

RATTLESNAKE MAN.

Catches Venomous Serpents for a Livelihood.

Interesting Incidents of a Dangerous Occupation.

In a wild valley at the foot of a rocky and precipitous mountain, near the little hamlet of Long Eddy, in Sullivan County, N. Y., is the home of John C. Geer, whose business is the charming of rattlesnakes. This eccentric individual who lives in this isolated spot is known throughout that part of the country as "the rattlesnake man." Though over sixty years of age, he is as active almost as he was twenty years ago, and for a mountaineer, born and reared in that untamed country, where people of any kind are scarce, he possesses a rare intelligence.

A better insight into his strange and dangerous business cannot be given than by the following story, told by himself: "I have been engaged in catching rattlers at the foot of this mountain for many years. Some seasons I get from 200 to 300 of them, many of which I tame and ship alive to museums of New York and other cities. I kill a good many and extract the oil, for which I find a ready sale at from \$2 to \$5 an ounce. The skins are worth from \$1 to \$5 each, according to their size and condition. This mountain back of my house is fairly alive with rattlesnakes; thousands of them live there in their lairs in the crevasses of the rocks. One day last year I started out below my house, and in two hours and a half caught twenty-two rattlers and a black snake. I catch the snakes with a hook or snare, and put them into a bag, in which I bring them home. Do they ever bite me? Well, sometimes, but very seldom, as I know what a rattlesnake's bite is, and am always very careful how I handle them. Six or seven times they have been too smart for me, and have sunk their fangs into my hands, but I am alive yet, for I have an infallible cure for the poison. The bites always leave a scar, though, as you will see by the back of my hand."

This hand has a number of small, deep scars, which look like a very pronounced pockmark, and these, the "rattlesnake man" declares are the results of the bites he has received. The "infallible" cure which Mr. Geer used is compounded by himself. Certain it is he has been called upon many times to save people who have been struck by the poison-laden fangs of rattlesnakes, and his remedy has never failed to cure.

No less weird and interesting than the man is his rude loghouse, which is always the home of from a dozen to thirty or more of the venomous reptiles. These are kept in boxes, and many of them are very tame, actually seeming to be very fond of their master. It does not take the old man long to subdue these wild creatures, and he often has them crawling about the floor while he smokes his pipe and meditates. He is fond of having visitors come to see his pets, though few people can be persuaded to enter this den of rattlers and black snakes. This amuses the old man, as long association has taken away every vestige of fear of having them harm him, and he thinks no more of handling the reptiles than if they were playful kittens.—[New York Times.

Excitements of Mexican Agriculture.

At the Casa Camadra are two other log houses, and in them live some squalid, yellow-hid humans who are to form a little stretch of bottom-land this year. They require work steers to do their ploughing, and Mr. Bell has brought up half a dozen vicious old "stags," which are both truculent and swift of foot. The Mexicans insist that they are not able to handle them; and Mr. Bell orders his punchers into action. After a lot of riding and yelling they are herded and dragged into the enclosure, where they huddled while seven punchers sat on their ponies at the gate. I was standing at one corner of the corral, near two men, when out from the midst of the steers walked a big black bull, which raised its head and gazed directly at me. The bull had never before in his stupid life observed a man on foot, and I comprehended immediately what he would do next, so I "led out" for the case at a rate of speed which the boys afterwards never grew weary of commending. No spangled toery of the bull-ring ever put more heart and soul into his running than did I in my great coat and long hunting spurs. The bull made a "fo'orn hope" for the gate, and the gallant punchers melted away before the charge.

