The Tri-Weekly Commercial.

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THE TRI-WEEKLY COMMERCIAL

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W. H. S. LORING—Editor and Proprietor
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New York—Messrs. Dollner & Potter.
Boston—Charles Smith, No 5, Central Wharf
Philadelphia—S. P. Cohen
Baltimore—Wm H Peake and Wm Thomson

MISCELLANY

HUGGED BY A SERPENT.

I was brought up near the Canadian line in Vermont. My father owned a large farm, though he was an iron worker by trade. I think he made some of the best nails ever used. Not far from his farm was quite a lake. We used to enjoy ourselves at fishing and sailing, for we had one of the best sail boats eve put into fresh water. We knew there were plenty of snakes about this lake, especially on one part of it—a wide piece of flats, where the water lay most of the year, and where the tall grass and reeds grew thickly. It was a sort of bay, making up into a cove on the opposite side from the farm. We had seen some large snakes in the water there, and I had tried to shoot them as they swam with their heads up, tho' I never happened to get one of them in that way. I am sure I hit some of them, but they managed to get away into the grass; and I had no desire to follow them, especially into such a place.—Most of those that I saw were the common black water snake but they were not all alike. Some of the largest ones had a light-colored ring round the neck; and I was told, by those who knew, that these latter were by far the strongest and most dangerous.

However, I was destined soon to have my eyes opened. One afternoon, I saw a flock of black ducks fly over the house, and I was sure they lighted on the lake, so I seized my doubled barrel gun and ammunition, and started off. When I reached the landing I saw the ducks a way off by the opposite shore. I at once cut some green boughs with my knife; and having rigged up the bows of a small flat bottomed scull, we kept on purpose for such work, I jumped in and started off. There was a hole in the stern through which we could put the oar, and thus scull the boat without sitting up in sight, so from where the ducks were my contrivance had the appearance only of a simple mass of boughs floating along upon the water.

I had got near enough for a shot, and had drawn in the scull, and was in the act of taking up my gun, when the ducks started up. As quickly as possible I drew one hammer and let drive. I hit two of them, but they didn't fall into the water. They fluttered along until they fell among the tall grass up in the cove. The water was low, and the place was dry where they were. I pulled up as far as I could, and got out and waded up. I knew very near where one of the ducks had fallen and very soon had my eye on it. As I ran up to take it I saw the head of a black snake pop out and catch it by the wing. I saw only the head and neck of the reptile, and had no idea how large a one it was; or, if I had, probably I should have done just as I did, for I had no idea of fearing such a thing. I had left my gun in the boat, and had nothing to kill the chap with, but as I took the duck I just put my foot upon the thief's neck.

The ground was moist and slimy, and the snake had his body braced among the roots of the stout reeds; he took his head out from under my foot about as quick as a man could comfortably think. I thought I'd run back to my boat and get my gun, and try to kill this fellow; and I had just turned for that purpose, when I felt something strike my legs, as though somebody had thrown a rope round it. I looked down, and found that the snake had taken a turn round my leg with his tail, and was in the act of clearing his body from the grass. I dropped the duck and gave a smart kick, but that didn't loosen him; so I tried to put my right foot upon him, and thus draw my leg away; I might as well have tried to put my foot on a streak of lightning!

And hadn't I been deceived? I had forgotten the proportionate size of the head of the species of the black snake. I had expected to see a snake four or five feet long, but instead of that he was nearly eight feet and a half. Still, I hadn't yet any great fear, for I supposed that when I put my hands on him I could easily take him off, for I was pretty strong in the arms, in a few seconds he had his body all clear, and it was then that the first real thrill shot through me. There he held himself by the simple turn around my leg, and with his back arched in and out he brought his head just on a level with mine. I made a grab for him, but missed him; and then, as quick as you can snap your finger, he swept his head under my arm, clear around my body, and straightened up and looked me in the face again. I gave another grab at him, and another, as quick as I could, but he dodged me, in spite of all I could do.

I next felt the snake's body working its way up. The turn of the tail was turned to my thigh, and the coil around my stomach commenced to tighten.—About this time I began to think there might be some serious work, and the quicker I took the snake off the better. So I just grasped him as near the head as possible, by taking hold where he was around me, and tried to turn him off. But this only made it worse. The fellow had now drawn himself up so high, and stretched out so, that he whipped another turn about me. His tail was now around my left thigh, and the first of him turned twice around my body; one of them being just at the pit of my stomach, and the other one above it. All this had occupied just about half a minute from the time he first got the turn round my leg.

