

introduction, and terminate with a postscript and bibliography by Ross. At this period the Italians, notably Grassi, Bignami and Bastianelli, were endeavoring to follow Ross's investigations on the development of the malarial parasites in the mosquito, and Dr. Charles acted as an intermediary, informing Ross of the progress made by the Italians, and similarly communicating to the latter Ross's observations and handing them his specimens. In the first letter, Charles asks for specimens for Marchiafava 'of the mosquito in which human malaria develops.' Grassi now denies that Ross ever detected this species. It is pointed out how closely the Italians followed and how well informed they were of the details of Ross's work, yet now Grassi states that his labors were independent of Ross. In the third letter, with regard to the cultivation of crescents in the 'dappled winged mosquito' by Ross, Charles says, "He (Grassi) seemed perfectly satisfied that your description referred to the *Anopheles claviger*." Grassi now contends that he could not identify the malaria-bearing mosquito from Ross's description. Bignami, Grassi and Bastianelli have frequently stated that Ross's first successful experiments with human malaria were unsound, because the insects employed might have already bitten another animal before having been fed on man. Yet in Ross's publication it is clearly premised that the insects had been bred in bottles from the larvæ.—*Nature*.

IMPRESSIONS OF A GERMAN CONGRESS.

AN occasional correspondent, who speaks from experience, has been moved to unburden his soul as to the mode in which discussions are carried on at some German scientific congresses. The picture he draws is not, he declares, exaggerated, but his remarks must be understood as applying only to those congresses which are not divided into sections but in which the discussions take place in plenary session. There is a large room where the congress is to take place, filled with hundreds of our colleagues, of German and other nationalities. These gentlemen are prepared for several days' ennui, but are also resolved not to let it be all dull. They present a very varied ap-

pearance, and produce a very varied impression by the complexity of sound which their conversation, before the commencement of the proceedings, creates. The management consists of a chairman, who is changed at each sitting, and his *confrères*, the president, the secretary, and the other members of the council. The chairman opens the day's proceedings by informing the readers of papers that the time limit, namely, half of an hour for papers, and ten minutes for discussion speeches, will be rigidly adhered to. At first all goes smoothly until a speaker has occupied the attention of the House for twenty minutes or so, when there is heard an ever-increasing buzz of conversation from the back part of the room. Of this the speaker takes no heed, and when the half-hour is past, the chairman merely stretches himself and remains quiet. The next speaker has obviously not been fortunate in the impression that he has made on the House, for the conversation, begun during the last speech, continues, and becomes disturbing. But he, being accustomed to such trivial inconveniences, labors on steadily. The hands of the clock steal slowly onward, and when they register that the speaker has been standing at the desk for nearly twenty minutes, a single cry of 'End!' (*Schluss*) is heard. Soon the air is rent with wild delighted cries of 'End!' and feebly tempered by a few subdued remonstrating '*Gsch.*' The chairman rings his bell. Some order is restored, and he tells the speaker that he has two minutes more. Poor speaker! He has lost the thread of his argument (for papers must be given from memory, not read), he is face to face with the fact that he has but two minutes more to live—as a speaker—and he thereupon invariably pitches himself headlong into his subject, at such an enormous rate, and with so much energy, that it becomes a matter of impossibility to understand what he is speaking of. The noise at the far end of the room continues, and in one minute the second 'sound' of the bell is heard. The chairman now shows his humanity and asks the House to decide whether the speaker shall continue or not. This is done either by direct appeal and an interpretation of the responsive sound, as to what the

wish of the majority is, or by a show of hands. There is a subtlety in the decision, for if the chairman wishes he can rule on a single show, or he may ask for 'Ayes' and 'Noes,' or he may compare the number of hands shown with the number of persons present. But it is decreed that our friend, the speaker, must stand down, and there is something pathetic in his self-conscious, proud and satisfied bow, and the death-like silence which follows it for one moment. A discussion now takes place. At first absolute oblivion of time seems to surround the Chair, and the first intimation which the occupant of it receives of the fact that one member has occupied the platform for nearly half an hour is that his conversation with a colleague is interrupted by a dozen eager members who wish to have their say. Then he rings the bell and asks if the speaker has much more to say, but to do this he waits until the latter has reached the middle of a sentence. 'I am just finishing,' is the reply. Five minutes later a further ring, the same question, the same reply. Still five minutes later the chairman says that Herr X. is in possession of the platform, and requests the loquacious one to stand down. He forgets to bow, and, collecting his notes and papers slowly mumbles that he has had no time to give his most important points of argument. Will he try to continue his arguments at next year's congress?—*British Medical Journal*.

CURRENT NOTES ON PHYSIOGRAPHY.

THE MARYLAND COASTAL PLAIN.

A LUMINOUS generalization concerning the geological history and the geographical features of our Atlantic coastal plain has lately been announced by Shattuck ('The Pleistocene Problem of the North Atlantic Coastal Plain,' Johns Hopkins Univ. Circulars, No. 152, 1901). Five shore lines with wave-cut and wave-built terraces, accompanied by spits, bars and lagoon deposits, are recognized. The uppermost is the Lafayette on the margin of the Piedmont uplands at altitudes of from 300 to 500 feet. The lowest is on the present coast. The development of each shore line was preceded by a period of erosion during a somewhat higher stand of the land; hence when submergence to

the new level occurred, the shore was of irregular outline. Valleys were thus repeatedly drowned, and rivers transformed into estuaries; for one may trace the younger terraces along the sides of the older valleys. The changes of level do not seem to have been accompanied by so much warping as has been inferred by other observers: the conclusions thus announced are thought to be applicable to the coastal plain for some distance northeast and southwest of Maryland. A fuller description of the topographic details on which these changes are based will be waited for with interest.

DUNMAIL RAISE.

THE low pass between Windermere and Keswick in the English Lake district, annually crossed by thousands of tourists in stage and on foot, is known as Dunmail Raise. Its elevation is 782 feet, between Helvellyn, 3,118, and Scafell pikes, 3,210. R. D. Oldham ('On the Origin of Dunmail Raise, Lake District,' *Quart. Journ. Geol. Soc.*, LVII., 1901, 189-195) points out the striking disproportion between the size of the local streams and the dimensions of the opposing valleys that head in the open pass, and concludes that it is the work of a large river which once flowed from north to south through the mountains, long maintaining its course in spite of their upheaval, until at last overcome by a too rapid warping. While the conditions of such an origin are readily conceived, the consequences by which the conditions may be tested are not explicitly stated, and the reality of the postulated river is left in doubt. The present form of the opposing valleys being held to be beyond production by the existing streams, the valleys are taken as the product of the extinct river. The valleys being still but little modified by their streams, the warping by which the river was broken in two must have been relatively recent. The slopes of the opposing valley floors being strong and of recent origin, the warping that produced the slopes must have been rapid. As the present north-sloping valley descends against the slope of the extinct river for ten miles or more, the warping must have affected the district for a number of miles north of the pass. So rapid and extensive a warping can hardly have been