

TEACHING YOUNG TO SWIM.

Interesting Description of How a Mother Muskrat Gave Lessons to Her Offspring.

That sensible portion of the animal kingdom which naturalists are wont to term the "brute creation" has a wonderful aptitude for encouraging a close acquaintance with those whom it trusts. Were it not for terror, inherited through generations of abused confidence and malicious cruelty, the timid thrush would proudly lead us to the sylvan paradise, where she has hidden her broodings, and the coy doe would bring to us her trembling offspring, that we might stroke its spotted side, says Forest and Stream.

BOLIVIA'S CURIOUS CLIMATE.

Where There Are No Stoves and People Keep Warm by Piling on Clothes.

As Alto Crucezo water freezes every night of the year and the thermometer frequently falls to six, eight and ten below zero, says the Chicago Record, there are no facilities for artificial heat—not even a fireplace—and people keep themselves warm by putting on ponchos and other extra wraps. Mr. Grunty, who has charge of the smelter at Maravillas, says that this winter the thermometer has frequently fallen to eight degrees below zero in the sitting-room of his residence, but the family have felt no discomfort from the lack of stoves and furnaces, and have sat around the evening lamp reading and chatting just as they are accustomed to do at an ordinary temperature.

SODA WATER FOR HUNGER.

It is Now Prescribed as a Palliative in Some Cases Due to Disease.

Water charged with carbonic acid gas—in other words, soda water—is now prescribed as a palliative for hunger, especially for an abnormal sense of hunger due to disease. Says Modern Medicine, which gives us this information: "Carbonic acid gas has the singular property of lessening the sense of hunger, and may profitably be remembered in dealing with cases of diabetes in which bulimia (abnormal hunger) is a prominent symptom. The seat of hunger is found in the solar plexus. By the use of water charged with carbonic acid gas, the branches of the solar plexus distributed through the mucous membrane of the stomach are influenced in such a way that the abnormal irritation of the plexus, which is the foundation for the ravenous hunger often present in diabetes and certain forms of indigestion, may be greatly mitigated, if not wholly appeased. Water charged with carbonic acid gas may likewise be employed with advantage in many cases of hyperperistalsis in which there is a sensation present in the stomach described by the patient as a gnawing sensation, 'goneness,' emptiness, etc."

A Long Shot.

Maj. James M. Ingalls, whose authority in the science of ballistics is recognized in Europe as well as in this country, calculates that the extreme range of the new 16-inch gun, now nearing completion at the Watervliet arsenal, and which is to be used in defending New York harbor, will be almost 21 miles. At its maximum elevation the shot, weighing 2,870 pounds, will be 30,818 feet above its starting point, so that it would clear the summit of Mount Everest, with more than 1,400 feet to spare, even if that giant peak stood on the shore of the sea. The longest shot hitherto made was with a krupp canon, which sent its projectile 12 1/2 miles, the greatest height attained by it being 21,456 feet.

ABBOTSBURY SWANNERY.

One of the Most Ancient Game Preserves in England and Its Regulations.

Lord Ichester's swannery at Abbotsbury is one of the most ancient game preserves of England. It has existed for 900 years, the swans being the property of the abbots, from which the place takes its name, and they were entitled to legal protection. Henry II. enacted penalties for destroying them. Anyone who stole swans' eggs from the nest was liable to be imprisoned for a year and a day in addition to paying a large fine. Henry VIII. granted the lands of this monastery to Giles Strangways, the ancestor of the present Lord Ichester, and raised the number of swans from 800 to 1,600 birds. The home of the swans to-day is as nearly wild as possible, and is a fine combination of sea and land, the beauties of which are unrivaled. Bamboos, pampas grass, fuchsias and exotic shrubs flourish. When not engaged with the swans the men on the estate go mackerel fishing. Early in April the swans gather like so many giant albatrosses and compete for nesting ground, a very ancient habit peculiar to the Abbotsbury birds. Each pair crouches down on its choice of land, and as there are perhaps 200 nests over the lake the swans cover the fields like a flock of noisy sheep. The old birds grab the best places, and were it not for the swanherd the newcomers would fare badly. The swans' method of building is different from that of other birds. The swan sits on the ground and gathers every morsel of portable stuff she can reach, piling it up around her. The male bird drags reeds from the water edge and places them within her reach.

