

come up and see if she could answer their puzzles.

'I'll be up in fifteen or twenty minutes, Rod,' she said. 'Meantime try my conundrum while you wait: "What is it that one must lose before he can keep?"'

'Worse and worse!' cried the boy. 'We'll never get these three untangled.'

But when Mrs. Martin had put off her kitchen apron and put on her thimble again, she announced her readiness to have the conundrums submitted to her. Rodman read his out in a tone of triumph, not expecting Blake's mother to succeed when Blake, the champion guesser, had failed. "What is it that you must give before you can keep?"

'Your word, I think,' said the lady, smiling. 'At least, I know when you give your word you are expected to keep it.'

'Why, of course!' cried Blake. 'What a goose I was not to see that! Now try mine, mother. "What is that which you cannot get until it is taken from you?"'

Rodman's eyes glowed with eagerness. 'It took me a good while to guess that,' said Mrs. Martin. 'I was about to give it up, when it suddenly occurred to me that a photograph had to be "taken from you" before you could get it.'

Both boys shouted with glee. 'Now it only remains for you to guess your own, mother,' said Blake. 'We couldn't.'

'Ah,' said Mrs. Martin, 'I hoped you would; for mine came from the Bible. Don't you remember that our Lord says, "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it?"'

'But all Christians don't die at the stake,' objected Rodman.

'No, boys; but all true Christians must lose their own sinful lives before they can have the eternal life, which is the gift of God through faith in his Son. This is the blessed conundrum which I want you to spend your lives trying to understand.'

Sea Lions in California.

(S. U. Holder, in the New York 'Observer'.)

No tourist or stranger in San Francisco would think of leaving the city without having seen the far-famed Seal Rocks; in fact they are generally the first among the local attractions visited, and one is quite certain of finding as many native as foreign enthusiasts watching and enjoying the movements of the sea lions and their surroundings, especially if the day be a holiday, when crowds of San Franciscans gather at the Cliff House, which is built on the bluff directly opposite the rocks, or on the sands below.

These rocks, which are situated at Point Lobos, the southern portion of the Golden Gate, and entrance to the harbor, about seven miles from the business centre of San Francisco, are but one hundred or so yards from the shore, so that even without a glass one can plainly distinguish the curious inhabitants of this cluster of isolated crags.

How long the sea lions have occupied this locality is not known, but there is a legend that the early discoverers of upper California heard their barking when a long distance from land, and fearing they were approaching a rocky shore, would not venture further in until the fog had lifted. In former times there were thousands of these animals upon these rocks,

which were being so rapidly depleted in numbers that a few years ago the State appealed to Government for their protection, and now a heavy fine is imposed upon anyone destroying or capturing a sea lion. At certain seasons the colony consists of six or seven hundred individuals, of all sizes and ages, from the soft-furred, year-old baby to the rough-coated old patriarch weighing nearly or quite fifteen hundred pounds, and generally two or three hundred may be seen during the greater portion of the day.

Nearly all the large males, the old residents of the rocks, have received the names of prominent Americans, and never apparently lose their identity with the proprietors or employees of the Cliff House, notwithstanding their yearly migration to the Farallone Islands. Among them one sees Brigham Young and his numerous wives, General Sherman and other favorite generals of our Civil War, Grover Cleveland, a new comer of goodly proportions, and Ben Butler, the apparent king of the rookery, named by Horace Greeley, when on a visit to this coast thirty or more years ago, who commands the attention of not only his island subjects, but the observers on shore.

At first glance, and from the unfamiliar and discordant sounds, heard above the roar of the surf long before one reaches the beach, the visitor immediately assumes that this is a very quarrelsome and ferocious community before him; but such is not the case, and although occasionally some great burly fellow who covets the highest point of the crags, or the sunniest nook for a sun-bath, thinking it his by right of size, has a slight altercation with the weaker usurper, perhaps removing the latter by pushing him off into the water. On the whole they are, notwithstanding their incessant 'fussing' and growling and grunting, not unpeaceable citizens, and their actual contests of infrequent occurrence, except during the breeding season, when they are very savage and in constant warfare with each other. Late in May or the first of June, the greater number of the herds disappear, migrating to the Farallones, some thirty miles out to sea, where vast quantities of sea lions from various portions of the California coast, congregate on these barren islands, and remain until the young are born and old enough to undertake the long sea trip. There is only one instance known of a baby seal having been born on Seal Rocks.

The young cubs are fractious little creatures, and at first are inclined to be very timid and averse to entering their native element, but after much coaxing and teaching, and perhaps some little scolding on the part of both parents, they learn to frolic and dive in the breakers, and enjoy their games of 'tag' and 'leap frog' as much as the older ones.

Several years ago a baby seal was captured and taken to the Cliff House, where it was left for some time, becoming so tame and attached to its owner, that it followed him about constantly, proving very tractable, and soon learning to perform various tricks for the entertainment of visitors.

Perhaps it would be safe to say that nearly all the sea lions that have been seen in various menageries and zoological gardens in this country and Europe,

came originally from the California coast and its islands, there being various favorite localities for these animals between San Francisco and San Diego, and even below in Lower California.

In former days the sea lion of the California coast was hunted for its oil and skin, vast numbers falling victims to the seal hunters, but at present it has little value outside the Alaskan coast and its islands and various Northern localities where it is highly prized. The flesh is greatly esteemed by the natives, large quantities of it being dried for winter consumption. The skin after being prepared, serves as a covering for canoes and other boats; the blubber is used for light and fuel, the intestines, dressed and sewed together, are converted into 'oilskins' for the fisherman; the legs of boots and shoes are made from the lining of the throat after being tanned, the soles of the same coming from the fin-like feet; in fact, almost every part of the sea lion is used except the skeleton.

When in the water the movements of the sea lions are exceeding rapid and graceful, particularly when excited, but on the shore they are very awkward, dragging themselves over the rocks with apparent effort, though even the most cumbersome not hesitating to scale the loftiest pinnacle from which they look around their island home as if indeed monarch of all they survey. If the day be very bright and warm, the rocks present the appearance of the sleeping village, the animals lying singly, in groups, crowded together and upon each, basking contentedly in the very warm rays of the sun, but when the wind is fresh, the sun obscured by heavy banks of fog and the waves come rolling in to break fiercely over the rocky barrier, the observer sees a very animated mass of gigantic, snail-like forms, crawling, squirming and tumbling over the rocks, apparently seeking the most sheltered and the warmest nook. It is a sight the crowd of observers never seem to tire of, and not until the wind has grown too cold, or the hour late, do they turn their faces cityward.

African Children Memorizing Scripture.

While children in the home lands are learning less of the Bible than a former generation did, those in heathen lands are showing great love for the word. A missionary in South Africa refers to the interest taken by Kaffir children—even those whose parents remain heathen—in reading and committing to memory portions of the New Testament. 'I lately heard the seventh chapter of Revelation repeated word for word, the children taking different parts, and answering one another—all of them children of heathen parents. One can hardly over-estimate the good these Testaments will do in their homes.'

Autumn Offers.

See the special autumn offers announced in this issue. The boys and girls have the opportunity of securing a premium and at the same time extend the usefulness of the 'Messenger' by circulating it among their friends.

Not one man in a thousand dies a natural death, and most diseases have their rise in intemperance.—Lord Bacon.