

The Life of the Caterpillar

plans: I wanted to find out how the family of the Large White Butterfly behaves when the cold weather sets in. Things happened just as I wished. At the end of November, the caterpillars, having grown to the desired extent, left the cabbages, one by one, and began to roam about the walls. None of them fixed himself there or made preparations for the transformation. I suspected that they wanted the choice of a spot in the open air, exposed to all the rigours of winter. I therefore left the door of the hothouse open. Soon, the whole crowd had disappeared.

I found them dispersed all over the neighbouring walls, some thirty yards off. The thrust of a ledge, the eaves formed by a projecting bit of mortar served them as a shelter where the chrysalid moult took place and where the winter was passed. The Cabbage-caterpillar possesses a robust constitution, unsusceptible to torrid heat or icy cold. All that he needs for his metamorphosis is an airy lodging, free from permanent damp.

The inmates of my fold, therefore, move about for a few days on the trelliswork, anxious to travel afar in search of a wall. Finding none and realizing that time presses,