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THE STATE MUSEUM

NOTE—In line with giving visitors definite information regarding the State of North Carolina, the editor has secured several stories of which this is the fourth to appear.

The articles already printed include the following: Dec. 29, Industries; Jan. 5, Educational Equipment; Jan. 12, Hall of History, State Museum.



HE State Museum is, beyond question, the "show-place" of Raleigh and the State, and this is a story about some of the features which are well calculated to attract the attention of winter tourists, who, like the Athenians of old, always crave some new thing.

The entrance door leads into one of the many spacious halls, this one filled with the birds and beasts, and, pendant overhead, the skeleton of an enormous whale, over 50 feet long, which weighed 200,000 pounds and yielded 50 barrels of oil besides 700 pounds of the now costly whale-bone. There is a whale fishery on the North Carolina coast, at Beaufort, and there this monster was taken. Nearby are two jaw-bones of whales, so placed as to form an arch, which is surmounted by harpoons and the strange guns which are used to shoot the death lances, these being shot from the shoulder, very much like a blunderbuss and firing an arrow with a long steel head and a rubber "feather" on the hank, to give it accuracy.

The collection of birds at once impresses a discerning visitor that North Carolina is really the true dividing line between the north and south. One of the most observant men I ever knew told me that Cape Hatteras was certainly that line, and that certain kinds of fish never passed it going north or south, while it was the limit of certain kinds of vegetation either way, and also the line of demarcation as to some birds. Here, for example, along on this line are colonies of cormorants, not found elsewhere north of Florida, and here are sometimes seen the great snowy owls, arctic birds, both of these being shown in the collection. Up the state there is a large colony of beavers, which is preserved by the people in the vicinity, and several specimens are shown in the hall, as well as seals.

There are in another hall noble specimens of the tarpon or silver king or king shad, as it is variously known, which people go to Florida in search of, merely for the sport of capture. One of these big North Carolina tarpon weighs 119 pounds, and was taken near Newbern. North Carolina is the paradise of ducks, and this great collection shows this fact. Here is the canvas-back, beloved of the epicure, and his near relative, the red-head, which stands almost as high among gourmards, and which, in fact, is very often passed off for his somewhat more aristocratic cousin, the canvas-back. These two ducks live on the roots of the wild celery which grows so abundantly in Currituck sound.

In a case are shown all sorts of traps used in taking game, for parts of North Carolina are yet the resorts of trappers.

One immense bear-trap, made by a mountain blacksmith, in rude fashion but of the strongest, is one which for many a year was used by "Big Tom Wilson," the famous bear hunter of Black Mountain, who killed and captured more bears than any man ever known in this part of the world. Big Tom's son lives there now, and he and his wife are trappers and dead shots.

There is a panther, or mountain lion, as President Roosevelt calls these animals, and there are bears, big and little, which are very plentiful in the mountain region and the coast counties. Two of these bears had the honor of a salute from President Roosevelt as they were rested in front of the Museum on the occasion of his memorable visit here last October.

There are buffalo and elk, merely to illustrate the fact up to a little over one hundred years ago, both these animals were plentiful in North Carolina. One of the most amusing sights in the Museum is a stump in which is a colony of 'possums. Mother is there, with baby on her back, its little tail, so rat-like, securely hitched around her own, with a double turn, while in a recess at the foot of the stump is the old-man, fast asleep and illustrating as some wag remarked the accuracy of the song, "Everybody works but Father." Every negro who sees this group grins his broadest.

Here also is a strange bird, sitting on a strange nest. The water-turkey, which really doesn't belong this high-up, but which yet lives in the great swamps below Wilmington. A covey of quail feeding is one of the prettiest groups in this very fine collection, all of which is the work of the present curator, Mr. Herbert Brinley, a most accomplished taxidermist and a sportsman, English by birth, but who has lived here from boyhood.

In another hall the fish are shown, and the exhibit of game fish is very striking. It may not be known, but it is true, that the United States, at all fishery exhibitions east of the Rocky Mountains, uses sea-water which is taken at Beaufort, this state, because of its great purity. It is equally true that more varieties of fish and of marine life in general, a blending of northern and southern forms, are found in these waters than anywhere else on the American coast.

Vast numbers of Spanish mackerel, one of the finest table and game fish in the world, are taken in the sea off Beaufort by trolling in the swift sharpies, as the sail boats there are called, while next in rank comes the bluefish, which is caught in the same manner, sheepshead, as well as pompano, etc. It is a world of water and there is fishing everywhere, in sea and sound.

The various modes of taking fish are illustrated, and it is seen from the first pictures ever made by Englishmen on this continent that some of the present modes were in use by the Indians when the first whites arrived in 1584, in these very waters. One fish, shown as a curiosity, is the all-mouth, which lies, with mouth bigger than itself, wide-open,

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