NOTES AND NEWS.

IT is announced that the next meeting of the American association for the advancement of science will be held on Aug. 26 and following days, at Ann Arbor, Mich. The vote of the association at the Philadelphia meeting was to hold the 1885 meeting at Bar Harbor, Mount Desert Island, Me., provided suitable accommodations could be secured; but, failing that, the meeting would be held at Ann Arbor. The decision was left to the permanent secretary. The correspondence of this officer has developed the fact that it would be quite impossible to hold the meeting at Bar Harbor in August, as the hotels would be overcrowded. It would only be possible in July or in the latter part of September. The decision to meet at Ann Arbor was also re-enforced by the invitations which have been received from the mayor of that city, and the president of the University of Michigan, cordially urging the association to decide to visit that place; and, as the meeting will fall in vacation, there will be ample accommodations, as fifteen hundred students and four hundred members of professors' families are cared for in term-time. The university offers to open its halls for the sectional meetings. There is no doubt that the association will thoroughly approve the decision of the permanent secretary.

— Mr. J. A. Allen, who for many years has had charge of mammals and birds at the Museum of comparative zoölogy at Cambridge, has accepted the curatorship of mammalogy and ornithology in the American museum of natural history in New York, where he will enter upon his new duties about May 1.

— The friends of rational work in physiology have achieved well-merited success in the university of Oxford. Early in March, in an overflowing 'convocation,' says *Nature*, the battle of vivisection was fought out a third time. The victory of sound sense over false sentiment has again been won; and on this occasion the vote is unmistakable. In spite of the most vigorous exertions of the opponents of physiology, the decree to endow the physiological laboratory — as the other scientific departments in the university are endowed — has been carried by the large majority of one hundred and sixty-eight. The dean of Christchurch opened the debate in a moderate speech recommending the grant. He pointed out that the vote was for teaching-purposes, and in no way concerned vivisection; for Professor Burdon Sanderson had given the most complete assurances that he would not use painful experiments on living animals for the purposes of teaching. Canon Liddon opposed the decree, on the ground that the council should have introduced further safeguards against the indiscriminate use of vivisection. He admitted that vivisection was justified in certain cases, and spoke of it as a painful necessity. The bishop of Oxford denied the moral right of man to inflict pain in order to advance knowledge, and declared vivisection to be degrading to the sensibility and humanity of the operator. The vote was supported by Professor Dicey and Sir W. Anson, and unintentionally damaged by Dr. Acland. The last speakers were much interrupted by a clamor which prevented their remarks being heard. The announcement of the result — *placets*, 412; *non-placets*, 244 — was received with great enthusiasm, both in the arena and in the undergraduates' gallery. It is to be hoped that this decisive vote will put an end to the warfare waged against the teaching of physiology in Oxford.

— In an article in the March number of the *North-American review*, on 'the moral aspects of vivisection,' treated solely from an ethical point of view, Prof. Noah K. Davis concludes that "whoever hinders the physiologist in his duties by exciting public odium, commits a trespass on him, and on society at large, in whose interest he is laboring, and so does a multiplied wrong."

— The journal of the English Society of arts, in speaking of the testing of house-drains by smoke in order to ascertain whether the joints are tight, describes the 'Innis' smoke-rocket,' which can be used in place of the iron vessel for fire, and the pump or fan for forcing the smoke into the drain, and which is found to be much more handy and simple. The rocket is made of a composition that will generate an abundance of smoke, packed in its case hard enough to burn ten minutes, thus giving time for the inspector to light it, introduce it into the drain, insert a plug behind it, walk through the house to inspect the joints, and finally reach the roof, where the smoke is issuing from the soil-pipe. A wet cloth thrown over the top of this pipe may be used to cause a slight pressure in the pipes below, and thus render the test more severe. Such a test would appear to be more satisfactory than the introduction of peppermint-oil, and to imitate the action of sewer-gas in attempting to pass the usual traps.

— The *Academy* announces the initial number of a journal entitled *Parallax*, and supposably intended to be published monthly. It is edited by Mr. John Hampden, the valiant champion of the theory that the earth is a circular plane. The *Academy* is disposed to welcome the new periodical, as the professedly comic papers have been painfully dull of late. Mr. Hampden retains all his well-known ingenuity of vituperative expression. To call Sir Isaac Newton 'a fanatical pantheist' is a happy thought which would certainly not have occurred to everybody.

