

ACINATE SERPENT AS MEN.

America Gaze of Her Ladies—Methods of Subduing Big Snakes Troublesome

A charming woman was seated on a big anaconda was wound once around her waist, the rest of its length lying on her lap.

"You, you had better speak low when you pay me compliments," she replied, her eyes twinkling mischievously, "for the giant over there is my husband. He's awfully jealous, and when he gets mad he weighs ten times as much as he does now."

"Ah, there," said a little dudu disposed to be facetious, "is that a w-a-a worm, doncher know?"

"No, it's a w-a-a masher, doncher know, would you like to try how it can-aw-mash?" responded Mrs. Smith, alias "Madame Jeanette De La," etc., with excellent mimicry.

"The dudu dropped his eyeglass and became deeply interested in the Egyptian mummy. The snake began to stir its coils in the woman's lap.

"Don't speak, please," she said earnestly. She moved the hand which held the snake's head until the head was pointing straight at her face. She then fastened her lustrous black eyes on the two small, treacherous eyes of the snake. Her eyes seemed to expand and the snake's to get smaller.

"Now you may speak," she said. "That was very pretty."

"Oh, indeed, there was no 'fake' about that. If I hadn't mastered the snake he would have whipped his tail into that third loop he was forming and squeezed me until my bones cracked unless somebody came to my assistance and cut him in two.

"Ah, that's more than I can tell you. What causes the bird or the mouse that I feed to the snake to become powerless when the snake fastens its eyes on it? What is it that enables one man to mesmerize another? All I know is that I look at the snake's eyes and will it with all my might, to yield to me. When I do that I seem to feel something going out from me—electricity—magnetism—I don't know what. I feel afterward as though I had engaged in a physical struggle with something and conquered. There's where the pleasure comes in. You may not believe it, but when I concentrate my will to subdue that snake the excitement is intense—the enjoyment exquisite. I suppose it is something like what a soldier feels when the music plays as he marches to battle."

"How do you acquire that power?" "It isn't acquired; it's born. Many people possess that power, undoubtedly, who don't know of it. Quite accidentally I found that I had it. I never had that fear of snakes that most people have.

"When quite a girl I noticed some children running from a garter snake. What possessed me to do it I don't know, but I picked it up, fastened my eyes on its eyes and found myself willing it to submit. Then it fell into a sort of stupor, and I found that I could do with it what I liked. This discovery that I could subdue the snake so that it yielded entirely passive in my hands pleased me. I began to experiment with other and larger snakes, always selecting, of course, snakes that are not venomous. Then when circumstances took a turn so that I had to earn my own living I took to the business. It pays a good deal better than sewing or school teaching or selling dry goods."

"How do you first go to work with an anaconda?" "I first give it a bath of warm milk. This seems to enjoy hugely, and is soothed by it and gets languid. Then I try to get it in a position where I can fasten my eyes on its eyes. This often requires a great deal of patience, for the snake tries to avoid it, seeming to feel that it means a contest in which it will get worsted. But the opportunity comes at last, and when the snake droops its head listlessly I know that I have charmed it and can safely put my hand on it. The next operation is to ensnare and the snake is more quickly rendered passive. With each operation it becomes more docile until I can perform with it in public. But always one has to be careful, for the snake is liable at any time to try squeezing. You can tell by the way it moves its coils when it is going to do that, and when the snake drops its head until it is passive; but if you are frightened and get bewildered, you can't exercise any control over the snake, and the snake will actually try to charm you. I have had one or two narrow escapes through carelessness.

"The worst place to have a snake is around the neck, because it takes very little squeezing to make you feel exceedingly uncomfortable. Anacondas troublesome to keep?" "Yes; they require a great deal of care, and a baby. They are so liable to be cold when confined. You have to warm blankets over them and exercise them to keep them properly warm. They are mighty particular what they eat. The only things that seem to thoroughly satisfy them are white mice and guinea chickens and squabs, and these have to be given to them alive. The snake doesn't seem to enjoy eating unless it can first charm a animal or bird. I have never found it possible to keep one long, and they are expensive to buy."—New York Tribune.

"How was the Ark Wood Discovered?" "The radius of sixty miles of Nashua is said to be found a tree of the shittim wood of ark. The botanists from all over the world examined the trees and they found nowhere else on the globe a tree which was the shittim wood which Noah's ark was composed of. This is made several feet thick. The tree is medium sized, with smooth bark, and the wood is a pale color. In early spring it has long, white blossoms with great ostrich-like leaves. It is remarkable in that it is the only tree in America

Tired and Hungry—What a Foreigner Saw in the City of Kiu Kiang.

