WILD BEASTS AND TAME

Good Stories of Animals from Many Sources.

HUNTING AND FISHING YARNS.

Hints for the Midsummer Season of Vacations.

HOW ANIMALS ARE TAUGHT.

Facts Picked Up Among Veteran Trainers of Wild Beasts.

Training Beasts for the Ring—Cruelty a Usual Means of Tuition—How Elephants Are Taught to Stand on Their Heads—Bears Must be Tortured and Monkeys Beaten Before They Will Mind—Savage Animals That Will Learn No Tricks—Persuading Lions and Tigers Not to Bite Their Keepers' Heads Off—The Timid Antelope and the Fierce Rhinoceros.

"Ground arms."

The unwieldy brute glanced furtively at his keeper out of the corners of his wicked little eyes, and moved sullkily toward the further end of his cage. Keeper William Snyder of the Central Park menagerie was explaining to the reporter how elephants are trained, and was illustrating his lecture with the three animals under his charge.

"Ground arms, Tip!" Snyder leaped over the rail and slid between the bars of the cage, and stood beside the elephant, pick in hand.

"Tip!" The animal felt the sharp steel prod his side and gave a shrill scream of terror.

"Ground arms!" Slowly and awkwardly the great brute bent his legs and sank down on his foreknees.

"Over!" A lurch, such as a sinking ship gives, followed this command, and Tip rolled over on his side, apparently dead.

"Get up, now!" With almost incredible rapidity Tip pulled himself together and assumed his normal posture.

"Elephants are the hardest animals in the world to train," said the keeper after his lecture was ended. "It takes three years to teach one all of the circus tricks, but the time is not thrown away. A green elephant is worth $2,000, while one that has acquired the ring accomplishments often brings $20,000. How do we go about it? It's just like a course in school. There are the rudiments, the classics, and the finishing touches. The course of training is seldom varied. To begin with, an elephant is taught to lie down at the command 'ground arms.' This isn't an easy job. We first shackle his fore feet together, then his hind feet. Then to the forward shackle we hitch a trained elephant, and another to the hind shackle. Both elephants are started in opposite directions, and the pupils' legs are pulled apart, throwing him down. This is repeated possibly fifty times in a day, until he will do the trick without the use of force.

"Next come the salute, when he throws up his trunk and snorts; the roll call, when he leaves his fellows and takes his place in the other end of the ring as his name is called, and the various manœuvres of the grand march. These are easily taught. All that is needed is a patient trainer and an assistant, aided by two sharp-pointed steel picks. The real difficulty comes when you begin with the tub and barrel tricks. To make an elephant stand on his hind legs or on his head, or with his fore feet on another elephant's back, and to teach him to stand on a barrel and roll it, requires months of hard work. Mechanical appliances are needed to teach these tricks. You must have a block and tackle suspended from a stout beam in the ceiling. Then the feet of the pupil must be shackled as in the first trick. To make him stand on his head, hoist his hind feet into the air. Reverse this to make him stand on his hind feet. With this block and tackle all of these tricks can be taught, varying the process to suit the case. This work is not only hard, but dangerous. An elephant keeper or trainer takes his life in his hands every time he is in reach of a trunk or tusk. No one can tell when an elephant will strike at him. At certain seasons of the year the male elephants are almost unmanageable, and the training schools stand a mighty good chance of being turned into a hospital at any minute."

"The easiest animal to train," said Dr. Conklin, superintendent of the menagerie, "is the seal. Seals are very docile and intelligent. In training them little force or cruelty is needed. Kindness is the best plan. After doing each trick they get a little morsel of fish, and they are sometimes petted in addition. It takes about three months to make a young seal an expert performer in the circus tank. The secret in training most animals is constant association with them. Take lions, tigers, panthers, leopards, and other members of the cat tribe. The only way they can be tamed sufficiently to allow their trainer to go into their cages is by his associating with them and feeding them daily for weeks and months. When they know him well enough to let him pat them and caress them through the cage bars, he makes his first attempt inside. He carries a whip in his hand, and speaks to them continually. He has taken the precaution to have two attendants around with sharpointed iron prods in the cage. In case his pupils should prove bloodthirsty. Generally the trainer is not hurt. In three months, as a rule, these cat animals can be tamed to that extent, but years of work could not make them do any tricks. They will be submissive to man, but they will not work for him, as the bear and elephant do.

"Speaking of bears," continued the Doctor; "they are hard to train, and their tuition is and must be excessively cruel. The Italians are the most expert bear trainers in the world, and they finish their term of school in an incredibly short time. Often a month, and sometimes two weeks, will make a wild and ferocious bear as tame and harmless as a domestic pig. First the Italian pierces the bear's nose with a stout iron ring, and while the wound is still fresh he drags poor brute around his pen, pulling and beating him until the brute screams in agony. That generally conquers his spirit, but it does not teach him tricks. If you ever see an Italian with his performing bear you will notice that he always has a rope attached to the ring in its nose, and at each command this rope is cruelly jerked. To prevent any serious accident, he usually takes the precaution to file the bear's claws and his teeth.

