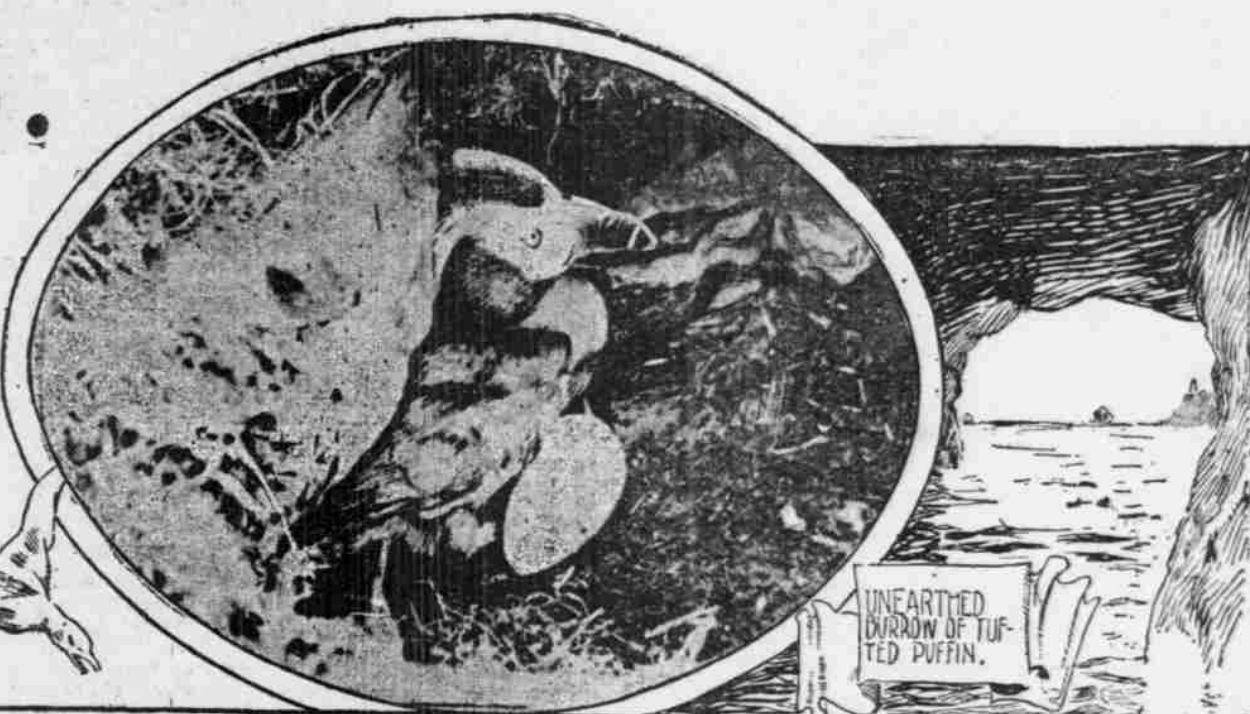
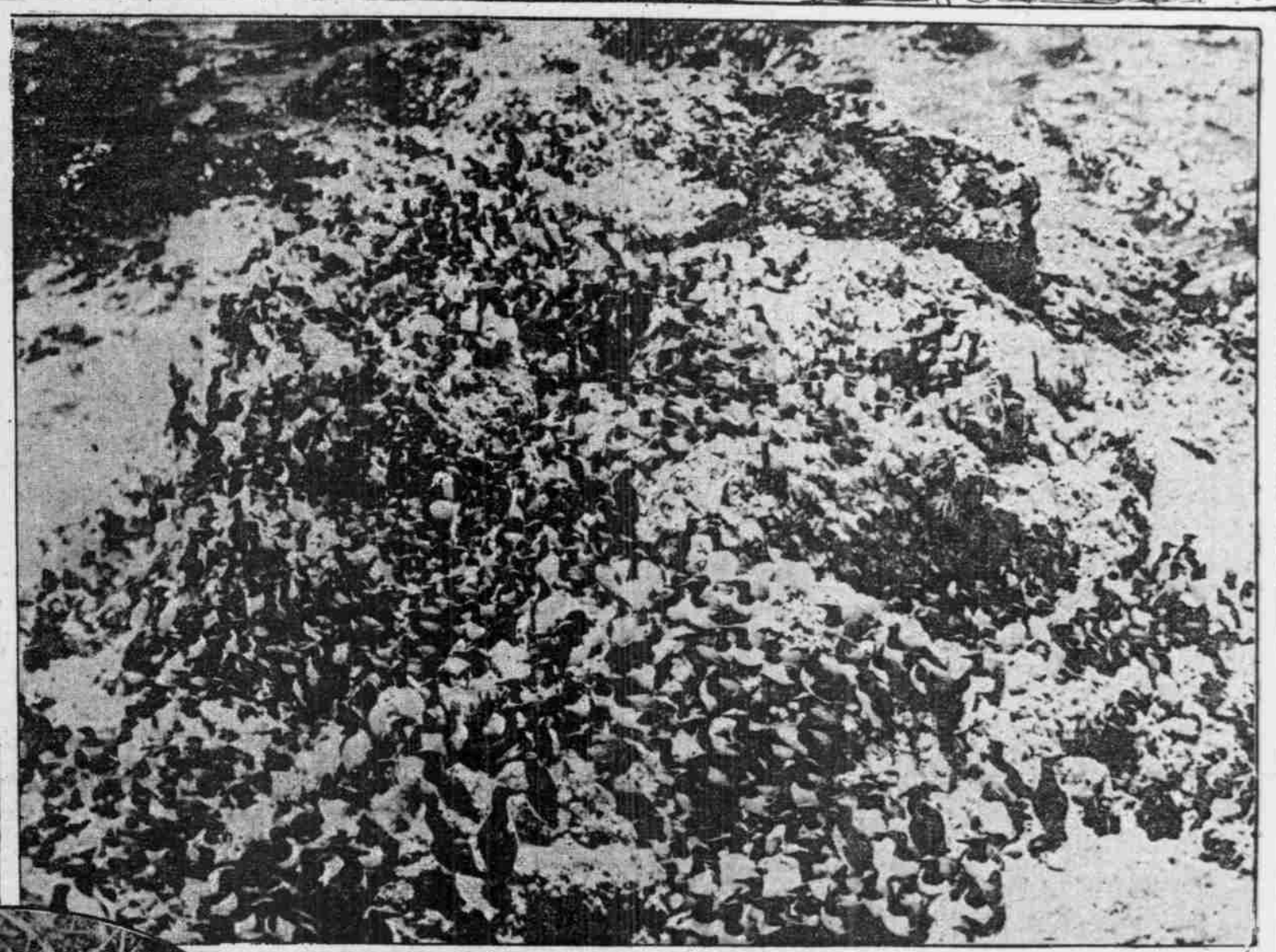




