

commentaries on the method in which I think they should be executed, in order that we may arrive at permanent and unchangeable results. These canons, as I would express them, are as follows :

1. The binominal system of nomenclature is the only one to be recognized: one word for the genus, and another for the species, to indicate each object.
2. Linnæus was the author of the binominal system.
3. The law of priority must be adhered to, so far as the interests of science make it practicable.

This law renders inviolable the name of every species which has been properly published, and the name of every genus properly defined and exemplified by one or more species.

4. The great number of the organic beings subjected to study has made it necessary, in order to avoid confusion, to increase the binominal name by adding the authority upon which the name either in whole or part rests.

5. In the formation of new names, reference is to be had to classical construction and to the ordinary proprieties of social intercourse.

Since the binominal system is of modern invention, being indeed scarcely more than a century old, and was only gradually introduced even by its author, it is obvious that none of these fundamental canons existed in the minds of the founders of Zoology, and that the appreciation of the necessity of such ordinances has become apparent only in consequence of the confusion occasioned by their non-existence.

The old codes of rules, *Philosophia Botanica* of Linnæus, and its imitation, *Philosophia Entomologica* of Fabricius, do not cover many of the most perplexing cases which have since arisen under these four rules, although, if acted on in good faith, they would have prevented much of the confusion since produced.

Concerning the two old codes I have at present nothing to say, the exhaustive commentary on the rules of Linnæus in the introduction to the *Nomenclator Zoologicus* of Agassiz, leaving, in fact, nothing to be desired.

It is therefore apparent that in applying the four canons, their influence must, like all retro-active laws, commence at certain arbitrary periods, to be determined, not by the judgment of individual investigators, but by