

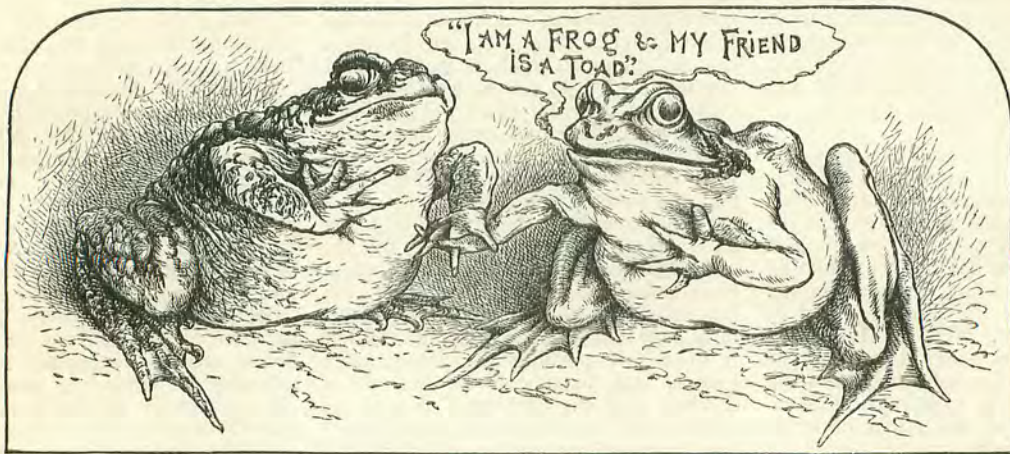
Dulcey, "which has been the means of his attracting my brother to him. I think he will do. But what is to become of Flo? She will be a duchess if you get the fortune; if you are ruined, as you must be if you lose it, she is good for nothing. Why didn't she go in for the 'higher education of women,' instead of frittering away her time over accomplishments? Not that I believe in your certificated and learned ladies. Between ourselves, I hate 'em."

When Miss Dulcey wound up thus, Belle knew that the argument was closed. But she was always asking herself, what could Flo do? If she was

too attractive for a companion, there seemed no other door opened to her. It was evident that Mrs. Prendergast had found her, if not exactly a rival, at any rate a hindrance; and since she was neither highly accomplished nor "certificated," she was not capable of obtaining a permanent situation as governess. In spite of oracular Miss Dulcey, Belle's common sense told her that it was best to qualify yourself for some sort of occupation if obliged to earn your livelihood. She had qualified herself for housekeeping and country work generally, and she knew she could secure a situation if obliged to leave

home. But Flo's training had been so desultory, that she was fitted for nothing but a companion, and she was too attractive for that. Belle thought of her as she was at that moment, happy in sleep and unconsciousness, and wondered how she would feel when she awoke and realised that she was condemned to the dullness of Castle Farm, and, perhaps, daily tuition at the vicarage. Belle had been accustomed to her complaints when she returned from her visits to Charlie and Amy in London, and, in spite of her sisterly love, she dreaded them.

(To be continued.)



## SNAKES, TOADS, AND OTHER ALARMING CREATURES.

By DARLEY DALE.

LONDON girls are often painfully nervous at the strange creatures they come across when on a visit to their country cousins, and the country cousins often share their ignorance if not their fears. A walk through a wood on a hot summer's day is fraught with fear, lest a snake should dart out and bite or sting (they are not quite sure which) the pretty, unwise things. Or they come across a dead blind-worm which a previous more intrepid passer-by has slain, and the burying beetles have not had time to bury; this terrible sight provokes sundry screams and rustling of skirts and fluttering of feathers on the part of the town cousins.

In vain the country cousins suggest the horror is dead. It was once alive; and who knows if it is harmless even now? Or they are comfortably seated in a dry wood eating their luncheon, when a rustling among the undergrowth close by attracts their attention, and, horror of horrors! a viper slinks away. Now this is a legitimate fear; but in all probability they are too comfortable to pay much attention to it; it is gone and won't return, and the country cousins, with superior wisdom, are sure it is only a common snake, and therefore harmless. Then some wasps are attracted by the jam tarts, and, dear, dear, the commotion they cause! Up jump the girls, buzz, buzz, buzz the wasps, a battle ensues, the girls dodge the wasps, the wasps pursue the girls, and the end is a girl is stung, whereas if the group had sat still, in all probability no one would have been hurt.

