SPONGING IN BAHAMA.

METHOD OF GATHERING AND PREPARING FOR MARKET.

The Profits of the Work—The Laborers Are Chiefly Blacks and Most of Them Earn Pretty Small Pay—The Sponges Sell at a Good Price However.

Consul Thomas J. McLain of the United States consulate at Nassau, in the Bahama islands, in response to the direction of the state department, has furnished an interesting paper on the sponge trade of the Bahamas, in which the value of the industry and the methods of catching the sponges are given.

The vessels employed in the trade are small, varying from five to twenty-five tons, sloop or schooner rigged, and are built in the local shipyards. The construction and repair of these vessels constitute an important industry in itself. They have small cabins for sleeping purposes. The cooking is done on deck. About 500 of these vessels are engaged in gathering sponges.

The number of persons gathering sponges in the Bahamas, handling them and preparing them in various stages for market, is from 5,000 to 6,000, all of whom, except the shipowners, brokers and shippers, are black people. Hands employed in clipping, washing, packing and preparing finally for shipment abroad get from fifty to seventy-five cents per day of ten hours. The amount earned by the men who go fishing depends entirely on the number of sponges obtained.

The owner of the vessel fits her out at his own expense, and the profits of the voyage are divided up in shares among the owner, the master and the men. They are never hired by the month, nor do they ever get specified wages. The most that can be said is that the men make a tolerable living, and the sponge fisherman who earns over $300 a year is the exception.

HOW SPONGES ARE GATHERED.

The method of gathering sponges is by means of iron hooks attached to long poles. By using a waterglass the fisherman can readily discover the sponges at the bottom, and then by the pole and hook can bring up those he may select, leaving the smaller ones untouched. Some sponges adhere firmly to the bed of the sea, while others are not attached at all, these latter being known as "rollers."

About ten years ago an attempt was made to introduce dredges, but it was found that their use was likely to ruin the beds, because in passing over the bottom they dislodged and brought up not only the good sponges, but the young and unsalable ones as well, killing the spawn and working great mischief. Such an outcry was raised against dredging that an act was passed forbidding it.

When brought to the vessel the sponges are at once spread upon the deck and left exposed to the sun for several days, during which time the animal matter that covers the sponge gradually dies. This is a black, gelatinous substance of a very low order of marine life, which, during the process of decay, emits a most objectionable odor.

The vessels visit what is called the kraal once a week to land the load from the deck. The kraal is an inclosed pen, fenced in by sticks of wood so as to allow a free circulation of water through it, usually built in a sheltered and shallow bay or cove, on one of the cays near by.

THE CROP OF 1890.

The sponges are placed in the kraal and left to be soaked and washed by the action of the water from four to six days, when they are taken out and beaten with sticks until the decayed covering is entirely removed. Having been subjected to this course of exposure, soaking, beating and washing, the sponges are quite clean and are taken on board the vessel, packed in the hold, conveyed to Nassau, and in this condition are sold in the local market.

Of the larger sponges a catch of 5,000 or of the smaller ones 7,500, would be considered a fair lot. Occasionally a cargo of from 12,000 to 15,000 large sponges has been brought in, but this success is exceptional.

The principal varieties gathered in the Bahamas are as follows: Boat, grass, glove, hardhead, reef (white and dark), velvet (abaco and cay), sheep wool, and yellow, of which the most valuable is sheep wool. The total export in 1890 reached over 900,000 pounds, valued at $306,896. The crop of that year was above the average, being really the most valuable one in many years.

Of that crop there were shipped to the United States 708,000, valued at $236,000. Bahama sponges are not considered very good, but a ready market is found for all that can be obtained, and at constantly improving prices. There are no indications of any failure of the supply.—Philadelphia Ledger.

An Acrobatic Kitten.

A pet kitten follows its mistress all over the house when she is at work. Recently she was in an attic chamber, the blind of the window being shut but unfastened. The playful kitten ran across the room and leaped against the blind, which opened, and the kitten disappeared, but came crawling back, having turned in the air and caught the edge of the gutter with its forepaws. It was a feat of remarkable quickness and presence of mind, as the little animal had a very short time to recover from its surprise at being launched suddenly into space.—Portland (Me.) Transcript.

