

THE SNAKE HUNTER.

A Queer old Man in the Catskills Who Catches Live Rattlesnakes.

In a little hut on the side of the great Storm King Mountain, in the Hudson Highlands, far above the river, and about an equal distance below the loftiest pinnacle of the towering hill, lives old Zachary Archer, who supports his wife and himself, the only inhabitants of the cabin, by catching snakes. The cottage is not visible from above or below in Summer time. The thick foliage of the trees, and the dense undergrowth which arises almost to the level of its low roof, effectually conceal it; and as the old man has an insurmountable objection to a fire in the kitchen in the warm weather, and makes his wife walk two miles every day to a small cave to cook their food, which is always eaten cold, no floating smoke betrays the presence of their dwelling. But at this season, when the mountain trees have partly withdrawn the curtains that covered it, while the gorse and brushwood are covering close to the ground as if for warmth, the desolate little building is very conspicuous. No other house is near it, and it is a picture of loneliness.

The venerable snake catcher does not like it in the Winter months, and passes as much time as he can away from it, leaving his wife and the snakes to keep each other company. They hibernate together, the serpents sleeping in the cold back room and the old woman doing before the wood fire, which burns night and day when the snow is on the ground. Old Zack, as he is usually called, is generally pursuing his slippery trade or doing his share of slumbering before a barroom stove in one of the numerous small villages or settlements at the foot of the mountain. He was engaged in the latter avocation a few days ago, when the reporter aroused him and asked him how he felt. He said he was well, but rheumatic, and added that the reptile business was brisk.

"It's always a sight safer in Winter than in Summer," he said, when he had taken something to wash down his sleepiness, "and though I don't get as many snakes I like it better. In Summer the rattlers and the copperheads stand a chance of catching you instead of your trapping them. You see, they're always wide awake, and keepin' their eyes peeled for danger. I can find them ready enough, but to get them into the leather bag I carry is a horse of another color. I have all sorts of ways of catchin' them. Sometimes I set traps for them, and that's a heap the safest way. The trap is only an open basket, with a lot of red flannel inside. Snakes, unless they're disturbed, will always go back to their old sleeping ground when the sun is high. When I find a snake track I follow it until I come either to the serpent or his bed. If it's the serpent, I try to pin his neck to the ground with a forked stick that I carry. That's mighty dangerous work if he's a rattler, for I must go very close to him, and if I miss him at the first jab I'll be apt to be closer in a second. However, I never missed yet, and I don't suppose I ever will, now I'm that experienced. When I have him down I take him with my hand, close behind the fork, so that he can't turn his head to bite me and drop him into the bag. But if the snake hasn't gone to bed and I don't find him I go back about fifty yards along the track and lay the basket down with the lid open. Then I hunt more serpents. When I come to the basket again, in two hours or so, I creep up from behind and slam the cover shut. The snake is generally inside, mixed up with the flannel. He's found the place too comfortable to get out of it in a hurry. The serpent may be the wisest beast of the field, but he's a uxorious cuss, and he don't value his life nowhere as compared with his comfort.

"When I find a hole with snake marks about its mouth I just hang a running noose of cat gut over it and fasten the single end to a stick like a fishing rod. Then I put a lump of soft bread soaked in milk before the hole and goin' back I hold the rod in my hand. Nearly all snakes are dead set on milk and the smell of the bait is pretty sure to draw the one I'm after out of the hole. He must pass his head through the loop to reach the bread, and when he does that I jerk the rod, tighten the noose, and I have him. It's just like fishin'."

"Then there's my dog Viper. He catches a lot of snakes and helps me to catch more. In the Summer, when he finds a snake, he'll walk around him until he makes him dizzy trying to keep his ugly eyes p'inted at the danger. At last he'll either drop his head or make a turn the other way to take the kinks out of his body. Then Viper is on him as quick as a wink. He grabs him by the back of the neck, out of reach of his fangs, and brings him to me without hurtin' him. In the winter he can't catch the snakes himself, but he leads me to holes in the trees and other snug places where they lie. Just to be on the safe side, I push a stick into their bedrooms first; but they're asleep, and as good as dead, they're so sound asleep, and I can pull them out with my hand, covered with a thick cloth glove. I have to use a good deal of ether to stupefy my snakes when I'm movin' them from one box or bag to another."

