

three-furrowed form, and where every point of the structure of the style and stigma is favourable to fertilisation by bees; the other, the section to which *V. tricolor* belongs, where they are very much larger and either pentagonal or hexagonal, and the style and stigma are adapted for fertilisation by Thrips. In all Crucifers hitherto known the pollen has the most common form. *Pringlea antiscorbutica*, the "Kerguelen's Land cabbage," has been shown by Dr. Hooker to be wind-fertilised, from the following considerations: the absence of petals, the absence of honey-glands, the exerted style, and the stigma being covered with long papillæ. The form of the pollen supports the same view, being very small and perfectly spherical, extremely different therefore from every other plant of the order. In the cowslip and primrose there is a uniform difference in size between the pollen belonging to the two dimorphic forms, that of the short-styled being always considerably larger than that of the long-styled form. An interesting discussion followed, in which Dr. Hooker, Prof. Dickson, Sir J. Lubbock, Prof. Balfour, and Mr. W. E. Hart took part.

SCIENTIFIC SERIALS

Memorie della Societa degli Spettroscopisti Italiani, June.—This number contains a very interesting account of the theories of the cause of formation of comets' tails, by Schiaparelli. The author seems to have no doubt that a repulsive force is in action, and that the only two acceptable theories are that the force is due to electricity or the repulsive power of the sun's heat.—Tacchini contributes a note on the polarisation of the zodiacal light, in which he corroborates Wright's observations of polarisation, and the presence of reflected sunlight. He also adds position observations of Coggia's comet in June.—Prof. Lorenzoni contributes a paper On some theoretical researches for a manner of rendering the whole of the solar chromosphere visible at once.

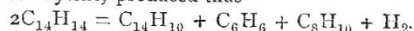
Bulletin de l'Académie Royale de Belgique, tome 37, No. 6.—This number contains an article by M. P. I. Van Beneden, On the whales of New Zealand. He refers to the fact that Dr. Gray of the British Museum has recognised three species in the New Zealand district, *Neobalena marginata*, *Coperea antipodium*, and *Macleayius australiensis*, and urges that among the right whales there should be but one genus, *Balena*. Those genera were established on imperfect data, and now that we have more material, several supposed diagnostics are found not to exist, and those that are established are of no great importance. As regards the skeleton at the Museum at Paris, studied by Prof. Lilljeborg, being without the ear-bone, that had been removed to be figured, and had not at the time been replaced. It is reported, however, as safe. Dr. Gray, believing that Van Beneden's drawing of the ear-bone was from some other source, erected it into a new genus.—MM. Cornet and Briart draw attention to some little known beds of phosphate of lime in the cretaceous beds of Hainault, and urge their being worked commercially.—M. Gluge gives a short note on tonic muscular contraction being converted into rhythmic contraction. His observations were on the sphincter ani muscles of rabbits, and he refers to similar experiments by M. Goltz on a dog. He believes that such experiments may lead to the explanation of the rhythmic contraction of the heart.

SOCIETIES AND ACADEMIES

PARIS

Academy of Sciences, Sept. 14.—M. Bertrand in the chair.—The following papers were read:—Science before grammar, by M. E. Chevreul. A considerable portion of the paper (which is but an abstract of a more lengthy memoir) is devoted to a discussion of the word "fact." The author also draws a parallel between psychic and chemical analysis, the former separating simple ideas perceptible by the mind, and the latter ponderable simple substances perceptible by the senses. The difference between the moral and political sciences and the sciences of the domain of natural philosophy is pointed out, and in an appendix the author states his reasons for dissenting from scepticism and materialism.—On a particular toxic action exercised at a distance by *Colchicum autumnale* at the time of flowering; extract from a letter from M. Is. Pierre to M. Dumas. The hand, when held near the anthers of the flowers without coming

into actual contact with them, changes in a few seconds to a livid greenish-yellow colour. The natural colour returns about ten seconds after the removal of the hand. The author believes that this remarkable action is chiefly exerted during or near the period of fertilisation, and proposes to examine further the nature of the substance emitted.—New conditions for the production of the silent electrical discharge; its influence on chemical reactions; by M. A. Boillot. The author concludes, from his experiments, that the space traversed by the silent discharge can be considerably augmented without a diminution in the chemical effects produced.—On some tungsten minerals from Meymac (Corrèze), fourth note, by M. Ad. Carnot. The minerals now described are wolfram (containing $FeWO_4$ and $MnWO_4$) calcareous scheelite (containing $CaWO_4$), and hydrated tungstic acid, to which the author assigns the formula $2WO_3 \cdot 5H_2O$, or $WO_3 \cdot 2HO$ (old notation).—On the supposed migration of winged *Phylloxera* to *Quercus coccifera*, by M. Balbiani. The author states his belief that the species seen by M. Lichtenstein on this tree is not identical with *Phylloxera vastatrix*. The following species of *Phylloxera* are recognised in addition to *vastatrix*:—*P. quercus*, especially inhabiting *Quercus pedunculata*, and *P. coccina*, inhabiting *Q. robur*. The species found by M. Lichtenstein on *Q. coccifera* it is proposed to name *P. lichtensteinii*.—Experiments on the employment of alkaline sulpho-carbonates for the destruction of *Phylloxera*; a letter from M. Mouillefer to M. Dumas.—On new points attacked by *Phylloxera* in Beaujolais; a letter from M. Rommier.—On the actual state of the invasion of *Phylloxera* in the Charente provinces; extract from a letter from M. Maurice Girard.—Employment of the water used in purifying gas for the destruction of *Phylloxera*; a letter from M. G. Beaume.—Note on the action exercised by the soil of vine fields on sulphuretted gases, and memoir On the propagation of *Phylloxera*, by M. Cauvy.—Other communications were received on the same subject from various authors, and M. Dumas gave a résumé of M. Balbiani's observations, and stated that in future the sending of living specimens of the insect to Paris would be interdicted.—The Minister of Foreign Affairs forwarded to the Academy a communication from the French Consul at Messina, relating to the opening of new vents of eruption in Etna, and on some earthquakes felt at Messina.—On a transformation of the equations of celestial mechanics, by M. Allégret.—On the causes which modify the setting of plaster, new cements with plaster and lime bases, by M. Ed. Landrin.—Action of heat on phenylxylene, by M. P. Barbier. The products are anthracene, benzene, and xylene, produced thus—



—On a case of decomposition of chloral hydrate, by M. Tauret. By the slow oxidation of this substance, carbonic oxide is liberated. The author thinks this furnishes a new explanation of the action of chloral upon the system, and accounts for the accidents occasionally resulting from its use.—On the development of red vapours during the boiling of saccharine juices in manufacture, by M. E. J. Maumené. The author attributes these to the action of nitrates. On the rôle played by gas in the coagulation of the blood, by MM. E. Matthieu and V. Urbain.—Synthesis of purpurine, by M. F. de Lalande. This was effected by the action of oxidising agents on pure alizarine.—During the meeting, a communication was read from his Majesty the Emperor of Brazil, offering his thanks to the Academy for adding a young Brazilian astronomer to one of the Transit of Venus expeditions.

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