

of his back comes under the fall or tree, he looses the support by tugging the meat off the stick, when down it falls on him, killing him instantly, but doing no injury to the fur. The winter fur is by far the most valuable, and the Indians say the first shower of rain after the snow disappears spoils the martin. The animal is skinned somewhat like a rabbit, the skin being inverted as it is removed, then placed on a flat board, and so dried in the sun. A good martin skin is worth in the trade from two and a half to three dollars; about ten or twelve shillings. Very fine martins come from the western slopes of the Cascade and coast ranges of mountains; the further north, the darker and better are the skins.

The Russian Sable inhabits the forest-clad mountains of Siberia, a desolate, cold, inhospitable region. The animal is hunted during winter, and generally by exiles. There are various methods of taking the sable. Great numbers are shot with small-bore rifles; others are trapped in steel and fall traps, and many taken in nets placed over their places of retreat, into which they are tracked on the snow. Who can picture to himself, without shuddering, the case of the condemned sable-hunter? He leaves, with heavy heart, the last thinly-scattered habitations which border the pathless wilds; a sky of clouds and darkness is above, bleak mountains and gloomy forests before him; the recesses of the forests, the defiles of the mountains must be traversed: these are the haunts of the sable. The cold is below zero, but the fur will prove the finer! Nerved by necessity, and stimulated by the hope of sharing the gains, on he presses. Fatigue and cold exhaust him, a snow storm overtakes him, the bearings or way-marks are lost or forgotten. Provisions fail, and too often he who promised, to his expecting and anxious friends, a speedy return, is seen no more. Such is sable-hunting in Siberia, and such the hapless fate of many an exile, who perishes in the pursuit of what only adds to the luxuries and superfluities of the great.

The Fisher (*Mustela Penantii*) is very similar to the pine martin in all his habits, but much larger. Why it was named a fisher I could never imagine, as

it is not known to catch fish or go in the water, except to wash, or swim a stream. It climbs readily, and lives on birds and rodents. A very fine pair are in the Regent's Park Zoological Gardens. It is trapped much in the same way as the martin. The tail is very long and bushy, tapering to a fine brush-like point, and quite black. At one time a large trade was carried on with tails, only the tail being worn by Jewish merchants as an ornament in Poland. About twelve thousand fisher skins are annually imported. I obtained some remarkably fine specimens of the fisher in the pine woods of the Na-hoi-le-pit-ke valley, on the Columbia river. The value, or trade price, in British Columbia, is from two dollars fifty cents to three dollars per skin. The fisher in full winter fur makes a far handsomer muff than the sable.

The fur of the Mink (*Mustela vison*) is vastly inferior to either the fisher or martin, being harsh, short, and glossy. The habits of the animal, too, are entirely different. The mink closely resembles the otter in its mode of life, frequenting streams inland, and rocks, small islands, and sheltered bays on the sea-coast. It swims with great ease and swiftness, captures fish, eats mollusks, crabs, and any marine animal that falls in its way. Should a wounded duck or sea-bird happen to be discovered by this animal, it is at once pounced upon and greedily devoured. On the inland rivers it dives for and catches great numbers of crayfish, that abound in almost every stream east and west of the Cascades. Along the river banks, the little heaps of crayfish shells direct the Indian to the whereabouts of the mink, which is generally caught with a steel trap baited with fish. The trade price is about fifty cents, or two shillings, per skin. Very little of the fur is used in England, the greater part being again exported to the Continent. About two hundred and fifty thousand skins are annually imported. I procured some very fine specimens of the mink at Vancouver Island; that are now stuffed and set up in the British Museum.

The Ermine (*Mustela longicauda*) of Northwest America is hardly worth importing. The fur never grows long, or becomes white enough in winter. The Indians use it for ornamental purposes,