Japanese losses were again very heavy. Chang Ho is now in the hands of the Chinese. It is expected that another great battle will be fought to-day. The Chinese had previously evacuated, as an under general, Yeh, was falsely reported killed, who was obtaining reinforcements from the Corean marches of Seoul in the direction of the Chinese forces converging at Ping Yonk. Nine thousand Japanese marched from Seoul toward Ping Yonk. The telegraph at the latter point remains in the possession of the Chinese fleet, which is in full possession of the Gulf of Pechili. The Japanese are re-embarking a large number of their troops at Fusan. Their destination is unknown.

Government officers have gone aboard another vessel on the Tyne because they were convinced that she was fitting for service in the Chinese-Japan war. The work on the vessel has been pushed with the greatest haste since the declaration of war, and recently materials of war have been placed aboard of her. As far as can be ascertained neither China nor Japan ordered the vessel. It is thought that she may have been fitting out merely for speculative purposes, her owners intending to offer her to China or Japan after getting away from English waters. Despite the presence of the officers work on the vessel has not been stopped. More seizures of vessels are expected. The steamer Alaska, which China bought before the war through the Thames Iron Company now lies in the Thames. She is armor clad, carrying rapid-firing guns. She is understood to be shipping her crew. A dispatch from Vienna says that 20,000 Mannlicher rifles, made in Austria, have been shipped to China.

The secretary of state for foreign affairs has ordered the customs authorities at Glasgow to seize the warship Islam, which is being fitted out for either China or Japan. This order was given under the foreign enlistment act, as was the order Saturday to seize an Elswick works' torpedo catcher at Newcastle.

The Islam is a fast cruiser. She was recently sold by D. & W. Henderson to the Japanese government. At that time her name was changed to Tosmaru, but at the outbreak of the war it was again changed to Islam.

A special dispatch to the Times from Shanghai says it is rumored that instead of a large Chinese army only a small force was routed at Yashan by Japanese. The remainder of the army, it is said, had gone north to join the northern forces. Skirmishes are reported to have taken place at Ping Yan, province of Shanye, and a great battle is expected to be fought there shortly.

A dispatch from Shanghai says the Chinese there are suffering from a spy mania that has developed among Chinese officials. All vessels arriving at Toosung river are boarded by Chinese naval officers and searched for spies and contraband munitions of war. Two prominent Japanese have been arrested within the French concessions on an unfounded charge of spying. They are still detained for trial. The dispatch further states that a number of Englishmen and Scotchmen have been obliged to leave the arsenal at Wei-hai-wei owing to the war. They had been fired at by some of the Chinese guards, and some of them would undoubtedly have been killed had it not been for the protection afforded them by the Chinese officials. It is added that on three successive nights Japanese torpedo boats forced the boom guarding the water entrance to Wei-hai-wei. They either evaded or counter-mined the torpedoes that had been laid by the Chinese, and effected an entrance to the ports, the defence of which had heretofore been supposed to be impregnable. The Japanese did not engage the forts, as it is said they were in search of information as to the lines to be followed in the event of it being decided to make an attack in force upon the place.

China has accepted the offer of Lui Yung Fi, the celebrated ex-chief of the Black Flags in Tonquin, who is now a naval commodore at Canton, to reorganize the Black Flags to fight against Japan. The Chinese government has prohibited the exportation of horses. Horses are regarded as contraband of war by Japan. Urgent orders have been sent from the northern to the southern arsenals for powder and other munitions. Recruiting for the army is progressing rapidly. The Japanese have fortified the passes leading from China into Corea, and have established elaborate defences at Seoul. One hundred and sixty thousand men have been mobilized by Japan.

The Central cable says that government officials are watching carefully all firms that are fitting out ships and manufacturing ammunition. The many firms which have been warned against working for either Japan or China have denied invariably that they have intended to undermine the government's policy. Those who acknowledged that they were dealing in materials or vessels of war, protested invariably that the materials and vessels were to be sent to South American countries. In hardly a case has the firm stopped its suspected activity on account of the government's warning.

Shanghai, Aug. 21.—Admiral Ting, acting under orders, has so disposed the smaller vessels of the Chinese fleet as to prevent the Japanese from landing troops in Chinese territory. The stronger vessels are openly cruising in the Gulf of Pechili, ready to fight the Japanese. Up to this time they have not had the good fortune to meet them.

New York, Aug. 21.—The Japanese government has ordered, it is said, 100,000 stand of guns and ammunition from a firm in this city. When questioned as to this report the firm said: "The fact is I am not at liberty to speak concerning the matter, as the two countries are at war, and it may do some harm to talk."