Very True.

There is much in knowing how to see sights. The discreet and skillful person, when confronted with a variety of attractions, will carefully select those that are for him the best, and then will devise means to see them with the least wear and tear. But there are excitable people who set out to see everything, tire themselves out, see only half of anything, and are dissatisfied in the end.—Detroit Free Press.

MR. MALLORY'S WONDERFUL WELL.

The Peach Switch Outdid Itself When It Told the Diggers to Dig There.

Mr. Austin Mallory is a farmer living in the northern portion of this county. Some time since he decided to have a well dug on his premises. The services of a water witch were called into requisition, and the turn of the infallible peach tree switch located a spot where water would be struck.

The well diggers set to work, but had not gone more than six feet when they encountered a stratum of rock. They went down into the solid rock ten, twenty, thirty, forty feet, and yet no indication that the rock was giving out. Mr. Mallory instructed his men to blast away, as he was bent on finding water if he had to blast into the Chinese empire. They followed his instructions and went ten feet farther down, with no new developments.

They were soon to be rewarded, however. All the preparations for an unusually heavy blast had been made, the fuse was touched off, and the men were drawn out to await results. After the smoke of the explosion had cleared out they looked down and found that they had struck a cave. Lights were let down to be sure there was no damp, and three or four ventured. Some bystanders agreed to investigate the discovery. They were lowered with ropes through the opening down into a cavern whose darkness had never been pierced with the light of day, and whose infinite silence took up the sound of their voices and echoed and reechoed it until it died away in some rocky recess.

Their suspense as they descended into the darkness was intense, until their feet touched the floor of the cavern. Striking a match they proceeded to look about them. The roof of the cave was covered with pendant stones, consisting of glittering minerals, that flashed the light in strange and beautiful effects. At some points the stalagmite and stalactite formations almost touched each other. At other places in the roof were quaint, regularly shaped arches that gave an impression as if they had been built by human hands. Still other portions of the roof were smooth and studded with a peculiar incrustation, which glittered like diamonds, and far surpassing in beauty the star chamber in the Mammoth cave.

Wandering about the explorers came upon a small river of crystal clearness, in whose waters strange looking fish disported themselves, and whose merry ripples had furnished music for centuries with no other audience than the eternal rocks. A pool of water was also found which, so far as they could sound, was bottomless. On the banks of the stream were found the wreckage of what had once undoubtedly been an Indian canoe, drifted there, doubtless, from some other water course, and preserved so long by the pure atmosphere of the cave. The adventurers explored the cave for a considerable distance in each direction, but found no limit or reduction of size.—Franklin (Ky.) Cor. Louisville Courier-Journal.

No Need of Having "Lopped Ears."

It seems odd that so many mothers see the fault of broadened ear lobes and bending tops, yet do not raise a finger to rectify this defect. Their own ears "lop," so, they suppose, must those of their poor children. If their own ears are put on "bias," why grumble if those of their offspring are not straight? A woman may hide her ears—may brush the long strands of her silken hair down from her temples and over the tops of these useful organs; not so a man. His barber shaves him until his head is blue, and each knob of vanity, or whatsoever weakness he may possess, shows plainly forth—a lesson that the phrenological who run may read, and his ears stand anchored in uncouth, bristling boldness at each side of his denuded cranium.

Now even he, a grown man, can remedy this defect. Let him each night tie a soft, close bandage about his head and sleep in this. If it be difficult to keep it in place let him wear above the bandage a close cap, pinning the cap and bandage together on the outside with small safety pins. Continued use of the bandage will show good effects in a comparatively early date, and the deformity will gradually disappear.—Detroit Free Press.

What Was in His Mind.

A young barrister, who was a long headed lawyer in a too unpleasantly literal sense of the term, had to deal with a country witness who had a habit of cautiously pausing before replying to a question.

