

HUNTING SEA OTTERS.

THEIR FUR THE MOST HIGHLY PRIZED IN THE WORLD.

Found at Only One Point on the Pacific Coast—The Hunter Must Have Patience.

Under the shadows of the majestic Olympic range of mountains of the coast of the State of Washington, is one of the few localities on the eastern shores of the Pacific Ocean where the very valuable sea otter is caught. There are hundreds of people, even in the State of Washington and Oregon, that do not know this fact. Until a few years ago the main source of supply for the skins of the sea otter was the shores of the Aleutian Islands, away up north, nearly to the coast of Siberia, says the Chicago Tribune. The fur is the most expensive and highly prized in the commercial world. The fur requires no dyeing to fit it for use, like the seal fur, and in its natural state is worth ten or twenty times the figure that the seal skin sells for. It is not usually made into sacks or cloaks, because to suit the taste of many, and it is so rare that the fur is not often seen except as trimmings for garments of seal skin.

The manner of securing the sea otter on the coast of Washington is interesting to anyone. If it were an easy task to get a sea otter there would no longer be any of them left in these waters, for they have been hunted here for twenty years by white men and a hundred or more years by Indians. The Indians hunt the sea otter from long heavy canoes, in which they go out through the surf, and cruising along a mile or two, shoot or spear the animal as he lies sleeping in the water with only his head in sight. Owing to his extreme wariness it is hard to approach and difficult to hit the animal after it is found. It is only after long practice that an Indian accustomed as he is to the use of a canoe is able to meet with any success at all, for it takes great skill to shoot or spear a floating object in a choppy sea from an uncertain canoe. Very often a hunter remains out five or six days without result.

It is not, however, the Indians who secure the most sea otters, for there are not many natives left and the pursuit is a hazardous one. It is the white hunter, or "Boston man," as the Indians called him, who has devised a way of getting the coveted fur without risking his life in a canoe at sea. Along this stretch of beach from Gray's harbor to Point Granville are seven or eight three-legged towers, that look from a distance like three-legged skeleton pile drivers, with a rude box at the top of each. These towers are called sea otter derricks, and they are erected as far out toward the breakers as practicable without danger of being washed away. The beach is smooth and so nearly level that at a distance of 1000 feet from shore the water is only two or three feet deep. From the top of these derricks the hunters pick out the way sea otter, and it is not an unusual thing for the hunter to shoot and kill his game at a distance of 1000 yards. But though these hunters are excellent riflemen and their weapons are the very best, they may shoot a hundred times without killing a single otter, so that in addition to being good shots, they must possess unusual patience. In spite of the apparent lack of liveliness in the pursuit, the sport is a most attractive one and the hunter that once gets into it seldom abandons it.

In the locality mentioned these derricks form a conspicuous feature of the coast scenery and are scattered from two to four miles apart. Two of these lookouts have been up a long time. One is built on the top of tall trees on the bank, and the other is on a rock some distance out, the little cabin on top being reached by a rude ladder built of short pieces of driftwood tied together. Severe storms blow the derricks on the sand down every winter, but they are easily rebuilt, as there are great quantities of driftwood handy and no lack of standing timber within a few rods of the breakers. Usually two hunters build a derrick together and share its use.

These derricks are 40 feet high, and at the base are 24 feet wide. On one of the poles are braced together by cross pieces nailed on at different points. Upon the top, or apart, is built a box, nearly as high as a man's head, open at the top and partly open on the side toward the sea. The ends of the poles are sawed off and a board is nailed on top, making a seat for the hunter, who sits in his well-protected coop, and, with his rifle resting on the edge of the box in front of him, waits and watches for the game. He soon learns the habits of the sea otter, and can tell by the wind and the tide and the currents where to look for the first appearance of the stubby little head above the water.

Not one sea otter in a dozen sinks when it is killed by a bullet, and the next flood tide throws the carcass on the beach. When a number of hunters are shooting, each one marks his bullets, so that the animal is found. The hunters have implicit faith in each other, and would not think of taking skins that did not belong to them. The Indians going up and down the beach are employed by some of the hunters to look out for their expected carcasses. If they find the dead animals easily, they are allowed a small sum, enough to pay them for their time and labor. If, for some reason, an animal that has been shot fails to come in when or where it is expected, and a whole day has gone by in fruitless search, then the In-

dian who finds it is given \$10; two days after the Indian gets \$30 for bringing it in, and if a week elapses from the time the hunter shoots the sea otter to the time he is found, he gives half of its value to the Indian, for he has then nearly despaired of ever seeing it.