The British steamer Cam, which arrived to-day from Coosaw, S. C., is bound for Yokohama, Japan, and will carry a large quantity of arms and ammunition to the country. The Cam's agents admit that she is going to carry arms to Japan but refuse to say who are the consignees of the consignors. They say that already they have secured eight tons of cartridges and fuses, and 50 cases of arms for shipment.

Nice Covers.

Samples of a very neat portfolio cover for America Photographed can be seen at the Times office. Orders will be received at 65 cents each and covers will be supplied two or three weeks after. The numbers of the portfolios when placed together in this cover will be a handsome ornament to the house.

THE CAPITAL OF COREA

Seoul, the Strangest City in the World—300,000 People and no Sewers.

An Immense Collection of One Story Huts—The Great Wall and Keys of City.

I want to give you some idea of Seoul, the capital of Corea. It is the centre of the war trouble between China and Japan. A battle may be fought in it any day, and the firing would wipe its thatched huts from the face of the earth. It lies in a basin in the mountains, and it is perhaps the most beautifully located capital on the face of the globe. It is only twenty-six miles from the sea and it is connected with the port of Chemulpo by a poor wagon road, which climbs up the hills and over the mountains to get to it. The sluggish Han river flows within three miles of it, and it was up this river that I rode in a little steam tug to a landing place not far from the spot on which Kim Ok Kiun's dead body was cut into six pieces recently.

But first take a look at Corea's chief seaport. Chemulpo is the place at which Seoul gets all its provisions. It is now the liveliest little city in Asia. There are something like two score gunboats in its harbor, and the Japanese have all told twenty-eight gunboats and transports there. The harbor is large and landlocked by islands. The tide has an enormous rise and fall, often as high as thirty feet, and boats which get close to the town are left on the mud when the tide goes out. Chemulpo lies right on the edge of the sea, with great hills rising behind it, and it is on one of these that still stands the house where Admiral Shufeldt met the Corean commissioners in 1882 and made the treaty which opened Corea to the civilized world. Since then Chemulpo has grown to be quite a city, and it looks more like a slice of Japan than Corea. It has 2500 Japanese and 3500 Corean population. There are less than 1000 Chinese, four Americans, sixteen Germans and five Englishmen in it. The only American business firm in Corea is located at Chemulpo, and that is, I think, now closed on account of the war. It has been about decided to regard Chemulpo as neutral ground, and this will prevent its being fired upon by either party. Were it otherwise, a single gunboat could shell it out of existence, as its harbor is open and unprotected.

A great part of the war has to be fought on Corean soil, and Seoul will be ground between the upper and the nether millstones. It may be wiped out of existence. If so, the most curious city on the face of the globe will pass away. I visited it six years ago, and my visit of the present year included more than a month of hard work. I have spent days in wandering through its streets. I have been inside of its prisons and have walked through its palaces. I have talked with all classes and have seen all sorts of new things at every turn. There are no guide books of Asia. You will not find accurate descriptions of Seoul in any books of travel. The tourist who comes here without introductions could not find a lodging place. There are no hotels, and I am indebted to my friends among the missionaries, among the diplomats, and with some of the high Coreans for my entertainment through these many days. I despair of giving you an accurate idea of the Corean capital. It is quite different from any other city on the face of the globe. It is such a mass of the beautiful and the ugly, of civilization and barbarism, of the old and the new, that I don't know how to describe it. Take its situation. It lies in a great basin surrounded by mountains, which in some places are as rugged as the wildest peaks of the Rockies, and which in others have all the beautiful verdure of the Alleghanies or the Catskills. The tops of these mountains oft rest in the clouds and masses of vapor hang in their recesses above the green plain upon which the city is built. They change in their hues with every change of the heavens, and they give Seoul a setting more gorgeous than jewels.

