to err against the most generally accepted rule covering the particular matter discussed; and even if I grant, for the sake of argument, that this opinion was wrong, it still remains true that they unnecessarily created difficulties and left opportunities for an annoying divergence of opinion.*

Systematists might 'be much happier' for the time being if left to go their own ways, but the trouble would merely be thrown with increased force on the shoulders of those coming after. Dr. D. S. Jordan, when recently replying in SCIENCE to a criticism of mine, indicated the desirability of letting each case stand on the basis of the original publication, and not leaving the types of genera or species to be determined by the process of subsequent elimination. Now as a matter of plain common sense this is surely much to be commended, but if I adopt Dr. Jordan's view (as I should much prefer to do), what am I to do about the innumerable names of genera (especially among the Lepidoptera) which have been determined by the 'elimination process'? It is surely excusable to wish to be consistent.

Zoologists seem to be agreeing to the eminently sensible view that homonyms must be exactly alike, not merely similar. Botanists, however, have made and are making many changes on account of mere similarity in names. For example, *Batschia carolinensis* Gmelin, 1791, is a *Lithospermum,* and the name of the species is suppressed (being changed to *gmelini*) because of *Lithospermum carolinianum* Lamarck, which is an *Onosmodium.* According to my view the first mentioned plant should be *Lithospermum carolinensis* (Gmel.). Many names of genera, even in zoology, are changed for such reasons, and as the matter can not be yet said to be settled, I think it is worth while to make as strong a stand as possible for the rule 'no homonymy without absolute identity of names.'

Zoologists generally agree that when subgenera or sections are raised to the rank of genera, the subgeneric or section names must be retained for the genera. Botanists, however, have frequently denied this altogether.

All these divergent practices are productive of future difficulties, and I can not see that anything is gained by going ahead with our eyes shut. Uniformity has to come, sooner or later.

T. D. A. COCKERELL.

* According to the plan indicated by Mr. Bather for saving the name *Cucumites lesquereuxii*, most published species would be nameless, as the name rarely occurs *after* the description! I should like to know what Mr. Bather thinks about the substitution of *Washingtonia* Raf., for *Osmorrhiza* Raf. as now adopted by American botanists.

A RARE SCIENTIFIC BOOK.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: I would like information concerning the following very rare scientific book:

Purkenje: 'Commentatio de examine physiologico organi visus et systematis cutanei. Vratislav' (Breslau), 1823. Francis Galton states in 'Finger Prints' ('92), that there is *one copy in America.* As I am desirous of locating this or any other American copy, I shall be grateful to any one who can give me information on the subject.

HARRIS HAWTHORNE WILDER.

SMITH COLLEGE,
March 6, 1903.

SHORTER ARTICLES.

ORIGIN OF THE WORD 'BAROMETER.'

THE instrument familiar to us all as the barometer was first universally known by the name of its inventor as 'Torricelli's tube'; de Guericke, the inventor of the air-pump, called his huge water-barometer 'Semper Vivum,' also 'Weather Mannikin,' with the Latin form 'Anemoscopium.'

Soon after the year 1665 the words 'baroscope' and 'barometer' came into general use in England, but the individual to whom the credit belongs for originating these terms has not been certainly known; the assertion made by a contributor to the *Edinburgh Review* for 1812 that 'baroscope' was first used by Professor George Sinclair, of Scotland, in 1668, is an error, for both words occur in the *Philosophical Transactions* four years earlier. The passage is unsigned and reads thus: