

QUEER FISH TRAPS.

STRANGE DEVICES FOR CAPTURING FINNY PREY.

Ingenious Schemes Used in India, Siam and Japan—For Catching Ducks—Fire Fishing—Odd Materials for Fish Nets and Lines.

"The traps by which man captures other animals are the best possible illustration of his superiority to the rest of the brute creation," said a naturalist the day. "Not the least remarkable of his achievements in this line are to be found in the varied apparatus he has devised for taking fishes."

In India a huge funnel of wickerwork is planted in a stream below a waterfall, and every finny creature coming down drops into it, the water straining out and leaving the flapping prey in the receptacle, all ready to be gathered in. A remarkable scheme for trapping eels is practiced in the same country. Barrels loaded with stones and bait are pierced with holes and sunk in the water. Eels, smelling the food, find an entrance through the perforations; they cannot easily get out again, and soon the interior is a wriggling mass of slimy victims. The fisherman is dead sure to secure a couple of bushels at every haul.

"Another trap used in India for a like purpose is a funnel-shaped affair made of long thorn branches and set on the bottom among the weeds in which a certain sort of fish find their favorite hiding places. The latter go in, but are unable to get out again, because the thorns all point inward. In Siam the natives utilize a curious wicker contrivance for fishing in narrow streams. The device in question is in the shape of an inverted vase, flaring at the rim and without a bottom. While one man devotes his attention to driving the fish down the water way, another stands ready to clap the basket over their heads when they come thickest. Having thus penned in a number of them he thrusts his arm into the trap and pulls them out. The Japanese have a remarkable pound-net arrangement that scoops vast quantities of fish into an enormous bag of netting hanging beneath the bottom of a vessel. In this receptacle something like thirty times the cargo can be conveyed to market that could be carried by the ship in the ordinary way. Furthermore, the merchandise is by this method brought into port alive.

In the same country an ingenious scheme is practiced for taking ducks on a line, which is attached at one end to a flexible stick stuck up in the mud. The other extremity having a double-pointed needle of bone attached to it. The latter is baited by stringing upon it some grains of corn. Presently along comes Mr. Duck, swallows the needle, and finds himself a captive the minute he tries to fly away. In old times the Cape Cod fishermen depended largely for bait upon the sea fowl they took on their voyages. To catch them they threw out fishing lines with hooks at the ends, to which were attached chunks of cod liver. The latter floated, because of the oil they contained, and murrets, gulls and other birds swallowing them were quickly pulled in, skinned and chopped up. Nowadays these bold toilers of the ocean do not take the trouble to procure bait in such a fashion, relying for supplies upon the capitalists who employ them. These employers reckon that, incidentally to obtaining provisions of this kind, more time is lost in speers on shore than is consumed in the active business of the fishery.

"The use of fire in fishing is one of the curiosities of that employment. In southern waters muller are taken in enormous quantities by boats which go out with wire baskets at the bows filled with blazing pitch pine. For the purpose in view the craft is so loaded as to bring the gunwale on one side down nearly to a level with the water, and the fish, attracted by the light, jump aboard by hundreds. Sometimes a big dip net is used to scoop in the scaly creatures which crowd in the water toward the illumination. A machine for taking fish by the wholesale is employed in North Carolina. It is called a 'fish wheel,' and is worked like an ordinary water wheel by a narrow stream that is permitted to give outlet to a dammed stream. But it is so constructed that in revolving it picks up all the fish that pass through and throws them into a great box. In the same State is operated what is termed a fish slide, which is simply an enormous tray made of boards, with a bottom of open slats, set in the flow of a rapid. As the fish come down stream they pass over the slats, and the water falling through the slats leaves them flapping about on the planks, whence they are scooped up with dip nets.

