

ON THE EUDRIINÆ.

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In an original memoir on the *Zygaenidae*, published by the Essex Institute, Dr. Packard explained the relation of *Castnia* and allied genera to the European genus *Zygaena*, and contended for the solidarity of the group as the equivalent of the large family of *Bombycidae* in the Latreillean sense. The view, advocated by Agassiz, that *form* was a family criterion, not only form in general, but form of parts underlying form in general, obtained. Of a truth Dr. Packard's "family," *Zygaenidae*, contained genera more or less evidently related in one or other of their stages, and the agreement which Dr. Packard found in the form of the clypeus authorized their being brought together in a family group. This view has been followed by me in my papers and lists, and any adverse criticism of my particular course with regard to these insects is consequently ill-founded; while the inherent want of precision which our classifications must present allows of a shifting opinion, within limits, as this or that character appears in turn to be the decisive one, and renders such criticism unnecessary. The tendency of classifiers latterly has turned in the direction of a breaking up of these "families" into smaller groups still called "families," but based rather upon ultimate peculiarity than "form." Under the vague term "Bombyces," the various new families of the Spinner moths are still kept together, in recognition of a less tangible relationship which nevertheless is still held to exist; while the view, that the present representation of these families is the modified survival of the roots of the lepidopterous tree, is being seriously considered by students of phylogeny. Classifiers of the lepidoptera who seize only upon ultimate peculiarities of a common and essential part of the perfect insect, will, in the nature of things, eventually come to grief. Such modifications we may use to separate species, and, when so evident as to be of practical service, in the more artificial region of generic division; but, as we ascend higher, they diminish in importance and are superseded by characters of development, persistent or evanescent, offered in different stages of growth of the species. By these characters indications as to the truer affinities of the insect are given. The time is perhaps going by when lepidoptera are to be solely classified by final peculiarities of the legs, wings or tails of the perfect insect. Still, there will always be those whose observations in these directions will seem to themselves of prime importance, while, in the end, the value