

DIARY

OF A

MOSQUITO BITTEN MAN.

Talk of the plague of flies! Why the Egyptians never suffered one-half of the agony that I have suffered since the mosquito season set in. It makes me shudder to think of it. When I survey my disfigured face in the too-faithful mirror—when I behold the beloved faces of my wife and pretty ones—there are six of them—dotted all over like a plum pudding, I feel such indescribable anguish that at times I am forced to conclude that I was sent into the world for no other earthly purpose than to be eaten alive by flies.

What a life of torture has been mine for the last three months! Night after night I have lain awake—counting the minutes, until day-light would free me from the torments of these blood-thirsty devils. Sleep has been a stranger to my eyes for the last—I am afraid to say how long! I shall soon go mad. I know I shall. Peruse the following extract from my diary, and say if it is possible for human nature or mental reason to hold out against such dam—well I won't; but it is dreadful. Why don't I exterminate the midnight hags, is it? Ah, sirs, I have, as you will see, been endeavoring in vain to exterminate them for months past. Not a single newspaper remedy but I have tried, until I had almost exterminated myself and my beloved family—once by blowing myself up whilst mixing some infernal drugs, and again by setting fire to the bed on which my unconscious wife and first-born were serenely slumbering. But to my diary:

"Last night was the most miserable one I spent this year. Kate—my beloved wife—was in a bad temper. Kitty—my angelic infant—was in a worse. I tried to sleep. But in vain. The first mosquito of the season came trumpeting to my ear in shrill accents that he and his diabolical tribe had "murdered sleep." How I anathematized the insect! I made several indignant attempts to murder him, but without effect. Vexed to death, I at last made a tremendous lunge through the darkness at my tormentor with the pillow, and, sad to relate, brought it down with dreadful violence on the tender face of my beloved infant, who thereupon made such a hideous outcry, that I thought I had killed him. Oh, dear, when I think of the scene that followed. When I remember the upbraids of my dear wife, I look upon myself as the most hard-hearted father in Christendom. Sleep was banished for that night.

"Next night I was congratulating myself that the mosquitoes,—finding perhaps the mangled remains of their comrade, crushed into pulp by my pillow,—had retreated from my room for ever. But I was mistaken. It was past 1 p. m. Sleep had almost overpowered my aching senses. Dear Kate was snoring loudly beside me. Kitty was asleep, or meditating on the next Exchequer budget for all I know. How balmy I thought! How delicious I muttered!

Bzz-z-z-z-z-z-z came from one corner of the dark room. I was wide awake in an instant. The little devil will miss me, I said. But, no, the sound came nearer and nearer; until at last the horrid insect with

a fiendish yell of triumph, made an impetuous dash upon my unprotected cheek. But I was determined to be revenged.

"Cautiously freeing my dexter hand from under the blankets. I hoisted it in the air a moment as I thought exactly over the spot where the feud was gorging himself with my best blood, and then brought it down like lightning with a bang—not on my cheek, however, but on my nose. The miscalculated blow brought tears to my eyes and caused me to start up with pain, whilst to add to my mortification I could hear my deadly foe leisurely buzzing into a distant corner of the room. More than once I made the same dreadful mistake. Once my ear was the recipient of a box that made my head sing—but I had the satisfaction of knowing that I had ground my enemy to pieces in the attempt.

Twice my unsuspecting wife's face was dreadfully disfigured through my miscalculation of distances, arising from the same cause. Need I repeat the scenes that followed? On the last occasion she actually packed up her things to go home, and it was only by locking the door and going down upon my knees that I obtained her consent to give me another trial.

"I bore sleepless nights of agony with the fortitude of a christian. My dear Kate also showed symptoms of resignation. I must own that she sometimes made use of strong language, regarding our tormenters. But then being the weaker vessel who could blame her? At length the lucky thought struck me to search the room every night before retiring to rest and see if I could not exterminate the Goths and Vandals—those destroyers of our midnight repose. Glorious! I shall now have rest I said. The unsuspecting miscreants will slumber on the ceiling. I shall kill them all before going to bed and then, Kate, we shall enjoy a night's rest at all events.

