

a committee, which reported substantially the same rules, with a few closer definitions of moot points and some useful commentaries upon certain rules.

This report was adopted at the meeting in 1865, and was reprinted with notes by Prof. A. E. Verrill, in the American Journal of Science and Arts, 2nd ser., xlviii, 92, in 1869.

It would therefore appear that the common law under which Zoologists now act in questions of nomenclature, is the code, the history of which I have just given. The only other alternative is, that there are no established rules, and that in the Republic of Science each citizen is a judge, capable of expounding the law for himself, and amenable to no tribunal.

I will therefore assume that until a different code is formally adopted, American naturalists are disposed to abide by the recommendations of the two important scientific bodies, whose reports are above mentioned.

As the language of all three reports is equally clear and definite upon the points I wish to make against the reception of the Geoffroyan genera, I shall quote from the latest, reprinted in Silliman's Journal, 1869, as being most easy of reference.

"Rule III. The committee are of opinion, after much deliberation, that the XIIth edition of the Systema Naturae is that to which the limit of time should apply, viz., 1766" . . . . . (p. 94.)

P. 96. "As our subject matter is strictly confined to the *binomial system of nomenclature*, or that which indicates species by means of two Latin words, the one generic, the other specific, and as this invaluable method originated solely with Linnaeus, it is clear that as far as species are concerned, we ought not to attempt to carry back the principle of priority beyond the date of the 12th ed. of the Systema Naturae, 1766. Previous to that period, naturalists were wont to indicate species not by a name comprised in one word, but by a *definition* which occupied a sentence, the extreme verbosity of which method was productive of great inconvenience." . . . . . (p. 97.) "The same reasons apply to genera." . . . "Brisson, who was a contemporary of Linnaeus and acquainted with the Systema Naturae, defined and published certain genera of birds which are *additional* to those in the 12th edition of Linnaeus' works, and which are therefore of perfectly good authority. But Brisson still adhered to the old method of designating species by a sentence instead of a word, and therefore while we retain his defined genera, we do not extend the same indulgence to the titles of his species, even when the latter are accidentally binomial in form."