

HUNTING BIG EGGS.

HOW THE COLLECTOR GETS AND PRESERVES HIS SPECIMENS.

It is Necessary to Have Outfits as Extensive as Those of Hunters of Big Game—Some Particulars.

Those who think deer or mountain lion hunting to be hard work ought to try hunting hawks' nests for awhile and get a taste of the really strenuous life. Hawks nest all over the world, from the equator to the far north; they make up one of the largest and most widely known of any of the bird families. To them belong the great bald eagles and the tiny sparrow hawks everyone knows. But their habits are all different, so that methods which will result in the finding of one hawk's nest, says the Los Angeles Times, will take the hunter directly by the home of another species. The little sparrow hawk lays its eggs in a hollow tree, while the eagle builds a bulky nest of all sorts of sticks and places it in the very treetop of the highest available tree.

The hawk hunter—who, by the way, calls himself an "oologist"—takes with him as much of an outfit as would a deer hunter. First of all, he wears a suit of duck or khaki, lemon, or, preferably, forest green in color, and instead of the usual heavy shoes of a hunter, light leather creations which yield to every movement of the foot and cling as tenaciously to the bark of trees as would the barefoot. To aid him in climbing still further, he carries a pair of the "climbers" used by telephone and telegraph linemen. Added to this is a tin box having straps on each end so that it may be easily carried, and in which the eggs are carefully packed in cotton.

Entering the forest or the cliff-walled canyon, the modern hawker strikes out carefully, treading as silently as any deer hunter, searching the skies frequently with a field glass for the great birds he seeks. Hawks, eagles and most of the owl nest in early spring, from the first of February to the end of May, so that the collector must be swift early in order to get eggs in which incubation has not commenced. He scans the tops of trees or such likely places as he knows and, finding some great bulk of sticks looming darkly against the sun, he lays down his paraphernalia and ascends the tree. If the hawk be one of the large species known as buzzard hawks, a rap on the trunk of the tree will usually send the nesting bird in screaming flight from her home. With the smaller hawks this test does not apply, but the experienced hawker rarely climbs to a nest from which no bird can be induced to fly.

Once secured and brought safely home, the next thing for the "oologist" to do is to preserve the eggs. This he does by drilling a small hole in one side of the egg and removing the contents by means of a blowpipe. Instruments are manufactured for this purpose, and many are of intricate make for use when the eggs are valuable and so far incubated as to be unsaveable with the unaided blowpipe. When the eggs are emptied of their contents, they are thoroughly dried with hot air and then laid carefully away in trays of cornmeal to become entirely dry in case the air has left any drops of moisture. In a day or two they are placed in their final nest of cotton in the drawer of a cabinet where many other hawks' eggs have preceded them. Each collection is catalogued, and the eggs are marked with a known symbol, so that not only may each set be distinguished from all the others, but each species may also be known by a glance at the egg and without reference to the printed catalogue.

Many thousands of dollars' worth of hawks' and other birds' eggs pass annually through the mails of this country. They are sent in exchange between collectors living in widely separated parts of America, and many come from Europe, where the study of birds' eggs and the sport of collecting them have been developed to a much greater extent than here.

A rare merlin found only in the northern part of Canada during the breeding season lays an egg worth \$15 to its fortunate finder; and not only this, but the merlin usually lays some three to five eggs in every nest, so that a "set" (as the full number of eggs laid by a bird is called) may be worth a neat sum to the hawker who finds it. But it is not for money that most of these men who have taken up this kind of sport go out; many of them are independently rich, others are in lucrative positions, but they take it up as a means of getting out into the world of the wild, and bring home the eggs as souvenirs of their trips. In time this has grown to be a regular study, until now almost all the large museums have a department devoted exclusively to the study of the eggs of birds, living and extinct.

An Exceptional Occupation. A Parisian actor who formerly made a good income in his profession is now earning his living as a cab driver. He has taken this step to spite his divorced wife. Wherever he went she put a lien on his salary. The actor found that the only occupation in which his wife was helpless against him was cab driving, because he drew no wages and had to pay for the hire of the cab. He says he is making a good living and is quite happy.

