THE TRAPPER'S COMPANION

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(FOURTH EDITION)

An Up-to-date Book replete with Trapping Methods, Approved Sets used by the Most Experienced Trappers, Instruction for Handling, Grading and Shipping Raw Furs, Traps, Bait, Scents, Fur Farming, Camp Building, Boat Building, Turtle Trapping, Bee Hunting, and many minor matters, embracing everything a trapper should know to insure success.

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MINK

Study of the Animal, Trapping Methods, Sets, Bait, Scents, Etc.

To trap the mink successfully methods must be followed suitable to conditions, season and locality. Until streams and other waters become frozen, water setting is the most conducive of success of any means known to the trapper.

We will suppose the time to be late November, with waters still open and minks prime, as the fur should be in nearly all sections at this time, except possibly in the extreme South. In the soft margin of lakes, rivers, brooks, ditches, swamp pools and other watery wastes the tracks of minks may be found where the animals have traveled in the night hours seeking their food, consisting of fish, crawfish and frogs and the muskrat.

The mink travels on the hop, with the print of two feet showing and one foot always in advance of the other. The track somewhat resembles that of the house cat, though smaller and more pointed than that of the cat, and the nail prints are left by the mink, which is not the case with the cat.

Minks may be caught by the use of bait in fall and early winter; but in midwinter and in spring bait attracts but little. Many minks may be taken without bait, simply by placing the trap in the mink's path, where the tracks are seen under overhanging banks, under undermined trees and in the mouths of small brooks and ditches and at the entrance to drain tiles. In all cases the trap must set level, with spring turned to the right hand. The trap must be covered by about an inch of water or very thin mud.

If the shore is flat and without banks, baiting must be resorted to. In this case stake down the whole carcass of a muskrat in the water margin, leaving half the thickness of the body exposed. Set the trap an inch under water, between bait and shore. Staple chain to fair-sized cut bush with brush left on, but not so heavy that a mink will have a dead pull when caught. This arrangement is proposed where the water is too shallow for the game to drown, which the trapper always wishes to happen in trapping minks or muskrats, to prevent footing.

A 'coon may be caught at this set, and the trap being fastened to a clog, as described above, will not pull out or break the chain or amputate the foot so easily or readily as he would do if staked solid, and this applies to the mink as well. When possible to obtain it, hardwood should always be used for stakes or drags, as a 'coon will soon reduce soft wood, such as poplar or willow, to shavings and carry off the trap.

In timbered sections there are usually many good places to set traps for minks. It may be under a fallen tree that clears the shore and water margin, or beneath the washouts under roots of trees and stumps. A mink explores all such places in its travels and should the shelf or margin be sufficiently narrow a trap can often be set "blind," that is without bait, and bring a reward. If there should be room for the mink to avoid the trap, a little fence of dead sticks stuck up, leading from the trap to the water, or an old chunk of stone, or a few dead weeds having heavy stalks will do as well; in fact anything that will tend to crowd the mink into passing over and perhaps into the trap.

Most trappers prefer to keep a certain number of traps baited, and in fact is a help in certain places, if the mink be one that will take bait, for with his keen scent the bait draws his attention a certain distance, and if he be hungry while working at the bait he is pretty sure to step in the trap, which he might otherwise avoid in passing along.

There is no better bait for minks than the flesh of a muskrat. This has been amply proven, although chickens, rabbits, squirrels, birds, etc., may be substituted. If the trap is to be baited it is best to use a small piece; it does not arouse suspicion in certain shy minks as does a large bait; except that a whole rat is used where there are no banks and

the water shallow and the shore so barren that a mink finds nothing of interest to cause him to halt.

At other sets a leg of rat is plenty. It should be staked down with a good twig and against the bank just above the trap. Cover the bait slightly with twigs or leaves. A mink does not need to see a bait. His keen scent will apprise him of its presence, and he will hunt for it, when if it were posted in plain view it might, and often does, cause alarm, and the place to be avoided.

In all cases the trap is to be barely under water, and an old, long-soaked leaf is laid on the pan and a pinch of mud to hold it in place, which the mink will have no hesitation in stepping upon.

The trap should be staked so as to pull the trap away from shore and into deep water, to ensure drowning. If the water is uniformly shallow a few dead sticks are thrust into the bottom and as far from shore as the chain will reach. These will cause the game, whether mink or rat, to become entangled and drown in quite shallow water. Drowning, of course, prevents footing. However, should a mink fail to drown he will not escape by foot amputation as readily as a muskrat, because the leg of the mink is so much stronger in skin, bone and sinews. And yet, as I said, it is always best to plan for drowning the game, as it prevents escape, and there is no struggling animal to attract the attention of enemies or thieves to the trap line.

As minks are pretty certain to explore all holes at water line, an artificial one can be made with paddle or hatchet, leading back into the bank about two feet. The water must cover the entrance of sufficient depth to submerge the trap. A leg or the intestines of a rat or a mouse posted on a prong at the end of this excavation is a very promising set after the trap has been placed at the entrance.

In the matter of scents to lure game to the trap will say, states a very successful trapper, "That I have tried fish oil, anise, rhodium, mink essence and others, and never had better success than when using no so-called lures. At times I believe any artificial scent will keep a very wary mink away from the bait and trap. In winter when bait is frozen neither bait nor scent is of much use."

Where an old half decayed log crosses a stream a mink may often be trapped by making use of a dry set. Chop a

notch in a log large enough to contain trap and have it set on level with the surrounding surface. Lay a large leaf on trap that will cover pan and jaws of a No. 1 trap. A sprinkle of dirt on the leaf to hold it from blowing away, and the trap staked strongly is necessary, for this set may catch a fox, a 'coon or a skunk.

Often a rat house will be found built very close to shore. Here a good mink set may be made by making a tunnel into the house at water line. The trap set at the entrance and a bait placed in back end of opening has caught me many a mink. Minks visit rat houses when near the shore, so that such an artificial set as described is really in the minks' road.

Certain minks are always found that are far more wary than their fellows. They refuse all bait and avoid traps with an instinct that causes the trapper to sit up and take notice, especially if he be inexperienced. To trap such minks there is but one sure way, which is to select a few cock sure places where the minks pass under banks or behind roots or through some narrow opening and place the trap without bait. It is best to use rubber boots, so as to leave few signs as possible on the bank at place of setting. When trapping for an extremely shy mink it is well not to visit the traps oftener than once or twice a week.

There is yet one more remark in regard to water setting which pertains to water variation. If the water is rising the rate of rise must be calculated and the traps set accordingly high, so that the traps will be at the proper depth when animals begin their nightly excursions. If the water is falling the trap must be set deep, according to the rate of fall. Not always does the best trapper guess correctly on the rise or fall of water; but like in everything else in his calling, he must ever be observant and put forth his best endeavors to succeed. The careless trapper and the bungler never make a successful catch of minks.

When the streams and lakes become frozen and snow falls, we must resort to dry trapping methods. In Northern and Central sections, during the period of coldest weather, and especially if snow be deep, minks move but little, often remaining in their retreat two or three weeks at a time. When they do come out they do not travel far from the den. This is especially true of the females.

When February comes, which is the mating season, the

males become active and travel long distances; often an old male will travel 10 to 12 miles in a night, taking in rivers, brooks, lakes, swamps and ditches.

In winter minks may be caught quite successfully in snow, while the weather is crisp and cold and the snow dry and powdery. Regular paths will be found in the vicinity of a mink's winter quarters and sometimes a whole family will be found inhabiting the banks of a lake or the hiding places which a swamp affords and sometimes the home is at the head of a stream where warm springs issue and water does not freeze. In snow trapping the trap is to be set in the runway and not too close to the den itself, or your signs may frighten the inmates and cause them to leave. The trap should be settled in the path and snow sifted over it by use of a stick or the hatchet, for snow picked up with the hand will soon afterwards form a crust over the trap and prevent its springing. Staple the chain to a cut brush so that the game when caught will not have a dead pull or he may resort to foot amputation, as the imprisoned member soon freezes and has no sense of feeling. If a mink does not escape by footing in zero weather he will soon freeze to death.

When a mink is found in the trap dead and frozen hard as a stick of wood, great care must be taken to thoroughly thaw it out from tip of nose to end of tail, or the pelt may be badly damaged in removing it from the carcass.

When trapping minks in snow make no more tracks in setting and visiting traps than necessary, and at each visit step exactly in your old tracks, so as not to frighten the wary animals by numerous signs.

In stormy, blustering weather, traps must frequently be raised out of their bed when covered too deep by snow; they should be sprung and reset and lightly covered as before. A mink is light and will tread on a trap covered by four inches of snow without springing it.

In the matter of traps I prefer the No. 1 Newhouse for minks, as they are sufficiently strong and work so smooth that the smallest mink will spring the trap even when slightly frozen or set with frost. The forefoot of a mink is usually caught and the leg being very short and the mink possessed of lightning quickness, how necessary it is that the trap should work quick may be seen by the following incident: I once had the opportunity of witnessing a mink in action

while conquering a large muskrat. The mink was a medium-sized one and it met the rat in one of its runways. The rat showed fight, but without avail. In about a minute the mink had its victim stretched out lifeless and so rapid had been the mink's movements that I had failed to see him bite the rat once.

When a live mink is to be dispatched a .22 slug sent through the head midway between the ears kills quickly and does not damage the skin or its selling value.

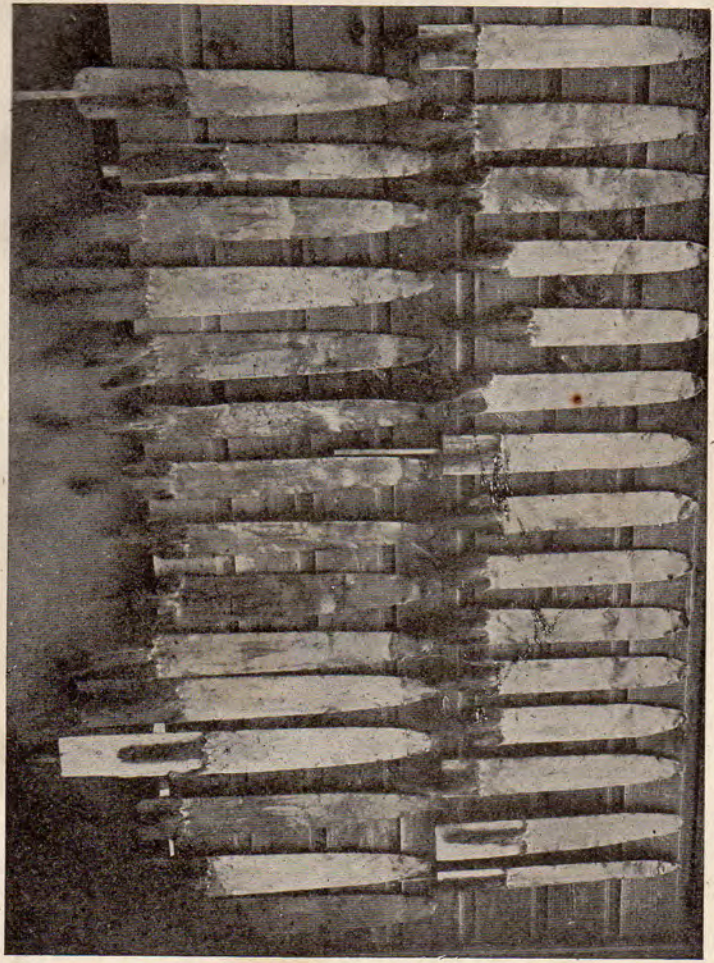
In timbered sections minks travel through hollow logs and play around the roots of overturned trees. When setting the trap in a log, cover it lightly with dry, powdered, rotten wood, or worm dust is better still. When setting at the overturned root place the trap at the entrance of some one of the openings, blocking the others with dry sticks and chunks which stand up carelessly without making anything conspicuous to arouse suspicion in the minks that someone has meddled. At this set cover trap lightly with dry dirt taken from the weather protected portions of the root. It will be seen by these directions that it is necessary to conceal traps with materials to match the surroundings. For instance: Suppose that you were making a snow set and should cover the trap with black dirt from the root just mentioned. Do you think you would get your mink? Not in a hundred years.

In winter trapping, especially severe weather, bait is not mentioned, as many of the most experienced trappers do not use it; the bait very soon freezes hard, and is not attractive to the minks.

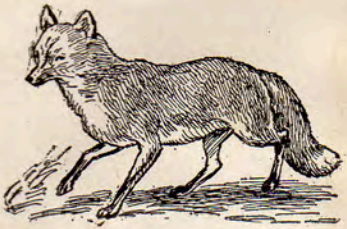
In the Southern States, where waters remain open, water setting can be followed throughout the winter months and yet even there the water gets cold enough so that minks do not travel in it and wet their feet as freely as in autumn, so that even in the South dry setting may be followed to advantage in the winter months.

SHOT AND DOG.

Many mink hunters throughout the region where snow falls catch minks exclusively by the use of dogs that have been trained for the purpose. A sample outfit for two men beside the dog is a spade, ax and shotgun. A mink being tracked up and holed, it is either cornered in the den and killed or caught by the dog, or shot when it runs out after a series of digging, poking and punching with slender poles



has routed him. Minks so caught are usually badly damaged by the dog or by shot and do not bring full market prices, and then this method results in the destruction of animal dens, which should always be discouraged.



THE FOX.

Path Set.—This set is the best for early fall or where trappers are not bothered with snow. Select a sheep path in sections where foxes are plenty. Set trap where path runs between stone wall or something similar. Dig hole size of trap and line with dead leaves; place trap in space and cover between jaws and over pan with large leaf, or thin paper. Sprinkle a thin layer of dirt over all, making everything look natural and level. Now place two small weeds or fern stems across path three inches each side of trap, three inches from ground. Clog; never stake trap. Use no scent or bait. Fox will step between weeds and get caught.

Knoll Set.—Find a knoll or bank in pasture or field and dig hole two feet deep, letting dirt remain at mouth of hole. Do this so as to resemble the work of skunk, fox or woodchuck. Next place a piece of cat, muskrat or skunk in hole; then set trap carefully in dirt at front of hole, and you will secure the fox.

Nest Set.—Dig up ground as a fox would do in digging out a bees' nest; set trap, cover lightly but out of sight with fine dirt, throw over it some torn honey comb and scent with honey; fasten trap to clog with chain about five feet in length.

Land and Stump Set.—Find stump with roots opening out in shape of letter "V," place bait at point of "V" and

trap in front of bait, and cover bait lightly, so that the fox will have to hunt for it.

Sod Set in Water.—Find a spring six feet across, and place a stone in centre of spring. Place a sod on stone, so as to project above water two inches or more and have edges under water. Set trap not over three inches from shore, under water one-half inch. Place a sod between jaws, so as to fill entire space between them, and have sod project above water one inch, so as to afford a dry footing for the fox. Now place bait on sod in middle of spring and fox in reaching for bait will step on small sod and get caught.

Log Set.—Follow a brook through the woods until you find an old log across a stream. If there is not already sand or loose dirt at each end of log, place some in these positions, and let it so remain for a month or more, then set traps at both ends of the log.

Tree Set.—Hang bait, small chicken or any game bird, against tree trunk eight or ten feet from ground, where it can be readily seen by the fox; if there is a knoll about 20 feet from the tree it will do, if not make one; set traps concealed on knoll; the fox will try to get the bait, and failing will go upon the knoll and howl in disappointment—and get caught.

Snow Path Set.—Go into a field where foxes run and tramp a path; take a No. 2½ or No. 3 jump and boil in lime until it is white as snow. Handle with gloves. Take a wooden paddle and dig place for trap slightly to right of centre of path. Bed trap firmly at bottom. Then place a piece of white paper over trap and sprinkle snow slightly over paper until level with path. The snow should not be handled with hands or gloves or it will freeze; use the paddle. Set a trap every six rods. Foxes delight to run in paths in running from one field to another and this is a very good set.

BED SET.

Dig out a bed of earth about three or four feet square, make it level and smooth, set a trap on each side, cover traps with light dead grass gathered at immediate locality, throw some sharp cheese over the bed; the fox will approach gradually and finally take the cheese, and in many instances will be caught.

MOUSE NEST SET.

Fox Set from a Maine Trapper.—Take a mouse nest and put a small piece of meat in it, using a little scent on the meat and put the rest under the edge of a rock or in a hole, so it will look as if it was tucked in out of the way of birds or things that might come along. Then set the trap and have everything look as natural as it was before setting the trap. Don't handle the meat or mouse nest with your bare hands. This set is also good for 'coons and skunks.

SILVER FOXES.

SNOW SET.

Set Used by a Manitoba Fox Trapper.—Where the chance is good, which is a lake, river or pond, take a dead hen, or better a wild duck, in early winter, chop a hole in the ice large enough to take about half of your bait, so as to leave a little above the ice. Let water up so as to freeze the bait in solid. Now when it snows all over deep, keep your eye on the bait, as the fox may start any time to work on it. When he has got at it good take two No. 3 traps; then take eight or ten feet of fence wire, double it and fasten one end to trap, the other to a clog three inches through and four feet long. Go to your set, and when three rods from it lay down one trap and set it. Have a large lump of cotton batting, which will fill the space inside the jaws; best to keep your mittens on, if you don't want your hands to get cold. Now take one trap at a time and go and set them; put one in the middle of the hole the fox has dug to your bait and one at the upper end of it. Don't get trap too close to the bait. Dig a small hole for your traps and cover over level; sink clogs at end of the wire away from set, and walk in your same tracks, so as to make as little signs as possible. I said No. 3 traps, as they are liable to freeze down. If this set can be made close to a small rat house, flatten rat house a little and set one trap on top. This is one of my snow sets which works all right in this Northern country.

When you know a snowstorm is coming take half a dozen No. 3 or No. 4 Blake & Lamb traps, select your locality with care, set the traps in a circle, and in the centre of the circle suspend from a bush a hen or piece of fresh meat for bait, the bait to be suspended about 15 inches above the ground; cover the traps lightly with leaves and then with snow; also cover chains and attached drag; place some musk-

rat musk on a branch as high as you can reach; the falling snow will cover your tracks. The fox, drawn by the scent, will approach the circle about the bait nearer and nearer and will be caught.

MOLES.

The wooden mole trap is a difficult thing to describe on paper, but its working parts consisted of a flat narrow piece of wood with small hoops, also of wood, let into it, one at each end; a "bender" of ash or hazel, and a peg with a right-angled crook, like the handle of a walking stick. To the thin end of the bender is attached a piece of twisted cord, and tied to the other end of the latter is a wire noose with a small wooden crosspiece above the loop. To set the trap it is necessary to remove the soil from over the mole's "run," so that the flat piece of wood, supported by its two hoops, fits exactly into the prepared space, forming a little tunnel. Immediately beside it the peg is driven in, with its handle over the centre of the wooden tunnel. The bender is then thrust into the ground and bent down until the wire noose can be passed through a hole in the flat piece of wood in such a way that the mole must pass through it. The wooden crosspiece is held by the peg, keeping the bender strained, and the trap, after a handful of soil from the nearest mole hill has been sprinkled over the tunnel to stop the chinks of light, is ready. When the mole comes along and pushes his way through the noose the movement will cause the crosspiece to disengage and away goes the bender into the air with the hapless victim held tight in a relentless grasp.

No trap that ever was devised is so swift and sure in its working, and the mole catcher can generally reckon the size of his bag, directly, as he enters the field, by the number of upright benders. If the latter are still down he has no occasion to go near them.

MUSKRAT.

The best rats are found in Central and Eastern sections. In the South the fur is shorter and thinner, and in certain portions of the North and Northwest the fur is thin and the collections average small and papery pelted. The only way to account for rats being of a poorer quality from a cold country lies, perhaps, in the fact that the amount of feed and sunlight of settled localities is lacking in the wild regions; the effect upon these fur-bearing rodents being virtually the same as upon plant life when deprived of proper nourishment and sunshine. In all seasons the best rats are those of good weight of pelt, well furred and well handled.

In handling, rats should be stretched on uniform oblong-shaped thin boards, with dressed sides and edges. About six small nails should be used to each side of skin. Skins should not be stretched so that the edge of board passes along back of pelt. Have back on one side of board and belly on the other. Never remove while green, for they wrinkle, and shriveled skins have but little value.

Rats as well as all other furs should be cured in a dry, cool, airy place, away from sun, fire and smoke. Fire-dried skins are often brittle and many times ruined. Fire or sun-

dried skins, although prime when taken off the animals, are by the above treatment, blackened and rendered unprime in appearance. Skins should dry slowly, and through the process of a circulation of cool air in a shady place only.

When rats are taken off the boards, hang them up out of reach of mice and rats, and put only a small number of skins in each bunch, as a large bunch often sweats and mildews, damaging them considerably.

TRAPPING THE MUSKRAT.

Much has been said about this wonderful little fur-bearer, which is trapped through the United States, but it is to be remembered that good judgment is the main point in trapping it successfully. It has been known that some trappers would start out with a bunch of traps and would set them any old way, just so they get them set, and then they wonder why they do not catch anything. It is the same case as the farmer that hitched his horse to the back end of the plow and wondered why it did not work right.

The muskrat is small in price and size, but counts up into dollars. As a general thing more wages can be made by trapping them than can be made trapping most any other animals, because they are more plentiful.

In the following, different methods of trapping the muskrat are given, and all have been used successfully. There is not an untried method given. Anyone that will follow closely the instructions here given will be able to trap rats successfully. Different methods are given here to suit different localities.

KIND OF TRAPS TO USE.

There have been many arguments among trappers as to the proper size trap to use. Some would use No. 4 and others No. 0 Newhouse, but to give the question the proper answer, would say that the No. 0 and the No. 1 will give the best results, the No. 1 being liked best of the Newhouse and similar makes. The No. 2 stop thief is also very good for trapping rats; but it seems trappers like the steel trap best.

When using steel traps it always pays to take care of them, as they will then last twice as long. When buying, get the best, as they are cheapest in the long run. When using

a cheap trap many animals get away because the traps are made of defective material. The extra animals that are caught in the well-made traps will more than pay for the extra cost of them. When taking in the traps from the line oil or grease them with some good animal fat, especially the working parts and then when the season comes to take them out again they can be wiped off with a dry cloth and they will be ready for use.

When setting steel traps, always pull the pan down level with the jaws, so that an ordinary touch will spring the trap; and always set the trap on a solid foundation. Don't lay it down in soft mud, where it will sink in a short time. When setting in such places it is best to lay the trap on a broad leaf. This will hold the trap nicely and it will be always ready for the rats to enter.

Steel traps may be cleaned by boiling them in ashes. As soon as cleaned they may be greased to prevent rusting.

MARKING.

When trapping where trap thieves are active, it is best to mark traps, so that the owner can identify them if he sees them, should they be stolen. Marking may be done by cutting initials or odd marks in the steel with a cold chisel.

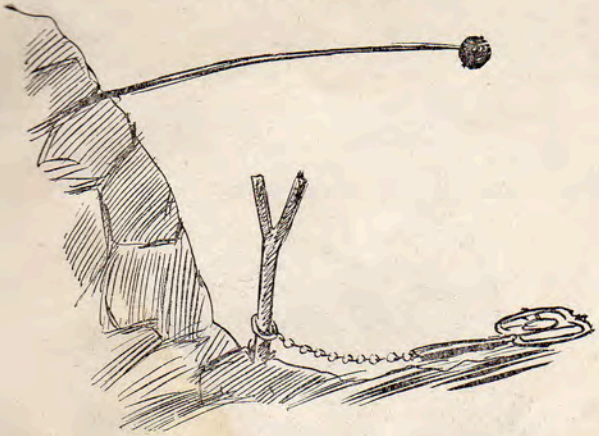
REMOVING THE NEW FINISH.

When steel traps are new and bright an animal will notice them more quickly. The new finish may be removed by burying the traps in black mud, which is commonly to be found around ponds and along streams. When burying the traps, mix some rotten leaves with them and let them remain until they get black.

HIGH AND LOW PANS.

Many trappers are troubled with high and low pans on traps. Many of the cheap traps have too short a dog and some have too long a dog. This is the reason the pan is too high or too low. When the pan sets too high, the frame of the trap where the dog is fastened must be bent in towards the pan with a hammer and if the pan sets too low, so that the jaws do not spring when the pan is pushed down, it may be remedied by filing the end of the dog a little shorter.

MUSKRAT SETS.



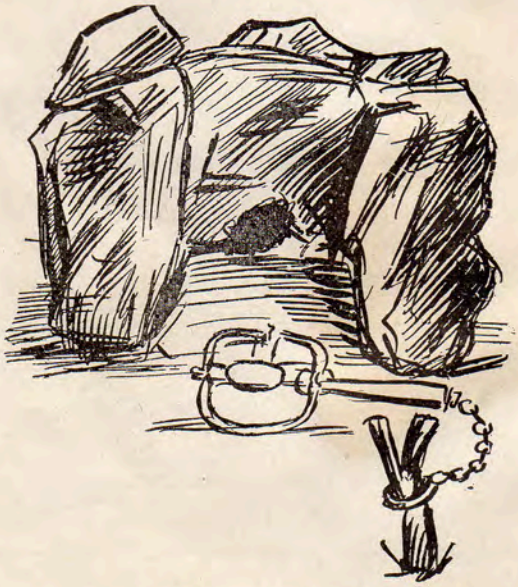
A FAVORITE SET.

This is one of the best known sets and has proved satisfactory wherever used. It is one of the easiest to make and can be used whether the bank is steep or nearly level. When you have selected the place to set your trap, take same and place in water several inches deep, at a little distance from the bank. Next cut a long stick and jam one end into the bank, so that the other end, on which the bait is to be placed, is about 18 or 20 inches above the trap, and directly over same. When the rat goes after the bait he will have to do some jumping to get it and is almost certain to get caught.

THE COMMON BARREL TRAP.

