the great value of such meetings as the means of securing unanimity of action.

Such being the tenor of the correspondence, your Committee are convinced that initial steps of a definite nature in furtherance of the scheme ought now to be taken.

They accordingly request the President and Counsel to take measures with the view of calling together, in July of next year (1896), an International Conference, at which representatives of the several nations engaged in scientific work should be invited to attend, with the view of discussing and settling a detailed scheme for the production, by international coöperation, of complete authors' and subject catalogues of scientific literature.

London will probably be found the best place in which to hold such a conference. It may be desirable to summon the representatives of the different countries through their respective governments, and it will obviously be necessary that a detailed scheme be prepared, to serve as a basis for discussion at the conference. These and other points will require much consideration before any action at all can be taken; meanwhile it is desirable that a beginning should be made during the autumn, before the winter session of the Society. The Committee therefore recommend that the President and Council should give the Committee (which includes the President and officers) executive powers in order that they may take, in the name of the Society, such steps as they may think desirable, with the view of calling together the above-mentioned conference.

NOTES FROM LONDON.

A DAY with Mr. Maxim and his wonderful gun and more marvelous flying-machine has proved one of the most interesting of our tour to date. The flying-machine is completely repaired, and in as good working order as before its famous flight and unlucky accident. Mr. Maxim's lease has nearly expired, however, and little more can be done until he is reëstablished in new quarters. He has, at Bexley, only about 1800 feet range, and for further operations desires at least a mile. It may be difficult to find precisely the location suitable for the work. It would be fortunate for the inventor, for science and for the country, could the new location be found in the United States, with ample funds for the experiment. Mechanically, the machine is a success; but much experience is likely to be required to give its operation certainty and safety. The reduction to practice of the art of flying may probably prove a more serious matter than the solution of the purely mechanical problems involved.

THE Maxim gun is perhaps the most extraordinary implement of war ever devised. The pressing of a button is all that is required of the gunner, the gun loading itself and firing automatically, at the rate of 600 to 800 shots a minute, until the finger is removed or until the ammunition is exhausted. All the needed energy in working the mechanism is supplied by the recoil of the barrel of the gun. Hundreds of these guns have been supplied European and Oriental nations, and they have already done much effective work. It seems hardly creditable to the ordnance authorities of the United States that they should have permitted foreign nations to lead in utilizing so great an American invention. Mr. Maxim has not imbibed much respect for our officials, or our methods of treatment of inventors in this department of applied science, from his personal experience at home.

THE Henley races have come and gone, and the most interesting feature, to Americans, proved disappointing. In the races for the Grand Challenge Cup, Cornell won from Leander by an error on the part of the umpire, and was beaten by Trinity Hall. The result is claimed by advocates of the long

stroke, adopted by British oarsmen, and imported into the United States by Yale, to be proof of its efficiency as against the stroke adopted by Cornell for short races.

The friends of the latter deny this, and state that their crew left America in fine condition, having beaten Henley time on their own Cayuga Lake course; that they continued in excellent condition, on this side the Atlantic, making in trial races the best records of the season. Their best figure for 1 mile 550 yards was 7 m. 4½ sec., as against Leander's 7 m. 14 sec. Trinity finally beat them in 7 m. 15 sec., 'easily,' although the 'Yankees' held the lead for half the course. In the last two weeks of their stay the Cornell crew had suffered from the enervating effect of the unaccustomed climate, and suddenly lost their staying power. The event was anticipated by those who watched them most closely days before the races. The men themselves say they have lost no faith in boats, stroke or coaching system, and when in condition are ready to meet any crew which appeared at Henley. They had made better time and held their speed on much longer courses.

The matter has some scientific interest and even importance. Improved oarsmanship means much outside athletic circles. There is certainly a stroke of maximum efficiency which will, with a stated expenditure of muscular power, give the greatest possible work in the line of the boat's keel. It is this really important problem that is likely now to be solved on our home waters; for no change is likely to occur on British waters. Yale and Cornell will perhaps finally settle the question by fighting to a conclusion at home.

The London Times has been recently publishing letters from its correspondent at Kiel, in which are criticised, by a naval expert, the warships of various nationalities there represented. He considers the 'Columbia' defective in offensive and defensive power, although a marvel of speed, and likely to prove a success in our special province, that of 'commerce-destroyer.' He thinks the French iron-clad 'Dupuy de Lõrne' their best approximation to British standards, and speaks very lightly of the ships built by the Russians for their Baltic fleet. The U. S. S. 'New York' is classed with the best.

I had the pleasure of meeting Lord Kelvin last week for the first time since the meeting of the British Association of 1884 at Montreal. He bears the added years remarkably well and appears quite as much interested as ever in America, Americans and scientific work on the other side of the Atlantic. He is engaged, with Sir John Lubbock, Lord Rayleigh and other distinguished men of science, in a movement having for its object the erection of a memorial to the late Professor Huxley, whose death, on the 29th ultimo, was a source of grief to all scientific men, and many divines as well, on both sides of the Atlantic.

R. H. T.

London, July 16, 1895.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

FOSSIL MAMMALS OF PATAGONIA.

Dr. Florentino Ameghino, of La Plata, has recently published an important pamphlet, '*Sur les ongulés fossiles de l'Argentine*,' which includes an exhaustive criticism of the recent memoirs of Mr. Lydekker entitled 'A Study of the Extinct Ungulates of Argentina,' recently noticed in Science. Dr. Ameghino goes over Mr. Lydekker's work page by page and points out a number of grave errors arising from the fact that the author confined his studies entirely to the collections in the National Museum and did not examine the very rich private collection of Dr. Ameghino. We noted as a special feature of Mr. Lydekker's handsome memoirs that the English and Span-