"Bears and monkeys require more cruelty in training than the other animals. The Italians excel all others in that work, and seldom or never fail to succeed. Monkeys learn their tricks not so much by imitation as by constant and cruelly enforced practice. But even then the punishment must be continued as long as the monkey acts. This, however, does not apply to the late Mr. Crowley, the dead chimpanzee. He has more than proved himself a common monkey. In his case kindness and firmness were all that was needed to make him the most accomplished ape in the world.

"The hippopotamus can be trained to a limited extent if it is taken young enough. For instance, Miss Murphy and Caliph, our young pair, were taken in charge last week to follow their keeper from their winter quarters to their big stone tank outdoors. If they had been trained at an older age this would have been impossible."

"Are animals born in captivity trained more easily than those born in a wild state?"

"They are not. You see, from their infancy they are accustomed to associate around them all the time. They have no fear of man, and it is only through fear that some animals can be subdued. When a tiger is captured it must be wounded or beaten before it can be put into a cage. This teaches it a wholesome respect for its captor, and makes its subsequent training comparatively easy.

"What is the most singular case of animal training I ever saw? In Europe I once saw a man with a tank full of performing alligators. They let him put his head and body into their mouths. They ate from his hand and swam around the tank with him astride their backs. He seldom punished them. He treated them kindly and kept them well fed. Charged with a fillabo, I put the head of a headed bra into his mouth once. A moment later the snake was allowed to bite a rabbit, which died a few minutes afterward. I don't know how the trick was done, and indeed I had little curiosity to learn. Boa constrictors are tame and trained solely by kindness, patience, petting, and feeding. There are only two animals that never have been trained. One is the antelope and the other is the rhinoceros. The former is too wild and the latter too fierce. I have never heard of a polar bear becoming tame enough for the ring, and I don't recall a case where a grizzly bear contributed to a circus performance."

SHE KILLED THE BEAR.

One of the Vicissitudes in the Life of a Country School Ma'am.

SCRANTON, July 13.—Miss Emeline Wright, a healthy and buxom country maiden of 22, teaches a little backwoods school in the Burdick district of Tobyhanna township. It is a very sparsely settled section, and in boarding around among the parents of her pupils Miss Wright often has to walk two miles and a half from the schoolhouse along lonely roads and through stretches of woodland. The schoolhouse was built as near the centre of the district as possible. It stands in a beech grove on an unfrequented highway, the nearest dwelling being being three-quarters of a mile distant, and back of it there is a succession of laurel swamps. An entry extends across the front of the building, and a door leads from the entry into the schoolroom.

On the morning of Friday, June 28, Miss Wright reached the schoolhouse ahead of any of the scholars, intending to write a letter before she called school at 9. She was surprised, she said, to find the outside door ajar, but she was still more astonished when she stepped into the entry and saw a bear nosing around in the schoolroom. Miss Wright was born and brought up in a pretty wild township, and she had seen many a bear roaming through the berry patches and bark peelings; therefore the sight of the bear in the schoolroom did not demoralize her a particle. What she did is told by herself as follows:

"The bear saw me as soon as I looked into the room. It snorted a little and acted as if it didn't know which way to go. I wasn't much afraid of it, for I had seen a good many larger ones. I don't know why I did it, but I stepped outside at once, closed the door, and put a stick in the handle. I heard the bear come into the entry and paw on the door, but as the door opened inside I knew that the bear couldn't break the stick in the handle and pull the door toward it. I was anxious for some of the scholars to come, because I wanted to send one of them over to the woods where some men were peeling bark to get the men to come with their axes and kill the bear. Before any of the children came in sight the bear clawed very hard at the door, and, for fear that the stick might hold, I got a stronger one and put it in the handle.

"While I stood there waiting, I heard the bear run into the schoolroom and clamber over the benches. Then it ran back and scratched on the door and growled for the first time. It seemed to be acting as if it was getting more and more afraid to stay in the house, and then it hurried back to the room. I heard my dog's creek, and I stepped to the north side of the house and found that the bear had broken a pane out of a window. It had its nose through the sash, but it left the window and ran back to the door when it saw me. It was scratching on the door again when I got back to the front, and then I went into the wood shed and got an axe, going from there to the broken window. The bear was still pawing on the door.

"In a little while one of my boy scholars came, and I sent him over to the woods to tell the men. Instead of doing as I had told him, the boy ran toward his home, and told all the children he met that there was a bear in the schoolhouse, and they all ran back, too. Those that came from the other direction also got scared when they heard about the bear, and I couldn't get one to go over to the woods and notify the bark peelers. The bear had been rushing back and forth, pawing on the door and clambering over the desks and benches all this time, and I had about made up my mind to go away and leave it there, when I heard it dash against a window in the back end of the room. When I got there it had its paws and nose through the sash, and I hit it on the head with the axe as hard as I could. The axe glanced off and broke out some more of the sash, and the bear struggled to climb out. It seemed as though it was going to plunge upon me, and I struck it with the blade of the axe just as it sprang from the window. I must have struck a good deal harder than I thought I could, for the axe split the beast's forehead open, and the poor animal tumbled past me and rolled over and over almost to the bank of the little creek that runs past the schoolhouse. It died in a little while, and then I was sorry for it, because if I hadn't fastened it in the house it would have run away and not broken the windows. I didn't have any school that day. The men who saw the dead bear said it was 2 years old. Folks around here talk about my killing the bear as though it was a brave deed, but I don't think so. I wouldn't kill another one if I had a chance, unless I had to do it to keep it from injuring me."

