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CONTENTS:

Dr. Asa Fitch.....	65	The "Death-watch" beetle.....	75
Calvert—Notes on European Entomological collections	66	Superstitions about "Lady-birds".....	77
Holland—Ravages of <i>Dermestes vulpinus</i> in cork.....	68	Editorial	81
Dyar—Another <i>Euchromiid</i> to be added to our list.....	69	Economic Entomology	82
Hamilton—A review of T. L. Casey's..	70	Notes and News.....	86
Cleveland—A List of Lepidoptera, etc.	72	Entomological Literature	88
		Doings of Societies.....	93
		Banks—A new species of <i>Meleoma</i>	95

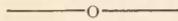
Dr. ASA FITCH.

Dr. Asa Fitch was a son of Hon. Asa Fitch, M.D., and was born Feb. 24, 1809, at Fitch's Point, Salem, Washington County, N. Y., and died at his home April 7, 1879, aged 70 years. In the death of Dr. Fitch Economic Entomology, in this country, lost one of its ablest votaries, who spent the larger part of his life in the untiring and successful study of the insects injurious to agriculture and horticulture. While his earlier writings were contemporaneous with those of Harris, and his later ones with those of Walsh, he will, judged by the work he did, take a high rank among the fathers of applied entomology in America. He practised medicine for eight years, but in 1838 gave it up to assume the management of his father's business. From this time on he devoted himself to agricultural pursuits, which gave more opportunities for investigations in entomology. He was appointed State Entomologist of New York, which position he held for seventeen years, and among other things published fourteen reports on the noxious, beneficial and other insects of the State of New York.

of some calamity, only by a little worm, which breeds in old wainscot, and, endeavoring to eat its way out, makes a noise like the movement of a watch!" (Secret Memoirs of the late Duncan Campbell, 1732, p. 61).

Authors were formerly not agreed concerning the insect from which this sound of terror proceeded, some attributing it to a kind of wood-louse, others to a spider.

The "Death watch" commences its clicking, which is nothing more than the call or signal by which the male and female are led to each other, chiefly when Spring is far advanced. The sound is thus produced: Raising itself upon its hind legs, with the body somewhat inclined, it beats its head with a great force and agility upon the plane of position. The prevailing number of distinct strokes which it beats in succession is from seven to nine or eleven; which circumstance, thinks Mr. Shaw (*Zool.* vi, 34), may perhaps still add, in some degree, to the ominous character which it bears. These strokes follow each other quickly, and are repeated at uncertain intervals. In old houses, where these insects abound, they may be heard in warm weather during the whole day.—*Cowan's Curious Facts.*



SUPERSTITIONS ABOUT "LADY-BIRDS."

(COCCINELLIDÆ.)

The Lady-bird (*Coccinella septempunctata*) in Scandinavia was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and is there, to this day, called *Nyckelpiga*—Our Lady's Key-maid, and (in Sweden, more particularly) *Jung-fru Marias Gullhona*—the Virgin Mary's Golden-hen. A like reverence was paid to this beautiful insect in other countries; in Germany they have been called *Frauen* or *Marienkafer*—Lady-beetles of the Virgin Mary; and in France are now known by the names of *Vaches de Dieu*—Cows of the Lord, and *Betes de la Vierge*—Animals of the Virgin. The names we know them by, *Lady-bird*, *Lady-bug*, *Lady-fly*, *Lady-cow*, *Lady-clock*, *Lady-couch* (a Scottish name), etc., have reference also to this same dedication, or, at least, respect.

The Lady-bird in Europe, and particularly in Germany, where it probably is the greatest favorite, and whence most of the superstitions connected with it are supposed to have originated, is

always connected with fine weather. At Vienna the children throw it into air, crying,—

Little birdie, birdie,
Fly to Marybrunn,
And bring us a fine sun.

Marybrunn being a place about twelve English miles from the Austrian capital, with a miracle-working image of the Virgin (still connected with the Virgin), who often sends good weather to the merry Viennese (*Chambers' Pop. Rhymes*, 1841, p. 170).

And, from the marsh of the Elbe, to this little insect the following words are addressed :

May-cat,
Fly away,
Hasten away,
Bring me good weather with you to-morrow.

In England, the children are wont to be afraid of injuring the Lady-bird lest it should rain.

With the Northmen, the Lady-bird—Our Lady's Key-maid—is believed to foretell to the husbandman whether the year shall be a plentiful one or the contrary; if its spots exceed seven, bread-corn will be dear; if they are fewer than seven, there will be an abundant harvest and low prices. And, in the following rhyme from Pleon, this insect is invoked to bring food :

Marspäert, fly to heaven!
Bring me a sack full of biscuit, one for me, one for thee,
For all the little angels one.

