

MUFFS AND BOAS.

A New York Farmer Raising "Alaska Sable."

His Skunk Business Brings Him in Thousands of Dollars Annually—How He Cares for His Pets and Makes Money on Them.

"There goes a man who has made a fortune of \$50,000 breeding skunks for their pelts," said a friend to me a few days ago as we stood on the platform of the Erie Railway depot at Port Jervis, New York.

"Who is he?" I inquired hastily, as I looked to see if the shutter of my ever-present camera was set and ready for work. Then, without waiting for my friend's answer, I said: "I must have his picture, because a man who can create such an odorous industry as skunk breeding and make a fortune out of it deserves to have his portrait chronicled in the records of history."

"Well," returned my friend, as he pointed out a well-dressed elderly man standing before a stand of cheap trinkets—suspensives, neckties, socks and handkerchiefs—a few steps away, "he is a farmer. His name is 'St. Raphael,' and he lives at the upper end of the Mongaup Valley, in Sullivan County, several miles from here."

"Wait for me and tell me the rest when I return," I said to my friend. Then, drawing near with the ever-present black box to which the skunk farmer stood examining a filthy suspensive, the shutter clicked and he was mine—or rather his portrait was, he had unconsciously of the fact.

"Beckoning to my friend I asked: 'Do you know him? I want to talk to him about his skunk breeding.'"

"Of course I know him," said my friend, and then stepped up to the old man and began inquiring about the industry. As I neared the object of my curiosity my nostrils were greeted by a pungent odor of such a superlative quality and strength that it fairly made me reel with faintness. In a few minutes we learned much about skunk farming from the old man, and got just what we desired, an invitation to visit the place.

"Two days later we went to Mongaup, and after a drive of several miles over the hills and through the woods came to Kapeley's place. He greeted us and at once conducted us to an old Dutch barn, which he said was his skunk farm. It did not look so much different from any other barn, but we were assured that hundreds of skunk pelts had been produced from the breeding grounds within the shelter of the old building."

"When I moved up here, way back in the fifties," said the old man, "I went into the hop pole, lumber and shingle business. I came up here from Morris County, New Jersey, and never had any idea of staying except to clear off the timber, make shingles out of the hemlock stumps and cut off the hop poles."

"Well, there were times that we couldn't work at lumbering, and in that day this region was full of small ponds and running streams, as the timber had been cut off much yet. The woods were full of deer and the ponds full of milk, otter, and once in the while we would come across a stray beaver colony. When we had no lumbering work we turned our attention to hunting and trapping. For years we trapped mink, otter, muskrat and other animal life, but to make a long story short, I was down to 'Port' the latter I used to sell my pelts to ask me:

"'Ain't you got any skunks up your way?'" "Why, yes; they ain't good for nothing, are they?" I asked.

"'Sure,' he said; and then, 'I'll buy all you bring down.'"

"I had never thought then pole-cats were good for anything, although we were pestered to death with them, and the woods were full of them. At first I didn't know how to take them, because when they throw their scent it spoils the bait—that is, the handling of it. Well, I soon fixed up some traps for them by filling a barrel half full of water and throwing some rye chaff on top of the water. Then I run a snaffle through the barrel head and fixed the head so it would tip and throw whoever got on it into the water. Then I baited the head with a dead chicken, and when they came out, I threw three skunks, all of which were drowned, and which we succeeded in skinning without breaking their musk bags."

"This was a good skunk year, so I made several more traps and baited them with the carcasses of the dead skunks. Well, we went on catching skunks, me and my wife, till we had a goodly number of them to go into their holes, when we found we had over eighty musk bags, dried and ready for market. We had got these without any traps, but to make an extra story on our part, and they netted me over \$100 which was a pile of money in those days."

"The next year, I believe it was 1854, was a good skunk year, and I caught over twice the number that I had the first year. I increased my number of traps and spread them all over the place, none turned out such results as those around the barn, and then I came to the conclusion that the 'critters' had their breeding place under the barn, and there must be a whole community of them there. Well, I went on catching skunks until about ten years ago when my entire catch turned out to be about twenty skunks. Then I sent to my wife: 'Wife, skunks are getting scarce, and I'm afraid they will soon be gone.'"

