

Miscellany.

THE PYTHON AND THE IMAMBA.

The Serpent Family in Africa and Some of its Characteristics.

I send you a few observations on some of the unwelcome intruders we were occasionally obliged to eject from our houses, premising, however, that danger, except to the bare footed and bare bodied Africans, is often exaggerated. Seldom did we experience anything more than a common fright.

The serpent family in South Africa is legion, and its extermination is a matter of great difficulty, if not an impossibility. In point of size we place the python at the head.

It is often found as large round as the calf of a man's leg, and from fifteen to twenty feet long.

Some Zulu boys, while hunting near my house, heard the cries of an antelope in a cluster of bushes, and running to the spot, found a python in the act of swallowing it. Dispatching his serpentship, with spears and clubs, they leaped on the game entrapped in this novel fashion.

A story is told of a python attacking a Zulu boy while he was asleep, and attempting to swallow him, beginning with one leg. Not getting on satisfactorily, and the unfortunate lad awakening to a "realizing sense" of his situation, the serpent tried to eject the limb, but the fangs were too deeply fixed in the flesh to render this an easy matter. The poor lad was obliged to make the best of this awkward situation till help came.

During a long residence in South Africa, I never knew a case of death to a human being from an encounter with this serpent. If armed with a knife or a club, one is tolerably safe. And it is easily destroyed while digesting an antelope or a rabbit. When boiled, the flesh of the python is tender, and looks like haddock. It is said to be an article of food among some tribes in the interior of Africa.

Pythons in South Africa are often reported as long as thirty feet, but I never saw one over twenty-one. None are large enough to swallow an animal bigger than a goat.

The most formidable serpent is called the imamba. There are two kinds, black and green, the former being the most poisonous, and the only snake which is known to attack human beings when unprovoked. If fully grown it is as large as a man's wrist and twelve or fifteen feet long. The sight of it in hot chase, with its erect, eyes dilated and tongue protruded, is not calculated to awaken pleasant emotions in man or beast. The Zulus, unless well armed with spears and clubs, generally take to their heels when a good-sized one appears in their path. Rev. Lewis Groat, in his interesting book called "Zulu Land," gives a graphic account of a narrow escape from one which pursued him, although he was on horseback. When it enters a Zulu kraal, the greatest consternation prevails. I remember a case in which a woman was obliged to quit her house, dragging her three children after her, an imamba having taken possession. Her husband, a brave fellow, entered alone, and after a severe contest, succeeded in killing the reptile.

The appearance of snakes in native dwellings is always regarded as an evil omen. Generally after such a visitation an ox is slaughtered as a propitiatory sacrifice to the spirits, which have sent the snakes on some evil errand. A part of the beef is usually laid aside for these reptiles. We should suppose that, as the beef is never eaten, their faith in the utility of this offering would be shaken, but this does not appear to be the case. African snakes often go in pairs, and when one is killed in a house the uncomfortable apprehension remains that another is some where on the premises.

A missionary once hearing a rustling on the floor of his bed-room, in the middle of the night, struck a light and ascertained that a horrid imamba was the cause of the disturbance. He killed it and returned to his bed. Half an hour after he was startled by a similar visitation and was obliged to repeat the operation. The riddance of two deadly serpents in one night was quite a feat, and the next morning the Zulus were loud in their praises of their "Teacher," using a common exclamation among them, "Jek abelungu ba ya nulwa akuta Kodwa," meaning: "Oh, white people! Nothing overcomes you but death!"

Another missionary was reading one of "Spurgeon's sermons" to his wife, when she suddenly exclaimed: "My dear, what is that under your chair?" To his horror he found a green imamba coiled up near his feet; how long the visitor had been listening to the great London preacher was not the question to consider but how to get rid of him, which was not a very pleasant business.

The lamented Dr. Adams, one of the pioneer missionaries, was once preaching in a grass covered chapel, when a beautiful but venomous imamba entered, and slyly crept along the ridge, till it came directly above the good man's head, and then assumed an attitude of rest and attention.

The preacher, nothing daunted, went on with his sermon, closing with prayer and benediction and then said: "Now you may kill the serpent." Whether pythons (when free to roam about in the wilds and forests of Africa) are cannibalistic, I cannot say, but it seems that when shut up in museums, month after month, they become so. Lately all London was excited by the story that a python eleven feet long had swallowed his

wife, which was nine feet in length. The story is told on too good authority to be disputed. Truly the male serpent swallowed himself into notoriety. It seems that the two serpents had lived quietly together for nearly a year. It is not supposable that one intended to eat the other, for serpents are generally peaceable animals, and live together amicably.

The swallowing came about in this way. One, the male, saw a pigeon in the mouth of the other, and concluded he would have a bite of the bird. The keeper was absent, but this is probably the case. Catching hold of one of the pigeon's wings, its teeth became fastened in its bones, and he could not withdraw it. So he gradually drew into his own throat not only the bird, but the head of his companion.

