

Pink, Snapdragon, Canterbury Bell, Red Valerian, Columbine, Lupines, &c.

If our flower-garden occupies us so much this month, almost the same may be said of our kitchen-garden, where successional sowing, constant weeding, and much else has to be done. But particularly will early-sown crops want thinning, and, of course, very many must be planted out.

Beans should be topped as soon as they have set a sufficient quantity of pods, while hoeing and earthing up will benefit them. Pick out the heart-bud from any of the winter onions that seem disposed to

run up. Their bulbs are greatly assisted by bending over the stems in the old-fashioned way with the rake. The spring-sown onion crop will want a careful thinning as well as weeding. Some four or five inches should be left between each of them. And then what shall we say of the fruit, or of those strawberry runners, those terrible gooseberry caterpillars, or of the cautious and judicious thinning of our wall-fruit? Not much of this last, however, should be done at one time, as occasionally a failure takes place when we did not look for it, and especially when the stoning season sets in.

A WHALE-HUNT.



ON a sultry afternoon in July, 18—, a brigantine, with all sail set, slowly rounded the North Head of Wick Bay, and steered to an anchorage to wait the rising of the tide to a height sufficient to admit of her entering the harbour. As the vessel passed into the bay, persons on the headland observed that she

was followed at a distance of two or three hundred yards by a whale, which at intervals rose to the surface, sent a jet of water into the air, and then plunged downwards with a flourish of its tail. The appearance of whales off that part of the coast is no unusual thing, but one of those huge animals actually entering the bay was an exceptional occurrence, and was noted accordingly.

In a little time the brigantine furled her sails, dropped her anchor, and swung round on the tide. The whale, which appeared to be about forty feet in length, now passed close to the vessel, and began a series of gambols in her immediate neighbourhood. It subsequently transpired that the animal had followed the brigantine all the way from Stornoway, being evidently attracted by the bright new metal with which the vessel's hull was sheathed.

There were, as usual at that period of the year, many persons about the shores of the bay, engaged in putting things in order for the great "herring harvest" which was about to begin, and no sooner was their attention drawn to the presence of the whale, than by a common impulse a grand hunt of the marine monster was resolved upon, and a

general launching of small boats took place. When the boats were got into the water, quantities of stones from the beach were thrown into them, and the men about to embark seized such weapons of offence as were handy. The plan of attack was to form a line of boats across the bay to the seaward of the whale, and then advance towards the shore and try to drive the animal on to the sands at the river-mouth. In order to carry out this design, the boats were rowed along the shore on either side of the bay, until they got some distance beyond the scene of the whale's gambols, when they were extended into line and advanced in that formation, their crews in the meantime hallooing and throwing stones into the water. In due time the whale appeared to realise the situation, and shaped its course towards the sands which occupy the inner angle of the bay, the boats closing in rapidly on its track. When the animal found itself in shallow water, it began to plunge about wildly, and at one moment appeared to be completely stranded. By a desperate effort, however, it got away, and headed towards the line of boats. This movement created intense excitement, as it was feared that a flourish of the animal's tail might work havoc among the hunters. The shouts of the men, the beating of the water with their oars, and the rain of stones had their effect, however, and the whale again and again got into difficulties on the sands. In the meantime, the report that a whale-hunt was in progress had got abroad in the town, and the cliffs and jetties were soon lined by eager spectators.

Among the people on the shore when the whale first came into view was old Sandy Manson, who had struck many a "fish" when serving as harpooner on board a Peterhead whaler. Promptly recognising what was the proper thing to do, Sandy thrust into his waistcoat pocket the short clay pipe he was smoking, and hurried to his house, which was not far off. The chief ornament in his sitting-room was an old harpoon, a trophy of his early achievements in Davis Straits, which was slung from two stout nails over the mantelshelf, and which had formed the text of many a yarn spun for the delectation of the fisher-lads who made Sandy's home a place of resort on winter evenings.

