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### KING OF THE ASPES.

This Raptia, the Most Venomous of Snakes, is Death Itself.

The most venomous of snakes is said to be the Echis carinata of India. It is about eighteen inches long and of a gray color. The creature is death itself and carries in its head the secret of destroying life with the concentrated agony of all the poisons.

The Echis carinata is tolerably common in India, being found in nearly every part of the peninsula.

Fortunately, however, for man, it is not, like the cobra, a house frequenting snake, for its aggressive habits would make it infinitely more fatal to life than its dreaded relative.

This king of the asps does not turn to escape from man, as the cobra will, or dash into concealment, like the koriat, but keeps the path against its human assailant and, pitting its own eighteen inches of length against its enemy's bulk, challenges and provokes conflict.

A stroke with a whip will cut it in two or a clod of earth disable it. But such is its malignity that it will invite attack by every device at its command, staking its own life on the mere chance of its adversary coming within the little circle of its power. At most the radius of this circle is twelve inches. Within it at any point lies certain death, and on the bare hope of hand or foot trespassing within its reach the Echis carinata throws its body into a figure of eight coil. Then it attracts attention by rubbing its loops together, which, from the roughness of the scales, make a rustling, hissing sound, erects its head in the center and awaits attack.

It is said that no one, having once encountered this terrible reptile, can ever forget its horrifying aspect when thus aroused. Its eagerly aggressive air, its restless coils, which, in constant motion over the other and rustling ominously all the while, stealthily but surely bring it nearer and nearer to the object of its fury—Harper's.

### TWO NEW HATS.

The Scheme That Won Them and the Way It Was Worked.

A man who used to be in politics and was a constant borrower found himself in need of a new hat, but he couldn't find anybody who would lend him a cent.

Finally he went to an acquaintance and said:

"I want to borrow \$50 for five minutes."

"You can have it if you will put up a couple of fingers for security."

"Nix. Now, I've got a scheme. You lend me the fifty and you needn't let me get out of your sight. If you do I'll stake you to a new hat."

Mystified, but curious, the acquaintance agreed to this, and the two repaired to a prominent hat store.

"Wait a minute," said the adventurer and left his backer doing sentry duty on the sidewalk.

Picking out the most important looking personage in the store, the politician went up to him and said:

"I am So-and-so of the — district. I have come to pay for two hats for which I have given orders on you to two of my constituents."

With that he flashed a fifty dollar bill.

There was a scurrying around, a search of books and a reply that no such orders had been presented.

"Just look out for them, will you?" said the district leader, waving the big bill, which was hypnotic in its way, for the clerk bowed low and said:

"Yes."

Half an hour later two orders were presented and two hats left the store.—Chicago Post.

### The History of "Stepmother."

"Stepmother" is a word with a commonly unsuspected history. Probably most people if called upon to explain it would say that it meant a woman who had stepped into the place of the true mother. Dr. Johnson, at any rate, believed that this was the suggestion of the word to most minds. Really, "step" is the Anglo-Saxon "steop," the original meaning of which appears to have been "orphaned." Stepmother, step-brother, stepson and stepdaughter came first, and then by gradual fading of the etymological meaning of "step" stepfather and stepmother came into being.—London Chronicle.

### Japanese Landowners.

A landowner in Japan owns the surface and products of the land only. All minerals under the surface appertain not to him, but to the Japanese government. Moreover, should the government or its nominee wish to extract the minerals lying under a landowner's property the latter, though he would, of course, receive compensation for loss, cannot object on legal ground to the development of these minerals.—British Consular Report.

### His Motion.

"De meetin' had to disband very sudden."

"Did you make the motion to adjourn?"

"I did."

"How did you do it?"

"I made a motion like I was reachin' for a razor."—Pittsburgh Press.

### Properly Placed.

"John," exclaimed the inebriated printer's wife, "when you come home in that condition at this unseemly hour I hardly know what to call you!"

"At's awright, m'dear," enjoyed the printer. "Jus' put me in the 'too late to classify' department."—Judge's Library.

## TOYS OF A STORM

An Experience on a Mountain Top Alive With Electricity.

