

Finally, objection must be taken to the proposal to substitute the generic name *Acropora* for the well-known and widely distributed coral that is usually called *Madrepora*, a proposal originally due to Verrill, but one which cannot be accepted. The name *Madrepora* has been used for this genus since the time of Lamarck (1801), and has become definitely established by use in all the principal memoirs on the subject and in the museums of the world. To change it now can lead to no useful purpose, and can but produce a perfectly unnecessary confusion; and the confusion will be all the worse confounded if, as is proposed, the generic name be transferred to the equally well-known imperforate coral *Oculina*.

It may be true that if we are entirely to conform to the so-called rules of nomenclature the change is justified, but these rules were drawn up, not for the confusion of science, but for its convenience and for the sake of simplicity; and when it is found, as in this case, that they are likely to produce just the opposite effect from that for which they were intended they must either be amended or broken. This is by no means an isolated case, for it has been proposed on the same plea that we should use the name *Polypus* for the common octopus, *Astacus* for the lobster, *Potamobius* for the fresh-water crayfish, and that many other changes of a similar kind should be introduced. It has been found in practice, not only inconvenient, but practically impossible, to make these changes, and the customary names are still used. So it will be with the name *Madrepora*. We may argue and plead as we like for the change, but custom is too strong for us, and the proposal will not be accepted. The time has come when the committee of the International Congress of Zoology should reconsider seriously the question of the maintenance of the names of well-known or widely distributed genera, and endeavour thereby to prevent the confusion with which the strict adherence to Linnean nomenclature threatens us.

S. J. HICKSON.

COMMEMORATIVE DINNER TO SIR WILLIAM RAMSAY, K.C.B., F.R.S.

IN commemoration of the twenty-first anniversary of Sir William Ramsay's election to the chair of chemistry in University College, London, the professors of the college entertained him to dinner on March 18. The Provost, Dr. T. Gregory Foster, was in the chair, and covers were laid for eighty persons. The guests included Lord Rayleigh, Lord Reay, Sir Norman Lockyer, Sir Alexander Kennedy, the Master of the Temple, the Masters of the Worshipful Companies of Drapers, Mercers, and Carpenters, the president of the Society of Chemical Industry, the Clerk of the Fishmongers' Company, Prof. H. B. Dixon, Prof. A. Smithells, Prof. J. M. Thomson, Prof. Meldola, Mr. T. Harrison Townsend, Mr. Henry Higgs, Mr. M. Carteghe, Dr. E. M. Borrigo, Dr. F. Clowes, and Colonel Walseley Cox.

After the toast to the King had been drunk with due honour, the chairman explained that the dinner was, in the first place, the means of expressing the personal affection and admiration of his colleagues for Sir William Ramsay. Leaving it to others to tell what Sir William's contributions to science had been, the chairman referred to the services he had rendered to the college and to London by establishing a great school of chemistry, and also to his perseverance and tact in questions relating to the re-organisation of the University of London. He had never been weary of expressing the great principles of the true relation of examinations to teaching in the University, and of emphasising the view so strongly held by him that in all university examinations the candidates' teachers should of necessity have a share.

Lord Rayleigh then proposed the health of Sir William Ramsay. He told how, twenty-one years ago, when he was secretary of the Royal Society, papers from Ramsay passed in rapid succession through his hands. Many of the older members, perhaps because they were old, hardly approved of his new methods; but, fortunately, these papers were accepted. Proceeding, he reminded the company of the work which Sir William had done in investigating the gases of the atmosphere, of the never failing energy which led him to new discoveries.

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Prof. Dixon seconded the toast, and in doing so attempted to take the view of a later generation in looking back on Sir William Ramsay's work. Having briefly summarised that work as a contribution to the developments of chemistry, he concluded by comparing his activity to that of radium itself.

The toast having been enthusiastically drunk, Sir William Ramsay replied. After thanking his colleagues for their invariable kindness and helpfulness, and his assistants and students for their loyalty and devotion to their work, he emphasised the debt that he owed to them in whatever he had accomplished, and went on to explain how he had received the first suggestion which led to the discovery of argon, and how generously Lord Rayleigh had allowed him to follow out that suggestion. He dwelt, further, on the questions raised by the chairman in connection with university organisation, and expressed the hope that the University of London would even more fully than it had at present develop the principles to which reference had been made.