"Who buy my serpents? Well, I'll tell you. Circuses and small museums, as well as old fossils of naturalists, are always wantin' curiosities, and when I catch a snake with two heads, or two tails, which I do about three times a year, I get a good price—often as much as \$100—for him. The common reptiles are worth only a few dollars each. Hello, here's Viper. Where have you been, sir? There's no snakes down here, you know."

An ill-looking dog, with only one eye, trotted up to the stove and lay down before his master. His worth as a serpent chaser may have been above estimate, but his market value was clearly below par.

A romantic marriage was celebrated at Saratoga in the early part of the week. According to a despatch, "the contracting parties were Warren B. Westcott, age 69, and Miss Jane S. Truman, age 58. More than twenty-five years ago the parties were engaged. They were about to be married when Mr. Westcott fell in love with a widow and married her instead. A breach of promise suit followed, in which Mr. Westcott was compelled to pay damages. He was left a widower three years ago, when he returned to his former love."

Mrs. Lightpursue: "Here is an article in this paper entitled 'The World's Debt to the Jews.' Shall I read it?" Mr. Lightpursue: "No; that's a chestnut, I guess. Nearly everybody is in debt to the Jews; we all know that. Here, put this last pawn ticket with the others."

YOUNG FOLKS.

A Problem in Threes.

If three little houses stood in a row,
With never a fence to divide,
And if each little house had three little maids
At play in the garden wide,
And if each little maid had three little cats
(Three times three times three),
And if each little cat had three little kits,
How many kits would there be?

And if each little maid had three little friends
With whom she loved to play,
And if each little friend had three little dolls
In dresses and ribbons gay,
And if friends and dolls and cats and kits
Were all invited to tea,
And if none of them all should send regrets,
How many guests would there be?

—[St. Nicholas.

JONAS POPKIN'S MODEL.

BY F. B. STANFORD.

It was a great surprise to Chester Ludlow when he found out that Jonas Popkin had taken pattern after him. But the way he found out—that was the more surprising still! Jonas was a small colored boy, black as coal; and Chester was a white boy, the leader of all the other boys in the village. Jonas would have given all the world to be the sort of boy that no one dared to make sport of,—just such a boy, for instance, as Chester. He always watched Chester when he ordered the other boys around; and he was always very willing to be ordered around himself by Chester, for whose father he worked. But one day something happened that, taken altogether, astonished Jonas very much.

"Look here, Jonas, I'll tell you something if you will keep it to yourself," Chester said, taking him out behind the house. "I'll never say a word," Jonas answered. "Guess I know how to keep mum as well as you do."

"All right. Follow me, and I'll show you something."

They went into the stable, and climbed up on the haymow. In a barrel under the hay Chester had hidden away an old suit of clothing, a mask, and a worn-out beaver hat. These possessions he drew out, article by article, and exhibited.

"I'm going to have a high time to-night," he explained.

"You're gwine to the masquerade up at the school-house," said Jonas. "I know that was jes' what you was up to. I could tote you so."

"We're going to have a roaring lot of fun," Chester continued. "But I'm afraid mother won't let me out after dark."

That was the reason everything happened as it did. Chester's mother did not let him out that night until he had pleaded with her a long time, and it had grown late. In the meanwhile the idea had occurred to Jonas to put on the masquerade, and go to that party himself. If Chester could not go, he would not, of course, want all the fixings he had hidden; and Jonas believed he could borrow them an hour or two without anybody being the wiser.

"The fellows will think I'm Ches," he chuckled. "They'll never know the difference if I jes' cover my head and hole my tongue. I'll hab some fun, sure!"

His teeth chattered and he shook in his boots,—he was so nervous,—while he stood on the hay-mow and changed his clothes for the disguise. If Chester caught him he knew it would go hard with him. But he did not intend to let any one find out what he was doing. Out in the road he stopped, and reflected in the moonlight. There was Farmer Cole's apple orchard, which he would have to pass on the way to the school-house. He would never have a better chance, as long as he lived, to help himself to some of those apples. Whenever he had been in the orchard before he was always afraid some one would spy him, and know that he was Ludlow's colored boy. Now no one could tell who he was.

It must have been about the time Jonas was climbing over Farmer Cole's fence that Chester gained permission from his mother to go out, and made tracks for the stable to array himself for the evening's frolic. He scrambled on the hay-mow and made haste to get to the barrel; but when he got to it, of course, he soon was not in the best of tempers.

