

culty. I caught the spear to keep it from falling out and releasing the serpent, but the serpent would draw back, and with a tremendous hiss strike at my hand that held the spear, and come suspiciously near hitting it with his tremendous extended fangs. If I let go, the spit would fall out, and the serpent would get away; and he and I could not sleep there together that night. If I held on, his body might slide down the spit until he could reach my hand, which might be fatal to me instead of to him.

However, in answer to my lusty calls, my servant appeared with a club; and, holding the spit with my left hand, and taking the club in my right, I soon administered to the serpent a headache from which he died. As I took him down, and held him up by the middle on the spit to the level of my shoulder, both head and tail touched the floor, showing that he was ten feet long.

Just as I held him in this position, one of the village watchmen passed the door of the hut, going into the village, and saw what I had done. It occurred to me at once that now I should find myself in a "bad box," for the people revere serpents as demi-gods. They dare not kill them or harm them, and will always beg for the life of a serpent if they see any one else killing one. They think that if you harm one of these deadly serpents, it or its kin will wage war with you and your kin and descendants until your kin are exterminated.

I, a missionary, had come there to preach. How would they hear me when I had killed one of their gods? Knowing that the news had gone into town, to the elders, I began to prepare my line of defence, for I thought that they would soon come out to call me to account. I remembered a verse of one of Telugu poets commending the killing of venomous reptiles, and, having a copy of that poet with me, I opened my book-box and took it out, but had not found the verse when I saw the chief men of the place coming out towards the hut. To my astonishment they had native brass trays in their hands, with sweetmeats and cocoanuts and limes and

incense-sticks on them; and as they came to the door of the hut, they prostrated themselves before me, and then presented these offerings, for they said I had rid them of their most dangerous enemy, that that serpent had been the bane of the village for several years. It had bitten and killed some of their kine, and, I think, also a child. They had made every effort to drive it away from the village by burning straw between it and the village and putting the burning straw closer and closer to it to make it go farther and farther away, but it would always return. They had tried to coax it away by putting little cups, each holding half a teaspoonful of milk, every two yards or so in a line out into the jungle; but as soon as it had drank all the milk it wanted, it would turn around and crawl back into the village and into some house, and then the people of that house would have to vacate until it chose to leave. It had become the terror of the village.

But now I, a stranger and foreigner, had killed it without their knowledge or consent (that was their safety); for if they had seen me doing it, they would have begged for its life, lest they be taken as accomplices; and now it was dead, and they were guiltless, and it could harm them and theirs no more. Would I please accept these sweets? They had sent to the flock to have a fat sheep brought me as an offering, and would I please accept the sheep? Now, whatever I had to say, they would listen to me gladly, for was not I their deliverer? The sheep was brought. Myself and associates and servants made a sumptuous dinner from it. The serpent was not a cobra—cobras never grow so large—but it was said to be equally venomous.

When the heat of the day was over, we all went into the town to preach. At the gate was the village erier, with his tom-tom, or small drum; and, as soon as we appeared, he went through all the streets, beating his tom-tom and crying: "Come, all ye people; come and hear what the serpent-destroyer has to say to us." A royal audience we had, while we spoke to them of "the old serpent" and his deeds, and Christ who bruised the serpent's head. The killing of the serpent, instead of proving a bar, had opened a door of access to the gospel.—*Golden Rule.*