

THE SNAKE HUNTER.

HE IS AN INTERESTING INDIVIDUAL INDEED.

HIS JOB HAS BECOME AN IMPORTANT INDUSTRY.

He Knows Very Well That if it Were Not for Him the Snake Papers Wouldn't Come Out—Thrilling Experience of One.



POISONOUS REPTILES and gruesome stories concerning them have a peculiar charm for certain classes of people.

Big Indian is the name of a settlement in New York State which might appropriately be named Snakeville. All the good snake stories come from there.

Very few people have been introduced to the snake-hunter. He is a very important individual indeed. He goes out into the swamps, gets tired by a nest of reptiles, has a thrilling escape, and lies himself away to the village, where in the seclusion of a box room he writes up a story which will average with the one which follows:

"We came into the mountains about three weeks ago, intending to stay for a month. When we left the train at the station here we inquired for a good camping-ground, and were told to follow the stream through the Lost Cove and go over on the west slope of Balsam mountain, where, near the summit, we would find a clearing and a living spring of good water. We followed the directions and found the spring, but we also found that it was a regular rendezvous for mountain tramps, and as we wanted solitude we shifted our quarters over on Eagle mountain, which we could see across the valley. We found a good spring there and pitched our tent. Then we began to see snakes.

"One morning while I was dipping water from the spring a huge blacksnake sprang clear over my head out of the rocky basin and went like a streak into the woods. I yelled with fright, but finally filled my bucket and returned to camp. There I related my experience, but Wallis said he wasn't afraid of all the snakes in the Catskills. The next morning when we were boiling coffee a blacksnake over five feet in length crawled out of the bush and in the most impudent manner raised his head clear of the ground and eyed us until we were nearly paralyzed with fear. He showed no inclination to depart, so Wallis seized a stout switch and gave him a cut with it which broke his neck and killed him.

"That afternoon we went out into a little clearing to pick huckleberries. While we were picking one of the boys gave a yell of fright and keeled over. We all ran up to him, and when he regained his speech the first words he said were: 'Snakes! The patch is full of them!' He then said that while moving about among the bushes he had stepped on something which whirled out from beneath his foot with such rapidity as to throw him to the ground. We concluded then to give up berry picking and return to the tent, and just as we were coming in we killed another blacksnake, as we were now all armed with stout hickory switches. That same afternoon I shot a black snake from a tree where it was trying to reach a nest of young birds. It proved to be a female snake and contained a number of young ones, which crawled from the mother's mouth when she fell to the ground riddled with shot. These I killed with a switch. That same afternoon one of the other boys, who had been down into the hollow, came trooping into camp with a big rattler which he had killed while it was sunning itself on a rock. That set us to thinking that we had better make tracks, which we concluded to do early the next morning. That night, however, we were destined to a visitation from snakes that we will always remember.

"Before we retired we built a big fire outside the tent to keep off the punkies and gnats and went to sleep. About midnight we were awakened by an awful yell from Wallis, and at the same instant I felt something clammy glide rapidly across my face. By the glare of the firelight, which shone into tent, we saw Wallis standing erect,



Spring clear after rain.

holding a snake in his grasp at arm's length, its head waving in front of his face with its horrible forked tongue playing like lightning, and its tail coiled about his arm.

"We yelled to him to drop it, but some fascination had seized him and he couldn't let go of it. Suddenly the snake, which was a big racer, nipped him in the hand, when he dropped it and fainted in his tracks, while the serpent escaped. We brought him to, and knowing that the snake was not venomous, political the bite with winter-green. We then began to pack up, and in pulling up our blankets found a venomous copperhead snake underneath one of them. We killed him, finished packing our traps and started for Big Indian. We have had enough of camp life in the Catskills for one session.

The young men exhibited the rattles of the rattlesnake which they had killed. There were eight of them and several were missing, which proved that the rattlesnake must have been an old one. After they had told their story the boys boarded an Ulster and Delaware train and went over Fine Hill to Margaretville, where they intended to stay for a few days before returning home.

