

HUNTING THE 'POSSUM.

AS ENJOYED IN MIDDLE GEORGIA IN SLAVERY DAYS.

It is Described by Richard Malcolm Johnston in a Government Pamphlet on "Early Educational Life in Middle Georgia."

Richard Malcolm Johnston is the author of a Government pamphlet on "Early Educational Life in Middle Georgia."

It is an exception to the general rule of Government pamphlets, and is genuine literature and full of interest.

From it the following account of 'possum hunting is extracted:

A sport which boys greatly delighted in was accompanying the negroes while hunting the opossum. Its relish was the dearer because of the infrequency with which parents, especially mothers, consented to it.

Of all delights to the palate of a Southern negro, and, indeed, of many a Southern white, the flesh of the opossum, when baked to the proper degree of brown, is the dearest.

Abounding in fat, perhaps, beyond any other animal, its flesh resembles much that of the sucking pig, only being more soft.

It is so easily fattened that on being taken out of the woods it generally is in condition fit for the oven.

Southerners regard it of all meats the least indigestible, and but for its superabundant fat it would appear more frequently on the tables of the whites.

In some houses this superfluity was disposed of by placing a layer or more of oak hickory sticks to the height of three or four inches at the bottom of the oven, and upon the lattice work thus made laying the opossum.

By such mode much of the oil was deposited on the bottom. The negro, when cooking for himself, never resorts to these measures, but takes his favorite as he is, indeed preferring him with all his imperfections on his head.

"At every home, whatever might be lacking for making up the full of home comforts, it was never an opossum dog, seldom was it without two or three. These were not of the pack of hounds—from four to eight and more—kept by the owner for the fox and the rabbit.

They belonged to the negroes, and were usually well trained. The hunter, providing himself with an ax, a torch of lightwood sticks of suitable length (about two feet), accompanied by at least one other, bearing another ax and an armful of other sticks, sallied forth to the woods.

"Both he and his dog well knew the most frequented haunts of the quarry, along skirts of wood and meadow where the negroes, the muscadine and the wild grape. A rabbit starting up attracted little notice from the dog, which understood well enough that that sort of game was for the day, never for the night.

After the trail was found the pursuit was usually brief, as the beast is not swift of foot and travels over an inconsiderable space. The dog barks little or none while pursuing, and so the opossum, when about to be overtaken by surprise, makes with what speed is possible for the tree.

In his emergency he sometimes has to take a small sapling, up which he can mount to no higher than six or eight feet without bending the top. If he is not too hotly pressed he will take to a large one, although he is not as particular in that matter as the raccoon, who, being more swift of foot and more capable in general of taking care of himself, invariably seeks the largest he can find for his flight.

There was one exception, however, and that was in the case of small ones, especially six or seven months old, which were much more fleet of foot and with a preponderance of black hairs in their skin. Whenever it was a very large tree to which the hunter was called by his dog, he was apt to suspect that it was either a raccoon or a 'blue dick' at which the race was called. Whether it was of a distinct species was not known.

Individuals were not often met with, and a black hunter was always disappointed when one of them took the place of its better, as being small and thin. It cost more to take him and to fatten him afterward.

less, thick-skinned tail was drawn about half its length through the slit, after which the wedge was withdrawn. The captor slung the stick across his shoulders, trimmed his torch, and, if not ready to return home, tied his dog to another stick, occasionally a negro would return home, not too late for rest enough for the morrow's work, with three or four hanging from his pole.

"The killing was usually postponed to a Sunday. During the interval it was kept in a box seat with its open side upon the ground, and made firm by heavy stones laid upon the top, ventilated with auger holes. It was fed upon persimmons mainly, but with addition of bread, collards, potatoes and other vegetables got from the negro's small garden that lay behind his cabin. It was rarely surprised what degree of fatness it would take on in a very short time.

