

hauled on board. When the latter was the case every one stood clear, whilst the shark hammered in its flurry the thwarts and bottom of the boat, till they resounded. At last its tail was cut, and it was then soon slit up into bait pieces.

Sometimes a tremendous sudden pull was felt at one's line, and it went fizzing through one's fingers without possibility of checking it. The only thing to be done was to take a turn round a belaying pin. Then came a check, and the line broke right off, without even a momentary struggle, and some big shark went off with hook and bait, without probably noticing anything the matter. We returned to the ship at 12 P.M., with enough fish to give the whole ship's company a breakfast.

In the morning I went to a white peak on the western side of the bay. This rock forms the home of the boobies, which are not nearly so numerous as the noddies, and seem to be almost restricted to this one peak out of the five of which the islands are made up.

The whiteness of the rock is caused by the birds' dung, which in some places forms on the rocks, as described by Darwin, an enamel-like crust, which is hard enough to scratch glass. I found some of this at about 45 feet above sea level.

The rock is 50 feet in height, steep on the sheltered sides, and there hung all over with the bracket-like nests of the noddies; the weather-side slopes more gently; and all over it, on every little flat space, are the boobies' nests, mere hollows, some containing two eggs, but mostly with one only. The eggs are as large as a fowl's, sometimes dirty-white all over, sometimes blotched with brown.

In many of the nests were young, which were of all ages; some just out of the egg, ugly big-bellied black lumps, without a particle of down or feathers; then larger ones, as big as one's fist, covered with white down; then others as large as a fowl, thickly clothed with down; then larger ones again, with brown wing feathers and brown feathers on the breast, the white down remaining only in patches, about the head especially. Then birds with brown feathers all over, full-sized and just beginning to fly.

Two almost full-grown birds, as big nearly as geese, were having a desperate fight at the bottom of the slope as I came up. They evidently thought each other the cause of the whole disturbance. They fought furiously with their sharp bills, flapping their wings, and half screaming, half croaking, with anger. They fought till they were quite exhausted, and could not stand, but went at it again after they had rested awhile and recovered their breath.

Some old boobies were sitting on their young on the top of