



Blacksnake

SHUFFLING along through fallen leaves, or idly overturning a log or stone, you may startle yourself by chasing out a blacksnake. These and other inoffensive serpents are more likely to be encountered in the autumn, when they are semi-somnolent, than in the summer when they are wide awake and better able to avoid the blundering coming of human feet.

Because a certain kind of heavy, pliable whip got the name of blacksnake, its harmless prototype has had to take the consequences. In certain rural sections, boys still solemnly believe that a blacksnake will whip you to death with his tail if he can get you into a corner, and many a poor blacksnake has had to suffer a fatal stoning on account of that legend. A blacksnake will turn his tail on you every time, of course—but only to take that tail away with the rest of his long swift body as fast as he can depart from your disagreeable neighborhood.

Of all boys, farm boys ought to let the blacksnake alone. For every one they kill, they are assuring the raiding of their fathers' corncrib by scores of field mice which would normally disappear down those black jaws, and permitting the survival of numerous black beetles and other insects that in the course of nature would eventually become blacksnake meat. Balancing that, to be sure, is the account of frogs and toads, which the blacksnake also eats, and above all the young thrushes and other songbirds that nest on or near the ground. But taken all around the blacksnake and all other non-poisonous constrictor snakes do a great deal more good than harm, and are deserving of at least our tolerance, if an Adam-old repugnance prevents us from giving them our friendship.

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ARCHAEOLOGY

Main Street in Old Olynthus Uncovered After 2279 Years

MAIN STREET, Olynthus, Greece, which has lain in ruins ever since 348 B. C., has been excavated by a Johns Hopkins University expedition, led by Dr. David M. Robinson, professor of archaeology. This is the news brought back by Dr. Robinson on his return to Baltimore.

An entire city block, with 27 houses, was uncovered by the expedition, and the fine street running north was given the name "Main Street."

"In the houses we found floors of beautiful pebble mosaics, in red, purple, blue, and white," said Dr. Robinson, describing the discoveries. These are the oldest mosaic floors known. Some have famous myths beautifully pictured in the pebbles. One floor shows Belerophon and his winged horse encountering the mythical beast, the Chimera, which had a lion's head, goat's middle and the tail of a snake.

Finds Two Cemeteries

In his previous expedition of 1928, in which the ruins of Olynthus were first found and identified, Dr. Robinson was unable to locate the cemetery. This time he found two cemeteries. The custom of placing four coins in the mouth at burial was noted. This, Dr. Robinson explains, was done to provide the dead with money to pay the ferryman on the river of the underworld.

The houses that have been uncovered date from about 400 B. C., Dr. Robinson concludes. Olynthus was a large city, having a population of 65,000, judging from its ruins. It was destroyed suddenly by Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, in 348 B. C.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Lack of Practise Does Not Injure Skill of Typist

THE EXPERT typist need not worry for fear she will lose her skill during periods when she has no practise. Dr. J. E. Coover, of Stanford University, has found that typing skill persists even over a period of fifteen years in which no consistent drill was taken. The actual loss in skill during this time was only four per cent.

Dr. Coover has made a careful analysis of the movements of expert typists. One of the interesting facts disclosed by his study was that when the typist is equally skilled with the use of the left-hand and right-hand levers for throwing back the carriage at the end of a line, the left-hand lever required 21 per cent. more time in typing English than the right-hand type.

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