

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Âmona; The Child; And The
Beast; And Others

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Âmona; The Child; And The Beast; And Others

Author: Louis Becke

Release date: March 29, 2008 [eBook #24952]
Most recently updated: February 6, 2021

Language: English

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ÂMONA; THE
CHILD; AND THE BEAST; AND OTHERS ***

Âmona; The Child; And The Beast

From "The Strange Adventure Of James Shervinton and
Other Stories"

By Louis Becke

T. FISHER UNWIN, 1902

LONDON

ÂMONA; THE CHILD; AND THE BEAST
THE SNAKE AND THE BELL
SOUTH SEA NOTES
I
II

ÂMONA; THE CHILD; AND THE BEAST

Âmona was, as his master so frequently told him—accentuating the remark with a blow or a kick—only “a miserable kanaka.” Of his miserableness there was no doubt, for Denison, who lived in the same house as he did, was a daily witness of it—and his happiness. Also, he was a kanaka—a native of Niué, in the South Pacific; Savage Island it is called by the traders and is named on the charts, though its five thousand sturdy, brown-skinned inhabitants have been civilised, Christianised, and have lived fairly cleanly for the past thirty years.

Âmona and Denison had the distinction of being employed by Armitage, one of the most unmitigated blackguards in the Pacific. He was a shipowner, planter, merchant, and speculator; was looked upon by a good many people as “not a bad sort of a fellow, you know—and the soul of hospitality.” In addition, he was an incorrigible drunken bully, and broke his wife’s heart within four years after she married him. Âmona was his cook. Denison was one of his supercargoes, and (when a long boat of drunkenness made him see weird visions of impossible creatures) manager of the business on shore, overseer, accountant, and Jack-of-all-trades. How he managed to stay on with such a brute I don’t know. He certainly paid him well enough, but he (Denison) could have got another berth from other people in Samoa, Fiji, or Tonga had he wanted it. And, although Armitage was always painfully civil to Denison—who tried to keep his business from going to the dogs—the man hated him as much as he despised Âmona, and would have liked to have kicked him, as he would have liked to have kicked or strangled any one who knew the secret of his wife’s death and his child’s lameness. And three people in Samoa did know it—Âmona, the Niué cook, Dr. Eckhardt, and Denison. Armitage has been dead now these five-and-twenty years—died, as he deserved to die, alone and friendless in an Australian bush hospital out in the God-forsaken Never-Never country, and when Denison heard of his death, he looked at the gentle wife’s dim, faded photograph, and wondered if the Beast saw her sweet, sad face in his dying moments. He trusted not; for in her eyes would have shown only the holy light of love and forgiveness—things which a man like Armitage could not have understood—even then.

She had been married three years when she came with him to Samoa to live on Solo-Solo Plantation, in a great white-painted bungalow, standing amid a grove of breadfruit and coco-palms, and overlooking the sea to the north, east, and west; to the south was the dark green of the mountain-forest.

“Oh! I think it is the fairest, sweetest picture in the world,” she said to Denison the first time he met her. She was sitting on the verandah with her son in her lap, and as she spoke she pressed her lips to his soft little cheek and caressed the tiny hands. “So different from where I was born and lived all my life—on the doll, sun-baked plains of the Riverina—isn’t it, my pet?”

“I am glad that you like the place, Mrs. Armitage,” the supercargo said as he looked at the young, girlish face and thought that she, too, with her baby, made a fair, sweet picture. How she loved the child! And how the soft, grey-blue eyes would lose their sadness when the little one turned its face up to hers and smiled! How came it, he wondered, that such a tender, flower-like woman was mated to such a man as Armitage!

Long after she was dead, Denison heard the story—one common enough. Her father, whose station adjoined that of Armitage, got into financial difficulties, went to Armitage for help, and practically sold his daughter to the Beast for a couple of thousand pounds. Very likely such a man would have sold his daughter’s mother as well if he wanted money.

As they sat talking, Armitage rode up, half-drunk as usual. He was a big man, good-looking.

“Hallo, Nell! Pawing the damned kid as usual! Why the hell don’t you let one of the girls take the little animal and let him tumble about on the grass? You’re spoiling the child—by God, you are.”

“Ah, he’s so happy, Fred, here with me, and—”

“Happy be damned—you’re always letting him maul you about. I want a whisky-and-soda, and so does Denison—don’t you?” And then the Beast, as soon as his wife with the child in her arms had left the room, began to tell his subordinate of a “new” girl he had met that morning in

Joe D'Acosta's saloon.

"Oh, shut up, man. Your wife is in the next room."

"Let her hear—and be damned to her! She knows what I do. I don't disguise anything from her. I'm not a sneak in that way. By God, I'm not the man to lose any fun from sentimental reasons. Have you seen this new girl at Joe's? She's a Manhiki half-caste. God, man! She's glorious, simply glorious!"

