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From the Home Journal.

THE SERPENT TAMER.

A TALE OF THE SOUTH.

One day, towards the close of the fashionable season at one of the most celebrated of the Virginia watering places, a man, carrying a large box under his arm, made his appearance in the front yard of the visitor's hotel. He was tall and sinewy in person, with the air and deportment of a foreigner. The steady gray eye, and the rigid mould of features, indicated vigor of will and energy of character. In other respects, there was nothing noteworthy in his appearance or movements.

Having approached to within a short distance of the hotel, he deposited his box upon the ground, uncovered it, and took out a large rattlesnake, which he held in his hand, grasping it tightly around the body about six inches from the head, and fixing a steady gaze upon its glittering eyes. The reptile coiled its body around the arm of the man, or writhed in slow wavy motions through the air, darting its arrowy tongue with a sibilant sound through the half-opened jaws. In a few moments the erect head drooped, the mouth closed, and the subdued serpent lay motionless in the hand of the operator, who, during the whole performance, stood, erect and silent, in the position he had first taken.

A spectacle so novel and exciting, attracted at once the attention of the visitors at the Springs. The ladies crowded on the front gallery of the hotel, and the men and boys gathered in a dense circle around the mysterious stranger, to witness his perilous feat.

To convince the spectators that the exhibition was not a deception, the performer drew forth another, large rattlesnake from his box, placed a blunt short stick upright in its mouth so as to hold the fangs apart, and then, inserting another stick beneath the fangs, he pressed them outwardly until their full length was exposed to view. In this condition he carried the reptile round the circle of men and boys, and through the crowd of ladies, that all might see it was a veritable snake, armed with fang and poison with which his experiments were performed. This done, he returned to his first position, placed the snake upon the ground, and commenced kicking at it with great violence, taking care, however, not to strike it with his foot. Quickly irritated by the simulated assault, the snake threw itself into a coil, shook its rattles, and seemed eager to strike its assailant, who, leaning forward, seized and held it up, writhing and hissing, in his grasp. He looked steadily for a short time into his eyes, when, as in the first experiment, the head drooped, the passion subsided, and the serpent remained subdued and still in the hand of the tamer.

He next emptied upon the ground the contents of his box, consisting of a dozen or more large, venomous looking rattlesnakes. The reptile mass coiled, or glided, hissing and fierce, at his feet. He picked them up, one by one, gazed intently, for a short time, into their eyes, and then placed some of them in his bosom with their heads and necks protruding as from a den; others he twined around his neck and arms, and the rest he seized and held aloft in his hand. The reptiles writhed and twisted and coiled as if tightening their hold upon the person of the performer. Their eyes glittered, and their tongues shot forth and back, like tiny arrows, from their mouths. But the ominous rattles all were still, betokening that curiosity and not anger elicited these reptile demonstrations. The snake tamer, begirt with the serpentine girdle, remained not only unharmed, but apparently quite unconcerned. He had radiated the mysterious spell of the human eye upon them, and man asserted his lordship over the most cunning of all the beasts of the field.

The report of these wonderful feats having spread through the neighborhood with the offer of a liberal price, by the performer, for live venomous snakes, of every description, a lad came in one morning to the Springs, bringing a large rattlesnake which he had just caught in the neighboring mountains. The snake tamer paid the promised reward for it, and proceeded at once to subdue it in the presence of nearly all the visitors.

Having cautiously removed the lid of the box in which the snake was confined, and turned it over upon one side, he withdrew a few steps

and awaited the result. In a few moments, a rusty and most venomous looking rattlesnake, of very large size, crawled leisurely out upon the grass with which the yard was covered. It is the nature of this species of the serpent race to betray neither fear nor excitement at the presence of man. Dreaming themselves secure in the possession of enormous fangs and supply of virtue sufficiently copious and deadly to produce almost instant death in man or beast, they neither hasten to escape from sight when discovered, nor betray the least alarm when assailed. It is even the popular faith that they magnanimously give warning before they strike, by shaking their rattles, which produce a peculiar, whirring sound, startling to the nerves and alarming to the mind.

