



FIGUREHEAD OF AN OLD WHALER, NEW BEDFORD.

STRAY LEAVES FROM A WHALEMAN'S LOG.¹



TWO-PRONGED TOOTH OF A SPERM-WHALE — IN THE ATHENÆUM MUSEUM, NANTUCKET.

THE smoke of the *Alabama's* guns had scarcely lifted from the highways of the ocean, when the New Bedford whalemen began to refit their vessels for long-deferred cruises.

For four years the good ship *Cachalot*, bound in chains, had been chafing her sides in the narrow confines of a dock; but with the news of peace she was soon overhauled,

and, plunging her nose into the restless waters of Buzzard's Bay, she headed for the Pacific Ocean, via the Western Islands. While making a quick passage from this group, sperm-whales were occasionally seen moving rapidly to windward,—always to windward,—and now and then a humpback, or a finback, and, while off the stormy Cape, several right whales. The boats were lowered from time to time, and engaged in an exciting chase; but the whales had eyes, and also heels, and won in the race. Myriads of blackfish—a small cetaceous animal valuable for its oil, though the yield individually is small—were encountered, and the boats were lowered frequently in order that the green hands might attain a degree of proficiency that would enable them to encounter the monsters of the Pacific.

While cruising on the coast of New Zealand, one day about 11.30 A. M., the lookout at the main hailed the deck with: "Thar sh' b-l-o-w-s! Thar sh' b-l-o-w-s! Blows! B-l-o-w-s!"

"Where away?" promptly responded the officer of the deck.

"Four points off the lee bow! Blows sperm-whales! Blows! Blows!" came from aloft.

¹ With the exception of the engraving on page 512, the accompanying pictures were drawn by W. Taber.

"How far off?" shouted the captain, roused out of his cabin by the alarm, as his head and shoulders appeared above deck. "Where are they heading?" he continued, as he went up the rigging on all-fours.

"Blows about two miles and a half off, sir," replied Mr. Braxton, the mate, looking off the lee bow with his glasses, "and coming to windward, I believe."

"Call all hands!" said the captain. "Haul up the mainsail, and back your main-yards! Hurry up there! Get your boats ready, Mr. Braxton!"

At the first alarm the men came swarming up the companionway of the forecastle, divesting themselves of superfluous articles of clothing, and scattering them indiscriminately about the deck. Rolling up their trousers, and girding their loins with their leather belts, taking a double reef until supper-time, they flitted nervously here and there in their bare legs and feet, observing every order with the greatest alacrity, and holding themselves in readiness to go over the side of the vessel at the word of command. There is a certain order, systematic action, or red tape, observed on all first-class whaling-vessels, however imperfectly disciplined some of the boat-crews may be. The captain indicates the boats he wishes to attack the whales; the boat-header (an officer) and the boat-steerer (the harpooner) take their proper positions in the boat, the former at the stern and the latter at the bow, while suspended in the davits. At the proper moment the davit-tackles are run out by men on deck, and the boats drop with a lively splash; the sprightly oarsmen meantime leap the ship's rail, and, swinging themselves down the side of the vessel, tumble promiscuously into the boats just about the time the latter strike the water. Although it may be said that there is a general scramble, there is not the

least confusion; every person and thing has the proper place assigned to it in a whaleboat; the officer has full command, but he is subject to the orders of the captain, who signals his instructions from the ship, usually by means of the light sails. The manner of going on to a whale, the number of men and their positions in the boat, and the kind of instruments and the manner of using them, have been perpetuated in this fishery for more than two centuries. But let us catch our whale.

"Clear away the larboard and bow boats!" shouted the captain. "Get in ahead of the whales, Mr. Braxton, if you can. Here, cook, you and cooper lend a hand there with them davy-taycles. Are you ready? Hoist and swing your boats!"

Down went the larboard boat and the bow boat almost simultaneously.

"Shove off! Up sail! Out oars! Pull ahead!" were the orders from Mr. Braxton, the officer of the larboard boat, in rapid succession. "Let's get clear of the ship. Come, bear a hand with that sail, do," he added coaxingly, with his eye on the third mate's boat. "Don't let 'em get in ahead of us."

"All right, sir; here you go, sheet," replied Vera, the harpooner, a well-developed and intelligent American-Portuguese, with his accustomed good spirit and vivacity.

The sail was run up, and the gafftopsail set, and under the immense spread of canvas peculiar to whaleboats, the little craft bounded merrily over the waves. "Peak your oars, boys! Take your paddles, and send her along!" said the officer. "Look out for whales, boy!" he continued, addressing Vera. "Sing out when we head for them!"

"Blows! B-l-o-w-s! S-t-e-a-d-y! Coming to windward, sir," said Vera.

"Look out for the head whale, Vera!" said Mr. Braxton.

