

## The Fireside.

### SCARES THAT ARE USELESS.

BY CHARLES M'ILVAINE.

I think it was King James II. who said to one of his soldiers when he was boasting that he did not know what fear was, "Hench, mon! then you never snuffed a candle with your fingers." We jerk our fingers away from anything not. They get scared. These scares are burned. This is a proper scare. We are saving our personal property; our fingers belong to us. It is always right, and never cowardly, to keep ourselves and others from being hurt.

It is a good thing to think about what we would do in different kinds of danger, because if we should ever be in the kinds of danger we have studied we would know what to do, having already made up our minds. If we know what to do or say instantly, it is called presence of mind. The English comic paper, *Punch*, once said: "There is but one thing better than presence of mind in danger; that is, absence of body." This is true, but we do not always know when to be absent.

A great many persons, young and old, think they are in danger when they are not. They get scared. These scares are useless. As they are very uncomfortable to the person getting scared, and often frighten other persons, it is well to know how to avoid them.

Mice come first as the makers of scares. They are the smallest and prettiest animal we have. They are shy, easily frightened, and scamper to their holes on hearing the least noise, or seeing the least motion. A mouse never hurt any one. If mice happen to be white and have pink eyes we make pets of them. If their fur is brown, we prance about, get on the piano, and scream. There is a consolation in all this,—the mouse is scared as badly as we are. The best plan is to sit still, make a little noise if the presence of the mouse is unpleasant, and it will quickly disappear. Exactly the same thing can be said of rats, excepting that as they are a few times larger than mice, the scare is bigger. Another very good plan to avoid these scares is to think for five minutes how very uncomfortable it must make the little animals to frighten them badly.

Next, spiders. How exquisite their webs are when strung with dew beads, or when sparkling with rain-drops, or when stretched as perfectly made nets to catch their maker's food. Then, too, how exquisitely decorated spiders are when examined under a magnifying glass! How neatly joined are their legs! How delicate their spinners! How wonderful their eyes! How industriously they attend to their own business! How many flies, mosquitoes, gnats, bugs, they capture, and take from bothering us!

Yet, oh, horrors! Let one—even a timid daddy-long-legs—come anywhere near, and great big human bodies will jump, strike, shoo, screech, grab the

broom, and be in mortal terror. A useless scare. Few spiders will bite anyone unless coaxed to do it. If, then, they do bite, their bite is no more than that of a mosquito or flea. There are but two spiders whose bite is severely poisonous: that of the tarantula, a native of hot countries; and the female of a pretty black, polished, red-spotted spider, which belongs to a family noted for staying at home. There is no use in being frightened by spiders.

There is nothing that will stir up more racket and make the girls—young girls, old girls, and grandmother girls—get their heads covered quicker with newspapers, sewing, aprons, even coal-scuttles and dustpans, than a bat in the room.

The bat is not a bird; it rears its little ones as the cow does her calf. There is a well-known cow that is said to have jumped over the moon, but she did not fly. The bat is the only four-footed animal that flies. The flying squirrel does not fly; it floats or sails from one tree to another. It always lights lower down than the place it starts from. The flies to catch insects. Attracted by a light, it comes into a room. Then it flies about wildly, trying to get out. The way to get it out of a room is to take the light, it comes into a room. Then it flies about wildly, trying to get out. The way to get it out of a room is to take the light out; the bat will follow the light. Really, now, who ever knew of a bat getting in anyone's hair? And if one did, did it carry the hair off? Bats do not bite unless they are taken hold of. Their ugly, wrinkled faces are very much like those of pug dogs. Yet who is afraid of pugs? Brace up, and keep braced when a bat is about. The bat should be honored; its squak is the highest sound we can hear.

