

is made up to it by the swimming power given by the mobility of the spine. When the great ice-fields, which are borne past our shores on the current that sets out of Baffin's Bay towards the equator, begin to break up and melt, as they reach the latitude of the Gulf Stream, the seals take to the water and return to their Arctic solitudes till the spring of the following year, when they again issue forth on their annual trip. It is pretty certain that they bring forth their young but once a year, and rarely more than one at a birth.

#### A MERMAID INTERVIEWED.

In the olden time, when sailors were not familiar with the appearance and habits of the seal, it was sometimes taken for the mythical mermaid by the simple-minded seamen, its large brown eyes and short, round face, as it swam with head elevated above the surface, suggesting the idea of something feminine and semi-human. It is not at all unlikely that we owe the numerous fables connected with mermaids to the appearance presented to the eyes of the sailors by this plump denizen of the waters. One of the most amusing and circumstantial narratives regarding mermaids is contained in an old work on Newfoundland, written by Captain Richard Whitbourne, in the reign of James I., and recently reprinted in London. This gallant old seaman, who first visited Newfoundland in 1615, relates in this volume an interview he had with "a strange creature—a mermaid" as he verily believed, in the harbour of St. John's. He tells how early one morning, as he stood by the side of the harbour, he saw "a strange creature, which very swiftly came swimming towards me, looking cheerfully on my face, as it had been a woman: by the face, nose, mouth, chin, ears, neck and forehead, it seemed to be so beautiful, and in those parts so well proportioned, having round about the head many blue streaks, resembling hair, but certainly it was not hair." The stout-hearted old captain, who had faced many a storm without quailing, was not a little alarmed when he saw this beautiful female, without the formality of an introduction, swimming boldly towards him. At once the thought flashed on him that here was a veritable "mermaid," of which so much had been said and sung; and how was he to know whether her intentions were quite honourable? How could he tell but she meant to "grab" him, married man though he was, and claiming him as her "affinity," bear him off to her sea caves, leaving Mrs. Whitbourne a disconsolate widow. And so the weather-beaten sailor, who had stood the fire of the Spanish Armada without flinching, "seeing the creature within the length of a long pike, and supposing it would have sprung to land to me, as I verily believe it had such a purpose," turned and fairly ran for it. Whereupon, he says, the fair siren dived and swam to another part of the harbour, and "did often look back towards me with her soft brown eyes"—the impudent hussy trying, evidently, to coax him to his ruin, like too many of her flirting sex—and reproaching him with her soft backward glances for his want of gallantry. Even as he fled, soft-hearted sailor as he was, he could not help admiring "her smooth, white shoulders," which she cunningly displayed, the coaxing jade, as she playfully gambolled in the water. Fortunately Captain Whitbourne was proof against all the blandishments of this charmer of the waters, and like Joseph of old, under circumstances slightly similar, he considered discretion the better part of valour, and fled from her clammy embrace.

The simple sailor, however, was persuaded that he had seen the fabled woman-fish, not as other sea-rovers had reported her, combing her fair locks with a golden comb, but under much more interesting and exciting circumstances. He winds up his narrative thus:—"This, I suppose, was a mermaid, or," he adds with the caution of a voracious historian, "a merman." "Now, because divers have writ much of mermaids, I have presumed to relate what is most certain of such a strange creature as was thus seen at Newfoundland: whether it were a mermaid or no I leave others to judge." It is rather sad to find science, in her inexorable march, dissipating one after another of our delightful delusions, and supplanting the sweet fancies of the world's youth by her own prosaic facts. It is melancholy to think that we can no longer believe in William Tell, or the heroic dog Gellert, Prester John, or the Wandering Jew. The sea-serpent, too, that has filled so many brave skippers with awe and wonder, must also, I fear, go among the myths; and, notwithstanding the solemn testimony of honest Captain Whitbourne, I am afraid we must give up mermaids too. In the interests of truth, I am constrained to admit that Whitbourne's mermaid has a strong resemblance to the unpoetic seal. This plump dweller amid the waves does really present such an appearance as the old tar describes; and seen in the haze of early morning, under the colouring of an excited imagination, corresponds wonderfully to the outlines of the mythological mermaid.