The presence of the performer and of the large crowd which surrounded him, seemed not to disturb or even to arrest the attention of the scaly monster, which, having crawled forth out of the box, lay motionless and extended to its full length upon the grass. The snake tamer approached and stimulated an attack by repeated and rapid motions towards its head with his foot. The reptile became furiously irate in a moment. Assuming the coil, which is its natural position both for attack and defense, it darted forth its tongue and shook its rattles with the rapidity and violence which produce their most alarming sound. As the performer continued, at a safe distance, the motions with his foot, the snake soon became almost blind with rage. Its head flattened, its eyes glittered like diamond points, and a fearful, prolonged hiss issued from its mouth. The man made one step towards it, when, unable longer to control its passion to strike, it leaped forward and fell full length upon the grass, close at his feet. Before it could throw itself again into a coil, he seized it with a firm grasp, about six inches below the head, and holding it off at arm's length from his person, lifted it up from the ground.

The rage and contortions of the now imprisoned reptile were terrible to behold. Through the air, and round and round the arm of the performer, it twisted and writhed the caudal extremity of its body, making, all the time, a monotonous and fearful whizz with its rattles, and essaying every motion, to strike his arm or his person. The spectators shuddered with horror and alarm at the sight; but the intrepid experimenter, confident in his art, betrayed neither fear nor doubt as to the certainty of his triumph.

From the moment he first seized the snake, he had looked, with a fixed, almost an unwinking gaze, into his eyes, which the serpent apparently returned with a look equal steady and fierce. By degrees the contortions of its body became less violent, and its efforts to strike less frequent. The arm of the man was gradually bent, so as to bring the snake, by slow approaches, nearer to his face. At length, overcome by the magnetic fascination of his look, it lay harmless and unresisting in his grasp. He placed it in his bosom, twined it around his neck and fondled it with his hands. The subdued creature, shorn of its native ferocity, yielded itself to the power of its victor, and permitted him to caress and handle it with impunity.

The spectators broke forth into audible expressions of admiration at the accomplishment of this remarkable feat. The performer passed his hat around for a collection, and soon had the satisfaction of receiving it back well replenished with coins—the enthusiasm of the visitors prompting them to make a liberal donation as a reward for the peril he had braved, and the entertainment he had afforded.

Satisfied with his success, the snake tamer vanished from the Old Sweet Springs as suddenly as he had come. In a few days, however, he made his appearance at another and not very distant watering-place in the Old Dominion, where he repeated, before a wondering crowd of spectators, the same feats with his snake. A new and most perilous addition was destined to be made at this place to the almost fabulous list of his achievements.

A countryman brought him, one day, a rattlesnake, recently caught, which was said to be peculiarly vicious and dangerous. He bought it, and announced his intention to tame it upon the greensward in front of the visitor's hotel. A large crowd assembled to witness the feat. A vacant space being left in their midst for the experiment, the snake—a very large and most ugly-looking one—was placed upon the ground and provoked to anger by a feigned attack with the foot of the performer. At the proper moment he seized it, but almost immediately threw it violently upon the ground, exclaiming that he was bitten in the hand. The crowd quickly drew back, and the stunned reptile lay motionless where it fell.

The man at once applied his lips to the wound, and sucked it with great eagerness for several minutes. Finding no relief from the pain which he endured, he next made several incisions, with the point of his knife, in the flesh of his wounded hand and arm. Then, ta-

king from his pocket a large white bean, he scraped and pounded a portion of it into a thin, impalpable powder, which he rubbed into the punctures upon his hand and arm. He bit off and swallowed another portion of the same bean. This specific he called the Cedron bean. "It grows," said he, "in the East, and is an infallible cure for the bite of venomous reptiles."

In the mean time the virus, having become diffused throughout his system, began to produce painful and alarming effects. The arm and hand, swollen to enormous size, assumed a livid hue. Vertigo, nausea and stupor—the three most fatal symptoms in cases of assault upon the powers of life by reptile poison—began to supervene. Death seemed inevitable, and almost at hand.

