

ARTICLE XLV.—*On the Insects injurious to the Wheat crop.*

The recent appearance of the Fly, in Upper Canada, having occasioned a good deal of anxiety, we have thought proper to publish the following article, in order to give as wide a circulation as possible to the Natural History of this destroyer of the staff of life. The Wheat Midge, *Cecidomya tritici*, appears to be the species which threatens our crops with the greatest amount of damage. Its history has been known to Naturalists during the last fifty years, but no effectual method has been discovered of guarding against its ravages. There is but one way of arriving at this much desired knowledge. It is by increasing the number of qualified observers throughout the country. Were any argument necessary to establish the expediency of introducing the study of Natural History into all the common schools throughout the civilized world, the best would be that a creature barely visible to the naked eye may, under circumstances favourable to its multiplication, scourge the nations with famine. We do not know how to protect ourselves, and we never shall know until we arrive at a more perfect insight into those laws of life which regulate the introduction, increase and extermination of species. Geology teaches us that there is a power in nature which destroys not only individuals but even whole races. No doubt there is a power which, could man discover it, would enable him to slay the Wheat Midge, as it has in by-gone ages silenced for ever the Ichthyosaurus, the Mastodon, or any other of the buried thousands of the old lost worlds. It is not enough that a few men know at what season the Wheat Midge lays her egg, the time when that egg produces the worm-like larva, or when the pupa bursts to liberate the perfected insect, the parent of new swarms: all this has been for the last half century but a small item in the journal of the Entomologist; our only hope is to have thousands of observers of nature where there are now scarcely half a dozen; and surely when the vast interests depending upon the wheat crop are at stake, there is a sufficient reason to encourage the only science through which the means of saving it can be approached.

We regret that not having duly apportioned our space, much that we had prepared on this subject, together with some engravings already executed, must be excluded from the present number.

The following is from the Report of the Commissioner of Patents at Washington for the year 1854; Department of Agriculture.