

POETICAL SOCIETY.

A Cove Birthday Celebration Described in Merry Rhyme.

The twelfth birthday of Miss Dillie Gray Happened round the other day And her friends about four score, Or rather, even, seventy-four, Remembering the important date,

If you are going to can black-berries GET BUSY

They will soon be out of the market

\$2.50 CRATE

City Grocery and Bakery

All gathered in to celebrate. At her father's farm in lower Cove In the shady bowers of the Island Grove,

Where the crickets chirp and the wild birds wed,

A bounteous birthday feast was served Fit for the Gods, and you may know, 'Twas enjoyed by mortals here below; It seems superfluous to relate When friends and neighbors congre-

gate

When their hearts are light and the weather's prime,

That they had a royal good old time; But this gay rural holiday

Like all days do, soon passed away, As the people scattered homeward, they

Wished "long life" to Miss Dillie Gray.

Miss Gray was the recipient of many valuable presents. The names

of the persons present were Mr. and Mrs. G. G. Gray and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Miller and son, Mr. and Mrs. Taylor, Mr. and Mrs. Will Miller and family, Mr. and Mrs. W. Dahlstrom

and family, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Conley and family, Mr. and Mrs. G. M. Gray and family, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Miller and son, Mr. and Mrs. Lee Childers and daughter, Mrs. W. S. Newcomb, Mrs. A. A. Phckett and family, Mrs. George Conley and son,

Mrs. Frank Eyres and family, L. K. Robinson and two sons, Messrs John Randall, Albert Eyres, Lou Eyres, Ray Eyres, Joe Gray, Nathan Gray, Ben Miller, Reginald Heryford and Dick Smith, Misses Irene Conley, Vera Myers, Stella Conley, Effie Conley, Irene Dahlstrom, Beile Dahlstrom, Katie Taylor, Abbie Taylor, and Georgianna Miller and Mr. and Mrs. J. G. O. Richardson.

Everybody should read the Observer.

A DEADLY REPTILE

The Fer-de-lance the Most Venomous of All Serpents.

ITS STING A DEATH WARRANT

Little Chance For a Victim of the Fangs of This Terror of the Island of Martinique—The Cat and the Mongoose Its Most Formidable Enemies.

Every one is perfectly well aware that there exists a large number of venomous serpents—we have many of them right here in the United States; the rattler, for example—but probably no other spot in the known world has such a death dealing reptile as has the French island of Martinique, nestling in the limpid blue waters of the Caribbean sea. It is the fer-de-lance, scientifically known as *Trigonophalus lanceolatus*, that can beyond the shadow of a doubt lay claim to being the most deadly serpent of the earth. Its sting means almost certain death.

There are eight distinct varieties, the most common being a dark gray and black speckled, which coloring enables it to conceal itself easily among roots and stumps of trees. Another variety is a clear, bright yellow, and when hidden in the freshly cut cane it can hardly be distinguished from the stalks. It may also be a dark yellow or coal black with a yellow belly.

It is not a large snake, rarely exceeding five feet in length and in circumference approximately the size of a child's arm. To repeat, the sting means almost certain death, and should not the service of a physician, or "panseur," as the natives call him, be obtained within a very short time the venom does its deadly work—the flesh grows cold, softens, becomes pulpy, changes in color, quickly begins to spot, and a great chilliness creeps through the blood. This lasts only a few minutes—possibly half an hour—then death.

If the victim is fortunate enough to get a physician upon the scene post-haste and no artery or vein has been pierced there is hope—just a faint hope—but even if life is saved the danger is not entirely removed, for in many cases necrosis of the tissues follows. The flesh corrupts and falls from the bones, and the body molder as does a tree.

There is, however, a heroic method of treatment often brought into use by the Martiniquais. It is the immediate amputation of the leg or arm if the sting happens to be in either. Even this has to be done at once and before the venom circulates through the system. There are to be seen today upon the island many natives with limbs missing, and in the majority of cases it is the result of having the machete, or cane knife, applied after an experience with a fer-de-lance.

The fer-de-lance is a fighter—and no mistake about it—aggressive and pugnacious, and domestic animals, with the cat as the one exception, stand a very poor show in a battle. Pussy, in about nine cases out of ten, will come out of the scrap with colors flying because of the fact that it is apparently quite as quick in movement and at the same time uses what may be termed ring generalship.

There is but one animal other than the cat that successfully wages war upon the fer-de-lance. It is the mongoose (ichneumon), imported from India a number of years ago for the sole purpose of getting rid of the snakes.