AFTER WOODCOCK AT NIGHT.

Hunting the Summer Bird With Rabbit Hounds in Posey County.

STEWARTSVILLE, Ind., July 10.—"A half moon, no clouds, plenty of stars, and woodcock thicker than sycamore balls in the bottoms. Shall we drive over and knock down a few?"

"Sycamore balls?"

"No; woodcock."

"To-night?"

"Yes."

"It's a go."

"All right. I came through Anderson's place on the edge of the Spread-out this morning and flushed a couple of brace while walking through his corn field. The ground there is peppered with borings, and we can bag all the birds we want without going into the Spread-out at all. The Spread-out is the swamp, you know, and it is a little too soft under foot for night work. But when worms are plenty in corn land, woodcock will invariably give the muck the go-by, and no matter how often you flush them, you can't drive them out of the corn. They will get up and go away among the alders, perhaps, but as soon as they are out of sight they will whirl away at right angles with their former flight, and circle around into the cultivated land again.

"The rains have so flooded the corn piece ever since it was planted that the stalks are not more than knee high, and Anderson says he has given up hopes of getting any grain from the strip along the bottoms, so we can tramp through it as much as we please. We will take my two rabbit hounds, Don and Tony, to put up the birds, and if you are a good snap shot you will find that night hunting the woodcock lays all over day sport."

The place where the Wabash has left its banks on either side and made a ten-acre morass, locally known as the Spread-out, lies about ten miles to the west of Stewartsville, and two hours of steady travel over a half-defined road brought us to Anderson's woods, where we left the team and buckboard, and at once put the dogs into the strip of young corn bordering the swamp. It was about 10 o'clock. The night was clear and beautiful. The bellowing of bullfrogs in the swamp had borrowed the enchantment of distance, and the only other sound which broke the stillness was the tinkle of the bells on the dogs' necks. In this species of sport it is absolutely necessary to belt the dogs, in order that the hunter may be able to follow them with ease, as their business is simply to beat about through the undergrowth and startle the feeding birds into flight, and unless the sportsman is aware of the dogs' whereabouts a hundred birds may get up and drop again without his being the wiser. Where the birds are plentiful, however, dogs are by no means indispensable.

I had just climbed the old-fashioned rail fence and taken a couple of steps into the corn when whizz went three or four up from my feet almost hidden by the tassels, and over the top of the undergrowth about eight feet above the ground, and before I had recovered from the shock of their sudden appearance they dropped like so many stones into the darkness on the other side of a sweet-brier bush which the plough had spared, and which even in the night could be seen to be covered with the beautiful pink blossoms of this sweetest of all wild roses.

Marking a bird down is half the work in day shooting; but at night unless you bag your bird at the first missing, you have but little chance for a second shot. However, I made my way around to the other side of the sweet-brier and seen a bunched up brown earth sweeping the ground about its roots like grape shot. It started one of the birds, which got up with that inspiring ring, which in the stillness of night makes the dullest sportsman's nerves tingle, and always gives the shooting of woodcock half its zest. Like the ruffed grouse, this bird's instinct impels it to keep quiet until flight is absolutely necessary, and then it suddenly rises with a clear whistle of its wings as exhilarating and not so apt to rattle the hunter as the duller whirr of the pheasant. As soon as the bird's form was outlined against the blue of the night sky it was covered, and in the moonlight I saw the pale yellow of its belly as it threw up its wings, as it were, with the report of the gun, and came down upon its back a dead bird.

In September and October, when the woodcock is at its best, its colors are much more highly accentuated, and, owing to its habit of suddenly closing its wings and dropping to the earth like a stone, even an experienced sportsman is often at a loss to know whether he has made a hit or miss unless he sees the yellow breast, which none but the wounded bird shows, as it turns in falling to alight upon its back.

After picking up my bird I started along a furrow toward the nearest bell and presently came upon the edge of the swamp—a jungle of alders, swamp grass, and rank-growing vines, topped by an occasional sycamore tree, their white trunks glittering like silver birches. The sound of the bell kept growing fainter and fainter, and I was about to retrace my steps and again enter the corn, when a brace of birds got up immediately before me. I threw down to my right barrel, and the other fluttered away and dropped in the edge of the undergrowth, trailing a broken wing, as well as I could judge in the dim light. She had strength enough to get up, however, on my approach, and sense enough to keep in the shadow of the alders, so that the shot which I essayed at her was without other effect than to induce her to quicken her flight. When she did fly across an open space she went like an October bird, and the true meaning of her fluttering flight at the beginning suddenly suggested itself.

