

that a premium was offered by Government for the best mode of destroying them. The Society of Arts in London, during many years, held forth a premium for the best account of this insect and the means of checking its ravages, but without having produced one successful claimant. For more than a century an insect destructive in granaries has prevailed in the western parts of France, and has gradually been extending in an easterly and northerly direction. In the province of Angoumois it continued to increase for many years, till at length the attention of Government was directed to its fearful depredations. This was in 1760, when the insect was found to swarm in all the wheat fields and granaries of Angoumois, and of the neighbouring provinces, and the afflicted inhabitants were thereby deprived not only of their principal staple, wherewith they were wont to pay their annual rents, their taxes, and their tithes, but were threatened with famine and pestilence from the want of wholesome bread. Two members of the Academy of Sciences of Paris, the celebrated Duhamel du Monceau and M. Tillet, were then commissioned to visit the province of Angoumois, and inquire into the nature of this destructive insect. The result of their inquiries was communicated to the Academy, in whose history and memoirs it may be found, and was also subsequently republished in a separate volume.*

Such then are some of the instances where Governments have endeavoured, by offering premiums and enlisting the services of scientific persons, to procure such information as may serve to avert the calamities caused by destructive insects amongst the valuable products of the soil. And no small part of the difficulty which arose in making such investigations, was caused by the ignorance of the farmers with regard to the nature of the insects from whose ravages they had suffered so much. One would have supposed that men who had lost entire crops by an insect whose transformations must have come under their notice in every stage of its existence, ought to have been able to give all the information which was required respecting its nature, propagation, and economy. So far, however, was this from being the case, that many of those from whom information was sought, seemed to be ignorant whether the insect was a moth, a fly, or what they termed a bug, indeed so various and contradictory were the statements regarding the Hessian Fly, submitted to the celebrated entomologist, Sir Joseph Banks, by the Privy Council of England in 1788, that though he had a large mass of materials before him, he was unable to reach any satisfactory conclusion, and it remained for the American Entomologist, Say, to determine, satisfactorily, the species and genus of the insect in question. The frequent misapplication of names, by persons unacquainted with Natural History, is one of the greatest obstacles to the progress of science, and shows how necessary it is that things should be called by their right names, if the observations communicated respecting them are to be of any service. For instance, the name "weevil" is used in this country to describe any insect that destroys the wheat plant; it is given to at least six different kinds of insects, two of which are moths, two are flies, and two are beetles. Now nearly four thousand species of weevils have actually been scientifically named and described. When mention, therefore, is made of "the weevil," it may well be a subject of doubt to which of these four thousand species reference is made; if the scientific name of the species in question were made known, this doubt would at once be removed. Every intelligent farmer is capable of becoming a good observer, and of making valuable discoveries in Natural History, but if he be ignorant of the proper names of the objects examined, or if he give to them names which have previously been applied by other persons to entirely different objects, the result of his observations will be to confuse instead of throwing light upon the subject.

* *Histoire d'un Insecte qui devore les grains de l'Angoumois*, 12mo., Paris, 1762.