

STURGEON FISHING.

An Important Industry on the Columbia River.

How the Big and Homely Fish Is Captured.

The Columbian river sturgeon, known among scientific men as a transmontanus or white sturgeon, is the largest of the sturgeon family. It is a salt-water fish, but, like the salmon, runs up the coast rivers to spawn, and thus becomes an easy prey for the fishermen. The first look at a sturgeon, and particularly if he is a big one, is almost sufficient to put an end to all desire to taste the meat. The long hog-like snout, the small glassy eyes, the ugly sucker-like mouth, toothless and situated on the lower side of the head several inches from the end of the snout, the bony plates upon the sides, and sharp and ugly fin extending down the whole length of the back; the general sluggish and ugly appearance of the fish, when taken from the water, suggest almost anything except an article of food. The scientist takes a great interest in the sturgeon because it is one of the oldest members of the fish family now in existence and one which plays an important part in the great theory of evolution.

A fine specimen of Columbia-river sturgeon was recently captured by some of S. Schmidt's employees and presented to a well-known taxidermist of this city, who stuffed the skin and sent it to form part of Oregon's exhibit at the World's Fair. This fish was 9½ feet in length, and when first taken from the water weighed 450 pounds. Three fish taken by Mr. Schmidt's employees this winter had an aggregate weight of 1800 pounds. Of course these are exceptionally large ones, the average weight of a dressed sturgeon being 125 lbs. It is believed that these monsters are of a great age. They are known among fishermen as "mossbacks," because of the horny and crusted appearance of their backs, upon which large-sized barnacles are often found. The sturgeon is naturally a scavenger, and lives upon any bits of food it can pick up on the bottom of the river, including worms and all kinds of shellfish. In September and October, when sardines swarm in the mouth of the river, the sturgeon has a regular feast, for the sardine is an easy prey for it, and seems to be well suited to its digestive apparatus.

The season for taking sturgeon is from September 15 to April 1. When they first enter the river to feast upon sardines they are taken in large quantities with gill-nets, in much the same manner that salmon are caught. During the remainder of the season the sturgeon must be taken with hook and line, or, rather hooks and line, for the sturgeon does not nibble at a bait like a common, ordinary fish. The method in common use is as follows: Upon a stout line many fathoms in length are fastened a number of big hooks. These hooks are made of steel and are strung several inches apart. The line is then lowered by means of sinkers, so as to bring the hooks within a few inches of the river bottom, where it is fastened securely. The fish, swimming sluggishly along the bottom of the river in search of food, suddenly feels one of the sharp barbed hooks fastened in its scaly hide.

In thrashing about to free itself the clumsy fellow gets aful of more hooks and is then securely fastened. The fisherman rows his boat along above his line, pulling up his line as he goes and removing the fish entangled in it. If he wishes to use the fish at once he draws it up to the side of the boat and knocks it in the head with a hammer before drawing it into the boat. If he wishes to preserve the fish alive until the market is better he tows it along to a trap, which is simply a shallow portion of the river shut in by a barrier of stout poles stuck in the bottom so close together that even a small sized sturgeon cannot force its way between them. If the sturgeon were possessed of any sort of life or activity it would be a hard customer to handle. A big sturgeon will sometimes "get his dander up," as the saying is, and thrash about in such a manner as to almost upset the big fishboat, but such occurrences are rare.—[Portland Oregonian.]

Brain Prefers a Vegetable Diet.

"Speaking of bears," said the knowing man from Colorado, "their carnivorous habits are usually much overrated. I have been a resident within the borders of my adopted state for twenty-three years, ten of which were passed in the wildest portion of its grand mountain ranges, and three con-

secutive years in a part of the then Territory, when bears were as common as raccoons are in Virginia. In my hunting and trapping expeditions, alone or with the Indians, I have started these animals from their mid-day slumbers in their 'wallows' in the sloughs of the Grand, Snake, and Yampah rivers, surprised them in the raspberry patches of the Cochetoba and Gove ranges, and watched them digging for ant's eggs or feeding on the windrows of benumbed grasshoppers that lay along the summer snow line between Long's Peak and Berthard Pass, but have never seen one watching a deer trail or lick, or chasing a bull elk. I have seen a big gray-black brute of this much-maligned family standing as high and looking as vicious as John L. Sullivan, clasping a bunch of sarvis-bushes in his mighty arms, and 'gorming' down the fruit in gallon mouthfuls, while a doe and two fawns eropped water crosses within fifty feet of him and plainly in his sight, but never a glance did this bloodthirsty vandal cast in their direction.