"It's that little nigger," he said, standing petrified and looking ferociously at the moonbeams filtering through a cobwebbed window. "That's just who it is,—that little nigger Jonas. Not a soul except him knew where those duds were; and he has either hidden them somewhere else, or taken them and gone to the party himself."

Chester searched here and there desperately a few moments, upsetting all the hens that had gone to roost, and frightening the horse and cow. He found Jonas's clothes smuggled in the corn-crib. All was plain to him then.

"I'll fix him!" he growled savagely, bundling up the clothes, and returning to the house with them.

Ten or fifteen minutes later, any one on the watch might have seen a very black negro boy stealing out the back door of Mr. Ludlow's residence; but no one would have been likely to guess that the boy was Chester himself. He had blackened his face with the shoe-brush, and put on Jonas's clothes. His straight, brown hair was concealed by an old fur cap, which he pulled down over his ears. He meant to go to the party disguised one way or another, and he meant to catch Jonas if he had gone there.

By this time Jonas's indiscretion threatened to bring dire disaster to him in more ways than one. Farmer Cole was after him also, and he carried in hand an oxgoad that had a brad in it.

"I'll teach you, boy, not to steal apples," he cried, chasing Jonas round and round the orchard. "I'll teach you, you young darkey, to be up to better tricks than such dishonest ones."

The mask and beaver hat had fallen off but Jonas held them in his hand, and ran with all his might. Farmer Cole knew him, and now he was in a fix, sure. He did not stop to think much, however; he threw himself over the fence, and dodged among an acre of stumps, until he escaped the old man and his goad. After that he crawled away to some bushes, where he rested and recovered his breath.

Chester looked for him in vain among the thirty or forty boys gathered in the one room of the old-fashioned school-house. They were all in masquerade of one sort or another,

and he could not easily make out who any one was. Jonas was not there, though, in his disguise. He was certain of that; but he expected he would make his appearance any moment, and he kept watch of the door.

"You keep watch, too, Dave," he said to one of his friends who had been told the secret. "When he comes in, we'll nab him before he knows where he is."

"Hold him against the wall, and I'll tie his hands behind him," Dave suggested. "Then we'll drag him outdoors," said Chester.

"And after that you can settle with him," added Dave.

While this arrangement was being made, Jonas happened to be standing in the rear of the school house eating an apple, and looking in at one of the windows. It had occurred to him that it would be best to wait a while and see what was going on before he ventured in among the white boys. They were having a good time; there could be no doubt about that. Shortly he discovered there was a colored boy among them,—a colored boy who was blacker than even he himself was; and—unless his eyes deceived him—that boy had on his clothes. Jonas dropped his apple half eaten, and moved nearer the window. He felt rather scared. How had that strange boy got those clothes? His hair almost uncurled and stood up straight the next instant, when he saw Farmer Cole rush in among the crowd, and seize that colored boy by the nape of the neck.

"Now, then, sonny," shouted Farmer Cole, "come along with me!"

"Let go of me. What are you doing?" Chester replied, resisting with all his strength.

"Come on, I say," and Farmer Cole dragged Chester outdoors before he could do anything to save himself.

In a few minutes everybody knew that he had been stealing apples. Chester was taken by surprise. He had helped himself to Farmer Cole's apples whenever he felt like it, but he had not been near the orchard more than two weeks. He did not suppose that any one, not even Jonas Popkin, suspected him.

"If I'd got my hands on you half an hour ago, when I was chasing you around those stumps, boy, I would shook the wind out of you," said Farmer Cole.

"I guess you've made a mistake, Mr. Cole," Chester answered. "I haven't been near your stump-field to-night."

"Tut, tut, boy, don't you try that game. You had a mask on and an old beaver hat, but I saw your face. And I followed you all the way up here to the schoolhouse."

They were walking down the road, followed by several boys, and Farmer Cole kept his grip on Chester's collar. Chester guessed, as soon as he heard about the mask and beaver hat, that Jonas had gone to the orchard instead of the school-house. It was Jonas who should be punished.

"It was Jonas Popkin, our colored boy, you chased," Chester asserted stoutly, refusing to go any farther.

