

## THE ELISHA MITCHELL SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY.

THE 136th meeting of the Society was held at the University of North Carolina, on Tuesday evening, October 8, when the following papers were presented :

'Interpretation of the Value  $\frac{0}{0}$ ': PROFESSOR WILLIAM CAIN.

'The Work of the Beaufort Laboratory during the Season of 1901': PROFESSOR H. V. WILSON.

'Note on the Existence of a New Element associated with Thorium': PROFESSOR CHAS. BASKERVILLE.

The permanent secretary, President F. P. Venable, reported some four or five hundred exchanges as continued, and favorable progress in the cataloging and binding of the journals received in exchange.

The following officers were elected for the year: *President*, Dr. H. V. Wilson; *Vice-President*, Dr. A. S. Wheeler; *Secretary*, Dr. Chas. Baskerville.

CHARLES BASKERVILLE,  
*Secretary.*

## DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

## AN INSTITUTE FOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: In these days when large endowments are made for furthering scientific research in many directions, it is only natural that bibliographers and librarians should look forward eagerly to an endowment in the interest of that science which is the foundation of library work and, in a way, of all scientific investigation. Without bibliographies knowledge of what has been previously done in the various sciences would be wellnigh impossible; the investigator would be groping in the dark, and many a work would be written to demonstrate what had already been well demonstrated. Without bibliographies the building up of an ever so modest library would be beset with difficulties without end.

The thought that such an endowment must be made was in everybody's mind at the meeting this summer of the American Library Association. The plans for cataloging at one place books for all libraries in the country, which were discussed at the last two confer-

ences of the Association (Montreal, 1900, and Waukesha, 1901), presuppose a central bureau of some kind to organize the work and carry it out. The generous way in which the Librarian of Congress met the Publishing Board of the Association gives assurance that the cataloguing of the current literature will be taken care of through the National Library. But this is only one part of the needed work. If thus the American literature of the new century will be permanently recorded (it is to be hoped that the work will be retrospective so as to cover the whole of the year 1901) we shall still lack an accurate bibliography of the American literature of past times.

There are other works of great importance that should be undertaken. Let me mention a few:

Bolton's catalogue of scientific and technical periodicals covers only one group of sciences and does not cover that one completely. A complete and accurate catalogue of serial publications of all kinds, including such as are published by societies, academies and other institutions, is a desideratum.

There is no critical and complete bibliography of bibliographies in existence. Petzholdt's monumental work does not go beyond 1866, and Henri Stein's recent volume, while bringing his predecessor's work fairly down to date, is anything but critical. It is doubtful whether a really authoritative catalogue of bibliographies can be produced without the cooperation of bibliographers and specialists in this country and Europe.

The catalogue of scientific literature undertaken under the auspices of the Royal Society of London has met with gratifying support from American libraries. But the 'Regional Bureau' for America that should do our part of the work is not yet founded. The Smithsonian Institution has provisionally undertaken to act as 'Regional Bureau,' but with all the other demands on it it is uncertain how long it can continue to cooperate in this work.

This catalogue is planned to cover only the natural and physical sciences. It is of the utmost importance that other sciences also should be covered by similar catalogues.

Furthermore, the Royal Society catalogue

covers only the current literature. The older publications should not be neglected, but should be cataloged in a series of monographs on special subjects.

The annotation of books by experts, advocated for many years with rare enthusiasm by Mr. George Iles, or at least the indexing and condensing of authoritative book reviews, is another work that would naturally come within the scope of a Central Cataloguing Bureau.

And finally, the bibliographical interests need an organ of their own where problems can be discussed and results made known.

It is clear that all these various undertakings, if carried out simultaneously, would result in a great deal of unnecessary duplication were there no central organization to guide and supervise the whole, and, if no provision were made for the utilization in many places of any title entry needed in several catalogues, without the necessity of setting up the matter anew for every time. As long ago as 1850, Professor Charles C. Jewett proposed that stereotype plates be made of the titles of all the books in American libraries, these to be kept at the Smithsonian Institution and to be utilized for the printing of catalogues of any library desiring it. The cost was too large then and the proposition too new. What was then looked upon as the visionary, though interesting, dream of an enthusiast, is now a reality, proved to be of economic value. The experience of the John Crerar Library with electrotypes for title entries, used for printing of catalogues in book form as well as on cards, has been that the cost of making these plates and of their care and handling is less than that of printing the same matter over again from newly set type.

The purpose of these lines has been to call attention to the need of an Institute for Bibliographical Research where all the bibliographical and library interests of the country would center, and I hope that they may reach some one who might be able and willing to endow such an institute.

AKSEL G. S. JOSEPHSON.

THE JOHN CERERAR LIBRARY, CHICAGO,

Sept. 10, 1901.

#### DISCORD.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: Permit me to respond briefly to Mr. W. Le Conte Stevens's remarks on 'Discord and Psychology' in the issue of SCIENCE for September 20. (1) How Mr. Stevens found out that I had not read the investigations of Professor Mayer on this subject is an enigma to me. His intimation that they were unknown to me is based solely on the fact that I do not swear by the authority of these investigations, made 25 years ago (1875). I have known them for many years. But I know also many more recent investigations which do not agree with those of Mayer. Physicists who are interested in psychological theories and discuss them in their text-books may keep up with current literature by looking once a year at the 'Psychological Index,' published annually by the *Psychological Review*, or at any other psychological bibliography. (2) With Mr. Stevens's request to criticize from the psychological standpoint the sentences quoted by him, I shall gladly comply by quoting a few sentences from a physicist who was unusually familiar with psychological literature, namely the late Professor Melde, who says (Winkelmann's 'Handbuch der Physik,' I., p. 789): 'Eine Hauptstörung eines regelmässigen Tones oder eines consonirenden Zusammenklanges bilden die Stösse oder Schwebungen. Sie können durchs Zusammenwirken der primären Töne, also durch Interferenz entstehen, oder es können auch auf rein mechanische Weise solche Stösse erzeugt werden. Ihre Wirkung muss in beiden Fällen mehr oder weniger die einer Beimischung eines Rasselgeräusches sein. Zur Erklärung des inneren Wesens einer Con oder Dissonanz können aber nach des Verfassers Ueberzeugung auch nicht die Stösse (*viz.*, auch nicht Nebentöne) herangezogen werden, denn eine sogenannte Dissonanz besteht sicherlich auch ohne jedes Verhandensein von Stössen.' Let me further quote from Stumpf, 'Konsonanz und Dissonanz' (1898), p. 5, where the author discusses the very investigations of Professor Mayer which I am supposed to have ignored: "Wir können Intermissionen in *beliebiger Frequenz* auch bei zwei *konsonanten* Tönen künstlich herstellen, *ohne dass sie dissonant würden.*"

When there are beats, the psychologist speaks