#### NEWFOUNDLAND SEAL-HUNTERS.

Nowhere are our fishermen more at home than amid the ice-fields, pursuing the seal, bounding from "pan" to "pan," fighting the old, dangerous dog-Hoods, clubbing the "white-coats" and harps, and dragging the spoils for miles, over the broken hummocks, to the ship's deck. Their patient endurance of hardships and fatigues that only men of iron could bear,—their courageous encountering of appalling dangers when miles away from their vessels, and often enveloped in fogs or snow-storms, or adrift on detached masses of ice, are worthy of the highest admiration. No finer men for confronting the perils of the great deep can be found anywhere. Big-boned, broad-chested fellows, with splendid development of muscle in limb and arm, are our fishermen. There can be no doubt that their dexterity and daring in seal-hunting and fishing, being continued through many generations, has become hereditary, and that the aptitude, mental and physical, is transmitted from father to son. The young take to these pursuits as naturally as ducks to water, and with such evident speciality as hereditary genius alone could bestow. Their fine physical development is owing in part to the circumstance that their lives are passed mostly in the open air, in a healthy, bracing climate, and that their habits of life are simple. Their life-long battling with the billows, amid ice-laden, stormy seas, gives them vigour of body and fearless daring. No greater contrast can be imagined than that presented by such men to the pale, stunted, gin-and-rum-sodden

dweller in great cities, or the degenerate factory-workers of the manufacturing centres. They are, too, a kindly, hospitable, simple people, like all fisher-folk, having their peculiarities and superstitions, and being remarkable for their intractability to change. As their fathers have been before them, so are they contented to be; the word progress does not enter into their vocabulary. They are so orderly and free from serious crime that, in the capital, the penitentiary is generally all but untenanted. Only when political agitations prevail, and elections are in progress are there any considerable infringements of the law. Of late years, however, party asperities are much softened, and old quarrels are fading from the memories of the present generation. Nearly half the population are of Irish descent, and in former days feuds prevailed between them and those of English origin. Kindly intercourse, however, has greatly abated the evils. Both the bishops of the Roman Catholic and English churches are happily men of moderate views, who promote peace and good will among their respective communions; and Catholics and Protestants are learning to live in harmony, and respect each other's rights and feelings.

#### ATLANTIC CABLES SPEAKING AGAIN.

Just now we are rejoicing over the successful operations of the steamship "Scanderia," in repairing both the Atlantic Cables. Operations commenced on the 26th ult., and on the 8th the work was completed. Captain Halpin, of the "Great Eastern," deserves the highest credit for his energy and skill in conducting these operations to a successful issue. The "Scanderia" is coming here to coal, and will then take her departure for England.

#### CAPLIN AND COD.

During the latter part of May and June, and up till this date, the weather has been unusually cold and ungenial. We have been compelled to re-ignite fires in our sitting-rooms and resume part of our winter clothing. The cold weather, however, and the fogs are favourable for the fisheries, and help to bring the cod from their ocean solitudes along our shores and into our bays. The caplin are due just now, and are showing themselves in the northern bays. Almost to a day we can calculate on the arrival of this beautiful little fish in enormous shoals. It furnishes the best bait for the cod fish. Immediately behind the caplin come the voracious cod, devouring them in myriads, and fattening on their delicate bodies. Then the labours of the fisherman begin, and with hook and line, seine and bultow, he plies his work, endeavouring to earn as much during the short fishing season as will provide for the long, dreary months of winter. Salmon is abundant now in our market at six and eight cents per pound, and of splendid quality. The cod are just beginning to show themselves.

#### BANKS—THEIR DIVIDENDS.

Our banking establishments are very prosperous at present, the Union Bank having declared a dividend at the rate of 12 per cent per annum, and a bonus of £2 per share. The other bank is not far behind this mark.

#### THE NEW TREATY.

The Washington Treaty is approved of here as far as its stipulations affect our fisheries. What we want above all things is the opening of the American markets for our fish and oil, as this would at once largely increase the value of our staples. The Americans could not come here and compete successfully in our shore fishery with our own fishermen. We are not afraid of their competition.

