

sprung up a class of authors who have devoted themselves with enthusiasm to exploring ancient works and forgotten publications of all sorts, in the hunt for the earliest recorded name to every species, by which to replace the name or names in use. The old authors had described but a few hundred species, and their descriptions were of the briefest. How brief, an average example from Linnæus will show :—" *Papilio Troilus* ; wings tailed, black ; fore-wings with pale marginal spots, hind wings beneath, with fulvous spots;" a description applicable, perhaps, to fifty species of *Papilio*. (This description at once misled Drury into giving the name *Troilus* to his figure of *Asterias*, to which it applies equally well.)

As new species were discovered, each of the earlier described having a group of close allies, many of these descriptions were no longer capable of identification, applying to numerous species as well as one. Then recourse was had to tradition, or to type specimens. The former may, or may not be trustworthy, and the latter is utterly untrustworthy unless the type agrees with the description. Dr. Staudinger says:—" It is unfortunately a fact that the acquirer of the Linnæan collection had the deplorable idea of sometimes replacing damaged specimens by fresh."

Mr. McLachlan says :—" It (this Linnæan collection,) was so maltreated by additions, destructions and misplacements of labels, as to render it a matter of regret that it now exists at all. Any evidence it now furnishes is only trustworthy when confirmed by the descriptions." Speaking of quite a modern collection, that of Mr. J. F. Stephens, Mr. Janson says :—" It not unfrequently happens that two, or in difficult genera, more species are mixed up under the same specific title."

And it is my opinion, knowing well the carelessness of collectors in the matter of labelling, some even who have described many species using no labels at all, but trusting to memory for identification of all their specimens, that a type specimen, or what was offered as such, if it disagreed essentially with the description, should be wholly rejected.

Besides the brevity of the old descriptions, many are defective from other causes. Often the two sexes received different names ; often varieties were described as species ; often damaged and broken specimens were described as if fresh, the defects being cured by imagination ; often figures were made by unskilled artists, who omitted the specific characteristics, or the figures were colored so poorly as to be incapable of identification, or were copies from copies, or copies from memory, (for a curious illustration of this last, see Westwood, *Trans. Lond. Ent. Soc.*