represent actual motion, we may still assume that our universe is either contracting or expanding at a rate that can not now be measured by the observer.

In the second place, the conclusion assumes that the measures on which they are based are reliable. They are all the measures we have which bear on the critical questions and, by the usual criteria of probable errors, they seem to be sufficiently consistent. Nevertheless, the operations are delicate, and the most significant data are found near the extreme limits of the greatest telescopes. Under such conditions, it is always possible that the results may be affected by hidden systematic errors, the nightmare of all observers. This possibility will persist until the critical investigations can be repeated with improved techniques and more powerful telescopes. Ultimately, the matter should be settled beyond question by the 200-inch reflector destined for Mount Palomar.

Meanwhile, on the basis of the evidence now available, a choice seems to be presented, as once before in the days of Copernicus, between a small, finite universe, and a sensibly infinite universe plus a new principle of nature. And, as before, the choice may be determined by the attribute of simplicity.

OBITUARY

SOMA WEISS

DR. SOMA WEISS, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, died suddenly on January 31, 1942, after a brief illness, just having passed his forty-third birthday. At the time of his death he occupied two nationally important medical posts: he was the eighth physician to be Hersey professor of the theory and practice of physic in Harvard University, and the second to be physician-in-chief of the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston.

He was born in Bestercze, Hungary, but came to the United States as a young man. He graduated from Columbia University in 1921 with the degree of bachelor of arts, and received his medical diploma from Cornell University in 1923. But before this, already he had displayed ability as a teacher and student at the Royal Hungarian University at Budapest, where he served as demonstrator and research fellow in physiology and biochemistry. From the very outset of his career, therefore, he displayed an interest in these two fundamental sciences, and this persisted. He seemed to ask himself continually how things pertaining to medicine happened and how they might be influenced by physiologic and chemical approaches.

In 1925, the Harvard Medical School was able to attract him to Boston by appointing him research fellow in medicine. The opportunities for the investigation and study of disease afforded by the Thorndike Memorial Laboratory of the Boston City Hospital were bound to appeal to a man of his ideals, and here he worked until 1939. His career there served well to illustrate the qualities of imagination and industry which were so prominent in his make-up.

In the Boston City Hospital, he rose from research fellow to assistant director of the Thorndike Memorial Laboratory and physician-in-chief of the Fourth Medical Service—no mean achievement in the course of eleven years for a stranger to Boston. As he grew accustomed to Boston and its medical ways, and as he grew older, besides becoming a master clinician and investigator, he developed also remarkable skill in inspiring men younger or older than himself to learn more: medical students, interns or colleagues. These abilities were so impressive that he ascended the academic ladder of Harvard with equal promptness. He started as an assistant in the department of medicine and became associate professor seven years later.

During the years at the Boston City Hospital, his industry bore fruit in many ways: The patients liked him, for his conscience never allowed him to forget that the patient in the hospital was a human being who might be, like any one else, homesick or lonely, ill in mind as well as body; his colleagues on the staff of the hospital admired and respected him, for he was easy to deal with, unselfish and always honest and straightforward; his students adored him. Whenever he made ward rounds, there would be an enthusiastic following; and one of the important teaching exercises which he conducted with painstaking regularity was that of meeting the house officers of the entire hospital one evening each week, when he would visit other wards than his own and discuss medical problems with others than his own group.

His pen was busy constantly; well over a hundred papers were written during his Boston City Hospital years; and they cover a wide range of subject-matter. They were written only as a man with scientific conscience allows himself to write—always with a careful analysis of what other workers had done previously on the problem under discussion, an account of what his own observations entailed and what he believed they added. To work and teach as he did required not only remarkable industry but also omnivorous reading. On top of all this, he found time to take a sincere interest in various scientific medical societies—the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American College of Physicians, the American Heart Association, the Association of American Physicians, the Association of Research in Nervous and Mental Diseases, and many others.

