



A SHIELD FOR THE "TRAFFIC."

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A FLY.

BY THE ONLY ONE THAT'S LEFT OF ALL THE FAMILY.

I am a lone, tired fly, slightly bald-headed, and pre-disposed to inflammatory rheumatism.

I have taken up quarters for the winter in the radiator of one of the latest patents in base-burner coal stoves; but I am sadly afraid I shall have to remove to some slightly warmer locality before long. At first I was snugly ensconced for several weeks under a beautiful vase on the dining-room mantle-shelf. But the lady of the house undertook to relieve the two servant girls of the dusting, and I had to leave.

It was on the first of May, if my memory serves me right, that I was born. The family with whom my parents had been residing were moving on the occasion, and I well remember my mother remarking to a neighbor who had dropped in to enquire whether she hadn't noticed the peculiar flavor of the new season maple sugar the folks had bought at the grocery store round the corner, that she was real glad new people were coming into the house, and she hoped they would use ice on the butter and serve up the dinner gravy a little cooler and with less water in it. Hot gravy, too much diluted, as I afterwards learned, always gave my mother indigestion and a weak back. It sometimes struck me as singular that my mother's antipathy to water did not reach in other directions. Now, for instance, she could drink with the keenest relish the Pure Country Milk delivered at the house daily, and never experience any ill-effects. But, alas! her fondness for the lacteal fluid cost her her life. She mistook a pan of whitewash for a dish of milk, and, notwithstanding all that the best medical skill could do, she succumbed to the effects of her injuries. She could stand chalk, but lime was too much for her.

My education when young was so carefully attended to that I grew to mature flyhood without a single injury of any consequence befalling me, except a sprain of my off hind foot, sustained in a fight with one of my blue-bottle cousins who assaulted me because I championed the Scott Act. I am a temperance fly on principle—never intoxicated but on one occasion, when I was persuaded to try a celebrated brand of Hop Bitters, under the

false assurance that it was a tonic without whiskey ingredient.

When only six weeks old I could tell a fly-paper ten feet distant, and would sooner go hungry or regale myself with store molasses than

Linger, shivering on the brink,
And fear to lunch away

on one of those seductive sheets of stickem.

Permit me to observe here that the popular phrase, "There's no flies on it," would scarcely be applicable to a sheet of stickem.

As my education progressed and my faculties developed I learned to tell an ink-spot from a black spider without walking over it; while it also became quite easy to me to distinguish between the saucer with the fly-poison mixture in it and one containing the boarders' tea leavings, although, to tell you the candid truth, a person has to have an educated taste in these matters if he doesn't want to make a mistake.

My finer instincts soon made me appreciate the advantage of spending a well-earned leisure on a newly-ironed shirt bosom over remaining out in the sink among the dirty dishes; nor would I ever think of sporting during play-hour on the kitchen window if I could possibly discover a freshly-cleaned mirror on which to gambol. I would instantly quit sampling the plum cake whenever I could locate where the newly-baked custard pies were kept; and if I couldn't get a bath in the cream jug I went unwashed, contenting myself with polishing my feet up a little on the soda-biscuit plate.

I made it a rule of my life never to sit down twice on the same spot, except it was a particularly attractive bald-head or an uncommonly enticing nose on a sleeping baby. In such a case I could not restrain a wild impulse to go back again and become more familiar with the spot.

The narrowest escape I ever had was one day when the new cook was making the bread. I incautiously happened to alight on the piece she was kneading and my lame leg got caught. I am positive the cook saw me. In fact it runs in my head that she actually laughed in my face. At all events, without a word of explanation, I was abruptly and unceremoniously rolled up in the dough and soon lost consciousness. When I came to myself I was lying on the broad of my back, and a small boy was exclaiming: "Maw, if here ain't a dead fly, and I was jest agoin' to eat him for a curm!"

With a superhuman effort I staggered to my feet and got away. I took my revenge out of that callous-hearted cook by paying strict attention, during one whole afternoon, to an unprotected boil on the back of her neck.

Though fairly educated, I have lost interest in books ever since the day they closed the family Bible on me after the minister left. I don't suppose I would have escaped to this day (except the minister had called again) only that the eldest unmarried daughter of the house had occasion to consult the family register for the purpose of making some alterations in the dates.

I emerged very much squeezed, and have ever since had contracted views of life.

I got rheumatism from being locked up one night in a bank vault around the corner. The drafts, you understand, affected me.

Some of my ancestors must have been of a literary turn, and that's how I come bald-headed.

I am tired because of my propensity to keep my tongue waggin'. And being "burrowed" in here I naturally am "lone."

If this is not too much for you, "when the spring-time comes, gentle Annie," you may hear from me again.

T.

LAWDEDAW ON LITERATURE.

I have no sympathy with the—aw—litchaw of the masses. I think it is absehd to suppose that a fellow of my culchaw could weally be intewested in a lot of pussions who are always in a cwonic state of impecuniosity. No amount of—aw—honesty—or—aw—vehctue can compensate faw the lack of, aw—culchaw. Honesty, vehctue and culchaw combined, might, by a clevah authaw, be made to appeal vewy chawming, but honesty—and integwity in wags!—well, of caws—one might occasionally meet with such a wawa avis, but granting this, why dwag him fawth fwom his obscurwity and hold him up as the—aw—wepwewesentative of a class?—heahby cweating a wewpect faw the lowah classes which is as unwawwantable as it is uncalled faw. I think it is an insult to ouah intelligencw-and wewpectability faw an authaw such as Dickens, to suppose faw one moment that we could by any possibility be intewested in the vulgah quawwells of a thild-class monthly nubse and her diswewputable and dwunken cwony Betsy Pwig; Sairey Gamp I considew a most scandalous chawacteh, unfit to be spoken of in decent society, and only fit to be the nubse of that "pwecious wictim," the editaw of the *Poll Mall Gazette*—ha! ha! Then, again, there's that howid little wetch, Jenny Wen, if she had blistehed my back with vinegah and peppeh like that, by Jove I would have—aw—choked her! I don't see why poor Pecksniff should have been so severely punished aftah all. I think he was an exceedingly well-bwed fellow, always in good fawm, if he *did* take good cayah of numbah one, whewas youah honest, upwight fellows are always—so shockingly—bwutally stwaightfawwawd. The wide on the staga-coach is one of the few things of Dickens that I like. I am fond of dwiving myself, and am considewed vewy good indeed at handling the wibbons—then, again—Pickwick isn't half a bad sort eithaw—but why the doose a gentleman in his position should be so gween—is, to me—aw—incwedi-ble. On the whole, I decidedly object to the litchaw of Dickens. It is pwepwewstewous, the idea of intwoduwing such chawactehs into wufined society through the medium of the—aw—pwess. Yet it is a lamentable fact that in the libwawies of the most culchawed litewawy people you will find Dickens, with his genewous convicts, his bowible mid-wives, his bloated dwawfs, his old, insane beggahs, his schoolmates of all kinds; thieves, pwetty girls, debtors, jail-buids, all jumbled up—