The basin below is just about large enough to contain the town, and a great gray wall from thirty to forty feet high runs along the sides of the hills, bounding the basin and mounting here and there almost to the tops of the lower mountains. It scales one hill at least one thousand feet in height, and the wall encloses the whole city. It was built in nine months by an army of two hundred thousand workmen, about five hundred years ago, and is a piece of solid masonry, consisting of two thick walls of granite packed down in the middle with earth and stones. Its top is so wide that two carriages could easily be driven about it, and it has, on the side facing the country, a crenellated battlement, with holes large enough for the defenders to shoot through with arrows. There are no cannon upon it, and it will be no means of defence against the batteries of the Chinese or the Japs in its present struggle. Its only use in late years has been to keep out the tigers and leopards. This wall is more than six miles in length. It is pierced by eight gates, the arches of which are beautifully laid and cut as those of any stone work you will find in the United States. Each of these green arches has a curved roof of black tiles. This rests upon carved wooden pillars, which rise above the tops of the walls and form watch towers for the soldiers. Over the great south gate, the main entrance to the capital, there are two such roofs, one above the other, which are guarded at teh corners by miniature demons of porcelain, who seem to be crawling along the edges of the structure. It would not take much more than a Gatling gun to batter down the heavy doors by which these arches are closed. These doors are bigger than those of any barn in our country. They are swung upon pivots made by pins fitting into the masonry at the top and the bottom. They are sheathed with plates of iron riveted on with big bolts, and up till now the common Coreans have thought them a defence against the enemy. They have as much ceremony connected with them as other nations with their forts, and there are officers in charge of them who would lose their heads if they failed in their duty. Every night just at sundown these gates are closed, and they are not opened again until about 4 in the morning.

The signal of their closing and opening is the ringing of a massive bell in the exact centre of the city. After this those who are in cannot get out and those who are outside cannot get in.

The greatest care is taken of the keys to these gates. The locks close with a spring and the keys are kept in the king's palace, except at the time that they are used at the gates. The locks themselves are guarded all day at the palace and are only brought to the gates a short time before closing the city. I wish I could show you one of these locks. Each gate has two of them and they are each as heavy as a ten-year-old boy. It is all that one man can do to carry them from one part of the city to the other, and when I tried to lift one I found my back strained. They are of massive iron. They are made in the shape of a box and are two feet wide and at least one foot thick. They lock with a spring like that of padlock, and it takes a hammer to put them together.

When I lifted the lock the gate-keeper warned me with horror to leave it alone. He pointed to my neck and drew his finger rapidly around in order to let me know that I was in danger of losing my head. I still held it, and he rushed toward me as though he would seize it from my hand. As he came up I dropped it on the stones. It clattered and I stooped over and tried to raise it again. As I did so I stood it on end and the rod of iron which was partially thrust into the iron box rested on the ground. The Corean gate-keeper's face became ashy. He grabbed the lock from me, and as he did so I could see the reason for his fear. The rod on which the lock rested on the ground formed the means of locking it, and had I pushed down on it the spring would have caught. He would have been unable to lock the gate that night without going to the palace to get the key and might have lost his head for his carelessness. My interpreter showed me the trouble and he told me that the king would surely punish the man if he knew that the lock had been out of his possession. I then went on to the gate and looked at the clumsy fastening into which this lock went. The bar which I have spoken of was as big as an old-fashioned poker and the lock joined chains made of links of wrought iron, which were as big around as the biceps of a blacksmith, the rings being as thick as your thumb.

It was just after this that the hour for closing the gates of the city approached. I waited and watched. First two men came from the gate house and sang out in Corean the words that the gates were closing and the time was short. Their voices were as shrill as those of an iman of a Mohammedan mosque when he calls out the hour of prayer from the minarets, and they held on to their final tones for the space of 12 seconds by my watch. As they cried there was a grand rush for the gates. Hundreds of men in black hats and white gowns ran ghostlike through the darkness. Bareheaded coolies dragged great bullocks with packs on their backs through the doors, and porters by the scores, loaded down with all sorts of wares, came stumbling along. There were coolies bearing closed boxes, in which were their mistresses. There were officials on horseback and nobles on foot, all pushing and scrambling to get in before the gates closed. As I watched the big bell pealed out its knell, and the two men grasped the great doors and pulled them together with a bang. It took the strength of both to move each one of them, and the gates locked with a spring. The key, which remains with the king over night, is not brought back from the palace until morning. It is a massive bar of iron, and it takes a sledge-hammer to drive it into the lock. Similar locks are on the gates to the wall which encloses the palace of the king, and on each of the eight gates of the city.

