

Nature's Most Invincible
Creatures.(As described by Eugene M. Aaron in the
Scientific American.)

We are apt to consider ourselves the most powerful and all-conquering members of the animal world, and next to us we range such creatures as the lion, tiger, grizzly bear, and elephant, as capable of maintaining their own against all others in an open hand-to-hand or mouth-to-mouth fight. Yet in doing so we err greatly, simply because we consider mere bigness or muscular force, forgetting the energy and the intellectual powers that make one of nature's tiny creatures, when combined in the vast numbers in which they are always found, by far the most formidable animal force known on land. Therefore, when the question is put to us, "Which do you consider the most irresistible of all animals?" it is always safe to reply that, if warlike manifestations are referred to, the soldier or driver ants are far and away the most terribly invincible creatures with which we can be brought in contact.

Monsieur Coillard, a French missionary in the Barotse Valley of South Central Africa, thus writes of the terrors there: "One sees them busy in innumerable battalions, ranked and disciplined, winding along like a broad black ribbon of watered silk. Whence come they? Where are they going? Nothing can stop them nor can any object change their route. If it is an inanimate object, they turn it aside and pass on; if it is living, they assail it venomously, crowding one on top of the other to the attack, while the main army passes on, business-like and silent. Is the obstacle a trench or a stream of water? Then they form themselves at its edge into a compact mass. Is this a deliberating assembly? Probably, for soon the mass stirs and moves on, crosses the trench or stream, continues in its incessant and mysterious march. A multitude of these soldiers are sacrificed for the common good, and these legions, which know not what it is to be beaten, pass over the corpses of these victims to their destination." Against these tiny enemies no man, nor band of men, nor lion or tiger, nor even a herd of elephants, can do anything but hurriedly get out of the way. Among the Barotse natives a favorite form of capital punishment is to coat the victim with grease and throw him before the advancing army of soldier ants. The quickness with which the poor wretch is dispatched is marvelous when it is considered that each ant can do nothing more than merely tear out a small particle of flesh and carry it off. Yet in a surprisingly short time the writhing victim will have been changed into a skeleton of clean and polished bones that will make the trained anatomist envious.

All are familiar with the tales of how these armies of ants enter a tropical village and take entire possession of it, driving its inhabitants out in terror, and at last in a few hours or a day or two abandoning it cleaner than the arts of the most orderly housekeeper could ever make it. These are not travelers' tales. The most gifted pen must fail to give an adequate idea to the uninitiated of just how thorough and searching these creatures are in ridding a house of every bit of animal or vegetable matter in it. Perhaps, however, the narration of the following bit of personal experience may help to illustrate it. I had returned from a day's tramp in the hills, laden with trophies in the shape of tropical insects, some of them, perhaps, new to the eye of scientists, and all of certain value, when I was called out of my house by the cry, "The driver ants, the driver ants." Hastily placing most of my collections in glass jars and tin boxes, so as to be out of the reach of the invaders, and gathering such clothes as I would need for a day or two, I made a rather undignified retreat. After I had done so I remembered that I had left some rare beetles pinned in a box that was in the pocket of my collecting coat, but as the coat had been placed in a strong chest and this chest was heavily scented with naphthalin or "tar camphor," and the lid fitted down very tight, I felt that they were safe. The next morning when I went back, after a night spent in my hammock in a tamarind tree, I found that of a bunch of bananas, consisting of a thick stem and about 100 of the fruit, there was no trace whatever, save the dangling string with which it had been hung from the ceiling; and not a vestige of bread, chocolate, coffee, and other eatable odds and ends could be found on the thoroughly cleaned shelves on which some food had been left. Even the cracks between the floor boards had been cleaned out, the particles of edible matter having been carried away or devoured and the mere dust left where it could easily be swept away.

