

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY JULY 31 1897.

SAVAGE LITTLE FISHES.

THE SHARP-TOOTHED ANIMALS ARE FEROCIOUS.

The Sight of Blood Will Make Them Wild and They Will Follow the Scent Everywhere—How They Sometimes Kill Horses—What They Look Like.

'Ah, Senor! Hold, I pray you! Do not put that wounded hand in the water! Warn you it will be dangerous to do so! Don Enrico Carmono had called to him so suddenly, with such an expression of alarm on his face, as quite to astonish the traveller from New York to whom the words were spoken. The two had reined their horses at the bank of the Guarico River, in Venezuela, and the traveller, who had just cut his finger in snatching at a stalk of river grass in passing, had dismounted and was stooping to wash the blood from the wound. His first thought at the quick word of warning was of a snake or saurian in lurking; that he had failed to see.

'What is it, Don Enrico?' he asked. 'An alligator? A boa?'

'No, senor, neither. Those you can see and watch against. It is something far fiercer and worse. The caribes.'

'Do you mean seriously to tell me that those little fishes would attack my hand put into the water—at the very shore?' said the traveller, who had seen dead caribes and did not believe half he had heard of live ones.

'Senor, a caribe would take off the end of one of your fingers at a snap, as completely as a surgeon could do it with his instruments, or would make such a wound in your hand as would leave a lasting disfigurement. You never have seen them excited by blood! Well, suppose you fire at that alligator asleep on the spit. He offers you a fine shot behind the shoulder. If you wound him badly, see what will happen.'

The traveller took his express rifle from its case at the saddle. The alligator, about sixty yards away, was an easy mark. The shot struck true and the saurian, mortally wounded, whirled round toward the water, dived in, and disappeared, leaving a streak of blood upon the turbid surface. Then the reddened waters began to move and bubble strangely, and by looking closely with a glass the traveller could see that the motion in the water was caused by the swimming and darting about of fishes. Presently the alligator in his dying struggles came to the surface, and he was surrounded by a great school of fishes, all attacking him furiously—short, heavily built fishes, something like the perch in size and shape, with strange markings of white, red, and bluish-green. Crowding and leaping so that the water could scarcely be seen for yards around, they snapped and tore at the dying saurian, swarming upon him so as literally to cover the body from view. Anything more ferocious, ravenous, eager, the traveller had never seen. As he gazed in a sort of horror-stricken fascination at the spectacle he so suddenly had called upon with the report of his rifle, Don Enrico turned toward him with his grave smile:

'Those are caribes, senor, drawn by the sight of blood. Would you trust your wounded hand among them?'

The traveller 'allowed' pretty emphatically that he wouldn't. He had seen the caribes in their native element, and how they behaved there, and he wouldn't trust them, or any waters they swam in. He found out a great deal more about these fishes, though, during his stay at San Pablo, and also in other waters than the Guarico. By personal experience he learned of the matter of course way with which a caribe would bite off the strongest fishing line above the hook, and the fish did not stick at the performance any more when the line was defended by gauging of silver or copper. A few of them in a fishing net would ruin it by biting through its meshes, and would also injure many of the valuable fish about them. Whether in the water or flopping about on land or in the bottom of a canoe, they were always ready for a fight and would snap and bite at everything in reach as long as they could stir a fin. A trace of blood on any creature, large or small, in the water would bring them upon it, and it far from shore its chances of escape was small. Horses with spur wounds in their sides were special marks for the caribes, which would attack them so savagely in the crossing of streams as often to eat their way into the entrails and destroy the poor animals before they

can gain the shore. A horse, in the traveller's knowledge, which had waded into the river up to its knees to drink was hamstringed by caribes before it could get clear of the water. With their heavy, underhung bulldog jaws, double rows of shark's teeth, the red rings around the eyes, the red tinged gill covers and the bright orange markings over their white and bluish-green bodies, these savage little pests of the Orinoco waters were as evil in looks as in disposition.

These things the traveller found out at a later time. The story of Juana Boldoso and Gutierrez, the Spanish commander, he heard from Don Enrico Carmono on this day as together they stood on the bank of the Guarico watching the caribes and the alligator.

