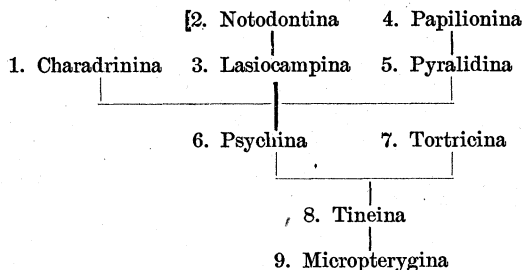


SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE.

A Handbook of British Lepidoptera. By EDWARD MEYRICK. London, Macmillan. 1895. 6,843 pp., 8°.

Within the compass of a very handy volume, in reasonably large type, Mr. Meyrick has contrived to pack the descriptions of over 2,000 British Lepidoptera, giving at the same time indications of their habitats, distribution, and time of flight, and, where known, a line or two descriptive of the larva, pupa and food plant; analytical keys are also added. It is not only precisely what its title implies, and so must be of distinct service to the young English entomologist, but it is a really new book and not a series of copied or condensed descriptions. It gives the beginner, however, no clue to anything beyond that to which he may go for fuller information, and the descriptions of the early stages are confessedly at second hand and unsatisfactory.

All this, however, hardly interests greatly the American entomologist, and if this were all there would scarcely be need of more than a brief notice in these columns. What gives the book a far wider interest is that the author has endeavored, by means of diagrams under about half of the groups, to express succinctly his views of the phylogeny of that group, and then has arranged the members in a serial order in accordance with their relative distance from what is regarded as the primitive type, the several members of each distinct branch, however, being kept together. Thus the Lepidoptera are divided into nine groups of families, as follows:



And they are then arranged in the book in the order indicated by the numerals which we have

prefixed. "The order begins," declares the author, "with the most recently developed forms and descends gradually to the earliest or most ancestral, which are the last in the book." This brings the butterflies into the middle of the book, between the Lasiocampina and Pyralidina, a startling innovation, which will not fail to draw instant attention to the impossibility of arranging any large group naturally in a linear series.

It is evident that Mr. Meyrick has made use of the latest researches on the affinities of the different members of the Lepidoptera (which have been exceptionally important of late), and that he has also brought to the task he has undertaken much critical judgment; but it may well be doubted whether the Manual to appear in another thirty-six years (the time that has elapsed since Stainton covered the same ground) will not see as much change from the present work, especially through investigations on the early stages of these insects, as this work shows when compared with Stainton.

It were much to be wished that the author had used a rational nomenclature for the neuration of the imago, and not have employed the back-handed numerical method so much in vogue among Old World lepidopterists, a method absolutely without meaning and a mask of affinities. Many clear illustrations of the neuration accompany the descriptions, and the work is admirably printed and convenient at every point.

S. H. SCUDDER.

Atlas d'ostéologie, comprenant les articulations des os et les insertions musculaires. Par CH. DEBIERRE, Professor d'Anatomie à la Faculté de médecine de Lille. Paris, Félix Alcan. 1896. Pp. viii, 92. 253 gravures.

The superb anatomical atlases of Bougery and Jacob, and of Bonamy and Beau, have deservedly made French artists famous, and have been a mine from which anatomists of all countries have drawn for the illustration of their works. They are, however, so expensive as to be far beyond the reach of the ordinary student.

The present work has a totally different aim, being an attempt to present in a cheap and con-