

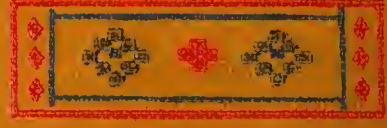
ANIMAL FOLK of WOOD & PLAIN

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ELK

ANIMAL FOLK OF WOOD AND PLAIN

WITH TWELVE FULL-PAGE COLOR-PLATES AFTER PAINTINGS IN WATER-COLOR
TOGETHER WITH ILLUSTRATIONS IN BLACK-AND-WHITE

By EDWIN WILLARD DEMING

AND WITH STORIES

By ^{Mrs.} THERESE ^(O. Starbela) DEMING



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THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR AND ARTIST TO THEIR TWIN SONS
HALL MATHER AND EDWIN WILLARD JF
MEMBERS OF THE THUNDER LODGE
OF THE BLACKFOOT TRIBE
O-TKQUE-BO-TZE-TZEST-GO-YELLOW-CLOUD
E-GOTZE-TZA-TZEST-GO - - RED-CLOUD

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ELK AND SABLE



ONCE there roamed over three-fourths of this great America the beautiful, graceful elk, king of all the deer family, with his wonderful crown of horn; but, like all other things of the very old time, he has been driven back to the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains, where he still lives, and where he herds his bands and watches for all the dangers that threaten his family.

Like many of our wild animals, he was misnamed by early explorers and settlers; for the elk of the Old World is just like our moose, and our elk claims to be a cousin of the stag or red deer of Europe.

Our Indians called the beautiful elk, Wapiti, and if our country were not so full of people it might be easy to give the graceful creature that beautiful name, because it belongs to him. We will call him Wapiti in our story. If we could stop all hunters who kill him, we would not have to fear that sometime this great creature will be gone like the bison.

Wapiti, the master, gathers together a little herd of cows, and these are his family. He leads them to the best feeding-grounds and watches and listens for all dangers. He fears, among other things, that a bull larger and stronger than he might come along and take the band away. When this happens, the master must fight, and if he proves the weaker, he has to give up his band, and the family has a new master.

In the summer these animal people are greatly worried by flies and mosquitoes; then they will rush for water and stand in a stream for hours, to protect themselves from these

little pests. The old bull will roll and wallow in mud-holes—and then King Wapiti does not look so kingly!

Toward winter, the master gathers his band together and they wander about until they find a good sheltered spot for a winter feeding-ground. Wapiti has a good appetite and is not too particular about what he finds for dinner. He eats all the grasses, herbs, lichens, and most of the weeds, but he loves the leaves and twigs of trees. Wapiti's deer cousins feed mostly at night, but Wapiti prefers to rest at night and eat his meals in the daytime.

While the family feeds, the master of the herd watches and listens for any danger that might threaten his cows, and if he hears, smells, or sees anything strange, he calls his family together and drives it to safety.

All the fawns of the deer family wear little spotted suits of baby-clothes, and even the male has no horns; but when the little fellow gets to be about two years old he is the proud possessor of two long spikes. He shows them to all his sisters and his mother, and tries them on his brothers, he is so proud of them. You may well imagine, then, the surprise of this proud fellow when he loses his spikes completely, about March. The little fellow is so much ashamed of himself that he hides in the dense forests, where he finds many other brother Wapiti without the crown they had worn all winter. There these brothers live at peace with each other. They are so weak and so much strength is used up to grow a new pair that they do not care to be quarrelsome.

Soon the horns begin to grow again, but they are covered with a soft skin, and then the horns are said to be in velvet. Can you guess what has happened? Wapiti has had a new prong added to his crown, and all this has taken only four months! Now Wapiti is proud again. He goes forth to find a new family, and forgets the tragedies he saw in the pine

ELK AND SABLE

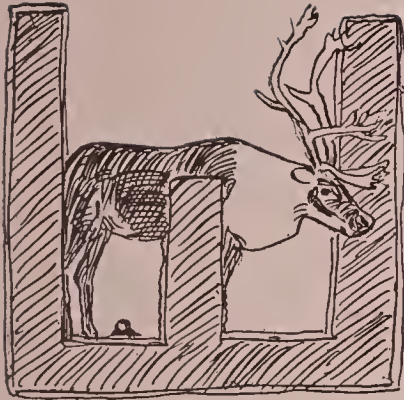
woods, where the pine-marten or American sable jumps from tree to tree in pursuit of the little tree-dwellers or chases a poor little hare, which knows there is little hope for its life, as the sable is of the weasel family and does not rest until it has caught its prey.

The sable's coat is so valuable that he is trapped and killed to furnish furs to keep man warm in winter.



SABLE

CARIBOU AND ARCTIC HARE



WHEN you open your geography to the map of the North and begin to study of the Arctic, do you not wonder how the men who go so far up there to make these maps, live? Of course, you will say, they take all sorts of provisions with them. They must do that; but, in addition, they must have fresh meat, and for this they have to depend upon whatever animals make that country their home. One of our greatest explorers went into this cold, unknown country, carrying with him provisions for sixty days and plenty of ammunition; he stayed there for nearly two years, living upon what the country afforded.

One of the most curious animals which have chosen this country for their home is the barren-ground caribou. To the Eskimo and also to many other Indian tribes, the caribou is most important, as it furnishes food and clothing for them.

