

The gipsy-moth, which in 1859 stripped the trees of Brussels of their leaves, multiplies so quickly that a single pair might, should all their progeny live, be responsible for the destruction of all the foliage in New Zealand.

The natural enemy of the insect is the insect-eating bird.

"The millions of the insect world are upon us," writes Dr. Hornaday (New York Zoological Society). The birds fight them for us."

"Birds," says Dr. Gordon Hewitt (formerly of Manchester University, now Dominion Entomologist of Canada), "are the most powerful insecticides we have. Their rapid wings, keen eyes and ears, and sharp beaks are the weapons specially formed to deal with these plagues. The great hunter of insects, our great auxiliary," says M. Edmond Perrier (of the Institute of France), "is the bird."

For want of close examination the harm done by insects is too often attributed to the very birds that are in pursuit of the insects. As Mr. Archibald, of Leeds University, says, the damage done by birds is readily detected; but it is vastly exaggerated through the mistakes of careless observers, "whilst the great services they render are appreciated only by those who will examine and consider facts carefully." The bird is extremely visible; the grub is hidden out of sight, the fly is small and harmless-looking. The bird is six, eight, ten, or fourteen inches long; the beetle is perhaps one-tenth of an inch.

A great proportion of the commoner small birds of the countryside live entirely or chiefly on insects. The amount they consume is prodigious, for a bird will eat one-sixth of its own weight in a day. Beyond this comes the fact that even those species which as adults feed more or less on another diet, feed their young on insects—on grubs, worms, and flies. And at what time of the year is this? In the spring and early summer, just when the destruction of injurious insects is most essential for the life and health of vegetation.

Nearly all land birds are more or less valuable, and a large number are absolutely invaluable, as man's allies in the production of his crops, whether he is a resident of the Old Country, living by the product of the soil his forefathers have tilled for centuries, or a settler bringing virgin land under cultivation. His enemy is the insect—mining, boring, creeping, flying—baffling his knowledge, defying his warfare, unceasingly feeding upon his crops, destroying his green things, devastating his fields, existing in myriads, increasing with a rapidity no other living creature can parallel.—(*Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.*)

"I have estimated that the loss due to insect depredations (in Canada) is not less than 125 million dollars annually," writes