

HABITS OF THE SEAL

AN INTERESTING CREATURE OF COMMERCE.

For the Fur and Oil Thousands of Men Every Year Imperil Their Lives—The Romance of an Unfortunate Seal.

Not the least interesting sight witnessed by the visitor to San Francisco are the rocks covered with seals, which lie not far out in the bay and are easily discernible from the Cliff House. At times the piles of stone and earth projecting above the water are so filled with the smooth-furred creatures that none of the rock is visible. The bay itself swarms with the animals, as they are called, to bask in the sunshine. Should the visitor attempt to study the animals at close range he would find them extremely interesting. Of American animals there is none more valuable or sought after than the fur-seal and no creature of the numerous American animal family is more interesting or intelligent. They live in the sea, but always in the neighborhood of the coasts, where they wage an incessant warfare on the fishes, which constitute their principal food. They enjoy climbing upon rocks and beaches along the shore. When out of the water they are exceedingly watchful, and appear to have sentinels to give notice of the approach of an enemy, plunging into the water the moment any danger approaches them. On land they are very awkward. Their movements are performed by the actions of the strong muscles of the back. The creatures take hold by their forepaws, while they curve the back strongly and thus draw forward the hind feet.



SEALS SUNNING THEMSELVES IN SAN FRANCISCO BAY.

The latter then form the point of support and the head and forepaws are pushed on by the straightening of the body. The mode of progression is plainly laborious, and the seals never travel any great distance on land.

In only one genus is an external ear present and that genus inhabits the southern ocean. Yet the northern seals hear well when under water and are easily attracted to the surface by a noise. They generally travel in shoals and are often seen in such numbers in the northern seas as to appear like a continuous mass. For the sake of



COMMON SEAL.

respiration they appear now and then on the surface, springing up with their whole bodies out of water. Fishes, crabs and aquatic birds disappear when the seal gets hungry. Before a gale of wind the seals are full of frolic, jumping and tumbling about, sometimes throwing themselves entirely out of water and performing many awkward gambols. At last they retire to their wonted rocks or caverns and there remain till the storm is over. They are extremely curious; if people are passing in boats they often come up very close, stare at them and follow them a considerable time. When a church bell rings for divine service at some point on the coast, all the seals within hearing swim directly for the shore and remain while the bells continue ringing, look about wonderingly, but never alarmed.

In appearance the seal is unique. Its skin is clothed with thick, downy wool. But as this would impede swift motion, it is covered with an outer coat of close, strong, shining hair. The nostrils are closed at will. The orifice of the ear can also be closed and the eye is furnished with a third eyelid, which can be drawn across it as a

defense. The limbs are short and almost enclosed within the body, little more than the feet projecting.

A Creature of Commerce.

Though little known to science, the seals have been long known to commerce and the pursuit of the animals for their oils and skins forms no inconsiderable source of national wealth. Fleets of vessels of various sizes, manned by expert and hardy seamen, annually leave the shores of Europe and America, bound either for the Arctic regions, the coast of Newfoundland, or the desolate shores of extreme South America, whence they return, after long voyages attended with incredible hardships, loaded with the valuable products of the seal. The sealing craft generally start out about the first of March. From 16 to 35 hands usually compose a crew, many of whom are provided with large guns, and the rest with stout clubs or bats. Each man has also a pole or gaff, provided with a hook at the end, to assist him in leaping from piece to piece when among loose ice. Often it is necessary to cut, with ice saws, a broad channel through the midst of the harbor to the open sea; and as the united crews of a sealing fleet sometimes number 2,000 men, it may properly be supposed that the broad, icy plain displays a scene of no ordinary animation and excitement. Once the vessels are in the open sea, a day's run will bring them to the edge of an ice field, where myriads of seals are discovered with their new-born young. The young produce an oil that is both valuable and abundant and, as it takes but a slight blow with a bat to kill them, they are easily made captive. The gun is used to shoot the old seals. As soon as a seal is killed—and sometimes even before—a circular cut is made with a sharp knife around the neck and a longitudinal one down the belly to the tail. The skin with the

surface fat is "scalped" off, forming altogether a "pelt." This alone is taken and the carcass is left on the ice. Barring accident a vessel in a locality where seals are thick will have its hold filled in ten days. The adventure is full of hazard.

