

## ASSEMBLING OF ATTACUS PROMETHEA.

*Sir*,—About 3 o'clock p.m., on the 11th of June, whilst hunting along the east side of a high picket fence, running north and south, with woods on the west, and a field on the east, my attention was arrested by the unusual movements of what I thought was a black butterfly. It was fluttering up and down the tall pickets, passing through between them and returning again, in a state of evident excitement. It left off, and flew close by me, when I saw that it was a male *promethea*. Meanwhile another had taken its place, and was going through similar movements. I at once inferred that a female must be in that vicinity. I moved onward, looking between the pickets, and I saw a female suspended to the lower end of a cocoon, out of which she had probably emerged that day. The cocoon was attached to the end of a slender twig, 12 or 14 inches from the fence, and about 4 feet from the ground.

I remained close by and watched the movements. There were at least four males on the wing. They would fly 20 or 30 feet along the fence, either way, and return. They never flew far afield, and I did not see that they ever entered the woods, whilst one or other of them was always fluttering about the spot, regardless of my presence. They seemed to tire themselves out in a main effort to locate the object of their search. I had watched for about fifteen minutes, when one came quietly along, passed between the pickets, fluttered hither and thither for an instant, then I saw its mate was found. During my observation the female was perfectly quiescent; not a movement of wing or foot. There were three males still on the wing when I left.

Are we to consider *A. promethea* a day flyer? or are all the *Suturniidae* ready to pair at any hour of the twenty-four when circumstances are favourable? It seems they do not require to fly at all to feed. The female may oviposit during the night.

I was greatly impressed during the observation by noticing how little, if at all, eye-sight was made use of.

J. ALSTON MOFFAT.

Mailed August 1st.