

EMOJI DICK; OR THE WHALE

By Herman Melville

Edited and Compiled by Fred Benenson

Translation by Amazon Mechanical Turk





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The first edition of *Moby Dick* was issued in October, 1851. The London Edition, entitled *The Whale*, was published by Bentley in three volumes; in New York it was issued in one volume by Harper. Chapter 54, the only part to be serialized appeared the same month in Harper's *New Monthly* magazine as "The Town-Ho's Story." *Moby Dick* was reprinted in 1863 and 1892 in New York, and in 1901 in London. A collected edition of Melville's works in sixteen volumes was issued by Constable, London in 1922-24. In 1930 *Moby Dick* was published in three volumes by The Lakeside Press, Chicago, with illustrations by Rockwell Kent.

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This edition does not include the first Etymology chapter.



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*"To produce a mighty book, you must choose a mighty theme. No great and enduring volume can ever be written on the flea, though many there be that have tried it."*

- Herman Melville



## ABOUT THIS BOOK

*Emoji Dick* is a crowd sourced and crowd funded translation of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* into Japanese emoticons called emoji.

Each of the book's approximately 10,000 sentences has been translated three times by a Amazon Mechanical Turk worker. These results have been voted upon by another set of workers, and the most popular version of each sentence has been selected for inclusion in this book.

In total, over eight hundred people spent approximately 3,795,980 seconds working to create this book.

Each worker was paid five cents per translation and two cents per vote per translation.

The funds to pay the Amazon Turk workers and print the initial run of this book were raised from eighty-three people over the course of thirty days using the funding platform Kickstarter.

More information about this project is available at <http://www.emojidick.com/>



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# INTRODUCTION

## BY PADDY JOHNSON

I added the Japanese emoticons known as Emoji to my iPhone last week and, unless I'm reading hearts, I still don't know what I'm looking at. This makes me a little nervous about writing an essay on Fred Benenson's *Emoji Dick*, a work in which the artist pays thousands of people small sums of money to translate Herman Melville's American classic *Moby Dick* into Emoji.

I wanted to write about the project because I've grown fond of using the Japanese icons. Not only do they add a much needed visual variation to my IM conversations, but the pictorial gestures and emotions actually help to clarify my text. To ensure *Emoji Dick* is as clear as possible, Benenson has three different translations of each sentence made. Voters then choose which is the most intelligible. Of course, it is unlikely that the translation will improve upon one of the greatest works of literature, but I like the idea that a book which has generated so much discourse over the last one hundred and sixty years will be represented in an emoticon language designed to augment conversations.

I've always thought the preoccupation with Ishmael and Captain Ahab's obsessive hunt came from our need to believe that even in the face of insurmountable obstacles, we have a hand in making our own fate. Ahab's vengeance against the whale is analogous to this desire, and we're left pondering what there could possibly be left to do should the man capture the whale.

Is translating *Moby Dick* comparable to this undertaking? To my mind, only partially. Amazon Turk's legions of workers make what once would have been a daunting task relatively easy to complete, so naturally, Melville's characters have far more at stake. The laborers of *Emoji Dick* are also working for pocket change, which doesn't engender much personal investment.

It does, however, provide a much needed record of engagement typical of Internet: exuberant exchange, hive mentality, and compulsive rewriting. This project would not

exist without the support of dozens of micro-patrons pledging through Kickstarter – a redistribution of funds based on a collective interest in preserving some of this culture.

This collective effort reminds me of the work of the contemporary artist Francis Alys. In 2002, for *When Faith Moves Mountains*, Alys enlisted five hundred volunteers with shovels to move a sixteen-hundred-foot-long sand dune in Ventanilla, an area just outside Lima. The project's volunteers came from neighboring shanty towns populated by economic immigrants and political refugees who escaped the civil war of the eighties and nineties. They moved the dune about four inches from its original position.

In contrast to Alys, who presents a metaphorical attempt to envision a better future, *Emoji Dick* offers a picture of what we already have. Benenson's book is made of emoticons I share with my friends even though I don't know how to read it perfectly. It is a social game, yes, but perhaps more importantly, it is a snapshot of the mutable, yet collective response of thousands.



# CHAPTER 1



# Loomings



Call me Ishmael.



Some years ago--never mind how long precisely--having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world.



It is a way I have of driving off the spleen and regulating the circulation.



Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off--then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can.



This is my substitute for pistol and ball.



With a philosophical flourish Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take to the ship.



There is nothing surprising in this.



If they but knew it, almost all men in their degree, some time or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings towards the ocean with me.



There now is your insular city of the Manhattoes, belted round by wharves as Indian isles by coral reefs--commerce surrounds it with her surf.



Right and left, the streets take you waterward.



Its extreme downtown is the battery, where that noble mole is washed by waves, and cooled by breezes, which a few hours previous were out of sight of land.



Look at the crowds of water-gazers there.



Circumambulate the city of a dreamy Sabbath afternoon.



Go from Corlears Hook to Coenties Slip, and from thence, by Whitehall, northward.



What do you see?



--Posted like silent sentinels all around the town, stand thousands upon thousands of mortal men fixed in ocean reveries.



Some leaning against the spiles; some seated upon the pier-heads; some looking over the bulwarks of ships from China; some high aloft in the rigging, as if striving to get a still better seaward peep.



But these are all landmen; of week days pent up in lath and plaster--tied to counters, nailed to benches, clinched to desks.



How then is this?



Are the green fields gone?



What do they here?



But look!



here come more crowds, pacing straight for the water, and seemingly bound for a dive.



Strange!



Nothing will content them but the extremest limit of the land; loitering under the shady lee of yonder warehouses will not suffice.



No.



They must get just as nigh the water as they possibly can without falling in.



And there they stand--miles of them--leagues.



Inlanders all, they come from lanes and alleys, streets and avenues--north, east, south, and west.





Were Niagara but a cataract of sand, would you travel your thousand miles to see it?



Why did the poor poet of Tennessee, upon suddenly receiving two handfuls of silver, deliberate whether to buy him a coat, which he sadly needed, or invest his money in a pedestrian trip to Rockaway Beach?



Why is almost every robust healthy boy with a robust healthy soul in him, at some time or other crazy to go to sea?



Why upon your first voyage as a passenger, did you yourself feel such a mystical vibration, when first told that you and your ship were now out of sight of land?



Why did the old Persians hold the sea holy?



Why did the Greeks give it a separate deity, and own brother of Jove?



Surely all this is not without meaning.



And still deeper the meaning of that story of Narcissus, who because he could not grasp the tormenting, mild image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned.



But that same image, we ourselves see in all rivers and oceans.



It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all.



Now, when I say that I am in the habit of going to sea whenever I begin to grow hazy about the eyes, and begin to be over conscious of my lungs, I do not mean to have it inferred that I ever go to sea as a passenger.



For to go as a passenger you must needs have a purse, and a purse is but a rag unless you have something in it.



Besides, passengers get sea-sick--grow quarrelsome--don't sleep of nights--do not enjoy themselves much, as a general thing;--no, I never go as a passenger; nor, though I am something of a salt, do I ever go to sea as a Commodore, or a Captain, or a Cook.



I abandon the glory and distinction of such offices to those who like them.



For my part, I abominate all honourable respectable toils, trials, and tribulations of every kind whatsoever.



It is quite as much as I can do to take care of myself, without taking care of ships, barques, brigs, schooners, and what not.













But "The Crossed Harpoons," and "The Sword-Fish?"



--this, then must needs be the sign of "The Trap."



However, I picked myself up and hearing a loud voice within, pushed on and opened a second, interior door.



It seemed the great Black Parliament sitting in Tophet.



A hundred black faces turned round in their rows to peer; and beyond, a black Angel of Doom was beating a book in a pulpit.



It was a negro church; and the preacher's text was about the blackness of darkness, and the weeping and wailing and teeth-gnashing there.



Ha, Ishmael, muttered I, backing out, Wretched entertainment at the sign of "The Trap!"



Moving on, I at last came to a dim sort of light not far from the docks, and heard a forlorn creaking in the air; and looking up, saw a swinging sign over the door with a white painting upon it, faintly representing a tall straight jet of misty spray, and these words underneath--"The Spouter Inn:--Peter Coffin."



Coffin?



--Spouter?



--Rather ominous in that particular connexion, thought I.



But it is a common name in Nantucket, they say, and I suppose this Peter here is an emigrant from there.



As the light looked so dim, and the place, for the time, looked quiet enough, and the dilapidated little wooden house itself looked as if it might have been carted here from the ruins of some burnt district, and as the swinging sign had a poverty-stricken sort of creak to it, I thought that here was the very spot for cheap lodgings, and the best of pea coffee.



It was a queer sort of place--a gable-ended old house, one side palsied as it were, and leaning over sadly.



It stood on a sharp bleak corner, where that tempestuous wind Euroclydon kept up a worse howling than ever it did about poor Paul's tossed craft.



Euroclydon, nevertheless, is a mighty pleasant zephyr to any one in-doors, with his feet on the hob quietly toasting for bed.





Yet Dives himself, he too lives like a Czar in an ice palace made of frozen sighs, and being a president of a temperance society, he only drinks the tepid tears of orphans.



But no more of this blubbing now, we are going a-whaling, and there is plenty of that yet to come.



Let us scrape the ice from our frosted feet, and see what sort of a place this "Spouter" may be.









"I thought so.



All right; take a seat.



Supper?



--you want supper?



Supper'll be ready directly."



I sat down on an old wooden settle, carved all over like a bench on the Battery.



At one end a ruminating tar was still further adorning it with his jack-knife, stooping over and diligently working away at the space between his legs.



He was trying his hand at a ship under full sail, but he didn't make much headway, I thought.



At last some four or five of us were summoned to our meal in an adjoining room.



It was cold as Iceland--no fire at all--the landlord said he couldn't afford it.



Nothing but two dismal tallow candles, each in a winding sheet.



We were fain to button up our monkey jackets, and hold to our lips cups of scalding tea with our half frozen fingers.



But the fare was of the most substantial kind--not only meat and potatoes, but dumplings; good heavens!



dumplings for supper!



One young fellow in a green box coat, addressed himself to these dumplings in a most direful manner.



"My boy," said the landlord, "you'll have the nightmare to a dead sartainty."



"Landlord," I whispered, "that aint the harpooneer is it?"



"Oh, no," said he, looking a sort of diabolically funny, "the harpooneer is a dark complexioned chap.



He never eats dumplings, he don't--he eats nothing but steaks, and he likes 'em rare."



"The devil he does," says I.





































The rest of his toilet was soon achieved, and he proudly marched out of the room, wrapped up in his great pilot monkey jacket, and sporting his harpoon like a marshal's baton.





That man next him looks a few shades lighter; you might say a touch of satin wood is in him.



In the complexion of a third still lingers a tropic tawn, but slightly bleached withal; HE doubtless has tarried whole weeks ashore.



But who could show a cheek like Queequeg?



which, barred with various tints, seemed like the Andes' western slope, to show forth in one array, contrasting climates, zone by zone.



"Grub, ho!"



now cried the landlord, flinging open a door, and in we went to breakfast.



They say that men who have seen the world, thereby become quite at ease in manner, quite self-possessed in company.



Not always, though: Ledyard, the great New England traveller, and Mungo Park, the Scotch one; of all men, they possessed the least assurance in the parlor.



But perhaps the mere crossing of Siberia in a sledge drawn by dogs as Ledyard did, or the taking a long solitary walk on an empty stomach, in the negro heart of Africa, which was the sum of poor Mungo's performances--this kind of travel, I say, may not be the very best mode of attaining a high social polish.



Still, for the most part, that sort of thing is to be had anywhere.



These reflections just here are occasioned by the circumstance that after we were all seated at the table, and I was preparing to hear some good stories about whaling; to my no small surprise, nearly every man maintained a profound silence.



And not only that, but they looked embarrassed.



Yes, here were a set of sea-dogs, many of whom without the slightest bashfulness had boarded great whales on the high seas--entire strangers to them--and duelled them dead without winking; and yet, here they sat at a social breakfast table--all of the same calling, all of kindred tastes--looking round as sheepishly at each other as though they had never been out of sight of some sheepfold among the Green Mountains.



A curious sight; these bashful bears, these timid warrior whalemens!



But as for Queequeg--why, Queequeg sat there among them--at the head of the table, too, it so chanced; as cool as an icicle.



To be sure I cannot say much for his breeding.



His greatest admirer could not have cordially justified his bringing his harpoon into breakfast with him, and using it there without ceremony; reaching over the table with it, to the imminent jeopardy of many heads, and grappling the beefsteaks towards him.



But THAT was certainly very coolly done by him, and every one knows that in most people's estimation, to do anything coolly is to do it genteelly.



We will not speak of all Queequeg's peculiarities here; how he eschewed coffee and hot rolls, and applied his undivided attention to beefsteaks, done rare.



Enough, that when breakfast was over he withdrew like the rest into the public room, lighted his tomahawk-pipe, and was sitting there quietly digesting and smoking with his inseparable hat on, when I sallied out for a stroll.

# CHAPTER 6



## The Street



If I had been astonished at first catching a glimpse of so outlandish an individual as Queequeg circulating among the polite society of a civilized town, that astonishment soon departed upon taking my first daylight stroll through the streets of New Bedford.



In thoroughfares nigh the docks, any considerable seaport will frequently offer to view the queerest looking nondescripts from foreign parts.



Even in Broadway and Chestnut streets, Mediterranean mariners will sometimes jostle the affrighted ladies.



Regent Street is not unknown to Lascars and Malays; and at Bombay, in the Apollo Green, live Yankees have often scared the natives.



But New Bedford beats all Water Street and Wapping.



In these last-mentioned haunts you see only sailors; but in New Bedford, actual cannibals stand chatting at street corners; savages outright; many of whom yet carry on their bones unholy flesh.



It makes a stranger stare.



But, besides the Feegeens, Tongatoboarrs, Erromangoans, Pannangians, and Brighggians, and, besides the wild specimens of the whaling-craft which unheeded reel about the streets, you will see other sights still more curious, certainly more comical.



There weekly arrive in this town scores of green Vermonters and New Hampshire men, all athirst for gain and glory in the fishery.



They are mostly young, of stalwart frames; fellows who have felled forests, and now seek to drop the axe and snatch the whale-lance.



Many are as green as the Green Mountains whence they came.



In some things you would think them but a few hours old.



Look there!



that chap strutting round the corner.



He wears a beaver hat and swallow-tailed coat, girdled with a sailor-belt and sheath-knife.



Here comes another with a sou'-wester and a bombazine cloak.



No town-bred dandy will compare with a country-bred one--I mean a downright bumpkin dandy--a fellow that, in the dog-days, will mow his two acres in buckskin gloves for fear of tanning his hands.



Now when a country dandy like this takes it into his head to make a distinguished reputation, and joins the great whale-fishery, you should see the comical things he does upon reaching the seaport.



In bespeaking his sea-outfit, he orders bell-buttons to his waistcoats; straps to his canvas trowsers.



Ah, poor Hay-Seed!



how bitterly will burst those straps in the first howling gale, when thou art driven, straps, buttons, and all, down the throat of the tempest.



But think not that this famous town has only harpooners, cannibals, and bumpkins to show her visitors.



Not at all.



Still New Bedford is a queer place.



Had it not been for us whalemens, that tract of land would this day perhaps have been in as howling condition as the coast of Labrador.



As it is, parts of her back country are enough to frighten one, they look so bony.



The town itself is perhaps the dearest place to live in, in all New England.



It is a land of oil, true enough: but not like Canaan; a land, also, of corn and wine.



The streets do not run with milk; nor in the spring-time do they pave them with fresh eggs.





## CHAPTER 7



# The Chapel



In this same New Bedford there stands a Whaleman's Chapel, and few are the moody fishermen, shortly bound for the Indian Ocean or Pacific, who fail to make a Sunday visit to the spot.



I am sure that I did not.



Returning from my first morning stroll, I again sallied out upon this special errand.



The sky had changed from clear, sunny cold, to driving sleet and mist.



Wrapping myself in my shaggy jacket of the cloth called bearskin, I fought my way against the stubborn storm.



Entering, I found a small scattered congregation of sailors, and sailors' wives and widows.



A muffled silence reigned, only broken at times by the shrieks of the storm.



Each silent worshipper seemed purposely sitting apart from the other, as if each silent grief were insular and incommunicable.



The chaplain had not yet arrived; and there these silent islands of men and women sat steadfastly eyeing several marble tablets, with black borders, masoned into the wall on either side the pulpit.



Three of them ran something like the following, but I do not pretend to quote:-- SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF JOHN TALBOT, Who, at the age of eighteen, was lost overboard, Near the Isle of Desolation, off Patagonia, November 1st, 1836.



THIS TABLET Is erected to his Memory BY HIS SISTER.



SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF ROBERT LONG, WILLIS ELLERY, NATHAN COLEMAN, WALTER CANNY, SETH MACY, AND SAMUEL GLEIG, Forming one of the boats' crews OF THE SHIP ELIZA Who were towed out of sight by a Whale, On the Off-shore Ground in the PACIFIC, December 31st, 1839.



THIS MARBLE Is here placed by their surviving SHIPMATES.



SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF The late CAPTAIN EZEKIEL HARDY, Who in the bows of his boat was killed by a Sperm Whale on the coast of Japan, AUGUST 3d, 1833.



THIS TABLET Is erected to his Memory BY HIS WIDOW.



Shaking off the sleet from my ice-glazed hat and jacket, I seated myself near the door, and turning sideways was surprised to see Queequeg near me.



Affected by the solemnity of the scene, there was a wondering gaze of incredulous curiosity in his countenance.



This savage was the only person present who seemed to notice my entrance; because he was the only one who could not read, and, therefore, was not reading those frigid inscriptions on the wall.



Whether any of the relatives of the seamen whose names appeared there were now among the congregation, I knew not; but so many are the unrecorded accidents in the fishery, and so plainly did several women present wear the countenance if not the trappings of some unceasing grief, that I feel sure that here before me were assembled those, in whose unhealing hearts the sight of those bleak tablets sympathetically caused the old wounds to bleed afresh.



Oh!



ye whose dead lie buried beneath the green grass; who standing among flowers can say--here, HERE lies my beloved; ye know not the desolation that broods in bosoms like these.



What bitter blanks in those black-bordered marbles which cover no ashes!



What despair in those immovable inscriptions!



What deadly voids and unbidden infidelities in the lines that seem to gnaw upon all Faith, and refuse resurrections to the beings who have placelessly perished without a grave.



As well might those tablets stand in the cave of Elephanta as here.



In what census of living creatures, the dead of mankind are included; why it is that a universal proverb says of them, that they tell no tales, though containing more secrets than the Goodwin Sands; how it is that to his name who yesterday departed for the other world, we prefix so significant and infidel a word, and yet do not thus entitle him, if he but embarks for the remotest Indies of this living earth; why the Life Insurance Companies pay death-forfeitures upon immortals; in what eternal, unstimulating paralysis, and deadly, hopeless trance, yet lies antique Adam who died sixty round centuries ago; how it is that we still refuse to be comforted for those who we nevertheless maintain are dwelling in unspeakable bliss; why all the living so strive to hush all the dead; wherefore but the rumor of a knocking in a tomb will terrify a whole city.



All these things are not without their meanings.



But Faith, like a jackal, feeds among the tombs, and even from these dead doubts she gathers her most vital hope.



It needs scarcely to be told, with what feelings, on the eve of a Nantucket voyage, I regarded those marble tablets, and by the murky light of that darkened, doleful day read the fate of the whalemens who had gone before me.



Yes, Ishmael, the same fate may be thine.



But somehow I grew merry again.



Delightful inducements to embark, fine chance for promotion, it seems--aye, a stove boat will make me an immortal by brevet.



Yes, there is death in this business of whaling--a speechlessly quick chaotic bundling of a man into Eternity.



But what then?



Methinks we have hugely mistaken this matter of Life and Death.



Methinks that what they call my shadow here on earth is my true substance.



Methinks that in looking at things spiritual, we are too much like oysters observing the sun through the water, and thinking that thick water the thinnest of air.



Methinks my body is but the lees of my better being.



In fact take my body who will, take it I say, it is not me.



And therefore three cheers for Nantucket; and come a stove boat and stove body when they will, for stave my soul, Jove himself cannot.







Its panelled front was in the likeness of a ship's bluff bows, and the Holy Bible rested on a projecting piece of scroll work, fashioned after a ship's fiddle-headed beak.



What could be more full of meaning?



--for the pulpit is ever this earth's foremost part; all the rest comes in its rear; the pulpit leads the world.



From thence it is the storm of God's quick wrath is first descried, and the bow must bear the earliest brunt.



From thence it is the God of breezes fair or foul is first invoked for favourable winds.



Yes, the world's a ship on its passage out, and not a voyage complete; and the pulpit is its prow.



## CHAPTER 9



# The Sermon



Father Mapple rose, and in a mild voice of unassuming authority ordered the scattered people to condense.



"Starboard gangway, there!



side away to larboard--larboard gangway to starboard!



Midships!



midships!"



There was a low rumbling of heavy sea-boots among the benches, and a still slighter shuffling of women's shoes, and all was quiet again, and every eye on the preacher.



He paused a little; then kneeling in the pulpit's bows, folded his large brown hands across his chest, uplifted his closed eyes, and offered a prayer so deeply devout that he seemed kneeling and praying at the bottom of the sea.



This ended, in prolonged solemn tones, like the continual tolling of a bell in a ship that is foundering at sea in a fog-- in such tones he commenced reading the following hymn; but changing his manner towards the concluding stanzas, burst forth with a pealing exultation and joy-- "The ribs and terrors in the whale, Arched over me a dismal gloom, While all God's sun-lit waves rolled by, And lift me deepening down to doom.



"I saw the opening maw of hell, With endless pains and sorrows there; Which none but they that feel can tell-- Oh, I was plunging to despair.



"In black distress, I called my God, When I could scarce believe him mine, He bowed his ear to my complaints-- No more the whale did me confine.



"With speed he flew to my relief, As on a radiant dolphin borne; Awful, yet bright, as lightning shone The face of my Deliverer God.







Strong intuitions of the man assure the mariners he can be no innocent.



In their gamesome but still serious way, one whispers to the other--"Jack, he's robbed a widow;" or, "Joe, do you mark him; he's a bigamist;" or, "Harry lad, I guess he's the adulterer that broke jail in old Gomorrah, or belike, one of the missing murderers from Sodom."



Another runs to read the bill that's stuck against the spile upon the wharf to which the ship is moored, offering five hundred gold coins for the apprehension of a parricide, and containing a description of his person.



He reads, and looks from Jonah to the bill; while all his sympathetic shipmates now crowd round Jonah, prepared to lay their hands upon him.



Frighted Jonah trembles, and summoning all his boldness to his face, only looks so much the more a coward.



He will not confess himself suspected; but that itself is strong suspicion.



So he makes the best of it; and when the sailors find him not to be the man that is advertised, they let him pass, and he descends into the cabin.



"Who's there?"



'cries the Captain at his busy desk, hurriedly making out his papers for the Customs--'Who's there?'



'Oh!



how that harmless question mangles Jonah!



For the instant he almost turns to flee again.



But he rallies.



'I seek a passage in this ship to Tarshish; how soon sail ye, sir?'



'Thus far the busy Captain had not looked up to Jonah, though the man now stands before him; but no sooner does he hear that hollow voice, than he darts a scrutinizing glance.



'We sail with the next coming tide,' at last he slowly answered, still intently eyeing him.



'No sooner, sir?'



'--'Soon enough for any honest man that goes a passenger.'







But the sea rebels; he will not bear the wicked burden.



A dreadful storm comes on, the ship is like to break.



But now when the boatswain calls all hands to lighten her; when boxes, bales, and jars are clattering overboard; when the wind is shrieking, and the men are yelling, and every plank thunders with trampling feet right over Jonah's head; in all this raging tumult, Jonah sleeps his hideous sleep.



He sees no black sky and raging sea, feels not the reeling timbers, and little hears he or heeds he the far rush of the mighty whale, which even now with open mouth is cleaving the seas after him.



Aye, shipmates, Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship--a berth in the cabin as I have taken it, and was fast asleep.



But the frightened master comes to him, and shrieks in his dead ear, 'What meanest thou, O, sleeper!



arise!



' Startled from his lethargy by that direful cry, Jonah staggers to his feet, and stumbling to the deck, grasps a shroud, to look out upon the sea.



But at that moment he is sprung upon by a panther billow leaping over the bulwarks.



Wave after wave thus leaps into the ship, and finding no speedy vent runs roaring fore and aft, till the mariners come nigh to drowning while yet afloat.



And ever, as the white moon shows her affrighted face from the steep gullies in the blackness overhead, aghast Jonah sees the rearing bowsprit pointing high upward, but soon beat downward again towards the tormented deep.



"Terrors upon terrors run shouting through his soul.



In all his cringing attitudes, the God-fugitive is now too plainly known.



The sailors mark him; more and more certain grow their suspicions of him, and at last, fully to test the truth, by referring the whole matter to high Heaven, they fall to casting lots, to see for whose cause this great tempest was upon them.



The lot is Jonah's; that discovered, then how furiously they mob him with their questions.



"What is thine occupation?



Whence comest thou?









Delight is to him--a far, far upward, and inward delight--who against the proud gods and commodores of this earth, ever stands forth his own inexorable self.



Delight is to him whose strong arms yet support him, when the ship of this base treacherous world has gone down beneath him.



Delight is to him, who gives no quarter in the truth, and kills, burns, and destroys all sin though he pluck it out from under the robes of Senators and Judges.



Delight,--top-gallant delight is to him, who acknowledges no law or lord, but the Lord his God, and is only a patriot to heaven.



Delight is to him, whom all the waves of the billows of the seas of the boisterous mob can never shake from this sure Keel of the Ages.



And eternal delight and deliciousness will be his, who coming to lay him down, can say with his final breath--O Father!



--chiefly known to me by Thy rod--mortal or immortal, here I die.



I have striven to be Thine, more than to be this world's, or mine own.



Yet this is nothing: I leave eternity to Thee; for what is man that he should live out the lifetime of his God?"



He said no more, but slowly waving a benediction, covered his face with his hands, and so remained kneeling, till all the people had departed, and he was left alone in the place.



# CHAPTER 10



## A Bosom Friend



Returning to the Spouter-Inn from the Chapel, I found Queequeg there quite alone; he having left the Chapel before the benediction some time.



He was sitting on a bench before the fire, with his feet on the stove hearth, and in one hand was holding close up to his face that little negro idol of his; peering hard into its face, and with a jack-knife gently whittling away at its nose, meanwhile humming to himself in his heathenish way.



But being now interrupted, he put up the image; and pretty soon, going to the table, took up a large book there, and placing it on his lap began counting the pages with deliberate regularity; at every fiftieth page--as I fancied--stopping a moment, looking vacantly around him, and giving utterance to a long-drawn gurgling whistle of astonishment.



He would then begin again at the next fifty; seeming to commence at number one each time, as though he could not count more than fifty, and it was only by such a large number of fifties being found together, that his astonishment at the multitude of pages was excited.



With much interest I sat watching him.



Savage though he was, and hideously marred about the face--at least to my taste--his countenance yet had a something in it which was by no means disagreeable.



You cannot hide the soul.



Through all his unearthly tattooings, I thought I saw the traces of a simple honest heart; and in his large, deep eyes, fiery black and bold, there seemed tokens of a spirit that would dare a thousand devils.



And besides all this, there was a certain lofty bearing about the Pagan, which even his uncouthness could not altogether maim.



He looked like a man who had never cringed and never had had a creditor.



Whether it was, too, that his head being shaved, his forehead was drawn out in freer and brighter relief, and looked more expansive than it otherwise would, this I will not venture to decide; but certain it was his head was phenologically an excellent one.



It may seem ridiculous, but it reminded me of General Washington's head, as seen in the popular busts of him.



It had the same long regularly graded retreating slope from above the brows, which were likewise very projecting, like two long promontories thickly wooded on top.



Queequeg was George Washington cannibalistically developed.



Whilst I was thus closely scanning him, half-pretending meanwhile to be looking out at the storm from the casement, he never heeded my presence, never troubled himself with so much as a single glance; but appeared wholly occupied with counting the pages of the marvellous book.



Considering how sociably we had been sleeping together the night previous, and especially considering the affectionate arm I had found thrown over me upon waking in the morning, I thought this indifference of his very strange.



But savages are strange beings; at times you do not know exactly how to take them.



At first they are overawing; their calm self-collectedness of simplicity seems a Socratic wisdom.



I had noticed also that Queequeg never consorted at all, or but very little, with the other seamen in the inn.



He made no advances whatever; appeared to have no desire to enlarge the circle of his acquaintances.



All this struck me as mighty singular; yet, upon second thoughts, there was something almost sublime in it.



Here was a man some twenty thousand miles from home, by the way of Cape Horn, that is--which was the only way he could get there--thrown among people as strange to him as though he were in the planet Jupiter; and yet he seemed entirely at his ease; preserving the utmost serenity; content with his own companionship; always equal to himself.



Surely this was a touch of fine philosophy; though no doubt he had never heard there was such a thing as that.



But, perhaps, to be true philosophers, we mortals should not be conscious of so living or so striving.



So soon as I hear that such or such a man gives himself out for a philosopher, I conclude that, like the dyspeptic old woman, he must have "broken his digester."







And what do I wish that this Queequeg would do to me?



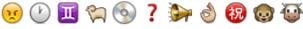
Why, unite with me in my particular Presbyterian form of worship.



Consequently, I must then unite with him in his; ergo, I must turn idolator.



So I kindled the shavings; helped prop up the innocent little idol; offered him burnt biscuit with Queequeg; salamed before him twice or thrice; kissed his nose; and that done, we undressed and went to bed, at peace with our own consciences and all the world.



But we did not go to sleep without some little chat.



How it is I know not; but there is no place like a bed for confidential disclosures between friends.



Man and wife, they say, there open the very bottom of their souls to each other; and some old couples often lie and chat over old times till nearly morning.



Thus, then, in our hearts' honeymoon, lay I and Queequeg--a cosy, loving pair.





We had been sitting in this crouching manner for some time, when all at once I thought I would open my eyes; for when between sheets, whether by day or by night, and whether asleep or awake, I have a way of always keeping my eyes shut, in order the more to concentrate the snugness of being in bed.



Because no man can ever feel his own identity aright except his eyes be closed; as if darkness were indeed the proper element of our essences, though light be more congenial to our clayey part.



Upon opening my eyes then, and coming out of my own pleasant and self-created darkness into the imposed and coarse outer gloom of the unilluminated twelve-o'clock-at-night, I experienced a disagreeable revulsion.



Nor did I at all object to the hint from Queequeg that perhaps it were best to strike a light, seeing that we were so wide awake; and besides he felt a strong desire to have a few quiet puffs from his Tomahawk.



Be it said, that though I had felt such a strong repugnance to his smoking in the bed the night before, yet see how elastic our stiff prejudices grow when love once comes to bend them.



For now I liked nothing better than to have Queequeg smoking by me, even in bed, because he seemed to be full of such serene household joy then.



I no more felt unduly concerned for the landlord's policy of insurance.



I was only alive to the condensed confidential comfortableness of sharing a pipe and a blanket with a real friend.



With our shaggy jackets drawn about our shoulders, we now passed the Tomahawk from one to the other, till slowly there grew over us a blue hanging tester of smoke, illuminated by the flame of the new-lit lamp.



Whether it was that this undulating tester rolled the savage away to far distant scenes, I know not, but he now spoke of his native island; and, eager to hear his history, I begged him to go on and tell it.



He gladly complied.



Though at the time I but ill comprehended not a few of his words, yet subsequent disclosures, when I had become more familiar with his broken phraseology, now enable me to present the whole story such as it may prove in the mere skeleton I give.

# CHAPTER 12



# Biographical



Queequeg was a native of Rokovoko, an island far away to the West and South.



It is not down in any map; true places never are.



When a new-hatched savage running wild about his native woodlands in a grass clout, followed by the nibbling goats, as if he were a green sapling; even then, in Queequeg's ambitious soul, lurked a strong desire to see something more of Christendom than a specimen whaler or two.



His father was a High Chief, a King; his uncle a High Priest; and on the maternal side he boasted aunts who were the wives of unconquerable warriors.



There was excellent blood in his veins--royal stuff, though sadly vitiated, I fear, by the cannibal propensity he nourished in his untutored youth.



A Sag Harbor ship visited his father's bay, and Queequeg sought a passage to Christian lands.



But the ship, having her full complement of seamen, spurned his suit; and not all the King his father's influence could prevail.



But Queequeg vowed a vow.



Alone in his canoe, he paddled off to a distant strait, which he knew the ship must pass through when she quitted the island.



On one side was a coral reef; on the other a low tongue of land, covered with mangrove thickets that grew out into the water.



Hiding his canoe, still afloat, among these thickets, with its prow seaward, he sat down in the stern, paddle low in hand; and when the ship was gliding by, like a flash he darted out; gained her side; with one backward dash of his foot capsized and sank his canoe; climbed up the chains; and throwing himself at full length upon the deck, grappled a ring-bolt there, and swore not to let it go, though hacked in pieces.



In vain the captain threatened to throw him overboard; suspended a cutlass over his naked wrists; Queequeg was the son of a King, and Queequeg budged not.



Struck by his desperate dauntlessness, and his wild desire to visit Christendom, the captain at last relented, and told him he might make himself at home.



But this fine young savage--this sea Prince of Wales, never saw the Captain's cabin.



They put him down among the sailors, and made a whaleman of him.



But like Czar Peter content to toil in the shipyards of foreign cities, Queequeg disdained no seeming ignominy, if thereby he might happily gain the power of enlightening his untutored countrymen.



For at bottom--so he told me--he was actuated by a profound desire to learn among the Christians, the arts whereby to make his people still happier than they were; and more than that, still better than they were.



But, alas!



the practices of whalers soon convinced him that even Christians could be both miserable and wicked; infinitely more so, than all his father's heathens.



Arrived at last in old Sag Harbor; and seeing what the sailors did there; and then going on to Nantucket, and seeing how they spent their wages in that place also, poor Queequeg gave it up for lost.



Thought he, it's a wicked world in all meridians; I'll die a pagan.



And thus an old idolator at heart, he yet lived among these Christians, wore their clothes, and tried to talk their gibberish.



Hence the queer ways about him, though now some time from home.



By hints, I asked him whether he did not propose going back, and having a coronation; since he might now consider his father dead and gone, he being very old and feeble at the last accounts.



He answered no, not yet; and added that he was fearful Christianity, or rather Christians, had unfitted him for ascending the pure and undefiled throne of thirty pagan Kings before him.



But by and by, he said, he would return,--as soon as he felt himself baptized again.





# CHAPTER 13



# Wheelbarrow



Next morning, Monday, after disposing of the embalmed head to a barber, for a block, I settled my own and comrade's bill; using, however, my comrade's money.



The grinning landlord, as well as the boarders, seemed amazingly tickled at the sudden friendship which had sprung up between me and Queequeg--especially as Peter Coffin's cock and bull stories about him had previously so much alarmed me concerning the very person whom I now companied with.



We borrowed a wheelbarrow, and embarking our things, including my own poor carpet-bag, and Queequeg's canvas sack and hammock, away we went down to "the Moss," the little Nantucket packet schooner moored at the wharf.



As we were going along the people stared; not at Queequeg so much--for they were used to seeing cannibals like him in their streets,--but at seeing him and me upon such confidential terms.



But we heeded them not, going along wheeling the barrow by turns, and Queequeg now and then stopping to adjust the sheath on his harpoon barbs.



I asked him why he carried such a troublesome thing with him ashore, and whether all whaling ships did not find their own harpoons.



To this, in substance, he replied, that though what I hinted was true enough, yet he had a particular affection for his own harpoon, because it was of assured stuff, well tried in many a mortal combat, and deeply intimate with the hearts of whales.



In short, like many inland reapers and mowers, who go into the farmers' meadows armed with their own scythes--though in no wise obliged to furnish them--even so, Queequeg, for his own private reasons, preferred his own harpoon.



Shifting the barrow from my hand to his, he told me a funny story about the first wheelbarrow he had ever seen.





On one side, New Bedford rose in terraces of streets, their ice-covered trees all glittering in the clear, cold air.



Huge hills and mountains of casks on casks were piled upon her wharves, and side by side the world-wandering whale ships lay silent and safely moored at last; while from others came a sound of carpenters and coopers, with blended noises of fires and forges to melt the pitch, all betokening that new cruises were on the start; that one most perilous and long voyage ended, only begins a second; and a second ended, only begins a third, and so on, for ever and for aye.



Such is the endlessness, yea, the intolerableness of all earthly effort.



Gaining the more open water, the bracing breeze waxed fresh; the little Moss tossed the quick foam from her bows, as a young colt his snortings.



How I snuffed that Tartar air!



--how I spurned that turnpike earth!



--that common highway all over dented with the marks of slavish heels and hoofs; and turned me to admire the magnanimity of the sea which will permit no records.



At the same foam-fountain, Queequeg seemed to drink and reel with me.



His dusky nostrils swelled apart; he showed his filed and pointed teeth.



On, on we flew; and our offing gained, the Moss did homage to the blast; ducked and dived her bows as a slave before the Sultan.



Sideways leaning, we sideways darted; every ropeyarn tingling like a wire; the two tall masts buckling like Indian canes in land tornadoes.



So full of this reeling scene were we, as we stood by the plunging bowsprit, that for some time we did not notice the jeering glances of the passengers, a lubber-like assembly, who marvelled that two fellow beings should be so companionable; as though a white man were anything more dignified than a whitewashed negro.



But there were some boobies and bumpkins there, who, by their intense greenness, must have come from the heart and centre of all verdure.



Queequeg caught one of these young saplings mimicking him behind his back.



I thought the bumpkin's hour of doom was come.



Dropping his harpoon, the brawny savage caught him in his arms, and by an almost miraculous dexterity and strength, sent him high up bodily into the air; then slightly tapping his stern in mid-somerset, the fellow landed with bursting lungs upon his feet, while Queequeg, turning his back upon him, lighted his tomahawk pipe and passed it to me for a puff.



"Capting!"



Capting!"



yelled the bumpkin, running towards that officer; "Capting, Capting, here's the devil."



"Hallo, you sir," cried the Captain, a gaunt rib of the sea, stalking up to Queequeg, "what in thunder do you mean by that?"



Don't you know you might have killed that chap?"



"What him say?"



said Queequeg, as he mildly turned to me.



"He say," said I, "that you came near kill-e that man there," pointing to the still shivering greenhorn.



"Kill-e," cried Queequeg, twisting his tattooed face into an unearthly expression of disdain, "ah!"



him bevy small-e fish-e; Queequeg no kill-e so small-e fish-e; Queequeg kill-e big whale!"



"Look you," roared the Captain, "I'll kill-e YOU, you cannibal, if you try any more of your tricks aboard here; so mind your eye."



But it so happened just then, that it was high time for the Captain to mind his own eye.



The prodigious strain upon the main-sail had parted the weather-sheet, and the tremendous boom was now flying from side to side, completely sweeping the entire after part of the deck.



The poor fellow whom Queequeg had handled so roughly, was swept overboard; all hands were in a panic; and to attempt snatching at the boom to stay it, seemed madness.



It flew from right to left, and back again, almost in one ticking of a watch, and every instant seemed on the point of snapping into splinters.



Nothing was done, and nothing seemed capable of being done; those on deck rushed towards the bows, and stood eyeing the boom as if it were the lower jaw of an exasperated whale.





# CHAPTER 14



# Nantucket



Nothing more happened on the passage worthy the mentioning; so, after a fine run, we safely arrived in Nantucket.



Nantucket!



Take out your map and look at it.



See what a real corner of the world it occupies; how it stands there, away off shore, more lonely than the Eddystone lighthouse.



Look at it--a mere hillock, and elbow of sand; all beach, without a background.



There is more sand there than you would use in twenty years as a substitute for blotting paper.



Some gamesome wights will tell you that they have to plant weeds there, they don't grow naturally; that they import Canada thistles; that they have to send beyond seas for a spile to stop a leak in an oil cask; that pieces of wood in Nantucket are carried about like bits of the true cross in Rome; that people there plant toadstools before their houses, to get under the shade in summer time; that one blade of grass makes an oasis, three blades in a day's walk a prairie; that they wear quicksand shoes, something like Laplander snow-shoes; that they are so shut up, belted about, every way inclosed, surrounded, and made an utter island of by the ocean, that to their very chairs and tables small clams will sometimes be found adhering, as to the backs of sea turtles.



But these extravaganzas only show that Nantucket is no Illinois.



Look now at the wondrous traditional story of how this island was settled by the red-men.



Thus goes the legend.



In olden times an eagle swooped down upon the New England coast, and carried off an infant Indian in his talons.





With the landless gull, that at sunset folds her wings and is rocked to sleep between billows; so at nightfall, the Nantucketer, out of sight of land, furls his sails, and lays him to his rest, while under his very pillow rush herds of walruses and whales.

## CHAPTER 15

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# Chowder



It was quite late in the evening when the little Moss came snugly to anchor, and Queequeg and I went ashore; so we could attend to no business that day, at least none but a supper and a bed.



The landlord of the Spouter-Inn had recommended us to his cousin Hosea Hussey of the Try Pots, whom he asserted to be the proprietor of one of the best kept hotels in all Nantucket, and moreover he had assured us that Cousin Hosea, as he called him, was famous for his chowders.



In short, he plainly hinted that we could not possibly do better than try pot-luck at the Try Pots.



But the directions he had given us about keeping a yellow warehouse on our starboard hand till we opened a white church to the larboard, and then keeping that on the larboard hand till we made a corner three points to the starboard, and that done, then ask the first man we met where the place was: these crooked directions of his very much puzzled us at first, especially as, at the outset, Queequeg insisted that the yellow warehouse--our first point of departure--must be left on the larboard hand, whereas I had understood Peter Coffin to say it was on the starboard.



However, by dint of beating about a little in the dark, and now and then knocking up a peaceable inhabitant to inquire the way, we at last came to something which there was no mistaking.



Two enormous wooden pots painted black, and suspended by asses' ears, swung from the cross-trees of an old top-mast, planted in front of an old doorway.



The horns of the cross-trees were sawed off on the other side, so that this old top-mast looked not a little like a gallows.



Perhaps I was over sensitive to such impressions at the time, but I could not help staring at this gallows with a vague misgiving.



A sort of crick was in my neck as I gazed up to the two remaining horns; yes, TWO of them, one for Queequeg, and one for me.



It's ominous, thinks I.



A Coffin my Innkeeper upon landing in my first whaling port; tombstones staring at me in the whalemens chapel; and here a gallows!



and a pair of prodigious black pots too!



Are these last throwing out oblique hints touching Tophet?



I was called from these reflections by the sight of a freckled woman with yellow hair and a yellow gown, standing in the porch of the inn, under a dull red lamp swinging there, that looked much like an injured eye, and carrying on a brisk scolding with a man in a purple woollen shirt.



"Get along with ye," said she to the man, "or I'll be combing ye!"



"Come on, Queequeg," said I, "all right.



There's Mrs. Hussey."



And so it turned out; Mr. Hosea Hussey being from home, but leaving Mrs. Hussey entirely competent to attend to all his affairs.



Upon making known our desires for a supper and a bed, Mrs. Hussey, postponing further scolding for the present, ushered us into a little room, and seating us at a table spread with the relics of a recently concluded repast, turned round to us and said--"Clam or Cod?"



"What's that about Cods, ma'am?"



said I, with much politeness.



"Clam or Cod?"



she repeated.



"A clam for supper?"



a cold clam; is THAT what you mean, Mrs. Hussey?"



says I, "but that's a rather cold and clammy reception in the winter time, ain't it, Mrs. Hussey?"



But being in a great hurry to resume scolding the man in the purple Shirt, who was waiting for it in the entry, and seeming to hear nothing but the word "clam," Mrs. Hussey hurried towards an open door leading to the kitchen, and bawling out "clam for two," disappeared.





## CHAPTER 16



## The Ship



In bed we concocted our plans for the morrow.



But to my surprise and no small concern, Queequeg now gave me to understand, that he had been diligently consulting Yojo--the name of his black little god--and Yojo had told him two or three times over, and strongly insisted upon it everyway, that instead of our going together among the whaling-fleet in harbor, and in concert selecting our craft; instead of this, I say, Yojo earnestly enjoined that the selection of the ship should rest wholly with me, inasmuch as Yojo purposed befriending us; and, in order to do so, had already pitched upon a vessel, which, if left to myself, I, Ishmael, should infallibly light upon, for all the world as though it had turned out by chance; and in that vessel I must immediately ship myself, for the present irrespective of Queequeg.



I have forgotten to mention that, in many things, Queequeg placed great confidence in the excellence of Yojo's judgment and surprising forecast of things; and cherished Yojo with considerable esteem, as a rather good sort of god, who perhaps meant well enough upon the whole, but in all cases did not succeed in his benevolent designs.



Now, this plan of Queequeg's, or rather Yojo's, touching the selection of our craft; I did not like that plan at all.



I had not a little relied upon Queequeg's sagacity to point out the whaler best fitted to carry us and our fortunes securely.



But as all my remonstrances produced no effect upon Queequeg, I was obliged to acquiesce; and accordingly prepared to set about this business with a determined rushing sort of energy and vigor, that should quickly settle that trifling little affair.



Next morning early, leaving Queequeg shut up with Yojo in our little bedroom--for it seemed that it was some sort of Lent or Ramadan, or day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer with Queequeg and Yojo that day; HOW it was I never could find out, for, though I applied myself to it several times, I never could master his liturgies and XXXIX Articles--leaving Queequeg, then, fasting on his tomahawk pipe, and Yojo warming himself at his sacrificial fire of shavings, I sallied out among the shipping.



After much prolonged sauntering and many random inquiries, I learnt that there were three ships up for three-years' voyages--The Devil-dam, the Tit-bit, and the Pequod.





Scorning a turnstile wheel at her reverend helm, she sported there a tiller; and that tiller was in one mass, curiously carved from the long narrow lower jaw of her hereditary foe.



The helmsman who steered by that tiller in a tempest, felt like the Tartar, when he holds back his fiery steed by clutching its jaw.



A noble craft, but somehow a most melancholy!



All noble things are touched with that.



Now when I looked about the quarter-deck, for some one having authority, in order to propose myself as a candidate for the voyage, at first I saw nobody; but I could not well overlook a strange sort of tent, or rather wigwam, pitched a little behind the main-mast.



It seemed only a temporary erection used in port.



It was of a conical shape, some ten feet high; consisting of the long, huge slabs of limber black bone taken from the middle and highest part of the jaws of the right-whale.



