

THE PITCHER PLANT.

This plant belongs to the small family *Sarraceniaceae*, which includes only the species *sarracenia*, *heliamphora*, and *darlingtonia*, and its peculiarities are that the leaf stalks, as shown by the cut, are pipe-like, and the leaf proper on the end of the pipe appears as an ear-like appendage. The pipe or tubes extend first along the ground, and then bend upward. The interior of each tube is covered with a network of veins, and the interior glands secrete quantities of water which attracts all kinds of insects, most of which perish. For this reason, these plants have been called, since the time of Darwin, insect-devouring plants. Although their structure is very wonderful, they are not unique, for many other plants have tube-shaped petioles; take, for example, the *Nepenthes*, *Cephalotus*, *Darlingtonia*, etc. Linne knew the species, and gave it the name of Dr. Sarrazin, of Quebec.

These plants are found only in North America, specially in the southern part, where they are known as "pitcher plants" or "fly traps." There are about six species, viz., *sarracenia purpurea* L., *S. rubra* Walt., *S. flava* L., *S. psittacina* Mx., *S. variolaris* Mx., *S. drummondii* Hook., *S. leucophylla* Rafin. The flower is very insignificant, the distinguishing feature of the plant being the trumpet-shaped leaves. This genus grows in marshy land. This is, in brief, a description of a plant which interests us specially, since it has been found on the high lands of the Thuringen forest, where it will have to endure severe winters. We hope that its discoverer did not disturb the roots, so that they may increase in the natural way, as the plants blossom and go to seed.—*Illustrirte Zeitung*.

THE PINE SNAKE—SO-CALLED HORN SNAKE.

BY C. FEW SEISS.

Gonston, in a curious book entitled *Hist. Nat. Serpentibus*, published in England in 1653, says: "In America are found asps with stings in the tail, where-with they strike and kill." To the present day there are people in America who firmly believe in the existence of a deadly horn or hoop snake. Only last summer, a Philadelphia daily paper, noted for its veracity, published a clipping from a Virginia paper, stating that in a certain locality in said State the horn snakes were so numerous as to be destructive to young oak trees. The account says the snakes (in mere play I suppose) rolled hoop-like down the hill and struck their poison-horned tails into the trunks of the trees, and "a witness" observed that the leaves upon the trees thus stung would wither and turn brown in two hours, and the trees themselves were completely destroyed!

It is to be deplored that "witness" neglected to secure and preserve specimens of such rare ophiidians—serpents injurious to vegetation! He would certainly have made himself both famous and wealthy.

Wasps, bees, and scorpions have a sting or lancet-like instrument at the end of the abdomen or tail, generally furnished with a poison duct; but serpents have venom weapons in the form of teeth only, never in any other situation. The so-called venomous horn and hoop snake never existed in America or in any other country. They are impossibilities and myths.

The venom of serpents is not injurious to vegetation. That delicate seeds will throw out roots and sprout in dilute snake poison has been repeatedly demonstrated. A hole bored in the trunk of a tree and filled with serpent venom would cause no perceptible ill effect

to the tree. Not long ago I met a reverend gentleman who sincerely believed in the existence of a poisonous horn snake—not a *cerastes*, which has two horn-like projections upon the head, but one with a "poison sting" at the tip of its tail. He said he himself at one time saw a "horn snake" killed and cut apart with a scythe, and that he plainly observed the scythe was covered and spattered with the unmistakable "white

Knowing that the gentleman was truly sincere in declaring he had seen (what he supposed to be) a horn snake, I was desirous of knowing to what species it really belonged; and not having specimens handy, I placed before him colored drawings of the serpents likely to exist in the locality designated. In a short time he picked out the figure of the pine snake, *Pityophis melanoleucus*, and exclaimed, "That's it!"

—the very same serpent that was pointed out as the "horn snake" to Dr. Holbrook forty years ago.

Its tail does certainly end in a horny point, as is the case with several of our snakes, but it is needless to say there is no venomous gland or duct connected with it in any way whatever, but that it is as harmless as the bill of a baby chick just out of the egg. Indeed, the pine snake is in no way harmful. It is without venom fangs, and is not a constrictor, like the boas.

