

Ontario Boy Goes Whaling

(By Herbert Collier.) (Concluded from last week.)

The whale is a most unique animal, as different as can be from its fellow-inhabitants of the ocean, fishes. It is warm-blooded, and must have lots of air to breathe, as well as many other peculiar characteristics. In expelling the air from its lungs, with great force it passes through the spiracles, or blow-holes, and shoots high in the air in two streams of semi-liquid consistency. Four or five "breaths," as we would term it with their subsequent exhalations in the form of these "spoutings," and the whale can stay beneath the surface of the water for nearly half an hour before reappearing. That seems a long time to hold your breath, and exceeds by a long way man's ability at such a feat. And here just let me give further information about this animal which may assist you to a proper understanding of this marine monster.

Although by their mode of life so far removed from close observation that it is impossible to become as familiar with them in their natural condition as with many other animals, whales are in many respects the most interesting and wonderful of all creatures. There is much in their structure and habits which is well worthy of study, much that is difficult to understand, and much that leads to great generalizations, and throws light upon far-reaching philosophical speculations. One of the first lessons which a study of these animals affords is that in the endeavor to discover what a creature really is who were its ancestors, and to whom it is related, we find the general outward appearance affords but slight information, and we must go deep below the surface to learn the essential characteristics of its nature.

In the first place a whale is not a fish. When you consider carefully what a fish really is, what is common among this class of form, size and other characteristics which distinguish them from other classes, such as reptiles and mammals, the whale is found to resemble the latter named class. It is as essentially a mammal as a cow or a horse, and simply resembles a fish externally because it is adapted to inhabit the same element. But it is no more on that account a fish than is a bat nearly related to a bird because adapted to live and fly in the air. Careful examination of the structure of a whale indicates that long ago its ancestors lived on land, and could at least move about on shore on its four legs. Yes, you may well laugh. It does sound funny. Yet there in the whale today are its four legs—all that is left of them—every bone necessary, even to its toes. But because he changed his way of living, and stayed so much in the water, he lost the use of these legs and they shrivelled up. His forelegs became little flippers or paddles, but supplied with all the bones necessary for good legs if properly developed. The rudimentary hind legs are also to be found by careful examination. This is an excellent example of how nature demands that every organ of the body must be used, otherwise it is taken away.

The most remarkable characteristic of this animal is its similarity to human beings. It gives birth to children, and the mother provides milk for its baby. It does seem so odd for a baby whale, with its great mouth, to get its food supplied by sucking, and down under the water at that!

As we approached slowly and with engines going as quietly as possible under muffled steam, we detected some of the whales feeding. By a great sweep of the tail thousands of shrimps would be gathered together into a concentrated mass. Sometimes the whale, apparently not satisfied with the result of one such sweep, would make a second flourish, to insure that his meal was properly set before him. Then, swinging his enormous body into position, he would lazily roll over on his side and make a sudden dash through the water with wide-open mouth, in such a manner as to make the upper jaw a sort of scoop-net.

umbrella closes partly, when the lower jaw is brought up and, like a lid, covers all. Contained within is a great mass of food and water. The latter is not wanted, so the whale hurls this out through the hundreds of narrow passages, while a fringe of bristles along the edges prevents even the smallest minnow from escaping. It is simply a huge strainer. Sometimes as much as a ton of food is thus taken at one mouthful, and whales have been captured with as much as four tons of food in their stomachs.

But no time was lost by our captain and crew in watching the animals eat. Quickly and quietly had all necessary preparations been made, and now every man was at his post, alert to perform his particular duty when the moment for action arrived. Everyone seemed anxious and excited with the exception of two, Captain Macauley and the gunner. There, beside his powerful gun, stood Franz, coolly awaiting the approach to within striking distance, and to this end much skillful manoeuvring of the ship was necessary. Selecting first one whale and then another, we crept up quite near, when each suddenly decided to go below. With a flourish of the great flukes in the air he would "sound," or dive. Truly it was quite disappointing to meet with two such experiences. But with the third selection success came. Closer and closer we approached. Franz, with his eye along the sights, touched the lever. A flash and loud report followed instantly. My heart fairly stood still as I beheld the great harpoon, with enclosed bomb, speeding through the air on its journey of death. The attached heavy rope gave a merry "soop-soop-s-s-s-s" as it flew out of its porthole, and chased the harpoon deep into the vitals of the whale. About two seconds after the entrance of the harpoon the bomb exploded. The enraged animal, mortally wounded, threw itself entirely out of the water, lashing his great tail furiously. We on the vessel, of whatever size, that chanced to be within striking distance of those flukes then! Like an egg-shell would it be crushed. We were indeed near enough to meet with a sufficiently unpleasant experience. One hundred tons of whale falling back into the ocean created an enormous disturbance of water. A mountainous wave leapt up and rolled toward us. A warning cry rang out as the danger to ourselves became immediately apparent. Each clung desperately to the nearest support as the wave, towering high above us, thundered upon our decks. Our good boat, built for heavy seas, shed most of the water nicely. Not so with us, however, as our clothes held every drop possible. Choking with the brine, we took a hasty look about to see that every man was safe, and then all eyes hurried to the dying whale. His struggles caused a frightful commotion, foaming water flying in all directions. Only occasionally would we catch a glimpse of the dark skin, for the splashed water hid everything. Suddenly quiet came. The back of the huge animal showed above the surface of the calming water, and then slowly disappeared from view. He was dead.