In 1938, when the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital needed to appoint a new physician-in-chief, and when

Harvard University needed a new Hersey professor of the theory and practice of physic to succeed Dr. Henry A. Christian, Dr. Weiss seemed an obviously satisfactory choice. So it came about that Dr. Weiss moved from the Thorndike Memorial Laboratory and the Boston City Hospital to the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital and was promoted to one of the most venerable medical professorships in the country.

Two and a half academic years in the life of a university or hospital are not long. Yet, Dr. Weiss will be remembered by Harvard University as having carried forward honorably the fine tradition upheld by his predecessors in the Hersey professorship of the theory and practice of physic; and at the Brigham Hospital, he will be regarded as are Francis Peabody, Harvey Cushing and Henry Christian. For, like them, he did his share to make of this hospital an institution such as the donor wished—a sanctuary where life would be more hopeful and care more possible for sick persons in indigent circumstances residing in the County of Suffolk and for sick persons the world over.

REGINALD FITZ

DEATHS AND MEMORIALS

DR. GLOVER MORRILL ALLEN, associate professor of zoology at Harvard University and curator of mammals at the Agassiz Museum, died on February 14, at the age of sixty-three years.

PROFESSOR FRED W. UPSON, dean emeritus of the Graduate College of the University of Nebraska and a former chairman of the department of chemistry and chemical engineering, died on February 10.

ACCORDING to *Chemical and Engineering News*, as a memorial to E. P. Kohler, professor of chemistry at Bryn Mawr College until 1912 and at the time of his death in May, 1938, Sheldon Emery professor of organic chemistry at Harvard University, a fellowship for graduate study in chemistry has been endowed through contributions from his students. Recipients of the fellowship will be chosen in such a way as to provide for an exchange of outstanding students between the institutions where Kohler taught and those in which the Kohler tradition is particularly cherished.

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

EXPEDITIONS OF FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

FOUR of the five expeditions which Field Museum of Natural History has in Latin-American countries have recently sent to the museum reports on the progress of their work.

Paul O. McGrew, assistant curator of paleontology, who is leader of an expedition in Honduras, reports that he has excavated a specimen of a large and rare dog which lived some 7,000,000 years ago and is similar to a rare type of about the same period that inhabited the North American plains. He has found also a dwarfed type of Pliocene horse which resembles prehistoric North American horses in all characters except size. Its stunted growth may have been due to the unfavorable habitat afforded by the tropics. He writes that the dog is a species almost "certainly new to science, and of great importance." He also writes: "I am amazed and pleased at the high opinion in this country of anything pertaining to 'Los Estados Unidos.'"

Colin Campbell Sanborn, curator of mammals, who is conducting a zoological expedition in Peru, reports that he has collected a large number of animals for the museum. He is engaged in visiting localities of special zoological interest, especially in the valleys of some of the more remote tributaries of the Amazon.

From Cuenca, Ecuador, Donald Collier, ethnologist, sends a preliminary report on explorations on mule-back in little-known regions, and archeological excavations on sites once the seats of prehistoric Indian communities. The museum shares in this expedition with the Institute of Andean Research, New York.

Dr. Julian A. Steyermark, who is conducting a botanical expedition in Guatemala, is working in difficult mountain regions and living largely with native Indians.

The museum's fifth Latin-American expedition, that being conducted by Llewelyn Williams, curator of economic botany, who is making a botanical survey in Venezuela, has not reported recently.

DEDICATION OF THE HORACE H. RACKHAM EDUCATIONAL MEMORIAL

THE Horace H. Rackham Educational Memorial of the Extension Service of the University of Michigan and the Engineering Society of Detroit was dedicated on January 28. The building was made possible by gifts to the university and to the society from the Horace H. Rackham and Mary A. Rackham Fund and from Mary A. Rackham. It was erected at a cost of $2,000,000 and is situated in the art center of Detroit.

President Alexander G. Ruthven accepted the building for the university. He pointed out that the facilities of the university wing of the memorial will be used to meet the educational needs of two groups, young people who are unable to spend years of continuous study at Ann Arbor and adults who desire to continue their education. He said: