

LIVES OF SEAL-HUNTERS

Their Occupation Is Fraught With Perils and Hardships.

OF LONG EXISTANCE

No Marine Industry in These Days Brings Such Hazards—Daily During the Sealing Season Hundreds of Men Risk the Dangerous Ice Flows.

There is a seal fishery which has had a far longer existence than the fur-seal fishery of the Pacific, and enjoys greater vitality, and what is the hair-seal fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador. No marine industry in these days brings such hazards to crews and ships as this one. Daily during the sealing season hundreds of men risk their lives on the floes, and the vessels face arctic "naps" which often crush them.

The crews always start off at day-break and remain out till night. They are clad in flannel underwear and canvas outer garb, but carry no overcoats, that they may travel the easier, and take along only a little food, for the same reason. Hence, when blizzards assail, they are ill provided to defy them, and if the storm is prolonged, they cannot withstand the rigors of a night on the floe, with its numbing cold and gnawing hunger.

One of the most serious tragedies in the annals of this industry befell the crew of the steamer Greenland on March 29, 1898. Up off Labrador at this time winter has by no means spent its fury, and on this eventful day, while her two hundred men were scattered over the floes, a blinding snowstorm began, with a startling drop in the temperature, the vessel was driven helplessly seaward, and the hapless crew were left to their fate, no other ship being near and they being far from land.

Record for Good Cows. James Miller, of Schuylville, Lackawanna county, Pa., has a herd of 16 cows that yielded 15,631 pounds of milk in one month, an average of almost 1,000 pounds a cow, or about 18 quarts a day.

The laws of Norway compel a man who chops down one tree to plant three saplings.

By emigration Europe loses 960,000 natives every year, and in the same period 200,000 return.

Ma's motto for framing: Keep busy and you won't have to read books on how to be happy.

When a man gets away from home he can wear a blue shirt with a red necktie,—if he wants to.

Some weddings are little else than a dress suit case.

ARABS AT THEIR BATH

Gathering Place for the Women—Votive Offerings by the Religious.

Dr. Georges Martin of the thermal station of Hamman-Risha gives an interesting account of the Arabs who come in crowds to take the baths at that station. Their number every year can be estimated at more than 20,000.

Of these bathers about two-thirds are women. Besides the medical effect the baths are for the Arab woman a meeting place where she encounters her friends, as they remain a long time in the baths, three-quarters of an hour or more. They dip themselves in the water from time to time; then, sitting on the curb, they chat, laugh and sing.

Sometimes one of them addresses an invocation to the Sultan Sillman (Soliman), patron of the springs hidden in the mountain. The more believing sometimes receive their recompense in seeing the steam rise from the waters. After the bath the native rolls himself in his cloak and lies in the sun.

To quench the burning thirst which the very warm bath gives, Arabs suck the juice of lemons or oranges or they go to the "cafe mauro" attached to the baths to drink a tiny cup of coffee. Many Arabs, instead of coming to the establishment, prefer to take the bath in the open air. On the side of the hill a spring flows from the rock and the natives come to bathe in the natural basin where the water gushes out.

As a votive offering the women hang portions of their veils on the neighboring bushes. The childrens come there piously to plunge in their small stuff dolls. It is there that the prayer is above all agreeable to Sid Sillman. They sacrifice fowls to him; they burn incense and spices in the earthen braziers, and it is in his honor that the little many colored wax tapers stuck in the ground burn so often at night.

Crip Has Twenty-one Names. Bishop Thornon, who is anxious to find an alternative to the "smooth, snave name" of influenza, should consult "La Grippe," by Dr. G. Andre, a work published last October. There he will find a list of twenty-one names bestowed by the French on that unpleasant malady since its first appearance in A. D. 475.

The Vestal Virgins. The number of the Vestals was limited to six, and no new election could take place unless a vacancy was caused by the death of one of the sisters. They were selected from the noblest families. Both parents of a Vestal had to be alive, and irremovable in public and private life.

War Without Notice. Reventlow, of the German navy, says that the days of honest declaration of war or of open preparations for war are no more and that war can break out any old time without formal notice.

Masculine Shyness. A party of well-dressed women of a certain maturity of age is encircled with an atmosphere of awe which bears witness to their consciousness of power and superiority. For a complete stranger to enter among them requires a bravery of which mere man, unless driven by absolute necessity, is often incapable.—Black and White, London.

