

THE DEADLY COBRA.

How Venomous Creature Is Handled by Hindoo Snake Charmers.

The creatures were on the defensive, but not one of them attempted to strike at the master, who sat serenely in front of them, so long as he did nothing to annoy them. Kullian talked to them as if they were his dearest friends. After a time one or the other of them would lower its head, collapse its hood and begin to try to wriggle away, whereupon Kullian would give it a smart little rap on the tail with his stick and bring it instantly to attention again. Whether this man possessed any special magic over these cobras or whether the description given below of how he could handle and play with them was simply due to his method, I cannot say. He himself repudiated the idea of magic and asserted positively that any one who had the necessary nerve and dexterity could do exactly the same.

He used no reed instrument or music of any kind to propitiate the reptiles. He would simply squat on his haunches in front of them, and after they had been hissing and swaying their uplifted heads backward and forward for a few minutes he raised his hands above their heads and slowly made them descend till they rested on the snakes' heads. He then stroked them gently, speaking all the time in the most endearing Hindoostanee terms. The serpents appeared spellbound. They made no effort to resent the liberty, but remained quite still, with heads uplifted, and seemed rather to enjoy it. Presently his hands would descend down the necks about three inches below the heads, his fingers would close loosely around the necks, and he would lift them off the ground and place them on his shoulders. The looseness of the grip appeared to be the main secret. The snakes, being in no way hurt, would then slowly crawl through his fingers and wind themselves round his neck, his shoulders and his arms. They appeared to realize that no harm was to be done them, and they made no effort to resent the handling. He would pick them gently off one arm and place them on the other and, in fact, stroke them and pet them as if they had been a pair of harmless worms.—*Cornhill Magazine.*

The Story That Failed.

The story teller was telling stories.

"It is a curious but nevertheless absolute fact," he said, "that when I used to live in the sheep rearing district in Derbyshire I knew an old man who used to wander about picking up and selling the wool which the sheep scratched off their backs by rubbing against the hedges.

"The old fellow was somewhat of a butt in the neighborhood. But he stuck to his work, unmindful of jeers, wandering miles over the hills every day, silent, absorbed and untiring. Well, now, how much do you suppose that old boy left when he died? Just guess, now."

"One thousand pounds?" opined one auditor.

"Five thousand?" said another.

The raconteur shook his head.

"Not a blessed ha'penny!" he replied.—*Answers.*

The Golden Wedding.

A servant asked her mistress for leave from Friday to Monday to visit her mother a long journey away, as all the family desired to meet to celebrate their parents' golden wedding. The mistress gave permission, and on Monday the maid duly returned, and her mistress said to her:

"Well, Mary, how did you get on?"

"Oh, splendid, ma'am, and mother was so grateful to you for letting me go."

"Yes, and your father—what did he say?"

"Lor' bless you, ma'am, he wasn't there: he died twenty years ago!"—*London Globe.*

Prompt.

An insurance agent was boasting that his company recently paid a life policy to the widow the day after the funeral of her husband and insisted that no company was ever so prompt in payment.

"That's nothing," replied the agent of another company. "One of our patrons recently fell from the top of a four story building, and a check for the full amount of the policy was handed him as he passed the second story window."

Sublime Faith.

"Pa, what is sublime faith?"

"When a man who weighs fifty pounds sits down beside a lady whose weight is 235 pounds and the hammock in which they are seated is held up by a rope a quarter of an inch thick it seems to me that they give an exhibition of sublime faith that would hardly need an explanation."—*Chicago Record-Herald.*

FAMOUS FLOGGERS.

Head Masters of Eton Who Loved to Swing the Birch.

Flogging is to a great extent a lost art nowadays, and the modern schoolboy ought to be duly thankful for it. Etonians in particular ought to feel grateful that Canon Lyttelton is not so fond of the birch as were some of his predecessors. Dr. Hawtrey, for instance, who was head master about 1826, was not one who believed in sparing the rod. He once flogged Gladstone under the following somewhat peculiar circumstances:

Gladstone was prepositor one day, and it was accordingly his duty to put down the names of those to be flogged. Three boys, however, came to him with a story that their friends were coming down to see them that day and if they were down on the flogging list they would be unable to meet them. Gladstone omitted the names, with the result that the head master noticed the absence of the three boys and flogged the prepositor for not putting them down.

On another occasion Dr. Hawtrey called out to the prepositor. "Put down Hamilton's name to be flogged for breaking my window."

"I did not break your window, sir," exclaimed Hamilton.

"Prepositor," said Hawtrey, "put down Hamilton's name for breaking my window and lying."

"Upon my soul, sir," said the boy indignantly, "I did not do it."

"Prepositor," roared Hawtrey, "put down Hamilton's name for breaking my window, lying and swearing."

More famous than Hawtrey as a flogger was Dr. Keate, who Gladstone described as "the master of our existence and the tyrant of our days." On one occasion he is said to have birched forty boys in succession and been sorry when he found that there were no more to operate upon.

Commenting on the text, "Blessed are the pure in heart," Keate once said: "You hear that, boys. It's your duty to be pure in heart, and if you are not pure in heart I'll flog you."

During his head mastership the doctor is said to have flogged over fifty dukes, earls and barons, besides an innumerable crowd of common or garden misters. And yet after his retirement he is said to have had but one regret—that he had not flogged more!—*London Tit-Bits.*

Too Realistic.