"You mean Laea, I suppose. She's a common beacher—sailor man's trull. Surely you wouldn't be seen ever speaking to *her*?"

"Wouldn't I! You don't know me yet! I like the girl, and I've fixed things up with her. She's coming here as my nursemaid—twenty dollars a month! What do you think of that?"

"You would not insult your wife so horribly!"

He looked at Denison sullenly, but made no answer, as the supercargo went on:

"You'll get the dead cut from every white man in Samoa. Not a soul will put foot inside your store door, and Joe D'Acosta himself would refuse to sell you a drink! Might as well shoot yourself at once."

"Oh, well, damn it all, don't keep on preaching. I—I was more in fun than anything else. Ha! Here's Amona with the drinks. Why don't you be a bit smarter, you damned frizzy-haired man-eater?"

Amona's sallow face flushed deeply, but he made no reply to the insult as he handed a glass to his master.

"Put the tray down there, confound you! Don't stand there like a blarsted mummy; clear out till we want you again."

The native made no answer, bent his head in silence, and stepped quietly away. Then Armitage began to grumble at him as a "useless swine."

"Why," said Denison, "Mrs. Armitage was only just telling me that he's worth all the rest of the servants put together. And, by Jove, he *is* fond of your youngster—simply worships the little chap."

Armitage snorted, and turned his lips down. Ten minutes later, he was asleep in his chair.

Nearly six months had passed—six months of wretchedness to the young wife, whose heart was slowly breaking under the strain of living with the Beast. Such happiness as was hers lay in the companionship of her little son, and every evening Tom Denison would see her watching the child and the patient, faithful Amona, as the two played together on the smooth lawn in front of the sitting-room, or ran races in and out among the mango-trees. She was becoming paler and thinner every day—the Beast was getting fatter and coarser, and more brutalised. Sometimes he would remain in Apia for a week, returning home either boisterously drunk or sullen and scowling-faced. In the latter case, he would come into the office where Denison worked (he had left the schooner of which he was supercargo, and was now "overseeing" Solo-Solo) and try to grasp the muddled condition of his financial affairs. Then, with much variegated language, he would stride away, cursing the servants and the place and everything in general, mount his horse, and ride off again to the society of the loafers, gamblers, and flaunting unfortunates who haunted the drinking saloons of Apia and Matafele.

One day came a crisis. Denison was rigging a tackle to haul a tree-trunk into position in the plantation saw-pit, when Armitage rode up to the house. He dismounted and went inside. Five minutes later Amona came staggering down the path to him. His left cheek was cut to the bone by a blow from Armitage's fist. Denison brought him into his own room, stitched up the wound, and gave him a glass of grog, and told him to light his pipe and rest.

"Amona, you're a *valea* (fool). Why don't you leave this place? This man will kill you some day. How many beatings has he given you?" He spoke in English.

"I know not how many. But it is God's will. And if the master some day killeth me, it is well. And yet, but for some things, I would use my knife on him."

"What things?"

He came over to the supercargo, and, seating himself cross-legged on the floor, placed his firm, brown, right hand on the white man's knee.

"For two things, good friend. The little fingers of the child are clasped

tightly around my heart, and when his father striketh me and calls me a filthy man-eater, a dog, and a pig, I know no pain. That is one thing. And the other thing is this—the child's mother hath come to me when my body hath ached from the father's blows, and the blood hath covered my face; and she hath bound up my wounds and wept silent tears, and together have we knelt and called upon God to turn his heart from the grog and the foul women, and to take away from her and the child the bitterness of these things."

"You're a good fellow, *Âmona*," said Denison, as he saw that the man's cheeks were wet with tears.

"Nay, for sometimes my heart is bitter with anger. But God is good to me. For the child loveth me. And the mother is of God... aye, and she will be with Him soon." Then he rose to his knees suddenly, and looked wistfully at the supercargo, as he put his hand on his. "She will be dead before the next moon is *ai aiga* (in the first quarter), for at night I lie outside her door, and but three nights ago she cried out to me: 'Come, *Amona*, Come!' And I went in, and she was sitting up on her bed and blood was running from her mouth. But she bade me tell no one—not even thee. And it was then she told me that death was near to her, for she hath a disease whose roots lie in her chest, and which eateth away her strength. Dear friend, let me tell thee of some things... This man is a devil... I know he but desires to see her die. He hath cursed her before me, and twice have I seen him take the child from her arms, and, setting him on the floor to weep in terror, take his wife by the hand——"

"Stop, man; stop! That'll do. Say no more! The beast!"

"*E tonu, e tonu* (true, true)," said the man, quietly, and still speaking in Samoan. "He is as a beast of the mountains, as a tiger of the country India, which devoureth the lamb and the kid... And so now I have opened my heart to thee of these things——"

A native woman rushed into the room: "Come, *Âmona*, come. *Misi Fafine* (the mistress) bleeds from her mouth again."

The white man and the brown ran into the front sitting-room together, just as they heard a piercing shriek of terror from the child; then came the sound of a heavy fall.