Planted with their broad ends on the deck, a circle of these slabs laced together, mutually sloped towards each other, and at the apex united in a tufted point, where the loose hairy fibres waved to and fro like the top-knot on some old Pottowottamie Sachem's head.



A triangular opening faced towards the bows of the ship, so that the insider commanded a complete view forward.



And half concealed in this queer tenement, I at length found one who by his aspect seemed to have authority; and who, it being noon, and the ship's work suspended, was now enjoying respite from the burden of command.



He was seated on an old-fashioned oaken chair, wriggling all over with curious carving; and the bottom of which was formed of a stout interlacing of the same elastic stuff of which the wigwam was constructed.



There was nothing so very particular, perhaps, about the appearance of the elderly man I saw; he was brown and brawny, like most old seamen, and heavily rolled up in blue pilot-cloth, cut in the Quaker style; only there was a fine and almost microscopic net-work of the minutest wrinkles interlacing round his eyes, which must have arisen from his continual sailings in many hard gales, and always looking to windward;--for this causes the muscles about the eyes to become pursed together.



Such eye-wrinkles are very effectual in a scowl.



"Is this the Captain of the Pequod?"



said I, advancing to the door of the tent.





I protested my innocence of these things.



I saw that under the mask of these half humorous innuendoes, this old seaman, as an insulated Quakerish Nantucketer, was full of his insular prejudices, and rather distrustful of all aliens, unless they hailed from Cape Cod or the Vineyard.



"But what takes thee a-whaling?"



I want to know that before I think of shipping ye."



"Well, sir, I want to see what whaling is.



I want to see the world."



"Want to see what whaling is, eh?"



Have ye clapped eye on Captain Ahab?"



"Who is Captain Ahab, sir?"



"Aye, aye, I thought so.



Captain Ahab is the Captain of this ship."



"I am mistaken then.



I thought I was speaking to the Captain himself."



"Thou art speaking to Captain Peleg--that's who ye are speaking to, young man.



It belongs to me and Captain Bildad to see the Pequod fitted out for the voyage, and supplied with all her needs, including crew.



We are part owners and agents.



But as I was going to say, if thou wantest to know what whaling is, as thou tellest ye do, I can put ye in a way of finding it out before ye bind yourself to it, past backing out.



Clap eye on Captain Ahab, young man, and thou wilt find that he has only one leg."





Now then, thou not only wantest to go a-whaling, to find out by experience what whaling is, but ye also want to go in order to see the world?



Was not that what ye said?



I thought so.



Well then, just step forward there, and take a peep over the weather-bow, and then back to me and tell me what ye see there."



For a moment I stood a little puzzled by this curious request, not knowing exactly how to take it, whether humorously or in earnest.



But concentrating all his crow's feet into one scowl, Captain Peleg started me on the errand.



Going forward and glancing over the weather bow, I perceived that the ship swinging to her anchor with the flood-tide, was now obliquely pointing towards the open ocean.



The prospect was unlimited, but exceedingly monotonous and forbidding; not the slightest variety that I could see.



"Well, what's the report?"



said Peleg when I came back; "what did ye see?"



"Not much," I replied--"nothing but water; considerable horizon though, and there's a squall coming up, I think."



"Well, what does thou think then of seeing the world?"



Do ye wish to go round Cape Horn to see any more of it, eh?



Can't ye see the world where you stand?"



I was a little staggered, but go a-whaling I must, and I would; and the Pequod was as good a ship as any--I thought the best--and all this I now repeated to Peleg.



Seeing me so determined, he expressed his willingness to ship me.



"And thou mayest as well sign the papers right off," he added--"come along with ye."



And so saying, he led the way below deck into the cabin.











It was an exceedingly LONG LAY that, indeed; and though from the magnitude of the figure it might at first deceive a landsman, yet the slightest consideration will show that though seven hundred and seventy-seven is a pretty large number, yet, when you come to make a TEENTH of it, you will then see, I say, that the seven hundred and seventy-seventh part of a farthing is a good deal less than seven hundred and seventy-seven gold doubloons; and so I thought at the time.



"Why, blast your eyes, Bildad," cried Peleg, "thou dost not want to swindle this young man!



he must have more than that."



"Seven hundred and seventy-seventh," again said Bildad, without lifting his eyes; and then went on mumbling--"for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."



"I am going to put him down for the three hundredth," said Peleg, "do ye hear that, Bildad!



The three hundredth lay, I say."



Bildad laid down his book, and turning solemnly towards him said, "Captain Peleg, thou hast a generous heart; but thou must consider the duty thou owest to the other owners of this ship--widows and orphans, many of them--and that if we too abundantly reward the labors of this young man, we may be taking the bread from those widows and those orphans.



The seven hundred and seventy-seventh lay, Captain Peleg."



"Thou Bildad!"



roared Peleg, starting up and clattering about the cabin.



"Blast ye, Captain Bildad, if I had followed thy advice in these matters, I would afore now had a conscience to lug about that would be heavy enough to founder the largest ship that ever sailed round Cape Horn."



"Captain Peleg," said Bildad steadily, "thy conscience may be drawing ten inches of water, or ten fathoms, I can't tell; but as thou art still an impenitent man, Captain Peleg, I greatly fear lest thy conscience be but a leaky one; and will in the end sink thee foundering down to the fiery pit, Captain Peleg."



"Fiery pit!



fiery pit!



ye insult me, man; past all natural bearing, ye insult me.



It's an all-fired outrage to tell any human creature that he's bound to hell.



Flukes and flames!



Bildad, say that again to me, and start my soul-bolts, but I'll--I'll--yes, I'll swallow a live goat with all his hair and horns on.



Out of the cabin, ye canting, drab-coloured son of a wooden gun--a straight wake with ye!"



As he thundered out this he made a rush at Bildad, but with a marvellous oblique, sliding celerity, Bildad for that time eluded him.



Alarmed at this terrible outburst between the two principal and responsible owners of the ship, and feeling half a mind to give up all idea of sailing in a vessel so questionably owned and temporarily commanded, I stepped aside from the door to give egress to Bildad, who, I made no doubt, was all eagerness to vanish from before the awakened wrath of Peleg.



But to my astonishment, he sat down again on the transom very quietly, and seemed to have not the slightest intention of withdrawing.



He seemed quite used to impenitent Peleg and his ways.



As for Peleg, after letting off his rage as he had, there seemed no more left in him, and he, too, sat down like a lamb, though he twitched a little as if still nervously agitated.



"Whew!"



he whistled at last--"the squall's gone off to leeward, I think.



Bildad, thou used to be good at sharpening a lance, mend that pen, will ye.



My jack-knife here needs the grindstone.



That's he; thank ye, Bildad.



Now then, my young man, Ishmael's thy name, didn't ye say?



Well then, down ye go here, Ishmael, for the three hundredth lay."



"Captain Peleg," said I, "I have a friend with me who wants to ship too--shall I bring him down to-morrow?"



"To be sure," said Peleg.



"Fetch him along, and we'll look at him."



"What lay does he want?"



groaned Bildad, glancing up from the book in which he had again been burying himself.



"Oh!



never thee mind about that, Bildad," said Peleg.



"Has he ever whaled it any?"



turning to me.



"Killed more whales than I can count, Captain Peleg."



"Well, bring him along then."



And, after signing the papers, off I went; nothing doubting but that I had done a good morning's work, and that the Pequod was the identical ship that Yojo had provided to carry Queequeg and me round the Cape.



But I had not proceeded far, when I began to bethink me that the Captain with whom I was to sail yet remained unseen by me; though, indeed, in many cases, a whale-ship will be completely fitted out, and receive all her crew on board, ere the captain makes himself visible by arriving to take command; for sometimes these voyages are so prolonged, and the shore intervals at home so exceedingly brief, that if the captain have a family, or any absorbing concernment of that sort, he does not trouble himself much about his ship in port, but leaves her to the owners till all is ready for sea.



However, it is always as well to have a look at him before irrevocably committing yourself into his hands.



Turning back I accosted Captain Peleg, inquiring where Captain Ahab was to be found.



"And what dost thou want of Captain Ahab?"



It's all right enough; thou art shipped."



"Yes, but I should like to see him."



"But I don't think thou wilt be able to at present.



I don't know exactly what's the matter with him; but he keeps close inside the house; a sort of sick, and yet he don't look so.



In fact, he ain't sick; but no, he isn't well either.



Any how, young man, he won't always see me, so I don't suppose he will thee.



He's a queer man, Captain Ahab--so some think--but a good one.



Oh, thou'lt like him well enough; no fear, no fear.



He's a grand, ungodly, god-like man, Captain Ahab; doesn't speak much; but, when he does speak, then you may well listen.



Mark ye, be forewarned; Ahab's above the common; Ahab's been in colleges, as well as 'mong the cannibals; been used to deeper wonders than the waves; fixed his fiery lance in mightier, stranger foes than whales.



His lance!



aye, the keenest and the surest that out of all our isle!



Oh!



he ain't Captain Bildad; no, and he ain't Captain Peleg; HE'S AHAB, boy; and Ahab of old, thou knowest, was a crowned king!"



"And a very vile one.



When that wicked king was slain, the dogs, did they not lick his blood?"



"Come hither to me--hither, hither," said Peleg, with a significance in his eye that almost startled me.



"Look ye, lad; never say that on board the Pequod.



Never say it anywhere.



Captain Ahab did not name himself.



'Twas a foolish, ignorant whim of his crazy, widowed mother, who died when he was only a twelvemonth old.



And yet the old squaw Tistig, at Gayhead, said that the name would somehow prove prophetic.



And, perhaps, other fools like her may tell thee the same.



I wish to warn thee.



It's a lie.



I know Captain Ahab well; I've sailed with him as mate years ago; I know what he is--a good man--not a pious, good man, like Bildad, but a swearing good man--something like me--only there's a good deal more of him.



Aye, aye, I know that he was never very jolly; and I know that on the passage home, he was a little out of his mind for a spell; but it was the sharp shooting pains in his bleeding stump that brought that about, as any one might see.



I know, too, that ever since he lost his leg last voyage by that accursed whale, he's been a kind of moody--desperate moody, and savage sometimes; but that will all pass off.



And once for all, let me tell thee and assure thee, young man, it's better to sail with a moody good captain than a laughing bad one.



So good-bye to thee--and wrong not Captain Ahab, because he happens to have a wicked name.



Besides, my boy, he has a wife--not three voyages wedded--a sweet, resigned girl.



Think of that; by that sweet girl that old man has a child: hold ye then there can be any utter, hopeless harm in Ahab?



No, no, my lad; stricken, blasted, if he be, Ahab has his humanities!"



As I walked away, I was full of thoughtfulness; what had been incidentally revealed to me of Captain Ahab, filled me with a certain wild vagueness of painfulness concerning him.



And somehow, at the time, I felt a sympathy and a sorrow for him, but for I don't know what, unless it was the cruel loss of his leg.



And yet I also felt a strange awe of him; but that sort of awe, which I cannot at all describe, was not exactly awe; I do not know what it was.



But I felt it; and it did not discline me towards him; though I felt impatience at what seemed like mystery in him, so imperfectly as he was known to me then.



However, my thoughts were at length carried in other directions, so that for the present dark Ahab slipped my mind.















Now, as I before hinted, I have no objection to any person's religion, be it what it may, so long as that person does not kill or insult any other person, because that other person don't believe it also.



But when a man's religion becomes really frantic; when it is a positive torment to him; and, in fine, makes this earth of ours an uncomfortable inn to lodge in; then I think it high time to take that individual aside and argue the point with him.



And just so I now did with Queequeg.



"Queequeg," said I, "get into bed now, and lie and listen to me."



I then went on, beginning with the rise and progress of the primitive religions, and coming down to the various religions of the present time, during which time I labored to show Queequeg that all these Lents, Ramadans, and prolonged ham-squattings in cold, cheerless rooms were stark nonsense; bad for the health; useless for the soul; opposed, in short, to the obvious laws of Hygiene and common sense.



I told him, too, that he being in other things such an extremely sensible and sagacious savage, it pained me, very badly pained me, to see him now so deplorably foolish about this ridiculous Ramadan of his.



Besides, argued I, fasting makes the body cave in; hence the spirit caves in; and all thoughts born of a fast must necessarily be half-starved.



This is the reason why most dyspeptic religionists cherish such melancholy notions about their hereafters.



In one word, Queequeg, said I, rather digressively; hell is an idea first born on an undigested apple-dumpling; and since then perpetuated through the hereditary dyspepsias nurtured by Ramadans.



I then asked Queequeg whether he himself was ever troubled with dyspepsia; expressing the idea very plainly, so that he could take it in.



He said no; only upon one memorable occasion.



It was after a great feast given by his father the king, on the gaining of a great battle wherein fifty of the enemy had been killed by about two o'clock in the afternoon, and all cooked and eaten that very evening.



"No more, Queequeg," said I, shuddering; "that will do;" for I knew the inferences without his further hinting them.



I had seen a sailor who had visited that very island, and he told me that it was the custom, when a great battle had been gained there, to barbecue all the slain in the yard or garden of the victor; and then, one by one, they were placed in great wooden trenchers, and garnished round like a pilau, with breadfruit and cocoanuts; and with some parsley in their mouths, were sent round with the victor's compliments to all his friends, just as though these presents were so many Christmas turkeys.



After all, I do not think that my remarks about religion made much impression upon Queequeg.



Because, in the first place, he somehow seemed dull of hearing on that important subject, unless considered from his own point of view; and, in the second place, he did not more than one third understand me, couch my ideas simply as I would; and, finally, he no doubt thought he knew a good deal more about the true religion than I did.



He looked at me with a sort of condescending concern and compassion, as though he thought it a great pity that such a sensible young man should be so hopelessly lost to evangelical pagan piety.



At last we rose and dressed; and Queequeg, taking a prodigiously hearty breakfast of chowders of all sorts, so that the landlady should not make much profit by reason of his Ramadan, we sallied out to board the Pequod, sauntering along, and picking our teeth with halibut bones.

## CHAPTER 18



# His Mark



As we were walking down the end of the wharf towards the ship, Queequeg carrying his harpoon, Captain Peleg in his gruff voice loudly hailed us from his wigwam, saying he had not suspected my friend was a cannibal, and furthermore announcing that he let no cannibals on board that craft, unless they previously produced their papers.



"What do you mean by that, Captain Peleg?"



said I, now jumping on the bulwarks, and leaving my comrade standing on the wharf.



"I mean," he replied, "he must show his papers."



"Yes," said Captain Bildad in his hollow voice, sticking his head from behind Peleg's, out of the wigwam.



"He must show that he's converted.



Son of darkness," he added, turning to Queequeg, "art thou at present in communion with any Christian church?"



"Why," said I, "he's a member of the first Congregational Church."



Here be it said, that many tattooed savages sailing in Nantucket ships at last come to be converted into the churches.



"First Congregational Church," cried Bildad, "what!



that worships in Deacon Deuteronomy Coleman's meeting-house?"



and so saying, taking out his spectacles, he rubbed them with his great yellow bandana handkerchief, and putting them on very carefully, came out of the wigwam, and leaning stiffly over the bulwarks, took a good long look at Queequeg.







But at this question, Queequeg, who had twice or thrice before taken part in similar ceremonies, looked no ways abashed; but taking the offered pen, copied upon the paper, in the proper place, an exact counterpart of a queer round figure which was tattooed upon his arm; so that through Captain Peleg's obstinate mistake touching his appellative, it stood something like this:-- Quohog.



his X mark.



Meanwhile Captain Bildad sat earnestly and steadfastly eyeing Queequeg, and at last rising solemnly and fumbling in the huge pockets of his broad-skirted drab coat, took out a bundle of tracts, and selecting one entitled "The Latter Day Coming; or No Time to Lose," placed it in Queequeg's hands, and then grasping them and the book with both his, looked earnestly into his eyes, and said, "Son of darkness, I must do my duty by thee; I am part owner of this ship, and feel concerned for the souls of all its crew; if thou still clingest to thy Pagan ways, which I sadly fear, I beseech thee, remain not for aye a Belial bondsman.



Spurn the idol Bell, and the hideous dragon; turn from the wrath to come; mind thine eye, I say; oh!



goodness gracious!



steer clear of the fiery pit!"



Something of the salt sea yet lingered in old Bildad's language, heterogeneously mixed with Scriptural and domestic phrases.



"Avast there, avast there, Bildad, avast now spoiling our harpooneer," Peleg.



"Pious harpooneers never make good voyagers--it takes the shark out of 'em; no harpooneer is worth a straw who aint pretty sharkish.



There was young Nat Swaine, once the bravest boat-header out of all Nantucket and the Vineyard; he joined the meeting, and never came to good.



He got so frightened about his plaguy soul, that he shrinked and sheered away from whales, for fear of after-claps, in case he got stove and went to Davy Jones."



"Peleg!



Peleg!"



said Bildad, lifting his eyes and hands, "thou thyself, as I myself, hast seen many a perilous time; thou knowest, Peleg, what it is to have the fear of death; how, then, can'st thou prate in this ungodly guise.



Thou beliest thine own heart, Peleg.



Tell me, when this same Pequod here had her three masts overboard in that typhoon on Japan, that same voyage when thou went mate with Captain Ahab, did'st thou not think of Death and the Judgment then?"



"Hear him, hear him now," cried Peleg, marching across the cabin, and thrusting his hands far down into his pockets,--"hear him, all of ye.



Think of that!



When every moment we thought the ship would sink!



Death and the Judgment then?



What?



With all three masts making such an everlasting thundering against the side; and every sea breaking over us, fore and aft.



Think of Death and the Judgment then?



No!



no time to think about Death then.



Life was what Captain Ahab and I was thinking of; and how to save all hands--how to rig jury-masts--how to get into the nearest port; that was what I was thinking of."



Bildad said no more, but buttoning up his coat, stalked on deck, where we followed him.



There he stood, very quietly overlooking some sailmakers who were mending a top-sail in the waist.



Now and then he stooped to pick up a patch, or save an end of tarred twine, which otherwise might have been wasted.



# The Prophet



"Shipmates, have ye shipped in that ship?"



Queequeg and I had just left the Pequod, and were sauntering away from the water, for the moment each occupied with his own thoughts, when the above words were put to us by a stranger, who, pausing before us, levelled his massive forefinger at the vessel in question.



He was but shabbily apparelled in faded jacket and patched trowsers; a rag of a black handkerchief investing his neck.



A confluent small-pox had in all directions flowed over his face, and left it like the complicated ribbed bed of a torrent, when the rushing waters have been dried up.



"Have ye shipped in her?"



he repeated.



"You mean the ship Pequod, I suppose," said I, trying to gain a little more time for an uninterrupted look at him.



"Aye, the Pequod--that ship there," he said, drawing back his whole arm, and then rapidly shoving it straight out from him, with the fixed bayonet of his pointed finger darted full at the object.



"Yes," said I, "we have just signed the articles."



"Anything down there about your souls?"



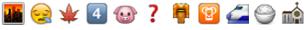
"About what?"



"Oh, perhaps you hav'n't got any," he said quickly.



"No matter though, I know many chaps that hav'n't got any,--good luck to 'em; and they are all the better off for it.



A soul's a sort of a fifth wheel to a wagon."



"What are you jabbering about, shipmate?"



said I.



"HE'S got enough, though, to make up for all deficiencies of that sort in other chaps," abruptly said the stranger, placing a nervous emphasis upon the word HE.



"Queequeg," said I, "let's go; this fellow has broken loose from somewhere; he's talking about something and somebody we don't know."



"Stop!"



cried the stranger.



"Ye said true--ye hav'n't seen Old Thunder yet, have ye?"



"Who's Old Thunder?"



said I, again riveted with the insane earnestness of his manner.



"Captain Ahab."



"What!



the captain of our ship, the Pequod?"



"Aye, among some of us old sailor chaps, he goes by that name.



Ye hav'n't seen him yet, have ye?"



"No, we hav'n't.



He's sick they say, but is getting better, and will be all right again before long."



"All right again before long!"



laughed the stranger, with a solemnly derisive sort of laugh.



"Look ye; when Captain Ahab is all right, then this left arm of mine will be all right; not before."



"What do you know about him?"



"What did they TELL you about him?"



Say that!"



"They didn't tell much of anything about him; only I've heard that he's a good whale-hunter, and a good captain to his crew."



"That's true, that's true--yes, both true enough.



But you must jump when he gives an order.



Step and growl; growl and go--that's the word with Captain Ahab.



But nothing about that thing that happened to him off Cape Horn, long ago, when he lay like dead for three days and nights; nothing about that deadly skrimmage with the Spaniard afore the altar in Santa?



--heard nothing about that, eh?



Nothing about the silver calabash he spat into?



And nothing about his losing his leg last voyage, according to the prophecy.



Didn't ye hear a word about them matters and something more, eh?



No, I don't think ye did; how could ye?



Who knows it?



Not all Nantucket, I guess.



But hows'ever, mayhap, ye've heard tell about the leg, and how he lost it; aye, ye have heard of that, I dare say.



Oh yes, THAT every one knows a'most--I mean they know he's only one leg; and that a parmacetti took the other off."



"My friend," said I, "what all this gibberish of yours is about, I don't know, and I don't much care; for it seems to me that you must be a little damaged in the head."



But if you are speaking of Captain Ahab, of that ship there, the Pequod, then let me tell you, that I know all about the loss of his leg."



"ALL about it, eh--sure you do?"



--all?"



"Pretty sure."



With finger pointed and eye levelled at the Pequod, the beggar-like stranger stood a moment, as if in a troubled reverie; then starting a little, turned and said:--"Ye've shipped, have ye?"



Names down on the papers?



Well, well, what's signed, is signed; and what's to be, will be; and then again, perhaps it won't be, after all.



Anyhow, it's all fixed and arranged a'ready; and some sailors or other must go with him, I suppose; as well these as any other men, God pity 'em!



Morning to ye, shipmates, morning; the ineffable heavens bless ye; I'm sorry I stopped ye."



"Look here, friend," said I, "if you have anything important to tell us, out with it; but if you are only trying to bamboozle us, you are mistaken in your game; that's all I have to say."



"And it's said very well, and I like to hear a chap talk up that way; you are just the man for him--the likes of ye."



Morning to ye, shipmates, morning!



Oh!



when ye get there, tell 'em I've concluded not to make one of 'em."



"Ah, my dear fellow, you can't fool us that way--you can't fool us."



It is the easiest thing in the world for a man to look as if he had a great secret in him."



"Morning to ye, shipmates, morning."



"Morning it is," said I.



"Come along, Queequeg, let's leave this crazy man.



But stop, tell me your name, will you?"



"Elijah."



Elijah!



thought I, and we walked away, both commenting, after each other's fashion, upon this ragged old sailor; and agreed that he was nothing but a humbug, trying to be a bugbear.



But we had not gone perhaps above a hundred yards, when chancing to turn a corner, and looking back as I did so, who should be seen but Elijah following us, though at a distance.



Somehow, the sight of him struck me so, that I said nothing to Queequeg of his being behind, but passed on with my comrade, anxious to see whether the stranger would turn the same corner that we did.



He did; and then it seemed to me that he was dogging us, but with what intent I could not for the life of me imagine.



This circumstance, coupled with his ambiguous, half-hinting, half-revealing, shrouded sort of talk, now begat in me all kinds of vague wonderments and half-apprehensions, and all connected with the Pequod; and Captain Ahab; and the leg he had lost; and the Cape Horn fit; and the silver calabash; and what Captain Peleg had said of him, when I left the ship the day previous; and the prediction of the squaw Tistig; and the voyage we had bound ourselves to sail; and a hundred other shadowy things.



I was resolved to satisfy myself whether this ragged Elijah was really dogging us or not, and with that intent crossed the way with Queequeg, and on that side of it retraced our steps.



But Elijah passed on, without seeming to notice us.



This relieved me; and once more, and finally as it seemed to me, I pronounced him in my heart, a humbug.



## CHAPTER 20

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# All Astir



A day or two passed, and there was great activity aboard the Pequod.



Not only were the old sails being mended, but new sails were coming on board, and bolts of canvas, and coils of rigging; in short, everything betokened that the ship's preparations were hurrying to a close.



Captain Peleg seldom or never went ashore, but sat in his wigwam keeping a sharp look-out upon the hands: Bildad did all the purchasing and providing at the stores; and the men employed in the hold and on the rigging were working till long after night-fall.



On the day following Queequeg's signing the articles, word was given at all the inns where the ship's company were stopping, that their chests must be on board before night, for there was no telling how soon the vessel might be sailing.



So Queequeg and I got down our traps, resolving, however, to sleep ashore till the last.



But it seems they always give very long notice in these cases, and the ship did not sail for several days.



But no wonder; there was a good deal to be done, and there is no telling how many things to be thought of, before the Pequod was fully equipped.



Every one knows what a multitude of things--beds, sauce-pans, knives and forks, shovels and tongs, napkins, nut-crackers, and what not, are indispensable to the business of housekeeping.



Just so with whaling, which necessitates a three-years' housekeeping upon the wide ocean, far from all grocers, costermongers, doctors, bakers, and bankers.



And though this also holds true of merchant vessels, yet not by any means to the same extent as with whalemén.



For besides the great length of the whaling voyage, the numerous articles peculiar to the prosecution of the fishery, and the impossibility of replacing them at the remote harbors usually frequented, it must be remembered, that of all ships, whaling vessels are the most exposed to accidents of all kinds, and especially to the destruction and loss of the very things upon which the success of the voyage most depends.



Hence, the spare boats, spare spars, and spare lines and harpoons, and spare everythings, almost, but a spare Captain and duplicate ship.



At the period of our arrival at the Island, the heaviest storage of the Pequod had been almost completed; comprising her beef, bread, water, fuel, and iron hoops and staves.



But, as before hinted, for some time there was a continual fetching and carrying on board of divers odds and ends of things, both large and small.



Chief among those who did this fetching and carrying was Captain Bildad's sister, a lean old lady of a most determined and indefatigable spirit, but withal very kindhearted, who seemed resolved that, if SHE could help it, nothing should be found wanting in the Pequod, after once fairly getting to sea.



At one time she would come on board with a jar of pickles for the steward's pantry; another time with a bunch of quills for the chief mate's desk, where he kept his log; a third time with a roll of flannel for the small of some one's rheumatic back.



Never did any woman better deserve her name, which was Charity--Aunt Charity, as everybody called her.



And like a sister of charity did this charitable Aunt Charity bustle about hither and thither, ready to turn her hand and heart to anything that promised to yield safety, comfort, and consolation to all on board a ship in which her beloved brother Bildad was concerned, and in which she herself owned a score or two of well-saved dollars.



But it was startling to see this excellent hearted Quakeress coming on board, as she did the last day, with a long oil-ladle in one hand, and a still longer whaling lance in the other.



Nor was Bildad himself nor Captain Peleg at all backward.



As for Bildad, he carried about with him a long list of the articles needed, and at every fresh arrival, down went his mark opposite that article upon the paper.



Every once in a while Peleg came hobbling out of his whalebone den, roaring at the men down the hatchways, roaring up to the riggers at the mast-head, and then concluded by roaring back into his wigwam.



During these days of preparation, Queequeg and I often visited the craft, and as often I asked about Captain Ahab, and how he was, and when he was going to come on board his ship.



To these questions they would answer, that he was getting better and better, and was expected aboard every day; meantime, the two captains, Peleg and Bildad, could attend to everything necessary to fit the vessel for the voyage.



If I had been downright honest with myself, I would have seen very plainly in my heart that I did but half fancy being committed this way to so long a voyage, without once laying my eyes on the man who was to be the absolute dictator of it, so soon as the ship sailed out upon the open sea.



But when a man suspects any wrong, it sometimes happens that if he be already involved in the matter, he insensibly strives to cover up his suspicions even from himself.



And much this way it was with me.



I said nothing, and tried to think nothing.



At last it was given out that some time next day the ship would certainly sail.



So next morning, Queequeg and I took a very early start.



## CHAPTER 21



# Going Aboard



It was nearly six o'clock, but only grey imperfect misty dawn, when we drew nigh the wharf.



"There are some sailors running ahead there, if I see right," said I to Queequeg, "it can't be shadows; she's off by sunrise, I guess; come on!"



"Avast!"



cried a voice, whose owner at the same time coming close behind us, laid a hand upon both our shoulders, and then insinuating himself between us, stood stooping forward a little, in the uncertain twilight, strangely peering from Queequeg to me.



It was Elijah.



"Going aboard?"



"Hands off, will you," said I.



"Lookee here," said Queequeg, shaking himself, "go 'way!"



"Ain't going aboard, then?"



"Yes, we are," said I, "but what business is that of yours?"



Do you know, Mr. Elijah, that I consider you a little impertinent?"



"No, no, no; I wasn't aware of that," said Elijah, slowly and wonderingly looking from me to Queequeg, with the most unaccountable glances.













And all this seemed natural enough; especially as in the merchant service many captains never show themselves on deck for a considerable time after heaving up the anchor, but remain over the cabin table, having a farewell merry-making with their shore friends, before they quit the ship for good with the pilot.



But there was not much chance to think over the matter, for Captain Peleg was now all alive.



He seemed to do most of the talking and commanding, and not Bildad.



"Aft here, ye sons of bachelors," he cried, as the sailors lingered at the main-mast.



"Mr. Starbuck, drive'em aft."



"Strike the tent there!"



--was the next order.



As I hinted before, this whalebone marquee was never pitched except in port; and on board the Pequod, for thirty years, the order to strike the tent was well known to be the next thing to heaving up the anchor.



"Man the capstan!"



Blood and thunder!



--jump!"



--was the next command, and the crew sprang for the handspikes.



Now in getting under weigh, the station generally occupied by the pilot is the forward part of the ship.



And here Bildad, who, with Peleg, be it known, in addition to his other officers, was one of the licensed pilots of the port--he being suspected to have got himself made a pilot in order to save the Nantucket pilot-fee to all the ships he was concerned in, for he never piloted any other craft--Bildad, I say, might now be seen actively engaged in looking over the bows for the approaching anchor, and at intervals singing what seemed a dismal stave of psalmody, to cheer the hands at the windlass, who roared forth some sort of a chorus about the girls in Booble Alley, with hearty good will.



Nevertheless, not three days previous, Bildad had told them that no profane songs would be allowed on board the Pequod, particularly in getting under weigh; and Charity, his sister, had placed a small choice copy of Watts in each seaman's berth.



Meantime, overseeing the other part of the ship, Captain Peleg ripped and swore astern in the most frightful manner.



I almost thought he would sink the ship before the anchor could be got up; involuntarily I paused on my handspike, and told Queequeg to do the same, thinking of the perils we both ran, in starting on the voyage with such a devil for a pilot.



I was comforting myself, however, with the thought that in pious Bildad might be found some salvation, spite of his seven hundred and seventy-seventh lay; when I felt a sudden sharp poke in my rear, and turning round, was horrified at the apparition of Captain Peleg in the act of withdrawing his leg from my immediate vicinity.



That was my first kick.



"Is that the way they heave in the marchant service?"



he roared.



"Spring, thou sheep-head; spring, and break thy backbone!



Why don't ye spring, I say, all of ye--spring!



Quohog!



spring, thou chap with the red whiskers; spring there, Scotch-cap; spring, thou green pants.



Spring, I say, all of ye, and spring your eyes out!"



And so saying, he moved along the windlass, here and there using his leg very freely, while imperturbable Bildad kept leading off with his psalmody.



Thinks I, Captain Peleg must have been drinking something to-day.



At last the anchor was up, the sails were set, and off we glided.



It was a short, cold Christmas; and as the short northern day merged into night, we found ourselves almost broad upon the wintry ocean, whose freezing spray cased us in ice, as in polished armor.



The long rows of teeth on the bulwarks glistened in the moonlight; and like the white ivory tusks of some huge elephant, vast curving icicles depended from the bows.



Lank Bildad, as pilot, headed the first watch, and ever and anon, as the old craft deep dived into the green seas, and sent the shivering frost all over her, and the winds howled, and the cordage rang, his steady notes were heard,-- "Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood, Stand dressed in living green.



So to the Jews old Canaan stood, While Jordan rolled between."





Luck to ye, Starbuck--luck to ye, Mr. Stubb--luck to ye, Mr. Flask--good-bye and good luck to ye all--and this day three years I'll have a hot supper smoking for ye in old Nantucket.



Hurrah and away!"



"God bless ye, and have ye in His holy keeping, men," murmured old Bildad, almost incoherently.



"I hope ye'll have fine weather now, so that Captain Ahab may soon be moving among ye--a pleasant sun is all he needs, and ye'll have plenty of them in the tropic voyage ye go.



Be careful in the hunt, ye mates.



Don't stave the boats needlessly, ye harpooners; good white cedar plank is raised full three per cent.



within the year.



Don't forget your prayers, either.



Mr. Starbuck, mind that cooper don't waste the spare staves.



Oh!



the sail-needles are in the green locker!



Don't whale it too much a' Lord's days, men; but don't miss a fair chance either, that's rejecting Heaven's good gifts.



Have an eye to the molasses tierce, Mr. Stubb; it was a little leaky, I thought.



If ye touch at the islands, Mr. Flask, beware of fornication.



Good-bye, good-bye!



Don't keep that cheese too long down in the hold, Mr. Starbuck; it'll spoil.



Be careful with the butter--twenty cents the pound it was, and mind ye, if--"Come, come, Captain Bildad; stop palavering,--away!"



and with that, Peleg hurried him over the side, and both dropt into the boat.



Ship and boat diverged; the cold, damp night breeze blew between; a screaming gull flew overhead; the two hulls wildly rolled; we gave three heavy-hearted cheers, and blindly plunged like fate into the lone Atlantic.





Glimpses do ye seem to see of that mortally intolerable truth; that all deep, earnest thinking is but the intrepid effort of the soul to keep the open independence of her sea; while the wildest winds of heaven and earth conspire to cast her on the treacherous, slavish shore?



But as in landlessness alone resides highest truth, shoreless, indefinite as God--so, better is it to perish in that howling infinite, than be ingloriously dashed upon the lee, even if that were safety!



For worm-like, then, oh!



who would craven crawl to land!



Terrors of the terrible!



is all this agony so vain?



Take heart, take heart, O Bulkington!



Bear thee grimly, demigod!



Up from the spray of thy ocean-perishing--straight up, leaps thy apotheosis!

# CHAPTER 24



## The Advocate



As Queequeg and I are now fairly embarked in this business of whaling; and as this business of whaling has somehow come to be regarded among landsmen as a rather unpoetical and disreputable pursuit; therefore, I am all anxiety to convince ye, ye landsmen, of the injustice hereby done to us hunters of whales.



In the first place, it may be deemed almost superfluous to establish the fact, that among people at large, the business of whaling is not accounted on a level with what are called the liberal professions.



If a stranger were introduced into any miscellaneous metropolitan society, it would but slightly advance the general opinion of his merits, were he presented to the company as a harpooner, say; and if in emulation of the naval officers he should append the initials S.



W.



F.



(Sperm Whale Fishery) to his visiting card, such a procedure would be deemed pre-eminently presuming and ridiculous.



Doubtless one leading reason why the world declines honouring us whalemen, is this: they think that, at best, our vocation amounts to a butchering sort of business; and that when actively engaged therein, we are surrounded by all manner of defilements.



Butchers we are, that is true.



But butchers, also, and butchers of the bloodiest badge have been all Martial Commanders whom the world invariably delights to honour.



And as for the matter of the alleged uncleanliness of our business, ye shall soon be initiated into certain facts hitherto pretty generally unknown, and which, upon the whole, will triumphantly plant the sperm whale-ship at least among the cleanliest things of this tidy earth.





It would be a hopeless, endless task to catalogue all these things.



Let a handful suffice.



For many years past the whale-ship has been the pioneer in ferreting out the remotest and least known parts of the earth.



She has explored seas and archipelagoes which had no chart, where no Cook or Vancouver had ever sailed.



If American and European men-of-war now peacefully ride in once savage harbors, let them fire salutes to the honour and glory of the whale-ship, which originally showed them the way, and first interpreted between them and the savages.



They may celebrate as they will the heroes of Exploring Expeditions, your Cooks, your Krusensterns; but I say that scores of anonymous Captains have sailed out of Nantucket, that were as great, and greater than your Cook and your Krusenstern.



For in their succourless empty-handedness, they, in the heathenish sharked waters, and by the beaches of unrecorded, javelin islands, battled with virgin wonders and terrors that Cook with all his marines and muskets would not willingly have dared.



All that is made such a flourish of in the old South Sea Voyages, those things were but the life-time commonplaces of our heroic Nantucketers.



Often, adventures which Vancouver dedicates three chapters to, these men accounted unworthy of being set down in the ship's common log.



Ah, the world!



Oh, the world!



Until the whale fishery rounded Cape Horn, no commerce but colonial, scarcely any intercourse but colonial, was carried on between Europe and the long line of the opulent Spanish provinces on the Pacific coast.



It was the whaleman who first broke through the jealous policy of the Spanish crown, touching those colonies; and, if space permitted, it might be distinctly shown how from those whalemen at last eventuated the liberation of Peru, Chili, and Bolivia from the yoke of Old Spain, and the establishment of the eternal democracy in those parts.



That great America on the other side of the sphere, Australia, was given to the enlightened world by the whaleman.



After its first blunder-born discovery by a Dutchman, all other ships long shunned those shores as pestiferously barbarous; but the whale-ship touched there.



The whale-ship is the true mother of that now mighty colony.



Moreover, in the infancy of the first Australian settlement, the emigrants were several times saved from starvation by the benevolent biscuit of the whale-ship luckily dropping an anchor in their waters.



The uncounted isles of all Polynesia confess the same truth, and do commercial homage to the whale-ship, that cleared the way for the missionary and the merchant, and in many cases carried the primitive missionaries to their first destinations.



If that double-bolted land, Japan, is ever to become hospitable, it is the whale-ship alone to whom the credit will be due; for already she is on the threshold.



But if, in the face of all this, you still declare that whaling has no aesthetically noble associations connected with it, then am I ready to shiver fifty lances with you there, and unhorse you with a split helmet every time.



The whale has no famous author, and whaling no famous chronicler, you will say.



THE WHALE NO FAMOUS AUTHOR, AND WHALING NO FAMOUS CHRONICLER?



Who wrote the first account of our Leviathan?



Who but mighty Job!



And who composed the first narrative of a whaling-voyage?



Who, but no less a prince than Alfred the Great, who, with his own royal pen, took down the words from Other, the Norwegian whale-hunter of those times!



And who pronounced our glowing eulogy in Parliament?



Who, but Edmund Burke!



True enough, but then whalemens themselves are poor devils; they have no good blood in their veins.



NO GOOD BLOOD IN THEIR VEINS?



They have something better than royal blood there.



The grandmother of Benjamin Franklin was Mary Morrel; afterwards, by marriage, Mary Folger, one of the old settlers of Nantucket, and the ancestress to a long line of Folgers and harpooners--all kith and kin to noble Benjamin--this day darting the barbed iron from one side of the world to the other.



Good again; but then all confess that somehow whaling is not respectable.



WHALING NOT RESPECTABLE?



Whaling is imperial!



By old English statutory law, the whale is declared "a royal fish."



\* Oh, that's only nominal!



The whale himself has never figured in any grand imposing way.



THE WHALE NEVER FIGURED IN ANY GRAND IMPOSING WAY?



In one of the mighty triumphs given to a Roman general upon his entering the world's capital, the bones of a whale, brought all the way from the Syrian coast, were the most conspicuous object in the cymballed procession.



\*\*See subsequent chapters for something more on this head.



Grant it, since you cite it; but, say what you will, there is no real dignity in whaling.



NO DIGNITY IN WHALING?



The dignity of our calling the very heavens attest.



Cetus is a constellation in the South!



No more!



Drive down your hat in presence of the Czar, and take it off to Queequeg!



No more!



I know a man that, in his lifetime, has taken three hundred and fifty whales.



I account that man more honourable than that great captain of antiquity who boasted of taking as many walled towns.



And, as for me, if, by any possibility, there be any as yet undiscovered prime thing in me; if I shall ever deserve any real repute in that small but high hushed world which I might not be unreasonably ambitious of; if hereafter I shall do anything that, upon the whole, a man might rather have done than to have left undone; if, at my death, my executors, or more properly my creditors, find any precious MSS.



in my desk, then here I prospectively ascribe all the honour and the glory to whaling; for a whale-ship was my Yale College and my Harvard.



# Postscript



In behalf of the dignity of whaling, I would fain advance naught but substantiated facts.



But after embattling his facts, an advocate who should wholly suppress a not unreasonable surmise, which might tell eloquently upon his cause--such an advocate, would he not be blameworthy?



It is well known that at the coronation of kings and queens, even modern ones, a certain curious process of seasoning them for their functions is gone through.



There is a saltcellar of state, so called, and there may be a castor of state.



How they use the salt, precisely--who knows?



Certain I am, however, that a king's head is solemnly oiled at his coronation, even as a head of salad.



Can it be, though, that they anoint it with a view of making its interior run well, as they anoint machinery?



Much might be ruminated here, concerning the essential dignity of this regal process, because in common life we esteem but meanly and contemptibly a fellow who anoints his hair, and palpably smells of that anointing.



In truth, a mature man who uses hair-oil, unless medicinally, that man has probably got a quoggy spot in him somewhere.



As a general rule, he can't amount to much in his totality.



But the only thing to be considered here, is this--what kind of oil is used at coronations?



Certainly it cannot be olive oil, nor macassar oil, nor castor oil, nor bear's oil, nor train oil, nor cod-liver oil.



What then can it possibly be, but sperm oil in its unmanufactured, unpolluted state, the sweetest of all oils?



Think of that, ye loyal Britons!



we whalemen supply your kings and queens with coronation stuff!





Yet, for all his hardy sobriety and fortitude, there were certain qualities in him which at times affected, and in some cases seemed well nigh to overbalance all the rest.



Uncommonly conscientious for a seaman, and endowed with a deep natural reverence, the wild watery loneliness of his life did therefore strongly incline him to superstition; but to that sort of superstition, which in some organizations seems rather to spring, somehow, from intelligence than from ignorance.



Outward portents and inward presentiments were his.



And if at times these things bent the welded iron of his soul, much more did his far-away domestic memories of his young Cape wife and child, tend to bend him still more from the original ruggedness of his nature, and open him still further to those latent influences which, in some honest-hearted men, restrain the gush of dare-devil daring, so often evinced by others in the more perilous vicissitudes of the fishery.



"I will have no man in my boat," said Starbuck, "who is not afraid of a whale."



By this, he seemed to mean, not only that the most reliable and useful courage was that which arises from the fair estimation of the encountered peril, but that an utterly fearless man is a far more dangerous comrade than a coward.



"Aye, aye," said Stubb, the second mate, "Starbuck, there, is as careful a man as you'll find anywhere in this fishery."



But we shall ere long see what that word "careful" precisely means when used by a man like Stubb, or almost any other whale hunter.



Starbuck was no crusader after perils; in him courage was not a sentiment; but a thing simply useful to him, and always at hand upon all mortally practical occasions.



Besides, he thought, perhaps, that in this business of whaling, courage was one of the great staple outfits of the ship, like her beef and her bread, and not to be foolishly wasted.



Wherefore he had no fancy for lowering for whales after sun-down; nor for persisting in fighting a fish that too much persisted in fighting him.



For, thought Starbuck, I am here in this critical ocean to kill whales for my living, and not to be killed by them for theirs; and that hundreds of men had been so killed Starbuck well knew.



What doom was his own father's?



Where, in the bottomless deeps, could he find the torn limbs of his brother?



With memories like these in him, and, moreover, given to a certain superstitiousness, as has been said; the courage of this Starbuck which could, nevertheless, still flourish, must indeed have been extreme.



But it was not in reasonable nature that a man so organized, and with such terrible experiences and remembrances as he had; it was not in nature that these things should fail in latently engendering an element in him, which, under suitable circumstances, would break out from its confinement, and burn all his courage up.



And brave as he might be, it was that sort of bravery chiefly, visible in some intrepid men, which, while generally abiding firm in the conflict with seas, or winds, or whales, or any of the ordinary irrational horrors of the world, yet cannot withstand those more terrific, because more spiritual terrors, which sometimes menace you from the concentrating brow of an enraged and mighty man.



But were the coming narrative to reveal in any instance, the complete abasement of poor Starbuck's fortune, scarce might I have the heart to write it; for it is a thing most sorrowful, nay shocking, to expose the fall of valour in the soul.



Men may seem detestable as joint stock-companies and nations; knaves, fools, and murderers there may be; men may have mean and meagre faces; but man, in the ideal, is so noble and so sparkling, such a grand and glowing creature, that over any ignominious blemish in him all his fellows should run to throw their costliest robes.



That immaculate manliness we feel within ourselves, so far within us, that it remains intact though all the outer character seem gone; bleeds with keenest anguish at the undraped spectacle of a valor-ruined man.



Nor can piety itself, at such a shameful sight, completely stifle her upbraidings against the permitting stars.



But this august dignity I treat of, is not the dignity of kings and robes, but that abounding dignity which has no robed investiture.



Thou shalt see it shining in the arm that wields a pick or drives a spike; that democratic dignity which, on all hands, radiates without end from God; Himself!



The great God absolute!



The centre and circumference of all democracy!



His omnipresence, our divine equality!



If, then, to meanest mariners, and renegades and castaways, I shall hereafter ascribe high qualities, though dark; weave round them tragic graces; if even the most mournful, perchance the most abased, among them all, shall at times lift himself to the exalted mounts; if I shall touch that workman's arm with some ethereal light; if I shall spread a rainbow over his disastrous set of sun; then against all mortal critics bear me out in it, thou Just Spirit of Equality, which hast spread one royal mantle of humanity over all my kind!



Bear me out in it, thou great democratic God!



who didst not refuse to the swart convict, Bunyan, the pale, poetic pearl; Thou who didst clothe with doubly hammered leaves of finest gold, the stumped and paupered arm of old Cervantes; Thou who didst pick up Andrew Jackson from the pebbles; who didst hurl him upon a war-horse; who didst thunder him higher than a throne!



Thou who, in all Thy mighty, earthly marchings, ever cullest Thy selectest champions from the kingly commons; bear me out in it, O God!



## CHAPTER 27



# Knights And Squires



Stubb was the second mate.



He was a native of Cape Cod; and hence, according to local usage, was called a Cape-Cod-man.



A happy-go-lucky; neither craven nor valiant; taking perils as they came with an indifferent air; and while engaged in the most imminent crisis of the chase, toiling away, calm and collected as a journeyman joiner engaged for the year.



