

Natural History.

INSECTS AND THEIR ENEMIES.

The Relations of the Farmer Thereto.—How they Originate and How to Depose Them.

BY F. S. MATTERSON.

The Ichneumon Fly is a four-winged fly which is parasitic upon different insects. Mr. Glover says of him: "These insects are characterized by unusually long and slender bodies, and the long projecting ovipositors of the females. These ovipositors are often very long, and are protected by a sheath of four stylets of the same length as the true ovipositor. The head is usually rather square, with long, many jointed antennae. The larva is a soft, cylindrical, fleshy, white, footless grub, the rings of the body convex, and the head small. The eggs are laid by the parent, either on the outside, or within the caterpillar or other larvae upon which its young is destined to feed. When hatched, the larvae devours the fatty portions of its victim, until it gradually dies. The family, as a whole, is one of the members of which are of immense service to agriculturalists, is destroying great numbers of noxious insects.

There are numerous varieties of this fly, varying in size from a fourth of an inch to one and one-fourth inches long. I have a specimen of the latter length, with an ovipositor twice as long.

These ichneumon flies deposit their eggs in the bodies of a great variety of insects: caterpillars, the army worm, grasshopper, etc. That the cut worm is often thus destroyed, my own observation leads me to believe, although the nocturnal habits of this worm greatly protects him. But the ichneumon goes for the diurnal feeding cotton-worm, in the Southern states, with a freedom that should charm the heart of the cotton planter, and cause him to count the ichneumon among his best friends. He is none the less a friend to the Oregon farmer, and deserves his consideration accordingly.

The last insect that I shall mention is the Asilus fly (robber fly, or bee killer). I do not know this fly, nor if he is in Oregon. He inhabits the cotton states, and also Nebraska, and other places where I am not informed. Bee men probably know him, but I can only condense what Glover and others say of him, leaving the question open as to his being useful or otherwise.

A large buzzing fly an inch or more long, with long slender abdomen, and thick hairy throat. They are among the most rapacious of insects, but not only are they indiscriminating as other predaceous insects, but some species seem actually to prefer beneficial insects as a steady diet. There is almost no enemy that the apiarist fears more than these bee killers, as some species are termed.

The asilus attack and kills almost every insect which he can overcome. It is probable that he does not relish bees more than other insects, but because he finds them in greater abundance, and therefore gets his food with least exertion. And as large as they are, a single one will perhaps destroy a hundred bees every day. Therefore if this fly was common, it would cause great loss to bee men. They appear most abundant in June and July. When in pursuit of his prey he makes rapid dashes, capturing the bee upon the wing, and when he has it secure, seeks a bush or tall weed upon which he alights and devours it, sucking out the fluids and dropping the empty shell upon the ground.

The asilus fly deposit their eggs in the ground, and their larvae, a yellowish white maggot, about three-fourth of an inch long, are said to be vegetable feeders. When about to change to the perfect fly, they come to the surface of the ground, and leave their empty shells sticking up where they shed them.

So much for the Asilus flies. Mr. Glover regards them, as, in the main, beneficial. From the description, I incline not to concur. "But all may think which way their judgments lean."

(To be continued).

Miss Belle DuBois, Oregon's Prima Donna, who has just returned from Italy where she has completed a thorough course in music under the ablest teachers known, will appear before a Salem audience on Wednesday, May 5th, assisted by leading Portland talent. Her concert given recently in Portland, was one of the most thorough home welcomes that has ever been accorded to anyone. The concert will be given at the opera house, and we trust that she will receive such a reception as her talents should command. Popular prices, and reserved seats at H. D. Boon's book store.

Buy blue vitriol at Port's.

Telegraphic News

Senator Blair has made a speech for prohibition to the United States Senate.

The Inter-State commerce bill is before the Senate.

The Senate has confirmed C. W. West as Governor of Utah.

The Chinese Minister, just retired, accompanied by Secretary Bayard, called at the White House on Tuesday, and took official leave of the president. He expressed his appreciation of their kind treatment.

Ex-President Arthur is greatly distressed by insomnia. He is not dangerous, but yet he is far from being out of danger.

Father Ryan the poet priest is dead, and his remains were entombed at Mobile, Ala., under impressive ceremonies. The remains were followed by an immense concourse of citizens.

Work on the California & Oregon railroad is being pushed forward at a rapid rate. This extension will shorten the overland stage connection between the Oregon and California ends about eighty miles. Stage people say they have put on new stock and coaches, and that they will arrange their time so as to allow passengers to have a daylight view of Mt. Shasta, along the skirts of which the road runs.