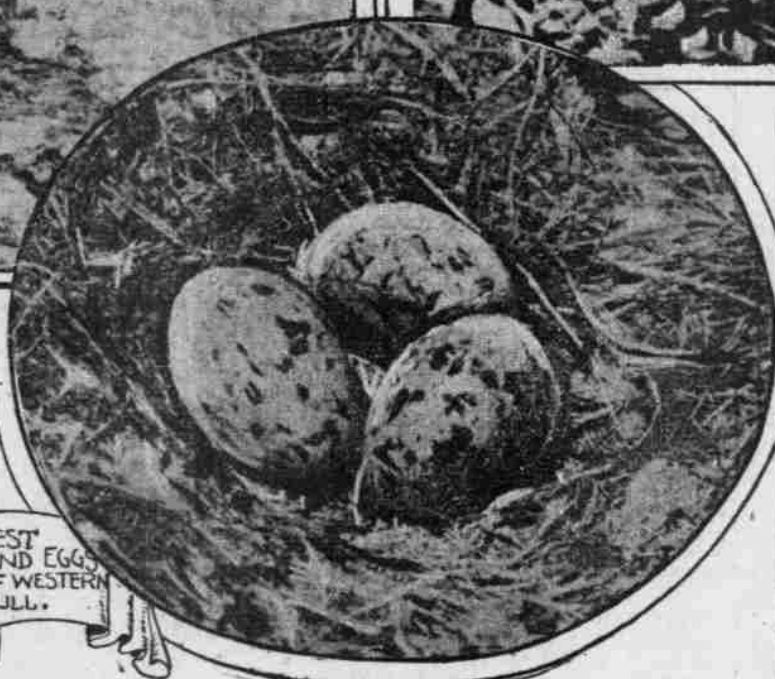
Among The seabirds. Oregon Coast.

