

NATURE STUDY NOTES OF ANIMALS.

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A short time ago the writer chanced upon a man carrying a pickle bottle filled with turnip leaves, in which were feeding small naked striped caterpillars. He reported that they were causing considerable damage, and wished to know their name, and how to get rid of them.

Most of the caterpillars were small, about five-eighths of an inch long, which is about half their full grown size. On close examination they were seen to have three broad, longitudinal, black stripes, one on the back and one on each side; separating these black stripes and bordering them on the sides were narrower yellowish stripes. Another distinguishing feature was the numerous fine white lines, that crossed the black stripes of the sides. The underparts were reddish.

Some specimens were nearly full grown and showed the markings very plainly.

Our friend and practical scientist thought he had something new; he had never seen them before, and felt sure he had made a discovery.

As we talked about this pest my mind went out to the thousands of schools all over our provinces, and I wondered how many boys and girls have seen such caterpillars during the fall; how many have stopped a moment to notice them, and take note on what plants they were feeding, whether they were pests or not, and many other points of interest, that have to be passed over in silence in this short note.

The full grown caterpillar is a most beautiful little creature, and when disturbed rolls itself up in a ring. Find out what other caterpillars do the same when a great big fierce looking animal called a boy or girl pokes them with a stick. Some caterpillars, like the sphinxes, do not respond in this way when an enemy threatens, but elevate the forepart of the body in a threatening attitude as much as to say — "stand back."

This striped caterpillar does well in captivity, if you supply it with lots of food, and keep its cage reasonably clean. It is found on a number of ordinary garden plants, and is especially fond of turnips and cabbage. For school study, follow with slight modifications exercises II, III and IV, as given in the September issue of the REVIEW.

This is no new form of insect life, it has long been known to scientists, and is widely distributed over

our country. It is the larvae form of what scientists have called the *Mamestra picta* (*Mamestra-picta*); but such a Latinized name has little meaning for most of us; we will remember it longer by a common name that has been applied to it because of its beautiful striped coat, the Zebra Caterpillar.

No matter how numerous these caterpillars may be at any place this season, they are not likely to remain as pests very long in that locality. There are some very fierce little flies that follow them from place to place and keep them in check. The flies lay their eggs in the caterpillars; the young flies, maggots, hatch and feed upon the tissues of their hosts, and so exhaust them that they have not vitality enough to carry them through the resting, metamorphosing period to the winged form,— the moth,— the form in which reproduction takes place. Thus every caterpillar so disposed of means fewer next year.

The little flies just mentioned are often spoken of as the natural enemies of these caterpillars. The whole process illustrates very well one of nature's methods of keeping certain forms in check. We may add that most of our caterpillars, in fact most of our insect pests, native to our country, have similar natural checks. It is only when forms have been removed from places in which nature has balanced them, that they tend to run riot, and for years together continue their depredations. In the end, however, a new balance will be struck, for nature never allows her balance for any considerable time, to remain far from true.

Have you noticed the dark bluish "growths" often forming close clusters along the stem on the upper part of some of our weeds in autumn? Lamb's Quarters (*Chenopodium Album*), is often very much alive with such growths. Examine the stalks carefully. What are the little particles?

They move; on close application you can see them walk; some have wings, but not all, for it is not time yet for all of them to fly; but, eventually, there will be a generation all of which will have wings.

These curious little creatures are aphids, true bugs, and they live on the juice that they suck out of plants with their piercing little mouth parts. This explains why garden plants never have a normal growth when infested with aphids. The Dahlias are often dwarfed by these pests.

With the aphid cluster one is quite sure to find