

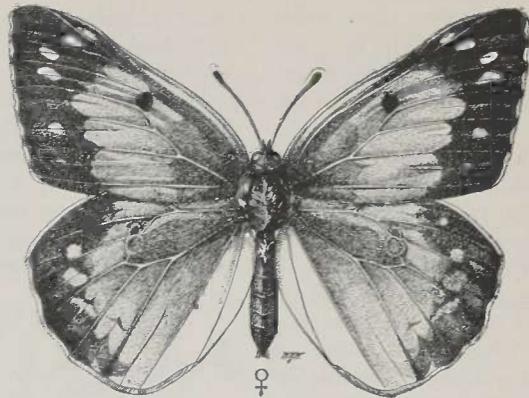
THE IMPORTANCE OF ENTOMOLOGY

P. Klingenberg, '31

Insects Are One Of The Farmers Worst Enemies. Work Of The Economic Entomologist.

UNTIL recent years, entomology has not been regarded as being worth while to be classed as a separate science. In fact it has been looked down upon as a hobby of a few eccentric individuals who didn't have anything else to do. The government, until recent years, would not make adequate appropriations for the development of this most interesting science, but due to the findings that those eccentric bug-hunters gathered together, the appropriations for entomology in the United States at the present time stand between six and seven millions of dollars. To the average individual this would seem to be an enormous amount to spend for this none too well known science. If this individual was told that insects are his worst enemy he might wake up and take notice. As it now stands, man is waging a mighty battle with the hordes of the enemy, insects, and it seems as if he will have a hard time to come out on top.

This fight that is being carried on by these "bugologists" is seen by the economic and taxonomic phases of this science. Economic entomology depends on the taxonomist, for it is necessary to know the life histories and habits of insects before anything can be done to combat them. The economic entomologist discovers the insects that are parasitic on agriculturally important plants and then finds out all about them from the taxonomist; whereupon, after he has learned all their habits, he undertakes to find methods of exterminating them. The average person would find it dull, perhaps, to watch a worm grow or to see an insect get into a scrap with another and kill it—he would not be able to see the importance of a little fight like that. This kind of a fight is very important in the insect world as this is one method of killing off the insect that eats holes in the cabbage crop, lays eggs that cause worms in our corn, and in general destroy our agricultural crops. The economic entomologist is continually discovering new species of insects that will either combat the parasitic insects or destroy our plants. How glad he is when he can find an enemy for a parasite. Not long ago the Japanese Beetle was discovered



Cabbage Butterfly, A Harmful Insect.

in the eastern United States and has been doing a lot of damage to fruit and shade trees in the orchards of the east. During July, 1923, in an orchard of one hundred fifty-six 10-year-old Redbird peach trees, thirteen 16-gallon tubfuls of beetles were shaken from the trees and collected early one morning, in somewhat less than two hours. The next morning the beetles were apparently as numerous on these trees as before. We see by this instance an idea of what we are up against. There is at present three leading taxonomists in the Orient who are studying this little bug to find a method of fighting it. There are many other insects and beetles that are causing so much havoc, such as the pink boll worm, the corn borer, and the chalcis fly. Each is generally parasitic on a single host plant, from which the name of the insect is usually derived. When an insect is parasitic on one plant, the entomologist's job is greatly simplified.

As the taxonomist classifies and determines the life histories and habits of the insects, he has a big job on his hands. There are over 300,000 known species of insects and of course each species has its individuals; with the individuals it has been estimated that over a million species of insects exist. With this prospect before him the taxonomist can well say that he is going to have a most interesting time. To find out all about an insect it is necessary to take the specimen apart, study it under the microscope, and then make drawings or pictures of it from which the entomologist is able to work out the classification. With

this knowledge to work from he is able to aid the economic entomologist in his study of parasitic insects and their extermination.

The intelligence of insects, which can be interpreted as their instincts, has been found to be the highest of the lower forms of animal life. This is especially true in the case of the ant and the bee. Due to this intelligence, the fight becomes more difficult against the parasitic insects. It is evident, in view of this huge number of species and individuals of insects and their importance in the economy of nature, that there is some ground for describing the present as the "age of insects."

COLLEGE FRIENDS

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campus who looks as if he might speak, shout it out to him, "Hello, there." In the words of the poet, Don't go slow; Walk right up and say Hello." Both of you will smile and the next time you meet him, he will be more than ready with a cheery salutation. Friendliness pays big dividends because it lasts and lasts.

After you have learned a hundred or more faces and names in this manner, the casual inquirer in the home town is not going to catch you uninformed. You will know John So-and-So and the others, but, best of all, you will have paved the way for fine friendships, which will be of life-long duration.—Iowa Agriculturist.

Momentous Moments

Watching the circus strong man trying to raise a Pullman window.