

Leaves from the Book of Nature.

No. 5.

THE MOSQUITO. (*Culex*.)

There can be but few persons living in our Dominion, who are unacquainted with this noxious little insect, for with a natural rudeness, akin to that possessed by some members of the human family, it invariably thrusts itself into society, and becomes so painfully familiar, that any one possessed of the slightest feeling is obliged to retire from its presence in disgust. It is, however, a happy circumstance that this two-winged intruder is possessed of a very short life, and that a few weeks at most are generally sufficient to put an end to its existence, for assuredly if allowed to try our tempers all the year round, it would require more than ordinary efforts to subdue the passion engendered by inflammation, which is unhappily the usual result of its dreaded attack.

The mosquito loves moisture. Born in some stagnant pond, it seems to imbibe a natural inclination for dampness; and on warm rainy evenings in summer, the forest, especially in the neighbourhood of swamps, is absolutely filled with them. It is at such a time that both men and cattle hurry away to the clearings, for no living creature possessed with a pierceable skin, could possibly withstand the attacks of these venomous insects for any length of time. And it is not alone in our own country that the mosquito exists, but in almost all parts of the world; the silent shores of the Arctic Sea, having their representative mosquitos as well as the dense forests of the torrid zone. There are many different species of musquitos also; those of the tropics and southern hemisphere being dissimilar either in form or size to those of the northern regions. Nova Scotia herself possesses two known species, *Culex stimulans* and *C. provocans*, made known to the entomological world years ago through the indefatigable labours of Lieut. Redman. Our Acadian mosquitos exceed in size almost all known insects of the genus in collections, although we have heard by report that the mosquitos of Labrador are much larger; a fact, however, not satisfactorily proved. As we have said before, it is impossible for any one to remain in our forests during the warm days and nights of summer with any degree of comfort, owing to the perpetual annoyance occurring from the onslaught of hundreds, nay thousands of these blood-thirsty creatures. But what are such attacks compared with those made in other climes upon unfortunate travellers. In Lapland, their numbers are so prodigious as to be compared to a snow storm when the flakes fall thickest, or the dust of the earth. The natives cannot take a mouthful of food, or lie down to sleep in their cabins unless they be fumigated almost to suffocation. In the air you cannot draw your breath without having your mouth and nostrils filled with them; and unguents of tar, fish grease, or nets steeped in fetid birch oil, are scarcely sufficient to protect even the case-hardened cuticle of the Laplander from their bite. In certain districts of France, the accurate Reaumur states that he has seen people whose arms and legs have become quite monstrous from wounds inflicted by mosquitos, and in some cases in such a state as to render it doubtful whether amputation would not be necessary. In the neighbourhood of the Crimea, the Russian soldiers are obliged to sleep in sacks to defend themselves from the mosquitos; and even this is not a sufficient security, for several of them die in consequence of mortification produced by the bite of these furious bloodsuckers. This fact is related by Dr. Clarke, and to its