

BAGGING DEADLY SNAKES.

A MAN WHO HAS BEEN AT IT FOR YEARS AND STILL LIVES.

Catching Rattlesnakes to Sell to Showmen—John Geer's Ways—Facts About Rattlesnakes.

The demand for rattlesnakes for museums, menageries, side shows and for exhibition at agricultural fairs in the large country towns is yearly on the increase and is evidence that, in spite of the repulsive appearance of the reptiles, there is something about them that is certain to attract attention and which induces the showman to pay well for fine specimens for exhibition. Among the persons engaged in capturing these snakes to supply this demand none have been more successful than John Geer, of Long Eddy, N. Y., who has been known to ship as many as fifty-four at one time, and who once received an order from Cincinnati for 100 for one person.

Catching rattlesnakes is by no means a very difficult or dangerous occupation, though it may seem to be so to those unacquainted with the habits of reptiles, and who only think of them with a shudder at the thought of a bite from fangs which contain so deadly a poison. Armed simply with a stick five or six feet long, to one end of which is attached an iron hook, and another stick about one-half as long, to one end of which is tied a good stout cord, the loose end of which terminates in a loop-slipping noose, and accompanied by an assistant carrying a bag or sack, the rattlesnake catcher is ready for work. He repairs upon a warm day in spring to the "dens" in search of snakes. The "dens" are spots upon the barrens of loose stones or openings under ledges of rocks, through which the reptiles crawl to their winter quarters, and to which they go on the first appearance of cold weather in the fall and remain till the turn of warm weather in the spring.

When first recalled to conscious life by the appearance of warm weather these snakes crawl to the open air, at first carefully shielding themselves from the direct rays of the sun and becoming gradually used to the light and heat by keeping for a few days under the edge of the stones or in the crevices of the rocks. After lying about the dens in a semi-torpid condition for several days, and having regained their normal condition after their long winter's sleep in underground darkness, they start out on their summer's tour in search of food.

While thus lying dumplily about the den the snake-catcher takes advantage of their lethargic condition. With his hook he draws them out from their comfortable quarters, and hastily slipping the noose over their heads drops them into the bag, which is held open by his assistant. With a knife he cuts the string as near the animal's head as safety will warrant, and then fixing another noose, is ready for more snakes. In this manner sometimes twenty or thirty, or even more, may be caught in one day. They seldom struggle in the bag and never try to bite. Seemingly to understand that they are powerless they willingly submit to the inevitable. John Geer has been known to throw over his shoulders a bag containing sixteen large rattlesnakes and carry them without fear of injury.

The writer once saw Mr. Geer empty two bags full of snakes (thirty-two in number, the catch of a couple of hours' work with two assistants), into a large box. It was a warm day and they had been carried some distance. The close confinement and jolting to which they had been subjected irritated and maddened them so that as soon as they found themselves in comparative liberty on the bottom of the box they began using their fangs freely, biting in all directions. Those standing near expected to see the bitten snakes swell up and die from the effects of the poison, but were assured by Mr. Geer that they would not. This proved to be the case. Not one of them seemed to be affected in the least. Either their skins are impervious to teeth or else (as is the case with the flesh of the hog) their fangs cannot penetrate deep enough to reach the tissues and they thus escape the effects of the poison.

The number of rattles is generally supposed to indicate the age of the snake, a year being allowed for each one. But they frequently lose them and it is no uncommon occurrence to find a very large snake with but few rattles and sometimes with none, and in a like manner a comparatively small one with a large number.

By many persons it is supposed that the black rattlesnake is the female and the yellow the male. But color is no distinction of sex. The rattlesnake travels by night as well as by day, and in the course of the season frequently gets several miles from its den, to which, however, it invariably returns on the first appearance of cold weather, unless it has been disturbed there, and then it seeks other quarters.

