ON SOME OF OUR COMMON INSECTS.

8. THE BACON BEETLE—*Dermestes lardarius*, Linn.

BY W. SAUNDERS, LONDON, ONTARIO.

This interesting little beetle, of which we give an enlarged drawing, as well as a representation of its larva, in fig. 18, is a very destructive creature, dreaded by every Entomologist who has had any experience of its ravages. Its larva is very destructive also in some carelessly kept provision and household stores, affecting hams, bacon, old cheese and other substances. It is a European insect, which has long been naturalized in this country, where it seems to be quite as much at home as in its native land. If this beetle can find its way into the drawers or boxes where the Entomologist has his specimens stored, it deposits its eggs on the bodies of the dried insects, where, as soon as the young larvae are hatched, they begin at once to work their way towards the interior, and here they live and gradually fatten on the dried up viscera of the dead moth or butterfly, skilfully hiding themselves within the body they are consuming, and leaving, when their work is completed, only the bare shell which frequently falls to pieces when disturbed. Where the beetle cannot get at the bodies of the insects to deposit its eggs upon, it will often lay them by the side of small openings or crevices in such boxes, through which the young larvae enter and at once begin their work of destruction. Besides the substances already mentioned, these larvae feed on feathers, skins, cat-gut, hair and have even been reared on bees-wax, so that their appetite is by no means a dainty one, and their destructive powers may be considered good.

The larva is an ugly, brown, hairy creature, its body tapering from head to tail, and furnished with a pair of short, curved, horny spines on the top of the last joint; it is quite active in its movements, crawling about with a wriggling motion. The beetle is about three-tenths of an

inch long, of an oblong oval form, black, with a wide band across the wings at their base, of a dull, pale buff colour, dotted with black. Its legs are short, and it is rather timid and slow in its movements, feigning death for a time when disturbed.

Collections of insects and birds need to have a constant watch kept on them to keep out these intruders. Camphor, which seems to be offensive to these beetles, is frequently used to deter them from entering; but where they have entered and begun their devastating work, they cannot be dispossessed by such mild measures; in such instances purified benzine applied freely to the saturation of the bodies of the insects occupied will destroy the *dermestes* larvae without injuring the collector's specimens.

NOTES ON APHIDES.

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The following notes were suggested by "Observations," &c., on Aphides in THE CANADIAN ENTOMOLOGIST for July, 1873. The species noticed on *Rumex crispus* seems to have very much resemblance to *A. rumicis* in Europe; some other species of N. America do not differ from those of Europe, but have been probably introduced by means of shipping. With regard to European Aphides it is well known that the winged female of many species appears in the spring, that the wingless female is more fertile than the winged one, that the winged state is, partly at least, by means of the diminution of quantity or alteration of quality in the food, and that the winged state enables the species to have a change of habitation and thus to continue its race till the autumn. It is also well known that the male and the oviparous female do not appear till the autumn, and W. Curtis in the last century remarked that this appearance was owing to the change in the atmosphere and to the consequent difference in the food. The male is, in few instances, wingless, but is very generally winged, and the oviparous female wingless, but in some few species the oviparous female is always winged.