

TEXAS SNAKE DENTIST

F. B. ARMSTRONG FOLLOWS HAZARDOUS OCCUPATION.

Make Good Living by Extracting Fangs and Poison from Rattlesnakes—Reptiles Then Sold for Fancy Prices.

Weatherford, Tex.—Men have adopted many strange and hazardous occupations and callings by which to gain a livelihood, but the state of Texas boasts of one whose choice of occupation is perhaps the only one being followed at any place in the United States—that of a snake dentist.

For nearly 25 years F. B. Armstrong, of the country near Brownsville, Texas, has been in this business. He operates on a choice clientele of customers, for he only handles the business of his majesty the diamond-back rattler. And he makes a handsome living out of his strange and gawdawful occupation; in fact, he has grown well off in worldly goods, and is now able to retire comfortably from following his more or less hazardous calling.

Mr. Armstrong actually does dental work on the big snakes that he handles. He extracts their fangs and poison sacs, and he does this to a thousand of them every year. The poison when extracted is sold to chemists and physicians who find it highly useful in medicine, and he also sells many of the harmless snakes which are in much demand, also, so that he does a good business without advertising, and always has more orders than he can fill.

Armstrong's method of handling the snakes and extracting the poison from the little sacs which lie at the base of the fangs is unique and original. From each rattler he extracts from one to two tablespoonfuls of the poison, which is a green, syrup-like liquid, and has a distinctly sweetish taste. The poison is comparatively harmless when taken internally, though Armstrong would not advise anyone to make a habit of swallowing much of it crude.

For the purpose of extracting and saving the liquid poison the captor uses a specially constructed box which has a sliding glass top. This box is so constructed that Armstrong can hold the snake securely while operating on him, and at the same time keep an eye on the snake's movements in the box. The snake is hauled out of the box in which it had been placed when taken from the fattening pen, where it has been kept for weeks and perhaps months, and is then induced to enter the operating box which Armstrong facetiously calls his "dental chair."

By their united efforts Armstrong and his Mexican helper then press the rattler's head backward over the sliding top, which forces the snake's mouth open. The lid is then pressed tightly against the protruding neck. By this time the snake has become furiously angry at his undignified treatment and is ready to strike at anything and strike deep and hard. At the opportune moment Armstrong places the rim of a small glass in the snake's mouth, the Mexican helper releases the head of the reptile for an instant and it immediately clamps its fangs on the rim of the glass. The terrible fangs dart forth (they are shaped exactly like the claws of a cat when they are unshed) and the poison is quickly emptied into the glass.

In its ferocious state the snake drains its glands of all the poison they contain, and for a long time it remains harmless, so far as danger from its poison is concerned. Mr. Armstrong then has little difficulty in removing the fangs with a pair of ordinary dentists' forceps. From six to eight of these fangs are grown by the rattlesnake in the course of his lifetime, and they are from one-quarter to a half inch in length, are curved and as sharp as needles. The snakes from which the fangs have been extracted find ready sale at fancy prices. Armstrong keeps a large lot on hand all the time, however, in order to supply the demand for the poison.

PUFFY WENT HIS BEARD.

Reached Bender's Knees—Boys Ignited It—Firemen Were Late.

Philadelphia.—For 50 years Abraham Bender, aged 70, let his beard grow, until it reached below his knees. It went up like smoke the other day, though engine company No. 10 answered a call to extinguish the flames.

Walter Collins and Lawrence Richardson, boys, are being held for court in \$300 bail each, although Magistrate Hughes is at a loss as to whether they shall be charged with arson or disorderly conduct.

Bender's beard was so long that he used to tuck it into the tops of his boots, and in cold weather wrapped it about his neck like a comforter. It was the pride of his life. The old man likes boys and when Collins and Richardson asked him for a match he replied "Sure."

Before he could realize it one of the boys had lit his whiskers. There was a puff of smoke and a scream. The engine company was too late. Bender was not badly burned.

Sixth Pair of Twins Born.

Goodhue, Minn.—Mrs. A. Rosner has given birth to her sixth pair of twins, all of whom have arrived since 1898. Mrs. Rosner is the mother of 25 children.