"The killing was after a way peculiar to that animal. In all probability never since Georgia was first occupied by white people with slaves did an opossum die in any other. For this time-honored custom he felt respect that would have been sorely hurt even by suggestion of substitution of another. The affection he cherished for this dear object made him scrupulous that when his end was to come, as it must come inevitably, according to the destiny of all beings, sentient and not, it should be decently in accord with usage handed down from the ancestors of both. And so on a fair Sunday morning, taking him by the tail, he drew him from his hole in the light of day, let him go dead for a while, after his harmless deceptive way, and, it may be, addressed to him some words of praise for the manner in which he had made himself ready for the whinding up of his last job. Then, laying down his hands, he heaved across the victim's neck, and placing his foot upon it near the place of contact, while he kept it pressed, with his two hands he pulled the 'possum's tail until its neck was broken. Already a pot of water had been made hot for scalding the hair from his precious carcass, by this time become, as some expressed it, 'as round as a butter ball.' After he was baked and set upon a tray, flanked satisfactorily with attendant good things, it was interesting to see the negro, with which, using favored smile among negroes, it would 'go down the red line.'

"Practically, this goes to the root of the matter," says Joel Chandler Harris, reviewing the pamphlet in the Atlanta Constitution. "In the sixties the 'blue dick' was known as the 'Black Jack,' and it seems certain that it is a variety different from the common gray 'possum. Ordinarily they are smaller, but frequently a Black Jack was caught from fifteen to twenty pounds. They are as crafty as coons and almost as fleet as foxes. They have been known to leap from a falling tree and take to the fields and give the dogs a race of a mile or two before taking to a tree, and sometimes they were caught on the ground in an open clearing. The hounds would bay at a distance, and the hunter writes of were the old-fashioned long-eared, blabber-mouthed dogs, of the 'bloodhound' variety. Later foxhounds were used as 'possum dogs. I remember two on the Turner plantation—Jolly and Loud—black-and-tan in color, and in excellent track-and-tree dogs. With these hounds after a game Black Jack the sport was almost equal to fox hunting. The night made a fine background for their musical voices as they trailed in unison. The Black Jacks had a way of taking to a fence, and when they were on a fence of a mile or more to elude pursuit; but the trick was mere child's play to Jolly and Loud. One would jump over the fence while the other remained on the opposite side, and in this way the trail was soon picked up. The 'possum, if small, would seek to get to a big tree; if fat and big, to a small sapling, in the top of which he would be found swinging and snarling. If found in a big tree he was known to be small, and would be left to grow and fatten. If found in a sapling a negro would bend it down, and whip the 'possum in the face until he got 'shamed or hissed,' when he could easily be picked up by the scruff of the neck and held so until a pole was cut and split and his tail run through."

New York Tribune.

OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES

"I hear that your father is sick," said a neighbor to little four-year-old Mamie. "What has he got?" "Why," replied the observing little lady, "he's got a doctor, of course."

"How old is your grandfather?" asked a visitor to little Clarence, aged 5. "Don't know," was the reply. "Your father's awful old," for he's been round here ever since I can remember."

Little six-year-old Willie accompanied his father to the circus and among the many strange things he saw was one elephant standing on the back of another. "Look, papa!" he exclaimed, "there is a two-story elephant!"

"What is an abstract noun, Nellie?" asked the teacher of a bright little girl. "Don't know," was the answer. "You don't know!" exclaimed the teacher. "Well, it's the name of something you can think of, but can't touch. Now can you give an example?" "A red hot poker," was the prompt reply.

Little Johnnie was playing in the school yard when he accidentally stepped upon the foot of a lady caller. "Now, Johnnie," said his mother, "you must apologize to the lady for having stepped on her foot." Johnnie went up to her and said: "I'm awful sorry you didn't keep your foot out of my road."

Harry was reading in a Sunday-school paper the story of a missionary having been eaten by cannibals. "Papa," he asked, "will the missionary go to heaven?" "Yes, my son," replied the father. "And will the cannibals go there, too?" queried the youthful student. "No," was the reply. After thinking the matter over for some time the little fellow exclaimed: "Well, I don't see how the missionary can go to heaven if the cannibals don't, when he's inside the cannibals."

Rather Inconsistent.

Father—Come, young man; get your coat off and come with me. Tommy—You're not going to lick me, are you, dad?

Father—Certainly. Didn't I tell you this morning that I would settle with you for your bad behavior?

Tommy—Yes, but I thought it was only a joke, like when you told the grocer you was going to settle with him—Chicago Record.

A Rebuke.

"It is monstrous!" said Mr. Humayne, "to think that women will stick feathers in their hats, though they have read over and over again of the cruel massacres of innocent birds to satisfy their disgusting craving for finery. I call it perfectly monstrous. They are no better than savages."

