held on the evening of August 18 at the University of California.

The committee appointed to draft an organization reported as follows:

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

The committee appointed May 3, 1905, by unanimous vote of the charter members of the Berkeley Folk-Lore Club to report on a scheme of organization for the club, beg leave to submit the following:

CONSTITUTION OF THE BERKELEY FOLK-LORE CLUB.

1. This society shall be called the Berkeley Folk-Lore Club.

2. Besides the fifteen charter members, to wit: Messrs. Lange, Mitchell, Goddard, Dresslar, Hart, Setchell, Merriam, Richardson, Fryer, Gayley, Miller, Ritter, Keeler, Noyes and Kroeber, members shall consist of such men members of the academic senate of the University of California, and such men members in good standing of the American Folk-Lore Society, as are unanimously elected by the club; and of such only.

3. The officers shall be a president, vice-president and secretary, who shall constitute an executive committee which shall arrange for all meetings and transact all business of the club.

4. Four or more meetings annually shall be held, at the first of which in each academic year the officers shall be elected.

5. Five shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

6. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed at any meeting of the club and adopted by a two thirds vote of those present at the next meeting.

The committee recommend the adoption of this constitution and the immediate organization of the club under its provisions.

Signed: A. L. Kroeber,
Charles Keeler,
G. R. Noyes.

The report of the committee was discussed and accepted, the proposed constitution being thereby adopted.

The following officers were then elected:

President—A. F. Lange.
Vice-President—Charles Keeler.
Secretary—A. L. Kroeber.

New members elected were: Professor F. W. Putnam, Dr. B. P. Kurtz and Professor H. K. Schilling.

The committee on the establishment of a California branch of the American Folk-Lore Society reported as follows:

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

The committee appointed May 3, 1905, on vote of the charter members of the Berkeley Folk-Lore Club to report on the feasibility of the establishment of a California branch of the American Folk-Lore Society beg leave to submit the following recommendations:

That the formation of the Berkeley Folk-Lore Club provides an opportune basis for the establishment and successful development of a California branch of the American Folk-Lore Society, which will extend the work undertaken by the Berkeley Folk-Lore Club to a wider sphere of influence and bring it before a larger body of persons, thus enhancing the promotion of folk-lore interests on the Pacific coast. Be it resolved, therefore,

That a California branch of the American Folk-Lore Society be hereby organized by such of those present as signify their willingness; and

That a committee of five be appointed to arrange for a meeting, including a program, in Berkeley, on the evening of August 28; said committee to submit at this meeting a formal draft of organization, with nominations for officers, for the California branch of the American Folk-Lore Society.

Signed: A. L. Kroeber,
Charles Keeler,
G. R. Noyes.

This report was adopted, and the following committee appointed under its provisions to report at the first meeting of the California branch on August 28: J. C. Merriam, G. R. Noyes, A. L. Kroeber, W. C. Mitchell and Charles Keeler.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

LATIN AS THE LANGUAGE OF BOTANICAL DIAGNOSIS.

Among the resolutions passed by a majority vote at the recent congress of botanists at Vienna, one only seems to have altogether surprised us in America, and that is the one the import of which is conveyed in the above caption. A large number of botanists—a list of names embracing very many of the leading systematic botanists of Europe—have announced that after two years more new genera

and new species of plants will not, with them, obtain recognition as published, unless the diagnoses of them be in Latin.

This ruling of the Vienna congress has quite startled the botanical public on our side of the Atlantic, if one may judge by the comments one hears; and the present writer, being one who has published many new generic propositions, and an exceedingly long list of species, all in English—and next to none at all in Latin—has already been asked repeatedly for his opinion as to this regulation.

Now as to the fact of its having come to us as a surprise, I think that our twentieth-century generation botanist is the only one to whom such a resolution would have come as a surprise. Anyhow, all of us who are familiar with the work of the great American botanists of the last half of the nineteenth century know that with them—Torrey, Engelmann, Gray, Tuckermann and several lesser names—the descriptions of their new genera and species were published in Latin; the only exceptional instances being those of their coming upon new types in the course of the publication of books and manuals intended primarily for the use of an English-speaking public, and in which only a few of the genera and species were new. And if we go back to still earlier generations we find that even the whole flora of North America, when done in book form, was done in Latin, as to the essential characters of all the genera and all the species, both old and new. Need one name Walter's 'Flora Caroliniana,' Michaux's, Pursh's and Hooker's immortal classics on the botany of an English-speaking land?

