

ART. XII.—*On the Habits of Dermestes vulpinus.*

By A. T. POTTER.

[Read before the Auckland Institute, 20th June, 1898.]

THIS is a very destructive beetle which I have had under observation for the last three years, having first noticed its larvæ in a building in Whangarei in December, 1895. Since then I have carefully noted its metamorphoses each season. This insect has been imported here, very likely in bones from Sydney. It is placed amongst occasional agricultural pests in England and America on account of its ravages—which are well known—on skins and hides. It is unnecessary to enter on these here; but its injuries to bones and wood seem much less known, and therefore a few remarks may be of interest.

The average size is about $\frac{3}{8}$ in. long. The shape is somewhat narrow and flattened. The general colour above brownish or greyish-black, with more or less very short pale fine hairs, and white pubescence on the head; a broad band along each side of the thorax or fore-body being much more thickly covered with longer and whiter hairs, so as to show clearly, like a long white or grey patch; beneath the abdomen quite white.

The beetle, I believe, will propagate on grease, or dirt of that nature, but only in very hot weather. The larvæ are very hairy, and in length average over $\frac{1}{2}$ in., and when about to change to the pupa state will burrow into the sound wood-work of a building, which in some cases is reduced to a honey-comb. The largest specimens noticed by me were a little over $\frac{5}{8}$ in. long by $\frac{3}{16}$ in. in diameter, subcylindrical, tapering gradually to the tail, more bluntly to the head; general appearance brown above, whitish below, excepting towards the hinder extremity, where the brown colour turns down, as it were, from the upper side, and extends beneath to the tail; a pale yellowish-brown line runs along the centre of the back above, and between each segment there is usually a yellowish line. Above the tail, which is bluntly pointed, are two somewhat thorn-like processes. Head dark-brownish, as also the six clawed legs.

The eggs are hatched in from four to seven days, and the newly hatched grubs, which at first were almost white, in a few hours took the ordinary colouring, and buried themselves in their food. After moulting several times, the full-grown grub formed a chamber in its food material, or in any other convenient locality at hand, when it curled itself up, loosely

covered with some of its own food and the refuse around it. There it lay for five days, then moulted again for the last time, and turned to the pupa (or chrysalis), from which the beetle developed in thirteen days.

The temperature I kept was about 70 deg.

ART. XIII.—*Notice of the Occurrence of the Australian Snipe (Gallinago australis) in New Zealand.*

By T. F. CHEESEMAN, F.L.S., F.Z.S.

[Read before the Auckland Institute, 15th August, 1898.]

THE distance separating Australia and New Zealand is so great that one might suppose it would present an almost insuperable barrier to the migration of birds, save perhaps for those species—as the albatros and its allies—whose home is on the ocean itself. But, notwithstanding the twelve hundred miles which intervene between the two countries, it is well known that there are certain birds—as, for instance, the shining cuckoo and the common godwit—which every spring appear in New Zealand, and every autumn return to Australia. And, in addition to these regular migrants, quite a number of Australian birds occasionally visit New Zealand. As instances I need only mention the Australian roller (*Eury-stomus pacificus*), the Australian tree-swallow (*Petrochelidon nigricans*), the Australian swift (*Cypselus pacificus*), the black-faced shrike (*Graucalus melanops*), the masked plover (*Lobivanellus lobatus*), and the true curlew (*Numenius cyanops*). As to why it is that these species now and then stray so far from their proper home we have no certain knowledge, although we conjecture that in most cases it is probably due to the influence of storms. I have now to exhibit a specimen of the Australian snipe (*Gallinago australis*), being, as far as I am aware, the first obtained in this country. It was shot by Mr. C. C. Sandford on the 26th March of this year in a field near Arch Hill, on the western side of Auckland. Mr. Sandford recognised that it was a stranger, and was kind enough to bring it to the Museum at once, thus enabling me to have it properly preserved. Only one specimen was noticed.

The Australian snipe is very closely allied to the common snipe of Europe (*Gallinago caelestis*), differing chiefly in the slightly larger size, somewhat different plumage, and in the