

which we are associated, the only way in which we can render them available to our numerous Fellows resident in our colonies, is through our publications, and heavy as have been of late years our printer's and artists' bills, they will and ought to become heavier and heavier still. To render fully available the assistance we have received from Government, we require continued and increased support from our Fellows, and from the scientific public. We reckon already among our Fellows the great majority of those who have acquired a name in zoology, or botany, and I sincerely hope that all men of means who take a sincere interest in biological pursuits will think it a pleasure as well as a duty to contribute directly or indirectly to the support of the Linnean Society of London.

With regard to future arrangements in the new phases of life into which the Society has entered, the Council has kept in view three great objects, the endeavour to render our Meetings attractive, the extended usefulness of our library, and the steady maintenance of our publications. On meeting-nights the library will be open at 7 o'clock, the chair will be taken in the meeting-room at 8 o'clock, as at present, and after the meeting the Fellows will adjourn to tea in the Council Room upstairs, opposite to, and in direct communication with the library. The extended shelf-room in the library has enabled a classification of the books which will render those most frequently consulted much more readily accessible than heretofore; and as evidence that there is no relaxation in our publishing department, I have to announce that besides the two numbers of our Journal, one in Zoology, and the other in Botany, which have been sent out since our last meeting, two new parts of our Transactions are in the course of delivery, the concluding one of Volume XXVIII., and the second of Col. Grant's Volume XXIX. The first part of Volume XXX. is in the printer's hands.

INAUGURATION OF THE CHEMICAL SOCIETY'S NEW ROOMS

ON Thursday night last the Chemical Society met for the first time in the new apartments assigned to it in the right-hand front wing of Burlington House. The event was a notable one, and it is not often that such an occasion happens to the president of a hard-working body of scientific men as last Thursday fell to the lot of Dr. Odling when he rose to welcome the fellows to their new home, and he might well feel it his duty to break for once the tradition which imposes silence on the president on the first night of the session.

Dr. Odling accordingly rose and proceeded to bid them welcome to the new rooms, and then to give in a few words a general statement of what had been done in relation to the taking possession of them by the society. This it seems had been by no means an easy matter, as but a few days back the society was still in its old quarters without a book of its library moved, and the present apartments were in a damp and generally unfinished state.

Thanks, however, to the exertions of the Council and especially of the Junior Secretary (Dr. Russell), who were most kindly met and aided in their endeavours by Mr. Barry (the architect) and the Clerk of the Works; the new rooms were got into a habitable condition, the books in great part placed in their cases, and the meeting-room provided with seats in time for the first meeting of the session.

The rooms in question at present in use consist of the library, a noble room on the second floor, well capable of holding the books of the society for some time to come. That for meetings, below the library and overlooking Piccadilly, is capable of seating nearly twice the number of listeners that could be provided for in the old quarters. The seats, however, are somewhat crowded, and though

the room is provided with double windows there is a considerable noise from the street. The president, however, held out hopes of a wooden or asphalt pavement being before long laid down in front of the building, and we hope a point of such importance will not long be neglected by the authorities. The most noticeable point, however, is a laboratory, placed on the right-hand side of the meeting-room and opening into it with double doors immediately behind the lecture-table. This, though at present not quite ready for use, is supplied with every fitting of a good laboratory, and will shortly be provided with the necessary apparatus and re-agents. According to the president, "whatever may be its subsequent use, it is intended at present to place it at the disposal of those authors who may wish to illustrate their papers with experiments." We do not know whether the words of the president imply an intention on the part of the society to aid research by granting the use of its laboratory in such cases as it may think deserving, but in any case the society deserves the thanks of every scientific man for so admirable an innovation as a room for the preparation of experiments.