"Come, Mr. Baconface, what are you thinking about?" at length asked the impatient barrister. "I've just been thinking," returned the countryman, "what a foine dish my bacon face and your calf's head would make together."

The wigged gentleman dropped such a dangerous customer like a hot potato, and he was allowed to resume his seat amid the titter of the court.—London Tit-Bits.

Scotch Logic.

A Scotch minister was startled by the original views of a not very skillful plowman whom he had just hired. He noticed that the furrows were far from straight, and said:

"John, yer drills are no near straucht ava; that is no like Tammie's work"—"Tammie" being the person who had previously plowed the glebe.

"Tammie didna ken his wark," observed the man coolly, as he turned his team about; "ye see, when the drills is crookit the sun gets in on a' sides, an so ye get early tatties."—Youth's Companion.

Sea Water for Weak Eyes.

Weak eyes should be strengthened by bathing them five or ten minutes at a time in full basins of sea water, which allows the hands to lave the closed eyes, the water welling over them gently without shock. No one has any idea of the relief to overtasked eyes till they have tried this method. You might ask me for a good many things I would sooner give you than the gallon glass bottle of sea water brought with pains inland for sponging the eyes.—Shirley Dare.

An Incident of the Encampment.

In every large boarding or lodging house there is the accommodating young man. He is always ready to do a service and will run his feet off for another, however disinclined to exertion he may be on his own account. He gets up in the night to call the doctor or go to the drug store; he matches silk for ladies in the shops, and he is never so happy as when, at infinite cost to his time and purse, he has gratified the whim of some one whom he likes—that some one being of the better sex. Sunday, in a rather fashionable house of the kind in this city, the landlady said: "By the way, Mr. Stillson, I have one nice room vacant, and if you hear of any of the Grand Army people who would like it won't you send them up? Try to get us some one nice."

Of course Stillson promised. He set out for his office and every man he met had a word to say to him, for every one liked Stillson. At the windup of each of these conversations the latter delivered the message of his landlady, and being popular, it was not noon before he had forty or fifty people hustling for tenants for that room. The result was that the vicinity of the house, for a day or two, looked like the approach to Camp Sherman, and it was necessary to disconnect the bell.—Detroit Free Press.

A Sun Spot Maximum.

A spectator, viewing the sun from a distant point in space, would perceive that its brilliancy was slightly increased once in about every eleven years. These accessions of light should correspond, not with the periods of fewest spots, but with those of most spots, because the energy of the sun's radiation is greatest during the spot maxima. At present a sun spot maximum is approaching, and since last winter the face of the sun has frequently exhibited startling indications of the tremendous disturbances now affecting the solar globe. Our imaginary observer in space would probably behold at the present time a very slight increase in the sun's brilliancy, and this increase may go on for three or four years to come.

While we, dwelling upon a globe that is bathed in the sun's rays, may be unable to perceive these variations directly, yet their effects have long been recognized by the changes that they produce in terrestrial magnetism. It is also highly probable that a perceptible influence upon the weather is exercised by variations in solar radiation corresponding with the presence or absence of sun spots.—G. P. Serviss in Popular Science Monthly.

A Vociferous Reception.

A young man who is stopping at a well known watering place has had an amusing experience. At one of the neighboring hotels he had met a fair southerner who greatly captivated his rather susceptible fancy. His request to be allowed to call met with a gracious assent, and the next day he presented himself at the door of her mother's sitting room. "Come in," called out a strident voice as he knocked at the door. On opening it he was surprised to see no one in the room, but from the next apartment came an injunction in the same harsh accents to "sit right down in the parlor."

Wondering not a little at his reception, he took a chair, but his astonishment may be imagined when he heard his fair one summoned in the following manner: "Mary Anne, you've got a beau!" "Mary Anne, you've got a beau!" and his equanimity was not even restored when his inamorata entered and laughingly explained that the culprit was a huge green parrot.—New York Tribune.

New York's First Bath Tub.

