

INSECTS ATTACKING THE CUCUMBER, MELON, PUMPKIN AND SQUASH.

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| 1. The Squash-vine Borer (<i>Ægeria Cucurbitæ</i> , Harris.) | 3. The Striped Cucumber Beetle (<i>Diabrotica vittata</i> , Olivier.) |
| 2. The Squash Bug (<i>Coreus tristis</i> , De Geer.) | 4. The Cucumber Flea Beetle (<i>Haltica cucumeris</i> , Harris.) |

The plants above named, whose insect enemies we are about to describe, belong to a family known in Botany as the *Cucurbitaceæ* or Gourd family. It does not include in its limits a very large number of genera, but most of them being familiar to us in garden, or field, we trust that our readers will not object to learn some few facts regarding the natural history of the various insects that more commonly affect the growth of these vines, which, to almost every person in this country at any rate, are, in their respective seasons an object of interest, whether it be the pretty little *Mock-orange* ornamenting, with its climbing tendrils and bright-coloured fruit, our arbours and cottage walls; the esculent *Cucumber*, that mysterious emblem of coolness, but rightly surnamed the "Nemesis of vegetables"; the fragrant and delicious *Melon*; the thirst-assuaging *Water-melon*; the gigantic *Pumpkin*; or the mammoth *Squash*, the pride of the agriculturist and source of much joy and comfort to his cattle.

1. THE SQUASH-VINE BORER (*Ægeria Cucurbitæ*, Harris.)

Order, LEPIDOPTERA; family, ÆGERIADÆ.

The *Ægerians*, or "Clear-wings" as they are popularly termed, are a very curious tribe of moths. The greater part of their wings is devoid of scales, and is as transparent as the membranous wings of a bee or a fly. They are still further remarkable for their extraordinary resemblance to insects of other orders—bees, wasps, hornets, etc. They are true lovers of flowers and sunshine, and flying only in the day-time they may frequently be seen reposing on some leaf enjoying the warmth of the sun's rays and expanding and contracting the curious little brush or fan of hairs at the end of their body. Their habits in the larval state are quite different from those of the *Sphingidæ*, the latter, as we have seen in the *Potato* and *Plum Sphinges*, living exposed upon the leaves of their food-plants, while the caterpillars of the *Ægerians* conceal themselves in the stems or roots of plants, and feed on the wood or pith.

During the summer our *Squash* and other similar vines often seem troubled with some disease which kills the plant. A little examination discloses the presence of a small borer, which has commenced its operations in the larval state, and has eaten out the interior of the stem close to the ground. This is the larva of the *Squash-vine borer* (*Ægeria Cucurbitæ*) Fig. 96. The full grown larva is about an inch in length. It is fleshy, soft, and of a transparent whitish colour, tapering at each extremity. The head is retractile, small, and of a brown colour. The larva has more the appearance of a maggot than a true caterpillar, the prolegs being wanting; but their loss is replaced by double rows of hooks beneath each segment, which enable the larva to proceed up and down its tunnels in the pith of the plant with the greatest ease and facility.

When fully matured the larva leaves the plant and seeks shelter beneath the earth, where

FIG 96.