Some time ago, I saw in a saloon window a card bearing this notice: "Turtle-headed Snakes on Exhibition." I went in with a friend to see what these unheard of serpents might be, and after waiting a short time, the bartender drew from a box a snake about four feet in length, which he fondled and entwined about his neck, and twice put its head into his wide open mouth. This latter performance the snake evidently did not enjoy. There were three serpents on exhibition, all of them being common pine snakes. When

I informed my friend to what species they belonged, one of the audience heard my remarks, and I was flatly contradicted in a menacing manner.

A young Southern lady informed me—and I know she truly believed what she said—that in Eastern Virginia she once saw a dark colored snake drop from a tree, throw itself into the form of a hoop, and roll away with lightning-like rapidity; but, poor darling! she was nearly frightened to death, and what she

seemed to see was but an imaginary picture flashed upon a terror-struck brain. I have heard, from "actual witnesses," many wonderful stories concerning the deadly "hoop-horn snake," but they are all lies or the production of morbid imagination.

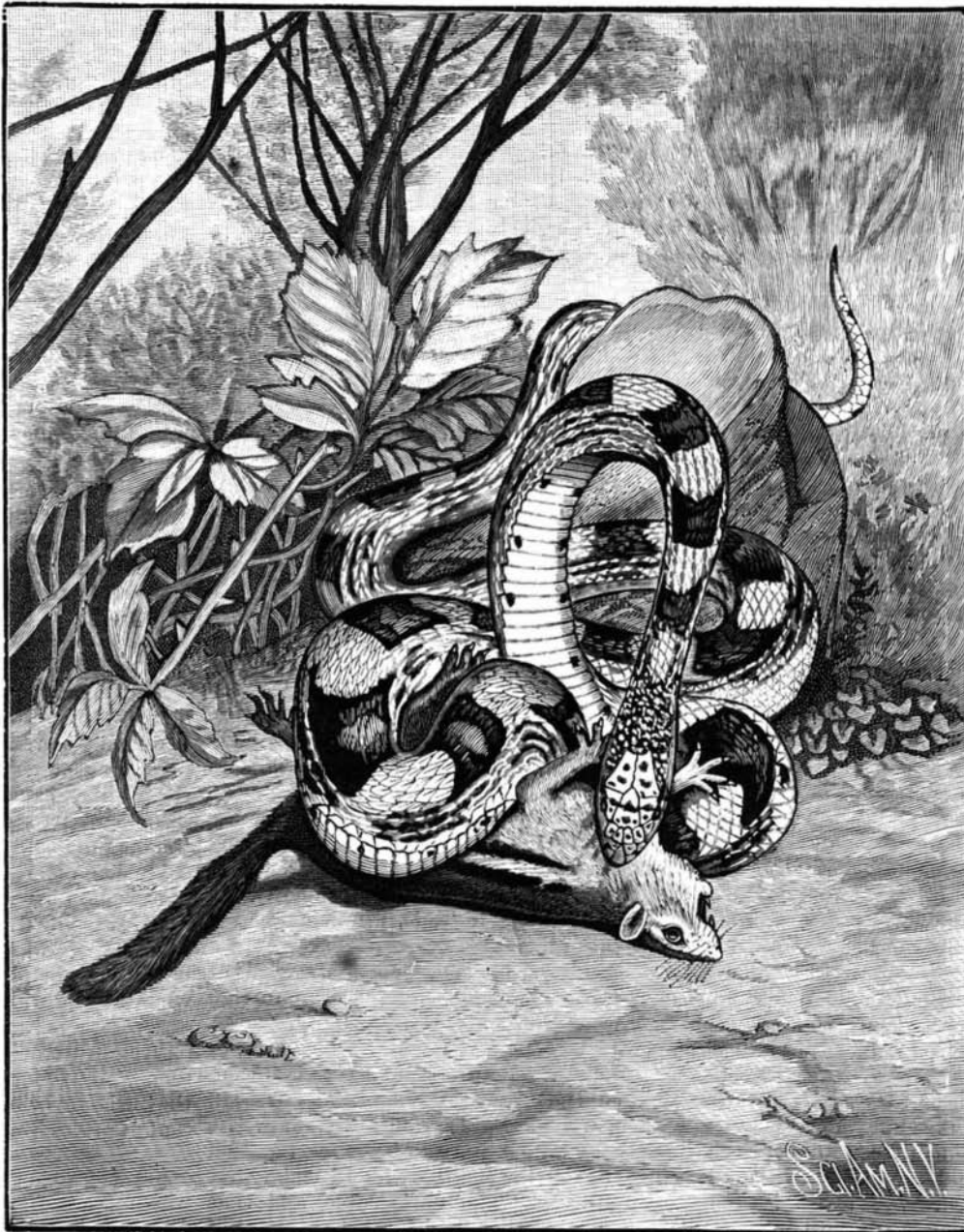
The pine snake feeds upon frogs, toads, and the smaller mammals. It is found occasionally in Pennsylvania, frequently in New Jersey, southward to Florida.