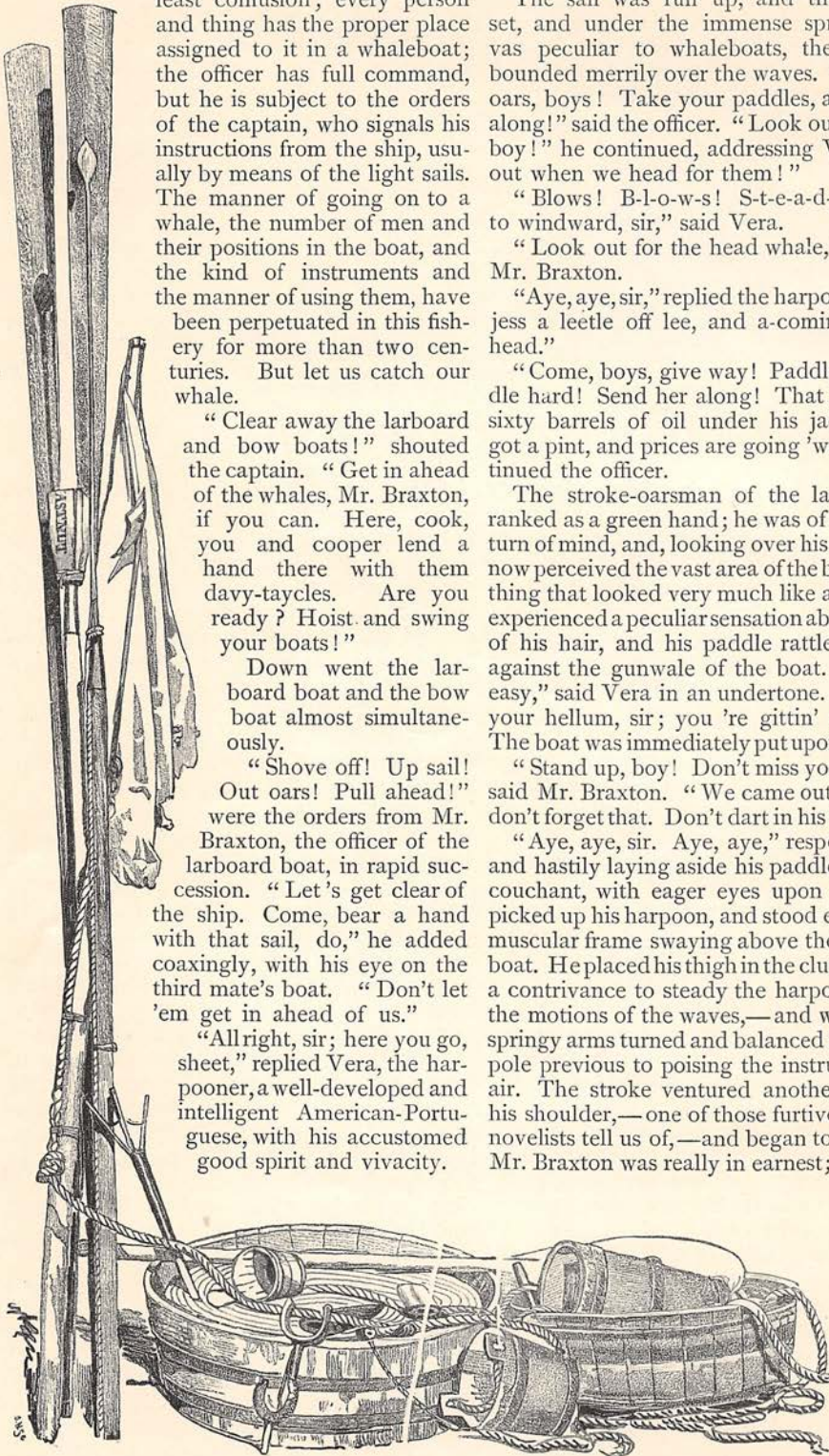
"Aye, aye, sir," replied the harpooner. "Him jess a leetle off lee, and a-comin' head and head."

"Come, boys, give way! Paddle hard! paddle hard! Send her along! That fellow 's got sixty barrels of oil under his jacket if he 's got a pint, and prices are going 'way up," continued the officer.

The stroke-oarsman of the larboard boat ranked as a green hand; he was of an inquiring turn of mind, and, looking over his shoulder, he now perceived the vast area of the back of something that looked very much like a whale. He experienced a peculiar sensation about the roots of his hair, and his paddle rattled nervously against the gunwale of the boat. "Easy, sir, easy," said Vera in an undertone. "Starboard your hellum, sir; you 're gittin' on his eye." The boat was immediately put upon her course.

"Stand up, boy! Don't miss your chance!" said Mr. Braxton. "We came out here for oil; don't forget that. Don't dart in his head, Vera."

"Aye, aye, sir. Aye, aye," responded Vera; and hastily laying aside his paddle, like a tiger couchant, with eager eyes upon his prey, he picked up his harpoon, and stood erect, his tall, muscular frame swaying above the head of the boat. He placed his thigh in the clumsy-cleat,—a contrivance to steady the harpooner against the motions of the waves,—and with his long, springy arms turned and balanced the harpoon-pole previous to poisoning the instrument in the air. The stroke ventured another peep over his shoulder,—one of those furtive glances the novelists tell us of,—and began to believe that Mr. Braxton was really in earnest; that he had



OUTFIT OF A WHALEBOAT.

ENGRAVED BY O. NAYLOR.

really come for oil; that he was really laying the boat on the head of the whale; and that Vera was really about to strike the animal with the harpoon. Under the motive power of sail and paddle, the space between the boat and whale was rapidly diminishing, and apparently they would soon come in collision. The enormous head of the cetacean, as it plowed a wide furrow in the ocean, and the tall column of vapor rising from the blow-holes, as it spouted ten or twelve feet in the air, were to be seen right ahead; the expired air, as it rushed like steam from a valve, could be heard near by; the bunch of the neck and the hump were plainly visible as they rose and fell with the swell of the waves; and the terrible commotion of the troubled waters, fanned by the gigantic flukes, left a swath of foaming and dancing waves clearly outlined upon the surface of the sea.

Mr. Braxton laid the boat off gracefully to starboard, and the mastodontic head of a genuine spermaceti-whale loomed up on our port bow. The junk was seamed and scarred with many a wound received in fierce and angry struggles for supremacy with individuals of its own species, or perhaps with the kraken; the foaming waters ran up and down the great shining black head, exposing from time to time the long, rakish under jaw; but what small eyes—!

"Now!" shouted the officer, as if Vera was a half-mile off instead of about twenty-five feet. "Give him some, boy! Give him—!" But his well-trained and faithful harpooner had already darted the harpoon into the glistening black skin just abaft the fin; the boat was enveloped in a foam-cloud—the "white water" of the whalemén, stirred up by the tremendous flukes of the whale.

"Stern all!" shouted the officer; and the boat was quickly propelled backward by the oarsmen, to clear it from the whale. "Are you fast, boy?"

