

RAISING MUSKRATS.

The Crop Is Large in the Marshes of Maryland.

Thousands of Acres Are Devoted solely to the Raising of the Animals for Their Fur—How They Are Caught.

In the vast marshes of the county of Dorchester, stretching from Fishing Bay, near the Chesapeake on the west, to the Delaware line on the east, is harvested Maryland's great muskrat crop. Last year the catch aggregated 100,000 rats, and this year, judging from the start already made, the crop will be even larger. The hunting season begins January 1 and closes March 31.

The great marsh section of Dorchester county borders mainly on the Blackwater, Transquakin and Chiconomic rivers, in the election districts known as Lake, Drawbridge and Bucktown, where for miles the country is a monotonous level, the high grass shutting out from view the inky waters of the rivers, which, though extremely narrow, are navigable. A few years ago much of the land was looked upon as an irredeemable waste, and it remained part of the public domain, being the property of the state. Farmers pastured their hogs upon the grass and there was no thought that other use might be found for these tracts. The increase in the demand for muskrat skins as well as for the fur of the otter and mink changed all this, and within the last few years the Maryland land office has issued patents to thousands of acres taken up solely with a view to muskrat farming. There are still thousands of acres of these marsh lands in the possession of the state, more than even the land commissioners can trace, and all to be had merely for the asking. Should Germany and Russia, which now manifest such a fondness for the skins of the American muskrat, continue to take all that we can ship, there is no doubt that all these waste lands will soon have owners. In these marshes otter and mink were almost as plentiful as muskrats, but in recent years the latter have had almost undisturbed possession and have been protected by legislation.

The typical muskrat hunter is as peculiar a product of this region as is the muskrat. Though he lives in a section that is fairly reeking with malaria, the home of chills, fever and ague and mosquitoes, he is a picture of rugged health, and is hardy and long lived. The people of these marshes are plain and simple and very hospitable. Their homes are small and rude built, usually one story in height and containing but two or three rooms. The children are as hardy as their parents, though in this country a stranger can no more learn in good health than he can in Cuba during the rainy season. The muskrat builds his house in the shape of a mound and aims to make it high enough to be safe from the highest tide, but in the spring and fall tidal waves sometimes flood the little structures, drowning the young, and then follows a shortage in the muskrat crop. The houses are built of grass, woven into a sort of cloth.

There are several methods of catching the little animals, the most common being by the use of the ordinary steel trap and giggering. The traps are set in the paths made by the rats in their travels through the marshes. Giggering furnishes the most interesting and exciting sport. The gig is a weapon about three feet long, having five or six sharp steel prongs, each 2 1/2 feet in length and several inches apart. This weapon is made just long enough for a man to easily thrust it through the grassy home of the muskrat. The hunter must approach these little houses against the wind, and a windy day is much the best for successful work.

The animal's sense of smell is acute, and on detecting the approach of a human being all the rats scamper from the upper chamber of the house to the lower ones, where they are out of reach of the gig. When the hunter approaches a muskrat house properly it is not unusual for him to catch a rat on each prong of the gig. But no matter how many there may be in the house, the first throw of the gig is the hunter's only successful one, for those he fails to catch then make their escape.

The day's hunt over, the trapper returns to his home and prepares both the fur and the flesh of the animal for market. With remarkable rapidity the skin is removed. An expert can skin a muskrat in less than half a minute. After the skin is removed it is stretched over a shingle to dry or cure. This process requires about four days. The outside of a rat trapper's cabin is always hung with bunches of skins, and on the inside they are frequently hung from the rafters. The meat of the rats is washed and prepared for buyers who visit the marshes almost daily, and they find a ready market for the meat in nearby towns and in New York and other cities. The muskrat lives principally on roots. These he gathers from the marshes and mounting a tussack washes them as clean as bleached celery. The muskrats will eat ducks or any fowl they can capture and kill, but nothing they find dead.

The skin of the muskrat now brings about 15 cents. Last year the market price was 24 cents for blacks and 12 cents for reds. The black is a richer and more desirable color, but the black rats are not so plentiful as the red. Now and then a white muskrat is caught. Buyers from New York and Baltimore are now visiting the marshes, but the hunters are holding off for higher prices, at present disposing of only enough in trade with merchants to meet their immediate wants. A good muskrat generally makes about \$400 a season, and then in the spring turns

—Puck.

