

FOXES.

After we pass the timber belt to the westward we find but very little game, the only valuable land animal on the Aleutian chain of islands being the fox, which until recently was a source of income to the natives, who spent the greater part of the winter hunting and trapping the animal.

All that has been said about the wanton destruction of deer can be said with equal truth about the wholesale poisoning by which whole islands are stripped of their foxes in one winter, and the native hunter and his children left to starve. So systematically is the work done and so desperate are the gang engaged in it that those who know them best are very careful to say least about them.

Members of the gang are to be found wherever there is money to be made suddenly by illegitimate means. In the fishing season they dam the streams, capture the salmon by the quantity, and sell them to the nearest cannery for what they will bring. They never take the trouble to tear down the dams. They are to be found in schooners in the early spring hunting the sea otter in forbidden waters. They go to Bering Sea after seals, and last season some of them made a successful raid on a trading post and robbed it of some 15 or 20 fine sea-otter skins, valued at \$7,000 to \$10,000.

Generally they wind up the year's plunder by selecting a group of islands, where they spend the winter poisoning foxes and securing the pelts. These are the men who are armed to the teeth with the best modern breech-loading arms; men who own swift-sailing schooners, in which they carry cargoes of whisky from British Columbia, and, following the Alaskan coast and Indian settlements, peddle it out to natives for whatever skins and trinkets they may have to spare, and having made them drunk, they slip in and rob them of everything.

No effort has ever been made to break up their nefarious business, and now they swagger into court as though the Government were an intruder, and listen awhile to the proceedings; just long enough to assure themselves that their tools at the bar and in the jury box are doing their duty—to the gang.

The perpetual presence of a revenue cutter that would patrol the inner waters of Alaska from Cape Fox to Chilkat and Sitka, aided by armed steam launches stationed at convenient points along the route, is the only practical method that I know of by which the present dangerous bands of outlaws can be suppressed.

With boats at his disposal whenever needed, the marshal could enforce the law, the collector could follow the smugglers to their rendezvous and break up the whole business at one blow. As it is now, all the officers in Alaska are utterly powerless to do anything, and the consequence is the laws are defied and derided and spat upon.

THE SEA OTTER.

The most valuable of all the fur-bearing animals in Alaskan waters and the most widely distributed is undoubtedly the sea otter, which, if properly protected by the Government, is capable of giving profitable employment to the native hunters for all time.

Beginning at Sitka they were to be found till very recently all around the coast and Aleutian Islands as far westward as Atton, a distance of nearly 5,000 miles; but now, after a few years of hunting by the mod-