"Fust iron in, sir; can't tell second," replied Vera; but the zip-zip-zip of the line as it fairly leaped from the tub and went spinning round the loggerhead and through the chocks, sending up a cloud of smoke produced by friction, indicated the presence of healthy game at one end.

"Wet line! wet line!" shouted Mr. Braxton, as he went forward to kill the whale, and Vera came aft to steer the boat, unstepping the mast on his way; for all whales are now struck under sail. The whale, however, soon turned flukes, and went head first to the depths below. Meantime the other whales had taken the alarm, and, with their noses in the air, were showing a "clean pair of heels" to windward.

The boat lay by awaiting the "rising" of the cetacean. Twenty minutes passed, twenty-



WHALING-IMPLEMENTS.

Boarding-knife. Bomb-lance. One-fluked iron. Two-fluked iron.
Harpoon-guns. Boat-lantern. Skimmer. Bailer.

five, stroke-oarsman began to feel hungry; thirty, thirty-five, and still the line was either slowly running out or taut; but soon it began to slacken. "Haul line! haul line!" said the officer, peering into the water. "He 's stopped." The line was retrieved as fast as possible, and carefully laid in loose coils on the after platform. "Haul line! He 's coming! Coil line clear, Vera!" said Mr. Braxton, shading his eyes with his hand, and looking over the gunwale at an immense opaque spot just beginning to outline itself in the depths below. "Look out! Here he comes! Stern all. Look out for whale!"

But the mate's injunctions were received too late. The whale, fairly out of breath, came up with a bound and a puff, scattering the water in all directions, and catching the keel of the boat on the bunch of its neck. The boat bounded from this part of the whale's anatomy to the hump, and, careening to starboard, shot the crew first on the whale's side and then into the water. The stroke-oarsman now began to feel wet. The whale, terrified beyond measure by the tickling sensation of the little thirty-foot boat creeping down its back, caught the frail cedar craft on one corner of its flukes, and tossed it gracefully, but perhaps not intentionally, into the air, as one would play with a light rubber

ball. As the boat descended, with one tremendous "side wipe" of the mighty caudal fin, and with a terrible crash that was heard on the ship nearly two miles away, the whale smashed it into kindling-wood. Then catching up the lantern-keg, water-keg, line-tubs, and other wooden utensils comprising the furniture of the boat, it ground them to splinters in its ponderous jaws, and spitefully ejected the fragments. With festoons of whale-line hanging from its teeth, it angrily shook its head, and started off to join its fellows, leaving a wide wake of boiling suds, and the wreck of the boat. The work of demolition occupied considerably less time than is required to describe it. Meantime the crew were afloat, clinging to oars and paddles, and endeavoring to place themselves beyond the foaming water. The mate, with a presence of mind that never forsakes the fraternity, was treading water between the whale and his men; and as soon as he could divest his spiracles of the briny liquid he had stowed away when first thrown overboard, he began to count noses, or rather the heads that were bobbing up and down in the water.

"One, two, three, four, five — one man gone" said he, turning almost white. "Who is — oh, no," he added, regaining his equanimity, "I forgot to count myself. All right! All 'counted for safe! Boat ahoy!" he yelled, raising his voice to the highest pitch. The sea was running a mill-race. Mr. Ashford, the officer of the bow boat, had, according to instructions, remained as close alongside as he could, and down came the starboard and waist boats with mainsails flowing. "I 'm afraid you 're wet," remarked the officer in the bow boat, with a dry kind of humor, to the officer in the water.

"A little moist, perhaps. I say, can't you give my men a little run over to the ship?" was the rejoinder.

"I don't know," returned Mr. Ashford. "I don't see any more whales; perhaps I can."

This dialogue was conducted with the most perfect nonchalance, while the men in the boat were resting automatically on their oars with their ears apeak, and the men in the water were bobbing up and down as serenely as possible, awaiting orders to go aboard. The water-logged crew were finally hauled over the gunwale, and all sail made for the ship. The incident of the day very naturally furnished enough material to spin yarns of the most extraordinary length and character. Such accidents are common enough, it is true, in the sperm fishery, but still they do not happen every twenty-four hours.

Vera had been ordered to rig up one of the spare boats, and devoted most of the

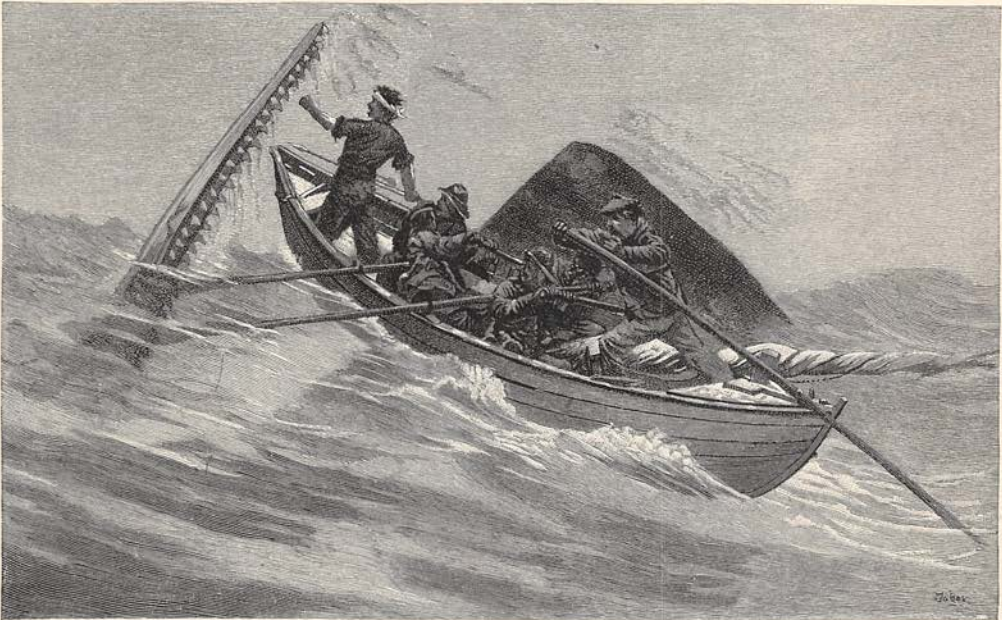
night to "strapping his irons," and to getting the boat in shape for lowering; whistling, and humming snatches of songs to himself, as he worked industriously about the windlass-bitts. Early next morning a "lone" sperm-whale was descried upon the horizon, and the larboard and bow boats were again ordered down. "I think you 'd better play loose boats to-day, and let Mr. Ashford get fast," said the captain to Mr. Braxton, as the boats pulled from the ship.