The common barrel trap is easily made and it gives very good results. Any common barrel will do and it need not be water tight. To make this trap, secure an old barrel and sink it in water that is deep enough, so it will just come half way up to the top of the barrel. It is best to place a few rocks in the barrel, so that it will not float away.

Stretch a piece of burlap over the barrel, very tight, fastening to the sides of the barrel. Next take several poles 10 feet long and about five inches in diameter and fasten the ends of the top of the barrel, letting the other ends float in the stream. Next strew plenty of bait on the burlap and also on the poles where it can be seen easily. Replace the bait as rapidly as it is taken by the rats and when they begin to come freely, take the burlap off the barrel and put some bait inside and a little on the poles and the next morning you will find many drowned rats if you follow instructions. A box may be used instead of a barrel.



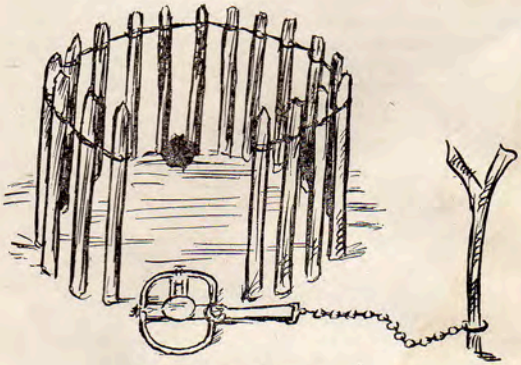
THE ROCK PEN SET.

The rock pen set is a very good one, if used properly. It is made something like the pen set, except that it is made

of rock instead of sticks. It is very simple and easily made, as follows: Secure three or four rocks and make a pen with these rocks as shown in illustration. The trap may be placed at the entrance and the bait may be placed at the back, so that it may be seen easily.

THE BANK SET.

The bank set can be used successfully where the bank of a stream is steep. It is made by digging a hole in the bank about the size of a three-quart bucket. Aim to have about one-fifth of the hole below the surface of the water and the rest above. The trap is to be set at the entrance and the bait at the back of the hole where it can be seen.



THE PEN SET.

This set is very well known and is used widely. It is easily made and understood and is a good set for beginners, as well as experienced trappers. It is made by securing 15 or 20 sticks, about 12 or 15 inches in length. With these sticks make a "U" shaped pen as shown in illustration. Set the trap at the entrance to the pen and place the bait at the back of pen, where it may easily be seen.

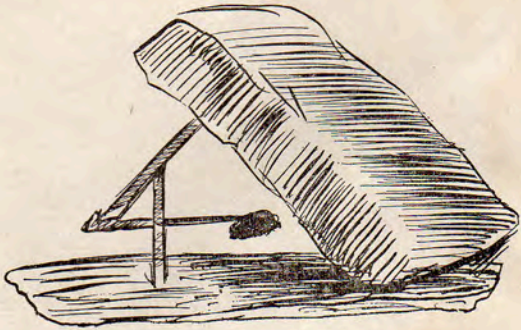
THE BARREL TRAP.

The barrel trap is well known throughout the United States and Canada. It gives good results and is very popular on account of catching more than one rat at a time. Some trappers have been known to catch as many as 15 or 20 rats at one time in one of these traps. To make the trap, secure a barrel that is watertight and sink the barrel in a place where the water nearly fills the barrel. Place enough rock in the bottom of the barrel, so as to sink it as directed, and hold it firmly when sunk. Pour water in the barrel until it is about half full. Next, tie a piece of heavy paper over the top of barrel and stretch as tight as possible. If there is any slack in the paper after same is tied, dampen with a sponge and when paper dries it will be tight as a drum head. Next put plenty of bait on the paper and around

the barrel, and when you see that the rats are coming freely, take a sharp knife and cut two slits in the paper, at right angles to each other, as shown in illustration. Then place bait on paper, same as before. Visit the trap the next morning and see the results. If you use this trap continuously, the paper should be taken off occasionally and renewed.

TRAPPING WITHOUT BAIT.

Steel traps may be set without bait where rats are plentiful. Set at their feeding grounds and paths, which can be found along the shore of ponds, and where the bank overhangs streams and the roots of trees and grasses make a narrow tunnel, which the rats are sure to go through. Steel traps can be set at the entrances to these places, and in their paths, and many rats can be caught in this way, if the traps are set properly as here directed.



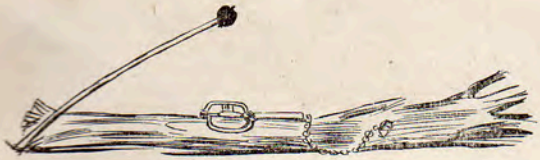
THE STONE DEADFALL.

This deadfall has given very good results. It is easily made where flat stones can be found. There are many places along streams where steel traps cannot be used to advantage, on account of the rocks. Therefore this deadfall is preferable.

It is made by taking a flat stone about two feet square, which is used for the foundation. Secure another stone about the same size. Place enough small rocks on top to kill the rat when caught. Make a common figure 4 trap, strong enough to bear the weight of the stone without breaking, and set as shown in illustration.

TRAPPING AT DENS.

Muskrats can be caught easily at their dens, which will be found a foot or so under water. In some places dens are plentiful and there are generally about five or six rats in each den—sometimes more. The whole family can be sometimes caught by setting stop thief or steel traps in these places. When setting the trap be careful not to destroy the den by dropping dirt into it. Set the trap at the entrance to the den, so that the rats will have to walk into it. Always fasten the trap to a stake or stone in the water.



THE LOG SET.

Wherever a log can be found several inches under water the rats are sure to travel it. This makes a good place to trap them. Go about it as follows: Set your trap on the top of the log, so that it is under water. Next cut a stick and jam same into the bank, or in the ground at roots of log. Have the stick placed so that the free end is about 20 inches above the trap, and place bait on this end. The bait must be exactly above the trap.

RATS THAT CHANGE GROUNDS.

It often happens that rats change gounds; sometimes they are very plentiful at a certain place and in another place they are very scarce. This is usually caused by high water, which makes them go a little farther up or down the stream and locate in new places. Trappers can learn where rats are the most plentiful by observing the number of tracks which are to be found in the mud along the water's edge.

FOOTING THEMSELVES.

Muskrats will often "foot" themselves; that is, twist off their legs, especially if the trap is strong enough to break the leg. They will do this in about two hours' time or less. When a rat is caught he will always make a bee-line for the water, and if the stake to which the trap is fastened is set back from the water so as to keep the rat from getting to it and drowning, he will twist the trap chain around the stake and five times out of ten he will free himself by twisting his leg off. For this reason it is always well to use the sliding poles and wires which will always prevent this trouble.

PATHS UNDER THE ICE.

Paths may often be found under the ice, when the streams and ponds are frozen over. These paths are plentiful in shallow water near the dens and houses. Muskrats will sometimes travel a great distance under the ice and they can be caught in this way: Chop a hole in the ice with a hatchet and set trap directly in the path, so that the muskrat will have to walk into it. Sometimes many rats can be caught in this way, if the traps are set properly.

Muskrat Slides.—Muskrat slides resemble otter slides in many ways. The muskrats seem to have great sport sliding where the bank is steep and muddy. The rats will walk up the bank at one place and slide down at another. They usually use a slide about two weeks and then leave it and go somewhere else and make a new one. They may be trapped at these slides by setting a steel trap at the bottom of the slide, several inches under water; fasten the trap and it is ready for business. If a slide has fresh tracks around and looks wet and muddy, you may know that it is being used. If it is dry and has no fresh tracks around it, it shows that the slide is not being used. These slides are found in most places, although they are not found everywhere.

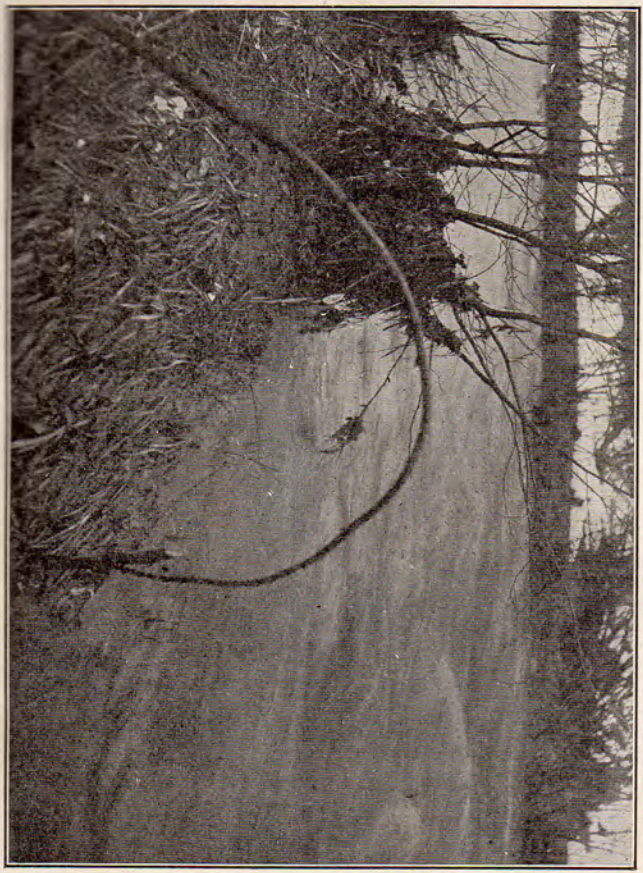
Changing Sets.—To be successful it is best to move your sets around and use different places. When sets are left any length of time in one place it seems to be an old story to the rats and they will not take any interest in the set, particularly if there is plenty of food nearby. But changing sets attracts their attention and they will take bait readily.

TIME TO TRAP MUSKRATS.

Much has been said about the proper time to trap rats. Some say that the fur is good in any month that has the letter "R" in it. But this is a mistake, as rats and other furs as well are no good when caught in September and October, except in the Far North. Some will be good if caught in the latter part of October, but it is much better to wait till the first of November, if they get trap shy. When it comes right down to it they are as smart as the rest of us.

FASTENING TRAPS.

When trapping along streams that are subject to rising water, it is best to fasten traps well. When using stakes,



BEAVER DAM IN TIMBER IN MIDDLE OF PRAIRIE

they ought to be about two feet in length, so as to make sure of their staying when high water reaches them. It is not safe to fasten to logs and other things that are lying loose along shore, as they are likely to float away when the water rises.

LEAVING SURROUNDINGS NATURAL.

When setting traps along streams where minks and raccoons are found it is best to set traps carefully and do as nice a job of it as you can. Don't leave any paper or whittlings of wood nor any other thing that would scare the animals. But be careful in setting your traps, whether minks and raccoons are about or not, as the traps will work better on sly rats when set carefully, and should any of these other animals be about, you will have a chance to get them. But the trap must be strong enough to hold them.

When going along the trap line it is best to carry a good strong club. Then if you find a rat in a trap, with his leg nearly twisted off and about ready to get away, you are ready for him, while if you have to hunt for a club the rat will get away before you can find one.

DENS OUT OF WATER.

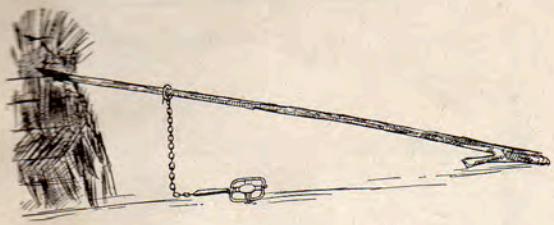
Rats often make their dens when the water is not down to the lowest mark and when it goes down later and leaves the entrance to the den out of water, they will leave it until the water rises again. It is useless to set traps at such places.

THE MUSKRAT RECEIVER.

This is an article that is needed when using sliding poles and wires. To make it cut a pole and have a fork on the end. When you find you have a rat in your trap, he will be at the bottom of the pole or wire, and all you have to do is to reach down and with the hook on the end of the receiver pull the rat ashore.

Sliding Poles and Wires.—The sliding pole is one of the most useful things that a trapper using steel traps can have. It can be used successfully almost everywhere. It keeps rats from getting trap shy and prevents them from twisting out of the traps. If they are used properly every rat will be downed by the time the trapper gets to his trap, and if a

mink gets into the trap it will work as well with him as with a rat.



THE COMMON SLIDING POLE.

The common sliding pole will give very good results in ponds and streams that are not likely to rise much, because it will not stand high waters. It is as good as any for catching rats.

It is made as follows: Secure a pole about 10 feet in length, leaving a fork at one end so as to keep the ring on trap chain from sliding off. Sharpen the other end and jam it into the bank as shown in illustration.

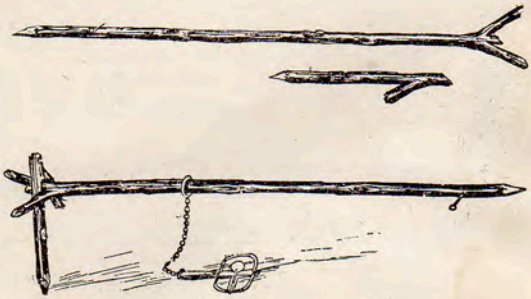
THE WIRE DROWNER.

The wire drowner will give very good results where the water is deep near the shore. It can be made by securing a wire the same length as the trap chain. Fasten one end to the ring of trap chain and the other to a stake at the shore and it is ready for use.

THE WIRE SLIDER.

This slider works a good deal like the sliding pole, but it is made differently. It can be used in connection with any of the sets shown in this book, where steel traps are used.

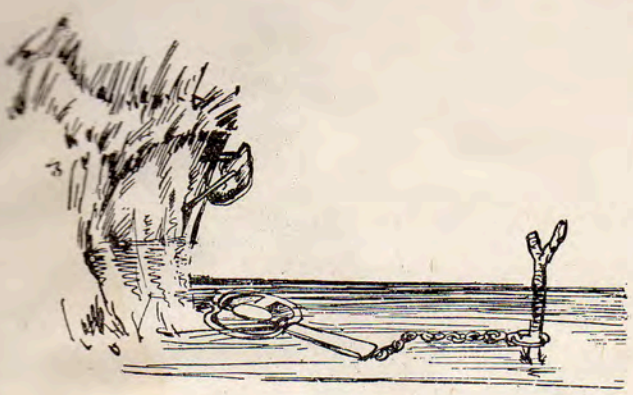
It is made by securing a smooth wire of sufficient length to reach out to water deep enough to drown rats. Wrap one end of the wire around a stone and throw same out into the water. Fasten the other end to a stake at the shore, slipping the ring of the chain on the wire before fastening same to the stake.



THE FAVORITE SLIDING POLE.

This pole is an invention that has never been equalled and it will double the catch of many trappers that are troubled by having rats twist their legs off. It is very simple and easily made and can be used in connection with any set shown in this book in which steel traps are used. It will not easily wash away in high water, and when a rat steps into a trap where a sliding pole is used he is yours.

To make a sliding pole, secure a pole about six or eight feet in length and thick enough to let the ring on the trap chain slide freely over it. Try to cut the stick off so as to leave a fork at the thin end and see that all knots are cut off smooth. Now sharpen the thick end and drive an eight-penny nail about 12 inches from the thick end. Next cut a stick about two feet in length with a fork on one end pointing downward towards the other end, which should be sharpened. This short stick is the fastener. Now take the pole and jam it into the bed of the stream where you are going to trap. Have the end reach out into water that is deep enough to drown a rat. Then bend the other end down to the ground on the shore and drive the fork on the sliding pole. Before driving the nail in the end of the sliding pole be sure to slip the ring on trap chain over the pole, as the nail is meant to keep same from coming off.



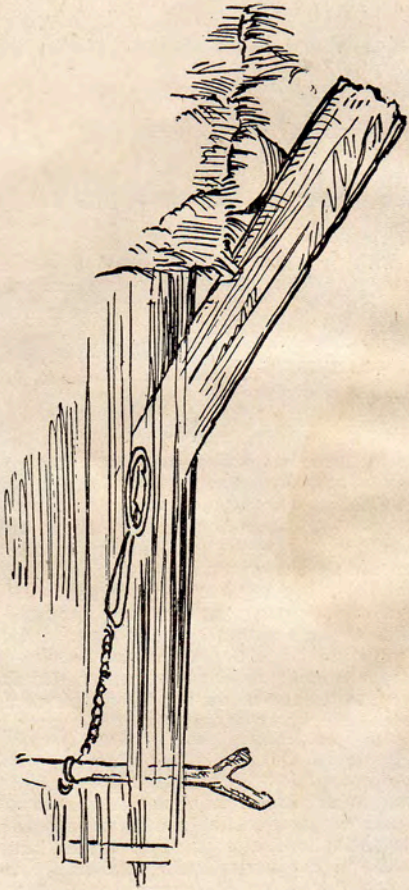
THE BANK SET.

Blind sets are best; find where muskrats go to an apple tree and set a trap just under water and stake out in the stream. Use a No. 81, as you will get a mink also. If you see a steep, perpendicular bank at the roots of trees, set a trap just under water and stake out in the stream. Where a log comes out of the water set a trap just under water on the log and fasten to a log out in the stream.

In summer go over your trapping grounds and if you find any hollow logs about 15 feet long, roll them to the creek and put one end in the water and let the other rest on the bank and block log until at the water end there is about two inches of water for about one foot. Block up other end. Set a trap in the water at mouth of log and stake out in streams.

TIDE MARSHES.

Trapping muskrats on tide marshes is tiresome, requiring high boots on account of much wading in rather deep water; then there is the waiting for tides, and hurry and scurry between tides; under such conditions steel traps are at times covered with water to the depth of a few inches, and at other times a few feet. One of the best traps for tide



HOLLOW LOG SET FOR MUSKRAT.

marshes is the box trap with self-closing wire doors; a number of these can be carried from place to place in a boat, and every rat entering is drowned—you get it.

PREPARING SKINS FOR MARKET.

SKINNING.

Skinning muskrats is an easy thing to do after a little practice. The best way to learn is to take a strong string of sufficient length and tie an end to each hind foot. Then drive two nails into a building; have them about six or seven inches apart. Hang the rat upon the nails and with a sharp knife cut around each hind foot. Then cut straight across from one hind foot to another. Next cut the tail off and the pelt may then be pulled down over the body. Be careful so as not to cut or tear the skin. When coming to the front legs, strip the skin part way over them and then run your finger between the leg and skin and pull it out from the skin. Pull the skin a little further over the head till you come to the ears and they should be cut off close to the head. Then pull a little further till you come to the eyes, which can be cut off same as the ears. Cut close around the lips and nose, and when cutting, always keep pulling on the skin. Now the pelt is ready for fleshing.

FLESHING.

Muskrats are hard to flesh compared to some other animals; but after a little practice they can be fleshed easily. They can be fleshed by putting them on the stretcher and getting hold of a piece of flesh or fat at a time and cutting it away with a knife; being careful as you go along not to cut the skin. But this is a slow way of doing the work. It would be better for anyone having much fleshing to do, to use the following outfit. With the fleshing pole and fleshing knife faster work can be done and it will be easier on the operator. The outfit can be made at home, with a few hours' work. Secure a soft wood pole, such as linden or any other wood that will not crack easily and have the pole about eight feet in length and about six inches in diameter. Peel all the bark off and trim the thinnest end down to a point. Trim on three sides, but leave the fourth side untrimmed, where the fleshing is to be done. Taper the end to a nice point, so that a muskrat pelt will fit it snugly; then sand-

paper it smooth with No. 2 sandpaper. Next secure two pieces of board about 26 inches in length and about three or four inches wide. These are the legs of the fleshing pole. Nail them on each side of the pole, about 26 inches back from the end of the pole.

Now to make a seat, secure a piece of board about five inches in width and six or eight inches in length. Fasten one end a little above where the legs are fastened, and make it level by placing boards under the lower side, nailing each piece so as to make it good and solid.

Your fleshing pole is now ready, and the next thing is to get a fleshing knife. Get an old 12-inch file and have your blacksmith taper the blunt end to a point, so that both ends will be alike. Then put the file on a grindstone and grind all roughness off and grind the edges crossways, so as to have four sharp corners. Next make two handles.

Now then you are ready for fleshing. First pull the pelt over the end of the pole and then drive two nails through the ears into the end of pole, just tight enough to keep the pelt from slipping back too far, and so that they may be pulled out easily. Now take your seat and with your knife in hand begin to flesh. Use the knife edgewise and use a little elbow grease to get the flesh started. Always work the flesh toward you, and after you have it started it will come easily enough. Aim to start a strip down the centre of the back, and then one on the sides. It will take a little practice to do this, but after you are once on to the trick it can be done easily. A fine, neat job can be done with this outfit. Be sure to have all mud and burrs out of the fur before beginning to flesh.

STRETCHING.

First secure a board about three-eights of an inch in thickness and about two feet in length, and as wide as the pelt will properly fit. Taper one end of the board down to a point and round the edges off with a plane. Be sure to have the board tapering all the way from the square end to the point, or you will have trouble in getting the skin off after it is dry. Next stretch the pelt on the board, and tack it around the edge tight, but not so tight that it will make the fur look thin. Pelts that are stretched too much will always go a grade lower. The pelt should be put on the board so the back is on one side and the belly on the other.

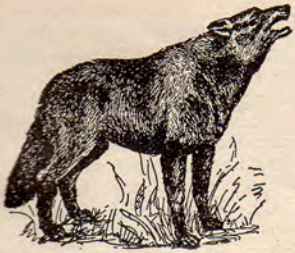
ANOTHER WAY OF SKINNING RATS.

To skin a rat we kneel on the right knee, step on the rat's tail with the left heel, with his head towards the right knee. Catch the hind leg with the left hand outside of left leg. With knife in right hand slit from heel to tail. Grab the other leg and do the same. Drop the knife, work the pelt lose from the legs (you don't need to dull your knife cutting around the legs), also from the tail, grab front and back with both hands, and pull the skin to the forelegs. Pull these out, take the knife, cut around ears, eyes and mouth and pull the pelt off. Keep your heel on the tail all the time. The above method is used by a South Dakota trapper.

SOUTH JERSEY MUSKRATS.

SHOOTING RATS.

Do not shoot muskrats, unless you are specially anxious to get a small price for the skins; it is unlawful to shoot them in some States; it is foolish to shoot them for any market—all shot skins will bring a shot-skin price, and you'll worry when you receive your returns.



WOLF.

To trap wolves successfully requires great skill, patience and perseverance. Many trappers claim wolves are more difficult to take than foxes and they certainly are every bit as cunning, crafty and trap wary as any fox could be, and for the reason that they are much wider rangers; consequently using the same runways and hunting grounds less frequently it is at least a reasonable claim. The ordinary method is to put the trap up close to a bait or carcass where wolves come to feed or are likely to come, the traps placed as near as possible where the wolf will be likely to plant his feet in the act of tearing a piece from the choicest or the most delectable portion. While this set is undoubtedly all right for the less crafty or suspicious animals, it has become an ancient chestnut with the up-to-date wolf, and it is only a young, heedless, hare-brained wolf who ever, nowadays, falls a victim. Much better luck will be had if a number of traps are placed at a considerable distance away from the bait, carefully covered, in the paths and passageways by which the wolf is most apt to approach. If possible the bait should be laid within 20 or 30 feet of a mound or small hillock, or if in a timber country the bait may be fastened in a small or large tree several feet from the ground and the traps ought to be set on the top of the mound. A place must be dug out of the mound of a size capable of holding the trap and clog, or traps, as the case may be. The dirt should be removed with a small wooden spade and place on a sack. The bare hands should not be used. When the traps are placed, the space under the pans ought to be filled with wool, cotton or moss, so that the dirt will not get

packed under the pan and prevent springing. The extra dirt should be carried to a distance and the set scattered over with leaves or grass to make it correspond as exactly as possible with the rest of the mound. A wolf, scenting the bait and approaching will, even though not hungry, from his instinctive caution and curiosity, circle the bait and be very apt to go onto the mound to investigate from this vantage point. A scent can be used that will help very considerably to attract the wolves from quite a distance, providing, of course, they get the wind of it. It is also effective if used as a drag.

This scent is made as follows: Take equal parts of rabbit, skunk and muskrat, with two mice added, chop fine, place in a glass jar, screw on the cover part way and allow to stand in the sun until liquid is formed. The jar should be filled about two-thirds full. Then to complete the bait add a quantity of skunk musk, one-half ounce of oil of anise and fill the jar with goose oil. This scent can be rubbed on the trapper's boot soles, moccasins or snowshoes, or smeared on meat and used as a drag.

To remove the iron or trap smell, traps can be boiled in water with cedar or hickory bark, one-quarter pound of beeswax should be added to the liquor.

When ponds, lakes and rivers are frozen over and the snow is deep, wolves are apt to travel on the ice; any dark object out on the smooth expanse of snow on lake or river will at once attract their attention and they are apt to go and examine. A crow, rabbit or bait of any sort; let it be up where it can be seen in the distance. Place two or three traps around the bait at a distance of three feet, put pieces of white paper, one under and one over the trap, then cover carefully with dry snow by sifting it with a piece of wire screen. When traveling an old trail or timber road through the woods, reach out to one side as far as possible and place two traps half way between bait and trail, also one directly in the trail. Set and cover it as on the ice. It is a good plan to scatter a few beef or lard "cracklings" along your trail.

No. 3 traps are about right for wolves, and the No. 2½ Newhouse otter trap makes a good wolf trap if the attachment is taken from the pan.

To sum up, the trapper who makes a success of trapping wolves must make a study of it and must often contrive methods suitable to his particular trapping grounds. It will

be found that wolves of the more remote and wilder regions where men seldom penetrate are much easier taken than those that live in the better settled districts.

The time to hunt young wolves is during April and May. The young, usually seven or eight in number, are born in the latter part of March or first part of April. The den is apt to be in the ground and generally not very deep, sometimes under a ledge. I recall one instance when the den consisted of a large hollow log, and another where the young were in a nest of leaves under a brush pile. The location which is, as a rule, selected by the wolves will not be far from water, on some knoll or brushy hillside. The prairie wolves or coyotes frequently den on the open prairie.