The diversion of the punchers made the retreat of the infantry possible, and from an entrenched position I saw the bulls tear over the hills, with the punchers "rolling their tails" behind. After an hour of swearing and hauling and bellowing, the six cattle were lugged back to the pen, and the bars put up. The punchers came around to congratulate me on my rapid recovery from a sprained ankle, when they happened to observe the cattle again scouring off for the open country. Then there was a grunting of ponies as the spurs went in, some hoarse oaths, and for the third time they tore away after the "gentle work-oxen." The steers had taken the bars in their stride. Another hour's chase, and this time the animals were thrown down, trussed up like turkeys for the baking, and tied to posts, where they lay to kick and bellow the night through in impotent rage. The punchers coiled their ropes, lit their cigarettes and rode off in the gathering gloom. The morning following the steers were let up, and though wet and chilled, they still roared defiance. For agricultural purposes a Mexican "stag" would be as valuable as a rhinoceros or a Bengal tiger, and I await with interest the report of the death rate at the Casa Camadra during spring ploughing.—[Harper's Magazine.

A Queer Marriage Ceremony.

They have a queer betrothal custom among the common natives or peons of Guatemala, which is scarcely romantic for the girl. I was passing the hut of a native on a finca or coffee plantation one day when I saw an old woman belaboring her daughter with a good-sized stick, which she applied vigorously across the shoulders and body of her beloved offspring, who set up a wail of woe and pain, though I fancy her tears were quick dried, for it was a significant event for her. This is the way the old lady gave her consent to the marriage of her daughter.

The natives receive but little cash during the year. The priests charge what is there considered a good sum for performing a marriage ceremony, and the natives of the lower classes dispense with it. The mother beats the daughter, there is a feast of frijoles and tortilla cakes and the dispensation of unlimited quantities of native whiskey, everybody is happy and drunk, and that constitutes the marriage, which, singular as it may appear, is regarded and observed, as a rule, faithfully.—[Goldwaite's Geographical Magazine.

When Plants Decide to Walk.

The first of a course of lectures on locomotion and fixation in plants and animals was delivered at the Royal Institution by Prof. Stewart Prillierian, Professor of Physiology. The lecturer said locomotion was necessary, whether in plants or animals, at some period of their lives, to prevent injurious overcrowding, and to enable the one or the other to obtain such necessities of life as food and air. Locomotion was in solids, in water, and in air. The first head was subdivided into: Creeping—the greater part of the body usually in contact with its support; walking and running—the body being supported on, and moved by, special parts; jumping—the body being projected suddenly from its support or position of rest; climbing, or prehension for locomotion by proxy—the organism ascending a vertical or overhanging support, or becoming attached to some moving object; burrowing, digging, boring; reabsorption of hard parts, fixation. Locomotion in water was subdivided into floating and swimming; and that in air was also subdivided into passive, active, flying.—[Westminster Gazette.

A Dead-Letter Office Story.

Among the curiosities in the museum is a baby Jumbo with one of his sides gorgeously embroidered in the Stars and Stripes, and the other flaunting the Union Jack, the two united by a golden chain. It had drifted thither, and had been for several years encased in its glass case, when a postal exhibit was begged from the department for a church fair, and for the first time Jumbo went out for an airing. It so happened that a lady from New Hampshire was visiting Washington at the time and went to the fair. To the surprise of her friends, she greeted Jumbo as a long lost friend. Ten years before she had made him and sent him to her daughter in England, who had married a man named Link—hence the design of the two flags linked together. But she did not claim her possession, and so he has never made his journey across the ocean.—[St. Nicholas.

A midshipman in the United States navy receives pay equivalent to that of a lieutenant in the British navy.

LADIES' DEPARTMENT.

NORLIEST CAREER OF A WOMAN.

Women who are happily married will agree with Walter Beaunt, who, upon being asked "what was the noblest career for a woman?" replied that he thought it was marriage. No woman, who had been a mother, would be willing to exchange her lot in order to become a journalist, novelist, teacher, or any sort of "professional." "To enrich the world with noble children, to give the country more brave hands and honest hearts. What, in comparison to this, is the independence of the single woman, or her work—her average work?"

GOLD SHOES.