"All right, sir," replied the mate, and away sped the little boats through the silent water, under double motive power of sail and oar.

The bow boat, according to orders, got in first, and was going head on; but the whale "turned flukes," and sounded. Both boats lay off for the "rising," and for further developments. The boat-steerer of the bow boat was reported ill before leaving the vessel, and Vera had taken his place; the bow-oarsman of the larboard boat, an active harpooner, had taken Vera's place, another man being sent to fill the vacancy. The stroke-oarsman, being the lightest man of the crew, was retained at his own oar, and at the time we now speak of was in excellent position to witness the magnificent spectacle of harpooning a large sperm-whale, provided Mr. Ashford's boat should strike it first. Vera was standing in the head of his craft with his harpoon well in hand, his head swathed in a party-colored handkerchief, his shirt-collar turned well back, exposing the bronze of his powerful neck, and his nervous, restless eye covering the sea about him. There was a deathlike stillness about the scene, broken only by the swashing of the restless waves as they beat against the sides of the boats, and by the gurgling noise of the tide-rips as they played mischievously with the steering-oars, which trailed astern. Suddenly there seemed to be a commotion in the bow boat; Vera uttered a cry in Portuguese, and, like a terrific bolt of fire from the clear sky of a midsummer day, the immense glistening lower jaw, armed with two rows of polished teeth, flashed from the water, and the gigantic whale leaped into the air, carrying with it the head of the boat, which had been snapped asunder, and the unfortunate Vera, whose head and long arms were suspended from the corner of the monster's mouth, the body and legs being confined within the iron vise. The sportive humpbacks, those clowns of the cetaceous order, oftentimes "bolt" clear of the water; but it is seldom the horizon is outlined between a sperm-whale and the sea. The eyes of the stroke-oarsman of the larboard boat were directed to poor Vera's face — the rapidly changing expression of that face, which afterward

appeared to him in his dreams in the fore-castle and in his lonely vigils at night. First it indicated surprise and indignation; next it seemed to implore help; but the lips spake not, and not a muscle moved. A calm resignation now settled upon the blanched fea-

During the remainder of the voyage, as the bright lights of St. Elmo's fires, or corposants, made their appearance at the midnight hour, settling upon the apex of the mainroyalmast, and at either extremity of the mainroyal-yards, and burning with steady flames, the men who



A WHALEBOAT BETWEEN THE JAWS OF A WHALE (SEE THE PREVIOUS PAGE).

ENGRAVED BY G. P. BARTLE.

tures, but it soon gave way to utter despair and helplessness, which were rapidly succeeded by facial contortions indicative of the most intense physical suffering. The whale closed its mouth upon the victim's waist, and disappeared beneath the boiling waters, carrying with it the wretched sufferer, whose life-blood tinged the foam-crested waves. Two other men, the bow-oarsman and the mid-ship-oarsman, were never seen again. No one knows whether they were killed outright or drowned. The remaining three, all of whom were more or less cut or bruised, though not seriously, were fished up from the floating debris, the officer, Mr. Ashford, being hauled up by the hair of his head in a fainting condition. Not a word was uttered, except by Mr. Braxton, who said in a low, soft tone of voice, "Come, boys, let's head her for the ship."

The captain had witnessed the tragedy through his glasses from the vessel near by. When the boats returned, his absence from the deck was remarked; but as some of the men passed the cabin skylight, they saw the "old man," with his hands thrust into his pockets, gazing abstractedly upon the well-worn oil-cloth of the cabin floor.

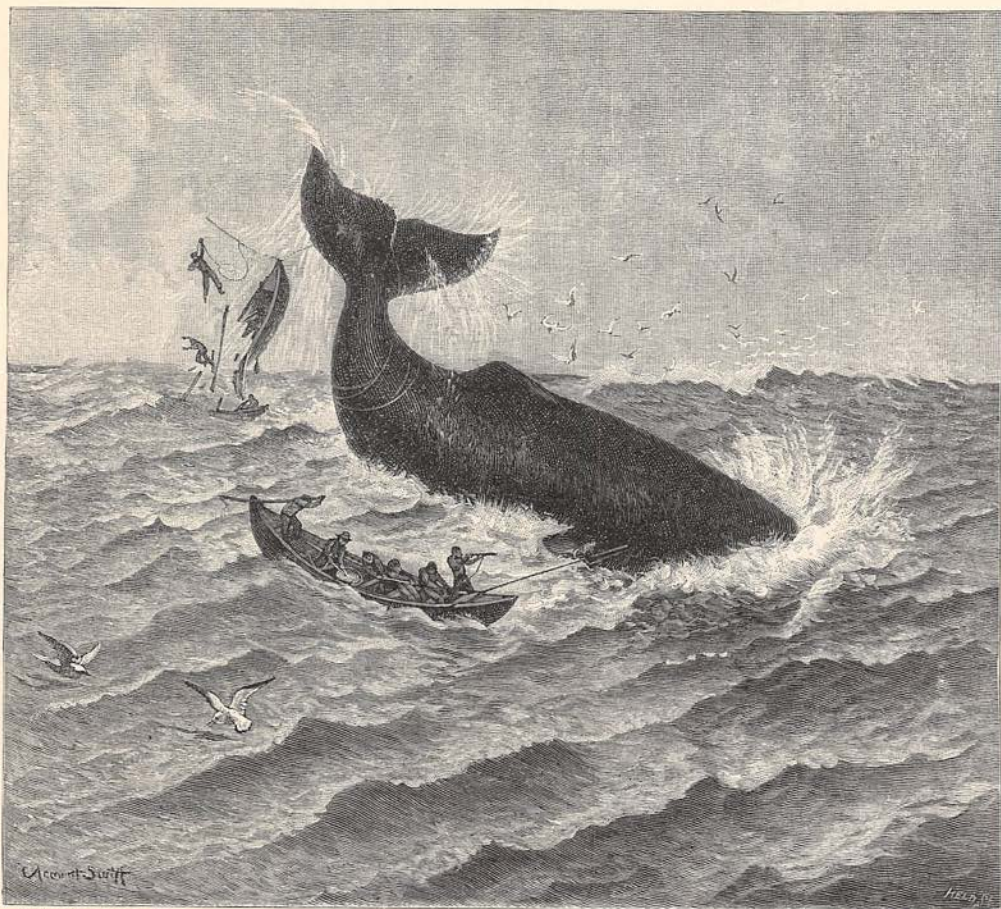
served their tricks at the wheel in this watch hailed their presence as a good omen, for they knew that the brave spirits of Vera and his two companions would not leave their ship until she was safe in port.

