

# THE TURN OF THE WHEEL

"That be a relief!" exclaimed Micah Daggle as he threw down his hammer and drew his sleeve across his forehead. It was striking one o'clock. They could just hear the quarters from the Stent parish church, about a third of a mile from the Rathole.

The other workers in Micah's shop also uttered exclamations of gladness. It was a blazing July day outside the shed. Inside the shed, where three fires were glowing, it was as hot as it well could be without being unbearable. These other workers comprised Mrs. Daggle, Ruth Daggle, Adam Gray, and a boy. It was almost a family affair, this chain-shop of the Rathole. Adam Gray, though no relation, in fact, had won Ruth's heart, and was to marry her when—

But this brings us to the pathos of the place. Trade was extremely bad. It had steadily worsened for years. The big chain-factories had swallowed up scores of the domestic workshops. Not absorbed them, giving compensation for so doing; but driving them into extinction by the facilities they naturally obtained for underselling them. What became of them afterwards no one knew. The men and women left the neighbourhood some well-nigh broken-hearted. The Stent district, though spoilt by these factories, is not without attraction; and after all, home is home, be it a palace in a shire, a hotel in Stent, or a single room in Whitechapel alley.

The Daggs had come down in the world. Micah's father had been reputed a well-to-do man. The bankers of Stent had treated him with a certain deference that meant much in a pecuniary sense. His bills were always met, with never a word about extended time. There was then, too, a certain rule plenty in the old red house; meat on the table every day, and no lack of bones for the three white bulldogs which for fifty ten years seemed to occupy almost too much of old Daggle's spare time.

But the old man died one day, with a queer sort of smile on his face. "Nebbs, Micah, thou'lt be a rich man—molbe thou won't," he murmured.

This oracular statement did not affect Micah much at the time. But after the funeral—with abundance of feathers, and half Stent at their doors uttering exclamations of rapture—Micah took himself to the bank in his sleek Sunday clothes, and asked the manager to please to tell him how much money he had inherited. The old man had been mightily reserved. He always drew the wages himself, and attended to cheques and all commercial matters. His son was just a paid employee of his—rather more favoured than the rest of course, but little else. But the banker had merely lifted his eyebrows and said there was nothing in his hands to the late Mr. Daggle's credit. There had been once upon a time, he allowed, a matter of thousands; but it had all been withdrawn. He rather fancied the chain-maker had invested it in land, was exceedingly surprised at the deceased man's reticence, and was sorry he could say nothing of a more satisfactory kind for Micah.

Time passed, and after a while as they did on this particular day of disappointment. No one knew in the least what had become of old Daggle's money. Micah had questioned every lawyer within ten miles of Stent on the subject, had, in fact, become liable for a astonishing number of six-and-eight-pence suits, to no purpose. And as the outcome, it appeared, was the heir to nothing in the world but the old workshop, the old red house adjacent, and a strip of soft ground behind, some twenty yards by five, which sloped towards a certain black brook between elder-bushes, famous for the size and number of its rats. Hence the style of the immediate neighborhood: Rathole.

Micah had married three or four years before his father's death, and Ruth was born. In compliance with local custom, Mrs. Daggle, when she was freed from the embarrassments attendant upon little Ruth's birth, had entered the workshop and wielded the hammer with the rest. She was a large woman, of the common Stent type: fond of red gowns, shawls and drooping feathers to her shoulders, with a very red face and great arms which made nothing of the ten-pound hammers. And she was not slow to proclaim her opinion that her husband's father had behaved very shabbily in going away with the money she, in common with others, believed had been saved up for the next generation.

Since then, all sorts of disconcerting events had happened. The first large factory had been established—a huge haunting building of red brick with a tall chimney. Others had followed it; and now daily you might see men and lasses in troops entering the gates of the various workshops. Trade had languished, and the price of materials had risen, while the ability of Micah's customers to pay enhanced values had gone down. Little by little the old Daggle connection had died off. It was not easy—it seemed these were impossible—to get new patrons. There was no money to be had. Nor was it easy to get work done to grub and hammer in the poky little domestic forge, when in the large establishments there were higher wages, better and more extensive society, and where the sanitary conditions were better cared for.