The courageous man refused either to sit or lie down, but walked backwards and forwards, uttering occasionally a suppressed groan of anguish. The torture of the pain he endured forced the perspiration in streams from his forehead and face. To the inquiry of one who asked if he suffered much, he replied, "Yes, more than tongue can express, or you can conceive."

The landlord at the Springs, alarmed at the fatal result of the experiment, and apprehensive that the snakes might escape to infest his premises, rushed out, cudgel in hand and with loud imprecations, to kill them. The sick man, whose first care, after being bitten, had been to replace and secure all the snakes, including the untamed one, in their boxes, seemed to forget his own sufferings in the imminence of the peril which threatened his uncouth favorites. Confronting the landlord with both look and meaning gesture, and protesting loudly against the meditated assault upon the snake, he threatened to inflict immediate and summary punishment for any harm that might be done them.—Awd by the stern visage and fierce words of the man, the landlord desisted from his undertaking and retired within the hotel. Such an outburst of passion and combativeness from one who seemed to be already dying from the bite of one of the monsters which he was so prompt to defend, struck the beholders with mingled astonishment and awe. Was it the delirium of approaching death, or the madness of a wild attachment to the reptile companions of his wanderings, that fired his passions and led to the spectacle which they had just witnessed? No one could tell, but all looked on, amazed and perplexed at what they saw and heard.

It was with the snake tamer, now apparently in the last extremity, as with other mortals in the final hour—the ruling passion proved strong in death. Being interrogated as to his feelings and hopes in prospect, of impending dissolution, he said that he experienced neither hope nor fear in the contemplation of the great hereafter. He was not afraid to die, and desired to live only that he might be able to prove the supremacy of his art in the subjugation of the snake which had bitten him. That accomplished, he cared neither how nor when the inevitable summons came.

When first bitten, he had been induced, by the persuasion of others, to swallow a small draught of whiskey, which is deemed a valuable antidote in cases of poisoning by the bite of a snake. But no remedy could prevail on him either to repeat the remedy or apply other specifics known to medical science. He had unshaken confidence in the efficacy of the Cedron bean; and should that fail to cure him, he felt persuaded that it was fated for him then and there to die, in despite of all human aid to save him.

By this time the virus had produced its most fearful effects upon the system. The pain which he endured became agonizing in the extreme. His sight grew dim, his pulse sank to fifty feeble beats per minute, alternate flushes of heat and cold passed over his body, his articulation became thick and indistinct, and both the pallor and the stupor of death seemed to be rapidly spreading over both mind and body. Unable longer to walk or even sit erect, he had fallen prostrate upon the floor, and was lifted by the bystanders and placed upon a low couch, in one corner of the bar-room of the hotel, to die.—Fortunately his reason remained undisturbed, and he continued to bite off and swallow portions of the Cedron bean, which, he still believed and asserted, had power to save him. As yet it had produced no perceptible effects. To all appearance the poison was steadily encroaching upon the citadel of life, which seemed already tottering beneath its furious assault.

Several gentlemen of the medical profession who were present as spectators, now interposed and begged to be permitted to use other remedies as the patient himself could not fail to see that his own antidote had failed. Roused from his stupor by the discredit thus attempted to be thrown upon his bean, the apparently dying man repelled, with vehement gesture and earnest word the insinuation against its efficacy, protested his unshaken faith in it, and concluded his expostulation with a blunt refusal to

permit other antidotes to be applied, at the same time biting off another portion of the Cedron bean.

The spectators could do no more than leave him to his fate. Gathering in a dense semicircle close to his couch, they stood silent and with uncovered heads awaiting the departure of a human spirit to the bar of the final Judge. Stranger though he was to them all, and dying as they believed, by a rash persistence in the use of an inefficacious antidote, the fact that he was undergoing the extreme penalty common to humanity on account of the primal sin, made his fate and his suffering objects of mysterious interest, for the moment, to every one in the room. Death is not only the leveller and the sanctifier, but its presence makes all beholders feel of kin to the victim which it has seized and is bearing to the jaws of the remorseless grave.