This was not so bad, for a good cleaning never hurts a house in the tropics, but when I came to examine my chest and found that a hole quite two inches in diameter had been torn in one end through an inch board of hard wood, that the box in my coat pocket had also been pierced and every one of the pins on which my beetles had been arranged stood in place as empty and clean as when taken out of the paper, I had a better idea of the thoroughness of these wondrous, tiny scavengers of nature than ever before. Life in the tropics is a continuous revelation, from day to day, of new wonders of a life in all its phases.

One Great Bargain.

It is, or ought to be, a pleasure to us to see other men happy, and therefore we feel certain that a rather unusual scene described in the Fergus Falls Journal will be enjoyed by all sorts of readers. A Dutchman came into the clerk's office, with a broad smile on his face, and asked for a marriage license. "An old Dutchman of about 50," the Journal says, but the word "old" must have been an inadvertence.

The paper was made out, and the German produced his pocket-book.

"Two dollars and a half," said the clerk.

"Zwei tollar und a holf! Mein gracious, but dot vas cheap!"

The clerk looked a little surprised. He had known men to grumble even at the cost of a marriage certificate.

"Yah, mynher," said the happy customer, "dot vas cheap. For zwei tollar und a holf I gets me ein frau—"

"Yes."

"Und four shildrens—"

"Yes."

"Ein goot home—"

"Yes."

"All dese tings for zwei tollar und a holf? Mein gracious, but dot vas cheap!"

The clerk wished him joy and a long life, and he went away rejoicing.

Each present conviction, each secret suggestion of duty constitutes a distinct and separate call of God, which can never be slighted without the certainty of its total departure or its fainter return. The power which is not wisely spent must be wildly wasted. Our true opportunities come but once; they are sufficient but not redundant; we have time enough for the longest duty, but not for the shortest sin.—James Martineau.

Witty Retorts.

The late James G. Blaine was credited, even by those who disliked him, with remarkable command of temper, and his courtesy was unflinching.

On one occasion a decision which he made as speaker of the House greatly enraged a new member, who waited on Pennsylvania avenue after the House adjourned, with some friends, declaring he would "have it out or fight."

"You can't," said one of his friends.

"Nothing you can say will get the better of Blaine's good humor and politeness."

"We'll see!" said the enraged man, as he caught sight of the strated figure of the Speaker coming slowly toward him. He stepped forward quickly and stood across his path.

"Mr. Blaine," he said, loudly, "I don't know you. I am no acquaintance of yours. But I take the liberty of telling you, sir, that you are a fool and a jackass!"

"Indeed!" said Blaine, mildly.

"Now I wonder," regarding him thoughtfully, "what kind of a liberty you would have taken if I had been one of your intimate friends?" and bowing courteously, he passed on, while the companions of the Congressman burst into a shout of laughter.

A Cruel Affront.

When Gen. Thiebault, then a young man, was with the French army in Italy near the close of the last century, he had for one of his comrades La Salle, a brilliant soldier, but capable of all manner of strange and foolish pranks. One such escapade is narrated by Thiebault in his memoirs, recently published.

At the head of a small body of troops La Salle entered Perugia at nightfall, on his return from some expedition. As he rode through one of the streets he noticed a house lighted from top to bottom. A passer-by told him that it was the residence of Madame So and So, a beautiful young widow, who was giving a ball to the elite of the city.

La Salle was seized on the instant by one of those strange whims for which he was famous. He halted his squadron, and covered with dust as he was, rode to the door of the house, mounted the steps and rode into the hall. Then at the risk of breaking his neck a hundred times, as Thiebault expresses it, he put his horse to the marble stairs, and rode across the marble tiles of the second-story hall into the parlor.

He entered the ball-room "at a gallop," and took his place in the middle of the floor. He had plenty of room, for the dancers, as was naturally to be expected, hastened to make way for him. The orchestra had stopped playing, but he ordered them to resume, and still on horseback he went through the quadrille.

Then he helped himself to punch, gave his horse lemonade and cakes, drove to the window that his men could see him, made a low bow to the widow and her guests, rode down the stairs and rejoined his command in the street, where he was received with acclamations.

