

TRAPPING OF MUSKRAT IS QUITE PROFITABLE

Best Skins Bring Good Price, Especially in London Where Most of Them Are Sent—Flesh of Too Strong Taste for More Refined.

(By WALTER B. LEUTE)
London alone takes over 4,000,000 muskrat skins every year, and most of these are shipped from the United States. The demand for muskrat skins is constantly increasing because of the decreasing supply of mink, beaver and other skins.

Only one other animal in the world, the European rabbit, now exceeds the muskrat in the number of skins marketed.

The common muskrat is about four times as large as the ordinary brown rat. It lives near streams and lakes



Full-Grown Muskrat.

where water is always at hand. It is a strong swimmer and is chiefly active at night. While they may occasionally be seen building their houses in the daytime, most of the work is done after nightfall.

Their houses are made of grasses, rushes and roots, with the bottom resting on the bottom of the pond and the dome rising two or three feet above the water.

From the part of the structure above the water an interior chamber is dug out, from which two or three passages lead downward through the mud to the water, reaching it at points below the frost line. If the water is shallow the muskrat digs a channel to deeper parts of the pond.

The young are seldom born in the houses, which are used chiefly to store food and for shelter in the winter.

When banks of streams or ponds are high enough for the purpose the muskrats burrow into them. The entrance to the tunnel is almost always under water, and the approach is by channels deep enough to prevent the ice from closing the passage.

It is very difficult to locate a muskrat channel, for this reason. Sometimes the tunnels extend upward into the bank above the level of the water, and extend back from ten to fifty feet into the bank, and terminate in a large chamber.

Usually two tunnels lead from the seat to the water, and often a tunnel has two branches or outlets.

Although the animals do not hibernate, and make little provision for winter food, they become very active as winter comes on, building new houses, adding to the old ones and deepening channels.

There is much difference of opinion as to the number of young raised by each female. Some observers say the muskrat has three litters in a season and from three to seven in a litter. The northern Indians, who were close observers, say that two litters are born the first year and three the succeeding seasons.

The muskrat lives mostly on roots and herbs, and sometimes will eat ani-



Muskrat Skin Stretcher.

mal food. When located near gardens they do a tremendous amount of injury to the crops, eating corn when it is in the roasting ear and destroying vegetables such as beets, turnips and carrots.

In the south the muskrat is a great enemy of the rice planter. As it burrows into the embankment, it allows the water to flood the land. It also causes great damage to irrigation districts, ponds and river levees.

North American Indians eat the muskrat, but its strong flavor makes it unpalatable for people of more refined taste.

Muskrats are easily trapped. They take any suitable bait readily. The trap should be set under water so the animal will quickly drown, as they fear foot-loose and escape from the trap.

An ordinary steel trap No. 1 is best. Sink the trap in the trail partly in mud where water is two or three

inches deep, fasten the chain to a stake or pole, reaching to deep water. The pole, upon which the ring of the chain is to slide, should have a fork at the outer end to prevent it from slipping off. The other end should be stuck firmly into the bank. Fasten the bait to a stick set in mud so that it is about a foot above the pan of the trap. The animal, in reaching for the bait, sets the hind foot upon the pan and is caught securely.

An open barrel sunk near the bank of the stream is said to be an effective trap, although a floating barrel is more generally used. A hole is sawed in the side and a strong cleat is nailed across each end, upon which boards, longer than the barrel, are nailed. Enough water is placed in the barrel to make a float with these platforms level with the surface. Apples or carrots are placed in the barrel for bait.

Trappers in Ohio, Illinois and some other middle states are reported to be able to earn from \$400 to \$900 during the season from January first to about the middle of March.

The owner of a 1,300-acre tract of marsh land, with the aid of his son, secured over 5,000 muskrats in one season, which were sold for \$2,300.

The skins are sorted into black and brown before being shipped to market.

Baltimore is a good market and pays from 35 cents for brown to 45 cents for black. St. Louis is also a large market, and prices are generally a little higher there.

Muskrats taken for the fur should be trapped, not shot or speared. If taken alive in a trap they should be



Floating Muskrat Trap.

killed by a sharp blow across the back of the head. Trappers usually carry a short club for this purpose. Muskrat skins intended for the market should be "cased," not opened along the belly. In skinning, traps begin at the heel and slit up the middle of the hind leg to the tail around it, and then down the other leg to the heel in the same way. No other cuts in the skin are needed, though many trappers pass the knife around the feet, where the long fur ends. The skin is then turned back inward. The skin peels off easily to the front feet. The trapper cuts closely around nose, ears and lips, so as not to tear the skin. If bits of flesh adhere to the skin about the head, they may be scraped off, but this is usually left for the fur dresser. The skin, inside out, is stretched over a thin board or a shingle of the proper shape, and a tack or two is inserted to keep it in position until dry. Skins should be dried in the open air—not before a fire or in the sun.