Getting His Shape. Molly—I hear your brother is wearing corsets, now? Cholly—Oh, yes, he's trying to get in shape for the winter afternoon teas.—Yonkers Statesman.

MINE IS A CRYSTAL PALACE

The First Silver Mine in Colorado Is Now a Picturesque Marvel.

Away up on the top of McClelland mountain, a dozen miles from Georgetown, and at an altitude of 13,600 feet above sea level, is one of the most picturesque bits of scenery to be found in the whole of Colorado. It is a perpetual palace of ice, formed by nature in the abandoned tunnel of what was the first silver mine ever discovered in this state. The ice crystals, formed by the percolation of water through earth to air in the intense cold of a high altitude, have taken all sorts of weird and peculiar forms. There are bears and elephants and turtles and other animals, birds and human figures galore. At one point in the tunnel a grim white figure, with arm upraised and knife in hand, seems to be pursuing the figure of a girl, whose long, flowing hair is fluttering in the wind as she runs, and the whole is pictured with such apparent fidelity that one is reminded irresistibly of rocks carved by the ancient Aztecs in regions further south.

The history of this tunnel is coincident with the discovery of silver in Colorado. Early in April, 1859, placer gold was discovered in Clear creek canyon, near the present site of Idaho Springs, and for several years thereafter the sluice boxes of the miners dotted every available bar for miles up and down the little stream. At first the Clear creek prospectors hunted gold only, the existence of silver being unknown. On September 14, 1894, however, Gov. Robert W. Steele, with two companions, discovered the outcrop of what was afterward called the Johnson lode, and a little investigation showed that it assayed from \$200 to \$500 in silver per ton. The resulting excitement flooded every hill in the vicinity with an army of picks and shovels, and the future of the Clear Creek district became assured.

A number of years ago, however, the old Johnson lode, after a production of millions in silver, was practically abandoned by its owners as worked out. Then the ice crystals began to form from percolation. It is always cold on the mountain top. The temperature goes away below freezing every night of the year, and zero weather is constant for months at a time. Season by season the ice becomes more beautiful and enchanting, though the crystal palace is absolutely unknown as yet by the casual tourist. At present an electric railway, running from Silver Plume to the top of McClelland mountain, is under construction, and it is expected that by next year the old Johnson mine will be thrown open to those hardier tourists who are willing to brave the altitude for the sake of a new sensation.

WHAT MEN WANT TO KNOW

Presented by a Woman Who Propounds a Few Questions for Her Sex.

"Men," she said, according to an exchange, "are continually asking in the newspapers the questions: 'Why does a woman always want to know if her hat is on straight?' 'Why does she sharpen pencils with her husband's razor?' 'Why will she ruin a \$50 gown in a struggle to save two cents at a bargain counter?' 'I think it is about time we women should retaliate on the men with some questions like these: 'Why does a man when he finishes with a newspaper always throw it in a heap on the floor, instead of folding it up neatly?' 'Why, when sent to look for something in the bureau or closet, does he always return and say it isn't there?' 'Why, when a pretty girl praises another man's looks, does he sneer and say the girl is soft?' 'Why is his Sunday morning headache always due to what he ate, not to what he drank, on Saturday night?' 'Why, as he laughs at women, does he fail to perceive that women find much of the ludicrous in him?'"

A Naval Family. Thomas Oliver Selfridge entered the navy in 1818 and was a rear admiral when he died. Since 1818 there has always been a Selfridge among the officers of the navy—generally more than one. Seven Selfridges in all appear on the general navy register. Capt. James Russell Selfridge, ordnance officer at the Charlestown navy yard, who has just died, was one of them. He was a son of the first admiral and a brother of the living Admiral Selfridge.—The Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Conscription in Argentina.

There are reasons that induce men to leave Argentina as soon as they have managed to save the necessary passage money. The military laws of the republic help to some extent, for as conscription has lost Germany and France thousands of promising subjects, so has it deprived Argentina of thousands of settlers who have taken their Argentina-born children out of reach of a law that has more terrors than attractions for the people.

Won by Waiting.

The lutecheon service had been particularly slow, but none the less did Uncle Harry leave a quarter by his plate for the waiter. Wherefore small Reginald asked: "Why did you give the man money, uncle?" "For waiting," came the answer. "You ought to have divided 'tween us; we did the waiting," said small Reginald.—Lippincott's Magazine.

