

AN
INTRODUCTION
TO
ENTOMOLOGY:
OR
ELEMENTS
OF THE
NATURAL HISTORY OF INSECTS:
WITH PLATES.

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mur tells us of a little moth whose larva feeds upon chocolate, observing very justly that this could not have been its original food^a. Both a moth and a beetle (*Dermestes surinamensis*, L.) were detected by Leeuwenhoek preying upon two of our spices, the mace and the nutmeg^b. The maggots of a fly (*Musca cellaris*, L., *oinopota*, K.) are found in vinegar, in the manufactories of which the perfect insects swarm in incredible numbers; and sometimes even water in the casks of ships, in long voyages, so abounds with larvæ of this tribe as to render it extremely disgusting. Browne, in his History of Jamaica, mentions an ant (*Formica omnivora*, L.) that consumes or spoils all kinds of food; which perhaps may be the same species that has been observed in Ceylon by Percival, and is described by him as inhabiting dwelling-houses, and speedily devouring every thing it can meet with. If at table any one drops a piece of bread, or of other food, it instantly appears in motion as if animated, from the vast number of these creatures that fasten upon it in order to carry it off. They can be kept, he tells us, by no contrivance from invading the table, and settling in swarms on the bread, sugar, and such things as they like. It is not uncommon to see a cup of tea, upon being poured out, completely covered with these creatures, and floating dead upon it like a scum^c.

In some countries the number of flies and other insects that enter the house in search of food, or allured by the light, is so great as to spoil the comfort of almost every meal. We are told that during the rainy season

^a Reaum. iii. 276.

^b Loeuwenh. *Epist.* 99.

^c *Ceylon*, 307.

scription devour the whole substance of the leaf (most lepidopterous larvæ). And of the flower-feeders, while some eat the very petals (larvæ of *Noctua Verbasci*, *Linariæ*, &c.), others select the pollen which swells the anthers (Bees *Lepturæ* and *Mordellæ*), and a still larger class the honey secreted in the nectaries (most of the *Lepidoptera*, *Hymenoptera*, and *Diptera*).

Nor are insects confined to vegetables in their recent or unmanufactured state. A beam of oak when it has supported the roof of a castle five hundred years, is as much to the taste of some, (*Anobia*), as the same tree was in its growing state to that of others; another class (*Plini*) would sooner feast on the herbarium of Brunfelsius, than on the greenest herbs that grow; and a third (*Tineæ*, *Termites*), to whom

“ ——— a river and a sea
Are a dish of tea,
And a kingdom bread and butter,”

would prefer the geographical treasures of Saxton or Speed, in spite of their ink and alum, to the freshest rind of the flax plant.—The larva of a little fly (*Musca Cellaris*? *L. Oinopota Cellaris*, K.), whose economy, as I can witness from my own observations, is admirably described by Mentzelius^h, disdains to feed on anything but wine or beer, which like Boniface in the play it may be said both to eat and drink, though, unlike its topping counterpart, indifferent to the age of its liquor, which whether sweet or sour is equally acceptable.

^h *Ephem. German. An. xii. Obs. 58. Raij Hist. Ins. 261.*