"In September, 1876, I killed a black bear in my potato patch in the Yampah Valley. This fellow in order to reach the garden, had passed through a little paddock where were kept six calves, but I do not think he gave them a nod as he went by. It has been my misfortune to have him raid my camp while I was hunting in Elk-head range, and, while on my return at night, I found the commissary breadless and butterless, the molasses keg 'busted' and contents missing, sugar an unknown quantity, and cans of corn and tomatoes mashed flat as pancakes. There on the ridge pole of the tent swayed the side of bacon, and on the branch of a pine tree, not ten feet away, hung undisturbed the fat and juicy ham of a spike buck killed the previous evening."—[New York Sun.]

How Helena Received Its Name.

In October, 1854, there was a meeting in George Wood's cabin to arrange for laying out a town and giving it a name. These were some of the names the rough miners suggested that the prospective city be called: "Punkinville, Squashtown, Tomahawk and Tomah." A Mr. John Somerville suggested that a good name would be St. Helena. The general taste was divided between Helena (a shortening of St. Helena and Tomah, an abbreviation of Tomahawk. Helena won the votes. In the name St. Helena the accent is on the second syllable of the last word, but in the course of years the name of the place has come to be called Helena by everybody.

It is said that one miner had been to the island of St. Helena, and thought Last Chance Gulch looked like a part of that island. Then, again, it is said that Helena was the name of a daughter of a miner who attended the meeting, or of the wife of such a miner. But the best story is that John Somerville said, in a speech that he made, "I belong to the best country in the world, lived in the best State in it, in the best county in that State, and in the best town in that county, and, by the Eternal, this place shall bear the name of that town—Helena." He was a tall, hardy, jovial frontiersman from Minnesota, who had taken his wife with him to share his rough life as a miner.—[Harper's Young People.]

An Enormous Ox.

William McMillan of Atlantic, Ia., lays claim to the ownership of the largest ox in the world. His measurements are as follows: from head to tail, 12 feet 4 inches; from tip of nose to tip of tail, 17 feet 8 inches; girth, 11 feet 1 inch; across hips, 2 feet 9 inches; from brisk to top of shoulder, 4 feet 11 inches; circumference—front leg at body, 29 inches; of hind leg between knee and body, 2 feet and 8 inches; height to top of shoulder, 6 feet and 4 inches; weight, 3,890 pounds. This weight was taken last fall on his return from an exhibition tour to the county and State fairs in Iowa and Nebraska. Mr. McMillan estimates that his ox, named Jumbo, will weigh at least 300 pounds more than when weighed last fall. Jumbo is a thoroughbred Durham, with the characteristic red color of that breed, and unmarked excepting a white star in the forehead. He has been pronounced by the best stock breeders of Iowa and Nebraska as finely a proportioned animal of the bovine species as they had ever seen. He will be seven years old on July 14, 1893. He is gentle as a kitten, and has but a moderate appetite. He was raised by C. W. Curtis of Cass County, Ia., who has marketed several brothers and half-brothers of Jumbo, whose weights ranged from 2,200 to 2,800 pounds.—[St. Louis Globe-Democrat.]

FOIBLES OF SHARKS.

A Diver's Experience With the Marine Monsters

They Are Rather Curious, But Rarely Give Trouble.

Sharks are very common all along the coast of Australia. They become more numerous, larger and more voracious the nearer we go to the equator. Passengers who make ocean voyages may often see them from the deck of the ship, but I see them in their native element, says a diver in Chambers' Journal. A day seldom passes when I am at work that I do not see some of these creatures. They do not seem to recognize a diver when clad in his diving dress as something which is good to eat. Probably he is mistaken for some other great sea monster with which the shark would just as soon as not measure his strength.

At all events sharks rarely give us any active annoyance. At first when we go into a new country they exhibit some curiosity. They sometimes come and inspect us and our work, moving slowly around us with perceptible motion and smelling us like great dogs. It gives one a very horrible feeling of insecurity, I assure you, when one of those monsters twelve or fourteen feet long runs his nose around your body, and without even a solitary "wag" of his tail to indicate good fellowship. The shark will swim away right enough when he has finished his inspection—at least he has always done so with me—and although annoying I can stand it now.

