Title: Camp Life in the Woods and the Tricks of Trapping and Trap Making

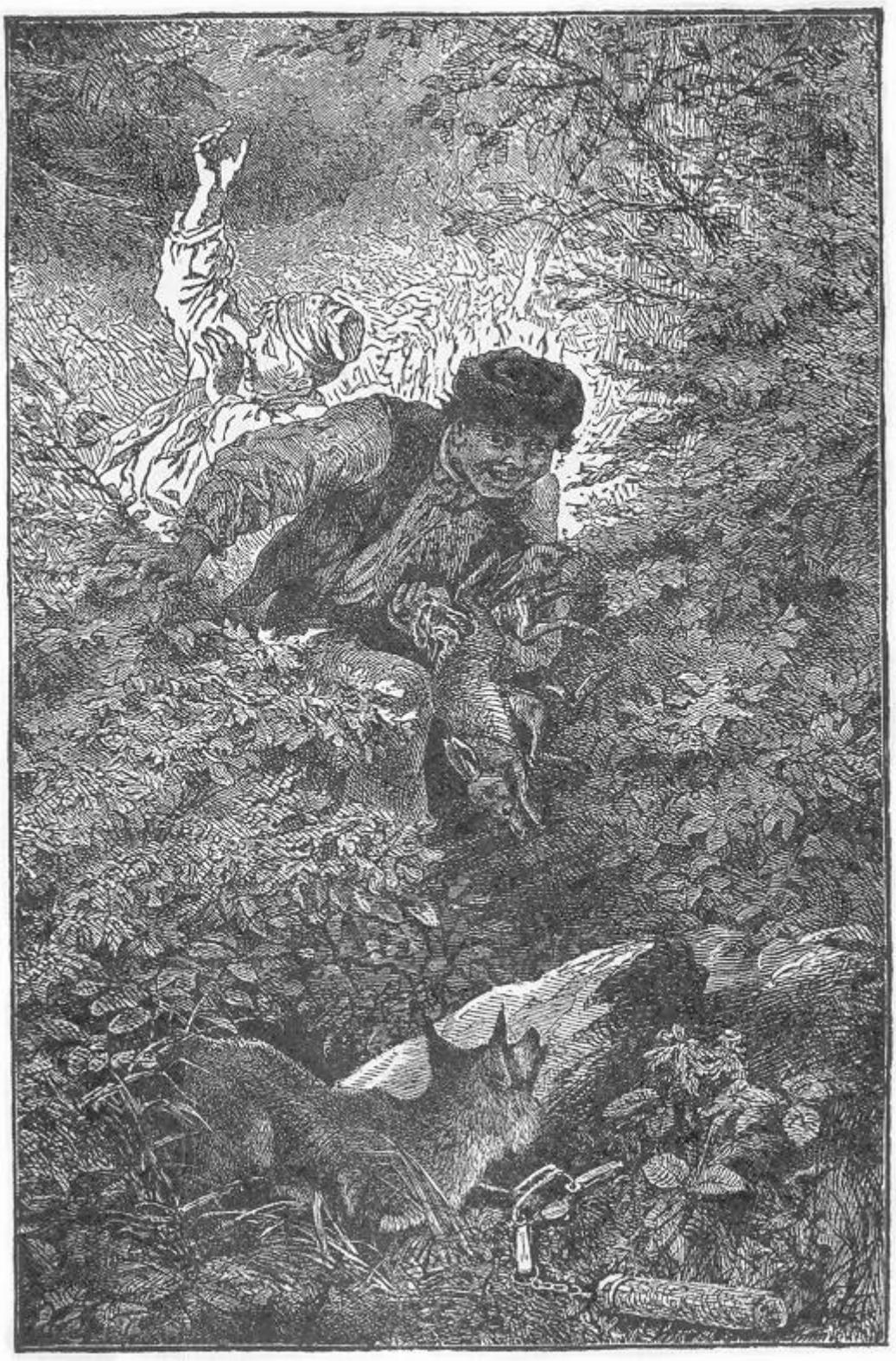
Author: William Hamilton Gibson

Release Date: November 18, 2005 [EBook #17093]

Language: English

Character set encoding: ISO-8859-1

Produced by Robert J. Hall



CAMP LIFE IN THE WOODS
AND THE
TRICKS OF TRAPPING

AND
TRAP MAKING

CONTAINING

COMPREHENSIVE HINTS ON CAMP SHELTER, LOG HUTS, BARK SHANTIES, WOODLAND BEDS AND BEDDING, BOAT AND CANOE BUILDING, AND VALUABLE SUGGESTIONS ON TRAPPERS' FOOD, ETC. WITH EXTENDED CHAPTERS ON THE TRAPPER'S ART, CONTAINING ALL THE "TRICKS" AND VALUABLE BAIT RECIPES OF THE PROFESSION; FULL DIRECTIONS FOR THE USE OF THE STEEL TRAP, AND FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF TRAPS OF ALL KINDS; DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CAPTURE OF ALL FUR-BEARING ANIMALS; VALUABLE RECIPES FOR THE CURING AND TANNING OF FUR SKINS, ETC., ETC.

BY

W. HAMILTON GIBSON

AUTHOR OF "PASTORAL DAYS"

ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR

TO

MY BELOVED FRIENDS

MR. AND MRS. F. W. GUNN,

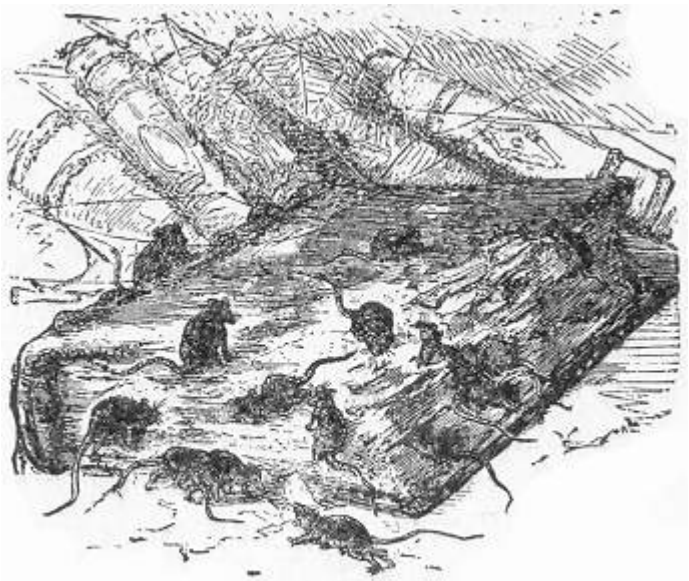
KIND INSTRUCTORS, AND PARTICIPANTS

IN THE BRIGHTEST JOYS OF MY YOUTH,

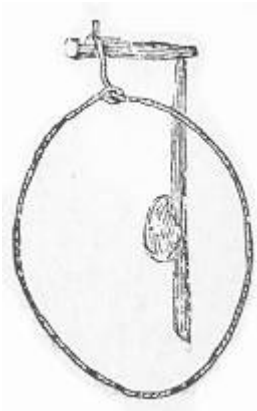
THIS BOOK IS

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE



f all the various subjects in the catalogue of sports and pastimes, there is none more sure of arousing the enthusiasm of our American boys generally, than that which forms the title of this book. Traps and Trapping, together with its kindred branches, always have been and always *will* be subjects of great interest among boys, and particularly so to those who live in the country.

It is a fact to be regretted that we have so few examples of "Boys' Books" published in this country. There are a few English works of this character, that are very excellent as far as they go, but are nevertheless incomplete and unsatisfactory to the wants of American boys, dwelling largely on sports which are essentially English, and merely touching upon or utterly excluding *other* topics which are of the *utmost* interest to boys of this country. In no one of these books, so far as the author of the present volume knows, is the subject of Traps considered to any fair extent, and those examples which are given, represent only the most common and universal varieties already known to the general public.

With these facts in mind, the author has entered with zealous enthusiasm upon the preparation of a work which shall fill this odd and neglected corner in literature, and judging from the reminiscences of his own boyish experiences, he feels certain that in placing such a volume within reach of the public, he supplies a long felt want in the hearts of his boy-friends throughout the land.

Far be it from us in the publication of this volume, to be understood as encouraging the wanton destruction of poor innocent animals. Like all kindred sports, hunting and fishing for example, the sport of Trapping may be perverted and carried to a point where it becomes simple cruelty, as is *always* the case when pursued for the mere *excitement* it brings. If the poor victims are to serve

no use after their capture, either as food, or in the furnishing of their plumage or skins for useful purposes, the sport becomes heartless cruelty, and we do not wish to be understood as encouraging it under any such circumstances. In its *right* sense trapping is a delightful, healthful, and legitimate sport, and we commend it to all our boy-readers.

It shall be the object of the author to produce a thoroughly *practical* volume, presenting as far as possible such examples of the trap kind as any boy, with a moderate degree of ingenuity, could easily construct, and furthermore to illustrate each variety with the utmost plainness, supplemented with the most detailed description.

With the exception of all "clap-trap," our volume will embrace nearly every known example of the various devices used for the capture of Bird, Beast, or Fowl, in all countries, simplifying such as are impracticable on account of their complicated structure, and modifying others to the peculiar adaptation of the American Trapper.

Devices, which inflict cruelty and prolonged suffering, shall, as far as possible, be excluded, as this is not a necessary qualification in any trap, and should be guarded against wherever possible. Following out the suggestion conveyed under the title of "The Trapper," we shall present full and ample directions for Page 5
baiting traps, selections of ground for setting, and other hints concerning the trapping of all our principal game and wild animals, valuable either as food or for their fur. In short, our book shall form a complete trapper's guide, embracing all necessary information on the subject, anticipating every want, and furnishing the most complete and fully illustrated volume on this subject ever presented to the public. In vain did the author of this work, in his younger days, search the book stores and libraries in the hopes of finding such a book, and many are the traps and snares which necessity forced him to invent and construct for himself, for want of just such a volume. Several of these original inventions will appear in the present work for the first time in book form, and the author can vouch for their excellence, and he might almost say, their infallibility, for in their perfect state he has never yet found them to "miss" in a single instance.

As the writer's mind wanders back to his boyish days, there is one autumn in particular which shines out above all the rest; and that was when his traps were first set and were the chief source of his enjoyment. The adventurous excitement which sped him on in those daily tramps through the woods, and the buoyant, exhilarating effect of the exercise can be realized only by those who have had the same experience. The hope of success, the fears of disappointment, the continual suspense and wonder which fill the mind of the young trapper, all combine to invest this sport with a charm known to no other. Trapping does not consist merely in the manufacture and setting of the various traps. The study of the habits and peculiarities of the different game—here becomes a matter of great importance; and the study of natural history under these circumstances affords a continual source of pleasure and profit.

Among the most useful, although the most cruel, of inventions used by the professional trapper are the steel traps; so much so that the author would gladly omit them. But as they are of such unfailing action, of such universal efficacy, Page 6
and in many cases are the only ones that can be used, any book on trapping would certainly be incomplete without them. The scope of our volume not only embraces the arts of trapping and trap-making, but extends further into the

subject of the wild life of a trapping campaign,—containing full directions for building log cabins, and shanties; boats and canoes; hints on food and cooking utensils; also full directions for the curing and tanning of fur skins,—in short, a complete repository of all useful information pertaining to the life and wants of a professional trapper.

In the preparation of the work no pains have been spared to insure clearness in general directions, and every point which would be likely to puzzle the reader has been specially covered by separate illustration. In this particular it stands unique in the list of boys' books. Every difficulty has been anticipated, and in every instance the illustrations will be found thoroughly comprehensive and complete. That the care and thoroughness which has been displayed throughout the work, and to which its pages will bear witness, may meet with the appreciation and enthusiastic approval of every boy-reader throughout the land, is the most earnest hope of

THE AUTHOR.

Page iii

Page vi

Page vii

BOOK VII.

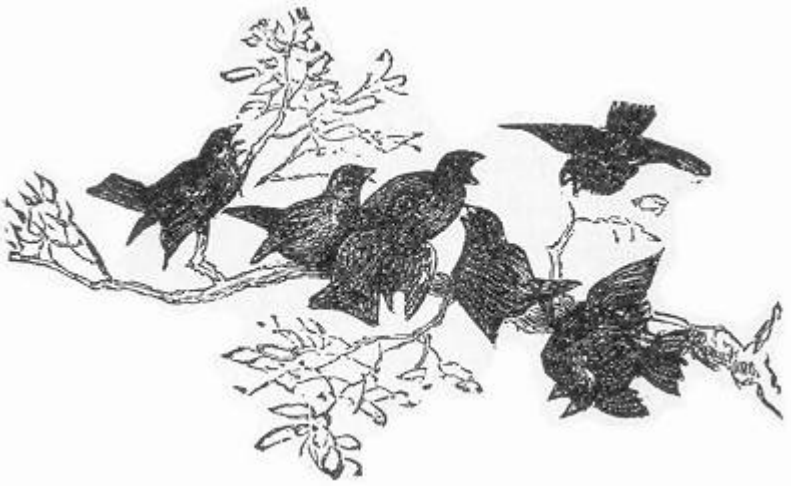
CAMPAIGN LIFE IN THE WILDERNESS.

BOOK VIII.

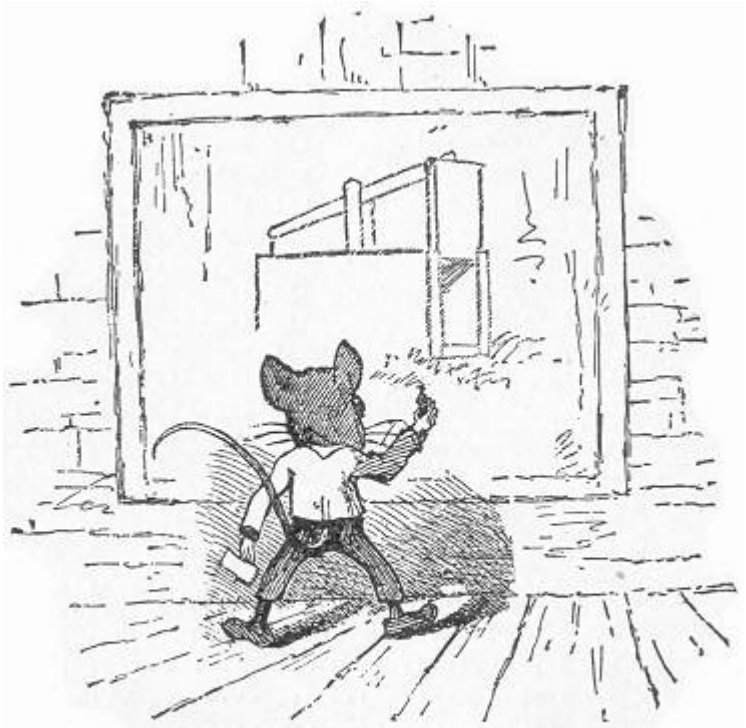
THE TRAPPER'S MISCELLANY.

Net.—Netting attachment for the Hat.—Portable Sun Shade or Hat brim.—Netting attachment for the Hat brim.—BOAT BUILDING.—A Boat of some kind a necessity to the Trapper.—The "Dug-Out" or Log-Canoe.—Requisite Tools for its Manufacture.—Selection of the Log.—Directions for making the boat.—Remarkable thinness to which they may be reduced.—Lightness of the boat.—How to gauge the thickness.—How to stop leaks.—THE INDIAN OR BIRCH BARK CANOE.—The Indian as a Canoe-maker.—His remarkable skill.—Perfection of the Indian made Canoe.—Description of the Canoe.—Capacity of the various sizes.—How to construct a Bark Canoe.—Selection of Bark.—How to prevent Leaks.—Material used by the Indians in sewing the Bark.—Advantages of the Birch Bark Canoe.—Basswood, Hemlock, and Spruce Bark Canoes.—A LIGHT HOME-MADE BOAT.—Selection of Boards.—Directions for making the Boat.—Caulking the seams.—Value of Pitch for waterproofing purposes.—How it should be applied.—THE SCOW.—How to construct the ordinary Flat-bottomed Boat.—The Mud-stick.—SNOW SHOES.—A necessity for winter travel.—The "Snow Shoe Race."—The mysteries of a Snow Shoe.—"Taming the Snow Shoe."—How to make the Snow Shoe.—Complicated Net-work.—Two methods of attaching the Net-work.—How the Snow Shoe is worn.—THE TOBOGGAN OR INDIAN SLEDGE.—Its value to the Trapper.—Winter Coasting.—Great sport with the Toboggan.—How to make a Toboggan.—Selection of Boards.—How the Sledge is used.—CURING SKINS.—Importance of Curing Skins properly.—Valuable hints on Skinning Animals.—How to dry Skins.—How to dress Skins for Market.—Astringent preparations.—Recipe.—STRETCHERS.—How skins are stretched.—The Board Stretcher.—How it is made and used.—The Wedge Stretcher.—How made and used.—The Bow Stretcher.—The Hoop Stretcher.—TANNING SKINS.—To Tan with the hair on.—Preparation of Skin for Tanning.—Tanning Mixture.—Recipe.—Second Mixture.—Recipe.—Third Mixture and Recipe.—How the Skin is softened and finished.—HOW TO TAN MINK AND MUSKRAT SKINS.—Preparation of Skin.—Tanning Mixtures.—Various Recipes.—"Fleshing."—The Fleshing-knife.—Substitute for the Fleshing-knife.—HOW TO TAN THE SKINS OF THE BEAVER, OTTER, RACCOON, AND MARTEN.—Tanning Mixtures.—How to soften the Skin.—Simple Tanned Skin.—Recipe for removing the fur.—How to finish the Skin.—OBSERVATIONS ON THE HISTORY OF FURS AND THE FUR TRADE.—Some bits of History in connection with Furs.—Ancient use of Furs.—Furs a medium of Exchange.—Furs and Fashion.—Extravagance in Fur Costume.—Choice Furs as Badges of Rank.—Their use restricted to Royal Families.—The Early Fur Trade of Europe.—A Tribute paid in Furs.—Early History of the Fur Trade in America.—Origin of the Hudson's Bay Company.—Hostility of the French Canadian Traders.—Establishment of the North West Company.—Competition and War.—Consolidation of the two Companies.—Great sales of the Hudson's Bay Company.—Importance of the Fur Trade.—Cities founded by the enterprise of the Trapper.—St. Paul.—Montreal and Mackinaw.—Fortunes built up on Fur Traffic.—John Jacob Astor.—Mink and Muskrat Skins.—Their extensive use in America.—Estimated value of the annual yield of Raw Furs throughout the World.—Classification of Furs by American Dealers.—"Home" Furs.—"Shipping" Furs.—Table of Sales of Hudson's Bay Company, in 1873.—March Sale.—September Sale.—Price according to Quality.—Estimated average per Skin.—List of American "Shipping" Furs.—List of American "Home" Furs.—MARKET VALUE OF FUR SKINS.—Eccentricities of the Fur Market.—Demand governed by Fashion.—How Fashion runs the Fur Trade.—The Amateur Trapper and the Fur Trade.—Difficulty of a profitable disposal of Furs.—Advice to the Novice.—How to realize on the sale of Furs.—TABLE OF VALUES OF AMERICAN FUR SKINS.—A complete list of American Fur bearing Animals.—Various prices of Skins according to Quality.—USES OF AMERICAN FURS AT HOME AND ABROAD.—The Silver Fox.—Fifty Guineas for a Fur Skin.—Red Fox Fur.—Its use in Oriental Countries.—Beaver Fur.—Its various uses.—Raccoon Skins, a great Staple for Russia and Germany.—Bear Skins and their various uses.—Lynx, Fisher, and Marten Skins.—The Mink.—Use of its hair for Artists pencils.—Muskrat Skins.—Three millions annually exported to Germany alone.—Their extensive use among the American poorer classes.—Otter Fur.—Sleigh Robes from Wolf Skins.—Rabbit Fur.—Its use in the Manufacture of Hats.—Breeding Rabbits for their Fur.—The Wolverine.—Skunk Fur, dignified by the name of Alaska Sable.—Large shipments to Foreign Countries.—How the Fur of the Badger is used.—Opossum, Puma, and Wild Cat Fur.—Robes for the Fashionable.—Squirrel and Mole skins.

Page xii



Page xiii

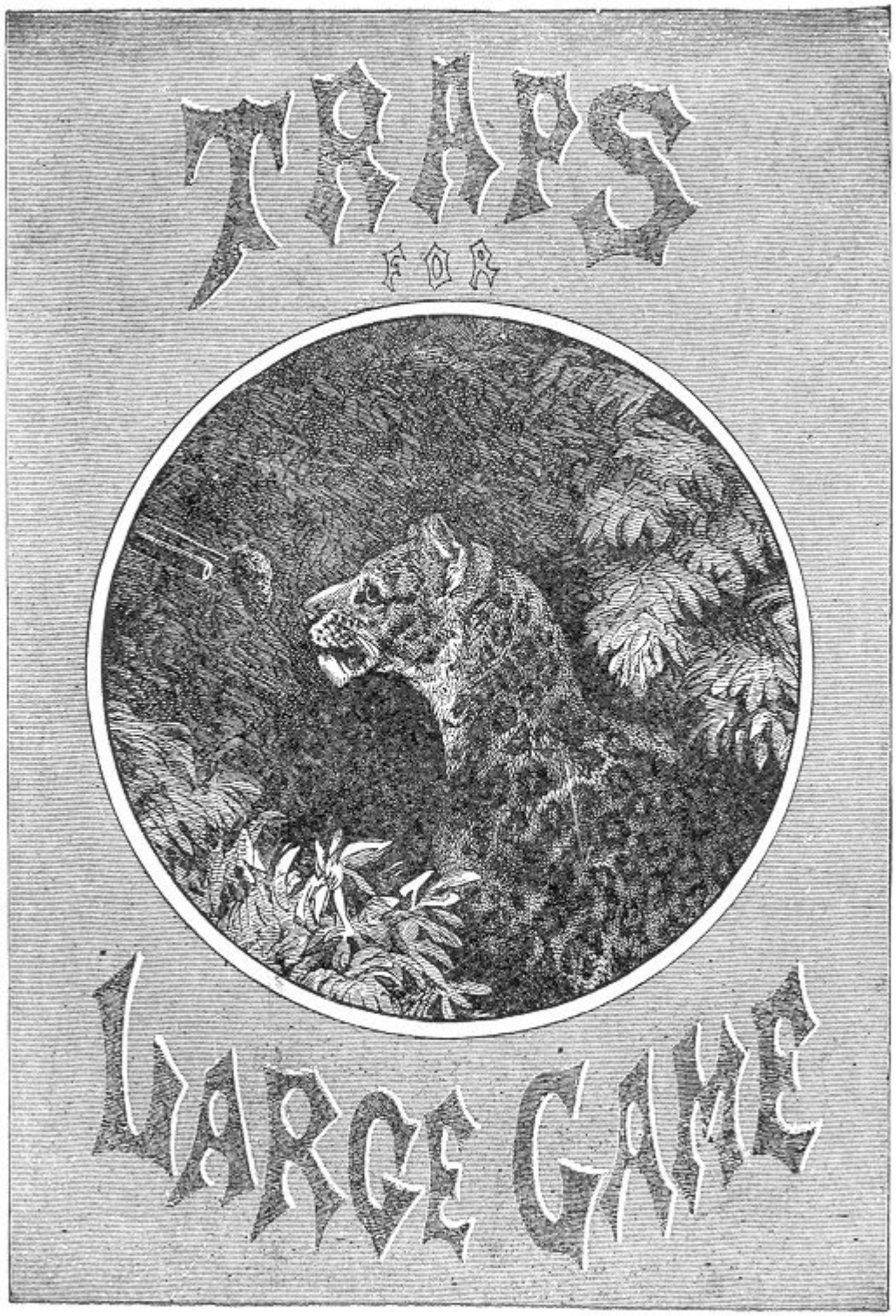


ILLUSTRATIONS.

FULL PAGES.

ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT. Page xiv

Page 15



Page 17

BOOK I.

TRAPS FOR LARGE GAME.

owever free our forests may be from the lurking

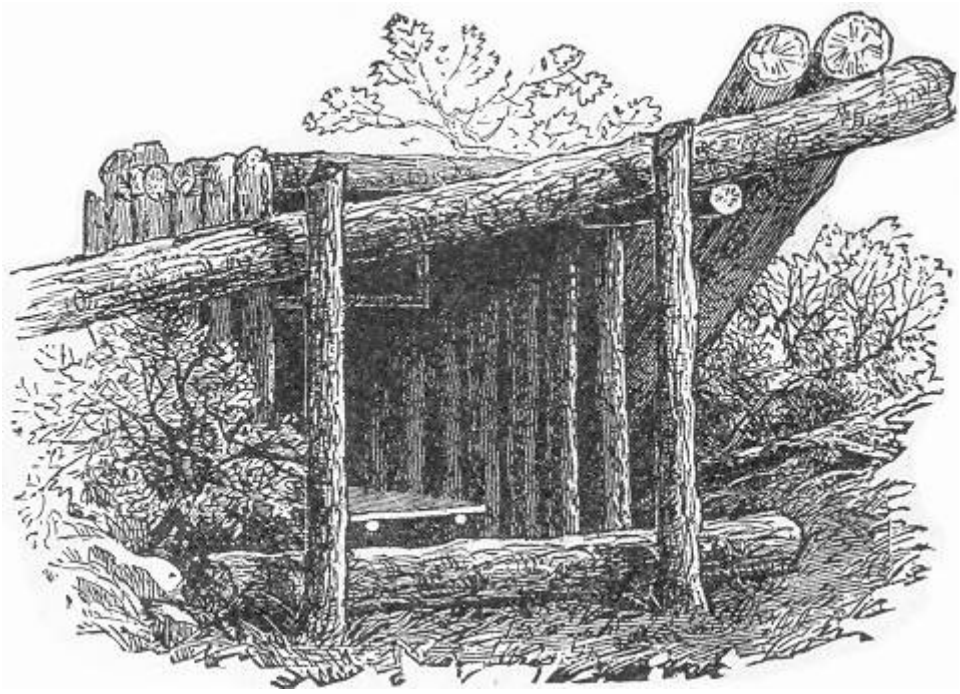
dangers of a tropical jungle, they nevertheless shelter a few large and formidable beasts which are legitimate and deserving subjects of the Trapper's Art. Chief among them are the Puma, or Cougar, Bear, Lynx, Wolf and Wolverine.

Although commonly taken in steel traps, as described respectively in a later portion of this work, these animals are nevertheless often captured by Deadfalls and other devices, which are well known to the professional Trapper, and which serve excellently in cases of emergency, or in the scarcity of steel traps.

THE DEAD-FALL.

There are several varieties of this trap, some of which are described in other parts of this volume. In general construction they all bear a similarity, the methods of setting being slightly changed to suit the various game desired for capture. For large animals, and particularly the Bear, the trap is sprung by the pressure of the animal's foot, while reaching for the bait. Select some favorite haunt of the Bear, and proceed to construct a pen of large stakes. These should consist of young trees, or straight branches, about three inches in diameter, and should be of such a length as to reach a height of four or five feet when set in the ground, this being the required height of the pen. Its width should be about two and a half or three feet; its depth, four feet; and the top should be roofed over with cross pieces of timber, to prevent the bait from being taken from above. A straight log, about eight inches in diameter, and six feet in length should now be rolled against the opening of the pen, and hemmed in by two upright posts, one on each side, directly on a line with the sides of the enclosure. Another log, or tree trunk, of the same diameter, and about fifteen or twenty feet in length, should next be procured. Having this in readiness, we will now proceed to the construction of the other pieces. In order to understand the arrangement of these, we present a separate drawing of the parts as they appear when the trap is set.

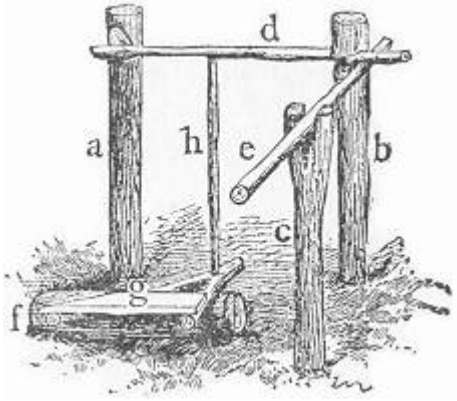
Page 18



(*a*), An upright post, is supplied at the upper end with a notch, having its flat face on the lower side. This post should be driven into the ground in the left

hand back corner of the pen, and should be three feet or more in height. Another post (*b*) of similar dimensions, is provided with a notch at its upper end, the notch being reversed, *i. e.*, having its flat side *uppermost*. This post should be set in the ground, *outside* of the pen, on the right hand side and on a line with the first. A third post (*c*), is provided with a crotch on its upper end. This should be planted outside of the pen on the right hand side, and on a line with the front. The treadle piece consists of a forked branch, about three feet in length, supplied with a square board secured across its ends. At the junction of the forks, an augur hole is bored, into which a stiff stick about three feet in length is inserted. This is shown at (*h*). Two poles, (*d*) and (*e*), should next be procured, each about four feet in length. These complete the number of pieces, and the trap may then be set. Pass the pole (*d*) between the stakes of the pen, laying one end

Page 19



in the notch in the post (*a*), and holding the other beneath the notch in the upright (*b*). The second pole (*e*) should then be adjusted, one end being placed in the crotch post (*c*), and the other caught beneath the projecting end of the pole (*d*), as is fully illustrated in the engraving. The dead-log should then be rested on the front extremity of the pole last adjusted, thus effecting an equilibrium.

The treadle-piece should now be placed in position over a short stick of wood (*f*), with its platform raised in front, and the upright stick at the back secured beneath the edge of the latch pole (*d*).

The best bait consists of *honey*, for which Bears have a remarkable fondness. It may be placed on the ground at the back part of the enclosure, or smeared on a piece of meat hung at the end of the pen. The dead-log should now be weighted by resting heavy timbers against its elevated end, as seen in the main drawing, after which the machine is ready for its deadly work.

A Bear will never hesitate to risk his life where a feast of honey is in view, and the odd arrangement of timbers has no fears for him after that tempting bait has once been discovered. Passing beneath the suspended log, his heavy paw encounters the broad board on the treadle-piece, which immediately sinks with his weight. The upright pole at the back of the treadle is thus raised, forcing the latch-piece from the notch: this in turn sets free the side pole, and the heavy log is released falling with a crushing weight over the back of hapless Bruin.

There are many other methods of setting the Dead-fall, several of which appear in another section of this book. The above is the one more commonly used for the capture of Bears, but the others are equally applicable and effective when enlarged to the proper size.

Page 20

In South America and other countries, where Lions, Tigers, Leopards, and Jaguars abound, these and other rude extempore traps are almost the only ones

used, and are always very successful. The pit-fall often allures the Bengal Tiger to his destruction, and the Leopard often terminates his career at the muzzle of a rifle baited as seen in our page illustration. A gun thus arranged forms a most sure and deadly trap, and one which may be easily extemporized at a few moments' warning, in cases of emergency. The Puma of our northern forests, although by no means so terrible a foe as the Leopard, is still a blood-thirsty creature, and while he shuns the gaze of man with the utmost fear, he is nevertheless constantly on the alert to spring upon him unawares, either in an unguarded moment or during sleep. A hungry Puma, who excites suspicion by his stealthy prowling and ominous growl, may easily be led to his destruction at the muzzle of a gun, baited as we shall now describe.

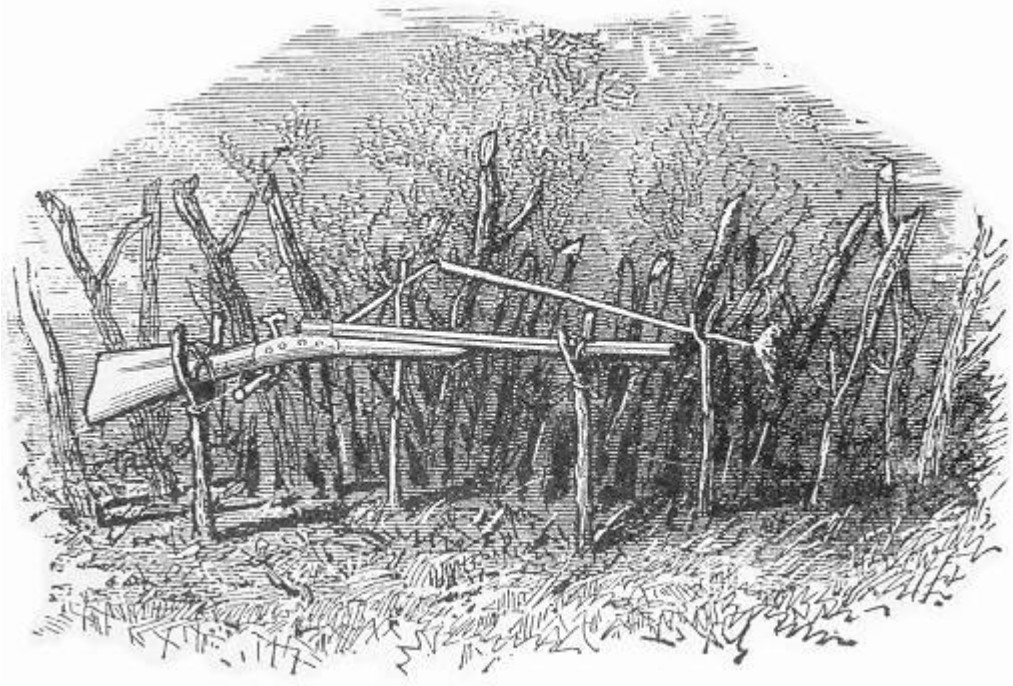
THE GUN TRAP.

After a Puma has succeeded in capturing his prey, and has satisfied his appetite by devouring a portion of its carcass, he leaves the remainder for a second meal, and his early return to a second banquet is almost a matter of certainty. Where such a remnant of a bygone feast is found, the capture of the Cougar is an easy matter. Any carcass left in a neighborhood where Pumas are known to exist is sure to attract them, and day after day its bulk will be found to decrease until the bones only remain. By thus "baiting" a certain place and drawing the Pumas thither, the way is paved for their most certain destruction. The gun-trap is very simply constructed, and may be put in working order in a very few moments. The weapon may be a rifle or shot-gun. In the latter case it should be heavily loaded with buck-shot. The stock should be first firmly tied to some tree, or secured in a stout crotch driven into the ground, the barrel being similarly supported.

The gun should be about three feet from the ground, and should be aimed at some near tree to avoid possible accident to a chance passer-by within its range. The gun should then be cocked, *but not capped*, due caution being always used, and the cap adjusted the very last thing after the trap is baited and set. Where a rifle is used, the cartridge should not be inserted until the last thing.

Page 21

It is next necessary to cut a small sapling about a foot or two in length. Its diameter should allow it to fit snugly inside the guard in front of the trigger, without springing the hammer. Its other end should now be supported by a very slight crotch, as shown in our illustration. Another sapling should next be procured, its length being sufficient to reach from the muzzle of the gun to the end of the first stick, and having a branch stub or hook on one end. The other extremity should be attached by a string to the tip of the first slick.



Now take a portion of the carcass and draw it firmly over the hook in the long stick. Prop the latter in such a position as that the bait shall hang directly in front of the muzzle. The crotch supporting the bait stick should be firmly implanted in the ground in order to hold the bait from being drawn to either side of the muzzle.

The gun-trap is now set, and its merits may be tested. Before adjusting the cap the pieces should be tried several times to insure their perfect working. A slight pull on the bait from the front will draw the short stick forward. This immediately acts on the trigger and causes the hammer to snap. By a few trials, the sticks can be arranged so as to spring the trigger easily, and where a hair trigger is used, a mere touch on the bait will suffice to discharge the gun. When all is found to work perfectly, the trap should be surrounded by a rude pen of sticks and branches, extending two or three feet beyond the muzzle, in order to insure an approach directly in the aim of the gun. The cap should now be placed on the nipple, after which the deadly device may be left to do its certain work. The remaining portion of the carcass should be removed, and where the locality is likely to be frequented by other hunters or trappers, it is well to put up a "danger" signal to guard against accident. If desired two or three guns may be arranged like the spokes of a wheel, all aiming near the bait. Even with one gun the victim stands but little chance, but where two or three pour their contents into his body, his death is an absolute certainty.

Page 22

By fastening the gun three feet above ground the load is discharged upward into the mouth of its victim, and thus directly through the brain. Where two or more guns are used, it is advisable to aim at least one in such a direction as will send its charge into the *breast* of the animal.

The Indian Panther is very commonly taken by the gun trap, and even Lions are sometimes secured by the same device, only increased in power by a larger number of guns.

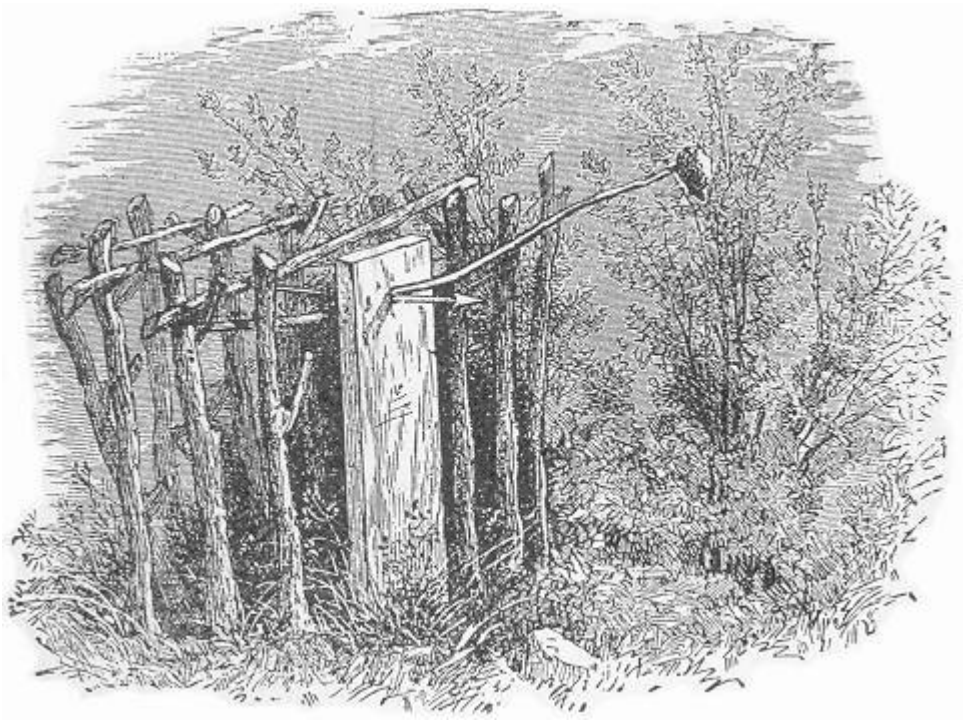
There are several other methods of setting the gun trap. One way consists in

attaching a string to the finger piece of the trigger, passing it back through a small staple or screw eye inserted in the under side of the stock for that purpose, and then drawing the string forward and attaching it to the top of the bait stick. This latter is stuck in the ground directly in front of the muzzle and the bait secured to its extremity. When the tempting morsel is grasped, the bait stick is drawn forward and the string pulled, the result of course being the discharge of the gun. By still another method, an elastic is passed through the screw eye in the stock and over the finger piece of the trigger, thus tending continually to draw it back and spring the hammer. To set the gun a short stick is inserted behind the finger piece, thus overcoming the power of the elastic. It should be very delicately adjusted, so that a mere touch will dislodge it. Its length should be about six inches, and to its other end the bait stick should be attached and arranged as first described. Although a rather dangerous trap to be set at random it is nevertheless often utilized and has brought many a dreaded marauder to his doom. Page 23

The bear, lynx, and other large animals are sometimes taken by the gun trap, but it is most generally set for the Puma.

