

Snake Stories Are Mostly Unfounded

Tale of Hypnotic Power Is Declared Untrue.

London.—In spite of the fact that the majority of snakes are quite harmless, the popular prejudice against them is insurmountable, writes E. G. Boulenger in the London Sunday Observer. Almost any absurd story about these reptiles is accepted at its face value and without the slightest attempt to ascertain the true facts of the case.

Specially remarkable is the current belief that snakes have the power to "fascinate" or exert hypnotic influence over their victims. It is possible that the absence of eyelids and consequent inability to close the eyes may be partly responsible for this fetish; the creature's sinuous movements and habit of probing the ground with its forked tongue may perhaps further encourage the common superstition.

Psychological Influence.

That the snake has from early times exerted a very powerful psychological influence over the imaginative mind of man there can be no doubt whatever. One has but to recall the grotesque story of the hoop snake or the American Indian's belief that the rattlesnake adds a joint to its rattle every time it takes a human life. Serpents, moreover, have been deified in many lands, as is evidenced by the frequency with which many figures on innumerable tombs, temples, etc.

The actual "fascinating" power of the snake over intended victims has been disproved by many carefully conducted experiments. Many years ago, when it was customary to feed the zoo's snakes in public on living rats, mice, etc., it was usual to see such small animals contentedly feeding or cleaning themselves within a few inches of the reptiles.

Some years ago I met with a curious instance illustrating the indifference that most small mammals show toward serpents. A white rat was offered as food to a four-foot long South African snake kept in the Natural History museum, but the reptile apparently not being hungry the rodent was left untouched for several months. With the approach of winter the snake retired into a snug hole which it had excavated. This retreat apparently appealed so strongly to the rat that it ejected the unresisting tenant and promptly appropriated the coveted shelter.

Snake Digs In Again.

Once more the snake dug itself a burrow, and yet again was the rightful owner ejected. Peace finally reigned for a considerable period. With the approach of spring, however, the snake recovered both appetite and initiative, with the result that the rat, one-time bully of the

Venice Girls Man Boats in Hunt for Husbands

Venice, Italy.—Girls anxious to find husbands rode the canals in beflowered gondolas.

They observed an ancient Venetian custom, just revived after a lapse of nearly seven centuries, in which unmarried girls parade to display their charms for the approval of masculine admirers. The revival is in line with Premier Benito Mussolini's campaign for increased marriages and "more babies."

Makes Fireproof Paint That Withstands Blaze

Leningrad.—Tanned shavings were scattered over a house. Then paraffin and other highly inflammable liquids were poured over it. Finally the shavings were set on fire—the flames caught the paraffin. But the house remained unharmed. Window panes melted, but the woodwork round them was unharmed. It was a test of a new fireproof paint with which the house had been treated.

Croesus' Gold Mine Is Found by Turks

Alkara, Turkey.—A rich gold mine which was worked 500 years before the Christian era by King Croesus, last ruler of Lydia, is said to have been discovered in the Boz Dagh region of Anatolia. The proverbial wealth of Croesus, known to have been immense, came in large part from trade.

The Turkish ministry for the national economy is investigating the reported discovery, and the government may take over the mine.

Women's Smoking Rooms Are Approved by College

Corvallis, Ore.—Women's rights conquered tradition at Oregon State college when the administration approved a provision for women's smoking rooms in two dormitories. Authorities said establishment of the smoking rooms will lessen fire hazards caused by co-ed smoking in their study rooms, a practice that is still forbidden.

Unearth Ruins of Most Ancient City

Scientists Hope to Find Earliest Layers of History.

Philadelphia.—Ruins of a city 6,000 years old—in fact, the "oldest city in the world"—have been unearthed in the Tepe Gawra prehistoric mound in northern Iraq.

A report from Charles Bache, field director of a joint archeological expedition from the American School of Oriental Research and the museum of the University of Pennsylvania, recently disclosed the discovery of the ruins. Work on the mound was begun in 1927 under Dr. Ephraim A. Spiesern, director of

SEE THE NEW HATS!

