assistant librarian in the Museum, of encyclopedic memory, who, without benefit of subject cataloguing or recourse to a reference book, could produce upon demand the original description of a new species of insect, is still recalled with nostalgia by the older members of the present scientific staff.

John Murdoch was appointed librarian in 1887, and he served until 1891. Cyrus Adler, as librarian and later as assistant secretary in charge of the library, gave distinguished service to the Institution from 1892 until 1908. Paul Brockett was assistant librarian from 1902 until his resignation in 1924, and William L. Corbin, who was appointed librarian in 1924, served until his retirement in 1942.

The Smithsonian Deposit in the Library of Congress

Morris C. Leikind
Fellow in Medicine and Biology, Library of Congress

The Library of Congress is bound to the Smithsonian Institution with ties of the greatest intimacy. These ties are not merely the intangible ones of unity of purpose, *i.e.* "the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men." They are in fact visible and tangible bonds for all to see. Although the Library of Congress was already 46 years old when the Smithsonian Institution and its library were established, there began from the very moment of the birth of the younger institution a cooperation which has continued to this day to the mutual advantage of both and which has resulted in incalculable benefits to science and learning the world over.

The first systematic effort at cooperative cataloguing was proposed by the scholarly and imaginative librarian of the Smithsonian, Charles Coffin Jewett, and applied to the Library of Congress. As early as 1850 the Institution prepared a code of cataloguing rules together with a plan for stereotyping titles. Congress authorized the Institution to apply its rules and procedures to the collections of the Library of Congress, so that by 1854, 9,654 titles representing 21,805 volumes had been catalogued under this plan.

Under the old copyright laws the Smithsonian Institution was a co-depository with the Library of Congress for the receipt of copyrighted works. The Institution was instrumental in changing the copyright act so that the Library of Congress became the sole depository of such materials.

The final and firmest link in the bonds which united the two institutions was forged in 1866 when the library of the Smithsonian Institution was, by act of Congress, deposited in the Library of Congress. This action was necessitated by the growth of the Institution's library through its international exchange of publications to a size which it was unable to care for. Furthermore, this most valuable collection was endangered because it was not housed in a fireproof building. Thus, when commodious fireproof rooms were provided in the Capitol for the Library of Congress, the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution suggested that its books be transferred to the custody of the Library of Congress. In urging this action Joseph Henry wrote in 1865 as follows:

> The object of this transfer is not of course to separate this unique and highly prized collection of books from its relations to the Smithsonian Institution, for it must still bear its name and be subject to its control, but merely to deposit it where its preservation will be more certain and its usefulness more extended.

The act of transfer was approved by Congress on 5 April 1866. Of this transfer Prof. Henry later said:

> The union of the library of the Institution with that of the Congress still continues to be productive of important results. The Smithson fund is relieved by this arrangement from the maintenance of a separate library, while at the same time the Institution has not only the free use of its own books, but also those of the Library of Congress. On the other hand the collection of books owned by the Congress would not be worthy of the name of the National Library were it not for the Smithsonian deposit. The books which it receives from this source are eminently those which exhibit the progress of the world in civilization, and are emphatically those essential to the contemporaneous advance of our country to the higher science of the day.

True as these words of Joseph Henry were then, they are even more true today, for the 40,000 volumes of the original deposit have grown by a process of accretion and now number almost 1,000,000.

The publications deposited in the Library of Congress are received from all over the world by the Smithsonian Institution in exchange for its own publications or by gift. By far the largest and most important part of the Deposit is the collection of the proceedings and transactions of learned societies and institutions, and of other scientific and technical journals, which forms one of the most unique collections of such publications to be found anywhere in the world. Because of its size and importance this unit of the Smithsonian Deposit is familiary referred to as the "Deposit," but the Smithsonian Deposit also includes many thousands of other books, pamphlets, and manuscripts each marked with an identifying stamp but distributed and shelved throughout the Library according to classification. Notable among special collections that have been deposited by the Institution is the Langley Aeronautical Library of early aeronautical magazines, manuscripts, and other material which was transferred to the custody of the Library of Congress in 1930.

