

# THE FLEA IS THE CHAMPION MURDERER

## Causes More Deaths Each Year Than All Reptiles and Beasts.

"If some one were to tell you of a creature covered with a heavy armor of horn and provided with two large, triangular slashing weapons in addition to two lances and a very sharp stiletto, having the longest and most powerful hind legs of any being in existence, so strong and powerful that the animal could jump 500 times its own length, and if you were to be further told that this creature was abroad upon the face of the earth today, causing more deaths annually than all the venomous reptiles and ferocious beasts in the world, would you not imagine that the narrator was the victim of hallucinations far outclassing those of the most habituated pipe dreamer?" asks William Colby Rucker, in the Technical World Magazine. Dr. Rucker is a passed assistant surgeon in the United States Public Health and Marine Hospital service.

"Yet," he continues, "such a creature does exist, and in many varying forms is found in almost every quarter of the globe and upon practically every animal having a hairy coat. It is only in recent years, however, that this insect, the flea—there, the secret is out—has excited anything more than a natural curiosity on the part of the scientists who desire to know and catalogue every living thing upon the surface of the earth.

"Almost every animal having a coat of hair has his own particular variety of flea. In other words, fleas vary with their host; but one host may harbor six different species of fleas, or one species may occupy six different hosts. In general it may be said, however, that each flea bearing animal has its own choice stock within its flea preserves. For example, man elects the Pulex irritans (parenthetically it may be noted that this species is also chosen by the skunk and the hog); the dog, the Ctenocephalus canis, while the mouse has a little blind flea of its own.

### Flea Peculiarities.

"The Ceratophyllus fasciatus, the common rat flea of the United States, has a collar of heavy spikes about its neck, giving it the appearance of a Fifth avenue bulldog; the Ctenocephalus musculus, the mouse flea, is blind; the Ctenocephalus canis has a large cavalryman mustache of heavy spines; the Pulex irritans is globular in shape and has no collar at all, while the rabbit's affinity, the Hoplophylus affinis, has two heavy clasping plates resembling a pair of ice tongs with which he anchors himself to his victim.

"The flea has an oval body which is flattened to permit easy progress through the hair of its host. It is as though this insect had been literally narrowed so that it might move with ease in the hairy forest which it inhabits. It is covered, armorlike, with heavy plates of chitin laid on like the shingles of a house. This chitin is a hard, hornlike substance which is insoluble in acids, and is dissolved only by strong alkaline solutions. We thus see that the insect has been provided by nature with an almost impregnable defensive armor.

"At the points where the plates overlap are the openings of the respiratory apparatus, and it is through these that the flea breathes. These are twenty-four in number and are the only vulnerable points on the insect. In fact, almost the only way to kill fleas, if we except crushing and starvation, is by means of fine, moist dust such as buhach, which clogs the respiratory orifices, or by poisonous gases.

### Smells with "Pygidium."

"Fitted over the tail like a saddle and protected by an innumerable number of fine bristles is the organ of smell, the pygidium. This is roughly triangular in shape and consists of a platelike structure having a number of sensory pits which look as though they had been punched out. Immediately below this plate is a large respiratory opening which takes the place of a nostril. The air passing over the pygidium to this opening irritates the fine bristles, thus transmitting the sensation of smell. This organ is very necessary to the flea on account of the almost utter lack of tactile sense, and he depends very largely upon it in hunting for food.

"In common with the rest of the animal world, if we except mankind, the male is much more adorned than its better half, who is modestly arrayed in a neatly fitting suit of brown armor. The ladies are inclined to be petite, being perhaps three-fourths

the size of the stronger sex. They far outnumber the latter, however, and hence in courtship the male assumes the passive role in a very lordly manner. With absolute lack of gallantry he ignores the other sex, who must seek his society if she wishes a mate. It is very amusing to watch the efforts of a flirtatious flea to capture a beau, but having once seized hold of him, she cuddles closely in his embrace, entangling herself in a determined manner in his spines.

