

thicker than the edge of a leaf, as a very slight examination will show.

Insects are so abundant that they can be found at any time, and almost in any place. Their presence everywhere offers a ready means for learning something of the ways and habits of the creatures which constitute so large a portion of the animal kingdom. Even a cursory study of any of our caterpillars will soon convince one that there is much of interest as regards the habits of even the commonest species, many of which show remarkable traits.

During the first warm days of spring, even before the snow has entirely disappeared, reddish or mouse-coloured hairy larvæ, about an inch in length, are often seen walking across the sidewalks of outlying streets, or especially along the railroad tracks. These are the caterpillars of *Phragmatobia rubricosa*, Harr., and are chiefly interesting to local collectors in view of the fact that two distinct forms of the moths have been met with at Ottawa, and it is not at all improbable that we may have here two good species instead of one, as now recognized by standard lists.

The spring time is also opportune for the collection of arctiid and noctuid larvæ, under stones, etc., particularly in open places. Along the grassy sides of railroad tracks there are usually numbers of strips of bark, broken pieces of plank, etc.; and, underneath the same, many of these larvæ, which pass the winter about half, or nearly full grown, can be found hiding at that time of the year. The old leaves of mullein plants also harbour various kinds of caterpillars.

After the May and June, by which time many caterpillars will have hatched from eggs laid during those months, doubtless the most prolific way of collecting larvæ is by beating them off the plant they are feeding upon, into a beating net. Dealers in entomological supplies have for sale nets made specially for the purpose; but the accompanying figure shows a good pattern for an easily made net, which can be held beneath the plants with one hand, while the larvæ are beaten down on to it with a light rod held in the other hand. This beating net consists of a stick on each side and a flat sheet of cotton between, three feet wide at the top and one foot at the bottom. Two cross bars close together