As they entered, Armitage strode out, jolting against them as he passed. His face was swollen and ugly with passion—bad to look at.

"Go and pick up the child, you frizzy-haired pig!" he muttered hoarsely to *Amona* as he passed. "He fell off his mother's lap."

Mrs. Armitage was leaning back in her chair, as white as death, and trying to speak, as with one hand she tried to stanch the rush of blood from her mouth, and with the other pointed to her child, who was lying on his face under a table, motionless and unconscious.

In less than ten minutes, a native was galloping through the bush to Apia for Dr. Eckhardt. Denison had picked up the child, who, as he came to, began to cry. Assuring his mother that he was not much hurt, he brought him to her, and sat beside the lounge on which she lay, holding him in his arms. He was a good little man, and did not try to talk to her when the supercargo whispered to him to keep silent, but lay stroking the poor mother's thin white hand. Yet every now and then, as he moved or Denison changed his position, he would utter a cry of pain and say his leg pained him.

Four hours later the German doctor arrived. Mrs. Armitage was asleep; so Eckhardt would not awaken her at the time. The boy, however, had slept but fitfully, and every now and then awakened with a sob of pain. The nurse stripped him, and Eckhardt soon found out what was wrong—a serious injury to the left hip.

Late in the evening, as the big yellow-bearded German doctor and Denison sat in the dining room smoking and talking, Taloi, the child's nurse entered, and was followed by *Amona*, and the woman told them the whole story.

"*Misi Fafine* was sitting in a chair with the boy on her lap when the master came in. His eyes were black and fierce with anger, and, stepping up, he seized the child by the arm, and bade him get down. Then the little one screamed in terror, and *Misi Fafine* screamed too, and the master became as mad, for he tore the boy from his mother's arms, and tossed him across the room against the wall. That is all I know of this thing."

Denison saw nothing of Armitage till six o'clock on the following morning, just as Eckhardt was going away. He put out his hand, Eckhardt put his own behind his back, and, in a few blunt words, told the Beast what he thought of him.

"And if this was a civilised country," he added crisply, "you would be now in gaol. Yes, in prison. You have as good as killed your wife by your brutality—she will not live another two months. You have so injured your child's hip that he may be a cripple for life. You are a damned scoundrel, no better than the lowest ruffian of a city slum, and if you show yourself in Joe D'Acosta's smoking-room again, you'll find more than half a dozen men—Englishmen, Americans and Germans—ready to kick you out into the *au ala*" (road).

Armitage was no coward. He sprang forward with an oath, but Denison, who was a third less of his employer's weight, deftly put out his right foot and the master of Solo Solo plantation went down. Then the supercargo sat on him and, having a fine command of seafaring expletives, threatened to gouge his eyes out if he did not keep quiet.

"You go on, doctor," he said cheerfully. "I'll let you know in the course of an hour or two how Mrs. Armitage and the boy are progressing. The seat which I am now occupying, though not a very honourable one, considering the material of which it is composed, is very comfortable for the time being; and"—he turned and glared savagely at Armitage's purpled face—"You sweep! I have a great inclination to let Eckhardt come and boot the life out of you whilst I hold you down, you brute!"

"I'll kill you for this," said Armitage hoarsely.

"Won't give you the chance, my boy. And if you don't promise to go to your room quietly, I'll call in the native servants, sling you up like the pig you are to a pole, and have you carried into Apia, where you stand a good show of being lynched. I've had enough of you. Every one—except your blackguardly acquaintances in Matafele—would be glad to hear that you were dead, and your wife and child freed from you."

Eckhardt stepped forward. "Let him up, Mr. Denison."

The supercargo obeyed the request.

"Just as you please, doctor. But I think that he ought to be put in irons, or a strait-jacket, or knocked on the head as a useless beast. If it were not for Mrs. Armitage and her little son, I would like to kill the sweep. His treatment of that poor fellow Amona, who is so devoted to the child, has been most atrocious."

Eckhardt grasped the supercargo's hand as Armitage shambled off "He's a brute, as you say, Mr. Denison. But she has some affection for him. For myself, I would like to put a bullet through him."

Within three months Mrs. Armitage was dead, and a fresh martyrdom began for poor Amona. But he and the child had plenty of good friends; and then, one day, when Armitage awakened to sanity after a long drinking bout, he found that both Amona and the child had gone.

Nearly a score of years later Denison met them in an Australian city. The "baby" had grown to be a well-set-up young fellow, and Amona the faithful was still with him—Amona with a smiling, happy face. They came down on board Denison's vessel with him, and "the baby" gave him, ere they parted, that faded photograph of his dead mother.

