

RATTLESNAKES AND SCORPIONS.

During a recent trip in the interior of British Columbia I fell in with an old acquaintance, Mr. E. Bullock-Webster, from Kere-meos, on the Similkameen River, near the southern boundary of the province, on the mainland. This part of the country seems to be a continuation of the desert regions which extend through the adjoining States and California down to Mexico; the theory being borne out by the existence of some of the plants and reptiles peculiar to these regions, for instance, *Purshia tridentata* as well as various members of the *Artemisia* family, burrowing owls, horned toads, rattlesnakes, scorpions, &c.

Being aware of the existence of scorpions in the hot rocky hills in the vicinity of his ranch, having seen one from there in captivity some years ago at New Westminster which had been kept in a glass jar with only some gravel, and without food or water for several months, I asked my friend if he could obtain a specimen for me. He promised he would do so when opportunity offered; but the season, he said, was past for obtaining them to the best advantage. He then explained that during the dormant season the scorpions shared the dens of rattlesnakes, *Crotalus lucifer* (Baird and Girard) and in the spring time when the sun began to attain some power, the snakes come out to the mouths of their dens, in horrid coiling masses, the scorpions running over them on apparently quite friendly terms. Mr. Webster described several of these dens in the rocky defiles of the mountains of Similkameen very graphically.

One, which from accounts received from Indians, seems to be the headquarters of all the rattlesnakes, is situated in an ideal inferno, a weird defile that would have appealed to the imagination of Doré. It appears that the Indians from superstitious motives do not kill snakes, and from the same motives do not go near their dens. Mr. Webster, however, induced an old Indian to conduct him to the spot, which he did, but would not go nearer than about two hundred yards. Mr. Webster entered the horrid place alone. He says it is indescribably weird, the entrance of the den proper being partly stopped up with bunch-grass, apparently carried there by the snakes, presumably for protection against cold. It