#### DISASTER AT SEA.

A fortnight since one of our coasting schooners struck on an iceberg in the darkness of the night, and went down immediately, having twenty-three souls on board. Not one escaped. By this deplorable occurrence nearly sixty children have been left fatherless and unprovided for.

#### SIR WILLIAM LOGAN.

We are favoured just now by a visit from Sir Wm. Logan, your veteran geologist, who arrived by last mail steamer. He is to remain a fortnight. He has come on a visit to Alexander Murray, Esq., our Geological Surveyor, and doubtless wishes to have a look at our remarkable rock formations.

#### BRANTFORD WATER WORKS—THE ENGINE ROOM.

The subject of water supply for the cities and towns of Canada, as well for domestic and manufacturing purposes as for the extinction of fires, has long engaged public attention, though the serious item of expense has deterred many places from establishing such works as would furnish the quantity demanded, alike for the sake of health and the arrest of conflagrations. As time moves on, new systems are invented calculated to cheapen the first cost, and also to reduce the working expenses to a minimum, and the town of Brantford, which has long hesitated in the matter, has at length been compensated for its former losses by fire in securing the "Waterous improved System of Fire Protection and Water Supply." The great advantages claimed, and now fully established, for this system are cheapness of construction and economy in use. These combined, will place the Waterous system within the reach of every town, and of many of the village municipalities throughout the country, and surely it would be a wise economy to introduce it, and so save a great part of the annual drain for insurance, while reducing the risk of the destruction of valuable property to a minimum. A single fire sometimes destroys the property of a village, or throws it back for many years, simply because of the want of a proper system of water supply.

The flourishing town of Brantford, the capital of the county of Brant, and occupying a beautiful and commanding site on the banks of the grand river, though enterprising in many things, was slow to enter on the question of water supply; and it was not until ten years after Mr. Waterous had perfected his system that the town of Brantford adopted its use. In 1860 he first brought it before the notice of the public, and, three years later, Mr. Holly patented a similar system in the United States, now well known as the "Holly system," which is in operation at Syracuse, Ogdensburg, and many other places, giving the utmost satisfaction. The Waterous system can be furnished by the engine works, Brantford, at prices varying from \$8,000 to \$150,000, according to size of place and service to be rendered. As an illustration of its cheapness it may be stated that while some Canadian cities have paid as high as \$40 per head for their water works, those of Brantford have been furnished for about \$2.40 per

head, or about one-seventeenth of the usual cost by the old systems.

Reduction in the rates of insurance is an unavoidable consequence of the introduction of water works. In Brantford the rates have been reduced 12½, 25, and in many instances as much as 50 per cent since the establishment of the Waterous system. This statement is official, as is another that the saving in insurances alone had in several instances paid the whole of the water rate, and left a handsome margin over.

Another advantage of the Waterous system is in dispensing with the use of fire-engines, the water being thrown to the required height by the main works. In the coldest weather it is effectively protected from frost; and at any part of the town a hose may be attached to the hydrant which will play as effectively as the most powerful engine. The inventor, as we have said, is the chief partner in the firm which owns the Brantford Engine Works, at which are manufactured steam engines, grist and saw mills, shingle, lath and stave machines, chopping mills, circular saws, &c., &c. The works occupy an extensive block on Dalhousie street, occupying a frontage of 200 feet, the building being three stories high. On the ground floor is the machine shop proper; on the second the wood-shop; on the third the pattern shop. A number of other workshops of considerable magnitude afford facilities for moulding, boiler-making, blacksmithing and general storage. The whole number of hands employed is about one hundred and fifty, and the weekly wages about a thousand dollars. The value of the machinery in actual use is about \$30,000, and is being daily added to as the works extend. Altogether the works of Waterous & Co. are not only a credit, but a source of substantial profit to the town of Brantford, and furnish a notable example of the manufacturing enterprise of the Western Province.

