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OCCASIONAL NOTES.

No. 2.

OVA-SACS OF ARACHNURA TRILOBATA, *Urq.*

By W. J. RAINBOW, Entomologist.

(Plate xvii.)

In the early part of May of this year, Mr. W. F. Howlett, of Eketahuna, New Zealand, presented to the Trustees of this Museum, a spray, measuring about 10 inches in length, containing a large series of cocoons or ova-sacs of a spider, *Arachnura trilobata*, *Urq.*, which species occurs also in Tasmania.

In his letter, dated May 2, 1916, Mr. Howlett says:—"A friend handed me enclosed, apparently the egg-cocoons of a social spider . . . He says the spiders have all gone away now . . . I opened one cocoon and found it full of well developed spiders . . . My friend says the spiders had a very large web 'right across the track.'" In a further letter, dated June 2, 1916, Mr. Howlett says:—"It is 'social,' and of course makes geometric webs."

The species is described by Urquhart¹ as being $9\frac{1}{2}$ mm. long in the ♀, and 5 mm. in the ♂. The ♀ has a glossy black cephalothorax and glossy green abdomen, the latter terminating in three blunt, transversely wrinkled protuberances. In the ♂ the cephalothorax is dull brownish-black, while the abdomen somewhat resembles the ♀ in colour and form, but is comparatively broader at the posterior end. Mr. Howlett, in his letter dated June 2, 1916, says:—"The spider is unmistakable. From memory I call it pure black, with three humps at end of abdomen. The young have a white patch on the back." In respect of the latter, I opened one of the cocoons and took therefrom upwards of fifty individuals, some of which were

¹ Urquhart—*Trans. N.Z. Inst.*, xvii., 1884, p. 37, pl. ix., figs. 3, 3a-3f; *Proc. Roy. Soc. Tasm.*, 1892 (1893), p. 119.

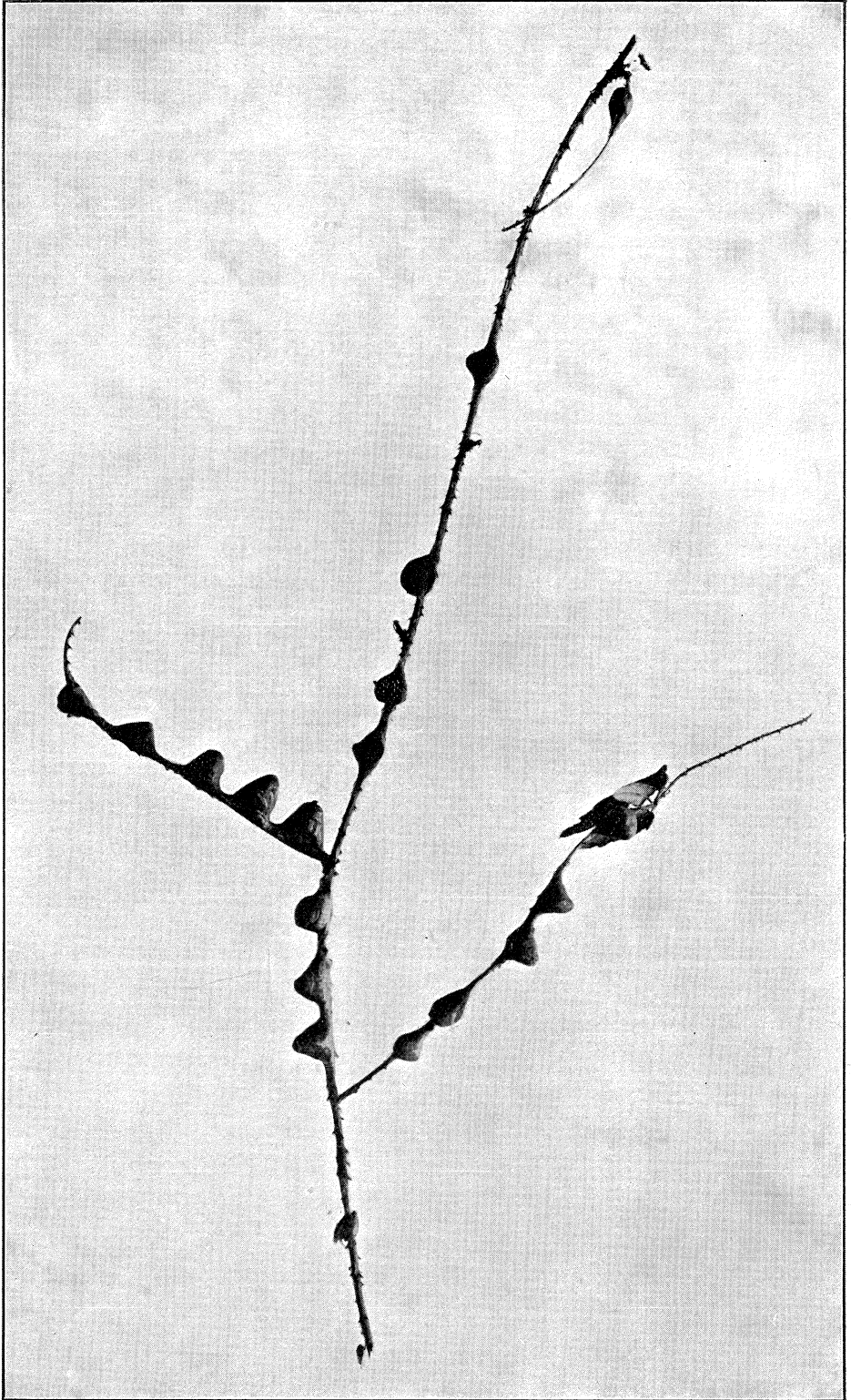
dead. The living examples, however, are exceedingly beautiful, the cephalothorax being bright, glossy black, the abdomen dull black, but ornamented with a broad silvery median band which runs nearly the entire length.

The species disappears altogether during the winter months. Doubtless many die off, whilst others hibernate. The cocoons vary in size from 9 mm., in height and diameter at base to 6.8 mm. They are closely woven, sheeny, light copper-coloured, and glisten, when exposed to sunlight, like a new copper coin; each cocoon is soft and cushion-like to the touch, and firmly bound to the twig to which it is attached, by the silk being carried right round it. Within the outer shield there is another cocoon, soft, silky, flocculent, and concolorous. Mr. Urquhart describes the eggs as being spherical, straw coloured and agglutinated. He also states that the sexes pair in February, March and possibly earlier, and that the cocoons are generally fabricated at the ends of manuka twigs. The figure on Pl. xvii. is slightly smaller than the original, and the plant is certainly not manuka.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XVII.



Cocoons of *Arachnura trilobata*, Urq., slightly reduced.



C. CLUTTON, Austr. Mus., photo.