

NORTHWEST'S GREAT SALMON INDUSTRY

Some Figures and a Mass of More or Less Authoritative Information.

(Special Correspondence The Journal.)

SEATTLE, Aug. 21.—While the land of the strange, silent North is giving up the millions in yellow treasure each year, its waters continue to yield wealth far in excess of the gold that is wrested from the reluctant earth. The red meat of the North Pacific salmon is as precious as the golden nuggets of the Klondike, because it constitutes one of the principal items of the world's food supply. The take of the last season represented 36,245,000 fish, and the pack reached the colossal figure of 126,304,000 pounds of food prepared for the table.

Around the salmon there is the all-pervading mystery of the North. It is born in fresh water, and comes back to its birthplace to die. Beyond that, little is known of its habits. How far it goes when it puts to sea, what it lives upon, and how long it remains away, are questions that no man can answer. Great schools of them have been sighted in the ocean hundreds of miles from land, but when seen they were always headed toward the shore and fresh water. They are supposed to subsist upon vegetable matter, and their length of life is reckoned by various authorities to be all the way from four to eight years.

When they are grown they make for fresh water, traveling in such numbers that often the smaller streams are literally choked with them. They follow closely along the shore in the search for suitable spawning grounds. The male scoops out a little furrow in the sand with his nose, in which the female deposits her eggs, after which they are covered over and left to hatch. It is said that there is not room enough at the spawning grounds for one-tenth of the fish to deposit their eggs, and that there is great waste from the crowding, the deposits of the early arrivals being disturbed again and again by the late comers. As soon as the female deposits the eggs, her usefulness is ended, and she soon dies.

The fish are caught at the mouths of the streams or as they ascend the same. The men in the employ of the different companies are separated into gangs and distributed over the territory they are to cover. They operate from stations where there are small houses, in which they eat and sleep during the fishing season. Sometimes a company will have as many as 60 men distributed among 20 of these stations, at distances reaching as far as 60 miles from the cannery. The same steamer station gathers up the fish from the station, delivers the food and supplies for the men.

A gentleman familiar with the different methods of catching the salmon said: "In gill-net fishing two men are assigned to each boat. The nets commonly in use vary from 200 to 250 fathoms in length. These are carefully stored in the stern. One man rows and the other carefully pays out the net, which has a buoy attached to the end. The course is steered across the tide, and when the last of the netting is out another buoy holds it in place, when it is left to drift with the tide until the time arrives for hauling in the fish. It sometimes happens, when the run is heavy, that the net will have to be pulled in before it is half paid out. The process of gill-netting is the most simple of all.

"In some fishing the nets are usually much longer, generally 500 or 1,000 fathoms in length, and often more. They are laid in the same way, being paid out from a boat, and are then hauled in, the rope having been first attached to a stout post on the beach. A wide circuit is then made, inclosing as much water as the length of the seine will allow. When the last end is landed the whole gang of men, often 20 or more, laboriously haul in, and when there is a good catch it is heavy work, indeed. At some fisheries much hard work is avoided and the process greatly facilitated by the use of a steam launch in towing the seine and a steam winch for the hauling. During the latter case men in boats follow along the cork line to prevent the seine from snagging at the bottom. It is reported that with the help of steam power and the largest sized seine as many as 75,000 salmon have been taken at a single haul. When the fish are hauled into the water, the catch is a large one, they are scooped out of the seine with huge dip nets into the large boats, which take them to the canneries. One of these boats will hold 12,000 fish.

"What is known as trap fishing is the wholesale way of taking the salmon. The traps are constructed by driving piles so arranged as to form a lead which is covered by wire or cotton netting. The fish follow this run into an ingeniously arranged 'pot,' and when this is once entered there is no escape. All the fishermen has to do is to fill his boats at leisure."

The largest cannery in the world is at Fairhaven, Wash., and the process of putting up the fish is very interesting. When the plant is running at its full capacity, 600 people are employed in it. A transcontinental railroad line has a station running up to the warehouse in the rear of it, while at the outer end there is a pier where ocean-going steamers can tie up and load. In the loft over the cannery 10,000,000 tin cans are stored preparatory to the coming of the fish. During the busy season, in July and August, this great plant can handle 100,000 salmon averaging six pounds each, every day.