KANSAS WHEAT BELT

REGION IN WHICH ARE MANY HOMES OF CULTURE.

The Only Real Work of the Year Is During the Harvest Season—Farmers Generally Are Students.

There are homes on the wheat ranches where culture reigns. Books, pictures, music, pianos and newspapers keep the inhabitants in touch with the best things of life, says the Kansas City Star. The onerous toil of the wheat harvest is mostly imaginary. The only real work of the year is during the week of harvest. Turning the soil with a riding plow is not hard, as farm work goes. Planting the wheat with a drill is easy. Waiting for it to grow is not such degrading labor. Men who raise three crops of alfalfa a year work harder all summer than do the wheat harvesters. The harvest, hands are softened, weakened products of enervating city life, and that is why the work seems hard. The harvest season is a godsend to these men. The outlet to the country for a season of receding toil soothes the nerves of a fermenting element the city breeds and harbors.

The farmers of the wheat belt, on the whole, seem to be about the happiest agriculturists to be found. The rapid growth of the western counties into the gigantic wheat-producing section that it now is has offered ample opportunity for all the farmers of managing ability to build up moderate fortunes and acquire large tracts of land. These they have adorned with splendid homes, orchards and shade trees, and have stocked with fine cattle and good breeds of all domestic stock. The wheat belt is also "the greatest grass land on earth." That is, native grass grows there in profusion, and it makes the best grazing of any grass crop. All these things have enabled the progressive farmers to surround themselves with everything that goes to make rural life delightful.

These wide-awake farmers are students of everything that comes into their lives. At a glance they can tell which of two steers will gain a pound and the quicker and more given rations, and this same faculty makes them judges of human character as well. They know what kind of men they are dealing with and treat them accordingly. Many a man who came to the harvest like a tramp, a man used to a cultured home, but fallen from grace and "down on his luck," has been singled out by the farmer or his wife as one fit for better things. Such a man is treated as one of the family. His story is learned if he wishes to tell it. When the harvest is over he is given steady work. The bond that throws people together of an equal plane of thought becomes established.

Cases of this kind can be related in every household in the wheat belt. Said one farmer's wife—she traced her ancestry to Ethan Allen and other historic names of colonial days and was herself a college graduate: "One of the most interesting things of the harvest is studying the character of the men. Last year a young man worked for us who, we readily saw, was of good breeding and came from a respectable home. His hand got sore in the harvest and I dressed it and doctored him the best I could. It got worse, and one day I asked him what was the matter with it. He said: 'The blood does not circulate in it.' Then he rolled up his sleeve and showed a scar that was frightful. He had been in some scrape and had received a bad cut, which had been sewed up by a surgeon. His hand got well and he worked for us nearly a year. One time he was sick for several weeks and I said to him: 'John, why don't you write to your folks? I know that you have a home and that your parents are worrying about you.' He took my advice and wrote two letters. While later he said to us: 'I'm going to leave you. I will eat dinner with my folks to-morrow in Golden, Col.' Well dressed and feeling good, with \$250 in his pocket, he bade us good-by. We soon received a letter from his mother, thanking us for what we had done for her son."

When the men who have accumulated much land in the wheat country die and divide their holdings, the land will be in smaller tracts and so thickly settled that the local market will supply all the labor needed in the harvest. That will mark the end of the summer migration.

Swimmers' Cramp.

In drowning accidents where expert swimmers suddenly lose all control of their powers, the usual explanation of cramps is beginning to be looked upon as insufficient. It has been noticed that persons having disease of the middle ear, who have already shown symptoms of vertigo, are especially liable to such accidents, and as the semicircular canals are the organs of direction, it is suggested that even a slight hemorrhage in this delicate structure from a blow by the waves would result in utter helplessness. Persons with ears not perfectly sound are therefore warned against swimming in rough water.

Carried with You.

Joy is a prize unthought, and is freest, purest in its flow when it comes unthought. No getting into heaven, as a place, will compass it. You must carry it with you, else it is not there. You must have it in you, as the music of a well-ordered soul, the fire of a holy purpose, the willing up out of the central depths of eternal springs that hide the waters there.—Harace Bushnell.