CAPT. JOE

NESTING SITE OF CORMORANTS—TOP OF SHAG ROCK.

UNFEATHERED
BURROW OF TUFTED
PUFFIN.BRANDT'S CORMORANTS' NESTS
AND EGGS.

A NESTING COLONY OF MURRETS.

NEST AND EGGS
OF WESTERN
GULL.

BIRDS' EYE VIEW OF SHAG ROCK, FROM SHAG ROCK.

A RAMBLE which we took through the Willamette Valley and over the Coast Range of Mountains to the seashore, in the latter part of last May, led us through regions inhabited by many rare and interesting birds. In fact, wherever one may go up and down the broad expanse of Oregon, he finds feathered friends, whether it be on the broad sage plains of the eastern part of the state, or the lake regions of the south; whether through the great forest-clad mountains of the Cascades or Coast Range, or over the fertile and cultivated valleys between; or even though one should proceed down along the rugged and broken shore line, where the perpetual waves beat on the barren rocks. The study of the land birds has always a certain interest and deep fascination about it, but our few days' visit among the sea birds opened up a strange and mystical world to us, and added a new chapter to our experiences.

Awaiting Opportunity.
The latter part of May and the first of June are not very pleasant days to spend on the Oregon Coast. The weather is cold and unsettled, and the sea is likely to be rough. So we found it, encamped at Netarts Bay. Our efforts were directed toward three large rocks, which are many acres in extent, and which lie off the coast, about two miles from the mouth of the bay. Day after day we watched the sea and the winds, waiting for the weather to moderate sufficiently for us to undertake the voyage to the rocks.

Finally, our patience was rewarded, when "Captain Joe," the old Indian pilot, told us that, on the morrow, he thought we could try the sea. Old Joe was born and bred near the ocean, and has spent most of his life as a fisherman; he knows all the dangers to be encountered on such a trip as that we proposed to make, and is a safe man to follow. His past experience had taught him that the wind and the sea must be just right before venturing out to the rocks, and no one could persuade him to deviate from his set purpose to take no unnecessary risk.

The Departure.
We were on hand early the next morning, but had to wait an hour or so for the tide. It was a hard task getting the big fishing boat down to the water's edge, ready to launch her in the breakers, and we soon began to realize that it was not going to be an easy or pleasant task, for an inexperienced crew to pull successfully through the surf and pass the big combers that were continually rolling in.

We waded out with the boat till she floated freely; then each one jumped in to his assigned place and grasped an oar. We had not proceeded far, when a couple

of waves in succession struck our boat, and we bent to the oars, to escape a third wave, before it broke. But we were too late; it came crashing in upon the beach, thundering and roaring, and hurling the white foam in all directions. For a few moments it seemed that we were to be swamped; our strong and heavy boat was tossed like a cork-shell, and the water dashed in over the bow and sides, drenching us through. In another moment the craft righted itself and we were out in the smooth water beyond the breakers.