Once commenced, the swallowing process went on mechanically. The keeper the next morning did not need to search for the unfortunate serpent. He saw at once that it was down in the stomach of the surviving bow, and as it weighed about fifty pounds, it was a meal that filled up his serpent majesty, beyond all proportion, making him very lethargic.

That other serpents are guilty of cannibalism, is evident from an incident that is said to have happened at the Cape of Good Hope.

A Hottentot servant once brought to his master a yellow snake about five feet long, out of the mouth of which a tail was hanging. On being pulled out, it was found to be a black snake not six inches shorter than the one that had swallowed it.—(Rev. Josiah Tyler in the Raleigh, N. C., News and Observer.)

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The Topic of the Hour.

Within the past year, and especially within the past six months, finance has taken, as a topic of press discussion, the place occupied for several years past by the tariff. Contradictory and irreconcilable as are the positions, complex and confused as are the arguments, of the political parties and leaders of the country on the tariff question, they are no less so upon the question of finance. The great political problem of the day in the United States is the problem of reforming the National currency. The man or woman who pretends to be well informed will not be content to learn the views of a few newspapers only upon the financial and other questions of the hour, but will seek in some way to get a survey of the of the press discussion in all parts of the country and upon all sides of the questions at issue. There is no way to get such a survey except by reading a journal that gives extracts and condensed statements from all the leading representative papers and reviews. Such a journal is Public Opinion, published weekly at Washington, D. C. In its particular field it is unique and unrivalled. It covers the entire range of current news and comment, political, sociological, financial, scientific, religious, literary, both American and foreign. In connection with the American Institute of Civics it has inaugurated an exceedingly helpful plan for the study of current topics. (A pamphlet containing details for the organization and conduct of clubs and valuable suggestions as to methods of work will be sent for ten cents; address, Extension Department, A. I. C., Box 348, Washington, D. C.) We can offer Public Opinion at a reduced rate if taken at once in connection with the CALEDONIAN. Back numbers can be had to complete the present volume, beginning January 1.

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Cholera is on the increase in Brazil.

The Moon and the Wives.

I saw the moon bright, full and round, It shed its beams o'er all the ground, And then there came this thought to me Our wives just like that moon should be. Fair, full, all rounded out and bright And by their presence shedding light. Yes, and they will be it in time of functional derangements or organic troubles, they take Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. No woman should keep house with out it. It is a cure for the "complaints" peculiar to her sex.

Queen Louise of Denmark is sick.

"Jack the Giant Killer."

The child's story of "Jack, the Giant Killer" furnishes a striking illustration of the efficacy of small agencies towards the suppression of great evils, when judiciously used. The daring exploits of brave little Jack remind us, in their results of the wonderful achievements of Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets in battling with the giant, Disease. Relatively, the proportion between the youthful hero and old Blunderbore, is apparently not greater than that between the little "Pellets" and the relentless monster which preys upon the vitals. Yet the "Pellets" comes of conqueror of constipation, sick headache, biliousness and kindred ailments every time. If you are suffering from either acute or chronic disorder of the digestive organs, try this sure remedy. Brazilian rebels are still active.

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In speaking of Favorite Remedy, Mr. Winnie said: "It has done more for me than all the physicians I ever employed, and I most unhesitatingly recommend it to any one suffering from kidney, liver or urinary troubles, for it will cure them." Dr. Kennedy's Favorite Remedy is the acknowledged specific for all diseases arising from acidity of the blood, and will cure dyspepsia, rheumatism, scrofula, eczema, kidney, liver and urinary troubles. You can not afford to trifle with health and life. Putting of treatment when dangerous symptoms exist is only slow suicide. Accept the aid of Dr. Kennedy's Favorite Remedy; it has restored thousands to health and strength.

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Travellers' Guide.

BOSTON & MAINE R. R.

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WINTER ARRANGEMENT, NOV. 19, '94.

Trains Leave St. Johnsbury.

GOING SOUTH.

For Concord, Manchester, Nashua, Lowell and Boston via White River Junction, 12.30 and 9.00 a. m., arriving at Boston 8.12 a. m., 4.55 p. m.

For Concord, Manchester, Nashua, Lowell and Boston via Wells River and Plymouth, 1.40 a. m., 8.00 a. m., 2.33 p. m., 4.55 and 8.30 p. m.

For Bellows Falls, Northampton, Springfield, Hartford, New Haven and New York, 12.30 and 9.00 a. m.

For Newbury, Bradford, Norwich and White River Junction, 12.30 and 9.00 a. m., and 5.55 p. m.

For Passumpsic, Barnet and McIndoes, 9.00 a. m., and 5.55 p. m., 1.40, and 9.00 a. m., 2.33 and 5.55 p. m.

For Montpelier, 9.00 a. m. and 2.33 p. m.

For Littleton, at 9.00 a. m., 2.33 and 5.55 p. m.

GOING NORTH.

For Lyndonville and Newport, 2.22 a. m., 3.15 and 10.50 a. m., 3.10, and 4.27 p. m.

For West Burke, Barton and Barton Landing, 3.15 and 10.50 a. m., and 4.27 p. m.