Houses for Winter Farrowing.
Provide good individual houses for sows due to farrow in cold weather. A canvas or burlap curtain hung in the door will keep out the cold and make the house more comfortable for the young litter. A lantern hung in the sowhouse on very cold nights when the pigs come will temper the atmosphere and aid in saving the lives of some of the pigs.

Feeding Dairy Cows.
The cost of feeding the average dairy cow in the United States for a year is \$21, according to statistics gathered by one of the big dairy cattle societies. With the low prices of grain, the feed bill this year will run from five to ten dollars below these figures. Even at that there may be cows in the herd that do not earn their keep.

Chinese Corn.
The department of agriculture is experimenting with corn shipped from China. Plants raised last year averaged less than sixteen inches in height with an average of 12 green leaves at the time of tasseling. The ears averaged 6 1/2 inches in length and 4 1/2 in greatest circumference, with 16 and 18 rows of small grains.

HAD A REASON FOR BEING

Carnegie Elicited Information Asked For, but It is Doubtful if He Appreciated It.

At the recent dinner given by Andrew Carnegie, an eminent lawyer, seated half-way down the table, was deeply immersed in conversation with his neighbor when the host opened up the subject of the British coinage system, and showed signs of wishing undivided attention.

"Every other civilized nation," he declared, "has the decimal system, while England adheres to the absurd and cumbersome table of pounds, shillings and pence." Rap-rap-rap.

The raps were for the lawyer, who remained absorbed in his own conversation. "And even farthings," continued the iron-master, "is there anything else in finance so ridiculous as the farthing?" Rap-rap.

The lawyer glanced around somewhat impatiently.

"Judge U—," Mr. Carnegie called out, "why do the British continue their coinage of farthings?"

"To enable the Scotch to practice benevolence," Mr. Carnegie, returned the lawyer.

SUCCESSFUL TREATMENT OF PIMPLES AND BLACKHEADS

A speedy and economical treatment for disfiguring pimples is the following: Gently smear the face with Cuticura Ointment, but do not rub. Wash off the ointment in five minutes with Cuticura Soap and hot water and bathe freely for some minutes. Repeat morning and evening. At other times use hot water and Cuticura Soap for bathing the face as often as agreeable. Cuticura soap and ointment are equally successful for itching, burning, scaly and crusted humors of the skin and scalp, with loss of hair, from infancy to age, usually affording instant relief, when all else fails. Send to Potter Drug & Chem. Corp., Boston, Mass., for the latest Cuticura book on the care and treatment of the skin and scalp.

WHERE IT WAS LACKING



She—You poked up your lips so I thought you were going to kiss me.

He—No; I got some grit in my mouth.

She—Well, for goodness' sake swallow it! You need it in your system!

OATS—259 Bu. Per Acre.
This is the swain to yield of Theodore Harms, Lewis Co., Wash., had from Salzer's Rejuvenated White Bonanza oats and won a handsome 80 acre farm. Other big yields are 141 bus., 119 bus., 103 bus., etc., had by farmers scattered throughout the U. S.

Salzer's Pedigree Barley, Flax, Corn, Oats, Wheat, Potatoes, Grasses and Clovers are famous the world over for their purity and tremendous yielding qualities. We are surely the largest growers of farm seeds in the world.

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The Test of Intellect.

"I wonder why Mrs. Flimflit regards her husband as stupid. He has been very successful in business."
"Perhaps," replied Mr. Meekton, "he's like so many of the rest of us who can't possibly learn to keep the score of a bridge game."

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one size smaller after using Allen's Foot-Ease. It's a delicate powder to be shaken into the shoes. It makes tight or new shoes feel easy. Write for free trial package, address Allen B. Unwin, La Roy, N. Y.

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"What is the name of the song the lady is singing?"
"Meet me in Heaven."
"Don't you think she's taking a great deal for granted?"

Taking Garfield Tea will prevent the recurrence of sick-headache, indigestion and bilious attacks. All druggists.

A good home is the best exposition of heaven.

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Take LAXATIVE BROMO Quinine Tablets. It makes tight or new shoes feel easy. Write for free trial package, address Allen B. Unwin, La Roy, N. Y.

The bill collector is also a settlement worker.

Take Garfield Tea to arouse a sluggish liver—all druggists sell it.

