

of such systems as we have. This, if found to be the fact, will be very far from yielding the least support to the people who just now, under the name of conservatism, are making the plea of convenience, as against us who would insist upon the exercise of the principle of priority; for they are only pleading as against present changes, that is, against a present and transitory inconvenience, as affecting only the present generation of biologists; whereas, the only convenience which reasonable principles can very seriously regard and try to provide for must be the general convenience of all, that of the future as well as of the present; nay, more than of the present; because it would be absurd to question that the future generations of those who will have to do with the names—scientific names—of plants and animals, are prospectively a thousand fold more numerous and important a body than the whole little handful of to-day, how large a handful we to ourselves may seem.

Of convenience, one of the very prime conditions, as far as relates to nomenclature, is brevity. Such of the Linnæan names of plants and animals as are binary have, by universal consent, been allowed to supersede those older names which were of from three to a dozen words' length; thus has more brevity abundantly proved itself a principle far more truly fundamental than priority.

Again, what is perhaps still more thoroughly an underlying principle of botanico-zoological nomenclature is that it be given in the terms of, and according to the rules of, an universal language. It were most easy to demonstrate that neither the binary quality of a name, nor a right of priority, nor both these qualities combined, ever gives a plant name the right to recognition, unless it have the quality of Latinity, unless it be given in the Latin language, at least as to its form. And this, too, is only a matter of

general utility; convenience is looked to, not indeed of the English, or of the Germans, or of the Russians, or of the Japanese; for the botanists of each and all these nations, separately considered, would be better accommodated, the English by the adoption of English instead of Latin, the Germans by the adoption of German, as the language of scientific nomenclature, and so on through the whole list of modern tongues.

Under a rational treatment of the whole subject it can hardly fail to appear that, as making for the convenience of the whole botanical world, in time present and to come, the first fundamental principle is that of an Universal Language of Nomenclature; the second, that of Brevity in Names; the third—and this subservient to both the aforementioned, and secondary to them—the principal of Priority of Publication.

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#### IMPRESSIONS OF THE NAPLES ZOÖLOGICAL STATION.

THE *Stazione Zoologica* of Naples is so well known that it is quite unnecessary to say anything at present about the history of this famous establishment. The editor of SCIENCE has asked me, however, to write an account of the work of the station as seen from within during my visit of ten months to Naples. During that time it was my good fortune to occupy the table of the Smithsonian Institution, and I take this opportunity to express to the Secretary of the Smithsonian and to the Associated Board of Directors of the Naples Table my indebtedness for the appointment.

Prof. Dohrn has recently given in *Nature* an account of the history of the Naples station and of the work that has been accomplished. Prof. Dohrn's life and interests have been so intimately connected with

the history of the Naples station, and his influence for good is so widely felt throughout the working of the institution that to speak of the success of the station is to speak of the splendid results of the life-work of one man. And all who have been in Naples will, I think, agree with me, when I add that to Professors Eisig and Meyer, no small part of the success of the station is also due.

The station is situated in the beautiful *Villa Nazionale*, within a stone's throw of the Bay of Naples. The building of stucco and marble is in two parts joined by a bridge. Within are several well conducted departments. First is the aquarium proper on the ground floor of the larger building. This is open to the public. You enter a large square room with huge aquaria on the sides. In the center are still other and smaller aquaria. Each aquarium is built into the wall, and all the light comes from above, so that the observer standing within the darkened room sees the animals as though himself submerged amongst them. The effect is indescribably beautiful.

The aquaria are supplied with aerated, running water, and it is interesting to note that in winter when the turbid water of the bay is unfit for use, the water in the large reservoir in the station is used over and over again, even for months at a time.

A corps of fishermen is supported by the station and brings in every day fresh material to supply the wants of the investigators and to restock the aquaria. The other Neapolitan fishermen too have learned the value of the rarer animals, and a half-score of these interesting fellows are generally present in the collecting department bargaining, as only a Neapolitan can bargain, for their fish.

All of the Mediterranean forms of life are prepared by the station, and sold at very reasonable rates. Considering the skill required to preserve many of the delicate pe-

lagic animals and the success of Sig. Lo Bianco in this direction, it is not surprising to learn that the Naples station supplies material to many of the largest museums and laboratories of the world.

