RICH ON SHEDDER CRABS.

UNCLE WASH RAINOR WHO FIRST SOLD THEM TO SHED SHOOK.

Said to Have Been the Discoverer of the Edible and for Ten Years to Have Had a Monopoly in It—He Discourses On the Habits and Peculiarities of Crabs.

For long years Uncle "Wash" Rainor has been the crab authority of Freeport, L. I. This honor is due to a man who says he was the discoverer of the soft shell crabs and who is said on good authority, to have made $100,000 out of them. This was some years ago. Whether he has the money is another story, but the fact remains that what he does not know about crabs is not worth telling. His stamping ground used to be along the Hempstead Creek, all those tributaries of assorted sizes which run curving and wriggling into Hempstead Bay. There were few houses near them. They were unknown waters to all but Uncle Wash and the one man to whom he is known to have opened his heart, a well-known figure in the banking world of the metropolis.

Starting from his house at Freeport before dawn with his handy sloop, Uncle Wash would steal down the water ways. High tide or lowest ebb made no difference to him, he knew every bar and shoal and threaded every passage until those who tried to follow him, only to run aground hard and fast, were forced to admit that "Wash was born on a foggy morning, sure as you live." Natives have been known to sail down the bay and lie in wait to see out of which creek Wash would come, hoping to get some pointers, but Wash would come along, lazy-like, chuckling to himself, and say:

"Hello, Tom, aint seen yer a week or so. Heard yer was to Bridgeport for the scallops? Gettin' any crabs? Awful scarce; aint seen a comer in a week, all racks, dern 'em."

The watcher would answer something and Wash would pass on with a seemingly empty boat, and the watcher would follow up the creek to find barren grounds. The truth was that Wash built all his scowboats himself, and each had a false bottom which in the three-inch high space would hold a hundred or two "soft shells," and in the sloop was crate space all under the scant decking and washboards to hold any quantity and show next to none. The old man knew his business, and even to-day no one has learned where he gathered his great catches of twenty to fifty years ago.

"How did I first catch on to the shedders? Well, I stepped on one and found it soft and slung it away. It fell against a caulking fire and baked, and first thing I knew a little lad was eating it and asking for more 'mush crab.' I tried it and liked it. I had boarders at a neighboring village come around and ask my wife to get them up a sea-food feed for a picnic, and for fun as much as anything, I laid down some of the crabs, and they could not get enough of 'em. One feller gave me an order for a dozen and took 'em to New York to a hotel man who, he said was called Shed Shook, and for years I thought he was guying me on the shedder crabs, but I found he wasn't, and this Shook gave me my first steady order, over forty years ago. For over ten years he and I had the monopoly of the business. He wouldn't tell where he got 'em, and I packed clams on the baskets and let on that was what I was shipping steady every week, and then little by little others got on to 'em and the cream was gone.

"Still most of 'em is gathered by luck; the gatherers know nothin' about the habits of the crabs an' walk over hundreds they ought to get. The great secret is to know when they are going to shed. I have taken in four hundred crabs, kept them in my tank two days, fed them to bursting, and shipped them almost hard as nails, no sign of change, to have them reach the city half out their shells, soft as pap. That was where the money came in. Monday and Tuesday a crab feels it is time to change his clothes and he loads up with grub to last him through his helpless spell. Having filled up, he goes for shallow water, where the eel and the toadfish are not so likely to come and even other crabs will keep away, for they are cannibals, the best of them.

"Then it is a sight worth studying, for the ways of Nature are great and marvellous. Flat down lies the crab, pushing the shell into the soft sand or mud and raking a bit of salad weed over its back. Then it appears to swell itself, a thin crack appears in the back seam, triangular cracks come at the base of the large claws, the inside swells more and more, the crab swings back and forth in the still water, as if moved by the tide, and little by little backs out of the old shell, freeing every claw and leg as it goes, until it rests just behind the old shell, but fully a third larger and so weak and nerveless that it cannot move. Even the claws are as soft as wet paper. The whole skin is soft and smooth as a baby's cheek. Many and many a time I have smoked a pipe and watched the whole performance, and it is wonderful, man; it is wonderful.

"That's not all. Lift the old shell and you will find discarded the old set of horny eye cases, and the lung coverings from stem to stern, from keelson to truck. It is a clear shuck, a perfect skeleton, so perfect that I have known visitors gather these 'sheds,' as we call them, and bring them home thinking they were crabs. In forty-eight hours the crab diminishes in weight and fatness, the flesh loses its firmness, the fat is a dirty green yellow, the plumpness is gone, there is no flavor, but still that it the way the bulk of the so-called soft-shelled crabs reach the market. A man never knows what one tastes like unless eaten within twenty-four hours after shedding and, twenty-four minutes is a derned sight better. Then the skin gets leathery and in a few hours this hardens, not too much for eating, but one naturally rejects it and we call 'em 'crackers.' All the rich fat of the freshly shed crab has gone to make the new hard shell.

"Another curious thing is that any claws which may have been fought off, or cast off by the crab when mad—you know, I suppose, they can crack 'em off easy as wink—are all renewed. I had a man down here, a literary-science man he calls himself, who said this was where the Japs got their idea of wrastling from. I used to be a bit of a wrastler myself years ago, but I couldn't get at what he meant. I meant to have asked him next visit, but some one up the bay served him spawning crab and it nearly killed him."

The writer once went out with Uncle Wash to see how crabs were taken to-day. The old man kept up a running talk about the business running down, until a suitable creek was reached and the flat-bottomed scow pushed up on the mud. The old man stepped out into the knee deep mud and pointing to a piece of "salad" said "Turn it over." Underneath was a hard shelled, blue clawed crab, very vicious. "Kick him out," said the old man, "and dig under him." There came to light a fine soft crab not quite out of the shell. "Laying for him," laughed Uncle Wash. "See that piece of salt hay grass? Pull it aside and turn the mud over." There was another shedder. We had seen five or six people passing over this patch of creek and get perhaps a half dozen crabs among them, and in half an hour Wash had sixteen. Hardshell crabs he despises. He says the only way to cook a soft-shell is to fry it in sizzling hot butter, "no cracker dust, no nothing," and eat it from the pan as it is cooked.

