

THE TWO ANACONDAS.

Before leaving the subject of pythons, a few words must be said about the the most terrible and dangerous of all pythons—the huge, dark, and almost black anacondas that inhabit the dense forests of central and south tropical America. These are far more common than is generally supposed by those who are not familiar with those regions; and but for the great difficulties which I have mentioned as to taking these monsters alive, there is no reason why our Zoological Gardens should not possess some half a dozen specimens. These American Boas are greatly dreaded by the natives, and not without reason. They haunt the pools where cattle drink, or twine, when watching for prey, in the branches of the forest. Their boldness is well supported by their prodigious strength. There are not unfrequent instances of specimens having been killed which had attained a length of more than thirty feet, and which in some parts were as thick round as the body of a child. The endless tales which are related of their daring in killing men, women and children, of course, partake somewhat of the marvellous; but there is too much reason to believe that the stories, when stripped of all native exaggeration, contain the terrible basis of truth that many human beings have been killed by these monsters. One peculiarity about the anaconda is that it is said to be always found hunting in couples. This fact is undoubtedly deposited to by all the natives and all the Europeans who have had any opportunity of learning anything about the habits of these gigantic serpents. Even Waterton, one of the most careful of natural historians, and one most thoroughly versed in the deadly ophiology of these regions, admit that when the male anaconda is seen the female is seldom far distant, and *vice versa*.

A terrible tale has been told me in connection with these great serpents. For its authenticity I do not vouch myself, but it certainly is, if not true, not only possible, but, from what I know of the snakes, even perhaps probable. It was related to me by a Brazilian gentleman of high position, and in the presence of two others who had also heard the story, and were ready to vouch for its accuracy. Certainly it seems accepted in the wilder parts of Brazil as a tradition of frontier life. The story is simply this, and as it occurred more than forty years ago, there can be no reason for concealing names which were not concealed from me. Mr. Barclay, an English gentleman who had made a comfortable independence in mining speculations, determined, after some years' residence, to settle in the Brazils. With this end in view, he bought and formed a large tract of almost uncleared land on the extreme north-west frontier, and pursued his clearing and farming with great success and tolerable profit, and, what is more, with a certain prospect of much greater profit to come in time. He gave himself, after a time, a short leave of absence, and came back to Scotland, where he married his cousin, with whom he again returned to his plantation in Brazil. During his absence, and according to his instructions, a neat, light wooden residence—such as are built on all plantations—had been erected in the midst of the clearing, with a lofty verandah round it to keep the rooms cool, and French windows leading straight from the apartments to the ground. Still, young Mrs. Barclay, though surrounded with every comfort, was very far from being quite happy, for she was constitutionally in terror of the repulsive and tremendous-looking insects and reptiles with which all the wilder parts of Brazil literally abound. She could not go to a drawer without finding in it a centipede as large as a little eel, or open a cupboard without meeting with a spider almost as large as a small crab. Lizards of beautiful colors, but repulsive appearance, had to be swept out of the bedroom at night. These are harmless enough, but there are few people who would care to wake up and find them crawling over their faces, or to hear their long nails clattering along the wooden floor. The climate, too, told on Mrs Barclay's health. The reptiles by day and mosquitoes by night made her unusually susceptible of irritation and alarm. But of all her horrors, the greatest she entertained was that against snakes and serpents of all kinds. This was ineradicable from her nature, and was, in fact, as much a part of her nature as the overwhelming antipathies some ladies feel to the sight of a rat, a spider or a bull. Unfortunately, Mrs. Barclay lived in a part of the country which was infested with

snakes; some harmless, some deadly; but whether harmless or deadly, the unconquerable terror she evinced was the same to all. Once a tuboba, a quick and deadly snake, was killed in her house. At another time a coral-snake, the most beautiful and most quickly deadly of all the venomous reptiles God has created, was found and killed with ease upon the rough lawn, if we may dignify by such a term the short, brown, burnt-up herbage which surrounded the house. At another time a small anaconda, about eleven feet long, was found in the woods near the house and killed; and what was much worse, constant rumors were brought in that two very much larger serpents of the same class had been seen in the forest not far off. Poor Mrs. Barclay's terrors were not diminished by the exaggerated tales of her native servants, till at length they rose to such a pitch that it seemed very likely, as she often said, that she would die if a serpent came near her. Her fears got to such a height that at last she would not venture out at all, and actually kept her room. In this frame of mind, it will easily be believed that her life was a misery to herself, and not of much comfort to her wild, fear-naught husband.

