

THE MOSQUITO IN UPPER CANADA.

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The Insect has been called the "Outlaw of Creation;" and some have not hesitated to say that the great fight ahead of man is with the Insect, and that if he does not conquer the Insect, it will conquer him and civilization together.

Whatever truth there may be in these somewhat alarming statements, there can be no doubt of the tremendous amount of misery and mischief done by some kinds of insects. And the mosquito is not the least noxious. Her activities are almost as varied as the methods of spelling her name; Murray gives twenty-six spellings and the mosquito has at least a score of ways of being a nuisance.

All writers on early Upper Canada agree in their account of the extraordinary number of mosquitoes in that new land;—apparently the Arctic regions in the summer are the only places which could be cited as a rival in that respect. Dr. Howison who spent a few years in this Province in the second decade of the last century tells of visiting the Gaelic settlement in Glengarry, and says that on going up to his bedroom at that place the moment the door was opened a cloud of mosquitoes and other insects settled on the candle and extinguished it. While such an occurrence must have been unusual, every one who lived even half a century ago in rural Ontario must have seen swarms not much if at all less thick. The "rain barrel" without which the farm mistress could not do her washing was placed at every corner of the house and almost invariably was full of "wigglers" or baby mosquitoes, larvae. Offensive as the mosquito was and is, her music annoying, her bite irritating and poisonous to man and beast, until recently she was not blamed for more. And yet it is quite certain that what we now call malaria is due to the mosquito. In olden Upper Canada, fever and ague, ("fevernager" was the common pronunciation,) remittent fever or "fever of the country," was an almost intolerable curse. The cause was generally considered to be the bad air of swamps or low lying undrained lands, and if one here and there suggested the mosquito as the real offender he had no hearers. It was not until the closing years of the 19th century that it was scientifically established that the real cause is a very minute parasite in the blood and introduced by the Anopheles mosquito—that kind of mosquito which stands on a window pane with the proboscis and body in a straight line at an angle and not parallel with the surface, and "the female of the species is more deadly than the male."

The Anopheles has been busy in this Province ever since it was a province and it would be impossible to set out all her deeds. We shall speak of only two or three.

After the foolish and fratricidal war of 1812 had been waged for two years and a half, the contending parties agreed to quit as they began. By