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TWO CURIOUS FISH.

There are curious creatures on the earth and in the air, but for extremes of beauty and ugliness the sea appears to eclipse them both. In the picture two of the odd looking specimens of fish are represented. The sea raven is an acanthopteros fish, or one with bony and prickly fins, and is described as one of the ugliest of the bullhead or sculpin family. The head is flattened, rough and spiny, the pectorals are large and wing-like, advancing far under the throat, and with no free rays; ventrals under the pectorals, consisting of a spine and three or four soft rays; the first dorsal deeply notched, and all the fin rays simple. The head and jaws are furnished with numerous skinny branching filaments, which with the spines and huge mouth render the fish anything but pleasing in appearance. The typical species is the common sea raven, also known as the Acadian bullhead and deep-water sculpin. It attains a length of two feet and a weight of four or five pounds. The colors present every shade of dark brown, blood red, pinkish purple, and yellowish brown, with various markings and bands; and yellowish white below; the head is large, about the quarter of the whole length, with enormous gape and hideous appearance; the whole body above the lateral line is granulated and thickly studded with tubercles; the first three rays of the first dorsal are longest and with the other rays of this fin are fringed at the end. It is not unfrequently taken on hooks by cod fishermen in deep water in Nova Scotia, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and near the New England and New York coasts, especially around the ledges of Massachusetts bay. Like the land raven, it is omnivorous and voracious, acting the part of a useful scavenger in removing decaying matter.

The toad fish is so named from the large head, wide gape, usually naked skin, and disgusting appearance; it is also called frog fish and oyster fish. The head is flattened and wider than the body; head, lips and cheeks provided with numerous fleshy appendages; body generally scaleless. They hide in the sand and mud of salt water and occur in both hemispheres, preying on fish. There are more than a dozen species, of which one of the best known is the grunting toad fish, found in the seas of the East Indies. The skin is naked, smooth, soft and spongy; the head and jaws with numerous cutaneous appendages; the color is brownish above, marbled with darker; below white; fins white with brown bands. It is eight to thirteen inches long and is said to be eaten at Bombay. It received its specific name from its making a grunting noise like a pig from the expulsion of air by the muscular air bladder through the mouth. The common American toad fish is much like the East

Indian, with stronger teeth, more prominent dorsal spines, and rather darker colors; it is eight inches to a foot long, light brown, marbled with black, and the fins with black lines; the body is covered with a copious viscid secretion; the mouth very large, and the chin and cheeks with numerous fleshy appendages. It is found from Maine to the Gulf of Mexico and the West Indies, on the New England coast usually in ponds and lagoons connected with the sea, in muddy shoal water, or under eel grass and stones. The disgusting appearance of this fish, its slimy body, goggle eyes and immense mouth, have generally prevented the use of

would glide into place with comparative ease. There hung the great frame, with a crowd of anxious men below straining every muscle, but all in vain. They could neither raise nor lower it, and to fly was instant death.

"Lift, men, for your lives!" shouted the master-builder, and again they bent to their useless task. The frame was settling instead of rising.

Three men appeared on the brow of the hill, and heard the call for help. But they saw the peril, and passed by on the other side. The women of the place gathered with white and tearful faces, as they watched their

awakened souls be saved or lost? Mothers and sisters, a great deal depends on you. How sad to hear the word, "You knew your duty, but you did it not." And now those dear ones are gone forever. It will not do to trifle or idle when this moment of decision has come. We must put forth every atom of spiritual strength; we must pray as we would on a burning steamship in mid-ocean; we must speak earnest, loving, solemn words of entreaty, which show the depth of our feeling for souls in danger of perishing. We must abstain from many things lawful at other times, but which now would lead the soul to cast off its anxiety. A pleasant sleigh-ride, an evening party, and even less diversions, have cost a soul. Walk softly, and be much alone in prayer. Then go forth hopefully about your accustomed duties, and doubtless "you shall come again with rejoicing, bringing your sheaves with you."—*American Messenger.*

