

offspring of the first, which has attained its maturity during the summer, and has laid its eggs in its turn. It is in May and June that the eggs are chiefly laid. The number laid by each insect is considerable.

THE EGG.

The insect passes through several changes. Its first appearance is in the form of an egg,* when it is merely a small, roundish, yellowish-white object not so big as a small pin's head. No one has yet found out where the eggs are laid; and we only know their appearance by dissecting the mother, and taking the eggs out of her body. We can guess very well where she lays them, but that is all—we do not yet *know it*. Insects usually lay their eggs where the young ones will most readily find their food; for instance, the bluebottle fly lays its eggs on meat, because its grub feeds on that substance—the dung beetles lay their eggs in dung—the common white butterfly, whose grub feeds on the cabbage, lays its eggs on the leaves of that plant, and so on. We may infer, therefore, that the wireworm beetle does not lay its eggs far from the roots on which the young wireworm grub is to feed—and most probably it lays them between the enveloping leaves or sheathes of a plant near the base of the stalk, but no one has yet seen them do so, and it cannot therefore be held as ascertained, because no fact ought to be taken for granted. It is not, however, for want of watching, that we do not know where the insect lays its eggs; many people have taken pains to find this out, but as yet without success. Others may be more fortunate; and the following plan, which was tried by Mr. Curtis, shows how such observations may be conducted. About the end of May be collected as many of the beetles as he could find, and then put them into a garden-pot in which some young wheat was thriving, and then tied some gauze over it to prevent their making their escape. He found this precaution scarcely necessary, for they remained a very short time on the surface of the mould before they began to dig into it, and soon buried themselves completely. From their thus seeking the roots of the wheat, he was led to believe that they there deposited their eggs; consequently, on the 14th of June he emptied his garden pot, and found two of the beetles dead at the roots of the wheat, but he was not able to detect either eggs or recently hatched wireworms.

(To be Continued.)

*The eggs of many insects have the shell ornamented with beautiful sculpture, but there is nothing of this in the egg of the wireworm beetle.

THE EARLY ENGLISH AGRICULTURAL WRITERS.

[Many of our readers will doubtless feel interested in the following sketches of the early history and literature of British Agriculture, from the prolific pen of CUTHBERT W. JOHNSON, Esq., F. R. S., copied from the *Mark Lane Express*. They will find in these remarks of by-gone times not a little that is suggestive, and much that will prove amusing.—Eds.]

That the early inhabitants of our island practised agriculture is well known. That the districts bordering on the English Channel were better cultivated than those of the interior of the island, we learn on the authority of Cæsar. After his expedition to England, B. C. 55, he described the Cantii, or inhabitants of Kent, and the Belge, inhabiting our counties of Hants, Wilts, and Somerset, as the most advanced of our island tribes in the habits of civilized life. They cultivated the soil, employed marl as a manure, stored their corn unthrashed, and separated it from the chaff and bran, only as their daily demands required. The interior inhabitants lived chiefly upon milk and flesh, being fed and clothed by the produce of their herds. "The country" adds Cæsar, "is well peopled, and abounds in buildings resembling those of the Gauls, and they have a great abundance of cattle. They are not allowed to eat either the hen, the goose, or the hare; yet they take pleasure in breeding them." Cicero in one of his letters remarks, "There is not a scruple of money in the island; nor any hopes of booty but in slaves,"—a description that the industry and intelligence of succeeding years have rendered singularly inapplicable.

Such are the earliest yet meagre allusions to the farming of our island, in our possession. There is no doubt but our ancestors had more agricultural knowledge than we are always willing to believe. And that this skill in the art of tillage did not diminish in succeeding Saxon and Norman days, is equally certain. To the very earliest existing notices of the farming of Saxon times I do not, however, propose now to direct the reader's attention. My intention is to commence these retrospective glances, with some of those writings or official notices which appeared from the ninth or tenth centuries, to about the year 1852—the year when old Fitzherbert published his work on the English farming of those days.

The conciseness and spirit with which