

met with when an attempt is made to depart from the principle of the method by the introduction of an arbitrary symbol. Professor Mark (SCIENCE, January 4, 1901) proposes that the sixteen hundreds shall be denoted by 1600, etc., the seventeen hundreds by 1700, etc., the eighteen hundreds by '00, etc., and the nineteen hundreds by :00, etc. This method could be of value only if accepted universally, or at least by all scientific writers. The confusion introduced by inadvertently writing '23 for 1923 will be as great as if one had actually written 1823. But is it likely that this confusion will be avoided, seeing that many people already have dated letters and so forth '00 or '01, meaning 1900 and 1901? Setting this objection aside for the present, we note what difficulty Professor Mark has in finding a suitable symbol for the nineteen hundreds, and we wonder what is to be done with the next century, and with the one after that, and so on. If we are to settle this question in a scientific spirit, let us attempt something better than an apostrophe for 18, a colon for 19, a hyphen, say for 20, a dagger for 21, and such arbitrary methods, all for the sake of saving an *em* space here and there or a few tenths of a second *per annum*. The irritation induced by the constant repetition of 18 or 19 is the least of the penalties we have to pay for the possession of ten fingers, and it is hardly enough to induce us to attempt yet once more some new method of notation. I therefore dismiss as impracticable all suggestions that familiar numerals should arbitrarily or even with some show of reason be replaced by punctuation marks, or by letters of any alphabet, or by ideographs, or by musical notes. But, seeing that the majority of papers referred to by any writer are, and in most cases will be, those of the hundred years immediately preceding the date of his own writing, I suggest that the apostrophe should be used, by those who like such self-saving devices, for all those years and for them alone. Professor Mark when he wrote in 1899 used the apostrophe for all the years 1800 to 1899. In 1901 let him use it for the years 1802 to 1901; in 1923, if, as we hope, he be still active, let him use it for the years 1824 to 1923. This plan seems to be more in accord with general usage. 'Who fears to

speak of '98'? did not cease to be intelligible to everyone, until the year '98 again came round. For all years more than a hundred back, or in any case of doubt, let us use the full number; and more particularly should it be used in the dating of important letters, of publications, and of formal entries in museum registers, or similar volumes of permanent historic importance.

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A FURTHER APPEAL TO ALL LOVERS OF BIRDS.

ONE year ago all the sea birds breeding along our coasts seemed doomed to extinction at the hands of the milliners, in spite of their beauty and incalculable services as scavengers, and as guides to fishermen and mariners.

The American Ornithologists' Union, alarmed at the prospect, appointed a special committee to devise means for the preservation of these birds. This committee, aided by the press, appealed to the bird-loving public for funds with which to hire wardens to guard the sea birds while they were on their breeding grounds.

The contributions received in response to this appeal were sufficient to secure faithful wardens for the protection of all the colonies still left on the coast from Cape Charles, Virginia, northward to Maine.

The encouraging results of the efficient protection given the birds during the season of 1900 prompts the American Ornithologists' Union to continue its efforts during the coming breeding season and to extend, if possible, the work to the South Atlantic and the Gulf coasts, where there is even greater need of bird protection than in the north.

At the last session of Congress a Federal law was enacted, known as the Lacey Act, which gives by far the strongest protection ever furnished to bird or beast in the United States, as it makes it a punishable offense to export from a State any bird or animal unlawfully killed therein, or to receive such bird or animal in any other State. The common carriers are even now refusing to transport birds and animals in view of the heavy penalty attached to a violation of the Lacey law. It is believed by the committee that the vigorous enforcement

of this law by the United States Department of Agriculture, which has the matter in charge, and the proposed extension of the warden system, will in a very short time break down the whole plume trade so far as it lives upon the birds of the United States.

In addition to the special protection given to the birds by wardens, the American Ornithologists' Union, through its Protection Committee, is taking very active steps in a large number of States to improve the bird laws by amendments, or through the enactment of entirely new and effective statutes.

In view of the urgent need for a continuance of the work, and of the encouraging results of the first year's systematic efforts, the undersigned committee of the Union feel justified in making a second urgent appeal to every bird lover, and to every one who desires the preservation of these beautiful and economically valuable birds, to contribute to the fund necessary for continuing the work on a more extended scale.

Contributions should be sent to the treasurer, Mr. William Dutcher, No. 525 Manhattan Avenue, New York City.

[Signed.] Abbott H. Thayer; William Brewster, President Mass. Audubon Society; Witmer Stone, Chairman A. O. U. Com. on Bird Protection; Robert Ridgway, Curator of Birds, U. S. Nat. Mus.; C. Hart Merriam, Chief U. S. Biological Survey, Pres. A. O. U.; A. K. Fisher, Ass't Biologist, U. S. Biological Survey; J. A. Allen, Curator Vertebrate Zoology, Am. Mus. Nat. His.; Frank M. Chapman, Ass't Curator Ver. Zoology, Am. Mus. Nat. His.; William Dutcher, Treasurer, A. O. U.

SHORTER ARTICLES.

THE PROPER NAMES OF THE ALPINE CHOUGH AND OF THE EGYPTIAN CROCODILE.

In a recent number of SCIENCE attention was called to some names of animals proposed by Osbeck (*Reise nach Ostindien und China*, 1765), which had been overlooked by subsequent writers and should replace several names in common use. Since then I have had the opportunity of examining a copy of the German translation * of Hasselquist's *Iter Palæ-*

* 'Reise nach Palästina.' Rostock, 1762.

stinum eller Resa til Heliga Landet, etc., 1757; and among the many interesting questions of synonymy that are opened by this book there are two to which I desire to call attention at the present time, viz., the proper names of the Alpine Chough and of the Egyptian Crocodile.

In the first edition (1757) of Hasselquist that author describes the Alpine Chough as *Monedula pyrrhacorax* (p. 238), which was referred to the genus *Upupa* by Linné in his 10th edition (1758), and subsequently, in the 12th edition (1766), described as *Corvus pyrrhacorax*. As the German translation of Hasselquist's work appeared in 1762, in which the name *Monedula pyrrhacorax* occurs with a full description on pages 238, 239, that author must be credited with first removing the Alpine Chough from *Upupa*, and restricting it under the name *Monedula pyrrhacorax* which is the proper name of the bird. Several changes in the synonymy of the species are necessary which should stand as follows:

MONEDULA PYRRHOCORAX (L.) Hass.

Upupa pyrrhacorax Linné. 1758.

Monedula pyrrhacorax Hass. 1762.

Corvus pyrrhacorax Linné. 1766.

Pyrrhacorax alpinus Viell. 1816.

Pyrrhacorax pyrrhacorax (L.) Temm. 1820.

Monedula Brehm (1828), being preoccupied by *Monedula* Latr. (1802), has been replaced by *Colæus* Kaup. Latreille's generic name must likewise fall in view of Hasselquist's prior use of *Monedula*.

The use by Hasselquist of Linné's name, *Lacerta crocodilus*, for the Egyptian crocodile has an important bearing as to the proper name of that animal. The *Lacerta crocodilus* of both editions of Linné was a composite species, and for that reason the name has been dropped by recent writers, the Egyptian species generally carrying the name *Crocodilus niloticus* Laur. 1769. It seems evident that its proper name is *Crocodilus crocodilus* (Linné), 1758, in consequence of Hasselquist's restriction of *Lacerta crocodilus* to the Egyptian animal in 1762.

I am indebted to Mr. Witmer Stone for suggestions regarding the synonymy of the Alpine Chough.

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