



Mrs. Anderson, Jacksonville, Fla., daughter of Recorder of Deeds, West, who witnessed her signature to the following letter, praises Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

"DEAR MRS. PINKHAM:—There are but few wives and mothers who have not at times endured agonies and such pain as only women know. I wish such women knew the value of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. It is a remarkable medicine, different in action from any I ever knew and thoroughly reliable. I have seen many cases where women doctored for years without permanent benefit, who were cured in less than three months after taking your Vegetable Compound, while others who were chronic and incurable came out cured, happy, and in perfect health after a thorough treatment with this medicine. I have never used it myself without gaining great benefit. A few doses restores my strength and appetite, and tones up the entire system. Your medicine has been tried and found true, hence I fully endorse it."—Mrs. R. A. ANDERSON, 296 Washington St., Jacksonville, Fla. — \$5.000 for original of above letter proving genuineness cannot be produced. No other medicine for women has received such widespread and unqualified endorsement. No other medicine has such a record of cures of female troubles. Refuse to buy any substitute.

The Whirr of the Rattler

Dallas Lore Sharp, in Youth's Companion.

I bent over to bend the fire, and in rising hit my head against a tassel of tiny rattlesnake tails dangling from the mantel. The old professor shivered. "Cold?" I inquired. "Yes," he replied, "but not for lack of fire. It's strange, but the whirr of those rattles was in my ears the moment before you touched them. There are eight tails in that little bunch, all of one species—the ground-rattler. He's the runt among rattlesnakes, but the truth is, he runs all to poison and wickedness. "Snakes have never been repulsive to me. I really owe my life to those eight whose tails hang there. Yet ever since the night since their whirring woke me, the dry rattle of their buttons makes me shiver. "I was hunting in Southern Georgia; not hunting, collecting only, when I caught those, and that was the last real collecting trip I ever made South. Perhaps you think that was one too many. A man of seventy has no business off alone in the swamps of the Altamaha; he's too old. "But I didn't look seventy. Anyway, with the help of those eight little snakes I taught a rascal of half my years some things about shooting." The old professor was a famous shot, and I knew there was a story coming of some nice work. "I was after ivory-billed woodpeckers," he went on, "and I started into the woods at Perry's Mills on the Altamaha. I brought my horse up the river to that point by boat. As the landing was deserted, the steamer had hardly turned the first bend before I was in the saddle. The swamp began immediately, but was broken here by ridges of higher ground. Mounting the third and highest of these, I caught the distant chug, chug of the cotton boat; perhaps five miles away. "As I paused, listening, the puffing ceased, a faint whistle sounded. The boat had pulled in at another landing. "I had no trouble in finding the trail, which soon dwindled to an irregular line of blazed trees, running most of the time through spongy, cypress-covered bottoms. Not once all day did I hear the drum-beat or the trumpet-blast of the great ivory-billed birds I was seeking. "Before noon the next day the trail began to open, leading out of the swamp into drier, more piny stretches, until it at last brought me to what had once been a clearing. The old shanty, sagging hard behind, was still standing. "Some human being had cleared the patch of ground and tried to make a home. The long, single-roomed cabin was now without door or window. One end of its roof was crushed in, and its chimney was a mere heap of clay and rotten sticks. "As I approached the cabin a sharp whirr startled me, and out of the sand at my feet rose the ugly head of a little sand rattlesnake. As I needed several specimens, I joyfully

