of formation is directly proportional to the number of atomic unions in the molecule.

3. The absolute heat of formation of any organic compound is a multiple, by a whole number, of a single constant. The latter is identical with the neutralization constant, and has a value somewhere between 13,700 and 13,800 calories.

4. The thermal value of a union between two atoms is independent of their masses.

5. The absolute heats of formation of corresponding chlorides, bromides and iodides are equal.

The last conclusion at once suggests a correlation between thermochemical data and Faraday's law. From this point of view, the latter may become part of a wider generalization whose details are yet to be worked out.

Mr. J. D. Thompson then explained the principles of the 'Reclassification of the Science Section at the Library of Congress.' All the books in the library are to be grouped in twenty-six classes, lettered A to Z; Q is assigned to science; a second letter gives the first subdivision, and then follow numbers, as Q A 503; in a second line the familiar Cutter author-abbreviations are given. The division is to be rather minute since access to the shelves will be liberally granted to students. It is expected that ultimately the library will have a card catalogue of all the other Washington libraries.

C. K. WEAD,
Secretary.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

GUESSES ON THE RELATIVE WEIGHTS OF BILLS AND COINS.

IN SCIENCE for April 25 an account was given by Mr. J. Franklin Messenger of certain results obtained in reply to the question, 'How many one-dollar bills will equal in weight a five-dollar gold piece?' The answers revealed a quite startling notion either of the heaviness of the coin or of the lightness of the bill, the average guess being 2,291 for 97 students of Columbia University and 2,749 for a class of students in the University of Kansas. The correct answer should have been about 7. The writer of the article used only those results that were obtained from male students, somewhat disparagingly remarking that he had omitted the replies of the women because of their great variation. Since the feminine power to make reliable, or at least utilizable, estimates of this nature was thus called in question, I determined to put the same query to a class of 175 students in Smith College. The results were by comparison so gratifying that it may be of interest to state them.

A few had heard of the question before and were more or less sure of the correct answer. Their replies were, of course, excluded, leaving 162 replies for consideration. The average estimate was 108, as compared with the above given figures, 2,291 and 2,749. But, as Mr. Messenger rightly says, it is not so much the average as the median that is here significant. This was found to be 25, as compared with 45 for the Columbia students and 99 for the students of the University of Kansas.

Since a five-dollar gold piece is a relatively unknown quantity to those of us who live in this part of the country, a further question was asked as to the number of one-dollar bills requisite to equal in weight a fifty-cent piece. The average of 162 replies was 161.7, the median 50. The correct number is between 9 and 10. Familiarity with the coin seems not to have added materially to the correctness of the estimate.

I am not at all sure that such investigations as this disclose any profound psychological laws, but the results here given may serve to correct the error that women are less capable than men to make estimates of this sort.

A. H. PIERCE.

SMITH COLLEGE.

A POINT IN NOMENCLATURE.

MORE than once lately, lacking time to explain my views on zoological nomenclature in detail, I have stated to correspondents that they agreed with those of Dr. D. S. Jordan, supposing the latter to be well known. I am, therefore, somewhat distressed to find Dr. Jordan and Mr. Fowler (*Proc. U. S. Natl. Mus.*, XXV., pp. 266–268) adopting a course in nomenclature which seems to me inadvis-