Good-humored, easy, and careless, he presided over his whale-boat as if the most deadly encounter were but a dinner, and his crew all invited guests.



He was as particular about the comfortable arrangement of his part of the boat, as an old stage-driver is about the snugness of his box.



When close to the whale, in the very death-lock of the fight, he handled his unpitying lance coolly and off-handedly, as a whistling tinker his hammer.



He would hum over his old rigadig tunes while flank and flank with the most exasperated monster.



Long usage had, for this Stubb, converted the jaws of death into an easy chair.



What he thought of death itself, there is no telling.



Whether he ever thought of it at all, might be a question; but, if he ever did chance to cast his mind that way after a comfortable dinner, no doubt, like a good sailor, he took it to be a sort of call of the watch to tumble aloft, and bestir themselves there, about something which he would find out when he obeyed the order, and not sooner.



What, perhaps, with other things, made Stubb such an easy-going, unfeeling man, so cheerily trudging off with the burden of life in a world full of grave pedlars, all bowed to the ground with their packs; what helped to bring about that almost impious good-humor of his; that thing must have been his pipe.





Or, being armed with their long keen whaling spears, they were as a picked trio of lancers; even as the harpooners were fingers of javelins.



And since in this famous fishery, each mate or headsman, like a Gothic Knight of old, is always accompanied by his boat-steerer or harpoonee, who in certain conjunctures provides him with a fresh lance, when the former one has been badly twisted, or elbowed in the assault; and moreover, as there generally subsists between the two, a close intimacy and friendliness; it is therefore but meet, that in this place we set down who the Pequod's harpooners were, and to what headsman each of them belonged.



First of all was Queequeg, whom Starbuck, the chief mate, had selected for his squire.



But Queequeg is already known.



Next was Tashtego, an unmixed Indian from Gay Head, the most westerly promontory of Martha's Vineyard, where there still exists the last remnant of a village of red men, which has long supplied the neighboring island of Nantucket with many of her most daring harpooners.



In the fishery, they usually go by the generic name of Gay-Headers.



Tashtego's long, lean, sable hair, his high cheek bones, and black rounding eyes--for an Indian, Oriental in their largeness, but Antarctic in their glittering expression--all this sufficiently proclaimed him an inheritor of the unvitiated blood of those proud warrior hunters, who, in quest of the great New England moose, had scoured, bow in hand, the aboriginal forests of the main.



But no longer snuffing in the trail of the wild beasts of the woodland, Tashtego now hunted in the wake of the great whales of the sea; the unerring harpoon of the son fitly replacing the infallible arrow of the sires.



To look at the tawny brawn of his lithe snaky limbs, you would almost have credited the superstitions of some of the earlier Puritans, and half-believed this wild Indian to be a son of the Prince of the Powers of the Air.



Tashtego was Stubb the second mate's squire.



Third among the harpooners was Daggoo, a gigantic, coal-black negro-savage, with a lion-like tread--an Ahasuerus to behold.



Suspended from his ears were two golden hoops, so large that the sailors called them ring-bolts, and would talk of securing the top-sail halyards to them.



In his youth Daggoo had voluntarily shipped on board of a whaler, lying in a lonely bay on his native coast.



And never having been anywhere in the world but in Africa, Nantucket, and the pagan harbors most frequented by whalemens; and having now led for many years the bold life of the fishery in the ships of owners uncommonly heedful of what manner of men they shipped; Daggoo retained all his barbaric virtues, and erect as a giraffe, moved about the decks in all the pomp of six feet five in his socks.



There was a corporeal humility in looking up at him; and a white man standing before him seemed a white flag come to beg truce of a fortress.



Curious to tell, this imperial negro, Ahasuerus Daggoo, was the Squire of little Flask, who looked like a chess-man beside him.



As for the residue of the Pequod's company, be it said, that at the present day not one in two of the many thousand men before the mast employed in the American whale fishery, are Americans born, though pretty nearly all the officers are.



Herein it is the same with the American whale fishery as with the American army and military and merchant navies, and the engineering forces employed in the construction of the American Canals and Railroads.



The same, I say, because in all these cases the native American liberally provides the brains, the rest of the world as generously supplying the muscles.



No small number of these whaling seamen belong to the Azores, where the outward bound Nantucket whalers frequently touch to augment their crews from the hardy peasants of those rocky shores.



In like manner, the Greenland whalers sailing out of Hull or London, put in at the Shetland Islands, to receive the full complement of their crew.



Upon the passage homewards, they drop them there again.



How it is, there is no telling, but Islanders seem to make the best whalemens.



They were nearly all Islanders in the Pequod, ISOLATOES too, I call such, not acknowledging the common continent of men, but each ISOLATO living on a separate continent of his own.



Yet now, federated along one keel, what a set these Isolatoes were!



An Anacharsis Cloutz deputation from all the isles of the sea, and all the ends of the earth, accompanying Old Ahab in the Pequod to lay the world's grievances before that bar from which not very many of them ever come back.



Black Little Pip--he never did--oh, no!



he went before.



Poor Alabama boy!



On the grim Pequod's forecandle, ye shall ere long see him, beating his tambourine; prelusive of the eternal time, when sent for, to the great quarter-deck on high, he was bid strike in with angels, and beat his tambourine in glory; called a coward here, hailed a hero there!





Three better, more likely sea-officers and men, each in his own different way, could not readily be found, and they were every one of them Americans; a Nantucketer, a Vineyarder, a Cape man.



Now, it being Christmas when the ship shot from out her harbor, for a space we had biting Polar weather, though all the time running away from it to the southward; and by every degree and minute of latitude which we sailed, gradually leaving that merciless winter, and all its intolerable weather behind us.



It was one of those less lowering, but still grey and gloomy enough mornings of the transition, when with a fair wind the ship was rushing through the water with a vindictive sort of leaping and melancholy rapidity, that as I mounted to the deck at the call of the forenoon watch, so soon as I levelled my glance towards the taffrail, foreboding shivers ran over me.



Reality outran apprehension; Captain Ahab stood upon his quarter-deck.



There seemed no sign of common bodily illness about him, nor of the recovery from any.



He looked like a man cut away from the stake, when the fire has overrunningly wasted all the limbs without consuming them, or taking away one particle from their compacted aged robustness.



His whole high, broad form, seemed made of solid bronze, and shaped in an unalterable mould, like Cellini's cast Perseus.



Threading its way out from among his grey hairs, and continuing right down one side of his tawny scorched face and neck, till it disappeared in his clothing, you saw a slender rod-like mark, lividly whitish.



It resembled that perpendicular seam sometimes made in the straight, lofty trunk of a great tree, when the upper lightning tearingly darts down it, and without wrenching a single twig, peels and grooves out the bark from top to bottom, ere running off into the soil, leaving the tree still greenly alive, but branded.



Whether that mark was born with him, or whether it was the scar left by some desperate wound, no one could certainly say.



By some tacit consent, throughout the voyage little or no allusion was made to it, especially by the mates.



But once Tashtego's senior, an old Gay-Head Indian among the crew, superstitiously asserted that not till he was full forty years old did Ahab become that way branded, and then it came upon him, not in the fury of any mortal fray, but in an elemental strife at sea.



Yet, this wild hint seemed inferentially negated, by what a grey Manxman insinuated, an old sepulchral man, who, having never before sailed out of Nantucket, had never ere this laid eye upon wild Ahab.



Nevertheless, the old sea-traditions, the immemorial credulities, popularly invested this old Manxman with preternatural powers of discernment.





But the Pequod was only making a passage now; not regularly cruising; nearly all whaling preparatives needing supervision the mates were fully competent to, so that there was little or nothing, out of himself, to employ or excite Ahab, now; and thus chase away, for that one interval, the clouds that layer upon layer were piled upon his brow, as ever all clouds choose the loftiest peaks to pile themselves upon.



Nevertheless, ere long, the warm, warbling persuasiveness of the pleasant, holiday weather we came to, seemed gradually to charm him from his mood.



For, as when the red-checked, dancing girls, April and May, trip home to the wintry, misanthropic woods; even the barest, ruggedest, most thunder-cloven old oak will at least send forth some few green sprouts, to welcome such glad-hearted visitants; so Ahab did, in the end, a little respond to the playful allurings of that girlish air.



More than once did he put forth the faint blossom of a look, which, in any other man, would have soon flowered out in a smile.



## CHAPTER 29



# Enter Ahab; To Him, Stubb



Some days elapsed, and ice and icebergs all astern, the Pequod now went rolling through the bright Quito spring, which, at sea, almost perpetually reigns on the threshold of the eternal August of the Tropic.



The warmly cool, clear, ringing, perfumed, overflowing, redundant days, were as crystal goblets of Persian sherbet, heaped up--flaked up, with rose-water snow.



The starred and stately nights seemed haughty dames in jewelled velvets, nursing at home in lonely pride, the memory of their absent conquering Earls, the golden helmeted suns!



For sleeping man, 'twas hard to choose between such winsome days and such seducing nights.



But all the witcheries of that unwaning weather did not merely lend new spells and potencies to the outward world.



Inward they turned upon the soul, especially when the still mild hours of eve came on; then, memory shot her crystals as the clear ice most forms of noiseless twilights.



And all these subtle agencies, more and more they wrought on Ahab's texture.



Old age is always wakeful; as if, the longer linked with life, the less man has to do with aught that looks like death.



Among sea-commanders, the old greybeards will oftenest leave their berths to visit the night-cloaked deck.



It was so with Ahab; only that now, of late, he seemed so much to live in the open air, that truly speaking, his visits were more to the cabin, than from the cabin to the planks.



"It feels like going down into one's tomb,"--he would mutter to himself--"for an old captain like me to be descending this narrow scuttle, to go to my grave-dug berth."







Ain't that queer, now?



But there's no telling, it's the old game--Here goes for a snooze.



Damn me, it's worth a fellow's while to be born into the world, if only to fall right asleep.



And now that I think of it, that's about the first thing babies do, and that's a sort of queer, too.



Damn me, but all things are queer, come to think of 'em.



But that's against my principles.



Think not, is my eleventh commandment; and sleep when you can, is my twelfth--So here goes again.



But how's that?



didn't he call me a dog?



blazes!



he called me ten times a donkey, and piled a lot of jackasses on top of THAT!



He might as well have kicked me, and done with it.



Maybe he DID kick me, and I didn't observe it, I was so taken all aback with his brow, somehow.



It flashed like a bleached bone.



What the devil's the matter with me?



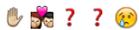
I don't stand right on my legs.



Coming afoul of that old man has a sort of turned me wrong side out.



By the Lord, I must have been dreaming, though--How?



how?



how?



--but the only way's to stash it; so here goes to hammock again; and in the morning, I'll see how this plaguery juggling thinks over by daylight."





This thing that is meant for sereneness, to send up mild white vapours among mild white hairs, not among torn iron-grey locks like mine.



I'll smoke no more--" He tossed the still lighted pipe into the sea.



The fire hissed in the waves; the same instant the ship shot by the bubble the sinking pipe made.



With slouched hat, Ahab lurchingly paced the planks.

# CHAPTER 31



# Queen Mab



Next morning Stubb accosted Flask.



"Such a queer dream, King-Post, I never had.



You know the old man's ivory leg, well I dreamed he kicked me with it; and when I tried to kick back, upon my soul, my little man, I kicked my leg right off!



And then, presto!



Ahab seemed a pyramid, and I, like a blazing fool, kept kicking at it.



But what was still more curious, Flask--you know how curious all dreams are--through all this rage that I was in, I somehow seemed to be thinking to myself, that after all, it was not much of an insult, that kick from Ahab.



'Why,' thinks I, 'what's the row?



It's not a real leg, only a false leg.



' And there's a mighty difference between a living thump and a dead thump.



That's what makes a blow from the hand, Flask, fifty times more savage to bear than a blow from a cane.



The living member--that makes the living insult, my little man.



And thinks I to myself all the while, mind, while I was stubbing my silly toes against that cursed pyramid--so confoundedly contradictory was it all, all the while, I say, I was thinking to myself, 'what's his leg now, but a cane--a whalebone cane.





'Wise Stubb,' said he, 'wise Stubb;' and kept muttering it all the time, a sort of eating of his own gums like a chimney hag.



Seeing he wasn't going to stop saying over his 'wise Stubb, wise Stubb,' I thought I might as well fall to kicking the pyramid again.



But I had only just lifted my foot for it, when he roared out, 'Stop that kicking!



'Holloa,' says I, 'what's the matter now, old fellow?



'Look ye here,' says he; 'let's argue the insult.



Captain Ahab kicked ye, didn't he?



'Yes, he did,' says I--'right HERE it was.



'Very good,' says he--'he used his ivory leg, didn't he?



'Yes, he did,' says I.



'Well then,' says he, 'wise Stubb, what have you to complain of?



Didn't he kick with right good will?



it wasn't a common pitch pine leg he kicked with, was it?



No, you were kicked by a great man, and with a beautiful ivory leg, Stubb.



It's an honour; I consider it an honour.



Listen, wise Stubb.



In old England the greatest lords think it great glory to be slapped by a queen, and made garter-knights of; but, be YOUR boast, Stubb, that ye were kicked by old Ahab, and made a wise man of.



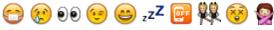
Remember what I say; BE kicked by him; account his kicks honours; and on no account kick back; for you can't help yourself, wise Stubb.



Don't you see that pyramid?



'With that, he all of a sudden seemed somehow, in some queer fashion, to swim off into the air.



I snored; rolled over; and there I was in my hammock!



Now, what do you think of that dream, Flask?"



"I don't know; it seems a sort of foolish to me, tho.



"" "May be; may be.



But it's made a wise man of me, Flask.



D'ye see Ahab standing there, sideways looking over the stern?



Well, the best thing you can do, Flask, is to let the old man alone; never speak to him, whatever he says.



Halloa!



What's that he shouts?



Hark!"



"Mast-head, there!



Look sharp, all of ye!



There are whales hereabouts!



"If ye see a white one, split your lungs for him!



"What do you think of that now, Flask?



ain't there a small drop of something queer about that, eh?



A white whale--did ye mark that, man?



Look ye--there's something special in the wind.



Stand by for it, Flask.



Ahab has that that's bloody on his mind.



But, mum; he comes this way."



## CHAPTER 32



# Cetology



Already we are boldly launched upon the deep; but soon we shall be lost in its unshored, harbourless immensities.



Ere that come to pass; ere the Pequod's weedy hull rolls side by side with the barnacled hulls of the leviathan; at the outset it is but well to attend to a matter almost indispensable to a thorough appreciative understanding of the more special leviathanic revelations and allusions of all sorts which are to follow.



It is some systematized exhibition of the whale in his broad genera, that I would now fain put before you.



Yet is it no easy task.



The classification of the constituents of a chaos, nothing less is here essayed.



Listen to what the best and latest authorities have laid down.



"No branch of Zoology is so much involved as that which is entitled Cetology," says Captain Scoresby, A.D. 1820.



"It is not my intention, were it in my power, to enter into the inquiry as to the true method of dividing the cetacea into groups and families.



... Utter confusion exists among the historians of this animal" (sperm whale), says Surgeon Beale, A.D. 1839.



"Unfitness to pursue our research in the unfathomable waters."



"Impenetrable veil covering our knowledge of the cetacea."



"A field strewn with thorns."



"All these incomplete indications but serve to torture us naturalists."











Among these I here include the following chapters:--I.



The SPERM WHALE; II.



the RIGHT WHALE; III.



the FIN-BACK WHALE; IV.



the HUMP-BACKED WHALE; V.



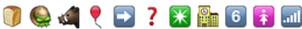
the RAZOR-BACK WHALE; VI.



the SULPHUR-BOTTOM WHALE.



BOOK I.



(FOLIO), CHAPTER I.



(SPERM WHALE).--This whale, among the English of old vaguely known as the Trumpa whale, and the Physeter whale, and the Anvil Headed whale, is the present Cachalot of the French, and the Pottsich of the Germans, and the Macrocephalus of the Long Words.



He is, without doubt, the largest inhabitant of the globe; the most formidable of all whales to encounter; the most majestic in aspect; and lastly, by far the most valuable in commerce; he being the only creature from which that valuable substance, spermaceti, is obtained.



All his peculiarities will, in many other places, be enlarged upon.



It is chiefly with his name that I now have to do.



Philologically considered, it is absurd.



Some centuries ago, when the Sperm whale was almost wholly unknown in his own proper individuality, and when his oil was only accidentally obtained from the stranded fish; in those days spermaceti, it would seem, was popularly supposed to be derived from a creature identical with the one then known in England as the Greenland or Right Whale.



It was the idea also, that this same spermaceti was that quickening humor of the Greenland Whale which the first syllable of the word literally expresses.



In those times, also, spermaceti was exceedingly scarce, not being used for light, but only as an ointment and medicament.



It was only to be had from the druggists as you nowadays buy an ounce of rhubarb.



When, as I opine, in the course of time, the true nature of spermaceti became known, its original name was still retained by the dealers; no doubt to enhance its value by a notion so strangely significant of its scarcity.



And so the appellation must at last have come to be bestowed upon the whale from which this spermaceti was really derived.



BOOK I.



(FOLIO), CHAPTER II.



(RIGHT WHALE).--In one respect this is the most venerable of the leviathans, being the one first regularly hunted by man.



It yields the article commonly known as whalebone or baleen; and the oil specially known as "whale oil," an inferior article in commerce.



Among the fishermen, he is indiscriminately designated by all the following titles: The Whale; the Greenland Whale; the Black Whale; the Great Whale; the True Whale; the Right Whale.



There is a deal of obscurity concerning the identity of the species thus multitudinously baptised.



What then is the whale, which I include in the second species of my Folios?



It is the Great Mysticetus of the English naturalists; the Greenland Whale of the English whalemens; the Baliene Ordinaire of the French whalemens; the Growlands Walfish of the Swedes.



It is the whale which for more than two centuries past has been hunted by the Dutch and English in the Arctic seas; it is the whale which the American fishermen have long pursued in the Indian ocean, on the Brazil Banks, on the Nor' West Coast, and various other parts of the world, designated by them Right Whale Cruising Grounds.



Some pretend to see a difference between the Greenland whale of the English and the right whale of the Americans.



But they precisely agree in all their grand features; nor has there yet been presented a single determinate fact upon which to ground a radical distinction.



It is by endless subdivisions based upon the most inconclusive differences, that some departments of natural history become so repellingly intricate.



The right whale will be elsewhere treated of at some length, with reference to elucidating the sperm whale.





Broad-nosed whales and beaked whales; pike-headed whales; bunched whales; under-jawed whales and rostrated whales, are the fishermen's names for a few sorts.



In connection with this appellation of "Whalebone whales," it is of great importance to mention, that however such a nomenclature may be convenient in facilitating allusions to some kind of whales, yet it is in vain to attempt a clear classification of the Leviathan, founded upon either his baleen, or hump, or fin, or teeth; notwithstanding that those marked parts or features very obviously seem better adapted to afford the basis for a regular system of Cetology than any other detached bodily distinctions, which the whale, in his kinds, presents.



How then?



The baleen, hump, back-fin, and teeth; these are things whose peculiarities are indiscriminately dispersed among all sorts of whales, without any regard to what may be the nature of their structure in other and more essential particulars.



Thus, the sperm whale and the humpbacked whale, each has a hump; but there the similitude ceases.



Then, this same humpbacked whale and the Greenland whale, each of these has baleen; but there again the similitude ceases.



And it is just the same with the other parts above mentioned.



In various sorts of whales, they form such irregular combinations; or, in the case of any one of them detached, such an irregular isolation; as utterly to defy all general methodization formed upon such a basis.



On this rock every one of the whale-naturalists has split.



But it may possibly be conceived that, in the internal parts of the whale, in his anatomy--there, at least, we shall be able to hit the right classification.



Nay, what thing, for example, is there in the Greenland whale's anatomy more striking than his baleen?



Yet we have seen that by his baleen it is impossible correctly to classify the Greenland whale.



And if you descend into the bowels of the various leviathans, why there you will not find distinctions a fiftieth part as available to the systematizer as those external ones already enumerated.



What then remains?



nothing but to take hold of the whales bodily, in their entire liberal volume, and boldly sort them that way.



And this is the Bibliographical system here adopted; and it is the only one that can possibly succeed, for it alone is practicable.



To proceed.



BOOK I.



(FOLIO) CHAPTER IV.



(HUMP-BACK).--This whale is often seen on the northern American coast.



He has been frequently captured there, and towed into harbor.



He has a great pack on him like a peddler; or you might call him the Elephant and Castle whale.



At any rate, the popular name for him does not sufficiently distinguish him, since the sperm whale also has a hump though a smaller one.



His oil is not very valuable.



He has baleen.



He is the most gamesome and light-hearted of all the whales, making more gay foam and white water generally than any other of them.



BOOK I.



(FOLIO), CHAPTER V.



(RAZOR-BACK).--Of this whale little is known but his name.



I have seen him at a distance off Cape Horn.



Of a retiring nature, he eludes both hunters and philosophers.



Though no coward, he has never yet shown any part of him but his back, which rises in a long sharp ridge.



Let him go.



I know little more of him, nor does anybody else.



BOOK I.



(FOLIO), CHAPTER VI.



(SULPHUR-BOTTOM).--Another retiring gentleman, with a brimstone belly, doubtless got by scraping along the Tartarian tiles in some of his profounder divings.



He is seldom seen; at least I have never seen him except in the remoter southern seas, and then always at too great a distance to study his countenance.



He is never chased; he would run away with rope-walks of line.



Prodigies are told of him.



Adieu, Sulphur Bottom!



I can say nothing more that is true of ye, nor can the oldest Nantucketer.



Thus ends BOOK I.



(FOLIO), and now begins BOOK II.



(OCTAVO). OCTAVOES.



\*--These embrace the whales of middling magnitude, among which present may be numbered:--I.



, the GRAMPUS; II.



, the BLACK FISH; III.



, the NARWHALE; IV.



, the THRASHER; V.



, the KILLER.



\*Why this book of whales is not denominated the Quarto is very plain.



Because, while the whales of this order, though smaller than those of the former order, nevertheless retain a proportionate likeness to them in figure, yet the bookbinder's Quarto volume in its dimensioned form does not preserve the shape of the Folio volume, but the Octavo volume does.



BOOK II.



(OCTAVO), CHAPTER I.



(GRAMPUS).--Though this fish, whose loud sonorous breathing, or rather blowing, has furnished a proverb to landsmen, is so well known a denizen of the deep, yet is he not popularly classed among whales.



But possessing all the grand distinctive features of the leviathan, most naturalists have recognised him for one.



He is of moderate octavo size, varying from fifteen to twenty-five feet in length, and of corresponding dimensions round the waist.



He swims in herds; he is never regularly hunted, though his oil is considerable in quantity, and pretty good for light.



By some fishermen his approach is regarded as premonitory of the advance of the great sperm whale.



BOOK II.



(OCTAVO), CHAPTER II.



(BLACK FISH).--I give the popular fishermen's names for all these fish, for generally they are the best.



Where any name happens to be vague or inexpressive, I shall say so, and suggest another.



I do so now, touching the Black Fish, so-called, because blackness is the rule among almost all whales.



So, call him the Hyena Whale, if you please.



His voracity is well known, and from the circumstance that the inner angles of his lips are curved upwards, he carries an everlasting Mephistophelean grin on his face.



This whale averages some sixteen or eighteen feet in length.



He is found in almost all latitudes.



He has a peculiar way of showing his dorsal hooked fin in swimming, which looks something like a Roman nose.



When not more profitably employed, the sperm whale hunters sometimes capture the Hyena whale, to keep up the supply of cheap oil for domestic employment--as some frugal housekeepers, in the absence of company, and quite alone by themselves, burn unsavory tallow instead of odorous wax.











(DUODECIMO), CHAPTER II.



(ALGERINE PORPOISE).--A pirate.



Very savage.



He is only found, I think, in the Pacific.



He is somewhat larger than the Huzza Porpoise, but much of the same general make.



Provoke him, and he will buckle to a shark.



I have lowered for him many times, but never yet saw him captured.



BOOK III.

(DUODECIMO), CHAPTER III.



(MEALY-MOUTHED PORPOISE).--The largest kind of Porpoise; and only found in the Pacific, so far as it is known.



The only English name, by which he has hitherto been designated, is that of the fishers--Right-Whale Porpoise, from the circumstance that he is chiefly found in the vicinity of that Folio.



In shape, he differs in some degree from the Huzza Porpoise, being of a less rotund and jolly girth; indeed, he is of quite a neat and gentleman-like figure.



He has no fins on his back (most other porpoises have), he has a lovely tail, and sentimental Indian eyes of a hazel hue.



But his mealy-mouth spoils all.



Though his entire back down to his side fins is of a deep sable, yet a boundary line, distinct as the mark in a ship's hull, called the "bright waist," that line streaks him from stem to stern, with two separate colours, black above and white below.



The white comprises part of his head, and the whole of his mouth, which makes him look as if he had just escaped from a felonious visit to a meal-bag.



A most mean and mealy aspect!



His oil is much like that of the common porpoise.



Beyond the DUODECIMO, this system does not proceed, inasmuch as the Porpoise is the smallest of the whales.



Above, you have all the Leviathans of note.



But there are a rabble of uncertain, fugitive, half-fabulous whales, which, as an American whaleman, I know by reputation, but not personally.



I shall enumerate them by their fore-castle appellations; for possibly such a list may be valuable to future investigators, who may complete what I have here but begun.



If any of the following whales, shall hereafter be caught and marked, then he can readily be incorporated into this System, according to his Folio, Octavo, or Duodecimo magnitude:--The Bottle-Nose Whale; the Junk Whale; the Pudding-Headed Whale; the Cape Whale; the Leading Whale; the Cannon Whale; the Scragg Whale; the Coppered Whale; the Elephant Whale; the Iceberg Whale; the Quog Whale; the Blue Whale; etc.



From Icelandic, Dutch, and old English authorities, there might be quoted other lists of uncertain whales, blessed with all manner of uncouth names.



But I omit them as altogether obsolete; and can hardly help suspecting them for mere sounds, full of Leviathanism, but signifying nothing.



Finally: It was stated at the outset, that this system would not be here, and at once, perfected.



You cannot but plainly see that I have kept my word.



But I now leave my cetological System standing thus unfinished, even as the great Cathedral of Cologne was left, with the crane still standing upon the top of the uncompleted tower.



For small erections may be finished by their first architects; grand ones, true ones, ever leave the copestone to posterity.



God keep me from ever completing anything.



This whole book is but a draught--nay, but the draught of a draught.



Oh, Time, Strength, Cash, and Patience!

3 7 2 1 6 5 8 5 3 1 6 7 2

9 5 3 2 6 1 9 7 1 2 3 5 7

6 9

## CHAPTER 33



# The Specksnyder



Concerning the officers of the whale-craft, this seems as good a place as any to set down a little domestic peculiarity on ship-board, arising from the existence of the harpooner class of officers, a class unknown of course in any other marine than the whale-fleet.



The large importance attached to the harpooner's vocation is evinced by the fact, that originally in the old Dutch Fishery, two centuries and more ago, the command of a whale ship was not wholly lodged in the person now called the captain, but was divided between him and an officer called the Specksnyder.



Literally this word means Fat-Cutter; usage, however, in time made it equivalent to Chief Harpooner.



In those days, the captain's authority was restricted to the navigation and general management of the vessel; while over the whale-hunting department and all its concerns, the Specksnyder or Chief Harpooner reigned supreme.



In the British Greenland Fishery, under the corrupted title of Specksioneer, this old Dutch official is still retained, but his former dignity is sadly abridged.



At present he ranks simply as senior Harpooner; and as such, is but one of the captain's more inferior subalterns.



Nevertheless, as upon the good conduct of the harpooners the success of a whaling voyage largely depends, and since in the American Fishery he is not only an important officer in the boat, but under certain circumstances (night watches on a whaling ground) the command of the ship's deck is also his; therefore the grand political maxim of the sea demands, that he should nominally live apart from the men before the mast, and be in some way distinguished as their professional superior; though always, by them, familiarly regarded as their social equal.



Now, the grand distinction drawn between officer and man at sea, is this--the first lives aft, the last forward.



Hence, in whale-ships and merchantmen alike, the mates have their quarters with the captain; and so, too, in most of the American whalers the harpooners are lodged in the after part of the ship.



That is to say, they take their meals in the captain's cabin, and sleep in a place indirectly communicating with it.



Though the long period of a Southern whaling voyage (by far the longest of all voyages now or ever made by man), the peculiar perils of it, and the community of interest prevailing among a company, all of whom, high or low, depend for their profits, not upon fixed wages, but upon their common luck, together with their common vigilance, intrepidity, and hard work; though all these things do in some cases tend to beget a less rigorous discipline than in merchantmen generally; yet, never mind how much like an old Mesopotamian family these whalemen may, in some primitive instances, live together; for all that, the punctilious externals, at least, of the quarter-deck are seldom materially relaxed, and in no instance done away.



Indeed, many are the Nantucket ships in which you will see the skipper parading his quarter-deck with an elated grandeur not surpassed in any military navy; nay, extorting almost as much outward homage as if he wore the imperial purple, and not the shabbiest of pilot-cloth.



And though of all men the moody captain of the Pequod was the least given to that sort of shallowest assumption; and though the only homage he ever exacted, was implicit, instantaneous obedience; though he required no man to remove the shoes from his feet ere stepping upon the quarter-deck; and though there were times when, owing to peculiar circumstances connected with events hereafter to be detailed, he addressed them in unusual terms, whether of condescension or IN TERROREM, or otherwise; yet even Captain Ahab was by no means unobservant of the paramount forms and usages of the sea.



Nor, perhaps, will it fail to be eventually perceived, that behind those forms and usages, as it were, he sometimes masked himself; incidentally making use of them for other and more private ends than they were legitimately intended to subserve.



That certain sultanism of his brain, which had otherwise in a good degree remained unmanifested; through those forms that same sultanism became incarnate in an irresistible dictatorship.



For be a man's intellectual superiority what it will, it can never assume the practical, available supremacy over other men, without the aid of some sort of external arts and entrenchments, always, in themselves, more or less paltry and base.



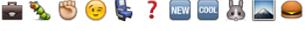
This it is, that for ever keeps God's true princes of the Empire from the world's hustings; and leaves the highest honours that this air can give, to those men who become famous more through their infinite inferiority to the choice hidden handful of the Divine Inert, than through their undoubted superiority over the dead level of the mass.



Such large virtue lurks in these small things when extreme political superstitions invest them, that in some royal instances even to idiot imbecility they have imparted potency.



But when, as in the case of Nicholas the Czar, the ringed crown of geographical empire encircles an imperial brain; then, the plebeian herds crouch abased before the tremendous centralization.



Nor, will the tragic dramatist who would depict mortal indomitableness in its fullest sweep and direct swing, ever forget a hint, incidentally so important in his art, as the one now alluded to.



But Ahab, my Captain, still moves before me in all his Nantucket grimness and shagginess; and in this episode touching Emperors and Kings, I must not conceal that I have only to do with a poor old whale-hunter like him; and, therefore, all outward majestic trappings and housings are denied me.



Oh, Ahab!



what shall be grand in thee, it must needs be plucked at from the skies, and dived for in the deep, and featured in the unbodied air!

## CHAPTER 34



# The Cabin-table



It is noon; and Dough-Boy, the steward, thrusting his pale loaf-of-bread face from the cabin-scuttle, announces dinner to his lord and master; who, sitting in the lee quarter-boat, has just been taking an observation of the sun; and is now mutely reckoning the latitude on the smooth, medallion-shaped tablet, reserved for that daily purpose on the upper part of his ivory leg.



From his complete inattention to the tidings, you would think that moody Ahab had not heard his menial.



But presently, catching hold of the mizen shrouds, he swings himself to the deck, and in an even, unexhilarated voice, saying, "Dinner, Mr. Starbuck," disappears into the cabin.



When the last echo of his sultan's step has died away, and Starbuck, the first Emir, has every reason to suppose that he is seated, then Starbuck rouses from his quietude, takes a few turns along the planks, and, after a grave peep into the binnacle, says, with some touch of pleasantness, "Dinner, Mr. Stubb," and descends the scuttle.



The second Emir lounges about the rigging awhile, and then slightly shaking the main brace, to see whether it will be all right with that important rope, he likewise takes up the old burden, and with a rapid "Dinner, Mr. Flask," follows after his predecessors.



But the third Emir, now seeing himself all alone on the quarter-deck, seems to feel relieved from some curious restraint; for, tipping all sorts of knowing winks in all sorts of directions, and kicking off his shoes, he strikes into a sharp but noiseless squall of a hornpipe right over the Grand Turk's head; and then, by a dexterous sleight, pitching his cap up into the mizentop for a shelf, he goes down rollicking so far at least as he remains visible from the deck, reversing all other processions, by bringing up the rear with music.



But ere stepping into the cabin doorway below, he pauses, ships a new face altogether, and, then, independent, hilarious little Flask enters King Ahab's presence, in the character of Abjectus, or the Slave.



It is not the least among the strange things bred by the intense artificialness of sea-usages, that while in the open air of the deck some officers will, upon provocation, bear themselves boldly and defyingly enough towards their commander; yet, ten to one, let those very officers the next moment go down to their customary dinner in that same commander's cabin, and straightway their inoffensive, not to say deprecatory and humble air towards him, as he sits at the head of the table; this is marvellous, sometimes most comical.

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Wherefore this difference?

A 🤔 ? ? ?

A problem?

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Perhaps not.

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To have been Belshazzar, King of Babylon; and to have been Belshazzar, not haughtily but courteously, therein certainly must have been some touch of mundane grandeur.

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But he who in the rightly regal and intelligent spirit presides over his own private dinner-table of invited guests, that man's unchallenged power and dominion of individual influence for the time; that man's royalty of state transcends Belshazzar's, for Belshazzar was not the greatest.

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Who has but once dined his friends, has tasted what it is to be Caesar.

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It is a witchery of social czarship which there is no withstanding.

! 🗣️ 🗣️ 🗣️ 🗣️ ! 🗣️ 🗣️ 🗣️ 🗣️

Now, if to this consideration you superadd the official supremacy of a ship-master, then, by inference, you will derive the cause of that peculiarity of sea-life just mentioned.

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Over his ivory-inlaid table, Ahab presided like a mute, maned sea-lion on the white coral beach, surrounded by his warlike but still deferential cubs.

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In his own proper turn, each officer waited to be served.

3 🗣️

They were as little children before Ahab; and yet, in Ahab, there seemed not to lurk the smallest social arrogance.

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With one mind, their intent eyes all fastened upon the old man's knife, as he carved the chief dish before him.

🗣️ 🗣️

I do not suppose that for the world they would have profaned that moment with the slightest observation, even upon so neutral a topic as the weather.

✗ 🗣️ ✗ ! !

No!

🗣️ 🗣️

And when reaching out his knife and fork, between which the slice of beef was locked, Ahab thereby motioned Starbuck's plate towards him, the mate received his meat as though receiving alms; and cut it tenderly; and a little started if, perchance, the knife grazed against the plate; and chewed it noiselessly; and swallowed it, not without circumspection.

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For, like the Coronation banquet at Frankfort, where the German Emperor profoundly dines with the seven Imperial Electors, so these cabin meals were somehow solemn meals, eaten in awful silence; and yet at table old Ahab forbade not conversation; only he himself was dumb.





I am an officer; but, how I wish I could fish a bit of old-fashioned beef in the forecandle, as I used to when I was before the mast.



There's the fruits of promotion now; there's the vanity of glory: there's the insanity of life!



Besides, if it were so that any mere sailor of the Pequod had a grudge against Flask in Flask's official capacity, all that sailor had to do, in order to obtain ample vengeance, was to go aft at dinner-time, and get a peep at Flask through the cabin sky-light, sitting silly and dumfounded before awful Ahab.



Now, Ahab and his three mates formed what may be called the first table in the Pequod's cabin.



After their departure, taking place in inverted order to their arrival, the canvas cloth was cleared, or rather was restored to some hurried order by the pallid steward.



And then the three harpooners were bidden to the feast, they being its residuary legatees.



They made a sort of temporary servants' hall of the high and mighty cabin.



In strange contrast to the hardly tolerable constraint and nameless invisible domineerings of the captain's table, was the entire care-free license and ease, the almost frantic democracy of those inferior fellows the harpooners.



While their masters, the mates, seemed afraid of the sound of the hinges of their own jaws, the harpooners chewed their food with such a relish that there was a report to it.



They dined like lords; they filled their bellies like Indian ships all day loading with spices.



Such portentous appetites had Queequeg and Tashtego, that to fill out the vacancies made by the previous repast, often the pale Dough-Boy was fain to bring on a great baron of salt-junk, seemingly quarried out of the solid ox.



And if he were not lively about it, if he did not go with a nimble hop-skip-and-jump, then Tashtego had an ungentlemanly way of accelerating him by darting a fork at his back, harpoon-wise.



And once Daggoo, seized with a sudden humor, assisted Dough-Boy's memory by snatching him up bodily, and thrusting his head into a great empty wooden trencher, while Tashtego, knife in hand, began laying out the circle preliminary to scalping him.



He was naturally a very nervous, shuddering sort of little fellow, this bread-faced steward; the progeny of a bankrupt baker and a hospital nurse.



And what with the standing spectacle of the black terrific Ahab, and the periodical tumultuous visitations of these three savages, Dough-Boy's whole life was one continual lip-quiver.





But, though these barbarians dined in the cabin, and nominally lived there; still, being anything but sedentary in their habits, they were scarcely ever in it except at mealtimes, and just before sleeping-time, when they passed through it to their own peculiar quarters.



In this one matter, Ahab seemed no exception to most American whale captains, who, as a set, rather incline to the opinion that by rights the ship's cabin belongs to them; and that it is by courtesy alone that anybody else is, at any time, permitted there.



So that, in real truth, the mates and harpooners of the Pequod might more properly be said to have lived out of the cabin than in it.



For when they did enter it, it was something as a street-door enters a house; turning inwards for a moment, only to be turned out the next; and, as a permanent thing, residing in the open air.



Nor did they lose much hereby; in the cabin was no companionship; socially, Ahab was inaccessible.



Though nominally included in the census of Christendom, he was still an alien to it.



He lived in the world, as the last of the Grisly Bears lived in settled Missouri.



And as when Spring and Summer had departed, that wild Logan of the woods, burying himself in the hollow of a tree, lived out the winter there, sucking his own paws; so, in his inclement, howling old age, Ahab's soul, shut up in the caved trunk of his body, there fed upon the sullen paws of its gloom!

# CHAPTER 35



## The Mast-head



It was during the more pleasant weather, that in due rotation with the other seamen my first mast-head came round.



In most American whalemens the mast-heads are manned almost simultaneously with the vessel's leaving her port; even though she may have fifteen thousand miles, and more, to sail ere reaching her proper cruising ground.



And if, after a three, four, or five years' voyage she is drawing nigh home with anything empty in her--say, an empty vial even--then, her mast-heads are kept manned to the last; and not till her skysail-poles sail in among the spires of the port, does she altogether relinquish the hope of capturing one whale more.



Now, as the business of standing mast-heads, ashore or afloat, is a very ancient and interesting one, let us in some measure expatiate here.



I take it, that the earliest standers of mast-heads were the old Egyptians; because, in all my researches, I find none prior to them.



For though their progenitors, the builders of Babel, must doubtless, by their tower, have intended to rear the loftiest mast-head in all Asia, or Africa either; yet (ere the final truck was put to it) as that great stone mast of theirs may be said to have gone by the board, in the dread gale of God's wrath; therefore, we cannot give these Babel builders priority over the Egyptians.



And that the Egyptians were a nation of mast-head standers, is an assertion based upon the general belief among archaeologists, that the first pyramids were founded for astronomical purposes: a theory singularly supported by the peculiar stair-like formation of all four sides of those edifices; whereby, with prodigious long upliftings of their legs, those old astronomers were wont to mount to the apex, and sing out for new stars; even as the look-outs of a modern ship sing out for a sail, or a whale just bearing in sight.



In Saint Stylites, the famous Christian hermit of old times, who built him a lofty stone pillar in the desert and spent the whole latter portion of his life on its summit, hoisting his food from the ground with a tackle; in him we have a remarkable instance of a dauntless stander-of-mast-heads; who was not to be driven from his place by fogs or frosts, rain, hail, or sleet; but valiantly facing everything out to the last, literally died at his post.





For the most part, in this tropic whaling life, a sublime uneventfulness invests you; you hear no news; read no gazettes; extras with startling accounts of commonplaces never delude you into unnecessary excitements; you hear of no domestic afflictions; bankrupt securities; fall of stocks; are never troubled with the thought of what you shall have for dinner--for all your meals for three years and more are snugly stowed in casks, and your bill of fare is immutable.



In one of those southern whalers, on a long three or four years' voyage, as often happens, the sum of the various hours you spend at the mast-head would amount to several entire months.



And it is much to be deplored that the place to which you devote so considerable a portion of the whole term of your natural life, should be so sadly destitute of anything approaching to a cosy inhabitiveness, or adapted to breed a comfortable localness of feeling, such as pertains to a bed, a hammock, a hearse, a sentry box, a pulpit, a coach, or any other of those small and snug contrivances in which men temporarily isolate themselves.



Your most usual point of perch is the head of the t' gallant-mast, where you stand upon two thin parallel sticks (almost peculiar to whalers) called the t' gallant cross-trees.



Here, tossed about by the sea, the beginner feels about as cosy as he would standing on a bull's horns.



To be sure, in cold weather you may carry your house aloft with you, in the shape of a watch-coat; but properly speaking the thickest watch-coat is no more of a house than the unclad body; for as the soul is glued inside of its fleshy tabernacle, and cannot freely move about in it, nor even move out of it, without running great risk of perishing (like an ignorant pilgrim crossing the snowy Alps in winter); so a watch-coat is not so much of a house as it is a mere envelope, or additional skin encasing you.



You cannot put a shelf or chest of drawers in your body, and no more can you make a convenient closet of your watch-coat.



Concerning all this, it is much to be deplored that the mast-heads of a southern whale ship are unprovided with those enviable little tents or pulpits, called CROW'S-NESTS, in which the look-outs of a Greenland whaler are protected from the inclement weather of the frozen seas.



In the fireside narrative of Captain Sleet, entitled "A Voyage among the Icebergs, in quest of the Greenland Whale, and incidentally for the re-discovery of the Lost Icelandic Colonies of Old Greenland;" in this admirable volume, all standers of mast-heads are furnished with a charmingly circumstantial account of the then recently invented CROW'S-NEST of the Glacier, which was the name of Captain Sleet's good craft.



He called it the SLEET'S CROW'S-NEST, in honour of himself; he being the original inventor and patentee, and free from all ridiculous false delicacy, and holding that if we call our own children after our own names (we fathers being the original inventors and patentees), so likewise should we denominate after ourselves any other apparatus we may beget.



In shape, the Sleet's crow's-nest is something like a large tierce or pipe; it is open above, however, where it is furnished with a movable side-screen to keep to windward of your head in a hard gale.



Being fixed on the summit of the mast, you ascend into it through a little trap-hatch in the bottom.



On the after side, or side next the stern of the ship, is a comfortable seat, with a locker underneath for umbrellas, comforters, and coats.



In front is a leather rack, in which to keep your speaking trumpet, pipe, telescope, and other nautical conveniences.



When Captain Sleet in person stood his mast-head in this crow's-nest of his, he tells us that he always had a rifle with him (also fixed in the rack), together with a powder flask and shot, for the purpose of popping off the stray narwhales, or vagrant sea unicorns infesting those waters; for you cannot successfully shoot at them from the deck owing to the resistance of the water, but to shoot down upon them is a very different thing.



Now, it was plainly a labor of love for Captain Sleet to describe, as he does, all the little detailed conveniences of his crow's-nest; but though he so enlarges upon many of these, and though he treats us to a very scientific account of his experiments in this crow's-nest, with a small compass he kept there for the purpose of counteracting the errors resulting from what is called the "local attraction" of all binnacle magnets; an error ascribable to the horizontal vicinity of the iron in the ship's planks, and in the Glacier's case, perhaps, to there having been so many broken-down blacksmiths among her crew; I say, that though the Captain is very discreet and scientific here, yet, for all his learned "binnacle deviations," "azimuth compass observations," and "approximate errors," he knows very well, Captain Sleet, that he was not so much immersed in those profound magnetic meditations, as to fail being attracted occasionally towards that well replenished little case-bottle, so nicely tucked in on one side of his crow's nest, within easy reach of his hand.



Though, upon the whole, I greatly admire and even love the brave, the honest, and learned Captain; yet I take it very ill of him that he should so utterly ignore that case-bottle, seeing what a faithful friend and comforter it must have been, while with mittened fingers and hooded head he was studying the mathematics aloft there in that bird's nest within three or four perches of the pole.



But if we Southern whale-fishers are not so snugly housed aloft as Captain Sleet and his Greenlandmen were; yet that disadvantage is greatly counter-balanced by the widely contrasting serenity of those seductive seas in which we South fishers mostly float.



For one, I used to lounge up the rigging very leisurely, resting in the top to have a chat with Queequeg, or any one else off duty whom I might find there; then ascending a little way further, and throwing a lazy leg over the top-sail yard, take a preliminary view of the watery pastures, and so at last mount to my ultimate destination.



Let me make a clean breast of it here, and frankly admit that I kept but sorry guard.



With the problem of the universe revolving in me, how could I--being left completely to myself at such a thought-engendering altitude--how could I but lightly hold my obligations to observe all whale-ships' standing orders, "Keep your weather eye open, and sing out every time."



And let me in this place movingly admonish you, ye ship-owners of Nantucket!



Beware of enlisting in your vigilant fisheries any lad with lean brow and hollow eye; given to unseasonable meditateness; and who offers to ship with the Phaedon instead of Bowditch in his head.



Beware of such an one, I say; your whales must be seen before they can be killed; and this sunken-eyed young Platonist will tow you ten wakes round the world, and never make you one pint of sperm the richer.



Nor are these monitions at all unneeded.



For nowadays, the whale-fishery furnishes an asylum for many romantic, melancholy, and absent-minded young men, disgusted with the carking cares of earth, and seeking sentiment in tar and blubber.



Childe Harold not unfrequently perches himself upon the mast-head of some luckless disappointed whale-ship, and in moody phrase ejaculates:-- "Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll!"



Ten thousand blubber-hunters sweep over thee in vain."



Very often do the captains of such ships take those absent-minded young philosophers to task, upbraiding them with not feeling sufficient "interest" in the voyage; half-hinting that they are so hopelessly lost to all honourable ambition, as that in their secret souls they would rather not see whales than otherwise.



