

Entomology.

Specimens from a School Girl.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR,—I send you three beautiful specimens of insects. I hope they will prove interesting to you, and if so, I would like to see them re-produced in pictures in your paper, as I have often seen before. The spider I found on some scarlet beans; the moth in my bedroom; and the curious fly on a girl's hat.

I remain, Sir,

Yours respectfully,

A SCHOOL GIRL.

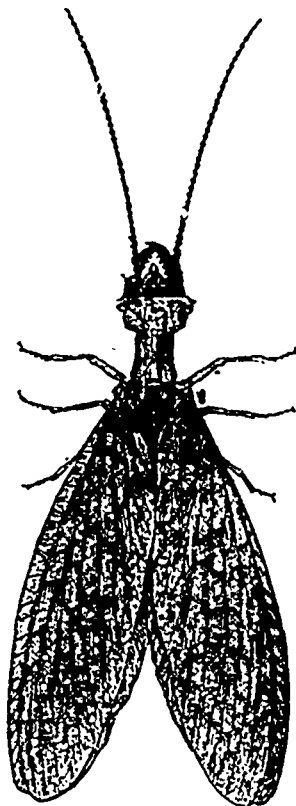
Mimico, September.

NOTE BY ED. C. F.—We were much pleased at receiving the above note, which was neatly and clearly written, from some fair young correspondent. We trust that her example will be followed by others among our youthful readers who desire to know something about the many beautiful and curious things in nature. The study of Natural History in any of its phases, no matter whether the attention is turned to ferns or flowers, insects, fishes, or birds, is, we feel satisfied, one of the best means for the improvement of the mental faculties of the young; while at the same time it renders all the common objects in the world around us sources of pure and unalloyed interest and delight. In the words of Kingsley, in his "Glaucus,"—"I have seen the young London beauty, amid all the excitement and temptation of luxury and flattery, with her heart pure and her mind occupied in a boudoir full of shells and fossils, flowers and sea-weeds, and keeping herself unspotted from the world by considering the lilies of the field, how they grow."

The spider sent us is a very beautiful black and golden-yellow specimen of these usually rather repulsive creatures. Its Latin name we do not know, as we have not made a special study of these useful animals. We do not suppose, however, that our correspondent has any particular anxiety to be enlightened on that point. The moth is called the Crimson Underwing (*Calocera concubens*, Walk.). When its wings are closed, it presents the appearance of a flat mottled-gray triangle, very like the bark of the trees on which it reposes during the daytime; but peep at its underwings, and then you will see what a thing of beauty it is—they are of a rich crimson colour, with a broad black band across the middle, and a black border fringed with white. There are about twenty different kinds of these moths in Canada, some with the underwings of various shades of red, some of yellow, some white, all having one or more bands of black, while others, again, have these wings entirely black above, but with the usual bands beneath. The fly is one of those commonly called "May Flies," (*Ephemera*); they have light, gauzy wings and slender bodies, with long antennae in front, and two excessively long tails behind. In their first stages they live in the water, some say for as long as three years, but when they obtain their wings, they live but for a single night, coming out at sunset, and dying the next morning; a few stray specimens, however, live sometimes for ten days or a fortnight. Early on a bright summer morning we have occasionally seen tens of thousands of them dancing merrily in the sunshine over the shore and shallow margin of the lake; up-and-down, up-and-down they go, enjoying their short existence to the utmost. We must defer any illustration of these interesting creatures for another occasion.

The Horned Corydalis, or Shad-fly.

IN our issue of Aug. 1, we mentioned the receipt of a communication from Mr. Walter Tait, of Beverley, accompanied by a specimen of the female of this insect. (We regret that by a typographical error the name was mis-spelt "Chad Fly," instead of "Shad Fly.") He writes as follows: "Enclosed I send for your inspection, an insect, which from its peculiarly ferocious appearance, has excited the curiosity of every one who has seen it. Never having met with an insect of the same kind during a ten years' residence in Canada, nor found among old settlers one who had seen such a specimen, I thought that perhaps it might be a native of some tropical country, which, in consequence of the unusually hot weather we have had, may have migrated to our usually more temperate region." The terrible hot weather of July was certainly tropical enough to warrant us in expecting the advent of any monstrous dire from the regions of the equator; the specimen before us, however, of which we give an illustration, is not to



