

H. Holmes, Kansas City; H. C. Hamey, Kirksville; E. R. Hedrick, Columbia.

At the business meeting provision was made for the submission to the members of amendments to the constitution providing for the enlargement of the society so as to include teachers of science. In future mathematics and science sections will be held in addition to the general meetings. The next meeting will be held in April or May at Columbia. A more complete report of the meeting may be found in *School Science and Mathematics*.

L. D. AMES,  
Secretary.

#### DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

##### RELATION OF MUSEUMS TO EXPERTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: The letter from Dr. Holland on 'The Relations of Museums to Experts and Systematists who are Engaged in Working Up and Naming Collections,' published in SCIENCE for December 15, seems to me altogether too general and too sweeping for universal acceptance. While I agree with Dr. Holland, fully, in his idea that all material borrowed from a museum or from a collector should be promptly and scrupulously returned, I think there are many cases in which a monographer or a student of a special group is fully entitled to retain material which may be sent him for identification. We are all supposed to be working for the advancement of science—for the establishment of definite facts. If a collector happens to find material which he is incompetent to use, which he can not place and of which he can not recognize the value he should, as a true and philanthropic student, send it to some one who has the ability to use it for the help of other workers. Museum material is worthless so long as it remains unknown and unidentified, and can be made of value only when it is recognized as forming a certain link in the chain. The specialist who visits a museum is in honor bound to leave its specimens intact, but the museum maker, the collector, has no right to ask busy workers for their time and labor without some courtesy in the form of a return. In my own work I have sent hundreds of specimens to specialists for

identification and description of new species, and have never asked, or expected, that the material would be returned to me. I have also worked over many collections made by others and have not hesitated to retain such specimens as I wanted for myself. When a specialist is willing to take the time and trouble to study a collection—at my request—the smallest courtesy I can offer him is the retention of the material with which he has worked. If I do not have full confidence in him as an authority in that particular group I do not send him my unstudied material. Of course there are cases in which a collector finds a specimen which he can not place, but which he recognizes as being rare or unique, and then he is perfectly justified in submitting it to an expert and asking for its return, but such cases should not constitute a general rule.

Dr. Holland expresses the idea that all material studied should remain the permanent property of the original owner. It seems to me that a distinction should be made. When a worker in any line visits a museum, or secures the loan of material for study, he is the party favored, and can have no claim; but when a museum or a collector asks the specialist to work a lot of unrecognized material the worker is justly entitled to such reward as he may find in the retention of the specimens to which he has given his time and work.

S. M. TRACY.

BLOXI, MISS.

##### THE LETTERS K AND W IN ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE.

IN SCIENCE of September 29, page 399, I referred to a practise prevalent in certain quarters, of changing the letters k and w to c and v, respectively, whenever they occur in generic and specific names of animals.<sup>1</sup> At

<sup>1</sup>I there attributed the change of *Kogia* to *Cogia* to Dr. D. G. Elliot; but I find that he did not originate it. The form *Cogia* was used years ago by Wallace (1876), Blanford (1891) and Lydekker (1891). The late Dr. W. T. Blanford had curiously little respect for the original form of names, and even went so far as to alter the name of the well-known ant-genus *Pheidole* to *Phidole*, in Col. Bingham's work on the ants of