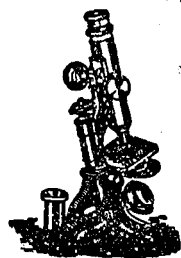


Medical Matters.

MALARIA IN ITALY.



Though deaths from malarial fever in Italy have greatly diminished in number—they were 13,338 in 1901, as against more than 20,000 in 1887—it is proposed to hold a congress in Naples to consider the whole subject. All stations and guard-houses in malarial districts are now wired, and the octroi officials in the outskirts of the Campagna wear wire masks at sundown in the autumn. But the peasants are often unwilling to take quinine, even gratis, and the large landlords, especially in the south, being often absentees, do little for the improved cultivation of their estates—one of the best cures for malaria.

THE CONGO FLOOR MAGGOT.

Doctors J. Everett Dutton, J. L. Todd, and Cuthbert Christy, in describing this maggot in the *British Med. Journ.*, tell how the natives collect them by digging with the point of a knife or scraping with a sharpened stick in the dust filled cracks and crevices of the mud floors of their huts. Many were turned up from the depth of 3 in. In moist, soft earth, they are found even at greater depths. There is no doubt these maggots feed only at night. The natives said that the maggots drop off at once if the limb on which they are feeding is moved. There were specimens of all sizes, ranging in length from 2 to 15 m.m. When ready to pupate, the larva lies dormant upon the surface, changes in colour to a pinkish-brown, and later becomes a dark reddish or brownish black, chitinous, segmented, with oblong paraparium. The natives believe that the maggot is able to jump to a height of 18 in., but the authors have never been able to substantiate this. It probably feeds nightly, for blood in varying stages of digestion, and ranging in colour from bright red to black, is often seen in its alimentary canal. The writers think that the maggots reach the raised beds by crawling up either the supports or the grass walls against which the bed is usually placed. The distribution of the larva is very extensive. This larva maggot is semi-translucent, of a dirty white colour, cephalous, and amphipneustic. It resembles, when adult, the larvæ of the bot-flies, and consists of eleven very distinct segments. Paired groups of minute spicular teeth

are placed around two tenacula so as to form a sort of cupping instrument. The integument of the larva is tough and thick. The larva can stand a great deal of pressure without injury. The time required for the maturation of the larva is not yet known. The writers saw a large light brown fly, which is believed by some observers to be developed from the floor maggots. The writers have allowed a number of these maggots to feed on rats and guinea-pigs. They mean to determine whether they are able to play a part in the transmission of the human trypanosome. They have not been able yet in any entomological works which they can command to find any reference to the habits or morphology by which this fly can be identified.

Mr. E. E. Austen, dipterologist to the British Museum, states that these flies are specimens of *Auchmeromyia luteola*, Fabr. (a species of the family *Muscidae*). He declares that the writers of this article have come across an entirely novel and very interesting fact in the biology of diptera.

A TYPHUS OUTBREAK.

The question of the origin of a serious outbreak of typhus at Gelsenkirchen, Germany, is being fought out in the law court at Essen.

Professor Koch's evidence supported the theory that the epidemic is due to the presence of bacteria in drinking water. If this view is accepted, the local waterworks will incur a heavy liability. Professor Emmerich, on the other hand—who says that when he read in the papers that proceedings had been instituted against the directors of the waterworks he was astounded that the Public Prosecutor should have dared to interfere in a scientific dispute—maintains that it is impossible for water to give rise to an epidemic. He attributes it to the filthy condition of the surface soil in the Gelsenkirchen district, and declares that during the cholera epidemic in Turkey, when he was invited by the Sultan to Constantinople, he saw nothing comparable to it in the dirtiest towns.

"I should like, he said, to shout it into the world with a voice of thunder that might reach the Landtag, Reichstag, and the steps of the throne. Then, perhaps, measures might be taken which would prevent thousands of workmen who find their way into this district from being decimated under the earth by worm disease and on the surface by typhus and dysentery." Where expert scientists differ, who shall decide where the truth lies?

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