

directly for one of the deadliest snakes in Australia. The next moment I heard the rustle of its coils up the tent-pole to which my hammock was slung, and then I saw its flat head and black beady eyes hanging right down into my face to see if I were dead or not. I suppose it thought I was, for the next minute it slid down over my face, and to and fro along the hammock, till at last it went to the other pole, and then it glided off, and I saw no more of it. Anybody watching me then would have called me a brave fellow; but I dare say it's not the first time that a man has been thought brave because he couldn't run away!

"I don't know how long it was after that—it may have been an hour, or a day, or a week, for all I could tell—that a shadow fell across my face, and I heard a voice calling out, 'Holloa, mate! can you give us a firestick? I've let my fire go out!' With the sound of that voice all my love of life came back again, and I gathered up my strength to try to speak.

"Seeing me lying there so white and still, the fellow must have thought me dead; and for a moment—the bitterest moment I ever had—I thought he was going to turn and go out again; but, although I couldn't speak, I managed just to move my eyelids, and he saw it. He said nothing, but raised my head on his arm, and took out his flask to pour some rum into my mouth; and then I knew that I was saved, and with the shock of the reaction I fainted in right earnest."

Here my strange companion suddenly ceased, and, raising from his chair said to me, 'You've had your story, stranger, and now I'm going to bid you good night; for I haven't spoken of this business since it befell me, and it rather upsets me thinking of it. You tell me you're off early to-morrow morning, so it's a hundred to one if we ever meet again; but, in any case, I wish you success in your travels, and may you end better than I have done!'

Then grasping my hand with a force that made it tingle to the wrist, he departed.

His parting words were true, for we have never met since that night; but should these lines ever meet his eye, it may gratify him to know there is at least *one* man in the world who fully believes his story, even though it be (as he styled it) "the strangest adventure of all."

—Mackay's *National Freemason*.

ERRORS IN NATURAL HISTORY.—I wish to call the attention of your readers to a few errors in Natural History, that are generally believed by the young, (and sometimes by the old.) We often see it asserted in school books, that the lion and eagle will not eat any animal that they have not killed themselves. Any naturalist knows that such is not the truth. Any person preparing a book for the young should know better than to print such folly for the youth of the land to read. I once heard an old gentleman say that porcupines could throw their quills; some people believe that they can shoot their quills three or four rods—thus making quite a monster out of a quiet, harmless animal. I once heard a gentleman telling how tree toads could change their color to suit any object that they chanced to set upon; he said that their *natural* color was whitish. How an animal that was always changing its color, could have a *natural* color, I could not comprehend.—H. Shilch, O.