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THE SEA-BIRD'S HAUNT.

Where the higher cliffs mount, spar by spar, to the clouds,
Till their peaks show like masts among wind-swol-len shrouds;
Where the lower cliffs plunge sheer down to the bay,
To bound off in bouiders far out in the spray:—
It is there,
In mid-air,
When the evenings are fair,
That the sea-birds flock home to their crag-hidden lair.

Where the sound of the wind, as it sings through the caves,
Echoes up with the plash of the murmuring waves;
Where the creaking of pinions is heard through the roar
Of the sea far below as it booms on the shore:—
There they fly
On high
And ceaselessly cry,
Ere they make fo. their eirie betwixt sea and sky.

Where the white rocks are flushed with the setting sun's beam,
And the samphire flower glows with a golden gleam;
Wher- the foam that rides in on the emerald tide
Now blushes, now pales, like a bashful bride:—
There they whirl,
And swirl
All silver and pearl,
And a league of pink wings to the waters unfurl.

O man! soulless man of the slaughterous will,
Taking life in mere wantonly test of thy skill!
Whence comes thy commission to break up the bliss
Of a scene so surpassingly joyous as this—
To stand
On the strand,
And, with murdering hand,
To thin out with death-spray yon feathery band?

—*J. L.*

THE AMBER RING.

It was a cold winter night. I sat by the fire at a German inn. Not far from me was Carl Von Arnheim. We were both members of the German University. The fire blazed fitfully, wreathing itself in glowing spirals around the huge logs that were slowly being consumed. I was about going on in a doze, when, suddenly Carl recalled me to my senses by asking:

"Do you know that the Baron Von ——— and his lovely daughter are in town?'

I replied in the affirmative.

As I gazed on his face as it slowly settled to its dark, weird aspect, I was forced to give credence to those stories bruited around among the students of some strange, supernatural gifts with which Carl Von Arnheim was endowed. I had often met him; and from the first acquaintance he had somehow attached himself to me.

On being asked why, by some one, he replied that his and my own destinies were united; that I would be necessary to him some time in the future.

The persons he alluded to in his question to me were known to both of us. Baron Von ——— was a frank, free-hearted German nobleman. His daughter, Rena, as she was called, was the most beautiful creature I ever saw. Not only that her beauty attracted me—for we were secretly engaged, but it had evidently touched the heart of the sombre, pale faced German student, Carl Von Arnheim. I do not know whether the thought of my being attached to Rena ever troubled him. He seemed confident and feared no rival.

But, as I watched him that night, he had a strange look of fierce determination on his face. Presently he turned toward me, and fixed his eyes on mine. It was impossible to avoid his glance; a lurid light seemed playing in the very depths of his eyes. I could not move nor speak. Another moment and his hands were moving before me, and I knew that Carl was a mesmerist, and that I was under his control. Soon I lost all consciousness, and when I awoke to what appeared a new state of existence, I saw Carl still looking at what was myself; but from which, in some manner, I was separated.

I had often read of the quality of our existence; but never comprehended its meaning so clearly before. Here I was looking on a living and breathing body, from which the soul, the Ego of metaphysicians was absent.

Carl still continued to gaze fixedly at my body, then, though he spoke not, I knew he was addressing me. There was no word uttered; but still the horrible purport of his meaning was conveyed to me, the more distinctly as we were conversing spirit with spirit. Knowing by his diabolical arts that I had won the love of the Lady Rena, he was conjuring my soul from its body, which his own soul was to enter, while I was to dwell the inhabitant of his body. I could not struggle; I could only submit.

In this way he was to win the Lady Rena, and I was to lose her forever. Again I lost consciousness; and when I came to myself I found the transformation complete, and Carl had departed. I was sitting alone by the fire of the German inn in the body of Carl Von Arnheim!

I arose to leave. The little inn-keeper stepped up briskly, and handed him his bill.

"The gentleman, your friend, said that you would settle this little account, Herr Von Arnheim," said he, handing him a slip of paper.

"Yes; henceforth I was to be Carl Von Arnheim, and he was to be myself. I paid the bill and then departed.

And now, as I came out in the cold, frosty air, the terrible truth dawned upon my mind for the first time in its awful reality. What was I to do? Where was I to go? Would it not be worse than madness to try and retain the love of Rena in my present guise? Should I attempt that, Carl Von Arnheim, in his new personality, would forestall me by declaring me a madman, and Rena would believe him. I staggered under the weight of my misery. All night I roamed the streets, caring not whither I went. In the morning some of the students passed by.

