



AN ORCHESTRA.

way of rushing to the insect world for his lessons, though a moment's reflection and a few inquiries would convince him that the insect world is the most immoral sphere of action existing. The pervading villainy of the whole insect kingdom is obvious in the very system of their existence; for if ever you inquire what is the earthly use of some particular insect, you always find that it is to eat some other insect, which, if allowed to increase, would do all sorts of frightful damage. You then find that the use of this second insect is to kill

some other insect, an equal pest; the object in life of the third insect being to unite in

large numbers and assassinate some entirely different and very large insect indeed, who spends his days and nights skirmishing about and devouring all the different sorts of insects we have just been speaking of. Therefore, since the mission of every insect is

to kill some other, it is plain that murder is the chief occupation of the insect tribes, and even the illustrative moralist is reported to admit that murder is not



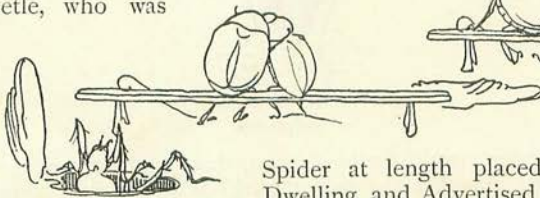
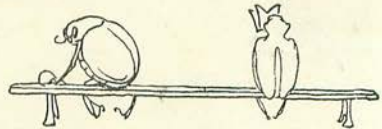
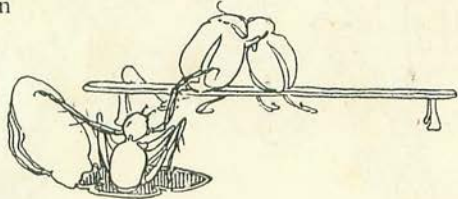
THE WICKED OGRE.

a strictly moral amusement. Also, since it is proper that every insect should be kept in restraint by some other, it is plain that the sum of insect depravity, apart from murder, must be vast indeed; which disposes of the insect as a popular preacher.

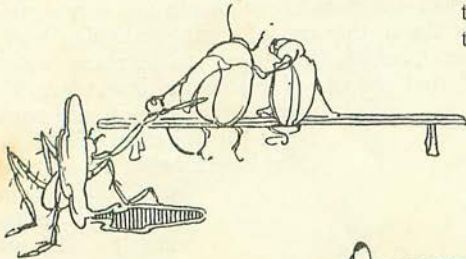
But the insect as an ogre, the insect as a pirate, as a flute, a flageolet, a torpedo, a Jew's harp, a walking-stick, a double bass, and a Jack-in-the-box—in such characters he shines, often literally. For the beetle *Xylotrupes*, with his glossy back, is a double bass, and nothing in the world else—unless it be a bloated violoncello. Just as the stick insect may be a flute, a flageolet, a walking-stick, or a mere twig, as fancy may persuade you; and as the



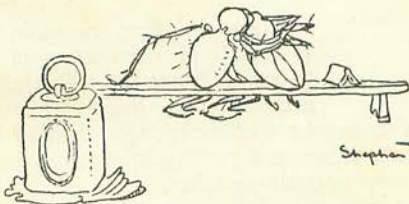
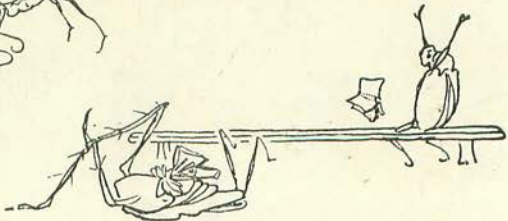
trap-door spider may be a Jack-in-the-box or a wicked ogre rising through the stage in a pantomime. Here, in the Insect House, one may see the trap-door in all its neatly fitting and spring-hinged guile, and there is no reason why a moral fable should not be built round him, or round any other insect, so long as he is not elevated to an ethical pedestal whereon he has no right. For instance, one might tell the Fable of the Artful Spider and the Fascinating Beetle thus: "A certain Green Beetle, that was a great Belle, was much Beloved by a Brown Spider, owning an elegant and convenient Trap-door in a Fashionable Situation. But his Suit had an unfavourable course owing to the intervention of a Prussian Blue Beetle, who was the more favoured Swain. Having thought on many Stratagems, the



