

importance); these had been found dead in eastern manuscripts, with many living larvæ, which from their size might fairly be assumed to be those of this species of *Anobium*: also a Ptinideous larva, which Mr. Westwood had found gnawing the morocco covers of books in his own library, in the same manner as the Lepidopterous larva which he had exhibited at a previous meeting of the Society: also a large Ptinideous larva, found within the covers of a Syriac manuscript, which Mr. Westwood considered to be that of *Ptinus fur*, as dead specimens of that species had also been found in the same collection of books.

Mr. Smith observed that he had seen the female of *Vespa vulgaris* on the wing on the 14th of February last,—a proof of the unusual mildness of the season at that period.

The Secretary read the following communication from Mr. A. R. Wallace, Corresponding Member of the Society, dated Batchian, Moluccas, Nov., 1858, intitled

*Remarks on enlarged coloured Figures of Insects.*

“The practice of publishing highly-coloured figures of insects, more especially of Coleoptera, above the natural size, is so very general that I fear I shall stand almost alone in protesting against it.

“Coloured figures should represent nature in every respect. They should as much as possible take the place of actual specimens, enabling us more readily to determine species than can be done by descriptions, and making us acquainted with the actual appearance of the rare and beautiful forms which are daily being discovered. Insects, it is true, vary very much in size; yet, as a general rule, magnitude is a great assistance, and often an important supplementary character, in determining species. This assistance we altogether lose by enlarging our coloured figures; for not only does it require time to look for the line of size appended to each, and to consider the effect of reducing the insect to that size, but a small and obscure species is often so transformed, by all its delicate detail being brought out and exaggerated, that we may pass it over altogether as something we have never seen, although the identical insect may be waiting for its name in our cabinet. The evil is made still greater by no system being followed. In the same plate we have insects figured of the natural size, and others slightly or very much enlarged; so that in some cases the largest figure represents the smallest of the insects. See White's *Cat. of Longicorns* in B. M. tab. 6, figs. 5 and 9. An instance of the same anomaly occurs also, I believe, in one of the plates of *Longicorns* illustrating Mr. Pascoe's second paper in the *Transactions of the Society*.

“There is also another evil in this unsystematic enlargement of insects,—that we cannot readily check the accuracy of the figures, which must be often very doubtful, as the artist must trust solely to his eyes for the various proportions; whereas in figures of the natural size a fine pair of compasses will both give the principal dimensions accurately, and enable any one in a moment to test their accuracy. Now, though *size* may not be, yet *proportion* is certainly an excellent specific character; and it cannot be considered a trifling matter that, by enlarging our figures in no determinate scale, we can no longer use this character with confidence.

“In turning over good coloured plates of an entomological Monograph or of a local Fauna, we may get at once a mass of useful information. We can compare the

species with those of our own country, or of any other district with which we may be acquainted, or the species of a new genus with those of an allied group in our cabinet, seeing at a glance their several relations of size, form and colour. But this can only be done if the figures are of the natural size. In the other case we get quite an erroneous idea of the new group or of the unknown Fauna,—erroneous not only as to size, but in form and colour also; for a mass of colour, though of the same tint, strikes the eye more forcibly than a small portion; and in like manner any abnormal form becomes far more striking when exhibited of a larger size than usual. Let any one compare two plates of well-known insects, in one of which all the figures are of the exact natural size (representing actual specimens), in the other variously enlarged (representing nothing in nature), and he will be convinced that the former is in a very great degree more useful and instructive than the latter. It is the difference between truth and error.

“Species which are too small to be well coloured of the natural size should be represented by outlines enlarged in some definite given proportion; and such figures should be given on separate plates, so as to be comparable with each other.

“To make our coloured figures larger than nature has formed the objects which they are intended to represent, in order to make them more showy and ornamental than they really are, is quite unworthy of Science. Such figures do not possess any one solid recommendation, while they do possess many positive disadvantages to the scientific inquirer. They are also likely to disgust the incipient entomologist with his study when he finds that his cabinet can never be so showy as the plates on which entomologists profess to represent his specimens.

“In Lepidopterous figures nature is seldom so falsified. Who ever thinks of figuring a new *Erycina* or *Lycæna* so as to equal in size a *Papilio* or a *Morpho*? The thing would be scouted as absurd, yet it would be in reality not one whit more objectionable than is the present practice as regards *Coleoptera*.

“I beg, therefore, to propose that the Entomological Society of London should lead the way in this salutary reform, and allow, in its ‘Transactions,’ fully-coloured figures only of the natural size, and outlines enlarged in some definite degree which should be uniform for at least all the figures on the same plate.”

Several members present objected to the opinions expressed by Mr. Wallace, and Mr. Smith suggested that Mr. W.’s dislike to enlarged coloured figures might arise from the fact that he had never seen any well-executed plates containing such figures.

Mr. W. Wilson Saunders read a paper on some remarkable Dipterous insects from Dory, New Guinea, having long horns arising under the eyes, and projecting forward like those of some of the deer tribe. The specimens were exhibited at the last meeting of the Society, and were sent to this country by Mr. Wallace. Mr. Saunders proposed for their reception the genus *Elaphomya*, and described five species, viz., *E. cervicornis*, *E. Wallacei*, *E. alcicornis*, *E. brevicornis*, and *E. polita*.