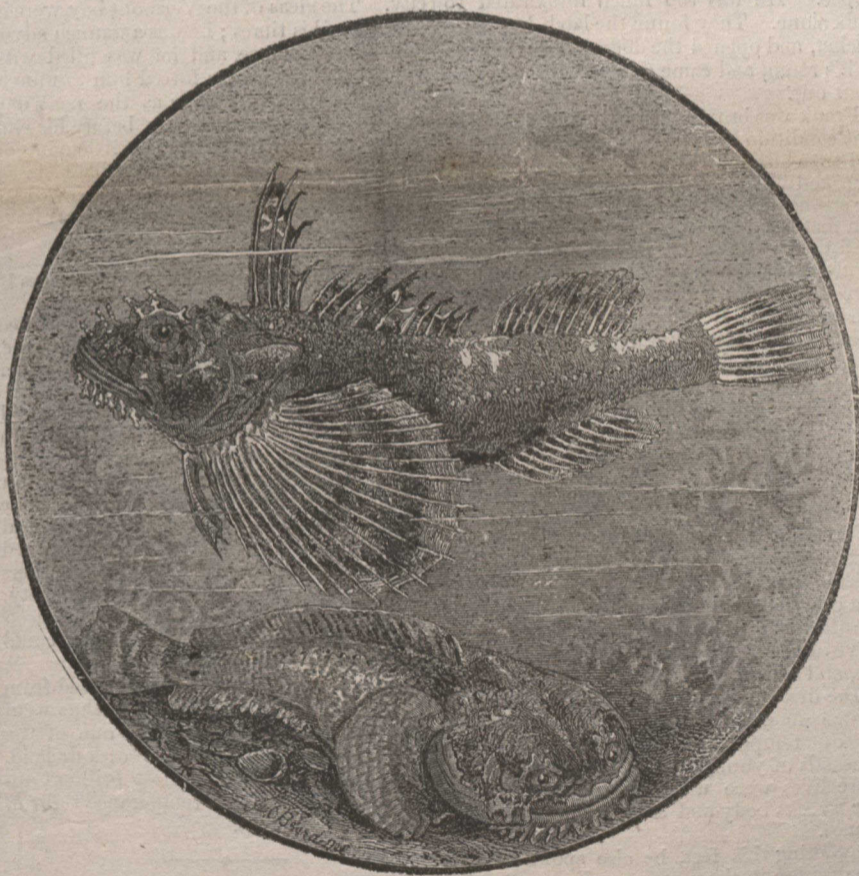
"SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES."

A gifted lady who devotes herself to Bible study, and who has wonderful power in unfolding the hidden treasure of the word, tells how new light came to her upon the word search: She was in Sweden, and though she knew but little of the language of that country, yet she liked to read her chapter in Swedish every day. One morning she came upon the words which stand in our translation, "Search the Scriptures," and found that the first word in that passage was one which we render in English "ransack."

Ransack is a very strong word. It means to search up and down, high and low, from right to left, and in the corners and by-places! It means to search with the purpose to find; and he who searches the Scriptures thus will not fail of his reward.

This is what we all need to do—ransack the Bible! It is full of hidden treasure. We shall not find it if we search with a lazy, half-formed purpose; but if we set ourselves in earnest to ransack the Bible for our food of life, oh, how it will open to us, and how strong and courageous we shall become.—*Kind Words.*

DYING OF JOY.—One of the strongest instances of affection in dogs is related in the *Memoires du Marquess Langallery*. The marquess had been two years in the army, when, returning home, a favorite dog which had been left came to meet him in the court yard and recognized him as if he had only been absent two days, leaped upon his neck, and died of joy at having found him again.



THE SEA RAVEN AND THE TOAD FISH.

its flesh as food though it is said to be delicate, palatable, and wholesome; it is a savage biter, and capable of inflicting severe wounds. Other species are found in the Indian and African seas, and some larger ones with soft scales on the Brazilian Coast.

HOW THE BENT WAS RAISED.

A great mill was going up in Western New York, and when the last and heaviest "bent" was to be raised, the strength of the men was found to be insufficient. They could not raise it past what the builders call "the pinch in the bent." After that it

sons and husbands, and when the call came to them to "help lift, if they would see them alive that evening," how eagerly they lent their strength to the work!

The giant frame rose inch by inch, the critical point was passed, and soon a grand shout and hammer-stroke told that all was well. Some were laid aside for weeks by that day's overstrain, but all hearts rejoiced, because all were saved.

Such a moral crisis often comes in a church or community. A spiritual "bent" seems poised in a balance, and more than human lives are at stake. Shall these precious,