

## Poisonous Insects.

The danger of insect poisons is very generally overestimated in the popular mind. Everywhere among civilized people, as well as among uncivilized races, there exist superstitions regarding perfectly harmless insects. For example, the common dragon flies, or devil's darning needles are feared very generally by English speaking races, and children in this country think that these harmless insects will sew up their ears. The common tomato worm, or tobacco worm, a perfectly harmless insect, is considered to be fatally poisonous by many people.

Much of the common superstition about spider bites is totally unfounded, while the stories about scorpions and centipedes are grossly exaggerated. The effects of intense nervous fear, following a physical injury of an insignificant nature, are well understood by the medical profession. Hence it is not difficult to understand cases of severe nervous prostration and even death following a sting or a bite from a comparatively harmless insect.

Nervous dreads are contagious, and psychologists will admit that the tarentism, or tarantula frenzy of South Europe, ascribed to the bite of the tarantula, which has been repeated at long intervals within the past few centuries, was largely a dread or panic epidemic. Entomologists know that there is nothing in the poison of the tarantula to produce the symptoms described such as the prolonged dances, ending in coma. The so called kissing bug epidemic of two years ago was probably in a minimized form influenced by one of these psychological crazes.

The truly poisonous insects, that is, insects which possess poison glands and secrete poison with the bites or stings, belong in the main to two classes. Either they sting for protection, as with the bees, certain ants and certain wasps, or they use the poison to assist in the capture of their prey, as with the digger wasps, certain predaceous bugs and all spiders.

The mosquito belongs to a third class and the purpose of the poison which it injects is not fully understood. It may render the blood of its victim more digestible and less liable to coagulation, or it may have some other unexplained use.

Insect poisons, as a rule, were undoubtedly developed for use against other insects. Therefore, they are small in quantity and, generally speaking, are serious in their effects only upon other insects. The exact nature of the poison is not well understood. In some instances it is a combination of an alkali and an acid which become effective only when they are combined. In ants, wasps and bees it consists of formic acid and a whitish, fatty, bitter residue in the secretion of the glands. The corroding, formic acid is the essential part of the poison.

Cases are on record of the death of human beings as a result of the injection of poison with the strings of bees and wasps, as well as with bites of spiders. Such cases, however, are rare. A number of cases are on record of death from a multitude of bee stings. I know of one case well authenticated, of the death of a middle-aged woman from a single bee sting. The physical condition of the patient undoubtedly had much to do with the fatal result, which was probably due partly to nervous shock and possibly to the fact that the poison was injected directly into a large vein and was thus carried immediately to the heart.

Another case of similar nature came under the observation of Dr. William Frew of England, in 1896. The patient, a young lady of 23, was stung on the neck, just behind the angle of the jaw, by a wasp, the sting of which was extracted by a servant. A solution of arnica was applied and, as the patient felt ill, she was assisted to bed. She complained immediately of a horrible feeling of choking and of pains in the abdomen. The neck swelled rapidly and the pains in the abdomen became agonizing. Two teaspoonfuls of brandy were administered, but before anything could be done the patient became insensible and breathed her last, fifteen minutes after the sting.

Dr. Frew saw the body about two hours after death and found the neck and lower part of the body much swollen to such an extent that it filled the mouth. The young lady was of a nervous, excitable temperament, and had shown symptoms of weak action of the heart. From both father and mother she had inherited gouty tendencies and the mother was remarkably susceptible to the action of certain medicines.

The stings of bees and wasps have very

different effects on different people, and without doubt persons who habitually handle bees become immune to their poisons. That this immunity is produced by inoculation cannot be doubted, but there must be an almost continuous re-inoculation. A man may have kept bees for a series of years and have become in a measure immune to their sting. He may discontinue the industry for a year or so and upon resuming it he will find he is affected by bee stings as at first. It is a curious fact that some portions of the body may become immune and others not.

Herbert H. Smith, who is a professional collector of insects, catches bees and wasps in his net and removes them with his thumb and forefinger. In this case, the forefinger is stung so often that it has become thoroughly inoculated, and stings upon this finger produce no effect, but if he is stung on the back of the neck or in some other part of the body the sensation is as painful as it is with another person.

Authentic cases of death from spider bite are rare, although cases reported in the newspapers are of almost weekly occurrence. I have investigated more than a hundred such reports in the United States in the past ten years. In many cases the reported facts were entirely erroneous; in the majority of cases no spider was seen to inflict the bite; there were almost no cases in which the spider was seen to bite and was saved for examination.

