the sun's parallax by observation of Victoria and Sappho. I have already commenced the preliminary work, and I anticipate that much time will be devoted thereto in the ensuing autumn.

ROBERT S. BALL

SCIENCE IN BOHEMIA

A CORRESPONDENT, who was present at the recent meeting of the Bohemian Naturalists, sends us the following brief report:—

The second meeting of Bohemian Naturalists and Physicians was held during May 24–30 in Prague (NATURE, vol. xxvi. p. 66). This meeting, in which over 600 members (some of them coming from Poland) took part, seems to have proved sufficiently that the above-named Slavic tribe (counting only something over six millions of souls) is not less successful in cultivating and promoting science in its own language, than other small nations (Dutch, Swedes, &c.).

In the two general meetings the following addresses were given:—By Dr. Schafarik, Professor in the Bohemian University, on the aims of chemical investigation, in which the subject was treated from an unusually deep and philosophic point of view; and by Dr. Holub, on the importance of the medical profession in transatlantic countries. In this address the essayist pointed out that the great power which had been obtained by the English in transatlantic countries is especially due to the investigations made by them from the scientific, commercial, economical, and strategical point of view. Dr. Holub further referred to other experiences of that kind, which he made in his travels in South Africa, already known to the readers of NATURE (vol. xxiv. pp. 35–38).

In the Section for Medicine, papers were read by the following gentlemen:—Doctors Eiselt, Janovsky, Maixner, Drozda, Thomayer, Chodounsky, Hlava, Wiktor, Zahor, Pelc, Böhm, Belohradsky, Ehrmann, Carda, Krasinski, Chudoba, Mayzel, Steffal, Wach.

In the Section for Surgery, papers were read by Doctors Schoebel, Obtulowicz, Janovsky, Janda, Kuniewicz, Michl, Medal, Talko, Weiss, Bastyr, Jerzykowski, Ostreil, Carda, Michl, Matlakowski, Spott, Maixner, Skalicka.

In the Section for Pharmacy, papers were read by Doctors Belohoubek, Jandous, Fragner, and Stepanek.

In the Section for Mathematics and Physics, Dr. E. Weyr read a paper on the construction of a hyperboloid of osculation; J. Vanecek, on general inversion; V. Jaeger, on the solution of equations of 4th degree; K. V. Zenger, on a dispersive parallelopipedon, and on microscopes with endomersic lenses; Dr. Doubrava, on sensitive flames; Dr. Becka, on comets; F. Machovec, on the construction of certain curves; Dr. Weyr, on the construction of rational curves in space, of third, fourth, fifth, and sixth degrees; B. Prochazka, generalisation of stereographic sections of planes of second degree; A. Sucharda, on movements of curved planes; F. Toms, construction of section lines of two conic sections; F. Cechac, contributions to electrotechnics; Dr. A. Seydler, on the use of quaternions for the solution of a certain mechanical problem; Dr. V. Strouhal, on the peculiarities of magnetic and galvanic steel; E. Dziewulski, electric conductivity of mixtures of alcohol and water.

In the Section for Natural Science, papers were read by Dr. Celakovsky, on the sympodial constitution of vine-branches; J. Szyszylowicz, on the influence of light upon the transformation of matter in plants; F. Bayer, on the asymmetry in the shoulder-blade circle of frogs and some birds; V. T. Velenovsky, on the flora of Bohemian chalk-formation; Dr. Palacky, on the relations of the American and Bohemian flora; F. Sitensky, on the turfs from the giant mountains; K. Cermak, on the stratification of the alluvium and diluvium in certain parts of Bohemia, the fauna of these strata, and their deposition over older formations; Dr. Mayzl, on the division of cells; Dr. Fric, on the Sauria found in the permic formation of Bohemia; F. Safranek, on a new rock found near Tabor (Bohemia); J. Korensky, on the diluvial fauna from the rock-cave near Tetin; J. Kafka, on Bohemian bryozoa; Dr. Woldrich, on the diluvial system of Central Europe; G. Ossowski, geology of Wolonia; Dr. Novak, contributions to the fauna of Bohemian Siluric formation; J. Fric, contribution to the ontogeny of Copepoda; Dr. Kamienski, contribution to the morphology of the urticularii; J. Ssyszylowicz, conservation of spores of plants during the winter; K. Taranek, on rhizopoda and diatomaceæ of South Bohemian turfs; S. Klnava, criteria of modern petrology; Dr. Celakovsky, comparison of indusia of ferns and oval integumenta; F. Safranek, on a new find of opals and chalcedons near Tabor; Dr. Vejdovsky, on the male of *Lernæpoda selachiorum*, and on Bohemian Planariæ; Dr. Hansgirg, on Bohemian Algæ, and on the movements of Oscillariæ; J. Ulicny, on Moravian Molusca; Dr. Zulinski, on mineralogical symbolics; Dr. Palacky, on the flora in the Bohemian chalk formation; C. Zahalka, geological map of the environments of Jicin; Dr. Kamienski, growth of plants in an atmosphere not containing carbon dioxide; F. Posepny, on the disintegration of rocks; Dr. Rostafinski, on the distribution of Galician fishes, and on the formation of hormogonia.