A great many girls, undoubtedly, have white canvas shoes so soiled and grimy from the summer's campaign that it is quite impossible to clean them. These supposedly worthless shoes may be transformed into a very pretty pair of evening shoes by the magic of a few cents' worth of gold paint. Mix the gold paint very thin and coat the entire shoe. After going over the shoes the second time dust them lightly with the dry gold powder and lace them with narrow ribbon the color of the dress with which they are to be worn. The effect is very pretty, and if they are retouched from time to time they will be found extremely serviceable.—[New York Recorder.

AS THEY DO IN RUSSIA.

In matters relating to the welfare of women, as in most other affairs, Russia seems to consistently "progress backward." From the beginning of the new year all the women hitherto employed as clerks and telegraph operators on the various Russian railways were dismissed and their places are being filled by men. No reason of any kind was assigned for this harsh and reactionary step, and it was not even suggested that these employes had in any way failed in their duties or proved unequal to their work.

On the contrary, it is declared by those who have had opportunities of judging, that they have filled their posts in a thoroughly efficient manner. The edict which rewarded their service with a sentence of summary dismissal can only be attributed to some sudden spasm of hostility against the claim of women to earn their living by their own exertions.—[Chicago Post.

THE BOWS BENEATH THE CHIN.

The poet may get out his pen and set his imagination to work on a ballad, the refrain of which shall be "Tying her bonnet under her chin," for that is what she will soon be doing. The little velvet bands that are merely fastened with a glittering pin are becoming passe. My lady wants a change, and she proposes to have it.

Therefore she fastens in the back of her toque or even of her broad, trimmed hat, a long, broad, soft sash-like affair of crepe or gauze, or silk of most diaphanous quality. The two ends are brought around back of her ears and tie under her chin in a big, soft bow. They are bonnet strings and neckscarf in one. In color they usually follow the tone of the rest of the trimming. A soft, rather narrow-brimmed, black velvet hat, trimmed with pale yellow ostrich tips, has a pale yellow gauze scarf, while a jet toque, blossoming with pale blue flowers has a couple of yards of pale blue crepe to serve for a tie.—[New York Advertiser.

REIGNING LONDON BEAUTIES.

Last year's beauties are reigning again this season in London. The Duchess of Sutherland, Georgiana Lady Dudley, Lady Brooke, who has just become Countess of Warwick; Lady Henry Fitzgerald, Lady Powis and Lady de Trafford still hold their own against all new comers. Princess Henry of Pless, Mrs. Hanbury, Lady Chelsea, Lady Rossmore and Mrs. Lancelot Lowther among the married belles, and Lady Ulric Duncomb, Lady Sophia Cadogan and Miss Mauriel Wilson of the unmarried beauties are all attracting much attention. But the sensation of the season was Princess Helene d'Orleans, who is beautiful even beyond the privilege of a princess.

Women of the middle class are said to be much handsomer now than they were 20 years ago in England, taller, better formed and more brilliant in coloring. The typical English girl is as daintily pink and white and modest as Burns' "erimion tipped flower."

The typical English wife is a rather colorless and uninteresting type, with the pink faded out of her cheeks, the gold dulled to dun brown in her hair, the blue dulling to gray in her eyes,

and after this comes the blowy stage, particularly with the women greatly addicted to heavy burgundies and clarets of the English dinner.—[Detroit Commercial Advertiser.

A STRANGE CAREER.

Lady Gertrude Stock, nun, novelist, Marquis' daughter and baker's wife, has just closed, in the shelter of a convent, a life of strange experiments. Had she possessed something more than the very modest literary capacity that was in fact hers, and had her own personality thus been more salient and interesting, her story would have been one of the principal romances of the modern social world.

Lady Gertrude Douglass entered early upon her cloistral life in a convent of the Good Shepherd. She spent many years there, not as a novice, but as "professed" nun, bound by all the vows. From these she was authoritatively and officially released, hers being one of the very few cases in which such dispensation is given, or indeed, desired.

