

IN PASTURES IN THE SEA.

The Manatee or Sea Cow of Florida's Rivers and Inlets.

The manatee or sea cow is an amphibious creature of the pachydermal family that once was very numerous along the shores of Florida, the West Indies, tropical Brazil, and the Gulf of Guinea, but which in our day is almost extinct. It has the body of a whale, the hump of a rhinoceros, and its whole carcass, from muzzle to tail, is sparsely covered with short, stiff bristles like those on the back of a hog. The animal in some ways is a curious mixture of several other amphibia, resembling many, and yet distinctly none; but on the other hand it is in a few respects totally dissimilar to any other known creature of land or water, although it grazes like a cow, lives like a hippopotamus, and swims like a fish.

It partakes, however, more of the nature and peculiarities of the hippopotamus than of any other living creature, especially in the disk-like muzzle and thick hide, as well as in the manner of its eating and style of living; but again, unlike the hippopotamus, it is not a fighting beast, and its feeding is done entirely at night.

It being a timid and almost defenceless creature—perfectly harmless in every way—and possessing a hide that is valuable and flesh that is well flavored,

THE NATIVES

of both continents have hunted this animal until to-day, like the departed bison, the species is almost extinct. The coast of Florida is now about the only place in the world where the manatee can yet be found in considerable numbers. They have never been heard of outside of the limits of the Atlantic, their places in other oceans and other climes being taken by their first cousin, the dugong, who is a native of Ceylon and the East India lands.

In Florida the manatees, there popularly known as the sea cow, subsists almost entirely on a peculiar kind of marsh herbage called manatee grass, which grows in great abundance along the swampy shores of Florida's inlets and rivers. Notwithstanding its thick hide and stiff bristles, the creature is said to form a favorite morsel of food for the herds of savage blue sharks which are numerous along the coast of Florida. The North American manatee attains a length of from ten to twenty feet, and weighs anywhere from 500 to 2,500 pounds. The infants are about 3 feet long at birth and weigh from 75 to 100 pounds. The full-grown South American specimen rarely exceeds a length of 10 feet or a weight of 1,000 pounds.

The youngsters rapidly accumulate bulk, and with increasing age and experience, acquire the marvellous speed which enables them generally to elude the swiftest swimming sharks and other enemies. Notwithstanding its great size and seeming unwieldiness, the manatee is by far the speediest of all the large sea animals, and this appears all the more remarkable from its apparent lack of propelling power. The insignificant flat tail is small, though thick, seemingly insufficient for the amount of weight which it must force through the water; and it seems scarcely possible for

THE BULKY CREATURE

to work his caudal appendage rapidly enough to give his body the wonderful impetus which it certainly attains. Unlike other natives of the deep, the manatee's swimming apparatus is neither sharp nor clean cut, as is the case with the shark, blue-fish, or tarpon, nor is it placed on edge—that is up and down—but lies flat and horizontal, totally dissimilar in every respect from the conventional lines of a good propeller.

A general description of the incongruous brute would be about as follows: Body round, bulky, and sparsely covered with short, stiff bristles; eyes small and bead-like; the muzzle similar to that of a domestic cow; nostrils like a hippopotamus; a mouth scarcely large enough to drink with; small and inoffensive teeth; no neck; no tusks; fins like those of a seal, a flat tail, and a hide fully an inch thick. Its keen sense of hearing combined with speed renders this defenceless creature comparatively secure from harm unless skillfully trapped or caught afloat. The principal grazing grounds of the North American "sea cow" is the St. Lucia River near Jupiter Inlet in southeastern Florida.

Capt. John Zellers of Titusville makes a specialty of trapping manatees, his outfit being merely a good strong seine of the finest and strongest quality, and a knowledge acquired from long study and experience of the habits, ways, and favorite grazing grounds of the animal. Occasionally the hunter or fisherman runs across the beast when least expecting it, as happened not long since to two gentlemen named Hepburn and Miller, who live on Indian River near the mouth of Jupiter Inlet. They were quietly paddling along shore on a dark but quiet night, when they heard a rustling just ahead of them in the rushes and tall grass that lined the low muddy bank. Stealthily and softly they approached, inch by inch, when what was their surprise to discover a baby manatee peacefully feeding among the herbage, and totally unconscious of the danger lurking so near.

Mr. Hepburn is a tall, powerful, and athletic man, and for an instant was undecided what course to pursue in order

TO SECURE THE PRIZE

alive. Then untying a large handkerchief from his neck, he made a half hitch of one end and passed the other end firmly and tightly around his right wrist. Motioning his partner, who stood at the helm, to rightly advance the boat a few feet, at the right moment Hepburn reached down and passed the nose quickly over the infant's rudder-like tail, at the same time grasping that member with both hands.

