

## DECOYING FISH.

SKILLFUL INDIANS OF THE NORTH HAVE QUEER METHODS.

**They Cut a Hole in the Ice, Build a Hut Over the Hole and Let Down a Decoy Through the Ice—Fooling Innocent Creatures of the Deep Lakes.**

"You have heard of shooting game by means of decoy birds often enough no doubt," said an old sportsman the other day, "but I doubt if you ever heard of fishing by means of a decoy fish, where the decoy was not used for bait. I never saw it done myself till I visited Georgian bay, a part of Lake Huron, in Canada, one winter. There I found that the half breed Indians erected huts on the frozen bay and fished through holes cut in the ice by means of a queer decoy.

"In order to facilitate matters, some of them had little stoves in their huts to keep them warm while they fished. The huts had only one opening, a door, and when the fisherman had entered and closed the door no light entered the hut except what came up through the floor, reflected through the ice outside and the water underneath it. This made it possible for the fisherman to see deep down into the water and difficult for fish to see him in his dark hut. The fisherman has a chair or bench to sit upon, food and drink to keep life in him during his long watch and a little stove to prevent chill. Now comes the decoy business.

"The half breed takes out of his kit a queer looking stick, painted and shaped roughly to look like a fish, he avers, though it would hardly be breaking the second commandment to worship it, for it is the likeness of nothing in the heavens above, or on the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth; but if the fish think it is the main object is accomplished. This wooden counterfeit of a fish is loaded with lead, so that it sinks and lies in the water the right way when suspended from the middle of the back by a string attached to a short fishing pole. The Indian lets this decoy down into the water and by means of the string gives it a series of short, sharp jerks, which make it dart hither and thither in a remarkably lifelike manner, although, of course, its range is exceedingly limited, about a yard in any direction.

"The thing is provided with tin fins and tail and is weighted with lead most heavily at the head. The string is attached nearer the head than the tail, upon the back, and the skill with which these fishermen make the queer thing shoot about in a triangle under their feet, through a hole in the ice, is truly remarkable. I did not succeed in acquiring the art myself. I should say from trying it that it is rather more difficult to learn than fly casting.

"Presently a few fish, noticing this decoy darting about as if in active pursuit of his food, swim that way to see if there is not something there for them also. They may be fresh water herring, salmon, trout, whitefish or less valuable game; but none of them, big or little, is refused by the half breed. Fine fish he sells; the coarse ones he or his dogs or his children or his squaw eat readily.

"Pulling up his decoy, the fisherman lets down a baited hook and tries his luck on the newcomers, seldom in vain. These men fish with all sorts of queer bait. I saw one man make a splendid haul one day, using for bait only a big white bone button without any hook. The fish swallowed it greedily, and he would jerk them out of the water before they could get it out of their throats. By and by a pike or dogfish, seeing the shoal of fish around the pole, darts after them. They scatter in a hurry, and the fisherman lets down his decoy again to attract the pike.

"Now all the skill at his command must be employed to make the decoy work well, for if it lags in the water long enough for the pike to suspect its genuineness he will turn away in disgust. If the decoy deceives the wily pike he dashes at it, and the fisherman jerks it away before the pike can grab it in his strong jaws. The pike turns to pursue, and as he halts to turn the fisherman drives at him with a long forked spear. If his aim is accurate, the pike is transfixed and is brought bleeding to the surface in a jiffy.

"These men are skilled hunters and know many curious habits of the creatures they pursue. They say that muskrats, for instance, are able to swim long distances under the ice in this manner: Taking a long breath, the muskrat dives from his pursuer and swims as far as he can. When he can no longer without a fresh breath, he comes up under the ice, and pressing his nose against it breathes out all the air in his lungs. This forms a big bubble under the ice, and the Indians say that the ice has the power of making that bubble of air fresh again, oxygenizes it in fact, and that the little fellow then breathes it in again and dives once more. This he can do half a dozen times, the Indians say, before the air he took with him becomes so foul that the ice cannot freshen it again.

"Whether this property of the ice is true or not I cannot say, but the Indians firmly believe it, and I know that muskrats can travel a long way under the ice, and I have seen them come up under the ice, press their noses to it awhile and then dive again. Perhaps some scientist might explain the case."—New York Tribune.