Early one summer morning, the latter went to look after the progress of some rather distant clearings he was making; of course, he went on horseback, and of course he carried with him the heavy, old fashioned, double-barrelled musket, without which, in that time and in those wild regions, no planter ever stirred far abroad. Both the barrels were loaded with a heavy charge of slugs, sufficient to bring down a deer, if one came near enough, or, better still, to scare away or stop the charge of a jaguar or tree panther. Mr. Barclay's survey took him rather late, and it was high in the noonday heat before he returned through a short belt of forest which lay between his new clearings and his home. At that time the tropical forests are as silent and as motionless as if they were dead. It was through such a scene as this that Mr. Barclay rode on his return home, and it was amid such stillness that his attention was at once attracted to a large creeper hanging from a tree in front of him, and which, amid the deadly stillness around, was swinging quickly. Such signs in the forest are never to be disregarded, and Mr. Barclay was too old a woodsman not to be at once on the alert. After waiting some minutes, till the oscillation ceased, and being reassured by the quietness of his horse, which would have been the first to scent a jaguar or a puma, he rode carefully towards the tree, and at a little distance examined it, but for some time in vain. At last the cause of the disturbance, and of the danger also, became apparent on close inspection. On a limb of the tree overlooking the path lay a huge black anaconda, piled in great masses fold over fold, as is its wont, with the end of its tail just curled round the limb on which its great bulk rested, and its head left free and elevated about two feet above the rest of its body. In this position it was quite prepared for action, and, holding on by its tail, could at once drop its great length down with resistless force on any unhappy animal or even person, that might pass below; and when once secured in its gigantic folds, death was certain, whether to man or goat, or deer or sheep. Mr. Barclay, however, was not inclined to give it such a chance as this on his account, and waited quietly at a little distance till, by some cautious manoeuvring, he got a full view of the creature's head against the bright, blue sky. Then he fired, and with one charge of slugs so shattered the huge reptile's head that after writhing for a single moment, it came in a long heap to the ground. It was far from dead, however, and plunged wildly, so that for a time he durst not approach it, as it lay knocking the leaves and branches about in all directions. At last it lay still, when he got a close shot with his second barrel, and this so completely shattered the serpent's head that it never moved again. Like a cautious woodsman, however, Mr. Barclay did not feel secure till he had divided with his knife, and not without great difficulty, the vertebrae in the centre of the back. The serpent measured nearly twenty-nine feet in length, and was evidently, from its great thickness, immensely powerful. The only question which remained to the successful hunter was, what was to be done with the carcass. He was loth to leave it where it was; besides, he wanted its skin—as what victorious hunter does not?—and, above all, he wished to show Mrs. Barclay how easily such seeming monsters could be killed. Not unnaturally, then, though in an evil

hour, he determined to drag it home. For this purpose he undid his stirrup-leather, and, making it fast over the head of the snake, led his horse along, which, as it towed the snake, left a deep mark in the herbage, and sometimes a trail of blood on the grass over which the carcass was dragged. As he advanced, with the huge reptile trailing at his heels, some evil genius put it into his head that now was a fine opportunity to give Mrs. Barclay a lesson that would cure her of her fear of serpents. He never seems to have thought of the matter unkindly, or to entertain for a moment an idea that her woman's nature would not as soon and easily get over its repugnance to these reptiles as he, in his wild, rough life, had easily been enabled to do. There is no doubt but that nothing more than a rough practical joke entered his mind, and this was perhaps the only kind of joke the point of which he was capable of perceiving. His simple plan of mischief was soon laid. He determined to take the serpent into the house, and coil it in the sitting-room in such a manner as that its wounded parts could easily be hidden. He dragged it, therefore, with some trouble along the verandah, and soon managed to coil away its great folds in such a way that its injuries were hidden, and it looked indeed as if alive.

When all had been quietly arranged by himself, he went out and called for a servant to fetch down her mistress, who, as is the custom of the country, was sleeping out the great heat of the day in her own room. Little suspecting what was to follow, she came down at once, and the instant she entered the sitting-room Mr. Barclay slipped out and fastened the door behind him. What passed afterwards can only be guessed with horror. Her screams of "The serpent, the serpent!" were at first so shrill and loud as to quite drown Mr. Barclay's calls at her that the reptile was dead, and that she must look at it quietly; and he was only first alarmed by a noise of struggling, and the piercing cries of some half a dozen female servants, who, drawn by the shrieks of their mistress, had entered the room by another door. What they saw on entering was Mrs. Barclay attacked by a huge anaconda, which had followed up the broad track left by the body of its slaughtered mate. The instant their cries alarmed it, it rolled back its folds through the window by which it had entered. Mrs. Barclay was found insensible, and only slightly torn about the face, and partly on the bosom, by the fangs of the boa. She was quite insensible, however, and never rallied. In spite of all restoratives, she remained in a comatose state till the succeeding day, when convulsion succeeded convulsion, till her death left Mr. Barclay a widower and the parent of a still-born child.—*Serpents and Venomous Snakes.*

LIST OF LETTERS

Remaining in the Office at Salt Lake City, Utah Territory, on the 18th day of May, 1869; which if not called for within one month, will be sent to the Dead Letter Office.

GENTLEMEN'S LIST.