Our boys and girls will be interested to know that the caribou is the reindeer of America; although the real reindeer has been brought over from Lapland and thrives in our North Country.

The caribou is a member of the deer family; but the mother caribou carry horns, too, though very much smaller than those of the male caribou.

The horns of these queer animal people are very much alike and yet no two pairs seem the same. The horns are partly palmated, which means broad and flat, with projections



CARIBOU

like fingers; the legs are thick and strong; and the hoofs expand and flatten, so that they act almost as snowshoes. The caribou walk and run with a slow, swinging gait; and as they roam about, the dew-claws and hoofs strike together, making a queer, clanking sound. The heavy coat is almost like a soft, warm mat near the body; and the long, coarse hair, growing through, acts as a raincoat.

These strange people of the Arctic gather in great herds and, on account of the climate, migrate in the spring far to the North, where they wander over the great frozen regions, keeping to the low, barren grounds all summer and feeding upon such things as grow on these desolate shores. In the fall they begin traveling southward, to spend the winter in the forests, which afford some protection from the bitter winds and the fierce storms of this cold country. Here they eat the mosses that hang from the trees, and browse upon the branches of the juicy evergreens.

The caribou changes his clothing twice a year. He must be very vain! In the summer he wears a suit of brown, to match the colors in the barren marshes where he loves to live; but in the fall his hair grows longer, thicker, and much lighter. By midwinter and toward early spring the coat is smoky white, very nearly the color of a snowstorm in the woods, or of the mosses that hang from the trees, while the great horns look almost as if they might be dead branches of trees in the woodlands. This is Mother Nature's way of giving each animal a chance to protect himself from his enemies.

For this very same reason the little Arctic hare keeps on its coat of white all the year round. This little fellow, who shares the wintry, frozen Northland with the caribou, burrows a hole in a snowdrift for his home, or crawls under a friendly ledge of rock which seems to be waiting to protect the pretty, timid creature.

CARIBOU AND ARCTIC HARE

During the long, dim winter the Arctic hare stays close to a snowdrift. This is for protection from the great Arctic owl, who is always ready to pounce upon and carry him off. Still, this little fellow can run very swiftly; and his gift from the Great Spirit was a keen sense of sight, scent, and hearing.



ARCTIC HARE



RACCOON

RACCOON AND OPOSSUM



PROWLING about in wet places, along the edges of swamps, with his clumsy yet deliberate gait, never discouraged in his hunt, we find the little raccoon. He is always ready to eat anything, from a hare to the green corn which the weary farmer tries so hard to protect, first from the crows and in the fall from the raccoon.

But the raccoon is a clean little fellow. When he kills his meat he will not eat it until he has taken it down to the water to wash. He takes the meat in his two forepaws and drags it about in the water until the meat is white and flabby; then he will eat it. In the South the negro hunts this fellow for food and calls him "Brother 'Coon."

His general color is gray and black; the fur is soft and long; while his very bushy tail has alternate black and gray rings, from the base to the tip.

A live 'coon is one of the most interesting pets a boy could have. All he wants is enough to eat and a good big place to hide away in. He loves a hollow tree; but he prefers living in a cave in the rocks, if he can find a large one.

How the farmers hate the raccoon! He loves green corn and he will ruin all the ears he can reach.

Some say the raccoon is related to the bear family, though he is much smaller. He does have a great deal of the bear about him, and the Indians tell of a time when he was as big as a bear. At that time, he was traveling through the woods and came to the home of a poor old woman. As it was very cold, he went into the house; and after he had got warm,

he said: "Old woman, if you will rid me of the insects on my back, I will give you my mittens."

The old woman did as the 'Coon asked, because she needed the mittens to trade for food for her babies. After she had finished, the 'Coon gave her his mittens and the old woman started off right after the Raccoon left the house. You remember it was very cold; soon the Raccoon's hands were nearly frozen and he started back to make the old woman give him back his mittens; but she had gone to exchange them for food. When the Raccoon reached the house and the children would not give up the mittens, he was very savage and killed all but one of the babies; then he became frightened and ran away.

When the mother reached home, she saw 'coon tracks all around the house, and when she went inside she found all her babies dead but one. She ran after the 'Coon, following his tracks, until she caught him. Then she whipped and whipped him, until the Raccoon became one of the small animals; and all the stripes on him now are the black-and-blue marks from the whipping that was given him. The Indians are sure that is the reason for the Raccoon's being so small; and surely the Raccoon deserved being punished for his ingratitude.

Like the bear, too, this little fellow eats animals as well as vegetables. He shuffles through the woods eating berries, nuts, frogs, serpents, and anything else he can find. He



10 OPOSSUM

RACCOON AND OPOSSUM

catches fish, waiting at the edge of a stream for a fish to swim by, when Mr. 'Coon reaches down and grabs it with his sharp claws.

He prowls about at night, frightening the tree-dwellers; for they are blind at night and the raccoon can see everything. But the raccoon babies are blind, just like kittens, and then Mr. 'Coon must be careful or some other prowling forest-dweller will give him a scare.

