



Fig. 48.

The female (Fig. 48) is larger than the male, and varies much in colour, from a deep purplish brown to an ochreous red. The fore wings are covered by similar wavy lines; the inner margin is of a darker colour; the hind wings are marked very similarly to those of the male. These moths fly only at night.

THE AMERICAN CURRANT BORER (*Psenocerus supernotatus*). (Say)

The accompanying cut (Fig. 49) represents an enlarged view of a native currant borer, *Psenocerus supernotatus*; the small outline figure shews the natural size. It is a beetle belonging to the family of longicorns, *Cerambycidae*, which doubtless had its home originally among the wild currant bushes of our woods, but a more extended and inviting field having been opened for it by the planting of the cultivated varieties in our gardens, it has taken kindly to them, and although not so destructive as the imported currant borer, *Egeria tipuliformis*



Fig. 49.



Fig. 50.

(Fig. 50), has in many instances, proved quite troublesome. In nearly all our gardens numbers of the currant stalks annually perish, and were it not for the vigorous growth of new shoots from year to year, the bushes would soon be destroyed. If one of these stalks is split asunder, the cause of its death is manifest, for through its whole length it is found to be more or less eaten away, the hollows being filled in places by a fine sawdust-like powder. This is sometimes the work of the imported currant borer (Fig. 50), and sometimes the work of the native species (Fig. 49).

Early in June the parent beetle of the native currant borer deposits her eggs upon the currant stalks, where they soon hatch into tiny grubs, which burrow into the heart of the stem, and feeding on its pith, reach full growth before the close of the season. They are footless grubs, which measure, when full-grown about half an inch in length. The head is scarcely half as broad as the body, is of a dark brown colour, with black jaws. The body is whitish with some brown dots along each side, and is slightly clothed with very fine short hairs. When full-grown, and about to change to a chrysalis, the larva gnaws a channel through the woody fibre to the outer bark, so that when changed to a beetle it can make its escape by merely rupturing the bark. The cavity thus made is filled with little chips to prevent the bark from being prematurely broken, and below this stuffing the insect constructs a bed of short, woody fibres, packing the passage below with a finer material resembling sawdust. Within this enclosure, which is about half an inch in length, the larva changes to a chrysalis, and reposes until the fully formed beetle is ready to emerge; then gradually drawing away the obstacles to its egress, it finds its way to the end of the passage, and gnawing a small round hole through the bark, effects its escape.

The Beetle is black with the edges of the wing covers and the thorax pale chestnut brown. On each wing cover there is a rather large white spot beyond the middle, and two smaller anterior spots, which are sometimes ash-grey and sometimes yellowish. The antennae, which are shorter than the body, are pale brown, thickly clothed with short ash-grey hairs. The under side is black and sparsely covered with short grey hairs.

Dr. Fitch describes two parasites which he found attacking this pest in the larval state, one a small ichneumon fly, the other that of a small two-winged fly. Hence, secluded as it seems to be within the centre of the currant stem, it is unable to escape the acute instincts of its enemies, who searching it out, feed on its body and cause its death.

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