Adams J C	K	Kaver S T
Adams L B		Kennedy J
Addis H C		Ketcham H
Anderson H J		Koontz J
Archer L G		Kulitz B C
Atwood C E 2		
Backman O	L	Lacy L
Baggs J		Lane J
Baker J R		Larsen J
Barr W		Larsen J
Baaty J W		Latus Wm
Bennett D V		Leavy T
Blackhurst D		Lenard D H
Briggs H L		Lendell J K
Boyd J M		Lewis A
Boyle G		Ling A 2
Broderick P		Loeb L
Brown H		Loomis L
Brown S W		
Browning J W	M	Marshall J K 2
Bunting C		Mero C H
Burnham C C		Merrill T
Busbey J		Meyers C
Butler J		Miller G T
Buzzard F H		Miller E T
Bywater G		Miller H
		Monty Mr
Camp J		Molsser G
Calhoun J J		Morgan J W
Carlson G		Moss W
Cartline C W		Murray G W
Case C		
Chandler J M	N	Neal W
Coats B F		Newton J L
Coe L W		Ninwell E R
Conover F M		
Cotterrell C		Olsen G
Coniam H		Olsen Mr
Craddock J 2		Ormiston S
Crosby J W	P	
Cunningham B		Palmer J A
Cuyler C P		Parker D E
		Patterson J A
Day M S		Paul D
Dallin W		Pederson H P
Dixon G		Peterson A
Donovan D		Pierson D J
Douglas J		Pike W
Downey W F		Pillsbury A B
Downing L D		Pinkerton J H
Downing W F		Pixley H O 4

Driskel H	Pixton R
Dugal H M	Plaskett J H
Dugglus S G	Pollock R I
	Pollock J
Eastman H A	Price E
Eckerle F	
Ellis W N 2	Reed C B
Evans P	Rhodes G F
	Rene A 2
Fawcett B	Reynolds J A 2
Ferrimon L	Ritter L E 2
Flagg D E 3	Roberts J A
Ford G	Rogers J C
Foster R	Rood L C
Frost F	
	Sanders Jas
Gant J M	Schneib J R
Gardlenn Mr	Schroeder C
Gardner A	Shaffer J B
Gardner A	Shaw J
Garner W R	Sherman E L
Ganchat A 2	Shriver T
Geldenhuysen W 1	Skirvan T
Gorill D	Sickels T E
Gregg W C	Smith F
	Smith A T
Hale T	Smith L
Hall E F	Snell H 2
Hallender J F	Sobroder C
Hamblin G	Snoden & Webster
Hansen M	Spencer D
Harday M H	Stokes G
Hardy C W	Stoltz N
Harquave S	Stout E
Harris W J	Stover D B
Hart M	
Haskell C 2	Taylor W
Hassett C W	Taylor R J
Haward G L	Thomas J D
Heath F	Tillet H
Heard E	Tomson T
Hedge R	Torn Ber F
Hedges G B	Trainer P H
Helde J	
Hemenway L 2	Vance J
Henry C A	Von Burg F
Hinckley A J	Vose M R
Hoffman J	
Holland N	Walker J W
Horton H B	Wallace J L
Howard G L	Ward E
Howard C S	Wald R
Howley H	Whiller W
Hull H	Williams T
Hyde E	Williams J L
	Williams E
Jarman W	Williamson Mr
Johnston J D	Wilson E M
Johnson G L	Wilson J
Johnson J P	Wolf J
Johnson W W	Woodworth G W
Johnson W	Worstenholme G M
Jones J R	Wright W
Jones C F	

LADIES' LIST.

Andrews A	Kay A M
Aethins E	Kirkham G M
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Bates E	
Benton M	Lencham A
Braddock A	Loeysay A
Brimhall N 2	Neal J A
Brown S	
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Bushy M M	Parker E
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Condee E	Pursell N
Cook M	
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Daniels A	Robbins C
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Dykman A	Rowgers M
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	Speaker M W 2
Fielding M	Stanton M
Fowler E	Steel M
	Stoddard M
Gallagher A A	
George E	Thorp M E
Gibbs L A	
	Vann R
Hansdother H A	
Hawkes S A	Wade D 2
	Wallis E
Johnson J E	Weab H
	White E

Persons inquiring for the above letters are requested to state when advertised.

A. W. STREET.

Postmaster

The following plan, to break a bottle or jar across its circumference, so as to form a battery cup, or vessel for other purposes, may be of some service to our readers. I have performed the operation successfully many times. Place the bottle in a vessel of water, to the height where it is designed to break it; also fill the bottle to the same level. Now pour coal-oil, inside and out, on the water; cut a ring of paper, fitting the bottle. Saturate with alcohol or benzine so that it touches the oil. Pour, also some inside the bottle. Set on fire; the cold water prevents the glass from heating below its surface, while the expansion caused by the heat will break the vessel on the water-line.—*Scientific American.*

In New Orleans, a young man and woman eloped and were married. The mother of the girl captured them, and brought them before the Recorder for separation. She was informed that the couple for a moment, and then said "Judge, that girl ain't fit to be married she has spells!" "Has what?" exclaimed the Judge. "Why, you see, Judge, but before the old lady could proceed, the daughter sprung to her feet and said, "Mother, there ain't no use in saying any more; I'm married, and, if I ain't fit, I'd like to see the girl who is!"