BABY WEIGHED FORTY POUNDS.

Obliging Des Moines Ice Man Gets Employers in Trouble.

Des Moines, Ia.—When Assistant Attorney General Charles W. Lyon, of Iowa, discovered that a 40-pound baby boy had been born to his wife the other day he immediately ordered an investigation of the Des Moines ice trust. Ordinarily babies and ice have no intimate connection. But in this instance they had.

When the baby was born the other day the proud father—it was his first born—immediately called for a pair of scales to weigh the youngster. His demand could not be supplied from the house furnishings, but it so happened that the ice man came along.

"A pair of scales to weigh the baby?" said the ice man to the questioner, "sure, I have! What do you think I weigh my ice with?"

"Bring them in," said the attorney general. Then the nurse carefully bundled up the baby and carried him out to the ice man. The beam on the scales shot up when the baby bundle was attached to it.

"How much does he weigh?" questioned the anxious father.

"Just 40 pounds," said the ice man, who was a bachelor.

"I know he was a husky young un," said the proud father, who also didn't know much about babies, and he hurried off to his office at the statehouse to tell the glad news and pass around the cigars.

"How much does he weigh?" was the first question put to the joyous father.

"Forty pounds," the assistant told Attorney General Byers.

"Why, you must be crazy," said Mr. Byers. Then Lyons told the attorney general just how he knew the baby weighed 40 pounds. "I guess all the trouble is that the ice man has been beating you out of 30 pounds of ice every day this summer," was Byers' comment. And now a petition is about to be filed to dissolve the ice trust.

PERISHES WITH HERMIT.

Faithful Dog Refuses to Leave Master in Flames.

Rehersburg, Pa.—Frederick C. Witman, aged 75, a well-known character in western Berks county, met with a horrible death by burning in his hermit home in Tulpehocken. George Yeakley, who lives some distance away, heard cries coming from the old man's stone home, and when he reached there he found it all ablaze. He tried to get inside, but the lone occupant of the place had each night secured the doors and windows with strong wrought iron bars.

Through a rift at one of the windows Yeakley and his mother beheld a horrible sight. Seated on his old wood chest, where he had lounged so much all his life, they saw the figure of the aged man. He was in flames from head to foot, and his clothing and hair had all been burned off. The arms were partly raised and his features terribly distorted, indicating that he had died in fearful agony.

Witman's old shepherd dog, that had guarded his master for many years, was pacing up and down in front of the wood chest when Yeakley finally cut away the door frame and gained admittance. The dog, although badly burned, could have been saved, but he snarled and bit when an effort was made to take him out. Finally he dragged himself over to the chest and died at the feet of his master.

GERMANS PREFER HANGING.

Distinguished Criminologist Declares Electrocution Undesirable.

Berlin.—Prof. Freudenthal, the distinguished German criminologist who went to New York to study the use of electricity in carrying out death sentences, advises against its substitution for the system of hanging and of decapitation now in vogue in Germany.

Prof. Freudenthal witnessed an execution by electricity at Auburn prison, New York. He says that the chair is preferable to the gallows or the block from the standpoint of the spectators, because the human agency whereby death is caused is not so apparent. He insists, however, that this advantage does not compensate for the torture the spectators suffer in the uncertainty as to just what moment death occurred, or if it had occurred at all.

On the occasion when Prof. Freudenthal was present the spectators had a distinct impression that the heart of the condemned man continued to beat after the first application of the voltage. A second application was therefore made. Prof. Freudenthal also finds that the length of the torture suffered by the condemned makes the adoption of electricity undesirable in Germany.

Gaudy Pews for Church.

Allentown, Pa.—Joseph Heid, John Galt and Clarence Hobart have started suit for \$158 wages against Galt & Dally, contractors, who painted the interior of Jordan Reformed church at Walbert's last summer. The defendants claim that the consistory had withheld part of their money because the pews were painted yellow, green and chestnut, altogether too gaudy for a church.

More money was held back, they explained at the hearing before the alderman, because they hadn't been able to finish a memorial window for lack of proper material. The Reading firm, which had contracted to supply this, had sent colored glass designed for a barroom window instead of an ecclesiastical scene.