For Stanstead and Derby Line, Massachusetts, North Hatley, Lennoxville and Sherbrooke, 3.15 and 10.50 a. m., and 4.27 p. m.

For Quebec via Sherbrooke and Grand Trunk Ry., 3.15 a. m. and 4.27 p. m.

For Quebec via Sherbrooke and Quebec Central Ry., 3.15 a. m. and 4.27 p. m.

For Montreal via Sherbrooke and Grand Trunk Ry., 3.15 a. m. and 4.27 p. m.

For Montreal via Newport and Canadian Pacific Ry., 2.22 a. m. (daily), 3.10 p. m.

T. A. MacKINNON, H. E. FOLSOM, Gen. Manager, Div. Supt.

ST. JOHNSBURY AND LAKE CHAMPLAIN R. R.

Winter Arrangement, Nov. 19, 1894.

Trains Leave St. Johnsbury.

GOING WEST.

For Danville, Hardwick, Morrisville, Cambridge Junction, Burlington, St. Albans and Rutland, 7.35 a. m. and 3.15 p. m.

For Danville, West Danville, Walden, Greensboro, East Hardwick, Hardwick, Morrisville and Hyde Park, 7.35 a. m., 3.15 p. m., and 4.32 p. m.

For Johnson, Cambridge Junction, Burlington, Fletcher, Fairfield, Sheldon, Highgate and Swanton, 7.35 a. m. and 3.15 p. m.

For Stanbridge, St. John, and Montreal via East Swanton, 7.35 a. m. and 3.15 p. m.

GOING EAST.

For East St. Johnsbury, North Concord, Miles Pond and Lunenburg, 2.30 a. m., 2.45 and 4.55 p. m., (mixed).

For Whitefield, Fryburg, Crawford, Glen, North Conway, Fryeburg, Portland, Brunswick, Lewiston, Augusta, Waterville, Bangor and St. John, 2.30 a. m., 2.45 p. m.

For Boston via North Conway, 2.30 a. m. H. E. FOLSOM, D. J. FLANDERS, Supt. Gen. Pass. Agt.

MAINE CENTRAL R. R.

Through the White Mountains

To Lancaster, Colebrook, North Conway, Boston, Portland, Lewiston, Bangor, Bar Harbor and St. John.

On and after Dec. 30, 1894.

Lancaster, 12.10, 3.30, 7.30

Jefferson, 12.40, 3.47, 7.47

Quebec Jct., 1.00, 3.55, 8.00

Whitefield, 1.30, 8.32

St. Johnsbury, 2.40, 9.40

St. Johnsbury, 2.30, 2.45

Whitefield, 4.12, 4.10, 8.20

Quebec Jct., 4.20, 1.35, 4.25, 8.50

Lancaster, 1.50, 4.40, 8.55

Leave St. Johnsbury 2.30 a. m., 2.45 p. m.

St. Conway 3.14, 5.00

Boston 12.55 p. m., 8.10 p. m.

Portland 8.25 a. m., 8.10 p. m.

Boston via Portland, 12.56 p. m., 5.58 a. m.

Lewiston 9.45 a. m., 1.25 p. m.

Bangor 6.30 p. m., 4.50 a. m.

Bar Harbor 9.30, 10.05

St. John 1.40 p. m.

Trains arrive at St. Johnsbury from Boston, Portland, Lewiston, Augusta, North Conway and White Mountain resorts 2.40 and 9.40 p. m.

PAYSON TUCKER, V. P. & Gen. Mgr. F. E. BOOTHBY, G. P. & T. A.

Oct. 29, 1894.

CONCORD & MONTREAL R. R.

Passenger Service from St. Johnsbury.

For Woodsville, Plymouth, Laconia, Tilton, Concord, Manchester, Nashua, Lowell and Boston, 1.40 (ex.), 9.45 a. m., 2.33 (ex.) p. m. Arrive Boston 8.02 a. m., 4.45, 8.25 p. m.

St. Johnsbury 1.40 a. m., arrive Boston 8.02 a. m., 4.45, 8.25 p. m.

The 1.40 a. m. train (daily) has through passenger and sleeping cars.

For St. Johnsbury via Plymouth and Wells Leave Boston 9.00 (ex.) a. m., 8.00 (ex.) p. m. Sundays 8.00 p. m.

Leave Lowell 9.45 (ex.) a. m., 8.43 (ex.) p. m. Sundays 8.43 p. m.

Leave Nashua 10.12 (ex.) a. m., 9.07 (ex.) p. m. Sundays 9.07 p. m.

Leave Manchester 10.41 (ex.) a. m., 9.37 (ex.) p. m. Sundays 9.37 p. m.

Leave Concord 11.20 (ex.) a. m., 10.15 (ex.) p. m. Sundays 10.15 p. m.

Arr. St. Johnsbury 9.08 p. m., 2.17 a. m. The 9.00 a. m. train from Boston week days and the 8.00 p. m. train (daily) have through passenger and sleeping cars.

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