### MEN GLOWED WITH SPARKS.

The Discharge From the Lightning Laden Cloud Enveloped the Party and Turned It Into a Sort of Human Pyrotechnic Display.

We had spent a week in pathless and dense woods, working toward a high mountain in northwestern Montana. At last we left the pack horses in care of the guide, and three of us set out on foot for the peak. We carried a plate camera, provisions, gun, ice pick, aneroid barometer for determining elevation and other necessary articles. For several hours we climbed over ridges and up ravines.

The final ascent was a slope of rotten shale. For four and a half hours we climbed the loose rock, with not a solid bit of footing. Halfway up the slope we observed that a storm cloud had gathered southwest of us, not far above a ridge which we had crossed early in the morning. Suddenly a bolt of lightning flashed from the cloud to the earth. A little later a wreath of smoke ascended from the ridge, and we knew a fire had started from the lightning.

About half past 1 we reached the summit, a narrow top but a few feet in width, on which was a pile of rocks shoulder high, a government triangulation monument. Before was a precipice, at the foot of which was an unnamed and unexplored glacier. Behind was the rotten shale up which we had scrambled. To the right a narrow ridge, with boulders as large as a small house, connected our summit with the one beyond.

Against the eastern face of this summit great masses of snow and ice formed the head of the glacier. To the left was a steep, open ridge.

The glacier was furrowed by hundreds of chasms. The yellow rocks of the neighboring summits were flanked by great masses of ice on the one side and by tremendous precipices on the other. Far away the mountains blended with the blue sky. On the crags were a few mountain goats.

"What is that noise?" shouted one of the boys suddenly.

"What noise? I do not hear it," I replied.

"Over at the monument."

"I will go and see."

The monument was not a dozen steps away. As I approached it I smelled the pungent odor of ozone, and instantly I knew. We had forgotten the storm cloud gathering near us to the south. The summit on which we stood presented to the electric cloud above a sharper point in comparison with the earth than can be made on any electric machine. The exchange of electricity between the charged cloud and the earth began at the rock monument, which was a little higher than the place where we stood. I may have heard the noise; I do not remember. I smelled the ozone and turned toward my companions with the cry: "We are in an electric storm! We must run for our lives!"

In a few seconds the electric discharge had increased with wonderful rapidity. My rifle was shooting sparks from the end of the barrel, which were visible in broad daylight. I did not drop the gun; I threw it. My scalp felt as if each hair was a bristle, and pushing against my hat. I could feel the discharge from fingers, cheeks, nose and chin, and I was wearing heavy rubber soled shoes, which should have assisted in making me a nonconductor.

One of my companions threw away his ice pick, as I had thrown my gun. The other, seeing my white face—as he afterward told me—was completely unnerved and knew not what he was doing or what to do. Before was the cliff. Behind was the rock shale, with no protection. To the right was the impassable ridge, connecting the summits and blocked with masses of rock. There was only one way—to the left.

"Shall we go this way," said one, extending his hand in that direction. The extended hand and fingers were aglow with sparks shooting outward from the body, and instantly the arm was jerked back to the body with a startled exclamation. Stronger and stronger grew the charge. It seemed to fill our bodies and crackled from every projecting rock.

Half dazed, I hooked my arm in the carrying case of my camera and with it dashed down the ridge, followed closely by my two companions. We crawled under a big rock and, with our feet against the ice and our backs against the solid mountain, felt safe. Thus we remained for perhaps an hour. Then we began to feel hungry and in this trying position ate our luncheon.

We returned to the summit. Fortunately the cloud had passed to the south of us, and we had experienced only the edge of the manifestation of electricity. Had the cloud been directly overhead this story would perhaps never have been written.—Morton J. Elrod in Youth's Companion.

### Reasoning It Out.

"I have calculated that I can't lose much if I put my money in electrical illumination."

"Why not?"

"Because there couldn't possibly be a heavy loss on a light investment."—Baltimore American.

When a friend asks, there is no tomorrow.—George Herbert.

### TRAINING THE HAWK.

A Feeding Lesson Given by an Old Bird to its Young.