be classed among these, notwithstanding its portentous aspect, but is a veritable native of Canada. We have taken them from time to time ourselves, and have occasionally had them brought in to us by astonished captors, who not unnaturally deemed that they were prodigiously valiant in venturing to touch such a horribly ferocious-looking animal. Its looks belie it, however; for, though so big and formidable in appearance, it is one of the most harmless insects that we have. It belongs to the order *Neuroptera*, which includes also Dragon-flies and other net-winged insects—and is called the *Corydalis Cornutus*. Its larva is a broad flat worm with six legs, and a row of long spiny filaments on each side of its body, living in the water and preying upon various aquatic insects. When about to assume the pupa state, it crawls out of the water and hides itself under some log or stone on the river-side, where it is often found by fishermen, who make use of it as bait, and call it by the expressive name of "crawler." It takes about three weeks to arrive at its perfect state, and then it comes out with huge wings to fly about at night, and provide for the due arrival of a new generation. The jaws of the female that we have figured are by no means small, but they are nothing when compared with those of the male, which, to use an expressive phrase, are "a regular caution," being about an inch long, curved, and crossing each other in the middle like a pair of scissors!

An Emperor Moth's Cocoon.

WE have received from "B," who writes from Kin-cardine, Co. of Bruce, a tin box, enclosing a carefully packed specimen of an Emperor Moth's cocoon. It was found, he states, "firmly fastened to the branch of an apple tree, and so securely did it adhere with its parchment-like covering that it required considerable effort to detach it;" as he had never seen anything like it before, he sends it to us for identification.

This pod-like cocoon, formed of strong silken fibres so firmly agglutinated together as almost to resemble parchment in texture, is the last stage but one in the life of one of our largest and handsomest insects—the *Cecropia* Emperor Moth. The caterpillar, which is hatched from a round, flattened, brown and white egg, is, when fully grown, a huge, fat, humped worm, three or four inches long, and thicker than a man's thumb; it is of a beautiful green colour, adorned with singular blue, yellow, and coral-red warts on the back. It feeds on the leaves of apple, plum, cherry, and numerous other trees, to a twig of which it attaches its cocoon when done feeding, and there it remains, exposed to the frost and snow, and bitterest blasts of winter, unaffected by them all, ready to come out a beautiful winged moth when genial June comes round again. This moth is the largest insect we have in Canada, its wings expanding to a breadth of six or seven inches. We shall not describe it particularly now, as we purpose giving an illustration of it before long.

Poultry yard.

Fancy Pigeons.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR,—Perhaps a few more observations on the Pigeon tribe may not be unacceptable to your readers. I am afraid I cannot offer anything new, or that may not be found in Tegetmeier's, Eaton's, or other modern works on the subject; but I have found few, even of those who call themselves fanciers, in Canada, know anything, or comparatively anything, about it.

As a rule, the specimens of pigeons exhibited and kept in Canada are very inferior. I hope I may not "catch it" for this sweeping condemnation, but it is truth, and the sooner told the better; and my advice to those who are inclined to keep pigeons is to clear their lofts of all their rubbish, and invest in a few pairs of the correct specimens, by importation from England. Perhaps it would be as well to give an illustration of my meaning by reference to a few kinds. I will begin with Carriers. Well, with the exception of my own, I do not think I have seen a Carrier since I left England. I have seen one or two Horsemen, and very indifferent Dragons. Unsophisticated persons are very apt to call all these birds Carriers, but a true genuine English Carrier is a fancy bird, very hard to obtain; and to keep them up to the standard is still harder. Great circumspection is required in the selection of breeding stock and matching; and the worst is that neither this nor any good stock can be had without paying very high prices, not justified at present by the demand for them. But then it is useless having inferior stock; so that it is simply do without, or pay the price; and it will then take from three to five, and on to nine years, to get up such studs as I have seen at Mayne's Potter's, &c. There is one good thing about them,—they are, as a rule, good nurses, and take care of their young; and my experience of Canada is that it suits them. The atmosphere takes liberties with their plumage, especially the "dun;" and due allowance must be made for this at exhibitions. Indeed I know of no bird harder to judge in close competition. For the points of these birds I must refer you to Tegetmeier's Pigeon Book; it would take up too much time and space to enter into them here.

The coffee trees in Madras and that part of the East Indies are greatly troubled with the coffee borer, an insect similar to the borers we have had in the acacias