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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF M. ACHILLE GUENEE.

BY A. R. GROTE.

MONSIEUR ACHILLE GUENEE died at Chateaudûn on the 10th day of December, 1880, in the 72d year of his age, and the world has lost an excellent Entomologist.

I remember well the little old town, perched on a hill near the left bank of the Loire, and overlooking the valley through which that river makes its way. Its castle and churches, the square in front of the inn filled on market days early in the morning with sellers of country produce of all kinds; its paved streets without trees, and for the most part without sidewalks; a ruined highway, with an inscription, incomplete and defaced, of "Liberté, égalité," and the rest (a curious commentary on the appearance of the horrible old women who picked up the droppings on the streets for a living)—all this and much more I noticed between my arrival in Chateaudûn one evening and my call on M. Guenée the next day, as by appointment. For M. Guenée then, it being summer, lived out of town, but was to come in and open his house for my reception.

The collaborator of Dr. Boisduval, in the "Species Générales des Lépidoptères," was a thin, rather short, dark, beardless man, polite and pleasant as most of his nation are, but with a good heart behind his somewhat diplomatic manners. The house was old, dark and gloomy, and probably appeared at an additional disadvantage from having been closed for the summer.

Before proceeding to examine his collection of types of American moths, which was the main object of my visit, we sat down to a déjeuner à la fourchette, consisting chiefly of a bottle of good wine and an ancient game pasty, in which latter I half suspected I should find some entomological acquaintances had taken up their dwelling.

M. Guenée's collection was contained in glass boxes, many of the type specimens being separately put up. The rest of the

day was spent in looking this over and comparing my own specimens with M. Guenée's types. Unfortunately, the collection which I had brought with me was comparatively small, and M. Guenée no longer possessed types of a great number of moths, American species, which he had described. I, however, verified or corrected a number of my previous determinations of his species, and was able to make several new ones, which I have since disseminated among entomologists in this country.

With the evening we parted, promising each other a future meeting, which was destined never to take place. This was in 1867. Our correspondence since that time had been slight, but only recently M. Guenée had sent me an outline drawing of some of his species of Noctuidæ, which enabled me to recognize his *Mamestra Passer* and his *Celaena Exesa*.

So far as American Lepidopterists are concerned, their interest in M. Guenée begins and ends with his six volumes in the series of the "Species Générales." There is no necessity at this time to enter into any detailed criticism of this work. Its publication and the friendship of Doubleday gave to its author a popularity in England, which he can hardly be said to have outlived. In Germany, M. Guenée's classification of the moths met with decided and growing opposition among the best entomologists. For myself, being a student of his work, especially the volumes on the Noctuidæ, I believe him to have been an excellent describer of species, but a deficient observer of generic characters. The material out of which M. Guenée composed his genera *Agrotis*, *Noctua*, *Hadena*, *Mamestra* and *Aplecta*, is badly selected, and species are consorted without regard to natural characters which had been already discovered by Stephens and earlier writers. On the other hand, the effort of M. Guenée to gather structural features from *all* the stages of the insect, merits favorable notice. The North American species of Noctuidæ which he has described, I have been able largely to make out from his published descriptions. A few species of *Acronycta*, *Leucania*, *Hadena*, etc. remain unknown to me. Among single forms which should be sufficiently striking are *Lepidomys Irrenosa*, *Mythimna Culea*, and *Cleoceris Onychina*, that I have not been able to recognize as yet in any of our collections. M. Guenée also drew up descriptions of several species from drawings by Abbot, and none of these have been satisfactorily identified and probably cannot be.

Notwithstanding the criticism of Clemens, published in the Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia for 1860, and which, while it may be considered in the main correct, is particular and unnecessarily personal, M. Guenée's work retains a literary and scientific value, which atones for its now apparent defects. It is, however, somewhat curious to find Dr. Clemens taking Guenée to task for overlooking the ocelli in *Dory-*

odes, and at the same time advancing the statement that these organs are always absent in the *Phalenites*, which is not the case. In fact the absence or presence of ocelli cannot be considered of family value in the Lepidoptera. And when we compare Dr. Clemens's writings on the Phycidae, we can see how easy it is to neglect to observe structural characters in the moths.

M. Guenée will always survive in the memory of American Entomologists so long as they find *Catocala Parta* on the willows, or, at dusk, take *Plusia Thyatiroides* hovering over flowers. The impartial historiographer will, I think, always recognize the fact that the works of M. Guenée have done much to encourage the general taste for Entomology, as well as to advance our knowledge of their special subject, and this must be sufficient to keep his name and fame bright among us. Dr. Packard, in naming the genus *Gueneria*, says that American lepidopterists are under lasting obligations to M. Guenée, in which statement I heartily concur.

NEW NOCTUIDS, WITH A LIST OF THE SPECIES OF ONCOCNEMIS.

BY A. R. GROTE.

ONCOCNEMIS MAJOR n. sp.

Eyes naked; fore tibiæ with a claw; middle and hind tibiæ unarmed; abdomen untufted. Dark gray, closely resembling *Chandleri*, but larger, without the basal black dash, more uniformly dusky gray. Median lines indicated on costa, else lost. Median shade vague, broad, diffuse. Veins incompletely marked with dusky. A terminal series of black interspaceal dashes, neatly and evenly interrupted by the subterminal line, which is else obsolete. The hind legs are blackish fuscous, pale at base, with white interlined fringes. Two specimens, Colorado, Mr. Neumoegen.

ONCOCNEMIS AQUALIS n. sp.

♀. Eyes naked; fore tibiæ with a claw. Related to *Chandleri*, but stouter. Forewings bluish-white gray over blackish. All the lines obliterate. Subterminal line wanting. The gray concolorous stigmata with difficulty perceived; all three present. Veins obsoletely marked. A distinct series of black interspaceal terminal lines or streaks. Hind wings smoky, the veins soiled, slightly iridescent, fringes whitish, interlined. Collar light gray, dusky behind, narrowly lined in front; head blackish. Beneath paler, discal spots present; hind wings whitish, irrorate, with a dotted exterior line feebly marked. *Expanse* 38 mm. *Hab.* California.

This Californian form differs by the black interspaceal dashes



Grote, Augustus Radcliffe. 1881. "Biographical sketch of M. Achille Guenee." *Papilio* 1(3), 31–33.

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