

In this order the hind limbs are entirely wanting and the tail is expanded to a wide fin, like that of the whale. All its representatives which have come under the observation of man, appear to be slow, and unintelligent, if not actually stupid. They are herbivorous, living on marine algae, or on aquatic plants growing in the estuaries of rivers. They are without means of defense, unable to escape easily by superior speed in the water, and incapable of locomotion ashore. More than this, in their search for food, they are frequently left stranded by the outgoing tide, when they are entirely helpless; while the flesh is always good for food, the fat produces an excellent oil and the skins are useful because of their thickness and strength. The inducements for their pursuit by man are thus very great.

Both the Manatee proper and the Halicore are provided with teeth, the now extinct *Rhytina* was toothless, the place of teeth being supplied by bony plates upon the jaws which served for the mastication of its soft food.

The discovery of the sea-cow and its utilization for food by Behring's crew have already been referred to. The short story of its extermination must now be told.

No sooner had the survivors of Behring's crew returned with specimens of rich furs, particularly that of the sea-otter, than Siberian traders began to build small vessels to revisit the new islands which had been discovered. These were no well equipped expeditions, for means and materials of all sorts were scarce and very primitive on the shores of the Sea of Okotsk. The craft employed at first were small and ill-constructed. Coxe writes of them :—"Most of the vessels which are equipped for these expeditions are two-masted; and commonly built without iron, and in general so badly constructed, that it is wonderful how they can weather so stormy a sea. They are called in Russian *Shitiki*, or sewed vessels, because the planks are sewed together with thongs of leather." *

In such crazy vessels the Russians by degrees extended their wanderings till the whole of the islands of the great Aleutian chain

* Account of the Russian Discoveries between Asia and America. p. 9.