

insect. The poison instilled into the wound thus made, although not causing immediate death, has a paralyzing effect upon the muscles, and quickly deprives the insect of its struggling powers, and consequently of all chance of escape. If the insect is a small one—one in fact that can be easily held in the pincers and eaten without trouble while alive—a scorpion does not always waste poison upon it. Thus I have seen : *Parabuthus* (one of the genera of scorpions) seize a bluebottle fly, transfer it straight to its mandibles and pick it to pieces with them while still kicking. . . . An insect is literally picked to pieces by the small chelate mandibles, these two jaws being thrust out and retracted alternately, first one and then the other being used; the soft juices and tissues thus exposed being drawn into the minute mouth by the sucking action of the stomach."

Old fables die hard, and none is more persistent than the legend that the scorpion, when surrounded by a ring of fire, puts an end to its existence by turning its tail over its back and stinging itself to death. No matter that naturalists have proved that their poison is innocuous to their own kind, and that scorpions are killed by a very moderate elevation of temperature, the old, old story is still as firmly believed as ever by the general public.

In an article published in the ninth edition of the "Encyclopaedia Britannica," the Rev. O. P. Cambridge refused to believe that there was any substratum of fact in the popular legend, but Mr. Pocock, writing in *Nature* for 1893, is more merciful. He thinks, indeed, that a scorpion may occasionally sting itself, either by a random blow for an unseen enemy, or when it has been irritated by the contact of any strong stimulant, such as acid or mustard, or even that in the madness of pain it may be driven to turn its weapon on itself; but that in any case there is an