Inside this great wall, within this setting of mountains, lies the city of Seoul. It is a town bigger than Cincinnati, Cleveland, Louisville, Washington City, Buffalo or Detroit. It contains more than three hundred thousand people, and it has scarcely a house that is more than a story high. It is a city of wide streets and narrow winding alleys. It is a city of thatched huts and tiled one story buildings. On one side of it are the palaces of the king. They cover an area as large as that of a one thousand-acre farm, and they are massive one-story buildings surrounded by great walls and laid out with all the regularity of a city. As you stand on the walls of Seoul and look over this medley of buildings, your first impression is that you are in the midst of a vast hay field, interspersed here and there with tiled barns, and the three biggest streets that cut through these myriad haycocks look like a road through the fields. You note the shape of the thatched houses. They are all formed like horseshoes with the heel of the shoe resting on the street. The roofs are tied on with strings, and the thatch has grown old, and under the soft light of the setting sun it assumes the rich color of brown plush, and there is a velvety softness to the whole. As you look closer you see that the city is divided up into streets, and that these narrow and widen and twist and turn without regularity or order. One part of the city is made almost entirely of tiled buildings. These are the homes of the swells, and over there not far from the gate above one such building you see on the top of the staff an American flag. That is the establishment of our legation to Corea, and the cosy little compounds about it are the residences of the missionaries and the other foreigners who reside in Seoul.

Come down now and take a walk with me through the city. There are no pavements on the streets and you look in vain for gas lamps or the signs of an electric light. This city of three hundred thousand people is entirely without sanitary arrangements. There is not a water closet in it and the sewage flows along in open drains through the streets and you have to be careful of your steps. There are no water works except the Corean water carrier, who, with a pole on his back, takes up the whole sidewalk as he carries two buckets of water along with him through the streets. The clouds are left to do the sprinkling of the highways, save where here and there a householder takes a dipper and ladles out the sewer fluid to lay the dust. All the slops of each house run into the ditches along the sidewalk and the smell comes up in solid chunks so thick that it could be almost cut into slices and packed away for use as a patent fertilizer. Mixed with the smell is the smoke. This comes out of chimneys about two feet above the ground, which jut out from the walls of the houses into the streets. Fit a stove pipe into your house at right angles with the floor of the porch and you have the average Corean chimney. At certain hours of the morning and evening each of these chimneys vomits forth the smoke of the straw which the people use for the fires of their cooking and the air becomes blue. The doors to the houses along the street are more like those of a stable or a barn than the entrance to residences. They are very rude, and in the bottom of each is cut a hole for the dog. Such doors as are open give no insight to the homes of the people, and I was in Seoul for some time before I knew that these doors facing the street were merely the entrance gates to large compounds or yards in which were very comfortable buildings. I thought that the nobles lived in these thatched huts. They are in reality only the quarters of the servants, and the homes of the better classes contain many rooms, and are in some cases almost as well fitted for comfort as those of our own. These houses along the streets have no windows to speak of. There are under the roof little openings about a foot square. These are filled with lattice and backed with paper. They permit the light to come in but you cannot see through them. Here and there I noted a little eye-hole of glass as big around as a red cent, pasted on to the paper, and as I go through the streets I find now and then a liquid black ball surrounded by the cream-colored button-hole which forms the eyelids of a Corean maiden, looking out.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

STUDENTS IN AN ICE CAVE.

A Natural Curiosity in the Shawangunk Mountains.

The travelling class in geology, under the direction of Prof. Heilprin, have made the latest observations in the northeastern part of Pennsylvania, and a member of the party writes from Conashaugh, Pike county, under the date of July 22, saying:

"Variety and novelty rewarded our efforts last week. On Wednesday we drove from our hotel at Cragsmoor to the little inn at the foot of the mountain, opposite Ellenville, from which we were to climb to the ice cave in the top. We made the ascent successfully, but took the wrong path, walked past the ice cave and wandered over the mountain tops all the afternoon, our search being fruitless. Late in the day we returned to the town to stay over night, that we might start bright and early the next morning.

"We attended to some very necessary purchases and repairing of shoes, procured provisions for the trip next day, and on Friday morning we started, soon after six o'clock, to again ascend in search of the cave, this time taking a guide. We reached the cave about nine o'clock, and, looking over the side of the chasm that leads to it, we felt the ice cold air rushing out. Prudence dictated that we wait and cool off a little before going down into so cold a place. After a rest and eating ice and snow, we climbed down into this big rift, and down the slide of ice and rock to the tongue-shaped mass of snow, which accumulates during the winter and remains throughout the year.

The depth is about 70 feet, and we found the temperature in the coldest place 34 degrees, while out in the sunshine the thermometer ran up to 126. This ice cave is one of the many in the Shawangunk mountains, and they are very interesting as well as attractive features. The large fissures in the rock caused by the slipping of the upper course conglomerate on the fine underlying shale, extend to a great depth in many cases, and the snow forms a mass large enough to last through the entire season. The melting and re-freezing of the snow cause quite beautiful stalactitic formations, resembling the calcite ones found in caves in limestone regions.