After the finishing touches are put on he sends the manuscript to New York, and the paper that receives it comes out as usual the following Sunday. The next week he gets a draft by mail, after cashing which he proceeds to the mountains and has another experience. Such is the result of the control exercised over the human race by the reptile family.

THE BARONESS DE STEURS.

She is at Present in Sioux Falls with a View of Divorce.

A dispatch from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, says that Baroness de Steurs has arrived there and will at once apply for a divorce. The dispatch also states that Sioux Falls is the place for divorces, and points with pride to the



BARONESS DE STEURS.

fact that many notable people have had the conjugal knot ripped in twain there within the past year. Mrs. James G. Blaine is also there and will be free in five days.

Mme. de Steurs is a niece of William As. and wife of the Baron de Steurs, now and for many years Belgian minister to Paris. She takes her meals at the principal hotel, constantly accompanied by her agent, William Elliott, who is described as a young gentleman of very athletic build, a splendid horseman, of dark complexion and very English in dress and manner. It was common understanding in New York before Mme. de Steurs' marriage that Elliot Zborowski, whose father left him a millionaire, was deeply enamored of the handsome heiress, and this was at the time believed to be so reciprocated that her marriage with the Belgian created great surprise in New York society. Young Mr. Zborowski was also a firm friend of Mme. de Steurs in her subsequent matrimonial trials. He is a well-known member of the Book-away hunt. He was last definitely heard from as having been in India, where Mme. de Steurs is also understood to have passed the last winter. Mme. de Steurs is an exceedingly eccentric and interesting personality. Her domestic history has furnished a series of very romantic chapters during the past two or three years, and society has prepared for an additional chapter more romantic and fascinating than any of its predecessors—very possibly, in case she obtains a divorce, her marriage to the devoted lover of her childhood days.

KILLED HIS RIVAL.

Fatal Termination of a Pennsylvania Prize Fight.

Monongahela City, Pa., is in a great state of excitement over a prize-fight that turned into a murder. Harry Boyd and John Myford, living at Black Diamond, a mining town just outside of the city limits, had a quarrel about some trivial affair, though it is supposed jealousy over a girl was the real cause of their difference. After their first quarrel they were constantly bickering, and it was decided that they should fight it out according to prize ring custom. Three terrible rounds were fought, at the end of which both were bleeding profusely. Both men came up for the fourth round grimly, and it was evident they intended to do each other all possible harm. A few preliminary blows were struck, when Boyd, seeing an opening, rushed in and delivered a tremendous blow on Myford's neck just over the jugular. Myford staggered back a few steps and fell to the ground insensible. He was picked up by his friends, but never recovered consciousness, and expired an hour later. Boyd surrendered himself and will be tried for murder. The girl was Hattie Wreford, the belle of the vicinity.

MINING IN 1840.

How "Rocker" Separating Was Carried on in Pioneer Days in California.

The most expensive instrument of the early miner was the rocker, which, though simple in construction, cost in the mines from fifty to a hundred dollars. In general appearance it was not unlike a baby's cradle as used by our grandmothers and as still seen on the frontier. It consisted of a flat bottom with two sides that flared outward, and an end board at the head, while the foot was open save a riffle about an inch and a half high at the bottom to catch the gold that might pass another riffle across the bottom near the middle. At the head of the cradle was a hopper about eighteen inches square, with a perforated sheet iron bottom or wire screen. Under this was an apron, or board, sloping downward toward the head. Two substantial rockers under the whole completed the simple machine which gave to the world millions of dollars.

The modus operandi may be described as follows: Two sticks of wood hewn on the upper side were imbedded at the river's brink, one four inches lower than the other, on which the rockers were to rest, thus securing a grade in the machine to facilitate the outward flow of the water and sand. Two miners usually worked together as partners. One shoveled the earth into the rocker, while the other, seated on a boulder or block of wood, dipped the water from the river and poured it upon the earth in the hopper with one hand, all the time rocking with the other. When the earth was thoroughly washed, he rose, lifted the hopper from its place, threw out the stones and gravel, replaced it, and thus the work went on. As the ground about the rocker became exhausted to the bed-rock, recourse was had to the bucket, and the earth was carried sometimes a few rods, making laborious work for the miner.

