

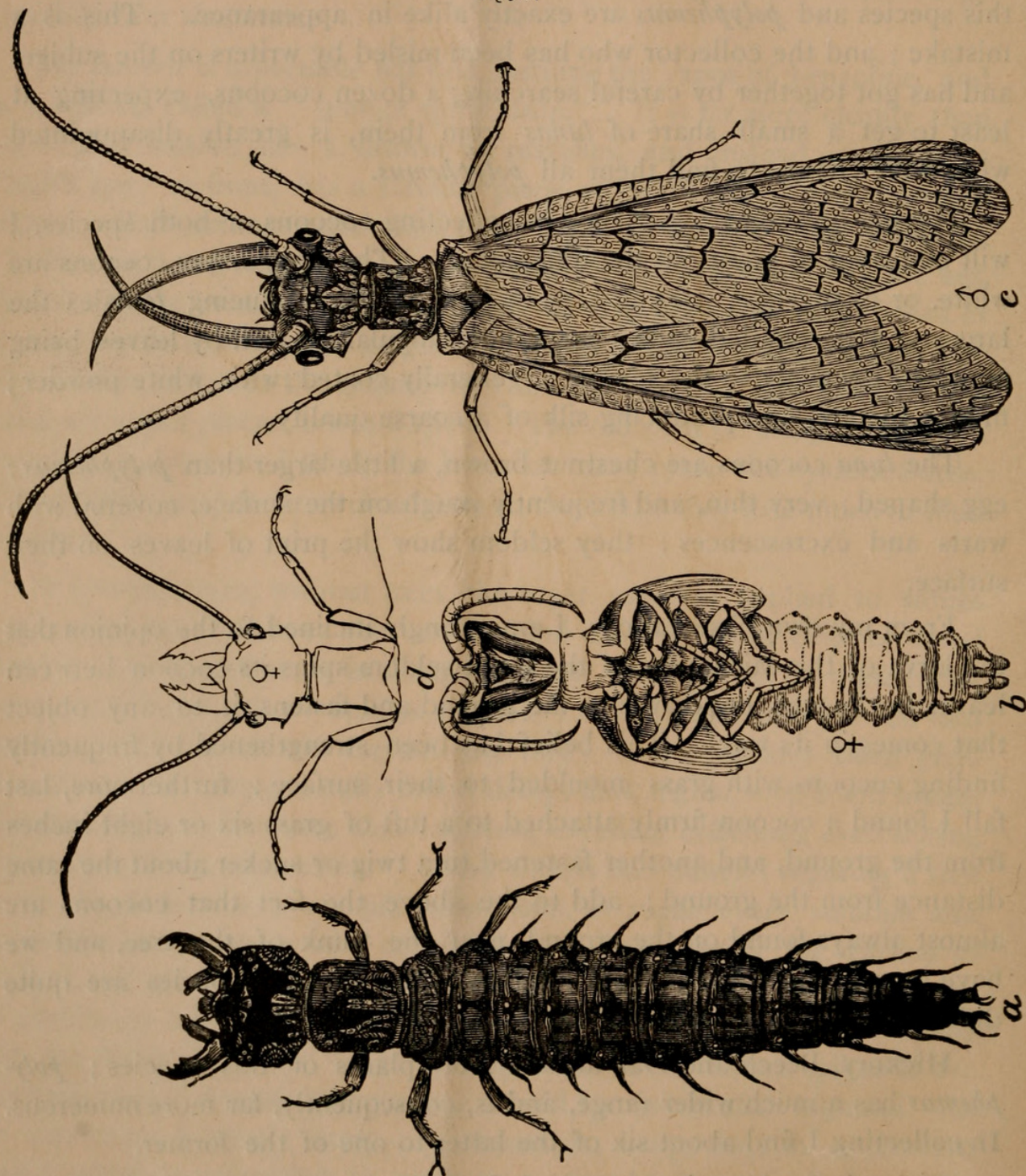
## ON SOME OF OUR COMMON INSECTS.

*THE HELLGRAMMITE FLY*—*Corydalis cornutus* Linn.

BY THE EDITOR.

This insect is common throughout Ontario, and wherever found, either in its larval or perfect state, excites astonishment and curiosity, owing to

Fig. 9.