THE BOW TRAP.

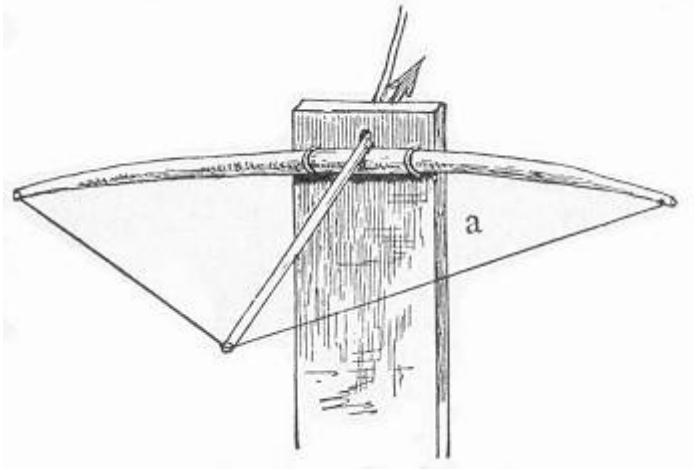
This device does duty in India and Southern Asia, where it is known as the *tiger trap*.



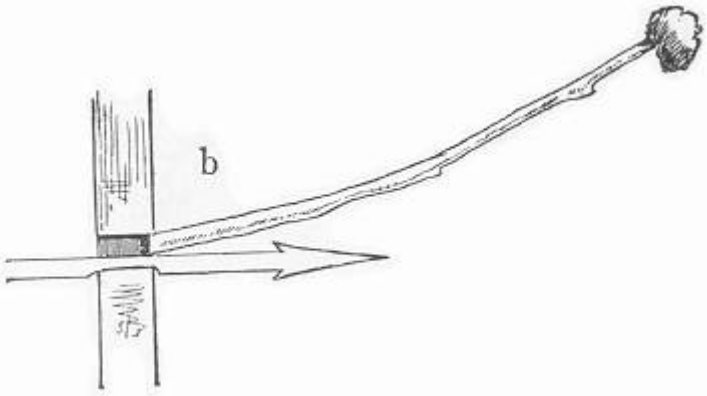
It is easily constructed as follows: First cut a stout board five inches in width, two and a half feet in length and about two inches in thickness. Shave off one end to a point so that it may be driven into the ground. At the other extremity, in the middle of the board and about two inches from the edge, a hole one half an inch in diameter and three quarters of an inch in height, should be made; two auger holes, one directly above the other with the sides flatly trimmed, will answer perfectly. The arrow should next be constructed. This should be made of seasoned oak or ash, two feet in length, perfectly straight, smooth and round, Page 24

and one third of an inch in diameter. One end should be notched for the bow string and vaned with thin feathers after the manner of ordinary arrows. The other extremity should be armed with a steel barb sharply pointed, and firmly riveted in place. Any blacksmith can forge such a tip; the shape of which is plainly seen in our engraving. The bow should consist of a piece of stout seasoned hickory, oak or ash four feet long, if such a bow is not at hand, a stout sapling may be used. The bow string may consist of cat-gut, or stout Indian twine.

Before setting the trap, it is advisable to attract the game to the spot selected as already alluded to in connection with the gun trap, and particularly so when the Puma is the victim sought. In our illustration we see the trap as it appears when set, and the same precaution of aiming at some tree should be exercised as advise with the gun trap. The bow should first be secured in place directly beneath and one eighth of an inch from the edge of the hole in the board, as seen at (*a*). Two large wire staples may be used for this purpose, being passed over

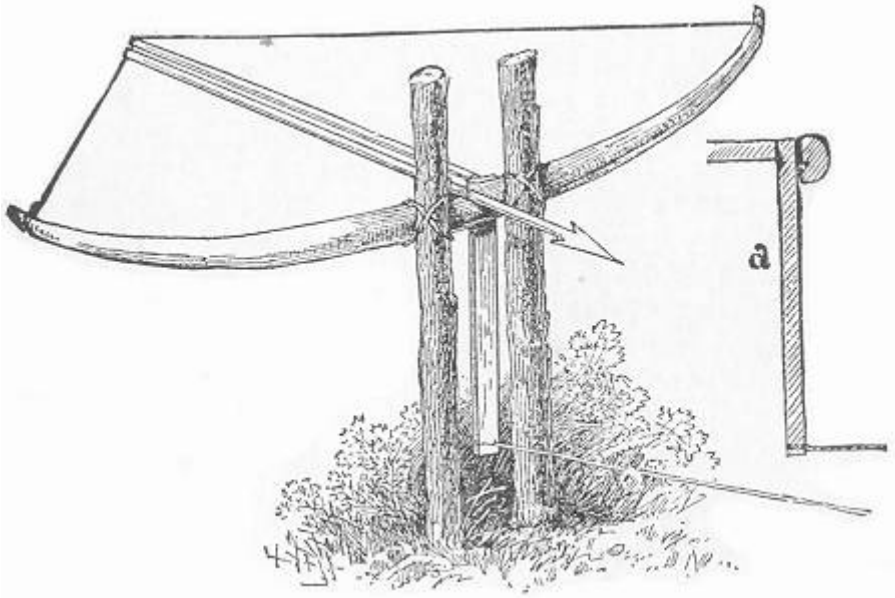


the bow through holes in the board and clinched on the opposite side. The bend of the bow and length of string should now be determined, one end of the latter being attached to the tip of the bow and the other end supplied with a loop. The board should then be driven into the ground to the depth of about eight inches. We will next take up the arrow. Pass the barb through the hole in the board and adjust the notch over the bow-string, draw the arrow back and release the string. If the arrow slide easily and swiftly, through the board, keeping true to its aim, the contrivance is in perfect working order and is ready to be set. This is accomplished by the very simple and ingenious mechanical arrangement, shown at (*b*). On the under side of the arrow just behind the barb, a flat notch one eighth of an inch in depth and two and a half inches in length is cut, with rounded ends, as seen in the illustration. The bait stick should consist of a sapling about three feet in length, the large end being trimmed so as to fit in the hole over the arrow while the notch in the latter rests in the bottom of the aperture as seen in the illustration (*b*). The trap may then be set. Draw back the arrow, until the notch rests in the hole in the board. Insert the bait stick *very lightly* above the arrow as shown at (*b*), propping it in place at the angle seen in the main drawing. The bait for a puma should consist of a portion of some carcass, or if for other animals, any of the baits given in our section on "trapping" may be used. In order to secure the bait firmly to the bait stick, a small hole and a peg at the side of the baited end will effectually prevent its removal and the trap win thus most surely be sprung. The prop which sustains the bait stick need be only a small crotch inserted a little to one side of the trap. The bow should now be surrounded by a wide pen, allowing room for the spring of the ends. The top of the enclosure should also be guarded by a few sticks or



branches laid across. Directly in front of the trap and extending from it, a double row of rough stakes three feet high should be constructed, thus insuring an approach in the direct range of the arrow. Without this precaution the bait might be approached from the side, and the arrow pass beneath the head of the animal, whereas on the other hand it is sure to take effect in the neck or breast of its victim. Of course the success of this trap depends entirely upon the strength of the bow. When a large and powerful one is used its effect is almost surely fatal.

Another form of the bow trap, much used in the capture of the tiger, forms the subject of our next illustration: no bait is here used. The trap is set at the side of the beaten path of the tiger and is sprung by the animal pressing against a string in passing. The bow is large and powerful and is secured to two upright posts about eight inches apart. The string is drawn back and a blunt stick is then inserted between the bow string and the inside centre of the bow, thus holding the latter in a bent position. A stout stick, with a flattened end is next inserted between the end of the blunt stick and the inside of the bow, the remaining part of the stick extending downwards, as our illustration shows. To the lower end of this stick a string is attached and carried across the path in the direct range of the arrow, being secured to a stake on the opposite side. The arrow is generally barbed with a steel or flint point, and wound with thread saturated with a deadly poison. This is now rested on the top of the bow between the upright parts, and its notch caught in the bow-string. Everything is then in readiness. The tiger soon steals along his beaten track. He comes nearer and nearer the trap until at last his breast presses the string. Twang, goes the bow and the arrow is imbedded in the flesh of its victim. He writhes for a few moments, until he is released from his torments by the certain death which follows the course of the poison through his veins.



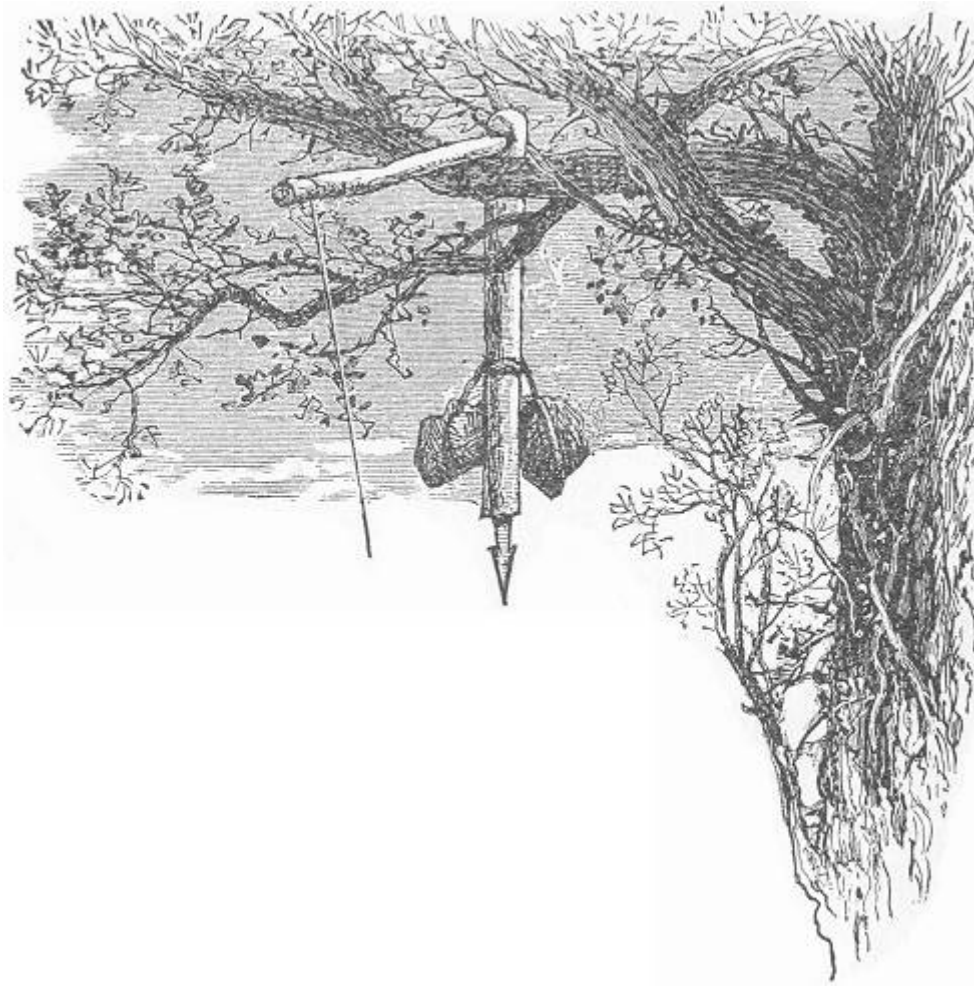
The use of the poison is very dangerous: a mere scratch through the skin is likely to prove fatal, and the trapper is thus likely to prove his own victim. Poisoned arrows are little used by trappers; and the bow trap, when properly constructed, is sufficiently effective without the venom.

THE DOWN-FALL.

This is the famous harpoon trap, so commonly used in Africa for the capture of the hippopotamus. There is no reason why it may not be successfully employed Page 27 in our own country for taking large game, or modified on a reduced scale for smaller animals.

The hippopotamus makes his daily rounds in regular beaten pathways; and the trapper, knowing this peculiarity, turns it to advantage. This is a common habit with many animals; and these "runways" are easily detected by the matted leaves and grass and the broken twigs. Over such a beaten track the harpoon-trap is suspended.

The harpoon used by the native African trappers somewhat resembles a double-barbed arrowhead, and has a reflexed prong on the shaft just behind the barbs,—a sort of combination between a spear and a fish-hook. It is a terrible weapon; and, when once launched into the flesh of its victim, its withdrawal is impossible, on account of the reflexed barb. Any sharp steel shaft will answer the purpose of the harpoon; it should be eight or ten inches in length, and filed to a keen point. We will now construct the trap. The first requisite is a straight section of the branch of some tree. This should be about four inches in diameter, and four feet in length. Into one end of this beam the harpoon should be firmly imbedded, allowing the point to project about six inches. This beam should then be weighted with two large stones, attached firmly by a rope, about eighteen Page 28 inches above the harpoon. At about six inches from the other end of the log a notch should be cut, having its flat side uppermost, as shown plainly in our illustration. The implement is now ready.



Select some favorably situated tree, whose branches extend over the pathway chosen for the trap. By the aid of a rope secured to the log, and thrown over the limb, the weighted beam may be drawn up into the tree. While thus held by a person below, the trapper should climb the tree to complete operations. For this purpose, a smaller branch about three feet in length should be cut. One end should be flattened off on both sides, so as to fit in the notch in the beam; and the part which rests on the limb, as seen in the illustration, should also be flattened to prevent turning. A piece of stout Indian twine should next be fastened to the unwhittled end of the stick, which may then be adjusted in the notch of the harpoon beam, as seen in the engraving. The string may then be thrown down, and grasped by the companion below, who holds it firmly, after which the original rope may be removed. It will be noticed that the weight of the harpoon and accompaniments rests on the short arm of the lever which passes over the limb of the tree, and the tension on the string from the long arm is thus very slight. This precaution is necessary for the perfect working of the trap. To complete the contrivance, a small peg with a rounded notch should be cut, and driven into the ground directly plumb beneath the long end of the lever. It should be inserted into the earth only sufficiently to hold the string without pulling out, and the *side* of the notch should face the path; its height should be about a foot. Into the notch the string should be passed, being afterwards drawn across the path and secured on the opposite side at the same height. The trap is now set; and woe to the unlucky quadruped that dares make too free with that string! A very slight pressure from either side is equally liable to slip the string from the notch, or loosen the peg from the ground; and the result is the same in either case,—down comes the weighted harpoon, carrying death and destruction to its

victim.

For large animals, this made of setting will be found to work perfectly. When constructed on a smaller scale, it may be slightly modified. It will be noticed that, when the string is approached from one side, it is merely slipped out of the notch,—a slight pressure being sufficient to dislodge it,—while the pressure from the opposite direction must be strong enough to lift the peg out of the ground bodily. This is easily done when the peg is lightly inserted; but, to *insure* success, even with *light* pressure from either side, an additional precaution may be used, if desired. Instead of fastening the end of the string securely to some object on the further side of the path, it is well to provide the end of the cord with a ring or loop, which should be passed over a nail or short peg driven in some tree or branch, or fastened into an upright stake, firmly embedded into the ground. The nail should point in the opposite direction from the notch in the peg, and its angle should incline slightly toward the path. It will thus be seen that an approach from one side forces the string from the notch in the peg, while an opposite pressure slides the ring from the nail.

Page 29

This mode of setting is especially desirable for small animals, on account of its being more sensitive.

Such a trap may be successfully used for the puma, bear, and the lynx. When constructed for smaller animals, the harpoon may be dispensed with, a large stone being equally effective in its death-dealing qualities

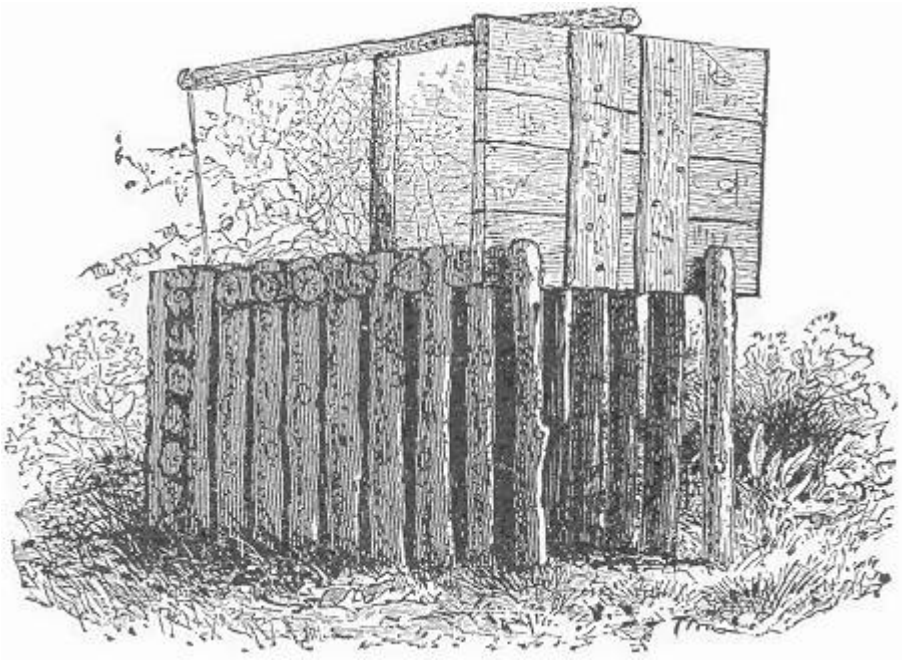
THE BEAR TRAP.

This trap is constructed after the idea of the old-fashioned box or rabbit trap, and has been the means of securing many a hungry bear, or even puma, whose voracity has exceeded its cunning. The lynx and wild-cat are also among its occasional victims; and inasmuch as its prisoners are taken alive great sport is often realized before the captive is brought under control.

Our illustration gives a very clear idea of the affair. The sides are built of stout young tree-trunks, cut into sections and firmly driven into the ground close together. For a large animal,—a bear, for instance,—the enclosure should be about seven feet deep, two and a half feet wide, and four feet high. The top should be built in with the sides, after the manner of the log cabin, described in page (244.) The two posts at the entrance should be first set up. On the back side of each, near the end, a deep notch should be cut for the reception of the cross piece at the top. This should likewise be notched in a similar manner on both sides of each end, so as to fit singly into the notches in the uprights on the one side, and into the second pair of uprights on the other. These latter should next be inserted firmly into the ground, having been previously notched on both sides of their upper ends, as described for the cross piece. They may either be fixed in place and the cross piece sprung in between them at the top, or the latter may be held in the notches of the first pair, while the second are being inserted. Continue thus until the full length of the sides are reached, when the end may be closed by an upright wall of plain logs, either hammered into the ground, after the manner of the sides, or arranged one above another in notches between the two end uprights. The sliding door is next required. This should be large enough to cover the opening, and should be made of stout board slabs, firmly secured by cross pieces. It should be made to slide smoothly into grooves cut into perpendicular logs situated on each side of the opening, or may be arranged to

Page 30

slip easily between the flattened side of one log on each side and the front of the pen. Either way works well. In the latter an additional upright or short board should be inserted in the ground at the edges of the sliding door, to prevent the latter from being forced to either side by the efforts of the enclosed captive.



There are two or three ways of setting the trap, depending upon the desired game. For a bear it is arranged as in our illustration. An upright post, two feet in length, should be cut to an edge at one end, and wedged in between the logs at the top of the trap, near the middle. Across the top of this, a pole seven feet in length, should be rested; one end being attached by a loop, or secured in a notch in the sliding door, and the other supplied with a strong string about four feet in length, with a stick eight inches in length secured to its end. Through the centre log, in the back of the pen, and about two feet from the ground, an auger hole should be made. The bait stick with bait attached should be inserted through this hole from the inside, and the spindle caught on the outside between its projecting end and a nail driven in the adjoining upright. This principle is clearly illustrated on page 105 at (*a*), and, if desired, the method (*b*) may be used also. For a bear, the bait should consist of a piece of meat scented with burnt honey-comb. The odor of honey will tempt a bear into almost any trap, and even into such close quarters as the above he will enter without the slightest suspicion, when a feast of honey is in view.

Page 31

For the cougar, or puma, the best bait is a live lamb or a young pig, encaged in a small pen erected at the end of the trap. A fowl is also excellent. When thus baited, the setting of the trap is varied. The upright post at the top of the trap is inserted nearer the front, and the cross pole is stouter. The auger hole is bored in the top of the trap, through the centre of one of the logs, and about twenty inches from the back end of the trap. The spindle is dispensed with and the end of the string is provided with a large knot, which is lowered through the auger hole, and is prevented from slipping back by the insertion of a stick beneath. This stick should be about three feet in length, and of such a size at the end as will snugly fit into the auger hole. It should be inserted delicately, merely enough to hold the knot from slipping back, and so as to be easily released by a slight movement in any direction.

This mode of setting is more fully detailed on page 52. As the puma steals in upon his prey he dislodges the stick, the lid falls, and he finds himself imprisoned with his intended victim. This trap is much used in India and Asia for the capture of the tiger, and the jaguar of South America is frequently entrapped by the same devices.

THE PIT-FALL.

The tiger is the scourge of India and Southern Asia and some sections of these countries are so terribly infested with the brutes that the inhabitants are kept in a Page 32 continual state of terror by their depredations. Many methods are adopted by the natives for the destruction of the terrible creatures, some of which have already been described. The pit-fall is still another device by which this lurking marauder is often captured and destroyed. It sometimes consists of a mere pit covered and baited in the haunts of the tiger, or is constructed in a continuous deep ditch surrounding the habitations of the natives, and thus acting as a secure protection. The pit is about twelve feet deep and ten feet in width, and its outside edge is lined with a hedge five or six feet in height. As the fierce brute steals upon his intended prey, he nears the hedge and at one spring its highest branch is cleared. He reaches the earth only to find himself at the bottom of a deep pit, from which there is no hope of escape, and where he speedily becomes the merciless victim of a shower of deadly arrows and bullets.

Happily we have no tigers in the United States, but the puma and the lynx are both fit subjects for the pit-fall. These animals cannot be said to exist in such numbers as to become a scourge and a stranger to the inhabitants of any neighborhood, and for this reason the "Moat" arrangement of the pit-fall is not required. The simple pit is often used, and when properly constructed and baited is a very *sure* trap. The hole should be about twelve feet in depth and eight feet across, widening at the bottom. Its opening should be covered with slicks, earth and leaves, so arranged as to resemble the surroundings as much as possible, but so lightly adjusted as that they will easily give way at a slight pressure. One edge of the opening should now be closely built up with stakes firmly inserted into the ground, and so constructed as to form a small pen in the middle, in which to secure the bait, generally a live turkey, goose, or other fowl. The other three sides should also be hedged in by a single row of upright stakes three or four feet in height, and a few inches apart in order that the hungry puma may whet his appetite by glimpses between them.

They should be firmly imbedded in the earth directly at the edge of the pit, and as far as possible trimmed of their branches on the inside. There will thus be a small patch of solid ground for the feet of the fowl, which should be tied by the leg in the enclosure. Our trap is now set, and if there is a puma in the neighborhood he will be sure to pay it a call and probably a *visit*.

Spying his game, he uses every effort to reach it through the crevices between Page 33 the stakes. The cries of the frightened fowl arouse and stimulate his appetite, and at last exasperated by his futile efforts to seize his victim, he springs over the fence of stakes and is lodged in the depths of the pit.

The puma is very agile of movement, and unless the pit is at least twelve feet in depth there is danger of his springing out. Any projecting branch on the inside of the stakes affords a grasp for his ready paw, and any such branch, if within the reach of his leap, is sure to effect his escape. For this reason it is advisable to

trim smoothly all the projections and leave no stub or knot hole by which he could gain the slightest hold. The construction of a pit-fall is a rather difficult operation on account of the digging which it necessitates. On this account it is not so much used as many other traps which are not only equally effective but much more easily constructed. The following is an example:—

THE LOG COOP TRAP.

This is commonly set for bears, although a deer or a puma becomes its frequent tenant. As its name implies it consists of a coop of logs, arranged after the principle of the Coop Trap described on page 67. The logs should be about eight feet in length, notched at the ends as described for the Log Cabin, page (244). Lay two of the logs parallel about seven feet apart. Across their ends in the notches, lay two others and continue building up in "cob-house" fashion until the height of about six feet is reached. The corners may be secured as they are laid by spikes, or they may be united afterward in mass by a rope firmly twisted about them from top to bottom. Logs should now be laid across the top of the coop and firmly secured by the spikes or rope knots. There are several ways of setting the trap. A modification of that described on page 67 works very well, or an arrangement of spindle and bait stick, as in the Box Trap, page 105, may also be employed. In the latter case, the bait stick is either inserted between the logs at the back of the coop, or a hole is bored through one of them for this purpose. For this mode of setting, the coop should be constructed beneath some tree. It is set by means of a rope attached to the upper edge of one of its sides the rope being thrown over a limb of the tree and the loose end brought down and secured to the bait stick by a spindle, as described for the trap on page (195). Page 34 The limb here acts in place of the tall end piece of the Box Trap, and by raising the coop up to such an angle as that it will be nearly poised, the setting may be made so delicate that a mere touch on the bait stick from the interior will dislodge the pieces and let fall the enclosure. The *simplest* mode of setting the trap is that embodied in the "snare" method on page (52). The rope is here provided with a knot, which must pass easily between the logs, or through the hole at the back of the coop, the length of rope being so arranged as that the coop shall be sufficiently raised where the knot projects into the interior. The introduction of the bait stick beneath the knot will thus prevent the latter from being drawn back, and thus our trap is set. The bait stick in any case should be about two feet in length; and with this leverage but a slight touch will be required to spring the pieces. In the latter method the limb of the tree is not necessary. A stout crotched stake driven into the ground about twenty feet, at the back of the coop, will answer every purpose, and the coop may be constructed wherever desired. This is a most excellent trap for large animals. It secures the game alive, and is thus often productive of most exciting sport. For the bear, the bait should consist of honey or raw meat. Full directions for baiting all kinds of American game are given under their respective heads in another part of this book. The Coop Trap may be constructed of any dimensions, from the small example on page (67) to the size above described.

There are several other inventions commonly used for the capture of large animals in various parts of the globe, which would be of little avail in this country. Such is the African Corrall, or Hopo, by which whole herds of quaggas, elands, and buffalo are often destroyed. The trap consists of two hedges in the form of the letter V, which are very high and thick at the angle. Instead of the hedges being joined at this point, they are made to form a lane about two hundred feet in length, at the extremity of which a giant pit is formed. Trunks of

trees are laid across the margins to prevent the animals from escaping. The opening of this pit is then covered with light reeds and small green boughs. The hedges often extend miles in length and are equally as far apart at these extremities. The tribe of hunters make a circle, three or four miles around the country adjacent to the opening, and gradually closing up are almost sure to enclose a large body of game, which, by shouts and skilfully hurled Javelins, they drive into the narrowing walls of the Hopo. The affrighted animals rush Page 35 headlong to the gate presented at the end of the converging hedges and here plunge pell-mell into the pit, which is soon filled with a living mass. Some escape by running over the others; and the natives, wild with excitement, spear the poor animals with mad delight, while others of the brutes are smothered and crushed by the weight of their dead and dying companions. It is a most cruel and inhuman device, and its effects are sometimes appalling.

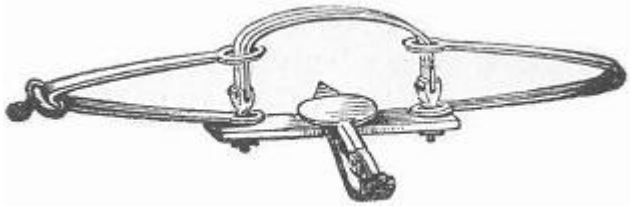
THE NET TRAP.

The lion and tiger are often taken in a net, which is secured to a frame work and suspended over a tempting bait. When the latter is touched the net falls, and the victim becomes entangled in the meshes and is securely caught. So far as we know, this mode of capture is never tried in this country. For the puma, lynx and wild-cat we fancy it might work admirably. The net should be of stout cord, and should be secured to a heavy square frame work, tilted as in the coop trap, already described. There should be plenty of slack in the net, and the looseness should be drawn flat over the framework in folds. The contrivance may be set by a large figure four trap, page (107), or the device described under the coop trap, page (67).

The use of bird lime, for the capture of a tiger, certainly seems odd; but it is, nevertheless, a common mode of taking the animal, in the countries where this marauder abounds. The viscid, tenacious preparation known as bird lime is described on page (97) and is familiar to most of our readers. For the capture of birds it is unfailing, when once their delicate plumage comes in contact with it. Its effect on the tiger is surprising, and many a hunter has secured his striped foe by its aid. For this purpose, the cans of the preparation are arranged on elevated boards around a bed of leaves, in which the bait is placed. A small platform is so placed that the tiger shall step upon it in reaching for the bait, which, by the aid of strings, tilts the boards and tips off the cans. The lime spills on its victim and over the bed of leaves, and the tiger, in his endeavors to free himself from the sticky substance only succeeds in spreading it, and as he rolls and tumbles on the ground he soon becomes completely smeared and covered with the dry leaves, from which it is impossible for him to extricate himself.

In his frantic rage he writhes upon the ground and becomes an easy prey to the Page 36 hunter, who is generally on hand for the fray.

Steel traps are much used for the capture of large game, and are made in sizes especially adapted for the purpose. These are described under the proper head, in another portion of this work; and the various baits and modes of setting required for the different animals, are clearly set forth under their respective titles of the latter, in the section "Art of Trapping."

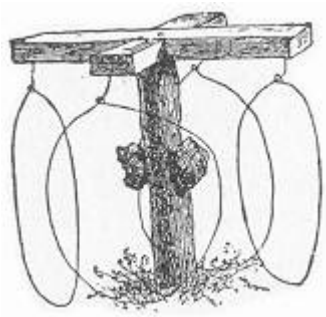


Page 37

BOOK II.

Page 39

SNARES OR MOOSE TRAPS.



hese devices, although properly coming under the head of "traps," differ from them in the sense in which they are generally understood. A *snare* naturally implies an *entanglement*; and for this reason the term is applied to those contrivances which secure their victims by the aid of strings or nooses. Inventions of this kind are among the most useful and successful to the professional Trapper, and their varieties are numerous. The "Twitch-up" will be recognized as a familiar example by many of our country readers, who may have seen it during their rambles, cautiously set in the low underbrush, awaiting its prey, or perhaps holding aloft its misguided victim.

Snares are among the most interesting and ingenious of the trap kind, besides being the most sure and efficacious. They possess one advantage over all other traps; they can be made in the woods, and out of the commonest material.

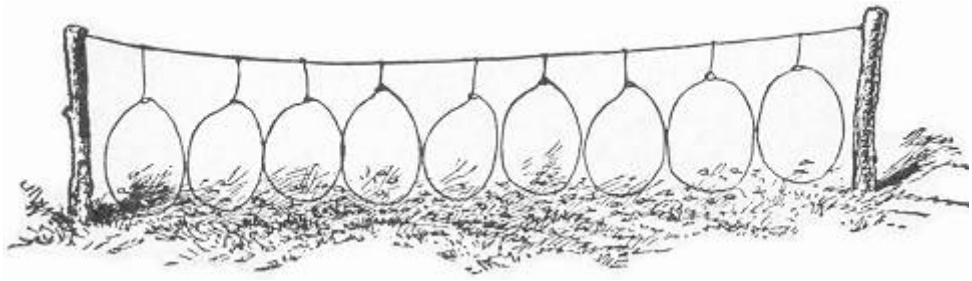
Let the young trapper supply himself with a small, sharp hatchet, and a stout, keen edged jack-knife,—these being the only tools required. He should also provide himself with a coil of fine brass "sucker wire," or a quantity of horse-hair nooses (which will be described further on), a small ball of tough twine and a pocket full of bait, such as apples, corn, oats and the like, of course depending upon the game he intends to trap. With these, his requirements are complete, and he has the material for a score of capital snares, which will do him much excellent service if properly constructed. Perhaps the most common of the noose traps is the ordinary

QUAIL SNARE,

which forms the subject of our first illustration. This consists of a series of nooses fastened to a strong twine or wire. They may be of any number, and should either consist of fine wire, horse-hair, or fine fish-line. If of wire, common brass "sucker wire," to be found in nearly all hardware establishments and country stores, is the best. Each noose should be about four inches in diameter. To make it, a small loop should be twisted on one end of the wire, and the other passed through it, thus making a slipping loop, which will be found to work very easily. Fifteen or twenty of these nooses should be made, after which they should be fastened either to a stout string or wire, at distances of about four inches from each other, as seen in our illustration. Each end of the long string supporting the nooses should then be fastened to a wooden peg. After selecting the ground, the pegs should be driven into the earth, drawing the string tightly,

Page 40

as seen in our illustration. The ground around the nooses should then be



sprinkled with corn, oats, and the like, and the trap is set. As a general thing, it is advisable to set it in a neighborhood where quails are known to abound; and as they run all over the ground in search of food, they are sure to come across the bait strewn for them, and equally as certain to be caught and entangled in the nooses. The writer has known as many as six quails to be thus caught at a time, on a string of only twelve nooses. Partridges and woodcock will occasionally be found entangled in the snare, and it will oft-times happen that a rabbit will be secured by the device.

HOOP NOOSES.

This is a variation from the above, the noose being attached to a barrel hoop and the latter being fastened to two stout posts, which are firmly driven into the ground. By their scattering the bait inside the hoop, and adjusting the loops, the contrivance is complete.

This is a very old and approved method.

In the initial (T) at the head of this section we give also another suggestion for a noose trap. The cross pieces are tacked to the top of the upright, and a noose suspended from each end,—the bait adjusted as there seen. Page 41

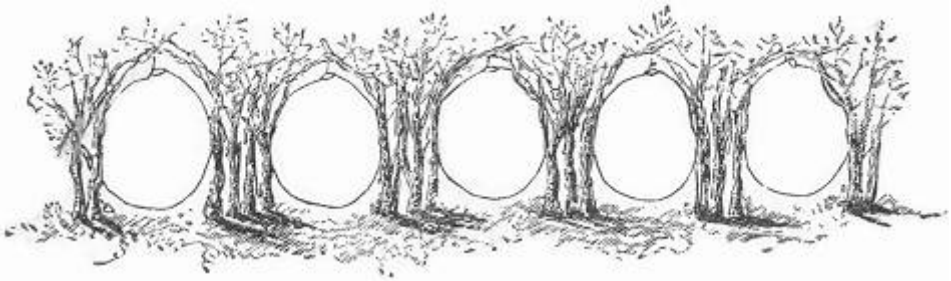
We have mentioned horse-hair nooses as being desirable, and they are commonly used; but, as it takes considerable time to make them, and the wire answering the purpose fully as well, we rather recommend the wire in preference. We will give a few simple directions, however, for the making of the horse-hair nooses, in case our readers might desire to use them instead.

Select long, stout hairs from the tail of any horse, (we would recommend that it be a good tempered horse), take one of the hairs and double it in the middle, hold the double between the thumb and fore-finger of the left hand, letting the two ends hang from the under side of the thumb, and keeping the hairs between the thumb and finger, about a third of an inch apart. Now proceed to twist the two hairs toward the end of the finger, letting them twist together as the loop emerges on the upper side of the thumb.

A little practice will overcome what at first seems very difficult. To keep the two hairs between the fingers at the right distance of separation, and at the same time to twist them and draw the loop from between the fingers as they *are* twisted, seems quite a complicated operation; and so it will be found at first. But when once mastered by practice, the twisting of five nooses a minute will be an easy matter. When the entire length of the hairs are twisted, the ends should be cut off even and then passed through the small loop at the folded end. The noose is then ready to be fastened to the main string of support. Horse-hair nooses are

commonly used in nearly all snares as they are always to be had, and possess considerable strength. The fine brass wire is also extensively used, and the writer rather prefers it. It is very strong and slips easily, besides doing away with the trouble of twisting the loops, which to some might be a very difficult and tedious operation. We recommend the wire, and shall allude to it chiefly in the future, although the horse-hair may be substituted whenever desired.

There is another modification of the foregoing quail-traps very commonly utilized by professional trappers of many countries. A low hedge is constructed, often hundreds of feet in length small openings are left here and there, in which the nooses are placed, as in the accompanying engraving. The bait is strewn around on both sides of the hedge, and the grouse or other game, on its discovery, are almost sure to become entangled sooner or later. It is a well- Page 42 known fact about these birds, that they will always seek to pass *under* an object which comes in their way rather than fly over it; and although the hedge of this trap is only a foot or more in height, the birds will almost invariably run about until they find an opening, in preference to flying over it. It is owing to this peculiarity of habit that they are so easily taken by this method. Our illustration gives only a very short section of hedge; it may be extended to any length. The writer's experience with the hedge nooses has been very satisfactory, although never using a length greater than ten feet. It is well to set the hedge in the



locality where quails or partridges are *known* to run. And in setting, it is always desirable to build the hedge so that it will stretch over some open ground, and connect with two trees or bushes. Cedar boughs are excellent for the purpose, but any close brushwood will answer very well. Strew the ground with corn, oats and the like. A small quantity only is necessary.

There is another noose trap commonly used abroad, and very little known here. It is a *tree* trap, and goes by the name of the "triangle snare." It is not designed for the capture of any *particular* kind of bird, although it often will secure fine and rare specimens. It consists of a sapling of wood, bent and tied in the form of a triangle, as shown in our illustration. This may be of any size, depending

altogether on the bird the young trapper fancies to secure. A noose should be suspended in the triangle from its longest point. This noose should hang as

indicated in our illustration, falling low enough to leave a space of an inch or so below it at the bottom of the triangle. The bait, consisting of a piece of an apple, a berry, insect, or piece of meat, according to the wish of the trapper, Page 43 should then be suspended in the centre of the noose, after which the contrivance should be hung in some tree to await events. As they are so easily made and can be carried with so little trouble, it is an excellent plan to set out with a dozen or so, hanging them all in different parts of the woods; as, under circumstances of so many being set, scarcely a day will pass in which the trapper will not be rewarded by some one of the snares. The writer once knew of a case where a hawk was captured by one of these simple devices. In this case it had been set expressly, and the wire was extra strong. This trap, we believe, is quite common in parts of Germany, but, as far as we know, has not been utilized to any great extent in our country. We recommend it with great confidence.

For the capture of woodchucks, muskrats and house-rats, the wire noose may also be adapted to good purpose. Many a woodchuck has been secured by the aid of this simple invention. It is only necessary to arrange the loop in the opening of the burrow, securing the wire to a stout stick, firmly driven into the ground. If properly "set" the animal, on emerging from the burrow, will become entangled, and by his efforts to disengage himself will only tighten the loop and thus render escape impossible. For rats, the noose should be attached to a nail, and the wire similarly arranged over the hole.

The slipping-noose thus simply adapted becomes a most effective trap, and is always sure to hold its victim when once within its grasp, as every struggle only tends to draw the noose tighter. They are quick in their action, and produce death without much pain, and for this reason are to be commended.

THE "TWITCH-UP."

