

**STORIES OF INSECT LIFE:  
SECOND SERIES,  
SUMMER AND AUTUMN**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649420469

Stories of Insect Life: Second Series, Summer and Autumn by Mary E. Murtfeldt & Clarence  
Moore Weed

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**MARY E. MURTFELDT & CLARENCE MOORES WEED**

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OF  
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*SUMMER AND AUTUMN*

BY

MARY E. MURTFELDT

AND

CLARENCE MOORES WEED



BOSTON, U.S.A.  
GINN & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS

*The Athenæum Press*

1901

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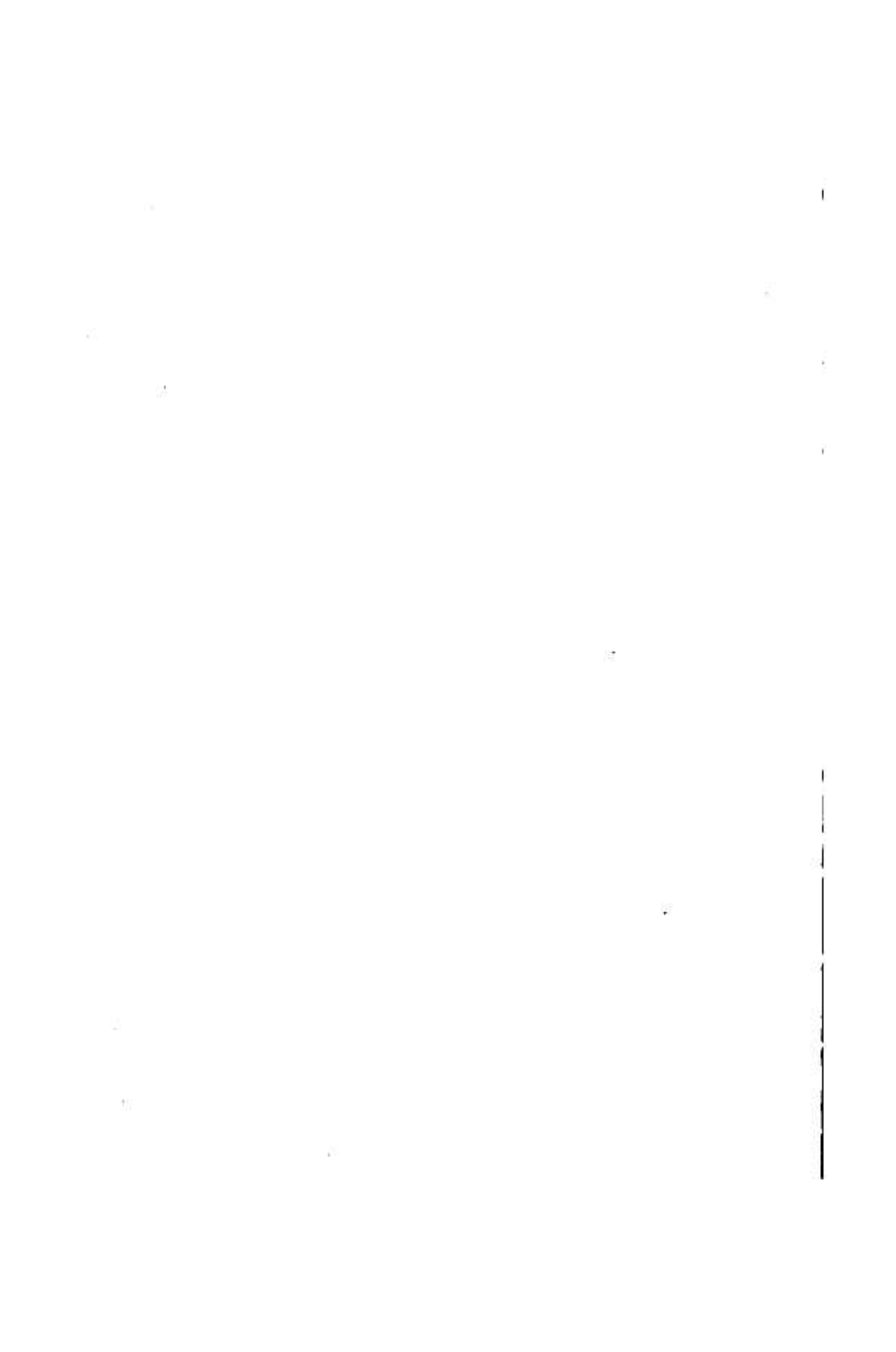
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## SUGGESTIONS TO THE TEACHER.

