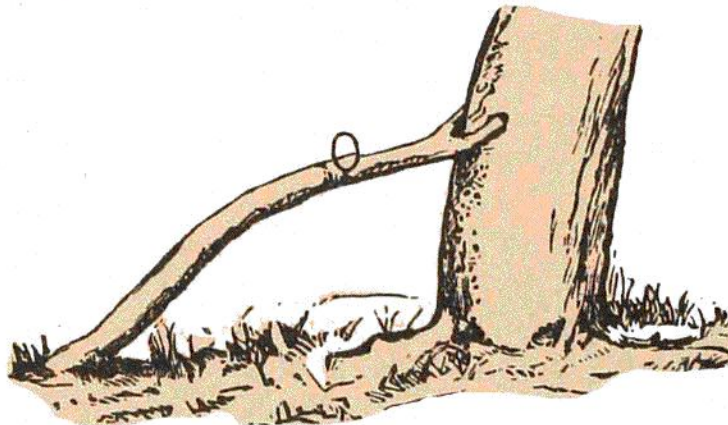


made tea in a "billy," a simple tin pot with wire handle, the universal Australian camp teapot, and had hardly lain down to sleep under our tent before it came on to rain heavily. It continued to rain all the next day.

Waking in the night I heard Opossums (*Phalangista vulpina*) caterwauling in the gum trees close by, and in the early morning the Laughing-jackasses and Piping Crows kept up a curiously contrasted concert; the loud harsh laugh of the former mingling with the flute-like musical notes of the latter.

Notwithstanding the rain, I shot a beautiful paroquet, of which and other birds numerous flocks were flying about. With the help of a neighbouring farmer, who rented the bush for grazing, an Opossum was driven out of its hole in a dead-branch or "pipe" of a gum-tree and secured.

The scratches of the claws of the Opossum on the bark of the tree show at once whether a tree is inhabited or not. All the bigger trees were scored deeply and marked with a regular



OPOSSUM SNARE.

track right up to the various pipes in the dead branches far overhead. The timber of many of the gum-trees decays away in the heart with great rapidity. Hence, whenever a branch is broken off, a pipe is soon formed, and it is especially these holes with abrupt entrances which the opossum affects.

The tracks are always on the side of the tree trunk on which the slope renders ascent most easy. The opossum economizes his force, or is lazy, and this fact is turned to advantage by trappers, who snare the opossums in order to make the opossum rugs, of which so many are used in Australia and exported.

A short piece of a stout branch, with a fork at the end, is placed leaning against the butt of a tree meeting the opossum path, the jaws of the fork embracing the round of the trunk a little, so as to keep all steady. About a foot or so from the fork a noose is placed on the lean-to, being kept in place by a notch.