for a final decision; the former for a much-needed rule as to whether or not "a generic name is to be considered identical whether the ending is masculine, feminine or neuter" if from the same root; the latter for an official opinion as to whether a lapsus calami does or does not exist in the case of *Libell[ula] americanus* Drury.

In the meantime we feel that our action is as clear and consistent as is possible, our aim being to follow the official decisions of the International Code, and, in cases where action has not as yet been taken, to follow that course which, after careful consideration, we believe most likely to coincide with the later rulings of that body.

We naturally do not relish our work being used as a striking illustration of the hopelessness of unanimity among systematists on nomenclatorial matters, but we could hardly hope for a less gloomy viewpoint from one of the authors of "The Entomological Code" the first rule of which recommends in the vernacular "everybody for himself."

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SYLVESTER AND CAYLEY

ON page 781 of the last volume of SCIENCE there appeared a criticism relating to a statement in my recent book entitled "Historical Introduction to Mathematical Literature." The statement in question seems to be the following: "Cayley and Sylvester were students at Cambridge at the same time and formed then a lifelong friendship," which appears on page 259. In view of the fact that a "colossal error" is said to have been committed it may be of interest to compare the given sentence with the following quotation from the third edition, page 484, of "A Short Account of the History of Mathematics," by W. W. R. Ball:

> He (Sylvester) too was educated at Cambridge, and while there formed a life-long friendship with Cayley.

The same statement appears in the fifth edition (1912) of Ball's "History" and an equivalent form of it is found in the reviewed and augmented French translation of the third edition.

The fact that Ball has been connected with Trinity College, Cambridge, for a long time and that he was Fellow of this college during many years while Cayley was professor in the University of Cambridge led me to place more confidence in the given statement as a reliable historical fact than I should otherwise have done. While I do not now recall all the evidence at hand when writing the sentence which has been the subject of said criticism, it appears to me that the given evidence is sufficient to warrant this sentence until it can be proved that this evidence is unreliable.

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SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Fundamental Conceptions of Modern Mathematics, Variables and Quantities, with a Discussion of the General Conception of Functional Relation. By ROBERT P. RICHARDSON and EDWARD H. LANDIS. Chicago and London, The Open Court Publishing Company, 1916. Pp. xxi + 216.

According to the announcement near the end of the present volume "that portion of 'Fundamental Conceptions of Modern Mathematics' dealing with algebraic mathematics will consist of thirteen parts." The volume under review is Part I. and has as subtitle "Variables and Quantities with a Discussion of the General Conception of Functional Relation." The magnitude of this undertaking and the fundamental character of the questions considered combine to direct unusual attention to the project, and hence the present volume is of interest not only on its own account, but also on account of the hopes or fears it may inspire as regards the remaining volumes of the projected series.

A striking feature of this volume, which will doubtless create at the start an unfavorable impression on many mathematical readers, is the somewhat harsh criticism of some of the work of many eminent mathematicians, including Baire, Bauer, Pringsheim, Riemann, Russell, Weber, and many others. For in-