"It is really astonishing," said a gentleman to me, "how many people there are who, on a sweltering day when the thermometer is way up in the nineties, do not take a bath, although their tubs, with hot and cold water, are at their disposal every minute of the day. They are either too lazy to take a refreshing bath, or they forget all about it. People do not sufficiently appreciate the many conveniences of a modern house which we now enjoy. And it is not so many years since we had these conveniences. Last May there died in this city Mrs. Mary Mason Jones, aged eighty-nine. The year she married (1818) she built a residence at No. 122 Chambers street, New York, and that was the first residence in this city to have gas and a bath tub. At no time in the history of the world have people had so much comfort and luxury as at the present day.—New York Epoch.

Thought He Had a Sea Serpent.

Captain John Brooks, of Block Island, became the unwilling possessor, one day last week, while hauling in his pots, of a six foot sea serpent, subsequently pronounced a monster sea eel. Captain Brooks was in doubt for a few moments as to the ownership of the nine foot skiff he was in at the time, and his vessel being at least a mile distant, he was not particularly "stuck" on his companion. He succeeded at last, however, in killing the "animal" or "fish," whichever it was, after it had bitten through his rubber boot and sock, grazing his leg.—Hartford Times.

A brown rat with a blue tail made itself visible in a Cincinnati court house, and an enterprising individual tried to capture it alive, with a view to its exhibition in a museum. Unfortunately he accidentally killed it; then he discovered that it was an ordinary Norway rat, which had been investigating the contents of a pot of blue paint.

Since Brazil became a republic it has greatly increased in favor as a field for German emigrants, of whom 7,927 have gone there during the first six months of the present year, as compared with 2,122 during the whole of last year, while in 1889 there were only 228.

Three couples, all over seventy years of age, have been married within a few days. Sullivan county, N. Y., is the home of two of the couples, while the third lives out in Michigan.

BOHEMIA IN NEW YORK.

WHERE ACTRESSES AND THEIR ARDENT ADMIRERS MEET

How a Portion of the Population of the Metropolis Turns Night Into Day—Soubrettes, Chorus Girls Clubmen and Collegians Make Up the Parties.

At that hour when staid and solid Gothamites are either preparing to go to bed or are already fast asleep there begins to gather in two well known Broadway restaurants a bizarre company of men and women who make it a habit to be very wide awake o' nights, when ordinary mortals are abed and asleep. These nocturnal gatherings form an odd feature of the faster life of the big town.

They are Parisian in their Bohemian good fellowship, and they seem to possess marked interest for those who find pleasure in contemplating the various modes of existence that the lively metropolis presents to the philosophic observer. The nocturnal bon vivants who make up the coterie are actors and actresses, men about town, clubmen, collegians and professional men, who have the faculty of never getting sleepy until the sun wakes up.

The restaurants have become noted resorts because of the presence of these Bohemian spirits. They are prosperous, and in the character and quality of their creature comforts rank in the first class. Their prosperity has been attributed to fortunate location. They are situated half a mile apart on the west side of Broadway, amid the group of fashionable theaters and big hotels in the Tenderloin district, that famous parallelogram of Gotham blocks which has for years been known as "the heart of the city," and which is a locality that the police say "never goes to sleep."

Special accommodations are provided for the Bohemian set. They recall the "Cave of Harmony" that Thackeray tells about. In the restaurant at the southern end of the big Tenderloin parallelogram this Bohemian Cave of Harmony is located on the ground floor. When the restaurant was first established the bower was directly back of the big apartment where ordinary guests got their late meals.

WHERE THEY MEET.

It was separated from the main restaurant by an alcove decorated with lace curtains. When the coterie grew in numbers, however, a new and spacious apartment, aglow with electric lights, was added to provide comfortable accommodation for the special patrons. It has mirrors and fine frescoes. In the second restaurant the whole second floor of the building is set aside for the Bohemian bower. It is carpeted and comfortably furnished, and the indispensable mirrors are there too.

