certain conditions, even some quadrupeds show clear traces of it. In the course of his investigations, Prof. Cunningham has brought many new and interesting facts and phenomena to light. Thus in man and the chimpanzee the quality of this lumbar curve is identical; the only differences are its extent and its development. And then among the members of the human race this curve does not appear to be equally prominent; upon some —as the Australian, the Negro, and the Andaman Islander —the curve is by no means so well marked as it is in the European. Not that the absolute degree of curvature is less in these races, but whereas in the European the bodies of the vertebræ are more or less moulded in adaptation to the curve, in the lower races there is to be found no trace of this. With this subject the first part of this memoir is taken up, and the adaptation of the vertebral bodies with reference to the lumbar curve is considered in a first section. The method of making the measurements, and the results derived from them, are given, and special points in connection with the European and several of the lower races (Australian, Tasmanian, Andaman, Negro, and Bushman) are given. Then follow details of the indices of the lumbar vertebræ in the four man-like apes, as well as in nine of the lower apes. The statement that this curve is more marked in the female than in the male is strongly supported by the evidence adduced in this memoir, and it would seem that the vertebral bodies of the female are moulded more in adaptation to the curve than those of the male.

The second section of this part of the memoir treats of the entire lumbar curve as found in man and the apes. The difficulties in the way of securing accurate curvatures of the living spine seem to be insuperable. Parow, who worked hard on this subject, has signally failed; hence the standard of comparison must be sought for in the dead, and the details of how this has been done are given at some length. Racial differences are next discussed, and the development of the spinal curve is treated at great length, with some excellent illustrations. The condition of the lumbar column in the anthropoid apes is next considered. It was, as we have seen, thought that the lumbar curvature did not exist save in man. Goodsir is positive about it. Sir W. Turner at one time was equally so. Sir Richard Owen denies its presence in the gorilla and orang-utan. Huxley was among the first to assert its existence. Broca and Topinard followed. As to the facts to be seen by frozen sections, Cunningham has not succeeded in getting fresh material for the gorilla; but in the case of the chimpanzee the curve differs but little from that in man. In the orang it is feeble, resembling that in man in some respects, and in others differing from that in the chimpanzee. In a gibbon (*Hylobates agilis*) it stands intermediate between the chimpanzee and orang. In some of the monkeys it is also to be found, and even in some quadrupeds.

In a second part of his memoir, Prof. Cunningham, taking advantage of the same anatomical method which enabled him to make such interesting discoveries as to the extent of the curves of the vertebral column, viz. by sections through recently frozen bodies, has been able to advance our knowledge of the topographical anatomy of the orang, chimpanzee, and gibbon, very considerably. Certain relations of distinct morphological importance cannot by any other method be with accuracy ascertained. The question of how far the cerebrum in the anthropoid apes projects backwards in relation to the upper surface of the cerebellum, was at one time a burning question, and, although fairly set at rest, cannot be said to have been unmistakably demonstrated until now; when the whole of the parts were frozen in their places, sections were made, and we have the results in this memoir amply corroborating previous inductions. Sections of the brain *in situ* in the adult male and newly-born child, in the male and female chimpanzee, female orang, and gibbon, are all figured. Other points in the anatomy of the brain, as the condition of the corpus callosum, and of the hippocampus minor are also alluded to, and a few further details as to other visceral anatomy are given.

The memoir forms a quarto volume of some 150 pages, the typography of which is extremely creditable. The woodcut illustrations and plates are excellent, and the publication of this treatise as a Cunningham Memoir marks the appreciation of its value by the Council of the Royal Irish Academy, as the series of its publication—known as the Cunningham Memoirs, because the expenses thereof are defrayed out of the funds left by a Mr. Cunningham—is reserved only for works which the Council believe contribute some new facts to science.

SCIENTIFIC SERIALS

Bulletin de l'Académie Royale de Belgique, August.—Note on the eruptive rocks of the islands of Marion, Prince Edward, Macdonald, and Heard, by A. F. Renard. These insular groups, which stand on the great submarine plateau in the southern regions of the Indian Ocean, are shown to be entirely volcanic, in no way connected either with the Madagascar group or with the lands of the South Polar seas. Marion and Prince Edward, which were visited and partly explored by Mr. Buchanan, of the *Challenger* Expedition, consist of old plutonic formations, such as feldspar basalts and much more recent black and other lavas. Heard, discovered in 1853 by the American captain Heard and also visited by the *Challenger*, is largely covered with a black volcanic sand formed of grains of magnetite and augite. Elsewhere occur more recent lava formations, which show no trace of the erosive action exercised by the sands on the older rocks. All the specimens collected here belong mainly to the group of feldspar basalts.—On the presence in Belgium of *Bothriocephalus latus*, Bremser, by Edouard van Beneden. A few recent instances are recorded of the presence in Belgium of this human parasite, which is common enough in Holland.—Experimental researches on the influence of magnetism on the phenomenon of polarisation in dielectrics, by Edmond van Aubel. In this second communication the author gives the result of fresh experiments, showing how, by means of a specially-constructed electro-magnet, the electric field which interfered with previous researches may be completely eliminated, while preserving an intense magnetic field. The electro-magnet here described may also be used in ordinary physical experiments, wherever it is necessary to ascertain whether the phenomena observed with the Ruhmkorff and other electro-magnets are due to magnetism and not to the electric field or to the heat of the current traversing the bobbins.

SOCIETIES AND ACADEMIES

PARIS

Academy of Sciences, November 2.—M. Jurien de la Gravière, President, in the chair.—Fresh communication on rabies, by M. Louis Pasteur. (For summary of this report, see p. 30).—Note on the unequal flow of gases, by M. Haton de la Goupillière. Having, in previous papers, given a complete analytical solution of the various problems connected with this subject, the author here determines the true character of his formulas in their relation to experimental applications.—Remarks on M. Fontaine's report concerning his experiments on the transport of power by electricity, by M. Marcel Deprez. It is pointed out that M. Fontaine's method, which replaces the generator and receiver by a series of machines coupled together in sufficient number to produce the desired effect, so far from being based on any new principle, is the same as that proposed by all electricians who have sought to obtain high tensions without having recourse to the construction of the special machines first suggested by the author. The means employed by M. Fontaine to control simultaneously the four series of generators is also stated greatly to resemble that described in a patent taken out on April 28, 1885, by M. Deprez.—Experimental researches connected with the cerebral functions, by M. Brown-Séquard. These researches have been undertaken in order to show how varied and numerous are the purely dynamic effects proceeding from influences exercised on the encephalon by the sensitive nerves, and on the motor nerves by the nervous centres. Experiments carried on for seven or eight years lead to the general conclusion that all the motor nerves, and nearly all the excitable parts of the nervous centres, may have their excitability greatly modified, even under the influence of remote and slight irritations of the greater part of the nervous system.—On the atomic weight of the oxide of gadolinium, by M. A. E. Nordenskjöld. This compound is not a simple oxide, but consists of the three closely-related oxides of yttrium, erbium, and ytterbium, all with very different atomic weights. Nevertheless, even when derived from quite different minerals occurring in localities far removed from each other, it is here shown to possess a constant atomic weight. On the other hand, this substance is not a true chemical combination, but an isomorphous mixture, thus presenting a new phenomenon in chemistry and mineralogy. It is the only known instance of three isomorphous substances of the class which must still be regarded as