

APPLIED ENTOMOLOGY FOR THE FARMER.

BY F. M. WEBSTER, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Of all husbandmen, the true farmer, the grower of grains and forage crops for sale or consumption on his premises, has been the last to profit by the applied science of entomology. He in the past has indeed supposed himself as helpless against the inroads of insects upon his crops as the Indian squaw whose only hope of saving her patch of Indian corn was in the effect of charms and incantations in warding off attacks of wireworms, cutworms and perhaps other similar pests.

The beginnings in applied entomology consisted in dusting garden vegetables with soot, lime, ashes, and, somewhat later, with powdered hellebore. But to the farmer these precautions meant practically nothing. Though his farm might not be a large one, the area was usually too wide to render these measures practicable, even if they proved effective in a small way. It is true that the trapping of cutworms under compact bunches of elder sprouts, milkweed, clover and mullen, "placed in every fifth row between every sixth hill," was known as early as 1838, but these constituted only a trap or baits, the worms found under the traps being killed by some sharp instrument. This measure, however, seems to have never become popular.

The spread of the so-called Colorado potato beetle over the country from the west eastward brought the use of the Paris green and London purple as insecticides to the front, but, again, this did not help in the least the troubles of the ordinary farmer.

The work of Riley, Packard and Thomas, on the western migratory locust, was the first important effort made to aid the farmer in devising practical measures of fighting destructive insects over large areas.

The spread of the cabbage butterfly from the east to the westward brought into use as an insecticide the powdered blossoms of Pyrethrum, but the farmer does not raise cabbage as either a grain or a forage crop.

Studies of the cotton-worm, by Riley and others, brought Paris green again into use and developed that useful insecticide,