nied by the council (October 17, 1920), but permission was granted for those interested in the History of Science to enter Section L on "Historical and Philological Sciences," a Section which had never been organized and existed only in name.

The special committee appointed by the president of the association for the organization of a History of Science Section, recommended, on December 16, 1920, that the words "and philological" be dropped. This recommendation was likewise rejected by the council. It is clear, therefore, (1) that the council does not deem it wise to admit a separate section on the History of Science and (2) that the organization effected in Chicago on December 29, 1920, will not meet the needs of the increasing number of men interested in the History of Science, since, at any time, those representing "Philological Sciences" and the "Historical Sciences" (whatever that term may mean), may step in and give rise to a heterogeneous, incoherent group of workers, having no interests in common. If representatives of the "Philological Sciences" and "Historical Sciences" do not appear, then Section L constitutes in reality the very kind of organization which the council decreed should not be admitted as a Section.

In the judgment of the present writer, the dignified and logical procedure for those interested in the History of Science is, therefore, to withdraw altogether from organized historical work in connection with the American Association for the Advancement of Science until such time when the council and general session will be ready to welcome them into the association as a separate Section.

Florian Cajori
University of California

CONCERNING "AERIAL PHOTO-HYDROGRAPHY"

In an article[1] describing attempts to photograph "the small coral heads and pinnacle rocks" off the coast of Florida, E. Lester Jones of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey concludes that:

> These experiments proved very conclusively that photographs from the air, using present-day equipment, are of little practical value to the hydrographer (p. 575).

Those interested in the study of underwater features may be interested in the opposite view published in *Comptes Rendus*.[2] Objects in French water were photographed to a maximum depth of 17 m. and several points of rock were revealed by the photographs which had escaped detection by other methods. ("Plusieurs têtes de roche qui avaient échappé aux levés détaillés et trés exacts de ces parages ont été ainsi révélées par la photographie.") Specific instances are given where points of rock dangerous to shipping, not indicated on the hydrographic charts, were discovered by means of the photographs.

Perhaps the statement that photographs taken from the air are of little practical value is more conclusive than was intended.

Willis T. Lee
U. S. Geological Survey

SOIL COLOR STANDARDS

In order that there may be uniformity in the designation of the color of soils it is proposed that a set of color standards be prepared in which those colors which occur in soils and subsoils may be represented. Such a set of standard colors would be of great value to soil survey workers and would certainly lead to a better understanding of the descriptions of soils from the various regions of the United States and of the earth as a whole.

In order that such a set of color standards might be published representative soils from all parts of the United States would need to be examined. No doubt the Bureau of Soils of the United States Department of Agriculture could lead in the work and by consultation with various State Soil Surveys and with the Soil Surveys of other nations standardize the colors and publish reproductions of them as Robert Ridgway did in his "Color Standard and Color Nomenclature" (published by

[1] Science, December 17, 1920.

[2] Tome 169, 27 October, 1919.

the author, Washington, D. C., 1912). If it should seem impracticable to name all colors, a numerical system could be devised. The writer has felt the need of some such set of color standards in the Soil Survey work in South Dakota. Perhaps others may have felt the same need.

J. G. HUTTON

S. D. EXPERIMENT STATION

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

The Letters of William James. Edited by his son, HENRY JAMES. Two volumes, xx + 348 and xiii + 382, The Atlantic Monthly Press, Boston, 1920. $10.00.

William James was one of the half dozen greatest Americans of his generation; he was also a past master of writing. Every one with intellectual interests will wish to read his letters. They will be well rewarded, whether they seek better acquaintance with a great man, or literature itself, or stimuli to reflections upon the conditions of scholarly and scientific work in America.

The most notable fact about James himself which the letters reveal and emphasize is that he was from youth a philosopher and moralist, tremendously interested in the world as a whole and in its deeper meanings. Painting, natural history and medicine, each for a brief time, and psychology for almost a score of years, restrained him from the study of fundamental questions and sweeping statements which really had his life-long allegiance. At the age of twenty-six, while studying medicine and expecting to earn his living by practising it, and while gaining considerable acquaintance with the best work of the time in physiology and psychology, he was reading Hegel and writing that Kant's "Kritik" "strikes me so far as almost the sturdiest and honestest piece of work I ever saw." In the partial list of his readings during the half year after he took his M.D. philosophy and religion outweighed science and medicine nearly ten to one.

In respect to the actual working of James's intellect, the letters probably do not add much to what the shrewd reader would infer from the "Principles of Psychology," the "Varieties of Religious Experience," "Pragmatism" and other writings. The letters show brilliantly the extreme fertility of mind, the receptivity to facts, theories and viewpoints of all sorts, the impulsive reaction to approve and make the best out of every man's offering, the intuitive sense of causes and consequences, and the perfect candor and directness. They do not show so well the sheer mastery in observing and organizing the facts of human nature and behavior, the final recognitions of truth and value, and the persistent refusal to tolerate inadequacies or imperfections by which James worked his way to them.

As literature the letters have the verve, the magic gift of epithet and the utter sincerity which, writing or speaking, James never lacked. His caricature, or possibly characterization, of the university professor will be often quoted:

> —a being whose duty is to know everything, and have his own opinion about everything, connected with his *Fach*. . . . has the most prodigious faculty of appropriating and preserving knowledge, and as for opinions, he takes *au grand sérieux* his duties there. He says of each possible subject, "Here I must have an opinion. Let's see! What shall it be? How many possible opinions are there? three? four? Yes! just four! Shall I take one of these? It will seem more original to take a higher position, a sort of *Vermittelungsansicht* between them all. That I will do, etc., etc." So he acquires a complete assortment of opinions of his own; and, as his memory is so good, he seldom forgets which they are! But this is not reprehensible; it is admirable—from the professorial point of view.

He tells his little daughter of a big mastiff:

> The ears and face are black, his eyes are yellow, his paws are magnificent, his tail keeps wagging *all* the time, and he makes on me the impression of an angel hid in a cloud. He longs to do good.

Of the subtleties in the theme and treatment of his brother's latest novels he writes:

> You know how opposed your whole "third manner" of execution is to the literary ideals which