But all in vain; those young Platonists have a notion that their vision is imperfect; they are short-sighted; what use, then, to strain the visual nerve?



They have left their opera-glasses at home.



"Why, thou monkey," said a harpooneer to one of these lads, "we've been cruising now hard upon three years, and thou hast not raised a whale yet.



Whales are scarce as hen's teeth whenever thou art up here."



Perhaps they were; or perhaps there might have been shoals of them in the far horizon; but lulled into such an opium-like listlessness of vacant, unconscious reverie is this absent-minded youth by the blending cadence of waves with thoughts, that at last he loses his identity; takes the mystic ocean at his feet for the visible image of that deep, blue, bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature; and every strange, half-seen, gliding, beautiful thing that eludes him; every dimly-discovered, uprising fin of some undiscernible form, seems to him the embodiment of those elusive thoughts that only people the soul by continually flitting through it.



In this enchanted mood, thy spirit ebbs away to whence it came; becomes diffused through time and space; like Crammer's sprinkled Pantheistic ashes, forming at last a part of every shore the round globe over.



There is no life in thee, now, except that rocking life imparted by a gently rolling ship; by her, borrowed from the sea; by the sea, from the inscrutable tides of God.



But while this sleep, this dream is on ye, move your foot or hand an inch; slip your hold at all; and your identity comes back in horror.



Over Cartesian vortices you hover.



And perhaps, at mid-day, in the fairest weather, with one half-throttled shriek you drop through that transparent air into the summer sea, no more to rise for ever.



Heed it well, ye Pantheists!



## CHAPTER 36



# The Quarter-deck



(ENTER AHAH: THEN, ALL) It was not a great while after the affair of the pipe, that one morning shortly after breakfast, Ahab, as was his wont, ascended the cabin-gangway to the deck.



There most sea-captains usually walk at that hour, as country gentlemen, after the same meal, take a few turns in the garden.



Soon his steady, ivory stride was heard, as to and fro he paced his old rounds, upon planks so familiar to his tread, that they were all over dented, like geological stones, with the peculiar mark of his walk.



Did you fixedly gaze, too, upon that ribbed and dented brow; there also, you would see still stranger foot-prints--the foot-prints of his one unsleeping, ever-pacing thought.



But on the occasion in question, those dents looked deeper, even as his nervous step that morning left a deeper mark.



And, so full of his thought was Ahab, that at every uniform turn that he made, now at the main-mast and now at the binnacle, you could almost see that thought turn in him as he turned, and pace in him as he paced; so completely possessing him, indeed, that it all but seemed the inward mould of every outer movement.



"D'ye mark him, Flask?"



whispered Stubb; "the chick that's in him pecks the shell.



"Twill soon be out."



The hours wore on;--Ahab now shut up within his cabin; anon, pacing the deck, with the same intense bigotry of purpose in his aspect.



It drew near the close of day.



Suddenly he came to a halt by the bulwarks, and inserting his bone leg into the auger-hole there, and with one hand grasping a shroud, he ordered Starbuck to send everybody aft.



"Sir!"



said the mate, astonished at an order seldom or never given on ship-board except in some extraordinary case.



"Send everybody aft," repeated Ahab.



"Mast-heads, there!"



come down!"



When the entire ship's company were assembled, and with curious and not wholly unapprehensive faces, were eyeing him, for he looked not unlike the weather horizon when a storm is coming up, Ahab, after rapidly glancing over the bulwarks, and then darting his eyes among the crew, started from his standpoint; and as though not a soul were nigh him resumed his heavy turns upon the deck.



With bent head and half-slouched hat he continued to pace, unmindful of the wondering whispering among the men; till Stubb cautiously whispered to Flask, that Ahab must have summoned them there for the purpose of witnessing a pedestrian feat.



But this did not last long.



Vehemently pausing, he cried:-- "What do ye do when ye see a whale, men?"



"Sing out for him!"



was the impulsive rejoinder from a score of clubbed voices.



"Good!"



cried Ahab, with a wild approval in his tones; observing the hearty animation into which his unexpected question had so magnetically thrown them.



"And what do ye next, men?"



"Lower away, and after him!"



"And what tune is it ye pull to, men?"







cried Ahab; then pausing, "Aye, Starbuck; aye, my hearties all round; it was Moby Dick that dismayed me; Moby Dick that brought me to this dead stump I stand on now.



Aye, aye," he shouted with a terrific, loud, animal sob, like that of a heart-stricken moose; "Aye, aye!



it was that accursed white whale that razed me; made a poor pegging lubber of me for ever and a day!"



Then tossing both arms, with measureless imprecations he shouted out: "Aye, aye!



and I'll chase him round Good Hope, and round the Horn, and round the Norway Maelstrom, and round perdition's flames before I give him up.



And this is what ye have shipped for, men!



to chase that white whale on both sides of land, and over all sides of earth, till he spouts black blood and rolls fin out.



What say ye, men, will ye splice hands on it, now?



I think ye do look brave."



"Aye, aye!"



shouted the harpooners and seamen, running closer to the excited old man: "A sharp eye for the white whale; a sharp lance for Moby Dick!"



"God bless ye," he seemed to half sob and half shout.



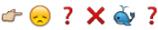
"God bless ye, men.



Steward!



go draw the great measure of grog.



But what's this long face about, Mr. Starbuck; wilt thou not chase the white whale?



art not game for Moby Dick?"



"I am game for his crooked jaw, and for the jaws of Death too, Captain Ahab, if it fairly comes in the way of the business we follow; but I came here to hunt whales, not my commander's vengeance.







Are they not one and all with Ahab, in this matter of the whale?



See Stubb!



he laughs!



See yonder Chilian!



he snorts to think of it.



Stand up amid the general hurricane, thy one tost sapling cannot, Starbuck!



And what is it?



Reckon it.



'Tis but to help strike a fin; no wondrous feat for Starbuck.



What is it more?



From this one poor hunt, then, the best lance out of all Nantucket, surely he will not hang back, when every foremost-hand has clutched a whetstone?



Ah!



constrainings seize thee; I see!



the billow lifts thee!



Speak, but speak!



--Aye, aye!



thy silence, then, THAT voices thee.



(ASIDE) Something shot from my dilated nostrils, he has inhaled it in his lungs.



Starbuck now is mine; cannot oppose me now, without rebellion."



"God keep me!



--keep us all!"



murmured Starbuck, lowly.



But in his joy at the enchanted, tacit acquiescence of the mate, Ahab did not hear his foreboding invocation; nor yet the low laugh from the hold; nor yet the presaging vibrations of the winds in the cordage; nor yet the hollow flap of the sails against the masts, as for a moment their hearts sank in.



For again Starbuck's downcast eyes lighted up with the stubbornness of life; the subterranean laugh died away; the winds blew on; the sails filled out; the ship heaved and rolled as before.



Ah, ye admonitions and warnings!



why stay ye not when ye come?



But rather are ye predictions than warnings, ye shadows!



Yet not so much predictions from without, as verifications of the foregoing things within.



For with little external to constrain us, the innermost necessities in our being, these still drive us on.



"The measure!



the measure!"



cried Ahab.



Receiving the brimming pewter, and turning to the harpooners, he ordered them to produce their weapons.



Then ranging them before him near the capstan, with their harpoons in their hands, while his three mates stood at his side with their lances, and the rest of the ship's company formed a circle round the group; he stood for an instant searchingly eyeing every man of his crew.



But those wild eyes met his, as the bloodshot eyes of the prairie wolves meet the eye of their leader, ere he rushes on at their head in the trail of the bison; but, alas!



only to fall into the hidden snare of the Indian.



"Drink and pass!"



he cried, handing the heavy charged flagon to the nearest seaman.





Well done!



Let me touch the axis."



So saying, with extended arm, he grasped the three level, radiating lances at their crossed centre; while so doing, suddenly and nervously twitched them; meanwhile, glancing intently from Starbuck to Stubb; from Stubb to Flask.



It seemed as though, by some nameless, interior volition, he would fain have shocked into them the same fiery emotion accumulated within the Leyden jar of his own magnetic life.



The three mates quailed before his strong, sustained, and mystic aspect.



Stubb and Flask looked sideways from him; the honest eye of Starbuck fell downright.



"In vain!"



cried Ahab; "but, maybe, 'tis well.



For did ye three but once take the full-forced shock, then mine own electric thing, THAT had perhaps expired from out me.



Perchance, too, it would have dropped ye dead.



Perchance ye need it not.



Down lances!



And now, ye mates, I do appoint ye three cupbearers to my three pagan kinsmen there--yon three most honourable gentlemen and noblemen, my valiant harpooneers.



Disdain the task?



What, when the great Pope washes the feet of beggars, using his tiara for ewer?



Oh, my sweet cardinals!



your own condescension, THAT shall bend ye to it.



I do not order ye; ye will it.



Cut your seizings and draw the poles, ye harpooneers!"



Silently obeying the order, the three harpooneers now stood with the detached iron part of their harpoons, some three feet long, held, barbs up, before him.



"Stab me not with that keen steel!



Cant them; cant them over!



know ye not the goblet end?



Turn up the socket!



So, so; now, ye cup-bearers, advance.



The irons!



take them; hold them while I fill!"



Forthwith, slowly going from one officer to the other, he brimmed the harpoon sockets with the fiery waters from the pewter.



"Now, three to three, ye stand.



Commend the murderous chalices!



Bestow them, ye who are now made parties to this indissoluble league.



Ha!



Starbuck!



but the deed is done!



Yon ratifying sun now waits to sit upon it.



Drink, ye harpooneers!



drink and swear, ye men that man the deathful whaleboat's bow--Death to Moby Dick!



God hunt us all, if we do not hunt Moby Dick to his death!"



The long, barbed steel goblets were lifted; and to cries and maledictions against the white whale, the spirits were simultaneously quaffed down with a hiss.



Starbuck paled, and turned, and shivered.



Once more, and finally, the replenished pewter went the rounds among the frantic crew; when, waving his free hand to them, they all dispersed; and Ahab retired within his cabin.



## CHAPTER 37



# Sunset



THE CABIN; BY THE STERN WINDOWS; AHAB SITTING ALONE, AND GAZING OUT.



I leave a white and turbid wake; pale waters, paler cheeks, where'er I sail.



The envious billows sidelong swell to whelm my track; let them; but first I pass.



Yonder, by ever-brimming goblet's rim, the warm waves blush like wine.



The gold brow plumbs the blue.



The diver sun--slow dived from noon--goes down; my soul mounts up!



she wearies with her endless hill.



Is, then, the crown too heavy that I wear?



this Iron Crown of Lombardy.



Yet is it bright with many a gem; I the wearer, see not its far flashings; but darkly feel that I wear that, that dazzlingly confounds.



'Tis iron--that I know--not gold.



'Tis split, too--that I feel; the jagged edge galls me so, my brain seems to beat against the solid metal; aye, steel skull, mine; the sort that needs no helmet in the most brain-battering fight!



Dry heat upon my brow?





That's more than ye, ye great gods, ever were.



I laugh and hoot at ye, ye cricket-players, ye pugilists, ye deaf Burkes and blinded Bendigoes!



I will not say as schoolboys do to bullies--Take some one of your own size; don't pommel ME!



No, ye've knocked me down, and I am up again; but YE have run and hidden.



Come forth from behind your cotton bags!



I have no long gun to reach ye.



Come, Ahab's compliments to ye; come and see if ye can swerve me.



Swerve me?



ye cannot swerve me, else ye swerve yourselves!



man has ye there.



Swerve me?



The path to my fixed purpose is laid with iron rails, whereon my soul is grooved to run.



Over unsounded gorges, through the rifled hearts of mountains, under torrents' beds, unerringly I rush!



Naught's an obstacle, naught's an angle to the iron way!



## CHAPTER 38



# Dusk



BY THE MAINMAST; STARBUCK LEANING AGAINST IT.



My soul is more than matched; she's overmanned; and by a madman!



Insufferable sting, that sanity should ground arms on such a field!



But he drilled deep down, and blasted all my reason out of me!



I think I see his impious end; but feel that I must help him to it.



Will I, nill I, the ineffable thing has tied me to him; tows me with a cable I have no knife to cut.



Horrible old man!



Who's over him, he cries;--aye, he would be a democrat to all above; look, how he lords it over all below!



Oh!



I plainly see my miserable office,--to obey, rebelling; and worse yet, to hate with touch of pity!



For in his eyes I read some lurid woe would shrivel me up, had I it.



Yet is there hope.



Time and tide flow wide.



The hated whale has the round watery world to swim in, as the small gold-fish has its glassy globe.



His heaven-insulting purpose, God may wedge aside.



I would up heart, were it not like lead.



But my whole clock's run down; my heart the all-controlling weight, I have no key to lift again.



A BURST OF REVELRY FROM THE FORECASTLE.



Oh, God!



to sail with such a heathen crew that have small touch of human mothers in them!



Whelped somewhere by the sharkish sea.



The white whale is their demigogon.



Hark!



the infernal orgies!



that revelry is forward!



mark the unflinching silence aft!



Methinks it pictures life.



Foremost through the sparkling sea shoots on the gay, embattled, bantering bow, but only to drag dark Ahab after it, where he broods within his sternward cabin, builded over the dead water of the wake, and further on, hunted by its wolfish gurglings.



The long howl thrills me through!



Peace!



ye revellers, and set the watch!



Oh, life!



'tis in an hour like this, with soul beat down and held to knowledge,--as wild, untutored things are forced to feed--  
Oh, life!



'tis now that I do feel the latent horror in thee!



but 'tis not me!



that horror's out of me!



and with the soft feeling of the human in me, yet will I try to fight ye, ye grim, phantom futures!



Stand by me, hold me, bind me, O ye blessed influences!



## CHAPTER 39

---



# First Night Watch



Fore-Top.



(STUBB SOLUS, AND MENDING A BRACE.



) Ha!



ha!



ha!



ha!



hem!



clear my throat!



--I've been thinking over it ever since, and that ha, ha's the final consequence.



Why so?



Because a laugh's the wisest, easiest answer to all that's queer; and come what will, one comfort's always left--that unflinching comfort is, it's all predestinated.



I heard not all his talk with Starbuck; but to my poor eye Starbuck then looked something as I the other evening felt.



Be sure the old Mogul has fixed him, too.



I twigged it, knew it; had had the gift, might readily have prophesied it--for when I clapped my eye upon his skull I saw it.



Well, Stubb, WISE Stubb--that's my title--well, Stubb, what of it, Stubb?



Here's a carcass.



I know not all that may be coming, but be it what it will, I'll go to it laughing.



Such a waggish leering as lurks in all your horrors!



I feel funny.



Fa, la!



lirra, skirra!



What's my juicy little pear at home doing now?



Crying its eyes out?



--Giving a party to the last arrived harpooneers, I dare say, gay as a frigate's pennant, and so am I--fa, la!



lirra, skirra!



Oh-- We'll drink to--night with hearts as light, To love, as gay and fleeting As bubbles that swim, on the beaker's brim, And break on the lips while meeting.



A brave stave that--who calls?



Mr. Starbuck?



Aye, aye, sir--(ASIDE) he's my superior, he has his too, if I'm not mistaken.



--Aye, aye, sir, just through with this job--coming.



# CHAPTER 40



# Midnight, Forecastle



HARPOONEERS AND SAILORS.



(FORESAIL RISES AND DISCOVERS THE WATCH STANDING, LOUNGING, LEANING, AND LYING IN VARIOUS ATTITUDES, ALL SINGING IN CHORUS.



) Farewell and adieu to you, Spanish ladies!



Farewell and adieu to you, ladies of Spain!



Our captain's commanded.



-- 1ST NANTUCKET SAILOR.



Oh, boys, don't be sentimental; it's bad for the digestion!



Take a tonic, follow me!



(SINGS, AND ALL FOLLOW) Our captain stood upon the deck, A spy-glass in his hand, A viewing of those gallant whales That blew at every strand.



Oh, your tubs in your boats, my boys, And by your braces stand, And we'll have one of those fine whales, Hand, boys, over hand!



So, be cheery, my lads!



may your hearts never fail!



While the bold harpooner is striking the whale!



MATE'S VOICE FROM THE QUARTER-DECK.



Eight bells there, forward!



2ND NANTUCKET SAILOR.



Avast the chorus!



Eight bells there!



d'ye hear, bell-boy?



Strike the bell eight, thou Pip!



thou blackling!



and let me call the watch.



I've the sort of mouth for that--the hogshead mouth.



So, so, (THRUSTS HIS HEAD DOWN THE SCUTTLE,) Star-bo-l-e-e-n-s, a-h-o-y!



Eight bells there below!



Tumble up!



DUTCH SAILOR.



Grand snoozing to-night, maty; fat night for that.



I mark this in our old Mogul's wine; it's quite as deadening to some as filliping to others.



We sing; they sleep--aye, lie down there, like ground-tier butts.



At 'em again!



There, take this copper-pump, and hail 'em through it.



Tell 'em to avast dreaming of their lasses.



Tell 'em it's the resurrection; they must kiss their last, and come to judgment.



That's the way--THAT'S it; thy throat ain't spoiled with eating Amsterdam butter.



FRENCH SAILOR.



Hist, boys!



let's have a jig or two before we ride to anchor in Blanket Bay.



What say ye?



There comes the other watch.



Stand by all legs!



Pip!



little Pip!



hurrah with your tambourine!



PIP.



(SULKY AND SLEEPY) Don't know where it is.



FRENCH SAILOR.



Beat thy belly, then, and wag thy ears.



Jig it, men, I say; merry's the word; hurrah!



Damn me, won't you dance?



Form, now, Indian-file, and gallop into the double-shuffle?



Throw yourselves!



Legs!



legs!



ICELAND SAILOR.



I don't like your floor, maty; it's too springy to my taste.



I'm used to ice-floors.



I'm sorry to throw cold water on the subject; but excuse me.



MALTESE SAILOR.



Me too; where's your girls?



Who but a fool would take his left hand by his right, and say to himself, how d'ye do?



Partners!



I must have partners!



SICILIAN SAILOR.



Aye; girls and a green!



--then I'll hop with ye; yea, turn grasshopper!



LONG-ISLAND SAILOR.



Well, well, ye sulkies, there's plenty more of us.



Hoe corn when you may, say I.



All legs go to harvest soon.



Ah!



here comes the music; now for it!



AZORE SAILOR.



(ASCENDING, AND PITCHING THE TAMBOURINE UP THE SCUTTLE.



) Here you are, Pip; and there's the windlass-bitts; up you mount!



Now, boys!



(THE HALF OF THEM DANCE TO THE TAMBOURINE; SOME GO BELOW; SOME SLEEP OR LIE AMONG THE COILS OF RIGGING.



OATHS A-PLENTY.



) AZORE SAILOR.



(DANCING) Go it, Pip!



Bang it, bell-boy!



Rig it, dig it, stig it, quig it, bell-boy!



Make fire-flies; break the jinglers!



PIP.



Jinglers, you say?



--there goes another, dropped off; I pound it so.



CHINA SAILOR.



Rattle thy teeth, then, and pound away; make a pagoda of thyself.



FRENCH SAILOR.



Merry-mad!



Hold up thy hoop, Pip, till I jump through it!



Split jibs!



tear yourselves!

TASHTEGO.

(QUIETLY SMOKING) That's a white man; he calls that fun: humph!

I save my sweat.

OLD MANX SAILOR.

I wonder whether those jolly lads bethink them of what they are dancing over.

I'll dance over your grave, I will--that's the bitterest threat of your night-women, that beat head-winds round corners.

O Christ!

to think of the green navies and the green-skulled crews!

Well, well; belike the whole world's a ball, as you scholars have it; and so 'tis right to make one ballroom of it.

Dance on, lads, you're young; I was once.

3D NANTUCKET SAILOR.

Spell oh!

--whew!

this is worse than pulling after whales in a calm--give us a whiff, Tash.

(THEY CEASE DANCING, AND GATHER IN CLUSTERS.

MEANTIME THE SKY DARKENS--THE WIND RISES.

) LASCAR SAILOR.

By Brahma!

boys, it'll be douse sail soon.

The sky-born, high-tide Ganges turned to wind!



Thou showest thy black brow, Seeva!



MALTESE SAILOR.



(RECLINING AND SHAKING HIS CAP.



) It's the waves--the snow's caps turn to jig it now.



They'll shake their tassels soon.



Now would all the waves were women, then I'd go drown, and chassee with them evermore!



There's naught so sweet on earth--heaven may not match it!



--as those swift glances of warm, wild bosoms in the dance, when the over-arboring arms hide such ripe, bursting grapes.



SICILIAN SAILOR.



(RECLINING.



) Tell me not of it!



Hark ye, lad--fleet interlacings of the limbs--lithe swayings--coyings--flutterings!



lip!



heart!



hip!



all graze: unceasing touch and go!



not taste, observe ye, else come satiety.



Eh, Pagan?



(NUDGING.



) TAHITAN SAILOR.

♥ ID 🙌 🍷 AB 😞 🙄 🙄

(RECLINING ON A MAT.

👩 👩 👩 👩 👩

) Hail, holy nakedness of our dancing girls!

🏠 🔑 🚗 📱 ☕ 🧑 🧑 🧑

--the Heeva-Heeva!

😞 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄

Ah!

🏠 📱 📱 🏠 🧑 ☕ 🏠 📱 📱

low veiled, high palmed Tahiti!

🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 ✖

I still rest me on thy mat, but the soft soil has slid!

😞 AB 777 🚗 18 🙄 🇩🇪 ? ⭐ 🕒 📱 📱

I saw thee woven in the wood, my mat!

🏠 🔑 🚗 📱 ☕ 🧑 🧑 🧑

green the first day I brought ye thence; now worn and wilted quite.

🧑 🧑 🧑 🧑 🧑 !

Ah me!

📱 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄

--not thou nor I can bear the change!

📱 🙄 ✂ 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄

How then, if so be transplanted to yon sky?

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Hear I the roaring streams from Pirohitee's peak of spears, when they leap down the crags and drown the villages?

🙄 😞 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄

--The blast!

😞 😞 😞 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄

the blast!

🧑 🧑 🧑 🧑 🧑

Up, spine, and meet it!

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(LEAPS TO HIS FEET.

🇫🇷 🇫🇷 🇫🇷 🇫🇷 🇫🇷 🇫🇷 🇫🇷 🇫🇷 🇫🇷

) PORTUGUESE SAILOR.

🏠 🔑 🚗 📱 ☕ 🧑 🧑 🧑

How the sea rolls swashing 'gainst the side!

🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄

Stand by for reefing, hearties!

🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄

the winds are just crossing swords, pell-mell they'll go lunging presently.



DANISH SAILOR.



Crack, crack, old ship!



so long as thou crackest, thou holdest!



Well done!



The mate there holds ye to it stiffly.



He's no more afraid than the isle fort at Cattagat, put there to fight the Baltic with storm-lashed guns, on which the sea-salt cakes!



4TH NANTUCKET SAILOR.



He has his orders, mind ye that.



I heard old Ahab tell him he must always kill a squall, something as they burst a waterspout with a pistol--fire your ship right into it!



ENGLISH SAILOR.



Blood!



but that old man's a grand old cove!



We are the lads to hunt him up his whale!



ALL.



Aye!



aye!



OLD MANX SAILOR.



How the three pines shake!



Pines are the hardest sort of tree to live when shifted to any other soil, and here there's none but the crew's cursed clay.





What's that I saw--lightning?



Yes.



SPANISH SAILOR.



No; Daggoo showing his teeth.



DAGGOO (SPRINGING). Swallow thine, mannikin!



White skin, white liver!



SPANISH SAILOR (MEETING HIM). Knife thee heartily!



big frame, small spirit!



ALL.



A row!



a row!



a row!



TASHTEGO (WITH A WHIFF). A row a'low, and a row aloft--Gods and men--both brawlers!



Humph!



BELFAST SAILOR.



A row!



arrah a row!



The Virgin be blessed, a row!



Plunge in with ye!



ENGLISH SAILOR.



Fair play!



Snatch the Spaniard's knife!



A ring, a ring!



OLD MANX SAILOR.



Ready formed.



There!



the ringed horizon.



In that ring Cain struck Abel.



Sweet work, right work!



No?



Why then, God, mad'st thou the ring?



MATE'S VOICE FROM THE QUARTER-DECK.



Hands by the halyards!



in top-gallant sails!



Stand by to reef topsails!



ALL.



The squall!



the squall!



jump, my jollies!



(THEY SCATTER.





--but spoken of once!



and only this evening--it makes me jingle all over like my tambourine--that anaconda of an old man swore 'em in to hunt him!



Oh, thou big white God aloft there somewhere in yon darkness, have mercy on this small black boy down here; preserve him from all men that have no bowels to feel fear!







There are those this day among them, who, though intelligent and courageous enough in offering battle to the Greenland or Right whale, would perhaps--either from professional inexperience, or incompetency, or timidity, decline a contest with the Sperm Whale; at any rate, there are plenty of whalers, especially among those whaling nations not sailing under the American flag, who have never hostilely encountered the Sperm Whale, but whose sole knowledge of the leviathan is restricted to the ignoble monster primitively pursued in the North; seated on their hatches, these men will hearken with a childish fireside interest and awe, to the wild, strange tales of Southern whaling.



Nor is the pre-eminent tremendousness of the great Sperm Whale anywhere more feelingly comprehended, than on board of those prows which stem him.



And as if the now tested reality of his might had in former legendary times thrown its shadow before it; we find some book naturalists--Olassen and Povelson--declaring the Sperm Whale not only to be a consternation to every other creature in the sea, but also to be so incredibly ferocious as continually to be athirst for human blood.



Nor even down to so late a time as Cuvier's, were these or almost similar impressions effaced.



For in his Natural History, the Baron himself affirms that at sight of the Sperm Whale, all fish (sharks included) are "struck with the most lively terrors," and "often in the precipitancy of their flight dash themselves against the rocks with such violence as to cause instantaneous death."



And however the general experiences in the fishery may amend such reports as these; yet in their full terribleness, even to the bloodthirsty item of Povelson, the superstitious belief in them is, in some vicissitudes of their vocation, revived in the minds of the hunters.



So that overawed by the rumors and portents concerning him, not a few of the fishermen recalled, in reference to Moby Dick, the earlier days of the Sperm Whale fishery, when it was oftentimes hard to induce long practised Right whalers to embark in the perils of this new and daring warfare; such men protesting that although other leviathans might be hopefully pursued, yet to chase and point lance at such an apparition as the Sperm Whale was not for mortal man.



That to attempt it, would be inevitably to be torn into a quick eternity.



On this head, there are some remarkable documents that may be consulted.



Nevertheless, some there were, who even in the face of these things were ready to give chase to Moby Dick; and a still greater number who, chancing only to hear of him distantly and vaguely, without the specific details of any certain calamity, and without superstitious accompaniments, were sufficiently hardy not to flee from the battle if offered.



One of the wild suggestions referred to, as at last coming to be linked with the White Whale in the minds of the superstitiously inclined, was the unearthly conceit that Moby Dick was ubiquitous; that he had actually been encountered in opposite latitudes at one and the same instant of time.



Nor, credulous as such minds must have been, was this conceit altogether without some faint show of superstitious probability.



For as the secrets of the currents in the seas have never yet been divulged, even to the most erudite research; so the hidden ways of the Sperm Whale when beneath the surface remain, in great part, unaccountable to his pursuers; and from time to time have originated the most curious and contradictory speculations regarding them, especially concerning the mystic modes whereby, after sounding to a great depth, he transports himself with such vast swiftness to the most widely distant points.



It is a thing well known to both American and English whale-ships, and as well a thing placed upon authoritative record years ago by Scoresby, that some whales have been captured far north in the Pacific, in whose bodies have been found the barbs of harpoons darted in the Greenland seas.



Nor is it to be gainsaid, that in some of these instances it has been declared that the interval of time between the two assaults could not have exceeded very many days.



Hence, by inference, it has been believed by some whalemens, that the Nor' West Passage, so long a problem to man, was never a problem to the whale.



So that here, in the real living experience of living men, the prodigies related in old times of the inland Strello mountain in Portugal (near whose top there was said to be a lake in which the wrecks of ships floated up to the surface); and that still more wonderful story of the Arethusa fountain near Syracuse (whose waters were believed to have come from the Holy Land by an underground passage); these fabulous narrations are almost fully equalled by the realities of the whalemens.



Forced into familiarity, then, with such prodigies as these; and knowing that after repeated, intrepid assaults, the White Whale had escaped alive; it cannot be much matter of surprise that some whalemens should go still further in their superstitions; declaring Moby Dick not only ubiquitous, but immortal (for immortality is but ubiquity in time); that though groves of spears should be planted in his flanks, he would still swim away unharmed; or if indeed he should ever be made to spout thick blood, such a sight would be but a ghastly deception; for again in unensanguined billows hundreds of leagues away, his unsullied jet would once more be seen.



But even stripped of these supernatural surmisings, there was enough in the earthly make and incontestable character of the monster to strike the imagination with unwonted power.



For, it was not so much his uncommon bulk that so much distinguished him from other sperm whales, but, as was elsewhere thrown out--a peculiar snow-white wrinkled forehead, and a high, pyramidal white hump.



These were his prominent features; the tokens whereby, even in the limitless, uncharted seas, he revealed his identity, at a long distance, to those who knew him.



The rest of his body was so streaked, and spotted, and marbled with the same shrouded hue, that, in the end, he had gained his distinctive appellation of the White Whale; a name, indeed, literally justified by his vivid aspect, when seen gliding at high noon through a dark blue sea, leaving a milky-way wake of creamy foam, all spangled with golden gleamings.



Nor was it his unwonted magnitude, nor his remarkable hue, nor yet his deformed lower jaw, that so much invested the whale with natural terror, as that unexampled, intelligent malignity which, according to specific accounts, he had over and over again evinced in his assaults.







Winding far down from within the very heart of this spiked Hotel de Cluny where we here stand--however grand and wonderful, now quit it;--and take your way, ye nobler, sadder souls, to those vast Roman halls of Thermes; where far beneath the fantastic towers of man's upper earth, his root of grandeur, his whole awful essence sits in bearded state; an antique buried beneath antiquities, and throned on torsoes!



So with a broken throne, the great gods mock that captive king; so like a Caryatid, he patient sits, upholding on his frozen brow the piled entablatures of ages.



Wind ye down there, ye prouder, sadder souls!



question that proud, sad king!



A family likeness!



aye, he did beget ye, ye young exiled royalties; and from your grim sire only will the old State-secret come.



Now, in his heart, Ahab had some glimpse of this, namely: all my means are sane, my motive and my object mad.



Yet without power to kill, or change, or shun the fact; he likewise knew that to mankind he did long dissemble; in some sort, did still.



But that thing of his dissembling was only subject to his perceptibility, not to his will determinate.



Nevertheless, so well did he succeed in that dissembling, that when with ivory leg he stepped ashore at last, no Nantucketer thought him otherwise than but naturally grieved, and that to the quick, with the terrible casualty which had overtaken him.



The report of his undeniable delirium at sea was likewise popularly ascribed to a kindred cause.



And so too, all the added moodiness which always afterwards, to the very day of sailing in the Pequod on the present voyage, sat brooding on his brow.



Nor is it so very unlikely, that far from distrusting his fitness for another whaling voyage, on account of such dark symptoms, the calculating people of that prudent isle were inclined to harbor the conceit, that for those very reasons he was all the better qualified and set on edge, for a pursuit so full of rage and wildness as the bloody hunt of whales.



Gnawed within and scorched without, with the infixed, unrelenting fangs of some incurable idea; such an one, could he be found, would seem the very man to dart his iron and lift his lance against the most appalling of all brutes.



Or, if for any reason thought to be corporeally incapacitated for that, yet such an one would seem superlatively competent to cheer and howl on his underlings to the attack.



But be all this as it may, certain it is, that with the mad secret of his unabated rage bolted up and keyed in him, Ahab had purposely sailed upon the present voyage with the one only and all-engrossing object of hunting the White Whale.



Had any one of his old acquaintances on shore but half dreamed of what was lurking in him then, how soon would their aghast and righteous souls have wrenched the ship from such a fiendish man!



They were bent on profitable cruises, the profit to be counted down in dollars from the mint.



He was intent on an audacious, immitigable, and supernatural revenge.



Here, then, was this grey-headed, ungodly old man, chasing with curses a Job's whale round the world, at the head of a crew, too, chiefly made up of mongrel renegades, and castaways, and cannibals--morally enfeebled also, by the incompetence of mere unaided virtue or right-mindedness in Starbuck, the invulnerable jollity of indifference and recklessness in Stubb, and the pervading mediocrity in Flask.



Such a crew, so officered, seemed specially picked and packed by some infernal fatality to help him to his monomaniac revenge.



How it was that they so aboundingly responded to the old man's ire--by what evil magic their souls were possessed, that at times his hate seemed almost theirs; the White Whale as much their insufferable foe as his; how all this came to be--what the White Whale was to them, or how to their unconscious understandings, also, in some dim, unsuspected way, he might have seemed the gliding great demon of the seas of life,--all this to explain, would be to dive deeper than Ishmael can go.



The subterranean miner that works in us all, how can one tell whither leads his shaft by the ever shifting, muffled sound of his pick?



Who does not feel the irresistible arm drag?



What skiff in tow of a seventy-four can stand still?



For one, I gave myself up to the abandonment of the time and the place; but while yet all a-rush to encounter the whale, could see naught in that brute but the deadliest ill.

# CHAPTER 42



# The Whiteness Of The Whale



What the white whale was to Ahab, has been hinted; what, at times, he was to me, as yet remains unsaid.



Aside from those more obvious considerations touching Moby Dick, which could not but occasionally awaken in any man's soul some alarm, there was another thought, or rather vague, nameless horror concerning him, which at times by its intensity completely overpowered all the rest; and yet so mystical and well nigh ineffable was it, that I almost despair of putting it in a comprehensible form.



It was the whiteness of the whale that above all things appalled me.



But how can I hope to explain myself here; and yet, in some dim, random way, explain myself I must, else all these chapters might be naught.



Though in many natural objects, whiteness refiningly enhances beauty, as if imparting some special virtue of its own, as in marbles, japonicas, and pearls; and though various nations have in some way recognised a certain royal preeminence in this hue; even the barbaric, grand old kings of Pegu placing the title "Lord of the White Elephants" above all their other magniloquent ascriptions of dominion; and the modern kings of Siam unfurling the same snow-white quadruped in the royal standard; and the Hanoverian flag bearing the one figure of a snow-white charger; and the great Austrian Empire, Caesarian, heir to overlording Rome, having for the imperial colour the same imperial hue; and though this pre-eminence in it applies to the human race itself, giving the white man ideal mastership over every dusky tribe; and though, besides, all this, whiteness has been even made significant of gladness, for among the Romans a white stone marked a joyful day; and though in other mortal sympathies and symbolizings, this same hue is made the emblem of many touching, noble things--the innocence of brides, the benignity of age; though among the Red Men of America the giving of the white belt of wampum was the deepest pledge of honour; though in many climes, whiteness typifies the majesty of Justice in the ermine of the Judge, and contributes to the daily state of kings and queens drawn by milk-white steeds; though even in the higher mysteries of the most august religions it has been made the symbol of the divine spotlessness and power; by the Persian fire worshippers, the white forked flame being held the holiest on the altar; and in the Greek mythologies, Great Jove himself being made incarnate in a snow-white bull; and though to the noble Iroquois, the midwinter sacrifice of the sacred White Dog was by far the holiest festival of their theology, that spotless, faithful creature being held the purest envoy they could send to the Great Spirit with the annual tidings of their own fidelity; and though directly from the Latin word for white, all Christian priests derive the name of one part of their sacred vesture, the alb or tunic, worn beneath the cassock; and though among the holy pomps of the Romish faith, white is specially employed in the celebration of the Passion of our Lord; though in the Vision of St. John, white robes are given to the redeemed, and the four-and-twenty elders stand clothed in white before the great-white throne, and the Holy One that sitteth there white like wool; yet for all these accumulated associations, with whatever is sweet, and honourable, and sublime, there yet lurks an elusive something in the innermost idea of this hue, which strikes more of panic to the soul than that redness which affrights in blood.



This elusive quality it is, which causes the thought of whiteness, when divorced from more kindly associations, and coupled with any object terrible in itself, to heighten that terror to the furthest bounds.



Witness the white bear of the poles, and the white shark of the tropics; what but their smooth, flaky whiteness makes them the transcendent horrors they are?



That ghastly whiteness it is which imparts such an abhorrent mildness, even more loathsome than terrific, to the dumb gloating of their aspect.



So that not the fierce-fanged tiger in his heraldic coat can so stagger courage as the white-shrouded bear or shark.



\* \*With reference to the Polar bear, it may possibly be urged by him who would fain go still deeper into this matter, that it is not the whiteness, separately regarded, which heightens the intolerable hideousness of that brute; for, analysed, that heightened hideousness, it might be said, only rises from the circumstance, that the irresponsible ferociousness of the creature stands invested in the fleece of celestial innocence and love; and hence, by bringing together two such opposite emotions in our minds, the Polar bear frightens us with so unnatural a contrast.



But even assuming all this to be true; yet, were it not for the whiteness, you would not have that intensified terror.



As for the white shark, the white gliding ghostliness of repose in that creature, when beheld in his ordinary moods, strangely tallies with the same quality in the Polar quadruped.



This peculiarity is most vividly hit by the French in the name they bestow upon that fish.



The Romish mass for the dead begins with "Requiem eternam" (eternal rest), whence REQUIEM denominating the mass itself, and any other funeral music.



Now, in allusion to the white, silent stillness of death in this shark, and the mild deadliness of his habits, the French call him REQUIN.



Bethink thee of the albatross, whence come those clouds of spiritual wonderment and pale dread, in which that white phantom sails in all imaginations?



Not Coleridge first threw that spell; but God's great, unflattering laureate, Nature.



\* \* I remember the first albatross I ever saw.



It was during a prolonged gale, in waters hard upon the Antarctic seas.



From my forenoon watch below, I ascended to the overclouded deck; and there, dashed upon the main hatches, I saw a regal, feathery thing of unspotted whiteness, and with a hooked, Roman bill sublime.



At intervals, it arched forth its vast archangel wings, as if to embrace some holy ark.



Wondrous flutterings and throbbings shook it.



Though bodily unharmed, it uttered cries, as some king's ghost in supernatural distress.



Through its inexpressible, strange eyes, methought I peeped to secrets which took hold of God.



As Abraham before the angels, I bowed myself; the white thing was so white, its wings so wide, and in those for ever exiled waters, I had lost the miserable warping memories of traditions and of towns.



Long I gazed at that prodigy of plumage.



I cannot tell, can only hint, the things that darted through me then.



But at last I awoke; and turning, asked a sailor what bird was this.



A goney, he replied.



Goney!



never had heard that name before; is it conceivable that this glorious thing is utterly unknown to men ashore!



never!



But some time after, I learned that goney was some seaman's name for albatross.



So that by no possibility could Coleridge's wild Rhyme have had aught to do with those mystical impressions which were mine, when I saw that bird upon our deck.



For neither had I then read the Rhyme, nor knew the bird to be an albatross.



Yet, in saying this, I do but indirectly burnish a little brighter the noble merit of the poem and the poet.



I assert, then, that in the wondrous bodily whiteness of the bird chiefly lurks the secret of the spell; a truth the more evinced in this, that by a solecism of terms there are birds called grey albatrosses; and these I have frequently seen, but never with such emotions as when I beheld the Antarctic fowl.



But how had the mystic thing been caught?



Whisper it not, and I will tell; with a treacherous hook and line, as the fowl floated on the sea.



At last the Captain made a postman of it; tying a lettered, leathern tally round its neck, with the ship's time and place; and then letting it escape.



But I doubt not, that leathern tally, meant for man, was taken off in Heaven, when the white fowl flew to join the wing-folding, the invoking, and adoring cherubim!



Most famous in our Western annals and Indian traditions is that of the White Steed of the Prairies; a magnificent milk-white charger, large-eyed, small-headed, bluff-chested, and with the dignity of a thousand monarchs in his lofty, overscorning carriage.



He was the elected Xerxes of vast herds of wild horses, whose pastures in those days were only fenced by the Rocky Mountains and the Alleghanies.



At their flaming head he westward trooped it like that chosen star which every evening leads on the hosts of light.



The flashing cascade of his mane, the curving comet of his tail, invested him with housings more resplendent than gold and silver-beaters could have furnished him.



A most imperial and archangelical apparition of that unfallen, western world, which to the eyes of the old trappers and hunters revived the glories of those primeval times when Adam walked majestic as a god, bluff-browed and fearless as this mighty steed.





Therefore, in his other moods, symbolize whatever grand or gracious thing he will by whiteness, no man can deny that in its profoundest idealized significance it calls up a peculiar apparition to the soul.



But though without dissent this point be fixed, how is mortal man to account for it?



To analyse it, would seem impossible.



Can we, then, by the citation of some of those instances wherein this thing of whiteness--though for the time either wholly or in great part stripped of all direct associations calculated to impart to it aught fearful, but nevertheless, is found to exert over us the same sorcery, however modified;--can we thus hope to light upon some chance clue to conduct us to the hidden cause we seek?



Let us try.



But in a matter like this, subtlety appeals to subtlety, and without imagination no man can follow another into these halls.



And though, doubtless, some at least of the imaginative impressions about to be presented may have been shared by most men, yet few perhaps were entirely conscious of them at the time, and therefore may not be able to recall them now.



Why to the man of untutored ideality, who happens to be but loosely acquainted with the peculiar character of the day, does the bare mention of Whitsuntide marshal in the fancy such long, dreary, speechless processions of slow-pacing pilgrims, down-cast and hooded with new-fallen snow?



Or, to the unread, unsophisticated Protestant of the Middle American States, why does the passing mention of a White Friar or a White Nun, evoke such an eyeless statue in the soul?



Or what is there apart from the traditions of dungeoned warriors and kings (which will not wholly account for it) that makes the White Tower of London tell so much more strongly on the imagination of an untravelled American, than those other storied structures, its neighbors--the Byward Tower, or even the Bloody?



And those sublimer towers, the White Mountains of New Hampshire, whence, in peculiar moods, comes that gigantic ghostliness over the soul at the bare mention of that name, while the thought of Virginia's Blue Ridge is full of a soft, dewy, distant dreaminess?



Or why, irrespective of all latitudes and longitudes, does the name of the White Sea exert such a spectralness over the fancy, while that of the Yellow Sea lulls us with mortal thoughts of long lacquered mild afternoons on the waves, followed by the gaudiest and yet sleepest of sunsets?



Or, to choose a wholly unsubstantial instance, purely addressed to the fancy, why, in reading the old fairy tales of Central Europe, does "the tall pale man" of the Hartz forests, whose changeless pallor untrustingly glides through the green of the groves--why is this phantom more terrible than all the whooping imps of the Blocksburg?







## CHAPTER 43



# Hark!



"HIST!



Did you hear that noise, Cabaco?"



It was the middle-watch; a fair moonlight; the seamen were standing in a cordon, extending from one of the fresh-water butts in the waist, to the scuttle-butt near the taffrail.



In this manner, they passed the buckets to fill the scuttle-butt.



Standing, for the most part, on the hallowed precincts of the quarter-deck, they were careful not to speak or rustle their feet.



From hand to hand, the buckets went in the deepest silence, only broken by the occasional flap of a sail, and the steady hum of the unceasingly advancing keel.



It was in the midst of this repose, that Archy, one of the cordon, whose post was near the after-hatches, whispered to his neighbor, a Cholo, the words above.



"Hist!



did you hear that noise, Cabaco?"



"Take the bucket, will ye, Archy?"



what noise d'ye mean?"



"There it is again--under the hatches--don't you hear it--a cough--it sounded like a cough."





## CHAPTER 44

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# The Chart



Had you followed Captain Ahab down into his cabin after the squall that took place on the night succeeding that wild ratification of his purpose with his crew, you would have seen him go to a locker in the transom, and bringing out a large wrinkled roll of yellowish sea charts, spread them before him on his screwed-down table.



Then seating himself before it, you would have seen him intently study the various lines and shadings which there met his eye; and with slow but steady pencil trace additional courses over spaces that before were blank.



At intervals, he would refer to piles of old log-books beside him, wherein were set down the seasons and places in which, on various former voyages of various ships, sperm whales had been captured or seen.



While thus employed, the heavy pewter lamp suspended in chains over his head, continually rocked with the motion of the ship, and for ever threw shifting gleams and shadows of lines upon his wrinkled brow, till it almost seemed that while he himself was marking out lines and courses on the wrinkled charts, some invisible pencil was also tracing lines and courses upon the deeply marked chart of his forehead.



But it was not this night in particular that, in the solitude of his cabin, Ahab thus pondered over his charts.



Almost every night they were brought out; almost every night some pencil marks were effaced, and others were substituted.



For with the charts of all four oceans before him, Ahab was threading a maze of currents and eddies, with a view to the more certain accomplishment of that monomaniac thought of his soul.

Now, to any one not fully acquainted with the ways of the leviathans, it might seem an absurdly hopeless task thus to seek out one solitary creature in the unhooped oceans of this planet.



But not so did it seem to Ahab, who knew the sets of all tides and currents; and thereby calculating the driftings of the sperm whale's food; and, also, calling to mind the regular, ascertained seasons for hunting him in particular latitudes; could arrive at reasonable surmises, almost approaching to certainties, concerning the timeliest day to be upon this or that ground in search of his prey.







So that Monsoons, Pampas, Nor'-Westers, Harmattans, Trades; any wind but the Levanter and Simoon, might blow Moby Dick into the devious zig-zag world-circle of the Pequod's circumnavigating wake.



But granting all this; yet, regarded discreetly and coolly, seems it not but a mad idea, this; that in the broad boundless ocean, one solitary whale, even if encountered, should be thought capable of individual recognition from his hunter, even as a white-bearded Mufti in the thronged thoroughfares of Constantinople?



Yes.



For the peculiar snow-white brow of Moby Dick, and his snow-white hump, could not but be unmistakable.



And have I not tallied the whale, Ahab would mutter to himself, as after poring over his charts till long after midnight he would throw himself back in reveries--tallied him, and shall he escape?



His broad fins are bored, and scalloped out like a lost sheep's ear!



And here, his mad mind would run on in a breathless race; till a weariness and faintness of pondering came over him; and in the open air of the deck he would seek to recover his strength.



Ah, God!



what trances of torments does that man endure who is consumed with one unachieved revengeful desire.



He sleeps with clenched hands; and wakes with his own bloody nails in his palms.