The chief aim and work of the station is original investigation, and the laboratories are thoroughly equipped for this purpose. There are large zoölogical and physiological laboratories and a smaller botanical laboratory, and in addition a number of private rooms for special research. Each worker is fully equipped with the necessary reagents and apparatus. Peppino is always willing to add any special preservatives, etc., should such be needed. Each worker has a private aquarium for his own use. Every day there is brought in to him a fresh supply of animals.

So rich is the fauna of the bay and so well managed is the collecting department, with its little steamer and other boats, that you have only to make known your wants and you are often embarrassed by the quantity of material that is brought to you. Even within the last year the equipment has been overhauled and greatly improved, so that the station is now better prepared than ever before to carry on its work. The number of investigators who go every year to the Naples station is the best guarantee of the widespread appreciation of its advantages. The library is excellent, and the books are made very accessible to all the workers in the station. In the arrangement of the books it is a model of what a library should be. Each investigator is allowed to go to the shelves and get his own books, leaving a card on the shelf in place of the book removed.

The laboratories are open day and night, and the rooms are heated in winter. This is by no means a small matter, for in winter the station is often the only warm place in Naples for weeks together.

The special advantages for work in Na-

ples are I think, these: Absolute freedom to work on any subject desired, a plentiful and never-failing supply of fresh material and a well-filled library always at hand.

At the Naples station are found men of all nationalities. Investigators, professors, privatdocents, assistants and students come from Russia, Germany, Austria, Italy, Holland, England, Belgium, Switzerland and 'America'—men of all shades of thought and all sorts of training. The scene shifts from month to month like the turning of a kaleidoscope. No one can fail to be impressed and to learn much in the clash of thought and criticism that must be present where such diverse elements come together. And through all the changes of life and thought Prof. Dohrn and his staff remain always open-minded, courteous, helpful and generous. Isolated, as we are in America, from much of the newer, current feeling, we are able at Naples, as in no other laboratory in the world, to get in touch with the best modern work.

During the ten months in which I was in Naples there were seven Americans there for longer or shorter periods. At present we have but one table under the direction of the Smithsonian Institution. It is needless to add that one table is insufficient for the demands of American students.

The following list gives the names of those who have occupied the Smithsonian Table: Mr. David Fairchild, of the United States Department of Agriculture; Prof. H. C. Bumpus, of Brown University; Prof. Wm. M. Wheeler, University of Chicago; Dr. Lewis Murbach, University of Michigan; Prof. Herbert Osborn, University of Iowa; Prof. T. H. Morgan, Bryn Mawr College; Mr. Walter T. Swingle, United States Department of Agriculture; Dr. J. M. McFarland, Leland Stanford University. The table has been continuously filled since its establishment, and more applications have been made than it was possible to grant.

Williams College at one time subscribed to a table for a year, and the University of Pennsylvania had also a table for a year; and more recently other Americans have enjoyed the advantages of a table subscribed for by Prof. Agassiz.

Major Davis has again and again in recent years most generously paid for tables for those who have been unable to find other opportunity, and it is notorious that for many years in the past the Americans in Naples have had to ask for foreign tables. It is to be hoped that a better time is coming.

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*ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN  
MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY.*

THE annual meeting of the American Mathematical Society was held in New York, on Friday afternoon, December 27, at three o'clock, the President, Dr. G. W. Hill, in the chair. Among those present were Prof. Ernest W. Brown, Prof. F. N. Cole, Dr. J. B. Chittenden, Prof. Edwin S. Crawley, Dr. J. W. Davis, Dr. W. S. Dennett, Mr. P. A. Lambert, Mr. G. Legras, Prof. A. Macfarlane, Mr. James MacLay, Mr. C. R. Mann, Dr. Emory McClintock, Prof. James McMahon, Prof. Mansfield Merriman, Prof. Hubert A. Newton, Mr. J. C. Pfister, Miss A. Rayson, Prof. J. K. Rees, Mr. R. A. Roberts, Prof. J. H. Van Amringe, Prof. J. M. Van Vleck, Prof. E. B. Van Vleck, Prof. R. S. Woodward. In the Secretary's report it was stated that the total membership of the Society was 267. The Council and Officers for the coming year are as follows: President, Dr. G. W. Hill; Vice-President, Prof. H. A. Newton; Secretary, Prof. F. N. Cole; Treasurer, Prof. R. S. Woodward; Librarian, Prof. Pomeroy Ladue; Committee of Publication, Prof. Thomas S. Fiske, Prof. Alexander Ziwet, Prof. Frank Morley; other members of the Council, Prof. Henry