

CONCERNING FELTIA, AND OTHER MATTERS.

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The question asked by Mr. Slingerland in his very interesting paper in the CAN. ENT., XXVII, p. 301, is in great part answered by himself. I think he shows very conclusively that *subgothica*, Haw., is correctly used for our American species, and has given us a very full statement of the evidence upon which he bases his conclusions, thus removing the matter from the domain of unsupported opinion. From the nature of the case, and in the absence of Haworth's actual type specimen, the proof cannot be absolute; but until something more definite is supplied, I think the conclusions of the paper on the identity of *subgothica*, must be accepted. As to the synonymy, I think Mr. Slingerland is also correct. I have not found the A. O. U. Code clear on this matter, though it is as to genera in the same case; but, after consulting Dr. C. Hart Merriam, a recognized authority on questions of nomenclature, I am assured that Guenée's name *jaculifera* must sink as a synonym. On this, the main features of the paper, I accept all of Mr. Slingerland's conclusions; but I was a little surprised to find him defending genitalic characters as possibly good for generic divisions, in the apparent belief that I had used these characters as a basis for my division of the mass of species I found lumped as *Agrotis*! I believe that, with the possible exception of Mr. Scudder, no one in America has studied the genitalia of more insects of all orders than I. Certainly no one has figured more, and no one has insisted more strongly upon the value of these characters for specific distinction. I have examined in some cases over one hundred specimens of a single species without discovering appreciable variation, and while I was engaged in the study of *Lachnosterna* I examined nearly 2,000 specimens of the *fusca* group alone, for these characters. Yet, while insisting on their specific value, I have also pointed out that while easily distinguished species often have very similar genitalic structures, very closely allied species—superficially—may have them utterly unlike. Nowhere have I ever claimed that genitalic characters afford good bases for genera; on the contrary, I am distinctly of the opinion that they should not be used except in very special cases. The only instance where I have yet found it desirable to make use of them as a sole character, is in the series of species which I have called *Porosagrotis*. That is an expediency genus, and stated as such, with the reasons for it.