

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE TWELFTH ANNUAL
MEETING OF THE LEPIDOPTERISTS' SOCIETY

This meeting marks the second occasion in which the Lepidopterists' Society has scheduled its national gathering in the state which contains a greater number of its own members than any other state in the Union.

This prompts us to express our gratitude to the Executive Council and Officers for the privilege of attending a foregathering of our confrères without the long trek to some distant area.

It also gives us the opportunity of expressing to the Officers and Director of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History our deep appreciation of the many courtesies they have extended to our organization and its members on this and many other occasions.

The particular message that I wish to present at this time concerns one aspect of our entomological endeavors which, I believe, is of major importance, namely, the relationship of graphic illustration to publication of technical papers.

The ancient Chinese proverb that "a picture is worth ten thousand words" is as true today as it was in olden times. We must also stress the point that scientific illustrations should evidence the same degree of accuracy and craftsmanship as is expected in the written text.

The late JOHN L. RIDGEWAY, in his excellent book, *Scientific Illustration* (published by Stanford University), puts it aptly as follows: "in the matter of illustrations, which are an important corollary to the literature of science, their very character, purpose, and treatment place them in a class quite distinct from the more popular application of the art."

We agree with RIDGEWAY also that a scientific illustrator "does not recognize modernistic tendencies in the display and technique of scientific illustration."

In this exacting craft there is no place for the type of individualistic "masterpiece" suggesting scrambled eggs on burlap, framed and hung (frequently upside-down) in museums, with high-sounding titles and higher prices. Fortunately, the classic presentation is still the dominant character in scientific publications.

We all recognize the strong appeal which beautifully illustrated works on entomology have, both for the amateur and expert. How reverently we poured over the text of EDWARDS' *Butterflies of North America* and lingered over the exquisite colored drawings of MARY PEART, and how thrilling it was to read the scholarly excursions in SCUDDER'S *Butterflies of the Eastern United States and Canada*, and note the many fine drawings. Others must have wondered as we did at the skill that was evidenced in

the wood engravings of ANNA BOTSFORD COMSTOCK which illustrated many of the works of her husband, JOHN HENRY COMSTOCK. Most of us are familiar with the classic papers of C. V. RILEY, in the *Missouri Reports* and other writings, in which much of the appeal lies in RILEY's drawings. It has long been recognized that the scholarly works of ALPHEUS S. PACKARD, when illustrated by JOSEPH BRIGHAM, as in the *Monographs of the Notodontidæ* and the *Ceratocampidæ*, are particularly outstanding.

Some of these entomological "old masters" had the advantage of reasonably priced color reproduction. Today we are denied this. We can only hope that at some future time a cheaper process of color printing will be invented, and kept free from the dictation of union labor bosses.

The editors and/or business managers of some of our journals have not always recognized the value of illustrations. In most cases this is probably due to budgetary limitations. It is disheartening to find that, with many technical journals the contributing authors are required to pay for illustrations. It would seem to me more advantageous to cut down on the number of pages and put the saving into good illustrations.

This is the policy that was followed during the past forty years by the Southern California Academy of Sciences, thanks to the backing and support of a cooperative Board of Trustees. The steady growth of that organization and its high scientific standing seems to suggest that the policy was efficacious.

We should all offer congratulations to the governing body of our Lepidopterists Society for the stand they have taken in this respect. They have established a special "illustrations fund". We should do all in our power to help in this endeavor, and hope that eventually someone will set up an endowment for that specific purpose.

One other aspect of this subject should be considered. I have occasionally seen publications in which the authors used good drawings that were obviously made by competents, without giving credit to the illustrators, reprehensible whether it is done intentionally or by oversight. Most scientific illustrators not only have had long training in their craft, but have a good grasp of the fundamentals of the subject that they are illustrating. Illustration adds greatly to any work and should be accorded full recognition. The author will himself benefit by giving adequate credit to the associate artist.

There is a challenge in these meticulous demands for all of us who have a part in the training of our novitiates.

JOHN ADAMS COMSTOCK