Thus, from eight paid hammerers, the workshop had fallen to one—young Adam Gray. The old lad was a good charge of one of the bellows was of small account. Adam Gray was an anomaly in Stent. He had none of the brag, self-assertive ways of the other chainmakers; nor did he care two pence about pigeon-flying, horse-racing, coursing, or poaching, which were the favorite holiday pursuits of the districts. He was a quiet, almost a reflective, fellow, with long hair and a reflective look. Mrs. Daggle did not think much of him; but she forebore to tell him so, fearful lest he, like his predecessors, should straightway give notice. Micah, on the other hand, had a certain regard for the lad. There was something in Adam's face and in such of his mind as he exhibited that convinced Mrs. Daggle that his assistant was not, as she playfully expressed it, more than once, "such a fool as he looked." Adam had a fine pair of brown eyes. He was, besides, strong in the arm and phenomenon of industry.

Ruth Daggle had entered the workshop in her tenth year. That was before state legislation made it penal to employ young girls at hard chain-work. She was a delicate little slip of maidenhood, and Adam, from the first, resented seeing her little arms bared to such work as she had to do. The attachment that grew up naturally between them increased with the years. Ruth, though distinctly pretty in a fragile way, was almost as shy a girl as Adam was diffident among mankind. The two went about together, much to the amusement of Stent. Mrs. Daggle did not appreciate such a courtship. But Micah said: "Let 'a be—the lad's a good un, and the wench loves him. I'll be no comin' between 'em."

It was no matter to Stent in the Daggle household when Micah flung away his hammer and breathed with satisfaction. He adopted the conventional division of the day that Adam might have the less cause for discontent with the lower rate of wages he received, and, for Ruth's sake, received willingly. All four left the workshop as if it were a purgatory, as in truth it was that day.

"Put on thy coat, wench," said Micah when he saw Ruth bare-armed to the shoulder, and with her dress open at the throat, inhaling the scant July breeze with avidity. Her little face was sadly pale, and her blue eyes seemed preternaturally large. But ere Micah had finished speaking Adam had anticipated him.

"I dunnot want it, Adam," murmured the girl as she fledged under the cloak.

"You'd catch a cold, else; you are such a one for colds, Ruth."

A sudden rattle of pelulance took possession of the girl. It was not wonderful. The poor lass had been worked beyond her strength. Chain-making is never an agreeable employment. The hot days of summer had told upon her.

"I'd like rarely to catch a cold as should carry me right away to the churchyard—that I would," she exclaimed. Tears broke from the blue eyes as she said these naughty, though not unpardonable words.

Micah looked at his daughter in surprise and his face assumed an expression of grievous anxiety. None knew better than he, how little chance there seemed of excusing Ruth from the work she did in the forge. The bellows were to be blown. The lad could not attend to two pairs at once; nor could he, Micah, afford to pay another hand. Things seemed almost desperate with him.

"Come my wench," he said nevertheless, with a tone of tenderness that in the grimed and wrinkled man was very touching—"keep up thy heart; joy cometh in the morning. The book says—'Bring her in, Adam, lad, to her dinner. I would not be surprised, not if, if there was to be a bit of pork on the table to-day. Thou wert allers a good little un for pork, Ruth.'"

The girl surrendered herself to Adam.

"I'm so tired," she whispered. "I didn't mean to bother poor feyther."

Adam stooped and kissed the pale face, where a tear was beginning to run. "Your father's right," he said. "Never fear; it'll be better by-and-by. I had a black dream last night—it goes by contraries, you know, dear. I'll work the extra this evening, and you shall go to five."

The tear-dimmed look that Ruth gave him was enough reward to Adam for his own self-sacrifice.

Then they went in to dinner, which did in fact include some salt pork with the potatoes. Salt pork, potatoes, and bread do not make up a great meal; but they dined worse three days in the week.

