

The World's Most Beautiful Hunting



Pleasing Summer Pastime of the Meadows and Plains

NOW is the time when, at an expense trivial compared with the pleasure and the profit, any one—man, woman or even child—can indulge in the most beautiful hunting the world affords.

No need to wander the thousands of miles that are required to take the hunter to the depths of savage Africa, although there this hunting might well be practiced, with results as valuable to science as will be the trophies of the chase sent to the Smithsonian at Washington by Colonel Roosevelt and his son Kermit.

No need to go much further than the first country lane or the city's popular park.

Why, you can even be one of these hunters on a scale of adventure no more wild or daring than that of Simple Simon, who did his fishing in the family washtub, for the back yard and the front grass plot often afford specimens worth the attention of the amateur.

Yet the well-nigh impenetrable jungles of the Amazon, that have a death lurking in every pool and shadow, and where such hunting is often done, offer extremes of danger such as would delight the most enterprising.

THE hunt of the butterfly, the chase of the moth—nature affords no more marvelous beauties for the pursuit of man, while the world's science is only beginning to recognize the astounding fact that, where the ancient hunting of animals traditionally man's foes is practically needless now for man's welfare, the real menace to humanity held by the ever unconquerable wild increases as the foes grow smaller. The little butterfly, the tiny moth, the microscopic bacterium, by the infinity of their numbers, are synonymous with humanity's destruction.

So he or she, whoever may choose the capture of butterfly and moth as the delightful chase, may know that, in the very act of capture and killing, it is possible, as the Buddhists say, to acquire merit.

There are very few among the lepidoptera and all their radiant, fluttering kin that have been amenable to training for the uses of man. The silkworm and, perhaps, a few others come into the handicrafts. Beyond them little or nothing is to be found as the butterfly's "reason for existence" except the still vague and not as yet dreadful "balance of nature," that bogy which avers that man dare not interfere with the animated life of the land and the air save at risk of some dire sequel, disastrous to himself.

The smallest "miller" you capture and asphyxiate, as it hovers over your head at nightfall, may be a belated moth with designs upon the household rugs or the dress suit in the wardrobe; the biggest, most brilliant butterfly that flaunts its rainbow hues over the peaceful meadow is the parent of some hideous, de-

structive worm destined to prey on the green, nutritious things the world of man requires.

Practically all may be classed as vermin and chased with less compunction than a red-coat gives the fox. As for the cute little birds who need them in their cute little business, rely upon it, the few you take by hand wouldn't amount to a mouthful for a single nest of robins in the springtime, when the parent birds go hunting.

This continent supplies many very beautiful varieties, the hot and baked city streets oftentimes furnishing some stray from the woods or fields well worth all the admiration that was ever bestowed upon the art of an Almatadema or a Bouguereau.

The magnificent monarch butterfly is the king of American specimens: It is a great, red-brown insect, ranging all over the two continents of the hemisphere, and because of the abundance of the milkweed, its especial food-plant, and of its secretion of a bitter juice distasteful to all birds, will probably never be exterminated in the history of man's existence on the planet.

It has a remarkably faithful imitator in the viceroys, a butterfly which, for its own salvation from the birds, copies the ill-tasting monarch in its red-brown main hue, in its black-bordered veins and its small white spots. The larvae of the viceroys, however, disdain such ignoble food as the milkweed and prey upon various trees and shrubs, the more frequent victims being oaks, birches, willows and currants.

AN OMNIPRESENT VARIETY

At the other extreme of the American butterfly scale, but charming, nevertheless, in its dainty simplicity, is the common yellow clover butterfly, small but almost omnipresent. It swarms in the clover fields, small and golden in its color, supplying innumerable descendants in its early stage as a slender green caterpillar that prey on the young clover, so valuable for the renewal of the nitrogen of the farmer's soil.

Between them there are hundreds of dazzling beauties, many very common, all living poems of line and color, the art of man unequal to the skill of rivaling such exquisite miniatures of nature as she provides in the famous red admiral, measuring two inches across its crimson-banded wings; the tiger swallowtail, that great butterfly whose golds and blacks and delicate pinks flash an irresistible temptation to every child that sees it, and the luna moth, grandiloquently, yet justly, entitled "the pale empress of the night."

It is hard for words to do justice to the incomparable beauty of the luna moth, which expands nearly five inches and, in its wonderfully delicate green tints, ranges over the whole country. Unequaled as its pale loveliness is, the larva, of corresponding size, is as horrible to look upon, like some ancient dragon conceived only by the grotesque imagination of the Chinese. It does the worm's foul work, too, its prey being the rare and valuable hickory and walnut trees of America's dwindling forests.

Most admirable are all of these, and many of them huge, as moths or butterflies go, yet none approach in size and gorgeousness the giant swift moth of Australia, a wonderful creature of pink and white that is as large, with its wings outspread, as a fair-sized bird, and actually digs burrows in the trees for the rearing of its young.

So great has been the demand for the giant swifts, and so difficult are they to secure in perfect condition, that a constant search for their burrows goes on, the big caterpillar being



put under a safe cover and reared to the moth stage in captivity.

Great prices are often paid for rare specimens—and the rarity may call for no beauty at all to enhance its value. One man received from Baron Rothschild, who has a famous collection in London, \$425 for a single butterfly he secured at the mouth of the Amazon river.

He was one of the professional hunters of lepidoptera, as the scientific word for butterflies goes. There are professionals in this class of hunting, just as there are in the hunting of orchids and lions and rare birds and—shame on man's greed and woman's vanity—rare furs and plumage.

The net is the usual weapon employed, but in the South American tropics many of the most splendid butterflies wing their tantalizing way high up past the tops of the tall trees. The weapon he had to use was that strangest of all the devices of the chase, a butterfly gun, with a bore no bigger than the diameter of a needle, shooting a tiny projectile containing a single drop of water. When he fired, with an aim that would have made the glass-ball breakers of a Wild West look like dabblers at marksmanship, he hit his hovering quarry with that delicate explosive shell.

The amateur, in this country, can find, with the ordinary butterfly net and a proper poison bottle, as much exercise and pleasure as the most adventurous explorer of the jungle can enjoy—and it can be had any afternoon almost anywhere.