irrigation, long-continued tillage of orchard soils, organic materials and soil microorganisms were considered. In addition, enzymatic *vs.* microbial concepts of urea hydrolysis, the maintenance of nitrogen in dry farm soils and the persistence of algae in old adobes were topics presented.

At the banquet on Wednesday evening at which were present fifty-one members and guests, President F. S. Harris, of Brigham Young University, described some interesting and peculiar agricultural problems of Iran.

Officers of the society elected for the coming year were as follows: *President,* T. L. Martin, Brigham Young University; *Vice-President,* O. C. Magistad, U. S. Regional Salinity Laboratory; *Secretary-Treasurer,* W. P. Martin, University of Arizona.

OBITUARY

RAYMOND L. DITMARS

As a keen student of human nature has reminded us, "Contemporaries appreciate the man rather than the merit, but posterity will regard the merit rather than the man." Most creative thinkers are content to have it this way, for they realize that they labor for future generations rather than for their own. The life and works of Dr. Ditmars will illustrate the truth of the observation. Quietly and persistently he toiled in his chosen field. To many biologists he was but little known; to others he was the modest curator of reptiles in the New York Zoological Park. But it may be safely predicted that future historians of American zoology will recognize in him an important contributor to the science.

Scientists too generally fail to appreciate that research is promoted not only by the efforts of skilled investigators but also by the labors of those who undertake to develop the students of the future. Zoologists particularly are prone to decry attempts to popularize the results of their studies. This is unfortunate, for most teachers will testify to the great value of natural histories and manuals in stimulating in the youthful mind an interest in the natural sciences. It is to this field that Dr. Ditmars has contributed effectively and permanently. He has successfully popularized, in the best sense of the term, the study of reptiles, and the results are already appearing in an augmented group of specialists in the habits, distribution and relationships of an important, difficult, neglected and much maligned group of animals.

Thus, while it will be the future Copes, Boulengers and Stejnegers who will really give to this man full credit, we who are privileged to have known him may feel proud to have been associated with one who is destined to be considered a good teacher. He would desire no other epitaph.

Dr. Ditmars died on May 12. The events of his life are given in biographical directories. "American Men of Science" prints the following:

Ditmars, R(aymond) L(ee), Zoological Park, New York, N. Y. *Natural history.* Newark, N. J., June 20, 76. Pub. and private schs. Asst. curator entom, Am. Museum Nat. Hist, 91–97; stenographer, 97–99; reporter, 'N. Y. Times,' 99–00; *curator reptiles, N. Y. Zool. Park, 00–, mammals, 27–* Soc. Ichthyol. and Herp; N. Y. Zool. Soc; N. Y. Entom. Soc; Linnaean Soc. N. Y. Herpetology; mammalogy; educational motion pictures.

ALEXANDER G. RUTHVEN
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

HENRY FRANCIS NACHTRIEB

HENRY FRANCIS NACHTRIEB, professor emeritus of animal biology at the University of Minnesota, died at his home in Berkeley, California, on July 17 in his eighty-sixth year. He is survived by his wife and daughter. Born near Galion, Ohio, in 1857, Professor Nachtrieb began his higher education at German Wallace College at Berea, Ohio. From there he came to the University of Minnesota and received his B.S. degree in 1882. Graduate work at the Johns Hopkins University from 1883 to 1885 completed his professional training. Returning to the University of Minnesota in 1885 as an assistant, he became assistant professor the following year and department head in 1887, which position he held until his retirement in 1925.

During his long service to the university he was untiring in his efforts to build up the work in zoology. When Governor John S. Pillsbury was considering the gift of a building to the university in 1889, Professor Nachtrieb was influential in having the building devoted to the natural sciences. As the work grew, and additional space became imperative, he was again influential in securing a legislative appropriation for a new building to be devoted exclusively to zoology. This fine modern laboratory was built in 1915, according to plans largely developed by him.

During the years of the Geological and Natural History Survey of Minnesota, Professor Nachtrieb was active in directing this work as state zoologist. At this time he began his work on the spoon bill or paddle fish, Polyodon. He accumulated much material on this extraordinary form, but, unfortunately, the greater part was never published. His published papers dealt chiefly with leeches and fishes.

In addition to his scientific interest, Professor Nachtrieb had a warm interest in the whole of human life