

# How a Girl and a Plane Now Foil the Rattler

## San Diego Zoological Society Establishes Regular Sky Ambulance Service to Rush to Snake-Bite Victims Serum Obtained From Rattlesnakes Captured by a Pretty New York Girl.

A close-up of Gladys Ditmars demonstrating how to hold a rattler. So now you'll know the next time.

black snakes, mountain pilots and many others swarm out into the sunlight. The black snakes take to the brush heaps and form themselves in balls and twists of a dozen or more. The rattlers crawl about swiftly, looking for early mushrooms. The adders fancy swamps and streams. The mountain pilots, big, large and round and six to eight feet long, go crashing through the underbrush for frogs, small mammals, birds, snails and other prey.

The rattler, however, is the first of all the snakes to crawl into his winter home at the approach of autumn, and is the last to emerge in the spring. Each of this species comes forth slowly and crawls cautiously to the top of a rock, where he lies, and suns himself and recovers his vitality. When he feels he is completely restored to strength he starts out to roam.

The Ditmars family knows the habits of snakes perfectly. They know when the rattlers will be sunning themselves and they are there to greet them.

On a recent Sunday morning hunt in which the Ditmars family and several zoo attendants participated, 30 rattlers and half a dozen copperheads were captured. On this occasion Gladys spied a rattler from the machine, made a flying leap to the ground and pinned the rattler down with her stick. As the forks closed over the snake, she reached down swiftly, grasped the astonished reptile by the neck and thrust him squirming into a bag. Closing the neck of the bag, she moved over to another rock and repeated the operation.

Miss Ditmars declares she does not always have to use the fork. In fact, she only uses it with the more active reptiles. Usually she stuns her quarry with a blow on the neck, then picks him up.

On this occasion the Ditmars family, after getting whatever snakes were sunning on the rocks, climbed up the precipices like mountain goats, in the effort to capture such as were dried and were off on the summer outing. Captures here were less frequent.

Some of the snakes bagged that day were placed in the reptile house at the Bronx zoo. The others were dispatched to Brazil.

Theodore Roosevelt in "Through the



Miss Gladys Ditmars has played with snakes since she was a baby. Here she has used a live king snake as a bandeau.



Thirty rattlers and six copperheads were captured by Mrs. Ditmars and her two daughters on a Sunday morning trip into the Ramapo mountains.

NEW YORK girl, a Brazilian scientist and a California aviator have collaborated in saving southwestern ranchers from the menace of death by rattlesnake bites. Under the direction of the San Diego, Cal., Zoological society arrangements have been made to rush anti-toxin serum to the outlands in case of rattlesnake bite. The occurrence of several deaths in the back country because of snake bites led to the adoption of these measures.

The serum which will be used comes, for the most part, from the Instituto Serum-Therapico at San Paulo, Brazil, presided over by Dr. Vital Brazil. And this institution gets a great many of its snakes, from which is drawn the venom

ter, Gladys, is America's foremost woman snake catcher.

Gladys is not the only member of the family who is expert at stalking the wary rattler or the elusive garter snake. When the Ditmars family goes out on a snake hunt, mother, father and both daughters carry forked sticks and sacks. But Gladys thus far holds the family record, for numbers captured.

When she is not laying fair hands to some strictly feminine enterprise she is usually out after snakes in the wilds of Dutchess county, the Ramapo mountains or the Berkshire hills.

It is not unusual, in fact, for Gladys to dance all Saturday night and then at break of day Sunday make a quick change



1—Skull of a pit viper, the South American bushmaster snake (*Lachesis Muta*). 2—The Fer-de-lance of South and Central America (*Lanceolatus*). 3—South American rattlesnake (*Crotalus Adamanteus*). Note the movable jaws, the few bones in the skull, with poison-holding glands at the sockets, and the incurved teeth.

into sport costume and lead her family on an expedition into the hills in search of such snakes as may be found.

A particularly favorable section for the hunting of snakes is on a farm in Dutchess county, several hours' ride from the Dit-

mars home at Scarsdale, N. Y. This section is very rocky and is filled with crevices and underground runways especially favorable to the hibernation of snakes.

In the bowls of the rocks are the entrances of the snakes' homes. But when the weather gets warm they become exits. Rattlers, copperheads, garter snakes,

Brazilian Wilderness" (Scribner's), told of a visit to the Brazil Institute, where the serum is now manufactured. Describ-

(Continued on Page 7.)