

THE FEAR OF SNAKES.

Why Many Children and Some Grown Persons Dislike Them.

There are many authenticated instances of children becoming attached to snakes and making pets of them. The solution of a question of this kind is sometimes to be found in the child's mind. My experience is that when young children see this creature in its strange appearance and manner of progression, so unlike those of other animals known to them, affect them with amazement and a sense of mystery and that they fear it just as they would fear any other strange thing. Monkeys are doubtless affected in much the same way, although in a state of nature, where they inhabit forests abounding with the larger constrictors and venomous tree snakes, it is highly probable that they also possess a traditional fear of the serpent form. It would be strange if they did not.

The experiment of presenting a caged monkey with a serpent carefully wrapped up in a newspaper and watching his behavior when he gravely opens the parcel, expecting to find nothing more wonderful than the familiar sponge-cake or succulent bananas—well, such an experiment has been recorded in half a hundred important scientific works, and out of respect to one's masters one ought to endeavor not to smile when reading it. A third view might be taken which would account for our feeling toward the serpent without either instinct or tradition. Extreme fear of all ophidians might simply result from a vague knowledge of the fact that some kinds are venomous; that, in some rare cases, death follows swiftly on their bite, and that, not being sufficiently intelligent to distinguish the noxious from the innocuous—at all events while under the domination of a sudden, violent emotion—we destroy them all alike, thus adopting Herod's rough and ready method of ridding his city of one inconvenient babe by a general slaughter of innocents.

It might be objected that in Europe, where animosity to the serpent is greatest, death from snake bite is hardly to be feared; that at Fontana's 6,000 experiments with the viper, showing how small is the amount of venom possessed by this species, how rarely it has the power to destroy human life, have been before the world for a century. And although it must be admitted that Fontana's work is not in the hand of every peasant, the fact remains that death from snake bite is a rare thing in Europe, probably not more than one losing his life from this cause for every 250 who perish by hydrophobia, of all forms of death the most terrible. Yet while the sight of a snake excites in a majority of persons the most violent emotions, dogs are universal favorites, and we have them always with us and make pets of them in spite of the knowledge that they may at any time become rabid and inflict that unspeakably dreadful suffering and destruction on us.

This leads to the following question: Is it not at least probable that our excessive fear of the serpent, so unworthy of us as rational beings, and the cause of so much unnecessary cruelty, is part of all events, a result of our superstitious fear of sudden death? For there exists, we know, an exceedingly widespread delusion that the bite of a venomous serpent must kill and kill quickly. Compared with such ophidian monarchs as the bushmaster, fer de lance, hamadryad and the cobra, the viper of Europe—the poor viper of many experiments and much (not too readable) literature—may be regarded as almost harmless—at all events not more harmful than the hornet. Nevertheless, in this cold, northern world, even as in the other worlds where nature elaborates more potent juices, the delusion prevails and may be taken into account here, although its origin cannot now be discussed. For my own part I am inclined to believe that we regard serpents with destructive hatred purely and simply because we are so taught from childhood.—Macmillan's Magazine.

Hawthorne as a Visitor.

On one occasion after my return from an African and European cruise I was ordered to the Portsmouth station, where we were hardly settled at housekeeping when Hawthorne came to see us.

The hall was encumbered with boxes, the sight of which made him feel his visit to be inopportune, and he said quickly:

"I have just come for an hour or two to see you and must return this evening."

Mrs. Bridge, seeing that he was only afraid of incommencing us, at once answered:

"Must you desert us when I need your aid in unpacking these boxes?"

"Will you really let me help you?" he asked.

Her joking answer, assuring him of her pleasure in gaining a helper so strong, both in muscle and intelligence, put him at ease, and for a week he made himself useful on all possible occasions.—Commodore Bridge's "Recollections."

Mental Emotion and Jaundice.

The connection of simple jaundice with sudden mental emotion is generally admitted. Such facts as the following are not uncommon: A young woman becomes yellow at the discovery of her misdeeds; another on hearing that her lance was killed; a young man on being discharged from office because he had not grown tall enough.

Simple jaundice is often followed by acute yellow atrophy, which is also known to be directly caused by shock. In this form of jaundice there is always disorganization of the liver cells. Even cancer may have a like origin.—Exchange.

In the Street Car.

Fogg—No, I never give my seat to a lady unless she is advanced in years. To young lady who has been trying to pry him out of his seat? Would you like my seat, madam?

Young Lady—Thanks! Prefer to stand! But she looks mad enough to bite Fogg's head off.—Boston Transcript.

A Story About Booth.

John Malone, the actor, who is also a lawyer and a bookworm, has been writing of Edwin Booth in *The Forum*. "His instinctive shrinking from anything like self-praise," says he, "impelled him often to ascribe to accident the adoption of some felicitous detail of illustrative action or variation of reading. Once while we were rehearsing 'Hamlet' he told me how he came to adopt the action of swearing Horatio and Marcellus upon the cross of his sword.

"One night, he said, while kneeling during the ghost's speech with his hands pressing rather heavily upon the sword hilt, the point sank into the exit of the ghost the sword remained standing. When he came to the line, 'Never make known what you have seen tonight,' he turned to recover the sword. Seeing it standing with the light shining upon the cross, the words, 'I'll cross it though it blast me,' came into his mind, and he grasped it by the blade and held out the cross for his companions to swear on. Thenceforward he adopted that action. It was this alertness of mind that distinguished him, where another actor, content with tradition and wedded to old ways, would have seized it by the hilt as usual."

Treatment of Obesity.

In a medical article which was recently reprinted in these columns from the European edition of *The Herald*, our foreign medical correspondent communicated approvingly the treatment for reducing flesh recommended by M. Dujardin-Beaumont.