While fishing in a remote and wild part of Scotland a British naturalist chanced to witness an entertaining performance in the form of a feeding lesson given by an old hawk to its young.

A cry of a young hawk to its parent was heard, and the naturalist soon located three young peregrine falcons sitting side by side on a shelf of rock overhanging the lake in which he was fishing. Presently the old bird came into view, like a dot out of the sky, and made straight for her vociferous young.

She poised high above the shelf on which they were sitting and to the surprise of the watcher dropped the bird she was carrying. She had so chosen her position that the bird cleared the rock as it fell toward the lake.

Instantly youngest No. 1 dashed off the cliff. Evidently this was not its first lesson, for it hurried itself into a beautiful swoop and actually caught the prey before it reached the water.

The youngster was not allowed to enjoy it, however, for down came the old bird and with the utmost grace snatched it from the young one's grasp and ascended in rapid rings to the height of several hundred feet. The discomfited youngster with some difficulty returned to the rocky shelf.

The old hawk repeated this maneuver, dropping the prey this time in front of No. 2.

The young all knew their lesson, for neither No. 1 nor No. 3 ventured to stir. It was No. 2 who started in pursuit and, like its brother or sister, succeeded in interrupting the falling prey before it reached the water.

The old hawk did as before, snatching the prey from her offspring. Rising high in the air, she this time dropped it before No. 3, who in turn caught it. But No. 3 was not allowed to possess the prize. The old hawk now ascended to the shelf beside the young ones, tore the prey to pieces and proceeded to divide it equally among her hungry and expectant progeny.—Harper's Weekly.

### PRACTICAL SYMPATHY.

A Pretty Incident in the Career of Rosa Bonheur.

"We are not brothers for nothing," Rosa Bonheur once wrote in jesting affection to her brother Isidore. And in truth the wonderful, quaint, boyish little woman, with her bright eyes, cropped curls and breezy ways, was almost more a brotherly chum than a sister to the "Isidore" whom she so dearly loved.

Much of the time on her country estate, in her studio and among her animals, wild and tame, she wore the masculine costume which her manner of life required, to wear which she had, with one other woman, a famous explorer and archaeologist, received express permission from the French government. Yet this very manly little person was far from unwomanly in her sympathies, and her latest biography records a pretty incident related by her friend, Joseph Verrier, the landscape painter.

"One evening she was dining with me and some friends. Among the friends was a young lady recently married, who gave us an account of the furnishing of her house. All the rooms were furnished except the dining room. For this last her husband could not yet give her the money, and she was compelled to hold her little receptions in her sleeping room.

"After dinner Rosa asked me for a large sheet of drawing paper, and while we were talking she sketched a delightful hunting scene, which she signed with her full name. Then, under cover of a general conversation on music, while tea was being served, she approached the young wife and said to her:

"Take this picture to Tedesco on your return to Paris, and he will give you at least 1,500 francs for it. Then you will be able to furnish your dining room."

### Wealth Among Treasury Scraps.

Unique among government "jobs" is that of the two women who sit side by side down in the basement of the treasury department and spend the entire day going through the contents of the department wastebasket. They are searching for stray bonds, checks and bills that may through some mishap have fallen into the basket. The positions of the two women are more important than their place on the treasury rolls would indicate, for some time back one of them fished up a \$10,000 United States coupon bond. The two women have been doing this work for years and have saved to the government the amount of their annual salaries a hundred times over.—Philadelphia Record.

### Pilot and Engineer.

Care, the utmost care, is taken on the Hudson river and Long Island sound night boats with their brilliant display of searchlights never to let a ray be thrown upon a locomotive engineer at his lever or the pilot of another craft at his post. On rail and water engineer and pilot must be kept in darkness, as one flash of a brilliant electric searchlight would blind them temporarily and they might go unheeding by a danger signal.—New York Press.

### Good For Nothing Else.

I couldn't saw or plane a plank or work in stone or wood. I never tried to run a bank. I don't suppose I could. I couldn't bake a decent pie or draw a glass of fizz or set a shoe, and that is why I'm in the poetry biz.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

To what gulfs a single deviation from the track of human duties leads!—Byron.

## A VICIOUS COLONY

England's Penal Settlement In the Andaman Islands.