The snake had now his head in front of my face, and he tried to make his way into my mouth. This intention was I cannot surely tell, though, I have always believed that he knew he could strangle me in that way. He struck me one blow in the mouth that hurt me considerably; and after I had got him by the neck, and there I meant to hold him—at least so that he could not strike me again. But this time another difficulty arose. The moment I grasped the snake by the neck, he commenced to tighten his folds about my body! It wasn't over a few seconds before I discovered that he'd soon squeeze the breath out of me in that way, and I determined to unwind him. He was in this way: the turn around the thigh was from left to right; then up between the legs to my right side, and around the back to my left side, and so on with the second turn; thus bringing his head up under my left arm. I had the snake now with the left hand, and my idea was to pass his head around my back until I could reach it with my right, and so unwind him. I could press the fellow's head down under my arm, but to get it around so as to reach it with my right hand, I could not! I tried; I put all my power into that one arm, but I could not do it. I could get the head just about under my armpit, but here my strength was applied to a disadvantage, Until this moment I had not been really frightened. I had believed that I could unwind the serpent when I tried. I never dreamed what power they had. Why, only think, as strong as I was then, and could not put that snake's head around my neck! I tried it until I knew I could not do it, and then I gave it up—My thought was of my jack-knife; but the lower coil of the snake was directly over my pocket, and I could not get it.

I now, for the first time called out for help. I yelled with all my might, and yet I knew the trial was next to useless, for no one could easily gain the place where I was, except with a boat. Yet I called out, hoping against hope. I grasped the snake by the body and pulled—I tried to break. This plan presented itself with a gleam of promise; but it amounted to nothing. I might as well have tried to break a rope by bending it forward or backward!

A few minutes had now passed from the time when I first tried to pass the snake's head around my back.

His body had become so elongated by his gradual pressure around my body, that he had room to carry his head round in a free and symmetrizal curve. He had slipped from my grasp, and when I next caught him, I found that I was weaker than before! I could not hold him. The excitement had kept me from noticing this until now. For a few moments I was in a perfect frenzy. I had leaped up and down, cried out as loud as I could, and grasped the snake with all my might. But it availed me nothing. He slipped his head from my weakened hand, and made a blow at my face, striking me fairly upon the closed lip.

But the moment of need was at hand. I felt the coils growing tighter and tighter around my body, and my breath was getting weak. A severe pain was beginning to result from the pressure, and I saw that the snake would soon have length enough for another turn. He was drawn so tightly, that the centre of his body was no bigger than his head! The black skin was drawn to a tension that seemed its utmost; and yet I could tell by the working of the large hard scales upon the belly that he was drawing himself tighter still!

"For God's sake!" stricken with absolute terror, "what shall I do?" What could I do? The enemy for whom I at first held so little thought, was killing me; killing me, slowly, openly, and I had no help! I, a stout, strong man, was actually held at the deadly will of a black snake! My breath was now short, faint and quick, and I knew that I was growing purple in the face. My hands and arms were swollen, my fingers numbed! I had let go of the snake's neck, and he now carried the upper part of his body in a graceful curve, his head vibrating from side to side with an undulating motion of extreme gracefulness.

At length I staggered! I was losing my strength rapidly, and the pain of my body had become excruciating. The snake's skin, where it was coiled bout me, was so tight that it seemed almost transparent. He had found me, or I had found him, in a state of hunger, his stomach free from food, and his muscular force unimpaired. A second time I staggered, and objects began to swim before me.

A dizzy sensation was in my head, a faintness in my heart, and a pain, the most agonizing, in my body. The snake now had three feet of body free. He had drawn himself certainly three feet longer than before. He darted his head under my right arm, and brought it up over my shoulder, and pressing his under jaw firmly down the e, he made a sudden wind that made me groan with pain. Each moment was an age of agony! each second a step nearer to death!

