

SELECTIONS

SCORPIONS AND CENTIPEDES.

Their Stings Are Not So Dangerous as is Commonly Reported.

"No, I don't believe that the sting of any scorpion would kill a human being, save perhaps under extraordinary conditions. In southern latitudes wounds of any kind are more dangerous than in cooler climates, and the setting in of fever may produce fatal results," said Dr. George Marx of Washington, who is recognized as the greatest authority on arachnids in this country.

"Scorpions are tropical animals," he added. "They do not get very far north. They live under the bark of long leaved pines in the northern part of that kind do not occur in this vicinity they find no suitable domicile hereabouts. Such pines grow in Baltimore county, Md., and so a species of scorpion exists there. It is yellow, with brown stripes, and measures about 2 inches in length.

"The biggest scorpions of the world are those of India, which attain a length of 6 inches. In California scorpions 4½ inches long are found. They are the largest that occur in America. Between them and the smallest species are many. The sting of a small one is about as severe as that of a wasp, and the effects of it soon pass.

"The scorpion carries its tail over its back and stings it backward for the purpose of inflicting a sting. It has two poison glands side by side in the last joint of its tail. It is said that scorpions will commit suicide by stinging themselves to death when they are put into a circle of burning charcoal. I don't know whether this is true or not—the question has not been cleared up.

"Scorpions live on beetle larvae and slow moving insects. They conceal themselves under the bark of trees in the daytime and pursue their prey at night. The whip tailed scorpions—so called because of a peculiar appendage of which the use is not known—are not poisonous. For the purpose of defense they squirt fine streams of a fluid that smells like vinegar. Doubtless it is offensive to some of their enemies."

Every now and then one reads in the newspapers a frightful story about a centipede. According to these accounts the animal is just a bit more dangerous than a rattlesnake. Not only is its bite fatal, but it carries poison in the little claws with which its numerous legs are terminated. Crawling over a man's bare flesh, it burns like fire. To move is death, for then the creature will dig its venomous feet into the victim, who will presently be reduced to the condition of a loathsome and bloated corpse.

All of this is purest fable.

An expert in centipede is attached to the Smithsonian institution. He knows all about the creature, and he says that the bite of one of these animals is less poisonous than the sting of the scorpion. That it could ever kill anybody is most unlikely. The claws are sharp and unpleasant to the feel when a centipede walks over the bare skin, but they have no venom.

There are two distinct types of centipede. One of them may be termed the true centipede type, with a flat body and only one pair of legs on each segment. The largest forms are all poisonous. Whether the smaller ones are so is undetermined. The jaws of this kind of centipede are perforated by channels, which convey the poison into the wound made by the bite. The action is somewhat the same as in the case of a venomous serpent.

The other type of centipede is built on the thousand leg plan and attains a length of 10 inches. The biggest in this part of the world will not exceed five inches. It has four legs to each segment and sometimes as many as 85 segments. It is easy to count up how many legs that makes. Though not as many as 1,000, they are sufficient. This style of centipede is never poisonous. Centipede feed on rotten wood and other decaying vegetable material. They live in the ground and among rotten leaves and wood.—Washington Star.

HUMOR

POWER OF THE HUMAN EYE.

A Novice Tries It on a Dog With an Unusual Result.

A family druggist in North Chicago happened to look up from the tub of fruit sirup he was compounding and was astonished to see the shattered wreck of a man enter and throw itself upon a chair. The wreck was in an awful condition, bleeding, like Colonel Marco Bonarria, at every vein.

"What, in the name of Sir Walter Scott, has happened to you?" cried the druggist.

"Pour a few quarts of arnica on me," responded the wreck weakly, "and I'll tell you."

The druggist stitched him up and soaked him in healing fluids and listened for the story.

"I live on Clifton avenue," said the wreck. "I have lately been reading up on lion tamers, and I came to the conclusion that the human eye would subdue any beast that walks. I tried it on all the animals in the neighborhood, and it seemed to work all right. For two or three weeks I went around subduing things with my eye. Then I got into an argument with a neighbor on the question. He held that a really fierce animal didn't care a red cent for the human eye. I offered to bet \$10 that he couldn't produce an animal that I couldn't conquer by looking at it."

"I can guess the rest," said the druggist. "He trotted out a big mastiff with a month as large as the arctic regions and you tried to subdue it, and it wouldn't subdue to amount to anything, and in the grand symposium that followed the dog tried to make a record at plain and fancy chewing—and succeeded."