In the excitement of the pursuit after the seal, leaps of terrific risk are taken from field to field, across yawning chasms, whose terrors are scarcely noticed and sometimes night draws on, with the hunter then first realizing that he is many miles from his vessel, and there is no clue to guide him across interminable icefields. With the setting sun, the temperature has gone down and the bewildered voyager has to pass the night on unsheltered ice, in an atmosphere at zero. Frozen limbs are frequently the result of these exposures and individuals, in their attempts to return, often drop through holes and are seen no more. But this is not all. Sometimes a sudden change of wind will separate fields of ice on which the men are sealing and ere they are aware they are driving far out to sea, helpless and hopeless.

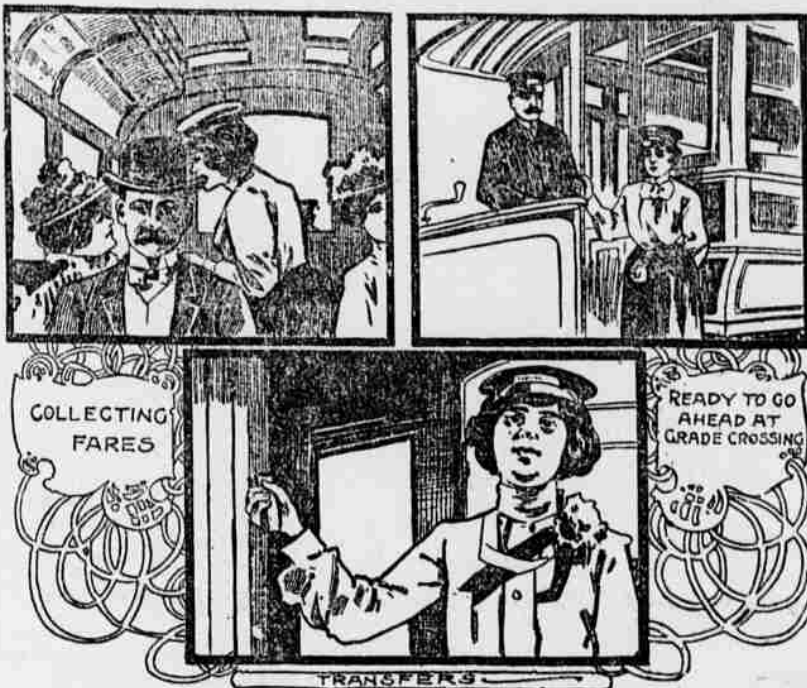
The seal possesses much intelligence, combined with its docility, gentleness and affection. It may be taught to perform various tricks.

Washed Coins.

Queen Alexandra, it is said, has a great horror of the microbes. She will in no case accept a piece of money until it has been thoroughly cleansed. Whenever a check is turned into hard cash for the queen's use the coins are plunged into a basin and scrubbed in a lather of spirits of wine, water and soap, to which has been added a few drops of carbolic acid. After this bath the coins are placed in the royal purse and her majesty is ready to start out on her purchasing tour. But when she tenders a coin in payment for any article on which change is due the change is never on any account handed to the queen, but is turned over to her lady in waiting. At the end of the shopping excursion all of the coins received in the way of change from tradesmen are put into the microbe-destroying bath before they get into the royal purse.

When a mother has been away two or three weeks, it is worth watching her three or four little children when she returns home. You may not cry, but the sight will make something tremble inside of you.

PRETTY GIRLS CONDUCTORS ON AN OHIO STREET CAR LINE



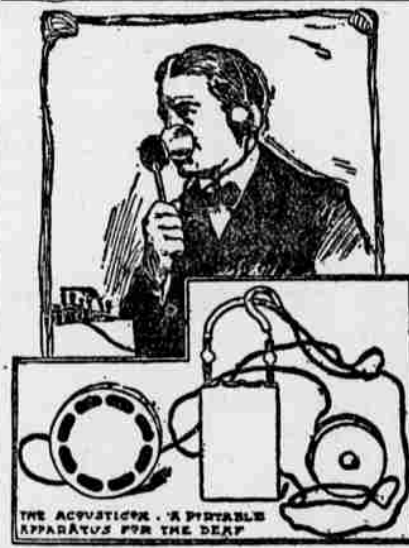
Chillicothe, Ohio, is a bustling business city of 12,000 inhabitants, but it gains greater notoriety from the fact that it is the only city in the United States that has lady street car conductors. When the electric line was established some time ago the superintendent said he would have women conductors, but he was laughed at. He went ahead with his idea, however, and now has a trained corps who do the work as well as men, even to jumping off and going ahead to see if the track is clear at railroad crossings, or putting "bad men" who won't pay their fare off the car.

