

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY JULY 3, 1897.

## PLAYING WITH SNAKES.

THEY ARE GENTLE AND AFFECTIONATE SAYS THE OWNER.

Rattlesnakes are much maligned and misrepresented creatures, if the story is true. How he manages the Dangerous Reptiles—A Barrel of Snakes.

If young Leroy George is right, the rattlesnake is the most misrepresented and maligned creature on earth. He is a young man from San Diego county, where he has spent all his life on a ranch, blue-eyed and frank-faced, and thinks no more of letting a dozen rattlesnakes climb all over him than another would of playing with a pet poodle. He says snakes are just as capable of feeling and showing affection and gratitude as any other animal. He has a barrel full of rattlesnakes, an even 128, and for the last week he has been showing how much they think of him.

He kept his snakes in a room over in Pasadena, which had in the centre a rough board inclosure about five feet by three and waist high. In that he stood bare-headed, in his shirt sleeves, surrounded by his snakes, apparently the happiest, serenest family in existence. The mass of reptiles crawled and wriggled all about him, covering the floor everywhere, winding about his legs, twisting themselves about his back and arms and neck. If a visitor asked to see the poison fangs of any particular serpent George took the snake in his hands, pried open its mouth with his fingers, and with a toothpick showed the deadly fangs curled back against the poison sacs in the roof of the mouth.

One day a spectator doubted that there were 128 rattlers, and the boy with his foot carefully scraped the snakes away from one corner of the pen and, picking them up one by one, dropped them into the cleared space counting as he did so. He plunged his bare hands fearlessly into the mass of crawling bodies, waving heads, and rattling tails, seizing hold of them anywhere, by neck, body, head, or tail, as was most convenient. If any of them tried to crawl out of the corner where they were placed he struck them gently over the head with his open palm and made them stay where they were put. He handled them as if they were so many newly hatched chickens and paid not the least attention to their protests of open, hissing mouths and buzzing rattles. Some of the spectators could not endure the sight, but hurried away in alarm. The next thing the boy did was to sit down on the floor he had cleared and lean his head and shoulders against the two-foot pile of hissing rattlers in the corner, somewhat as Kipling's Mogli supported himself against the coils of the python when the two held a confidential talk. A half dozen snakes slid out from the wriggling mass and George picked them up, unbuttoned his shirt and thrust them into his bosom, where they coiled up against his flesh to warm themselves. Others thrust out their heads from the pile behind him and rubbed their necks caressingly against his face. He wound them around his neck and arms, and they seemed to like it. He picked up a score of them and held them in his lap and stuffed others into his pockets. Then he teased them in his lap by poking one finger into their faces until they seemed in a frenzy. The serpents buzzed their rattles and hissed, and the others, joining in the excitement, sounded their alarms until the noise from the rattling was so loud that the spectators had to raise their voices to enable one another to hear. After he had roused them to fury he began soothing and petting them. They stopped rattling, shut their mouths, and snuggled up to him in calm contentment.

Presently George unwound the snakes from his neck and arms and legs, emptied his pockets and bosom, brushed them out of his lap, and stood up beside the boards of the inclosure and chatted with the lookers on. As he talked the rattlers crawled over his feet wound themselves around his legs, and climbed to his waist. And he took out a bag of tobacco and a package of cigarette papers, rolled and lighted a cigarette, and began smoking, as careless the reptiles as if they had not been there. Occasionally, if one stuck its head out over the top of the pen, he would strike it with his open palm and make it go down again. 'There's no mystery about my influence over these rattlesnakes,' he said, 'I've found out that a snake is as gentle and affectionate as a rabbit, if it gets acquainted with you and knows that you are not going to hurt it. Anybody, any of you

people here, would do just as I do with these snakes if you had the nerve to do it and would let the snakes get used to you first. I am attached to my rattlers, and no two of them are just the same. Here's this one, now,' and he picked up a long slender snake, and wound it around his neck. 'She's just loves to be petted like this, and I do believe she'd fight for me, if it was necessary. She slept under a foot of snakes one night last week, and I think the weight injured her a little, for she doesn't seem well since. I've been doctoring her a little since, and she really seems to appreciate what I do for her. She's very intelligent, and if you just look into her eyes you can see plainly that she is kind, gentle, and affectionate.'

