

# BEES IN AMBUSH

## More Angling Hazards

*In which, from the safety of their cell, "Irideus" (the scribe) and Gaffem (Col. Retd.) consider the hazards of their so-called sport.*

**T**HERE is an air almost of jollity in our cell to-day. A Bar of Sunlight, which fell through the window this morning, has freshened the atmosphere considerably and my good friend, Col. Gaffem (Ret'd.), is at this moment sitting on the end of his cot, skilfully turning the heel of a large canvas mailbag and humming the while (in accents which if unmelodious are at least hearty) such excerpts from the Psalms of David as he remembers from his somewhat distant Sunday School days.

Already I have been informed, in the quaintly inverted phraseology of the metrical version, that "Snarers, fire and brimstone, furious storms, On sinners He shall rain: This, as the portion of their cup, Doth unto them pertain," which suggests that the perfidy of Batecan is still much in my old friend's mind. It is obvious, however, that he has other preoccupations. "Ev'n as a bird out of the fowler's snare, Ti-tum, ti-tum, ti-tum-ti tum-ti-ti," chanted vociferously, is probably due to reflection on our imminent translation from these parts. For, all going well, we get out next Saturday morning. We are both anxious that there shall be no last-minute delays in view of the all-in angling competition which the club has arranged for the following day, and we are walking delicately in consequence.

### Gaffem was Indiscreet

In point of fact, Gaffem nearly queered the pitch entirely by a careless remark. Speaking to me of the impending contest the other evening he said that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to soak Batecan's gut in a mild solution of sulphuric acid. Unfortunately, one of the warders, who happened to be passing our door at that moment, overheard us and we spent a perspiring half-hour explaining to the governor that Gaffem had used the singular and not the plural, and that he had referred to Batecan's tackle and not to his intestines. It is occasionally more than a little difficult to cope with the lay mind.

At the moment, however, all appears to be right with the world. Gaffem's pocket aneroid, which they have allowed him to retain, is registering "Very Dry," and we hope that it also refers to the weather forecast, while yesterday's "Evening Blather," in a paragraph idiotically buried in a corner, informs us that "angling conditions throughout the province are expected to be much improved by the week-end, as flood waters are now subsiding."

### Summer is Incumen In

We have to-day had several intimations of the speedy advent of summer. Outside, the day has been clear and

sunny and the distant hills have been overlaid with those hard white clouds which betoken settled weather, the cicadas have been tuning up in a gaunt blue-gum outside the grounds, and the voice of the grasshopper has been heard in the land. . . .

All these things remind me, unfortunately, that summer brings with it its own problems and its own perils for the angler. For, you must apprehend, the tribulations of the fraternity range beyond bulls and thunderbolts. There are other sources of danger which, if apparently insignificant, are no less real.

### I Don't Like Spiders

There are, for example, spiders, and in this demi-paradise of the Pacific, spiders are a Source of Danger. This, you will be aware, is because of the katipo, which is the principal maggot in our national Stilton, as it were. Because of the katipo, I am allergic to spiders of any sort. We are told, of course, that it is easily distinguished by the red spot on its back. This marks it out from the general run of spiders and also from those to be found in the purlieus of such hostleries as the Anglers' Rest and the Extended Arms, the latter breed being red all over and luminous. But I am not encouraged by the alleged existence of such warning devices. After all, it does assume that all little katipos are born on the right side of the blanket whereas we know that in other respects the insect's reputation is of the shadiest. Ah, I know! I have been told, as no doubt have many others, that all spiders are not katipos. Against this comfortable reflection, you must set the converse,



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that all katipos are spiders. And unless you can show a blood analysis like Gaffem's (who would probably prove more noxious to a katipo than it would be to him) you will be wise to adopt my tactics and regard all spiders as katipos, to be avoided like the plague.

### On the Subject of Bees

The subject of bees, another potential source of danger, recalls somewhat happier memories. Generally speaking, there are two types of bee, the humble or wild bee (which is the milder of the two) and the busy or worker bee (which is by far the more vicious). It is generally conceded that the humble bee is the less troublesome, being an inoffensive and solitary soul, whereas the workers, perpetually herded together in a sort of primitive communism, are a constant source of danger. The humble bee, too, it is said, stings only once and then dies (O Death, where is thy, etc.) but, of course, that is cold comfort once one has been stung.

For myself, though I recognise them as a source of danger, I have never been bothered by bees, in the bonnet or elsewhere, probably because when I sight one, be it never so humble, I walk rapidly away to another place waving my hat vigorously. In this I am more fortunate than Gaffem who, perennially carrying around his own pungent atmosphere of Mountain Dew, attracts bees as moths to a candle. Not that he gets stung very often, but a cloud of bees reeling around one's head does distract attention from the business of fishing.

### An Attack on Gaffem

I recollect in this connection a summer's day in, I think, '32. It was the occasion of a club competition and I was hurrying upstream to get well away from such canaille as Batecan. Before I had gone far, however, I was halted by a muffled bellowing, like that of an angry bull, which appeared to come from behind a screen of small willows. Cautiously investigating, and on tiptoe for precipitate retreat, I was flabbergasted to see my old friend Gaffem leaping round with the vigour, if not quite the grace, of a Nijinsky. It is true that I was not able to recognise him for some

moments, for his head and shoulders were completely obliterated in a thatch of swarming bees. Through this buzzing mass Gaffem boomed impotently.

Approaching as close as I dared, I shouted to him to sit down till I got help. Some twenty minutes later, draped in muslin, I returned with young Ebenezer Bogwallop; but how to tackle the swarm was a problem outside even Ebenezer's experience. We kindled a small smudge fire and fanned the smoke towards Gaffem but desisted after he had swallowed two bees in a fit of coughing. If he swallowed the queen, he grunted through set teeth, he would be a dead man, and in any case he didn't want Judges XIV, 8, engraved on his tombstone. Then we tried to brush the bees off but they held on tenaciously. Finally we perceived that nothing short of extreme measures would suffice. We accordingly hung up Gaffem by the heels to a convenient branch and beat him with the butt of his rod until the last bee, tumbling drunkenly, fell into the box which Ebenezer had brought with him. Gaffem still maintains that the forty-five minutes of fishing time we lost cost him the championship. Batecan, with eight fish (which we strongly suspected represented the total catch of himself and two satellites) won the championship for the year. Gaffem, whose three fish represented the best basket in the war veterans' class, received a consolation prize. A crystal honey-jar.

—IRIDEUS

## Cup To Cavalry

*More than one listener telephoned the station to congratulate the 2YD Sports Club compere after the first revived session, and again after the second, on October 31; but few heard his review of the Melbourne Cup with such personal interest as a New Zealander who happened to be on the spot in Egypt in 1917 when a wounded horse came in for attention. He was given charge of this horse. It had shrapnel in its flank, and he looked after it for two or three weeks.*

*Its name was Clean Sweep, and it had gone to Egypt with the Australian Light Horse. The same man heard the 2YD announcer mention Clean Sweep during the session on October 31.*

*It was the same horse, and when it was wounded in Egypt it must have been 20 years old. In 1900 it won the Cup easily by one and a-half lengths from Maltster and Alix, carrying seven stone as a three-year-old, with 20 to 1 odds.*

## BOXING NOTES

*Match For Strickland + Open Air Bout Possible + The Coming Boxers*

**W**ELLINGTON boxer, Norm. Tanner, pays a tribute to the boxing ability of Tut Hoggarth, of Greymouth. On his return to Wellington Tanner said that among the many good things discovered on the Coast, someone found a good boxer when Hoggarth was unearthed.

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