My knife? Oh! if I could but reach it! Why not? Why not tear it out?—My arms were free. Mercy! why had I not thought of this before, when my hands had some strength in them?—Yet I would try it. I collected all my remaining power for the effort, and made the attempt. My trowsers were of blue cotton stuff, and very strong; I could not tear it! I thought of the stiches. They might not be so tenacious. I grasped the cloth upon the inside of my thigh and gave my last atom of strength to the effort. The stiches started; they gave way! This result gave me hope, and hope gave me power. Another pull with both hands, and the pocket laid bare! With all the remaining force I could command, with hope of life, of home, of everything I loved on earth in the effort, I caught the pocket upon the inside and bore down upon it. There was a cracking of the threads, a sound of tearing cloth, and my knife was in my hands.

I had yet sense enough to know that the smallest blade was the sharpest, and I opened it. With one quick, nervous movement I pressed the keen edge upon the tense skin, and drew it across.—With a dull tearing snap, the body parted and the snake fell to the ground in two pieces. I staggered to the boat—I reached it, and there sank down. I knew nothing more until I heard a voice calling my name. I opened my eyes and looked up. My father stood over me with terror depicted on his countenance. I told him my story as best I could. He went up and got the duck I had taken from the snake; the other one he could not find; and also brought along the two pieces I had made of my enemy. He told me he had heard me cry out and at once started off in the large boat after me, though it was a long while ere he say my boat. I had lain there over half an hour when he found me.

When we reached home the snake was measured and found to be eight feet and four inches in length. It was a month before I fully recovered from the effects of that hugging, and to this day there is something in the very name of snake that sends a chill of horror to my heart.—*National Magazine.*

THE "DEAD HEAD" SYSTEM.

A correspondent of the Boston Journal writes concerning the late letter of President Moran, of the New York and Erie Railroad:

In this circular he makes a savage assault on the class of editors and keepers of the principal hotels, whom Mr Moran says rode over his road free, without the slightest return any way. The system of free passes I am not about to defend. Let the rule be adopted, and "editors" and "keepers of the principal hotels" are not the men to suffer. The agents and runners and employees of this same Erie Road are the greatest suckers and "dead heads" in the country. One or their New York runners has been at one of the principal hotels in this city for the brief space of five years, and he has not paid one cent. Another of the employees of this road was taken sick at the same hotel, and remained there six months, for which this "dead head" never paid one dollar, nor has the road for him. And the bill for the entertainment of the employees of this road alone, if charged at the common rate, would be five thousand dollars, while the proprietors of this hotel have never used a free pass on that road in their lives. The fact is, these men come to New York—go to the best hotel—put down their names as of this railroad or that—have the best rooms—eat the fat of the land—drink the best of wine—smoke the best cigars—bow their thanks to the "gentlemanly proprietor," go home fat and flourishing, send their men and cards to the hotel, expect that the people will be directed to their road, and when the annual meeting comes round, these "dead head" managers, who have not skill enough to make the road popular or productive, smite the hand that feeds them, and talks about the "free pass system" by which "editors and hotel men are not the men that dead head it over the country.

They have no time to waste in such recreations, while day by day and year by year these editors are expected to aid the roads and lend them the use of their columns; and as eighty out of each hundred persons that leave our hotels will take the advice of the keepers of the hotels which road they had better take, it is demanded that their road be prominent.

Let Mr. Moran propose this resolution to the board at its next meeting

"*Resolved*, That the system of giving free passages to the keepers of principal hotels, especially, is unjust, inasmuch as it entails upon them the obligation to entertain Directors, Agents, Conductors and runners to such an extent, that the free passage to some of them cost in reality one hundred dollars a trip."

In one case I know, if the proprietor were to be passed "dead head" over the Erie Road, he would have already paid in free entertainment to the agents &c., of that road five thousand dollars, notwithstanding he never used a free pass on the Erie Road.

All the hotel men will aid the passage of such a resolution, and a rule to make hotel keepers pay will be received with delight by them. The doing away with agents and runners, alias bill distributors, will be hailed with satisfaction. They are a nuisance. Let the hotel officers be thoroughly posted, so that they may be familiar with all changes and acquainted with the general wishes of the route. The traveler relies upon the hotel officer in eighty out or a hundred cases.

Mr. Moran ought to remember, when he writes again, to say that the free passage system is a deep injury to hotels without the road being advantaged thereby. But let him remember also, that when free rides on the road are discontinued, free dinners, free segars, and free puffs in the columns of the editoris paper go with it. In this age of rivalry, not a day passes that the editorial rooms are not dogged by the employees of these corporations, to answer some squib, to run up some stock, to praise his man and that measure. "Pay here" should be on all editorial doors and on the table of all hotels.