A KEYLESS LOCK.

The Latest and Most Acceptable Invention Proposed for Post Office Boxes.

There is more than \$400,000 of the people's money locked up in post office boxes, each and every key-holder being required to put up with the postmaster's deposit for his key, the amount deposited being returned when the box is given up and rent paid, says the Washington Times. Postmasters are required to keep a strict account of the key-deposit fund, while the post office department here has a regular division set apart for keeping this account. As a postal official puts it, there is a great deal of trouble and no money in the transactions, and the final outcome of the trial of the keyless locks which are to be tried in the principal offices of the country is eagerly looked for. The department has long wanted a keyless lock, but none of the lock inventors until the present was regarded as in any way calculated to prove acceptable. Contracts have been made for a supply of the new locks, which will first be tried in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago and St. Louis, as the largest and most important offices, and then in St. Paul, Minn.; Cleveland, O.; Hartford, Conn.; Madison, Wis., and Rockford, Ill. These offices will be fitted out as soon as the factory can complete the making of the boxes. If they prove in every way satisfactory to the department and to the patrons they will be placed in the offices throughout the country, but not to the entire exclusion of the lock-boxes. It is the belief of the post office department lock experts that the keyless box will prove a blessing.

BENT RIFLE WITH A HISTORY.

A Souvenir of the Battle of Manila That Cost Its Insurgent Owner His Life.

Among the many objects of interest in the collection of war trophies and curios from the Philippines that has recently been placed on exhibition in the Battle of Manila building on Wash-bash avenue is a bent and shattered Remington rifle. This rifle is of interest because of the following story, says the Chicago Inter Ocean.

During the first battles of the American troops with the Filipinos around Manila a charge was ordered to drive the enemy from a strong position. The charge took the American troops over a rice field which the enemy had occupied at the beginning of the engagement, but from which they had been driven.

As the American forces charged across the piteous cries of a wounded Filipino for water excited the compassion of one of the boys, who hastened to give him a drink from his canteen. As he knelt down by the side of the insurgent the latter drew a dagger and tried to stab him. Several of the American soldiers saw the attempt and, hastening up, took the insurgent's gun from beside him and beat his brains out. This is the gun now on exhibition.

The weapon came into the possession of Douglas Young, editor of the Manila Freedom, and from him passed into the possession of the local exhibition. It is of the breech-loading pattern made in 1876 and long since discarded by the American army.

Geological Mouth of Grand River.

In the American Journal of Science Mr. Mudge says that while the present mouth of the Grand River is at Grand Haven on Lake Michigan, there is another point 70 miles inland from the shores of Lake Michigan which was the termination of the old river valley and is therefore its mouth in an interesting sense. He declares that at one time a great glacial river, three-fourths of a mile in width, flowed across the peninsula from Lake Saginaw to Lake Chicago. Long ago the sources of this glacial river (which has been called the Pemmico outlet) failed and the wide valley with its record bearing deposits was laid bare to give up its secrets to the inquisitive geologist. Mr. Mudge describes its course and the river deposits about its old mouth.

UNIQUE COURTSHIP.

How the Young Men of the Transvaal Make Love to the Ladies of Their Choice.

There is something very comic according to our notions in the way a Boer manages his love-making. Having asked the permission of his father to court a certain damsel in the neighborhood—by that is meant anywhere within about 50 miles—he proceeds to purchase the most strikingly decorated and loudly colored saddle cloth for his steed that he can possibly obtain. He will very likely spend a large sum of money on this, for it is a special occasion, and no one knowing the country and the habits of the people will have the least doubt from the appearance of his horse that he is in quest of a bride.

Having made his preparations he mounts his most spirited horse and journeys to the lady's home, but instead of seeking out the object of his affections he respectfully asks permission of her father to court her. The old man cautiously refrains from answering, but consults his wife, and the youth joins the younger members of the household.