THE SNAKE AND THE BELL

When I was a child of eight years of age, a curious incident occurred in the house in which our family lived. The locality was Mosman's Bay, one of the many picturesque indentations of the beautiful harbour of Sydney. In those days the houses were few and far apart, and our own dwelling was surrounded on all sides by the usual monotonous-hued Australian forest of iron barks and spotted gums, traversed here and there by tracks seldom used, as the house was far back from the main road, leading from the suburb of St. Leonards to Middle Harbour. The building itself was in the form of a quadrangle enclosing a courtyard, on to which nearly all the rooms opened; each room having a bell over the door, the wires running all round the square, while the front-door bell, which was an extra large affair, hung in the hall, the "pull" being one of the old-fashioned kind, an iron sliding-rod suspended from the outer wall plate, where it connected with the wire.

One cold and windy evening about eight o'clock, my mother, my sisters, and myself were sitting in the dining-room awaiting the arrival of my brothers from Sydney—they attended school there, and rowed or sailed the six miles to and fro every day, generally returning home by dusk. On this particular evening, however, they were late, on account of the wind blowing rather freshly from the north-east; but presently we heard the front-door bell ring gently.

"Here they are at last," said my mother; "but how silly of them to go to the front door on such a windy night, tormenting boys!"

Julia, the servant, candle in hand, went along the lengthy passage, and opened the door. No one was there! She came back to the dining-room smiling—"Masther Edward is afther playin' wan av his thricks, ma'am ——" she began, when the bell again rang—this time vigorously. My eldest sister threw down the book she was reading, and with an impatient exclamation herself went to the door, opened it quickly, and said sharply as she pulled it inwards—

"Come in at once, you stupid things!" There was no answer, and she stepped outside on the verandah. No one was visible, and again the big bell in the hall rang!

She shut the door angrily and returned to her seat, just as the bell gave a curious, faint tinkle as if the tongue had been moved ever so gently.

"Don't take any notice of them," said my mother, "they will soon get tired of playing such silly pranks, and be eager for their supper."

Presently the bell gave out three clear strokes. We looked at each other and smiled. Five minutes passed, and then came eight or ten gentle strokes in quick succession.

"Let us catch them," said my mother, rising, and holding her finger up to us to preserve silence, as she stepped softly along the hall, we following on tiptoe.

Softly turning the handle, she suddenly threw the door wide open, just as the bell gave another jangle. Not a soul was visible!

My mother—one of the most placid-tempered women who ever breathed, now became annoyed, and stepping out on the verandah, addressed herself to the darkness—

"Come inside at once, boys, or I shall be very angry. I know perfectly well what you have done; you have tied a string to the bell wires, and are pulling it. If you don't desist you shall have no supper."

No answer—except from the hall bell, which gave another half-hearted tinkle.

"Bring a candle and the step-ladder, Julia," said our now thoroughly exasperated parent, "and we shall see what these foolish boys have done to the bell-wire."

Julia brought the ladder; my eldest sister mounted it, and began to examine the bell. She could see nothing unusual, no string or wire, and as she descended, the bell swayed and gave one faint stroke!

We all returned to the sitting room, and had scarcely been there five minutes when we heard my three brothers coming in, in their usual way, by the back door. They tramped into the sitting room, noisy, dirty, wet with spray, and hungry, and demanded supper in a loud and collected voice. My mother looked at them with a severe aspect, and said they deserved none.

"Why, mum, what's the matter?" said Ted; "what *have* we been doing now, or what have we not done, that we don't deserve any supper, after

pulling for two hours from Circular Quay, against a howling, black north-easter?"

"You know perfectly well what I mean. It is most inconsiderate of you to play such silly tricks upon us."

Ted gazed at her in genuine astonishment. "Silly tricks, mother! What silly tricks?" (Julia crossed herself, and trembled visibly as the bell again rang.)

My mother, at once satisfied that Ted and my other brothers really knew nothing of the mysterious bell-ringing, quickly explained the cause of her anger.

"Let us go and see if we can find out," said Ted. "You two boys, and you, Julia, get all the stable lanterns, light them, and we'll start out together—two on one side of the house and two on the other. Some one must be up to a trick!"

Julia, who was a huge, raw-boned Irish girl, as strong as a working bullock, but not so graceful, again crossed herself, and began to weep.

"What's the matter with you?" said Ted angrily.

"Shure, an' there was tirrible murders committed here in the ould convict days," she whimpered. "The polace sargint's wife at Sint Leonards tould me all about it. There was three souldiers murdered down beyant on the beach, by some convicts, whin they was atin' their supper, an' there's people near about now that saw all the blood and —"

"Stop it, you great lumbering idiot!" shouted Ted, as my eldest sister began to laugh hysterically, and the youngest, made a terrified dart to mother's skirts.

Ted's angry voice and threatening visage silenced Julia for the moment, and she tremblingly went towards the door to obey his orders when the bell gave out such a vigorous and sustained peal that she sank down in a colossal heap on the floor, and then went into violent hysterics. (I assure my readers that I am not exaggerating matters in the slightest.)

My mother, who was a thoroughly sensible woman, pushed the whole brood of us out of the room, came after us, shut the door and locked it. *She* knew the proper treatment for hysterics.

