

boardwalks told the tale of the passing of the first growth.

We were in search of the big oyster company's tugs that catch shrimp off this western coast, seeking to pic-ture and tell the tale of the operations. Tied to the side of the floating landing stage was a fisherman's boat. In it were hundreds of the strangest fish I have ever seen. Some were flatfish. Fritz says he was in a lagoon where the water was so shallow the fish had to swim on their sides. These were the fish he saw no doubt. They had black backs and white bellies, but these odd flatshaped things were not the fish that puzzled me. I had seen the cormorants take hundreds of these



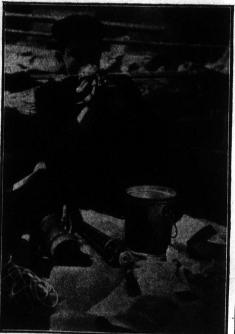
Hauling in a Hair Seal

so-called sole in a day from out the shallow waters of an inlet. The ones could not classify were in a barrow illshapen, poch-bellied, ragged-tailed, swollen-eyed deep-sea fish.

"What are they." I asked a passing Chinaman. "Latfish," he gibbered. "What," cried Fritz, "Ratfish?"
"Rats," said a nearby Jap fisherman.

To look at the huge teeth in their mouths one cannot wonder at them being given the very appropriate name of Ratfish. They belong to the shark family and have the glorious emerald green eye so common in this class.

Picture to yourself a fish about a foot and a half long, with a great bull head containing two of the biggest of glassy green eyes, a silvery distorted body, numerous pairs of fanlike fins, a long tapering sharklike tail furnished with fringy edges, a big mouth set far back in under the head containing the rat teeth-but bigger



Lunch, Eating the Crab that Pinched his Toe

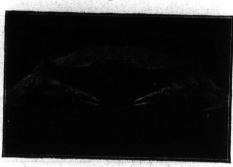
teeth than any rat save the Muskrat. Fritz and I set one up and pictured this ugly denizen of the deeper waters. It contained little save the liver, this almost filled the whole body cavity, it was filled with a fatty matter that produces a valuable oil, otherwise the fish is worthless.

"Eat him, John?" I asked the chink. "No, latfish him poison," he chirped back. Well, when he won't eat it, I guess it is, so we left the mass of ratfish, soon to be thrown into the various crabpots for bait.

The hairseals that inhabit all these bays and inlets have many odd ways. Our cance was passing the estuary of a little river. The tide was half out and the water quite shallow. So dull |

dled involuntarily in the stern. Suddenly close beside us a curling wave leaped up, a brown head shot out, a volume of water was thrown aloft, a shining body of a salmon gleamed for a moment ahead of the next curling wave that was forming off our bow. Again the seal showed for an instant, this time it was the strong hind flippers that broke the water and a curve of the enormously strong tail switched him at right angles to his course. The salmon should have escaped as the water was shallow and the suction on the big body of the passing seal very strong, but unfortunately for the alarmed fish it sped up a blind channel, found it had no outlet and darted straight back towards the waiting seal.

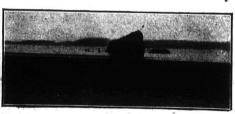
We could clearly see the raised furrow of water over the back of the approaching salmon as well as the circles and bubbles that disclosed the seal squatting on the sand. As the two paths converged the water about the seal became more convulsed. It reminded me of a cat crouched with slowly waving tail awaiting her prey. Along came the fish disclosing furrow. We could tell the moment the seal would strike as though we held him in leash. He darted out faster than I thought even this quick carniverous animal could. There was a great splashing impact, a swirling struggle—then the seal bit a large piece out of the belly of the bending fish-rupturing the air bladder so



The Crab that Bites

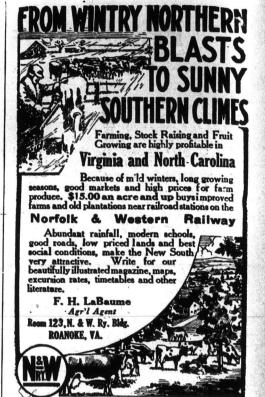
that the fish now floated on its side, then on its back. Its fins were splashing the warm mouth of the seal. bright brown eyes of the slayer travelled their gaze from dying fish to watching men and back again; evidently he thought we were after fish also, for he suddenly seized the still struggling salmon in his mouth and swam off towards the deep water.

Fritz had amused himself with whistling at the seal, causing it to stare at him and approach closer. No its mate, thinking no doubt that we were the custodians of juicy salmon in shallow places swam up close to us. Its intensely human face—when it pops up out of the water reminds you of the face of an old man-with the lustrous brown eyes beaming benevolently on us, its plaintive whining cry, as if it wanted instantly to be adopted into the family, all interested us immensely.



Native Clamming about large Glacial, Rock on Tide Flats

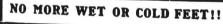
There was a shuffling in the bow and I saw Fritz's bare feet twinkling overboard and off he waded to catch a seal that weighed possibly two hundred pounds and was as strong as several boys in that unstable element-water. The seal watched the big fat extended hand, peered humanly at the puckered whistling lips, then when a frightful screech rent the calm air the seal silently dived and swam off and Fritz popped down into the shallow water fervently embracing one foot and at the same time thoroughly soaking his specimen filled clothes—alas! for the seal catcher, he had inadvertently inserted one big fat toe into the waiting claw of a huge crab-whether the shellfish thought it was something to eat, or mayhaps he too, was collecting specimens-well if you want to find out. and peaceful was everything that Fritz ask Fritz, as it is yet a sore was half asleep in the bow while I pad-subject and he will not tell me.





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