At a later stage in the evening, in reply to an inquiry from one of the guests as to when a new laboratory would be built for Sir William, the chairman stated that, though they have the ground and the plans, they have not yet obtained the money for buildings.

Prof. Ker then proposed the health of the other guests, and Lord Reay replied. In view of his close connection with the college as president and chairman, his lordship said that he could hardly consider himself a guest within the college walls, but he thanked the professors for having done him the honour to invite him to commemorate with them Sir William Ramsay's twenty-first anniversary. He proceeded to tell of the great work which Sir William had done in advising Mr. Tata about the organisation of the new institute that he had founded in India, and how Sir William's influence was likely to be extended through the fact that one of his pupils, Dr. Morris Travers, was holding the position of head of that institution. Referring to the need of new laboratories for the chemical department, and the inconvenient accommodation now provided for Sir William Ramsay, Lord Reay hoped that just as at Essen the little cottage had been preserved from which the great Krupp gun factory was developed, so that when the new laboratories were built, which his lordship hoped would be soon, the room in which Sir William Ramsay's discoveries had been made should be also preserved.

Expressions of regret for absence were received from the Chancellor of the University (Lord Rosebery), from the Principal (Sir Arthur Rücker), from Profs. Tilden, Crum Brown, and many others.

NEW SLIDE-RULES.

MESSRS. J. J. GRIFFIN AND SONS, LTD., of Kingsway, London, have sent examples of two slide-rules which they are introducing at a very low price—the longer one, which is 25 cm. in length, at 2s., and the shorter, which is 12.5 cm. in length, at 1s. These rules with their slides are made of card, and the divisions are printed. In point of clearness and accuracy they are nearly equal to the best rules divided on celluloid, and they are vastly superior to the old-fashioned box-wood rules of thirty or forty years ago. In each case the upper lines of the slide and of the rule go from 1 to 10 twice over or from 1 to 100, being what are called "A" and "B" lines, while the lower lines of the slide and of the rule are on twice the scale, being "D" lines. Each is provided with a cursor with chisel pointers both to right and left. The back of the slide and all the remaining spaces on the rule are left plain. The accuracy of the surfaces of juxtaposition is specially noteworthy, and is greatly in excess of what is generally associated with card structures. Each is provided with a paper imitation-leather case. With rules such as these, the real utility of the slide-rule may, it is hoped, be brought home to thousands to whom the expense of the now nearly universal celluloid rule is prohibitive; it may even be hoped that some daring mathematical master in a public school may see fit to inculcate the wholesome practice of making calculations not vastly more accurate than any possible knowledge of the data can be, and use rules such as these both to

exemplify the idea and to let schoolboys know how the daily arithmetic of the laboratory and of the workshop is carried out. Masters should also find them useful for curve tracing on squared paper, as the coordinates of any parabola or rectangular hyperbola, or of any curve representing the law of inverse squares, can be read off from the rule with a single setting of the slide.

With such inexpensive slide-rules it is to be hoped that the makers will in time provide two spare slides at a slight additional cost. For instance, one should be divided so as to give sines and tangents; the second should have a scale of equal parts to give logarithms and a log log or P line for exponential calculations. They might also with advantage print on the back of the rule constants that are frequently required, but at no extra cost.

With such extra slides the master would be able to illustrate further curve tracing, and the line of sines would be specially useful in the optical class for reading off angles of incidence and of refraction with any refractive index, or for showing the necessity of total internal reflection when the scale of sines stops short of the number representing the refractive index. He would also find it useful in solving triangles.

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

CAMBRIDGE.—Dr. G. H. F. Nuttall, F.R.S., Quick professor of biology and fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, has been elected to a professorial fellowship at Magdalene College.

MANCHESTER.—By the will of Mr. G. Harrison, who died on January 21, 1900, is bequeathed to Owens College for scholarships or fellowships, or such similar purposes as the council of the college may direct, subject to the words "George Harrison" being always associated with the objects provided for by this bequest.

SIR FREDERICK WILLS has contributed another 500*l.* to the fund for establishing a university at Bristol. This brings his contribution up to 10,000*l.* At the beginning of this year Mr. H. O. Wills promised 100,000*l.* toward the endowment of the university provided a charter be granted within two years.