Then he called at a poulterer's and struck a string of larks home for supper—Pick-Me-Up.

RUNNING THE FAST EXPRESS.

The Train Dispatcher Has More to Do With It Than the Engineer.

The eyes of the engineer are on the clock and time-table before him, and he keeps a sharp lookout ahead. For various reasons he may fall a few minutes behindhand at one point, but he manages to make up the loss at another. He has certain stops to make, and he makes all speed possible between them. But he is not master of the road. At any moment a danger signal along the line may confront him. He asks no questions, but obeys orders. Five minutes later a special may run past him and then the signals are set again, warning the engineer of the express that he must make up for lost time.

To understand this delay, and the sudden changes made in the time-table, it will be necessary to go back to headquarters and to watch the General Superintendent and the train dispatcher. Although many trains running on the line are hundreds of miles away, the exact position of every one, every second in the hour, is known and recorded. A telegraph operator is working industriously in the office of the train dispatcher, receiving and sending orders. The running orders of all the trains are directed from this office. Each engineer has orders to make a certain run according to the time-table, unless other orders from headquarters interfere.

If an accident happens on the road the train dispatcher knows it almost as soon as the passengers. A breakdown of some local train on the main line may upset all the calculations of the day. Immediately upon receipt of a message that line must be stopped before a collision occurs. A snowstorm may block a train on the northern branch of the road, and thereby make necessary a change in the regular schedule.

A train from the West is half an hour behind schedule when it enters with the regular running of the other trains. Arrangements must be made to let trains pass without accident. The express trains nearly always have the right of way. A Western express may be behind time and start out five minutes ahead of some special express. In this instance she must give the special the right of way, and she is forced upon some siding. The special express passes without losing a minute.

There are fifty trains coming and going, one behind time, another head, probably, and each crowding out another. The train dispatcher has to regulate this tangle and keep things running smoothly. Thus it is that the engineer of a flyer may suddenly find himself side-tracked.

Should the train dispatcher make a mistake, or fail to make arrangements for two fast-moving trains, the block signal system would probably prevent an accident. The block towers are connected by telegraph lines and a bell code enables the men to communicate directly with each other. They can stop a train at any moment by means of their signals, independent of orders from headquarters. Thus the engineer depends entirely upon others to keep the track clear, and he merely runs his train as near schedule time as possible, and keeps his iron steed in perfect condition.—St. Nicholas.

CHAMP CLARK.

A Brainsy Man Who Represents Missouri in Congress.

One of the brainiest, brightest and most unique figures in Congress is Champ Clark of Missouri. Few men enjoy greater popularity at home or in Washington than this "wit of the House."

Clark was born in Anderson County, Kentucky, in 1850, his father being a farmer. By working as a farm-hand and clerking in a country store he worked his way through Bethany College and Kentucky University and later through Cincinnati Law School.

At the age of 23 he was President of Marshall College in West Virginia. Next year he practiced law and edited a country paper in Missouri. His first official position was as City Attorney of Louisiana, Mo. He has since been prosecuting attorney of the county, Presidential elector, a member of the Legislature. In 1882 he was elected to Congress from the Ninth Missouri District. He was defeated in 1894, but elected again in 1896. He is a Democrat. His wife accompanies him to Washington and corresponds for a St. Louis paper.

An Elephant in a Baker's Shop.

The elephant "His Royal Highness," which carried the Prince of Wales during his Indian tour, and which was only landed at Blackwell from the ship Olivia yesterday, has, says a correspondent, already distinguished himself by displaying great anxiety to sample the contents of a baker's shop. He was safely stabled at Bentley Road, Dalston, along with eight other elephants belonging to Lord George's house, and when left at 3:45 o'clock this morning appeared perfectly contented. However, at 4:30 o'clock the keepers were suddenly aroused by a man who rushed into the circus and stated that the elephant had broken out of the stable, and was making a furious onslaught on a baker's shop. Mr. Tottenham and Thanyo, his Indian attendant, immediately went to Benyon Road, and at the premises of H. Stein, a baker, they found "His Royal Highness" had charged a large plate-glass window with his enormous tusks, and was enjoying himself by demolishing the contents of the window. Directly the elephant caught sight of Mr. Tottenham with a whip in his hand, he commenced trumpeting loudly, and this caused the inhabitants of the neighboring houses to appear at their windows. "His Royal Highness" allowed himself to be quietly led back to the stables, where his feet were hobbled in order to prevent him again making his escape. He is greatly attached to his Indian keeper, and in Mr. Tottenham's opinion, "His Royal Highness," being in strange quarters and missing Thanyo, broke out of the window of his shop, but scented bread in the baker's shop, he burged the place in order to obtain a feed.—St. James' Gazette, December 15th.