The great fun in crabbing comes in getting the hardshells. Children and visitors usually get all they want. This year they have been small and somewhat scarce. The cold weather of the early spring froze them to the bottom and did not let them get out to the deeper water. The ice is supposed to have swept millions of them to destruction. Certain it is that in working for oysters great beds of blue clawed crabs were struck in February in sixty feet of water off the Long Island bays and shores.

For some reason, except just at the very full moon, when crabs are always at their best, this summer they have been watery and poor, and it is only now, when the summer tide is returning to the city that the large crabs are appearing and the fat beginning to appear on their bodies. Those who will go "lining" for them in twenty feet of water using a line four hundred yards long, sinking the ends and bouying it lightly at about every seventy-five feet, baiting it four feet apart with tough meat or menhaden, will get all the crabs they can carry. This line is easy to place and it is worked all the time. It does not equal the sport of "nabbing" or fishing for them, but it gets the big ones. It is only after Aug. 21 that this method is deemed of any use.

Ways of cooking crabs are numerous but the old style way of boiling until red in salt water holds general favor. It can be improved by adding a wine glass full of vinegar to the water, and letting the crabs cool in the water before taking them out; also by taking a fairly large onion to every dozen crabs, sticking into it half a dozen cloves, a leaf of mace, half a dozen sweet peppers, and boiling all together with the vinegar. It is not known generally that many travellers prefer crab salad to lobster salad. It is made in the same way, picking the crabs using the yellow matter in the shell, with lettuce and mayonaise dressing.

MEIGS'S MOVE TO HARLEM.

It Resulted In His Unexpected Reform In Drinking Habits.

"Meigs has been a changed man since he moved up to Harlem," said the old guard on the Sixth avenue elevated train, "and as he has for many years been one of our regulars on the midnight up-town train I know him so well that I may say truthfully that the change has improved Meigs. I know most of our regulars on the midnight train by name and as Meigs has been riding up in my car for many years I know him quite well. I don't know what his business is but it is something that keeps him down town until midnight. Then he boards my train at Fourteenth street.

"There isn't a nicer traveller on this road than Meigs sober nor a rougher one than Meigs drunk. He lived for many years near Seventy-second street station. Four or five years ago I noticed that Meigs was drinking heavily. Finally one night he boarded my car very much intoxicated and fell asleep. I forgot him until he reached 125th street and when I woke him up and told him that we had carried him beyond his station he staggered to his feet and hit out at me. Well, sir, it was a nasty fight while it lasted and we held the train for it. It took three of us to subdue Meigs and land him on the platform and we were all badly bruised. I hated to see Meigs roughly handled but it had to be done.

"The following night Meigs boarded my car at Fourteenth street, sober and very penitent. He offered to repair all damages done and asked me as a favor to see that he was put off the car at Seventy-second street if he again fell asleep. I think Meigs averaged two nights a week asleep in my car for at least five years, and I never carried him past his station. I put the other guards on to him, and when I was off duty they looked out for him. Meigs was so regular in his irregular habits that we all felt sorry for him.

"Well, sir, last May one night Meigs got on my train in his usual sleepy condition, and when he reached Seventy-second street I tried to put him off, but he insisted that he must go to Harlem. He put up a game fight, but with the assistence of another man we pushed him off the car, and as we drew away Meigs cursed us. He came aboard the next night, sober as a judge, and told me that he had just moved up to 138th street, and for that reason he had objected to being put off at Seventy-second street.

"'It was all right on your part,' said Meigs, 'but I knew what I wanted and I couldn't tell you. I waited nearly half an hour for the next train, and when I attempted to get on board of it the guard pushed me back, saying that I didn't know what I was doing. He recognized me, you see, and supposed that I was at my station.'

"It happened that I was sick a few days after that and when I came back I found that my substitute was a wreck. He had tried to put Meig's off at Seventy-second street, as usual, and Meig's had put up a stiff fight. Well, sir, to be brief, Meigs fought nearly all of the old guards at Seventy-second street station during the next few weeks, and he frequently got the worst of it. You see they didn't know he had moved and they thought that they were doing him a favor. Meigs couldn't keep up that pace and he had two alternatives, either to move back to Seventy-second street or to stop drinking. His wife objected to the former and approved the latter. Meigs knew that if he didn't make a choice soon he would be a wreck. Some of the old men, you see, handled him more roughly than necessary at Seventy-second street.

"Meigs was all right at bottom and he made the wise choice and swore off rum. He now advises every man to move to Harlem and stop drinking. First time I ever knew such a move to result in that way, but Meigs's story is straight. Goodby, here is your station."

THOUGH A FORMER CONVICT.

How a Chicago Chief of Police Won One Man's Firm Allegiance.

Major R. W. McClaughry, who recently resigned the wardenship of the Joliet penitentiary to accept a like position at Leavenworth, Kan., had one champion on the Chicago police force who, up to his death, a few years ago, would fight for him at any time. This police officer was an ex-convict and served his sentence of one year for larceny at Joliet during McClaughry's first administration as warden. Upon his release from prison the young man returned to Chicago, where he had many friends who were willing to give him a helping hand. The offence for which he was sent to prison was done more in the spirit of a boyish prank than with any criminal intent, but he was in the company of an ex-convict at the time, and but for that fact he might have escaped with a short jail sentence.

Soon after his return to Chicago he got a position in a wholesale house, and he applied himself to the work with more than ordinary energy. He attended church regularly, something he did not do before going to prison, and his every act proved him worthy of the confidence placed in him by his friends.

Time went on, and he made application for a position on the police force. According to the rules of the department no man who has ever been convicted of a felony can become a policeman, and in order to properly fill out the application blank he had to perjure himself. The signers of his application were men of prominence in ward politics, and he had no difficulty in securing his appointment. He was stationed at a downtown crossing when Major McClaughry was appointed Chief of Police under Mayor Washburne in 1891.

