

wolf, and mountain sheep. The latter is a large animal weighing, when full grown, several hundred pounds. It is covered with long hair, resembling coarse wool, and supplied with enormous crooked horns, upon which it is said to strike when throwing itself from precipices in seeking to escape pursuit.

The flesh is esteemed equal to that of the domesticated sheep, but it is rarely the hunter makes a prize of one, or even gets a sight of them, they being exceedingly solitary in their habits, keeping always on the tops of the most wild and rugged mountains. Even when the snows fall deep, they do not come down as do other animals, seeking the milder climate and more abundant feed of the valleys. There are also foxes, marmots, rabbits, minks and martens, and along the streams beaver and otter, though these animals are now very scarce, as well as sly, having been so much hunted for their peltries and furs. Amongst the inferior animals are skunks, squirrels, mice and a singular species of bush-tailed rat, said to be naturally mischievous, a reputation it seems ambitious to deserve, meddling with everything about the traveler's camp at night, and running over his person with the greatest familiarity. These easy habits are probably owing to the immunity from harm guaranteed it by the Indian, who scruples not to feed upon every other form of animated matter, save only the rat and the raven. These, owing to a natural repugnance, or more likely in his case, to some superstitious notion, the Indian never eats, even in his extremest need.

While animals are scarce in this region, of birds it may be said there are almost none, since, with the exception of water-fowl, you may not see one in a day's travel. Geese, ducks, swans and brant, however, gather in clouds about the lakes, and inlets, in the proper season. Pelicans, cranes and loons are also to be found about these places at all times. Of the feathered tribe, are occasionally seen the eagle, hawk, cormorant and raven. Owls are at times heard, but not often. There are, also, a few woodpeckers, bluejays, larks and a small dusky ground-bird, with a few quail, and a good many grouse, the latter always fat and tender. The raven resembles that of California, being large, and uttering the same harsh croak. Near the sea, gulls and several other kinds of aquatic animals hover about in great numbers, affording the natives much acceptable food by means of their flesh and eggs. The pelican being a clumsy bird, also falls an easy prey to the Indian.

Fish, small and of an inferior kind, are plentiful in the lakes and streams at all seasons, but salmon, the only really valuable fish, is abundant only from June till September, being best and most numerous in August. This is a most delicious fish, being large, rich and oily, easily caught and readily cured, and hence most valuable both for the white and Indian. An inferior kind of salmon is taken during the fall months, called the hook-bill, from its having a beak like a parrot.

It has small, sharp teeth, is covered with livid spots, and its flesh is soft and flabby. The whites do not care to eat it, nor is it much relished by the natives. Fine trout is caught in the streams during winter. The Indians adopt various plans for taking the larger fish, spearing, the wler and basket being the most common. A small species of smelt, but little worth, swarms in some places; sturgeon of large size and excellent quality are frequently caught in the Fraser. In Lake Okinagan, and in all the streams along the Oregon trail, trout weighing from one to two pounds and of fine flavor, are caught with the greatest ease, men taking them out with nets by the wagon load, and by wading into the water, catching them with their hands without difficulty. In the inlets and all tide waters, fish of every variety abound in incredible quantities; nor are oysters, clams, mussels, or any other kind of shell fish wanting. Of reptiles and insects, except mosquitoes, confined to the Lower Fraser, and a few other localities, British Columbia has but few. There are some rattle snakes, with a few others of a more harmless kind. The lizard seen in California, is not common, nor is the tarantula, or centipede met with. Indeed, the whole country is remarkably exempt from both animals and reptiles of a hurtful or obnoxious kind, being in this respect, if no other, a very desirable abode for man.

#### TREES, PLANTS, FRUITS, &c.

The Southern, which may also be called the rainy portion of British Columbia, is a densely wooded country, both the mountains and plains, with the exception of a few inconsiderable prairies, being covered with thick and stately forests. So closely do the trees stand, and withal so tall and straight, that the united navy yards of the world might draw thence their supplies for years, without more than partially exhausting these spacious and majestic forests. To the north and east there is less timber, the country being open and the only wood met with, except in the bottoms, being a species of pitch pine scattered sparsely over its surface. It never grows large, being not over a foot or two in diameter, and is not much esteemed for making lumber, though being straight and of suitable size, it is very convenient for building log cabins and for similar uses. Many of the prairies in these sections are entirely destitute of trees, although the growth along the streams is in most places abundant and varied. The prevailing timber everywhere is pine, fir and spruce, of different varieties, with hemlock and cedar, and a small sprinkling of birch, oak, ash, yew and maple. In the swamps and along the water courses willow, alder, cotton-wood and balm of Gilead are found; the latter always attracting notice, its unctuous buds glittering with healing gum and filling the air with balmy fragrance. To this tree the native tribes, as have the whites from the earliest ages, ascribe many medicinal virtues, assigning it an important place in their pharmacy. It here grows to a majestic size.