Ringing noises in the ears, some times a buzzing or snapping sound, are caused by catarrh in the head. The great value of Hood's Sarsaparilla as a remedy for catarrh is unquestioned.

Advertisement for Royal Baking Powder, featuring a logo and text: "Royal Baking Powder, Absolutely Pure. Sold Everywhere."

FALL OF A METEOR.

Left Three Giant Interlocked Cloud Rings in the Air.

Some interesting information concerning the recent fall of a big meteor is furnished by R. L. Fisk, who returned on Saturday from a two months' trip into the game districts of the Blackfoot and Flathead. Speaking of the occurrence, Mr. Fisk had this to say:

"We were bound into the Flathead country in search of game. The party consisted of George Miller, Postmaster at Lincoln, my brother and myself. We broke camp above camp on Friday morning, September 7th, and took what is known as the 'Falls Trail' up the south fork of Montour Creek. The trail is an awful one for pack horses even, and progress is very slow. Just before 6 o'clock in the afternoon we halted at some old elk wallows north of the water shed. Here we unpacked, built a fire and started to cook supper.

"About twenty minutes past six the ground underneath shook and vibrated, and we heard distinctly three reports, the first being a sharp crash of thousands of tons from one of the numerous peaks surrounding us than anything else, and the other to the ringing echoes sent back from the steep mountain sides. The horses even noticed the trembling of the earth, and stood with their heads down, uttering a low, guttural snort. My brother remarked somewhat facetiously:

"Get down on your marrow bones, you fellows, the mountains are turning over."

"We stood awaiting the next act, discussing the probable origin of the strange noise. Happening to glance skyward, straight north of our camp, we beheld a peculiar shaped cloud, whitish gray in color and resembling three interlocked rings. With our field glasses we could make out the rings ever so clearly. "We suddenly tumbled to the fact that we had witnessed, or rather felt, the results attending a meteor's fall. Mr. Miller looked at his watch and announced the time as 6:23. From our camp we looked up at the meteor had fallen on the range we were then on. We didn't know anyone else had witnessed its fall until we got back into civilization about a week ago, and all of us counted on giving the interesting occurrence to the press. The smoke cloud was discernible as long as daylight lasted.

"The next day, just after we struck Salmon Trout Creek, a tributary of the North Fork of the Big Blackfoot, we encountered a bunch of Flathead Indians. They were Louie Ashley, a half-breed, and a stepson of the old Flathead chief, Arlee, and another brave whose Indian name meant coyote, or some of the wild beasts of the region. I have forgotten what they had their squaws and children with them. All were excited, and Ashley remarked: "You know much about that meteor that world coming to end. Get away from here."

"They were unanimous in the opinion that the meteor, for we told them that was what it was, had fallen on the range between the North Fork of the South Fork of Flathead and Montour Creek, and I believe such was the case.

"It is easy to account for the story that it struck near Hay Stack Butte in this county. A circle drawn with a string and a stake in the center, with its central point on Willow Creek, will cover the headwaters of a dozen different streams flowing in as many different directions. It is but eight miles from Willow Creek over into the headwaters of the Snake river.

"If the formation of the country counts for anything in deciding just where it fell it was somewhere in the range I have referred to. Iron predominates, with considerable silt and lime and other bases. I honestly believe that the place to look for it is in the big range situated as stated. I do not believe that the meteor as a whole landed anywhere. The first report was very clear, as if the meteor had exploded in mid-air, and then rained its broken fragments on all sides. We estimated the smoke cloud to be about fifty miles above the range, and compass placed it directly north. From the vibrations of the ground we concluded that some of the fragments struck within a few miles of our camp.

