



By GRANT ALLEN.

HE was an airy, fairy orange-tip. He had just emerged from the chrysalis, and stood poised for a moment, like a hesitating Psyche, on the flat-topped blossoming branches of a big white cow-parsnip. For the most part, he sat there, irresolute, plimning his untried wings, and half opening them tentatively from time to time, as if wondering to himself how the dickens they got there. And well might he wonder; for remember, he was bred a common green caterpillar; never till this moment did it dawn across his mind that such a motion as flight could exist in the universe. So there he sat still, uncertain what strange change had come over him unawares. Six well-formed legs, in place of the creeping suckers on which he crawled in his youth; and what could these thin vans mean—these light and airy vans, that moved so dubiously on his soft woolly shoulders?

While his wings remained erect and closed, the under surface alone showed; and that was chequered green and white, like the flowers he sat upon. Indeed, so exactly did groundwork and insect harmonise with one another in hue and markings that even a quick eye might easily have passed my orange-tip by unnoticed, were it not for the quivering movement of those uncertain wings, whose opening and shutting betrayed him as I passed to my scrutinising survey. And this in itself was odd. For "How did he know," thought I, "he who till lately was but a small green grub, feeding on the bush leaves and stems of cresses—that he ought now to make straight on his emergence from the chrysalis for this white-flowered cow-parsnip, which, indeed, is the favourite perching-place of all his race, and

which effectually conceals him from the prying eyes of birds that fain would prey upon him, yet of whose very existence he, a crawling caterpillar, was till this moment ignorant? Surely that shows in his small brain some curious pre-existent picture, as it were, of this unknown cow-parsnip—a picture which enabled him to recognise it offhand when seen, and to steer for it at once with unerring instinct."

As I watched, the timid creature, feeling his wings at last, made up his tiny mind to spread those untried vans, and venture into the unknown on the undreamt-of pinions. So he opened them wide, and displayed himself in his glory as a full-fledged orange-tip. His colours were still quite fresh; his feathery scales unspoiled by rain or wind or enemies. I gazed at him in delight, with sympathetic joy for his pure joy of living, as he unfolded those white wings with their brilliant orange badge and their fringe of dark purple. For a second or two he darted off in the brilliant sunshine, rejoicing; he seemed to learn, as he went, to recall of a sudden some dim but recurring ancestral memory. All at once, as he fluttered somewhat doubtfully in mid-air, he caught sight from afar of a female brimstone. "Will he chase her?" I thought to myself; though, indeed, I knew well, had I chosen to recollect it, that inherited instinct is far too strong in these little creatures to admit for a moment such egregious errors. Our great Bashaw just glanced at her with unobservant eye; no gleam of recognition lighted up the tiny face; he passed on, without one word; not a curve of the feeble flight; not a divergent pirouette of the orange-tipped



pinions. Then a Clouded Yellow floated past, pursued by two rivals of her own swift-winged race. They are the fleetest of our butterflies. My orange-tip just glanced at them as who should say, "Strange that insects of taste should put up with such colouring. Why, she's almost pure white. I wouldn't look twice at her." The words had scarcely thrilled through his fatuous little brain when up loomed from windward a small yellowish butterfly not wholly unlike himself: green and white underneath fringed with black above, but without the orange spot which made my lord so attractive. In a second I recognised her: it was a female orange-tip—a virgin female. But, quicker far

A familiar country sight. And yet, great heavens, what a miracle! For bethink you that that orange-tip was born and bred a small green-and-white caterpillar. He did not know, as you and I do, that his father and mother were orange-tip butterflies. He never saw or knew them. They were dead and gone before he emerged from the egg; and when he came out into the world, he met none of his own kind, save it may be some other small green-and-white caterpillars. His sole business in life was to gorge himself with cresses. At last, one fine day, when he had eaten his soul's fill, some inner impulse seized him. He began to transform himself, half unconsciously to his



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than myself, her natural master had seen her and known her instinctively as the mate predestined for him. Hi, presto! as I looked, all the world was one maze: the pretty things were at once in the thick of their courtship.

And what a courtship that was! How dainty! how ethereal! He, rising on the breeze and displaying with pride his beautiful orange tips; she, coquetting and curvetting, dancing coyly through the air, now pretending to fly away, now affecting disdain, now returning to his side, now darting off on light wings just as he thought he had captivated that capricious small heart of hers. So they continued for ten minutes their dainty aerial minuet; and when last I caught sight of them they were still circling undecided above the sprays of wild rose in the hedgerow by the valley.

own mind, into a boat-shaped chrysalis. There he lay as in a mummy-case, melting slowly away into organic pulp, and growing again by degrees into a full-formed butterfly. All his organs changed: strange legs and wings budded out on him incontinently. Yet even when he emerged once more from the mummy-case he had no intuitive knowledge of himself as a male orange-tip. Still less had he any distinct conception of the female of his species. But, as he floated about on his untried wings, he took no notice at all of any other butterflies; till the moment a mate of his own appeared upon the scene, and then he instantly and unerringly recognised her. The sole explanation of this marvel, it seems to me, lies in the fact that his nervous system has in it by inheritance a form or mould, if I may be allowed so material a metaphor, into

which the image of his own kind and of his own mate falls and fits exactly. The moment that mould is completely filled and satisfied, the creature that fills it he loves as instinctively as Miranda loved Ferdinand, the first human being she had ever beheld save her father, Prospero.

And what is thus true of the butterfly is true, I believe, *mutatis mutandis*, of all of us. On the human brain there is impressed by anticipation a blank form or model of the human face and the human figure. Our central type of human beauty is thus found for us by nature and ancestral experience: the nearer a man and a woman approach to that central type the more beautiful on the average, other things

equal, do normal judges consider them. I do not doubt, of course, that many other and more general elements come in to complete the developed concept. White teeth, rosy cheeks, bright eyes, delicate curves, have of themselves a certain intrinsic and universal æsthetic value as colour and lustre, as shape and softness. But dainty pink is not so beautiful on the nose as on the cheeks or lips; nor are curves as desirable in the lines of the spine as in the external contour. Indeed, even expression itself has its stereotyped value; for a baby in arms will smile responsive to a smile from its nurse, and will cry at a frown, independently of experience.