One day the policeman was recognized by an ex-convict. They had worked together in the same shop in prison, and the policeman had once whipped the other fellow for abusing a crippled convict. The opportunity to get even with the blue-coat for the chastisement given years before presented itself, and in less than an hour a commanding officer was told of the policeman's imprisonment at Joliet.

Major McClaughry sent for the officer, and when the latter entered the chief's office, ignorant of why he was called there, Major McClaughry instantly recognized him. The officer did not deny his identity. He looked his chief squarely in the face and said:

"Chief, it is true; I have been a convict in the Joliet penitentiary. I was sent there some years ago for a crime for which the severest punishment ought not to have been more than thirty days in jail. I was a victim of circumstances, still I have never complained. I served eleven long months for my youthful folly, and it is unnecessary for me to tell you my prison behavior. Friends induced me to go on the police force, and I have performed my duties faithfully as an officer of the law. I am married and the father of three children. It is for my wife and little ones that I plead. You have the power to discharge me from the police force and perhaps send me back to Joliet for committing perjury. I am an ex-convict; treat me as you think you should be treated yourself if our positions were reversed."

Tears were in the Major's eyes. He rose from his chair, and, grasping the policeman by the hand, said:

"Go back to your crossing, officer, and so long as you behave yourself you need have no fear of losing your position while I am chief."

Champion Egg Swallower of Connecticut.

From the Hartford Times.

Over in the mountainous country east of Esko where sixty sleek Jerseys walk with the regularity of clockwork into their stalls at 4:30 every afternoon, lives Amri Stone, who likes raw eggs with their shells on. Recently, on a bet, in Flutsville, he swallowed twenty-five of these eggs. This eclipsed all his former records. In his latest test he is said to have swallowed the eggs without difficulty up to the twentieth. It took him an hour to get away with the rest. He won $5 by the operation and his friends expected to find him dead the next day. Stone, however, was up early and out and piled a cord of wood between daylight and dark, taking along with him a lunch of more raw eggs, a loaf of bread and a few slices of raw pork.

THE OYSTER CROP OUTLOOK

QUALITY HIGH AND DEMAND GREATER THAN THE SUPPLY.

Last Year the Spat Beds Were Depleted but the Result Has Been To Improve This Year's Crop—Origin and Growth of the Industry—Methods of Business in Vogue.

For the first time in five years oystermen are fairly satisfied with the crop and prospects. They expect the demand for oysters this season to exceed the supply and the quality to be very high. Last year sloop load after sloop load was rejected at the headquarters on West Tenth street, and sent away to be returned to the water, and the general opinion was that the year was a poor one; but there was another side to it. Oysters are placed to spawn in "spat beds" along the deeper water shores of bays and estuaries. Each is capable of producing 1,000,000 eggs. These rise to the surface, then sink and attach themselves to old shells or stones. After growing for a time they are brought to the surface by dredging. They are broken apart, the barren shells are rejected, and the good ones are removed to the shallower and more sheltered waters to mature for market.

When June, July and August are dry, oysters thrive, but when this period is rainy the flow of fresh water from the land makes it impossible for the oysters to get proper food in the shape of sea water. Then oysters are dark, thin and stunted, not filling the shell. This was the case in 1897-8; the oysters in the shallows were not fit for market, and short-sighted oystermen took a chance. They dredged up the spat beds, picked out the largest oysters, those properly belonging to the next year's crop, and sent them to market. These were rejected and the cry went up that the crop had failed. Millions of these immature oysters died before they could be again placed on the beds. The early spring ice floes, heavy last spring, still further depleted the spat beds, and so this year the supply is not too large. Greater care will be taken, no immature stock will be brought in, and the consumer has a treat before him. The shallows are not overstocked, and there is less "salad" to prevent the sea water from coming direct to the mollusk. Sometimes the covering is two feet thick above the transplanted spat and men have to clear it away before commencing operations. The statement that mussels have seriously injured the beds applies only to the spat, and well informed men think the injury is greatly exaggerated.

American oysters rank among the best in the world and the export list is growing all the time, England taking about 5,000 barrels a week almost the year round. As early as 1621 the chronicles of "New Amsterdam" tell of "very large oisters" on the shores, and in 1681 Arnoldus Montanus and Sir George Calvert reported beds producing oysters a foot long. Gone are the days of the old Saddle Rocks which no man could place entire in his mouth, which for frying were the Elysium of the Philadelphia chef. As the Dutch passed oysters languished, and early in this century they were practically extinct in this region. In 1830 there was a bed discovered in the Great South Bay off Sayville, but no one seeded them, and it was soon worked out; then in 1838 a schooner came from Virginia with a cargo, and these, not being bought, were dumped into the Great South Bay and formed the neucleus of the present beds. In 1842 there were reported to be seventeen boats oystering on the bay.

The industry grew, seed was supplied to all and soon beds were in operation all along the Connecticut, New York and New Jersey coasts, all seeded from "Green's bed." Then an organization was formed to boom Sayville, to control the seed and also the making of private oyster beds, and to-day the Government report shows that between Orient and Throgg's Neck alone there are 200,000 acres of available oyster beds employing 6,280 men, 18 steamers, 235 sloops, 9 schooners and 1,435 boats and skiffs, all requiring a capital of $2,147,850, and marketing annually 2,367,735 bushels of oysters. This leaves all the Lower Bay and the Great South Bay still uncounted as well as the outside eastern and southern places.

It is generally understood that the French Government was the first to foster this industry, but this is not true, for three years before the Frenchman, Coste, began his experiments, the State of New York in 1855 enacted a law to protect the oystermen. This law still stands, and to sustain its provisions all night long watchmen patrol the beds to prevent poaching. However keen the watcher may be, he is spurred on by the knowledge that he is being watched by the would-be poachers just as closely as he is watching for them. The place is no sinecure. The watchman uses an open boat, often only a row boat, although electric or vapor launches are coming into use, covers a stated route, has to be at certain places at certain half hours, and has to do battle with mosquitoes in clouds on the sultry nights, and the midges—even worse—in millions on the hazy nights and early mornings.

