

CORRESPONDENCE.

DEAR SIR,—

The following note may prove of interest as showing the numbers in which the larvæ of *Lachnosterna fusca* may exist in a lawn without perceptible damage to the grass resulting.

On Sunday last, while walking through the Capitol grounds a few hours after a heavy shower of rain, I observed these larvæ in great numbers upon the stone pavement north and east of the Capitol building. I counted up to three hundred and then came to a spot where they were so thick that I had to give it up. I certainly saw *thousands*, nearly all of which were dead, either from heat or from having been trodden upon. Upon interviewing the Superintendent of the grounds, I learned that at this season of the year the grubs always make their appearance in like numbers after a hard rain. This gentleman informed me, and his statement was corroborated by several others, that frequently the sweepers of a morning in going over the walks would collect at the bottom of the hill as many as a *bushel* of the grubs. The pavement is edged on both sides by a two-inch curb, and the larvæ falling over this are unable to return; only those grubs inhabiting the earth near the curb would reach the walk, and the great numbers killed in this way after every shower afford an index to the immense number which the entire lawn must contain. Yet, in spite of this most serious drawback, as one would naturally call it, the grass over the entire plot is so fresh and green as to call for universal admiration.

The movements of the larvæ upon the smooth pavement were very interesting. The characteristic bend of the body unfits them for walking on smooth surfaces, and every live individual that I observed was upon its back, moving forward quite rapidly by the alternate expansion and contraction of the segments. This mode of locomotion seemed strange at first, but upon reflecting that the probable natural position of the larva in the earth is upon its back with its legs grasping the grass roots, it seemed not so unnatural after all. The strong transverse corrugations and rows of bristles upon the dorsum, taken in connection with the extremely business-like and natural air with which the larvæ took this position and the rapid progress which they made while in it, would seem to indicate that the back is used for locomotion with these insects more than has perhaps been suspected.

L. O. HOWARD.

Washington. D. C., Sept. 17.