"Let her stay there, boys," she said quietly, "she will hurt the furniture more than herself, the ridiculous creature. Now, Ted, you and your brothers get the lanterns, and the little ones and myself will go into the kitchen."

We ran out into the stables, lit three lanterns, and my next eldest brother and myself, feeling horribly frightened, but impelled to show some courage by Ted's awful threats of what he would do to us if we "funked," told us to go round the house, beginning from the left, and meet him at the hall door, he going round from the right.

With shaking limbs and gasping breath we made our portion of the circuit, sticking close to each other, and carefully avoiding looking at anything as we hurried over the lawn, our only anxiety being to meet Ted as quickly as possible and then get inside again. We arrived on the verandah, and in front of the hall-door, quite five minutes before Ted appeared.

"Well, did you see anything?" he asked, as he walked up the steps, lantern in hand.

"Nothing," we answered, edging up towards the door.

Ted looked at us contemptuously. "You miserable little curs! What are you so frightened of? You're no better than a pack of women and kids. It's the wind that has made the bell ring, or, if it's not the wind, it is something else which I don't know anything about; but I want my supper. Pull the bell, one of you."

Elated at so soon escaping from the horrors of the night, we seized the handle of the bell-pull, and gave it a vigorous tug.

"It's stuck, Ted. It won't pull down," we said.

"Granny!" said the big brother, "you're too funky to give it a proper pull," and pushing us aside, he grasped the pendant handle and gave a sharp pull. There was no answering sound.

"It certainly is stuck," admitted Ted, raising his lantern so as to get a look upwards, then he gave a yell.

"Oh! look there!"

We looked up, and saw the writhing twisting, coils of a huge carpet snake, which had wound its body round and round the bell-wire on top of the wall plate. Its head was downwards, and it did not seem at all

alarmed at our presence, but went on wriggling and twisting and squirming with much apparent cheerfulness.

Ted ran back to the stables, and returned in a few seconds with a clothes-prop, with which he dealt the disturber of our peace a few rapid, but vigorous, blows, breaking its spine in several places. Then the step-ladder was brought out, and Ted, seizing the reptile by the tail, uncoiled it with some difficulty from the wire, and threw it down upon the verandah.

It was over nine feet in length, and very fat, and had caused all the disturbance by endeavouring to denude itself of its old skin by dragging its body between the bell-wire and the top of the wall. When Ted killed it the poor harmless creature had almost accomplished its object.

SOUTH SEA NOTES

That many animals, particularly cattle and deer, are very fond of salt we all know, but it is not often that birds show any taste for it, or, if so, the circumstance has not generally been noted. In 1881, however, the present writer was residing on Gazelle Peninsula, the northern portion of the magnificent island of New Britain in the South Pacific, and had many opportunities of witnessing both cockatoos and wild pigeons drinking salt water. I was stationed at a place called Kabaira, the then "furthest-out" trading station on the whole island, and as I had but little to do in the way of work, I found plenty of time to study the bird-life in the vicinity. Parrots of several varieties, and all of beautiful plumage, were very plentiful, and immense flocks of white cockatoos frequented the rolling, grassy downs which lay between my home and the German head-station in Blanche Bay, twenty miles distant, while the heavy forest of the littoral was the haunt of thousands of pigeons. These latter, though not so large as the Samoan, or Eastern Polynesian bird, formed a very agreeable change of diet for us white traders, and by walking about fifty yards from one's door, half a dozen or more could be shot in as many minutes.

My nearest neighbour was a German, and one day when we were walking along the beach towards his station, we noticed some hundreds of pigeons fly down from the forest, settle on the margin of the water, and drink with apparent enjoyment. The harbour at this spot was almost land-locked, the water as smooth as glass without the faintest ripple, and the birds were consequently enabled to drink without wetting their plumage. My companion, who had lived many years in New Britain, told me that this drinking of sea-water was common alike to both cockatoos and pigeons, and that on some occasions the beaches would be lined with them, the former birds not only drinking, but bathing as well, and apparently enjoying themselves greatly.

During the following six months, especially when the weather was calm and rainy, I frequently noticed pigeons and cockatoos come to the salt water to drink. At first I thought that as fresh water in many places bubbled up through the sand at low tide, the birds were really not drinking the sea-water, but by watching closely, I frequently saw them walk across these tiny runnels, and make no attempt to drink. Then again, the whole of the Gazette Peninsula is out up by countless streams of water; rain falls throughout the year as a rule, and as I have said, there is always water percolating or bubbling up through the sand on the beaches at low tide. What causes this unusual habit of drinking sea-water?

Another peculiarity of the New Britain and New Ireland pigeon is its fondness for the Chili pepper-berry. During three months of the year, when these berries are ripe, the birds' crops are full of them, and very often their flesh is so pungent, and smells so strongly of the Chili, as to be quite uneatable.

