

1910, ix. (1), No. 20, p. 7, pl. 4, f. 6) records and figures a cowrie found in the Serpent Mound, Ontario. It is a regular *C. moneta*, and it is suggested that "this is probably one from the Hudson Bay Company's stock."

But these suggestions entirely ignore the uses made of the cowrie in America. If Columbus and the Hudson Bay Company really introduced *C. moneta*, as these speculations demand, are we to assume that they also instructed the Indians in certain remarkable ceremonies practised with this shell in Africa, India, and China? Is there any reason for believing that Columbus was even aware of such uses, and if he were, that he should have had the foresight to take *C. moneta* with him, and have devoted the limited time he spent in America in teaching the natives some of the lesser-known elements of Indian and Chinese beliefs?

The money-cowrie is, and has been for centuries, a sacred object among the Ojibwa and Menomini Indians, and is made use of in initiation ceremonies of the Grand Medicine Society (see Hoffman, Bureau of Ethnology, 7th Annual Report, 1885-86 (1891), and 14th Annual Report, 1892-93 (1896); also NATURE, January 27, 1916, for abstract of paper by the writer).

The tradition among the Indians is that the original sacred shell came through a particular hero-god, who acted as intermediary between the Great Unknown and the Indians, and founded their Medicine Society.

The initiation ceremonies consist of much dancing and the shooting forward by the medicine men of their medicine bags containing the sacred cowries. Mystic powers are attributed to the shells, and it is firmly believed that if they be swallowed by the medicine man, all he is obliged to do to transfer his power to the medicine bag is to breathe on it, the mysterious power and influence being then transmitted by merely thrusting the bag towards the desired object or person. At initiation ceremonies the magic influence is shot at the candidate's breast, and the cowrie—the symbol of life—is supposed to enter his heart; he becomes unconscious and falls forward on his face. The chief medicine man then raises the candidate's head slightly from the ground, and a sacred cowrie drops from the candidate's mouth.

The same shells are used apparently at baptismal ceremonies of the Ojibwa (see Greenwood, "Curiosities of Savage Life"). There is the same dancing and shooting forward of the medicine bags, and after much facial contortion each medicine man spits out two shells.

The essential part of these ceremonies is the supposed death and survival of the candidate, and it is remarkable how closely the prevailing idea of the cowries being connected in some strange manner with resurrection and resuscitation agrees with the ancient Chinese belief as evidenced in the ceremonial use of money-cowries in obsequies of the dead. In pre-Christian and later times cowries were used in China, in association with rice, for stuffing the mouth of the dead. Wild rice, it might be added, also enters into the ritual of Ojibwa and Menomini ceremonies.

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Notice of Possible Suspension of the Rules of Nomenclature in the Cases of *Holothuria*, 1758, vs. *Physalia*, 1801, and *Bohadschia*, 1833, vs. *Holothuria*, 1791.

IN accordance with the requirements prescribed by the International Congress of Zoology, notice to the zoological profession is hereby given that on or about October 1, 1917, the undersigned proposes to recom-

mend to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature that the rules be suspended in the following cases:—

Holothuria, Linn., 1758 (type *physalis*), vs. *Physalia*, Lamarck, 1801 (type *pelagica*). The effect of suspension will be to retain *Physalia* as generic name for the Portuguese man-of-war.

Bohadschia, Jaeger, 1833, vs. *Holothuria*, Bruguière, 1791. The effect of suspension will be to retain *Holothuria* for the sea cucumbers.

The motion for suspension includes the following points:—

(1) Suspend the rules in the case of the generic names in question.

(2) Permanently reject *Holothuria*, 1758, type *physalis*.

(3) Validate *Physalia*, 1801, type *pelagica* (syn. *physalis*, 1758).

(4) Accept *Holothuria* as dating from Bruguière, 1791, despite the existence of *Holothuria*, 1758 (if rejected).

(5) Said suspension is not to be construed as invalidating any specific name.

The grounds for suspension will be:—(a) A strict application of the rules in these cases will result in greater confusion than uniformity, because (b) the cases involve a transfer of generic names, almost universally accepted in the sense given above since 1791 (for *Holothuria*) and since 1801 (for *Physalia*), to genera in other groups in connection with which they have been used by only a very few authors during more than 100 years.

The undersigned cordially invites zoologists to communicate, not later than September 1, 1917, to him or to any other member of the Commission, either their approval or disapproval of the proposed action.

C. W. STILES,

Secretary to Commission.

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SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH.

THE first report of the Advisory Council of the Committee of the Privy Council for Scientific and Industrial Research was published in full abstract in the issue of NATURE for September 7, and has probably already been read by all who are interested in this important matter. It will therefore be unnecessary to refer in detail to the contents of the report, but it is essential to consider it in its broad aspects and thoughtfully to estimate its bearing as a contribution to the subject of much discussion and contention in the past two years.

One feature of the report is the degree to which it repeats much that has been said and written by British scientific men, engineers, and practical manufacturers in the public discussions which have taken place on this subject during the past twenty-five months or more, but without carrying the matter forward by the prescription of practicable remedies for recognised defects. The arguments for and against various actions are weighed with an air of detachment which gives to it rather the character of an interesting essay than the authoritative decisions of a committee possessing executive power. The public has, without doubt, looked