

protest against the custom in Belgium of using so many French text-books. He carefully avoids all except real Dutch words: so we have *borstpijp* ('thoracic duct'), *tuschenwervelig* ('intervertebral'), etc., all of which are gathered into an alphabetical list at the end of the volume, where their French equivalents are also given.

The book is devoted almost exclusively to the anatomy and physiology of man as illustrating the general principles of animal life. The author's presentation of the rudiments of his science is excellent; but his illustrations, white lines on a black ground, are neither very clear nor always accurate.

ASSOCIATION OF OFFICIAL AGRICULTURAL CHEMISTS OF THE UNITED STATES.

At a meeting held in Philadelphia, Sept. 8, to consider the formation of a sub-section of agricultural chemistry of the American association, it was deemed inadvisable to apply to the standing committee; but a committee was selected to report a plan for the formation of an association of chemists who are engaged in the analysis of commercial fertilizers.

The committee's report, which was adopted, recommended that the Association of official chemists of the United States should be organized. To membership in this society, chemists of departments of agriculture, state agricultural societies, and boards of official control, are eligible; and each of these organizations is entitled to one vote, through its properly accredited representative, in all matters upon which the society may ballot. All chemists are invited to attend the meetings, and take part in the discussions, without the right to vote. The affairs of the association are managed by an executive committee of five, including a president, vice-president, and secretary (who acts as treasurer). There are also three standing committees, on the determination of phosphoric acid, nitrogen, and potash. They will distribute samples for comparative work, and report the results at the annual meeting, which takes place on the first Tuesday in September of each year, or at any special meetings which may be called.

After the acceptance of the constitution, the following officers were elected: President, Prof. S. W. Johnson of Connecticut; vice-president, Prof. H. C. White of Georgia; secretary and treasurer, Dr. C. W. Dabney, jun., of North Carolina; members of the executive committee, Dr. E. H. Jenkins of Connecticut, Dr. H. W. Wiley of Washington. The presiding officer then appointed the following members of the standing committees: On phosphoric acid, Dr. E. H. Jenkins of Connecticut, Dr. H. C. White of Georgia, Dr. W. C. Stubbs of Alabama; on nitrogen, Mr. P. E. Chazal of South Carolina, Dr. A. T. Neale of New Jersey, Prof. J. A. Myers of Mississippi; on potash, Dr. H. W. Wiley of Washington, Mr. J. W. Gascoyne

of Virginia, Mr. Clifford Richardson of Washington.

It was voted to adopt provisionally the Atlanta method for the determination of the various forms of phosphoric acid, involving the use of the usual neutral citrate solution at a temperature of 65° C. for a half-hour. The recommendations of Dr. Jenkins in regard to potash estimation were accepted; and Mr. P. E. Chazal of Columbia, S.C., was directed to have the proceedings and methods of the association printed for distribution among those who are interested in the subject.

THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION.

IN response to a call issued by Gen. Eaton and F. B. Sanborn of the Social science association, and by Professors Adams of Ann Arbor, Tyler of Cornell, and Dr. H. B. Adams of Baltimore, about twenty writers, students, and teachers of history in this country met at the United States hotel, Saratoga, on the morning of Sept. 9, and decided to form an independent organization for the advancement of the scientific study of history on this continent. Among others present at this and later sessions, were President White of Cornell; Charles Deane, LL.D., of Cambridge; Justin Winsor, librarian of Harvard university; General Walker of the Massachusetts institute of technology; William B. Weedon of Providence; Clarence W. Bowen of the New-York *Independent*; Professors C. K. Adams of Ann Arbor, Tyler, Crane, and Tuttle of Cornell, Austin Scott of Rutgers, Emerton of Harvard; Associate-professor H. B. Adams of Johns Hopkins; Dr. Channing and Dr. Francke of Harvard. Justin Winsor was elected temporary president, with Dr. H. B. Adams secretary.

In the afternoon President White of Cornell delivered the opening address in Putnam hall. He advocated a broader treatment of historical topics than is at present followed. Not that he undervalued the work of the specialist; but he thought that a view of the historical work now going on in the world showed the necessity of connecting critical analysis, on the one hand, with a synthesis of results on the other. Instruction in history, which is growing of more importance every day, should include both methods. He severely criticised Herbert Spencer's theory of historical study as confounding a mere search for statistics with the real study of the forces of civilization.

Professor C. K. Adams read a long paper, written by one of his pupils, in which the actions of several western states with regard to the lands which the nation had given them for purposes of collegiate education were most justly denounced.

