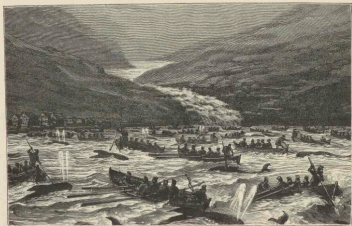


villages instantly are set in motion, fires are lit, that their smoke may summon further aid, knives are sharpened, and the line of boats is strengthened. Like a flock of sheep the whales are driven up the fjord, till within a few hundred yards of land, and then the foremost boats approach, harpoons, or rather lances, are raised, and from the rear are struck into the bodies. At once they rush away, and a great wave of water and of whales bursts on the shore. Among them dash the expectant villagers: some cut the monsters' necks to the bone, which the plunging animal soon breaks



THE WHALE FISHERY IN THE FARÖE ISLANDS.

himself; others seize the blowholes of receding ones, and drag them up with hands or ropes. Meanwhile the boatmen urge the rest, or kill them in the water, which is crimsoned with their blood.

It is a ghastly scene, and the actors, with their blood-stained clothes, and hands, and faces, look more like South Sea cannibals than mild and gentle Faröese. The numbers captured vary greatly, but the yearly average exceeds a thousand. The tithe is set apart, the largest carcase goes to the crew who found the shoal, others to the poor, the officers, etc., and then the rest are shared among the dwellers in that particular neighbourhood and the men who have shared the labour of the chase. The flesh is eaten fresh or else hung up to dry. The blubber is boiled to extract the oil, or sometimes salted down; the fat is cut in strips, hung up, and used instead of bacon.