At this season of the year redundancy of flesh interferes very much with comfort. The proposed method of curtailing surplus fat includes refraining from drinking between meals and giving up the use of tea, coffee, cognac and other liquors, and requires the patient to take plenty of exercise, to breakfast and dine early and to make his dinner without soup. Dry friction and massage every morning, after a general lotion with a sponge dipped in hot water, and a desiccating powder of a given solution (iodide of potassium, 15 grams; water, 150 grams) after each meal will complete the regime.

This treatment, which prescribes only two meals a day, and that they shall be very light and simple, seems rather heroic, but ought to be efficacious.—*New York Herald*.

Relics of Barbarism.

They are very fortunate young people, so far as we can now see, this George, duke of York, and Princess Mary of Teck, who have just been married with all the high ceremonial the most stately court in Europe could contrive. The statesmen, the politicians and the newspapers are predicting that he will yet be a king and she a queen—higher still, in fact, an emperor and an empress.

We hope not. But we do trust they will both be good citizens of the coming English republic, which shall go hand in hand with the United States, France and all our great galaxy of South American republics in developing the advancement and glory of the peoples.

Kings and queens, emperors and empresses, are joining the extinct mammoths of the human race. A few of them are still left, but their fate is sealed. They are really relics of barbarism.—*New York Recorder*.

Bargains in New Testaments.

It has been often stated that the revised version of the Scriptures has been a failure so far as sale is concerned. But this, observes the *Westminster Gazette*, is not quite accurate. For the Revised New Testament, the sale of which on its first appearance was phenomenal, there is now practically no demand, and the Oxford University Press is offering privately for charitable distribution its surplus stock at very low rates. For instance, if 500 copies are taken, the six-penny edition can be had for a penny, the shilling edition for twopence and the 18 penny edition for threepence each copy. But this only applies to the New Testament. The sale of the revised version of the Bible, containing the Old and New Testament, is now large and has always been so.

Maine's "Nap Party."

The very latest in Maine is a "nap party." They had one in Rockland the other day. The *Tribune* explains that for two preceding evenings the guests had enjoyed a round of social gayeties prolonged to late hours, which rendered sleep desirable. Quaint invitations named the "nap" hour as 7 o'clock, and each guest on arrival was supplied with a comfortable chair and pillow, "all was quiet and hush," and the gentle and refined snoring which arose from the dimly lighted rooms told how gratefully the opportunity was appreciated. A merry musical programme followed the period of somnolence, refreshments were served, and the company went home at midnight, presumably ready for another nap party the next day.

Father of Forty Girls.

Moses William, colored, lives on a farm about five miles east of Fayetteville. He is 65 years old, but no one would take him to be more than about 50. He was married twice and had born to him 45 children. By the first wife he had 23 children—3 boys and 20 girls—and by the second 22 children—2 boys and 20 girls. He says he has about 40 grandchildren.—*Galveston News*.

A remarkable discovery has been made at Carrig, near Llangollen. While a number of workmen were carting stones from the bed of the river Dee they discovered the remains of an ancient church which was washed down by a heavy flood 300 years ago.

Murders and suicides by mere children in France are reported to be very frequent. Nine murders of boys and girls under 10 years of age, committed by boys under 14, are noted within the past few months. Suicides are about as numerous.

Know All About It.

"The world is full of people who think they know it all," said John A. Starr, "and in no subject is there so much superfluous knowledge rolling around as that which relates to food adulteration and substitution. What little money I have been made out of sugar, and I profess to know something about that indispensable and very popular article. But I learned something the other day which neither I nor any one else ever knew before. I was eating breakfast with a chance acquaintance I had picked up on the cars, and he called for some crushed sugar, objecting to white lump because, as he assured me confidentially, it was all made from glucose, which was nothing else but animal refuse."

"I explained to him that he was quite right in his ideas excepting in two respects, one of which was that white lump was not made from glucose and the other that glucose was a product of corn and not of animal refuse. He seemed rather to resent the information at first, and as he proceeded to destroy the flavor of his coffee by the use of some very dark sugar which was little more or less than glucose itself he told me that he had the information from an authentic source, and that he could not be persuaded to ruin his internal organs at the request of the first stranger he happened to meet."—*St. Louis Globe-Democrat*.

Mistaken Diagnoses.

Last year 462 mistakes were made in London by doctors in notifying cases of infectious diseases for removal to hospitals, with the result that 102 of the mistaken cases resulted fatally.—*Exchange*.

An Afterthought.

"That is an excellent little thing about the Lord tempering the wind to the shorn lamb, is it not?"

"It sounds well—yes; but did you ever reflect that lambs are not shorn?"—*Truth*.

Green Snow.

Three places at least are known where green snow is found. One of these places is near Mount Hecla, Iceland, another 14 miles east of the mouth of the Obi and the third near Quito, South America.

More Interesting Than the Fair.

It is reported that Count Tolstoi, the Russian novelist, will visit the World's fair. If he comes, the greatest show on earth will present no object more interesting than the man who has voluntarily put luxury and ease behind him to bring himself in touch with the common people and carry out the humanitarian idea laid down in the Christian system by the great exemplar.—*Kansas City Star*.

The Discovery of America.

Bishop William Stevens Perry of Iowa in a sermon at Buffalo a few days ago is reported to have said that we owe nothing to either Columbus or Spain for the discovery of America. The honor belonged to John Cabot, who sailed under the patronage of Henry VII.

Dead Sure.

Johnson—When I die, I know my death will cast a gloom over the community.

Thompson—Undoubtedly. You're the laughing stock of the place, you know.—*Vogue*.

Miscellaneous.

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