

them. The old man sitting down on the frame of a hotbed that was close at hand, and telling Tony to take a seat beside him, drew a paper from his pocket, and read to him the following brief lecture, though he did not know the author's name:—

"It is idle to talk about useless animals. All are useful, and many that we despise are necessary to man. Even the common house-flies should be ranked among the best friends of man. All dead and decaying matter, which is most abundant in the hottest weather, is detrimental to human health and life. Swarms of flies rapidly convert this matter into living, healthy substance, and thus purify the atmosphere, and make our dwellings habitable. These ever-busy workers are actually essential, particularly in the dirtiest portions of cities. They destroy immense quantities of pestilence-breeding impurities. Their busy motions pertain to life.— With death come foul odors, which flies consume and convert to life and motion. They are the real sanitary inspectors of our dwellings, and abaters of nuisance. They are under-estimated, and so are all reptiles. The despised toad is one of our most useful domestic animals,— one of the farmer's and gardener's best friends. We should all learn lessons of useful instruction of the toad, and teach our children and servants never to injure them. They delight in well-cultivated grounds, and live long in the same locality, occupying the same nests for many years. Their natural food is bugs and flies which are injurious to the garden. They catch their prey with wonderful facility, by the power they have of shooting out their tongues to the length of six or eight inches, striking with lightning quickness whatever comes within the focus of their two prominent eyes. If one eye is destroyed they lose the power of striking their prey. The tongue is covered with a glutinous substance, which holds every insect it strikes. Night is the toad's time to work. We have accounts of monster toads in Surinam, with mouths like a hog.

"All toads and frogs are insect-eaters, and the numbers they destroy can hardly be over-estimated. They seem to have been predestined for the great work of destroying bugs and insects generally; and as the natural habitat of toads is with man in his cultivated grounds, they are there his most useful coworkers. If not already in the garden, man should collect and carry them there. A few toads in a vine-patch soon rid it of its worst enemies, the bugs. The young of frogs, while in the tadpole age, breathe by gills, under water. After they lose their tails, and become perfect frogs, they are air-breathing animals, and not amphibious. If they dive, it is only suspended inspiration. They must come to the surface for breathe. In spite of all that Shakespeare has said to sustain the prejudice against

toads, they are not poisonous, nor hateful. Our antipathy all comes from faulty education. We should teach our children not to hate, but to protect toads. We should also try to overcome the prejudice against eating frogs. They should be the cheap and plenty food of the poor, instead of, as now, the choice dainties of the rich. They might as well be drawn for food as chickens. Frogs would only need a fit place to live in. They would need no food nor care. If the idea of cultivating frogs is thought absurd, it is not more so than the idea of sending ice to the tropics was thought to be a few years ago. It was made to pay; and a frog-pond as well as the ice-pond may, and frogs should be an article of food in every market."

Then, turning over to an other page, he read the following:—

"Our ugly friend, the toad, affects gardens as much as the lord of creation. You will find him in a hole in the wall, in the strawberry patch, under the squash-vines, or among the cucumbers. He is not handsome, but serene and dignified as a judge. He executes judgment upon all bugs, worms, snails, and pests of the garden in the most summary way. See what a capacious maw he has, occupying the the whole space from his forelegs to his haunches. He is the very incarnation of stomach, and his gastronomic feats would do credit to an alderman.— He tucks away bugs and all kindred flesh as an epicure would turtle and pudding. He is never full. That maw stretches like caoutchouc, and he is nearer to having an endless gullet than any other reptile. He is altogether too useful to be without enemies. All the serpent tribe hate him, and devour him when they can. Even man slanders him. He misses a few strawberries from his patch, and lays it to the toad, who stands like a sentinel guarding his treasures. It was the snail who did the mischief before the toad took up his station; fortunately, he is now where he will spoil no more ruddy fruit.— Or it was the robin who slyly snapped up the berries, and flew off into the neighboring tree, leaving the poor toad to bear his sins. But you see by the look of his honest face that he is guiltless. Those lustrous eyes are above stealing. One fat bug would give him more pleasure than all the fruit in your garden.

"Cultivate the friendship of toads, for they take the insects that the birds are apt to overlook. They inspect the ground closely, peer under the leaves of strawberries, under the growing vines, and nab every creeping thing in sight. They are as easily domesticated as birds, never sing when you do not want them to, are quiet and unobtrusive, and, if not worth five hundred dollars apiece, are still profitable pets and fellow-helpers. Birch the boys that teases toads."