

The subject is rather intricate, as may be judged from the history of the genera *Uruguaya*, Carter, 1881, and *Potamolepis*, Marshall, 1883. In describing the latter, Marshall, it appears, confessed that its separation from *Uruguaya* depended only on a geographical consideration, one group being found in Africa, the other in South America. Yet now they are assigned to separate subfamilies. Dr. Annandale, however, admits that the recognition of his sub-family *Potamolepidinæ* "depends to some extent on the fact that no gemmules have been found in any species that can be definitely assigned to the genus *Potamolepis*," and that if in the future "gemmules be found in an undoubted *Potamolepis* with specialised gemmule-spicules that can be called microscleres, the genus would have to be transferred to the *Spongillinæ*." It is evidently a case in dealing with which the student must be specialised as well as the spicules. It will not interest the water board at Cardiff, which is reported to have cleared its pipes of a blockading sponge-growth simply by using a solution of common salt, without reference to systematic nomenclature.

As it is sometimes supposed that the influence of environment is all-sufficing for the origin of species and makes natural selection a needless hypothesis, it is worth while to quote Dr. Annandale's remark that "it is not unusual for two species that live together to adopt diametrically opposite means to attain the same end." This he illustrates by the case of *Cortispongilla barroisi*, notable for the possession of a well-defined and almost symmetrical central cavity, while *Nudospingilla aster*, which inhabits the same environment, is a peculiarly compact sponge without any trace of a central cavity. The explanation offered is, that "if the particularly well-developed exhalant system implied in the production of a central cavity opening by a large osculum is advantageous in getting rid of silt that has entered the sponge, a compact structure may be equally efficient in preventing the silt from entering at all."

In separate sections of the report several subjects besides sponges are discussed by Dr. Annandale and his collaborators, but to these justice cannot be done within the limits of this notice.

T. R. R. STEBBING.

PROF. P. V. BEVAN.

THE younger generation of Cambridge physicists and many others will have noticed with regret the announcement in last week's *NATURE* of the death of Prof. P. V. Bevan at the early age of thirty-eight. He had a distinguished scientific record, and his friends confidently expected for him a useful and fruitful career. Entering Cambridge University in 1896 he took up the study of mathematics, and in 1899 was fourth Wrangler. The following year he was placed in the first division of the first class in part ii. of the mathematical tripos. With this equipment he turned his attention to experimental physics, and commenced research in the Cavendish Laboratory under Sir J. J. Thomson. In 1901 he was appointed to a

demonstratorship, to which lecturing duties were added in 1904, and in 1908 he became Professor of Physics at the Royal Holloway College, a post which he held till his death.

Prof. Bevan's earliest important research was a very complete investigation of the action of light on the rate of combination of hydrogen and chlorine, but after his removal to London he devoted himself to optics. Starting from the work of Prof. R. W. Wood on anomalous dispersion in sodium vapour, he extended it to the vapours of other alkali metals. He made a detailed study of the absorption spectra of the vapours of lithium and caesium, mapping their principal lines, and testing the applicability of the various formulæ suggested by Kayser and Runge, Rydberg, and Hicks to the series of lines in these spectra. Both at Cambridge and in London Bevan was keenly interested in the religious life of the students. He was president of the Cambridge Nonconformist Union, and later took an active part in the student Christian movement, to the publications of which he was a contributor. His was a strong, vigorous, and genial personality, which won the affection of all the students with whom he came into personal contact.

A. W.

NOTES.

FOR several days Sir David Gill has been suffering from double pneumonia at his residence in Kensington. As we go to press we learn that though his lungs are improving and he maintains his strength, his condition is still critical.

DR. TEMPEST ANDERSON, whose death was announced in *NATURE* of September 4, has left 50,000*l.* to the Yorkshire Philosophical Society, of which he was formerly president, and 20,000*l.* to the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund, established by his sister, Mrs. Sladen, in 1904.

It is proposed to present to the Royal Society a portrait of the retiring president, Sir Archibald Geikie. A small executive committee, with Sir William Ramsay as chairman, has been formed to carry out the preliminary arrangements and collect subscriptions, which it is agreed should range between one and three guineas. Promises amounting to about one hundred guineas have been received already from fifty fellows of the society. Subscriptions may be sent to the treasurers of the Geikie Portrait Fund, at the Royal Society, or paid direct to Messrs. Coutts and Co., 440 Strand, W.C., for the fund. The subscribers will constitute a general committee, and they will be called together at a later date to consider the choice of an artist and other matters.

THE valuable services rendered to public departments by the Royal Society were referred to by Sir Archibald Geikie in his recent presidential address (see *NATURE*, December 4, p. 405); but it was pointed out that though the society has acquired the character of a kind of central bureau of science, there has been no corresponding increase of financial support. Sir Joseph Larmor, in *The Times* of December 20, refers