When cold weather comes on, the raccoons curl themselves up and go to sleep; but they do not sleep all winter as the bears do. They sleep a week or so at a time. When a warm spell comes on some of them will venture out, only to go to sleep again with the next cold spell. At the first sign of spring, the raccoon is out in the bogs and swamps, hunting snakes and frogs.

The raccoon is not the only night prowler the tree-dwellers have to fear, for the opossum also sleeps all day and hunts at night. Yet the two are entirely different. The opossum has a tail which he can twist around the limb of a tree, while he hangs down to rob nests or gather fruits. He lives principally upon insects, fruits, nuts, berries, mice and bugs; but he loves sweet potatoes and other things that he can steal from the farmyard. No wonder farmers get discouraged when the wild folk make their homes on his farm!

CANADA LYNX AND PORCUPINE



THE flat-faced, savage Canadian lynx, with its great muscular legs, travels with silent leaps over the snow in winter or amid dry leaves, without making the slightest noise, in summer and fall. His soft, gray fur hides him so well that it is hard to see him, even at short distances; but the wood folk know they have him to fear, and as they love their wild life as well as their enemy, the lynx, loves his, they keep a sharp lookout for this silent shadow of death.

Like all the cat family, he can climb any tree, and he feasts upon squirrels and birds; or he stretches himself upon the limb, among the lower branches, and pounces upon any unwary creature that passes his way.

During the long, cold winters he almost starves; for days he can find nothing but scraps that have, perhaps, been cast aside by some hunter during a more plentiful season. The lynx wanders through the dense, dark northern forests, through the long, cold nights and the short days, starving, sometimes for days at a time, but never losing courage, knowing that pretty soon the birds will come back from their warm home in the South, and the animal people will venture out again; then there will be plenty for all to eat.

During the whole year in the North, the lynx depends a great deal upon rabbits; but every few years the rabbits seem to disappear. Nobody knows why; it may be from disease. At this time, however, many lynx starve to death. Often in their desperate effort to get food they pounce upon the porcupine; but then they get their mouths so full of quills that they cannot eat and starve to death.



CANADA LYNX

CANADA LYNX AND PORCUPINE

Porcupines are of a dark brown or nearly black color. They are burrowing animals, though they sometimes make homes in rocky caves, and are as much at home in the tree-tops as on the ground. They strip the pine-trees of their bark, killing them for a meal.

The porcupine's flesh is sometimes eaten; though there is a prejudice against it as food. In one of our trips in the West, we killed and ate a young porcupine, and the meat was tender and juicy, very much like young pork.

His sense of sight is very poor and he seems dull-witted. He moves about slowly, perhaps because with his spines as weapons he fears nothing. He does not throw his spines, as is generally supposed, but when attacked by an enemy he erects his quills and then gives a strong sidewise slap with his tail. This drives the quills into his enemy.

The porcupine quills are very dangerous. Each quill is fitted with numerous barbs that make it almost impossible to pull them out; in fact, they work their way into the body, and finally penetrate a vital spot, and the hunter has to give up his life for the meal he only half enjoyed many weeks before.

Though naturally a nocturnal animal, the porcupine often prowls about by day, visiting the camps of hunters, eating all the salt he can find. He eats the bacon and everything leather he can find: he even eats the ax helves. Perhaps he prefers traveling in the day-



PORCUPINE

CANADA LYNX AND PORCUPINE

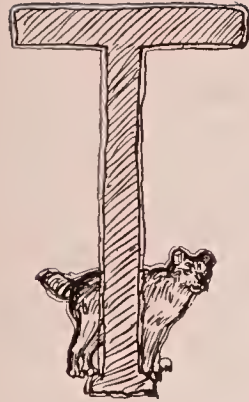
time, because most of his enemies prowl about at night, especially his most persistent enemy, the fisher, who manages to get the porcupine by the throat, where he is least protected by spines.

When the very cold weather comes on, the porcupine curls up in a ball, with his spines toward the opening of his den, making him safe from almost any attack, trying to sleep and forget his hunger until a warm snap comes along. Then he gets out to feed upon the bark of trees, so that he can withstand the cold for another spell, but he fears nothing, and goes back to sleep, hoping that spring will hurry along so that he can enjoy the fresh green leaves again.



SLOTH

SLOTH AND BAY LYNX



THE sluggish sloth is a stupid creature that passes all the day and most of the night hanging, back downward, from the branch of a tree. His long, slender limbs terminate in long, hooklike claws.

He is so helpless and so weak, so unable to protect himself from his enemies, that one wonders why Dame Nature did not provide him with an armor of spines or scales, so that those who prey upon him would have at least a little trouble to kill this strange creature. Dame Nature *has* helped a little; for, in the rough, shaggy, grayish brown coat, lives a vegetable growth that makes him look as if he might be a lichen-covered knot that has grown on the limb.

He hangs all day, and during the night travels slowly through the upper branches, hunting for food; of which he finds plenty, for he lives mostly upon leaves and buds, although he also eats other vegetable matter that he may find.

He is wholly unfitted to travel upon the ground, as his legs are too weak to carry his body. He could neither run nor hide from an enemy (his speed is unbelievably lacking; he travels, perhaps, half a mile in twenty-four hours). He is too weak to burrow and too large to get into a hole.