In the Chemical Section papers were read by Prof. Butleroff, on the oxidation of isodibutylene by potassium permanganate (presented); Dr. Radziszewski, on physiological oxidation; F. Stolba, application of aluminium-metal in laboratories; A. Belohoubek, on crystallised hydrates of potassium; Dr. B. Brauner (Manchester), on the atomic weight of didymium and other researches, regarding the chemistry of rare earth-metals (presented); F. Chodounsky, on fermentation; Prof. Preis, on sodium sulfarsenite; Dr. Janecek, on the electrolysis of saline solutions; Dr. Wasowicz, on crotaconic acid; Farsky, on superphosphates; K. Kruis, fermentation in spirit-refineries; M. Fischer, on the decomposition of collagenous substances; J. Stoklasa, on the geochemical conditions of Bohemian chalk-formation; Jal, on the estimation of hypophosphorous acid; J. Wiesner, on potassium-uranic chromates; K. Sykora, on certain coloured clays found in Bohemia, B. Rayman, on a new synthesis of methyl-phenyles; Farsky, chlorine as a nutriment of plants.

In the Section for Archæology and Anthropology, papers were read by Dr. Woldrich, on the skulls of prehistoric domestic dogs; J. Ossowski, on the objects found in caves near Cracow; Dr. Berger, on fibulæ found in Bohemia; Dr. Kopernicki, on the trepanation of prehistoric skulls in Bohemia; B. Jelinek, on the environments of Plesivec.

In the Section for Pædagogy the following papers were read or subjects discussed:—Dr. Hejzlar, how to teach physics and astronomy; F. Nekut, how to teach mineralogy; J. Mrazik, on the services rendered to pædagogy by medicine and natural science; J. Vanecek, necessity of teaching new geometry in middle schools; Dr. Kotal, on the treatises of natural science used in middle schools; J. Klika, how to popularise natural science; Pokorny, on teaching of gymnastics.

In an exhibition connected with the meeting many interesting objects touching upon Medicine and Natural Science were exhibited. From the scientific excursions by which the meeting was concluded only that into the well-known mine of Pribram, under the direction of Prof. Krejci, may be mentioned.

Only within recent years Natural Science began to be cultivated in Bohemia in the Slav language, and this is especially due to the establishment of a Bohemian Polytechnic School and recently of a corresponding division in the University of Prague though the last-named high school was founded already in 1348.

INDIA-RUBBER PLANTS

MR. W. T. THISELTON DYER brought before the Linnean Society, June 15, an important communication on the caoutchouc-yielding Apocynaceæ of Malaya and Tropical Africa. After giving a general sketch of the structural and physiological conditions of the occurrence of caoutchouc in plants, the author pointed out that the plants which appeared to yield it in commercial quantity in three widely-separated regions all belonged to one tribe of Apocynaceæ, the *Carisseæ*. In the East Indies the "gutta singgarip" of the Malay Peninsula, the "gutta soosoo" of Borneo, was the produce of a new species *Willughbeia, W. Burbidgei*. Many other species of this and allied genera also seemed to produce caoutchouc in quantity, worth collection. In Central Africa *Landolphia*, which was closely allied to *Willughbeia*, but differed in possessing terminal instead of axillary flowers, was the most important source. On the East Coast caoutchouc was yielded by *L. owariensis* and *L. florida*, the latter a very ornamental plant. As the rubber exuded from the cut stems, it was plastered by the collectors on the breast and arms, and the thick layer, when peeled off and cut up into squares, was called "thimble rubber." On the west coast the most important species was *L. Kirkii*, the rubber of which could be wound off into balls or small rolls from the cut stems, like