

A MAN WHO LIVES IN A DEN OF SNAKES.

A Journal Woman Sees the Crawling Horrors That Surround Him and Describes Them.

There is a man in New York who lives day in and day out in a room that contains two hundred snakes. The reptiles are very much alive, too, and more than one of them has the seeds of death in its fangs. You may think existence under these circumstances would be torture, but Dr. O'Reilly looks upon it as delightful.

It was during the early part of a Spring evening that I climbed to the very top of a big house in Fourteenth street and knocked at the door of a room in front of the last landing. It opened and a tall man bade me enter.

I walked in boldly, seated myself and took a survey of the apartment. Of one thing I was instantly conscious. It was tropicallly hot, and then—horror upon horror! There by my elbow, within a foot of me, was a huge black snake. Its mouth was open, its head was raised, and I seemed to feel myself being swallowed. To prevent this calamity I jumped—how far I don't know.

All this amused the doctor intensely, because the snake was dead.

After I had recovered from the shock a fresh horror confronted me, for on the walls hung two hundred snakes, all alive, and, thank fortune, in cages. The sight almost took my breath away. By degrees I ventured near the cages, which were all provided with glass doors.

The doctor called my attention to a black vicious appearing occupant of one of the cages. "This is my especial pet," he said, taking him out in his hands. "Isn't he a beauty?"

The eyes of the snake glistened fiercely. Its fangs were active, though I was assured they were perfectly harmless. Its whole body was in constant motion. It wound itself tightly about the doctor's throat and he kissed it. Ugh! I had to shudder. I wondered if he really enjoyed kissing that ugly, black, wriggling snake. As for myself, I couldn't possibly see where the pleasure came in, and I retreated a few steps.

A FEARFUL INVITATION.

"Come nearer. He is perfectly harmless. See here." The doctor thrust the ugly black head, the cloven fangs and the glistening eyes into his mouth, at the same time caressing the writhing body.

I drew a step nearer and finally conjured up enough courage to touch the creature gently with the tips of my fingers. It really wasn't so bad, after all. The body was as smooth as satin. I stroked it as I would a kitten. The doctor meantime holding firmly its head and tail at my request. Somehow, although assured of its harmlessness, I wouldn't have had that wriggling tail coiled about my wrist or those glistening eyes near my face for a million.

Next the doctor went to a cage on the end and took out a little snake about the size of one's forefinger, and a yard or so long. It was a pretty little thing. Even in my egotisms I was forced to acknowledge it. The doctor declared it perfectly harmless, and also that it was at a very interesting period, for it was just shedding its skin.

"Poor dear, it's having a hard time. Let me help you take off your coat, pet," and the doctor assisted the snake in crawling from its old covering. "This is my little king snake," continued the doctor, "and I know you will make friends with it directly. This one is invariably the ladies' pet. Just wait a moment, till he gets rid of his old coat, and you'll hardly know him in his new Easter outfit. Usually the snakes crawl out of their old skins without injuring the old coating, leaving it whole and in good condition. Now come over here and I'll show you a snake who has just escaped his skin."

I looked and saw a small black snake who had just cast its skin about a cup that had been placed in the cage for that purpose. The skin was in perfect shape and just by it the new coated creature glistened in the lamplight. It was asleep, but its eyes were open. Snakes always sleep with their eyes open.

NOT AFRAID, OH, NO!

"Now, come here," said the doctor; "I want you to take this little king snake. Don't be timid. I know you cannot be afraid."

Mechanically, I put out my hands. I made up my mind to take the snake if only for a moment, for, you see, I wanted to be able to tell my friends I had actually handled a real, live snake.

Twice I held out my hands, and each time I withdrew them. I hated snakes worse than ever just at that moment. I looked at the snake again, and made a third attempt. This time I closed my fingers over the thing I most detested of all animal life.

I wish I were clever enough to describe the mingled sensations that seemed to choke my whole body. No one can ever know the sensations attending the touching of a snake for the first time till they have tried it.

"Don't hold him so tightly. Handle snakes as gently as possible, always. They are not so likely to bite."

did rattle. Somehow, it sounded to me like a lot of sleigh bells out of tune.

A SIGHT OF HORROR.

Then he showed me the deadly copper-heads, the asiders, the garter and ribbon snakes and explained to me all their characteristics.

"Just wait till I show you how my pet will chase me about the room after a mouse." The doctor went to a cage filled with tiny mice, caught one, chopped off its teeth with shears, and then tied its tail firmly to a string. The mouse frolicked about on its forefeet. The blacksnake was

I simply couldn't remain quiet another instant. It wasn't natural for one to allow one's self to be numbered with the dead when there is so much going on in life. I resolved to live. I made a bold leap for the door. The snake leaped at the same time. It just grazed my dress skirt. I was paralyzed with fear.

