

applied to draw it up as it is separated from the carcass. After being taken on board, the blankets are cut up. The next operation is "trying out:" this is done by melting the blubber in large pots set in a fire-place of brick-work, which is carefully secured on the upper deck, with a trough around it, in which water is put to prevent accidents from fire. The fuel used is blubber from which the oil has been extracted, which produces a strong heat, and is a very economical fire. To prevent accidents great caution is necessary, and the readiest mode that has been found to extinguish the burning oil, is by throwing sand on it; a quantity of sand is, therefore, generally kept in the "try-works." In well-regulated ships, the oil after boiling is put into reservoirs until it cools, after which it is drawn off and placed in the proper casks; of each of these a sample is kept, properly marked and labelled, and these are often shown with much pride by the master of the ship to his visitors, as indication of his success and the quality of his oil.

The profits of the whaling fishery have been great, and show what industry and perseverance can yield when well directed. The small number of accidents in this large fleet is surprising; for the total losses for which underwriters have to pay, seldom exceed one per cent., and those from other accidents are not more than one half per cent. The insurance seldom exceeds two and a half per cent. by the year, and at this low premium the underwriters have derived good dividends.

Of late years there has been much fluctuation in the price of oil, which has caused those to make losing voyages who returned at the times of its depression; but at the steady prices of eighty-five cents per gallon for sperm oil, and thirty-five cents for whale oil, voyages would generally yield a handsome return.

It is estimated that about ten per cent. of the ships make losing voyages, as well from the incompetency of the masters as from accident and ill luck.

The greater proportion of the oil finds a market in Germany, Holland, and Prussia; consequently the prices abroad control those at home.

I have stated the number of sperm whales that are taken at five thousand, and this may in some years be beyond the truth. From the best authorities, the whole of both species annually taken is about ten thousand, including those lost from accident, and those cut adrift, in consequence of bad weather or night. These losses may amount to eight or ten per cent. of those mortally wounded.

It is said that an equal proportion of bull and cow whales are taken.