TRAPPING WOLVES.

When you are trapping for the wolf you want No. 3 or No. 4 steel traps, as many as you can handle easy, and you also want some bait. Rabbit is one of the best kinds of bait that can be used for most any kind of animals. Take about four or five rabbits and 10 to 12 traps; that is all a man wants to carry for five or six miles the first day. Keep your eyes open for a place you think they travel. In the mountains they travel the ridges and gullies; but on the plains they go everywhere. Find a "V" shaped place near some flat, scrubby tree and take a good big stick, or clog, as most trappers call it, say about four or five feet long and about two inches thick at the little end. (Don't cut the stick if you can help it). Take a No. 3 trap and set as follows: Dig a hole in the ground or needles, whatever it may be, about the middle of the "V" shaped place, digging the hole so it will be just a little lower than the level of the ground. Place the trap in the hole and put a piece of paper, about seven by 10 inches, over the trap and then put dirt around the edges first, then cover the middle of the trap about one-sixteenth of an inch deep, and place your clog as far to one side of the trap as chain will let it go. Cover the clog if you want to, but it doesn't make much difference, unless you cut it with an ax. Next put your bait in the end of the "V" and fasten it well. About half a rabbit is plenty. Use some scent if you have any that will bring them to the trap.

For your second trap take a No. 4 Newhouse trap and fasten to your second clog. Dig a hole as before, about seven or eight feet from the mouth of the "V" shaped place

COYOTE TRAPPED IN IDAHO COUNTY, IDAHO.

A LARGE WOLVERINE.

and place your clog between your second trap and the first one, as far as chain will let it go. Then cover the trap as the first one is covered, just so the trap is level with the ground or a little bit lower (but not too much). Never have your trap a little high, because if you do the animal won't step on it at all. Don't cover the second clog at all, except the ends, if you have cut or broken it. If your fox or wolf is hungry, you will catch him in the first trap you set, because he will go right in the "V" shaped place after the bait, but if he is not hungry, he will walk round and round the trap and then you will generally find him in the second trap when you get there. If there are any wildcats in the country and one comes along near the trap there is no mistake—he is yours. The fox may also be caught in this way.

Another set for wolves and coyotes: Take a piece of meat and stake it in the river 18 inches from the bank and set traps between bank and bait. These will fool them every time, for they can't smell traps under water.

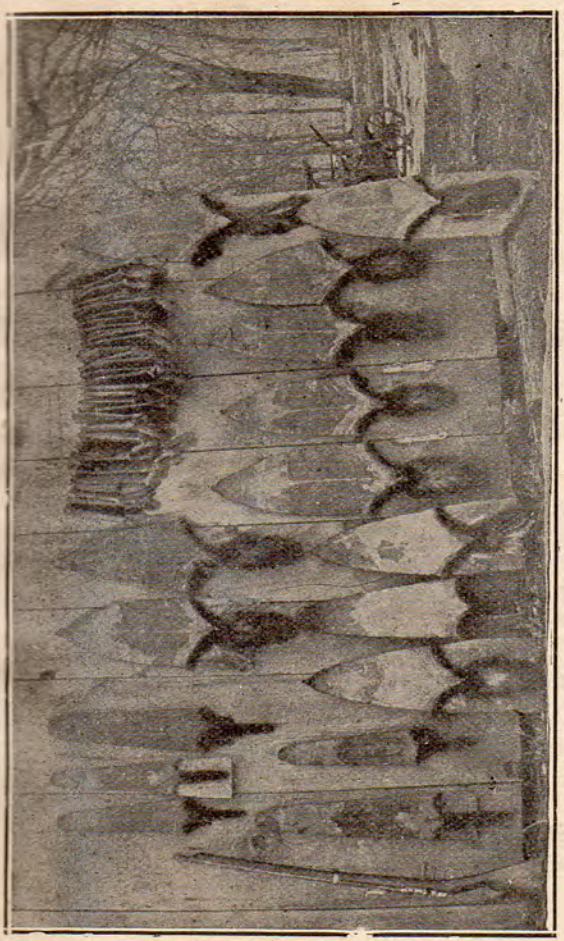
Another succeessful trapper writes: Now in regard to trapping, there are many ways and much depends on the country. I don't say that either my way or the other fellow's is wrong. I have caught one or more of the grey wolf. I prefer the No. 14 Newhouse trap, and, believe me, bare ground. I don't take any stock in smoking traps and so on; still it may be required in places. So far as the traps are concerned, bare hands and anything goes with me. I like a set of deer's insides, feet, head, etc. Throw these into a pile, cover with rocks, rotten logs, etc. Then get a long dead pole, lay it over this pile, with top end sticking out to one side far as possible and some 18 inches above ground. Set trap at end of pole and set it good, so you can't see it yourself and "then some." When going to look at it walk straight to it and right over it; don't stop, for I don't know why, but a wolf seems determined to go out around where a man stops; but does not hesitate to walk in a man's tracks. As soon as this bait gets ripe, the wolf will locate it for some distance. When he arrives he will circle around to investigate and that circle keeps getting smaller until the pole is in his road, when rather than hop over, he walks around the end and something happens. If you use scent, put it on stuff over the deer trimmings, and nary a thing around that trap. If you have lots of traps and plenty of

wolves, set out four traps at end of four poles and four between poles, close to bait.

Another way is: Bury the bait, set four traps around square set style and cover the traps, bait and all with deer hide. Put scent on trees; not too close. The wolf is quite a puppy and likes to play with the hide, and when he pulls it up it clears the snow and he gets next to the buried bait and those traps.

HUNTING YOUNG WOLVES.

The first thing of importance in hunting young wolves is to learn the range of a pair during the latter part of winter if possible. A couple of good hounds, well trained on 'coons or foxes, or any hounds that are thoroughly broken from rabbiting, will do to use; but with a good, cold trailer the quest is rather a simple matter, when otherwise it is apt to be very difficult. It is best to get out very early in the morning with the cold trailer, follow him up and watch his movements closely. Upon striking the trail of one of the old wolves, the dog will follow it, even though two or three hours old, and where the track crosses soft or sandy ground we should be able to tell whether our dog is trailing the dog or the bitch wolf by the size of the track, that of the dog being considerably the larger. We are in luck if it is the bitch's track the dog is working; possibly our dog may have picked up the trail at a point where she is returning to the den to bring the litter something she has killed for them, or to suckle them; in this case the dog soon leads up to the den. Possibly we may hear him barking holed at the entrance, but more likely the old lady hearing him tongueing on the trail rushes out, cutting in on her old trail, and we all at once hear our dog singing merrily away on the hot track as she leads him away from the den as fast as she can. If we are "on to our job" we will pay no attention to the race, but try to guess from what direction she came from her den to head off the dog. We then begin a careful and painstaking search; should this fail we turn our attention to the race. After the wolf has led off a mile or two she is apt to worry about the den, and make an effort to get to it. The more ardent cries of the dogs will indicate the action of the wolf, and often enable the experienced wolf hunter to locate the den.



SOME NORTH DAKOTA FURS.

WILDCAT.

The wildcat is comparatively easy to catch, if you cover your trap and do not disturb the natural appearance of the surroundings. Use No. 3 or No. 4 trap, find where the cats travel, or their favorite trees, and in a "V" shaped place near a tree or rocks, dig a hole in the ground so that the trap will set down a little below the level of the ground, set trap and cover with the light litter gathered nearby; place bait, part of a rabbit, behind trap in small end of "V;" use clog for your trap. The trap may be set in same way between two trees, or two bunches of bushes, growing six or eight inches apart. Deadfalls may be used with same bait.

HOT WATER.

No domestic remedy can equal hot water in cases of congestion of the lungs, rheumatism or sore throat, if tried promptly and thoroughly. An acute attack of croup will be usually relieved in 10 minutes if a towel or strip of flannel folded lengthwise and dipped into hot water, then slightly wrung out, be placed around the neck of the sufferer and covered so as to retain the heat. The same placed over the seat of pain will in most cases quickly give relief in neuralgia and toothache, and laid over the stomach acts like magic in attacks of colic. Headache almost always yields to the simultaneous application of hot water to the back of the neck and to the feet.

A WILDCAT.

LYNX.

Methods of a Canadian trapper: In trapping the lynx I use a No. 1½ or No. 2 trap, which are the safest traps for these animals. When I set a trap for a lynx, I take sticks about three feet long and set them in the ground, making a corral something like a long "V" in shape, and place the trap in the opening, well covered. Then I wind some hay very hard around the end of a stick about two feet long and push some fish oil on the hay and set the stick up in the farthest end of the corral from the trap. I always catch the lynx by using this method.

Here is another way I catch the lynx when the snow is deep and soft: I walk on skis, and when setting traps I walk straight through a big bunch of timber and then come back over my own tracks, setting traps in the tracks I make in the snow. I use no scent and am always particular not to leave any signs of the traps. I cover my traps with duck feathers or chicken feathers; but the feathers must be fine. When a lynx sees a track like this he always likes to follow it, and then he gets in the trap.

OTTER.

A New York State trapper gives this set: Take a boat or a canoe and as many traps as you wish to set. Cut small trees about two inches through to fasten the traps to, put them into the boat, then go along the pond near the bank, you will see places where they slide. This is the place to get an otter if you work it right. Find the place where they go up to slide if you can. There is generally a path leading to the top of the slide; if you can find this path set your

under water just where the otters start to go up. pen the small tree which you cut, then staple the trap and stick it into the bank. Have all the fresh cut part e little tree covered with mud or something, so it will natural. Do not leave any part of the trap or chain e the water and do not step on the bank or touch it with hand. If you cannot find the path which leads to the f the slide, use the same method at the bottom of the but the path is the better, as sometimes when they are g the trap will spring on their body and it won't hold

will tell you the use of the tree: When the otter gets from the bank it will swim out in the pond and soon n. The little tree will float and easily be found unless ake is too large; but don't try this on flowing streams, e water will carry it away.

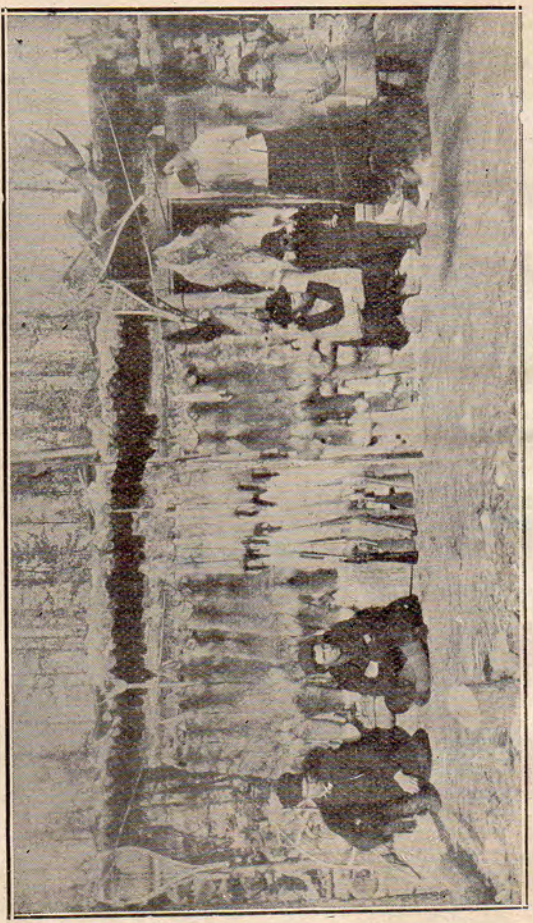
Do not place too much confidence in a stake, no matter firmly it is driven into the ground; it is better to use g wire securely fastened to a stone weighing 25 pounds, ore, the trap being fastened to the other end of the wire.

OTTER SETS.

A British Columbia trapper gives the following as his od of trapping otters: Set traps on points in river by ing out rocks into the water, a distance of about 10 two feet wide, and six inches above water. On the end ese I pack dirt about two feet high, then set a trap in of these in water 10 inches deep, using the oil from il bag of otter and beaver musk mixed for scent.

OTTER SKINS.

The No. 2 size trap is strong enough for otters, but it o small for regular otter trapping by any except the careful and expert trappers. Having but the same d of jaws as the 1½, it is apt to be missed by the otter's and this animal is too slippery, too elusive, and too tain in his habits for the trapper to take any chances ot catching him when he makes his visit. My personal rence is the single-spring otter trap, with toothed jaws, 2½ and 3½. These traps are more certain to catch old than the same size with plain jaws, therefore pref- e for setting at slides, landing places, and trails, where "sign" is spread so much that there is no certainty of



A SASKATCHEWAN (CANADA) TRAPPER AND HIS CATCH OF FURS.

placing the trap at just the right place for the otter's foot. These traps will invariably catch and hold the animal if he touches the pan with either foot, body or tail. For these who prefer plain jaw traps, the Nos. 3 and 4 are the best ones for general use, while for those trappers who want a double spring trap, with the teeth, the No. 48 is ideal. It is a double spring No. 4 size trap with the addition of teeth on the underside of the jaws.

I strongly advise setting otter traps from the water whenever possible, as by so doing you leave no human odor to alarm the quarry. A boat should be used if possible; but in small streams this is impractical. There the trapper should wade the water and should not approach on land nearer than 50 feet towards the place where the trap is to be set. Moreover, he should not travel close to the stream when it can be avoided. Traps should be placed under water, submerged anywhere from two to four inches. The chains may be staked out in the water, using an old wood stake, or driving it entirely out of sight beneath the water. Since an otter, when caught in a trap so set, may spoil the place for the probable capture of another, it is better to make some provision for drowning the catch; thus the landing place will not be spoiled and there will be more certainty that the captured animal will not escape. The sliding pole is the best fastening, if the water is deep enough for its use.

When making such sets the Indians frequently fasten the trap to the butt of a small sapling, which is cut somewhere not far away, by splitting the wood and driving a wedge into the split. A five or six-pound stone is then tied to the trap and the sapling stood straight, the butt under water, at the side of the trap. When caught the otter plunges down stream, dragging the sapling with him, and when he becomes tired from struggling the weight of trap and stone pulls him under water where he drowns. The half floating clog reveals his whereabouts to the trapper.

I spoke of driving a stake out of sight under water as a good way to fasten an otter trap. The driving tool is usually an axe, and I wonder how many trappers have tried driving a stake beneath the surface of the water in this way. There is a way this may be done very easily without splashing water over yourself. Drive the stake down with the butt of the axe until the top nears the surface, then cut a stout piece of wood about two feet long, square off the ends, hold it on top

BEAVERS AT WORK.

of the stake and strike on top with the axe, just the same as if it were a part of the stake that projected that high above the water. When you are through, be sure to take this piece of wood away with you.

BEAVER.

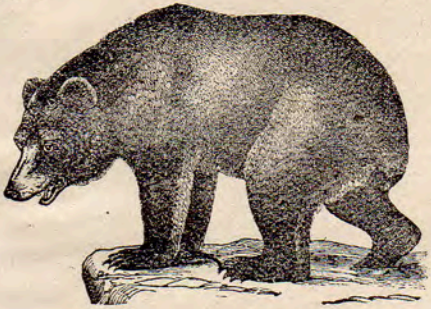
The beaver is not easily caught, and will not be taken unless you have patience; use steel traps set in water a short distance from the shore where the beaver frequently lands in coming from its dam and where water is shallow, that is where the beaver ceases to swim, and in making landing is fairly certain to place foot or two feet in trap; have trap fastened to wire running out into deep water, so that beaver will drown; some trappers place a little beaver musk or beaver castor on shore at expected landing place. Traps may be set at entrance to dam, but should be arranged to drown the beaver outside in the deeper water. If the animal begins to cut a tree—for dam repairing—in the trapping season, carefully concealed traps may be set at two or three places around the tree.

FISHER.

The fisher may be caught in steel traps set in hollow logs, holes running under stumps, or a prepared den made with boards or sticks; the prepared places should be well covered, except opening, with dead brush and leaves to look as natural as possible; set the trap, covered with well de-

A SMALL YEARLING BEAR.

cayed leaves and wood mold, and place the bait back of the trap so that the fisher will have to step on the trap to get the bait; fish and muskrat make good bait; a little scent, muskrat musk or fish oil, scattered on the ground and leading from the trap for some distance will help to attract the fisher. We advise attaching the trap chain to a spring pole, as by its use the fisher will not escape, and the animal, when caught, will be suspended where it cannot be secured by other animals.



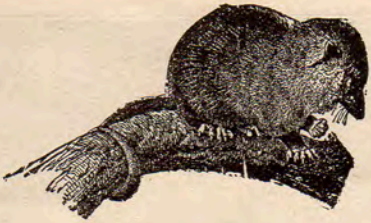
TRAPPING BEARS.

Bears are hunted and trapped. Steel traps should be covered and have heavy clog, and if prospects of a catch are fairly good, should be visited early following day, and may be kept set during the day. Deadfalls made of heavy logs, which kill the bear, are used by successful trappers. Honey makes a particularly good bait; use a fair-sized piece of honey-comb with honey in, and drop some strained honey or small pieces of honey-comb for some distance along the lead to the trap; have bait in sight. Fruit and vegetables may also be used.

MARTENS.

The marten, where the animal is found at all, frequents pine forests; traps may be set near decaying stumps, fallen trees, trunks or prepared hiding places; traps should be carefully concealed; meat bait may be used—a small bird is very good.

A LARGE BLACK BEAR.



OPOSSUM.

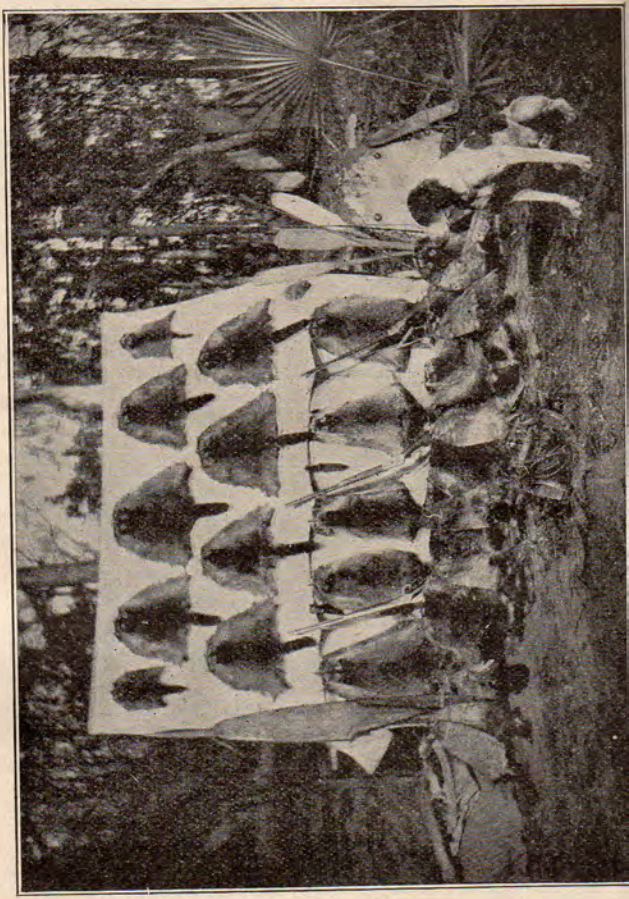
Opossum makes its den in hollow trees, tree stumps, openings in stone fences, and hollow logs, and may be caught by setting steel or box traps, or deadfalls at such places; traps should be concealed with leaves or very light rubbish gathered near where trap is set. Except where opossum must pass in or out of den, use bait, which should be in sight and arranged so that animal must step into or enter trap to get bait; a persimmon, after it has been well frosted, makes good bait; an apple and various vegetables are also used.

BADGER.

Steel traps covered with material found at the place selected may be set just within the burrow, or in a slight depression in the ground where the badger is known to travel; the animal eats vegetables, small animals, snails, and is particularly fond of honey; in using honey in comb for bait, cover it lightly, the badger will find it, and place trap where badger must pass over it to get bait.

CIVET CAT.

The civet cat may be trapped the same as the skunk; a small bird, or one large as a pigeon or a field mouse, make good bait; bait may be placed in sight at the back of a passageway, between bushes, where the civet can only enter at the place where the covered trap is set. In using deadfall, have log placed in bushes with only one way of passing to bait, which should be behind the trap concealed, so that everything looks natural.



COON AND SKUNK CAUGHT IN NEW YORK.

RACCOON.

A good set is made by simply suspending a bait over a trap set in the water. The bait should be a bird, frog or crab. Care should be taken in arranging it so that it will not be too high above the trap.

Another effective set is arranged in much the same way, except that this set is made upon land instead of in water. Honey should be used as bait—a comb of it 10 to 12 inches above the trap. A quantity of the honey should be smeared about the trap. Care should be taken to have the trap well concealed and properly covered. A raccoon is a far more cunning animal than either the skunk or civet cat.

An imitation fish, made out of tin, etc., or a real one, will prove a good bait. Contrary to the usual custom, the fish should be placed upon the pan of the trap—the latter

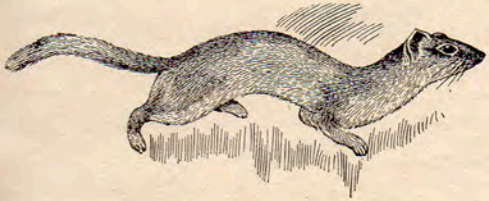
'COON HUNTERS AND THEIR DOGS.

should be in about three or four inches of water. A raccoon, if he passes the trap, will invariably be caught, especially if some fish oil is used to call his attention to it. As a rule the bait is more effective placed on a stick or wire above the trap.

Dig a hole about two feet square and 12 to 14 inches deep with a trench leading from about three feet in length, fill hole with offal of hog or other animal, cover hole and trench with boards, and then cover boards with dirt; set trap a short distance in the trench—the trench should be wide and deep enough for raccoon to enter easily.

Raccoons may be caught in many localities by placing a very bright piece of tin on the trap pan—curiosity does it.

Many hunters catch 'coons with dogs at night, but in a number of instances the 'coon skin is destroyed by the dogs in killing the animals. These same hunters also shoot 'coons; it is rather tame sport, and it should be remembered that shot skins bring lower prices in the market than those that are trapped. Always skin and handle 'coons with great care; well handled skins bring the best price every time.



WEASEL AND ERMINE.

Always remember that a trap must be set so that it can spring. Set your traps where you know the weasel is in the habit of running. (They usually run around the edges of a slough or low meadow and around brush piles). Find small mounds, or throw up snow in a little heap or pile, so Mr. Weasel can see the place from a distance. Set your trap on

one side of this pile, or mound, or heap. Cover your trap with feathers, or if you can't get feathers, rabbit hair is good covering, or wild cattails growing around muskegs or marshes. Also have some of this under trap, so it will not get any snow between trap and pan, for then the trap will not work. After carefully covering the trap, a bird is hung up on a stick above trap, about eight inches high. Now throw a few feathers all over the snow pile, then take a little snow in your hand and throw over the feathers. Just a little snow only, so the wind will not blow the feathers away. You understand that the feathers are on that snow pile for weasel to see from a distance, and now if you want to make it all look doubly attractive to Mr. Weasel sprinkle a little blood over it all. If all this is done just right you will surely get the weasel.

The weasel is in no way trap shy, and is, therefore, not very difficult to catch when once located. He, however, has a very keen nose and is somewhat particular about approaching human scent. It is, therefore, well to remove all unnatural appearances and leave as little human scent about the trap as possible. The best trap to use is a No. 0 of any reliable make. It must snap very easy, or it is of no use for weasels. The best place to look for weasels is along old stone rows, old foundations of tumbled-down buildings, under old bridges or the trunks of fallen trees.

The weasel cannot work in snow without leaving some marks, so if you look carefully over the ground you cannot fail to locate runways and places frequented. There are many ways to set and bait traps to catch them, but I am only going to mention a few. First of all, I will tell you of a set that I believe to be the best of all, and almost never-failing for weasels, and it is just as good for minks.

Make a little cage about five inches square of common wire—mosquito netting. Catch a mouse and keep him in it alive. Give him some dried grass for a bed, and, of course, feed him. In a few days things will smell pretty mousie and will be ready for bait. Take the cage with the mouse and plenty of feed for him to eat where you wish to make your set. Build a little den of stone, make it warm and comfortable for the mouse, for he is valuable. Build it so the weasel can enter only one way. Place the cage in the back with plenty of dry grass packed around all sides except the

front. Stake the trap and set it in the entrance with a little dry grass scattered over it. If the trap is setting on snow, put a small piece of paper under it. Arrange everything as natural as possible and you will have as good a set as ever was. Of course, if you can find a place to put the mouse in without making one, so much the better.

Don't walk up to this set any oftener than you have to. If you have made the mouse comfortable and given him food enough he will live, and the longer he stays there the more scent he will make. You will not need to buy any scent at $1.00 a bottle.

If there are any minks likely to come where you make this set, you had best use a No. 1 trap, for he will be sure to get in.

Another good set is to place your trap where weasels are known to frequent and cover it over with feathers, freshly plucked from a bird.

A rabbit's head hung in a hollow tree about 12 inches above a trap that has been lightly covered over makes a good set. I don't think much of hanging the bait in the open. The crows or owls get it in the most of cases.

A hollow log makes an easy place for a set; throw a dead rabbit or bird in log and set a trap at each end.

In skinning a weasel use cornmeal freely on your hands and the carcass, as it prevents blood and grease from soiling the fur. The skin should be cased fur side out and dried in a cool place; it should be stretched similar to mink in shape.

SKUNK.

All agree that this animal may be easily caught in many different kinds of traps; in studying other sets for various animals you will note that a number are as good for skunks as for the particular animal for which they were set; it is not desirable to repeat all these here, but will say that all kinds of traps may be used. Best baits for skunks are also given elsewhere in this book under proper head.

Many persons are now raising skunks in captivity, and more will do so, as it can be profitably done; the skunks may sell alive at good prices, and it would pay well to catch them alive.

SKUNK ODOR.

