



The Hair Seal. Note the claws on the fore flipper, the bony feelers on the jaw

our great ranch. All about us, in every cove, in every bay, on the reefs, on the flats, in the tide runs, swim and leap and splash and dive the hair seals (*phoca vitulina*). It is at midnight, when the sea is filled with the countless myriad plankton, the phosphorescent atoms that turn the inlets and bays and coves into slumbering sheets of flame, sheets that seem to be instantly ignited by the swift passage of fin or scale. Here is a sight that outdoes Dore's most spectacular work. The passage of a hair seal in pursuit of a salmon, the capture amid pulsating waves of liquid fire, the tearing out of the bite, the throwing aloft of the fish, a dark object thrown out from a bed of silver, falling back therein with many a glittering living jewel of phosphorescent water upcast, the dive of the feeding seal after the sinking fish—curves, ripples, lines of intense blue light in the dark sea water—all this must be

actually seen to get even then but an insufficient part of the much craved for whole. The seal in the picture had just turned on its side preparatory to diving as the focal plane curtain fell, the great nails of the fore flippers can be seen very distinctly.

All along these shores the martin and the mink run all the night long. The native "pit-lampers," those men that hunt with a headlight, spy the cruel flashing slit—the small gleam of the sharp green eye—"bang" sings the pump-gun and another of our animals has passed out. These while hunting at midnight often come across the humble coon clam digging on the shores, the big, pale blue flame of their eyes are readily distinguished. The big soft lamps of the deer shine out with much more space between, and it is between that the blinding charge of buckshot is aimed, usually a swift merciful death.

this. But all the game is not game, if I may use the term. I know of one man that has learned to tell a certain widely divided pair of eyes as seen at midnight in the pitlamp's glare. This nocturnal hunter, paddling silently along a lonely cove, saw a pair of huge, widely divided eyes shining out of the dark shrubbery of the shore—"Bang" cracked the smokeless, and the huge object rushed furiously off into the night. The next day this midnight paddler on those lonely shores sought his horse to drive into the town. Horses stray widely in these unfenced ranges so he failed to find him, the next day his search also was in vain. On the third day his quest led him along near where he had lost the big animal—he found it, and strange to say he found the horse at the same time. They say that he now lands at night and pulls a hair out of the animal before he shoots. You see one's stock of horses soon becomes depleted in pitlamping, especially if your stock consists of one only.

Of the skunks I am glad to say we have but very few. A wildly enthusi-

astic upsetter of Nature's plans liberated a couple on one of the gulf islands. Ditto the muskrats, and another—shall I say foolish man set—set some of these bank destroyers, dike-eaters, yet cleanly livers and excellent furbearers, loose upon this big island. If they had been of prime importance Nature would have included them. True we have the larger representative the beaver. Thanks to the excellent protection this very valuable fur-bearer is again building dams and making houses all over the province. It is a good animal up to a certain number, but it must always be thinned down if we want to keep our small waters free flowing and navigable. This national emblem of our's is well worthy of a life's study. The writer did not think six seasons wasted in the study of the Muskrat. There is not a thing that the Great Maker of this mighty ranch has made that cannot be studied with interest and great delight.

Well, kind fellow traveler in this field of knowledge, the day is far spent and we have not noted one in a hundred

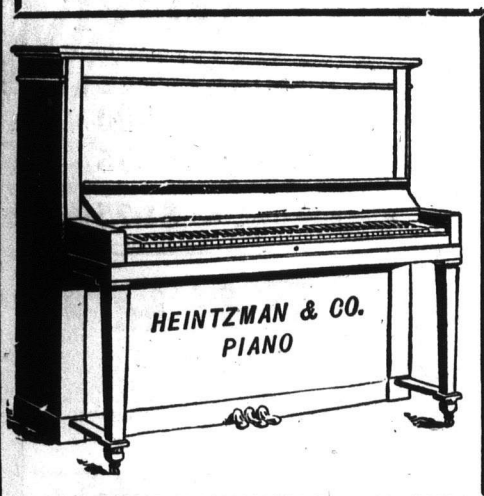


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