In the north of Europe it is thought lucky when a young girl in the country sees the Lady-bird in the Spring; she then lets it creep about her hand, and says: "She measures me for wedding gloves." And when it spreads its little wings and flies away, she is particular to notice the direction it takes, for thence her sweetheart shall one day come. The latter part of this notion obtains in England; and it has been embodied by Gay in one of his Pastorals as follows :

This Lady-fly I take from off the grass,
Whose spotted back might scarlet-red surpass,
Fly, Lady-bird, north, south, or east or west,
Fly where the man is found that loves me best.
He leaves my hand, see, to the west he's flown,
To call my true-love from the faithless town.

In Norfolk, too, where this insect is called the Bishop Barnabee, the young girls have the following rhyme, which they continue to recite to it placed upon the palm of the hand, till it takes wing and flies away :

Bishop, Bishop Barnabee,
Tell me when my wedding be;
If it be to-morrow day,
Take your wings and fly away !
Fly to the east, fly to the west,
Fly to him that I love best.

Why the Lady-bird is called Bishop Barnabee, or Burnabee, there is great difference of opinion. Some take it to be from St. Barnabas, where festival falls in the month of June, when this insect first appears; and others deem it but a corruption of the Bishop-that-burneth, in allusion to its fiery color.

So also in Scotland, the Lady-bird, which is still a great favorite with the Scottish peasantry, has been used for divining one's future helpmate, as appears from a rhyme from the north of Scotland, which dignifies the insect with the title of Dr. Ellison :

Doctor, Dr. Ellison, where will I be married?
East, or west, or south, or north?
Take ye flight and fly away.

It is sometimes also termed Lady Ellison, or knighted Sir Ellison; while other Scottish names of it are Mearns, Aberd, The King, and King Galowa, or Calowa. Under this last title of dignity there is another Scottish rhyme, which evinces also the general use of this insect for the purpose of divination :

King, King Calowa,
Up your wings and flee awa'
Over land and over sea;
Tell me where my love can be.

There is a Netherlandish tradition that to see Lady-birds forebodes good luck; and in England it is held extremely unlucky to destroy these insects. Persons killing them, it is thought, will infallibly, within the course of the year, break a bone, or meet with some other dreadful misfortune.

In England the children are accustomed to throw the Lady-bird into the air, singing at the same time :

Lady-bird, lady-bird, fly away home;
Your house is on fire, your childrens at home,
All but one that digs under the stone,—
Ply thee home, lady-bird, ere it be gone.

Or, as in Yorkshire and Lancashire,—

Lady-bird, lady-bird, eigh thy way home;
Thy house is on fire, thy children all roam,
Except little Nan, who sits in her pan,
Weaving gold laces as fast as she can.

Or, as most commonly with us in America,—

Lady-bird, lady-bird, fly away home,
Your house is on fire, and your children all burn.

The meaning of this familiar, though very curious couplet, seems to be this: the larvæ, or young, of the Lady-bird feed principally upon the Aphides, or plant-lice, of the vines of the hop; and fire is the usual means employed in destroying the Aphides; so that in killing the latter, the former, which had come for the same purpose, are likewise destroyed.—*Cowan's Curious Facts*.

I RECEIVED the February number of the NEWS last evening and noticed the article on the Red Bug by Mrs. A. T. Slosson, and also the article in the previous number by Dr. Hamilton.

Thinking that you might not take a quotation on the subject amiss, I will enclose one from White's "Natural History of Selborne," which I happen to be reading.

From White's letter to Thomas Pennant dated March 30, 1771: "There is an insect with us, especially on chalky districts, which is very troublesome and teasing all the latter end of the summer, getting into people's skins, especially those of women and children, and raising tumours which itch intolerably.

"This animal (which we call harvest bug) is very minute, scarce discernible to the naked eye; of a bright scarlet color, and of the genus of *Acarus*.*

"They are to be met with in garden on kidney beans, or any legumens, but prevail only in the hot months of summer.

"Warreners, as some have assured me, are much infested by them on chalky-downs, where these insects sometimes swarm to so infinite a degree as to discolour their nets, and to give them a reddish cast, while the men are so bitten as to be thrown into fevers."—I. FOSTER MOORE, JR., Bridgeport, Conn.

* "*Leptus autumnalis* of Latreille."