The water of the Yangtze Kiang had been rising, and at last it had overflowed its banks and filled the plain. The city of Kiu Kiang, where I was living, was half submerged, and the only outlying lowlands were covered with water.

A native magistrate told me that there were no less than 40,000 of these hungry and impoverished wretches in the city. They had neither silver nor gold, and depended for subsistence solely upon the charitable, of whom China has a goodly number, and upon what they could steal or pick up. So great was the distress and so importunate the cries for bread (or rice) that many merchants closed their stores to get rid of the cries of the hungry for food.

I entered these stores in my canoe, and traded and chatted with the merchants, who amused themselves between customers by watching the fish which swarmed in vast schools in the stores and fed upon the falling crumbs of rice thrown them by the clerks. Occasionally I would find a resident street upon lower ground where the water covered the doors and where the only means of passage was through holes made in the roofs.

I frequently found families living upon improvised rafts and the children were suspended in baskets or tubs hanging from the beams or rafters.

I passed one street built of reed and adobe shanties, where the frail houses of the poor were rapidly yielding to the encroaching waters. One house had just crumbled away, and the late occupants—a man and woman—were standing in the water to their armpits, holding on their little possessions, in the way of scanty wardrobe and crude bedding, and pleading in piteous but fruitless prayers for rescue.

After a day's rest and recuperation we whiled the time away in exploring the mountains. Hid away in the most inaccessible places were the graves of distinguished dead, which, in a few centuries, were overgrown with acacia bushes, now in full blossom, and whose rich blossoms loaded the pure mountain air with a sweet perfume. The only remaining relics of these tombs were the carved and entablatured stones, which told in crude hieroglyphics of the renown of the men whose bones had long since returned to dust.

Now and then we came upon tall groves of bamboo, from whose branches our guns brought down wild pigeons, which found a warm welcome upon our table. In the gorges were crude mills fitted with wheels upon which the spring fed "babbling brooks" fell in ceaseless torrents in their rush to the sea.

Two weeks were thus passed, when we returned to our yacht, and after a few hours' sail again cast anchor off the crowded city. The waters had subsided and the populous city was again busy with the ceaseless chatter and clatter of oriental commerce. But the flood had left tears and desolation in its tracks. Where a few weeks before were crowded streets of humble homes of the poor was now only a clean washed sand plain. The adobe houses had been dissolved in mud and washed away. Many people had gone into the tide and become food for sharks and porpoises.

The loss of life and property by that flood will never be stated in figures; but to the end of my life I shall never forget the scenes of sorrow and desolation then witnessed.—Chinese Letter.

The hero of the following anecdote, a boy of 16, was not a Yankee, as might naturally be supposed, but a "Johnny Reb." He had been entrusted with dispatches for a certain Capt. Grandy at the battle of Fredericksburg, and found himself compelled to descend a hill directly into the fire of Union sharpshooters. Suddenly his horse stopped and tumbled under him, as if warned of danger ahead. It seemed like certain death to ride down in fair view of the marksmen concealed in yonder tannery, but he must deliver the orders to Grandy.

An odd plan occurred to him; he would dismount and roll down the hill! No sooner thought than done. He got off his horse, which had come enough to the down-draw fence corner, and down our horse rolled right into the breastworks! What Grandy and his men thought of this mode of delivering dispatches, he did not stop to inquire. Returning, he found his horse waiting in the fence corner, and they soon showed their heels to the "Yanks," to their mutual comfort.—Youth's Companion.

A CHINESE FLOOD.

WHAT A FOREIGNER SAW IN THE CITY OF KIU KIANG.

Entering Stores by Means of a Canoe—A Pathetic Incident—Refuge in the Mountains—Graves of Great Men—After the Flood's Subsidence.

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SKILL OF THE HANDS.

The Wonderful Degree of Accuracy to Which They Can Be Trained.

You hear a great deal about the wonderful precision and accuracy of machinery in these days, and of course it is wonderful; but the degree of accuracy to which the human hand can be trained is equally wonderful.

Playing cards are required to be cut with the sides quite parallel to each other, because if a pack be trimmed by the machine slightly wider at one end than the other, and they become turned "end to end" in dealing, the excess in width of some cards over others at the end of the pack will be double the variation in any one card, which would facilitate cheating, a very minute variation being perceptible. The men who test these cards for this make calipers of their fingers and thumb and by passing them along from one end to the other detect a difference in width between the two ends which it is difficult to measure by any other means.

