

world. The genus *Leucozona* includes a single species, possibly two. In accordance with this iniquitous, *ex post facto* law of the 'First Reviser' it is now proposed to apply the name *Syrphus* to this single species and to give to the hundreds now called by that name, the name of a synonym made years ago by the greatest blunderer that ever wrote on entomology. Schiner was remarkably conscientious, following the usages and rules of his time closely. He, of course, could not imagine that the future historical naturalist would impose so absurd a rule as would make the carelessly designated and wholly unwarranted 'type' of Curtis compulsory; did not dream that it was necessary for him to look through the writings of every author of high and low degree to see whether Fabricius's types had been arbitrarily fixed. His work was done in good faith.

This is but one example of the workings of this newly proposed, *ex post facto* law. There are scores of others not unlike it; in fact, dipterology will be a small chaos until all the present works on the science have been rewritten, and a paradise of the name tinkerer, if such a rule obtains.

I should not object to the 'first species' rule, if it were not made retroactive in such cases as would upset other names established by elimination. Surely those of the past who have done able and conscientious work under accepted usages should not be stigmatized at the caprice of any self-constituted authority. And what assurance have we that a few years hence some other *ex post facto* law will not be invoked to do the work all over again? New writers will have little opportunity to propose new generic names unless some such historical mine is opened up.

I really believe that the final solution of the ever-growing controversies and apparently never-ceasing changes will be some such commission as Dr. Davenport has recently suggested, an accepted commission to pass upon the validity of names without regard to priority or anything else. And one of the first rules that I should attempt, were I a member of such a commission, would be that he who digs up a name that has been buried

for fifty years to replace some other in common use, should be ostracised and debarred from all further use of reputable scientific journals.

S. W. WILLISTON

TYPES OF GENERA BY FIRST SPECIES

IN a recent article¹ it is claimed that the first species method is opposed to the law of priority, since it supersedes the action of the first reviser. It is only necessary to reply that the action of the original author always precedes that of any possible reviser, and since the first species method determines the type of the genus solely from the first publication of the original author, it is obviously more in accord with the law of priority than any other method.

The same writer makes the surprising statement that the method of elimination and that of the first reviser are parts of one method. As a matter of fact, they are almost diametrically opposed. The elimination method, or the method of residues, tends to leave as the type of the original genus the one left last after all removals. This is usually the most obscure or unrecognizable species, since the more prominent ones are generally first selected as the types of new genera, or are otherwise removed. The first reviser method, or that of the nomination of types, tends to select some prominent species as the type of the old genus, since such will naturally be first selected by some later author as an illustration. These two opposed rules are, unfortunately, capable of being mixed in various ways (one of which is illustrated in the article here referred to), allowing of almost an infinitude of methods of selecting types. It is this extreme and most undesirable latitude in the rules that renders those most lately promulgated so unsatisfactory and impracticable.

HARRISON G. DYAR

U. S. NATIONAL MUSEUM,
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A SHEEP-GOAT HYBRID

WHAT seems to be a hybrid between a sheep and a goat was produced this spring on the

¹SCIENCE, n. s., XXV., 625, 1907.