

FOUND IT FULL OF GAS.

THE FOORD PIT AT STELLARTON CLOSED AGAIN.

Full of Fire Damp and Full of Danger—Only been Opened Since 1886 After Being Flooded for Six Years After the Explosion of 1880—Urgent Need for Action.

New Glasgow, Dec. 5, 1892.—The closing of the Foord pit will in some measure put an end for a time at least to the rapid progress of Stellarton. It is a very serious affair and yet there is no cause for panic. There is coal in the seam that can yet be got out if the right way to get it is found out. One of the miners, Michael Breen on his way to work descending the shaft, when near the old working concluded that he detected the fumes of the deadly choke damp that heralds an explosion. He at once informed Overman Brown of this fact, who went to the surface and gave instructions to the engineer to lower the cage slowly down the shaft, when he came to the place where Mr. Breen's suspicions were aroused he found they were correct. He then ordered the men all up on the surface, showing his good judgment in acting so promptly. The horses and some material were then brought up and by 2 a. m. the management decided to damp down the pit. On Friday they removed the coverings and it was found their worst fears were realized—the pit was full of gas! The inspector of mines was acquainted with the state of affairs at once, but owing to force of circumstances was unable to come to Stellarton but is expected.

This closing of the pit is a serious thing. On Saturday last the management were ready to close down the mine. This is the second closing of the Foord pit. It has only been reopened since 1886, having been closed and the East river turned to flow into it after the explosion of Nov. 12th 1880. In 1886 the companies amalgamated and the pit was pumped out and reopened, and ever since has seemed free of danger and has turned out a fine quality of coal. Before the mine is again closed due consideration should be given to this case. It is undoubtedly the duty of the government to deal with this matter seriously. For the closing down of the pit is a grave matter in the province, as well as to the county of Pictou. In this coal field, there is estimated to be twenty to forty million tons of coal. It is surely worth while to try and save this at even a great cost. The oldest man in Stellarton does not remember the time, when some of the pits were not on fire. All the years the fire have been allowed to rage. Large sums of money have been expended in what some regard as "make shift" operations. But now the need is urgent. The best expert testimony in the continent should be obtained, so that that the government will be able to know what is best to be done in the case.

AN AFRICAN SERPENT HUNT.

Exciting Adventure With a Beautiful but Terribly Deadly Reptile.

The spitting snake, of which the Dutch settlers in South Africa tell startling tales, is generally considered a myth, but I myself found the creature there.

One day in 1877, while I was living at Grahamstown, in the Cape Colony, I went out for a snake hunt in Currie's Kloof. An alpenstock, revolver, hunting knife and binocular glass composed, as usual, my equipment.

Now this South African country is very different from our American landscapes. The sky is very cloudless. There are days, weeks, even months of uninterrupted sunshine. Consequently the extreme dryness of the atmosphere entirely precludes that delightful greenness which renders a European or American country so charming.

The city of Grahamstown lies in a valley among hills 2,000 feet above the sea. The country in every direction is unencumbered by fence or wall, so that away across the continent to Kharatoom the traveler may walk or ride, finding no other barrier to his progress than mountains and rivers.

For a considerable distance to the north the country is parklike, with hills rising 200,—sometimes 300—feet above the plain, their sides covered by grass browned in the sunshine, or scrubby brush 20 or 30 feet high, struggling to draw life from a stony, sunbaked soil. About the hillsides the rocks crop out in every direction, too hot in the eternal solar glare to give resting place to any living thing except lizards. In spite of all this heat and drought and apparent sterility flowers grow in abundance.

In the heat and moisture of the kloofs or mountain ravines the trees grow tall and stately, with great orchid covered vines stretching like ropes from branch to branch, or trailing to the earth, forming a natural gymnasium for the baboons and monkeys to frisk in. The tree fern waves its feathery fronds in the warm wind, and countless varieties drape every overhanging bank and fill every crack of rock or every tree stump, forming shady retreats for the puff adder to sleep in and ambush for snatching the wandering woodrat as he nibbles his nuts in the neighborhood.

