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## THE COLEOPTERA OF CANADA.

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### XIV. THE MEOIDÆ OF ONTARIO AND QUEBEC.

The Canadian species of Meloidæ are few in number, but offer considerable difficulty to the student, chiefly from the fact that some of them are extremely variable in colour and size, while in the genus *Meloe* we meet with a group in which the specific characters have never been accurately determined. The family is characterized by the vesicant or blistering properties of its members (the "Spanish fly" being perhaps the best known in this connection), and, under the name of cantharides, blister-beetles are to be found in every drug store. To the agriculturist they are often a pest, *Macrobasis unicolor* often doing considerable damage to potatoes. The naturalist finds in the curious modifications of the antennæ of the males, a theme worthy of his careful study.



FIG. 1.—Larva of Blistering Beetle.

The larval habits of but few species have been worked out, and these vary somewhat among themselves. The account of the transformations of some European species of *Meloe* has been so often copied in entomological text books that it seems scarcely necessary to reproduce it here. It may be enough to note that the larvæ are hatched as minute six-footed active creatures, which find their way on to the bodies of bees, and are carried in this way into the nests. Here they feed on the provisions and larvæ of the bees, changing their form several times before appearing as pupæ.

Technically, the family characters may be summed up as follows:—

Hind tarsi 4-jointed, the others 5-jointed; anterior coxal cavities open behind. Head strongly narrowed at base into a small neck, front vertical; lateral suture of prothorax entirely obliterated. The base of the prothorax narrower than that of the elytra, the hind coxæ are large and promi-