One of the experts in the employ of the concern, in describing the process, said: "The fish are brought in on scoops during the evening. They are transferred from the boats to conveyors, which deposit them upon the floor of the butcher room. Chinamen are employed as butchers. They stand in rows at tables and cut off the heads, fins and tails. In order to keep this room clean it is frequently hosed with salt water. After the butchers remove the heads and tails from the fish, they are pushed forward upon a revolving drum, which conveys them to new and recently installed cleaning machines. The salmon are fed into these at the rate of 45 per minute. They go head first between rollers which move them onto sharp knives, which slit their bellies open, then scrapers and brushes, operating in a force of water, clean out all entrails and blood, and discharge the fish in a tank of running water, so that they are sure that the fish are thoroughly clean they are inspected and placed in elevated boxes with slatted bottoms and left to drain.

"The next step in the process is accomplished by placing the fish in pockets on a revolving drum, which carries them around to a series of rapidly moving circular knives, that divide the meat into choice cuts, just the size required to fill the cans then being used."

There are nine sets of these revolving knives across the cannery, and it is remarkable to see them all running at once, some cutting for one-sized can and some another. After the cutting 250 young women pack the meat in the tins. Following a number of minor processes, to insure perfect cleanliness, the cans are steamed for 25 minutes and afterward submitted to a heat of 240 degrees Fahrenheit for an hour, which thoroughly cooks the meat and the bone.

The two great industries of the Northwest are fishing and lumbering, and they

are similar in the one respect that fearful waste is practiced in both. Sometimes the traps fill up faster than the cannery can dispose of the fish, and when this happens dreadful loss ensues.

While I was preparing this article the following dispatch from Astoria, Or., was published:

"During the past few days the run of salmon has been so heavy as to compel the packers to decline to receive further catches, and as a result the beach for a distance of two miles is piled high with dead fish dumped there by the boatload. Hundreds of tons of valuable food have been lost in this way, and the City Council has had to take steps to have the putrid mass removed. Great bonfires will be lighted and the decaying fish destroyed by fire."

All of these fish were destroyed as they entered the Columbia River. Among them were thousands of mature females hurrying to the spawning grounds to deposit their eggs. Every one intercepted meant a lessening of the progeny by many thousands. Considering the wholesale manner in which these valuable fish are taken before they can accomplish their habits of reproduction, it seems almost marvelous that the species has thus far escaped total annihilation. The law has been formed to protect them, but their destruction continues in the most ruthless manner.

Mr. Howard M. Kutchn, special Government agent, tells this instance of a trap so arranged that it obeyed the letter of the law, while in reality it violated and defeated the spirit of the same. The law says that obstructions must not be placed in the mouths of streams. To avoid this the trap was set just outside the mouth and built diagonally outward from shore until it became practically a fence, although it left a wide entrance to the stream on an approach from the opposite direction. The incoming salmon followed along the beach on which the trap was set, not laying a course as a boatman would to get by it. They were as effectually prevented from entering the stream as if the trap had been built straight out from one shore to the other. The abuses of the trap system are varied. In many instances when there are enough fish on hand to run the cannery for the time being, the traps are still left open and the salmon crowd into them and are left there to rot. This is done to prevent the fish from getting into the traps of competitors farther up stream.

The law also requires that every firm taking fish from the streams must take up the propagation of salmon and put back into the water 10 minnows for every matured fish they catch. In compliance with this act one firm this year released 50,000,000 fry. They have many enemies that lay in wait for them, and it is doubtful if one out of every 10 of them live to reach salt water or to return at maturity to its birthplace. The difficulty of propagation, even if conducted with honest intentions, is that so little is known of the habits of this mysterious fish.

The strange nature of the situation is that, although the salmon has been pursued and butchered in the most relentless manner, it seems to utterly defy its enemies, human and otherwise, and to be equal to surviving the terrible slaughter to which it is being subjected. Every year there are more fishermen and more canneries, and yet the salmon come out of the deep in countless millions, and run into the rivers, where sure doom awaits them. They have already outlived prophecy. The mystery of their charmed life seems not within the province of man to understand.

FREDERIC J. HASKIN.

