

lizard, previously recorded as extinct. Hundreds are now to be met with on the outskirts of Kingston, where only a few years ago not one was to be seen. The wood-slave is not rarely seen. Crocodiles are certainly more in evidence, especially on the south side; numerous eggs, young and adult forms being now brought to the Museum. There is not nearly the same outcry against the loss of poultry and domestic animals, particularly around the towns. Correspondents from the country state that beevies of quail are to be occasionally seen, and that the various pigeons and black-birds are more numerous.

The attorney in charge of the largest sugar estate in the island gives information that lately more of his canes are being destroyed, due to an increase in the number of rats, and that ticks are not nearly so prevalent. There seems not the slightest doubt therefore but that the maximum influence, both for good and for evil, of the Mongoose, is passing away in Jamaica; first from the vicinity of towns, but not less surely from the country districts. Of the cause we can do little more than speculate at present.

The animals now returning in greater abundance were evidently never exterminated, but only extremely rare; so that, as their destroyer in the past is becoming less important, they are increasing towards their original proportions. New balances of life are being struck in the island, and further developments will be watched with interest."

ROBT. T. HILL.

U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

*THE INTERNATIONAL METEOROLOGICAL AND
HYDROLOGICAL MEETINGS.*

THESE were held last autumn in France, the first and more important being the International Meteorological Conference, which met at Paris, in the Hotel de la Société d'Encouragement, September 17th to 23d, inclusive. It had the same official

character as the similar conference at Munich in 1891, to which representatives of the principal meteorological services and observatories of the world were invited. There were at Paris about forty such representatives, besides several specialists who were invited to participate in the discussions. At Munich the United States Weather Bureau had two representatives, but at Paris, unfortunately, there was not one. Mr. J. Page represented unofficially the United States Hydrographic Office, and the writer represented the Harvard College and Blue Hill Observatories. No one came from either Spain or Brazil, as was the case at Munich, but Belgium, Canada and Mexico each sent a delegate to Paris, the two latter countries participating for the first time in an international meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. R. H. Scott, secretary of the Permanent International Committee, and M. Mascart, director of the French Meteorological Office, was chosen president of the meeting. The programme of questions proposed for discussion was shortened by excluding questions which had been considered at previous Congresses or which were beyond the scope of this Conference. Action on some propositions was deferred and there was an unwillingness to aid anyone to influence his government. The postponed proposition for double thermometric stations was decided by recommending that a standard thermometer shelter be adopted in each country and that comparisons be instituted between it and other shelters, and especially the Assmann aspiration thermometer. Most of the questions were considered by sub-committees on meteorological telegraphy, instruments and methods of observations, cloud observations, terrestrial magnetism and atmospheric electricity, whose reports were substantially adopted by the Conference. Among the most important opinions expressed was a general recommendation by the first-named com-

mittee that the daily international dispatches to Paris be accelerated, so that they should be more useful in forecasting, pending the possible adoption of the American 'circuit system' in the European countries; the second committee refused to adopt either a standard anemometer or a uniform exposure for anemometers; and the third committee, after considering the delays which had occurred in commencing the international system of cloud observations in some countries, requested, when possible, that both nephoscope observations and theodolite measurements of clouds be continued throughout the year 1897, in order to obtain one whole year of observations for synoptic comparison. Probably the most noteworthy feature of the Conference was the attempt of the last named of the sub-committees to secure uniformity in magnetic surveys, and as regards instruments and methods of reduction both in the field and at the permanent stations. Resolutions were adopted favoring the use of captive balloons, free balloons, and unmanned, or pilot balloons for obtaining meteorological data in the upper air. Simultaneous ascents in the different countries and the prompt publication of the original observations were recommended. The success of kites at Blue Hill Observatory for elevating self-recording meteorological instruments led to the expressed desire that similar experiments should be made elsewhere.