"As we had abstained from food to a certain extent the previous day, we had prepared for this trip quite an elaborate lunch, the crowning feature of which was to be vanilla ice cream, made of condensed milk and frozen in the perpetual snow of the ice cave. The concoction was made carefully in a tin pail, a whole bottle of vanilla being used in it. The pail, with a lid, was buried snugly in the snow at teh bottom of the cave. There it remained to freeze for two or three hours according to most approved Greenlad methods; but, alas! when lunch time came and we excavated the luxury, it was found in its original liquid state, and that 'vanilla soup' became the substitute for ice cream.

"This was a grievous disappointment, for, as scientifice students, we had expected unusual pleasure from ice cream frozen in nature's own freezer. The afternoon was spent in visiting other rifts in the vicinity. In one the ice formations hung like a graceful mantle, while in a deeper chasm a beam of sunlight, piercing the darkness from a chink in the rocky walls, made a beautiful effect. What is known as the 'great rift' is a great split in the rocks, extending about a mile in length and its greatest width about one hundred feet. This riven and torn mountain, with its great blocks fallen in and downward, is a wonderful lesson in geology. There must have been some quaking in that region when those rocks were broken and tossed in so wild a manner."—Philadelphia Record.

Miscellany.

Interesting information is given by a French traveller in China of the Mau-tzu, a people who occupy all the territory between China proper and Thibet. The feudal system prevails among these mountaineers, who are divided up into more than eighty small states. Lamaism is the religion professed by the majority. The languages of these states, which are more Thibetan than Chinese, differ very much from one another. The Mau-tzu are fairly well made and strong. They do not wear a queue like the Chinese and dress in coarse woollen fabrics, which they make for themselves. The men wear a shirt with a collar, and the women wear dresses consisting of a body and skirt, two styles unknown in China, and reminding one of European fashions. The houses, too, built of stone, have usually one or two stories above the ground floor, the latter being always occupied by cattle, upon which they chiefly depend. The animals reared by the Mau-tzu are the horse, the horned and the hornless yak, two species of cow, sheep with long spiral horns, and the goat, one variety of which has four horns. The pigs, dogs, cats and fowls which are bred there are identical with those found in the rest of China.

Lunar halos are sometimes large and sometimes small, because they are formed at different heights in the air.

NEWFOUNDLAND SEALERS.

The Mode of Hunting Differs from that of the Pacific.

Newfoundland is a queer kind of a place, most people think. But, really, Newfoundland is a good deal of a place. Well, maybe not in the banana belt, but a good deal of a place, with two hundred thousand warm-hearted people and great resources.

There's its little known seal fishery, for instance. It isn't like that up in Behring Sea. The Pacific seal is valuable for its fur, and is killed in rookeries on the shore. The Newfoundland seal is hunted for its skin and oil on the ice floes which pass along the coast in the spring. They live about the Grand Banks and Gulf Stream from November to January, and move north in February, as they "breed" on this ice. About the first of March each female brings forth its young; never more than one cub, or "pup." Being covered with white hair, they are termed "whitecoats." Their skin, prepared and stuffed, forms an attractive ornament in nearly every Newfoundland house. The mothers fish to feed them and each returns to its own "pup," though there may be hundreds of thousands of young seals on the same ice. The white fur turns brown after about a month, when the young seals take to the water. It is only by repeated efforts they learn to swim.

About March 15th the young seals are in their prime. Then they are near the northern part of the island and on March 10 our sealers start to hunt them. The fishery is prosecuted by a fleet of twenty powerful steamers, two of which come from Dundee, Scotland, the remainder being owned here. They are staunch ships, built especially for this enterprise, and are sheathed with ironwood or greenheart, and have their bows well protected with heavy iron bands. American explorers have availed themselves of their service to carry them to the far north, and Greely and Peary can bear testimony as to their staunchness. The Bear and Thetis of the United States revenue service formerly belonged to this fleet, but were purchased by the American government to search for Greely. The number of men these sealing steamers carry is surprising. They are literally crowded with men. Temporary sleeping accommodation has to be made for them. This they occupy till they get seals, and when the space is required for the catch the men are compelled to sleep on deck.

The fishery is most exciting. Its perils are many, but its prizes are great. Success for the men means many dollars; for the captain, social prominence and a small fortune, for the owners, a rich harvest. The demand for berths is very great. It is not unusual for men to walk eighty or one hundred miles looking for a berth. Consequently, captains can choose the best and no navy in the world ever had a finer, more stalwart body of men than the six or seven thousand who sail from here each year.