bagged this one and continued toward the cabin. "The knoll upon which the shanty sat was of pure sand. About the doorway was a spot half the area of the cabin, which was entirely bare of grass. From the numerous hollows or pits all over it I saw that it must be the place where the wild turkeys and other large birds of the swamp came for their daily dust baths. "I had put one foot among the hollows when the whirr of another snake checked me, and instantly every little crater there in the sand shot up a glittering head and smoked with the dust of a vibrating tail. I had stepped into a nest of sand rattlesnakes! "My snood was still unwound, and I began immediately the somewhat delicate task of harvesting this crop of small fiends. One by one they fought in the loop, twisting and striking; but the ground was soon cleared, and eight little snakes were squirming in the bag. "I entered the cabin with my mind all ready made up to camp here for a few days. Putting the bag of snakes down just inside the doorway, I looked about my quarters. "One-half of the roof was down upon the hard earth floor; but I soon had this debris cleared out. The rest of the roof seemed perfectly safe, and fortunately there was enough of it to shelter me. In the end, covered by the roof and along the wall opposite the doorway, stood the solitary piece of furniture—a bunk built of live-oak posts, about four feet high, driven into the floor. "I still had a good afternoon before me, so, tethering my horse, I started out to hunt till dusk. Up to this time I had neither seen nor heard the great king woodpecker of the swamp. I was not at all discouraged, for if I got one, which was by no means certain, it would be one of the very last of his noble race. "But along toward mid-afternoon a loud, resonant roll echoed through the swamp, followed by a ringing cry that sent me hurrying down through the pines toward the denser cypress growths. It was an ivory-bill. "I was just entering the thick swamp when off on my right a twig snapped, and I caught a glimpse of something dark—a mere shadow—some animal, apparently, slipping away through the bush. But what animal? In the snap of that stick, in the motion of that shadow, what was peculiar? "A man works by hints in the woods. As I hurried on I felt vaguely that there was something unlike either a deer or a bear in the movement of this animal that had crossed my path. But then sounded loud the ivory gravel, and away I rushed among the trees. "Now here, now there, it sounded, and I followed, without even the sight of a bird, until the wary creature, feeling the presence of an enemy, must have risen and swung off over the swamp. "One never counts time or distance on such a chase. I had been so eager that I lost count of direction, too. The twilight suddenly reminded me of a cabin off in the woods, but in what direction and how far away I did not know. "The light could hardly last till I got to the camp, and the full moon would not rise above the trees before eleven o'clock, but I hadn't the least desire to camp where I was. My compass showed me that I had circled round and must now be approaching the cabin from the opposite direction to that by which I had left it. "As I picked my way along, my thought turned again to the shadow in the brush. I was still worrying about it when there was a quick stir ahead of me, and there, with the same peculiar movement, went the creature again. "It was certainly odd. Was my imagination, helped out by the wald swamp twilight, playing tricks upon me? I cocked my gun, for I was growing uneasy. Then just ahead of me the horse neighed, and I laughed at my foolishness. I stopped behind a bunch of jasmine to examine the cabin before coming out into the open. "From my first relief at sight of it I found myself dreading to enter, so wrapped seemed this house in eternal silence and night. "I shook off this nonsense instantly, concluding that I needed a dose of quinine, for nothing under the stars could stir up this bilious imagination but malaria. "After supper I brought the horse up close to the shanty, tying him in the sandy spot before the door. Bed-making was a matter of throwing my blankets over the bunk, and having done this, I sat down upon the door-step, for I was anything but sleepy. "The moon had not yet risen, but there was a soft shadowy light hanging like mist among the trees, which thinned the darkness. "The quiet was profound. Now and then it was broken by a cry or a bird-call—an owl among the hollow tupeloes. Down in the brush in front of me something large and dark passed. Then another something. I strained to make out the form when the bush seemed suddenly to turn into resin-barrels, and over them, leering at me, appeared the sinister face of a negro! "The sweat started from every pore of my body. I must certainly be ill! But I laid my revolver across my knees. "This could be but an illusion. That