The rope attached to the harpoon was now all that could save the valuable animal from being lost forever to us. A dead whale at the bottom of the ocean is worthless. Every eye held the question, "Is the rope all right?" as, fearful lest in the struggle this might have become detached or broken we watched the steam winches winding up the "slack." The answer came promptly, without words, in the tight rope showing the weighted end. The terrible suspense was for a time ended. Everybody was happy. In a short time the powerful machinery had drawn the carcass up under our bows. A half-dozen agile fellows trained for this particular work were ready and, grasping firmly their peculiar weapons, leaped down upon the great, slippery back of the dead whale. Pirates indeed they appeared as they took possession of this strange ship. Thrusting a tubular lance deep into the animal, a rubber hose was attached and connected to a powerful air pump. This was set in motion, and air forced into the body in such quantity as to make the animal float readily. A metal shaft was then driven in as a flag pole, and a Canadian ensign placed at its top. Such action seemed very romantic, and savored of true stories of sea warfare. Yet it was not for mere glory that the victors thus hoisted the flag of their country. The reason was so made apparent when the men scrambled back on board the steamer and cut loose from the whale. Away we went, leaving the captured whale to await our return. The flag was to enable us the more easily to locate him again.

Of course the great commotion caused by such a fight with this whale frightened the other members of this school of whales, and now none were in sight. Rapidly we steamed about, keeping a sharp lookout for spoutings. Fully three hours passed in eager searching before the watchman from his lofty perch announced that he spied one lone whale some two miles to starboard. A strong breeze had risen, and the waves, rolling high, broke in foaming crests. Our little boat seemed a mere mariner and more joyous on account of the extra struggle as, from

her bows, she dashed the water in great sheets of flying spray. With full speed we rushed to within a short distance of the whale, and then continued the approach more cautiously by slowing down, so as to make as little noise as possible. The animal, however, paid not the slightest attention. He was evidently in sportive mood, enjoying himself in the waves. Placing his great body in such a position that the waves rolled along his entire length, he appeared to take as much pleasure in thus having his back rubbed as if he were a dog. If his enjoyment was in proportion to his enormous length he should be pardoned for being wholly oblivious of his surroundings. The situation suggested to my mind that amusing rhyme of the giraffe.

"The tall giraffe, with his face all aglow, As he munches his wisp of hay, Blesses his neck as down it goes, For he tastes it all the way." But Franz Naroda had no time for such idle thoughts. Upon his judgment all depended. The real target, the vulnerable spot, was comparatively small. The waves tossed our boat and its gun about in reckless manner, making aim almost difficult. Under such conditions came the real test of skill, a proving of nerves unajured by alcohol or tobacco. With his eyes on the "sights" he quietly said to me, "Be ready," for he had consented to allow me the honor of pulling the lever. It was a great moment for me. The job was really one of the smallest and easiest imaginable, yet on my fidelity utter failure or great success was absolutely dependent. I simply watched his lips and waited for one word, "Now," when instantly my hand responded.

With thunderous roar and belching flame the massive harpoon shot from the gun and disappeared in the body of the whale. Interrupted thus rudely in his play, the animal, as though to wave us a farewell, gave a flourish in the air with his great tail and rolling over on his side, sounded. It was quite evident that the wound was not to be immediately effective. Though we could not see him, his speed was shown by the trailing harpoon rope, which whirled through the portholes. A mile of rope must have been thus let out before the winches tightened in an effort to check the animal. But instead we were towed along at a lively speed. It was quite like King Neptune in his royal chariot drawn by marine steeds. Our engines were reversed in an effort to tire the whale. Yet for a time even this was not wholly effective. A pause came, and advantage was taken to wind up all the slack rope possible. Then another rush followed, in which we not only lost all we had gained, but much more with it. And so the battle waged for three hours before the lance men were called upon to perform their duties. He proved to be one of the largest of whales and a very worthy prize, measuring no less than seventy-eight feet.

After sufficient air was pumped into the body to make it easily floatable, the great flukes were hoisted by derrick so as to rest partly on the side of the boat, and all made fast with ropes. In order that the huge animal might be more easily towed, the head was turned to the stern of our boat, the mouth being tied shut. These interesting operations completed, we set out to locate our former prize, and then on to the whaling station, with its towing astern. We were told that "the cargo" approximated \$25,000.

Long before you reach the whaling factory it comes to you. It announces its presence in no uncertain manner. It has a sort of wireless equipment, judging by the distances to which this peculiarly distinctive, pungent, disagreeable smell will travel. You must possess a really educated nose to live in harmony with such a plant. During the day I spent at Sechart I did my best to make my nose understand that it was not to rebel against the enforced discipline of handling bad smells. But I fear such was not a success.