UTILIZING FOGS.

The Problem to Which California Agriculturists Are Invited to Address Themselves.

Herbert Eriseloff, of Santa Barbara, Cal., has communicated to the weather bureau, through the chamber of commerce of Los Angeles, a suggestion relative to fog that should call forth all the inventive genius of America. Mr. Eriseloff says:

"In California there are vast areas of valuable land where the water supply is insufficient. Nature has endeavored to correct this by sending in heavy fogs laden with moisture, and it only remains for the ingenuity of man to utilize this. These fogs generally come in from the ocean at night during the dry summer months, when most needed, but are dissipated early in the morning by the sun. Heretofore the moisture brought to our very doors if we could but discover some simple and practical method of condensing or precipitating it on a large scale."

It certainly is tantalizing to think of this immense quantity of moisture present and visible but unavailable. Neither science nor art at present can suggest any feasible method of causing this fog to descend in refreshing drops of rain. On the other hand, the green vegetation at the summits of many mountains has often been observed to be due essentially to cloud or fog and not to rain; it may, therefore, be hoped that along the coast of California some device will soon be introduced that shall catch the fog particles as they float along and force them to trickle down in gentle streams of water so as to moisten the earth. We do not propose to condense or precipitate the atmospheric moisture in the ordinary sense of those words, but simply to catch it as the leaves of the trees do. We recall the so-called drip from every rock and twig on the summit of Table mountain at Cape Town, and especially on the summit of Green mountain, in the island of Ascension, and the dampness of the rocks on Pike's Peak, and we cannot doubt but that in many spots throughout the globe vegetation is kept alive by the small amount of moisture that is caught on the leaves, and, dripping thence to the ground, is soaked up by the roots of the plant. In fact, there are several plants whose leaves and branches are so arranged as to facilitate drip and the collection of moisture by this process.

What is needed by the agriculturist on the California coast is some simple mechanical arrangement by which the quantity of fog particles shall be intercepted as they flow past any given plant, and shall be forced to drip or glide downward into the ground at the root of the plant. Any fan-shaped arrangement of sticks or slate that increases the area exposed to the fog should apparently increase the quantity of moisture carried down to the roots. Mechanical devices, the explosion of dynamite, refrigerating apparatus and other analogous devices are likely to be too expensive in comparison with the return they make.—Monthly Weather Review.

TOO MUCH FURNITURE.

Nothing is More Uncomfortable Than to Have the Room Crowded.

There are many girls who, by the way, are exceedingly happy, whose married life is one long study of the science of economy, with its various branches of "ways and means" and "how to make two ends meet" and "the possibility of \$1 doing the duty of \$5." There is not, however, the study of economy in money matters alone, but there are also the economy of labor, the economy of time and the economy of health to be considered.

When we start housekeeping and begin to buy the necessary furniture for our future dwelling places, we women, one and all, have the same intense desire to make our homes as beautiful and pleasant to look upon as it lies in our power to do. Unless one can afford to keep plenty of domestics it is well to avoid furniture that has much carving upon it. Simple decorative designs have a better "bred" air about them and, what is more important, are much easier to make clean and keep so. Nothing looks worse than little gray heaps of dust accumulated in difficult corners of an elaborately ornamented piece of woodwork, especially if it belongs to the cheap and common order of things.

It does not follow by any means that furniture must be costly to be beautiful, but it is well when purchasing to remember that it is not only the amount of money paid that constitutes "saving." Therefore one must exercise the greatest discretion.

Crowding rooms with furniture is not only a sign of bad taste, but it is positively unhealthy. All the space taken up by chattels means so much less air for breathing purposes.—N. Y. Press.

Onions.

A learned doctor says that onions are really sweeteners of the breath in the long run. They rectify disorders of the stomach, carry off the poison accumulating in the system, act as a vermifuge, and, if eaten raw, will often check a violent influenza. To eat a small onion every night at bedtime is a good way to cure sleeplessness, as well as certain head troubles. It soothes the nerves without the evil effects of a drug. The torment of earache is often relieved by the application of a roasted onion heart, and onion sirup for a cough is too well known to need more than mention.—Housewife.