"Their goes that queer, unfathomable genius, Carl Von Arnheim," I heard them say.

"What in the world has he been doing?"

"Reading the stars perhaps all night."

No one took any notice of my haggard aspect. It was like Carl to look pale and haggard. I turned a corner, and there a sight met my eyes before which I recoiled in horror. I saw Carl, as myself, glide swiftly past in the sleigh of Baron Von ———. The latter was driving, and Carl was sitting beside the lovely Rena, talking earnestly. When he saw me he threw a malicious, triumphant glance. The sleigh and all rushed past; and I staggered and fell—and then knew no more.

When I recovered my senses I found myself in Carl's room. I recognized it, for I had been there once or twice before at his invitation. A physician and one or two students were standing beside the bed where I lay. I opened my eyes and thanked them for their kindness.

Again the horrid reality of my condi ion burst upon me, and I nearly fainted again. Rallying my strength, I told them to leave me, as I wished to be alone. The physician gave them a sign, and all went out. I lay for some moments longer, trying to reflect upon my situation. At length I rose up and paced the room.

A desire for vengeance had seized upon me. A thousand schemes suggested themselves to me by which I could obtain satisfaction, but none of them seemed to content my morbid imagination. I looked about the room. In one corner I espied a large, iron-bound chest, which Carl was always particular never to open in my presence. A thought struck me. Why might not this chest contain secrets which it would be of importance for me to know! But how to get into it! I hesitated a moment. Carl must have carried the key which unlocked it in his pocket; I felt for the key. Sure enough there was a large one there. I took it out and tried the lock. It yielded, and I opened the chest.

There was nothing in it—except some chemicals, several old, wrinkled, and yellow parchments, and in a small box by itself, an amber ring. I had a presentiment that with these means I was to work my deliverance. I examined the manuscript; large rolls they were, filled with diagrams, and words in the Latin language. Being familiar with the latter, I was at no loss to understand their meaning.

What! Had the day of magic returned? Here were directions for calling the powers of darkness to the act of humanity; the hidden mysteries of nature revealed and explained; and dissertations of a metaphysical character on the mind of man, and its unknown affinities with the world of spirits. All was apparently written long ago—it might be centuries. I sat all day studying the mysterious writings. Night came and, after obtaining a little nourishment for the body that was mine for the time being, I lit a lamp, and, locking the door, still continued to pore over those wonderful manuscripts that were revealing to me with every line I read strange secrets, which would make my power over mankind irresistible.

All that was demanded for the possessor of this secret was a peculiar organization. With the body of Carl Von Arnheim I, of course had obtained his temperament, and facility to use these powers. I determined to make myself master of them, and then—let the villain look to himself. He had forfeited all his power by taking upon him my organization, so great had been his love for the beautiful Lady Rena.

Litt e did he think that I would act with my inheritance as I intended. My heart beat with hope. Already I seemed to grasp revenge. With that Amber Ring, and the knowledge of its wonderful properties made known to me by these old manuscripts, I would bring him down—down to the very lowest pit of misery.

Over the way the mansion of the Baron was, the father of Rena. It was lit up with a thousand brilliant lights. I heard the sound of music and dancing. As I looked from the window I saw passing by the opposite window, and inside the gorgeous drawing-room, Rena and Carl, arm in arm. I did not stagger that time. I smiled with secret exultation. Going to my table I unrolled a manuscript and read:

"The odic fluid is generated by wearing the Amber Ring on the third finger of the left hand, and by the odic fluid matter and mind are united. When odyle is withdrawn from the body the mind is free, and can be commanded."

The following farther directions ending with:

"Thus the Amber Ring, to him who knoweth its proper use, is to a certain extent, all powerful."

Days passed. By the aid of the ring I kept myself informed of the movements of Carl. He was to be married in three days, which would be the day before Christmas. The ceremony was to take place in the evening.

My time was short, yet long enough for what I had to do. Day and night I studied and worked. My experiments were, with a few exceptions, successful. By the day before Christmas I was prepared. I had perfected myself in my art. I had no more need of the manuscripts—no more need of the Amber Ring. I therefore, for reasons of my own, burnt the whole, the manuscripts first, and then threw the Amber Ring into the blazing fire. A pale light started up; the whole room shook and gleamed as if of phosphorescent material. Then all was silent. I went to the window again and looked over the way. Could I have been mistaken? It seemed to me that I saw, in the uncertain light of the moon, Carl Von Arnheim raising his hands to heaven, with a look betokening the greatest fear. It was but a moment, and then he was gone.

