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A SUGGESTION AS TO THE GENERIC NOMENCLATURE OF INSECTS.

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Mr. Scudder's recent admirable work on the butterflies of New England has, naturally enough, given rise to fresh discussion of the question of generic nomenclature, without, however, leading to any very decisive result. Mr. Scudder's views on the sub-division of hitherto-accepted generic units are certainly extreme, and probably few will be found to follow him entirely. On the other hand, many no doubt feel that Mr. W. H. Edwards's genera require some sort of sub-division, and would compromise matters by admitting some, and rejecting others, of Mr. Scudder's divisions. Mr. Edwards himself, in his 1884 catalogue, has numbered sub-divisions of many larger genera; thus of *Lycæna* we get groups I. to VII. But these numbers are not adopted by others, partly because different authors treat the subject differently, thus creating confusion, and partly because it is not easy or convenient to use a number instead of a name.

So we come to this conclusion: It is necessary that the larger genera should be sub-divided, but it is highly inadvisable to call all those sub-divisions genera. We therefore need a system of section or group-names which shall be uniform, used generally,—not, like the numbers, variable according to the fancy of the author,—and yet not of the nature of genera or sub-genera.

In the treatment of *Carex* by the botanists I think we see a similar problem solved. *Carex* is a huge genus, which even after a reasonable amount of subgeneric division, needs further grouping to be made intelligible. So, Fries, Drejer, Tuckerman and others have proposed section-names: *Flexiles*, *Paniceæ*, *Sigitatæ*, etc. These names are always in the plural, and have nothing to do with sub-genera or genera properly speaking, nor does any trouble arise about priority, provided the name has not been used before in the same genus. The groups may not