Of the weasel family and looking very much like it, this little animal is absolutely fearless so far as snakes are concerned and will just as readily tackle one five feet in length as one a foot long. From the mongoose the fer-de-lance will flee, but if cornered will put up a great fight, using every trick at its command—a useless sort of contest, however, for within a short time it will be stretched out lifeless.

A battle between these two natural enemies is well worth witnessing. It is never a "limited" fight, but to a finish always, and probably the snakes by this time have come to understand that when they enter such a combat it is with the odds greatly against them.

The mongoose is quite as clever a ring general as the cat and uses that gift to advantage. Strategy more than strength is its asset.

When they meet, and if the snake sees no avenue of escape, it prepares for battle, as does the mongoose, but in a more leisurely manner. It takes about one minute for them to get fully prepared. There is no shaking hands, so to speak, as by prizefighters.

The mongoose circles about the reptile, always at a safe distance and "drawing fire," inviting it by moving closer and closer to dart out its head and then quickly jumping out of harm's way. It torments in every possible manner, causing the snake to change position time and time again, tiring it by forcing a strike again and again without ever reaching the objective point. At last, seeing its op-

ponent at some particular disadvantage, the mongoose springs forward quick as a bolt of lightning, catches it firmly with the teeth behind the triangular head—a shake, possibly two, no more—and in less time than it takes to tell it the fer-de-lance is dead, its vertebrae severed.—New York Times.

The gods have attached almost as many misfortunes to liberty as to servitude.—Montesquieu.

A Woman's Solution

By JANE PINCKNEY BENNETT

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"Please consider our engagement broken," she snapped.

"Have you considered it broken?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean have you thought over the consequences of a broken engagement between us? We have been engaged for a month; all our friends know that we are lovers."

"Were lovers."

"Supposed to be lovers."

"That's more like it."

"Now suppose we announce that all is off between us. People will naturally be curious to know the reason."

"It is none of their business."

"But they will make it their business."

"I shall tell them that I have been very much disappointed in you."

"And what shall I say about it?"

"What you like."

"I shall say I discovered that I am unworthy of a girl with so much amiability."

"There was no reply to this."

"What is to be considered in the matter is whether you contemplate renewing our engagement after it has once been broken."

"Never."

"Very well; so far so good. In that case I am free to engage myself to whosoever I please."

"And it is my privilege to do the same."

"Certainly. Tomorrow evening we dine at the Spinglers'. Naturally I shall be expected to take you in to dinner. This will be embarrassing for both of us. Had you not better send word to Mrs. Spangler that our engagement is off?"

She pondered a few moments, toying with her engagement ring, which she had pulled off her finger, then said:

"Mrs. Spangler is a very prying woman and a frightful gossip. She will know all about how it happened and if she is not informed we give her own version of it to every present and every one not present."

"That is one of the points to be considered, or, rather, was one of the points to be considered. It's too late now. You have dismissed me and said that you will never recall me. We are both free to marry some one else."

There was a pause here. She slipped the engagement ring over the point of her finger, as though afraid he was about to take it away. Then she said:

"The breaking of our engagement is one thing; its announcement to the world is another. Is it necessary that we should announce it through Mrs. Spangler?"

"We might give it out today to some one else."

"It seems singular that you, who have so many times sworn that you loved me, can't bear the idea of sitting beside me for an hour or two at a dinner party."

"What would we talk about?"

"The weather, I suppose."

"No, thank you; I don't go to dinners to talk about the weather. But let us leave this subject of the dinner and agree upon a reason to give our friends for our quarrel."

"We will give them the true one, of course."

"And that is?"

"Your horrible treatment of me."

"Please frame a statement of it."

"Oh, you are better at stating things than I am. Frame it yourself. Any version you give of it will be satisfactory to me."

"Very well; I shall put it in this way: It started—what started it? I've forgotten."

"Why, it was something about—wasn't it about—funny I can't remember what started it. I only know that you acted horribly."

"Well, then, we will put it in that way. We'll say that we can't remember what the quarrel was about, but I acted horribly."

"That would be considered very silly of us."

"Silly of you, I fear."

"Not if they knew how horribly you have acted."

"What did I say or do?"

"Everything that was disagreeable."

"Name one."

"Oh, how bothersome you are! How can I tell you what you said when I can't remember what it was about?"

"I suppose then we are to announce to the world that, not being able to remember the cause of our quarrel, it is impossible to give a cause for the breaking of our engagement."

"That would be too ridiculous for anything. People would laugh at us."

"Upon the whole, I think you were right when you said that it's none of people's business why we have agreed to part. We will give no reason."

"Do you think that would be possible?"