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



The elongated brim at the front, the forward movement, as some milliners express it, gives the woman who wants to know what's what in regard to the new hats, something quite out of the usual order to think about. Anyway, the smartest early arrivals emphasize the voguishness of hats with brims narrowed at the sides and which extend way to the front over the forehead as shown above in the picture. This striking sports model is of forest green felt banded in black belting ribbon. The other hat shown goes to the opposite extreme. It is one of the new-type Breton sailors of black straw with an airplane bow

SEEN and HEARD around the National Capital

By CARTER FIELD

Washington.—Increasing evidence of under-cover moves to discredit President Roosevelt from both the extreme conservative and the extreme radical sides is obvious to the most casual observer in Washington.

It is difficult to prove any given case, for in every instance some senators or members of the house are honestly and enthusiastically for the particular thing that the White House thinks would hamstring its program. Proof of the real underlying desires of any given senator being so difficult to obtain, it would be very misleading to name names.

The interesting point about the whole situation, however, lies not in any particular move against the administration which may gain unexpected support, but in the possible consequences for 1936.

It muddies what until now had been a very clear view of what seemed certain to happen, and which in all probability still is very sure. It is only the fact that there is now a bit of a cloud on the horizon—which may or may not grow—that is really interesting at all.

The cloud is the possibility that a group of the extremists may get together and form a third party next year. For such a move to get anywhere it must surmount several rather tall hurdles. One is whether they could even get together on a candidate, there being no such person in the offing as the elder La Follette was in 1924.

With that hurdle surmounted, and assuming—which is much easier—that the third party leaders could agree on a platform, the next hurdle is something over which the radicals have no control whatever—what the regular Republicans will do.

Big Handicap

For the only possible importance of a third party entering the field would not be the possibility of electing its own candidates, but of giving the Republicans a chance to beat Roosevelt, just as the elder La Follette's candidacy in 1924 assured the election of Calvin Coolidge by a landslide. The third party would draw votes from the New Deal. It would not get any of the 13,000,000 men and women who voted the Republican ticket last November.

Even with this big handicap, however, the Republicans would have to make a good showing to win, a bigger showing, in fact, than there is any apparent probability at this time of their making. Their difficulties revolve not only around the candidate, but the platform.

What could they agree on in a national convention as to platform? Talks with half a dozen leading Republican survivors in the house and senate indicate almost that number of widely varying views as to the proper course to be taken as to issues. And the same is true with respect to candidates, with the notable difference that here it is not a case of warmly advocating different candidates, but of coldly rejecting nearly all candidates in sight.

There is not the personal angle which usually is so apparent at this stage of the Presidential term among the outs. No one is screaming for this or that candidate. All unite in saying they do not know what candidate would make a good run.

There is less opposition to Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg of Michigan, and to Frank Knox, the publisher, than to most, but even those who like these particular men disagree as to what the platform should be.

Altogether, even with more success for the radicals than is now anticipated, the picture is not very disconcerting to the New Deal. Actually, the far more important element is whether business can revive sufficiently by November, 1936, for America to see its path leading out of the present difficulties.

The Baby Bonds

Anticipated objections from the life insurance companies to the baby bonds the government proposes to sell at post offices have not materialized, most representatives of the companies saying there is no strictly insurance feature, in that the amount of return is not changed by the death of the holder.

Actually the baby bonds present an ideal arrangement for the purchaser only in one set of circumstances: If the purchaser figures that ten years from now he or she will need a sum of money for some purpose, and that there is no reasonable possibility that the money will be required before that time.

For example, if a father has a son now six years old, and is figuring on providing a sum of money for that son's education at college, ten years hence, the bonds might be very attractive. The rate of interest would not be high. It would be slightly under 3 per cent. But the money would be as safe as anything can be—the direct obligation of the government.

