

### A Snake Story.

This is not spring poetry but an early spring snake story, and its truthfulness is vouched for:

Two gentlemen of this city went down to Neuse river recently, fishing. They stayed all night. After supper they lit their pipes, baited their hooks and stuck the ends of their poles in the bank of the river, after which they threw themselves on the grass to have a quiet smoke and chat. The conversation turned on snakes. Said one who pretended not to be afraid of snakes, "I tell you, Bob, (we will call one Bob and the other Jim), there is some of the all-freest, durndest, biggest snakes around here you ever saw. I saw one here once that was as large as the largest part of my thigh, and they told me he was small to some of them. Suppose one of them was to come crawling along here now, what would you do?" Just then a rustle in the leaves was heard and when Bob turned to see from whence came the noise, Jim quietly slipped up and stuck a pin about half way up in Bob's leg. That was enough. With a yell and a bound that would have surprised a Comanche Indian, he exclaimed: "Great God, Jim, I'm snake bitten. I saw him just before he struck, and he was as big as my body. Oh, Lord, what shall I do. And there is not a drop of whisky in five miles of here."

In the meantime, Jim was rolling and tumbling on the ground fairly bursting his buttons with laughter. Bob soon saw the point, and felt it, too, we expect, and quieted down. About 12 o'clock that night they were attending to their hooks, and chatting as if there wasn't a snake in forty miles of the place. Bob saw his chance. With a little willow stick he crept up behind Jim, and while he was trying to stick the end of the pole in the bank of the river he wiggled the stick in between Jim's legs and exclaimed:

"Look out Jim, there's a snake." Jim saw it, and with a yell he leaped forward and landed in about ten-foot water. When he came to the top and could get the water from his nose and mouth he said:

"Bob, by golly, we are even."—*Raleigh Visitor.*

### A Terrapin Farm.

The Mobile (Ala.) Register has the following account of a terrapin farm owned by Mulford Dorton at Cedar Point: This projection of land is on the western shore of Mobile Bay, about thirty miles below this city, and is inhabited principally by oystermen, who reap golden harvests from the many beds which furnish nearly every oyster brought to Mobile. Mr. Dorton, who keeps a store at this point, has about three acres fenced in with strong pilings. Leading to this enclosure are two canals, one on the bay side and the other on the gulf side, which supply with salt water a number of ditches ten feet wide and 100 feet long. The sand accumulating from the excavation of these ditches is thrown on each side, and used by the terrapins to sun themselves and lay their eggs in, which, if counted would go up in the millions, and can be raked up by the bushel. In the winter season the terrapins remain imbedded in the mud of the ditches, where they stay until spring time, never touching a morsel of food. A system of sluices enables Mr. Dorton to keep the ditches full of salt water, or drain them at pleasure, and he is not at all dependent on the tide for that purpose.

The number of terrapins on the farm, as far as can be ascertained by the closest calculation, is between 20,000 and 25,000, and in the course of the next three or four years will be something hard to calculate. About May 1, Mr. Dorton makes his purchase of terrapins from the people on the Mississippi sound, and takes all he can secure at \$3 a dozen, and that generally averages about 8,000 a year added to his farm, outside of those bred therein.

The inhabitants of Mississippi and Alabama hunt the terrapin with dogs trained for that purpose. The dog barks when he finds one, and the hunter immediately secures it by going to the spot where the dog points.

The cost of feeding the terrapins, which, as we have said, is only done in the summer, is about one dollar per dozen for the season, and the price per dozen in New York has varied from \$18 to \$8. The food, which consists of crabs and fish, is caught with a seine, in front of the farm, and really very little expense is attached to the raising of these valuable

land tortoises. Mr. Dorton begins to ship about October 1, and then on to May 10. He generally sends his to Savannah by rail, and thence to New York by steamer, averaging about 12,000 a season, and had it not been for a disastrous hurricane, which some time ago washed out Mr. Dorton's farm, it would be to day the greatest terrapin farm in the world. He can always ship all he can get, for there is a ready market for these delicacies.

### A Pennsylvania Boy.

Nearly forty years ago, in South Huntingdon Township, Westmoreland county, Pa., says the Pittsburgh Telegraph, lived John Hinton. He was an orphan boy, rude and uneducated, and had wandered there from the neighborhood of Masoutown, Fayette county.

With no known relatives, he was kicked from one family to another till manhood. Enlisting then in the war. At its close he helped to escort the Cherokee beyond the Mississippi. From Indian Territory he went to New Orleans and shipped as a common sailor on a vessel bound for the East Indies. At the bay of Madras, on the western shores of the Bay of Bengal, he deserted, and enlisted in a British regiment. He served many years, and during the memorable Sepoy-Rebellion was noted for his daring bravery. At his discharge he was presented with a gold medal by the Governor General himself.

He is next heard of traveling in a caravan from Delhi, westward across the Indus River, through Afghanistan and Persia, to Turkey and back.

In time, from trading, he became immensely wealthy, and was the owner of five caravans containing over 130 horses and camels and fifty elephants.

In 1854 he visited Cabul, the capital of Afghanistan, for copper, great quantities of which are there mined and smelted. His magnificent retinue attracted the attention of the Ameer, and he was invited to an audience—an honor never before received by a Christian. A present of a hundred of his best horses and a three tusked elephant made the Ameer his eternal friend. When, yearly it was followed by similar presents, besides camels and merchandise, John Hinton has the monopoly of trade from the summit of the Hindoo Kosh Mountains to the confines of Beloochistan, and in real power second only to the Ameer himself.

About 1870 he was made Military Commander of the District of Herat, and in 1876 suppressed a local rebellion to the great satisfaction of his sovereign. Trained in the arts of war among the savages of North America, and among the superstitious natives of India, where he became thoroughly familiar with British soldiers and resources, together with his years of service as the idolized commander of the Mohammedan tribes of about thousands of half-civilized men, he is to-day the ablest soldier in Asia.