Often, when forced from his hammock by exhausting and intolerably vivid dreams of the night, which, resuming his own intense thoughts through the day, carried them on amid a clashing of phrensies, and whirled them round and round and round in his blazing brain, till the very throbbing of his life-spot became insufferable anguish; and when, as was sometimes the case, these spiritual throes in him heaved his being up from its base, and a chasm seemed opening in him, from which forked flames and lightnings shot up, and accursed fiends beckoned him to leap down among them; when this hell in himself yawned beneath him, a wild cry would be heard through the ship; and with glaring eyes Ahab would burst from his state room, as though escaping from a bed that was on fire.



Yet these, perhaps, instead of being the unsuppressable symptoms of some latent weakness, or fright at his own resolve, were but the plainest tokens of its intensity.



For, at such times, crazy Ahab, the scheming, unappeasably steadfast hunter of the white whale; this Ahab that had gone to his hammock, was not the agent that so caused him to burst from it in horror again.



The latter was the eternal, living principle or soul in him; and in sleep, being for the time dissociated from the characterizing mind, which at other times employed it for its outer vehicle or agent, it spontaneously sought escape from the scorching contiguity of the frantic thing, of which, for the time, it was no longer an integral.



But as the mind does not exist unless leagued with the soul, therefore it must have been that, in Ahab's case, yielding up all his thoughts and fancies to his one supreme purpose; that purpose, by its own sheer inveteracy of will, forced itself against gods and devils into a kind of self-assumed, independent being of its own.



Nay, could grimly live and burn, while the common vitality to which it was conjoined, fled horror-stricken from the unbidden and unfathered birth.



Therefore, the tormented spirit that glared out of bodily eyes, when what seemed Ahab rushed from his room, was for the time but a vacated thing, a formless somnambulistic being, a ray of living light, to be sure, but without an object to colour, and therefore a blankness in itself.



God help thee, old man, thy thoughts have created a creature in thee; and he whose intense thinking thus makes him a Prometheus; a vulture feeds upon that heart for ever; that vulture the very creature he creates.



## CHAPTER 45



# The Affidavit



So far as what there may be of a narrative in this book; and, indeed, as indirectly touching one or two very interesting and curious particulars in the habits of sperm whales, the foregoing chapter, in its earlier part, is as important a one as will be found in this volume; but the leading matter of it requires to be still further and more familiarly enlarged upon, in order to be adequately understood, and moreover to take away any incredulity which a profound ignorance of the entire subject may induce in some minds, as to the natural verity of the main points of this affair.

I care not to perform this part of my task methodically; but shall be content to produce the desired impression by separate citations of items, practically or reliably known to me as a whaleman; and from these citations, I take it--the conclusion aimed at will naturally follow of itself.



First: I have personally known three instances where a whale, after receiving a harpoon, has effected a complete escape; and, after an interval (in one instance of three years), has been again struck by the same hand, and slain; when the two irons, both marked by the same private cypher, have been taken from the body.



In the instance where three years intervened between the flinging of the two harpoons; and I think it may have been something more than that; the man who darted them happening, in the interval, to go in a trading ship on a voyage to Africa, went ashore there, joined a discovery party, and penetrated far into the interior, where he travelled for a period of nearly two years, often endangered by serpents, savages, tigers, poisonous miasmas, with all the other common perils incident to wandering in the heart of unknown regions.



Meanwhile, the whale he had struck must also have been on its travels; no doubt it had thrice circumnavigated the globe, brushing with its flanks all the coasts of Africa; but to no purpose.



This man and this whale again came together, and the one vanquished the other.



I say I, myself, have known three instances similar to this; that is in two of them I saw the whales struck; and, upon the second attack, saw the two irons with the respective marks cut in them, afterwards taken from the dead fish.



In the three-year instance, it so fell out that I was in the boat both times, first and last, and the last time distinctly recognised a peculiar sort of huge mole under the whale's eye, which I had observed there three years previous.



I say three years, but I am pretty sure it was more than that.



Here are three instances, then, which I personally know the truth of; but I have heard of many other instances from persons whose veracity in the matter there is no good ground to impeach.



Secondly: It is well known in the Sperm Whale Fishery, however ignorant the world ashore may be of it, that there have been several memorable historical instances where a particular whale in the ocean has been at distant times and places popularly cognisable.



Why such a whale became thus marked was not altogether and originally owing to his bodily peculiarities as distinguished from other whales; for however peculiar in that respect any chance whale may be, they soon put an end to his peculiarities by killing him, and boiling him down into a peculiarly valuable oil.



No: the reason was this: that from the fatal experiences of the fishery there hung a terrible prestige of perilousness about such a whale as there did about Rinaldo Rinaldini, insomuch that most fishermen were content to recognise him by merely touching their tarpaulins when he would be discovered lounging by them on the sea, without seeking to cultivate a more intimate acquaintance.



Like some poor devils ashore that happen to know an irascible great man, they make distant unobtrusive salutations to him in the street, lest if they pursued the acquaintance further, they might receive a summary thump for their presumption.



But not only did each of these famous whales enjoy great individual celebrity--Nay, you may call it an ocean-wide renown; not only was he famous in life and now is immortal in fore-castle stories after death, but he was admitted into all the rights, privileges, and distinctions of a name; had as much a name indeed as Cambyses or Caesar.



Was it not so, O Timor Tom!



thou famed leviathan, scarred like an iceberg, who so long did'st lurk in the Oriental straits of that name, whose spout was oft seen from the palmy beach of Ombay?



Was it not so, O New Zealand Jack!



thou terror of all cruisers that crossed their wakes in the vicinity of the Tattoo Land?



Was it not so, O Morquan!



King of Japan, whose lofty jet they say at times assumed the semblance of a snow-white cross against the sky?



Was it not so, O Don Miguel!



thou Chilian whale, marked like an old tortoise with mystic hieroglyphics upon the back!



In plain prose, here are four whales as well known to the students of Cetacean History as Marius or Sylla to the classic scholar.



But this is not all.



New Zealand Tom and Don Miguel, after at various times creating great havoc among the boats of different vessels, were finally gone in quest of, systematically hunted out, chased and killed by valiant whaling captains, who heaved up their anchors with that express object as much in view, as in setting out through the Narragansett Woods, Captain Butler of old had it in his mind to capture that notorious murderous savage Annawon, the headmost warrior of the Indian King Philip.



I do not know where I can find a better place than just here, to make mention of one or two other things, which to me seem important, as in printed form establishing in all respects the reasonableness of the whole story of the White Whale, more especially the catastrophe.



For this is one of those disheartening instances where truth requires full as much bolstering as error.



So ignorant are most landmen of some of the plainest and most palpable wonders of the world, that without some hints touching the plain facts, historical and otherwise, of the fishery, they might scout at Moby Dick as a monstrous fable, or still worse and more detestable, a hideous and intolerable allegory.



First: Though most men have some vague flitting ideas of the general perils of the grand fishery, yet they have nothing like a fixed, vivid conception of those perils, and the frequency with which they recur.



One reason perhaps is, that not one in fifty of the actual disasters and deaths by casualties in the fishery, ever finds a public record at home, however transient and immediately forgotten that record.



Do you suppose that that poor fellow there, who this moment perhaps caught by the whale-line off the coast of New Guinea, is being carried down to the bottom of the sea by the sounding leviathan--do you suppose that that poor fellow's name will appear in the newspaper obituary you will read to-morrow at your breakfast?



No: because the mails are very irregular between here and New Guinea.



In fact, did you ever hear what might be called regular news direct or indirect from New Guinea?



Yet I tell you that upon one particular voyage which I made to the Pacific, among many others we spoke thirty different ships, every one of which had had a death by a whale, some of them more than one, and three that had each lost a boat's crew.



For God's sake, be economical with your lamps and candles!



not a gallon you burn, but at least one drop of man's blood was spilled for it.



Secondly: People ashore have indeed some indefinite idea that a whale is an enormous creature of enormous power; but I have ever found that when narrating to them some specific example of this two-fold enormousness, they have significantly complimented me upon my facetiousness; when, I declare upon my soul, I had no more idea of being facetious than Moses, when he wrote the history of the plagues of Egypt.



But fortunately the special point I here seek can be established upon testimony entirely independent of my own.



That point is this: The Sperm Whale is in some cases sufficiently powerful, knowing, and judiciously malicious, as with direct aforethought to stave in, utterly destroy, and sink a large ship; and what is more, the Sperm Whale HAS done it.



First: In the year 1820 the ship Essex, Captain Pollard, of Nantucket, was cruising in the Pacific Ocean.



One day she saw spouts, lowered her boats, and gave chase to a shoal of sperm whales.



Ere long, several of the whales were wounded; when, suddenly, a very large whale escaping from the boats, issued from the shoal, and bore directly down upon the ship.



Dashing his forehead against her hull, he so stove her in, that in less than "ten minutes" she settled down and fell over.



Not a surviving plank of her has been seen since.



After the severest exposure, part of the crew reached the land in their boats.



Being returned home at last, Captain Pollard once more sailed for the Pacific in command of another ship, but the gods shipwrecked him again upon unknown rocks and breakers; for the second time his ship was utterly lost, and forthwith forswearing the sea, he has never tempted it since.



At this day Captain Pollard is a resident of Nantucket.



I have seen Owen Chace, who was chief mate of the Essex at the time of the tragedy; I have read his plain and faithful narrative; I have conversed with his son; and all this within a few miles of the scene of the catastrophe.



\*\*The following are extracts from Chace's narrative: "Every fact seemed to warrant me in concluding that it was anything but chance which directed his operations; he made two several attacks upon the ship, at a short interval between them, both of which, according to their direction, were calculated to do us the most injury, by being made ahead, and thereby combining the speed of the two objects for the shock; to effect which, the exact manoeuvres which he made were necessary.



His aspect was most horrible, and such as indicated resentment and fury.



He came directly from the shoal which we had just before entered, and in which we had struck three of his companions, as if fired with revenge for their sufferings."









By the best authorities, he has always been considered a most trustworthy and unexaggerating historian, except in some one or two particulars, not at all affecting the matter presently to be mentioned.



Now, in this history of his, Procopius mentions that, during the term of his prefecture at Constantinople, a great sea-monster was captured in the neighboring Propontis, or Sea of Marmora, after having destroyed vessels at intervals in those waters for a period of more than fifty years.



A fact thus set down in substantial history cannot easily be gainsaid.



Nor is there any reason it should be.



Of what precise species this sea-monster was, is not mentioned.



But as he destroyed ships, as well as for other reasons, he must have been a whale; and I am strongly inclined to think a sperm whale.



And I will tell you why.



For a long time I fancied that the sperm whale had been always unknown in the Mediterranean and the deep waters connecting with it.



Even now I am certain that those seas are not, and perhaps never can be, in the present constitution of things, a place for his habitual gregarious resort.



But further investigations have recently proved to me, that in modern times there have been isolated instances of the presence of the sperm whale in the Mediterranean.



I am told, on good authority, that on the Barbary coast, a Commodore Davis of the British navy found the skeleton of a sperm whale.



Now, as a vessel of war readily passes through the Dardanelles, hence a sperm whale could, by the same route, pass out of the Mediterranean into the Propontis.



In the Propontis, as far as I can learn, none of that peculiar substance called BRIT is to be found, the aliment of the right whale.



But I have every reason to believe that the food of the sperm whale--squid or cuttle-fish--lurks at the bottom of that sea, because large creatures, but by no means the largest of that sort, have been found at its surface.



If, then, you properly put these statements together, and reason upon them a bit, you will clearly perceive that, according to all human reasoning, Procopius's sea-monster, that for half a century stove the ships of a Roman Emperor, must in all probability have been a sperm whale.







That protection could only consist in his own predominating brain and heart and hand, backed by a heedful, closely calculating attention to every minute atmospheric influence which it was possible for his crew to be subjected to.



For all these reasons then, and others perhaps too analytic to be verbally developed here, Ahab plainly saw that he must still in a good degree continue true to the natural, nominal purpose of the Pequod's voyage; observe all customary usages; and not only that, but force himself to evince all his well known passionate interest in the general pursuit of his profession.



Be all this as it may, his voice was now often heard hailing the three mast-heads and admonishing them to keep a bright look-out, and not omit reporting even a porpoise.



This vigilance was not long without reward.





The straight warp of necessity, not to be swerved from its ultimate course--its every alternating vibration, indeed, only tending to that; free will still free to ply her shuttle between given threads; and chance, though restrained in its play within the right lines of necessity, and sideways in its motions directed by free will, though thus prescribed to by both, chance by turns rules either, and has the last featuring blow at events.



Thus we were weaving and weaving away when I started at a sound so strange, long drawn, and musically wild and unearthly, that the ball of free will dropped from my hand, and I stood gazing up at the clouds whence that voice dropped like a wing.



High aloft in the cross-trees was that mad Gay-Header, Tashtego.



His body was reaching eagerly forward, his hand stretched out like a wand, and at brief sudden intervals he continued his cries.



To be sure the same sound was that very moment perhaps being heard all over the seas, from hundreds of whalemens look-outs perched as high in the air; but from few of those lungs could that accustomed old cry have derived such a marvellous cadence as from Tashtego the Indian's.



As he stood hovering over you half suspended in air, so wildly and eagerly peering towards the horizon, you would have thought him some prophet or seer beholding the shadows of Fate, and by those wild cries announcing their coming.



"There she blows!



there!



there!



there!



she blows!



she blows!"



"Where-away?"



"On the lee-beam, about two miles off!



a school of them!"



Instantly all was commotion.



The Sperm Whale blows as a clock ticks, with the same undeviating and reliable uniformity.



And thereby whalemen distinguish this fish from other tribes of his genus.



"There go flukes!"



was now the cry from Tashtego; and the whales disappeared.



"Quick, steward!"



cried Ahab.



"Time!



time!"



Dough-Boy hurried below, glanced at the watch, and reported the exact minute to Ahab.



The ship was now kept away from the wind, and she went gently rolling before it.



Tashtego reporting that the whales had gone down heading to leeward, we confidently looked to see them again directly in advance of our bows.



For that singular craft at times evinced by the Sperm Whale when, sounding with his head in one direction, he nevertheless, while concealed beneath the surface, mills round, and swiftly swims off in the opposite quarter--this deceitfulness of his could not now be in action; for there was no reason to suppose that the fish seen by Tashtego had been in any way alarmed, or indeed knew at all of our vicinity.



One of the men selected for shipkeepers--that is, those not appointed to the boats, by this time relieved the Indian at the main-mast head.



The sailors at the fore and mizzen had come down; the line tubs were fixed in their places; the cranes were thrust out; the mainyard was backed, and the three boats swung over the sea like three samphire baskets over high cliffs.



Outside of the bulwarks their eager crews with one hand clung to the rail, while one foot was expectantly poised on the gunwale.



So look the long line of man-of-war's men about to throw themselves on board an enemy's ship.



But at this critical instant a sudden exclamation was heard that took every eye from the whale.



With a start all glared at dark Ahab, who was surrounded by five dusky phantoms that seemed fresh formed out of air.



## CHAPTER 48



# The First Lowering



The phantoms, for so they then seemed, were flitting on the other side of the deck, and, with a noiseless celerity, were casting loose the tackles and bands of the boat which swung there.



This boat had always been deemed one of the spare boats, though technically called the captain's, on account of its hanging from the starboard quarter.



The figure that now stood by its bows was tall and swart, with one white tooth evilly protruding from its steel-like lips.



A rumpled Chinese jacket of black cotton funereally invested him, with wide black trowsers of the same dark stuff.



But strangely crowning this ebonness was a glistening white plaited turban, the living hair braided and coiled round and round upon his head.



Less swart in aspect, the companions of this figure were of that vivid, tiger-yellow complexion peculiar to some of the aboriginal natives of the Manillas;--a race notorious for a certain diabolism of subtilty, and by some honest white mariners supposed to be the paid spies and secret confidential agents on the water of the devil, their lord, whose counting-room they suppose to be elsewhere.



While yet the wondering ship's company were gazing upon these strangers, Ahab cried out to the white-turbaned old man at their head, "All ready there, Fedallah?"



"Ready," was the half-hissed reply.



"Lower away then; d'y'e hear?"



shouting across the deck.



"Lower away there, I say."











) Sperm, sperm's the play!



This at least is duty; duty and profit hand in hand."



"Aye, aye, I thought as much," soliloquized Stubb, when the boats diverged, "as soon as I clapt eye on 'em, I thought so.



Aye, and that's what he went into the after hold for, so often, as Dough-Boy long suspected.



They were hidden down there.



The White Whale's at the bottom of it.



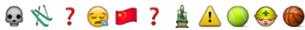
Well, well, so be it!



Can't be helped!



All right!



Give way, men!



It ain't the White Whale to-day!



Give way!"



Now the advent of these outlandish strangers at such a critical instant as the lowering of the boats from the deck, this had not unreasonably awakened a sort of superstitious amazement in some of the ship's company; but Archy's fancied discovery having some time previous got abroad among them, though indeed not credited then, this had in some small measure prepared them for the event.



It took off the extreme edge of their wonder; and so what with all this and Stubb's confident way of accounting for their appearance, they were for the time freed from superstitious surmisings; though the affair still left abundant room for all manner of wild conjectures as to dark Ahab's precise agency in the matter from the beginning.



For me, I silently recalled the mysterious shadows I had seen creeping on board the Pequod during the dim Nantucket dawn, as well as the enigmatical hintings of the unaccountable Elijah.



Meantime, Ahab, out of hearing of his officers, having sided the furthest to windward, was still ranging ahead of the other boats; a circumstance bespeaking how potent a crew was pulling him.







He withdrew it from his hatband, where he always wore it aslant like a feather.



He loaded it, and rammed home the loading with his thumb-end; but hardly had he ignited his match across the rough sandpaper of his hand, when Tashtego, his harpooneer, whose eyes had been setting to windward like two fixed stars, suddenly dropped like light from his erect attitude to his seat, crying out in a quick phrensy of hurry, "Down, down all, and give way!



--there they are!"



To a landsman, no whale, nor any sign of a herring, would have been visible at that moment; nothing but a troubled bit of greenish white water, and thin scattered puffs of vapour hovering over it, and suffusingly blowing off to leeward, like the confused scud from white rolling billows.



The air around suddenly vibrated and tingled, as it were, like the air over intensely heated plates of iron.



Beneath this atmospheric waving and curling, and partially beneath a thin layer of water, also, the whales were swimming.



Seen in advance of all the other indications, the puffs of vapour they spouted, seemed their forerunning couriers and detached flying outriders.



All four boats were now in keen pursuit of that one spot of troubled water and air.



But it bade fair to outstrip them; it flew on and on, as a mass of interblending bubbles borne down a rapid stream from the hills.



"Pull, pull, my good boys," said Starbuck, in the lowest possible but intensest concentrated whisper to his men; while the sharp fixed glance from his eyes darted straight ahead of the bow, almost seemed as two visible needles in two unerring binnacle compasses.



He did not say much to his crew, though, nor did his crew say anything to him.



Only the silence of the boat was at intervals startlingly pierced by one of his peculiar whispers, now harsh with command, now soft with entreaty.



How different the loud little King-Post.



"Sing out and say something, my hearties.



Roar and pull, my thunderbolts!



Beach me, beach me on their black backs, boys; only do that for me, and I'll sign over to you my Martha's Vineyard plantation, boys; including wife and children, boys.



Lay me on--lay me on!



O Lord, Lord!



but I shall go stark, staring mad!



See!



see that white water!"



And so shouting, he pulled his hat from his head, and stamped up and down on it; then picking it up, flirted it far off upon the sea; and finally fell to rearing and plunging in the boat's stern like a crazed colt from the prairie.



"Look at that chap now," philosophically drawled Stubb, who, with his unlighted short pipe, mechanically retained between his teeth, at a short distance, followed after--"He's got fits, that Flask has.



Fits?



yes, give him fits--that's the very word--pitch fits into 'em.



Merrily, merrily, hearts-alive.



Pudding for supper, you know;--merry's the word.



Pull, babes--pull, sucklings--pull, all.



But what the devil are you hurrying about?



Softly, softly, and steadily, my men.



Only pull, and keep pulling; nothing more.



Crack all your backbones, and bite your knives in two--that's all.



Take it easy--why don't ye take it easy, I say, and burst all your livers and lungs!"



But what it was that inscrutable Ahab said to that tiger-yellow crew of his--these were words best omitted here; for you live under the blessed light of the evangelical land.



Only the infidel sharks in the audacious seas may give ear to such words, when, with tornado brow, and eyes of red murder, and foam-glued lips, Ahab leaped after his prey.



Meanwhile, all the boats tore on.



The repeated specific allusions of Flask to "that whale," as he called the fictitious monster which he declared to be incessantly tantalizing his boat's bow with its tail--these allusions of his were at times so vivid and life-like, that they would cause some one or two of his men to snatch a fearful look over the shoulder.



But this was against all rule; for the oarsmen must put out their eyes, and ram a skewer through their necks; usage pronouncing that they must have no organs but ears, and no limbs but arms, in these critical moments.



It was a sight full of quick wonder and awe!



The vast swells of the omnipotent sea; the surging, hollow roar they made, as they rolled along the eight gunwales, like gigantic bowls in a boundless bowling-green; the brief suspended agony of the boat, as it would tip for an instant on the knife-like edge of the sharper waves, that almost seemed threatening to cut it in two; the sudden profound dip into the watery glens and hollows; the keen spurtings and goadings to gain the top of the opposite hill; the headlong, sled-like slide down its other side;--all these, with the cries of the headsmen and harpooners, and the shuddering gasps of the oarsmen, with the wondrous sight of the ivory Pequod bearing down upon her boats with outstretched sails, like a wild hen after her screaming brood;--all this was thrilling.



Not the raw recruit, marching from the bosom of his wife into the fever heat of his first battle; not the dead man's ghost encountering the first unknown phantom in the other world;--neither of these can feel stranger and stronger emotions than that man does, who for the first time finds himself pulling into the charmed, churned circle of the hunted sperm whale.



The dancing white water made by the chase was now becoming more and more visible, owing to the increasing darkness of the dun cloud-shadows flung upon the sea.



The jets of vapour no longer blended, but tilted everywhere to right and left; the whales seemed separating their wakes.



The boats were pulled more apart; Starbuck giving chase to three whales running dead to leeward.



Our sail was now set, and, with the still rising wind, we rushed along; the boat going with such madness through the water, that the lee oars could scarcely be worked rapidly enough to escape being torn from the row-locks.



Soon we were running through a suffusing wide veil of mist; neither ship nor boat to be seen.



"Give way, men," whispered Starbuck, drawing still further aft the sheet of his sail; "there is time to kill a fish yet before the squall comes.



There's white water again!



--close to!



Spring!"



Soon after, two cries in quick succession on each side of us denoted that the other boats had got fast; but hardly were they overheard, when with a lightning-like hurtling whisper Starbuck said: "Stand up!"



and Queequeg, harpoon in hand, sprang to his feet.



Though not one of the oarsmen was then facing the life and death peril so close to them ahead, yet with their eyes on the intense countenance of the mate in the stern of the boat, they knew that the imminent instant had come; they heard, too, an enormous wallowing sound as of fifty elephants stirring in their litter.



Meanwhile the boat was still booming through the mist, the waves curling and hissing around us like the erected crests of enraged serpents.



"That's his hump.



THERE, THERE, give it to him!"



whispered Starbuck.



A short rushing sound leaped out of the boat; it was the darted iron of Queequeg.



Then all in one welded commotion came an invisible push from astern, while forward the boat seemed striking on a ledge; the sail collapsed and exploded; a gush of scalding vapour shot up near by; something rolled and tumbled like an earthquake beneath us.



The whole crew were half suffocated as they were tossed helter-skelter into the white curdling cream of the squall.



Squall, whale, and harpoon had all blended together; and the whale, merely grazed by the iron, escaped.



Though completely swamped, the boat was nearly unharmed.



Swimming round it we picked up the floating oars, and lashing them across the gunwale, tumbled back to our places.



There we sat up to our knees in the sea, the water covering every rib and plank, so that to our downward gazing eyes the suspended craft seemed a coral boat grown up to us from the bottom of the ocean.



The wind increased to a howl; the waves dashed their bucklers together; the whole squall roared, forked, and crackled around us like a white fire upon the prairie, in which, unconsumed, we were burning; immortal in these jaws of death!



In vain we hailed the other boats; as well roar to the live coals down the chimney of a flaming furnace as hail those boats in that storm.



Meanwhile the driving scud, rack, and mist, grew darker with the shadows of night; no sign of the ship could be seen.



The rising sea forbade all attempts to bale out the boat.



The oars were useless as propellers, performing now the office of life-preservers.



So, cutting the lashing of the waterproof match keg, after many failures Starbuck contrived to ignite the lamp in the lantern; then stretching it on a waif pole, handed it to Queequeg as the standard-bearer of this forlorn hope.



There, then, he sat, holding up that imbecile candle in the heart of that almighty forlornness.



There, then, he sat, the sign and symbol of a man without faith, hopelessly holding up hope in the midst of despair.



Wet, drenched through, and shivering cold, despairing of ship or boat, we lifted up our eyes as the dawn came on.



The mist still spread over the sea, the empty lantern lay crushed in the bottom of the boat.



Suddenly Queequeg started to his feet, hollowing his hand to his ear.



We all heard a faint creaking, as of ropes and yards hitherto muffled by the storm.



The sound came nearer and nearer; the thick mists were dimly parted by a huge, vague form.



Affrighted, we all sprang into the sea as the ship at last loomed into view, bearing right down upon us within a distance of not much more than its length.



Floating on the waves we saw the abandoned boat, as for one instant it tossed and gaped beneath the ship's bows like a chip at the base of a cataract; and then the vast hull rolled over it, and it was seen no more till it came up weltering astern.



Again we swam for it, were dashed against it by the seas, and were at last taken up and safely landed on board.



Ere the squall came close to, the other boats had cut loose from their fish and returned to the ship in good time.



The ship had given us up, but was still cruising, if haply it might light upon some token of our perishing,—an oar or a lance pole.



## CHAPTER 49



# The Hyena



There are certain queer times and occasions in this strange mixed affair we call life when a man takes this whole universe for a vast practical joke, though the wit thereof he but dimly discerns, and more than suspects that the joke is at nobody's expense but his own.



However, nothing dispirits, and nothing seems worth while disputing.



He bolts down all events, all creeds, and beliefs, and persuasions, all hard things visible and invisible, never mind how knobby; as an ostrich of potent digestion gobbles down bullets and gun flints.



And as for small difficulties and worryings, prospects of sudden disaster, peril of life and limb; all these, and death itself, seem to him only sly, good-natured hits, and jolly punches in the side bestowed by the unseen and unaccountable old joker.



That odd sort of wayward mood I am speaking of, comes over a man only in some time of extreme tribulation; it comes in the very midst of his earnestness, so that what just before might have seemed to him a thing most momentous, now seems but a part of the general joke.



There is nothing like the perils of whaling to breed this free and easy sort of genial, desperado philosophy; and with it I now regarded this whole voyage of the Pequod, and the great White Whale its object.



"Queequeg," said I, when they had dragged me, the last man, to the deck, and I was still shaking myself in my jacket to fling off the water; "Queequeg, my fine friend, does this sort of thing often happen?"



Without much emotion, though soaked through just like me, he gave me to understand that such things did often happen.



"Mr. Stubb," said I, turning to that worthy, who, buttoned up in his oil-jacket, was now calmly smoking his pipe in the rain; "Mr. Stubb, I think I have heard you say that of all whalemens you ever met, our chief mate, Mr. Starbuck, is by far the most careful and prudent."





After the ceremony was concluded upon the present occasion, I felt all the easier; a stone was rolled away from my heart.



Besides, all the days I should now live would be as good as the days that Lazarus lived after his resurrection; a supplementary clean gain of so many months or weeks as the case might be.



I survived myself; my death and burial were locked up in my chest.



I looked round me tranquilly and contentedly, like a quiet ghost with a clean conscience sitting inside the bars of a snug family vault.



Now then, thought I, unconsciously rolling up the sleeves of my frock, here goes for a cool, collected dive at death and destruction, and the devil fetch the hindmost.





Considering that with two legs man is but a hobbling wight in all times of danger; considering that the pursuit of whales is always under great and extraordinary difficulties; that every individual moment, indeed, then comprises a peril; under these circumstances is it wise for any maimed man to enter a whale-boat in the hunt?



As a general thing, the joint-owners of the Pequod must have plainly thought not.



Ahab well knew that although his friends at home would think little of his entering a boat in certain comparatively harmless vicissitudes of the chase, for the sake of being near the scene of action and giving his orders in person, yet for Captain Ahab to have a boat actually apportioned to him as a regular headsman in the hunt--above all for Captain Ahab to be supplied with five extra men, as that same boat's crew, he well knew that such generous conceits never entered the heads of the owners of the Pequod.



Therefore he had not solicited a boat's crew from them, nor had he in any way hinted his desires on that head.



Nevertheless he had taken private measures of his own touching all that matter.



Until Cabaco's published discovery, the sailors had little foreseen it, though to be sure when, after being a little while out of port, all hands had concluded the customary business of fitting the whaleboats for service; when some time after this Ahab was now and then found bestirring himself in the matter of making thole-pins with his own hands for what was thought to be one of the spare boats, and even solicitously cutting the small wooden skewers, which when the line is running out are pinned over the groove in the bow: when all this was observed in him, and particularly his solicitude in having an extra coat of sheathing in the bottom of the boat, as if to make it better withstand the pointed pressure of his ivory limb; and also the anxiety he evinced in exactly shaping the thigh board, or clumsy cleat, as it is sometimes called, the horizontal piece in the boat's bow for bracing the knee against in darting or stabbing at the whale; when it was observed how often he stood up in that boat with his solitary knee fixed in the semi-circular depression in the cleat, and with the carpenter's chisel gouged out a little here and straightened it a little there; all these things, I say, had awakened much interest and curiosity at the time.



But almost everybody supposed that this particular preparative heedfulness in Ahab must only be with a view to the ultimate chase of Moby Dick; for he had already revealed his intention to hunt that mortal monster in person.



But such a supposition did by no means involve the remotest suspicion as to any boat's crew being assigned to that boat.



Now, with the subordinate phantoms, what wonder remained soon waned away; for in a whaler wonders soon wane.



Besides, now and then such unaccountable odds and ends of strange nations come up from the unknown nooks and ash-holes of the earth to man these floating outlaws of whalers; and the ships themselves often pick up such queer castaway creatures found tossing about the open sea on planks, bits of wreck, oars, whaleboats, canoes, blown-off Japanese junks, and what not; that Beelzebub himself might climb up the side and step down into the cabin to chat with the captain, and it would not create any unsubduable excitement in the fore-castle.



But be all this as it may, certain it is that while the subordinate phantoms soon found their place among the crew, though still as it were somehow distinct from them, yet that hair-turbaned Fedallah remained a muffled mystery to the last.





# CHAPTER 51



# The Spirit-spout



Days, weeks passed, and under easy sail, the ivory Pequod had slowly swept across four several cruising-grounds; that off the Azores; off the Cape de Verdes; on the Plate (so called), being off the mouth of the Rio de la Plata; and the Carrol Ground, an unstaked, watery locality, southerly from St. Helena.



It was while gliding through these latter waters that one serene and moonlight night, when all the waves rolled by like scrolls of silver; and, by their soft, suffusing seethings, made what seemed a silvery silence, not a solitude; on such a silent night a silvery jet was seen far in advance of the white bubbles at the bow.



Lit up by the moon, it looked celestial; seemed some plumed and glittering god uprising from the sea.



Fedallah first descried this jet.



For of these moonlight nights, it was his wont to mount to the main-mast head, and stand a look-out there, with the same precision as if it had been day.



And yet, though herds of whales were seen by night, not one whaleman in a hundred would venture a lowering for them.



You may think with what emotions, then, the seamen beheld this old Oriental perched aloft at such unusual hours; his turban and the moon, companions in one sky.



But when, after spending his uniform interval there for several successive nights without uttering a single sound; when, after all this silence, his unearthly voice was heard announcing that silvery, moon-lit jet, every reclining mariner started to his feet as if some winged spirit had lighted in the rigging, and hailed the mortal crew.



"There she blows!"



Had the trump of judgment blown, they could not have quivered more; yet still they felt no terror; rather pleasure.



For though it was a most unwonted hour, yet so impressive was the cry, and so deliriously exciting, that almost every soul on board instinctively desired a lowering.



Walking the deck with quick, side-lunging strides, Ahab commanded the t'gallant sails and royals to be set, and every stunsail spread.



The best man in the ship must take the helm.



Then, with every mast-head manned, the piled-up craft rolled down before the wind.



The strange, upheaving, lifting tendency of the taffrail breeze filling the hollows of so many sails, made the buoyant, hovering deck to feel like air beneath the feet; while still she rushed along, as if two antagonistic influences were struggling in her--one to mount direct to heaven, the other to drive yawingly to some horizontal goal.

And had you watched Ahab's face that night, you would have thought that in him also two different things were warring.



While his one live leg made lively echoes along the deck, every stroke of his dead limb sounded like a coffin-tap.



On life and death this old man walked.



But though the ship so swiftly sped, and though from every eye, like arrows, the eager glances shot, yet the silvery jet was no more seen that night.



Every sailor swore he saw it once, but not a second time.



This midnight-spout had almost grown a forgotten thing, when, some days after, lo!



at the same silent hour, it was again announced: again it was descried by all; but upon making sail to overtake it, once more it disappeared as if it had never been.



And so it served us night after night, till no one heeded it but to wonder at it.



Mysteriously jetted into the clear moonlight, or starlight, as the case might be; disappearing again for one whole day, or two days, or three; and somehow seeming at every distinct repetition to be advancing still further and further in our van, this solitary jet seemed for ever alluring us on.



Nor with the immemorial superstition of their race, and in accordance with the preternaturalness, as it seemed, which in many things invested the Pequod, were there wanting some of the seamen who swore that whenever and wherever descried; at however remote times, or in however far apart latitudes and longitudes, that unneareable spout was cast by one self-same whale; and that whale, Moby Dick.





Meantime, the crew driven from the forward part of the ship by the perilous seas that burstingly broke over its bows, stood in a line along the bulwarks in the waist; and the better to guard against the leaping waves, each man had slipped himself into a sort of bowline secured to the rail, in which he swung as in a loosened belt.



Few or no words were spoken; and the silent ship, as if manned by painted sailors in wax, day after day tore on through all the swift madness and gladness of the demoniac waves.



By night the same muteness of humanity before the shrieks of the ocean prevailed; still in silence the men swung in the bowlines; still wordless Ahab stood up to the blast.



Even when wearied nature seemed demanding repose he would not seek that repose in his hammock.



Never could Starbuck forget the old man's aspect, when one night going down into the cabin to mark how the barometer stood, he saw him with closed eyes sitting straight in his floor-screwed chair; the rain and half-melted sleet of the storm from which he had some time before emerged, still slowly dripping from the unremoved hat and coat.



On the table beside him lay unrolled one of those charts of tides and currents which have previously been spoken of.



His lantern swung from his tightly clenched hand.



Though the body was erect, the head was thrown back so that the closed eyes were pointed towards the needle of the tell-tale that swung from a beam in the ceiling.



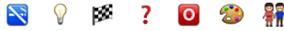
\* \*The cabin-compass is called the tell-tale, because without going to the compass at the helm, the Captain, while below, can inform himself of the course of the ship.



Terrible old man!



thought Starbuck with a shudder, sleeping in this gale, still thou steadfastly eyest thy purpose.



# The Albatross



South-eastward from the Cape, off the distant Crozetts, a good cruising ground for Right Whalemens, a sail loomed ahead, the Goney (Albatross) by name.



As she slowly drew nigh, from my lofty perch at the fore-mast-head, I had a good view of that sight so remarkable to a tyro in the far ocean fisheries--a whaler at sea, and long absent from home.



As if the waves had been fullers, this craft was bleached like the skeleton of a stranded walrus.



All down her sides, this spectral appearance was traced with long channels of reddened rust, while all her spars and her rigging were like the thick branches of trees furred over with hoar-frost.



Only her lower sails were set.



A wild sight it was to see her long-bearded look-outs at those three mast-heads.



They seemed clad in the skins of beasts, so torn and bepatched the raiment that had survived nearly four years of cruising.



Standing in iron hoops nailed to the mast, they swayed and swung over a fathomless sea; and though, when the ship slowly glided close under our stern, we six men in the air came so nigh to each other that we might almost have leaped from the mast-heads of one ship to those of the other; yet, those forlorn-looking fishermen, mildly eyeing us as they passed, said not one word to our own look-outs, while the quarter-deck hail was being heard from below.



"Ship ahoy!



Have ye seen the White Whale?"



But as the strange captain, leaning over the pallid bulwarks, was in the act of putting his trumpet to his mouth, it somehow fell from his hand into the sea; and the wind now rising amain, he in vain strove to make himself heard without it.





But in pursuit of those far mysteries we dream of, or in tormented chase of that demon phantom that, some time or other, swims before all human hearts; while chasing such over this round globe, they either lead us on in barren mazes or midway leave us whelmed.

# CHAPTER 53



# The Gam



The ostensible reason why Ahab did not go on board of the whaler we had spoken was this: the wind and sea betokened storms.



But even had this not been the case, he would not after all, perhaps, have boarded her--judging by his subsequent conduct on similar occasions--if so it had been that, by the process of hailing, he had obtained a negative answer to the question he put.



For, as it eventually turned out, he cared not to consort, even for five minutes, with any stranger captain, except he could contribute some of that information he so absorbingly sought.



But all this might remain inadequately estimated, were not something said here of the peculiar usages of whaling-vessels when meeting each other in foreign seas, and especially on a common cruising-ground.



If two strangers crossing the Pine Barrens in New York State, or the equally desolate Salisbury Plain in England; if casually encountering each other in such inhospitable wilds, these twain, for the life of them, cannot well avoid a mutual salutation; and stopping for a moment to interchange the news; and, perhaps, sitting down for a while and resting in concert: then, how much more natural that upon the illimitable Pine Barrens and Salisbury Plains of the sea, two whaling vessels desecrating each other at the ends of the earth--off lone Fanning's Island, or the far away King's Mills; how much more natural, I say, that under such circumstances these ships should not only interchange hails, but come into still closer, more friendly and sociable contact.



And especially would this seem to be a matter of course, in the case of vessels owned in one seaport, and whose captains, officers, and not a few of the men are personally known to each other; and consequently, have all sorts of dear domestic things to talk about.



For the long absent ship, the outward-bounder, perhaps, has letters on board; at any rate, she will be sure to let her have some papers of a date a year or two later than the last one on her blurred and thumb-worn files.



And in return for that courtesy, the outward-bound ship would receive the latest whaling intelligence from the cruising-ground to which she may be destined, a thing of the utmost importance to her.





And that question once answered, pirates straightway steer apart, for they are infernal villains on both sides, and don't like to see overmuch of each other's villainous likenesses.



But look at the godly, honest, unostentatious, hospitable, sociable, free-and-easy whaler!



What does the whaler do when she meets another whaler in any sort of decent weather?



She has a "GAM," a thing so utterly unknown to all other ships that they never heard of the name even; and if by chance they should hear of it, they only grin at it, and repeat gamesome stuff about "spouters" and "blubber-boilers," and such like pretty exclamations.



Why it is that all Merchant-seamen, and also all Pirates and Man-of-War's men, and Slave-ship sailors, cherish such a scornful feeling towards Whale-ships; this is a question it would be hard to answer.



Because, in the case of pirates, say, I should like to know whether that profession of theirs has any peculiar glory about it.



It sometimes ends in uncommon elevation, indeed; but only at the gallows.



And besides, when a man is elevated in that odd fashion, he has no proper foundation for his superior altitude.



Hence, I conclude, that in boasting himself to be high lifted above a whaleman, in that assertion the pirate has no solid basis to stand on.



But what is a GAM?



You might wear out your index-finger running up and down the columns of dictionaries, and never find the word.



Dr. Johnson never attained to that erudition; Noah Webster's ark does not hold it.



Nevertheless, this same expressive word has now for many years been in constant use among some fifteen thousand true born Yankees.



Certainly, it needs a definition, and should be incorporated into the Lexicon.



With that view, let me learnedly define it.



GAM.



NOUN--A SOCIAL MEETING OF TWO (OR MORE) WHALESHIPS, GENERALLY ON A CRUISING-GROUND; WHEN, AFTER EXCHANGING HAILS, THEY EXCHANGE VISITS BY BOATS' CREWS; THE TWO CAPTAINS REMAINING, FOR THE TIME, ON BOARD OF ONE SHIP, AND THE TWO CHIEF MATES ON THE OTHER.



There is another little item about Gamming which must not be forgotten here.



All professions have their own little peculiarities of detail; so has the whale fishery.



In a pirate, man-of-war, or slave ship, when the captain is rowed anywhere in his boat, he always sits in the stern sheets on a comfortable, sometimes cushioned seat there, and often steers himself with a pretty little milliner's tiller decorated with gay cords and ribbons.



But the whale-boat has no seat astern, no sofa of that sort whatever, and no tiller at all.



High times indeed, if whaling captains were wheeled about the water on castors like gouty old aldermen in patent chairs.



And as for a tiller, the whale-boat never admits of any such effeminacy; and therefore as in gamming a complete boat's crew must leave the ship, and hence as the boat steerer or harpooner is of the number, that subordinate is the steersman upon the occasion, and the captain, having no place to sit in, is pulled off to his visit all standing like a pine tree.



And often you will notice that being conscious of the eyes of the whole visible world resting on him from the sides of the two ships, this standing captain is all alive to the importance of sustaining his dignity by maintaining his legs.



Nor is this any very easy matter; for in his rear is the immense projecting steering oar hitting him now and then in the small of his back, the after-oar reciprocating by rapping his knees in front.



He is thus completely wedged before and behind, and can only expand himself sideways by settling down on his stretched legs; but a sudden, violent pitch of the boat will often go far to topple him, because length of foundation is nothing without corresponding breadth.



Merely make a spread angle of two poles, and you cannot stand them up.



Then, again, it would never do in plain sight of the world's riveted eyes, it would never do, I say, for this straddling captain to be seen steadying himself the slightest particle by catching hold of anything with his hands; indeed, as token of his entire, buoyant self-command, he generally carries his hands in his trowsers' pockets; but perhaps being generally very large, heavy hands, he carries them there for ballast.



Nevertheless there have occurred instances, well authenticated ones too, where the captain has been known for an uncommonly critical moment or two, in a sudden squall say--to seize hold of the nearest oarsman's hair, and hold on there like grim death.



## CHAPTER 54



# The Town-ho's Story



(AS TOLD AT THE GOLDEN INN) The Cape of Good Hope, and all the watery region round about there, is much like some noted four corners of a great highway, where you meet more travellers than in any other part.



It was not very long after speaking the Goney that another homeward-bound whaleman, the Town-Ho,\* was encountered.



She was manned almost wholly by Polynesians.



In the short gam that ensued she gave us strong news of Moby Dick.



To some the general interest in the White Whale was now wildly heightened by a circumstance of the Town-Ho's story, which seemed obscurely to involve with the whale a certain wondrous, inverted visitation of one of those so called judgments of God which at times are said to overtake some men.



This latter circumstance, with its own particular accompaniments, forming what may be called the secret part of the tragedy about to be narrated, never reached the ears of Captain Ahab or his mates.



For that secret part of the story was unknown to the captain of the Town-Ho himself.



It was the private property of three confederate white seamen of that ship, one of whom, it seems, communicated it to Tashtego with Romish injunctions of secrecy, but the following night Tashtego rambled in his sleep, and revealed so much of it in that way, that when he was wakened he could not well withhold the rest.



Nevertheless, so potent an influence did this thing have on those seamen in the Pequod who came to the full knowledge of it, and by such a strange delicacy, to call it so, were they governed in this matter, that they kept the secret among themselves so that it never transpired abaft the Pequod's main-mast.



Interweaving in its proper place this darker thread with the story as publicly narrated on the ship, the whole of this strange affair I now proceed to put on lasting record.



\*The ancient whale-cry upon first sighting a whale from the mast-head, still used by whalers in hunting the famous Gallipagos terrapin.



For my humor's sake, I shall preserve the style in which I once narrated it at Lima, to a lounging circle of my Spanish friends, one saint's eve, smoking upon the thick-gilt tiled piazza of the Golden Inn.



Of those fine cavaliers, the young Dons, Pedro and Sebastian, were on the closer terms with me; and hence the interluding questions they occasionally put, and which are duly answered at the time.



"Some two years prior to my first learning the events which I am about rehearsing to you, gentlemen, the Town-Ho, Sperm Whaler of Nantucket, was cruising in your Pacific here, not very many days' sail eastward from the eaves of this good Golden Inn.



She was somewhere to the northward of the Line.



One morning upon handling the pumps, according to daily usage, it was observed that she made more water in her hold than common.



They supposed a sword-fish had stabbed her, gentlemen.



But the captain, having some unusual reason for believing that rare good luck awaited him in those latitudes; and therefore being very averse to quit them, and the leak not being then considered at all dangerous, though, indeed, they could not find it after searching the hold as low down as was possible in rather heavy weather, the ship still continued her cruising, the mariners working at the pumps at wide and easy intervals; but no good luck came; more days went by, and not only was the leak yet undiscovered, but it sensibly increased.



So much so, that now taking some alarm, the captain, making all sail, stood away for the nearest harbor among the islands, there to have his hull hove out and repaired.



"Though no small passage was before her, yet, if the commonest chance favoured, he did not at all fear that his ship would founder by the way, because his pumps were of the best, and being periodically relieved at them, those six-and-thirty men of his could easily keep the ship free; never mind if the leak should double on her.



In truth, well nigh the whole of this passage being attended by very prosperous breezes, the Town-Ho had all but certainly arrived in perfect safety at her port without the occurrence of the least fatality, had it not been for the brutal overbearing of Radney, the mate, a Vineyarder, and the bitterly provoked vengeance of Steelkilt, a Lakeman and desperado from Buffalo.



"Lakeman!



--Buffalo!



Pray, what is a Lakeman, and where is Buffalo?



' said Don Sebastian, rising in his swinging mat of grass.



"On the eastern shore of our Lake Erie, Don; but--I crave your courtesy--may be, you shall soon hear further of all that.



Now, gentlemen, in square-sail brigs and three-masted ships, well-nigh as large and stout as any that ever sailed out of your old Callao to far Manilla; this Lakeman, in the land-locked heart of our America, had yet been nurtured by all those agrarian freebooting impressions popularly connected with the open ocean.