The rattlesnake swims with great ease, floating lightly upon the water with its rattles held up to keep them from getting wet. It is generally supposed that the rattlesnake cannot climb, but one was killed a few years since upon a beam in a tannery at least ten feet from the ground.

Snakes are frequently found around deserted buildings, barns, outhouses, and indeed in the cellars of inhabited dwellings where, if they are allowed to remain, they will as thoroughly rid the premises of rats and mice as would the best cat and in much less time. They are not pleasant joint occupants of a house, however, as Mrs. Hawks, of Ten Mile River, found to her sorrow when she put her hand into the pork barrel for a piece of meat and got a bite from a large rattlesnake instead.

Rattlesnakes feed on rats, mice, squirrels, birds, frogs, toads and rabbits, and in lying in wait for their prey exhibit a patience that would be a credit to Job. They seldom bite, even when they have an opportunity, unless irritated or trodden upon. They cannot strike unless coiled or partially so, and cannot reach more than one-half or two-thirds their length.

While their gastronomic capacity is very great a good sized snake will make very good eating for a single man, their ability to fast is equally as wonderful. There are many well-attested instances of their living for two years without eating!

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A CITY'S SEWING GIRLS.

SEAMSTRESSES AND THEIR SMALL WAGES IN NEW YORK.

Working Long Hours for a Pittance—Work They Do, and the Prices They Get.

As a rule seamstresses on men's wear receive the least pay, according to the fineness of the work and the extreme care bestowed upon it, though work on some women's garments is illy enough paid. The large tailor and manufacturing establishments give all their work outside, and it is curiously divided up. Some women receive those parts that require special basting. The cutter cuts out so many coats and with them all the linings, buckram and velvet which are necessary, and these are graded in a methodical manner and each size placed by itself. In some cases men do the stitching of the seams, but generally women do that. Then they are all given to the pressers and then to the busters. From them they go to the liners, after which they are sent to the finishers and the buttonhole makers. They are afterward given to those who sew on the buttons, and then others take out the bastings, after which the pressers again have them, and finally the inspector orders the tickets and little silk patch with the firm's name sewn on. Thus ten persons work on each coat. Each part of work is done on a dozen coats and each dozen as soon as finished is fastened together and returned. When the work is returned it is inspected, and if the least imperfection is discerned the mistake must be rectified. The cutter and inspector are well paid, but those who do the work piece-meal only earn about thirty-five to forty cents a day, working constantly and giving half a day to take the work and get more. In one tenement house lives a woman who supports herself and three small children by finishing gentlemen's fine overcoats. She sews the satin linings and sews in the sleeve linings and the velvet collar and puts in several stays, in all setting from eight to ten thousand stitches on each, and earns at most thirty-five cents a day. Out of this she pays \$5 a month for rent. She works Sundays too. She sends her babies to a kindergarten, where they are fed, but in the summer the school is closed, and how she lives and keeps them in clothes and fire none but those who live in the same way know. Just now another woman with one child is sharing her room and her rent, which relieves her a little. The man she obtains work from has a factory, also a fine tailoring establishment, and the class of work these women do is for overcoats which cost forty and fifty dollars. Allowing each of the ten workers on each coat ten cents for what she does, and the cutter and inspector each fifty cents, the cost of making a man's fine overcoat is about two dollars. Many manufacturers give all their work to contractors after it is cut out, and they in turn give it out in small parcels to the poor women who do it, and to make money themselves grind them down to the very lowest figure. Other contractors take in large quantities of work, and then hire hands in their own work-room and set them to work there. When the work requires machine stitching they allow the girls the use of machines, charging them so much a day for the use of them, and they pay by the piece always. Some of the work is of the cheapest quality and some of it again of the richest and finest, but however it is the girl's pay remains about the same, just enough to keep body and soul together while living in the most squalid manner. There are immense quantities of this work done in the poorer houses in the city by the mothers of families who cannot leave their little children. In cases of contagious diseases the work goes on just the same, and the germs of sickness can be carried in the fine coat of the society man. Where the girls or women can leave and go into stores or factories they have a chance to earn more money, but on tailoring the pay is cruelly small.