Calced Oyster Shells as a Remedy for Cancer.

In a recent number of the *Lancet*, Dr. Peter Hood, of London, refers to a communication of his published in the same journal nearly twenty years ago, on the value of calcined oyster shells as a means of arresting the growth of cancerous tumors. In a case which he then reported, that of a lady nearly eighty years old, the growth sloughed away and left a healthy surface after a course of the remedy, as much as would lie on a shilling being taken once or twice a day in a little warm water or tea. He now reports another case of scirrhus of the breast, in the wife of a physician, in which the treatment was followed by an arrest of the growth and a cessation of the pain, the improvement having now lasted for years, and no recrudescence having thus far occurred. He urges that the remedy can do no harm, and that the *prima facie* evidence in its favor is stronger than that on which, at Dr. Clay's recommendation, the profession lately displayed an extraordinary eagerness to try Chian turpentine. He would restrict the trials to well marked cases of scirrhus, and insists that no benefit should be looked for in less than three months.



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Why Workmen Are Not Fully Employed.

Some very important facts belonging to the labor question have been developed by the Illinois Bureau of Labor Statistics. This body in its latest report shows that of the workingmen in that State only 20 per cent are employed full time, and 35 per cent work less than half time. Those who get less than 40 weeks' work are 65 per cent of the whole; and those who get only from 13 to 30 weeks' wages in the year 35 per cent of the whole, or 30,451 in number. The conclusion drawn from these rather mournful figures, by the report, is that they supply a strong argument for the reduction of the hours of daily labor; the idea being that, as there is only just so much work to be done, the diminution of the time spent in doing it will have the effect to permit the larger employment of men now not fully employed. This notion, it will be observed, is simply a development of the theory that there is overproduction of the fruits of labor; that men now make more than men can consume, and that, as too much wealth is produced, idle or half idle persons cannot find full use for their powers except by decreasing the time in which all others are employed.

Now, we venture the assertion that these conclusions, and the theory from which they are drawn, are wholly apart from the truth, and absolutely defiant of the first principles of economy. It may be laid down as a fundamental fact, beyond the reach of controversy, that there has never been, and that there never will be, any such thing as overproduction of the general mass of things upon which human industry expends itself. The reason for this is that there cannot possibly be a creation of too much wealth until human desire is completely satisfied, and human desire for good things is an appetite which grows constantly with the materials upon which it feeds. That all men do not now have enough is a fact which needs no demonstration. The complaint of these Illinois workmen is that they do not or cannot get enough—not that they or any of their kindred and acquaintance have too much. If they and millions of others cannot fully supply their wants at a time when multitudes of men are complaining that, for their part, they cannot find opportunity to go to work to create such supply, then, manifestly, the trouble is not that too many are working and producing too much, but that there is some grave and scandalous defect in the social and commercial machinery which operates under the pressure of supply and demand. This is as clear as sunlight to every man who thinks.

What, then, is the matter? We think we can give at least a partial answer to that question. We must, of course, put aside the cases of men whose business is of such a kind that it cannot be pursued constantly, as, for example, bricklayers and masons, against whom is the fact that their work can hardly be done in wintry weather. The matter must be considered in a general way, on broad grounds; and we declare that the first thing to be considered as the greatest and worst and most destructive enemy of the workman is the rum traffic. Let us leave out of the question the moral aspects of that business, and regard it wholly from an economical standpoint.

