

four hours of landing, the period of gestation being twelve months less a few days. The males leave at the end of July and early in August, in an emaciated condition, not having fed nor entered the sea since they arrived: the females, however, constantly go to the sea to feed, and return to the land to nurse their young. The pups get down to the water's edge and begin to learn to swim when about six weeks old. By the middle of September they can all swim, and the 'Rookeries,' as the breeding grounds are called, are then broken up, and by the end of October and beginning of November all the mature seals have left: a few pups remain about the islands a little longer, but by the end of November the whole are gone, and the islands are deserted.

An important fact is that the males, up to the age of six years, take no part in breeding, but herd by themselves in a different part of the islands: they are called 'holluschickie,' or bachelor seals, and are calculated to consist of from one-half to one-third of the whole number of seals, which was put by Mr. Elliott in 1873 at about five millions. It is from these bachelor seals that the Alaska Commercial Company, who have the sole right of taking seals on the islands, select those to be killed: the number being limited by their agreement with the United States Government to 100,000 annually. The breeding seals are never disturbed or interfered with.

The manner of securing the bachelor seals is as follows:—In the very early morning the natives get between the bachelor seals and the sea. They then spread out on each flank of the herd, and drive the seals, which then form a long line, to the neighbourhood of the storehouses, where they are 'corralled.' The foreman then selects those to be killed, which are mostly three and four years old (the skins being finest at that period), and they are slaughtered by being knocked on the head with a wooden club, the others finding their way back to the sea.

Alaska was sold by Russia to the United States in 1867 for \$7,200,000 in gold, or rather less than a million and a half sterling. In the treaty conveying Alaska to the United States, the western and southern boundary of Alaska was defined as follows:—

The western limit, within which the territories and dominion conveyed are contained, passes through a point in Behring's Straits on the parallel of 65° 30' north latitude, at its intersection by the meridian which passes midway between the islands of Krusenstern, or Ignalosk, and the island of Ratmanoff, or Noonarbook, and proceeds due north, without limitation, into the Frozen Ocean. The same western limit, beginning at the same initial point, proceeds thence in a course nearly south-west, through Behring's Straits and Behring's Sea, so as to pass midway between the north-west point of the island of St. Lawrence and the south-east point of Cape Choukotski to the meridian of 172° west longitude; thence, from the intersection of that meridian, in a south-westerly direction, so as to pass midway between the island of Attou and the Copper Island of the Kormandarski couplet or group, in the North Pacific Ocean, to the meridian of 193° west longitude, so as to include in the territory conveyed the whole of the Aleutian Islands east of the meridian.