Another day a town cousin has a terrible escape—an earwig is actually found on her counterpane in the middle of the day; it might have been in the middle of the night, and it might have been on her pillow, and

then, of course, the result would have been fatal, for the earwig would have crawled into her ear, and the poor, pretty victim would have succumbed to her agonies.

For isn't it the sole mission in life of earwigs to crawl into people's ears? Does not their very name indicate as much? And don't they pinch dreadfully with those forceps-like tails? What other possible use can they put their tails to? Why were such ugly, useless, dreadful, cruel creatures made?

Again our girls were lingering in the garden one balmy but rare summer's evening, and a great toad dared to cross their path; the ugly, ill-mannered thing swelled its body out and spat at them, and naturalists only know what further insolence and wickedness it would have been guilty of, if they had not rushed into the house in fear and trembling lest it should jump after them.

Poor toad! It could not if it would.

A degree less repulsive are the croaking, jumping frogs they meet, in such numbers and such varying sizes, in a marshy meadow another day; but the pretty frogs are condemned as small toads, and pronounced venomous reptiles.

And, oh! the terror, a lizard, which, darting across a sunny bank one glorious day, struck into the hearts of all the cousins, town and country alike. Just fancy, if the creature had stung one of them, with that long, vicious-looking tail; short shift indeed must have sufficed the victim, if, indeed, death were not instantaneous!

Poor pretty little lizard, how they malign it!

Leaving the wasps and earwigs out of the question, for wasps undoubtedly sting, and earwigs we will return to presently—and neither

are reptiles, with which we are chiefly concerned—let us remark, for the comfort of all our girls who need it, that the only British reptile which can hurt us is the viper. The common snake is perfectly harmless, so is the very rare smooth snake and the blindworm; lizards can neither bite nor sting; frogs are absolutely harmless, and the worst the toad can do is to emit a watery liquid which is innocuous. That the bite of the viper is dangerous is perfectly true; it is the only poisonous reptile indigenous to England and Scotland; in Ireland it does not exist—it was banished from that island, with the snake, by Saint Patrick hundreds of years ago, and has never dared to return.

Here it is too plentiful, particularly in chalky districts, where it may be found in dry woods and on sandy banks in warm weather. In the winter it hibernates at the foot of a tree, or in a hollow stump, or in a hole in a bank, coiled up with other vipers.

It is between two and three feet long; the head is thicker than the body, the tail pointed; its colour is a dingy yellow, with black markings, and it may be distinguished from the common snake by the following marks:—

The viper is found in dry places; the snake in damp spots.

The snake is larger than the viper.

The viper has numerous small plates on its head; the snake has few, but large, plates on its head.

The viper has a dark, zigzag, blotched line down the entire length of its body; the snake is spotted all over with a darker colour.

The tail of the snake tapers far more than the tail of the viper, which is better described as pointed.

The head of the snake is more depressed and more pointed.

The viper is marked with an obscure V on its crown.

Both snake and viper are so quick in their movements that only an accustomed eye could distinguish one from the other at a glance; so, perhaps, as the bite of the viper is very dangerous, our girls will err on the safe side in fleeing from both.

The viper strikes rather than bites; it coils itself up with the upper part of its body raised in the air, and then, quick as thought, darts its head forward and strikes its tooth, behind which its venom is secreted, into its victim.

The warmer the weather the more virulent the poison, but if promptly treated the bite is seldom fatal in this climate. The best thing to do when bitten by a viper is to suck the wound at once, and tie a tight bandage above it; on reaching a house, wash the wound well and apply olive oil, and give the patient a dose of ammonia. There is one peculiarity of a comforting nature about the bite of a viper—his poison is quickly exhausted, so that if he inflicts two wounds, the second wound is not so serious as the first, the third is less venomous than the second, and so on; this applies to all serpents whose bite is poisonous.

