



S. 1654.

MACRO-LEPIDOPTERA

BY JAMES J. WALKER, R.N.

THE larger SpHINGIDAE are well represented in the neighbourhood of Oxford; *Dilina tiliae* L., *Amorpha populi* L. and *Smerinthus ocellatus* L. are common in the larval and perfect states, *Acherontia atropos* L. and *Sphinx convolvuli* L., though not rare in certain years, being much more irregular in their appearance. The beautiful larva of *S. ligustri* L. is a familiar object on privet hedges in late summer, when the formidable-looking caterpillar of *Chaerocampa elpenor* L. may be met with frequently on willow-herb and water-bedstraw beside the Cherwell and the Isis. *C. porcellus* L. comes occasionally to flowers at dusk, and its larva is found on *Galium verum* at Tubney and elsewhere. Of the rare *C. celerio* L. there is but one record, but *Phryxus livornica* Esp. occurred at Abingdon in 1883, and a beautiful specimen of this rare immigrant was taken by Mr. A. H. Hamm in South Oxford on 13th May, 1922. *Deilephila galii* Rott. has been seen on the wing in a garden at Summer-town, and the 'Humming-bird Moth,' *Macroglossa stellatarum* L., in some years is a frequent garden visitor; *Hemaris fuciformis* L. is common in most woods in early summer, and its larva has been taken freely at Tubney Wood on low-growing honeysuckle; its congener *H. bombylifformis* Esp. is less frequently met with.

The Notodontidae are also well to the fore, the two commoner 'Kittens,' *Cerura furcula* L. and *C. bifida* Hb.,

occurring sparingly at gas-lamps and on the trunks of willows and poplars, and the 'Puss,' *Dicranura vinula* L., much more frequently, especially as a larva; the 'Lobster Moth,' *Stauropus fagi* L., though by no means as common as in the Reading district, has been taken on several occasions in Bagley Wood, and more than once on gas-lamps in the City itself. *Drymonia trimacula* Esp. occurs rarely in Bagley and Hen Woods, and *D. chaonia* Hb. is an occasional visitor to gas-lamps, with *Ptilodontis palpina* L., *Phaeosia tremulae* Cl. and *Notodonta ziczac* L. fairly commonly, and less frequently *P. dictaeoides* Esp., *N. dromedarius* L., *N. trepida* Esp. and *Lophopteryx camelina* L. *Pygaera curtula* L. has been taken at Shotover and at Boar's Hill, and in most of the woods *Habrosyne deraea* L. and *Thyatira batis* L. may be taken in abundance at 'sugar.' The beautiful *Palimpsestis octogesima* Hb. sometimes comes to this attraction, as well as to light, and *Polyploca ridens* F. has been found on oak trunks in Bagley and Tubney Woods.

Orgyia gonostigma L. has occurred in the larva stage at Bagley Wood, whence also *Dasychira fascelina* L. has been reported, and *Lymantria monacha* L. is not scarce there and at Hen Wood on tree-trunks in July. The larva of *Trichiura crataegi* L. is found, sometimes not rarely, on crab-apple, blackthorn, etc., in early summer, and the perfect insect occasionally comes to the city gas-lamps, which in some years attract *Poecilocampa populi* L. quite numerously in November and December. The gregarious larva of *Eriogaster lanestris* L. has been found commonly on blackthorn, but *Lasiocampa quercus* L. and *Saturnia pavonia* L. are apparently much scarcer here than in most localities; indeed, there is no recent record of the occurrence of the latter species. *Gastropacha quercifolia* L., the well-known 'Lappet Moth,' is not uncommon, and sometimes comes to light. The 'Hook-tips,' *Drepana falcataria* L., *D.*

