

# Weird Tales

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# Folks Used to Believe

by ALVIN F.  
HARLOW

## The Resurrecting Snake



**O**NE of the most remarkable snake stories in history was told for sober truth by European travelers returning from South America in the Sixteenth Century, and sincerely believed, even by some of the narrators themselves. The wonderful species of snake referred to, which seemed to partake of the characteristics of the phoenix, is described twice in the old chronicles of *Purchas his Pilgrimes*.

One account is given by Master Thomas Turner, who calls it "the Serpent Cobrus, whereof he saw one almost as big as himself, twentie foote long, killed by their Indian boy." He goes on to tell how the snake, when it seizes a hog or deer, "preyeth on the same, devouring all, till it be not able for fulnesse to stirre, but rotteth as it lyeth, the flesh quite away, the head and bones remaining, in which the life continuing, recovereth at last his former state. One was thus found in the rottennesse, and being bound for proove with a withe to a tree by the Portugalls, on their return was found so repaired."

Another account is given in "A

treatise of Brazill, written by a Portugall which had long lived there." "The Snake Cucurijuba," says he, "is the greatest or one of the greatest that are in Brazill, notable as well for greatnesse as for beautie. Some are taken of five and twentie or thirtie foote long, and a yard in compasse. It hath a chaine along the back of notable Pictures and verie faire, that beginneth at the head and endeth in the Taile. It hath Teeth like a Dogge, and laying hold on a man, Cow, Stagge or Hogge, winding it with certain turns of her Tail, it swalloweth the said thing whole. And after she hath it so in her belly, she lets her selfe rot and the Ravens and Crowes do eate her all, so that there remaineth nothing but the bones, and afterwards it breedeth new flesh againe, and reneweth as before it was. The reason whereof is (say the men of the Countrie) because while it putrifieth, it hath the head in the mire, and having life in the noddle, they live againe; and because this is knowne alreadie, when men find them putrified, they seeke out the head and kill it."