

**Thirty-Five.**

BY HENRY MORFORD.

Halt on the road a little space!  
 Pull up your team, old charioteer!  
 You're hurrying on at a slapping pace;  
 Suppose we stop and consider, here!  
 If our lives are three score and ten—  
 If my count is all to be told—  
 The half-way house we are passing, then,  
 Thirty-five long winters old!

How has the ride been, charioteer?  
 Plenty of dust and a little mire?  
 Cold north winds on the hills severe,  
 And the air of the valley thick with fire?  
 Horses baulking, then running away—  
 Lynch pins lost and axle down?  
 Creeping, crippled, at close of day,  
 To a night of rest at tavern or town?

More than this, oh charioteer!  
 We have rounded the hills in the flush of  
 morn—  
 Heard the sunrise bird sing loud and clear,  
 And snuffed the breeze on the blue waves  
 born.  
 We have caught such glimpses of Eden vales,  
 Heard such sounds by wood and stream—  
 Drank such sounds by wood and stream—  
 As made all life an Elysian dream!

Rough and loud have voices been—  
 Pelting and bitter missile and storm;  
 But ever at last have we hurried in  
 And found some shelter snug and warm.  
 Kind, sometimes, have been word and fare;  
 Strong and steady the hand;  
 And erring roads had many a prayer  
 Breathed o'er them from the better land!

How much further, charioteer,  
 To the end! and he shakes his head.  
 No, to the eyes of an older seer  
 Peril is looming near and dread!  
 Tell me not, oh charioteer!  
 Bold and blind let me meet my fate!  
 Only thus our journey steer—  
 So that we wreck at the Beautiful Gate!

Onward, now, but tighten rein!  
 Downward, now, our journey lies!  
 Weakened soon will grow hand and brain!  
 And the mist comes over failing eyes!  
 God be with us charioteer!  
 Keep us with a heart and hope alive!  
 Sad and short is our stoppage here—  
 At the half-way house of thirty-five!

**INSECT LIFE.**

*A Lecture delivered before the Mechanics'  
 Institute of Port Hope, Whitby,  
 Newcastle, and Belleville,*

BY THE REV. DR. SHORTT.

(From the Home Circle.)

Continued.

In the course of one brief popular lecture, it is not easy to give much insight into a topic exhibiting such great variety as *Insect life* suggests. Many volumes have been written on the fruitful theme; and the merest outline of the Science of Entomology, as it is styled, would occupy much more of your time and patience than I can venture to trespass on. I must therefore content myself with endeavouring to stimulate your curiosity by bringing before you a few interesting facts, collected from the sources within my reach, which may induce you to make further inquiries in a field so full of interest, and so fraught with edification.

In order to excite an inclination in the minds of their readers in favour of the studies to which they devoted so large a portion of their lives, Kirby and Spence, able writers on the subject of insect life, in their introductory remarks, select some instances of striking interest, and make statements which, to those entirely uninitiated in the science must, probably, appear overstrained and exaggerated. This however is by no means the case, as a very small progress in the study of the subject is sufficient to convince us.

They say—"The Lord of the creation plumes himself upon his powers of invention, and is proud to enumerate the various useful arts, and machines to which he has given birth;" not aware that "He who teaches man knowledge" has instructed these despised insects to anticipate him in many of them. The builders of Babel doubtless thought their invention of turning earth into artificial stone a very happy discovery; yet a little bee had practised this art (using indeed a different process) on a small scale, and the white ants on a large one, ever since the world began. Man thinks he stands unrivalled as an architect, and that his buildings are without a parallel among the works of the inferior order of animals. He would be of a different opinion did he attend to the history of insects; he would find that many of them have been architects from time immemorial; that they have had their houses divided into various apartments, and having stair cases, gigantic arches, colonnades, and the like; nay, that even tunnels are excavated by them so immense, compared with their own size, as to be twelve times larger than the Thames Tunnel.

The modern fine lady, who prides herself on the lustre and beauty of the hangings which adorn the stately walls of her drawing room, or the carpets that cover its floor, fancying that nothing more rich and splendid was ever seen, and pitying her ancestors who were doomed to unsightly whitewash and rushes, is ignorant all the while, that before she or her ancestors were in existence, and even before the boasted Tyrian dye was discovered, a little insect had known how to hang the walls of its cells with tapestry of a scarlet more brilliant than any her rooms can exhibit; and that others daily weave silken carpets, both in tissure and texture infinitely superior to those she so much admires.

No female ornament is more prized and costly than lace, the invention and fabri-

cation of which seems the exclusive claim of the softer sex. But even here they have been anticipated by these industrious little creatures, who often defend their helpless chrysalis by a most singular and beautiful covering of lace.

Other arts have been equally forestalled by these creatures. What vast importance is attached, very properly, to the invention of paper! For nearly 6000 years one of our commonest insects has known how to make and apply it to its purposes; and even pasteboard, superior in substance and polish to any we can produce, is manufactured by another.

We imagine that nothing short of human intellect can be equal to the construction of a diving bell or an air pump, yet a spider is in the daily habit of using a kind of diving bell; and what is more, one exactly similar in principle to ours, but more ingeniously contrived, by means of which she resides, unwetted, in the bosom of the water, and procures the needful supplies of air by a much more simple process than ours. The caterpillar of a little moth knows how to imitate the air pump, producing a vacuum, when necessary, without any piston besides its own body.

If we think with wonder of the populous cities which have employed the united labor of man for many ages to bring them to their full extent, what shall we say to the white ants, which require only a few months to build a metropolis, capable of containing an infinitely greater number of inhabitants than imperial Nineveh, Babylon, Rome, or Peking, in all their glory?

That insects should thus have forestalled us in our inventions, ought to urge us to pay a closer attention to them and their ways than we have hitherto done, since it is not at all improbable that the result would be many useful hints for the improvement of our arts and manufactures, and perhaps for some beneficial discoveries. The painter might thus probably be furnished with more brilliant pigments, the dyer with more delicate tints, and the artisan with a new and improved set of tools. In this last respect insects deserve particular notice; all their operations are performed with admirable precision and dexterity, and though they do not usually vary the mode, yet this mode is always the best that can be conceived for attaining the end in view. The instruments also with which they are provided are no less wonderful and various than the operations themselves.