A MACHINE TO MAKE THE DEAF HEAR.

Miller R. Hutchinson has been giving some wonderful exhibitions in New York City with his "Acousticon" apparatus, designed to enable the deaf to hear.

As most cases of deafness are only partial and result from missing or defective parts of the ear, the Acousticon is made so as to correct these faults.

The middle ear is separated from the outer by the eardrum, and is an air-filled cavity with a chain of three small bones, one end of which is attached to the drum, and the other to the "oval window," or outer membrane of the inner ear. Sound waves striking upon the drum cause it to



vibrate, communicating the motion to the bone chain which in turn moves the "oval window." The motion of the latter is taken up by the fluid of the inner ear in which float 3,000 nerve terminals, which being wound together in the form of a cable convey each its proper sound to the brain. Most of the deafness comes from trouble in the middle ear. As sound waves will not pass from the atmosphere to a fluid the bones are needed to transfer them. When the bones become impaired deafness results.

The Acousticon is made to take the place of the middle ear. It consists of a mouthpiece, an ear-cap and a storage battery—the whole making a small and easily carried outfit. Generally speaking it may be stated that the new machine takes up sound waves and transfers their energy to the fluid of the inner ear.

MISTAKEN FOR A UNION SPY.

One of the Amusing Incidents During the Recent Hotel Strike.

It was dance night at the Hotel del Prado, but owing to the sudden stampede of waiters that morning the great dining hall had not been cleared, and consequently there was no dancing. The musicians, however, were filling the air with rag-time noise, and the corridor was thronged with excited people talking together in groups. Every stranger who entered was eyed suspiciously and discussed in whispers.

A poorly dressed woman carrying a shabby traveling bag came in, went to the office and asked for a room for the night. She made no inquiries as to rates or location, and when asked to register did so in a hesitating, uncertain manner. She followed the bell-boy to the room assigned her, which was on the first floor, with a window overlooking the street. Immediately on entering she locked the door, but did not turn on the light. This roused suspicion. Later on she did not respond to a knock; this roused more suspicion.

"A spy," they said, "a union spy, sent here to find out about the state of things in the house."

A detective was stationed outside the door and a policeman patrolled the street outside her window. The latter reported that she had opened the window.

Meanwhile bewildering rumors were floating around concerning the strange lady, such as that she was a private detective; that she was a man in woman's clothing; that she had dynamite in her bag and was going to fire the house; that she was going to signal to the pickets outside and let the unionists in through the window; that she was sent to scare out the few kitchen girls who had not gone out on strike.

She did not emerge from her room for nearly an hour. By that time everyone was on the qui vive, and when she did appear her actions were watched with absorbing interest. She walked deliberately down the long corridor, through the crowds of people, apparently oblivious to their glances.

"Going straight to the kitchen to terrify those Swedish girls," said a lady. "Wonder how she knows where to go? Must have been informed." When she reached the telephone box she stopped, looked around uncertainly, asked for a book and began to search for a number. The bellboy captain, who had been previously warned about her, offered to assist her, but she refused his offers. More suspicion. "Doesn't want anyone to know where she telephones," they said. After fumbling with the address book for a few minutes, and glancing furtively around her, she returned to her room without telephoning.

Imagination ran riot after she disappeared. "Looks like an anarchist," said one. "There'll be trouble tonight," said a nervous woman, "I'm scared to go to bed."

Nothing happened that night. The next morning the strange lady promptly paid her bill and departed.

And the imaginative people who supplied her with a story are still guessing. —Chicago Record-Herald.

A Historic Lemon.

Who ever thinks of connecting such a commonplace article of diet as the lemon with the romantic history of ill-fated Anne Boleyn? Yet indirectly she was the cause of its first introduction into England and so into popular notice. Henry VIII. gave such splendid feasts and pageants in honor of the coronation of Anne and of their previous nuptials as had seldom been accorded to queens of the blood royal. These kingly entertainments were in turn followed by the great civic feasts of London, for which the whole world was searched for delicacies, to add to the splendor.

