

## THE CIVILIZATION OF BOHEMIA

WITH reference to Dr. Hrdlička's article in SCIENCE of December 17, p. 880, it may be of interest to note the prominence of Bohemia in zoological research. In gathering material for the "Directory of Zoologists," I have obtained biographical data from fourteen prominent zoologists resident in Prag, namely, Babák, Počta, v. Lendenfeld, Stölc, Klapálek, Perner, Rádl, Babor, Frič, Vojdovsky, Němec, Srdinko, Steinach, Völker. Any zoologist looking at this list will recognize familiar names. Prag in 1900 had a population of 204,498. There are many cities in America which could not make nearly so good a showing; for example, New Orleans, with a population of 287,104; or Los Angeles and Denver combined, with a population between them of 236,338.

T. D. A. COCKERELL

## ENGINEERING STUDENT STATISTICS

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: President Howe, of the Case School of Applied Science, has called my attention to an error which in some strange way crept into the table of engineering student statistics that was published in the issue of SCIENCE for June 4, 1909. In the table the number of students is given as 479 in 1907-8 and 431 in 1908-9. The catalogues show that the number of students for 1907-8 was 440 and for 1908-9 445, thus showing a slight gain instead of a loss of 10 per cent.

A reference to the reports of the president of Cornell University proves that the statement made by me in the issue of December 24, 1909, to the effect that at Cornell the number of undergraduate women in the academic department is probably larger than that of the men is not borne out by the facts of the case. On page 18 of the president's report for 1908-9 the following statement appears: "This increase in attendance in the College of Arts and Sciences has taken place in spite of a slight decline in the number of women enrolling in that college. In 1907-8 there were 313 women and 507 men, in 1908-9 there were 309 women and 593 men." No distinction is made between men and women in the figures fur-

nished for the table included in the number of SCIENCE to which reference has been made.

RUDOLF TOMBO, JR.

## THE STRICT APPLICATION OF THE LAW OF PRIORITY TO GENERIC NAMES

MR. FRANK SPRINGER, on the first of May last, distributed to one thousand zoologists and paleontologists a circular bearing upon the question of the rigid application of the so-called "law of priority" in zoological (and paleontological) nomenclature. The generic name *Encrinus*, the best known and supposedly the most firmly established of all of the generic names of the Crinoidea—the name of the typical crinoid genus of all authors, both of learned systematic works and of general treatises and text-books, for over one hundred years—was shown to be untenable as previously understood, having been earlier employed (a use long since forgotten) for other and widely different genera, this application of necessity, if section 30 of the international code were rigidly followed, causing the preoccupation of other generic names equally well established. The case was still further complicated by the intricate technical problems in regard to the earlier usage of the name *Encrinus*, and the great zoological difficulties in the way of a positive identification of the earlier genotypes, altogether causing such confusion that the most expert taxonomists differ widely in their interpretation of the facts.

The circulars were distributed by the undersigned, except those destined for Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Germany; Dr. Th. Mortensen very kindly undertook the task of sending them to the naturalists in these countries, and for his courtesy in thus assisting us we take this opportunity of offering him our most sincere thanks.

A post card was enclosed with each circular, the recipient being requested to return it with the information whether, in his judgment, it would be better to retain the name *Encrinus in statu quo ante* (with the genotype *E. liliiformis* Lamarck) or to follow strictly the dictates of the code and overturn the heretofore universally accepted nomenclature of a large

and important group, a group which, above all others, is of prime importance to a very large number who can not, from the nature of their work, occupy themselves with laborious taxonomic research in a more or less alien field.

The reception accorded the circular was extremely gratifying, graphically demonstrating the deep interest taken in nomenclatorial questions not only by systematists, but by zoologists and paleontologists interested in all the varied phases of their subjects; to those who have so kindly acceded to our request and have acquainted us with their personal views we beg to tender our most cordial thanks.

Replies have been received from zoologists and paleontologists resident in the following countries: Algeria, Austria-Hungary, Brazil, Canada, Ceylon, Denmark, Egypt, England, Finland, France, Germany, Hawaii, Holland, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, New South Wales, New Zealand, Norway, Philippine Islands, Portugal, Queensland, Russia, Scotland, South Australia, Sweden, Trinidad, United States, Western Australia and Victoria.

Of these working zoologists and paleontologists 80 per cent. are entirely dissatisfied with the present course of procedure; and this number is by no means inclusive merely of those having only an indirect interest in systematic work, but is made up to a surprising extent of the most prominent systematists; 83 per cent. are more or less dissatisfied with the methods now in vogue; about 18 per cent. believe it best to adhere to the code in its present form, and 15 per cent are convinced that this is the only logical and reasonable course.

The individual replies will, of course, be considered in the light of confidential communications, and therefore no indication will be given as to how any one has answered; when the canvass is concluded a minute analysis of it will be published, together with the names of those who have replied, showing the existing sentiment in the greatest detail for each class of workers, and for workers in the various groups, and a synopsis will be given of all the suggestions which have been sent in, with the proportionate numerical

strength of each, each suggestion being duly and specifically accredited to its author or authors, who will have the opportunity of finally revising it before it is sent to press. It is our hope that this canvass now under way will result in the formulation of an amendment to, or a revision of, article 30, by which zoological nomenclature may attain a true stability and henceforth be freed from the constant and perplexing changes now abounding on every side.

We beg that all zoologists and paleontologists who read this notice and who have not yet sent in their decision will do so at once; and that they will favor us with an expression of their views in regard to the best means of attaining a more stable system of zoological and paleontological nomenclature than we have at present.

Owing to press of other duties, Mr. Springer will not be able to continue further the work which he has started; he has therefore requested me to take it up and carry it on to its conclusion, analyzing and preparing for publication the final results. In order that these may be as expressive as possible of the true sentiment of working zoologists and paleontologists as a whole, he joins with me in urging all interested in the subject of nomenclature, no matter in what branch of zoology or paleontology their interest may lie, to submit their opinions, whether for or against the present method of procedure, and to assist us in the formulation of a possible means of escape from the nomenclatorial difficulties which on every side beset the path of the modern naturalist.

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#### SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

*A College Text-book of Geology.* By T. C. CHAMBERLIN and R. D. SALISBURY. 8vo, xvii + 978 pp., illustrated. New York, Henry Holt and Company. 1909.

This book seems to be a concentrated form of the three-volume work on geology by the same authors and published by the same company, 1904-1906. Such a boiling down of one's results is usually a tedious process, and