COURTING.

"I don't see why people cannot do their courting by daylight, thereby saving an expense of light, fuel and forenoon naps." A breakfast table remark.

When I preach that doctrine until your head is gray, and you are as toothless as a new born babe, and still young folks will "set up" till the stars grow tired of watching, and the roosters begin to crow!

There is a sort of fascination in it, a positive denial to the contrary notwithstanding. An indescribable, undeniable charm—charm in being the sole occupant of a front parlor with nothing to molest or make afraid; the sofa drawn up before the shining grate, and the lamp regulated to a steady blaze that will not eclipse the brightness of eyes, or made particularly pleasing in hearing the last pair of household feet take a bee line departure for the upper chambers, and feeling that the ever swinging parlor door will remain closed until one of the party cornered choose to open.

Talk of courting by daylight! Think of taking one's arm by quick, hasty withdrawals from around a certain waist at the incessant ringing of the bell, or seeing the puff-combs and curl fly in every direction by a sound of coming footsteps. Imagine proud lover at the feet of fair lady, puffing forth an eldquent, long avowal, with extraordinary expressions fitting over the face; and, at the same moment, a puzzled little countenance peering through the folding door, wondering what makes Mr. M ——"pray with his eyes wide open," and, more disagreeable still, have mama" open the door, without the prelude of a rap, of course, just at the moment you have ventured to test the temperature and sweetness of her daughter's lips.—*Margaret Verne.*

NEGRO THEIVES AND COUNTERFEITERS.

A correspondent of the Memphis Eagle, writing from McNairy county, Tenn, under date of the 1st inst., says:

I to-day attended a trial in the first district in this county, before Esquires Gooch and Morphis, which brought to light some startling developements. The parties arraigned were Hugh Freeman and John Kennedy, charged with attempting to decoy and steal negroes, and counterfeiting. The principal witness implicated many persons not heretofore suspected. He said they tried to get him to join the band, gave him some signs, (which he showed to the court) and wanted him to make dies for counterfeiting base coin. Those implicated (besides those arraigned) was as follows: David Lewis, (constable of said district) Samson Carper, Alex. Carper, V. D. Hoffman, James B. Crocker and M. Claxton; and he said they told him there was a large band of them, sufficient to protect any one of their party that should get into difficulty. The parties arraigned were bond of $1000 each. Freeman could not give the requisite security and was sent to jail.

From facts in his possession, the editor of the Coarrollton Democrat has but little doubt that there is an organized band of negro stealers and horse thieves extending through the State of Mississippi. The negro is seduced from his master under the tune of freedom, the general places of rendezvous soon to be Port Gibson and Grand Gulf. Strangers appear in our county, well dressed and well mounted, who are acquainted with the locality of different plantations and the names of the negroes belonging to it. Several horses and negroes have disappeared. The general plan seems to be, for the negro to run away and meet those that entice them away on a given day at one the above points. The points are well chosen either for running them off by the river, or across the country into the State of Texas.

THE LOVE OF HOME.

If nobler sentiments than the following, which were uttered by Daniel Webster, ever fell from humane lips, we have yet to see them. They are indeed pearls of the rarest value, and should be cherished in the very heart of hearts by every one:

"It is only shallow-minded pretenders who make either distinguished origin a matter of personal merit, or obscure origin a matter of personal reproach." A man who is not ashamed of himself need not be ashamed of his early condition. It did happen to me to be born in a log cabin, raised among the snow drifts of New Hampshire, at a period so early that when the smoke first rose from its rude chimney and curled over the frozen hills, there was no similar evidence of white man's habitation between it and the settlements on the rivers of Canada. Its remains still exist; I make it an annual visit. I carry my children to it, and teach them the hardship endured by the generations before them. I love to dwell on the tender recollections, the kindred ties, the early effections, and the narrations and incidents which mingle with all I know of this primitive family abode; I weep to think that none of those who inhabited it are now among the living and if ever I fail in affectionate veneration for him who raised it, and defended it against savage violence and destruction, cherished all domestic comforts beneath its roof, and through the fire and blood of seven years; revolutionary war, shrunk from no toil, no sacrifice to serve his country, and to raise his children to a condition better than his own, may my name and the name of my posterity be blotted from the memory of mankind."