Instead of following her, I cut back to the place where she had been flushed, and with my face close to the grass carefully beat over the ground like a pointer quartering. Before I had been at it ten minutes the old bird came out of the darkness and made the most reckless efforts at tolling me away from the spot, thus making suspicion a certainty that she was a mother bird trying a mother's self-sacrificing tactics to save her brood.

I stumbled upon the little ones finally—four of them, looking like young turkeys, with the bill of a snipe. They were not yet in feather, and were certainly either a second brood, or the result of an exceptionally late hatch.

Mating, as these birds do, in April, and hatching, as a rule, early in May, it is by no means a rarity for snow and frost to injure the eggs or kill the young birds in their infancy. Very often the nests, which are built upon the ground in some low land near a swamp or river, are flooded by spring freshets. When these accidents occur the parents rear a later brood, and so long as summer shooting of woodcock is permitted hunters are bound to kill young, half-grown birds, and in many cases the mothers of broods, like this one which I found, and which without the mother's protection cannot fail to fall victims either to starvation or to prowling foxes, weasels, hawks, owls, or raccoons.

The sound of repeated gunshots coming from the corn field induced me to cut back to the vicinity of the dogs and begin the night's work in earnest, and presently I was ploughing through the knee-high corn a dozen yards in the rear of Don's bell. The whistle of the birds' wings or the quick, excited bark of the dog would usually give warning of a rise, but such warning was not necessary. In the mellow light cast by the moon and stars the bird's form became even more clearly outlined than in sunlight, and out of eleven shots which I got in the next hour I bagged five birds. It was touch-and-go work. Whizz went the cock, and then for a second I could see his body—in reality brown, but looking black at night—sailing through the air on a line with my shoulder gun. Unless he caught the shot in that second he was down, and in the monotonous area of the corn-field it was impossible to so mark his fall as to flush him again.

Once when the dog barked, instead of the ring of a woodcock there came the whirr which no bird but the ruffed grouse makes in rising. I watched her flight—much longer than that of the woodcock without any effort at pulling trigger, and saw her settle in the woods on the edge of the field, where I have no doubt she had a dozen chicks awaiting her. These States which make the open season for the killing of woodcock begin on July 1 almost without exception protect the grouse until October or November, the young rarely being able to fly well until September, while an average brood of woodcocks are flying in July. Every sportsman knows that the birds are larger and their flight swifter in October than earlier in the year.

SWIFT ON THE WING.

The Fastest Railroad Train Slow Compared with the Wild Duck and Goose.

"The gadwale—but there; it isn't likely at all that you know what a gadwale is," said an observant wild fowl hunter. "The gadwale is a duck. It is a wild duck that doesn't get East very often, but is a familiar fowl in the West. I was just about to remark that the gadwale is a bird that can travel nearly a hundred miles while the fastest railroad train is going fifty, and yet it is slow on the wing compared with a canvasback duck, the broadbill, or even the wild goose. I have held my watch on about every kind of wild fowl there is, and know to a dot just how much space any of them can get over in an hour. The canvasback can distance the whole wild fowl family, if it lays itself out to do it. When the canvasback is out taking things easy he jogs along through the air at the rate of eighty miles an hour. If he has business somewhere, though, and has to get there, he can put two miles behind him every minute, and do it easy. If you don't believe that, just fire square at the leader in a string of canvasbacks that are out on a business trip some time when you have the chance. Duck shot, propelled by the proper quantity of powder, travels pretty quick itself, but it will surface bruise a given any member of that string of ducks at all it will be the fifth or sixth one back from the leader, and I'll bet anything there is on it. If you have the faintest idea in the world of dropping the leader you must aim at space not less than ten feet ahead of him. Then the chances are that he will run plumb against your shot. When he drops you will find him a quarter of a mile or so on, because even after he is dead he can't stop short of that distance.

"The mallard duck is lazy. He seldom cares to cover more than a mile a minute, but he can if he wants to. His ordinary every-day style of getting along over the country takes him from place to place at a 35-mile clip. The black duck can fly neck-and-neck with the mallard, and neither one can give the other odds. If the pin-tail widgeon and wood duck should start in to race either a mallard or a black duck it would be safe to bet on either one. But if a redhead duck should enter the race you can give big odds on him. He can spin off his ninety miles an hour as easy as you can walk around the block, and can do it all day. He would be left far behind, though, by the blue-winged or the green-winged teal. These two fowl can fly side by side for 100 miles and close the race in a dead heat in an hour, and appear to make no hard task out of it. The broadbill duck is the only fowl that flies that can push the canvasback on the wing. Let a broadbill and a canvasback each do his best for an hour, and the broadbill will only come out about ten miles behind. One hundred and ten miles an hour can be done by the broadbill, and he consequently makes a mark for a shotgun that a pretty good gunner wouldn't be apt to hit once in a lifetime.