ZIONISTS AT BALSE

BASLE, Aug. 22.—Representative Jews of the United States, Great Britain, Germany, France, Austria and other countries have gathered here for the sixth Zionist Congress, which is to begin its session tomorrow. The congress this year promises to be the most important ever held in view of the late Kishineff outrages and the political situation in Eastern Europe. There seems excellent reason for believing that the Zionist leaders are preparing to take full advantage of the situation developed through the Macedonian uprising. One of the principal discussions of the congress will be the colonization of a province of Wadel-Ausch, in Palestine. It is a protectorate of Great Britain, where it is proposed to settle 100,000 Jews. Negotiations have already been opened with the British Government.

No Fuss to Her.

From the Chicago Tribune.

The fortune teller examined the lines in the young man's palm.

"You have a past that you seek to hide," she said, "and a future that you do not wish to know."

"Which that you are!" he exclaimed.

"How did you know that?"

"Because you have tried to fool me by changing the lines of your hands with a lead pencil, or something," she said, with a mocking laugh.

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Portland people endorse this claim. Mr. Doan's Kidney Pills cured me. I was a young girl I had a severe spell of sickness, and all who knew me thought I was going to die. I finally recovered, but ever after my kidneys bothered me and I have suffered at times terribly. I could no more lie on my left side than I could fly, and could not stoop to pick anything off the floor without working myself up gradually by placing my hands on my hips. In addition to this there were headaches, dizziness, and trouble with the kidney secretions, for all of which I doctored and used more than one remedy said to be a sure cure for such annoyances. Nothing brought me relief compared with that Doan's Kidney Pills, procured at the Laid-Davis Drug Company's store, corner of Yamhill and Third streets. The results stamp that remedy as one fully up to representations made for it."

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HAL P. DENTON.

Mr. Hal P. Denton, Chief Department of Publicity and Promotion of National Export Exposition, writes:

Philadelphia, Dec. 20, 1900.

The Peru Medicine Co., Columbus, O. Gentlemen:—"Toward the latter part of August I found myself in a very much run-down condition. I suffered particularly from catarrh of the stomach, aggravated no doubt by the responsibilities and worry incident to the exploitation of a great international exposition. What I ate distressed me and I would lie awake at night 'threshing over,' if I may use that expression, the affairs of the previous day.

"My family physician said I had nervous prostration and recommended a sea voyage. I gradually grew worse. A kind friend whom I had known in Ohio recommended Peru. Though skeptical, I finally yielded to his advice. After using one bottle I was much improved and with the fifth bottle came complete recovery. I am in perfect health to-day and owe everything to Peru."

Very truly yours,
HAL P. DENTON.

If you do not derive prompt and satisfactory results from the use of Peru, write at once to Dr. Hartman, giving a full statement of your case and he will be pleased to give you his valuable advice free.

Address Dr. Hartman, President of The Hartman Sanitarium, Columbus, Ohio.

DR. CURL SAYS HE MEANS TO REFORM

Albany Dentist Sets Fire to His Own Residence and Barely Escapes Death.

(Journal Special Service.)

ALBANY, Or., Aug. 22.—Police investigation has developed the fact that Dr. R. H. Curl, the dentist residing here, did not set his house afire yesterday morning, accidentally, by going to sleep with a lighted cigar in his mouth. It is now clearly proved that the man was very much under the influence of intoxicating liquor, and before lying down on the couch where he was found, he had started small fires in a dozen different places about the house.

When rescued by neighbors, who broke into the house after noticing dense smoke pouring from it, Dr. Curl was found helpless on a sofa, with a fire burning under each end of it, and other incipient blazes burning in other parts of the place.

When the dentist was taken to the police station he was so stupefied that he could not give a clear account of the circumstances, but kept repeating: "I had a right to burn down the house and myself with it, if I wanted."

The unfortunate man is badly burned about his feet, but otherwise he is not seriously injured. He was released from custody last night. Before leaving the station he said he would try and reform.