Our arrival in the harbor with two whales produced a lively scene. Great steam winches were soon in operation and the big animals dragged up inclined runways to the working platforms of this modern factory. Immediately a group of men set to work with long-handled flensing knives. Marching from one end of the whale to the other, they made cuts through the blubber, which lay in thickness of from six inches to two feet. Parallel cuts, about eighteen inches apart, were thus made over the whole body, after which special machinery was used to catch hold of one end of a strip and peel it off, as one might a thread from a stalk of celery. These great strips of blubber was then passed through chopping machines into big vats, to be boiled, in order that the oil might be thereby "rendered."

For such large animals it is a surprise to find they possess so thin a skin. It is not much better than wrapping paper, and quite useless for leather. The coat of blubber of such thickness seems to be ample as a protection for this warm-blooded animal against the chilling effect of the icy waters. One can imagine the difficulty of keeping a skyscraper properly immersed in ice-cold water. Beneath the blubber is a coarse, red meat, which, among certain Indians and Japanese, is much appreciated. Especially is this so of the tail and fins of the humpback whale, which is dry-salted and packed in barrels for shipment to Japan. For a time at least a certain Newfoundland firm produced a very fine "extract of beef" with this red meat.

The head of the whale is the most valued portion of the animal, an account of the whalebone in certain species, or the fine oil in others. The value of the whalebone alone in one animal often exceeds \$5,000. In the head of the sperm whale there is a great pocket, or "case," containing as much as fifteen barrels, and sometimes even forty barrels, of the purest and best natural oil known to commerce. It is used for watches and delicate machinery, and consequently commands a very high price on account of its special qualities.

In the modern whale factory not an atom of the monster whale is discarded. After the oils and other useful products have been secured, the residue is placed in drying machines and then ground to a coarse powder. This product, which is much like coffee both in color and form, is highly prized as a fertilizer, especially on the sugar plantations of the Hawaiian Islands.

The tongue of a whale will usually exceed three tons in weight, and sometimes even five tons. The size of the mouth can consequently be the more readily appreciated when compared with a roomy cave. The heart, whose duty it is to pump warm blood through those miles of arteries, weighs about a ton. Truly it is a magnificent engine. While examining the interior of the mouth of one of the whales, naturally I recalled the story of Jonah and "great fish." As some biblical critics have freely stated that the throat of a whale is so small as to prevent the passage of a man, father and I determined to discover for ourselves the truth. Donning oilskin suits, we entered the dead whale's mouth (a sulphur-bottom), and not only one at a time, but both of us together, passed through the throat. At least we went far enough to prove the possibility of such an animal taking care of Jonah in that respect. It is true that some whales have a small throat, but there are a number of species, especially the sulphur-bottom, with ample provision for the passage of even three men together.

The Black Sheep

The Canadian volunteer citizen soldier is, if properly managed, as near the ideal as a military force can be. It is probably as little imbued with Dutch courage as any army in the world. The Russian army is excluded from vodka from the moment of mobilization. That is found necessary with such a drink-soaked peasantry as the imperial saloon-keeper has been cultivating to replenish his war chest. But the same rule would be profitable even here. Military service might be made a valuable refuge for splendid men who have been their own enemies. It is pitiful to see a lad in the King's uniform get on a street car in a silly condition. It humiliates to the great sober majority who wear the uniform to see it openly be derided. The Mayor has been the saloon-keeper refuse liquor to men in uniform after eight in the evening. This is a moderate restriction, he alleges, as the occasion of his instruction, that sentries have been drunk at their posts. This has been indignantly denied by Colonel Hughes who has done all that a Minister of Militia could under the law to have a sober army. Whether the indictment is true or not, one man was drunk on what might have been momentous duty. A soldier on an errand connected with the defence of a certain government work was seen emerging from an urban hotel so intoxicated that he was hardly able to stand. A good Samaritan took him in hand and helped him to discharge his trust. One such dereliction might wreck a railway or navigation system. Some seem to have a notion that drinking is a natural adjunct of soldiering just as swearing used to be thought necessary to the right sort of a soldier. It certainly is different from drinking in private life to that so much more hangs upon it. A man who had taken the pledge never to drink nor give drink to others said he considered it no harm to treat a comrade to liquor at the regimental quarters. So a railway conductor might say it was no harm to treat his gang while running a train. The present Minister of Militia has faced much ill-humor in his determined efforts to stop all this. We could wish that Parliament before it rose had given the minister power to make our mobilized force as sober as the armies of Russia. These men certainly do Canada credit. It would be a pity if that credit should be in any case sullied by drink. For the most of the men the absolute stoppage of drink would be no privation, for a large proportion it would involve no change.

An amusing story is told of an officer residing in India. Returning home one day from the hunt he was encountered by an Indian tax-collector, who said to him: "Four rupees, carriage tax; five rupees, horse tax; total nine rupees!" The Englishman was indignant, and said in an angry voice: "So you've been prying round, have you, and questioning the servants? If you don't go soon I'll set the dog on you."

And to the amusement of the Englishman the Indian replied: "One rupee more, dog tax; total, ten rupees." What the Englishman said is not

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