solution is obviously, as Needham now admits, not to be found in any such device as numbering species. The use of quadrinomials I also object to; it is confined to few authors and to few groups of animals, and is not recognized by the International Rules, to which Needham makes too little reference. The use of trinomials to designate incompletely differentiated forms most systematists believe to be sound and unavoidable, and when logically applied leaves the binomial specific name available for the use of those who do not need or those who do not care or those who are unable to split the subspecies of the species in question.

Thus the evil, or virtue, of subspecies "splitting" need not worry those who long for a simple nomenclature (even if the simplicity be artificial). The splitting of species, when sound, unavoidably alters the scientific name and can be ignored only through ignorance or arrogance. The splitting of genera into subgenera need not worry the worshipers of brevity, for there is no need for quoting the subgenus in the scientific name. But the splitting of genera into smaller genera does alter the name. So does the transfer of species from one genus to another. The Rules of Nomenclature have no primary application to such taxonomic changes. These changes are at the base of an ever-increasing proportion of the unfortunate shifting of names. Fewer and fewer alterations are due to the uncovering of overlooked available names or to alteration of the species interpretations.

It is becoming increasingly clear that these name changes, due to genus splitting or shifting, are the chief concern of those who long for a stable nomenclature. It is unfortunate that the changes in genus concept should alter the scientific name of an animal. The fault lies in the binomial system of nomenclature. This system confounds classification, which ought to be flexible, with nomenclature which should be fixed. A uninomial system of animal names would divorce classification from nomenclature and would presumably emphasize the fact that the species is the most natural and objective of all systematic groups. It would certainly shorten animal names. The uninomial system has been found workable in mineralogy, chemistry and astronomy, and would have many advantages in zoology.

I do not propose the present adoption of any uninomial system of zoological nomenclature. I do emphasize, however, the facts that the tendency to split has continued, despite occasional set-backs by lumpers, from the time of Linnaeus until the present; that in some groups the splitting of genera has gone so far as to produce a high percentage of monotypic genera; that for such groups there is a tendency, in conversation or in general works or in the frequent repetition of the name in technical papers, to allow the generic name to stand for the whole scientific name. We are to this degree now heading toward a uninomial nomenclature of animals. That this system will be gradually and eventually adopted I venture to predict. If the uninomial system is not accepted, or until it is, I see no hope for ever arriving at a really stable nomenclature. In the meantime we can devise ways of surviving without this stability.

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SEA-LEVEL CHANGE NEAR NEW YORK

IN *Bulletin* of the National Research Council, Number 70, just issued, there is an erroneous statement. On page 35, paragraph D, it is stated that "Tidal observations at Fort Hamilton extending over a period of 35 years indicate no appreciable change in sea-level at that point during the period of observations."

As a matter of fact, the probable change in sea-level at Fort Hamilton between 1893 and 1927 is at the average rate of a rise of one foot in 214 years (by the least square method 0.0047 feet a year $\pm$ 0.06). Though the probable error of this result is great, it is more likely to be at the rate of 0.6 feet per century (.006 feet per year) as suggested by J. R. Freeman than to be with "no appreciable change."

Curiously, taking the last twenty-five years, from 1903 to 1927 inclusive, the rate would be .0055 feet a year.

The whole question deserves further consideration which we hope it will receive. For instance, M. R. Campbell's suggestion that meanders in streams flowing essentially at and below tide level are indicative of drowning, Bull. G. S. A. (1927) pp. 537–555, has a bearing.

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ASTRONOMY IN SOUTH AFRICA

THE paragraph quoted from *Science Service* in the issue of December 20, 1929, headed "Astronomy in South Africa," contains several inaccurate statements.

The large refractor of the Radcliffe Observatory has an aperture of twenty-four inches, not eighteen inches. The University of South Africa does not possess an observatory, and there is no observatory in Cape Town other than the Royal Observatory. The twenty-four-inch photographic refractor of this observatory has an eighteen-inch visual refractor on the same mounting.

Neither the University of Michigan nor the Yale University has branches in the grounds of the Union