

An American Writer at the Sealfishery.

What George Allan England Wrote About
Our Winter Industry.

To-day we begin the publication of an article entitled "The Greatest Hunt in the World," which George Allan England, an American journalist and novelist, described the Newfoundland Sealfishery for the readers of the Saturday Evening Post. This and a further article which is called "Vikings of the North," have been the subject of severe criticism in the local press, a criticism which a careful perusal of them will show to have been to a great extent, undeserved. The author writes of certain Newfoundlanders as he saw them, and while some of the things he says may not be altogether palatable, on the whole, his comment redounds to the credit of the men and the colony that produced them. This is how he concludes "Vikings of the North."

"GREAT MEN AND TRUE, IN MANY WAYS THE FINEST BREED IN THE WHOLE ROUND WORLD INDEED THEY ARE, THESE VIKINGS OF THE NORTH—GENTLE-MEN UNAFRAID."

We shall, however, refrain from further comment and will leave our readers to judge for themselves how much of the criticism levelled at Mr. England is deserved and how much unjustified.

"Whitecoats!" yelled a hoarse voice from the cabin compartment. The confusion electrified everybody. Captain, bosun, carpenter, master-at-arms and all jumped up from the deck-covered table where we had been having our lobcouse, potatoes and jam. Such a shouting, such a running, such a buckling of sheath knives, grabbing of towels and murderous-looking glances you never could imagine. Up tumbled all hands and ran on the coal-blackened decks of the morning old Terra Nova. One sealer early impaled me with his gaff point. I scrambled for binoculars and camera. Never mind! Whitecoats. They thudded the decks. Forward, the Newfoundlander was coming. The sealer appeared at the engine-room hatch, the galleys. Babel broke loose. Sealers lined the bridge rails, shouting out toward the limbo-like plain of arctic ice that blazed, glaring white, under the March sun. "Whitecoats! Hear 'em bawlin'!" Shouts, laughter, cheers. "Dere 'm de whitey jackets, b'ys!" From a ship of anxious questing, he had become a ship of joyous finding. The thrill that comes but once a year was here. For now we were to have a rally at the whitecoats, a killing of young seals. The Terra Nova, first of all the St. John's fleet, struck the fat. "Overboard, my sons!" shouted Cap'n Abram Kean, admiral of the fleet, from the bridge he had already reached. "You'll see somethin' like seal runnin', now we've got down the regular sheet ice and no more bob get into 'em!"

OVERBOARD AND AT 'EM. But the men needed no urging. They dived for the kill as harts for falling streams. Even before the ship had backed into the edge of a vast, rising flow that broke crisply like luscious candy, they had escalated the rail, eager for a go at this white-ratch, the outskirts of the great Atlantic herd; they had slid down the ropes to the side sticks, or horizontal rope-hung timbers, and were all ready to spring. For in this deeper game of hide-and-seek with the herd, here at last was a chance to get something. After all these days of fishing, grinding, wallowing in the white wilderness, here was a gain, a slaughter.

First of all actually to make the seal was Cyril, the cap'n's grandson, a mere boy. Sixteen, I think he was; he boys grow strong, learning to use hardy laddered. He had the ship's yelling crowd that jumped the unpleasant slither of loose-broked pass, scrambled with gossamer agility to solid ice, and in their heavy Eskimo skinny-woppers, in their boots, ran like madmen across fantastic and tumbled-up confusion.

At the rail, meantime, I watched; who by the grace of the ship owner, Bowring Bros., had been permitted to go to the ice. Watching, I got the whitecoats bawling, saw their white-furred bodies, popping out or lying prone on the floes that had like frosting on some Brobagnian cake.

SPEEDY CYRIL. The old seals raised inquiring eyes, began to swing round, to get a way with their peculiarly shiny shimmy—it certainly would not allowed in United States waters—

ropes. Aboard, they were pulled in a jiffy. A comfortable pile of fat already filled the scuppers, steaming. "Come aboard, all hands!"

Up they swarmed, bizarrely crimsoned of hand and boot. Up the ropes they hauled themselves, over the rail. More babel. The decks smoked and guttered. The sweet, pure Arctic air, tingling with ozone, grew heavy with a hot, stichy smell. My camera was working overtime.