In the old days there were only three centres for oysters—Baltimore, New York and New Haven. Many men now working in the neighboring bays served their apprenticeship in oystering in Virginia, whence the oysters had to be taken by sloops to Baltimore to be shipped west and north. This gave rise to the supposed excellence of the Baltimore oyster. The New York oysters are every bit as good or even finer, but the New Yorker likes them taken to the fresh water floats of the Shrewsbury, Rahway or Passaic river and there "freshened" until they are white which means practically that a foreign food is given them and the mollusk made sick. Other places in the East prefer the oysters to be of the natural grey color with the full sea taste to them.

Now shipping centres are found in scores of places limiting the possibility of an oyster trust. One of the most recent enterprises is that to boom the famous Lower Bay industry. Capt. Dan Burbank, a veteran of many years is at the head and is now driving spiles at the mouth of the Great Kills, for a shucking and canning plant, with a deep-water channel to the floats. The oysters are to be shipped direct from Giffords station in special storage cars west or south to the wholesale handlers. The object is to avoid the three days' journey to New York and back, the ten cents or a shilling a thousand for "carrying" from the sloops to the scows at Tenth street, and the transportation after shucking to the ferries and eventually to the cars. Along the same line of saving time and expense, many private farmers have begun to use steam auxiliary boats. The first was the Commodore, which started in the work in 1896, making five trips in eight days, as against two trips a week for the sailing sloops of Staten Island. These farmers have the advantage over the Great South Bay men in that heavy frosts do not freeze their oysters tight and they can work when the baymen are tied up. Other steam auxiliaries are the Henry Clay, and the Mersereau.

At first all oysters were shipped away in shells, as they still are for export but by and by came the air-tight can, followed by the cold storage, and to-day the great bulk of the crop is moved without shells, saving heavy freight charges. In the restaurants of the West, old shells are kept for the shucked oysters to be served on. This custom obtains in many New York restaurants.

The best oysters come from Blue Point, Oak Haven, Buzzards Bay (deep water), Lynn Haven, (Chesapeake), Shrewsbury, Mill Pond, Rockaway, Maurice River Cove (mouth of Delaware), Great South and Lower bays. It is estimated that Tenth street, New York, sells for a strictly metropolitan supply 100,000,000 oysters a week during the season, that there are 5,000 places where they can be bought at retail and that in the metropolis 50,000 persons make a living direct from the oyster business. England takes 5,000 barrels a week, mostly for use during her native oyster closed season. Some are replanted on the English coast. They are put into a common flour barrel with a hole at the bottom for drainage. At first bran was used, mixed with water for food for them, but this is done away with now. It is said that the French shippers at Courseulles-sur-Mer train their oysters to keep their mouths shut in transit by alternate exposure to air and immersion in water. The American oyster knows his business, and feeling the reputation of the country at stake patriotically retains his individual liquid, until, at the point of the knife, it grasps over the British fingers opening the shell.

Experts in the business say that the finest oysters obtainable are in the first weeks in May as then the fat, luscious Virginia oysters come North to be planted in our waters to prevent spawning. The shells formerly were quite an item of commerce. They are sold to the gas companies for 10 cents a load, to be used for gas purifying, but a new process has done away with the demand and now the handlers have to pay to have them taken away, except when an individual appears at intervals with a canal boat and takes a cargo to Long Island City and New Haven where he sells them to lime kilns and fertilizer factories.

WOODCHUCK MEAT IS GOOD.

Down In Maine They Have Found That the Farmer's Pest Is Worth Hunting.

PROSPECT FERRY, Me., Sept. 7.—Stern men who are members of the Baptist church have lived on this side of Hogan's mountain for half a century. Other men have raised beans and clover on the mountain slopes for an equal length of time. A good number of practical Christians have attempted to grow beans and clover on the mountain, but as yet no one has succeeded at both callings. After a few seasons of prayerful trial every man who has attempted to combine religion with clover culture has been forced to abandon one or the other.

The woodchucks are to blame for all of it. There is no Maine man living who can see his clover patch wallowed down by marauding woodchucks without giving vent to his natural feelings in copious profanity. The talk relieves his mind and enables him to mow his tangled crop, but it mars his reputation for piety to such an extent that his expulsion from church becomes only a question of time. Hence it has passed into a local proverb that no Maine man can grow clover and belong to the church at the same time.

The Maine woodchuck has been in disgrace for more than a century. It feeds upon the crops which the farmer wants for commercial purposes, and what it does not eat up it wallows down and spoils. It digs deep holes on mellow sidehills, covering wide areas of tillage with dirt. It breeds rapidly. It hides cunningly. It dies hard. Until ten years ago it was of no value living or dead, and was looked upon as one of the worst curses which Adam's sin entailed upon the human race. No wild creature upon the globe was ever exterminated for the wanton sport of killing. As soon as an animal becomes useful to man it begins to give way before its destroyers, and the more valuable it becomes, the nearer it is to extinction.

Woodchucks would have lived in clover for centuries to come if some benevolent glutton had not discovered they were good to eat, and conveyed the information to his neighbors. After that woodchuck hunting became a refined and elevating sport, and woodchuck dinners grew in popularity until they surpassed the bear, the raccoon, and the deer, holding the honored place at the North which the 'possum has maintained at the South for many years.

Woodchuck hunting begins in September and lasts until late in October, when these overfat animals, finding no more clover to feed upon, get ready for their long winter nap. As it takes as much killing to slay a woodchuck as it would to capture a bear, the process of taking is always vigorous. Catching the animals in stout steel traps concealed at the entrance to their dens, drowning and smoking out from their holes, killing by trained dogs and shooting with double B shot from 10-gauge guns are among the methods in use. As a woodchuck has a sturdy spirit inside of a tough hide and as its meat is easily discolored by blows, care is exercised in the slaughter in order that the tender flesh may not receive blemishes. The groundhog is not only a good fighter, but a skilled tactician, hiding away at the first sign of a foe, and remaining in his hole for days at a time sooner than come out and take the chances of battle.