binaria Hufn. and *D. cultraria* F. are to be taken at Tubney and other well-wooded places, with *Nola strigula* Schiff., the beautiful green *Hylophila bicolorana* Fuesl. (most frequently beaten off oaks in the larva stage) and the variable *Sarothrips undulatus* Hb., all three of these being somewhat scarce. *Phragmatobia fuliginosa* L. and *Parasemia plantaginis* L. are both common in Tubney Woods, the latter in some seasons especially so, and the gorgeous 'Scarlet Tiger,' *Callimorpha dominula* L., occurs somewhat locally at Cothill and Weston-on-the-Green, the larva being most partial to the Hemp-Agrimony, *Eupatorium cannabinum*. The 'Cinnabar Moth,' *Hyposcritia jacobaeae* L., occasionally appears in extraordinary profusion, when the swarming larvae clear off every leaf of their food-plant, *Senecio Jacobaea*, over extensive areas, and are even to be found abundantly on the naturalized *S. squalidus* on walls in the City. *Comacla senex* Hb. flies in wet places at Cothill, and the pale race *stramineola* Dbl. of *Lithosia griseola* Hb. occurs not rarely with the typical form; *L. sororcula* Hufn. is not uncommon at Bagley Wood, and *L. complana* L. and *Cybosia mesomella* L. in heathy places near Tubney.

The NOCTUINA are well represented in the district, and 'sugaring' in the woods, notably those at Boar's Hill and near Tubney, for the members of this group of Moths, is usually highly remunerative. *Demas coryli* L. has been found not rarely in the larval stage at Wytham Park and elsewhere; *Acronycta leporina* L. and *A. aceris* L. may be found sparingly at rest on tree-trunks; *A. ligustri* F. sometimes comes rather freely to sugar, and the scarce *A. alni* L. has occurred singly at Cothill and Tubney, and its most conspicuous larva has been found, usually on hazel, on several occasions in recent years. A brownish form of *Agrotis vestigialis* Rott., usually a littoral species,

is by no means rare at Tubney; *A. cinerea* Hb. has once occurred at Wytham Park; *A. obscura* Brahm has been taken rather freely at sugar near Abingdon, and Mr. E. G. R. Waters once captured the uncommon *A. simulans* Hufn. at flowers of the Red Valerian (*Centranthus ruber*) in his garden in North Oxford. The local *Noctua stigmatica* Hb. and *Triphaena orbona* Hufn. (*subsequa* Hb.), with the handsome *T. fimbria* L. and *Eurois prasina* F., are attracted to sugar in the Tubney Woods, where *Aplecta tincta* Brahm may be taken as a larva in early spring. *A. advena* F. frequents gardens, *Mamestra dissimilis* Kn. comes to sugar on trees near the Cherwell, and this attraction produces the very pretty *M. genistae* Bkh. quite freely at Hen Wood at times. *Neuria reticulata* Vill. is also a 'sugar' insect, and *Epineuronia popularis* F. is mentioned chiefly on account of its abundance in certain years, when it becomes a nuisance from its habit of flying into lighted rooms and blundering into incandescent gas-mantles. *Tholera cespitis* F. and *Aporophyla lutulenta* Bkh. are much less common, the latter being also found on ivy-bloom; *Apamea ophiogramma* Esp. has been taken in Oxford by Mr. Waters; *Xylophasia sublustris* Esp. comes to sugar not rarely, and the variable *Polia chi* L., which is here nearly at the southern limit of its distribution in Britain, is common on walls and tree-trunks in August, the ground-colour being usually nearly pure white, a very pretty form. *Brachionycha (Astero Scopus) sphinx* Hufn. is a common 'gas-lamp' insect in November, and *Agriopsis aprilina* L. abounds at sugar in the oak-woods a little earlier in the season, when the dark form *capucina* Mill. of *Miselia oxyacanthae* L. is not rarely met with. The northern *Hydroecia petasitis* Dbld. has more than once been taken at light. The larva of *Nonagria geminipuncta* Hatch. burrows in the stems of reeds at Cothill, and *Coenobia rufa* Haw. flies freely before

