

### III. Biographical Sketches.

#### No. 17.—CORNELIUS CONWAY FELTON, Esq., LL.D.

Born at Newbury, Mass., November 6, 1807, died at Chester, Pa., February 26, 1862. He graduated at Harvard in 1827, and after five years teaching, partly as tutor at Harvard, he in 1832 became College Professor of Greek at that institution; and in 1834 he was appointed Eliot Professor of Greek Literature. That post he resigned two years ago, being chosen President of the University. His literary labors have been various, consisting largely of contributions to the journals of the day, *North American*, the *Christian Examiner*, and the *New American Cyclopaedia*, as well as lectures and addresses. His best known works are his editions of Homer, and of some of the works of Æschylus, Isocrates, and Aristophanes; he has also composed a Greek Reader. He assisted Longfellow in the compilation of the 'Poets and Poetry of Europe,' and translated and edited several valuable European books, chief of which may be mentioned, Menzel's *German Literature* and Guyot's *Earth and Man*. His labors for education were not confined to his own college, he was a member of the Massachusetts Board of Education, a regent of the Smithsonian Institution, and was warmly interested in popular education. He died of enlargement of the heart, not yet old in years, though old in labors and in honor.

#### No. 18.—REV. THOMAS HARTWELL HORNE, B.D.

The author of Horne's *Introduction to the Bible*, died January 27th, at the age of 81. His first work was a little treatise issued in 1800, written when he was only 18; he had therefore been an author over 60 years. Allibone lists 41 books published by him, beside which he wrote numerous sermons and articles for reviews, etc.

#### No. 19.—PRINCE WINDISCHGRATZ.

Two of Europe's most famous political characters have recently died at an advanced age, both having taken an active part in the contest with the first Napoleon; identified themselves thoroughly with the absolutist interest, and lived to see a new generation trample upon the fabric constructed with so much labor by the Congress of Vienna. One was an Austrian warrior-statesman; the other a diplomatist. Prince Windischgratz was born in 1786, enjoyed the unenvied reputation of having been the greatest bombardier of civilized capital cities in his day. He was a descendant of the famous Wallenstein, and a genuine aristocrat. In 1813 and 1814 he was actively engaged in the war by which Napoleon was driven out of Germany and expelled from France. But all his laurels withered in the Hungarian campaign of 1849, and since then he has lived in retirement, having declined the office of Governor of Bohemia tendered him by the Austrian government. As the commander who ordered the execution of Robert Blum, his memory will be held in little respect by liberals of Europe.

#### No. 20.—COUNT NESELRODE.

Count Nesselrode had reached the age of eighty-two years at the time of his death. He was born on board a Russian frigate in the port of Lisbon, and baptized in the Protestant faith. Resigning early military life for diplomacy—the profession of his father and grandfather—he gained the esteem of Alexander I., and after the war of 1812, was entrusted with the bureau of foreign affairs. In 1814 he signed the capitulation of Paris, by which Bonaparte was expelled from the government, and took a prominent part at the Congress of Vienna. The influence of no single mind was more felt in European politics than Nesselrode's for the next forty years; but the charm of Russian superiority, which he conjured up with so much effect, was broken by the Crimean war; and it is a curious instance of the law of recompenses that this veteran diplomatist should have been employed to negotiate the next great treaty of Paris, in 1856, by which the Holy Alliance arrangement was declared to be broken up, and Russia reduced to a condition of only second among equals. Nesselrode was one of the richest subjects in Europe.

### IV. Papers on Natural History.

#### 1. THE SEAL FISHERY OF LABRADOR.

From a recent article in *Harper's Magazine*, entitled "Three Months in Labrador," we gather the following information respecting one of the most important industrial pursuits of the North-country:

The seal fishery of Labrador is valued at \$1,500,000 per annum, and is wholly prosecuted by Newfoundland vessels, with the excep-

tion of perhaps a dozen that sail from Canada and other Provinces. The hunting ground lies between the 49th and 52d parallels of latitude, and the season of catching extends from March to May, inclusive. The average fare of successful vessels is two thousand seals, though as many as eight thousand have been taken; but of upward of four hundred vessels that yearly engage in sealing not more than sixty make remunerative voyages, and many suffer heavy losses. Hence the business is altogether a lottery. Nevertheless, the chances of large gains are so seductive that sealers' berths, in vessels "up for the ice," command a premium of from \$8 to \$20. The men so engaged obtain their outfit (which includes clothing, guns ammunition &c.) on credit, the cost of which is deducted from their earnings at the end of their voyage; and they not unfrequently find a balance of \$125 in their favour at the close of the season. Yet they are fortunate if, after their accounts are squared, they do not find themselves in debt to the vessel or at least with empty pockets. The expense of the outfit is borne by the owners of the vessel. The captain receives no wages, but is allowed a tare of ten cents on every seal caught. When this is deducted one-half fare is divided among the crew, and the other half falls to the owners. The average price per seal is \$3.50. Consequently, a fare of two thousand seals, worth \$7,000, yields to the owners and crew \$3,325 each, and to the captain \$350.

Sealing vessels are sheathed with iron and extra planked about the bows to protect them from the ice. On reaching the ground they are warped into channels cut through the ice, where they lie snugly moored until warm weather breaks it up. Then the sealers, singly and in small parties, each man armed with a heavy iron-spiked bat, and muffled to his eyes in furs, go forth in quest of victims. These lie quietly sunning themselves near their breathing holes, often a hundred together, uttering doleful cries and frog-like croaks. Upon some hammock a sentinel is ever on the alert to warn of approaching danger. But the hunters, creeping stealthily, and taking advantage of the wind and inequalities of surface, rush upon them at the first alarm, dealing death-blows right and left among the affrighted herd, who wriggle hurriedly over the ice, and tumble floundering into their holes. The old seals generally escape as their movements are wonderfully quick; but many of the young are killed. These are dexterously "sculped," stripped of their blubber and pelts, which come off entire; the bloody carcasses are left to glut the starveling bears and Arctic foxes, and the pelts rolled up and dragged away to the vessel. After the ice breaks up the seals are shot from boats in open water, where they are found disporting.

There are various kinds of seals, among which are the harbor, ranger, jar, hood, doter, bedlamer, harpe, blue and square flipper; differing as greatly in size and physiognomy as members of the human family. There are canine and feline looking seals; seals with round smooth heads cropped like a prize-fighter's, and seals with patriarchal beards and long flowing locks; pensive-looking seals, and seals fierce and long tusked; little seals three feet long, and monsters upwards of eight feet long, weighing a thousand pounds. Selah! The hood seal when attacked throws up a thick bullet-proof hood or shield before its face, and whichever way a gun is presented this defence is always opposed, the animal moving dexterously from side to side with every movement of his assailant. An effective wound must be given directly under the ear, and it requires an expert marksman to hit him there. The harpe is most esteemed, and commands a market price of \$7 to \$8. He is a first-class pugilist, and always shows fight, rising on his hind flippers, dodging the bat skilfully, and often seizing it from his assailant's hand. He is very tenacious of life, and, when worsted, frequently feigns death. At such times the unsuspecting sealer, stooping over to "sculp" him, is liable to serious injury. Sometimes they have been completely disembowelled.

Seals whelp in March, and suckle their young. They are in good condition at all seasons, but are seldom taken after July as they migrate to more northern regions, returning in December. In early summer they are caught in strong large meshed nets. They constitute an important article of food to the settlers and Esquimaux, and to the latter are indispensable. The blubber is exceedingly fat, and being cut into stripes and thrown into vats, a large quantity of oil is obtained by natural drainage. The residue is tried out by heat. It is extensively used for machinery, both in Europe and the United States, but is sold under a different name. Its value is about fifty cents per gallon.

#### 2. THE SEALS OF SPITZBERGEN.

A full-sized Spitzbergen seal, in good condition, is about nine and a half or ten feet long, by six or six and a half feet in circumference and weighs six hundred pounds or upwards. The skin and fat amount to about one-half the total weight. The blubber lies in one layer of two or three inches thick, underneath the skin, and yields about one-half of its own weight of fine oil. The value of a seal, of