

CHAMOIS.

The chamois of commerce is a variety of soft, pliable leather, obtained by tanning the skin of the animal of the same name belonging to the antelope species. The leather is used extensively for burnishing metals, jewelry, glass, precious stones, silverware, fine woods, etc., and also in some cases for linings, and as a filling in or pack for surgical instruments. A great deal of the leather sold in the shops is nothing but finely-tanned sheep skin; but this is not nearly so soft or strong as the genuine article, although it is held at the extreme prices asked for the imported and real chamois leather. The animal known as the chamois chiefly inhabits the Alps and the Pyrenees mountains in Europe, being found in flocks of from half a dozen up to a hundred in number. It is of an exceedingly wild nature and never has been domesticated. Its size is about that of the domestic goat, of a dusky yellow-brown color, with the cheeks, throat, and belly of yellowish-white. It is very agile in its movements, and when being pursued bounds over the ground with great rapidity. The horns are black, slender, upright, hooked backward at their tips, and about eight inches in height, and are very graceful both in their proportions and appearance. At the base of each there is a good-sized orifice in the skin, of which the use is unknown. Like all animals of the antelope species, the chamois has sparkling and beautiful eyes. It feeds only on the sweetest and finest herbage of the mountains, and its flesh is of a very delicate flavor, and is highly prized.

Heat is very disagreeable to the chamois, and they are very seldom seen in summer, except in excavations in the rocks, surrounded by fragments of unmelted ice, or under the shade of overhanging precipices which face the north and effectually keep off the rays of the sun. They drink but sparingly, and chew the cud in the intervals of feeding. When in rapid flight from any cause they make the most wonderful leaps, and frequently throw themselves across a chasm and down a perpendicular wall of rock twenty or more feet in height. Thousands of these animals are killed annually, both for the sake of their flesh and their skins; but such is the demand for the leather in civilized countries that immense quantities of inferior goods are sold to consumers.—*Druggists' Journal*.