To keep the rocker going another hand would be employed to carry earth, and each would carry two buckets at a time. Hard work of this kind suggested improvements in mining. At noon the gold and black sand collected above the riffles were taken up on a scraper and thrown into the pan, which was carried to the river and carefully washed to remove as far as possible all but the gold. The yield of the forenoon was carried to the camp, dried over a blaze, the dry sand blown out, and the gold weighed in scales or guessed at, and poured into the partnership purse and deposited under the bed or anywhere else out of sight.—Century.

BELL WITH A HISTORY.

It Hangs in the Shops of the C. H. & D. at Hamilton, Ohio.

In the shops of the C. H. & D. railroad at Hamilton, Ohio, is a cracked locomotive bell that has a history. It was attached to a locomotive presided over by a strong, manly, handsome engineer whose great object of pride and adoration were first his sweetheart and his faithful engine. He loved them both devotedly, though, of course, in quite different ways.

One day in Hamilton he stood in the cab of the engine, bell rope in hand, ready to move the lever and start the train, when he saw a bridal party approaching. He glanced at the bride; it was the girl he loved. His heart stopped beating, he gave a groan and dropped dead. As he fell with the bell rope in his hand he gave the bell a loud ring that cracked it from top to bottom, and it was found afterward the unfortunate engineer had died literally of a broken heart. The bell in the shops at Hamilton to this day is still called "the bell of the broken heart."

She Was Basely Deserted.

The belle of Monongahela county, W. Va., was Miss Mary Gallagher. She had love affairs numerous and her father's extensive farm was the resort for outing parties. An actor came with a party and for a few days made his home with the Gallagher's. He made himself agreeable to Miss Gallagher, yet in her teens, and they apparently came to like each other. Finally the actor went away, to rejoin his company he said, but the fact that a few days after his departure Miss Gallagher attempted suicide told a sad, mournful story that soon re-echoed through the hills. A second and a third attempt was made with as little success. Then she was taken to a mad-house, a hopeless mental wreck, there to brood over her faithless lover until dead.



Prehistoric Skating.

As is well known, the art of skating is a prehistoric one. In many parts of Europe bones of domesticated animals have been found which had been used as skates or as runners of small sledges. It is of considerable interest to learn that similar implements are found still in use in several parts of northern Germany. In the Journal of the Berlin Ethnological society, sledges are described which consist of a board resting on the bones of a horse. But, besides this, skates are used, the runners of which consist of the lower jaw of cattle, the curvature of the lower side serving admirably the object of the skates.—Science.

Queer Money.

In the interior of South America chocolate, coconuts, and eggs are used as currency.

THE ONE WHO STAYS AT HOME.

The wheels of the world go round and round, In the press of a busy throng, More with its main cord, And night with its vesper song; The tides are out and the tides are in, Like the sea in its ebb and flow, For there's always one to stay at home Where there is one to go.

Aboard on the highway's noisy track There is rash of hurrying feet, The sparks fly out from the wheels of time To brighten the bitter and sweet; But apart from the beaten road and path, Where the pulse of earth runs slow, There is always one to stay at home Where there is one to go.

Over and over good-bys are said, In tears that die with the day, When eyes are wet that cannot forget, And smiles have faded away; Smiles that are worn as over a grave, Flowers will blossom and blow; For there's always one to stay at home Where there is one to go.

Always one for the little tasks Of a day that is never done; Always one to sit down at night And watch with the stars alone, And he who lights on the world's broad field, With hammer and blast and drum, Little dreams of a battle gained, By the one who stayed at home.—Bursston Lane in Detroit Free Press.