"Full speed ahead!" shouted Cap'n Kean.

The bridgmaster jerked the engine room telegraph. A bell clanged far below. The archaic engines began to thump and thud again, like a dried heart. Away drew the Terra Nova from that place where now, save for some startled survivors surging up and down in open bays, all seal life had vanished. Away she ground, crashed, shuddered through the floes, as for so many days now. But a different spirit it was hers. Tuned up, electrified, nerve-taut, her men were different men. For the first honors of the spring—as wireless assured us—were the Terra Nova's. She was then, as still then she remained, high liner of the fleet.

The first whitecoat out, or kill, had been made.

COMMERCIAL SEAL PRODUCTS.

With an eagerness, no less acute than the men's, I was all the time doing my own hunting, even though it's hard to operate camera and pencil with freezing fingers; but the task was worth while; for if life in the raw has power to stir the pulses, the seal hunt puts them high.

Before wading through any more slaughter, let's stop a moment to get some general idea about this hunt as a whole. The two commercially hunted Atlantic seals are the harp and the hood, common to the Pacific fur seal, yet killed, not for their fur but for their hides and fat. Atlantic seal fur is not fast, save that only of the cat, or stillborn seal. The hides and fat, however, are immensely valuable. At St. John's the sculps are peeled, the skins salted and sent to England to be worked up into leather; the fat is ground, steam-cooked, refined, sunned in glass-roofed tanks till it's a pure white, tasteless and odorless oil. And that's a miracle, no less; for seal sculps and oil, originally, remind one of anything but the roses of Guilan.

My lady dainty everywhere carries handbags and fine leather articles made of such skins; yes, often wears shoes made of them too. Her costliest perfumes and soaps often contain seal oil; and by chance her purest olive oil holds a good percentage that came from the frozen north. The finest of lubricating oil, too, is a seal product. Then, there are other uses, but enough of this. One likes to save one's conscience, re the killing of this extremely warm-blooded mammal, by reflecting how very necessary it is:

The hunt takes place every spring, in the tremendous ice field that drifts down from Greenland and the Labrador, finally to melt on the Banks. The vast herd summer far north. As autumn nips the seas to pack ice they migrate, some down Hudson Bay, and others along the Labrador and Grey, and thence to the Straits of Belle Isle and down the Gulf of St. Lawrence; part keep to the open Atlantic. Why, no one knows; but the strings of hoods always swim to the seaward of the harps, either in the gulf or at sea.

These two species always migrate in company, but never mix.

They winter on the banks—incidentally destroying millions of tons of food fish—and toward winter turn north again. As they meet the ice they take to the harps, they bear their young, called pups. In spite of the fact that each female has only one pup a year, and these infants are the chief object of the hunt, the herds seem increasing rather than diminishing.

DAUNTLESS SHIPS AND SHIPMEN. In the old sailing-vessel days, when many thousands of men were out, serious inroads were made; but now, that only nine or ten steamers go to the ice, with perhaps fifteen hundred

men, only one to two hundred thousand are taken, as against five to six hundred thousand in former times.

This killing, however, remains the greatest hunt in the world, not only in number of mammals slaughtered, but also in point of perils from ice, storm, fire, explosion, drowning—a whole catalogue of hardships that the Newfoundlanders alone—and of these only men of the northern bays—can possibly endure.

It reads easy, in an armchair; but my Lord, if you could only put in six weeks of it as I did!

A few thousand seals are killed by men working offshore on the drift ice; but the vast bulk of the hunt is carried out by the regular St. John's fleet, owned by three firms. Old-time wood on ships they all are, using both sail and steam and carrying heavy crews of as many as a hundred and sixty men. Built of green heart oak, in bonny Dundee, massively timbered, and with great iron-sheathed bows, these dauntless ships, in charge of ice masters incredibly bold and skilled, slog out through the ice pack.

Two or three usually go to the Gulf, the rest to the front, where, roughly speaking, they operate in the drifting snow-blinding and hurricane-swept world of ice, growlers and bergs between the Newfoundland and the Greenland coasts. "Roughly speaking" is right too!