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Wanted Both Killed.

A railroad trial story is told in this wise. Two passengers appeal to the conductor; one wants a window sash up and the other insists on keeping it down. Says No. Two: "If that window is for me it will be the death of me, for I'm about perished with cold now," and to that No. One replies: "If the window is shut I'll smother in the foul air of this car." When the conductor looked around in a sorely puzzled sort of way, passenger in a rear seat called out: "Conductor, the two fellows have been growling about that window for fifty miles, and now I hope for the peace and comfort of the train you'll keep the window open long enough to kill one and shut it long enough to smother the other."

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Wanted Both Killed.

A railroad trial story is told in this wise. Two passengers appeal to the conductor; one wants a window sash up and the other insists on keeping it down. Says No. Two: "If that window is for me it will be the death of me, for I'm about perished with cold now," and to that No. One replies: "If the window is shut I'll smother in the foul air of this car." When the conductor looked around in a sorely puzzled sort of way, passenger in a rear seat called out: "Conductor, the two fellows have been growling about that window for fifty miles, and now I hope for the peace and comfort of the train you'll keep the window open long enough to kill one and shut it long enough to smother the other."

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SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL.

Thomas Edison is going to experiment with earth currents, which he thinks may revolutionize telegraphy. He says, sooner or later, telegraph wires will be a thing of the past.

Careful experiments by Mr. Joseph Jastrow show that the evidence obtained in favor of a "magnetic sense"—a perception of the invulnerable force of magnets—is unreliable. The sense does not exist.

An incandescent lamp which requires no vacuum in the globe has been invented in Germany. The wire used is a mixture of conducting and non-conducting elements, the latter preventing the former from melting.

Aniline oil is reported to be gaining considerable favor as a local anesthetic in simple surgical operations, such as opening a felon. On dipping the finger in the oil for a short time it becomes so insensible that the flesh may be cut to the bone without pain.

A Spanish inventor, Senor Pumariega, proposes applying an electric current to the body by a novel method. Flannel is impregnated with oxides of iron, copper, zinc and tin, which are excited by the perspiration of the body and subject the latter to a weak but constant electric current.

It is not generally known that coal which remains in store perfectly dry is rendered less valuable on that account, yet such is the fact. Most coal mines are saturated with water, and if this is drained off, the coal becomes flinty and valueless. Coal stored through the summer should be sprinkled and kept moist.

J. H. Lullard, of Springfield, Mass., has for several months past been at work on a tricycle for which steam shall furnish the motive power. The experiment has so far succeeded that recently several trial trips have been made with such satisfaction as to already cause two manufacturers to apply for the right of manufacture.

Ebony can be imitated on wood by first painting with a one per cent. solution of sulphate of copper. When perfectly dry the wood is painted over with a liquid consisting of equal weights of aniline, hydro-chloride and spirits of wine. The blue vitriol acts on the aniline and forms nigrosin, a black which can not be affected by acids or alkalis. A luster can be added by coating with simple copal varnish.

It is said that the great glacier of Alaska is moving at the rate of a quarter of a mile per annum toward the sea. The front, according to this account, presents a wall of ice some five hundred feet in thickness, its breadth varies from three to ten miles, and it is about 150 miles long. Almost every quarter of an hour hundreds of tons of ice in large blocks fall into the sea, which they agitate in the most violent manner, the waves being such as to toss about the largest vessels that approach the glacier as if they were small boats. The ice is extremely pure and dazzling to the eye, and has tints of the lightest blue as well as of the deepest indigo. The top is very rough and broken, forming small hills, and even chains of mountains in miniature.

How to Secure Health. REV. A. DAMON. Enclosed find one dollar for two packages of Pilo's Remedy for Catarrh. The first package, received in June, gave perfect satisfaction. GILL MESSER.

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