

burthen. Those lately added to the sealing fleet, and which are now considered of the most suitable sizes, range from 130 to 160 tons. Vessels of this size carry from 40 to 50 men. The season of embarking for the voyage is from the 1st to the 15th of March. The voyage seldom exceeds two months, and is often performed in two or three weeks. Several vessels make two voyages in the season, and some perform the third voyage within the space of two months and a half.

The seals frequenting the coast of Newfoundland are supposed to whelp their young in the months of January and February; this they do upon pans and fields of ice, on the coast, and to the northward of Labrador. This ice, or the whelping ice as it is termed, from the currents, and prevailing northerly and north-east winds, trends towards the east and north-east coast of Newfoundland, and is always to be found on some part of the coast after the middle of March, before which time the young seals are too young to be profitable. The young seal does not take to the water until it is three months old. They are often discovered in such numbers within a day's sail of the port, that three or four days will suffice to load a vessel with the *pelts*, which consist of the skin and fat attached, this being taken off while the animal is warm; the carcase, being of no value, is left on the ice. The young seals are accompanied by the old ones, which take to the water on the approach of danger. When the ice is jammed, and there is no open water, large numbers of the old seals are shot. The young seals are easily captured; they offer no resistance, and a slight stroke of a bat on the head readily dispatches them. When the pelts are taken on board, sufficient time is allowed for them to cool on deck. They are then stowed away in bulk in the hold, and in this state they reach the market, at St Johns and other ports in the island. Five-sevenths of the whole catch reach the St Johns market. A thousand seals are considered as a remunerating number; but the majority of the vessels return with upwards of 3000, many with 5 and 6000, and some with as many as 7, 8, and 9000. Seals were formerly sold by tale; they are now all sold by weight,—that is, so much per cwt. for fat and skin.

The principal species captured are the hood and harp seal. The bulk of the catch consists of the young hood and harp in nearly equal proportions. The best and most productive seal taken is the young harp. There are generally four different qualities in a cargo