It is the little heart that is honest broken.

A Fairly Wet World.

The Pacific ocean covers 63,000,000 miles, the Atlantic 38,000,000 and the Indian, Arctic and Antarctic 42,000,000. To show away the contents of the Pacific it would be necessary to fill a tank one mile long, one mile wide and one mile deep every day for 446 years. Put in figures, the Pacific holds in weight 645,000,000,000,000,000 tons. The Atlantic averages a depth of not quite three miles. Its water weighs 225,000,000,000,000,000 tons, and a tank to contain it would have each of its sides 43 miles long. The figures of the other oceans are in the same startling proportions. It would take all the sea water in the world 2,000,000 years to flow over Niagara.

The Handy Remedy for Eruption Caused by Poison Ivy or Wood Poison is Resinol Ointment.

I have used Resinol Salve for several years. I was badly broken out with eruptions caused by Poison Ivy. The itching was unbearable. My doctor recommended Resinol. It did its work fine. Being subject to wood poison, I now keep a jar of Resinol on hand. I have told others of it who had like results. Jno. H. Kohl, Benton, Kan.

Queen Mary's Trousseau.

Queen Mary is following the example set by her mother, the duchess of Teck, who at the time of her daughter's wedding with the present king declared that for the trousseau "not a yard of cambric or linen, of flannel or tweed, of lace or ribbon should be bought outside the kingdom," and who kept her word. Queen Mary is having her coronation robes and gowns for court functions as well as the opening of parliament gown made by a British firm of all British material. She has ordered eight dresses so far, and work on them has commenced.—London Correspondent New York Sun.

England's Oldest School.

A controversy has arisen in England as to which school has the right to claim greatest age. There are two schools which were founded in the early part of the seventh century—the King's school, Rochester, and the King's school, Canterbury. Justus, on his appointment to the see of Rochester in 604, made provision for a school in connection with the cathedral. Augustine established the Canterbury school about the same time. St. Peter's at York dates back to the eleventh century.

A Quick Sidelstep.

Merchant (to widow)—I am willing to buy your husband's working business and good-will for \$5,000.

Widow—Well, but I happen to be part of the working business.

Merchant—Then I'll take only the good-will.—Fleegende Blaetter.

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Much moonshine goes into pious talks about making sunshine.

The Human Heart

The heart is a wonderful double pump, through the action of which the blood stream is kept sweeping round and round through the body at the rate of seven miles an hour. "Remember this, that our bodies will not stand the strain of over-work without good, pure blood any more than the engine can run smoothly without oil." After many years of study in the active practice of medicine, Dr. R. V. Pierce found that when the stomach was out of order, the blood impure and there were symptoms of general breakdown, a tonic made of the glyceric extract of certain roots was the best corrective. This he called

Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery

Being made without alcohol, this "Medical Discovery" helps the stomach to assimilate the food, thereby curing dyspepsia. It is especially adapted to diseases attended with excessive tissue waste, notably in convalescence from various fevers, for thin-blooded people and those who are always "catching cold."

Dr. Pierce's Common Sense Medical Adviser is sent on receipt of 31 cent stamps for the French cloth-bound book of 1008 pages. Address Dr. K. V. Pierce, No. 663 Main Street, Buffalo, N. Y.

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For twenty-nine years I have been at intervals a great sufferer from rheumatism. During that time, no telling how many gallons of the various kinds of liniments and oils I have used and with but little relief. Recently, I was confined to my bed helpless. I tried Sloan's Liniment and used it with such satisfactory results that I sent for two large bottles, and I have up to this time used about half a 50 cent bottle with splendid success.—JAMES HYDE, Beebe, White County, Ark.

Got Ease in Less Than Ten Minutes.

MR. JAMES E. ALEXANDER, of North Hayswell, Me., writes:—"I am a horsehooper and subject to many strains in my back and hips which has brought on rheumatism in the sciatic nerve. I had it so bad one night when sitting in my chair, that I had to jump on my feet to get relief. I at once applied your

SLOAN'S LINIMENT

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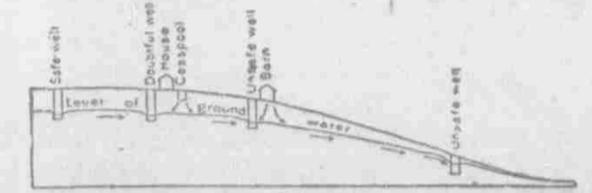
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You Look Prematurely Old

Because of those ugly, grizzly, gray hairs. Use "LA CREOLE" HAIR DRESSING. PRICE, \$1.00, retail.