

Mr. Thomas Meehan discussed the relationship of *Helianthus annuus* and *H. lenticularis*; showing that there was a constant difference in the form of the corollas, the former being campanulate, and the latter tubular. The two are treated as one species in Gray's 'Synoptic flora of North America;' the one being considered a cultivated form of the other, — a view from which the speaker dissented. Mr. Meehan then spoke upon the fertilization of composites; concluding that the arrangements were such as to favor self-fertilization, which is opposed to the generally accepted view.

Prof. L. M. Underwood of Syracuse, N.Y., gave some statistics concerning the North-American Hepaticae. Of the two hundred and thirty-one species found north of Mexico, a hundred and twenty are peculiar to America: fully one-half the latter are not represented in any public or private herbarium in this country.

In a paper on the nature of gumming, or gummosis, in fruit-trees, Prof. J. C. Arthur detailed experiments from which the conclusion had been reached, that it was due to a de-organization of the cell-walls of the tree through the influence of some fungus, but not necessarily of a specific one. It had been produced experimentally by the bacteria of pear-blight and by *Monilia fructigenum*, the fruit-rot fungus; although the most common cause is doubtless the *Coryneum*, first described by Oudemans in Hedwigia.

At the final meeting the committee on postal matters then gave its report. This committee was appointed at Minneapolis to inquire into the various obstructions which the postal authorities throw in the way of exchanging specimens of dried plants. The efforts of the committee had been directed toward securing the passage of specimens bearing the customary written label at fourth-class rates of postage. The decision of the postmaster-general was read, stating that the present law could not be construed to permit the passage of specimens with written labels except at letter-rates, but expressing a willingness to bring the matter, at the proper time, to the attention of congress, the Canadian authorities, and the congress of the Universal postal union. Some discussion followed; and a motion was carried to continue the committee, and also instructing the president and secretary of the club to draft resolutions to be presented to the section of biology in order to still further promote the objects in view. These resolutions were acted upon by the biological section on the following day. Dr. Bessey was chosen president, and Professor Arthur secretary, for the next year.

Besides the reading of papers, the club took several excursions. On Saturday they went to the pine-barrens of New Jersey, about fifty participating. On Monday a party visited the ballast-grounds during the morning, and upon their return inspected the library and herbarium of Mr. I. C. Martindale of Camden, N.J. In the evening of the same day the Botanical section of the Philadelphia academy of sciences entertained the club, the Torrey botanical

club of New-York City, and other invited guests, at the rooms of the academy. About three hundred were present, and a thoroughly enjoyable time experienced. On the afternoon of Tuesday the club and its friends, in all about eighty, made an excursion to the Bartram gardens, one of the most interesting historical spots to botanists in this country; and the club then adjourned.

In reviewing the attendance of botanists at Philadelphia, and the work of the Botanical club, there is much reason for congratulation. About a hundred entered their names on the register of the club as botanists, or about eight per cent of the total attendance, one-half of whom are widely known for their attainments in the science. There was no lack of interesting papers and free discussion. Besides the important measures already referred to, the club was instrumental in securing the appointment of a permanent committee of the Association to encourage researches on the health and diseases of plants. But, above all, the augmented facilities for intercourse and acquaintanceship, and the impulse imparted to individual workers, through the influence of the club, are a sufficient *raison d'être*, and a promise of usefulness for the future.

PSYCHICAL RESEARCH IN AMERICA.

A MEETING was held in Boston, on Sept. 23, to consider the advisability of forming an American society for psychical research. Prof. W. F. Barrett, vice-president of the English society, was present, and gave an account of the work they are doing in England in the investigation of 'mind-reading' and the so-called spiritualistic phenomena, which last they always find to fail when the medium is securely bound. As one good result of the English society's work, it was stated that there had been a decrease in the activity of the society of spiritualists in London. It was the sense of the meeting, that if any thing could be done in this country to check the growth of the belief in the supernatural powers of 'mediums,' and to show what is the true explanation of such phenomena as 'mind-reading' and mesmerism, it would be a work which should enlist the assistance of American scientific men. Professor Barrett showed, that, in the case of 'mind-reading,' most of the results pointed to an unconscious guidance on the part of the person whose mind was being read, but there were residual cases he would not so explain. It was the opinion of those present, that the collecting of the stories of fulfilled dreams and anxieties would be fruitless, but that there were many questions of a physiological nature which should be investigated, and no longer be allowed to go unanswered or ignored. A committee was appointed to consider the whole matter of the formation of a society, or in what way it may seem best to undertake the work; and, at a meeting held last week, steps were taken for the formation of a society in America, of which we hope soon to report the complete organization.