New York's Fur Market Leads In Raw and Finished Skins

Sale of $7,000,000 Worth of Pelts Starts To-morrow and Supremacy in World Trade Gained During the War Is Likely to Remain.

ABOUT $7,000,000 worth of raw furs will be sold in New York during the week of October 6. Both in value and the number of skins this is said to be the most notable collection of furs ever offered in this country.

In spite of the unsettled situation in Russia and Siberia it is reported that the offerings of Russian sables will be very large and of a most valuable nature.

Many foreign buyers, heretofore kept away by the war, will attend a New York auction for the first time. While it is impossible just now for even the most astute business men to tell just what our position in some world markets will be later on, one thing now seems certain, and that is, America having become during the war the chief fur trading centre of the world is likely to retain this supremacy indefinitely.

Of the many commercial changes due to the war by no means the least interesting is the way the United States has gained this supremacy. To-day, of greater importance than the English or Russian fur auctions are those now held in New York and St. Louis. High prices have so far obtained.

The war has brought about a good many adjustments in the world's business affairs, and all things considered the United States is only coming into her own in becoming the world's leading fur market, as ever since the white man first came here America has ranked among the world's largest fur producing countries, but until the war gave Europe something more serious to think about we played second fiddle in the selling end of the business to London, Petrograd, Leipsic and Frankfort.

How We Dress the Pelts.

Not only has the war centred the sale of raw furs in this country, but we have also become during the period of strife excellent fur dressers on our own account, which is another big step forward to permanent commercial supremacy in the fur trade, as for a long time previous to the beginning of hostilities sealskins had to be sent to Europe for finishing, later to be returned to this country and reentered in the dressed state at a customs tax of 20 per cent. ad valorem. The necessity for taking this trouble in getting the skins put into condition for cutting up into garments naturally had a detrimental effect on the prices they brought in the raw state and increased the figures asked for them when made up for wear. Now, however, the finishing can be done in this country, and the Government in consequence has become a seller of sealskins at the New York and St. Louis auctions.

The cutting down of the supplies of skins received from other countries is another way in which the war has thrown Uncle Sam on his own resources in reference to furs. This difficulty has been offset to an extent by the reduced shipments of skins from the United States. However, as a result of depleted supplies of foreign furs, prices have advanced sharply, particularly on skins of animals not native to this country. The law of supply and demand has had a hand in the increases, but it has been ably aided by fashion, which this fall is crying for furs and still more furs.

A factor in this evidence of prosperity is the increased skill of American manufacturers and fashion artists. So marked has been this increase that it may truly be said now that New York rivals Paris in the designing of rich fur garments.

According to all advance reports, among the most popular furs the approaching season will be the most expensive of all—Russian sable, the "royal fur." In various forms of made up goods these sables to-day are literally worth a king's ransom. In the form of stoles, containing from fifteen to eighteen carefully matched skins, they have sold at prices ranging from $10,000 to $18,000.

Sable coats worth $50,000 and $60,000 are by no means uncommon. In such coats the skins are matched as carefully as milady's string of choicest pearls, and they are things of beauty and a joy to the wearer forever.

As it is impossible for most people to pay the prices and our fur trade to keep up with the demand for Russian sables, marten fur, generally known as Hudson Bay sable because it comes from Canada, is being put forward in competition with it. Although it costs considerably less, the best grade of this fur so closely resembles Russian sable that only an expert can tell the difference between the two. One of the most popular and reasonable in price of our strictly United States furs is muskrat. It is dyed and sold under the trade name of Hudson seal. After a process known as plushing, which leaves only the soft, short under hairs, muskrat can be dyed so closely to resemble sealskin as to deceive the average person.

Mink, under the touch of the fairy wand of Dame Fashion, recently has begun to bring high prices in our fur auctions. Another exceedingly popular American fur is red fox. At a recent sale 26,000 of these skins were sold and so great was the demand for them that there were seemingly 26,000 buyers, consequently the skins brought very high prices.

