

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, which assemble on these Seal Rocks, 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 bear 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 "peit." 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 frantically 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.

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 in to 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.

Aghted 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.

HAPPENINGS HERE IN OREGON

GREAT FRUIT YIELD.

Rogue River Valley Trees Promise Choice Product.

From the viewpoint of the grain-raiser nature is in a state of revolt this year in Southern Oregon, the drought prevailing for the past few months having wofully reduced the average in all small grains. It appears as if nature, indeed, rebelled at man's persistent perversion of soil and climate conditions intended to produce nectar for the gods, to the baser uses of growing provender for kind or grain for human kind or other cattle.

The orchards and alfalfa meadows, however, are yielding up such stores of wealth as only those realize who are familiar with existing conditions. Apples and pears promise fancy figures again this year, in fact growers look for record-breaking prices, owing to partial failure of fruit of ordinary quality in the east. Of course the fancy fruit for which this section is distinguished is not exactly in competition with ordinary barrel stock, but scarcity of the latter article always enhances prices all round. Growers are carefully thinning and applying the summer spray at present, and favoring weather conditions are giving promise of quality surpassing, perhaps, any former year in the history of the local trade.

FIX PRICE OF PRUNES.

Willamette Valley Growers' Association Says 2½ Cent Basis.

The Willamette Valley Prune Association held an important meeting at Salem last week. Delegates were in attendance from Douglas, Lane, Linn, Polk, Benton and Clackamas counties, and from Vancouver, Wash., and was the most representative gathering of the fruitgrowers of the Northwest ever held in that city. Organizations are already formed in Linn, Benton, Douglas, Marion and Yamhill counties, and at Vancouver, Wash., and associations will be formed all over the state and the northwest in the near future. The plan under discussion at the meeting was to have all the associations in the Northwest under one secretary, so that it will be impossible for one organization to undersell another in the market, thus creating uniform scale of prices for all fruits on the coast. The plan met with the approval of all present and an effort will be made to bring the condition about.

The price of prunes this year is fixed on a 2½ cent basis.

Coming Events.

Ninth annual regatta, Astoria, August 19-21.
State fair, Salem, September 14-19.
Second Southern Oregon District fair, Eugene, September 29-October 3.
Summer association of the Northwest Indian agencies, Newport, August 17-27.
Lane county teachers' institute, Eugene, August 4-5.
Klamath county fair, Klamath Falls, October 6-9.
Good roads convention, Jacksonville, August 15.
Fruitgrowers' convention, Jacksonville, August 15.
Teachers' institute, Tillamook, July 29-31.
Old Folks' celebration, La Grande, August 1.
Hoo Hoo contention, Portland, August 1.
Knights of Pythias convention, Astoria, August 20-21.
Teachers' institute, La Grande, August 17-21.

Smiling Fields of Polk County.

Excellent samples of hay and grain have been brought to Independence this week. Early oats and spring wheat have commenced to change color, and the heads of each are well filled. Some early hops have been exhibited in town, which are three-fourths grown. Hay harvest is being pushed rapidly forward, and there is a larger acreage in Polk county this year than has ever been planted before. The fruit season for cherries and berries has practically passed, but the plums, prunes and apples are just commencing to ripen.

Huckleberry Season Here.

Huckleberries are beginning to ripen in the foothills of the Blue mountains. Never before was there promise of such a bountiful crop there as is now presented. The season has been an ideal one for their growth. There were no early frosts, and as a consequence none were blighted. Every bush is loaded, and already parties are being formed to go out and gather the luscious fruit.

Collecting Mining Data.

George E. Boos, of the United States Geological Survey, Washington, D. C., is at Baker City, and will make a complete report of mining in Eastern Oregon, showing production, cost of operation, wages, etc. By act of congress mineowners are compelled to furnish information under penalty.

Ready for Steel Bridge.

The approaches and center pier for the Lewis and Clark draw bridge near Astoria have been completed and are ready for the steel draw when it arrives from the east. It has been on the road for several weeks and is expected within a few days.

JUNE OUTPUT SPLENDID.

