

A selection of British butterflies and moths
1862
Mss.595.78.P26

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Summary Information

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Abstract	<p>The youngest of the eleven children of Admiral Thomas Sabine, Baronet Pasley (1804-1884) and his wife Jane Matilda Lily Wynyard, Madalene Pasley was born in 1848, about the time that her father left the Brazilian station to take up duties as superintendent of the Pembroke Dockyard. Madalene married Sir Henry Jenkyns in 1877.</p> <p>Produced when she was 14 years old, Madelene Pasley's "A Selection of British Butterflies and Moths" is a thin duodecimo volume containing observations on British lepidoptera, illustrated with seventeen watercolor sketches. While it was expected that a genteel young woman would acquire basic artistic skills and might be exposed to at least some facets of the study of the natural sciences, Pasley's book was accomplished with unusual skill. Her comments on the phenology, ethology, ecology, and</p>

appearance of butterflies are concise and knowledgeable and suggest that Pasley was a true enthusiast.

Preferred Citation

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Background note

The youngest of the eleven children of Admiral Thomas Sabine, Baronet Pasley (1804-1884) and his wife Jane Matilda Lily Wynyard, Madalene Pasley was born in 1848, about the time that her father left the Brazilian station to take up duties as superintendent of the Pembroke Dockyard. Madalene married Sir Henry Jenkyns in 1877.

Scope & content

Produced when she was 14 years old, Madelene Pasley's "A Selection of British Butterflies and Moths" is a thin duodecimo volume containing observations on British lepidoptera, illustrated with seventeen watercolor sketches. While it was expected that a genteel young woman would acquire basic artistic skills and might be exposed to at least some facets of the study of the natural sciences, Pasley's book was accomplished with unusual skill. Her comments on the phenology, ethology, ecology, and appearance of butterflies are concise and knowledgeable and suggest that Pasley was a true enthusiast.

Pasley's book, made while her father was stationed at the Devonport Dockyard, contains an interesting record of the time of arrival and departure of butterflies, and of their relative abundance in Britain in 1862. At several points, she notes that some species had nearly disappeared, or that they were never found in towns -- poignant words to a modern ecologist. If nothing else, the book is a beautiful record of one mid-Victorian young girl's ardent interest in the natural sciences. Sadly, although Pasley writes on the title page that she is also author of "Our pets" and "Rocks pools and their inhabitants," and labels her Selection of British Butterflies "Vol. I," none of the other works appears to have survived.

Administrative Information

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- Entomology
- Moths--Great Britain

Collection Inventory

Contents

The contents with transcriptions are presented here in order of pagination.

Plate I

Title page

A SELECTION OF BRITISH BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

By Madalene Pasley

Author of

"Our Pets", "Rock Pools and their Inhabitants" &c. &c &c

In Two Volumes. *Price 10s.*

VOL. I. BUTTERFLIES.

1862

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PREFACE

The object of this book is to give a description and drawing of some (generally common) British Butterflies and Moths, with their caterpillars and chrysalides, &c.

(The plants drawn in the Plates are not generally those on which the caterpillars feed.)

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Chap. I

(Family Papilionidae)

The Brimstone Butterfly: *Gonepteryx Rhamni*; (Plate I, fig. 1 male, 2 female underside, 3 the caterpillar and 4 the chrysalis). This is generally the first butterfly to appear in spring. Those specimens however are hibernated and are seldom so brightly coloured as those which appear in the autumn. It seldom appears in gardens, but may be found plentifully in fields and in road sides. This butterfly can fly very fast when disturbed, but it is easy to catch when settled upon anything. It is very

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difficult to catch when flying for it gets frightened if missed the first time, and sets off at an average rate of 15 knots an hour at which rate to pursue it would be useless, and to catch it impossible. The caterpillar feeds on Buckthorn, and may be found from the end of May to the middle of July. The female Brimstone is greenish yellowish white and looks almost like one of the White Butterflies at a distance. It is very common in the South of England, but it is not found in Scotland.

The Clouded Yellow Butterfly: *Colias Edusa*. (Plate II fig. 1 female, 2 male under side, 3 caterpillar, 4 (chrysalis.) The male has no yellow spots on the black border to the wings. It is one of the most difficult butterflies

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to catch and one of the most beautiful. Like most butterflies it looks much larger when flying than when caught. It appears in August and September. I have found more specimens at Whitsandbay than anywhere else, half way down to the beach: especially last year. It is not easy to catch them there however because the grass is slippery and the stones mostly loose. Entomologizing on nearly perpendicular ground is not very pleasant. The caterpillar feeds on several leguminous plants: and is to be found in June and July. This butterfly is only common in the South and not always there: this year I have seen only one specimen.