"'Bred 'em, St. Raphael,' she said, and then I began to conjure up some plan to breed skunks. I finally came to the conclusion the way to do it was to let the colony live in peace under the barn, but to make a practice of feeding them. Then I knew all the skunks for a mile about would soon find the thing out and gather under the old barn."

"I tried this and for two seasons didn't kill a skunk. At the end of the second season you couldn't move about the barn for the stink of the skunks. Then, one morning when the sun came up there would be dozens of the old ones come out each with their kittens on the sunny side of the barn, and other parties who got to know me as the one who provided their food for them, and first would follow me, and then the whole 'passel' of them would answer my whistle, and I could pick them up and handle them as they don't try either to bite me or to perfume me. I had a Frenchman from New York up here last summer and he showed me how to take the musk bags from the young ones, and now all the kittens as soon as they get mine enough to handle are relieved of the glands which make the offensive fluid which, for a better name, I call musk. I don't dare try this on some of the old ones, however, but they are as tame as cats, and as I keep them for breeders I don't bother with them."

"While we were talking to the old man an old female animal reeking with blood, two pretty little black and white kittens, had come out of a hole in the foundation of the barn and stood eyeing us askance. That's an old skin sheen, the best breeding four years. She's tame as a tabby," said Kapeley as he advanced toward the odoriferous animal. The kittens man under the barn, but the one hoisted her bushy tail in the air and advanced to meet the old man, rubbing herself up against his legs like a cat, while he reached down and stroked her back with his hand.

Then he went into the house and came back with a pan of chopped liver and the lungs of some animal reeking with blood. I only fed them once a week, and I bring this up from the slaughter-house in 'Port, and the rest of the time I let them bustle for themselves," he said.

female skunks, until the air seemed to be ready for some terrible explosion, so laden was it with fetid odors. The skunk seemed to regard the old man, as he scattered their feet right and left and finally emptied the pan, when each, with its reeking morsel, again disappeared under the old barn.

"They'll suck the blood out of it, then they'll go to sleep," said the old man, as the last of his uncanny pets disappeared. "I don't know," he said, "but I've got every skunk from all over the township come right here to me to be due time stripped of his hide to furnish some young lady to the city with a barrel of water to see sure they won't come again. Those that will not allow me to handle them I approach with the deadly sponge fastened to the end of a long wand, and when I poke it at them they will always smell of it and that generally fixes them. If I don't knock them out this way I shoot them with an air-gun that will throw a dart sharp like a needle, always shooting them in the head, so as to kill them instantly. The gun makes no report. I never allow a gun loaded with powder to be fired on the place, as it would frighten the animals and cause them to scatter."

Mr. Kapeley then called the attention of the reporter to the fact that the animals had but little white fur on them.

"That," said he, "is the result of breeding. It was a long time before I learned to raise black skins. When I did I promptly killed all kittens which showed an over-abundance of white, as it does not pay to raise them. The white fur is neither so long nor so thick as the black, and by breeding out the white animals I soon had a race of breeders which were up to the maximum in black fur."

He said the best skins were to be had just before the animals began to prepare for hibernating. Then the skins will be filled with the long, thick underfur, and the hair, which is made into what is known as Alaska sables, will be full and thick. During the latter part of November or early in December the animals will shed their hoies, where, with an occasional raid during the winter months on some chicken-coop, they will hibernate until spring. Then the slaughter will begin, the hides will be stripped off, rubbed well with salt and stretched on the sunny side of the old skunk barn. After a few days of sizzling and frying in the hot sun they will dry hard as a bone, and in a few days later they find their way into the wholesale establishments in Mercer street, New York, to find their way later into the hands of some fur dresser, to be tan cured and cut into boas, muffs and cloak trimmings."

There are only three known skunk farms in the United States. One is in Bucks County, Pa.; another at Prairie Depot, Ohio, and the third the one just described. Undoubtedly there are more, but it is doubtful if there are any as fruitful in the production of the maddening quadruped, as Uncle St. Raphael, in the Valley of Mongaup, Henry Black Ingran, in New York Advertiser.

SWALLOWED HIS FRIEND.

Extraordinary Tragedy in Snake Life in the London Zoo.