A full grown sea otter is from four to five feet long, and perhaps a foot or more wide. When a hunter secures one he loosens the hide from the nose and head, and without cutting it lengthwise at all, he pulls the skin down over the body, the hide being so elastic that this is not a difficult job. It is then stretched over a smooth board six and a half feet long, nine inches wide at one end and ten at the other end. Each end of this board is tapered to a point. Another board exactly the same size is inserted, and the skin is stretched a foot or eighteen inches longer than its original length. A thin board, half the length of the others, is wedged in and the skin tightly tacked at the ends to hold it in place. If any flesh adheres to the skin it is then cut off, and the hide is cured and dried in this condition. In a few days it is taken off the boards and turned fur side out, when it is ready for market.

The most valuable fur is that of the darkest color, a rich, nearly jet black fur with long silver hairs scattered through being the most prized of all, and such pelts bring the hunter from \$150 to \$250. The clear black comes next in value, and the brown is the cheapest of all and brings from \$75 to \$100. These prices do not indicate the true value of the skins, for the locality is a long distance from the railways, and it is very difficult and expensive to get freight of any kind from this out-of-the-way beach. A skin that the hunter sells for \$150 more than doubles in value by the time it goes through several hands and reaches a good market.

Ships.

Few people stop to consider the varied industries that are interested in a ship. The tax gatherer seldom thinks of the benefits derived by a community in which ships are owned. The industries directly concerned in a vessel are alone sufficient to encourage shipping as a business and to discourage the assessment of local taxes of any kind.

The Maritime Register of New York, directs attention to a few of these. There is the builder, the owner, the iron manufacturer, the engine builder, the chain and anchor maker, the spar maker, the canvas and sail maker, the various manufacturers who furnish provisions, fittings, electric lights, and various goods that enter into the make and supply of a ship as much as into the building of a hotel; the cargo owner, the many buyers of the varied cargoes, the underwriter, the numerous middlemen that arrange for everything in the supply, the employment and management of the ship and in the buying and sale of her cargo; the warehousemen, the crew, the men who live on the crew, the tugs and the wharfinger. There are many trades besides directly engaged and depending almost entirely upon the ship for support. There are also to be added those trades that directly supply goods to and are but ramifications of those directly concerned in the making and running of the ship itself. Indeed, when the list is considered as a whole, it may be claimed that no single industry is as important as shipping in the variety of trades that it practically creates and supports, or as valuable to a country in its influence upon the general business and commercial welfare of a country. It needs no other argument, therefore, to support the assertion that it is of the very greatest necessity and of immense advantage for this country to be a ship owner.

The Trick of the Trade.

"What bothers most people who think anything about the subject," said Kearney P. Speedy, a high diver, who began his public career by jumping head first from the St. Louis Bridge four or five years ago, "is how a dive of fifty or sixty feet can be made into a tank of thirty-six inches of water."

You see they confuse diving with bridge jumping—quite a different thing. Bridge jumpers are neither jumpers nor divers—they're droppers; that is, they reach the lower rods of the bridge truss and drop feet foremost into the water. The trick is to maintain the perpendicular. They must have plenty of water under them, too. The high diver, as you have seen, makes a clear dive, head first, just as a boy does from a springboard in swimming.

"I do it in very shallow water. I weigh, stripped, 180 pounds, and never do any training. I have been diving from the top of a circus tent all summer into a tank but seven feet wide and into water but three feet deep.

"The shallow water dive is possible from the same principle that a cannon or rifle shot meets the most resistance the more powerful the impact. You see, I give my body and head a slight inclination upward at the instant I strike the water, which causes me to pop out as a board would do or as an oar on the feather. I learned this trick in the St. Louis natorium when a boy, practising in shallower water and from a greater height. Then there is a certain elasticity in the water known to the high diver, but the trick is in the strike and turn, for water will break bones and crush chests, as many a man knows."

An Indiana calf, now two months old, has hoofs like a horse.

What Electricity is Doing.