It requires two ounces of double B shot backed up by five drams of powder and delivered at a range of fifty yards or less to kill a groundhog. When wounded to death it often manages to drag itself into its hole beyond the reach of the hunter. If water is handy to the holes it is a good plan to drown the animals out and hit them on the head with a club when they emerge. A good number are also captured by boys who bob for them with yellow birch twigs. A slim withe about six feet long is employed by those who bob woodchucks. Holding an end in each hand, the boy inserts the bight of the withe in the groundhog's burrow and moves it back and forth until the animal grows angry and bites. As the teeth of woodchucks are so built that they cannot let go their hold when the stick is drawn taut, a fact which the boys know very well, after the groundhog is pulled from the hole by its teeth a club ends its career.

A woodchuck's skin, while of great value to the woodchuck, has no worth in the market. After it is taken off and the carcass is dressed and washed down in cold water, the meat is hung up over night in a cool room. In the morning it is boiled for twenty minutes in saleratus water, which removes the animal taste. It is then stuffed with rich dressing and laid in a pan, the body being shored up by slices of sweet potato and strips of raw salt pork, with perhaps an onion or two for seasoning. It is baked in a slow oven and basted frequently for two hours. When properly cooked a baked woodchuck is nut brown, and is covered with a scaly coat of cracklings, compared with which a roast pig is no better than sawdust. Those who have eaten of the dish always like it and call for more. Cooks can produce nothing like it north of Mason and Dixon's line.

Many thousand of woodchucks are killed and eaten in Maine every year. Hunters make up large shooting parties and go forth to beat the record. Levi. Berry, a local rifle man, killed twenty-three in one forenoon last week. These kept a dozen families in baked woodchuck for several days. The hunters like the sport of shooting woodchucks, and the farmers rejoice to have them shot. As for the woodchucks, they have nothing to say about it.

COWBOY LASSOES A SHARK.

Landed the Rope Right Under the Fins of the Monster, Says the Skipper.

From the Portland Press.

"Yes, there are funny things going on down the bay and soon they will really be catching sharks with cod lines." This was the remark of a coaster who happened to drop into J. H. Blake's on Widgery's wharf yesterday morning. The remark was nothing surprising. Yesterday afternoon Capt. Rickett, who commands one of the oddest-looking three-masted fisherman's boats that sails from this port, and right here it can be said that he is among the smartest of the captains, poked the nose of his craft right round Commercial wharf. As he did so, some one from Henry Sargent's fish store on Commercial wharf, called out in that familiar style known to every traveller along the water front, "What you got, captain?"

"Wait and see," came the reply and in his impatience he went to the lower deck and calling to his assistance his crew of five men, held up a swindle tail shark, which, as matter of fact, he had captured near Drunkard Ledge, just about eight miles from the Cape lights.

The captain was called to explain how he got the fish, but he was reluctant to say much until the eager observers had a better opportunity to see his catch, and then, opening up in a very graphic way, said: "We were sailing along very quietly with nothing to cause a ripple on the smooth surface of what had been a smooth sea, when some one at the lookout called out 'A whale ahead!' and then came a cry: 'It may be the sea serpent, of which we have heard so much.'

"As they drew nearer, a tail flopped in the air and the water flew up as if under the influence of a sub-marine mine, and the captain seeing danger called out every man to the ropes.

"To capture the fish was the next thing in order and there happened to be on board a man who had thrown the lasso over many a wild Western broncho, and he was the man who did the trick.

"The man gathered up his rope, surveyed the distance and with a dexterous fling, landed the rope right under the fins of the shark. Then the fun began, for the shark showed the gameness of a trout, and plunged here and there, throwing up the water in his wake. The man on board held on to the rope, and as one described it to a reporter of the Press, 'it was a tug of war.' At last the shark showed signs of weakening and then it was a dead pull to the boat. When the game, so to speak, was once on board, accurate measurements taken of the fish was 8 feet 7 inches; the tail was 6 feet 7 inches and that it had 88 teeth. It was a voracious monster, for in the jaw at least six herrings remained undigested.

A HERMIT IN WISCONSIN.

POSSIBLE FATE OF A FORMER TUTOR OF CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND.

John Holden Fled After Striking What He Believed Was a Mortal Blow—Now Thought To Have Spent the Remainder of His Life as a Recluse in the Forest.

FLORENCE, Wis., Sept. 8.—The finding of the skeleton of a man at the edge of a swamp four miles north of Armstrong creek, in the western part of this county, is supposed to reveal the fate of a strange man who led the life of a hermit for more than a quarter of a century, and disappeared on the day that his existence became known to the authorities. One day last week, some men in the employ of the Murphy Lumber Company of Green Bay who were making timber explorations in the western part of Florence county and the northern part of Marinette county found a skeleton partly buried in the soft ground at the edge of a swampy lake. The bones were removed to Armstrong, where they were examined by a physician, who declared that they apparently were those of an extremely aged person. The forehead and general formation of the skull seemed to indicate that the man had possessed unusual intellect. While there is no direct evidence on the subject, it is believed that the remains are those of a man whose name was recently ascertained to be John Holden.

Eight months ago a number of woodsmen representing the Murphy Lumber Company went to an old lumber camp, intending to make it their headquarters while engaged in the vicinity. The buildings stood in a clearing partly overgrown with pines, hemlock, and white birch, and the log houses were invisible until the visitors were within a few feet of them. The men had approached to within forty or fifty feet of the main structure, when a man dashed through a rear exit and disappeared in the underbrush back of the logging camp. The man was bent, apparently by age. He was clad in garments made of rough skins, and a mass of tangled gray hair hung down his back, while a matted gray beard fully two feet in length was revealed by the glimpse the men caught of him as he fled through the timber. For more than twenty years before this it had been reported from time to time that a wild man lived in the forest north of Armstrong Creek. Men employed in logging camps said they had seen the hermit, and from time to time Indians brought in stories of having been befriended by a white man who wore clothing made of skins. Hunters also said they had caught glimpses of the strange man, but none succeeded in gaining any information concerning him or his habitation. That he lived by taking wild game, and by catching fur bearing animals and and selling their pelts, if he had existence except in the minds of hunters and Indians, there was no doubt.