Yet another shock was destined, however, to come upon Micah Daggle that afternoon. They had hardly begun to work again when a black-coated young man appeared with a paper. "Mr. Branstone has sent me with this, Mr. Daggle," he said. "I'm sorry to have to bring it."

"What is it, sir?" asked the chain-maker, looking about for his iron spectacles. "There be no papers de yet awhile."

"It's about the mortgage. Those people want to build another factory, and unless you can pay, I'm afraid they mean to foreclose, take possession, you know, and just pull down your place."

"Pull down this 'ere house, which was my gran'feather's?" exclaimed Daggle.

"That's just it, Mr. Daggle. But you must try and find the money."

"I canna do that, sir. I'd as well hope to find a gold mine. Well-a-day, it be hard!—How much time do they give me?"

"A month, Mr. Daggle."

"One month—only a month. Well if the Lord dunnot provide in that time, they shall have their will o' me, sir—I wish you good-day."

August opened very wet in Stent. The black brook of the Rathole surged in its bed with a riotous music that was never heard except in flood-times. For a week it rained daily—heavy tempestuous downpours, with big drops. It was good weather neither for farmers nor chain-makers.

Micah Daggle and his shop were, however, less concerned about it than the weather, than about the calamity that was impending over them. On the 14th of the month, if money was not found, they would have to go elsewhere.

"I'll just break my heart, though I winna say nowt about it," said Micah to Adam one day. "To which young Gray made no reply. What reply could he have made? There were snatches of talk between them about America, or joining one of the large factories as paid hands. It would have to be one or the other. There was no money for the passage to New York. The issue, therefore, seemed a foregone conclusion. But it was a sad come-down for Micah, whose father and grandfather had both been independent employers of labor themselves.

In Stent as has been like that for years, an years an' never the worse or it."

Adam looked dubious, and his eyes wavered between Ruth and the tallow candle in the kitchen, which could be seen guttering at a considerable angle on the table. "I'll fetch Jake Carter," he exclaimed as he snatched up his cap; "he'll know if it's safe."

Jake Carter soon came, laughing at the idea that there was any real danger in a house so slightly tilted, and then went away, refusing the glass of beer that was offered to him.

An hour after this the house was wrapped in utter darkness. The Daggles and Adam were all abed, and the heavy rain and the noisy brook echoed about it.

But Jake Carter's wisdom on this occasion was at fault. Towards one o'clock, when the heavens seemed like to be wholly liquidated upon the earth, there was another resounding crack throughout the house, and in an instant the back part of the building, on the side which had already yielded, broke into the ground. The loss of equilibrium sent the chimney pots flying; and one of the inner walls fell with a crash. The lesser noise of breaking china and sliding furniture could also be heard, followed by a scream from Ruth, and Micah's and Mrs. Daggle's voices intermingled.

Adam slept on the ground-floor, in the room in which Micah's father had died. It was just here that the subsidence was most emphatic. He awoke with a sense of calamity upon him, heard the clamour of the general ruin, and was then sensible that his head was much lower than his heels. In this uncomfortable position he heard something else. It was not the chink of gold pieces in numbers, then his recollection of the sound as he had heard it in the bank when he had changed a cheque for Micah was much disordered for the moment. However, he did not heed this agreeable music. He was much encumbered, and all his wits were necessary to enable him to get out of bed and grovel upon his hands and knees towards the door. Ruth's cries much startled him.

An hour passed, and then all the four members of the household were reunited outside in the drenching night. No one was hurt. Ruth had been merely frightened. She was quite calm again, now that Adam had her in charge.

They went to a neighbour's house, where they were given such accommodation as was possible. Here it was that Adam recalled to mind the noise of gold pieces.

"Micah," he said, if there is not money in the house, my hearing is at fault. It was like bagfuls of it breaking against each other.

At first the chain-maker made light of the matter. "You wert but half awake, lad, an' it was the glasses buzzin' about your head!" Later, however, he suddenly became serious. "See," he whispered; "the daylight is here, an' it don't rain so much. What dost say—us two'll just step across an' look at the old place."

