



DUEL BETWEEN A LIZARD AND A SCORPION.

SOMETHING ABOUT LIZARDS.

Oh, the kingdom of the lizards!—brown, black, olive-green, leaf-tailed, brown-tailed, turnip-tailed, banded, crested, speckled, but every one a lizard.

In the above statement I did not exhaust the list of colors in the lizard kingdom. We find tints of blue, red, chestnut and yellow. Other features we will notice as together we look at this large, widely-scattered family.

When the spring sun shines on the green lizard, its color is brightest. That master-painter, the sun, when he passes his brush over the earth, does not forget the members of this family. In return, this creature loves the sun. It is just a lazy loafer, seemingly, in localities bathed in sunshine. If one thrust his hand forward as if to seize it, the loafer is gone; he has darted into some safe retreat. Patience and kindness will tame him, and he will come at last and breakfast on gathered flies in one's hand.

There is a lizard called the official skink, which might be loosely translated as the medicinal skink. Once it was highly valued by the doctors. They dried it; they pounded it, and gave it to their patients. "Lizard" was reputed to be a wonderful healer. It is said that the doctors would sometimes prove their belief in this panacea by taking a dose themselves.

This was only fair. They did not hesitate to swallow some of their other remedies, such as "the burnt liver of a hyena," and "the moss from a dead man's skull" was not a dose too difficult for them. Do you laugh? Coming generations may smile and wonder at some of our remedies.

And here is the broad-headed plestiodon, but I will ticket him with an easier name by which he is known—the scorpion lizard. He is a native of our continent; and if he can find the forsaken home of a woodpecker, say, thirty or forty feet above the ground, he is pleased. Without asking who the landlord is, and what the rent may be a month, he drops in at once and is happy. He is called venomous, and can indeed put so much strength into his bite that people will have occasion to remember him at least an hour or two. So that very popular visitor, the mosquito, has enough virulence in his stinger to make us wish him at the bottom of the Atlantic, and yet neither scorpion, lizard nor mosquito is a dreadful creature. This lizard is fond of a home in a tree, lurches on insects, and likes to sip the dew

sparkling on the leaves. Another North American lizard is the five-lined plestiodon, or, as common folks would say, the blue-tail.

And who is this eyeing us out of circular eyelids? This is a house gecko, the fan-foot, common in Egypt. He is an agile traveller, running over the floor or a wall, and is nimble in picking up a bug as he goes along. While common, he is not popular. In Cairo, they nickname him about-burs, or "father of the leprosy." The common gecko, or ringed gecko, is very much at home in India. By day it hides, and here it differs from the lizard that loves the sunshine; for at night the common gecko darts out of his retreat, and is such a soft-footed traveller that ignorant people in India give him a place among supernatural beings. When cold weather sets in, he retires to winter barracks, and is believed to be nourished by means of "two fatty masses" on its body.

CLOTHES THE BIRDS WEAR.

We usually call birds' clothing dresses, and not coats. These dresses are made of feathers, and many of them are very beautiful, much more beautiful than those which girls wear.

Birds change their dresses once in a while, as cats and dogs change their coats. The new dresses of most birds are just

like the old ones, but a few birds have two dresses which look very unlike. They wear one dress a part of the year, and the put on the other. Sometimes the new dress is so unlike the old one that we think the birds are of a different kind.

Some birds have bright red dresses, some have green ones, some have blue ones and some have yellow ones.

A few birds wear only plain blue, brown, or gray clothes, and never put on any bright colors; others have dresses, which there are many colors mingled together, so as to make a very showy garment.

The bluebird, which we often see in the summer, wears a dress which is almost a blue.

A woodpecker, which comes about in the summer, and sometimes in the winter, has a bright red cap, a blue-black coat, and nice white vest.

The blue jay wears a light blue head dress and a shawl of the same color. Her underclothes are nearly white, and her overcoat, or cloak, is deep blue, with white border.

There are very many birds, and if we keep our eyes open when we walk along the streets and in the fields, we shall see some very beautiful dresses.

THE WASP AND THE BEE.

A wasp met a bee that was just buzzing by. And he said, "Little cousin, can you tell me why you are loved so much better by people than I?"

"My back shines as bright and as yellow as gold, and my shape is most elegant too. Behold, yet nobody likes me for that, I am told."

"Ah, cousin," the bee said, "'tis all very true; but if I had half as much mischief to do, indeed they would love me no better than you."

"You have a fine shape and a delicate wing; they own you are handsome, but there's one thing they cannot put up with, and that is your sting."

"My coat is quite homely and plain, you see, yet nobody ever is angry with me, because I'm a humble and innocent bee."

From this little story let people beware. Because like the wasp, ill-natured they will never be loved if they're not so fair.