Young seals and old alike are slaughtered, but preference goes to the whitecoats, because their fat—fat means skins as well—brings the higher prices and is easier to be had. The young can be gaffed. In many cases the wary old ones have to be shot, and ammunition costs money. Seal shooting is dangerous work, too, as we shall presently see. The open season is from March fifteenth till May first, or until about a month after the young have rolled off their protective covering and dipped or plunged into the sea.

An enormous area is worked over. Day after day, week after week, the ships—sometimes close together, sometimes out of sight of each other—grind, crash, groan, and shudder thru the ice, blast their way through it with bombs, drift with it when nipped, free themselves and struggle against every possible object, and hardship that Nature, in her most terrible moods, can fling against them. And ever they are killing; ever letting down the precious pelts. The only limit to the kill is determined by luck and the capacity of the ships to carry fat below and on deck. Coal, living space, everything is sacrificed to the fat—sometimes even life itself, as Newfoundlanders well know.

The Dominion's prosperity hangs largely on the seal. A bad season, a fishery—these people still insist that seals are fish—feeds thousands of hungry mouths ashore. A bad one brings misery in its train. The price of fat fluctuates sharply. During the war I believe it was up to some twelve dollars a qtl, a qtl being about one hundred pounds. This year it was only four dollars for whitecoats and three dollars for bedlamers, or older seals. Of this, one-third goes to each of three groups: Captain and officers, common hands, ship owners. All kinds of minor arrangements exist, bonuses, and so on; but the rough statement must do.

TRUMPS AND JOKES.

Luck and skill are trumps. Luck is the real joker. With it, the Wolf once brought in twenty-seven thousand in only eleven days. Without it, a ship may suffer weeks in misery and come home almost blanked. The high-line achievement of the fleet was made by Cap'n Kean in 1910, when he headed toward the North at St. John's aboard the Florizel, with some more than forty-nine thousand sculps aboard. Cap'n Kean is known as a Jeweler, which is the reverse of a flinker, a flinker being, in United States, a Jonah.

These are all the statistics I am going to load into the article, so pluck up heart again. We shall get back to the killing almost at once; also to some very satisfying perils and disasters. I want only to say, here, that every spring all Newfoundland thinks and talks little except seal; and that

the men themselves toil night and day, through hardships quite incredible to an outsider, with a daring seal that one must see to understand.

I lived, as a kind of unofficial general-utility man, for some five weeks on board the historic old Terra Nova—the very ship, you remember, which Scott and Shackleton used in much of their antarctic exploration. Later I transferred over the ice to the Eagle. Thus I had experience such as no other American writer has ever had, on two old-time sealers. Marvellous, thrilling and all that—but never again!

Day by day and night by night, except when we were burned down—stopped—in the ice, the rugged ship fought her way on, in all directions and seemingly in none. As ever, sculps accumulated above; were tailed down, below. Time seemed lost. Sense of location vanished. It seemed only that we were somewhere in a limitless, frozen, dazzling, heaving, grinding wilderness of white.

Gales swept us, with a blistering cold that seemed to peel the very skin from my face. Fog folded us. Snow wrapped up the whole world in a shroud. Black nights of ineffable, starry splendor bent over us. The northern lights—virescent and amber curtains waved above us more gloriously than words can tell. Sun dogs gleamed, mock suns glowed, the ice blink and loom shot the horizons far aloft in palisades of mytic white. Mirages lifted, floated. Bergs crushed, growling, through the floes. We jostled them familiarly, neighboring death with an indifference born of hard experience. A wonderland such as southern folk never even dream of—a wonderland of sights, sounds, colors indescribable—wrapped us to the exclusion of all other life. Some day, by the way, an enterprising tourist agency will reap a fortune by outfitting a stout steamer to take American millionaires seal hunting. In common parlance an expedition of this kind would have every other possible hint faded. Yes, I could organize such a hunt. Trot out your millionaires!

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"Where is My Wandering Boy To-Night?" TOUCHING STORY COMING TO THE NICKEL.

The Nickel Theatre announces another of those extra special photographs which will be screened soon. This picture is entitled, "Where is My Wandering Boy To-Night?" Every character in this film is real. There is a good old kindly mother, a good bad son, a sweet trusting and loyal sweetheart and people met daily in the city and in the country. It is the story of good folks. It is a story of Main Street and Broadway, of the good woman and the cabaret, of the little church and the crowded dance halls, of a mother and her wayward boy, of a country lass and a choru girl.