When the storm king rides on the blast and miles of ice fields are tossed hither and thither by the restless sea; when towering bergs, in fantastic forms, bear down upon their ships, an added grandeur imparted to them by the tempest, these men thread their way safely through narrow leads of water with the ice masses grinding and threatening every moment to crush in the ship's sides or if the channel be closed, then the staunch, noble vessel backs off a short distance and, hurling her ironclad stem against the barrier, seams and rends it for many yards, and repeating this like a battering ram, slowly fights her way to clear water. But now and then the ice rafts, in great masses close in on the ship, crushing her till her beams crack and she becomes as leaky as a sieve. As soon as the ice opens she will sink.

Fortunately, disaster is rare; not for over twenty years has any ship been lost with her crew, or even part of them, for they always contriye to get on to the ice and make their way to other steamers or to land. But it takes endurance as well as courage. Judging by the rules of ordinary comfort, they are miserably clad. A suit of woolen or flannel underclothing, an outer suit of canvas, a cap with ear flaps, gloves of blanketing, and skin boots over a pair or two of homeknit stockings constitute their outfit. Overcoats, neckerchiefs or extra clothing are unknown, and would earn the wearer a "guying."

Yet in this garb a sealer ventures on the North Atlantic at the most stormy period of the year with the thermometer rarely above zero, and usually many degrees below. The food, too, is not of the daintiest quality. "Hard tack," pork, butter and tea are the staples, with occasionally "duff," a mixture of flour, water and pork fat. Unusually the older and more experienced men provide themselves with delicacies, coffee, a better grade of tea, etc. If the ship is fortunate enough to strike the seals the men cook the hearts, kidneys and flippers and fare sumptuously. When travelling about on the ice they frequently fall into holes and get soaking wet. They take off and wring the dripping garments, then don them again and trust to the natural heat of the body to dry them.

Before leaving for the fishery each captain watches the weather, for his is a difficult task. He has a wide ocean before him, with an immense body of seals somewhere on it, and an error of judgment may cause him to miss them, or he may run into ice and a cold snap coming on be frozen up for the whole season. But if he is fortunate enough to strike the "patch" as the body of seals is called, he is well repaid. The most intense excitement prevails on board at such a time. The men are divided into watchers, and the ship being forced as near the seals as possible, the men clamber on to the ice. Each man has a long rope, a long pole like a boat hook, in one hand, and in a belt around the waist, each man has a knife. The long pole is termed a "gaff" and is used to kill the seal. A blow on the nose gives the seal the quietus. Immediately on killing the seal the hunter "sculps" it. The animal is turned on its back, then a cut is made from head to tail, the carcass is separated from the fatty mass with a few other cuts and thrown to one side. The skin and fat weigh 35 to 45 pounds.

The hunter then cuts two or three holes in the pelt and "reeves" his hauling rope through it. Then he kills four or five more seals, treats them the same way, till they resemble an overgrown sausage, and then starts to drag the mass over the ice to the steamer. If the ice is open he jumps from one place to another, and when a channel is too broad he pushes his "tow" into the water, and, using it to step on, skips across. The men are very expert on this but to avoid risks they usually go in pairs. If the ice be sufficiently open for the ship to steam through, the "pelts" are heaped together, one of the ship's flags are stuck on top and she steams along and picks them up.

Three or four days suffice to kill seals to fill a steamer. The ice fields are now covered with crimson patches, gory carcasses are everywhere, grimy, blood-covered men are dragging their "tows" alongside, coal is being thrown overboard, for each steamer is loaded with coal so that if she fails to strike the "patch" she may be able to cruise about; and seals' fat being more valuable than coal, the latter is got rid of. Pelts are hauled aboard and thrown into the pounds in the hold, the bustle and excitement is intense, and all are working their best to fill the ship and get home as soon as possible. And filled she is, even the decks being covered to the bulwarks, and then the flags are hoisted, hearty cheers are given and she sails for home, so deeply laden that it seems wonderful she can ever reach land.

In port the skins are salted and sent to England, where they are used for boots, shoes and gloves. The fat is converted into oil. This is sent to England, too, where it is used for lubricating purposes and in lighthouses, etc., and for soap.