THE University of London Union Society appears to have made good progress since its formation in July, 1906. The annual report for 1906-7 shows that at the end of the session there were 377 members, 180 of whom were graduates. Monthly meetings for discussion were held during the Lent and Easter terms of 1907, and, in addition, friendly relations have been established with the Students' Representative Council, the University Athletic Union, and the University Musical Society. The new union is modelled on the lines of those existing at Oxford and Cambridge, and deserves the support especially of the students of London colleges affiliated to the University. Interested members should apply to the secretary, Mr. D. W. H. Bell, 20 Maxey Road, Plumstead.

A BILL to establish compulsory continuation schools in England and Wales, and to amend the Education Acts of 1870 and 1902 in respect of the age of compulsory school attendance, was introduced in the House of Commons on Tuesday by Mr. Chiozza-Money, and read a first time. In introducing the Bill, Mr. Chiozza-Money said that according to the last census there were in England and Wales 5,000,000 youths of both sexes between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one, and of these not more than 400,000 were receiving any measure of systematic training. This does not include the children of the upper and middle classes, but if 400,000 be added the extraordinary conclusion is arrived at that out of 5,000,000 young people between fifteen and twenty-one years of age only 800,000 continue training after leaving the elementary schools. The practical result is that untrained boys and girls drift into the ranks of the incompetent, the unskilled, and the unemployed. The Bill abolishes all partial or total exemptions of boys and girls under fourteen years of age. It abolishes half-timers, making fourteen years the lowest age at which a boy or girl might leave an elementary school. A continuation scholar is defined as a boy between

the ages of fourteen and seventeen, and a girl between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. The Bill makes it the duty of the education authority to establish continuation schools, with technical classes, and the attendance of continuation scholars is made compulsory on the parent and the employer. The hours of attendance would be six per week, spread over one, two, or three days. The cost of carrying out the provisions of the Bill would be defrayed out of money voted by Parliament.

ABOUT a year ago the Board of Education requested its Consultative Committee to consider and advise the Board what methods are desirable and possible, under existing legislation, for securing greater local interest in the administration of elementary education in administrative counties by some form of devolution or delegation of certain powers and duties of the local authority to district or other strictly local committees. The committee has reported to the Board, and the report has been published (Cd. 3952). A prefatory memorandum states that the findings of the committee are under the consideration of the Board, and that the report has been published to provide information in view of the discussion arising out of the Bill recently introduced in the House of Commons to secure compulsory devolution. The Consultative Committee has arrived at certain general conclusions which should prove of value in assisting intelligent action. Every education committee, it is suggested, should, so far as existing powers go, secure as managers of schools the services of persons familiar with the educational needs of the locality and likely to be regarded with confidence and sympathy by parents, teachers, and the education authority. At the same time, there are certain duties requiring a wide outlook and broad educational experience which, the committee thinks, should be reserved by the authority itself. A certain number of counties exist which might with advantage create some form of local subcommittees and delegate to them duties appropriate to their needs and circumstances. It is very important to notice that the Consultative Committee states that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to devise any uniform system which would give general satisfaction throughout the country. It would be fatal to efficiency if a parochial spirit became predominant in the administration of education. It is desirable by all means to encourage an interest in educational matters in all districts by every legitimate means, but every step must be taken to ensure that the supply of efficient education in every locality is a national matter which must not be left at the mercies of local prejudices.

SOCIETIES AND ACADEMIES.

LONDON.

Royal Society, December 5, 1907.—"Localisation of Function in the Lemur's Brain." By Dr. F. W. Mott, F.R.S., and Prof. W. D. Halliburton, F.R.S.

The brain of the lemur, the lowest of the ape-like animals, does not appear to have been subjected previously to a thorough examination. Page May and Elliott Smith brought a brief communication on the subject before the Cambridge meeting of the British Association in 1904. Their experiments were apparently limited to stimulation of the cerebral cortex, and they have never published a full account of their work. Brodmann has worked out some of the histological details of the structure of the cortex cerebri, and Max Volsch has performed a stimulation experiment upon one lemur. The work of these investigators will be referred to again in the course of this paper.

(1) The brain of the lemur has a simple convolutional pattern, and the fissures are few and for the most part shallow.

(2) The motor areas are limited to the central region of the cortex.

(3) Extirpation of the excitable areas is followed by transitory paralysis of the corresponding regions on the opposite side of the body, and by degeneration of the tracts which pass to the bulbar or spinal grey matter which controls these movements. Degeneration also occurs in commissural (callosal) and association tracts in the cerebrum.