On all of the low-lying islands of the Ellice, Kings-mill and Gilbert Groups, a species of snipe are very plentiful. On the islands which enclose the noble lagoon of Funafuti in the Ellice Group, they are to be met with in great numbers, and in dull, rainy weather, an ordinarily good shot may get thirty or forty in a few hours. One day, accompanied by a native lad, I set out to collect hermit crabs, to be used as fish bait. These curious creatures are to be found almost anywhere in the equatorial islands of the Pacific; their shell houses ranging in size from a pea to an orange, and if a piece of coco-nut or fish or any other edible matter is left out overnight, hundreds of hermits will be found gathered around it in the morning. To extract the crabs from their shells, which are of all shapes and kinds, is a very simple matter—the hard casing is broken by placing them upon a large stone and striking them a sharp blow with one of lesser size. My companion and myself soon collected a heap of "hermits," when presently he took one up in his hand, and holding it close to his mouth, whistled softly. In a few moments the crab protruded one nipper, then another, then its red antennae, and allowed the boy to take its head between his finger and thumb and draw its entire body from its shell casing.

"That is the way the *kili* (snipe) gets the *uga* (crab) from its shell," he said. "The *kili* stands over the *uga* and whistles softly, and the *uga* puts out his head to listen. Then the bird seizes it in his bill, gives it a

backward jerk and off flies the shell."

Now I had often noticed that wherever hermit crabs were plentiful along the outer beaches of the lagoon, I was sure to find snipe, and sometimes wondered on what the birds fed. Taking up two or three "hermits" one by one, I whistled gently, and in each case the creature protruded the nippers, head and shoulders, and moved its antennæ to and fro as if pleasurably excited.

On the following day I shot three snipe, and in the stomachs of each I found some quite fresh and some partly digested hermit crabs. The thick, hard nippers are broken off by the bird before he swallows the soft, tender body.

In a recent number of *Chambers's Journal* the present writer was much interested in a short paragraph dealing with the commercial value of the skin of the shark, and, having had many years' experience as a trader and supercargo in the South Seas, desires to add some further information on a somewhat interesting subject.

In all the equatorial islands of the North and South Pacific, shark fishing is a very profitable industry to the natives, and every trading steamer or sailing vessel coming into the ports of Sydney or Auckland from the islands of the mid-Pacific, always brings some tons of shark fins and tails and shark skins. The principal market for the former is Hong Kong, but the Chinese merchants of the Australasian Colonies will always buy sharks' fins and tails at from 6d. to 11d. per lb., the fins bringing the best price on account of the extra amount of glutinous matter they contain, and the which are highly relished by the richer classes of Chinese as a delicacy. The tails are also valued as an article of food in China; and, apart from their edible qualities, have a further value as a base for clear varnishes, &c.; and I was informed by a Chinese tea-merchant that the glaze upon the paper coverings of tea-chests was due to a preparation composed principally of the refuse of sharks' fins, tails, and skins.

All the natives of the Gilbert, Kingsmill, and other Pacific equatorial islands are expert shark fishermen; but the wild people of Ocean Island (Paanopa) and Pleasant Island (Naura), two isolated spots just under the equator, surpass them all in the art of catching jackshark. It was the fortunate experience of the writer to live among these people for many years, and to be inducted into the native method of shark-catching. In frail canoes, made of short pieces of wood, sewn together with coco-nut fibre, the Ocean Islanders will venture out with rude but ingeniously contrived *wooden* hooks, and capture sharks of a girth (*not* length) that no untrained European would dare to attempt to kill from a well-appointed boat, with a good crew.

Shark-catching is one of *the* industries of the Pacific, and a very paying industry too. Five-and-twenty years ago there were quite a dozen or more schooners sailing out of Honolulu, in the Hawaiian Islands, to the isolated atolls of the North Pacific—notably Palmyra and Christmas Islands—where sharks could be caught by the thousand, and the crews, who were engaged on a "lay," like whalers, made "big money"; many of them after a six months' cruise drawing 500 dollars—a large sum for a native sailor.

The work is certainly hard, but it is exciting, and the writer will always remember with pleasure a seven months' shark-fishing cruise he once had in the North Pacific, the genial comrades—white men and brown—and the bag of dollars handed over to him by the owners when the ship was paid off in Honolulu.

It is not generally known, except to scientists and those who are acquainted with the subject, that a large percentage of the various species and varieties of sea snakes are highly venomous. These snakes must not be confounded with the very numerous species of sea eels, which, though exceedingly savage and armed with strong needle-pointed teeth, are all non-venomous, though their bite produces high inflammation if not at once properly attended to and cleansed by an antiseptic. The sea snake is a true snake in many respects, having either laminated scales or a thick corduroyed skin resembling rudimentary scales. The head is flat, and the general structure of the body similar to that of the land snake. Whether any of them possess the true poison glands and fangs I do not know, for although I have killed many hundreds of them I never took sufficient interest to make a careful examination; and I was told by a Dutch medical gentleman, long resident on the coast of Dutch New Guinea, and who had made some investigation on the subject, that he had failed to discover any poison sacs or glands in any one of the several snakes he had captured. Yet in some instances he found what at first appeared to be the two long front teeth common to venomous land snakes, but on detailed examination these always proved to be perfectly solid; nevertheless a bite from one of these sea serpents was generally regarded by the natives as fatal; in my own experience I know of two such cases, one at the island of Fotuna in the South Pacific, and the other in Torres Straits.