Vipers bring forth their young in eggs, which are hatched before they leave the mother's body; from twelve to twenty of these very undesirable reptiles are hatched at a birth, and so pugnacious are they that they will put themselves into an attitude of defence if irritated directly they are born.

The common snake, though quite as alarming as the adder or viper in appearance and manner—for both give one that strange thrill of horror a serpent, and a serpent only, can produce—is perfectly harmless, and this is a consolation to the nervous, seeing that it is also very common in all damp places in England and Scotland. Like the adder, it has never been seen in Ireland since the days of St. Patrick. It is rather larger than the viper and handsomer; perhaps it is vain also, for it changes its skin several times during the year.

This curious operation of changing its skin does not occur at any fixed time; before it takes place the animal is blind, for the whole skin becomes opaque; by degrees the old skin is detached from the body, then the snake cracks it at the neck, and, creeping through some thick undergrowth, leaves it attached to some bushes, and emerges in all the splendour of a new coat, fitting exquisitely, and far more brilliant than its discarded one, which is now called a "slough," and the whole operation is called "sloughing."

The snake feeds on birds, mice, lizards, and frogs, but the latter are its favourite food; it swallows all these unfortunate creatures whole, sometimes yawning afterwards, so that frogs have been seen to seize the opportunity and hop out again. It produces its young by eggs, but not in the same manner as the viper, which, to use a long word, is ovo-viviparous, while the snake is oviparous, that is, the young are hatched after the egg is separated from the parent. The common snake usually lays its eggs in a hotbed or in a dunghill, heat being necessary for the hatching of the young snakes, and having provided her offspring with the necessary warmth to bring them into the world, the snake takes no further trouble about them.

As we have said before, the snake is found in damp places and near water; sometimes it dives for water-newts when it desires a change of diet. Like the viper, it passes the winter in sleep in some secluded spot, generally in company with others.

Neither snake nor viper nor any serpents drink, nor do they require frequent food—one meal will last them for weeks or months, as

their digestion is very slow, and when they do dine they dine well.

The blindworm, which our London cousins have doubtless stigmatised as a dreadful snake, is no snake at all, and perfectly harmless, though some ignorant people believe it to be most venomous. It is the connecting link between lizards and true serpents, for though so like a snake in appearance, it is no serpent. It has no forked tongue like a serpent; its jaws do not expand like the jaws of a snake; its eyes have movable eyelids, like a lizard's, and it has rudimentary legs beneath its skin.

It has very small eyes, hence one of its names, the blindworm; it is very slow in its movements, hence its other name of the slow-worm. Like snakes, it casts its "slough," but never eats it afterwards. If attacked it becomes rigid, and though you may break you cannot bend it; if you attempt to do so you will break it; if you catch hold of it by the tail it will escape, leaving a piece of the tail in your hand. It has the power of reproducing this tail to a certain extent, or perhaps it would be less prodigal of it.

The slowworm is much smaller than the viper or the common snake; it varies from ten to fourteen inches in length, and is of a brownish steely-grey colour.

It produces its young in the same way as the viper, bringing forth from seven to twelve at a time. It passes the winter in sleep, coiled up with about half a dozen of its kind, but it bears cold better than the snake and viper, and comes out of its winter retreat earlier. In this country most reptiles hibernate for six months. During this time they neither eat nor grow, their respiration is very low, and their circulation very slow while this sleep lasts.

Just as harmless as the blindworm is the pretty little lizard, though he is a very near relation of the fierce crocodile, and a descendant of those huge Saurian reptiles with whose fossil remains our London girls at least must be familiar from seeing them in museums. A pretty, bright-eyed, slender, sun-loving little creature he is, very shy, and so active that he scarcely gives us time to glance at him as he darts across a sunny wall or bank; very graceful, too, in his quick movements. In the summer-time, indeed from early spring until the autumn, he may be seen basking in the sunshine, but so timid is he, that he will retreat into his hiding-place before the bravest of our country cousins has time to approach him.

