

published in St. John, N.B., a most excellent series of illustrated popular articles is appearing from the pen of Principal A. H. McKay, of Platon, N.S. These are in the shape of addresses to an imaginary class at "Ferndale School," and from their simplicity and accuracy will certainly be intelligible to all and give much instruction.

From this it will be seen that anyone now-a-days who wishes to obtain knowledge concerning injurious and beneficial insects can do so with very little trouble.

The ease with which parcels of specimens and books may now be sent by mail and the low rates of postage, as well as the extensive development of systems of railways in all the Provinces of the Dominion, by which it is now possible to communicate in a few days with many localities previously inaccessible, bring it within the power of all to obtain almost any desired information. It is my duty, however, to remind you that these advantages also bring with them their responsibilities, and I take the liberty, therefore, of suggesting certain lines of study in which I believe more work should be done by our members.

Our monthly magazine still maintains its character as a high-class scientific magazine, and should be, as it doubtless is by most, carefully read by all our members. I should, however, be glad to see some new names amongst the contributors. There are also certain orders of insects which receive little attention at our hands, and the work, although good, is being done by too small a number of workers. Amongst the lines of investigation which demand our attention, I would mention, first of all, the clearing up of the missing links in the life-histories of our common and conspicuous injurious and beneficial insects. There is a great deal yet to be done with regard to the common injurious insects, as out worms, wire-worms, etc. Again the advantages of easy access to the North-West Territories and British Columbia by means of the Canadian Pacific Railway must not be neglected. By the completion of this great highway, connecting the Pacific with the Atlantic it is now possible for us to receive eggs of nearly all the unknown species of our diurnal lepidoptera. The ease with which these can be reared from the egg has been explained in the *Canadian Entomologist* by our highly esteemed contributor, Mr. W. H. Edwards. The keen pleasure to be derived from breeding insects and watching them through all their stages can only be appreciated by those who have tried it. All I can say is that I, for my part, have never derived more true pleasure from any occupation. The excitement of catching the female, the anxiety to know whether she will lay eggs and whether these will hatch, then watching the small larvæ through their successive moults till they are full grown, and the final emergence of the perfect insect, all are intensely interesting. Now the large number of Canadian lepidoptera of which the preparatory stages are unknown, but of which we could with comparative ease obtain eggs, should surely induce some of us to make a great effort to clear up some of these points. Let us, at any rate, try to have a few of them disposed of before the next annual meeting.

Another study of enormous importance which might well receive more attention is that of the dipterous and hymenopterous parasites of injurious insects. Mr. Harrington, of our Council, has done good work in this line. The Abbé Provancher, of Quebec, has also in his excellent little magazine, *La Naturaliste Canadien*, published lately much valuable information concerning both the hymenoptera and the hemiptera.

In this connection I would mention a curious discovery made during the past summer. In examining the seeds of the common Canada thistle with a view to finding out the extent of their fertility, I was surprised to find that in nearly every head most of the seeds had been destroyed by a white dipterous larva, which was generally placed head downwards, only showing a brown disk with two pores on the upper end. It had a peculiar habit of enveloping itself with the pappus of the thistle, which was wrapped tightly round it, as though the larva had twisted itself round and round and drawn the silky pappus with it until a thick wad was formed. This is probably as a protection during the winter, for most of these larvæ were mature, and some which I have in breeding jars remain quiet in these coverings. I was naturally much interested in this beneficial insect which had suddenly developed in such large numbers; but my surprise was great when I found that from upwards of 200 specimens collected, most of them produced a small parasitic hymenopterous fly of a kind unknown to me. We had then the somewhat paradoxical result of an insect parasitic upon another insect being noxious; but

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