

## A SOUTHERNER ARRESTED IN CANADA.

Towards the end of November last I had occasion—as I so frequently have—to test the patience and endurance of Dr. J. B. Smith, in order to obtain the names of some *Noctuids* taken here last summer; which he promptly determined and returned. In his letter to me accompanying the list of names, he says amongst other matters: “But let me ask of you what do you know concerning No. 11? This is *Acontia aprica*, var. *biplaga*. It is a very common species in Texas and in the South-west generally, and it has been found North as far as Southern Missouri; but I have never seen it any further North or East of that. Is there any chance of a mistake in the locality? This northward extension, if actual, would prove very interesting; but I must confess I am distinctly skeptical,” which under such circumstances he was quite justified in being, and in requiring proof of its right to bear the London label. There are in Ontario two species of this somewhat extensive genus *Acontia*, (*Tarache*) *erastroides* and *candefacta*, which are present every season and nowise rare; but I have never heard of any other species of the genus as having been taken in it.

My evidence to the genuineness of the capture here is that Mr. Bice was at the time I got it constantly going the rounds of his daily occupation, and that he is not in communication about insects with anyone outside the city to get it from abroad. I saw him turn it with other things out of his cyanide bottle, which he told me were taken in a closed globe; that is, one closed at the bottom, where small specimens get quickly dried up, and have to be relaxed before they can be pinned with safety. I secured it there and then; relaxed it, pinned and spread it with special pleasure, because it was to me such a novel and attractive specimen. Dr. Smith acknowledged my answer to his question and considered the evidence satisfactory.

Such a find as that is well calculated to throw theories of distribution and exactly laid out Faunal Zones into confusion; but these, like all other human systems, are rigid things in comparison with nature's elastic methods of dividing up the surface of the globe to best suit its own interests. Life in nature rebels against being hedged in by lines of latitude and longitude, and insect life particularly. Many interesting questions are started by such a departure from the ordinary routine of human observation and experience. Missouri is a long way from here. Did that specimen come direct from there to here? It seems very unlikely. Did it get here by shortened

stages and lengthened time through several generations? That starts the question of food plant, what it is, and can it be obtained between there and here? Latitude might thus arrest its progress, at least its permanent progression that way. I have oftener wondered why insects, which I have every reason to believe were in a locality, could not be got; and am impressed with the idea that there must be many in a locality where one is got, and that some may be in localities where none have yet been seen; and when one is taken in such localities we are apt to conclude that it is the only one that ever was there.

It was in the autumn of 1881 that I took my first specimen of *Heliothis armiger* at Hamilton. An. Rep. Ent. Soc. of Ont., 1881, p. 30. And Dr. Saunders, then of London, now of Ottawa, assured me that up to that time he had not taken it. It was considered then to be but a transient visitor; now it could be taken here in numbers every season, although reported as injuring corn for the first time last season—a good illustration of how a migrant establishes itself in a new locality where its favorite food plant is easily obtainable. And others may be doing the same, of whose presence we have as yet had no indication.

The other species new to the Society's collection of that sending were:

*Bryophila teratophora*, H. S.

*Manestra anguina*, Grote.

*Schinia trifascia*, Hub.

*Galgula subpartita*, Guen.

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As a postscript to the above, I will now notice another of Mr. Bice's rare finds. Amongst the *Hydroecia* sent to me by Mr. H. Bird, Rye, N. Y., was a handsome specimen of *H. Necopina*, Grote, which Mr. Bird said was considered by many to be a mythical species until he discovered its food plant, and secured it in sufficient numbers to distribute freely. Mr. Bice called and saw the specimens; looked at them long and intently; pondered much, but said little. He went home and turned over his more recent captures, called a few days later with a box in his hand, which I took and opened; and there, to my surprise and delight, was a *Necopina*; lacking the lustre of the other, but quite unmistakable. Mr. Bird's specimen recalled something he remembered taking, but said nothing until he should see, for fear he might be mistaken.

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