

the gaps existing in the knowledge of the history and earlier stages of this beetle. Our most skilled field observers tried their hands in this investigation, scores of beavers were carefully combed from head to tail, the contents and surroundings of beaver dens, either of a dry, moist or wet nature, were thoroughly sifted, then packed up, shipped to Washington and here again subjected to the closest scrutiny. All of no avail; our knowledge of the natural history of *Platyphylus* has not advanced a single step; even that mysterious object the "ultimate larva" has never been found or seen again, and stands out prominently as a sad example of disconnected solitude.

American contributions towards a classification of Coleopterous larvæ are very few, but we have a large number of scattered descriptions of single species. Some of this descriptive work has been excellently done, but a large proportion of these descriptions, both in scientific and economic literature, leaves much to be desired. There seems to be a notion on the part of some writers that it is a meritorious thing to draw up as quickly as possible and publish a description of any Coleopterous larva. If we examine such descriptions it will be found that they are not of any popular value because the untrained reader cannot understand them anyhow; nor are they of any scientific value because the student cannot find any tangible points in them. Such writers do not seem to be aware of the fact that there are many Coleopterous larvæ provided with six legs, the body being more or less flattened, the head a little darker and the thoracic segments a little longer than the abdominal segments, which are more or less transversely wrinkled. Quite a number of larvæ also have a Y-shaped mark on the head. Much better descriptions than those just characterized were excusable in bygone times when there was little known of the classification of Coleopterous larvæ, or when what little there had been published was generally not accessible to the American entomologist; but to-day where, in the works of Perris and Schöedte, we have safe guides to the classification of Coleopterous larvæ of many families, descriptions of such larvæ should no longer be the result of momentary impulse but of a good deal of study and comparison.

It will take many years of hard work before the biological material accumulated in the collections mentioned above can be adequately worked up, and this work will be the more retarded, in my opinion, because I fully side with those who believe that at the present state of biologic science descriptions of Coleopterous larvæ ought to be accom-