

MUSING IN EUROPEAN MUSEUMS

by BERNARD HEINEMAN

Our six weeks sojourn in Europe was so filled with rare lepidopteran experiences that Mrs. HEINEMAN and I thought a resumé might be apropos.

April 12th saw us alight in Paris. The first rainy day took us to the Natural History Museum where Monsieur J. BOURGOGNE, who spoke English well, aided us in our search for types of butterflies from Jamaica, British West Indies. We got off to a good start finding five described by LATREILLE, BOISDUVAL, GODART, and LUCAS. The fine collection was well arranged and pleasant to handle, but damp cold made it uncomfortable for New Yorkers accustomed to steam heat.

Delightful Copenhagen was our next stop. But there, too, the Museum's dark halls and sombre corridors cooled our ardor. The enthusiasm shown by its Director, Dr. S. L. TUXEN, quickly made us forget slight inconveniences. The Zoological Museum had no Jamaican specimens, but we experienced the first of our many strokes of fortune. FABRICIUS' renowned collection was here on loan from Kiel. We were privileged to examine priceless gems collected 150 to 200 years ago. Mrs. SIMPSON was studying them, and her findings should make a valuable contribution to lepidoptery. We discovered many types with data in FABRICIUS' handwriting. Others were inscribed by—but that is Mrs. SIMPSON'S story, not mine.

Before leaving Copenhagen, we saw the beautiful collection of Mr. VILHELM LAURITZEN. He was immersed in two projects—designing the Danish Embassy in Washington and a work on subspeciation of *Papilio machaon*.

Our arrival April 24th at Amsterdam was timed for Holland's floral display which surpassed our greatest expectations, but the Museum was disappointing in that Dr. G. KRUSEMAN could show us no insects from Jamaica.

We visited with Mr. CURT EISNER at The Hague, glancing at his famous *Parnassius* collection. Regrettably Dr. A. DIAKONOFF of Leiden was off for the week-end so we missed meeting him.

London was bubbling over with friendly bustle and breathless preparation for the Coronation.

The British Museum at South Kensington is comparable to The American Museum of Natural History in content and appearance. Its youthful visitors seem to appreciate its wonders, absorbing with propriety the countless exhibits. Mr. NORMAN D. RILEY, Keeper of the Entomological Dept., was an affable man of many intellectual interests (fig. 1). He showed us through the floors housing the Museum's massive collection of millions of specimens. In buildings that had been struck 49 times by German missiles, we were taken unerringly to each of the insects for which we inquired, and here we found most of the types for which we searched.

Brigadier W. H. EVANS aided with "skippers." He is now 77, and though suffering patiently from a wounded leg, works ceaselessly on his "American Hesperidae." Riley's admonition to him was: "Take it easy, Brigadier," but I order you not to die until you complete Part III."

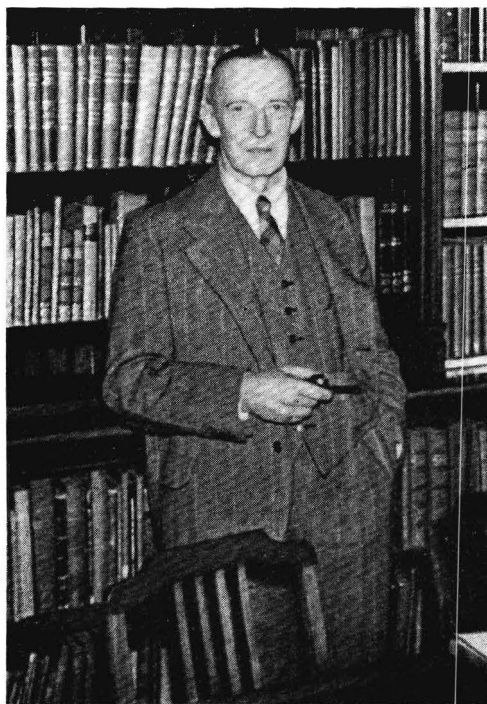


Fig. 1. Mr. N. D. RILEY

On one of our frequent visits to the Museum, we were pleasantly surprised to run into Dr. EUGENE MUNROE from Ottawa, Canada, working, of course, on Pyralididae. He looked as if he had been up all night, and so he had. His two children had contracted measles.

Now we come to another high spot. Mr. W. H. T. TAMS, who is criticized only for overworking, had recently been made Zoological Director of the Linnæan Society at Burlington House. He escorted us thereto and, with trembling hands, showed us CARL LINNÉ's acquisitions of the 18th Century and told us in hushed tones that we were the first in years to have handled these precious insects. Our flash photographs show a box containing *Danaus plexippus* about whose nomenclature there storms such discussion. It is a male labelled "*Archippus* Fab.4.49 Marsham." The handwriting, according to TAMS, is that of Sir JAMES EDWARD SMITH Kt., former President of the Linnæan Society. There is a small bull's eye label bound in red similar to those used to indicate "type." Underneath are four females with broad white bands towards the tip of the primaries. They are marked "*plexippus*" in Linnæus' handwriting, and each label is marked "East Indies." (Fig. 2.)

