

THE PURSUIT OF WHALES.

THE PRESENT METHOD OF HUNTING THE MIGHTY CETACEAN.

Duties of Officers and Crew in a Whaling Ship—Equipment of a Whaleboat—Killing a Whale.

Before proceeding to detail the manner in which whales are captured it may be well to describe the duties of the various members comprising the crew of a whaling ship. The master remains on board of his vessel at all times, navigating and working her through the ice. When the boats are down after whales the master immediately proceeds to the crew's nest—a frame covered with canvas built at the fore topgallant masthead—and from that vantage he directs the boats by means of flag signals in what direction to pursue the whale.

There are generally as many mates on board of a vessel as there are boats. When whales are sighted the Captain designates the boats to be lowered. Each boat has a petty officer, termed among American whalers the boatsteerer, in Scotch whaling parlance the harpooner. The work that is done by the boatsteerer is described fully in the narration relating to the capture of the whale. In the whaleboat the forecastle hands are the oarsmen. The post of bowman, pulling the bow oar, is regarded as the most important position among the oarsmen.

As a general rule, the boats have stems, knees and frames of white oak, while cedar is used for planking. A first-class whaleboat without her equipments weighs from 500 to 600 pounds, and when all the necessary articles for capture—including masts, sails and oars—are in place the total weight aggregates about 1530 pounds. The apparatus used for killing whales has been improved from time to time. Harpoons were the first instruments used for fastening to the whale. The modern harpoon is nothing more than an improved type of obsidian iron or copper "kapoon" that the Arctic Alaskan Eskimau use at the present day when they cannot obtain a better substitute.

The initial step now taken in the capture of whales is identical with that of the early days of whaling, the harpoon being relied upon to fasten the whale to the boat. Hand lances have been superseded by bomb lances for killing, and boat spades that were formerly used for severing the tendons which connect the body and the flukes are also displaced by the explosive lance.

The shanks of the harpoons are forged by hand from the best Swedish iron, and the heads, although sometimes wrought, are usually cast from annealed or malleable iron. Some irons now in this city have the shanks twisted in the strangest forms; some have been bent into a loop. There are instances of the shank at its neck being reduced in diameter by trawling force, that is to say, the power exerted by the whale when towing a boat and with an iron in its body. It may appear overdrawn to make the statement, and many persons are inclined to scout the idea that the fibers of cold iron can be drawn out, but the fact remains proved by the presence of three of these "stretched" irons in the National Museum at Washington.

Besides the killing gear, a whaleboat contains as its equipment hatches, canvas, sheet lead, tacks, hard bread, salt pork and other provisions, a keg containing water, a bucket, a lantern, a box containing a lantern, matches, tinder-box, candles, pipes and tobacco, oars and paddles, a spade to cut a hole in the whale's lip to run a line through in order to tow the carcass, a fog-horn and other articles. Thus fitted, the boat when lowered skims over the water in quick time, provided the crew are well trained.

With this outfit let us now imagine that a school of whales or a big fish is sighted by the lookout at the crow's nest. As soon as a whale is "raised," that is seen, the officer on duty aloft sings out, "There she blows."

Then a scene ensues—the watch on deck rush to the boats to which they belong, while the sleepers or watch below tumble up on deck. Meanwhile the captain is in the crow's nest and directs the particular boat to be lowered. "Starboard waist boat" is the order, and into her the officer, boat steerer and crew soon find the way. "Lower away" comes the next command, and as the falls slacken out, the boat touches the water, her crew are all ready at their oars, and with a strong, steady pull the vessel is soon left.

When squarely in the water, if the wind allows, sail is set on the boat. The officer or boat header steers with a long oar and the boat steerer at the bow thwart pulling an oar, until at the word of command he springs to his feet. Steadily and noiselessly the boat approaches the big fish, the men's nerves strung to a high degree of tension. Not a whisper can be heard, and no sound save the drip of water from the paddles. Then the whale, if resting or playing, as the "baleen" generally do amid the ice in the spring of the year, emits a soft yet sonorous breathing, resembling the drawn-out sighing of a forest of trees during a wind storm. By this time the boat is in such a position that the whale can be reached with a darting gun. The boat steerer stands ready, sees that the line attached is clear of kinks and snarls, with body thrown back and right arm poised with the heavy darting gun, feet firmly planted, he awaits the supreme moment to hurl the deadly bomb lance.

Up comes the whale, and with great dexterity the darting gun is thrown, striking the fish, if an expert boatsteerer is on duty, in a vital spot. The harpoon is fast and the whale soon feels the instrument of torture in its vitals. Sometimes, but rarely, does the first bomb kill it. Then comes the order "Stem all!" and "Wet line," and as the line pays out from the tube over the bow of the boat at lightning speed it requires continual wetting to keep it from being burnt by friction. The boatsteerer or harpooner now goes to the stern of the boat, and the officer takes the place in the bow. Meanwhile the

boat is being towed by the whale at a quick pace. But the cetacean has to come up to breathe, and as the line slackens the crew haul it into the boat, and soon the fish is on the surface. Then comes the chance to use the shoulder gun, and when from eighteen to thirty feet from the whale, a bomb planted in the "life" (or lungs) of the fish ends its career. The dying struggles of the whale are almost human like. Spouting its life blood the water is tinged for a large area with the ruddy hue. Swimming round and round, the big fish heaves almost human sighs, and finally, with a gigantic nervous thrill and shake, gasps its last breath and turns on its side or back dead.