Our next example of the snare, we imagine, is one which all our boy-readers will immediately recognize; for it would certainly seem that any country boy who does not know the "Twitch-up" must be far behind the times, and live in a locality where there are no rabbits, quail, or even boys, besides himself, to suggest it. This snare is a *universal favorite* among nearly all country boys, and our illustration will immediately bring it to mind. Its name, "The Twitch-up," conveys perfectly its method of working. Our illustration represents the trap as it appears when set. It has many varieties, of which we will select the best. They may be divided into two classes—those with upright nooses, and those in which the noose is spread on the ground, the latter of which are commonly called Page 44 "ground snares." We will give our attention first to the "upright" style. These are rather entitled to preference on account of the harmless death which they inflict, invariably catching by the neck. Whereas the ground nooses as frequently lift their prey into the air by their feet, and thus prolong their suffering. Twitch-ups are the most successful and sure of any snares, and that, too, without being complicated. The writer, in his younger days, was quite an expert in trapping,

and he can truthfully say that he found more enjoyment and had better success with these than with any other kinds of traps he employed.

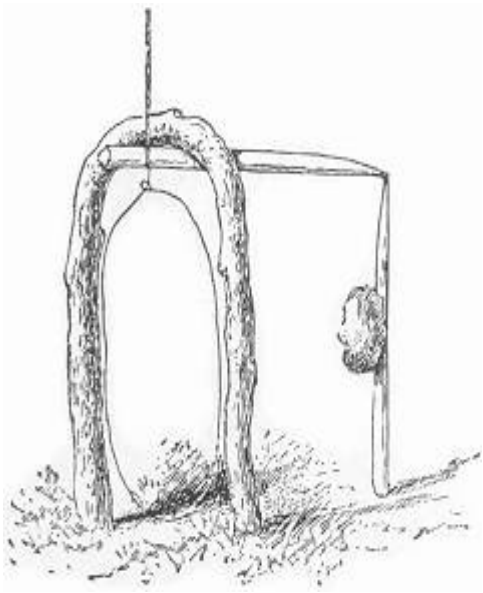
They are generally set in thickets or woods where either rabbits or partridges are known to abound. Having arrived at his chosen trapping ground, the young trapper should first select some slender, elastic sapling; that of the hickory is the

best, and is generally to be found in open woods—if not, some other kind will answer very well. It should be about five or six feet in length, (trimmed of its branches,) and in diameter need be no larger than an axe-handle or a broom-stick. When this is decided, some spot about five feet distant from the sapling should then be selected. The hatchet and knife will now come into excellent use, in cutting the sticks for the little inclosure shown in our drawing. This should be about eight or ten inches in diameter, and of about the same height. The sticks should be driven into the ground in a circle, leaving an open space of about six inches on one side. A stout switch as large as a man's little finger, and nearly two feet long, should then be cut and nicely sharpened at both ends. This should then be driven into the ground in the form of an arch, at the opening of the inclosure.

Page 45

We will now ask our readers to turn their attention to the next illustration, in order to understand what is to follow. This picture shows the method of setting the trap.

After the arch is firmly fixed in its place, a short piece of stick should be cut, of a length corresponding to the height of the arch. To the middle of this stick the bait should be attached, being either tied to it or stuck on a plug driven into the stick, the latter being sharpened on one end. Next proceed to cut another stick, of about six inches in length; let this be flattened on one end. The wire noose should then be fastened to the opposite end. The noose in this case should be large enough to fill the opening of the arch. We will now go back to the sapling again. It should be bent down slightly, and a piece of the strong twine should be tied to its tip. Taking hold of the string, proceed to bend down the end of the sapling, in the direction of the inclosure, until it draws with a force strong enough to lift a rabbit if he were tied to the end of it. Thus holding it down with the string against the front of the inclosure, cut off the twine at the place where it crosses the top of the arch, as this will be the required length. It is now necessary to tie the end of this string to the same piece of wood and at the same place to which the noose was tied. When this is done the trap may be set as shown in the cut. The spring sapling should be bent as seen in the first illustration. The piece



of wood holding the noose should be passed beneath the top of the arch, as far as it will go, with its long end pointing inside the inclosure. By now supporting the inside end with the bait stick, and carefully adjusting the noose so as to completely fill the arch, the trap will be set.

Page 46

In order to reach the bait, the rabbit or bird *must* necessarily pass its head through the noose, after which, if the bait be scarcely *touched*, the animal's doom is sealed, and he is lifted into the air, generally suffering almost instant death. It is well known that in the case of a rabbit the neck is broken by a very slight blow, a strong snap of the finger being often sufficient. It is therefore safe to conclude that when thus suddenly caught and lifted by the noose, death must occur almost instantaneously from the same cause.

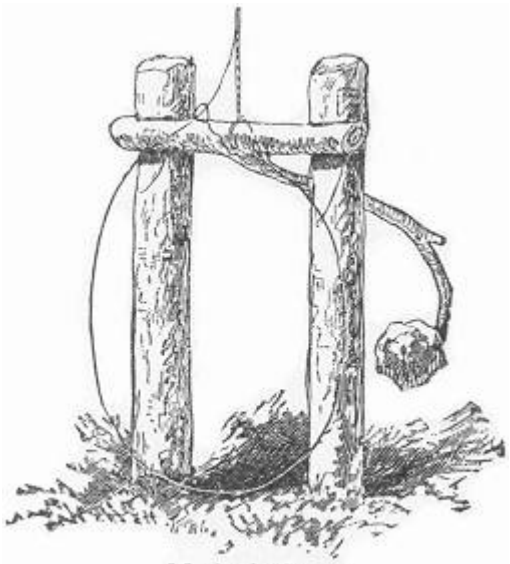
It is not really necessary to success that the force of the sapling should be strong enough to lift the rabbit from the ground, as a mere strong tightening of the noose would be sufficient to cause strangulation and death. But we recommend the former method as being less painful and more rapid in its effects.

If the young trapper should experience any difficulty in finding saplings of the right size, in the locality where he desires to set his traps, the difficulty may be easily mended by cutting the poles elsewhere, and carrying them to his trapping-ground, this answering the purpose equally well. They should be sharpened nicely on the large end, and firmly stuck into ground. The "Twitch-up" may be used for the capture of all varieties of game, and when set with the noose in the opening of a hollow tree, a stray coon will occasionally be entrapped.

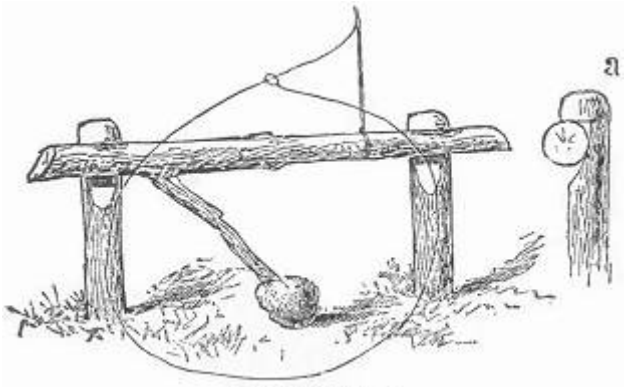
The next figure represents another method of constructing this trap, The picture explains itself. Instead of the arch, two notched sticks are driven into the ground, one on each side of the opening of the pen, The other piece should be of the shape shown in the figure, made either in one piece or in two pieces fastened together. They may all be constructed from twigs in the woods. Let the noose and draw-string now be fastened to the middle of the cross piece, and when set it will appear as in our figure. It will easily be seen that a slight pull on the bait will turn the cross piece from beneath the notches, and allow it to fly into the air.

Page 47

In our next instance the same principle is employed. The notched pegs are here driven in the back part of the pen, about five inches apart, with their



Method No. 2.



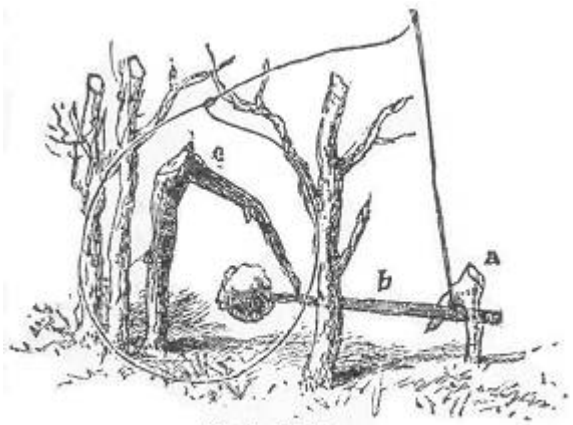
Method No. 3.

notches towards the front. A forked bait stick of the shape shown is then procured. The draw-string should be attached near the end furthest from the fork. By now inserting the ends lightly beneath the notches in the pegs, at the same time letting the bait incline near the ground, the trap will be set on a very slight lift, as the bait will dislodge the pieces. Of course the noose must be arranged in the opening of the pen, as in the previous varieties. The bait stick in both cases should be set cautiously beneath the notches, as shown at (*a*), so that the slightest turn will cause it to roll out of position.

A fourth method of snaring is shown in our next figure. In this instance the original arch is used, or else some circular opening constructed in the front of the pen. Inside, at the back part of the inclosure, a smaller arch is placed. Two sticks are then to be made similar to those mentioned in our first example of the "Twitch-up." Let the draw-string be tied to the end of one of these sticks; after which it should be passed under the inside arch, being brought out in front of it, and there supported by the bait-stick, as seen in our illustration. The noose should then be attached to the draw-string above the pen, and afterward brought down and arranged in front of the opening. The trap is then set, and will be found on trial to work admirably.

One of the simplest as well as *surest* of "Twitch-up" traps forms the subject of our next illustration. Like the foregoing varieties it is of course to be surrounded by its pen, and supplied with a circular opening or arch at one side, in which to hang the noose. It is constructed of three twigs. A simple crotch (*a*) should be firmly inserted in the ground at the back part of the pen; (*b*) the bait stick, consists of a straight twig, five or six inches in length, and should be attached to

Page 48



Method No. 5.


Method No. 4.

the draw-string at about half an inch from the large end; (*c*) is another forked stick with unequal arms, the long one being driven into the ground near the opening of the pen and a little to one side, letting the remaining arm point directly towards the crotch-stick at the back of the pen. The noose having been attached to the draw-string, the trap may now be set. Lower the bait stick and pass the large end under the crotch at the back of the pen, catching the baited end underneath the tip of the forked stick near the pen's opening. Arrange the noose in front of the entrance, and the thing is done. A mere touch on the bait will suffice to throw the pieces asunder. It is an excellent plan to sharpen the point of the forked stick (*c*) where it comes in contact with the bait stick, in order to make the bearing more slight, and consequently more easily thrown from its balance.

THE POACHER'S' SNARE.

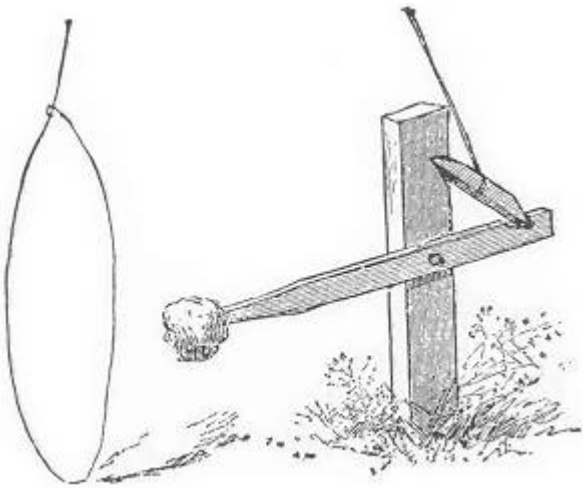
Our next example represents one of the oldest and best snares in existence,—simple in construction, and almost infallible in its operations. It is the one in most common use among the poachers of England, hence its name. The pieces are three in number, and may be cut from pine wood, affording easy and profitable employment for the jack-knife during odd hours and rainy days, when time hangs heavily.

The pieces are so simple in form and easy of construction that a sufficient number for fifty traps might be whittled in less than two hours, by any smart boy, who is at all "handy" with his jack-knife.

If a few good broad shingles can be found, the work is even much easier,—mere splitting and notching being then all that is necessary. The bait stick should be about eight inches long, pointed at one end, and supplied with a notch in the other at about half an inch from the tip. The upright stick should be considerably shorter than the bait stick, and have a length of about ten inches, one end being nicely pointed, and the broad side of the other extremity supplied with a notch similar to the bait stick. About four inches from the blunt end, and on the narrow side of the stick, a square notch should be cut, sufficiently large to admit the bait stick loosely. The catch piece now remains. This should be about two and a-half inches in width, and bevelled off at each end into a flat edge. The shapes of the different pieces, together with their setting, will be readily understood by a look at our illustration.

Page 49

A hundred of these pieces will make a small bundle, and may be easily carried by the young trapper, together with his other necessaries, as he starts off into the



woods. He will thus be supplied with parts for thirty-three traps, all ready to be set, only requiring the stakes for the pens, which may be easily cut in the woods. Having selected a flexible sapling about five feet in length, and having stripped it of its branches, proceed to adjust the pieces. Take one of the upright sticks, and insert it firmly in the ground, with its upper notch facing the sapling, and at about four feet distant from it. Bend down the "springer," and by its force determine the required length for the draw-string attaching one end to the tip of the sapling, and the other near the end of a catch piece, the latter having its bevelled side uppermost. The wire noose should then be attached to the draw-string about six inches above the catch-piece. The pen should now be constructed as previously directed. Its entrance should be on the side *furthest* from the springer, and should be so built as that the peg in the ground shall be at the back part of the enclosure. The pen being finished, the trap may be set.

Insert the bait stick with bait attached into the square notch in the side of the upright peg; or, if desired, it may be adjusted by a pivot or nail through both sticks, as seen in our illustration, always letting the baited end project toward the opening. Draw down the catch piece, and fit its ends into the notches in the back of the upright peg and extremity of the bait-stick. By now pulling the latter slightly, and gently withdrawing the hand, the pieces will hold themselves together, only awaiting a lift at the bait to dislodge them. Adjust the wire loop at the opening of the pen, and you may leave the trap with the utmost confidence in its ability to take care of itself, and any unlucky intruder who tries to steal its property.

Page 50

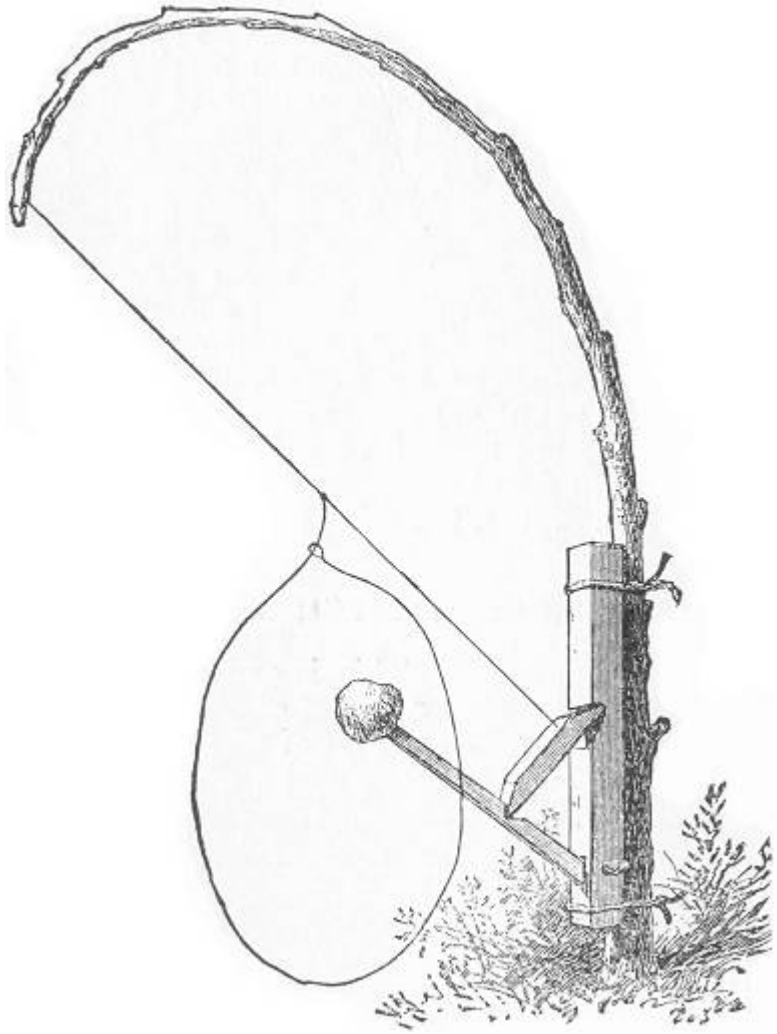
Most of the snares which we shall describe are constructed from rough twigs, as these are always to be found in the woods, and with a little practice are easily cut and shaped into the desired forms. If desired, however, many of them may be whittled from pine wood like the foregoing, and the pieces carried in a bundle, ready for immediate use. In either case, whether made from the rough twigs or seasoned wood, it is a good plan to have them already prepared, and thus save time at the trapping ground when time is more valuable.

THE PORTABLE SNARE.

This is simply a modification of the snare just described, but possesses decided advantages over it in many respects. In the first place, it requires little or no protection in the shape of an enclosure. It can be set in trees or in swamps, or in short in *any* place where an upright elastic branch can be found or adjusted. Like the foregoing, it is to be commended for its portability, fifty or sixty of the

pieces making but a small parcel, and furnishing material for a score of traps. We call it the "portable snare" partly in order to distinguish it from the one just described, but chiefly because this particular variety is generally called by that name in countries where it is most used.

It is composed of three pieces, all to be cut from a shingle or thin board. Let the first be about eight inches long, and three-quarters of an inch in width. This is for the upright. An oblong mortise should be cut through this piece, one inch in length, and beginning at about an inch from the end of the stick. Three inches from the other end, and on one of the broad sides of the stick, a notch should be made, corresponding in shape to that shown in our illustration. The bait stick should be four or five inches long, one end fitting easily into the mortise, where it should be secured by a wire or smooth nail driven through so as to form a Page 51
hinge, on which it will work easily. On the upper side of this stick, and two inches distant from the pivot, a notch should be cut, similar to that in the upright. The catch piece should be about two inches in length, and bevelled off to a fiat edge at each end. This completes the pieces.

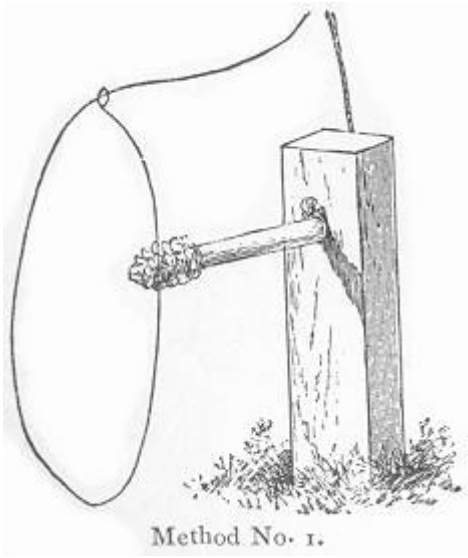


To set the trap, it is only necessary to find some stout sapling, after which the upright stick may be attached to it close to the ground, by the aid of two pieces of stout iron wire, twisted firmly around both. It is well to cut slight grooves at each end of the upright for the reception of the wires, in order to prevent slipping. Tie a strong piece of twine around one end of the catch piece, knotting Page 52
it on the beveled side. Cut the string about two feet in length, and attach the

other end to the tip of the sapling. Adjust the bait stick on its pivot. By now lowering the catch piece, and lodging the knotted end beneath the notch in the upright and the other end in the notch on the bait stick, the pieces will appear as in our drawing. Care should be taken to set the catch pieces as slightly as possible in the notches, in order to insure sensitiveness. At about four inches from the catch piece, the wire noose should be attached and arranged in a circle directly around the bait. By now backing up the trap with a few sticks to prevent the bait from being approached from behind, the thing is complete, and woe to the misguided creature that dares to test its efficacy. By adjusting the drawstring so far as the upper end of the catch piece, the leverage on the bait stick is so slight as to require a mere touch to overcome it; and we may safely say that, when this trap is once baited, it will stay baited, so far as animal intruders are concerned, as we never yet have seen a rabbit or bird skilful enough to remove the tempting morsel before being summarily dealt with by the noose on guard duty.

For portability, however, the following has no equal.

THE "SIMPLEST" SNARE.

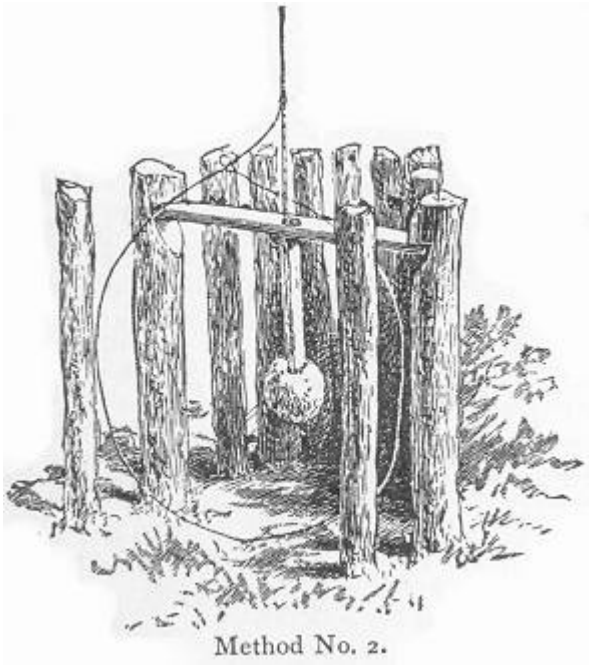


Method No. 1.

This is one of the most ingenious and effective devices used in the art of trapping; and the principle is so simple and universal in its application to traps in general as to become a matter of great value to all who are at all interested in the subject. There is scarcely a trap of any kind which could not be set with the knotted string and bait stick, at the expense of a little thought and ingenuity. The principle is easily understood by a look at our engraving, which probably represents the *simplest* twitch-up it is possible to construct. A stout wooden peg, having a hole the size of a lead pencil near the top, is driven firmly into the ground. The "knot" is made on the end of the raw-string, and passed through the hole in the peg from behind, being secured in place by the insertion of the bait stick in front. The latter should be about four inches long, and should be inserted very lightly,—merely enough to prevent the knot from slipping back. The noose should be fastened to the draw-string six or seven inches from the knot, and arranged in front of the bait at the opening of the pen, which should be constructed as previously directed. The peg should be about six inches long and the hole should be made with a 1-3 inch auger. Dozens of these pegs may be carried without inconvenience, and utilized in the same number of snares, in a very short time. We have already described the so-called "portable snare;" but,

Page 53

for portability, there is no noose-trap to be compared with the above. We give also a few other applications of the same principle.



Method No. 2.

In the second example, a horizontal stick is used instead of the peg, the hole being made in its centre. Its ends are caught in notches in opposite sticks at the back part of the pen, and the noose arranged at the opening.

Again, by a third method (see engraving next page), these notched sticks may be driven into the ground first, and a row of twigs continued on them on both sides, thus leaving a passageway between as represented in the illustration. A noose may then be set at each opening, with the bait in the middle; so that, at whichever side it is approached, the result is the same, besides affording a chance of securing two birds at the same time.

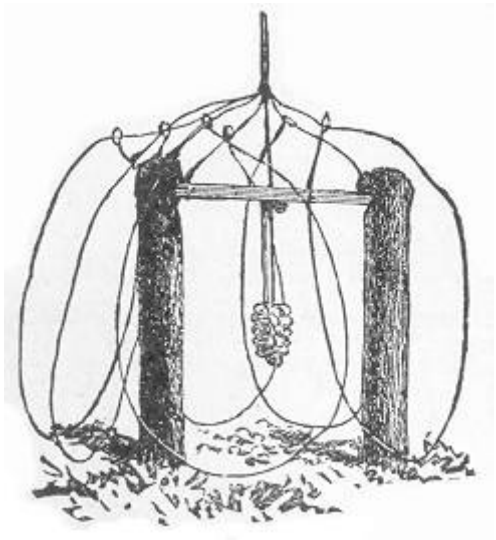
THE QUAIL SNARE.

That quails are sociable in their habits, and that they run together in broods in search of their food, is a fact well known to all sportsmen. A most excellent Page 54
opportunity is thus afforded the hunter to secure several at one shot, and the same advantage may be gained by the trapper by specially arranging for it. For this purpose there is no invention more desirable or effective than the snare we next illustrate; and on account of the companionable habits of the quail, it is just as sure to catch six birds as one. The principle on which the trap works, is the same as in the three foregoing.

Two notched pegs are first driven into the ground, about four inches apart, and the flat stick with the hole in the centre caught beneath these summits, as just described. It should be firmly secured; several nooses are next to be attached to the drawstring, and the trap set as already directed.

The best bait consists of a "nub" of pop-corn, firmly impaled on the spindle, together with a few loose grains scattered on the ground right beneath it. The nooses should be arranged around the bait so as to touch or overlap each other, and the bait stick introduced into the hole a little more firmly than when set with one noose. The quail on reaching the trap all rush for the corn on the ground, and

Method No. 3.

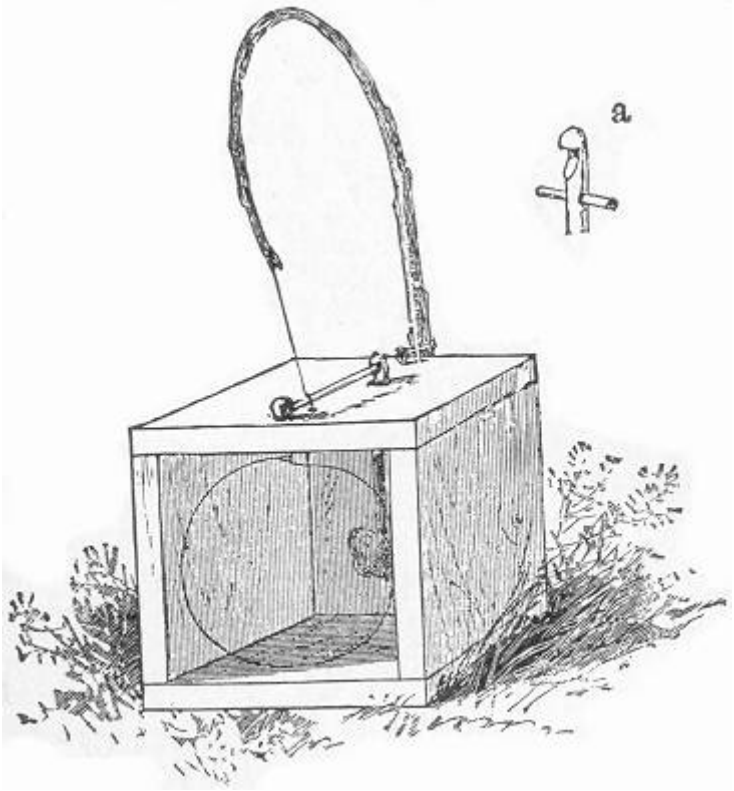


thus fill nearly if not all the nooses. When the supply here is exhausted, then united attacks are directed towards the "nub" on the bait stick, which soon becomes loosened: the knot is thus released and each noose will probably launch a victim in mid-air. This invention is original with the author of this work, so far as he knows; and it will be found the simplest as well as most effective quail snare in existence. Pop-corn is mentioned as bait partly on account of its being a favorite food with the quail; but particularly because the *pecking* which it necessitates in order to remove the grains from the cob, is sure to spring the trap. If pop corn cannot be had, common Indian corn will answer very well. Oats or buckwheat may also be used, as the ground bait, if desired.

Page 55

THE BOX SNARE.

This is a most unique device, and will well repay anyone who may desire to



test its merits. It may be set for a rabbits, coon, or feathered game, of course varying the size of the box accordingly. For ordinary purposes, it should be

seven or eight inches square, leaving one end open. Place it in the position shown in the illustration and proceed to bore an auger hole in the top board, one and a half inches from the back edge.

This is for the reception of the bait stick. Directly opposite to this and an inch from the front edge of the board a notched peg should be inserted. A gimlet hole should now be bored on a line between the auger hole and notched peg, and half an inch from the latter. A small stout screw eye should next be inserted at the rear edge of the board, and another one fastened to the back board, two inches from the bottom. With these simple preparations the box is complete. The bait stick should be about five or six inches long and supplied with a notch at the upper end. It should be of such a size as to pass easily into the auger hole, and provided with a peg inserted through it at about an inch and a half from the notched end, as shown in our illustration at (*a*). The object of this peg is to prevent the bait stick from being drawn entirely through the hole by the force of Page 56
the pull from above. The catch piece should be only long enough to secure its ends beneath the notches in the peg at the top of the box and the projecting bait stick. It should be bevelled off at the tips as in the instances previously described, and attached to a piece of sucker wire, the point of attachment being at about an inch from the end of the stick. The wire should be about two and a half feet in length, the catch piece being fastened at about six inches from one end. To set this neat little invention it is first necessary to procure a strong and elastic switch about four feet in length, sharpen it slightly at the large end and insert it firmly in the screw eye at the back of the box, securing it in place at the top by strings through the screw eye at that place. By now attaching the short end of the wire to the tip of the sapling, inserting the bait stick from the inside of the box, and securing the catch piece in the notches, the other pieces will be in equilibrium, and the only remaining thing to be done is to pass the long end of the wire through the gimlet hole, and form it into a slipping noose which shall completely fill the opening of the box. In order to reach the bait the animal must pass his head through the noose, and it can be easily seen that the slightest pull on that tempting morsel will release the catch piece and tighten the wire around the neck of the intruder. Where the trap is small and the captured animal is large, it will sometimes happen that the box will be carried a distance of several feet before overpowering its victim; but it is sure to do it in the end if the spring powers of the sapling are strong and it is firmly secured to the box. If desired, the box may be tied to a neighboring stone or tree to prevent any such capers; but it will generally be found unnecessary, and a few minutes' search will always reveal it with its unlucky captive.

We have described the box with its spring attached; but this is not a requisite, as it may be used with growing sapling when required.

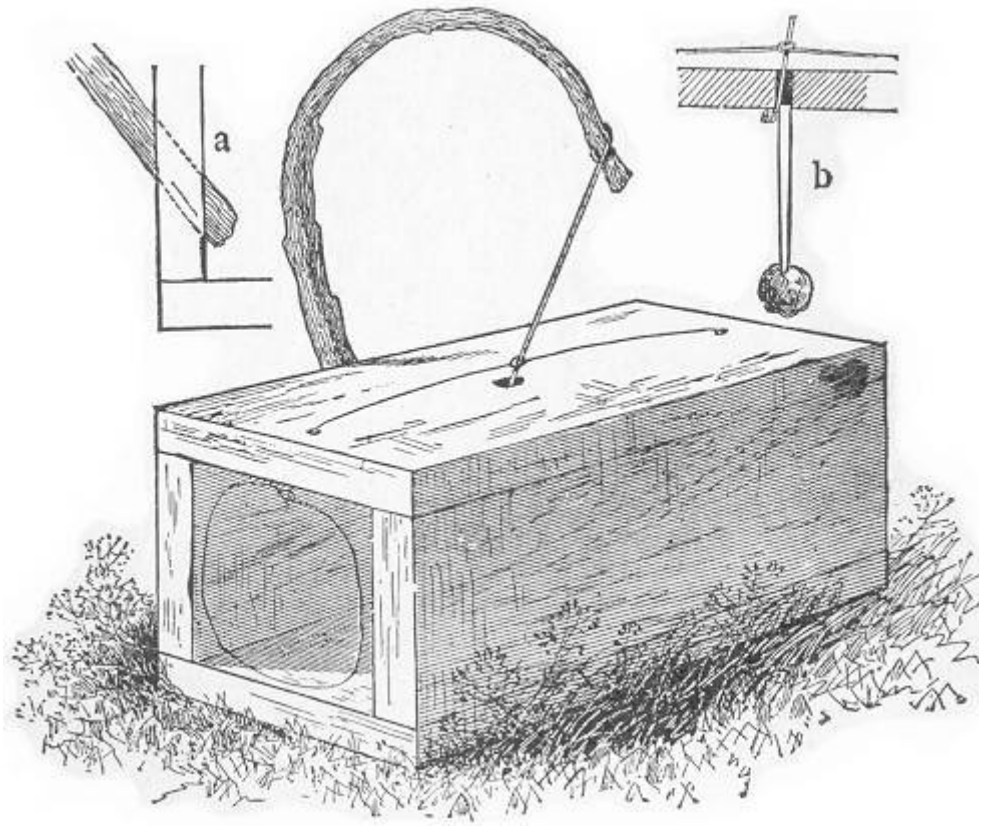
The same trap may be constructed of a pasteboard box and whalebone, for the capture of small birds, and used with good success. The size we have mentioned is adaptable for rabbits and animals of the same size, but is really larger than necessary for feathered game.

THE DOUBLE BOX SNARE.

This is another embodiment of the same principle which has already been described, viz.—the knotted string. By many it is considered an improvement Page 57
on the box snare just mentioned, owing to the possibility of its taking two victims at the same time. It may be set for rabbits, mink, or muskrat, and will be

found very efficient.

It consists of a box about eight inches square, one foot in length, and open at both ends. In the centre of the top board a hole of the diameter of a lead pencil



should be bored, and a smaller aperture also made in the middle of each end near the edge as seen in the accompanying engraving. The spring is next required. This should consist of an elastic switch or small pole, three or more feet in length. It should be inserted in a slanting auger hole, made through the middle of one of the side boards near the bottom at the angle shown at (*a*). Should the switch fit loosely it may be easily tightened by a small wedge driven in beside it. The bait stick (*b*) should be about four inches in length, and large enough to fit easily into the hole in the centre of the top board. Next procure a stout bit of cord about eight inches in length. Tie one end to the tip of the switch and provide the other with a large double knot. A second knot should then be made, about an inch and a half above the first. A piece of sucker wire is the next necessity. Its length should be about five feet, and its centre should be tied over the uppermost knot in the string. If the bait is now in readiness, the trap may be set. Bend down the switch until the end knot will pass through the hole in the centre of the board. When it appears in the inside of the box, it should then be secured by the insertion of the top of the bait stick, as shown at (*b*). This insertion need be only very slight, a sixteenth of an inch being all that is sufficient to prevent the knot from slipping back. The spring is thus held in the position seen in the drawing, and the loose ends of the sucker wire should then be passed downward through the small holes and arranged in nooses at both openings of the box. Our trap is now set, and the unlucky creature which attempts to move that bait from either approach, will bring its career to an untimely end. The bait stick may be so delicately adjusted as to need only the slightest touch to dislodge it. Such a fine setting is to be guarded against, however, being as likely to be sprung by a mouse as by a larger animal. The setting is easily regulated, being entirely

Page 58

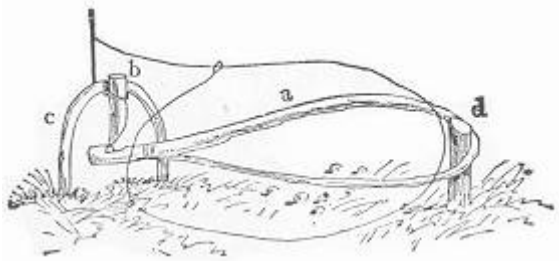
dependent upon the slight or firm insertion of the bait stick. Among all the "modi operandi" in the construction of traps, there is scarcely one more simple than the principle embodied in this variety, and there is none more effective.

The box snare already described may be set by the same method, and indeed the principle may be applied to almost any trap, from the simplest snare described on page (52) to the largest dead-fall.

GROUND SNARES.

THE OLD-FASHIONED SPRINGLE.

This is the variety of snare which has been in very common use for ages, and has always been the one solitary example of a noose trap which our "boys' books" have invariably pounced upon for illustration. For the capture of small birds it works very nicely; and as without it our list of traps would be incomplete, we will give an illustration of it as it appears when set and ready for Page 59
its work. In constructing the affair it is first necessary to cut a flexible twig of willow or bramble about eighteen inches in length, and form it into a loop as seen at (*a*), securing the tips by a few circuits of string, and allowing the larger end to project an inch or more beyond the other. This loop, which is called the "spreader," should now be laid down flat; and on the upper side of the large end and about an inch from its tip, a notch should be cut as our illustration shows. The spring should next be procured, and should consist of a pliant, elastic switch, about four feet in length. A piece of fish line about two feet long, should now be fastened to the tip of the switch, and the loose end of the cord attached to a catch piece of the shape shown at (*b*). This catch may be about an inch and a half long, and should be whittled off to an edge on one end, the string being attached at about its centre. A slipping noose, made from strong horse hair, or piece of fine wire about two feet long, should now be fastened to the string about

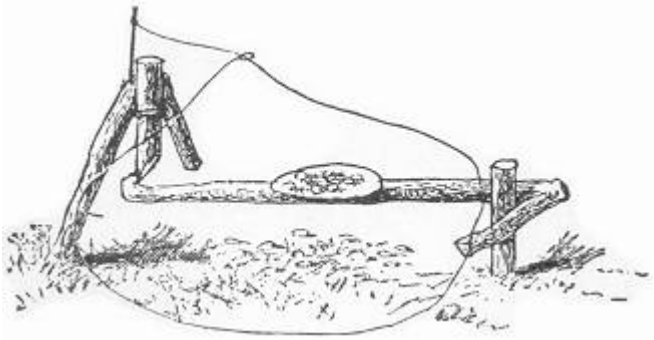


two inches above the catch. Having the switch thus prepared, it is ready to be inserted in the ground at the place selected for the trap. When this is done, another small flexible twig about a foot in length should cut, and being sharpened at both ends, should be inserted in the ground in the form of an arch (*c*), at about three feet distant from the spring, and having its broad side toward it. Insert the notch of the spreader exactly under the top of the arc, and note the spot where the curved end of the former touches the ground. At this point a peg (*d*) should be driven leaving a projecting portion of about two inches. The pieces are now ready to be adjusted. Pass the curved end of the spreader over the peg, Page 60
bringing the notched end beneath the arc with the notch uppermost. Draw down the catch piece, and pass it beneath the arc from the opposite side letting the

bevelled end catch in the notch in the spreader, the other end resting against the upper part of the arc. Arrange the slipping noose over the spreader as our drawing indicates, bringing it *inside* the peg, as there shown, as otherwise it would catch upon it when the snare is sprung. Strew the bait, consisting of berries, bird-seed, or the like, *inside* the spreader, and all is ready. Presently a little bird is seen to settle on the ground in the neighborhood of the trap; he spies the bait and hopping towards it, gradually makes bold enough to alight upon the spreader, which by his weight immediately falls, the catch is released, the switch flies up, and the unlucky bird dangles in the air by the legs. If the trapper is near he can easily release the struggling creature before it is at all injured, otherwise it will flutter itself into a speedy death.

THE IMPROVED SPRINGLE.