The lizard found in this country is the small viviparous lizard, so called because it brings forth its young alive, as its name implies; ovoviviparous is the exact description of its method of bringing forth its young, for instead of depositing her eggs the mother keeps them in her own body until the young are hatched. After this she does not pay them very much attention, but they are fully formed when hatched, and able to take care of themselves.

The food of this pretty little reptile—for a lizard is a true reptile, although a harmless one—is insects, which it darts at with great rapidity and swallows whole. Like other reptiles, it does not like our climate, and being unable to winter abroad, perhaps, too, aware that there are drawbacks even to that bliss, it very wisely goes to sleep till the warm days come again. It burrows in the ground, and retreats to this burrow when it is disturbed or alarmed. This little creature is almost the only reptile known in Ireland; its harmlessness, perhaps, prevailing with the saint, when he banished the snakes, to allow the pretty lizard to remain.

There is perhaps some excuse for shrinking from a toad, for, though harmless, the toad is undoubtedly a repulsive-looking creature; its slow movements, and its habit of discharging an unpleasant fluid when disturbed, do not add

to its attractions, although this fluid is harmless. The toad requires very little air and very little food; at least it can sustain a prolonged fast with very little inconvenience, though all the tales of toads being shut up in wood or stone for years without either food or air must be taken for fables. It does not like cold, and becomes torpid during the winter, secreting itself in some hole or tree, or even among some stones, where it remains until the spring. In the spring it takes to the water, where it lays its eggs and remains until its young are hatched. Here it shows some taste for the beautiful, for it makes a very pretty necklace of its eggs, though we scarcely think any girl would care to wear it, for the jet-like beads are the young tadpoles, presently to break from the chain of transparent gluten in which they are set. These necklaces are in two strings, three or four feet long. The tadpoles live in the water until the early autumn, when they introduce themselves into the world as young toads.

The toad feeds on worms and insects of every kind; he is only particular that they should be alive, and to ensure this he prefers them to be in motion when he devours them. He catches his prey with his tongue, which is covered underneath with a viscid liquid to which the insect sticks. He darts his tongue in and out of his mouth, when he strikes an insect, so rapidly that you can scarcely witness the operation.

The toad changes his skin at intervals, and the operation is rather an interesting one to watch. The old skin splits down the centre of the back and front of the creature; by degrees it rolls back, and then the toad extricates itself by means of its mouth and feet, until it emerges in its bright new dress; it then rolls the old skin up into a small ball and swallows it.

If toads are repulsive, frogs, though they resemble them somewhat, are not. They are altogether more attractive; they are brighter in colour, generally smaller than toads, and much more active; they leap, while toads crawl; their bodies are polished and glistening, the toad's body is rough and dusky. The colour of the frog varies at different times, for he, too, changes his skin at intervals, and the new skin is always much brighter than the old, which gets faded with the wear and tear of the frog's active life.

Happily for our nervous London cousins, the tadpoles of the frog spend their life under water, for otherwise they are such odd-looking creatures that if met ashore, in all probability even the country cousins would be unable to give them a name, and who knows what mischief a lively imagination might not attribute to the poor innocent tadpoles!

But it is possible a fishing excursion might be organised, and perhaps some unhappy tadpole caught in the landing-net, so, lest he should strike terror into the fair fisher's heart, we will describe him. He is not in the least like a frog, so if a country cousin denies the fact that he will be one, let her be forgiven; he seems to be merely a head and tail—a large round black head, and a slender fringed tail; this is when he is quite a baby tadpole. If he should be six or eight weeks old when caught he will look like something between a frog and a lizard, for he will have developed legs, and the nearer he is to becoming a frog the less like a lizard is he, until at last the tail or lizard part disappears entirely and rapidly, and a full-blown frog is the result, as harmless as the tadpole.

So we find the only English reptile we need fear is the viper, and, common as it is, it is quite possible to spend years in the country without coming across one, though on a hot summer's day a dry wood is a very likely place to meet one.