Mrs. Daggle, too, wished to accompany them, mindful of her Sunday gowns, a favourite box of tea, and certain articles she wished to secure from possible ruin. But Micah bade her lie down again and keep Ruth company.

They had much ado to get into the building, and could move in it only on their hands and knees. But the moment they were in Adam's room the truth of his tale was evident. The floor had started from the wall and knocked out several bricks, and with the bricks three boxes had come out. These latter lay in a heap in the sunken corner with a number of sovereigns still in them. As for the coins that had got dislodged, they were in double handfuls in the corner of the room. There was also another similar box still in the hole whence the others had tumbled, and this, too, proved to be full of gold.

The two men sat on the floor and looked at each other. Adam was the first to speak. "I knew that good would come of it, Micah; though I'll allow I hadn't much hope how it would come."

"It's my feyther's savings—there be a doubt in the matter," retorted Micah. "Fraise the Lord, for sure good hev come from this evil."

Then they set to work and collected the coins. They replaced them in the boxes, which were just ordinary workshop boxes for chain-litter, and without lids. And carrying them in their arms, sweetly conscious of their weightiness, they returned to the house, where Mrs. Daggle and Ruth lay awaiting them.

"See what we've found, my dears," cried old Micah joyfully as he plumped his burden upon the floor. "We're rich for life—all four on us.—An' we'll hev your invention put up in Lunnun, Adam, where they're all fine an' honest, I've heard tell. An' you shall hev the wench here whenever she likes to say 'I'll hev you.'"

Adam laughed somewhat shyly. Mrs. Daggle was too much occupied with the gold to heed anything else.

"I think, Master," said Adam, "I'll be wise to strike while my chance is warm.—Will it be 'Yes,' Ruth, if I ask you now a quarter of six to buy tobacco at the store, this evening, with a happy light in her eyes. 'I've loved you ever since you were a mite—you know I have,' proceeded Adam. 'Will you be my wife for better or worse, Ruth?'"

"The 'Yes, Adam' of her reply was fully cordial as the young man could have desired it to be.

There were six thousand five hundred sovereigns in the boxes—quite enough, as Micah said, to set up a big chain-factory if he had a mind to build it. But he preferred to live on the interest of it in a snug house outside Stent. The five hundred pounds that were appropriated to further Adam's invention turned out a remarkably good investment. It did not result in a fortune, but it brought in a very comfortable living for Adam and his wife.

The new British coinage will bear the Queen's head without her crown. A dish-washing machine has been for some time in use in a London hotel. With two persons to attend to it, it washes one thousand dishes an hour.

The streets of London are cleaned between eight in the evening and nine in the morning. Many of the carriages-ways are washed daily by means of a hose, and the courts and alleys are cleaned by the poorer classes are cleaned once a day.

Perhaps the most striking thing about the new Paris fashions is their extreme simplicity; beautiful materials are used, but the cut is in every case innocent of any elaborations, and the only trimming consists of plain, handsome embroideries of gold galoons.

A French perfumer has been making tests of California roses, and discovered that they possess 20 per cent. more of the volatile oil than French roses. This means the development of a new industry for California. The French perfume factories of the town of Grasse alone give employment to 5,000 persons. It is said that fifty cents per pound is paid for some flowers.

# YOUNG FOLKS.

## A STRANGE RETRIBUTION.

BY EDMUND COLLINS.

There are still in Canada and Maine vast stretches of primeval forest, in many parts of which the sound of the lumberman's axe has never been heard. Wolves have disappeared almost entirely from these regions, but bears growl and travel everywhere. The lumberman and the traveler, however, are not afraid of bears, for it is only in spring, when Bruin comes out of his den, lean and hungry, and cannot find insects, mice, buds and berries, that he will attack cattle or human beings.

But there is a beast found over a wide stretch of territory which will sometimes, when not needing food, attack a man and tear him to pieces. He is an abiding terror to all woodsmen, and the choppers and teamsters huddle close around the camp-fire on winter nights, as some comrade relates a story about the vicious beast. This northern terror is known to every man who goes into the woods as the Indian Devil.