Because he finds it so difficult to travel over land, we wonder if he must always go without water; but for this Dame Nature provides. In the country he loves and calls his own, there is very heavy dew. In the early morning the sloth gathers together all the leaves within his

reach and drinks this heavy dew. It is all the moisture he needs, besides what he can get from such fruit as he will find in his search for food.

On account of the strange development of his teeth, the sloth belongs to a family called *Edentata*. He has no front teeth, and his cheek teeth, growing throughout his life, have never developed roots nor have they any outside coating.

The sloth is one of the very lowest types of animals, having a very small brain.

Sloths hunt at night. It is good there are few birds of prey in the forests these poor beasts inhabit, or they would have very little chance to live, for the sloths climb way out to the end of a limb, so they will be safe and out of the way of the bay lynx, who, like most other animal people, counts the sloth a great delicacy.

The bay lynx, called also wildcat, bobcat, catamount, and red lynx, is a big, savage, stub-tailed cat, who does not hunt in the forests all the time, but also finds food in clearings, overgrown with brambles, and new growth. He travels about, feeling under the bushes for rabbits and other small game that might be hidden there. Like the rest of the cat family, he likes mice and will

watch for them, or for small birds or squirrels, to come out of their hiding-places and serve a meal, as patiently as a house cat watches for a mouse.

He wanders about in the snow all winter, hunting for food, still-hunting mostly, as he is not as swift a runner as the fox or weasel, and depends upon pouncing upon his prey.



BAY LYNX

SLOTH AND BAY LYNX

When the bay lynx hears a noise, he crouches and waits to see if the comer be friend or foe. If it be foe, he will disappear like a shadow; but if everything remains quiet he will travel on, giving a wild yell every once in a while, to frighten any wild life that may be hiding near by.

In the spring, the bay lynx, like the domestic cat, loves to eat the blossoms of the fragrant catnip and to roll in the leaves of this plant.

JAGUAR AND SKUNK



LARGE, tawny-yellow cat, with black spots on his back and light-centered rosettes on his side, is the jaguar, the king of the Mexican jungles. He sometimes finds his way across the border, into the southern States; but he is very common in Mexico, living in the dense jungles, where he follows a regular trail, and preys upon all the wood folk. He is the largest of the cat family in North America, a powerfully built animal, with a head seemingly too large for its body and a tail entirely too short.

Like all the cat family, he is a great climber, and depends upon his ability to climb when he attacks and seizes a peccary. These savage, fearless little beasts travel in droves, and are bound to avenge the death of their brother. They will drive the big jaguar up a tree, and keep him there until hunger forces them on, in search of food.

In Mexico the jaguar is known as “el tigre”; and although a most powerful, fierce, and dangerous beast, like all other wild creatures he has learned to fear man and will seldom attack.

A hunter friend tells a story of an alligator hunt. He was hunting for market, and as he was watching the river for his game he heard a slight noise and a movement behind him. Turning suddenly, he saw a large jaguar in position to spring. He felt that he had had a narrow escape, though he said he was not sure whether the jaguar was after him or the alligators he was hunting.



JAGUAR

JAGUAR AND SKUNK

Like all others of the cat family, the jaguar is a good fisherman, and will catch fish with his claws.

The jaguar follows his well-beaten trails through the jungles, and feeds upon the many wild beasts unfortunate enough to cross his path; but he also is hunted. The Mexican Indians hunt him with a spear about eight feet long. They follow a trail until they come upon the jaguar. When he turns the Indian stoops very low, holding the blunt end of his spear solidly to the ground. The jaguar, realizing he is caught, prepares to spring; and the Indian directs the long weapon so that the jaguar when he springs, impales himself upon the spear.

The beautiful little black and white kitten, with its large bushy tail, would make a pretty little pet, were it not capable of a most terrible revenge when it gets angry. The almost suffocating odor which the skunk or polecat sends forth to defend himself against most enemies is so offensive that the pretty pet is better left to his forest home. Still, he is hunted and trapped now to furnish furs for the market, as the otter, the beaver and the marten are getting more scarce.

On account of his natural defense, the wood folk are careful not to disturb the skunk much, lest they get their noses full of the terrible odor and, like hunting dogs, will be unable to follow a scent for several days. This is why the skunk has become so lazy, slow, and fearless, that it does not even run from man.

While out among the Indians, a hunter was lying asleep in his tepee when he was awakened by what sounded like an Indian dog, chewing some game he had brought in that day. Upon investigation he found that a skunk had come into his tepee for the meat. He slipped outdoors and shouted and screamed to frighten the intruder; but the skunk finished

JAGUAR AND SKUNK

his meal, and then came leisurely out of the tepee and slowly waddled down to his hole below the river bank.

He feeds upon everything that he can catch easily while hunting at night; and as soon as his babies are old enough to be taught, they and their mother may be seen traveling through the woods, single file.

They live in burrows, where they retreat for the winter's sleep in the late fall, after they have become so fat that they cannot exert themselves to get food.

In the old times, hunters and trappers occasionally were bitten by skunks on the nose and ears while sleeping, and they would die of rabies. For this reason every one feared the skunk, and imagined the bite of all skunks produced rabies. There is, occasionally, an epidemic of hydrophobia among skunks, and

then they are dangerous to both man and animal people; but the skunk bite does not always produce rabies and many people are now devoting their time to raising skunks for the market of skins.



