

HORNED TOADS AS PETS.

THE REPULSIVE REPTILES ARE VERY POPULAR IN THE WEST.

They Can Be Tamed and Afford Much Amusement—They Are Real Interesting Creatures—Remarks by a Dealer Who Sells Many of Them.

"Of all the curious objects for pets," said the dealer, "I think that the horned toad will take the palm."

"Are they popular as domestic animals?" asked the one to whom this remark was offered.

"I guess you think so if you know how many we sell in the course of the year, to say nothing of all those that are brought on the spot and carried home in triumph by those who fancy such things."

"How are they treated when in captivity?"

"Pretty much as we treat them, I suppose. You can see for yourself," said the dealer, "leading the way to one of the cages of these animals, where a great, round, deep glass tank were half a dozen or more of the funny little fellows sprawled out upon their sandy domain. One seemed asleep, the others were moving with more or less degree of animation."

One was trying to mount an elevation furnished by the back of a comrade, and having attained that height, he began to climb upon his hind legs and tried to climb up the glassy sides of the tank. But in this he was not successful, and after slipping back a second discouraging time, he turned it up as a bad job. Two others seemed to be assuming a belligerent attitude, to which the owner at once called the attention of his visitor.

"Mustn't see them as pets."

"Do you see that?" said he. "Some of those fellows are the greatest fighters imaginable. They take a dislike to each other, and never rest until they have fought it out to the death. The old ones are especially vicious."

"These horned toads are to be found in sandy wastes. I have heard of their being caught out at the Mission, but that I can't speak positively. These horns come from Arizona, although we have received them from much nearer home."

"At Rolland the boys catch ever so many, and the Chinese eat them. They eat the inside. Besides, they highly prize the oil, which is contained in a little pouch somewhere within the anatomy of a horned toad."

"The toads are shipped to us by express in boxes, sometimes as many as twenty or more in the same box, and by the time they are released from covering they are all dead. I have known them, until they look like a writhing, animated mass of wriggling legs and squirming tails."

"As soon as you think to consider it a safe thing to do they unlock their traveling grip and begin to look about. Then I sell them. They bring from four to six bits. How long do they live?"

"Oh, I don't know. I have known them to live three or six months in perfect health, and with every prospect of continuing in that state, when they were brought to an untimely end by being stepped on. If there is one thing above another that a horned toad cannot stand it is being stepped on. It seems to flatten him out, as it were."

"Are you becoming very fanciful?" asked the reporter.

"Not at all; that is the usual fate of a pet horned toad. You see, they are great travelers and like to keep running about. Nearly everybody who has a horned toad thinks it is so cute to see him try to climb up out of his box, and the first thing you know he has succeeded in getting out of his box and is running about on his own hook."

"How to keep them."

"Can they be tamed? Do they seem to know one human being above another?"

"Those who buy them maintain that they do. Why, I sold one to a lady who lived at the Palace hotel, and also allowed him the freedom of her apartment. He went out and she told me that on her return he would run to meet her, no matter where he had hidden himself. He was finally stepped on. Another, a sea old lady, said that her grandchild had taken him to her, and declared she thought the horned toad scratched his toes on the floor in response to her chirp, but she said he really did not go so far as that, although he was very knowing."

"What do they live on? Oh, on flies and insects. I have known them, though, go for a month without eating anything. There is this that must be remembered if you wish to keep your toad alive—give him plenty of sun. The best home for him is a fish globe filled with a deep bed of nice clean sand. Set this in the sun, and throw in some live flies now and then, and Mr. Toad will thrive. If he wants the flies he'll catch them, and devour them quicker than a wink. If he doesn't do so you may say it because he's not hungry."

"And I must not forget either to tell you that while they are perfectly harmless to themselves into covering rages. It makes them mad to be tickled under the chin. They like to be smoothly stroked down the back. If you poke him on the side he will kick away down as if in response to your touch."—San Francisco Call.

A Brain Disorder.

A Neucha county farmer sent this mixed order to a Chamotte merchant:

"Send me a sack of flour, five pounds of coffee and a month without eating anything. There is this that must be remembered if you wish to keep your toad alive—give him plenty of sun. The best home for him is a fish globe filled with a deep bed of nice clean sand. Set this in the sun, and throw in some live flies now and then, and Mr. Toad will thrive. If he wants the flies he'll catch them, and devour them quicker than a wink. If he doesn't do so you may say it because he's not hungry."

Trust is a Blunder.

The intelligent compositor is sometimes worse than he looks. It was the case when recently in setting up a list of persons whose claims against the city had been allowed by the board of supervisors he substituted a k for an i and prefaced the list with the statement that "the following bills were ordered paid."

Good boys the intelligent compositor! He has a bad habit, but his hand is true.—San Francisco Examiner.

"National History."

A class in natural history was called up for recitation. The teacher talked to them a while about the relations of friendship between man and animals, and asked a girl:

"Do animals really possess the sentiment of affection?"

"Yes, almost always," said the little girl.

"And now," said the teacher, turning to a little boy, "tell me what animal has the greatest natural fondness for man."

"Woman!" said the boy.—Youth's Companion.

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RAILROAD TIME TABLE

DELAWARE, LACKAWANNA & WESTERN RAILROAD.

STATIONS. NORTH.

STATIONS. SOUTH.

Connections at Report with

Pennsylvania Railroad.

Philadelphia & Erie R. R. Division, and Northern Central Railway.

TIME TABLE.

WESTWARD.

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Jobber in cigars.

Jobber in cigars.