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A Snake Story.

Mugford hitched his horse in the shade and threw himself on the grass near a clump of bushes. He was tired, and after eating a lunch from his haversack he was about to lie on the ground for a nap when he happened to see a squatter riding up the trail.

"Is there any danger of snakes here?" he asked.

"Thar ain't a snake in this part uv the country," replied the squatter.

"Why, you surprise me."

"Ye'd be wuss surprised if ye found a snake here, if ye warn't a stranger."

"Weren't there ever any snakes here?"

"Ye've said it."

"What has become of them?"

"Do ye see that house on the hill about a mile away?"

"Yes."

"They're all up ther."

"The snakes?"

"Ye've said it."

"Somebody got a menagerie?"

"Fot 'less that's er nuther new name for drug store."

"Oh, it's a drug store?"

"Old Duck's."

"What does he do with so many snakes?"

"Hangs 'em on er hook."

"But what does he want with them?"

"He don't want 'em. Fellers that wants licker brings 'em ther."

"I don't understand."

"Ye would if ye war dry an went thar for licker."

"I should like to have ye explain."

"Waal ye see this is a prohibishun state."

"Yes."

"An ye can't get licker at er drug store 'less ye've got er perscritshun er, as ole Duck 'lows, er snake."

"That's odd."

"Ye've said it. It happened like this: One day ole Swoppy gits bit with er snake. We sends Ropes over to Dick's fer licker on the jump. He sez ter Duck, 'Give me a quart uv yer best licker.' 'Wher yer perscritshun?' sez Duck. 'Aint got none,' sez Ropes. 'Th n yer can't have no heker her,' sez Duck. 'The laws powerful strict.' 'But dad blame ye, er man's snake bit!' sez Ropes, 'an 'less we git that licker double quick he dies deader an a mus'rat.' 'I can't help it,' sez Duck. 'Ye brings yer perscritshun er ye gits no licker. I ain't poper'latin no jail fer vil'atin the law if I knows it.' 'But ther aint no doctor in 40 miles of the place' sez Ropes 'and this yere Swoppy's snake bit.'

"Duck thinks a moment, then he sez, 'have ye got the snake?' 'Yes,' Ropes. 'Then bring it an get yer licker,' sez Duck. So Ropes brings the snake and gets the licker, which saves Swoppy's life all right.

"That is the startin uv the snake business, an havin 'established the precedent, as Duck 'lowed, he don't

discriminate none, an if ye brings yer snake ye gets yer licker. Everybody 'lows thats fair, an it warn't long till snakes were snakes in this nick of the woods. As the snakes got scarcer it warn't so powerful uncommon for a cove that wer dry ter pay a couple uv dollars for a snake, an they warn't particular to the size. The county attorney, that's paid ter look after this prohibishun bizness, kicks some at first; but, seein that all the boys is agin him, he lows that custom mecks laws, so he accepts the snaiks in the place uv perscritshuns. Now when he comes around he jist looks over Duck's stock uv licker, counts his snaiks an goes away."

"Well, I must say that that's a queer arrangement."

"Ye've sed it. But I must be ridin."

As he started to ride away he turned and said:

"Say stranger."

"Well?"

"If ye happen ter be dry an stop at Duck's, jist give him this, an ye'll git all the licker he want."

He tossed something to Mugford who picked it up, to find that it was a smtl rubber snake.

"Don't try ter git no licker 'less ye take that along," said the squatter as he rode away. "I tell you Duck's a square man, an ole Grover Cleavland couldn't git a sup uv licker thar 'lesf he oad a snaik. Good day."—Will Lisenbe in Truth.

The first coins really deserving the name of United States coinage were struck off as "pattens pieces" by Benjamin Dudley at the instigation of Robert Morris and were laid for congress in 1783 as specimens of what the coinage should be. They were a "mark" and a "quint" and thus described: The "mark" observes; an eye, the center of a glooy, 13 points, gross equidistant a circle of as many stars. The "quint" is similar in design, the value on reverse being noted.

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