SKUNK



MOUNTAIN-GOAT

MOUNTAIN-GOAT AND WEASEL



FARE up in his Rocky Mountain home, where you find the wildest scenery, surrounded by glaciers, climbing almost inaccessible places—particularly dangerous, ice-covered mountain-sides—the mountain-goat has his stronghold. Only the boldest, most daring hunter may follow him into his rocky fastness. They say he is the most stupid of all animals, and you might suppose him slow and clumsy; but in reality he is the most expert and the swiftest climber of all hoofed animals. Do you know why? Mother Nature has provided him with a peculiar set of hoofs, padded in the center, to catch hold of and cling to the rocks, and sharp and knifelike around the edges, to cut into the ice and hold him, when he is passing over slippery places.

Perhaps he is stupid because he feels so secure in his almost inapproachable home that he need fear nothing; but he always keeps a sharp lookout for the approach of an enemy. His eyes are very keen, and he can see long distances; but he has never learned that an enemy may hunt him from above as well as from below. Nothing that passes beneath him escapes his sharp eyes. Should he see a strange object he will watch it until the danger passes out of sight, perhaps around a little rise, then he will go on; and when next you see him he is almost at the top of a high mountain. All his enemies know they cannot approach him from below, and animal hunters, as well as man hunters, start for this game from above.

MOUNTAIN-GOAT AND WEASEL

If the hunter prove to be steady enough of nerve to follow this beast as he travels over the little ledges of rock, he will find no difficulty in killing him; for he is known to be one of the most stupid of our game animals, and will stand still and watch the hunter come on.

If you should see a goat in his rocky home, you would think him the queerest, strangest beast imaginable. His shoulders are high and his hind quarters low, and he is covered with long, wiry hair of cream-white color. This is his outside coat. Inside he wears a woolly coat, next to his skin. The inside coat keeps him warm, while the outside coat sheds all the rain and snow.

His four short, stocky legs carry him along in a slow, lumbering gait.

He has a pair of very black horns—almost sharp-pointed spikes. They are not very imposing; and the square, short beard which reaches straight across his chin does not add to his beauty.

His flesh is not good to eat, unless you can get no other food; it tastes musty and dry. He is hunted for his head and hide. But he need not leave his rocky home to get his food, as he finds great patches of lovely grass just above timber-line, and he loves the short, almost lichen-like, moss that grows on the face or at the base and between the crevices of the rocks.

When the hunter starts in search of this Rocky Mountain game he often runs across the bloodthirsty little weasel, who changes his suit of fur from a reddish brown in summer to one of pure white in winter. He is a wicked little murderer, and often kills to satisfy a vicious desire. He may not be hungry, but he will kill ten or fifteen small animals, one after another, and just let them lie where they died, while he goes on in search of new prey.

MOUNTAIN-GOAT AND WEASEL

His white fur resembles that of the beautiful ermine; in fact, he is called the ermine of America. He has even the black tip to his tail.

Weasels will often kill ground-squirrels and then take possession of their burrows; although they also make their homes under stumps and in the hollows of old trees.



WEASEL

MINK AND OTTER



THE quick, graceful little brown mink is found all over this country and is as happy in the water as he is on land. Though he has many enemies, he fears none, as he can always find a hiding-place. He can climb a tree with the agility of a cat, or he can dive into a stream and swim almost as well as a fish. He loves to dodge and suddenly disappear into a hole—perhaps no bigger than a rat hole—or to hide under a lot of fallen leaves and glide along so quietly that the hunter just stands still and wonders into what hole he has disappeared. Then, way off in the distance, the saucy little mink will sit up to get a glimpse of his enemy, probably laughing to himself and enjoying the fun he is having at the hunter's expense. Then off he scampers again.

The mink is both a land and a water hunter. He loves to explore swamps, to find frogs and lizards, or turn over dead leaves to see if any snakes or insects have hidden themselves away there. Though he loves to live on the banks of rivers, where he can find all sorts of good things and splendid hiding-places, he also wanders into the wild woods, where he can find birds; these he catches in great numbers, to satisfy his love for killing.

The mink digs a home for himself in the ground, but often he steals the muskrat's home. One day a hunter saw a mink run into a muskrat's hole. He dug out the place and found ten dead muskrats in the hole the mink had appropriated for his own home!

The mink hunts without fear, even after Jack Frost has closed his icy fingers over every-



MINK

MINK AND OTTER

thing, He will look for an air hole, jump into the icy water, and hunt for the little mice that run along the shore space at the edge of the water; then out he will come and follow a rabbit-track in the snow. He is a busy fellow and hunts the wood folk, upon which he preys, both night and day. Once upon the trail of the wild folk, the mink keeps right after his prey until he catches it. He sleeps whenever he is tired.

While sitting before his campfire one evening, a hunter friend was suddenly surprised by a rabbit, which jumped out of the bushes and almost into the fire, but he rushed right ahead, as fast as the poor frightened little creature could go. Almost immediately a mink jumped out of the same bushes, hurrying after his game; but the surprise party was such a surprise that it separated the hunter and the hunted and saved the rabbit's life.

