Highland Messenger.

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THOS. W. ATKIN,
EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

TERMS OF THE MESSENGER:

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The Hessian Fly.

Observations communicated at the request of the Hon. H. L. Ellsworth, by E. C. Herrick, librarian of Yale College, Connecticut.

The insect commonly called the *Hessian fly*, which has for so many years ravaged the wheat fields of our country, appears to have been wholly unknown here before the American Revolution. It is usually stated that the insect was first noticed in the year 1776 or 1779, on Staten Island and the westerly end of Long Island, and was generally supposed to have been introduced among straw brought hither by the Hessian troops in the service of Great Britain. The ravages of the insect soon attracted general attention; and as early as the year 1778, serious apprehensions were excited in England that the destroyer might be conveyed thither in some cargo of wheat. The alarm there was so great, that the Government took up the matter; "the Privy Council sat day after day, anxiously debating what measures should be adopted to ward off the danger of a calamity more to be dreaded, as they well knew, than the plague or pestilence; expresses were sent off in all directions to the officers of the customs at the outports, respecting the examination of cargoes; despatches written to the ambassadors in France, Austria, Prussia, and America, to gain that information, of the want of which they were now so sensible; and so important was the business deemed, that the minutes of the council, and the documents collated from, fill upwards of 200 octavo pages." (Kirby and Spence, i, 50.) On the 25th of June of that year, an order in council was issued, prohibiting the entrance into Great Britain of wheat raised in any of the territories of the United States; intending, by this measure, to keep out the much-dreaded enemy. Soon after the arrival of the news of this order, the supreme executive council of Pennsylvania addressed a letter of inquiry to the "Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture," who promptly replied that the plant of the wheat alone was injured, and that the insect was not propagated by sowing the grain which grew on fields infected with it. The prohibition was doubtless based on the erroneous representation of Sir Joseph Banks and Dr. Blagden, which they continued to enforce, even after they were better instructed by Dr. Currie. It is sufficiently remarkable, that, although the wheat was prohibited an "entry," it was allowed to be stored; so that the Hessian fly, if concealed among the grain, would, after all, have had a good opportunity to escape into the country. In eight or ten months, the Government bought the imprisoned wheat at prime cost, kiln-dried it, and re-sold it at great loss, and almost immediately took off the prohibitation. (Memoir of Currie, ii, 65.)

In the course of a few years after this, the Hessian fly was found in every part of our country where wheat was cultivated. From the period of the Revolution down to the present time, no insect in the land has received so much public attention, or has called out so many scores of pages of observation and speculation. These are to be found scattered through magazines, agricultural journals, and common newspapers. But, in defiance of them all, the Hessian fly continues its destructive work, and is probably as little under the actual control of man as it was half a century ago.

Whether this insect was an original inhabitant of this country, or was imported by the Hessian soldiers, is a question not yet settled. At the time of the discussion which led to the prohibitory order, an extensive inquiry in Europe resulted in the conclusion that the insect was wholly unknown there. Yet, in the year 1834, it was found existing in several places in southern Europe, and injuring the wheat in the same manner as in this country. This important discovery was made by my friend, Mr. James D. Dana, who had previously been engaged with me in the examination of the Hessian fly, and was well qualified to decide upon the case. (American Journal of Sciences, xii, 153.) Moreover, we have an account from the vicinity of Geneva, in Switzerland, reported by Duhamel, of an insect destroying the wheat there as long since as 1732, in the manner of the Hessian fly; and an account, in 1828, by Raddi, of what is probably the same insect, in various places in Italy. No traces have been detected of any insect of the habits of the Hessian fly, in our country, earlier than the year 1776; and if this insect is a native of North America, what plant sustained it before wheat, rye, and barley, were introduced? On the other hand, we have no proof that the Hessian fly has ever been found in Germany; and it is certain that, if the wheat were reaped in the ordinary manner, nearly all the available insects would be left in the stubble; and, further, the straw alleged to have been brought by the Hessians must have been that which ripened in the summer of 1776, and from which most of the insects which it contained would have escaped before August, 1776. On a question of such uncertainty, no one need quarrel with another's opinion.

