

and Lower Forms of Plant Life." This medal is awarded annually to a senior in the University of Wisconsin for quality and quantity of research in preparing a thesis in physical or natural science, or pure mathematics, or their useful applications.

DR. GOLDWATER, health commissioner of New York City, has resigned in order to resume his duties as superintendent of Mt. Sinai Hospital.

EDGAR M. LEDYARD, formerly assistant professor of entomology in the University of the Philippines, who has spent the last year in research work in the laboratory of parasitology of the University of California, has been appointed director of the Agricultural Department of the United States Smelting Company, Salt Lake City, Utah.

COLONEL WILLIAM HUNTER, M.D., assistant physician to Charing Cross Hospital; Lieutenant-Colonel G. S. Buchanan, M.D., first assistant medical officer to the local government board; Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew Balfour, C.M.G., director of the Wellcome Bureau of Scientific Research, and Lieutenant-Colonel Leonard Dudgeon, F.R.C.P., lecturer on general and special pathology at St. Thomas's Hospital, have gone to the Dardanelles, as an advisory committee to assist the British Royal Army Medical Corps in dealing with epidemics.

THE St. Louis University has fitted up an expedition to make a study of tropical diseases and biology in British and Spanish Honduras. The party which left New Orleans on July 21, was composed of the following: John P. Coony, Ph.D., S.J., professor of chemistry; E. N. Tobey, M.D., instructor in tropical diseases, and A. M. Schwitalla, S.J., A.M., a student in biology.

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS

MR. C. W. DYSON PERRINS, who gave £5,000 toward the construction of the University of Oxford chemical laboratory which is nearing completion, has lately offered to present to the university a further sum of £25,000, of which £5,000 is to be applied to the equipment of the laboratory, and the remaining £20,000 is to

form a permanent endowment fund for maintenance of the laboratory and for the encouragement of research and instruction in chemistry.

GEORGE PEABODY COLLEGE FOR TEACHERS has received \$8,500 from Miss Eleanor Cuyler of New York City and Mr. Thos. DeWitt Cuyler of Philadelphia, for equipping the Jesup Psychology Laboratory. This amount of money is to be spent for furniture, laboratory equipment and psychological publications.

PROFESSOR H. S. JACKSON, of the Oregon Agricultural College, has accepted the position of head of the botanical department of the Agricultural Experiment Station of Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana, to take effect September first, as successor to Dr. J. C. Arthur, who retires as a beneficiary of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

DR. E. W. SINNOTT, of the Bussey Institution, has been appointed professor of botany and genetics at the Connecticut Agricultural College.

At Yale University, Reynold A. Spaeth, Ph.D. (Harvard, '13), instructor in embryology at Clark University, has been appointed instructor in biology in Yale College.

THE following appointments have been made at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology: George Owen (M. I. T., '94), assistant professor of naval architecture; Royal M. Frye, A.B., instructor in physics; Charles H. Calder, Horatio W. Lamson and Joseph C. MacKinnon, assistants in physics; Elwyn E. Snyder, Jr., assistant in industrial chemistry.

At Rutgers College research assistants have been appointed as follows:

- Roland E. Curtis, B.S. (Oregon), soil bacteriology.
- F. E. Allison, B.S. (Purdue), M.S. (Iowa State), Amos Phos fellow.
- Selman A. Waksman, B.S. (Rutgers), soil bacteriology.
- Carl R. Fellers, B.S. (Cornell), soy bean.
- William S. Porte, B.S. (Rutgers), plant physiology.
- Orville Schultz, B.S. (Iowa State), plant breeding.
- W. H. Martin, B.S. (Maine), plant pathology.
- W. S. Krout, B.S., M.A. (Ohio State), plant pathology.
- Homer E. Carney, B.S. (Miami), botany.

A. C. Foster, B.S. (Alabama Polytechnic), botany.
Franklin O. Church, B.S. (Rutgers), hydraulic
engineering.

F. P. Schlatter, B.S. (Pennsylvania State), cran-
berry investigations.

DR. FRANCIS ARTHUR BAINBRIDGE, of the Uni-
versity of Durham, has been appointed to the
University of London chair of physiology ten-
able at St. Bartholomew's Hospital Medical
School.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

LOSING THE ADVANTAGES OF THE BINOMIAL SYSTEM OF NOMENCLATURE

THE communication from Dr. F. B. Sumner
which appeared in *SCIENCE* for June 18 last on
the subject of saving the genus as a category
of zoological classification, is certainly a timely
one, and expresses views that are by no means
confined to its author. It will require but
little examination of the facts to lead to the
conclusion that not the enforcement of the law
of priority, but unrestricted splitting of gen-
era, is responsible for most of the confusion
and instability which characterize zoological
nomenclature to-day, and makes it a source
of inconvenience and uncertainty, demanding
from scientific men much profitless labor, and
expenditure of mental energy sufficient to
bring about important advances in science if
it could be turned into some useful channel.

Few zoologists ever stop to think how far
we are getting away from a real binomial
system of nomenclature. It is true that scien-
tific names of animals still consist of two
words, but only in a minority of cases does
the first term of the binomial have any real
meaning to us, or suggest ideas of a much
broader and more comprehensive character
than the second one. The genus name has be-
come little more than a mere prefix to, or part
of, the species name. The addition of a few
more letters or syllables to the latter (to pre-
vent confusion of organisms which have
chanced to receive the same specific designa-
tion) would serve the same purpose. We learn
generic names, if we learn them at all, by
mere acts of memory, and we use them because
we find them in the latest monographs and

might be thought not up to date if we did
otherwise, but what the distinctions are be-
tween these multitudes of closely allied genera
we rarely stop to inquire. Indeed, if we do
have interest enough to look up such points,
the slight importance and complexity of the
distinctions are apt to surprise and discour-
age us, and convince us that we had better
take the specialist's word for them, and spend
our time and labor in some more useful way.
In short, though our classification is binomial
in form, it is only very imperfectly so in effect.

Even within the memory of some scientific
men living to-day, the system in use did still
afford the practical advantages which secured
the universal adoption of the system of Lin-
naeus. The recognized genera, though even
then being multiplied to an inconvenient ex-
tent, were still in a majority of cases separated
by sufficiently well-marked characters and not
as yet too numerous to enable the professional
zoologist and even the more serious amateur
students of the science to recognize by name
and classify a large proportion of the genera,
and to recall some of their more important
characters. A genus name had in those days
a real meaning to some others besides the spe-
cialists in the class of animals to which the
genus happened to belong.

It would be a mistake to maintain that zoo-
logical classification has suffered through the
recognition of these minor subdivisions. They
exist in nature, and should have a recognition
commensurate with their importance. The
older and more comprehensive genera are now
in many cases treated as subfamilies or fam-
ilies. Classification has gained in exactness
and truthful representation of the facts, but
through our neglect to keep the first term of
our scientific names comprehensive in its ap-
plication, and easily distinguished and re-
membered in its meaning, we have allowed
our nomenclature to lose most of the practical
advantages and conveniences of the Linnæan
system.

Unfortunately, specialists, as Dr. Sumner has
hinted, are only too apt to study their speci-
mens till they see only differences and lose
sight of much more important resemblances,