Some years ago a baby sleeping in a cradle in a Connecticut town was bitten upon the lip by a spider known as *Latrodectus mactans* and died as a result of the bite. A laboring man in South Carolina in the early '90s died, either as a result from a bite of a spider of the same species, or as a result of the large doses of whiskey which were given to him as a remedy. The latter exclamation is the more probable one.

This *Latrodectus* is not one of our large spiders. It is glistening black in color and a little larger than a large pea. It is usually marked on the underside with a red spot. It is the most dangerous spider which occurs in the United States, but its fangs are so weak that it cannot penetrate the skin in parts of the body that are ordinarily exposed. If by chance it bites a particularly sensitive, thin-skinned portion of the body which is especially well provided with blood vessels the results are likely to be painful and serious. This spider occurs under old logs and rubbish and is occasionally found in outhouses. It is rather common in the Southwest and extends in small numbers northeastward to New England.

I have been unable to authenticate a single instance of death from the bite of the large spiders known as tarantulas, although circumstantially reported cases are frequent in the newspapers. These stories usually tell how the tarantulas have been imported with bananas or other tropical fruit. A good example appeared in a daily paper published in a large Western city two years ago. The scare headlines read: 'In two weeks three men have died from the bites of tarantulas and another had to have his arm amputated. All were Sicilians and received their death wounds in the steaming rooms of fruit houses.' The exact localities are given. I had the matter examined with great care by a scientific friend resident in that city and he found after thorough examination that there was no truth whatever in the newspaper statement.

Many of the true bugs give severe punctures with their beaks. Some of them insert a slight amount of poison, but the inflammatory effects which occasionally follow the bite of most of them are due to the fact that their beaks have previously been inserted into some dead or decaying animal matter so that the germs of putrefaction are thus carried into the human blood. This is the explanation of the comparatively few authentic cases of severe swelling following the bite of the so-called kissing bugs.

The large aquatic bug which of recent years has become known as the electric light bug has a sharp beak and may inflict a severe wound when incautiously handled. Serious results, however, are not known to follow. The large ungainly, predaceous bug known as the wheel bug may give a serious wound under similar conditions, and Glover, many years ago, reported a serious swelling of his hand and a subsequent sloughing off of the skin and superficial tissues of the ball of his thumb as a result from the bite of this insect.

There is a little group of caterpillars

armed with sharp hairs which will pierce the skin and produce sometimes an intense irritation much like that which is produced by the nettle. The commonest of these caterpillars and the caterpillar of the lo or corn emperor moth. The irritation produced by these creatures is sometimes as severe as the severest cases of poisoning from nettles.

I have seen the hand of a young woman swollen to twice its normal size, causing great pain, in consequence of being stung. The President of a Baptist college in the West wrote last year that one of these caterpillars accidentally touched his wrist and 'for eight hours the pain was excruciating and could not be allayed by any treatment. It could be felt for twenty-four hours.'

The caterpillar of the so called brown tailed moth, a recent importation from Europe which exists in numbers about Boston, has this peculiar quantity, and the laborers engaged by the Gypsy Moth Commission were frequently stung by these caterpillars during the summer of 1899 with painful effects. Then, again, the so called blister beetles, of which there are many species in this country, are occasionally the cause of a blistering poison. When one of these insects alights on the back of one's neck, the first impulse is to brush it off and it frequently gets crushed in which case the blistering effect of its juices is very marked.

There is little danger from centipedes and scorpions in this country, even in the Southern States. Notwithstanding an almost universal belief to the contrary a scorpion's sting is no more dangerous than that of a honey bee and often the effect is no worse than that of a prick of a pin. Down in Mexico, however, and especially in the State of Durango there is a scorpion generally known as the Durango scorpion, which is much feared. The stories about even this creature, however are generally exaggerated, and Dr. Edward Palmer, who has lived in this state, says that he has known but one death to result from the sting of this creature, and that was of a young woman who was in very bad health at the time.

In the same way stories about centipedes are also exaggerated. We have no dangerous species in the United States. The tropical centipedes bite with their mandibles and possess poison glands. The old stories that they exude poison from the tips of their sharp claws and leave a trail like fire when they walk over the skin of a human being are entirely false. Their bite is poisonous, but the result is not serious.

In Central America, and among the Mexicans in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and Southern California, many harmless insects are generally considered poisonous. This is due to a special cause. It arises from the fact that the blood of these people is so vitiated by unclean diseases that an insignificant bite or scratch is apt to bring on blood poisoning followed by serious results.

### How a Fortune Disappeared.

The Tribune recently commented upon the manner in which the entire fortune of a New York millionaire, Samuel Wood, which was mostly bequeathed for the purpose of founding a college of music, has been dissipated. Of his bequest of \$1,000,000 for this college not one dollar is now available. Of the sums left to heirs little has been received. In 23 years this fortune has almost absolutely disappeared.