WOODSTOCK, N. B. WATSON, 1904. sinister face was one of the last two human faces I had looked upon. It belonged to a negro passenger whom I caught watching me from behind some resin-barrels on deck as the boat pulled out from my landing. It had stuck unpleasantly in my mind, along with the other face, that of a young white man, the only other passenger on the boat. "He was a suave fellow this, whom my kit and trip had greatly interested. I had broken a twenty-dollar note for him. He collected birds, too, and studied my map of the swamp, remarked on my being alone, admired my two hundred dollar hammerless gun, took a look at the picture of my wife on the face of my Swiss watch, asked the price of my new binocular field-glasses, and after a good natured attempt to get me to play cards, said good night and went to his room with a pretty exact estimate, I was sure, of what I was worth as I stood. "I had put him down as a sharper, but over and over again during the past two days the thought of him and of my carelessness made me uneasy. I should have been more guarded. "This all came over me anew as I caught sight of the black phantom face leering at me out in the dusky twilight. But it was all nonsense. The two men were not together. They had gone on up the river, and it was no more likely that I had actually seen a human face than that I had actually seen before me the resin-barrels from the boat. "I can't remember that I ever went to bed before with a revolver under my pillow. This time I put it there, and lay down with my feet toward the end of the cabin, so that I could look out into the open where my horse stood. "Every now and then a smothered whirr from the bag of snakes would rouse me. It was a hot night; the rattlers were restless. In the dim light of the room I could see the bag against the wall. Presently it rolled over on the floor. While watching it move with the squirming snakes, I fell into sound sleep. "The room was buzzing—it was a part of my dream—a rapid whirring filled my ears. "A flash of time only was it dream—then all reality! I was awake, wide awake. "In the middle of the floor, with clear moonlight flooding through the broken roof upon him, stood the young man, my fellow-passenger. The light glinted on a blade in his hand. His face showed white with horror. All over the floor were the swaying heads and whirring tails of the sand rattlesnakes. They had broken out of the bag. Beyond him, in the open, leered the face of the negro. "Before he had had time to stir I was upon my elbow, revolver in hand. "If I were you," I said, quietly, but so that he heard me through the hum, "I would not move. There's a snake ready to strike right behind you. See, there at your left foot," and as he dropped his eyes he saw a headless snake flatten out upon the floor. My aim was perfect. "I never was cooler. The real danger before me restored me fully. My nerves instantly responded to their seventy years of training. "There at your right," I said. The wicked little head fell against his boot. "Don't go yet. Let the smoke rise. I must kill that snake behind you. Still, now, I'm going to fire between your knees." I pulled. The ball cut a hole through his trousers, as I intended. The snake whipped over with a broken back. "To his fright at the snakes was added a new and keener horror of my revolver. The next bullet would be the one he deserved and expected! The moments between my deliberate firing were whole lives to him. The rascal's face was pitiful in its terror. "As the smoke again cleared I looked him in the eyes. Slowly lifting my revolver along his body to the breast, I paused. Then I pointed toward the door. "Your way is clear now. If I were you, I'd go. Tell the boy to refasten my horse before you leave. And if you are after ivory-billed woodpeckers, you had better hunt some other swamp. "There was not a sound. He backed out of the door and vanished. The horse reappeared in its place. I waited, but the moonlight made no stir as it brightened, and the silence of the midnight deepened undisturbed. "I never slept better than during the remainder of that night; but it was not until I had rid the cabin of the rest of those little snakes."

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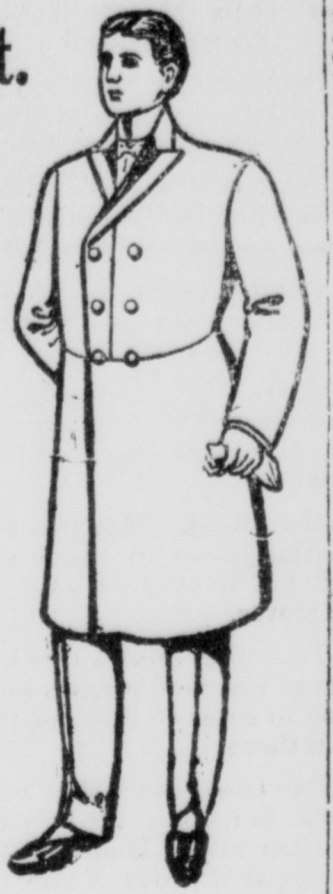
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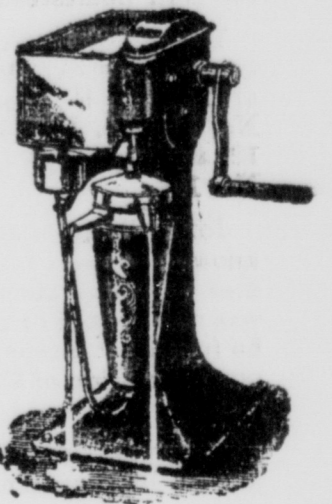
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