SLEEPS FOR FIFTY YEARS.

Railway Engineers Unearth a Modern Rip Van Winkle.

Sacramento, Cal.—The engineering corps of the Western Pacific has roused from his slumbers a modern Rip Van Winkle—an old recluse who did not know of the civil war.

"Bill" Brown is his name, and he lives in a lonely cabin in the Sierras back of Orville. Here he made his home in the days before the war, and only once or twice a year has he entered the nearest mining camp for supplies. Without asking any questions as to what the rest of the world was doing he would go back to his hermitage.

In running lines for the Western Pacific, engineers penetrated his hiding place. For a time he was diffident and refused to talk. At last he became loquacious and began to ask questions. He wanted to know the outcome of the fight between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas for a seat in the United States senate. His engineering friends brought him to Sacramento to witness the celebration of the coming of the Northern electric road. Rip Van Winkle had slept for 25 years, but "Bill" Brown had been buried for half a century. He refused to take an interest in anything.

"This is too much for me," he said. "Too much noise, too much bustle, too many people."

He was astonished at the progress the world had made, but could not understand it. He gave a sigh of relief when he was placed on the cars and again headed for the mountain fastnesses of Butte county.

"GHOST HOUSE" FOR MUSEUM.

Strange Relics from the South Sea Islands Sent to New York.

New York.—A "Ghost House" from the Bismarck archipelago in the South Pacific, a peep into which used to cost any native woman her life, has just come into possession of the American Museum of Natural History by purchase from Prof. Eugene Schroeder. The house is actually a temple and it contained idols wonderfully carved from single logs and painted bright red and yellow. It is made of logs and has a thatched roof. There are interstices between the timbers of which it is made, and through these any curious man might peep with impunity. But should a woman do so she was summarily clubbed to death if caught. The strange temple stood in a remote part of one of the islands.

Prof. Schroeder has also sold the museum ten idols, such as the ghost house held; 30 strings of small shells, which in the archipelago are the exact price of one wife; weapons made from human bones; a death drum, which the islanders do not beat, but rub, the resulting sound being weirdly mournful; numerous tools and many other objects of great ethnological value and interest.

IN JAIL FOR DEBT; MAY BE LIFE.

Teacher Incarcerated Two Months with No Prospect of Freedom.

Champaign, Ill.—Sherman Cass, a school-teacher, has been in jail here for two months for debt, and under the laws of the state it is possible to keep him there for the rest of his life.

The parents of a child whom Cass had chastised recently secured judgment against him for \$1,800. Cass refused to pay—perhaps could not pay if he wished—and was sent to the debtor's cell. Under the law he can be kept imprisoned as long as the plaintiffs in the case pay his board regularly each week. So far they have done so. Should they omit payment on the proper day one time the prisoner would be freed. And should they desire to go away for a month, and pay for the board in advance for that time, that also would set the prisoner free, for the law provides that the board be paid regularly each week.

The case makes it plain, however, that a person with a grudge against another may, by securing a judgment, keep him in jail just as long as revenge continues to be worth the price of the plain fare furnished prisoners in the county jails.

HIS HEART IS TOO WARM.

Lawyer Abandons Profession Because He Can't Bear to See Clients Suffer.

Waterbury, Conn.—Declaring that he can no longer bear to witness the suffering of clients who are forced to seek a lawyer's advice, Joseph E. Lauber has abandoned the practice of law and announced that he will engage in an occupation in which the experiences are less pitiable.

"The nervous strain of the average lawyer's general practice is too much for any man, unless he is singularly callous and cold-hearted," said Mr. Lauber. "The shifting of a client's troubles to the shoulders of his attorney not only ails his sympathies to the depths, but burdens him with a responsibility which sometimes is killing."

Mr. Lauber is one of the most successful of the younger attorneys here. He is a graduate of Yale.

Kaiser Gives \$10,000 in Tips.

London.—Before leaving Windsor Castle for Highcliffe Castle Kaiser Wilhelm left \$10,000 to be divided as tips among the servants at the castle, the gamekeepers and the stable attendants. On his previous visit to Windsor in 1891 the imperial tip was only \$2,500.