In Sigavi Harbour, on Fotuna, there is a rock to which vessels occasionally make fast their stern moorings. In the boat which I sent away with a line to this rock were several boys, natives of the island, who went with the crew for amusement. One of them, aged about ten, jumped out of the boat, and in his hurry fell on his hands and knees, right on top of a large black and white banded sea snake, which at once bit him savagely on the wrist, causing the blood to flow from a score of tiny punctures. The boy at once swam on shore to be treated by a native; in the evening I heard he was suffering great agony, in the morning the poor little fellow was dead.

The second instance was near Raine Island, in Torres Straits. A stalwart young Kanaka, one of the crew of a pearling lugger, was diving for clam shells on the reef, when a snake about three feet in length suddenly shot up from below within a foot of his face. In his anger and disgust he unthinkingly struck it with his hand, and was quickly bitten on the forefinger. A few hours later he was in a high fever, accompanied with twitchings of the extremities; then tetanus ensued, followed by death in forty-eight hours.

Although these sea snakes are common to all tropical seas, they are most frequent about the Great Barrier Reef of Australia. On any smooth day they may be seen disporting themselves on the surface, or rising suddenly from the depths, erect their heads and some inches of their bodies clear from the water, gaze at the passing vessel, and then swiftly disappear. In nearly all the Pacific Islands the natives hold them in detestation and horror, and when one is seen lying coiled up on a rock sunning itself or crawling over the surface of the reef in search of food, a stone, accompanied by a curse, is always hurled at it. In the Ellice Oroup, when catching flying-fish at night, one (or more) of these horrid serpents is sometimes swept up in the scoop-net before it can be avoided. They range from six inches to nearly four feet in length, and all have one feature—a blunted tail-end.

Quite recently much further light has been thrown on the subject by Sir James Hector, of the Philosophical Society of Wellington, New Zealand. At one of the Society's meetings, held in April last, Sir James showed several specimens of *hydrida*, some from Australasian Seas, others from the Atlantic. The usual habitat of sea snakes, he said, were the tropical seas generally, but some had been captured in the comparatively cold waters of the New Zealand coast, at the Catlins River. These latter were all yellow-banded; those from the islands of the Fijian Oroup were black-banded, and those taken from the Australian coast grey-banded. There were, he said, no fewer than seventy species, which, without exception, were fanged and provided with glands secreting a virulent poison. In some of the mountainous islands of the South Pacific, such as Samoa, Fiji, &c, there were several species of land snakes, all of which were perfectly harmless, and were familiar to many people in Australia and New Zealand, through being brought there in bunches of island bananas—it was singular, he thought, that the sea snakes alone should be so highly venomous. "They were all characterised

by the flattened or blunted tail, which they used as a steer oar, and were often found asleep on the surface of the water, lying on their backs. In this state they were easily and safely captured, being powerless to strike." The present writer, who has seen hundreds of these marine snakes daily for many years, during a long residence in the Pacific Islands, cannot remember a single instance where he has seen one of these dangerous creatures asleep *on the water*, though they may frequently be found lying asleep on the coral reefs, exposing themselves to the rays of a torrid sun. They usually select some knob or rounded boulder, from the top of which, when awake, they can survey the small pools beneath and discern any fish which may be imprisoned therein. In such case they will glide down into the water with astonishing rapidity, seize their prey, and after swallowing it, return to their sun bath. The natives of the Paumotu Archipelago informed me, however, that they are most active in seeking their prey at night-time, and are especially fond of flying-fish, which, as is well known, is one of the swiftest of all ocean fishes. The sea snakes, however, seize them with the greatest ease, by rising cautiously beneath and fastening their keen teeth in the fish's throat or belly. A snake, not two feet six inches in length, I was assured, can easily swallow a flying-fish eight inches or ten inches long.