The first scientific description of the Hessian fly was published in the Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, for July, 1817, (No. 3, i, 45,) by the late distinguished entomologist, Thomas Say. He there gives it the systematic name of the *cecidomyia destructor*; and to his description adds a few remarks relative to its habits, and furnishes, also, an account of another insect, by which the fly is often destroyed. Without going into a minute and tedious technical description, the following account is offered, as probably sufficient to enable an observer to identify the insect in its various transformations: The Hessian fly is a two-winged insect, with head, eyes, and thorax, black; the head is small and depressed; the palpi (or mouth feelers) are three or four jointed—the basal one being the smallest; the antennæ are about half as long as the body, and consist each of from 14 to 17 oval joints, besides the basal joint, which appears double; the wings are large, hairy, rounded at the tip, and have each two or three longitudinal nervures; the abdomen is of a tawny red, and furnished, irregularly with many black hairs; consists of seven rings or segments, besides the ovipositor, which is of two sides, and of a rose-red color; the ovipositor, when extended to the utmost, is about one-third as long as the abdomen; length of body, from the front of the head to the end of the abdomen, about one-eighth of an inch; the legs are long and slender, pale red, and covered sparsely with dark hair. The male is equal in size to the female, but generally less black, with antennæ somewhat longer, and about three-fourths the length of the body. The joints of the antennæ are globular, and slightly separated from each other. Several other species of the genus *cecidomyia*, or one closely allied to it, are common in this region. But the Hessian fly is the largest and darkest of our species with which I am acquainted.

The eggs are laid in the long creases or furrows of the upper surface of the leaves (*i. e.* the blade or strap-shaped part) of the young wheat plant. While depositing her eggs, the insect stands with her head towards the point or extremity of the leaf, and at various distances between the point and where the leaf joins and surrounds the stalk. The number found on a single leaf varies from a single egg up to thirty, or even more. The eggs is about a fiftieth of an inch long, cylindrical, rounded at the ends, glossy and translucent, of a pale red color, becoming, in a few hours, irregularly spotted with deeper red. Between its exclusion and its hatching, these red spots are continually changing in number, size, and position; and sometimes nearly all disappear. A little while before hatching, two lateral rows of opaque white spots, about ten in number, can be seen in each egg. In four days, more or less, according to the weather, the egg is hatched; the little wrinkled maggot, or larva, creeps out of the delicate membranous egg skin, crawls down the leaf, enters the sheath, and proceeds along the stalk, usually as far as the next joint below. Here it fastens, lengthwise, and head downwards, to the tender stalk, and lives upon the sap. It does not gnaw the stalk, nor does it enter the central cavity thereof but, as the larva increases in size, it gradually becomes imbedded in the substance of the stalk. After taking its station, the larva moves no more, gradually loses its reddish color and wrinkled appearance, becomes plump and torpid, is at first semitranslucent, and then more and more clouded with internal white spots; and, when near maturity, the middle of the intestinal parts is of a greenish color. In five or six weeks (varying with the season) the larva begins to turn brown, and soon becomes of a bright chestnut color. In this state, the insect bears some resemblance to a flax seed; and many observers speak of this as the *flax seed* state. The larva has now become a chrysalis, or papa, and takes no more food. The pupa within gradually cleaves off from the outer skin, and in the course of two or three weeks, is entirely detached from it, so that the skin of the larva (now hardened, and of a sort of leatherly texture) has become a case or shell for the pupa inside.

The *pupa shell* is, of course, in size and form, like the larva: it is oval, bulging out beneath, and of the same curve above as the outside of the stalk; divided by cross lines into twelve segments, and is about an eighth of an inch long. Within this shell the pupa gradually advances towards the winged state; it contracts in length, but not in breadth; and its skin appears covered with minute elevations. Just before evolution, we find the pupa invested in a delicate membrane, or scarf, (which, not long previous, was its outer skin,) through which many parts of the future fly may be distinctly seen. Finally, this scarf splits along the thorax, or back, and the insect comes forth, both from this and the pupa shell, a perfect two-winged fly.

This is, in brief, the history of an individual which has been so fortunate as to escape all the antagonist enemies with which its race is surrounded from the moment the egg is deposited; but of these, more hereafter.