"Several days later we met two white men named McKnight and Betts, both well known at Ovando, who were cutting hay in a big meadow on Willow Creek, expecting to winter stock on shares, though they had not solved the problem as to how they were to get the stock in there, and both said they had witnessed the strange scenes of the Friday before, and that it appeared southwest of their cabin.

Mr. Miller and R. C. Fish both confirmed the above. The Indians named what at home can be found at the station of Arlee, on the Northern Pacific, west of Missoula.—Helen Herald.

The "Hot Touch" in Tennessee.

Every man that is nearly every man has been "touched," and therefore, the explanation of a "touch," which is given herewith, is for the benefit of women and children who do not know. A "touch" is a "mace," a "strike," a "blow." There are many different kinds of touches, such as the "hot touch," the "rub touch," which is the "hot touch," the "twist brother," "sympathy touch" and other kinds too numerous to mention.

A "hot" touch or "rush" touch is one that is made so quick that the "toucher" gets the money he asks for before the "touched" realizes what is happening.

The other day a "hot one" was made on a young man who is rather "near" with his money. The toucher in this case was an artist. He rushed up to the toucher with tears in his eyes and said: "I've got to go to Nashville, old man. My mother is dead. Please lend me ten."

Advertisement for White Goods, featuring a large graphic and text: "White Goods at 50c yard, Instead of 75c yard. The Dress Goods Store. At 50c yard, Instead of 75c yard. Colored Dress Goods Reductions. At 25c yard, Instead of 40c yard. Black Dress Goods Reductions. At 35c yard, Instead of 50c yard. At 50c yard, Instead of 65c yard. At 89c yard, Instead of \$1 25 yd. Neckwear for Ladies. At 33c yard, Instead of 50c yard. Wasserman, Davis & Co., 111 K, between Sixth and Seventh."

That this store is headquarters for Dress Goods in Sacramento has long been a recognized fact. Reasons for this well-merited consideration, too—our stock is always the largest, always new, bright and fresh, due to the fact of great selling, and this selling we can attribute to the fact that we place such reasonable and low prices on the high class of fabrics which we always carry, as will not permit of their remaining long enough on the shelf to become old to the eyes of our patrons or in fact. For this clearance sale we have still lessened already low prices, which will make this ever attractive department a still stronger center of attraction throughout the sale.

This is a line of handsome Black Mohair Figured Granite Cloth, full 38 inches wide, of superior quality, and guaranteed fast colors. The designs are especially adapted for separate skirts, but they also will make handsome full suits.

About five pieces of 38-inch Black Satin Soleil. This is a plain fabric, with a rich satin luster; looks like a Duchess Satin; all pure wool, and guaranteed color; an excellent thing for a handsome street costume.

A line of handsome Black Satin Finished Lizard Soleils, in floral and lattice effects; comes full 45 inches wide; all pure wool; a handsome fabric for full suit or separate skirt.

When Captain Chisholm Was Seen to Drink Plain Water.

There were five or six of us on the hotel veranda, and when Major Hillson was seen coming up the street a boy was ordered to bring out a glass of water for every sister. We were sipping the beverage when the Major halted at the steps and looked up, and Captain Chisholm, who was the only one who knew him, called out: "Mawwin' to yo', Majah—I hope I see yo' well!"

"Mawwin' to yo'!" was the reply; "mawwin' to yo'!" "It's a hotish day, Majah," continued the Captain, as he raised his glass. "Yes, rather hotish," replied the Major, as he peered at the glasses and a puzzled look came over his face. "Won't yo' come up and join us?" "I was going over to the commissary, but I am in no powerful hurry."

The Major came up the steps, and was introduced to each of us in turn, and as he sat down, the Captain said to the young negro: "Heah, boy, bring Majah Hillson a glass."

"I am, sah." "And these other gentlemen—they are drinking plain water?" "Jest plain water, Majah."

"Captain Chisholm," said the Major, as he put down his glass and rose to his feet, "is there a report that the cotton crop has failed?" "Not that I have heard of, sah. Cotton crop seems to be all right, Majah."

"Has the State of Alabama repudiated her obligations?" "Not that I know of."

"Anything wrong with corn, oats, peanuts and tobacco?" continued the Major. "Nothing wrong, sah—not that I've heard of," answered the Captain. "Do yo' suspect anything wrong, Majah?" "Yes, sah; I do."