She Was Innocent.
Mrs. Gotrox—Bridget, some of my jewelry is missing.
Bridget—Well, don't come to me about it, mum! I'm no kleptomaniac! —Puck.

A TIMELY WARNING.

How a Member of Gen. Miles' Staff Escaped the Spaniards in Porto Rico.

Capt. Whitney, of the staff of Gen. Miles, who made the military reconnaissance of Porto Rico, and furnished the material upon which the plan of campaign was based, owes his life to a young woman attendant in a photograph gallery at Ponce. Whitney had spent a month in Porto Rico in various disguises, principally as a sailor from a British merchantman, and wore a shabby seaman's dress. He kept his notes and memoranda carefully sewed under the collar on the back of his shirt. One day as he was making preparations to leave for the United States he went into a photograph gallery at San Juan to buy such views as he could find of the harbor and fortifications and various places along the coast. Watching his opportunity, a young Porto Rican girl who was employed in the place, whispered to him that the Spaniards were looking for an American spy who was disguised as a sailor, and hinted that he better not be seen on the street. Whitney thanked her for her information, but assured her that they could not be looking for him because he was an Englishman. He made good use of the warning, however, and concealed himself until dark, when he rowed out to an English ship in the harbor and persuaded the sailors to stow him away.

The first thing Capt. Whitney did when he returned to Porto Rico with Gen. Miles was to call upon his unknown friend in the photograph gallery. She did not recognize him at first with a shaven face and a gilt-edged uniform, but recalled the incident as soon as it was mentioned, and said that she was confident he was the man the authorities were looking for, and had given him the warning because her sympathies were with the Americans.

HOW "YANKEE" GROWS.

Even South Americans Are So-Called When They Go to European Countries.

"I was really amused," said a New Orleans citizen who has lately made a visit abroad, according to the New Orleans Times-Democrat, "to notice how the term 'Yankee' widens in application as one gets further and further away from the habitat of the real thing. In New York a Yankee is commonly supposed to be a native of Connecticut, Vermont or Massachusetts, and I notice that the name is applied to mean skinflints rather than to the people in general. In St. Louis a Yankee is understood loosely to be anyone from the extreme northeast. Here in New Orleans the term includes pretty nearly everybody above Mason and Dixon's line—in short, 'northerner' and 'Yankee' are more or less synonymous. Now comes the real absurd part of it, although quite in line with what I have just remarked. While I was in London I found myself continually referred to as a 'Yankee' by natives, who had learned I was from New Orleans. I think you Yankees are very charming people," said a big wholesaler, who wanted to be extra pleasant. "I know several from your state." I tried to explain at first, but I soon got tired of that. I was sure to be greeted by a stare of amazement. "But I thought all Americans were Yankees, don't you know?" would be the usual protest. Later on I met a very intelligent hotel keeper, at Bern, in Switzerland, and in the course of conversation he remarked that he had an extremely agreeable countryman of mine staying at his house the previous season. "As you are both Yankees," he said, "you may, by chance, know him." "Where does he live?" I asked. "In Buenos Ayres," replied the hotel keeper.

IMMUNE FROM MUSIC.

The Odd Verdict of a Sorely Tried Teacher Who Was Disappointed in a Pupil.

One of Chicago's music teachers, a Frenchman, went to Cuba as bugler in an Illinois company. Since his return he has had some difficulty in building up a profitable class, and for that reason he has been compelled to accept a number of unpromising pupils, says the Inter Ocean.

The patience of the teacher became exhausted in the case of one pupil, the daughter of a North side board of trade man. In a moment of recklessness the Frenchman summoned all the English at his command and wrote the following note to the father of the girl who was not making advancement in her piano studies:

"Dear Sir: I regret me, indeed, to make announcement to you that your daughter is what may be called a music immune. As a man of honor, I give you my word that, even should she be exposed repeatedly to infection at grand operas and concerts, not a single germ of music would lodge in her mind, her soul, her constitution in general. Again, with apologies most humble I to you declare that my pupil is a music immune, and so I hereby muster her out of my class, with regrets most sad."

Tariff on Skulls.

A Swiss anthropologist, on his return from Patagonia, brought home with him a complete collection of Patagonian skulls, and when the custom house proposed to tax them on the basis of animals' bones imported as manure he protested that this was an insult to humanity. To his surprise his objection was listened to, and he received a receipt for the duty charged upon a higher scale, with the skulls entered as "returned emigrants' worn effects."