This beautiful snake, which is also one of the most deadly in the world, abounds in all the hilly land of the Cape Colony. Both cobras and puff adders swarm around about Grahamstown. Many a day have I spent among the rocks watching their ways and habits—studying their lives at home.

On this special day I had been lying a couple of hours behind a rock watching through my binocular a small snake of the genus Psammophis chasing lizards within a few yards of me. Heated with the sun,

which had been blazing on my back all the time, and being very thirsty besides, I had then gone down to a big tengu tree growing in the valley, to refresh myself with the copious sap of its succulent roots, for no water was to be had. Quenching my thirst I had lain down in the shade at its foot.

All was silence and solitude around, except for the cicadas, which kept up one unchanging and unending song. It was the bottom of the valley where I lay, and out before me ran a level stretch clear of trees for a hundred yards or more. In the middle rose a small bush of acacia horrida, from which we get gum arabic, thick all over with little flower tufts of yellow. The ground around was covered with the bright green of a creeping mesembryanthemum, all starred over with purple flowers, looking like a rich oriental carpet ready spread for the denizens of the wilderness to stretch themselves upon. And all this time there was one of them lying in the sun—one of the most beautiful and dreadful of Africa's animal wonders.

The birds called my attention to him. I supposed they espied him from the surrounding treetops and they flew down to the acacia bush to reconnoiter. They suddenly raised such a confusion of chattering that I took up my glass to see what was the matter. They seemed greatly excited, hopping hurriedly from twig to twig, flapping their wings and crying out all the time. I could perceive no cause till I stood up. Then there appeared with his broad neck flattened out a large black cobra (Sepedon Haemachates) slowly gliding about on the green carpet within a yard of the birds.

For some minutes I watched the scene; but fearing he might disappear in the mole holes, which were numerous all around, I seized my long stick and advanced upon him. His tail was toward me and his attention fixed on the birds. I could see his glittering black eyes, and every moment the forked tongue would lap out meditatively as if he were contemplating a spring.

He saw me as I approached, and, turning quickly around, he threw himself into a position of attack. His head, with two-thirds of his body, stood up perpendicularly from the ground, while the remaining part was gathered into a coil of support. The tongue was exerted rapidly, the jetty eyes glistened brightly above the spreading hood, the white rings on his throat appeared across the center of the hoodlike armorial bearings on the shield of a warrior. Altogether he was a most beautiful but dreadful sight.

Facing him, I stood on guard with my stick grasped in both hands, studying how I could best pin his head to the ground with it so as to catch him safely by the neck.

As I moved he came forward to meet me, but still standing erect—a living picture of conscious power and dreadful rage. He dodged the stick, then struck at me. He was about five feet off and too far to reach me. Up to that time I had not believed in spitting snakes, but as the black fellow struck forward towards me two thin, bright streams came from his mouth. One of them struck me in the face, wetting my right cheek close beneath the eye. I paused for a moment, in astonishment, uncertain in my surprise whether any of it had gone into my eye, but as I felt nothing I concluded it had not and wiped the drops from my face with the sleeve of my coat. Then I captured him.

He was added to my collection of living snakes, where he often afterward repeated the performance behind the glass of his cage for the amusement of myself and friends. The poison was squirted from the fangs, as I had many occasions of observing, by the force of muscular compression in the act of striking, and not by the impetus of exhaled breath.

I know from observation that the poison of this snake will destroy the sight of animals, temporarily at least. The eye, after being touched by it, appears as if covered by a white opaque film. After a time, however, I have seen this disappear, and the normal appearance resumed. Further than this I have not examined its effects.

In consequence of the great development of commerce with Africa and the greater frequency with which travellers and scientists visit its strange fastnesses, there is every probability that its deadly snakes as well as its other wonders will get that scientific attention which our present ignorance of them demands.

Philosophy of the Street.

Office is one of the things that grow smaller on possession.