### Diamonds in Mecklenburg.

Something About Our Minerals and Precious Stones.

A copy of an advance sheet of State Geologist, Kerr's, report upon the minerals of North Carolina has been seen in the city. Besides many new and interesting items of general information it gives some facts about our own section which are interesting. It is gathered that the number of mineral species now known to have been discovered in this State is 178, an increase of 38, or more than 25 per cent. since 1875, when only 140 could be enumerated. This is stated to be a greater number than has been discovered in any other State; and if there had been means to make a complete investigation of all the materials in hand, the number would probably fall little short of 200.

A number of the new minerals were discovered by Mr. W. E. Hilden, of New York, who it will be remembered visited this city at different times last year, in his search for platinum for Edison's electric light. It was during this search that the discoveries were made, and his report of them, which is embraced in the work, he says: "In regard to the success of my search for platinum, I will state that at the many places where I operated, I did not succeed in finding any traces of its existence. The five reported localities in this State were carefully examined without success."

Among the general list of native minerals mentioned as having been

repeatedly found in various localities in the State. A very beautiful specimen was found in Todd's branch, in this county, in the summer of 1852. It was nearly of the first water and a perfect crystal. It was in the possession of the late Dr. Andrews, of this city. The author says: "Dr. Andrews informed me that a very beautiful diamond, of considerable size, like a small chinquapin, and of a black color, had been found at the same locality by three persons, while washing for gold. In their ignorance believing that it could not be broken, they smashed it to pieces. Dr. Andrews tested the hardness of a fragment, and it scratched corundum with facility, proving it to be a diamond."

About 30 varieties of minerals are mentioned as being found in this county.—*Charlotte Observer.*

### The Honey Ant.

The honey ant makes its store-vests from the bodies of workers. First it bites the end of the abdomen, thereby setting up an inflammation, which closes the apertures of the body. Then it feels the maimed creature with honey, pouring it into the mouth of the living honey-pot, just as the bee pours honey into its crop. The process is continually repeated until the body of the store-ant is extended to an astonishing size with honey, the skin being stretched to such an extent that it is sufficiently transparent to show the honey within. It cannot escape, for its body is so heavy that the limbs are not sufficient to carry it, and so it remains in the nest until the honey is wanted. In Mexico these ants are so plentiful that they form regular articles of commerce, being sold by measure in the markets, and used for the purpose of making meal. Specimens may be seen in the British Museum.—*The Rev. J. Wood, in Good Words.*

### A Valuable Piece of Plate.

The Pittsburgh paper says that a lady of that place has the oldest and most valuable piece of silver that has ever been seen there. It is a coffee urn of pure solid silver, weighs one hundred and thirteen and a half ounces, and is nearly two hundred years old. It is an old family relic, having belonged to the ancestors of its present owner all that long time. It has been hidden in three wars, having been buried during the revolutionary war, and again in the war of 1812, when the British threatened to attack Wilmington, and during the late war it was thrown into a deep well to escape Sherman's bummers. Messrs. Tiffany & Co., the celebrated jewelers of New York, have recently offered a large sum of money for it.

### Remarkable Instance of Gratitude.

An old lady, 90 years of age, very wealthy and full of wit, died recently at Fontainebleau, in France. Her will contained this provision: "I leave to my physician, whose enlightened care and wise prescriptions have made me live so long, all that is contained in the old chest in my boudoir. The key of the chest will be found under the mattress of my bed." The heirs were much disturbed, for they foresaw a material diminution of their share of the property. The fortunate and expectant physician at length arrived. The notary delivered to him the key of the chest. It was opened and found to contain solely all the drugs and potions, still intact, which the worthy physician had given his patient for twenty years back.

What a happy faculty is that of self-possession. A friend dropped in to make a call on a wedded couple who were in the very crisis of a family jar. The evidence of the little unpleasantness was too plain to be concealed, but both smiled a cast iron smile, and the visitor politely observed: "You, madam, I perceive, have a bad headache." "No," she responded, trying to look angelic; "my dear little Fido has just swallowed a buttonhook, and I'm so alarmed." Then he turned to the husband: "And you, sir, are doubtless worried about some business affair." "No," he said in a sepulchral voice; "Fido has swallowed the buttonhook before and I'm afraid it won't kill him."

"I have no more influence than a farthing rushlight," said a workman in his blouse. A friend replied, "Well a rushlight does much. It may burn a hay-stack or a house—may, it helps me read a chapter in God's Word. Go your way and let your little rushlight shine before men, that they may glorify your Father in heaven."

Raleigh "News and Observer": Here is an instance of speedy justice: James Wilson, colored, was brought from Harnett jail to Raleigh last Wednesday. He had stolen some property in Wake county. He arrived here about 8:30 o'clock, at 10:30 the grand jury had found a true bill and returned it. The case was at once called; the prisoner pleaded guilty at 11 o'clock, and Judge Schiek promptly sent him to the Penitentiary for ten years. Friday morning, with a batch of other convicts, he was taken out to his home for a decade.

If a man is honest he does not need to tell of it. Sterling virtue can afford to keep still, but sly dishonesty has a very busy tongue.

He that is proud eats up himself; pride is his own glass, his own trumpet, his own chronicle; and whatever praises itself but in the dead, devours the deed in the praise.

We are often abroad, but seldom at home, where our chief business lies. Like some travellers who are well acquainted with foreign countries, but shamefully ignorant of their own, we know more of others than we are willing to know of ourselves.—*Robert Walker.*

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The golden opportunity is never offered twice, seize the hour. When fortune smiles and duty points the way.—*Old Play.*

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