No further notice is taken of the suitor for the rest of the day, but if the parents approve of him, when the rest of the household retire for the night the mother solemnly approaches the young man and maiden with a long tallow candle in her hand. This she places on the table and lights and then, having taken an affectionate farewell of the couple, she retires. This is a sign to the lover that his suit is acceptable. As long as the candle lasts the young people are allowed to sit up and talk.

TAMING A "TIGER CAT"

The Success of a Woman Reformer in Handling a Wayward Prisoner of Her Own Sex.

Mrs. Ellen Johnson, who died recently, was probably the most successful reformer of fallen women in this country. She had hundreds of the most vicious of her sex under her control in the prison at Sherborn, Mass., of which she was superintendent. Her first effort with each prisoner was to show her that she trusted her, and did not believe her to be wholly bad.

A writer in one of the daily newspapers says that she once saw a fierce, powerful woman carried into prison by fire policemen.

"It took us all to get the handcuffs on her," they said to the superintendent.

Mrs. Johnson turned to the huge creature, who sat on a bench trying to wipe the tears from her eyes with her manacled hands.

"Poor thing!" she said. "You are tired out. Come into my room and I will give you a cup of tea. Take off her handcuffs," turning to the policemen.

"She's a tiger-cat. She'll murder you," they insisted.

"Oh, no, she won't," said Mrs. Johnson, kindly. "She's not a tiger-cat. Come, Mary."

"I'm so thankful to you for treating me like a woman and not a beast!" said poor Mary, sobbing, as she was led to her cell, after the tea and motherly talk in the superintendent's room.

There was very little trouble with her afterward.

CACTI IN A BOTTLE.

Thus Inclosed They Will Grow Without Air or Water and Flourish for Years.

A new method of growing cacti has been discovered in the botanical gardens of Berlin. All that is required is a shapely bottle, a little rich earth and a few cactus seeds that can be bought of any florist for a few cents. Bottles in which cream de menthe or some of the other cordials usually come, are well adapted to this purpose on account of the clearness of the glass and the grace of their shape.

Having secured the bottle, cleanse it thoroughly and then put earth in it until the bottom is covered to a height of about an inch. Sprinkle this earth well, almost soaking wet, and then throw in three or four cactus seeds. Close the bottle snugly with a tight-fitting cork and seal it well with sealing wax. Tie a strong cord around the neck of the bottle and hang it in a window that the sun reaches for at least several hours every day. In cold weather the bottle must not be exposed. The living room with a constant temperature of 70 degrees or more, suits the experiment admirably. Then the entire process of growth can be watched with no small interest. The opening and rooting of the seeds and the gradual development of the plants will follow, almost as if by magic.

A Small Boy's Big Bear.

The largest bear killed in middle Pennsylvania for many years was of the genuine Black Mountain variety, and tipped the scales at 350 pounds. It attracted a great deal of attention when brought to Altoona, especially as it had been shot by a boy 14 years old. The boy's father tells the tale. "We had been after the animal for several weeks, off and on, and twice we followed him to his lair, but could not dislodge him. The other morning the bear was seen in a field not far from my house, and my brother and I, with my son, gave him a hot chase. He gained on us, and we would likely have lost him had it not been for the boy. We had posted him on the public road where the bear had crossed before, and, sure enough, Bruin took the same track this time. The boy saw him coming, and, although it must have been a terrifying sight, he held his ground and planted a bullet square into the bear's brain."

Change of Color in Cats.

Twelve black cats were put in a New York cold-storage warehouse. At the end of six months their hair had turned white.

A HEDGEROW MURDERER.

A Deer of Furtive Crimes in the Great Northern Shrike—His Curious Song.

While the rest of the feathered tribes are discussing the best air lines southward, the great northern shrike is taking cognizance of chill skies with a view, not to changing them for warmer ones, but to making himself as comfortable as may be during the winter without shifting his quarters. The shrike, or butcher bird, as he is appropriately called, is one of the birds that stay here the year round. Constance is one of his few good qualities. Like most freebooters, he is a hardy fellow, and as cold has no terrors for him he forms a pleasant feature of the winter landscape in this region; for all that, he is the most brutal murderer that wears feathers.