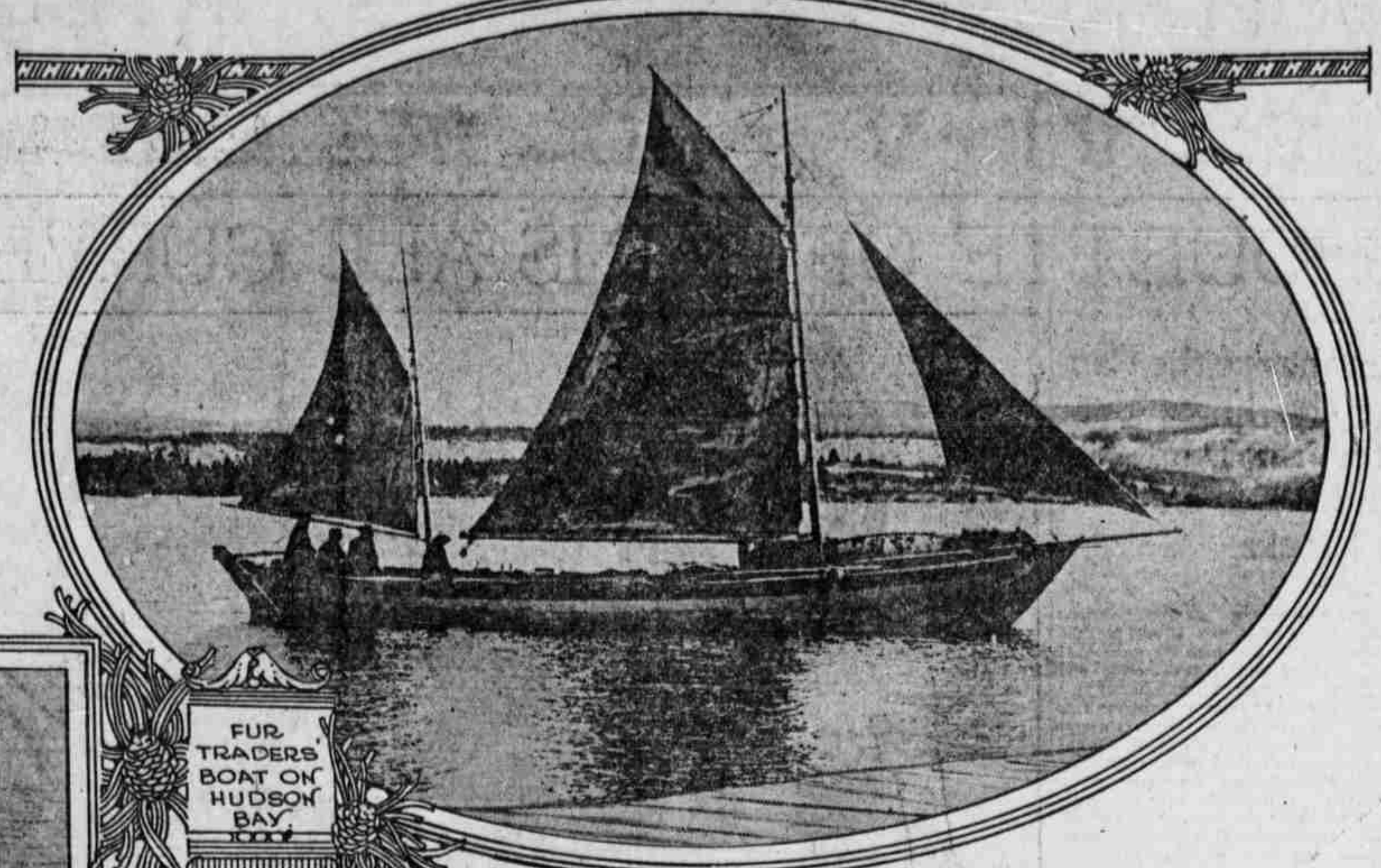
At a fur auction recently held in St. Louis 2,000 sealskins from the Pribiloff Islands were sold for the United States Government. The value of these skins was about $100,000, while the total value of the furs placed on sale during the week of the auction was approximately $4,500,000. Besides the sealskins disposed of during the sale were hundreds of blue fox skins valued at many thousands of dollars. A vast number, considerably over half a million, moleskins, were offered and fetched good prices, while nearly half a million squirrel skins and many thousand muskrat skins were also quickly disposed of. The buyers seemed anxious for all the furs put on the block at this big sale.

The present very general use of furs has to a large extent been brought about by automobiling in winter. This has made the fur trade of the present day of much greater importance than in those days when the fur traders were the chief pioneers of the North American continent. Curiously enough the quantities of many fur bearing animals have vastly increased, seemingly for the sole purpose of keeping up with the demands. Especially is this true of those rather small mammals which seem to thrive and breed quickly in the proximity of settlements. The larger ones, on the other hand, such as bears and beavers, in course of time will, if not protected, become generally reduced in numbers.

