

terms in speaking of familiar species. In all cases where exactness is necessary, even well-known common names will not serve, for often a single plant will have several names or a single common name may be applied to several plants. In spite of the conspicuous differences that still exist between the adherents of the "American Code" and those who advocate the "Vienna Rules," the scientific names are still the safest to go by and all botanists would do well to insist upon their use. The sooner the general public discovers that even technical botany is still "the amiable science" the better it will be for all concerned.

WILLARD N. CLUTE

JOLIET, ILL.

#### LACEPÈDE OR LACEPEDE

IN going over "The Genera of Fishes" recently published by Dr. David Starr Jordan, assisted by Barton Warren Evermann, I discover that these authors accept and adopt the view expressed by Sherborne in his "Index Animalium," p. lvii, where, under the head of "Additions and Corrections," Sherborne says:

A letter dated 1831 is signed "b.g.é etc de lacepède." This spelling and accentuation should be adhered to.

The writer is very much inclined to think that both Sherborne and the learned authors of the recent paper on "The Genera of Fishes" err in accepting the accentuation of the name of the great Frenchman found attached to a scrap of paper bearing his name, which was evidently written in haste. "One swallow does not make a spring," and one hurriedly written autograph with the omission of the acute accent over the first "e" in the word does not prove that this was the correct way of writing the name. The writer of these lines is called upon every month to attach his signature hundreds of times to vouchers and other documents. He ordinarily puts a period after his initials, W and J; but only yesterday, having signed some two hundred vouchers, he observed that in the haste of doing so he had in a number of cases omitted the period after his initials. Personal observation shows him that just so it is not an infrequent thing for French

gentlemen in hurried writing to omit an accent.

In the judgment of the writer of these lines the existence of one letter in which the French ichthyologist signed himself "lacepède" should not avail against the fact that in all his published writings the other method of accentuation prevails, that all biographies, encyclopædias, and dictionaries, in which the name occurs, give it as "Lacépède." If he were the only person who had borne the name there might be some weight attached to the signature, which Sherborne has turned up; but there were and are others in France who bear the name, and any one who takes the trouble to consult a French dictionary or encyclopædia of biography will find that invariably the name is and has been spelled "Lacépède." The name is so spelled in Buffon, who was the friend and contemporary of Lacépède, and I think it seems "rather late in the day" to change the universally accepted spelling of the name of the well-known naturalist on the strength of the L. S. discovered by Sherborne.

To be consistent, if the acute accent is omitted on the first "e," the capitals should also cease to be employed, not only in the family, but also the Christian names of Lacépède, for in the autograph which Sherborne quotes the name is written throughout without capitals. After carefully weighing the matter the writer is of the opinion that Buffon, the authors of the "Dictionnaire Universelle," and the thousand or more Frenchmen engaged in scientific research, who have for over a century written the name "Lacépède" are more likely to know what is correct than the author of the "Index Mammalium," who, having unearthed this L. S., has on the strength of it proceeded in this particular to overthrow the usage of more than a century, and the usage of those who were the friends and acquaintances of Lacépède himself.

W. J. HOLLAND

PITTSBURGH, PA.,

October 17, 1917

#### FORBES WINSLOW MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: The British Ministry of Pensions has recognized and authorized for trial psychical treatment for

soldiers suffering from shell-shock and nervous breakdown. It can not be too widely known that this is exactly the treatment practised at the British Hospital, 72 Camden Road, London, N. W. 1, England, for over a quarter of a century. The hospital has given effective and permanent relief gratuitously to thousands of men, women and children. The war has obviously increased the number of cases suffering from shell-shock and nervous breakdown to a marked extent, and the hospital is at present appealing for additional funds to cope with the position, and also with the object of sending patients into the country, so necessary for their speedy recovery.

Will our American friends help us? Donations, however small, will be greatly appreciated and may be sent to me or the Secretary, Mr. F. J. Lee-Smith, 72 Camden Road, London, N. W. 1, England.

MARGARET FORBES WINSLOW

#### QUOTATIONS

##### INCREASED RANK AND MORE AUTHORITY FOR MEDICAL OFFICERS

As most of our readers are aware, an amendment was introduced into Congress at the recent session which, if it had been adopted, would have given the medical officers in the Army the same rank that prevails in the Medical Corps of the Navy. Specifically the amendment provided that there should be twenty-five one-hundredths of 1 per cent. of major-generals, the same proportion of brigadier-generals, 4 per cent. of colonels, 8 per cent. of lieutenant-colonels, 23.5 per cent. of majors, 32 per cent. of captains, and 32 per cent. of lieutenants, *this to apply to both the regular and the reserve corps men*. Thus, if there are 10,000 medical officers in active service, there might be 25 major-generals, 25 brigadier-generals, 400 colonels, 800 lieutenant-colonels, 2,350 majors, 3,200 captains and 3,200 first lieutenants. This amendment lapsed without action by the ending of the session. The substance of the amendment, however, will be incorporated in a bill which will be introduced in both the Senate and the House at the coming session of Congress.

Medical officers must be equal in rank and authority with line officers if they are adequately to carry out the duties for which they will be held responsible. This fact has been emphasized by the experience of our allies in the present war, as well as by our own experience in the past. Our allies admit that in the beginning the medical officer did not have the rank, and consequently the authority, he should have had and that, for this reason, there have been grievous consequences. Among these was the disastrous experience of the British Army in the Mesopotamian campaign as a result of the failure of the medical service. The report of this tragedy, made by a board of nonmedical men, showed that lack of authority of the medical officers was an important factor. The medical officers were practically ignored. They were not advised as to the character of the expedition that was being undertaken, and as a consequence, they were unprepared for what happened. When later a medical officer made urgent representations in regard to the actual conditions obtaining, which in his opinion needed prompt action, he was threatened with arrest and removal from his post. When the actual results came the blame was thrown on the medical department, of which this medical officer was a member. The medical officers were censured because they had not protested more vigorously. We had a similar experience in 1898 when our medical officers were criticized for insanitary conditions at Chickamauga and elsewhere, although there was plenty of evidence to show that they had protested against these conditions to line officers. The whole sad story is told in detail in the Dodge report. There, also, will be found testimony that line officers treated with contempt the recommendations and protests made by medical officers. The medical officer is without influence simply because his shoulder straps indicate lower rank than that of the line officer with whom he is associated. Some may sneer, but the fact remains that it is rank that counts in both the Army and the Navy.

Of course rank brings with it increased pay. This, however, is immaterial. At the same