

members when known is a sufficient definition of the limits of a group and gives it an unquestionable right to recognition." That looks rather like a reversal of Dr. Thorell's Rule than a modification of it, and it is the foundation on which these late innovations rest. What right has any man to lay down a Rule or propound a Canon at variance with the received Code, and then assume that his Rule or Canon has the force of law? The Rules of the British Association were adopted by the representatives of the different branches of zoology, assembled in convention, and they have been accepted and acted upon. If any of them need modification or repeal, such change must proceed from as high an authority as that which enacted them. We may reverence or respect the opinions of an Agassiz, or a Thorell, or a Scudder, but in these matters to consider opinions as so many laws would be to establish a dangerous precedent, and cannot for one moment be tolerated.

Under another of these Canons Mr. Scudder has undertaken to apply the rule of priority to groups higher than genera, as follows: "In any subsequent alteration of the limits of a group its name must never be cancelled." And accordingly we are requested to introduce a host of barbarous family and stirps names, to the utter confusion of the received nomenclature of the higher groups. The Committee of the Br. Ass'n, on the contrary, not intending to apply the rule of priority to these groups, recommended "that the assemblages of genera termed families should be uniformly named by adding the termination *idae* to the earliest known or most typically characterized genus in them, and that the subdivisions termed sub-families should be similarly constructed with the termination *inae*." And this recommendation has been accepted and generally acted on because this mode of designating families and sub-families, being uniform and an aid to memory, was found eminently convenient. It was regarded as a vast improvement on the fantastic and heterogenous names of the earlier authors and of Hübner especially. But the effect of this Canon would be to swamp our nomenclature with such terms as *armati* and *hypati*, *argonautae* and *moderatæ*, *adolescentes* and *terribiles*, *frugalia* and *voracia*, and hundreds more equally absurd. And already we find the writings of Mr. Scudder defaced and obscured by them. This is making progress backwards, and in my opinion is as sensible as if we were to surrender the Indian numerals for the letters of Rome, or the notation of chemistry for the hieroglyphics of the alchemist, or railroads for buck-boards and pillions.