

## · SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE COLLECTING OF 1890.

A combination of causes prevented me from doing my usual amount of hunting around Hamilton last summer, and the reports of the collectors there left with me the impression that I was not losing much. I took many a stroll through the city, looking for, and expecting to find something, but invariably returned disappointed.

I suspect that electric lights and sparrows are working a revolution in city collecting. I was informed by a collector, whose duty takes him out early in the morning, that unless he got to a light that was in close proximity to his work before the sparrows, he got nothing; that they know the location of all the lights as exactly as the City Engineer, and when they have cleaned up one, they make straight for another; and they are not content to take merely what is on the ground, but will flutter up and down the pole, and pick off what is at rest on it; or perched on top of a fence, they will survey carefully all below them, and the instant they see an insect, they drop to a level with it, pick it off, and mount the fence again to devour it.

The communications from other parts of the country, which I have received since the season closed, indicate a general disappointment with the result of the collectors' labours.

On the 7th of June I went on a visit to the country, about sixteen miles south of the city, staying to the 23rd. The weather was warm—the first steady heat of the season. There was a bit of open woods close at hand, to which I was a constant visitor, and found hunting there specially interesting and profitable, a goodly number of different Lepidoptera almost daily emerging.

*Edema albifrons* was in surprising numbers. Look in any direction, and the eye would light on several of them sitting in their own peculiar attitude when at rest, the wings rolled tightly round the body, the front legs straightened out beneath them, supporting the forward part of the insect at an angle to the object it rests on, the lime-grey colour of its wings, and the light coloured, brown margined, singularly truncated head end, giving it an exact resemblance to a bit of rotten twig sticking out from the side of a tree.

Another plentiful thing was *Heterocampa guttivitta*; what most drew my attention to this insect at this time, was the large proportion of deformed ones. We are often disappointed in rearing insects in confinement, by having some of them deformed, and are apt to attribute the deformity

to the confinement ; but this species in nature gave a larger proportion of deformed specimens than I ever got from all my rearing in confinement. *Lunas* were very abundant. I took one dozen, and could have taken three. I found several of them in a badly crippled condition, one particularly so ; on one side the wings were perfect, on the other they had not expanded one iota, they did not even look as large as they should have been when it burst the chrysalis.

I saw *Lunas* flying for the first time in my life. They mount easily and make good progress, but the operation is performed wholly by the front wings ; the tails were crossed, and in one instance I felt certain the curves were linked into each other, giving firmness and immobility to the hind wings. I took a pair of *Packardia geminata* in coitu ; the singular form of the object arrested my attention, without suspecting it was produced by insects. The sexes differ greatly, in both size and markings. It has been an extremely rare insect in my experience, having never seen the male before, so I was much pleased with my find.

I took my first specimen of *Datana angusii*, and a single specimen of a *Datana* of the *ministra* type, but with only three lines across the wings, wavy and comparatively even.

I also made my first capture of *Halisidota maculata*, although *Caryæ* and *Tessellata* are amongst the most constant and plentiful species in the Hamilton neighborhood. On the field day of our Society during its annual meeting in August last, I took a *Tussock* larva on bass wood that attracted my attention by its bright lemon yellow colour, and square black spots down the centre of its back. Not knowing it I showed it to Mr. Fletcher, and he pronounced it to be *H. maculata*. During September they were quite abundant on the maple shade trees about London.

During that June visit I took an *Azelina hubnerata*, which has been in my experience a very rare and variable geometer. I am aware that some of the forms that I have taken may have distinguishing names, but I have not had them authoritatively determined. I also took five specimens of *Dryocampa rubicunda*, my first captures of that attractive moth, several *Tortrixes* and other small moths new to me, which have not yet been identified, and a variety of good but not uncommon moths besides ; also two males and six females of that delicate long-sting Hymenopter *Arotes amœnus*, Cress., making altogether a very satisfactory two weeks' collecting.

I made another visit between the 18th of July and the 2nd of August, to a locality 25 miles north of the city, but got nothing worthy of notice, except, perhaps, a *Catocala relictæ*, for its being somewhat early in the season. In London during November *Operophtera boreata* was very plentiful, yet I did not see a single specimen of an *Anisopteryx*.

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VANESSA CALIFORNICA IN VANCOUVER ISLAND.

Noticing the remarks of Mr. W. G. Wright in the February number of the CANADIAN ENTOMOLOGIST respecting *V. Californica*, I considered it would be of interest to give particulars of its capture at Victoria, B. C. During 1890 it was scarce in this vicinity, though probably common enough on higher elevations. The specimens taken by me were captured at Beacon Hill, amongst or near the fir trees that compose the wooded part of the Park, and situate some sixty feet above the sea level. I secured my first as it was rapidly flying along a new made road, which runs through the firs; this was on September 9th. The next time I saw it was September 21st, when I managed after a long run to net a worn-out specimen. A whole month intervened before seeing it again, the third one being captured October 26th. This was the last, and was taken off a fir tree whilst sucking the sap, apparently too satiated with the juice to heed danger, being easily taken, and transferred to my collecting box. It was a good specimen as regards plumage, but ragged and torn, having evidently been "on the road" a long time. Mr. James Fletcher, of Ottawa, kindly named it for me, at same time mentioning that it was the first recorded capture from Vancouver Island, if not in Canada.

I doubt very much if those taken by me were bred here, but hold more to the idea that they were visitors from foreign parts across the Sound, or perhaps from the northern part of the island. Mr. W. G. Wright says:—"It is of no value itself; it is usually present when you don't want it, and its appearance seems to be the signal for more interesting species to disappear." This without doubt is true as regards California, its natural home; but considering all things, I certainly believe that its appearance on Vancouver Island is of value, even if it does nothing more than add another species to the list of diurnals occurring here, and I fondly hope to see it again this year.

W. H. DANBY.

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