To remove skunk odor from clothing: 1. Wash thoroughly with plenty of tar soap; or: 2. Saturate with turpentine and hang outdoors on a windy day. To remove the odor from traps hold over a fire—above, but not in the flame or intense heat—a few minutes will suffice. For the hands—tar soap. Much of the odor can be removed by rubbing the hands in fine, dry road dust before washing. From a dog—sprinkle finely pulverized sulphur into the hair.

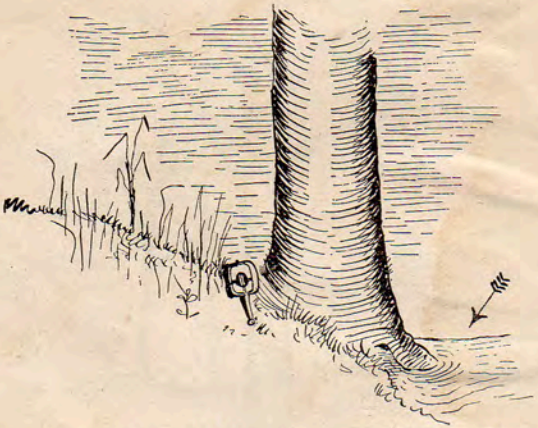
A CANADIAN TRAPPER'S METHOD.

A successful Canadian trapper writes us: I spend most of my time in August and September on streams and trails, making deadfalls and fixing up all old deadfalls I made the year before. After I have them all ready to set up, I go around once a week, take my gun and shoot birds or anything that will make bait and cover the trap and set it so it will not go off. I do that until the season commences and minks will get used to the trap and in passing nearby will always go to the trap to look for something to eat. It will always leave a smell around the trap. I had 75 deadfalls set up last year. I baited them for two or three months occassionally and the first time I set them up to catch, I caught eight minks and four skunks, besides weasels, proving to me that those minks knew exactly where those traps were set. Besides, it gives the mink a longer time in which to find the trap and by going to the trap, they get used to it and are not the least bit shy about entering. The deadfall I make I consider the best for animals, for you never lose any, as they are always dead in the trap.

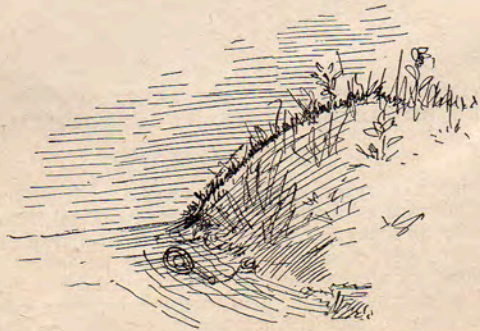
A GOOD NATURAL SET IF THE WATER IS NOT MORE THAN SIX INCHES DEEP AT POINT WHERE TRAP SHOULD BE PLACED. GOOD FOR MINK AND 'COON.

TRAIL SETS.

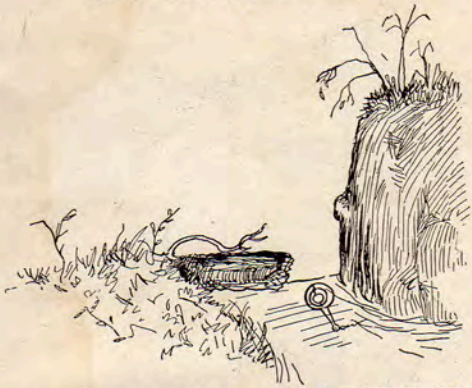
The more wary animals, such as the wolf, coyote, fox and lynx, as well as smaller fur-bearers, will fall into a trail set as easily as a skunk or rat will walk into a trap properly set. In the wild country fur trails may be found leading along ridges, or along streams and around lakes; also may be found in narrowest places in marshes between ridges, or abandoned moose and caribou trails, as well as old pack trails, are nearly always travelled by fur-bearers. In more



TOO DEEP AT ARROW POINT; PLACE TRAP ON OTHER SIDE OF TREE. GOOD FOR MINK AND 'COON.



A POND SET. TRAP AT EDGE AND UNDER THE WATER.

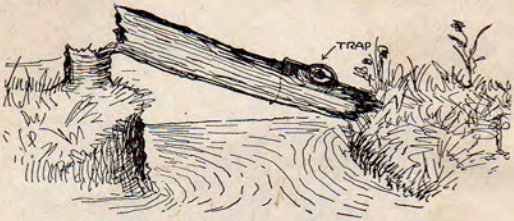


A GATE-LIKE PLACE MADE BY PUTTING PIECES OF LOGS, ETC., ON ONE SIDE AND THE BANK ON THE OTHER. GOOD FOR MINK AND 'COON.

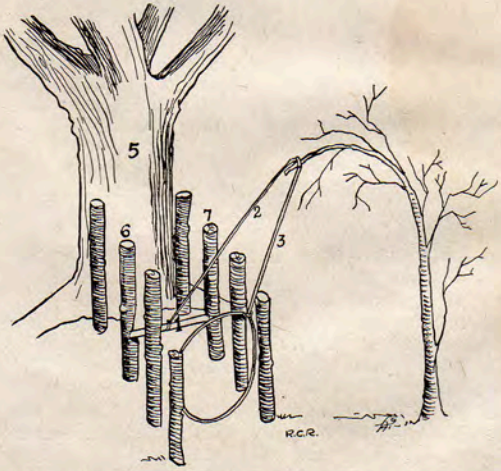
settled sections cattle trails, old roads or footpaths are generally used. By following some of these trails you will usually see signs of fur which inhabit that part of the country.

Next find where there is a small log or bush lying across the trail that the animal steps over. By carefully examining the ground you may be able to find the exact place where they step. Cut out of the ground a place somewhat larger than trap and springs. This should also be deep enough to allow a good lining of dry grass or small, dry, broken branches under and around sides of trap to insure it against freezing in. Place trap in hole so that it sets nearly level with ground and cover lightly with grass, leaves, or needles which have fallen off the evergreens. This, of course, depends on whatever corresponds with surrounding conditions. Carefully conceal clog and chain and do not visit traps too often for good results.

Setting on trails in marshes where there is grass and weeds growing, it is not necessary to find a log or other obstruction to set by, but sharpen end of clog so it can be easily pushed back under the grass and fix trap bed as before, then cover trap with dry grass cut up in lengths of an



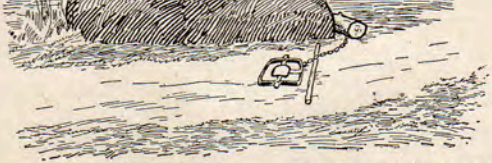
A GOOD PLACE TO MAKE A LOG SET.



A SKUNK SNARE. No. 1, BAIT AND TRIGGER STICK; No. 2, WIRE; No. 3, SNARE, COPPER WIRE; No. 4, SPRING POLE; No. 5, TREE TRUNK; No. 6 and 7, BAIT AND PEN STICKS, WITH NOTCHES CUT ABOUT TWO INCHES FROM GROUND FOR BAIT AND TRIGGER STICK TO CATCH ON.

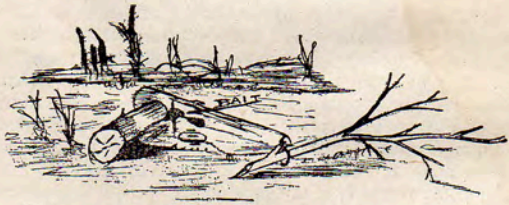
inch or more. This makes a very natural covering and grass leaves jaws as soon as trap is sprung. Next place a weed, or few blades of grass, across trail two or three inches above ground about the right distance from trap and set is complete. These sets work very satisfactorily after snow has fallen to a depth of four to six inches. If traps are disturbed or new sets made after snow has fallen, traps may be inclosed in very thin tissue paper, which gives best results in nearly all conditions of snow. Have tried using paper sacks, such as used by grocers and found that while they worked very well at times when the snow was very light and dry, they were a complete failure when snow became soft and later frozen. The paper is altogether too tough and when frozen in will hold jaws of trap from rising after trap has been sprung, while the tissue paper will break instantly and allow trap to spring freely.

For a clog I prefer a small, dry pole from four to six feet in length, which should be large enough to fill chain ring and fasten with a small staple about six inches from end. This makes clog very easy to conceal in many different ways and can be stood up on end in brush when it is impossible to get it out of sight otherwise. In many instances the clog can be placed across the trail and used as a guide to cause animal to step into trap. It is a good idea to place clogs across trails in summer, so they get accustomed to passing over them and at opening of season a trap may be placed there without arousing suspicion.



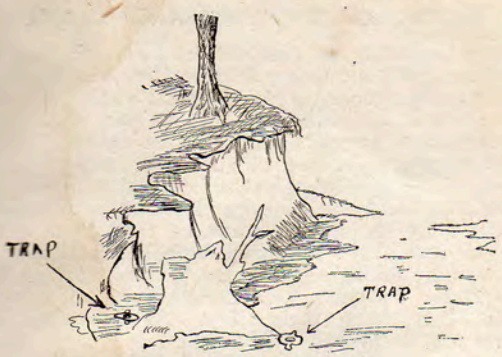
EXACT SET THAT CAUGHT 14 FOXES IN 14 DAYS LAST FALL, WITH 28 TRAPS SET. NOTE STEPPING STICK AND SET TRAP SLIGHTLY TO ONE SIDE OF PATH. USED BY E. F. KEITH IN ADIRONDACK MOUNTAINS.

A BLIND SET FOR MINK.



LOG SET FOR MUSKRAT AND MINK.

A DEN SET.



A MUSKRAT SET.

FINDS FUR NEWS VALUABLE.

I have taken Fur News for only two months and I think it an ideal magazine. I have enjoyed reading the articles written by other trappers and believe that I owe most of my success this year to those articles. I am only a beginner, so I am writing to tell you of my trapping experience. It is probably the same old story with most trappers, but it may help some beginner.

I don't think there is any better exercise, sport, or recreation than trapping. It creates a love for the outdoors, teaches one the habits of wild animals, and builds up strength and health as nothing else can. I know it gave me an appetite to get up at 5 a. m., and walk about two miles before breakfast to visit my small line of traps. A TRAPPER.

METHODS OF FASTENING TRAPS.

Not infrequently we read articles in the trapping magazines setting forth the money loss sustained by the trappers that fail to take proper care of the pelts of the animals they capture, but it is seldom, indeed, that we read anything about the money loss to trappers caused by the use of bad methods—or by the improper use of good methods—of fastening traps. I believe this latter loss to be equal to, if not greater than, the loss due to the improper handling of the pelts. In the great army of trappers scattered throughout this vast country of ours, there are many, both amateur and professional, who are failing to attain the greatest success in their chosen art for the one reason that they do not use proper methods of fastening their traps. At first thought this statement may seem to be just a little far-fetched; however, a close study of the subject will prove that such is not the case. A trapper may be scientifically correct in selecting his traps; he may properly locate his sets; he may place and cover his traps in accordance with the best scientific knowledge to be gained on the subject; yet if he goes wrong in fastening his traps his work will produce but indifferent results—his skinning knife will not be dulled by use, and his stretching boards will keep, forever, their newness. He will gain little by catching a valuable fur-bearing animal if, before he visits his trap, it gnaws off a foot, or pulls out of the trap, and escapes. To expound a few of the better methods of fastening traps and to point out the evils of the inferior methods of fastening them, is the purpose of this article.

In making use of the various methods of fastening traps, the trapper should ever keep in mind that the primary object of their use is to enable the trap to hold the game in such manner as to prevent it escaping by pulling from a trap, eating or twisting off a foot, or by breaking the trap or the trap chain. There are but few, yes, very few, methods of fastening traps that measure up to these requirements. Why do trappers use these inefficient methods of fastening traps? The answer is obvious. When we consider that the method of fastening the trap is determined not alone by the object of enabling the trap to hold securely the game when caught, but by this object conjoined with other governing influences, we see at once why trappers use inefficient methods of fast-

ening traps. The "other governing influences" are the serpent in the Garden of Eden here. As an illustration of this point, let us take an example from the life of a real trapper. This trapper has his trap line in a section of the country where trap thieves are known to operate extensively. Fearing the thieves will locate his line of traps, he makes use of only such methods as are not likely to call the attention of a "sneaksum" to the set. He finds numerous signs of muskrats in a shallow, bush-fringed slough some two hundred yards back from the little creek where he is trapping, and decides to set a few traps at points where signs are most numerous. When he examines the slough more closely he finds, to his disappointment, that nowhere is the water more than six

THE SPRING POLE.

inches deep. This is too shallow for him to make use of the drowning pole or the slide wire—at least too shallow for using them effectually. How, then, shall he proceed to set the traps to be able to capture these valuable little fur-bearing animals? True, he can employ the "drowning flip-up" in connection with his traps and successfully drown his catch, but this would be an undesirable method of fastening to use here, owing to the difficulty of concealing the "flip-up" arrangement. After pondering the situation he

decides to use the method of fastening the traps to stakes, which he drives in the mud at the bottom of the slough out the full length of the trap chain from the set, preferring to take the risk of the muskrat escaping by twisting off a foot rather than expose the sets to the mercy of trap thieves. The result is anything but gratifying—five muskrat feet and one muskrat are taken from the traps the next morning! And the serpent was surely responsible for it! I am wondering if the results would have been different had the trapper fastened the traps to light stones, or iron weights, which would have been an encumbrance to the captured 'rats, yet which would have permitted them a limited freedom in their movements.

Of the many methods of fastening traps used by trappers, none is more efficient and satisfactory than the method of fastening the trap to a movable clog or drag. Anything, from a four-foot section of a log chain to a burlap bag filled with straw, will do for the drag. Small bushes or branches, however, make the most satisfactory drags; and the more small twigs on the bush or branch the better drag it will make. The weight of the drag should be such as to permit considerable freedom in movements of the captured animal, yet such as will be a successful impediment to any extended effort at locomotion. A very good way of fastening the trap to the drag—when trapping the smaller fur-fearing animals, is to use a short piece of baling wire and fasten the ring of the trap chain to the drag at a point not far distant from one of its ends. This will aid, in a measure, in keeping the drag from getting fast among the bushes when it is being dragged along by the captured animal. It is a good plan when using baling wire in fastening the trap to the drag, not to fasten the trap chain directly to the drag, but to use a piece of wire about eighteen inches long, fastening one end of it to the ring in the trap chain and the other end to the drag at a point about twelve inches from one of its ends. This lessens the strain on the trap and chain, and minimizes the chances of the captured animal pulling loose from the trap. It is an easy matter to conceal the set from the prying eyes of trap thieves when using this method of fastening the trap, as the bush that is used for the drag may be placed in an upright position among the other bushes near the set, or it may be covered lightly with long grass or leaves, or it

may be left exposed to view near the set; however it is placed it is not likely to attract the attention of trap thieves, as it will blend in nicely with almost any surroundings. In using this method of fastening traps, the trapper should ever remember that the object of it is to encumber, but not hold fast, the captured animal.

When trapping along water-courses it is advisable, when possible, to fasten the traps in such a manner as to drown the catch. This not only lessens the chances of trap thieves discovering the whereabout of the sets, but it also limits the chance of escape of the captured animal to a brief period of struggling after it is caught before it tires itself and is dragged beneath the water, either by its own struggles or by the weight of the trap. Animals of aquatic habits when caught in a trap invariably plunge into the water, and this

THE BRUSH DRAG.

gives the trapper an excellent opportunity to drown his captive. With the view utilizing this characteristic of the amphibious animals, trappers have devised various methods of fastening their traps when trapping for them. The method most commonly used, however, is what is known as the sliding pole. It consists of a pole about eight or ten feet long

which has been trimmed of its branches except a few at the small end, and one of a size that will permit the ring of the trap chain to traverse freely its entire length. This pole is placed near where the trap is set, in an inclined position, with its small end reaching into deep water and the large end secured by a small, forked limb driven into the ground with the fork engaging the pole. The ring of the trap chain is slipped on to this pole before the pole is secured to the shore, and care should be used to see that it slides freely down the whole length of the pole. When an animal is captured it plunges desperately into the deep water. The ring of the trap chain slides rapidly down to the end of the pole, and the weight of the trap, together with the tendency of the animal to endeavor to reach the surface of the water by swimming directly upwards, prevents the victim from either rising to the surface again, or returning to the shore.

A modification of this method of fastening traps is found in the sliding wire. In this method the pole is replaced with a wire which is fastened to some heavy object, which is later sunk in the deep water out ten or fifteen feet from the shore. Short loops made in the wire, prevent the captured animal from regaining the surface.

Another method of fastening traps, where the object of the fastening is to drown the game, is what some trappers call the "drowning wire." It is merely a piece of baling wire, about eighteen inches long, with one end fastened to the ring in the trap chain and the other end fastened to a stake out a ways from the shore in deep water. Simple as it is, this method will give good results where the water is deep near the shore, and where the game to be captured is of small size.

Sometimes, in trapping along a water course, one will find shallow sloughs where signs of game are abundant, yet where the water is not sufficiently deep for the use of the sliding pole or the "drowning wire." Oftentimes one hesitates to set traps for muskrats at such locations, as it is rarely one meets with success in trapping for these little animals at locations where the death of the captured animal cannot be effected by drowning or other means, or where the captive is not permitted limited freedom in its movements. Such locations, however, offer splendid opportunities for the use of the "drowning flip-up," as by its use the game is drowned in water but a few inches deep. The

"drowning flip-up" is a combination of the "drowning wire" and the old-fashioned "flip-up" snare, with a modification of the trigger arrangement; it makes a splendid fastening for traps when trapping where the water is shallow and where the object of the fastening is to drown the captive. In using this method of fastening traps, there is one point that the trapper must ever keep in mind; that point is that the trap chain, or the wire connecting the trap with the "flip-up" pole, *must* be fastened to the end of the trap which is *farthest from the spring.* If the trap is fastened otherwise the spring of the trap is certain to be pulled beneath the "drowning fork"—a condition which would quickly cause the captive to be liberated. The one great drawback in using this method of fastening traps is the difficulty of concealing the sets from the ever-watchful eyes of trap thieves; owing to this drawback the method is seldom used by professional trappers in settled districts.

THE SLIDING WIRE.

There is another method of fastening traps that is used a great deal by trappers when trapping for 'rats, especially when the trapping takes place during the late fall before the ice forms on the rivers and lakes and during the spring months when the streams are open. This method is used

where a floating log or plank forms the location of the set. It consists merely in setting the trap on the log or plank—which, of course, has been anchored to the shore—and fastening the chain to the under side of that on which the trap is set. To facilitate fastening the chain, the log or plank may be temporarily turned bottom-upward; and only sufficient slack to permit the proper placing of the trap should be permitted in the chain. This method of fastening forces the captured muskrat to jump into the water on the side of the set next to the chain, where, owing to the weight of the trap, he is speedily drowned. In using this method, one should use large traps, in order to insure sufficient weight to prevent the 'rat from regaining the surface, once he makes his plunge.

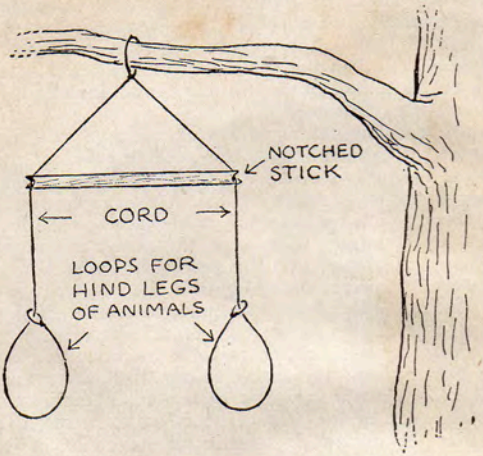
A very common method of fastening traps, and one not to be recommended except in the few cases where no other method can be used, is that of stapling the trap chain to a log, tree, or similar, fixed object. I can call to mind, at present, but one method of fastening traps that equals it in lack of efficacy; that method is the one of fastening the trap by driving a stake into the ground through the ring of the trap chain. These two methods of fastening traps are anything but good, and should be used only when conditions and surroundings are such as to bar all other methods. The trapper should ever remember that the instant the trap is sprung and clamps itself to the foot of a wild animal, that that animal is prompted by instinct to make a wild dash for liberty. It is this first wild dash that tests the holding power of the trap; and when the trap is fastened to a fixed object, as in the two methods mentioned above, the strain on the trap and chain is tremendously great. Especially is this true if the captured animal be one of great strength, such as the timber wolf, the wolverine, etc. When it is absolutely necessary that the trapper use either of these methods of fastening traps, he should attach either an extension chain or a piece of strong wire to the regular trap chain. This lessens the strain on the trap and chain, and, by reducing the purchase, adds to the holding power of the trap.

There is one other method of fastening traps that I wish to bring to the notice of the reader; namely, the spring pole. The objects of this method are to prevent the captured animal from gnawing off its foot, and to swing the catch up into

the air out of reach of predaceous animals. The spring pole may be the flexible limb of a tree—if one is found conveniently near the set—or it may be a sprout, or, if neither tree or sprout is found in the proximity of the set, a slender pole may be cut, trimmed of its branches, and fastened, firmly, in the ground near the set.

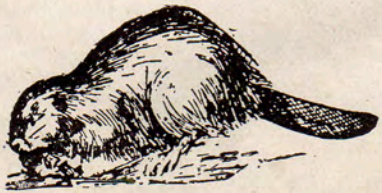
A notch is cut in the pole near the top, and the ring of the trap chain is fastened to the pole just below this notch. The top of the pole is now bent down until this notch engages a similar notch in a stake driven in the ground some three or four feet back from the base of the pole. When an animal is caught its struggles disengage the notch in the pole from the notch in the stake and the pole springs back to its original, upright position, carrying into the air with it the trap and its victim. The size of the pole, of course, is determined by the weight of the game it is expected to lift.

In deciding the proper method of fastening to use in making a set, there are many things that the trapper must take into consideration; he is governed in making his decision by the size of the animal he is endeavoring to capture, by whether the animal is aquatic or otherwise in its habits, by the surroundings of the set, by the prevailing weather at the time of making the set, and by the general surroundings of the section where the set is to be made. And while taking these governing influences into consideration, he must ever keep in mind the primary object to be gained by the use of the method—the prevention of the escape of the animal by pulling from the trap, eating or twisting off a foot, or by breaking the trap or trap chain.



SKINNING DEVICES.

Here is a little skinning device. Of course, every trapper has his own way, but this device is practical and handy and can be made anywhere.



STEEL TRAPS.

All trappers agree that it pays to use the best traps that are made; you simply lose your fur, the fur you might get, by using traps that are too cheap to be good. Keep your traps clean—this does not mean bright, but it does mean free from rust, and clear of dried dirt or mud in the spring—a trap that cannot be easily set, and that is hard to spring, is not good no matter how much it costs. It is worth while to put your good traps away in proper order at the close of the trapping season.

If trap set for fox has a small pan, leaving considerable space between jaws and pan, rivet on a larger pan; this will make it impossible for the animal to step in the trap without touching the pan and springing the trap.

Method of keeping traps from close to opening of following season: Boil for about half an hour in strong solution of fresh black walnut bark, remove from liquid with a hook and let dry; treated thus the traps will not rust. Traps should be thoroughly cleaned before boiling.

To prepare traps for use, boil in clean water; if rusty add lye or wood ashes to the water; next boil traps in water with hemlock or spruce foliage, or maple leaves, to remove odor of iron; handle traps at all times, especially when setting, with buckskin gloves rubbed with dirt. Above general instructions not necessary when traps are to be set in running water.

TRAP SIZES.

Size O.—Common house rat, Southern muskrat, weasel.
No. 1.—Muskrat, opossum.
No. 1½.—Muskrat, mink, lynx, skunk.
No. 2.—Lynx, mink, skunk, raccoon.
No. 3.—Fox.
No. 4.—Fox, otter, wolf, coyote, beaver.
No. 5 and 6.—Bear.

Where we give more than one number as satisfactory for the same animal, we do so because trappers in various sections recommend the different sizes; trappers also use for mink, 1½ and 2 Victor, 2 and 2½ stop thief, and 2 and 2½

jump; and for skunk, 81, 91 and 91½. It is mainly important not to use a trap that is weak, or unnecessarily strong.

No. 115-X—"Triple Clutch" High Grip for muskrat, skunk, mink, etc.

No. 215-X—"Triple Clutch" High Grip for fox, 'coon, 'possum, etc.

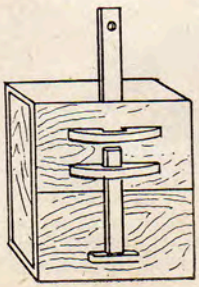
No. 1-X—"Triple Clutch" Kangaroo for muskrat, skunk, mink, etc.

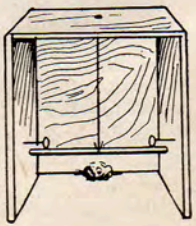
No. 2-X—"Triple Clutch" Kangaroo for fox, 'coon, 'possum, etc.

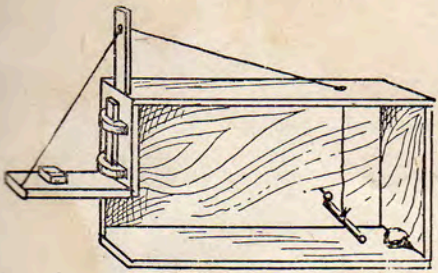
No. 2-X—"Triple Clutch" Triumph for fox, 'coon, wildcat, etc.

BOX TRAP.

May be used for catching skunks, opossums and similar animals. Take one-inch board (weather-beaten) make a box four feet long, two and a half feet wide tnd three feet high. On one end make a door the whole width of box and one and a half feet high and hinged at the top. Now take two pieces of wood and cut them so that a cleat one and a half inches wide can work (Fig. 2) up and down in the slots, and nail them as in Fig. 1. Make a cleat one and a half inches wide and about two feet long to work up and down in these cleats. When the door is up (trap set) the cleat will rest on the top of door and stay up. Now nail a stick about one foot long at the upper edge in front and have it project about 10 inches above top of box. Make a little hole through this for the string from trigger to pass through.