It is generally near midnight before the neighboring playhouses are shut up and the fun makers of the stage are free to enjoy themselves. Pretty actresses, neat in attire, light witted and fond of late hours and Bohemian associations saunter in in knots of two or three. Male escorts accompany them.

By 2 o'clock the coterie is at its liveliest. It is a striking picture of midnight conviviality. Soubrettes and chorus girls are the bright particular stars. The actors, dressed up like fashion plates, are a sort of background to the picture. The clubmen and collegians and professional men are the moths enjoying the glitter. They are almost invariably young. Sometimes, however, a gay old fellow with gray hair and a jolly laugh gives the interesting spectacle of the fellow who is trying hard to be a boy and sit up with the other boys. Whether the moths are young or old, however, they seem inspired with the same ardent ambition to gain the good graces of the theatrical people.

Each plunges into his pocket for money and tries to excel the others in spending it for the entertainment of the soubrettes and chorus girls, and incidentally keeping solid with the actors and managers. They seem to imagine that this sort of thing will insure good seats at the theater whenever they want to go there, and that they won't have to pay for the seats at all. In most instances this is a very big mistake.

NOT WHAT IT USED TO BE.

The collegians are partial to the second-story bower at the upper end of Broadway. Yale, Harvard and Princeton boys go there whenever they come to town to have a good time. They boom things when they get there too. The polished cherry tables are pushed together, and the soubrettes and chorus girls draw up their chairs with the men. Sometimes as many as thirty gather in a single group. The collegians joke and tell college stories. The soubrettes and chorus girls take a hand in the story telling, at which some of them have a gift. Very often the sun rises while the throng is still there.

It all looks feverish and unhealthy to the observer who has decided notions about the hurtfulness of late hours and late suppers, but there can be no doubt that the revelers enjoy it and don't bother their heads about any of Ben Franklin's judicious injunctions about going early to bed and getting up with the sun.

All this in marked contrast with the revelry that used to run fast and furious in the resorts that were numerous in the Tenderloin district a decade or so ago. The pale faced opium eater and the painted women of the streets do not pass, as a rule, within the portals of these Bohemian caves. There is no boisterousness and no singing of songs. A stranger will find out in a twinkling that while all seems to look more or less jolly and free and easy, there is in reality a strict enforcement of order at all times.—New York Sun.

Chili's Curious Currency.

The money of Chili at present is peculiar. It consists of small tags of pasteboard, on which a man writes the value for which he is willing to redeem it, putting his name on the back. It then begins to circulate, until it finally gets back to the source from which it emanated.—Boston Traveler.

Six Years in a Cellar.

A horrible affair has just been discovered at Itegehem, in Belgium. A family named Vanden Eynde, consisting of two brothers and a sister, live there on their own estate. Six years ago there was another brother, called Louis, who went away from the village to serve his time in the army, but although he was very soon discharged as unfit for military service, the family always replied to questions about him, saying that he was still a soldier.

Lately, however, mysterious reports were spread, and recently the family were surprised by the appearance of the burgomaster, accompanied by several other officials and a doctor. In spite of protests, they searched the premises, and when they opened one of the cellars a horrible sight met their eyes. Cowering in a corner, on a filthy heap of straw, was the lost brother, who looked more like a wild animal than a man.

A continual idiotic laugh was the only sign of life he gave, for he was not capable of making any movement of his own accord. Even his head staid in whatever position it was turned by the doctor who examined him. His unnatural family confessed that when he returned from his regiment he was slightly mad, and to save the expense of putting him into a lunatic asylum they had tied him up in the cellar, where he had remained for six years. The brothers and sister were arrested, and the imbecile was removed to an asylum.—Galignani Messenger.

As a Man Sees It.

The letter fluttered into the sanctum yesterday. It was from a man to a woman, and he was trying to give her, in his enthusiastic masculine way, his idea of the girls of Narragansett Pier and the costumes they wear. Here is what he says. Comment is unnecessary:

"I want to tell you that the women here are the most glorious creatures on the face of the earth. They go swinging about in the independent, healthy manner you never see except at the seashore or among the mountains. Say, why are they always sick in town and ready for twenty mile tramps when they get out here?

