

terly worthless for agricultural purposes, the waters it surrounds contain sources of wealth which, strange to say, have hitherto been monopolized by the Dundee and New Bedford whalers, just as the fur trade has been monopolized by the English Hudson's Bay Company; the Canadians, to whom the region belongs, deriving scarcely any benefit from it whatever. Formerly, the whale fisheries of the bay were extremely valuable, but of late years this leviathan has so decreased in numbers as to render his chase precariously profitable, and his extinction an early possibility. From a table prepared by Dr. Boas, it appears that between 1846 and 1875 inclusive, the United States sent 113 vessels to the Hudson's Bay whale fishing, and that they obtained 1,620 barrels of sperm, 56,019 barrels of whale oil, and nearly a million pounds of whalebone, which, considering that the average size of the ship is only 240 tons, makes it clear that there has been a handsome margin of profit. The right whale, which, in consequence of the high price of whalebone, viz., about \$12,000 a ton, is by far the richest prize a whaler can capture, attains a size of from fifty to eighty feet. It was once readily found in the northern part of the bay, but now is rarely seen and the pursuers have to go farther and farther north every year. The white whale, on the other hand, still abounds at the York, Nelson, and Churchill rivers. They go up with the tide every day in great numbers, and seem quite tame, bobbing up serenely and blowing within twenty feet of the boats. They are caught in nets and also by rows of stakes driven into the mud, and taken to the forts where they are flensed, the blubber

tried out, the skins cured, and the carcass put by for the food of the dogs in winter. As these whales average about forty gallons of oil each, and their skins are valuable, they are worth from twenty to thirty dollars apiece. The narwhale or unicorn, and the walrus still exist in considerable numbers, and well repay the trouble of hunting them, while the seal, it need hardly be said, swarms upon the ice in countless numbers during the greater part of the year, and to a large extent constitutes the Eskimo's commissariat. Of smaller fishes, the salmon is the only one having commercial value. It is caught in large quantities by the Company, and sent to England fresh in a refrigerator ship specially built for the trade.

There are not many species of land animals, the polar bear, wolf, wolverine, arctic fox, reindeer, polar hare, and lemming being the principal ones. They are all pretty numerous still, but their ranks are undoubtedly thinning, as the demands of the fur trade increase; and some day or other they will be so scarce as to render the business of catching them no longer remunerative. Indeed, as it is now, no matter how hospitable, genial, or talkative an official at one of the Hudson's Bay Company's forts may be, under no circumstance can he be seduced into the admission that his post is run at a profit to the company; according to him it is kept up just for the benefit of the Indians and Eskimo; in other words, for philanthropic rather than for commercial purposes. Accordingly, if this showing be true, the end of the fur trade is already within sight.

But it is not because of its human inhabitants, nor of its quarries for the hunter on land or sea that the Hudson's Bay region has special interest for us to-



LOOKING SOUTH ALONG THE MERIDIAN LINE, LENNOXVILLE, P. Q.