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ON THE MEDICO-LEGAL APPLICATION OF ENTOMOLOGY.<sup>1</sup>

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The remarkable results of Mégnin's<sup>2</sup> studies on cadaveric fauna have made medico-legal entomology part of the regular stock-in-trade of the medical expert. One may now judge from the animal fauna met with in a dead body how long it has been exposed. The creation of this special department of legal evidence is an honour which belongs to Mégnin alone, although prior to him, Bergeret<sup>3</sup> had already made some practical applications based on the erroneous views current at the time.

Through the publishing of his *Faun des Cadavres*, the popularisation of the subject has been greatly furthered, though the subdivision of the stages in the process of destruction into 8 successive stages is perhaps less easy to comprehend than the simpler classification previously adopted with 4 stages.

The result of over 15 years experience at the Paris morgue, during which period M. Mégnin had been entrusted with all the expertises requiring a knowledge of entomology, has been, according to Professor Brouardel<sup>4</sup>, entirely satisfactory. Often the conclusions which he had arrived at from the examination of a few debris and insects were borne out in the most striking manner by the subsequent course of the case. Sometimes the mystery was never cleared up. But in no single instance did the results of the inquiry go to show that M. Mégnin's deductions were erroneous. There is something almost uncanny in the way which M. Mégnin could state for instance after

<sup>1</sup> Read before the Canadian Medical Association, Montreal, August, 1896.

<sup>2</sup> P. Mégnin *Faune des Cadavres*, Paris, 1894, *Gazette Hebdom. de Méd. et de Chirurg.*, July 20, 1883; *La Faune des Tombeaux*, 1887.

<sup>3</sup> *Annales d'Hygiene*, 1855, Tome IV., p. 404.

<sup>4</sup> *La Mort Subite*, 1894, p. 99; *L'Infanticide*, 1896, p. 141.