A Noisy Greeting.
As we approached our destination, the roaring of a great herd of sea lions that make their home on the smaller and low-lying rocks of the vicinity grew louder and louder; it soon became almost deafening, and the sea lions themselves dashed against the granite foundation. Our boat, with its occupants, looks like a mere toy. We glance back down the long, sloping ridge, up which we came, and count hundreds of nests of birds, at intervals of two or three feet. Each contains from four to six greenish-white, chalklike-looking eggs.

The Landing.
We decided to land on the large rock farthest out from the mainland, and which is known as Shag Rock. We selected a place on the south side, where there was some shelter from the breakers. The waves washed up continually over the jagged edges of the rock and made it a difficult matter to land. However, by backing the boat up between the swells, we were able to jump ashore. After we had landed, the crew pulled the boat out into the smooth water, and there anchored, awaiting our return.

We had now to face the problem of getting to the top of the rock. We followed the water's edge around to the north side, where we found a steep grade leading up part way. Up this we clambered to the

first long ledge. Here we found many nests of the western gull.

But we were now confronted with the more difficult task of reaching the next ledge, twenty or thirty feet up, and from which we could get to the main ridge, leading to the top of the rock. The place upon which we were standing was narrow, and on each side of us, was a sheer descent of 50 or 75 feet.

Risky Undertaking.

It was a hazardous undertaking to reach the next ledge; but, by edging along and holding fast to the crevices, one of our party gained the desired spot. It was then an easy matter for the rest of us to reach the ledge, by the aid of ropes. Making our way between the great numbers of cormorants' nests that were strewn all about, we passed on up the ridge, about a hundred yards, to the summit of the rock.

The scene is subject for our amazement. We are standing on the very edge of a precipice. Hundreds of feet below the angry waves dash themselves violently against the granite foundation. Our boat, with its occupants, looks like a mere toy. We glance back down the long, sloping ridge, up which we came, and count hundreds of nests of birds, at intervals of two or three feet. Each contains from four to six greenish-white, chalklike-looking eggs.

To the north there is a long slope of about 100 yards, extending the length of the rock, and which is covered with a rich growth of grass and weeds. The whole distance is perforated with the burrows of petrels and puffins that nest in great colonies. Scattered at short intervals through the grass are also the nests of gulls. At the lower edge of the slope the rock breaks into an abutting cliff, then descends perpendicularly to the water. Down the steep, rocky bank to the water is a great rookery of California murrelets.

Words will not adequately describe the strange feeling that came over us as we

stood there on the summit of the rock. The sound of the lashing waves was lost in the ceaseless cries of the immense numbers of sea fowl that we aroused by our presence among them. They crowded about in the air, circling over and darting past our heads, and, at times, they hovered above their nests watching, with anxious solicitude, every move we made. It was a wild, weird picture, and made one feel like cowering down or getting out of the disputed territory.

Three or four species of cormorant inhabit the rocks off the entrance of Netarts Bay. They are commonly known as "shags." The Brandt's cormorant, which is the most abundant, nests in the great colony on the summit of the rock we visited in May last. The bird may be identified by the peculiar, white, stiff growth of feathers along its neck and back, in strong contrast to its iridescent, greenish-black plumage. Its bright blue pouch, ending in a buff-colored throat patch, is another distinguishing feature. Baird's cormorant is a smaller bird, and more solitary in its habits, breeding in the more inaccessible places along the face of the cliff. It has patches of white on its sides which can be seen a long distance, and serves as a distinguishing mark. The young of these birds are about as ugly as can be imagined, being entirely devoid of feathers when hatched, and of inky blackness.

The nests of the Baird's cormorants are inhabited year after year, only a fresh lining being added each season. We noticed some nests over a foot high, built up of decayed matter, while all about were scattered the rotting remains of fish and the bones of many feasts—the accumulations of generations of the past. These cormorants present a strange sight, as they stand erect, with their long necks outstretched, like tall sentinels over their nests, guarding their homes from the over-thrilled raids of the watchful gull.