Dr. Odling in his speech alluded to the "childish pleasure, childish in its earnestness and simplicity," with which a chemist looks upon a new experiment. We quite agree with him as to the fact of its existence, but we think that this desire to see answers a far higher purpose than that of mere pleasure. The science of the chemist is essentially a science in which, to quote a popular phrase, "seeing is believing," and nothing can be more wearisome than the constant repetition of the description of reactions, or the recounting of qualitative or quantitative results unenlivened by a single experiment. Such descriptions quite fail to lay hold upon the mind, except at the expense of a wearisome strain, and the consequence is that many a valuable paper loses half or all its effect when read (which should be to raise discussion), simply because in an attempt to describe facts the author loses sight of the necessity of succinctly generalising therefrom.

In the meantime what have the other societies affected by the changes in Piccadilly been doing to provide for the experimental illustration of papers? and especially what has the Royal Society done in the direction to which we have alluded? We are informed on the best authority—nothing! The rooms of the latter consist as did the temporary ones, simply of those requisite for the accommodation of the library and for the reading of papers. Now is the Chemical Society right? If so the Royal Society is wrong. It has not done all when it has provided comfortable reading-rooms for its members, and a place where its secretaries can read the papers to a few silent Fellows who are sparsely scattered over the benches. The reading and publication of papers is not all that a great and wealthy society can or ought to do for the advancement of science. Why should its laboratories not exist as well as its library?

There is no reason why the meetings of the societies instead of being, as some of them now are, dull reunions only attended by the Fellows as a matter of duty, should not be made more useful to men of science. What could be better than to see them attended by the more advanced of the younger students of science, as the meetings of the Chemical Society now very often are, who might there see how the better known workers demonstrate their discoveries, and how their papers are examined and discussed. Unless some attempt is made to give the other societies a greater grasp over the several classes of workers to which they more directly appeal, they will infallibly lose the guiding power they have hitherto had, and the advantages conferred by their organisation in the propagation of scientific knowledge will be lost. It behoves the Royal Society in particular to show the way to the others in following in the steps taken with

such signal success by the chemists. If it does not do so, but allows itself to be left behind, it must soon see many of the most important papers sent to the Chemical or to such of the other societies as may choose to provide the means of properly illustrating them.

It may be urged that if papers are to be experimentally illustrated, all cannot possibly be read. We can only say so much the better. Why should not a society's council exercise a wise discretion, and relegate some classes of papers at once to the "Journal," the proper place for many a mass of numerical data now perforce read, but of which discussion is impossible?

F. C. S.

NOTES

WE regret to announce the death, on the 10th inst., of Mr. B. F. Duppa, F.R.S., well known for his numerous and important researches in organic chemistry. He was educated at Cambridge, and was afterwards, in the year 1857, a pupil in the Royal College of Chemistry. Within a period of eleven years he published, partly alone and partly in conjunction with Mr. W. H. Perkin and Dr. Frankland, no less than twenty papers, most of which appeared in the Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society. The most important of these researches related to the action of bromine and iodine on acetic acid, the artificial production of tartaric acid, the formation of organic compounds containing mercury, and the synthetical production of numerous acids of the fatty and acrylic series. Mr. Duppa was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1867. Being a man of independent means, he never applied for, nor held, any scientific appointment, but formed one of that small band of enthusiastic and disinterested amateur workers of whom England may justly feel proud, and to whom she is so much indebted for a very large proportion of the contributions which she has made to the progress of science.

MR. MITCHELL, of Old Bond Street, is, we believe, about to publish a portrait of the late Dr. Bence Jones, engraved by Holl from the beautiful drawing by Mr. George Richmond, R.A.

THE following awards have been made by the French Geographical Society:—2,000 francs to M. Dournaux-Dupéré, who has just set out for Timbuctoo; this gentleman has also received a similar sum from the Minister of Public Instruction; 2,000 fr. to M. Francis Garnier, to aid him in his explorations along the Blue River in China, and which have Yun-nan and Tibet for their objects; 1,500 fr. to MM. Marche and Compiegne, who have already proceeded a considerable distance along the course of the Ogowe with the design of penetrating as far as the great African lakes, and joining Livingstone.