"The wild goose is an astonisher on the fly. It has a big heavy body to carry, and to see it waddling on the ground you wouldn't suppose it could get away from you very fast on the wing. But it manages to glide from one feeding place to another with a suddenness that is aggravating to the best of wing shots. To see a flock of 'honkers' moving along, so high up that they seem to be sweeping the cobwebs off of the sky, you probably wouldn't care to bet that they were travelling at the rate of ninety miles an hour, but that is just what they are doing, any hour in the day. The wild goose never fools any time away. His gait is always a business one."

THE CHIPMUNK WAS CHARMED.

It Paid No Attention to Pistol Shots Until One Killed the Snake.

"Those knowing folks who ridicule the idea that a rattlesnake can charm the bird or animal it covets for its dinner don't want to talk to me, after an experience I had a few days ago," said Edward Blaisdell of Hawley, Pa. "I was always a little skeptical myself on the power of the snake to charm, and consequently when I was taking a walk through the woods near Hawley one day last week, and saw a chipmunk sitting on a rock and giving no sign that my near approach to it disturbed it in the least, the thought that the influence of a snake had anything to do with the indifference of the little squirrel was the furthest thing from my mind, although it struck me as being singular, the agility with which the chipmunk makes itself scarce as a person approaches it being well known to me.

"The squirrel's side was toward me, and it was as motionless as if it had been a part of the rock itself. It was gazing intently in the direction of a log that lay a few feet from the rock. I stopped within less than a rod of the rock and watched the chipmunk a moment. I had my revolver with me, and made up my mind I would see what the effect of a shot at the squirrel would be. I fired not aiming to hit the chipmunk, and the bullet furrowed the rock close by it. The squirrel did not move a hair. I fired again, but the chipmunk paid not the slightest attention to the noise or the whizz of the bullet that struck the rock directly in front of it. I began to think that the little animal was dead. I stepped a little closer and got directly behind the squirrel and fired a bullet close over its head, and into the log. The result was startling. Something fell from the log and began to thrash around among the ferns and low bushes. The chipmunk started up, ran to and fro on the rock in a dazed manner, and then dodged with its peculiar chirp into its hole off to one side of the rock. I stepped forward to the log to see what was the cause of the disturbance there, and found an enormous rattlesnake. It had been shot through the neck, and was still writhing under the effects of the wound. I had been so taken up with the strange conduct of the chipmunk that it had not seen the snake, which must have been lying on the log, among the moss that covered it, in range of my bullet. That the snake held the squirrel under the spell of its fascinating powers, which accounted for the chipmunk's indifference to my presence, there can be no doubt. The moment my bullet struck the rattlesnake and knocked it from the log the fatal spell was broken, and the squirrel, recovered to the log a few seconds from its effects, was able to escape into its hole.

"In that same vicinity, some years ago, Solomon Purdy, who lived near Hawley, discovered a red squirrel on a log, in a condition similar to the one in which I discovered the chipmunk. He knew the habits of rattlesnakes, and understood at once what the situation meant. He got his eye on the snake, which was coiled on the end of the log, its head uplifted, and its eyes fairly glittering. He shot the snake's head off. The squirrel dropped from the log, also. Purdy went to the spot where the squirrel had disappeared. He found it lying on the ground dead, although there was not a mark of injury upon it."

SHARPSHOOTING FISH.

Curious Piscatorial Specimens Found by Dr. Meister in Siam.

Dr. Carl Meister, a German traveller, is telling some very curious stories just now about shooting fish which he found in the rivers and small lakes of Siam. The shooting fish passes most of its time doing nothing in the deep, quiet pools near the shore. When it becomes hungry it swims slowly down stream near the surface of the water. As soon as it sights a fly or bug on a bush or bit of grass at the water's edge it floats up to a position within two or three feet of the insect. For a few seconds it remains motionless, apparently taking aim with its mouth about a hair's breadth under water. Then it projects its under jaw slightly beyond the upper jaw and fires from the little round aperture thus formed a drop of water at the fly or bug. This drop of water moves with lightning rapidity, and invariably hits the insect at which it is aimed. The insect falls into the water and the fish gobbles it. Dr. Meister says he has often seen a shooting fish bag thirty or more insects in quick succession after this fashion. Bugs with hard shells or heavy wings are sometimes impervious to the shooting fish's drop of water. Any ordinary insect, however, of smaller size than the end of a man's thumb is usually knocked senseless by it.

In Siam Dr. Meister caught and preserved in his aquarium several shooting fish. They became very tame. They would shoot at almost any kind of an object that was held over their tank. To test the accuracy of their aim, Dr. Meister occasionally held over the tank a bit of white pasteboard, on which was painted a black fly of about half the size of the top of a lead pencil. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred the fish hit the fly squarely, and the one hundredth time missed it only by a hair's breadth. The end of a pencil, or a finger, or any small, round object, held over the tank, always attracted a tiny shower of drops from the fish below. Three of the shooting fish were trained by Dr. Meister to jump five or six inches out of water to get bits of food from between his fingers. Dr. Meister considers shooting fish to be the most intelligent of all fish, and destined to supplant gold fish in the parlor aquariums of Europe and America. The shooting fish is usually the size of a man's hand, short and thick, and of a gravish-green color. Four heavy black stripes cross its back, which, near the sides, is of a silvery hue. It is a very shy and cautious fish, is rarely found near other fish, and is very difficult to catch.