In the Northern and Middle States, at least, winter wheat is sown in September or October. Soon after the plants have appeared above ground, the Hessian fly begins to lay her eggs upon them; and this operation is continued during several weeks, according to the season. The eggs find on the green leaves are in a few days hatched, and the young larva crawl down the stalk, and take their stations; generally clustering around the stalk at the nearest joint below. Here, by sucking of the plant, they increase in size, become full and hard, and, pressing deeply into the stalk, they impair its growth; and if their number about one joint is large, the stalk is killed. Frequently the plant, although impoverished, advances far enough to head out; but when the grain begins to fill, its own weight, or perhaps the wind, causes the stalk to break down. The injury done to the wheat is occasioned by the exhaustion of the sap, and by the pressure on the yielding stalk.

In five or six weeks the larva stop feeding, the outer skin turns brown, and within this brown and leathery case the pupa pass the winter—generally a little below the surface of the earth. In April and May the fly is again found depositing her eggs on the same wheat, (viz: that from grain sown the preceding autumn,) and also on the spring wheat which has just come up. These eggs hatch, and the larva therefrom operate in the same manner as those of the autumn previous.—These larva become pupa about the middle of June. The flies which lay their eggs in the spring are probably in part from the pupa which became such late in the preceding autumn, and partly from pupa contained in stubble left the preceding summer. The period of the existence of the Hessian fly in the pupa or flax-seed state is exceedingly variable. After much observation, my own opinion is, that, in general, pupa which become such late in the autumn evolve the winged insect partly during the next spring, and partly in the summer and autumn following. Those pupa which become such about June evolve the winged insect partly during the next autumn and partly during the year succeeding.

The Hessian fly is attacked by numerous foes, which, in various stages of its existence, destroy a large part of every generation.—Whether it has, in its winged state, any enemies, except the ordinary destroyers of flies, I know not. The eggs, while lying on the leaves of the young plant, are visited by a very minute four-winged insect, (a species of platygaster,) which lays in them its own eggs. From later observation, it appears that, occasionally, as many as five or six eggs of this parasite are laid in a single egg of the Hessian fly. The latter egg hatches and becomes a pupa, as usual: but from the pupa case, instead of the Hessian fly, issues one or more of these minute parasites.

The pupa, while imbedded in the stalk, are attacked by at least *three* different minute parasites, (four-winged hymenoptera,) which, boring through the sheath of the stalk, deposite their eggs in the body within; and the latter is finally devoured by the parasite larva. These are the principal means by which the multiplication of the Hessian fly is restrained within tolerable limits.

Although the loss annually sustained by the wheat growers of this country, in consequence of the ravages of the Hessian fly, is severe, yet it is well nigh impossible to ascertain even its probable amount. As long since as 1800, Dr. S. L. Mitchill, of New York, affirmed that the "insect is more formidable to us than would be an army of twenty thousand Hessians." In 1804, President Dwight, of Yale College, remarked that "this insect is feeble and helpless in the extreme, defenceless against the least enemy, and crushed by the most delicate touch; yet, for many years, it has taxed this country, annually, more, perhaps than a million of dollars." At the present day, the amount of the injury inflicted probably far exceeds what it was forty years since; and to discover some feasible mode of exterminating the insect, or, at least, of arresting its ravages, is an object of great importance to this country.

Various remedial measures have, from time to time, been proposed; most of which I will here state.

1st. Steeping the seed wheat in cider-juice, solution of nitre, boiling water, or other liquids; or rolling in lime, ashes, or some other substance, in order to kill the eggs.—But as the eggs of the Hessian fly are not on the seed, they will never be hurt by such processes. So far as these means give vigor to the plant, they may be of some little service.

2d. Sowing seed obtained from places in which the insect has not made its appearance, (American Museum, iv, 47.) This recommendation also assumes the error that the eggs are laid on the grain, and will be found, as it has often proved, useless as respects this insect.

3d. Abstaining rigidly throughout the whole grain-growing region of North America from planting wheat, rye, barley, or oats, for one, two, or three years, and thus to starve out the insect! This plan might be effectual, but would obviously involve some inconvenience.

4th. Manuring the land very highly, so that the plants will grow vigorously, and be sooner out of the way of the insect, and also better able to resist it. This proposal has some merit, but does nothing towards destroying the insect.