A boa-constrictor in the London Zoological gardens recently found himself in such a position that by his physical conformation he was obliged to swallow a fellow boa. It is hardly possible for the imagination to conceive a situation more distressing than that of these two snakes, if they had any kindly feeling for one another. This suggestion may furnish an incredulous smile, but an experienced snake tamer recently declared in the *Sunday Worker* that many snakes were not only intelligent but amiable.

The two snakes had lived together in the reptile house amicably for nearly a year. They were of the same species, both South American boa-constrictors, but one was only nine feet long and the other eleven. They never had any quarrel, so far as could be observed, and the larger one had shown no disposition to dominate over his smaller friend. Snakes ordinarily dwell together in peace and amity.

Their usual food consisted of live pigeons. One afternoon the keeper placed two pigeons in their house, a glass-covered inclosure fifteen feet by six feet. The bigger snake quickly swallowed a bird. The other spent some time in catching his pigeon. When the big snake had put away his meal he saw the other still sitting on the bird's carcass, with his mouth full of it, possibly in play, but his teeth became fixed in it.

Then the tragedy began. A snake having no teeth in its mouth, it was gradually withdrawn from them. They are very sharp and set backward, pointing towards the throat. The jaws are small but elastic. The smaller snake was gradually drawn in by the probably struggled convulsively. This action would only have hastened the end. As a boa constrictor will swallow its prey whole, it is its own, this one, of course, had no difficulty in disposing of a smaller snake.

It should be said that all this is conjecture. The incident tragically happened in the night time. When the keepers arrived in the morning only the big snake was left. He was considerably swollen throughout his length, and his girth was twenty-four inches from the tip of his tail. There could be little doubt as to the whereabouts of his friend.

The snake tamer signs at remorse, but these are hard to detect in a serpent's face. Neither did he appear to suffer from indigestion. He will not need anything more to eat for four or five months. But it was an expensive meal.

Some time ago in the London Gardens a boa accidentally swallowed a blanket. It returned it after a week or so, not finding it to his liking, but on examination it was found to be full of holes, made by the gastric juices, and was, therefore, useless.

CONTENTED minds make happy homes. Dr. Price's Cream Baking Powder.

Traders' Tokens.

During the sixteenth century the national coinage was so unsatisfactory that private traders and merchants were impelled to issue for themselves, these "tokens" as they were called, were made of lead, pewter, latten, tin, and even leather, and could only be made use of as currency at the shops or warehouses of their respective issues.

Notwithstanding the endeavors made during several reigns to put a stop to the circulation of this unauthorized coinage, traders' tokens continued to multiply to an astonishing extent, until, in 1674, a proclamation was issued prohibiting their making, or use, under severe penalties. From that date until 1787 the use of private tokens entirely ceased; but in the latter year, owing to the great scarcity of government copper coin, the Anglesey Copper Mines Company struck and put in circulation some three hundred tons of copper pennies and halfpence. The bold issue of this set was speedily followed by other trading firms all over the kingdom, and again the Government felt it necessary to take action in the matter, which it did by issuing a new national copper coinage from the *Soho Works, Birmingham*.

AN IDAHO CATARACT.

A Vivid Description of the Shoshone Falls.

Wonderful as Niagara—Piquant Beauty Rather Than Grandeur Their Striking Feature—Sights in a Canyon a Quarter of a Mile in Depth—An Eagle's Eyrie—Gold Galore.

Some of the pen painters would lead people to believe that the Shoshone Falls in Idaho are grander than Niagara. That is a great mistake, says the *Chicago Record*, for it is not so. They are only about one-third of the size—perhaps as large as the American fall at Niagara—and carry about one-third of the volume of water, but the two mighty wonders are so different that it is difficult to compare them. You might as well compare the canyon of the Colorado with the Yosemite Valley. Niagara is more majestic and more impressive, illustrating better than anything I know the existence and the presence of irresistible power; and the hydrant of the great lakes flows toward the sea in the broad sunlight. The Shoshone Falls are more picturesque and fantastic. The dark cavern that shields them is weird and mysterious. The atmosphere is sultry, and the everlasting roar of the falling water is often broken by strange sounds whose source is a secret no one has ever been able to explain. The lights and shadows are always changing with the morning sun with startling effects that come and go suddenly and incessantly.