As to the trigger part, about 12 inches from rear of trap drive two nails on opposite sides of the box and about six inches from the floor. Make a stick one-half by one-half inch and about three feet eight inches long, and tie string about six inches from one end, and then pass through hole in top and then through the cleat and onto a staple driven in lower edge of door. Draw door up and fasten trigger under nails and the right height can be guessed. Put bait in back of box and you will have a fine trap. Animals caught in this trap, being caught alive, can often be sold at a much better price alive than when trapped only for the fur; if very young and small, they can be reared until full grown, or may be given their freedom.

CHAINS.

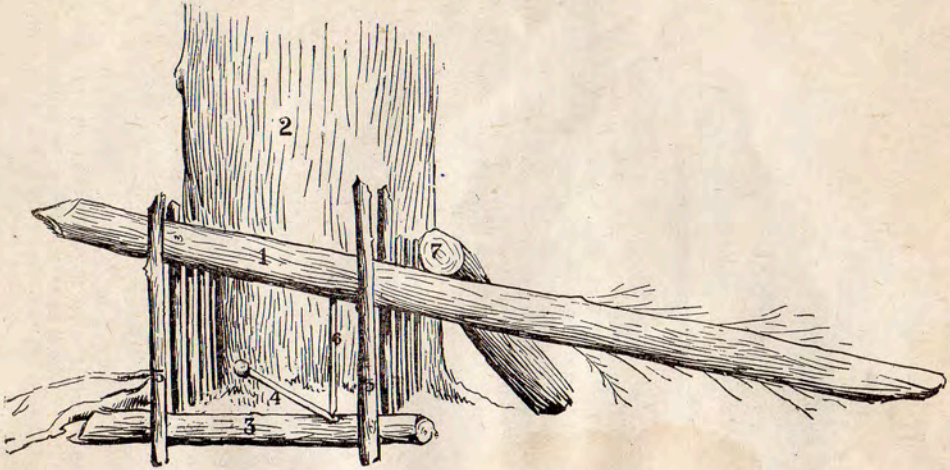
Have chains four to six feet long, the latter is the better, so that the drag may be far enough away from the trap not to attract attention of the animal.

DROWNERS.

Fasten a strong wire to a heavy stone, sink the stone in deep water 10 or 20 feet from shore, have iron ring at end of trap chain, run wire (that is attached to stone) through the ring, and fasten other end of wire to a stake securely driven down under water about a foot from shore.

DRAGS.

Many experienced trappers prefer movable drags to firmly fixed stakes to which to attach traps; a brush drag is recommended, fastened to the chain with piece of bailing wire.



POPULAR CANADIAN DEADFALL.

We show above a deadfall used in Canada for minks and martens: 1, the fall; 2, trunk of tree; 3, bed log; 4, bait stick; 5, guide for fall; 6, trigger; 7, weight. Some brush or a few twigs thrown on a deadfall makes it a more effective trap. It is found to be very satisfactory.

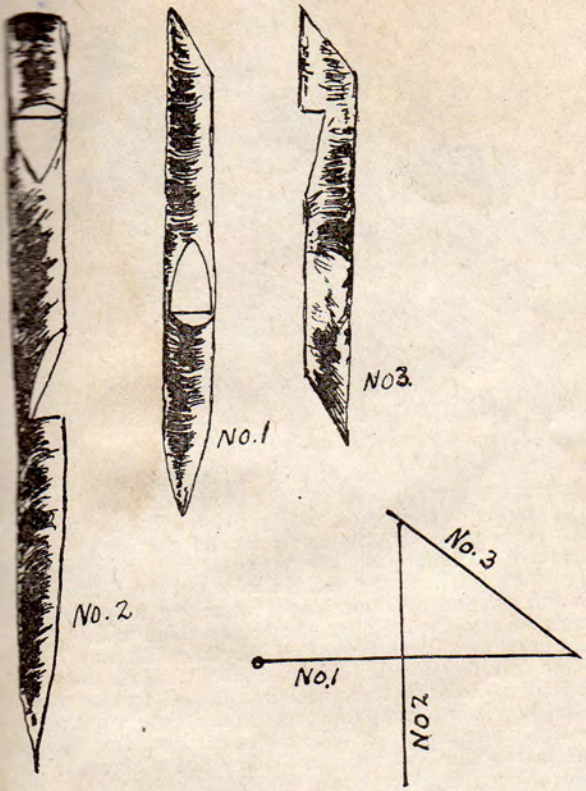


FIGURE FOUR.

The parts of the figure four set here shown are not in exact length or proportion; in using figure four the length of upright must be determined by the size of animal for which box or deadfall is set.

FOX SNARING AS PRACTICED BY A NOVA SCOTIA TRAPPER.

I make the snares of wire altogether, and the kind o wire most generally used is No. 20 brass or copper, and abou six strands of this wire loosely twisted together so that i will close smoothly and easily around the fox's neck. The noose of the snare is made about seven or eight inches in diameter, and the tail piece used for tying the snare is made in different lengths, suitable for attaching it to the differen kinds of sets used. Then the bright shine and brassy odor that is on them must be got rid of. The best way I know o is the way that the Indians go about it. First they take the bark of a hemlock tree, peel it right off to the wood, and then chop it into small pieces and put it into a pot and cover it with water and boil it for about an hour and then put in the snares and boil them until they are a nice dark brown color. Then they are ready to set.

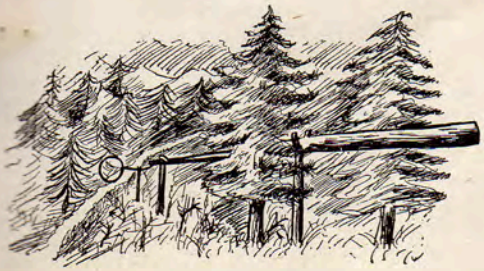
I will first describe the most successful set I know of—that is, on logs over brooks and streams of water. In most any wooded place where there are foxes you will find streams of water with old logs and fallen trees lying across from one bank to another, and I find this an ideal place for snares, as the foxes use those logs for crossing. Now, the chances are that there may be an old tough limb still attached and

standing to one side of the log, and this is a place provided by nature to fasten your snare to. Tie the snare securely to the bottom of the limb and have it hanging fair over the center of the log, and the bottom of the snare should be about six inches above the log; you will have to set a small limb midway between the snare and the limb that the snare is tied to. Set it firmly in the log, and put a split in the upper end and press the tail piece of the snare into this split, so as to keep the snare in the right position. If there is no limb like this on the log to fasten the snare to, you will have to drive a stake in the log instead; and if the log is hard you will have to bore a hole for the stake. You don't need a large stake; one an inch in diameter is large enough to hold any fox. Tie the end of the snare to the stake close down to the log, then split the top end of the stake across the log and lift the snare up and press the wire down firmly in this split so that the noose will hang fair over the centre of the log.

Sometimes you will find a small sapling growing up from the bottom of the stream and right against the side of the log; this is an excellent place to tie your snare to.

A spring pole is not needed in this kind of a set, for as soon as foxes get fast in the snare they tumble off to one side in a few seconds and are strangled by the tight drawn snare very quickly.

Next is the trail set. There are different ways of making trail sets, and I will first try to describe the spring pole, or balance pole way of setting. In my estimation the bal-



ance pole is much superior to spring pole; as you all know, a spring pole, especially green wood, after it is set for a short time, loses the spring and retains the position it is set in; but a balance pole is always ready for business.

I am sending a drawing of one of the sets, which I think will explain itself. No. 1 is a stake with a prong of a limb left on, and the end of the balance pole is caught under this prong to hold the pole down. Have it so that it will spring beside the trail, the upper end of which is split and the wire pressed down in this split to hold the snare in the right position over the trail. If possible, set so that the balance pole is screened by bushes, so that it cannot be plainly seen from the trail.

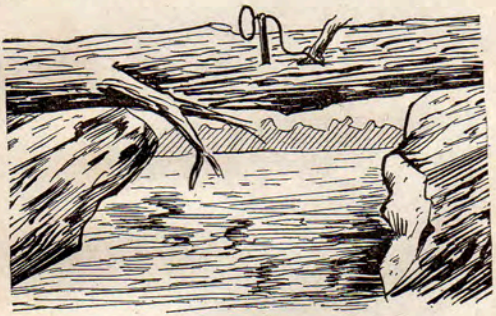
Next I will try to tell you how I snare foxes on trails without the balance pole. I fasten the snare in two different ways—and one of those ways is tying the snare solid to a bush close beside the trail. Perhaps some of you may think this a very crude way of setting; but it is very successful, if the conditions are right for making the set. As I said before, I tie the snare solid and hang it over the trail the same as with the balance pole, but there must be another bush close behind the one that the snare is tied to, and the fox will soon wind itself up tight between those two bushes and they strangle as quickly as though they were hung up by a balance pole. Or, if the bush that the snare is tied to is limbed close down to the ground, it will do the trick alone without a second bush.

The other way I set is by laying a limb lengthwise beside the trail and fasten the snare to the middle of it, and have the snare hung over the trail as in the former sets.

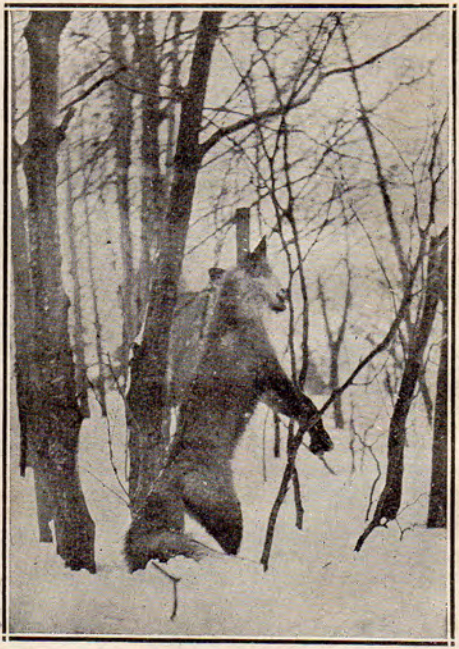
Now, there may be better ways of snaring foxes than the four different ways I have described to you, but those same sets are good enough to take the foxes we have in this corner of Canada, and I think our foxes are just as hard to snare or trap as any you find. It was from an old Indian that I learned how to snare fox and he was the best hand at the business that I ever saw. The first season that he snared around here he set out over two hundred snares, and by the time that he was forced to quit on account of deep snow falling, he had 50 foxes caught. I know that to be a fact, as I am personally acquainted with the men that he sold those fox pelts to. This was the Indian that taught me how to

snare foxes. But you may be sure he did not let me on to the job until he was ready to leave this part of the country for good himself. And when he was leaving he told me some things about setting snares—what to do, and what not to do—that enabled me to get four foxes out of twenty snares.

The things that the Indian told me to be most particular about was, whenever possible to have everything as natural as the surroundings, and when making these sets to try and



make them so that they would be serviceable for future seasons, so that the foxes would be no ways suspicious, as they some times are of new settings. And when making new sets *to have them made as long as possible before trapping time.* And when going the rounds of the snares, not to go any closer than necessary when there is nothing in them. And to be sure and not walk on the path near the snare.



RED FOX CAUGHT IN A SNARE WITH LIFTING POLE.

BAITS.

Best baits for muskrats are the following in order given: Carrots, mellow apples, wild parsnips, turnips, corn, pumpkins, artichokes, roots and grasses.

Good fox bait consists of the meat of the muskrat, cat, chicken, crow, skunk and horse.

Mink bait—fish, frogs, crayfish, crabs, muskrat, chicken, small birds, squirrel, rabbit. Do not use a very large piece; the bait will prove most effective if lightly covered.

A successful trapper says: "I have tried fish, rabbit and squirrel for mink, and find squirrel much the best."

Rabbit is a good bait for fox, wolf, lynx, skunk and nearly all animals you wish to trap.

Raccoon—apples, frogs, muskrat, fish, grubs, insects, green corn.

An English sparrow, which you can easily catch, set up to appear as natural as possible, makes a good bait for mink, skunk, fox or squirrel.

Make a study of the various kinds of food eaten by the animals you wish to catch, and then vary your bait.

SCENTS.

A trapper recommends as a good scent: Mink scent—pint fish oil, two muskrat musks, three mink musks; let stand for week or more.

A scent for foxes and minks can be made of musk from the muskrat alone, or muskrat and fox musk mixed with a little honey or glucose. Three-fifths honey, one-fifth skunk essence, and one-fifth musk.

Scents for muskrat—oil of anise, sweet fennel or assafoetida—a very little of the scent should be put on the bait.

A Saskatchewan trapper makes a mink scent as follows: Fish oil, a little alcohol, oil of anise, and a small amount of beeswax boiled together; it is also good for foxes and wolves; has proved satisfactory for past 10 years.

FISH OIL.

Fish oil may be made by cutting up small fish, eels especially good; put the pieces in a colorless bottle, cork *nearly* air tight and let stand where the sun will shine on it for four or five weeks, then strain through a cloth, or muslin, and it is ready for use.

TRACKS AND TRACKING.

In order to be a successful trapper one should be able to read the tracks and signs of the various animals; he will then have a better idea of the number and varieties of fur-bearers to be found on his trapping grounds.

In the fall is the best time to look for signs; the roads and stock paths are then usually dry and dusty, and such of the animals as travel in such places will leave their tracks there during the night. In sand bars and muddy strips along streams is also a good place to look for tracks of several of the fur-bearers, such as 'coon, mink, etc.

Around drifts, large stones, logs, etc., one is likely to find droppings of the 'coon, which, in the fall usually consist of grapes, and other fruits, crawfish, etc.

Along the streams you will find the tracks of the 'coon; at places you will see where he has waded out quite a ways into the stream in search of fish, crawfish, etc. The hind track is very long, as they walk on the entire bottom of the foot part of the time. In the drawing I have shown the track of the front and hind foot, but the front track does not always show. They usually go on a lope somewhat like the mink. The track of the hind foot will be from two and a half to five and a half inches in length, some will tell you less, but I caught one that made a track nearly six inches long and it was not an extra large one, if I remember correctly it only weighed 16 pounds.

Sometimes you will see his tracks several miles from any stream and in the early fall there will be, at times, sev-

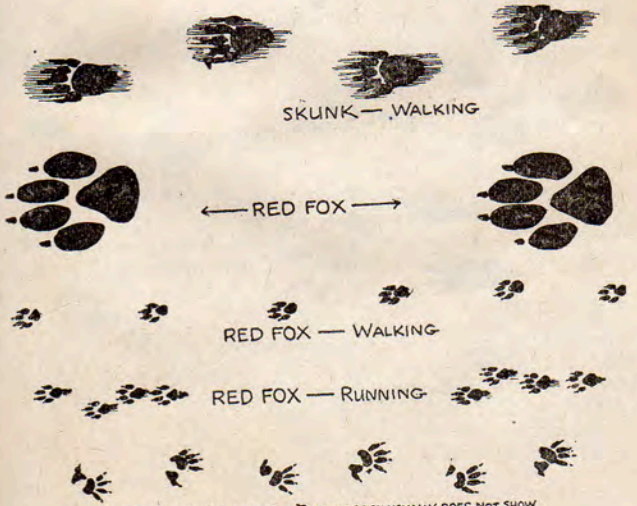
eral 'coons together, sometimes five or six. This, I think, is the mother and her young, that still run together in search of food.

The foot is bare and the long, slender toes make a very distinct track where conditions are favorable.

The fox makes a track somewhat like a small dog; but they make a more distinct and regular trail than the dog.

The track of the red fox will measure about one and three quarters or two inches in length, and the usual step about 12 to 16 inches in length. The Southern grey fox will make a track somewhat rounder than the red fox, and resembles the track of the cat some. You will find the tracks of the fox around old fields, woods, roads, etc. They are fond of grapes, poke berries, and other fruits and around such places you are liable to find their tracks.

The opossum is another animal that is fond of grapes, poke berries, persimmons, and other fruits, and where such



fruits are to be found is a good place to look for signs. They also travel roads and trails considerable in the fall season and you will see their tracks there. Their feet make a broad track, caused by their long, slender toes spreading. I have shown the tracks of both the front and hind foot; but the front track is usually ruined by the hind foot.

Sometimes they travel when the snow is on the ground, but usually they do not.

The wolf and coyote make tracks similar to the fox and

dog—about the only difference between the wolf, coyote and red fox track is in size. Sometimes when several wolves are traveling together they will all step in some tracks and a person would think there was only one wolf.

The track of the grey wolf will be about four inches in length, the length of the step about 18 inches.

The track of the coyote will be about two and one-fourth inches in length and the usual step about 15 or 16 inches.

I have shown the track of the dog, to show the difference between the dog and wolf.

The skunk makes a rather broad trail, the individual tracks being about one or one and one-half inches in length and the step only four or five inches, owing to their short legs.

The wildcat makes a track like a common house cat, only larger and perhaps a trifle shorter and broader in comparison to the size. The track will be about one and one-half or one and three-fourths of an inch in length and the usual step about 15 or 16 inches. The tracks of this animal, however, are not as common as some animals, unless there is snow on the ground, as they like a rough country. In some places one is liable to find cat tracks of various sizes, for the common house cat runs wild and interbreeds with the wildcat and that makes an animal in size between the house cat and the wildcat. There are such cats in this country (Arkansas) and Mr. E. Kreps says he has heard or known of such cats being found in Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Massachusetts. I have seen one such cat. It had a longer tail than the wildcat and had the head and ears of a wildcat and had the grey color of the wildcat. It's tail looked to be about 10 or 12 inches in length.

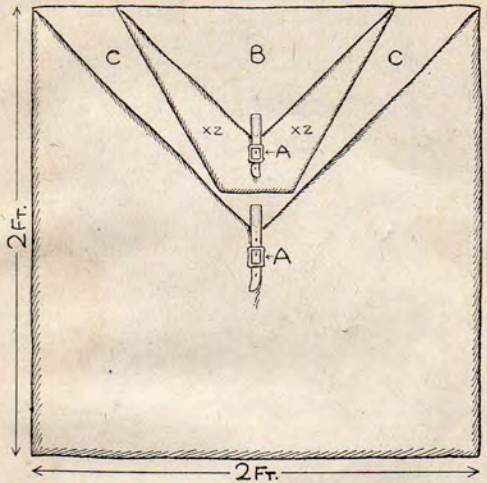
The muskrat makes a rather long track compared to the size of the animal. Their tracks will be found around water and they are so well known that I do not think it advisable to say much about them here.

The track of the mink will usually be found near water and one foot will be somewhat in front of the other and the tracks in pairs. Their method of travel is a lope; the two tracks will be about two and one-half or three inches apart and the jump from 12 to 24 inches. The footprints

will measure about one to one and three-fourths inches in length.

I have shown the track of the rabbit, as some beginners might mistake it for some other animal.

I have only shown some of the commoner animal tracks, such as are found in the South, and there are a few more. Otter, beaver, bear, panther, etc., are found in the South; but my aim was to give only the more common ones and I think by studying the accompanying illustrations one will be able to tell the tracks of different animals when they find the real tracks on their trapping grounds. I will say, though, that sometimes a few animals will make lots of tracks and one not pretty well up on tracking is liable to be misled and think that there are more fur-bearers than there really are.



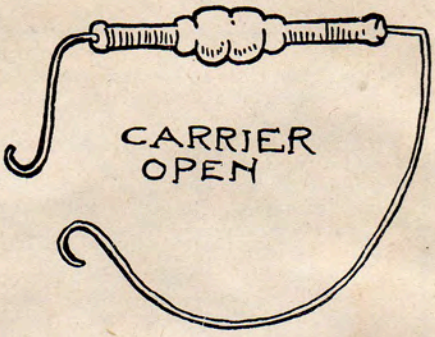
A, BUCKLES TO FASTEN FLAPS; B, FLAP ON BAIT POCKET; C, FLAP ON MAIN SACK.

A PACK SACK.

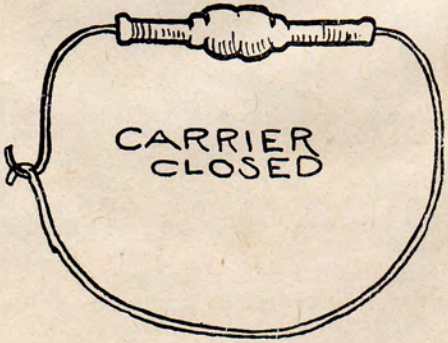
I am sending a description and sketch of the pack sack that I find most convenient in the trapping and trading business. I first purchase a piece of 16-ounce duck two feet wide by three feet long. I fold this so as to make a sack two feet square, as is shown in diagram. There is then left a flap which is two feet wide by one foot long. I cut this to a point, which makes a covering for the sack. On this I sew a pocket (xz) which can be made of blue denim, or any strong cloth which is handy.

This makes what I call the bait pocket.

The shoulder straps can be fastened to the other side in most any way the maker wishes.



Handy game and trap carrier, easily made from handle of a bucket or pail.



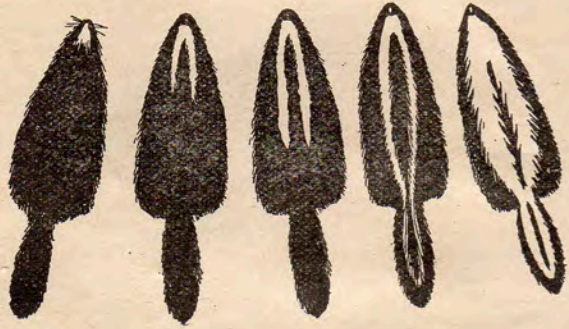
EARLY AND LATE TRAPPING.

It is positively wrong, foolish and wasteful to trap too early in the season, that is a day before the fur is prime; all skins taken too early rank low in value invariably, whereas if the same animals were not killed until a few weeks later the fur would command a much higher price and prove more satisfactory to everyone, from the trapper to consumer. Trapping too late in the season is just as bad, as it results in many faded, rubbed and shedded skins being caught, all of which grade low in price—and what is worse and inexcusable, tend to the all to rapid extermination of fur-bearing animals of every kind.

HANDLING SKINS.

It is impossible to give too much care to the work of handling the skins you catch, as it decidedly affects their value, that is the amount you receive for them; great care should be taken in every operation—skinning, stretching, scraping, drying and packing for shipment. Do not skin the animal while the fur is wet, as the skin is to be stretched with the fur turned inward, and if the fur is wet, or even damp, it will become musty, and may be so badly damaged that the value will rank a number of grades lower than it otherwise would have. Bear, beaver, wolverine and wolf (except very fine Northern skins) should be "open," that is cut from the under lip down the center of the belly to the tail and stretched flat, skin side out, and as near as may be natural in shape; raccoon may be stretched open or cased—skins that are cased are cut from one hind foot across to the vent, and then across to the opposite hind foot, and then pulled carefully down over the body, and the fur is turned inside before the pelt is placed on the board or other stretcher. All skins not specified above should be dressed cased. Before or after stretching remove all fat or flesh adhering to the skin, being careful not to cut the pelt; stretch the skin while it is fresh; do not attempt to exceed natural size—stretchers should be of different sizes. In skinning, remove the tail bone; take out the skull and meat about it, but do not cut off the pelt covering the head; do not cut off ears or tail—except tail of muskrat, opossum and beaver—do not dry by fire or any artificial heat. Pack

neatly and firmly, so that skins will present a good appearance on arrival at destination. Following these instructions means more money for you.



No. 1. No. 2. No. 3. No. 4.

GRADING RAW FURS.

The following was specially written by an expert grader of raw furs, and those who carefully study it will be able to grade their fur and know approximately what they should receive for it, and thus not only avoid loss, but actually save many dollars in the course of the season:

SKUNK.

Skunks are one of our most common fur-bearers, being found practically throughout the country. In marking there are four grades—black, short stripe, full narrow stripe and broad. In former years a skunk to be classed black, or No. 1, should have only a white scalp, while now skins are classed No. 1 where slight stripes reach to the shoulders, and even to the middle of the pelt, if the stripe is very thin or broken and the skin is a large one. This is supposing skunk to be in fair to good demand. If in poor favor the assortment is rigid and severe until it approaches that of the old days.

Short stripe, or twos, are medium sizes with stripes to the middle or an inch beyond, and large skins with heavy stripes; also small quarter stripes which would have been classed No. 1 if of larger size. The threes have stripes of about one inch, reaching entire length of skin, or very near it. If a larger stripe than one inch in width is permitted the skin must be an extra large one. The broad, or fours, are those skins which contain more white than black.

In several of the Western and Northwestern States nearly all skunks are full striped. But they are of a very large size and bring more money than ordinary skunks for that reason. In Ohio and Northeastern Indiana collections often sort out 50 per cent. to No. 1s. The further South we go the thinner furred we find skunks to be, and they are also lacking in gloss, and consequently sell for less. South Indiana skins are worth 10 per cent. less than North Indiana skins.

Now we come to the seasonable skins. To be classed prime the pelt side must be white. If blue, or even slightly so, they grade one below in markings. The unprime ones go down into the twos, the twos into the threes, the threes into the fours, while unprime fours are cut in price. Many skins are collected when heavy with grease, which in a measure disguises the unprime state, and yet a close observation on the sorter's part will usually inform him if the skin will turn out blue when it comes from the scraper's hands. Skunks caught so early as to be black on flesh side are termed scabs and have no value.

All autumn and early winter skins should be scraped before leaving the trapper's hands, for the reason that a blanket of fat often causes sweating and the fur to loosen. Such burned or heated skins have no value. From the deep yellow and sticky nature of the fat the expert grader quickly detects them and a slight pull on the fur brings away a good patch. Certain skunks are mangy and poorly furred at their best, and have little or no value.

