

plorations in Eastern Asia. He was brother of Robert V. Anderson, late of the U. S. Geological Survey, now representing the War Trade Board at Stockholm.

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS

By the will of the late Morton F. Plant, the Connecticut College for Women receives a bequest of \$250,000.

Two years ago Professor and Mrs. Herdman gave to the University of Liverpool, the sum of £10,000 to establish a chair in memory of their son, Lieutenant George A. Herdman, who was killed in action. *Nature* states that they have now made a further gift of £10,000 for the purpose of establishing a chair of oceanography with special reference to fisheries. The council of the university has accepted this gift with grateful thanks, and has resolved that (1) Professor Herdman be appointed professor of oceanography as from October 1 next; (2) Dr. J. Johnson succeed him on October 1, 1920, and during the twelve months from October 1 next be lecturer on oceanography at the salary derived from the endowment.

THE senate of the University of Cambridge has approved the plan for the establishment of the degree of doctor of philosophy. The syndicate dealing with this question recommends that, subject to certain exemptions, candidates for the degree, before submitting a dissertation, must have pursued a course of research for not less than three years, and the senate has determined that of this period one year in the case of a graduate of the university and two years in the case of other students must be spent in Cambridge.

SIR OLIVER LODGE has retired as principal of Birmingham University.

THE resignation of Dr. Harry B. Hutchins, as president of the University of Michigan, which was presented on October 12, 1916, has now been accepted by the regents to take effect on June 30. It is reported that Dr. James Rowland Angell, professor of psychology and dean of the department of arts and sciences of

the University of Chicago, will be asked to accept the presidency.

DR. JOHN JOHNSTON, secretary of the National Research Council in Washington, has been appointed professor of chemistry in the Graduate School of Yale University. Professor Johnston is a graduate of the University of St. Andrews.

LIEUTENANT KARL SAX, recently discharged from military service in the coast artillery at Fort Amador, Canal Zone, Panama, has been appointed instructor in genetics at the University of California.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

DESMOGNATHUS FUSCUS (SIC).

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: Professor Wilder's letter recalls a proposal made by Mr. Oldfield Thomas and myself, a proposal worth repeating. Zoological nomenclature has many inevitable difficulties to overcome, and it will save time and disputes if there be removed from it the extrinsic burden of trying to conform with the rules of Greek and Latin grammar. Let the convention be established that the name of a genus, whatsoever its derivation, be regarded as masculine when the genus denotes a group of living animals, feminine if it denote a group of living plants, and neuter if it denotes a fossil animal or plant. Let it be agreed that the scientific name of an existing species may be changed to accord with this conventional sex where possible, and that in the making of new names, the accord should be made by the author, corrected by the editor or by any subsequent writer. This would simplify matters and, in a considerable proportion of instances would give useful information.

P. CHALMERS MITCHELL

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: I have read with interest and some amusement the letter by Mr. H. H. Wilder, on "*Desmognathus fuscus* [sic]." It seems to me to lend additional support to the suggestion made years ago by my friend, the Rev. T. R. R. Stebbing, that

all zoological generic names should be regarded as masculine. I enclose herewith a copy of his article on the subject: perhaps you could quote some portions of it in *SCIENCE* in order to remind the zoological world of an eminently reasonable proposal.

WM. EVANS HOYLE

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WALES

My suggestion is that a technical specific name in Zoology should be released from the obligation of agreeing with the supposed gender of the generic name to which it is attached.

Simplicity would be attained by acceptance of the convention that in zoology a generic name, whatever its termination, is to be regarded as of the masculine gender.

That some scholarly ear might occasionally be offended, is a minor disadvantage compared with the general utility of the convention. A famous historical character was hailed as "our king Maria Theresa," without any influence on the actual sex of that distinguished person. Similarly many men have been named Maria without in consequence becoming women or in any degree effeminate. The termination of a generic name is a very indifferent reason for determining a zoological species as either masculine, feminine, or neuter, seeing that the species itself usually includes two of the genders, and sometimes all three. Very commonly all the normal individuals of a species are either of the male or female sex. Yet, under the existing rule, the species must sometimes have a neuter name, as though it referred to something inorganic or of undiscriminated sex. Such considerations, however, are of subordinate importance compared with the troublesome character of the present arrangement. As every one is aware, it repeatedly happens that by accessions to knowledge, genera become unwieldy and have to be subdivided. The new names, it may be, do not agree in gender with the old, and then the transferred species must all have their terminations altered. But, apart from this consequential trouble, naturalists for ages past have found the determination of generic genders a stumbling-block. How much more is this likely to be the case in the future, with the continuous decline of classical studies! Without actual examples, few would credit the difficulties encountered and the errors committed by naturalists in their endeavors to comply with the existing rule or practise.—T. R. R. Stebbing in *Knowledge* (1910).

HAY FEVER AND THE NATIONAL FLOWER

TO THE EDITOR OF *SCIENCE*: The attention of the American Hayfever Prevention Association has been called to the article on "Hay Fever and the National Flower" in a recent issue of your journal.

The research department of this association, which was established in 1915, has made a thorough investigation of the causes of hay fever, being assisted in this work by specialists and botanists in practically every state of the union. The pollens of all the most common plants and trees have been tested and their relation to hay fever established.

Generally speaking, the principal causes of fall hay fever in the northern, eastern and southern states¹ are the pollens of the ragweeds (*Ambrosiaceæ*), these being replaced in the Pacific and Rocky Mountain States² by the wormwoods (*artemisia*). The chief causes of spring hay fever are the pollens of the grasses in all sections. About five per cent. of hay fever cases are due to other pollens. The golden rod, however, is not included in these, having proven a clear "alibi."

For those not already familiar with the subject, the following statement is made:

THE GOLDEN ROD IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR HAY FEVER

1. It does not conform to the description of hay fever plants, which is as follows:³ (1) They are wind-pollinated, (2) very numerous, (3) the flowers are inconspicuous, without bright color or scent, and the pollen is formed in great quantities. The flowers of the golden rod are insect-pollinated, have bright colors and scent, and the pollen is not formed in large quantities.

¹ "Hayfever: Its Cause and Prevention," W. Scheppegrell, M.D., *Journal of the American Medical Association*, March 4, 1916.

² "Hayfever: Its Cause and Prevention in the Rocky Mountain and Pacific States," W. Scheppegrell, M.D., *United States Public Health Reports*, July 20, 1917.

³ "Hayfever and Its Prevention," W. Scheppegrell, M.D., *United States Public Health Reports*, July 21, 1916.