

poisoned by these pleasant-tasted but deadly mushrooms. In this connection it may be worth while mentioning that the popular tests of the edibility of mushrooms, such as the blackening of silver during cooking, the change of colour of the flesh when broken, easy peeling of the skin, and a host of others, are all perfectly worthless, and the mushroom eater who relies on them is in mortal peril of his life.

When we turn to the animal life of our wilds we find no such deadly enemies as these. Although our fauna includes a number of large mammals and about a dozen species of snakes, it can be stated with the utmost confidence that, with the single exception mentioned later on, no animal of Eastern Canada ever makes an unprovoked attack on man, and very few of them indeed show any fight even when brought to bay.

Considering first some of the lower forms, it may be remarked that in many countries, insects are to be counted among the worst foes of mankind. The pestiferous mosquitoes of the tropics and sub-tropics, the tse-tse fly of Africa, and the flea that spreads the bubonic plague are best known examples. We have our share of biters and blood-suckers,—deer flies, black flies, sand flies and mosquitoes,—and it is hard to think of anything kind to say about them. They make life in the woods miserable during the finest season of the year; but annoying as their attacks are, at least we must admit that they do not inoculate us with yellow fever or malaria, sleeping sickness or the plague.

Our ophidia comprise about a dozen species. The only venomous one of these, the rattle snake, once common in Western Ontario, is now practically extinct there, and as far as I know, never lived in the Ottawa district at all. Without exception, the other species are perfectly harmless. Some of them, such as the milk snake, live almost exclusively on rats and mice. Others are largely insectivorous, and all of them serve a very useful purpose in helping to maintain that balance of wild life that man sometimes disturbs with such dire consequences to himself. One must then deplore the wanton cruelty and gross superstition that prompt so many people to kill these harmless and beautiful creatures at sight.

The catalogue of mammals of Eastern Canada recites such formidable names as the cougar, the wild cat, the lynx, the bear, the wolf. But it is not among these that our "dangerous" animals are to be found. The cougar, which reached the extreme northern limit of its range in Southern Ontario, has long been extinct in these regions, and while a powerful animal and very destructive of deer and domestic live stock, was never