

planation why this construction was so often made. I had ascribed it to savage fetish, but is there not a better reason for it? I suspect that the film acts as a sympathetic drum, like that of the *nyasataranga* of India, the onion flute of Europe, and its late reproductions in the *kazoo* and *zobo*. In that case, it increases the volume of sound and adds a different timbre to the *marimba*, as it does to the other instruments mentioned. The same reasons may also be ascribed for the use of the membrane over a lateral hole of the Chinese flute (*ti-tzü*) and other flutes of the far east.

E. H. HAWLEY.

U. S. NATIONAL MUSEUM,  
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#### QUOTATIONS.

##### SCIENCE IN THE BRITISH WEST INDIES.

THE American Consul at Bermuda describes in a United States Consular Report the steps which have been taken to establish there a biological station which will be to North America what the Naples station is to Europe. For several years American naturalists have carried on investigations of the natural history of the Bermudas and the surrounding sea, and have made efforts to establish a biological station in these islands. Upon the advice of the Royal Society, our government has given its assent to the project. The Colonial Government has expressed its willingness to purchase the land and erect the building, and grants toward equipment and support of tables have been made by the Royal Society and the Carnegie Institution. Harvard University and New York University, in connection with the Bermuda Natural History Society, have already commenced work in a temporary laboratory close to what will be the permanent quarters of the station, and the United States Government has been asked to give generous support to the station. America has already founded a tropical botanical laboratory in buildings of the government of Jamaica at Cinchona, and has now secured a biological station, so that it appears as if the Americans are rapidly getting the control of the scientific interests of our western tropical possessions. While we can not

but admire the interest shown in the establishment of these stations by universities and colleges in the United States, it is impossible not to regret the apathy with which our home and colonial governments regard such matters. Surely it is the duty of the state to encourage the pursuit and cultivation of natural knowledge throughout the Empire, and to realize the richness of its possessions in material for scientific study as well as in precious minerals. It is a reproach to our nation that a biological station has not been established by us in the Bermudas; for now, instead of American investigators carrying on their work in a British station, we have to face the fact that, though the station will be on British soil, it will belong to the United States, and our own countrymen will be guests in it. So far as the interests of science are concerned, probably this does not matter; for, as Mr. Balfour wrote a few days ago to the translator of his British Association address, community of aim 'binds together the scientific men throughout the world into one international brotherhood.' But it should be evident to some of our ministers, at least to Mr. Balfour, who has often expressed sympathy with scientific progress, that it can not be to the advantage of the state for another nation to accept responsibilities which belong to us. Mr. Balfour is gratified at the success of the translation of his address into German, but apparently he does not consider that the interest shown in scientific matters in Germany is due to the active and practical part played by the state in helping scientific education and research. What we want here and in all parts of the Empire is more practical help of the kind given by the United States and Germany to save us from the future regret of lost opportunities.—*Nature*.

#### ECONOMIC ENTOMOLOGY AT THE WORLD'S FAIR.

THERE prevails in Europe a very proper idea that the United States takes the lead in economic entomology. It must, therefore, have been somewhat surprising to our foreign friends, upon visiting St. Louis, to have found our station collections of insects so poorly