

can not fail of exciting contemplations of the most serious kind. Indeed, one has no idea of the amazing beauty of these diminutive creatures until he has observed them through a microscope.

The common Mosquito (*Culex pipiens*) of America, as well as of Europe, is gray, and has immaculate wings. The females are the principal tormentors, hovering up and down in large swarms near the water, and at night persecuting man and beast with their stings, as well as their intolerable music.

Their visible proboscis is not the sting itself, but only the case or scabbard which incloses the instruments for piercing the skin and sucking our blood. These instruments are five bristles, which may be seen protruding from the scabbard, or proboscis, if you take hold of the neck of the insect and squeeze the proboscis. These bristles, cut off and placed under the microscope, appear like lancets with a hook in the end, which remains in the wound made by it, if the insect be driven away suddenly when sucking, and which causes greater pain and inflammation than if the insect is allowed to withdraw it when he has ceased sucking. After the hollow sting has entered the flesh about three-quarters of a line, and the insect has filled its body with human blood, the wound begins to itch and swell—not on account of the insignificant puncture, but on account of the venomous saliva which entered it, for the purpose, probably, of diluting the blood. We see the same thing when a fly drops some liquid from its proboscis upon a piece of sugar, in order to dissolve it and diminish its strength, so that it can suck it up. The saliva, therefore, performs the same office in insects that it does in mammals when masticating their food.

Mosquitoes deposit their eggs in stagnant water, and this is probably the reason that they are more numerous in wet summers. If a hogshead or barrel of water be placed