

SPECIFIC NOMENCLATURE.

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The publication of Mr. Scudder's Revision has caused much dismay among amateurs, on account of the numerous specific changes and minute generic sub-divisions which it proposes.

To students of Lepidoptera the novel, and in many cases, original views advanced afford a fertile field for discussion. Mr. Scudder has attempted to study the order by the same methods, and to correct its tangled specific nomenclature by the same principles which govern all other departments of Zoology.

This work is rendered very difficult from the fact that their beauty and the readiness with which they can be captured and preserved, has made them from the time of Linnæus a favorite order with collectors. Thus it was that many of the species have been described not by naturalists, but by amateurs; and genera founded on the most casual and unimportant characters. The confusion caused by the publication of superficial and carelessly written works, or of works in which the labors of preceding Entomologists have been neglected, it will take years to undo. Mr. Kirby, in his invaluable catalogue, has combined the results of the labors of European students in this direction, and adopted, although he did not fully carry out, the principles which Mr. Scudder followed strictly in his Revision.

Unless some definite law is laid down and universally observed, in regard to Entomological nomenclature, the Science will always remain in the chaotic condition in which it now is. Time will only increase the confusion; and now that a good remedy has been proposed, it would be folly to reject it, because of the temporary inconvenience it would occasion. The condemnation with which Mr. Scudder's book has been received seems to be founded, not on an intelligent rejection of his deductions, but simply on account of the trouble which a partial change of names would cause the present generation of students.

But is it not better to endure a slight and constantly diminishing evil for the sake of a future and permanent good?

There are two laws by which the nomenclature of a science may be governed, that of priority and the so-called law of convenience. The