

this is largely due to the selection of the best specimens that offered; any that were obviously poor being passed by.

Professor Milne remarks that "the fact that there remains no evidence of cuts or blows leads to the supposition that these birds may have died peacefully" but some of the crania *do* show the marks of cuts and blows, and, moreover, there is plenty of local history or tradition to show exactly how these birds were done to the death.

It should also be borne in mind that birds seldom die peacefully, for nature rarely accords this boon to her subjects, and when they do meet their end, they seem to have a habit of making away with their skeletons: it would be more accurate to say have their skeletons made away with, for dead birds do not often go to waste, but usually find their way into the stomach of some hungry animal, possibly of the same race.

Dr. Stejneger tells me that during his stay at the Commander Islands many sea birds were washed ashore during or after gales, but unless one was on the beach before daylight the bodies were destroyed by foxes. Even in the immense guano deposits of the Chincha Islands, where every circumstance is favorable to the preservation of inhumed specimens, bird remains are of comparatively rare occurrence, while in localities where the climate is subject to extremes of heat and cold, rain and sunshine, they go to pieces rapidly.

It was not without regret that we prepared to leave so interesting a spot as Funk Island, but having successfully accomplished our mission of collecting bones of the Great Auk, no good reason remained for a longer stay when many miles of our proposed route yet remained to be traversed. Accordingly we gathered up our various impedimenta, the boat was brought alongside "the bench" for the last time, and laden with the spoils of our two days' labor we returned to the *Grampus*, which lay at anchor a mile to the eastward of Escape Point.

Fortune continued to smile on us, and as the threatening weather of the morning had given way to calm, so now that we were ready to leave a fair breeze sprang up that carried us rapidly toward the mainland.

Funk Island grew lower and lower in the distance, and as the sun was nearing the western horizon we bade the home of the Great Auk a long farewell.

It was the intention to visit, if possible, any localities whose names indicated that the Great Auk might once have been found there, especially Penguin Islands on the south coast, and Penguin Islands near Cape Freels. A brisk southwester drove us by the former place at a very lively pace, while with the visit to Funk Island still in prospect, it was not deemed advisable to lose any time in waiting for the wind and sea to go down, so this portion of the trip was abandoned.

On the eastern coast, however, the weather was more favorable; so after leaving Funk Island, the *Grampus* ran over to the well-named harbor of Seldom Come By, and the next morning started for Penguin