— We learn from *Nature* that the trade in children within the province of Yakutsk is the subject of an interesting note in a recent number of the *Izviestiya*. The Irkutsk geographical society had received a note from one of its members, who thus depicted the lot of girls within the province: In the last century the poorest Yakute, who had no means of supporting a large family, took his new-born child in a covering of birch-bark, and hung it on a tree in the forest to die from hunger. But the richer Russian merchants began to buy children from their poorer Yakute clients, and so several Russians purchased whole families of servants. This custom induced the Yakute communities to take care of the poorest chil-

dren; and the community was bound to feed them under the name of *Kumolan* children, who spent three days in the houses of the richer members of the community, two days in those of the moderately wealthy, and one day with the poorest. But of late the custom has arisen of selling children, and especially girls, to Olekminsk merchants, who sell them further to the Yakutes and Tunguses of the Olekminsk district. The parents sell girls for from thirty to forty roubles (from three to four pounds); and in Olekmir they are re-sold for sixty roubles, sometimes eighty roubles. Of course, this trade is made under the cover of 'taking children to bring up.' The Irkutsk society having taken interest in this communication, it has received information from Yakutsk authorities, and from a well-known student of Yakute life, Mr. Gorokhoff. It appears from these communications that such trade really exists; the chief impulse to it being given less by the work a purchased girl might do than by the possibility of receiving for her the *kalym*, that is, the money paid by men for purchasing a wife. Woman labor is at so low a price that one might have a woman in his household and pay her half a piece of cotton, 'for a shirt,' per year. But the *kalym* reaches very high prices. One rich Yakute has recently sold his daughter to a Tungus for 3,000 reindeer, and the same price was recently given by a half-idiotic Yakute for the daughter of another Yakute. Middendorff quotes also several instances of a very high *kalym* paid for girls, its average being about 500 roubles. When a Russian priest sold a girl whom he had educated, for five sables and ten skins, it was considered as a very low price. Altogether, the *kalym* is the chief cause of maintaining the trade in girls, together with the gradual impoverishment of the Yakutes.

— The second part of this season's course of Saturday scientific lectures in Washington opened March 28, with the following programme: President J. C. Welling, Oldest history in the light of newest science; Mr. Frederick W. True, Ornithorhynchus, a mammal that lays eggs; Medical Director A. L. Gihon, U.S.N., Sanitary ignorance among high and low; Mr. J. S. Diller, A trip to Mount Shasta, California; Dr. D. E. Salmon, Our invisible enemies, the plagues of animal life; Prof. T. C. Mendenhall, Weighing the earth.

— Capt. L. U. Herendeen of San Francisco communicates the following notes on prehistoric structures in Micronesia. American missionaries recently settled at Ponapé, may, it is hoped, furnish additional details hereafter.

A few years ago I visited Ponapé Island in the Pacific, in east longitude 158° 22′, and north latitude 6° 50′. The island is surrounded by a reef, with a broad ship-channel between it and the island. At places in the reef there were natural breaks, that served as entrances to the harbors. In these ship-channels there were a number of islands, many of which were surrounded by a wall of stone five or six feet high; and on these islands there stood a great many low houses, built of the same kind of stone as the walls about them. These structures seem to have been used as temples and forts. The singular feature of these islands is that the walls are a foot or more below the water. When they were built, they were evidently above the water, and connected with the mainland; but they have gradually sunk until the sea has risen a foot or more around them. The natives on the island do not know when these works were built: it is so far back in the past, that they have even no tradition of the structures. Yet the works show signs of great skill, and certainly prove that whoever built them knew thoroughly how to transport and lift heavy blocks of stone. Up in the mountains of the island there is a quarry of the same kind of stone that was used in building the wall about the islands; and in that quarry to-day there are great blocks of stone that have been hewn out, ready for transportation. The natives have no tradition touching the quarry, — who hewed the stone, when it was done, or why the work ceased. They are in greater ignorance of the great phenomena that are going on about them than the white man who touches on their island for a few hours for water. There is no doubt in my mind that the island was once inhabited by an intelligent race of people, who built the temples and forts of heavy masonry on the high bluffs of the shore of the island, and that, as the land gradually subsided, these bluffs became islands. They stand to-day with a solid wall of stone around them, partly submerged in water.

— J. Borodin describes, in the journal of the Royal microscopical society, what he believes to be the long-sought pure chlorophyl. He obtains it in a crystalline form, by slow evaporation of an alcoholic solution, though he has not yet been able to isolate the crystals. They are doubly refractive, giving a beautiful green sheen in polarized light. Their physical properties differ from those of the dark-green crystals of hypochlorine hitherto obtained.

— American zoölogists will be interested to learn what is to become of the great collections in Central-American ornithology and entomology amassed by Messrs. Salvin and Godman. A recent note in *Nature* announces that a part of it is already given to the British museum, and that the rest is to follow. One collection, presented on certain conditions not specified by *Nature*, comprises the entire series of American birds brought together by those gentlemen, numbering upwards of twenty thousand specimens, and illustrating, more than any other collection in existence, the life-history and geographical distribution of the birds of tropical America. No labor or expense has been spared in the formation of this splendid group of ornithological rarities. The other gift, which is unconditional, comprises a very fine collection of Central-American Coleoptera of the families of Cicindelidae and Carabidae. It contains 969 species, and, moreover, 7,678 examples, of which more than four hundred are types of new species described in the work entitled 'Biologia Centrali Americana,' now in course of publication by Messrs. Salvin and Godman. To this collection will be ultimately added, by gift, the remaining families of Coleoptera, with other entomological specimens.