

ON REARING DRAGONFLIES.

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Field work in Entomology is full of delightful opportunities, and none, just at present, is more inviting, none more certain to repay well even a little effort, none more sure to yield discoveries of scientific value, than work upon the life-histories of Dragonflies.

Of the species occurring throughout the central tier of States, a majority perhaps has now been bred; but of the Canadian, far western and southern species the known nymphs are few and far between.

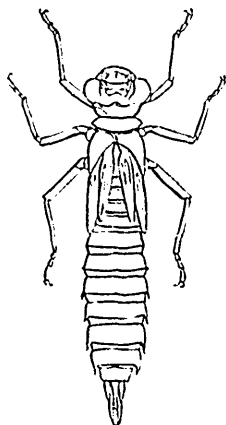


FIG. 15.—AESCHNID NYMPH.

The nymphs (fig. 15), which are all aquatic, have an interesting distribution in depth. Those of *Agrionidae* and of most *Aeschninae* cling to floating or submerged vegetation. These at least every aquatic collector has seen. Those of *Libellulidae* sprawl upon the bottom amid fallen trash. Those of *Gomphinae* burrow shallowly along beneath the film of sediment that lies on the bottom, with the end of the abdomen turned up for respiration.

It is very easy to collect them, especially in spring. A garden rake with which to draw ashore the stuff to which they cling and a pail of water in which to carry them home is all the apparatus desirable at that season. Later, when a new growth of weeds is rooted fast to the bottom, the rake will have to be exchanged for a water-net. Withdrawn from the water, the nymphs render themselves evident by their active efforts to get back, and need only to be picked up. The number of species one will find will generally depend on the variety of aquatic situations from which he collects. The places apt to yield the best collecting are small permanent pools, shallow inlets in the shores of lakes, and the places where the trash falls in the eddies of streams.

They are quite as easily reared. I have found common wooden kits and pails half filled with water, with screen or netting covers, entirely satisfactory. A number of nymphs, if near one size, may safely be kept together (excepting only a few notoriously cannibalistic *Aeschninas*: e. g. *Anax junius*), and if not grown may be fed upon such small insects as a net will gather in any pond. A good square meal once a week will keep