Whether the beautiful hostess and her gay companions were able to resume their festivities, we are not informed.

If attacked with cholera or summer complaint of any kind send at once for a bottle of Dr. J. D. Kellogg's Dysentery Cordial and use it according to directions. It acts with wonderful rapidity in subduing that dreadful disease that weakens the strongest man and that destroys the young and delicate. Those who have used this cholera medicine say it acts promptly, and never fails to effect a thorough cure.

About People.

It appears certainly true of the late Rev. C. H. Spurgeon that his works live after him. His publishers report that the demand for his sermons continues to increase, notwithstanding that this is the 40th year of publication, and that there are yet as many unpublished sermons as will require another ten years to get out.

A Dominican monk, named Pere Didon, has created quite a sensation in Paris by his preaching. Whenever he preaches he attracts crowds, not only of the faithful, but of the intellectual lights of society, attracted by his wit, eloquence and learning. But he is of very questionable orthodoxy; he directs his hearers to the study of Christ in the New Testament, and it is not improbable that mother church will feel called upon to investigate.

Bishop William Boyd Carpenter, of Ripon, England, is the court preacher. A story is told of him that when he was asked how he managed to address so exalted a person as the sovereign and yet maintain his composure he replied that he never addressed her at all. He knew there would be present the Queen, the princes, the household, the servants, down to the scullery-maid. "And," said the bishop, "I preach to the scullery-maid, and the Queen understands me."

Queen Margherita of Italy had a narrow escape from a tragic death the other day. She was crossing a glacier under the Matterhorn, and was fastened by a rope in the usual way with the guides and the other attendants. One of the latter, Baron Pecoz, who led the line, suddenly fell dead of heart disease, and the whole party were dragged by the weight of his body to the edge of the precipice. The Queen behaved with remarkable courage and presence of mind, when she might well have been excused for womanish agitation.

The Queen is an Anglican in England, but a Presbyterian in Scotland. Last year her Majesty laid the foundation-stone of the new parish church at Crathie, near Balmoral. The building has been completed, and last Tuesday a bazaar was opened in aid of the building fund by Princess Louise. One of the stalls was presided over by Princess Beatrice, and several members of the royal family sent articles for sale. It is even reported that the Queen herself contributed articles in plaited straw, worked by her own hands. The drawings for the day were over £1,280, the contribution of the royal stall being £307.

"How Doth Death Speak."

We often hear it said that an excellent rule in speaking of others is to say only what we would say of them if they were present. A still better one is to speak always of people as we would if they were dead. This disposition to look upon the best side of those who have gone is very beautiful, but how much happier all would be if everyone would speak of the living with as much kindness and gentleness as they do of the departed. Many have acquired a habit, almost unconsciously, of making sharp speeches without really intending or expecting to be taken in earnest; but O! the harm they do, these little stinging arrows!

An incident lately occurred in a family well known to the writer, which illustrates what has been written. One day the conversation at the dinner-table turned upon a lady who was so unfortunate as to have incurred the dislike of certain members of the household because of some little peculiarities. After several had expressed their views in no gentle terms, the married sister added:

"I can't endure her, and I believe I will not return her call if she comes here again."

Her husband who had hitherto remained silent, replied:

"She will not trouble you again, my dear, as she died an hour ago."

"You do not mean it. Surely you are only teasing us for our uncharitableness."

"She is really dead. I learned it on the way to dinner."

Overwhelmed with shame the little group realized for the first time the awful solemnity of such sinful conversation. Let us take warning, and speak of those about us as we will wish we had done when

Death sweeps their faults with heavy hand

As sweeps the sea the trampled sand.

—Christian-at-Work.