My vengeance should be a retribution. One hour before the time appointed for the marriage I was at the inn of which I spoke at the beginning of the story. I began the incantation which I knew would bring Carl, whether he wished or not, to my presence. Soon he came. There was a wild look in his eyes, and he seemed overcome with terror. I made him sit where he had sat three weeks before. Then using the same mesmeric means he had used, reduced him to a state of insensibility. Then I taking from my pocket a vial containing a virulent poison which I knew would take deadly effect in the space of half an hour, swallowed its contents—and commanding the spirit of Carl to resume its original body, I re-entered my own. Then springing up I shouted triumphantly, for my vengeance was complete; the soul of Carl Von Arnheim had gone into its former body, whence it was soon to be driven forever by the deadly poison I had infused into his system.

As I sprang from my seat the surroundings, somehow, seemed to be changed. I was still in the same room of the inn, and there before me sat Carl, fast asleep. The little keeper of the inn was bustling about as usual, and before me seemed lying the veritable box I had seen burning a month before. I shook Carl.

"What do you want?" said he, looking up.

"What do I want?" said I, half reflectively, "I believe I've been asleep, and had a queer sort of dream—all about magic and mesmerism. This isn't Christmas eve, is it?"

"Christmas eve!" he echoed. "Why, Christmas won't be here for a month."

"Let us go," said I.

—An old proverb says that "the anvil lasts longer than the hammer." This is probably the only consolation the undermost man in a fight has.

A REAL ROMANCE.

Some years since—it makes no difference when—in one of our Washington departments, and it is not the slightest importance which—a girl held the position of copyist, who was remarkable for her deformity and her beauty. She reversed the fact of ugliness in the case of the daughter of Dumas; for while her body was horribly deformed, her head was a model of womanly beauty. Her features were regular to a fault. Her complexion vied in delicacy with the ocean-tinted interior of a shell. Her chin rounded out like the bow of Cleopatra's barge, just broad and prominent enough to give force to the sweet face above. Her mouth had enough sweetness and expression for any other woman's full face, and at the ends of her sensitive lips, where the two bows of Cupid terminated, instead of running off in weak lines, they ended in two little wells from which one could imagine love flowed over fresh and abundant. Her eyes dark-hazel, large and luminous. They were a hair's breadth over the width of one eye apart, and gave, in this, to the face that frank, honest winning look that such width ever indicates. Over all this was woman's crowning glory, a great mass of nut-brown hair, through which there seemed to play the caught and tangled sunlight of sixteen years. Passing from this to the body was like passing from the exquisitely chiseled head of a marble saint to the charnel house below. The poor girl did not seem to have any part of the human frame in its proper place, or answering to its proper function. It was all the result of a cruel casualty that happened when she was young. She had hurried from home one winter night in search of medical relief for a sick mother, lost her way, fell, perishing from cold, and was picked up hours after, to linger for months between life and death, and death held all of her but her lovely head.

How nature accommodates herself to the inevitable. It was years before she was free of pain, and when at last she could hobble about in a difficult way on crutches, she seemed to look at life as cheerfully as any one. The sweetness of her nature had not been destroyed by pain, nor the cruelest wrong that could be done to a woman. She was poor, and her mi fortunes secured her a place where she could earn her plain food and poor lodgings. This was the day in the traditionary past, before the penitentiary system prevailed in the departments, and the government, not so poor as now, was able to employ gentlemen as heads of bureaus. The one who ruled immediately over the room in which the girl worked was not only a gentleman, but one of those sensitive natures that go to wreck on the rocks of life from not being iron-clad. His intellect and culture had secured for him a comfortable place in the department, and into this he settled to dream of what he would do some day and never did.