RING THE CURSE OF SPAIN

Simple Band Is Known as "Mephisto's" and Brings Misfortune to Dynasty.

There is always a distinction and a sort of pride in possessing something which no one else has, even if that something is reputed to be a dispenser of misfortune and history can show that the possessor is sure to get into trouble through it. Until very recently the Spanish royal family was in this unenviable position and this lasted from about the middle of the sixteenth century until after the time of the Spanish-American war.

This unique but unfortunate possession is nothing more or less than an innocent-looking but rather wonderful ring, and because it is reputed to be the carrier of ill luck it has been dubbed "Mephisto's ring." In appearance it is similar to an ordinary marriage band of solid gold with the exception that it is set with a large and perfect emerald, the center of which has been hollowed out and contains a ruby so cut as to fit exactly. Around these at the edge of the emerald are alternately set pearls and diamonds of about the size of pin heads.

Although this ring is said to be quite valuable and to have a wonderful history attached to it, no one can be found in Spain who is willing to take it even as a gift, and this because it is universally known what "Mephisto's ring" means.

This evil ornament came into Spanish possession at the time of the reign of Philip II., but how no one seems to know. History tells that during the reign of this monarch and those of his successors, Philip III. and Philip IV., the country was slowly but surely on the decline. This ring was in the possession of all these kings. From the reign of Philip IV. to that of Charles IV. the ring cannot be traced, but it then again springs into existence, and history tells of the disastrous wars between Spain and England during the time of the last-named monarch.

Next Philip's son, who ascended the Spanish throne as Ferdinand III., is taken prisoner by Napoleon and the Spanish throne is given to the brother of the French emperor. Then comes the Carlist rebellion under Ferdinand's daughter, Isabella II., and the banishment of Queen Christina; the war with the Moors; the banishment of Queen Isabella in 1868; the general scenes of anarchy and bloodshed during the years of 1873 and 1874, and finally the quarrels between Spain and her colonies, which resulted in the disastrous Spanish-American war.

At the time of the commencement of the recent war between Spain and the United States this ring was presented by the Spanish royal family to a church in the hope that having a religious institution as its owner its evil effects would be averted. This did nothing toward changing its influence, for almost immediately after its reception by the church this house of worship was burned to the ground, and the ring was thereupon returned to its donor.

It was then given to a museum, but, like the church, this was also destined to receive harm, for it was twice (a thing said never to happen) struck by lightning. The ring was again returned to the Spanish royal family, where it remained for some time. The last defeat of the Spanish army and navy is claimed to be due to this ring. At present no one will take the responsibility of the ownership of this jewel, so it has been placed in a strong box and secretly buried.

Explosive Gems.

It is not uncommon for a diamond to explode soon after it reaches the surface; some have been known to burst in the pockets of the miners or when held in the warm hand, and the loss is the greater because large stones are more liable to explode or fly in pieces than small ones. Valuable stones have been destroyed in this way, and it is whispered that cunning dealers are not averse to allowing responsible clients to handle or carry in their warm pockets large crystals fresh from the mine. By way of safeguard against explosion some dealers tinned large diamonds in raw potato to insure safe transit to England.—London Chronicle.

Eclipse in Malta.

An engineer who viewed the recent eclipse of the sun from his station in Malta thus describes the effect of the darkness on the inhabitants of that island: "The Maltese nearly went mad with fright, thinking the world was coming to an end. All the people of the village where I am living ran into the church, while some rang the church bells and some even fired off large squibs (something of the fireworks tribe, I mean), but it was all over in about a quarter of an hour and then the Maltese left the church and made their way back to their houses, still looking very much scared."

Called His Bluff.

Miss Cutting—I have often wondered why you have never dabbled in literature, Mr. Glibb. Mr. Glibb—Ah, you flatter me, Miss Cutting. "Not at all," said she. "If I could spin off fairy tales as easily as you can, I should certainly try to put them into book form!"—Detroit Free Press.

Retail Graft.