The Mining and Scientific Press thus sums up the uses to which electricity is applied. It enters into the preparation of what we eat, drink and wear, and there are many articles of utility now produced by its aid. The residents of many citizens in the United States have their houses protected, lighted and heated by electricity. They go to their places of business in cars run by electricity, the elevator by which they reach their office in high buildings, or the machinery in their factory, is run by electricity, the bell which summons them to church is rung by electricity and the church organ is played by electricity. Electricity brings the news to them from all parts of the earth; stamps their letters, automatically sounds the alarm in case of fire, rings the door bell, cooks the food, and fans them while eating it. When they go to the dentist their teeth are drilled and filled by electricity, and miniature electric lamps are now constructed for the use of doctors in diagnosing diseases. The patient swallows a lighted lamp, which illuminates his person so as to enable the physician to make a correct diagnosis. The barber cuts or shaves the hair by means of electricity, the streets are lighted and the farm cultivated by it. By means of it we can talk with our friends 500 or 1,000 miles away and hear their voices as distinctly as though they were in the same room. The telephone is perhaps in more general use in this country than electric lighting. Even in small towns telephones form a part of the furniture of many private houses, and are used to transmit orders to the butcher, baker, etc. There are now some eighty-five electric railways in the United States and 9,000 miles of track, employing 23,000 cars. With the aid of electricity natural forces which have heretofore run to waste are being turned to the service of mankind. The American River has already been made to furnish motor power by which Sacramento, Cal., is lighted, and by which its street cars and factories are run, and new projects are in progress all over the State.

Hygienic Rules for Schools.

The new hygienic rules for the government of the New York schools, which were formulated by the health authorities, prohibit the use of slates, slate pencils and sponges. Pens and lead pencils are to be used hereafter, and they are not to be transferred from one pupil to another. Books taken to their homes by pupils must be covered once a month with brown manilla paper. Places for drinking water on the ground floor are to be abolished, each room is to be supplied with a covered pitcher, and each pupil will have a numbered cup and the interchange of cups is prohibited.

These precautions are predicated on the more recent discoveries in the science of bacteriology, which teach that it is possible to eradicate every contagious disease if the conditions favorable to the existence and distribution of the disease germs are destroyed.

As the public schools, with their aggregations of juvenile humanity, containing representatives from nearly every home in the city, have been the most prolific breeders of these family scourges and are most favorably organized for the spread of disease germs, it would seem that these are the places to institute the most systematic hygienic regulations. The adoption of such restrictive measures in the public schools of all the larger cities would not only retard the propagation of infectious diseases, but would have a tendency to teach parents the importance of exercising greater diligence in the observance of hygienic rules in the home.

The Unseen Gold Supply.

What is called the "unseen gold supply" is an important feeder of the mints. This includes all sorts of old jewelry, which finds its way eventually into the melting pots of the Government. No manufactured article of gold lasts forever. It may be preserved for some time as a keepsake or an heirloom after it has survived the period of its usefulness, but some day inevitably, if not lost, it will be sold for old gold. The mints will buy such old gold, but not less than \$100 worth of it.

Scattered over the country are thousands of dealers of precious metals, who will purchase the smallest quantities—even a ring or a brooch that is good for nothing but to be melted. They are chiefly instrumental in collecting the "unseen supply," which they dispose of to the mints.

Nevertheless, the loss of gold to the world through its use in the arts, for gilding and otherwise, is enormous. Practically all of the watchcases reach Uncle Sam's melting pots sooner or later. Millions of dollars worth of gold are used annually for filling teeth. All of this is lost except what is taken from extracted teeth by dentists. Dental surgeons do not permit this gold to go to waste.

As to Fingers.

There is a wonderful amount of character in the fingers and thumbs. In general usefulness the thumb is quite the equal of the four fingers. It backs them up on all occasions. The shape of the thumb tells all we want to know of a man's character. The index or forefinger tells a man's occupation in life. The big middle finger indicates a man's habits. The third finger is the most sensitive of all, and is generally used when delicacy of touch is necessary. The

little finger is simply a rest for the hand, a sort of spring upon which it may fall at any time without a jar or shock. We could get along very well without our little fingers. Women like them because they can use them to show off a pretty hand. They are really worthless to women except for ornament. They are always up in the air when the rest of the hand is in service.