dusk in Bullingdon (or Hogley) Bog, where Mr. A. H. Hamm has taken the fen-loving *Tapinostola hellmanni* Eversm.; two other marsh-frequenting species, *Calamia lutosa* Hb. and *Leucania impudens* Hb., have occurred not rarely near the 'Ruskin Reserve' at Cothill. *Panolis griseovariiegata* Hufn. (*piniperda* Panz.) is not very common as yet, despite the extensive planting of Conifers in the woods, but all the species of *Taeniocampa*, with the exception of *opima* Hb., are to be found more or less plentifully at sallow-bloom in the spring, the larva of *T. populeti* F. being common on poplars in Bagley Wood. There are single records of *Dicycla oo* L. and *Dyschorista suspecta* Hb. for the District; the beautiful *Cosmia diffinis* L. comes sparingly to sugar and light, and the larva of *Plastenis retusa* L. has been found on sallows. *Cirrhoedia xerampelina* Hb. is occasionally taken at gas-lamps. Nearly all the Noctuae associated with autumnal work at ivy-bloom occur in greater or less abundance, and among these may be mentioned the pretty and very variable *Xanthia aurago* F., formerly not rare at Wood Eaton, but taken more freely at sugar near Woodstock in company with *X. citrargo* L. *Hoporina croceago* F. is not scarce both before and after hibernation, and the much scarcer *Orrhodia rubiginea* F. has occurred at least once in the District. *Lithophane semibrunnea* Haw. is taken sparingly on ivy-bloom at Wood Eaton and elsewhere, and *L. socia* Rott. is reported from Boar's Hill, where the beautiful caterpillar of *Cucullia chamomillae* Schiff. may be found on *Matricaria* in June. The larva of *Pyrrhia umbra* Hufn. is also to be swept freely enough (though too often parasitized) from the rest-harrow, *Ononis spinosa*, in late summer. *Acontia luctuosa* Esp., not rare on the Berkshire chalk-downs, has been taken by Mr. Waters at Holton Pits near Wheatley, and *Hydrelia uncula* Cl. was formerly common at Headington Wick, but

has not been seen there of late years. The beautiful *Plusia moneta* F., which first made its appearance as a British insect some thirty years ago, has quite taken possession of the Oxford gardens where *Aconitum* and its allies are grown, the green larva (which is very easily reared) at times causing no small damage to these plants by eating the undeveloped flowers. *P. iota* L. and *P. pulchrina* Haw. are both fairly common, but the brilliant *P. festucae* L. is but rarely met with here. The 'Red Underwing,' *Catocala nupta* L., varies in abundance from year to year, but in some seasons is so common as to admit of four or five specimens being seen on a telegraph-post at once; the much more local and scarce *C. promissa* Esp. was taken by the late Mr. A. Sidgwick at Hen Wood, and more recently at Waterperry Wood by Mr. Waters. An example of the rare *C. fraxini* was seen, but unfortunately not captured, by Mr. A. W. Pickard-Cambridge on Headington Hill in the autumn of 1917. *Toxocampa pastinum* Tr. is widely distributed and not rare in boggy places, as at Cothill, etc., where the little *Hypenodes costaestrigalis* Steph. has also occurred; the curious *Laspeyria flexula* Schiff. comes sparingly to light, and *Brephos parthenias* L., with its less common congener *B. notha* Hb., may be seen on the wing at Bagley Wood on bright days in March and April.

Many interesting species of the GEOMETRINA are also to be met with in the Oxford District. The larva of the fine *Geometra papilionaria* L. is sometimes fairly common on small birch bushes at Cothill and Tubney Wood, the perfect insect being less frequently found; *G. vernaria* Hb. comes to light at Summertown not rarely, and *Euchloris (Phorodesma) pustulata* Hufn. occurs in Bagley and other woods, with many of our species of *Acidalia*; *A. inornata* Haw., a local insect, is taken at what remains of Stow Wood near Beckley, and at Wytham Park, and *A. immutata* L. is