STUFFED GOOSE TRADE

WATERTOWN, WIS., CENTER OF INDUSTRY IN AMERICA.

Product Finds a Ready Market All Over United States—Stuffing Done by Hand—Custom Brought from Germany.

Watertown, Wis.—The season for stuffing geese is near at hand, and many farmers around Watertown will be busy between now and Christmas looking after this much-sought-after article of food, which requires time and patience on the part of the family household to produce. The importance of this industry in this section of the state is little understood, but thousands of dollars are paid out annually for stuffed geese, which in turn find a ready market all over the United States. Orders for hundreds of thousands of pounds of stuffed geese have already been received in Watertown, and the order for the stuffing of the same has already been given out to the farmers who understand this line of poultry production. It is a science in itself, and requires judgment, skill and aptitude to make the undertaking successful.

The old notion and theory that the geese were called to the floor by their web feet to keep them quiet was exploded long ago. No such practice ever prevailed here so far as known. In fact, during a portion of the stuffing process the goose is allowed some freedom and plenty of water, but toward the close of the stuffing season they are confined in smaller pens. The time of stuffing varies from three to four weeks, and under favorable conditions the latter period gives the best results.

The stuffing is first begun at intervals of six or seven hours and during the last week this is kept up three hours, both day and night, turns being taken by members of the family in this work. During the last week the goose becomes heavy and in consequence of the stuffing and the small exercise the liver becomes quite large, in some cases being known to weigh four pounds. Great care must be exercised or the goose may suffocate and die. The work of stuffing is done by hand, the noodles being actually pushed down the throat of the goose. In doing this each goose must be taken separately and given as much food as the person deems sufficient. The noodles are generally prepared from a mixture of wheat and rye flour, which is mixed into a dough and cut into strips or noodles, which in turn are baked in the oven ready to be used. When the time comes they are moistened in water and forced down the throat of the goose with the aid of the finger.

The dressing of the goose after killing is one of the main considerations, as much depends upon the way the geese are put up for market, and this generally means that the farmer has a gathering to help in the work so that it can be done expeditiously. When the work of dressing is done the fatted fowls have the appearance of huge rolls of butter, as the legs, neck and head are tied up in such a manner as to give the fowl that appearance.

The prices vary somewhat with respect to the law of supply and demand, but the farmer each year knows in advance pretty near the price he is to receive for a certain quality of fowl. The usual price for good stock is the price a pound that the fowl will average. If a lot of geese will average 28 pounds in weight then the price is 28 cents a pound and so on. The writer has seen stuffed geese marketed in Watertown which weighed 34 pounds, and the liver of which weighed in the neighborhood of four or five pounds. They are certainly a sight, and during the season hundreds of people watch the marketing of this class of fowl. As said before, they are shipped all over the country. The custom is one which came to this country with the Germans from certain sections of that empire. At Strassburg the industry is a large one, the livers being used to make a pie called pate de foie gras, much eaten and greatly relished by the French. The liver is used as a dainty edible in this country, while the lard is fried out and put away for table use. The skin of the geese is toasted and makes a dish called Jewish crackers, greatly relished. There is but little lean meat on the fowl, the most of the carcass being converted into goose lard.

The amount of money paid out for stuffed geese about Watertown may be inferred from the fact that one farmer in the town of Milford got a check for almost \$1,000 for the stuffed geese he marketed in one season. Of course this is not all profit, and care must be exercised in the selection of the geese, but the poultry pays remarkably well, especially in years when other poultry brought low prices. Besides the stuffed goose industry, Watertown is noted as one of the largest poultry markets in the northwest.

Novel Use for a Fox Terrier.

Paris.—Yet another vocation has been found for dogs at Nice. The new sewerage system now being constructed is said to be one of the best in the world, but among the sewers is one too narrow for a man to traverse. In order to clean it a small fox terrier is used. The dog is fitted with harness and trots through the passage pulling a cord after him to which a large brush is attached. When the dog emerges at the other end the workmen pull the cord through, thus performing the cleaning process.

HARD WORK TO RETAIN YOUTH.

One Man Declares He is Not Envious of His Friend's Success.