Some girls seem afraid of every insect and animal they see, apparently on the principle that the unknown is to be avoided; hence a

large slug causes a panic, though, except to the gardener, it is perfectly harmless, in spite of its slimy path and great, soft, black body and horned head.

The larvæ of some insects are alarming-looking creatures to the uninitiated; for instance, the caterpillar of the goat-moth is a great soft thing, as large as a man's finger; it is harmless, but we don't advise any girl to touch it, for it gives out a strong and most offensive odour, which is very difficult to get rid of. Bees, wasps, hornets, gnats, and some flies are no doubt troublesome; hornets only are dangerous, and the first three are best left alone, as they rarely attack unless attacked. The gnat usually proclaims his presence in bedrooms by his trumpet-like hum, and as his bite is very venomous, it is better to have a gnat hunt where they are numerous before retiring. A veritable insect pest is the almost invisible *bête rouge* or harvest bug, which buries itself under the skin, making bumps

which last for a fortnight; but is such a tiny creature that there is no escape from its onslaughts; and the little midge is a still greater plague—greater in the sense of size, at any rate.

One precaution can be taken against these little plagues; put quassia-chips into your bath, this will make your skin so bitter that no insect will touch you.

As for earwigs, naturalists assure us that they are grossly maligned when it is said they creep into the ear; at the same time the writer knows two scientific men, one of whom was a botanist, the other a zoologist, though his line was among the microscopical infusoria; and each of these once had an earwig crawl into his ear during the night, and suffered horribly. But these are probably exceptional cases, though quite likely to occur to people sleeping out of doors, though this was not the case in either of the above-mentioned instances.

The earwig's forceps-like tails are generally

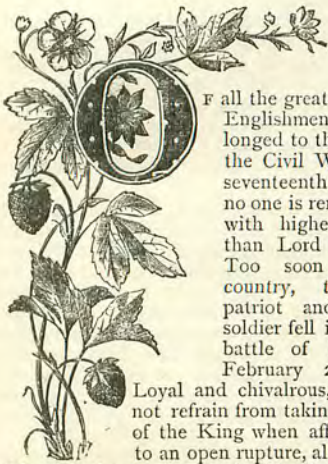
useful to them, not in nipping people's fingers, but in seizing other insects, though they feed chiefly on leaves and fruit.

They are the hares of the insect world, for they are very timid, quite as much afraid of the town cousins as the town cousins are of them, and they race away with tremendous speed. They possess very beautiful wings folded over their backs, but they seldom fly except at night, for they are nocturnal in their habits.

Objects of almost universal dislike, they have one redeeming trait—they are excellent mothers, and brood over their young like a hen, both before and after they are hatched; and, like every insect, and, indeed, every living creature, bird or beast, a better acquaintance with them will render them objects of interest rather than of fear, often of admiration instead of disgust; for they were all created to be of service to man in some way, and not the least of their uses is to arouse our admiration and wonder at their instinct and their habits.

## A NOBLE SISTER OF CHARITY:

LETTICE, LADY FALKLAND.



**O**f all the great and good Englishmen who belonged to the time of the Civil War in the seventeenth century, no one is remembered with higher honour than Lord Falkland. Too soon for his country, this true patriot and gallant soldier fell in the first battle of Newbury, February 20, 1643.

Loyal and chivalrous, he could not refrain from taking the side of the King when affairs came to an open rupture, although he felt that the Parliament had justly protested against some of the acts of arbitrary power. If any man could have saved the nation from calamity by proposals of conciliation and peace, it was Lord Falkland. Of him Lord Clarendon, in his history, says, "His nature was so gentle, and his disposition so obliging, with courtesy, kindness, and generosity, that all mankind could not but admire and love him."