Sometimes when you go down of a morning you will find half a dozen big and little sharks who have evidently selected the site of your operations as a camping ground. This is awkward. Perhaps they have observed the disturbance at the bottom of the sea, and, like marine constables, they "are waiting for the fellow who made it to run him in." This is an awkward experience, for these sharks do not clear off and admit your claim. They say all animals have a fear of man, but sharks cannot recognize a man in a diver's costume. They neither oppose nor assist us in our operations—they simply ignore us. We have to be very careful then, walking around about these pigs without disturbing them.

I have occasionally used a small crowbar as a weapon and struck a small shark on the nose when he was annoying me with his persistency. The shark will then turn and go off with a rush. I would not, however, like to try my crowbar on a shark ten feet long. After his rush away he might return for further investigation.

I have had many nasty adventures with sharks when pursuing my occupation. I recollect one that gave me a considerable shock. I had been engaged blowing up a reef of rocks so as to enlarge a little harbor on the coast. It was my duty to make the hole and put in the charge of dynamite. The charge was exploded in the evening after we left off work. On going down every morning I was accustomed to go over to a certain ledge which was always a good resting place for lobsters. Morning after morning I had invariably found a pair or more of these crustaceans, which I sent to the surface in a basket.

On the morning to which I now refer I walked straight to the ledge and ran my hand carefully along its lower side. I was surprised to find my hand scraping what I took to be the rock, but I was surprised still more when I observed my hand groping within a foot of the mouth of a great shark which had retired to rest in this cavity.

The shark must have been as much alarmed as I was, for it made one sprinting from its resting place and disappeared in the dark wall of the ocean. The shock to me was greater than I could have believed, and even yet I do not care to think about it. It is hardly necessary to say that I did not return to that ledge for lobsters for some time.

Chinese Babies.

When a Chinese baby is a month old it is given a name. Its head is also shaved for the first time, a ceremony which is called "munefet," and is made the occasion of great rejoicing in rich families. All members of the family are present in their holiday attire, and the baby to be shaved is clad in a light red garment.

The hair that is removed is wrapped in paper and carefully preserved. After the barber has performed his

task, an aged man—who is hired for this purpose and receives a small compensation—lays his hand upon the head of the little one and exclaims: "Long may you live!"

Those present thereupon sit down to a great feast, of which even the little hero of the day receives his share in the shape of a tiny piece of the rice-flour cake, which was donated by his grandmother. All who have made presents (of clothing, bracelets, etc.,) to the child since its birth are invited to the repast.

On this day the infant is also presented with a red bed, a low chair of the same color and a cap upon which either golden, silver or copper ornaments representing Buddha or eight cherubs or written characters (that signify old age and riches) are placed. Before the child is put into the new bed, however, the father consults a calendar and selects a lucky day.

The almanac also informs him which things should be removed from the presence of the child. In one instance it must not touch or see objects made of bamboo during a certain time; in another instance articles of copper and iron are proscribed.

Objects which are denoted as harmful by the calendar are either concealed or taken away.—[San Francisco Examiner.]

Plowed Up a Fortune.

"Speaking of money," said John I. Spencer, "brings to my mind the great find the Owens family made near Bedford, Ind., some two years ago. That country is rather hilly, and the ground not very desirable for agricultural purposes. This family had some 200 acres of land and largely used it for pasturage. However, about the time I refer to one of the Owens boys decided to cultivate a small portion which he judged to be better soil than the rest. With this point in view he began plowing in the early spring. In the course of his work he struck a snag. Before turning the plow aside he endeavored to draw out the snag. By striking the horse he forced the plow only deeper into the earth. The sudden start of the horse jerked the snaken log loose from the earth and revealed a heap of silver and gold coins. He gathered the find of coins and removed them to the house, where he polished up the many pieces and took an account of their face value.

"The find included rare old French coins, both copper, silver and gold; American silver dollars, some Mexican and some coins of the Revolutionary period.