In 1892 the catch was 349,000 seals, one of the largest on record. Last year nearly all the steamers missed the patch and the catch was only 135,000, the worst for eighty years. The annual value of the fishery is about $1,250,000. Beginning on March 10 it is over on April 20 when preparations for the summer's cod-fishery are begun.—P. T. McGrath in Pictou, N. S., Standard.

SILK FROM BIVALVES.

Fibre Obtained from the Byssus of the Mussel.

In recent times we have heard of the introduction of many new kinds of silk—artificial silk, silk from spiders' webs, etc.; but, on the authority of L'Industrie Textile, as quoted and commented on in La Nature, Paris, July 7, a by no means unimportant industry is still carried on with what may be called marine silk, prepared from the filaments, or, to use the exact term, the "byssus," of certain species of bivalves.

"Everyone," says the writer, "is familiar with this thread-like substance secreted by mussels and bivalves, by which they attach themselves to rocks. It has great strength, as may easily be tested by trying to tear away a cluster of three or four mussels from a common attachment.

"The fibre composing the byssus is of extreme fineness; in ordinary small mussels it is so short as to be quite useless for spinning purposes, but the byssus of the larger mussels is proportionately longer, reaching a length suitable for spinning. This is notably the case with the mollusk known to naturalists under the name of pinna and popularly called, in French, jambonneau, because of its triangular or ham-like form and color. These shells are very delicate, and, on being dried, they can be broken very readily. The pinna is very plentiful in the Mediterranean between Corsica and Sardinia, and on the coasts of Italy and Sicily; perhaps, also, south of the meridian of Malta. Those which the writer has had in his hands were fished up opposite the coasts of the Chiarente-Inferieure, and always at great depths.

"As a food-fish, the pinna is not valued, but the fishery is actively prosecuted for the byssus, the raw material of the spinning industry in certain districts of Sicily.

"Here and there, around the coasts of the country, the pinna is fished up from forests of submarine vegetation at a depth of from six to nine metres (20 to 30 feet) by means of a vertically forked instrument, called the crampon. The fibre although fine is strong, and adheres so firmly to the rock that considerable effort is necessary to detach it. When the filamentary tuft is detached, it is washed with soap and water, and dried in the shade, and the inferior part is cut away. The marketable fibre is rubbed between the hands to give it suppleness, sorted, and then dressed, at first with a coarse comb, then with a fine comb. In this operation there is, of course, much waste, the net product of the prepared fibre being only one-third of the gross product. The fibre is finally washed with water mixed with a little citron juice, rubbed on the hand to render it supple, and then laid on a hot iron, where it acquires a fine yellow brown, gold color.

"The fibre thus prepared and mixed with silk, in proportion of two or three parts of byssus to one of silk, is spun and woven into numerous fabrics as shawl, stockings, gloves, bonnets and purses. The chief centre of the manufacture is the neighborhood of Palermo. A second centre is Lucques, where very fine articles are produced in the workshops of the orphan asylums."

AUTOGRAPH DOCUMENTS.

The Value That May Sometimes be Developed in Them.

Historical documents have in a good many cases proved good investments for those who were first to recognize their value, says the Washington Star. So it has been with the original draft of a letter in the handwriting of the late Secretary Blaine. During the time when the Italian colony was giving a great deal of trouble at New Orleans, Mr. Wilbur, a newspaper man of Washington, went to see the secretary to know what his reply would be to the Marquis Imperiali, then charge d'affaires and acting Italian minister. He found Mr. Blaine engaged in writing the reply. In order that it might be put on the wire promptly he gave it to the journalist with the request to make such use of it as he wanted. The rough draft was in Mr. Blaine's handwriting and contained a number of strong sentences interlined. When Mr. Wilbur had made all the use of it he wanted, William E. Annin, a fellow newspaper man, offered $25 for the original paper and got it. He hung it on the wall of his office in a frame, and in a few days the late Frank Hatton happened in and seeing the relic said it was worth $100 to him. Then it passed into his hands and became an ornament of the sanctum of the Post building.

As in both China and Japan women are held to be subordinate, inferior beings, neither should be too boastful of its civilization. No gauge of true civilization is more accurate than the status of woman in a given country.—Boston Globe.

GREAT SNAKES.

The Fine Reptiles Which Java Island Produces.

For the last one hundred years there have been traditions of huge snakes in the interior of Java 100 feet long and as big around as a hogshead, and our native hunters report these from time to time. Fifty years ago a man named Tait, a Scotchman, started with a party of natives to hunt up the pythons. He never returned and was supposed to have been killed by some wild animal. He must have been a giant, as I have seen one of his guns, weighing thirty pounds and carrying two-ounce balls.