After this sad adventure the current of daily conversation was directed into new channels. The vessel ran into Port Nelson on Blind Bay, as soon as possible, and shipped three men to fill the vacancies caused by death. One of them, an old gray-bearded whaler of large experience, but one of those ne'er-do-wells, related the following episode in the chequered life of the men who hunt for whale.

"Last year," he said, "I was with the bark *Awashonks*, and in October we were cruising for right whales on the coast of Patagonia. We raised two about noon; the first, by the way, we had seen since we left Port St. Catharine's, Brazil. We got dinner, and lowered three boats. I belonged to the bow boat, headed by Amos G. Baker, a spry young whaler from Bedford. The whales were running together, coming toward the bark and boats, and we took them head and head. The second mate went in and got slightly fast to one whale by the lip. Both whales sounded, but they soon broke water together. The fast one was fighting like a

Turk, and sending the white water almost mast-head high. Our boat tried to strike the loose whale, but he would settle before we got anywhere near darting distance of him. Mr. Baker got tired of trying for him, and went into the

Mr. Baker and the wreck right up to his flukes. One of the men was hanging on the steering-oar, and Mr. Baker asked him to cut the line, which he finally succeeded in doing, and shortly after, the whale spouted blood, and



PAINTED BY CLEMENT SWIFT.

FIRING A BOMB-LANCE.

ENGRAVED BY E. C. HELD.

suds, and struck the first whale, taking him quartering on the head.

“‘Don’t miss him, Tom,’ he shouted to the boat-steerer, a Cape Verder.

“‘Don’t you ’fraid, M. Bake’. I hit him. Don’t you ’fraid. No go too near,’ sung out Tom, at the same time sending both harpoons up to the hitches into the whale. Three of the green hands jumped into the water as soon as they saw Tom was going to dart; I guess they were galled. Mr. Baker went forward with the hand-lance to kill the whale, and had just got two sets in the life, when the beast flirted us up in the air with his flukes. The next thing we knew we were all in the water. Mr. Baker was badly hurt, and was lying helplessly on a part of the boat which was foul in the whale-line, and every time the whale kicked, he ’d yank

turned up. We were picked up by the mate’s boat, and carried to the ship. Mr. Baker had one leg and his collar-bone broken, and was badly cut about the head and chin.”

This is a true story. Captain Baker is now keeper of Clark’s Point Light, near New Bedford, and, although lame, is in excellent health. Seven or eight months after the adventure related by the old whaler, the *Awashonks* (which was finally crushed in ice in the Arctic Ocean) on her home passage fell in with two schools of sperm-whale in about latitude 10° 30’ north, longitude 39° 00’ west, in the Atlantic Ocean, and although the captain remonstrated with Mr. Baker, who was still on crutches, the latter persisted in lowering for the capture. The boat was stove by a whale, and Mr. Baker and the same harpooner who was

with him before were again picked up by the mate, and sent to the ship.

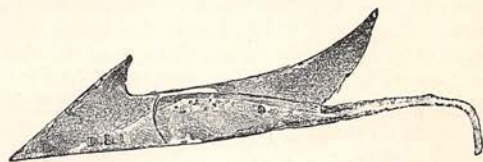
On the middle ground, about latitude $44^{\circ} 20'$ south, and longitude $169^{\circ} 40'$ east, whales were raised one morning at daylight, four miles off. All hands stowed away an "able-bodied breakfast," and by seven o'clock all the boats were down, and all of them got whales. The whales were small and easily taken, except the one killed by the waist boat, and he was not large, but extremely vicious. After a struggle of five or six hours, the boat-header stopped his career, and rendered him *hors de combat*, by "hamstringing" him with the boat-spade. Stopping a running whale in this manner is at once the most dangerous and thrilling feat ever executed in the varied career of the whaleman; but this method of capture has been superseded by the bomb-lances. The old whalemen never tire of telling us, as their eyes sparkle with the fire of youthful daring, how they "fought under the flukes of the whale." All aquatic mammiferous animals, such as whales, dolphins, and porpoises, that come to the surface for respiration and inhalation, commonly known as spouting, have horizontal caudal appendages of flukes; while the cold-blooded animals, such as fish, which receive the oxygen through gills, or branchiæ, have vertical caudal fins. A whale, therefore, when about to "take a header," must first get a purchase with his broad, flat caudal, and then throw it high in the air in order to dive head first; and the officer of the boat, taking advantage of this evolution, known as "turning flukes," would thrust the sharp-edged spade into the "small"—in which are inclosed the tendons that connect the body and the flukes,—and having severed some of them, the tail, if I may use this term, becomes useless, like the disabled screw of a propeller; progressive motion is arrested, and the whale is then a comparatively easy prey. Some of the whalemen were very skilful in this feat, even when the whale was swimming or running on the water, and it required powerful arms and courageous hearts to crown their efforts with success. There is one case on record, which has come under my observation, where an officer actually unjointed the flukes by a tremendous and well-directed blow of the spade. The whale was in a favorable position, the uplifted flukes producing a tension, and the caudal fin, though still connected, hung to one side. This was vouched for by several whalemen of Edgartown. Spading flukes is one of the lost arts of the fishery, and may never again be revived, but will live with the whalemen from generation to generation.

