

ON JACOB HÜBNER AND HIS WORKS ON THE BUTTERFLIES
AND MOTHS.

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For a long time that school of Entomologists which has for its basis the view that there are but few genera in the Butterflies and Moths, and that the more minute characters which these insects offer are not of sufficient value to support genera, have held an almost undisputed sway in the scientific literature on the subject. The first opponent of these views was Jacob Hübner, whose works form the subject of the present paper. A single author, in the comparatively obscure town of Augsburg, in Germany, Jacob Hübner found no adherents to his views, and his works fell into obscurity. The Viennese Entomologists misapplied many of the few generic names of Hübner they adopted, and abused him. Their example was followed by the French Entomologists, including the abuse. In England Hübner's ideas found a more favorable reception from Stephens in 1829, and here and there, in Germany itself, a sort of half recognition has been extended to Hübner from time to time, in some few cases and under some limitations.

So far as Hübner's works are concerned, they must be studied from two separate aspects. First as to Hübner's fundamental idea that the Butterflies and Moths offer many genera, independent of the question as to whether the names Hübner proposed in consequence for these genera, be reinstated in modern systems of classification or not.

And here the question arises respecting the value of all systems of classification and as to their purport. And we shall be agreed that while our conceptions of genera and species and other divisions are abstract, the purpose of our system of nomenclature is to express briefly inter-relationship among animals, no less than to distinguish them. Under the view that dissimilar structures are allowed to be embraced under the same generic name, our systems become clearly defective to this extent. And as *the* question of to-day is the origin of the different kinds of animals, we are clearly on the right path if we seek to define our genera with more precision and to associate only those species under one genus which agree in minuter points of structure. Just this sort of nearer and more critical comparison is what we now evidently need in order