

Bees, Wasps and Hornets.

The common wasp as a rule keeps its sting for self-defence (says an English paper). It will bite a fly in two with its jaws if it gets in its way on a window-pane, but it does not use its sting even when trying to rob a bee-hive and 'tackled' by the bees. The latter will push a wasp away five or six times, hustling it off the footboard, without provoking it to sting. But if a bee endeavors to sting a wasp it then grapples with it and stings back, killing or benumbing the insect almost at once. British wasps are fussy and excitable but not vicious, like many of the Indian wild bees. However crowded or uncomfortable they may be, they very rarely quarrel with or sting each other, as, for instance, when a number are on the same window-pane, fretting and anxious to get out. Only when the entrance to their nest is threatened do they become actively aggressive, and then as a rule the attack is not begun till the person who excites their fear interposes between them and the entrance to the nest. A setter dog was noticed to turn and bite itself, whimpering with pain, just as the party was sitting down to a shooting luncheon by the side of a wood in Yorkshire. The dog being tired, had lain down on the hole of a wasps' nest, and five or six of the yellow insects were stinging it at once, but they did not touch the persons sitting close by.

Bees are far more free in the use of their stings than wasps, and often go out on an expedition of the most criminal kind, as fully intending to use their deadly weapon as was the late Mr. Charles Peace when he went a-burgling with a revolver. Every now and then a swarm makes up its mind to burgle another hive and steal the honey. Robbery and bee-slaughter, if not murder in the first degree, are their object. They sting the raided swarm, and the latter sting the raiders, and when this has been going on every bee near the place is ready to 'shoot at sight,' so to speak, and sting persons passing by. Besides this, bees have fads and fancies about people whom they like and dislike. They will sting the latter quite unprovoked.

Hornets, which are only large wasps, are very different from the latter in temperament, and far less active. This is matter for thankfulness, for the amount of poison emitted by a hornet is enough to cause most serious results. The pain is intense. The writer has seen a boy stung on the head faint at once from the shock. The results to some constitutions are so serious that the dread in which hornets are held is by no means unwarranted. But they are among the most sluggish of winged insects. They will sit for hours on a dying elm tree, apparently almost torpid, drinking the sweet sap, and if by chance one enters a house it will remain quietly on the window-pane, without any of the buzzing and fuss made by a bee or a wasp.

Although it is not at all unusual to hear people speak slightly of 'patent' medicines, the enormous demand for them throughout the whole of the civilised world is in itself proof that they are regarded generally as one of the necessities of life. The majority of housewives would consider themselves as wanting in their duty if they did not have at hand the remedies which experience has taught them to use in cases of emergency, and nobody will venture to question the wisdom of this. Among the remedies which no household should be without is EVANS'S WITCH'S OIL, an invaluable cure for rheumatic complaints of every description, which has proved itself to be unequalled both as an embrocation and an internal medicine.—***

German Catholic Press.

A correspondent writing to the 'Catholic Sentinel' of Portland, Oregon, says that the success of the Catholic Congress at Ulm, where 25,000 subjects of the King of Wurtemberg met to make public profession of faith and to take measures to oppose the Los-Von-Rome propaganda, was a significant demonstration of the vitality of the Catholic Church in that two-third Protestant country.

The great hit of the solemn Ulm assizes was made by Mr. Groeber, a fearless defender of Catholic interests in the Wurtemberg Centrum. His was the closing speech of the convention, its subject being the new 'Kulturkampf,' in which the Masonic fraternities of Austria, Germany, France, and Italy lately embarked.

Let us not forget, he said, that in this universal campaign of lies and calumnies the great means of resistance is the Catholic press—powerful and vigilant. We need a press which will signal attack, will denounce plots, will enlighten men of good faith and confound others. To you it belongs, dear friends, to make the role of this press easier and more efficacious. . . . Let us thank God for having renewed Catholic enthusiasm in us during these convention days and for having gathered us, 25,000 strong, at Ulm. And to thank him in a sincere and practical way, that is what I propose. Back in your homes, take up a pen and subscribe at once to a paper thoroughly Catholic.

Every year at the General German Catholic congress held in August, one of the principal speeches is devoted to the work of Catholic journalism, and it is always one of the most popular orators who pleads its cause—very often a Catholic priest. Indeed, the German clergy have ever been the first to discharge the three fold duty which they seek to inculcate on the people with regard to their press—subscribe, advertise, correspond. On every large and small daily, on almost every weekly, there is a priest whom the hostile press has nicknamed the 'Press Curat.'

To-day Catholic Germany is proud of its press. Four hundred and seventeen newspapers, with two million subscribers, form the vanguard of the faithful Catholic body that fights for truth, justice, and liberty.

Digestion of Plants.

It is well known that certain plants, of which the Sundew and the Venus's Fly-trap are examples, capture insects for food and digest them. Botanists have discovered that the leaf which captures the prey throws out a digestive fluid upon the insect, and that this fluid exhibits a composition analogous to that found in the gastric juice of our own stomach. Certain other plants capture insects by means of their pitcher-like leaves, the best-known species of these latter plants belonging to the group known under the name of Nepenthes. In the pitcher-like leaves the insects are drowned, and their bodies undergo a decomposition. Professor S. H. Vime, in a recent communication to the Lamsden Society, points out that in the Nepenthes the digestive ferment is not so much like that of the animal stomach as like that found in the pancreas or sweetbread. This latter organ furnishes a fluid which can digest all kinds of food, and one substance in its fluid, trypsin, to wit, acts specially on nitrogenous matter. It is this tryptic principle which is represented in the pitcher plants, and Professor Vime inclines to think that it is also represented in other insect-eating plants. If this be the case we shall have to regard the Sundews as also leaning rather to

the side of the sweetbread than to that of the stomach. Another likeness to the higher animal world might perhaps be found in the differences between the mode of feeding seen in the Sundews and in the pitcher plants. The former take their food in a fresh state; the latter, it is commonly believed, like their food rather 'high.'

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