

also, and came into the dining-room, when to her horror she found herself all alone and not more than six feet from the snake, which the cook had proclaimed to be a cobra. She dare not attack or move, so stood awaiting developments, when the snake crawled up close to the wall and under the edge of the bamboo mat which was a little bulged up. She then sprang upon the mat and tramped in excited fury for a little time, and to feel the thing writhing under her feet, supposing it to be a cobra, was a rather grizzly experience. After tramping it some, it managed to crawl out again, but so badly hurt that it was not much use for fighting, and as others had gathered with sticks by this time the excitement came to an end. But the nervous shock lasted for two or three days afterwards. When I received a letter from home, a few days later, on tour, this made rather interesting reading. Coming home from that tour one of the same kind of snakes ran into the canal ahead of the boat.

Just now as I am writing on the boat on tour, one of the coolies who are pulling the boat is killing a cobra, which he now holds up on his stick for me to see. Thus while we are in life we are in the midst of death.

We must keep a dim light burning all night in the bed-room, so that we can see the floor and what may be on it, in case one must rise. To put the foot down where one cannot see the floor is to make the hair rise on one's head.

We have had no very recent exciting experiences with carpet snakes, though we have had some sufficiently so, as when one evening one fell from the bottom of the study table drawer into Mrs. Chute's lap, and she, thinking it was her keys, was about to pick it up without looking, when she discovered what it was. And again when I was going up the stair leading to the top of the house, put my hand on one coiled around the railing. A servant had had the same experience the year before.

The Akidu compound has a good many trees in it, and on its boundary is a row of palm trees for a kind of hedge. These encourage the snakes to come, I am inclined to think. There is no wall around the compound, the only one in the mission so conditioned. A wall helps to keep the snakes out. If funds were sufficient we would be glad of a wall instead of a hedge of toddy palm trees which invites rather than repels the snakes. Besides, this toddy tree hedge is no use to stop all sorts of cattle that range the compound day and night.

There is no such a thing as a fence, in the American sense of that word, in India. There is no timber for such a purpose.

Two of our Christians have been killed by snakes this year. But we are not nervous over these dangers, knowing the Protector of our lives will keep us till our work is done. That old serpent, the Devil, is worse than all these reptiles combined. Pray for us in all our dangers from both.

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### Mildred's Guest.

(By Harold Farrington, in 'Wellspring'.)

Mildred Colton stood in the narrow hall window watching her mother as she stooped and slowly gathered up, one by one, the clothes that had been placed to dry on the closely cropped grass early that morning, before Mildred was awake.

The currant bushes by the fence in the yard seemed to nudge one another knowingly, while their leaves gossiped in surprise over the slow, languid movements of Mrs. Colton.

'It's but a short time that I've been away,' mused Mildred, reflectively, 'not quite a year, but she doesn't seem the same woman she was before I went to visit Aunt Mary—only that she's the same patient, loving mother; she wouldn't ever change in that respect, mother wouldn't'; and Mildred hurried down the stairs, out into the yard, and with her strong hands caught up the basket full of clean, white garments, and started on a run toward the side veranda. 'Stump you to catch me, mother mine!' she called.

She set down the basket, breathlessly, on the wooden steps, and waited for Mrs. Colton to come up.

'I'm not so spry as I once was, Mildred, or I'd have taken the stump. Somehow, lately—you can't tell, Mildred,' she broke off, abruptly, 'how much good it does me to have you round again!'

'But what were you going to say? Confess,' demanded Mildred, gently drawing her mother down on the step beside her. 'Oh, nothing.'

Yes, it was something, too! No secrets! Don't you recall how we made an agreement once—or, rather, I did, and you consented—out under the greening tree? It was when I had climbed into the tree to feed the little robins, and had torn my dress. I was trying to hide the tear with my apron when you came out. But you saw it, and then we agreed always to tell each other everything.'

'As I said, dear, it was really nothing, only I feel—well, sometimes I have dizzy spells. I guess it's because I'm tired after the spring cleaning; I'll get over it in a little while.'

Mildred looked anxiously into her mother's face. 'Now that I—'

'Have you got your trunk unpacked?' hurriedly interrupted Mrs. Colton, in order to change the subject. 'You know somehow I can't make myself realize that you've come home to stay, and will not until your things are hung up, and the trunk's in the attic, once more.'

'I was just finishing unpacking when I saw you taking in the clothes. I'll go right up, and then, little mother, you may just inform Mrs. Henry D. Colton that her daughter's got home to stay; that she isn't going off for a year again, and leave her with oceans of work to do.'

Mrs. Colton only partially succeeded in suppressing the 'thank look,' as Mildred used to call it, that crept into her face; it couldn't be wholly shut out, even if she did regard it as thoughtlessly selfish.

'Well, what you going to do?' Her chum's picture on the bureau seemed to ask the question, as Mildred sat down on the floor to meditate.

'Something; I don't know what. That's the thing to be decided. I wonder if I could do it!' she exclaimed, as by sudden inspiration.

She turned quickly to the picture. 'This I can tell you, I've decided so much! I've changed my mind about inviting you here this summer, as I'd planned. Instead of you, I'm going— Can't tell any more now. I've got to hurry and get unpacked, so as to go down and help mother,' and a look of secret expectancy took possession of Mildred's face.

'You're going to help in my plan,' she said, laying aside a large gingham apron that she had worn in the studio while at Aunt Mary's. 'I'll not hang you up;' this time it was a dark calico dress she had taken away from home, but which had hung for nearly a year on a closet hook in her aunt's city home, waiting in vain to be used.

'I'll not have any need of you,' and in another pile she placed a thin evening dress. 'Nor you, nor you, nor you,' and the useless pile grew perceptibly larger.

'There!' when the floor was cleared once more; 'now I'm ready to begin preparations. I hope all she needs is rest. Don't you tell, you gingham and calicoes, what we're going to do! We'll keep it secret, not even telling father and the boys.'

The next morning Mildred opened the blinds and aired out the parlor chamber.

'Going to have company?' asked Ralph, inquisitively, noticing the raised windows.

'Sometime, I imagine,' was Mildred's evasive answer. 'It's always well to be prepared.'

That afternoon Mildred drove with her father to the village. Her errand was to get some stamped linen and embroidery, silk.

'She has always been fond of needle work, but in late years her tastes have had little chance of being gratified,' thought Mildred, as she entered the one store in the village where fancy goods were sold.

'I know these will please her,' thought Mildred, as she selected the delicate materials. 'They'll bring back the old delight she took in such things, before the work grew so heavy.'

'Your mother's just about worn out; I almost wish I'd got her a tonic,' said Mr. Colton, abruptly, as they drove toward home. 'I wish, now you've got back, we could induce her to go away for a spell. She hasn't been away from home over night for nineteen years; not since your grandmother died. It hasn't been my fault,' apologetically, 'for I've done my best; but she just will not go!'

Unmindful of her promise to the gingham and calicoes, Mildred confided to her father the plan she had determined upon while unpacking and putting away her things.

'It seems just as though some one was coming,' thought Mrs. Colton, as she peeped into the spare room, which Mildred had so tastefully arranged. She was on an errand upstairs, and had to stop a moment to get her breath.

'I hope no one will come, though, till I feel better'n I do now.' She closed the door, softly. 'I'd like to stay in there a week and just rest!'

'Don't be in a hurry to get back, father,' cautioned Mildred, meaningly, the next day after dinner. 'Keep mother out just as long as you can.'

As soon as they had driven away, Mildred ran upstairs to add the finishing touches to the parlor chamber. She drew in the easy couch from her own room and threw over it a gay covering. On the table by the window she placed her set of George