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## KEEP A-CLIMBING.

If the road is hard and rough,  
Keep a-climbin'.  
If you're feelin' pretty tough,  
Keep a-climbin'.  
'Taint no use to sit and pout,  
'Cause the other feller's stout,  
Gittin' miffed won't help you out,  
Keep a-climbin'.

If you're feelin' kinda' sick,  
Keep a-climbin'.  
Make a cane from some old stick,  
Keep a-climbin'.  
Don't stand still if you get blue,  
One more step may change your view,  
Clouds will often change their hue,  
So keep a-climbin'.

Don't get down into the rut,  
Keep a-climbin'.  
Watch the road for some short cut,  
Keep a-climbin'.  
Don't be gazin' at the groun',  
With your face all in a frown,  
Raise your head and look aroun',  
But keep a-climbin'.

Don't let folks discourage you,  
Keep a-climbin'.  
Keep your goal always in view,  
Keep a-climbin'.  
If you do right things to-day,  
Sometime you'll be makin' hay,  
And you'll hear the people say,  
'He did some climbin'.'  
—Tacoma (Washington) Ledger.



## The Snakes' Curse.

By SIR H. H. JOHNSTON.

LIKE most boys, I had my dreams of adventure; perhaps I may say more than most boys. Several of them naturally were connected with a Robinson Crusoe life on a tropical island.

A few years after I had left boyhood behind I was appointed Vice-Consul in what were then the British and German territories of the Kamerun in western equatorial Africa. The question of the site for my official residence was being discussed by the Foreign Office, and as I had already visited the Kamerun in the capacity of a tourist, I was invited to offer an opinion.

I asked for leave to select the little island of Mondole, in Ambas Bay. On the island I should be safe from any attack by wild natives, I should be on British territory, in a healthy locality, and yet only two miles across the water from the little civilized negro settlement of Victoria.

My request was granted, and shortly after I started for Mondole, in 1885, an English builder was sent out to erect the vice-consulate in wood, iron and cement.

### MY HOUSE-ON MONDOLE.

I found Mondole Island of surpassing beauty—a little square mile of crumbling rock, which rose to a height of some 500 feet above the very blue waters of Ambas Bay. To the west was the Atlantic Ocean and the pale blue silhouette of Fernando Po, a large island with a peak rising nearly 10,000 feet.

Eastward rose above Ambas Bay the stupendous mass of the Kamerun volcano, more than 13,000 feet above sea level. To the south a beautifully wooded peninsula jutted out from the mainland toward Mondole, from which it was separated by barely a mile of somewhat rough sea.

My first residence was in a little two-roomed timber house which had been built and abandoned by a Polish explorer, who had attempted to found a kingdom in the Kamerun, with Mondole as his impregnable capital.

A few natives—fishermen mostly—lived on the western side of Mondole Island, but for the most part this little paradise of tropical vegetation was uninhabited by the human race. Instead, it was abundantly supplied with serpents.

My first attempts were directed toward clearing a site for my official residence on the central ridge of the island. In doing this I had to wage an exciting battle with the snakes, which had taken possession of most of the old and hollow tree trunks.

These snakes belonged to the particularly venomous genus of the tree cobra, a snake that is the source of endless African legends. All over negro Africa one hears that the dendraspis, or tree cobra, crawls like a cock, and in native legend it has some of the other attributes of the basilisk.

It is further, and truthfully, celebrated for its unusual ferocity. A tree cobra will frequently fly out from its hiding place and attack passers-by, quite unprovoked.

The two sexes, moreover, exhibit great attachment to each other when mated.

On the way from the beach to the site of my projected house there was one particularly large bombax tree, which was the home of a pair of these tree cobras. They were from about twelve to fourteen feet long, lithe, and of a dark slatish blue above with yellow bellies.

### ONE DUCK TOO MANY.

Again and again, as I passed this tree, I could see the male and female snakes lovingly intertwined, or, separ-

ately, mimicking some twisted branch in rigid immobility, waiting, no doubt, for their prey.

None of my negro laborers would lay an ax to this tree, nor would they at first let me kill the snakes, as they predicted that the most terrible consequences would occur—a veritable war of serpents. So this bombax tree was left standing longer than the other vegetable monsters which obstructed the building site, and the tree cobras became quite accustomed to our coming and going. They attacked no one at first, but soon became a nuisance from their fondness for my domestic ducks.