The mink and his otter cousin are hunted and trapped for their fur, which is very valuable. The poor otter, though larger than the mink, is almost gone, just because people like to wear his fur.

The otter loves the water better than the land; although originally he was a land animal, belonging to the marten or weasel family. Now, after having been a splendid fisherman for so long, he is gradually getting to look like a small seal and has become a semi-water animal. Strangely enough the baby otters are afraid of water and have to be taught by their parents to swim. The body is long and flat, with very short legs and webbed toes.

The otter's home is a den under the bank of a stream, with the opening under the water, for he knows that is the safest place. But some of the otter people select a deep cave high up on the bank of a river for a nest; and even the bottom of hollow trees are sometimes used.

The otters often travel over land for great distances, from one body of water to another, but their legs are so short that traveling on land is very slow. In winter they have great

MINK AND OTTER

fun traveling; they slide down every snow-bank they come to and in this way save a great deal of walking.

The otters love to romp and play on the grassy bank of a stream, or in the pines, like little puppies. When they find a stream with a steep bank, they make a path to the top, so as not to disturb the slide. Then they lie flat on their stomachs and slide down the muddy, slippery bank into the water. They go one after the other, sometimes racing, and often just missing a collision before they get to the bottom. Their fur seems to be so oily that the water can never reach the skin.



OTTER

The fur is very dark and the Indians say that is because, many years ago, an Otter and his three brothers, who were very light, stole the sister of three brothers, who always lived in the woods upon the earth. They took her into their dark den to live, and when her brothers finally found where she was they went down to rescue her.

The sister told her brothers how unkind all the Otters but the darkest had been. The brothers were very angry and, as the Otters came into their den, one by one, the brothers killed all but the dark and homely one. That is why all Otters are dark to this day; and if the dark one had not been so kind and good, we might not know anything about the Otter to-day. At least, that is what the Indians say.



SEAL

SEAL AND SEA-LION



SEALS are meat-eating animals, with bodies more suited for life in the water than on land, yet they often come out of the water and make a strange picture trying clumsily to paddle their way over land. Seals live in almost all oceans, but are more plentiful toward the Poles than anywhere else. Their young wear a white, woolly coat and live on an ice-cake with their mother, ready to jump into the water at the first sign of danger.

The fur seal is not plentiful, being greatly reduced by the hunters, who kill him for his wonderful coat; but he is not the seal so important to those who make their home or work in the frozen North, nor is he found as near the Poles. Many an explorer would have starved to death were it not for the seal and the polar bear. The seal furnishes light, heat, food and clothing for these North people.

An Eskimo will sit on a cake of ice, near the breathing-hole of a seal, and with the point of his spear will scrape the ice. The seal is a most curious creature and must find out what the strange noise may mean. He will come up, a long way off, and try to find out if the strange object on the ice be friend or foe. If the Eskimo should be wearing a white suit, the seal will dive under the water and not come up again until he is at least one hundred and fifty yards away; because he is sure his Northland enemy, the bear, is hunting him; but if the Eskimo should be dressed in a dark suit of fur, the seal will think he may be a brother, and swim within fifty yards to find out what the strange hummock on the ice really is. He will swim slowly all around the object, looking at it all the time.

When the seal is fat he will weigh about two hundred pounds; one hundred pounds of this being blubber and the other hundred flesh and bones.

The Eskimo sometimes go to the edge of the ice and set nets to catch seals, and often five or six are caught in a single night. A great deal of this catch is prepared for the long winter. To do this the Eskimo carefully skin a seal, making as small a cut in the hide as possible. This bag, or "poke," is filled as tightly as they can pack it with seal blubber cut up into small pieces; then it is set aside until it is ready for use. This is considered a great delicacy among the Eskimo.

After the seal poke has been standing all summer and become oil-soaked it is called an *Av-wa-tak-pak* and is waterproof. When the oil-soaked bag is empty the women scrape the inside until it is clean, but they leave the hair on the outside, and of this they make the winter boots. Some of the Eskimo like these boots made with the hair inside, as this keeps the feet very warm. Others prefer leaving the hair outside; but when worn this way the hair gathers snow and ice and makes traveling very hard. These are the boots for winter wear; to make the summer boots the women carefully scrape the sealskin both inside and outside. This makes a very thin and pliable boot, which, after it has soaked in seal-oil, is also waterproof.

The *Ugruk*, or walrus hide, is used for making the soles of their boots. This walrus is a very large fellow, and is not very common.

To get the greatest amount of work out of their dogs, explorers feed them as much blubber as they will eat. This gives heat and strength and enables the dogs to travel faster with the sleds.

In the summer months, when the seals are very thin, they sink one minute after they have

been killed. If the Eskimo are hunting in kyaks, it is easy to reach a seal before he goes down, but when the Eskimo are sitting on a cake of ice it is difficult to get their game; so they use a "nixy," which they have become very expert in throwing. A nixy is a long rope with a hook at one end, and it is used in very much the same way that a boy throws a sling. The Eskimo are so expert at throwing the nixy and catching the seal with the hook before he can go down, that they seldom lose their game.

The sea-lion and the seal are very different animals. The seal has a short neck, while the sea-lion's neck is long. His front flippers are simply paddles while his hind flippers are web toes.

