

subsequent authors; while Nicholls²⁴ (1915-16) believes implicitly in the value of this character, and thinks that "the difficulty experienced in attempting to draw hard and fast lines between the different families suggests that our classification is, in the main, a natural one and does not represent merely a convenient key." Amongst the authors who laid stress on the nature of the vertebral centra as a valuable feature in amphibian classification, mention might be made of Cope²⁵ (1866), Lataste²⁶ (1879) and Blanchard²⁷ (1885).

In the end, I should like to express my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. S. C. Sarkar

both for kindly presenting me his valuable collection of reference papers on this as well as on other subjects and for giving me much encouragement. Without the help of friends like him, my work would hardly be possible.

POSTSCRIPT.

After having written the foregoing article, I have been reminded of Whitehouse and Grove's explanation²⁸ of the biconvexity of the ninth vertebra in the frog. These authors feel that such a vertebra provides a much stronger base than a procœlous one could have done, and that it thereby fulfils the extra demand made upon its strength by the movement of the pelvic girdle. This view appears to be in contradiction to Gadow's notions²⁹ and to lose a great deal of its weight on account of the presence of a great many exceptions in the Anura.

²⁴ Nicholls, *op. cit.*, 1915-16, p. 91.

²⁵ Cope, E. D., *Jour. Acad. Sci., Philad.*, 1866, 6.

²⁶ Lataste, F., *Actes Soc. Linn.*, Bordeaux, 1879, 33.

²⁷ Blanchard, R., *Bull. Soc. Zool., France*, 1885.

²⁸ Whitehouse, R. H., and Grove, A. J., *Dissection of the Frog*. Univ. Tutorial Press Ltd., London, 1933, pp. 28-29.

²⁹ See footnote 23 above.

The Dead Sea: A Store-House of Chemicals.

IN a paper read before the Institute of Chemical Engineers, on March 6th, Mr. M. A. Novomeysky, read a paper on "the growth of the potash industry in the Dead Sea region" (*Chem. Age*, 1936, 34, 235). The separation of a potash salt of the grade required by the markets (80-99 per cent. KCl) from the waters of the Dead Sea by solar evaporation, is an achievement involving numerous chemical engineering problems of the first magnitude. Results of experiments led to the conclusion that to produce a high-grade carnallite with a low content of sodium chloride the process of evaporation of the mother-liquor after the separation of the common salt, should be conducted in two or even three stages. In February

1930, the Palestine Potash Ltd., began constructional work with a view to extracting salts on a commercial scale. In 1931, a bromine plant was added. The present output is 25,000 to 30,000 tons of potash and 1,000 to 1,200 tons of bromine. A carnallite with the composition of 22.23 per cent. KCl and 8.96 per cent. NaCl decomposed after its first treatment with water into a sylvinite with 50.38 per cent. KCl and 20.75 per cent. NaCl and this after the first spraying with water yielded a product containing 78.1 per cent. dry KCl. With one or more sprayings, or treatment with brine saturated with KCl, the product can be brought up to a purity of 99 per cent. KCl.