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"High Close", Thorsway, Caldy, Cheshire, UNITED KINGDOM
 and

Genetics Laboratory, University Museum, Oxford, UNITED KINGDOM

ARCTIC COLLECTING IN NEW ENGLAND

by DONALD J. LENNOX

When the southern edge of the last great ice sheet had been forced to recede northward and had reached the latitude of northern New England there appeared mountains of imposing height, the White Mountains of the present day. Because of their loftiness they extended up into layers of air so cold that

secondary glaciers continued to linger on their higher shoulders for a long period, carving deep cirques in the mica schist composing this great wrinkle in the surface of the earth. It follows, then, that these peaks were also able to hold many of the forms of animal and plant life that had become acclimated to the glacier's edge.

Mount Washington has the reputation of being the stormiest summit in the east. Its wintry blasts commonly reach velocities of one hundred miles an hour and more, with temperatures tumbling to 30° and 40° below zero. Snow seldom lies where it falls but is speedily whisked into one or another of the many glacial cirques. However, during the brief summer, many Hudsonian forms of life have time to come forth and bloom, or fly, and carry out the activities of their species. There are numerous small terraces scattered over the mountain where plants and sedges indigenous to the arctic are to be found and it is from these spare beginnings that the native life springs.

Here, in mid-July, the lepidopterist will find the drab but exciting butterfly, *Eneis melissa semidea*, in its natural habitat, and the beautiful little noctuid, *Anarta melanopa*. The butterfly will rely for safety upon its coloration, which so nearly matches the lichen-encrusted rock surfaces and upon the ever-present wind which aids it swiftly beyond the outcroppings of rock and out of sight. The moth, relying more upon its remarkable likeness to the rough gray rock, will disappear at his feet.

If the collector returns again in mid-August he may expect to find the even more choice butterfly, *Boloria titania montina*. Confining itself closely to the many damp areas immediately about and below the ice-cold mountain springs, it is by far the rarer of the two butterflies peculiar to the mountain. The tree-line is reached on the White Mountains at between 4200 and 5000 feet, according to exposure. *B. montina* extends its territory down into the scrub wherever its favored wet terrain is found, and it may also be found well above the limit of trees where alpine springs flow from the mountain. It gathers sweets from the Alpine Goldenrod and the Blue Fall Aster. *Montina* is a rather easy butterfly to capture, and since it is quite restricted as to locale it should be collected conservatively. There is a definite chance of causing it to become scarce or even extinct from too much collecting in its accessible habitat.

Mount Washington presents extremes in jagged rock and delicate flower. The rock-strewn summit is like a massive rock garden during the brief summer, *Arenaria grœnlandica* nestles among the rocks in company with *Diapensia lapponica*. *Rhododendron lapponicum* hugs the boulders in company with alpine blueberries, and in especially favored spots, beneath the shoulders of great rocks, the extremely delicate little *Cassiope hypnoides* may be found.

Thus it is in such enchanting surroundings that the collector, fortunate enough to find himself able to reach them, may spend happy exciting hours of real arctic collecting in New England. But he who chooses a whole fair day is extremely lucky, for there is seldom one during the warm months when fluffy daytime clouds do not condense and obscure the sun at some time during the day