

Earth-Worms.

Shortly before he died, the eminent naturalist, Charles Darwin, astonished the scientific world by a treatise on the vast importance of the earth-worms to the human race. The fertility of our soil is due to the labors of this despised and literally downtrodden creature. By penetrating the earth in every direction, and depositing their own remains therein, the fertility of the soil is not only kept up but added to. Their numbers are surprisingly large. In old pastures in England, Darwin estimates that there were as many as 21,806 in an acre. Mr. Heuson, another savant, states that in garden ground there are as many as 53,757 worms in the acre. Mr. Urquhart states that in certain pasture land near Auckland, New Zealand, an acre was found to contain 348,480 worms. In another piece of ground he found 784,080 worms to the acre. This immense mass of wriggling nitrogenous matter made the soil in which they lived and buried themselves extraordinarily fertile. Were it not for these earth worms soils would soon become barren and half our race would die of starvation. Yet this fact was never suspected until Darwin brought science to bear upon this interesting matter.