When whales are raised from the masthead, the species may be determined by their apparently sportive actions as well as by their

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spouts. In the latter case they are, of course, easily recognized, as the cachalot has one spiracle and the others two. The nostrils of the sperm-whale are on the left side of the cranium, and coalesce in one passage, which communicates with an external sigmoid fissure,¹ near the anterior and upper extremity of the head,—which portion is known to whalemen as the "needle end,"—on the left of the median line. Through this orifice the animal expires the column of air from its lungs, which is erroneously called the *jet d'eau* by some authors. The "spout" may at times, as the animal makes its rising, when the spiracle is submerged by the waves of a rough sea, be composed of or mingled with surface water, which is elevated by the column of breath as it escapes upward. Otherwise the spout is merely a condensation of warm air from the lungs as it comes in contact with the colder air of the atmosphere.

The right whale has two blow-holes at the summit of the large protuberance on the back of the head familiarly known as the "crown," and the vaporous emissions, which are thrown up vertically, part at the top and fall on each side. The bifurcate appearance of the column has given origin to the name "forked spout," applied to this species by the Nantucketers. It is all the more apparent—provided you take time to investigate the matter—as the whale approaches or recedes from you in a direct line. The finback whale also has two spiracles; but, as the columns unite near the base, it has, at a distance, the appearance of one spout. But to the experienced eye the spout of this whale can never be confused with that of the sperm-whale; the former ascends at almost right angles with the horizon, and the latter is thrown forward at an angle of about 45 degrees, or, as the whalemen say, about a four-point course.



ENGRAVED BY J. NAYLOR.

HARPOON. IN THE ATHENÆUM MUSEUM, NANTUCKET.

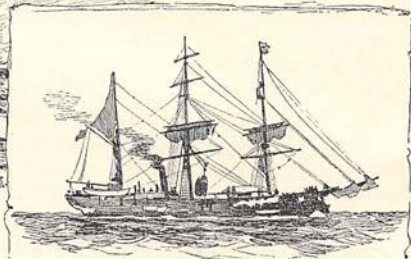
This harpoon (toggle-iron) was taken from a sperm-whale by Captain Hamblin of the bark *Platina* of New Bedford, in September, 1866; the whale yielding over 100 bbis of oil. The whale was first struck by Captain Obed Swain of the ship *Catarwa* of Nantucket, November 25, 1855, when the iron was broken. The whale was captured near Gallapagos Island, Pacific Ocean, about 90 miles from where it was first struck by Captain Swain.

The actions of whales, when attacked, vary both with the species and the individuals. Superficial wounds annoy them, and internal ones destroy them. Suffering from the cruel

¹ This external opening may be said more nearly to resemble the letter f, or the holes in the soundboard of a violin.

blow of the harpoon, they endeavor to escape the hand that inflicts it, or to rid themselves of the instrument that irritates and tortures the flesh. To accomplish their ends, they can resort only to the most violent physical exertions

and contortions. At such a time, and subsequently, as the boat approaches to afford



MODERN WHALERS.

the officer an opportunity to use the hand-lance, the imminent danger to one's life is oftentimes unparalleled; but the danger diminishes when the lance penetrates the sensitive lungs or convoluted intestines, for the unhappy creature then weakens, and becomes quiet under the soothing influence of approaching death.

As a means of defense, the right whale depends solely upon its flukes, which measure from 12 to 15 and sometimes 20 feet in expansion, and in depth 5 or 6 feet, and weigh several tons. This immense creature uses its caudal fin with remarkable dexterity, and often with the most frightful results. The northwest coast whale, or the Pacific right whale (*Balæna japonica*) is the most dangerous of the bone-bearing whales to encounter. When attacked, or surrounded by obnoxious objects, it performs an evolution with its flukes commonly called "sweeping," that is, swinging them from side to side; and indeed, when greatly incensed, it "swoops from eye to eye," churning the water into mountains of foam, and demolishing everything in range. Although the whalers anticipate this defensive and offensive maneuver, they oftentimes permit their passionate ardor in the capture to exceed the bounds of prudence, and as a penalty sometimes lose the whaleboat, apparatus of capture, and even their own lives.

The sperm-whale, on the other hand, is dangerous at both ends. Although it does not sweep with its flukes as the right whale does,

