

THE
HISTORY OF INSECTS.



And God made every thing that creepeth upon the earth.—*Genesis, i. 25.*

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Observe the insect race ordained to keep,
The silent sabbath of a half year's sleep!
Entomb'd beneath the filmy web they lie,
And wait the influence of a kinder sky;
When vernal sunbeams pierce the dark
retreat,
The heaving tomb distends with vital
heat;
The full formed brood, impatient of
their cell.
Start from their trance and burst their
silken shell.—*Barbauld.*

THE
HISTORY OF INSECTS.

INSECTS are so called from a separation in the middle of their bodies, seemingly cut into two parts, and joined together by a small ligature, as we see in wasps and common flies.

However small and contemptible this class of beings may appear, at first thought, yet, when we come to reflect, and carefully investigate, we shall be struck with wonder and astonishment, and shall discover, that the smallest gnat that buzzes in the meadow, is as much a subject of admiration as the

largest elephant that ranges the forest, or the most huge whale which ploughs the deep; and when we consider the least creature that we can imagine, myriads of which are too small to be discovered without the help of glasses, and that each of their bodies is made up of different organs or parts, by which they receive or retain nourishment, &c. with the power of action, how natural the exclamation, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all." Under these considerations, that they are the work of the same great, good, and Almighty hand that formed us, and that they are all capable of feeling pleasure and

pain, surely every little child, as well as older person, ought carefully to avoid every kind of cruelty to any kind of creature, great or small.

The supreme court of Judicature at Athens punished a boy for putting out the eyes of a poor bird; and parents and masters should never overlook an instance of cruelty to any thing that has life, however minute and seemingly contemptible the object may be.

“ I would not enter on my list of friends,
(Though grac'd with polish'd manners
and fine sense,

Yet wanting sensibility,) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.”

Cowper.

FLEA.



This very troublesome little animal multiplies very fast among old rags, dirt, straw, and litter, where hogs, cats or dogs sleep; and in the hair and bristles of those creatures; therefore, as a means of avoiding such unwelcome neighbors, in the spring the cleanly farmer scrapes up the rubbish about his wood-pile, and around his house and barn, and removes it into his field, where it also repays

him by manuring his lands. They abound in warm countries, particularly in the southern parts of France and Italy.

When examined by a microscope, the flea is a pleasant object. The body is curiously adorned with a suit of polished armor, neatly jointed, and beset with a great number of sharp pins almost like the quills of a porcupine : it has a small head, large eyes, two horns or feelers, which proceed from the head, and four long legs from the breast ; they are very hairy and long, and have several joints, which fold as it were one within another.

GRASSHOPPER.



Grasshoppers are too common to need description, as they abound almost wherever there is green grass. One summer only is their period of life: they are hatched in the spring, and die in the fall; previous to which, they deposite their eggs in the earth, which the genial warmth of the next season bring to life. They are food for many of the feathered race.

DRAGON-FLY.



Of these flies, which are called by many, Spindles, there are various species. They all have two large eyes, covering the whole surface of the head. They fly very swiftly, and prey upon the wing, clearing the air of innumerable little flies. The great ones live about water, but the smaller are common among hedges, and about gardens.

SCORPION.



This is one of the largest of the insect tribe. It is met with in different countries, and of various sizes, from two or three inches to nearly a foot in length: it somewhat resembles a lobster, and casts its skin, as the lobster does its shell.

Scorpions are common in hot countries: they are very bold and watchful: when any thing approaches, they erect their tails, and stand ready to inflict the direful sting.

In some parts of Italy and France, they are among the greatest pests that plague mankind: they are very numerous, and are most common in old houses, in dry or decayed walls, and among furniture, insomuch that it is attended with much danger to remove the same: their sting is generally a very deadly poison, though not in all cases, owing to a difference of malignity of different animals, or some other cause.

In the time of the children of Israel, scorpions were a plague in Egypt and Canaan, as appears by the sacred writings. See Deuteronomy, viii. 15, and other passages.

HONEY-BEE.



This is an extraordinary, curious, and remarkably industrious little insect to which mankind are indebted for one of the most palatable and wholesome sweets which nature affords; and which was one of the choice articles with which the promised land was said to abound.

In every hive of bees, there are three kinds: the queen, the drones and the laborers: of these last, there are by far the great-

est number: and as cold weather approaches, they drive from the hives and destroy the drones that have not labored in summer and will not let them eat in winter. If bees are examined through a glass hive, all appears at first like confusion; but on a more careful inspection, every animal is found regularly employed. It is very delightful, when the maple and other trees are in bloom, or the clover in the meadows, to be abroad and hear their busy hum.

“Brisk as the busy bee among learning’s
flowers,
Employ thy youthful sunshine hours.”

ELEPHANT-BEETLE.



The Elephant-beetle is the largest of this kind hitherto known, and is found in South America, particularly in Guinea, about the rivers Surinam and Oroonoko. It is of a black color, and the whole body is covered with a shell, full as thick and as strong as that of a small crab. There is one preserved in the museum that measures more than six inches.

BUTTERFLY



Of butterflies there are many kinds. How wonderful the various changes of this class of insects! The butterflies lay their eggs: from these hatch out worms or caterpillars, which change their skins several times, and finally, become aureliæ, chrysales, or silk-worms, out of which come the beautiful butterflies.

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