Spider at length placed a rustic seat near his Dwelling, and Advertised that that was the Place to Spend a Happy Day, knowing full well that the Green Beetle and the Prussian Blue Beetle would take Cheap Returns, and sit upon the rustic seat to Spoon. And when things fell out as he had intended, behold, he arose from his Den and Ticked the Prussian Blue Beetle in the Ribs, quietly Concealing himself. And having Repeated this, at



length he left open the Trap-door, taking Ambush behind it; and when the Prussian Blue Beetle arose and investigated the Premises, with great Speed did the Spider



Stephan D

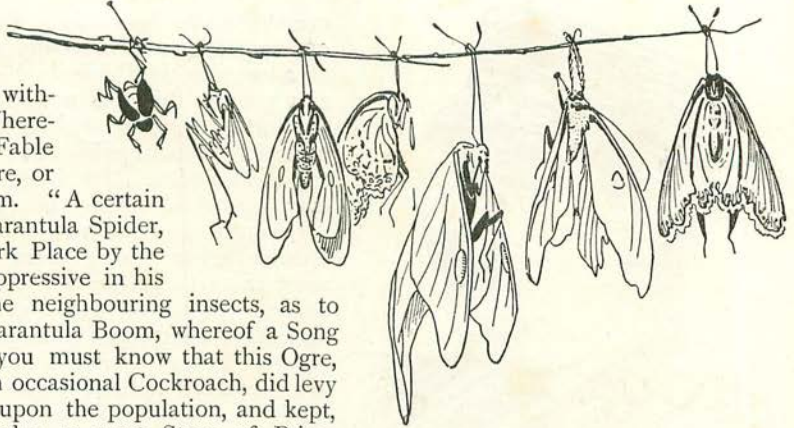
A FABLE.

hasten to shut down the Lid upon him, placing a Weight thereon, to reconcile him to his Incarceration. And straight-way the Spider did make his Court unto the Green Beetle, and they lived as happy as usual ever afterward. *Moral:* We may learn from this History, that, as the Poet has already Taught, it is unwise to introduce your Dona to a Pal."

The big hairy Tarantula Spider, too, the ogre that will kill a bird or a mouse when large insects are scarce, is here with his venom and ugliness in complete order. He sheds his skin periodically, sometimes leaving it perfect throughout except in the one place through



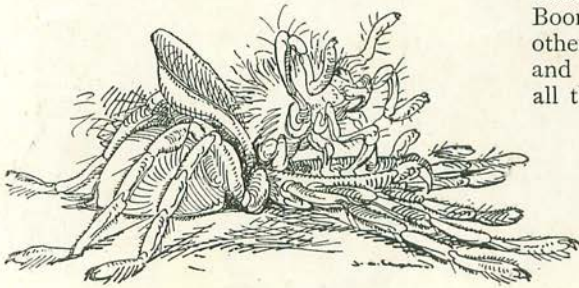
which he emerges, so that it would be possible to "have him stuffed" without killing him. Whereof one may tell the Fable of the Wicked Ogre, or the Tarantula Boom. "A certain Ogre, that was a Tarantula Spider, and dwelt in a Dark Place by the hillside, grew so oppressive in his Demands upon the neighbouring insects, as to create a Scare or Tarantula Boom, whereof a Song was written. For you must know that this Ogre, not satisfied with an occasional Cockroach, did levy daily contributions upon the population, and kept, hanging in his Larder, a great Store of Prime Joints, much greater than his Requirement.



THE OGRE'S LARDER.

And the Song of the Tarantula Boom was sung more than ever, and people grew Mad. Among many other Things, this Ogre demanded the Sacrifice every day of a White Lady. And still did all the Crawling Things, being bitten by the Tarantula, or as some said, Tara-ra Boom, fall to Dancing and Singing the