By March 1, in Central and Northern sections, and earlier still in Southern sections, skunks begin to shed, or threaten it, and are termed "springy." At this stage the flesh side loses its flinty white look of winter and acquires a very red appearance. The under fur becomes thin and the guard hairs crumpled and kinky and the whole coat is said to be woolly.

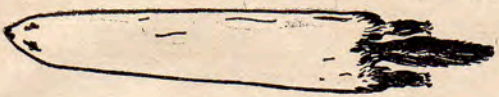
There are also rubbed skins usually in late winter. The chafed portion is always somewhere in the best of the coat, usually between the shoulders. A skin that is rubbed a spot the size of a nickel places it a grade below, and a larger rubbed surface puts a skin two grades below, or more, according to how much damaged, and if badly rubbed it may be worthless.

MUSKRAT.

Equally common with skunk is the muskrat, and while not quite so many things engage our attention as in the handling of skunks through the season, yet there is enough to be heeded, as regards sizes, heft of pelt, whether spring, winter or fall in primeness, and also handling, and if damaged or not.

In the greater portion of the country rats have put on the fur coat by November 1. At first the majority of autumn caught rats are classed as "fall," while the pelts are principally bluish on flesh side, and even after there is a small amount of red. Large and medium sizes, if of good heft, sell together as No. 1 fall; the small rats of good heft are the next grade in value, and here also belongs the full-sized skins, if papery pelted. Third and last comes little kits, and also rated with them are the papery, small-sized skins from older rats.

To be classed as "winter" the skins must be at least one-half red and full furred. Small winter are graded with the No. 1 fall, and small papery pelted winter go into the small fall. Winter rats continue to be so termed until spring, when all dark spots disappear and the pelt becomes all red and white.



MINK.

For the reason that minks inhabit a wide range of latitude and that the value of this fur depends not only upon sizes, primeness and section from which it comes but upon shade of color as well, few furs demand a greater share of our attention in grading.

Minks from Northern sections comprise the smallest skins of the species, but are far more valuable than any other on account of their dark gloss, fineness and density of coat. Minks of Central States are larger than those of the North, and Western minks average a fourth larger, but the coat is browner and coarser and worth correspondingly less.

A Northern large mink is 30 inches from tip of nose to end of tail, a little more or less than when boarded. Four to four and one-half inches at base of skin and an inch less at shoulders. A Western large mink is often found to stretch 35 or 36 inches from tip to tip, and in width five to six inches at base and four to four and one-half inches at the shoulders.

Medium and small minks grade in proportion, according to section. In Southern sections minks are thinner furred, coarser, and run largely to pale, and the fur is of shorter growth than that of a colder climate.

There are no black minks; a rich brown, accompanied by gloss, is the nearest approach to black. It has been said that the ony black furs we have are those of the black bear, skunk, black house cat and black fox.

From all sections minks are classed large, medium and small in size, dark brown and pale in shade, and are four degrees in seasonableness. A No. 1 being white in pelt and full furred; a No. 2 is bluish pelted but full furred, though still possessing too much top hair; a No. 3 has a fair growth of fur, but is hairy and the pelt is dark blue or black; a four has but a very small growth of fur and the pelt side is black.

Torn and badly shot skins are classed as damaged, and minks not cured the proper shape are worth less than well

handled skins. For example, a skin that is stretched wide and short like the shape of a muskrat, or short and pointed like a flatiron, is only worth half price or less.

So long as a mink is of ordinary color, a good brown, prime, well furred and well handled, it should bring top quotations. There are, however, shades between dark and brown and between brown and pale, so that the dividing line is often difficult to determine. But in such case the buyer endeavors to obtain such skins at a grading for color which he is sure it will be rated at when he sells it.

In Central sections minks are prime by November 15, or December 1 at the latest. A mink is most valuable in early winter, because it is the darkest. After January they fade rapidly. Shedding takes place in March, except in the Far North, and before March in the South.

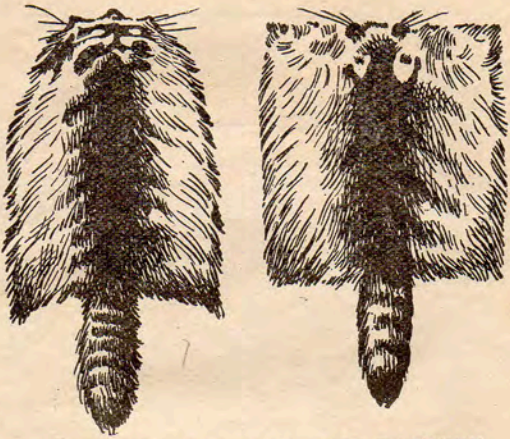
Before I close on the mink question, I will mention the so-called cotton minks, often found in the West and South. The outward appearance is about that of the ordinary mink, but a puff of breath into the fur shows it to be white from near the surface to the roots. The value is small.

RACCOON.

In 'coons there are three sizes—large, medium and small, and four grades in regard to when caught. It is rather difficult to explain what size a skin should be in this fur to establish the dimensions of what should constitute a large, medium or small. Grading for sizes must be largely acquired by eye practice, so that a glance suffices to determine which pile a skin belongs in. And then 'coons run to smaller sizes in one section than another.

Arkansas and Missouri, and similar sections, 'coons are much smaller than those of Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Eastern States. Southern and Southwestern 'coons are also thin pelted, light colored and the fur short. They are termed coat stock by the manufacturing furrier and flat skins by the raw fur dealers. Eastern, Northwestern and Central 'coons are long in top hair and dense in fur; the colors a good grey to a brown, sometimes dark brown, and the sizes and heft of leather far excels their Southern cousins.

The same directions as to primeness for assorting minks is applicable to 'coons in the four grades, a No. 4 having little or no fur and worth about 10 cents.

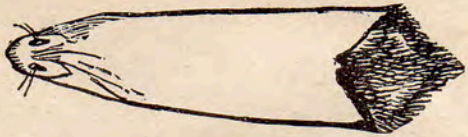


TWO WAYS OF STRETCHING RACCOON.

'Coon pelts, like the skunk, require scraping to prevent the grease from heating and loosening the fur. To sell for the most money they should be stretched square as possible, with nails driven an inch apart, and all shanks and irregular points that spoil appearance trimmed off. 'Coons that have been stretched and cured, using about six nails, one in each leg, one in nose and one in tail, make a ludicrous appearance. They are badly shrunken and possess but little value. The entire scalp, ears, nose, eyelids, etc, must be left on the pelt in skinning, so that it does not appear mutilated.

OPOSSUM.

Beginning with a line that crosses North Indiana, Illinois and Ohio we enter the opossum country, and this animal becomes numerous further South. Opossum is a cheap fur, and the assortment dealers make is usually more strict than in other furs. Here primeness of pelt does not count, should it be lacking in fur. The coat itself must be ex-



PROPER WAY TO STRETCH OPOSSUM.

amined, and if found thin in growth it is valued accordingly. As a rule, opossums inhabiting their Northern range are well furred when prime in pelt, though there are exceptions. As we proceed South into the cotton growing districts, opossums are thinner furred, even when at their best, so that the entire collection is bought for less money than skins taken in Central States.

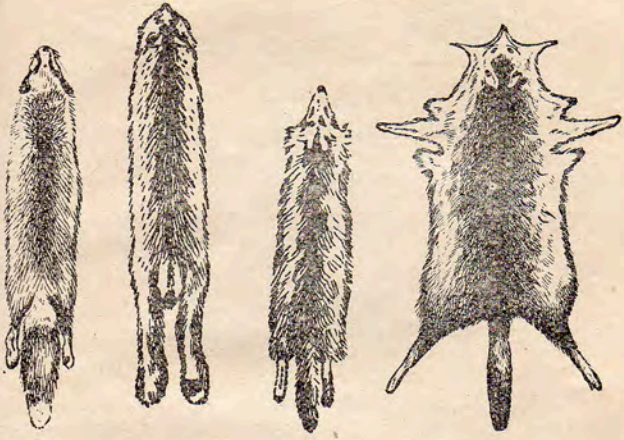
In assorting opossums of the Northern portion of the range, thin furred, large skins, although prime in pelt are rated one grade in size lower. A medium-sized skin, if poorly furred, goes into the small, well-furred pile, and a small, prime skin, but poorly furred, goes into the No. 2s or 3s, according to quality.

A No. 2 opossum, although the pelt may have appeared white at the time of skinning, when dry and by the time it reaches market it has acquired a creamy yellow cast, and the coat, even if full furred, is hairy. If a No. 2 in primeness does not possess a good growth of under-fur it must go into the No. 3s.

The threes are slightly bluish in pelt and possess but a small growth of under-fur. Into this grade also go poorly furred No. 2s and the damaged skins of the ones and twos.

Skins taken so early as to be black pelted and having no under-fur are trash and worthless. Some furred skins are also so badly torn or shot as to be classed "trash." Even prime, large, well-furred skins are graded one or two grades below if badly peppered by shot.

All fur-bearers killed by shot are damaged to a certain extent. The shot plows furrows and shears the fur off so that consequent deductions have to be made on all furs so secured.



Fox. Lynx. Coyote. Wolf.

FOX AND WOLF.

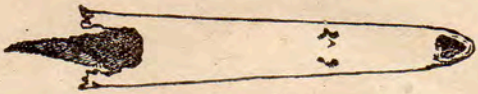
Foxes and wolves are assorted for sizes, heft of fur and brightness of colors, as well as primeness. If these skins have been scalped to obtain bounties a sufficient deduction must be made to compensate for such mutilation.

Occasionally a fox is found in which the coat is wilted and cotted and kinked, as if singed by fire. Such foxes are termed "Sampson" locally and are worth but little.

As in most other furs, foxes and wolves are superior in fur and beauty from the coldest sections. Red foxes of Michigan, Wisconsin and the Eastern States being of greater value than those of Indiana and Illinois and similar latitude where they are thinner furred, light or dull colored and smaller in size.

LYNX AND WILDCAT.

Lynxes and wildcats are assorted the same as foxes and similar to the long-haired furs.



OTTER.

Otters are similar to minks in fur, and the same assorting according to season, section, sizes and shade of fur applies to them.

BEAR.

Bears are assorted for primeness, brightness, heft of coat and perfection of same. Imperfect skins are those with rubbed spots on hips, shoulders or elsewhere. Also for size —large, medium and small, or cubs. In cold sections bears are in full fur from early winter until June.

BADGER.

Badgers are mainly of value when prime and the guard hair is of good length. The principal value lies in the hair itself, which is used for shaving brushes, etc. Therefore a prime skin, if short in coat, brings a low price.

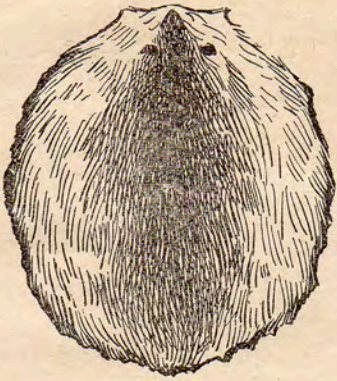
WEASEL.

All that need be said of weasels is that white furred prime skins only are of value. Brown furred and unprime of any section possess little or no value.

MARTEN.

Martens are graded same as minks as regards sizes. There are but few unprime martens marketed, as trapping of this fur does not begin until winter sets in, and the catch usually ends with the first break-up. In fact marten fur holds up in beauty and winter quality until the spring rains occur, when it quickly shows signs of shedding.

They are classed dark, brown and pale, and fancy prices are quoted for dark skins. The bulk of marten collections are rated brown and pale, and but few skins fetch anything like outside quotations. A large proportion of martens are pale or yellow and bring the same money that mink of the same section sell for.



BEAVER.

Beavers are stretched open and round in shape. They are assorted for size—large, medium and small, and there are four degrees of seasonableness, Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4. The colors vary from a light silvery pale for Utah and Montana sections to the almost black skins from sections of Canada and Kamchatka.

SKINNING.

Always skin an animal as quickly as possible after killing; following this simple rule will insure you good skins and full value.

DRYING.

Do not dry your skins by the fire or any artificial heat, as that method injures both the leather and the fur, and you have to stand the loss. Dry in a cool, shady place, where there is a free circulation of pure dry air; do not place the skins for drying in bunches; hang them so that there will be some space between the several skins.

HUMANE.

Trappers should be humane. Steel traps set on land cause considerable suffering to the animals caught therein,

and this condition should be fully considered, and be lessened as much as possible; all traps should be visited early every day, so that the animals captured may be taken out of the traps without unnecessary delay; to do this the trap or place need not be unduly disturbed, as it will suffice to go near enough to the trap to see if a catch has been affected.

SUCCESS IN TRAPPING.

Success in trapping depends on several things—a very thorough knowledge of the habits of the animals you hope to catch, which can only be acquired by long continued study in the haunts of the creatures; patience and persistence—it will not do to become discouraged because you do not catch your fur with the first set; self-control with regard to the right time to trap—not beginning too early, or continuing too late; catching a fur that will bring only 50 cents, but which a few weeks later would be worth $1.50 or $2.00, is not success; catching a fur so late in the season that it is off color and rubbed and worth only half price, and certain to reduce the supply for the following season, is not success—it is rank folly. It is important to use good traps, whethed you buy or make them, instead of merely cheap or poorly made contrivances called traps.

All the knowledge you can acquire is essential to success in trapping—learn all you can about animals, localities, traps, sets, handling skins and particularly about marketing your fur—100 skins caught with hard work, properly handled and carefully shipped to a concern paying you only the value of 10 skins, is not success. Many trappers have lost good sums by shipping to disreputable concerns, when $1.00 wisely spent just to know would have placed them in touch with reliable buyers.

STRETCHING SKINS.

Mink, otter, opossum, cat and muskrat should be cased. This is accomplished by slitting the hindlegs up inside to the vent and down the tail, to remove the bone. Then pull the skin from the animal by drawing toward the head, turning the pelt inside out. Care should be taken that the skin is not cut or torn, and use caution in working about the ears, eyes and mouth, as the head is often used entire.

'Coon, beaver, wolf, deer, goat and sheep should be skinned by cutting a slit from the under-jaw down the belly to the vent; make a slit on the inside of each leg, and cut off the paws or hoofs; after this the skin can be easily removed. After taking off the skin, stretch it smooth across a board, flesh side out, and tack the edges firm. Do this as soon as possible, or it may become tainted and lose the fur.

The rules are simple and easily followed, a little care being all that is necessary to insure perfect success. In every case the skin should be removed shortly after death, or at least before it has become tainted with decay. Avoid the adherence of flesh or fat to the skin and guard against cutting through the hide, as a pierced skin is much injured in value.

The board stretcher is the simplest form and is in most common use among trappers for the smaller animals. These stretchers are of two kinds, the plain and the wedged. The plain stretcher consists of a piece of a board a quarter of an inch in thickness, about 18 inches long and four to six inches in width. One end of the board is rounded off, and the sides should also be whittled and smoothed to a blunt edge.

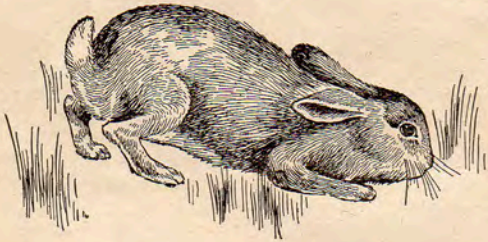
The board stretchers are used only for those skins which are taken off cased. The skins should be drawn tightly over the blunt end of the board, fur side in and its edges caught in notches cut in the edges of the square end or secured by a few tacks. This stretcher is particularly adapted to the skins of opossum, skunk, mink, muskrat and animals of a like size.

The wedge stretcher is more elaborate than the foregoing, and is said to be an improvement. The first requisite is a board of about three-eights of an inch in thickness, two feet or more in length and three and a half inches at one end, tapering to the width of two inches at the other. This end should now be rounded and the edges of the board whittled off to a blunt edge, as already described in the foregoing, commencing near the center of the board, thinning to the edge, and finishing with the notches at the square end. Now, by the aid of a rip saw, sever the board through the middle lengthwise.

The wedge is the next thing to be constructed and should consist of a piece of wood the thickness of the centre

of the board and of the same length, tapering from an inch in width at one end to half an inch at the other.

To use the stretcher the two boards are inserted into the skin (the latter with the fur side inward). The wedge is then inserted between the large ends of the boards and driven in sufficiently to stretch the pelt to its full capacity, securing it in the notches by slight cuts in the hide, or by a tack or two at the edge. It should then be hung in a cool, airy place and the pelt left to "season."

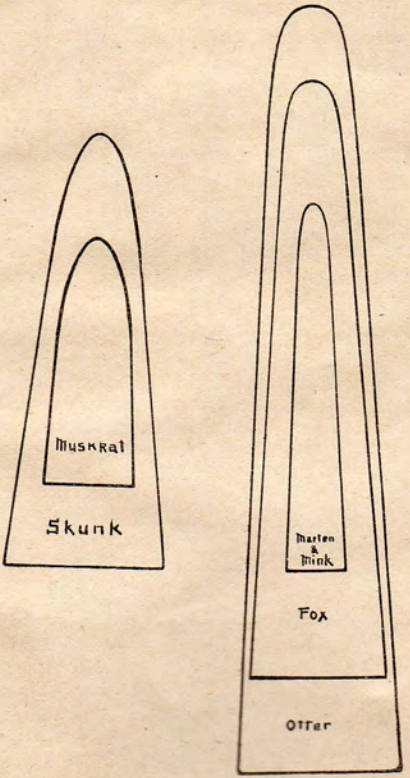


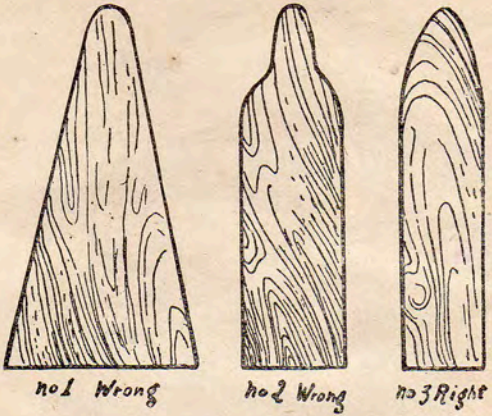
STRETCHING BOARDS.

We give herewith drawings showing the proper shape to make stretching boards for different furs that should be cased. The boards should be about three-eighths of an inch in thickness and the edges should be nicely rounded off. Boards for marten and mink are about the same shape, but the marten board should be a little wider than the mink board for the same length skin. It is well to have a set of boards of different sizes, so that skins can be stretched properly.

When stretching skins pull them on the boards tightly, but not so much as to make the fur appear thin. Tack around edge of skin at bottom of board, so that skin keeps its shape while drying. It is well to insert a small stick be-

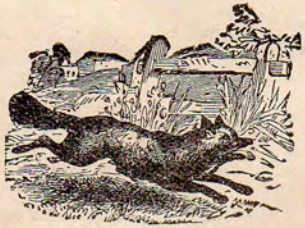
tween the skin and board; when the skin is dry the stick can be removed, thus making it easier to get the skin off the board.

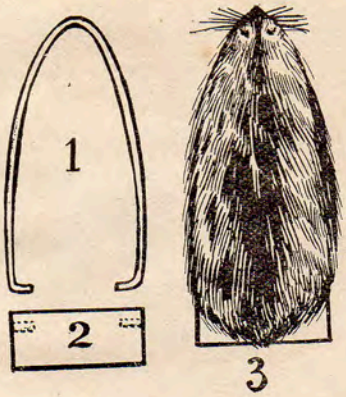




In the figures shown above, stretcher No. 1 is wrong. It gives the skin a wedge shape. No. 2 shows a board with a "neck," which is not necessary. No. 3 is the right shape.

Boards should not be thicker than larger end of common shingles. For muskrat, board should be somewhat tapered, or a little wider at the straight end—board should be longer than the skin, to allow for tacking.



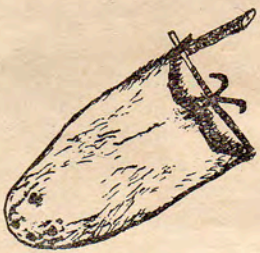


STRETCHER.

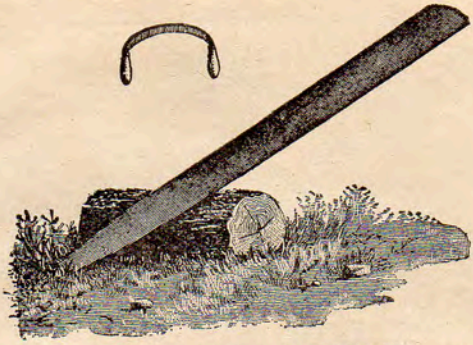
Figure shows the wire bent in proper shape. Figure 2, the block to nail skin to, showing nail holes ready to receive ends of wire. Figure 3, skin after being properly stretched and nailed.

Twenty-five cents' worth of No. 9 wire and 25 cents' worth of any kind of soft wood lumber, one by three inches, cut in lengths of about six inches for rat and seven to eight inches for skunk, will make about 65 stretchers. Cut the wire 30 to 36 inches long for rat and 36 to 40 inches for skunk. Take hold at the ends of piece and bend them together and past each other enough so that when they spring back the ends will be about three inches apart. By doing this the wire bends exactly in the middle or center. Then take a pair of wire-cutters, or a vice, or even a hammer, and bend a square, turn inward, three-fourths or one inch long. Then drive a nail a little smaller than the wire into each end of the blocks, one inch from the side, which makes a hole to drive each end of the wire into. After driving the ends of wire into the block you will see that it can be easily turned over, so that in pulling the skin over them, should it be a little too short to reach the block to nail to, you can turn the board over and your stretcher is one to two

inches longer or shorter. The wire should be some wider in the centre than at ends, then in pulling the skin over it it springs outward, holding it after being nailed to the end board in perfect shape to dry, when it slips off easily.

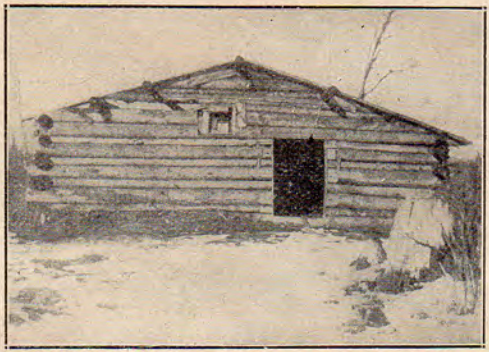


Some trappers stretch muskrat skins over willow or other bows cut in the woods; each bow or switch should be long enough to bend one end across to the other. Then put on the pelt and tie the tail over the bar. A notch cut in the bow where it is bent across will help to make a square turn and fasten the crosspiece. Draw skin over the bow as far as possible, cut through the edge of skin deep into the wood toward the nose of pelt. The strip of skin above slips into the cut in wood and stays. As fast as stretched the projecting end of the stretcher may be stuck in the ground in a shady place.



SCRAPING BEAM AND KNIFE.

To make a scraping beam take a piece of timber five feet long, eight inches wide and four inches thick; make this as near round as possible on one side, leaving it flat on the other. Sharpen one end of the beam and then drive it into the ground in a slanting direction until the upper end is, say, three feet from the ground. Put a brace near the lower end to keep the beam from swaying while in use. By the aid of the scraping beam shippers can remove fat and grease from skins before shipping.



CAMP BUILDING.

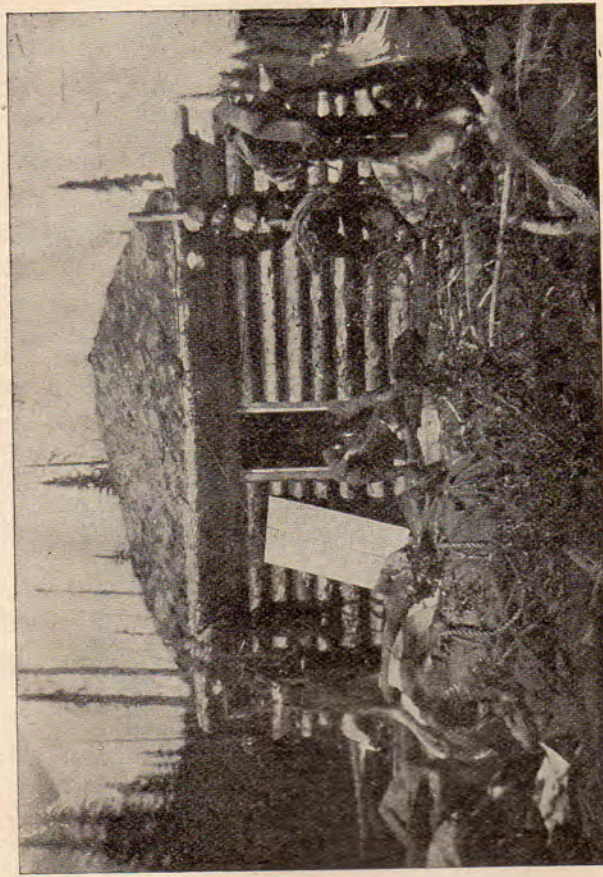
Much has been written on camp building, but as there is always something new to learn, here are a few points on camp building in the woods.

First, select ground that is sheltered from the north winds and close to good water. A spring is the best, and if you cannot build your camp close to the spring, cut some long poles about four to six inches in diameter; then cut grooves in the poles. Lay these from the spring to the camp, letting one end lap on the next, so that the water will run to the camp. To keep them off the ground drive forked stakes into the ground, laying the troughs in the forks.

Having selected a good place to build your camp, you cut some trees as near uniform in size as possible, and straight, about six to ten inches in diameter. Then cut the trees up into the size you want your camp, and that depends on how many is in the party, and whether it is for a trapper's camp or for party of hunters.

We will call it a trapper's camp, and it does not require much room for two, as that is all that should be in a party on the trap line—and sometimes that is one too many; but that does not matter now.

