

The ship Prosperity, from London, reached one of the West India islands, in May, 1856. One of the seamen, named Jarvis, having left the vessel, wandered about the island on a sultry day, such as are frequent in that part of the globe.

Being oppressed by the intense heat, and fatigued with previous exertions, he inconsiderately laid himself down to sleep, reclining his head on a small hillock, opposite a rock about ten feet high. He lay on his back; and his eyes, after he had slept a little, were directed, as the first object that met them, to the perpendicular height between them.

What was his horror to discover on the top of it an enormous rattlesnake, with its keen and beautiful, yet malignant eyes, steadily fixed on him.

He felt as if charmed to the spot. The witchery of the serpent's eyes so irresistibly rooted him to the ground, that for the moment he did not wish to remove his own from his formidable opponent. The huge reptile gradually and slowly uncoiled its body, and all the while steadily keeping its eyes fixed on those of its intended victim. Jarvis now cried out, without being able to move:

"He'll bite me! Take him away! Take him away!"

The snake now began to writhe its body down a fissure in the rock, keeping its head elevated more than a foot from the ground. Its rattles made very little noise. It every moment darted out its forked tongue, its eyes became reddish and inflamed, and it moved rather quicker than at first. It was now within two yards of its intended victim, who by some means had dissipated the charm, and roused by a sense of his awful danger, determined to stand on the defensive.

To run away from it, Jarvis knew, would be impracticable, as the snake would instantly dart its whole body after him. He therefore resolutely stood up, and put a strong glove which he happened to have with him on his right hand.

He stretched out his arm. The snake approached slowly and cautiously towards him, darting out its tongue still more frequently, and when about a yard distant, made a violent spring.

Jarvis caught it in his right hand, directly under its head, and squeezed it with all his power. Its eyes almost started out of its head; it lashed its body on the ground, at the same time rattling loudly. He watched an opportunity, and suddenly holding the reptile's head while for a moment it drew in its forked tongue, with his left hand, he, by a violent contraction of all the muscles of his hand, contrived to close effectually its jaws.

Much was now done, but much more was to be done. He had avoided much danger, but he was still in very perilous circumstances. If he moved his right hand from its neck for a moment, the snake, by avoiding suffocation, could easily muster sufficient power to force its head out of his hand; and if he withdrew his hand from its jaws he would be in the power of its most dreaded fangs.

He retained, therefore, his hold with both his hands. He drew its body between his thighs in order to aid the compression and hasten suffocation.

Suddenly the snake, which had remained quiescent for a few minutes, brought up its tail, hit him violently on the head, and then darted its body several times very tightly round his waist. Now was the moment of his danger. Thinking, therefore, that he had sufficient power over its body, he withdrew his right hand from its neck, and took (the work of a moment) his large sailor's knife out of his pocket. He bent his head on his knee, and cut its head from its body, throwing the head to a great distance.

When the present illustrious Captain Riggan was a mere boy, his father owned a mering ram that was known far and near for the excessive hardness of his skull, and the terribleness of his butting qualities. Captain Riggan took butting lessons for six years under that ram. And never did tutor turn forth a more finished pupil. But the scholar at length proved too much for the master.

Young Riggan was in the habit of going off to a meadow every morning and having a "set to" with that old ram. One day he went out, as usual, and, seeing a large crack in the meadow fence, he stuck his head through, and bleated. That made the old ram rambunctious, and he fetched a butt at Riggan's head. But Riggan quickly drew back, and let the ram ram his rampant head jam up against the fence.

Young Riggan was delighted with the trick, and repeated it several times, to the great discomfiture of his ramship.

But it happened that the crack in the fence was not the same size all the way along the panel, and so, one time, Riggan got his head through and wriggled his neck into a narrower part of the crack before he bleated. The fierce merino came charging down upon him, and Riggan tried to withdraw his cranium as he had done before. But his cranium wouldn't withdraw. The old ram had him dead.

There was no one stirring in that part of the farm. It was about ten o'clock in the morning, and from that hour till four in the afternoon not a sound broke the monotonous stillness of the lonely spot except the regularly repeated blows of the ram's skull against Riggan's. Then there was silence.

No one at the house knew where the youngster was. They missed him at dinner, and searched for him everywhere until supper time. Then they found him. He was lying with his head still through the crack of the fence—and sound asleep! Just on the other side of the fence lay the merino ram—stone dead! He had butted himself to death against that adamant skull.