"Of course you want to know what they're wearing. They all have dresses made of flannel or something, with white shoes, white caps, lots of ribbons and furbelows flying, and white parasols with loads of white lace bunched all over the tops. The skirts are cut bias (is that right?), and there's something round the bottom that I think you women call a panel—or perhaps it's a flounce. Why can't women dress like that all the time? Why don't you speak to 'em about it."—New York World.

Plowed Up Seventeen Thousand Dollars.

A few days ago a young farmer named Edwards, while plowing near Southerland Springs, struck an iron pot whose top projected a half inch above the surface. It was apparently filled with earth, but its great weight led to an investigation. Under an inch of dirt were many doubloons of gold. The leather in which they were wrapped was rotten, but save for a greenish mold the coins were uninjured. They were all doubloons. Edwards loaded his treasure in a wagon, drove to San Antonio and deposited it in bank, saying nothing of the find until his return. The amount is $17,000.

There has long been a tradition in Southerland Springs neighborhood that Santa Anna buried treasure there on his retreat after his defeat at the battle of San Jacinto in the war of independence, and various searchers have hunted for it. The pot was originally sunk deep, but the rains of more than half a century had denuded it of its covering.—Cor. Chicago Tribune.

A Curious Ohio Family.

Living near Waynesville is a family named Yeazel, who lately moved there from Clinton county. Recently the head of the family entered a hardware store at the first named place and called for seven hoes. The clerk was astonished, whereupon the farmer explained that he had brought but four hoes with him from Clinton county, and wanted seven more to keep his sons and himself busy.

He is possessed of eleven children, the mother and only daughter having six fingers on each hand, two of the boys six toes on each foot, and one having seven toes on one foot. The family cultivates tobacco and is regarded with much curiosity by the neighbors on account of the extra supply of fingers and toes.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Games Forbidden on Sunday Only.

There is a suspicion, doubtless unfounded, that those whose word is law at the Desplaines camp meeting are moving backward in their course with regard to the rules denying nearly all secular amusements to young people. The directors explain that they have no objection to croquet, tennis and sitting in hammocks on any day except Sunday, and the rules prohibiting these pleasures apply to that day only. To many Methodists it will appear ominous that any rules were necessary forbidding youthful Methodists to play games on the Sabbath.—Milwaukee Sentinel.

Boys Take Long Swims.

Two lads, each about twelve years of age, swam across the St. Lawrence between Levis and Quebec, yesterday, a distance of over three-quarters of a mile, at high water; but this feat was eclipsed a few days since by two other lads named Bertie Russell, of Quebec, and Duncan Anderson, of Chaudiere, who, it is claimed, successfully swam the entire distance from Chaudiere basin to Orleans island, which must be fully nine miles.—Montreal Witness.

Fast Time on an Aquacycle.

On the Wabash river, at Tuscola, Ills., occurred the first trial of Professor Claude Baum's aquacycle, which travels on the water with almost the speed of the bicycle on land. A race was run on the river between the steamer Dauntless, Commodore C. V. Walls, and Professor Baum's water wheel, and the latter showed better speed than the boat.—Cor. Chicago News.

CAN TALK WITH THE [illegible]

A San Francisco Man Who Is [illegible] to Have Mastered the [illegible]

A mysterious individual [illegible] ward's gardens to whom [illegible] the gift of conversing with [illegible] their own language. He is a [illegible] man who has seen about [illegible] years and ten, but as he is always alone and speaks to no one very little is known about him. For nearly a year past the old gentleman has daily visited that former popular resort, deposited the entrance fee, and as quickly as his feeble strength will allow and with eagerness depicted on his seamed and weather beaten countenance proceeds at once to the monkey cage.

The monkeys recognize him and set up a chattering and howling that would grate on a sensitive person's nerves, but the old man does not mind it a bit. He enjoys it, and beams on the quadrumana that make every effort to reach him through the iron bars with an expression that would lead one to think that his soul was wrapped up in them.