THE subject for the Le Bas Prize (Cambridge) for the present year is "The Respective Functions of Science and Literature in Education." Candidates must be graduates of the University of not more than three years' standing from their first degree when the essays are sent in, which date is fixed before the end of the Easter Term, 1874. The essays must each bear some motto, and be accompanied by a sealed paper bearing the same motto, and enclosing the name of the candidate and that of his college. The successful candidate is required to publish the essay at his own expense.

MESSRS. TRÜBNER AND Co. will publish, in about ten days, Mr. George Henry Lewes' new work, entitled "Problems of Life and Mind."

WITH reference to the paragraph in last week's NATURE on the discovery of the conversion of spherical into plane motion, Prof. Sylvester writes: "I feel it an act of simple justice to another to say that I should never have hit upon the instrument which effects this, had it not been for the previous,

wholly original and unexpected, discovery made nine years ago, by M. Peaucillier, of the conversion of circular into rectilinear motion, with which I was recently made acquainted by M. Tchebicheff, and which seems to have been little noticed in the discoverer's own country, and to have remained wholly unknown in this. M. Peaucillier has succeeded by the most simple means in solving a kinematical problem which had baffled the attempts of all mechanics, from our James Watts downwards, to accomplish, and a simple Captain of Engineers in the French army has actually accomplished by a stroke of inspiration the mathematical solution of a question which many of the most profound and sagacious mathematicians of the age have been long labouring, but necessarily (as it is now obvious) in vain, to prove to admit of none. The conversion of circular into rectilinear motion before M. Peaucillier's discovery was gradually growing to be classed in the same category of questions as the quadrature of the circle, and by a great number of mathematicians was actually deemed to be equally impossible in the nature of things. A working model of Peaucillier's machine constructed by my friend M. Garcia, the brother of Malebran and the inventor of the laryngoscope, is in my possession at the Athenæum Club, and several copies of it have been already made by its admirers, which term comprises all who have seen it. The wonderfully fertile kinematic and mathematical results which I have succeeded in educing from the simple conception involved in this machine may form the subject of another communication to NATURE."

PROF. JELINEK, of Vienna, writes us that the death of Prof. Donati is the only unhappy event connected with the Meteorological Congress of Vienna, which in all other respects has proved successful. The fact of all countries of Europe (France excepted) and the United States of North America being represented at the Congress, and the conciliatory spirit in which all the proceedings were held, the general desire to arrive at an uniform system of observation and publication make us hope, he thinks, that further decisive steps in this direction will be taken. The Congress has expressed the wish, that another Congress of Meteorologists shall meet in three years, and it has appointed a permanent Committee under Prof. Ruys Ballot of Utrecht, as President, and with Prof. Bruhns of Leipzig, Cantoni of Pavia, Jelinek of Vienna, Mohn of Christiana, Director Scott of London, and Director Wild of St. Petersburg, as members to prepare the solution of certain questions especially relative to the best form of publishing meteorological observations and to the extension of the existing system of meteorological observations. The permanent Committee has been also charged with the preparatory steps towards the convocation of a second Maritime Conference (the first having been held at Brussels in 1853). There will be three editions of the proceedings of the Congress. The one German, the other French, the third under the care of Mr. Robert Scott, in English.

RATHER an unusual incident has recently occurred in the Belgian Academy of Sciences, about which, according to the two gentlemen most concerned, erroneous statements have been made in the Belgian papers and *La Revue Scientifique*. The common statement is that at the *séance* of June 7 last M. E. van Beneden, son of the well-known Professor of Zoology at the Catholic University of Louvain, and himself Professor of Zoology at Liège, by appointment of the present Catholic Ministry, read a paper on the results of a voyage which he had recently made to Brazil and La Plata. Speaking of the difficulty of obtaining a dolphin on account of the superstitions of the Brazilian fishermen, he is reported to have referred to the ancient belief in Europe that dolphins were in the habit of bringing dead bodies on shore, and to have said, "The *fable* of Jonah is an embodiment of this belief." Thereupon, it is said, M. Gilbert, Professor