Although large quantities of the smaller sorts are found in the United States, the chief supply of furs is obtained from Siberia and the northern parts of North America, and as these tracts are for the greater part of the year frostbound the fur bearing animals enjoy a comparatively unmolested life. The fur, therefore, grows quickly during the winter season and is in the best condition when the animal is trapped in the spring.

The leading fur gathering companies to-day are the Hudson's Bay Company, established in 1670, and the Alaska Commercial Company, in 1870. It is the furs of these firms together with large quantities consigned from the United States Government and from numerous private traders that are offered at our fur auctions. Nearly all fur skins are brought to the market in the raw or undressed state.

The usual mode of dressing furs is by steeping them in liquor for a short time, after which the pelts are "fleshed" over a sharp knife, to get rid of the excess of fat, and subsequently fried off. They are next trodden in tubs of warm sawdust and common butter, by which means the pelt or leather is rendered supple. The skin is finished in dry sawdust and beaten out. Certain furs, such as beaver, nutria, hare and rabbit, are used in the manufacture of hats and other felted fabrics, for which purposes the under fur alone is retained. It is cut off from the pelt, separated from the upper hair and felted together by means of various machines.



FUR TRADERS' BOAT ON HUDSON BAY

INDIAN AND HALF BREED TRAPPERS WITH DOG TRAINS LEAVING A POST AFTER SELLING FURS... PHOTOS BY GILLIAMS SERVICE.

WITH DOGS AND SLEDGES, FUR TRADERS AT TRADING POST IN MID WINTER.

HOW The ESKIMO PREPARE FURS FOR MARKET.

Sadie Quotes Lamb Chops; Trade Flies

A CERTAIN meat and vegetable market on upper Broadway heretofore has enjoyed a fine trade. Its patronage includes the most substantial people in the section, and the fact that many of them are women who do their own marketing, pay cash and take their purchases home with them in their cars makes their custom all that B——, the market's proprietor, could desire. Bad debts are almost an unknown commodity in his establishment and the bookkeeping is so simple that B—— and his daughter Sadie, who recently graduated from business college, do it without outside and costly assistance.

B—— built up his business through the character of meats and vegetables he offered for sale, a certain genial personality which he, Mrs. B——, who sometimes assists in the store in rush hours, and Sadie have communicated to other employees, and the fact that he is splendidly located. With things breaking so nicely for him it is but natural that B—— should feel secure in his position and inspire the same sort of confidence in the minds of his family.

With the cream of the section's business B—— has found it possible to obtain a little better price for his meats and vegetables than some of his less successful competitors. His patrons know they are getting the best—and that is the most important thing they ask. It is easier to go there and get meat, fish and vegetables about which there can be no question rather than shop around, save a few cents and run the risk of not getting the best. This is the general attitude of his customers—all to the good fortune of the genial Mr. B——.

But These Careful Housewives!

But even in this Eden of merchandising there is one item which keeps Mr. and Mrs. B—— and Sadie ever on the alert. Despite the wealth of their customers and their willingness to pay a cent or so more for the best there are among them good housekeepers who have no intention of paying more than they consider right and just even to B——. It is the B—— policy to be sure to make prices exactly right for these careful buyers.

One of these careful buyers is Mrs. C——, even as she is one of those good customers every shopkeeper welcomes. She buys in good quantities, only of the best, pays cash and her purchases go home with her in her car. But, though buying only the best, Mrs. C—— insists that prices be right. And why shouldn't they be for such a desirable patron?

The other day Mrs. C—— wanted lamb loin chops. She could not go for them herself but sent her chauffeur—a new one, incidentally, who was unknown in the B—— store. He went there, asked for five pounds of chops and paid $3 for them.

A few minutes later Sadie B——, at the cashier's desk, answered the telephone.

"What is the price of lamb loin chops to-day?" asked a feminine voice.

"Who is this speaking?" asked Sadie in her most gracious manner.

"It doesn't matter," replied the voice with a touch of asperity. "You don't have to know my name to tell me the price you are selling lamb chops for to-day, do you?"

Sadie Slips Sadly.

And right here Sadie made a sad mistake. She was thinking that where some were paying 60 cents a pound for the best loin chops, others had got them for 50 cents, and she didn't know who was asking.