Snatching the harpoon from its resting-place, and throwing a coil of rope on one of his arms, Sandy hurried to the shore, full of that fervour which the cry of "A fall!" used to excite in him of old. Jumping into the first boat he came to, Sandy was soon a conspicuous figure in the hunt as he stood erect in the prow, with the harpoon poised aloft in his right hand. Unfortunately for him, however, he never got a chance of using his weapon, for the whale as if by instinct avoided the neighbourhood of his boat. For upwards of an hour the animal dodged about without being able to pass the line of boats, and during that time it frequently appeared on the surface, and was assailed with oars and stones, and in one instance a small anchor was thrown upon its back. A bullet from a rifle struck it, evidently in a sensitive part, for it tumbled about in agony for some time afterwards, and it was noticed that the water was tinged with blood.

A feeling of pity for the animal which had struggled so bravely against its assailants now began to manifest itself, and the beaters of the water relaxed their efforts. The excitement was revived however when, after remaining for an unusually long time under the water, the whale was seen to be once more in difficulties on the sands, lashing the sea into foam with its tail, and making a loud noise as it blew jet after jet of water into the air.

None of the boats were near at this moment, but some venturesome persons among the crowd on the shore rushed into the sea to attack the animal as they best could, and to place themselves in a position to claim

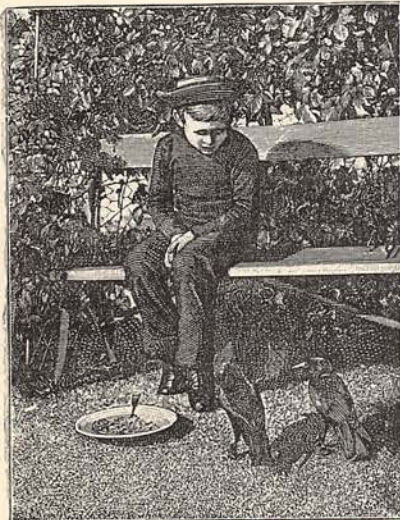
the prize should the whale fail to work itself clear of the sands. Their approach stimulated the animal to fresh efforts, and once more it got into deep water and headed seaward. When it next rose to the surface it was outside a number of the boats, and in a fair way to getting out of harm's way. A ready rifleman in one of the outer boats, however, succeeded in lodging another bullet in its body. This caused it almost to leap out of the water, and then taking a grand plunge into the deep, it continued its journey out of the bay at a speed which defied pursuit. It was seen to come to the surface several times afterwards, but was soon lost to sight.

The hunters, seeing their game beyond reach, then gradually returned to the shore and began to exchange speculations as to the size of "the fish," the quantity of oil it would yield, and the chances of its having received a fatal wound. Sandy Manson sulkily restored his harpoon to its old resting-place, and the townsfolk, after the passing thrill of excitement, resumed their avocations with renewed vigour. Three days afterwards, by which time the incidents of the hunt had been thoroughly talked out, the carcass of a whale was washed ashore at a fishing station a few miles south of Wick, and an examination of the wounds which it bore proved it to be the same animal that had afforded such an afternoon's excitement. One of the rifle-shots it was evident had reached a vital part, and the conclusion arrived at was that the whale had died within an hour or two after it got beyond reach of its pursuers.

DAVID BREMNER.

AMATEUR INSTANTANEOUS PHOTOGRAPHY.

BY THE REV. A. H. MALAN, M.A.



FEEDING THE CHOUGHs. (From an Instantaneous Photograph by the Author.)

tered have been overcome, and the satisfaction has followed of feeling oneself no longer a helpless, floun-

IF there were not a fascination about a camera, which only increases with usage, few of those numerous amateurs who take up photography in consequence of its modern facilities would be found to persevere until the many difficulties to be encountered

dering beginner, but to some extent a master of the instrument. The outfit can be readily purchased at moderate cost, even down to the plate already prepared for exposure; but there are many difficulties not dreamed of in the old and easy "wet-plate" process, and there is no royal road to escaping them; experience can only be gained at the expense of various blunders, and even much bewilderment; but then the corresponding advantages also are so great, that no one having once learned to use gelatine plates would be likely to go back to collodion.

No apology, indeed, is needed for amateur photography. Not to speak of the power of being able to reproduce at any moment any object that may take the fancy, thus preserving for the future visible reminiscences of pleasant faces and pleasant places, it is one of those few hobbies which can be said to give almost equal pleasure to others as well as to the person who pursues it.

The mere suggestion, for instance, of taking the portrait of a friend or acquaintance quietly in the drawing-room will be hailed with acclamations of delight—"if only for the fun of the thing." For, however much people may differ in other respects, nine out of