The doctor seemed greatly frightened. "Don't move again or he will kill you. If you value your life do as I tell

you. So long as you are quiet you are safe."

I don't know how it ever happened. I was too greatly frightened to remember, but finally the ugly creature was once more safely coiled behind the glass door of the cage.

The doctor reprimanded me justly. "You came as near death by a snake as you'll ever come again and escape. Let me tell you this: Never move quickly in the presence of a snake. Always be quiet."

As I ascended the steps to go home once more I made up my mind I hated snakes worse than ever. I know God never intended a snake for a pet. Yet Dr. O'Reilly sleeps, eats and sits in the room with 200 snakes as his only companions. All day long he studies them and puts the results of his observations in articles for the newspapers and magazines. There is absolutely nothing regarding snakes that he does not know.

GIVEN FREE LIQUOR.

Some Hotels Give the Cooks and Their Assistants Regular Daily Rations of Liquid Refreshment.

The foreign custom of dealing out a regular beer and wine allowance to chefs and their assistants in hotels is being adopted generally in New York. The "swell" hotels give liquor to their attendants much as a ship's officers used to treat sailors before the war.

The steward keeps strict account of the quantity of liquor absorbed, and charges it up to the profit and loss account in his regular report to the proprietor. The amount of liquor consumed in this way forms quite a considerable item in the hotel expense account. It is said, however, to insure temperance and tranquility below stairs.

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STRANGEST OF MONKEYS.

A Race of Simians in the Island of Borneo Which Closely Resembles the Human.

In the island of Borneo is a race of wonderful monkeys. They are called the proboscis monkey from their long nose. They are very large; indeed, they are the largest of their species, measuring four or five feet in height when standing in an upright position.

These creatures are seldom or never seen on the ground, spending almost their entire lives in the tree tops, where they are perfectly at home.

They are the most difficult to tame of all the simians, being very wild and unmanageable, and also on account of their size. This monkey gets his name from his enormous countenance which resembles a man with an exceedingly long nose, and they can also be recognized by a beard and side whiskers which extend from ear to ear under the chin, like the farmers' beards in the comic papers.

They so closely resemble a human being that travelers in the interior often used to mistake them for a race of people. One of them was exhibited some fifty years ago through England, the advertisements calling it the "Wild man of Borneo."

The natives who inhabit the interior of the island believe that these monkeys are descended from an old man who retired to the forest to avoid paying tribute to the King, and they hold them in the greatest respect for being clever enough to devise this means of evading the responsibilities of society and escaping the powerful hand of the ruler. On this account also they cannot be induced to kill or injure one, thinking and believing that it might be a relative.

They inhabit the central mountainous portion, principally, and are generally found in troops in the vicinity of streams. Borneo has many other curious and wonderful plants and animals, but this is the best known.

A NIGHT AMONG WOMEN PRISONERS.

Strange Revelry in a Station House When the Police Make a Big Raid in the Slums.

I studied reformed New York late the other night at a police station. I had been told that the police have practically driven out or suppressed slums and dives against which the Parkhurst crusade was waged.

Yet I saw a score or more of prisoners from the slums, captured in a raid, the same garrulous, brazen outcasts as in the palmist days in the Tenderloin, as indifferent as ever to the law, ready to take their punishment and then to resume their hapless lives.

I arrived at the Fifteenth Precinct Station, on Mercer street, shortly after 7 and found the prison cells unoccupied—that is,

I followed her to the cell. We went across a little bridge-like platform, up a pair of iron steps, and into a square prison room. It was dimly lighted. A great red hot stove glowed in the center of the place. On two sides were the horrid, dark, dismal cells.

The place was ill-smelling, notwithstanding everything was perfectly clean. The great iron doors stood wide open. Water bugs played tag unmoistened on the iron gratings. I couldn't suppress a shiver, warm as the place was. I glanced aside at the prisoner to see if she, too, felt cold and chill and sick at heart. But

There had been a raid. These were the female prisoners.

The vast crowd before me were of all sorts and conditions. Some were well dressed, some poorly clad. Some were young, some were old. Some were drunk, some were not. Some were hilarious, some were morose. Some were weeping, some were laughing. Some were utterly devoid of all gentility. Nearly all had been drinking. Some were crowded in on their chairs, had stockings full of money, took chairs and benches about the fire. I helped the matron put one of the intoxicated wretches on a bench. She was the only one in the party who was actually stupefied with liquor.

