

CRAFTY BRE'R FOX

Trappers Give Him Credit for Deep Cunning.

Of All Wild Animals, the Bushy-Tailed Rascal is the Hardest to Trap—but is Altogether Undeserving of Mercy.

In the opinion of trappers, the fox is the most cunning and resourceful of all the wild animals. He often fools the most expert trapper and the truest and fastest of dogs. Some trappers who are very successful in catching many other fur-bearers state that they do not believe it possible to take Reynard in a steel trap. This, of course, is not the case—in fact, he is as easy to catch in a steel trap as the mink, provided the trapper thoroughly understands his business. All that is necessary is a careful study of the animal's nature and habits.

The fox lives on small game, birds, eggs and poultry. He makes his den in sandy hillside, and in it the female rears from three to seven puppies, which are born in the early spring. February is the season Reynard goes wooing, and he travels far and wide in search of sweethearts, faithful to none, for his love is more fleeting than the footprints he leaves in the drifting snow. The fox's sense of smell is highly developed, and by it he detects the danger of the trap. The scent left by human hands and the scent left on the trap by other animals caught in it are quickly detected.

"A successful fox trapper must be a keen observer of details," writes C. A. Holmes, a special game protector. In a recent issue of the New York state conservation bulletin, in describing different methods of hunting and trapping foxes. "He must realize that he is pitting his wits against one of the most cunning of animals that roams the silent places of the hills and valleys. Recently I made an experimental set which resulted in the taking of one of the oldest, largest and wisest foxes in this vicinity. I noticed that the fox in question did not seem to take alarm at my trail over an old woods road, and as the snow was quite deep, would even take advantage of the better traveling by following in my tracks as far as he cared to go in my direction. That is the way of the fox—he is not blindly afraid of man, but trusts to his wits to keep him out of trouble. He knew that the trail was made by a man walking, and he also knew that the danger lay not in the trail, but in the man himself.

"After I had traveled this old road several times, and had noticed Mr. Fox was in the habit of following me nearly every night, I picked out a bush that stood close by the trail, to serve as a mark for locating the trap, and here I set two jump traps in one of my own footprints, with a sheet of clean paper beneath the traps, another sheet on top, and an inch of snow lightly brushed over all. I fastened the chains to clogs buried in the snow at the side of the trail and went on about my business.

"The next morning Reynard was waiting for me, a trap on each front foot. I would not have captured this fox had I not made this experimental set in the trail, and it only goes to show the value of observation to the experienced trapper.

"Every sportsman should realize that one of the worst enemies of wild life is the fox—cunning, vicious, bloodthirsty—it kills for the love of killing. The warm blood of its victims is its fountain of youth. Every fox shot or caught in a trap means just so many more grouse, pheasants and rabbits—to say nothing about the value of the fur. Fewer foxes, more sport, more game, more fun."

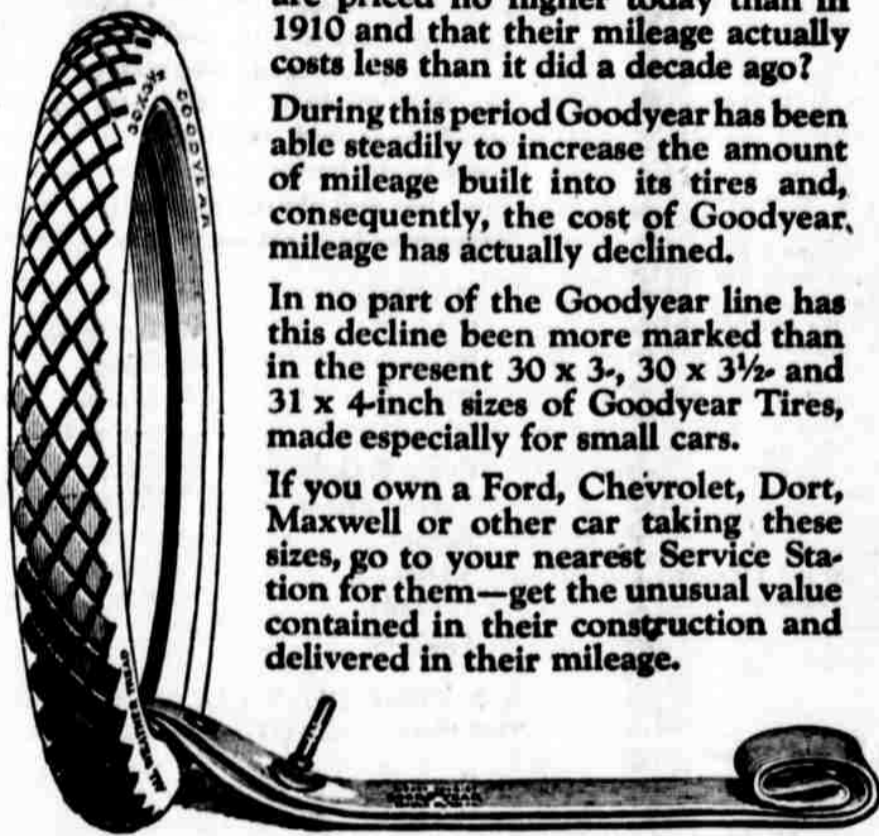
Purple Ore Now in Demand.
Purple ore is an unknown quantity to the uninitiated. To the initiated it is a heavy purplish powder used chiefly as ballast by ships leaving French ports. So little worth was attached to the ore five months ago that it sold in Bordeaux for 12.50 francs a ton. Since then it has been put to new uses, and, with the rise in demand, there has been a corresponding rise in price. Purple ore has a rich iron content, and that fact has been sufficient to prompt English manufacturers to devise new uses for the powder. Its sudden leap into the limelight will perhaps stimulate interest in the residue of other minerals, the possibilities of which may have been overlooked in the rapid march of all branches of engineering.

That Travelers May Read.
Borrowing a book from the public library in one city and returning it to the library in the next town where he makes a stop may be arranged for the benefit of the traveling man.

The National Council of Traveling Men's associations has appointed a committee to see what can be done along this line and has asked the American Library association to appoint a similar committee to confer. The library association, accepting the invitation, has just constituted its own committee. John Adams Lowe, vice librarian of the Brooklyn public library, is its chairman.

Bird Plumage Bill.
Bird lovers in this country will be pleased to learn that a bill has passed its second reading in the British house of commons forbidding the importation of bird plumage. The measure is heartily supported by the press, but is meeting with some opposition from certain members of parliament.

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