"Who is it asking?" she repeated.

"It's Mrs. C——," came the answer aggressively, "but I don't care to know now. If you must know who a person is before you tell your prices I'm through," and Mrs. C—— hung up the receiver.

Sadie quickly called Mr. B—— and Mrs. B——. There was a hurried family consultation. Then Mr. B—— called Mrs. C——. But his explanations fell on deaf ears. All his protestations meant nothing beside Mrs. C——'s.

"But why did she have to know who was talking?"

Mrs. C—— is buying her meat and vegetables elsewhere now and the worst part of it is that she makes no secret of it. Mrs. C—— is something of a leader too and B—— has noticed that a number of her friends no longer patronize his market. B—— has placed a conspicuous sign over his meat counter suggestive of retail clothing stores reading "One Price to All," and Sadie and all the clerks quote prices without regard to the identity of the asker; but the damage is done. Mrs. C—— and her friends have not returned with their patronage despite B——'s urgent solicitation.

What can he do to get them back? It is a problem many storekeepers frequently must encounter. B—— is giving mighty thought to the subject. In the meanwhile he knows he will lose no more customers for one particular reason. He has learned a lesson.

SOUPS OF THE ANCIENTS LIKE MANY OF MODERN KITCHENS

BY ANNE RITTENHOUSE.

IT is somewhat difficult to trace the history of soup back through the "dark ages" of cookery which preceded the eighteenth century, and it is extremely doubtful if prior to the Renaissance the juice of meat was generally used for such a purpose. It is true that the early Italian novelists have spoken of "capon broth with flour paste," and that tradition has told us of the black soup which was eaten by the Spartans, yet as the students tell us the soup of the heroes in the "Iliad" was nothing more than white onion broth, and the jura and juscula described by Apicius were merely mixtures of oil, acids, spices and vegetable juices, one is inclined to believe that these boasted soups of the ancients could no more be compared to the delicious liquid foods of this day than could the hell-broth of the witches in "Macbeth," with its heads, its tongues of dogs, its lips of Tartar and its nose of Turk.

While there are many literary references to prove that bisque is of most ancient lineage, one of the oldest recipes which provides for a foundation of meat juices is that in which Jack of Newbury announced his discovery of hare soup early in the sixteenth century.

"If any of ye men should catche and bringe in an olde hare," he says, in the Hystorie of hys Life," "you will have a prize, albeit he is very harde eating, stewe hym as long as you will, and hys fleshe will be naughte but shoe leathere, ...e will, with a sheep's heads, and a little stuffe from ye garden make very good supping and chewing, and bye these means you will save much money in ye years, whereby you mighte better maintaine your wife's French hood and like gowne."

The most celebrated cooks and epicures have long been advocates of the claims of soup to be recognized, as Careme says, as the provocative agent of the good dinner, while Grimrod de la Reyniere goes still further. "Soup," he says, "is what a portico is to an edifice. It is not only the first object of attraction, but if it is well combined it gives a true foretaste of the temper itself, just as the overture of an opera shadows forth the subject of the work." And while the masses may not have held such an exalted idea of the purpose of their soup, they were not tardy in recognizing the merits of a food which had so much to recommend it outside of its advantages from an economical point of view. Ox tail soup, for example, although now regarded as a national English dish, was unknown in England prior to the abrogation of the Edict of Nantes, having been invented by the French Huguenot emigrants because of the cheapness at that time of the little used ox tail.

So, too, in a great degree nearly all the soups which have come to be known as "national" are just such combinations of material which represent but little cost. The Scotch mutton and barley broth, the hoche pot, the cherry soup of north Germany, the Russian tschi, or cabbage soup, the sopa of Spain or the caldo of Galatia, not to mention many others, are foods whose economical features have had much to do with their popularity, and yet it is these soups rather than the more expensive combinations of many kind of flesh and vegetables, which have found a place in history and literature. Where is there a reader of books, for example, who does not know the broths of Scotland or the cuscus of the Arabs, while Gautier's descriptions of the olla podrida and gaspacho of Spain are scarcely less familiar. To Gautier olla possessed merits that were undeniable, even though it was more of a stew than a soup, but of gaspacho he could not speak disparagingly enough. "With us," he says, "dogs but tolerably well bred would refuse to compromise their noses in such a mixture, but it is the favorite dish of the Andalusians, and the prettiest women without fear swallow at evening great spoonfuls of this infernal soup."

