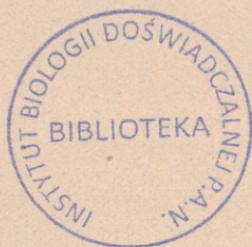

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Hypolimnas misippus captured at sea.

By Professor EDWARD B. POULTON, M.A., F.R.S., F.Z.S., &c.

Referring to the notes on this species in vol. xi., p. 322, and vol. xii., p. 80, of *The Entomologist's Record*, I am now, owing to the kindness of Captain E. P. Ellis, able to supply a full account of the circumstances under which he made the interesting capture of three females (two of the variety *inaria*) and two males, over 500 miles from land. The notes sent me by Captain Ellis were made by him on the sailing ship *Winefred* on a voyage from Australia, and are as follows:—

“May 5th, 1893. In 00° 36' N. lat. and 26° 42' W. long., a swarm of butterflies about the ship; they appear to be all of one kind.”

“May 9th, 1893. In 3° 56' N. lat. and 27° 20' W. long. Butterflies all over the ship; the sailors knocking them down with their caps from one end of the ship to the other.”

Captain Ellis also informs me that during these days the ship had passed through the region of the doldrums with calms and rain squalls between the N.E. and S.E. trade winds. To the best of Captain Ellis's recollection and opinion all the butterflies belonged to one swarm and were of the same kind on both occasions. The ship was then nearly on the line between Cape St. Roque and Sierra Leone, and 580 miles from the former, 960 miles from the latter. Although the African coast was far more distant than the South American, I cannot doubt that the insects came from the former. Indeed, I put down tropical West Africa as first among the suggestions thrown out in my note (vol. xii., p. 80). The only other possibility is tropical South America, a country in which *H. misippus* has comparatively recently established itself and is spreading rapidly. The insufficient observations that have been made in South America do not justify the belief that the *inaria* form of the female is present in large proportion, while two out of the three females captured at sea belonged to this variety—a proportion entirely consistent with our much more extensive series of observations upon this species in West Africa. Furthermore, the species is not sufficiently abundant in South America to render it probable that these vast swarms can have come from there. The observation throws much light upon the comparatively recent intrusion of the species into South America, and its even later spread to the Canary Islands, and goes far to explain its extraordinarily wide distribution in the Old World.

I am making a special study of this most interesting species, and



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should greatly value the help of any of your readers on two points. (1) Any information which may lead to the establishment of the inclusive dates between which the late Thomas Belt was at the Montes Aureos, Brazil. (A specimen in the British Museum from the Godman-Salvin collection was collected there by Belt, and is, as far as I am aware, the earliest recorded example from the New World.) (2) The capture of large series of the species, especially of females, in any of its American localities. These are British Guiana and Brazil in South America, and the Island of Trinidad, Southern Florida in North America, and many West Indian Islands. The specimens are best sent in "papers," with exact dates and localities written upon each. The African form of the female is said to be slightly darker than the Oriental, corresponding with the darker richer colouring of its model, *Limnas chrysippus*, and, however this may be, the proportion of the *inaria* form of female differs greatly in different parts of the geographical range. A sufficient series of New World females, carefully examined and compared, may be expected to throw light upon the direction of recent lines of migration.

The specimens brought by Captain Ellis are in the Hope Department, where they can be seen at any time.—Oxford University Museum. November, 1900.