In West Africa, at the time of which I am writing, the muscovy duck, a native of Brazil, was the most useful domestic bird. Its eggs are excellent food, and its flesh is, as most Americans know, a toothsome article of diet.

The inroads made by the snakes on these ducks became too serious to be tolerated. One day I encountered the male snake with a muscovy duck half-way down his gullet, and then and there shot him.

Thereafter, as the negroes had predicted, began a series of misfortunes. In the first place, the female snake entirely cut off our communications with the beach by the new made road. She flew at the first party of negroes who were descending in that direction, bit one of them in the leg, and his death two hours afterward, in spite of all antidotes I could think of, caused all the other native laborers to take to their canoes and desert the island.

### WHEN WE CUT THE BOMBAX TREE.

I supplied their place with Krooboy's from my residence at Old Calabar; but meanwhile I was left on the island with an Indian steward and an Accra cook till the English builder arrived with his materials and men.

We made a determined onslaught on the female snake, no doubt very much at the risk of our lives. We cut down the huge bombax tree, and our imported laborers—their legs and much of their bodies swathed in felt—flew at the hissing snake with long staves and did her to death.

But it seemed that ill luck was to continue to follow me so long as I remained on that island.

Prior to these events, my Indian servant, who had accompanied me on my previous African journeys, had always been a very quiet, well-conducted person. But now the poor fellow was suddenly seized with a bad attack of black-water fever, and after recovering, quite lost his mental balance, and became at times a raving maniac.

### MY DANGEROUS SERVANT.

A strong house of logs had to be built hastily for his detention, pending the arrival of some steamer by which he could be sent away to a healthier climate. Although slim and spare in build, his strength when seized by one of these fits of raving became almost superhuman.

One evening, as I was preparing for bed, and was, in fact, clad in nothing but pajamas and slippers, the door of my temporary house was dragged open, and the Indian servant stood before me with flashing eyes and a huge club, which was really an uprooted log from the house out of which he had broken.

After glaring at me for a moment he said:

"If you had not been such a good master I would kill you to-night."

Not thinking it wise to trust indefinitely to his clemency or gratitude, I sounded my whistle and called up my six Krooboy's.

Very friendly relations had existed

between the Krooboy's and this Indian servant. They therefore endeavored in their broken English to persuade him to go back to the log hut.

Turning on them, however, like a tiger, he stabbed one of them mortally and another very nearly so. The rest of the Krooboy's fled, and I was left alone with this raving madman in the bright moonlight on the sea beach.

Showing me the still dripping knife, he flung it behind him into the sea, saying as he did so:

"I do that lest I should be tempted to stab you."

I have never in all my life been placed in such an awkward position. The English builder was a mile or more away, all my men had bolted into the bush, and the only outward and visible sign of legal authority was at the little settlement of Victoria, two miles across the sea.

My first thoughts turned toward the wounded men, in the hope that both might be saved.

I managed to stanch the flow of blood from the less seriously wounded of the two. As to the other, he was stabbed in the stomach.

While attempting to restore him to consciousness, I was suddenly aware that the murderer was holding a candle and assisting in every possible way.

He betrayed no trace of his recent excitement, but in a tone of the deepest commiseration kept saying:

"Poor Grando! Who could have done this? Poor Grando!"

Under the circumstances I thought it best to avail myself of all the help that he could render at this moment, and he was most deft in binding up the wound.

### "DURING HER MAJESTY'S PLEASURE."

When all that could be done for the two men with the limited means at our disposal had been accomplished, I had to turn to the Indian and say:

"Now I have got to put you in irons." He held out his hands quite submissively for the handcuffs.

By this time the English builder had arrived, and one or two of his men helped to get out my boat and row us over to the mainland, where the Indian was put in custody.

He was eventually tried at a consular court and sentenced to be "detained during her majesty's pleasure." With assiduous attentions one of the Krooboy's recovered, but the other died.