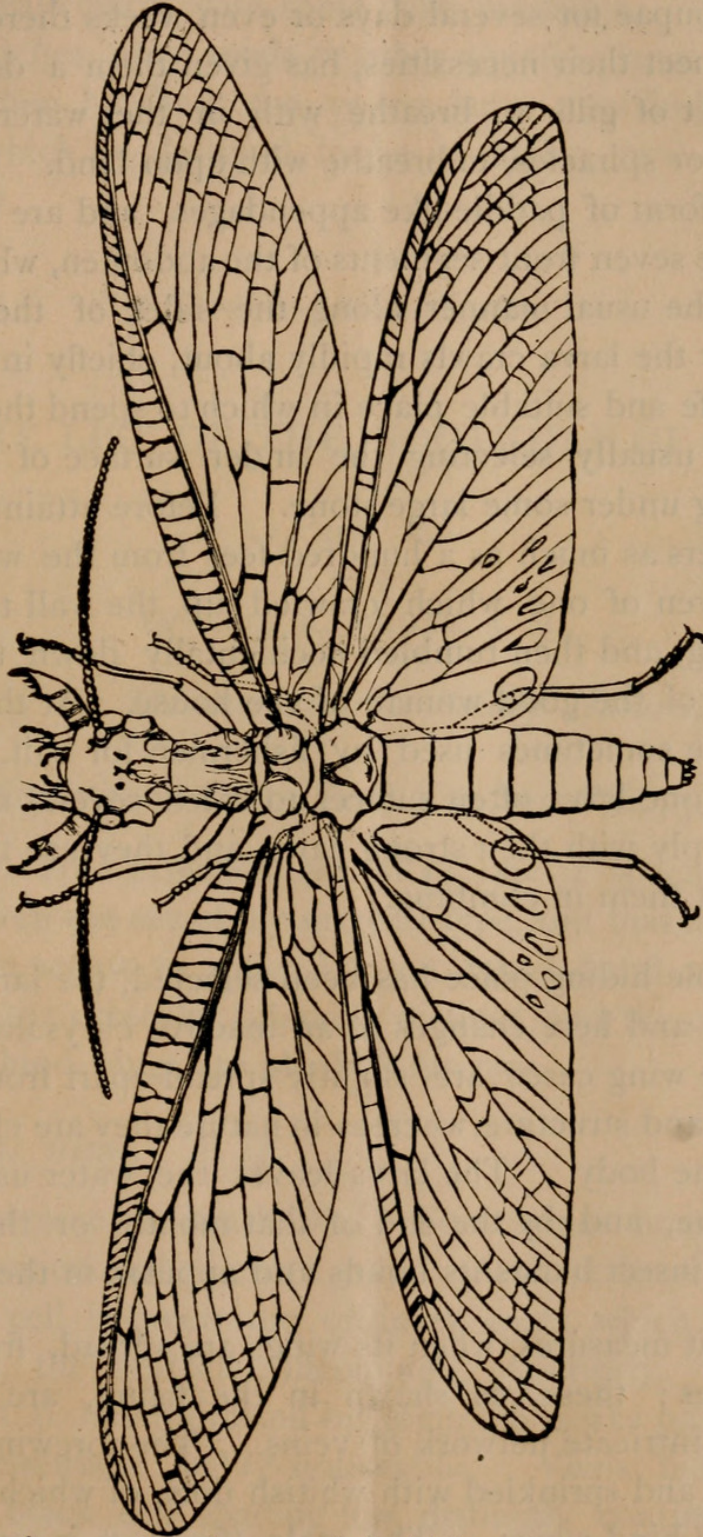


Colors—(a) dark brown, (b) whitish, (c) and (d) light brown.

its immense size and formidable appearance ; it is not, however, in any way poisonous, as some imagine. In fig. 9 this insect is represented in



its several stages, while in fig. 10 the perfect female is shown with wings expanded. The larva, which is a diabolical looking creature, is seen at *a*, fig 9 ; it spends the earlier portion of its life in the water, crawling and swimming about upon the bottoms of rivers and streams, feeding upon



the larvae of various other insects inhabiting the water. Mr. Riley has published an excellent paper on this insect in the first volume of the *American Entomologist*, from which most of the remarks following are condensed.