For in their interflowing aggregate, those grand fresh-water seas of ours,--Erie, and Ontario, and Huron, and Superior, and Michigan,--possess an ocean-like expansiveness, with many of the ocean's noblest traits; with many of its rimmed varieties of races and of climes.



They contain round archipelagoes of romantic isles, even as the Polynesian waters do; in large part, are shored by two great contrasting nations, as the Atlantic is; they furnish long maritime approaches to our numerous territorial colonies from the East, dotted all round their banks; here and there are frowned upon by batteries, and by the goat-like craggy guns of lofty Mackinaw; they have heard the fleet thunderings of naval victories; at intervals, they yield their beaches to wild barbarians, whose red painted faces flash from out their peltry wigwams; for leagues and leagues are flanked by ancient and unentered forests, where the gaunt pines stand like serried lines of kings in Gothic genealogies; those same woods harboring wild Afric beasts of prey, and silken creatures whose exported furs give robes to Tartar Emperors; they mirror the paved capitals of Buffalo and Cleveland, as well as Winnebago villages; they float alike the full-rigged merchant ship, the armed cruiser of the State, the steamer, and the beech canoe; they are swept by Borean and dismasting blasts as direful as any that lash the salted wave; they know what shipwrecks are, for out of sight of land, however inland, they have drowned full many a midnight ship with all its shrieking crew.



Thus, gentlemen, though an inlander, Steelkilt was wild-ocean born, and wild-ocean nurtured; as much of an audacious mariner as any.



And for Radney, though in his infancy he may have laid him down on the lone Nantucket beach, to nurse at his maternal sea; though in after life he had long followed our austere Atlantic and your contemplative Pacific; yet was he quite as vengeful and full of social quarrel as the backwoods seaman, fresh from the latitudes of buck-horn handled bowie-knives.



Yet was this Nantucketer a man with some good-hearted traits; and this Lakeman, a mariner, who though a sort of devil indeed, might yet by inflexible firmness, only tempered by that common decency of human recognition which is the meanest slave's right; thus treated, this Steelkilt had long been retained harmless and docile.



At all events, he had proved so thus far; but Radney was doomed and made mad, and Steelkilt--but, gentlemen, you shall hear.



"It was not more than a day or two at the furthest after pointing her prow for her island haven, that the Town-Ho's leak seemed again increasing, but only so as to require an hour or more at the pumps every day.



You must know that in a settled and civilized ocean like our Atlantic, for example, some skippers think little of pumping their whole way across it; though of a still, sleepy night, should the officer of the deck happen to forget his duty in that respect, the probability would be that he and his shipmates would never again remember it, on account of all hands gently subsiding to the bottom.



Nor in the solitary and savage seas far from you to the westward, gentlemen, is it altogether unusual for ships to keep clanging at their pump-handles in full chorus even for a voyage of considerable length; that is, if it lie along a tolerably accessible coast, or if any other reasonable retreat is afforded them.



It is only when a leaky vessel is in some very out of the way part of those waters, some really landless latitude, that her captain begins to feel a little anxious.



"Much this way had it been with the Town-Ho; so when her leak was found gaining once more, there was in truth some small concern manifested by several of her company; especially by Radney the mate.



He commanded the upper sails to be well hoisted, sheeted home anew, and every way expanded to the breeze.



Now this Radney, I suppose, was as little of a coward, and as little inclined to any sort of nervous apprehensiveness touching his own person as any fearless, unthinking creature on land or on sea that you can conveniently imagine, gentlemen.



Therefore when he betrayed this solicitude about the safety of the ship, some of the seamen declared that it was only on account of his being a part owner in her.



So when they were working that evening at the pumps, there was on this head no small gamesomeness slyly going on among them, as they stood with their feet continually overflowed by the rippling clear water; clear as any mountain spring, gentlemen--that bubbling from the pumps ran across the deck, and poured itself out in steady spouts at the lee scupper-holes.



"Now, as you well know, it is not seldom the case in this conventional world of ours--watery or otherwise; that when a person placed in command over his fellow-men finds one of them to be very significantly his superior in general pride of manhood, straightway against that man he conceives an unconquerable dislike and bitterness; and if he have a chance he will pull down and pulverize that subaltern's tower, and make a little heap of dust of it.



Be this conceit of mine as it may, gentlemen, at all events Steelkilt was a tall and noble animal with a head like a Roman, and a flowing golden beard like the tasseled housings of your last viceroy's snorting charger; and a brain, and a heart, and a soul in him, gentlemen, which had made Steelkilt Charlemagne, had he been born son to Charlemagne's father.



But Radney, the mate, was ugly as a mule; yet as hardy, as stubborn, as malicious.



He did not love Steelkilt, and Steelkilt knew it.



"Espying the mate drawing near as he was toiling at the pump with the rest, the Lakeman affected not to notice him, but unawed, went on with his gay banterings.









You must have heard of it.



' "'Nay, Senior; hereabouts in this dull, warm, most lazy, and hereditary land, we know but little of your vigorous North.



' "'Aye?



Well then, Don, refill my cup.



Your chicha's very fine; and ere proceeding further I will tell ye what our Canallers are; for such information may throw side-light upon my story.



' "For three hundred and sixty miles, gentlemen, through the entire breadth of the state of New York; through numerous populous cities and most thriving villages; through long, dismal, uninhabited swamps, and affluent, cultivated fields, unrivalled for fertility; by billiard-room and bar-room; through the holy-of-holies of great forests; on Roman arches over Indian rivers; through sun and shade; by happy hearts or broken; through all the wide contrasting scenery of those noble Mohawk counties; and especially, by rows of snow-white chapels, whose spires stand almost like milestones, flows one continual stream of Venetianly corrupt and often lawless life.



There's your true Ashantee, gentlemen; there howl your pagans; where you ever find them, next door to you; under the long-flung shadow, and the snug patronising lee of churches.



For by some curious fatality, as it is often noted of your metropolitan freebooters that they ever encamp around the halls of justice, so sinners, gentlemen, most abound in holiest vicinities.



"Is that a friar passing?



' said Don Pedro, looking downwards into the crowded plazza, with humorous concern.



"Well for our northern friend, Dame Isabella's Inquisition wanes in Lima,' laughed Don Sebastian.



'Proceed, Senior.



' "'A moment!



Pardon!



' cried another of the company.



'In the name of all us Limeese, I but desire to express to you, sir sailor, that we have by no means overlooked your delicacy in not substituting present Lima for distant Venice in your corrupt comparison.





I see!



' impetuously exclaimed Don Pedro, spilling his chicha upon his silvery ruffles.



'No need to travel!



The world's one Lima.



I had thought, now, that at your temperate North the generations were cold and holy as the hills.



--But the story.



' "I left off, gentlemen, where the Lakeman shook the backstay.



Hardly had he done so, when he was surrounded by the three junior mates and the four harpooneers, who all crowded him to the deck.



But sliding down the ropes like baleful comets, the two Canallers rushed into the uproar, and sought to drag their man out of it towards the forecastle.



Others of the sailors joined with them in this attempt, and a twisted turmoil ensued; while standing out of harm's way, the valiant captain danced up and down with a whale-pike, calling upon his officers to manhandle that atrocious scoundrel, and smoke him along to the quarter-deck.



At intervals, he ran close up to the revolving border of the confusion, and prying into the heart of it with his pike, sought to prick out the object of his resentment.



But Steelkilt and his desperadoes were too much for them all; they succeeded in gaining the forecastle deck, where, hastily slewing about three or four large casks in a line with the windlass, these sea-Parisians entrenched themselves behind the barricade.



"Come out of that, ye pirates!



' roared the captain, now menacing them with a pistol in each hand, just brought to him by the steward.



'Come out of that, ye cut-throats!



' "Steelkilt leaped on the barricade, and striding up and down there, defied the worst the pistols could do; but gave the captain to understand distinctly, that his (Steelkilt's) death would be the signal for a murderous mutiny on the part of all hands.





Captain, by God, look to yourself; say the word; don't be a fool; forget it all; we are ready to turn to; treat us decently, and we're your men; but we won't be flogged.



' "'Turn to!



I make no promises, turn to, I say!



' "'Look ye, now,' cried the Lakeman, flinging out his arm towards him, 'there are a few of us here (and I am one of them) who have shipped for the cruise, d'ye see; now as you well know, sir, we can claim our discharge as soon as the anchor is down; so we don't want a row; it's not our interest; we want to be peaceable; we are ready to work, but we won't be flogged.



' "'Turn to!



' roared the Captain.



"Steelkilt glanced round him a moment, and then said:--'I tell you what it is now, Captain, rather than kill ye, and be hung for such a shabby rascal, we won't lift a hand against ye unless ye attack us; but till you say the word about not flogging us, we don't do a hand's turn.



' "'Down into the forecastle then, down with ye, I'll keep ye there till ye're sick of it.



Down ye go.



' "'Shall we?



' cried the ringleader to his men.



Most of them were against it; but at length, in obedience to Steelkilt, they preceded him down into their dark den, growlingly disappearing, like bears into a cave.



"As the Lakeman's bare head was just level with the planks, the Captain and his posse leaped the barricade, and rapidly drawing over the slide of the scuttle, planted their group of hands upon it, and loudly called for the steward to bring the heavy brass padlock belonging to the companionway.



"Then opening the slide a little, the Captain whispered something down the crack, closed it, and turned the key upon them--ten in number--leaving on deck some twenty or more, who thus far had remained neutral.



"All night a wide-awake watch was kept by all the officers, forward and aft, especially about the forecastle scuttle and fore hatchway; at which last place it was feared the insurgents might emerge, after breaking through the bulkhead below.



But the hours of darkness passed in peace; the men who still remained at their duty toiling hard at the pumps, whose clinking and clanking at intervals through the dreary night dismally resounded through the ship.



"At sunrise the Captain went forward, and knocking on the deck, summoned the prisoners to work; but with a yell they refused.



Water was then lowered down to them, and a couple of handfuls of biscuit were tossed after it; when again turning the key upon them and pocketing it, the Captain returned to the quarter-deck.



Twice every day for three days this was repeated; but on the fourth morning a confused wrangling, and then a scuffling was heard, as the customary summons was delivered; and suddenly four men burst up from the fore-castle, saying they were ready to turn to.



The fetid closeness of the air, and a famishing diet, united perhaps to some fears of ultimate retribution, had constrained them to surrender at discretion.



Emboldened by this, the Captain reiterated his demand to the rest, but Steelkilt shouted up to him a terrific hint to stop his babbling and betake himself where he belonged.



On the fifth morning three others of the mutineers bolted up into the air from the desperate arms below that sought to restrain them.



Only three were left.



"Better turn to, now?"



' said the Captain with a heartless jeer.



"Shut us up again, will ye!"



' cried Steelkilt.



"Oh certainly," the Captain, and the key clicked.



"It was at this point, gentlemen, that enraged by the defection of seven of his former associates, and stung by the mocking voice that had last hailed him, and maddened by his long entombment in a place as black as the bowels of despair; it was then that Steelkilt proposed to the two Canallers, thus far apparently of one mind with him, to burst out of their hole at the next summoning of the garrison; and armed with their keen mincing knives (long, crescentic, heavy implements with a handle at each end) run amuck from the bowsprit to the taffrail; and if by any devilishness of desperation possible, seize the ship.



For himself, he would do this, he said, whether they joined him or not.





' he cried, at last; 'but there is still rope enough left for you, my fine bantam, that wouldn't give up.



Take that gag from his mouth, and let us hear what he can say for himself.



' "For a moment the exhausted mutineer made a tremulous motion of his cramped jaws, and then painfully twisting round his head, said in a sort of hiss, 'What I say is this--and mind it well--if you flog me, I murder you!



' ""Say ye so?



then see how ye frighten me"--and the Captain drew off with the rope to strike.



""Best not,' hissed the Lakeman.



""But I must,'--and the rope was once more drawn back for the stroke.



"Steelkilt here hissed out something, inaudible to all but the Captain; who, to the amazement of all hands, started back, paced the deck rapidly two or three times, and then suddenly throwing down his rope, said, 'I won't do it--let him go--cut him down: d'ye hear?



' "But as the junior mates were hurrying to execute the order, a pale man, with a bandaged head, arrested them--Radney the chief mate.



Ever since the blow, he had lain in his berth; but that morning, hearing the tumult on the deck, he had crept out, and thus far had watched the whole scene.



Such was the state of his mouth, that he could hardly speak; but mumbling something about his being willing and able to do what the captain dared not attempt, he snatched the rope and advanced to his pinioned foe.



""You are a coward!



' hissed the Lakeman.



""So I am, but take that.



' The mate was in the very act of striking, when another hiss stayed his uplifted arm.



He paused: and then pausing no more, made good his word, spite of Steelkilt's threat, whatever that might have been.



The three men were then cut down, all hands were turned to, and, sullenly worked by the moody seamen, the iron pumps clanged as before.





' said a shipmate.



""What do you think?



what does it look like?



' ""Like a lanyard for your bag; but it's an odd one, seems to me.



' ""Yes, rather oddish,' said the Lakeman, holding it at arm's length before him; 'but I think it will answer.



Shipmate, I haven't enough twine,--have you any?



' "But there was none in the forecandle.



""Then I must get some from old Rad;' and he rose to go aft.



""You don't mean to go a begging to HIM!



' said a sailor.



""Why not?



Do you think he won't do me a turn, when it's to help himself in the end, shipmate?



' and going to the mate, he looked at him quietly, and asked him for some twine to mend his hammock.



It was given him--neither twine nor lanyard were seen again; but the next night an iron ball, closely netted, partly rolled from the pocket of the Lakeman's monkey jacket, as he was tucking the coat into his hammock for a pillow.



Twenty-four hours after, his trick at the silent helm--nigh to the man who was apt to doze over the grave always ready dug to the seaman's hand--that fatal hour was then to come; and in the fore-ordaining soul of Steelkilt, the mate was already stark and stretched as a corpse, with his forehead crushed in.



"But, gentlemen, a fool saved the would-be murderer from the bloody deed he had planned.



Yet complete revenge he had, and without being the avenger.



For by a mysterious fatality, Heaven itself seemed to step in to take out of his hands into its own the damning thing he would have done.





--Now, gentlemen, so suddenly perceiving the snowy whale within fifty yards of the ship--forgetful of the compact among the crew--in the excitement of the moment, the Teneriffe man had instinctively and involuntarily lifted his voice for the monster, though for some little time past it had been plainly beheld from the three sullen mast-heads.



All was now a phrensy.



"The White Whale--the White Whale!"



' was the cry from captain, mates, and harpooners, who, undeterred by fearful rumours, were all anxious to capture so famous and precious a fish; while the dogged crew eyed askance, and with curses, the appalling beauty of the vast milky mass, that lit up by a horizontal spangling sun, shifted and glistened like a living opal in the blue morning sea.



Gentlemen, a strange fatality pervades the whole career of these events, as if verily mapped out before the world itself was charted.



The mutineer was the bowsman of the mate, and when fast to a fish, it was his duty to sit next him, while Radney stood up with his lance in the prow, and haul in or slacken the line, at the word of command.



Moreover, when the four boats were lowered, the mate's got the start; and none howled more fiercely with delight than did Steerkilt, as he strained at his oar.



After a stiff pull, their harpooneer got fast, and, spear in hand, Radney sprang to the bow.



He was always a furious man, it seems, in a boat.



And now his bandaged cry was, to beach him on the whale's topmost back.



Nothing loath, his bowsman hauled him up and up, through a blinding foam that blent two whitenesses together; till of a sudden the boat struck as against a sunken ledge, and keeling over, spilled out the standing mate.



That instant, as he fell on the whale's slippery back, the boat righted, and was dashed aside by the swell, while Radney was tossed over into the sea, on the other flank of the whale.



He struck out through the spray, and, for an instant, was dimly seen through that veil, wildly seeking to remove himself from the eye of Moby Dick.



But the whale rushed round in a sudden maelstrom; seized the swimmer between his jaws; and rearing high up with him, plunged headlong again, and went down.



"Meantime, at the first tap of the boat's bottom, the Lakeman had slackened the line, so as to drop astern from the whirlpool; calmly looking on, he thought his own thoughts.



But a sudden, terrific, downward jerking of the boat, quickly brought his knife to the line.





'demanded Steelkilt; 'no lies.



'"I am bound to Tahiti for more men.



'"Very good.



Let me board you a moment--I come in peace.

' With that he leaped from the canoe, swam to the boat; and climbing the gunwale, stood face to face with the captain.



"Cross your arms, sir; throw back your head.



Now, repeat after me.



As soon as Steelkilt leaves me, I swear to beach this boat on yonder island, and remain there six days.



If I do not, may lightning strike me!



'"A pretty scholar,' laughed the Lakeman.



'Adios, Senor!



' and leaping into the sea, he swam back to his comrades.



"Watching the boat till it was fairly beached, and drawn up to the roots of the cocoa-nut trees, Steelkilt made sail again, and in due time arrived at Tahiti, his own place of destination.



There, luck befriended him; two ships were about to sail for France, and were providentially in want of precisely that number of men which the sailor headed.



They embarked; and so for ever got the start of their former captain, had he been at all minded to work them legal retribution.



"Some ten days after the French ships sailed, the whale-boat arrived, and the captain was forced to enlist some of the more civilized Tahitians, who had been somewhat used to the sea.



Chartering a small native schooner, he returned with them to his vessel; and finding all right there, again resumed his cruising.



"Where Steelkilt now is, gentlemen, none know; but upon the island of Nantucket, the widow of Radney still turns to the sea which refuses to give up its dead; still in dreams sees the awful white whale that destroyed him.



"Are you through?"



' said Don Sebastian, quietly.



"I am, Don.



' ""Then I entreat you, tell me if to the best of your own convictions, this your story is in substance really true?"



It is so passing wonderful!



Did you get it from an unquestionable source?"



Bear with me if I seem to press.



' ""Also bear with all of us, sir sailor; for we all join in Don Sebastian's suit,' cried the company, with exceeding interest.



"Is there a copy of the Holy Evangelists in the Golden Inn, gentlemen?"



' ""Nay,' said Don Sebastian; 'but I know a worthy priest near by, who will quickly procure one for me.



I go for it; but are you well advised?"



this may grow too serious.



' ""Will you be so good as to bring the priest also, Don?"



' ""Though there are no Auto-da-Fe's in Lima now,' said one of the company to another; 'I fear our sailor friend runs risk of the archiepiscopacy.



Let us withdraw more out of the moonlight.



I see no need of this.



' "Excuse me for running after you, Don Sebastian; but may I also beg that you will be particular in procuring the largest sized Evangelists you can.



' ""This is the priest, he brings you the Evangelists,' said Don Sebastian, gravely, returning with a tall and solemn figure.



"Let me remove my hat.



Now, venerable priest, further into the light, and hold the Holy Book before me that I may touch it.



"So help me Heaven, and on my honour the story I have told ye, gentlemen, is in substance and its great items, true.



I know it to be true; it happened on this ball; I trod the ship; I knew the crew; I have seen and talked with Stealkilt since the death of Radney.



" CHAPTER 55.



Of the Monstrous Pictures of Whales.



I shall ere long paint to you as well as one can without canvas, something like the true form of the whale as he actually appears to the eye of the whaleman when in his own absolute body the whale is moored alongside the whale-ship so that he can be fairly stepped upon there.



It may be worth while, therefore, previously to advert to those curious imaginary portraits of him which even down to the present day confidently challenge the faith of the landsman.



It is time to set the world right in this matter, by proving such pictures of the whale all wrong.



It may be that the primal source of all those pictorial delusions will be found among the oldest Hindoo, Egyptian, and Grecian sculptures.



For ever since those inventive but unscrupulous times when on the marble panellings of temples, the pedestals of statues, and on shields, medallions, cups, and coins, the dolphin was drawn in scales of chain-armor like Saladin's, and a helmeted head like St. George's; ever since then has something of the same sort of license prevailed, not only in most popular pictures of the whale, but in many scientific presentations of him.



Now, by all odds, the most ancient extant portrait anyways purporting to be the whale's, is to be found in the famous cavern-pagoda of Elephanta, in India.



The Brahmins maintain that in the almost endless sculptures of that immemorial pagoda, all the trades and pursuits, every conceivable avocation of man, were prefigured ages before any of them actually came into being.



No wonder then, that in some sort our noble profession of whaling should have been there shadowed forth.



The Hindoo whale referred to, occurs in a separate department of the wall, depicting the incarnation of Vishnu in the form of leviathan, learnedly known as the Matse Avatar.



But though this sculpture is half man and half whale, so as only to give the tail of the latter, yet that small section of him is all wrong.









CHAPTER 56



# Of The Less Erroneous Pictures Of Whales, And The True Pictures Of Whaling Scenes



In connexion with the monstrous pictures of whales, I am strongly tempted here to enter upon those still more monstrous stories of them which are to be found in certain books, both ancient and modern, especially in Pliny, Purchas, Hackluyt, Harris, Cuvier, etc.



But I pass that matter by.



I know of only four published outlines of the great Sperm Whale; Colnett's, Huggins's, Frederick Cuvier's, and Beale's.



In the previous chapter Colnett and Cuvier have been referred to.



Huggins's is far better than theirs; but, by great odds, Beale's is the best.



All Beale's drawings of this whale are good, excepting the middle figure in the picture of three whales in various attitudes, capping his second chapter.



His frontispiece, boats attacking Sperm Whales, though no doubt calculated to excite the civil scepticism of some parlor men, is admirably correct and life-like in its general effect.



Some of the Sperm Whale drawings in J.







It is a quiet noon-scene among the isles of the Pacific; a French whaler anchored, inshore, in a calm, and lazily taking water on board; the loosened sails of the ship, and the long leaves of the palms in the background, both drooping together in the breezeless air.



The effect is very fine, when considered with reference to its presenting the hardy fishermen under one of their few aspects of oriental repose.



The other engraving is quite a different affair: the ship hove-to upon the open sea, and in the very heart of the Leviathanic life, with a Right Whale alongside; the vessel (in the act of cutting-in) hove over to the monster as if to a quay; and a boat, hurriedly pushing off from this scene of activity, is about giving chase to whales in the distance.



The harpoons and lances lie levelled for use; three oarsmen are just setting the mast in its hole; while from a sudden roll of the sea, the little craft stands half-erect out of the water, like a rearing horse.



From the ship, the smoke of the torments of the boiling whale is going up like the smoke over a village of smithies; and to windward, a black cloud, rising up with earnest of squalls and rains, seems to quicken the activity of the excited seamen.







On the spires of some old-fashioned churches you will see sheet-iron whales placed there for weather-cocks; but they are so elevated, and besides that are to all intents and purposes so labelled with "HANDS OFF!"



you cannot examine them closely enough to decide upon their merit.



In bony, ribby regions of the earth, where at the base of high broken cliffs masses of rock lie strewn in fantastic groupings upon the plain, you will often discover images as of the petrified forms of the Leviathan partly merged in grass, which of a windy day breaks against them in a surf of green surges.



Then, again, in mountainous countries where the traveller is continually girdled by amphitheatrical heights; here and there from some lucky point of view you will catch passing glimpses of the profiles of whales defined along the undulating ridges.



But you must be a thorough whaleman, to see these sights; and not only that, but if you wish to return to such a sight again, you must be sure and take the exact intersecting latitude and longitude of your first stand-point, else so chance-like are such observations of the hills, that your precise, previous stand-point would require a laborious re-discovery; like the Soloma Islands, which still remain incognita, though once high-ruffed Mendanna trod them and old Figuera chronicled them.



Nor when expandingly lifted by your subject, can you fail to trace out great whales in the starry heavens, and boats in pursuit of them; as when long filled with thoughts of war the Eastern nations saw armies locked in battle among the clouds.



Thus at the North have I chased Leviathan round and round the Pole with the revolutions of the bright points that first defined him to me.



And beneath the effulgent Antarctic skies I have boarded the Argo-Navis, and joined the chase against the starry Cetus far beyond the utmost stretch of Hydrus and the Flying Fish.



With a frigate's anchors for my bridle-bitts and fascies of harpoons for spurs, would I could mount that whale and leap the topmost skies, to see whether the fabled heavens with all their countless tents really lie encamped beyond my mortal sight!



# CHAPTER 58



# Brit



Steering north-eastward from the Crozetts, we fell in with vast meadows of brit, the minute, yellow substance, upon which the Right Whale largely feeds.



For leagues and leagues it undulated round us, so that we seemed to be sailing through boundless fields of ripe and golden wheat.



On the second day, numbers of Right Whales were seen, who, secure from the attack of a Sperm Whaler like the Pequod, with open jaws sluggishly swam through the brit, which, adhering to the fringing fibres of that wondrous Venetian blind in their mouths, was in that manner separated from the water that escaped at the lip.



As morning mowers, who side by side slowly and seethingly advance their scythes through the long wet grass of marshy meads; even so these monsters swam, making a strange, grassy, cutting sound; and leaving behind them endless swaths of blue upon the yellow sea.



\* \*That part of the sea known among whalers as the "Brazil Banks" does not bear that name as the Banks of Newfoundland do, because of there being shallows and soundings there, but because of this remarkable meadow-like appearance, caused by the vast drifts of brit continually floating in those latitudes, where the Right Whale is often chased.



But it was only the sound they made as they parted the brit which at all reminded one of mowers.



Seen from the mast-heads, especially when they paused and were stationary for a while, their vast black forms looked more like lifeless masses of rock than anything else.



And as in the great hunting countries of India, the stranger at a distance will sometimes pass on the plains recumbent elephants without knowing them to be such, taking them for bare, blackened elevations of the soil; even so, often, with him, who for the first time beholds this species of the leviathans of the sea.



And even when recognised at last, their immense magnitude renders it very hard really to believe that such bulky masses of overgrowth can possibly be instinct, in all parts, with the same sort of life that lives in a dog or a horse.



Indeed, in other respects, you can hardly regard any creatures of the deep with the same feelings that you do those of the shore.



For though some old naturalists have maintained that all creatures of the land are of their kind in the sea; and though taking a broad general view of the thing, this may very well be; yet coming to specialties, where, for example, does the ocean furnish any fish that in disposition answers to the sagacious kindness of the dog?



The accursed shark alone can in any generic respect be said to bear comparative analogy to him.



But though, to landsmen in general, the native inhabitants of the seas have ever been regarded with emotions unspeakably unsocial and repelling; though we know the sea to be an everlasting terra incognita, so that Columbus sailed over numberless unknown worlds to discover his one superficial western one; though, by vast odds, the most terrific of all mortal disasters have immemorably and indiscriminately befallen tens and hundreds of thousands of those who have gone upon the waters; though but a moment's consideration will teach, that however baby man may brag of his science and skill, and however much, in a flattering future, that science and skill may augment; yet for ever and for ever, to the crack of doom, the sea will insult and murder him, and pulverize the stateliest, stiffest frigate he can make; nevertheless, by the continual repetition of these very impressions, man has lost that sense of the full awfulness of the sea which aboriginally belongs to it.



The first boat we read of, floated on an ocean, that with Portuguese vengeance had whelmed a whole world without leaving so much as a widow.



That same ocean rolls now; that same ocean destroyed the wrecked ships of last year.



Yea, foolish mortals, Noah's flood is not yet subsided; two thirds of the fair world it yet covers.



Wherein differ the sea and the land, that a miracle upon one is not a miracle upon the other?



Preternatural terrors rested upon the Hebrews, when under the feet of Korah and his company the live ground opened and swallowed them up for ever; yet not a modern sun ever sets, but in precisely the same manner the live sea swallows up ships and crews.



But not only is the sea such a foe to man who is an alien to it, but it is also a fiend to its own off-spring; worse than the Persian host who murdered his own guests; sparing not the creatures which itself hath spawned.



Like a savage tigress that tossing in the jungle overlays her own cubs, so the sea dashes even the mightiest whales against the rocks, and leaves them there side by side with the split wrecks of ships.



No mercy, no power but its own controls it.



Panting and snorting like a mad battle steed that has lost its rider, the masterless ocean overruns the globe.



Consider the subtleness of the sea; how its most dreaded creatures glide under water, unapparent for the most part, and treacherously hidden beneath the loveliest tints of azure.



Consider also the devilish brilliance and beauty of many of its most remorseless tribes, as the dainty embellished shape of many species of sharks.



Consider, once more, the universal cannibalism of the sea; all whose creatures prey upon each other, carrying on eternal war since the world began.



Consider all this; and then turn to this green, gentle, and most docile earth; consider them both, the sea and the land; and do you not find a strange analogy to something in yourself?



For as this appalling ocean surrounds the verdant land, so in the soul of man there lies one insular Tahiti, full of peace and joy, but encompassed by all the horrors of the half known life.



God keep thee!



Push not off from that isle, thou canst never return!







Whatever superstitions the sperm whalemens in general have connected with the sight of this object, certain it is, that a glimpse of it being so very unusual, that circumstance has gone far to invest it with portentousness.



So rarely is it beheld, that though one and all of them declare it to be the largest animated thing in the ocean, yet very few of them have any but the most vague ideas concerning its true nature and form; notwithstanding, they believe it to furnish to the sperm whale his only food.



For though other species of whales find their food above water, and may be seen by man in the act of feeding, the spermaceti whale obtains his whole food in unknown zones below the surface; and only by inference is it that any one can tell of what, precisely, that food consists.



At times, when closely pursued, he will disgorge what are supposed to be the detached arms of the squid; some of them thus exhibited exceeding twenty and thirty feet in length.



They fancy that the monster to which these arms belonged ordinarily clings by them to the bed of the ocean; and that the sperm whale, unlike other species, is supplied with teeth in order to attack and tear it.



There seems some ground to imagine that the great Kraken of Bishop Pontoppodan may ultimately resolve itself into Squid.



The manner in which the Bishop describes it, as alternately rising and sinking, with some other particulars he narrates, in all this the two correspond.



But much abatement is necessary with respect to the incredible bulk he assigns it.



By some naturalists who have vaguely heard rumors of the mysterious creature, here spoken of, it is included among the class of cuttle-fish, to which, indeed, in certain external respects it would seem to belong, but only as the Anak of the tribe.

## CHAPTER 60

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# The Line



With reference to the whaling scene shortly to be described, as well as for the better understanding of all similar scenes elsewhere presented, I have here to speak of the magical, sometimes horrible whale-line.



The line originally used in the fishery was of the best hemp, slightly vapoured with tar, not impregnated with it, as in the case of ordinary ropes; for while tar, as ordinarily used, makes the hemp more pliable to the rope-maker, and also renders the rope itself more convenient to the sailor for common ship use; yet, not only would the ordinary quantity too much stiffen the whale-line for the close coiling to which it must be subjected; but as most seamen are beginning to learn, tar in general by no means adds to the rope's durability or strength, however much it may give it compactness and gloss.



Of late years the Manilla rope has in the American fishery almost entirely superseded hemp as a material for whale-lines; for, though not so durable as hemp, it is stronger, and far more soft and elastic; and I will add (since there is an aesthetics in all things), is much more handsome and becoming to the boat, than hemp.



Hemp is a dusky, dark fellow, a sort of Indian; but Manilla is as a golden-haired Circassian to behold.



The whale-line is only two-thirds of an inch in thickness.



At first sight, you would not think it so strong as it really is.



By experiment its one and fifty yarns will each suspend a weight of one hundred and twenty pounds; so that the whole rope will bear a strain nearly equal to three tons.



In length, the common sperm whale-line measures something over two hundred fathoms.



Towards the stern of the boat it is spirally coiled away in the tub, not like the worm-pipe of a still though, but so as to form one round, cheese-shaped mass of densely bedded "sheaves," or layers of concentric spiralizations, without any hollow but the "heart," or minute vertical tube formed at the axis of the cheese.



As the least tangle or kink in the coiling would, in running out, infallibly take somebody's arm, leg, or entire body off, the utmost precaution is used in stowing the line in its tub.



Some harpooneers will consume almost an entire morning in this business, carrying the line high aloft and then reeving it downwards through a block towards the tub, so as in the act of coiling to free it from all possible wrinkles and twists.



In the English boats two tubs are used instead of one; the same line being continuously coiled in both tubs.



There is some advantage in this; because these twin-tubs being so small they fit more readily into the boat, and do not strain it so much; whereas, the American tub, nearly three feet in diameter and of proportionate depth, makes a rather bulky freight for a craft whose planks are but one half-inch in thickness; for the bottom of the whale-boat is like critical ice, which will bear up a considerable distributed weight, but not very much of a concentrated one.



When the painted canvas cover is clapped on the American line-tub, the boat looks as if it were pulling off with a prodigious great wedding-cake to present to the whales.



Both ends of the line are exposed; the lower end terminating in an eye-splice or loop coming up from the bottom against the side of the tub, and hanging over its edge completely disengaged from everything.



This arrangement of the lower end is necessary on two accounts.



First: In order to facilitate the fastening to it of an additional line from a neighboring boat, in case the stricken whale should sound so deep as to threaten to carry off the entire line originally attached to the harpoon.



In these instances, the whale of course is shifted like a mug of ale, as it were, from the one boat to the other; though the first boat always hovers at hand to assist its consort.



Second: This arrangement is indispensable for common safety's sake; for were the lower end of the line in any way attached to the boat, and were the whale then to run the line out to the end almost in a single, smoking minute as he sometimes does, he would not stop there, for the doomed boat would infallibly be dragged down after him into the profundity of the sea; and in that case no town-crier would ever find her again.



Before lowering the boat for the chase, the upper end of the line is taken aft from the tub, and passing round the loggerhead there, is again carried forward the entire length of the boat, resting crosswise upon the loom or handle of every man's oar, so that it jogs against his wrist in rowing; and also passing between the men, as they alternately sit at the opposite gunwales, to the leaded chocks or grooves in the extreme pointed prow of the boat, where a wooden pin or skewer the size of a common quill, prevents it from slipping out.



From the chocks it hangs in a slight festoon over the bows, and is then passed inside the boat again; and some ten or twenty fathoms (called box-line) being coiled upon the box in the bows, it continues its way to the gunwale still a little further aft, and is then attached to the short-warp--the rope which is immediately connected with the harpoon; but previous to that connexion, the short-warp goes through sundry mystifications too tedious to detail.



Thus the whale-line folds the whole boat in its complicated coils, twisting and writhing around it in almost every direction.



All the oarsmen are involved in its perilous contortions; so that to the timid eye of the landsman, they seem as Indian jugglers, with the deadliest snakes sportively festooning their limbs.



# CHAPTER 61



## Stubb Kills A Whale



If to Starbuck the apparition of the Squid was a thing of portents, to Queequeg it was quite a different object.



"When you see him 'quid," said the savage, honing his harpoon in the bow of his hoisted boat, "then you quick see him 'parm whale."



The next day was exceedingly still and sultry, and with nothing special to engage them, the Pequod's crew could hardly resist the spell of sleep induced by such a vacant sea.



For this part of the Indian Ocean through which we then were voyaging is not what whalemen call a lively ground; that is, it affords fewer glimpses of porpoises, dolphins, flying-fish, and other vivacious denizens of more stirring waters, than those off the Rio de la Plata, or the in-shore ground off Peru.



It was my turn to stand at the foremast-head; and with my shoulders leaning against the slackened royal shrouds, to and fro I idly swayed in what seemed an enchanted air.



No resolution could withstand it; in that dreamy mood losing all consciousness, at last my soul went out of my body; though my body still continued to sway as a pendulum will, long after the power which first moved it is withdrawn.



Ere forgetfulness altogether came over me, I had noticed that the seamen at the main and mizzen-mast-heads were already drowsy.



So that at last all three of us lifelessly swung from the spars, and for every swing that we made there was a nod from below from the slumbering helmsman.



The waves, too, nodded their indolent crests; and across the wide trance of the sea, east nodded to west, and the sun over all.



Suddenly bubbles seemed bursting beneath my closed eyes; like vices my hands grasped the shrouds; some invisible, gracious agency preserved me; with a shock I came back to life.



And lo!



close under our lee, not forty fathoms off, a gigantic Sperm Whale lay rolling in the water like the capsized hull of a frigate, his broad, glossy back, of an Ethiopian hue, glistening in the sun's rays like a mirror.



But lazily undulating in the trough of the sea, and ever and anon tranquilly spouting his vapoury jet, the whale looked like a portly burgher smoking his pipe of a warm afternoon.



But that pipe, poor whale, was thy last.



As if struck by some enchanter's wand, the sleepy ship and every sleeper in it all at once started into wakefulness; and more than a score of voices from all parts of the vessel, simultaneously with the three notes from aloft, shouted forth the accustomed cry, as the great fish slowly and regularly spouted the sparkling brine into the air.



"Clear away the boats!



Luff!"



cried Ahab.



And obeying his own order, he dashed the helm down before the helmsman could handle the spokes.



The sudden exclamations of the crew must have alarmed the whale; and ere the boats were down, majestically turning, he swam away to the leeward, but with such a steady tranquillity, and making so few ripples as he swam, that thinking after all he might not as yet be alarmed, Ahab gave orders that not an oar should be used, and no man must speak but in whispers.



So seated like Ontario Indians on the gunwales of the boats, we swiftly but silently paddled along; the calm not admitting of the noiseless sails being set.



Presently, as we thus glided in chase, the monster perpendicularly flitted his tail forty feet into the air, and then sank out of sight like a tower swallowed up.



"There go flukes!"



was the cry, an announcement immediately followed by Stubb's producing his match and igniting his pipe, for now a respite was granted.



After the full interval of his sounding had elapsed, the whale rose again, and being now in advance of the smoker's boat, and much nearer to it than to any of the others, Stubb counted upon the honour of the capture.



It was obvious, now, that the whale had at length become aware of his pursuers.





But his wild screams were answered by others quite as wild.



"Kee-hee!



Kee-hee!"



yelled Daggoo, straining forwards and backwards on his seat, like a pacing tiger in his cage.



"Ka-la!



Koo-loo!"



howled Queequeg, as if smacking his lips over a mouthful of Grenadier's steak.



And thus with oars and yells the keels cut the sea.



Meanwhile, Stubb retaining his place in the van, still encouraged his men to the onset, all the while puffing the smoke from his mouth.



Like desperadoes they tugged and they strained, till the welcome cry was heard--"Stand up, Tashtego!



--give it to him!"



The harpoon was hurled.



"Stern all!"



The oarsmen backed water; the same moment something went hot and hissing along every one of their wrists.



It was the magical line.



An instant before, Stubb had swiftly caught two additional turns with it round the loggerhead, whence, by reason of its increased rapid circlings, a hempen blue smoke now jetted up and mingled with the steady fumes from his pipe.



As the line passed round and round the loggerhead; so also, just before reaching that point, it blisteringly passed through and through both of Stubb's hands, from which the hand-cloths, or squares of quilted canvas sometimes worn at these times, had accidentally dropped.



It was like holding an enemy's sharp two-edged sword by the blade, and that enemy all the time striving to wrest it out of your clutch.







"Yes; both pipes smoked out!"



and withdrawing his own from his mouth, Stubb scattered the dead ashes over the water; and, for a moment, stood thoughtfully eyeing the vast corpse he had made.



## CHAPTER 62



# The Dart



A word concerning an incident in the last chapter.



According to the invariable usage of the fishery, the whale-boat pushes off from the ship, with the headsman or whale-killer as temporary steersman, and the harpooneer or whale-fastener pulling the foremost oar, the one known as the harpooneer-oar.



Now it needs a strong, nervous arm to strike the first iron into the fish; for often, in what is called a long dart, the heavy implement has to be flung to the distance of twenty or thirty feet.



But however prolonged and exhausting the chase, the harpooneer is expected to pull his oar meanwhile to the uttermost; indeed, he is expected to set an example of superhuman activity to the rest, not only by incredible rowing, but by repeated loud and intrepid exclamations; and what it is to keep shouting at the top of one's compass, while all the other muscles are strained and half started--what that is none know but those who have tried it.



For one, I cannot bawl very heartily and work very recklessly at one and the same time.



In this straining, bawling state, then, with his back to the fish, all at once the exhausted harpooneer hears the exciting cry--"Stand up, and give it to him!"



He now has to drop and secure his oar, turn round on his centre half way, seize his harpoon from the crotch, and with what little strength may remain, he essays to pitch it somehow into the whale.



No wonder, taking the whole fleet of whalers in a body, that out of fifty fair chances for a dart, not five are successful; no wonder that so many hapless harpooneers are madly cursed and disgraced; no wonder that some of them actually burst their blood-vessels in the boat; no wonder that some sperm whalers are absent four years with four barrels; no wonder that to many ship owners, whaling is but a losing concern; for it is the harpooneer that makes the voyage, and if you take the breath out of his body how can you expect to find it there when most wanted!



Again, if the dart be successful, then at the second critical instant, that is, when the whale starts to run, the boatheader and harpooneer likewise start to running fore and aft, to the imminent jeopardy of themselves and every one else.



It is then they change places; and the headsman, the chief officer of the little craft, takes his proper station in the bows of the boat.



Now, I care not who maintains the contrary, but all this is both foolish and unnecessary.



The headsman should stay in the bows from first to last; he should both dart the harpoon and the lance, and no rowing whatever should be expected of him, except under circumstances obvious to any fisherman.



I know that this would sometimes involve a slight loss of speed in the chase; but long experience in various whaling men of more than one nation has convinced me that in the vast majority of failures in the fishery, it has not by any means been so much the speed of the whale as the before described exhaustion of the harpooneer that has caused them.



To insure the greatest efficiency in the dart, the harpooneers of this world must start to their feet from out of idleness, and not from out of toil.











Mingling their mumblings with his own mastications, thousands on thousands of sharks, swarming round the dead leviathan, smackingly feasted on its fatness.



The few sleepers below in their bunks were often startled by the sharp slapping of their tails against the hull, within a few inches of the sleepers' hearts.



Peering over the side you could just see them (as before you heard them) wallowing in the sullen, black waters, and turning over on their backs as they scooped out huge globular pieces of the whale of the bigness of a human head.



This particular feat of the shark seems all but miraculous.



How at such an apparently unassailable surface, they contrive to gouge out such symmetrical mouthfuls, remains a part of the universal problem of all things.



The mark they thus leave on the whale, may best be likened to the hollow made by a carpenter in countersinking for a screw.



Though amid all the smoking horror and diabolism of a sea-fight, sharks will be seen longingly gazing up to the ship's decks, like hungry dogs round a table where red meat is being carved, ready to bolt down every killed man that is tossed to them; and though, while the valiant butchers over the deck-table are thus cannibally carving each other's live meat with carving-knives all gilded and tasselled, the sharks, also, with their jewel-hilted mouths, are quarrelsomely carving away under the table at the dead meat; and though, were you to turn the whole affair upside down, it would still be pretty much the same thing, that is to say, a shocking sharkish business enough for all parties; and though sharks also are the invariable outriders of all slave ships crossing the Atlantic, systematically trotting alongside, to be handy in case a parcel is to be carried anywhere, or a dead slave to be decently buried; and though one or two other like instances might be set down, touching the set terms, places, and occasions, when sharks do most socially congregate, and most hilariously feast; yet is there no conceivable time or occasion when you will find them in such countless numbers, and in gayer or more jovial spirits, than around a dead sperm whale, moored by night to a whaleship at sea.



If you have never seen that sight, then suspend your decision about the propriety of devil-worship, and the expediency of conciliating the devil.



But, as yet, Stubb heeded not the mumblings of the banquet that was going on so nigh him, no more than the sharks heeded the smacking of his own epicurean lips.



"Cook, cook!



--where's that old Fleece?"



he cried at length, widening his legs still further, as if to form a more secure base for his supper; and, at the same time darting his fork into the dish, as if stabbing with his lance; "cook, you cook!



--sail this way, cook!"













It's a ticklish business, but must be done, or else it's no go.



But none of us are in heaven yet.



Drop your tongs, cook, and hear my orders.



Do ye hear?



Hold your hat in one hand, and clap t'other a'top of your heart, when I'm giving my orders, cook.



What!



that your heart, there?



--that's your gizzard!



Aloft!



aloft!



--that's it--now you have it.



Hold it there now, and pay attention."



"All 'dention," said the old black, with both hands placed as desired, vainly wriggling his grizzled head, as if to get both ears in front at one and the same time.



"Well then, cook, you see this whale-steak of yours was so very bad, that I have put it out of sight as soon as possible; you see that, don't you?"



Well, for the future, when you cook another whale-steak for my private table here, the capstan, I'll tell you what to do so as not to spoil it by overdoing.



Hold the steak in one hand, and show a live coal to it with the other; that done, dish it; d'ye hear?



And now to-morrow, cook, when we are cutting in the fish, be sure you stand by to get the tips of his fins; have them put in pickle.



As for the ends of the flukes, have them soused, cook.



There, now ye may go."



But Fleece had hardly got three paces off, when he was recalled.



"Cook, give me cutlets for supper to-morrow night in the mid-watch.



D'ye hear?



away you sail, then.



--Halloa!



stop!



make a bow before you go.



--Avast heaving again!



Whale-balls for breakfast--don't forget."



"Wish, by gor!



whale eat him, 'stead of him eat whale.



I'm bressed if he ain't more of shark dan Massa Shark hisself," muttered the old man, limping away; with which sage ejaculation he went to his hammock.







e.



that a man should eat a newly murdered thing of the sea, and eat it too by its own light.



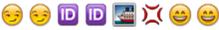
But no doubt the first man that ever murdered an ox was regarded as a murderer; perhaps he was hung; and if he had been put on his trial by oxen, he certainly would have been; and he certainly deserved it if any murderer does.



Go to the meat-market of a Saturday night and see the crowds of live bipeds staring up at the long rows of dead quadrupeds.



Does not that sight take a tooth out of the cannibal's jaw?



Cannibals?



who is not a cannibal?



I tell you it will be more tolerable for the Fejee that salted down a lean missionary in his cellar against a coming famine; it will be more tolerable for that provident Fejee, I say, in the day of judgment, than for thee, civilized and enlightened gourmand, who naillest geese to the ground and featest on their bloated livers in thy pate-de-foie-gras.



But Stubb, he eats the whale by its own light, does he?



and that is adding insult to injury, is it?



Look at your knife-handle, there, my civilized and enlightened gourmand dining off that roast beef, what is that handle made of?



--what but the bones of the brother of the very ox you are eating?



And what do you pick your teeth with, after devouring that fat goose?



With a feather of the same fowl.



And with what quill did the Secretary of the Society for the Suppression of Cruelty to Ganders formally indite his circulars?



It is only within the last month or two that that society passed a resolution to patronise nothing but steel pens.





They viciously snapped, not only at each other's disembowelments, but like flexible bows, bent round, and bit their own; till those entrails seemed swallowed over and over again by the same mouth, to be oppositely voided by the gaping wound.



Nor was this all.



It was unsafe to meddle with the corpses and ghosts of these creatures.