#### THE DECKER PARK RACES.

The Decker Park, situated at Mile End, about 200 yards from the terminus of the City Passenger Railway, was purchased, we believe, a year or two ago by the proprietor, Mr. Decker, of the Albion Hotel, who has converted it into a handsome and convenient race-course, half a mile in circumference. The arrangements, both for the running and for the comfort of the spectators are all that could be desired. The track is excellently graded and well fenced, while the stands, including the Grand, the Judges', Reporters', and Pool-sellers' stands, are admirably built and fitted up.

Announcements having been made for some time past that the inaugural race meeting would be held on the 15th July and three following days, a large influx of strangers from various parts of Canada and the United States, all interested in the coming event, poured into the various hotels of the city. On the first day, unfortunately, the weather was far from propitious, and the attendance at the race-course was much smaller than might have been expected. The number on the ground was estimated at about 2,000.

At half-past two o'clock the horses were called for the first race, for a purse of \$400, open to all horses that have never trotted better than 3 min.; \$250 to first horse, \$100 to second, \$50 to the third; mile heats; best 3 in 5. For this race there were 13 entries, but of this number 7 were scratched, leaving the following to compete:—Pierre Girouard, St. Onge, s. m.; Princess; James Lannagan, Belleville, h. m.; Butcher's Maid, Van Valkenburg & Weatherly, Canton, N. Y., h. m.; Scotch Girl, Godfroi Chapleau, Montreal, h. m.; Young Flora, T. E. Baily, Ticonderoga, N. Y., b. g.; Tom Moore; Benjamin Bunting, Flint, Mich., g. c.; Grey Ben; M. W. Black, Geneva, N. Y., h. m.; Lady Black. After half an hour spent in starting a start was accomplished, the Princess going to the fore with a rush. Lady Black, however, gradually worked her way up and came in at the head, in 2.32. The position of the horses as they came in was as follows:—Lady Black, 1st; Princess, 2nd; Grey Ben, 3rd; Tom Moore, 4th; Young Flora, 5th; Scotch Girl, 6th; Butcher Girl, distanced.

The second heat was started in about half an hour. Tom Moore went to the front at once, and maintained his position to the close; Grey Ben came in a good second, Lady Black was third, Princess fourth, Scotch Girl 5th, and Lady Flora distanced. Time, 2.37½.

During the interval between heats, the first heat of the second race, for a purse of \$500, open to all horses that have never trotted better than 3.25, was called. Out of the seven horses entered only the following came to the start:—M. Dougherty, Flint, Mich., b. g.; George; Austin Moran, Morrisburgh, s. m.; Governors; Charles R. Ballard, White River Junction, g. m.; Snowflake.

After about half-a-dozen attempts at a start, a send-off was effected, Snowflake leading. She held her foremost position to the end, George coming within a few yards of her at the finish, and Governors barely saving her distance. Time, 2.32½.

The third heat of the first race was now called; betting 2 on Tom against the field. In this heat Tom again led throughout, closely followed by Grey Ben, who finished within half a length of the leader. The other positions were Lady Black, 3rd; Princess, 4th. Time, 2.40½.

Before the next heat of the second race could be started, the rain, which had been threatening ever since morning, began to fall in torrents, and the betting was put an end to.

Snowflake again led off, and succeeded, by running in maintaining her lead, but was put back for this infringement of the rules, giving the heat to George. Time, 2.39½. The Judges then adjourned the races until ten o'clock next morning.

#### SECOND DAY.

On Wednesday morning the attendance was smaller by half than it had been on Tuesday. The first race was the unfinished heat of the day before. Tom Moore, Lady Black, Princess, and Grey Ben started. At the first turn Tom Moore, Grey Ben, and Lady Black ran into each other, when Tom Moore started off, threw out his driver, legged, who received some cuts and bruises, and smashed the sulky. Lady Black then won the heat in 2.44½. The next heat fell to Tom Moore, in 2.39½—thus winning the race; Lady Black 2nd, and Grey Ben 3rd. The spectators made up a purse of about \$150 and presented it to Mr. Ingalls, the driver of Tom Moore, as a reward for his pluck in driving after having been so severely injured.

The second race, for a purse of \$500, resulted in George and Snowflake each taking a heat, which was decided in favour of George, who took two straight heats in 2.37 and 2.43½.