

## THE BURDOCK GELECHIID

AN INSECT SEED-DESTROYER.

A very common but useful little insect which occurs in eastern Canada is the Burdock Seed Gelechiid, *Metzneria lappella* L. In the Ottawa district there is no difficulty whatever in finding in autumn and during the winter months, the curious little larvæ snugly concealed in the seed heads of the Lesser Burdock, *Arctium minus*. So abundant has the insect become that it is the exception to find a seed head in which the small caterpillar is not wintering. Oftentimes two larvæ are found in the same head. If a seed head is examined several of the seeds will be found to be fastened together and if these are separated the white larva, with a brown head, will be seen in its hibernaculum. It is a short, plump caterpillar and when mature is about three-sixteenths of an inch long. In spring it transforms to the pupal state and the moth emerges towards the end of May or during June. On one occasion I reared from a small handful of heads, nearly one hundred of the moths. The moth is a delicate little species, expanding when the wings are spread about half an inch, the females being slightly larger than the males. The front wings are pale brownish, with darker markings of brown; the hind wings are of a slate-colour and bear long fringes.

The Burdock Gelechiid, a native of Europe and Asia, was first discovered in Canada by the Rev. Dr. Fyles, at Levis, Que., in September, 1898. Since, it has spread considerably throughout the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario. The species is abundant at Toronto, where Dr. A. Cosens has noticed the larvæ since 1904.

Regarding the introduction of the insect into Canada, Dr. Fyles, in the Annual Report of the Entomological Society of Ontario, 1899, states: "It may well be asked, How was this European insect advanced to Canada?" This probably is the correct answer: at Point Levi there is a quarantine station for cattle; and old country hay and straw are often landed with the cattle; and burs containing larvæ of the species have, at some time, been landed with the fodder. The Burdock is plentiful on all our roads."

ARTHUR GIBSON.