

1872, on Donovan's *Papilio*); and often descriptions were made from unreliable figures, instead of from the insect.

Now, with these and other disadvantages that might be mentioned, the authors who have undertaken to revise our Nomenclature have, each for himself, fixed on this or that description as applying to this or that insect, and there is frequent and serious disagreement between them. This will sufficiently appear by comparing the two Catalogues hereinafter mentioned, which, as to the names of British butterflies alone, that one might suppose had been settled long ago, differ as to the correct specific name to the extent of one-seventh of the whole number, as has been stated by Mr. W. A. Lewis, in his paper on Synonymic Lists. Lond. 1872.*

To complicate the case still further, there is a disagreement as to the date at which names shall be held to have first begun. Specific names did not originate with Linnæus, but that naturalist was the author of the binomial system of Nomenclature, and enunciated it in 1751. This was after his earlier works had been published, and even he did not fully apply the system till several years later. He re-described the known species of insects, using sometimes the names of his predecessors, but often re-naming, and very frequently changed a name given by himself in his earlier editions.

The question of a starting point, therefore, has very much exercised authors exploring for ancient names. And it is a very important one, and one above all others on which agreement would seem to be necessary, for many insects in 1767 bore different names from those given to them in 1758, and the latter from those of prior date.

Rule 2nd of the Code says:—"Specific names published before 1766, *cannot be used* to the prejudice of names published since that date;" and in the explanatory remarks, it is said:—"We *ought not to attempt* to carry back the principle of priority *beyond the date of the 12th edition* of the *Systema Naturæ*, 1766." (Vol. I., issued 1766; vol. II., in which are the insects, 1767.)

Mr. Kirby, in his Catalogue of Lepidoptera lately published (1870), follows the Rule, and would ignore all names prior to 1767. Dr. Staudinger, in his Catalogue of European Lepidoptera, also published

*NOTE.—See also a very able pamphlet by Mr. Lewis, entitled "A Discussion of the Laws of Priority in Entomological Nomenclature," Lond. 1872, which I advise all persons who care to make themselves better acquainted with the subject, to obtain. It may be had through the Naturalists' Agency, Salem,