

NOTES ON *TORTRIX DECRETANA*, TR., WITH A DESCRIPTION OF ITS LARVA.

BY EDWARD A. ATMORE, F.E.S.

During a short visit to King's Lynn in October, 1887, Mr. W. Warren detected a pair of this fine *Tortrix* amongst my captures for that year, and subsequently the species was added to our Fauna (*vide* Ent. Mo. Mag., xxiv, p. 125). A third specimen (a ♂) found among my series of *T. Podana* must have been taken at least some three or four years previously, and I have also since observed three females among the series of *Podana* which were placed in the Lynn Museum early in 1884. But my first acquaintance with the species appears to have been made as far back as 1881, in which year I collected larvæ of several species of *Tortrices* feeding on *Myrica gale* (bog myrtle), in order to separate and describe the larva of *T. Lafauriana*. I have a distinct recollection of breeding at that time some specimens of *T. decretana*, which, however, were passed over as merely pale forms of *Podana*, and therefore received their liberty. This circumstance of my having remembered breeding the insect in 1881 has served at least one useful purpose, namely, that of furnishing a clue to the locality which might in future be searched with a fair prospect of success, for *T. decretana* seems to be very local. Accordingly, at the beginning of July last year, I repaired to this locality and collected a large number of larvæ of several species of *Tortrices* feeding in various ways between leaves and shoots of *Myrica gale*.

After having carefully separated the apparently different larvæ, and kept them well supplied with food until they "struck work" to undergo pupation, I anxiously awaited the result. My anticipations were amply verified, for on July 29th, the first specimen of *T. decretana* (a beautiful ♂) emerged. They now came out daily, as many as eighteen, eight of which were females, emerging on August 4th. The last specimen (a ♀) came out on the 10th, by which time I found myself in possession of a fine series of some four dozen or more specimens. It was but natural that I should seek to know more of the habits of such an interesting species, and therefore, while the imagines were emerging at home, some trips were undertaken to its chosen locality. On one occasion with my friend Mr. C. G. Barrett, who has also succeeded in rearing some specimens, we managed to disturb and secure a few specimens early in the evening, but as the evening advanced, the species was freely on the move, and several were netted. The flight of the male is strong and exceedingly wild, re-

sembling very much that of a *Miana*. As might be expected, a species with such powerful flight soon becomes worn, hence many of our captures were useless. The female seems to be very sluggish, almost as much so as that of *T. Lafauriana*, two or three only being observed on the wing.

Variability—remarkable deviations from the type have occurred in both sexes; indeed, the species is subject to considerable variation far more so, I believe, than has hitherto been supposed. In the ♂ the commonest form is that in which the colour of the fore-wings is of a brighter and paler red than that which usually obtains in its near ally, *Podana*. But specimens occur very much darker, some of them almost as black as the melanic forms of *Podana* found in the London district and elsewhere. In such specimens the patch of scales at the base of the fore-wings are silvery-white—certainly not of the normal yellowish or yellowish-grey tint. Occasionally specimens are met with very much paler than the type, and in some of these the markings are to a considerable extent lost. In the ♀ the colour of the fore-wing is generally somewhat paler than that which one finds in the same sex of normal *Podana*. Specimens however occur in which the fore-wings are of various shades of brown, in some of them of a dull pale brown, whilst in others the colour approaches that found in *T. dumetana* or very dark *T. heparana*, with darker reticulations and conspicuous costal spots of a very dark brown or black. This last described var. is remarkably handsome. A ready point of distinction from its near relative *Podana* is found in the colour of the apices of the hind-wings, which, in the ♂, are whitish or greyish-ochreous, and in the ♀, whitish-grey with a tinge of red, and *never* orange, as in both sexes of *Podana*. Another point of distinction, as previously noticed by Mr. Barrett (Ent. Mo. Mag., xxiv, p. 243), is the twice or thrice angulated line forming the anterior margin of the central fascia, whereas, in *Podana*, the same line is *not* angulated, but slightly curved or sinuous.

The larva, which is rather variable, and sometimes not very unlike that of *Podana*, may be described as follows:—

From 9 to 10 lines in length; active, of moderate thickness, tapering slightly towards the anal extremity, and somewhat flattened beneath. Dorsal region yellowish-brown, or greenish-brown, and a little paler between the segments. Spiracular region paler, with a still paler line below the spiracles. Head shining brown, jaws black. Dorsal plate shining brown or dark brown, its anterior margin white, and sometimes edged with white behind. Anal plate green or yellowish-green. Hairs of moderate length. Spots paler than the ground colour, but generally small and inconspicuous. A few of my larvæ, however, had the spots large and conspicuous, and these I believe produced females. Pupa blackish, with a tinge of brown in the wing-cases.

Larva between united leaves and shoots of *Myrica gale* (bog myrtle), and full fed at the beginning of July. It then usually quits its habitation to pupate amongst rubbish or dead leaves.

The larva of *T. Lafauriana* contents itself with drawing together the terminal leaves of a prominent or terminal shoot of its food-plant, which is also *Myrica gale*. But the larger and often irregular habitation of *T. decretana* (which is mostly concealed from view by being situated somewhere about the centre of its shrubby food-plant) is constructed of one or more of the lateral shoots and the remains of old flowering spikes. Of all the larvæ of *Tortrices* with which I am acquainted as selecting bog myrtle for a pabulum, that of *T. decretana* seems the most slovenly. So far as the United Kingdom is concerned, *T. Lafauriana* appears to be confined to this district. It would be odd, indeed, if *T. decretana* should be equally restricted in its range!

King's Lynn, Norfolk :

February 5th, 1889.

---

DESCRIPTION OF THE LARVA OF *HOMÆOSOMA NIMBELLA*.

BY GEO. T. PORRITT, F.L.S.

On August 16th, 1887, I found larvæ of *Homæosoma nimbella* feeding commonly in wild camomile flowers on the rocks near Douglas, Isle of Man; and on the 27th of the same month I described them as follows:—

Length, about one-third of an inch, and obese in proportion; head small, and, together with the frontal plate, is highly polished; it has the lobes rounded, and is considerably narrower than the second segment; body cylindrical, almost uniform in width, tapering a very little at the extremities. Ground-colour yellowish-green, varying in depth of shade in different specimens; head dark brown, but darkest on the upper part of the lobes; frontlet yellower-brown, with distinct intensely black border behind. The markings are all purple, and conspicuously defined; the medio-dorsal stripe appears rather irregular in outline, caused by slight interruptions made by the segmental divisions, and by a slight transverse depression on each segment; sub-dorsally is a pretty series of large round marks, one on each segment, the centre of each in some specimens being of the pale ground-colour, and so forming a ring-like mark, though in other specimens the "ring" appears to be almost filled up; below these, along the spiracular region, are other marks, usually three on each segment, one situate over two others, so that if extended to each other they would form a triangle. Ventral surface and prolegs very pale green, anterior legs black and glossy.

The first imago appeared on the 24th of June following.

Huddersfield: March 11th, 1889.