

3. APRIL, 24th.—“ENTOMOLOGY,” by Dr. James Fletcher, Dominion Entomologist.—The speaker without preliminary introduction went right to the heart of his subject by asking and answering shortly what is Entomology? What is an insect? He deprecated the indiscriminate use of the word “bug” as generally used because although all bugs were insects all insects were by no means bugs. Insects are amongst the most familiar of natural objects. They are met with in all climates and in one or other form at all seasons of the year. It was estimated that they comprised four-fifths of the animal kingdom; no less than 200,000 species being found in collections. Their place in the classification of the animal kingdom was noted and the differences between the members of the seven great orders explained. This old classification of the insects was recommended for beginners and the derivation of the names used explained. Diagrams illustrating the different kinds of insects were shown. An earnest plea was made for a more extensive study of insects on account of the utility of the knowledge obtained, first as a means of preventing the great losses which annually occurred among crops, then as a useful means of training the mind in habits of accuracy, of observation and precision of description and, lastly, as an unfailing and constant source of intellectual pleasure. It was advised to study a few things well—e.g. a single order or even a single insect, rather than to aim at amassing a large collection, the thorough study of which was rendered impossible by the shortness of the average life of man. Beginners were encouraged to make use of the leaders of the club. The delight of rearing even one of our commonest butterflies from the egg through the larval stages to the chrysalis and then to the perfect insect were graphically described and all present were urged to make at least one trial during the coming season. The speaker felt sure that if this were done many who had previously seen no particular beauties in insects would be surprised at the amount of pleasure they would derive and the unexpected beauties they would discern in the exquisite perfection of every smallest part of every insect they examined.