

### ANT-BATTLES.

I have within the past few years witnessed several battles between ants, and in some instances, the curious conduct of the captors towards their prisoners, which I think is worth mentioning. The most noted battle took place July, 1878, between two colonies of red ants. The victorious army were medium in size and numbered many thousands; those captured were a much larger ant, but not so numerous. The large ants, after a desperate resistance, were forced out of their fort, four or five small ants holding on to the antennæ and legs of the prisoner. The captives were usually taken a few inches from the fort and liberated. All the ants returned to the fight except one, who would stand facing his captive for a few moments, then taking hold of the antennæ of the prisoner give three or four pulls; after waiting a short time the pulling was repeated with more determination; the big ant not responding, he was savagely jerked, then he would lean forward, and a drop of sweet issuing from his mouth, the little ant would approach and drink the nectar, then pick up his captive and hurry home. This was repeated many times during the battle. Some of the prisoners gave up their sweets without so much pulling. I think this battle was for no other purpose than to secure the sweets supposed to be in the stomachs of the captives. These ants were kept prisoners just one week, when they were liberated, marched off in a body and never returned. They were probably kept confined until their sweets were exhausted, and then allowed to go free.—*American Naturalist.*

### THE STRONGEST MAN IN THE WORLD.

At Reno, in Nevada, according to Mr. R. A. Proctor, there now lives a man who is probably the strongest man in the world. His name is Angelo Cardela. He is an Italian, age 38, 5ft. 10in. in height, and weighing 13st. 8lb. He is a labourer, of temperate habits, but not objecting to the moderate use of malt liquors and light wines. In personal appearance he is not remarkable, but "merely a good-natured-looking son of Italy, with a broad heavy face, a noble development of chest and shoulders, and large fleshy hands." His strength was born with him, for he had no athletic training. His strength does not reside in his hair by any means, but apparently as much in his bones as in his muscles. At any rate, he differs from other men chiefly in his osseous structure. Though he is not of unusual size, his spinal column is double the ordinary width, and his other bones and joints are made on a similarly large and generous scale. He has been known to lift a man of 200 pounds weight with the middle finger of his right hand. The thing was done as follows:—The man to be lifted stood with one foot on the floor and arms outstretched, his hands being lightly grasped by two friends, one on each side, to preserve the balance of the body. "This slight assistance," we are assured, "had no tendency to raise the body, being merely to keep him from toppling over." Cardela then stooped down and placed the third finger of his right hand under the hollow of the man's foot, on which he was balancing, and with scarcely any perceptible effort raised him to the height of 4ft. and deposited him standing on a table near at hand. It is said that two powerful Irishmen living near Verdi, in Washoe County, Nevada, waylaid Cardela with intent to thrash him, but he seized one in each hand, and beat them together till life was nearly hammered out of them. He is, however, of a quiet and peaceable disposition. His strength seems to have been inherited, for he states that his father was even more powerful than he is himself.

### A FOSSIL SEA-SERPENT.

There is evidence, writes Mr. R. A. Proctor in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, that "long, long ago" a great sea rolled its waves over the region which now forms the Eastern States of America, and that the land rose and sank several times before attaining its present position. The State of New Jersey was in this way part of an ancient sea-bed; and it is not doubted that the marlpits of Monmouth County, N. J., were formed from the skeletons of marine animals which found a burial in remote times in the mud of that ancient sea. In these marlpits the bones of large animals have frequently been discovered. Recently Mr. Charles McCue found there certain bones which were pronounced by Professor Lockwood to be those of a fossil sea-serpent known as the pythonomorpha. This creature had a body of great size, the most exposed parts of which were protected by small bony plates or scales. It had two paddles in front and two behind,

the size and solidity of the bones of which indicated extraordinary propelling force. Extending far behind was the tail,—stout, long, and serpentine, but somewhat flat, so that it could afford great aid in propulsion, when used with a sculling movement. The neck was long, yet thick, and sufficiently powerful to sustain the great high head out of the water. When we consider the bony frame of the lower jaw, we note in the skeleton a sort of elbow attached to the jaw-bone, which is very significant. It would seem that the pythonomorpha had to swallow its prey entire, and often this prey would be a fish of considerable size. By means of the elbow-jointed jaw the monster could enlarge the opening over the gullet. Now, the upper jaw was provided with an auxiliary contrivance, which exactly met the necessities of the case. This was what may be described as, in reality, a jaw with small curved and very sharp teeth, and had the appearance of a grapple. Professor Lockwood, in describing this, said:—"As the great jaws, with their formidable teeth, gave a hitch, and thus forced the struggling prey a little way down the mouth, to get another hitch they had to open wide again, and then the prey would fall out. At this juncture, down came the little grapple-jaw, and held the struggling prey in place. So the movements of the great jaws, and of the small grapple-jaw, alternated until the prey was safely down the great maw. It is plain that during this snake-like process of swallowing, so slow and labourious, the wedging up of the throat would in ordinary animals stop the breathing. This difficulty was met, in the case of the great sea-serpent, by the position of the great air-tube, which, instead of being at the back of the mouth, was near the front teeth of the lower jaw. In other respects the sea-serpent resembled its congeners who live on land. The tongue was cylindrical, bifurcated, and retractile. Professor Lockwood considers that the animal whose bones have been discovered in New Jersey was not less than forty feet, and may have been as much as sixty feet long. "On another occasion," he says, "I demonstrated the existence of one that was not less than eighty feet in length, but it had teeth of twice the size that the present specimen had." The animal whose bones have recently been found must have met with some accident. He certainly did not die of old age, Professor Lockwood remarks, for in the examination of the skeleton he found the remains of the secondary teeth. The bones show marks of fishes teeth, which would seem to show that while the dead monster lay like a great wreck on the ocean bed, the fishes tore the flesh from off his bones.

### BOY AND TOBACCO.

A very large proportion of the boys of the present day use tobacco in some form. Their favorite method of poisoning themselves is with the paper cigarette. Boys of very tender years may often be seen with lighted cigarettes in their mouths, puffing away with more industry than would in most cases be shown if they earned their living by it. The effects, in the first place, are not usually pleasant, but during the process of tobacco seasoning, the average boy exhibits considerable fortitude. We presume very few of these lads realize the inevitable consequences of smoking during the growing period, when bones and muscles are developing. All boys want to be strong and vigorous—to have sound limbs, hard muscles and rich blood. But if medical science can establish any fact, it is that the use of tobacco in youth checks growth, arrests muscular development, and impoverishes the blood. A physician made test cases of 38 boys, from 9 to 16, who had been in the habit of smoking, and in 27 of the 38 he found obvious injurious effects. In the remaining 11 the consequences were not so pronounced, but it by no means followed that the seeds of premature debility were not sown. The impairment of nervous force, which inevitably results from the use of tobacco, involves a long list of disorders, which take one form or another, according to the constitutional tendencies of the individual. One of the most common and prominent effects is the impairment of growth. This is a misfortune from which there is no remedy. The system may be cleansed and purified, after having arrived at maturity, but the human structure cannot be set to growing again if development is arrested in the latter years of the growing period. Many boys do not know the consequences of their habits, and others, with the disregard of future penalties peculiar to the boy period, do not care what the consequences may be so that their present pleasure is enhanced. There are but few boys, however, who would remain insensible to appeals to their reason and to their pride in manhood. It is better, as a rule, to convince a boy that the use of tobacco is injurious, than simply to convince him that physical chastisement will follow his being caught using it.—*Call.*