In the report issued last month by the Bureau of Statistics at Washington, it is shown that the total annual expenditure for malt and spirituous liquors at retail in the United States is \$700,000,000, and that the drinking population includes about 15,000,000 persons. According to the census of 1880 (the most recent and accurate source of information we have), the total annual product of four great industries in this country is as follows:

Clothing, men's and women's.....	\$241,553,254
Cotton goods.....	210,950,383
Woolen goods.....	160,006,731
Iron and steel.....	296,557,685

Comparing these figures with those given above by the Bureau of Statistics, we find that the money squandered for rum by our people was more than three times greater than that expended for ready made clothing; that it was in excess of the value of the total combined product of the cotton, woolen, and iron and steel industries, and not much less than the value of the product of all four of the industries named. Of the fifteen million persons who wasted this vast sum, each man expended nearly one dollar a week in gratifying a base appetite. Every dollar of all this money was just as much wasted as if it had been dumped in the ocean. Indeed, such disposition of it would have been wise economy compared with that which was really made of it; for only the first cost of the rum appears in the sum of \$700,000,000. Probably the amount would be increased more than 50 per cent if we should ascertain the cost of the crime, pauperism, and insanity which always follow as the products of the rum traffic. Now, suppose all this money, three times the value of the total iron product of the country, had been expended for things useful, comfortable, and necessary, does any man believe that there would be complaint of overproduction? Would any laborer who wanted to work be forced into idleness? Is it not clear that there would be such a stimulus for business as would give to this country prosperity greater

than any it has ever known, with good wages for honest work? Here is one of the defects in our industrial machinery that need repairing. And observe out of the fifteen million drinkers and squanderers the vast majority are themselves workingmen. It is their money that goes into this terrible sink hole. It is their own hands that strike such a deadly blow at their dearest interests.

These are facts. We commend them to the thoughtful consideration of intelligent men. What ought such men to do with a traffic so costly, so destructive, so ruinous, a traffic which is purely vicious, of which not one good word can be said? Ought it not to be suppressed and strangled? Is it not blind folly to palter with such a monstrous public enemy?—*Textile Record*.

Bread Making.

The *Milling World* gives the following facts of interest to all housewives:

A barrel of good flour should make from 270 to 285 five cent loaves. Many bakers blend four brands, as two Minnesota springs and two Indiana winters, before they get the right alloy. Others use only one grade of spring and two of winter wheat. These make the best brands of fancy bread. Formerly yeast was made of malt, potatoes, and hops, and this is extensively used. Fancy bread bakers use a patent yellow compressed yeast. It is popularly supposed that bakers use alum extensively in order to whiten their bread. That is not the fact. There is no necessity for the use of alum, and it is not used in the trade. There are about twenty large steam bakeries in New York, which give employment to several hundred men. One of these, a noted Broadway establishment, makes a specialty of Vienna bread, and does an immense business. Vienna bread is made in air tight ovens, of the best grade of flour, and milk is used instead of water in mixing the dough. In baking, the steam settles back on the bread instead of escaping. This makes the outer crust thin and tender, and gives the bread a peculiarly rich taste and pleasant aroma. What is known to the trade as "steam" bread is another recent invention. It is made of the very finest of flour and baked in air tight pans, which inclose it on all sides. It is thus baked in its own steam, and possesses a flavor peculiarly its own. One very large bakery in New York is devoted solely to the production of aerated bread. It is a steam factory, and the bread so made is extremely light and spongy. The invention is an English one, but has been in use here for years. When the dough has reached a certain consistency, it is run into an air tight cylinder and stonily impregnated with carbonic acid gas. This creates the lightness and sponginess without detracting in the slightest from its nutritious qualities.

Taxes on Commercial Travelers.

There seems still to be considerable indistinctness in the minds of many merchants and commercial travelers regarding the effect of the recent decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States in the commercial travelers' tax cases. Under the circumstances, a brief recapitulation of the decisions of the Supreme Court upon the subject, together with some reference to the means by which the rights of traveling agents under them may be secured, may not be without its use.

The Supreme Court took the broad ground in the Robbins case, decided in March, that legislation by States or municipalities imposing taxes on commercial travelers engaged in inter-state commerce was not warranted by the Constitution, that salesmen from one State entering another to solicit orders or negotiate sales by samples or otherwise are engaged in inter-state commerce, and that taxes upon them by way of licenses upon sales constitute an interference with inter-state commerce such as falls within the jurisdiction of Congress alone. The court expressly declared that the fact that the State legislation does not discriminate between domestic and foreign drummers has no bearing whatever upon the question of its constitutionality, but that inter-state commerce cannot be taxed at all, even though the same amount of tax should be laid on domestic commerce, or that which is carried on solely within the State. The legislation declared invalid in the Robbins case was that of Tennessee.

In another case, that of *Gorsion vs. Maryland*, the court declared void the Maryland law requiring any one not the grower, maker, or manufacturer selling goods within the State to pay a license tax proportioned to the amount of his stock in trade, whether situated in the State or out of it.

