crucible to the Society of Chemical Industry; and his electric telephone by Reis to the Institution of Electrical Engineers. The residue of the property is to be divided into five parts, four of which are to go to the Royal Society and one to the Society of Chemical Industry, the wish being expressed that the fund shall be kept separate from the funds of the society the capital to be kept intact, and the whole of the income expended in the furtherance of scientific research and other scientific objects, and that no part thereof shall be applied for charitable objects, as the granting of pensions and the like.

THE *Journal* of the American Medical Association states that what is reported as the largest medical conference ever assembled in the capital of China was held February 21–28, of the present year. Over 300 delegates were present, including 210 medical missionaries. A message from the minister of education of China was read which stated the following as the educational policy for the immediate future in that country: (1) To establish new medical schools as soon as conditions will allow on the basis of one medical school for each province. (2) To improve and extend such schools as were already established. (3) To encourage the study of medicine and to maintain for the scientifically trained doctors a high social status aiming at a sufficient number for this important profession. (4) To cause to be organized at proper localities such institutions or facilities of investigation as will aid specialists in their own research work. (5) To regulate the practise of doctors trained in the traditional way with a view to the unification of standards required of medical practitioners.

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS

IT is planned to establish eight new professorships at Cornell University to commemorate the war services of 7,800 Cornell men.

DR. H. R. KRAYBILL, of the Bureau of Plant Industry, has been appointed professor of agricultural chemistry and head of the department of chemistry of the New Hampshire State College.

P. W. WHITING, in charge of biology at Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pa., has resigned to accept a position at St. Stephen's College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N. Y.

PROFESSOR C. F. CURTIS RILEY has been promoted to a full professorship in the department of forest zoology, Syracuse University.

JOHN T. METCALF, Ph.D. (Yale, '13), psychological examiner with the Illinois Department of Public Welfare, has been appointed assistant professor of psychology in George Washington University.

DR. L. V. KING has been appointed Macdonald professor of physics at the Macdonald Physics Building, McGill University, from which he received his bachelor's degree in 1905. The chair to which Dr. King has been promoted has been held in succession by Professor H. L. Callendar, Professor, now Sir Ernest Rutherford, Dr. H. T. Barnes, Professor H. A. Wilson, and by the present director, Dr. A. S. Eve.

AT the University of Sheffield, Dr. W. E. S. Turner has been appointed professor of glass technology, Mr. J. Husband professor of civil engineering, Dr. Mellanby professor of pharmacology.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

GENERA AND SUPERGENERA

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: I sympathize with Dr. Witmer Stone (SCIENCE, N. S., 51: 427, 1920) in his wish to preserve in generic names an expression of taxonomic relationships. Dr. Stone advocates the adoption of "an arbitrary set of genera *de convenience* so far as nomenclature is concerned and use subgeneric terms when we desire to call attention to more refined phylogenetic groups." I would call attention to the results of a practical application of this system. If I understand the proposed system correctly the genera for general use would stand toward the genera for technical use (since the latter

would be subgenera) in the relation of a supergenus to a genus. Suppose we apply this to the well-known genus *Panicum* among the grasses. There has been a tendency in the historical development of this Linnæan genus to split off one after another species or groups of species to form new genera. Even as limited by the avowed "splitter" the genus still includes hundreds of species. The more conservative botanists include as subgenera, *Digitaria* (*Syntherisma*), *Echinochloa, Trichachne* (*Valota*), *Thrasya, Echinolæna, Hymenachne, Sacciolepis,* and several more, in some cases, even *Setaria* (*Chætochloa*). I should be willing to use *Panicum* in the broader sense, but for the sake of consistency I should want to include under *Panicum* such genera as *Paspalum and Ichnanthus.* I think that the technical characters that separate these last from *Panicum* are no greater nor more important than those which separate *Digitaria* and *Echinochloa* from *Panicum.* But *Paspalum* and *Ichnanthus* have been considered distinct genera by most botanists for over 100 years. *Paspalum* is a Linnæan genus and includes probably more than 200 species. The practical question then arises, if the grasses are arranged in genera which are really supergenera on the basis of the relative importance of technical characters, the more technical groups appearing as subgenera, will the layman—or the botanist who is a layman in relation to the taxonomy of grasses—gain in convenience. Many well-known genera will disappear. *Bromus* and *Festuca, Sporobolus* and *Muhlenbergia, Trisetum* and *Deschampsia* (*Aira*), are as closely allied as *Panicum* and *Digitaria.* If *Digitaria* is placed as a subgenus of *Panicum* then one feels as if he must place *Sporobolus* as a subgenus of *Muhlenbergia* and so on. The layman is chiefly concerned with the stability of the names he uses. The method just outlined would, I think, be just as confusing to him as the "splitting" of which Dr. Stone speaks. It is very difficult to devise a nomenclature which shall adapt itself to the normal growth of a living science and yet have the kind of stability that the layman wants.

It has been assumed by some that the Linnæan concept of genera was a broad one, that his genera are what we are calling supergenera, and that later botanists have been splitting off fragments, or dividing along convenient cleavage lines, to form our modern genera. This assumption scarcely accords with the facts. He seems to have established genera according to his knowledge, his convenience, or sometimes apparently by a mere whim, if one is to judge by his grass genera. *Bromus* and *Festuca* are Linnæan genera that remain much as he left them; *Panicum* and *Andropogon* are supergenera; *Holcus* and *Aira* are assemblages of unrelated species or groups of species.

I believe there would be considerable confusion in the application of the concept of supergenera; and the names of the supergenera would be subject to continual change as our knowledge of relationships increased. Nevertheless, as a general principle, I think it is desirable to retain minor groups of species as divisions of genera rather than to recognize them as genera.

A. S. Hitchcock

Washington, D. C.

THE SITUATION OF SCIENTIFIC MEN IN RUSSIA

To the Editor of Science: In your issue of April 23 there is reproduced a letter from Professor Babkin, of the University of Odessa, in which the following statement occurs:

> The bolshevic revolution has brought Russia into such a state that not only has scientific work come to a standstill, but even our lives are in danger.

One is very much tempted to discuss the situation of scientific men in Russia, but it is perhaps better simply to quote testimony from impartial sources. There is, however, one remark which must be made with regard to Babkin's statement, namely, that Odessa is very far removed from the limits of the Federated Soviet Republic, being in the region (Ukraina) dominated by the anti-bolshevic forces.

I happen to have before me a book published recently by Gauthiers-Villars et Cie,