The Queen's Footmen.

Queen Victoria's footmen wear wigs, which have eight rows of curls, whereas those of the prince of Wales are allowed seven rows, and those of the lord mayor of London are given six rows.

A Poor Man.

Lawyer—You say deceased was a poor man?

Witness—Yes, sir; very poor.

Lawyer—Had you ever been inside of his house?

Witness—No, sir; but I knew that he kept seven dogs.—Harlem Life.

The Paragoner's Baby.

"It's funny I can't trust you with baby for a short half hour without your doing something ridiculous. What on earth did you carry him up in the attic for?"

"Just for a high bowl, my love."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Explanation.

"It must be hard for public men whose turn has come to explain how they came to get defeated."

"Yes," answered Senator Sorghum, pensively; "but not as hard as it is for some of 'em to explain how they come to get elected."—Washington Star.

His Advantage.

"I have never acted contrary to the dictates of my conscience," said the rich man, proudly.

"But some of us," replied the poor man, regretfully, "are not blessed with such easy-going consciences."—Chicago Post.

Sure.

"Are you sure you love her?" asked his close friend.

"Absolutely," answered the young man. "I've been her partner at whist when she forgot what trumps were, and didn't lose my temper."—Washington Star.

Class in Rhetoric.

"James, in what way can you justify the use of the expression, 'an itch for notoriety?'"

"Well, when a man gets an itch for notoriety he begins to scratch around for it."—Chicago Tribune.

His Polite Breeding.

Maud Edith—The count did not make any attempts to find out the amount of your wealth, did he?

Ethel Alice—He said nothing to me, of course. He is too well bred to talk shop.—Indianapolis Journal.

Still in Possession.

"Why do you think they are on their wedding journey?"

"Didn't you notice that he had the pocketbook when they bought those oranges from the train boy?"—Chicago Daily News.

Only Three.

Friend—The gossips have formulated a regular indictment against your character. They say you were a terrible flirt while abroad. Do you plead guilty?

American Girl—Yes; to three counts.—N. Y. Weekly.

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By special arrangement with the manufacturers of that justly famous Kidney Medicine, Dr. David Kennedy's Favorite Remedy, the readers of the POST are enabled to obtain a trial bottle and pamphlet of valuable medical advice absolutely free, by sending their full name and address to the DR. DAVID KENNEDY CORPORATION, Rondout, N. Y., and mention this paper.

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AUDITOR'S NOTICE.

In the Estate of Nathan Arbogast, dec'd. of Snyder Co., Pa. Notice is hereby given that the undersigned Auditor appointed by said Court to make distribution of the balance appearing in the account filed to and among the parties legally entitled, will sit for that purpose at the Washington Hotel at Middleburg, Pa., on Tuesday, April 18, 1899, at 11 o'clock A. M., where all parties in interest are requested to present their claims legally authenticated and in consonance with the Rules of Court, or be forever debarred from participating in said fund. W. E. HOUSEWORTH, Auditor. March 29, 1899.

GOOD COMMON SENSE

Common sense teaches us that a debilitated system cannot be built up by continued purging which reduces the strength of a body already weakened by disease. Most so-called blood builders are purgatives.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People do not act on the bowels. They build up the blood and strengthen the nerves.

The same good sense that leads you to give Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People a trial will prompt you to refuse any substitute an unscrupulous dealer offers. A druggist who says he has "something just as good," or "the same except in name" is dishonest and does not deserve your trade.

Alderman Louis W. Camp, of our city, says: "I was broken down in health and utterly miserable. I was unable to work much of the time and so badly afflicted with a form of stomach trouble that life was a veritable nightmare. I tried various remedies, but during the six months of my sickness I obtained no relief. I had always been a robust, hearty man and sickness bore heavily upon me. About two years ago I was advised to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People. I purchased one box and received so much benefit that I used five more and was entirely cured. I gained forty-two pounds in five weeks. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills restored me to health and I most heartily recommend them."

L. W. Camp on oath swears that the foregoing statement is true. W. W. MILLOAN, Notary Public. —From the By-Stander, March 11, 1898.

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