A sort of generic or Pantheistic vitality seemed to lurk in their very joints and bones, after what might be called the individual life had departed.



Killed and hoisted on deck for the sake of his skin, one of these sharks almost took poor Queequeg's hand off, when he tried to shut down the dead lid of his murderous jaw.



\*The whaling-spade used for cutting-in is made of the very best steel; is about the bigness of a man's spread hand; and in general shape, corresponds to the garden implement after which it is named; only its sides are perfectly flat, and its upper end considerably narrower than the lower.



This weapon is always kept as sharp as possible; and when being used is occasionally honed, just like a razor.



In its socket, a stiff pole, from twenty to thirty feet long, is inserted for a handle.



"Queequeg no care what god made him shark," said the savage, agonizingly lifting his hand up and down; "wedder Fejee god or Nantucket god; but de god wat made shark must be one dam Ingin."

## CHAPTER 67



## Cutting In



It was a Saturday night, and such a Sabbath as followed!



Ex officio professors of Sabbath breaking are all whalemen.



The ivory Pequod was turned into what seemed a shamble; every sailor a butcher.



You would have thought we were offering up ten thousand red oxen to the sea gods.



In the first place, the enormous cutting tackles, among other ponderous things comprising a cluster of blocks generally painted green, and which no single man can possibly lift--this vast bunch of grapes was swayed up to the main-top and firmly lashed to the lower mast-head, the strongest point anywhere above a ship's deck.



The end of the hawser-like rope winding through these intricacies, was then conducted to the windlass, and the huge lower block of the tackles was swung over the whale; to this block the great blubber hook, weighing some one hundred pounds, was attached.



And now suspended in stages over the side, Starbuck and Stubb, the mates, armed with their long spades, began cutting a hole in the body for the insertion of the hook just above the nearest of the two side-fins.



This done, a broad, semicircular line is cut round the hole, the hook is inserted, and the main body of the crew striking up a wild chorus, now commence heaving in one dense crowd at the windlass.



When instantly, the entire ship careens over on her side; every bolt in her starts like the nail-heads of an old house in frosty weather; she trembles, quivers, and nods her frightened mast-heads to the sky.



More and more she leans over to the whale, while every gasping heave of the windlass is answered by a helping heave from the billows; till at last, a swift, startling snap is heard; with a great swash the ship rolls upwards and backwards from the whale, and the triumphant tackle rises into sight dragging after it the disengaged semicircular end of the first strip of blubber.



Now as the blubber envelopes the whale precisely as the rind does an orange, so is it stripped off from the body precisely as an orange is sometimes stripped by spiralizing it.



For the strain constantly kept up by the windlass continually keeps the whale rolling over and over in the water, and as the blubber in one strip uniformly peels off along the line called the "scarf," simultaneously cut by the spades of Starbuck and Stubb, the mates; and just as fast as it is thus peeled off, and indeed by that very act itself, it is all the time being hoisted higher and higher aloft till its upper end grazes the main-top; the men at the windlass then cease heaving, and for a moment or two the prodigious blood-dripping mass sways to and fro as if let down from the sky, and every one present must take good heed to dodge it when it swings, else it may box his ears and pitch him headlong overboard.



One of the attending harpooners now advances with a long, keen weapon called a boarding-sword, and watching his chance he dexterously slices out a considerable hole in the lower part of the swaying mass.



Into this hole, the end of the second alternating great tackle is then hooked so as to retain a hold upon the blubber, in order to prepare for what follows.



Whereupon, this accomplished swordsman, warning all hands to stand off, once more makes a scientific dash at the mass, and with a few sidelong, desperate, lunging slicings, severs it completely in twain; so that while the short lower part is still fast, the long upper strip, called a blanket-piece, swings clear, and is all ready for lowering.



The heavers forward now resume their song, and while the one tackle is peeling and hoisting a second strip from the whale, the other is slowly slackened away, and down goes the first strip through the main hatchway right beneath, into an unfurnished parlor called the blubber-room.



Into this twilight apartment sundry nimble hands keep coiling away the long blanket-piece as if it were a great live mass of plaited serpents.



And thus the work proceeds; the two tackles hoisting and lowering simultaneously; both whale and windlass heaving, the heavers singing, the blubber-room gentlemen coiling, the mates scarfing, the ship straining, and all hands swearing occasionally, by way of assuaging the general friction.

## CHAPTER 68



# The Blanket



I have given no small attention to that not unvexed subject, the skin of the whale.



I have had controversies about it with experienced whalemens afloat, and learned naturalists ashore.



My original opinion remains unchanged; but it is only an opinion.



The question is, what and where is the skin of the whale?



Already you know what his blubber is.



That blubber is something of the consistence of firm, close-grained beef, but tougher, more elastic and compact, and ranges from eight or ten to twelve and fifteen inches in thickness.



Now, however preposterous it may at first seem to talk of any creature's skin as being of that sort of consistence and thickness, yet in point of fact these are no arguments against such a presumption; because you cannot raise any other dense enveloping layer from the whale's body but that same blubber; and the outermost enveloping layer of any animal, if reasonably dense, what can that be but the skin?



True, from the unmarred dead body of the whale, you may scrape off with your hand an infinitely thin, transparent substance, somewhat resembling the thinnest shreds of isinglass, only it is almost as flexible and soft as satin; that is, previous to being dried, when it not only contracts and thickens, but becomes rather hard and brittle.



I have several such dried bits, which I use for marks in my whale-books.



It is transparent, as I said before; and being laid upon the printed page, I have sometimes pleased myself with fancying it exerted a magnifying influence.



At any rate, it is pleasant to read about whales through their own spectacles, as you may say.







admire and model thyself after the whale!



Do thou, too, remain warm among ice.



Do thou, too, live in this world without being of it.



Be cool at the equator; keep thy blood fluid at the Pole.



Like the great dome of St. Peter's, and like the great whale, retain, O man!



in all seasons a temperature of thine own.



But how easy and how hopeless to teach these fine things!



Of erections, how few are domed like St. Peter's!



of creatures, how few vast as the whale!





# CHAPTER 70

## The Sphynx



It should not have been omitted that previous to completely stripping the body of the leviathan, he was beheaded.



Now, the beheading of the Sperm Whale is a scientific anatomical feat, upon which experienced whale surgeons very much pride themselves: and not without reason.



Consider that the whale has nothing that can properly be called a neck; on the contrary, where his head and body seem to join, there, in that very place, is the thickest part of him.



Remember, also, that the surgeon must operate from above, some eight or ten feet intervening between him and his subject, and that subject almost hidden in a discoloured, rolling, and oftentimes tumultuous and bursting sea.



Bear in mind, too, that under these untoward circumstances he has to cut many feet deep in the flesh; and in that subterranean manner, without so much as getting one single peep into the ever-contracting gash thus made, he must skilfully steer clear of all adjacent, interdicted parts, and exactly divide the spine at a critical point hard by its insertion into the skull.



Do you not marvel, then, at Stubb's boast, that he demanded but ten minutes to behead a sperm whale?



When first severed, the head is dropped astern and held there by a cable till the body is stripped.



That done, if it belong to a small whale it is hoisted on deck to be deliberately disposed of.



But, with a full grown leviathan this is impossible; for the sperm whale's head embraces nearly one third of his entire bulk, and completely to suspend such a burden as that, even by the immense tackles of a whaler, this were as vain a thing as to attempt weighing a Dutch barn in jewellers' scales.



The Pequod's whale being decapitated and the body stripped, the head was hoisted against the ship's side--about half way out of the sea, so that it might yet in great part be buoyed up by its native element.





thou hast seen enough to split the planets and make an infidel of Abraham, and not one syllable is thine!"



"Sail ho!"



cried a triumphant voice from the main-mast-head.



"Aye?"



Well, now, that's cheering," cried Ahab, suddenly erecting himself, while whole thunder-clouds swept aside from his brow.



"That lively cry upon this deadly calm might almost convert a better man.



--Where away?"



"Three points on the starboard bow, sir, and bringing down her breeze to us!



"Better and better, man.



Would now St. Paul would come along that way, and to my breezlessness bring his breeze!



O Nature, and O soul of man!



how far beyond all utterance are your linked analogies!



not the smallest atom stirs or lives on matter, but has its cunning duplicate in mind."



# CHAPTER 71



## The Jeroboam's Story



Hand in hand, ship and breeze blew on; but the breeze came faster than the ship, and soon the Pequod began to rock.



By and by, through the glass the stranger's boats and manned mast-heads proved her a whale-ship.



But as she was so far to windward, and shooting by, apparently making a passage to some other ground, the Pequod could not hope to reach her.



So the signal was set to see what response would be made.



Here be it said, that like the vessels of military marines, the ships of the American Whale Fleet have each a private signal; all which signals being collected in a book with the names of the respective vessels attached, every captain is provided with it.



Thereby, the whale commanders are enabled to recognise each other upon the ocean, even at considerable distances and with no small facility.



The Pequod's signal was at last responded to by the stranger's setting her own; which proved the ship to be the Jeroboam of Nantucket.



Squaring her yards, she bore down, ranged abeam under the Pequod's lee, and lowered a boat; it soon drew nigh; but, as the side-ladder was being rigged by Starbuck's order to accommodate the visiting captain, the stranger in question waved his hand from his boat's stern in token of that proceeding being entirely unnecessary.



It turned out that the Jeroboam had a malignant epidemic on board, and that Mayhew, her captain, was fearful of infecting the Pequod's company.



For, though himself and boat's crew remained untainted, and though his ship was half a rifle-shot off, and an incorruptible sea and air rolling and flowing between; yet conscientiously adhering to the timid quarantine of the land, he preemptorily refused to come into direct contact with the Pequod.









With them he pushed off; and, after much weary pulling, and many perilous, unsuccessful onsets, he at last succeeded in getting one iron fast.



Meantime, Gabriel, ascending to the main-royal mast-head, was tossing one arm in frantic gestures, and hurling forth prophecies of speedy doom to the sacrilegious assailants of his divinity.



Now, while Macey, the mate, was standing up in his boat's bow, and with all the reckless energy of his tribe was venting his wild exclamations upon the whale, and essaying to get a fair chance for his poised lance, lo!



a broad white shadow rose from the sea; by its quick, fanning motion, temporarily taking the breath out of the bodies of the oarsmen.



Next instant, the luckless mate, so full of furious life, was smitten bodily into the air, and making a long arc in his descent, fell into the sea at the distance of about fifty yards.



Not a chip of the boat was harmed, nor a hair of any oarsman's head; but the mate for ever sank.



It is well to parenthesize here, that of the fatal accidents in the Sperm-Whale Fishery, this kind is perhaps almost as frequent as any.



Sometimes, nothing is injured but the man who is thus annihilated; oftener the boat's bow is knocked off, or the thigh-board, in which the headsman stands, is torn from its place and accompanies the body.



But strangest of all is the circumstance, that in more instances than one, when the body has been recovered, not a single mark of violence is discernible; the man being stark dead.



The whole calamity, with the falling form of Macey, was plainly descried from the ship.



Raising a piercing shriek--"The vial!



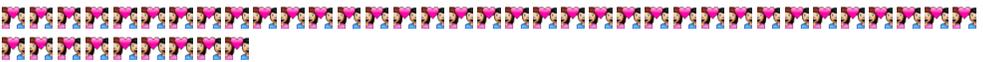
the vial!"



Gabriel called off the terror-stricken crew from the further hunting of the whale.



This terrible event clothed the archangel with added influence; because his credulous disciples believed that he had specifically fore-announced it, instead of only making a general prophecy, which any one might have done, and so have chanced to hit one of many marks in the wide margin allowed.



He became a nameless terror to the ship.



Mayhew having concluded his narration, Ahab put such questions to him, that the stranger captain could not forbear inquiring whether he intended to hunt the White Whale, if opportunity should offer.



To which Ahab answered--"Aye."



Straightway, then, Gabriel once more started to his feet, glaring upon the old man, and vehemently exclaimed, with downward pointed finger--"Think, think of the blasphemer--dead, and down there!"



--beware of the blasphemer's end!"



Ahab stolidly turned aside; then said to Mayhew, "Captain, I have just bethought me of my letter-bag; there is a letter for one of thy officers, if I mistake not.



Starbuck, look over the bag."



Every whale-ship takes out a goodly number of letters for various ships, whose delivery to the persons to whom they may be addressed, depends upon the mere chance of encountering them in the four oceans.



Thus, most letters never reach their mark; and many are only received after attaining an age of two or three years or more.



Soon Starbuck returned with a letter in his hand.



It was sorely tumbled, damp, and covered with a dull, spotted, green mould, in consequence of being kept in a dark locker of the cabin.



Of such a letter, Death himself might well have been the post-boy.



"Can'st not read it?"



cried Ahab.



"Give it me, man.



Aye, aye, it's but a dim scrawl;--what's this?"



As he was studying it out, Starbuck took a long cutting-spade pole, and with his knife slightly split the end, to insert the letter there, and in that way, hand it to the boat, without its coming any closer to the ship.



Meantime, Ahab holding the letter, muttered, "Mr. Har--yes, Mr. Harry--(a woman's pinny hand,--the man's wife, I'll wager)--Aye--Mr. Harry Macey, Ship Jeroboam;--why it's Macey, and he's dead!"



"Poor fellow!"









\*The monkey-rope is found in all whalers; but it was only in the Pequod that the monkey and his holder were ever tied together.



This improvement upon the original usage was introduced by no less a man than Stubb, in order to afford the imperilled harpooneer the strongest possible guarantee for the faithfulness and vigilance of his monkey-rope holder.



I have hinted that I would often jerk poor Queequeg from between the whale and the ship--where he would occasionally fall, from the incessant rolling and swaying of both.



But this was not the only jamming jeopardy he was exposed to.



Unappalled by the massacre made upon them during the night, the sharks now freshly and more keenly allured by the before pent blood which began to flow from the carcass--the rabid creatures swarmed round it like bees in a beehive.



And right in among those sharks was Queequeg; who often pushed them aside with his floundering feet.



A thing altogether incredible were it not that attracted by such prey as a dead whale, the otherwise miscellaneous carnivorous shark will seldom touch a man.



Nevertheless, it may well be believed that since they have such a ravenous finger in the pie, it is deemed but wise to look sharp to them.



Accordingly, besides the monkey-rope, with which I now and then jerked the poor fellow from too close a vicinity to the maw of what seemed a peculiarly ferocious shark--he was provided with still another protection.



Suspended over the side in one of the stages, Tashtego and Daggoo continually flourished over his head a couple of keen whale-spades, wherewith they slaughtered as many sharks as they could reach.



This procedure of theirs, to be sure, was very disinterested and benevolent of them.



They meant Queequeg's best happiness, I admit; but in their hasty zeal to befriend him, and from the circumstance that both he and the sharks were at times half hidden by the blood-muddled water, those indiscreet spades of theirs would come nearer amputating a leg than a tall.



But poor Queequeg, I suppose, straining and gasping there with that great iron hook--poor Queequeg, I suppose, only prayed to his Yojo, and gave up his life into the hands of his gods.



Well, well, my dear comrade and twin-brother, thought I, as I drew in and then slacked off the rope to every swell of the sea--what matters it, after all?



Are you not the precious image of each and all of us men in this whaling world?





Sea-coal?



firewood?



--lucifer matches?



--tinder?



--gunpowder?



--what the devil is ginger, I say, that you offer this cup to our poor Queequeg here."



"There is some sneaking Temperance Society movement about this business," he suddenly added, now approaching Starbuck, who had just come from forward.



"Will you look at that kannakin, sir; smell of it, if you please."



Then watching the mate's countenance, he added, "The steward, Mr. Starbuck, had the face to offer that calomel and jalap to Queequeg, there, this instant off the whale.



Is the steward an apothecary, sir?



and may I ask whether this is the sort of bitters by which he blows back the life into a half-drowned man?"



"I trust not," said Starbuck, "it is poor stuff enough."



"Aye, aye, steward," cried Stubb, "we'll teach you to drug it harpooneer; none of your apothecary's medicine here; you want to poison us, do ye?"



You have got out insurances on our lives and want to murder us all, and pocket the proceeds, do ye?"



"It was not me," cried Dough-Boy, "it was Aunt Charity that brought the ginger on board; and bade me never give the harpooneers any spirits, but only this ginger-jub--so she called it."



"Ginger-jub!



you gingerly rascal!



take that!



and run along with ye to the lockers, and get something better.



I hope I do no wrong, Mr. Starbuck.



It is the captain's orders--grog for the harpooneer on a whale."



"Enough," replied Starbuck, "only don't hit him again, but--" "Oh, I never hurt when I hit, except when I hit a whale or something of that sort; and this fellow's a weazel.



What were you about saying, sir?"



"Only this: go down with him, and get what thou wantest thyself."



When Stubb reappeared, he came with a dark flask in one hand, and a sort of tea-caddy in the other.



The first contained strong spirits, and was handed to Queequeg; the second was Aunt Charity's gift, and that was freely given to the waves.



## CHAPTER 73

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# Stubb And Flask Kill A Right Whale; And Then Have A Talk Over Him



It must be borne in mind that all this time we have a Sperm Whale's prodigious head hanging to the Pequod's side.



But we must let it continue hanging there a while till we can get a chance to attend to it.



For the present other matters press, and the best we can do now for the head, is to pray heaven the tackles may hold.



Now, during the past night and forenoon, the Pequod had gradually drifted into a sea, which, by its occasional patches of yellow brit, gave unusual tokens of the vicinity of Right Whales, a species of the Leviathan that but few supposed to be at this particular time lurking anywhere near.



And though all hands commonly disdained the capture of those inferior creatures; and though the Pequod was not commissioned to cruise for them at all, and though she had passed numbers of them near the Crozetts without lowering a boat; yet now that a Sperm Whale had been brought alongside and beheaded, to the surprise of all, the announcement was made that a Right Whale should be captured that day, if opportunity offered.



Nor was this long wanting.



Tall spouts were seen to leeward; and two boats, Stubb's and Flask's, were detached in pursuit.



Pulling further and further away, they at last became almost invisible to the men at the mast-head.













said Flask; "yes, you'll soon see this right whale's head hoisted up opposite that parmacetti's."



In good time, Flask's saying proved true.



As before, the Pequod steeply leaned over towards the sperm whale's head, now, by the counterpoise of both heads, she regained her even keel; though sorely strained, you may well believe.



So, when on one side you hoist in Locke's head, you go over that way; but now, on the other side, hoist in Kant's and you come back again; but in very poor plight.



Thus, some minds for ever keep trimming boat.



Oh, ye foolish!



throw all these thunder-heads overboard, and then you will float light and right.



In disposing of the body of a right whale, when brought alongside the ship, the same preliminary proceedings commonly take place as in the case of a sperm whale; only, in the latter instance, the head is cut off whole, but in the former the lips and tongue are separately removed and hoisted on deck, with all the well known black bone attached to what is called the crown-piece.



But nothing like this, in the present case, had been done.



The carcasses of both whales had dropped astern; and the head-laden ship not a little resembled a mule carrying a pair of overburdening panniers.



Meantime, Fedallah was calmly eyeing the right whale's head, and ever and anon glancing from the deep wrinkles there to the lines in his own hand.



And Ahab chanced so to stand, that the Parsee occupied his shadow; while, if the Parsee's shadow was there at all it seemed only to blend with, and lengthen Ahab's.



As the crew toiled on, Laplandish speculations were bandied among them, concerning all these passing things.



# CHAPTER 74



# The Sperm Whale's Head-- contrasted View



Here, now, are two great whales, laying their heads together; let us join them, and lay together our own.



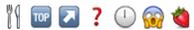
Of the grand order of folio leviathans, the Sperm Whale and the Right Whale are by far the most noteworthy.



They are the only whales regularly hunted by man.



To the Nantucketer, they present the two extremes of all the known varieties of the whale.



As the external difference between them is mainly observable in their heads; and as a head of each is this moment hanging from the Pequod's side; and as we may freely go from one to the other, by merely stepping across the deck:-where, I should like to know, will you obtain a better chance to study practical cetology than here?



In the first place, you are struck by the general contrast between these heads.



Both are massive enough in all conscience; but there is a certain mathematical symmetry in the Sperm Whale's which the Right Whale's sadly lacks.



There is more character in the Sperm Whale's head.



As you behold it, you involuntarily yield the immense superiority to him, in point of pervading dignity.



In the present instance, too, this dignity is heightened by the pepper and salt colour of his head at the summit, giving token of advanced age and large experience.



In short, he is what the fishermen technically call a "grey-headed whale."



Let us now note what is least dissimilar in these heads--namely, the two most important organs, the eye and the ear.



Far back on the side of the head, and low down, near the angle of either whale's jaw, if you narrowly search, you will at last see a lashless eye, which you would fancy to be a young colt's eye; so out of all proportion is it to the magnitude of the head.



Now, from this peculiar sideways position of the whale's eyes, it is plain that he can never see an object which is exactly ahead, no more than he can one exactly astern.



In a word, the position of the whale's eyes corresponds to that of a man's ears; and you may fancy, for yourself, how it would fare with you, did you sideways survey objects through your ears.



You would find that you could only command some thirty degrees of vision in advance of the straight side-line of sight; and about thirty more behind it.



If your bitterest foe were walking straight towards you, with dagger uplifted in broad day, you would not be able to see him, any more than if he were stealing upon you from behind.



In a word, you would have two backs, so to speak; but, at the same time, also, two fronts (side fronts): for what is it that makes the front of a man--what, indeed, but his eyes?



Moreover, while in most other animals that I can now think of, the eyes are so planted as imperceptibly to blend their visual power, so as to produce one picture and not two to the brain; the peculiar position of the whale's eyes, effectually divided as they are by many cubic feet of solid head, which towers between them like a great mountain separating two lakes in valleys; this, of course, must wholly separate the impressions which each independent organ imparts.



The whale, therefore, must see one distinct picture on this side, and another distinct picture on that side; while all between must be profound darkness and nothingness to him.



Man may, in effect, be said to look out on the world from a sentry-box with two joined sashes for his window.



But with the whale, these two sashes are separately inserted, making two distinct windows, but sadly impairing the view.



This peculiarity of the whale's eyes is a thing always to be borne in mind in the fishery; and to be remembered by the reader in some subsequent scenes.



A curious and most puzzling question might be started concerning this visual matter as touching the Leviathan.



But I must be content with a hint.



So long as a man's eyes are open in the light, the act of seeing is involuntary; that is, he cannot then help mechanically seeing whatever objects are before him.







There are generally forty-two teeth in all; in old whales, much worn down, but undecayed; nor filled after our artificial fashion.



The jaw is afterwards sawn into slabs, and piled away like joists for building houses.









Look your last, now, on these venerable hooded heads, while they yet lie together; for one will soon sink, unrecorded, in the sea; the other will not be very long in following.



Can you catch the expression of the Sperm Whale's there?



It is the same he died with, only some of the longer wrinkles in the forehead seem now faded away.



I think his broad brow to be full of a prairie-like placidity, born of a speculative indifference as to death.



But mark the other head's expression.



See that amazing lower lip, pressed by accident against the vessel's side, so as firmly to embrace the jaw.



Does not this whole head seem to speak of an enormous practical resolution in facing death?



This Right Whale I take to have been a Stoic; the Sperm Whale, a Platonian, who might have taken up Spinoza in his latter years.







So that when I shall hereafter detail to you all the specialities and concentrations of potency everywhere lurking in this expansive monster; when I shall show you some of his more inconsiderable braining feats; I trust you will have renounced all ignorant incredulity, and be ready to abide by this; that though the Sperm Whale stove a passage through the Isthmus of Darien, and mixed the Atlantic with the Pacific, you would not elevate one hair of your eye-brow.



For unless you own the whale, you are but a provincial and sentimentalist in Truth.



But clear Truth is a thing for salamander giants only to encounter; how small the chances for the provincials then?



What befell the weakling youth lifting the dread goddess's veil at Lais?













both!



--it is both!"



--cried Daggoo again with a joyful shout; and soon after, Queequeg was seen boldly striking out with one hand, and with the other clutching the long hair of the Indian.



Drawn into the waiting boat, they were quickly brought to the deck; but Tashtego was long in coming to, and Queequeg did not look very brisk.



Now, how had this noble rescue been accomplished?



Why, diving after the slowly descending head, Queequeg with his keen sword had made side lunges near its bottom, so as to scuttle a large hole there; then dropping his sword, had thrust his long arm far inwards and upwards, and so hauled out poor Tash by the head.



He averred, that upon first thrusting in for him, a leg was presented; but well knowing that that was not as it ought to be, and might occasion great trouble;--he had thrust back the leg, and by a dexterous heave and toss, had wrought a somerset upon the Indian; so that with the next trial, he came forth in the good old way--head foremost.



As for the great head itself, that was doing as well as could be expected.



And thus, through the courage and great skill in obstetrics of Queequeg, the deliverance, or rather, delivery of Tashtego, was successfully accomplished, in the teeth, too, of the most untoward and apparently hopeless impediments; which is a lesson by no means to be forgotten.



Midwifery should be taught in the same course with fencing and boxing, riding and rowing.



I know that this queer adventure of the Gay-Header's will be sure to seem incredible to some landsmen, though they themselves may have either seen or heard of some one's falling into a cistern ashore; an accident which not seldom happens, and with much less reason too than the Indian's, considering the exceeding slipperiness of the curb of the Sperm Whale's well.



But, peradventure, it may be sagaciously urged, how is this?



We thought the tissue, infiltrated head of the Sperm Whale, was the lightest and most corky part about him; and yet thou makest it sink in an element of a far greater specific gravity than itself.



We have thee there.



Not at all, but I have ye; for at the time poor Tash fell in, the case had been nearly emptied of its lighter contents, leaving little but the dense tendinous wall of the well--a double welded, hammered substance, as I have before said, much heavier than the sea water, and a lump of which sinks in it like lead almost.



But the tendency to rapid sinking in this substance was in the present instance materially counteracted by the other parts of the head remaining undetached from it, so that it sank very slowly and deliberately indeed, affording Queequeg a fair chance for performing his agile obstetrics on the run, as you may say.



Yes, it was a running delivery, so it was.



Now, had Tashtego perished in that head, it had been a very precious perishing; smothered in the very whitest and daintiest of fragrant spermaceti; coffined, hearsed, and tombed in the secret inner chamber and sanctum sanctorum of the whale.



Only one sweeter end can readily be recalled--the delicious death of an Ohio honey-hunter, who seeking honey in the crotch of a hollow tree, found such exceeding store of it, that leaning too far over, it sucked him in, so that he died embalmed.



How many, think ye, have likewise fallen into Plato's honey head, and sweetly perished there?





Nevertheless, Leviathan is of so mighty a magnitude, all his proportions are so stately, that the same deficiency which in the sculptured Jove were hideous, in him is no blemish at all.



Nay, it is an added grandeur.



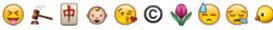
A nose to the whale would have been impertinent.



As on your physiognomical voyage you sail round his vast head in your jolly-boat, your noble conceptions of him are never insulted by the reflection that he has a nose to be pulled.



A pestilent conceit, which so often will insist upon obtruding even when beholding the mightiest royal beadle on his throne.



In some particulars, perhaps the most imposing physiognomical view to be had of the Sperm Whale, is that of the full front of his head.



This aspect is sublime.



In thought, a fine human brow is like the East when troubled with the morning.



In the repose of the pasture, the curled brow of the bull has a touch of the grand in it.



Pushing heavy cannon up mountain defiles, the elephant's brow is majestic.



Human or animal, the mystical brow is as that great golden seal affixed by the German Emperors to their decrees.



It signifies--"God: done this day by my hand."



But in most creatures, nay in man himself, very often the brow is but a mere strip of alpine land lying along the snow line.



Few are the foreheads which like Shakespeare's or Melancthon's rise so high, and descend so low, that the eyes themselves seem clear, eternal, tideless mountain lakes; and all above them in the forehead's wrinkles, you seem to track the antlered thoughts descending there to drink, as the Highland hunters track the snow prints of the deer.



But in the great Sperm Whale, this high and mighty god-like dignity inherent in the brow is so immensely amplified, that gazing on it, in that full front view, you feel the Deity and the dread powers more forcibly than in beholding any other object in living nature.



For you see no one point precisely; not one distinct feature is revealed; no nose, eyes, ears, or mouth; no face; he has none, proper; nothing but that one broad firmament of a forehead, pleated with riddles; dumbly lowering with the doom of boats, and ships, and men.



Nor, in profile, does this wondrous brow diminish; though that way viewed its grandeur does not domineer upon you so.



In profile, you plainly perceive that horizontal, semi-crescentic depression in the forehead's middle, which, in man, is Lavater's mark of genius.



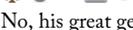
But how?



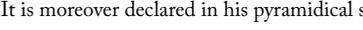
Genius in the Sperm Whale?



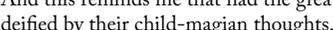
Has the Sperm Whale ever written a book, spoken a speech?



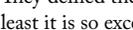
No, his great genius is declared in his doing nothing particular to prove it.



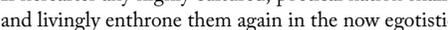
It is moreover declared in his pyramidal silence.



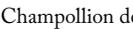
And this reminds me that had the great Sperm Whale been known to the young Orient World, he would have been deified by their child-magian thoughts.



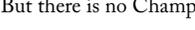
They deified the crocodile of the Nile, because the crocodile is tongueless; and the Sperm Whale has no tongue, or at least it is so exceedingly small, as to be incapable of protrusion.



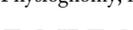
If hereafter any highly cultured, poetical nation shall lure back to their birth-right, the merry May-day gods of old; and livingly enthrone them again in the now egotistical sky; in the now unhaunted hill; then be sure, exalted to Jove's high seat, the great Sperm Whale shall lord it.



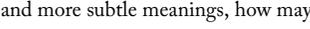
Champollion deciphered the wrinkled granite hieroglyphics.



But there is no Champollion to decipher the Egypt of every man's and every being's face.



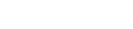
Physiognomy, like every other human science, is but a passing fable.



If then, Sir William Jones, who read in thirty languages, could not read the simplest peasant's face in its profounder and more subtle meanings, how may unlettered Ishmael hope to read the awful Chaldee of the Sperm Whale's brow?



I but put that brow before you.



Read it if you can.

## CHAPTER 80



# The Nut



If the Sperm Whale be physiognomically a Sphinx, to the phrenologist his brain seems that geometrical circle which it is impossible to square.



In the full-grown creature the skull will measure at least twenty feet in length.



Unhinge the lower jaw, and the side view of this skull is as the side of a moderately inclined plane resting throughout on a level base.



But in life--as we have elsewhere seen--this inclined plane is angularly filled up, and almost squared by the enormous superincumbent mass of the junk and sperm.



At the high end the skull forms a crater to bed that part of the mass; while under the long floor of this crater--in another cavity seldom exceeding ten inches in length and as many in depth--reposes the mere handful of this monster's brain.



The brain is at least twenty feet from his apparent forehead in life; it is hidden away behind its vast outworks, like the innermost citadel within the amplified fortifications of Quebec.



So like a choice casket is it secreted in him, that I have known some whalemens who peremptorily deny that the Sperm Whale has any other brain than that palpable semblance of one formed by the cubic-yards of his sperm magazine.



Lying in strange folds, courses, and convolutions, to their apprehensions, it seems more in keeping with the idea of his general might to regard that mystic part of him as the seat of his intelligence.



It is plain, then, that phrenologically the head of this Leviathan, in the creature's living intact state, is an entire delusion.



As for his true brain, you can then see no indications of it, nor feel any.



The whale, like all things that are mighty, wears a false brow to the common world.



If you unload his skull of its spermy heaps and then take a rear view of its rear end, which is the high end, you will be struck by its resemblance to the human skull, beheld in the same situation, and from the same point of view.



Indeed, place this reversed skull (scaled down to the human magnitude) among a plate of men's skulls, and you would involuntarily confound it with them; and remarking the depressions on one part of its summit, in phrenological phrase you would say--This man had no self-esteem, and no veneration.



And by those negations, considered along with the affirmative fact of his prodigious bulk and power, you can best form to yourself the truest, though not the most exhilarating conception of what the most exalted potency is.



But if from the comparative dimensions of the whale's proper brain, you deem it incapable of being adequately charted, then I have another idea for you.



If you attentively regard almost any quadruped's spine, you will be struck with the resemblance of its vertebrae to a strung necklace of dwarfed skulls, all bearing rudimental resemblance to the skull proper.



It is a German conceit, that the vertebrae are absolutely undeveloped skulls.



But the curious external resemblance, I take it the Germans were not the first men to perceive.



A foreign friend once pointed it out to me, in the skeleton of a foe he had slain, and with the vertebrae of which he was inlaying, in a sort of basso-relievo, the beaked prow of his canoe.



Now, I consider that the phrenologists have omitted an important thing in not pushing their investigations from the cerebellum through the spinal canal.



For I believe that much of a man's character will be found betokened in his backbone.



I would rather feel your spine than your skull, whoever you are.



A thin joist of a spine never yet upheld a full and noble soul.



I rejoice in my spine, as in the firm audacious staff of that flag which I fling half out to the world.



Apply this spinal branch of phrenology to the Sperm Whale.



His cranial cavity is continuous with the first neck-vertebra; and in that vertebra the bottom of the spinal canal will measure ten inches across, being eight in height, and of a triangular figure with the base downwards.



As it passes through the remaining vertebrae the canal tapers in size, but for a considerable distance remains of large capacity.



Now, of course, this canal is filled with much the same strangely fibrous substance--the spinal cord--as the brain; and directly communicates with the brain.



And what is still more, for many feet after emerging from the brain's cavity, the spinal cord remains of an undecreasing girth, almost equal to that of the brain.



Under all these circumstances, would it be unreasonable to survey and map out the whale's spine phrenologically?



For, viewed in this light, the wonderful comparative smallness of his brain proper is more than compensated by the wonderful comparative magnitude of his spinal cord.



But leaving this hint to operate as it may with the phrenologists, I would merely assume the spinal theory for a moment, in reference to the Sperm Whale's hump.



This august hump, if I mistake not, rises over one of the larger vertebrae, and is, therefore, in some sort, the outer convex mould of it.



From its relative situation then, I should call this high hump the organ of firmness or indomitableness in the Sperm Whale.



And that the great monster is indomitable, you will yet have reason to know.



# The Pequod Meets The Virgin



The predestinated day arrived, and we duly met the ship Jungfrau, Derick De Deer, master, of Bremen.



At one time the greatest whaling people in the world, the Dutch and Germans are now among the least; but here and there at very wide intervals of latitude and longitude, you still occasionally meet with their flag in the Pacific.



For some reason, the Jungfrau seemed quite eager to pay her respects.



While yet some distance from the Pequod, she rounded to, and dropping a boat, her captain was impelled towards us, impatiently standing in the bows instead of the stern.



"What has he in his hand there?"



cried Starbuck, pointing to something wavingly held by the German.



"Impossible!



--a lamp-feeder!"



"Not that," said Stubb, "no, no, it's a coffee-pot, Mr. Starbuck; he's coming off to make us our coffee, is the Yarman; don't you see that big tin can there alongside of him?"



--that's his boiling water.



Oh!



he's all right, is the Yarman."



"Go along with you," cried Flask, "it's a lamp-feeder and an oil-can.





Lord, think of having half an acre of stomach-ache!



Adverse winds are holding mad Christmas in him, boys.



It's the first foul wind I ever knew to blow from astern; but look, did ever whale yaw so before?



it must be, he's lost his tiller."



As an overladen Indiaman bearing down the Hindostan coast with a deck load of frightened horses, careens, buries, rolls, and wallows on her way; so did this old whale heave his aged bulk, and now and then partly turning over on his cumbrous rib-ends, expose the cause of his devious wake in the unnatural stump of his starboard fin.



Whether he had lost that fin in battle, or had been born without it, it were hard to say.



"Only wait a bit, old chap, and I'll give ye a sling for that wounded arm," cried cruel Flask, pointing to the whale-line near him.



"Mind he don't sling thee with it," cried Starbuck.



"Give way, or the German will have him."



With one intent all the combined rival boats were pointed for this one fish, because not only was he the largest, and therefore the most valuable whale, but he was nearest to them, and the other whales were going with such great velocity, moreover, as almost to defy pursuit for the time.



At this juncture the Pequod's keels had shot by the three German boats last lowered; but from the great start he had had, Derick's boat still led the chase, though every moment neared by his foreign rivals.



The only thing they feared, was, that from being already so nigh to his mark, he would be enabled to dart his iron before they could completely overtake and pass him.



As for Derick, he seemed quite confident that this would be the case, and occasionally with a deriding gesture shook his lamp-feeder at the other boats.



"The ungracious and ungrateful dog!"



cried Starbuck; "he mocks and dares me with the very poor-box I filled for him not five minutes ago!"



--then in his old intense whisper--"Give way, greyhounds!



Dog to it!"







But so decided an original start had Derick had, that spite of all their gallantry, he would have proved the victor in this race, had not a righteous judgment descended upon him in a crab which caught the blade of his midship oarsman.



While this clumsy lubber was striving to free his white-ash, and while, in consequence, Derick's boat was nigh to capsizing, and he thundering away at his men in a mighty rage;--that was a good time for Starbuck, Stubb, and Flask.



With a shout, they took a mortal start forwards, and slantingly ranged up on the German's quarter.



An instant more, and all four boats were diagonically in the whale's immediate wake, while stretching from them, on both sides, was the foaming swell that he made.



It was a terrific, most pitiable, and maddening sight.



The whale was now going head out, and sending his spout before him in a continual tormented jet; while his one poor fin beat his side in an agony of fright.



Now to this hand, now to that, he yawed in his faltering flight, and still at every billow that he broke, he spasmodically sank in the sea, or sideways rolled towards the sky his one beating fin.



So have I seen a bird with clipped wing making affrighted broken circles in the air, vainly striving to escape the piratical hawks.



But the bird has a voice, and with plaintive cries will make known her fear; but the fear of this vast dumb brute of the sea, was chained up and enchanted in him; he had no voice, save that choking respiration through his spiracle, and this made the sight of him unspeakably pitiable; while still, in his amazing bulk, portcullis jaw, and omnipotent tail, there was enough to appal the stoutest man who so pitied.



Seeing now that but a very few moments more would give the Pequod's boats the advantage, and rather than be thus foiled of his game, Derick chose to hazard what to him must have seemed a most unusually long dart, ere the last chance would for ever escape.



But no sooner did his harpooneer stand up for the stroke, than all three tigers--Queequeg, Tashtego, Daggoo--instinctively sprang to their feet, and standing in a diagonal row, simultaneously pointed their barbs; and darted over the head of the German harpooneer, their three Nantucket irons entered the whale.



Blinding vapours of foam and white-fire!



The three boats, in the first fury of the whale's headlong rush, bumped the German's aside with such force, that both Derick and his baffled harpooneer were spilled out, and sailed over by the three flying keels.



"Don't be afraid, my butter-boxes," cried Stubb, casting a passing glance upon them as he shot by; "ye'll be picked up presently--all right--I saw some sharks astern--St. Bernard's dogs, you know--relieve distressed travellers.



Hurrah!



this is the way to sail now.



Every keel a sunbeam!



Hurrah!



--Here we go like three tin kettles at the tail of a mad cougar!



This puts me in mind of fastening to an elephant in a tilbury on a plain--makes the wheel-spokes fly, boys, when you fasten to him that way; and there's danger of being pitched out too, when you strike a hill.



Hurrah!



this is the way a fellow feels when he's going to Davy Jones--all a rush down an endless inclined plane!



Hurrah!



this whale carries the everlasting mail!"



But the monster's run was a brief one.



Giving a sudden gasp, he tumultuously sounded.



With a grating rush, the three lines flew round the loggerheads with such a force as to gouge deep grooves in them; while so fearful were the harpooners that this rapid sounding would soon exhaust the lines, that using all their dexterous might, they caught repeated smoking turns with the rope to hold on; till at last--owing to the perpendicular strain from the lead-lined chocks of the boats, whence the three ropes went straight down into the blue--the gunwales of the bows were almost even with the water, while the three sterns tilted high in the air.



And the whale soon ceasing to sound, for some time they remained in that attitude, fearful of expending more line, though the position was a little ticklish.



But though boats have been taken down and lost in this way, yet it is this "holding on," as it is called; this hooking up by the sharp barbs of his live flesh from the back; this it is that often torments the Leviathan into soon rising again to meet the sharp lance of his foes.



Yet not to speak of the peril of the thing, it is to be doubted whether this course is always the best; for it is but reasonable to presume, that the longer the stricken whale stays under water, the more he is exhausted.



Because, owing to the enormous surface of him--in a full grown sperm whale something less than 2000 square feet--the pressure of the water is immense.



We all know what an astonishing atmospheric weight we ourselves stand up under; even here, above-ground, in the air; how vast, then, the burden of a whale, bearing on his back a column of two hundred fathoms of ocean!



It must at least equal the weight of fifty atmospheres.



One whaleman has estimated it at the weight of twenty line-of-battle ships, with all their guns, and stores, and men on board.



As the three boats lay there on that gently rolling sea, gazing down into its eternal blue noon; and as not a single groan or cry of any sort, nay, not so much as a ripple or a bubble came up from its depths; what landsman would have thought, that beneath all that silence and placidity, the utmost monster of the seas was writhing and wrenching in agony!



Not eight inches of perpendicular rope were visible at the bows.



Seems it credible that by three such thin threads the great Leviathan was suspended like the big weight to an eight day clock.



Suspended?



and to what?



To three bits of board.



Is this the creature of whom it was once so triumphantly said--"Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons?



or his head with fish-spears?



The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold, the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon: he esteemeth iron as straw; the arrow cannot make him flee; darts are counted as stubble; he laugheth at the shaking of a spear!"



This the creature?



this he?



Oh!











Be it said, however, that the Sperm Whale is far less liable to this accident than any other species.



Where one of that sort go down, twenty Right Whales do.



This difference in the species is no doubt imputable in no small degree to the greater quantity of bone in the Right Whale; his Venetian blinds alone sometimes weighing more than a ton; from this incumbrance the Sperm Whale is wholly free.



But there are instances where, after the lapse of many hours or several days, the sunken whale again rises, more buoyant than in life.



But the reason of this is obvious.



Gases are generated in him; he swells to a prodigious magnitude; becomes a sort of animal balloon.



A line-of-battle ship could hardly keep him under then.



In the Shore Whaling, on soundings, among the Bays of New Zealand, when a Right Whale gives token of sinking, they fasten buoys to him, with plenty of rope; so that when the body has gone down, they know where to look for it when it shall have ascended again.



It was not long after the sinking of the body that a cry was heard from the Pequod's mast-heads, announcing that the Jungfrau was again lowering her boats; though the only spout in sight was that of a Fin-Back, belonging to the species of uncapturable whales, because of its incredible power of swimming.



Nevertheless, the Fin-Back's spout is so similar to the Sperm Whale's, that by unskilful fishermen it is often mistaken for it.



And consequently Derick and all his host were now in valiant chase of this unneighbourable brute.



The Virgin crowding all sail, made after her four young keels, and thus they all disappeared far to leeward, still in bold, hopeful chase.



Oh!



many are the Fin-Backs, and many are the Dericks, my friend.



## CHAPTER 82



# The Honour And Glory Of Whaling



There are some enterprises in which a careful disorderliness is the true method.



The more I dive into this matter of whaling, and push my researches up to the very spring-head of it so much the more am I impressed with its great honourableness and antiquity; and especially when I find so many great demi-gods and heroes, prophets of all sorts, who one way or other have shed distinction upon it, I am transported with the reflection that I myself belong, though but subordinately, to so emblazoned a fraternity.



The gallant Perseus, a son of Jupiter, was the first whalerman; and to the eternal honour of our calling be it said, that the first whale attacked by our brotherhood was not killed with any sordid intent.



Those were the knightly days of our profession, when we only bore arms to succor the distressed, and not to fill men's lamp-feeders.



Every one knows the fine story of Perseus and Andromeda; how the lovely Andromeda, the daughter of a king, was tied to a rock on the sea-coast, and as Leviathan was in the very act of carrying her off, Perseus, the prince of whalermen, intrepidly advancing, harpooned the monster, and delivered and married the maid.



It was an admirable artistic exploit, rarely achieved by the best harpooneers of the present day; inasmuch as this Leviathan was slain at the very first dart.



And let no man doubt this Arkite story; for in the ancient Joppa, now Jaffa, on the Syrian coast, in one of the Pagan temples, there stood for many ages the vast skeleton of a whale, which the city's legends and all the inhabitants asserted to be the identical bones of the monster that Perseus slew.



When the Romans took Joppa, the same skeleton was carried to Italy in triumph.



What seems most singular and suggestively important in this story, is this: it was from Joppa that Jonah set sail.



Akin to the adventure of Perseus and Andromeda--indeed, by some supposed to be indirectly derived from it--is that famous story of St. George and the Dragon; which dragon I maintain to have been a whale; for in many old chronicles whales and dragons are strangely jumbled together, and often stand for each other.



"Thou art as a lion of the waters, and as a dragon of the sea," saith Ezekiel; hereby, plainly meaning a whale; in truth, some versions of the Bible use that word itself.



Besides, it would much subtract from the glory of the exploit had St. George but encountered a crawling reptile of the land, instead of doing battle with the great monster of the deep.



Any man may kill a snake, but only a Perseus, a St. George, a Coffin, have the heart in them to march boldly up to a whale.



Let not the modern paintings of this scene mislead us; for though the creature encountered by that valiant whaleman of old is vaguely represented of a griffin-like shape, and though the battle is depicted on land and the saint on horseback, yet considering the great ignorance of those times, when the true form of the whale was unknown to artists; and considering that as in Perseus' case, St. George's whale might have crawled up out of the sea on the beach; and considering that the animal ridden by St. George might have been only a large seal, or sea-horse; bearing all this in mind, it will not appear altogether incompatible with the sacred legend and the ancientest draughts of the scene, to hold this so-called dragon no other than the great Leviathan himself.



In fact, placed before the strict and piercing truth, this whole story will fare like that fish, flesh, and fowl idol of the Philistines, Dagon by name; who being planted before the ark of Israel, his horse's head and both the palms of his hands fell off from him, and only the stump or fishy part of him remained.



Thus, then, one of our own noble stamp, even a whaleman, is the tutelary guardian of England; and by good rights, we harpooners of Nantucket should be enrolled in the most noble order of St. George.



And therefore, let not the knights of that honourable company (none of whom, I venture to say, have ever had to do with a whale like their great patron), let them never eye a Nantucketer with disdain, since even in our woollen frocks and tarred trowsers we are much better entitled to St. George's decoration than they.



