

The Beaver Circle.

[All children in second part and second books, will write for the Junior Beavers' Department. Those in third and fourth books, also those who have left school, or are in High School, between the ages of 11 and 15, inclusive, will write for Senior Beavers'. Kindly state book at school, or age, if you have left school, in each letter sent to the Beaver Circle.]

Beetles.

(Family Coleoptera.)



The Carpet Beetle.

a, larva; b, larval skin, split to expose the pupa inside; c, pupa; d, beetle. The larva is known as "buffalo bug."

A swamp, or marsh, wild, as Nature made it, is always a thing of beauty. What wonderful things may be found in it, "fiddle-heads" in the spring, developing into great ferns, breast-high, later on; Joe Pye weed, and boneset; thick velvety mosses; graceful willow bushes, sometimes with queer willow-galls on them; feathery meadow rue and wild roses; dewberry and twin flower; perhaps even orchids and pitcher plants.

Never, however, is it more beautiful than at dusk of a warm evening in early summer, when the fireflies flitting about by the thousands.

"Gleam, living diamonds, the trees among."

You have heard the story, have you not, of the Irishman and the firefly? Two Irishmen, "just out," were vainly trying to sleep one night, because of mosquitoes, which kept annoying them. They fought them and fought them, all to no effect. Presently a firefly came in at the window, and Pat groaned, "It's no use, Mike. Here comes one of them wid a lantern!"

Now, every Canadian boy and girl knows that a firefly is not a mosquito with a lantern; what many of them do not know is that it is not a fly at all. It is a beetle, and a very curious and beautiful beetle, too, its peculiarity consisting of a bright sulphur-colored portion on the abdomen, which the beetle can make shine at will with the phosphorescent glow which we know so well. You have seen "glow-worms," too, glowing like pale, greenish coals among the grass of a damp evening. Perhaps you will be surprised to know that these are not worms at all, but just the females of one species of firefly. They have no wings, and so cannot fly round among the trees and bushes, or over the meadows, and even into our houses as the others so often do.

And, now, something about beetles in general. They are very numerous, as many as over 12,000 kinds having been classified in America alone. All of them are "horn-winged," that is, they have hard, horny, or tough, leathery forewings, which meet in a straight line down the back. These wings are not used for flying, but simply to protect the under-wings.

All beetles chew their food and have mandibles, but in one species, called "snout-beetles," the head is prolonged into a snout, or beak. Some beetles are destructive, others, such as the lady-bug, are very useful. The various species may be found everywhere, some on plants, others burrowing in the ground or under bark, some, such as the "water-tigers," on the water, others in our houses, particularly wherever a bit of flour or bacon may have been left undisturbed for a time.

At day eggs, from which larvae hatch out, just as from fly eggs, and the larvae change into pupae, which, in turn, emerge from the pupae as full-grown beetles. Much, as you will see, is the very same thing that goes on in the case of flies, butterflies, and moths. Some of the larvae are very curious in shape, as you may know from your acquaintance with the flattened larvae of the potato beetle.

Have you ever had to "pick" them? I can remember very well of knocking them off with a stick into a pail, when I was little, at the rate of "a cent a row."

Some beetles are very plain in color, others are very pretty, especially the "goldsmith beetle," which is sometimes found on swamp-willows. It is of a shining yellow, with a head of burnished gold. There are also beautiful green, and bronze, and red-banded beetles. Very pretty, too, is the little lady-bug, to which you have all said:

"Lady-bug, lady-bug,
Fly away home,
Your house is on fire,
Your children alone."

I hope you let the lady-bug go, too, for she is very useful at eating the destructive plant-lice. Some lady-bugs are red, with black spots; others are black, with red or yellow spots. They are always small in size.

One very curious beetle emits a puff of bluish smoke when it is suddenly disturbed, and so it has been called the "Bombardier beetle."

Now, I will just refer to three more, which you know very well, in some form, at least. The first is the clumsy "June bug," which comes into the house, bumping about the walls and ceiling, often, on warm evenings. This great bug has come from a large larva, known as one of the "white grubs," which, as you know, do injury to crops and gardens.

Again, you all know the wireworm very well. But do you know that it is just the larva of a creek beetle?

If your big brother wants to get either white grubs or wireworms out of the soil, he will have to plow the land every fall, as plowing destroys most of the pupae and beetles in the ground, and so prevents just so many of the larvae from being produced to eat the crop next season. Frequent change of crops is advised for infested lands.

Last of all, the carpet beetle. Have you ever heard your mother complaining about it? Perhaps she calls it "buffalo-bug." It is a broad, oval beetle, with brick-red patches, and two white curving bands on its back. The larva of this beetle is hairy, and so gets the name "buffalo," and it is these which eat holes in woollen things or carpets. Soaking the infested things with gasoline will kill both beetles and larvae, but when using it there must be no fire in the room, not even a lamp or a burning match, for fear of explosion and a big burn-up. I knew a girl who was very badly burned because her little brother came near with a toy lantern when she was washing a pair of gloves with gasoline. There is no danger, however, if no flame is near, and if windows are kept open until all the fumes and gases from the liquid have gone out. Gasoline should be tightly corked, and kept in a cool place. P.

Our School Fair.

[The following is the second composition on the North Dumfries School Fair. The third will be held over until towards spring, when it will be time to think about planting things for next year's fairs. By that time, I hope it will have some company from other schools, and some pictures of rural-school fairs, and the boys and girls who got them up. Don't you think we can manage this? By the way, this is a very good composition, Bessie.]

Dear Puck and Beavers,—I feel as if I should write to the Beavers and tell them of what is going on in Waterloo County. I am very shy, like some red squirrels, and I do not like beginning a composition.

I am going to give the Beavers a description of a Rural-school Fair that was held at the Riverside school, near Galt, October 1st, 1909.

In the year 1908, in the fall, about November, a certain man visited the Riverside school. I noticed he was well dressed, and he was tall, with blue eyes and fair hair. He also had a buggy and horse.

Miss McPherson, the lady who taught at the Riverside school then, told us his name and what he came there for. She said, "Here is a man who has come here this afternoon to speak to you on Farming Hints."

Are Your Children Properly Fed?

LET us talk about the right feeding of children. Of course, you want your children to grow up strong and healthy; you want to equip them for the battle of life with rugged constitutions and good red blood. Now, the first step is to see that they are properly fed. And these words "properly fed" mean much in the diet of children. For it isn't quantity that counts, but quality.

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