

We have sufficient precedence from other regions to guide us, as the total extinction of the yellow moccasin flower in Center county, Pennsylvania, and the extirpation of the pitcher plant, fringed gentian, azalea and wild lilies from many localities. We should profit from the experience of others and treat our wild flora as a natural resource which should be neither squandered nor destroyed, but should rather be treated in a sane and thoughtful manner, so that it may be appreciated and enjoyed by those who follow us.

ALBERT A. HANSEN

#### A SUGGESTION FOR MAKING OUR SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS MORE USEFUL AND OUR POST-OFFICES A CENTER OF INFORMATION

It is evident to all persons who have thought about the matter that our federal and state scientific publications are not as widely used or as well known as their great value to the public warrants. There are two principal reasons for this: first, because it is difficult to promptly obtain them and, second, because comparatively few people know of their existence as the government has found no effective way of advertising them.

Sportsmen and scientists, for example, frequently find that the guides of a region of which an excellent topographic map has been made by the government are not aware of the existence of the map although it would be of great value to them in their work. It is perhaps conservative to say that most automobilists do not even know what topographic maps are, and that, when they do know, they can not obtain them unless their tour is planned long in advance. The writer has never but once seen a topographic map in the home of a farmer, notwithstanding the fact that it would be a source of great pleasure and profit to him. If a publishing house had issued maps of such excellence it would have expended thousands of dollars in advertising them so that, if possible, every home might have a map of its own neighborhood. As a matter of fact the expense of publishing these

maps is so great that no private concern could make them for sale at a profit. Nevertheless, after they have been published, no effort is made to let the people whose taxes paid for them learn of them and of their value.

A few examples from the writer's experience—which can be duplicated by many persons—will illustrate the characteristic inaccessibility of our federal and state publications. Many times he has wanted the topographic maps of a region but was unable to obtain them because he could not wait until he received them from Washington. At Zion National Park, Utah, this past summer not only were no topographic maps for sale but none could be consulted. At Uvalde, Texas, there are some interesting volcanic necks which are mapped and described in a United States Geological Survey Folio but when the writer stopped off to study them he found that no folio was available and, as far as he could learn, no one in the region owned a copy. At Ardmore, Okla., he wished to consult the geological literature of the region and found that the Carnegie Library has neither the publications of its own state nor the excellent United States Geological Survey Professional paper of the region. Many similar instances could be cited.

The biological and botanical publications are equally inaccessible. The archeological publications dealing with the Cliff Dwellings, the prehistoric ruins of New Mexico and Arizona, the Mound Builders of Ohio, and elsewhere, might almost as well never have been published as far as their usefulness to the visitor who has not had time to secure them from Washington is concerned.

The only justification for this state of affairs is that one can obtain the government publications in Washington and the state publications at the state capitols by writing for them; but it should always be added, "if one has the time to wait for them."

The writer proposes two remedies:

1. That every first, second, and third class post-office shall be provided with a framed, printed list of the federal and state publica-

tions which deal with the region in which it is situated as well as of historical and other publications of local interest. It is, perhaps, evident that if it became generally known that every first, second, and third class post-office contained such a list of publications the traveler and resident in search of information would immediately go to the post-office to consult the list.

2. The second suggestion is that every postmaster shall have on sale all of the federal and state publications on the exhibited list.

In order to put this suggestion in practical form the writer prepared the following list for his home town:

#### PUBLICATIONS ON WILLIAMSTOWN AND VICINITY

##### *Maps*

The Greylock, Bennington, Berlin, and Wilmington topographic maps published by the United States Geological Survey. Show the location of roads, streams, houses, and elevations. On exhibition and for sale here.

##### *Local History*

"Origins in Williamstown," by Professor A. L. Perry. An account of the early history of the Northern Berkshires. Can be consulted in the Village and College Libraries.

"A History of Williams College," by Professor L. W. Spring. A history of the local college from its foundation to 1916. Can be consulted in the Village and College Libraries.

"Boyhood Reminiscences," by Keyes Danforth. Published in 1895. An interesting account of the houses, people, and customs of the time. Can be consulted in the Village and College Libraries.

##### *Geology*

"Taconic Physiography," by T. Nelson Dale, U. S. Geological Survey Bulletin 272. Contains excellent descriptions and explanations of the scenery of the Berkshires. Can be consulted in the Village and College Libraries.

"Geology of the Green Mountains," by Pumpelly, Wolfe, and Dale. United States Geological Survey Monograph XXIII. Contains a technical discussion of the geology of the region. Can be consulted in the Village and College Libraries.

"Final Report of the Geology of Massachusetts, 1841," by Edward Hitchcock. Interesting

chiefly from a historical point of view. Can be consulted in the College Library.