Lady Gertrude wrote two or three average novels, but a few years after her return to the world she joined her brother, the Rev. Lord Archibald Douglas, in his work at a Catholic orphanage in the Harrow road. She did her work there simply and completely, and brother and sister alike made themselves the servants of the little waifs and strays they sheltered. To the orphanage was attached a bakery for the partial self-support of the charity and the technical teaching of the boys.

During Lord Archibald's absence in Canada, whither he had travelled in charge of some of his orphans, his sister took a step of which he had had no warning. With her baker husband she then set up a little shop near Brook Green—with small success.

Very recently Lady Gertrude Stock wrote a novel, of which a baker was the hero. But her husband was away, trying to better his fortunes in South Africa, when, last week, she died.—[Pall Mall Budget.

FASHION NOTES.

Very huge muffs are worn this winter.

Nearly all evening bonnets are made in the coronet style, and as small as possible.

Magenta and pink will be two leading shades in trimmings and bonnets this spring.

A pretty house gown is made of pale blue silk, showing tiny rosebuds in china effects.

Petticoats of India muslin are about three yards round and are trimmed with fine white lace.

Clouded moires are very fine; a blue moire antique has a zigzag gold effect woven in that is truly exquisite.

Pointed apron-front overskirts, draped high on the hips have been revived, and are now very popular.

An odd and pretty warp is of black velours trimmed with silk braid and lined with double warp changeable sarah.

Open-work stockings are again popular, while novelties in imported hosiery, showy colored stripes, plaids and diagonals.

There seems to be no end to the fancy kerchiefs and colors which the lady of the fashion delights in wearing about her neck.

Lace or fur trims a large majority of the reception and party dresses this season, and it is not unusual to see both on the same costume.

Soap boxes and powder cases for the baby's basket are made of ivory, with sterling silver monogram, or of enamel with colored engraved initials.

Boas are made of crisp, black gauze, edged with black satin ribbon, and box-plaited to a ruff just long enough to go around the neck comfortably.

The most fashionable shades for blending with other colors are magenta and light reds, while for day wear dark brown and green are the two favorites.

The attempt to make the very full skirt popular has been a distinct failure. Moderately full skirts are the rule in new fashions, and these are not elaborately trimmed.

Ruffs of black chiffon will be much worn, and are made of accordion plaiting in all styles, the favorite style being a number of small ruffles edged with narrow half-inch lace.

A handsome dinner gown, made for a rich follower of fashion, is of cerise velvet, trimmed with silver fox. Velvetene can be made up with the same effect and are much cheaper.

Sequins are the newest fancy in trimmings, and there are bodices of sequins, there are skirts decked with sequins, there are sleeves of sequins, and, in fact, sequins are the fad.

FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

TAMBOURINE WORK-BASKET.

This can be made into a lovely work-basket by covering the bottom with quilted satin and lining the sides with velvet of a contrasting color. A cover is made by covering a round piece of cardboard with velvet, and attaching it with straps of ribbon. Inside the cover is a round piece of velvet, having ribbon sewn down at intervals, and in these loops are kept the articles needed for fine sewing.—New York Journal.

SWEEPING THE CARPETS.

With a little care you can sweep the dirtiest carpet without raising much dust by placing outside the door of the room to be swept a pail of clear, cold water. Wet your broom, knock it against the side of the bucket to get out all the drops, sweep a couple of yards, then rinse off the broom again. Continue this until you have gone over the entire surface. If the carpet is much soiled the water should be changed several times. Slightly moistened Indian meal is also used by the oldest housewives. Snow, if not allowed to melt, is also excellent as a dust settler.—[New York World.

IT IS WELL TO REMEMBER.

That a clean apron worn while hanging the clothes keeps them clean.

That a pair of white gloves or mittens are a comfort to hands taken from hot studs to hang clothes in zero weather; also a close-fitting jacket and hood to keep one from catching cold.

That the line, as soon as its duty is ended, should be reeled up and placed in a bag until next time.

That clothes when brought in, should be separated and folded at once; if allowed to lie together many wrinkles accumulate.

That clothes carefully folded and sprinkled are half ironed.

