

floating in our channel. We tried once more to drag one of them up, but the attempt was as unsuccessful as before. At last we saw that our only course was to skin them in the water; but this was neither an easy nor an agreeable task. When at last, late in the evening, we had got one side of one animal skinned, it was low-water; the walrus lay on the bottom, and there was no possibility of turning it over, no matter how we toiled and pulled. We had to wait for high tide the following day, in order to get at the other side.

While we were busy with the walruses that day we suddenly saw the whole fjord white with white whales gambolling all round as far as the eye could see. There was an incredible number of them. In the course of an hour they had entirely disappeared. Where they came from and whither they went I was not able to discover.

During the succeeding days we toiled at our task of skinning and cutting up the walruses, and bringing all up into a safe place on the beach. It was disgusting work, lying on the animals out in the water and having to cut down as far as one could reach below the surface of the water. We could put up with getting wet, for one gets dry in time; but what was worse was that we could not avoid being saturated with blubber and oil and blood from head to foot; and our poor clothes, that we should have to live in for another year before we could change, fared badly during those days. They so absorbed oil that it went right through to the skin. This walrus busi-