

they were the *princes* of the Class of Insects, and if we consider the conspicuous manifestation of the Divine attributes of Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, exhibited in the wonderful instincts of those of them that are *gregarious*, we shall readily concede to them this title. If superior wisdom and devotedness to the general good are the best titles to rank and station,—the laborious and indefatigable *ant*, and the *bee*, celebrated from the earliest ages for its wonderful economy, its admirable structures, and its useful products, are surely entitled to it, though they cannot vie with the insects of many of the other Orders in size, and in the brilliancy and variety of their colours, and the pencil of the Creator has not decorated their wings with the diversified paintings which adorn those of the butterfly.

The functions which are given in charge to the several members of this Order are various. Some, like the predaceous and carnivorous tribes of the *Diptera*, appear engaged in perpetual warfare with other insects; thus the *wasps* and *hornets* seize flies of every kind that come in their way, and will even attack the meat in the shambles; the *caterpillar-wasp** walks off with *caterpillars*, the *spider-wasp*† with *spiders*, and the *fly-wasp*‡ with *flies*. But the motive that influences them will furnish an excuse for their predatory habits. They do not commit these acts of violence to gratify their own thirst for blood, like many of the flies, but to furnish their young with food suited to their natures. The wasp carries the pieces of flesh she steals from the butcher to the young grubs in the cells of her paper mansion. The other wasps I mentioned each commit their eggs to the animal they are taught to select, and then bury it; so that the young grub when hatched may revel in plenty.§

Some of the *Hymenoptera* prefer a vegetable diet, and

* *Ammophila*.

† *Pompilus*.

‡ *Bembex*.

§ See *Introd. to Ent.* i. 346.