

MONTREAL BRANCH, ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA.

The ninety-fourth meeting of the society was held at the residence of the President, Mr. H. H. Lyman, on Tuesday evening, 13th instant. The President read an interesting and valuable paper on the genus *Callimorpha*, illustrating his remarks by a large collection of the species, and by drawings of the types in the British Museum, made by Mr. Butler, of that institution. We venture to say that the confusion heretofore existing with regard to this variable genus is likely to be got rid of through Mr. Lyman's careful and thorough work, with the assistance of Mr. Cautfield. Mr. G. J. Bowles read a "Preliminary list of the Geometridæ of the Province of Quebec," opening up interesting questions as to the limits of the northern and temperate insect fauna of Canada. A third paper was read, entitled "Notes on some diurnal Lepidoptera occurring in Canada," by Mr. Cautfield, giving Canada as the habitat of a number of species of butterflies not stated in W. H. Edwards's catalogue as being found in this country.

THE TOMMY COD.

In "L'Opinion Publique" of the 18th January last, is an article on the Tommy Cod, *Morrhua pruinosa*, Mitchell, by the eminent French-Canadian *litterateur*, M. Benjamin Sulte. He gives an interesting account of the fishery carried on annually in the vicinity of Three Rivers, and supplies data which disprove the common idea that it is the young of the cod. But little is known of the history of this little fish, although it has been an important article of food in Lower Canada "from time immemorial," so that new information with regard to it is interesting, both to the naturalist and the public.

Mr. Sulte states that the Tommy cod ranges from Newfoundland to Three Rivers, but it is much more widely distributed, being found on the coast of New York, and no doubt on that of New England, if not farther east. DeKay tells us that it ascends the Hudson as far as Albany, where it is abundant at intervals of a few years. On the Long Island coast it is sometimes so plentiful that it can be shovelled on to the shore from the shallow water. It goes up the Hudson, as it does the St. Lawrence, at the beginning of winter, and is there called the Tom Cod or Frost-fish. It is one of these fishes, apparently, which inhabit waters of no great depth, and, except during the an-

nual migration, remains in salt water the whole year. All through the summer it may be caught on the shores of the lower St. Lawrence. The writer has often fished for them, from July to September, from the wharf at Rivière du Loup, and the rocks between there and Cacouna. They come up in great numbers with the rising tide, and like the ordinary cod, are voracious feeders, taking almost anything in the shape of bait. In December, however, they ascend to fresh water, reaching Quebec and Three Rivers about Christmas, the fishery lasting until about the 10th January. At Quebec they turn into the estuary of the River St. Charles with every tide, and the ice is dotted over with a village of *cabanes*, set up to shelter the fishers, who gather a large harvest while the migration lasts. Multitudes, however, go past Quebec, continuing their progress along the North Shore until they reach Three Rivers, but pay a heavy tribute to the *habitans* on the way. At Three Rivers they go up the St. Maurice river in shoals, as far as the rapids of the Forges, after which all trace of them is lost. We are not aware whether they have been taken above Lake St. Peter.

Strange to say, on passing out of tide water they swim near the surface, contrary to their usual habit of swimming near the bottom. This peculiarity gives the *habitans* an opportunity of taking them in great numbers. Large frames six feet high and two or three feet square, filled in with wickerwork, and open on one side some distance from the bottom, are plunged in through holes cut in the ice. The opening in the frame is placed towards the advancing shoals, and the trap is soon withdrawn, filled with the writhing tommy cods. In this way they are secured by the sleighload. On the St. Maurice, cabins are built, in which the fisherman eats and sleeps, waging war on the "petits morues" until they cease to pass. None are caught on their return. They seem to scatter and seek the deeper parts of the river, and the fishery is over, in fresh water at least, until the following December.

It has been stated above, that doubts have been entertained as to whether this fish is a distinct species from the Cod. Even experienced naturalists have had these doubts. But the facts above given seem to make the matter a certainty. The annual migration into fresh water (although contrary to the general habit of the cod family, as far as known) must be for the purpose of spawning. The fish, when