A MONARCH OF THE AIR.

The King Bird Fearless and Swift and Eager for Fight.

CANADENSIS, Pa., July 13.—The king bird is a monarch of the air. Small of form and swift of flight, he ruffles up his feathers and attacks the mighty hawk with as little fear as he would a harmless robin. He sounds his warning rattle as he swoops toward some feathered rival, and twists and turns, driving his strong bill into some vulnerable part, and keeping up the warefare until he tires of it. Near Spruce cabin a big speckled hen is busy with a chirping brood of little chickens. The mother has a vagrant spirit, and persists in roaming out of the barnyard and wandering in the outlaying fields with her fluttering family. A few days ago a hawk came down from the peak of Goose Pond Mountain, and swooping upon one of the little chicks rose into the air with it, leaving the old hen in a state of squawking terror. The hawk, to show its fearlessness, flew with great deliberation toward a big oak, with the evident intention of devouring its prey upon the stalwart branches. A dark speck came out of the tree, and with many a dart and curve rose high in the air.

The hawk recognized it as the king bird, about the only bird that is capable of filling him with fear, and making him swerve from his course and halt in his masterful flight. He showed his fear by increasing his speed and turning about as though to retreat. The king bird pursued his upward flight until he could look down upon the broad back of the hawk, and then, like an arrow from its bow, he shot down and hit upon it a fluttering bit of concentrated rage. The hawk darted, poised, and swooped, but that mite upon him clung, jabbing its bill again and again into the tender flesh near its wings. The pain was too great to bear, and so he folded his powerful wings and dropped like a shot toward the earth. But the king bird was not yet weary, and he swiftly followed, fighting all the time like a demon. The old hen had been an interested spectator of the fight, and when she saw the hawk descend she spread out her wings and flew heavily toward him to fight him away from her young. But the hawk was too wary to permit her to reach him, and before he had dropped within the range of her power of flight he spread out his wings again and shot upward.

The chicken which he still held in his claws, small as it was, hampered him a trifle, and he dropped it when near the earth and devoted all his attention to ridding himself of the little tormentor that was still fighting him with claws and beak. He sped away to his mountain home, and was nearly there before the king bird ceased his attack. The old hen ran with many an encouraging cackle to its injured little one that was lying, a downy ball, upon the spot where the hawk had dropped it. It was still alive, but it died the next day from the wounds in its back made by the hawk's claws.

THAT BIG TROUT CAUGHT.

He was King of the Pool, and Long Had Defied Fishermen.

CANADENSIS, Pa., July 13.—A short time ago THE SUN prin'ed a story about a big trout that lived in a deep pool in Stony Run and defied, with astonishing success, all attempts to catch him. The story told how flies and bait were tried without result, and proved that this was not because the big fellow was not hungry by describing his eagerness in snapping up some unhooked worms that were thrown to him. This trout was caught last Monday by Milton D. Price of Spruce Cabin, who had registered a vow early in the season to land him or lose his reputation as an angler.

Stony Run is a rapidly flowing stream that rushes between impenetrable masses of laurel bushes. The pool in which the king of the brook had made his home is so deep that anglers prefer to fight their way along the banks, rather than wade through it, and so the big fellow seldom had to seek shelter in the rocks. The water is usually so clear that when he lay at ease three feet beneath the surface, his kingly outlines could be clearly seen by the angler. On Monday Price went to the Run with an assortment of flies, a box of the latest worms he could find, a kettle of minnows, and half a dozen lively grasshoppers. He stepped into the Run at the nearest open, a quarter of a mile above the pool, and then, with cautious steps, he proceeded noiselessly down the stream. The severe rain that had fallen had swollen the Run and spread it out to twice its natural size. It had also turned the water to a rusty color that made objects in it invisible, and helped the angler in his work. Within 100 yards of the pool where the beautiful fish lived, Price stopped and took from his creel three fine silk lines, with six-foot leaders on each. On one of them he fastened three flies; a grizzly king, a queen of the stream, and a brown hackle; on another line he fastened a No. 10 hook, on which was impaled a large worm, which completely concealed it. On the third line he tied two hooks. One held a squirming minnow, and the other a kicking grasshopper. Then he dropped a worm on the bosom of the stream, and watched it as it swept down toward the pool. Suddenly there was a splash, the king of the brook darted up and fell upon the worm. Then a grasshopper and a minnow were sent down. The minnow was captured by a small trout on its way to the pool, but the grasshopper continued on until it reached the pool, when another splash and a momentary view of the kingly fish explained its fate. Then the three lines holding bait were dropped into the stream, and a few seconds later the flies followed. The flies reached the pool first, and were flicked along the surface without any result. The baited hooks passed over the pool in safety, and kept on down the stream until they were checked by the line. There was danger of a small fish hooking himself, which would ruin the chances of catching the big fellow, and so the lines were quickly hauled in.