With regard to their habit of lying asleep on their backs on the surface of the water, it may be that Sir James Hector is alluding to some particular species, but whether that is so or not Sir James's statement must of course be considered authoritative, for there is, I believe, no higher authority on the subject in the world. Apropos of these venomous marine serpents I may mention that the Rev. W. W. Gill in one of his works states that he was informed by the natives of the Cook's Group that during the prevalence of very bad weather, when fish were scarce, the large sea eels would actually crawl ashore, and ascend the *fala* (pandanus or screw-pine) trees in search of the small green lizards which live among the upper part of the foliage. At first I regarded this merely as a bit of native extravagance of statement, but in 1882, when I was shipwrecked on Peru (or Francis Island), one of the Gilbert Group, the local trader, one Frank Voliero, and myself saw one of these eels engaged in an equally extraordinary pursuit. We were one evening, after a heavy gale from the westward had been blowing for three days, examining a rookery of whale birds in search of eggs; the rookery was situated in a dense thicket scrub on the north end of the island, and was quite two hundred yards from the sea-shore, though not more than half that distance from the inside lagoon beach. The storm had destroyed quite a number of young, half-fledged birds, whose bodies were lying on the ground, and busily engaged in devouring one of them was a very large sea eel, as thick as the calf of a man's leg. Before I could manage to secure a stick with which to kill the repulsive-looking creature, it made off through the undergrowth at a rapid pace in the direction of the lagoon, and when we emerged out into the open in pursuit, ten minutes later, we were just in time to see it wriggling down the hard, sloping beach into the water. Instinct evidently made it seek the nearest water, for none of these large sea eels are ever found in Peru Lagoon.

Many of the rivers and lakes of the islands of the Western Pacific are tenanted by eels of great size, which are never, or very seldom, as far as I could learn, interfered with by the natives, and I have never seen the people of either the Admiralty Islands, New Ireland, or New Britain touch an eel as food. The Maories, however, as is well known, are inordinately fond of eels, which, with putrid shark, constitute one of their staple articles of diet.

In the few mountainous islands of the vast Caroline Archipelago, in the North-western Pacific, eels are very plentiful, not only in the numberless small streams which debouch into the shallow waters enclosed by the barrier reefs, but also far up on the mountainsides, occupying little rocky pools of perhaps no larger dimensions than an ordinary-sized toilet basin, or swimming up and down rivulets hardly more than two feet across. The natives of Ponapé, the largest island of the Caroline Group, and of Kusaie (Strong's Island), its eastern outlier, regard the fresh-water eel with shuddering aversion, and should a man accidentally touch one with his foot when crossing a stream he will utter an exclamation of horror and fear. In the heathen days—down to 1845-50—the eel (*tōan*) was an object of worship, and constantly propitiated by sacrifices of food, on account of its malevolent powers; personal contact was rigidly avoided; to touch one, even by the merest accident, was to bring down the most dreadful calamities on the offender and his family—bodily deformities, starvation and poverty, and death; and although the natives of Strong's Island are now both civilised and Christianised, and a training college of the Boston Board of Missions has long been

established at Port Lelé, they still manifest the same superstitious dread of the eel as in their days of heathendom. I well remember witnessing an instance of this terror during my sojourn on the island when I was shipwrecked there in 1874. I had taken up my residence in the picturesque little village of Leassé, on the western or "lee" side, when I was one evening visited by several of the ship's company—a Fijian half-caste, a white man, and two natives of Pleasant Island. At the moment they arrived I was in the house of the native pastor—a man who had received an excellent education in a missionary college at Honolulu, in the Hawaiian Islands—instructing him and his family in the art of making *taka*, or cinnet sandals, as practised by the natives of the Tokelau Group. Just then the four seamen entered, each man triumphantly holding up a large eel: in an instant there was a united howl of horror from the parson and his family, as they made a rash for the door, overturning the lamp and nearly setting the house on fire. In vain I followed and urged them to return, and told them that the men had gone away and taken the *tôan* with them—nothing would induce them to enter the house that night, and the whole family slept elsewhere.

One singular thing about the eels on Strong's Island is that they hibernate, in a fashion, on the sides or even summits of the high mountains, at an altitude of nearly two thousand feet. Selecting, or perhaps making, a depression in the soft, moss-covered soil, the ugly creatures fit themselves into it compactly and remain there for weeks or even months at a time. I have counted as many as thirty of these holes, all tenanted, within a few square yards. Some were quite concealed by vegetable *débris* or moss, others were exposed to view, with the broad, flat head of the slippery occupant resting on the margin or doubled back upon its body. They showed no alarm, but if poked with a stick would extricate themselves and crawl slowly away.

In the streams they were very voracious, and I had a special antipathy to them, on account of their preying so on the crayfish—a crustacean of which I was particularly fond, and which the natives also liked very much, but were afraid to capture for fear their hands might come in contact with the dreaded *tôan*.

One afternoon I was plucking a pigeon I had just shot by the margin of a mountain stream. After removing the viscera, I put the bird in the water to clean it properly, and was shaking it gently to and fro, when it was suddenly torn out of my hand by a disgustingly bloated, reddish-coloured eel about four feet in length, and quickly swallowed. That one pigeon had cost me two hours' tramping through the rain-soddened mountain forest, so loading my gun I followed the thief down stream to where the water was but a few inches deep, and then blew his head off.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ÂMONA; THE CHILD;
AND THE BEAST; AND OTHERS ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it,

give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of

any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from

all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.