There are men employed in factories where dried yeast is made whose business it is to put the yeast into packages weighing a certain amount each. It is on a table in front of them in a large plastic vessel, the scales for weighing it. But the men do not use the scales. They simply separate from the mass with their hands a lump of it and put it up, and you may choose at random and put it on the scales, and it will weigh exactly the right amount, the scales beam just balancing.

Where large numbers of eggs are handled and shipped to market there is a process known as "candling" eggs, which consists in taking them up in the hands usually two eggs in each hand at a time, and holding them up before a lighted candle. The light shining through them reveals to the practical eye the exact condition of the contents. But some of the men soon get so that they do not need to use the candle, the mere contact of their hands with the shells denoting the condition of the egg just as infallibly and much more quickly. And they distinguish in that way not merely eggs which are decidedly bad, but those which are just barely beginning to lose their freshness.

Here are three different ways in which extreme skill of the hands is shown by persistent training: First, in detecting slight differences in magnitude; second, in weight; and, lastly, in texture or character of surface handled.—American Machinist.

Why Good Swimmers Drown.

"Why do good swimmers drown in the sea?" was asked of life saver young Ed O'Brien, who has become somewhat famous along the coast here.

"I will tell you," he answered. "The men who are good swimmers, and who drown while in bathing here, are fresh water swimmers. They are good swimmers in smooth water, but when they tackle the sea they are no good. A good many, when in the water, go out too far to show off. Then when it comes to swimming back they give out and go down. These fresh water swimmers have an idea that they must get back on a straight line. They know nothing about tides or currents, and they strike out to get back to shore by the short route instead of finding their way to the beach by swimming with it. The first thing they know they get into a wave that twists them all up. They don't know when to cut through it, and all of a sudden they lose their head, get out of wind, become scared, and then comes the cry for help. A fresh water swimmer coming to any beach ought first to study the currents and tides before he ventures out. No one should venture out beyond the safety line unless he is thoroughly posted, no matter how good a swimmer he is in still water. If he knows the current and tides thoroughly he will find it an easy matter to get back to shore in his own good time."

"What do you first say to a drowning man when you reach him?" "I sing out to him as loud as I can that I have him safe. If I am in a boat I first throw him a rope. When I go for a drowning man I always think of a life for a life. It is always best to keep a drowning man off from you until you have him quieted down. If an excited man gets the best of you in the water the chances are both of you will be lost."

"What is the first thing a saved man will generally say to you?" "After he gets out and gets his wits back again the first thing a man generally does is to smile, shake his head and say 'That was a narrow escape, sure.' Then he'll thank me over and over again, and if he owned the world he'd give me three-fourths of it to me. A number of men I have saved rewarded me liberally, but I have helped out some men who promised me much, but never kept their promises."—Atlantic City Cor. New York Sun.

Girl Athletes in England.

Ten or fifteen years ago no man would have believed it possible that girls—that race of whose aptitudes Tom Tulliver entertained so disparaging an estimate—could ever have become such brilliant performers in the lawn tennis court. Even among men less prejudiced than the young hero of "The Mill on the Floss," it had always been an article of faith that women "can neither throw nor leap," and that the day would never come when a tennis ball wielded by a female arm would really and truly "strike" a ball instead of "spooning" it. They knew not what could be done with the female tennis player by merely "catching her young." The girls who have learned their tennis in the school room so to speak, who began this game at the age when they began their "scales" and "exercises," are very often nowadays a match for their brothers. And of power has been born grace, which, indeed, if it does not always spring from power, must always have power for one of its parents.

No one who has ever seen a really skilled competitor in a "ladies' tournament" but will at once retract and apologize for the impious word "awkward" and "unfeminine" if any such slanders have ever passed his lips. Lawn tennis has now fairly won its title to be considered a fitting game not merely for "young men and children," but for "old men or at any rate middle aged men and maidens" also. I have said my say on behalf of the latter, and as to the former, they, if they are sensible men, are hardened against ridicule. Why may they not as legitimately breathe themselves, though unskilled, on the tennis court, as grasp the crab catching bar, or mount the unaccustomed horse? Aquatic and equestrian facilities, moreover, are less easily come by than the opportunities in these days for a bout at lawn tennis.—English Illustrated Magazine.

A Few Toasts.

May we be loved by those whom we love. May we kiss whom we please and please whom we kiss. Woman—the fairest work of creation. The edition being extensive, let no man be without a copy exquisitely bound.

Here is to brothers who are not bothers, and sisters who are not blisters. May every man lose his nose who only employs it to poke into other people's affairs. May every man be just as happy as he wishes his neighbor to be. And may we never have to shed the tear of regret that we ever denied ourselves anything that we liked.

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