At a later date we visited Mr. FRANCIS HEMMING, Secretary of The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature. It is around him and his committee that most of the *Danaus plexippus* hubbub centers. We had hoped to see a photograph that HEMMING was reported to have taken of the type of *Hypolimnys misippus* L., but it was not to be found, so our next itinerary will include a trip to the Linnæan collection at Uppsala, Sweden, where the insect is reputed to be.

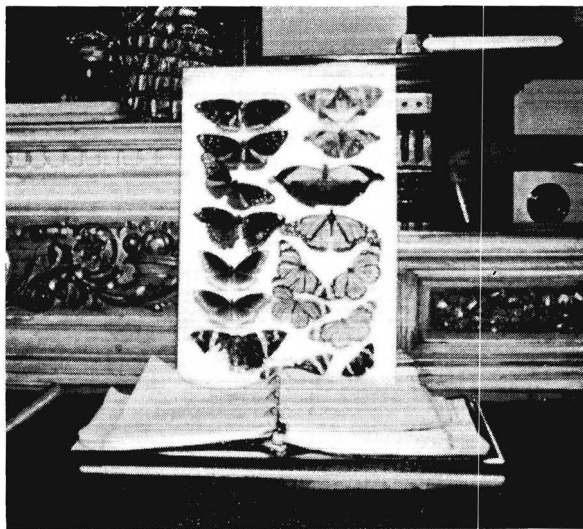


Fig. 2. Specimens in LINNÉ Collection

An afternoon with Mr. W. J. KAYE at his charming home at Guildford was most rewarding. He is now a hearty 78. KAYE it was who, in 1926, wrote the first all inclusive paper on Jamaican butterflies. He collected there for years, assisted by Miss LILY PERKINS. His works and those of AVINOFF and SHOUMATOFF are important contributions to Jamaican lepidoptery. In his immaculately kept collection, we found all the types he had described except *Thecla Bourkei* which he claimed was in the Hope collection at Oxford University. We searched there, unsuccessfully.

Mr. KAYE forwarded to us the following letter:

"Professor VARLEY has handed your letter regarding the type of *Thecla Bourkei* over to me.

"I very much regret to say that a further exhaustive search of all possible places has failed to reveal this type. Mr. HEINEMAN himself went over the drawers while he was here and could find no trace of the specimen. The Bourke collection is virtually intact, but in one of the drawers containing Trinidad Lycænidae is a strip of paper (obviously indicating that specimens have been removed) which reads A/B/C/D/E/F/ but that is the only clue, and it seems clear that the butterflies were not replaced.

"I do not think there is anything more we can really do. It is very distressing to find this very rare specimen is missing.

Yours faithfully,

ERNEST TAYLOR, Chief Assistant."

Needless to say, any information leading to the location of the *Thecla bourkei* type will be very valuable. We did not come away from Oxford fruitlessly, however, for a short glance through JONES' *Icones* left us with an insatiable desire to review that unique and sensational book.

Next we went to the Tring Museum, a modern edifice superbly located in delightful surroundings. Its rooms are light, clean, and airy with high ceilings and wide aisles between its long rows of spacious cabinets. The fabulous Dr. KARL JORDAN, its curator, is now 92. His daughter told us that he works 6 days a week from 10 mornings to 7 evenings. He interrupted his application to fleas to help us find *Papilio thoas melonius* and *Papilio polydamus jamaicensis*, both of which he and Lord ROTHSCHILD had described. We had been unable to locate the types, but he proceeded directly to the drawer containing *P. thoas melonius* extracting therefrom an insect, on the pin of which was attached an envelope containing its genitalia. This, Dr. JORDAN said, was the type—and it has now been so labelled. He insisted that the type of *P. polydamus jamaicensis* was with the series that had been presented to the British Museum, and when subsequently those insects were reexamined, one was found with an envelope containing genitalia, and this has now been added to the type collection. A dinner date in London caused us, regrettably, to rush off so that we did not even get a photograph of Dr. JORDAN.

Mr. C. BERNARD LEWIS, Curator of the Jamaica Institute at Kingston writes that he has seen, but not captured, some pierids that may be new to Jamaica. We go there in Feb. 1954 with the hope of obtaining some of these butterflies. Our 1955 plans are to return to Europe to continue our interesting studies in foreign museums.

247 Church Street, New York 13, N. Y., U. S. A.

SALMON'S FLUID, A NEW MOUNTING MEDIUM FOR SLIDES OF SMALL LARVAE AND LARVAL PELTS OF LEPIDOPTERA

by PETER F. BELLINGER

The study of very small larvae of the Lepidoptera and other groups of insects is a matter of some difficulty. Many minute characters such as the head and body setae are almost impossible to make out with direct illumination and the magnifications available on most dissecting microscopes. Specimens can of course be cleared and mounted in balsam or clarite, but this involves extensive and tiresome handling.