

in the bodies of beetles, grasshoppers, crickets, and other insects; when they have emerged from their prey they live in small pools or puddles of water. We have often observed them in hollows of the rock filled with water by the waves on the shores of Lake Ontario. Occasionally they are found in pans of milk into which a cricket has fallen. Their scientific name is *Gordius*, derived from the fabled Gordian knot of mythology, and applied to them on account of the intricate knotted mass into which they often coil themselves. The reader will find an interesting and elaborate article on these curious creatures in the May number of the *American Entomologist and Botanist*, by Prof. Leidy of Philadelphia.

PARASITES ON A CATERPILLAR.—E. R. M., Holloway, Ont., writes:—"Enclosed find what seems to be a caterpillar, apparently found depositing eggs. Please explain the matter, as caterpillars do not lay eggs. These and several others were found upon cotton cloths that had been left upon the grass for a day or two. As any conclusions I may draw are likely to be erroneous, I apply to you."

The supposed eggs are the little white cocoons of a small Ichneumon fly, belonging probably to the genus *Microgaster*, which includes a very large number of species. The eggs of this useful parasite are laid by the parent fly on the body of the young caterpillar. When hatched, the maggots burrow into and feed upon the fat of the worm, and at length occasion its death. When they have become full-grown, and almost demolished the worm, they work themselves out of its body, which has hitherto afforded them board and lodging, and form their egg-like cocoons. In about a week, a little lid is opened at the top of each cocoon, and out comes a small four-winged fly, which goes off to repeat the operation on another unfortunate caterpillar. These cocoons should not, of course, be destroyed, the parasites being most useful as a check upon the undue increase of destructive caterpillars.

THE PLUM CURCULIO.—G. C., Craigvale, Ont.—The specimens you sent are harmless flies, though numerous enough about plum and other fruit trees to be mistaken for enemies. The holes in your plums must have been made by the pestilent curculio, and not by this fly. Jar your trees, as we have often recommended, and you will no doubt catch some of the real offenders. We have sent you a live specimen of the Plum Curculio by mail, that you may have no difficulty in recognizing your foe for the future.

CUT-WORM EATER.—J. McCully, of Howard, Ridgetown, has sent us a specimen of an insect that he found destroying Cut-worms among corn. Another was observed that had seized a large worm by the neck, and was in mortal combat with it. It is the larva of a large ground beetle, which, like the rest of the members of its family, is car-

nivorous in its habits, and destroys numbers of other insects. Being generally nocturnal in their habits, these larvae are seldom seen, and not much is known about them: the beetles into which they turn, however, are very commonly observed under stones and rubbish, and even running over the surface of the ground. They should, of course, be regarded as good friends of the farmer and gardener.

Poetry.

Flowers.

Your voiceless lips, oh flowers, are living preachers;
Each cup a pulpit, every leaf a book,
Supplying to my fancy numerous teachers,
From loneliest nook.

'Neath cloistered boughs each floral bell that
swingeth,
And tolls its perfume on the passing air,
Makes sabbath in the fields, and ever ringeth
A call to prayer.

Not to the dome where crumbling arch and column
Attest the feebleness of mortal hand,
But to that fane most catholic and solemn
Which God hath planned.

To that cathedral boundless as our wonder,
Whose quenchless lamps the sun and moon supply;
Its choir the winds and waves, its organ thunder,
Its dome the sky.

There, amid solitude and shade, I wander
Through the green aisles, or stretched upon the sod,
Awed by the silence, reverently ponder
The ways of God.

A Dream of Summer.

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

Bland as the morning breath of June
The southwest breezes play;
And, through its haze, the winter noon
Seems warm as summer's day.
The snow-plumed Angel of the North
Has dropped his icy spear;
Again the mossy earth looks forth,
Again the streams gush clear.

The fox his hill-side cell forsakes,
The muskrat leaves his nook;
The bluebird in the meadow brakes
Is singing in the brook.
"Bear up, O Mother Nature," cry
Bird, breeze, and streamlet free.
"Our winter voices prophesy
Of summer days to thee."

So, in those winters of the soul,
By bitter blasts and drear,
O'er swept from memory's frozen pole,
Will sunny days appear.
Reviving Hope and Faith, they show
The soul its living powers,
And how beneath the winter's snow
Lie germs of summer flowers.

The Night is Mother to the Day,
The Winter of the Spring;
And ever upon old Decay
The greenest mosses cling.
Behind the cloud the sunlight lurks,
Through showers the sunbeams fall,
For God, who loveth all His works,
Has left His hope with all.

Household.

Birds' Nests—Household Ornaments.

To the Editor.

SIR,—The advantage of rendering our homes attractive to the eye as well as to the heart has repeatedly been the subject of editorial comment in the CANADA FARMER, and I fully concur in regarding the subject as one of great importance. Farmers, and all who live in the country, have many ways of adorning their homes without indulging in costly ornaments, which are usually quite beyond their means. Objects of natural history afford the most pleasing means of contributing to this end in almost endless variety; and among the most interesting and beautiful specimens of nature's handiwork, few things are more curious and attractive, or better fitted to serve the purpose of giving an air of refinement and taste to the interior of a room, than birds' nests on the table or other fit place. The wonderful structures of these tiny, feathered architects, are full of instruction. To the reflecting naturalist they open up a wide field of enquiry. Speaking of the mechanical skill and industry, manifested by birds in constructing their nests, Professor Rennie says:—

"This work is the business of their lives, the duty which calls forth that wonderful ingenuity, which no experience can teach, and which no human skill can rival. The infinite variety of modes in which the nests of birds are constructed, and the exquisite adaptation of the nest to the peculiar habits of the individual, offer a subject of almost exhaustless interest. The number and variety of the eggs of birds are curious subjects of contemplation, and should be carefully noted whenever opportunity offers."

Professor Rennie has arranged birds into systematic order according to the construction of their nests, under the following heads, namely: Mining birds, Platform-builders, Basket-making birds, Ground-builders, Mason birds, Carpenter birds, Weaver birds, Tailor birds, Felt-making birds, Cementers, Dome-builders, and Parasite birds. It only requires an examination of the nests themselves, which he has thus arranged, to convince us how appropriate the terms are which he has applied to their several structures. In preserving eggs it is only necessary to make a small hole at each end of the egg with a glover's needle or a triangular awl, then blow through the egg, and the contents will escape. The eggs should now be returned to the nest and fastened down with a little cement, dried in the open air, but in the shade. Then take the nests and their contents to the parlour, where they will attract more attention than any silver tea tray or other costly articles. Besides, any boy or girl can accomplish the task without money or loss of time.

Bayfield, Ont.

A. B. BROWNSON.