"Where is My Wandering Boy To-Night?" does not lecture. It is entertainment that is at all times enjoyable. There are human thrills, action, romance and adventure. It is a long way from the warmth of a comfortable country homestead to the breadline on the Bowery, and from the village store to Sing Sing; yet the adventure of Garry Beecher links

WAR DECLARED!

War has been officially Declared upon High Prices.

This war began on Saturday, the 30th, at 8.30 a.m., and will continue until Saturday, the 7th October, at 10.30 p.m., without cessation of hostilities.

HIGH PRICES WILL GET IT IN THE NECK SURE!

So, MR. SMOKER, wade in and help yourself and, incidentally, your pocket by buying your cigarettes and cigars at Faour's. The quality is of the best—the prices low. Read for yourself and become convinced.

The following Smokes are being Sold
at less than Cost.

CIGARETTES

Serene, 20's	40c.
Afternoon—Turkish, 20's	45c.
Duke of York—Turkish, 15's	38c.
Spinet, 20's	50c.
Spinet, 50's	\$1.25
Golden Spangled, 20's	50c.
Golden Spangled, 50's	\$1.25
Egyptian Prettiest, 20's	50c.
Egyptian Prettiest, 10's	25c.
Omer, pure Turkish, 10's	25c.
Omer, pure Turkish, 20's	50c.
Omer, pure Turkish, 50's	\$1.20
Gold Flake, two pkgs.	45c.
Red Lion, 10's	18c.
United States, 10's	18c.
Rob Roy, 10's	18c.
Hill's Imperial, 10's	28c.
Philip Morris, 20's	50c.
Aristocratic, pure Turkish, large size, 20's	65c.
Aristocratic, pure Turkish, large size, 100's	\$3.00
Colombos, pure Turkish, large size, 20's	65c.
Colombos, pure Turkish, large size, 100's	\$3.00

CIGARS

Glorifier, pkg. of 5	30c.
Federal, pkg. of 10	40c.
Amsterdam, pkg. of 10	40c.
Cuban Junior, pkg. of 10	45c.
El Grado, pkg. of 10	55c.
La Mesa, large, 3 for	20c.

PIPE TOBACCO

Serene, per pkg.	22c.
Players Cut Plug, 1/4-lb. tin	40c.
Rosy Morn Cut Plug, per tin	28c.
Dill's Best, 1 1/2 oz. tins	22c.
Dill's Best, 3 oz. tins	44c.
Sweet Crop	28c.

CIGARETTE TOBACCO

Venezelos, per pkg.	15c.
Muscat, per tin	80c.

In addition to the above we have a full line of Pipes, Tobacco Pouches, Cigarette Holders, Cigarette Makers and Tubes, all selling at cost.

Faour's Tobacco Store, WEST END

them in a fascinating theme that you can easily digest, and ask for more.

This is a picture that is sure to find a place in the hearts of St. John's movie fans, and after seeing it, we feel confident that they are going to say "nothing like it has ever been seen before." Watch the ad. in this paper for showing dates.

Dr. Howlett, Dentist, has resumed his practice. Office and Residence 203 Water Street, over Ellis & Co's Grocery.

Household Notes.

To can apples, boil a half cup sugar with 3 cups water for 5 minutes. Add 2 cups apples, cut in eights, and boil until clear. Pour sauce into sterilized jars and seal.

Green peppers are excellent stuffed with minced cooked ham, mixed with an equal quantity of cooked rice, and seasoned with minced olives, pimento and white sauce.

To prepare baked apples in a truly regal style, fill the centres with chop-

ped figs, raisins and nuts, sweeten with brown sugar, bake as usual and serve when cold with whipped cream.

It is worth while to keep three onions planted in flower pots in the kitchen throughout the winter. When onion flavoring is required for stews, soups or salads, cut off the young shoots.

Before dyeing material that is new, boil for 20 minutes in water and then rinse thoroughly. This removes sizing or any chemical left by the finishing process. Stir during the boiling.

AND SIR SID'S FARM IS FIFTY MILES AWAY.

MUTT AND JEFF

