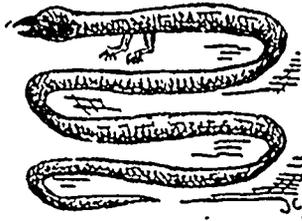


"Brevirostris" would prove a valuable fish food if it were possible for any kind of a fish to live in Elk Lake.



Now we come to the "Delander Acuticosta," of which the above is a speaking likeness. He is more to be dreaded than any other member of the collection. Of course he comes from Elk Lake. When taken into the human system he causes much uneasiness by destroying the coats of the stomach with his sharp beak and claws. After destroying the coats of the stomach he starts in on the waistcoat. He is not affected by boiling water and seems to thrive on vermifuge, bitter aloes, poison oak, etc., but sulphuric acid in heavy doses before breakfast will knock him cold even on a hot day.



The above cut is a very successful representation of the "Manticoira Latipennis." Born in the mud he remains quiet for ten days. Then he begins to grow legs, wings, claws and other apparatus necessary in his business. His food consists of decayed vegetable matter of which there are immense deposits in Elk Lake. When full grown he leaves the water and goes ashore to hunt grasshoppers. If grasshoppers are scarce he turns his attention to field mice, chickadees and even wood-peckers. In appearance he closely resembles the common alligator. A member of the British Association expressed the opinion that he was in fact a bona fide alligator and would grow to a length of fourteen feet if transplanted to a tropical climate. He was particularly interested in this insect and offered six bits cash on the nail for a healthy full grown specimen. He said further:

"Though I have frequently seen mention made in your daily papers of extraordinary reptiles coming through water pipes and coupled with such announcements a good deal of abuse of your town council for not making an effort to procure a supply of pure water for the city, yet I think that the discovery of a job lot of insects and reptiles such as we have seen to-day, all of them entirely new to science, entitles each member of the council to a leather medal accompanied by a neat

speech from scientific bodies on both sides of the Atlantic. The inconvenience of drinking water containing alligators, hornbugs and snails or whatever they may be called is slight, and the danger to life may be averted by taking a "corker" of Leith whiskey or sulphuric acid on an empty stomach in the morning; but even if a life should be lost now and then, it is nothing compared to what science has gained by the discovery of so many new species." He also said he heard it stated that each member of the council owned a distillery, and therefore wanted to discourage water drinkers and start them drinking whiskey before breakfast, a practice which would inevitably lead to family disturbances and general demoralization. This, he said, was absurd, as the town was not large enough to support so many distilleries. He heard that the water was so full of mud and organic matter that it was not fit to bathe in. He said he *did* find the water pretty thick but got over the difficulty by standing around after bathing until he got thoroughly dry and then brushing himself off with a whisk broom. He went into the whole question very thoroughly and expressed his intention of coming out next spring and camping at Elk Lake for the purpose of studying the habits of the reptiles. "Meantime," said he, "catch all you can, and tell the boys at the livery stables and breweries to save all rare specimens, and I will pay spot cash for them when I come back. I've got a little scheme in my head. I believe they can be fixed up with a little vinegar and whole peppers, and then sold for clam chowder, or put up in cans and exported to China; but mum's the word," and with a wink full of deep meaning he started off towards the Provincial Museum.

The opinions of such a man carry much weight, and when he comes back next spring the results of his experiments will be awaited with deep interest by our citizens. Meantime there is in the public bosom a deep distrust of Elk Lake water. Citizens of Victoria are used to the reptiles, but they frighten the unscientific stranger. A year or so ago a strong prohibitionist came from the East to deliver lectures, and organize a temperance crusade. On the evening of his first lecture he was found by a member of the committee holding on to an awning post on the south end of Government Street. "Shay, ole boy, lemme two bits. No ushe preach temperansh thish town—people can't drink, hic, water—watersh full of alligatorsh—swallowed two thish mornin'—whiskey'll kill 'em, bet yer life—Less have nother drink—Let her go, old socks. Hooray! hooray! Haven't hic, enjoyed myself so much since I

left home," and he subsequently refused point blank to come back and lecture on temperance until the city found some means of procuring a supply of pure water.

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