Something Coming Sure. Mistress—You know, M'linda, we are all very fond of you. I hope you like your room and are content with your wages. I'm thinking of giving you my silk petticoat. Cook—Foh de Lawd, Mis' Howard! How many folks has you been done gone an' asked foh dinner?—Puck.

A Useless Patent. One of the requests for a patent received in the patent office of Germany was a device for making one's own matches. With the aid of it, anyone can, by five hours' work, save six or seven cents!

Production Poorly Distributed. Germany, Great Britain and the United States produce four-fifths of the world's supply of pig iron.

CHARITY THAT IS GOING A-BEGGING

One Lone Minister Profits in Solitary Grandeur by Woman's Rich Bequest

MYSTERY OF FUND'S FAILURE

Remarkable Story About the Splendid Estate Which Mrs. Jane Mercer of Ambler, Pa., Left to Support Indigent Presbyterian Ministers.

A remarkable story of charity going begging is to be found in the failure of a fund that for the last twenty-five years has appealed in vain to ministers of the Presbyterian faith. The story begins a quarter of a century ago, when Mrs. Anne Jane Mercer, of Ambler, Pa., died. She had bequeathed her fortune with her fine house and grounds at that place for the use of infirm ministers of the Presbyterian Church. It was a splendid property, and the will was read amid the despairing comments of relatives who had hoped that different disposition would be made of the Mercer wealth.

The house and grounds were ideal for an institution such as the woman contemplated. The mansion was commodious and the park in which it stood a large tract in one of the most picturesque and healthful spots in that part of the Keystone State. As the amount in cash to be used for the maintenance of the institution was \$100,000, it looked as if the legatee had done all she could to insure comfort for the declining lives of a goodly number of Presbyterian ministers. But after twenty-five years the fine home willed by Mrs. Mercer, houses only one lone occupant, and despite all the efforts of the trustees and directors no more infirm Presbyterian clergymen can be induced to spend the winter of their lives within its hospitable walls.

This much has come to light through the attempt of the trustees to have the courts make some other disposition of the Mercer money, instead of permitting it longer to remain dormant, appealing without result to ministers who simply will not be supported from this fund.

Some light is shed on the mystery of this unsuccessful charity by the items in the bill praying for relief from the terms of the will and for some other project for the expenditure of the Mercer fortune. It is asserted in this bill that only thirty-five ministers have made application for admission to the home in all the twenty-five years that its doors have remained open to the applicants who could qualify. Twelve were found to be ineligible fifteen were taken in and the rest were not heard from again. Of the lucky fifteen ten went away for various reasons, four of the remainder died, and that left one, who is now the sole beneficiary under the will.

It might be supposed that some "joker" in the will deterred the ministers from availing themselves of the opportunity to end their days in comfort, but there appears to be none, except, possibly, that forbidding the use of tobacco. It is not easy to imagine that in the case of ministers of the Gospel this clause would prove an insurmountable obstacle. What, then, is the reason that this charity has so signally failed?

The lone survivor of the fifteen was asked this question, but could give no valid reason for the failure other than that the home was too lonesome. It cannot be denied that it is lonesome for him, this ancient minister, eating, living and sleeping in a great house, with none to speak to but the servants who wait on him, and no object in life except to make as great inroads on the charity as he can. It would not be lonesome if he had the company of a hundred or so of old ministers like himself.

The "help" have an easy time of it. There are four of them, three big men and one woman. With only one inmate to wait upon, it may be understood that time hangs rather heavily on their hands.

A Dramatic Suicide. A novel, but gruesome, method of suicide is that of Lieut. Stanwick, Gallia. He saturated the furniture of his room with naphtha, which he placed poured over the floor, and he placed on the carpet a number of ball cartridges. Then he fired the room in several places, so that in a few minutes it was converted into a veritable furnace, and finally hurled himself into the midst of the flames. The smoke and a series of violent explosions alarmed the neighbors, who hastened to help in extinguishing the fire, but when it was possible to enter the house only the ashes of the lieutenant were to be found.

Snowballs Rolled By Wind. A correspondent from Nicholville, a town in the northern part of New York state, tells of a storm lasting several hours, during which time the wind made snow balls. It began with small lumps of snow which it rolled over and over till they were too large and heavy to move. The ground was almost covered with these balls, some being as much as ten inches in diameter. A great many people noticed them, and some of the oldest inhabitants of the place said they never had seen such a thing before. Nevertheless the occurrence is in reality not extremely rare.—St. Nicholas.

