

Those I have are, I think, young, and have six legs, three on each side, and all springing from near the "shoulders." At the end of each leg they have a tuft of extremely fine sickle-shaped claws with which they presumably cling to their victim while they insert into the skin some sharp lancets which I see on the head. The colour is a rusty red, which was very well seen in the clusters already mentioned. A specimen which I have photographed gives at 70 diameters of magnification the following dimensions: from end to end, one and one-third inches; across body at broadest part, one inch; from claw to claw of the middle legs extended, one and a half inches. The middle legs are shorter than the other two pairs. In Dr. Radcliffe Crocker's "Diseases of the Skin," 1888, at pages 695, 696, I find the insect very well described and figured, but in my specimen the claws are more distinctly hook-shaped, and the tarsus on which they grow is more distinctly differentiated from the next portion of the leg. Dr. Crocker uses the name *Leptus autumnalis* which is also used by other authorities.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
Bexley Heath, S.E., Sept. 10th, 1901. ANDREW PRINGLE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Since writing my letter of August 27th, which you were good enough to publish in THE LANCET of August 31st, p. 616, I have been consulted by a lady for a dermatitis of the lower extremities due to the irritation of the harvest bug. The irritation, with formation of wheals, &c., began early in July. It is stated by some observers (Dubreuilh) that the parasite attaches itself to the base of a hair. I looked for it with the greatest care, but failed to find the acarus. This may be accounted for by the fact that applications had been used. The time to look for it would be when the animal starts its feeding operations. It does not burrow in the way that the acarus scabiei does; it introduces its head only into the skin. Being very minute it must, of course, be sought with a lens.

As to the districts and soils infested by the harvest bug, my patient came from a place situated between the South Downs and the sea (chalky soil). Many years ago, I was when a lad attacked about the legs. This was on Jura limestone soil (oölite) near the sea.

There are evidently different varieties of the creature, varying slightly in hue, some shade of red. It is described as brick-red, bright scarlet, rouge orangé, and dull red like cayenne pepper. In France it is called, in addition to *rouget vendangeur*, and according to Besnier it prevails in large numbers in the central and western parts of France. Therefore its distribution is wide and it is not necessarily found only near the sea. In Germany, in addition to *Erntemilbe* it is called *Grasmilbe* (grass mite). There is an interesting passage in Gilbert White's "Natural History of Selborne" with reference to the parasite: "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 a harvest bug) is very minute, scarce discernible to the naked eye, of a bright scarlet colour, and of the genus *Acarus*. They are met with in gardens 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 swarm sometimes 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." (Letter XXXIV., Pennant Series.)

Strictly speaking, the harvest bug is not an insect, but a member of the Arachnida. The German *Milbe* is therefore more apposite. It probably got the name of bug from its colour. Wood states that it is especially plentiful about French beans and is also found in stubble-fields.

In conclusion, I should be glad to receive a few specimens in a phial, properly corked.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
Upper Gloster-place, N.W., Sept. 9th, 1901. GEORGE PERNET.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Here in Devon this little pest is supposed to inhabit the raspberry canes, but this origin may have been assigned to it to protect the luscious fruit from children, who dread its bite.

I have never found it there, nor on anything taller than grass. but fruit-pickers certainly suffer much from its bite. Lying on grass is, in my experience, the commonest cause of "infection" with children, whom I have seen a mass of itching spots from the neck downwards after a day spent in play on a sunny tennis-lawn. It does not seem to trouble men in trousers, and tourists who don knickerbockers often make its acquaintance for the first time and are thereby much alarmed. Almost any one of the essential oils is a prophylactic, and so is carbolic soap frequently applied, or carbolic oil, but this treatment is almost as bad as the disease. I do not think that they bite those persons who have lately bathed in the sea, so that salt water may be a protection. Children rarely suffer if they are prevented from sitting on short grass or playing in long grass. It is killed by the same means as the itch acarus, which it somewhat resembles in size, shape, and method of attack, but not in colour. Balsam of Peru is useful, I believe, and a lotion made of liquor carbonis detergens is better, but there is nothing that gives such immediate and effective relief as a little sulphur ointment rubbed into each itching spot. Vaseline, as suggested by Mr. Armstrong in his interesting letter, does not stop the itching and the consequent scratching, so hurtful in children.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
Ilfracombe, Sept. 7th, 1901. O. CLAYTON-JONES, M.B. Oxon.

ROYAL MASONIC INSTITUTION FOR BOYS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—May I call the attention of medical Freemasons to the case of Reginald Everard Adolphe Webster, aged 10 years and nine months, who is a candidate for election to the Royal Masonic Institution for Boys in October? He is the second son of the late Mr. George Leonard Webster, M.R.C.S. Eng. and L.S.A., P.M. Lechmere Lodge, No. 1874, a member of the Addiscombe Lodge, No. 1556, and life subscriber to the institution, who died from acute pneumonia after a brief illness, leaving a widow and four children practically unprovided for. It is important that every effort should be made to secure the candidate's election in October, as it is his *first, last, and only chance*. I will thankfully receive and faithfully apply any voting papers which may be sent to me, or they may be sent to Brother J. D. Langton, 2, Paper-buildings, Temple, E.C.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
JOSEPH POLLARD.
51, Queen Anne-street, W., Sept. 7th, 1901.

"THE USE OF A LINEN BAG IN ETHER ANÆSTHESIA."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Will you kindly correct an error which appeared in the note of cases I gave? These should read: nephrotomy, 45 minutes; appendectomy, 40 minutes; ovariectomy, 42 minutes; gastro-enterostomy, 40 minutes; exploratory incision and colotomy, 35 minutes; breast amputation, 45 minutes. One hour extra appeared by mistake. The average time per ounce was, however, right. I ask this correction in justice to the operator, Mr. Mayo Robson, who is a rapid worker.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
W. MCGREGOR YOUNG, M.A., M.D. Glasg.
Leeds, August 31st, 1901.

"THE ELECTROLYTIC TRANSMISSION OF SULPHUR."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In reply to Dr. Longridge's comments upon my article I beg to say that my "discovery" is this—viz., that by passing a constant current of electricity through the Harrogate sulphur water nascent sulphur is thrown down from the sulphuretted hydrogen gas in the water, that it can be deposited upon a patient's skin when having a bath, that it penetrates the skin and enters the circulation, and that the benefit derived in eczema, gout, rheumatism, and peripheral neuritis is much quicker and greater than by the patient simply lying in an ordinary bath of sulphur water without electricity. I never heard of Mr. E. Savary de Rovigo or