

INTRODUCTION.

PERSONS who love nature are apt to be long-lived and their lives are apt to be happy ones. In this country until quite recently few people have realized this fact, and while notably with the Germans, and to a lesser extent with other European nations, we find a love of nature fostered through early childhood, and while there are people of all countries and all occupations who know much about the animals and plants which surround them, and many who make collections and study certain groups as a fad or pastime and as a relief from the daily drudgery of life, in the United States little attention has been paid to nature study in the school and in the family until within the past few years. It is true that there have been Americans who were born naturalists and who have pursued their studies in spite of uncongenial surroundings. It is true, too, that almost every country boy is a close observer in his own untrained way, and that he picks up many interesting facts about his natural history environment. But even the youngster of decided tastes has been too often discouraged by his parents, and, further than that, he has few books to help him and stimulate him in the occupation to which his tastes direct him.

Recently, however, a great nature study movement has sprung up amongst us and in this movement the study of insects must play an important part. They are the most easily observed of living creatures. They abound everywhere—in the fields and woods, in the door-yards, and, unfortunately, even in the household. Subjects for observation are never lacking, and although some prejudice exists against them as insignificant crawling creatures and in large part nuisances and pests from a human standpoint, yet their structure is wonderful, their life histories are most interesting, and among them may be found a wealth of material for the study of broad life problems of the utmost biographical importance. I know a stock broker, an insurance agent, a commercial traveler, a hotel clerk, a minister of the Gospel, a keeper of a beer saloon, a portrait painter, a hardware merchant, a stonemason, an iron founder, a carpenter and builder.