

Springfield, Mass.,

October 18, 1892.

Dear Dr. Black:--

Yours of the 13th at hand. When Dr. Hunt asked me to serve on the committee of "Nomenclature" for the World's Dental Congress, I replied that my engagements were such that it would be impossible for me to assume any new duties before January, 1893. I supposed this would end the matter as far as I am concerned. A few days ago, however, a note from him informed me that he had let my name go in with others, constituting this committee. Who the chairman, or others, of this committee were I did not know. And so I let the matter rest. But when, upon receipt of yours, I am informed of the nature of the work assigned this committee, my cour-

age fails me regarding the time following January next. As you say, it will be an exceedingly difficult matter to carry out the intention of this resolution. And I am sure that I am not fitted for any such undertaking, even had I the necessary time to give to it. My time and attention of late--for three or four years past--has been devoted to other lines than that of professional, and so I feel quite out of touch with the latest aspects of dental science.

On the whole, therefore, I think it best for the success of this matter that some one else take my place upon the committee. I am sure that I shall not be able to give to it the necessary time and attention.

A universal system on nomenclature that would be acceptable to the profession of the

entire world implies, it seems to me, a universal perception of the qualities by which the various conditions we wish to name express themselves to our consciousness. These qualities are often very complex, whereas the name we give, or attempt to give, is only a kind of abbreviation or sign. Hence, a name to be given to certain conditions that would prove to be universally acceptable, must imply a common conception regarding such conditions,--which seems to me an impossibility.

If Kant is right in the supposition that we cannot conceive the thing itself, but that only its qualities can reach our minds through our senses, then nomenclature must ever be a growing thing, or else knowledge must cease to progress. Given the scientific fact and nomenclature will take care of itself to a

large extent.

That there is legitimate work that may be done is undoubtedly true. But how it may be done, or by what plan, I am not at all sure about, and do not feel capable of advising.

Wishing you, however, abundant success,  
I am

Sincerely yours,

*C. J. Stearns*

381 Main St.