

a compound of any non-metal with a metal is a salt of a metal." This would, of course, include such bodies as antimonetted and arsenetted hydrogen, hydride of copper, and so on. The definitions of acids and bases, too, are weak. It may almost be inferred that such is the case, by the manner in which the author uses the term acid; N₂O₃ is called nitrous acid; I₂O₅ iodic acid, and, in the same line, HBrO₃ bromic acid; B₂O₃ boracic acid, and so on. There is one thing which the author tells us which is a curiosity in chemical history. On page 38 it is stated "some few of the elements receive their symbols from the names given to them by the ancients—e.g. Iron (Fe.) from *Ferrum*, Sodium (Na.) from *Natrium*." We certainly were under the impression that Sodium was discovered in 1807 by Sir Humphry Davy. A number of questions are appended to the book which will be found very useful to those employed in teaching.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his correspondents. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]

Ocean Currents

SURELY Mr. Ferrel must have misapprehended my arguments, or he would not have advanced the case of the tides against me. Undoubtedly the ocean will sink to its old level when the lifting force of the moon is withdrawn, even though the height to which the waters are raised may not exceed an inch. I agree also with what he says in regard to the improbability of ocean currents being caused by the heaping up of the waters by the winds. I believe that this erroneous view of the matter has done more real mischief to the wind theory than all the arguments advanced by the advocates of the gravitation theory put together. The notion that because the winds are applied to the surface of the ocean they can produce only surface drift is an error of a similar character.

I shall shortly refer to an important point bearing on the influence of rotation overlooked both by Dr. Colding and Mr. Ferrel. In my last paper in the *Phil. Mag.*, October 1871, p. 266, there is a trifling mistake to which I shall also refer.

Edinburgh

JAMES CROLL

Science Stations

ALLOW me to say a few words in reply to your editorial of Feb. 29. It does seem to me to be a pity to "run the risk of spoiling a good work" by multiplying suggestions and urging counter claims. It is not quite fair that when biologists start a proposal for obtaining a necessary but costly aid to their studies, the devotees of other sciences should exclaim, "Oh, we must have one, too!" If all speak at once in this way no one will be heard, and we shall get no stations of any sort. Probably the writer of the article is not aware of the expense and requirements of a zoological station, otherwise he would not propose to increase the difficulty by thrusting a meteorological and astronomical observatory on the backs of its promoters, and then observe that "the outlay need not be heavy." It is notorious that there are meteorological and astronomical observatories in almost every part of the globe; but there is nothing of the kind for zoology. Under these circumstances it is to me a disappointment that the suggestion for zoological stations meets with what looks like a somewhat selfish criticism, in place of unqualified support, at the hands of physicists.

As to the station in England, I do not gather from Dr. Dohrn's article that he proposes to separate teaching entirely, or even partially, from the stations. He leaves it alone. "Teaching" can come or go just as those who deal in it may please; but that instruction in rudimentary zoology should be a chief object of the station is a proposal of the same nature as would be that to make use of Greenwich Observatory for giving lessons in the outlines of astronomy, and is not entertained by him for a moment. It no doubt would be a very good thing that students from Cambridge and Oxford and London should spend some time in a zoological station; and it would also be good for others of them to work in a lead or copper mine, or pass a few nights

in an astronomical observatory; but we cannot urge the wants of these particular students as any reason for the maintenance of these three things. The primary object for which zoological stations will be erected—one for which it is to be hoped that the Universities, as well as scientific societies and private individuals, will be ready to subscribe money—is the prosecution of science.

We claim for biology now a place of far higher importance in the scheme of human knowledge than she has occupied hitherto. She has proved her claim to the respect and most serious attention of men by the discovery of the principles and detailed laws of evolution—a discovery which has more widely influenced human thought than has any other product of modern science, and must continue long so to do. We are no longer content to see biology scoffed at as "inexact," or gently dropped as "natural history," or praised for her relations to medicine. On the contrary, biology is the science whose development belongs to the day. At this moment she is deserving of more attention, more material aid, more assistance in her young growth, than any other human science. Her youthful performances, her hopeful stride onwards, promise more abundant results from pecuniary aid given to her than can be hoped for from her older sisters, who have "settled in life." If biology requires "stations," she ought to be gladly supplied with them.

I must protest against the notion—urged in your article only, I imagine, as a joke—that without "teaching" (whatever that may mean) there would be danger of a zoological station becoming the home of a narrow zoological clique. The connection is not explained, and I do not think any of your readers will see it. Are observatories the homes of narrow astronomical cliques? Are telescopes without professors liable to become the resort of ambitious young persons, anxious chiefly to discover hydrogen flames where nobody had found them before? I do not believe a bit in the narrow clique suggestion. Teaching bodies breed them much more rapidly and naturally than do working bodies. And as to the privat-docent, anxious to discover a note-chord, or the amateur astronomer hunting for hydrogen flames, I would most gladly see them multiplied exceeding abundantly. Would that we could obtain the institution of "privat-docents" in English Universities; by simply erecting a zoological station, would that we could infuse some of their kind of ambition—one of the best a man can have—into English students.

Naples, March 4

E. RAY LANKESTER

[* * The article to which our correspondent refers was written by a distinguished biologist.—ED.]

The Etymology of "Whin."

THE following is from Jamieson:—"Quhyn, Quhin-Stane, s. i. Green-stone; the name given to basalt, trap, &c. . . . Isl. *hwiyna*, resonare, *hwin*, resonans, q. 'the resounding stone.'" "Whin, whinstane, s. Ragstone or toadstone."

Whin or gorse, the name given to *Ulex eurobaeus*, common furze, is from a different root, being traced to Welsh *chwymyn* = weed.

A. HALL

YOUR correspondent, Mr. W. R. Bell, will find a derivation given for "Whin" in Jamieson's "Scottish Dictionary," where, under the name *Quhyn* or *Quhin*, it is referred to the "Islandic *hwiyna*, resonare," "*hwin*, resonans, q. the resounding stone," probably from the resonance emitted on its being struck. It is in all likelihood the same as the word *whine*, and the root is present in both Celtic and Teutonic tongues, e.g.:

Welsh	<i>Cwyno</i> , to complain
Irish	<i>Cwínead</i> , mourning (?)
Islandic	<i>hwiyna</i> (as above)
Danish	<i>hvine</i> , to whistle
German	<i>weinen</i> , to weep

Compare also the Latin *hinno*, to neigh.

F. DE CHAUMONT

Oakland, Woolston, March 15

WEBSTER, in his Dictionary (9th edition, 1862), says in explaining this word, which is known all over England, that it means *weeds, gorse, furze, waste growth*, from the Welsh *Chwyn*. That it is "a provincial name given to basaltic rock, and applied by miners to any kind of dark-coloured and hard unstratified rock which resists the pick."