

## THE MOLE CRICKET—*GRYLLOTALPA BOREALIS*.

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In the Report for last year, page 87, Mr. James Fletcher had an interesting article on his "pet" mole cricket (Fig. 35). At his suggestion I send a few notes upon the larval form of the same species.

On January 4 last, Mr. A. I. Hayward, connected with our State Experiment Station, brought me five larvæ of the mole cricket, which were found in rather a peculiar situation. He had a number of men putting up ice. The ice had been removed from a considerable space, when, wading around in the water with tall rubber boots on, he found the young mole crickets swimming around upon the water. It seems there was no connection between the open space and the land; besides, as the weather was very cold, they could not live upon or near the surface of the ground.

The only reasonable theory in regard to the matter is that they were buried in the mud at the bottom of the pond, which is a temporary one, having been flooded with water only a month or two. The wading through the mud dislodged them, when they at once came to the surface. However, there are some difficulties in the way of accepting this hypothesis. For example: Could the crickets exist beneath the water in the soft mud so near the surface for so long a time? Westwood says in regard to the European mole cricket, *G. vulgaris*, that the villose coating of the body and wings appears to protect them from the water. Our species has a similar coating of fine hairs; but in the larvæ especially it seems scarcely sufficient to protect it from the effects of the water in a prolonged submersion. Besides, could it live so long entirely surrounded by water, cut off from the air? They must have been in the thin mud very near the water to have been thus stirred out.



Fig. 35.

They seemed very little affected by the cold or their bath; in fact, they were as "lively as a cricket," and were apparently very much at home upon the water.

The life history of our American species, *G. borealis*, seems not to have been studied extensively. At any rate I have been unable to find figures or descriptions of the preparatory stages. It is stated that *G. vulgaris* requires three years to come to maturity, and *borealis* seems to be very slow in growth. When these specimens were taken they were but little more than half an inch in length. They are at this time (March 15) about .7 inches long. In two and a half months they have increased in length but little over one-tenth of an inch, though they have been kept in a warm room and supplied with plenty of food, consisting chiefly of the roots of growing wheat, earthworms, etc. As the female deposits her eggs in early spring, they are probably nine or ten months old now. The mature insect is an inch and a half long, while these are but little more than a third as long. Westwood says that *vulgaris* is inactive in winter. These have been active at all times; that is, not in any sense torpid, nor were they when taken.

When I first secured them I put them in a jar of earth, and gave them no further attention for several days. In the meantime one disappeared, and probably served to satiate the appetite of the rest, as they are known to devour their own kind sometimes when they can obtain no other food.

Since then, in exhibiting another before my class, it was accidentally injured and died. I shall try to rear the remaining three to maturity, and figure the various stages. I cannot say what stages they have already passed through. The larvæ of *vulgaris* are white before the first moult. These were dark velvety, and had moulted once or twice, I suppose. They have not moulted since.

I have written these notes in the hope of calling out other observations upon the early stages of the insect. And I should be glad to know of any one who has studied or figured the preparatory stages.