

versy. Then, perhaps, Dr. Merriam will tell us whether he continues to recognize *Lepus americanus* and its subspecies *L. a. virginianus*.

SAMUEL N. RHOADS.

ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES,
PHILADELPHIA, April 17, 1896.

AMERICAN POLAR HARES: A REPLY TO
MR. RHOADS.

THE above wail from Mr. Rhoads respecting my review of his paper on the Polar Hares calls for a brief reply. It was not the importance of Mr. Rhoads' paper, as he seems to suppose, but the importance of certain principles involved in his methods of treatment, that led to the length of my review. My criticisms were aimed mainly at two matters: one, a matter of description; the other a matter of nomenclature. In describing the new American hares, Mr. Rhoads contrasted them with a European species (*Lepus timidus*) instead of with their American relative (*Lepus glacialis*). This struck me as bad systematic zoölogy. In treating the Polar hare of Baffinland he adopted the specific name *arcticus* instead of *glacialis*, though both names appeared simultaneously in the same book. This struck me as bad nomenclature.

The reasons for retaining *glacialis* as the proper name of the animal were stated at length in my review and need not be repeated here. But in his reply Mr. Rhoads implies that I have subordinated priority to the scientific standing of an author. This I deny. Priority of publication is the cardinal principle of nomenclature—the foundation of all modern codes; without it, stability in nomenclature is impossible. But priority of *publication* and priority of *pagination* are two widely different things, and I deny that priority of pagination constitutes priority of publication. It can hardly be gainsaid that the different pages of a book appear simultaneously; hence names on different pages of the same book should be treated in the same way as names appearing simultaneously in different books. Sequence of pagination is a trivial circumstance, not to be considered in fixing specific names except in cases where no other reason for a choice can be found. Even the A. O. U. Code quoted by Mr. Rhoads concedes this, and goes so far as to

accord greater weight to *sex*, *age* and *season* of the type specimen than to priority of pagination. In other words, in choosing between names of even date, sequence of pagination is a last resort.

It is useless to enter into a controversy with Mr. Rhoads over his astonishing statement that of the descriptions of the American Polar hare given by Ross and Leach, "Ross' description is the better of the two." Reference to the work in which both appeared will settle this point.

In reply to Mr. Rhoads' inquiry as to the source of the rule that 'in cases of equal pertinency the first reviser of the group has the privilege of fixing the name,' it may be stated that said rule expresses the practice of most systematic zoölogists—and I think botanists as well—and is in complete accord with the spirit of the A. O. U. Code, though not there formulated as a distinct canon. In closing, I must thank Mr. Rhoads for calling my attention to what he considers would have been a proper review of his paper.

C. H. M.

THE SUBJECT OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: In the number of SCIENCE for May 15th there is a letter from Johannes Rehmke on the subject of 'consciousness,' about which I beg leave to be indulged in a brief statement.

Take two equal weights with handles, one weight being several times the bulk of the other. Ask a blindfolded man to tell which is the heavier, being careful not to let him touch either weight, but only the handle, and he will not judge of a difference. Now let the same man, seeing the weights, but not knowing them to be the same, decide which is the heavier; he will affirm that the smaller is the heavier weight. This is a common experiment in psycho-physics. There are on record a vast number of similar experiments which have been abundantly verified, all leading to the conclusion that there are two elements in sensation, the one of consciousness of the effect upon self and the other an inference relating to the thing observed by any one of the senses. All of these experiments, and a vast body of experiences which every individual undergoes,