Which! The young manatee swung round as quick as a stroke of lightning and took up a mile-a-minute gait straight for open water and freedom. Although an infant only a few weeks old, scarcely weighing 150 pounds, that boat and its occupants attached to his tail were no more hindrance than a baby carriage would be behind a runaway horse.

He tore through the rushes, the boat swinging and pitching from side to side, but Mr. Hepburn held his grip securely until at last the little fellow spun them out into deep water and then made a fine dash for the line of breakers that were rolling in at the mouth of the inlet five miles away. For six long miles he dragged those astonished sportsmen along at a pace they never dreamed possible, and at last struck the first breaker with a vim that nearly capsized the frail craft he was towing.

"Steer for the shore," shouted the nearly

exhausted Hepburn. "Keep her head in that direction."

Miller ported the helm with all the force he could muster, and held it steady. The young manatee was becoming exhausted in his struggle to keep his course in the opposite direction, and pretty soon the little fellow weakened so much that Mr. Hepburn was enabled to strengthen his grasp upon its tail. All effort was then directed to breaching the boat, and a few minutes later the captors landed their prize high and dry where they could secure it at their leisure.

Taking their captive into the boat they paddled back across the river, and the next morning placed the young creature in a tank on board a river steamer and carried it to Titusville, where it became at once the wonder and admiration of a thousand curious eyes.

WRECKS AND THE DROWNED.

They All Sink to the Bottom of the Ocean.

There is a rather common, but erroneous notion, to the effect that a human body, or even a ship, will not sink to the bottom of the profounder abysses of the oceans, but will, on account of the density of the waters at a great depth, remain suspended at some distance above the surface of the earth. This is an error. No other fate awaits the drowned sailor or his ship than that which comes to the marine creatures who die on the bottom of the sea; in time their dust all passes into the great storehouse of the earth even as those who receive burial on the land. However deep the sea, it is but a few hours before the body of a man who finds his grave in the ocean is at rest upon the bottom; it there receives the same swift service from the agents which, in the order of nature, are appointed to care for the dead, as comes to those who are reverently inhumed in blessed ground. All save the hardest parts of the skeleton are quickly taken again into the realm of the living, and even those more resisting portions of the body, in time are, in large part, appropriated by the creatures of the sea-floor, so that before the dust returns in the accumulating water to the firm set earth it may pass through an extended cycle of living forms.

The fate of animal bodies on the sea-floor is well illustrated by the fact that beneath the waters of the Gulf Stream, where it passes by southern Florida, there are in some places, quantities of bones, apparently those of the manatee, or sea-cow, a large herbivorous mammal, which like the seal, has become adapted to aquatic life; these creatures plentifully inhabit the tropical rivers which flow into the Caribbean Sea, and are, though rarely found in the streams of southern Florida. At their death they drift into the open water and are swept away to the north ward by the ocean current. For some weeks, perhaps, the carcasses are buoyed up by the gases of decomposition which are retained by their thick, oily skins; as these decay and break the bodies fall to the bottom.—[Scribner for July.

British Trade.

"Where is our Trade going to?" is the question editorially propounded by the Mercantile Guardian, published in London, England. It says: "The year 1892 has so far been a disastrous one in export circles. Each of the four months that have been completed have shown a considerable decrease in the volume of trade. The imports on the other hand show an increase in each month except April, when the decrease was four millions odd, the net increase being also nearly that sum. Whether this increase in the imports is a sign of health or not we leave political economists to decide; it is our duty to examine here the items of exports, although it may be of interest to glance at the totals of the import trade of the four months just passed. Living animals (for food), articles of food and drink, chemicals, oils, raw materials for sundry industries, and manufactured articles, all help to make up the increase that we have mentioned, while a fall is noticeable in tobacco, metals, and raw materials for textile manufactures, the last item alone representing over three-quarters of a million, and for April alone a million and a half sterling. Nearly everything decreased in April, a fact which seems to show that our purchasing power is less. . . . In the first four months of 1890 the value of the trade was £83,082,369, in 1891 we dropped by £194,989, to £82,887,380, and this year we have had a further fall to £76,006,715, which is £7,075,654 less than in 1890, and £6,880,665 less than in 1891. We fear that we have not the consolation of hoping that the later months of 1892 will be sufficiently prosperous to blot out this adverse balance and place it on the right side. It is of course possible that trade may revive, but we cannot see the boom yet. Whether the reduction means a loss in the world's purchasing power or a loss only to ourselves we have still to find out, but in any case, and the latter especially, it behoves our merchants to push, and our manufacturers to advertise, as there is no doubt that a happy combination of these two most excellent methods will do more to bring about prosperity than anything else."