It was observed that this official was very fond of lingering about the desk of the deformed girl, and the other inmates of the room spoke to each other of his goodness. After a time it was observed that the two continued talking and laughing after business hours. And then he began the practice of helping her from and to the building. One afternoon, at the end of a long, pleasant talk, she was about leaving, when he suddenly seized upon her long, thin, white fingers, that had been blighted by shaking hands with death, and in a rather confused sort of way, as if the utterance choked him, he poured into her ears a passionate avowal of love, ending in asking her to be his wife. It is said by those inhuman brutes in human form, who kill deer by cutting the throat of the poor animal while swimming, that the startled, pitiful, pleading look of the doomed creature is never forgotten. It was this sort of look the girl gave her wooer. She tried to speak as she withdrew her hand, but her lips only trembled, and then she abruptly reached for her crutches and hobbled from her room. That night she wrote a long letter to the man who had so strangely approached her. It was a despairing cry of a lost soul. Her poor heart under that deformed body was as keenly alive to the one passion that controls humanity as that of any heart; but she shrank in terror from that for which she longed and seemed dying to possess. But she put away his love, and never returned to her desk.

Not long after she was descending the Hudson upon a steamer, and sat looking dreamily upon the beautiful country that seemed to swing by in the golden haze of a summer day, when she was approached by a tall gentleman, whose heavy black beard made him resemble a benevolent old fox looking over a hedge. He introduced himself as Dr.———, of New York, and apologizing for his intrusion, went on to ask her many questions as to her condition. He ended by asking her to try his system of treatment. "The brain is right; the heart, lungs, and stomach are sound," he said. "These limbs of yours only need proper training and exercise to make you well." "I would be glad," she responded, "but I am too poor." "Never mind that," he said, "come to my establishment. All I ask of you is to remain there until you are well, or until I say you are incurable." The doctor is an enthusiast. He does much of that sort of thing to a great injury to his pocket. But his theory is that if you make a leg, or arm, or backbone or any part of your body, do what nature intends it shall do, after a while nature will come in and execute its own work. He found employment for his patient as copyist, and then devoted himself to her as if she had been the daughter of a landlord of a fashionable hotel, and that is the highest position we can think of.

And for seven long years that poor girl worked day after day in the complicated machinery of the doctor's hotel for invalids. And slowly—oh, so slowly! yet surely—she gained on the enemy. First one crutch went, and then the other. The cane followed, and after a long time the lameness disappeared, and at last she stood up in the image of her Maker, human, handsome, and liable to love. The secret of all success in fictitious literature is in that one word endeavor. To struggle for something that seems almost impossible to win, to make that struggle heroic in its self denial and high hope is to seize on and hold the popular heart. If there is success there is delight; if failure, there is grief, as the fictitious characters were alive and very near to us. Our little heroine was fighting for her life. Her love had become her life. Day after day, month after month, year that run into year, she had but one thought, or rather one hope, and that was to appear before her love, worthy his love, and not his horror.

The long, dreary struggle was drawing to a close, when one day she happened to pick up a Western journal, and suddenly she threw it from her with a wild cry. The good doctor and his attendants could not comprehend the cause. She had caught the name of her lover, and read a brief notice of his marriage. Poor little girl. She felt more wretched in her strength, health and beauty than when a helpless cri ple she sat in the room at Washington listening to the sweet, sympathetic words of the man who had forgotten her.

DANGERS OF CHEMISTRY.

TERRIBLE POSSIBILITIES OF COMBINATIONS OF HARMLESS CHEMICAL INGREDIENTS—THE POWER OVER NATURE AND HUMAN LIFE WHICH CHEMISTRY GIVES.

A most unfortunate accident which has occurred at Prague recalls in many of its circumstances the quaint traditions that were once prevalent in regard to the mediæval alchemists. Prof. Fischer, of the Prague Gymnasium, a young man only 25 years of age, and of the highest eminence in his profession—that of Chemistry—has come to an untimely end under the most melancholy circumstances. No one needs to be told that cyanide of potassium, a drug largely used in photographs, is a poison of the most deadly character.—Its active ingredient is prussic acid. Prussic acid, in its pure, or, as chemists would term it, "anhydrous" form, is a substance too dangerous to be kept, or even manufactured. If a glass capsule containing a wineglassful of pure prussic acid were broken in the pit of a theatre, those among the audience who were nearest the doors might escape, but the great majority would be killed on the spot. The prussic acid ordinarily sold, and occasionally used for killing dogs and cats, contains about a drop of the pure acid to a quarter of a pint of water. Pure prussic acid no chemist dare keep. He might as well compress a ton of dynamite into a single cartridge, supposing such package to be possible, and then leave the deadly parcel lying loose on the table.