"No; I don't. But since I've not been able to suggest any feasible cause myself I've fallen back upon your own suggestion."

There was no reply to this, only a stolid stare at the floor, while the finger of the engagement ring continued.

"Come," he said presently. "I leave it all to you. Decide what course we shall take. Name a way out of the dilemma."

They were sitting side by side. She dropped her hand on his. She had slipped the engagement ring back on her finger. He put his arm about her waist, drew her to him and kissed her.

"A woman's solution," he said.

His Glimpse of War

By R. W. KEENAN

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In 1870, having been just graduated from college, I went abroad to see something of the world before settling to my life work. There was a great deal to see at that time—namely, one of the biggest wars of modern times. The Germans under Von Moltke were marching across the French border. Landing at Cherbourg, I went directly to Paris and, taking letters from the American minister, set out for the front to get a glimpse of war. Having been ten years too late in my birth to take part in our own great struggle in America, I was extremely desirous to witness a similar contest between the French and the Germans.

I was received kindly at the headquarters of Marshal MacMahon, but there were few great battles, and the two nations did not seem disposed to fight one for the benefit of a young American who had come across an ocean to see "the fun." So after remaining for a time with the French I determined to join the Germans. I realized that passing from one army to its opposing one during actual war was a serious business, but I had heard so much of the thrilling episodes of war from friends who had fought in the American contest that my young blood was fired to participate in a similar affair. So, selecting a point between the lines where the French had no outposts, I left them and, walking down a road, was taken in by a Russian vedette.

This was rather a tame adventure, and I was on the lookout for something more exciting. Though I was not aware of it, something more exciting was on the lookout for me.

I presented my credentials, which were my passport and my letters to the French commanders. I had struck the troops under General Manteufel, and it was at his headquarters that the documents were examined. I was treated with the utmost civility by the officers of his staff. Indeed, I could not but contrast the attention I received with that of the French officers, who upon the statement of the American minister, vouching for me, permitted me to go pretty much where I pleased, but paid little heed to me. The Prussians showered me with attentions, but I was not permitted to go about at all. Indeed, excuses were made to keep me at headquarters.

One evening General Manteufel's chief of staff gave a dinner at which were several ladies. I was the guest of honor and was seated beside a very beautiful woman who spoke English with a broken accent. I was young and correspondingly susceptible; therefore it is not surprising that before the evening was spent I had fallen under a spell which, had I been older, I might have seen was purposely thrown over me. Before the party broke up I and this lady were left alone together. Suddenly her manner changed from lightness to intense seriousness.

"I am being watched," she said.

"Watched?"

"Yes; they know my mission."

"What mission?"

"I saw you at MacMahon's headquarters. I was receiving my instructions while you were there. Save me!"

"How?"

"They know that MacMahon has sent some one into their lines for information. If you take the risk for a time I will go free. If suspected you can prove that you are an American and will not suffer. I cannot prove that I am not a Frenchwoman. Here is the information I bear. Take it. If they find it on me I die. Keep it for me till the danger is past, then give it to me."

She thrust a little roll of tissue paper upon me. At the moment she did so a Prussian officer entered, and I had no opportunity to hand it back without being seen. To do so would be equivalent to informing the officer that she was a spy.

But if found with the paper in my possession I would be shot.

From that moment I was not for a second free from observation. When we were about to depart the chief of

staff came to me and said:

"We move at 2 o'clock. The general will have no one except soldiers with us. We have kept you at headquarters for your own good. You have seen nothing; therefore you may go back whence you came."

Without waiting for a reply he conducted me to the picket line. Glad to go free with the lovely spy's pellet, I walked hastily away. I was followed and arrested. Taken back to General Manteufel's headquarters, I was searched and the paper found on me.

As I was being led away I passed the lady who had given me the paper. The officers were apologizing to her for something, and I heard them tell her her carriage was waiting for her.

I was kept under guard till morning, when an officer came hurrying toward me. As soon as he reached me he said angrily, "You are a fool!"

"I am at any rate not a spy."

"No; the real spy has gone. We learned that some one was among us and suspected two persons who came in at the same time—this woman and yourself. As soon as the woman had gone beyond our reach she sent us proof that she was in MacMahon's service and had duped you. You will depart for our rear at once."

I had had all of war I wanted and went.

The Summer Girl.
She cut quite a figure on the ice
Last winter, so they say,
And now she cuts one on the beach
In her bathing suit each day,
—Chicago News.

Crusel Comeback.
"I'm doing my best to get ahead,"
asserted Chollie.

"Well, heaven knows you need one,"
asserted Dollie.—Toledo Blade.

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