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IMPORTANCE OF OBSERVATIONS ON APPARENTLY UNIMPORTANT INSECTS.

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In the course of the writer's somewhat extended experience in the investigations of insects, with especial reference to their economic significance, he has occasionally found himself confronted with criticisms on account of having apparently expended both time and funds in studying insects whose attacks were, or had been, so far as known, of little or no importance. It therefore seems not out of place to direct attention to a number of instances showing that such restrictions are not always warranted and that the present status of importance of a species cannot be taken as conclusive respecting its future, or indeed near future significance.

Selecting a number of instances in point from my own experience and of others working under my direction, that of *Myochrous denticollis*, the southern corn leaf beetle, which has since become better known by reason of its disastrous attacks on growing corn in Kansas and southern Ohio, may be first mentioned. The first observations made on this insect in the corn field were purely accidental.

The writer happened to be passing through a field of young corn in Tensas Parish, La., in April, 1887, and observed a few of these beetles attacking the plants by gnawing the outside of the stems. There was nothing observed at the time that would indicate the least likelihood of this ever becoming a serious pest, such as it has since proven itself. To have passed over the fact without mention would have been to fail to record the basic observation on the insect as a corn pest.

Curiously enough, during the same month in the same locality the adults of *Ceratoma caminea* were observed attacking cultivated beans in the garden of an old negro, whose cabin was located in