A Hesperiid Hitch-hiker

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IN THE course of unpacking a suitcase upon my family's return to Montreal in September 1977, following a visit to Trinidad, I was pleasantly surprised to find a live caterpillar among the damp towels and bathsuits. It was promptly secured and placed in an environmental chamber (LD 16:8, 60% RH, 80° C). Pupation occurred the following day (September 16, 1977) and an adult Hesperiid butterfly emerged eleven days later (September 27, 1977). It turned out to be *Pellicia bromias* G. & S. which occurs in Trinidad and Tobago (Barcant, 1970) and which is known also from Mexico, southwards to Panama (Godman and Salvin, 1887 — 1901; Draudt, 1921 — 1924). Klots (1951) records it as a casual species which strays into southern Texas.

I wish to thank Dr. J.D. Lafontaine, Biosystematics Research Institute, Ottawa, Canada, who confirmed the identification. The specimen is deposited in the Lyman Entomological Museum, Macdonald College of McGill University.

* *Pellicia bromias* G. & S. is a synonym of *Nisoniades rubescens* Moeschler — Ed.

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An early pest control measure in Trinidad

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THE problems which can be caused to health and agriculture by the introduction, wilfully or accidentally, of foreign insect species, are well known today. To name but a few: *Aedes aegypti* (L.) the urban mosquito transmitter of yellow fever in Trinidad, the African race of the honey-bee in Brazil, and the gypsy moth *(Porthetria dispar* L.) which is ravaging deciduous forests in North America. This is not to say that all wilful introductions are bad since this is an important aspect in the biological control of pest insects and weeds.

Almost two hundred years ago there was some concern for Trinidad. It appears that there was fear of introducing an ant species which apparently was doing some damage in the Antilles. This resulted in the King of Spain commanding the Governor of Trinidad (Royal Cedula on Colonization of 1783, Article 26. vide Carmichael, 1961) [1] to appoint suitable subjects to search vessels and the effects of arriving settlers in order to prevent its introduction. Whether that fear was real or unfounded is beside the point, but the edict represents probably the earliest pest control regulation in the history of Trinidad, and is certainly one of the earliest in the New World.

To my daughter Anna I express my gratitude for turning up Carmichael's book in her school library and bringing it to my attention.

[1] Carmichael, G. 1961. *The History of the West Indian Islands of Trinidad and Tobago. 1498 — 1900.* Alvin Redman Limited, London, 463 pp.