

Bites and Stings.

BY MRS. WESTAWAY,

Associate of the National Health Society.

It is certainly a drawback to the glories of summer that out-door life is rendered unpleasant by the too constant attention of flying creatures that leave a souvenir of their visit which may be irritating, painful, or dangerous in degree. Even the shelter of home does not ensure immunity, for open windows are an absolute necessity, and through these window spaces fly the noxious creatures, and there is the additional danger from the domestic cat and dog, which give vent to their irritability engendered by the hot weather in bites and scratches. In no case of bite, scratch, or sting is much warning given, but, as in a flash, the mischief is done, and without some knowledge of the method of rendering prompt first aid, serious results may follow.

Bites of cats and dogs are both dangerous, and particularly if the bite is on the bare flesh, since garments through which the teeth pass tend to cleanse away foreign matter which is liable to set up inflammation, but whether through clothing or not, prompt treatment is necessary, and particularly in the case of a dog-bite, which may result in hydrophobia. With what may be regarded as an unintentional bite of either animal, the part should be soaked in a 1 in 40 solution of carbolic acid, or, if the bite is on the body or face, compresses of linen soaked in a similar solution should be applied, and changed every few minutes. The patient should keep as quiet and calm as possible, so that the circulation is kept slow, and the chance of poison being introduced into the system is minimised. With a bite from an infuriated animal, the injured limb should be grasped tightly above the wound so that blood from it cannot flow readily towards the heart. The wound should be sucked, but what comes from it must not be swallowed, and then the wound should be soaked in warm water to encourage bleeding, or held under a running tap of warm (but not hot) water, without the grasp being released. A tight bandage should then replace the grasp, and the assistant should apply nitrate of silver to the wound, unless medical aid can be obtained almost immediately. Should the dog happen to be suffering from rabies an inoculation from its bite would set up hydrophobia, but of this dreaded complaint there is less need to fear owing to the discovery of Pasteur, which is effectual even when treatment does not commence until twenty-four hours after the accident, so that if first-aid treatment is promptly applied and

medical assistance sought at once, there is little to fear.

Stings of wasps and bees, although less dangerous, are extremely painful. As soon as the sting is felt, search must be made for the weapon of the creature, which is generally left in the wound. This should be removed by pressing on the surrounding part with a watch-key, which just covers the wound, then the sting can be withdrawn by the fingers or by tweezers. The part should be bathed in a strong salt solution, or ammonia should be applied, and even the homely remedy of a moist "blue bag" need not be despised, for it is very cooling. When the pain has somewhat abated, the part should be smeared with vaseline. A greater danger attends the sting of a bee or wasp, when it occurs in the throat, for the surrounding tissue swells so greatly that the pain is intolerable, and there is the risk of suffocation ensuing. When such an accident happens, the throat should be gargled with hot salt water, and linseed poultices should be applied externally to the throat, unless leeches can be easily obtained.

Gnat bites are teasing, but seldom dangerous. They are most painful when they are wetted with cold water, so that it is well to adopt a dry treatment. A lump of salt rubbed gently over the bite gives relief, but the immediate application of ammonia is the best antidote for this particular poison.

Until one has a personal acquaintance with the creature, one is apt to regard the mosquito as a large insect of prey found only in foreign countries. As a matter of fact, mosquitoes abound largely in England, particularly in well-wooded parts of a marshy nature, and in size and appearance they resemble the common midge or gnat. The bite of a mosquito is particularly painful, commencing with a slight irritation, which increases rapidly in severity, at the same time producing a large red swelling, which smarts and tingles anew at each beat of the heart. Occasionally, blood-poisoning is set up by the bite, while malarial fever is now regarded as the result of this creature's attentions. During the day, mosquitoes are comparatively quiet, but towards evening they are fired with energy, settling where they can, and biting where they settle. As they have a tendency to fly low, the feet are very liable to be attacked, so that those who cannot resist sitting out of doors at nightfall should eschew low shoes and openwork stockings, and should keep the feet well protected by high boots. Camphor, paraffin, and eucalyptus, help to ward off the attacks, and washing the skin with carbolic soap or coal tar soap is to a cer-

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