These fellows are not only more active in the water than the seals, but they can climb rocks and high cliffs with the greatest ease. They are the animals we always see in the zoological parks.

The largest sea-lions in the world are found in a few isolated spots. Some of the male specimens are from ten to eleven feet in length, weighing about fourteen hundred pounds, and are known as Steller's sea-lions. Among themselves, these great fellows fight awful battles; but, like all other wild folk, they have learned to fear man. At the sight of a human being they have been known to jump into the water from cliffs sixty feet high, to escape their enemy.



SEA-LION

MUSK-OX AND WHITE WOLF



WAY up in the frozen North, where the long, dark nights are cold and fierce, there lives the strangest of all our large animals. His body looks like an oblong mass of very long, wavy, brown hair, supported upon short legs, that look like posts, partly hidden by his long hair. His tail is only three inches long and almost invisible. The top of his head is covered by a pair of enormous horns, flattened at the base and meeting in the center of his forehead; from here they cross the head and curve downward, close to the cheek, and finally upward to a point.

It is hard to imagine how these animals get food in the dark months. Of course there are ridge crests kept clear of snow by blizzards and heavy winds, and they probably dig through snow and ice for grass, willow, and saxifrage, but when spring comes these strange creatures look as if they had been well fed.

Like the caribou this creature has a fine, soft, dense, light brown wool next to his skin, for warmth, through which neither cold nor wet can penetrate, as the long, coarse hair sheds the rain and snow. This long woolly coat of the musk-ox is highly valued by the Eskimo, who use it for many things.

The legs of the musk-ox are very short, with the queerest of hoofs. Each hoof is divided into two parts, the two hoofs of each foot are not symmetrical, and the lower surface is partially covered with hair.



MUSK-OX

The musk-oxen travel in bands of from twenty-five to fifty; many times in greater numbers, especially in winter. In summer the bulls travel alone, while the cows and calves wander about in small bands. At this time of year, their food consists almost exclusively of the leaves of small willows, scattered about here and there over the Barren Ground, but, also, they eat grass, lichens, mosses, and probably bark.

The musk-ox, when hunted by man or beast, turns to challenge his enemy, and stands perfectly still, facing him. This habit, so fatal to the poor beast when hunted, is all that saves him from destruction. The cow musk-oxen gather in a circle about the calves, to protect them and defy their natural enemy, the white wolves (who infest the Barren Ground in big packs) to attack.

In spite of their short legs, the musk-oxen can run with considerable speed; they are even said to climb steep cliffs and then turn around to defy the hunters.

This wonderful inhabitant of the far North is looked upon as a god by the Eskimo, and they feel sure that if the white man be allowed to carry off a live musk-ox, the musk-oxen will disappear and never come back again.

One year a white man was sent to get some calves for a museum. He worked hard, roped four calves and was bringing them home safely when some of the Eskimo crept upon their camp at night, while they were asleep, and killed every calf. They would not dare allow a live musk-ox to go out of the country.

The worst enemy the musk-ox has is the great white wolf. These wolves travel about in packs and attack the calves. Then the musk-oxen gather in groups around the calves and protect them. This savage beast will attack even man and dog when he is desperately

MUSK-OX AND WHITE WOLF

hungry. Dogs are invaluable to the Eskimo, and when they are attacked and bitten by wolves it means death inside of three days, as they are sure to get rabies.

This great wolf slinks along like a shadow and, like all other Arctic folk, he wears a dress of pure white. The Eskimo dread him and always try to kill him before he has a chance to destroy their dogs.

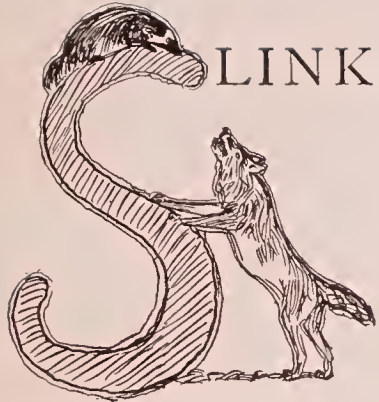


WHITE WOLF



TIMBER-WOLF

TIMBER-WOLF AND BADGER



SLINKING, creeping along, like great ghostly shadows, the wandering, unsettled, restless, gray wolves hunt up and down the country, in great packs. They prefer the wind-blown prairies of the West, where they followed the herds of bison in the old time, when the bison and Indians owned all the great West, but now they follow the cattle.

They rarely attacked the old bulls or cow bison, unless these happened to be wounded or crippled, but they were after the calves. Sometimes in the winter when the snow was deep the very old bulls used to wander off all by themselves; these the wolf pack would attack and hamstring.

The pack generally consisted of the old female, the most savage of the pack, and her full-grown family. If one of the pack scented a game trail, that one would give the hunting call, and others would join him from all around, to give chase. If the game should be a deer, the wolves would hamstring him, or they would jump at his throat, and kill him. They will even attack a big moose when he is alone, just as they would a bison.

This large, powerful beast is savage, and he will follow herds of sheep, killing twenty or thirty at a time, just to satisfy his terrible love for killing. The wolf also loves to hunt in the shadows of the dense, dark swamps and tamaracks of the North, and in the heavy timber of the Rockies, where game is plentiful. When hungry, this gray, ghostly shadow will sometimes slink along for hours, following a hunter carrying game; but he will seldom attack a man, unless he should run or try to get away. Sometimes the hunter will drop

his game; then the cowardly fellow will stop to devour it; and if the hunter were to fire a shot into the pack and wound one of the wolves, the others would jump upon the wounded brother and tear him to pieces.