The most of do not like snakes. The reason is that a snake which we have all read about often and often, and which people have heard about for several thousands of years, behaved very badly in the Garden of Eden. So we have been taught to dislike snakes. The dislike is bred in us. We do not try to stop it. We either scamper as fast as we can from a snake, or kill the poor creature, and are frightened all the time we are doing it. Stand still when you see a snake; it will slowly, bashfully, steal away. It will live to do more good for the farmers than any other wild creature, and are frightened all the time we are doing it. It eats mice and insects that injure their crops, and it kills insects in cellars, gardens, and about milk-houses. Very few snakes bite. Our common snakes never do. Their tongues are soft, and can hurt no one. The rattlesnake lives in wild places, and it is polite enough to tell you to stand a little further off. No snake in America will chase you. The copper-head, viper, puff-adder, are all cowards.

Not one of the beetles that come buzzing into the light at nights, and drops on the floor with a bang and straddle, will bite. Pick it up fearlessly. When bees, wasps, hornets, come about, keep perfectly still and they will not sting. Make a quick motion, strike at them, and they like it. They are very interesting. I would as soon think of stepping on my watch as I would of step-

ping on an insect; they are so perfectly made, such fine pieces of machinery.

Before you get scared by anything, always think how much scared the other thing is.—*S. S. Times.*

### HOW TO BE LOVED IN OLD AGE.

Sometimes you see a lovable old woman, whose age is as beautiful as was the bloom of her youth! And when you do, you wonder how it has happened. Well, this is how:

She learns how to forget disagreeable things.

She did not give way to her nerves, and inflict them on her friends.

She mastered the art of saying pleasant things.

She did not expect too much from her friends.

She made whatever work she had to do congenial.

She did not lose sight of her illusions and would not think all the world wicked and unkind.

She helped the miserable and sympathized with the sorrowful.

She never forgot that kind words and a smile cost little and are treasures to the discouraged.

She did unto others as she would be done by, and her reward is love and consideration in her old age, and she has learned the secret of a long and happy life.—*Good Sense.*

### HIS WILL.

Many good stories are told illustrating the marvellous ready wit of the late Mr. Spurgeon. One Lord's day morning two fashionably dressed young men entered the church in which he was preaching, and took their seats without removing their hats. They seemed bent on giving annoyance to the worthy preacher, and, at length, their conduct distracted the attention of the congregation so much that Mr. Spurgeon saw it was time to take action. "Some time ago," he remarked, "I had occasion to visit a Jewish synagogue, and, in deference to the prevailing custom, I retained my hat on my head during the service. Perhaps these two young Jews will display an equal degree of courtesy in our company?"

Needless to say, the intruders, whose convictions, if convictions they had, were anything but Semitic, instantly lapsed into a state of meek adherence to conventionality.

Another tale is told which shows that even in the most trying positions Mr. Spurgeon's "mother wit" did not desert him. A rich wine merchant, who had been annoyed by Spurgeon's repeated and whole-hearted denunciations of the drink traffic, refused, on meeting him on the pavement to make way for him to pass, insolently remarking, "I am not in the habit of making room for puppies." "There's where you and I differ, sir," said Spurgeon, stepping out to the roadway, and lifting his hat to his detractor with the utmost composure.

### GREENHORN.

The term originated in this way: The pioneers of the west were much given to hunting deer. It was a fact known to the early settlers that when the horn of a fawn began to grow there was a ring of green hair around the spot where the horn was coming out. It was considered a disgraceful thing for a hunter to kill a fawn a cruel act, and the killing time was regulated by the growth

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of the horn. There was a sort of unwritten law that no one should kill a male fawn before its horns could be seen. A person who was so unthoughtful as to kill a deer under the proper age was called a "greenhorn." He was so named because the young horn of the deer and the hair around it were still green. The use of the appellation gradually spread until it was applied to all raw or inexperienced youths or persons easily imposed upon.

There is at least one lighthouse in the world that is not placed on any mariner's chart. It is away out on an Arizona desert, marking the spot where the only water for miles around can be had. Every night a lantern is placed on a tall cotton-wood pole, which can be seen by thirsty travelers a great distance across the plain.

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