

In composition gypsum is a sulphate of lime with about twenty per cent. of water. When heated by the blow-pipe it instantly becomes white and opaque and exfoliates, then fuses and can be scratched with the finger nails. Dissolves slowly in hydrochloric acid.

#### ANHYDRITE.

Anhydrite is the same in composition as gypsum except that it contains no water. It can be distinguished from that mineral by yielding no water when heated in a closed tube, and by its superior hardness. It occurs usually associated with gypsum or limestone, when it is commonly called hard plaster. It is found in orthorhombic crystals but usually granular or massive. Color white with grayish, bluish or reddish tints; lustre vitreous to pearly.

#### FLUORITE. (Fluor-spar.)

This is a calcium fluoride occurring in cubic or octohedra crystals; also massive. The hardness is 4. Lustre, vitreous. Color white, green, blue, yellow or red; the green and light blue or amethyst being the most common. Cleavage distinct and octohedral. Heated on charcoal it fuses, coloring the flame red, and becomes phosphorescent. If pulverized and heated with sulphuric acid it produces fumes of hydrofluoric acid, which will etch glass. This fact gives it an important use. It is generally found in veins often with metallic ores, in gneiss, mica, schist slate and limestone. Sometimes the crystals of this mineral resemble gems, but it can easily be distinguished by its inferior hardness. The massive varieties are sometimes worked into vases and other ornaments, but it is hard to work on account of its brittleness. It is also used as a flux in the smelting of some ores.

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#### On the Wide Distribution of some American Fresh-water Sponges.

BY E. POTTS.

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Allusion having been made to the wide distribution of certain species of spiders over the North-American Continent, Mr. E. Potts, referring to the fresh-water Sponge fauna of this country, said that *Spongilla fragilis*, the first species named in America, described by Dr. Leidy in 1851 from