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FRAGMENTS IN THE LIFE-HABITS OF MANITOBA INSECTS—II.

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In a Province such as Manitoba, which is comparatively new agriculturally, we are continually experiencing insect outbreaks involving species not hitherto known to be obnoxious. The insects concerned are always native to the country and frequently owe their increase to the development of agriculture, which has been the means of placing new food supplies at their disposal. In other instances the insects have doubtless multiplied abnormally in the past but owing to the lack of observers at such times, their abundance apparently did not attract attention. Two such outbreaks have occurred in Manitoba within the last few years and though my notes relating to them are by no means complete they seem, however, sufficient to indicate the general habits of the insects concerned, and have, therefore, been brought together for publication under the above heading.

THE BROME-GRASS CUTWORM.

(*Trachea fanitima cerviana* Smith).

The larvæ of this insect are unobtrusive in their general habits and might pass unnoticed were it not for the fact that they gather in the sheaves of Brome-grass (*B. enermis*) to hide. The caterpillars are naturally shaken out of these sheaves at harvest time and in consequence attract attention as they crawl about the bottoms of the racks when the grass is being threshed.

The Brome-grass Cutworm is a surface feeder which hides under, or in, any convenient object, such as hay, etc., during the day and comes out to feed at night. It attacks the young shoots, or tender leaves, of various succulent grasses but shows a marked preference for brome-grass. The larvæ first attract attention about the middle of September when they gather into the grass sheaves which have been cut for seed purposes. Apparently the insects enter the sheaves with the object of securing shelter rather than for hibernating purposes, as they still continue to feed at night, though not very extensively. By the middle of October the caterpillars have attained a similar size and have finished feeding for the year. At this date, most of them leave the sheaves that are standing upright but they may still be found beneath those lying down or under any other conveniently placed object. They are now often partly buried in the soil showing that the time of hibernation has arrived.

In the spring, larvæ still remain in the vicinity of their hiding places and appear to eat comparatively little. They are, however, active by the time farming operations commence and continue to feed until they pupate in early May. A description of the caterpillars as they are met with in autumn follows :