Soup it may be called, or salad, whichever fancy may dictate, for to make it, according to Gautier again, one fills a tureen with a mixture of water, vinegar and oil in which shreds of garlic, onions cut in quarters, slices of cucumber and pepper and bits of bread are left to soak until they are thoroughly saturated with the liquid, when the mess is served cold.

What Thackeray Said.

While not less "messy," the rich and savory stew which Thackeray has done so much to immortalize will appeal more strongly to the ordinary palate:

This bouillabaisse a noble dish is—
A sort of broth, or soup, or brew,
Or hotchpotch of all kinds of fishes,
That Greenwich never could outdo;
Green herbs, red papper, mussels, saffern,
Soles, onions, garlic, roach and dace,
All these you eat at Terre's tavern,
In that one dish of bouillabaisse.

But Thackeray is not the only man of letters who has visited Marseilles and ever afterward has sung the praises of its bouillabaisse, nor is Marseilles the only spot on earth where this delectable dish can be prepared. Of course there are fish in the Mediterranean which cannot be found elsewhere, but the fact that other fishes may be substituted can easily be demonstrated, for it is just as possible to prepare good bouillabaisse within the borders of the United States as it is to make Lafcadio Hearn's gumbo herbs outside of the city of New Orleans or the vaunted clam chowder of Rhode Island far from the water of Narragansett Bay. To accomplish such culinary feats, however, one must exercise as much care in the selection of the recipe as in following the local methods of cookery to the letter, for otherwise it will be impossible to attain results that will in any sense prove satisfactory.

Soups of Onion.

Less difficult to prepare are the onion soups of which both history and literature make such frequent mention, for soups of which the basis is the onion have been the delight of the bravest and wisest men since the day when soup was first invented. The Homeric heroes dined well upon it, Stanislas, King of Poland, loved it so dearly thathe gave it his own name, while the great Dumas spent days in the invention of an onion soup which, to his taste, surpassed all his previous efforts.

If one is in search of new culinary sensations he cannot do better than follow the guidance of Dumas, for no soups are more delicious than those which he has taught us to prepare. Select his mussel soup, or if time presses too closely to permit of spending five or six hours over a single dish, his onion soup, which requires but a few minutes of cooking. Take, he says, a dozen onions—Spanish, if possible—and after they have been minced with discretion, fry them in fresh butter until they have attained that yellow hue that is almost golden. Boil them then in some two quarts of water, seasoned with pepper and salt. At the end of twenty minutes mix with them the yolks of three eggs and pour this delectable liquid over slices of toasted bread.

Puree of Quail.