A woman would rather lose a lover than let him know how much she loves him.

There is as much difference between independence and churlishness as there is between almonds and aloes.

People who volunteer more than they contract for generally find that what is extended as a favor will soon be demanded as a right.

The only royal road there is is the one that leads to ruin.

Acting on impulse saves a vast amount of preliminary worry, and generally results about as well as any other course.—Milwaukee Journal.

The Old Back Stair.

Of all the sports of childhood, I know of none so rare As sliding down the banisters Of the old back stair.

I remember well the circus, And the fun it used to bring; While watching fatless riders A-dashing 'round the ring. But this jolly old attraction Could never near compare With sliding down the banisters Of the old back stair.

Then I recollect the barn loft, Choked full of clover hay; Mother used to send us there To pass a rainy day. But I often stole away from that, And while mother wasn't there, Be sliding down the banisters Of the old back stair.

I have grown into manhood now, And often wander home; The old folks always welcome me— They're glad to have me come; But while they're not looking I'm tempted, I declare, To slide down the banisters Of the old back stair.

Clarence E. Edwards.

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Announcements under this heading not exceeding five lines (about 35 words) cost 25 cents each insertion. Five cents extra for every additional line.

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FRAZEE'S BUSINESS COLLEGE, 119 Hollis St., Halifax is in session day and evening. Best place to learn Bookkeeping, Business, etc., also Stenography and Typewriting. Send for our circular. J. C. P. FRAZEE, Principal.

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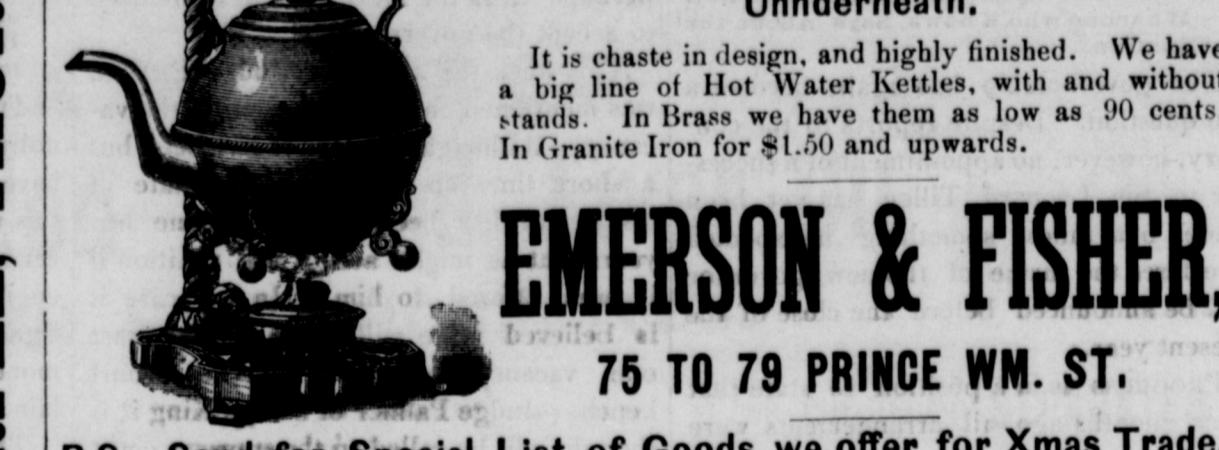
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STAMPS WANTED. USED before conoriginal envelope preferred. Also want pairs and blocks, on and off envelopes for my collection. Actually the highest prices paid. Particularly want some New Brunswick 75c. provisional (rate to Great Britain). Send list of what you have for sale. Sheets of stamps sent on approval to collectors. H. L. HART, 71, Göttingen street, Halifax, N. S. June 11—1f

IMPORTANT TO FLESHY PEOPLE.
We have noticed a page article in the BostonGlobe on reducing weight at a very small expense. It will pay our readers to send two cent stamp for a copy to Walker Circulating Library, 10 Hamilton Place, Boston, Mass.

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