DESERET EVENING NEWS.

Monday, - - - - April 19, 1869.

FUR SEAL FISHING.

This business of sealing was carried on from this State long years ago when California was an unknown land, and the city of San Francisco a poor collection of adobje houses on the side of a fine bay. There are enterprises from this city in distant waters successfully carried on, which date back for years before San Francisco contained one thousand inhabitants, and although now grown to magnificence, it is not the whole country by any means. A few facts pertaining to this seal business may give information and light on this subject, and lead eager speculators to consider. For one hundred years the skin of the fur seal has been eagerly sought after, and has brought in the markets of the world very remunerative prices. China used to be an excellent market, but is now valueless. Most of the supplies were drawn from the Southern Ocean. From 1765 to 1800 the island of Kergulen's Land, Indian Ocean, yielded Englishmen then one million skins, but open competition swept them all away. Afterwards Massafuero, near Juan Fernandez, was visited, and 50,000 a year were obtained. Here every one was free to go, and the usual result followed—extermination of the species. The region near Cape Horn, Falkland and Shetland Islands, came next in order, there 100,000 per annum could have been obtained with proper restriction, and continued indefinitely; but the rapacity of traders killed old and young, male and female. The little pups were left to starve on the beaches, and the fishery was annihilated. In the years 1821 and 1822 it is estimated that 320,000 of these animals were killed at those islands. Later, the sealmen pushed on to South Georgia Islands; and from this spot obtained in a few years about 1,200,000 skins, leaving those icy regions wholly depopulated of their heretofore teeming thousands. This almost completed the destruction of these valuable animals in the southern hemisphere, and now at all the places enumerated it is hardly possible to obtain 3,000 a year. A few still remain in inaccessible positions on the rocks where vessels cannot approach, but the vast numbers of the past are gone never to return. The only place where they are preserved, and that under strict government regulations, is at the Lobos Islands off River La Plata. This fishery carefully guarded and rented yields about 5,000 skins per year.

The last spot discovered by the ubiquitous Yankee trader, where these seals could be taken, was Robben Island, Japan Sea. There on a little bunch of rocks some 50,000 resorted annually. The club and knife made short work with them. Between 1854 and 1857 the whole herd was exterminated, and their jackets sent to market. One hundred a year cannot now be found there.

In the meantime, under Russian rule and the strictest regulations wisely planned and carried out, the fishery at St. Paul's and St. George's islands, Alaska, have been fostered and permitted to grow and increase until they are now considered to be the best rookeries extant, much larger and better than any others known. The peculiar location and climate of these islands fit them in an eminent degree for the home of the fur seal, where, with proper precaution and protection, they can be raised and perpetuated for years to come; more easily indeed, than sheep upon the ranches of California, for the seals require no feeding or personal care. These seals are migratory, and only visit the land for four or five months of summer, to copulate, bring forth their young, and shed their coats. They cannot be taken in the water, but when on the land are comparatively defenceless. Properly guarded, this seal fishery will perpetuate itself, and prove for fifty or one hundred years, a source of revenue to the government. Left open to competition and indiscriminate killing, it will be totally destroyed in three years. —*From the New London, Conn., Star.*

CATCHING SIOUX INDIAN GIRLS.

Polygamy is practiced in the tribe, but not extensively. A man may have as many wives as he can keep, but he must buy them. The universal price of a wife is a pony, or for a white man an American horse. A squaw once bought becomes the immediate property of the purchaser, but he must catch her. Men have bought wives and never been able to catch them. Most of them, however, are quite willing to be caught. An Indian, several years ago, took a fancy to an officer's horse and tried in every way to purchase him; but the officer would not part with the animal. Finally, the Indian offered his sister, a beautiful girl, in exchange for the horse. Fearing he would steal or maim the animal, and not wishing to offend him, the officer gave the Indian the horse, but declined to receive the girl in return. The young lady, however, was informed that she was sold, and so the matter stood. After waiting for a long time for her husband to come and claim her, she one day, as he rode by camp, put herself in the way, when, seeing he took no notice of her, she naively asked, "Why don't you catch me?" The officer, who had never seen her before, inquired what she meant, when she roundly told him she was his wife, and not at all pleased that he had not come to her. He never claimed her, but she was regarded by her tribe as the white man's squaw, and at last accounts she was still single and waiting for her husband.

Some of the Sioux are quite rich in horses, cattle and furs, and educate their children. I am told Spotted Tail has two of his daughters now at school in the North, and that the Misses Spotted Tail are very good looking and intelligent girls. Generally the women are homely, being compelled to labor hard, while the men do little but hunt, fish and make war. Now and then, however, a handsome Sioux girl is seen, but almost invariably she has lice in her head. Cracking lice is one of the occupations of the Sioux women. If a woman's husband leaves her she does not lose caste, but can marry again. A man who leaves one wife generally finds it difficult to get another. If a girl is unfortunate, her lover must pay one, two, or three horses, or her friends will kill him. In all cases of rape the penalty is death.—*New York Tribune.*

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We shall keep constantly on hand

A GOOD SUPPLY,

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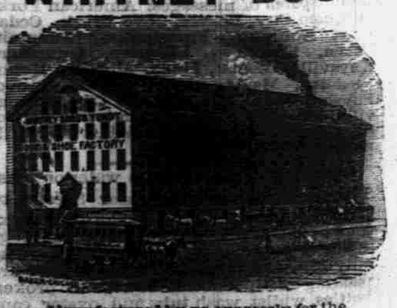

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