When the men saw the strange figure disappear from the log shack in the old lumber camp, stories that they had heard of the hermit of the woods came to them, and they had little doubt that they had accidently encountered the recluse. This surmise was strengthened when they entered the shanty. The structure was in two parts, separated by a roofed passageway. At one end of the passageway was the kitchen and dining room, while on the other was the apartment which in the old logging days was used as a sleeping room. This was the home of the hermit. The walls were covered with skins of deer, foxes and wolves, and on the floor was a matting of pelts of wild animals. In the middle of the room was a table made of rough boards, evidently taken from the dining-room part of the camp. A huge easy chair hollowed from the trunk of a tree stood near the table, while in one corner was a couch of skins. But this furniture was not the astonishing part of the discovery. On one side of the room was a rough book case, constructed from unplaned pine planks, and this case contained nearly 300 books of various kinds. Some were in the English language, but many more were in a type and in a tongue that the lumbermen could not comprehend. These volumes have since been found to be French, German, Greek and Latin. The books were worn and thumbed by long and constant usage, and evidently had been the companions of a student and lover of books. The volumes covered a wide range of literature, but consisted principally of Greek history and literature. There was only one novel among the many volumes, Robinson Crusoe, and this seemingly had been the most constantly read book of all in the little library, save the Bible. Everything in the room was examined carefully in the hope of finding something that would serve as a clue to the identity of the hermit who read Greek and Latin the original text and seasoned his studies of mythology and ancient literature with chapters from DeFoe's novel and the Bible. Nothing was found however that seemed to throw light on the past of the man, except that in two of the older books was inscribed the name "John Holden," and the address, "Kings, Cambridge," with the date 1859.

The old logging camp was not visited again for several weeks. Then the men who had found the haunt of the hermit returned to the place. They found everything in the shack precisely as they had left it. Apparently the hermit never had returned after his hasty departure. The skins in the bunk were covered with dust, and the binding of some of the books had been attacked by the rats, while a hedgehog had made its nest in one corner of the room. Again everything was left as it was found, and the men returned to Armstrong. In the meantime the story of the hermit had become known in Marinette and Menomonee, and sufficient interest was taken in the matter to inspire an attempt to ascertain the man's story. With that end in view a letter was addressed by the chief of police to the authorities of Cambridge University, asking for information regarding one John Holden, who in the late 50's or early 60's was supposed to have been a student or instructor in King's College. No answer to the letter was received for three months; then came a reply that revealed a strange story.

In 1862 John Holden, according to the letter, was a tutor at Cambridge. In his charge was a son of a titled Englishman whose name is not given in the letter. Holden, it seems, was a student of great brilliancy of mind and unusual attainments, but had an ungovernable temper. One evening in the fall of 1862 or the spring of 1863, he and his pupil had a disagreement. Angered by some utterance by the younger man, Holden flew into a violent passion, and seizing a heavy cane that stood in a corner of the room, felled the pupil by a blow on the temple. Persons attracted to the scene by the noise of the young man's fall, hastily pronounced the young man dead. Holden accepted their conclusion, and hurriedly packing a few of his personal effects, fled from the scene. He never was seen or heard of again at his college. The young man whom he had struck down was merely rendered unconscious, and quickly recovered from the effects of the blow. That Holden believed him dead, and became a recluse either through fear of arrest and punishment for murder, because he desired to expiate his sin in a life of solitude, there seems to be no reason to doubt.

The hermit never was seen at the Murphy lumber camp after he fled from the building. The recent discovery of the skeleton a few miles from the clearing is accepted by those familiar with this affair as evidence that Holden is dead. It is thought that when frightened by the approach of the Murphy lumber company employees, he ran blindly through the forest and into the edge of the swamp, where he became entangled in the soft mud and perished; or that he suffered some injury and fell and died from starvation.

It cannot be learned that Holden has any relatives, either in this country or in England, and his books, the only part of his effects of any value, will probably be presented to some public library or added to the State Library at Madison.

POST OFFICE CLERK RELEASED.

Suspended, However, Pending Investigation Shortage in His Accounts.

Joseph H. Kohle, a day clerk at the stamp selling window of the General Post Office, who was arrested by Post Office Inspectors Jacobs and James on Friday night, and charged with larceny, was released yesterday, but was suspended by Postmaster Van Cott pending further investigation. Chief Post Office Inspector King said that there were some irregularities in Kohle's accounts but that there was no strong evidence of intentional wrong-doing. The shortage, in any case, was small.

MORE MEN THAN WOMEN COME.

A Feature of Immigration Into the United States Which Does Not Change.

From 1819, the year of the passage by Congress of the law for the registration of immigrants arriving in the United States, until the present time, there have been 18,500,000 immigrants registered in the various ports of the country, and of these, taking the average through the whole course of years, 60 per cent. were men and 40 per cent. women, a disparity representing a total difference of nearly 3,700,000.

It has been frequently pointed out as a matter of interest and importance that the proportion of male immigrants is highest where such immigration is least desirable, particularly in the case of Chinese and Sicilians, while it is lowest among the Germans and Irish. The reasons assigned for this disparity have been many. Among them have been the perils and inconveniences of a residence on the frontier before the complete settlement of the country, emigration from continental countries to escape conscription in European armies, the danger and discomforts of ocean travel before the establishment of fast and commodious steamers, and the natural reluctance of women to seek homes in new lands. It has popularly been supposed however, that as these reasons for the excess of male immigration either disappeared or were diminished the totals of the two sexes would be more nearly even, a conclusion which the tables just published by the Immigration Bureau in Washington for the year ending March 1, 1899, completely overthrow.