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IN studying insects it is very desirable to be able to keep them under observation from day to day. For this purpose various sorts of "breeding cages" are commonly employed. A breeding cage is simply a closed vessel in which a caterpillar or other insect may be kept alive and fed, so that it will go through the cycle of its changes where it can be seen. A simple form of such a cage consists of a lantern globe or lamp chimney resting upon a wide, shallow dish, in which sand or earth to a depth of two or three inches has been placed. When it is to be used for large caterpillars a small glass vial nearly full of water is set down in the sand in the middle of the space, with the top of the vial projecting somewhat above the surface. In this vial a leaf or branch of the food plant is placed. The cage is now ready for the caterpillar, which will find its food kept fresh for two or three days by the water in the vial. Then a new leaf or branch may be exchanged for the old one. The open top of the lamp chimney is to be kept covered with a small piece of mosquito netting, held in place by a rubber band. For the lower dish a flowerpot or a flowerpot saucer serves the purpose very well.

Many forms of boxes may also be used for keeping insects under observation. An empty chalk box, with a piece of glass in place of the usual cover, does very well for some kinds of insects, though the box is likely to be spoiled if damp earth is

placed in the bottom. An ordinary glass fruit jar, with mosquito netting over the top, held in place by a rubber band, serves very well for rearing many insects, while for smaller leaf-

eating caterpillars, glass tumblers or jelly glasses with perforated tops may be used to advantage.

To collect many kinds of flying insects an insect net is desirable.

This is easily made by forming a ring ten or twelve inches in diameter out of stiff wire, with the ends welded together as shown in Fig. *A*. The pointed end thus made is to be inserted in the end of a suitable handle—a broomstick serves the purpose very well, although it is a little too large around to use easily. Then a bag, about two feet deep, of mosquito netting, cheese cloth, or some similar material is to be attached to the

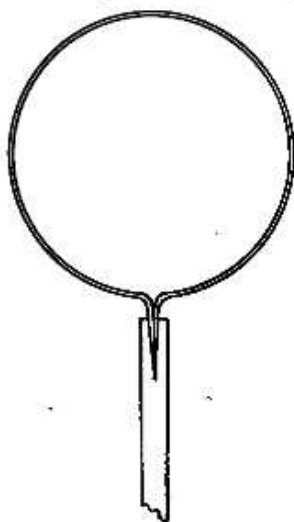


FIG. *A*.—Ring for Insect Net.  
(Diagrammatic.)

ring of wire. If the net is to be used much it will pay to sew over the wire a strip of strong muslin, to which the lighter cloth is to be attached. This muslin in contact with the wire will last longer than the thinner cloth would, as this is the place where most of the wear comes.

Some form of a killing bottle is very desirable for any one who gives even slight attention to the habits of insects. For small specimens such a bottle as is shown in Fig. *B* is excellent. It consists of a good-sized vial fitted with a cork. In the

bottom are placed two or three small lumps of cyanide of potassium, a deadly *poison*, which must be handled with great care, so as not even to inhale any of the fumes; then cover the lumps with a little fine sawdust, after which turn in a little thick, freshly mixed plaster of Paris; this forms on top of the sawdust a layer that soon hardens and remains in place. As soon as the superfluous moisture has evaporated insert the cork, and the preparation of the killing bottle is finished. The fumes of the cyanide rise through the plaster of Paris, filling the space below the cork. When an insect is put in the bottle it is quickly killed.

Larger bottles for larger insects may be prepared in a similar way. Almost any wide-mouthed bottle will do for medium-sized specimens, while glass fruit jars may be brought into use for the largest butterflies and moths. Of course these bottles must be kept away from small children, who might remove the cork and inhale the fumes. Each should be labeled *Poison*.

It is very desirable that butterflies and moths should be preserved with the wings spread out. For this a "setting board" is needed; it is made of two thin strips of pine board about a foot long, nailed to end pieces, as shown in Fig. C, with a space of half an inch, more or less, between. A narrow strip of sheet cork is tacked on the underside of the boards so as to cover the space between them. When the moth is killed



FIG. B.  
Small Cyanide Bottle.