She took off her hat. It was a stylish affair. The girl herself—she was about nineteen or twenty—was very pretty. At least, I should fancy she would be called pretty when she was not in her present torpid condition.

She wore a wedding ring and a big diamond guard. Her dress was of crepon and elaborately trimmed. Her underwear was sheer and delicate, and, in fact, she bore many indications of refinement.

The matron removed her clothes and fixed her comfortably in a cell.

I drew my chair within the circle about the stove and gazed cautiously at the six women who occupied chairs in the circle.

There was nothing remarkable about the looks of any of them. There was a great girl with fluffy hair and cherry lips, edged with dimples. Then there were a real gold blonde, a girl with wavy, curly hair, a girl with a high forehead, a girl with a dashing brunette, all sparkling, style and wit, an actress by profession. And last, a demure little girl with a turnip head, and the expression of a cat.

It was "DOWNRIGHT JOLLY."

"The six about the fire were inopportunistly allowed their groans of anger and sorrow to subside.

"Say, girls, I call this downright jolly. I don't mind it a bit, do you?" piped the fluffy-haired beauty, dimpling sweetly.

"Not a bit," said the sparkling brunette. "I couldn't be with more congenial company."

At this they all expressed their thanks and looked pleased.

"I'd hate to be sitting three or four together like sardines in a box with those dirty looking cells," spoke up the girl with the turnip head.

"The blonde beauty shuddered. 'I've never been locked in a cell. I couldn't stand it.'"

"Oh, you poor, delicate baby!" the black-haired beauty said, as she gazed at her in scorn. "I've been locked up more times than I have fingers and toes. That's nothing."

"Say, girls, let's have some dancing. Shall I? You a star dancer?"

The blonde, all smiles, jumped up and drew her skirts up to her knees. "Oh, for some music! Can't some one sing? That'll answer all purposes."

HIGH KICKING, THEN A SONG.

The singing commenced, so did the dancing. It was a novel scene. It surpassed all the theatres in New York for uniqueness. The heavy snoring in the cells still continued. Those who were still awake pressed to the grated doors to look and listen.

Then above the din arose a coarse laugh. Simultaneously we all turned in the direction of the sound. The yellow-eyed prisoner was standing at her grated door. She beckoned to the matron.

"Let me out with the others," she said. She would not be quieted. "Let me out! She shrieked. 'Let me out, I say! I can't stand it here! Here—she flung a diamond ring through the grating—'let me out, will you?'"

"Don't, please don't let her out!" cried half a dozen voices at once. "We're afraid of her. She's a monster. She'll kill us!"

"Shut up, you old idiots! I've as much right to be out as you have!" Then there was a battle of words. The most dreadful language ever in person uttered was hurled back and forth. Every one joined in. It was the most awful din I have ever heard. Two or three old drunkard legs were aroused and joined in the general hubbub. No one pretended to sleep or be quiet. All were howling.

At length the noise was hushed. Then the dance was resumed. This time the dashing brunette assisted. She nearly kicked the skylight in the ceiling. The blonde wasn't in it, for she could only kick as high as the top of the stove.

Then, in the midst of all the high kicking, the sweet strains of an old song burst forth from one of the crowded cells. The voice was a cultivated one. Every note was classic and pure and melodious. The old girl walls reverberated with the melody. Even the water bugs paused in their game of tag. Not even the snore of the drunken women was audible.

As the last notes died away there was a wild burst of applause. The women on the outside crowded about the cell where the sounds had issued. The song bird was a slight girl, with large, sad eyes and a hollow white face. She slunk away and hid her face in her thin hands. A sign escaped her pale lips, and then she burst into a fit of weeping. We begged her to sing again, but she heeded us not.

AND THEN TO SLEEP.

"Oh! I'm so tired," said the blonde, going back to her chair.

"Well, I fancy we all are. I'd give worlds for a soft, warm bed," cherry lips sighed.

"Oh! who's tired? Don't go to sleep!" said the demure little girl, with a shudder. "I can't sleep a wink in this place, and I'll have the horrors if you all go to sleep and leave me to keep vigil. That yellow-eyed fiend will kill me, or hypnotize me, or something dreadful."

"Well, anyway, I'm going to take off my shoes; they are just killing me by inches," growled the fluffy-haired, unbuttoning a brand new pair of patent leathers. She put them under the stove—so they went crack," she explained.

"Why, your legs ain't mates!" exclaimed the blonde. "What's the matter with them, anyway?"

Miss Fluffy Hair's eyes flashed fire. "What do you mean, you sneaky wretch!" She drew her slender legs under the grate and her legs into the right stocking. Here is an exact inventory of the articles the cherry lipped maiden drew from her slippers: Two handkerchiefs, three pairs of stockings, a small roll of bills, a penknife, a sachet bag, a pocket comb, two soiled letters, a little pocket calendar and a pair of gloves.