"That sounds reasonable enough," replied the wreck weakly, "but it wasn't the way it happened. My neighbor took me into a strange yard by moonlight and asked me to hypnotize a big sorrel bulldog that was sitting on the porch. Several strangers were there to see the experiment, and I went to work. I stared into the orbs of that beast for 15 minutes, and it didn't seem to move a muscle. Then, to show that it was thoroughly subdued, I went up and placed my hand on its head. It was a cast iron bulldog and was subdued when it first came from the foundry. While the spectators were laughing I sailed into my neighbor, determined to whip him all around the block and up and down an alley, and you see the result. I wish that you would pour a pint of oil of sassafras down the back of my neck."—Chicago Tribune.

He Was a Greenhorn.

The big gong which once called "Front" to the hotel counter is going out of date. It made too much noise.

The clerk glanced at him in a tired sort of way and softly gave a drawn out whistle.

"She is my sister," said the young man, with considerable dignity.

"Confound you, sir, don't you believe me? Your conduct is very strange."

"I beg your pardon. I was calling the boy. Here, chase this card up to 342."—Chicago Record.

A Defect.

A shade of vexation flitted across her countenance.

"I always," she exclaimed petulantly, "took you for a perfect gentleman."

"It was evident that her words cut him deeply."

"He is not!"

There was a thrill of reproach in his tone.

"My fault that one of my shoulders is higher than the other."

"After that both of them were silent."—Detroit Tribune.

Defined.

Willie—Father, what is reason?

His Father—Reason, my boy, is that which enables a man to determine what is right.

Willie—And what is intuition?

His Father—Intuition is that which tells a woman she is right whether she is or not.—Vogue.

Close Application.

She—"Don't you think that in order to be successful in these days a man should apply himself constantly?"

He—"That's my idea. I have been calling on an honest new every day for six months."—Detroit Free Press.

Precious.

Bingo—No, thank you, dear. I don't believe I can for any nice pie.

Mrs. Bingo—But, Henry, I have put in a lot of that brandy you brought home the other night.

Bingo (aghast)—What! Not that brandy I paid \$8 a quart for?

Mrs. Bingo—Yes, dear.

Bingo—Great guns! Give me the whole pie.—Truth.

Royal Washing.

The empress of Germany complains that her palace boasts of no laundry, and that she has to send all of her washing, even the children's clothes, to Berlin to be done up.

The royal family of England are in better domestic trim. They have a laundry of their own on the outskirts of London, in the vicinity of Hounslow, and whether sojourning at Balmoral, Osborne or elsewhere the royal linen is conveyed to the royal laundry. The work is said to be absolutely perfect, but not long ago the empress complained of being underpaid and struck. At the Vatican the pope's linen and clothing are looked after by an order of sisters bearing the curiously appropriate name "Ladies of Reparation." It is said they are of noble birth.—New York Dispatch.

Little Ida Melsner's Theology.

"Do you know the nature of an oath?"

naked Police Justice Potts of 11-year-old Ida Melsner in the Gregory Street police court, Jersey City, yesterday morning.

The child was a complainant against Thomas Donnelly.

"No, sir," the child answered.

"Do you know where children go who tell lies?"

"No, sir."

"Did you ever hear of heaven?"

"No, sir, but I heard of hell."

The judge had been getting discouraged, but the last answer inspired him to ask another.

"Well, tell me now," he said, with an encouraging smile, "who goes to hell?"

"Protestants," answered the child promptly.

Justice Potts decided to omit the formality of administering an oath to the witness.—New York Sun.

Pat Magee.

"Walkin wid Pat Magee Down by the Tullagh bog, Mind where y're settin' yere shupers," says he.

"Lest yet put yer foot on a frog, Frogs is the devil," he says, "I'm thinkin'," he says, says he, "Av I carried ye over to yonder wall The sorrow a frog we'd be."

"Stitin wid Pat Magee Alop av a loose built wall, 'Tis unsley I am in me mind," says he, "Thredwin the stones might fall, Stones is the devil to slip, 'I'm thinkin'," he says, says he, "Av I gave ye waist a bit av a clip The sorrow a frog we'd be."