The falls are about twenty-five miles due south from the station. The road is so good that the quick-footed Idaho horses make the journey in four hours, and by starting early you can get back the same evening. The plateau is almost as level as the sea. The landscape is a monotony of pale-blue sky, sage brush and scarcely a range of purple mountains in the distance. No living thing will be seen the whole distance, unless it be a jack rabbit. There isn't a house or a tree, only a single board to indicate a road that leads to the Blue Lakes when you have made two thirds of the distance.

Away back near the genesis, when this queer world was forming, a river of fire 200 miles wide and 900 miles long flowed over the breast of this great plain that stretches between the Rocky mountains in Wyoming and the coast ranges in Oregon and California, and, cooling, left a mass of black lava lying upon the earth, in some places twenty and in others 50 feet deep. They say it was suddenly submerged under a great sea, of which the salt Lake is the remnant, and, contracting by the chill, left curious fractures here and there that gape open unexpectedly on the plain, and so far as human knowledge goes are bottomless. If you drop a rock into them it will go down clinking from side to side as long as you can hear it, but it never seems to have reached the bottom.

Before this flow was stagnant, or since, by some mysterious and mighty force, a canyon was forged through the lava, and in the midst of the river of fire, was a deep green stream of water now flows with such silence and sinuously that the Indians call it the Snake River, although it deserves a better name. It rises in the Teton Mountains of Montana, and taking a wide sweep of 1,000 miles to the southward flows north and west again, and contributes with sister streams to form the great Columbia. The river and the falls were discovered by Meriwether Lewis, the private secretary of Thomas Jefferson, who, in company with Captain Clark, of the army, explored the Louisiana purchase that was made from Napoleon in 1805. The river was called the Snake River, and appears on all maps as such upon some of the old maps.

You can see nothing of the falls or the canyon until you come immediately upon them. There are no landmarks which they can be located from the wagon trail except one solitary cedar tree, which clings to a crag in the lava and can only be seen at a short distance. The mesa or table land which stretches across the country for hundreds of miles is a favorite winter range for cattle, as the snow is in the high, the climate mild, and the bunch grass is nourishing and tender as driven in from all the mountains around. It is said that there is a great deal of gold in the lava, and an old miner who said "got 100 cents every shovelful," but there was no way of reaching the plain with water.

The rocky river bed, about eight miles long and almost regular in its depth for the entire distance, the greatest altitude of its walls being 1,250 and the smallest 750 feet, is a series of terraces, walls are dark black; first strata of granite, stained by subterranean fires, then a bed of packed gravel, upon which are three great streams of water that burst out of the lava, and the lava is level with the top of the lava. Some people have said that it is "the grave of a volcano that has been robbed of its dead."

The lava has long since opened a portal from the face of the plain to the canyon, just above the falls, and it is the only route by which they can be reached. A wagon trail leads to the miners who discovered the pass about the year 1850. Then hundreds of men were blasted seeking gold. A narrow trail was blasted out of the lava, and leads to the bottom of the canyon over an almost circular amphitheater three-fourths of a mile in diameter, and is a level plain, and made a natural platform from which people can view the falls. The cliffs around them show curious formations—rounded domes of rock and jagged, frowning battlements that rise 1,000 feet like fortresses to the sky.

Below, in the shadows that they cast, the dipping river flows solemnly along its volcanic rocks, which the water has carved into fantastic shapes, some like pyramids, and some narrow and sharpened like piers, and suddenly plunges down between them eighty-three feet, then makes a vertical leap into a still, deep basin, and finally moves on a still, deep current into the gloom of the canyon again until it passes out of sight between two great black promontories. The scene is gloom intensified. The river is always in the spray, except for two or three hours each day while the sun hangs directly overhead, and its altitude with a low log stable and a small frame house that is called by courtesy a hotel. Three miles above is another fall, where the current is divided by a rock in the center and then drops 180 feet.