The accompanying cut illustrates an improvement on the last mentioned trap, whereby it can be used for the capture of larger game, and with most excellent success. In place of the "spreader" a crotched stick is used, the crotch of which catches around the peg, the other end being supplied with a notch as in the case of the spreader. On the upper side of this stick a small pasteboard platform is



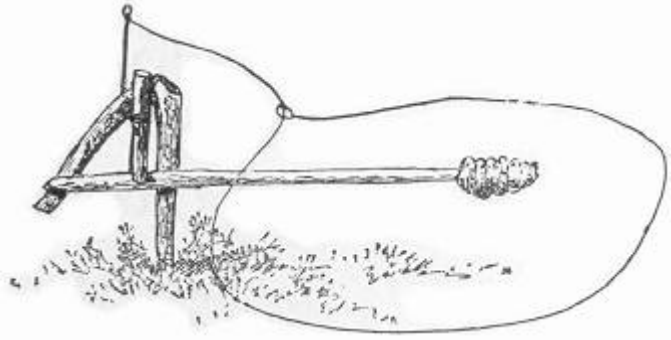
tacked, over which and beneath which the bait is thrown. Instead of the arc, a stout crotch stick is substituted. The noose should be at least ten inches in diameter and constructed of sucker wire. It should be arranged on the ground around the bait and inside of the peg. When the snare is set, the crotched end of the bait stick will thus rest near the earth, the notched end only being lifted in order to reach the catch piece. It is well to insert a few small sticks inside the edge of the noose in order to keep it in correct position. If properly set, the quail or partridge in approaching the trap will have to step *inside* the noose in order to reach the bait, and while thus regaling itself with a choice meal of oats, berries, or other delicacies, will be sure to press upon the bait stick either by pecking, or treading upon it, and will thus set the catch piece free, only to find itself secured by a grasp from which he will never escape alive. This is a very effectual snare; but on account of its securing its victim by the legs and thus torturing them to death, it is to be deprecated. We would recommend in preference, those varieties already described as being fully as successful, and far less cruel. They effect almost instant death, either by broken necks or strangulation, and are in this regard among the most humane traps on record.

Page 61

THE FIGURE FOUR GROUND SNARE.

For simplicity in construction there are few snare traps which can compare with this variety, although it is somewhat similar to those last mentioned, and like them, catches by the feet. The trap consists of three pieces. A catch piece about three inches long, a bait stick of about six inches, and a stout crotch of the

proportionate size shown in our illustration, a glance at which will make the setting too clear to need description. Be careful that the bait stick is set *fine* and

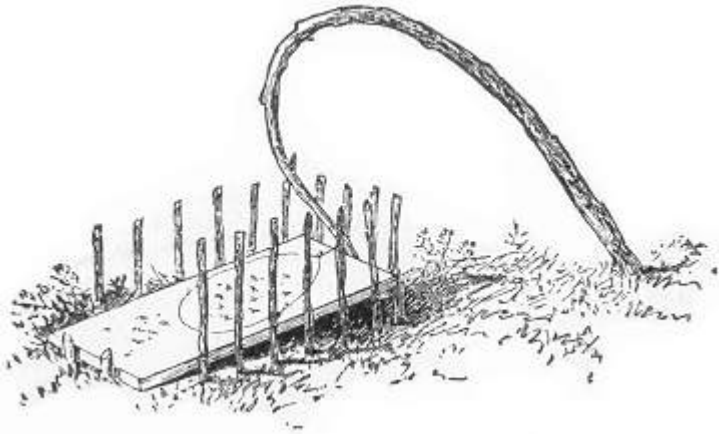


rests *just beneath* the *tip* of the catch-piece so that a mere touch on the bait will release it. Arrange the noose as in the instance last described, and bait either as therein directed or with an apple or nubbin of corn, as our accompanying cut indicates. Always remembering that the noose should be sufficiently large to require the birds to step *inside* of it in order to reach the bait.

THE PLATFORM SNARE.

This odd invention will be found to work capitally as a game trap, and the only extra requisite necessary consists of a slab or light board about seven inches wide, and a foot in length. Having selected the spot for the trap, proceed to cut a stiff switch about five feet in length, and having sharpened the larger end to a nice point, insert it firmly into the ground in a slanting direction as our drawing

Page 62



illustrates. Next bend down the tip of the sapling, and resting one end of the board on the ground, catch the tip of the switch against the other end, as our illustration also shows. A little experimenting will soon determine the right place for the board, after which two pegs should be driven in the ground at its edge to hold it against the pressure on the opposite end. This being done fasten a wire noose to the tip of the switch, after which the pen is the only thing required. This should be built of simple little twigs arranged around three sides of the board, leaving the front end open. To set the snare, lower the switch and raising the board slightly at the back end, catch the tip of the springer behind it, afterwards arranging the noose over the platform, and scattering the bait inside. If the trap has been constructed properly and set "fine" it will take but a very slight weight on the platform to lower it from its bearing, the weight of an ordinary bird being sufficient, and the springer thus released will fly forward either catching its victim by the neck or legs, as the case may be. It may sometimes be found necessary to cut a slight notch in the end of the springer to receive the board, but in every case it should be tried several times in order to be sure that it works sensitively.

Page 63

Page 65

BOOK III.

TRAPS FOR FEATHERED GAME.

mong the following will be found the various net and

cage traps commonly used in the capture of winged game, besides several other unique devices in the shape of box traps, etc., many of which are original with the author of this work and appear in the present volume for the first time in book form. Commonest among bird-catching machines, is the well known invention of

THE SIEVE TRAP.

This device certainly possesses one great advantage:—*it is not complicated*. Any one possessed of a sieve and a piece of string can get up the trap at two minutes' notice, and provided he has patience, and can wait for his little bird, he is almost sure to be rewarded for his pains,—if he wait long enough. This of course depends upon circumstances: when the birds are plenty and are not shy, it is a common thing to secure three or four at once in a very few minutes, while at other times an hour's patient waiting is unrewarded.

The trap consists only of a sieve tilted up on edge and thus propped in position by a slender stick. To this stick a string or thread is attached and the same carried to some near place of concealment, when the trapper may retire out of sight and watch for his "little bird." The ground beneath the sieve is strewn with bread crumbs, seed or other bait, and while the unsuspecting birds are enjoying their repast, the string is pulled and they are made prisoners. The sieve may be arranged with a spindle as described for the coop trap, page (68), and may thus be left to take care of itself. Where the birds are plenty and easily captured, the former method answers the purpose perfectly, but when tedious waiting is likely to ensue the self-acting trap is better.

Page 66

THE BRICK TRAP.

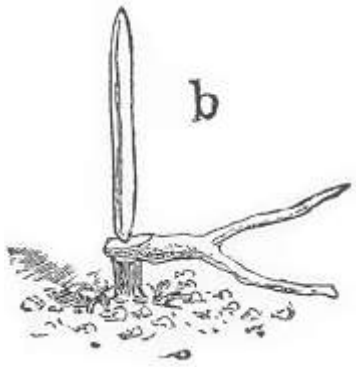
This is a very old invention, and has always been one of the three or four stereotyped specimens of traps selected for publication in all Boys' Books. It is probably well known to most of our readers.

Take four bricks, and arrange them on the ground, as seen in our engraving, letting them rest on their *narrow* sides. If properly arranged, they should have a space between them, nearly as large as the broad surface of the brick. A small, forked twig of the shape shown in the separate drawing (*b*) having a small piece cut away from each side of the end, should then be procured. Next cut a slender stick, about four inches in length, bluntly pointed at each end. A small plug with

a flat top should now be driven into the ground, inside the trap, about three inches from either of the end bricks and projecting about two inches from the ground. The trap is then ready to be set. Lay the flat end of the forked twig over the top of the plug, with the forks pointing forward, or toward the end of the enclosure nearest the plug. The pointed stick should then be adjusted, placing one end on the flat end of the fork, over the plug, and the other beneath the fifth brick, which should be rested upon it. The drawing (*b*) clearly shows the arrangement of the pieces. The bait, consisting of berries, bird-seed, or other similar substances should then be scattered on the ground on the inside of the enclosure. When the bird flies to the trap he will generally alight on the forked twig, which by his weight tilts to one side and dislodges the pieces, thus letting fall the sustained brick.

Page 67

It is not intended to kill the bird, and when rightly constructed will capture it alive. Care is necessary in setting the topmost brick in such a position that it will fall aright, and completely cover the open space. This is a very simple and



effectual little contrivance, and can be made with a *box* instead of bricks, if desired. A piece of board may also be substituted for the top brick, and the enclosure beneath made larger by spreading the bricks further apart, thus making a more roomy dungeon for the captive bird.

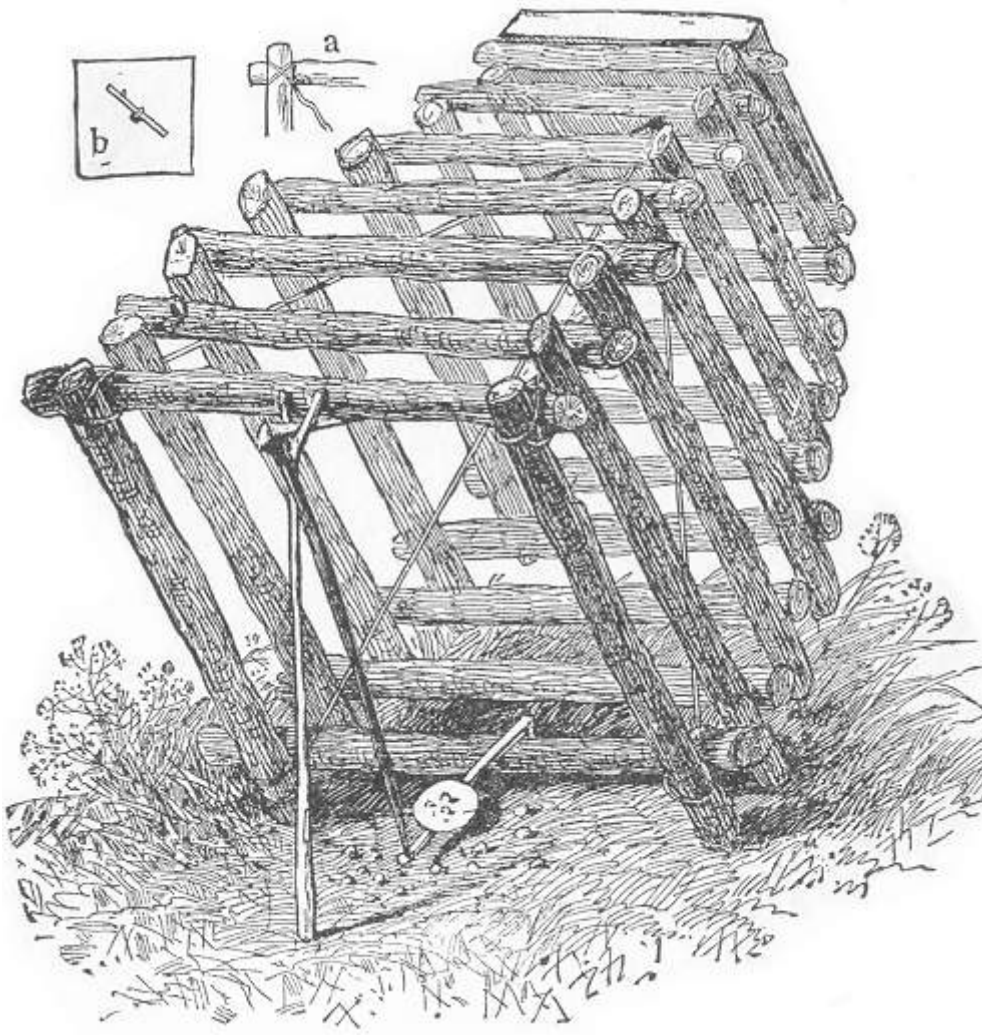
THE COOP TRAP.

This is another excellent device for the capture of birds and large feathered game, and is used to a considerable extent by trappers throughout the country. Like the brick trap, it secures its victims without harm and furnishes the additional advantage of good ventilation for the encaged unfortunate. Any ordinary coop may be used in the construction of this trap, although the homely one we illustrate is most commonly employed on account of its simplicity and easy manufacture. It also does away with the troublesome necessity of carrying a coop to the trapping ground, as it can be made in a very few minutes with common rough hewn twigs by the clever use of the jack knife. The only remaining requisites consist of a few yards of very stout Indian twine, several small squares of brown pasteboard, a dozen tacks and a number of pieces of board five inches square, each one having a hole through its centre, as our engraving (*b*) indicates. Having these, the young trapper starts out with material sufficient for several coops, and if he is smart will find no difficulty in making and setting a dozen traps in a forenoon.

Page 68

In constructing the coop, the first thing to be done is to cut four stout twigs about an inch in thickness and fifteen inches in length and tie them together at

the corners, letting the knot come on the inside as our illustration (*a*) explains and leaving a loose length of about two feet of string from each corner. This



forms the base of the coop. Next collect from a number of twigs of about the same thickness, and from them select two more corresponding in length to the bottom pieces. Having placed the base of the coop on the ground, and collected the strings inside proceed to lay the two selected sticks across the ends of the uppermost two of the square, and directly above the lower two. Another pair of twigs exactly similar in size should then be cut and laid across the ends of the last two, and directly above the second set of the bottom portion, thus forming two squares of equal size, one directly over the other. The next pair of sticks should be a trifle shorter than the previous ones and should be placed a little inside the square. Let the next two be of the same size as the last and also rest a little inside of those beneath them, thus forming the commencement of the conical shape which our engraving presents. By thus continuing alternate layers of the two sticks cob-house fashion, each layer being closer than the one previous, the pyramid will be easily and quickly formed. After ten or a dozen sets have been laid in place, the arm should be introduced into the opening at the top, and the four cords drawn out, letting each one lay along its inside corner of the pyramid. Taking the strings loosely in the left hand and having the twigs in readiness, proceed to build up the sides until the opening at the top is reduced to only four or five inches across. The square board will now come into play. Pass the ends of the cords through the hole in its centre and rest the edge of the board on the top pair of sticks, taking care that it is the tip of the grain of the wood

Page 69

instead of its side, as otherwise it would be likely to crack from the pressure that is about to be brought upon it. Have ready a stout peg of hard wood, and laying it over the hole in the board, and between the strings, proceed to tie the latter as tightly as possible over it. By now turning the peg, the cords will be twisted and tightened and the various pieces of the coops will be drawn together with great firmness, in which state they may be secured by the aid of a tack driven in the top board against the end of the peg as shown at (*b*). Thus we have a neat and serviceable coop, which will last for many seasons. To *set* the affair it is necessary to cut three sticks of the shapes shown in our illustration. The prop piece is a slender forked twig about ten inches in length from the tip to the base of the crotch. The spindle is another hooked twig of the same length: the bait piece is quite similar to the latter, only an inch shorter and supplied with a square notch at the tip. It is also slightly whittled off on the upper side to receive the square of pasteboard or tin, which is to hold the bait and which may be easily fastened in place by a tack. All of these twigs may be easily found in any thicket by a little practice in searching. In setting the trap, it is only necessary to raise up one side of the coop to the height of the prop stick, insert the short arm of the Page 70
spindle through the fork and beneath the edge of the coop. While holding it thus in position, hook the crotch of the bait stick around the lower piece at the back of the coop, and pushing the end of the spindle inside the coop, catch it in the notch of the bait stick where it will hold, and the trap is ready to be baited. The bait may consist of oats, wheat, "nannie berries" or the like, and should be strewn both on the platform and over the ground directly *beneath* and around it. If properly set, a mere peck at the corn will be sufficient to dislodge the pieces and the coop will fall over its captive. It is not an uncommon thing to find two or even three quail encaged in a trap of this kind at one fall, and after the first momentary fright is over, they seem to resign themselves to their fate and take to their confinement as naturally as if they had been brought up to it.

The method of setting the coop trap above described is a great improvement on the old style of setting, and is an improvement original with the author of this work. In the old method a semi-circular hoop of rattan is used in place of the bait stick above. The ends of the rattan are fastened to one of the lower back pieces of the coop, and the hoop is just large enough to fit inside the opening of the coop. This rattan rests just above the ground, and the spindle catches against its inside edge in place of the notch in the bait stick already described, the bait being scattered inside the hoop. When the bird approaches, it steps upon the rattan, and thus pressing it downward releases the spindle and the coop falls; but experience has shown the author that it does not always secure its intruders, but as often falls upon their backs and sends them off limping to regain their lost senses. By the author's improvement it will be seen that the whole body of the bird *must* be *beneath* the coop before the bait sticks can be reached and that when properly set it is absolutely certain to secure its victim. The author can recommend it as infallible, and he feels certain that anyone giving both methods a fair trial will discard the old method as worthless in comparison.

THE BAT FOWLING NET.

With English bird-catchers this contrivance is in common use, but so far as we know it has not been utilized to any great extent in this country. It is chiefly used at night by the aid of a lantern, and large numbers of sparrows and other birds are often secured.

Our illustration gives a very clear idea of the net, which may be constructed as Page 71

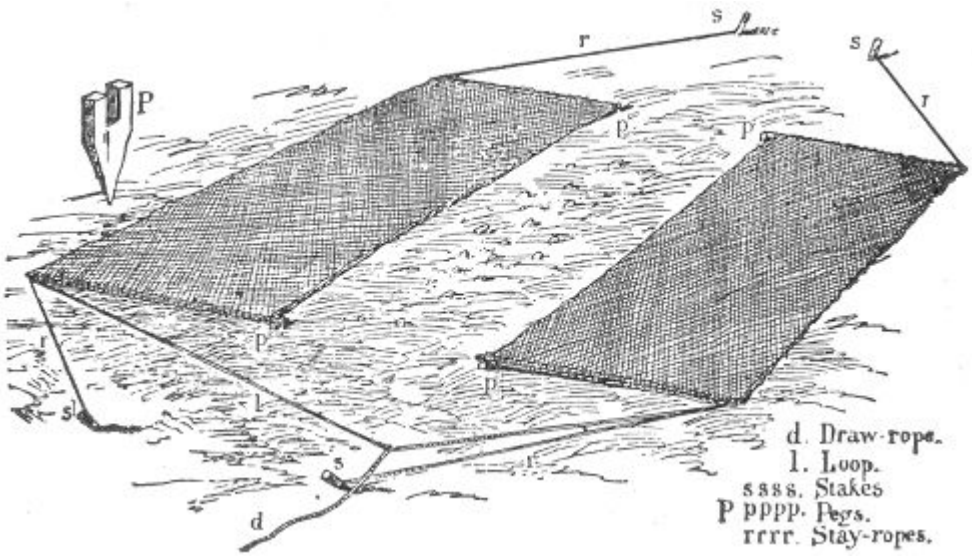
follows: Procure two light flexible poles, about eight feet in length; to the tip of each a cord should be attached, and the same secured to the middle of the pole, having drawn down the tip to the bend, shown in our engraving. The two bent ends should now be attached together by a hinge of leather. A piece of mosquito netting is next in order, and it should be of such a size as to cover the upper bent halves of the poles, as seen in the illustration—the bottom edge being turned up into a bag, about ten inches in depth. The contrivance is now complete, and is used as follows: Three persons are generally required, and a dark night is chosen. Hay stacks, evergreens, and thick bushes offer a favorite shelter to numerous small birds, and it is here that they are sought by the bird-hunters. A breezy night is preferable, as the birds perch low, and are not so easily startled by unusual sounds.

Great caution, however, is used in the approach. One party holds the light, which is generally a *dark* lantern, another takes the net, and the third arms himself with a switch with which to beat the bushes. The net is first held upright about a foot from the bush, and the light thrown upon the back of it. The bush is then moderately beaten, and the birds affrighted and bewildered fly against the net, which is instantly closed. The bird is thus captured, and when a full roost can be discovered a large number may be taken in a single night. The lantern should be closed while not in actual use, and everything should be done as quietly as possible. The dark lantern in itself is useful without the net. The light often so bewilders the bird that it flies directly in the face of the lantern and flutters to the ground, where it may be easily taken with the hand.

THE CLAP NET.

Page 72

In Asia, Africa, South America and Europe, this trap is a common resource for the capture of wild birds of various kinds. It may be called a "decoy" trap, from the fact that "call birds" are generally used in connection with it. They are placed at distances around the trap, and attract the wild birds to the spot by their cries. These birds are especially trained for the purpose, but almost any tamed bird that chirps will attract its mates from the near neighborhood, and answer the purpose very well. Sometimes the "decoys" are entirely dispensed with, and the "bird whistle" used in their stead. This will be described hereafter, and inasmuch as the training of a "decoy" would be a rather difficult matter, we rather recommend the use of the bird whistle. The skill and absolute perfection of mimicry which is often attained by bird fanciers. with the use of this little whistle, is something surprising.



No matter what the species of bird—whether crow, bobolink, thrush or sparrow, the song or call is so exactly imitated as to deceive the most experienced naturalist, and even various birds themselves. Of course this requires practice, but even a tyro may soon learn to use the whistle to good advantage.

The clap net commonly used, is a large contrivance—so large that several hundred pigeons are often caught at once. It is "sprung" by the bird-hunter, who lies in ambush watching for the game. The net is generally constructed as follows, and may be made smaller if desired:—

Page 73

Procure two pieces of strong thread netting, each about fifteen feet in length, and five feet in width. Four wooden rods one inch in thickness and five feet in length are next required. These may be constructed of pine, ash, or any other light wood, and one should be securely whipped to each end of the netting.

Now by the aid of a gimlet or a red-hot iron, the size of a slate pencil, bore a hole through one end of every piece one inch from the tip, taking care that the ends selected lay on the same side of the net. The other extremities of the four poles should be supplied, each with a large screw eye. Four pegs are next in order—one of which is shown separate at (*P*). It should be about eight inches in length, and three inches in width, and an inch in thickness, and sharpened to a point at one end. The other end should be supplied with a notch two inches in depth and of such a width as will easily secure the perforated end of one of the poles already described. By the use of the gimlet or a red-hot nail, a hole should now be bored through the side of every peg across the centre of the notch for the reception of a wire pin or smooth nail.

The nets may now be rolled up on the poles, and the trapper may thus easily carry them to his selected trapping ground. This should be smooth and free from stones and irregularities. Unroll the nets and spread them flatly on the ground, as seen in the illustration. Let the perforated ends of the poles be innermost, and allow a space of six feet between the inner edges of the nets. Draw the net flatly on the ground, and drive one of the notched pegs at each of the inside corners, securing the poles into the slots by the aid of the wire pins or nails. Next cut four stakes eight or ten inches long. The places for these may be seen by a look at our engraving. Each one should be inserted *five feet* distant from the notched peg,

and *exactly* on a line with the *inside* edge of the net—one for each corner. They should slant from the net in every case. To each one of these stakes a stay-rope should be secured, and the other end passed through the screw eye of the nearest pole, drawing the string tightly, so as to stretch the net perfectly square. Next, take a piece of cord, about twenty feet in length, and fasten it across the ends of the net into the screw eyes in the poles. This is the loop to which the draw-string is attached, and either end of the net may be chosen for this purpose. To this loop and a *little one side of the middle*, the draw-string should be fastened. If secured exactly in the middle of the loop, the two nets will *strike* when the draw-rope is pulled, whereas when adjusted a little to one side, the nearest net will move a trifle faster than the other, and they will overlap neatly and without striking—completely covering the ground between them. When the trap is spread the draw-rope should extend to some near shelter where the bird-catcher may secrete himself from view. Spreading the bait on the ground between the nets, and arranging his call birds at the proper distances, he awaits his opportunity of springing his nets. At the proper minute, when the ground is dotted with his game, he pulls the draw-string, and the birds are secured.

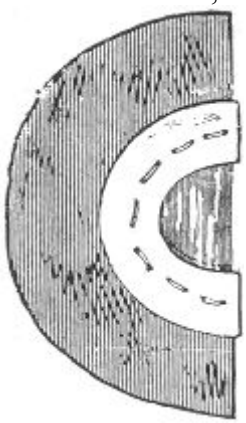
Page 74

Immense numbers of wild fowl are often captured in this way.

The "bird whistle," already alluded to, is often used with good effect, it being only sufficient to attract the birds to such a proximity to the net as will enable them to spy the bait, after which their capture is easily effected.

THE BIRD WHISTLE.

This instrument, also known as the prairie whistle, is clearly shown in our illustration. It is constructed as follows: First, procure a piece of morocco or thin leather. From it cut a circular piece one inch and a quarter in diameter. Through the centre of this disc, cut a round hole, one-third of an inch in diameter. A semi-circular piece of tin is next required. It should be of the shape of an arc, as seen in our illustration; its width across the ends being about three-quarters of an



inch, and its entire length being pierced with a row of fine holes. Next procure a piece of thin sheet India rubber or gold beater's skin. Cut a strip about an inch in length by half an inch in width, and lay one of its long edges directly across the opening in the leather disc. Fold the leather in half (over the rubber), and draw the latter tightly. Next lay on the arc of tin in the position shown in the illustration, and by the aid of a fine needle and thread sew it through the holes, including both leather and rubber in the stitches. When this is done, the whistle is complete. If the gold beater's skin is not attainable, a good substitute may be found in the thin outer membrane of the leaf of a tough onion or leak, the pulp being scraped away.

To use the whistle, place it against the roof of the mouth, tin side up, and with the edge of the rubber towards the front. When once wet, it will adhere to the roof of the mouth, and by skilful blowing, it can be made to send forth a most surprising variety of sounds. The quack of the duck and the song of the thrush may be made to follow each other in a single breath, and the squeal of a pig or the neigh of a horse are equally within its scope. In short, there is scarcely any animal, whether bird or quadruped, the cry of which may not be easily imitated by a skilful use of the prairie whistle, or, indeed, as it might with propriety be called, the "menagerie whistle." Page 75

THE WILD GOOSE TRAP.

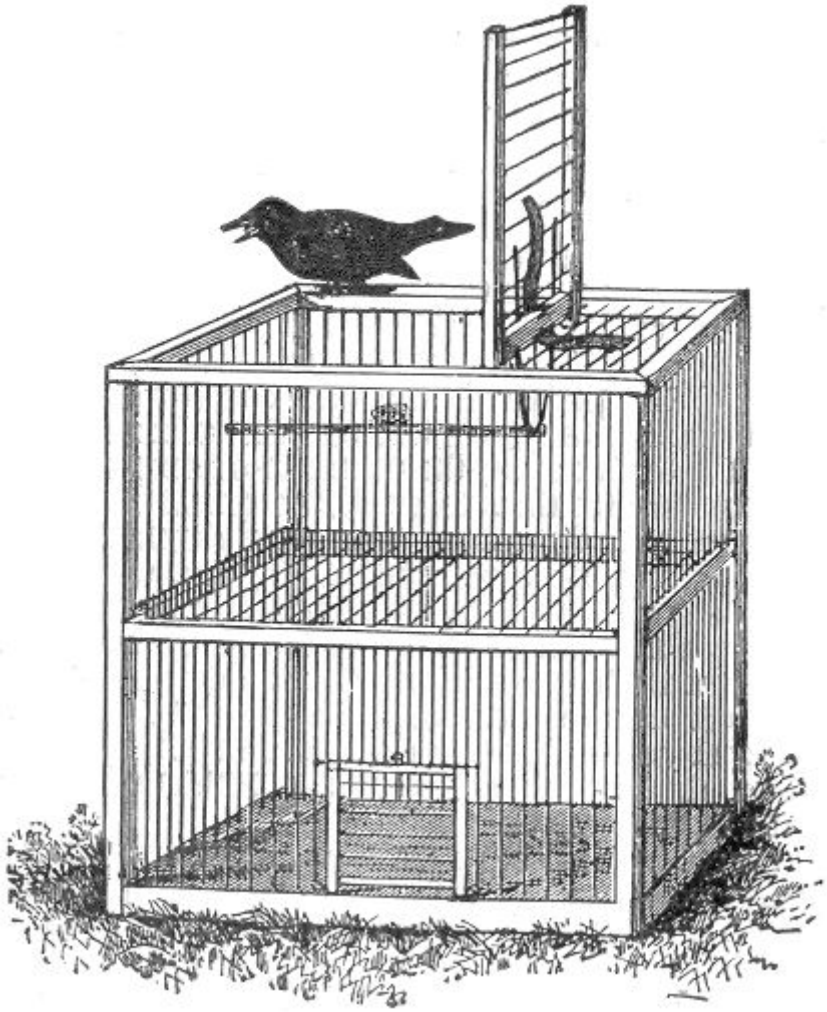
In our northern cold regions, where the wild geese and ptarmigan flock in immense numbers, this trap is commonly utilized. It consists merely of a large net fifty feet in length, and fifteen in width, arranged on a framework, and propped in a slanting position by two poles, after the manner of the sieve trap. It is generally set on the ice; and the trapper, after attaching his strings to the props, and sprinkling his bait at the foot of the net, retires to a distance to await his chances. Tame geese are often used as decoys, and sometimes the bird whistle already described is used for the same purpose. For the capture of the ptarmigan, the bait consists of a heap of gravel. It is hard to imagine a less tempting allurement, but as the food of the birds during the winter is sapless and hard, it becomes necessary for them to swallow a considerable amount of gravel to promote digestion. The great depth of the snow renders this commodity very scarce during the winter season; and the Indians, taking advantage of this fact, succeed in capturing immense numbers of the game in nets by the use of that simple allurement. The gravel is packed on the surface of a pile of snow, placed under the centre of the net, and the draw-string is carried to some neighboring shrubbery or place of concealment, where the trapper can always get at it without being seen by the birds under the net.

When everything is thus prepared, the hunters start out into the adjacent woods and willows, and drive their game toward the nets. This is generally an easy matter, and, no sooner do the birds come in sight of the heap of gravel, than they fly towards it *en masse*, and the ground beneath the net is soon covered with the hungry game. The hunter then goes to the end of the line, and, with a sudden pull, hauls down the stakes: the net fans over the birds, and they are prisoners. Page 76

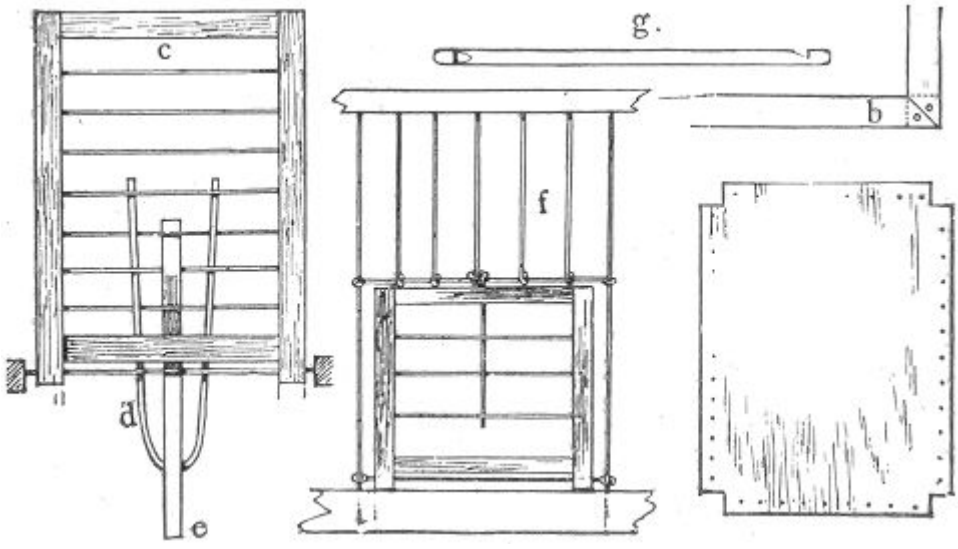
Hundreds of ptarmigan are often thus caught by a single sweep of the net. The trap is simply arranged, and may be constructed on a reduced scale for smaller birds, if desired.

THE TRAP CAGE.

Among bird-catchers generally, this is the favorite and most universal trap; and, where a *decoy* bird is used, it is particularly successful. The cage is arranged in two compartments, one above the other,—the lower one being occupied by the call-birds. The making of the cage requires considerable ingenuity and much patience; and, for the benefit of those who may desire to exercise that patient ingenuity, we will subjoin a few hints, which may help them along in their efforts. For an ordinary cage, the height should be about one Page 77



foot, the broad sides the same, and the top and other two sides eight inches. First cut four corner uprights. These should be three-quarters of an inch square, and one foot in length. Next cut a bottom board of pine, twelve inches by eight inches, and one inch in thickness. From each of its corners, cut a small cube of the wood, exactly three-quarters of an inch square, thus leaving four notches,



which will exactly receive the ends of the uprights, as seen at (*a*). Before adjusting these pieces, the four sides of the boards should be pierced with small

holes, as is also shown in the diagram (*a*). These may be punched with a brad-awl, and should be about half an inch apart, and three-eighths of an inch from the edge of the board. Each one of the uprights may then be secured in place by two long brads, one being hammered each way into each side of the notch. Next proceed to cut four more of the square sticks. Two of these should be one foot in length, and the remaining two eight inches. The corners of these should now be neatly bevelled off, so as to fit after the manner of a picture-frame. They should then be attached to the upper ends of the uprights by a brad through the corner of each, as seen at (*b*), the dotted lines indicating the end of the upright beneath. These sticks should likewise be pierced with holes to correspond with those in the bottom board, and running up and down in the direction of the wires.

Page 78

The middle tier of braces are next required. Two of these should be ten and a half inches in length, and the other two six and a-half, and the ends should be perfectly smooth. These should now be punched with holes corresponding with those above, after which they may be inserted between the uprights as seen in the engraving, and secured by a brad at each end.

The trap door is shown separate at (*c*). The side sticks should be eight inches in length, and one-half an inch square, and the top and bottom sticks five inches in length. They should be set in *between* the side sticks, and the lower one should be secured about half an inch above the lower ends of the uprights, as seen in the illustration. The holes should be made in the side pieces, and the wire run across from side to side, as shown. Annealed iron, or copper wire is best for this purpose. The door should now be pivoted or hinged at the top of the cage, between the long sides, in such a position as that the top end shall rest on one of the narrow upper edges of the cage. A stiff wire should be used for the hinge, being passed through the top pieces of the cage into the lower ends of the door pieces. The cage may now be wired throughout. This is an easy matter, if the holes are properly made. About thirty yards of the wire will be required: iron wire is generally used. It should be about the size of a hair-pin, and should work easily. Commence by passing it from the under side of the bottom board through one of the holes next to the corner. Pass the wire upward, through the centre braces, again upward through the top piece and across to the opposite broad side and corresponding hole. From this point it should pass downwards, through centre brace, and again through the bottom. Draw the wire tightly and passing it upward through the hole next to it, bring it over the top of the cage and around again to the bottom edge from which it started. Continue thus until the hinge of the door is reached; after which the wire should be passed up and down on the same side and thus carried around the small end of the cage until it finally meets at the door hinge on the opposite side. The two halves of the cage should now be separated by a grating of wire, as seen in the main illustration. This may be accomplished either by passing the wire from side to side, around the base of each upright wire, or an additional horizontal row of holes below the others may be punched for the purpose. The door through which the call-bird is introduced should next be made in the bottom section. There are two ways of doing this: one method consists in sawing a hole three inches square in the bottom board of the cage; and a cover consisting of a piece of tin is made to slide beneath the heads of four tacks, two of which are placed on each side of the opening. This form of door is perhaps the simplest of the two. The other is shown separate at (*f*), together with its mode of attachment.

Page 79

It consists of two side pieces of wood, about a third of an inch square, and three inches in length, and two shorter ones, two inches in length. These are

arranged into a square framework by a board in each corner. Four holes are to be pierced in each side piece, at equal distances. Commencing at the top, the door should then be wired as directed for the cage. The lowest hole on each side should be left open for a separate piece of wire. The cage should now receive attention. The broad side is generally selected for the door. Find the seven centre wires and connect them across the middle by another horizontal bit of wire. This may be easily done with a pair of pincers, by compressing a loop at each end of the wire around the two which run perpendicularly at its ends. When this is performed the five intermediate wires should be cut off about a quarter of an inch below the horizontal wire, and the projecting tips looped back over the cross piece, and made fast by the pincers. The lower parts of the upright wires may now be cut off close to the board. We will now take up the door. Pass a piece of wire through the holes at the bottom, clap the door over the opening, and loop the ends of the projecting wire loosely around the upright wires at each side. This will allow the door to slide easily up and down. Another wire should now be interlaced downwards through the centre of the door, and bent into a ring at the top. Let the door rest on the bottom of the cage, and, while in this position, adjust the ring at the top around the central wire directly behind it. The door is then complete, and, if properly made, will look neat and work easily.

The "trap" at the top of the cage is next in order. To complete this it is first necessary to interweave a *stiff* wire loop, as seen at (*d*). The loop should extend on the *inside* of the lower piece of the door and about two inches below it. The *spring* power consists of a piece of stiff hoop-skirt wire, interwoven between the wires of the top of the cage, and those of the door, while the latter is shut. The force of this will be sufficient to bring down the door with a snap; and for further security a catch, such as is described in page (88), may be added if desired.

Page 80

The spindle is next required. This is shown at (*g*), and consists of a small perch of wood seven inches in length, and notched at each end. In setting the trap, the door should be raised as seen in the main illustration. One of the notches in the spindle should now be caught beneath the loop and the other around one of the central wires in the end of the cage. The bait, consisting of a berry, bird-seed, or what-not, may be either fastened to the spindle or placed beneath on the wires. The call-bird having been introduced, the trap may now be left to itself. If the call-bird is well trained it will not be many minutes before the birds of the neighborhood will be attracted to the spot by its cries. Ere long one less cautious than the rest will be seen to perch upon the top of the cage. He soon discovers the bait, and alighting upon the perch, throws it asunder, and in an instant the trap door closes over its captive. The cage is sometimes constructed double, having two compartments beneath for call-birds, and two traps above, in general resembling two of the single traps placed side by side. The decoy bird is not an absolute necessity to the success of the trap. Many birds are caught simply by the bait alone. The trap cage, when constructed on a larger scale, is often successfully employed in the capture of the owl. In this case it is baited with a live mouse or bird, and set during the evening in a conspicuous place. A trap working on this principle, being especially adapted to the capture of the owl, will be noticed hereafter.

THE SPRING NET TRAP.

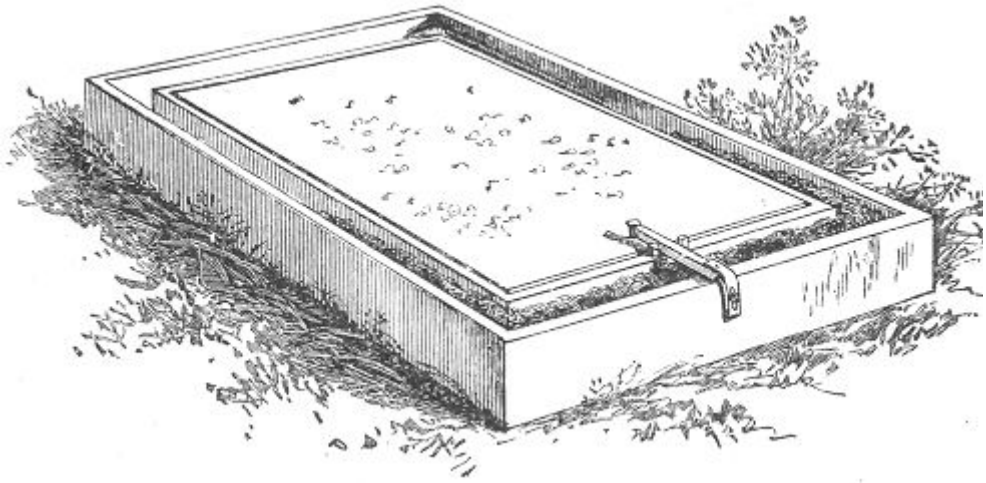
Although slightly complicated in construction, our next illustration presents one of the prettiest bird traps on record, and may be made in the following manner, and by frequently referring to the picture, our explanation will be easily

understood.