At one such banquet, graced by the presence of the royal pair, a lemon was introduced as an elegant novelty. To an epicure such as Henry the acquisition of a castle in France would have proved less acceptable, and such was the importance attached to the discovery—so says an old biographer—that a special record was made of the fact that the cost of this precious lemon was six silver pennies!

A Sornambulist.

A good story is told at the expense of a police inspector of New York, who when he was new to the business of a patrolman, once, with great official zeal, grasped and held a citizen on his beat who was addicted to sleep-walking.

"Hold on!" cried the man. "You mustn't arrest me. I'm a sornambulist!" "I don't care what your religion is!" exclaimed the ardent officer. "You can't walk the streets in your night shirt!"

Women can wait better than men.

LOST IN THE GRASS.

There is surely no country half a world away in which the Occidental traveler expects so much delight and so little adventure as in Japan. Yet Ernest Foxwell has recently related a tale of terrible adventure experienced in Japan by an Englishwoman but a few days after her arrival. She was staying at a little country village among the hills, and had gone out in the morning to gather flowers. The path ran across the uplands, where there is a wild and lonely stretch of country extending for several miles; and the beauty of some wild flowers growing in the tall grass led her to leave the trail unthinkingly, and press farther and farther into the waving tangle. She was a short woman, and it reached above her head.

"If I had been a foot taller," she said, in telling her story, "I should have laughed and been out in a minute or two; but those few inches buried me alive."

"Almost instantly I felt sick, as you do at the beginning of an earthquake; for although I must have been quite near the path, yet with the grass all round above my head there was no knowing what would happen. I might be going right away at that very moment, and the possibilities came like a shock. I believe I lost my head at once. I could not think, so I kept moving one way, then another. But merely pushing through this tall, tough grass is very tiring work, even if you are on sloping ground and can judge where you will come out; and when it is level all round, the heart is taken out of you from the feeling that every step is probably burying you deeper. It was like being drowned."

It was not until sunset, after a whole day in the blazing sun, without food or water, constantly wandering, constantly pushing and tearing at stems so stiff and serrated that they quickly make the hands bleed, that she walked suddenly out on to open ground and fell fainting in a heap. When she recovered, stars were shining, and she was alone on an unknown mountainside. She slept from exhaustion, and the next day followed a winding mountain torrent over rocky land, her shoes and then her stockings worn from her feet, only to find, at sundown, that it had led her to a narrow gorge, without one inch of foothold or shore. The stream dashed through in a torrent that hopelessly barred the way.

Light-headed with terror, hunger and weariness, she crouched for a time in despair. Then she suddenly waded into the stream and stood until after dawn waist-deep in water, while a rain-storm pelted upon her from above. Whim or instinct, she believed that by the cool rush and sting of the water her reason and strength were preserved.

The next day she retraced her weary way along the watercourse back to the heights; thence, fixing anew the point to which she must direct her steps, she successfully made her way back to civilization. When at length she reeled into the hut of a kindly Japanese woman, she had been four days lost without food, and had walked until her feet were so torn and inflamed it was thought she must have them amputated; but she fortunately regained her health uncrippled.

Alighted Too Soon.

It had taken considerable persuasion to induce the old lady to trust herself in an automobile; but finally she consented because, says the Automobile Magazine, she was anxious to reach the bedside of her sick grandchild in a village some twenty miles away.

The owner of the big automobile, who was touring through Long Island, had been very kind about it. He chanced to be near the station when the old lady found she had missed her train, and when he overheard her lamentations he insisted that she should accompany him. His route lay through that particular one of the half-dozen Long Island villages named Hampton where the sick grandchild lay.

They started at last, and everything went well until, in attempting to pass a wagon which occupied most of the road, the flying automobile went unexpectedly into the ditch, and rather violently deposited its occupants in an adjoining field.

Recovering from the shock, although somewhat confused from the rather unusual method of alighting, the old lady asked of the chagrined chauffeur: "Is this a-a-a Hampton?"

"No, ma'am," he managed to gasp; "this is an accident."

"O dear!" said the old lady. "Then I hadn't oughter have got out here, had I?"

Consumption of Iron in Germany.

In Germany the annual consumption of iron per capita is 168 pounds and the production just double that amount.

After an angel reaches thirty-five and wears an old wrapper across the alley to borrow butter from a neighbor, she looks pretty tough.