The shrike is the quietest of birds, keeping his plans and affairs entirely to himself. Except in the nesting season he almost invariably travels alone, a wolf in sheep's clothing, who takes advantage of the fact that he possesses the innocent-looking plumage of a song-bird to deceive his victims until his small, sharp, crooked beak has bitten into their brains. He never strikes like the hawk, from the open, but you will see him, a bird slightly smaller than a robin, dark gray and black with white markings on his wings and tail, flying along just above the ground, a silent, uneven flight, from thicket to thicket, bush to bush and hedge to hedge. A flock of little birds, perhaps chickadees, are busy in a tree. Quietly the shrike alights. Easily and deliberately he hops from twig to twig, attracting no special attention. One quick jump, a little flutter, and the unsuspecting chickadees have lost one of their friends. They never dreamed that that queer-colored plumage concealed a murderer. After a few tastes of his victim the shrike goes on and kills another. So bloodthirsty is he that he used to go by the name of nine-killer, owing to the popular belief that he killed and impaled on thorns nine little victims each day. Of late years it is said that his mathematical accuracy has deteriorated.

Greed of slaughter at times makes him very bold and instances are cited where a shrike has flown in at a window, grasped the bars with his claws and struck at the canary within with such vicious pertinacity that he was finally captured by the indignant owner of the bird. One of the butcher bird's peculiarities is that he sometimes, as though ashamed of his evil ways, attempts to sing. The result is curious and not altogether unpleasant. It is as though the spirits of the countless little songbirds he had slaughtered were trying to sing together inside of him and his throat were too small to let the sound out, resulting in a wondrous bubbling and gurgling, while occasionally a clear note of fine music will escape from the melody of sound. It is not often that the shrike essays this performance, but when he does he generally delivers his cantata in the early morning from the topmost twig of a tree, with breast thrown out and head raised in an devotional attitude as the Pharisee that stood and prayed.

In the spring he chooses for a nesting place one of his favorite bushy thorn trees and builds a rather bulky nest therein, wherein his mate, in order that the race of shrikes may grow and multiply, lays eggs to the goodly number of six, yellowish white, thickly speckled and dotted with darker yellow. And in a few weeks the young pirates are traveling about the hedges and bushy byways becoming rapidly conversant with the ways that are dark for which the race of shrikes is peculiar.—N. Y. Sun.

PACIFIC COAST WHALE STORY.

Narrow Escape of a Small Boat's Party from a Huge Whale's Mad Rush.

The theory that whales refuse to attack men unless they themselves are assailed was exploded one day recently.

A monster whale not less than 60 feet in length made a vicious charge at a boat anchored off Point Cavallo and badly frightened its occupants. The boat in charge of the man who had the been disastrous, the result might have been disastrous.

The boat, containing the fisherman and his three children, was pulled to a point about 1,500 feet off Point Cavallo and dropped anchor.

The party were fishing industriously when a whale entered the Golden Gate and sped toward them. The spectacle of the animal excited the curiosity of the younger fisher folk, but caused no alarm. Suddenly his whale-ship caught sight of the boat and he reared his majestic proportions aloft until he seemed to tower in the water like a six-story building. He was evidently getting his bearings, and as he caught sight of the boat he spouted fiercely. Then he sank with a huge splash, came up again and dashed for the boat.

Happily the aim of the leviathan was bad, for in his rush he missed the boat, by some three or four feet and passed on like a whirlwind a considerable distance beyond. The rapid passage of the whale with half of his huge body above the water line thrashed the water into a miniature tidal wave, which swung the boat as though in an eddy and all but capsized it. The children screamed in terror and gave themselves up for lost. The fisherman did not lose his head, however, and by a judicious use of his oars brought the boat about and, minus some fishing tackle which was purloined by the whale in his passage, he headed for the shore.

The whale turned as if to renew the attack, but, apparently thinking better of it, he flapped his fins and tail and dove out of sight.

FOREIGN GOSSIP.

Opium eating is increasing in England. China's first sawmill has just been built.

Melodramas are returning to fashion in London. A writer in an English magazine declares that the real average Englishman is a workman earning \$6 a week.

Toronto trains are to be forbidden to whistle within the city limits on Sunday, as they disturb the worshippers at church.

