

THE HOUSE FLY.

A Study of His Habits and Characteristics—An Agent of Infection—Power Which Scent Gives Him in Feeding.

The common house fly is an agent of infection. But that is not his claim to consideration here, says The Toronto Mail and Empire. Albeit no bloodsucker, he has every other piratical characteristic. Like Macbeth, he murders sleep with his droning, buzzing or crawling. Upon top of that he is as inquisitive as a whole regiment of gossips, and as determined to possess the earth and the fulness thereof as the lustiest billion-dollar trust. In excuse or explanation of such acquisitiveness he can plead his eyes. They are like rubies, faceted several thousand times, and forming a perfect image through every one of the facets. Thus Master Fly sees before, behind, around himself at the same time. Naturally, it is confusing to the sense of property and proportion, moral and material, to be thus many visioned. These eyes, out of all proportion to the insect's size, are further so mounted that they can be pushed a little out of socket when occasion arises. They are so big, indeed, and take up so much of the head, one may well wonder where a fly packs away his very keen and decided sense of smell.

Flies are quickly drawn by scents imperceptible to human nostrils. Still they do not feed wholly by scent. Their feeding is throughout a curious process, often involving something which looks like reasoning power. If a fly lights upon something moist and high flavored he at once begins to suck it. But if in crawling or flying he finds something dry, which he yet fancies, he stops stock still, sets his bill down upon it, and forces through the bill a drop of liquid, something like saliva. After a little, when the liquid has moistened what it fell on, he begins feeding. It is the marks left by this manner of feeding which constitute a large part of the flyspecks good housekeepers so loathe.

A fly has an air pump in each foot, with a hollow running down the leg to it, through which air goes in or out. Thus he walks as he listeth, overhead or down. He has no voice proper—his buzzing and droning are wholly matters of wings. By setting the wings rapidly in motion and forcing out air underneath, he makes the familiar sounds.

The house fly has cousins (German), scarcely to be told from himself, who are among the most virulent and bloody-minded of all winged pests. They haunt pastures from June to October, tormenting especially horses, mules and cattle. Indeed, in stock-raising regions it is sometimes unsafe to drive spirited horses after 10 o'clock in the morning, unless they are protected with nets. The name of these stock flies is literally legion; more, they are winged appetites, pitiless and sharp of beak as hawks or vultures. They settle in clouds all over an animal, clustering thickest and biting hardest either side of the backbone, just behind the shoulders, where it is well-nigh impossible for the poor beast to reach and dislodge them with either head or tail. Cattle thus bitten break wildly for thick scrub, and tear through it until their tormentors are brushed off. Afterward they either hunt water—water deep enough to come half way up their sides—or stand in it all day, or else bury themselves in the thickest, shadiest undergrowth, the thicker and shadier the better. There they stand all day with drooping heads, waiting until sundown before they go out to graze. But for the fact that flies grow sluggish, almost torpid, as soon as the sun is down, and do not get fully alive again until it shines warm next day, grazing beasts would be in danger of starving before fly-time ended. Horses loose at grass lie down and roll every few minutes, thus killing many of their persecutors. But, in harness, they may be driven to run away by the unbearable pain of the stinging and sucking.

Big, lubberly horseflies, two inches across the spread of the wings, though they suck voraciously

and bite hard, are not to be named in the same breath with the swarming stock flies. It is rare to see a dozen true horseflies at once. Given opportunity they bite anything that has blood, but are shy of attacking human beings. They have beaks as big as darning needles, and make wounds that sometimes bleed after they have been driven away or killed. They have further the stock fly's malicious knack of setting and sucking in the most inaccessible spots. But since they offer fair targets for an expert with the whip, it is the part of wisdom, very well followed, to kill them with a swish of the lash as they hover buzzing about.

Both stock and horse flies breed best in stable refuse. By keeping it well composted their numbers are greatly diminished. But where there is much pasturing such prevention is impossible. The pests must have a strong bump of locality. In a drive of a few miles across summer roads little used one may cross three or four fly-infested belts, with as many clean ones in between. But there is much travel along such roads the flies become general. They are carried from one belt forward, and either fly off or are driven off, stay where they find themselves, breed quickly, and thus set up new colonies of torment.

SUCCESS.

At the foot of the Hill of Endeavor,
O, Young One, look upward and see
The shine of the prize
That dazzles your eyes
With the gleam of the glory to be.

Far up in the clouds like a beacon,
Its lustre illumines the world,
And you start on your way
At the dawn of the day
With the flag of your purpose unfurled.

Youth, Hope and Ambition attend you
And the line of your march is bestrewn
With roses that bring
You the fragrance of Spring.
While the fulness of earth seems your own.

Up the steps of the Hill of Endeavor
You battle and toil and keep on
For the glittering prize
That dazzles your eyes
At eve as it did at the dawn.

Its brilliance is always before you
To lighten the arduous way
That leads to success,
Through struggle and stress,
And crown you with laurel and bay.

At the top of the Hill of Endeavor,
O, Old One, look downward and call
To the brave and the true
Who are following you,
Godspeed and good-cheer to them all.
—William J. Lampman.

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Feb 27, 1901—d PROPRIETOR

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Dec. 21, 1900, dwalyr.