"Well," said the optimist, "there are at least two senators who won't do any grafting this session." "Oh, I don't know," growled the confirmed pessimist. "They'll both make a pretty good rake-off on their mileage!"—Chicago Sun.

DECLINE OF

Water Level of the Niger Is Slowly

The Niger is the largest river in Africa and one of the great rivers of the world. If a large island in the Niger were to be cut off from the continent in the latitude of the equator it would make an island of the northern part of North America. But the Niger is now showing more signs of the desiccation that is gradually spreading over large parts of Africa than any other large river, for it has the run off for the waters of a great part of the western Sudan, where the decline in rainfall has been prominently marked for a considerable period.

The British have made several futile attempts in the last two years to reach Jebba from the Niger, and with their steamer Nupur, in 1904, they reached this point, where the river is accessible at all stages of the year to light draft steamers. At that time, the French report that the water level is slowly but steadily sinking. This is very apparent among the islands that divide the Niger into many channels from 100 to 300 miles above the delta. As long as we have had the islands of these islands some of them have been completely covered at high water so that the native inhabitants have been compelled to make an annual sojourn on the mainland till the fall of the floods. Not a single island is now abandoned, for none of them is covered even when the flood is unusually high.

The French officers Touze, Hourst and Fourneau proved the possibility of carrying supplies from the mouth of the Niger to the upper river in spite of the long stretch of rapids about 500 miles above the delta. Hundreds of tons of freight have thus been distributed from the ocean among the French posts in the western Sudan, and as late as last year some supplies were still forwarded by this route; but this highway to Inner Africa, hailed as a great discovery when the French declared its practicability, has been abandoned this year. The water is so low in the rapids that no boat can get over the rocks.

Fortunately for the French they have completed their railroad from the Senegal river to the upper Niger, giving a new inlet to their Sudanese possessions. But geographers are wondering how long the drying up of Africa is to continue. It has been marked within the last ten years by the disappearance of Lake Ngami, in the south, and the diminution of Lake Chad, 2,400 miles further north, to a fourth of its former size, and there are as yet no signs that the great decrease in rainfall is merely a temporary phenomenon.

WOMEN'S NEW EMPLOYMENT

Hired to Run Elevators in Buildings Devoted to Female Interests.

Women always seem to be able to establish some new kind of work. Now Boston has in several buildings devoted to women's interests, or largely patronized by women, girls employed to run the elevators. The idea was introduced by the Women's Educational and Industrial union, and the Young Women's Christian association soon followed.

"Except for one janitor," said the superintendent of the latter institution, "we are all women around here, and to have two or three boys about to run the elevator was an unmitigated nuisance. So we discharged the boys and hired the girls. Since then we have been much more comfortable." The New England hospital for women in Roxbury has also introduced elevator girls, and some of the millinery and women's furnishing goods stores in Boston are taking up the idea.

The girls are all doing the work to the complete satisfaction of their employers and have at the same time suggested a solution for the perplexing question of what to do with a girl who has to earn money at an early age. She can run an elevator until she is old enough or has acquired the necessary training for something better. Formerly she might have been a cash girl, but now various mechanical devices are taking the place of the cash girl and leaving her without employment. Several of the girls employed as elevator girls in the buildings just mentioned are studying for better positions and one is glad to earn three dollars a week while her eyes are recovering from the strain of her high school course.

To run an elevator is not difficult work, but requires careful attention to business. For this reason, according to the testimony of their employers, girls do it better than boys. They are more conscientious and trustworthy. The girls seem to enjoy the work, and though the hours are long the work is not tiring. At the Young Women's Christian association the elevator girl goes on duty at seven o'clock and works till 12. There she has two hours' rest. In the afternoon she works from two o'clock until five, when she has an intermission of half an hour, resuming work at 5:30 o'clock and continuing till seven.

The Statue to the Pilgrims.

On Plymouth hill stands the imposing statue of the Pilgrims. Its base is granite and supports a seated figure at each of the four corners, with open searching the surrounding country, while a woman's figure crowns the top. On the pedestal is inscribed the name of every man, woman and child that came over in the Mayflower.—St. Nicholas.

MAMMOT OR ELEPHANT.

