

upon the results reached. However, there seems to be a residual effect which cannot thus be accounted for, and it may be due to an ether displacement. This matter is being carefully studied, and it is intended to use more violent explosives."

WILLIAM TRELEASE,  
*Recording Secretary.*

#### DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

##### AN AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

As has been announced, the next meeting of the International Geographical Congress is to be held in Washington, D. C., in 1904. It must be apparent, I think, to every one familiar with the status of geography in America, that we are not prepared for such an invasion, and that a better organization of our geographical ranks is highly desirable.

There are now at least ten geographical societies in the United States. How many more there are in other parts of the two Americas I am not informed. Each of these societies is a local organization and there is no tangible bond of union between them. It needs no argument to show that some form of cooperation or of union between these various societies is much to be wished, not only that we may make a creditable showing at the coming meeting of the International Congress, but what is much more important, in order that mutual assistance may be had, and the science of geography advanced in a more efficient way than is practicable at present. This matter is not new, and at the risk of seeming to assume undue responsibility, I venture to state a plan of reorganization which embodies ideas gathered from various sources.

My thesis is: There should be an American Geographical Society having for its territorial limits the New World. The aims of this society should be in the main threefold:

1st. The holding of a general meeting each year, preferably during convocation week.

2d. The publication of an illustrated monthly magazine, devoted to geography in its widest aspects.

3d. The promotion of geographical exploration and research.

In reference to the first of these aims, I

need not enlarge on the desirability of an annual meeting at which the results reached by various students of geography may be presented and discussed, and acquaintances made or renewed, since abundant justification for such a course is known to every one, from the success that has attended the annual meetings of several national and international scientific organizations during the past decade. Geographers certainly need to know their fellow workers as much as geologists, chemists, etc.; need to know each other. This would be one of the chief results of an annual meeting of geographers, held perhaps at the same time and place as the annual winter meeting of the Geological Society of America.

The greatest gain to be expected from the proposed reorganization lies in the second of the aims to be fostered by the new society, namely, the publication of a strong, attractive, well-illustrated monthly magazine, in the place of the several publications now issued by existing societies. Some of the reasons for this are: The saving of expense in editing, and in duplication, especially of news items, reviews, etc.; concentration and ready reference. The concentration of American geographical literature would be a blessing to future generations, in view of the fact that complete files of the present publications are not readily accessible, and to find all of them in one library is seldom possible. With a central bureau of publication, also, it is to be hoped that the standard of the articles published would be higher. While the expense of a monthly magazine representing the interests of all classes of geographers, and well edited and well printed, would perhaps be greater than that of any one of the single publications referred to, it would be much less than all of them combined. It would also, I venture to assert, reach a wider audience than all of the publications combined which it would replace. Such a magazine would place American geography in a far more favorable light than it now enjoys, in the eyes of the geographers of other continents.

While a few of the existing societies have assisted in geographical research, their efforts

have been local and the results attained, while creditable, have not been such as could be legitimately expected from a stronger and more widely extended organization. With all geographers in America united, influence in favor of exploration could be brought to bear upon legislative bodies which would command attention.

#### PLAN OF REORGANIZATION.

To attain the desirable ends referred to above, the following plan for uniting the existing geographical societies into one organization, with power to increase its membership and broaden its efficiency, is proposed for discussion:

Let each of the existing societies become a section of the new organization to be known as the American Geographical Society. Each section to manage its own affairs, independently, have its own officers, its own property, etc., but pay a sum, in proportion to its membership, in support of the magazine to be published by the united sections.

All members of the various sections to be fellows of the larger organization, and at their annual meeting to elect a president, secretaries, treasurer and editor. The president of each of the various sections to be *ex officio* vice-president of the main society.

The various sections to choose their own names, but it is to be hoped these names would be geographical, as for example, Boston Section, New York Section, Washington Section, San Francisco Section, etc., of the American Geographical Society. Such a broadening and enlargement of aims would be a compliment to the Society now bearing the name which it is desirable should be given to the representative Society of the two Americas.

The arguments for a truly American geographical society are far greater than I have attempted to show. The objections to the plan outlined seem to refer entirely to local pride or, more accurately, local self-interest. That the existing societies should be proud of the results they have attained and love their present methods is not only natural, but commendable. A broader view, however, must convince one that each local society by union with all other similar societies in America,

without losing its own individuality, would bring to itself renewed strength and vigor.

My aim in presenting this outline of a method by which all students of geography in America may be induced to cooperate and mutually assist in enlarging the boundaries of geographical knowledge, is to invite discussion. I am sure that the editor of *SCIENCE* will give space for the expression of the opinion of any one in this connection. I wish especially to invite the Council of each existing society to discuss this matter and express its views. If we can arrange for a meeting of delegates from each society, a mutual agreement beneficial to all can no doubt be reached. This should be done in time to effect a reorganization before the convening of the International Geographical Congress.

ISRAEL C. RUSSELL.

ANN ARBOR, MICH.,

Jan. 13, 1902.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRALBLATT FOR BOTANY.

As we have already noted the president of the *Association Internationale des Botanistes* has appointed the following American editors for the *Botanisches Centralblatt*:

D. H. Campbell, Stanford University, California, 'Morphology.'

C. J. Chamberlain, University of Chicago, 'Cytology.'

D. T. MacDougal, New York Botanical Garden, 'Physiology.'

G. T. Moore, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., 'Algae, Lichens, Archegoniates' (systematic).

D. P. Penhallow, McGill University, Montreal, 'Paleobotany.'

H. von Schrenk, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo., 'Fungi (systematic) and Vegetable Pathology.'

Wm. Trelease, Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis, Mo., 'Phanerogams' (systematic).

For the coordination of the editorial work, the two editors last named have been asked to serve respectively as secretary and chairman of the American Board.

Professor William Trelease, chairman of the Board has sent out the following directions, which we quote as of interest to all workers in science.