### LIFE CONVICTS FROM INDIA.

Often the Most Desperate Prisoners Kill One Another, While Others Fall Victims to the Native Head Hunters, to Whom Murder Is Sport.

Frederick Taylor, F. R. G. S., writing in the Century Magazine about life in the Andaman islands, says:

"The sailing of the Maharaja from Calcutta for the Andaman islands was not accompanied by the usual goodbyes and handkerchief waving, for of my fellow passengers there were seventy to whom no one wished bon voyage or a safe return. These were convicts, all murderers under life sentences, who for some reason had escaped the death penalty, and included six women for the colonial Indian government to transport convicts to the penal settlements near Port Blair, South Andaman island, a distance of 650 miles from Calcutta.

"The prisoners were all manacled and shackled about the ankles, with chains fastened to bands at the wrist. They were a despicable lot. At night a continual moaning and cursing and hopeless sobbing came up from the hatches and made sleep out of the question for me, though the European officer in the steamer's cabin apparently slept undisturbed. Early the first morning I went on deck and learned that two of the male prisoners were ill and had been brought up to the deck for air. They were closely guarded, and raw recruits were stationed at the railing to prevent them from committing suicide by jumping overboard into the Hugel river.

"The Andamans are literally the homes of murderers. The inhabitants are the most vicious members of an older civilization and the uncivilized head hunters, among whom murder is a sport and a pastime. In the settlement are about 1,700 prisoners, including 800 women. On arriving at Port Blair the prisoners first spend six months in solitary confinement in the cellular jail of Viper island. They are then transferred to one of the associated jails and the comparative blessing of hard labor in company with others, though still occupying separate cells at night. After a year and a half of this they become slaves, working in and about the settlement during the day and sleeping in barracks at night, always closely guarded. At the expiration of five years a convict becomes eligible to join the colony of 'self supporters' and live in the village, where he earns his living in his chosen way, lives in his own house and can send for his wife and children or marry a convict woman. In a limited sense he becomes a paternal family, but is always carefully watched and cannot leave the settlement without permission.

"Despite the rigid discipline and the vigilance of the authorities the communal life is far from harmonious, and the more vicious often rebel. The murderers kill one another and are in turn murdered by the treacherous Andamanese, who regard the hapless convicts and their guards as their natural prey. Occasional attempts at escape are made by the prisoners, but the efforts inevitably prove disastrous. The fugitive, finding his conditional freedom worse than servitude, either dies at the hands of the Jarawa warriors, falls a victim to fever or other disease or starves. There is also a system in vogue by which the more friendly tribes of savages co-operate with the authorities in capturing escaped convicts and receive rewards for the return of the unhappy deserters. More often, however, the head hunters kill the fugitive and return only the head, receiving the reward just the same, the killing adding zest to the chase and the return of the head being the easiest and quickest way of earning the reward.

"Under these conditions there are few attempts at escape, though many remarkably hazardous dashes for liberty have been made from time to time, which, though futile, were most daring. Some time ago the steamer Pulata picked up a poor, emaciated wretch who was sighted on a small bamboo raft off the Arakan coast. He was later found to be an escaped convict. When picked up he had been on the raft for twenty-nine days during one of the southwest monsoons and had secured water by catching the rain and sucking it from his turban and loin cloth. He lived upon flying fish that flew aboard the raft, eating them raw. He was swept off the raft many times by the waves, but had managed to cling to it. After a month in a hospital at Rangoon he was returned to prison and solitary confinement.

"Another daring attempt at escape was made by a party of six convicts who were sent with two native policemen to a small island off the middle Andaman to work. They managed to escape from the guards and, hoisting the sail of the small boat, started out in a gale. After seven days of heavy weather they were dashed upon the rocks of the Tenasserim coast, and the boat was wrecked. All escaped with their lives and eventually reached the Siamese border, where they were apprehended by the local authorities and returned to the prison."

"The value of a thing is the peace of mind it gives you.

### BRASS WORKERS.

There is a Dangerous Trade, and They Usually Die Young.