### The Southerner at Home.

The southerner at home is prone to neglect his headgear for the sake of having his feet well shod, and he will go about in public places wearing a battered and soiled slouch hat, but scrupulously neat as to his footwear. The peculiarity perhaps arises from family pride, a besetting southern sin, coupled with the belief that aristocracy is evinced in the shape and size of the feet. It is worthy of note, however, that the southern slouch hat is often a costly article of the finest and most durable felt. Such a hat for winter and a costly and indestructible Panama straw for summer are the proper headgear for a southern country gentleman.—Chicago Herald.

### Prices of a Few Autographs.

Some prices on autograph letters are as follows: From Charles Francis Adams, 1859, 50 cents; long letter in German by Hans Christian Andersen at Copenhagen, \$5; John Quincy Adams, 1841, \$5; P. T. Barnum, 1867, 75 cents; Joseph Bonaparte, in regard to the sale of his diamonds and on political matters, dated at Philadelphia, 1823, \$4; Ole Bull, \$4.50; President Cleveland, letter regarding Mrs. Cleveland, 1890, \$3; C. Corot, on art subjects, \$3; Edward Eggleston, on sending copy of a novel, 75 cents; Nathaniel Hawthorne, Concord, 1863, \$12.50; Leigh Hunt, three page letter on note paper without date, \$4; Jean Ingelow, \$2.50; Washington Irving, \$6.50; Andrew Jackson, \$7.50; Louis XIII of France, signed document, \$3; President Monroe, commission of a major in the army, on vellum and signed by J. C. Calhoun, \$2.50; Joaquin Miller, autograph verse, \$1; Marshal MacMahon, \$2; Ouida, \$3; Ellen Terry, \$1; President Tyler, \$2.50; Victoria, Duchess of Kent and mother of Queen Victoria, \$3; Benjamin West, \$10.

An order of arrest signed by Robespierre, also signed by Couthon, is valued at \$25; a salary advance agreement of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, \$7.50; Jonathan Swill, with seal of the deannery, \$10; photograph of Theodore Thomas, signed and dated, 75 cents.—New York Telegram.

### American Levity.

Singularly enough it appears that Poe, the only absolutely distinct genius our country has yet produced, was incapable of humor and that even his levity was artificial. Hawthorne, next to Poe in originality and far above him in style, was but meagerly equipped with smile provoking material. Bryant, our greatest poet, maintained a lofty seriousness throughout his work.

It may be sacrilege to say so, but the truth is Lowell was the founder of our levity. He never could be quite a reliably serious thinker, but could at any moment break off into funmaking. Humor is good in a fresh and natural state, but so is a peach. Cut and dry either, and you have a poor article for a regular diet. We Americans have fed upon laughable things until our faces show the wrinkles of a grin even when in solemnest repose.

We are never sure of one another, but must wait awhile after each communication to find out whether or not it is a joke. The effect of highest sincerity cannot be reached in the midst of all this hurly burly of chaffing voices. How can one be serious while everybody else is grimacing?—Chautauquan.

### There Was Just One Man.

There is a gallant congressman who once had the reputation of sowing wild oats broadcast. When he was first running for congress, many breezy stories were told about him. At last he gave it out in the heat of his campaign that he would speak shortly in defense of his morals. It was a Populist district, and he had a big audience. The speech every one liked, but until the last sentence not a word was spoken about the advertised subject. At the last the candidate stuck his hand under his desk and pulled out several boxes of imported cigars.

"Gentlemen," he cried, "I am accused of having certain bad habits. Particular instances have been alleged in fact, I wish to make some one in this assemblage a present of a box of good cigars. If there is any one here who has never done what I have done, will he please step up and take it?" No one moved.

For a long time the big crowd kept silent. But an old Baptist minister in a far back seat after awhile arose and said in a high, squeaky voice, "Colonel, I don't smoke."—San Francisco Argonaut.

### Didn't Know His Own Child.

At Antietam, just after the artillery had been sharply engaged, the Rock-bridge (Va.) battery was standing waiting orders. General Lee rode by and stopped a moment. A dirty faced driver about 17 said to him:

"General, are you going to put us in again?"

"Think of such a question from such a source to the general of the army, especially when that general's name was Lee.

"Yes, my boy," the stately officer kindly answered; "I have to put you in again. But what is your name? Your face seems familiar somehow."

"I don't wonder you didn't know me, sir," laughed the lad; "I'm so dirty, but I'm Bob."

It was the general's youngest son, whom he had thought safe at the Virginia Military Institute. "God bless you, my son; do your duty!" and the general rode on.—Washington Post.