Sumpter District Mines Cleaned Up All of \$350,000.

Estimates based on the production of ore in the Sumpter mining district for the past month give much greater returns than heretofore. The deep sinking operations carried on in most of the leading properties have resulted in opening up a larger area of mining territory and consequently an increased production has resulted. According to the estimates that are at hand from the best sources obtainable, the Bonanza is said to have cleared up during June \$50,000; the North Pole, \$80,000; the Columbia, \$45,000; Golconda, \$35,000; the Badger, \$30,000; total, \$240,000. The production of the Red Boy is variously stated to be from \$25,000 to \$50,000, and therefore should be added to the total production.

There are many other properties that are constantly shipping ores away for treatment at smelters. It is impossible to get any figures as to the value of these ores, as no returns are given from the smelters receiving them, except to the owners, and the latter as a rule are opposed to making public these figures. It would be safe in fixing the total at \$350,000 for the month. This total includes the cleanup from many claims in the district that are not ranking with the big producers. This also includes the output of the placers as far as can be learned.

Oregon King Looking Up.

The Oregon King mine, which has been shut down for several years on account of litigation, is again hoisting ore. The management is looking for more miners and preparing to make heavy shipments. To give a history of this mine would be to repeat that of other properties accidentally discovered, abandoned, relocated and developed sufficiently to make a trial shipment, which was found to give surprising returns. Shipments followed, which, after deducting charges for a 60-mile wagon haul to the then terminus of the Columbia Southern railway, which was being extended southward, and freight from there to the smelter at Toconama, netted over \$105 per ton.

Not Enough Water.

The voters of the proposed Little Walla Walla river irrigation district near Frewater turned down the proposition to form an irrigation district by 89 to 52, the voters living at the upper end of the district killing the proposition on the ground that the river does not give enough water when at low ebb for those holding riparian rights, whereas if an irrigation district were formed including both themselves and those below them, they would have to divide what water was with those below them. A three-fifths vote of the residents was required to carry the establishment.

Hot Contest for Land.

A contest of more than usual importance was begun in the Oregon City Land Office a few days ago. Important is the contest because an entire section of heavily timbered land located near Corvallis, Benton county, is involved. It is estimated that the section contains 16,000,000 feet of fine timber. There are four entries, each having filed upon a quarter section, and there are as many contestants on the ground that the entrymen abandoned and did not prove up properly on the land.

PORTLAND MARKETS.

Wheat—Walla Walla, 77@78c; valley, 79c.
Barley—Feed, \$19.00 per ton; brewing, \$20.
Flour—Best grades, \$4.10 @ 5.50; Graham \$3.35@3.75.
Millstuffs—Bran, \$23 per ton; middlings, \$27; shorts, \$23; chop, \$18.
Oats—No. 1 white, \$1.07 @ 1.07½; gray, \$1.05 per cental.
Hay—Timothy, \$19@20; clover, nominal; chest, \$15@16 per ton.
Potatoes—Best Bu-banks, 70@75c per sack; ordinary, 35@40c per cental, growers' prices; Merced sweets, \$3@3.50 per cental.
Poultry—Chickens, mixed, 11@12c; young, 16@17½c; hens, 12c; turkeys, live, 10@12; dressed, 14@15c; ducks, \$4.00@5.00 per dozen; geese, \$6.00@6.50.
Cheese—Full cream, twins, 15½@16c; Young America, 15½@16c; factory prices, 1@1½c less.
Butter—Fancy creamery, 20@22½c per pound; extras, 22c; dairy, 20@22½c; store, 16c@17.
Eggs—20@21c per dozen.
Hops—Choice, 15@16c per pound.
Wool—Valley, 17@18c; Eastern Oregon, 12@15c; mohair, 35@37½c.
Beef—Gross, cows, 3½@4c, per pound; steers, 5@5½c; dressed, 7½c.
Veal—7½@8c.
Mutton—Gross, 3c per pound; dressed, 5½@6c.
Lamb—Gross, 4c per pound; dressed, 7c.
Hog—Gross, 6@6½c per pound dressed, 5½@7c.