

economic relation to the host. This important information can be best and most reliably supplied by specialists who are studying the different families of insects, and by those who will make a study of the food habits and life history of certain classes of insects which infest forest growth, such as foliage-infesting, bark-infesting, and wood-infesting insects, etc., as special lines of research.

If specialists in these various lines will keep in mind the importance of noting the host relations of the species they collect or observe on forest growth, and will publish the knowledge thus obtained, together with lists of species taken on the various economic forest trees, they will contribute valuable service to the country in the rapid advancement of forestry entomology.

Mr. Webster read the following paper:

THE IMPORTATION AND REPRESSION OF DESTRUCTIVE INSECTS.

BY F. M. WEBSTER, WOOSTER, OHIO.

In the year 1795 my topic would have sounded remarkably visionary and illogical; not that it was not known that destructive insects were being brought into this country from England and Europe, but that there should be any united action to prevent such importations, or to suppress them after being introduced, would have sounded unreasonable and unpractical. But, come to think of it, can we name a single imported insect that has been repressed, or, in fact, has been seriously impeded in its diffusion over the country, by any systematic obstacles placed in its way by the action of man? Is it not nearer the truth to say that we have, as a people, assisted this sort of immigrants, both in reaching this country and in getting inland as fast as possible after they had landed? Our entomologists have increased in numbers and efficiency to deal with these pests, but I do not know of a single one that we have prevented from coming to this country or stamped out after it had reached here.* That we have and are saving the country millions of dollars annually by our advice and experiments I freely admit, but that is only a temporary relief, and by no means a protection against future depredations and losses. Now, there must be something the matter somewhere, and if not with the entomologists, as I feel that it certainly is not, then wherein lies the obstacle? Entomologists do not make the laws, nor are we always able to get those properly enforced that we do have; but that does not settle the problem. For my own part, I have very little faith in State laws, even if they could be enacted, and have often asked myself the question whether or not it was possible for a republican government, composed of minor governments, possibly, as in our case, numbering nearly half a hundred to protect its people from the immense losses occasioned yearly by destructive insects whose place of nativity is known to be thousands of miles away and across wide stretches of ocean which they could never have crossed unaided.

At present we seem unable to deal with the problem intelligently and practically, even within our own borders. We can not, as a people, protect ourselves from each other, much less from countries who very naturally have less regard for us than we have for ourselves. It was with such feelings that I watched the diffusion of the San Jose scale, even after it had been located. Here was a simple problem in national economic entomology, and the question appeared to me to be composed of two propositions, viz.: Could we do anything with it? and if so, what would be the importance of the entomologist in this transaction? We have been steadily gaining strength during the last quarter of a century, and I was a little desirous of seeing how powerful we were getting to be, how much we could do to stop the spread of this pest, as well as to effect its extermination where it had already gained a foot-hold. True, we had no laws to sustain us; but if we could but show the necessity for them we would have accomplished much, for, while

*See appended note at the end of this paper.