5th. Sowing some variety of bearded wheat, flint wheat, &c., supposed to have a harder and more solid stalk than common wheat, and better able to withstand the impression of the larvæ. A suggestion of some value, but, equally with 4th, leaves the insect unharmed.

6th. Fumigating the wheat field, and sprinkling the young wheat with infusions of elder and with other steeps. If successful, which is quite uncertain, it is plain that these measures are impracticable on a large scale.

7th. Sowing winter wheat very late in the autumn, so that the fly shall have mostly disappeared before the plants are large enough to be attacked. No doubt this plan is to some extent useful, but the wheat sown late is in great danger of perishing during the winter. The fly will of course attack it in the spring, yet one attack will do less damage than two.

8th. Sowing oats early in autumn on the intended wheat-field. It is supposed the fly will lay its eggs on the plant; then let them be ploughed in, and the wheat sown. The fly having nearly exhausted itself on the oats, the wheat will suffer less. This plan may possibly be of some partial utility.

9th. Drawing a heavy roller over the young wheat both in autumn and spring. This process must be useful in crushing many eggs and larvæ.

10. Permitting sheep and other animals to graze the wheat-fields while the insects are laying their eggs. By these means large numbers of the eggs will be devoured with the leaves.

11. Burning the stubble immediately after harvest, and ploughing in the remains. This is by far the most practicable and effectual mode of exterminating the insect, or at least, of checking its increase. In the stubble are many pupa of the fly, at this time completely in our power; if, in reaping, the stubble is left high, the fire would sweep rapidly over a field, and destroy nearly all these pupa; the few which escaped the fire, would, by the plough, be buried so deep as to perish in the earth; mere ploughing in of the stubble must be highly useful. If the two recommendations last named were thoroughly put in practice over the whole country—not only upon wheat, but also on rye and barley, and any other plants attacked by the Hessian fly—the ravages of this insect would, in all probability, ere long, become scarcely worthy of notice.

It may not be improper, in this place, to state that the foregoing account of the habits of the Hessian fly is derived from my own long-continued observations, and that I have moreover endeavored to consult all the papers of any importance which have been published on the subject.

There are in the United States, besides the Hessian fly, several other insects which attack the wheat while in the field. Those persons who assert that the former lays its eggs on the grain in the spike or head, have undoubtedly mistaken for the Hessian fly some one of these other insects. The following brief notices of the more important of these enemies, I have abridged from the accounts comprised in Dr. T. W. Harris' "*Treatise on some of the insects of New England, which are injurious to vegetation*," (Camb. 1842; 459 pages, 8vo.,) a work of great interest and value.

In it the inquirer will find a faithful digest of all the reliable information we have on the numerous insects which injure our plants, fruits, and trees; and, in addition, he will learn the means of defence, so far as any have been discovered. The book ought to be in the hands of every intelligent farmer and orchardist.

1. A grain moth (Angoumois moth—*alucita cerealella*, Oliv.) probably the same as described by Colonel Carter, in the *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, volume i, 1771; and by J. Lorain, in Mease's *Archives of useful Knowledge*, volume ii, 1812. It is about three-eighths of an inch long when its wings are shut. The upper wings are of a light brown satin color and lustre, covering the body horizontally above, but drooping a little at the sides. The lower wings and the rest of the body are ash-colored. The moth lays her eggs usually on the young and tender grain in the field; each catterpillar from these eggs selects a single grain, burrows into it, and remains concealed, devouring the meal within. Subjecting the grain to a heat of 167 deg. Fahr., for twelve hours, in an oven, will kill the insect.

1. *The English wheat fly* (*tipula tritici*, Kirby,) is a small orange colored two-winged gnat, which lays its eggs in the head of wheat [illegible] The maggots [illegible] head, [illegible] tapering towards [illegible] less, but soon [illegible] transparent and colorless, [illegible] orange-yellow; and when mature, are [illegible] an eighth of an inch long. It is supposed they devour the pollen, and prevent the [illegible] of the grain; the maggots fall from the spike to the [illegible] within which they undergo their final transformations. The insect (or one very similar to it) has done much damage in the northern States and in Canada for several years past; but no effectual mode of preventing the mischief, or of destroying the insect, appears to have been devised.

