

tints of pearly grey, set off by the stronger contrast of bright orange and peacock-blue of the spots on the fore-legs. These insects are by no means as saintly as they look with extended front legs as if in prayer. This devotional attitude earned for their kind, long years ago, the title of "Praying Mantis."



Hu Hu and Beetle.

Nothing equals their ferocity, and the flies, moths, and other insects they prey upon (for their menu is a large and varied one), soon vanish beneath their rapacious jaws. The spirit of antagonism is so largely developed in them, that two can rarely meet without defensively extending their fore-legs in hostility towards the other. The manner they assume when securing their booty is peculiarly their own; to watch them in ambush, protected by branch or leaf, then stealthily steal out upon the victim, rising upon four legs and striking with the front ones (much as a kitten would when sparring at a dog), is a revelation to the uninitiated, and merits all the interest they arouse.

And how quick they are to take

advantage of any position that provides an easy living! In our garden were a great many white Japanese Anemones, and as a matter of course, hosts of bees, flies, moths, etc., came to the feast of honey these flowers advertised; first one mantis, then another and another, furtively crept out from the green, and took up its post on the white petals, as if it were a natural part of the flowers, until quite a number had collected, and whichever insect it was whose evil genius conducted it thither after that, was quickly grabbed and devoured. The writer has kept them for months alive, but could never persuade them to eat any dead insect, no matter how hungry they were; yet they never hesitated to accept any live offering brought to the sacrifice; even though it happened to be a cousin.

THE HU HU.

The Hu Hu is the larva of the largest beetle in New Zealand, and was much esteemed by the Maoris as a delicacy, though not the principal food, as some would have us believe. No one looking at it in its grub-hood would ever suspect it of growing up into a fine, armoured beetle. For it is not ushered into the world in that form, but as a tiny, screw-shaped grub, with a minute light-brown head.

It begins life by tunnelling itself into the interior of a tree, where it lives, concealed by the darkness, growing and thriving on the fragments of wood it bites off with its strong jaws. For months and months it luxuriates in its gloomy burrow, eating the timber, and filling its vicinity with sawdust. Though small and insignificant, a number of them can in a comparatively short time level huge trees; all is grist that comes to their mill, and they seem equally as partial to the imported trees, as to the native. The skins of this grub are shed after the style of a caterpillar's.

When the pupal rest is at hand, it quits its sawdust galleries for a firm oval cavity about the size of a wal-