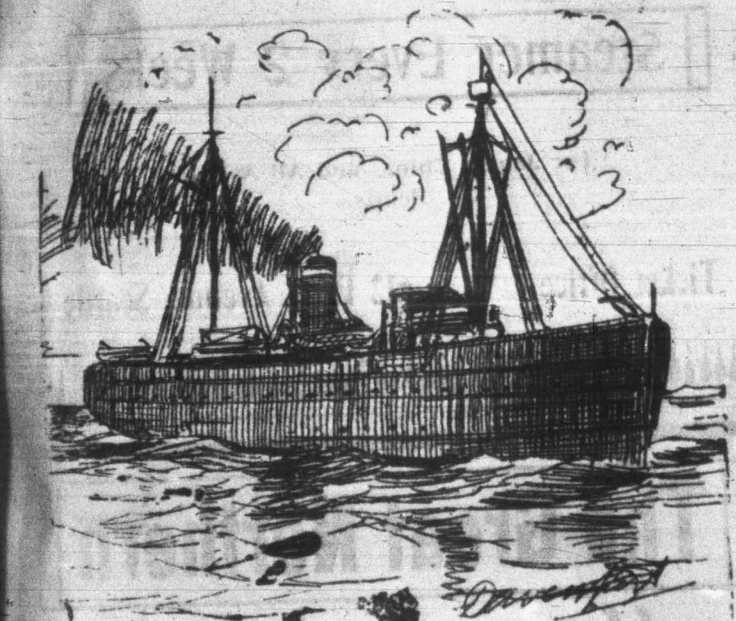


# Whaling, Past and Present

What's the matter with whaling? used to be the reply to the question asked by the New England whaler when he would inquire what to do with his boy, too big to go to school and not old enough to go to work. And "What's the matter with whaling?" the old whaler backs are asking now, but in a different way. Something is the matter with it, that's certain, for it used to have "gone to the dogs," so far as remunerative returns go. The profits have been dwindling year by year until they are now hardly worth considering, the whalers ruefully admit.

Compare the last season's catch as reported from New Bedford via San Francisco with the catches of some of the lucky seasons that have preceded it, and we shall find some cause for the whaler's complaint. By the last accounts the total catch in the arctic waters was less than thirty-nine whales, the best vessel getting only twelve, while a few years ago the



A MODERN WHALER.

higher number was not considered large for one ship. And this catch includes not only the season just closed, but what were left over from last autumn. It is called the small catch for years and was obtained by the greatest outlay of material. In any way they fix it, the whalers always seem to be "playing in hard luck," for if they get a small catch, of course their rewards are small; if they make a large one, the prices of whalebone run down to almost nothing in consequence. Take, for instance, the phenomenal year of

petroleum for whale oil. The bone is not so easy to replace, although there are several substitutes "just as good," which do not always fill the bill, however. So the whalers go forth to do business on the vasty deep and equip themselves annually to hunt the leviathan in his native lair.

Times have changed since the comparatively busy days of the primitive industry when the whale could be found in temperate and tropical waters, even though the voyages were long and the rewards not always very great. Many can remember when Nantucket and New Bedford were in the heyday of their glory, reeking with oil and amassing more capital than they knew what to do with. But now a change has come. First there was a substitution of Portuguese sailors for the native material, and then the sailing vessels dropped out one by one, their places being taken by steamers armed with all the latest scientific appliances, such as harpoon guns, bombs, etc., which reduced the dangers and discomforts of whaling to a minimum.

The beautiful West Indian islands were once the haunts of the whalers; some species of the cetaceans being found offshore and almost within the harbors. Then the whalers lived high and "slept in the garret" even if they did not make great wages, for sailing in West Indian waters was nearly always idyllic. The inhabitants of the islands were hospitable and kind to the visiting tars from Yankeealand. But latterly the whale has retired farther and farther within his arctic fastnesses, diving under the pack ice at the approach of his enemies and keeping pursuers always in uncomfortable situations. It was only a few years ago that the United States government had to go to the rescue of the unlucky whalers, imprisoned by ice and threatened with starvation at Point Barrow in the Arctic. And, by the irony of fate, some of the vessels that left their bones to bleach there were among those that had made the enormous catches of 1893.

So it has been "turn about and turn about" with the whalers for many years. The men who have made fortunes have generally been those who stayed at home and "whaled" the whalers, and so probably it always will be, until finally the huge cetaceans return to the terrestrial mode of life, from which, some of the scientists say, they departed in the ages long ago. The whale is not a fish at all, but a warm blooded, air breathing animal which, they say, has descended from an ancestor

that once upon a time had four legs and lived upon dry land. According to the law of nature, which provides that if an organ is not used it shall become atrophied and finally disappear, the whales became deprived of their legs when they found it too hard to use them and made use of their tails instead. According to the scientific naturalists, they left the land, took to the water, and have since lived in the sea.

Whaling was going on in this country more than 200 years ago and about fifty years ago the American whaling fleet consisted of over 700 sail, with an aggregate of 231,000 tons. The catch of 1846 was worth \$21,000,000, in 1854 it was about \$11,000,000, and twenty years ago it was less than \$3,000,000. Eight years ago there were only eighty-five United States vessels engaged in whaling, and the total catch amounted to less than \$1,000,000, which is not far from the average of the past few years.