Cyanide of potassium is not, like prussic acid, volatile. It is a white powder, rather resembling flour or chalk. It is, however, so poisonous that a mere pinch of it sprinkled over an open wound or sore will cause almost instantaneous death; that a fragment almost imperceptible to the eye will, if swallowed, prove equally fatal, and that a mere smell has before now produced immediate death. It was, it seems, the ambition of Prof. Fischer to discover some means of rendering cyanide of potassium harmless. We can do this with gunpowder—although the analogy is not strictly exact—the means employed with gunpowder being mechanical, while those for which Prof. Fischer sought were chemical. We know what happens if a light is applied to a keg of gunpowder. If, however, we mix the powder with four or five times its bulk of sawdust, a torch may be applied to it with impunity. The mechanical resistance of the sawdust makes it impossible for the explosion to at once spread to the whole mass, and the consequence is that a sort of splutter ensues, like that of a squib or blue-light. Prof. Fischer's idea was that, if cyanide of potassium were thoroughly mixed with sal ammoniac, it would be as harmless as gunpowder mixed with sawdust, but would still remain equally available for all those purposes of photography for which it is at present absolutely indispensable.

In the course of his researches Mr. Fischer made a mixture, of which in his own mind he felt assured that it would meet

THE CONDITIONS OF HIS PROBLEM.

He compounded the cyanide with some other substance, and then, turning to his laboratory assistant, said:

"Science has now so far advanced as to be even able to render harmless so dangerous an agent as cyanide of potassium."

With these words he tested the mixture, and was almost in an instant seized with the most violent and excruciating agonies. He at once implored his assistant to send for medical aid. Cyanogen, however, whether as prussic acid or cyanide of potassium, kills almost instantaneously. In a few seconds Prof. Fischer was beyond help. We are told that there is no possible reason to suppose that a deliberate suicide had been planned and carried out under the mask of experiment. On the contrary, there is every reason to believe that the Professor has met the fate which befel only too many of the early chemists and their predecessors, the alchemists.

We know what will happen to any experimentalist if he dips blotting-paper in nitric acid, washes it, dries it, and then incautiously treads upon it. What happened to the old man who is believed—for his record perished with him—to have first discovered fulminate of silver, is a matter of scientific record. That he was engaged in researches upon the fulminates of the higher metals, was well known. How it precisely came about that he disappeared as he did will remain a matter of conjecture.—There came one day a puff, a slight shock, and a smart noise as if some one inflated a paper bag and then burst it between his hands. Of the Professor himself, of his laboratory, of his apparatus, and of much less within a radius of some yards, not a vestige or trace was left.

So it used to be with the alchemists—the heritors of the hidden wisdom of Bohme, and Roger Bacon, and Albertus Magnus. They were always blowing themselves up or asphixiating themselves with some noxious vapor. For a man who knows nothing, or next to nothing, of chemistry, it is a very dangerous game indeed to mix together a couple of substances of which he knows nothing, and then bray them in a mortar. Common sulphur is harmless stuff enough, so is charcoal, so is nitre; but let an ignorant man mix the three and apply a light to them, and the result will much astonish him.

When of old an alchemist was reduced to fragments in this fashion our ancestors had an easy explanation. He was a magician, they used to say, and the Devil had come suddenly and had carried him off. There was a time, between the days of Roger Bacon and those of Davy, Black and Cavendish, when the foul fiend was thus always carrying off alchemists. We know not how it happened. If a man goes into a chemical laboratory and takes up a big beaker and pours into it the contents of the first two bottles that are ready at his hand, the probabilities that he will be reduced to atoms on the spot are sufficiently serious to call for his careful consideration.

Apart from the sad fact that a young man with a bright and brilliant future before him should be thus suddenly cut off, the death of Prof. Fischer has another moral. Chemistry—whatever Mr. Lowe may have to say in praise of civil engineering—is the science of the world and of the future. The bridge which takes the engineer years upon years to construct, the chemist can in so many sixtieths of a second reduce to atoms.

CHEMISTRY

has given us the balloon; it has put in our hands gunpowder, nitro-glycerine, dynamite, and, above all, fulminate of gold, an explosive so terrible that if an ounce of it be left in a stoppered bottle its grains falling among themselves by their own weight will create a convulsion sufficient to lay all London in ruins. It has given us poisons so subtle that, were we to employ such means of warfare, we could sail in a balloon over the camp of the enemy and drop upon it a shell, the bursting of which would kill every human being within a mile of its range.