If on the other hand he should find it necessary to use the money before the expiration of that ten years, he would be forced to take a

lower rate of interest. For during the first year no interest whatever accumulates. And for the next six years the rate is only a little above 2 per cent. It is only in the last three years, when the rate per year goes over 4 per cent, that the average is pushed up—and then not quite to 3 per cent.

The government is figuring on a very large sale of the bonds, and bankers and insurance men are rather skeptical as to any such large amounts being taken. There is plenty of idle money waiting for safe investment. Every banker, broker and insurance man knows that. The government knows it. It is proved every time a short term loan is asked by the government.

There are always lots of applications which cannot be filled. And the government has been able to get money at around 1 per cent repeatedly.

Different Proposition

But, bankers and insurance men point out, this baby bond issue presents an entirely different proposition. In the case of people taking short term government loans, their motive is to obtain a little return on their money while they are waiting. They hope that by the end of the period of that loan they may find some safe investment, which will yield them a larger return. Proof of this is in the fact that for long term bonds the government has to pay from two to four times as much interest.

But in the case of the baby bonds there is no return at all during the first year, and only a very small return for the next six years. Moreover, the holder is compelled, if he wants to cash in before the higher interest rate becomes effective, to take the price fixed in advance by the government. Other investors might be willing to pay more, but the bonds are not transferable.

One of the government's objects here is to save money, of course. Every person cashing the bonds in before maturity takes a very low interest rate. Another object is to keep the bonds out of the hands of the banks. There has been a great deal of criticism of government financing on the score that it was loading the banks up with government bonds, and thus restricting the amount of money which could better be employed at stimulating industry.

Not being negotiable, these baby bonds will stay out of the banks, thus serving this purpose. But the fact that the bonds are not negotiable also lessens their attractiveness to investors. This might not interest the chap who buys just one bond for \$18.75. But it would interest considerably the man or woman with a few thousand dollars to invest. Hence the prediction that the total sales will not figure heavily in the government's fiscal plans.

In fact, this is frankly admitted by some administration officials. They admit they would like to see certain other effects. Just holding a bond of any sort, they point out, has the effect of making the holder just a little more conservative. And incidentally making him in a way a partner in the New Deal.

Gold Clause Decision

One of the most significant things about the gold clause decision of the Supreme court was not only the secrecy which shrouded what that decision would be—indicated by the fact that some of the first news flashes were very misleading—but also the moves the administration had planned to counteract the effects in case the decision should have gone 100 per cent against the government.

For it can now be stated that not even the speaker of the house, nor leading administration senators, had the slightest idea what would be done.

Just three people really knew. They were: President Roosevelt, Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau, and Attorney General Cummings.

And that Cummings knew is the writer's guess. Cummings does not admit it. So it might be possible that the third person who knew was not Cummings, but some other lawyer on whose judgment the President and Morgenthau could rely.

Some Deductions

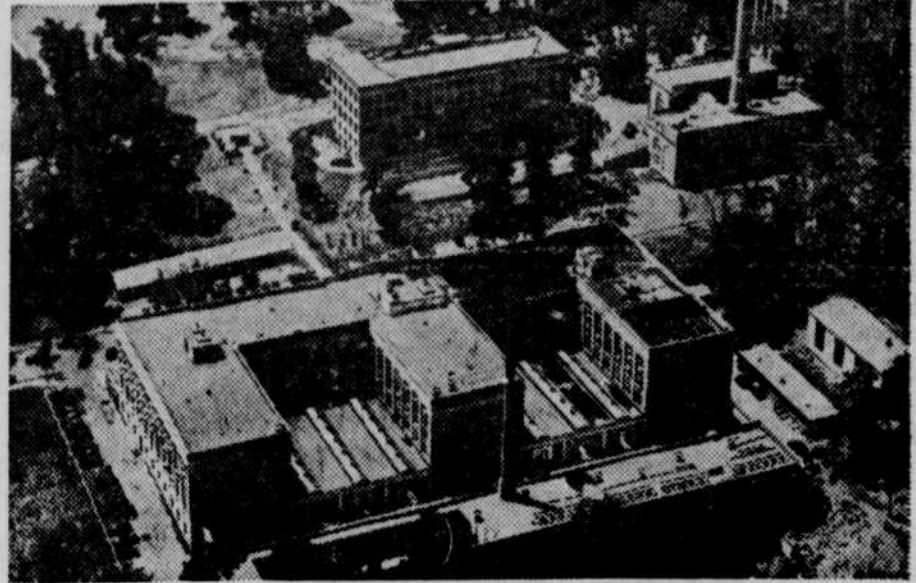
One high treasury official, known for his shrewdness, made some interesting deductions in advance. For example, he had the idea, stressed in the majority opinion by the court, that the amount of damages would have to be determined in court—that certainly no court would force a company to pay the full \$1.69 for each dollar of a gold clause bond.