When the whale is killed the vessel, if a steamer, has followed her boats and soon picks them and their prize up, the hose is taken out, and in a few hours nothing remains but a carcass for gulls and other sea birds to feed upon.—San Francisco Chronicle.

SELECT SIFTINGS.

Artificial coffee is gaining ground. Schaller (Iowa) aldermen get \$1 a year. Three hundred and ninety-eight millions speak English. An orange wine factory is soon to be started in Jacksonville, Fla. A clock owned by a resident of Trappe, Penn., has ticked since 1766. There were 1500 different orchids at the New York orchid show, and no two alike.

It is claimed that sheep furnish the most profitable live stock industry in North Dakota. The expenditures for the first fifty years of the Government amounted to \$600,000,000.

A game called "progressive potato picking" is all the rage in North Platte, Neb., social circles. The Indian boys and girls at the Indian school have \$11,000 on deposit in Carlisle, Penn., banks.

A Brooklyn man paid \$2800 for a Japanese glass ball at the Brayton Ives sale in New York City.

Ice cream in the form of asparagus, is made to order by New York caterers at the rate of \$3 a dozen.

Alaska is so sparsely settled that there is a tract of nineteen square miles of land for every inhabitant.

A man recently arrested at Williamsport, Penn., for larceny gave his occupation as that of a dude.

George Vanderbilt's palace near Asheville, N. C., will cost \$10,000,000, and is to be the finest ever built.

In China less than 30,000 officials suffice to rule, in a most perfect manner, one-third of the world's inhabitants.

The earth's fifteen hundred millions of human inhabitants speak 3034 different languages, and possess about one thousand different religious beliefs.

A fourteen-year-old girl who was sworn as a witness in a Camden, N. J., murder case said she had never seen a Bible before she entered the court room.

John Logan, who died in Omaha, Neb., a few days ago, had the distinction of being the first man to be married in that town, the ceremony taking place in 1854.

The hottest of the "big foreign cities" is Calcutta, India, with a mean annual temperature of 82.4; the coldest is St. Petersburg, which averages only 36.6 the year round.

The full name of the late King of the Sandwich Islands was David Laamea Kamaukapur Makinulani Nalvicihuokalama Lumilolani Kalakata, and they called him "Calico" for short.

The army of the Pope for 1891 is made up as follows: Two generals, two colonels, two lieutenant-colonels, a major, two captains and four lieutenants and sixty men. This number includes the famous Swiss Legion.

Since the one per cent. reduction in the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railway dividend, the market value of the stock has shrunk more than \$9,000,000, or an amount sufficient to pay the extra one per cent for twelve years.

The blackened teeth of the Malays and Siamese are not produced, as has been supposed heretofore, by coating them with a mixture of betel and lime, but by rubbing the teeth with a paste made from charred cocoanut kernels. This is carefully applied to the teeth again and again, until a black varnish hides the natural white.

Bountiful South America. By virtue of its most valuable combination of continuous heat with abundant moisture, South America possesses a wonderful wealth and variety of vegetation. Its fertility of soil and innumerable vegetable productions, its immense pasture plains and its rich mines of gold, silver and precious stones, give to South America natural advantages over all the other countries of the globe. It already supplies the world with immense quantities of coffee, sugar, cotton, tobacco, caoutchouc, cattle products, dye wood, drugs, spices, fruits, minerals and precious stones, and all that it requires to astonish the whole world with the variety and profusion of its productions is a perfect system of interior communication, as well as available and ample facilities for exportation.—Mail and Express.

Most Startling Fact in Astronomy. Professor Charles A. Young, the eminent Princeton astronomer, recently sat chatting in the court of the Palace. One of his listeners could not refrain from asking him in an off-hand way:

"What is to you the most wonderful and startling fact of astronomy?"

"The fact that your great Lick telescope reveals about 100,000,000 of stars, and that every one of them is a sun, theoretically and by analogy giving light and heat to his planets. You know the Lick telescope reveals stars so small that it would require 30,000 of them to be visible to the naked eye."—San Francisco Examiner.

Properties of the Kola Nut.

The wonderful stories that have been told of the properties of the kola nut are more than confirmed by the British Consul at Bahia, who has written a special letter to Lord Salisbury on the subject. The west African carriers at that port, who use kola and carry the bean wrapped in banana about their persons, are not physically speaking superior men to the Brazilian negro; yet the African, though constantly masticating kola, can, it is said, endure fatigue which no Brazilian traveler can withstand. Where it takes eight Brazilian negroes to carry a load with difficulty, four African porters carry it cheerfully, singing and chanting as they trudge along, each with a bit of kola bean in the mouth. As a rule the kola-eating African gangs who labor at the hard task of unloading vessels earn twice as much as their competitors. The beans, which are described as intoxicating and in no way injurious, are said to act as a nutritive, and quench the thirst, yet they are not strictly a stimulant. The supply of Bahia comes from Lagos. It is best soon after it is gathered, and is sold, according to freshness, at two-pence and three-pence for each bean. It appears that the attention of the Government of India has already been called to the extraordinary properties of kola nuts, and practical information has been supplied to them from the authorities at Kew.