And the reason is readily manifest. Latin is, and has always been, the official language of systematic botany; the one and only language which all systematic botanists are supposed to be able to read and understand. It is our universal medium of expression. It is, therefore, hardly reasonable to expect that important contributions shall obtain wide recognition unless given in that official language. Or, if that seem too dogmatic, disputed it can not be, that a botanical book, or page, or paragraph published in Latin obtains at least a much wider and more general publication than it can attain to in any other language. This is why every great standard of taxonomy, at present, as through the past, is sure to be in Latin. But, as has been intimated, every extension of a plant genus, and every attempt to indicate and circumscribe a new group, is an important item, a new landmark, so to speak, in the progress of botany; and if important, the character should be given in Latin. Botanists, one and all, and to the ends of the earth, seem to me to have the right to demand this.

I have within the last decade heard now and then a complaint made by one and another of my American colleagues, that in Europe, and especially on the continent, due recognition has not been given to our contributions to taxonomy; and I have sympathized; but within the last two years, in the course of correspondence, it has become known to me that, in many an instance, the monographer who may have seemed to make little of a given piece of my own or some other man's work, has only done so because he could not pause in the midst of his own work to learn English well enough to be able to read understandingly our diagnoses. Of this aspect of the case I can not forego the mention of one illustration. The man across the sea, being obliged to make use of a new monograph of a certain genus, fell into something nearing despair at the number of new species, and expressed frankly a fear that few, if any, of them could be valid. Less than a half year later came word that the diagnoses were found susceptible of translation into Latin; that he had himself done the labor of translating them; that he now understood them and could not controvert the validity of the species.

It was really, all the while, a sort of unwritten law in botany, that diagnoses of new types should appear in Latin. To this day the botanists of Norway and Sweden, Finland and Russia and Japan, and all the way back again to southern and middle Europe, not excepting those of England and Ireland, do almost invariably, even in their monthly journals, give the characters of new forms in Latin. The law has been violated now and then and here and there in Europe, but we on

our side the Atlantic, since the passing of the fathers of the last generation, have quite recklessly transgressed, and I, as one of the chief among the transgressors, acknowledge the justice of the reprimand.

It will be questioned that the Vienna congress was truly and fairly international. Many will deny that its regulations are of binding force; and let all that even be denied. Yet the laws that are unwritten are sometimes, it may be, the most binding of all; and I can but regard this expression of the congress as its most important pronouncement; and viewed—if one so view it—as a mere recommendation, it is a most wholesome one.

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FLEAS AND DISEASE.

A NEW and very striking interest now attaches to investigations relative to the connection of fleas with the transmission of disease, in view of the recent specific statements that have been made in connection with the transmission of leprosy by these insects. It is perfectly true that we have very little definite knowledge of the whole matter and that opinions so far expressed are almost purely theoretical. An excellent historical résumé of the subject is given by Dr. Herzog in Bulletin No. 23 of the Bureau of Government Laboratories at Manila. He tells of various efforts to find plague bacilli in fleas or to produce the disease by allowing fleas from diseased rats to bite healthy individuals. Here he might have referred back to Yersin's experience in failing to find the bacilli in the blood from other parts of the body when they were multitudinous in the buboes, and he should have suggested that a flea might have a similar experience. Such a view-point might invalidate much if not most of the experimental work so far accomplished. The 'severe and just' criticisms of Galli-Valerio, made at a time when he was not even acquainted with the species of fleas infesting rats in regions ravaged by the plague, are scarcely worthy of consideration one way or the other. The only serious work on the subject was begun at Sydney, where there was a proper effort to first know the fleas and then to determine if any of the species infesting rats would also bite human beings. Investigators there found *Pulex pallidus* common on rats. This is a very near relative of *P. irritans* and was experimentally determined as able and willing to bite human beings, as might have been expected theoretically. The singling out of this species from all the others found there on rats was a distinct step in advance.

The verdict of the Indian Plague Commission was: No evidence, one way or the other. Indeed, all the way through this discussion, a point that strikes the unprejudiced reader more strongly than any other is the startling paucity of facts—actual observations and experiments—on which all the theories, for and against, have been built. Apparently the most categorical statements are coming from men who do not know the rat fleas of the tropics and subtropics at all. Dr. Herzog adds nothing in the way of adequate experiment, but submits the description of a 'new rat flea'—*Pulex philippinensis*—which may or may not be new, since the description does not include a single diagnostic character to make possible comparisons with any other species. The photographs presented, which are exceedingly poor in detail, indicate a form extremely close to *Pulex irritans,* the flea specific to human beings, which species has, by the way, been taken from rats, cats, dogs, foxes and other animals in regions where it is abundant, a fact of striking importance in this investigation.

There are some most important aspects of the case which have as yet not been considered at all. Most fleas are epicures in their blood-sucking habits where mosquitoes are gluttons. They do not settle and gorge themselves, as do the mosquitoes, but pass rapidly from place to place and bite often. A single flea has been observed to bite so as to leave a dozen or more inflamed spots in as many minutes and yet its abdomen show no extraordinary dilation. The flea possesses a remarkable puncturing apparatus, portions having the appearance of a double-edged saw, with an intricately developed serration. It seems likely that the