

The House Fly

The fly is here with us again. We cannot leave our tables without returning to find these unwelcome visitors partaking of our food and endangering us. We cannot take our siesta in peace; they buzz about us and if we have exposed sores, then be sure of their friendliness.

Flies come to us with the summer heat and early rains, with the ripening guavas and santol to being their yearly disturbance. No one ever said a kind word for the fly. Not only does it spoil much food by means of its dirty habits, but the far more important charge of spreading disease is now laid to them. That bacteria causing typhoid fever might be carried on their feet so flies could easily carry the typhoid bacteria to a dish of milk, thus infecting the milk and causing danger to all drinking it.

Why do flies appear suddenly and seemingly increase overnight to thousands? The development of the house fly is very rapid. A female may lay from one hundred to two hundred eggs. These are usually deposited in filth or manure. In warm weather within a day after the eggs are laid the young maggot, as the larvae are called, hatch. After about one week of active feeding these wormlike maggots become quiet and go into the pupal stage, whence under favorable conditions they emerge within another week as adult flies. The adults breed at once, and in a short summer there may be over ten generations of flies. This accounts for their great number.

How do you drive away the flies from your home? Merely swatting them with the broom won't rid your place of them. See that your home and your yard are clean, that no garbage or fruit peelings lie about for the flies to breed upon. Cover the food on the tables and always

keep the pantry shut. Spray your floors and yard with a mild disinfectant like lysol and flies will not linger about. During the fly season cook everything bought in the market and wash thoroughly those that are eaten raw like fruits and vegetables. Examine these fruits and vegetables well before eating them because in hidden parts as in the core of the fruits or in the stems of the vegetables there may be lively maggots.

There are other kinds of flies that cause much harm to man: one is called the Hessian fly, its larva feeds on young wheat; the Bot fly, which in a larval state is a parasite on horses and the dreaded tsetse fly of South America which spreads a disease known as sleeping sickness.

Can we not say something good of the fly? The fly is not wholly devoid of use to man. One kind, the tachina fly, when in the larval stage, feeds on injurious caterpillars. And now modern medical science has discovered a beneficial



use of the maggots of flies. These maggots are introduced into deep sores of the human body that do not heal at once and they feed on the decaying flesh. The human body then renews that flesh and the sores heal eventually. This has been successfully tried here. Recently a Chinese whose sores on his foot would not heal received this treatment and got well, and a boy from Laguna whose arm was rapidly being consumed by sores was treated this way at St. Luke's Hospital. The maggots of the flies were allowed to feed on the sores on his arm and when the decayed flesh was consumed, nature and medicine aided the boy to get well. So after all this pest of a fly has its use in this world, but we shall always regard it with annoyance and disgust and greet it with a well-aimed fly swatter.