The Indian Devil is a creature that sleeps and rests in the branches of tall pine, spruce fir, and other trees which have thick leaves. It is really the tree panther, though descriptions of him in scientific quarters are very meagre. He is a great jumper, and can go for miles along the top of the forest by springing from tree to tree. There are great bunches of muscles on his thighs and shoulders; he has long, sharp fangs and cruel, rending claws, which he can draw in much as a cat does. His favorite method of seizing his prey is to lie quietly hidden in the branches of a tree and spring upon the head of his victim. He gives no warning, but falls like death out of the top of a tree as you pass.

The beast is so malignant and so fierce that the Indians believed he was a real devil. Hence his name.

In the region lying along the upper waters of the Northwest Miramichi, in the province of New Brunswick, was the hut of an old trapper who lived all the winter in the woods. He invited two lads, George and James Nelson, to come, and spend a fortnight in his shanty, promising them plenty of shooting.

One day the boys set out alone from the hut on a moose hunt, and the old man went to examine his traps. The snow was deep, but they could travel swiftly on their snow-shoes.

The tracks of a moose were soon discovered, and the brothers, with wild enthusiasm, set out to run the animal down. I may say that the way to capture a moose when the snow is deep in the woods is to "run him down" on snow-shoes, for the animal sinks to the hips and shoulders in the deep snow.

I consider the killing of wild game taken at such disadvantage as this, hardly sportsmanlike, but it is their way in these woods. So the boys riddled the fine animal with their bullets, skinned him, took each a portion of a hind quarter, and set out for the trapper's shanty.

When the sun was getting pretty low, and they were still three miles from camp, they came up a beaten road where logging teams had been passing all day. They had not gone far, when they saw two men coming after them, each having a pair of snow-shoes upon his back, and one of them a disabled fox-trap.

The boys waited when the strangers shouted to them, but they were sorry that they had done so, for they felt an instinctive dread of the men on scanning them closely. They were what is known in Canada as *metis*—that is, part Indian and part French. They had dark, oily faces, hair as black as the feathers of a crow, and sullen brown eyes.

The older one, and the more evil-looking of the two, said, on coming up: "Live about here much?"

George was spokesman, and replied: "No; we are staying a few days in Billy Rogers' shanty."

"You don't want only one of these quarters of meat," said the older man, walking up to James. "Better let us have this one," laying his hand on the venison.

George at once turned to the impudent fellow.

"If you had asked properly, we should have given you some; now you can't have any."

The fellow walked back a few paces and glowered on the brothers; then the two intruders spoke a few words in *patois* in low tones.

The leaders, stepping up to the boys, then said: "We are vora poor men—vora poor. Perhaps the young 'metis' would give us a quarter of venison to buy tobacco at the store." George, who was very generous and could not resist an appeal like this, took out his pocket-book, opened it and probed around till he found four twenty-five cent pieces, which he handed to the man.

But he saw that he had made a mistake in letting the *metis* see the contents of his pocket-book, which contained a roll of five-dollar bills and five or six sovereigns.

The eyes of the swarthy stranger gleamed when he saw the money, then, in an instant, he was asked: "Going to stay to-night with old Billy Rogers?"

"Yes; we shall be with him for several days."

Jingling the quarters in his hand, the man turned away, and, bowing, said: "Merci, *mon frere*, am mooch oblige; we go across throo de woods."

The two evil-looking men put on their snow-shoes and turned abruptly into a dense forest of spruce.

It was now growing dark, but the road gleamed white through the dusk and it was easy to follow.

were startled by a terrible cry. It seemed to come from the road about a quarter of a mile behind them, and resembled the very high-pitched shrieking of a woman in great distress.

The boys shuddered at the sound. Then it was repeated again and again, filling the forest with its terrifying echoes.

"It is a woman, George," said James, as his face grew white, "and I fear those two men are doing her some harm."