"Bed time came at last, and found me armed with a bolster, mounted on the bed and in diligent search after the mosquitoes. Soon I spied one clinging to the fresco work on the ceiling. Bang went the pillow with indignant violence, and down came the murdered remains of the mosquito, together with part of the coiling with an appalling crash on the top of my awe-struck wife and family. Here was a pretty mess!

"My wife insisted, better mosquitoes than have the house torn down about our ears. But no! no! I shouted. Better tear the world up by its roots and set the universe on fire than that a mosquito should live. Armed with desperate courage and the destructive bolster I again waged war on the mosquitoes. Dragging the basin stand in the middle of the room I sprang upon it. Another mosquito was visible at a little distance from my post of observation.

"Carefully poisoning myself—for the basin stand had only three legs, and had always been supported against the wall,—I made a desperate dash at the foe. I missed him. Just as I made the blow, he flew away with a shrill note of defiance. In another minute I saw him fly past me. You shan't escape me this time I said as I made another desperate flourish with the bolster in the direction he had passed me. At that moment the basin stand lurched

over, and came down with a direful crash, sending myself headlong through the best mirror in the house, smashing all the china basins at hand, and to crown all, sending my beloved wife and children into violent hysterics and fits.

"After this I gave up mosquito-hunting. I next tried to smoke them out—or rather to fumigate them to death. My beloved wife, however, would not consent to the experiment. But I was not to be balked. So I arose one night, when my dear family were buried in slumber, and taking the prescription which I had bought on the faith of a newspaper paragraph, from my pocket, I carefully mixed it in a saucer, and set fire to it. Bang! Bless my life, there was a report as if the *Great Eastern* had blown up a second time. The room was instantly filled with suffocating smoke. The terrified cries of my wife for fresh air and smelling salts were heart-rending. My babes—I never thought infant lungs could send forth such deafening sounds.

"Seizing frantically on something—it happened luckily to be the boot-jack, I rushed to the windows and soon had the satisfaction of demolishing every pane of glass within reach. Hearing the noise and seeing the smoke, my neighbours rushed in upon me pell mell—and it was as much as I could do to keep them from deluging my bed and household furniture with water. I could not get my chamber cleared until I had informed the crowd that a Canadian's house was his castle—and in fact several castles—and that if I was not instantly left alone, I should certainly be compelled to use fire-arms.—Saying which, I took down an old fowling-piece, supposed to have been made by mein herr Swartz some five centuries ago, and soon had the room once more to myself.

"It would take up too much time to enumerate the various devices I resorted to in order to escape the dreadful mosquito plague. I have several times been on the point of smotheration and strangulation by my neck becoming entangled in the folds of clothes and curtains which I had spread over my head before going to sleep. But as yet I have had no rest. Indeed the mosquitoes seem to redouble their fury as I redouble my rage against them. At first they used simply to come, bite me and go away with a skin full. But now they come roaring to devour me—trumpeting loudly and shrilly in my ear, and pouncing down on my unprotected nose, cheeks, eyes, and hands, and those of my beloved wife and children, with the venom and hatred of professed enemies."

Well, sirs, am I not to be pitied? My nightly prayer is—"Would that all the mosquitoes in the world had but one neck that I might break it!"—But, alas, there is no use in such prayers—there is no faith to be placed in prescriptions—nor is there remedy or repose to be sought by the pillow. What is to be done? Will no one tell me what is to be done? Are the mosquitoes to have it all their own way? Think of it ye philanthropists—ye preachers of glad tidings, and find if ye can an elixir to exterminate the mosquitoes. Do this and the blessing will be about you for ever of

Yours truly,

JOB GOGGORTT.