"The flea's head is armed with an elaborate biting apparatus which acts both as a weapon of offence and a means of securing food. On either side is a large triangular anchor which firmly grasps the skin of the victim and enables the insect to effectually insert the piercing organs. These consist of two lances each having a sharp spear shaped head below which is a series of saw teeth. Between and above them is a sharp stylet. In biting, all three are inserted simultaneously, the saws working back and forth until a good opening is made and a flow of blood is started.

### As a Source of Danger.

"Many of the fleas have the disgusting habit of depositing their excreta at the same time they secure their meal. The human flea is the worst mannered in this particular, and it is well established that it is in this way he infects his victim with bubonic plague. Having eaten previously from a plague stricken animal, he has taken into himself a very large number of pest bacteria. These have been frequently found in the defecata of the flea, and may be deposited upon the skin of a healthy victim who subsequently rubs the irritated parts. The bacilli are thus forced into the minute wounds made by the flea, inoculating the victim with disease. This is not a matter of scientific speculation, but has been thoroughly proved by accurate and painstaking experiments in many parts of the world.

"The flea is provided with six legs arranged in three pairs, which become progressively longer as you go aft. There is nothing very remarkable about the first two pairs, but the hind legs are the largest, longest and most powerful in proportion to the size and weight of the insect of any in the entire animal kingdom. The propulsive apparatus of the kangaroo is, in comparison, but a pitiful imitation. Provided with enormous hams and with feet armed with claws working on the principle of a cant-hook, they are able to leap in a manner calculated to make the most bemuddled track athlete green with envy.

"The American amateur indoor standing broad jump record is 15 1/2 inches was made by a fair co-ed after fasting four days. The running high, 7 1/2 inches, is also held by Miss Pulex irritans. This family has representatives in all of the colleges of the Pacific Coast. Figuring on this basis in proportion to weight and body length, a man would be able to jump over an office building 168 stories high, and in making such a leap would traverse over three-fifths of a mile.

### Their Taste in Hues.

"The question of the individual preference of fleas for persons has received careful study. It is the popular belief that fleas prefer blondes to brunettes and women to men, but it has not been possible to prove this experimentally. Certain it is that they are equally disposed to black or white guinea pigs and several negroes are known whom the fleas use as a veritable haven. Cleanliness does not seem to be a bar to them; in fact, there seems to be some reason for the belief that they prefer cleanly persons to those to whom the bathtub is unknown.

"There is still a vast amount of work to be done upon the interesting flea and much time and money have to be spent in the study of it. The British in India and Australia, the French in their Chinese provinces and the Americans on the Pacific Coast are all seeking after knowledge regarding this enemy to mankind, and it may not be long before the results achieved by these various agencies will enable us to destroy forever this persistent disseminator of pestilence and death."

Nearly \$100,000 is spent in Mexico City every week on lottery tickets, and in the same period only about \$70,000 is paid back in premiums.



## HUNTED TURKEYS FOR LIVING.

Henry Garis and Bill Tilghman in the '70s and early '80s supplied the Northern and Eastern markets with deer and wild turkeys. In time they dealt mostly in turkeys, for the reason that a deer, usually weighing more than 100 pounds, brought only \$5 a carcass, while turkeys, averaging from ten to twelve pounds each, always sold readily at \$1 apiece.

"It was my rule," Garis said, "never to fire into a drove of turkeys in daylight, as to do so would frighten them and cause them to leave that part of the country. The result of this kind of hunting was that we always had an abundance of turkeys within reach—we often rode within forty feet of a big drove of turkeys without their taking flight.

"Persons who never hunted in the Southwest in the old days scarcely can imagine the enormous number of turkeys that ranged the country. I believe the greatest turkey range on earth was in what we called the Red Hill country, now embraced in Woods, Majors and Alfalfa counties, Oklahoma. I have seen ten and twelve acres at a time black with turkeys; actually the ground itself seemed to be alive. After the turkeys had passed their scratching made the ground look as if it had been gone over with rakes. The turkeys fed on small acorns and often flew into the hackberry trees for berries, their weight stripping the trees of their smaller limbs. I know of one gobbler sold at Dodge City that weighed forty-five pounds, and we killed many that weighed thirty-five or forty pounds.

