

## Insects and the Like.

In one of his recent articles, Silas Wegg lamented the dreariness of Blue Book literature. Silas is our wise man, but he must admit there are exceptions to his rule. A well known Ottawa naturalist, in the pursuit of his official duties, wrote to persons in India for specimens of the "spotted mountain fever tick." We are not violating the rules of official etiquette in publishing the following reply from a correspondent in the East who somewhat mistranslated the meaning of the request.—Eds.

### Great Sahib, Protector of the Poor.

How merciful and condescending you are in addressing this humble chunk of clay, asking for specimens of certain blood suckers of which my departed father was a connoisseur. Nature is full of wonders, every atom is a standing miracle, and endowed with such qualities as could not be impressed on it by a power and wisdom less than infinite. For this reason I would not discourage any searches that are made into the most minute and trivial parts of creation. However since the world abounds in the noblest fields of speculation, it is methinks the mark of a little genius to be wholly conversant among insects, reptiles, vermin, and those trifling rarities, that furnish out the apartment of a virtuoso.

There are some men whose minds are so oddly turned this way, that though they are utter strangers to the common occurrences of life, they are able to discover the sex of a cockle, or describe the generation of a mite, in all its circumstances. They are so little versed in the world that they scarce know a horse from an ox, but, at the same time will tell you with a great deal of gravity, that a flea is a rhinoceros and a snail is a hermaphrodite. I have known one of these whimsical philosophers who stt a greater value upon a collection of spiders than he would upon a flock of sheep, and sold his coat off his back to purchase a tarantula.

I would not have a scholar wholly unacquainted with these secrets and

curiosities of nature, but certainly the mind of man, that is capable of so much higher contemplations, should not be altogether fixed upon such mean and disproportionate objects. Observations of this kind are apt to alienate too much from the knowledge of the world, and to make us serious upon trifles, by which means they expose philosophy to the ridicule of the witty, and contempt of the ignorant. In short studies of this nature should be the diversions, relaxations, and amusements, and not the care and business of life.

It is indeed wonderful to consider that there should be a sort of learned men, who are wholly employed in gathering together the refuse of nature, if I may call it so, and hoarding up in their chests and cabinets such creatures as others avoid the sight of. One does not know how to mention some of the most precious parts of their treasure without a kind of apology for it. I have been shown a beetle valued at twenty dollars, and a scorpion at a hundred, but we must take this for a general rule, that, whatever appears trivial or obscene in the common notions of the world, looks grave and philosophical in the eyes of a virtuoso. To show this humour in its perfection, I shall present my legacy left by my father—I swear by Shiva it is true—for your perusal.

I, Booga Singh, being in sound health of mind, but in great weakness of body, do by this my last will and testament bestow my worldly