

NOTE ON *PLUSIA PRECATIONIS* AT PETUNIA BLOSSOMS.

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During the past summer the Westmount Park gardener devoted to Petunias a circular bed about 20 feet in diameter, and knowing the fondness of the Plusias for the blossoms of this plant, I paid a little attention to it, my original intention being to see how many species I would find visiting it.

The flowers were of the old-fashioned single kinds, small blossoms, but hundreds of them, and were of three colours: first, a deep magenta or purple; second, a pale, washed-out looking variety of same, and third, pure white.

My first visit was on August 17, before dusk, and I had not long to wait, as while it was still quite light two Plusias appeared and quickly took a head-first plunge into the funnel-shaped blooms. They were easily boxed, and proved to be both *P. precationis*. A number of others soon followed, flying about among the blossoms, and I was struck with an unexpected circumstance, that they were all selecting the dark-coloured blooms. This seemed remarkable, as white colour in flowers has been considered a sort of special guide for crepuscular and night-flying moths. The colour of the Plusias matched so well that of the blooms in the now fading light, that I wondered whether, when darkness actually set in, the moths would adjourn to the white blooms, so walked around and around the bed, watching developments, doubtless to the amusement or mystification of the park frequenters. After a while a moth fluttered over the bed, and went boldly into a white blossom. I tried to box it, but was in too great a hurry and missed, but saw that it was no Plusia. Next moment I had it, or another — *Cucullia intermedia*. There were soon lots of them, and without exception they selected the white blooms, while the Plusias kept to the dark ones, and long after it was so dark that one could see only the swaying blossoms by the light of the nearest street lamp, they kept to their respective colours. The result of the evening's catch was 67 *Plusia precationis* and 23 *Cucullia intermedia*, and nothing else. Not a single moth was seen to get into the tube of any of the washed-out coloured blossoms, though they were continually fluttering past. On several other evenings up to the 8th September, the same two moths were the sole visitors of the Petunias.

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