"The worst scare I ever got in the west country was while hunting turkeys one night, even though we had an occasional brush with the Cheyenne Indians. Tilghman and I, though partners, always hunted alone. We started out one night in search of a roost, Tilghman going down a big canon, while I went up the canon. Our reconnoitering finally led both of us into a heavily timbered creek bottom. Each was moving stealthily along with gun cocked, taking a step at a time, doing our best to penetrate the darkness and locate turkeys on their roost.

"The wind was blowing from the south and it was difficult to hear footsteps or the breaking of twigs. Suddenly we backed squarely into each other in the darkness, neither suspecting the presence of the other. I am confident that I jumped ten feet into the air, my hair on end and my finger on the trigger of my gun. By the time I came down Tilghman had regained his composure—he had been too startled to shoot me on the wing, while I couldn't shoot with my feet off the ground. Both of us lay down and panted a while to get our breath, and then each cursed the other for scaring him."—Guthrie Correspondence Kansas City Times.

## A LABRADOR RESCUE.

In his work among the people of the Labrador coast Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell has often imperiled his life. One such instance is given in his book, "Ardit on an Ice-Pan," in which is told the story of his remarkable escape from death. What follows—an account of the rescue—is all the more impressive from being told in the homely words of one of the rescuers.

One day about a week after Dr. Grenfell's return two men came in from Griquet, fifteen miles away. They had walked all that distance, although the trail was heavy with snow. "We just felt we must see the doctor and tell him what 'twould 'a' meant to us if he'd been lost," said George Andrews.

"'Twas even when us knew 'e was on the ice, George Davis seen us first. 'E went to th' cliff to look for seal. 'E got 'is spy-glass an' made out a man an' dogs on a pan, an' knowed it war the doctor.

"'Us had a good strong boat an' four oars, an' took a hot kettle of tea an' food for a week, for us thought 'ud have to go far, an' p'd'aps lose th' boat. I di'n't hope to find the doctor alive, an' kept lookin' for a sign of us on th' pans. 'Twa no' easy gettin' to th' pans wi' a big sea runnin'."

"'Us saw th' doctor about twenty minutes afore us got t' un. 'E was wavin' 'is flag, an' I seen 'im. 'E was on a pan no bigger'n this flea, an' I dunno what ever kep' un fro' goin' abroad, for 'twas't ice, 'twas packed snow.

"'Th' pan was away from even th' slob, floatin' by hisself, an' th' open water all round, an' 'twas just across fro' Goose Cove, an' outside o' that there'd been no hope.

"I think th' way th' pan held together was on account o' th' dogs' bodies meetin' it, an' it froze hard during the night. 'E was level with th' water, an' th' sea washing over us all th' time.

"'E ad ripped the dog harnesses an' stuffed the oakum in th' leg o' 'is pants to keep un warm. 'E showed it to us. An' 'e cut off th' tops o' 'is boots to keep th' draft from 'is back. 'E must 'a' worked 'ard all night. 'E said 'e droiled off once or twice, but th' night seemed wonderfu' long.

"'Us took un off th' pan at about half-past seven, an' ad a 'ard fight gettin' in, the sea still runnin' 'igh. 'E said 'e was proud to see us comin' for us. And so 'e might, for it grew

wonderfu' cold in th' day, and th' sea so 'igh the pan couldn't 'a' lived outside.

"'E wouldn't stop when us got ashore, but must go right on, an' when 'e 'ad dry clothes an' was a bit warm us sent un to St. Anthony with a team."

## BAGGING A POLAR BEAR.

To be frozen in for a winter at Cape Bathurst, on the Arctic Ocean, is an experience described in a recent number of Recreation. The ship was on a whaling cruise and was well loaded. They had about sixty dogs, and had secured several carcasses of walrus, and cached them on the ice as food for the dogs.

One morning, says the captain, who tells the story, my Indian boy, Neponack, came running up the plank, shouting at the top of his voice that there was a bear near the ship.

