### Scientisic.

THE SEVENTEEN YEAR LOCUSTS. II.

This interesting animal is very properly named the Seventeen year Locust, for it usually requires that length of time to undergo its transformation from the egg to the perfect state. Some butterflies come to perfection in six or eight weeks, and some beetles are two or three years in arriving at the same state, but there is no insect known which spends so long a time in its larval state as this Locust.

In many of the districts, also, there are duplicate appearances of the Locust. For instance, in Londoun county, Va., in the Southern portion, they appear every eighth and every ninth year. This would seem to controvert the idea above advanced, that they only appear every seventeenth year. It is explained as follows: Suppose the district in Southern Virginia, (extending from Loudoun county East of the Blue Ridge, South to North Carelina), to be bounded on the North-east by the Maryland district, and that in Virginia the insects appeared in 1792, 1809, 1826, 1843, and that in the Maryland district they appeared in 1766, 1783, 1800, 1817, 1834, 1851, 1868, and that the boundaries of the two districts should pass through Loudoun county, Va, it is obvious that on the boundaries and for a considerable distance within each district, the appearance of the insect will be 1766, 1775, 1783, 1792, 1800, 1809, 1817, 1826, 1834, 1843, 1851, 1860, 1868, the insects of each district appearing there at each of these periods alternately. And this has been the fact ever since the insect attracted attention: the old people of that portion of country always asserting that the Locusts appeared there every eighth and every ninth year. This lapping, as it may be called, of the two districts, extends into the District of Columbia and Montgomery county in Maryland, and occupies some twenty miles in width. It is the same in other parts of the country, and all from the same cause. Then again, on the boundary between the Northern and Southern tribes there is a large interlocking as well as overlapping of the tribes and districts. Those of the South running up into the territory of the North, and vice versa, causing great confusion, in those places where they occur, as to the regularity of the insect's appearance at stated times. But the difficulty is easily solved by taking the known date of any previous advent, and calculating from it by seventeen and by thirteen alternately, the time of their next appearance will be found to be that of the result of one or the other.

I have no doubt that the insect will, in some distant time, appear throughout the whole country every year, from the inter-mingling of the tribes and districts, by the continual encroachment of individuals from other districts upon adjoining districts, for although the insects do not fly far at a time -from tree to tree, ten to perhaps fifty yards, being the extent of their flight; never crossing, voluntarily, rivers 100 yards wide; yet they are often driven by high winds even a mile.

This intermixture of districts is very conspicuous in the South, and many in South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi and Louisiana, ridicule the idea of their being regular in their appearance every 13 years, to say nothing of every 17 years. Although in some future time they will undoubtedly appear annually everywhere in the United States, there will be for a much longer time much greater numbers at some seasons than at others, and these seasons of great abundance will be the regular ones at which they formerly appeared only at stated times. But, ultimately, they will certainly appear annually in about equal numbers. In those times, if this Essay or these sayings of mine should be remembered, they will be ridi-culed, as a superstitious legend of the olden times. I need scarcely remark, that al though the insect will appear annually, in that far off future, each insect will still retain its privilege of living seventeen or thirteen years, according to its premature char-

The music of the Locust is familiar; a dull, monotonous, unpleasant stridulation—an everlasting din, without inflection or change. I suppose I need hardly say, that it is the male only which is furnished with this musical drum, for it is not a vocal organ. No insects have a voice, and hence do not sing. The musical apparatus of our Locust is situated under the shoulder of the wing, on each side of the chest. It is a beautiful, nearly triangular membrane, convex and ribbed with fine, bony ridges. This membrane is stretched over a cavity of the chest, the lower angle of which is connected internally with a large muscle. Upon the broast there are two large scales, one on each side, firmly attached above, but free below. On bending the body backwards, these scales are elevated and expose two large cavities covered with extremely fine and silk-like membranes. These cavities are connected with those under the musical membranes and probably supply the place of bellows for dilating them. The upper ends of the muscles are connected together at the inner centre of the breast bone, and the lower ends by ligatures to the lower angles of the outside drum, thus forming two sides of a triangle and spanning the cavity of the chest. The music is probably produced by the action of these muscles, causing a quick vibratory motion in the membranes, which are stretched over the air cavities. No action is perceived in these muscles by the eye, yet on applying the point of a probe to sation is felt by the hand. If you press the probe upon these muscles, the music instantly ceases. If you cut out one, the sound on that side ceases, but continues on the other. If you divide the fibres transversely in the middle, the music will stop. The best evidence we have that these muscles are the source of musical power, is the the side of one, a disagreeable jarring sen-

fact that they are absent in the femaleneither the muscles, the membranes, nor the cavities described, are found in the female. She is destined to be silent.

Their coming out of a hole in the ground, the form of the chrysalis, the bursting of it on the back, and the appearance of the perfect insect, I need not describe. A much more practical question is, Are they injurious to vegetation and poisonous to man and other animals? It is certain that they weaken the smaller limbs and twigs of trees by sawing small furrows for their eggs, which are subsequently broken off by high winds; but it is still a question whether this insect pruning is not of real benefit to these trees after all. Nature performs what the pruning knife of the gardener should do.

insect pruning is not of real benefit to these trees after all. Nature performs what the pruning knife of the gardener should do.

But as to the other question of their poisonous character. The newspapers report various instances of severe wounds and even death ensuing from their "sting," but I have never seen or heard of a clearly authenticated case. It is certain that tanimals, as hogs, fowls, cats, birds, &c., &c., devour thousands with impunity, and it is reasonable to infer that if they secreted any poisonous substance, it would injure these animals; but on the contrary, they grow fat upon Locusts. The males have no sting and the females have no "stinging" instrument but.

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\*\*B Blac females have no "stinging" instrument but the ovipositor, which is too flexible to pierce the skin of any animal. With some pressure you can push it through a tender leaf, but then you must be careful to prevent it from breaking. The insect can pierce wood after a painful and protracted effort with the saw and rasp covering the ovipositor, as described in my first communication, but no person would submit to such a protracted operation on his skin by the Locust, and all the "stings" received, which I have heard of, were as sudden as that of a bee, which in the case of the Locust is simply im-

It appears strange, that whilst children and grown persons are daily handling them, so few should be "stung." This, and other facts, which I have not time to mention, create doubts in my mind whether this animal has the faculty of inflicting a venomous sting; but the student of nature is always open to conviction upon well authenticated facts, but never listens to mere conjecture or popular ignorance and prejudice.-Lutheran Observer.

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