

# INTRODUCTION.

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THE completion of the Volumes dealing with the very rich Rhopalocerous fauna of Mexico and Central America has been inordinately delayed from various causes—the constant pressure of other work, the ever-increasing amount of material, the gradually failing health and subsequent death of my colleague, Osbert Salvin, and the great difficulty of dealing with the Hesperiidæ. Salvin, however, lived long enough to help me conclude all but the Pamphilinæ and the latter part of the Supplement. The difficulty with the Hesperiidæ was, in a measure, solved, in 1893, by the publication of Watson's classification of that family, and our arrangement of the Pyrrhopyginæ and Hesperinæ is mainly based on that author's system; the Pamphilinæ, however, were left unfinished, and but little use could be made of his work on these insects. Moreover, on commencing our study of the Hesperiidæ we found it necessary to dissect and examine the genitalia of the males of various critical species; and this led us to continue the process to the whole of them, a work requiring much time, but amply repaid by the results, as may be seen by a reference to our Plates. As an instance of the importance of these characters, we may note that in *Thanaos* several of the species are absolutely inseparable by external peculiarities, but markedly different in their genital structure.

Our study of the Central-American butterflies proves conclusively (1) that the fauna is mainly a northern extension of that of Tropical South America, extending on the Pacific side to Mazatlan and on the Atlantic to a little beyond Ciudad Victoria in Tamaulipas, some few species on each coast reaching the Southern United States, with, of course, many peculiarly modified forms in the region; (2) that there are a considerable number of Nearctic genera and species coming down the central plateau a certain distance into Mexico and some even into Guatemala, as *Argynnis*, *Vanessa*, *Limenitis*, *Grapta*, various *Colias*, &c.; (3) that there are no strictly alpine forms, the insects met with above the tree-line being mostly stragglers from below, such species