

**THE ENTOMOLOGIST'S  
COMPANION; BEING A GUIDE TO  
THE COLLECTION OF MICRO-  
LEPIDOPTERA, AND COMPRISING A  
CALENDAR OF THE BRITISH TINEIDAE**

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The entomologist's companion; Being a guide to the collection of micro-lepidoptera, and comprising a calendar of the British Tineidae by H. T. Stainton

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A Guide to the Collection

OF

MICRO-LEPIDOPTERA,

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OF

THE BRITISH TINEIDÆ.



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By H. T. STANTON.

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## P R E F A C E.



IN preparing my volume of the *Insecta Britannica* (which will appear early in 1853), I find that I shall be unable, from the limited space allowed, to give as much information of the habitats of species as many of my readers would like; and having been also applied to by several young Entomologists for hints and instruction, it occurred to me that a duodecimo volume combining these two requisites would supply a great desideratum, its small size enabling the Collector to take it with him on all excursions, and the due study of it affording a useful occupation when proceeding to his destination by railroad, &c.

As soon as the whole of the present Edition is sold off, I am prepared to publish a second, with all the additional information I can acquire in the meantime.

A similar Calendar of all the European *Tineidæ* would be a great boon even to exclusively British Collectors, as it would contain the habitats of many species which probably only require to be looked for at the right time and in the right place to be found—the great bulk, however, of such a work,

and the slight prospect of any considerable sale in this country, deters me however from attempting it (at present).

For the amount of information contained in this little book I am much indebted to many of my correspondents, to whom I beg to return my thanks for the patience and readiness with which they have answered my numerous inquiries.

H. T. STAINTON.

MOUNTSFIELD, LEWISHAM,  
*December 1st, 1851.*



## INTRODUCTION.

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THE object of this little volume is to supply rudimentary information to the incipient Entomologist, by instructing him when and where to look for insects; and when seen, how to catch them. For want of distinct instruction on these matters, a young Entomologist frequently wastes a great deal of time, which might otherwise have been employed with great advantage to science.

Of course different orders of insects, having different habits, are to be sought in different ways and at different times. To give full instruction therefore in the *when*, *where* and *how* to catch all orders of insects, an accurate acquaintance with the habits of all orders of insects would be necessary. I have therefore confined myself in the following pages to an account of the modes of capture, localities frequented and times of appearance of the MICRO-LEPIDOPTERA\* inhabiting these islands.

For the assistance of the more advanced student of Entomology I have collated into a tabular form the times of appearance of all our known TINEIDÆ, and have then added under each separate month fuller details of the habitats of each species occurring during that month, whether in the states of larva, pupa or imago; by this means an industrious collector is at once reminded to look for each species at the proper time, and will not, as now too frequently happens, *begin to think of looking* for a species just when its period of appearance is over.

A few hints in conclusion on the method of rearing the larvæ, and of killing, pinning and setting the perfect insects, will not be unacceptable to the Entomological tyro.

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\* Or, to speak more correctly, of the *Tineidæ*, but the modes of capture of the *Tortricidæ* are precisely identical, and the localities frequented are also similar.

## HOW TO CATCH MICRO-LEPIDOPTERA.

Of course the modes in which *Micro-Lepidoptera* might be caught are very numerous, but the best mode of capture is that by which the insects suffer least injury, and which takes up least time.

For this purpose, nothing seems to answer better than a ring or bag net of book-muslin, in which the moths are caught in the first place, and afterwards removed, each in a separate pill-box, to the coat pocket. Besides the ordinary ring net for catching moths on the wing, a sweeping net is of great use for brushing them from the herbage, and also for beating the branches of trees and hedges into it, since though a simple ring net may be used for both these purposes, its smaller size necessarily diminishes very greatly the number of insects which would be beaten into it, or swept off the herbage by it. I proceed to describe in detail these two kinds of nets, in order that those who like may be enabled to construct them for themselves.

The ring net consists of a stick, a brass ring, and a net; the stick should be about thirty-nine inches long, and bound at the top by a piece of brass; at the top is a small cavity in the wood, into which the ends of the ring fit, and may be made quite firm by adding wedges; the ring is of brass, ten or eleven inches in diameter, and about a quarter of an inch thick; it does not form a complete ring, being as it were cut open and the two ends turned down; these ends are flattened, and fit into the end of the stick; the net is of white book-muslin, with a double border of calico round the opening, through which the ring slides. The length, form and substance of the net are matters of primary importance; the length should be such, that while in a pendant position, and held in the left hand, the right hand should be able to reach to the bottom, comfortably; if it is too long it will have to be pulled up in order that the hand may reach the bottom, and this will so distort the shape of the net, that the collector will no longer be able to see the insect situated at the bottom of it; if the net is too short, many insects will be found to fly out of it before there is time to secure them in pill boxes, however much the collector may blow upon them to keep them from coming up; the net should be as wide at the bottom as at the top, or nearly so, and the corners rounded, as if there is a sharp corner (I have known Entomologists use a net terminating in a point) many insects will secrete themselves therein, and independently of the time occupied in dislodging them, they will be found when so dislodged considerably rubbed by their friction against the net. The substance of the

net is required to be tough, and at the same time not coarse or rough, and not with large openings. *Gauze* is not at all adapted for Entomological purposes, as it so easily tears, the first bramble bush frequently making a tremendous gap; *net* is also ill adapted for small moths, as they are no sooner in than out of the net, by creeping through the holes; *lino* is likewise rather too open, and is besides very readily torn, though not so much so as gauze; *book-muslin* has the advantage of not easily tearing, and being fine enough to prevent the smallest moths from creeping through it, and is therefore best adapted for Micro-Lepidopterists. The ring with the net on it may, for convenience of carriage, be placed up the back, that is, between the coat and waistcoat of the collector.

The sweeping net may, in Mr. Douglas's words, be constructed as follows:—

“ Find a descendant of Tubal Cain that has ability to work neatly in brass, get him to make a figure of **Y** with brass tube, the trunk two inches and a half long, and five-eighths of an inch diameter, and each arm two inches and a quarter long, and three-eighths of an inch diameter. Into one of the small tubes put a tightly fitting cane, and bend it till it meets the other tube and forms a pear-shaped ring, twenty inches by fourteen inches diameter. For carrying, this ring may be rolled up, so that it will fit into a collector's hat, or better because firmer when made up, it may be cut into lengths of a foot (more or less), and when wanted for use they may be fitted together by means of pieces of brass tube slightly curved, and about four inches long. Then get a lady friend to make a bag net of book-muslin, rather *larger* than the ring, thirty inches long, and cut so that it hangs perpendicularly at the handle, tapering from the opposite point of the circumference, but rounded at bottom, *not going to a point*; round the top must be a band of brown holland, in which the cane can slide *easily*. A handle is made by fitting a walkingstick into the large tube.

“ This net is very useful for sweeping grass, the edges of bushes, or anything that will not catch and tear it; it is also large enough to beat into furze bushes or hedges, and its size gives the collector great facility for catching insects on the wing.”

Having provided himself with one of these nets, and a beating stick, and a supply of pill boxes (for small moths  $\frac{1}{2}$  drachms are quite large enough, and an ordinary pocket will hold 150 of these easily), the collector is equipped; but how, when he has caught a moth in his net, is he to proceed to get it into the pill box? There are several ways of doing this, but the best is as follows:—holding the net in the left hand, take with the right hand a pill box out of the pocket, and, raising it to the mouth, remove the lid by means of