Lofty Mountains in the Sea.

There exists in the great ocean between Australia and New Caledonia a range of mighty submarine mountains, whose limestone tops rise within 300 fathoms of the surface. The discovery of these peaks, rising sheer 7,500 feet from the bottom of the deep sea, was made by the men who have just finished laying the first section of the trans-Pacific cable. Sir Audley Cooze, who was at the head of the cable expedition, arrived here yesterday on the steamer Alameda from Sydney, New South Wales. He said:

"The sea from Australia to New Caledonia has been surveyed by a British and by an American vessel. Your Albatross went there and did some very good work, but as it happened, both this expedition and the other missed the strange feature of the ocean that I can describe. We had anticipated no great difficulty in laying the cable section, and did not find any until suddenly the bottom of the ocean began to rise. We were forced to cut the cable there in mid-ocean and to buoy up the ends. It was then found that what had hindered us was a range of submarine mountains.

"There is nothing else like this in the world that I know of. The mountains rise in abrupt peaks, and are hard limestone and granite. By careful measurement we found that the peaks were more than 7,000 feet on the average, and the highest of them 7,500 feet from the bottom of the ocean. Less than 300 fathoms from the surface of the water we found the tops of the highest mountains. The range extends for nearly seventy-five miles—that is, measuring from the extreme northerly to the extreme southerly point. To lay the cable around this range took forty-eight miles more of cable than we had counted on. We had to go around the peaks as a railroad would go around a mountain on land."

Don't Lick Envelope Flaps.

Envelope-lickers will do well to pause and ponder on the fact that a man has died in consequence of indulging in the popular but disgusting trick of moistening the adhesive envelope with the tongue, advises Oakland Echoes. Some will say "How can gum arabic poison anyone?" Gum arabic? Are they so innocent as to believe that this article, raised to a prohibitive price by the Egyptian war and subsequent closure of the Soudan, is used or their envelopes? Do they see that ancient nag hobbling down the street? There is the parent of this gum arabic; and in a few weeks time, when that decrepit animal makes his bow to the knacker, and yields up his hoofs to the glue boiler, perhaps they may have a lick at the remains on an envelope they are dispatching to a friend or sweet heart.

And should some taint of animal poison lurk amid that "gum," they may soon require other and black-bordered envelopes to be licked for them when their mourning cards are sent out.

Diet and Dentistry.

A dentist of Boston within the past year has had come to him for professional treatment four Swedish girls, who have been serving as domestics in families where little attention is paid to proper selection of food, the palate being pleased rather than the body fed. The teeth in each of these young women were really crumbling away. And why? In their native country, where the Swedish bread is baked at intervals during the year, and hung on poles to dry and harden, the teeth had had their proper exercise. But when these girls became subject to "American civilization," and were obliged to eat the pap and pastry in homes where more time is devoted to catering to the tastes than to finding out the needs and requirements of the body, the masticating of food was no longer a necessity and the teeth, finding they were of no more service, decided to take themselves out of the way.

A Belated Success.

Samuel Appleton, the wealthy manufacturer of Bristol, Penn., who died the other day, had a remarkable career. He was sixty-six years old at the time of his death, and every one of his ventures was a failure until about ten years ago. The last time he failed he became so discouraged that he declared that he had no courage, no character, no cash and no credit. He started again in a small way and inscribed on his business cards: "No C., No C., No C., No C." People inquired the meaning of the mysterious inscription, and Appleton became well advertised. His business increased and in ten years he was a rich man.

It is probably the only instance on record where a man made fame and fortune by advertising the fact that he had no courage, character, cash, or credit. But his success is, of course, due to the unwillingness of people to accept his estimate of himself. They determined to show him that he was mistaken, and they succeeded.

Up to date women do not go on any kind of a journey without the tiny traveling cloak in Russian leather case. And it adds to interest in it if it is "a present from a friend."

TAMEDIA TIGRESS.

The Brute Taught to Ride a Horse and Jump Hoops.

James McElroy, a young man who was born in Galveston and lived there with his family up to six years ago, has gained fame as the only man who ever succeeded in taming and training a tigress. Wild animal trainers have failed to subject tigrises to their will after having succeeded with nearly every other species of wild beast. The animal that McElroy trained is Victoria, a majestic specimen of the full-grown Bengal tigress. She was captured at the age of three months in a jungle near the city of Amoy, China.

