

A MANUAL OF NORTH AMERICAN BUTTERFLIES, by Charles J. Maynard :  
8vo., pp. 226. Boston : DeWolfe, Fiske & Co., 1891.

We are always glad to welcome the publication of a new book which is likely to render more easy, and consequently to popularize, the study of entomology. The author of the work before us has, no doubt, had this object in view when preparing this manual, in which are brought together "for the first time, descriptions of all the species of butterflies which occur in North America, north of Mexico." He has evidently taken a great deal of pains in the execution of his task, and expended much labour upon the descriptions of over six hundred and thirty species of butterflies, and in the preparation of the illustrations, for "not only is a coloured plate given of one species of nearly all the genera, but wood cuts are given of some portion of about 250 species, illustrating some peculiar character by which the insect may be known ; both plates and wood cuts have, with a single exception, been drawn and engraved by the author himself." The wood cuts, giving a wing, or a portion of a wing, of a number of closely allied species, will be found very useful helps by any one employing the book for the identification of his specimens, and are much superior to the coloured plates. Anyone with a large stock of specimens on hand, and with a few named in different genera to start with, will find this book a very useful and handy manual for the naming of his material, but this, we fear, is the extent of its value. The author has adopted the comparative method in his descriptions, which involves a constant reference to some other species, which the beginner in the study may chance not to have, and be woefully puzzled in consequence. There are no synopses, or comparative tables, of either genera or species given, but the author selects a species as his "type" and compares the other members of the genus with it. If the student possesses a specimen of this typical species his way will be fairly easy, but without it the investigation will be sadly difficult, if not hopeless. Another very serious defect in the book is the entire absence of all reference to the preparatory stages of the insects, and consequently to their food-plants, habits, dates of appearance, etc. We trust that the author may be enabled to issue a second edition of the work, and make it a thorough and complete "manual" by remedying the defects that we have referred to. That this may be done in a concise form and in a most useful manner is admirably proved by Stainton's "Manual of the British Moths and Butterflies," which we would commend to our author as a model for imitation when he enters upon the preparation of his next edition.