The Conference reappointed the International Meteorological Committee, which was elected at Munich, except that three vacancies caused by resignations were filled. This committee of 17 is thus constituted: von Bezold, of Prussia; Billwiller, of Switzerland; de Brito-Capello, of Portugal; Davis, of Argentine Republic; Eliot, of India; Hann, of Austria; Hepites, of Roumania; Hildebrandsson, of Sweden; Mascart, of France; Mohn, of Norway; Moore, of the United States; Paulsen, of Denmark; Rus-

sell, of New South Wales; Rykatcheff, of Russia; Scott, of Great Britain; Snellen, of the Netherlands; Tacchini, of Italy. M. Mascart is the President, and Mr. Scott retains the position of Secretary to the Committee, which he has held for many years. The Committee appointed commissions to deal with problems relating to solar radiation, terrestrial magnetism and atmospheric electricity, cloud observations and meteorological aeronautics. The United States is represented in the two last-named commissions by the writer. French, English and German reports of the Conference will be published, respectively, by Messrs. Mascart, Scott and von Bezold. The date of the next conference was fixed five years hence, the place of meeting to be named by the International Committee.

During the Conference the meteorological institutions of Paris and its suburbs were visited. These included the Central Meteorological Office with its station on the Eiffel Tower and its meteorological and magnetical observatory at the Parc Saint Maur, the municipal observatories of the Tour Saint Jacques and Montsouris, and the new private observatory of M. Teisserenc de Bort at Trappes, which is devoted to dynamic meteorology and at present chiefly to the measurement of cloud heights by photography. The pleasantest feature of the Conference was the cordial relations which existed between all the members, and these were especially noticeable in the case of the French and Germans. At a breakfast given by M. Mascart on the Eiffel Tower, M. Rambaud, the Minister of Public Instruction, under whose patronage the Conference was placed, spoke of the international character of all science, but especially meteorology, since the air which we breathe belongs to no country and can be monopolized by no one.

The Fourth International Congress of Hydrology, Climatology and Geology,

which has been noticed already in *SCIENCE*, met at Clermont-Ferrand, in the Department of the Puy de Dôme, between September 28th and October 2d, inclusive. The first session was at Biarritz in 1886, but the geological section was added this year. The present Congress, open to anyone on payment of a fee, was attended by about two hundred persons, of whom more than half were French physicians, but its international title was sustained by the presence of official delegates and representatives of eleven other countries. The Congress was under the patronage of the Minister of the Interior who delegated Prof. Proust, general inspector of the Sanitary Services. Dr. de Ranse and Dr. Fredet, president and general secretary, respectively, of the Committee of Organization, retained these offices for the meeting. The foreign honorary president, chosen by acclamation, was Dr. Berthenson, of Russia, the foreign honorary vice-presidents being Prof. Ludwig, of Austria, Prof. Kuborn, of Belgium, and Mr. Rotch, of the United States.

The Congress met in three sections, but, as might be expected, the chief interest was in the hydrological section. The Committee of Organization had prepared printed reports upon questions pertaining to each section, which were read and discussed. The majority of the papers presented afterwards treated of the therapeutic properties of thermal and climatic stations, but there were three conferences on the history of hydrology, the geology and the climate of the region. The proceedings will be published under the direction of the Committee.

Outside the University, where the meetings were held, there was much to be seen, and in a volume specially prepared for the occasion the historical and physical features of the province of Auvergne were described. Unfortunately, the cold, rainy weather proved a drawback to sight-seeing. The

climatological conference was given on the Puy de Dôme, at the observatory, which, built twenty years ago, was the first well-equipped mountain meteorological station in Europe. During the Congress, an exhibition of objects illustrating the neighboring thermal stations was open at Clermont. Entertainments were given by this municipality, and at a banquet offered by the management of the Thermal Establishment at Royat some international courtesies were exchanged. After the close of the Congress the more distant thermal stations were visited. The next session is intended to take place at Brussels in 1898.

A. LAWRENCE ROTCH.

A PROPOSED BUREAU OF PLANT REGISTRATION.

THE question of establishing a bureau for the registration of plants, in connection with the present Division of Pomology, was brought before the Section of Botany and Horticulture at the recent meeting of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations, by Prof. L. C. Corbett, of the West Virginia University. After a careful consideration of the matter, the Section appointed a committee to report upon the feasibility of the scheme, and to suggest the outline of a plan to be presented to Congress at an early date. The committee consisted of L. C. Corbett, Morgantown, W. Va., Chairman; W. A. Taylor, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.; Prof. L. H. Bailey, Ithaca, N. Y.; F. S. Earle, Auburn, Ala., and C. H. Shinn, Berkeley, Cal.

The idea is to have some one place in the United States where all plants placed upon the market can be officially registered, numbered, and a description, together with specimens of the bloom, seed, foliage and fruit, placed on record. When it is not practicable to preserve the original, colored casts are to be prepared, as in the case of