"Fish nets, by the way, are made from some very strange materials. The Eskimo manufacture them from strips of seal hide and from thin slices of walrus-bone. By the Fijians they are constructed of human hair. Savages in various parts of the world plait the inner fibers of tree bark for fishing lines, and the Indians on the Pacific coast of North America use for the same purpose seaweed—a sort of kelp which is strong enough to hold a finny captive of about 150 pounds weight. It is very interesting to observe the development of the fishery from its original form to the shape it is found in to-day. You will find the Eskimo using a piece of bone with a bent nail stuck through it, the lure being rendered more attractive by the addition of two or three colored beads obtained from a trader and perhaps a couple of the red bills of auks. He knows by experience that certain sorts of figures carved in the wood out of which he makes his bigger hooks will catch the greatest possible number of fish, and he always uses those. It seems very

remarkable to find that the fish hooks of the bronze age have precisely the same bends as the Limerick and Shaughnessy patterns of to-day. Originally the hook and the sinker of the fisherman were separate. Then came a modification, such as is seen in the 'mackerel gig,' which combined the two in one piece of metal. Next came the notion of making the sinker hook of a bright substance so as to attract the prey. Later on the modern sportsmen transformed the device into the likeness of a fish of bright metal poured into a mold. Now the English have improved on this trollying contrivance by making minnows and frogs of rubber and coloring them in a lifelike manner as possible. But no such lure is equal to the bright revolving nickel-plated spoon, with a brilliant bunch of feathers to disguise the gang of hooks.

"However, artificial flies may fairly be considered to illustrate the highest development of the art piscatorial. The imitations produced in this shape of winged insects, grasshoppers and the larvae of various bugs are really wonderful. In their manufacture materials are drawn from every part of the world. Furs as well as feathers are utilized in making them. Deer, bears, monkeys, seals, rabbits, sheep, pigs, squirrels, dogs, and even rats contribute. Agents are sent out from Paris to all parts of the earth to gather for this purpose the skins of rare and gaudy-winged creatures. These plumes and furs represent chiefly the waste stock of the milliners and taxidermists, nearly all of them being brought from France. The gut snells to which the fly hooks are attached are made from immature silk worms drawn out to the requisite lengths."—[Washington Star.]

A RUSSIAN BASTILE.

The Terrible Prison Where Even the Guards are Prisoners.

Some fifty miles from St. Petersburg, upon the lake of Ladoga, there is a small granite island, entirely occupied by a fortress, says Free Russia. It is Schlüsselburg, the dreadful prison of state—worse than the French Bastille, worse than the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, with its Troubetzkoi and Alenevsky rayelins and its underground cells. The most resolute of the revolutionists, men and women who have taken part in active conspiracies, whom it is not considered safe to keep in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, are sent there.

The absence of any inhabitants except those employed in the service renders it possible to isolate prisoners to a degree unattainable anywhere else. No one is allowed to land upon the island. Sentinels have orders to shoot any one who approaches. If the near relatives of a prisoner inquire concerning him at the Police Department in St. Petersburg they are sometimes told "Alive" or "Dead," sometimes no answer is given. The soldiers and guards are themselves prisoners, who mingle only with each other and are carefully watched on the rare occasions when they are allowed to make a visit to the mainland. It was possible to establish secret communications with even the most jealously guarded rayelins of the St. Petersburg fortress. But the fortress of Schlüsselburg remained dumb, like the grave it is.

The journal continues: Though some of the best known men of the revolution party, in whom the greatest interest was felt among the whole body of revolutionists, were kept there, we rarely could even tell whether they were alive or dead. A few months ago, however, our friends in Russia received some news from this place of endless misery. It is very brief—only such as can be conveyed upon a bit of paper smuggled with the greatest danger through some friendly hand. It merely tells which of the prisoners are dead and which are still alive. But even this summary is eloquent enough.—We learn from it that out of the fifty-two prisoners sent there in the course of the last eight years, 20, or about 40 per cent., are already dead. Several of those who survive should be added to the list of the dead. They are insane, and have lost what is as precious, if not more precious, to a man than life.

The Meaning of Dreams.

