THE LIFE OF THE WEEVIL

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The life of the weevil by J. Henri Fabre

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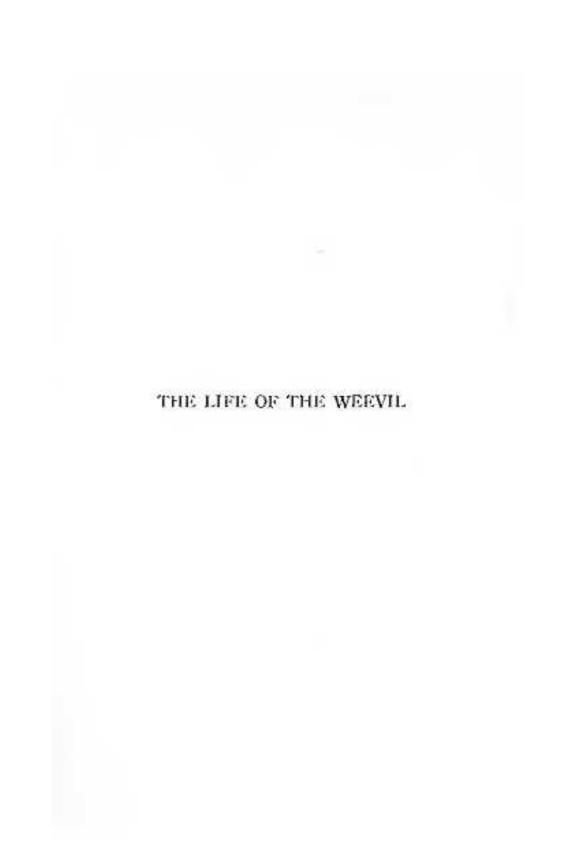
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J. HENRI FABRE

THE LIFE OF THE WEEVIL





'THE INSECT'S HOMER'

Maurice Maeterlinck

THE LIFE OF JEAN HENRI FABRE

THE LIFE OF JEAN HENRI FARRE, The Renemologist. By the Abbit Angustim Farre, Translated by Bernaud Miall.

THE WORKS OF JEAN HENRI FABRE

MORE HUNTING WASPS THE GLOW-WORM AND OTHER BEETLES THE LIFE OF THE SPIDER THE LIFE OF THE FLY THE LIFE OF THE CATERPILLAR. THE LIFE OF THE GRASSHOPPER BRAMBLE-BEES AND OTHERS THE MASON-BEES THE HUNTING WASPS THE MASON-WASPS THE SACRED BRETLE AND OTHERS THE LIFE OF THE WERVIL THE WONDER BOOK OF SCIENCE THE STORY BOOK OF THE FIRLDS INSECT ADVENTURES THE STORY BOOK OF BIRDS AND BEASTS THE STORY BOOK OF SCIENCE

FABRE'S BOOK OF INSECTS
Illustrated with Plates in Colour by E. J. Daymond

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THE WORKS OF J. H. FABRE

THE LIFE OF THE WEEVIL

BY

J. HENRI FABRE

Translated by

ALEXANDER TEIXEIRA DE MATTOS, F.Z.S.

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Translator's Note

I HAVE gathered into this volume the essays on Weevils contained in the Souvenirs entomologiques, lest I should swell unduly the number of volumes devoted to Beetles, of which there will be three in all, or four if we include the present book.

Chapters I, and VII, to IX, have already appeared, wholly or in part, in an illustrated miscellany, entitled The Life and Love of the Insect, translated by myself and published by Messrs. Adam and Charles Black (in America by the Macmillan Co.), and Chapter V. and parts of Chapters XI. and XII. in a similar volume, entitled Social Life in the Insect World, translated by Mr. Bernard Miall and published by Messrs. T. Fisher Unwin Ltd. (in America by the Century Co.). I am permitted by arrangement with the firms named to retranslate and reissue the chapters in question for the purpose of this collected and definitive edition of Fabre's entomological works.

I am also under no small obligation to Mr. Miall, who has given me the benefit of his assistance throughout.

Alexander Teixeira de Mattos.

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Chapter i

THE OLD WEEVILS

In winter, when the insect takes an enforced rest, the study of numismatics affords me some delightful moments. I love to interrogate its metal disks, the records of the petty things which men call history. In this soil of Provence, where the Greek planted the olive-tree and the Roman planted the law, the peasant finds coins, scattered more or less everywhere, when he turns the sod. He brings them to me and consults me upon their pecuniary value, never upon their meaning.

What matters to him the inscription on his treasure-trove! Men suffered of yore, they suffer to-day, they will suffer in the future: to him all history is summed up in that! The rest is sheer futility, a pastime of the idle.

I do not possess this lofty philosophy of indifference to things of the past. I scratch the piece of money with my finger-nail, I carefully strip it of its earthy rind, I examine it with the magnifyingglass, I try to decipher its lettering. And my satisfaction is no small one when the bronze or silver disk has spoken. For then I have read a page of humanity, not in books, which are