The color of the water is very peculiar. Some people insist that it is green, others that it is blue, and both are right, for as the sun shifts the tints change. When it falls below the cliffs the river reflects the sky and carries light like an opal, or a girl with blue eyes, and the tints are usually beautiful and sometimes startling. The sky sometimes blazes with flame-bursts and yellow banners. As the light becomes subdued the tints are in the colors of violet and crimson, with shadings of pink and gold. The cool amber tints creep over them, which are in gray and drab, and have no tint, are seventy-five feet deep and have no tint, are in the color of the lava, and the stars are lit. The effect of these lights upon the surface of the stream is marvelous, and I wonder that some great artist has not been here to catch them, although if they were transferred faithfully to canvas the picture would seem unnatural and people would criticize it as exaggeration.

Four miles below the Shoshone Falls, in a amphitheater several hundred feet below the plain. They are never varied more than three days. He kept a record of their appearance. She never varied more than three days. This year she appeared on the 27th of March. Last year she was one day late.

The spray from the falls carries a sediment which clings like frost to the windows of the little hotel, and can be scraped off with a knife. Mr. Keller, who keeps the place, says that they clean the glass every spring by laying the sashes flat and pouring upon it a solution

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PROF. EDWARD E. PHELPS, M. D., LL. D.

"Excepting his handful of magnificent statesmen and his military heroes," says the most recent writer upon America, "the people owe more to Dartmouth's physician-teacher than to any one man."

"Every walk of life, among the highest officeholders at Washington, in the homes of the best people in the large cities, among the every-day folks of the country, families in comfortable circumstances, families that hire from hand to mouth, and could not, if they wished, afford the services of any but an ordinary physician—everywhere I have met people to whom Paine's celery compound has been a blessing."

The story of the life-work of this giant among men has been often told and is familiar to most readers. The likeness above is probably the best portrait of him ever printed.

It was the world-famed discovery of Professor Phelps of an infallible cure for those fearful fits that result from an impaired nervous system and impure blood, which has endeared the great doctor to the world, and made his life an era in the practice of medicine.

Professor Phelps was born in Connecticut and graduated from the military school at Norwich, Vt. He studied medicine with Professor Nathan Smith of New Haven, Conn., and graduated in medicine at Yale.

His unusual talent soon brought him reputation and prominence among his professional brethren. First he was chosen to the professorship of anatomy and surgery in the Vermont University. Next he was appointed lecturer on materia medica and medical botany in Dartmouth College. The next year he was chosen professor of the chair then vacated by Prof. Bobby, and occupied the chair, the most important one in the country, at the time when he formulated his most remarkable prescription.

In view of the overwhelming testimony to the value of Paine's celery compound that has recently appeared from men of national reputation, the picture of Prof. Phelps is particularly interesting.

New York's State Treasurer, Hon. Addison B. Cavin. Ex-Minister to Austria, John M. Francis. President Cook of the National Teachers' Association. Hon. David P. Toomy, the Publisher of *Demolins Magazine*. Hon. John A. Halderman of New York City. Hon. John G. Carlisle's private secretary.

The popular and talented doctor, Marjorie Tompkins, the author, Albert H. Harry, the Mayor of Montreal, brave Ida Lewis and a host more of prominent men and women are among the thousands of grateful people who have recently sent to the proprietors of this wonderful remedy their expressions of its unequalled value—men and women who can well afford to command the highest medical advice in the country. And then also "the plain people" there are thousands of honest, straightforward, hearty fellows, telling how Paine's celery compound has made them well.

His testimony simply goes to show that New England's vigorous essayist has so aptly said, that Paine's celery compound is not a patent medicine; it is not a sarsaparilla; it is not a mere tonic; it is not an ordinary medicine; it is as far beyond them all as the diamond is superior to cheap glass.

It makes people well. It is the one true specific recognized and prescribed to-day by eminent practitioners for all diseases arising from a debilitated nervous system. Professor Phelps gave to his profession a positive cure for sleeplessness, wasting strength, dyspepsia, biliousness, liver complaint, neuralgia, rheumatism, all nervous diseases and kidney troubles. For all such complaints Paine's celery compound has succeeded again and again where everything else has failed.

It is as harmless as it is good, and it was the universal advice of the medical profession in the compound in which the general public could secure it, and thousands of people have every year proven the wisdom of this good advice.

Only a truly great and really capable man could continue, as Paine's celery compound has done, to hold its high place in the estimation of the ablest physicians and of the thousands of busy men and women whose only means of judging is from the actual results in their own homes or among their friends. No remedy was ever so highly recommended because it never accomplished so much.