"Talkin wid Pat Magee, Wid the arm av him round me waist An the red sun slakin," "Agrah," says he, "Will ye let me spake to the prasted Delays is the devil's delight, 'I'm thinkin'," he says, says he, "Av the two av us settled the matter tonight, 'Tis married next week we'd be."

—Lena Giles in Temple Bar.

Jennie's Ride.

During the Revolutionary war there was a strip of land in Westchester county, N. Y., called the neutral ground. It was so named because it was not held by either the American or British army, but lay between them, forming a common foraging ground for both.

Near the center of this famous neutral ground there lived a widow, gentle Mrs. McNeal, and her pretty 15-year-old daughter Jennie. The father had been as brave as he was honest and several times had laid down his farming implements to take part in the Indian wars that at an earlier period had devastated the land of his adoption. He was an intense American, and had not his career been brought suddenly to a close by the common enemy—death—just on the eve of the battle of Lexington, he would doubtless have laid his life on the altar of his beloved country, a willing sacrifice.

Jennie not only inherited her father's patriotism, but his fearlessness as well, and she and her mother, refusing the advice of friends to move into a more protected section, remained in the home that love had provided for them unmolested by friend or foe until two years of strife and bloodshed had passed away.

Though gentle and loving to her friends, there was plenty of fire in Jennie's black eyes, and those who were evil disposed knew that she would not hesitate to use her father's old gun, which hung high up on the kitchen wall, should it become necessary for her own or her mother's protection.

One dark, rainy night late in November, after the evening work was finished and she and her mother had settled themselves for a pleasant hour's chat, there came a loud knocking at the outer door. Jennie ran to draw the bolt, but before she had time to raise the latch the door was thrown open, and in walked a dozen or more dragoons. That they were British soldiers their stained and muddy red coats plainly showed, but withal they were gentlemen, a fact which Jennie's quick eye detected and made her feel that helpless women were safe in their presence. The leader, called by the other soldiers Captain Long, bowed courteously and in a respectful tone asked for something to eat, saying that they would pay for all the trouble they made. And then he added: "Please, madam, be as quick as possible about placing food before us, for we have to ride 10 miles to catch Colonel Adair of the rebel army, who is at home for the night. Hurry up now, my pretty lass," he continued, turning to Jennie. "He is a lucky chap if he slips me this time, and you shall be well paid if you give us a lift by hastening us on our journey."

Jennie went to the kitchen to help her mother apparently as unconcerned as if the gray haired colonel was altogether unknown to her. But for all that her heart was very heavy, for next to her mother the brave old warrior was the best friend she had on earth. Her father had fought by his side, and once on the field of battle he had saved that dear father's life.

He had taught her how to row and ride and shoot, and since her father's death he had looked after her mother and herself with as much interest as if they really belonged to him. She must save him at any cost, and while she worked her brain was busy with schemes to accomplish her purpose. As soon as the redcoats were seated at the table, without a word even to her mother, who divined her object, she slipped out of the back door, and running down to where the horses were feeding she sprang upon the captain's fiery steed and in a moment was galloping down the hilly, rock strewn path, heedless alike of storm or darkness. She had not dared to wait for cloak or bonnet, and whenever the ragged lightning gleamed her long black hair might have been seen streaming out behind her.

Her flight was not discovered until the dragoons were ready to mount, and then began a chase for life or death. Soon from the mato hills over which she had passed Jennie heard the clatter of hoofs in hot pursuit, but she had chosen the captain's gray, the swiftest flier among the steeds, and for miles the distance between her and her pursuers increased rather than diminished. On and on she sped, fire flying from the rocky road as the gray horse's iron shoes clashed along at a fearful pace.

More than half of the distance had been covered when far in the rear came a command, loud and stern, "Halt, or your blood be on your head!"

"On, on, brave beast—on for your life! Don't fail me now!" cried Jennie, stroking the horse's foaming neck with coaxing hand.

"Halt!" again came the voice of dread. "Halt, halt, or take the risk of losing your life!"

No answer being returned, a volley of leaden bullets rattled after her. They passed her as the maddened flight continued, screaming to the right, screaming to the left, whizzing over her head

like so many harmless birds seeking for shelter from the night's storm.

With a prayer of thanksgiving on her lips she rushed on over the slippery track, through wood and valley, over hill and plain, the gray horse as true as steel, until in an unlucky leap he stumbled and fell, throwing his rider with force against a rock on the edge of the ditch over which he had tried to spring.

