

*doubtful cases*, to restrict its operation to the time since the commencement of Olivier's part of the *Encyclopedie Methodique*, and to accept his decision as final on all cases up to that time, in the same way that the 12th edition of Linnæus is accepted as final on the question of binominal nomenclature.

2. If the authors anterior to the 12th edition are ruled out because of the imperfection of the binominal method up to that time, it would surely be consistent to exclude those after that time who failed to recognize its necessity. Species cannot, of course, be cited from them, for they gave no specific names; but I will go farther, and say that genera ought not to be attributed to them, except so far as to quote them in synonymy for their generic ideas, which were brought into harmony with the system of nomenclature by subsequent authors. They will live in the literature of the science in synonymy, but they have taken no part in the formation of the names of the objects, by which alone we know them and can speak of them, and therefore should not appear as authorities.

The proper application of the fourth canon is attended with still greater difficulty, and I fear that the two sets of opinions regarding the authority to be placed after the binominal name are absolutely irreconcilable. The arguments in favor of the original describer of the species on the one hand, and of the author of the binominal combination adopted on the other hand, are equally strong, perhaps, as regards the convenience of science, and each side has been argued with the utmost ability. I have therefore nothing to say on the subject in the way of argument, and suspect that for some time it must be left to the discretion of each student to decide under which system he can work best. Practically I do not regard it as a matter of any consequence, if each person will *distinctly declare* in his work *which system* he uses. The number of instances in which any confusion can result are few, and the synonymy in catalogues which are always at hand will at once resolve the doubt.

I may be permitted to observe, however, that clearer views of the respective merits of the two methods would prevail, and possibly even some harmonious result more speedily be obtained, if the arguments involved less discussion of purely personal interests. It would seem from some expressions of opinion I have seen, but which I forbear to refer to more definitely, that there are those that believe that one main object of descriptive natural history is to give the authors a sort of proprietary