The story of the shrinkage is as interesting as that of the Stewart millions. Wood's will was admitted to probate in 1878. He left \$135,000 to relatives, the remainder of the estate, amounting to over \$1,000,000 for the founding of the Samuel Wood College of Music. From the day the will was admitted to probate litigation has never ceased. The first contestant of the will was a nephew, who finally obtained about one third of the property. The remaining two thirds gone. The executors refused to establish the college, claiming the will was invalid and meanwhile were drawing sometimes as \$150,000 as salary and fees in the year. They were also in continuous litigation with the nephew. When they came to a final settlement with him, and were about to sell the property, another lawyer put in an appearance as the attorney for some of the poor heirs and stopped all proceedings. Then litigation began afresh.

It came out in the supreme court last week that \$135,000 now remains of the property in the custody of the court, obtained through a real estate deal. New suits are to be instituted to determine to whom this belongs. More than one half of it will go to the lawyers. It will be surprising if the heirs get a dollar of it in the end. Meanwhile the only remainder of the million dollar bequest is a little organ in a Long Island village church. Wood, it appears was fond of music in his last days, and was moved to buy this organ and give it to the church.

Its strains were so pleasant to him that he conceived the idea of a great college of music, and made the liberal bequest already mentioned. Every dollar of that million went into lawyer's pockets.

The moral of the story is sufficiently plain. The parishoners of the Long Island church have their organ because Samuel Wood gave it to them while living. If he had bequeathed an organ to them it would have gone where the college of music went. Mr. Wood enjoyed the organ while he lived and the church is enjoying it now he is gone. And this little organ eventually will be the only relic of the fortune which Samuel Wood accumulated after more than 70 yrs. of effort.

## Weak From Infancy.

### THE UNFORTUNATE CONDITION OF MISS ERNESTINE CLOUTIER.

As She Grew Older Her Troubles became More Pronounced—Doctors Said Her Case Was One of General Debility, and Held Out Small Hopes of Recovery—She is Now Well and Strong—A Lesson for Parents.

From the Telegraph, Quebec.

No discovery in medicine in modern times has done so much to bring back the rich glow of health and the natural activity of healthy young womanhood to weak and ailing girls as has Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. Girls delicate from childhood have used these pills with remarkable beneficial effects, and the cherished daughter of many a household has been transformed from a pale and sickly girl into a happy and robust condition by their use.

Among the many who have regained health and strength through the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills is Miss Ernestine Cloutier, the fifteen year old daughter of Mr. G. A. Cloutier, residing at No. 8 Lallemand street, Quebec city. Mr. Cloutier in an interview with a representative of the Telegraph gave the following account of his daughter's illness and recovery: "Almost from infancy my daughter had not enjoyed good health, her constitution being of a frail character. We did not pay much attention to her weakness as we thought that she would outgrow it. Unfortunately this was not the case, and as she grew older she became so weak that I got alarmed at her condition. For days at a time she was unable to take out of doors exercise; she became listless, her appetite failed her, and as time went on she could not stand without supporting herself against something and at times she would fall in a faint. I called in a doctor, but his medicine did not help her and she was growing weaker than ever. Another physician was then consulted who pronounced her case one of general debility, and gave me very little hope for her recovery. Some months ago while reading one of the daily papers I came across the case of a young woman cured by the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, so I determined to give them a trial. After she had used about three boxes the color began to come back to her cheeks and she began to grow stronger. Greatly encouraged by this, she continued to use the pills for several months and now she is as well as any girl of her age. Her appetite is good and she has gained thirty-five pounds in weight. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have built up her system and have made her healthy and active after doctors failed to benefit her. I believe that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are the greatest known medicine for growing girls and I would advise their use in all cases similar to that of my daughter's."

Miss Cloutier's story should bring hope to many thousands of other young girls who suffer as she did. Those who are pale, lack appetite, suffer from headaches and palpitation of the heart, dizziness, or a feeling of constant weariness, will find renewed health and strength in the use of a few boxes of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. Sold by all dealers or sent by mail, post paid, at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50, by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brookville, Ont.

### Buttons, Boots and Brahms.

Mr. George Henschel, in his recent recollections of Johannes Brahms in the Century, tells one or two droll incidents of his intimacy with the great composer. Brahms was—let us put it as respectfully as possible—a truly majestic snorer, evoking from his vocal organs sounds which out-Wagnered Wagner. Therefore, during a little tour which he and Mr. Henschel took together, sharing the same room, Mr. Henschel always tried to get first to bed and to sleep. Being a sound sleeper, the concert would not then arouse him; but if it began before he fell asleep, slumber became impossible.