"Miss Russell," full sister to "Maud S.," has just arrived at Senator Stanford's Palo Alto ranch, to be bred to "Electro-ner." She was sent by the managers of the most prominent breeding establishments in the United States.

The 64th anniversary of Gen. Grant's birth was observed at the Metropolitan Church in Washington, D. C., on April 27.

Jefferson Davis has made a tour of Alabama, and has been enthusiastically received everywhere. He was quite feeble, but although he could not address the people, yet he did considerable hand-shaking.

In Missouri, a half-witted German outraged a family, and the father went crazy and killed himself. The neighbors caught the offender and put a rope around his neck and tied it to the pomel of a saddle on a wild horse and left him to his fate—which was worse than death.

State and Territorial News.

Sheriff McGraw, of Seattle, has offered \$1000 reward for the arrest and conviction of the persons implicated in the murder of John Grum, at Green River, on the night of September 26th, 1885.

The Knights of Pythias lodges throughout Puget Sound, are making arrangements for a grand time at Seattle the second Tuesday of May. An excursion is being planned to go from Tacoma to attend the jollification.

The Democrats of Marion county nominated the following ticket on the 27th: State Senators, E. O. Norton, F. E. Eldridge, W. H. Holmes; Representatives, John T. Smith, M. J. Egan, H. H. Savage, R. H. Scott, W. F. Dugan, B. F. Cooley; Sheriff, R. O. Thomas; Clerk, W. R. Privett; Treasurer, Preston Hamilton; Judge, Geo. S. Downing; Commissioners, Frank Feller, Henry Warren; School superintendent, Edwin Shiel; Assessor, W. B. Simpson; Surveyor, Alfred Gobalet; Coroner, J. D. Shaw.

San Francisco parties are buying horses for that market. L. Sanders of Albany has paid out \$40,000 for that purpose and he is only one out of some dozen buyers.

The Republican county convention of Marion county has nominated the following ticket. Senators—J. B. Looney, John Dimick, M. L. Chamberlin. Representatives—J. T. Greeg, A. M. Lafollett, W. H. Hobson, Samuel Layman, D. J. Pendleton, and D. F. Hicks. Sheriff—John W. Minto. Clerk—M. N. Chapman. County Judge—T. C. Shaw. Commissioners—Jacob Ogle and John N. Davis. School superintendent—Geo. A. Peebles. Treasurer—August Giesey.

The O. & C. R. R. company will sell tickets to Odd Fellows attending the grand lodge meeting at The Dalles at reduced rates. Also the narrow gauge system.

Elsewhere appears the advertisement of Mrs. C. S. Rokenfield, Salem's popular florist, who offers collections of votted plants that are both rare and beautiful. The prices asked are very reasonable and our lady friends can rest assured that they will receive good treatment at her hands. Let those who desire such plants apply at once, or what is better, call in person and see them.

The weather now is simply perfection and farmers are happy.

G. W. H. Cook, foot of Yamhill street, Portland, opens this spring with a good assortment of agricultural machinery for the coming harvest, and is disposed to increase the trade he is rapidly building up in Oregon and Washington. He has the H. A. Pitts Sons' threshers, engines, horsepowers, etc., the Judson company's Victor mower, and the popular spring tooth harrows and cultivators. This last have become a standard machine in this valley and are becoming well-known east of the Cascades. We have one of them at work in our orchard and lend it to the neighbors, and after five years hanging about and doing promiscuous work has never been housed from sun or rain, and is now as sound and serviceable as when we bought it.

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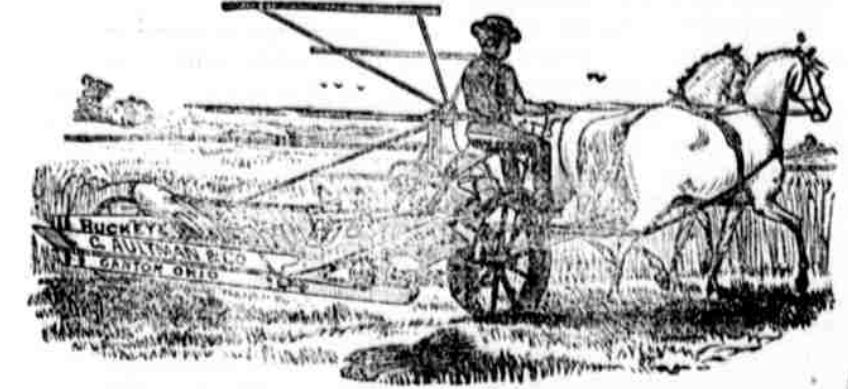
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