ponding secretary, C. C. Royce; recording secretary, Lester F. Ward; treasurer, J. Howard Gore; curator, Dr. W. J. Hoffman; council, President J. C. Welling, Professor E. A. Fay, Dr. J. Meredith Toner, Mr. F. A. Seely, Mr. Miles Rock. Mr. H. L. Thomas.

The Biological Society of Washington.

On the first of December last, another society was organized for the study of the Biological sciences which, after completing its organization, elected the following officers for the ensuing year: President, Theodore Gill; vice-presidents, C. V. Riley, J. W. Chickering, Henry Ulke, Lester F. Ward; secretaries, G. Browne Goode, Richard Rathburn; treasurer, Robert Ridgway; council, George Vasey, O. T. Mason, J. H. Comstock, and Drs. Schafer and A. F. A. King. Professor S. F. Baird was elected an honorary member. Dr. Frank H. Baker, Mr. H. H. Birney and Mr. C. W. Scudder were elected to active membership. Professor L. F. Ward read a paper entitled "The Flora Columbiana of 1830 and 1880," in which a comparison was made between the lists of plants recorded as growing in the District of Columbia in 1830 in Brereton's "Flora," and the lists as now known to the botanists of the District. Mr. Ulke spoke of the occurrence in the District of many species of beetles, before known only in Alaska and other remote localities. Professor Jordan read a paper on "The Salmon of the California Coast," which contained many new and important facts regarding their habits and economic value. The annual address will be delivered at the next meeting by Professor Theodore Gill. A paper was also read by Professor Tarleton H. Bean on "An Excursion to the Northern Coast of Alaska."

CHEMICAL SOCIETIES.

The January *Conversazione* of the American Chemical Society was held at the rooms of the Society on Monday evening, January 17. The Vice-President, Dr. Albert R. Leeds, of the Stevens Institute, exhibited a new modification of Dinitro-orcine and certain of its salts. These salts were originally prepared by Professor Leeds at his own laboratory in the course of his investigations of Hyponitric Anhydride in organic substances.

Specimens of Dibenzole and Diphenyle were also exhibited by the same gentleman. Several of the members took advantage of the occasion to visit the laboratory and see the recently patented electrical inventions of Dr. O. Lugo.

The next and regular meeting will take place on the first Monday of February, the 7th prox.

The Chemical Society of Paris announces that among the vice-presidents, according to the constitution, the president shall be chosen from the following gentlemen; M. M. Grimaux, Salet and Berthelot, and that the Council nominates M. M. Grimaux and Salet; therefore M. Berthelot will remain as vice-president during 1881, and in consequence of the regretted decease of M. Personne, M. Berthelot will be the only occupant of that office.

The German Chemical Society at their annual re-union increased the dues of the non-resident members from 15 to 20 marks. This action has been in contemplation for several years, and has now been definitely settled.

M. B.

The French Association for the Advancement of Science is to hold its next meeting in the city of Algiers, on the 14th of April. The people and authorities of the city are making preparations to give the Association a fitting welcome, and liberal appropriations have been made by the Council for organizing the meeting, to entertain the members and their friends.

THE UNITY OF NATURE.

By the Duke of Argyll.

V.

ON THE TRUTHFULNESS OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE CONSIDERED IN THE LIGHT OF THE UNITY OF NATURE.

But another nightmare meets us here—another suggestion of hopeless doubt respecting the very possibility of knowledge touching questions such as these. Nay, it is the suggestion of a doubt even more discouraging—for it is a suggestion that these questions may probably be in themselves absurd—assuming the existence of relations among things which do not exist at all—relations indeed of which we have some experience in ourselves, but which have no counterpart in the system of Nature. The suggestion, in short, is not merely that the answer to these questions is inaccessible, but that there is no answer at all. The objection is a fundamental one, and is summed up in the epithet applied to all such inquiries—that they are anthropomorphic. They assume authorship in a personal sense, which is a purely human idea—they assume causation, which is another human idea—and they assume the use of means for the attainment of ends, which also is purely human. It is assumed by some persons as a thing in itself absurd that we should thus shape our conceptions of the ruling power in Nature, or of a Divine Being, upon the conscious knowledge we have of our own nature and attributes. Anthropomorphism is the phrase employed to condemn this method of conception—an opprobrious epithet, as it were, which is attached to every endeavor to bring the higher attributes of the human mind into any recognizable relation with the supreme agencies in Nature. The central idea of those who use it seems to be that there is nothing human there; and that when we think we see it there, we are like some foolish beast wondering at its own shadow. The proposition which is really involved when stated nakedly is this: that there is no Mind in Nature having any relation with, or similitude to, our own, and that all our fancied recognitions of intellectual operations like our own in the order of the Universe are delusive imaginations.

The denial of what is called "The Supernatural" is the same doctrine in another form. The connection may not be evident at first sight, but it arises from the fact that the human mind is really the type of the Supernatural. It would be well if this word were altogether banished from our vocabulary. It assumes that we know all that "Nature" contains, and that we can pronounce with certainty on what can and what cannot be found there. Or else it assumes that Nature is limited to purely physical agencies, and that our own mind is a power and agency wholly separate and distinct from these. There might indeed be no harm in this limitation of the word if it could be consistently adhered to in all the terms of any argument involving its use. We are all quite accustomed to think of Man as not belonging to Nature at all—as the one thing or Being which is contradistinguished from Nature. This is implied in the commonest use of language, as when we contrast the works of Man with the works of Nature. The same idea is almost unconsciously involved in language which is intended to be strictly philosophical, and in the most careful utterances of our most distinguished scientific men. Thus Professor Tyndall, in his Belfast address to the British Association, uses these words: "Our earliest historic ancestors fell back also upon experience, but with this difference, that the particular experiences which furnished the weft and woof of their theories were drawn, not from the study of Nature, but from what lay much closer to them—the observation of men." Here Man is especially contradistinguished from Nature; and accordingly we find in the next sentence that this idea is connected with the error of seeing our-