The first step is to make or procure a low flat box, about fifteen inches long, by ten inches in width, with a depth of about two inches. Next fasten an interior box, of the same height, leaving a space of about three-quarters of an inch between them all round. A platform should now be made. Let it be of such a size that it will just fit in the interior box, with a very slight space all around its edge. It should then be pivoted in the upper part of this box by two small slender pins, one being driven through into its edge, at the centre of each end. Let it be sensitively poised. The next thing to be done, is to arrange the spindle and catch. The latter should consist of a tack or small bit of wood fastened on the middle of the platform, about an inch from one end, as seen both in the main illustration and in the diagram at (*b*).

Page 81

The spindle should consist of a flat piece of wood, secured with a leather hinge to the edge of the outside box, directly opposite the catch. Let it be long enough

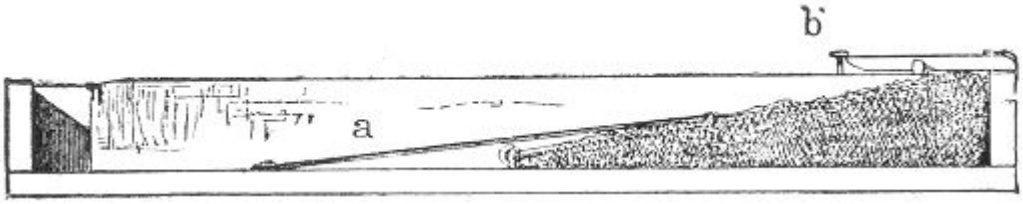


to reach and barely hold itself beneath the catch. When thus in its position, two small plugs should next be driven into the edge of the inner box, one on each side of the spindle, thus holding it in place. A glance at our illustration makes this clear. The netting and "hoop" are next in order. The hoop should consist of an iron wire of the diameter of common telegraph wire.

For a box of the size we have given, a length of about twenty-eight inches will be found to answer. Before making the hoop, however, its hinges should be ready for it. Two screw eyes, or staples of bent wire should be driven into the bottom of the box between the two walls, one in the exact middle of each side. The iron wire should now be bent so as to fit round and settle into the space between the boxes, letting each end rest over the screws in the bottom. It will be found that there will be enough surplus wire on each end to form into a loop with the pincers. These loops should be passed through the screws or rings already inserted, and then pinched together; the hinge will thus be made, and will appear as at (*c*). If properly done, they should allow the hoop to pass freely from one end of the box to the other, and settle easily between the partitions. If this hinge should prove too complicated for our young readers, they may resort to another method, which, although not so durable, will answer very well. In this case the wire will only need to reach to the exact middle of the long sides. No surplus being necessary, a length of twenty-six inches will be exactly right. On each end a short loop of tough Indian twine should be tied. By now fastening these loops to the bottom of the box with tacks, in the place of screws, it will

Page 82

form a hinge which will answer the purpose of the more complicated one.



The netting should consist of common mosquito gauze, or, if this cannot be had, any thin cloth may be substituted. It should be sewed fast to the iron wire, from hinge to hinge, and then, with the hoops resting in its groove, the netting should be drawn over the platform, and tacked to the bottom of the groove, on its remaining half. It should rest loosely over the platform to allow plenty of space for the bird.

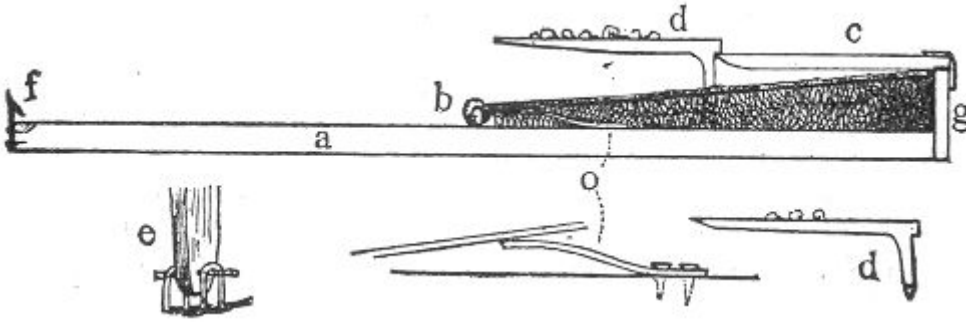
But one more addition, and the trap is finished. We have mentioned the use of elastics in other varieties: they are of equal use here, and should be attached to the hoop as seen at (*a*) in the section drawing, the remaining ends being fastened to the bottom of the groove, as there indicated. These elastics should be placed on both sides, and stretched to such a tension as will draw the hoop quickly from one side to the other.

It will now be easy to set the trap. Draw the hoop back to the opposite end, tucking the netting into the groove; lower the spindle over it, resting it between the two little plugs, and securing its end beneath the catch on the platform. If the bait, consisting of bread-crumbs, berries, insects, or the like, be now sprinkled on the platform, the trap is ready for its feathered victim. It will easily be seen that the slightest weight on *either* side of this poised platform will throw the catch from the end of the spindle, and release the hoop and the platform in an instant is covered by the net, capturing whatever unlucky little bird may have chanced to jump upon it. This is a very pretty little trap, and will well repay the trouble of making it.

Page 83

A SIMPLER NET TRAP.

Much ingenuity has been displayed in the construction of bird traps of various kinds, but often the ingenuity has been misplaced, and the result has been so complicated as to mar its usefulness for practical purposes. The examples of net traps presented in this volume are so simple that the merest tyro can readily understand them. What can be more so than the present example, and yet it is as sure in its effect, and *surer* than those other varieties of more complicated construction. One necessary element in a trap of any kind is, that the bearings are slight and that they spring easily. To obtain this requisite it is necessary to



overcome friction as much as possible, using only a small number of pieces, and having as few joints and hinges only as are absolutely necessary. The present variety possesses advantages on this account. It is constructed somewhat on the principle of the ordinary steel trap, and also resembles in other respects the one we have just described, although much simpler. We give only a section drawing, as this will be sufficient. The long side of a flat board of about eight by sixteen inches is shown at (*a*); (*b*) indicates the loops of a bent wire, to which the netting is attached, as in the trap just described, the loops being fastened to the board as in the other variety; (*g*) consists of a small bit of wood an inch or so in length and half an inch in width. It should be tacked on to the middle of the one end of the board and project about a half inch above the surface. To the top of this the spindle (*c*) should be attached by a leather or staple hinge. The spindle should be of light pine, five inches in length and a quarter of an inch square, bevelled; on the under side of one end (*d*) is the catch or bait piece, and should be whittled out of a shingle or pine stick of the shape shown, the width being about a half an inch or less. One side should be supplied with a slight notch for the reception of the spindle, and the other should project out two or three inches, being covered on the top with a little platform of pasteboard, tin, or thin wood either glued or tacked in place. To attach this piece to the main board, two small wire staples may be used, one being inserted into the bottom end of the piece and the other being hooked through it, and afterward tacked to the bottom of the trap, thus forming a loop hinge. Another method is to make a hole through the lower tip of the bait piece by the aid of a red-hot wire, as seen at (*d*), afterwards inserting a pin and overlapping its ends with two staples driven into the bottom board, as shown at (*e*). In our last mentioned net trap the spring power consisted of rubber elastic, and the same may be used in this case, if desired, but by way of variety we here introduce another form of spring which may be successfully employed in the construction of traps of various kinds. It is shown at (*o*) and consists merely of a piece of tempered hoop iron, so bent as to act with an upward pressure. It should be about three inches long by half an inch wide. About three-quarters of an inch should be allowed for the two screws by which it is to be attached to the board. The rest should be bent upward and thus tempered by first heating almost to redness, and then cooling in cold water.

Page 84

One of these springs should be fastened to the board on each side, directly under the wire and quite near the hinge, in the position shown in the main drawing. Now draw back the net, lower the spindle and catch its extremity in the notch of the bait piece, and the trap is set as in our illustration. Sprinkle the bait on the platform, and lay the machine on the ground where birds are known to frequent; and it is only a matter of a few hours or perhaps minutes, before it will prove its efficacy. In order to prevent the bird from raising the wire and thereby escaping, it is well to fasten a little tin catch (*f*) at the end of the board. This will spring over the wire and hold it in its place.

Page 85

THE UPRIGHT NET TRAP.

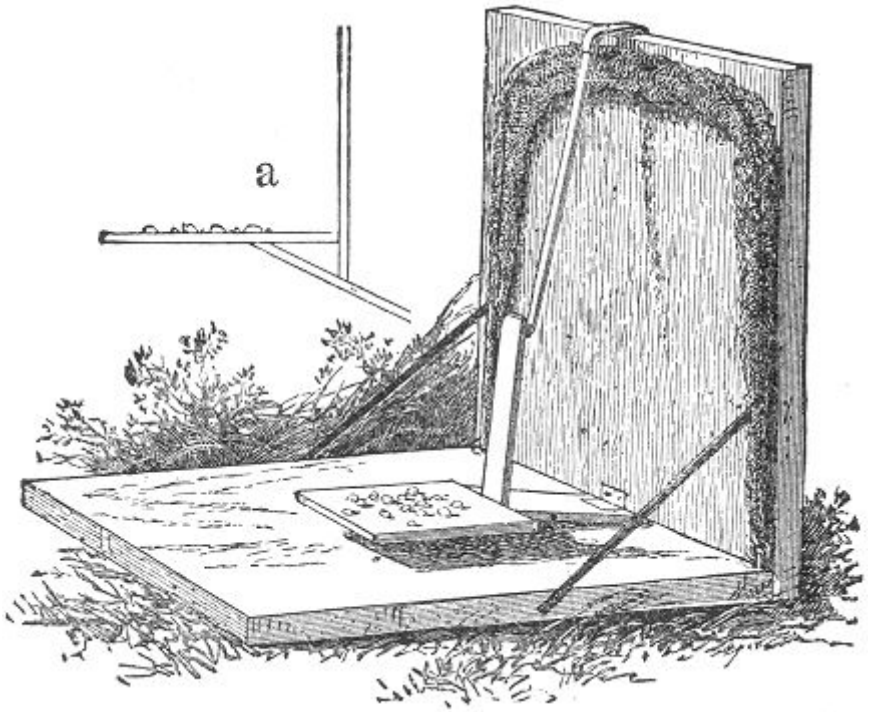
The following is another novelty in the way of a bird-trap, somewhat similar to the one we have just described, in its manner of working.

Procure two pieces of board about a foot square. Nail one to the edge of the other, as represented in our engraving. A stout wire is the next requisite. It should be about thirty inches long, and bent either into a curve or into two corners, making three equal sides. Each end of the wire should then be bent into a very small loop for the hinge. On to this wire the netting should then be

secured as in the two previous examples, after which the ends of the wire may be tied with string or hinged on wire staples into the angle of the two boards, as seen in our illustration. Allow the wire now to lie flat on the bottom board, and then proceed to tack the netting around the edges of the upright board. Two elastics should next be fastened to the wire on each side, securing their loose ends to the bottom of the trap. They should be tightly drawn so as to bring the wire down with a snap. The spindle of this trap should be about eight or nine inches long, square and slender,—the lower end being flattened, and the upper end secured to the top edge of the upright board by a hinge of leather or string. An excellent hinge may be made with a piece of leather an inch and a half long, by half an inch in width, one half of the length being tied around the end of the spindle, and the other tacked on to the upper edge of the board.

The platform is given by itself at (*a*) in the same picture. It may be made of very thin wood—cigar box wood, for instance, or even thick pasteboard. It consists of three pieces. The piece which is hinged into the angle of the boards should be about three inches in length; the platform piece ought not to be more than four inches square, and the upright piece only long enough to reach the tip of the spindle when the platform is raised, as shown in our engraving. The hinge piece should be cut to an edge on that end where the leather is fastened, the opposite end being bevelled off in order that the platform may rest and be tacked or glued firmly upon it. The diagram (*a*) will make this all very clear.

When the platform is all made and fastened in its place, the trap may be set. Page 86
Draw the hoop back as far as possible, and lower the spindle over its edge, catching it behind the upright stick on the platform. If the trap is properly constructed, the pressure of the spindle on the platform will suffice to hold it up as seen in our illustration. The upright stick on the back of the platform should never be more than an inch and a half from the back of the trap. If need be, a slight notch may be made in the end of the spindle and a small tack driven into the back of the upright stick to correspond to it. By thus fitting the notch under the head of the tack, it will be sure to hold the platform in the right position. But

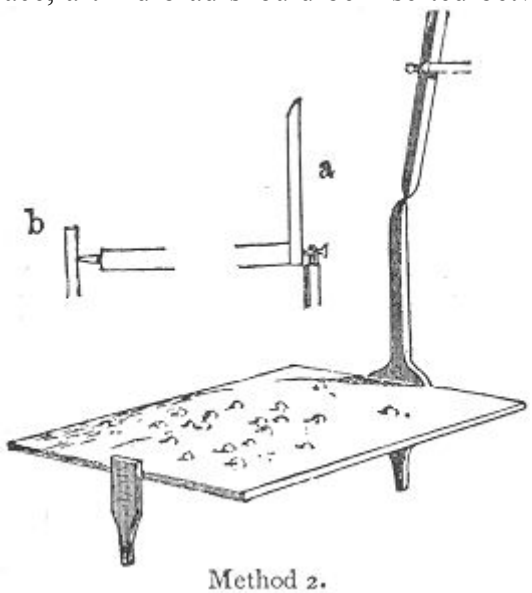


it should be carefully tested before setting, to see that it springs easily.

When thus set sprinkle the bait on the platform, scattering a little also on the bottom of the trap and on the ground directly around it. The little birds will soon spy the tempting morsels, and alighting on the trap are misled, and the slightest peck or pressure on the platform where the bait is most bounteously spread brings down the wire and net with a *snap*, and the little creature is secured without harm.

Our next illustration shows another method of constructing the platform. It should be about three or four inches square, and on the middle of one of its edges the upright catch piece should be fastened. This piece, as will be seen in our engraving, should be cut spreading at the bottom so as to admit of being secured to the platform by two brads, the tip being cut to a point. The total length of this piece should not be over two and a half inches. When tacked in place, a third brad should be inserted between the other two and exactly in the

Page 87



Method 2.

centre of the side of the platform. This latter brad is to act as the pivot, or hinge, and should project about a quarter of an inch, as seen at (*a*). On the opposite edge of the platform another larger brad should be driven, having its end filed to a blunt point, as in (*b*). If the filing would be too tedious, a plug of hard wood of the required shape would answer every purpose. The upright props which support the platform should be cut of thin wood. Let one be an inch and a half long and half an inch wide, the other being an inch in length. Each should have one end whittled to a point, which will admit of its being inserted in a gimlet hole in the bottom of the trap. These gimlet holes should be made at least half an inch in depth. Make the first at about an inch or so from the back of the trap. Into this insert the shorter pieces, broadside front. Lay the pivot brad of the platform on the top of this piece and insert over it a small wire staple, as seen at (*a*). Elevate the platform evenly and determine the spot for the other gimlet hole, which should be directly beneath the point of the filed brad. Be sure that it is in the middle of the board, so that the platform may set squarely, and be perfectly parallel with the sides. Insert the remaining prop in its place, and the platform is complete. The overhanging spindle now requires a little attention. This should be whittled off on each side, bringing it to a point at the tip. On each side of the spindle a long plug should then be driven into the back piece, as our illustration shows. These should be far enough apart to allow the spindle to pass easily between them. The *setting* of the trap is plainly shown in our engraving. The spindle being lowered between the plugs is caught finely on the tip of the catch-

Page 88

piece. The blunt point at the opposite end of the platform should have a slight hollow made for it in the prop against which it presses. If the platform be now strewn with bait, the little machine is ready. It is certainly very simple and will be found very effective.

THE BOX OWL TRAP.

The use of a box trap for the capture of an owl is certainly an odd idea, but we nevertheless illustrate a contrivance which has been successfully used for that purpose.

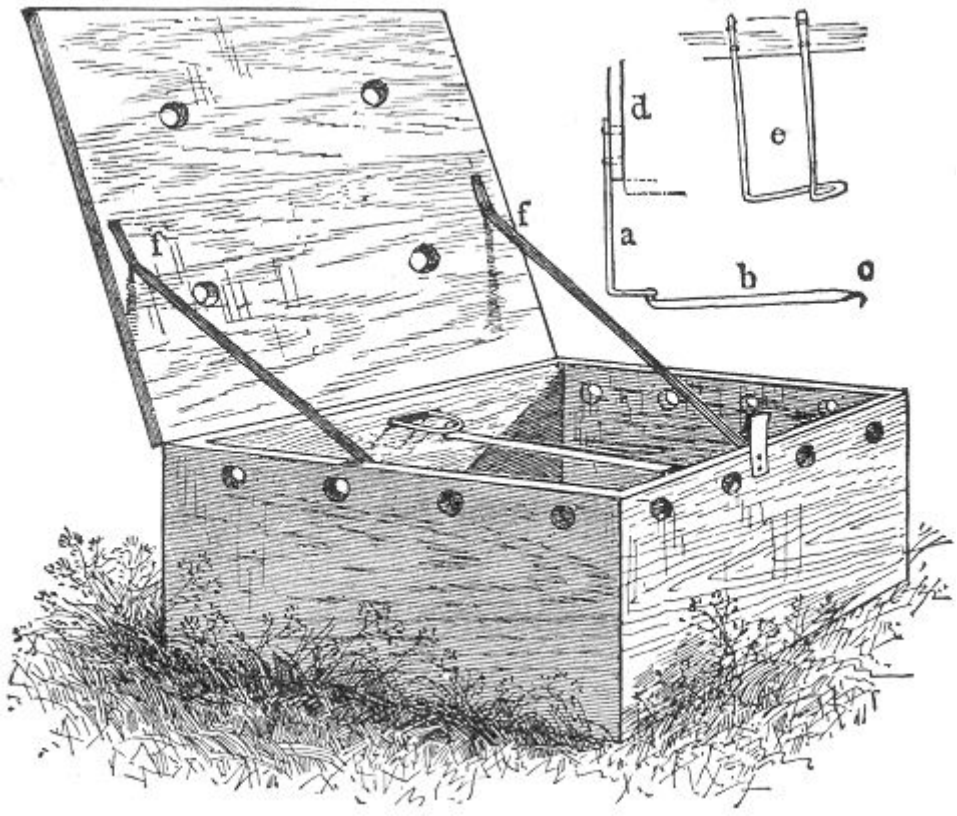
The box in this case should be of the proportions shown in our engraving, and well ventilated with holes, as indicated. (This ventilation is, by-the-way, a good feature to introduce in *all* traps.) Having made or selected a suitable box—say, fourteen or more inches wide, provided with a cover, working on a hinge—proceed to fasten on the outside of the lid a loop of stiff wire, bent in the shape shown at (*e*). This may be fastened to the cover by means of small staples, or even tacks, and should project over the edge about two inches. When this is done, the lid should be raised to the angle shown in our illustration, and the spot where the end of the wire loop touches the back of the box should be marked and a slit cut through the wood at this place, large enough for the angle of the loop to pass through. Two elastics should now be fastened to the inside of the box, being secured to the bottom at the side, and the other to the edge of the cover, as seen in the illustration. They should be sufficiently strong to draw down the cover quickly. The perch, or spindle, should consist of a light stick of wood, as shown at (*b*,) one end provided with a slight notch, and the other fastened to the inside of the front of the box by a string or leather hinge, (*c*,) keeping the notch on the *upper* side of the stick. It will be now seen that by opening the cover, until the loop enters through the groove, and by then hooking the notch in the spindle *under* the loop as seen at (*a*) the trap will be set, and if properly done it will be found that a very slight weight on the spindle will set it free from the loop and let the cover down with swiftness.

To secure the cover in place a small tin catch should now be applied to the front edge of the box, as shown in the illustration. A piece of tin two inches in length by a half an inch in breadth will answer for this purpose. One end should be bent down half an inch at a pretty sharp angle, and the other attached by two tacks, to the edge of the box, in the position shown in the cut. This precaution will effectually prevent the escape of whatever bird, large or small, the trap may chance to secure. It is a necessary feature of the trap, as without it the elastics might be torn asunder and the lid thereby easily raised.

Page 89

This trap may be baited in a variety of ways. As it is particularly designed for a *bird* trap, it is well to sprinkle the bottom of the box with berries, bird-seed, small insects, such as crickets, grasshoppers, etc. These latter are very apt to jump out, and it may be well to fasten one or two of them to the bottom with a pin through the body, just behind the head.

There are many kinds of birds which live almost exclusively on insects; and as this bait is of rather a lively kind, there is scarcely any other method to retain them in their position. A bird on approaching this trap will almost irresistibly alight on the perch, and if not at *first*, it is generally sure to do so before long. If



desired, a pasteboard platform may be fastened on the top of the perch with small tacks, and the bait scattered upon it. This will act in the same manner, and might, perhaps, be a trifle more certain. We will leave it to our readers to experiment upon. Page 90

We have given this variety the name of "owl-trap," because it may be used with success in this direction. When set for this purpose, it should be baited with a live mouse, small rat or bird, either fastened to the bottom of the trap, if a bird, or set in with the trap inclosing it, if a mouse. A small bird is the preferable bait, as it may be easily fastened to the bottom of the box by a string, and as a general thing is more sure to attract the attention of the owl by its chirping.

The trap should be set in an open, conspicuous spot, in the neighborhood where the owls in the night are heard to "hoot." The chances are that the box will contain an owl on the following morning.

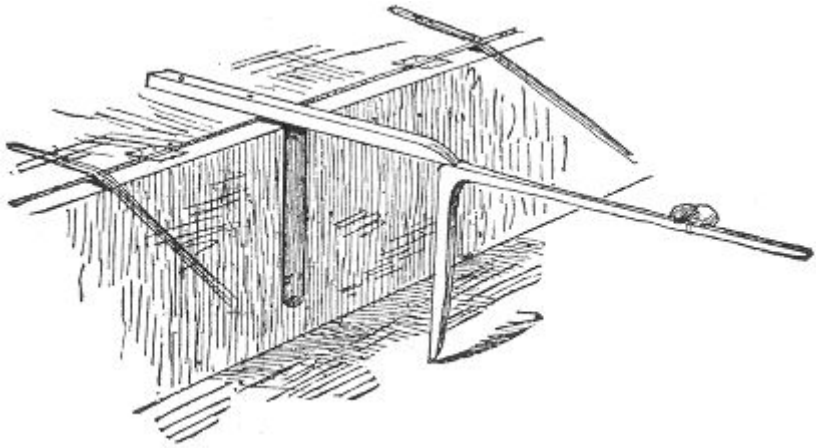
This bird is a very interesting and beautiful creature, and if our young reader could only catch one, and find rats and mice enough to keep it well fed, he would not only greatly diminish the number of rats in his neighborhood, but he would realize a great deal of enjoyment in watching and studying the habits of the bird.

Should it be difficult to supply the above mentioned food, raw meat will answer equally well. The bird should either be kept in a cage or inclosure and in the latter case, its wings will require to be clipped.

THE BOX BIRD TRAP.

Here we have another invention somewhat resembling the foregoing. Our engraving represents the arrangement of the parts as the trap appears when set.

The box may be of almost any shape. A large sized cigar box has been used with excellent success, and for small birds is just the thing. The cover of the box in any case should work on a hinge of some sort. The trap is easily made. The first thing to be done is to cut an upright slot, about two inches in length, through the centre of the backboard, commencing at the upper edge. To the inside centre edge of the cover a small square strap, about four inches in length, should then be secured. It should be so adjusted as that one-half shall project toward the inside of the box, as seen in the illustration, and at the same time pass easily through the slot beneath where the cover is closed. The lid should now be Page 91 supplied with elastics as described in the foregoing. Next in order comes the bait stick. Its shape is clearly shown in our illustration, and it may be either cut in one piece or consist of two parts joined together at the angle. To the long arm



the bait should be attached and the upright portion should be just long enough to suspend the cover in a position on a line with the top of the box. The trap may now be set, as seen in our illustration, and should be supplied with the necessary tin catch, described in the foregoing.

THE PENDENT BOX TRAP.

This invention is original with the author of this work, and when properly made and set will prove an excellent device for the capture of small birds.

The general appearance of the trap, as set, is clearly shown in our illustration. A thin wooden box is the first requisite, it should be about a foot square and six inches in depth, and supplied with a close fitting cover, working on hinges. The sides should then be perforated with a few auger holes for purposes of ventilation.

Two elastics are next in order, and they should be attached to the cover and box, one on each side, as shown at (*a*.) They should be drawn to a strong tension, so as to hold the cover firmly against the box.

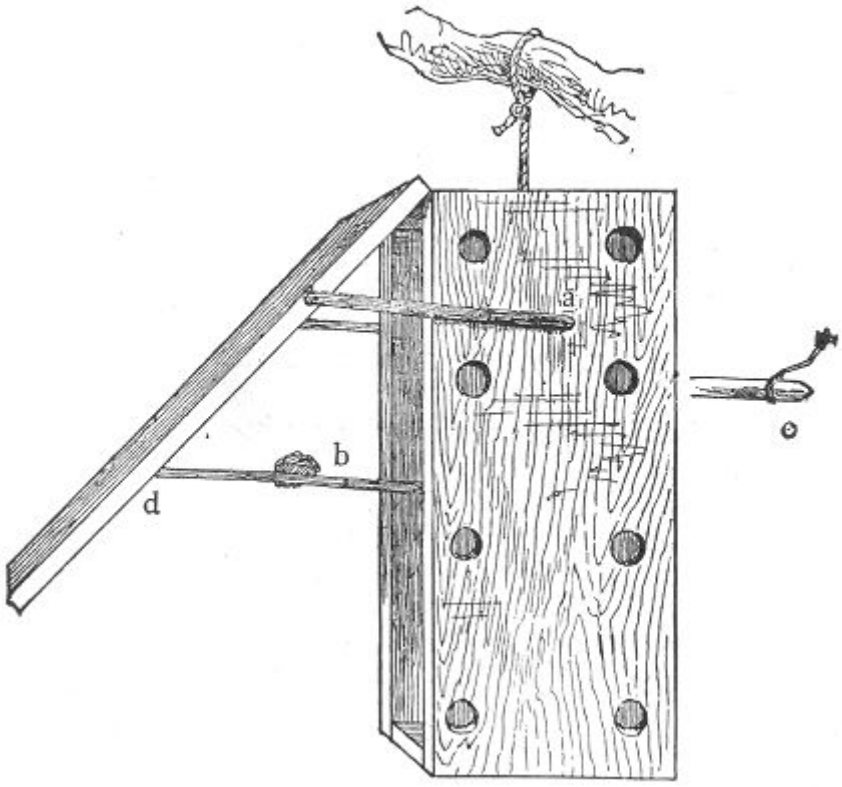
The mechanism of the trap centres in the bait stick which differs in construction from any other described in this book.

It should be made about the size of a lead pencil, and eleven inches or so in Page 92

length, depending of course upon the size of the box.

It should then be divided in two pieces by a perfectly flat cut, the longer part being six inches in length. This piece should be attached to the back board of the box by a small string and a tack, as shown at (*c*), its end being bluntly pointed. Its attachment should be about five inches above the bottom board, and in the exact centre of the width of the back.

Near the flat end of the other piece the bait consisting of a berry or other fruit, should be secured, and the further extremity of the stick should then be rounded to a blunt point. The trap is now easily set. Raise the lid and lift the long stick to the position given in the illustration. Adjust the flat end of the bait stick against

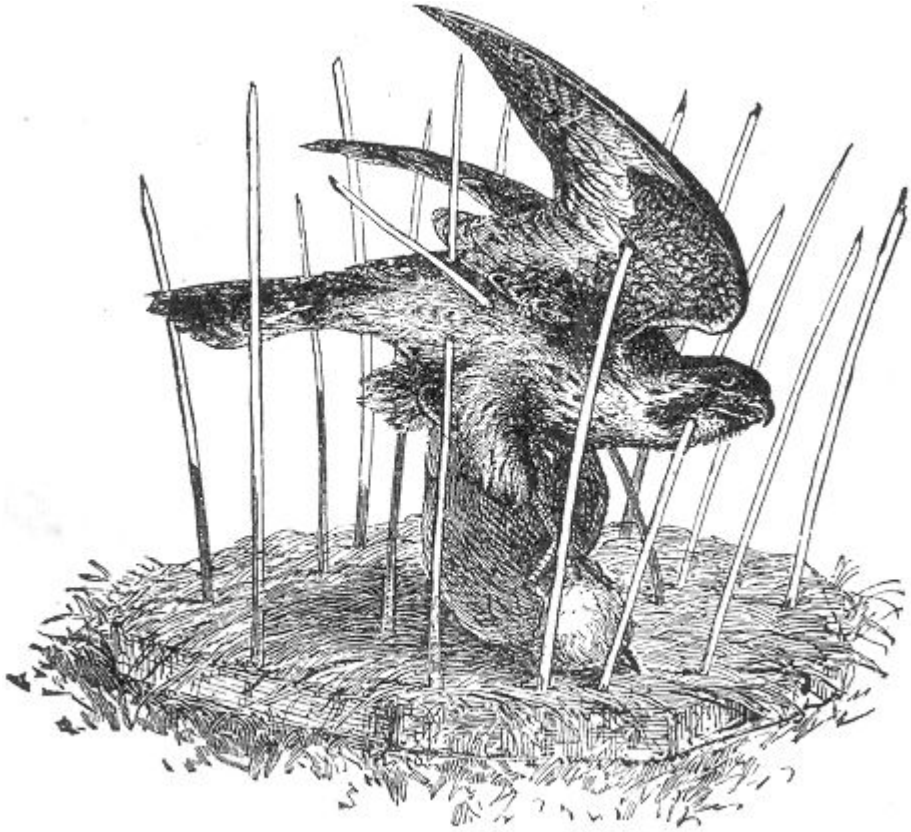


that of the former, and allow the pressure of the lid to bear against the blunt point of the short stick at (*d*), as shown in the illustration, a straight dent being made in the cover to receive it, as also in the hack of the box for the other piece. If properly constructed, this pressure will be sufficient to hold the sticks end to end, as our engraving represents, and the trap is thus set. The slightest weight on the false perch thus made will throw the parts asunder, and the cover closes with a snap.

Page 93

The greatest difficulties in constructing the trap will be found in the bearings of the bait sticks (*b*), the ends of which must be perfectly flat and join snugly, in order to hold themselves together. The box may now be suspended in a tree by the aid of a string at the top. The first bird that makes bold enough to alight on the perch is a sure captive, and is secured without harm. If desired, the elastic may be attached to the inside of the cover, extending to the back of the box, as seen in the initial at the head of this chapter. If the elastic in any event shows tendencies toward relaxing, the tin catch described on page 88 should be adjusted to the lower edge of the box to insure capture.

THE HAWK TRAP.



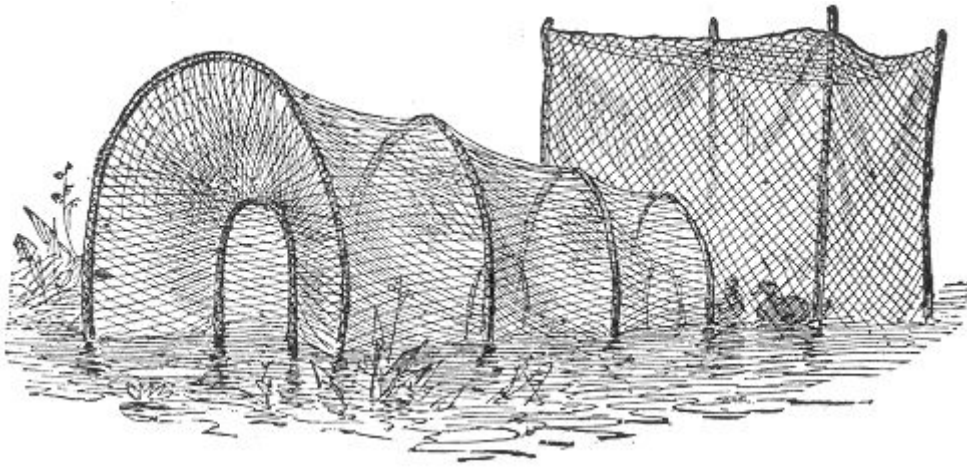
Our illustration represents a hawk in a sad plight. The memory of a recent feast has attracted it to the scene of many of its depredations: but the ingenious farmer has at last outwitted his feathered foe and brought its sanguinary exploits to a timely end. This trap is a "Yankee" invention and has been used with great success in many instances where the hawk has become a scourge to the poultry yard. The contrivance is clearly shown in an illustration, consisting merely of a piece of plank two feet square, set with stiff perpendicular pointed wires.

Page 94

This affair was set on the ground in a conspicuous place, the board covered with grass, and the nice fat Poland hen which was tied to the centre proved a morsel too tempting for the hawk to resist. Hence the "fell swoop" and the fatal consequences depicted in our illustration. The owl has also been successfully captured by the same device.

THE WILD DUCK NET.

Following will be found two examples of traps in very common use for the capture of wild ducks, and in the region of Chesapeake bay, immense numbers of the game are annually taken by their aid. The first is the well known net trap, so extensively used in nearly all countries, both for the capture of various kinds of fish as well as winged game. Our illustration gives a very clear idea of the construction of the net, and an elaborate description is almost superfluous. It consists of a graduated series of hoops covered by a net work. From each a



converging net extends backward ending in a smaller hoop which is held in position by cords extending therefrom to the next larger hoop. The depth of these converging nets should extend backward about three or four feet from the large hoop; and the distance between these latter should be about five feet. The length of the net should be about twenty feet, terminating in a "pound" or netted enclosure, as seen in the illustration. The trap may be set on shore or in the water as seen. "Decoy" birds are generally used, being enclosed in the pound.

Page 95

When set on land the bait consisting of corn or other grain should be spread about the entrance and through the length of the net.

It is remarkable that a duck which so easily finds its way within the netted enclosure, should be powerless to make its escape, but such seems to be the fact, and even a single hoop with its reflex net, has been known to secure a number of the game.

THE HOOK TRAP

Our second example is one which we are almost tempted to exclude on

account of its cruelty, but as our volume is especially devoted to traps of all kinds and as this is a variety in very common use, we feel bound to give it a passing notice. Our illustration fully conveys its painful mode of capture, and a beach at low water is generally the scene of the slaughter. A long stout cord is first stretched across the sand and secured to a peg at each end. To this shorter Page 96
lines are attached at intervals, each one being supplied with a fish hook baited with a piece of the tender rootstock of a certain water reed, of which the ducks are very fond. The main cord and lines are then imbedded in the sand, the various baits only appearing on the surface, and the success of the device is equal to its cruelty.

THE "FOOL'S CAP" TRAP.

Of all oddities of the trap kind, there is, perhaps, no one more novel and comical than the "Fool's Cap" crow-trap, which forms the subject of our present illustration. Crows are by no means easy of capture in any form of trap, and they

are generally as coy and as shrewd in their approach to a trap as they are bold in their familiarity and disrespect for the sombre scarecrows in the com field. But this simple device will often mislead the smartest and shrewdest crow, and make a perfect *fool* of him, for it is hard to imagine a more ridiculous sight than is furnished by the strange antics and evolutions of a crow thus embarrassed with his head imbedded in a cap which he finds impossible to remove, and which he in vain endeavors to shake off by all sorts of gymnastic performance. The secret of the little contrivance is easily told. The cap consists of a little cone of stiff paper, about three or four inches in diameter at the opening. This is imbedded in the ground, up to its edge, and a few grains of corn are dropped into it. The inside edge of the opening is then smeared with *bird-lime*, a substance of which Page 97
we shall speak hereafter.

The crow, on endeavoring to reach the corn, sinks his bill so deep in the cone as to bring the gummy substance in contact with the feathers of his head and neck, to which it adheres in spite of all possible efforts on the part of the bird to throw it off.

The cones may be made of a brownish-colored paper if they are to be placed in the earth, but of white paper when inserted in the snow. It is an excellent plan to insert a few of these cones in the fresh corn hills at planting season, as the crows are always on the watch at this time, and will be sure to partake of the tempting morsels, not dreaming of the result. The writer has often heard of this ingenious device, and has read of its being successfully employed in many instances, but he has never yet had an opportunity of testing it himself. He will leave it for his readers to experiment upon for themselves.

BIRD LIME.

This substance so called to which we have above alluded, and which is sold in our bird marts under that name, is a viscid, sticky preparation, closely resembling a very thick and gummy varnish. It is astonishingly "sticky," and the slightest quantity between the fingers will hold them together with remarkable

tenacity. What its effect must be on the feathers of a bird can easily be imagined.

This preparation is put up in boxes of different sizes, and may be had from any of the taxidermists or bird-fanciers in any of our large towns or cities. Should a Page 98 *home made* article be required, an excellent substitute may be prepared from the inner bark of the "slippery elm." This should be gathered in the spring or early summer, cut into very small pieces or scraped into threads, and boiled in water sufficient to cover them until the pieces are soft and easily mashed. By this time the water will be pretty much boiled down, and the whole mass should then be poured into a mortar and beaten up, adding at the same time a few grains of wheat. When done, the paste thus made may be put into an earthen vessel and kept. When required to be used, it should be melted or softened over the fire, adding goose grease or linseed oil, instead of water. When of the proper consistency it may be spread upon sticks or twigs prepared for it, and which should afterwards be placed in the locality selected for the capture of the birds.

An excellent bird-lime may be made also from plain linseed-oil, by boiling it down until it becomes thick and gummy. Thick varnish either plain or mixed with oil, but always free from alcohol, also answers the purpose very well. The limed twigs may be either set in trees or placed on poles and stuck in the ground.

If any of our readers chance to become possessed of an owl, they may look forward to grand success with their limed twigs. It is a well known fact in

natural history that the *owl* is the universal enemy of nearly all our smaller birds. And when, as often happens, a swarm of various birds are seen flying frantically from limb to limb, seeming to centre on a particular tree, and filling the air with their loud chirping, it may be safely concluded that some sleepy owl has been surprised in his day-dozing, and is being severely pecked and punished for his nightly depredations.

Profiting from this fact, the bird catcher often utilizes the owl with great success. Fastening the bird in the crotch of some tree, he adjusts the limed twigs on an sides, even covering the neighboring branches with the gummy substance. No sooner is the owl spied by *one* bird than the cry is set up, and a *score* of foes are soon at hand, ready for battle. One by one they alight on the beguiling twigs, and one by one find themselves held fast. The more they flutter the more powerless they become, and the more securely are they held. In this way many valuable and rare birds are often captured.

THE HUMMING BIRD TRAP.

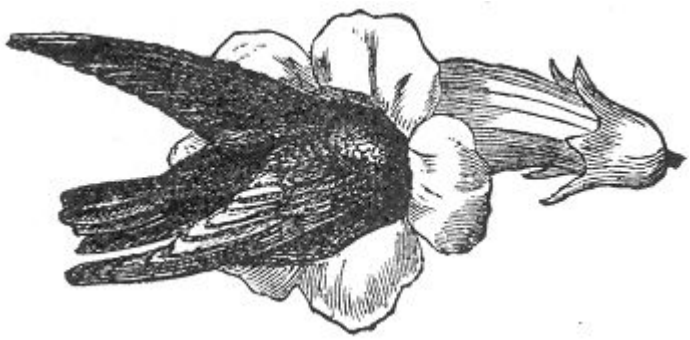
Page 99

One of the most ingenious uses to which bird lime is said to have been applied with success, is in the capture of humming-birds. The lime in this instance is made simply by chewing a few grains of wheat in the mouth until a gum is formed. It is said that by spreading this on the inside opening of the long white lily or trumpet-creeper blossom, the capture of a humming-bird is almost certain, and he will never be able to leave the flower after once fairly having entered the opening. There can be no doubt but that this is perfectly practicable, and we recommend it to our readers.