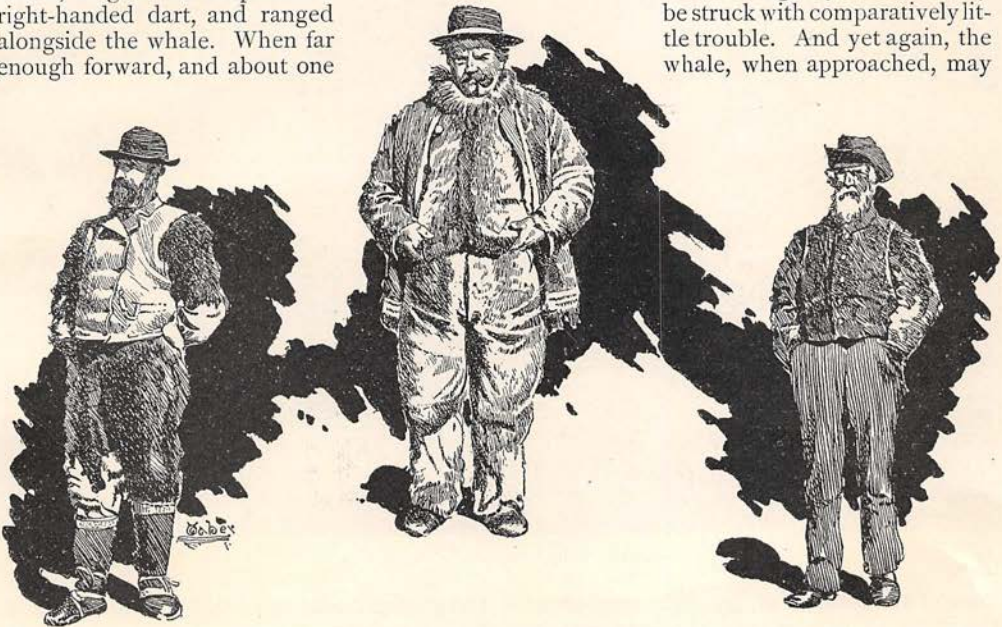
it gives them up and down motions, bringing the broad surface with tremendous force and startling effect upon the water. If disposed to show fight, it relies, however, mainly upon its long, slender, treacherous lower jaw, studded with glistening teeth; and to this dangerous habit, sometimes called "jawing back," may be attributed the death of many whalers and the demolition of many boats. Owing to the position of its eyes, it commands a wide, oblique vision, and consequently guards against premeditated attacks on both sides; but while it may congratulate itself upon so wise a provision on the part of nature, it seems oblivious

of the fact that, for the same reason,—the peculiar position of its eyes,—it cannot perceive an object immediately in front or behind. To this oversight of nature the sperm-whale may attribute its defeat and destruction, and the sperm-whaler his success and profit. To use a colloquial expression, this species is rarely, if ever, approached on its blind side. The favorite method of capturing is, as the whalers express it, to "take it head and head," or to "go on the flukes." In either case it is better to keep the hump—a functionless adipose dorsal fin—and the spout in the line of vision; for in so doing, the boat cannot deviate far enough from its course to "get on the eye" of the whale. Going on head and head is therefore considered a better plan, and is always carried out when practicable. As the boat and the whale are moving toward each other, they come together more rapidly than when the boat follows the flukes. A few moments are of the utmost importance to a man about to strike a whale. Though large, this animal is exceedingly quick in its movements when alarmed; and the individual who thinks he can approach and strike it as he would a barn will find that he is greatly mistaken. In a twinkling the whale may change its position from a horizontal to a perpendicular one, and disappear beneath the surface; it may settle away like a corresponding mass of lead, disappearing rapidly from view; or with a dexterous movement of the flukes it may strike and demolish

the boat. Many sperm-whales are lost when the boat "goes on their heads," because the harpooner darts the iron prematurely, and, striking the impenetrable headskin, known as "white horse," bends the harpoon. This usually happens, however, when an inexperienced or "gal-lied" boat-steerer throws the iron, and loses his whale because he did not wait for the orders of his officer. An expert harpooner, on the other hand, need not be told when to dart, as he "chooses his chance," and buries his harpoon abaft the head as the boat is laid off. In following the flukes, the rule is, of course, first to overtake your whale. Having accomplished this, the boat is laid off, say to the star-board, to give the harpooner a right-handed dart, and ranged alongside the whale. When far enough forward, and about one

sperm-whales when mortally wounded, more especially after eating heartily, eject from their capacious stomachs immense "slabs" of the octopus, upon which this species largely feeds.

If the whale is swimming "top-water," the harpooner has a better target to fire at; but if swimming under the rim of the water, or about to sound, he must make the best use of his time and opportunity, and exercise his discretion. Again, the whale may be "scooping," or feeding,—a more horrible sight has never been witnessed ashore or afloat than a large right whale, with contracted upper lip exposing the long layers of baleen, taking in his food,—and while thus engaged pays little attention to surrounding objects, and may be struck with comparatively little trouble. And yet again, the whale, when approached, may



SOME WHALING CAPTAINS OF THE NORTH PACIFIC.

or two fathoms, or possibly three or four, from the whale, and moving in a line parallel with it, the boat-steerer has an excellent opportunity for darting the harpoon into the back, or bilge, and the chance of drawing will be lessened if the iron gets fast to one of the costal bones. It used to be the custom with some of the whalemen to carry a small air-tight cask in the boat. When they perceived that a sperm-whale, usually an old patriarch, was disposed to show fight, the cask was thrown overboard, and the ferocious animal immediately proceeded to attack it. From its buoyancy, and the facility with which it revolved on its axis in the water, the cask became at once an object of interest and annoyance to the cetacean, which was too much engaged with this little nuisance to notice the boat as it stealthily approached. Some

turn flukes and sound; but the men know by experience about the location where it may make its rising, which it is compelled to do for inhalation. It may reappear suddenly under the boat, and smash or upset it, or it may come to within a short distance of the men, in which case the boat is laid on, and the boat-steerer strikes him "wood and blackskin." Or, as is the case very often in right whaling, the boat may sail over the whale broadside, striking it about midships, at the very time the harpoon is thrown. As before remarked, the right whale has the power to settle like a lump of lead when an offensive object comes in contact with it, and the boat sails over without injury, or whales may also be approached "quartering," the harpoon being thrown as the boat crosses the angle of the flukes.

