

The last paper of the evening was read by Dr. F. W. Clarke and was entitled: 'The Action of Ammonium Chlorid on Certain Silicates' by F. W. Clarke and George Steiger.

A brief outline of the method of decomposition of some zeolites by heating with ammonium chloride in a sealed tube, was first given. It was shown by the experiments that two of the formulæ hitherto given, to Scolecite, Natrolite and Prehnite must be abandoned. Scolecite and Natrolite give almost identical ammonium compounds, calcium having been replaced in the one case and sodium in the other. They also show these two zeolites to be probably salts of orthotrisilicic acid. In the case of Prehnite the results were quite different, two experiments giving only .17 per cent. in the one case and .22 per cent in the other, of ammonium, in the product formed by their treatment. This different action shows that Prehnite can no longer be classed with the former two. In the case of Pectolite the results were so irregular that definite conclusions could not be drawn from the facts at hand. Some figures were given and a formula suggested.

WILLIAM H. KRUG,  
*Secretary.*

#### BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON.

THE 325th regular meeting, the last for the season, was held on Saturday evening, May 19th. Mr. C. H. Townsend spoke at length on 'The Recent Cruise of the *Albatross* among the South Pacific Islands, with Remarks on the Inhabitants and their Customs,' illustrating his remarks with numerous lantern slides. The speaker described the route followed, the method of sounding and dredging, and noted the additions made to our knowledge of the depth of the ocean. The peculiarities of some of the islands were given, including those of the typical atolls. Mr. Townsend then described the inhabitants of some of the groups of islands visited, calling attention to the fact that each group possessed its own type of house and canoe. In conclusion the speaker gave an account of his trip across the island of Fiji, giving high praise to the manner in which the group was ruled by the English.

F. A. LUCAS.

#### THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON.

THE 305th regular meeting of the Anthropological Society was held Tuesday, April 24, 1900.

The meeting was designed as a memorial of Frank Hamilton Cushing, Vice-President of the Section of Technology, whose recent death had deprived the Society of one of its most brilliant members.

The following resolutions, prepared by a committee of the Board of Managers of the Society, were presented:

WHEREAS, Our colleague and friend, Frank Hamilton Cushing, Vice-President of the Section of Technology in the Anthropological Society of Washington, has been removed from our midst by death—

*Resolved*, That the members of the Anthropological Society of Washington unite in an expression of deep sorrow at his untimely death. An enthusiastic investigator, an acute observer, a genius in grasping the thoughts of primitive men, a master in exposition, and a tireless worker, his contributions to the science of man are many and brilliant.

To unravel and correlate the fading myths of a well nigh extinct race, he gave the best years of his unselfish life, braving disease, danger and death itself in his work as a pioneer; and in his death while yet in his prime and in the midst of his noblest work the science has suffered a grievous loss. An active member of this Society from its foundation, he was a frequent contributor to our proceedings; his contributions were of surpassing originality, embodying rich and unique experience and the results of profound study, always expressed in felicitous form; so that his death closes forever one of our richest sources of instruction and inspiration.

The loss to the science and our Society is a loss to mankind; the world is poorer to-day because the life of Frank Hamilton Cushing has passed from it.

To his bereaved family and sorrowing friends we tender our heartfelt sympathy.

J. H. McCORMICK,  
P. B. PIERCE,  
W. H. HOLMES,

*Committee.*

Addresses giving various phases of Mr. Cushing's life and work were then made by President W J McGee, Major J. W. Powell, of the Bureau of Ethnology, in which Bureau Mr. Cushing was a brilliant worker, Mr. L. O. Howard, Secretary American Association for the Advancement of Science, who was a classmate in Cornell; Professor W. H. Holmes, spoke of his work for the National Museum; Mr. Stuart Culin, of his researches in behalf of the University of Pennsylvania; Mr. J. D. McGuire, of his genius in the technological and archaeological field; Dr. Washington Matthews, of his discoveries in Zuni and the Salado Valley and of his organization and explorations with the Hemenway expedition; Mr. P. B. Pierce, of his character as a personal friend; Miss Alice C. Fletcher, of Mr. Cushing's wonderful mind and his ability to discern similarities and forge the connecting links between the thoughts of primitive man and the archæic remains with which he was surrounded. The consensus of opinion was that Mr. Cushing occupied a field peculiarly his own and that he ranked as one of the few real geniuses of the world.

Letters of regret were read from Dr. Franz Boaz, of the American Museum of Natural History and Mr. Wm. Wallace Tooker and Wells M. Sawyer.

The resolutions were adopted by a rising vote.

J. H. McCORMICK.  
Secretary.

#### DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

##### HUMANIZING THE BIRDS.

*Bird Lore* for December last contained an excellent article by Caroline G. Soule, entitled 'Humanizing the Birds,' and protesting against the too common practice of ascribing to them human qualities which they do not possess and mental traits with which they are not endowed. The title might well serve as the text for a long discourse on the subject, for there is all too much of this 'humanizing' indulged in nowadays, not only by those who write about birds, but by writers in all branches of natural history, and it is not confined to stories written for the instruction of small children, but in articles intended for the edification of children

of a much larger growth. Writers on evolution are all too prone to humanize their subjects, and it is so favorite a sin with those discussing problems of mimicry that in his *Dictionary of Birds* Professor Newton follows that caption 'with the prefix UNCONSCIOUS, which in every department of zoology should always be expressed or understood.' For it is a common fault to make the mimicking process active instead of passive, to say, for example, that "Many butterflies escape destruction by mimicking the colors and markings of uneatable forms," as if the butterflies had given serious thought to the matter. When an author writes that "Butterflies are often attracted by the excreta of birds and a spider takes advantage of this fact to secure his prey," he implies a considerable amount of reasoning power in the spider. That this implication is not intended is shown a little later by the statement that "The whole combination of habits, form and coloring afford a wonderful example of what natural selection can accomplish," but the damage has been done and the suggestion made that the mimicry is intentional.

When we read that the "witch-hazel, knowing that neither boy nor girl, nor bird nor beast nor wind, will come to the rescue of its little ones, is obliged to take matters into its own hands" we realize that it was written for a child, although we may deplore this manner of writing and wish that the case had been differently stated. But here is a statement almost, if not quite as bad, taken from an important work on zoology and not written with the view of interesting a child: "In the Mediterranean the embryos [of sponges] \* \* \* escape from the tissues of the parent when they have arrived at the blastula condition \* \* \*, in the same species on the shores of the English Channel the young are retained until after gastrulation \* \* \*." The explanation of this it is said is not difficult: "In the Mediterranean there are no strong currents and is evidently best for the parents to get rid of the young at as early a moment as possible, thus escaping longer drain upon its energies. In the English Channel, on the other hand, the current is very strong, and were the embryos to be set free at the stage at which they are in the Medi-