The Smallest British Quadruped.

The harvest mouse which from nose to tail is just 2½ inches, and the tail 2 inches long, is the smallest British quadruped. Two of them, if put into a scale, only weigh down a half-penny, so that the weight of one is not more than a sixth of an ounce avoirdupois. A full-grown ordinary domestic mouse weighs as much as six harvest mice. The harvest mouse breeds eight at a litter in a little round nest composed of blades of grass or wheat. It hangs its nest for breeding amidst the straws of the standing corn above the ground, and sometimes in thistles; while in winter it burrows deep in the earth, and makes a warm bed of grass. The food of this diminutive quadruped consists of corn and grass seeds, insects and worms. The colour of its fur is a delicate brown, the base of each hair taking the darker tints and the point warming into red, while the underparts of the animal are white. The line of demarcation between the brown and white is well defined. This description may assist its identification by anyone who lights upon this beautiful little creature. The smallest quadruped in the world is the pygmy mouse of Siberia, which is even smaller than the harvest mouse.

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We Know Them.

I. With a glance that says "I told you so!" and lights his wrinkled cheek. And nods of joy, he hears the boy address the world in Greek; And, smiling, turns where interest burns—all centered on the "laddie!" And thumps the floor and claps by turns—we know him: That's his daddy!

II. With a glance that never wavers, and with lips that never speak. A woman hears the rousing cheers that greet the boy in Greek; But from the glad depths of her heart—unseen by any other, The warm tears to the eyelids start—we know her: That's his mother!

The cable daily brings tidings of further ravages of Asiatic cholera, which seem likely "to spread like wildfire" in Central Asia. It may also invade Europe, especially Russia and other regions where primitive methods of sanitation still prevail. It certainly should gain no foothold in any highly civilized country, and for it to cross the Atlantic and enter any part of America ought to be an impossibility. Yet the least carelessness, the least laxity in quarantine restriction, might give room for the outbreak even here of a devastating epidemic. The health officers of every port of entry on the continent, should exercise, during the coming summer the utmost vigilance, especially with respect to the immigrants who are fleeing hither from beneath the knout of the Great White Czar.

No Disappointment.

Disappointments of one kind and another crop up all along life's pathway, for unfortunately it is the unexpected that always happens. There is at least one article of acknowledged merit that never disappoints. Putnam's Painless Corn Extractor is sure to remove the worst corns in a few days, and as no claim is made that it will cure anything else, it cannot disappoint. If you have hard or soft corns just try it. Beware of the article "just as good." N. C. Polson & Co., proprietors, Kingston.

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A. P. 614

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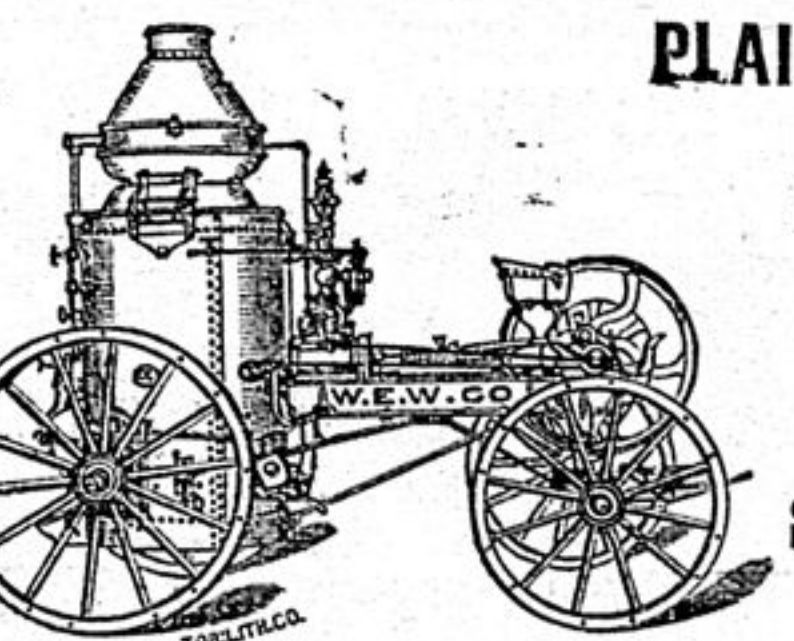
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