While the name of Lord Falkland thus lives in history, comparatively little has been heard of his wife, Lady Falkland, a woman of the highest excellence, worthy of such a husband, and with a character for wisdom and goodness such as has rarely been surpassed. Her name was Lettice Morison, a daughter of Sir Richard Morison. She also died young, in February, 1646, aged thirty-five, surviving Lord Falkland only three years. The record of her life we owe to another lady of those times, also memorable for her wisdom and virtue, Lucy Hutchinson, the wife of Colonel Hutchinson, a leading man on the Parliamentary side in the Civil War. That a Republican lady thus celebrated the praises of her Royalist contemporary, shows how personal excellence is above mere party feeling, and it is the happiness of our more peaceful time that we can admire the devotion and imitate the example of each of these noble women. From Mrs. Hutchinson's memorial of Lady Falkland our readers will be pleased to see some extracts.

After telling of her happy married life, and the sorrow of her sad bereavement, Mrs. Hutchinson says that the years of Lady Falkland's widowhood "abounded in prayers and alms-deeds." Her first and grand employment was to study and to practise our blessed Saviour's sermon on the Mount, beginning with those virtues to which the beatitudes are annexed.

Much of her charity was such as could not be concealed; though often she sent relief to prisoners and needy persons, with strict charge that it should not be known from whence it came. Some of her near neighbours, who were either very old and not able to work, or very young and not fit for work, were wholly maintained by her. To other poor children she contributed much, both for their spiritual and their temporal well-being, by erecting a school for them, where they were to be taught both to read and to work. Much care she took that no man or woman or child should want employment, that their own hands might bring them in a competent subsistence, and accounted that to be the best management of her estate which set most poor people to work; for if it were to their profit she little regarded her own detriment in it. So that her principal care herein was to keep them from idleness, the root of most sin and wickedness.

As for the poor at home, and for strangers at the door, she was very charitable in feeding the hungry, and refreshing the faint and weak, and in clothing the naked. Sometimes when she had given all the clothing she had of her own, she would in extremity beg garments from her servants (whom she requited soon after with new), that the poor wayfarer might not go naked or cold from her door. When one objected that idle and wicked people were by this sort of charity relieved at her house, her answer was, "I know not their hearts, but can only judge their carriage and speech; and I had rather relieve five unworthy vagrants than that one member of Christ should go empty away."

And this her mercifulness extended to enemies as well as those who professed to be friends to the same cause. When many prisoners were taken by the King's soldiers, and were in great need, she consulted how she might send relief to them; and when it was said that such acts would raise jealousies in some of her loyalty to his Majesty, she re-

plied: "No man will suspect my loyalty because I pity and relieve these prisoners, but he would suspect my Christianity if he would see me relieve a needy Turk or Jew. However, I would rather be so misunderstood than that any of my enemies should perish for want of it."

Beyond all, her mercifulness towards the sick was most laudable. When any of her poor neighbours were sick she had a constant care that they should neither want relief nor such attendance as their weak condition called for; and, if need were, she hired nurses to serve them. Her own frequent visiting of the poorest cottages, and her ready service to them on their sick-bed, argued as great humility as kindness in her; yet the books of spiritual exhortation she carried to those sick persons declared a further design she had therein of promoting them towards heaven, by reading to them, and by administering words of holy counsel to them. "There is no ground more fit," she would say, "for sowing good seed than this, while the ground of their hearts is softened by sorrow and sickness." And to gain this advantage it was that she was so frequent a visitor of the sick, going day after day to their bedside. This honourable lady hath been observed sitting in a cottage, waiting the sick woman's leisure, till the slumbers or fits were over, that she might read again to her, and finish the work she had begun.

For meekness also she was most eminent. She was second to none of her sex and age, I believe, among us for perspicuity of understanding and clearness of judgment; yet as far from self-conceit as from ignorance. Her way, indeed, was, upon debates, to object till all arguments she could think on to the contrary were satisfied, and when that was once done no cavil was heard, but her assent was readily given. This ready submission of her judgment to the best reasons I mention, to show the meekness of her wisdom. And she seldom delayed to do what she was convinced was fit to be done.

The greatest difficulty with her was as to her affections. Her natural temper, she would often complain, inclined her to anger, and being so well aware of it, she most diligently observed herself, and did in a great degree conquer that froward inclination, which was the more commendable because of the many difficulties she met with in it.