

Mr. H. J. Elwes F. R. S. on Himalayan Parnassius.

Herr H. Fruhstorfer in the *Iris* Vol. XI. p. 147 describes as a „new subspecies *Parnassius hardwickii albicans*“. What he mean by a subspecies I can only judge from his previous writings in which he has given new names to many forms and varieties of Malayan butterflies which are neither constant or local. The followers of this practice seem to be increasing in Germany though its most notorious adherents in England have lately been less active than formerly. I have nothing to say against any naturalist who after carefully studying what has been published, and with sufficient materials to enable him to form an opinion, describes a new variety, however slightly defined, of a well-known butterfly; as has been recently done by Freiherr von Hormuzaki in the case of *Melitaea* var. *dictynnoides*, but I must protest against such writings as those of Herr Fruhstorfer which are full of errors and serve no scientific purpose. I will briefly point out the errors contained in his short paper.

First, he mis-spells the specific name, which is *hardwickii* not *hardtwickii*.

Secondly, he mis-spells the name of the locality which is Lachung (pronounced Lachoong) the valley which forms the eastern tributary of the Jista river in Sikkim, and whose elevation is from about 5000 feet at its foot to 18500 feet at the top of the Donkia Pass which I crossed in September 1870.

Thirdly, he says that the elevation at which it was taken (16000 feet) is 2000 feet above the snow line. I took *P. jacquemonti* var. *sikkimensis* as high as 18000 feet in this valley and there was no snow on the southern slopes or even at th top of the Donkia Pass in September: vide Hooker's *Himalayan Journals*.

Fourth, the so-called subspecies is neither a local or a seasonal variety, or even an aberration, and is very inconstant. I have precisely similar specimens collected by my own and

Mr. White's native collectors in the same valley, and others which shew a gradual transition to the darkest form of the species known as *charino*, Gray. The same variation also occurs in the North West Himalaya, vide Elwes, on the genus *Parnassius*, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1886 p. 39, where I quote Captain Young as follows. „In the interior it varies from typical *hardwickii* through light and dark grey to the high level form *charino*.“

Fifth, he says that the type of *hardwickii* has a yellowish ground color. Though the plate in Gray's *Lepidoptera of Nepal* is so colored, I have not one specimen out of nearly fifty in my collection, selected from hundreds, which shews this color. I therefore say that white, not yellowish, is the typical ground color of the species.

Lastly, Herr Fruhstorfer gives a list of the Himalayan *Parnassius* which is very incomplete and incorrect, as I will show. Instead of four species there are seven, namely.

1. *P. hardwickii*, Gray. Sikkim Kashmir 6—14000 feet.
2. *P. acco*, Gray. Alpine Sikkim (one specimen only received, in coll. Elwes). Ladak (Lapsang & Tibet frontier 17600 feet, Dr. Thorold).
3. *P. simo*, Gray. Ladak (Major Charlton in British Museum).
4. *P. jacquemontii vera* Bdv. Ladak and Tibet frontier 13—18000 feet = *epaphus* Ob., vide Elwes P. Z. S. 1886 p. 36.
var. *sikkimensis*, Elwes, (minor nom. vix conservandum), Alpine Sikkim 16—18000 feet; N. E. Tibet, Nan Shan Mountains 11—13000 feet (Koslow & Roborowsky).
5. *P. actius* var. *himalayensis*, Elwes? bona sp. *P. jacquemontii*, Blanch., Moore, Ob., Honrath et auctorum? B. A. in parte? N. W. Himalaya, Lahoul 11—15000 feet.
6. *P. stoliczkanus*, Feld. Ladak, Rupohu, Lahoul (15000 feet, de Niceville) Wardwan Valley. Kashmir.
7. *P. charltonius*, Gray. Ladak, Lahoul 11—16000 feet.



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Digitale Literatur/Digital Literature

Zeitschrift/Journal: [Deutsche Entomologische Zeitschrift "Iris"](#)

Jahr/Year: 1899

Band/Volume: [12](#)

Autor(en)/Author(s): diverse

Artikel/Article: [M. H. J. Elwes F. R. S. on Himalayan Parnassius 86-87](#)