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CONTENTS

<i>The Equilibrium Functions of the Internal Ear</i> : PROFESSOR S. S. MAXWELL	423
<i>Meeting of the Geneticists interested in Agriculture</i> : DR. D. F. JONES	429
<i>National Parks</i> : PROFESSOR V. E. SHELFORD.	431
<i>Scientific Events</i> :—	
<i>World Production of Coal in 1920; Top Minnows as Yellow Fever Eradicators; The National Botanic Garden; Medical Prizes; The Committee on Physiological Optics of the National Research Council.</i>	431
<i>Scientific Notes and News</i>	434
<i>University and Educational Notes</i>	437
<i>Discussion and Correspondence</i> :—	
<i>Paleobotany as viewed by Two Geologists</i> : DR. G. R. WIELAND. <i>Have Birds an Acute Sense of Sound Location</i> : DR. A. G. POHLMAN	337
<i>Quotations</i> :—	
<i>Scientific Organization</i>	440
<i>Scientific Books</i> :	
<i>Long's Catalogue of the Coleoptera of America north of Mexico</i> : L. O. HOWARD...	441
<i>Notes on Meteorology and Climatology</i> :—	
<i>Meteorology and Balloon Racing</i> : C. LE-ROY MEISINGER	442
<i>Special Articles</i> :—	
<i>The Catalytic Properties of the Respiratory Metals</i> : JOHN F. FULTON, JR. <i>The Influence of Heat and Oxidation upon the Nutritive and Antiscorbutic Properties of Cow's Milk</i> : EDLA V. ANDERSON, R. ADAMS DUTCHER, C. H. ECKLES, J. W. WILBUR....	444

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THE EQUILIBRIUM FUNCTIONS OF THE INTERNAL EAR¹

In this paper I have not attempted to survey the whole range of present-day problems on the functions of the labyrinth but have confined myself to some phases of two fundamental questions. (1) What and how much differentiation of function can be proved to exist in the different labyrinthine structures concerned in equilibrium? (2) How does movement or change of position of the body give rise to the excitation process in the labyrinth?

I wish to state at the outset that merely for the sake of brevity specific mention will not be made of the reasons for assigning the functions discussed to the inner ear rather than to the movement of retinal images or to other sources of sensory stimuli, but must have it understood that those possible errors have not been left uncontrolled. Furthermore I have dealt with the phenomena objectively, because the experimental work which can throw light on these questions has necessarily been done upon animals in which the postulation of subjective sensations is unsafe or unnecessary. Furthermore I have not been unmindful of the fact that the reactions in the form of compensatory movements and forced positions include the simultaneous activity of many muscle groups, but I have used the compensatory movements of the eyes as the most convenient index of the labyrinthine reflexes, and also as the simplest to describe.

The labyrinth of the higher vertebrates must be used in the solution of many yet unsolved problems, but for the two fundamental questions now before us it presents insuperable difficulties. On the other hand the ears

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