The Supreme Court has, beyond question, settled the principle that State laws imposing taxes on foreign travelers are unconstitutional. Its decision, however, does not operate to repeal these laws as a whole, or even to repeal those which have been declared unconstitutional. As to the latter, the effect of its decision is to make them unenforceable upon individuals. As regards the others, which have not yet been passed upon, it is open to the State authorities to claim that these laws are still valid and enforceable, and that there is some element in them which takes them out of the scope of the decisions already had. The only way

in which the validity of these laws can be determined is upon actual cases. The exercise of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, or of the other courts of the United States, is confined to cases and controversies. They can only exert their function of interpreting the Constitution in determining cases or controversies brought before them. The construction of the Constitution by them is incidental to adjudication upon the rights of the parties in such cases, and the relief which they grant is individual relief. The State officers must of necessity interpret and apply the State laws in the first instance, and if in their action under those laws they violate the constitutional rights of individuals by wrongful imprisonment or other punishment, the courts of the United States will, upon application, restrain the officials and relieve the oppressed individuals.

Commercial travelers, then, must look to the courts to secure their rights under the late decisions of the Supreme Court. They should apply preferably, of course, to the United States circuit or district judges, particularly in States whose legislation has not been passed upon specifically by the United States Supreme Court. They will, by so doing, be surer of getting relief. If, however, they are molested for not paying taxes in localities remote from the place of sitting of a United States court, they might make application to a State court. The Constitution declares that judges in every State shall be bound by the Constitution and the laws made in pursuance thereof, anything in the constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding, and with equal reason should the authorized interpretations of the Constitution be held binding upon the State judges. As a matter of fact this obligation is generally recognized by the State courts. If, however, they fail to give relief, recourse may be had in any case to the United States courts. It is hardly necessary to say that the uncertainty regarding the validity of the tax laws of any particular State can be only temporary at the worst. It is inconceivable that the State authorities would continue for any length of time to attempt to enforce legislation the principle of which has been condemned by the court of last resort, and from the enforcement of which relief may be had upon application to the courts.—*Bradstreet's*.

The question is frequently asked whether patentees or their agents, who travel from place to place, making it their business to sell patented articles, are liable to local fines and penalties. It will be seen from the foregoing decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States that they are not liable.

American vs. Russian Petroleum.

United States crude petroleum oil is to Russian crude as cream to skim milk. United States crude yields about 75 per cent of the finest illuminating oil the world produces. Russian crude yields only about 29 per cent of an inferior illuminating oil. United States crude yields about 12 per cent naphtha or spirit of such a valuable character that it readily sells for 20 per cent per gallon more than the oil. Russian naphtha is unmarketable, and it is mostly burned to get rid of it. United States lubricating oils, another product of crude, are now so low in price that Russian lubricating oils are practically debarred from competition in many of the European markets. United States crude yields a considerable percentage of scale, used for candle making, and this is a product of great value; weight for weight it is worth four times more than refined petroleum oil. The Baku crude yields no scale. Thus the United States, in the surpassing richness of its crude, has an enormous and unapproachable advantage over Russia.

The daily production of the United States is in excess of the world's demand, and has been so practically for the last ten years. In addition to this excess in the daily production of the United States, there are stored there, above ground, 34,800,000 barrels of 42 gallons each, the actual unmarketed accumulations.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

Wild Geese Killed by Lightning.

R. Burch, who resides on Rock Creek, north of town, informs us that during the storm of April 29, as he and his family were watching the clouds, a flock of wild geese passed near the house. As he was looking at them there came a vivid flash of lightning, which seemed to pass right through the flock of geese, and the next moment the flock seemed to be thrown into confusion, uttered the shrillest cries of alarm, and six of their number were seen falling to the ground. They had been killed by the lightning flash Mr. Burch had noticed. He went and picked up the dead geese, which he found to be plump and fat, without a mark to show where the lightning had struck them. He had a feast of roast goose the next day. This is the first instance on record, we believe, of geese being struck by lightning while flying, and it is generally supposed that they are safe from the destroying bolt of Jove.—*Chico (Cal.) Chronicle*.

A CO-OPERATIVE carpet manufacturing company, which was started in Philadelphia a few months ago by dissatisfied workmen, was sold out by the sheriff on the 29th of April.