Lively dreams are, in general, a sign of excitement of nervous action; soft dreams a sign of slight irritation of the brain, often, in nervous fevers, announcing the approach of a favorable crisis. Frightful dreams are a sign of determination of blood to the head. Dreams about fire are, in women, signs of impending hemorrhage. Dreams about blood and red objects are signs of inflammatory conditions. Dreams about rain and water are often signs of diseased mucous membrane and dropsy. Dreams in which the patient sees any part of the body, especially suffering, indicate disease in that part. Dreams about death often precede apoplexy, which is connected with determination of blood to the head. Nightmare (incubus ephialtes) with great sensitiveness, is a sign of determination of blood to the chest. "Of these," says Baron Von Echterleben, "we may add that dreams of dogs, after the bite of a mad dog, often precede the appearance of hydrophobia, but may be only the consequences of an excited imagination." Dr. Forbes Winslow quotes several cases in which dreams are said to have been prognostic: Arnaud de Villeneuve dreamed one night that a black cat bit him on the arm. The next day an anthrax appeared on the part bitten. A patient of Galen's dreamed that one of his limbs was changed to stone. Some days after his leg was paralyzed. Hippocrates remarks that dreams in which one sees black spectres are a bad omen.—[Dr. Hammond in Druggists' Circular.]

The Minister's Cat.
It's a pretty big story, but it's true. And the minister will tell you so. It's about Deborah, the minister's cat. She was a very large tabby, with three white stockings, two green eyes, and a wise old head.

Once upon a time Deborah had six little blind kittens, and they and their mother lay fast asleep in a round basket behind the stove in the minister's study.

Deborah was sleeping so hard that when Mr. Neal, the milkman, came into the room she only pricked up her left ear and then went on snoring. She did not know that Mr. Neal had come to borrow her to kill off the rats in his house. Indeed, she did not know that he had any house, or any rats, either. He lived a mile away across the plain, and she caught her rats nearer home.

But Mr. Neal knew all about Deborah. He had not for years sold milk at the parsonage without hearing what a famous mousethe she was; and he said now to the minister:

"Good evening, Mr. Penn. I've called this stormy night to ask if you'll be kind enough to lend us your cat?"

"Certainly," answered the minister, laying aside his pen; "only you'll have to take her family, too."

"Of course," said Mr. Neal; "and I'm glad she has the kittens; they will keep her happy."

Mr. Neal had brought a great strong bag, and by the help of the minister he put Deborah into it—basket, kittens, and all. She tried her best to get out, but Mr. Neal tied up the bag and held it firmly while he walked to his wagon. There he dropped the bag into a box that stood under the seat, and fastened down the cover. Then he drove away.

"Poor Deborah can't see where she is going any more than her blind kittens can," thought the minister, with a little smile, as he turned from the window. "I hope she won't be homesick, for I'm sure she could never find her way home. Why, why, the ground is getting really white with snow!"

Presently he sat down again to his sermon, and he wrote, and he wrote, till everybody else in the house was asleep. All at once he was startled by a sound from the porch. It was the mewing of a cat. He threw open the door, and in ran Deborah, carrying in her mouth a kitten.

"Dear me, Deborah, can't this be you?" he cried, in great surprise. She dropped the kitten on the rug at his feet and ran out before he could close the door. He put the little yet cold kitty on a warm cushion, and went to bed; but he was awakened from his first nap by another mewing on the porch. Deborah had come with her second kitten. An hour or two later she came with the third, and by the next noon she had them all home—all six of them.

Soon Mr. Neal followed, bringing the empty basket.

"I thought I must return it quickly, for Deborah would come for it," said he, laughing. "You may tell her that I've bought a rat trap, and I'll never disturb her again. A puss that will travel eleven miles in the snow for the sake of getting her family back to its old corner deserves to live in peace."

"Now, isn't this a pretty big story? I shouldn't have dared to repeat it if the minister hadn't told it to me himself."—Penn Shirley, in Our Little Ones.

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Mr. Spurgeon had been reviewing a book on "Primitive Methodism on the Yorkshire Wolds," and was especially pleased with a story of a not very fluent young man, who being in the habit of saying in his prayers, "Lord, help me to pray!" was answered one night by an old man's ejaculation: "And the Lord help thee to give ower!"

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Mrs. Dr. Horale's Certain Croup Cure, the only remedy in the world that will cure a violent case of croup in half an hour. No opium. Sold by druggists or mailed on receipt of 50 cts. Address A. P. Hoaxie, Buffalo, N. Y.

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