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THE FIVE THOUSAND DOLLAR BUTTERFLY.

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Somewhat over eight centuries have elapsed since the men of Europe woke from the slumber of the Dark Ages and began to value mental culture. Men of classic times do not appear to have been "collectors" except of art works. In the Renaissance there was a turn to Natural History, possibly inspired by the Moors, who taught even Entomology in their universities. Too many of the new collectors looked for unicorns, nine-headed hydras, and the like, but there was nothing more popular than a display of butterflies. The first collection of the "Frail Children of the Air" which is now known was made by an Italian toward the end of the Eleventh Century. From that time the number of Entomologists increased amazingly, although not until about A.D. 1600 was any truly scientific work done. However, it is much the same to-day. There is a goodly representation in every Entomological Society of students, of close observers, even of patient taxonomists, but the majority are still mere collectors, desiring nothing more from their fellows than the scientific names of their specimens and using no more mental acumen than is necessary to get together postage stamps or tin tobacco tags.

If a man will collect, spread and value butterflies in his cabinet, it also follows that he will buy them. He wishes for two elements, beauty and rarity. Thus the professional collector came into existence. He found business most lucrative furthest afield, in the most inaccessible corners of the earth, but he found much, too, at home. For at least a century there has existed a widespread belief that somewhere, anywhere, perhaps in one's own backyard, anyone might find a rare butterfly, so rare that some collector somewhere would gladly pay \$5,000 for the prize. It has passed orally through many lands, occasionally getting into print, but