

really, a difference of "spelling." *Scimitar*, *simitar*, *simiter*, *cimiter*, are four out of more than thirty spellings of one word, and *amoeba* and *ameba* are two spellings of one word; but *Ambystoma* and *Amblystoma*, whatever their status may be in zoology, are either two different words, or else two forms, one erroneous, of one word. No one asserts that they are two different words. All who have spoken agree that one is an erroneous form of the other. Which was intended? Let it be decided.

In all scientific compound names, intention is supposed to be present; and for this reason it will always be necessary that "science" shall correct what "science" has erroneously published; in other words, that Jones and Robinson shall correct the errors of their distinguished predecessors Brown and Smith. This is good science, and good fun, too, for Jones and Robinson. What but this, indeed, is the progress of science?

Is there not a scientific error in the attitude of those scientific men who prefer to take the first form and "have done with it"? Can science have done with anything? What the advocates of priority do is, in fact, to turn over an unfinished job to other men. This is reasonable enough, if they will let the other men finish it.

It were to be wished that the advocates of rule in zoologic nomenclature would play one game or the other—either the good old Presbyterian euchre, in which words are borrowed or manufactured orthodoxly from Greek and Latin sources (admitting, also, some heathen of the better sort), or else the less exacting Mohammedan solitaire, whose first law is the chance priority of print. It is hardly fair to mix with cards bearing the good old Presbyterian names of *Amblycephalus*, *Amblychila*, *Amblycorypha*, *Amblyopsis*, *Amblyrhynchus*, and the rest, a card bearing the Mohammedan and solitaire appellation of *Ambystoma*. (I am assuming that euchre and solitaire are played with cards.)

If this isolated *Ambystoma* is correctly formed, tell us how it is done and what it means. And then throw it out, nevertheless; for the scientific reason that it would be for-

ever confusable with the similar-seeming words with which, on the Mohammedan theory, it has no connection.

Notwithstanding all the politic reports and mosaic codes of the committees on nomenclature, committees which have done an inestimable service to science, and which should be liberally supported by money and advice (two sources of enrichment, of which one will never fail), I hold that it is the duty of scientific men to correct the errors which they find within their own domain; or at least not to enforce or prolong any error, great or small, by devotion to any rule of priority or any other hand-made rule intended to serve convenience in registration, regulation, indexing or proofreading. It is not right to make a rule out of chance and to call it a rule of order. It is not right to set up priority, which is a part of history, and to call it science, which is a part of reason.

If we will use the language of science, we must apply the science of language. And we must not ignore or reject that science on the ground that "the authorities differ" or that "the doctors disagree." Let me end with a hard saying: The doctors do not disagree. It is only some writers and advisers and committee men who disagree. The rest of us are agreeably unanimous. Let every man of science place his hand upon his heart, and agree!

CHARLES P. G. SCOTT

YONKERS,

July 28, 1916

AMBYSTOMA

IN connection with Professor M. W. Lyon, Jr.'s note on "*Ambystoma* not *Amblystoma*," I may mention the fact that Dr. Willard G. Van Name used *Ambystoma* as the scientific generic name of the spotted salamander in Webster's "New International Dictionary" which was published in 1909.

F. STURGES ALLEN

THE LIME REQUIREMENT OF SOILS.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: At this time when methods for the determination of the lime requirement of soils are receiving much