the English language exactly as we treat a mathematical equation. There are fine distinctions in words that we can not abolish by arbitrary rules.

I *quite* agree with Mr. Kuser that "quite common" is an incorrect expression as it is ordinarily used, but I am very sure that simple "common" does not fill its place, and I am not altogether certain that "fairly common" quite expresses it either, though perhaps that is the best substitute.

"Tolerably common," though it has the sanction of government usage, is also objectionable on etymological grounds, as Mr. Kuser points out.

"Frequent" strikes me as objectionable because it is an adjective of time rather than number or distribution in space. "Fairly common" or "rather common" are preferable, perhaps.

The statement that "accidental is occasional or rare" seems to me absolutely wrong. All birds that occur only accidentally or "casually" are rare, but not all rare birds can be called accidental. The distinction is generally recognized, I think. The accidental occurrence of a bird is supposed to be due to some stress of weather or similar outside force or possibly some abnormal tendency in the individual. No bird that is found regularly in a given locality, no matter how rare it may be, can be called accidental—unless, indeed, it is a single individual that is found thus regularly. Mockingbirds are still rare in Massachusetts, but they can no longer be called accidental, and the same is true of the Iceland, Kumlien's and glaucous gulls.

Mr. Kuser says that "very rare is using an unnecessary adverb, for rare is very rare," but are there not degrees of rarity, and, if so, why should we not be permitted to indicate them? Mr. William Brewster in "Birds of the Cambridge Region," calls the mourning warbler "rare in spring, exceedingly rare in autumn." Is there not a decided advantage in being able to make this distinction?

Is not Mr. Kuser's definition of "scarce" as indicating "that the bird mentioned was at some previous time common" a purely arbitrary one? If so, how can he expect its use in that sense to be generally adopted?

Finally I suggest that Mr. Kuser's definition of "irregular" be extended to cover the complete absence of a species during some seasons.

It was certainly worth while to call attention to the common use of vague and inaccurate terms in bird-lists, but as one who has made many lists (mostly unpublished), I have ventured to offer a few considerations which will serve to indicate that the standardization of the terminology is not so easy as it looks.

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POPULAR "SCIENCE" AGAIN

It is perhaps worth while calling the attention of the readers of Science to a fresh contribution to the pseudo-scientific literature of this country. In a recent number of *Mother's Magazine,* Dr. Cornelia B. DeBey writes concerning weeds as follows:

> Weeds may not seem (to you) to have much connection with your home hygiene, but they do have. Growing under the bedroom window, thriving in a corner of the yard, lining a back walk, they are constantly, through their nature, absorbing floating air poisons. As the period of their annual decay approaches, they throw off these poisons and the winds gather them up and sweep them through the house. They are blown into your lungs and into the lungs of your children. If perchance the system of any one of you happens to be weak at the time, a sickness may almost certainly be expected to follow.
>
> Weeds of the yard, like the foul dust of the streets of a city, carry millions upon millions of germs eager to thrive on any frail human or animal body. Root out the weeds. Treat them with scalding hot lye and wood ashes that have been soaked in hot water. Attack them with hoe and spade. Certain noxious weed growths, very common to American yards, may breed diphtheria, typhoid fever, scarlet fever and serious catarrhal affections.

The spirit of the foregoing is doubtless highly commendable, but the ideas of the causes of diseases inculcated in such a statement, are, at the very least, undesirable.

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