How a Scare Cured a Paralytic.

The Troy Times says: In a letter received a few days since from a person in New Hampshire occurs this sentence: "Old Simon Love stepped here yesterday on his way home. He is almost ninety two, and his hale and hearty."

And that brought to mind an incident which happened five and twenty years ago—yes, twenty-five years ago—it was in the autumn of 1848. The same Simon Love, then sixty-three years of age, and living with a son-in-law on the Grand Intervale road under Mote mountain, had been laid up for more than a year with what the doctors called a species of lumbago. He could not rise from his chair without assistance, nor could he move from chair to bed without the help of a strong man, for he was himself very heavy. There seemed to be a sort of paralysis of all the muscles of the lumbar regions, and when the pain came it came furiously. I don't know how many bottles of liniments and patent unguents had been rubbed upon the outside, or how many barrels of swash he poured down his throat. He seemed to grow worse instead of better, and with the prospect of another hard, long winter before him, he didn't think he could survive it.

Well, one day in early October, while the pigeons were very plenty, Mr. Hammond, Love's son-in-law, was fixing his double-barrel gun for a shot at them. He had just cut a piece of Indian wheat, not far away, and there the pigeons would be sure to gather, and he meant to be ready for them. He had loaded both barrels heavily, and put on the percussion caps; but as the caps were rather small for the tubes he had to press them on, which he was wont to do by easing the hammer down upon them.

Old Simon sat by the fire-place, bolstered up in his great easy chair, with padding of pillows and blankets for his back and cushions for his feet.

"Look out, Nathan!" he cried, as he saw the double muzzle pointed uncomfortably near to him.

"Pooh, there ain't no danger, dad," returned Nathan, pressing the hammer down upon the cap.

But the cap was a very sensitive one, and he pressed a little too hard, and—Mercy! what a crash! and what a howl! The right barrel of the gun was discharged with a report that shook the house from ridge pole to foundation, and a few of the shot grazed Simon Love's leg. He, poor man, believed he was shot dead. He sent forth a howl, loud and long, and leaped to his feet.

out into the yard—where he danced up and down, yelling like mad all the while, until Nathan and his wife and a hired man came to his assistance. They got him into the house, and got him down into his chair, and after critical examination they found two or three livid lines upon the calf of his right leg, where a stray shot had grazed the skin.

"Am I shot?"

"No. Get up and see."

He was up in a moment, standing first upon one leg and then upon the other, and presently the thought occurred to him that he had really risen, and unaided. He started off upon a brisk walk, without pain and without hinderance. He could hardly credit the evidence of his own senses. He leaped and he danced; he ran to the well twice and back again.

"Glory, hallelujah! Nathan, I'm a well man!"

And he spoke truly. The terrific shock, convulsing every nerve and straining every muscle, had healed him, and from that time he had not another touch of the old trouble.

Colored vs. Bald-Headed.

Years ago the then well-known firm of W. & Co., Boston, agents for a popular line of Australian packet ships, received a letter of inquiry from Cincinnati. Correspondence followed, and second-cabin passages were engaged for Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hatfield, their son Joseph, Jr., and Miss Blanche, who were politely urged to put in an appearance in Boston on or before May 5th, as "the good ship Daniel Sharp, whereof Joseph D. Cushing is master for the present voyage," would sail on the following day, weather permitting.

On the morning designated a young dandy, exquisite, sporting a tall hat and ivory-headed cane, sauntered into the elegantly appointed office and demanded: "Is dis yer de office of W. & Co.?"

"Yes, it is," growled the senior W from behind his desk, frowning over his gold-bowed spectacles at the intruder.

"Well, sah, me and my folks are gwine out to Melbourne in your ship Daniel Sharp, and I—"

"Not if I know it—you are not going to do any such thing."

"How so, sah? Didn't I correspond wid you from Cincinnati, and engage passage for my fadder and mudder and Miss Blanche?"

"What! is your name Hatfield?" roared the dismayed agent.

"Yes, sah, my name's Hatfield, and"—

"Why in the devil didn't you notify me that you were colored?"

"Why in de debil didn't you notify me dat you were bald-headed?"

The pertinent rejoinder silenced old W., and although two or three passengers, who preferred to have the color line drawn outside of a ship's second cabin gave up their berths and were refunded their passage money, the Hatfields complacently sailed in the Sharp.

1878 NEW YORK. 1878

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