SNAKES ARE WORSHIPPED

West Indians Put the Doctor Serpent Above All Others.

"I have just come back from a tour of the West Indies," said Dr. E. V. Munson, of Chicago, "and while in those Southern lands I got a clear insight into some of the customs and beliefs of the common people. In Haiti, where the natives are not far removed from savagery, I looked into the matter of voodoo worship, which is still very prevalent. Some of the most ignorant venerate snakes as deities and even those who do not go to the extreme of worship look on serpents with great awe and respect and ascribe to them uncommon power and wisdom. There is a species they call the 'doctor snake' that the West Indians put above all others; he is the recognized head of the whole serpent family, endowed with the most wonderful qualities and able to do the most marvelous things. This doctor snake is terrible and deadly to human beings, but to all of his own sort he is a savior.

"If a native wounds an ordinary reptile, even to the extent of cutting him half in two the doctor snake, though miles distant, knows about it in some telepathic way and, hurrying to the scene proceeds to apply remedies that soon makes the injured one as good as new.

"Along with this belief, which no amount of logic or learning can dispel from the native mind, is that of faith in a snake doctor, who is a sort of pal, as it were, of the doctor snake. The snake doctor is the good angel of the remote communities, where poisonous reptiles are thick. When a man is bitten he goes at once to this mighty personage, whose first act is to put his hand on the wound. Next he sallies forth to catch the serpent that used its fangs and, catching it in a firm grip, stretches it till the bones crack. This done the patient gets well right away. If by any chance the snake doctor has trouble in locating the guilty party, his partner, the doctor snake, is called upon for aid and he never fails to carry the medicine man to where the wrongdoer may be found."

Through with Chance.

They were seated on separate chairs, the young woman cheerful and smiling, the young man distrust and apparently struggling under some bitter disappointment—some well-nigh crushing blow from the pile-driver of Fate.

"So you care nothing for me and positively decline my offer, eh?" he hoarsely demanded, bending forward and staring moodily at the floor.

"Yes," was the frigid reply. "I am sorry for you, but you have utterly misconstrued my feelings. I can never be your wife."

"Stung again!" bitterly remarked the young man as soon as he could command his voice. "I was just foolish enough to bet Hank Perkins a week's salary that you would accept me, but I've got the throw-down, as usual, and am out 15 plunks in the bargain."

Jarred Queen Wilhelmina.

Queen Wilhelmina has a good ear for music, and once when an amateur musician was playing at the court she nearly disgraced herself from the point of view of royal discipline. His playing was anything but brilliant, and it so jarred on the young queen's ear that she hastily jumped up and left the room. Her courtiers remonstrated with her. "I know I ought not to have done what I did," she said. "I mean to be polite to my people, but I cannot be polite to wrong harmonies." Later she sent for the poor musician and begged his pardon, but it was a question whether her condescension as a queen was great enough to offset the fact that this only seemed to make a bad matter worse.

All Over.

While work on a new building was going on in a southern town, not long ago an old negro employed as a hod-carrier suddenly slipped while nearing the third story and plunged headlong to the ground. Several passers-by rushed over expecting to find a man dead with a broken neck, as the old fellow had struck squarely on the top of his head. Finding the old man still alive some one emptied the contents of a whiskey bottle down his throat. In a few moments the old negro sat up and looked around.

"How do you feel now, uncle?" asked a bystander kindly.

"Well, sar," came the reply, "I wuz sorter cornfused when I first started, but now dat I's hit I's all right!"

Fogs and Wireless Telegraphy.

It is one of the many marvels of wireless telegraphy that the ether waves which carry its messages, unlike light waves, suffer no absorption in mist or fog. Quite the opposite, in fact, is the case, for the effect on them of clear sunlight is so marked that they can be sent with equal initial power only less than half the distance by day as by night. For this reason press dispatches and long distance messages sent by wireless telegraphy are, wherever possible, committed to the ether waves after sunset.

Children Are Victims.

A member of the Society for Political Study in New York said the other day that the factories claim more victims than the rivers in China ever did, more little children going to their death from these places. The mines and the sweatshops are worse than the factories, she said. In the course of discussion the point was brought out that there is doubt as to whether the mothers in China ever do throw their children into the rivers.

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