

THE FORMATION OF GENERIC NAMES.

An article in the April number of the CANADIAN ENTOMOLOGIST leads me to offer a few remarks on this subject. The custom of forming new generic names by attaching a prefix or suffix to the existing name of a related genus has grown to serious proportions in recent years. There are several reasons why it should be discountenanced. For one thing, it almost invariably makes the name too long to look or sound well. This is no trifling disadvantage, although some entomologists seem not to appreciate the fact.

A second objection is that these names are usually lacking in euphony, as a result of the grafting process, having a tendency to break in two at the point of junction when they are spoken.

A third is that the relation indicated by the name may not really exist when the group comes to be more fully studied, or when different characters are made the basis of classification; or, an entomologist may simply make a mistake in assuming a relationship, which cannot be corrected after the generic name is once published. For instance, Eugnoriste is as far removed in relationship from Gnoriste as it could be and remain in the same family.

Still another objection lies in the danger that the name used as a foundation may turn out in the course of time, by the application of we know not what rules of nomenclature, to be invalid, or to apply to some other group, thus leaving the later name either meaningless or misleading. In Mr. Ashmead's article, which called forth my observations, this is a glaring objection to his procedure, as he states in the article that the genus *Pompilus* is preoccupied. Hence, his new names will in future suggest a relationship to the Mollusca or Pisces, rather than the Hymenoptera!

Such combinations as I object to would be all but impossible in the present generation, as they have been in the past, had we but the same æsthetic perception of euphony, and the same classical training, as the fathers of entomology. I might add to this, had we the same sense of responsibility when we establish a new genus.

I am aware that occasional instances on the best authority can be found that are open to one or another of my objections. I am also aware that I once made a genus that I called *Gnamptopsilopus*, which is open to all my objections but the third; but I have reformed since then.

J. M. ALDRICH, Moscow, Idaho.