That dish towels and common towels can be ironed just as well in half the time if folded together once as if ironed singly.

That sheets folded across, bringing the wide and narrow hems together, then folded again, then ironed across both sides, are finished quickly and look as well as if more time were spent on them.

That pillow-slips should be ironed lengthwise instead of crosswise if one wishes to iron wrinkles out instead of in.—[Good Housekeeping.

RECIPES.

Fish Croquettes.—Separate any kind of cooked fish from the bones, mince fine, season with pepper and salt to taste, beat one egg with a teaspoonful of flour and a little milk. Mix this with the fish and make into balls. Brush the outside with eggs; dredge with flour. Fry nicely in hot lard, being careful to get a nice even brown on them.

Cottage Pudding.—Beat the yolk of one egg light, add to it gradually one cup of granulated sugar, beating all the while, one-half cup of milk, one and a half cups of flour, and beat until light and smooth. Beat the white of the egg to a stiff, dry froth and stir it gently into the batter with one teaspoonful of baking powder. Put in a greased baking-dish and bake 25 minutes in a slow oven.

Apple Float.—Take four large tart apples, stew them in very little water, just enough to keep them from burning. They should be very dry when done. Press through a colander and beat with a fork until smooth, adding half a cupful of sugar. When entirely cold stir in the whites of two eggs beaten to a stiff froth; flavor with lemon or vanilla. Send to the table in a glass dish and serve with cream.

Scalloped Turkey.—Chop cold turkey, butter a dish, put a layer of bread crumbs in the bottom, then a layer of oysters; season with bits of butter, salt and pepper, then cover with a layer of turkey. Continue alternating in this way until the dish is full, having the first layer of crumbs. Pour over the whole a cream sauce made of one tablespoonful of butter, the same amount of flour, and a cupful of cream or rich milk. Cover closely and bake in a moderate oven twenty minutes.

Carrots in Bechamel Sauce.—Clean, cut (in thin slices or strips) and boil about a quart of carrots. When done, drain them. Mix well together two ounces of butter and a tablespoonful of flour; add a pint of milk and set it on the fire; stir slowly until it comes to a boil. Then put in the carrots and stir for a minute or two. Add a little salt and sugar, two yolks of eggs; stir and mix well. Give one boil and serve hot.

SOLDIERS' COLUMN.

IN FEMBERTON.

The Trick That Was Worked on Prisoners When Moving to Belle Isle.



I WAS a member of the 12th Pa. Reserves (Reynold's Brigade). Our squad of prisoners assembled at the hospital near Charles Crossroads on the morning of July 1, 1862.

We marched to the bridge crossing at White Oak Swamp and there awaited the passage of Jackson's Corps. After exchanging the compliments of the season with the dust begrimed Johnnies, we proceeded to Richmond. The roads were filled with vehicles carrying curious and jubilant citizens to the battlefields, and the conversation between these people and our line of weary, dusky Yankees was very spirited and frequently called for the intervention of our guards to preserve the peace.

Arriving in Richmond, we were compelled to wait in the street in front of the Femberton tobacco factory until the building could be fitted for our reception. This time was spent in animated discourse with a crowd of citizens who were certain that Lincoln's Government was "busted."

In the prison we removed the fastenings from the tobacco presses, divided the proceeds and took a general "chance" of the door leading to the cellar was lifted one night to permit a scout of the premises, with the result that a quantity of black strap molasses was discovered and impartially divided. Pending the arrangement of toilet conveniences, we were passed across the street to Castle Thunder as necessarily suggested, arranging the waiting candidates in line near the door to pass at stated intervals. This plan would have been satisfactory as a temporary expedient, had it not been for the fact that the prisoners were not the previous question with more candidates than the Tylers could provide for.

Of course graybacks abounded and their extermination became a daily duty. A picture of those rows of men seated on the floor, with their backs to the wall, their shirts on their laps, would not fill the soul of the ordinary pilgrim with poetry, but it would sharpen the memory and stir the blood of many of the old boys who were there.