### The Art of Graceful Walking.

It would seem sometimes that the art of graceful walking might be numbered among the lost sciences, so few women master the accomplishment or even acquire any approach to perfection in this exercise, which is the foundation of all others. Every one succeeds in propelling themselves along by means of their feet, but that is not true walking. An English authority says, "The body should be held erect, the shoulders down, chest extended and the leg moved from the hip, the whole figure above being immovable."—Philadelphia Times.

### Overfastidious Taste.

Men overfastidious in their choice of tea have been victims of their too vivid imaginations. One man objected to a brand of tea purchased by his wife, pronouncing it "weeds," and accordingly selected a choice kind. His next cup of tea was pronounced perfect. The color was good, and "That's a cup of tea for you" was said with emphasis as he drank the second cup made from the "weeds" his wife had bought.—Good Housekeeping.

### Times Have Changed.

Thieves who entered the house of the pastor of St. James Methodist Episcopal church in Harlem stole \$900 worth of silver. The surprise is not that they stole it, but that the minister had it. Times have changed since the apostolic itinerant said, "Silver and gold have I none."—Brooklyn Eagle.

### Mistakes of Missionaries.

Come behind the curtain with me while I whisper into your ear a few of the mistakes made by missionaries, who talk so much about the mistakes of the heathen. One evening an English missionary in Peking took a friend who was visiting him to a regular Chinese theater. It happened that the play for that evening was a burlesque on foreign preaching. A Chinaman dressed up to represent a foreigner came upon the stage with his arms full of books, attended by his Chinese servant. He began to preach a mock sermon, making the mistakes in talking which a foreigner is likely to make. These mistakes were received with bursts of laughter from the audience, to whom the books were distributed. The fun came to a climax when the preacher, after delivering a sentence particularly full of laughable mistakes, turned to his servant and said: "How did I speak? Did I do pretty well?" and the servant replied with great gravity: "The foreign teacher speaks the Chinese language exceedingly well. No mistakes at all were made."—New York Independent.

### An Invention For Steamships.

An English mechanical genius has devised a method of indicating and stopping a leak by the use of compressed air. He divides a ship into airtight compartments, fitted with doors provided with packing material and connected by tubes with a room on deck called the "switch room." In this room is a junction chest supplied with compressed air from fixed or portable compressors and so arranged that the air can be delivered to any of the compartments. Other tubes lead from the compartment from which water can be forced out when required, and electric indicators are also connected with the switch room to indicate the accumulation of water in any of the compartments. Should the vessel "spring a leak" the indicator will show which compartment is affected, so that the compressed air may be forced in to drive the water out.—Boston Journal.

### True Love Side Tracked by an Orange.

A young lady said the other day that she hated oranges because one had come between her and her lover. He had called on her one evening, and after sitting awhile had produced a couple of bright Florida oranges out of his pocket and suggested that each eat one. She now says that she cannot drive out of her mind the sight of his nose, cheeks and chin dripping with juice, and he has been whispering something horribly similar about her. Evidently you cannot love a girl and a citrus aurantium at the same time.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

### Evading a Law.

When Ben Butler was a young lawyer the selectmen of Lowell, then a town, issued a mandate that all dogs should wear muzzles. The next morning Ben walked down town, followed by his big Newfoundland dog, with a very small muzzle tied to the end of its tail. Ben remarked, "My dog is wearing a muzzle." A callow imitator of Ben living in Ward One has fastened a bicycle bell under his saddle and anticipates much fun when a bluecoat stops him because he has no bell on his "bike."—Springfield Homestead.

### Altogether Too Familiar.

Dr. A. T. Pierson, in some pithy, practical hints on pulpit oratory, says that to be winning is to be wise, but it must not be overdone. He has a friend, an evangelist, who got into the habit of calling his audience "dear souls." Inadvertently he would say as he passed from place to place, "Dear Belfast souls," "Dear Dublin souls"—and before he knew it he was saying, "Dear Cork souls," which convulsed his Irish audience.—London Tit-Bits.

Magna Charta, the great charter of Englishmen's liberties, is preserved in the British museum. It is somewhat stained by time, but King John's seal and name are still quite legible at the bottom of it.

Kansas farmers have reaped more wealth off the earth's surface in grain than has been dug out of its interior in precious metals in the same time in all the states and territories west of her.

Nash, a writer of the sixteenth century, says, "If a hogge loseth an eye, he dyeth presently." Also, "Goats take breath not at the mouth and nose only, but at ye earse (ears) also."

When Maha Mongkut, father of the present king of Siam, died in 1868, his body was embalmed and left sitting in state for nearly a year and a half.

It is said that a pinch of salt placed on the tongue and allowed to dissolve slowly is helpful in sick headache.



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