

THE
GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE

NEW SERIES. DECADE VI. VOL. VI.

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EDITORIAL NOTES.

WITH the present number a new feature is introduced into the GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE, namely, an Editorial page. Hitherto announcements of events of current interest have been relegated to a section with the somewhat unsatisfactory title of "Miscellaneous" and have been confined within rather narrow limits. The intention is to extend this feature into the form of Editorial notes and comments on topical matters, personal, academic, administrative, scientific, and economic; in fact, any subjects bearing on the development and progress of geology at home and abroad. It is hoped by this means to extend the usefulness of the Magazine and to interest a still wider circle of readers by affording an opportunity for a free and informal discussion of the problems of the day. This is a period of altogether exceptional conditions and also, it is believed, the dawn of a new era in the history of science in general and of geology in particular. In order that geology may play its part in the great work of reconstruction that lies before us a wide dissemination of ideas is essential, and, without being unduly egotistical, it is the hope of the Editors that the GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE may take a humble share in this great task.

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MR. ALFRED HARKER, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S., has been appointed Reader in Petrology in the University of Cambridge. There is at present no permanent Readership connected with Geology in the University, but "having regard to the long service and scientific achievements of Mr. Harker" it was decided that a special Readership should be established for him, the appointment to date from January 1, 1919.

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At the annual meeting of the Geological Society, held on February 21, the officers for the ensuing year were elected as follows: President (for the second year), Mr. G. W. Lamplugh; Vice-Presidents,

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Professor J. E. Marr, Sir Jethro Teall, Mr. R. D. Oldham, and Sir John Cadman; Secretaries, Dr. H. H. Thomas and Dr. H. Lapworth; Treasurer, Dr. J. V. Elsdon; Foreign Secretary, Sir A. Geikie. The following were also elected to replace the five retiring members of Council: Dr. G. T. Prior, Professor P. F. Kendall, Dr. G. Hickling, Mr. A. Howe, and Mr. R. S. Herries.

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IN view of the change in the political status of women brought about by the new Franchise Act it was inevitable that the question of their admission to the Geological Society should again be brought forward. In this connexion the award of the Murchison Medal to Miss G. L. Elles, as recorded last month, is significant. At the meeting of the Society on January 22 the President announced that a special general meeting will be held on March 26 to consider the following motion: "That it is desirable to admit women as Fellows of the Society." There can hardly be any doubt as to the outcome of the discussion, and we may hope that a long-delayed measure of justice will be carried out without serious opposition.

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MESSRS. GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN, LTD., have done a useful service by publishing, under the title of *German Designs on French Lorraine*, a translation, with introduction, of the secret memorandum presented by the German iron and steel manufacturers to the Imperial Chancellor and to Field-Marshal von Hindenburg at the close of 1917. This is a document of remarkable interest in many ways, partly as an exposition of German unscrupulousness and cynical disregard for truth and partly as an example of how completely a case may be given away by excess of zeal. Since the main points brought forward are essentially matters of geological fact, distorted to suit German arguments, it may be briefly summarized here. The gist of the argument is as follows: Germany will require, after a peace victorious for the Central Powers, a greatly increased supply of iron and steel: her home supplies are approaching exhaustion, therefore it will be necessary for the continued existence of the Empire, and especially for the successful prosecution of the next war, to annex that part of Lorraine which still remains French. In order to diminish the atrocity of this annexation, the reserves still remaining in Germany are much under-estimated, while the amount of the supplies available in the rest of France are multiplied enormously. The figures given are stated to be on the authority of the well-known geologists Beyschlag and Krusch. These authorities value the average life of the German mines at 40 to 50 years. According to the best pre-War figures the German resources were in 1910 about 3,900,000,000 tons of ore: if this is to be exhausted

in 50 years it would correspond to an average yearly production of 35,000,000 tons of pig iron from home ores alone, without counting imports, an apparently impossible figure, and more than double the pre-War production. The figures given for France are still more startling. In 1916 a German engineer estimated the resources of Normandy at 500,000,000 tons of ore, but the authors of this memoir adopt the figure of 5,000,000,000 tons for this area, or ten times as much. As a subsidiary argument the urgent need for phosphatic manures, i.e. basic slag, for German agriculture was insisted on, and this can best be obtained from the Lorraine ores.

This memorandum in point of fact proves in the clearest possible manner that without the Lorraine iron-fields the German Empire can never again conduct a great European war, and the general impression left on the mind of the non-political reader is that the one thing that really matters at the present Peace Conference is the restoration of Lorraine to France; without this iron-field Germany, on her own showing, is helpless for good or evil for evermore. This is of course an exaggerated view of the case, nevertheless it is clear that the matter is of paramount importance, and it is much to be hoped that the geological aspect of it has been duly placed before the responsible authorities.

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THE issue of *Nature* for January 16, 1919, contains a valuable article by Mr. V. C. Illing on Borings for Oil in the United Kingdom. The whole subject is reviewed from an eminently practical and common-sense point of view; while due weight is given to the admitted occurrence of petroleum in small quantities in many British localities, especially in the Carboniferous, these are reduced to their true proportions, which are shown to be insignificant, and the author evidently entertains no hope of a commercially successful result from the investigations now proceeding. The article should be read in conjunction with the memoir on this and cognate subjects recently issued by the Geological Survey, which likewise pours floods of cold geological common-sense on the rosy optimism which has lately been prevalent in the columns of the daily press. Such a treatment of the subject was much needed, since the indulgence of such hopes can, in the opinion of competent geologists, only lead to disappointment. Although the scheme now in operation in Derbyshire is on a somewhat higher plane than the famous leaky tank at Ramsey, nevertheless it is to be gravely doubted whether the results will be of much more practical value. It is of course possible, however, that these extensive borings may yield other results of unlooked-for scientific or economic importance, apart from the problematical supply of liquid fuel.