FOOD PLANT OF MELITÆA TAYLORI, EDW.

Having been asked by Mr. Jas. Fletcher, of Ottawa, to look for the larva of *M. Taylori*, with the purpose of discovering its food plant, &c., it was with much pleasure that I accepted the commission, and now have the gratification to inform you of my success.

I began searching on March 10th, but found everything very backward, owing to the severe winter experienced on this island. Being determined, however, not to miss an opportunity of succeeding, I continued making a close examination of the declivities of the coast at Beacon Hill (thinking it probable that the larvæ had not reached the top of the bluff before hibernating); but after several attempts to locate it, I turned my attention on March 30th to the level land above the cliff, and was rewarded by finding it feeding in numbers on the Rib-wort Plantain *(Plantago lanceolata, L.)*

One peculiar fact I must mention of *M. Taylori* is that the larvæ evidently avoided the old plants, and fed solely on the younger ones, instinctively knowing, perhaps, that they would be less exposed to the attacks of their natural enemies, as the young plants were mostly hidden by the dead grass of last year's growth; however, when the first was found it was an easy matter to follow them up, with the result of capturing about two dozen in half an hour.

They varied considerably in size, some being 6 lines, while most of them were 10 lines in length. I found a cast-off skin showing that they had moulted since "feeding up" this spring; and also that had I looked in the right place a few days sooner I should, without a doubt, have found them. They generally feed singly, but as their food plant grows in large patches it was possible to collect a dozen or more without changing one's position.

They occur all along the coast immediately fronting Beacon Hill, and I have found them a mile away from where they were plentiful; but, in that case, they were very few and far between, although I have collected several dozen during the few hours I could spare from business. They are day feeders, and naturally very slow in their movements.

The following table gives dates of capture with result:—

March 30 took 23 in ½ hour.
" 31 " 37 " 1 "
April 2 " 25 " 1 "

April 6 took 11 in 2 hours.
" 11 & 12—heavy snow storm.
" 14 took 5 in 1 hour.
" 17 " 1 " 1 "

The larvæ are doing well in the breeding cage, and at some future time I shall be glad to submit my observations as to habits while in captivity. Meanwhile am pleased to contribute the above facts.

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ARGIOPE RIPARIA AND ITS PARASITE ICHNEUMON ARANEARUM, AND ITS PARASITE A CHALCID FLY.

BY FREDERICK CLARKSON, NEW YORK.

The nests of *Argiope riparia* were unusually abundant last autumn in the neighborhood of this city. During the preceding summer this gayly colored, but atrocious looking spider, could be seen stationed in the centre of its well formed geometric web on nearly all of the low shrubbery in the uncultivated portion of Central Park. Merciless to every insect caught in her web, her household is nevertheless oftentimes greatly reduced, if not altogether destroyed by *Ichneumon aranearum*, a fearless and victorious enemy. Among a large number of nests collected last autumn, those obtained in the latter part of September and as late as the 10th of October contained ova: a single cocoon possessing by actual count 1,277 eggs; those found later in October, and as late as November 3rd, contained young spiders. Only a few of those collected in October had suffered parasitic attack, but the greater number of such as were gathered later in the autumn, contained the larvæ of *Ichneumon aranearum* feeding upon the spiders, or else spun up in their cocoons sometimes to the number of forty. May we not infer from these facts that the parasite deposits her eggs in the nest of Argiope after the eggs of the latter have hatched, or at least, whatever may be the time of depositure, the larva of the parasite feeds upon the spiders?

In examining the cocoons of this Ichneumon an interesting exhibit of secondary parasitism was revealed. In several of the nests of Argiope containing each some thirty cocoons of the Ichneumon, I found that each larval inhabitant was being devoured by from eight to ten larvæ of a Chalcid fly.

"Great fleas and little fleas have smaller fleas to bite 'em,
The smaller fleas have lesser fleas, so on ad infinitum."