##### *Zoology*

"Birds of New York," by E. H. Eaton. New York State Museum Memoir 12. Illustrates, with 106 colored plates, the birds of New York and New England. Can be consulted in the College Library.

"Useful Birds and their Protection," Edward H. Forbush. Massachusetts Bureau of Agriculture. An illustrated and interesting book on the birds of the state. Contains brief descriptions of the more common birds and accounts of their food and habits. Can be consulted in the Village and College Libraries.

##### *Botany*

"Wild Flowers of New York," by H. D. House. New York State Museum Memoir 15. Illustrated with many admirable colored plates. As the New York and New England species are for the most part identical this volume is as valuable for Williamstown as for New York. Can be consulted in the College Library.

"Bog Trotting for Orchids," Grace Greylock Niles. A popular description of the kinds and habits of orchids in this region. Can be consulted in the Village and College Libraries.

##### *Agriculture*

Lists of publications of great practical use to the farmer, stockman, and poultryman are on an adjoining bulletin board. The bulletins on these lists are published by the United States Department of Agriculture, the Massachusetts Agricultural Experiment Station at Amherst; the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station at Ithaca, and the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station at Storrs.

##### *Collections and Objects of Local Interest*

The sword and other personal property of Ephraim Williams, the founder of Williams College. In the College Library.

Collections of local rocks and other exhibits. In the Geological Museum, Clark Hall.

Mission Monument, Mission Park.

Block House Marker, West Main Street, on the property of the Kappa Alpha House.

The desirability of such a list in every post-office in the land becomes greater as automobile travel becomes more general. (In one

state there is, on an average, one automobile for every six persons.) Farmers, who, a few years ago, seldom went further than their nearest town now go many miles in their automobiles. When they reach a town new to them they want to see whatever is of interest. If all automobilists and other travelers knew a list such as the above could be found in the post-office they would first go there for information.

There is another important reason why such lists should be on exhibition in post-offices. It is very desirable that some person or persons in every community should know what has been written about their region. If those government and state publications pertaining to a region were listed and on sale at the post-offices, the postmasters and their assistants would know about them and through them this knowledge, which at present is confined to comparatively few, would be disseminated.

All this could be accomplished if congress should pass the following laws:

1. A law ordering the exhibition of a list of the publications pertaining to the region in which the post-office is situated, of somewhat the same character as that for Williamstown, Massachusetts.

2. A law ordering the scientific bureaus to send to each first, second, and third class post-office all of the government publications of local interest, and directing the postmasters to offer them for sale.

3. A law ordering that state publications be offered for sale by the postmasters if the state legislatures so direct.

It is hoped that all scientists and others interested will write to their congressmen urging the enactment of such a law as that outlined above so that our excellent government and state publications may become better known and so that our post-offices may become centers of greater usefulness.

HERDMAN F. CLELAND

#### SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

##### THE INSTITUTE OF HUMAN PALEONTOLOGY

ON December 23, 1920, the Institute of Human Paleontology in Paris was formally de-

clared open by Prince Albert of Monaco, its founder. The account in *Nature* states that the institute is situated in the Boulevard Saint Marcel. The building, which was nearing completion when war broke out, contains a large amphitheater for lectures and meetings, a spacious library, and a number of rooms fitted up as laboratories, for examining and photographing the material furnished by excavation. Collections of specimens from the sites which have already been explored, as well as reproductions of the paintings and drawings found on the walls of the French and Spanish paleolithic caves, are exhibited in the building. An endowment of two million francs is attached to the Prince of Monaco's foundation, and an additional sum has been promised should it be rendered necessary by any further increase in the cost of living. The institute is under the direction of M. Marcelin Boule, assisted by a council consisting of MM. Salomon Reinach, Dislère, Verneau and Louis Mayer.

Among those who were present at the opening ceremony were the President of the French Republic, M. Millerand, H.I.H. Prince Roland Bonaparte, M. Honnorat, then Minister of Public Instruction, the Belgian and Italian Ambassadors, the Argentine and Persian Ministers, M. Lacroix, secretary of the Academy of Sciences, the president of the Academy of Medicine, and representatives of the College of Medicine, the Collège de France, the Pasteur Institute, and the various scientific societies. An inaugural address was delivered by the Prince of Monaco, who defined the broad aims of human paleontology. At the conclusion of the prince's address brief speeches were made by M. Honnorat, minister of public instruction, M. Perrier, and M. Le Corbeiller, president of the Municipal Council, the last named speaking on behalf of the city of Paris. Lastly, M. E. Cartailhac, the veteran archeologist, expressed his joy at the creation of the institute, which, he said, had been his dearest wish throughout his career as an archeologist.

##### A NEW CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL

THE problems of technical agriculture in the adjoining provinces of Canada are essen-