We were very much interested in the petrels that inhabited the island home

we visited. There are two species—Leach's petrel and the gray, forked-tail petrel, the former being more common. The plumage of Leach's petrel is entirely sooty-brown, except the patch of white on the upper-tail coverts. The forked-tail petrel is a little larger, and has a bluish, ash-colored body, with a deeply forked tail.

The Storm Petrel.

The slender build and the graceful flight of these birds have always been admired. Far out on the wild ocean, sometimes hundreds of miles away from land, these little, swallow-like birds may be seen skimming along over the top of the water, looking for food on the foam-crested waves. They were long regarded as of evil omen, and messengers of tempests and storms, by superstitious sailors, because they often followed in the wake of some vessel and revealed in the roughest weather.

Years ago, before the nests and eggs of these birds had been discovered, it was the current belief among sailors that they hatched their eggs under their wings, as they sat on the water. The mysterious uncertainty of their origin doubtless gave rise to the prevalent opinion of the times that, in some way, the petrels were connected with that personage who has been styled the Prince of the Power of the Air.

Nocturnal in Habits.

The petrels are nocturnal in their habits, and none were seen by us flying about in daylight. They place their nests in a little underground burrow, which they excavate. In the burrows we sometimes found the male and female; generally we discovered the male incubating the single white egg, while its mate was probably far out on the sea hunting for food. In the evening, it is said, that the petrels

came in large number from the sea. They feed their young from an oily substance that is emitted from their own mouths.

Great numbers of the western gulls live about the rocks, and they seem to be troublesome and tyrannical inhabitants. They are tramp birds and thieves, and are so regarded by the other rock-dwellers. They float about overhead like great, white snowflakes, watching and waiting till they can steal a meal from some other bird or rob some unguarded nest. Still, with all their bad habits, they keep their coats remarkably clean and spottless.

Where They Breed.

Their nests are placed about over the tops and sides of the rock; a typical spot is on the side slope among the green grass and yellow flowers. The birds scratch out a little hollow in the ground and line it with a few dry grasses. Their two or three eggs are so well protected by color that one might easily pass by without noticing them. We might have stepped right in the nests several times had we not been keeping a sharp lookout. The parent gulls are very noisy while one remains about their homes. They float about overhead, uttering their loud screams and watching every movement of the intruder; or they will light on the ground, a little way off, and sit, with head cocked on one side, until you approach within a few feet, when they will rise, without apparent effort and sail away like a feather in the breeze.

Egg-Robbing Gulls.

On our second trip out to the bird rocks an incident came under our notice which shows the habits of the gulls. We were approaching the rocks in the boat, and were watching some Baird's cormorants

that were sitting on their nests, about 50 feet up the side of the cliff, on a ledge of rock.

Just then, one of the fishermen fired a shot at a sealion. Only one of the cormorants was scared from its nest by the loud report, and it hesitated at first, as if dreading to leave. The others seemed to realize the consequences, and remained by their homes.

No sooner had the single cormorant left its nest than the latter was pounced upon by two gulls that happened to be flying by. One of the robbers pierced two of the eggs with its bill and greedily devoured the contents, while the other gull grabbed up the remaining egg in its large bill and flew off over to the adjacent rock, where it devoured its stolen meal with much relish.

Visit Portland During Winter.

Large number of the gulls come up the Willamette River to Portland during the winter, and spend the stormy months about our city. They are great scavengers, and become quite domesticated in all the seaport cities along the Coast. When the food supply is low, they will resort to various measures.

We were amazed early last Spring to find a great flock of 200 or 300 of these birds over in a ploughed field on the east side of the river. They had taken their stand out near the middle of the field, where there was a low, damp place, and every time the farmer came along with his plow, he would turn up large numbers of angle worms, on which the gulls would pounce just as blackbirds often do. In their eagerness to get the first supply they would tumble and flutter against the

(Concluded on Page 30.)