The place of the Indian as general factotum in my service was taken by a very intelligent negro ex-slave, named Solomon. Solomon had been freed as a boy by one of her late majesty's cruisers, and had been landed for education at the little Baptist mission settlement of Victoria, in Ambas Bay. Here he received an excellent training. He was so ugly and ungainly in his movements that it was difficult to realize what a truly noble hearted creature was concealed under his grotesque mask. Solomon was one of the many wonders I have encountered in the negro world; had he lived he might have been another Bishop Crowther.

### \* POOR SOLOMON!

He took the keenest interest I remember, in the revision of the Old and New Testaments, and was one of the first persons in that part of Africa to secure a copy of the revised Bible.

He was a hard and steady worker, who kept the men in order without violence, and felled timber, quarried stone, collected and skinned birds, beasts and reptiles, and was always in a good temper, ready with a cheery answer to even the crassest question.

It seemed to me that with the acquisition of Solomon my troubles on Mondole were over. But the slaughter of the snakes was not yet expiated, according to the negro opinion. One day, when Solomon had been with me for three months, he proposed crossing to the adjoining peninsula to cut timber and convey the logs back to Mondole. For this purpose he preferred, he said, to use native dugout canoes rather than my little boat.

He started early in the morning, but I never saw him again. Late in the afternoon the canoe men returned, blue with cold, and their bodies wrinkled and flabby with long immersion in the water.

They described how, just as Solomon had started to return with his little flotilla a great sea had come in from the open Atlantic and swamped the canoes.

This in itself was a matter of little moment, where every native swam like a fish, and where the contents of the canoes would float. But it was supposed that a crocodile or shark had

seized Solomon and dragged him under.

One result of all these worries and anxieties was that I became seriously ill with black-water fever, and was obliged to move to Old Calabar.

On several occasions subsequently I returned to Mondole and attempted to reside there, for the place was supremely beautiful, and possessed features of great natural interest; but every time something untoward happened either to myself or to some one else staying in the house.

Nothing occurred, it is true, that might not equally well have taken place without the snakes' curse, in which I need hardly say I placed no faith whatever.

### DISPROVING THE SUPERSTITION

After my transference to East Africa, and the cession by England to Germany of the Ambas Bay settlements, the house was removed.

The island is probably now under cultivation by German planters, who must have removed without regard for superstition the tree cobras, and have been able to show the natives, by the prosperity which attends the cultivation of cacao in these regions, that the misfortunes of the English Vice-Consul had no connection whatever with supernatural causes.—Youth's Companion.

### A FATHER'S LETTER.

Quaintly Expressed Advice For the Young Sir Philip Sidney.

When Sir Philip Sidney was twelve years old he had made such good progress in his studies that he wrote to his father a letter in Latin and one in French. In those days, we must remember, if one has to read at all, it was necessary to read in Latin, and French was the language of courts, so both tongues were begun early and studied more practically than we nowadays think requisite. But young Philip's letters seem to have greatly pleased his father, for in return Sir Henry wrote a charming letter of advice and counsel, well worth reading in full.

We can quote only a little of it, but advise you to read it all. As to study, he wrote, in the old spelling:

"Apply your study to suche howres as your discrete master dothe assigne you, earnestly; and the tyme, I knowe, he will so lycmitt (limit) as shall be both sufficient for your learnings and saf for your health. And mark the sens and the matter that you read, as well as the wordes. So shall you both enriche (enrich) your witte with wordes and your witte with matter; and judgment will growe as years growyth in you. \* \* \* Yf you here a wise sentence, or an apt phrase, commyte yt to your memory, with respect to the circumstance when you shall speake yt."

Good advise, it is not. And yet how differently a modern father would write, even if he chose the same ideas to express. Would he not put it more like this?

"You'd better be regular in studying your lessons, for you will find that your teacher knows about what you can do without hurting yourself. Put your mind into it, and try to get the sense out of it, and you'll acquire a good vocabulary as well as learn something. Then the older you grow the more sense you'll have. If you find something well said, store it away, so you can repeat it when it will tell."

Yet the two fathers, he of the sixteenth and he of the twentieth century, mean the same thing.—From 'Books and Authors,' in St. Nicholas.