'It was many years ago, before the Venezuelans had emancipated themselves from the tyranny of Spain,' said the don, 'that Col. Ramon Gutierrez of Caracas marched with his Spanish soldiers to stamp out rebellion that already was gathering on the upper waters of the Orinoco. Particularly he desired to get hold of Ernestino Boldoso, a bold, high-spirited man of Indian strain, who was influential among his own people and made his voice heard for freedom. Gutierrez, a man of imperious, cruel temper, was a skilful, energetic commander. He marched so rapidly and silently as to surprise the Guarico people in their homes, and every one whom he suspected of disloyalty he shot on the spot. Ernestino Boldoso was shot before his own door, and the Spanish Colonel compelled his wife Juana, a beautiful Indian woman, to witness the execution of her husband. Gutierrez remained at San Pablo several months, engaged in the pacification of the province and during that time he forced Juana to live with him in his quarters and to cook his meals. She was a high-spirited woman, who had been devotedly in love with her husband, and so it seemed strange that, after the first outbreaks of resistance, she should appear to accept the situation passively and live with her brutal captor in apparent content.

'There came a time when Gutierrez started on an expedition down the river in canoes and, as it to heap every indignity on the widow of Boldoso, he commanded that she should paddle the canoe in which he voyaged, after the custom of Indian women who paddle their husbands along in the Orinoco waters. What the true cause was you may judge for yourself—the Indian of the Guarico knew many secret arts—but on the first morning after starting he woke complaining that a vampire bat had bitten him during the night, and he was strangely sleepy. The blood had stained his clothes, and the wound through the morning continued to bleed.

'In some way the canoe which Juana paddled fell behind the others, which passed round a bend in the river ahead. And then—it was done with the turn of the paddle—in a place where the river was wide and deep, the canoe was overset and Juana Boldoso, giving the craft one push that sent it far from both, was swimming for the nearer shore, and Gutierrez woke from a half slumber to find himself struggling in the water. The wound in his neck, the blood stains on his shirt, they were enough and almost before he could give one cry for help the caribes were about him. The two nearest canoes that had gone ahead turned back in time for their crews to witness the ending. You can see what it was.'

Don Enrico looked over to where the alligator, now dead, was floating on its back, with the caribes in growing numbers crowding, leaping, snapping about it.

'Eaten alive piecemeal,' he said; then, shrugging his shoulders: 'Perhaps it was no great pity, after what he had done. And Juana? She got ashore and safe into the woods. You can trust that no Spaniard could overtake her after that. She lived many years in health after the Spanish oppressors had been driven from Venezuela.'

ABOUT BICYCLING ACCIDENTS.

Some of the Things to be Done When You Come to Grief.

The bicycle girl is out in all her glory! She is all pervading and someone has said that she inherits the earth. If it is, it is certainly not through meekness, because that is not one of her characteristics; she is an important person in the world, and she knows it, her place is assured and she has no idea of relinquishing it; therefore it is as well to recognize her as a power in the land, and cater to her tastes occasionally. It is natural to suppose she will be interested in everything pertaining to cycling and anxious to gain all the information possible relative to that popular form of amusement.

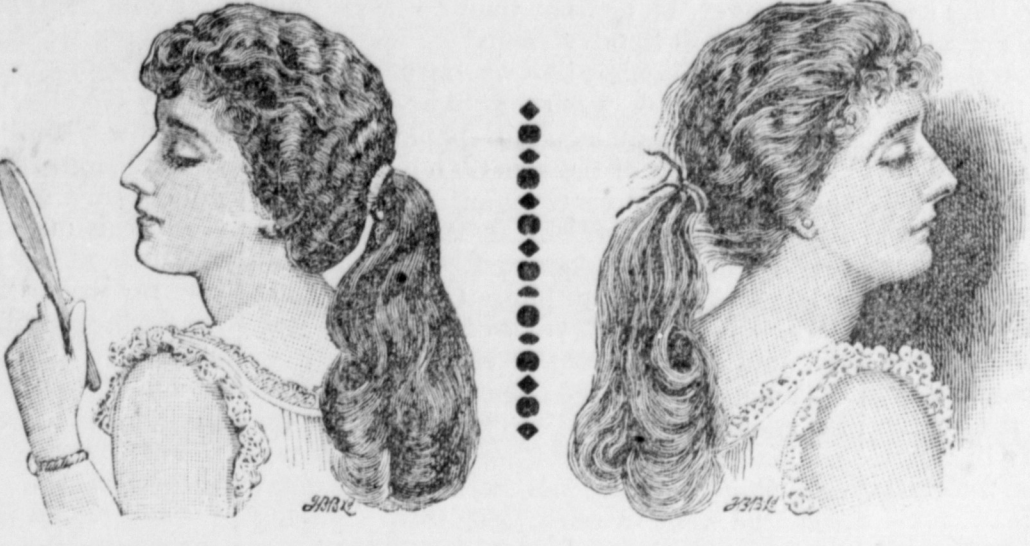
Here is some practical information and advice concerning the ills that the cyclist is heir to, and their remedy, as well as a brief dissertation from the pen of a surgeon, on the subject of bicycle accidents.