Apparently exhausted by the effort which he had just made in speaking, the snake tamer sank back upon his couch and remained for a few moments silent and still. A fresh paroxysm of pain having supervened he groaned heavily, turned his face to the wall and began to mutter like one who talks in a disturbed sleep. Imperial reason had, at length tottered upon its throne and the wild delirium, produced by a fevered brain and a tortured body, had come over the sufferer.

He babbled long and incoherently of snakes and Cedron beans, performing his feats with the one over again, and recounting the marvellous cures made in eastern climes with the other.—As the shades of the mental eclipse grew deeper, he spoke less and less audibly, until his voice sank to a whisper, and then, by degrees, his lips ceased to move, and he was at all appearance, dead.

After the lapse of half an hour he began to revive. The respiration deepened, the pulse quickened and swelled in volume, the stupor lifted like a cloud, from mind and body, and, in a short time, he opened his eyes and spoke. The vigor of his constitution, or remedial power of his Cedron bean, but more probably both combined, had triumphed. He rapidly convalesced and in a few days was able to go about as usual. His snakes had been left undisturbed in their boxes, and he proposed to resume his experiment of taming the one that had bitten him.—But the landlord and the visitors, satisfied with what they had seen, protested against its being repeated, and gathering up his boxes and carpet bag, vanished from the theatre of his recent sufferings as he now does from this tale.

A ROMANTIC AFFAIR.—Quite a romantic affair occurred in the western part of Philadelphia a week or two ago. The facts are these: Mrs. B.—(a handsome and rich widow) and the mother of a pretty daughter of 16 summers, by some means became acquainted with a young carpenter, who, although a fine looking man, was in rather poor circumstances. The carpenter visited the lady's residence very frequently, gallanted her to the church, the theatre, &c., scarcely paying any marked attention to the daughter, who sometimes accompanied them. Madame Rumor, with her thousand tongues, soon noised it about that the carpenter and the widow were about to be made one, and his friends congratulated him on the prospects he had of so shortly being able to "hang up his hat." The widow, too, was complimented by acquaintances, and in fact she began to think that the thing would take place, although the carpenter had not, as yet, "popped the question." With the craft naturally possessed by "widowers," she threw out a hint to her gallant at his next interview, and from this hint he took it for granted that she was anything else than averse to a matrimonial union with him. He thought it was time to act and undecide the lady, which he certainly did and astonished her too, for the next morning he eloped with the daughter! This set all the gossips in the neighborhood going, and they one and all pronounced it "scandalous." The girl's mother, however, being a woman of sense, takes it philosophically, and has forgiven the young people, who are now domiciled at the family residence. She gives her daughter credit for the shrewdness the latter exhibited in her courting, and also the carpenter for his discretion in picking of the two, the youngest and the prettiest.

BEAUTIFUL EXTRACT.—I saw a man at eventide near the grave of one darest to him on earth. The memory of joys that were passed, came crowding on his soul. And this, said he, all that remains of one so loved and so lovely? I call but no voice answers. Oh my loved one will you not hear! O death! inexorable death! what hast thou done? Let me bow down my sorrows in the slumber of the grave! Which thought thus in agony, the gentle form of Christianity came by. She had him look upward, and to the eye of faith the heavens were disclosed. He heard the song of transport of the great multitude which no man can number round the throne. There were the spirits of the just made perfect the spirit of her he mourned! There happiness was pure, permanent, perfect. The mourner then wiped the tears from his eyes, took courage and thanked God.—All the days of my appointed time, said he, will I wait till my change come; and he returned to the duties of his life no longer sorrowing as those who have no hope.

An enterprising Yankee named Fisher has started a sausage lottery at Leavenworth, Kansas. He puts up a hundred sausages at a time, five of which each contain a gold dollar.

Carrier's Address TO THE PATRONS OF THE "BEDFORD GAZETTE."