"So you're not that boy, but you are blacked up to look like him?" Farmer Cole asked with some surprise, halting a moment. "Well, you are the boy I want all the same, black or white. I say you, and you can't get off that way."

Chester was maroed home to his father and mother, in spite of everything he could say. Jonas was in bed up in the attic then, but he could hear Farmer Cole's voice downstairs, and he knew something awful was taking place. By and by somebody crept up the stairs, and Jonas sat up in bed nearly scared out of his wits.

"Oh! I'll fix you to-morrow, Jonas Popkin," Chester whispered at the door by way of comfort. "You won't steal any more apples in a hurry."

"I ain't agwine to steal nuffin agin, neber," Jonas answered. "I ain't agwine to be like you any more. You better neber steal apples any more yourself."

Chester shut the door. He did not want to say anything more. After he got into bed, he lay awake half the night thinking.

Any one may guess what he was thinking about. His thoughts did not make him feel very manly the next day.

Multiplication vs. Addition.

I picked up one of the daily papers the other day, and read this item: "The Rounder dropped into the post-office yesterday to post a little billet to a maiden, and while buying his stamp saw a boy slowly counting a sheet of two-cent stamps. Any ordinary person, to be sure they were the right number, would have counted how many there were in the top row, counted the number of rows, multiplied, and got the total. Not so the boy. Patiently he told over every stamp on the sheet until he had ascertained there was just a hundred when he sighed for relief and trotted away."

Now, a boy who would waste time like that can never make his mark in this busy world. In doing any work we all want to do it the best way, but we must learn next how to do it the best way in the least time. We must learn to use the multiplication table in everything we do.

One afternoon this week I got into a car on the elevated road going up-town. As I stepped into the car I saw the top of a small felt hat between two of the cross seats; I took one of the seats across the aisle. On his knees was a bright-eyed newsboy about eleven or twelve years old. He was busily folding papers. Every paper was folded perfectly even, and carefully creased in the middle; after folding about two-thirds of what he had, he wrapped them in a piece of black oilcloth, but wrapped in such a way that he could easily get at them. The remainder were as carefully creased and folded and laid in a pile outside of the others.

"Why do you not put them inside with others?" I asked.

"Cause then I could not reach them so fast. I don't want 'em all to get wet. I'll keep the rest dry till these are gone," and he left the car whistling, going out into the fog and rain.

Another thing I noticed; before our train went out of the station, the down train came in with the front platform crowded with newsboys who were pushing and elbowing each other, and left the train yelling like young Comanches. The newsboy in our train looked up with a smile, and said, "Some of them fellows will get left."

"Why?" I asked.

"I'll sell most of my papers before them fellows gets them. I always get down early. Ye catch the fellows then that leaves their up-town cities early."

I feel pretty sure that boy will be more than a newsboy before he is much older. He was careful, prompt and alert. He would use the multiplication table in business instead of addition.—[Christian Union.

WINDFALLS FOR SAVAGES.

Thriving on the Misfortunes of Shipwrecked Sailors.

A few weeks ago the British vessel *Anglo India* was wrecked on the Formosan coast, and the natives who, on about a third of the big island, are still thorough savages in spite of the Chinese occupancy, flocked to the beach to collect their booty. Fourteen of the crew, fearing to fall into the hands of the savages, put off to sea in a boat and were lost. The others were taken captive, deprived of their clothing, and terribly maltreated. The plundering of the vessel was in progress when a Government boat came along, drove the natives into the forest, and killed three of them as a warning to the other pirates.

It is a lucky day for many a savage tribe when a wrecked vessel gives them a chance to exercise their thievish and murderous propensities. The fierce natives of the Andaman Islands have only just been taught through a long and bitter series of reprisals, that shipwrecked sailors are not providentially thrown in their way as targets for their arrows.

One of the greatest prizes ever taken from the ocean by uncivilized men, fell a few months ago into the hands of some of the Gilbert Islanders, and they have thus far been left in possession, as their good fortune involved no crime. The British ship *Rock Terrace* was abandoned about a year ago by her crew in the Pacific. She was supposed to be in a sinking condition, but, strange to say, she floated about for several months and finally brought her cargo of oil and general stores to one of the Gilbert Islands. The joy of the islanders knew no bounds when they found that the winds and waves had wafted them so bountiful a treasure. They unloaded the vessel, enriched themselves with the cargo, and the insurance company which meanwhile has paid \$125,000 to the owners will hardly look to the islanders for reimbursement.

