

America it is almost entirely confined to boreal regions; its farthest southern range being the valley of the Salt Lake in Utah territory. The glutton is voracious and bloodthirsty, but fortunately its size by no means equals its ferocity; there hardly lives a more cunning, crafty animal, preying on beavers, muskrats, and squirrels. By tracking them or lurking hid among the lichen and moss-covered branches of the pine-trees, it pounces upon its prey and speedily kills it. The sharp incisor teeth, six in each jaw, together with the formidable claws, enable it to overcome animals even superior to itself in size and strength. It appears a connecting link betwixt the bears and weasels.

The Skunk (*Mephitis Americanus*), so renowned for the terrible stench it emits when interfered with, is very much more handsome than useful. So potent is the smell of the secretion it has the power of squirting many yards, that I have frequently buried articles of clothing and steel traps for weeks, and then the stench has been as bad as ever. The Indians generally shoot the skunk, and always skin it under water. About a thousand skins are usually collected.

Bears, black, brown, and grizzly, are always in demand, and used for innumerable purposes. The number killed annually is not easily obtained, but, at a rough average, may be estimated at about nine thousand. The greater number are killed in the winter, during their period of hibernation.

The fur of the Sea Otter (*Enhydra Marina*) is by far the most valuable traded, and is very difficult to obtain. The animal is generally caught in nets, or speared by the coast Indians in the sea; a good skin is worth £40, trade price. The sea otter ranges from Alaska to the Californian coast in the North Pacific. It appears to be an intermediate link between the true seal and the otter; but very little is known about its habits, or mode of reproduction. Nearly all the sea-otter fur goes to China.

There is also an immense trade in Rabbit fur. Added to the many thousand skins that annually come from the Hudson's Bay territories, 1,300,000 are sold every year in the markets of London, the skins of which are used in the fur trade.

In South America, living in the valleys along the slopes of the Andes, is a curious little animal (*Chinchilla Lanigera*) half hare, half rat, the fur of which is known as Chinchilla. This fur was much valued and extensively used by the older inhabitants of Peru and Chili, being manufactured into a fine kind of cloth, and then made into articles of clothing. Many thousand skins annually find their way into our markets, and are consumed in the manufacture of muffs, tippets, and lining for cloaks. The animal is entirely a vegetable feeder, and of most harmless and inoffensive habits. A pair may be seen in the Regent's Park Gardens.

Another South American fur in great request is that of the Coypu (*Myopotamus Bonariensis*), also called Metrid, from the Spanish for "otter," a name derived from the similitude the fur bears to that animal. Nearly all the skins are obtained from Rio de la Plata. About 1,125,212 skins were imported in one year; latterly the supply has been less, although it is still very considerable. The long hair is plucked out, as in the treatment of beaver, and, when dressed, the skin much resembles that of the beaver both in color and texture, and is used for similar purposes.

All the fur skins previously mentioned are collected during the fall and winter months at the different trading posts; and, as the system adopted at the various posts is pretty much the same, a brief sketch of the routine at Fort Colville, on the Columbia river, will suffice for all.

As the furs are brought by the Indians they are traded by the person in charge of the trade-shop. If an Indian were to bring a hundred skins of different sorts, or all alike, he would trade off every skin separately, and insist on payment for each skin as he sold it; hence it often occupies several days to barter a batch of skins; and it is a curious and interesting sight to watch a party of Indians selecting from the stores articles they require, as they dispose of skin after skin. An Indian trader needs to possess more than average patience. The skins, as purchased, are thrown behind, and then carried to the fur room, and piled in heaps, that are constantly turned and aired. In the spring, as soon as the snow is gone, generally in April, the