"The face value of the many pieces footed up \$500, but the market value was something like \$10,000. The old settlers assert that the money was left there by some former resident, who feared the approach of the Indians. Having buried the money he probably engaged in a battle with the Indians and never lived to return and take up the treasure. The money, no doubt, lay under that log for fully sixty years, and possibly longer."—[St. Louis Globe Democrat.]

The Vegetable Structure of Coal.

The substance of coal has been so compressed that the forms of the plants composing it cannot usually be seen. But when a piece of it is made so thin that it will transmit light, and is then subjected to a powerful microscope, its vegetable structure may readily be distinguished. Immediately under every separate seam of coal there is a stratum of what is known as fire clay. This stratum is always present and contains in great abundance the fossil impressions of roots and stems and twigs, showing that it was once the soil from which vegetation grew luxuriantly. It is common also to find fossil tree stems lying mashed flat between the layers of black slate which form the roofs of coal mines as well as the impressions of the leaves, nuts and seeds which fell from these trees while they were living. In some beds of cannel coal whole trees have been found with roots, branches, leaves and seeds complete, and all converted into the same quality of coal as that by which they were surrounded.—[Washington Star.]

Reasonably Explained.

"Claude, do you know what has become of the preserve that was in this bowl?"

"You mean the evaporated peaches, ma'am?"

"Yes."

"Don't you think they might have evaporated, mamma?"—[Judge.]

There are 1695 railroad bridges of various classes in Massachusetts, according to official figures, which also show that there have been 18,347 train accidents in the United States during the last twenty years.

PEARLS OF THOUGHT.

The object of the superior man is truth.

The secret of success is constancy to purpose.

Wisdom never analyzes the blood of pinpricks.

Disapproval is generally rooted in self-approval.

The negatives of life are the molders of character.

A noble soul has no other merit than to be a noble soul.

Philosophy, the food for thought, oft starves the body.

An individual's bliss oft becomes community's blister.

Truthfulness is at the foundation of all personal excellence.

Literature sometimes reaches its greatest height as kite-tails.

To steal from one's self is more contemptible than to steal from a blind man.

The telephone service of the nerves never loses a connection without disaster.

It is better to be misunderstood ninety-nine times than to misunderstand once.

A careless song, with a little nonsense in it now and then, does not misbecome a monarch.

Tears are often to be found where there is little sorrow, and the deepest sorrow without any tears.

Man absorbs knowledge as a sponge does water, and, like a sponge, needs an occasional wringing out.

The secret of many a man's success in the world resides in his insight into the moods of men and his tact in dealing with them.

Sincerity is an openness of heart; we find it in very few people.

What we usually see is an artful dissimulation to win the confidence of others.

Talkative people, if they wished to be loved, they are hated; if they desire to please, they bore; when they think they are admired, they are really laughed at; they injure their friends, benefit their enemies, and ruin themselves.

To Be the World's Granary.

"If the horse could stand it," said S. A. Rowbotham, a well-known resident of Winnipeg, Manitoba, to the Star this morning, "a man could leave Winnipeg and ride 1000 miles west and northwest over a level prairie before he would be obstructed by the mountains. This gives an idea of the great territory lying west of Winnipeg, which, to the eastern man, seems way out of the world.

"The soil of this prairie produces the finest spring wheat grown anywhere, and the enormous plain I've just mentioned will in a few years be the great granary of the world. Eastern people have a misty idea of our expansive territory. We are just commencing to grow wheat compared to a decade hence, though our crop two years ago was 30,000,000 bushels. We have but little snow and in the many years I resided in Manitoba I never saw the tops of the bright prairie grass covered. Cattle fairly roll in fat, and we are becoming a great cattle country.

"While most of our settlers are from across the water, yet the number from the Western states is yearly increasing. We have no wild West frontier scenes. There are no settlers killed over disputed claims, as has been an every-day story in the West for years. Our homestead laws require a three years' residence of six months each. Land may be pre-empted, too.

"Gold has been discovered in wonderfully rich quartz deposits a few miles east of Winnipeg, and paying have just been erected by Minneapolis capitalists. I predict a 'rush' to the Lake of the Woods district next year. Winnipeg has 35,000 inhabitants, and is a thriving city. Our winters are cold, but we do not mind them. The atmosphere is dry and the days are clear, murky weather being almost unknown."—[Washington Star.]

Benefit of Good Roads.