Two big seven foot rattlers had had a misunderstanding and were waving their heads back and forth, darting out their tongues and buzzing their tails at each other. George struck each one gently with the palm of his hand, separated them, and, after petting each a moment, put them in different corners of the pen. Entirely mollified, they ceased their signals of war and began crawling in and out among the other snakes, as peaceful as lambs.

'Snakes often coil and try to strike me,' the young man went on, before I get acquainted with them. But I can get on good terms with any of them in an hour or two. How do I do it? Oh, just petting and coaxing and caressing them, the same as you would win the confidence of a dog that was afraid of you. Of course, they are likely to use their weapons until they find out I am not going to hurt them, and until they get confidence in me I have to look out for myself. But there's nothing underhanded about a snake. If he's mad and means mischief he will coil and rattle like the devil, his mouth will be open and his eyes will snap. It always shows plainly in their eyes. Then I either snatch him by the neck or jump out of striking distance, which is only about four feet.

'I had always felt just as nearly every one does about snakes up to one day last winter, when I caught two rattlesnakes at a mining camp near Yuma. I caught them with a forked stick and put them into a wire cage' meaning to kill them the next day for their skins. Early the next morning I was awakened by one of the snakes crawling slowly across my neck. It's the solemn truth, I think I nearly died of fright. I kept perfectly still and held my breath for what seemed like hours, though it was really only a few seconds, while that snake dragged its entire length across my neck. Then it crawled under my blanket, coiled up on my chest, and went to sleep. One of the burrows had gnawed at the wire cage until the door came open, the snake had crawled out, and, crawling across me, had decided that under my blanket was a nice, warm place to go to sleep in, for a snake does like to be warm and comfortable as well as any cat you ever saw.

'As soon as I had time to think and get my breath again I grabbed the thing around the neck, jumped out of my blanket and ran out of the tent. Then I didn't know what to do, for I was afraid to let go, for fear it would strike me. But I knew it couldn't hurt me as long as I had hold of its neck even if it tail was switching and slashing round my legs and body. So I just kept hold and examined it good all over, and at last I began to try to make friends with it. By that time I had got over my scare and didn't feel afraid anymore. I coaxed and petted it and gathered its body up into my lap and covered it up with a blanket, and at the end of two hours that snake and I were good friends. I've got it with me yet and it has never offered to bite me.'

'Well, that experience taught me that it is just as easy to make snakes your friends as to have them your enemies, and I've never been afraid of them since. I stand here and haul them around all day and never think about their being dangerous unless I see some one in the room turn pale with fright. People tell me a hundred times a day that I'm bound to be langed to death some day, but I don't believe in chances that way are nearly as great as are those of the ordinary man who travels around in any region where rattlers live. I am very careful never to hurt or frighten one of my snakes, and I believe that they are all fond of me and have confidence in me, and have no more intention of hurting me than I have of hurting them.'

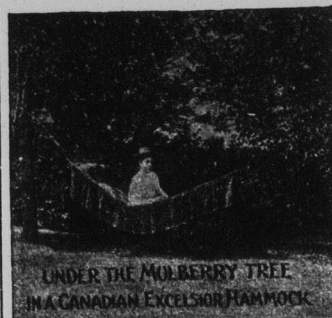
All Tastes Satisfied.  
New Clerk—'I notice some of these barrels of apples marked X and some Z. Are they different kinds?'  
Dealer—'No; same kind, but differently packed. Some customers want a barrel opened at the bottom and some at the top.'—N. Y. Weekly.

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With Pillow and one Spreader, \$1.00.

Canvas Weave, with one Spreader, \$1.25; with Pillow and one Spreader, \$1.35.