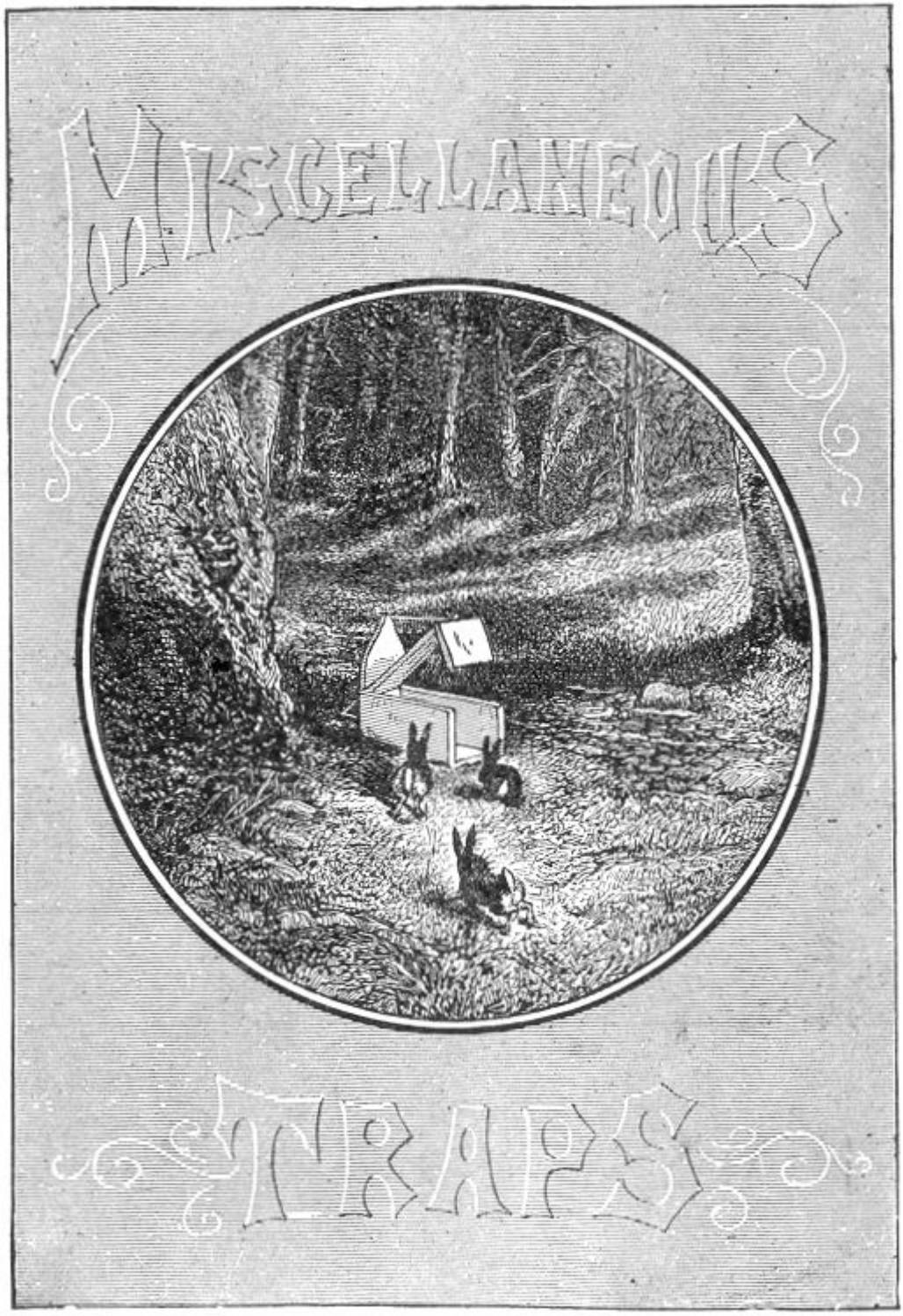
The object in making the bird-lime from wheat consists in the fact that this is more easily removed from the feathers than the other kinds.

We would not wish our readers to infer from this that a humming-bird might be captured or kept alive, for of all birds, they are the most fragile and delicate, and would die of *fright*, if from nothing else. They are chiefly used for ornamental purposes, and may be caught in a variety of ways. A few silk nooses hung about the flowers where the birds are seen to frequent, will sometimes succeed in ensnaring their tiny forms.

The blow-gun is often used with good success, and the concussion from a gun loaded simply with powder, and aimed in the direction of the bird, will often stun it so that it will fall to the ground. If a strong stream of water be forced upon the little creature, as it is fluttering from flower to flower, the result is the same, as the feathers become so wet that it cannot fly.



Page 101



Page 103

BOOK IV.

MISCELLANEOUS TRAPS.

THE COMMON BOX TRAP.

he following chapter includes a variety of traps which have not been covered by any of the previous titles. Several novelties are contained in the list, and also a number of well known inventions.

There is probably no more familiar example of the trap kind than that of the common wooden box-trap, better known, perhaps, by our country boys as the rabbit-trap. A glance at our illustration, will readily bring it to mind, and easily explain its working to those not particularly acquainted with it. These traps may be made of any size, but, being usually employed in catching rabbits, require to be made quite large. They should be made of hard seasoned wood—oak or chestnut is the best—and of slabs about an inch in thickness. The pieces may be of the following dimensions: let the bottom board be 20+7 in.; side board, 20+9 in.; lid board 19+7 in., and the end piece of lid 7 in. square.

The tall end piece should be about 16 inches high by 7 broad. Let this be sharpened on the upper end, as seen in the engraving, and furnished with a slight groove on the summit, for the reception of the cord. Now to put the pieces together.

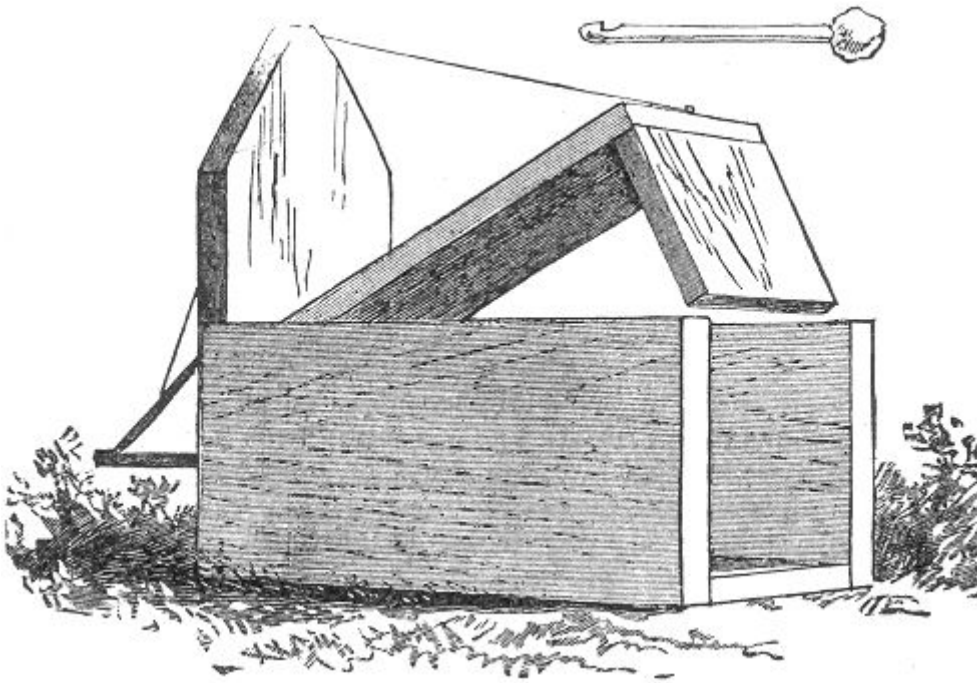
Nail the two sides to the edge of the bottom board, and fit in between them the high end piece, securing that also, with nails through the bottom and side boards. Next nail the lid board on to the small, square end piece, and fit the lid thus made neatly into its place.

To make the hinge for the lid, two small holes should be bored through the sides of the trap, about four inches from the tall end, and half an inch from the upper edge of each board. Let small nails now be driven through these holes into the edge of the lid, and it will be found to work freely upon them.

Page 104

The principal part of the trap is now made, but what remains to be done is of great importance. The "spindle" is a necessary feature in nearly all traps, and the box-trap is useless without it. In this case it should consist merely of a round stick of about the thickness of a lead pencil, and we will say, 7 or 8 in. in length. One end should be pointed and the other should have a small notch cut in it, as seen in the separate drawing of the stick. The spindle being ready, we must have some place to put it. Another hole should be bored through the middle of the high end piece, and about 4 in. from the bottom. This hole should be large enough to allow the spindle to pass easily through it. If our directions have been carefully followed, the result will now show a complete, closefitting trap.

In setting the trap there are two methods commonly employed, as shown at *a* and *b*. The string, in either case, must be fastened to the end of the lid.

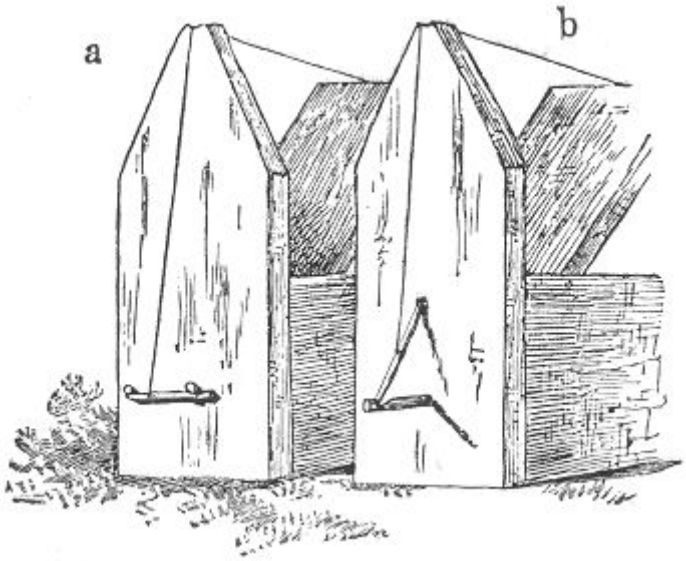


In the first instance (*a*) the lid is raised and made fast by the brace, holding itself beneath the tip of the projecting spindle, and a nail or plug driven into the wood by the side of the hole. Of course, when the spindle is drawn or moved from the inside the brace will be let loose and the lid will drop.

Page 105

In the other method (*b*) the spindle is longer, and projects several inches on the outside of the hole. The brace is also longer, and catches itself in the notch on the end of the spindle, and another slight notch in the board, a few inches above the hole.

When the bait is touched from the inside, the brace easily flies out and the lid falls, securing its victim. Either way is sure to succeed, but if there is any preference it is for the former (*a*). It is a wise plan to have a few holes through the trap in different places, to allow for ventilation, and it may be found necessary to line the cracks with tin, as sometimes the enclosed creature might



otherwise gnaw through and make its escape. If there is danger of the lid not closing tightly when sprung, a stone may be fastened upon it to insure that result.

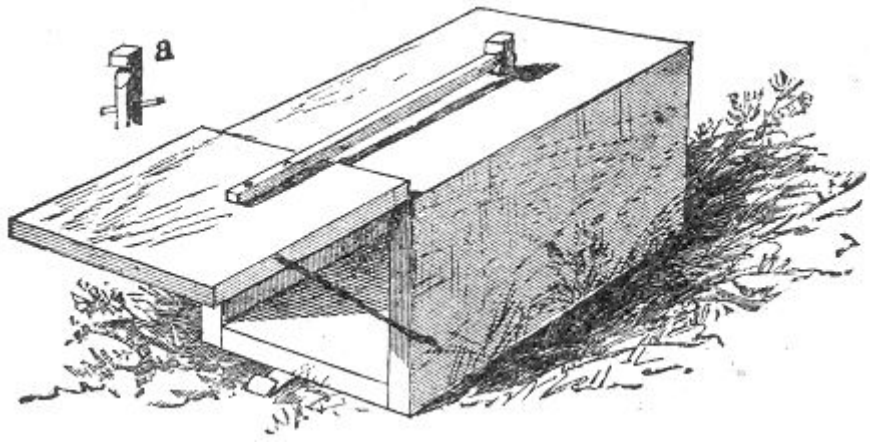
This trap is usually set for rabbits, and these dimensions are especially calculated with that idea. Rabbits abound in all our woods and thickets, and may be attracted by various baits. An apple is most generally used. The box-trap may be made of smaller dimensions, and set in trees for squirrels with very good success.

There is still another well known form of this trap represented in the tail piece at the end of this section. The box is first constructed of the shape already given, only having the lid piece nailed firmly in the top of the box. The tall end piece Page 106
is also done away with. The whole thing thus representing a simple oblong box with one end open. Two slender cleats should be nailed on each side of this opening, on the interior of the box, to form a groove into which a square end board may easily slide up and down, the top board being slightly sawn away to receive it. An upright stick should then be erected on the top centre of the box, in the tip of which a straight stick should be pivoted, working easily therein, like the arms of a balance. To one end of this balance, the end board should be adjusted by two screw eyes, and to the other the string with spindle attached. By now lowering the spindle to its place, the further end of the balance will be raised and with it the end board, and on the release of the spindle the board will fall. This plan is quite commonly adopted but we rather prefer the former. But as each has its advantages we present them both.

ANOTHER BOX TRAP.

This works after the manner of the ordinary wire rat-trap; our illustration explains itself.

The box should be of the shape there shown, with one of its end pieces arranged on hinges so as to fall freely. An elastic should be fastened from the



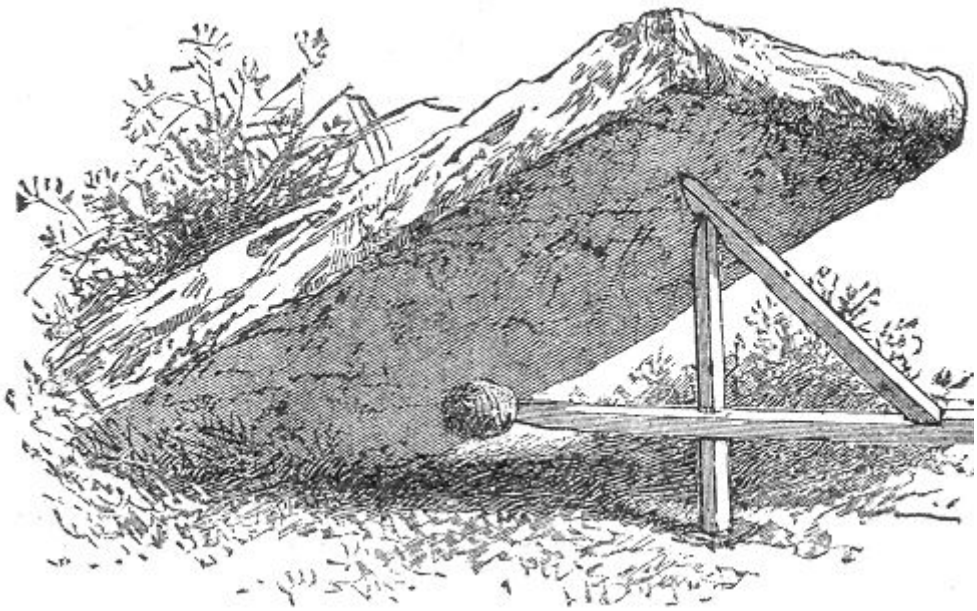
inside of this end to the inner surface of the top of the box, to insure its closing. If desired an elastic may be adjusted at the side as shown in the cut and a catch piece of stout tin should be attached to the bottom of the trap to secure the lid when it falls. A small hole should then be bored in the top, near the further end of the trap, and the spindle, having a notch on its upper end, passed through the Page 107
hole thus made. The top of the spindle is shown at (*a*). It should be held in its place by a small plug or pin through it, below the surface of the box. A slender

stick, long enough to reach and catch beneath the notch in the spindle should now be fastened to the lid and the trap is complete. It may be baited with cheese, bread, and the like, and if set for squirrels, an apple answers every purpose.

When constructed on a larger and heavier scale it may be used for the capture of rabbits and animals of a similar size, but for this purpose the previous variety is preferable.

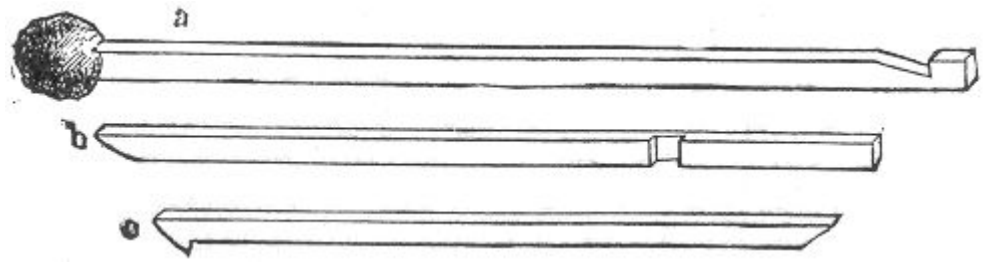
THE FIGURE FOUR TRAP.

One of the most useful as well as the most ancient inventions in the way of traps is the common *Figure Four Trap*, which forms the subject of our next illustration. It is a very ingenious contrivance, and the mechanism, consists merely of three sticks. It possesses great advantages in the fact that it may be used in a variety of ways, and a number of the machines may be carried by the



young trapper with very little inconvenience. Our illustration shows the trap already set, only awaiting for a slight touch at the bait to bring the heavy stone to the ground. A box may be substituted for the stone, and the animal may thus be captured alive. The three sticks are represented separate at *a*. *b*. and *c*. Of course, there is no regular size for them, as this would greatly depend upon the purpose for which they are designed to be used. If for rabbits, the following proportions will answer very well. The sticks should all be square, and about half an inch in thickness. The bait-stick, (*a*) should be about nine or ten inches in length, one end being pointed and the other furnished with a notch, as indicated. The upright stick, (*b*) should be a little shorter, one end being whittled to a rather sharp edge. At about three or four inches from the other end, and on the side next to that whittled, a square notch should be cut. This should be about a third of an inch in depth and half an inch in width, being so cut as exactly to receive the bait-stick without holding it fast. The remaining stick (*c*) should have a length of about seven or eight inches, one end being whittled, as in the last, to an edge, and the other end furnished with a notch on the same side of the stick.

Page 108



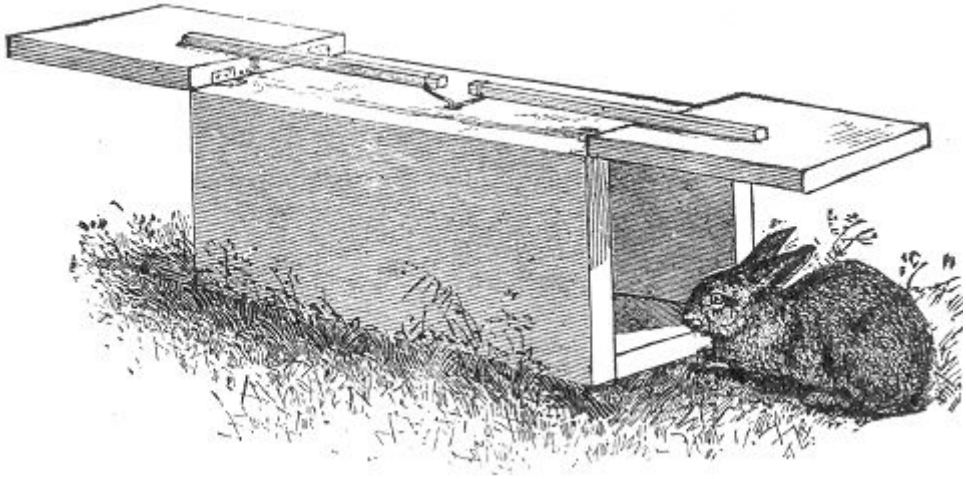
When these are finished, the trap may be set in the following manner: Place the upright stick, (*b*) with its pointed end uppermost. Rest the notch of the slanting stick, (*c*) on the summit of the upright stick, placing the stone upon its end, and holding the stick in position with the hand. By now hooking the notch in the bait-stick on the sharpened edge of the slanting stick and fitting it into the square notch in the upright, it may easily be made to catch and hold itself in position. The bait should always project beneath the stone. In case a box is used instead of a stone, the trap may be set either inside of it or beneath its edge. Where the ground is very soft, it would be well to rest the upright stick on a chip or small flat stone, as otherwise it is apt to sink into the earth by degrees and spring by itself.

When properly made, it is a very sure and sensitive trap, and the bait, generally an apple, or "nub" of corn is seldom more than touched when the stone falls.

THE "DOUBLE ENDER."

Page 109

This is what we used to call it in New England and it was a great favorite among the boys who were fond of rabbit catching. It was constructed of four boards two feet in length by nine inches in breath secured with nails at their edges, so as to form a long square box. Each end was supplied with a heavy lid working on two hinges. To each of these lids a light strip of wood was fastened, the length of each being sufficient to reach nearly to the middle of the top of the box, as seen in the illustration. At this point a small auger hole was then made downward through the board. A couple of inches of string was next tied to the tip of each stick and supplied with a large knot at the end. The trap was then set on the simple principle of which there are so many examples throughout the pages of this work. The knots were lowered through the auger hole and the

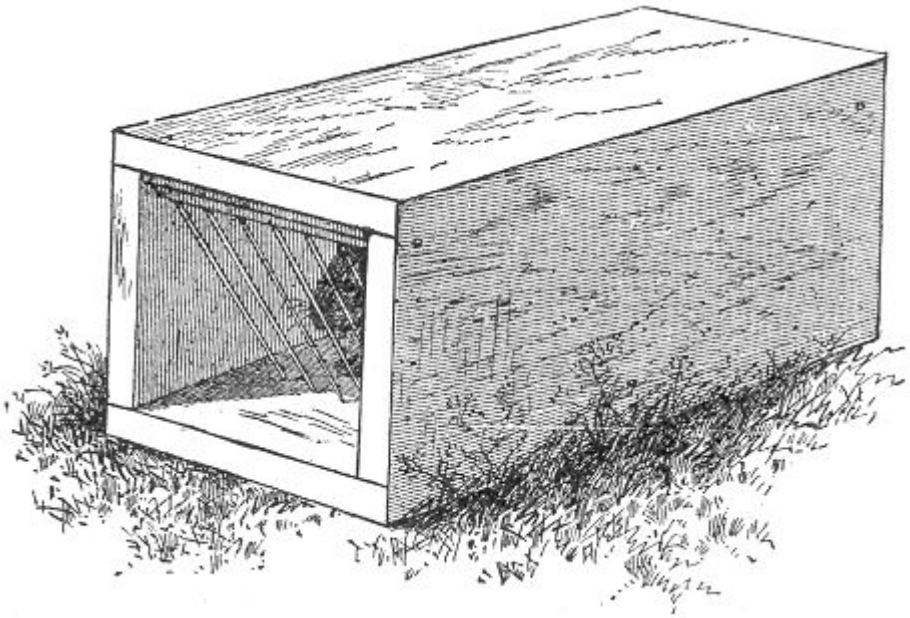


insertion of the bait stick inside the box held them in place. The edge of the bottom board on each end of the trap should be supplied with a tin catch such as is described on page 88 in order to hold the lid in place after it has fallen. No matter from which end the bait is approached it is no sooner touched than both ends fall and "*bunny*" is prisoner. Like many other of our four-footed game, the rabbit manifests a peculiar liking for salt and may be regularly attracted to a given spot by its aid. A salted cotton string is sometimes extended several yards from the trap for the purpose of leading them to it, but this seems a needless precaution, as the rabbit is seldom behind hand in discerning a tempting bait when it is within his reach.

THE SELF SETTING TRAP.

Page 110

One of the oldest known principles ever embodied in the form of a trap is that which forms the subject of the accompanying illustration. It is very simple in construction, sure in its action; and as its name implies, resets itself after each intruder has been captured.



It is well adapted for Rabbits and Coons and when made on a small scale, may be successfully employed in taking rats and mice. It is also extensively used in the capture of the Mink and Muskrat, being set beneath the water, near the haunts of the animals and weighted by a large stone. Of course the size of the box will be governed by the dimensions of the game for which it is to be set. Its general proportions should resemble those of the illustration, both ends being open. A small gate, consisting of a square piece of wood supplied with a few stiff wires is then pivoted inside each opening, so as to work freely and fall easily when raised. The bait is fastened inside at the centre of the box. The animal, in quest of the bait, finds an easy entrance, as the wires lift at a slight pressure, but the exit after the gate has closed is so difficult that escape is almost beyond the question.

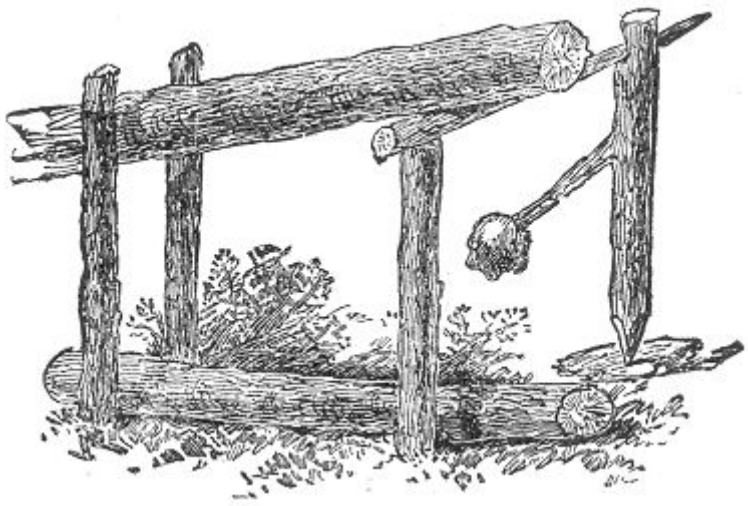
The wires should be so stiff as to preclude the possibility of them being bent by struggles of the imprisoned creature in his efforts to escape, and to insure further strength it is advisable to connect the lower ends of the wires by a cross piece of finer wire, twisted about each.

Page 111

The simultaneous capture of two rabbits in a trap of this kind is a common occurrence.

THE DEAD-FALL.

In strolling through the woods and on the banks of streams in the country, it is not an uncommon thing to stumble against a contrivance resembling in general appearance our next illustration. Throughout New England, the "dead-fall," as this is called, has always been a most popular favorite among trappers, young and old; and there is really no better rough and ready trap for large game. To entrap a fox by any device is no easy matter; but the writer remembers one case



where Reynard was outwitted, and the heavy log of the "dead-fall" put a speedy end to his existence. The trap was set in a locality where the fox had made himself a nuisance by repeated nocturnal invasions among the poultry, and the bait was cleverly calculated to decoy him. A live duck was tied within the pen, and the morsel proved too tempting for him to resist. Thrusting his head beneath the suspended log, in order to reach his prey, he thus threw down the slender framework of support; and the log, falling across his neck, put him to death.

Our illustration gives a very correct idea of the general construction of the "dead-fall," although differing slightly in its mode of setting from that usually employed.

A pen of rough sticks is first constructed, having an open front. A log about Page 112
seven or eight feet in length, and five or six inches in diameter, should then be procured. An ordinary fence rail will answer the purpose very well, although the log is preferable. Its large end should be laid across the front of the pen, and two stout sticks driven into the ground outside of it, leaving room for it to rise and fall easily between them and the pen, a second shorter log being placed on the ground beneath it, as described for the bear-trap, page (17). A look at our illustration fully explains the *setting* of the parts. A forked twig, about a foot in length, answers for the bait-stick. The lower end should be pointed, and the fork, with its bait, should incline toward the ground, when set. The upper end should be supplied with a notch, square side down, and directly above the branch which holds the bait. Another straight stick, about fourteen inches in length, should then be cut. Make it quite flat on each end. A small thin stone, chip of wood, or the like, is the only remaining article required. Now proceed to raise the log, as

shown in the drawing, place one end of the straight stick beneath it, resting its tip on the flat top of the upright stick on the outside of the log. The baitstick should now be placed in position inside the inclosure, resting the pointed end on the chip, and securing the notch above, as seen in the illustration, beneath the tip of the flat stick. When this is done, the trap is set, but, there are a few little hints in regard to setting it finely,—that is, surely,—which will be necessary. It is very important to avoid bringing too much of the weight of the log on the flat stick, as this would of course bear heavily on the bait-stick, and render considerable force necessary to spring the trap. The leverage at the point where the log rests on the flat stick should be very slight, and the log should be so placed that the upright shall sustain nearly all the weight. By this method, very little pressure is brought to bear on the bait-stick, and a very slight twitch will throw it out of poise. The fork of the bait-stick should point to the side of the inclosure, as, in this case, when the bait is seized by the unlucky intruder, the very turning of the fork forces the notch from beneath the horizontal stick, and throws the parts asunder.

If the trap is set for muskrats, minks, skunks, or animals of similar size, the weight of the log will generally be found sufficient to effect their death; but, if desired, a heavy stone may be rested against it, or the raised end weighted with other logs (see p. 18), to make sure. When set for a coon or fox, this precaution is necessary. To guard against the cunning which some animals possess, it is frequently necessary to cover the top of the pen with cross-sticks, as there are numerous cases on record where the intended victims have climbed over the side of the inclosure, and taken the bait from the inside, thus keeping clear of the suspended log, and springing the trap without harm to themselves. A few sticks or branches laid across the top of the inclosure will prevent any such capers; and the crafty animals will either have to take the bait at the risk of their lives, or leave it alone.

Page 113

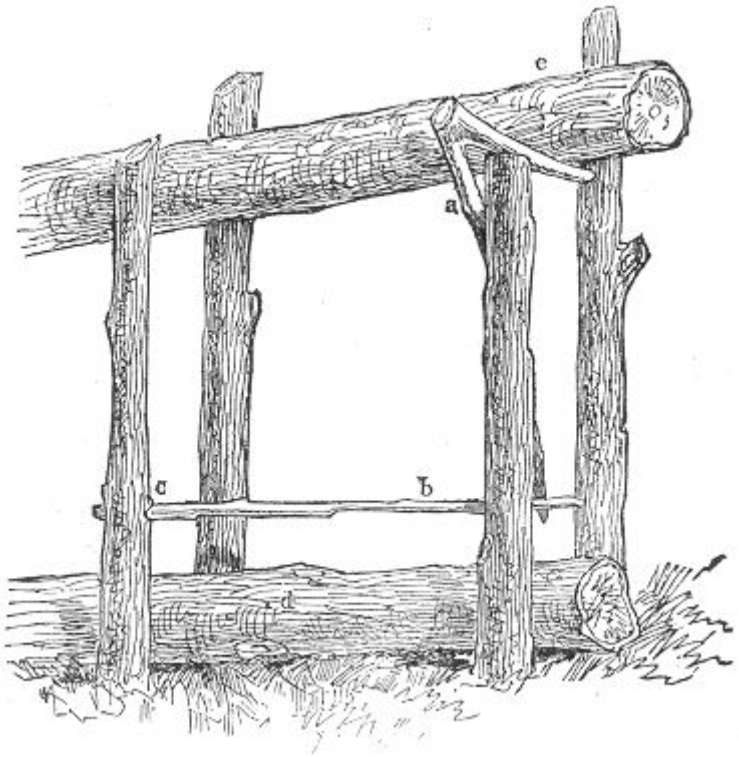
For trapping the muskrat, the bait may consist of carrots, turnips, apples, and the like. For the mink, a bird's head, or the head of a fowl, is the customary bait; and the skunk may usually be taken with sweet apples, meats, or some portion of a dead fowl.

In the case of the fox, which we have mentioned, the setting of the trap was somewhat varied; and in case our readers might desire to try a similar experiment, we will devote a few lines to a description of it. In this instance, the flat stick which supported the log was not more than eight inches in length; and instead of the bait-stick, a slight framework of slender branches was substituted. This frame or lattice-work was just large enough to fill the opening of the pen, and its upper end supported the flat stick. The duck was fastened to the back part of the pen, which was also closed over the top. The quacking of the fowl attracted the fox; and as he thrust his head through the lattice to reach his prey, the frame was thrown out of balance and Reynard paid the price of his greed and folly.

There is another mode of adjusting the pieces of the dead-fall, commonly employed by professional trappers, whereby the trap is sprung by the foot of the animal in quest of the bait. This construction is shown correctly in the accompanying cut, which gives the front view, the pen being made as before. The stout crotch represented at (*a*) is rested on the summit of a strong peg, driven into the ground beneath the *outside edge* of the suspended log; (*b*) is the treacherous stick which seals the doom of any animal that dares rest his foot upon it. This piece should be long enough to stretch across and overlap the

guard-pegs at each side of the opening. To set the trap, rest the short crotch of (*a*) on the top of the peg, and lower the log upon it, keeping the leverage slight, as directed in our last example, letting much of the weight come on the top of the peg. The long arm of the crotch should be pressed inward from the front, and one end of the stick (*b*) should then be caught between its extreme tip, and the upright peg about ten inches above the ground. By now fastening the bait to a peg at the back part of the pen, the affair is in working order, and will be found

Page 114



perfectly reliable. The ground log (*d*) being rested in place as seen in the illustration. To make assurance doubly sure, it is well to cut a slight notch in the upright stick at (*c*) for the reception of the foot-piece (*b*). By this precaution the stick, when lowered, is bound to sink at the right end, thus ensuring success.

The Figure-Four Trap, already described in another part of this book, is also well adapted to the dead-fall, and is much used. It should be made of stout pieces and erected at the opening of the pen, with the bait pointing toward the interior, the heavy log being poised on its summit.

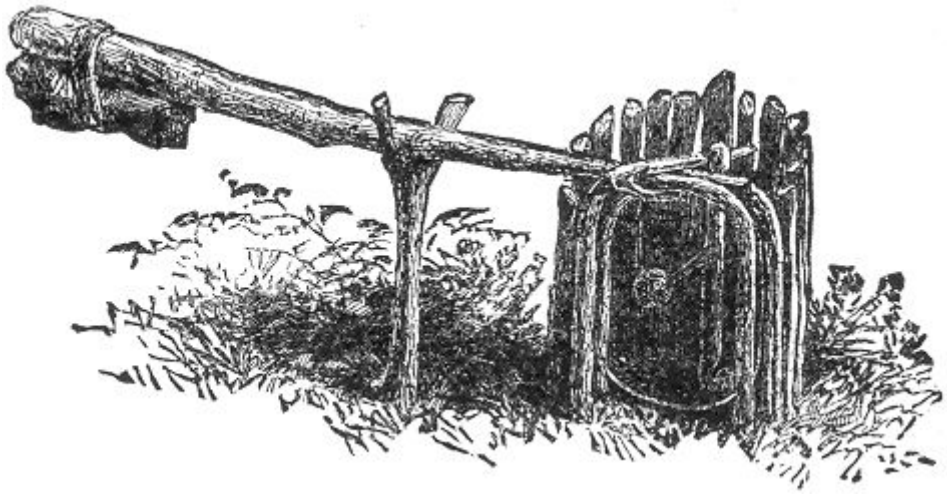
THE GARROTE.

There is another variety of trap, somewhat resembling the dead-fall, but which seizes its prey in a little different manner. This trap, which we will call the *Garrote*, is truly represented by our illustration. A pen is first constructed, similar to that of the dead-fall. At the opening of the pen, two arches are fastened in the ground. They should be about an inch apart. A stout forked stick should then be cut, and firmly fixed in the earth at the side of the arches, and about three feet distant.

Page 115

Our main illustration gives the general appearance of the trap, but we also subjoin an additional cut, showing the "setting" or arrangement of the pieces. They are three in number, and consist: First, of a notched peg, which is driven

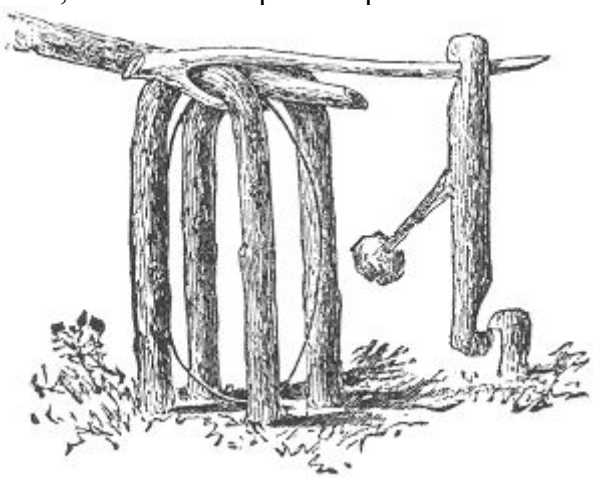
into the ground at the back part of the pen, and a little to one side. Second, of a forked twig, the branch of which should point downward with the bait attached to its end. The third stick being the little hooked piece catching beneath the



arches. The first of these is too simple to need description. The second should be about eight inches long; a notch should be cut in each end. The upper one being on the side from which the branch projects, and the other on the *opposite* side of the stick, and at the other end, as is made plain by our illustration. The third stick may consist merely of a hooked crotch of some twig, as this is always to be found. Indeed, nearly *all* the parts of this trap may be found in any woods; and, with the exception of a jack-knife, bait, and string, the trapper need not trouble himself to carry any materials whatever. When the three pieces are thus made the trap only awaits the "Garrote." This should be made from a stiff pole, about six feet in length, having a heavy stone tied to its large end, and a loop of the shape of the letter U, or a slipping noose, made of stout cord or wire, fastened at the smaller end. To arrange the pieces for their destructive work, the pole should be bent down so that the loop shall fall between the arches. The "crotch stick" should then be hooked beneath the front of the arch, letting its arm point inward. After this the bait stick should be placed in its position, with the bait pointing downward, letting one end catch beneath the notch in the ground-peg, and the other over the tip of the crotch stick. This done, and the trap is set.