"It is not a woman's voice," said George. "Come on; we have no time to lose now. It is the screaming of an Indian Devil."

"Then, perhaps we ought to drop our loads and run!" If not, it will overtake us.

"Hold on, yet, for a little! It is coming along the tree-tops, and has scented us, because the wind is blowing straight toward us. But I don't think it can catch up to us before we reach the Burnt Swamp; then the beast will have to take to the ground, where it cannot be half so dangerous as when in the trees."

"I think, George, we ought to throw away one load and cut the other in two. We can hide one load, rig it in the snow, and get it to-morrow."

"A good idea! We'll put it here."

And in a few seconds, George's load was thrust under the snow.

Three or four cuts of the small axe, carried for the moose hunt, and the other quarter was divided. Each brother pushed, shouldered his lightened burden and started off at a run.

All the while the enemy kept up his crying, and the sound grew nearer and nearer. The boys could not keep up a running pace for long, as they had tramped from sunrise and eaten very little food, but they were nearing the Burnt Swamp now, where the dead pine trunks would be obliged to run along the ground.

I should here inform my readers that guns were of little use to the boys, for the night was pitchy black, and it would be impossible to get a "sight" on an animal like that, which assaults his victim always by springing upon it.

Presently the edge of the wood was reached, but the blood-curdling screams of the terrible pursuer were also near at hand.

Half a mile away lay the shanty of the trapper, but as it stood in the heart of a grove of tall spruces, the greatest danger was threatened there, as the animal would at once take to the trees on leaving the burnt land trap.

The boys hurried more and more, but soon heard a crunching sound in the snow, about fifty yards behind them.

"Of with our loads, James! Let us put them in here. Now we must defend ourselves."

It was the work of only a moment to thrust the two large bunches under the snow, so that the leamsters should not see them in the daylight, and to get back to the beaten road.

There was no sound, however, now; but the two brothers paused every minute or so in their mad run to listen. George grasped James' arm.

"What is that black thing, just there? See, it's moving!"

"That's he! Look! He has gone under the brush. Be careful; he is sure to spring on us. We must keep looking. I doubt if we'll get a chance to fire, but I may be able to settle him with the axe."

The guns were muzzle-loaders, and to strike the brute with the stock would likely explode the barrel, and for this reason George depended on the axe.

"Of course," George added, "we may have a chance to shoot."

Both ran again, not speaking a word, and still hearing no sound, they began to believe their pursuer had abandoned the chase, when a dark object shot from the bare branches of the back-track, with a horrible shriek, striking George on the head in his fall, but failing to seize him.

The blow, however, knocked the boy down and stunned him for a few seconds, the attacker meanwhile hiding somewhere near on the path-side.

Some one, indeed, was hurt, for there were faint moanings all night around the shanty, and the dawn revealed one of the *metis*, with a load of buckshot in his legs, writhing in the snow and unable to get away. The other evil-looking companion had fled, leaving his friend to his fate.

Close by the shanty an Indian Devil, nearly six feet long, lay dead upon the snow. The beast had followed the boys to the shanty and gone into a tree closely to be ready to spring when one of them came out. The *metis* had also followed them, and was about descending through the smokehole when the panther dropped upon one of the villains. This was the cause of the violent yell, but it probably saved the lives of the inmates of the camp.

# SOME VENEZUELA SUPERSTITIONS.

Women, it is Believed, Bring Death to a Snake-bitten Person.

Has any one ever heard of the snake men of the Alto Orinoco? In Venezuela there are all manner of snakes, from the deadly twelve-inch coral snake, whose bite is death, to the tiger-striped Tunting snake and the boa constrictor. Most persons know the habits of the boa constrictor, but know nothing of the tiger hunter, which is quite as remarkable in its way. Nothing will better illustrate the point than the story of an actual occurrence in this modern age of science and civilization.

