

tages of the graphic method as a means of illustrating principles and presenting statistical statements, the significance of which is understood with so much difficulty by the ordinary student. Professor Laughlin recognizes the utility of history and statistics, but he treats them rather as means of illustration and verification of what has otherwise been ascertained, than as the source of new principles. Professor Laughlin also attempts to divorce ethics and economics.

A feature of the book is a 'teachers' library,' excellent on the whole, though omissions are noticeable. No history of the science is mentioned. Even such a well-known and valuable work as Thorold Rogers' 'Work and wages' finds no place, and the same is true of the works of Wagner and Knies. Communism and socialism, irrespective of the value of their theories, have assumed an historical importance sufficient to demand a careful study of their principles by teachers of political economy; yet none of their leading exponents are referred to. Under 'Reports and statistics,' the author fails to notice those valuable sources of information, the reports of the state bureaus of labor statistics, as well as other valuable state publications.

The object of the book is good, and the work is a valuable addition to our too scanty literature on the subject of method in teaching political economy.

#### NOTES AND NEWS.

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS announce the publication of a monthly paper to begin January, 1886, to be entitled *The national argus*. This paper will be devoted to the discussion of questions relating to the care of the insane, the idiotic, the deaf and dumb, the blind, paupers, and homeless children.

— *Il morgagni* of Nov. 3 reports that Dr. Freire of Rio Janeiro has inoculated more than three hundred persons with a liquid culture of the yellow-fever microbe. Such inoculations are performed with five or six punctures in one arm, and in a few hours afterwards the patient complains of headache and backache, with a slight rise of temperature. Nausea and vomiting occur in rare cases. These symptoms sometimes last between two and three days, but they are never serious. The inoculations are practised on individuals who were in the centre of the infected locality. None of them died, and only very few presented mild forms of yellow fever.

— Lord Crawford cables, Dec. 16, the discovery by Gove of a new star, in the place of D. M. 20°, 1172, possibly a variable. It was of the 6th mag. on Dec. 13.

— Kane's 'European butterflies' is meant to replace Kirby's little manual published more than twenty years ago, and is, indeed, a much more complete work, with excellent illustrations of over 100 butterflies; but it is sadly deficient just where we most need help, and where Kirby did all that was then possible, for it pays no attention whatever to the early stages or food plants of these insects, any allusions to them being merely incidental. It is of value, therefore, only to a student of the old school, or the old-fashioned collector. In its details as to geographical distribution it is worthy of all praise.

— The Smithsonian institution has issued a price-list of its publications, which are no longer distributed gratuitously to individuals, as formerly; and no wonder, when they already exceed six hundred. The prices which have been affixed are high as compared to government publications in general, though an ordinary publisher would look on them as rather low. Considering the object of the institution, one is inclined to wish the prices had been made somewhat lower; and to attach any price at all to some of them, such as circulars, seems not worth the pains. Nearly a third of the publications are out of print, and therefore not embraced in the list.

— With the beginning of the coming year, the two leading meteorological journals — the Austrian and the German — will be consolidated, and will appear under the joint editorship of Drs. Hann and Köppen. The composite journal will be known simply as the *Meteorologische zeitschrift*. It will be published by Asher & Co. of Berlin.

— Dr. Latour's 'De la chaleur animale' (Paris, Baillière, 1885) may be described as an attempt by a person unacquainted with elementary facts in physiology and anatomy to explain the pathology and nature of fever. In reading it, one hardly knows whether to be amused by its author's *naïf* self-conceit or to be exasperated by his impudence. As regards the color of the blood, we are informed (p. 13) that "it is only by mixture with carbonic acid . . . that this fluid takes the dark tint, — a tint which it gives up to resume its brightness so soon as this excrementitious gas has been rejected." It is hardly necessary to point out that the bright color of arterial blood is due to the fact that its coloring-matter is combined with oxygen; and the dark color of venous blood, to the fact that most of the haemoglobin has given up its oxygen, and that

the presence or absence of carbon dioxide has no direct connection with the phenomena in question. The well-established fact that by far the greater part of the oxidations of the animal body occur outside the blood-vessels and within the living cells and fibres of the tissues, is apparently quite unknown to our author. One hardly knows how to characterize the treatise: if written for the laity, it is charlatanry; if for pathologists and physicians, an impertinence.

#### WASHINGTON LETTER.

THE past fortnight has been a period of considerable activity, not to say anxiety, in the national capital. The pursuit of science withdraws men to a great degree from 'the madding crowd's ignoble strife,' and it is supposed to go on undisturbed and uninterrupted by affairs political or social. But the science of Washington is, in one way or another, almost entirely government science; and for its support, extension, contraction, indeed for its very existence, it must depend on the favor with which it is looked upon by a somewhat vacillating and fickle body of statesmen. The organization of a new congress is always a matter of much interest; but just now this is greatly enhanced by the consideration that the new body is to receive the first message from the head of a new administration, from which communication the attitude to be assumed by the ruling party towards science may possibly be inferred. This document has been before the public for several days, and comment is unnecessary; but it is not too much to say, that, in its references to the scientific work of the government, the general impression seems to be that it is not unsatisfactory on the whole, although in certain particulars it is not in agreement with the prevailing sentiment among scientific men.

The reports of cabinet officers are also looked for with interest, as they almost invariably contain recommendations, which, if carried out, affect the science of the government favorably or unfavorably. The reports just issued are, in the main, favorable to a liberal support of the scientific bureaus, and in one or two instances indications are shown of a disposition to correct certain evils which have long been recognized.

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that scientific men should themselves be tempted to bestow more or less thought and attention upon the somewhat uncertain relation which they and their work bear to the government. The retiring president of the philosophical society, Prof. Asaph Hall, only incidentally yielded to this temptation in his address, delivered before the members of

the society and invited guests, on the evening of Dec. 5. Professor Hall's topic was the scientific societies of America, and his treatment of it gave great satisfaction to his hearers. He spoke of the organization and history of some of the older and more important societies of the country, beginning, of course, with the American philosophical society, with Ben Franklin for its first president. The National academy came in for a good share of the discussion, and in this connection the general question of the relation of the academy to the government was considered, as well as that of the position of the 'government scientist.' He paid the society over which he has so satisfactorily presided the deserved compliment of declaring it to be first in importance among the local societies of America.

Only a few days later, the chemical society, a young and vigorous organization, listened to the address of its retiring president, Prof. F. W. Clarke. It was an able and entertaining *résumé* of the growth of chemistry in Washington during the past twelve or fifteen years, and it concluded with a plea for the establishment of a national laboratory, which, in its dimensions and equipment, should be commensurate with the importance and dignity of the science. Arguments to show the economy in and the necessity for such an establishment were not lacking, either in number or force. Examples of duplication or useless repetition of work, multiplication of instruments and facilities with no increase in efficiency, and frittering away time and energy on work properly belonging elsewhere, were given with a convincing emphasis, which made it a little difficult, at the close of the address, to believe that there were two sides to the question.

With the assembling of congress, the committee appointed by that body to report upon the advisability of a union of the scientific bureaus of the government has taken up its work again. Two or three meetings have been held, at which one or more officers of the signal corps have been examined. Most of the evidence obtained by this committee prior to the current session has been widely published, and read by many with much interest. It may be inferred, from the promptness with which the committee has begun the collection of testimony at the opening of the session, that it is desirous of making its report at an early day: indeed, it is generally thought that not much more will be done in the way of examination of witnesses.

The signal service, which has received much attention during the past year at the hands of this committee, as well as from the general public, is preparing for the introduction of one or two im-