

referring to the Maoris at the nephrite cutting village, Kararoa, say: "Of these only the old man and woman had ever seen a white man. They remembered the sealers." Even at that date, however, it was worth while to visit the "rookeries" occasionally. Two years before the exploring party went down, 150 sealskins had been obtained at the Steeples. Another point had not been visited for ten years, and it is mentioned that fifteen years earlier a sealing vessel had been lost, and those of her crew who escaped had been murdered by Maoris.

I am unable to give the northward limit of the seals. They were extremely plentiful in Bass Strait, in lat. 38° , and on this island at least as far north as Cape Foulwind, lat. 42° . While not unknown in the North Island, they were evidently rare there. Mention is made in a book of a vessel coming from the Fiji Islands with sealskins, but, if this is not a mistake, I suspect that this locality was given out to mislead competitors, the vessel having really come from some previously unvisited spot in the vicinity of New Zealand, which it was thought undesirable to make known.

Some idea of the number of seals in suitable localities will be gathered from a few facts which may be mentioned.

New South Wales was colonized in 1788, and very soon after, whalers and sealers began to frequent the neighboring seas. In that year Messrs. Enderby's ship, the *Emilia*, rounded Cape Horn, and first carried the sperm whale fishery into the Pacific Ocean. As early as 1793 an American sealer, on his way to his own cruising grounds, called at Sydney and expressed surprise that they had no small craft on the coast, as he had observed a plentiful harvest of seals as he came along.

The insularity of Van Diemen's Land was discovered by Messrs. Bass and Flinders in 1798. In the vicinity of Bass Strait they met the sealing vessel *Nautilus*, which obtained 9,000 seals on that cruise. Seals of several species in enormous numbers were seen. Mr. Flinders likens the scene to a crowded farmyard, and Mr. Bass "had to fight his way