which has been noticed already in SCIENCE, met at Clermont-Ferrand, in the Department of the Puy de Dôme, between September 28th and October 2d, inclusive. The first session was at Biarritz in 1886, but the geological section was added this year. The present Congress, open to anyone on payment of a fee, was attended by about two hundred persons, of whom more than half were French physicians, but its international title was sustained by the presence of official delegates and representatives of eleven other countries. The Congress was under the patronage of the Minister of the Interior who delegated Prof. Proust, general inspector of the Sanitary Services. Dr. de Ranse and Dr. Fredet, president and general secretary, respectively, of the Committee of Organization, retained these offices for the meeting. The foreign honorary president, chosen by acclamation, was Dr. Berthenson, of Russia, the foreign honorary vice-presidents being Prof. Ludwig, of Austria, Prof. Kuborn, of Belgium, and Mr. Rotch, of the United States.

The Congress met in three sections, but, as might be expected, the chief interest was in the hydrological section. The Committee of Organization had prepared printed reports upon questions pertaining to each section, which were read and discussed. The majority of the papers presented afterwards treated of the therapeutic properties of thermal and climatic stations, but there were three conferences on the history of hydrology, the geology and the climate of the region. The proceedings will be published under the direction of the Committee.

Outside the University, where the meetings were held, there was much to be seen, and in a volume specially prepared for the occasion the historical and physical features of the province of Auvergne were described. Unfortunately, the cold, rainy weather proved a drawback to sight-seeing. The climatological conference was given on the Puy de Dôme, at the observatory, which, built twenty years ago, was the first well-equipped mountain meteorological station in Europe. During the Congress, an exhibition of objects illustrating the neighboring thermal stations was open at Clermont. Entertainments were given by this municipality, and at a banquet offered by the management of the Thermal Establishment at Royat some international courtesies were exchanged. After the close of the Congress the more distant thermal stations were visited. The next session is intended to take place at Brussels in 1898.

A. LAWRENCE ROTCH.

A PROPOSED BUREAU OF PLANT REGISTRATION.

THE question of establishing a bureau for the registration of plants, in connection with the present Division of Pomology, was brought before the Section of Botany and Horticulture at the recent meeting of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations, by Prof. L. C. Corbett, of the West Virginia University. After a careful consideration of the matter, the Section appointed a committee to report upon the feasibility of the scheme, and to suggest the outline of a plan to be presented to Congress at an early date. The committee consisted of L. C. Corbett, Morgantown, W. Va., Chairman; W. A. Taylor, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.; Prof L. H. Bailey, Ithaca, N. Y.; F. S. Earle, Auburn, Ala., and C. H. Shinn, Berkeley, Cal.

The idea is to have some one place in the United States where all plants placed upon the market can be officially registered, numbered, and a description, together with specimens of the bloom, seed, foliage and fruit, placed on record. When it is not practicable to preserve the original, colored casts are to be prepared, as in the case of

citrons, drupaceous and pomaceous fruit, as well as vegetables.

In all cases where plants are sent for registration, specimens of flowers, foliage, fruit, root, tuber or seed must accompany the application. All vegetables must be accompanied by a given amount of seed (to be determined) to be preserved for purposes of noting the duration of cultural varieties, the influence of climate during any series of years or in any locality. A further purpose of the seed shall be to grow plants for purposes of identifying the sort.

ENDS SOUGHT.

1. To discourage the duplication of names, and the re-naming of old sorts for commercial purposes.

2. To form a National herbarium of economic plants, which shall be made up largely of type specimens.

3. To simplify the matter of nomenclature.

4. To aid the student of varieties as well as of variation of plants under culture.

5. To secure the originator of a truly valuable variety some reward for his labor, the same as is now accorded the inventor.

The incorporation of such a clause (No. 5) will undoubtedly secure the hearty coöperation of all plant breeders, nurserymen and seedsmen, and this coöperation we must have in order to advance the scientific ends sought.

It is further proposed that this central bureau be made a part and parcel of the present Division of Pomology of the United States Department of Agriculture. A very valuable nucleus for the beginning of such work is had in the fruit models now in the museum of that department.

Each person interested in this matter will kindly formulate his ideas on the subject and send to some member of the committee who will put them in such form that a bill may be drafted at an early date and presented before Congress. The idea in having the members of the committee so scattered is to get the needs of the several sections of the United States as well represented as practicable. It is hoped that each one interested will lend hearty coöperation in the matter.

CURRENT NOTES ON PHYSIOGRAPHY.

PHYSICAL FEATURES OF MISSOURI.

THE current annual volume of the report of the Missouri Geological Survey contains an essay on the physical features of that State by C. F. Marbut(Vol. X. 1896, 14–109). The general upland of the State, bevelled obliquely across the nearly horizontal strata, is explained as a peneplain produced by subaerial erosion that continued into Tertiary time; the peneplain now being dissected in consequence of a warping uplift of middle or late Tertiary date. Apart from the narrow valleys by which much of the upland is dissected, the most notable features of the State are the escarpments that are formed on the retreating edges of the harder strata. A number of these are described, mapped and figured. The most important are the Bethany escarpment, formed on the resistant members of the upper coal measures in the northwest corner of the State; the Burlington escarpment, on the Burlington limestone in the southwest; and the Avon, Crystal and Burlington escarpments on a series of hard strata near the confluence of the Missouri and the Mississippi, below St. Louis. The lower ground that spreads out in front of an escarpment is called a platform; the upland, to which the escarpment rises, descends again in a back-slope or structural plain. The relief form included by the back-slope and the escarpment is called a ridge; the special term, *cuesta*, might be introduced to advantage. The drainage system of the State is discussed at some length, with special reference to the origin of incised