I am not much of a hunter, but I object to being run over by game; so I always keep a rifle and belt of cartridges within reach. I grabbed them and started to look for the bear.

As I drew near the meat cache I saw a big polar bear, with his head down in the barrel, helping himself vigorously. The whole pack of sixty dogs were leaping, barking and howling about him. The bear paid no attention to them, and they all seemed afraid to take hold of him. I walked up to within a hundred yards and took a shot at old Ursus arcticus.

When the ball hit him he leaped into the air, and as he came down on the ice the entire pack of dogs "lit into him."

The bear let out in all directions with his great paws, and at every blow some poor dog was sent shrieking and spinning across the ice.

As soon as the bear had thinned out the pack sufficiently to escape, he struck out across the ice-flo for a bit of open water half a mile away.

At that stage of the game there were but three dogs in the whole pack that wanted bear. The others had had more than they cared for. But in a few seconds the race was reversed, and the dogs were coming for the ship as if they had been shot out of a gun, and the bear was after them. This was my chance, and I fired again, and my shot finished him.

By this time the whole crew had come out to see the fun. We put a line around the bear's neck and dragged him on board, where we skinned him.

While the fight was going on, I would have sworn the bear would weigh a ton, but when we got him on deck he seemed to have grown much smaller. Still, he was a good-sized animal.

## FIGHT WITH BRIGANDS.

Two nights ago a band of brigands attacked the railway station of Rosetti on this line. Choosing the hour of midnight they approached the station, which is desolately situated, and commenced their attack on the dwelling of the telegraph clerk, which stands some 200 yards from the station itself.

This official possesses a savage watchdog, but the brigands silenced it by throwing to it dead fowls stolen from the adjacent shed. Then they proceeded to force an entrance by a back window, thinking they had an easy task, the only inhabitants being the clerk and his wife.

They reckoned, however, without their host, for hardly had they begun to force the window when a door was thrown open and a shot from a Martini rifle stretched one bandit dead. This threw the others into disorder.

They rushed from the yard, the clerk following, but seeing he did not fire again (having recklessly advanced without loading) they turned on him with the knives and axes with which they were armed, and for a moment his death seemed certain, when his courageous young wife ran forward and fired with a shotgun with which she had armed herself, and another brigand fell wounded. Picking up their companion they, fairly cowed, now took to their heels. The clerk and his wife, loading, followed them, but unfortunately both fell in the dark, the band making their escape.

The gendarmeries have already arrested some members of the band, known criminals, lately come into the district. They have confessed their complicity, and say that being burdened with the wounded man and afraid if they left him of his denouncing them, they threw him, still living, into a deep well, where his body has been since discovered.—Braila Correspondence London Chronicle.

## Taxicab Trick.

"I'm just planning on my braid," said the young woman who had been called to the telephone. "Oh, about twenty minutes, I guess."

"That is a trick," she said, "that came in with taxicabs. A man going anywhere with a woman in an old-fashioned cab would have squandered half a week's salary before he would telephone her about the stage of her toilet. But with taxicabs it is different. They eat up money faster than the old cabs, and it is nothing unusual now for an escort to ask how much longer it will take to get ready. Within fifteen or twenty minutes of the time set he calls a taxi and gets here as you are going down stairs. Not very romantic, no; but it's sensible and saves money."—New York Sun.

The colony of Barbary apes, on the Rock of Gibraltar, is the only one of its kind in existence, and is being protected by the British Government.



For the Younger Children...



## WHICH IS BEST?

I always love the summer time, When it is here, you know, For then I think I ne'er could stand The winter's sleet and snow.

But when the first cold days roll round, And the hillsides smooth and white,



I take my sled and coasting go; Oh, it is such delight!

I know that I, like other boys, Love the season that is here; And be it winter, summer, spring, It is the one most dear.

—Washington Star.

## WISDOM OF ELEVEN.

The latest definition of the woman suffragist is furnished by a strong-minded girl of eleven, who attends a certain fashionable private school. At a Sunday luncheon recently this child announced to her parents that she was going to hear a debate on woman suffrage.