Some of the old Indian dogs were pure gray wolves and some were coyotes.

The mother wolf usually has four or five and sometimes six young; these she cares for very tenderly, while the father wolf provides food for her.

He is one of the most cunning of animals, and therefore the hardest to catch. He knows better than to be caught in a trap; and he has been known to carry for a long distance a piece of meat into which poison has been put, and then drop it.

He is such a ghostly beast, that the old Indians tell a tale which would almost make us believe the Indians knew all about "keeping the wolf from the door." They tell a folk-tale of an old Indian woman with her pack of phantom wolves. She leads them out of her cave, and then they gradually spread and spread, until they devastate the country, and the Indians suffer famine. The raven is her forerunner, and when the Indians see a big raven flying along they look sharply for fear they will see the old woman and her wolves following.

This great big wolf goes slinking about at night, trying to catch the wise little badger; but the badger also travels at night, and if he should be far from his home when he sees his wolf enemy he just flattens his short-legged, broad, flat body, and lies close to the ground, where only the keenest-sighted will see him. (He does not dare run: he is so fat that he is very slow.)

The badger is an underground, burrowing animal; and the holes he has dug for his home have been the cause of many a horse breaking his leg, for the horse steps into the hole before he can avoid it.

TIMBER-WOLF AND BADGER

The badger's cousin in the Old Country was looked upon as a game animal, and a favorite sport was hunting him with dogs. But the dog found a good enemy, for the badger has a real bulldog grip, and his jaws seem to lock after he has taken hold.

If this slow, sullen fellow with his savage disposition is left alone he is very harmless and does good. At night, during the summer, he hunts for gophers, field-mice, ground-squirrels, prairie-dogs; in fact, he eats all the small ground folk. Through the long winter he sleeps; but the Indians know he is a very wise person, and that the spirit of the badger, if he should come to any of them, will bestow the gift of wisdom and make the Red Man he visits wiser than all others. Those who belong to the badger clan would never think of killing that animal, as he is their totem.



BADGER

WOLVERINE AND FISHER



THE greatest thief, the biggest glutton, and the most sullen beast of our smaller animals is the wicked wolverine, or Indian devil, as he is named by the northern trappers. He is hated by explorers, as he breaks into their caches and destroys everything; what he does not care to eat or cannot eat, he soils so it cannot be used. Yet the fur of this hated wolverine is the only fur that explorers and Eskimo can use close to the face with comfort, as frost from the breath will not cling to it.

The wolverine is hated by everybody and everything. In Wyoming he is called the skunk bear; and in Washington, Indians call him the mountain devil. He is a member of the weasel family; he never risks his life, but always manages to get a good meal, and just slinks about through the forest, robbing traps, and getting at the trappers' stores.

He steals not only from man hunters, but from animal hunters as well. Many animals hide or bury what food they can for winter use, but the wicked wolverine finds it and eats all he can, then destroys what he cannot eat, so no other animal can get it.

This fellow is so sly and clever that he springs traps and eats the bait without so much as hurting a hair. Trappers have found that the only way to trap him is to bury the traps deep down under the snow and smooth over the place as if they were hiding food from him. Then he will dig, to steal from the cache, and so get caught in the trap. When a trapper gets a wolverine, he is very happy and seems to gloat more over capturing this



WOLVERINE

WOLVERINE AND FISHER

wicked-tempered, destructive little glutton than he does over the possession of the hide.

The fisher, like the wolverine, belongs to the weasel family. He is as strong as his cousin, the wolverine, but he is very much more spry and has more courage. He travels at night, loves the dark evergreen woods, and he is as much at home in the tree-tops as on the ground. He eats all kinds of flesh, from the deer to the hare, and has been known to kill even the porcupine with its terrible armor of spines. He is at home in the swamps as well as the mountains; and, like his wolverine cousin, he helps the trappers look after their traps. They hate the fisher as much as they do the wolverine, as he sleeps all day and does all his damage at night. Trappers will walk many miles, in deep snow and terrible weather, to gather skins, only to find that the fisher has been there first. Perhaps he has sprung the traps and stolen the bait, but most likely he has taken out the animal caught and torn it to shreds. If a trapper succeeds in outwitting this sly hunter, he feels that he has won a hard-earned victory, for he has triumphed over a most cunning and sly creature and one of the wildest of all our wild folk.

The fisher is larger and has a more bushy tail than the weasel or mink. He is of a grayish brown color, and the tip of his bushy tail is black.

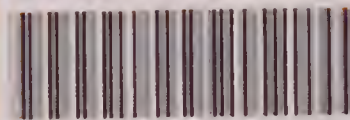


FISHER

WOLVERINE AND FISHER

One of the fisher's worst enemies is the crane. The fisher loves to rob the nests of these birds, and eat the young; but the old crane is too much for him. She will drive her long bill into his eyes or into his brain, and kill him. That is why the fisher is always very careful to visit the crane's nest when the mother is away.

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