Now, there are two sizes of camps; both are good. One size for general camping is 13 x 15 feet; but for a trap line a



TRAPPER'S CAMP.

camp 11 x 13 feet is plenty large enough. Cut your logs 11 feet long one way and 13 feet the other. Notch in near the end of each log, placing one log on top of the other until you have them high enough, which should be about five feet at the eaves; then in the centre of the 13-foot sides, or half way of the 13-foot sides, toe-nail an upright piece about two and one-half feet long and six inches in diameter, and on top of this place the ridge pole.

Or you can lay small poles on the 13-foot sides, laying each pole on top of the other. Spike them together up to the required height of your ridge pole, and lay your ridge pole on top, by using poles at the gable end. You make it warmer by putting mud on the logs. Then slant your poles off with an axe the pitch you want the roof to be.

Now saw out your door in the centre of the 13-foot side. Then split some slabs out of straight grained wood, hew them off smooth, spike one on each side of the door against the ends of the log. Then split out some pieces for a door, and if the door is very wide, say over two feet, nail some cross pieces on to hold the door together. If you have no tools to make wooden hinges with, set your door in the frame and fasten a stout piece of cord to the door on the inside, tying the other end to the roof of the camp on the inside, and when you go out lay a pole in some hooks nailed on each side of the door. This will hold it in place from the outside.

For roof, peel bark during summer and lay flat, holding it down with some heavy weight, so as to keep it from curling up.

If you cannot get to peel the bark, then do the next best thing—which is considered by many who follow the woods and streams much better than the bark. That is, cut some blocks of wood two feet long, then split some shooks for your roof. The timber should be straight grained so it will split easy.

Now the rafters should be laid crosswise, and not up and down like the dwelling house roof.

Now we will say the camp is enclosed and the fire-place or stove, whichever you choose, should be opposite the door and the bunks should be, say in the left end, as you enter the door; and to make plenty of room should be built just wide enough for one. Then about two feet above, another

bunk, and sometimes three bunks are built, one above the other. Yes, I have seen in the mountains of Virginia as many as five bunks, one above the other; and the last one was so near the roof there was just room enough to get in and out.

In the pposite end build your table. This will give you plenty of room at the table; also at the stove to dry your clothes, at the same time give the cook his share to do his work.

Gather some moss and with a wedge-shaped paddle fill the cracks between the logs from the inside and fill with mud from the outside. For a window some use a piece of white cloth. Glass is best; but sometimes hard to get. This makes a very convenient camp. A good material for roof is a roll of tarred paper. It is soon put on and is warmer than shook roof. In back places where you have to pack in your outfit a dirt roof is put on. First cover over with poles laid close together, then put on six to eight inches of dirt.

For camping one night in a place, cut brush, small bushes, evergreens and anything that has thick branches. Place them against a pole laid in the crotches of forked stakes driven into the ground in a slanting position, letting one end rest on the ground. It is best to drive three forked stakes in a half circle. Lay a pole in the forks, then place bushes against the pole in a slanting position. Place some fine brush on the ground for a bed. Build your fire in front. The fire should be built against a large log or by the side of a steep bank, so the heat will strike in under the roof of your camp. I saw once while trapping in western Virginia a camp built in the shape of a wigwam. Stout poles were set in a slanting position, letting the top rest against a tree. These were covered with spruce boughs, commencing at the bottom. They were laid on same as shingles, letting them lap enough to shed water, putting on several layers until there was enough to shed water. This makes a very good camp for two; but is too small for a party of more than two, as the tree in the center takes up some room.

In building a fire-place, all depends on where you are—in the mountains, along the rivers, how you are going and whether you are going into a country where there are rocks to build a fire-place.

If you have to pack in your outfit a stove is out of the

question; if in a country where there are no rocks to build a fire-place, then a mud chimney is better than none.

First select a spot to build your camp close to a steep bank, so that you can dig a hole deep enough for your fire-place. Then build your chimney on the outside of camp.

Commence by laying up poles cut the size you want the fire-place, which should be about five feet by three. Lay them the same as you would for the camp. Notch the ends, laying one on top of the other to a height of four feet; then gradually draw in until you reach the top at a height of eight to ten feet. These poles should not be over four to five inches in diameter.

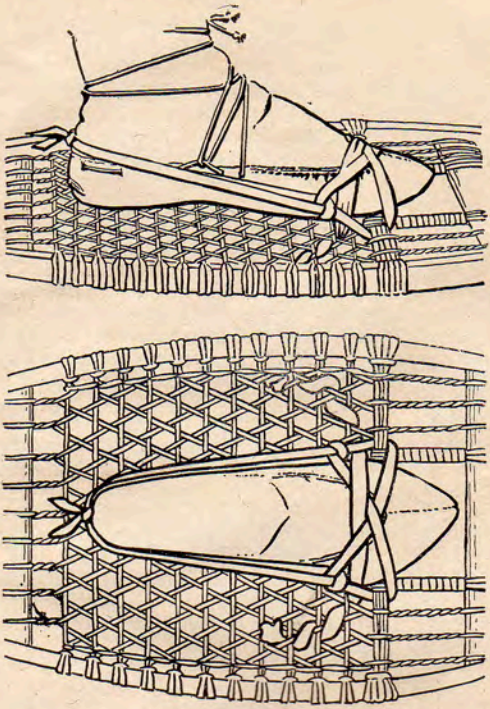
Next cut some larger poles and lay up around these on the outside, leaving a space between of eight inches, and fill this space with mud. But commence to fill with mud before you get the outside poles laid to the top. Lay up poles to height of four or five feet, then fill in with mud; then lay on some poles; then fill in more mud, and so on until you reach the top.

Now your chimney is completed. Build a fire and the inside poles will burn out, and mud will bake the same as a brick. Care must be taken in putting in the mud to get it in compact form, so there will be no holes left for fire to get to the outside poles or logs.

I never took much fancy to this kind of a chimney for after they are used some time they will burn through and are unsafe. They are in use throughout the sand hills of the South and many a time I have seen a ladder set against the chimney with a colored woman perched on the top round, with a bucket of water, putting out the fire where it had burned through the mud. But for camping where you have no rocks to build with, they answer the purpose and are all right for a short time, until they get old.

WARMING TENTS.

On very cold nights your tent may be made more comfortable by placing on the ground in the centre two or three large stones that have been superheated in your camp fire.



INDIAN SNOWSHOE HITCH.

If you are a "down East" man you will undoubtedly select some kind of snowshoe boot, harness, fastening or whatever you choose to call it. Most of these give satisfaction, but I have used the Indians' method mostly, the same being a tie or hitch with a piece of five-eights-inch lampwick, about four feet long. The toe strap is separate and is fastened by weaving the ends in and out of the filling

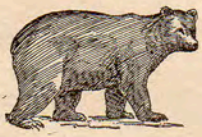
at the sides of the toe opening. The way of tying to the foot is shown in the illustration more plainly than I can describe it. Both strings are tied together above the heel, and when properly adjusted it is not necessary to untie for putting the shoe on or removing it from the foot; a simple twist will do it. I have used snowshoes for a week or more without undoing the fastening, and it is very nice in extreme cold weather to be able to put on or remove shoes without baring the hands.

BEE HUNTING.

We have a box with a false bottom in it and a glass slide on the top in place of a lid and honey is put in the box and when we come to a flower with a bee on it we put the box over the bee and flower and close the bottom and the bee will fly up against the glass. Then we slacken the bottom a little and lift the box off the flower; then by shading the glass with the hand we can drive the bee over to where the honey is and as soon as it gets to drinking honey we draw out glass stop gently. This leaves the box open and all that remains to do is keep your eye on the bee. When the flowers are all gone they are drawn by burning wax and by having honey close by, one can easily line them. Some like to use anise seed oil; while others prefer the wax and salt method. All these methods have to be performed in an open place, so that the hunter can determine what direction they go and by placing vermillion or flour on the backs of one or two of the bees one can tell about how far away the hive or tree is by timing them.

BEE SCENT.

Thinned honey, small quantity of oil of anise and oil of rhodium.



DESCRIPTION OF A ONE-MAN TRAPPING BOAT.

No. 1, board 12 inches by 14 feet cut at dotted lines.

No. 2, as side looks after being bent over form and stem and transom are in place.

No. 3, end view.

No. 4, shows how to bend and hold while putting in stem and transom or stern board.

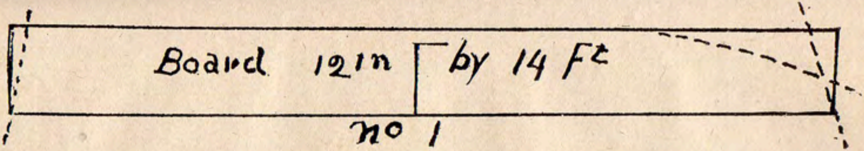
No. 5, shows end view with inside strip and part of floor and piece of keel strip on also shows corner blocks inside where transom and side are nailed together.

No. 6, shape of stem (make of white oak).

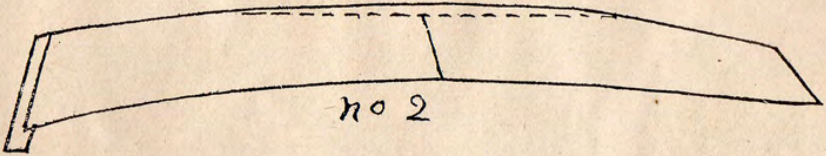
No. 7, form can be made of board or plank, 10 or 12 inches wide, but cut flare at rate of 4 inches to the foot.

In No. 1 see mark to place form by. Keep bottom edge of form 2½ inches from edge of sideboard. Make the marks to place form by on the inner side of sideboards. After sides are bent and fastened to ends, side will look like No. 2, which will have too much rocker or belly. To get rid of this, on side near form mark down three-fourths of an inch and take straightedge and mark out each way about four feet from this mark. (See dotted lines No. 2).

If boat was placed right side up on floor now about eight feet of the edge of sideboards should touch the floor. If this rocker is not taken off you will not have a good running boat. Dress off edges where floor boards go, so a straightedge laid across will touch on both sides and edges of sideboards. Put in strips of ⅞-inch stuff now, about 2½ inches wide along inner edges of sides to nail floor to (your



no 1



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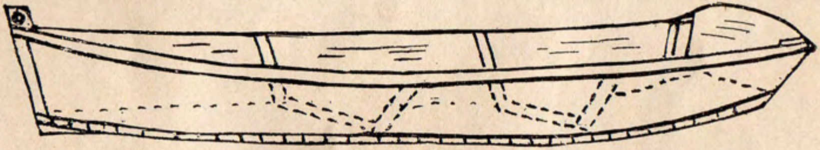

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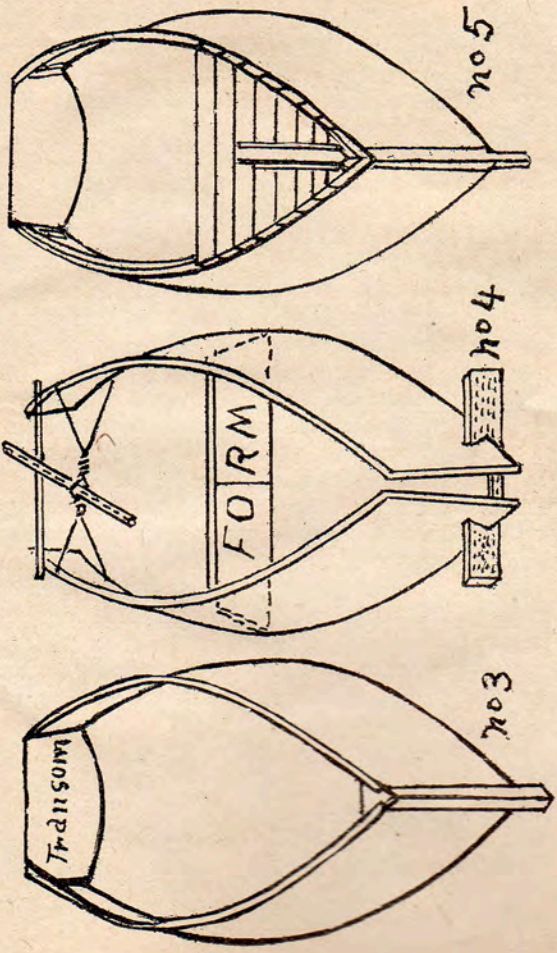
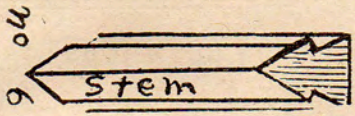

No 5
No 4
FORM
No 3
Transom

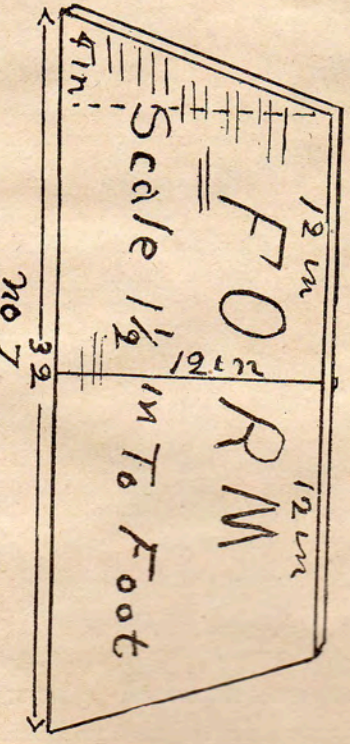
corner blocks should be put in when transom is put in). Strips should run from stem to corner blocks and when placing them leave enough of edge above sideboard to dress off even with sideboards, so floor will nail to both side and strips.

Before putting on bottom take a line and draw tight from center of transom over form to center of stem. Now if center line on form comes under line you are ready to put on floor; if not you will have to fasten both ends of boat and put a shore against the side near form, and shove the whole midship part over until the stretched line comes over the line on form and keep it there until you get your bottom boards all on.

Do not use matched stuff for bottom; jointed edged boards are best. Caulk seams before putting on rib. Now turn over and put in two iron ribs made of iron about like buggy tire is made of; old one cut up will make them. Paint where they go against the wood before putting in, using two coats of paint and you are done.

For seat use a bag of hay or straw, placing it about where the after rib is (see sketch No. 8); seats in a trapping boat are no good. For paddles use a 5½-foot short one, and for punting, when standing, an 8½-foot paddle or seasoned pole.


No 6
Stem


No 7
32
12 in
12 in
12 in
Scale 1½ in To Foot
FORM

TURTLE TRAPPING.

Snapping turtles are found in most all lakes and streams but they like it where there is muddy bottom best, as they have a better chance to cover up to fish. They are great fishers, next to the otter, as they can catch large fish and hold them. Have known them to catch pike as large as 9¾ pounds and the turtle only weighed 12 pounds, as I caught him. The way I catch them is with nets and hook. The hook is made of an old horse rake tooth, 18 inches long, with a small hook on end 1½ across and set in a rake handle and used as a gaff hook and also used to lift nets with, as the nets are from 1 to 6 feet under water. The nets are a trap net or a fike without the wings and only one pocket.

I make them on a square hoop in front, 17 by 24 inches of ¼-inch round iron, with three 17-inch round hoops in back and I use No. 30 hard laid seine twine for netting. Commence on square hoop and knit the funnel and then the outside. They are 3 feet 10 inches long, with a drawn string in back end so can be opened to get turtles out and to bait. The mesh is 2 inches square, all but the funnel, which is 1½ inches and smaller at end. The funnel has a string on each side to hold it in place, tied to third hoop. They are braced open with two sticks, one on each side, so as to hold them stretched solid and are oiled or parafined to keep them from rotting. I use 40 to 50 nets at a time, all I can tend and keep baited, as it takes fresh bait for turtle. Fish is the best, but they will take most any fresh meat (not spoiled meat) as they don't like it if it stinks. I use dog fish for bait as they are the best. I set nets in streams, on bare bottom, close to weeds or flood piles, as they like these kind of places so they can get in the shade and hide. Always set net with mouth down stream, as they follow the scent of the bait they come to mouth of net first and get in the first thing.

To keep turtles have crates made of 2-inch strips or some light stuff. Make crates 4 or 5 feet long by 2½ wide and 14 inches high with cover with hinges and clasp so can be locked to keep people from letting them out. Set crate in water 6 inches deep and turtles will keep fresh until you get enough to ship. Ship by express in sacks.

Turtles may also be caught in No. 1½ steel traps set 3 or 4 inches under water, baited with fish fastened to pan of trap—fasten tray to stake in deep water.

NET MAKING.

To make our gill net, or seine, the necessary tools required are easily and cheaply made, i. e., a gauge stick and shuttle and a sharp knife and cigar box is all that are required to make them. A cedar or walnut cigar box make a good gauge stick and shuttle; but any old cigar box will do. The drawings show the proper size for a two-inch square mesh, and are quickly whittled out with a sharp knife. We also need a one-quarter-inch stick, or piece of round iron four or five feet long to tie our first row of loops to when starting the net, as shown in the drawing at Fig. 1. These are simply two half hitches thrown on and the gauge stick slid in to form half the mesh and drawn tight with the shuttle.

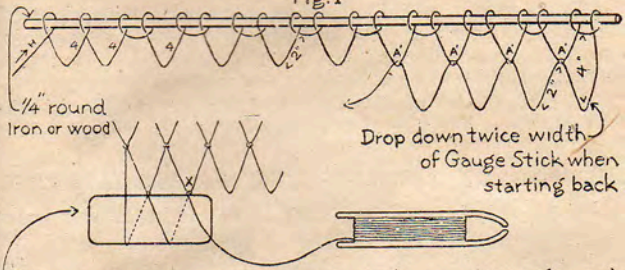
Fig. 2 shows the best net knot that I know of and the drawing explains how to tie it. Take a string and practice on the knot first and get it down fine; if you have patience and perseverance you will have no trouble. If you are a quitter, then don't try to tie nets.

On your stick that you start your net on, you need not have the loops two inches apart; you can lay them on one-quarter inch apart; but use your gauge stick to form the one-half loop below. Hold the thumb and forefinger (thumb on top of gauge stick and forefinger on bottom) so as to hold thread tight while tying the knot. Then pass shuttle up through loop from below of next mesh and slip gauge stick along and tie another mesh and so on.

Handle your gauge stick with the left hand and the shuttle with the right hand; and don't grab the gauge stick as you would an ax; but let it lie lightly flat always across your four fingers and handle it with the forefinger and thumb. Go slow at first; it is best to use coarse twine at first like No. 16 (medium hard laid seine twine); then you can untie knots if you make a bull.

We will assume you wish to knit a seine or hammock and you wish it to be three feet deep or wide, and of two inches square mesh. You will lay on to your one-quarter-inch round iron six meshes to the foot until you have three feet laid out; then knit it as long as you wish. Now you probably knit right-handed, so when you get your three feet laid on and are at the end you will have to step around on the other side and knit back right-handed and so on.

Fig. 1



Showing how Gauge Stick is passed along, making the mesh proper size. Hold Gauge Stick in palm of hand flat, with thumb on top and fingers underneath to hold thread at X when tying the knot. Dotted lines show thread on opposite side of Gauge Stick

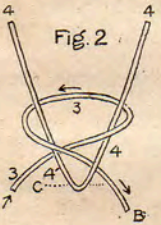
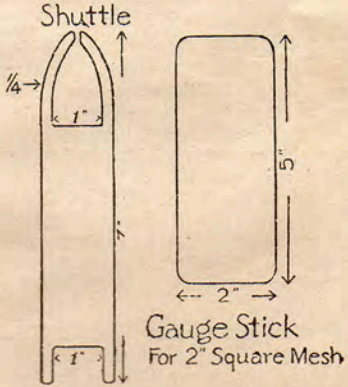


Fig. 2

"The Knot" shown tied loosely. Pull hard on "B" and form knot above dotted line "C". The shuttle is at "B"



Gauge Stick
For 2" Square Mesh

H at Fig. 1 shows you knitting or laying on your meshes toward the right; aaa shows you dropped down the width of your gauge stick twice or four inches, and supposedly standing on the opposite side and knitting back. In order to make the turn your last mesh at each end will be four inches long and the middle of this mesh ties onto your backing cord for your floats or sinkers.

Don't expect to knit a perfect gill net or seine right off the bat; you must pay the price of spoiling a few yards for learning. You will observe that you can knit a larger or smaller mesh by using a large or small gauge stick.

Whatever size mesh you wish, have the gauge stick the same width as one side of your mesh.

METHOD OF TANNING FUR OR WOOL SKINS.

If the skin is not fresh, soak it thoroughly in soft water (never use hard water in tanning), then beam or scrape off all meat or loose fibre. Next put the skin in a luke warm bath made of water with enough oil of vitriol to make it as sharp as vinegar (the mount of vitriol to be used can be determined by adding a little gradually, and tasting the liquor after stirring it thoroughly), and add a handful of salt. Leave the skin in this bath 24 hours, when the native grease should be removed and the glue in the skin loosened from the fibre, so as to give the tanning materials an opportunity to take effect on the glue and fibre.

Next wash the skin (wool or fur) in strong soap suds, removing all dirt or grease from the wool or fur, then rinse in clean water. Next dissolve in hot water, two ounces alum, one ounce glauber salts, one ounce borax, a piece of saltpeter the size of the end joint of your thumb, and add a little salt. Add this mixture to sufficient water (that is a little below blood heat) to cover the skin. Leave the skin in this 24 hours, stirring it up occasionally so that the liquor will reach all parts of the skin. When the skin is taken from this tanning liquor, strip out all that can be done with the hands, and hang up in the shade to dry (the sun will make it hard).

When bone dry, sprinkle the flesh side with water, fold up until the leather is evenly damp (not wet), then stretch to length then to width. Repeat the pulling process until the skin is dry, when it may be finished off with sandpaper. If the skin is handled according to directions the leader will be as soft and pliable as velvet.

Success in working leather depends more on the manner of handling than on the materials used. To tan a skin without first removing all the native grease and oil means that the leather will soon become rotten.

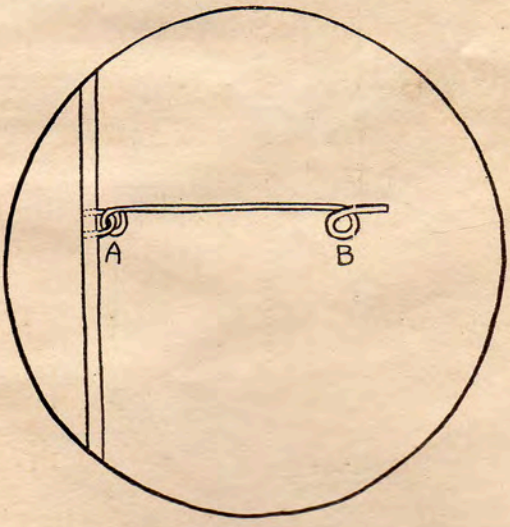
WINTER FISHING FOR PICKEREL.

To those who live near a large pond or a lake, winter fishing through the ice is one of the best of sports. I will describe my method of catching pickerel and perch.

It is a cold, cloudy day in December that we set off for a small lake about two miles away, laden with an axe and ice chisel, about a dozen tip-ups and a plentiful supply of minnows for bait.

Arriving at the lake we start chopping holes in the ice a little ways out from the shore, where we know the water is deep and is full of weeds and pond lilies. The pickerel stay mostly in these places during the winter.

With the axe we chop a hole about eight or ten inches in diameter almost through the ice. The last couple of inches



THE TRIGGER
FIGURE TWO

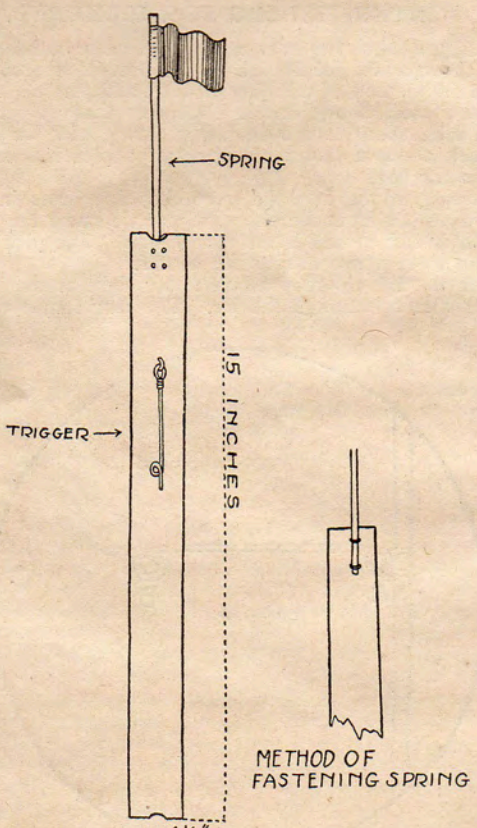
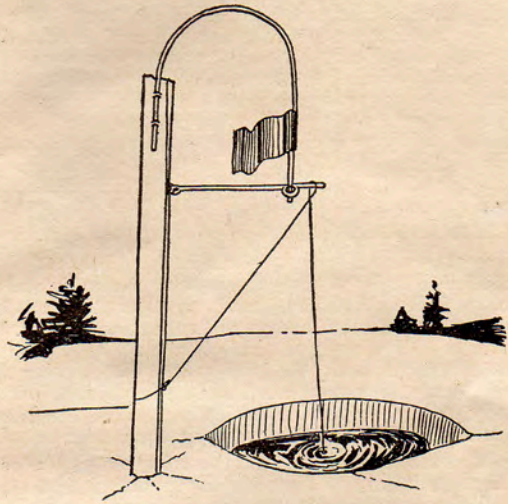


FIGURE 1



THE COMPLETED SET-
FIGURE THREE-

we take out with the ice chisel, for were we to use the axe only we would be splashed with water, which would soon freeze.

About two inches from the hole we chop a small, narrow hole to fit the end of the tip-up. It need only be about two inches deep.

We need a thin piece of board about 15 inches long by one and one-half inches wide—a piece of lath will do—and a narrow, flexible piece of steel about 10 inches long. If you have whalebone this is good. Now we need a piece of stiff wire eight inches long and a small square of colored cloth for a flag.

