

THE MINOR HORRORS OF WAR

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The minor horrors of war by Sir A. E. Shipley

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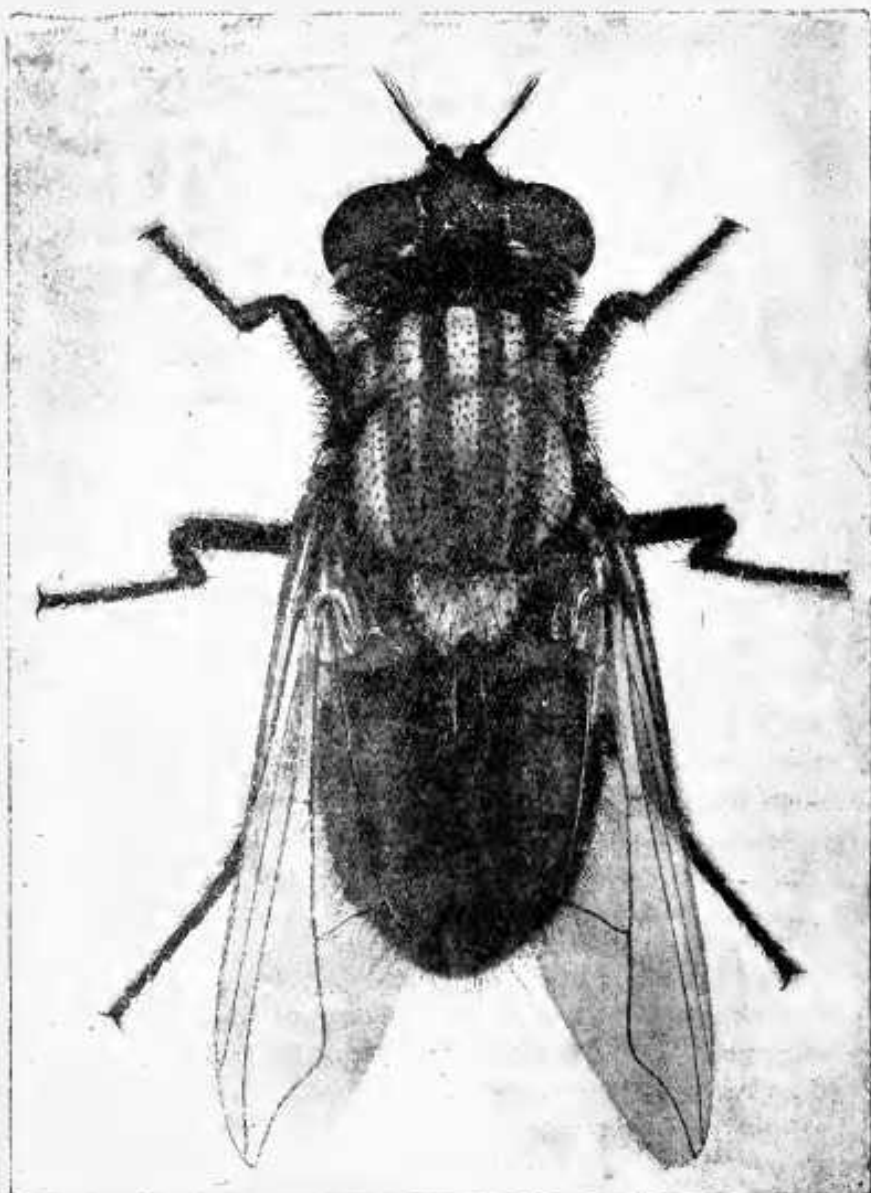
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SIR A. E. SHIPLEY

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Photograph of enlarged model of the house-fly (*Musca domestica*) in the American Museum of Natural History, New York. (From Gordon Hewitt.) P. 66.

[Frontispiece

THE MINOR HORRORS OF WAR

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PREFACE
TO
THE FIRST EDITION

THE contents of this little book hardly justify its title. There are whole ranges of 'Minor Horrors of War' left untouched in the following chapters. The minor poets, the pamphlets of the professors, the people who write to the papers about 'Kultur' and think that this is the German for Matthew Arnold's over-worked word 'Culture,' the half-hysterical ladies who offer white feathers to youths whose hearts are breaking because medical officer after medical officer has refused them the desire of their young lives to serve their country. Surely, as Carlyle taught us, '*There is no animal so strange as man!*'

These 'Minor Horrors of War,' and many besides, have for the moment been neglected in favour of certain others which attack the bodies, the food, or the accoutrements of the men who are giving all that they have to

give, even unto their lives, for their homes and for their country.

I deal with certain little Invertebrata: animals which work in darkness and in stealth, little animals which in times of Peace we politely ignore, yet little animals which in times of War may make or unmake an army corps. As that wise old Greek, Aristotle, wrote—and he knew quite a lot about them—‘*One should not be childishly contemptuous of the study of the most insignificant animal. For there is something marvellous in all natural objects.*’

We are shy of mentioning these organisms in times of Peace; but all of them are within the cognisance of every medical officer of health and of every police-court missionary. These gentlemen do not talk about them in general society: the subject is as a rule ‘taboo.’ Yet if we face these troubles with courage and frankness, they can be overcome. As ‘Emigration Jane’ says: ‘*Well, there’s nothink lower than Nature, an’ She Goes as ’Igh as ’Eaven.*’

I confess that these articles have been written in a certain spirit of gaiety. This is the reflex of the spirit of those who have gone to the Front and of my fellow countrymen in general. For more years than I care to remember, the spirit of Great Britain and of Ireland had