"The fabled secret of youth, the fountain of everlasting life, and all the panaceas for growing old without looking old or feeling old are abundant by the side of the process used by a professional man of my acquaintance," said a widely known lawyer of Philadelphia. "That man looks like a chap of 35, acts, eats, drinks and enjoys himself like one, but I know he's past 80, and I considerably put it at that. He hasn't a gray hair on his head, his eyes are bright, his skin clear, his step elastic and his voice strong. What's the secret? It has been an inflexible habit with him from early youth to retire at eight o'clock in the evening and sleep until seven in the morning. On rising he takes a cold bath, but many men do that. Oh, that's all easy, you say? It's not so easy after all. Try it and stick to it, despite engagements at the theater, business affairs left over from the day and all the variety of things of that sort, and you'll find it about as hard a task as you can place before yourself. Of course, there have been a few breaks in his lifetime habit. But in the main he has adhered to it. Do I recommend it? Well, hardly. It's a dry existence. I prefer this style of life, and am willing to die young accordingly."

EFFECT OF EARTH'S ROTATION.

Belgian Geologist So Ascribes Curious Twists in Tree Trunks.

Curious twists are observed in many tree trunks, and the inquiry just begun in Europe suggests the surprising conclusion that they are produced by the earth's rotation like the twists of storms and the whirls seen in water. Van den Broeck, the Belgian geologist, points out that if conditions of growth were the cause the torsion should follow the sun's apparent path. In at least 990 out of 1,000 trees the reverse is true, and it may be that the twist is usually to the left in the northern hemisphere and to the right—or with the clock—in the southern hemisphere, like the turn of the cyclonic storms and water vortices. This difference is due to the earth's rotation. Jean Brunhes notes that it was shown some years ago that the winds due to the earth's motion blow steadily at a season when vegetation is active and sensitive, and a slight continuous bending and turning them would be likely to affect the tree permanently. —From the Bulletin of the American Forestry Association.

The American Beauty's Defects.

If we were to find particular fault with our American beauties dominant in the public eye today, it would be their lack of facial strength, the absence of soul quality which our strenuous national life and feverish ambitions tend to nullify if not annihilate. The nobility of countenance, the calm, pure, steadfast expressions seen in the faces of the great sculptured might well be emulated by our own beautiful women. We lack the simplicity, the repose of the period that produced those beauty types that have been accepted as a standard for all ages. The American girl, with all her glorious qualities, needs some of the serenity and power of old Greece to make her more perfect than she is. Her facial weak points are in her nose and chin and forehead. Now and then one comes upon the strong type, but it is the exception—Perriton Maxwell, in the Bohemian.

How a Philosopher Described a Child.

A child is nature's fresh picture, newly drawn in oil, which time and much handling dims and defaces. His soul is yet a white paper, unscrubbed with observations of the world, where-with, at length, it becomes a blurred notebook. He is purely happy because he knows no evil, nor hath made means by sin to be acquainted with misery. He arrives not at the mischief of being wise, nor endures evils to come by foreseeing them. He kisses and loves all, and when the smart of the rod is past, smiles on his beater. Could he put off his body with his little coat, he had got eternity without a burden, and exchanged but one heaven for another.—John Earle (1601-1655).

Tennyson and the Socialist.

Tennyson figuring as a champion of the imperiled rights of property is thus quoted in William Allingham's lately published "Diary": "I was once in a coffee shop in the Westminster road at four o'clock in the morning. A man was raging. Why has so-and-so a hundred pounds and I have not a shilling?" I said to him, "If your father had left you a hundred pounds you would not give it away to somebody else." He had not a word to answer. I knew he hadn't."

What Happened.

Eva—"Dear me! I really believe that Jack was a pugilist at some stage of his career." Katherine—"Gracious! What in the world gave you that idea?" Eva—"Why, the other evening when we were sitting on the sofa little Tommy peeped in the parlor and shouted 'Break away!' and Jack jumped all the way to the other end of the room. After that he said in confusion he was thinking about referees."

Real Sweet.

"Please let me take your picture, miss," pleaded the young man with the camera. "I declare, you are sweet enough to eat." "Gracious!" laughed the pretty summer girl; "and is that why you wish to put me on a plate?"