One of the best arguments for good roads is contained in a calculation recently published in one of the engineering papers. It states that on the worst earth roads, not muddy, but sandy, a horse can draw only twice as much as he can carry on his back; on a fair earth road, three and a half times as much; on a good macadamized road, nine times as much; on a smooth plank road, twenty-five times as much; on a stone trackway, thirty-three times as much, and on metal rails, fifty-four times as much. The man who uses the country roads can therefore make money by improving the roads rather than by buying new horses every year or two.—[New York Journal.]

CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

THE CRUISE OF THE ELVES.

Three elves sailed forth on a flake of snow, And a great wind soon began to blow.

"We must take in sail at once," said they, "With a yea, heave ho!—heave ho, belay!"

Then they looked about them, fore and aft, But they found no sail on their snowflake craft.

"We must port our helm instead," said they, "With a yea, heave ho!—heave ho, belay!"

But, alas, there wasn't a helm to shift, So they ran aground on a big snowdrift.

"This isn't bad seamanship," said they, "With a yea, heave ho!—heave ho, belay!"

"You can't reef sails that you haven't got, Or port your helm where a helm is not;

"But we know what should be done," said they, "With a yea, heave ho!—heave ho, belay."

To Elftown straight from that spot they sped, And they paced the streets with a naval tread.

"'Twas a most successful cruise," said they, "With our yea, heave ho!—heave ho, belay!"

—[Felix Leigh, in St. Nicholas.]

HOLLAND'S LITTLE QUEEN.

If any little American maid who is a queen by right divine and has had her will and way ever since she could hold a rattle box, even if she doesn't know it, thinks it would be a fine thing to be a real queen with a crown of gold and jewels and to wear her Sunday things every day, it will be well for her to read something of what is expected of Queen Wilhelmina of Holland. In the first place she has as many corner stones to lay, ships to christen and great bazaars to open as does that overworked man, the Prince of Wales.

Then there are lessons to learn from masters and mistresses galore. Indeed, at a great court festivity the child Queen was heard consoling one of her cousins who was complaining of lessons, saying: "I, too, must learn such a stupidly stupid lot."

Already she speaks equally well Dutch, French, English and German, and masters come every day to teach her other branches. She is fond of music, and shows considerable promise of talent, inheriting this taste from her father, who once composed an opera. There is but an hour's respite from the lessons in the morning, and in the afternoon there is always the cooking and sewing, for every Dutch maiden must be a good Hauswirth. A retinue of 30 dolls the little girl has of all sorts and conditions, but an addition to her numerous family gives her greater pleasure than anything else.

The German Emperor sent her at Christmas a whole regiment of lead soldiers in most resplendent uniform.

Some day the baby Louise will teach her father what a waste of money it is to send soldiers to a girl. When these dolls are very, very bad, after the manner of dollies the world over, their royal mother punishes them by making them bow, and bow, and bow to an imaginary public, which the Queen thinks is the most disagreeable thing one can have to do. This doll family lives in a chalet in the garden, and here the Queen brings all the friends who come to visit her. They play at housekeeping, just as all little girls do, and the Queen always insists on being the servant. It was the Princess Victoria, who, when a child, went to visit a dear old lady that allowed her to do just as she pleased, and she always pleased to have a pair of dolls and wash the windows.

Wilhelmina of Holland doesn't begin to have the pretty things to wear that the little girls here enjoy, even those whose fathers are not wealthy and whose mothers make the frocks themselves, for the Dutch idea of dress is deplorably inartistic. She often wears the peasant dress of the different provinces when she travels through them, and when her old nurse comes to visit her she finds, not a Queen child, but a little peasant maid dressed just like herself. Sometimes the quaint caps are very heavy and hot, but the little girl wears them until her head aches, learning the lessons early that all queens must learn.—[N. Y. Sun.]

Unexpected Wealth.

I have heard it said by a friend of the late Albert Way, the well-known archaeologist, that he came by a fortune in this wise. Crossing Pall Mall he cannoned against an old gentleman, and discomfited him. After mutual apologies and the interchange of civilities, cards were exchanged, and on each card was imprinted "Mr. Albert Way." The older gentleman dying had no natural heir, and left his fortune to the other Albert Way.—[The Spectator.]

Three different boring machines, designed to cut out a central bore 24 feet in diameter, were invented for use in the Hoosac tunnel.