

1. Place the specimens (except the hind wings, which should not be treated thus) in a dish containing some of the potash solution. This substance disintegrates the muscular and other body tissues quite rapidly, but affects the chitinous framework on which our classifications are based, but very slowly, though the dissolution of enclosed pigments renders the hard parts more transparent. The objects must remain in the potash until they are sufficiently softened to permit of the muscular debris being removed easily and the chitin rendered fairly clear. In many instances this will require but a few hours, or it may take several days, the length of time depending on the thickness, solidity and pigmentation of the dissection. The true way of judging is through experience, which is soon gained. Ordinarily considerable latitude may be allowed the time of immersion, a few hours more or less making little difference in the majority of cases. The mouth-parts of most beetles should be soaked at least twenty-four hours, the legs somewhat longer, while the mandibles and elytra are still more refractory. If it is desired to hasten the process the solution may be kept warm, but on the whole it is preferable to carry on all operations at the natural temperature of the room.
2. Take the specimens out of the potash and lay them in a dish of clean soft water. By pressure with the finger-tip carefully squeeze out the fluid remains of the internal organs, muscles, and so on, being particular to direct the discharge through a natural opening or through one of the orifices where the member was amputated. Place for a short time in another dish of clean water to get rid of most of the remaining potash.
3. Change the dissections to a dish of commercial alcohol. The hind wings may now be added and carried through the rest of the stages along with the other pieces. Leave in the alcohol for at least several minutes, or until some convenient time when the next change may be made.
4. Remove to absolute alcohol. This is for the sake of getting rid of all traces of water, since future successes depend largely upon thorough dehydration. Give the specimens plenty of time, several hours if convenient, since no damage arises from prolonged immersion.
5. Transfer the parts to clearing fluid. Let them remain in this for several hours, since in thick specimens the process of permeation is slow. Thin structures will clear in a few minutes, but if the work is hurried the balsam is likely to be clouded when the object is mounted.
6. Take one of the glass slips upon which the final mount is to be made, and, after carefully cleaning it, place in the middle a large drop of