USED POISON OF RATTLESNAKE.

Preparation That Made War Arrows of Cherokee Indians Deadly.

An old Cherokee Indian recently gave away the secret how the Indians of olden times used to poison their arrows, heads for war purposes or for killing bears, according to the Denver Field and Farm. They took a fresh deer liver, fastened it to a long pole, and then went to certain places where they knew they would find rattlesnakes in abundance. About midday the rattlers are all out of their dens, coiled up in the cooling sun. The bucks would poke the first rattler they found with the liver on the long pole. A rattler, unlike common snakes, always shows fight in preference to escaping. The snake would thus repeatedly strike at the liver with its fangs until its poison was all used up, whereupon it would quit striking and try slowly to move on. The bucks would then hunt up another rattler and repeat the performance, keeping up the work until the liver was well soaked with snake poison. Then the pole was carried home and fastened somewhere in an upward position until the liver became as dry as a bone. The liver was then pounded to a fine powder and placed in a buckskin bag, to be used as needed for their arrows. This powder would stick like glue to any moistened surface and was death to any creature which it entered on its arrows.

TOOK HIS OWN FROM ROBBER.

How a Pilgrim Got Back His Stolen Purse in Church.

From Czenstochowa, the Mecca of Polish pilgrims, comes an amazing story of coincidences. A pilgrim went to one of the priests and complained that some thief had stolen his purse while he was in church, and asked for money. The priest replied that he had no money and that the best thing for the pilgrim to do was to try to find the thief. "I shall go into the church and steal money from somebody else," said the pilgrim. "For I have nothing to go home with." He went into the church and seeing a man in the crowd with a wallet on his back slipped his hand into it and pulled out his own stolen purse, with the exact sum he had left in it. He was so glad to find his money that he hurried off to tell the priest and the thief got away.

First Idea of the Telegraph.

Long before Prof. S. F. Morse had perfected his great invention the word "telegraph" was used for a sort of semaphore. In the French revolution a "telegraph," assisted by telescopes, was devised to carry news over immense distances. Forty years before this time, however, there was published the first detailed scheme for communication by means of electricity. It is outlined in a letter to the Scots magazine, written February 1, 1753, from Renfrew and signed "C. M." This suggestion was to transmit a "charge from the conductor of an electrical machine at the sending station along an insulated wire to the receiving machine, the presence of the charge being indicated by the behavior of a light pit ball or the passage of a spark." Each letter of the alphabet was to have a separate wire, so that any word might be spelled out and any message sent.

"Time, the Great Healer."

A doctor who had treated a patient for a long time without giving relief finally wrote to him that he could do no more, and that tommy-rotum was the only remedy. The patient immediately went to a drug store and applied for the remedy. The druggist gave him a bottle of some kind of mixture and charged him a large sum for it. After the patient had taken the compound for some time he met his doctor and thanked him for the wonderful prescription, which had cured him. The druggist's trick was discovered and the patient sued him for the money spent on the bogus medicine.

Trend of Civilization.

I had thought that civilization meant the attainment of peace and order and freedom, of good will between man and man, of the love of truth, and the hatred of injustice, and by consequence the attainment of the good life which these things breed, a life free from craven fear, but full of incident; that was what I thought it meant, not more stuffed chairs and more cushions, and more carpets and gas, and more dainty meat and drink—and therewithal more and sharper difference between class and class.—William Morris.

"Shopping Headache."

A prominent physician says that "shoppers' headache" is due to the fact that one has not eaten enough. He declares that no work is so nerve trying as shopping, and advises a good, substantial luncheon in the midst of the store hunt. Take an hour for rest and eat, thinking as little as possible of the tasks yet to be accomplished, and there will not be such a splitting headache to take home.

Making Sure.

Artist—I want to get a frame for a rather important picture I've just finished. Picture Dealer—Certainly, sir. For your own use? Artist—No, I'm sending it to the exhibition. Picture Dealer—Just step this way. I've the very thing. There! You see, the design of the frame is a nymph on each side. Absolutely excludes all danger of having the picture hang upside down.—Stray Stories.