"The class just above the one I'm in is holding it," she said importantly. "The debaters are reading up a lot for it, and they said I must be sure to come."

"Why," said her father, to quiz her, "you don't know anything about woman suffrage. You don't even know the meaning of the term."

"Yes, I do," insisted Miss Eleven. "Every one knows that. It's easy. It is just that the women are suffering to be men."—New York Tribune.

## CHERRY, THE CANARY.

Last Fourth of July, instead of getting fireworks, my brother and I got a canary bird. He is a lovely singer, and sometimes he sings so loud that we have to tell him to be quiet. The more we talk, the louder he sings. Whenever my father or uncle comes into the room, Cherry begins to flutter his wings and make his little mouth go so hard that he can hardly talk in his little bird language.

Cherry does not like to take a bath at all, and the only way he gets one is when mother puts him in a bowl of water and covers him with a colander and makes him walk around in the water. But when she takes him out and puts him back in his cage the first thing that he does is to try to get in his water cup and take another bath in that.—Doris Staunton, in the New York Tribune.

## TALE OF PERVERSIVE JANE.

Great-grandma had received a letter by post. It was not in an envelope, though at first glance at the outside it would seem so. There were no envelopes in those days. It was written on a large sheet of paper, curiously folded and sealed with red wax. It came from the Philadelphia cousins and in formal, gracious lines gave family news and good wishes. It also said that in seventh month, Cousin Benjamin and Cousin Caroline were to visit in the town, and their youngest daughter, Cousin Jane, would accompany them. Great-grandma and great-grandpa talked about it at breakfast, as told by Harriet Mendenhall in the Churchman.

"They will be welcome guests here. They will spend the afternoon with us and take tea, and doubtless we shall see much of them."

Harriet, Sue and Mary heard. They saw the letter, too. Letters were rare in those days. They saw the impress of the seal on the red wax. "Time is short." They knew how it was done, for they had seen father seal letters. When they grew up they meant to write letters and have a seal themselves.

They were glad Cousin Jane was coming. She had wavy, brown hair and bright, brown eyes. She laughed merrily and she liked to see Gyp stand and beg. When three odd shoes were found in his kennel and father wondered to whom they belonged, and mother declared she could not have a dog that stole from the neighbors, and the little girls trembled for Gyp's fate, Cousin Jane had laughed gaily. She said he would be the family provider; and she and Harriet and Sue and Mary made calls up and down the street to restore the property. The children thought it a grave offense, but nobody scolded Cousin Jane, at which they were somewhat puzzled. So Harriet, Sue and Mary were glad she was coming. Cousin Benjamin and Cousin Caroline were like other people who visited or dined and of whom the children had glimpses. Cousin Jane was different.

"They ways are perverse," father said once. He smiled in the saying and mother smiled also. The little girls thought perverse meant pleasant.

It was toward the end of the Sixth month, which is June; and after breakfast the little girls went into the garden to gather currants from the bushes. Mother was to make jelly and they had three small kettles to

fill. They walked down the brick path and over the grass to the side where the currants grew. The breeze blew fresh and cool from the river lying beyond the garden. First there were flowers and grass, then fruit trees and currant bushes, raspberry bushes and quinces, then vegetables, then more grass and a little dock projecting into the blue breadth of water. They turned their flushed faces to catch the air.

"Bonnets are hot," they said. "Will it be weeks and weeks before she comes?" questioned Mary. Sue was doubtful. Harriet said Seventh month came after Sixth month. They always had cherry pie on the Fourth, and it was a holiday. "It would be fine if she came then. Maybe father will take us in the boat." That was something else they longed for—to be big, to stand on the dock and watch the water and to sail in a boat. They were little now and the currants were to be gathered, and mother would not like them to stand on the dock alone.

