

the times when the earliest butterflies were seen, when they became most abundant, when the numbers perceptibly diminished, or specimens became old and worn, and when the last were seen. It is particularly difficult to decide upon the average age of individuals, when, as is not infrequently the case, a brood of butterflies is augmented by gradual accretions for a long period of time, three, four or five weeks. It is again difficult in the case of those butterflies, and there are not a few of them, like some of our *Argynnidi*, which appear upon the wing in mid-summer, receive a sudden accession to their numbers a month or two after the advent of the earliest and then only begin to lay their eggs. I, for one, can hardly believe that all these earliest individuals perish before the season for egg laying, and I even think from the condition of specimens, worse and worse as the season progresses, that some of the earliest live to the last and are upon the wing sometimes for two and three months of the year.

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### ON SPECIFIC NAMES.

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Dr. Williston, in his painstaking work on the *Syrphidæ*, says: "There are no generic and specific limitations in nature," and illustrates the statement by the present knowledge of the family with which his synopsis deals. And what Dr. Williston brings forward is a mere quota of the mass of evidence brought out by naturalists generally, and by entomologists dealing with the different orders of insects. But while, theoretically, the essential unity of living forms or of nature as a whole may be granted, the practical question of what names we shall bestow upon our specimens and upon what basis these names shall repose, must be solved. Our systems of nomenclature must be brought into consonance with the facts observed. And it is well that our nomenclature be not too rigorous, so that I have expressed the opinion in these pages that we shall have to use in certain cases a trinomial title. With regard to the test for genera in the moths, I have to refer for my conclusions to a paper in *Papilio*, 3, 35, where I say that the *amount* and *extent* of the peculiarity gives the criterion, not the *kind*. Every well-marked variation and modification of structure, which can be clearly made out by the microscope or otherwise, is of generic value. The moment this rule is departed from, we are thrown upon individual "opinions." All the characters which, when well-marked, are of generic importance, are liable to slighter modi-