

SEALING OFF COAST OF NEWFOUNDLAND

Pitiful Slaughter of 300,000 or More Pups Every Spring—At Their Best When Three Weeks Old.

From the Commercial Advertiser.

Nearly every person is acquainted with the characteristic seal leather and admires its peculiar softness and remarkable durability. Indeed, most of us possess small pieces of it in the form of belts, card cases, pocket books, etc. Yet the number familiar with its source and the conditions surrounding its obtaining is relatively small, notwithstanding the fact that it is the object of one of the most picturesque and venturesome of the marine industries of the world. The "fishery" is now in progress off the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador, and more than four thousand men are in quest of the small seals which supply the market with this leather.

The seals are quite unlike the fur seals of Alaskan waters, differing in structure, appearance and habits. Several varieties are taken in the Newfoundland fishery, but the young of the harp seal is by far the most numerous and forms the principal object of capture. The harp seal is widely distributed about the lower arctic regions, living on the icefloes, drifting from the head of Baffin Bay to the Gulf of St. Lawrence and also in the ice floes of the European coast. It arrives at the mouth of Davis Strait about the middle or last of February for the purpose of bringing forth its young. Within a few days hundreds of thousands have hauled up, and each female has become a mother on the ice floes carried by the great arctic current from Baffin Bay past the shore of Newfoundland to be melted finally in the warm waters of the Gulf Stream.

ONLY THE "WHITE COATS" VALUABLE.

At the time of birth the young seals weigh six or eight pounds each, and are of a creamy white color, quite unlike the young fur seals, which are jet black. Nourished by their mother's milk the young seals grow rapidly on their icy beds, and when two weeks old are really balls of fat, weighing under usual conditions about fifty-five pounds each, of which about forty pounds represents the weight of the skin and the attached fat, leaving only fifteen pounds for the carcass. At this stage, they are covered with a coat of very thick, soft, nearly white, hair, hence they are known as "white coats," and are in perfect condition for the hunters. At the end of about three weeks the animals gradually take to the water, the skin changes in color and becomes less valuable, and the weight of the animal decreases greatly. At the age of one month the seal averages but thirty pounds in weight, and six months later it is only about forty pounds, or practically the same as when the animal was only two weeks old.

The seal hunters endeavor to be "on the grounds" when the white coats are two weeks old, as the latter are in prime condition at that time. Formerly the steamers left port about March 1, but it was found that they reached the whelping ice usually before the seals were sufficiently grown, and great damage was done by killing the mother seals while the young were being born. Consequently in 1884 a law was enacted interdicting the sailing of the steamers previous to March 10 of each year.

SEARCHING THE ICE FLOES.

The vessels steam boldly in among the ice masses floating from Davis Strait, working their way frequently to the 53d degree or the 54th degree of north latitude, searching the floes for herds of seals. The masses of ice are frequently a hundred or more miles in width, and of unknown length, and the success of the hunt depends on the vessels working their way among the floes to those containing the seals, the precise location of which is a matter of conjecture, the prevailing winds having much to do with it. The vessels may be caught in the ice and there held until the seal floes are broken up and the white coats have taken to the water. Heavy, closely packed masses of ice may cut them off from the largest patches of seals, resulting in a small catch. During some seasons the most skillful sealing captains miss them entirely; at other times a steamer runs into a patch of seals sufficient to load several vessels. They may be found in vast herds of thousands, sometimes 30,000 or more being in view at one time; or, as is more likely the case, in smaller groups of a few hundred. The whimpering of the seals is heard in close proximity to the whining or sobbing of infants, and when grouped in large numbers they raise a great commotion which may be heard for miles.

On being sighted by the lookout at the masthead the vessel is wedged close to the herd. By means of the small boats the hunters are landed on the floes, each man armed with a pole or gaff, about seven feet long, with an iron hook at one end. The mature seals scamper away, seeking to escape into the water, leaving the white coats defenseless and helpless on the ice. A single blow on the nose with the gaff stuns each animal, and as soon as a group has been dispatched the work of skinning or "sculpting" begins. A cut with a knife is made down the under side from nose to tail, and the skin with the adhering fat is removed in one piece and transported to the vessel, leaving the carcass on the ice. As soon as a patch has been "cleaned up" and the pelts secured aboard ship the hunters proceed with their search for others.