"Say, girls, 'any one got some paper?'"

"What kind—news paper?"

"Any kind."

"I'll look for a fright to-morrow in court. Just gaze at my hair. It's all out of curl. I must have some paper. Oh, never mind, though! I'll get it myself. She divided up her handkerchiefs in even parts and stripped it off with her teeth.

Then she rolled up her slender legs into tight stockings, and the girls 23-looked her example, and soon the whole party were huddling about the great fire, with their legs lighted, three rows of stockings and a bagful of very comical spectacles they made. Even the pretty blonde looked ugly.

The yellow-eyed girl was sleeping, and so were nearly all the inmates. The curl-paper band were beginning to quiet down.

I left them as the first gray streaks of morning were tinging the window walls. They were nearly all sleeping. The girl with the fluffy hair had slid to the floor. Her arms were folded over her head, and her head was pillowed comfortably on her arms. She wore a happy expression. I wondered if she were dreaming of home.

The world never looked so bright to me as it did that early Sunday morning as I stepped once more into the free air of free men and women.

My heart ached for the women I had left behind, for I knew it was but the beginning of the same. Some day they would come to this station house, worn and tired, every body and mind, hopeless, homeless and friendless. There would be no crepon dresses, no silk petticoats, no diamonds.

I never realized before how heavenly it is to be free. I never dreamed before of the agony, the privations, and the unrest of a prisoner, nor of the pitiable lives of those women.



WITH THE MAN WHO EATS AND SLEEPS WITH SNAKES.

CRESPO'S CONFIDENCE.

A Funny Incident Which Shows How the Venezuelans Trust Us in the Boundary Dispute.

Here is an interesting story about President Crespo, of Venezuela. It happened last week in one of the Paris journals—the Petit Parisien—and in the translation which follows an effort has been made to give an idea of the sprightly fashion in which an imaginative French writer can handle foreign news.

"Some time ago a troop of ambulant acrobats debarked at Caracas, and, among other articles there was remarked a 'Miss Americaine,' who was a rare shot with the carbine. The director of the troupe offered to give the President a special representation, and President Crespo accepted.

"Miss Mexik, the young lady with the carbine, astonished all present by the marvelous precision of her aim. Suddenly, stimulated by the applause which was lavished upon her, she begged M. Crespo to place upon his august head a glass ball, which she handed him, and which she said she would do her best to snuffer with a single shot.

"M. Crespo responded without hesitation: 'I accept, in order to show well my unlimited confidence in the Americans of the North.'"

"It is well known that the latter at this moment sustain the Venezuelans in their conflict with the English, who, following their republican customs, wish to devour a portion of their territory."

"The words of M. Crespo are therefore explained."

THE FIRST PRISONER.

She was a tall, well developed woman with flaming red hair. Her apparel was stylishly put together. Her fingers, as she rested them carelessly upon the rail, I observed, were covered with gems. Her cheeks had a brilliant hue. Her eyes were extremely large and bright, and as the light struck the gleaming orbs they took on a queer, yellow shade.

Altogether, she was the most extraordinary looking person I had ever seen. She gave her age as twenty, but I'm sure she was a miscount. She stood before the sergeant wonderfully composed. Seemingly, there was not a feather of her make-up ruffled. No one would ever have guessed she was standing before an officer of the law.

the women's prison. I didn't go to see the men's.

The matron took me to her snug little room. I waited nearly two hours and not one prisoner was brought in. New York has indeed reformed, thought I.

The matron read a paper. Things were so quiet I began to get sleepy.

"Very stupid to-night, isn't it?" I ventured. "I'm afraid there won't be many prisoners to-night."

The matron gazed at me over her glasses. "Don't get impatient. It's early yet."

Scarcely had she uttered the words when I heard a noise outside. I peeped out. Yes, there was a prisoner, to be sure. A woman. I gazed at her earnestly. Could this finely dressed, distinguished looking female be a prisoner? I drew nearer to listen to the charge.

It was "disorderly conduct."

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CAPTURED IN A RAID.

I sat glued to the corner. Presumably there was a great noise outside. The door was pushed open and a great crowd of women poured in. I couldn't count them, they kept coming so fast.

They were fierce as animals, and their language was disgraceful. Once inside the cells the younger one dropped wearily upon the bench and pressed her hand over her wounded forehead.

The other girl paced up and down, pounded the door and beat the walls. Her cries and moans were fearful. For fully fifteen minutes she kept them up. Then she sank exhausted upon the floor—a ragged, filthy heap.

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