A man kicked his wife to death a few days ago over in Jersey City. She was too ill to sit up; her four little ones were hungry and crying for bread; she had a few dollars in her possession which she intended to spend for food. The husband came home late at night and demanded the money. The wife refused to part with it, whereupon her husband dragged her from her bed to another room, and kicked her until she died. He was drunk, and wanted to get drunker. We license the traffic that prompts to such deeds as this.

If you feel languid and bilious try Northrop & Lyman's Vegetable Discovery and you will find it one of the best preparations for such complaints. Mr. S. B. Maginn, Ethel, used Northrop & Lyman's Vegetable Discovery, and cured a severe bilious sick headache which troubled him for a time.

Gladstone on Temperance Legislation.

So much has been written in the various Canadian journals about Mr. Gladstone's recent letter to Lord Thring regarding temperance legislation it may be of interest to give extracts from English papers that have come to hand since our remarks appeared in the HOME GUARD. The fuller reports confirm the opinion we then expressed that the venerable statesman has not condemned local option in principle, but given expression to the strong conviction that a good deal more than that is required to prove an effectual remedy to the existing evils of the drink traffic.

What Mr. Gladstone wrote was as follows:

"For many years I have been strongly of opinion that the principle of selling liquors for the public profit only offers the sole chance of escape from the present miserable and almost contemptible predicament, which is a disgrace to the country. I am friendly to local option, but it can be no more than a partial or occasional remedy. The mere limitation of numbers, the ideal of Parliament for the last twenty years is, though pretending to the honor of a remedy, little better than an imposture. The growth of the system of tied houses continually aggravates the prevailing mischief. Of details I do not speak, but in principle you are working on the only lines either promising or tenable. I am glad to see that Mr. Chamberlain is active in your cause."

Sir Wilfred Lawson, M.P., an old friend and supporter of Mr. Gladstone, wrote as follows to the Manchester Guardian: "If the liquor traffic were to be nationalized or municipalized tomorrow it would not weaken by one jot the necessity and urgency of our demand for the popular veto on the liquor traffic, as substantially embodied in Sir William Harcourt's bill. It would be just as cruel to force a degrading and ruinous traffic on resisting localities if that step were taken by the national executive, or by a municipal authority, as though it were taken at present, by the magistracy. Mr. Gladstone himself, speaking at Chester, on June 25, 1892, on the eve of the general election, distinctly described the demand of the workingman in this matter. He said, 'He' (the working man) 'demands no more than this, that in areas reasonably defined and marked out the population shall have the power of regulating the conditions under which the liquor traffic is to be dealt with, and that that power shall extend even to the local extinction of the traffic.'"

Mr. W. S. Caine, M.P., a leading Liberal and co-worker with Mr. Gladstone for years, wrote as follows to the London Daily Chronicle: "If Lord Rosebery were to do what your correspondents advise, and use Mr. Gladstone's letter as a flimsy excuse to turn his back upon his solemn pledges, there is no man living who would ensure him more sternly than Mr. Gladstone himself, who by his own words to the deputation from the Covent Garden Convention, which waited on him and Sir William Harcourt at Downing street, on Dec. 7 last, bound the present Government to its Direct Veto Bill by ties that cannot be broken. Mr. Gladstone's letter to Lord Thring has been used by the enemies of the temperance movement in a way he himself would be the first to condemn, were it worth while. It is clear that he may wish well to such an experiment as the Bishop of Chester wishes to try, without backing down on a measure to which he stands committed by having been Prime Minister of the Government which introduced it, and which is not traversed in any way by the bishop's proposals."

Mr. James Whyte, secretary of the United Kingdom Alliance, in a letter to the Manchester Guardian, said: "Now, it has for long enough been the contention of the Alliance that the mere limitation of the number of licenses in any district would be a very inadequate way of dealing with the liquor traffic, and it is undeniable that the organization has always taught that the self-interest of the liquor traffickers is a great obstacle in the way of the honest and efficient administration of the laws for controlling the traffic. Such being the case, I am unable to see why Prohibitionists should be agitated because Mr. Gladstone greatly prefers a method of regulating the liquor traffic intended to eliminate the publican to a method which would not do so."

