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EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE appearance of a new part (No. 20) of *Geological Literature added to the Geological Society's Library* in 1913 will be welcomed by all who are actively engaged in geological work. In the interests of research it is to be hoped that the issue of the records for 1914 and subsequent years will not be long delayed, as this publication is of the greatest possible value, in fact one might almost say indispensable to all who desire to keep up with the current developments of their particular branch of the subject. Our thanks are due to the anonymous compiler of this part; only those who have had experience in bibliographical work can form any idea of the amount of time and trouble which its preparation must have involved.

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DURING the year 1921–22 Geophysical Discussions of the Royal Astronomical Society will take place on the first Friday in November, December, February, March, and May. In each case the meeting will begin at 5 p.m., and tea will be provided at 4.30. On 4th November Col. H. G. Lyons will open a discussion on the Eötvös Gravity Balance. On 2nd December Dr. Harold Jeffreys will open a discussion on the Cooling of the Earth and its Geological Effects. Fuller particulars of the meetings will appear in *Nature*, or can be obtained on application to the Assistant Secretary, Royal Astronomical Society, Burlington House, London, W.1. All members of the Geological Society are invited.

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IN comparison with the amount of attention bestowed on the nomenclature of the igneous rocks, that of the sediments has been comparatively neglected. All field-workers in stratigraphical geology must have been often conscious of a want of precision in the terms at their disposal for the description of the rock-types encountered in the course of their work. This applies perhaps with the greatest force to the arenaceous types of sediment. The special point that we have in mind is the want of a satisfactory field-term to describe the very hard fine-grained rocks that are so abundant for example in the Silurian system in most parts of this country. These are generally called *grits*, but this is a misapplication of the

word. The essential feature of a true grit is that it should be gritty, that is, breaking and weathering with a rough uneven surface, which these rocks do not. A true grit, such as the Millstone Grit, is of very irregular grain, and usually more or less porous, whereas the Silurian rocks here referred to are of very fine texture, even-grained, and very closely and tightly cemented. The name sandstone is hardly applicable, since to most people it connotes the idea of a somewhat soft and crumbly rock. The old term greywacke is better, but unfortunately it is not English. What is wanted is a good Anglo-Saxon word, not already used in some other quite different sense, and if possible self-explanatory. During the present field-season we commend this problem to our readers, and shall be glad to receive any communications on the subject that may suggest themselves. There are other problems of a similar nature; for example, What is a quartzite? Is a marl necessarily calcareous? And so on. Many more will no doubt occur to our readers. However, let the discussion, if any, be confined to one at a time.

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It is quite obvious that in geological research work two sets of names are required. One, of a rough and ready character, for use in the field; the other, for detailed petrographical descriptions in the laboratory. Among the igneous rocks we have excellent examples of the first class in the good old names felsite and greenstone. It is true that felsite is a barbarous word, but it is consecrated by usage, while greenstone is eminently descriptive, and both are well adapted for field notes. Later on, the rock can be examined and analyzed and assigned to its proper pigeon-hole in the system of petrographic nomenclature specially fancied by the writer. Most of the common names for the sediments do fulfil the requirements of field-work, but there are not quite enough of them, so that many are used in more than one sense. Every one is acquainted with the trouble caused by endeavours to find out what is really meant by *schiste* and *Schiefer*, and the two senses of the word cleavage are a perpetual stumbling-block to beginners. We are far from wishing to increase the number of technical words or of words used with technical meanings in addition to their ordinary significance, but it is evident that a few more are really needed.