

THE LION THAT LIVES IN A PIT.

"Please do not forget that you have promised to tell us about the lion that lives in a pit, mamma," said Ernest. "The ant-lion, I think you called him, and why is he called an ant-lion?"

"Because he preys upon ants," answered Mrs. Heywood, "in the same way that real lions prey upon sheep and goats, and sometimes upon men and women. The ant-lion is only the grub or larva of a winged insect. In this state it is very slow and awkward in its movements, so that it could never catch the quick and active little creatures it requires for food if God had not taught it to make up by cleverness what it wants in activity. The parent insect carefully deposits her eggs upon a light, sandy soil, so that when the young ant-lion is hatched he finds himself in a position exactly suited to his purpose of digging a pit, or trap, by which means he hopes to catch his little victims."

"But how does he manage to dig, mamma? He has no spade to help him, I am sure."

"His feet and his mouth answer all the purposes of a spade," said his mother; "no gardener or architect could hollow out a pit better. His body is of a dusty grey color, composed of rings, and tapers to a point at the tail; he has six legs. The head is provided with a most terrible pair of jaws, half round, like a reaping-hook, and toothed inside, that he may hold the prey firmly whilst sucking their blood. The ant-lion traces a circle in the sand, generally about three inches in diameter—that means, three inches across from one side to the other. This done, he gets inside this circle or ring, and with one of his legs shovels up a load of sand on the flat part of his head, and then, with a sudden jerk, he throws the whole some inches away. It is a curious fact," continued Mrs. Heywood, "that when the little fellow has gone once round the ring, he returns just the opposite way, so as to use the leg on the other side for shovelling, and rest the one with which he began. In this way he digs on and on, making each ring narrower and deeper than the one before, until he

has completed a hole about two or three inches deep, in the shape of a funnel, generally three inches wide at the top, and narrowing into a point at the bottom, the loose sand forming its sloping sides. When he meets with no stones, the ant-lion gets through his business with very little difficulty, but sometimes there are stones mixed up with the sand, and these cost him a great deal of trouble. If they are quite small, he lifts them upon his head, and jerks them over the side of the

his labors. He knows well that other insects are as much afraid of him as you and I should be of a real lion, so he completely hides himself under the sand at the bottom of his pit, and leaves nothing but the tips of his crooked jaws peeping out. Very soon an ant, who has been sent out on an exploring expedition, or some other little traveller, passes that way, and steps upon the edge of the pit, that he may see what there is to be seen below. He does not know that he will pay for his look with his life.

he cannot stand upon the slippery bank, under the heavy sand-showers, and falls again, this time, most likely, within reach of the lion's jaws. If so, it is all over with him—he is pounced upon in a moment, and the ant-lion holds him fast in his powerful jaws while he sucks his blood at his leisure. When he has finished, he takes care to throw the dead body to some distance from his den, lest other insects, espying it, should guess there is a murderer below; and then he goes back to his hiding-place to watch for more prey. The fierce grub lives thus for nearly two years, until he is fully grown, when he wraps himself up in a round ball of sand fastened together by very fine silk, which he spins on purpose. Here he remains for about three weeks, when he bursts forth a pretty little insect, something like a dragon-fly in appearance."

"O, mamma, please let us look for one. I should like to see a real living ant-lion so much!"

"You may look, my child, and I will try to help you, but I cannot give you much hope that you will be successful, for though the ant-lion abounds in France and Switzerland, it is seldom now found in England."—*Child's Companion.*



CHANGES OF THE ANT-LION.

pit, as he did the sand; but when they are too large for this he tries another plan. Crawling backwards to the place where the stone may be, it thrusts its tail underneath, and gradually pushes it upon its back. This done, he marches slowly and carefully up the sides of his pit, and rolls off the great stone at the top.

"What a clever little creature, mamma. I am sure he deserves his dinners and suppers, after taking so much pains."

"When the pit is really done the ant-lion reaps the fruit of

The slippery sand slides from under his feet, he tries to save himself, but only falls the faster, down, down into the very jaws of the lion below. Sometimes, however, it may happen that the poor little victim is able to stop himself half-way, and in haste he will try to scramble back to the top. But the lion from the bottom of the den, with his six sharp eyes, has spied him out, and quick as thought he shovels heaps of sand upon his head, and throws them up, one after another, upon the runaway. This destroys his last hope of a rescue;

have been any, for I cannot imagine how, if there had been, I could have forgotten it. I don't believe anybody can ever forget the misery of having told a lie. It would be as hard as to forget how the toothache feels after you have had it once.

When I was a little girl, I went to a little school, which was kept by a very little lady, in a very little house. The little lady herself lived in another little house, which was divided from the little school-house only by a little garden. I did not know then how little

THE FIRST TIME.

SARAH HOLM, IN ST. NICHOLAS.

Perhaps I ought to have said, instead of "The First Time," "The first time that I can remember," for I was eight years old when I told the lie which I am going to confess now, and I am afraid I might have told some others before it; but I do not remember one; and on the whole I do not believe there could