



Tanning and Coloring Skins.

THE first requisites for tanning are a fleshing-beam and knife. For the fleshing-beam select a fine grained, hard wood slab, about five feet long, and ten to fifteen inches wide, as shown in Fig. 1. Have the round side up; put in two legs, two-and-a-half feet long, and one foot from widest end, the other end resting on the floor. Make the top surface smooth and it is ready for use. A good fleshing knife, like that seen in Fig. 2, may be made from an old drawing knife, or piece of scythe, by grinding

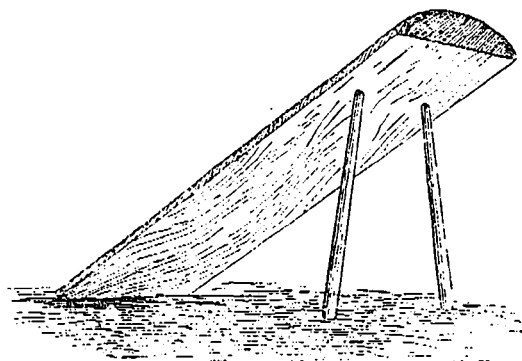


Fig. 1.

the edge down to a face about a thirty-second of an inch; this will give two edges to work with by reversing, and of sufficient sharpness to remove all fleshy substance from a skin.

Preparatory to tanning a skin, soak it well and break all hard spots on the fleshing beam. To soak a skin, take four gallons of cold, soft water, half a pint of soft soap, half an ounce of borax, half a pint of salt; mix and immerse the skins. For skins to be tanned with the hair and wool on, add three-fourths of an ounce of sul-

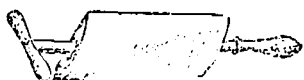


Fig. 2.

phuric acid. Soak from two to six hours. After soaking, if it is required to remove the hair or wool, immerse the skins in a liquor composed of five gallons of cold water, four quarts of slaked lime and four quarts of hard wood ashes. Let it soak in this from one to six days, until the hair or wool slips off easily. Then remove to the fleshing beam, and scrape off all the hair and flesh,—that is, remove with the fleshing knife all fleshy particles that may remain on the inside next to the animal. Now remove and wash thoroughly in cold water, and with the knife scrape off all the surplus water. Fig. 3 shows the tub for soaking the skins.

Prepare the tan liquor as follows: To eight quarts of cold, soft water, add one-quarter of a pound of pulverized oxalic acid, and one quart of common salt. Dissolve well, and immerse the skins. Enough tan liquor should be made to cover the skins well. Light skins should remain in this liquor from three to four hours, and should be handled occasionally, that every part may be well wet with the liquor. Calf-skins, dog skins and wolf skins, should remain in the liquor at least forty-eight hours, or until tanned through, which can be told by cutting on the neck, the thickest part of the skin. On all the finer furred skins, where extra softness is desirable, the following liquid should be applied to the skin after removing from the tan liquor. One pint of soft soap, one pint of tanner's oil, or neat's-foot oil, one pint of alcohol. When this is thoroughly dried in, the skin should be dampened enough to finish.

All skins when drying are like full-cloth when

wet; they contract or full up, and have to be stretched in finishing. To do this, take the skin before it is thoroughly dried, and place it upon the fleshing-beam over some yielding substance, or a sheep-skin, flesh side up, then take the fleshing-knife, and carefully push the edges of

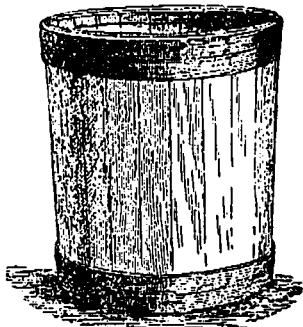


Fig. 3.

the blade stoutly in all directions over the skin, until it becomes stretched, soft and pliable.

To culiven the fur upon the skins that have been tanned and finished, take equal parts of scorched bran, and sharp, clean, white sand, or dry, hardwood sawdust, and rub well in the fur, then shake out.

To color fur or wool take equal parts of pulverized, unslaked lime and litharge, mix to a thin paste with water, and apply with a brush. One or two coats will give a light buff color. By using several coats, a beautiful, light brown is obtained, every additional coat deepening the color. By adding a small quantity of ammonia and nitrate of silver, a beautiful black is produced. To color a bright orange on the wool of sheep-skins, for rugs, etc., wash out all grease from the wool, then take an ounce of picric acid to each skin; dissolve the acid in soft, lukewarm water, using enough to cover the skin. Use alcohol or vinegar to set the color. A very pretty magenta color may be obtained by taking

for each skin half an ounce of magenta crystals; dissolve in two quarts of boiling hot water, stirring until dissolved; then add warm water enough to cover the skins. The water should not be more than lukewarm when putting the skins in, and should be handled well, that the color may be evenly distributed. When of the right color, remove and set with a pint of vinegar, or alcohol, in water to cover the skins. Stretch while drying, to prevent shrinkage.

A HALO around the moon is a sure indication of rain. The larger the halo the nearer the rain clouds, and the sooner the rain may be expected. Small colored circles which are frequently seen around the moon or sun are termed corona. A corona growing smaller indicates rain; growing larger fair weather. It is said that rain will follow a halo within as many days as there are stars within the circle.

A haze around the sun indicates rain. When this is seen a rain of five or six hours' duration may be expected.

A halo around the sun occurring after fine weather indicates a storm.

Kitty Knew About Sheep.

"Seven sheep were standing
By the pasture wall
Told me," said the teacher,
To her scholars small:

"One poor sheep was frightened,
Jumped and ran away.
One from seven—how many
Woolly sheep would stay?"

Up went Kitty's fingers
A farmer's daughter she,
Not so bright at figures
As she ought to be.

"Please, ma'am"—"Well, then, Kitty,
Tell us if you know."
"Please, if one jumped over
All the rest would go."

—The Pansy.

