DR. WILLIAM STIRLING has been appointed to the chair of physiology in the University of Aberdeen.

THE *American Journal of Pure and Applied Mathematics*, the New York *Nation* states, will appear quarterly, beginning with January, 1878. The form will be quarto, and 384 pages will constitute a volume. The associate-editor in charge is Dr. W. E. Story, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

AT the Social Science Congress which has been meeting in Aberdeen during the past week, there were very few papers of strictly scientific interest. Among papers in the Educational Section was one by Prof. Bain on Competitive Examination for Public Appointments. In their choice of subjects the Civil Service Commissioners had, he remarked, been guided by the received branches of education in the college and schools, but after an inquiry into the essential nature of the subjects, he arrived at the conclusion that the sciences and not the languages were the proper subjects for competition. Other languages than our own were only of secondary utility. He expressed surprise at our intense conservatism in the matter of languages. There were, according to him, three great regions of study that should be fairly represented by every successful candidate—first, the sciences as a whole; secondly, English composition; and thirdly, institutions and history, with perhaps literature. These he would fix as a minimum. Sir Alexander Grant, principal of the Edinburgh University, read a paper on the Best Means of Securing a High Standard of Education. He considered a revision of the code, in order to remove the inequality in which classics and mathematics stood in relation to science in the "specific subjects," and a reconstruction of the normal school system to be necessary. Dr. Brown, of Haddington, read a paper in which he advocated the establishment of schools of forestry in Great Britain, in view of the fact that all candidates for admission to the department of the Indian Civil Service which had to deal with this matter, had to pass an examination which they at present could only qualify themselves for by going to France or Germany for the instruction. Something of this kind was being attempted in connection with the botanic gardens of the Edinburgh University, where ground had now been acquired for an arboretum.

SOME of our readers may like to know that, as might have been expected, the three rhinoceroses now exhibited in the Alexandra Park are specimens of the African Black Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros bicornis*). This species is extremely uncommon in menageries, and we have heard of no other in this country except the fine adult male now living in the Zoological Society's Gardens in Regent's Park. The three specimens above referred to are all young, a pair being about eighteen months old, and the other a male not more than a year old. In the larger specimens the posterior horn is much smaller than that upon the nose, whilst in the young male its existence is only indicated by a slight rugosity. The late development of the posterior horn is of particular interest, as it shows that the growth of this dermal appendage is a secondary phenomenon, which makes it not surprising that there may be causes which result in it attaining a greater size than usual, as it does in the so-called distinct species, *R. sondaicus*, in which the only characterising feature is its large posterior horn.

IT is perhaps a fortunate thing that our great politicians, like the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr. John Bright, are beginning to concern themselves in their public addresses with science as well as art. With reference to Mr. Bright's recent address, as the *Times* remarks, if his hearers complain that they have not been told much about either science or art, we can only say that we agree with them, and that we deplore our common loss. In the coming time it is to be hoped that public speakers, like Mr. Bright, will know better what science really is than they seem to do now.

IT is stated that the Italian Government has authorised two officers of the Royal Navy to take part in the Polar expedition which the Swedish Government is fitting out.

THE *Gaulois* states that M. Durnof, the balloonist, has been engaged by the Russian Government to organise an aeronautical service for the Danube army.

THE last field meeting of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club for the year will be held at Hereford, for a foray among the funguses, on Thursday, October 4. M. Maxime Cornu, of Paris, is expected to be present. An exhibition of funguses, apples, and pears will be held in the museum room at the Free Library. The fungus foray will be made on the Whitfield Lawns, by the kind permission of the Rev. Archer Clive. Carriages will leave the Free Library at 10 A.M., to return there by 3.30. A meeting of the members will be held on the return, in the Woolhope Room, for the election of officers for the ensuing year, and for the transaction of the ordinary business of the club. After dinner, or in the course of the evening, the following among other papers will be given:—A Report on the Progress of Mycology during the Year, by Dr. Bull; a Report on the Progress of "The Herefordshire Pomona," by the Rev. C. H. Bulmer; "On a Fossil Fungus (*Pythium*) with Zoospores in situ, belonging to the Palæozoic Epoch," by Worthington G. Smith, F.L.S.; and if time permit, a paper "On the Mosses of Herefordshire," by the Rev. Augustin Ley.