JANUARY 1, 1859.

Oh! thou, whatever name thou bearest, Whate'er the creed by which thou swearest, Or what the lot in life thou sharest, Be't good, or evil, Who but a shilling's value carest For me, poor "devil!"

To thee be health and peace and pleasure, And all the joys that mortals treasure, Sans calculation and sans measure, This New Year's morning; (And if thou be't a loafer, leisure For years of yawning!)

Whate'er thy nature's predilection, If but an honest man's inspection Discovers therein no defection, God gratify it! And may it be thy heart's election To do well by it.

If in thy bosom holy wishes Supplant, with thought and hopes delicious, The lust for earthly "loaves and fishes," And banish evil, Be fiends that tempt no more malicious Than Printer's "Devil!"

If toward the world thine inclination, If Gold's attraction, Fame's elation, Or Pride's eternal, fell vexation, Do onward lure thee, Mayst thou have thy worst condemnation From Sheriff's Jury.

If Beauty's forms to thee are charming, If "women's looks" do prove alarming, So that a certain bachelor's arm in Thy heart is pining To place some *erudine* and *carmine*, (The two combining

What constitutes thy beauteous lady;) Remember Juan and his Haidee; Remember Cupid, ever ready For thy undoing; Watch "Number One," with eyesight steady, When gone a-wooing.

If rural sights and sounds delight thee, So that the fields and woods invite thee Where thorns do prick and "earwinks" bite thee, Refrain from swearing, But give thy love for Nature mighty, A wholesome airing.

'Twill do you good God's works to ponder; Of trees and rocks and hills to wonder; To listen to the cataract's thunder; And gaze admiring, On all that meets you as you wander With foot untiring.

If politics possess attraction To draw thee to that sphere of action, Where envious faction wars with faction, Be thine the party That aims to bind each jarring section In Union hearty.

But if by lantern darkly litten, Or, if by love of negro smitten, Thy name, perchance, thou hast down-written, With that foul party, The Constitution the bottomless pit in, With curses hearty,

Wouldst thou, if it but had the power, I pity thee, unhappy gaur! Oh! soon may come the glorious hour, When thou no longer Shalt'neath the lash of leaders cower, Or office-monger.

But thou, whate'er thy occupation, Thy feelings, wishes, earthly station, To whom shall come this visitation Of "one-horse" rhyming, May New Year bells for thee occasion A merry chiming!

A MIDNIGHT ADVENTURE.

Females often possess presence of mind, and the power of self-control under circumstances of imminent peril which seem almost foreign to their nature, and beyond the endurance of delicate physical organization. A striking instance of self-command, by a lady whose fears must have been powerfully excited, and whose life of affluence had probably never before given her nerves any severer test than is incident to the vexations of domestic care, is given in *Chamber's Journal* of last month. We copy the adventure, promising by way of explanation that the lady was the daughter of a rector residing in a quiet English country village, and was upon the eve of marriage.

The wedding day was to be on the morrow of that on which our adventure happened.—Grand preparations were made for the wedding; and the rector's fine old plate, and costly gifts of the bride, were discussed with pride and pleasure at the Hare and Hounds, in the presence of some strangers who had come down to a prize fight which had taken place in the neighborhood.

That night, Adelaide, who occupied a separate room with her sister, sat up late—long after all the household had retired to rest. She had a long interview with her father and had been reading a chapter to which he had directed her attention, and since, had packed up her jewels, &c. She was consequently still dressed when the church clock tolled midnight. As it ceased, she fancied she heard a low noise like

that of a file; she listened but could distinguish nothing clearly. It might have been made by some of the servants still about, or perhaps it was only the creaking of the old trees. She heard nothing but the sighing of the winter winds for many minutes afterwards. Housebreakers were mere myths in primitive Shydon, and the bride elect, without a thought of fear, resumed her occupation. She was gazing on a glittering set of diamonds, destined to be worn at the wedding, when her bedroom door softly opened. She turned, looked up, and beheld a man with a black mask, holding a pistol in his hand standing before her.

