

plied sciences, chemistry, physics, and mechanical science, put together. Geology, geography, biology, and anthropology furnish more than half of all the new members.

In the reading of papers before the sections, the same want of proportion was shown. Section F, biology, held sessions on both Thursday and Friday, morning and afternoon; and 32 papers were listed for those two days. Section I, economic science and statistics, held a session on Thursday afternoon only, and none on Friday, and only 4 papers were listed, and of these the only paper that was statistical was a five minute paper on Statistics of the Salvation Army! The Section of Biology, in fact, is so overcrowded with papers and discussions that it was decided to split it into two sections, F, Zoology, and G, Botany; while a proposition was made, although not entertained, to consolidate sections D and I into one section.

At the recent meeting of the British Association, it is reported that there were 2,500 members in attendance. At the Rochester meeting there were less than 500.

From the above facts, it appears that the American Association is not a fairly representative body of American scientific men. In it the physical sciences are dwarfed by the natural sciences. The reason for this is undoubtedly because the applied scientists, and especially those in the department of mechanical science, have so many societies of their own that they are diverted from and lose their interest in the American Association. In engineering there are four large national societies, the civil, the mechanical, the mining, and the electrical, besides numerous local societies, aggregating a membership of probably 5,000 persons, not counting duplications of those who belong to two or more societies. The small attendance at the section of economic science is probably due to the superior attractions offered by the American Social Science Association. The recent reorganization of the American Chemical Society with its branches will be very apt to diminish the interest of chemists in section C.

These facts are worthy of consideration by those interested in the future of the Association.

WILLIAM KENT.

New York, Aug. 29.

BOOK-REVIEWS.

Report of the United States Board on Geographic Names. Ex. Doc. No. 16, House of Representatives, 52d Congress. Washington, Government.

THE necessity of bringing about a uniform usage and spelling of geographic names throughout the executive departments of the government has led to the creation of a board representing the Departments of State, War, Treasury, Navy, and Post Office, the Coast and Geodetic Survey, the Geological Survey, and the Smithsonian Institution, who serve without pay and can officially say in many cases what names shall be used. Names in our country have not been bestowed by any formal authority, except the more important ones of States, counties, and municipalities. The early explorers would employ aboriginal designations or others of little import; their successors often proposed others; a mountain range would receive different names from different sides of approach. Post-offices and railroad stations may not conform to the local names of the enclosing townships, or else very familiar terms have been excessively multiplied. The modes of spelling vary from time to time. To meet the various necessities, the Board adopted the following rules in case the local usage is divided: 1, Avoidance of the possessive form of names; 2, the dropping of the final "h" in the termination "burgh;" 3, the abbreviation of "borough" is "boro;" 4, the Websterian spelling of "center;" 5, the discontinuance of hyphens in connecting parts of names; 6, the omission, whenever practicable, of the letters "C. H." (court house) after the names of county seats; 7, the simplification of names consisting of more than one word by their combination into one word; 8, the avoidance of the use of diacritic characters; 9, the dropping of the words "city" and "town" as parts of names.

As to the employment of foreign words, the Board recommend that our charts for the use of the navy adopt the local names in

the language of the several countries, and for home use the Anglicised forms. About 2,000 names have already been passed upon, of which a list is printed as an appendix to the report. Another appendix presents a list of all the counties in the United States.

It is easy to see that this Board is doing great service for the improvement of geographic nomenclature. Unfortunately, it cannot have power to compel the adoption of the sensible names proposed for the new States recently added to our galaxy and rejected by Congress, nor can it persuade people to use good sense after controversies have been inaugurated. The world is, however, improving, and the very objectionable names are everywhere ridiculed.

The Naturalist in La Plata. By W. H. HUDSON. London, Chapman & Hall. Ill. 396 p.

THE universal interest now taken by all classes in scientific matters has of late years given rise to a new class of books of travel. The celebrated "Voyage of a Naturalist," by Darwin, or perhaps more properly the "Wanderings in South America," by Waterton, formed the starting-point for a series which includes such books as "Travels in Peru," by von Tschudi; "Travels on the Amazon" and "Malay Archipelago," by Wallace; "Naturalist on the Amazons," by Bates; "Naturalist in Nicaragua," by Belt; "Two Years in the Jungle," by Hornaday; "Life in the East Indies," by Forbes, and many others of similar title and character. The existence and popularity of these books is evidence of the interest they have excited in the public mind; and in view of the good influence they exert there cannot be too many of them. The "Natural History of Selborne," although limited in its scope to a single parish in England, is an example of the multitude of objects which can be made interesting to all classes of readers, and it is perhaps not too much to say that there is scarcely a section of our own country about which an equally interesting book could not be written. The fact is that the objects to be studied in nature are inexhaustible. They exist in earth, in sky; in air, in water; in lane, in tree, in barren plain. Everywhere in fact that one can turn, facts of the profoundest interest are to be observed.

The ordinary globe-trotter has left few places unexplored as far as his foot alone is concerned. He has penetrated to the wilds of tropical Africa, and has left his traces amid the snow and ice of the Arctic regions; he has suffered from hunger and thirst in the deserts of Australia, and has been shipwrecked in the vast Pacific; he has explored the snowy heights of the Himalayas and the Andes, and penetrated the humid jungles of India; he has braved the sands of the desert of Gobi and the terrible glare of the Sahara. The globe-trotter used to write books describing his travels; but, alas, too frequently his eyes saw no further than his feet. He chronicled his daily aches and ills, his breakfast and supper, and mentioned the rivers he crossed or the mountains he saw. The day for such books has passed; and a man who would be listened to now must have more to tell of than how he cooked his dinner, of how many miles he sailed or walked or rode. The modern traveller must, therefore, be versed in some branch of science. He must know men, or birds, or beasts, or plants. His volume, too, must be something more than a mere itinerary; and the more closely he studies the workings of nature in her secluded haunts the wider the circle of his readers and the greater the value of his book.

Of such books as those we have mentioned above there cannot be too many. It is, therefore, with a feeling of pleasure that we welcome a late comer to the ranks, "The Naturalist in La Plata." The author is a native of the country whose phases of life he chronicles. He is an enthusiast, a lover of beasts and birds, and he makes his reader love with him. The book is filled with interesting matter, and in this notice we will mention some of the many tidbits which are offered.

One of the most interesting subjects touched upon, all too briefly be it said, is that wonderful instinct of bird migration. It seems incredible that out of twenty-five species of aquatic birds, thirteen are visitors from North America, several of them breeding in the Arctic regions and crossing the whole tropical zone to winter, or rather to summer, on the pampa. In September and even in August they begin to appear on the pampa—plover, tatler, god-