Canvas Weave, with one Pillow and one Spreader, \$1.60 and \$1.80; with Valance, Pillow and one Spreader, \$2.75; with Valance, Pillow, Spreader, and two Wooden Bars, \$3.15; do., extra large, \$4.00.

Child's Hammock, with two Curved Spreaders, 90c.

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BRASS BANDS AND A HOLIDAY.  
Funerals in Greece Not Generally Occasions of Visible Mourning.

Funerals are far less funeral in sunny Hellas than in northern climes. The typical Greek funeral of the poorer sort is led by six or eight men, bearing between them an open coffin, in which the face of the corpse is fully visible to passers upon the street. If the bearers are in the Greek national costumes—red caps, white kilts, knife plaited, and long white stockings, with embroidered gaiters—they certainly look rather gay for mourners. If a hearse is used it is not a black affair with heavy plumes, but as gay with gilding and red and white paint as a circus wagon and so arranged that the face of the corpse is visible. If the family of the dead man be rich enough to afford it, a brass band accompanies the procession, besides the group of Greek priests walking by the coffin. There is always a crowd of on-lookers. Public notice of deaths and funerals is always given in the towns by printed cards, posted on the church doors, lamp posts and dead walls.

In Athens the funeral of an eminent man is always made the excuse for something like a public festival. On such occasions the state hearse is brought out, drawn by four white horses. This hearse is a high affair, made in close imitation of a Corinthian temple. The elaborately carved columns are gay with gilding, the roof is white and gold. On every possible pretext there is a military parade in honor of the distinguished departed, and the brass band is never omitted. When the late Austrian minister, Baron Koszick, was buried there was a parade in his honor of several regiments of Greek infantry, a lot of marines from the Greek navy, Austrian sailors and attaches; music was furnished by Greek and Austrian military bands, the former of which wound up the day by playing popular airs in the Place de la Constitution to an audience of several thousand. Fully half the population of the city were gathered in dense masses along the wide academy avenue, and saw the parade, in which the gay frontier troops in their Albanian dress were the most conspicuous feature, and next to them were the beautiful floral designs borne upon long poles by men of European dress. The king was present in a plain carriage driven by a coachman in silver and blue uniform, but he attracted little attention. Athenians can see their king almost any day.—Paila-polis Press.

"SAY SO AS WE GO ALONG."  
It Would Lessen Difficulties to Have Funerals When Alive.

If folks could have their funerals when they are alive and well and struggling along, what a help it would be! sighed Aunt Jerusha. She had just returned from a funeral, and Mrs. J. B. Lummis pictures her in Zion's Herald as wondering how 'poor Miss' Brown would have felt if she could have heard what the minister said. 'Poor soul, she never dreamed they set so much by her!'

'Miss' Brown got discouraged,' continued Aunt Jerusha. 'Ye see, Deacon Brown, he'd got a way of blaming everything onto her. I don't suppose the deacon meant it,—twas just his way,—but it's awful wearing. When things wore out or broke he acted just as if Miss' Brown did it herself on purpose; and they all caught it, like the measles or the whooping cough.'

'And the minister a-telling how the deacon brought his young wife here when 'twasn't nothing but a wilderness, and how patiently she bore hardship, and what a good wife she'd been! Now the minister wouldn't have known anything about that if the deacon hadn't told him. Dear! dear! If he'd only told Miss' Brown herself what he thought, I do believe he might have saved the funeral.'

'And when the minister said how the

children would miss their mother, seemed as though they couldn't stand it, poor things!'

'Well, I guess it is true enough; Miss' Brown was always doing for some of them. When they was singing about sweet rest in heaven, I couldn't help thinking that that was something Miss' Brown would have to get used to, for she never had none of it here.'

'She'd have been awful pleased with the flowers. They was pretty, and no mistake. Ye see the deacon wa'n't never willing for her to have a flower-bed. He said 'twas enough prattling sight to see good cabbages a-growing; but Miss' Brown always hankered after sweet-smelling things, like roses and such.'