To-day Paine's celery compound stands without an equal for feeding exhausted nerves and building up the strength of the body. It cures radically and permanently. The nervous prostration and general debility from which thousands of women suffer so long, and which it is to be a second nature with them—all this suffering and despondency can be very soon removed by properly feeding the nerves and replacing the unhealthy condition by a fresher, more highly vitalized fluid. A healthy increase in appetite and a corresponding gain in weight and good spirits follow the use of Paine's celery compound.

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Part of the water is believed to filter its way through the gravel under the lava beds to these curious lakes, and a portion to the Spouting Springs, near Salmon Falls, where the great stream of water that bursts out of the wall of the canyon under the lava bed, streams that are several feet wide and as thick as a man's body, as if they were forced by some mysterious pump.

Strange stories are told of phenomena that appear at the Shoshone Falls. Sometimes when the air is perfectly still the spray arises several hundred feet above the walls of the canon, and can be seen on the plains at a considerable distance. Then for days and weeks at a time there is scarcely any spray at all. Often the whole canyon around the falls will be filled with spray, and every bark and rock will drip with moisture. Again it will be as clear as frosty night under the same conditions from influence that no one has been able to discover or explain.

Often above the monotone of the falling waters weird sounds may be heard, unlike any that were ever named, and can be compared to no other, and again, from time to time, a sudden throbbing is audible, measured by intervals like the beating of the pulse. These, too, proceed from no apparent cause, and science has been unable to solve their mystery.

At the crest of the highest peak in the center of the Shoshone Falls is the nest of an eagle, and for thirty-four years the same bird has come regularly on the 23rd or 27th or 28th of March to repair and recony it and raise a brood of young. Charles Waigmont first noticed the bird when he located here in 1859. The nest was standing then, and as long as he lived here, until five years ago, he kept a record of their appearance. She never varied more than three days. This year she appeared on the 27th of March. Last year she was one day late.

The spray from the falls carries a sediment which clings like frost to the windows of the little hotel, and can be scraped off with a knife. Mr. Keller, who keeps the place, says that they clean the glass every spring by laying the sashes flat and pouring upon it a solution

of vinegar and salt. After they have soaked for three or four days the coating can be wiped off with a cloth, but in a few weeks the glass is covered again as if it were frosted. The scrapings look like the dust of lime. The same sediment clings to the leaves of the trees and vegetation that are grown around the place, and can be scraped off the rocks and the face of the day.

There are several caves and other natural curiosities about the place, and in one of them is a dripping spring, from which cool water pours from the roof like a shower bath. In one of the caves three homeless miners spent last winter quite comfortably, and occupied their time in washing gold from the sand that has accumulated in the crevices of the rocks below the falls. They panned out several dollars a day.

There is said to be gold enough in the Snake River Canyon to pay the national debt, but it is very difficult to reach. The stream flows through the richest gold belt of Montana and Idaho, and wherever the cool water pours from the roof like a shower bath. In one of the caves three homeless miners spent last winter quite comfortably, and occupied their time in washing gold from the sand that has accumulated in the crevices of the rocks below the falls. They panned out several dollars a day.

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some years ago when one of his ears broke, and although he struggled desperately the other was not sufficient to carry it ashore. The Chinaman leaped into the water, hoping it is supposed, to land safely upon one of the rocks above the falls, but when he saw the destruction was certain, stood upright in his little boat, folded his arms and looked death squarely in the face.

His body was discovered a few days later several miles below, and after a month or more the corpse of Mon Sit, one of the Chinamen, was found in some drifts. The Chinaman had only a few hundred yards under the falls. He had \$1,000 in gold dust on his person and his bones were sent across the ocean to be buried with those of his fathers. A man was paid \$175 to carry the coffin in a cart to the nearest station on the Union Pacific Railway. The body of the other Chinaman was never found.

Harper's War History.

All who have received a portion of the numbers of "Harper's History of the Civil War" at this office are notified to call without delay and get the remaining numbers, as they will be on hand only for a limited period. Under the terms of our subscribers can get this valuable history sent direct to their address from the publishing house by leaving their orders at this office. The complete work comprises twenty-seven numbers, at eight cents each.

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