

sensitive revolving leaflets (*Fumaria*), by the petioles (*Clematis* and *Tropæolum*), by the tips of the leaves (*Tillandsia* and *Flagellaria*). Then come the leaf-tendrils proper, such as *Pisum sativum* and *Cobæa scandens*. But the almost peculiarly tropical branch-climbers, plants climbing by means of modified caulomes (branches or inflorescences), present the most singular forms. Dr. Schenck divides them into branch-climbers proper, which have elongated naked or leafy revolving branches clasping the branches of other plants; hook-climbers, which develop hook or claw-like supports; "watch-spring" climbers and thread-climbers. The grape-vine and passion-flower are classed under the last. The climbing organs of the "watch-spring" type are very curious. They are naked, attenuated branches, which roll up in one plane, forming a loose elastic spiral, between the coils of which the support is caught. The spirals usually thicken only at the point of contact, thereby effecting a firm hold of the support. Dr. Schenck does not enter deeply into the anatomy of climbing organs, though he states that differentiation of the tissues of sensitive organs only takes place after contact. The plates are all devoted to the illustration of the external morphology of climbing organs. A systematic list of genera containing climbing species is given, and there is also a chapter on the geographical distribution of climbing plants.

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#### CLAPHAM JUNCTION AND PADDINGTON RAILWAY.

THE statement that appeared in the press towards the end of last week, that the promoters of this railway had applied to the committee who rejected the bill for permission to bring the subject again before the House of Commons did not represent the fact. What really occurred may be gathered from the following extract from the *Times* of Saturday, the 25th inst. :—

"It had been the intention of the promoters of the Clapham and Paddington Railway Bill to ask the committee, presided over by Sir J. Kennaway, to grant permission to have the bill recommitted, in order to meet the objections as to electric traction raised by the Royal College of Science and the City and Guilds Institute. After a private consultation with the chairman, it has been decided that the public application to this effect should not be made until some arrangement has been come to with the authorities of these institutions in the Exhibition Road, and until steps had been taken to find out whether they would agree to the substitution of cable for electric traction on that portion of the line coming within the radius of the scientific colleges. . . ."

Even the preceding corrected statement rather represents the aspect which the promoters would like the matter to assume than the strict truth. For as a matter of fact it has been pointed out first that the passage of the electric locomotives and the train of iron-framed carriages running nearly due north and south within some 40 feet of magnetometers would stop all work, even if the motive power were a cable; secondly, that the vibration caused by the quick moving trains and by the slapping cable would be ruinous; and lastly, that no one but an over-sanguine company promoter would imagine that an electric railway with a fragment worked by cable in the middle would be a lasting arrangement. Let but the bill pass, and within six months after the railway was open an interesting collection of broken cables would be on exhibition in the Houses of Parliament. It is amazing that the question of the shifting of the route of the proposed railway a few hundred yards to the east or west of Exhibition Road seems to be altogether neglected.

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#### NOTES.

HONOUR has been done lately to two British men of science by the Academy of Sciences of the Institute of France. On March 6 Sir Joseph Lister was elected a Foreign Associate in succession to the late Sir Richard Owen, and on March 20 Sir Henry Roscoe was elected a Correspondent in the section of chemistry in succession to the late M. Abria.

THE Brazilian expedition, under charge of Mr. A. Taylor, for the observation of the solar eclipse has arrived safely at Ceara.

THE Liverpool Marine Biology Committee have recently appointed Mr. J. Henry Vanstone, from Prof. Howes' Laboratory at the Royal College of Science, South Kensington, as Resident Curator of their Biological Station at Port Erin in the Isle of Man. The important addition which has been made to the station during the winter, viz. a two-storied tank and aquarium house, is now finished, and will be open for use at Easter, when Prof. Brady, Mr. Thompson, Prof. Herdman, and several other biologists are going to Port Erin to work. Nine investigators and students have already applied for accommodation at the station during April, and others are coming at later periods during the summer, so there seems every prospect of the institution being well used this season.

IN connection with the conversazione to be held at the Royal College of Surgeons of England on July 5, to celebrate the jubilee of the Fellowship of the College, it has been decided, as this year is also the centenary of the death of John Hunter, to organise an exhibition of pictures, MSS., books, furniture, &c., connected with the great surgeon. In addition to the articles which are the property of the College of Surgeons, the exhibition will include other relics, the loan of which has been kindly promised by the present possessors. The librarian of the College will be pleased to give further information to any owner of Hunterian relics who may be willing to lend them for exhibition.

A VERY successful conversazione was held by the students of the Royal College of Science in the South Kensington Museum on Thursday, March 23. Mr. C. V. Boys concluded the various entertainments by exhibiting Mr. Henry Dixon's photographs of spiders walking on water, Lord Rayleigh's and his own photographs of bursting bubbles, and by showing his interesting experiments with soap bubbles.

THE council of the City and Guilds Institute for the Advancement of Technical Education have nominated the following as members of the Technical Educational Board of the London County Council, viz. :—Mr. Herbert Saunders, Q.C., Sir Owen Roberts, and Dr. W. J. Russell, F.R.S.

THE Camera Club announces that the seventh annual Photographic Conference will be held in the theatre of the Society of Arts on Wednesday and Thursday, April 12 and 13, under the presidency of Captain W. de W. Abney, F.R.S. Papers will be read by some of the leading students of photography, and all photographers are invited to take part in the conference.

SOME time ago the Egyptian Government appointed a commission to examine the building in which the archaeological collection is housed at Ghizeh. This commission has now finished its investigations, and, according to the Cairo correspondent of the *Times*, its report shows the condition of the building to be even more dangerous than it was known to be. A fire would completely destroy the building in the course of a few hours. The Egyptian Government propose to have the Museum made fireproof at a probable cost of £90,000, but the result is not expected to be satisfactory. A new building on a