France loses every year by infectious and contagious diseases 240,000 lives, or nearly double the number of lives lost in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. Among the Vosges peasants children born at the new moon are supposed to have better hung tongues than others, and those born at the last quarter to have keener reasoning powers.

A British act of parliament requires that habitual feminine drunkards shall be sent to homes for inebriates, but there were 200 such women arrested last year and the homes can accommodate only 25.

Forest lands in Sweden comprise 40.65 per cent. of its entire area. With the exception of Serbia, this is the largest proportion of forest land in any country, and yet Sweden has been an important lumber producer for more than a century.

A scientist recently made some experiments on Lake Geneva to demonstrate the power of sound to travel a long way in water. A clock was made to strike under the water, and was heard to a distance of 12 miles. In a second experiment the striking of a clock was heard to a distance of 27 miles.

HOW THEY RUN GOVERNMENT.

Striking Illustration of Methods in Vogue in Guatemala Described by a Former Resident.

"A quaint little experience I once had in the interior of Guatemala," said a former resident of that republic, "Furnishes a tipoff illustration of the way they run governments in Central America. I had occasion to visit a small guerilla town in the coffee belt on some business and found the commandant in a state bordering on distraction. We took dinner together and he told me his tale of woe between courses. His soldiers, it seemed, had been without pay for over three months, and as the government made no effort to provide them with rations, they had subsisted on beans, tortillas and coffee furnished on credit by the old women of the village. Naturally, the crew had worn itself out, and two days before I arrived all the old women went on a strike, since which time the garrison had been practically without food. Needless to say, the soldiers were desperate and they had determined to desert en bloc and go back to their homes.

"I advised the commandant to telegraph the facts immediately to the president, and at last he screwed up enough courage to send the message. As soon as it was received the president sent word to a wealthy planter 'requesting' him to dispatch some cash instantly to the commandant. The planter gave the messenger a \$100 bill and rushed him off on horseback for the village, which he reached at daybreak the next morning. When the poor commandant saw the remittance he nearly swooned away, for under the circumstances \$100 was about as much use to him as 100 brass elephants. Nobody in the whole department could charge it, and he was in the depths of despair until I suddenly appeared in the role of good fairy. I happened to have 100-dollar notes in my saddlebags, and I handed over the bundle in return for the bill brought by the courier. The commandant grabbed the package and kissed me violently on both cheeks. Glory hallelujah! The country was saved! Each soldier got a dollar, which he paid on account, and the credit of the government was restored. The garrison howled with joy, and the old women shed happy tears in the coffee which they at once proceeded to boil. It was a touching scene. If ever I go back to that place again I will be treated like a prince."—N. Y. Times-Democrat.

Where Women's Songs Displace.

In our land one of the greatest charms a woman or girl can possess is a low, sweet voice. Consequently, as soon as it becomes apparent that a little girl has an unusually good voice, her parents begin to make preparations for the cultivation of this gift, if they can possibly afford it, says the Chicago Record. This is so, indeed, in most European countries; but there are exceptions. In Greece, for instance, if a woman wishes to sing she has to steal to some out of the way place to do it, for were people to hear her she would be publicly disgraced. It must seem very strange for women to be going about their houses and their gardens, doing their work and attending their children, with never a snatch of song to enliven the tedium of their labor. A land where women did not sing about their homes would seem a dreary one to us, no matter how beautiful it might be naturally, and we hope the Greeks will learn to appreciate instead of despise women who sing.—Detroit Free Press.

Nobody Wants It.

There now remains only one people, and one little valley south of the equator whose sovereignty has not been claimed by some European power. It is the valley of Barotse, 50 or 60 miles wide, north of Laluel, in South Africa.—N. Y. Sun.

Her New Hat.

A girl is never really satisfied with a new hat unless it looks like an angel's wing or else like a cabbage.—N. Y. Press.

CHICAGO'S DUTCH WINDMILL.

For Forty Years It Has Ground Flour for the Farmers at Fair View.

When the wind blows the farmer of Fair View have bread. In periods of calm their children go hungry to bed. The whole domestic economy of the settlement is dependent upon the breeze. For it is the wind that gives power to the mill that grinds the farmers' grain.