Then, too, chemistry has given us disinfectants. To the chemists we owe carbolic acid, chloride of lime and permanganate of potash. Chemists have taught us to disinfect our sewers and drains, to ventilate our houses, to burn gas instead of oil, and to light our streets with what is more powerful than even gas itself—the electric light. It is to chemistry, indeed, that we owe almost all the comforts of every-day life.

But, on the other hand, the possibilities of chemistry are almost too terrible to be contemplated. As the science at present stands, any student can, if he have access to a well-stored laboratory, carry away in a pill-box matter sufficient to lay London in ruins, or to poison the whole community of its inhabitants. The chemist can, as every schoolboy knows, convert water into ice in the centre of a red-hot crucible. He can construct a shell the size of a cricket-ball which will explode the moment it touches the water and overwhelm in flames a hostile fleet. Indeed, the chemist reduces the world to its original and primal elements. For him, even more than the engineer, nothing is impossible. He can take life, but he cannot give it. He can level the city with the plain, but he cannot build it again. He can create prussic acid, but he is ignorant of its ant dote. He is like the fisherman who rashly opened the vessel sealed with the ring of Suleiman Ben Daoud. The forces at his control are beyond his command; the powers he can evoke he cannot lay. It is the old story of Cornelius and Agrippa—those who trifle with nature's secrets do so at their peril.—*London Observer.*

SNAKE ADVENTURES IN INDIA.

Those who go out to India for the first time, as a rule, leave home with a wholesome dread of snakes and the creeping plagues of the East in general. In point of fact, however, I am persuaded that in the Presidency and other large cities, the chances of being bitten are about equal to those of being knocked on the head when chimney-pots are flying about on a windy day at home. The natives undoubtedly run great risks, and occasionally drop down dead in their employer's compound (garden); but then they are fatalists, and wander unconcernedly about at night, in places where cobras inhabit.

Europeans never, if they can help it, walk in the dark. A boy carries a lantern in front, and the sahib follows in security. In Bombay, where the hooded snake is to be frequently found, I never remember, during a residence of four years, one instance in which an Englishman had been bitten. There may be one in your garden, coiled luxuriously round a small stem, and the malee could easily kill it. But for all he knows the soul of a man, and a dear but wicked relative, may have, in the order of Providence, passed into that venomous head in lieu of purgatory; so instead of cutting the reptile in two with his hook, he bolts to his master breathless with the interesting intelligence. Out flies the sahib with a stick, and rushing to the spot indicated by the malee, is about to administer a stunning thwack to the garden plague, when the thing seems to wink, and, almost as quick as lightning, uncoils and darts away in the direction of some shelter. If there are no holes, you may have half an hour's fine exciting sport running it down. So long as there is room to dart about, the snake will not turn upon its pursuer; but a remarkably sharp eye must be kept on the flashing white and yellow wriggling body.

I remember killing a formidable male cobra in Khandalla, one of the cooling stations on the Bhore Ghaut for baked Bombayites. A friend and myself were enjoying a cheroot on the verandah, when Ramajee, the butler, ran in crying, "Sahib, sahib, samphai!" and on taking up my riding crop and running to the scene of action, we saw, sure enough, a seven-foot cobra wriggling about the half-grown grass about thirty yards from the bungalow. Where it came from, goodness knows, but in several directions were snake-charmers, some playing their pipes, others dancing and shouting to keep the cobra from gliding down the side of the ravine close by, as, if taken alive, it would be a great catch for the purpose of exhibition. But no amount of piping, sweet as may have been the sound on the reptile organ, had any effect. It grew enraged at last, when escape seemed to be cut off, and, darting here and there, would have made short work of its tormentors, but that at every dart its attention was distracted by a shriek from behind. It was thus savagely employed when I rushed up. I was implored not to kill it. It was, the blacks said, worth fifteen rupees. But being determined to have a trophy of some sort to take back with me, I told the people to beat the snake on to plain level ground, where I could watch its movements. When they did so, and the thing came rushing at me raised high from the ground, with its broad hood extended to its utmost, and its villainous eyes glistening with rage, and the quivering, lance-like fangs but a yard from my body, I almost shrank from the contest; but it was too late. My arm, just as the fatal thrust was about to be made, swung round, and the iron head of the crop catching the cobra below the hood, it was sent stunned some distance from my feet. Another blow finished it, and the skinner was sent for.

