

CORRESPONDENCE.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., NOV., 1873.

DEAR SIR,—

Many printed pages you devote to the question of nomenclature and rights of priority of generic and specific names. Allow me a small space in your columns to say a word in no way personal, still from a different point of view, yet with deference to the contending opinions.

In the first place I would claim a general acknowledgement for such compilers of entomological material as have in an exhaustive way at their time—so far as exhaustion is possible—published the results of their researches, and which compilations form entireties of certain large groups of insects. I will refer to only a few, among them Burmeister, for his *Rhynchosa* and *Gymnognatha*; Gyllenhal, for his North European Coleoptera; Harold and Gemminger's Munich Catalogue of the World's Coleoptera; also, Ochsenheimer and Freitschke's work on Lepidoptera of Europe, this latter one *sc* complete with Geometridæ and Micros.

All these compilers have worked with the full understanding of the value of generic names come down to them from earlier authorities, have been guided by the wish of letting Linne's and other great author's earliest names stand for the typical genus, giving room at the same time where, by newer discoveries, new genera had necessarily been created, for their interpolation. The great completeness of these published compilations, based upon conscientious researches, is what has created, if not all over the world, at least in Europe, the use and endearment of certain generic names that in my opinion might be everywhere respected, and will, I hope, everywhere and for ever be adopted. I see no necessity of going further back than the authority of such great compilers, even if a few errors of judgment, as likely, have occurred.

To restrict my observations to Lepidoptera only, I will here especially refer to Ochsenheimer and Freitschke's work of wonderful completeness; it treats of European Lepidoptera only. The European Fauna has its representatives all the world over, and it is around and between European genera that the world's new species have to be ranged, whether or not the formation of new genera becomes necessary. Such ground work or basis for a complete series of classes and genera as O. & F. have compiled might, in my opinion, be followed up and their generic names without omission be adhered to. Addressing American Entomologists, I would

allow myself the question: Might not all controversy about generic names, whether from earlier or later editions of Linne's or from other early authorities, be dropped, and all punctilious adherence to priority be dismissed; might not the long-familiar names on the strength of above named second-hand authorities be with safety fixed upon as final and generally acknowledged?

Yours respectfully,

JAMES BEHRENS.

P. S.—It would be well if the authors of new created generic names would give their Greek or Latin derivations.

HABITAT, ECONOMY, ETC., OF *AGROTIS FENNICA*, EVERSMAN.

SPRING BANK, ST. CATHARINES, ONT., DEC. 22, 1873.

DEAR SIR,—

I am very anxious to obtain information respecting *Agrotis fennica*, Eversman, whether it is an abundant species in any part of Canada or the United States, and, being a stranger in this country, would be very thankful would any gentleman conversant with the insect, kindly aid me in the pages of the CAN. ENT., by any information he may possess touching its economy in the larval state, food plant, time of year when the imago is found, or any other necessary details.

Finally, should any Entomologist have duplicate specimens to spare, I need scarcely say they will be very acceptable, and later on in the season I will do my best in return to repay the obligation, and send an equivalent in any desirable species from this neighborhood.

I have read with much interest the articles on collecting in late numbers of the CAN. ENT., especially as my experience with cyanide of potassium as a killing material induced me years ago to abandon that method. I had the material both in tight-fitting boxes and glass-stoppered bottles, in all cases the cyanide being covered with a stratum of plaster of Paris. As a killer it does admirably, but, according to my experience, it renders the moths so rigid that in setting the wings are very liable to be torn in lifting them into position. This method of killing with cyanide was, indeed, condemned years ago in England owing to this very cause.

GEO. NORMAN.

ZOOLOGICAL MUSEUM, CAMBRIDGE, U. S., DEC. 20.

DEAR SIR,—

I have commenced to study and arrange the Coleoptera in the Museum, and hope to get help on all sides, and shall be particularly glad to see specimens in the less studied groups. At present I have finished the N. American Phytophaga, and hope to work at the Staphylinidæ ere long. I also want to see all the Dytiscidæ that I can, as it is only by a long series that much can be done. I shall be glad to hear from any one interested in exotic insects, also. Yours truly,

G. R. CROTCH.

LARVA OF *P. BREVICAUDA*.

We extract the following from a letter recently received from Mr. Edwards :—Miss Peart has drawn the larva of *brevicauda*. It differs from *asterias* larva in that the black transverse bands are broken, and no yellow spots are between them ; the lowest black spot is triangular, and so to each band. It is more like *zolicaon*, although that has yellow spots. The point is that it is not *asterias*.

W. H. EDWARDS, Coalburgh, W. Va., 18th Nov., 1873.

BOOK NOTICES.

- Hackberry Butterflies. Descriptions of the early stages of *Apatura Lycaon*, *Fabr.* and *Apatura Herse*, *Fabr.*, with remarks on their synonymy, from the Trans. St. Louis Acad. Science. 8 vo., pp. 14, with four illustrations by Chas. V. Riley, M. A., Ph. D., St. Louis.
- On Platypyllidæ, a new family of Coleoptera, from the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London, 8 vo., pp. 6, with one plate, by J. L. Le Conte, M. D.
- Seltame Geschichte eines Tagfalters, von Samuel H. Scudder.
- Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History, vol. xv, parts 3 and 4, Dec., '72 to April, '73.
- Nature, to December 11th.
- Science Gossip, December.
- American Naturalist, December, 1873, January, 1874.
- Canada Farmer, December 15 and 30.
- Prairie Farmer to Dec. 27.
- The Horticulturist, Nov. and Dec..
- Rural New Yorker to Jan., '73.
- American Agriculturist, Jan.
- Maine Farmer to Dec. 27.