Finally, the noise subsides and the old man gazes into a dozen comical expectant faces pressed against the bars, with twenty-four pairs of bright eyes looking at him, and utters a few guttural sounds that astonish and please the monkeys. He perfectly imitates the sounds of most of them, and all arrange themselves in a semicircle and with great seriousness listen to all he has to say. Sometimes his tone is serious, when all the monkeys put on a very abject expression and look as sorrowful as a monkey can.

Then again, when the tones are different, the monkeys will dance about with every evidence of delight, and all begin to jabber at once, until the old man points his finger at one of the largest. All remain silent while he seemingly carries on a conversation with one of the older ones, imitating all the grimaces and actions of a monkey as well as any human being could.

Sometimes the conversation lasts an hour or more, when the little man bids his friends adieu until the morrow.

It is said by some that the little man was once a sea captain, whose crew was murdered by the natives on the coast of Brazil, and he made his escape to the forests of the interior with no companions but the monkeys for many months, and subsisted entirely on the wild fruits and other food berries that he could gather. It is supposed that he obtained some knowledge of their method of communication during the months of his enforced residence in the wilderness that enables him to engage the attention of the monkeys at Woodward's Gardens.

When accosted the old man will not reply, and his mysterious behavior is a source of much comment.—San Francisco Examiner.

A Live Package in the Dead Letter Office.

Is it to be expected that an ordinary clerk, without special remuneration, shall expose himself to the dangers incident to the opening of the multitudinous and mysterious packages that are left as metaphorical foundlings upon the figurative doorstep of the postmaster general? Lest these perils be deemed imaginary, it may be appropriate to refer to seventeen snakes that arrived together on one occasion in a parcel of the sort described, although they were all very much alive, especially a rattler, eight feet in length and one of the biggest ever captured, that rattled its nine rattles and showed its fangs to the unaffected dismay of the young gentleman who undid the bundle.

So great was his embarrassment that he failed at the moment to keep accurate count of the reptilian consignment, and three weeks later the entire office was set in a stir by the unexpected appearance from beneath his desk of a three foot adder speckled in yellow and black. Owing to the fact that adders of other than the arithmetical variety are discouraged in government offices, this particular serpent is now enjoying a perennial spree in a bottle of alcohol on a shelf in the postoffice department.—Washington Letter.

Origin of an Old Fad.

A practice was common about fifty years ago of rubbing the eye in a peculiar way from the outer to the inner corner, the result being, as was supposed, to strengthen the sight. The practice originated with President John Quincy Adams, who had what is called "a weeping eye," disease having caused the closing of some of the ducts, so that he was forced to wipe away the overflowing moisture about once in every five minutes. He always wiped his eye from the outer to the inner corner, and some one noticing this peculiar action, and knowing also that, although he had passed his eightieth year, he never used spectacles, connected the two facts and started the theory that rubbing the eye in the way indicated prevented the changes inseparable from advancing years. For a time all the old people in the country spent half their time rubbing their eyes, but the fad soon died out, and is now scarcely remembered, save by some old man who saw people practicing it when he was a boy.—Interview in St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

The Piscina of an English Church.

Often in the furthermost end of an aisle or transcept, recessed into the wall, or but slightly standing out of it, bracket fashion, may be seen the small piscina that was used in old times when there was an altar there. Besides these, only much more rarely, a piscina upon the ground may be seen. This is a small hole upon the floor at the east end of the church, south of the altar. If there were no piscina into which to pour the water in which the chalice was rinsed, we might assume this was intended to carry it away, but in three out of four examples known there are piscinæ on the walls as well.

These ground piscinæ have been noticed in St. Catherine's chapel, in Carlisle cathedral, and in the churches at Utterton, in Lincolnshire; Little Casterton, Rutlandshire and Hevingham, Norfolk. It has been suggested they may have been made to carry away the water used in the consecration of the building.—Gentleman's Magazine.