

Aunt Julia's True Stories



DANGEROUS FISHES

You have read a great deal about our common food fishes. You should also know those that are dangerous because they are poisonous or because they can injure or even kill men.

Once in a while you read about men who have been killed by sharks. Corpses are sometimes found in the sea without legs or with the entire lower half of the body missing. These are victims of man-eating sharks. Sea bathers should be careful not to go to deep waters where a shark has been reported seen. The harmful sharks vary in length from two to five meters. The whale sharks which grow as long as ten to sixteen meters are harmless.

Sharks, although oftentimes injurious to men, are of great value. The fins are dried and eaten as a delicacy. You must have heard of shark fin soup. The skin is used for making a kind of leather and the meat and bones for fertilizer.

Some fishes are not good for food because they are poisonous or because they feed upon some poisonous things. Oftentimes people are poisoned because they eat decayed fish. Only strictly fresh fish should be eaten.

Puffer or botete and triggerfish or papakol are poisonous. People who eat these fishes know that they are poisonous but they deceive themselves into thinking that their way of preparing the fish is safe. Poisoning is marked with severe pains in the stomach. It is not safe to eat fishes that you do not know to be perfectly edible.

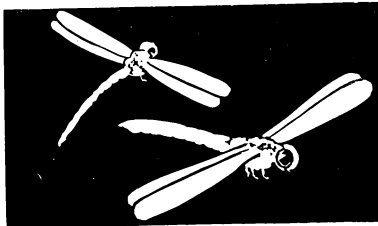
Some fishes do not have to be eaten to cause suffering or death. Some kinds have spines with poison sacs at the base. When a person steps on the fish he is pricked with the spine. A little poison is injected into the wound causing swelling and pain. Some poisons are so powerful that death immediately follows. When bathing or wading in shallow water, people should avoid stepping on fishes. A mere scratch may cause pain for days.

INTERESTING INSECTS

THE DRAGON FLY

Boys think it great fun to catch dragon flies, to hold their bodies and watch the flapping of the thin, glittering wings that spread out straight like those of an airplane. It may be fun to the boys but not so to the poor dragon fly, which finds joy only in flying about and doing its work of helping man.

How many kinds of dragon flies do you know? One kind has such a thin body that it is called "tubing carayom" or needle dragon fly. Another



has a stout body and is called "carabao dragon fly." Just like other insects, the dragon fly has six feet and a jointed body. It changes its skin several times while it grows. Have you seen the old skin that has been thrown away by an insect? This changing of the skin is called molting.

The dragon fly is our friend. It likes to fly about a pond where it can hunt for food. It feeds upon mosquitoes. Now, can you tell why you should not catch a dragon fly? When the dragon fly is young, it lives in the water. When there, it feeds upon the young mosquitoes called wrigglers. The wrigglers move fast, but the young dragon flies are swifter. They catch wrigglers with something like a fly swatter. The little dragon fly wears a mask which can move up and down. When it is near enough a wriggler, it holds out its mask to grab its prey and bring it to its mouth.