"And will yo' kindly explain?" "I will, sah. When I find Captain Chisholm, a true son of the South, drinking plain water, out of a plain glass, surrounded by nob who are also drinking plain water, out of plain glasses, it strikes me that the glorious South is on the eve of a great calamity, so I had better get along to the commissary, and do my business with Kernel Skellings' Gentlemen, excuse my abrupt departure, and yo' can divide the contents of this glass among yo'!"—Atlanta Constitution.

A Load on His Mind.

"Now, gents," said the leader of a gang of lynchers at Dawson City, "Afore we swing this duck off I want to make a few remarks. Injun Bill here, as you know, was caught robbing a bakery on Pnemonia avenue a few nights ago. He doesn't deny the crime and doesn't make no kick against becoming the deceased, but he wants me to make a little sort of statement for him afore he dies. As I said, Injun Bill was caught while gettin' away with a few bags of hardtack, and he says he would cash in his checks a danged sight more cheertuller, if he could jest get one crack at the tall sky."

Advertisement for Women's Tan Jackets, \$5 75.

Very swell, tan colored Melton Cloth jackets for women, lined throughout with fancy silks; the correct style and length. Reduced from \$10 to \$5 75 in this sale.

Advertisement for Women's Stylish Coats, \$5 each.

Your choice from 100. They are of the season's best styles, full or half lined, piped seams, the proper length and cut, black and stylish; made from Kersey, Melton, Broadcloth, etc. All placed in one great lot and your choice for \$5.

Advertisement for Misses' Jackets, \$3 75.

Misses' Jackets, of good, heavy cloaking, green and tan mixtures; this season's best styles, with velvet collar, and are half silk lined and silk piped seams; sold regular for \$5 50. Clearance sale price, \$3 75.

Advertisement for Electric Seal Fur Collarettes, \$4 50.

This is a greatly reduced price on these warm fur garments so much in vogue in the East and on our Coast this winter; they've high rolling storm collar, and are full silk lined with fancy colored silk, and reduced to \$4 50.

Advertisement for Women's Tailored Suits, \$7 50.

Look at this price; consider the cost of the material, linings, trimmings and makings, and also that they were cheap at \$10 and \$12 50; stylish, navy blue serge or novelty mixed suits, full silk lined, correctly tailored, fit front jackets of this season's best styles, and reduced in this clearance sale to \$7 50. Isn't that an inducement to purchase a new dress?

Advertisement for Hydrometers, Lactometers and Saccharometers.

I CARRY A COMPLETE LINE OF HYDROMETERS, LACTOMETERS AND SACCCHAROMETERS. For liquor, alcohol, milk, sugar, vinegar, salt, etc., etc. Also, compasses and gold scales, at cheapest prices. D. M. BISHOPP, Optician, - - 806 J Street

Advertisement for Radway's Ready Relief.

For internal and external use. Cures and prevents Colds, Coughs, Sore Throat, Influenza, Bronchitis, Pneumonia, Swelling of the Joints, Lumbago, Inflammations, Rheumatism, Neuralgia, Frostbites, Chills, Headaches, Toothaches, Asthma, Difficult Breathing.

Advertisement for Benson's Plaster.

Applied over the seat of pain cures it whether it be sharp and shooting, dull and aching, steady or intermittent; curing the ailment whether Pneumonia, Pleurisy, Bronchitis, Grippe, Stomach, Heartburn, Sick Headache, Diarrhea, Dysentery, Colic, Flatulency and all internal pains. Price 5 cents.

Advertisement for Tesla Coal, \$6 a Ton.

Good heat; absolutely no soot. YARD, TWENTY-THIRD AND E STS. THE SAN FRANCISCO & SAN JOAQUIN COAL CO. M. N. WINANS, Agent.

Advertisement for The Folsom Boulevard.

Prepare for it by having your buggy equipped with RUBBER TIRES—solid, cushion or pneumatic. No more tire setting or heavy repair bills. No more jar or noise in riding. A. MEISTER & SONS, 910-914 NINTH STREET.

Advertisement for Ott's Liver Pills, featuring a logo and text: "Ott's Liver Pills. NEVER GIPE OR SICKEN. Price, 25c. FRANCIS S. OTT, DRUGGIST, 200 K St., south side Second and K, SACRAMENTO, CAL."