

expressed a desire to fix it. It was thought by Profs. Henry, Maury, and others that the experienced men who had known and used the instrument for years understood it; and they hesitated to allow so young a man to meddle with it. But they finally consented, and after he had manipulated it a short time it displayed powers before unknown, to their great and happy surprise.

Mr. Spencer's rare ability was much appreciated, especially in Europe; and many honors were paid him by scientific men and societies. At the Paris Universal Exposition of 1878 his lenses were awarded a gold medal.

Eider Duck Farms and Feathers.

The *Herald's* correspondent with the United States steamer Alliance gives an interesting account of one of Iceland's peculiar industries. By a long and rigid enforcement of a law against the use of firearms within hearing of the resorts of eider duck, these ducks congregate in vast numbers. The owners of most of the duck farms are engaged in fishing, and all the refuse of the codfish dressed on the islands is thrown out on the water for the ducks to eat. Some of the farmers have lately retired from the codfishing, which in the vicinity of Reykjavik is no longer good; but still the ducks come and build their nests, but not in such great numbers as before. When one sees the treatment the birds get their annual return is strange and unaccountable, for they are systematically robbed by the island owners. In the spring,

room in which it is performed is as cloudy as the carding room of an old oakum walk. The chips of straw, moss, and lichen fall through, and only the down remains under the rubbing hand of the operator. Even in the matter of eider down there is a discrepancy between the real thing and the received notions about it. I have seen eider down presented for sale in New York which was pure white, while the real article is a dark slate color, and when viewed at a distance looks not unlike the fur of the blue fox. There is eider down and eider down. There is eider down taken from birds that have been killed in the far north, there is eider down half from killed birds and half from robbed nests, and there is eider (?) down taken from geese in Long Island and New Jersey and sold to other members of the family in New York. The down from dead birds or even the mixed down is without the virtue of the nest-robbled article, and there is so much adulteration practiced in the business that, even in Iceland, you are liable to be imposed on if you don't purchase from the farmer direct. Iceland down is a special grade in the market and brings better prices than any other at the annual auction held for its sale at Copenhagen. The supply from Iceland is very limited, and only amounts to 7,000 pounds per year.

BREAKFAST SET OF SEVRES PORCELAIN.

The accompanying engraving represents an elegant breakfast set of porcelain from the works at Sèvres, France. It

not only to kill but to secure the prey. It is sad to reflect that the race of the saurians is in danger of being extirpated. Thousands are slain annually by tourists and others for amusement merely, in addition to those slaughtered for profit.

Thousands of baby 'gators are stuffed as specimens or sent off alive as curiosities, while myriads of eggs are blown and disposed of by dealers. Amid all these causes combined the brute seems in a good way to become extinct. This is somewhat unfortunate, as the beast is a constant source of interest to our Northern brethren, and every hunter from that section eagerly craves the distinction of adding an alligator scalp to his list of trophies. If their wholesale destruction continues it will be necessary to call on the Fish Commissioners to restock our lakes and rivers with these valuable animals.—*Jacksonville Cor. Savannah News.*

Kind Treatment of Horses.

It has been observed by experienced horse trainers that naturally vicious horses are rare, and that among those that are properly trained and kindly treated when colts they are the exception.

It is superfluous to say that a gentle and docile horse is always the more valuable, other qualities being equal, and it is almost obvious that gentle treatment tends to develop this admirable quality in the horse as well as in the human species, while harsh treatment has the contrary tendency.



BREAKFAST SET OF SEVRES PORCELAIN, FOUR-NINTHS ACTUAL SIZE.

when the ducks swarm here to search out places between the rocks to build nests in, they, having selected a suitable site, pluck the down from their breasts—that soft, silky down famous the world over as the warmest and softest of coverings. Felt between the fingers it resembles floss silk, it is so soft, and it is as springy as rubber. A great bulk of it can be compressed into an incredibly small space, and when released after a long time it resumes its original size. This first plucking is very abundant, for the bird is preparing for warm weather and is prodigal of its thick under-plumage. The first nest is stolen by the farmers, and the bird, finding it gone, finds still enough down upon its breast to construct another, which in turn is taken like the first. The supply of down on the female is now exhausted, and she calls on the drake, and from his down the nest in which the eggs are hatched is made. In case this nest should be taken the bird seeks another nest-hiding place.

When taken from the nest the down is full of straw, chips, bits of moss, and wads of lichen, and must be cleaned before it is fit for use. The machine used in the process of cleaning is of the most primitive kind, and consists of a sort of harp made of coarse strings of raw seal hide, over which the nest is rubbed. In this operation the dust is driven out, and the

is something to be coveted by every lover of fine things in porcelain. The design and ornamentation show so well in the engraving that no description is necessary.

Hunting Alligators in Florida.

Parties are hunting the 'gators way down on the Caloosabatchie and Kissimmee rivers, and upon the numerous lakes in that region. Nothing is used except the skins upon the belly and legs, the rough, scaly plates upon the backs of the animals being rejected. The heads are cut off and buried for a few days, until the tusks can be detached. It was announced some days since that one person had collected alligator teeth to the amount of three hundred and fifty pounds. This fact alone will give some idea of the destruction now going on among these creatures. On the St. John's River a new method has been devised for the successful pursuit of this game. A dark lantern with a powerful reflector is used on suitable nights, and no difficulty is experienced in approaching the quarry. The animals appear to be perfectly bewildered by the strong glare, and make no effort to escape. The gun is held within a few feet of the head, a touch to the trigger, and there is a 'gator less in Florida. This new process is very effective, as the hunters are enabled

Horses have been trained so as to be entirely governed by the words of his driver, and they will obey and perform their simple but important duties with as much alacrity as the child obeys the direction of the parent.

It is true that all horses are not equally intelligent and tractable, but it is probable that there is less difference among them in this regard than there is among his human masters, since there are many incitements and ambitions among men that do not affect animals.

The horse learns to know and to have confidence in a gentle driver, and soon discovers how to secure for himself that which he desires, and to understand his surroundings and his duties. The tone, volume, and inflection of his master's voice indicate much, perhaps more than the words that are spoken. Soothing tones rather than words calm him if excited by fear or anger, and angry and excited tones tend to excite or anger him. In short, bad masters make bad horses.

REWARD FOR AN ANTIDOTE TO YELLOW FEVER.—According to the *Eco del Comercio*, the legislature of the State of Vera Cruz offers a prize of \$100,000 to him who shall present a true antidote for all kinds of vomiting.