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since none of us can hope to escape altogether from "spills" collisions and sprains.

Now comes forward the cycling physician and tells wheelmen and wheel women what to wear and what not to do at this festive season of the year, in order that they may be spared from pneumonia and other ailments that snap off youthful lives. 'At this season warnings against exposure to chills and their consequent evils cannot be too frequently reiterated,' he says 'more especially as they form a peril to life rendered deadlier by far than the most dreaded of cycling accidents, in that it is held far too lightly by the average of thoughtless humanity. Bicycling is one of the most active of exercises. It brings every muscle and organ into play and opens the pores of the body. After brisk riding and overheating there is always a strong temptation on the part of the rider to cool off in the fresh air without taking any precautions. Even in ordinary riding, to descend a long hill in the brisk draught of one's own making, while heated by the previous struggle uphill, is dangerous.

'The wisest safeguard against all risks is to wear woollen undergarments.'

The almost universal use of the bicycle and the appearance of diseases that arise from its use has developed the bicycle physician.

Dr. Earl S. Bullock, of New York, is a bicycle specialist. A wheelman for many years, he has many a study of the so-called bicycle disease, and has gained much interesting information.

'The trouble all arises,' said Dr. Bullock, 'from overdoing. The century run has proved a popular fad, but a very foolish one. The wheel, as a means of exercise, is valuable, provided the cyclist rides just enough to gain a pleasant feeling of exhilaration without so greatly fatiguing himself that he is a wreck afterward.

'Take the century run, for example. You have no idea of the aggregate of foot pressure that is necessary to propel a wheel 100 miles. It must of necessity injure the rider, so great is the strain. This strain does not, as some suppose, bear upon every muscle, but only upon a certain set. Therefore, it develops just a single set of muscles to the injury of others. Should bicycle exercise be taken in such degree as to give the muscles referred to their proper and proportionate amount of exercise, well and good, but just so sure as it is overdone, the effect is injurious and opens the way for the ills catalogued under the head of the bicycle diseases.

'The effect on the heart of riding is the same as that produced by alcoholic beverages. Both stimulate. If a little stimulant—alcoholic—is occasionally taken, no evil effect is discernible. Overindulgence, however, makes one a physical wreck the next day.

'So it is with cycling. Ride a few miles, just enough to exhilarate, and the result is beneficial. Take too long a ride, and the next day the rider feels as if he had drunk too much. These facts have been demonstrated to me by personal experience.

'The disease called the vibratory movement has become widespread. It is purely a nervous affection, and more often afflicts the scorcher. Notice a man who has it, and you will observe that he cannot keep still for a moment. Some part of him is in motion all the time.

'I attribute this affliction to the position

of the saddle. The scorcher's saddle is set in an inclined position, giving him a down hill tendency all the while. This position is altogether unnatural, and cannot fail to produce evil results. I regard the adjustment of the saddle as one of the most, if not the most important, factor in riding a wheel.

'The list of bicycle diseases is a lengthy one. Most dangerous of all is 'bicycle spine.' The pitch forward of the scorcher's body exhausts the nutriment from the pulpy interior of the cushions or intervertebral disks which are placed between the bodies of the spinal vertebrae. This portion of the spine loses its soft and spongy character, and becomes dry and hardened cartilage.