"And," this official added in a conversation several days before the decision, "I do not think it will be possible actually to demonstrate damages to the extent of the decision."

Now this was not just a haphazard opinion. Nor was it a "leak" from the court. It grew in that official's mind as a result of various questions he had to answer for Secretary Morgenthau.

The administration was sure of several things about the decision—that is as to what it could do in this or that event—but it was hoping there would be some such loophole as forcing holders of the bonds to demand their damages through the courts instead of a flat order to pay \$1.69.

Making Life Easier and Safer



U. S. Bureau of Standards Building at Washington.

Prepared by National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.—WNU Service.

IN THE nation's capital, scientists and laymen employed by the United States government and private institutions are quietly at work making life easier and safer.

Washington today has the largest number of scientific men and women gathered in any one spot of equal size in the world. In the government service alone are more than 5,000 scientists, attached to more than half a hundred bureaus and commissions whose research has uncovered many a new fact and created many a new instrument.

Would you believe that the mere weight of your finger could bend a 5-inch steel bar? No? Well, wizards of the bureau of standards built an instrument so delicate that with it you can see the big bar bend when you lay your finger on it. Near by is a precision balance with an accuracy of one fifty-millionth of a pound. This scale is so delicate that, if you stand too near, the mere heat of your body affects its balance.

Practical tests giving results useful in many trades go on all the time.

You and other motor car owners in America have saved millions of dollars through experiments made here with fuel, brake linings, tires, road material, etc. In simulating road tests for tires, for example, an automobile wheel with a nice new tire is put on a motor and speeded up. It runs against another wheel, a device which literally "runs the road past the wheel." This not only shows how fast the tire wears out, but it shows, too, how power is lost with different types of tires.

That's a Wind Tunnel.

That long, queer-looking structure out in the yard, with that big motor-driven fan roaring in one end, is a "wind tunnel." In it arial models, bombs, etc., are used, to learn the effect of wind streams on them. In such tunnels tests are also made to show pressure on skyscrapers during wind storms; with the fan revolving in one end, an artificial wind is blown through these tunnels at a speed of from 75 to 180 miles an hour.

When a house with a shingle roof gets afire during a high wind, neighboring houses are in danger from flying sparks. To study this hazard in winds of different speeds, the bureau built a shingle roof, used an airplane propeller to make the wind, and set fire to the roof. Thus it could study the flight of the embers.

Some studies, such as that of the effects of sea water on concrete construction, may go on for years. Cement used by the government in the Panama canal and other projects is tested here.

A device by which airships recover ballast was made at the bureau. An airship ordinarily loses weight equal to that of its fuel burned, but by this device the moisture from the exhaust is condensed, thus recovering more than a pound of water from each pound of gasoline consumed. This saves the waste of much lifting gas, hydrogen or helium, which formerly had to be released to maintain static equilibrium.

Gunfire and how to time a gun to shoot between the revolving blades of a propeller during aerial combat, and measure the radiation used to kill bacteria—all these are problems the bureau has solved.