AN ANIMATED SCENE.

Few scenes more animated and in greater accord with the surroundings are to be met with than those enacted each spring in the seal hunt. Fancy, amid the solitudes of the northern seas, the masses of ice floating down from the circum-polar regions bearing the hundreds of thousands of seals of varying ages, from the old patriarchs to the white coats of two weeks or less, all mingled together with the animation so characteristic of seal life. The steamers force their way through the crystal ramparts by which nature guards the animals, and the hunters appear—sometimes hundreds on a single ice floe—their clothing stained with oil and blood. The shouts of the ensanguined men! The babe-like crying of the defenseless little fellows on their icy cradle! The blows as they are dispatched with the gaffs! The ice stained with gore and dotted with the thousands of carcasses denuded of skin and

fat and yet palpitating with life! The mother seals, now cubless, popping their heads from vantage places in the ice crevices, look anxiously for their tender babes, and finding only their bloody carcasses, plunge into the sea and quickly escape from the polluted scene. Such is the seal hunt carried on each March and April off the northern coast of Newfoundland.

300,000 PELTS BROUGHT IN.

The sealing vessels are generally absent from port for four or five weeks. The catch varies greatly; some vessels bring in 30,000 or 35,000 pelts, while others return almost "clean," having been caught in the ice and thereby prevented from reaching the seals. The total catch for the fleet, however, is usually in excess of 300,000 pelts, and the average per vessel during the last decade is fully as large as it was two or three decades ago.

On arrival in port the cargo is discharged from the vessel and the thick fat or blubber is separated from the skins and rendered into oil. The skins are salted and shipped to the tanneries. By far the greater portion of the skins are tanned in Great Britain, especially in Glasgow and London, and many are tanned in Germany, Newfoundland and Canada. Last year about 40,000 skins were tanned in Newark and Hoboken, N. J., that being the first year in which many skins were tanned in this country. The American tannage was so satisfactory that our tanners will doubtless receive a large portion of the present year's catch.

ADVICE TO TOURISTS.

Do Not Put Valuables in Trunks While Traveling in Italy.

From the New York Tribune.

A. Vivaldi, inspector general of Italian railways, has issued a circular letter which may be of use and interest to many Americans who contemplate a trip to Italy. The letter is addressed to the president of the Italian Society of Hotel Keepers, at Genoa, Italy, and is as follows:

I have your letter informing me of the frequent complaints addressed to Italian hotel keepers by travelers whose luggage, entrusted to the care of our railways, have been meddled with. Needless to say how much the security in railway deliveries of all kinds is the object of the strictest attention, not from the companies interested alone, but from the government administration of railways and public security as well, who constantly employ their utmost care in the matter.

This office feels certain that the companies do their best to prevent any injury to travelers in having their effects stolen. Such an injury is not limited to travelers alone, but also reflects on those on whom the responsibility falls, for the latter must suffer morally and materially the consequences. To give an idea how severe the companies are toward their men, it is enough to say that the punishment inflicted upon the agents of trains and those having the handling and care of luggage, goods and valuables, in the discharge of their office, even if found in possession of any instrument, or key, however small or capable of opening or defacing luggage.

The inspector general, in answer to the serious remarks addressed to him in your letter, has not omitted to relay his request to the Mediterranean and Adriatic Railway company that the greatest care and severity should be used to restrain any possible offense of the kind.

As you are, in your quality of president of the Italian Society of Hotel Keepers, much interested in the welfare of our country, please notify that travelers should be persuaded carefully to verify their luggage when delivered to them, and that they may ascertain themselves whether a robbery has or has not been effected within the railway bounds, instead of strongly and uselessly protesting later, or before being convinced of the facts. Claims of the kind could neither satisfy the traveler nor the railway companies; nor can the latter verify the complaints or detect the thieves unless the losses are made known at once.

Travelers should be warned against putting valuables among clothes in their luggage. Such an imprudence may not only cause them a heavy loss, but according to article 43 of the regulations concerning the delivery to railways of luggage containing valuables, is contrary to law. The complaints, as confirmed by your letter, are about robberies of valuables, and must therefore fall under the law mentioned above. The transgression of this law comprises not only the entire loss of the valuables stolen, but likewise a fine for infringing such law.

