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THE CHAMELEON.

This Curious Animal is Like Two Half Creatures Joined.

The chameleon is not allied closely to any other animal. It stands as a genus by itself. The nervous centers in one lateral half operate independently of those in the other. This seems outrageous, and it is, but it is true. The chameleon has two lateral centers of perception—of sensation and of motion. There exists also a third center—that common one in which abides the power of concentration by means of which the two sides of the creature may be forced to work in harmony with each other. But this center of concentration does not always dominate the situation. Notwithstanding the strictly symmetrical structure of the animal's two halves, the eyes move quite independently, and they convey distinct and separate impressions to their respective centers of perception. As of the eyes, so of the other members—each reports to and is controlled by its own center.

The result is that when the faculty of concentration becomes disturbed everything is jumbled. Let the chameleon be much agitated and its movements grow erratic. They are those of two creatures fastened together, or, rather, of two half creatures joined. Each half exhibits its intention of going its separate way. The result is a pitiable confusion of movement. There is no concordance of action. A curious example of the chameleon's helplessness when unduly excited is found in the fact that it cannot swim. The shock of being plunged into water upsets the poise of its faculty for concentration. Forthwith each side strikes out wildly for itself, to its own undoing. The chameleon is the only four legged vertebrate that cannot swim.

When the creature is calm every impulse to motion is referred to the common center of concentration, and the entire organism acts in fitting accord with the commands issued by that faculty. Thus, while totally different impressions from the two eyes are transmitted from their centers to the common one, that concentrating power decides as to which scene is the more important and then directs the eye otherwise engaged also to regard it. The same principle applies in the control of all the members—so long as the animal remains unexcited. Any observer may easily verify the existence of this dual nature in a superficial way by some experiments with a sleeping chameleon. A touch on one side of the animal will wake that side up, while the other side sleeps calmly on.

FLINT AND TINDER.

Making Fire in the Days Before We Had Matches.

A friend of mine of just my age used to laugh about his own boyhood and tell the story of his mother shaking him in bed and bidding him put on his boots when he dressed and his overcoat and wade through the snow to the next neighbor's to get a pan of hot coals with which to make the fire. I suppose Joe's mother had lost her flint. We kept our flint and what was called "the steel" in a round tin box such as would hold a quart of strawberries now, and it was on the mantelpiece in the kitchen. It was half full of tinder. Half the boys and girls of today do not know what tinder is or was.

Now, whoever was in the kitchen in the morning and found that the last hot coal of the wood fire had gone out took down the tinder box and struck the steel with the flint smartly and often until a red hot spark fell on the tinder; then very carefully she blew with her breath on any flakes of the tinder which had lighted until she had quite a little core of lighted tinder. Then she took what we called a brimstone match and put that very carefully in the little hot hole. If all things worked well, the brimstone lighted and the wood of the match lighted, and she lighted the candle, which made a part of the tinder box.

Oh, dear! There were thousands of tinder boxes in little Boston the day I was born, and a few years ago I tried to buy one as a curiosity, and I could not find one in any of the junkshops. In those days old women would stop at the door and ask you to buy some bundles of matches. They had made these themselves of pine wood four inches long, which they had dipped in hot brimstone at both ends. And those were the only matches that anybody ever heard of.—Woman's Home Companion.

Always Dreaded the 14th.

Most dismal of all men off the stage was Grimaldi, the clown, and his father fathered him. He had that curious dread of a certain date which assails so many. The elder Grimaldi hated the 14th of the month, and when it was passed he regarded himself as safe until the next. He was born, christened and married on the 14th of the month, and, being discontented with all three events, we will hope his death on March 14, 1788, satisfied him.—London Tatler.

Cutting Humor.

With cap and bells jangling, he burst into the king's presence.

"Have you heard my last joke, your majesty?" he cried.

"I have," was the reply as the royal ax descended on the neck of the court jester.—Life.

Realism.

The Author—Well, how did you like my play? The Critic—Oh, it was very nice! The Author—Didn't you think the church scene realistic? The Critic—Intensely so. Why, a great many of us actually went to sleep while it was on.—Cleveland Leader.

SPECIAL

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