THE ACTOR.

Oh, man, with your wonderful dower, Oh, woman, with genius and grace, You can teach the whole world with your power; If you are but worthy the place, The stage is a force and a factor In molding the thought of the day, If only the heart of the actor Is high as the theme of the play.

No discourse or sermon can reach us Through feeling to reason like you; No author can stir us and teach us With lessons as subtle and true. Your words and your gestures obeying, We weep or rejoice with your part, And the player, behind all his playing, He ought to be great as his art.

No matter what role you are giving, No matter what skill you betray, The everyday life you are living Is certain to color the play. The thoughts we call secret and hidden Are creatures of malice, in fact, They steal forth unseen and unbidden, And permeate motive and act.

The genius that shines like a comet Fills only one part of God's plan; If the lesson the world derives from it Is marred by the life of the man, He worthy your work if you love it; The king should be fit for the crown; Stand high as your art, or above it, And make us look up and not down.—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

Gals.

Sometimes I sorer think as how The eastern gal's the best, An' then I sunsey cotton to The gal from out the west.

The eastern gal has got an eye Like yours—shiny an' keen, But then that western maiden's got A face that's like a queen.

Sum folks prefer the one, an' sum Prefer the other sort, But when a judge has got to say, It socka him to report.

For 'pintuns differ when it comes To size 'em side by side, Especially when a poor man Is countin' on a pride.

Thar's larvin' in the east, I know, An' 'wouth out in the west; But when it comes to choose between—By gum! that is the test.

The eastern maiden loves her book, The western maid her farm; An' as between 'em both, you see, They have a takin' charm.

I'm down in love with east an' west, An' I know which to choose; Perkin, I better stop to think Both 'em 'em might refuse!

I'll try the east—the west I mean— Eh! kissed plum on the mouth? I've changed my mind an' now will take This roadster from the south.—H. S. Keller in Judge.

A New Way to Shell Eggs.

At a meeting of the Royal Meteorological society Mr. R. H. Scott, F. R. S., drew attention to a curious case of lightning stroke which had occurred at Ballyglass, County Mayo. The eggs were in a basket on the floor of a room when the house was struck by the discharge. It was found that their shells fell off when they were put into hot water, leaving the inner membrane unbroken. On being cooked they tasted quite well.—Casell's Magazine.

The sun spot periodicity is a subject of universal interest, and little has been sounded of its unfathomable depths. It is known that the cycle is completed in about eleven years, containing a maximum of activity and a minimum of quiescence; that the spots are cavities in the solar photosphere, filled with gases or vapors cooler than the surrounding portions; that the spots move with a varying velocity, and that the spot producing activity has a direct influence on the magnetism and electricity of the earth.

Purse thefts seem to be the common thief's special weakness, more than 10 per cent. of the larcenies, etc., brought before the courts being for thefts of purses. Watches stand second favorites. More than three-fourths of the purses stolen are the property of ladies, the thieves seeming to find ladies' pockets more suitable for picking than men's.

The army of the United States consists of 2,167 commissioned officers and a little over 20,000 private soldiers, exclusive of those performing civilian duties; thus one-tenth of the force consists of its officers.

A new method of preparing wood pulp composition for moldings is described, in which the wood pulp is mixed with bronze powders, aniline or metallic colors, so as to give a uniform color of any desired shade to the pulp.

Riders in the Time of Alexander.

One of the most precious relics of the past is a bronze statuette dug up at Herculaneum in 1751, and thought to be a copy of the equestrian statue known to have been made of Alexander the Great by Lysippus, after the battle of the Granicus, when statues of all the brave who fell in this initial victory were made by the famous sculptor. If it is truly a copy of Lysippus' work we can judge from it how the Macedonians managed their horses in a hand-to-hand conflict. The king is shown sitting on a blanket firmly held in place by a breast strap and girth. Without dropping the reins from his bridle hand he grasps this substitute for a saddle at the withers, and turning full half way to the right and looking backward, gives a swinging cut with his sword to the rear, covering as big an arc of the circle as the best swordsman who ever sat in a saddle.