The present rate of mortality of the brass foundryman is two and a half times that of the farmer. Respiratory diseases, particularly consumption, account for the difference. Comparative tables based on sickness and invalidism, if obtainable, would show even greater differences.

The age statistics in the trade are startling. Of 1,761 brass foundrymen but seventeen over fifty years of age were found and a bare 200 over forty years of age. When asked the cause of this officials invariably stated: "They got too old. They can't turn out the work they should every day." But what sort of an industry is this in which nearly six-sevenths of its followers are too old at the age of forty? It is not thus among ironmolders, most of whom are hale and hearty even at sixty years and still able to turn out their full quota of work daily. Workmen claim they "are knocked out by the brass fumes."

These age statistics for Chicago workmen are no different from those Sir Thomas Oliver gives in his book on "Dangerous Trades." "Only ten brass workers of 1,200 casters in Birmingham, England, were found living beyond sixty years. A superannuation insurance for brass founders, to begin at fifty-five years of age, had only three applicants in a period of some ten years."

There is no cure for brass chills. But they can be prevented by striking at the cause. For such an important industry not to do so is like tolerating smallpox in a modern community. The workmen must be protected from the breathing in of brass fumes and foundry smoke. In large foundries with good ventilation, either natural or artificial, brass chills practically never occur.—Emery R. Hayhurst in Survey.

### HUNTING THE WOLF.

Trained Eagles Are Used by the Tartar Tribes of Asia.

There are many ways of hunting the wolf in Russia, some very curious and exciting and others as tame as target practice. The most sportsmanlike way is by means of hounds, and all over Russia today there are well-to-do sportsmen who hunt the animal in this fashion. Wolves are also taken in pit-falls and shot, while still another way is to drive in a sleigh through the forest in time of hard frost, when the wolves are bold with hunger. At the back of the sleigh one or more sportsmen lie snugly under their fur rugs with their rifles ready. A young pig is carried in the sleigh, and its cries soon reach the ears of the lurking wolves, who cannot resist following the sleigh and are speedily shot.

One of the most picturesque ways of hunting the wolf, perhaps, is that which one may see in the west of Asia on the bleak Kirghiz steppes. The Tartar tribes are wonderful horsemen, and they ride after the wolf in very large parties. Not only are dogs used to overtake the quarry, but because a fleet wolf may get away from them, eagles are used, being trained to help the hunter in very much the same manner as falcons in older times. The great bird sits on the hunter's wrist until it is let loose. Then it soars into the air, sails after the quarry and swoops down upon it. Its duty is not to kill, but to "bother" the wolf by flapping its wings in its face and driving its sharp claws into the animal's back. Such hunting makes capital sport for the riders, but apart from this, wolf hunting is a real necessity in those parts, the brutes being far too partial to the lambs and kids of the Tartars' flocks.—Wide World Magazine.

Hard to Get Into Jail.

There was a queer old specimen of humanity brought to the Cayahoga county jail. He had been convicted of the crime of cruelty to animals, and there was no doubt in anybody's mind that he richly deserved the penalty inflicted. It is the custom to examine prisoners, however, before they are assigned to their cells. When this old reprobate was brought up the interrogation went thus:

"What is your name?"

"Budd Dobbis."

"What is your age?"

"Sixty-eight."

"What is your religion?"

"Great snakes! Does a man hafter git religion before they'll let him later jail in this county?"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

### A Gentle Reminder.

Neighbor—Hello, Jenkins! How are you? Haven't seen you in the garden for quite a time, and you never come and see the wife and me now. Why is it? Jenkins—Well, the fact is, old chap, that it's not through ill will or bad feeling or anything like that, you know; only you and Mrs. Possmore have borrowed so many things from me that when I see your place it makes me feel quite homesick.—London Answers.

### Art and Science.

"What a beautiful picture of an angel!" said the lady who was visiting the art gallery.

"Yes," replied the aviation enthusiast, "but between you and me those wings aren't practical."—Washington Star.

### Never Despair.

He who despairs wants love, wants faith, for faith, hope and love are three torches which blend their light together, nor does the one shine without the other.—Metastasio.

He is a brave man who refuses to be disheartened by the fact that he was beaten yesterday.