UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS

DR. K. G. MATHESON, president of the Georgia School of Technology, announces that the sum of $1,222,857 has been contributed toward the fund of $5,000,000 which the institution has undertaken to raise for permanent buildings and equipment.

DR. WADE H. FROST, former surgeon in the United States Public Health Service, has been appointed head of the department of epidemiology and public health administration in the School of Hygiene and Public Health of the Johns Hopkins University.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL HARDEE CHAMBLISS, since 1919 commanding officer of the U. S. nitrate plant at Sheffield, Ala., has been appointed to take charge of the work of the department of chemistry at the Catholic University owing to the prolonged illness of the Reverend Dr. John J. Griffin, who has been in charge of the department since its opening in 1895.

DR. ROBERT H. LOWIE is leaving the American Museum of Natural History, where he has been associate curator in the department of anthropology, to accept the position of associate professor of anthropology at the University of California.

DR. BERTRAM G. SMITH, of the Michigan State Normal College, has been appointed associate professor of anatomy, in charge of embryology and histology, in the New York University and Bellevue Hospital Medical College.

DR. CHESTER A. MATHEWSON, for seven years head of the department of science in the Maxwell Training School for Teachers, Brooklyn, N. Y., has been appointed head of the department of biology in the School of Education at Cleveland, Ohio.

IN the Oregon Agricultural College, H. H. Gibson, professor of vocational agriculture in the University of Arizona, has accepted the headship of the department of agricultural education. He was formerly director of agricultural education in the University of Vermont. John R. Du Priest, professor of steam and gas engineering and design in the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, N. Y., has been appointed assistant professor of mechanical engineering.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

A DEFENSE OF PROFESSOR NEWCOMB'S LOGIC

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: To those acquainted with Professor Simon Newcomb's mental habits and with Professor Comstock's usual preciseness of language, the latter's criticism of Newcomb's statement concerning ultra-mundane life is puzzling (SCIENCE, July 8, 1921). After several readings I venture the opinion that he appears to impugn the logic which he seems to think Newcomb might have used in coming to the conclusion that "to suppose" countless worlds are inhabited "is perfectly reasonable." Is there a chance that Professor Comstock may be the victim of his own false premise, contained in the sentence with which he starts upon this phase of the subject: "As to the numerous worlds alleged (*sic*) to be the abode of life, Newcomb in his essay . . . " says so and so. If we may trust the dictionaries, *to allege* is to make a positive assertion, or a statement which the alleger is under obligations to prove; whereas *to suppose* is to "conceive a state of things . . . , but not free from doubt" (*Century Dictionary*). So far as my search has gone, Newcomb has not at any time alleged or asserted the existence of animal life in other worlds; he has merely supposed, and said that such supposition "is perfectly reasonable." A reading of his admirable essay on the subject ("Life in the universe," in "Side-Lights on Astronomy," 1906) should, in my opinion, convince of the reasonableness.

W. W. CAMPBELL

MOUNT HAMILTON, CALIFORNIA,
July 16, 1921

BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF DESTRUCTIVE INSECTS

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: Control of destructive insects by the introduction of their

natural enemies has become an important technique during the last generation. But if competent observers are to be trusted, the southern Arabs employed the same method more than 150 years ago, in the culture of the date-palm.

In his "Relation d'un Voyage dans l'Yemen" (Paris, 1880, p. 155), P.-E. Botta says:

> I was able to verify the singlar fact previously observed by Forskål, that the date-palms in Yemen are attacked by a species of ant which would cause them to perish, if each year the growers did not bring from the mountains and fasten in the tops of the palms branches of a tree that I did not recognize, which contain the nests of another species of ant which destroys that of the date-palm.

P. Forskål was the naturalist of C. Niebuhr's expedition; his work was published posthumously in 1775. I have not seen his account to which Botta refers.

It would be interesting to know whether the history of economic entomology furnishes any earlier record of the "biological method" of pest control.

Paul Popenoe

Thermal, Calif.,
April 24, 1921

A LONGLIVED WOODBORER

From its burrow in the top piece of an old birch book-case at Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, a soft white wood-boring grub was shaken recently, when the owner discovered the newly made opening and conical pile of wood chewings that had been thrust out. There is nothing unusual about finding grubs in wood, but this particular wood-boring larva has a strange history.

The matured larva was given to the writer and placed in a box to complete its development. It pupated in about two weeks and in a few days the adult beetle emerged. It was *Eburia quadrigeminate* Say, a longicorn commonly known as the honey-locust borer, and is recorded as developing in hickory, ash and honey locust.

Mrs. Doe, who owns the book-case, is certain that the board in which the grub fed and grew from egg to a matured larva is no less than forty years old, as the book-case has been in the possession of the Does for at least that many years.

Just how and why this creature should have spent so many years in this humdrum life between the narrow walls of a thoroughly seasoned birch board only five eighths of an inch thick, and never once coming out for air or water seems remarkable indeed.

Mr. J. McNeil, writing in the *American Naturalist*,[1] tells of two longicorns of this same species emerging from an ash door-sill that had been in place nineteen years. In that case the relation of the tunnels to the solid brick wall on which the door-sill rested seems to have made it certain that the eggs were laid in the wood before the house was built. This case seems to outstrip any known insect record in point of longevity.

H. E. Jaques

Iowa Wesleyan College,
Mt. Pleasant, Iowa

QUOTATIONS

THE COST OF PRINTING SCIENTIFIC WORKS IN ENGLAND

Officers of learned societies and librarians have made public a memorandum planned to impress on the printing and publishing firms of the United Kingdom the danger which they are incurring by enforcing the recent enormous increase in the price of books, more especially books of the more serious and specialized sort. They say:

> It is not only to the public detriment, but clearly also to the detriment of the printing and publishing trades, that learned societies should be forced to cut down or suspend altogether their output of proceedings and monographs, and that libraries should have to reduce to a minimum the number of books which they purchase. It is obvious that if books are bought in ever-decreasing numbers, publishers will find it useless to print anything, however valuable, which does not appeal to the unlearned public. And if societies are

[1] Vol. XX., p. 1055.