The Large White (Cabbage) Butterfly: *Pieris Brassicae*. (Plate III. Fig. 1 male, 2 female, 3 caterpillar, 4 chrysalis.) It is to be found almost everywhere, (or rather it can't help being seen almost everywhere) whether in a town or in the country. Last year however, some how, I only saw one specimen, and I could not find a single caterpillar or chrysalis: but this year I have found plenty of all three. Excepting the Small White Butterfly I think this is the commonest British butterfly. Generally it flies very fast. It appears from April to June and also in July and August, as it has two broods in the year. The caterpillar is to be found in June and September, feeding on cabbage of which it eats a great deal.

Plate II

Plate III

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The Small White (cabbage) Butterfly: *Pieris Rapae* (Plate IC. Fig 1,2 female, 3,4 caterpillar 5,6,7 chrysalis.) This species is even commoner than the last mentioned which it greatly resembles. It is

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much easier to catch, however. It appears from April to June, and in July and August. The caterpillar feeds on cabbage and appears in June, and September. The chrysalides of this species may be found in October and all the winter if the birds do not eat them, on walls and sheltered places near cabbages. All the chrysalides of this family are attached by their tails and by a belt of silk round them. The way the caterpillars spin this silk and the way they change is interesting but they generally do it at night. The only species I have seen do it is the Small White. When the caterpillar is full-grown, it leaves the cabbage on which it has been feeding, and goes to the nearest convenient place to change to a chrysalis, spinning a thread of silk before it on the ground as it goes. Having found one (that is, a convenient place), it spins some silk the length of its body with a small heap at one end, on which it stands, with its hindfeet on the heap of silk. Then it spins the belt of silk by turning its head over its back in a most uncomfortable looking way, appearing half-choked: the thread seems to be round its neck (Plate IV, fig 4).* The caterpillar moves its head slowly from side to side about fifty times

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adding a thread each time and fastening it at both ends till the silk is strong enough. Then it extracts its head apparently with some difficulty and waits for nearly two days before changing its skin. The silk is not too loose afterwards, for the chrysalis is fatter than the caterpillar. One chrysalis that I had, died from the silk being too tight (Also a caterpillar I had hung himself with the silk, because he was too weak to hold on with his feet and rested his whole weight on the silk which killed him.) After changing its skin the chrysalis holds on to the heap of silk with two small hooks at its tail.

The Green-Veined White Butterfly: *Pieris Napi*: (Plate V fig 1 male, 2 female, 3 caterpillar, 4 chrysalis.) It is so called from the veins on the underside of the wings being green. This is a very common butterfly: it appears from April to June, and in July and August. It is difficult to catch. The caterpillar appears in June and September. It feeds on Rape generally. The Chrysalis is sometimes quite transparent with hardly any spots: instead of being so in Plate V.

The Orange-tip Butterfly: *Anthocharis Cardamines*. (Plate VI fig 1 male, 2 underside, 3 female, 4 caterpillar, 5 chrysalis.) This is a beautiful butterfly.

 Plate IV

 Plate V

 Plate VI

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it appears in May, and flies very fast. In September 1860 however I saw several specimens; perhaps they made a mistake: The caterpillar feeds on Bitter Cress, Tower-wort &c; it may be found in July. The Orange-tip is very common.

The Speckled Wood Butterfly, or Wood Argus: *Lasiommata Aegeria** (Plate VII, Fig 1: 2 underside, 3 caterpillar, 4 chrysalis). This is a very common butterfly to be found in every lane or field in April, May, July and August. It is easy to catch. The caterpillar feeds on grasses; it appears in June and September.

The Wall Butterfly: *Lasiommata Moegoera*. (Plate VIII, fig 1:2 underside: 3 caterpillar, 4 chrysalis.) It is so called from the habit of sitting on walls. It is very common. It appears in May. The caterpillar feeds on grasses: it is to found in April and July. This butterfly flies fast.

The Meadow Brown Butterfly: *Hipparchia Janira* (Plate IX, fig 1 male, 2 female, 3 caterpillar, 4 chrysalis). This is an intensely common butterfly but it is not often seen in gardens. It appears from June to September. The caterpillar feeds on various grasses: it may be found in May.

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The Large Heath Butterfly: *Hipparchia Tithonus*. (Plate X, fig 1 male, 2 female, 3 caterpillar, 4 chrysalis). This is nearly as common as the Meadow Brown. It is difficult to catch, because though it does not fly fast, it always keeps a little way on before one and it is difficult to overtake. It appears in July and August. The caterpillar may be found in June feeding on various grasses.

The Red Admiral Butterfly: *Vanessa Atalanta*. This is a beautiful butterfly: it is very common and flies faster I think than any British Butterfly except perhaps the Painted Lady Butterfly: *Cynthia Cardui*. At first sight it seems to be quite impossible to catch it. It appears in August and may be seen till October: then however the specimens are generally sleepy and ragged. It is not particular like most butterflies whether it lives in lanes, fields, or gardens, but may be found everywhere, excepting towns. This butterfly especially, looks nearly twice the size when flying than it is really. The caterpillar feeds on nettle, and is to be found in June and July: (Plate XI fig 1 Atalanta: 2 underside, 3 caterpillar, 4 the chrysalis.)