'What did you say, Levi? 'Most time for supper? Well, land's sake! so it is. I must have got to meditating. I've been a-thinking, Levi, you needn't tell the minister anything about me. If the pancakes and the pumpkin-pies are good, you just say so as we go along. It aint best to keep everything laid up for funerals.'

SAN FRANCISCO IS SINKING.  
California's Chief City Will soon Reach the Sea Level.

The whole peninsula on which San Francisco stands has been and is gradually sinking down to sea level,' said Professor Andrew C. Lawson, the retiring president of the University of California Scientific Association, while delivering his farewell address before that body recently at Berkeley. The subject of the lecture was 'The Flooding of the Golden Gate.'

'Nearly all parts of the earth's surface show the phenomena of uplift or depression,' said Professor Lawson. 'Movements of this kind are either continental or orogenic. It is necessary to have in mind the criteria of these two movements. The criteria of the uplift are found in the presence of terraces and sharply shaped canyons. The criteria of depression are shown when deltas are built up at the mouths of rivers, when the sea floods into the valleys. Some time this depression continued to such a degree that mountains become islands, sinking, as it were, to their knees in the water. Greece is such a mountainous region up to its knees in the sea.'

'From Puget Sound to Behring Sea we have a depressed coast. The shore from the Straits of Fuca to Cape Mendocino shows evidence of uplift and also slight depression afterward. From Cape Mendocino to Russian River there has been a constant uplift. But from this point to the Bay of Monterey the region after having been elevated has been marked by a great sag. It is to that sag that we owe the Bay of San Francisco, Bolinas Bay, Drake's Bay and Tomales Bay. They are stream valleys invaded by the waters of

the ocean. This fact is very noticeable in Lake Merced. It is clearly a valley formed by juncture of several streams. The lake had been invaded by the sea and now its bottom is ten feet below sea level.'

'The phenomena of depression are also seen at Richardson's Bay and at San Rafael and Napa. The river valleys are filling up and making tidal marshes. More positive evidence is found in the swamp material in the Oakland estuary, taken twenty feet below the tide. The bay has been invaded by the sea and flooded the river valleys.'

'All this subsidence is of comparatively recent geological change and may go deeper. I am sure of the downward movement at the present time. It is hard to catch it on the move. Probably the whole of the San Francisco peninsula is going down as the maximum effect of the great sag that made the Golden Gate at San Francisco.'—San Francisco Bulletin.

HOW HE WAS FOUND OUT.  
He Cheated the Minister Who Afterwards Got Even With Him.

The way of the transgressor has many a pitfall. A clergyman who had officiated at a 'fashionable' wedding was astonished to receive at the hands of the best man an envelope containing a very meagre fee. Worse than that, it appeared that the sexton and the organist, who had been put to the trouble of several rehearsals, had also been treated shabbily. So says the Detroit Free Press, which proceeds to tell an interesting story of how the matter terminated:

Sometime afterward the sexton, while giving the church a cleansing, found behind a pew cushion some fragments of paper. Some one had torn up a note. He passed the pieces to the rector, who happened to be present, and he putting them together discovered that the note had been from the bridegroom to the best man, instructing him to pay such and such amounts to the clergyman, the organist and the sexton. These amounts were really liberal.

Now, then, the mystery was explained; and the minister, righteously indignant, wrote to the best man, who was cashier of a bank, calling upon him to set matters straight.

The cashier replied promptly, enclosing the sums which he had kept back, and begging that nothing more should be said about the transaction.

At first the clergyman was inclined to let the matter rest; but he thought to himself that a thief is a thief, and has no business to be handling other people's money; and so thinking, he felt bound to inform the bank officials of his discovery. They were surprised, but began at once an investigation of the cashier's accounts, and had not gone very far before they came upon proof that he had for some time been engaged in systematic robbery of the bank's funds.

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## Pistols and Pestles.

The duelling pistol now occupies its proper place, in the museum of the collector of relics of barbarism. The pistol ought to have beside it the pestle that turned out pills like bullets, to be shot like bullets at the target of the liver. But the pestle is still in evidence, and will be, probably, until everybody has tested the virtue of

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