Seventh month followed Sixth month and the cousins came to spend the afternoon and take tea, as mother had said. Things were apt to happen as mother said. They saw tall Cousin Benjamin, and Cousin Caroline in her silk gown, and other people, and Cousin Jane. Mother welcomed in her silk gown in the cool parlor. Cousin Jane promised to sit on the same side of the table as the little girls. Then they were sent into the garden—three little girls in quaint white frocks, low in the neck and short in the sleeve, showing the bare arms. Mother had said they were to play quietly, to keep clean and not to get wet in the river, else they must be sent to bed. That would be dire, indeed, to miss Cousin Jane. They looked at the flowers behind the hedges of box and picked a strawberry shrub flower apiece to hold in a warm hand and smell the delicious fragrance; and then they were at the end of the flowers. They walked under the trees and talked about the pears and the peaches that would drop on the grass; and always they were a little farther from the house and a little nearer to the river. How pretty it was, glinting in the sun and running, running past the dock. Gyp scampered about, inviting a chase. They were quite at the end of the garden now. Beyond lay only the dock and the river. Gyp ran on, turned his head, wagged his tail and barked. He ran farther and barked again.

"He's going to the dock," said Sue. "I suppose we might stand there," said Harriet, "if we did not get wet or muddy."

The three walked on. Gyp was delighted. He jumped and ran and barked and begged for a stick. Sue threw one into the river. With a joyous plunge he swam and brought it back.

"It is low tide," said Sue. "We could wade to-day."

She threw another stick. Then Harriet threw and Mary tried. Oh! oh! she slipped on the edge and her plump little self in her clean, white frock went right down, down into the shallow water! Harriet flew to the steps and pulled her out. Sue wiped her off and hushed the crying. They were all safe. Alas! also they were wet and muddy, and mother had said—

Three dragged little girls walked slowly under the fruit-trees, through the flower garden and into the kitchen. Mother found them there with their wet frocks, and mother had said— So the maid took them upstairs and put them into dry, white nightgowns and left them, with the sun high in the sky.

Harriet, Sue and Mary lay dismally in the big bed. They could hear the tinkle of china and silver and catch the sound of voices. They supposed there would be preserves and three kinds of cake and Cousin Jane had promised to sit on their side. Then they heard gay laughter; and, by and by, a step on the stair.

"Oh! Cousin Hannah," Cousin Caroline had pleaded, hearing of the children's plight, "did these send them to bed?"

"I infer," remarked Cousin Jane, as tea ended, "that their fare is prudent. These could not justly send them these jumbles, though, otherwise these would be willing."

Great-grandma and great-grandpa were smiling at Cousin Jane and at each other.

"Sponge cake would be more wholesome," observed great-grandma.

"It certainly would," assented Cousin Jane, piling three large pieces on a plate.

"Jane," said great-grandpa, "these is perverse still."

And then they all laughed.

Harriet, Sue and Mary sat up in bed.

"Look!" cried Cousin Jane, coming lightly in with the plate. Her brown hair waved and there were kindly twinkles in her bright brown eyes. "Look! I have brought some of the party."

They were sure, now, that perverse meant pleasant.

## The Reason.

"Why are you sore on the eminent magnate? He has done some good things."

"I was one of them."—Village Post.

# EGYPTIANS BUILT SOUL HOUSES

## The Same Principle Caused Them to Slay a Warrior's Steed at the Grave.

Egyptian "soul" houses were curious edifices made probably between the tenth and twelfth dynasties—that is, about 2600 and 3300 B. C. The same principle that caused the warrior's steed to be slain on his grave seems to have actuated the early Egyptians when they built a house for the dead man's soul.

The beginning of the custom was that a mat was laid on the grave, with a pan of food upon it. Afterward this offering was carved in stone as a table of offerings to give permanent satisfaction for the soul. Then to the table was added a shelter copied from an Arab tent, and this grad-

ually was elaborated. The shelter was placed on columns, a hut was put into this portico, chambers were copied, and finally appeared complete two-story houses furnished with pottery, models of couch, chair, stool, fireplace and the figure of a woman making bread.

The soul was conceived of as ascending from the grave through the ground and requiring shelter while feeding on its everlasting provision, and yet, though it ascended through the earth, it needed a staircase to go up to the upper floor, and the soul had a donkey, for which a manger was required.—Chicago News.