The baby tigress could not have received more careful treatment if she had been McElroy's child. The trainer permitted nobody but himself to perform even the most trivial services for his pet. He prepared her food himself, gave it to her out of his own hands, brought her water, cleaned her den, out daily, played with her and even slept beside her. In this way he taught the little cat that she must depend upon him alone for every necessary of life. As it was McElroy's intention to make her the only tigress equestrienne in the world he took her every day into the stables and played with her among the horses, to familiarize her with those animals.

This course of training was continued until McElroy decided that the tigress was old enough to leave the kindergarten and enter upon the actual work of receiving her education. In training Victoria one man, Henry Chappelle by name, and two horses sacrificed their lives. She is a treacherous brute, even when in the best of humors. The first day they turned her loose in a big cage to give her the first lesson on horse-back riding she ripped off the thick leather armor that covered the horse's body and tore his head from his neck and her teeth and claws. Chappelle and McElroy were in the cage, and Chappelle, trying to save the horse, commenced lashing Victoria with a blacksnake whip. That act cost him his life. The tigress made one spring from the horse to Chappelle, bore him to the earth and sank her fangs into his throat. McElroy escaped from the cage in time to avoid injury.

Victoria never had another chance to hurt anybody while receiving her education. Her claws were clipped and a steel muzzle was fastened over her head. McElroy worked with her three times a day for eighteen months. He rigged a hoisting apparatus to lift her from the ground to the horse's back. In a few months he had her trained so that the muzzle could be dispensed with and her claws allowed to grow.

Malay Straw Work.

All of the Malay races have a natural talent for weaving straw work. It probably rises from the fact that in the tropical lands where they live nature supplies a variety of raw material so great as to permit all sorts of pleasant surprises to an ingenious weaver. There are grasses and flags, long, strong and durable, which can be woven into mats, handkerchiefs and serviceable, and so compact that they will almost retain water. Then there are vines and creepers almost as strong as wire, which can be split and split again into a finer size than the best Panama straw. There are fibers of the same family as the rattan, which, when moderately subdivided, can be tied into the hardest of hard knots, and then, when united, will show no evidence of their hard usage.

With materials of this sort, it would be easy for any person to produce a wonderful variety of goods. The Sandwich Islanders, like other branches of the Malay people, did all these things, and turned out work which was famous for its beauty and which was at one time highly prized by the curiosity hunter and collector. In addition to these, however, they were instructed at one time in lace and knot work by some sisters of a religious order. The order has long since gone away from the islands, which are now nominally Protestant, and the industry grows smaller day by day. Some of the work, however, is still made, and can be obtained in a few of the old stores.

The most remarkable kinds extant are in hats and fans. Some of these hats are so fine and soft that they can be rolled up or folded like a handkerchief and put into a pocket, or even a pocketbook, and yet, when unrolled, they make as excellent a summer hat as the most fastidious might desire. The hat is woven as a whole, and in the finer qualities no thread is employed, the ends of the threads being turned back and worked into the edge of the brim, so as to give it the appearance of a hemmed or beaded outline.

The fans are marvels of beauty. I have seen some of them which suggested the finest lace work, others which resembled macramé, and still others which looked as though they had been carved out of some rich grayish, yellow wood. Sometimes the artist will weave the thread into leaves and flowers, which seem to be laid loosely upon the fan proper and about to fall off. The few natives who indulge in this kind of work are very proud of their accomplishment.

Stirring Time in a Show.

There was a performance in the ostrich department of the Syndicate shows recently which had not been advertised. It took the place of the strong man feature which was advertised but didn't come off. Sammie Hughes was standing near the ostrich conservatory, making a scientific study of the birds and smoking a freshly lighted ten-cent cigar. An ostrich suddenly lengthened his neck about a foot and removed the cigar from Mr. Hughes' mouth and swallowed it, fire and all. The length of an ostrich's neck furnishes a wonderful opportunity for a lighted cigar, and it burned every inch of the way as it went down. The ostrich acted as if he regretted having given way to the prompting of his indiscriminate appetite. A gentleman connected with the show in the capacity of chambermaid for the ostriches saw the cigar disappear within