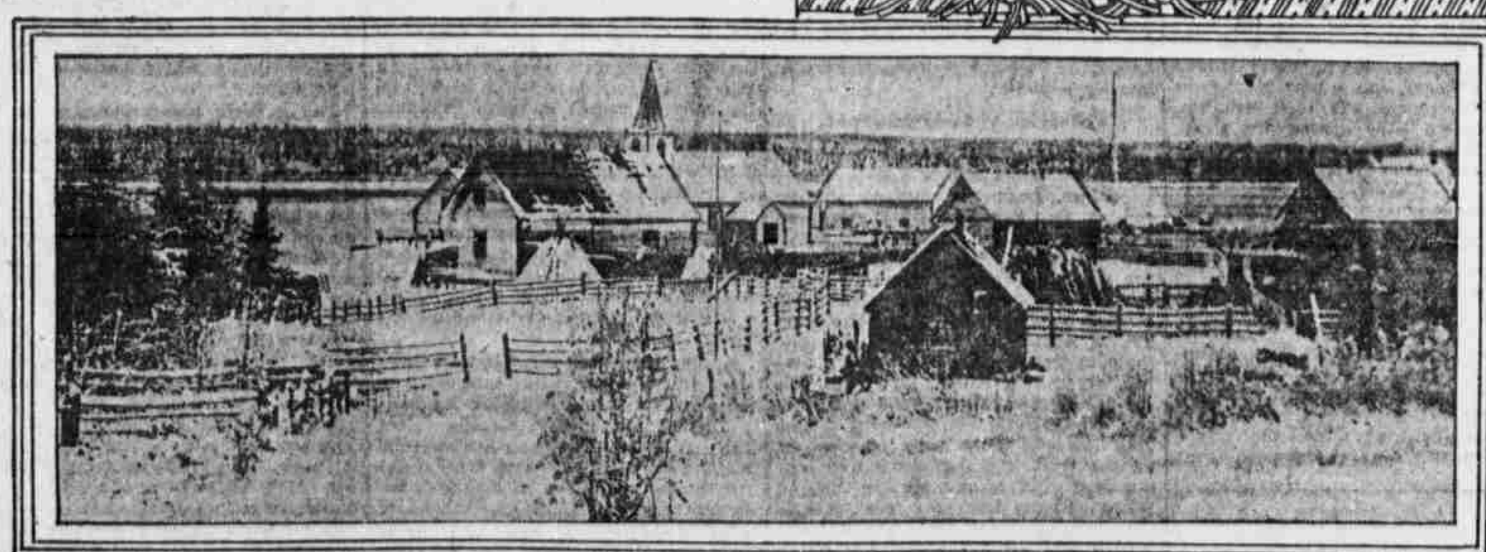
Almost equally delightful is the quail soup a la Fabert, that puree of quail's meat which still bears the name of Pere Fabert, most lovable of ecclesiastical gourmands, or the potage a la Camarani, which was found so delicious in 1806 that the rumor that its cost was three louis d'or per plate remained unquestioned until Baron Brisse, just before his death, made Dumas the custodian of its secret. From that day, however, the romance was destroyed, for Dumas could not withstand the temptation to inform the world that its soup of fabulous cost was nothing more or less than standard broth and vegetables, to which, just before completion, finely minced fowls livers had been added, one to each person, while the ready boiled macaroni and Parmesan cheese which followed the soup into the tureen completed a dish which, in spite of the simplicity of its construction, had long been the greatest of culinary mysteries.

In Voltaire's opinion the best of all soups was the blond de veau, which Tronchin invented and of which he wrote to his friend, St. Lambert: "Come to Cirey, where Mme. Duchastlet will prevent your being poisoned; there is not even a spoonful of just in the kitchen; all is done here with blond de veau, and we are going to live a hundred years." But, however delicious this soup might have been, it is quite evident that Voltaire was no expert in culintary matters, for his taste did not enable him to detect the presence of the "bouillon," the just which he so much abhorred, which played so important a step in its composition. To make this soup, according to Tronchin, fry slices of veal and pieces of fowl in butter, afterward adding onions, carrots, a bouquet of herbs and a pint of bouillon. When the liquid has boiled down to a glace fill the casserole again with bouillon, boil, skim and leave to simmer for two hours. In the meantime make a white roux and dry some mushrooms in it for several minutes, after which the broth is added, and being kept on a mild fire is skimmed of grease and passed through a tammy just before service, a recipe for longevity which can be tried by any one who can afford the ingredients.

Birch's Soup.

In the entire category of soups, however, there are none that the loyal Englishman can compare to those which have made the name of Birch's a household word. This establishment, which was opened in 1711, was long one of the most popular of London eating houses, and its spring soup, so lauded by Walker, and its mock turtle soup, for the making of which the famous Dr. Kitchener left such explicit directions, received the highest praise from "the committee of taste," that company of the elite of the grand gourmands and wits of the that day who met with regularity at the doctor's table to test his recipes and pass judgment upon the merits of all new

That was the romantic age in cooking, the age when cooks had just awakened to an appreciation of the possibilities of their art, and yet in spite of this fact it is doubtful if any mock turtle soup that has since been invented can compare in point of savorness to the soup which was made at Birch's two centuries ago, and if any cynic is inclined to question the truth of such an assertion, he has only to follow the instructions which Dr. Kitchener has left to be persuaded that he can well afford to go back, even for 200 years, in our search for delicacies to tempt the jaded palates of twentieth century epicures.



A HUDSON BAY FUR TRADING POST IN The FAR NORTH IN MID WINTER....

Vassar Blouse Shop

One Price $4.50

All Styles $4.50

Pearl Model

Crepe de chene, white, flesh, navy, black.

Georgettes Crepes de Chenes

Wide selection of other smart styles in georgette and crepe de chene at $4.50. Elsewhere $7.00.

Mail Orders Filled. Ask for Booklet B.

Vassar Blouse Shop
500 Fifth Ave., N.W. Cor. 42nd St.
NEW YORK