One night at the inn in Frankfurt, Mr. Henschel was hopefully encouraging his own sleepiness while his companion yet appeared wakeful.

"My delight at seeing him take up a book and read in bed was only equalled by my horror when after a few minutes I saw him blow out the candle. In a few minutes more the room was ringing with the most unearthly noises.

"I was in despair, for I wanted sleep, and moreover, had to leave for Berlin early the next morning. Suddenly I remembered Room No. 42. I got up, went down to the lodge of the porter whom I roused from a sound sleep, and made him open Room No. 42 for me.

"After a good night's rest I returned,

early in the morning, to the room in which I had left Brahms. He was awake, and looking at me with the familiar little twinkle in his eye, said to me with mock seriousness:

"O Henschel, when I awoke and found your bed empty, I said to myself: 'There! He has gone and hanged himself! But really, why didn't you throw a boot at me?' The idea of me throwing a boot at Brahms!

The two men had another interesting experience. A button on the composer's shirt flew off.

"As it was the one which held the collar in its place, Brahms was greatly embarrassed. I propose to help him out, and we went to my room, where I took out of my valise a little box of sewing materials, which I carried with me when travelling. The amusing situation—my sewing of the button on Brahms' shirt while he had the garment on—recalled memories of his youth.

"When I went on my first journey," he said, "my mother also put such a little box into my bag and showed me how to use its contents. But I remember quite well when I tore a hole in my trousers, I repaired it with sealing-wax. It didn't last long though."

### The Toast of "the Queen."

The Glasgow Weekly Mail publishes the following verbatim report of chairman's speech in giving the toast of "The Queen" at a recent agricultural show dinner in Scotland. It gives one canny Scotchman's opinion of the worth of Queen Victoria as a woman.

"Now, gentlemen," said the chairman, "will ye a' fill your glasses, for I'm about to bring forrit the queen. Our Queen, gentlemen, is really a wonderful woman if I may say it; she's ane o' the guid auld sort. Nae whigmairies or falderals about her, but a douce decent lady.

"She's respectable beyond a' doot. She has brocht up a grand family o' weel faured lads and lasses,—her suldest son being a credit to ony mither,—and they're a' weel married. Ane daughter is nae less than married to the Duke o' Argyll's son and heir.

"Gentlemen, ye'll maybe not believe it, but I ance saw the queen. I did. It was when I took my auld broon coo to Perth show. I remember her weel—such color, such hair—" (Interruption and cries of 'Is it the coo or the queen ye're proposin?')

"The queen, gentlemen. I beg your pardon, but I was talking about the coo. However, as to the queen, somebody pointed her out to me at Perth station, and there she was, smart and tidy-like, and says to myself, 'Gin my auld woman at hame slips awa' ye needna remain a widow another hour langer.' Noo, gentlemen, 'The Queen!'

### A Cat's Legal Value \$1.

Judge John A. Blair, in the Hudson Common Pleas Court, at Jersey City, yesterday, fixed the legal value of a cat at \$1, says a New York despatch. In December last Luigi Sanfrinni, of 407 Spring street, West Hoboken, shot and killed a feline that had invaded the yard at the back of his home in search of chickens as he alleged.

The cat belonged to Charles Stephani of 507 Highpoint avenue. Although it was only an ordinary cat, Stephani brought suit for \$100. In his complaint he alleged that the loss of the animal had caused him to 'suffer great fright and anguish of body and mind.'

Justice Eichmann, who heard the case, decided that Stephani's cat and the anguish combined were worth 50 cents. Stephani, dissatisfied with the amount, appealed the case to Judge Blair's court. In passing judgment Judge Blair censured the litigants for consuming the time of the court with so trifling a matter, but he gave Stephani \$1 damages in order that the costs might be assessed against Sanfrinni, who was originally responsible for the trouble.

### Times Have Changed.

The Youth's Companion tells of some Americans who had long lived in England and spent last summer in Maine, and wishing to play golf, got permission from a farmer to use some pasture land, and there laid out links.

The farmer's old servant, scandalized by the sight of tall, athletic girls in scarlet coats, armed with iron-booted clubs, striding over the fields, one day reported to his master:

"Them girls in the pasturo scare our cows!"

The farmer scratched his head. 'Hiram,' came his leisurely answer, 'times is changed since we was young. Used to be the cows scared the girls!'

EVERY HOME NEEDS a remedy that is adapted for use in case of sudden accident or illness. Such a one is Pain-Killer. Avoid substitutes, there's but one Pain-Killer, Ferry Davis'. 25c. and 50c.