He who waits for an inactive liver to do his work, exposes himself to all the diseases that come from tainted blood. Don't wait! Languor and loss of appetite warn you that graver ills are close behind. You can keep them from coming; you can cure them if they've come—with Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery. It's the only blood and liver medicine that's guaranteed, in every case, to benefit or cure. Your money back if it doesn't. Thus, you only pay for the good you get. Can you ask more? It cleanses the system and cures pimples, blotches, eruptions and all skin and scalp diseases. Scrofulous affections, as fever-sores, hip-joint disease, swellings and tumors yield to its superior alterative properties.

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SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL.

Berlin will not permit an electric road. Denver, Col., will have a mineral palace. Cork covering for steam pipes has proved very successful in England. Many of the explosions in flour mills have been traced to electricity generated by belts.

In Denmark the life-saving stations are all supplied with oil for stilling the waves in storms. A new bag machine both cuts and sews the bag, and thus saves the labor of fourteen operators.

It takes about three seconds for a message to go from one end of the Atlantic cable to the other; this is about 700 miles a second. In welding pipes by electricity, it has been the usual practice to employ internal mandrels to prevent collapse or change of circumferential outline.

A large body of antimony has been found in Inyo County, California. The owner says he has in slight bowlders of the metal weighing from two hundred to three hundred pounds. It is a valuable find.

Miss Frye, a school teacher, has discovered a method by which better tiles can be made than have ever been made before. She has a patent and is likely soon to turn from school teaching to financing.

The exhaustive experiments at Salford, near Manchester, England, with a view of ascertaining the most efficient method of purifying sewage, has resulted in the recommendation of an electrical system as the most satisfactory.

Small articles made of malleable iron are now finished and polished bright by being placed in revolving drums with carriers' shavings, from which they emerge with all of the rough edges smoothed and the surface highly polished.

A secret chemical powder introduced abroad, when sprinkled over the top of the coal in a newly made fire cement the upper part of the fuel together and causes the coal to burn at the bottom and throw the heat into the room instead of allowing a large part of it to go up the chimney.

A process has been recently invented by which iron may be copper, the surface of the iron being protected by a layer of melted cryolite and phosphoric acid. It has been found that if the article, when immersed, is connected with the negative pole of a battery, the coppering is done more rapidly.

By a new process waste leather scraps are steeped in a solution and subjected to a hydraulic pressure to mould them into railway brake shoes. The leather shoe weighs 4½ pounds against 2½ pounds for iron, and it will wear three times as long. Such, at least, is the claim of the compressed leather men.

A permanent and durable joint can be made between rough cast-iron surfaces by the use of lead to make a very stiff putty. This will resist any amount of heat, and is unaffected by steam or water. It has been employed for mending or closing cracks in cast iron retorts used in the distillation of oil and gas from camel coal.

High funnels seem to be growing more and more popular among the builders at the yards of the British navy. The Merco has had hers doubled in height, while those of the Blake are not less than fifty or sixty feet, reaching as far up as the tops. It is said that the result, as far as appearances are concerned, is anything but pleasing.

The Curve of Health. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes has made a discovery. It is that of the law of the curve of health. "It is a mistake," he says, "to suppose that the normal state of health is represented by a straight horizontal line. Independently of the well-known causes which raise or depress the standard of vitality—there seem to be, I think I may venture to say there is—a rhythmic undulation in the flow of vital force. The 'dynamo,' which furnishes the working powers of consciousness and action, has its annual, its monthly, its diurnal waves, even its momentary ripples in the current of its life—a series of ascending and descending movements, a periodicity depending on the very nature of the force at work in the living organism. Thus we have our good seasons and our bad seasons, our good days and our bad days, life climbing and descending in long or short undulations, which I have called the curve of health. From this fact spring a great proportion of the errors of medical practice. On it are based the delusions of the various shadow systems which impose themselves on the ignorant and half-learned public as branches or 'schools' of science. A remedy taken at the time of the ascent in the curve of health is found successful. The same remedy taken while the curve is in its downward movement proves a failure. So long as this biological law exists, so long the charlatan will keep its hold on the ignorant public. So long as it exists, the wisest practitioner will be liable to deceive himself about the effect of what he calls, and loves to think are, his remedies."

A Princely Tip. A gentleman accompanying two ladies entered one of the fashionable restaurants near Madison Square one evening recently and were ushered to a table. "Are you the man to serve me?" he said to the waiter who came to take his order. "Yes, sir," was the reply, whereupon a five dollar bill changed hands. The luncheon was admirably served, the glow of satisfaction never leaving the waiter's face. Yet most waiters will tell you that it is not the occasional large fee from a stranger which pays him so well as the steady ten or fifteen cent tip from the daily patron of his table. That becomes an actual income.—New York Times.

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