REDUCED RATES TO LOS ANGELES.

Via Pennsylvania Railroad, on Account of Convention of Federation of Women's Clubs.

On account of the convention of Federation of Women's Clubs, to be held at Los Angeles, Cal., May 1 to 8, the Pennsylvania Railroad company will sell special excursion tickets from all stations on its line, to Los Angeles and return, at reduced rates.

Tickets will be sold from April 19 to 26, inclusive, and will be good to return until June 25, when properly validated.

For specific rates, routes, and conditions of tickets, apply to ticket agents.

Convention of Federation of Women's Clubs, Los Angeles, Cal.

For the above occasion, which takes place May 1st to 8th, 1902, the Lackawanna railroad will sell special round trip tickets good going April 19th to 26th inclusive, and for return, to reach starting point not later than midnight of June 25th, at fare of \$64.25 for the round trip. See ticket agent for information about stop-off privileges, variable routes, side trips, etc.

Pennsylvania Day Charleston Exposition, April 16th, 1902.

On account of the above the Lackawanna railroad will sell special round trip tickets from Scranton to Charleston good going April 14th and 15th and for return within 11 days including date of sale at the low rate of \$17.75.

Connolly & Wallace

Scranton's Shopping Center,
123, 125, 127 and 129 Washington Ave.

A New Store—An Enlarged Store.

PROGRESS demands expansion—our new store is a result of it. We now occupy 28,000 square feet of floor space, devoted exclusively to the sale of Dry Goods. Our friends tell us we have the finest store they know of—we believe we have the largest dry goods store in this section of our country.

A store is much like a human being. It has its birth, its childhood, its period of preliminary schooling—it grows until it establishes its place in the affections of the people. And then keeps on growing, if it's good.

No store ever yet jumped full grown into business. Some have tried, so have some men. But the store that wins is the store that works up by degrees from nothing, just as the most successful men have been they who started as boys with their pockets empty, but their heads full.

Those of our friends who knew the old place a little further up the street know how small our beginning was.

That the store here is larger is due simply to the fact that we have tried to serve the people as they like to be served—fairly, courteously, comfortably. A store may start right and then go wrong. The foundation of a twenty story building may be secure, yet the superstructure may be so loosely built that it will tumble to the ground.

It's the Way a Store Builds on Its Principles That Counts

If its prices are too high, having "one price" is perhaps worse than having many.

If it has abnormally low prices for some things (as baits) and makes up the loss by charging too much for others, it's as bad as having two prices.

If it puts so much red tape around its "exchange and money back" rule, people with sensitive natures will refuse to ask for a privilege so grudgingly given.

While the Park Avenue Hotel in New York was on fire a guest rushed into the office and said to the clerk, "Man, this hotel is burning. Why don't you do something?" "This hotel is fire-proof," he replied, and went on leisurely writing.

Some stores say a thing in their advertisements, and no one knows it isn't so until the test comes.

Our store laid down a principle long ago that its advertisements must tell the exact truth: **It does what it says**, (unless a typographical error makes us say something not intended).

Trade has been uplifted in the past ten years.

This store was founded with the desire not only to do more than other stores were doing, but to do it better.

Andrew Carnegie has written his own epitaph, and it is this, "Here lies a man who was clever enough to gather cleverer men around him."

It was only with the assistance of the loyal men and women who for ten years have lived under our roof that we have worked out even a part of our ambition.

We cannot personally meet all our customers, though we would gladly do so every day. The folks behind the counters must speak for us. It is no empty compliment, or cheap attempt to win loyalty, when we say that no store was ever better served by its employes.

This period of expansion in our career is a time for well-wishes all around. While receiving the congratulations of our friends, we bespeak for all stores that deserve it the same success that has come to us. We have never placed hinderances in the way of other stores, nor done anything to prevent their growth.

On the other hand we have seen them grow with pleasure, believing that what helps Scranton helps this store, that the more good stores there are the larger will be the business of this store.

This is a time for making new friendships as well as for renewing the old.

If there are any who have never been in the store, let them come now and see how different it is from other places of business.

If there are any who have been turned away from this store, for one reason or another, let them come back and see how easy it is to right a wrong.

Satisfactory service is the corner-stone of the expanded store.

THE ENLARGED STORE IS NOW OPEN---COME.

Connolly & Wallace