Education, Sir J. Winthrop Hackett. The general secretary for the meeting is Dr. T. S. Hall.

PROFESSOR WALTER N. LACY, of the Anglo-Chinese College at Foochow, China, writes to Professor J. C. Branner, of Stanford University, the following in regard to the work of ants and termites in China. The paper referred to is published in the *Bulletin* of the Geological Society of America, Vol. 21, 449–496.

I have read with much pleasure your paper on the geologic work of ants in tropical America, for which I have to thank you. One or two items from this part of the world, regarding the termites or white ants may be of interest to you, although Foochow is in lat. 26° 58′ N.—not quite within the tropics.

On pages 478 and 479 you refer to the common ants being enemies of the white ants, and the two not thriving together. A friend of mine in the northwest part of this province has tried successfully placing black ants' nests under the house which was occasionally attacked by the white ants, and found that they were completely rid of the latter, without being in any way inconvenienced by the common ants.

On page 491 you say: "I am not aware that they (the white ants) ever attack living trees." It is not at all uncommon in these parts to find their mason-work passage-ways built up the trunks of growing trees. A few years ago an olive tree near our house was blown over in a typhoon, and it was discovered that the entire tree had been riddled by the white ants; although the tree trunk was from 18 to 24 inches in diameter, little had been left but the outer shell and bark of the tree and the leaves on the branches. For the white ants to do away with trees in this way is not rare, but, as you suggest, their work is not done in a night, but through a considerable period of time, without doubt.

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS

GRINNELL COLLEGE received on December 24 a Christmas gift of $50,000. The money was made immediately available, to be used for any purpose, the donor stipulating but one condition, namely, that his name should never be made public.

MRS. JOHN HALL has given £500 to Sheffield University in memory of her husband. The income will provide each year a gold medal to be awarded to the student who does best in the subject of pathology at the examination for the degree.

THE university court of Edinburgh University has given a grant to Professor Whittaker for the equipment of a mathematical laboratory for the practical training of mathematicians and for a research institution. This will, it is said, be the first laboratory of its kind in a British university.

THE general council of the University of Edinburgh has taken action to bring before members of parliament and others interested in higher education the serious danger with which the universities of Scotland are threatened by the recent interference of the treasury with their freedom of internal administration.

CERTAIN citizens of Oberlin recently asked that the part of the endowment funds of Oberlin College invested in stocks and bonds should be listed for taxation. The decision of the auditor of Lorain County has now been rendered in favor of the college, to the effect that according to the laws of the state of Ohio the college endowment funds can not be taxed.

AT Harvard University, Dr. Harvey Cushing has been appointed professor of surgery, and Dr. George Gray Sears, clinical professor of medicine. Professor Ralph B. Perry has been promoted to a professorship of philosophy.

W. S. HUNTER, Ph.D. (Chicago), has been appointed instructor in psychology in the University of Texas. F. A. C. Perrin, Ph.D. (Chicago), has been appointed instructor in psychology in the University of Pittsburgh.

MR. CHARLES FULLER BAKER, known for work in various fields of natural science, has entered the faculty of the College of Agriculture of the University of the Philippines as professor of agronomy. In the same college, Mr. A. G. Glodt, formerly of the engineer corps of the French army and a member of the Marchand relief expedition across Africa, is

associate professor of agricultural engineering. Mr. F. C. Gates, who recently finished the work for his doctorate at the University of Michigan, is instructor in botany. Mr. Edgar M. Ledyard, who spent the past year at the University of Michigan where he put the entomological collection in order and left some sixty thousand Philippine insects, has returned to his work as assistant professor in entomology. Dr. H. N. Whitford has resigned as associate professor of forest botany and silviculture, and has returned to the United States.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

THE VOTE ON THE PRIORITY RULE

To the Editor of Science: A brief rejoinder may be permitted to the report by Messrs. Nutting, Williston and Ward in Science for December 13, on a vote on the rule of Priority in Nomenclature.

Primarily this vote shows something quite different from what might be inferred from a superficial examination of the report.

It means *not* that the voters have studied the conditions of confusion which the priority rule was instituted to clear up, and which produce the present temporary state of which there has been natural complaint; but that the teachers (of whom the list of voters is exclusively composed) are much annoyed by the uncertainty incident to the period of transition. This is nothing new; everybody has felt it; it requires an almost Roman firmness to give up a familiar if erroneous name; and the wonder is that the vote was not unanimous. Precisely the same state of mind is the cause why we have not yet adopted the metric system, and Russia retains the old style in her calendar.

If the question had been put as to what remedy should be had, other than continuing the work of rectification as rapidly as possible, it is likely there would have been as many minds as there were voters. No teacher likes to give a name to an organism before his classes which he is not certain is up to date. Moreover, some too clever pupil may discover that Jordan, Merriam, Allen, Elliot, Gill, Richmond, and other master systematists reject that name; where then is our infallibility? It is a tearful situation.

However, a complete remedy is at hand which will harmonize all the disputants without sacrificing accuracy or rejecting necessary rules.

It is well known that nearly all the vertebrates have what are called "common" or popular names. These have been carefully preserved by the ornithologists in their check-lists, for example.

Now let the dear old familiar names of each man's particular set of text-books be given the status of "common names," distinguished by (say a plus sign before them) to avoid confounding them with the real names, and have it generally admitted that no odium attaches to the use of a "common name" for our invertebrates, any more than in ornithology, and we have the whole problem solved. Since only one in a million invertebrates has a "common name" at present, no trouble would ensue on that score.

(I expect nothing less than a statue for this discovery, from future generations of teachers.)

Wm. H. Dall

Smithsonian Institution,
December 16, 1912

THE STAINING OF PROTOZOA

To the Editor of Science: Hæmatoxylin is, so to speak, the printer's ink of protozoologists, for this stain is used by all workers in studying the morphology of the cell, and it has come into general use because it tells as much as a single stain can of the essential structures in the architecture of a cell. It is true that various mordants alter, or rather intensify the staining character of certain parts of the nucleus. For example, when "agamous" trophozoites of *Entamœba tetragena* are stained by alum hæmatoxylin, iron hæmatoxylin, or phosphotungstic acid hæmatoxylin, or if they are stained with Mallory's phosphotungstic acid hæmatoxylin after wet fixation by Merkel's and Zenker's fluids, the different structures in the nucleus—