cuse University, part of which has been used for the purchase of twenty-nine microscopes.

THE will of the late Miss Elizabeth Rogers leaves all her property, valued at $100,000, to the Rogers Hall School for Girls at Lowell, Mass.

THE sum of $50,000 has been collected in Pittsburg for the Methodist American University at Washington.

THE growth of the various English university colleges as compared with the older universities is illustrated by the papers read before the Royal Society during the past three years. Professor Ramsay points out that of 252 such papers about half—122—were contributed from these colleges, leaving only half from Oxford, Cambridge, Scottish and Irish universities and private individuals. University College, London, contributed 57 papers, which apparently surpasses the number of papers from Oxford or Cambridge.

THE Isaac Newton Studentship of Astronomy and the John Lucas Walker Studentship in Pathology at Cambridge University will be filled in January. Each studentship is of the annual value of £200 and is tenable for three years.

WE announced last week that Professor W. C. Röntgen had been called from Würzburg to Leipzig. The vacancy, we now learn, is caused by the retirement of Dr. Gustav Weidermann, which takes place at the end of the present semester.

DR. KLOCKMANN, of Clausthal, has been appointed professor of mineralogy and geology in the Institute of Technology at Aix.

M. C. SAUVAGEAU has been appointed professor of botany in the faculty of sciences at Dijon.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

ANLAGE OR PROTON?

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: I have read with interest the letter from Professor Burt G. Wilder which you recently published in regard to the word 'proton.' I thoroughly agree with him that it is very desirable to have some word better than *rudiment* for the primitive beginning in the embryo out of which some future structure is to be developed. We need a good word to use in our language, as the Germans use 'anlage' in theirs.

The suggestion of *proton* by Professor Wilder and that of 'primordium' by Professor Willey are certainly interesting, and I think, if we are to rely upon the Greek to supply us with a new term, that the suggestion made by Professor Wilder is the best we have had. But against all these suggestions I have to make an objection. It seems to me that the time has now definitely passed when it can be taken as a necessity for science to derive *all* technical terms from the Greek. When we look the matter fairly in the face we must recognize that the claim of superlative availability of Greek words and Greek derivatives is a survival of the Mediæval epoch, which was itself a survival of the earlier Roman days, when the Greek language was the language of the cultured, and the language with which all educated persons were not merely acquainted, but familiar. Whether or not this is a loss or gain, the Greek language is not now familiar to our generation; it is a language quite apart from the present day. The fact which we have to meet is that a knowledge of Greek is far from universal, and that a thorough knowledge of Greek is rarely attained except by the special student of the language. After all, a word is merely a convenient combination of sounds to furnish a symbol for a certain idea, and there is no inherent psycological reason why sounds of the type used by the Greeks should alone serve to represent ideas of a scientific character. Indeed, is it not striking that the greatest scientific nation of the world habitually uses technical terms of its own language—that German scientists use German words?

Now, Germany has attained such preeminence in science that it is probable that in any department at least as much is published in German as in any other two languages. It is literally impossible to keep abreast with any special department of science without a knowledge of German, and this implies an acquaintance with German words used by Germans with a technical meaning. An acquaintance with such words is absolutely indispensable.

To return to the question of an English equiv-

alent for 'anlage.' Why should we not use the German term? Why is not the German combination of sounds as scientific as any Greek combination? Why should we turn to Greek, a language far remote from English, out of which we must manufacture the word we want, rather than turn to the kindred language of German, which contains the precise word we want, a word, moreover, which every one must understand, if he wishes to study the science of embryology? Another important consideration is that the word 'anlage' has already been so widely and so extensively adopted both in England and America that it is now probably universally understood and often looked upon by those who use it as an accepted and established English word. Indeed, I believe its usage has become so thoroughly established that not only is the word indispensable, but also it has become impracticable to attempt to modify it; that the substitution of *proton* or *primordium* could not be accomplished, and that the attempt to make such substitution would only create an unfortunate conflict of terms. I hope, therefore, that these attempts and all similar ones will be renounced. It may also be described as a nuisance—this incessant introduction of superfluous scientific terms—and particularly in the form it takes of constantly adding a great many elaborate artificial words of Greek origin which are thoroughly unnecessary for scientific purposes. It would tend far more to the promotion of science to strike out altogether—so that they should be forever forgotten—half of the terms which have been introduced during the last twenty years, than to make any further additions to them. The load of unnecessary technical terms which we have to carry is a a terrible impediment, which hinders our progress every day. I cannot but consider it the result of a pedantic superstition, which appears like a Moloch to whom the life of Science must pay a heavy sacrifice.

CHARLES SEDGWICK MINOT.
HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL,
December 10, 1898.

IS THE BEACH PEA FOOD OR POISON?

CAN any botanical reader of SCIENCE give me any information in regard to the use as food of the seeds of the common Beach Pea (*Lathyrus maritimus*)?

Some twenty years ago I was told a story of some children near Boston who were terribly poisoned from thoughtlessly eating these peas. In fact, my impression is that one or more of them were said to have died from the effects of the poison. Recently, however, in looking over the files of the 'Meddelelser om Grønland,' I came across the following note. In Lange's 'Conspectus floræ grœnlandicæ,' under the heading *Lathyrus maritimus* (Med. om Grønl., Hefte 3, p. 233), the author writes as follows: 'Obs. Seminibus combustis ad coffeam parandam utuntur Grœnlandi,' quoting Wormsksjöld as his authority. Of course, it is possible that roasting the peas to make coffee, neutralizes the poisonous principle if there be any. I should be glad of any further information on the subject, and, at all events, wish especially to call attention to this curious substitute for coffee. JOHN MURDOCH.

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[WE are informed by Mr. V. K. Chesnut that the seed of the beach pea, *Lathyrus maritimus*, is eaten while still green in a number of places, including England, parts of Alaska, Kamchatka and the Island of Yeso. No recorded cases of poisoning from this species are known to him, but a peculiar kind of poisoning is caused by eating the seeds of other species of *Lathyrus* for long periods at a time. It is a curious disease which at one time and another has been very prevalent in India. Horses have recently been killed there by eating imported seeds of some of the vetches. It seems possible, therefore, that some toxic principle may be present in the beach pea. The question might be settled if a series of experiments were made on guinea pigs.—EDITOR SCIENCE.]

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