The United States Government sent agents thousands of miles to reward the Chookchees of Behring Strait for their hospitality to the unfortunate crew of the burned steamer *Rodgers*, and those other dwellers by the Arctic ocean who saved the lives of a part of the Jeannette expedition. Thus the recognition of services rendered by uncivilized peoples to seafarers in distress, as well as the retribution visited upon others, is lessening the perils of sailors who are cast away in savage lands.

Probably the Eskimos of King William's Land do not know to this day what a chance they lost to win the world's favor and substantial rewards when they destroyed almost every vestige of the Franklin expedition, and used to kindle their fires the precious records that would have given us the story of that tragical voyage.

THE FATE OF AN AFRICAN KING.

The Downfall of Mwangi the Bloody.

The fate of King Mwangi, recently the bloodthirsty tyrant of Uganda, shows that speedy retribution can overtake cruelty and injustice even in the heart of pagan Africa. Almost the only person in the world to give him now a helping hand is the missionary Mackay, whom Mwangi often threatened with death and kept a prisoner for many months after he had slaughtered his Christian subjects and murdered Bishop Hannington.

This fallen king, who, a few months ago, numbered his army by many thousands and his subjects by millions, was, at last accounts, 300 miles from his country, virtually a prisoner in the hands of Arabs. He feared the Arabs would send him back to Uganda to be murdered, and so sent a message to Mackay, imploring him to come to Magu and take him away. "Take me anywhere you like," he said "or slay me if you like." He added that he would go to Europe if Mackay would take him there, for he had heard that a big king in great trouble (meaning Napoleon III.) had once been welcomed to England when driven out of his country.

Mr. Mackay, when he wrote, was about to start for Magu, in the hope of getting the fallen king away from the Arabs and removing him to a place of safety. "If the English send an expedition here," Mwangi used to say to Mackay. "I will kill you." "It becomes me," writes Mackay now, "to do all in my power to return good for evil." What a remarkable opportunity to show forth the teachings of his Master, and how nobly this humble missionary is improving it!

HOW IT FEELS TO BE EATEN.

Three Eminent Men Have Asserted That It Is Not Painful.

Sir Lyon Playfair recently related that he knew three men who escaped with their lives after being partially devoured by wild beasts. The first was Livingstone, the great African traveler, who was knocked on his back by a lion, which began to munch his arm. He asserted that he felt no fear or pain, and that his only feeling was one of intense curiosity as to which part of his body the lion would take next. The next was Rustem Pasha, now Turkish Ambassador in London. A bear attacked him and tore off part of his hand and part of his arm and shoulder. He also said that he had neither a sense of pain nor of fear, but that he felt excessively angry because the bear grunted with so much satisfaction in munching him. The third case is that of Sir Edward Bradford, an Indian Officer, now occupying a high position in the Indian Office. He was seized in a solitary place by a tiger, which held him firmly behind his shoulder with one paw and then deliberately devoured the whole of his arm, beginning at the end and ending at the shoulder. He was very positive that he had no sensation of fear, and thinks that he felt a little pain when the fangs went through his hand, but is certain that he felt none during the munching of his arm.

The Railroad Commissioners of Massachusetts have made a report to the Legislature, in which they strongly recommend the heating of cars with steam from the engine. They were inclined to think that the danger of the pipes bursting, by reason of inability to control the pressure from the engine, was very remote indeed. They believed that the advantages of the system were so obvious that the companies would in time adopt it without compulsory legislation. Some companies, however, are opposing the reform strenuously.

How the Romans Enjoyed Life.