All these conditions more or less influence the distance the harpoon is thrown, which is commonly known as "darting distance." In many cases some of the "long dartmen" have thrown their harpoons effectively as far as four or five fathoms. There is one case on record in which a remarkable dart is mentioned. Two boats belonging to different ships, American and English, were chasing the same whale, when one harpooner threw his iron over the

would be to swallow a small bird with its feathers. But he will crush you in his ponderous jaws, if he is a fighting bull, and eject you in detail. He will also chew up and spit out pieces of the demolished boat, break up the wooden utensils floating upon the water, and fight every piece of wood until more than seven baskets of fragments may be taken up; and having tired himself out in this way, he will lay off, angrily slapping the water with his fins, and challenge



TOWING A DEAD WHALE TO THE SHIP.

crew of the other boat, and "fastened on to" the whale. The boat-steerers pride themselves upon their darts, and the heroic deeds that have been performed in this manner would fill a chapter of wonderful events. I say heroic, for many whalers have lost their lives endeavoring to strike whales, when they might have abandoned the attempt and saved themselves by jumping into the water and swimming around until picked up by their own or other boats. But this would be cowardice, and very little of this material is found in the class of men selected for harpooners.

Approaching a whale at all times is like going into battle, notwithstanding the abandon of the fishermen. Have no fear that the right whale will swallow you; he could not do so even if he were so disposed, as his gullet is only large enough to admit a good-sized herring. The sperm-whale could swallow a man if he desired to do so; but he is no more inclined to swallow a man, particularly with his clothes on, than you

some other boats, or perhaps, in rare cases, attack the vessel.

The capture of the whale, full of perils at all times, has been shorn of some of its dangers by the introduction of guns and bomb-lances. At least, it would seem so. Still, the record of accidents shows that the mishaps of the old style of fishing and those of the new are about evenly balanced. If it were not for the bomb-guns, few whales could be taken at present in any ocean. As the old style of killing the whale with the hand-lance was not only more dangerous but more exciting, I shall briefly refer to the manner in which it was accomplished.

The whale being well harnessed to the boat by means of the tow-line, which is fastened to the flesh-imbbed harpoon, it may either turn flukes and sound, or, bellowing at times like a bull,—with a greater volume of voice, however,—it may run, as it is termed, taking the boat in tow at a rate, it has been estimated, all the way from fifteen to twenty miles an hour, when it first

starts off, but settling down to about eight or ten knots per hour, when it gets warmed up to its work. This is the old "Nantucket sleigh-ride." The whale having tired itself by running, the boat is hauled up by the line, and side by side the crew, with hair standing on end, and the affrighted whale, startled anew by the close proximity of so strange a load, rush through the surging and fast-receding waters. The officer "gets a set" with his hand-lance, and plunges about five or six feet of cold iron into the lungs of the victim, and perseveres without ceasing in the up and down motions, familiarly known as "churning," as the boat persistently clings to the whale, until the spout of the unfortunate cetacean is tinged with the crimson of its own life-blood. The muscles of the strong arms now relax upon the lance, the boat is laid off, and the dying whale swims round and round in an unbroken circle. This is the "flurry." Death is now merely a question of time. The blood ejected through the spiracles now becomes as thick as tar. It is not only a belief of whalers, but it is usually the fact, that the whale, during its dying moments, so times its encircling path as to place its

head to the sun. It now makes a heavy lurch, the sea is lashed into a maëlstrom of bloody water, and the ponderous whale rolls heavily on its side, or partly on its back, with the fin projecting above the water. This is "finning out." A one-sided jury would say that the whale died of hemorrhage of the lungs. To use a paradoxical expression, some dead whales are not always dead. It may be in a comatose state, but averse to vivisection; and when the men again approach it, and cut holes through the lips to make the line fast, to tow it to the vessel, a demolished boat or loss of life and limbs may be the reward. Hence the more cautious whalers "prick his eye," and if the whale does not flinch, it is supposed to be dead. Several boats take their position in line like a tandem team of horses; the tow-ropes are properly adjusted, and the men with merry boat-song begin the laborious and monotonous task of towing the whale to the vessel. A dead whale may be towed more easily head first, and it is also worthy of mention that a dead whale, when cast adrift, will beat to windward, the natural motions of the flukes having a tendency to propel the body.

James Temple Brown.

FRANZ LISZT.



HE young men of to-day can hardly imagine the *éclat*, the magical prestige, with which the name of Liszt flashed upon the horizon of the young musicians of the early part of the Second Empire—a

name so foreign to the ears of a Frenchman, sharp and hissing as the edge of a sword that cuts through the air, torn by the Slavic Z as by a stroke of lightning. The artist and the man seemed to belong to fairyland. After having embodied on the piano the spirit of romanticism, Liszt, leaving behind him the glittering trail of a meteor, disappeared for a while behind the curtain of clouds which then veiled Germany—a Germany different from the one of our day; a mass of little kingdoms and independent duchies, bristling with turreted castles, and preserving even in its Gothic script the look of the middle ages, every trace of which had disappeared from France, in spite of the efforts of the poets to restore its beauty.

The greater part of the pieces which Liszt published seemed beyond the possibility of any executant but himself, and were so indeed, if played according to the old methods, which required perfect immobility of the whole body, the elbows close to the side, and allowed only a

limited action of the forearm. It was known that at the court of Weimar, disdainful of his former success, he was occupied with serious composition, dreaming of a renovation of art—a purpose which excited much anxious comment, as is always the case when a new world is to be explored or an accepted tradition broken. Moreover, the impressions left by Liszt in Paris gave ample ground for all sorts of surmises. Even the truth did not always appear probable when it was told about him. It was said that at a concert of the Conservatory, after the "Pastoral Symphony" of Beethoven had been performed, he had dared to play the whole composition over again alone, the amazement of the audience being quickly replaced by a tremendous enthusiasm. Again, it was said that another day, bored with the docility of the public,—tired of seeing this lion, ready to tear to pieces any who displeased it, forever fawning at his feet,—he determined to rouse it, and amused himself by coming late to a concert at the Italiens, and calling on some fine ladies in their boxes, laughing and chatting, until the lion began to growl and roar. At last he seated himself at the piano, when the fury abated, the only demonstrations being those of pleasure and admiration.

Many things more are told of him, which are hardly within the limits of this article. Only