Page 116

Like the dead-fall, the bait stick should point toward the side of the pen, as the turning involved in pulling it toward the front is positively *sure* to slip it loose from its catches. Be careful to see that the loop is nicely arranged between the arches, and that the top of the pen is covered with a few twigs. If these directions



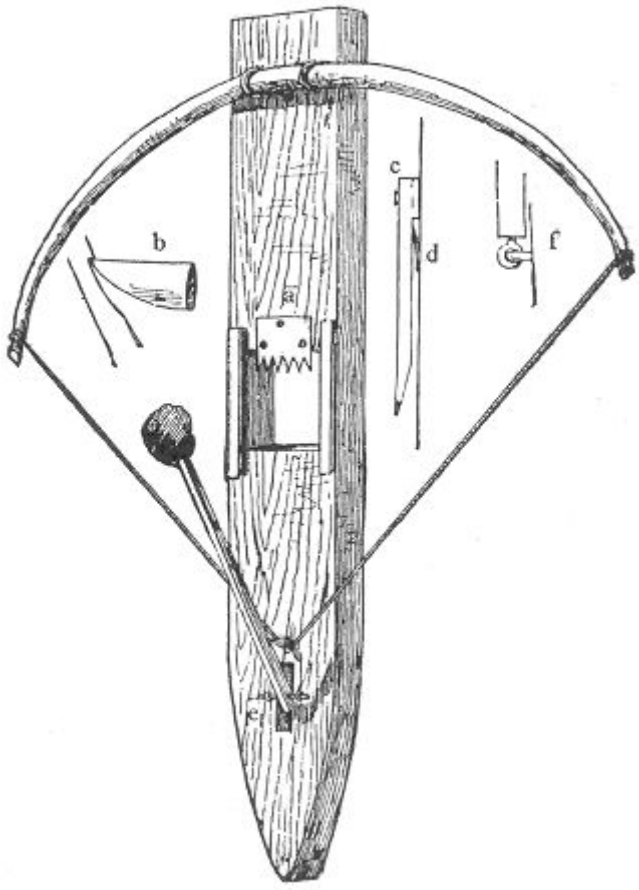
are carefully followed, and if the young trapper has selected a good trapping ground, it will not be a matter of many days before he will discover the upper portion of the arches occupied by some rabbit, muskrat, or other unlucky creature, either standing on its hind legs, or lifted clean off the ground. Coons are frequently secured by this trap, although, as a general thing, they don't show much enthusiasm over traps of any kind, and seem to prefer to get their food elsewhere, rather than take it off the end of a bait stick.

THE BOW TRAP.

This most excellent and unique machine is an invention of the author's, and possesses great advantages, both on account of its durability and of the speedy death which it inflicts.

Procure a board about two feet in length, by five or six in width, and commencing at about nine inches from one end, cut a hole four or more inches square. This may readily be done with a narrow saw, by first boring a series of gimlet holes in which to insert it. There will now be nine inches of board on one side of the hole and eleven on the other. The shorter end constituting the top of the trap. On the upper edge of the hole a row of stout tin teeth should be firmly tacked, as seen in the illustration. On the other side of the cavity, and three inches from it a small auger hole (the size of a lead pencil), should be bored. After which it should be sand-papered and polished on the interior, by rubbing with some smooth, hard tool, inserted inside. A round plug of wood should next be prepared. Let it be about half an inch in length, being afterwards bevelled nearly the whole length of one side, as shown at (*b*), leaving a little over an

Page 117



eighth of an inch of the wood unwhittled. This little piece of wood is the most

important part, of the trap, and should be made very carefully. The remaining end of the board below the auger hole should now be whittled off to a point, in order that it may be driven into the ground. The next requisites consist of two pieces of wood, which are seen at the sides of the square hole, in our illustration, and also seen at (*c*), side view. These pieces should be about six inches in length Page 118 and about an inch square. A thin piece being cut off from one side of each, to the distance of four inches, and ending in a square notch. The other end should be rounded off, as is also there plainly indicated. Before adjusting the pieces in place, two tin catches should be fastened to the board, one on each side of the hole. This catch is shown at (*d*), and consists merely of a piece of tin, half an inch in width, and three-quarters of an inch in length, tacked to the wood, and having its end raised, as indicated. Its object is to hold the bow-string from being pulled down after once passing it. The upper edge of these catch-pieces should be about an inch and a half from the top of the hole, and, if desired, two or three of them may be arranged one above the other, so that wherever the string may stop against the neck of the inmate it will be sure to hold. The catches being in place, proceed to adjust the pieces of wood, letting the notch be on a line with the top of the pole, or a little above it. Each piece should be fastened with two screws to make secure.

We will now give our attention to the bait stick. This should be about six inches in length, and square, as our illustration shows. There are two ways of attaching the bait-stick to the board, both shown at (*e*) and (*f*). The former consists merely of a screw eye inserted into the end of the stick, afterwards hinged to the board by a wire staple. The point for the hinge, in this case, should be about an inch below the auger hole. In the other method (*f*), the bait stick should be a half inch longer, and the spot for the hinge a quarter inch lower. At about a quarter of an inch from the square end of the bait stick a small hole should be made by the use of a hot wire. An oblong mortice should next be cut in the board, so as to receive this end of the stick easily. A stout bit of wire should then be inserted in the little hole in the stick, and laying this across the centre of the mortice, it should be thus secured by two staples, as the drawing shows. This forms a very neat and simple hinge. To determine the place for the catch, insert the flat end of the little plug fairly into the auger-hole above the hinge. Draw up the bait stick, and at the point where it comes in contact with the point of the plug, cut a square notch, as shown in (*b*). Everything now awaits the bow. This should be of hickory or other stout wood; it is well to have it seasoned, although a stout sapling will answer the purpose very well. It should be fastened to the top of the board by two heavy staples, or nails driven on each side of it. The string should be *heavy* Indian twine. Our illustration shows the Page 119 trap, as it appears when ready for business. The plug is inserted, as already described, with the bevelled face downward, and square end in the hole. Draw down the bow-string and pass it beneath the plug, at the same time catching the tip of the latter in the notch of the bait stick. If properly constructed the string will thus rest on the slight uncut portion of the under side of the peg, and the trap is thus set. If the bait is pushed when approached, the notch is forced off from the plug, and the string flies up with a *twang!* securing the neck of its victim, and producing almost instant death. If the bait is *pulled*, the bait stick thus forces the plug into the hole in the board, and thus slides the cord on to the bevel, which immediately releases it, and the bow is sprung. So that no matter whether the bait is pushed or drawn towards the front, the trap is equally sure to spring.

In setting this curious machine, it is only necessary to insert it into the ground, and surround the bait with a slight pen, in order that it may not be approached from behind. By now laying a stone or a pile of sticks in front of the affair, so

that the bait may be more readily reached, the thing is ready. Care is required in setting to arrange the pieces delicately. The plug should be *very slightly* inserted into the auger hole, and the notch in the bait stick should be as small as possible, and hold. All this is made clear in our illustration (*b*).

By observing these little niceties the trap becomes very sure and sensitive.

Bait with small apple, nub of corn, or the like.

THE MOLE TRAP.

If there is anyone subject upon which the ingenuity of the farmers has been taxed, it is on the invention of a mole trap which would effectually clear their premises of these blind burrowing vermin. Many patented devices of this character are on the market, and many odd pictured ideas on the subject have gone the rounds of the illustrated press, but they all sink into insignificance when tested beside the trap we here present. It has no equal among mole traps, and it can be made with the utmost ease and without cost. The principle on which it works is the same as the Fish Trap on page 120.

Construct a hollow wooden tube about five inches in diameter, and eight inches in length. A section of a small tree, neatly excavated with a large auger is just the thing. Through the centre of one of the sides a small hole the size of a lead pencil should be bored, this being the upper side. About half an inch distant from each end a smaller hole should be made for the passage of the noose. The spring should consist either of a stout steel rod, whalebone or stiff sapling, a foot or more in length, inserted downward through holes in the side of the tube after the manner of the Fish Trap already alluded to. No bait is required. A simple stick the size of the central hole at one end, and an inch in width at the other being sufficient. The trap is set as described in the other instances, and as the introduction of the spindle-stick is sometimes attended with difficulty owing to its position inside the trap, the bottom of the latter is sometimes cut away for two or three inches to facilitate the operation. The trap is then to be imbedded within the burrow of the mole. Find a fresh tunnel and carefully remove the sod above it. Insert the trap and replace the turf. The first mole that starts on his rounds through that burrow is a sure prisoner, no matter from which side he may approach.

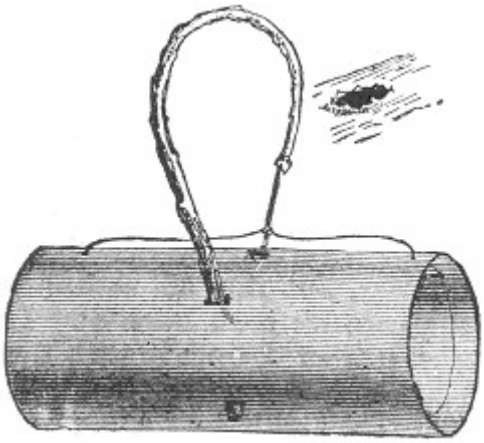
Page 120

Immense numbers of these troublesome vermin have been taken in a single season by a dozen such traps, and they possess great advantages over all other mole traps on account of their simplicity and unfailing success.

A FISH TRAP.

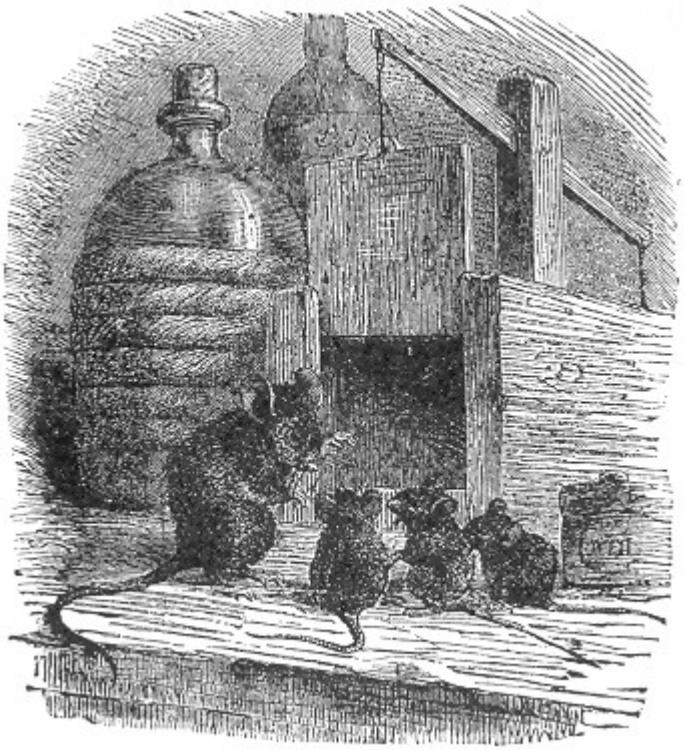
Our list of traps would be incomplete without a Fish Trap, and although we have mentioned some contrivances in this line under our article on "Fishing" we here present one which is both new and novel.

Its mode of construction is exactly similar to the Double Box Snare, page (57). A section of stove-pipe one foot in length should first be obtained. Through the iron at a point equidistant from the ends, a hole should be made with some smooth, sharp pointed instrument, the latter being forced *outward* from the *inside* of the pipe, thus causing the ragged edge of the hole to appear on the



outside, as seen in our illustration. The diameter of the aperture should be about that of a lead pencil. Considering this as the *upper side* of the pipe, proceed to pierce two more hole's *downward* through the side of the circumference, for the admission of a stout stick or steel rod. This is fully explained in our illustration. The further arrangement of bait stick and nooses is exactly identical with that described on page (57). It may be set for suckers, pickerel, and fish of like size, the bait stick being inserted with sufficient firmness to withstand the attacks of smaller fish. The bait should be firmly tied to the stick, or the latter supplied with two hooks at the end on which it should be firmly impaled. To set the trap, select a locality abounding in fish. Place a stone inside the bottom of the pipe, insert the bait stick and arrange the nooses. Page 121

By now quietly grasping the curve of the switch the trap may be easily lowered to the bottom. The bait soon attracts a multitude of small fishes; these in turn attract the pickerel to the spot, and before many minutes the trap is sprung and may be raised from the water with its prisoner. This odd device is an invention of the author's, and it is as successful as it is unique.



Page 123

Page 125

BOOK V.

HOUSEHOLD TRAPS.

or the most effectual domestic trap on record see our page title to this section. There are several others also which

have done good service in many households, and for the sake of pestered housekeepers generally, we devote a corner of our volume for their especial benefit.

Foremost in the list of domestic pests the rat stands pre-eminent, and his proverbial shrewdness and cunning render his capture often a very difficult, if not an impossible task. We subjoin, however, a few hints and suggestions of practical value, together with some perfected ideas in the shape of traps, by which the average rat may be easily outwitted and led to his destruction.

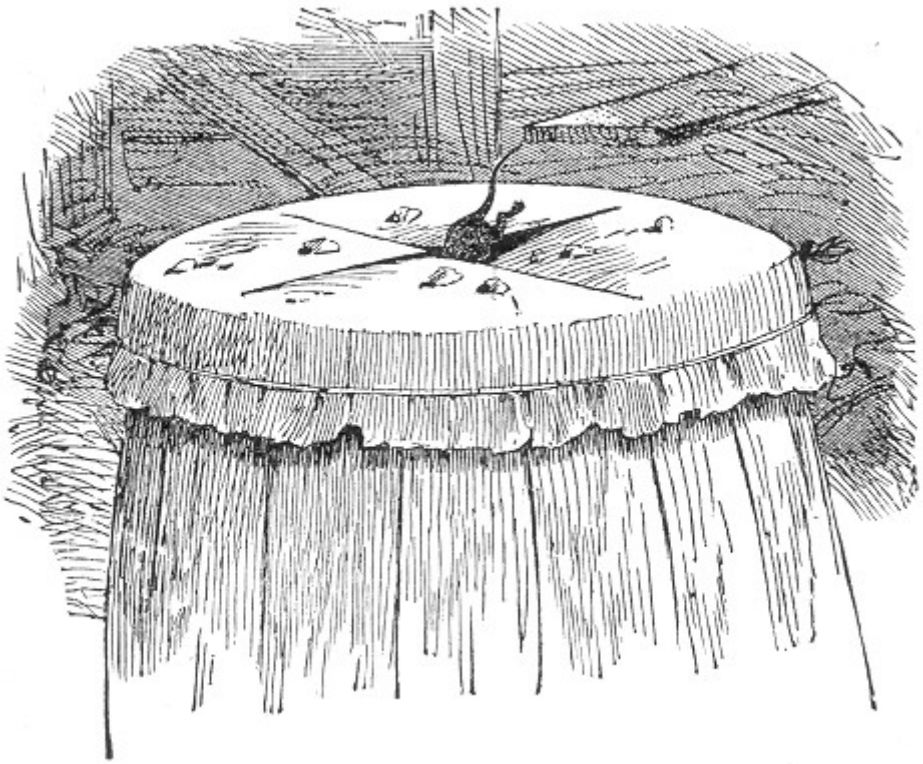
First on the list is

THE BARREL TRAP.

This most ingenious device possesses great advantages in its capabilities of securing an almost unlimited number of the vermin in quick succession. It also takes care of itself, requires no re-baiting or setting after once put in working order, and is sure death to its prisoners.

A water-tight barrel is the first thing required. Into this pour water to the depth of a foot. Next dampen a piece of very thick paper, and stretch it over the top of the barrel, tying it securely below the upper hoops. When the paper dries it will become thoroughly flat and tightened. Its surface should then be strewn with bits of cheese, etc., and the barrel so placed that the rats may jump upon it from some neighboring surface. As soon as the bait is gone, a fresh supply should be spread on the paper and the same operation repeated for several days, until the rats get accustomed to visit the place for their regular rations, fearlessly and without suspicion. This is "half the battle," and the capture of the greedy victims of misplaced confidence is now an easy matter. The bait should again be spread as before and a few pieces of the cheese should be attached to the paper with gum. It is a good plan to smear parts of the paper with gum arabic, sprinkling the

Page 126



bait upon it. When dry, cut a cross in the middle of the paper, as seen in the illustration, and leave the barrel to take care of itself and the rats. The first one comes along, spies the tempting morsels, and with his accustomed confidence, jumps upon the paper. He suddenly finds himself in the water at the bottom of the barrel, and the paper above has closed and is ready to practice its deception on the next comer. There is not long to wait. A second victim soon tumbles in to keep company with the first. A third and a fourth soon follow, and a dozen or more are sometimes thus entrapped in a very short space of time. It is a most excellent and simple trap, and if properly managed, will most effectually curtail the number of rats in any pestered neighborhood.

Page 127

By some, it is considered an improvement to place in the bottom of the barrel a large stone, which shall project above the water sufficiently to offer a foothold for one rat. The first victim, of course, takes possession of this retreat and on the precipitate arrival of the second a contest ensues for its occupancy. The hubbub which follows is said to attract all the rats in the neighborhood to the spot, and many are thus captured.

We can hardly recommend the addition of the stone as being an improvement. The rat is a most notoriously shrewd and cunning animal, and the despairing cries of his comrades must rather tend to excite his caution and suspicion. By the first method the drowning is soon accomplished and the rat utters no sound whereby to attract and warn his fellows. This contrivance has been thoroughly tested and has proved its efficacy in many households by completely ridding the premises of the vermin.

Another excellent form of Barrel Trap is that embodying the principle described in page (131). A circular platform should be first constructed and hinged in the opening of the barrel This may be done by driving a couple of small nails through the sides of the barrel into a couple of staples inserted near the opposite edges of the platform. The latter should be delicately weighted, as described on the above mentioned page, and previously to setting, should be baited in a stationary position for several days to gain the confidence of the rats. The bait should at last be secured to the platform with gum, and the bottom of the barrel of course filled with water, as already described. This trap possesses the same advantages as the foregoing. It is *self-setting*, and unfailing in its action.

Another method consists in half-filling the barrel with oats, and allowing the rats to enjoy their repast there for several days. When thus attracted to the spot, remove the oats, and pour the same bulk of water into the barrel, sprinkling the surface thickly with the grain. The delusion is almost perfect, as will be effectually proven when the first rat visits the spot for his accustomed free lunch. Down he goes with a splash, is soon drowned, and sinks to the bottom. The next shares the same fate, and several more are likely to be added to the list of misguided victims.

Many of the devices described throughout this work may be adapted for domestic use to good purpose. The box-trap page 103, box-snare, page 55, figure-four, page 107, are all suitable for the capture of the rat; also, the examples given on pages 106, 109, 110, and 129.

Page 128

The steel-trap is often used, but should always be concealed from view. It is a good plan to set it in a pan covered with meal, and placed in the haunts of the

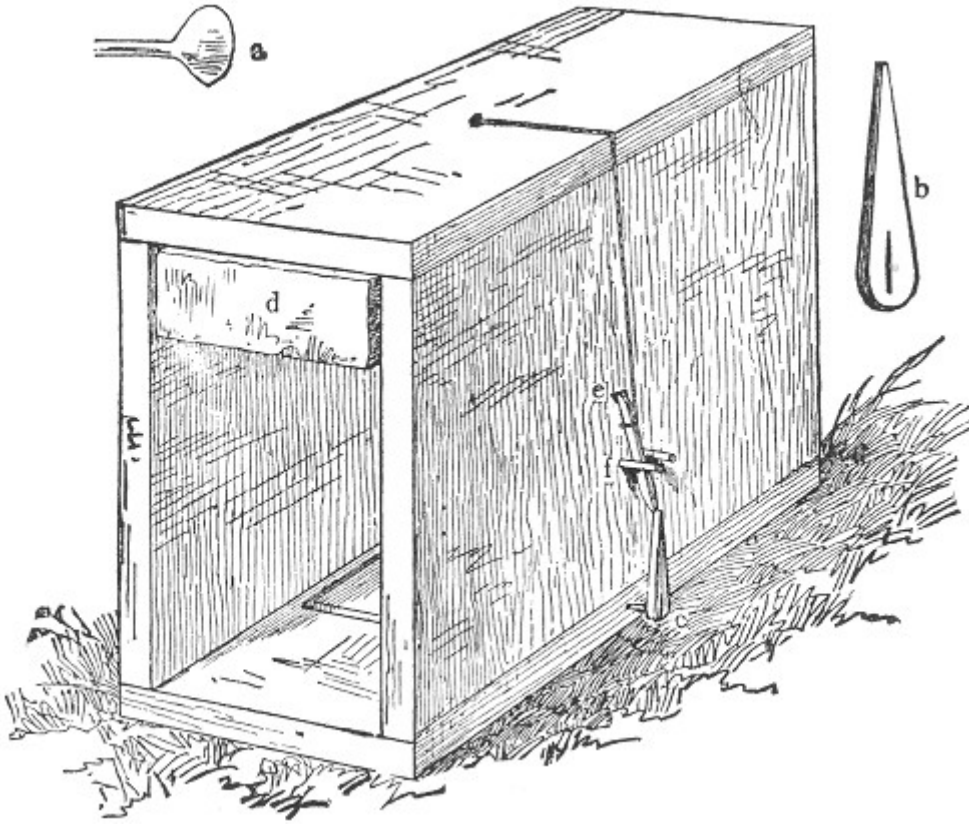
rats. The trap may also be set at the mouth of the rats' hole, and covered with a piece of dark-colored cloth or paper. The runways between boxes, boards, and the like offer excellent situations for the trap, which should be covered, as before directed.

Without one precaution, however, the trap may be set in vain. Much of the so-called shrewdness of the rat is nothing more than an instinctive caution, through the acute sense of smell which the animal possesses; and a trap which has secured one victim will seldom extend its list, unless all traces of its first occupant are thoroughly eradicated. This may be accomplished by smoking the trap over burning paper, hens' feathers or chips, taking care to avoid a heat so extreme as to affect the temper of the steel springs. All rat-traps should be treated the same way, in order to insure success, and the position and localities of setting should be frequently changed.

THE BOX DEAD-FALL.

This trap is an old invention, simplified by the author, and for the capture of rats and mice will prove very effectual. It consists of a box, constructed of four slabs of 3-4 inch boarding, and open at both ends. The two side boards should be 10 x 18 inches; top and bottom boards, 6 x 18 inches. For the centre of the latter, a square piece should be removed by the aid of the saw. The width of this piece should be four inches, and the length eight inches. Before nailing the boards together, the holes thus left in the bottom board should be supplied with a treadle platform, working on central side pivots. The board for this treadle should be much thinner and lighter than the rest of the trap, and should fit loosely in place, its surface being slightly below the level of the bottom board. This is shown in the interior of the trap. The pivots should be inserted in the exact centre of the sides, through holes made in the edge of the bottom board. These holes may be bored with a gimlet or burned with a red-hot wire. The pivots may consist of Page 129 stout brass or iron wire; and the end of one should be flattened with the hammer, as seen in (*a*). This pivot should project an inch from the wood, and should be *firmly* inserted in the treadle-piece. The platform being thus arranged, proceed to fasten the boards together, as shown in the illustration, the top and bottom boards overlapping the others. We will now give our attention to the stick shown at (*b*). This should be whittled from a piece of hard wood, its length being three

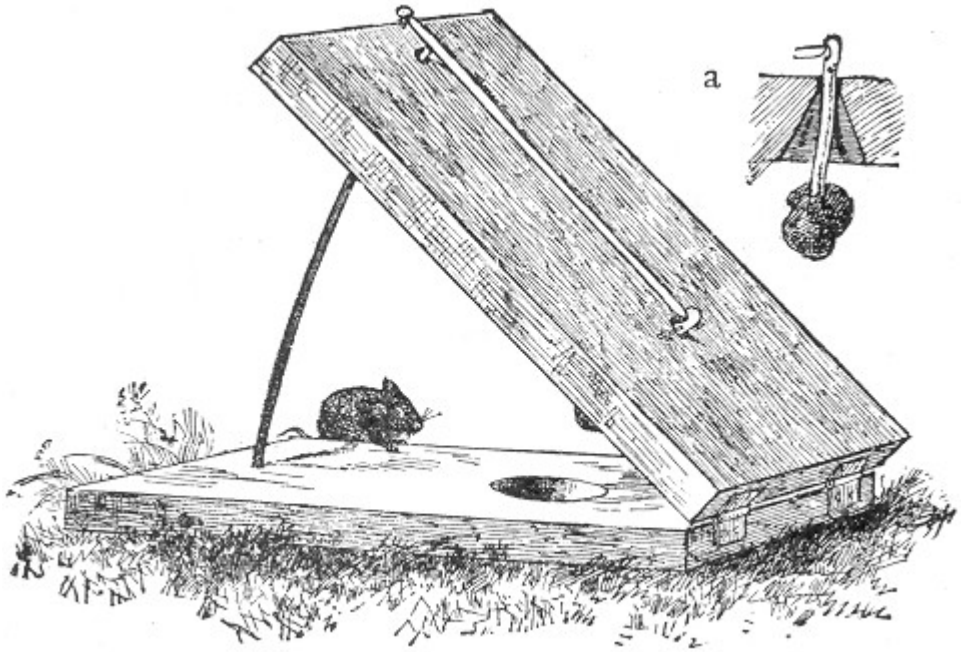
inches, and its upper end pointed as seen. The lower end should be pierced with a crevice, which should then be forced over the flattened extremity of the point (*a*) as shown at (*c*), pointed end uppermost. The weight (*a*) is next in order. This should consist of a heavy oak plank two inches in thickness, and of such other dimensions as will allow it to fit loosely in the box, and fall from top to bottom therein without catching between two sides. A stout staple should be driven in the centre of its upper face, and from this a stout string should be passed upward through a hole in the centre of the box. We are now ready for the spindle (*e*). This should be about three inches in length, and bluntly pointed at each end, a Page 130 notch being made to secure it at a point five inches above the pivot (*c*). To set the trap, raise the weight, as seen in the illustration; draw down the string to the point (*e*), and attach it to the spindle one-half an inch from its upper end, which should then be inserted in the notch, the lower end being caught against the extremity of the pivot stick. The parts are now adjusted, and even in the present state the trap is almost sure to spring at the slightest touch on the treadle-piece. An additional precaution is advisable, however. Two small wooden pegs (*f*)



should be driven, one on each side of the spindle, thus preventing any side-movement of the latter. It will now be readily seen that the slightest weight on either end of the treadle-piece within the trap must tilt it to one side, thus throwing the pivot-piece from its bearing on the spindle; and the latter being released, lets fall the weight with crushing effect upon the back of its hapless victim.

The trap is very effective, and is easily constructed. The bait should be rested in the centre of the treadle platform. Built on a larger scale, this device may be successfully adapted to the capture of the mink, martien, and many other varieties of game.

THE BOARD-FLAP.



Page 131

For the capture of mice this is both a simple and effective contrivance, and it may be enlarged so as to be of good service for larger animals. Procure two boards, one foot square and one inch thick, and secure them together by two hinges, as in the illustration. Assuming one as the upper board, proceed to bore a gimlet hole three inches from the hinges. This is for the reception of the bait stick, and should be cut away on the inside, as seen in the section (*a*), thus allowing a free play for the stick. Directly beneath this aperture, and in the lower board, a large auger hole should be made. A stout bit of iron wire, ten inches in length, is now required. This should be inserted perpendicularly in the further end of the lower slab, being bent into a curve which shall slide easily through a gimlet hole in the edge of the upper board. This portion is very important, and should be carefully constructed. The bait stick should be not more than three inches in length, supplied with a notch in its upper end, and secured in the aperture in the board by the aid of a pivot and staples, as is clearly shown in our drawing. The spindle is next in order. It should consist of a light piece of pine eight and a half inches in length, and brought to an edge at each end. A tack should now be driven at the further edge of the upper board on a line with the aperture through which the wire passes. Our illustration represents the trap as it appears when set. The upper band is raised to the full limit of the wire. One end of the spindle is now adjusted beneath the head of the tack, and the other in the notch in the bait stick. The wire thus supports the suspended board by sustaining the spindle, which is held in equilibrium. A slight touch on the bait stick soon destroys this equilibrium: a flap ensues, and a dead mouse is the result. The object of the auger hole in the lower board consists in affording a receptacle for the bait when the boards come together, as otherwise it would defeat its object, by offering an obstruction to the fall of the board, and thus allow its little mouse to escape.

It is, therefore, an essential part of the trap, and should be carefully tested before being finally set.

THE BOX PIT-FALL.

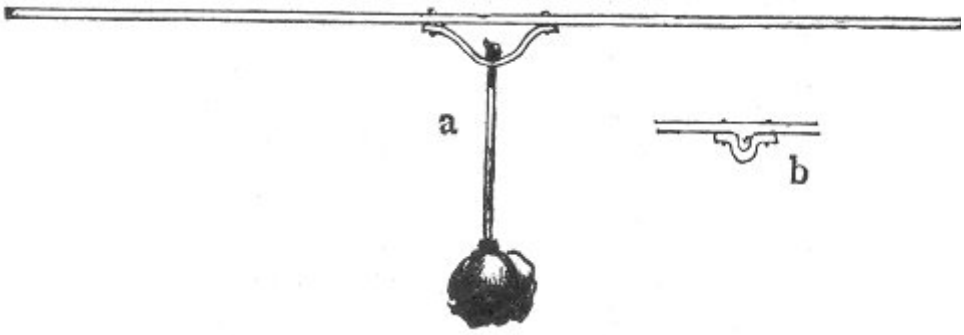
We now come to a variety of trap which differs in its construction from any previously described. It secures its victims alive, and without harm, and, when well made, is very successful. It may be set for squirrels, chipmunks, rats, mice, and the like, and on a large scale for muskrats and mink. Page 132

The trap is very easily made, and is represented in section in our illustration, showing the height and interior of the box. For ordinary purposes the box should be about twelve or fourteen inches square, with a depth of about eighteen inches. A platform consisting of a piece of tin should then be procured. This should be just large enough to fit nicely to the outline of the interior of the box without catching. On two opposite sides of this piece of tin, and at the middle of each of

those sides, a small strip of the same material should be wired, or soldered in the form of a loop, as shown in the separate diagram at (*b*). These loops should be only large enough to admit the end of a shingle-nail. A scratch should now be made across the tin from loop to loop, and on the centre of this scratch another and larger strip of tin should be fastened in a similar manner as shown in our diagram, at (*a*), this being for the balance weight. The latter may consist of a small stone, piece of lead, or the like, and should be suspended by means of a wire bent around it, and secured in a hole in the tin by a bend or knot in the other extremity. Further explanations are almost superfluous, as our main illustration fully explains itself. Page 133

After the weight is attached, the platform should be secured in its place, about five inches from the top of the box. To accomplish this and form the hinges, two shingle-nails should be driven through the side of the box into the tin loops prepared for them. To do this nicely requires some considerable accuracy and care, and it should be so done that the platform will swing with perfect freedom and ease, the weight below bringing it to a horizontal poise after a few

vibrations. Care should be taken that the weight is not too heavy, as, in such a case, the platform will not be sensitive on its balance, and, consequently, would



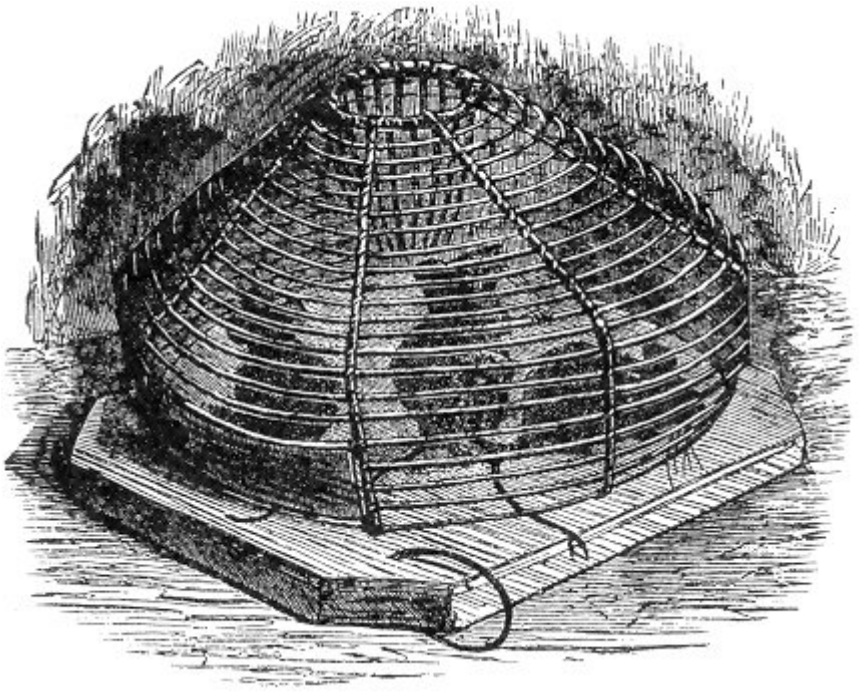
not work so quickly and surely. The weight should be *just heavy enough* to restore the platform to its perfect poise, and no more. This can be easily regulated by experiment. The bait should then be strewn on both sides of the platform, when the trap is set, and the luckless animal, jumping after the bait, feels his footing give way, and suddenly finds himself in the bottom of a dark box, from which it is impossible for him to escape except by gnawing his way out. To prevent this, the interior of the box may be lined with tin.

By *fastening* the bait—a small lump or piece—on each side of the tin, the trap will continually reset itself, and, in this way, two or three individuals may be taken, one after the other. Muskrats are frequently caught in this trap, it being generally buried in the ground so that its top is on a level with the surface. In this case it is necessary to arrange the platform lower down in the box, and the latter should be of much larger dimensions than the one we have described.

For ordinary purposes the box should either be set in the ground or placed near some neighboring object which will afford easy access to it. No less than a dozen rats have been caught in a trap of this kind in a single night.

Page 134

CAGE TRAP.



The common cage trap is well known to most of our readers, and for the capture of rats and mice, it is one of the most efficacious devices in existence. The construction of one of these traps is quite a difficult operation, and we would hesitate before advising our inventive reader to exercise his patience and ingenuity in the manufacture of an article which can be bought for such a small price, and which, after all, is only a mouse trap. If it were a device for the capture of the *mink* or *otter*, it might then be well worth the trouble, and would be likely to repay the time and labor expended upon it. We imagine that few would care to exercise their skill over a trap of such complicated structure, while our pages are filled with other simpler and equally effective examples.

For the benefit, however, of such as are of an inventive turn of mind, we subjoin an illustration of the trap to serve as a guide. The principle upon which it works is very simple. The bait is strewn inside the cage, and the rats or mice Page 135 find their only access to it through the hole at the top. The wires here converge at the bottom, and are pointed at the ends. The passage downwards is an easy matter, but to *escape* through the same opening is impossible, as the pointed ends of the wires effectually prevent the ascent. It is a notable fact, however, that the efforts to escape through this opening are very seldom made. The mode of entering seems to be absolutely forgotten by the captive animals, and they rush frantically about the cage, prying between all the wires in their wild endeavors, never seeming to notice the central opening by which they entered. This is easily explained by the fact that the open grating admits the light from all sides, and the enclosed victims are thus attracted to no one spot in particular, and naturally rush to the extreme edges of the trap, in the hope of finding an exit.

If a thick cloth be placed over the cage, leaving the opening at the top uncovered, the confined creatures are soon attracted by the light, and lose no time in rushing towards it, where their endeavors to ascend are effectually checked by the pointed wires. Profiting by this experiment, the author once improvised a simple trap on the same principle, which proved very effectual. We will call it

THE JAR TRAP.

In place of the wire cage, a glass preserve-jar was substituted. A few bits of cheese were then dropped inside, and the top of a funnel inserted into the opening above. This completed the trap, and it was set on the floor near the flour barrel. On the following morning the jar was occupied by a little mouse, and each successive night for a week added one to the list of victims. A stiff piece of tin, bent into the required shape, may be substituted for the funnel top, or even a very heavy piece of pasteboard might answer.

BOWL TRAPS.

Very effective extempore traps may be set up in a few minutes by the use of a few bowls. There are two methods commonly employed. One consists of the bowl and a knife-blade. An ordinary tableknife is used and a piece of cheese is firmly forced on to the end of the blade, the bowl is then balanced on the edge, allowing the bait to project about an inch and a half beneath the bowl. The odor of cheese will attract a mouse almost anywhere, and he soon finds his way to Page 136 the tempting morsel in this case. A very slight nibble is sufficient to tilt the blade and the bowl falls over its prisoner.

In the second method a thimble is used in place of the knife. The cheese is forced into its interior, and the open end of the thimble inserted far beneath the bowl, allowing about half its length to project outward.

The mouse is thus obliged to pass under the bowl in order to reach the bait, and in his efforts to grasp the morsel, the thimble is dislodged and the captive secured beneath the vessel. Where a small thimble is used, it becomes necessary to place a bit of pasteboard or flat chip beneath it, in order to raise it sufficiently to afford an easy passage for the mouse. Both of these devices are said to work excellently.

FLY PAPER.

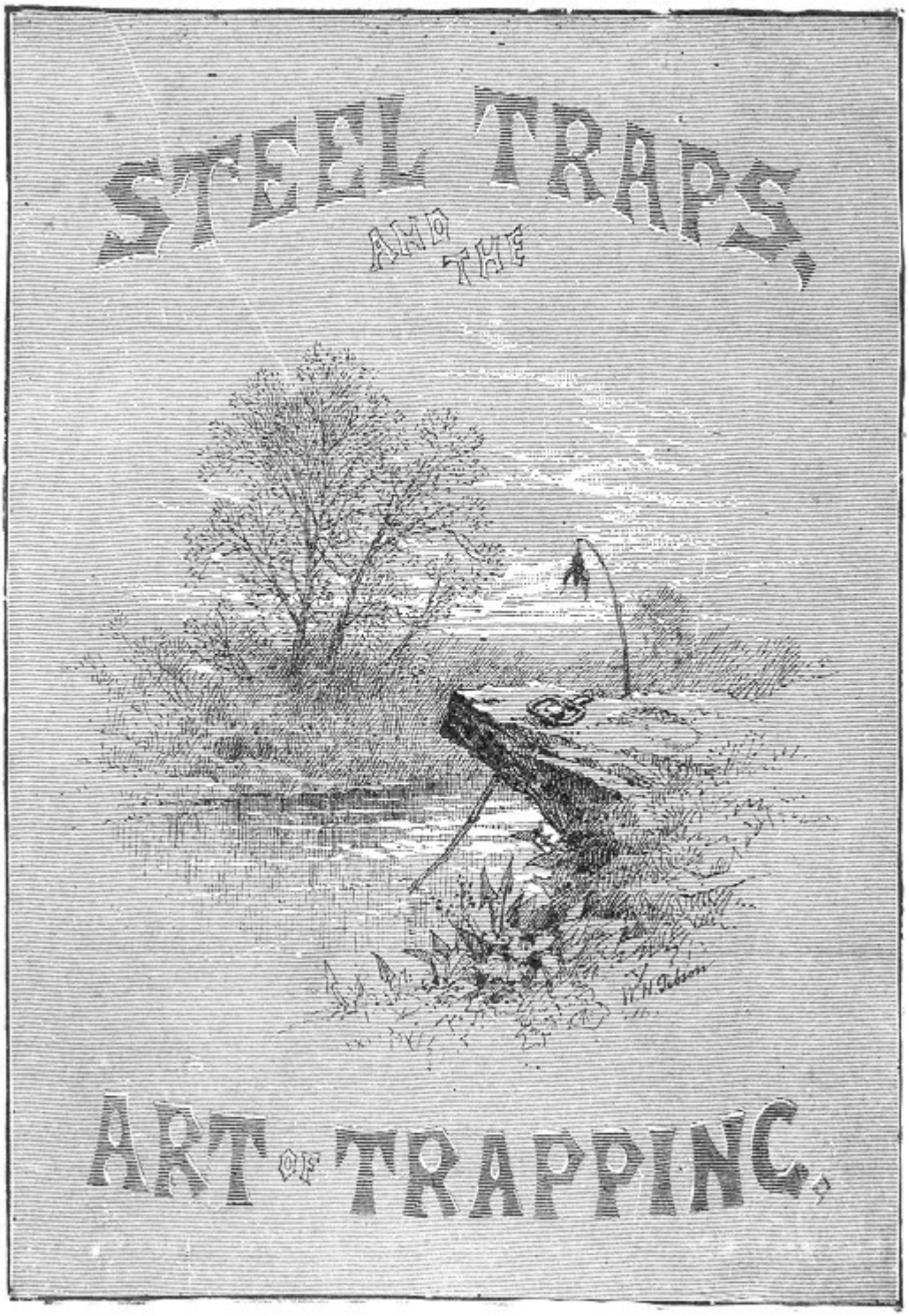
A sheet of common paper, smeared with a mixture composed of molasses one part, and bird-lime six parts (see page 97), will be found to attract large numbers of flies and hold them prisoners upon its surface.