During the year the actual number of immigrants coming into the United States were 310,000, an increase of 80,000 compared with a year ago. According to the ordinary division between male and female immigrants there should have been 186,000 of the former and 124,000 of the latter. Instead of this there were 193,277 male immigrants, or more than 60 per cent., and 117,438 female immigrants, less than 40 per cent. From England there were 6,700 male and 4,000 female immigrants, about the average ratio; from Germany, 14,700 male and 11,800 female immigrants, less than the average number: from Scandinavia there were 12,747 male and 10,502 female immigrants, and from Finland, a country from which there has been recently extensive emigration to the United States in consequence of the serious conflict between the Russian Government and the Finns, 3,900 male and 2,100 female immigrants came. From two countries female immigration to the United States preponderates, Ireland and Bohemia. There were last year 13,700 male and 18,600 female immigrants from Ireland, and from Bohemia the number of male and female immigrants was almost identical, 1,262 of the former and 1,364 of the latter.

The long-disputed question among immigrant officials as to the designation to be given to Polish Hebrew immigrants, whether they should be described as Polish or under the head of German, Russian or Austrian immigrants, as the case might be, has been settled by the adoption of a generic term for all such immigrants, the word Hebrew. There were 21,000 male and 16,000 female Hebrew immigrants last year. From Russian Poland there were in addition 18,000 male and 10,000 female immigrants, while from Italy, now the chief contributing country to the flow of immigration into the United States, there were 52,000 male and 23,000 female immigrants. Italian immigration is very largely responsible for the disparity of the sexes in the matter of immigration. Twice as many male Syrians as female Syrians came over last year and five times as many male Slavonians. There were 2,200 male Greeks and only 132 female, but the record of all other countries is distanced by China, 1,627 male immigrants and 11 female immigrants only.

Cuban immigration to the United States last year was 1,400, including 1,100 male and 300 female immigrants. From Hawaii there were more women than male immigrants, though the number of either was not large, and from Japan there came 3,175 male immigrants and 275 female.

COMPULSORY BEER DRINKING.

Novel Temperance Lecture By the Rector of the University of Bonn.

Par s Correspondence of the Courrier des Etats Unis.

It is not in the United States alone that the question of alcoholism troubles those who think seriously of the welfare, the health, and the strength of the young population. Germany has now fallen in line, and a leader in the movement against excess is the rector of the University of Bonn, Herr Koester. The following is an extract from an address which he delivered recently to the students:

"We, your elders, cannot remain indifferent to anything which concerns your welfare. It is regard for the future which confers upon the rector the right and the duty to advise and exhort the students who are beginning their academic life. On a former occasion I deemed it my duty to defend the German students against the charge that they were living dissolute lives. To-day I do the same thing, notwithstanding the repeated cries of alarm in regard to their drunkenness, in which some people fancy they see the danger of the complete degeneration of the educated classes.

The drunkard's code or tank law (sautcomment), was not invented by the students. That Germans get drunk according to established rules is a historical fact which we are obliged to admit, and which existed long before Tacitus referred to it. But, although Germans turned the habit of drinking into a sort of worship, the fact that they have retained their vigor and their depth of thought clearly shows that this worship or code is not in itself the cause of the moral, intellectual and physical degeneracy which oozes through the walls of our reformatories and insane asylums.

"In my personal and sad experience I have noticed that many students whom drink had completely ruined were not the victims of the drinking code. They were the victims of the passion for drink for which there is no law. To the drinking custom in the gay and joyous circles there can be no objection, because the rules for the thing possess charms and poetry, just like beautiful verses, music and the fine arts. And, as in poetry, rhythm and metre give movement to the heavy verb, so in the scansion of the habit of drinking there is brought about a sort of intellectual mobilization in the social life of the narrow circles in which the students are confined.

"But during the last ten years there has been enacted in many associations of students an idiotic beer code which all must obey, and which prescribes a certain quantity for each man. The thing is so utterly devoid of reason, sense and the spirit of good fellowship that it seems to be the product of imbecility pure and simple. It is difficult to understand how the German student, so proud and jealous of his academical liberty, could become the slave of such a stupid thing as compulsory drunkenness. He not only sacrifices his professional honor, but his physical and moral sanity to idiotic formulas which rob him of everything, including even the taste for drinking. The whole thing is nothing but fanfaronnade. You have the right to enliven your reunions by everything that can bring to them innocent gaity.

"Drink is good for the vivification and the renovation of the human organism. It enlarges the heart and the soul, and it is beneficial when it tends to gladden and strengthen the social system. But its utility ceases when through compulsion it transforms the gatherings of students into contests in drunkenness where the new-comers rapidly fall among the cadavers of beer.

"I believe, gentlemen, that many associations have abolished compulsory drinking during the last few years, and I hope that their good example will be followed. Our nation needs strong men not feeble sots, the slaves of beer."

A Sad Predicament.

From the Dahlonega (Ga.) Nugget.

Arch Anderson, while attending the Baptist Association the other Sunday, got into a very embarrassing condition. At night he went home with some girls to spend the evening with an old acquaintance. After chatting until a late hour they all retired for the night. After Arch had gone to bed it was so warm he became restless and decided to get up and slip out into the yard and remain a while where it was cool. He had not landed but a few minutes before the dog spied him and made for him. Arch had to climb a peach tree in haste in order to escape its powerful jaws. The dog barked so long that one of the young ladies came out to see what it meant, and looking up in the tree by the light of the moon discovered the man resting on a limb in his night suit.

SAM JENKINS'S LAST HOUR.

HE KILLED SIX MEN AND WAS HANGED WHILE THE TRAIN WAITED.

An Exciting Stop of an Hour at Raton, N. M., in the Early Days of Railroading There—Jenkins's Attempt at Card Cheating Led to a Riot in town and a Chase.

CHILLICOTHE, Ohio, Sept. 8.—"Did you ever hear the story of how Sim Jenkins met his end?" asked Ike Barnett, one of the pioneers of railroading in the West, but now settled down to spend the remainder of his days in peace here in Ohio. "It is a remarkable story from the fact that Jenkins put up the fight of his life and finished the careers of six men before he himself was captured and finally strung up to a telegraph pole, and it all happened while our train was waiting for dinner. It was in the summer of '79 that I took a train on the Santa Fe road on my way to Deming, New Mexico, which at that time was the southern terminus of the branch. In those days trains were few and divisions were long, so the engineer would yank the train along as fast as he could and would generally pull into the town where we were to take dinner about an hour ahead of time. This gave the passengers time not only to eat dinner but to take in the town, and was greatly appreciated.