Berlin Zookeepers Claim Mounts of Large Animals Ever

A new and interesting attraction at the Berlin Zoological garden is a mounted specimen of a monster sea elephant. It can claim the distinction of being the largest sea elephant that has ever been seen.

It was found one month ago by whalers off the coast of the Falkland islands, and promptly surrounded the whaler and subsequently slaughtered in easy task—and the hide, skeleton and skull were purchased at a high price by J. P. G. Umlauf.

Some idea of the size of the monster may be gained from the fact that from the tip of its trunk it has a total measurement of 21 feet. Such an animal, when fully grown, would weigh 10,000 pounds, or ten and one-half tons. The circumference of the body at its widest part is some 18 feet. The skull alone measures two feet three inches long and one foot two inches high.

The sea elephant, or seal elephant, is in many ways an interesting creature. So far as size goes he can give points to the walrus, but he is certainly not so ferocious looking. Except for the curious nose (whence his Greek name), he is just a big black seal, fairly agile in the sea and clumsy ashore like all his kind. He is about the bulk of a hippopotamus, although more hirsute and with a less extensive opening of the jaws. He holds among seals the unique position of being common to both hemispheres, although from the arctic with which he has been hunted, very few specimens now exist north of the equator.

Just now, however, the sea elephant is enjoying a respite and is consequently increasing in numbers rapidly, particularly in the southern sea. He forms practically the only population of many an otherwise lonely series of barren rocks in the Antarctic ocean.

His food consists chiefly, if not entirely, of cuttlefish. Formerly the animal was hunted by whalers upon all the islands of the Antarctic ocean, notably Kerzuelen's Land and the South Shetland, where they abounded in immense herds. The creatures were slaughtered for their hides and blubber.

The tusks of the male reach a length of four or five inches, their external part being smooth and conical, while the part imbedded in the flesh is furrowed and slightly curved. The tusks of the males are solid—at the lower end only a slight cavity appears—while in the female they are shorter, and, moreover, almost hollow up to the point. Sailors and seal hunters are fond of using these hollow teeth of the females for pipe bowls, quilts from the wings of pelicans supplying suitable stems for the pipes.

EMPTY-HEADED AND PLAIN.

What King Alfonso Says of Princesses Whom He Will Not Marry.

To the despair of his ministers and his mother, young King Alfonso of Spain continues his resistance to all their plans to make him marry any of the several princesses who have been suggested to him, says a recent report.

"I know that I must marry some day," he is said to have answered his mother not long ago, "and when the time comes, I shall submit quietly, but it seems to me that when I, for the sake of providing an heir to the throne, consent to marry one of these empty-headed, plain-looking and anything but charming princesses, on your list, I ought to be allowed a few years' freedom before entering into a loveless marriage."

Where I allowed, like any other young man not born to wear a crown, to choose my own bride according to the dictates of my heart, I should have no objection to marrying to-day, but as it is, my people will understand my desire to remain unchanged for a few short years."

Card of Chinese Merchant.

A Chinese, recently returned to his native country after a residence in the United States, has brought back some of our business methods, as his card will show. He has a dairy farm at Wooting, a village at the mouth of the Shanghai river, and two English cows furnish the milk which the card below advertises: "Yen Sung Kee, Dairy Farm. We open at Moo Sung—for sale the foreign milk, the taste are sweet, the milk are pure, and the price are just. We haven't put any water in it, if examine out, won't pay a single cash."

Mexican Banking Development.

The development of banking in Mexico is shown by the fact that during the six months ended June 30 the combined capital of the chartered banks of the republic increased from \$109,600,000 to \$127,356,844. Following are some increases voted: Banco Central Mexicano, \$11,000,000; Banco de Londres y Mexico, \$6,500,000; Banco de Tabasco, \$100,000; Banco de Tamaulipas, \$100,620; Banco Commercial Esfaccionario de Chihuahua, \$50,000; Banco Nacional de Mexico, \$27,027; total, \$17,356,844.

No Use for Genius.

Of all desperately dangerous persons the brilliant surgeon is the most lamentable, declares Sir Frederick Traves. Genius is some sort of uncalculated nervous disease, and the usual men of genius are quite impossible persons and entirely out of place in the medical profession, where even cleverness is not to be encouraged.