The statue is full of life and natural to a degree. If not Lysippus' work, it is that of a consummate artist. The position shows great freedom of movement on the horse, and a seat strong and elastic. That the Macedonians kept their heels well away from the horses' flanks, or rather that they did not rely on their heels to cling to him, is shown by their commonly wearing spurs, a thing the Indian usually avoids, and the same habit shows clearly in this piece of art.—Colonel T. A. Dodge in Harper's.

Care of the Hair.

The hair, like every other portion of the human frame, if uncared for, will go to waste and eventually drop out. This is due to a splitting of the ends of the hair, so that the interior oil duct which nourishes the hair is exposed, and the natural nourishment of the hair runs to waste, overflows upon the head, forming dandruff, which impedes the growth of the hair just as much as the tares among wheat. The best means to prevent this is a strengthening of the hair, and this can easily be accomplished by frequent cutting and the use of salt water and vaseline.

Have you ever noticed what bushy hair seafaring men have? Did you ever see a bald sailor? It is because their hair is in constant contact with the invigorating salt air, and is often wet with salt water. A good tonic of salt water should contain a teaspoonful of salt to a tumbler of water, and should be applied to the hair two or three times a week. The effect at the end of a month will be surprising.—American Spectator.

Mexico's "King Cake" Day.

The 6th of January is "king cake" day in Mexico. It is customary to invite one's friends to dinner on that day. For the desert a large cake resembling a crown is served. It is cut into as many slices as there are persons at the table. In the cake, before baking, a large bean is placed, and whoever gets the slice containing the bean has to give a party within a few weeks. There is always much merriment at the cutting of the king cake. The first Thursday of the year is also celebrated in Mexican social circles with a "Baile de los Compadres." All those families who attend the posadas in any one place for the nine nights previous to Christmas meet again at this ball. Lots are drawn for partners, and those thus paired off are compadres for the ensuing year.—Chicago News.

The "Seapegrace" Engine.

The other day the engine hitched to a New York Central train broke down midway between Albany and Rochester. "That's the seapegrace," said the conductor, as the train moved away to make room for the one that was to take its place. "There is always at least one seapegrace engine on every line. We call it a seapegrace because it is eternally getting into trouble. They had such a machine on the Lake Shore road. She was one of the two engines that pulled the west bound train that went through the Ashtabula bridge in one of the worst railroad accidents ever witnessed in this country. The head engine crossed the bridge all right, but the seapegrace pulled away from it and went through the bridge, a distance of eighty feet."—New York Evening Sun.

The Lime Kiln Club Declines.

Sir Isaac Walpole announced that the widow of the Hon. Scuppernon Williams, of Milwaukee, had made a demand on the treasury of the club for \$500, claiming that her husband, who was an honorary member, had been killed by lightning. "But what has his club got to do with lightning?" asked the president. "I dunno, sah." "De secretary will write to dat pussion to de effect that she has got a fish insurance policy on hoes barn mixed up with a certificate of honorary membership in dis lodge, an dat while we feel for her in her grief we couldn't possibly let go of no \$500 on any such claim."—Detroit Free Press.

A Bit of Advice.

At a big shooting party in England Gerard Start, now Lord Alington, was one of the guests. One of the party who had not succeeded in making himself very popular said to him on the morning of their departure, "Would you mind telling me, Start, what you generally give these fellows in the way of tips?" "Certainly; I'll tell you with pleasure. I give the gamekeeper so much, and the butler so much, etc., but," he added, "if you will allow me to give you a piece of advice, if I were in your place I wouldn't give them anything at all. You'll never be asked here again. What's the use?"—Cecil Clay in London Truth.

Rivalry.

First Boy—My ma is educated. She has "Ecco Homo" in the original. Second Boy—Pshaw! that's nothing. Mine has ezecema in the arm.—Journal of Education.