"Well, the town we stopped at that day was Raton, just south of the Colorado State line, and, at that time, one of the toughest towns in the West, made up of the usual collection of saloons, dance-houses, gambling hells and shanties. It was about 5 o'clock in the evening when we got into Raton and we were just getting off the train when we heard three pistol shots fired in an adjacent saloon. In those days a pistol shot meant a probable murder, and we were not surprised a moment later to perceive a man, with a smoking revolver in his hand, rush from the saloon and run toward our train. No one interfered with him, and he climbed up on the platform of the train and disappeared.

"The fugitive was Sim Jenkins, a well-known desperado and card sharper. He had reached Raton that morning, but had not been recognized. He had finally enticed one of the miners into a game of cards, and won heavily. The miner finally accused him of cheating and in the row that followed, Jenkins was recognized. He had his revolver out in a minute and springing back, fired at his opponent. A bystander struck up his arm and the bullet shattered the big plate glass mirror behind the bar. Jenkins wheeled around and fired twice at the man who had spoiled his aim. Both shots took effect, and the man fell to the floor dead. Jenkins took advantage of the excitement to rush out of the saloon, and made his way unmolested to the train which had just pulled in.

"A posse was organized at once and surrounded the train. Every car was carefully searched, but no trace of the fugitive was discovered until they came to the tender, where Jenkins was found crouched on one of the trucks. As soon as he saw he was discovered, he sprang out and made a rush for a pile of railroad ties near the track. A fusillade of shots followed him and it was seen that he had been wounded. But he managed to gain the shelter of the ties, and as the posse closed in on him, he arose, used the top of the pile for a rest, and fired five shots from his revolver. Every shot took effect. A man named Cooper, the landlord of a hotel; a justice of the peace whose name I have forgotten, and a car painter in the employ of the roadrad all fell dead in their tracks, every one of them shot through the heart, and a saloonist and a miner fell mortally wounded. The posse was unprepared for fancy shooting of that kind and fell back in considerable confusion.

"Jenkins saw his chance and waving his revolver over his head, he darted from his cover and ran toward the Raton mountains, about a mile and a half away. Two of the cowboys, however, jumped on their horses, with Winchesters in their hands, and soon headed off the fugitive. They covered him as soon as they got within good rifle shot and ordered Jenkins to throw up his hands. He saw that it was no use to hold out any longer, as his pursuers could pick him off and remain well out of the range of his revolver, so he stopped and surrendered.

"The cowboys rode up to him, took away his weapons and threw a lariat around his neck. They told him to hold on to it with his hands if he didn't want to be hanged a few minutes before his time, and brought him back to the depot at a gallop. Jenkins was nearly exhausted from the effects of his wounds and the rough usage he had received, but there was no delay in the execution. The end of the lariat was thrown over the cross arm of a telegraph pole, and in less time than it takes to tell it, Jenkins was dangling in the air. Just as he was kicking his last, a woman rushed from the crowd and emptied a revolver into the desperado's body. She was the widow of one of his victims.

"Well, the train crew had been as much interested in the event as anybody, and had obligingly held the train until it had been concluded in this satisfactory manner. Then the engineer rang the bell and we all clambered on board again. As we rattled out of the town, I reflected on the astonishing series of events of the past hour. Six men had been killed, three widows were weeping over the bodies of their husbands, half a dozen children had been left fatherless, and as I glanced backward I saw through the gathering dusk the body of the author of all this mischief swinging lazily in the breeze near the station. I lived a long time in the West, and in some very tough localities, but I never saw anything that beat the record made by Sim Jenkins in the last hour of his life."

BOY'S RAKE-OFF ON HOME ORDERS.

Wall Street Man's Confession of His Plunder Of the Home Exchequer.

They were talking about boys, at the lunch hour in a private room in Liberty street. One man who has crossed the half century line concluded the discussion:

"The boy of to-day has many advantages, but I don't know that I would swap my boyhood for his. And do you know that this never came to me as forcibly as it did a few days ago. I have been playing steward at my home while the Missus and the youngsters were in the mountains, and occasionally I stop and leave an order, for the house. One day I concluded to watch the grocer put up the order, not that I suspected him of shortage, but because I hadn't seen any-thing of that sort in years. When I read off 25 cents worth of one article, the grocer threw out a package already done up. Then I read off 50 cents worth of another article and the grocer threw out another package, tied up ready for delivery. Ten cents worth of an everyday article was on the list, and I'm hanged if the grocer didn't have that in a box, sealed and labeled.

"When I was a boy, sometimes I was sent for a dollar's worth of sugar; fifty cents worth of tea; ten cents worth of soda; so many cents worth of starch, and so on. My mother never ran accounts. She always paid cash. She gave me her purse and told me to pay the bill. Things were sold in bulk in those good old days. I would buy ninety cents worth of sugar and forty cents worth of tea on such an order as I have just quoted, and that gave me a clear rake-off of twenty cents. In this way I was the envy of the boys of my neighborhood. I was always flush. Occasionally I would tease some mother in the vicinity telling my mother about her indulgence of my extravagance and its effect for unhappiness on the minds of other boys. And when my mother would speak, rather proudly, to my father about it he would say, 'That boy is all right. He can make more show on ten cents than most men.' The piece I gave him last week doesn't seem to have been spent yet. He'll be in Wall street before those other boys quit wearing knee pants.' Poor Dad! I have been in Wall street a good many years, but I found some of the other boys here when I came. I don't know their methods, but I know I am not buying things in bulk like I used to'.

OLD CLUB HOUSE 1860 WHISKEY
WARRANTED PURE AND SOFTENED BY AGE ONLY
MACY & JENKINS—67 LIBERTY STREET, N.Y. ESTABLISHED 1860.