

## The Snake's Den in the Gully

Written for The Western Home Monthly by J. D. A. Evans

THE least possible to remark is that the sight is reproachful, a spectacular array of viperous creation. At the base of a rugged ravine in the deep gullies northward of Clearwater, Southern Manitoba, is what in local parlance is known as the snakes' den, a cavernous winter retreat of reptilian life in the valley through which Cypress Creek winds its course amidst the high banksides of shale and gravel whereon the poplar and scrub oak grow, yet upon some of these, scant vegetation is existent.

Within recent date, the writer had been informed that a resort of the viperous family was located in this district of the gullies, a visit to which would attest the veracity of that which many persons would immediately adjudicate as of mythical origin, concoction of imaginative mind, but the mists of sceptical attitude are relegated into oblivion by the assertions of residents in the neighborhood, some of whom have visited this hillside retreat, to others dwelling within the district, the hibernial cavern's existence is based solely upon report, and in the villages, towns of this portion of Southern Manitoba, it is safe to assume that the percentage of people to whose knowledge the lollow with its loathsome contents is now being revealed, will possess dubious thought as to its existence, will not be small. The snakes' den in the gully is a reality, statement of fact, can be seen.

From a standpoint of number, to form any calculation of the reptilian assembly cannot be accomplished; it is possible to guess its figurative quantity but in haphazard fashion at many thousands; this would decidedly suggest itself to the observer. A wriggling mass, to whom advent of summer's days will mean movement to the ravinesides, woods, and meadowlands. The day of the writer's visit at the latter part of April was not of that balmy atmospheric condition which would stretch forth invitation to the crawling mass to emerge from its fastness of hibernial

### BEGAN YOUNG

#### Had "Nerves" from Youth.

"When very young I began using coffee and continued up to the last six months," writes a Southern girl.

"I had been exceedingly nervous, thin and very fallow. After quitting coffee and drinking Postum about a month my nervousness disappeared and has never returned." (Tea contains the same injurious drug, caffeine, found in coffee.) "This is the more remarkable as I am a Primary teacher and have kept right on with my work."

"My complexion now is clear and rosy, my skin soft and smooth. As a good complexion was something I had greatly desired, I feel amply repaid even though this were the only benefit derived from drinking Postum."

"Before beginning its use I had suffered greatly from indigestion and headache; these troubles are now unknown."

"I changed from coffee to Postum without the slightest inconvenience, did not even have a headache. Have known coffee drinkers, who were visiting me, to use Postum a week without being aware that they were not drinking coffee."

Name given by Canadian Postum Co., Windsor, Ont. Write for booklet, "The Road to Wellville."

Postum comes in two forms.

Regular (must be boiled).

Instant Postum doesn't require boiling but is prepared instantly by stirring a level teaspoonful in an ordinary cup of hot water, which makes it right for most persons.

A big cup requires more and some people who like strong things put in a heaping spoonful and temper it with a large supply of cream.

Experiment until you know the amount that pleases your palate and have it served that way in the future. "There's a Reason" for Postum.

retreat. A few specimens, perchance an advance guard of more venturesome disposition, might have been noticed in the vicinity of the den's exterior, possibly wearied of the retirement from haunts of summer days. At the place from which a view of this den was obtained, it was apparent that the viperous conglomeration was composed of that variety indigenous to a major number of Manitoban localities, the garter or striped snake, a reptile credited by the student of natural history as a harmless member of the viperous family, which is a correct claim; nevertheless, to the average individual, the snake of any species could be dispensed with.

From a size point, the snake life within the den was variable; every appearance was indicative that a species of minor length was predominant. It was possible to observe some which were not of this characteristic, and it is safe to estimate these to have obtained a measurement of five feet, whilst a few specimens were noticeable which were in excess of that figure. Verily a weird and detestable sight, reptilian coils, and it is possible that within the recesses of this cavernous excavation, were twisted together thousands of the creatures. A resident of thirty years in the locality states that this horrible resort amidst the stony ravineside was visited by him in the first year of his arrival. It is safe to assume that for many ages this den has constituted the liberal resort of a loathsome snake migration when snows of winter cover the scenes of their haunts in summer's pleasant days.

In the curriculum of creation, the snake has received the endowment of instinctive power that it may at the appointed season return to a place of retirement. From what distance the creatures are enabled to accomplish this end cannot be said, and, from they who have studied the question, hence in a position to speak, the average date of this crawling migration may be said to commence about the middle of the autumnal season, then, when sunshine's bright rays are indicative that the fields, woods, grass meadows have assumed the gorgeous raiments of summer, the den is depleted of its crawling inhabitants until climatic condition is compulsory of return.

There are few only such viperous resorts in Manitoba; one such may be seen in the valley of the Souris; another was, until some years ago, located in close proximity to the site of the Provincial Penitentiary at Stony Mountain; however, this den has been destroyed, a plan which should be highly recommended to any wherever existent.

A more repulsive spectacle than this cavern with its loathsome creation is difficult to imagine; and, perchance, readers of the Western Home Monthly may be cognizant of viperous retreats within their own localities.

### The Universal Failing

Miss Mary Wood, organizer of women's clubs, and a member of the bar, is another advocate of the theory that vanity is a failing of men no less than of women. To make her position sure, she tells on a judge, that brand of man which is supposed to be superior to ordinary human weaknesses:

His honor was thoroughly and picturesquely impressed with his deep knowledge of the law. As a judicial genius, he thought, he had old Rhadamanthus backed off the boards.

On one occasion, in the trial of a case, a young lawyer made a point, and, in support of it, began to read a few selections from Blackstone.

"It is presumed, sir," interrupted the judge, "that this court knows the law, and it cannot be dictated to. Another such infringement on the dignity of the court, sir, will be followed immediately by your going to jail for contempt."

"If it please your honor," quickly replied the young attorney, "I was merely reading this to you to show you what an old fool Blackstone was."

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