Spruce gum, warmed on the fire, and mixed with a little linseed oil, is also excellent. For a genuine fly trap, the following stands unrivalled.

FLY TRAP.

Take a tumbler, and half-fill it with strong soap suds. Cut a circle of stiff paper which will exactly fit into the top of the glass. In the centre of the paper cut a hole half an inch in diameter, or, better still, a slice of bread may be placed on the glass. Smear one side of the disc with molasses, and insert it in the tumbler with this side downward. Swarms of flies soon surround it, and one by one find their way downward through the hole. Once below the paper, and their doom is sealed. For a short time the molasses absorbs their attention, and they, in turn, absorb the molasses.

In their efforts to escape, they one by one precipitate themselves in the soap suds below, where they speedily perish. The tumbler is soon half-filled with the dead insects, and where a number of the traps are set in a single room, the apartment is soon ridden of the pests.



BOOK VI.

Page 137

STEEL TRAPS AND THE ART OF TRAPPING.

assing from our full and extended illustrated list of extempore, or

"rough and ready" examples of the trap kind, we will now turn our attention to the consideration of that well-known implement, the trade *steel* trap. Although the foregoing varieties often serve to good purpose, the Steel Trap is the principal device used by professional trappers, and possesses great advantages over all other traps. It is portable, sets easily and quickly, either on land or beneath the water; can be concealed with ease; secures its victims without injury to their fur, and by the application of the spring or sliding pole (hereafter described) will most effectually prevent the captive from making his escape by self-amputation, besides placing him beyond the reach of destruction by other animals.

The author has known trappers who have plied their vocation largely by the aid of the various hand made traps, described in the earlier pages of this book, and with good success. But in the regular *business* of systematic trapping, their extensive use is not common. The experience of modern trappers generally, warrants the assertion that for practical utility, from every point of view, the steel trap stands unrivalled.

These traps are made of all sizes, from that suitable for the capture of the house rat, to the immense and wieldy machine adapted to the grizzly, and known as the "bear tamer."

They may be bought at almost any hardware shop, although a large portion of the traps ordinarily sold are defective. They should be selected with care, and the springs always tested before purchase. Besides the temper of the spring, there are also other necessary qualities in a steel trap, which we subjoin in order that the amateur may know how to judge and select his weapons judiciously. Page 138

REQUISITES OF A GOOD STEEL TRAP.

1. *The jaws should not be too thin nor sharp cornered*. In the cheaper class of steel traps the jaws approach to the thinness of sheet-iron, and the result is that the thin edges often sever the leg of their would-be captive in a single stroke. At other times the leg is so deeply cut as to easily enable the animal to gnaw or twist it off. This is the common mode of escape, with many animals.

2. *The pan should not be too large*. This is a very common fault with many steel traps and often defeats its very object. Where the pan is small, the foot of the animal in pressing it, will be directly in the centre of the snap of the jaw, and he is thus firmly secured far up on the leg. On the other hand, a large pan nearly filling the space between the jaws as the trap is set, may be sprung by a touch on its extreme edge, and the animal's toe is thus likely to get slightly pinched, if indeed the paw is not thrown off altogether by the forcible snap of the jaw.

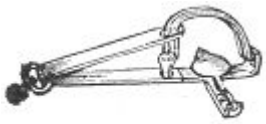
3. *The springs should be strong, scientifically tempered, and proportioned*. The strength of a perfectly tempered spring will always remain the same, whether in winter or summer, never losing its elasticity. The best of tempering, however, is useless in a spring badly formed or clumsily tapered.

4. The jaws should be so curved as to give the bow of the spring a proper sweep to work upon. The jaws should lie *flat* when open, and should always work easily on their hinges.

5. Every trap should be furnished with a strong chain with ring and swivel attached, and in every case the swivel should turn easily.

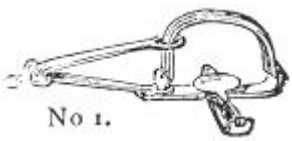
The celebrated "Newhouse Trap" embodies all the above requisites, and has deservedly won a reputation for excellence second to no other in this or any other country.

They are made in eight sizes, as follows:



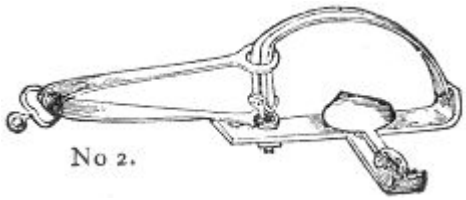
No. 0.

This is the smallest size and is known as the RAT TRAP. It has a single spring, and the jaws spread three and a half inches when set.

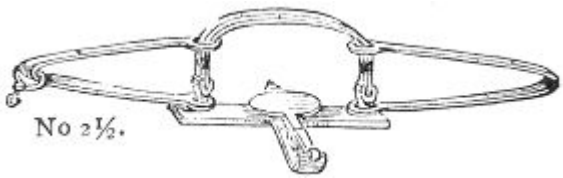


No 1.

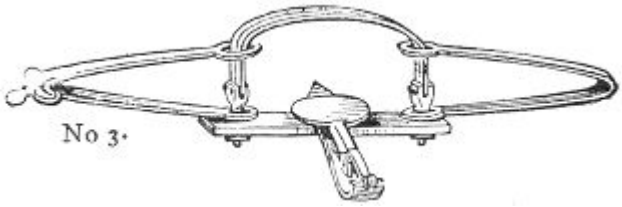
This size is called the MUSKRAT TRAP, and the jaws spread four inches. It is especially designed for the capture of the mink, marten, and animals of similar size.



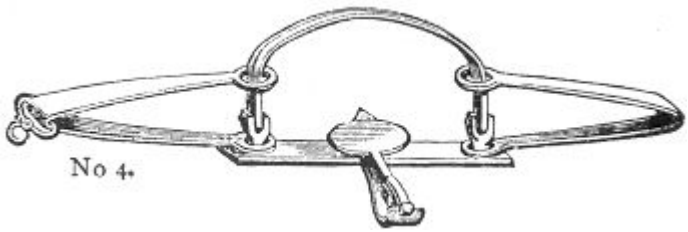
This is known in the trade as the MINK TRAP, and the jaws spread nearly five inches. It is adapted for the fox, raccoon, or fisher.



This size is called the FOX TRAP. The spread of the jaws is the same as in the foregoing, but the trap is provided with two springs, and consequently has double the power. It is strong enough for the otter, and is generally used for the capture of the fox and fisher.

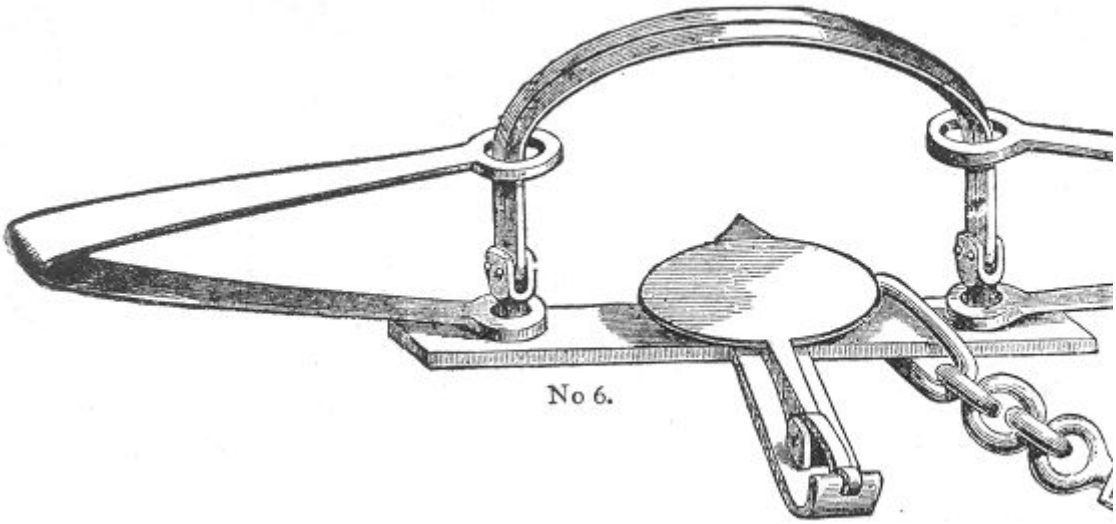


No.3 goes by the name of the OTTER TRAP. The jaws spread five and a half inches, and the powerful double springs do excellent service in the capture of the beaver, fox, badger, opossum, wild cat, and animals of like size.



Commonly called the BEAVER TRAP. Jaws spread six and a half inches. This size is especially adapted to the wolf, lynx or wolverine. It may also be set for deer, and extra sets of jaws are made expressly for this purpose, being easily inserted in the place of the ordinary jaws, when desired.

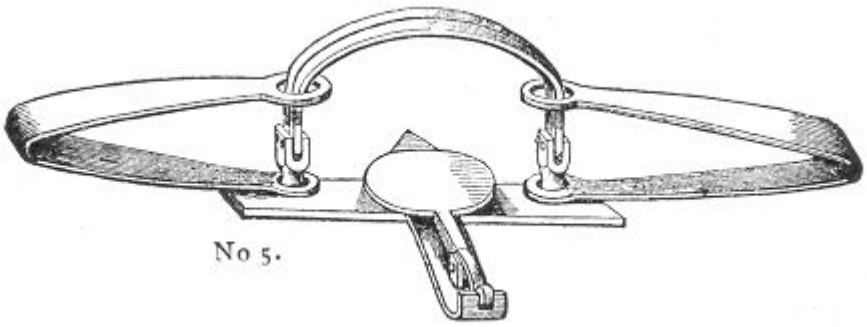
This is known as the "GREAT BEAR TAMER," and is a most formidable weapon. The jaws spread sixteen inches, and the weight of the machine is forty-two pounds. It is extensively used in the capture of the moose and grizzly bear, and is the largest and most powerful steel trap made in this or any other country. The springs possess most tremendous power, and require to be set by a lever, as the weight of an ordinary man has not the slightest effect upon them. This lever may be easily applied, as follows: Have at hand four stout straps, supplied with buckles. These should always be carried by the trapper, where the larger double-spring traps are used. To adjust the lever, cut four heavy sticks about three feet



No 6.

long. Take two of them and secure their ends together, side by side, with one of the straps. Now insert the spring of the trap between them, near the strap. Bear down heavily on the other extremity of the lever, and the spring will be found to yield easily, after which the remaining ends of the levers should be secured by a second strap. The other spring should now be treated in the same way, after which the jaws should be spread and the pan adjusted. The removal of the straps and levers is now an easy matter, after which the trap is set. The stoutest spring is easily made to yield by such treatment.

Page 143



No 5.

The SMALL BEAR TRAP. The jaws of this size spread nearly a foot, and the weight of the trap is seventeen pounds. It is used in the capture of the black bear, puma, and animals of similar size.

All of the foregoing are supplied with swivels and chains.

HINTS ON BAITING THE STEEL TRAP.

There is a very common and erroneous idea current among amateur sportsmen and others in regard to the baiting of the steel trap; viz., that the pan of the trap is intended for the *bait*. This was the old custom in the traps of bygone times, but

no modern trap is intended to be so misused, and would indeed often defeat its object in such a case, wherein it will be easily seen. The object of the professional trapper is the acquisition of furs; and a prime fur skin should be without break or bruise, from nose to tail. A trap set as above described, would of course catch its victim by the head or neck, and the fur would he more or less

Page 144

injured at the very spot where it should be particularly free from blemish.

The true object of the steel trap is, that it shall take the animal by the *leg*, thus injuring the skin only in a part where it is totally valueless.

We give, then, this imperative rule—*Never bait a steel trap on the pan*.

The pan is intended for the *foot* of the game, and in order to insure capture by this means, the bait should be so placed as that the attention of the animal will be *drawn away* from the trap; the latter being in such a position as will cause the victim to *step in it* when reaching for the tempting allurement.

There are several ways of doing this, one of which we here illustrate.

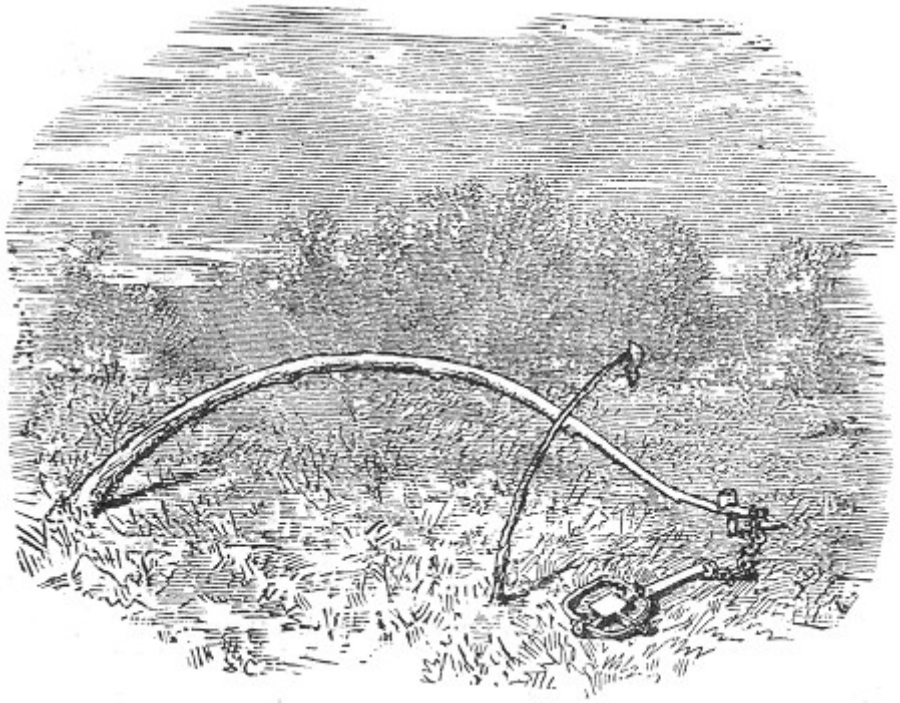
A pen of stakes, in the shape of the letter V, is first constructed. The trap is then set in the angle, and the bait attached to the end stake directly over it. Another method is shown in the picture on our title-page to this section, the bait being suspended on a stick above the trap. There are various other methods on the same principle, which will be described hereafter, under the titles of the various game.

THE SPRING POLE.

This is nearly always used in connection with the steel trap, in the capture of the smaller land animals. It not only lifts the creature into the air, and thus prevents its becoming a prey to other animals, but it also guards against the escape of the victim by the amputation of its own leg. This is a very common mode of release with many kinds of game—notably the mink, marten, and muskrat; and for the successful trapping of these, as well as many other animals, the spring and sliding pole are absolute necessities. It is a simple contrivance, consisting merely of a pole inserted in the ground near the trap. The pole is then bent down, and the trap chain secured to its end. A small, notched peg is next driven into the ground and the top of the pole caught in it, and thus held in a bent position. When the animal is caught, its struggles release the pole, and the latter, flying up with a jerk, lifts the trap and its occupant high in the air, out of the reach of marauders, and beyond the power of escape by self-amputation. Even in the capture of large game the spring pole often serves to good purpose. The

Page 145

of a heavy animal are often so violent as to break a stout trap or chain; and the



force of the spring pole, although not sufficient to raise the animal from its feet, often succeeds in easing the strain, and often thus saves a trap from being broken to pieces. The power of the pole must of course be proportionate to the weight of the desired game.

THE SLIDING POLE.

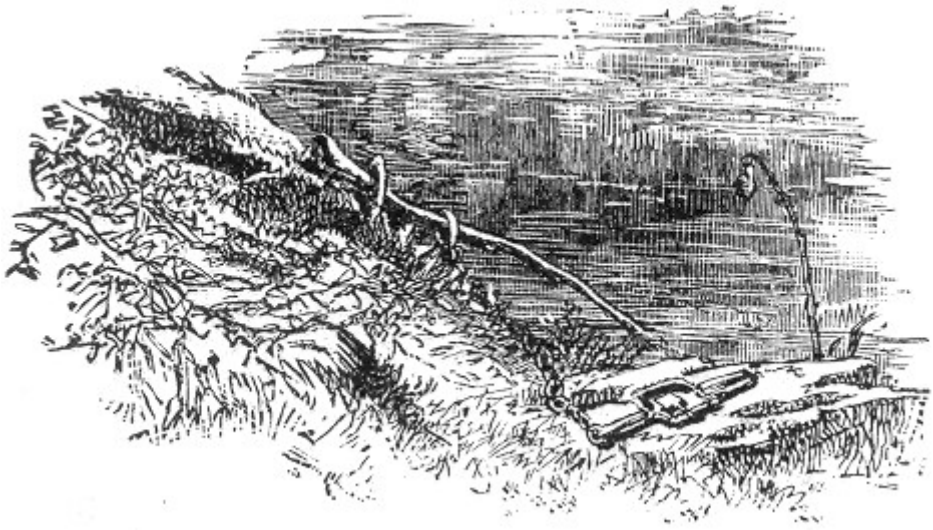
The first impulse with almost every aquatic animal when caught in a trap, is to plunge headlong into deep water. With the smaller animals, such as the mink and muskrat, this is all that is desired by the trapper, as the weight of the trap with the chain is sufficient to drown its victim. But with larger animals, the beaver and otter for instance, an additional precaution, in the shape of the "sliding pole," is necessary. This consists of a pole about ten feet long, smoothly trimmed of its branches, excepting at the tip, where a few stubs should be left. Insert this end obliquely into the bed of the stream, where the water is deep, and secure the large end to the bank by means of a hooked stick, as seen in our illustration. The ring of the chain should be large enough to slide easily down the entire length of the pole. When the trap is set, the ring should be slipped on the large end of the pole, and held in place by resting a stick against it. The

Page 146

animal, when caught, plunges off into deep water, and guided by the pole, is led to the bottom of the river. The ring slides down to the bed of the stream, and there holds its victim until drowned.

THE CLOG.

A trap which is set for heavy game should never be secured to a stake. Many of the larger and more powerful animals when caught in a trap thus secured, are



apt either to pull or twist their legs off, or break both trap and chain to pieces. To guard against this, the chain should be weighted with a pole or small log, of a size proportionate to the dimensions of the game, its weight being merely sufficient to offer a serious incumbrance to the animal, without positively checking its movements. This impediment is called the "clog," and is usually attached to the ring of the trap chain by its larger end, the ring being slipped over the latter, and secured in place by a wedge. A look at our frontispiece will give a clear idea of both clog and attachment.

THE GRAPPLING IRON.

Page 147

This answers the same purpose as the above, and is often used instead. It is manufactured in connection with the larger steel traps, and is attached to the

chain by a swivel joint. Its general shape is shown in an engraving, and it offers a serious resistance to the victim, who endeavors to run away with it.

THE SEASON FOR TRAPPING.

The business of trapping for profit must be confined to the season between the first of October and the beginning of May, as furs of all kinds are worthless when taken during the other months of the year. The reason of this is obvious. A "*prime fur*" must be "*thick*" and "*full*," and as all our fur-bearing animals shed their heavy winter coats as warm weather approaches, it necessarily follows that the capture at this season would be unprofitable. As the autumn approaches the new growth appears, and the fur becomes thick and glossy. By the middle of October most furs are in their prime, but the heart of winter is the best time for general trapping. The furs of the mink, muskrat, fisher, marten and beaver are Page 148 not in their perfect prime until this season. And *all* other furs are *sure* to be in good condition at this time.

THE ART OF TRAPPING.

From time immemorial, and in every nation of the world, the art of trapping has been more or less practised. By some as a means of supplying their wants in the shape of daily food, and by others for the purpose of merchandise or profit.

To be a clever and successful trapper, much more is required than is generally supposed. The mere fact of a person's being able to set a trap cleverly and judiciously forms but a small part of his proficiency; and unless he enters deeper into the subject and learns something of the nature and habits of the animals he intends to catch, his traps will be set in vain, or at best meet with but indifferent success. The study of natural history here becomes a matter of necessity as well as pleasure and profit. And unless the trapper thoroughly acquaints himself with the habits of his various game, the sagacity and cunning of his intended victim will often outwit his most shrewd endeavors, much to his chagrin. The sense of smell, so largely developed in many animals, becomes one of the trappers most serious obstacles, and seems at times to amount almost to positive *reason*, so perfectly do the creatures baffle the most ingenious attempts of man in his efforts to capture them. A little insight into the ways of these artful animals, however, and a little experience with their odd tricks soon enables one to cope with them successfully and overcome their whims. For the benefit of the amateur who has not had the opportunity of studying for himself, the peculiarities of the various game, the author appends a comprehensive chapter on "Practical Natural History," in which will be found full accounts of the peculiar habits and leading characteristics of all the various animals commonly sought by the trapper, together with detailed directions for trapping each variety, supplemented with a faithful portrait of the animal in nearly every instance. A careful reading of the above mentioned chapter will do much towards acquainting the novice with the ways of the sly creatures, which he hopes to victimize, and will thus prepare him to contend with them successfully.

In the art of trapping the bait is often entirely dispensed with, the traps being set and carefully concealed in the *runways* of the various animals. These by-paths are easily detected by an experienced trapper, and are indicated either by Page 149 footprints or other evidences of the animal, together with the matted leaves and broken twigs and grasses.

Natural channels, such as hollow logs or crevices between rocks or fallen trees, offer excellent situations for steel traps, and a good trapper is always on the *qui vive* for such chance advantages, thus often saving much of the time and labor which would otherwise be spent in the building of artificial enclosures, etc.

The most effective baits used in the art of trapping are those which are used to attract the animal through its sense of smell, as distinct from that of its mere appetite for food. These baits are known in the profession as "medicine," or scent baits and possess the most remarkable power of attracting the various animals from great distances, and leading them almost irresistibly to any desired spot. Such is the barks tone or castoreum, of such value in the capture of the beaver, and the oil of anise, so commonly used for the trapping of animals in general. These various substances will presently be considered under their proper heading.

Many detailed and specific directions on the subject of trapping will be found in the long chapter following; and, in closing our preliminary remarks, we would add just one more word of general caution, which the young trapper should always bear in mind.

In all cases avoid handling the trap with the bare hand. Many an amateur has set and *reset* his traps in vain, and retired from the field of trapping in disgust, from the mere want of observing this rule. Animals of keen scent are quick in detecting the slightest odors, and that left by the touch of a human hand often suffices to drive the creature away from a trap which, under other circumstances, would have been its certain destruction. To be sure the various scent baits already alluded to, will in a measure overcome human traces, but not always effectually, and in order to insure success no precautions so simple should be neglected. A pair of clean buckskin gloves are valuable requisites to the trapper, and should always be "on hand" when setting or transporting traps.

"MEDICINES," OR SCENT BAITS.

These form one of the most important requisites of the trapper's art. A trap baited simply with the food of the required animal, may and often will be successful, but with the addition of the trapper's "medicine" judicially applied, success is almost a certainty. These scent baits are of various kinds, some being almost universal in their usefulness, while others are attractive only to some particular species of animal. We give a few of the recipes of the most valued preparations used by trappers throughout the land. The application and use of each is fully described in its proper place hereafter. Page 150

CASTOREUM.

This substance, commonly known as "*Barkstone*," by trappers and fur dealers, is obtained from the beaver, and is a remarkable aid in the capture of that animal. It is an acrid secretion of a powerful musky odor, found in two glands beneath the root of the tail of the beaver. These glands are about two inches in length. They are cut out and the contents are squeezed into a small bottle. When fresh the substance is of a yellowish-red color, changing to a light-brown when dried. Both male and female animals yield the castoreum, but that of the male is generally considered the best. Castoreum is a commercial drug, and in many beaver countries it is quite an article of trade. There are other sacs lying directly

behind the castor glands which contain a strong oil of rancid smell. This should not be confounded with the Castoreum.

CASTOREUM COMPOSITION.

The Barkstone is used both pure and in combination with other substances, the following prescription being much used: Into the contents of about ten of the castor bags, mix two ground nutmegs, thirty or forty cloves, also powdered, one drop essence of peppermint, and about two thimblefuls of ground cinnamon. Into this stir as much whisky as will give the whole the consistency of paste, after which the preparation should be bottled and kept carefully corked. At the expiration of a few days the odor increases ten-fold in power and is ready for use. A bottle, if thus prepared, will retain its strength for nearly a half year, provided it is kept closely corked. A few drops of either the pure castoreum or the combination spread upon the bait or in the neighborhood of the trap, as described under the chapter on the Beaver, will entice that animal from a great distance.

MUSK.

Page 151

This substance is a secretion obtained from several different animals, notably the otter and muskrat. The glands which contain it are located similarly to the castor glands of the beaver, and the musk should be discharged into a vial, as previously described. The musk of the female muskrat is said to be the most powerful, and is chiefly used by trappers in the capture of that animal, the otter being chiefly attracted by its own musk.

ASSAFŒTIDA.

This foul smelling production seems to have a specially attractive fragrance to many animals, and for general use is much esteemed by trappers. It is a vegetable drug from Persia and the East Indies, and is imported in the form of concrete juice, of a brown color.

OIL OF RHODIUM.

This is a vegetable oil obtained from a species of rose, and is quite costly. Its power of attracting animals is surprising, and it is in very common use among trappers.

FISH OIL.

This is especially useful in the capture of the majority of the fur tribe, and particularly the water animals.

The oil may be bought ready for use, or prepared with little trouble. The common method consists in cutting up fish of any kind, especially eels, into small bits, putting them in a bottle, and setting the latter in the full exposure to the sun. It should thus be left for about two weeks, at the end of which time a rancid oil will have formed. A few drops of this oil will entice many animals

from surprising distances, often drawing their attention to a bait which otherwise they might never have scented.

OIL OF SKUNK.

This, the *ne plus ultra*, or quintessence of diabolical stench, yields the tempting savor which irresistibly attracts many animals to their final doom. It is contained in a pouch beneath the insertion of the tail of the animal, and is spread abroad by the creature with lavish extravagance when circumstances demand, or we might say when occasion permits. It may be taken from the animal and bottled as already described in other instances, chloride of lime being used to eradicate the stench from the hands.

Page 152

OIL OF AMBER.

This substance is frequently referred to in the following pages, and is a vegetable product of the amber gum of commerce. The Oil of Ambergris is also sometimes used by trappers, and is likewise known as Amber Oil. The two are thus often confounded, although the former is supposed to be most generally used.

OIL OF ANISE.

This is strongly recommended by many trappers as a most excellent "universal medicine." It is a vegetable product, and is obtainable at any drug store.

SWEET FENNEL.

This plant is commonly cultivated all over the United States, and the seeds are often powdered and used as a scent bait. The Oil of Fennel is preferable, however, and may be had at almost any drug store.

CUMMIN.

This is another plant, somewhat resembling the former, and, like it, cultivated for its seeds. It has an aromatic taste, and its strong pungent odor renders it of great value to the trapper. The seeds may be powdered and thus used, or the oil of the plant may be easily procured. The latter is preferable.

FENUGREEK.

Like the two foregoing this plant is valuable for its seeds, which are used for medicinal purposes. The oil or bruised seeds may be used.

LAVENDER.

This is another aromatic plant, the oil of which, either pure or diluted with alcohol, is much used in the trapper's art.

COMPOUND.

Page 153

For ordinary use, a mixture of Assafœtida, Musk, Oil of Anise, and Fish Oil, together with a few drops of the Oil of Rhodium, is especially recommended by our most skilled trappers. This preparation contains the various substances which are known to attract the different fur bearing animals, and its use often insures success where anyone of the simple substances would be ineffectual.

THE TRAIL.

The object of the "trail" consists in offering a leading scent which, when followed, will bring the animal to the various traps, and when properly made will be the means of drawing large numbers of game from all quarters and from great distances, whereas without it the traps might remain undiscovered.

Trails are sometimes made to connect a line of traps, as when set along the banks of streams for mink, etc., at other times, as in trapping the fox, for instance, they should extend from the trap on all sides, like the spokes of a wheel from the hub, thus covering considerable area, and rendering success more certain than it would be without this precaution.

The combination "medicine" just described is excellent for the purposes of a trail for minks, otter, muskrat, and many other animals.

Soak a piece of meat, or piece of wood in the preparation, and drag it along the ground between the traps. A dead fish smeared with the fluid will also answer the same purpose. The soles of the boots may also be smeared with the "medicine" and the trail thus accomplished. Trails of various kinds are considered under their respective and appropriate heads in the chapters on animals, all of which will be found useful and effective.

HOW TO TRAP.

In the following pages will be found full and ample directions for the trapping of all our leading game, together with detailed descriptions of peculiar habits of each species. The various articles contain careful descriptions, whereby the species may be readily recognized, and, in nearly every case, are accompanied by faithful illustrations. We add also valuable directions for the best manner of removing the skin of each animal, this being a matter of considerable importance, as affecting their pecuniary value.

THE FOX.

Page 154

Foremost in the list of animals noted for their sly craft, and the hero of a host of fables and well-authenticated stories, in which artful cunning gains the advantage over human intelligence, Reynard, the fox, reigns supreme. There is scarcely a professional trapper in the land who has not, in his day, been hoodwinked by the wily strategy of this sly creature, whose extreme cunning renders him the most difficult of all animals to trap. The fox belongs to the Dog family, and there are six varieties inhabiting the United States. The red species is

the most common and is too well known to need a description here. The Cross Fox considerably resembles the above, only being much darker in color, the red hair being thickly speckled with black. This species varies considerably in color in different individuals, often much resembling the red variety, and again approaching nearer in color to the Black or Silver Fox. This variation, together with the name of the animal, has given rise among trappers to the wide-spread belief of the animal being a cross between the two species which it so nearly resembles. It seems to be a permanent variety, however, the term cross being applied, we believe, on account of a dark marking on the back, between the shoulders of the animal, suggestive of that title. The Silver or Black Fox is the most beautiful and most rare of the genus, and yields the most valuable fur produced in this country. Its color is black, with the exception of the tip of the tail, which is white. The Prairie Fox is the largest of the species. It inhabits the Western Prairies, and in color resembles the common red variety, only being a trifle yellower.

The Kit, or Swift Fox, is smaller than the Red, and abounds in the Western States.

The Gray Fox is a Southern variety, and is very beautiful. It is less daring and cunning than the Common Fox, and seldom approaches a farm-yard, where it is in close proximity to a dwelling.

The general habits and characteristics of all the foxes are similar. For natural cunning they take the lead of all other animals. They are all built for speed, and their senses of smell and hearing are acutely developed. Their food consists of wild fowl of all kinds, rabbits, squirrels, birds and their eggs, together with many kinds of ripe fruits, "sour grapes" not included. They live in burrows, often usurped, or crevices between rocks; and their young, from three to nine in number, are brought forth in March. Page 155

We are strongly tempted to narrate a few remarkable instances of the animal's cunning, but we forbear for want of space. Our reader must take it for granted that when he attempts to trap a fox, he will be likely to find more than his match in the superior craftiness of that animal. If the trap is overturned and the bait gone, or if repeatedly sprung and found empty, he must not he surprised or discouraged, for he is experiencing only what all other trappers have experienced before him. There are instances on record where this knowing creature has sprung the trap by dropping a stick upon the pan, afterwards removing the suspended bait to enjoy it at his leisure. His movements are as lithe and subtile as those of a snake, and when "cornered" there is no telling what caper that cunning instinct and subtlety of body will not lead him to perform. When pursued by hounds he has been known to lead them a long chase at full speed up to the crest of a hill: here he leaps a shrub, swiftly as an arrow, and landing on the ground on the opposite declivity quickly returns beneath the brushwood and crouches down closely upon the ground. Presently the hounds come along in full cry, and blazing scent they dart over the shrub in full pursuit, dash down the hillside, never stopping until at the bottom of the hill they find they are off the trail. As soon as the hounds are passed, sly Reynard cautiously takes to his legs: creeping adroitly back over the brow of the hill, he runs for a considerable distance on his back trail, and at last, after taking a series of long jumps therefrom returns to his covert at leisure. Page after page might be filled to the glory of this creature's cunning, but enough has been said to give the young trapper an insight into the character of the animal he hopes to victimize,

and prepare him for a trial of skill which, without this knowledge, would be a most one-sided affair.

We would not advise our young amateur to calculate very confidently on securing a fox at the first attempt, but we can truthfully vouch that if the creature can be *caught at all*, it can be done by following the directions we now give.

One of the most essential things in the trapping of this, as well as nearly all animals, is that the trap should be *perfectly clean and free from rust*. The steel trap No.2, page 141 is the best for animals of the size of the Fox. The trap should be washed in weak lye, being afterwards well greased and finally smoked over burning hen's feathers.

All this and even more precaution is necessary. No matter how strongly scented the trap may be, with the smoke, or other substances, a mere touch of the bare hand will leave a *human scent* which the fox perceives as soon as the other, and this is enough to deaden his enthusiasm over the most tempting bait. Page 156

On this account, it is necessary always to handle the trap with buckskin gloves, never allowing the bare hand to come in contact with it, on any account, after once prepared for setting.

Before arranging the trap for its work, it is necessary to construct what is called a "bed." There are several methods of doing this; but from all we can learn from the most experienced trappers, the following is the most successful. The bed should be made on flat ground, using any of the following substances: Buckwheat chaff, which is the best, oat, wheat, or hay chaff, or in lieu of these, moss or wood ashes. Let the bed be three feet in diameter, and an inch and a half in depth. To insure success it is the best plan to bait the bed itself for several days with scraps of beef or cheese strewn upon, and near it. If the fox once visits the place, discovers the tempting morsels and enjoys a good meal unmolested, he will be sure to revisit the spot so long as he finds a "free lunch" awaiting him. When he is found to come regularly and take the bait, he is as good as caught, provided our instructions are carefully followed. Take the trap, previously prepared as already described, chain it securely to a small log of wood about two feet long. Dig a hole in the earth in the centre of the bed, large enough to receive the trap, with its log, and chain. Set the traps, supporting the pan by pushing some of the chaff beneath it. Now lay a piece of paper over the pan and sprinkle the chaff over it evenly and smoothly, until every trace of the trap and its appendages is obliterated. Endeavor to make the bed look as it has previously done, and bait it with the same materials. Avoid treading much about the bed and step in the same tracks as far as possible. Touch nothing with the naked hands. Cover up all the footprints as much as possible, and leave the trap to take care of itself and any intruder. If our directions have been accurately followed, and due care has been exercised on the part of the young trapper, there is every probability that the next morning will reward him with his fox. But if a day or two elapse without success, it is well to resort to the "scent baits" described on page 149. Take the trap out of the bed, and with a feather smear it with melted beeswax, or rub it with a little Oil of Rhodium, Assafœtida, or Musk. Oil of Amber, and Lavender water are also used for the same purpose by many professional trappers. These are not always necessary but are often used as a last resort, and will most always insure success. Page 157

Another method of baiting is shown in our page illustration opposite, and

consists in suspending the bait by a stick in such a position that the fox will be obliged to step upon the trap in order to reach it. The bed should be baited in this way several times before the trap is set. This method is very commonly employed.

Another still, is to bury the dead body of a rabbit or bird in loose earth, covering the whole with chaff. Sprinkle a few drops of Musk, or Oil of Amber over the bed. After the fox has taken the bait, the place should be rebaited and the trap inserted in the mound and covered with the chaff, being scented as before.

Some trappers employ the following method with good results: The trap is set, in a spring or at the edge of a small shallow brook and attached by a chain to a stake in the bank, the chain being under water. There should be only about an inch and a half of water over the trap, and its distance from the shore should be about a foot and a half, or even less. In order to induce the fox to place his foot in the trap it is necessary to cut a sod of grass, just the size of the inside of the jaws of the trap, and place it over the pan, so that it will project above the water and offer a tempting foot rest for the animal while he reaches for the bait which rests in the water just beyond. To accomplish this device without springing the trap by the weight of the sod, it is necessary to brace up the pan from beneath with a small perpendicular stick, sufficiently to neutralize the pressure from above. The bait may be a dead rabbit or bird thrown on the water outside of the trap and about a foot from it, being secured by a string and peg. If the fox spies the bait he will be almost sure to step upon the sod to reach it, and thus get caught.

If none of these methods are successful, the young trapper may at least content himself with the idea that the particular fox he is after is an *old fellow* and is "not to be caught with chaff" or any thing else,—for if these devices will not secure him *nothing* will. If he is a young and comparatively unsophisticated specimen, he will fall an easy victim to any of the foregoing stratagems.

Although steel traps are generally used in the capture of foxes, a cleverly constructed and baited dead-fall such as is described on page 113 will often do capital service in that direction. By arranging and baiting the trap as therein described, even a fox is *likely to become* its prey. Page 158

To skin the fox the pelt should be first ripped down each hind leg to the vent. The skin being cut loose around this point, the bone of the tail should next be removed. This may be done by holding a split stick tightly over the bone after which the latter may be easily pulled out of the skin.

The hide should then be drawn back, and carefully removed, working with caution around the legs, and particularly so about the eyes, ears, and lips when these points are reached. The skin should be stretched as described on page 273.

THE WOLF.

The United States are blessed with several species of this animal. The Grey Wolf, which is the largest, and the smaller, Prairie Wolf or Coyote, being the most commonly known. There are also the White Wolf, Black Wolf and the Texan or Red Wolf. In outward form they all bear a considerable resemblance to

each other, and their habits are generally similar in the different varieties.

Wolves are fierce and dangerous animals, and are very powerful of limb and fleet of foot. They are extremely cowardly in character, and will seldom attack man or animal except when by their greater numbers they would be sure of victory. Wolves are found in almost every quarter of the globe. Mountain and plain, field, jungle and prairie are alike infested with them, and they hunt in united bands, feeding upon almost any animal which by their combined attacks they can overpower.

Their inroads upon herds and sheep folds are sometimes horrifying, and a single wolf has been known to kill as many as forty sheep in a single night, seemingly from mere blood-thirsty desire.

In the early colonization of America, wolves ran wild over the country in immense numbers, and were a source of great danger; but now, owing to wide-spread civilization, they have disappeared from the more settled localities and are chiefly found in Western wilds and prairie lands.

The Grey Wolf is the largest and most formidable representative of the Dog tribe on this continent. Its general appearance is truthfully given in our drawing. Its length, exclusive of the tail, is about four feet, the length of the tail being about a foot and a half. Its color varies from yellowish grey to almost white in the northern countries, in which latitude the animal is sometimes found of an enormous size, measuring nearly seven feet in length. The fur is coarse and shaggy about the neck and haunches, and the tail is bushy. They abound in the region east of the Rocky Mountains and northward, and travel in packs of hundreds in search of prey. Bisons, wild horses, deer and even bears fall victims to their united fierceness, and human beings, too, often fall a prey to their ferocious attacks.

Page 159

The Coyote, or Common Prairie Wolf, also known as the Burrowing Wolf, as its name implies inhabits the Western plains and prairies. They are much smaller than the Grey Wolf, and not so dangerous. They travel in bands and unitedly attack whatever animal they desire to kill. Their homes are made in burrows