3. *The wheat caterpillar.*—This is a span worm of brownish color, with twelve feet—six near each end of the body. It feeds on the kernel in the milky state, and also devours the germinating end of the ripened grain. It is said to be found in the chaff when the grain is thrashed. We have little certain knowledge concerning the parent insect or its transformations.

In addition to these three, there are probably other insects more or less injurious to our wheat crops. Much has been published in our journals relative to these depredators; yet their habits are imperfectly understood, and many of the accounts are confused and contradictory. It is greatly to be desired that all who have the opportunity should endeavor to make careful observations, and communicate them to the public.

These observations must be accompanied by accurate descriptions of the insect under examination, and in its various stages; otherwise, most of the labor will be spent in vain.

American Hemp.—Experiments were made at Louisville, a few days ago, with a machine for testing the strength of cordage manufactured from Hemp, which showed that American Hemp, instead of suffering by a comparison with the Russian article, gained by the investigation. In the test of larger cordage, the Kentucky article sustained a much greater weight than that imported from Russia.

Thin shoes are worn in winter by high spirited young ladies who would rather die than conceal their beautiful feet.

No widow is so utterly widowed in her circumstances as she who has a drunken husband; no orphan so perfectly destitute as he who has a drunken father.

A lead mine of considerable value has been discovered near Lexington, Va., on the farm of Mrs. Baxter.

A fossil turtle eighteen feet long and seven feet high, it is said, has recently been found in the Himalaya mountains in Asia.

On Monday, two youngsters, of Philadelphia, "went out" and fought a duel. One was slightly wounded in the back—*and* his honor was satisfied.

A fight occurred on Monday, between the Protestant and Catholic Irish, employed on the rail-road near Port Richmond, Pa. No damage was done of any account.

Houston, ex-President of Texas, is delivering Temperance addresses in New Orleans.

Advertising.—An exchange says, with more truth than is generally palateable, people always like to patronize energy and enterprise. When they see a dealer advertising liberally, they naturally infer that he has an assortment he is not ashamed to have examined by all.

On the 27th inst. a worker in an iron foundry, in Cincinnati, was injured by having a kettle of molten iron poured on him.

On Tuesday 249 emigrants arrived, from Ireland, at Philadelphia.

Rev. C. A. Foster incontinently resigned the office of Principal of the Female Institute at Holly Springs, Miss., a few weeks since, in consequence of a difficulty which arose from his having made matrimonial proposals to several of the young ladies who were pupils at the Institute. Report gave a much worse feature to the cause of his abdication.

North Carolina Scenery.

We are satisfied that our state is less known abroad, than any other in the Union, and one of the reasons is, the most interesting parts of it are not visited by strangers at all, and but too rarely by our own citizens. A correspondent describes in this paper, some of the scenes with which our state abounds, and the grandeur of which would compensate an European tourist for all his trouble and expense in reaching it. The New Yorkers almost run mad about the wild and beautiful scenery of the North River, when it is nothing like so grand, romantic or beautiful, as that every where to be met with in our own mountains. Let the traveller, in search of health, or the picturesque, go to our extreme Western counties, drink the crystal water that gushes and flows in sparkling extacy around, and he will wonder that western Carolina does not become the summer resort of all the invalids and fashionables of the Union.—*Raleigh Register.*

No one died from the effects of injuries received on the Camden race course, but several amputations have taken place in consequence of the accident.

From the Edenton Sentinel.

The Late W. W. Cherry.

At a meeting of the members of the Bar attending Currituck Superior Court, called for the purpose of paying a proper tribute to the memory of their deceased brother, WM. W. CHERRY, his Honor Judge Battle being called to the Chair, and B. M. Baxter appointed Secretary, C. R. Kinney, Esq. addressed the meeting in a warm and feeling manner, peculiar to the occasion.

The following resolutions were then introduced by R. R. Heath, and seconded by T. F. Jones, and passed unanimously:

Resolved, That the intelligence of the death of WILLIAM W. CHERRY, Esq., a member of the Bar residing in this Judicial Circuit, which has reached us during the present term, has been received with profound sensibility, and with the most unaffected regret, and while in this afflicting dispensation of Providence we deplore the loss of a kind, sincere and generous man, and an able, ingenious and eloquent brother, we feel that our private griefs are almost overwhelmed in the great calamity which has befallen his family, and the country.