AT a meeting of the Linnean Society of New South Wales, on March 28, 1877, Mr. E. P. Ramsay read a "Note of a Species of Echidna (*Tachyglossus*) from Port Moresby, New Guinea," in which he described a fine and apparently full-grown male Echidna from that locality, applying to it the specific name *lawesii*, after its discoverer, Mr. Lawes, who had given the specimen to the Museum at Sydney. Mr. Ramsay's description has been published in the *Proceedings* of the above-named Society, and is accompanied by a plate representing the head and forepart of the animal and one of the hind feet, of the natural size. Unfortunately no diagnosis is given whereby the differences between this New Guinean form and the two long-known species of Australia and Tasmania are made plain; but as that gentleman is doubtless familiar with both of them, we may take his word for it that *Tachyglossus lawesii* is a good and distinct species. Its distinctness from the other New Guinean form, *T. bruijni*, is manifest.

IT has been proposed by a correspondent of the *New York Tribune* to give the names of Romulus and Remus to the two satellites of Mars.

WE understand that the Council of the Working Men's College, Great Ormond Street, have arranged for the ensuing session a series of lectures in connection with the Science and Art Department upon Human Physiology. The lectures will be delivered on Friday evenings by Mr. Thomas Dunman, and will commence on October 5.

AT the meeting of the Birmingham Natural History Society on the 18th inst. Mr. W. R. Hughes, F.L.S., gave some account of the recent dredging excursion of the Society to Arran. He described how the idea of such an excursion took shape, and gave an interesting account of the numerous finds of the party, mainly in Lamlash Bay, where, of course, it was not to be expected that anything new was to be found. Still many of the forms obtained were of great interest, and the members present gained much solid instruction by being able to examine specimens fresh from their native habitat. Other societies would do well to imitate this enterprising Birmingham association; indeed it might not be a bad idea for several societies to club together

and carry out a similar excursion on a more extended Marshall described the echinoderms, molluscs, an crustaceans taken.

PROF. PALMIERI has noted for the present anomalies of temperature. The degree of heat obse Vesuvius Observatory is unprecedented, having reac and the mercury has fallen as low as − 7° C. This rature has never been reached once before, even in February, in the twenty-five years during which the has been established.

THE Emperor of Brazil has formed a commission c the determination of geographical positions in the the first work of this commission is just published. an account of the determination of the longitude and Barra de Pirahy. Geodesic operations are co localities situated on the prolongation of the Santos also on the parallel (10° in length) destined to join great meridian of the empire, which will be meas commission.

Die Natur of September 17 contains an interestir of some of the myths and stories which constitute the the Australian aborigines.

IN the Anthropological Section of the Havre me French Association M. Gustave Lagneau exhibite graphic map of France, on which he has attempted in accordance with historical and ethnographical division, juxtaposition, superposition and mixture of ethnical elements which have contributed to the form present population of the country.

OF the many natural history societies in the Unite one, so far as is known, is composed almost entirely the proceedings of which are published in the Germa This is the Naturhistorischer Verein, of Milwaukee, of which the annual report for 1876–77 has just bee This society is organised in five sections—zoolo mineralogy, geology, and ethnology—holds regular m has quite a large active membership.

A GENERAL inventory has been taken by the Fre of all the public libraries of France. More than have been found to possess each a library num 10,000 to 20,000 volumes.

A SWEDISH paper just received publishes an inter under the heading, "Why is the Climate of Eur Colder?" The article states that in the Bay o near Koma, in Greenland, fossil and very character of palm and other trees have been discovered lately, to show that in these parts formerly a rich vegetatio existed. But the ice period of geologists arrived, a sequence of the decreasing temperature, this fine ve covered with ice and snow. This sinking in the which moved in a southerly direction, as can be pro logical data, *i.e.*, the discovery of fossil plants of ce seems to be going on in our days also. During years the ice has increased far towards the south. t Greenland and the Arctic Sea colossal masses of ic mulated. On European coasts navigators now in ice in latitudes where it never existed before during months, and the cold reigning upon the Scandinav this summer results from the masses of ice which ar the region where the Gulf Stream bends towards This is a repetition of the observations made in the of 1805. The unaccustomed vicinity of these m has rendered the climate of Iceland so cold th longer ripens there, and the Icelanders, in fear