In 1897, when the Library of Congress occupied its new building, the importance of the "Deposit" was recognized by assigning it quarters on the northeast side of the second floor of the main building. In 1900 a special division of the Library of Congress, named the Smithsonian Division, was organized to care for the "Deposit" and for the distribution of all the current accessions received from the Institution. Francis Henry Parsons was assistant in charge of the Smithsonian Division from 1900 to 1925, and his diligent labors did much to develop the collection to its present state of eminence. In 1926 Frederick E. Brasch took over the duties of administering the Division. In the stacks adjacent were the main library collections of scientific works, and thus there

was in being the physical basis for a Division of Science and Technology. Thus, with the tremendous advances in science during the past two decades the Smithsonian Deposit, with its unrivaled collections of the publications of learned societies, became more and more the center of scientific reference work in the Library of Congress.

In 1938, when the magnificent new annex to the Library was opened, the Smithsonian Division was moved to quarters in this building. The "Deposit" was shelved on Deck 12, in close proximity to the science collections, and its office occupied an alcove off the Thomas Jefferson Room, which houses the main reference collections in science, technology, medicine, and agriculture. Mr. Brasch, who administered the collection for 20 years, during his last year had the title of consultant in the history of science. He retired on 30 June 1946.

The Smithsonian Institution begins its second century at a time in world history when science has assumed an unprecedented importance in the affairs of men. The collections which the Smithsonian has amassed and continues to enlarge will thus play an increasingly significant role in the life of this Nation and of the world.

This Centennial Issue of *Science*, planned in midwinter, had to be shortened materially in view of the paper shortage. For that reason several book reviews of Smithsonian publications, which should have been included here, must be deferred to later issues.

Letters to the Editor

Botanical Taxonomy

With reference to C. R. Ball's complaints (*Science*, 1946, 103, 713), it may be said that an important reform is possible which does not involve any alteration of the rules. This is to omit the name of the author of the combination, when a specific name is transferred to a different genus from that to which it was referred by the original author. This is the general practice in zoology, and I have never known any inconvenience to arise. I, for one, propose to follow this method when referring to plants.

However, the real reason for the neglect of taxonomy is that it is too difficult and takes too much time. In order to revise a genus of plants it will usually be necessary to consult or borrow from many herbaria and to read and interpret literature in many languages, most of which is obtainable in only a few libraries. When all this is done, it still remains very desirable to have a knowledge of the living plants, wild and in the botanic garden. Sound taxonomy is the mother of sound ecology. We ask of a plant how it come to be and what are the conditions which now control its growth. We are involved in endless complexities, but it is possible to see and understand enough to answer many of our questions.

T. D. A. COCKERELL

908 10th Street, Boulder, Colorado

Lightning-like Phenomena on the Moon

The following observations were made some time ago and seem to me to be worthy of recording in *Science*. During the evening of 17 June 1931, I was working in the yard near our house at Riverside, California, and happened to glance at the moon. It was an unusually fine, clearly outlined new moon, and as I stood looking at it, suddenly some flashes of light streaked across the dark surface but definitely within the limits of the moon's outline. Since this was a phenomenon which I had never seen before, I continued to watch it and saw similar flashes streak across the moon again in a moment or two. Without mentioning what I had seen, I called my wife's attention to the new moon. She admired it. When I asked her to watch it closely to see if she noticed anything strange, she said: "Oh, yes, I see lightning on the moon," adding that this appeared to be confined to the moon. We watched it for some 20 or 30 minutes, during which the phenomenon must have occurred at least six or seven times. The facts were recorded in my notebook as of approximately 7:40 P.M., 17 June 1931. At the time, I was inclined to attribute the phenomenon to some sort of sunlight reflection from mountain peaks on the moon or possibly some sort of electrical activity. I wrote the Mount Wilson Observatory regarding the phenomenon, and the reply very courteously discounted my observations. The observations were carefully made and carefully verified, and at the time I assumed that the phenomenon was probably something with which astronomers were familiar.

N. J. GIDDINGS

Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering, Riverside, California