'Deprived of its elasticity, the bones of the spine draw closer together, aggravating the normal curvature. The action of the complaint is the same as if a piece of whalebone were being compressed at the ends. The curve that would result in the middle of the whalebone is precisely that which the backbone of the sufferer from 'bicycle spine' will assume when the complaint has become sufficiently aggravated.

'Back pedalling brings on the trouble called 'bicycle wrist.' When the rider treads back on the pedals of his wheel necessarily he tightens his grip on the handle bars. The muscles of both legs and wrists are brought into play in the effort to stay the progress of the wheel.

'One of the latest and most irritating infirmities, for whose origin the wheel is blamed, is the 'bicycle eye.' The sensitive eye of the wheelman is taxed altogether too much for safety during a long ride. Not only has the rider to face the glare of the sunlight, but the irritating effect of dust that rises in the clouds on a windy day. The muscles of the eye, intended only for the most delicate service, are constantly and violently at work for hours under especially irritating conditions.

'The focus is taxed to the utmost by the constantly moving vista, and the arteries of the choroid and iris are greatly overstrained.

A cycling surgeon gives the following hints as to 'what to do in cycle accidents': 'Notwithstanding the number of accidents, every season, cyclists, by taking ordinary precautions, may ride year after year without suffering even so much as a strain.

'A simple remedy against the majority of 'headers' and collisions is to be able to dismount instantly while riding at full speed.

This is quite a common feat; but there are still thousands of young and agile riders who have not yet attempted to accomplish it.

'A large number of accidents last year were brought about by beginners using machines which did not fit them. It is just as foolish for a man to buy a 'misfit' bicycle, as it is for him to buy a 'misfit' suit of clothes.

'No matter what precautions are taken however, a certain number of accidents are sure to happen, and, unfortunately, the simplest accidents often produce the most serious results. A case in point came under my notice last September, when a cycling friend of mine was thrown from his wheel through a side slip, and pitched on his right hand. Though his hand was badly scratched with grit, he rode home without dressing it. A little while after blood poisoning set in, and he was dangerously ill for weeks. His is a rather common case, and cyclists meeting with the same kind of accident can ensure safety, by immediately washing the parts in cold water, so that every trace of foreign matter is removed from the hand, which should then be wrapped in a dry handkerchief. If the hand is badly torn or damaged the rider must wear his arm in a sling, and must not on any account place his hand on the handle-bar again, or use any pressure on it that might force inwards a fragment of dangerous matter.

A Forgotten Author.

The oldest American man of letters is Theodore S. Fay, now living abroad at Berlin, at the age of 90. He is mostly forgotten, and his books are all out of print. Yet he was a man of some note in the literature of his day. His Novels, 'Norman Leslie' and 'Hoboken,' were in every circulating library, and were widely read, fifty years and more ago. He was a contemporary of Irving, Willis, Bryant, Halleck, Percival and others of that period. He had a position in diplomatic service, being given the place of Minister to Switzerland by President Van Buren, who was very kind toward literary men. Irving was appointed Minister to Japan by him. Hawthorne had his position in the Boston custom house during his administration. Bancroft was made collector of the port of Boston, and James K. Spaulding, who had written at least one novel, was a member of his Cabinet. It was noted as a curious fact at that time that the literary men of the country were generally Democrats. Mr. Fay has never resided at home since he lost his foreign mission. The charms of European life were too much for him.—Boston Herald.

The Same Old Sarsaparilla.

That's Ayer's. The same old sarsaparilla as it was made and sold 50 years ago. In the laboratory it is different. There modern appliances lend speed to skill and experience. But the sarsaparilla is the same old sarsaparilla that made the record—50 years of cures. Why don't we better it? Well, we're much in the condition of the Bishop and the raspberry: "Doubtless," he said, "God might have made a better berry. But doubtless, also, He never did." Why don't we better the sarsaparilla? We can't. We are using the same old plant that cured the Indians and the Spaniards. It has not been bettered. And since we make sarsaparilla compound out of sarsaparilla plant, we see no way of improvement. Of course, if we were making some secret chemical compound, we might.... But we're not. We're making the same old sarsaparilla to cure the same old diseases. You can tell it's the same old sarsaparilla because it works the same old cures. It's the sovereign blood purifier, and —it's Ayer's.