

from being a descendant of the apes, he may be looked on as their ancestor."

No one who has patiently analysed the structural characters of man and of anthropoid apes, and noted the points in which they resemble each other and those in which they differ, can find a perfectly satisfactory genealogical tree to account for the distribution of the points of resemblance and points of difference. That difficulty must remain so long as we are ignorant of the manner in which heredity works in moulding anatomical features. But to one who has tried to solve these difficulties, Prof. Wood-Jones's hypothesis, while clearing away minor difficulties, substitutes much greater ones. We cannot, on his hypothesis, explain the very remarkable and unquestionable structural community which binds man and anthropoid apes together, unless we fall back, as Prof. Wood-Jones has done and as the late Prof. Hermann Klaatsch did, on "convergence phenomena." There can be no progress in anatomy, any more than in cultural anthropology, unless we presume, until the opposite is proved to be the case, that similarity of structure and identity of custom presuppose a common origin. A. K.

The Genera of Fishes from Linnaeus to Cuvier, 1758-1833, Seventy-Five Years with the Accepted Type of Each. By D. S. Jordan, assisted by B. W. Evermann. Pp. 161. (Leland Stanford Junior University Publications: University Series.) (California: Stanford University, 1917.)

THE aim of this list, which must have involved much labour, is "to give stability to nomenclature" by altering, for the sake of priority under new rules enacted by various committees the mission of which thus to revolutionise has never received general sanction, most of the names with which we are familiar and the change of which would defeat the very object for which the use of Latin names is intended. We are glad botanists have almost unanimously repudiated such suggestions, and we trust to the good sense of the zoologists of the future to treat in like manner these attempts at upsetting nomenclature, and thus adding to the difficulties not only of systematics, but, even more, of every other department of biology. The writer of this notice is determined to continue, as in the past, to respect old names which have been universally in use, even if they do not conform to the strict rule of priority, which should be applied only when no serious harm can result from the point of view of stability in nomenclature.

We are referred to a Committee of Zoological Nomenclature, including several Germans, in May, 1917 (*sic*), with an appeal for "the fullest criticism both as to matters of fact and of opinion before placing the contents of this paper before the International Commission." We doubt if a commission so composed will ever meet again, and such seems to be also the impression of its president, as conveyed in the address delivered by him to the Zoological Society of France in January, 1915.

G. A. BOULENGER.

NO. 2539, VOL. 101]

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his correspondents. Neither can he undertake to return, or to correspond with the writers of, rejected manuscripts intended for this or any other part of NATURE. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]

The Promotion of a Closer Union between England and Italy.

THE utility, even the necessity, of a more intimate union between the democracies of the Entente will make itself felt still more urgently after the war than it does now. After the war, in fact, and even if its issues be as we wish and firmly trust they will be, there certainly will still be the danger that the hegemonic aspirations of Germany will again arise, and that she will renew her attempts at economic, technical, and scientific penetration for political purposes. On the other hand, the international division of labour, and the necessity arising from it that each country should avail itself of the complementary production and work of the other countries, will certainly continue after the war; so that, if this division of labour among the countries of the Entente is not organised, and if there does not come to pass a closer intellectual and moral union between Britain, France, and Italy, the last-named country sooner or later cannot but have recourse again, and in large measure, to Germany for all those productions and services needed to complete her own.

It is not enough, however, that Britain will produce henceforth all those manufactures which we formerly imported from Germany; nor will it be enough that she can furnish them at prices so low as to compete with Germany; nor yet will it be enough that the British manufacturers will understand the necessity of furnishing all those large supplies of goods on credit and affording all those facilities in the way of long credit with which Germany coaxed our markets. Certainly all these are measures that Britain must adopt immediately if she wishes to regain this market. If formerly, when she was the only producer of given machines or goods, she might well expect the customers spontaneously to come to her without needing to give herself too much trouble to secure them, now that she has a competitor so dangerous as Germany, Britain, too, must take due pains to acquire and preserve in our country an ever-widening circle of customers.

But, I repeat, even all these facilities will not suffice. For the economic penetration of one country by another must always be accompanied, and often even preceded, as Germany well understood, by a whole process of intellectual and moral penetration.

Let not the fact, for instance, seem insignificant that while almost no British firm is accustomed to write in Italian to Italian customers, the Germans, on the contrary, did so in always increasing measure. It is but too well known how they studied our needs and tastes in order to satisfy them. The insinuating work, often undignified, but persistent and able, of their commercial travellers has been remarked by all as one of the most important means used for the conquest that they had made in a few years of the world's markets in general, and of ours in particular.

As regards the intellectual side, properly speaking, no one can fail to recognise what valuable arms for Germany's penetration here among us in Italy she had in her books and periodicals, especially scientific and technical. These books and periodicals were in course of time considered so necessary to the students both of technical high schools and universities that where, in our secondary schools, there was the option