

gaged in business in Boston, has been elected president of the college, to succeed President Ernest Fox Nichols, who has resigned to accept a chair of physics at Yale University.

At the University of Nebraska, Dr. David D. Whitney, now at Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., has been appointed professor of zoology, in charge of courses in the fields of genetics, evolution and experimental zoology. Homer B. Latimer, now professor of zoology in Nebraska Wesleyan University, has been appointed associate professor of zoology, in charge of work in vertebrate anatomy, embryology and histology.

GEORGE FREDERIC ORDEMAN, Ph.D., has been elected associate professor of chemistry, and Robert William Dickey, Ph.D., associate professor of physics in Washington and Lee University.

At Sibley College, Cornell University, the following instructors have been promoted to the grade of assistant professors: Clarence Andrew Pierce, in power engineering; Myron A. Lee, in machine design, and John George Pertsch, Jr., in electrical engineering. Joseph Franklin Putnam has been appointed assistant professor of electrical engineering. He has been professor of physics in St. John's College, Shanghai. Frederick George Switzer has been appointed instructor in the mechanics of engineering.

VERA DANTSCHAKOFF, M.D., of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, has been appointed instructor in anatomy, and Rosalie F. Morton, M.D., as attending surgeon at Vanderbilt Clinic of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University.

RECENT additions to the faculty of the University of Arkansas are J. Sam Guy, Ph.D. (Johns Hopkins), head of the department of chemistry, succeeding the late Dr. C. G. Carroll; F. G. Baender, M.S. (Cornell University), formerly assistant professor in the University of Iowa, head of the department of mechanical engineering; P. B. Barker, late of the agricultural faculty of the University of Missouri, head of the department of agronomy. Arthur M. Harding, Ph.D. (Chicago), returns

to the university, after a year's leave of absence, as professor of mathematics and university examiner.

## DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

### CORAL REEFS

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: In his article on "Coral Reefs" in the April *Scientific Monthly*, Professor Davis gives an abridged and distorted version of Alexander Agassiz's theory, thus setting up a dummy to be conveniently knocked down. A careful consideration of *all* the forces suggested by Agassiz as contributing to the formation of atolls and barrier reefs should convince Professor Davis that the hypothesis calls for neither cliffs, deltas nor talus on the islands enclosed by barrier reefs. For the ring of living corals breaks the force of the waves; and the great quantities of water piled over the reef by the trade winds forms a gigantic modified pothole which scours out the material eroded from the island. Professor Davis has stated that any theory would account for the formation of atolls and barrier reefs themselves. He appears to forget that it was because many investigators in the field were unable to reconcile the facts observed with the theory of subsidence that led them to suggest other explanations. Any one at all familiar with the methods of work of both the elder and younger Agassiz would never think of quietly assuming that either was ignorant of the literature of his subject.

G. R. AGASSIZ

### ANOTHER POISONOUS CLAVICEPS

THE results of the experiments by Brown and Ranck, showing the poisonous action of *Claviceps paspali* Stevens and Hall on animals, published in Technical Bulletin 6, Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station, has just been received by me and read with unusual interest, as I have followed the history of this interesting fungus since 1902.

I first noticed the disease produced by *Claviceps* very abundant and conspicuous on *Paspalum lœve* in Maryland in the summer of 1902, and in the autumn of the same year a sample of it was received from a Maryland