Resolved, That for candor, amiability, and benevolence in private, and for firmness, independence, ability, and generous devotion in public life, we, in all sincerity, declare our belief that few have equalled and none surpassed him whose worth we now commemorate.

Resolved, That as a tribute of respect to our deceased and beloved brother, we will wear crape on our left arm for three months, and recommend that our brethren throughout the District do the same.

Resolved, That these resolutions be transmitted by the Secretary to the papers of the District for publication, with a request that the other papers of the State republish the same.

It was moved and carried that R. R. Heath, C. R. Kinney and J. C. B. Ehringhaus, be appointed a Committee to transmit a copy of these resolutions to the family of the deceased, and to express our deep condolence with them in their bereavement.

W. H. BATTLE, *Ch'n.*
B. M. BAXTER, *Sec'y.*

Runaway Slaves—Grand Battle.—The Hagerstown Torch Light and News publish accounts of a grand battle that came off on Monday morning last, between twelve runaway slaves from Leesburg, Va., and eight citizens of Smithburg, Md. They were passed on the road to Smithburg by Mr. Adam Shank, Jr., at 3 o'clock in the morning, and supposing them to be runaways, he alarmed the citizens of Smithburg, and a party consisting of Mr. Shank, Constable Flora, Jas. Waltemyre, Henry Lydey, Jr., Calvin Shoop, Wm. McCoy, Jos. D. Price and John Diamond, started in pursuit. Upon overtaking the negroes they were commanded to halt, when they drew themselves up in battle order, their leader exclaiming to them, "Now, boys, G—d d—n you fight." They were armed with pistols and tomahawks, and immediately commenced an attack on the whites, felling several of them to the earth at the onset. The whites being unarmed, except with bludgeons, found themselves engaged in rather an unequal and hazardous contest. Repeatedly the negroes were knocked down, but they returned to the contest with redoubled fury, and being all stout and athletic men, were rather hard to handle. Constable Flora was twice knocked down—Price had his arm nearly severed, and the bone broken by a blow from a tomahawk—he had a pistol snapped at him which very fortunately failed to go off—McCoy had his shoulder dislocated—Lydey received a wound in the shoulder from a tomahawk—Shank was several times felled to the earth, and the whole party more or less injured. However, after a desperate contest, the whites succeeded in carrying off one prisoner in an almost hopeless condition, with two pistols and two tomahawks, which were wrested from the hands of the negroes. Another negro, badly wounded, after following his companions a mile or two upon their retreat, gave himself up. We also learn that two more of the gang were arrested near Leitersburg.—*Baltimore Sun.*

The Duty of the Whigs.

We heartily coincide in the sentiments contained in the following article from the Alexandria Gazette:

We spoke the other day, of the determination of the Whigs to make no factious opposition to the present Administration, but, to permit it, without hindrance from them, to shape its policy, develope its views, and place the ship of State on the tack which it is intended to make for the next four years. At the same time we stated that it was equally the intention of the Whigs to keep a watchful eye upon those in power, to scan their course with attention, and to follow their movements with a vigilance that will never tire. This is a duty they owe to themselves and to the country and, in the language of an eloquent English writer, applied to his political opinions in his own country, "all the more so, if this party in power should be found acting without any fixed principles, covering over its interested views with the semblance of opinion, and shaping its course, professedly, by the popularity of a political creed—really, by that convenient needle, which, wide as its oscillations may be, always *dips to itself*." And, we cannot but think that the intelligence of the country has already detected and marked this dip of the political needle, as exemplified in numerous cases which have occured since the administration commenced its labor of love in the dispensation of power and patronage of the government. As the great work goes on, and the *patriots* of the late Presidential contest come in to beg for and to receive their rewards, we shall see more of these illustrations. Already, it is manifest, that in the bestowal of offices, ten enemies have been made to one friend gained—not enemies outright and open mouthed—but disappointed, chagrined, and mortified partizans, who bear their repulse with ill-concealed vexation, and will take hereafter an opportunity to give "a stab under the fifth rib," where they can gratify their revenge, and contribute to work their own ends. The disposition is manifested—now the execution of the design will be accomplished as soon as opportunity of-