Wednesday morning another session was held, at which a constitution was adopted, and permanent officers elected: Andrew D. White, president; Justin Winsor and C. K. Adams, vice-presidents; H. B. Adams, secretary; and C. W. Bowen, treasurer. The affairs of the association were confided to the care of an executive council consisting of the above *ex officio*,

and Charles Deane, Moses Coit Tyler, W. B. Weeden, and Ephraim Emerton.

Dr. Edward Channing of Harvard college then read a paper in which he maintained that the early settlers of the English North-American colonies did not leave behind them the experience in the management of local affairs which they had inherited from their ancestors, and which formed one of the most precious inheritances of the English race; but that they brought such experience to this country, and there applied it so far as the peculiar conditions of their environment would permit. He further said, that he thought the English common-law parish of 1600 was the most important connecting link between the institutions of the English race in their two homes; and he gave some examples of this connection. Dr. Charles Deane gave the pith of the argument advanced by Judge Aldrich, at a recent meeting of the Antiquarian society, that the New-England town system was but a legislative creation. Dr. H. B. Adams said that in his opinion there was not one institution of early New England which did not have its analogue in the institutions of old England, and he thought that the author of the paper under discussion had found the connecting link. Judge Chamberlain of the Boston public library endeavored to show that the two theories were not inconsistent, and likened the experience that the New-England fathers had brought with them to a grain of English wheat, which when planted in our soil reproduced its kind so far as circumstances would permit. President White, in closing the discussion, remarked that he considered the paper an example of the union of the analytic and synthetic methods which he had advocated.

Mr. C. H. Levermore of Johns Hopkins then read an able essay on the founders of New Haven, — John Davenport and Theophilus Eaton, — who had strengthened class distinctions at the outset in their colony, and had created a ruling caste of Brahmins.

Prof. T. M. Crane of Cornell described some new sources of mediaeval history which he has recently opened up. He thought the field would be an attractive one, both from the large amount of new material, and also from the new methods applied to old material such as local traditions, popular songs, and folktales, which often contained details not to be found in written history. A still more curious source was the collections of stories with which the preachers of that time enlivened their sermons; each in itself of little value, but forming, *en bloc*, invaluable material for the historian. This new method of study would re-act most favorably upon the study of our own history, and encourage the collection of local traditions, folk-songs, and tales; of which an excellent beginning has been made in Allen's Slave songs of the South, and Newell's Songs and games of American children. President White spoke of the importance of Professor Crane's work, and then introduced Dr. Francke of Harvard college; who described the founding and progress of the *Monumenta Germaniae*, with which he had been associated for two years. Justin Winsor closed the session with an account of the Narrative

and critical history of America that he is now editing, and of which two volumes are already printed although not published.

At a public session in the afternoon, Professor Tyler of Cornell presented a rather commonplace and eulogistic paper upon the influence of Thomas Paine on the declaration of independence; and Professor Austin Scott — formerly associated with George Bancroft — read an essay on the constitutional development of the United States. The intense heat interfered with the author's delivery, and also with the taking of notes; but it may be said that the author maintained that what he termed the federative principle was the key to our constitutional history, and he traced its action with great care and detail through the successive periods of our national growth. It is to be hoped that Mr. Scott will still further elaborate and publish his paper, which showed considerable ability and thought.

NOTES ON THE ELECTRICAL CONFERENCE.

THE Electrical conference, called together by the commission appointed by the president of the United States, met in Philadelphia on Monday, Sept. 8, and continued its sessions throughout the week. The first meetings were held in the lecture-hall of the Electrical exhibition; but on account of the bad acoustic properties of that room, the sessions after Tuesday took place in the hall of the Franklin institute.

About one hundred and seventy-five delegates were invited by this commission to be present, and constitute the conference. Of these the greater number were American investigators and electricians, but a number of foreign conferrees were also included. Of these it should be mentioned, that there were present Sir William Thomson, who was also vice-president of the conference; Professor Fitzgerald of the University of Dublin; Professor Oliver Lodge of Liverpool; Mr. W. H. Preece of the English postal telegraph; Professor Arthur Schuster of Manchester; and Professor Silvanus P. Thompson of University college, Bristol.

The conference was designed to be representative of all interested in progress in electrical knowledge; and so not only were those present who are more concerned with the purely theoretical questions involved, but also those especially occupied in developing applications of electricity.

Prof. Simon Newcomb, on behalf of the commission, opened the conference in a brief address of welcome, and also stated the objects for which the conference had been called. He was followed by the president of the conference, Prof. Henry A. Rowland, who delivered a carefully prepared and very interesting address, in which were discussed, among other things, the interdependence of applied and pure science, some of the questions still open in electrical science, and the need of more careful training in the *theory* of electricity in technical schools.