POULTRY NETTING

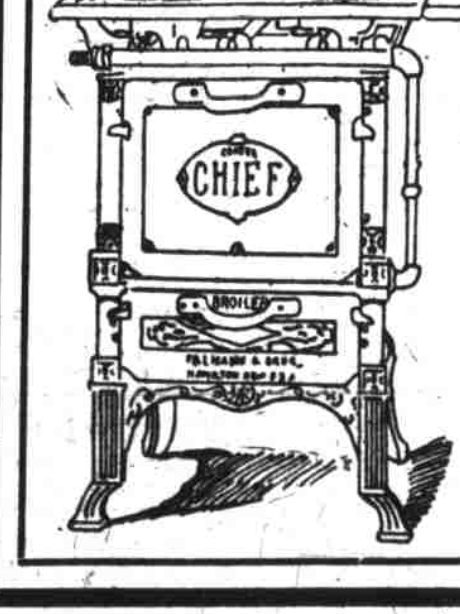
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FOREST FIRE MAY COST MILLIONS

(Journal Special Service.)

HOOD RIVER, Aug. 22.—A forest fire is raging in the hills along the White Salmon river. The wind is sweeping the fire northward. It is traveling toward the heavily timbered government forest reserve. The ranchers in that locality are out in a mass fighting the flames. Unless they succeed in checking the fire millions of feet of pine and fir timber will be destroyed and much damage will result to the farmers in that section. The fire is supposed to have been started by campers.

A Great River.

From the Pittsburgh Dispatch.

The river system of the Plata, or of the Rio de la Plata, is one of the most wonderful in the world. The volume of the stream is greater than that of the Mississippi. It is surpassed only by the Amazon. It drains a basin more than half as big as the whole United States, and one which in fertility of soil and salubrity of climate is only surpassed by the basin of the Mississippi, and it is a question whether it has not more cultivated territory. Upon it tens of millions of cattle and sheep are pastured, and its wheat fields compete with ours in the markets of Europe. It has the most extensive plains of the globe, and it is a vast expanse of fairly good land.

It is a white man's country. The basin of the Amazon is tropical and malarious. That of the Plata is largely in the temperate zone. Its northern parts are like Louisiana or Florida, and in the south the summer climate is as temperate as that of our Middle States. It is the Mississippi basin reversed, the source of its rivers being in the hot country, where there are coffee and sugar lands and rubber trees, and its mouth in the rather cool lands of Uruguay and the Argentine, noted for their fields of wheat and corn.

The vast basin is formed in the shape of a great horseshoe, with the opening toward the Atlantic, the Andes and the strip of highlands which crosses Brazil from the back and upper rim of the shoe, while the slightly sloping plains of Patagonia bound it on the south. In it are included the best of the Argentine, all of Uruguay and Paraguay and large portions of Brazil and Bolivia. The most of it has been built up by the Paraná, or Rio de la Plata system, and today these rivers are still at their great work of earth building.

You see this plainly in the Rio de la Plata proper. It is more a great bay of liquid mud than a river. It is 120 miles wide at the Atlantic, and narrows down to twenty-nine miles at Buenos Ayres, which is 180 miles inland. The width at Montevideo is about sixty-five miles. The Rio de la Plata is so full of all mud that it discolors the Atlantic for many miles out at sea.

We noticed the change in the color of the ocean long before we entered its mouth, and the water seemed to grow thicker as we sailed to Buenos Ayres. The channel is fast filling up with a sandy mud, and the Eads jetty system is proposed. As it is now, the rivers bring down a quarter of a million tons of mud a day, and the sediment is so great that all the water used at Buenos Ayres is filtered by the city.

In the Ocean's Depths.

From the Chicago Inter Ocean.

The idea that has prevailed up to a very recent date that organic life does not exist at great depths in the ocean has been exploded by late scientific investigations. As a matter of fact, the pressure of water is so great that ordinary articles of wood are compressed to half their original size if lowered to a depth of 3,000 feet. If a human being were suddenly exposed to the pressure of water at that depth he would be compressed to the thickness of paper. A diver at the depth of 10,000 feet would weigh upon him equal to several hundred of the greatest and heaviest locomotives. There are depressions very much deeper, however, and soundings have been made establishing depths of more than 22,000 feet.

What He Took Off.

From the Boston Transcript.

Harry (looking at his whitened coat sleeve)—That isn't much of a compliment to Carrie's complexion.

Ether—I should say not. It's a regular take-off.

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