The cooking for Femberton was performed in Libby. The details of men from each floor appointed to serve our repasts and carry the soup buckets were provided with the wooden yokes common in the sugar woods of the New England States, and the soup bearers between the prisons on their return trip was severe on the Sies, but added variety to our frugal meals.

Rumors of a speedy exchange were current every day, and the prison officials were loud in their denunciation of the delinquency of Lincoln's Government. At last the announcement was made one morning that "the first 100 men in line would be the first off." How we scrambled for the coveted places in that line, and as we received messages from the loved ones in the North, how we pitied the boys to be left behind. I do not think that I would have exchanged my place in that line for the best farm in the country.

Passing out of the prison we turned up the river instead of down, as we should do to reach Varina Landing, where the exchange boats were. Coming to a bridge, the situation was made clear that we were to cross the river and take the train to City Point. Four or five of us were soon cut short by our arrival on Belle Island, which we were informed was to be our home as well as that of our comrades in the city as soon as the camp was prepared to receive them. We were simply a detail to clean up the grounds.

Well, boys, it is all over now, but I never want to try to choke down quite so big a lump of disappointment as I swallowed that day. One comrade who was in that squad writes me that he did not have anything to eat that day. I guess it was when we got tired of waiting for the Commissary Sergeant to come over and issue our grub and charged the pile of bread on the river bank. I secured a chunk as sweet as pie.

But I must quit right here. I would like to stir up the memories of life on Belle Island, our elections and debates, but space is limited and we old boys are garrulous. If any of you come this way we will go down into the woods and fry a little bacon and drink a cup of black "Old Government Java."—C. E. FAULKNER, in "National Tribune."

FEEDING GEN. LEE'S ARMY.

Details of an Incident of the Appomattox Surrender.

I was Gen. Grant's Chief Commissary and was present in the room during the interview between him and Gen. Lee. says Michael E. Moran, Assistant Commissary General of Subsistence, in the Washington Post. After the terms of the surrender had been agreed upon Gen. Lee said to Gen. Grant:

"General, I would like my army fed."

Gen. Grant turned to me, as his Chief Commissary and said:

"Colonel, feed the Confederate army."

I asked: "How many men are there?"

Gen. Grant asked: "How many men have you Gen. Lee?"

Gen. Lee replied: "Our books are lost; our organizations are broken up; our companies are mostly commanded by non-commissioned officers, we have nothing but what we have on our backs."

Interrupting him in his train of thought I suggested, interrogatively: "Say 25,000 men?"

He replied: "Yes, say 25,000 men."

I started to withdraw for the purpose of giving the necessary orders and at the door met Col. Kellogg, the Chief Commissary of Gen. Sheridan's command. I asked him if he could feed the Army of Northern Virginia. He expressed his inability, having something very important to do for Gen. Sheridan.

I then found Col. M. P. Small, the Chief Commissary of Gen. Ord's army, and asked him: as I had asked Gen. Sheridan's Chief Commissary, if he could feed the Army of Northern Virginia. He replied, with a considerable degree of confidence "I guess so." I then told him to do it, and directed him to give the men three day's rations of fresh beef, salt, hard bread, coffee and sugar. He mounted his horse immediately and proceeded to carry out his order.

Both Co. Kellogg and Small are now dead.

That we had any rations on the spot to give may be wondered at when the swiftness and extent of the pursuit are considered, but we had and soon found sufficient to supply the famishing army.

Despondent Cattlemen.

The storms of January 23 and February 11 and 12 wrought such havoc among the cattle upon the great ranges in the Indian reservations of Oklahoma Territory that the cattlemen declare they will market what stock they have in the spring and quit the business.

Tax white adopted citizens of Cherokee Nation have started a movement to test in court their rights to a share of the Cherokee Strip money now due from the Government.

The company controlling the diablo output of the world has sold its stock at 20 cents to a London syndicate for \$6,350,000, an advance over a previous large sale.