Price was not yet beaten. He cast a few worms and grasshoppers into the run and then let his hooked bait float down with them. Right over the pool there was a wild flurry, the water was beaten into foam and then there came a jerk in one of the lines, which told Price that the coveted prey was hooked. He had only one rod with him which had controlled the flies. It was the work of only a few seconds to cut the leader from this line and connect the other line to the rod. It was a six ounce rod, and if Price had any doubt before as to the size of the trout he had hooked, this doubt disappeared when he felt the vibrations of the rod. The difficulty was to land his prize, and the excitement of the next hour was something nobody can appreciate who has not been in a similar position. Half a dozen times during the hour that it took to land his victim the fish was brought near enough to be seen even in the yellow water. Each time, with a flick of his mighty tail, the noble fish darted back and sped away again. But at last he grew too tired to fight, and came quietly up and was tenderly lifted up in the net. He had taken the grasshopper and had swallowed it so completely that the hook had to be cut out.

There was excitement in the village when Price came home with his prize. The trout measured sixteen inches from the tip of his spreading tail to the tip of his warlike snout, and weighed 2¼ pounds. When the brook cleaned itself and became again transparent the big pool was visited again. The aggravating form of the big trout was gone, and in its stead were hundreds of small ones. From this pool twenty-three trout were captured in an hour. Their average size was seven inches.

A NEST OF BLACK SNAKES.

The "Big Whopper" that Frightened a Connecticut Farmer's Hired Men.

WATERBURY, July 13.—In the past twenty years George W. Eaton, a thrifty rural resident of Torringford street, a suburb of Torrington, has made a small fortune in sheep and poultry raising. For two years his profits have been somewhat curtailed by the mysterious disappearance of lambs and chickens. Mr. Eaton concluded that he was being made an unwilling contributor to the sumptuous spreads of his colored help at their frequent dances in Burrville. Night after night he kept lonely vigil over his sheepfold and chicken coops, but never succeeded in capturing anything but a severe cold.

A little over two years ago, one hot summer day, one of his men, Hub Seeley, rushed out of a hay field nearly frightened out of his wits, and reported that he had been chased by a black snake which he insisted was as big around as a child's body. Hub is looked upon as a little off intellectually, so Mr. Eaton and the farm hands only laughed at his story. He refused to go back to work, however, until a thorough search had been made; no snake was found. Since that time, several other men have fled in terror from different parts of the farm, declaring they had seen a monster snake which they called "the old whopper."

On Tuesday last, when one of the men came in with a story of having seen the big snake again, Mr. Eaton, suspecting that they were trying to shirk work, became indignant, and started out on a personal investigation, carrying a big rawhide whip. While going through a pasture near an old barn, under which his flocks sometimes seek shelter at night in rainy weather, he hear the bleating of a lamb in the sheepfold beneath the barn. Lanterns were procured, and, as none of the colored help would venture inside, Mr. Eaton forced his way to the suffering lamb. He returned in short order and had the men rip up the floor planks and remove the overlying boards from a portion of the barn set well into the ground. There, behind a lot of old hay and other barn refuse, in an irregular hole about a foot deep, was found a snake's nest. Pitchforks, revolvers, axes, and a shotgun were procured, and the work of destruction began. The fight lasted ten minutes, and thirty-one reptiles were slain. They were black snakes of various sizes. The "old whopper" was there, with a mate nearly as big as himself. He measured 9 feet 3 inches in length and 7½ inches around his body. The mate was nearly 8 feet long and correspondingly thick.

This species of snake is very numerous in Connecticut, and specimens measuring four and five feet have been frequently killed on land adjoining swamps and ponds, but these are believed to be the largest black snakes ever killed in this State. The smaller reptiles found in the nest measured all the way from 2 to 4½ feet. The skins of the two largest were removed on Tuesday, and are now in the hands of a Torrington taxidermist.

BRUIN IN THE SWITCH TOWER.

In Full Possession of Signals and Switches Near Philadelphia.

From the Philadelphia Record.

A wild bear in possession of the signal tower and running the trains on the New York division of the Pennsylvania Railroad was the strange sight that nearly drove the rightful occupants of the tower into fits a few nights ago. The bear came from the Zoölogical garden, and the tower was that just back of the garden on the curve which the railroad makes at that place.

