

rival in our waters, to procure a supply of fresh meat and eggs for their voyage. This practice was kept up every season by our more modern Labrador fishers, who would give the islands a call on their way to the northern fishing grounds.

The Great Auk was unable to fly owing to the shortness of its wing appendages, which latter were destitute of long feathers, and were used more as paddles for propulsion, both on the surface and beneath the waters, hence on land the birds became an easy prey to the fishermen, who killed them in great numbers. It is related that these fishermen sometimes built pens or enclosures with walls of loose stones, into which they drove the poor brutes like sheep. Owing to their inability to rise in flight they were unable to effect their escape and hence became easy victims. Some authors state that boats were occasionally laid alongside the rocks, and a platform or gangway formed of the splitting tables, from the ledges to the gunwales of the craft, over which the birds were forced to travel, when they fell into the boats and were there despatched. It is not to be wondered at, under the circumstances, that the great, clumsy, awkward bird was soon decimated, and finally became extinct.

To-day there are not more than twenty or thirty specimens of the Great Auk to be found in the museums of Europe and America. The possession of one of those birds, or even an egg of one, would be quite a prize, and their money value considerable. Owing to its peculiar flipper-like wings, with short thick pin-feathers thereon, it was called the Penguin (pin or pen-wing) (*Alca. impennis*), but it is not the same bird as the true penguin of the southern ocean, which is still existent in many places. The difference was chiefly in the beak; that of the Great Auk was short and stout, somewhat like the Puffins, the Penguin's being long, narrow and sharp pointed.