

fellows, was also mistaken in the interpretation of what he saw. At least I can claim good company here. "In the course of my experience", wrote the Astronomer Royal (Sir H. Spencer Jones, F.R.S.), "I have come across so many instances of the unreliability of ocular evidence that I prefer to seek a natural explanation"\*.

Next month, with the Editor's permission, I shall say something about autumn pairings which have been observed.

\**The Spectator*, 15th December 1950, page 686, col. 2. Probably there is not a professional scientist in this country to-day who would not agree with me if I said that *jumping to conclusions* is the deadliest, numbing, incubus that can afflict a science. How terribly it can mislead, how many precious hours it can waste! Copying from a previous writer without confirming is another incubus.

(To be continued.)

## Notes on the Cape Satyrid butterfly *Torynesis mintha* (Geyer) with a description of a new race

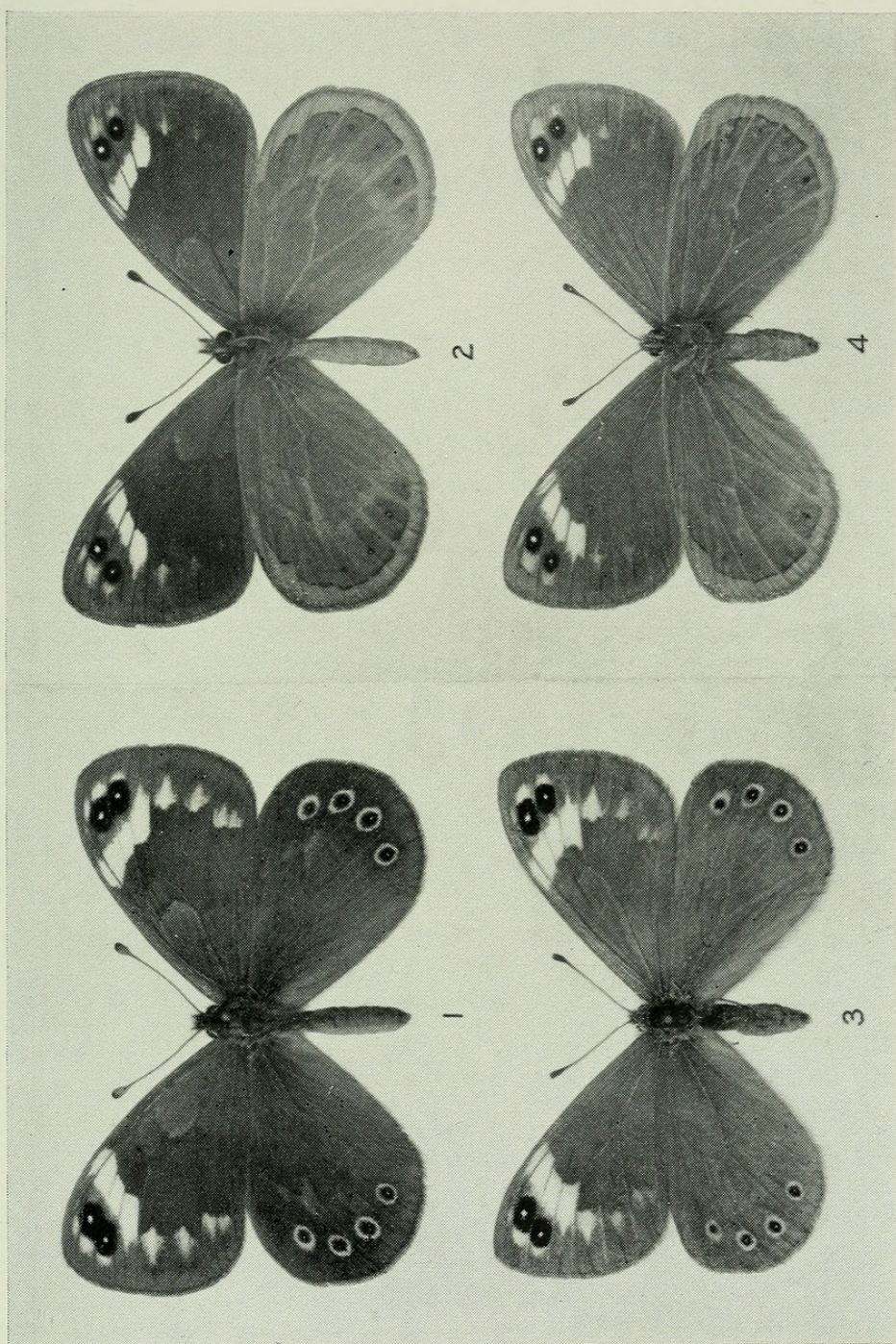
By C. G. C. DICKSON

Once considered to be a very scarce butterfly in the S.W. Cape, *Torynesis mintha* is in fact far from uncommon though localised in its occurrence. It is difficult to give any explanation as to why it was not encountered to a greater extent in Trimen's day, even if allowance is made for the generally less easy access to localities then and the limited flight-period of the butterfly—during part of the autumn only. A little over thirty years ago it became apparent that the typical race flew in many spots close to Cape Town and in some cases within easy walking distance of the town itself. The late P. R. Robertson and the writer first came across it in numbers at Durbanville, some 15 miles N.E. of Cape Town, on 24th March, 1934. Considerably earlier, the late D. K. H. Barnard took specimens of a variation of *T. mintha* high up in the Great Winter Hoek Mountains, these examples being in the collection of the South African Museum. Very much earlier (April, 1905), the late Gowan C. Clark was aware of its occurrence at Hout Bay, in the Cape Peninsula.

From specimens collected by the writer in many localities, mainly mountainous ones, between Cape Town and Worcester, as well as to the N.W. and S.E. of the intervening country, it has been found that the butterfly can be more or less transitional in appearance between the races *mintha mintha* Geyer and *mintha magna* van Son, but this aspect requires careful and detailed study. Examples taken near Worcester are, in fact, quite close in many cases to what appears to be a rather smaller than usual variation of *mintha magna* from W. of Matjesfontein, while some specimens found much nearer to Cape Town, even ones from the Simon's Berg, can bear a close resemblance to Worcester examples. There are certainly clear breaks between many of the populations in the stretch of country between Cape Town and Matjesfontein. It is of interest that specimens even from some localities far from those of *magna* proper should often have the subapical bar of the forewing upperside very pale, almost white.

\**Dira mintha* Geyer, Zutr. Samml. Exot. Schmett., 5th Cent., p. 15, n. 426, ff. 851-852 (1837).





*Torynesis mintha piquetbergensis* subsp. nov.

- Fig. 1. ♂ Holotype (upperside).      Fig. 2. ♂ Holotype (underside).  
 Fig. 3. ♀ Allotype (upperside).      Fig. 4. ♀ Allotype (underside).

Figures approximately natural size.

N.B.—Tips of forewings appear too rounded in fig. 1 owing to downward curvature of wings.

Photo : H. N. Wykeham.







Dickson, C G C. 1967. "Notes on the Cape satyrid butter-fly *Torynesis mintha* (Geyer) with a description of a new race." *The entomologist's record and journal of variation* 79, 160–162.

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