Most aquatic larvae spend the period of their chrysalis state in the water, and only emerge therefrom when ready to pass into the perfect or winged state; but the insects forming the group to which this larva belongs, leave the water while they are still in the larval state, and do not usually become pupae for several days or even weeks thereafter. Hence the Creator, to meet their necessities, has given them a double system of respiration—a set of gills to breathe with in the water, and a set of breathing holes, or spiracles, to breathe with upon land. In this larva the gills assume the form of paddle-like appendages, and are placed one pair upon each of the seven front segments of the abdomen, while the spiracles are arranged in the usual manner along the sides of the body. After leaving the water the larva crawls rapidly about, chiefly in the night time, in search of a safe and suitable place in which to spend the chrysalis stage of its existence, usually selecting the under surface of a flat board or log, or burrowing under some large stone. Before attaining its object, it sometimes wanders as much as a hundred feet from the water's edge, and an instance is given of one which crawled up the wall to the roof of a one-story building, and then tumbled accidentally down the chimney, to the great dismay of the good woman of the house. At this stage of their existence they are sometimes used by fishermen for bait, and having a very tough skin, one larva often suffices to catch several fish. They can pinch pretty sharply with their strong jaws, and they use the processes at their tail to assist them in climbing.

After a suitable hiding place has been selected, the larva forms a rude cell in the earth, and here changes to an inactive chrysalis (see fig. 9, *b*.) In this figure the wing cases are slightly spread apart from the body to show their shape and structure, whereas in nature they are closely appressed to the sides of the body. The larva leaves the water usually about the beginning of June, and by the end of that month, or the beginning of July, the perfect insect bursts its bonds and appears in the winged state.

In this form it measures, when its wings are spread, from four and a half to five inches; these, as shown in the figure, are gauze-like and covered with an intricate network of veins. The forewings are streaked with dark brown and sprinkled with whitish dots, of which latter there are also a few on the hind wings. The male (fig. 9, *c*) is remarkable for its enormous jaws, which are very long and hook-like, while the female (fig. 9, *d* and fig. 10) has short jaws. The flies hide themselves in obscure holes and corners during the day, and become active as the shades



of evening gather. They frequently fly into houses situated near running water, soon after dusk, attracted probably by the light.

The eggs of the Hellgramite Fly are oval, about the size of a radish seed, and of a pale color, with some dark markings. They are usually deposited in patches, upon reeds or other aquatic plants overhanging the water, where, when hatched, the young larva may find ready access to that element which is destined to be its home until the end of the following spring.

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## PRELIMINARY LIST OF THE NOCTUIDÆ OF CALIFORNIA.

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### Part V.

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BY AUG. R. GROTE, A. M.,

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105. *Agrotis vittifrons* Grote, Proc. Ent. Soc. Phil., 3, 527, pl. 5, fig. 6.

Nevada, Mr. Hy. Edwards, No. 5645, one ♀ specimen. I think I may have mistaken the sex of my original type, and that it is a male. The present specimen seems to differ by the costal band and collar being leathern brown, the orbicular tolerably distinct, and the cell suffused with blackish. The hind wings are blackish fuscous.

106. *Agrotis silens*. *N. sp.*

♂. The antennæ are brush-like. Fore wings hoary over fuscous, with the costal region and stigmata gray. A black basal dash and black shading on the cell between the ordinary spots, which are moderately sized, sub-equal, the orbicular incomplete superiorly. Ordinary lines obsolete. The t. p. line indicated by geminate marks on costa above the reniform, and elsewhere feebly noticeable. Veins indistinctly darker marked. The black cell shading less distinctly continued to s. t. line between veins 4 and 5. Subterminal line indistinct, gray, preceded by more or less distinct black interspaceal marks. Apical shade gray; terminal space darker, fuscous. Terminal line black, fringes pale fuscous tipped with a faintly brown basal shade, and improminently interlined with



Saunders, William. 1875. "On some of our common insects. The hellgrammite fly -- *Corydalis cornutus* Linn." *The Canadian entomologist* 7, 64–67.

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