The British Weekly, one of the leading journals of its class in England, writing on the subject, remarks: "The Gothenburg system may or may not be a good one, but nobody should mistake its meaning. It means the sanction and perpetuation of the moderate drinking, and will be, if adopted, the heaviest blow ever dealt against total abstinence."

"I think my boy is going to be a great mathematician," said Lemmony. "He's wonderful at it. He can multiply five by three and make twenty out of it every time. I don't see how he does it, but it seems as simple as can be to him."

Cold in the head—Nasal Balm gives instant relief: speedily cures. Never fails.

A Parliamentary Awakening.

Questions to be Asked Candidates—A
Northwest Plebiscite.

At a meeting of the executive committee of the Dominion Alliance, held at the secretary's office on Thursday afternoon, proposed questions to be asked by Prohibitionists to Parliamentary candidates were framed. Dr. J. J. MacLaren, Q.C., presided.

It was resolved that the following be published as suggestions of forms of questions to be addressed to candidates in different constituencies with the recommendation that Prohibitionists should support in conventions and at the polls only such candidates as would give affirmative answers thereto:

1. Are you in favor of prohibition of the liquor traffic?

2. If elected to the House of Commons will you support and vote for a prohibitory liquor law?

3. Will you co-operate with the other members of Parliament who favor prohibition to secure the introduction and enactment of such legislation at the earliest possible opportunity?

The idea that is held by many people that a plebiscite is at hand in the Northwest Territories is erroneous. Mr. F. S. Spence said recently. The real state of the question is that a straight prohibition resolution was introduced in the Legislature up there. It was defeated in favor of a resolution declaring for prohibition when the people should have expressed their desire for it. But nothing was done to provide for the plebiscite which was understood to be implied if not promised. Now the elections are coming on nothing can be done.

Their Choice.

People who find it tiresome to read a book more than once will scarcely credit the story which is told of one of the Seilly Isles. The entire library of this little island consisted, a century or more ago, of a single copy of the "History of Dr. Faustus."

As most of the inhabitants were able to read—provided words were not too difficult—the conjurer's story had been handed from house to house, until from perpetual thumbing very little of his enchantments or his catastrophe was left legible.

When this alarming state of things became evident, a meeting of the principal inhabitants was called to discuss what could be done to remedy it, for the people must have something to read.

A proposal was made and carried, that as soon as the season permitted any intercourse with Cornwall, a supply of books should be ordered. The question arose what these books should be, but at last it was settled amicably that an order should be transmitted to Penzance for another copy of the "History of Dr. Faustus." And then the meeting joyously broke up.

Habit Determines Character.

Prof. William James, of Harvard, in his text-book on psychology, says: Could the young but realize how soon they will become mere walking bundles of habits, they would give more heed to their conduct while in the plastic state. We are spinning our own fates, good or evil, and never to be undone. Every smallest stroke of virtue or of vice leaves its scar. The drunken Rip Van Winkle, in Jefferson's play, excuses himself for every fresh dereliction by saying, "I won't count this time." Well, he may not count it, and a kind heaven may not count it, but it is being counted none the less. Down among his nerve cells and fibers the molecules are counting it, registering and storing it up, to be used against him when the next temptation comes. Nothing we ever do is, in strict scientific literalness, wiped out. Of course, this has its good side as well as its bad one. As we become permanent drunkards by so many separate drinks, so we become saints in the moral and scientific spheres by so many separate acts and hours of work.

CHRONIC DERANGEMENTS OF THE STOMACH, LIVER AND BLOOD, are speedily removed by the active principle of the ingredients entering into the composition of Parmelee's Vegetable Pills. These Pills act specifically on the deranged organs, stimulating to action the dormant energies of the system, thereby removing disease and renewing life and vitality to the afflicted. In this lies the great secret of the popularity of Parmelee's Vegetable Pills.

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