E. W. Rose, the telegraph operator in the tower, and Samuel Foster, an assistant yardmaster, were dozing in the tower about 3 o'clock on Sunday morning when there came a soft pit-a-pat upon the stairs. They did not notice it, nor did they see a hairy head that was poked in at the door and looked curiously around. Something in the inspection may have displeased him, for suddenly the men were awakened from their napping by a deep growl. Before Foster, who was lying in a corner, could get up the bear had put his big paws around his neck and began to squeeze him affectionately. The startled man gave a shriek, and the more he shrieked the more the bear hugged him. Foster was beginning to grow purple in the face when Rose, who had recovered his presence of mind, started in with a broom stick to vanquish the bear. This drew his attention from Foster, and an instant later Rose was engaging a vigorous foe, and his first impulse so long that Rose began to think his last day had come. The hug still continued, when the men suddenly remembered that the early morning express from New York was due, and that the signal had not been set for it.

"Give the signal to No. 12," gasped Rose to his companion. Foster, who was very badly frightened indeed, managed to crawl from his corner, and see that the signal was properly set. Then he grasped the telegraph key and, while Bruin looked on in astonishment, he startled every operator along the line by flashing over the wires to Broad street:

"For Heaven's sake send assistance to No. 3 office. Bear in possession of the tower. Has full control of signals and switches. Send six men with rifles."

As the telegraph operator sank back exhausted the bear left Foster and returned to his first victim. He moved slowly, and both men grasped the opportunity to jump over him and dash down stairs. As they turned the key in the lock of the door at the bottom they heard the bear thump against it. Rushing over to the Zoölogical Garden from which place they supposed the strange visitor had escaped, they yelled loudly for assistance. Looking back on their way they saw Bruin in the tower trying to move the switch levers.

A sleepy keeper was aroused after considerable effort, and the party laid siege to the tower. There was a pretty struggle between keeper and bear for a time, but the former came off victor. The bear was led back to his pen and put in irons. Foster has been off duty ever since, and Rose still starts nervously whenever he hears a footfall on the tower stairs.

THROCKMORTON'S 'POSSUM CROP.

Eight Hundred of the Animals Hanging Like Hairy Fruit from the Trees.

From the Atlanta Constitution.

Have you ever seen a 'possum farm? If you have not take the first train and come to Griffin. You will never regret it. A few miles west of Griffin is the home of Mr. William Throckmorton. Mr. Throckmorton is the proprietor of the most unique and remunerative farm in Georgia. It is the "Lime Creek 'Possum Farm."

On the crest of a well-wooded hill is a comfortable cottage surrounded by beautiful shade trees. At the foot of the hill is a pretty branch, running through the centre of a ten-acre persimmon grove enclosed within a high board fence. The persimmon trees are interspersed with a quantity of old hollow trees and hollow logs planted in the ground.

It was in the early afternoon when we arrived, and to the uninitiated the farm appeared to be an immense fruit orchard bearing an oblong whitish sort of fruit hanging from the dead limbs of the trees by a long, black stem. But appearances were deceptive. It was not fruit, but between 700 and 800 'possums taking their afternoon siesta. Our party, the guests of Messrs. W. J. Kincaid and Seaton Grantland, who are, by the way, interested in the farm were somewhat unacquainted with the habits of the 'possum, and consequently plied question after question to our highly amused hosts. I now consider myself an expert on the 'possum, and here is what I learned and saw:

The 'possum, when desiring to take a nap, simply climbs the most convenient tree, walks out on a limb, wraps his tail in one and a half times around, and swings his body out into space. His legs and feet are drawn close into his body and his head drawn up between his shoulders until it forms an almost perfect ball, and appears to be a great pear covered with white fur.

The sun was slowly setting below the distant nine mountains and we were still gazing at the queer objects in amazement when a half dozen little 'possums emerged from the pocket of their mother, ran up her tail, and commenced playing on the limb above. In a few minutes this marsupial stretched her head and then her fore feet out. She swung herself once or twice, grabbed her tail with her forepaws, and climbed up it to the limb, which she caught with her claws, untwisted her tail, and pulled up. Hardly had she balanced herself when the half dozen young ones climbed into her pocket and were hid from view. She then climbed down the tree.

While this was going on more than 700 others had awakened and were coming down from the trees. Reaching the ground, each one made for the creek, drank, and then ran up the hill to a pen in which they were to be fed.

They were of all sizes. Some would barely weigh a half pound, while others would tip the scales at thirty. The 'possum, when hungry, utters a sound which is a cross between a mew and a moan. Over 700 'possums were together so thick that the ground could not be seen between them, and the small ones had been forced upon the backs of the larger. All were uttering this peculiar sound, reminding one of an army of soldiers moaning over the death of their General, when through a gate a negro posted a wheelbarrow heaping full of all kinds of trash and slops, consisting of fruit peelings, vegetables, meats, bones, and bread. As he hove in sight the scene among the 'possums reminded one of feeding time in a menagerie. The little ugly animals screamed and scratched and bit at one another until the negro had scattered the contents of the wheelbarrow over the ground. Then, although it was well scattered, all wanted to eat in one place just like hogs, and there was considerable more scratching and biting. But this did not last long, for the rations were soon consumed by the great drove of possums, and they commenced to disperse, seemingly contented, and this time climbed the persimmon trees. During the persimmon season the 'possums are not fed at all, for it is on this fruit they become rolling fat