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has led me to suppose that it lacks the disagreeable smell which is sometimes so apparent in presence of the Common Snake (*C. natrix*), but I know on this particular point opinions differ.—G. B. CORBIN (Ringwood, Hants).

AMPHIBIA.

Enemies of the Toad.—An instance of a Weasel having been seen carrying a Toad in its mouth was recorded in the 'Field' a short time since by Mr. E. Stanford, Honiton, Devonshire. I cannot unfortunately recollect the exact date of its appearance, but believe it to have been about a year ago, more or less. I have myself seen a tame Hedgehog devour a Toad which was more than half grown. Doubtless there are very few mammals, and not many birds, which ever make a meal of a full-grown Toad. The Common Buzzard, however, is known to do so, and in the spring Rats make great havoc among Frogs and Toads alike in the marsh ditches. The vast armies of young Toads which, after completing their change from the tadpole state, leave the water and spread abroad over the face of the country, are beset by many dangers. Numbers are no doubt crushed by wheels and the hoofs of horses and cattle, while others fall a prey to rats, fowls, ducks, &c. I once saw a cock calling his hens together to partake of some choice morsel he held in his beak. This he afterwards dropped, and on picking it up it turned out to be a small Toad. A Corncrake caught by a dog near Orford, Suffolk, in August, 1887, when taken in the hand, disgorged a very young Toad, and immediately afterwards a Frog of much larger size.—G. T. ROPE (Blaxhall, Suffolk).

[Mr. J. H. Gurney (Zool. 1883, p. 303) states that Common Snakes prey chiefly on Toads, which he had found to form the most frequent contents of their stomachs.—ED.]

INSECTA.

Stridulation of Cicadidæ and Orthoptera.—In the Editor's excellent and interesting "Zoological Rambles" (p. 159) the following passage occurs:—"Protective resemblance can scarcely be a factor in the insect's existence when by its piercing notes it proclaims the place of its concealment. In collecting I was usually apprised of their whereabouts by their stridulating music." I should like to ask if this is the experience of observers generally. I have many times listened to the highly-pitched sounds emitted by Cicadas, Grasshoppers, Crickets, &c., in Africa and South America, and have often searched for a considerable time without being able to discover the whereabouts of the insects. In my experience a highly-pitched shrill sound, even when very loud, is most difficult to localize exactly, and I say this with the sounds uttered or made by both birds and insects in my mind. I remember one evening, when I was in Uruguay, an intensely loud and highly pitched or shrill Grasshopper's trill suddenly began in the room.

It was so loud and ear-piercing as to leave an unpleasant and irritating void in the ear when it momentarily ceased. Although the room was scantily furnished, in a manner suitable to a hot climate, several minutes elapsed before we could discover the large bright green grasshopper (about two inches long) which was producing the sound while perched in a conspicuous position. The sound gave us no idea of the direction from which it proceeded. Cicadas, crickets, &c., become silent (p. 160) if you approach them closely (not, however, when they are in a tree twenty feet or so overhead), but begin to trill again if you keep quite still.—O. V. APLIN (Bloxham, Oxon).

PRESERVATION OF ZOOLOGICAL SPECIMENS.

Dermestes lardarius eating Specimens of Moths.—Some weeks ago I set eight specimens of *Sphinx ligustri*, and in a few days I noticed that the bodies of the insects had been disturbed and the paper which covered the setting-boards had been eaten. I removed the insects, and from one of them there came out two *Dermestes lardarius* beetles; I examined every one of the *ligustri*, but found no more *Dermestes*. The *ligustri* were put into a store-box, and on looking at them a few days ago I found their bodies completely eaten away; so much so that with the slightest touch the wings came off and out rolled a number of the larvæ of the *Dermestes*, a disgusting creature, and the greatest enemy of the zoological collector; but I have never before heard of their attacking entomological specimens. I have many thousands of butterflies and moths here, from all parts of the world, but this is the first time a *Dermestes* has given me any trouble in this direction.

NON-POISONOUS PRESERVATIVES.—Three years ago I made a trip to India for sporting and collecting purposes, and had the great misfortune to consult one of the leading firms of taxidermists in London, and following their advice I applied no poison to any of the skins and heads I got, with the result that when I reached home the specimens were swarming with *Dermestes*, and many quite spoilt. Now on former expeditions, of which I have made several, I have always poisoned my skins, &c., liberally, and not a single *Dermestes* has ever bothered me before. I should like to know what the experience of other sporting collectors is in this matter—to be able to dispense with poisons is very attractive, and has no doubt tempted many to do without them—but I wonder how they have got on. Every room in my house is filled with heads, skins, and preserved specimens of all sorts, most of which are poisoned, and none of which, I am thankful to say, have been touched. There is, however, clear proof that *Dermestes* is on hand, and how to guard against the ravages of his hairy larva with the appetite of a hog, and who is the incarnation of everything pestiferous, is a matter of considerable anxiety just now. Any hints or suggestions would be thankfully received.—C. DALLAS (Wootton, Lyminster, Hants).