the bird's bill. He accused Mr. Hughes of having made a voluntary contribution and uttered language which was neither moral nor polite, showing that the spiritual training of this great educational manager is not what it is cracked up to be. He threatened to eject Mr. Hughes from the premises. Mr. Hughes tried to explain that he was the chief loser by the transaction and that the whole thing was an affair between himself and the ostrich. Deputy United States Marshal Ezekiel also began to say that the ostrich had brought the trouble on himself. The showman pushed Mr. Ezekiel aside, and the officer was compelled to exhibit his gun as his badge of authority. In the mean time the cigar had been extinguished in the bird's gizzard, and he seemed to have forgotten the episode of the cigar and was looking longingly at an empty soda-water bottle which lay on the ground just out of reach.

Spontaneous Combustion.

The medical literature of this country, as well as that of England, France and Germany, relates many instances of the spontaneous combustion of the human body. In the majority of cases the victim has been a slave to the liquor habit, formed by an overindulgence, either in the way of using it as a beverage or in the form of a bath. In 1886 Sir William Gull, the great British surgeon, testified before a committee of the House of Lords on intemperance that a such a thing as the spontaneous combustion of a drunkard's body was neither impossible nor improbable. In support of the theory he said:

"In 1876 a large bloated man, who was suffering from difficulty of breathing, was brought to Guy's hospital. He died that night and at the post mortem on the following day the body was noticed to be much distended, as if with gas. When punctures were made in the skin the vapor of alcohol could be plainly smelled, and a lighted match applied to the places where the gas was escaping caused it to burn with a bluish flame. As many as a dozen of these little blue flames were burning on his body at one time."

There are several cases on record of drunkards going to bed to "sleep off a spree" only to wake to find themselves enveloped in alcoholic flames, the result of spontaneous firing of the gases in their tissues. Such cases always end in an agonizing death. The British Annual Register of 1789 records the death by spontaneous combustion of the Countess Bandi of Cesna, Italy. In our own country such cases have been rare, indeed, the last occurring in San Francisco in 1877, when a drunkard who was lighting a cigar at a gas jet actually lighted his breath and died in a few moments in great agony.

A Very Short Wait.

Next door to the office of a popular magistrate in the central portion of the city there is a small tailor shop which has this sign in the window: "Trousers pressed while you wait." Quite a number of politicians frequent the magistrate's office, and they often drop into the tailor shop to have the "bags" taken out of their trouser knees. One day last week Select Councilman Tommy Ryan and a number of up-country delegates were sitting in the tailor's back room while their respective pantaloons were being ironed. Representative John H. Fow, who is forever on the lookout to play a practical joke, passed the door of the shop and took in the situation at a glance. Mr. Fow raised his mighty fog-horn voice in one wild cry of "Fire!" The effect was instantaneous and startling. Mr. Ryan, the first to dash through the shop door, was clothed, as to his nether extremities, in flaming scarlet. Two of the country politicians wore gray and white, but the third wore, besides the startled look upon his face, not much of anything. His "biled" shirt was pretty long, but it did not prevent the few pedestrians on the street from seeing his bare knees knocking together with fright. When the victims realized the trick that had been played upon them they scurried back to shelter.

Useful Roadside Trees.

We notice with pleasure that some of the correspondents of our Western contemporaries are advocating the planting of both fruit and nut trees along the highways in place of those kinds that bear nothing in the way of food for either man or beast. One writer admits that the nut trees are just as handsome and yield just as much shade as maples and elms, while they bear something of economic value in addition. The idea that the boys and others passing along the roads would take all the nuts is only true where there is only a tree or two of such kinds in many miles, for it is rarely and scarcely which excites our curiosity and acquisitiveness. If at first a man should fail to reap much of economic value from the fruit or nut trees planted along the roadside he would be no worse off than if the ordinary kinds were planted, for from these he does not expect anything but shade and a little sentiment in the way of fine appearance.

An Old Convict Ship.

At the East India Docks, on the Thames, the old convict ship Success is now on exhibition. It was used by the British Government as lately as 1851, and was nicknamed the "Ocean Hell" on account of the barbarities inflicted on the prisoners. It has just returned from a trip through the colonies, where it was shown as a relic of the old penal system.

One leg of a pair of trousers was found in the stomach of a big shark caught near Annapolis, Md.