### The Really Clever Pose.

There is much more intellectual cleverness among the girls of to-day than there was fifty years ago. A hippant cousin says: "It does not pay for a girl to be clever. Men are afraid of you if you are, and the other girls hate you." But between a pedantic prig and a well educated young woman there is a vast difference. The really clever women are those who disguise their learning and pose as amiable and charming idiots.

### The Man in Love.

The ordinary man in love is a sorry sight compared with his mistress. He makes his love conventionally and continually disappoints the woman, who wishes to see new lights gleam in his eyes. He is in poignant fear of discovery; he has a horror of ridicule; his one dread is lest he make a fool of himself. But a woman is a cheap chit indeed if she spends a thought on such nonsense; her abandon is superb.—London Queen.

### MISSED.

(The reply of a lonely husband whose wife has asked in one of her letters: "Do you miss me, dear?")

"Do I miss you, dear? You ask me, "Since you've journeyed far away? Am I conscious of your absence?" Ah, my treasure, I should say!

I have ceased to lock the windows  
When I go to bed at night;  
I have ceased to care a cooky  
Whether everything's all right.

If the kitchen gas keeps burning  
I don't know it and don't care;  
'Neath the bed thieves may be hiding,  
I've sworn off looking there.

Darling, I have ceased to bother  
With the bird and with the cat,  
They're attended to by Maggie,  
Who has full charge of the flat.

I have ceased, my dear, to worry,  
When the busy day has fled,  
And I get to feeling sleepy,  
I just tumble into bed.

No more peering round in corners,  
No more nightly chores for me;  
From a score of vexing duties  
For the present I am free.

Do I miss you, dear, you ask me?  
Yes, oh yes, my heart's delight;  
I've quit getting up and hunting  
After burglars in the night.

If it storms I lie and listen  
To the drops' splash on the pane,  
Never minding if the curtains  
And the rug are soaked with rain.

In your absence I am getting  
Gladly rested, sweetheart mine;  
You will hardly recognize me,  
People say I look so fine.

Maggie has your sofa pillows  
All in her room now, my dear—  
Yes, I miss you every moment,  
I'm so free from bother here.  
—Chicago Record-Herald.



Hewitt—"Gruet says that his wife can cook and play the piano with equal facility." Jewett—"I'd hate to eat her cooking."—Brooklyn Life.

The spider in the baseball game  
Would surely be a winner,  
For catching "flies" he can't be beat,  
The gluttonous old sinner.

Willie—"Mr. Oldboy, why do they say you are in your second childhood?" Mother—"Willie!" Willie—"Oh, I know; it's because you're baldheaded, just like baby Dick."—Boston Transcript.

Teacher—"Thomas, mention a few of the proofs that the earth is round like an orange." Tommy Tucker—"I didn't know we had to have any proofs, ma'am. I thought everybody admitted it."—Chicago Tribune.

"You say that stout cha; in the opposite box owes his fortune to politics?" "Well, yes; he got so awfully defeated the first time he ran for office that he has stuck strictly to business ever since."—Puck.

Oh, Love will find  
The way, some say,  
But will it find  
Her father kind  
Enough to pay the way?  
—Philadelphia Press.

"No," he said, "I'm not sure whether my wife's Christmas gift to me was meant to please me or to humble my pride." "What did she give you?" asked the friend. "She had a crayon portrait of me made by an amateur artist."—Philadelphia Ledger.

"But," said the merchant to the applicant, "you don't furnish any reference from your last place." "You needn't worry about that," replied the man with the close-cropped head and prison pallor. "I wouldn't be here now if it hadn't been for my good behavior in my last place."

"I'll admit that the eminent tragedian we have just mentioned is exceedingly irascible and sometimes indiscreet in his manifestations," said the play goer; "but he is a fine actor." "Yes," answered Stormington Barnes, "he knows how to act, but he does not know how to behave."—Washington Star.

"Tommy," said the economical mother to the boy with the loose tooth, "I'll give you ten cents if you'll let me pull that tooth." The boy thought it over and then went to his bank. "The fun of doin' that is worth more'n ten cents," he said. "I'll give you fifteen if you'll let me pull one of yours."—Chicago Evening Post.

The British Board of Agriculture estimates that there are 1,871,619 dogs in the country—one to every score of human beings.

In twenty per cent. of the marriages in the German Empire last year the bride was older than the groom.