

THE GIANT SNAPPING TURTLE.

In the accompanying engraving is represented the North American giant snapping turtle (*Tryonyx ferus*). It attains a weight of about 60 to 80 lbs., and specimens nearly six feet in length have been frequently caught. The back is of dark slate blue color and covered with numerous yellow and reddish dots. The belly is white and the head covered with dark spots. A light band connects the eyes and descends on both sides along the neck to the shoulders. The chin, feet, and tail are marbled white; the iris of the eye is of a bright yellow color.

This turtle inhabits principally, according to Holbrook, the Savannah and Alabama rivers, also the northern lakes, and even the Hudson River; but it is missing in all rivers entering the Atlantic between the mouth of the Hudson and that of the Savannah. Into the great lakes of the North the turtle was probably brought from the great Southern rivers, in which it is indigenous, by the great inundations, by which the Illinois River is brought in connection with Lake Michigan, the Peters River, and Red River. Into the State of New York it probably emigrated through the Erie Canal, as before the completion of the latter it was unknown in New York waters.

In most of these rivers, especially those of the South, this turtle is very common. In clear, quiet weather they appear in large numbers at the surface or on the rocks in the water sunning themselves. When watching for prey, they hide under roots or stones, and lie motionless, till some small fish, lizard, or even a small water bird, approaches its hiding place. Then the somewhat elongated neck darts out suddenly; it never misses its aim. In an instant the prisoner is swallowed, and the turtle resumes its old position to repeat the same operation, when opportunity offers. They are also great enemies of the young alligators when these are just hatched. Thousands of them are devoured by the voracious turtles, which again fall prey to such of the grown up alligators as were happy enough to escape.

In May the females select sandy spots along the shore, mounting hills of considerable size if neces-

sity requires it. Here the eggs are deposited. Their calcareous shells are very fragile, more so than those of the eggs of other sweet water turtles. Very little is known of the early life of the young, which are hatched in June.

Among all North American turtles this species is, for culinary purposes, the most valuable, and it is therefore extensively hunted. They are either shot or caught in nets and with the hook. Grown

little Tommy Gray, as he was walking in the garden along with his father.

"Why do you wish him killed?" said his father.

"Oh! because he is such an ugly thing and I am afraid he will eat up everything in the garden. You know we killed several bugs and worms here last evening. I am sure this toad is much worse than they.

"We killed the bugs and

him and see what he will do."

Tommy looked about, and soon found three bugs which he placed near the toad, and then stood back a short distance to see the result. Soon the bugs began to move away. The toad saw them, and made a quick forward motion of his head. He darted out his tongue and instantly drew them, one by one into his mouth. Tommy clapped his hands with delight.

"How can such a clumsy-looking fellow use his head and tongue so nimbly?" said Tommy; and he ran off to find more food for him.

The next evening Tommy went again into the garden and soon found the object of his search ready for his supper. At first the toad was shy, but he soon learned to sit still while Tommy placed his food near him.

Then he would dart out his tongue and eat the bugs while Tommy was close by. Finding that the boy did not hurt him, he soon lost all fear, and became a great pet. Tommy named him Humpy, and says he would not have him killed now for anything.—*Ex.*

A PLAN IN LIFE.

"What is your plan in life, Neddie?" I asked a small boy, turning from his big brothers, who were talking about theirs, to which he and I had been listening; "what is yours, Neddie?"

"I am not big enough for a plan yet," said Neddie; "but I have a purpose."

"That is good; it is not every one who has a purpose. What is your purpose, Neddie?"

"To grow up a good boy, so as to be a good man, like my father," said Neddie. And by the way he said it, it was plain he meant it. His father was a noble Christian man, and Neddie could not do better than follow in his steps. A boy with such a purpose will not fail of his mark.

—*Rand of Hope Review.*

THE love of God is the source of every right action and feeling, so it is the only principle which necessarily ennobles the love of our fellow-creatures.—*Hannah More.*

PRAYER should be the key of the day and the lock of the night.—*Bishop Berkeley.*



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specimens must be handled with care, as they defend themselves desperately, and can inflict dangerous wounds.—*Ex.*

TOMMY LEARNS ABOUT TOADS.

"Oh, papa, see what a great ugly toad! Do get a stick and kill him before he gets away," said

worms because they were destroying our flowers and vegetables. This poor toad never destroys a plant of any kind about the place; besides, he is one of our best friends. These insects that are doing so much harm in our gardens are just what he uses for his food. I have no doubt that he kills more of them every day than we did last evening. If you can find a live bug, place it near

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