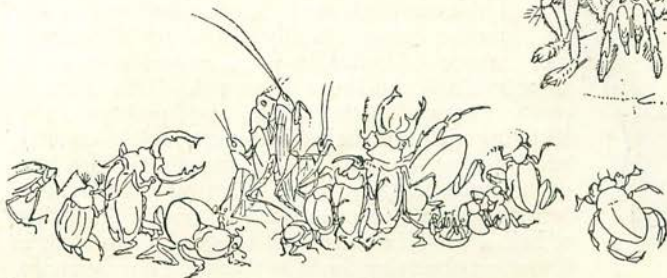
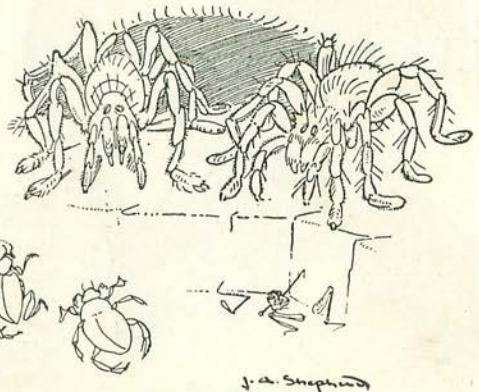
aforsaid Song like Mad, because of the Boom; all the White Ladies and all the others; and there was much High Kicking and Flinging of the Heels: Until at last all the Insects, finding the Tara-ra Boom beyond endurance, resolved to Come in their Thousands and Slay the Ogre. Of which the Ogre having privy Information, he set about to devise some means to Terrify his Assailants. To that end he Cast his Skin, taking much care not to Damage the suit of clothes, and set it Empty but seeming Full



THE STRATAGEM.

beside him. And when the Posse of Insects, driven Desperate with much repetition of the Tara-ra Boom (or as some did now call it, the Tara-ra Boom D. A., because it was Deuced Annoying), came unto the Ogre, behold, he was Twins. And they marvelled much, saying one to another, Lo, the Job has doubled in size; verily it would seem a Bit Too Thick. Thus they went Home in their Thousands, each diligently slinging his respective Hook, by Reason of the game not being Good enough. And so it was that the Tara-ra Boom D. A. lasted for ever. *Moral, very.*"

Speaking of booms, by the way, one remembers that, according to Tennyson, "At



TWINS.

J. A. Shepherd





THE INSECTEER.

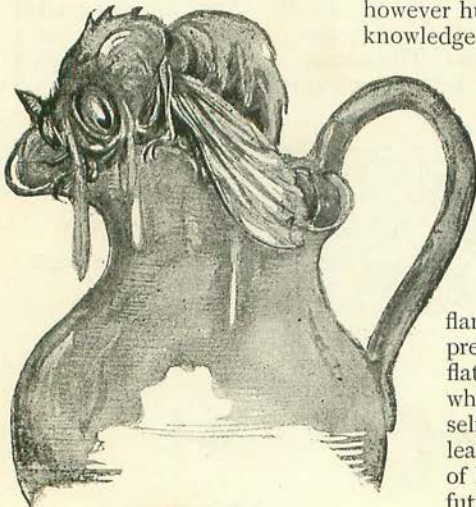
show in glass cases; consequently, I am always respectful to Quantrill, and inspect his person carefully for stray scorpions before coming very near.

A certain amount of entomology is forced on everybody, whether of a scientific turn or not. There are very many seaside lodging-houses where the whole of the inmates, without distinction of scientific tastes, sleeplessly adopt the study from



"WHAT A LOVELY SEALSKIN! BUT THERE'S MOTH IN IT."

their first night of residence. The sea air invariably stimulates interest in natural history. Nobody, therefore, however humble, need despair of acquiring entomological knowledge from want of material. The earnest student need do no more than buy an expensive sealskin cloak to gather together an instructive swarm of moths, sufficient to engage his attention for a long time. The Japanese, by-the-bye, have a pretty story to account for the rushing of moths at a flame. The moths, they say, in love with the night-flies, were bidden to fetch fire for their adornment. The moths, being naturally fools from the circumstance of being in love, rushed at the first flame available, and were damaged. This is a very pretty excuse for the moth, and perhaps more flattering than the belief prevalent in this country, which is that the moth is fool enough to burn himself without being in love. Because a moth never learns wisdom. Once having got away with the loss of half a wing, he might reasonably be expected, in future, on observing the light that caused the damage, to remark, knowingly, "Oh, that's an old flame of



INTEMPERANCE EVEN IN MILK.

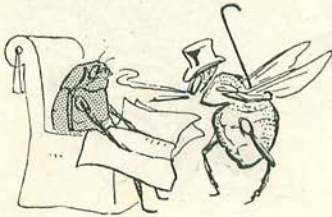


mine," and pass by on the other side. But he doesn't. He flies into it again and burns his other wing, or, more probably, roasts himself completely. Thousands of generations of scorched and roasted moths have passed away without developing the least knowledge of the properties of fire in their descendants. The moth remains consistent, and a fool.

There are few things of its size more annoy-

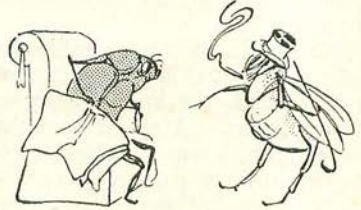


"HULLO, HOW DO?"