The small Tortoiseshell Butterfly: *Vanessa Urticae*. This is an excessively common butter-

Plate VII

Plate VIII

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-fly, inconveniently common; I am always mistaking it for some other species worth having. It appears from June to September. I have never known any butterfly so abundant as this species was last year: it was commoner a great deal; than *Rapae* and *Brassicae*. It is difficult to catch. The caterpillar may be found from the beginning of June to the end of August. It feeds on nettle. The Small Tortoiseshell seems to be a very cold butterfly, for it is always shivering! (Plate XII, fig 1; 2 underside, 3 caterpillar, chrysalis).

The Copper Butterfly: *Chrysophanus Phloeas*. This is a very common and beautiful little butterfly. It appears from the end of May to the beginning of October. The caterpillar may be found in May, July and September; feeding on sorrel. There is a butterfly rather like this only much larger, namely the Large Copper; *Chrysophanus Dispar*, which is very rare almost extinct. It used to be found in marshy places. The year before last (1860) I saw several butterflies exactly like the Large Copper at Whitsandbay, Cornwall, (not the one at the Land's End). Unfortunately however I had only a net made for catching small fish, I believe, and as the butterflies flew very fast I only caught one which escaped again.

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They appeared in August the same time as the Large Copper and flew in the same way. Last year I did not see any specimens at all like them but I was asked by a friend of mine, "What butterfly is it, that is very bright coppery red with a few black spots on it, and black borders to the wings I think; a good-sized butterfly? Because I saw one just now, and if I had had a net I could have caught it." This was in August and at Whitsandbay; I don't know of any butterfly like it, except the Large Copper. (No one will believe that there are Large Coppers at Whitsandbay, because it is not a marshy place, and because they used not to be found in Cornwall.) (Plate XIII, fig 1, Small Copper, 2 under side, 3 caterpillar, 4 chrysalis).

The Common Blue Butterfly: *Polyommatus Alexis*. This is an exceedingly common butterfly. It appears in June, and from July to the end of September. The caterpillar is to be found in April and August; it feeds on Bird's Foot Trefoil and Clover. This species flies rather fast; it is not easy to catch (Plate XIII).

[Plate XIII, fig 5 Blue m. & female, 3 variety of female, 8 underside, 9 caterpillar, 10 chrysalis].

Plate IX

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Plate X

Plate XI

Plate XII

Plate XIII

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Appendix

At Plate XIV fig 1, may be seen a very pretty butterfly namely the Painted Lady Butterfly; *Cynthia Cardui*. It may be seen from March to May (hybernated) and from July to the end of September. The caterpillar is brown and spiny with 4 yellow lines; it feeds on thistles, in June and July.

Plate XV, fig 1 shews the Large Skipper Butterfly (*Pamphilus Sylvanus*) male, 2 female. It is a very common little species, belonging to a race of butterflies called Skippers from their mode of flight. At first sight it looks like a moth. It appears in May and August.

The Small Heath Butterfly. (*Coenonympha Pamphilus*). Plate XV, fig 3. This is an excessively abundant butterfly, to be found everywhere except gardens. It is very easy to catch. It appears from June to September. The caterpillar is green and feeds on various grasses, from May to August. It is shaped like the caterpillar of the Wall Butterfly (Plate VIII).

The Green Hair-Streak Butterfly (*Thecla Rubi*). (Plate XV, fig 4,5 under side.) This is a beautiful butterfly on the under side, and quite the contrary on the upper. It is tolerably common in the south of England. It appears in the end of May, July and August.

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This is the end of the butterflies, most of which, as may have been observed, are commonest in the South of England. There are several other tolerably common butterflies such as the Brown Hair Streak (*Thecla Quercus*) several "Fritillaries" and the Peacock Butterfly. This last is supposed to be very common but somehow, though I have seen almost hundreds of Atalantas I have only seen 3 or 4 Peacocks. The caterpillars of butterflies are difficult to find. (Of course with the exception of the Cabbage caterpillars). Those which I was not able to draw from nature are copied from "British Butterflies and Mothers" illustrated by H. Noel Humphreys.

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The Grayling Butterfly; *Hipparchia Semele*, has been accidentally omitted. It is to be found on dry banks and rocky places, from the middle of July to September. When flying it is not unlike a good-sized Meadow Brown Butterfly; though it is not so easy to catch. The Grayling seldom flies far without settling but then it is equally difficult to catch, for when one arrives at the place where a specimen has been seen to settle, it is nowhere to be found. In three or four minutes an insignificant object resembling a dead leaf suddenly gets up and flies away, not to appear again.

Plate XIV

Plate XV

Plate XVI

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