Perhaps the drawing will explain it better than I can. The spring and trigger are fastened to the board with small staples. To make the trigger, take a piece of wire and twist a small loop in each end. At one end leave about an inch of wire projecting beyond the loop. This is to hold the line. Now fasten the trigger to the board about five inches from the top with a staple through the loop marked (a).

The spring should be fastened on the opposite side near the top, as shown in the small drawing. The piece of cloth may now be sewed on the spring, leaving an inch of spring projecting beyond the flag.

Now we will insert the end of this tip-up in the small hole already mentioned. But before we set it we should find the depth of the water by placing a sinker on the hook and dropping the line in it. About two feet more than the depth is now measured off on the line and a slip noose made in it. Now bend over the spring and put the end of it into the loop marked (b), as shown in Fig. 3. The tension in the spring will hold the trigger in a horizontal position. Now put the noose of the line over the projecting end of the loop (b), bait hook with a live minnow and wait for a bite.

We have made three sets when we happen to glance back to the first one made. The flag is up and we run to the tip-up. There is a fine pickerel on the hook. We give him time to get well hooked and then slowly pull him up. He weighs a pound and a half and is 13 inches long.

TRAIL.

If you are simply traveling through the woods aimlessly with no intension of making future use of the trail it makes little difference how you go, but if you are a trapper and are breaking out a trap line you will, of course, aim to strike the good places for sets, and you should make your trail with a view of using it afterwards, avoiding steep ascents and dense thickets.

Mark the trail by breaking half through, so they will hang down, small bushes—these will be more easily seen after a snow storm than marked trees.

A GRAND BUCK.

HOW TO COOK GAME.

Any hunter may cook his game and cook it properly. The fishy taste of certain game may be removed by putting a small, finely cut onion or a carrot in the vessel in which the game is cooking. In boiling wild game a very little soda added to the water will make it sweet and tender. Or a teaspoonful of vinegar will answer the same purpose. Another thing that may trouble you is to keep the birds from scorching. But this can be prevented by putting a pan of water in the oven.

Quail or Woodcock.—After dressing, split down the back, and lay, inside down, on a well-greased gridiron. Broil slowly until delicate brown. Season with salt, pepper and plenty of butter. Serve on dry buttered toast.

Roast Quail.—Dress the birds, rub with butter, tie a strip of bacon over the breasts and set in the oven for about 20 minutes; season to taste.

Roast Snipe.—Dress and wipe carefully, season with salt and pepper; cut as many slices of bread as you have birds, toast it brown, butter and lay in a meat pan. Dredge the birds with flour, place upon the toast, and set in the oven. Have a brisk fire, baste frequently with butter. Cook 20 minutes. Serve upon the toast.

Pigeon Pie.—Dress and quarter the pigeons, wipe dry and fry slightly in butter or drippings. Sprinkle well with salt and pepper. Have a greased pudding dish ready and rich biscuit dough. Lay pieces of pigeon in the bottom of the dish, cover with a mixture of chopped eggs and giblets, boiled tender, then minced. Add more pigeons and another layer of forcemeat. Stir two tablespoonsful of butter rolled in flour into the hot water in which the giblets were boiled. Season and pour enough into the pie to half cover the birds. Cover with a thick crust; slit in the middle. Bake one hour, if medium-sized pie is made. Glaze with beaten egg just before removing from the oven.

Venison.—Broil over a fairly hot bed of coals; turn frequently. Bear steaks may be cooked in the same way.

Opossum.—Bake in pan in oven, basting frequently; sweet potato stuffing is good.

Muskrat.—May be baked in oven same as opossum, or made into a stew.

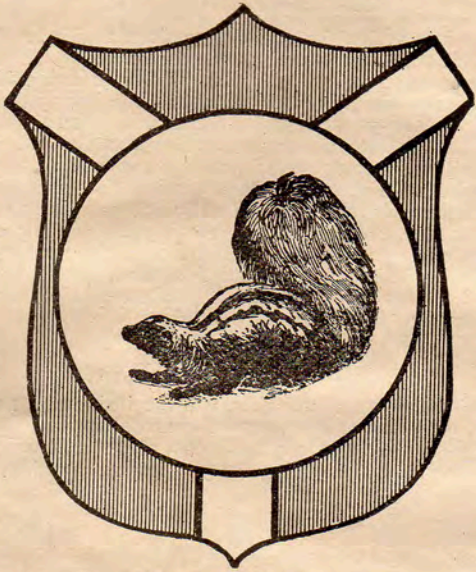
VENISON AND BEAR.

Here is a recipe for roasting venison and bear that will give satisfaction—has done so many times.

Kept compact; don't spread; bind with twine if necessary; soak in vinegar water three or four hours, then wash off vinegar. This process makes the meat tender, and the meat will not taste of the vinegar. Baste repeatedly with its own juices and add water occasionally when necessary. Don't cook too long. When the fork passes into the flesh easily it is done. If you add butter the flesh will brown too fast. Use fryings or lard. If you wish to destroy the wild taste of the meat make several holes and insert a small piece of onion. When the flesh is cooked remove the onion. Don't brown too fast or the meat will dry out. If you use a baker turn occasionally to keep from becoming too dry.

TO KEEP GAME.

Clean the game thoroughly, rub the inside and neck with pepper, and place small pieces of charcoal inside, cover with a white cloth and hang in a dark, cool place, and you can keep it sweet for several days in case you are out hunting.



FUR FARMING.

We have no doubt that the supply of fur in the not very remote future will be obtained from animals raised in captivity, or semi-captivity; early beginners will enjoy many advantages over those who wait to learn how others succeed, and who will finally discover that experience is the best teacher —for the reason no one should suppose that raising fur-bearing animals for profit is to be taken up as a side issue, or simply an entertaining pastime; it demands much time, close attention, and involves real work, more or less disappointment at the outset, and unless persistently pursued will end in failure. These statements apply to all fur farming, and we set it forth plainly, so that no one will begin under a misapprehension—*no* enterprise can be successfully conducted without strenuous effort.

HAWKS AND OWLS.

Hawks and Owls may be divided into four classes—wholly beneficial, chiefly beneficial, beneficial and harmful qualities about equal, and harmful.

To the wholly beneficial class belong the large rough-legged hawk, its near relative, the squirrel hawk or ferruginous rough-leg, and the four kites—the white-tailed kite, Mississippi kite, swallow-tailed kite, and everglade kite.

The chiefly beneficial class contains a majority of our hawks and owls, and includes the following kinds: Marsh hawk, Harris hawk, red-tailed hawk, red-shouldered hawk, short-tailed hawk, white-tailed hawk, Swainson hawk, short-winged hawk, broad-winged hawk, Mexican black hawk, Mexi-

can goshawk, sparrow hawk, Audubon caracara, barn owl, long-eared owl, short-eared owl, great gray owl, barred owl, western owl, Richardson owl, Acadian owl, screech owl, flammulated screech owl, snowy owl, hawk owl, burrowing owl, pygmy owl, ferruginous pygmy owl, and elf owl.

The class in which the harmful and beneficial qualities balance includes the golden eagle, bald eagle, pigeon hawk, Richardson hawk, Aplomado falcon, prairie falcon, and great horned owl.

The harmful class comprises the gryfalcons, duck hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, Cooper hawk, and goshawk.

Do not destroy the wholly or chiefly beneficial specimens.

CROWS.

Make a tight house of boughs along a hedge, fence or in a field. Have the house near a tree, and if the tree is dead, so much the better. Make the house of brush, sticks, old hay or anything else; but it must be made so that the crows can't see through it. Make a small port hole in the house, in such a position that you can see the tree. Now take a great horned owl; if you can't get a live one, a stuffed one will answer, if it has been mounted in a natural manner. Fix the owl on the fence or post or haystack, or even on the ground a short distance from the tree. Have everything ready before daylight. Then crawl into the bough house with a pocket full of cartridges loaded with smokeless powder and about No. 6 or 7 shot. About sunrise a crow will spy the owl and give a yell and less than a minute after there will be a black cloud whirling around the owl. Then they will begin to light in the tree. Now all you have to do is bang away. But don't show yourself; for if you do, the game will be up. It is well to have the house made a week or two before using, so that the crows will get used to it.

PEARL HUNTING.

Fresh water pearls, which have a ready sale, are found in clams and mussels in many rivers in the Middle West—pearl hunting can be conducted in summer, when trapping is out of season.

Two methods may be used in securing the clams: 1. A heavy iron rake, with wire basket at the back, is dragged along the bed of the stream, usually from a boat, and what clams are encountered fall back into the basket. The plan most used is by taking a piece of steam pipe six or eight feet long and having holes drilled through it, say four or five to the foot. A strong cord or wire is passed through these holes and a three-pronged hook made of wire dangles from each hole. A rope is run lengthwise through the pipe, the ends tied together and the anchor line is fastened to the centre of this. The length of pipe is thrown overboard from the boat and allowed to drag along the bed of the river. Clams, when feeding undisturbed, have their shells open and when a drag hook touches them they shut up on it and hang on. It is surprising how many clams can be dredged up in a short time by this method, where a bed is discovered.

THE USEFUL LEMON.

Two or three slices of lemon in a cup of strong tea will cure a nervous headache.

A teaspoonful of juice in a small cup of black coffee will relieve a bilious headache.

The juice of half a lemon in a cup of hot water on awakening in the morning is an excellent liver corrective and successful substitute for calomel and other alterative drugs.

An old-fashioned remedy for croup is honey, alum and lemon juice.

Salt and lemon juice will remove rust stains from white goods.

POINTERS.

The following pointers will prove helpful; some of them are contributed by trappers of many years' experience:

Learn all you can about the animals in your section—and those in other sections as well—you may change your location.

Good traps should be used; very cheap traps are not good.

Be honest; never touch your brother trapper's trap, and if you see anyone else do so, have the guilty party punished.

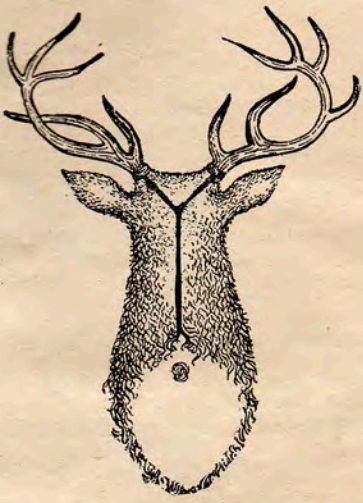
Do not dig out dens and kill the whole family of fur-bearers found therein; that is not real trapping, fair sport, or good business; it is the method of ending all trapping.

Remember that you cannot trap every animal in your vicinity in one season, and do any trapping the next year.

In covering your traps when set use material lying about the place—leaves, dead grasses, sand, as the case may be—make it natural, not strangely noticeable.

Never destroy a den made, or selected, by any fur-bearing animal—if you do, you drive the animal away, keep others from coming, and may never find the new den.

Any trapper will tell you that a skunk can be caught easier in September than in November; some trappers believe the skunk knows that its fur is worth very little in September, hence the easy catch; you say that is a nature story; perhaps! but we believe the skunk thinks you ought to know that its fur is worthless when not prime—if you don't that's a human nature story that is not creditable to you.



HOW TO PREPARE GAME HEADS FOR MOUNTING.

Directions Given by an Experienced Taxidermist.

"When you have killed a good buck, do not disfigure his neck by cutting his throat, but start where the neck joins the back, keeping the point of the knife under the skin, edge up; divide the skin in a circle all around the neck, being careful to keep down to the brisket in front, and never split the skin on the throat. Open it in a straight line along the back of the neck to a point between the ears, then make a straight cut to each antler; cut off the butts of ears close to the head and carefully cut and pry the skin away from the base of each antler. Skin down on each side and over the forehead until you come to the eye. Be very careful in skinning around the eye, not to cut the lid. By inserting the fingers beneath the skin and into the eye, they will guide you in cutting. When the skin is off, proceed to pare off all the flesh that adheres to it, especially from butts of ears and around lips and nose; split the lips on the inside and remove the flesh,

being careful to leave the lip cartilarges, as they are very necessary in modeling the lips. I would advise you to skin the ear upon the back side as far as you can easily, and salt well, rubbing salt and water mixed to the consistency of paste into the hair on both sides of the ear. When you have the scalp all cleaned, it is ready for a liberal dose of fine salt, and be sure to rub it over every inch of surface. You can now roll it up and let it lay for 12 hours or longer; then unroll, scrape off the salt, which will have taken out most of the blood and water from the skin; then salt it well again and dry it gradually and it will keep for months. Never stretch a skin or tack it up to dry, or hang it up by the nose. Just lay it out in the shade. By following these instructions the head will come out in fine shape for mounting."

RULES FOR SPORTSMEN.

The Albuquerque Game Protective Association presents the following six rules for sportsmen:

1—There is only one way to treat a gun—always consider it loaded.

2—There is only one way to treat a land owner—with respect.

3—There is only one safe time to shoot—in daylight.

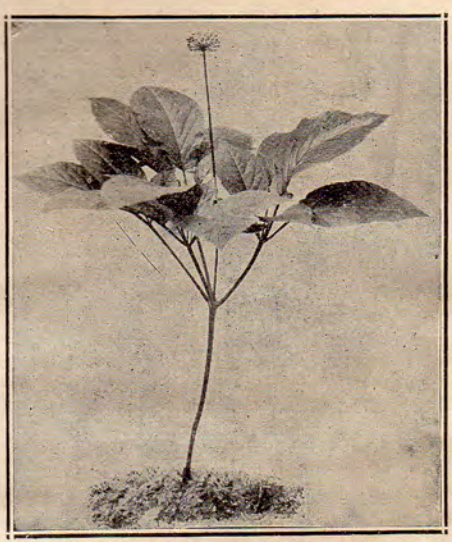
4—There is only one way to tell a buck—by his horns.

5—There is only one kind of cow you have a right to shoot—your own.

6—There is only one way to observe the law—observe it.

USES OF CARBOLIC ACID IN FUR BUSINESS.

Carbolic acid will be found a very handy article for the trapper for the purpose of drowning out offensive odors of furs, and it is also purifying in the curing and fleshing rooms. It can be used by pouring the acid on a piece of cotton and hanging it up at the ceiling of the room—and it is very useful for cleaning the hands. To use for this purpose pour a few drops into a basin of water, in which the hands should be washed. Carbolic acid is very effective in many other ways similar to the above mentioned.



COLLECTING BOTANICAL DRUGS.

The roots of annual plants may be dug in the spring; but other roots should not be disturbed until late in summer, or such date in the fall after the seeds have ripened, for if the roots are dug early in the year they are not in good condition, as much of the sap has passed upward into the stalk to facilitate the new year's growth; and unless the seeds are allowed to ripen, digging the roots will soon exterminate the plant. Never dig ginseng in the spring. Sassafras, or any plant of which only the bark of the root is used, may be dug any time.

Barks may be most easily obtained in the spring while the sap is running freely from root to branch, as the bark can then be peeled readily, and in large sections; it is only the inner man, or that immediately next to the wood that is

wanted; the rough outer bark should be carefully scraped off, and this may be effectively done while the bark is on the tree.

Seeds should be gathered just before the seed pods open, as these pods very generally burst open more or less violently, scattering the seeds to a considerable distance. This is nature's method of securing to the largest possible extent the perpetuation of the plants reproduced from seeds. Flowers should be picked as quickly as may be after the buds open, as they will then, if properly dried, most nearly retain their natural color—a condition determining their value and selling quality.

Leaves of commercial value should be carefully picked so as to avoid gathering therewith parts of the stalk of the plants; use extreme care in drying the leaves, choosing a dry place, and spreading thin—only bright, natural colored leaves, free from black spots, are saleable.

All roots and the bark of roots should be thoroughly cleaned in pure water, and should then be carefully dried in the air—do not dry by artificial heat or in the sun, and do not leave out of doors in either rain or dew. The same care and methods should be employed in drying barks, except in that washing is necessary only for the bark of roots.

Any of these goods may be packed in bags or boxes.

Dock and similar heavy roots may be dried more thoroughly, and to better advantage for selling, by being sliced; roots of this class should be examined frequently while in process of drying to insure freedom from mold.

Any of these goods may be packed in bags or boxes for shipment to market—the quantity, weight and particular character of each should determine whether you should use box or bag—but be sure that the article is dry, absolutely dry, and packed so that it cannot readily be affected by moisture.

DRYING RACK FOR ROOTS.

A root digger soon finds that it takes a lot of space to dry his goods in, and those who have small space are often inconvenienced by not having enough room. A rack can be made at small cost that will give a large amount of space, and at the same time take up very little room. A rack three feet wide, eight feet long and six feet high can be divided so as to hold 14 shelves, which will give a drying space of 336 square feet. A rack like this will hold more bontanical drugs than a

floor space of 10 x 33 feet. A rack of this kind need not cost very much, as it can be made of cheap lumber. The shelves can be made of plaster lath, or if the cost is not so important, wire setting would be better. The shelves should be made so that they will slide in and out of the rack. When in use the rack should be placed where it will have a free circulation of air about it, and when not in use it can be moved into some corner out of the way. A rack like this, if carefully made, will last for years, and any one who is handy with tools can make one in a few hours.

WATERPROOFING SHOES.

One of the greatest sources of La Grippe, colds and pneumonia, I think, is wet feet. If one will keep the feet warm and dry, I think there will be little danger of catching colds, or its attendant troubles.

I do not believe there is anything that will permanently waterproof the shoes or boots; but if the following is put on the shoes before going out in the wet I think the reader will find that the feet will remain dry as long as the oil is in the leather. Take one pint each of tallow and neatsfoot oil, a half teacupful of lamp black and a piece of rosin the size of a walnut. Melt the rosin in a little tallow, mix all together and when it comes to a boil, stir a little and when cool or nearly so, rub in all the leather will take with a sponge or soft flannel cloth.

SNAKE POISON.

If bitten by a poisonous snake instantly tie a ligature above the bite, tie tightly to stop circulation of blood; then cut the wound larger and rub in about ten grains of permanganate, a cheap drug, procurable at any drug store. Keep the ligature in place for some time.

HIDES.

After skinning, go over hide thoroughly scraping off all meat and fat, and then lay flat and run in salt freely; cover every part of the flesh side of the hide with salt, and let lie for two or three days, then *fold* up, hair side in, to keep in place, pack in securely sewed or tied burlap covering, and ship.

CARE OF THE RIFLE.

A rifle should never be laid away after use without cleaning. If allowed to lie over night, especially when smokeless powder is used, the burnt powder begins to harden and forms a crust which soon induces rust. Rust spots form, causing pits which soon interfere with the accuracy of the arm and eventually ruin it. The only way to remove these spots is to run through a wire scratch brush several times. If this does not remove them, sprinkle a little emery dust on a small piece of cloth moistened in some fine machine oil, and run this through the barrel briskly by means of a cleaning rod. Sometimes a cloth soaked in kerosene oil is run through and the oil allowed to remain over night. Next day, the oil and much of the residue can be removed by using dry cloth on the rod.

Rust spots injure the accuracy by gouging out particles of lead from the ball, thus producing a misshapen globe which cannot be fired accurately. After the rust has attacked the metal of the barrel it can never be removed so that a rough spot is not left on which rust easily forms at the first opportunity. Therefore, if buying a second-hand rifle, or even a new one kept in stock or one that has never been fired, one should examine the inside of the barrel and consider no rifle in which rough spots are seen.

After use a rifle should be cleaned by wiping with patches of soft cloth attached to a cleaning rod. A piece soaked in some fine machine oil, a kind used in typewriters or any fine machinery will do, should be run through dry. When they begin to come out nearly clean, moisten another with oil and continue this process until the patches come out with no coloring but that of the oil.

If the arm is to be used at once, the last cloth put through should be dry to remove all oil. If a rifle is fired when there is oil in the barrel, the oil adds to the residue remaining in the barrel. If the arm is to be laid away, even for a day or two, run a piece of cloth through well soaked in oil so that the entire inside of the barrel gets a coating of oil. This preserves the metal from dampness and possible rust. It is well to run a dry cloth through the rifle after two or three days when it will be found that some of the residue still remained and now comes out discoloring the cloth. After removing it thoroughly, and again moistening the barrel with oil, the arm

is ready to stand in some dry place for several weeks without further mention.

By care, a rifle may be made to last many years, while carelessness will ruin the best of arms within a very short time. Make it a regular practice never to leave the rifle uncleaned and cleaning will soon become a habit that occupies little time that is well spent.

USES OF TURPENTINE IN THE FUR BUSINESS.

Turpentine is a very handy article for trappers. It is very effective for removing skunk odor. When clothes are scented with skunk odor, it can be removed by rubbing turpentine into them, then hang them out in the open air a short time and it will soon disappear. After skinning a skunk the hands may be rubbed with a little turpentine and the knife that is used in skinning can be cleaned by pouring turpentine on it, and allowing it to remain for a little while.

TEMPERING STEEL.

To temper a steel cold chisen, sharpen first, heat in quick fire until bright red hot, remove from fire, hold till cherry red, plunge in cold water and let remain in water until cold. To temper a steel tool that is to be used on wood, heat until nearly white, take out, hold till red, and plunge into cold water. A hoe or other tool which you wish to sharpen should be heated until between cherry red and blue, and then plunge into cold soft water.

CLEANING FUR.

When white or light colored fur is soiled (a made-up fur) it may be cleaned by rubbing white cornmeal, dampened with benzine, gently into the fur in the direction in which the fur naturally lies; dust carefully after fur is dry. Black and dark furs may be improved in appearance by using bran made hot and rubbed well into the furs. Brush with a clean, not too stiff brush, until the dull look is removed. When moistening meal for fur cleansing purposes use gasolene or benzine rather than water.

DOGS.

Well trained hounds are best for general hunting, and are good rabbit, 'coon and fox dogs. The shepherd dog is good for 'coon and skunk. Some very insignificant dogs, without pedigree, are first-class hunters; training *for the purpose* is the all important consideration.

KNIFE.

In skinning an animal a knife is needed chiefly for the operation about the head, tail and thighs; use a sharp knife, but learn to handle it deftly and lightly, cutting no more than is absolutely necessary as you progress.

BURNING GLASS.

Do not depend wholly on matches—carry a good lense or burning glass and you can surely kindle a fire so long as the sun shines.

COMPASS.

Do not go into an unknown country or heavily wooded section without a *good* compass.

DAMP BOOTS.

Boots or shoes that have become damp during the day may be perfectly dried at night by placing in each a pint or more (according to size) of heated dry sand—remove sand from boots in the morning about a half hour before putting on.

MATCHES.

Keep your matches dry; this may be done by wrapping the match box in thin oil skin; in rainy weather, when the dew is heavy, or operations require much wading in streams, carry the matches in a tightly corked bottle.

SALT.

Do not salt your skins, as salt makes the pelt soft and injures the fur—and lowers the value.

SOAP.

Soap is an essential article; and there are many good kinds, but none equal to tar soap, which cleanses, heals and disinfects; it is specially serviceable when afield, where it would be inconvenient to carry carbolic, as it is neither heavy nor bulky, and is always ready for use—the very best is worth the difference in cost.

TAIL BONE.

The tail bone should be completely taken out in the operation of skinning all animals when the tail is to remain attached to the pelt, as the bone is quite certain to become tainted and measurably spoil the fur.

RUBBERS.

Small breaks in rubbers can be mended by applying a rubber cement made of a small quantity of real rubber dissolved in chloroform; keep cement in bottle with air tight cork, and as desired apply with a brush—work rapidly so that the cement will not harden before it is put on.

PRIME.

Skins become prime late in November, or about the first of December; the skin side of the pelt is white when dry, and the growth of under fur is well developed. On early caught skins the skin side shows blue or greenish. These conditions cannot be changed or disguised.

Prime skins are worth much more than the others.

Moral—Do *not* trap early.

SPRINGY.

Late caught skins show conditions plainly, are faded, rubbed, and have shed a part of the fur, and are denoted "Springy" and graded as No. 2, No. 3, or lower.

All good skins are now so high priced that springy skins are graded very strictly, and in very many instances are not worth labor of catching and handling—do not trap too late; it does not pay.

PHOTOGRAPHY.

All outdoor men should own a good camera and keep a photographic record of their outdoor work. Many are the times when you have wished for a good camera and the knowledge of how to use it when you have seen some beautiful or unusual scene, or some rare animal, bird or natural scenery that you wished your friends to share with you. Then, too, a permanent record of your work can be kept by taking photographs of the different operations, and many saleable views can be secured of wild life and natural scenery in the deep woods.

A four by five camera is about the proper size for general outdoor work; a good one is a folding camera with rapid rectilinear lens, reversible view-finder, seven-inch bellows, rising and falling front, iris diaphragm, shutter for instantaneous, bulb or time exposure, back focus, and tripod attachment; a set of three plate holders, holding two plates each; a set of extra auxiliary lens, consisting of one portrait lens, one ray filter and one telephoto lens, and a telescopic tripod. This last is a very necessary part of the outfit, as it is used in taking "time pictures." Such an outfit as the above can be bought at most mail order houses for $8.00 or $10.00.

Use the tray method of develoment and print the picture on developing paper, using a washing box to wash the prints in; also use the box for washing plates after developing and fixing. Dry the prints in a blotter book and keep them unmounted. Pictures may be printed on developing postcards, as these need no mounting and are convenient to mail.

GUNS.

A little attention now and then to the working parts of a gun will keep them in good working order, and make the gun ready for instant use at all times; all screws should be tight, and springs should be clean.

A Canadian hunter and trapper writes to FUR NEWS: Some hunters prefer large calibre rifles for big game; for one, I have *settled* on .30-30 and .38-55 as best all round rifles; the latter is all right every way for antelope and bear; the .30-30 for anything from partridge to elk.

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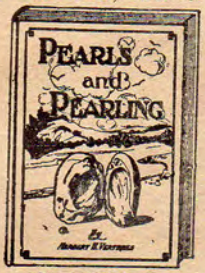

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