About a year ago a captain in the British army named Coles landed here, accompanied by a party of Sikh soldiers. He was soon joined by Lieut. Ayres of the British navy, and it was announced that they were after the big snakes. Captain Coles was a remarkable shot, and at 400 yards would knock over a parrot every time.

Their course was up the Dowan, a stream running clear for 50 miles and then spreading over a swamp for one hundred miles, almost to the south coast, and alive with man-eating crocodiles. They had with them several donkeys, and one night, encamped on the river bank, one of the animals gave a tremendous squeal, and the Englishman, looking out, saw a huge gray mass sliding over the ground and gave the alarm. Two crocodiles had come on shore and seized a donkey. Both were shot; they were hideous reptiles, thirty feet long, with jaws capable of cutting a man in two. Next morning they went to work and killed thirteen, one thirty-six feet long.

In a few days they reached the heart of this submerged region. Snakes 35 feet long were shot, but the giants kept out of sight. On land the brush was very thick, and wild hogs and deer made well-defined paths from one watercourse to the other, and along these the pythons watch for game.

One morning a native hunter came in and reported a big snake near. Two hundred yards away the Englishmen saw swinging between the trees a serpent almost as big as the middle of a barrel. Its backbone was broken by a shot, and after much trouble it was taken in and skinned. It was forty-one feet long. Such a snake would crush a man in five seconds.

They had now reached the end of their journey; the river ended in a mass of vegetation so dense as to make further progress impossible, so a camp was made on the river bank and next day the guides brought in the head and a few feet of the trunk of a serpent that had evidently been eaten by crocodiles. The head was nearly three feet long and indicated an enormous length. It weighed 60 pounds and was a hideous object. It had no doubt been caught in the water and bitten to death.

Early one morning an alarm was given by one of the Sikh soldiers. He pointed to something glistening in the water half a mile away. Through the glass it was seen to be a snake swimming. The raft was at once manned by the two Englishmen and their gun-bearers. Seen above the water the reptile's head was as large as a barrel and shone like bright copper. It was evidently making for a flat, sandy place near shore, and the hunters waited. Part of the body was now exposed, and the men were amazed. It was at least three feet thick, and as the long coils glided over the sand it seemed to get bigger.

"Now, men, break its back."

Four shots were fired, and three went through the body of the snake. A hiss like a steam escape and the head rose 20 feet in the air, while the tail beat the water like a flail. Suddenly it turned, and a tremndous blow smashed the raft. All got into the water and made for shore but one Sikh. He stopped to secure his rifle, and again the tail descended and he was struck fairly, his back and ribs being smashed into fragments. He never made a sound. Another shot back of the head and the monster dropped. It took six hours to get the body on land and its length was 94 feet. The skin was treated with palm ashes by the natives—an excellent preservative. There is no record of such a snake ever being killed before.

Fever now attacked the party and it took them three weeks to get home. They had been out three months.

WEDDING AT SAMOA.

A Bad Fitting Slipper Causes Some Inconvenience.

One of the bridesmaids became the victim of misfortune at the very start, and came near wrecking the continuity and integrity of the entire procession. A pair of slippers one size too large was the cause of the trouble. Every time her foot was lifted off dropped the slipper, necessitating a scuffling, sliding, snowshoe step which resulted in two couples gradually falling to the rear of the main column. For several hundred yards this agony was endured, accompanied by frantic clutchings at the escort's arm and half articulated gasps and exclamations, paga: "Oh, dear, what a mass!" fefe: "Afraid to go further," and repeated stops to replace the slipper on the foot. Half way down the village street the poor girl espied, in a house far from the road, a young friend. She was immediately and energetically beckoned forth and there was a hurried consultation. The result was that the friend sat down on the road, pulled off her smaller slippers and exchanged with the bridesmaid. By this time the head of the procession had moved fully a quarter of a mile, and stood looking back to see what caused the delay of the rear column. With a bound the bridesmaid, now fearlessly shod, started on the run, flying over the ground at a speed which her consort endeavored unsuccessfully to emulate. Through the laughing, chaffing lines of people leaning out of houses and store windows the belated couple sped, until they reached the advance column of the procession.

The ceremony at the consulate over, the return march was achieved successfully, small boys in the trees lining the road showering rice on the heads of the bridal party. A second ceremony at the church completed the marriage so far as to its legality.—Outing.

The bones of the skull are arched because in that form the greatest strength is combined with the least weight and quantity of material.