She did not scream, for her next thought was for her father, who slept in the next room, and to whom any sudden alarm might be death, for he was old, feeble, and suffering from heart complaint. She confronted the robber boldly, and addressed him in a whisper "You are come," she said, "to rob us. Spare your soul the awful guilt of murder. My father sleeps next to my room, and to be startled from his sleep would kill him. Make no noise I beg of you."

The fellow was astonished and cowed. "Won't make no noise," he replied sullenly, "if you give us everything quietly."

Adelaide drew back and let him take her jewels—not without a pang, for they were precious love gifts, remarking at the same time that two more masked ruffians stood at the half open door. As he took the jewel case and watch from the table, and demanded her purse, she asked him if he intended to go to her father's room. She received a surly affirmative: "he wasn't going to run a risk and leave half the tin behind!"—She proposed instantly that she should go herself, saying: "I will bring you whatever you wish, and you may guard me further, and kill me if I play false to you." The fellow consulted his comrades, and after a short parley, they agreed to the proposal; and with a pistol pointed at her head, the dauntless girl crossed the passage, and entered the old rector's room.—Very gently she stole across the chamber and removed his purse, watch, keys and desk, gave them up to the robbers who stood at the door. The old man slept peacefully and calmly, thus guarded by his child, who softly shut the door and demanded if the robbers were yet satisfied.

The leader replied that they should be when they had got the show of plate spread out below, but that they couldn't let her out of sight, and that she must go with them. In compliance with this mandate, she followed them down stairs to the dining room, where a splendid wedding breakfast had been laid to save trouble and hurry on the morrow. To her surprise, the fellows—eight in number when assembled—seated themselves and prepared to make a good meal. They ordered her to get them out wine, and to cut her own wedding cake for them; and then seated at the head of the table, she was compelled to preside at this extraordinary revel.

They ate, drank, laughed and joked; and Adelaide, quick of ear and eye, had thus time to study, in her quiet way, the figures and voices of the whole set.

When the repast was ended, and the plate transferred to a sack, they prepared to depart, whispering together, and glancing at the young lady. For the first time Adelaide's courage gave way, and she trembled; but it was not a consultation against her, as it proved. The leader, approaching her, told that they did not wish to harm her—that she was "a jolly wench, regular game," and they wouldn't hurt her, but that she must swear not to give an alarm till nine or ten the next day, when they should be off all safe. To this she was of course obliged to assent, and then they all insisted on shaking hands with her. She noticed in this parting ceremony, that one of the ruffians had only three fingers on the left hand.

Alone, in the despoiled-room, Adelaide, faint and exhausted, awaited the first gleam of daylight; then as the robbers did not return, she stole up to her room, undressed, and fell into an undisturbed slumber. The consternation of the family next morning may be imagined; and Adelaide's story was still more astounding than the facts of the robbery itself. Police were sent for from London, and they, guided by Adelaide's lucid description of her midnight guests, actually succeeded in capturing every one of the gang, whom the young lady had no difficulty in identifying and swearing to—the "three fingered Jack" being the guiding clue to the discovery. The stolen property was nearly all recovered, and the old rector always declared—and with truth—that he owed his life to the self-possession and judgment of his eldest daughter.

The only ill effect of the great trial to her nerves, was a disposition, on the part of the young heroine to listen for midnight sounds, and start uneasily from troubled dreams; but time and change of residence soon effected its cure.

How do my customers like the milk I sell them? "Oh, they all think it is of the first water."

If a young lady is not able to sport a riding habit, she should adopt a walking habit.

A country editor announces in the following terms that he has suspended specie payments:

"If any man wants to see stars and appreciate one of the uses to which brick bats may be perverted, let him approach our vicinity with an account."

P. S. We keep a pile of bricks in our sanctum and carry one in our hat.

Why is a drummer the fastest man in the world? Because Time beats all men, but the drummer beats time.

"Scatter the germs of the beautiful," as the poet said when he kicked his wife and children out of doors.