A gentleman had in his employ a groom who always wore an air of sadness and dejection. On going round his stables one morning the gentleman was surprised to find his groom dangling in midair at the end of a rope, one end of which was tied to a beam and the other round the man's waist.

"What on earth are you up to now?" queried the master.

"I'm a trivin' to hang masel, sir," said the groom in a tired of life tone.

"Then why didn't you tie the rope round your neck?" said the gentleman, disgusted with the man's foolishness.

"I did try it that way once," came the reply in all solemnity, "but it hurt my neck and I couldn't breathe."

Habit, Not Telepathy.

They were talking of telepathy. She was a believer, he a nonbeliever. "A great psychic wonder of a man, I forget his name," she said, "was in such telepathic communion with his wife that he could sit in one room with a friend, talking with him, then call her in from another room, and she could tell him everything he had said to his friend."

"That's nothing," he scorned. "They had lived together so long she knew everything he had to say and just the rotation in which he was accustomed to say it."—*New York Press.*

The Other Wall.

On one occasion a distinguished comedienne who was producing one of Sir Arthur Pinero's plays got rather irate.

"What is this scene supposed to be?" shouted the angry lady. "If it is a room, where on earth is the fireplace?"

"My dear Mrs. Blank," replied the equable dramatist, "every room has four walls, and this"—pointing to the footlights—"is the wall where the fireplace occurs."

His Plea.

Magistrate (to prisoner)—You are charged with meeting this man in a lonely street, knocking him down and robbing him of everything he had on him but a gold watch. Have you anything to say?

Prisoner—Had he a gold watch at the time?

Magistrate—Certainly!

Prisoner—Then I put in a plea of insanity.

THE TRAINED NURSE.

She Was So Very Different From the Old Time Natural Nurse.

The subject on Mrs. Pry's mind was the "independence" of the young woman who had nursed her in a recent illness. "Not a thing would she do outside the sickroom; 'it wasn't customary,' she said when I asked her if she wouldn't take hold with the washing. And she had to have her three meals regular, and never once did she offer to eat 'em in the kitchen, or 'av. No matter: I'll stand up in the pantry with the rest of you, not even when I was the sickest, and she knew Maria and Emily had it all to do."

"She never went into the kitchen except to cook what little I ate and to 'sterilize' everything she could lay her hands on."

"Good land! I said one day when I saw her grabbing up things I'd barely touched and starting for the kitchen. 'I haven't got anything catching!'"

"Do you suppose she stopped? No! She gave her head, with that doll's cap, a toss and started."

"And if I ever said I couldn't swallow my medicine she'd go right on measuring it, then under my head her arm would go, up it would come, and before I could shut my teeth down the medicine would go and I'd be back on the pillow! All without a word—that's what made her so exasperating."

"And when she did say anything it was generally impudent. I could not sleep nights I was in such pain, and when I wasn't I was lonesome and wanted to talk."

"Well, one night, long towards morning it was, I was telling her about Uncle Ezra Whiting courting his second wife—my mind kind o' run on the past—an' how his children held out against it, and he had to be so sly about it that he didn't dare unlatch her gate going or coming, but stepped over the fence so's not to make a mite o' noise, an' how she never saw him to the door or anything like that. I thought Miss Ames was mighty quiet, and I turned my head, and there she was—'asleep!'"

"I thought you were a trained nurse!" I said.

"I am not trained to keep awake night and day!" said she, like a wasp.

"What do you think of that?" demanded Mrs. Pry.

A sympathetic murmur ran round the room, but there was no direct reply to her challenge.

"And we paid her," added Mrs. Pry. "\$21 a week! We used to pay old Mis' Rogers five and her fare both ways. And she'd take right hold anywhere—sewing, preserving, anything that came up, and if anybody died she'd stay on through those first heartbreaking hours, and you felt that warm, soothing hand o' hers holding you up. And as for a thermometer and taking your temperature," concluded Mrs. Pry in a paean of praise, "she left that to the doctor, like the natural nurse that she was."—*Youth's Companion.*

Men's Slack Education.

Consider for a moment who patronizes the institutions in this country which make for mental and ethical culture. The vast majority of churchgoers are women. It is women almost exclusively who patronize art exhibitions, symphony concerts, libraries, theaters and the opera. These things make for culture, and men are far in the rear. It is probable that the average of education in this country is higher than in Great Britain, but the Briton who is at all educated is a man of better culture, wider perspective and better sense of proportion than is the American. The moral is for American men to use the advantages at their doors.—*Philadelphia Inquirer.*

Too Hungry to Study.

A teacher who had studied a particularly bad boy from every conceivable standpoint finally found the cause of his apparent wickedness. He had been especially annoying all day, and at the close of the school the teacher sat down by him and said: "John, what is the trouble anyway? Why is it you find it so hard to behave in school?"

Poor John in a burst of confidence blurted out, "It's 'cause I'm too darned hungry!"

Then the teacher knew that John's reformation must begin in his stomach.—*Exchange.*

Was He to Blame?

"Don't talk to me about the vanity of women," the woman began. "We are not in it with the men. Once I met a man who was so pockmarked I was sorry for him. My first impulse was to shudder. Then out of sheer kindness I made a little fuss over him, as one does over a hurt child, whenever I met him."

"Do you know, I found out afterward that he got to be afraid of me. He thought I had fallen in love with him and wanted to marry him."—*New York Press.*

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What Could He Have Meant. "Do you ever write on an empty stomach?" asked the mere man. "Sir!" exclaimed the literary person, "I am a poet, not a tattoo artist!"—*Puck.*

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