The foaming steed was unhurt and in a moment was on his feet again, but poor Jennie fared worse and rose with a broken arm hanging useless by her side.

Regardless of the numbing pain, she clung tenaciously to the horse's bridle, and after quoting him by gentle words and patting him softly with her able hand she managed to spring into the saddle and gave the brave fellow free rein. "Now do your best," she said coaxingly as she stroked his long mane. "Do your best, my good fellow, for upon you depends the safety of my friend, good Colonel Adair."

As if understanding the entreaty, the gray horse raised his head, and setting his feet firmly gathered his strength once more, as if for a final plunge; then, galloping down the steep hillside, he gained on the troopers at every leap until he passed at the colonel's gate fully a furlong ahead of the pursuers. Throwing the rein over the gripepost, Jennie rushed up the path and without knocking flung open the colonel's door, crying in her eager haste: "Quick, be quick, colonel, I say! Fly, fly for your life, for the redcoats are at the door. Don't wait—you're not a moment to spare. They come! They come! Away! Away!" And then she fainted and sank to the floor.

With a hasty goodby the colonel left his bright fireside and rushed out into the night's fearful storm, not, however, until he had kissed the pale brow of the girl who had risked her own life to save his.

Springing on his horse, always saddled for just such emergencies, he was soon on his way to where the patriot army was in camp.

The tramp of the troopers' horses roused Jennie from her swoon, and as the angry men came rushing in she turned her pale face toward them and laughed, even in the midst of a moan, as she said feebly:

"Good sirs, your bird has flown, and it was I who frightened him from his nest. Do not harm his dear ones in the home, but do with me as you think I deserve. I only am to blame."

"You need not fear, my brave lass," said young Captain Long, bowing low. "Of all heroic women I must crown you queen. Never before have I seen such courage in one so young, and for your sake not a hair of Colonel Adair's head shall be harmed. Even if he were here in his quiet home this minute chivalry would forbid his capture in your presence. I am sorry that my brave gray Jess did not carry you through without stumbling in such an awkward fashion as to break your arm. He is usually sure footed, and the darkness and an unknown road must excuse the blunder."

"He made up for the ill luck after the fall," suggested one of the troopers. "I mean in speed, which of course could not restore the broken bone, a fact we all regret," he added gallantly.

"I do not mind that since my good friend, the colonel, is out of your power," said Jennie, trying to smile. "How cruel in strong young men like you to try to harm an old man—a gallant soldier, too, like Colonel Adair! I should think you would be ashamed of yourselves."

"War is war, my fair young miss," answered the captain, "and nothing that war demands can be called cruel. This Colonel Adair is worth a whole regiment of us, and the way you have baffled us will prove a great disappointment to our cause."

"Still I honor you for your bravery and loyalty to your friend, and if you will wear this ring as a token of my admiration I will come back and marry you when the war is over."

"There's a lad in Putnam's corps who told me the same thing the morning he marched away to the beat of the drum. I promised to be true as steel to him, and as you two could never agree I think you may keep your ring for some more than I do," was Jennie's reply.

The captain laughed as he slipped the ring back on his little finger, and waving her goodby rushed out, mounted his gray Jess and was soon clattering down the rough road after his men. Regardless of her broken arm, Jennie insisted upon returning home that night, as her mother would be in distress until she knew she was safe. But Mrs. Adair would not suffer her to take this risk, knowing as she did the danger to be incurred. Instead she dispatched a messenger to the little brown cottage with the information that she would keep Jennie until morning, and being pretty much of a surgeon herself she set the broken arm and made the young girl as comfortable as possible until she could be removed to her mother's home. At the close of the war Jennie gave her hand and her heart as well into the keeping of the lad who had marched away with Putnam's corps, and she lived to relate her experience of that night to her children and her children's children—down to the fourth and it may be even to the fifth generation.—Chicago News.

Their Meeting.

At a council meeting in the town of Sunderland a well known alderman astonished the meeting by saying, "Gentlemen, we have been sending our lunatics to Sedgfield asylum for a long time now, and it has cost us a great sum of money, but I am glad to make the statement that we have now built an asylum for ourselves."—Durham (England) Chronicle.

Sedan Chairs.

Sedan chairs are one of the latest innovations in the modern drawing room. They are made of wicker-work, lined with some pretty color and are not so large as the original which suggested them, but more resemble the prosaic gigtop.—Philadelphia Call.

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