It has long been a matter of dispute as to whether the mungoose, after being bitten by a cobra, has in its own blood or body an element which neutralizes the effect of snake-poison, or whether it seeks, after the contest, an antidote in the long jungle grass. Experiments have been tried over and over again, but I believe the advocates of the one conjecture are as positive as the other. Therefore one day, two years ago, with a view to settle the matter, we engaged a snake charmer to bring to our bungalow a cobra with its poison intact and a full-grown mungoose on the day following, which he did. A large empty bed-room was prepared for the contest, our object being to prevent the mungoose leaving for the garden after killing the snake. If it survived for any length of time, it was conclusive proof that in its own body lay the antidote. If it died, we could safely conclude that its preservation lay in some particular herb unknown, or what is more probable, nippings from various herbs.

The room in which the snake and its brave little antagonist were to fight was a long narrow space, with no means of escape whatever. At one end the charmer sat on his haunches, with a little round flat basket before him, in which reposed his yellow-skinned beauty. At the other end I was in possession of the mungoose. It was in a bag; as they are to strangers by no means peaceably inclined, and would, I dare say, nip off one's thumb as cheerfully as separating a snake's neck from its body. The mouth is peculiarly suggestive of a pair of nippers in the form of the letter ⊱, and is thickly studded with lance-like teeth. Before commencing the performance, my Hindoo friend opposite, by way of encouraging his "man," sung a doleful ditty in Hindustani, and on concluding, lifted the lid of the basket, and giving a sharp tap to the snake, seized his pipes to soothe the cobra's anger should it feel tempted to retaliate. Up sprang the broad hood, and for a moment it swayed to and fro as if undecided as to who should be the victim. I then let the mungoose out of the bag. It dodged about the room for a little while, apparently unconscious of its enemy's existence. The snake was the first to sound the preliminary note of defiance, as on observing its foe slowly wandering down the room, it uncoiled itself fully from the basket, and with a hiss of anger awaited, half erect, the attack of its antagonist. The mungoose gradually got nearer and nearer, until almost under the snake's hood, when it rushed in and pinned its teeth in the cobra's flesh.

Then commenced the battle; the snake's head seemed to rise and fall like lightning, and each time it had evidently left a mark; but, undaunted, the mungoose snapped and bit, getting higher and nearer the neck each time. Then when the favorite spot was reached, it seemed to open its jaws to the utmost limit, and closing them on the cobra's throat ceased to struggle. The other, in the agonies of death, wrapt itself round its destroyer and tried hard to crush it; but it was useless; the little beast never opened its mouth, although the two rolled over one another, the snake twisting in a hundred shapes, and straining every nerve to loosen the grip of the mungoose. The fight lasted a long time, but at last the snake expired, and the victor was pulled from the body. The little beast then ran all about the room, as if looking about for means of exit, but there were of course none. It looked as if it had been severely bitten, and was evidently much tired; but there were no signs of the poison taking effect, as far as I could judge. I waited for a considerable time; but it seemed rather to regain strength than anything else. Being called for a moment out of the room, one of the native servants curious to know what was going on inside, opened the bed-room door and looked in. At that moment the mungoose slipped out between the native's legs and ran into the compound. I just reached it in time to see it nibbling here and there some green plants that were growing wild. So that the one object of the fight was frustrated after all; and we were left as much in the dark as ever as to the reason why a snake cannot kill a mungoose.

Besides the cobra there is the rock-snake, a great lazy, harmless reptile, which you may handle with perfect safety, and open its mouth with a piece of stick. Then there are the whip and carpet snakes, venomous little vipers, very difficult to catch, and just as difficult to kill. The rat-snake is a nasty-looking black thing, four to five feet long, which occasionally comes to grief through venturing too near the verandah, on the look-out for vermin. A black bottle nicely thrown seals its fate. There are other descriptions, but unless you hunt after snakes you rarely see any.

—During the next six months the French Government will have at its disposition in the Legion of Honor five nominations to the grade of Grand Officer, eighteen to that of Commander, seventy-seven to that of Officer, and 456 to that of Chevalier.

Varieties.

—Of late the robbers on the Roman campagna have been stealing horses, mules, cattle and everything they can lay their hands on.

—The wedding of the Duke of Connaught will take place in "semi-state" at Windsor, either on Tuesday, March 11, or on Thursday, March 13.