JAMES LEWIS HARDEE.

## A Tarantula's Jump

"There are strange sights in Porto Rico," said a returned traveler. "Tarantulas are one of them," he continued, "and you should see a tarantula jump! One of them went through a marvelous performance, with myself and a dog for spectators. The dog's barking awoke me early one morning, and I slipped into my shoes and ran out. Spot—that's the dog's name—was making frantic plunges at an enormous tarantula, as big as my palm and its legs covering as much ground as a soup plate. Its wicked black eyes made me creep."

"All of a sudden the thing shrank up like a sponge and jumped for the dog. I gave up my word, it jumped fifteen feet if it was an inch. Twice the dog ran under the spider's jump. Fact. Others were watching by this time, and they all saw it. Usually, though, he just side stepped a bit. "I broke up little pieces of a branch of a tree and hurled them at the tarantula. My aim was just good enough to stir him up. At first he kept jumping away from us, but Spot always herded him back again. Then he jumped straight for us. At last a lucky shot leveled him over, and a few strokes with a convenient club finished him."—New York Times.

"Mr. Grimes," said the rector to the vestryman, "we had better take up the collection before the sermon this morning."

"Indeed."

"Yes, I am going to preach on 'Economy.'"—Philadelphia Press.

## PROSPECT IS FLATTERING

### J. M. Jackson Representing English Syndicate

### Returns From Inspecting His Company's Property Near Eagle

Mr. J. M. Jackson, the local representative of an English syndicate heavily interested both in the Klondike and on the American side, returned to the city yesterday morning on the Tyrrell from Eagle where on one of the adjacent creeks he had been inspecting the work being prosecuted by his company. In the course of a short conversation had with Mr. Jackson considerable news was learned of the healthy financial condition of the promising camp on the other side of the boundary line. A few days ago a subscription was circulated among the merchants and residents of Eagle for the purpose of raising funds to construct a trail to Steel creek. In a very short time \$1000 was raised and men are already at work putting in the new trail. Its approximate length will be 40 miles as against 50 miles over the old route and it will follow the sidehills rather than the divides, thus affording a shelter in the winter and avoiding the logs in the summer. The old trail was such in name only as there were frequent timberless stretches many people in traveling to and from Steel creek have become lost and only found their way out after wandering around aimlessly for hours. The new trail in crossing bare spots will be flagged by means of sign posts so it can be traveled at any season of the year. Permanent bridges will also be put in where necessary.

Steel creek from its position will become a base of supplies for quite an amount of contiguous territory. The camp which is already established is located at the junction of the creek with Fortymile river and possesses a number of buildings of somewhat pretentious character. The N. C. Co. and the N. A. T. & T.

Co. each has a store at that point. Anderson Bros. have a hotel and are also putting in a ferry to operate across the Fortymile.

Jack Wade creek heads in the same divide as Steel creek though flowing in an opposite direction. From the post at the mouth of the creek, up Steele and across to Wade is about 12 miles. Steele creek being approximately ten miles long. Franklin creek and a number of others equally as promising head in close proximity and all are more or less tributary to Steele. A postoffice and recorder's office have also been established at the post, which will be of tremendous convenience to miners. From Steele creek to Chicken creek there is a natural trail by following the divides and it would require but very little work and the expenditure of almost no money at all to make it safe and passable both summer and winter. The distance is presumed to be about 80 miles. Miners frequently traverse that route, but it is best that they be acquainted with the country before attempting it. Upon some of the bald hills it is a very easy matter to become confused and lose one's way.

The trade of Chicken creek bids fair to be worth cultivating. Fortymile has always possessed it. Dawson merchants have cast longing eyes in that direction and the stores of Eagle are now going after it.

Through the Seattle chamber of commerce and other political influence that can be brought to bear congress is to be petitioned for an appropriation sufficient to build a wagon road from Eagle to Chicken. The creek has already been promised a postoffice which is to be established this summer.

Mr. Jackson has great faith in the country contiguous to Eagle and Fortymile. He is working a crew of 18 men on the claims owned by his company, prospecting and opening up the ground and expects to return to Eagle again in the course of a few days.

### Sailors Drowned

Duluth, Minn., June 7.—The whale-back steamer Wilson, Capt. Cameron, and the wooden steamer George G. Hadley, Capt. Fitzgerald, collided just outside Duluth canal today. The Wilson sank in less than a minute. The Hadley made a run for the beach and reached there just in time. The life-saving crew picked up several members of the Wilson's crew, but several are known to have been drowned. None of the members of the night crew escaped.



AN OLDTIME WHALER.

1893, when the banner catch of the decade was made. There were nearly twenty vessels of the arctic fleet that landed none at all, and yet the others more than made up for their loss by their enormous hauls. It seemed as though nearly all the whales in the Arctic ocean rose up right alongside and permitted themselves to be harpooned or bombed to death. Generally the whales make off for the pack ice and hide themselves securely out of sight as soon as they hear the whir of the propellers. To encourage the unfortunate whalers who have made next to no



AN OVERHEAD VIEW OF DAWSON IN 1905.