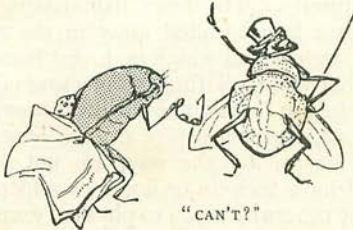


"SEEDY, EH?"

ing than a blue-bottle. He is always bursting with offensive, bouncing, robust animal spirits. He snorts and trum-



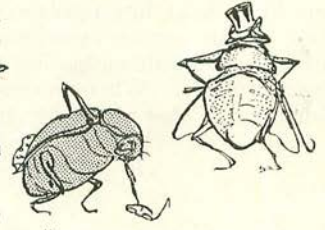
"THEN COME OUT."



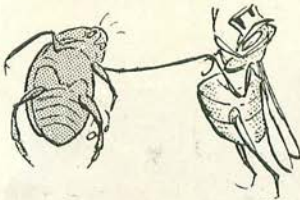
"CAN'T?"



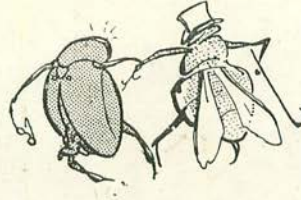
"WHY, YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!"



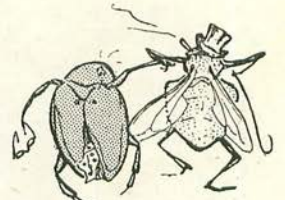
"NOTHING WRONG WITH YOU."



"ONLY A LITTLE TOO FAT."



"COME ALONG!"



"NO SHIRKING!"



"SOON PUT YOU' RIGHT."



"YOU WON'T?"

pets about your room in an absurdly important manner, when you are anxious not to be disturbed. To personal acquaintances of his own size he must be an intoler-

able nuisance. He is like those awful stout persons who wear very shiny hats very much on one side, who hum loud choruses, slap you boisterously on the back, take you forcibly by the arm and drag you out for promenades when you are anxious to be left alone. He is preferable to these persons, inasmuch as with some expenditure of time and temper and the shattering of various small pieces of furniture you may smash the



J. A. Shepherd

"WELL, I'M OFF!"



bluebottle, whereas the law protects the other creature. The bluebottle, however, adds to his other objectionablenesses by plunging among and rolling in your meals before your very eyes.

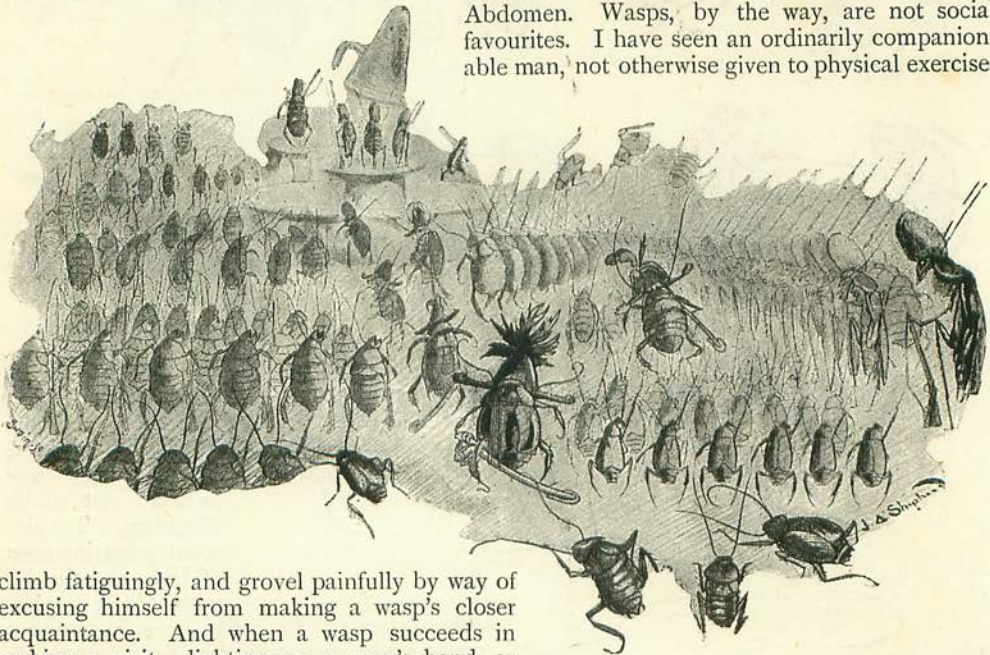
The Death Watch is another domestic insect never very cordially received. He only taps by way of telegraphic signal to his friends, but after all the terror he has caused he might have had the consideration to invent some other system. The Death-Watch, the Death's-Head-Moth, and the Pirate Spider are the banditti among insects—who are all cut-throats themselves to begin with.