—The annual report of the Connecticut Hospital for the Insane states that 629 persons were under treatment last year; that there were 161 new admissions and that 148 were discharged. The hospital has been continuously overcrowded, and at the close of the year had 481 patients.

—An old colored preacher in Atlanta, Ga., was lecturing a youth of his fold about the sin of dancing, when the latter protested that the Bible plainly said, "There's time to dance." "Yes, dar am a time to dance," said the dark divine; "and it's when a boy gets a whippin' for gwine to a ball."

—A late decision of the Indiana Supreme Court is both interesting and important. It has been ruled that a subscription made on Sunday for the benefit of the Church is not binding, and cannot be collected by a suit at law. This follows the general rule of the invalidity of contracts made upon the Lord's Day.

—Venus Anadyomene is still worshiped, says Professor Isaac H. Hall, by the inhabitants of Cyprus. On June 11, the young girl most noted for beauty is captured by real or apparent force, and carried out to sea in a boat, followed by a squadron, decked with ribbons and streamers. At a proper distance from the shore she is thrown into the sea. As she rises, she is taken out of the water with every demonstration of joy and carried to land in the handsomest of the boats, the others following in procession. She is then crowned queen for the day, honored with homage, and almost worshiped as a goddess. The night following is made hideous with revelry and noise. The inhabitants say that this custom has existed "from the time of Venus," whom they believe to be a real historical personage.

—Ida Lewis, the Grace Darling of America, has just been appointed keeper of the lighthouse situated on the Lime Rocks in New Haven harbor, at a salary of $750 per year. Her mother has been the custodian of the light since the death of Ida's father, a few years ago. The latter, by reason of her age, was induced to resign, through the influence of United States Senator Burnside, who had Ida appointed in recognition of her services in saving so many lives. Secretary Sherman, in his letter conveying the appointment, says: "This appointment is conferred upon you as a mark of my appreciation for your noble and heroic efforts in saving human life." The keepership of the light, therefore, is retained in the family. The salary has been increased $250 for Ida's benefit. Her mother will remain with her.

—Of the Prince of Wales and Dr. Lyon Playfair, it is told that they were once standing near a caldron containing lead, which was boiling at white heat.

"Has your Royal Highness any faith in science?" said the Doctor.

"Certainly," replied the Prince.

"Will you, then, place your hand in the boiling metal and ladle out a portion of it?"

"Do you tell me to do this?" asked the Prince.

"I do," replied the Doctor.

The Prince then ladled out some of the boiling lead with his hand, without sustaining any injury. It is a well-known scientific fact that the human hand may be placed uninjured in lead boiling at white heat, being protected from any harm by the moisture of the skin. Should the lead be at a perceptibly lower temperature, the effect need not be described. After this, let no one underrate the courage of the Prince of Wales.

—An ingenius Western inventor has hit on a device which he thinks will make grave-robbing such a thing of terror that only those of the strongest nerves could successfully complete a job where the device had been applied. His contrivance is a combination of Edison's phonograph with a piece of machinery which goes off like an alarm clock. The phonograph is attached to the machine inside the coffin. When the body-snatcher pulls up the lid a spring is released, the clock moves rapidly and the phonograph begins to revolve, while from the depths of the tomb a sepulchral voice exclaims in dreaded accents, "Get out of here!" A moment later a second phonograph is set in motion a little distance away, which remarks, in the gruff tones of a policeman, "Drop it!" By this time the human ghoul is expected to be quaking with terror and making off as expeditiously as possible.

—The London *Court Journal* tells of a man who has lived thirty years on seeds, vegetables and fruits, to the total exclusion of alcohol, flesh and fish, and says that he deserves to be heard on the subject of vegetarian diet. Mr. Ward, the gentleman in question, reports himself sound in wind and limb. He is a fellow of the Horticultural Society and President of the Vegetarian Association. Probably none could advance a better claim to the latter distinction. He brings his long experience to bear for the purpose of recommending lentils. A pennyworth of lentils, he says, contains as much nutriment as three shillings' worth of lean beef. A peck of lentils would, he adds, last a small family the whole winter. Of course, this is riding a hobbyhorse to death, but it is quite worth while to learn a lesson from this horticultural gentleman's long experience, especially at a moment when the subject of cheap food is so important. A vegetarian dinner, properly cooked and served, is exceedingly pleasant and satisfying; but whether one could subsist entirely on that regimen is another and a very much larger question.

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