common in damp spots at Cothill. *Minoa murinata* Scop. is found among *Euphorbia amygdaloides* in some of the woods, and the little black *Odezia atrata* L. abounds on Shotover Hill and at Pixey Mead near Yarnton. The chalk-frequenting *Ortholita bipunctaria* Schiff. has been found not rarely at Holton Pits, and Bagley Wood produces *Lobophora polycommata* Hb. and *L. carpinata* Bork., the latter in plenty; *L. viretata* Hb. has occurred at Boar's Hill and on the railings of the University Park, *L. halterata* Hufn. among aspens at Cothill and Tubney, and *L. sexalisata* Hb. at Bagley Wood, where the beautiful *Eucosmia undulata* L. has been taken among willows. *E. certata* Hb. is not uncommon in the University Park, and *Scotosia vetulata* Schiff. among buckthorn at Wood Eaton and elsewhere; *Eustroma silaceata* Hb. may be taken at Bagley and Wytham Woods among *Epilobium angustifolium*. The common *Cidaria truncata* sometimes varies to an entirely black form; this tendency to melanism is exhibited in several other species of moths in the District, very dark specimens of *Miana strigilis* Cl., *Eupithecia rectangulata* L., *Oporabia dilutata* Bkh., *Cheimatobia brumata* L., *Hybernia marginaria* Bkh. and *Phigalia pedaria* F. being frequently taken, and the melanic form *doubledayaria* Mill. of *Pachys betularia* L. is now at least as common as the normal insect. The recently recognised (as British) *Thera variata* Schiff. is fairly plentiful among spruce firs at Wytham Park. *Eulype hastata* L., previously somewhat scarce, became exceedingly plentiful some ten years ago when the woods at Tubney were thinned out and small birch bushes sprang up in the openings, but has recently diminished in numbers. *Meso-leuca albicillata* L. is not rare in Bagley Wood, and Mr. Waters has taken *Percnoptilia* (*Camptogramma*) *fluviata* Hb. in the City; *Abraxas sylvata* Sc. is less common than in many places, occurring sparingly near Cothill, where

Coremia quadrifasciaria Clerck is also to be found. The larvae of *Perizoma bifasciata* Haw. may be obtained in numbers from the flowers and seeds of *Bartsia Odontites* in the autumn, *Asthena blomeri* Curt. has occurred among wych-elsms at Bagley, and the rare *Eupithecia insigniata* Hb. (*consignata* Bkh.) was once taken by the late Mr. A. Sidgwick flying at dusk in Marston Lane. Other noteworthy members of this large genus occurring here are *scabiosata* Bkh., *haworthiata* Stt., *pusillata* F. (common among spruce firs at Bagley and Wytham Woods), *lariciata* Fr., *subciliata* Gn., *succenturiata* L., *irriguata* Hb., *dodoneata* Gn., *coronata* Hb., etc., and there is a record of the local *Collix sparsata* from 'near Wytham' by Mr. G. D. H. Carpenter. *Cabera rotundaria* Haw. is noted from Boar's Hill, and has been bred rather freely by Mr. Waters. The 'Thorns' of the genera *Selenia* and *Ennomos* are well represented in the District, all the members of the latter genus except *E. autumnaria* Wernb. occurring on gas-lamps in late summer, and occasionally coming into lighted rooms. *Eurymene dolobraria* L. is not rare in Bagley Wood, where *Apocheima hispidaria* F. has been more than once taken freely on oak trunks early in the year; it sometimes comes to light in the City, with, much more frequently, *Pachys strataria* Hufn. *Boarmia abietaria* Hb. and *B. roboraria* Schiff. have occurred at Hen Wood, and the latter has been taken at Waterperry Wood, where *Tephrosia consonaria* Hb. is also found; *T. luridata* Bkh. is common at Hen Wood and elsewhere. *Chiasma clathrata* L. and *Ematurga atomaria* L., though both are abundant species, deserve mention for the beautiful range of variation which they present in the District; an almost spotless black specimen of the former was taken some years ago near Abingdon by the present writer.

Of the well-known 'Burnets' and 'Foresters,' there are

flourishing colonies of *Zygaena lonicerae* Esp. at Shotover Hill and on the railway-bank near Yarnton, and of *Z. trifolii* Esp. at Bagley, Tubney, Cothill and elsewhere, fine confluent varieties of the latter species often occurring at the last-mentioned locality. *Ino statices* L. is locally plentiful in some years at Tubney and Bagley Wood; where *Cochlidion limacodes* Hufn. has been but rarely taken. *Cossus cossus* L. (*ligniperda* F.) and *Zeuzera pyrina* L. are by no means as common here as they are in many localities; indeed, a few more trees infested with the larva of the former moth would be heartily welcomed by the local Coleopterists.