Twenty-three miles northwest from the city hall is a Holland windmill that for four decades has been the pride of the people in that part of Cook county. Henry Brockman, the son of Holland parents, built the mill, and his four great arms that reach out to catch the breezes yield him a comfortable living. His busiest days are those when a gale is blowing. Then sometimes as many as a dozen farm wagons may be seen about the mill. It is always "first come first served," and the farmers take their time, paying to the thrifty miller a tithe in the shape of one-thirtieth of the grain that the mill grinds. Flour of the finest quality is produced by the primitive upper and nether stone process.

The peculiarly shaped structure that supports the great air motor stands just on the outskirts of Fair View, a little hamlet on the Wisconsin Central road. To the man who drives out from Chicago through Schiller park it presents a beautiful sight. It can be seen for two miles, as it stands on a ridge. From the ground to the shaft, or center of the cross, the measurement is 30 feet. The arms of the motor are each 30 feet long. Their fine latticed projections serve as supports for the canvas that is spread upon them when the mill is in operation.

Mr. Brockman, the owner, tells a story that illustrates how intimately the mill is associated with the welfare of the community. In the spring of 1890, he says, it happened that the farmers about Fair View had only small stores of flour and meal. In the month of May of that year there was only one day when the wind blew with force enough to operate the mill. The flour and meal of the settlement gave out, and the people had to leave their plows and come in to Chicago to get supplies. For 30 days hardly a breath of air stirred in Fair View, and farm work was seriously retarded by the loss of time that had to be taken in trips to the city. The first day of June the "wind famine" ended. A squall came in the van of a thunderstorm that sent Brockman's mill a-whirling at a rate that broke two of the arms off close to the shaft. Then a gale blew for six days, preventing repairs. Soon after that the mill was repaired and has continued its steady grind to this day.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

ON THE ICE TRAIL.

Desperate Race of Prospectors with Famine and Cold in the Klondike Country.

All through December a long procession of men passed Fort Selkirk, bound for God's country. All classes of life were represented, from the peddler to the millionaire mine owner, and it is only fair to the peddler to say that for grit and endurance no one surpassed him. Some trudged and tugged at heavy sleds and were their own dogs, as the saying went, and others trotted along behind half-broken dog teams and had their hired men to attend to the animals and do the work of making and breaking camp.

It was a gaily caparisoned procession and not at all suggestive of the desperate race with famine and cold. The men who knew to a certainty that their provisions would not last them to the coast, and who had no idea what they would do when the food gave out, wore carnival colored packages of yellow and white, or blue and white, or tawny fox skins, and the richer and darker furs. Even the face masks and projecting heads, when seen at a little distance, carried out the masquerade idea suggested by the domino-like packages, but a closer inspection of the deeper faces behind their fringe of ice showed hard lines and little suggestion of mirth.

And yet the men were not conquered and despondent. Once in awhile, it is true, some maimed, half-frozen creature would come along half-dazed with four and pain, but with the majority the hardships and care brought nipped at the masterful spirit that is characteristic of the born pioneer, and difficulties and danger were taken banteringly and with disdain.

"You Americans have wonderful constitutions," said John Peche, the Canadian government messenger, who late in December was the first man in from the outside world. "Coming down the river I met over 300 men on their way out, and most of them were from the states, and knew nothing of the cold that is cold, or how to take care of themselves right, yet they aoted as if they were on a picnic and as if the devil were really dead, and they didn't seem to mind little inconveniences like frozen cheeks and feet and hands with the nails coming off and blistered with frost. They're reckless devils, and a more cheery set I never met."—Forest and Stream.

Selfishness.

One day Jack, overcome with loneliness, said: "Oh, I wish I had a little brother to play with me!" "Well," said mamma, "if you had a little brother, he would be mamma's little boy, and you would have to be very kind and unselfish with him." Disheartened at the dreadful prospect, the little fellow exclaimed: "I don't want a little brother! I wish I was twins, so I could play with myself!"—Youth's Companion.

Thirty Feet of Sand.

It is supposed that the average depth of sand in the deserts of Africa is from 30 to 40 feet.—Chicago Inter Ocean.