

To this canon no exception whatever should be made ; for it would be difficult to draw the line anywhere and gain general consent. Anyone who considers the subject, will see that one apparently reasonable exception will lead to another scarcely less desirable, until the whole value and force of the proposed canon is destroyed.

III. The mere enumeration of its members, when known, is a sufficient definition of the limits of a group, and gives it an unquestionable claim to recognition.

Although it is certainly *most* desirable that every name proposed for a group should, when first propounded (or shortly after), be accompanied by a full description of its essential characters, it is evident that no one acquainted with the subject of which an author treats can fail to understand his meaning if he defines his groups by mere enumeration of their members. If, for instance, he designates the known genera to be embraced in a proposed family, he actually defines his group much better than he could do by a specification of its characters, since we have probably not yet been favored with any description of a natural family which gives everything which is characteristic and omits all that is not.

*Recommendations.*—I. "That assemblages of genera, termed families, should be uniformly named by adding the termination *-idaë* to the name of the earliest known or most typically characterized genus in them ; and that their subdivision, termed subfamilies, should be similarly constructed with the termination *-inæ*."

This recommendation, formulated by the committee of the British Association, is deprived of a great part of its value by the disagreement of naturalists as to the nature of family and subfamily groups,—assemblages of very diverse natures having received this designation at the hands of different writers ; indeed, up to the issue of Professor Agassiz's Essay on Classification, no one had ever attempted to give definite shape to current opinions upon the subject ; and it will be long before we shall see a general concurrence in either the views put forward in that work, or in any modification of them. Such being the case, it is evident that this recommendation cannot have the force of a law, nor be allowed any retrospective action. Otherwise these rules, or any other reasonable ones (however generally they may be accepted), are powerless to assign to any higher natural group a fixed and unalterable name ; but the group in question would receive a different name from different authors, according as they considered it a subfamily or an assemblage of still another nature.