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ON SOME OF OUR COMMON INSECTS.

15.—THE COCCINELLIDÆ.

BY R. V. ROGERS, KINGSTON.

“Of all the painted populace that live in fields and live ambrosial lives,” there is scarcely a family better known than those which compose the last of all the tribes of Hard-shells, the Coccinellidæ. To the young and to the old, to the illiterate and to the scientist, they are equally familiar and equally interesting. Popular sympathy is extended towards them by the elders because they do much good in preventing the excessive multiplication of Aphides; by the juveniles because they are very pretty little things and tamely pitter-patter to and fro, and their supposed misfortunes affect deeply sensitive little hearts, while infantile accents lisp “Lady-bird, lady-bird, fly away home; your house is on fire, your children are burned.” They are distinguishable chiefly by the colors of and the spots upon their wing covers; the different species are sometimes difficult to discriminate; they number upwards of one thousand, and more than thirty species are known to inhabit Canada.

The general colors of the Coccinellidæ are yellow, red or orange, with black spots, and black with red, white or yellow spots, the spots being either lunate or round. Their shape is hemispherical, and although of variable size, an average specimen “bears a considerable resemblance in size and figure to an ordinary split pea; they have but very short legs and therefore creep but slowly; their powers of flight, however, are considerable.” When alarmed or laid hold of, they fold up their tiny limbs and eject from the joints a yellow, mucilaginous fluid, which has a somewhat strong and disagreeable odor. This fluid entitles the pretty Lady-birds to be ranked among the *materia medica*, and to be assigned a place in the Phamacopœia, for it is a superior, cheap and never-failing