One of the most remarkable characteristics of insects as a class is their contempt for legs. No insect minds the loss of a leg or two, having so many others. A spider sometimes will get along very well with one. Indeed, every insect would seem to be made of parts which are complete strangers to each other. I have seen a wasp "divided," like Clonglocketty Angus McClan, "close by the waist," but not in the least inconvenienced by the solution of continuity.

The front half, having the best of the bargain by reason of retaining the wings and legs, strolled away in the most unconcerned fashion, leaving the unfortunate abdomen, legless and wingless, to get home as best it might. Whereon one might construct yet another fable, relating the meeting of the front end of that wasp with an enemy, and its inability to use its sting at a critical moment, with the moral, Never Despise even a Deserted Abdomen. Wasps, by the way, are not social favourites. I have seen an ordinarily companionable man, not otherwise given to physical exercise,



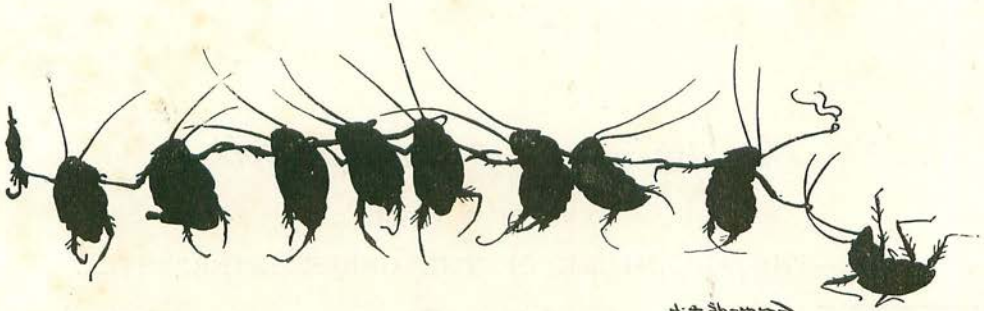
THE PIRATE AND THE DEATH'S-HEAD.



A REVIEW.

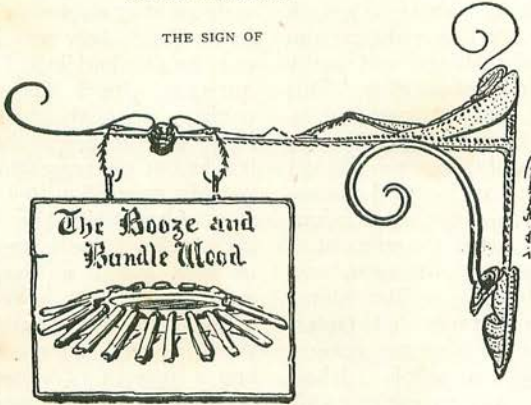
climb fatiguingly, and grovel painfully by way of excusing himself from making a wasp's closer acquaintance. And when a wasp succeeds in making a visit, alighting on a man's hand or neck, that man never asks him to sit down, because it is when a wasp sits down that one best understands the uselessness of his acquaintance. The only satisfactory way of averting a wasp-sting is to stand on the animal's back for five minutes before he commences.

The domestic black-beetle is so called in celebration of its being brown in colour and not a beetle. Beetles are aristocrats who keep their wings in sheaths. The more proper name for *Blatta Orientalis* is the cockroach, because it is equally



COMING HOME FROM

THE SIGN OF



unlike a cock and a roach. Its use in the economy of Nature is to supply a consolation for big feet. It is well known as a kitchen ornament, although its natural diffidence of disposition induces it to reserve its decorative effects for the evening, when it organizes reviews and parades on every available spot. Few domestic

pets are regarded more affectionately by their proprietors. Lettuce leaves and wafers are distributed for its comfort nightly, and I have known even respectable teetotalers to pander to its depraved tastes, and provide it with the means of shocking intoxication in an old pie-dish provided with convenient ladders.