

SPIDER BITE BY OLIGOCTENUS (Fam. CTENIDÆ)

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During June, 1929, a student brought into the laboratory a spider which has been identified by Prof. A. Petrunkevitch as a new species of *Oligoctenus* of the family *Ctenidæ*. According to Comstock the members of this family wander about in search of their prey and are active mainly at night. Some of the tropical species are very large. They make no webs for a dwelling, but some species appear to inhabit burrows in the ground.

My specimen was taken from a bunch of bananas, so its real origin could not be determined. It was placed in a rather large insectarium, of which the bottom was filled with earth. The spider was very inactive most of the time and hid in the corners of the container.

After about two weeks it was brought home because of the close of school. A visitor, noticing the cage, inquired what might be seen there and in order to show off my trophy I opened the cage and pushed the spider with the index finger of my left hand, in order to induce him to move about. Instantly I was bitten.

Here are my notes concerning the effects of this bite:

June 12, 1929:—4.30 P. M.—Bitten by spider (*Oligoctenus*) on index finger of left hand. Index finger swelled. The instant piercing pain was quite severe. After approximately ten minutes the swelling had covered the whole finger. The finger was numb, but painful with a prickly crampy sensation, interrupted by throbbing, jerky pains. A little dizziness accompanied this, and after fifteen minutes, for just a few seconds, became quite severe, and perspiration collected on my forehead. My lips became blue for a short while and the pain continued intense for about an hour. After two hours the swelling extended over a larger area of the hand, covering the index finger and the greater part of the back of the hand and reaching all the way over to the metacarpals of the third finger; in other words, leaving free only the metacarpal and phalangeal region of thumb

and little finger. By this time the intensity of the pain had diminished, there was no discoloration, while the temperature of the swollen area rose to some extent. At this time the prickling pain was accompanied by a slight burning sensation in the region of the greatest swelling, which had enlarged the knuckle of the index finger to twice its original diameter. During all this time I was unable to bend the first three fingers of my left hand.

June 13, 1929—6.30 A. M.—On awakening, I found that the swelling had subsided considerably, but the numb feeling still extended over the same area. The pain was the same prickly sensation as when a limb has "fallen asleep," as the popular saying is.

4.30 P. M.—Swelling entirely disappeared. No pain.

For scientific records pertaining to spider bites and their effects one should recall the admirable and heroic experiments of Dr. Baerg and his experiences with the Tarantula and Black Widow.

I offer this record as an addition to the few scattered records pertaining to spider bites. No medical attention was administered, and the only treatment given was to place the hand in warm water, which somewhat relieved the pain.

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