And there are standards of performance. The bureau aids industry in work with ships' watches, sextants, scales, airplane instruments, radio sets, lamps, milk testing machines, and so on.

Loss from waste in industry, amounting to many millions a year, is avoided now by the bureau's work in simplified practice. In the case of hotel chinaware alone, for example, 700 sizes and varieties were reduced to 67 by agreement among factories, dealers and consumers.

The bureau aids industry to achieve trade standards, too. Makers of many things, from locks and hinges to dress patterns and wall paper, come to it and agree that their products shall conform to certain standards.

For example, more than 100 leading manufacturers, dealers, and associations in the wall paper trade have agreed with the bureau that wall paper made or handled by them shall be of "commercial standard" quality in weight, size, texture, etc.

As to color fastness, also, they agree that "all printed papers, ground, backgrounds, or ink embossed, all finished printed wall papers, shall be resistant to light to the extent that they will "show no discoloration or fading" when exposed for 24 hours to an arc lamp or "fadedometer." This test is equivalent to many months of normal use.

But the bureau does not impose its tests or conclusions on the people. They voluntarily bring their problems to it for aid in their solution.

Other Scientific Groups.

In Washington, too, are located the National Academy of Sciences, the National Research Council, the Carnegie Institution of Washington, with its department of terrestrial magnetism and geophysical laboratory, and the National Geographic Society.

Certain of the national societies, in addition to the National Geographic, such as the National Education association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Chemical Society, the American Forestry association, and the American Engineering Council, maintain their headquarters in the nation's capital.

The most extensive scientific group under one administrative head comprises the 16 bureaus of the Department of Agriculture.

The oldest of the governmental scientific organizations is the coast and geodetic survey. For more than a century, many a ship and crew have owed salvation to the tireless, painstaking efforts of this bureau, to which is entrusted the survey of all coasts under the jurisdiction of the United States, including rivers to the head of tide water, deep-sea soundings and currents off our shores, as well as magnetic observations and researches. The results of such important studies appear in official sailing charts, tide tables, "notices to mariners" of floating wrecks, newly discovered rocks and other menaces to navigation.

A technical library, founded a century ago, has been assembled by this survey. Its maps, photographic negatives and prints, pamphlets, and field reports from surveying parties dealing with Alaska and with our various boundary surveys, aggregate tens of thousands.

"The rocky crust of the earth"—with its oil, coal, ores, precious metals, and other things—has been called the subject-matter of geology.

When congress, in 1879, set up the geological survey, under the Department of the Interior, there was imposed on it the task of classifying all public lands, and the study of their geologic structure and mineral deposits.

Through the years, to quote its former director, George Otis Smith, this has meant "helping a pioneering people to settle a vacant and, an industrial people to harness the forces of nature in the great work of development—all this with the well-defined purpose of safeguarding the future of America."

As our nation grew, this survey's functions multiplied. At the west was settled, the problems of conserving water for use on arid lands become one of its tasks.

Scientific Publications.

The official and private scientific publications issued annually from Washington make a most impressive exhibit, difficult to visualize.

If typhus breaks out in Teheran, plague in Peking, or cholera comes down the Yangtze, the United States public health service soon knows it. Our consuls in every corner of the world cable the news when certain diseases appear in foreign ports. This is so quarantine may be arranged where needed.

Rats by the myriad have been gassed out of incoming ships. Hides, furs, rags, many kinds of cargo, must be fumigated aboard before shipment here. Immigrants are examined, too, in various foreign ports where medical officers of the United States public health service are stationed. The Panama canal, for example, works like a strainer on all ships coming through it bound for American ports.

This finger of government, known then as the marine hospital service, was first established in 1798. Through generations it grew, till now—with its subsidiary, the National Institute of Health, at Washington—it is one of the world's foremost medical research agencies.

Burial of the "Status Quo" in the Saar



One of the most impressive events of the celebration in the Saar after the plebiscite was the burial of "Status Quo." The Hitlerites marched in jubilation through the snow-covered streets.