The lavish expenditure of the Romans on the cena, the great meal of the day, was often fabulous. Vitellius is actually reported to have squandered 400 aesteria, about £3,228, on his daily supper, though surely this must be a monstrous exaggeration! The celebrated feast to which he invited his brother Lucius cost 3,000 aesteria, or £40,350. Suetonius relates that it consisted of 2,000 different dishes of fish and 7,000 of fowls, and this did not exhaust the bill of fare. His daily food was luxurious and varied beyond precedent. The deserts of Lydia, the shores of Spain, and the waters of the Carpathian seas were diligently searched to furnish his table with dainties, while the savage wilds of Britain had to bear their part in replenishing his larder. Had he reigned long, Josephus says that he would have exhausted the wealth of the Roman Empire itself. Rufus Verus, another of these worthies, was equally profuse in the extravagance of his suppers. It is said that a single entertainment, to which only a dozen guests were invited, cost 6,000,000 aesteria—6,000 sesteria, that is—nearly £48,500. History relates that his whole life was passed eating and drinking in the voluptuous retreats of Daphne or at the luxurious banquets of Antioch. So profuse, indeed, was the extravagance of those times that to entertain an Emperor was to face almost certain ruin; one dish alone at the table of Hologabalus is said to have cost about £4,000 of our money. No wonder these imperial feasts were lengthened out for hours, and that every artifice, often revolting in the extreme, was used to prolong the pleasure of eating, or that Philoxenus should have wished that he had the throat of a crane with a delicate palate all the way down. One does not like to associate the name of Julius Cæsar with habits of low gluttony that would disgrace a prize fighter, and yet, if our memory does not play us false, even he did not disdain to take a morsel to return to his banquets with a keen appetite.—[The National Review.

An Insulted Bridegroom.

"Is this the editor?"
"Yes, sir. What can I—?"
"My name, sir, is Grumpy. I was married last week."

"Let me offer my congratulations, Mr. Grumpy. I am glad to see you. By the way, we published in this morning's paper quite a full account of your wedding."

"Yes, sir. I saw it."

"You have come, perhaps, to order some extra cop—"

"I have come, sir, for personal satisfaction. Your reporter asked for photographs of Mrs. Grumpy and myself to use in writing up the wedding, sir."

"Yes. Didn't he—?"

"He said he would have engravings made from them and run them in with the article he wrote about the affair."

"Yes. Was there any—?"

"And some lop-eared, wopper-jawed, bow-legged gourd-head of a printer in this office mixed up the portraits, sir. You published this morning, sir, in your advertising columns as a Tennessee barber who had suffered for fifteen years with a lame back and a sore throat, and had been cured by twenty-seven bottles of Dr. Billjaw's Compound of Hankus Pankus; and you run the portrait of that infernal Tennessee barber in your account of my wedding, sir. You can stop my paper, sir. And now, will you show me the typesetting department of this office? I am on the war-path this morning, sir, bigger than a grizzly bear, and I am going to find the man that mixed those odds and reorganizes him from the ground up!"

In the excitement and confusion that followed some one hastily turned in a fire alarm, and it took the entire department and a squad of police to quench the fiery young man.

English Gall.

The following three adve t e r e s recently appeared in an English paper:

WANTED, an able-bodied man at country rectory, willing to make himself generally useful; must have thorough knowledge of chickens, pigs, and understand milking; must be able to drive horses and groom them; ring the church bells, dig graves, be cheerful mourner, and not object to carry coffin; where parlor maid is kept.

A PIOUS YOUNG MAN desires to be received into a respectable family, where the excellence of his example and superior morality might be considered as an equivalent for board and lodgings.

ADoption. Youth, 19, highly respectable family, gentlemanly appearance, is willing to be adopted; reasons and particulars on application.

He Knew How it Was.

"Miss Silkington dresses very handsomely, doesn't she?" remarked a young lady to Bliven.

"Yes, I believe she does."

"You should have seen her yesterday evening. Her jewelry is gorgeous."

"Is it?"

"Perfectly magnificent. She had four large, handsome diamonds—"

"Yes, I know," said Bliven, absent-mindedly, "she drew one card and you held up three aces and bet them till she called you, and showed that she'd caught the other one. I know how it is."

What She Knew About Him.

"What do any of you know about Washington, children?" asked a teacher in the school on Thursday.

One bright-faced youngster put up his hand.

"Well, Willie, what do you know about Washington?"

"He was the first President of the United States," replied the boy.

There was silence then for quite a minute. This seemed to have exhausted the stock of information until at length a triumphant smile about a little girl's mouth broke out on the general area of perplexed faces, like a splash of sunshine on a muddy pool. A little hand went up.

"Well, Annie, what can you tell us about Washington?" said the teacher, with an encouraging smile.

"Please, ma'am, he's dead," answered the little girl.

French biography has just received an addition in a study of "Francis the First and His Times," by Madame C. Coignet.