
Chrysops carbonarius, Walk.

Taken at Humber, Toronto, June 13th, 1863.

Asilus -----? Sp.

Cape Cottage, Portland, August 16th, 1861. A large species, measuring an inch and a quarter in length, and nearly an inch and a half in expanse of wings.

CORRESPONDENCE.

EXPLANATORY.

DEAR SIR,—

The following considerations have suggested themselves to me in reference to Hr. Herman Strecker's recent personal attacks. For myself I do not think that either Mr. Strecker's style or language can be defended on any ground. As to the matter, this is furnished by certain synonyms in my writings on North American moths. To those conversant with the subject, it is not necessary to point out the fewness of such mistakes, but it may have escaped notice that in nearly every instance I have been the first to correct the mistake, and thus Mr. Strecker's abuse has come *ex post facto* and proves itself wholly personal and unscientific. I take pleasure in referring here to words used in my earliest paper (Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phil., 1862, p. 59). I think I have always lived up to my first statement, and where I have made a synonym, both "willingly and gladly" acknowledged it. And although I am charged by Mr. Strecker with allowing one mistake to remain "nineteen months" before correction, I can assure him that I still corrected it the moment I became aware that it existed. Certain of these mistakes have occurred in describing American species under distinct names. Sometimes these species have turned out to be the same with European forms, and a synonym has been the result. I do not think this the great misfortune which Mr. Strecker pretends, the less when we remember that in many instances the American specimens may be distinguished, and I have suggested that we shall lose a knowledge of these distinguishing points unless we use distinguishing names. Certainly these are occasions for quiet scientific observation, not in any case for unscientific vituperation. The difficulty of avoiding a giving of too great weight to a remote locality is even instanced by Mr. Strecker, who has re-described a ♀ *Cressonia juglandis* as a new species of *Smerinthus* from "Texas." The pale specimen, merely wanting the

median shade on the primaries, would, if caught, say in Reading, have hardly furnished one of Mr. Strecker's "coveted" novelties. Again, instances are on record where naturalists have first considered the American species the same as the European, and then changed their views and described them as distinct. An instance of this is offered by *Brephos infans*, first described as the same as the European *Brephos parthenais*. The amount of error is no greater in the one case than the other.

At the time that I commenced my labors, the difficulty of determining our species of moths was very great, certainly much greater than it is now. That this change is in part due to my work I think is true, equally so that Mr. Strecker is both unjust and ungrateful to omit the consideration from his mind. How much he himself is indebted to my labors may be seen by comparing my work on the genus *Catocala* with his own on the same subject. His figures and determinations are taken from the collection I studied and the paper I published; and, in reality, his figures merely supplement my original work. That Mr. Strecker has so generally coincided with me in his specific discriminations in the genus *Catocala*, is, I think, less a compliment to my correctness than a proof of Mr. Strecker's ready acceptance of assistance.

I have a few special remarks with which to conclude. I am blamed for retaining the name *C. ponderosa* instead of the earlier *C. nebulosa* || for a species of *Catocala*. From Linnæus to Lederer it has been customary to avoid the repetition of names in the same family of moths, and Guenné has changed the name of a species of *Catocala* on account of an *Anarta* bearing the same specific title. I have never changed the name of another author on this account; my opinion (as, indeed, cited by Mr. Strecker) being that a fresh name is unnecessary. I have merely, where two names were attached to the same species, preferred the later when the earlier had been previously used. Whether my descriptions in the genus *Catocala* are the best, I will not dispute with Mr. Strecker; in his comments on *C. ponderosa* Mr. Strecker forgets that we figured the species, in justice to Mr. Wiest, the artist, I think very acceptably. Nor will I allow Mr. Strecker the proper authority to discuss the value of structural characters in the Lepidoptera, seeing that he has shown no experience in the matter, and is unable to discriminate even between the sexes of *Catocala* when the abdomen is wanting.

A. R. GROTE.

SYNONYMICAL NOTE.

Dr. Boisduval has recently re-described *Eudryas grata* (Fabr.) from Georgia under the name of *Eudryas assimilis*, with the remark: Cette belle espece n'a pas encore ete figuree. It is manifestly unimportant to Dr. Boisduval that the science of Entomology is pursued in America. In this same paper (*Revue et Magasin de Zoologie*, 1874) the genus *Alypa* is erroneously attributed to Kirby, and a citation is given: "*Sphinx octomaculata* Hubn. Zut., 119, 120." which does not exist, the proper citation being "*Alypia octomaculalis* Hubn., Zut., No. 60, fig. 119, 120."

Dr. Boisduval separates Drury's figure of *Urania rhipheus* (1773) from Cramer's (1782), under the new name of *Urania Druryi*. This is, however, a simple synonym in any event, since Drury's species must retain the name of *Rhipheus* as originally proposed. Cramer himself says, when describing his *Rhipheus*, T. 3, p. 193, "Ce beau Papillon et qui est tres rare, ressemble beaucoup a' celui qui a ete annonce par Mr. Drury dans ses Illustrations of Natural History, Vol. 2, pl. 23, figs. 1, 2, sous le nom que nous lui donnons ci-dessus." Guennee, in 1857, also draws attention to this mistake of Dr. Boisduval's, then only proposed to be committed. It has been generally conceded that Drury's species is the same as Cramer's and that the differences in the figures arose from an intentional mutilation of Drury's original specimen. Dr. Boisduval's quotation from Lacordaire would hardly cover such a case as this, in which a pair of scissors very probably effected "la creation." To find another "taille sur le meme patron," would argue, then, a lack of conscience somewhere, as well as the sacrifice of a specimen. But Dr. Boisduval insists on other characters to separate the two species than the absence of the tails, i. e., the large size and the ornamentation of the fore wings of *Rhipheus* Drury. So in this case we should have two species, i. e., *Chrysidia Rhipheus* (Drury) nec Hubn. (= *Urania Druryi* Boisd.) and *Chrysidia Orientalis* (Swains) (= *Rhipheus* Cramer 385, A. B.; *Chrysidia Rhiphearia* Hubn.)

A. R. GROTE.

Our usual acknowledgements of books received have been omitted for want of space, they will appear in our next.—Ed. C. E.