

The Canadian Entomologist.

VOL. II.

TORONTO, AUGUST 15, 1869.

No. 1.

LARVA INFESTING THE PARSNIP.

(*Depressaria Ontariella*, n. sp.)

BY THE EDITOR.

Last year our bed of garden parsnips turned out so badly, in consequence of the protracted drought of the season, that most of them were not worth digging; thinking, however, that we might as well get some seed from them as they were a good variety, we left them where they were for the winter. When spring came they looked beautifully fresh and green, and soon grew most luxuriantly, sending up tall stems and producing huge umbels of flowers. There was a grand prospect of a fine crop of seed, and we began to promise supplies of it to some of our neighbours, who complained that their's was not satisfactory,—all, indeed, looked fair and promising till the last week in June, when “a change came o’er the spirit of our dream!” The fine umbels of flowers began to look rather unhappy. Decidedly *seedy* in one sense, but by no means “seedy” in another. Webs appeared over them, tiny caterpillars were seen to be thick about them, and very soon the big umbels were contracted into shapeless masses of web and excrement, the flowers were all eaten up, the prospect of seed was utterly and entirely gone! After the flowers were all consumed, some of the more juvenile caterpillars tried the uppermost green leaves, but not finding them to their taste they soon left them, and followed the example of the seniors, who had burrowed into the hollow stems, and were quietly eating the soft white lining, out of sight of all their enemies. Most of them entered the stems at the axils of the leaves, but some few burrowed directly into them, making a round hole in the sides. By the 14th of July, the majority of them had disappeared inside the stems, and there they lay so thick, some in the larval and some in the chrysalid state, that one could hardly cut a stem in two, at a venture, with a knife, without performing the same operation on a pupa or larva as well. Some of the caterpillars were so unkind as to wander off to a bed of the newly sown parsnips and eat a goodly quantity of them, after having destroyed all our