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TYPE AND TYPICAL.*

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These terms are used in such different senses by different authors that confusion is sometimes caused, and it is much to be desired that some authoritative body of naturalists should accurately define their proper use, and then that all other naturalists should accept the decision and conform to it even if it does not agree with their own individual opinions.

My thoughts have been recently turned in this direction by reading the Annual Presidential Address of Mr. Charles Owen Waterhouse, read before the Entomological Society of London on the 15th of January last.

In his address Mr. Waterhouse urges, and in my opinion rightly, that accuracy and stability of nomenclature are of more importance than the observance of the strict letter of the law of priority, but we differ in our views as to the use of the word type.

Mr. Waterhouse urges, as others have done, that there should be only one type specimen for each species, and that that type specimen should be the standard for all time, while I hold that a species should never be founded upon one specimen where that can be avoided.

We agree, however, in regarding the preservation of type specimens as of the greatest importance.

Mr. Waterhouse, pointing out the different ways in which different authors use the word type, especially mentioning that some regard all the specimens which they had before them when describing a new species as types, and distribute them as such, says: "Some thirty-five years ago I saw the danger arising from this loose way of using the word, and applied the word "type" to the actual specimen described when that could be determined, and called the other examples, mentioned by an author, 'co-types.' Some years afterwards my colleague, Mr. Oldfield Thomas, proposed (P. Z. S., 1893, p. 242) the terms para-type, topo-type and meta-type, and all these are useful in their way, but we are both agreed that the word type should be restricted to the actual specimen upon which the species is founded."

*Read before the Montreal Branch of the Entomological Society of Ontario, Feb. 8th, 1908.