

do not wish it to be inferred by my statement that I impugn the ability of many of these writers ; far from it. The fact, nevertheless, remains, that no one is competent to discuss philosophically the classification of any group of animal life who is not well grounded in the principles of taxonomy as applied to related animals. And the ignorance of related Diptera has been, more than once, deplorably shown by writers on the Culicidæ. A writer who persistently calls the beginning of the third longitudinal vein a "supernumerary cross-vein," and the fourth posterior cell the "anal cell," without in the least attempting to show that the standard authors on Diptera have been grievously in error, is, from the very nature of the case, incompetent to discuss classificatory characters, since the mosquitoes are not organisms isolated from all other living creatures.

It may be urged, on the other hand, that not being a specialist in the Culicidæ myself, I am not competent as a critic, and that is possibly true. I have, however, studied patiently a dozen or twenty of the so-called new genera of the mosquitoes, and have a more or less critical acquaintance with at least a thousand other genera of Diptera in all families, and I humbly submit that it is not necessary, at least for one whose taste is not depraved, to devour a whole sheep in order to detect the flavor of mutton.

Until within recent years, dipterologists were content to classify the known Culicidæ in a half dozen or so genera, genera which could be defined by characters equivalent to those used for generic definition in the allied families. With the great impulse given to the study of the mosquitoes by the marvellous economic discoveries of recent years, it was only to be expected that many new forms would be brought to light, and new structural characters discovered. The Culicidæ in the past had been generally neglected by students of Diptera, for two chief reasons : the frailty of the insects themselves and the difficulty of preserving them intact, and the recognized difficulties of their study. It naturally was very desirable, with the great influx of new forms, both for scientific and economic reasons, that relationships should be more closely defined than had hitherto been done. The results so far have been that a few new genera, based upon characters equivalent to those previously used, have been established, and that the other old genera have been broken up into scores of groups, to which the designation of genus has been, correctly or incorrectly, applied.

Theobald, in his recent discussion of the genera of the world, recognizes about seventy-five genera, and has promised more. American writers, with no less modesty, have proposed a score or so additional ones.