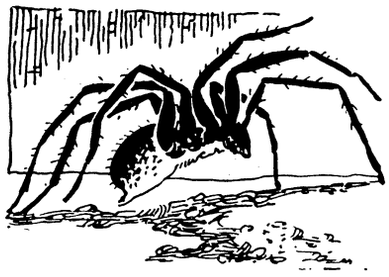
BIOLOGY

NATURE RAMBLINGS by Frank Thone



Uxoricides

THERE IS a good sound scientific foundation for the poetic assertion of Kipling that "The female of the species is more deadly than the male."

In many divisions of the animal kingdom we come upon species whose female members are larger, more aggressive, fiercer and in general more formidable than their mates.

Perhaps the most notable cases of female ferocity are to be found in the division related to the insects which includes the spiders and their kin, the scorpions, centipedes, etc. When a male spider comes a-courting his prospective mate, he is even more timid and shy than a young fellow having his first "date." And he has good reason to be. When a bashful young fellow first calls on a girl he is sometimes encouraged by his friends with, "Go ahead! She won't eat you." But that is exactly what is likely to happen to the hopeful spider swain. Immediately after the wedding, Mrs. Spider pounces on him.

And it is the female spider that spins the web and counts her luckless insect victims by the scores or hundreds. Similarly it is the female scorpion that is the most relentless huntress, the female centipede that is the most bloodthirsty.

This thirst for gore among the females of the spider world, however, is not mere wanton desire to kill. Mrs. Spider is no believer in birth control; she lays many eggs and rears a huge family. To get material for these eggs she has to have a great deal of food. Her business is to produce new spiders; it is just her husband's and her neighbors' hard luck if they happen to be in the way when she is looking for raw material.

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BOTANY

Boy Scouts Botanize Among Geysers On Volcano Floor

By PROF. H. E. STORK, of Carleton College, Director of Scout-Naturalist Expedition in Costa Rica.

COLLECTING specimens of a new species of a rare plant genus among the geysers on the lake-bottom of an extinct volcanic crater was a thrilling experience of the three Scout-Naturalists who are adventuring and exploring in Costa Rica.

The scouts encamped on Poas Volcano, one of the line of volcanic mountains in the Cordillera Central. It is one of the lower conical mountains, being but 2,680 meters in height, and therefore more easily ascended. It should really be known as a geyser and hot-spring area now, although it has a volcanic history.

At least three stages in the aging of a crater are here clearly evident. One large crater of rather symmetrical form has in its bottom a geyser, some hot springs, solfataras and fumaroles. In the wet season water stands in the bottom to the depth of several yards. The temperature varies from 105 to 140 degrees Fahrenheit. The large geyser is irregular in its eruptions. At times it rises to 1,500 feet and when there is little wind a great column of steam reminds one of the Old Faithful in Yellowstone. The first evidence of the eruption is the explosion from the surface of the lake of a great black mass of mud and sand reminding one of a mine explosion. This makes way for the pulsating rise of the column of water.

In collecting specimens of the plant life of this volcanic region the scouts encountered a flora ranged between acid loving plants and those usually associated with alkaline soils. In the upper regions and on some of the side ridges are the heaths, bog mosses and associated plants that are acid-loving. At other places where the layer of lime lies, an alkaline type of flora predominates.

Isoetes, a rare relative of the ferns, growing on the bottom of a cold lake in the crater is of interest, for there are relatively few species of this group known and this particular one is new to science.

The *Isoetes* species represent a stage in the evolution of plant life somewhat more advanced than the common ferns. At a distance a casual observer would regard clumps of them as sedges. A closer examination shows that each leaf has a somewhat spoon-shaped base in the hollow of which are borne masses of spores.

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PSYCHIATRY

Boredom Causes Most Lost Time From Work

BOREDOM cause industrial workers in England to lose more time from their jobs than all the recognized industrial diseases put together, the report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1931 shows.

This is the result of the mechanization of industry, according to a comment in the *Lancet,* English medical journal. The vague nervous disabilities which have increased greatly in recent years are really due to ennui on the part of the machine hand, it is thought.

This state of boredom so great as to cause nervous ailments severe enough to lose time from work was almost unknown to the craftsman, the *Lancet* points out.

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