While the English railroad from Tucacas to Barquisimeto was under construction an Englishman holding an important position in the work was bitten by a rattlesnake (here known as the *culebra*). The man was forthwith taken to the English quarters and put to bed. While the English doctor was being summoned the wives of the Englishmen at work on the road hurried about and tried to do what they could to help the sufferer. In the midst of the confusion a native came running in with the kind-hearted intention of curing the man.

"Turn all the women out," said he. "What the devil!" said the Englishman's friends. "What for?"

"Their eyes are death," explained the native. "The man will not live if they look upon him."

With that the Englishmen turned the native out of the house, and the bitten man himself declared that if the English doctor could not cure him no superstitious native could. The physician came in hot haste and worked until the perspiration ran down his face in little streams. The woman entered around and did what they could. In exactly two hours and a half the man was dead. The kind-hearted native heard of it, shrugged his shoulders, and went his way.

On the following day a native laborer was very badly bitten by a rattlesnake near the same place. He was not of sufficient account for the well-paid English doctor to bother with, so the native laborers carried him off to a house and turned all the woman out and sent for herbs and leaves and such things. They worked at him for an hour or so in the way that the natives and Indians know, and the next day he was back at work as though nothing had happened. The Englishmen could not explain this, and they cannot do so even to this day.

Here is another story on the same subject: A native woman's ten-year-old son was bitten most frightfully by some sort of venomous serpent. Did she rush to him, clasp him in her arms, and try to cure him? Not she. The only thing that she did was to send for her husband, and to help him and her female servants far away from the suffering lad's presence. Her husband and a neighbor or two hustled about and looked after the boy, and it was only on the third day that she looked upon her son. If she had looked upon him while the snake's poison was in his blood the natives had no doubt her eyes would have caused him to vomit blood and die. Yet this woman loved her boy with all a mother's devotion.

When the exposition was held at Caracas in 1883, the year of the Bolivar centennial, two men from some remote inland place had on exhibition a box full of exceedingly venomous reptiles. Merely to look at these poisonous snakes was enough to make one shudder. One day when the place was crowded the box was overturned, and five of the ugly things got out and began to run about in a remarkably lively sort of way. A tiger late loose would not have created half the excitement and confusion. People went raving mad in their desire to get away. Tables, chairs, and show cases were overturned by the frantic mob, and for a time it looked as though half the crowd would be bitten to death or trampled under foot before they could get away.

The man who told this story pulled off his coat and threw it over one of the snakes, and the two snake exhibitors caught the others in their naked hands. One of the men was bitten several times—so badly bitten, in fact, that it seemed to be impossible that he could live twenty minutes.

His companion knew just exactly what to do and did it. In the first place he called for blankets or pieces of cloth or anything that he could get, and with feverish haste he wrapped up his bitten companion completely out of sight. This was done with a haste that well nigh amounted to madness. Then the helpless man was carried across the street to his hotel and put to bed. His companion worked over him for two hours, and at the end of that time rested, with a sigh of relief.

"Why did you wrap him up in such haste?" asked the man who told this story. "To keep him away from the eyes of the women," replied the make exhibitor.

"What was the danger?"

"If women had looked upon him he would have vomited blood and died before we could have got him half way across the street."

This strange superstition is not confined to Venezuela by any means. The same thing is found in the Dutch island of Curacao, in the further West Indies, and also in the republic of Columbia. A Senator of the United States of Columbia said to an American visitor that although the fact was as familiar to him as the commonest detail of every-day life, yet he could not say why it was so. He added, however, that he believed the danger lay mostly in the case of women with child.

As to the snake men of the Alto Orinoco that is another matter. An American once lived in the house of an adopted member of the fraternity or tribe, notwithstanding that he can render a snake unconscious for many hours merely by blowing his breath on its head. A drop of his saliva will kill a snake almost instantly beyond all hope of resurrection.

In arranging ribbon belts, remember that the ends and loops can be tied in any place save at the back.

The ocean is more productive than the land. An acre of good fishing ground will yield more food than an acre on the best farm.

The Boston girl never hollers "hello" to the mouth of a telephone. She simply says as she puts the receiver to her ear, "I take the liberty of addressing you via a wire charged with electricity."