Whether to admit Hercules among us or not, concerning this I long remained dubious: for though according to the Greek mythologies, that antique Crockett and Kit Carson--that brawny doer of rejoicing good deeds, was swallowed down and thrown up by a whale; still, whether that strictly makes a whaleman of him, that might be mooted.



It nowhere appears that he ever actually harpooned his fish, unless, indeed, from the inside.



Nevertheless, he may be deemed a sort of involuntary whaleman; at any rate the whale caught him, if he did not the whale.



I claim him for one of our clan.



But, by the best contradictory authorities, this Grecian story of Hercules and the whale is considered to be derived from the still more ancient Hebrew story of Jonah and the whale; and vice versa; certainly they are very similar.





## CHAPTER 83



# Jonah Historically Regarded



Reference was made to the historical story of Jonah and the whale in the preceding chapter.



Now some Nantucketers rather distrust this historical story of Jonah and the whale.



But then there were some sceptical Greeks and Romans, who, standing out from the orthodox pagans of their times, equally doubted the story of Hercules and the whale, and Arion and the dolphin; and yet their doubting those traditions did not make those traditions one whit the less facts, for all that.



One old Sag-Harbor whaleman's chief reason for questioning the Hebrew story was this:--He had one of those quaint old-fashioned Bibles, embellished with curious, unscientific plates; one of which represented Jonah's whale with two spouts in his head--a peculiarity only true with respect to a species of the Leviathan (the Right Whale, and the varieties of that order), concerning which the fishermen have this saying, "A penny roll would choke him"; his swallow is so very small.



But, to this, Bishop Jebb's anticipative answer is ready.



It is not necessary, hints the Bishop, that we consider Jonah as tombed in the whale's belly, but as temporarily lodged in some part of his mouth.



And this seems reasonable enough in the good Bishop.



For truly, the Right Whale's mouth would accommodate a couple of whist-tables, and comfortably seat all the players.



Possibly, too, Jonah might have ensconced himself in a hollow tooth; but, on second thoughts, the Right Whale is toothless.



Another reason which Sag-Harbor (he went by that name) urged for his want of faith in this matter of the prophet, was something obscurely in reference to his incarcerated body and the whale's gastric juices.





And so it was.



Besides, to this day, the highly enlightened Turks devoutly believe in the historical story of Jonah.



And some three centuries ago, an English traveller in old Harris's Voyages, speaks of a Turkish Mosque built in honour of Jonah, in which Mosque was a miraculous lamp that burnt without any oil.

# CHAPTER 84



# Pitchpoling



To make them run easily and swiftly, the axles of carriages are anointed; and for much the same purpose, some whalers perform an analogous operation upon their boat; they grease the bottom.



Nor is it to be doubted that as such a procedure can do no harm, it may possibly be of no contemptible advantage; considering that oil and water are hostile; that oil is a sliding thing, and that the object in view is to make the boat slide bravely.



Queequeg believed strongly in anointing his boat, and one morning not long after the German ship Jungfrau disappeared, took more than customary pains in that occupation; crawling under its bottom, where it hung over the side, and rubbing in the unctuousness as though diligently seeking to insure a crop of hair from the craft's bald keel.



He seemed to be working in obedience to some particular presentiment.



Nor did it remain unwarranted by the event.



Towards noon whales were raised; but so soon as the ship sailed down to them, they turned and fled with swift precipitancy; a disordered flight, as of Cleopatra's barges from Actium.



Nevertheless, the boats pursued, and Stubb's was foremost.



By great exertion, Tashtego at last succeeded in planting one iron; but the stricken whale, without at all sounding, still continued his horizontal flight, with added fleetness.



Such unintermitted strainings upon the planted iron must sooner or later inevitably extract it.



It became imperative to lance the flying whale, or be content to lose him.



But to haul the boat up to his flank was impossible, he swam so fast and furious.



What then remained?



Of all the wondrous devices and dexterities, the sleights of hand and countless subtleties, to which the veteran whaleman is so often forced, none exceed that fine manoeuvre with the lance called pitchpoling.



Small sword, or broad sword, in all its exercises boasts nothing like it.



It is only indispensable with an inveterate running whale; its grand fact and feature is the wonderful distance to which the long lance is accurately darted from a violently rocking, jerking boat, under extreme headway.



Steel and wood included, the entire spear is some ten or twelve feet in length; the staff is much slighter than that of the harpoon, and also of a lighter material--pine.



It is furnished with a small rope called a warp, of considerable length, by which it can be hauled back to the hand after darting.



But before going further, it is important to mention here, that though the harpoon may be pitchpoled in the same way with the lance, yet it is seldom done; and when done, is still less frequently successful, on account of the greater weight and inferior length of the harpoon as compared with the lance, which in effect become serious drawbacks.



As a general thing, therefore, you must first get fast to a whale, before any pitchpoling comes into play.



Look now at Stubb; a man who from his humorous, deliberate coolness and equanimity in the direst emergencies, was specially qualified to excel in pitchpoling.



Look at him; he stands upright in the tossed bow of the flying boat; wrapt in fleecy foam, the towing whale is forty feet ahead.



Handling the long lance lightly, glancing twice or thrice along its length to see if it be exactly straight, Stubb whistlingly gathers up the coil of the warp in one hand, so as to secure its free end in his grasp, leaving the rest unobstructed.



Then holding the lance full before his waistband's middle, he levels it at the whale; when, covering him with it, he steadily depresses the butt-end in his hand, thereby elevating the point till the weapon stands fairly balanced upon his palm, fifteen feet in the air.



He minds you somewhat of a juggler, balancing a long staff on his chin.



Next moment with a rapid, nameless impulse, in a superb lofty arch the bright steel spans the foaming distance, and quivers in the life spot of the whale.



Instead of sparkling water, he now spouts red blood.



"That drove the spigot out of him!"



cried Stubb.



"'Tis July's immortal Fourth; all fountains must run wine today!



Would now, it were old Orleans whiskey, or old Ohio, or unspeakable old Monongahela!



Then, Tashtego, lad, I'd have ye hold a canakin to the jet, and we'd drink round it!



Yea, verily, hearts alive, we'd brew choice punch in the spread of his spout-hole there, and from that live punch-bowl quaff the living stuff."



Again and again to such gamesome talk, the dexterous dart is repeated, the spear returning to its master like a greyhound held in skilful leash.



The agonized whale goes into his flurry; the tow-line is slackened, and the pitchpoler dropping astern, folds his hands, and mutely watches the monster die.



## CHAPTER 85



# The Fountain



That for six thousand years--and no one knows how many millions of ages before--the great whales should have been spouting all over the sea, and sprinkling and mistifying the gardens of the deep, as with so many sprinkling or mistifying pots; and that for some centuries back, thousands of hunters should have been close by the fountain of the whale, watching these sprinklings and spoutings--that all this should be, and yet, that down to this blessed minute (fifteen and a quarter minutes past one o'clock P.



M.



of this sixteenth day of December, A.D. 1851), it should still remain a problem, whether these spoutings are, after all, really water, or nothing but vapour--this is surely a noteworthy thing.



Let us, then, look at this matter, along with some interesting items contingent.



Every one knows that by the peculiar cunning of their gills, the finny tribes in general breathe the air which at all times is combined with the element in which they swim; hence, a herring or a cod might live a century, and never once raise its head above the surface.



But owing to his marked internal structure which gives him regular lungs, like a human being's, the whale can only live by inhaling the disengaged air in the open atmosphere.



Wherefore the necessity for his periodical visits to the upper world.



But he cannot in any degree breathe through his mouth, for, in his ordinary attitude, the Sperm Whale's mouth is buried at least eight feet beneath the surface; and what is still more, his windpipe has no connexion with his mouth.



No, he breathes through his spiracle alone; and this is on the top of his head.





How obvious is it, too, that this necessity for the whale's rising exposes him to all the fatal hazards of the chase.



For not by hook or by net could this vast leviathan be caught, when sailing a thousand fathoms beneath the sunlight.



Not so much thy skill, then, O hunter, as the great necessities that strike the victory to thee!



In man, breathing is incessantly going on--one breath only serving for two or three pulsations; so that whatever other business he has to attend to, waking or sleeping, breathe he must, or die he will.



But the Sperm Whale only breathes about one seventh or Sunday of his time.



It has been said that the whale only breathes through his spout-hole; if it could truthfully be added that his spouts are mixed with water, then I opine we should be furnished with the reason why his sense of smell seems obliterated in him; for the only thing about him that at all answers to his nose is that identical spout-hole; and being so clogged with two elements, it could not be expected to have the power of smelling.



But owing to the mystery of the spout--whether it be water or whether it be vapour--no absolute certainty can as yet be arrived at on this head.



Sure it is, nevertheless, that the Sperm Whale has no proper olfactories.



But what does he want of them?



No roses, no violets, no Cologne-water in the sea.



Furthermore, as his windpipe solely opens into the tube of his spouting canal, and as that long canal--like the grand Erie Canal--is furnished with a sort of locks (that open and shut) for the downward retention of air or the upward exclusion of water, therefore the whale has no voice; unless you insult him by saying, that when he so strangely rumbles, he talks through his nose.



But then again, what has the whale to say?



Seldom have I known any profound being that had anything to say to this world, unless forced to stammer out something by way of getting a living.



Oh!



happy that the world is such an excellent listener!



Now, the spouting canal of the Sperm Whale, chiefly intended as it is for the conveyance of air, and for several feet laid along, horizontally, just beneath the upper surface of his head, and a little to one side; this curious canal is very much like a gas-pipe laid down in a city on one side of a street.



But the question returns whether this gas-pipe is also a water-pipe; in other words, whether the spout of the Sperm Whale is the mere vapour of the exhaled breath, or whether that exhaled breath is mixed with water taken in at the mouth, and discharged through the spiracle.



It is certain that the mouth indirectly communicates with the spouting canal; but it cannot be proved that this is for the purpose of discharging water through the spiracle.



Because the greatest necessity for so doing would seem to be, when in feeding he accidentally takes in water.



But the Sperm Whale's food is far beneath the surface, and there he cannot spout even if he would.



Besides, if you regard him very closely, and time him with your watch, you will find that when unmolested, there is an undeviating rhyme between the periods of his jets and the ordinary periods of respiration.



But why pester one with all this reasoning on the subject?



Speak out!



You have seen him spout; then declare what the spout is; can you not tell water from air?



My dear sir, in this world it is not so easy to settle these plain things.



I have ever found your plain things the knottiest of all.



And as for this whale spout, you might almost stand in it, and yet be undecided as to what it is precisely.



The central body of it is hidden in the snowy sparkling mist enveloping it; and how can you certainly tell whether any water falls from it, when, always, when you are close enough to a whale to get a close view of his spout, he is in a prodigious commotion, the water cascading all around him.



And if at such times you should think that you really perceived drops of moisture in the spout, how do you know that they are not merely condensed from its vapour; or how do you know that they are not those identical drops superficially lodged in the spout-hole fissure, which is countersunk into the summit of the whale's head?



For even when tranquilly swimming through the mid-day sea in a calm, with his elevated hump sun-dried as a dromedary's in the desert; even then, the whale always carries a small basin of water on his head, as under a blazing sun you will sometimes see a cavity in a rock filled up with rain.



Nor is it at all prudent for the hunter to be over curious touching the precise nature of the whale spout.



It will not do for him to be peering into it, and putting his face in it.



You cannot go with your pitcher to this fountain and fill it, and bring it away.



For even when coming into slight contact with the outer, vapoury shreds of the jet, which will often happen, your skin will feverishly smart, from the acridness of the thing so touching it.



And I know one, who coming into still closer contact with the spout, whether with some scientific object in view, or otherwise, I cannot say, the skin peeled off from his cheek and arm.



Wherefore, among whalemens, the spout is deemed poisonous; they try to evade it.



Another thing; I have heard it said, and I do not much doubt it, that if the jet is fairly spouted into your eyes, it will blind you.



The wisest thing the investigator can do then, it seems to me, is to let this deadly spout alone.



Still, we can hypothesize, even if we cannot prove and establish.



My hypothesis is this: that the spout is nothing but mist.



And besides other reasons, to this conclusion I am impelled, by considerations touching the great inherent dignity and sublimity of the Sperm Whale; I account him no common, shallow being, inasmuch as it is an undisputed fact that he is never found on soundings, or near shores; all other whales sometimes are.



He is both ponderous and profound.



And I am convinced that from the heads of all ponderous profound beings, such as Plato, Pyrrho, the Devil, Jupiter, Dante, and so on, there always goes up a certain semi-visible steam, while in the act of thinking deep thoughts.



While composing a little treatise on Eternity, I had the curiosity to place a mirror before me; and ere long saw reflected there, a curious involved worming and undulation in the atmosphere over my head.



The invariable moisture of my hair, while plunged in deep thought, after six cups of hot tea in my thin shingled attic, of an August noon; this seems an additional argument for the above supposition.



And how nobly it raises our conceit of the mighty, misty monster, to behold him solemnly sailing through a calm tropical sea; his vast, mild head overhung by a canopy of vapour, engendered by his incommunicable contemplations, and that vapour--as you will sometimes see it--glorified by a rainbow, as if Heaven itself had put its seal upon his thoughts.



For, d'ye see, rainbows do not visit the clear air; they only irradiate vapour.



And so, through all the thick mists of the dim doubts in my mind, divine intuitions now and then shoot, enkindling my fog with a heavenly ray.



And for this I thank God; for all have doubts; many deny; but doubts or denials, few along with them, have intuitions.



Doubts of all things earthly, and intuitions of some things heavenly; this combination makes neither believer nor infidel, but makes a man who regards them both with equal eye.



## CHAPTER 86



# The Tail



Other poets have warbled the praises of the soft eye of the antelope, and the lovely plumage of the bird that never alights; less celestial, I celebrate a tail.



Reckoning the largest sized Sperm Whale's tail to begin at that point of the trunk where it tapers to about the girth of a man, it comprises upon its upper surface alone, an area of at least fifty square feet.



The compact round body of its root expands into two broad, firm, flat palms or flukes, gradually shoaling away to less than an inch in thickness.



At the crotch or junction, these flukes slightly overlap, then sideways recede from each other like wings, leaving a wide vacancy between.



In no living thing are the lines of beauty more exquisitely defined than in the crescentic borders of these flukes.



At its utmost expansion in the full grown whale, the tail will considerably exceed twenty feet across.



The entire member seems a dense webbed bed of welded sinews; but cut into it, and you find that three distinct strata compose it:--upper, middle, and lower.



The fibres in the upper and lower layers, are long and horizontal; those of the middle one, very short, and running crosswise between the outside layers.



This triune structure, as much as anything else, imparts power to the tail.

To the student of old Roman walls, the middle layer will furnish a curious parallel to the thin course of tiles always alternating with the stone in those wonderful relics of the antique, and which undoubtedly contribute so much to the great strength of the masonry.







Fourth: Stealing unawares upon the whale in the fancied security of the middle of solitary seas, you find him unbent from the vast corpulence of his dignity, and kitten-like, he plays on the ocean as if it were a hearth.



But still you see his power in his play.



The broad palms of his tail are flirtd high into the air; then smiting the surface, the thunderous concussion resounds for miles.



You would almost think a great gun had been discharged; and if you noticed the light wreath of vapour from the spiracle at his other extremity, you would think that that was the smoke from the touch-hole.



Fifth: As in the ordinary floating posture of the leviathan the flukes lie considerably below the level of his back, they are then completely out of sight beneath the surface; but when he is about to plunge into the deeps, his entire flukes with at least thirty feet of his body are tossed erect in the air, and so remain vibrating a moment, till they downwards shoot out of view.



Excepting the sublime BREACH--somewhere else to be described--this peaking of the whale's flukes is perhaps the grandest sight to be seen in all animated nature.



Out of the bottomless profundities the gigantic tail seems spasmodically snatching at the highest heaven.



So in dreams, have I seen majestic Satan thrusting forth his tormented colossal claw from the flame Baltic of Hell.



But in gazing at such scenes, it is all in all what mood you are in; if in the Dantean, the devils will occur to you; if in that of Isaiah, the archangels.



Standing at the mast-head of my ship during a sunrise that crimsoned sky and sea, I once saw a large herd of whales in the east, all heading towards the sun, and for a moment vibrating in concert with peaked flukes.



As it seemed to me at the time, such a grand embodiment of adoration of the gods was never beheld, even in Persia, the home of the fire worshippers.



As Ptolemy Philopater testified of the African elephant, I then testified of the whale, pronouncing him the most devout of all beings.



For according to King Juba, the military elephants of antiquity often hailed the morning with their trunks uplifted in the profoundest silence.



The chance comparison in this chapter, between the whale and the elephant, so far as some aspects of the tail of the one and the trunk of the other are concerned, should not tend to place those two opposite organs on an equality, much less the creatures to which they respectively belong.



For as the mightiest elephant is but a terrier to Leviathan, so, compared with Leviathan's tail, his trunk is but the stalk of a lily.







Though by the repeated bloody chastisements they have received at the hands of European cruisers, the audacity of these corsairs has of late been somewhat repressed; yet, even at the present day, we occasionally hear of English and American vessels, which, in those waters, have been remorselessly boarded and pillaged.



With a fair, fresh wind, the Pequod was now drawing nigh to these straits; Ahab purposing to pass through them into the Javan sea, and thence, cruising northwards, over waters known to be frequented here and there by the Sperm Whale, sweep inshore by the Philippine Islands, and gain the far coast of Japan, in time for the great whaling season there.



By these means, the circumnavigating Pequod would sweep almost all the known Sperm Whale cruising grounds of the world, previous to descending upon the Line in the Pacific; where Ahab, though everywhere else foiled in his pursuit, firmly counted upon giving battle to Moby Dick, in the sea he was most known to frequent; and at a season when he might most reasonably be presumed to be haunting it.



But how now?



in this zoned quest, does Ahab touch no land?



does his crew drink air?



Surely, he will stop for water.



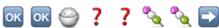
Nay.



For a long time, now, the circus-running sun has raced within his fiery ring, and needs no sustenance but what's in himself.



So Ahab.



Mark this, too, in the whaler.



While other hulls are loaded down with alien stuff, to be transferred to foreign wharves; the world-wandering whale-ship carries no cargo but herself and crew, their weapons and their wants.



She has a whole lake's contents bottled in her ample hold.



She is ballasted with utilities; not altogether with unusable pig-lead and kentledge.



She carries years' water in her.



Clear old prime Nantucket water; which, when three years afloat, the Nantucketer, in the Pacific, prefers to drink before the brackish fluid, but yesterday rafted off in casks, from the Peruvian or Indian streams.





If the wind only held, little doubt had they, that chased through these Straits of Sunda, the vast host would only deploy into the Oriental seas to witness the capture of not a few of their number.



And who could tell whether, in that congregated caravan, Moby Dick himself might not temporarily be swimming, like the worshipped white-elephant in the coronation procession of the Siamese!



So with stun-sail piled on stun-sail, we sailed along, driving these leviathans before us; when, of a sudden, the voice of Tashtego was heard, loudly directing attention to something in our wake.



Corresponding to the crescent in our van, we beheld another in our rear.



It seemed formed of detached white vapours, rising and falling something like the spouts of the whales; only they did not so completely come and go; for they constantly hovered, without finally disappearing.



Levelling his glass at this sight, Ahab quickly revolved in his pivot-hole, crying, "Aloft there, and rig whips and buckets to wet the sails;--Malays, sir, and after us!"



As if too long lurking behind the headlands, till the Pequod should fairly have entered the straits, these rascally Asiatics were now in hot pursuit, to make up for their over-cautious delay.



But when the swift Pequod, with a fresh leading wind, was herself in hot chase; how very kind of these tawny philanthropists to assist in speeding her on to her own chosen pursuit,--mere riding-whips and rowels to her, that they were.



As with glass under arm, Ahab to-and-fro paced the deck; in his forward turn beholding the monsters he chased, and in the after one the bloodthirsty pirates chasing him; some such fancy as the above seemed his.



And when he glanced upon the green walls of the watery defile in which the ship was then sailing, and bethought him that through that gate lay the route to his vengeance, and beheld, how that through that same gate he was now both chasing and being chased to his deadly end; and not only that, but a herd of remorseless wild pirates and inhuman atheistical devils were infernally cheering him on with their curses;--when all these conceits had passed through his brain, Ahab's brow was left gaunt and ribbed, like the black sand beach after some stormy tide has been gnawing it, without being able to drag the firm thing from its place.



But thoughts like these troubled very few of the reckless crew; and when, after steadily dropping and dropping the pirates astern, the Pequod at last shot by the vivid green Cockatoo Point on the Sumatra side, emerging at last upon the broad waters beyond; then, the harpooners seemed more to grieve that the swift whales had been gaining upon the ship, than to rejoice that the ship had so victoriously gained upon the Malays.



But still driving on in the wake of the whales, at length they seemed abating their speed; gradually the ship neared them; and the wind now dying away, word was passed to spring to the boats.



But no sooner did the herd, by some presumed wonderful instinct of the Sperm Whale, become notified of the three keels that were after them,--though as yet a mile in their rear,--than they rallied again, and forming in close ranks and battalions, so that their spouts all looked like flashing lines of stacked bayonets, moved on with redoubled velocity.





As, blind and deaf, the whale plunged forward, as if by sheer power of speed to rid himself of the iron leech that had fastened to him; as we thus tore a white gash in the sea, on all sides menaced as we flew, by the crazed creatures to and fro rushing about us; our beset boat was like a ship mobbed by ice-isles in a tempest, and striving to steer through their complicated channels and straits, knowing not at what moment it may be locked in and crushed.



But not a bit daunted, Queequeg steered us manfully; now sheering off from this monster directly across our route in advance; now edging away from that, whose colossal flukes were suspended overhead, while all the time, Starbuck stood up in the bows, lance in hand, pricking out of our way whatever whales he could reach by short darts, for there was no time to make long ones.



Nor were the oarsmen quite idle, though their wonted duty was now altogether dispensed with.



They chiefly attended to the shouting part of the business.



"Out of the way, Commodore!"



cried one, to a great dromedary that of a sudden rose bodily to the surface, and for an instant threatened to swamp us.



"Hard down with your tail, there!"



cried a second to another, which, close to our gunwale, seemed calmly cooling himself with his own fan-like extremity.



All whaleboats carry certain curious contrivances, originally invented by the Nantucket Indians, called druggs.



Two thick squares of wood of equal size are stoutly clenched together, so that they cross each other's grain at right angles; a line of considerable length is then attached to the middle of this block, and the other end of the line being looped, it can in a moment be fastened to a harpoon.



It is chiefly among gallied whales that this drugg is used.



For then, more whales are close round you than you can possibly chase at one time.



But sperm whales are not every day encountered; while you may, then, you must kill all you can.



And if you cannot kill them all at once, you must wing them, so that they can be afterwards killed at your leisure.



Hence it is, that at times like these the drugg, comes into requisition.



Our boat was furnished with three of them.



The first and second were successfully darted, and we saw the whales staggeringly running off, fettered by the enormous sidelong resistance of the towing drugg.



They were cramped like malefactors with the chain and ball.



But upon flinging the third, in the act of tossing overboard the clumsy wooden block, it caught under one of the seats of the boat, and in an instant tore it out and carried it away, dropping the oarsman in the boat's bottom as the seat slid from under him.



On both sides the sea came in at the wounded planks, but we stuffed two or three drawers and shirts in, and so stopped the leaks for the time.



It had been next to impossible to dart these drugged-harpoons, were it not that as we advanced into the herd, our whale's way greatly diminished; moreover, that as we went still further and further from the circumference of commotion, the direful disorders seemed waning.



So that when at last the jerking harpoon drew out, and the towing whale sideways vanished; then, with the tapering force of his parting momentum, we glided between two whales into the innermost heart of the shoal, as if from some mountain torrent we had slid into a serene valley lake.



Here the storms in the roaring glens between the outermost whales, were heard but not felt.



In this central expanse the sea presented that smooth satin-like surface, called a sleek, produced by the subtle moisture thrown off by the whale in his more quiet moods.



Yes, we were now in that enchanted calm which they say lurks at the heart of every commotion.



And still in the distracted distance we beheld the tumults of the outer concentric circles, and saw successive pods of whales, eight or ten in each, swiftly going round and round, like multiplied spans of horses in a ring; and so closely shoulder to shoulder, that a Titanic circus-rider might easily have over-arched the middle ones, and so have gone round on their backs.



Owing to the density of the crowd of reposing whales, more immediately surrounding the embayed axis of the herd, no possible chance of escape was at present afforded us.



We must watch for a breach in the living wall that hemmed us in; the wall that had only admitted us in order to shut us up.



Keeping at the centre of the lake, we were occasionally visited by small tame cows and calves; the women and children of this routed host.



Now, inclusive of the occasional wide intervals between the revolving outer circles, and inclusive of the spaces between the various pods in any one of those circles, the entire area at this juncture, embraced by the whole multitude, must have contained at least two or three square miles.



At any rate--though indeed such a test at such a time might be deceptive--spoutings might be discovered from our low boat that seemed playing up almost from the rim of the horizon.



I mention this circumstance, because, as if the cows and calves had been purposely locked up in this innermost fold; and as if the wide extent of the herd had hitherto prevented them from learning the precise cause of its stopping; or, possibly, being so young, unsophisticated, and every way innocent and inexperienced; however it may have been, these smaller whales--now and then visiting our becalmed boat from the margin of the lake--evinced a wondrous fearlessness and confidence, or else a still becharmed panic which it was impossible not to marvel at.



Like household dogs they came snuffing round us, right up to our gunwales, and touching them; till it almost seemed that some spell had suddenly domesticated them.



Queequeg patted their foreheads; Starbuck scratched their backs with his lance; but fearful of the consequences, for the time refrained from darting it.



But far beneath this wondrous world upon the surface, another and still stranger world met our eyes as we gazed over the side.



For, suspended in those watery vaults, floated the forms of the nursing mothers of the whales, and those that by their enormous girth seemed shortly to become mothers.



The lake, as I have hinted, was to a considerable depth exceedingly transparent; and as human infants while suckling will calmly and fixedly gaze away from the breast, as if leading two different lives at the time; and while yet drawing mortal nourishment, be still spiritually feasting upon some unearthly reminiscence;--even so did the young of these whales seem looking up towards us, but not at us, as if we were but a bit of Gulfweed in their new-born sight.



Floating on their sides, the mothers also seemed quietly eyeing us.



One of these little infants, that from certain queer tokens seemed hardly a day old, might have measured some fourteen feet in length, and some six feet in girth.



He was a little frisky; though as yet his body seemed scarce yet recovered from that irksome position it had so lately occupied in the maternal reticule; where, tail to head, and all ready for the final spring, the unborn whale lies bent like a Tartar's bow.



The delicate side-fins, and the palms of his flukes, still freshly retained the plaited crumpled appearance of a baby's ears newly arrived from foreign parts.



"Line!



line!"



cried Queequeg, looking over the gunwale; "him fast!









The waif is a pennoned pole, two or three of which are carried by every boat; and which, when additional game is at hand, are inserted upright into the floating body of a dead whale, both to mark its place on the sea, and also as token of prior possession, should the boats of any other ship draw near.



The result of this lowering was somewhat illustrative of that sagacious saying in the Fishery,--the more whales the less fish.



Of all the drugged whales only one was captured.



The rest contrived to escape for the time, but only to be taken, as will hereafter be seen, by some other craft than the Pequod.













A Fast-Fish belongs to the party fast to it.



II.



A Loose-Fish is fair game for anybody who can soonest catch it.



But what plays the mischief with this masterly code is the admirable brevity of it, which necessitates a vast volume of commentaries to expound it.



First: What is a Fast-Fish?



Alive or dead a fish is technically fast, when it is connected with an occupied ship or boat, by any medium at all controllable by the occupant or occupants,--a mast, an oar, a nine-inch cable, a telegraph wire, or a strand of cobweb, it is all the same.



Likewise a fish is technically fast when it bears a waif, or any other recognised symbol of possession; so long as the party waiving it plainly evince their ability at any time to take it alongside, as well as their intention so to do.



These are scientific commentaries; but the commentaries of the whalemens themselves sometimes consist in hard words and harder knocks--the Coke-upon-Littleton of the fist.



True, among the more upright and honourable whalemens allowances are always made for peculiar cases, where it would be an outrageous moral injustice for one party to claim possession of a whale previously chased or killed by another party.



But others are by no means so scrupulous.



Some fifty years ago there was a curious case of whale-trover litigated in England, wherein the plaintiffs set forth that after a hard chase of a whale in the Northern seas; and when indeed they (the plaintiffs) had succeeded in harpooning the fish; they were at last, through peril of their lives, obliged to forsake not only their lines, but their boat itself.



Ultimately the defendants (the crew of another ship) came up with the whale, struck, killed, seized, and finally appropriated it before the very eyes of the plaintiffs.



And when those defendants were remonstrated with, their captain snapped his fingers in the plaintiffs' teeth, and assured them that by way of doxology to the deed he had done, he would now retain their line, harpoons, and boat, which had remained attached to the whale at the time of the seizure.



Wherefore the plaintiffs now sued for the recovery of the value of their whale, line, harpoons, and boat.



Mr. Erskine was counsel for the defendants; Lord Ellenborough was the judge.







And what are you, reader, but a Loose-Fish and a Fast-Fish, too?



# CHAPTER 90



## Heads Or Tails



"De balena vero sufficit, si rex habeat caput, et regina caudam." BRACTON, L. 3, C. 3.



Latin from the books of the Laws of England, which taken along with the context, means, that of all whales captured by anybody on the coast of that land, the King, as Honourary Grand Harpooneer, must have the head, and the Queen be respectfully presented with the tail.



A division which, in the whale, is much like halving an apple; there is no intermediate remainder.



Now as this law, under a modified form, is to this day in force in England; and as it offers in various respects a strange anomaly touching the general law of Fast and Loose-Fish, it is here treated of in a separate chapter, on the same courteous principle that prompts the English railways to be at the expense of a separate car, specially reserved for the accommodation of royalty.



In the first place, in curious proof of the fact that the above-mentioned law is still in force, I proceed to lay before you a circumstance that happened within the last two years.



It seems that some honest mariners of Dover, or Sandwich, or some one of the Cinque Ports, had after a hard chase succeeded in killing and beaching a fine whale which they had originally descried afar off from the shore.



Now the Cinque Ports are partially or somehow under the jurisdiction of a sort of policeman or beadle, called a Lord Warden.



Holding the office directly from the crown, I believe, all the royal emoluments incident to the Cinque Port territories become by assignment his.



By some writers this office is called a sinecure.



But not so.







An allegorical meaning may lurk here.



There are two royal fish so styled by the English law writers--the whale and the sturgeon; both royal property under certain limitations, and nominally supplying the tenth branch of the crown's ordinary revenue.



I know not that any other author has hinted of the matter; but by inference it seems to me that the sturgeon must be divided in the same way as the whale, the King receiving the highly dense and elastic head peculiar to that fish, which, symbolically regarded, may possibly be humorously grounded upon some presumed congeniality.



And thus there seems a reason in all things, even in law.



















## CHAPTER 92



# Ambergris



Now this ambergris is a very curious substance, and so important as an article of commerce, that in 1791 a certain Nantucket-born Captain Coffin was examined at the bar of the English House of Commons on that subject.



For at that time, and indeed until a comparatively late day, the precise origin of ambergris remained, like amber itself, a problem to the learned.



Though the word ambergris is but the French compound for grey amber, yet the two substances are quite distinct.



For amber, though at times found on the sea-coast, is also dug up in some far inland soils, whereas ambergris is never found except upon the sea.



Besides, amber is a hard, transparent, brittle, odorless substance, used for mouth-pieces to pipes, for beads and ornaments; but ambergris is soft, waxy, and so highly fragrant and spicy, that it is largely used in perfumery, in pastiles, precious candles, hair-powders, and pomatum.



The Turks use it in cooking, and also carry it to Mecca, for the same purpose that frankincense is carried to St. Peter's in Rome.



Some wine merchants drop a few grains into claret, to flavor it.



Who would think, then, that such fine ladies and gentlemen should regale themselves with an essence found in the inglorious bowels of a sick whale!



Yet so it is.



By some, ambergris is supposed to be the cause, and by others the effect, of the dyspepsia in the whale.



How to cure such a dyspepsia it were hard to say, unless by administering three or four boat loads of Brandreth's pills, and then running out of harm's way, as laborers do in blasting rocks.



I have forgotten to say that there were found in this ambergris, certain hard, round, bony plates, which at first Stubb thought might be sailors' trowsers buttons; but it afterwards turned out that they were nothing more than pieces of small squid bones embalmed in that manner.



Now that the incorruption of this most fragrant ambergris should be found in the heart of such decay; is this nothing?



Bethink thee of that saying of St. Paul in Corinthians, about corruption and incorruption; how that we are sown in dishonour, but raised in glory.



And likewise call to mind that saying of Paracelsus about what it is that maketh the best musk.



Also forget not the strange fact that of all things of ill-savor, Cologne-water, in its rudimental manufacturing stages, is the worst.



I should like to conclude the chapter with the above appeal, but cannot, owing to my anxiety to repel a charge often made against whalers, and which, in the estimation of some already biased minds, might be considered as indirectly substantiated by what has been said of the Frenchman's two whales.



Elsewhere in this volume the slanderous aspersion has been disproved, that the vocation of whaling is throughout a slatternly, untidy business.



But there is another thing to rebut.



They hint that all whales always smell bad.



Now how did this odious stigma originate?



I opine, that it is plainly traceable to the first arrival of the Greenland whaling ships in London, more than two centuries ago.



Because those whalers did not then, and do not now, try out their oil at sea as the Southern ships have always done; but cutting up the fresh blubber in small bits, thrust it through the bung holes of large casks, and carry it home in that manner; the shortness of the season in those Icy Seas, and the sudden and violent storms to which they are exposed, forbidding any other course.



The consequence is, that upon breaking into the hold, and unloading one of these whale cemeteries, in the Greenland dock, a savor is given forth somewhat similar to that arising from excavating an old city grave-yard, for the foundations of a Lying-in-Hospital.



I partly surmise also, that this wicked charge against whalers may be likewise imputed to the existence on the coast of Greenland, in former times, of a Dutch village called Schmerenburgh or Smeerenberg, which latter name is the one used by the learned Fogo Von Slack, in his great work on Smells, a text-book on that subject.



As its name imports (smeer, fat; berg, to put up), this village was founded in order to afford a place for the blubber of the Dutch whale fleet to be tried out, without being taken home to Holland for that purpose.



It was a collection of furnaces, fat-kettles, and oil sheds; and when the works were in full operation certainly gave forth no very pleasant savor.



But all this is quite different with a South Sea Sperm Whaler; which in a voyage of four years perhaps, after completely filling her hold with oil, does not, perhaps, consume fifty days in the business of boiling out; and in the state that it is casked, the oil is nearly scentless.



The truth is, that living or dead, if but decently treated, whales as a species are by no means creatures of ill odor; nor can whalemens be recognised, as the people of the middle ages affected to detect a Jew in the company, by the nose.



Nor indeed can the whale possibly be otherwise than fragrant, when, as a general thing, he enjoys such high health; taking abundance of exercise; always out of doors; though, it is true, seldom in the open air.



I say, that the motion of a Sperm Whale's flukes above water dispenses a perfume, as when a musk-scented lady rustles her dress in a warm parlor.



What then shall I liken the Sperm Whale to for fragrance, considering his magnitude?



Must it not be to that famous elephant, with jewelled tusks, and redolent with myrrh, which was led out of an Indian town to do honour to Alexander the Great?



## CHAPTER 93



# The Castaway



It was but some few days after encountering the Frenchman, that a most significant event befell the most insignificant of the Pequod's crew; an event most lamentable; and which ended in providing the sometimes madly merry and predestinated craft with a living and ever accompanying prophecy of whatever shattered sequel might prove her own.



Now, in the whale ship, it is not every one that goes in the boats.



Some few hands are reserved called ship-keepers, whose province it is to work the vessel while the boats are pursuing the whale.



As a general thing, these ship-keepers are as hardy fellows as the men comprising the boats' crews.



But if there happen to be an unduly slender, clumsy, or timorous wight in the ship, that wight is certain to be made a ship-keeper.



It was so in the Pequod with the little negro Pippin by nick-name, Pip by abbreviation.



Poor Pip!



ye have heard of him before; ye must remember his tambourine on that dramatic midnight, so gloomy-jolly.



In outer aspect, Pip and Dough-Boy made a match, like a black pony and a white one, of equal developments, though of dissimilar colour, driven in one eccentric span.



But while hapless Dough-Boy was by nature dull and torpid in his intellects, Pip, though over tender-hearted, was at bottom very bright, with that pleasant, genial, jolly brightness peculiar to his tribe; a tribe, which ever enjoy all holidays and festivities with finer, freer relish than any other race.











## CHAPTER 94



# A Squeeze Of The Hand



That whale of Stubb's, so dearly purchased, was duly brought to the Pequod's side, where all those cutting and hoisting operations previously detailed, were regularly gone through, even to the baling of the Heidelberg Tun, or Case.



While some were occupied with this latter duty, others were employed in dragging away the larger tubs, so soon as filled with the sperm; and when the proper time arrived, this same sperm was carefully manipulated ere going to the try-works, of which anon.



It had cooled and crystallized to such a degree, that when, with several others, I sat down before a large Constantine's bath of it, I found it strangely concreted into lumps, here and there rolling about in the liquid part.



It was our business to squeeze these lumps back into fluid.



A sweet and unctuous duty!



No wonder that in old times this sperm was such a favourite cosmetic.



Such a clearer!

such a sweetener!



such a softener!



such a delicious molifier!



After having my hands in it for only a few minutes, my fingers felt like eels, and began, as it were, to serpentine and spiralise.



As I sat there at my ease, cross-legged on the deck; after the bitter exertion at the windlass; under a blue tranquil sky; the ship under indolent sail, and gliding so serenely along; as I bathed my hands among those soft, gentle globules of infiltrated tissues, woven almost within the hour; as they richly broke to my fingers, and discharged all their opulence, like fully ripe grapes their wine; as I snuffed up that uncontaminated aroma,--literally and truly, like the smell of spring violets; I declare to you, that for the time I lived as in a musky meadow; I forgot all about our horrible oath; in that inexpressible sperm, I washed my hands and my heart of it; I almost began to credit the old Paracelsan superstition that sperm is of rare virtue in allaying the heat of anger; while bathing in that bath, I felt divinely free from all ill-will, or petulance, or malice, of any sort whatsoever.



Squeeze!



squeeze!



squeeze!



all the morning long; I squeezed that sperm till I myself almost melted into it; I squeezed that sperm till a strange sort of insanity came over me; and I found myself unwittingly squeezing my co-laborers' hands in it, mistaking their hands for the gentle globules.



Such an abounding, affectionate, friendly, loving feeling did this avocation beget; that at last I was continually squeezing their hands, and looking up into their eyes sentimentally; as much as to say,--Oh!



my dear fellow beings, why should we longer cherish any social acerbities, or know the slightest ill-humor or envy!



Come; let us squeeze hands all round; nay, let us all squeeze ourselves into each other; let us squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk and sperm of kindness.



Would that I could keep squeezing that sperm for ever!



For now, since by many prolonged, repeated experiences, I have perceived that in all cases man must eventually lower, or at least shift, his conceit of attainable felicity; not placing it anywhere in the intellect or the fancy; but in the wife, the heart, the bed, the table, the saddle, the fireside, the country; now that I have perceived all this, I am ready to squeeze case eternally.



In thoughts of the visions of the night, I saw long rows of angels in paradise, each with his hands in a jar of spermaceti.



Now, while discoursing of sperm, it behooves to speak of other things akin to it, in the business of preparing the sperm whale for the try-works.



First comes white-horse, so called, which is obtained from the tapering part of the fish, and also from the thicker portions of his flukes.



It is tough with congealed tendons--a wad of muscle--but still contains some oil.



After being severed from the whale, the white-horse is first cut into portable oblongs ere going to the mincer.



They look much like blocks of Berkshire marble.



Plum-pudding is the term bestowed upon certain fragmentary parts of the whale's flesh, here and there adhering to the blanket of blubber, and often participating to a considerable degree in its unctuousness.



It is a most refreshing, convivial, beautiful object to behold.



As its name imports, it is of an exceedingly rich, mottled tint, with a bestreaked snowy and golden ground, dotted with spots of the deepest crimson and purple.



It is plums of rubies, in pictures of citron.



Spite of reason, it is hard to keep yourself from eating it.



I confess, that once I stole behind the foremast to try it.



It tasted something as I should conceive a royal cutlet from the thigh of Louis le Gros might have tasted, supposing him to have been killed the first day after the venison season, and that particular venison season contemporary with an unusually fine vintage of the vineyards of Champagne.



There is another substance, and a very singular one, which turns up in the course of this business, but which I feel it to be very puzzling adequately to describe.



It is called slobgollion; an appellation original with the whalemén, and even so is the nature of the substance.



It is an ineffably oozy, stringy affair, most frequently found in the tubs of sperm, after a prolonged squeezing, and subsequent decanting.



I hold it to be the wondrously thin, ruptured membranes of the case, coalescing.



Gurry, so called, is a term properly belonging to right whalemén, but sometimes incidentally used by the sperm fishermen.



It designates the dark, glutinous substance which is scraped off the back of the Greenland or right whale, and much of which covers the decks of those inferior souls who hunt that ignoble Leviathan.



Nippers.



Strictly this word is not indigenous to the whale's vocabulary.





## CHAPTER 95



# The Cassock



Had you stepped on board the Pequod at a certain juncture of this post-mortemizing of the whale; and had you strolled forward nigh the windlass, pretty sure am I that you would have scanned with no small curiosity a very strange, enigmatical object, which you would have seen there, lying along lengthwise in the lee scuppers.



Not the wondrous cistern in the whale's huge head; not the prodigy of his unhinged lower jaw; not the miracle of his symmetrical tail; none of these would so surprise you, as half a glimpse of that unaccountable cone,--longer than a Kentuckian is tall, nigh a foot in diameter at the base, and jet-black as Yojo, the ebony idol of Queequeg.



And an idol, indeed, it is; or, rather, in old times, its likeness was.



Such an idol as that found in the secret groves of Queen Maachah in Judea; and for worshipping which, King Asa, her son, did depose her, and destroyed the idol, and burnt it for an abomination at the brook Kedron, as darkly set forth in the 15th chapter of the First Book of Kings.



Look at the sailor, called the mincer, who now comes along, and assisted by two allies, heavily backs the grandissimus, as the mariners call it, and with bowed shoulders, staggers off with it as if he were a grenadier carrying a dead comrade from the field.



Extending it upon the forecassle deck, he now proceeds cylindrically to remove its dark pelt, as an African hunter the pelt of a boa.



This done he turns the pelt inside out, like a pantaloon leg; gives it a good stretching, so as almost to double its diameter; and at last hangs it, well spread, in the rigging, to dry.



Ere long, it is taken down; when removing some three feet of it, towards the pointed extremity, and then cutting two slits for arm-holes at the other end, he lengthwise slips himself bodily into it.



The mincer now stands before you invested in the full canonicals of his calling.



Immemorial to all his order, this investiture alone will adequately protect him, while employed in the peculiar functions of his office.



That office consists in mincing the horse-pieces of blubber for the pots; an operation which is conducted at a curious wooden horse, planted endwise against the bulwarks, and with a capacious tub beneath it, into which the minced pieces drop, fast as the sheets from a rapt orator's desk.



Arrayed in decent black; occupying a conspicuous pulpit; intent on bible leaves; what a candidate for an archbishopric, what a lad for a Pope were this mincer!



\* \*Bible leaves!



Bible leaves!



This is the invariable cry from the mates to the mincer.



It enjoins him to be careful, and cut his work into as thin slices as possible, inasmuch as by so doing the business of boiling out the oil is much accelerated, and its quantity considerably increased, besides perhaps improving it in quality.











thought I.



Lo!



in my brief sleep I had turned myself about, and was fronting the ship's stern, with my back to her prow and the compass.



In an instant I faced back, just in time to prevent the vessel from flying up into the wind, and very probably capsizing her.



How glad and how grateful the relief from this unnatural hallucination of the night, and the fatal contingency of being brought by the lee!



Look not too long in the face of the fire, O man!



Never dream with thy hand on the helm!



Turn not thy back to the compass; accept the first hint of the hitching tiller; believe not the artificial fire, when its redness makes all things look ghastly.



To-morrow, in the natural sun, the skies will be bright; those who glared like devils in the forking flames, the morn will show in far other, at least gentler, relief; the glorious, golden, glad sun, the only true lamp--all others but liars!



Nevertheless the sun hides not Virginia's Dismal Swamp, nor Rome's accursed Campagna, nor wide Sahara, nor all the millions of miles of deserts and of griefs beneath the moon.



The sun hides not the ocean, which is the dark side of this earth, and which is two thirds of this earth.



So, therefore, that mortal man who hath more of joy than sorrow in him, that mortal man cannot be true--not true, or undeveloped.



With books the same.



The truest of all men was the Man of Sorrows, and the truest of all books is Solomon's, and Ecclesiastes is the fine hammered steel of woe.



"All is vanity."



ALL.



This wilful world hath not got hold of unchristian Solomon's wisdom yet.



But he who dodges hospitals and jails, and walks fast crossing graveyards, and would rather talk of operas than hell; calls Cowper, Young, Pascal, Rousseau, poor devils all of sick men; and throughout a care-free lifetime swears by Rabelais as passing wise, and therefore jolly;--not that man is fitted to sit down on tomb-stones, and break the green damp mould with unfathomably wondrous Solomon.



But even Solomon, he says, "the man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain" (I.



E.



, even while living) "in the congregation of the dead."



Give not thyself up, then, to fire, lest it invert thee, deaden thee; as for the time it did me.



There is a wisdom that is woe; but there is a woe that is madness.



And there is a Catskill eagle in some souls that can alike dive down into the blackest gorges, and soar out of them again and become invisible in the sunny spaces.



And even if he for ever flies within the gorge, that gorge is in the mountains; so that even in his lowest swoop the mountain eagle is still higher than other birds upon the plain, even though they soar.

# CHAPTER 97



# The Lamp



Had you descended from the Pequod's try-works to the Pequod's forecastle, where the off duty watch were sleeping, for one single moment you would have almost thought you were standing in some illuminated shrine of canonized kings and counsellors.



There they lay in their triangular oaken vaults, each mariner a chiselled muteness; a score of lamps flashing upon his hooded eyes.



In merchantmen, oil for the sailor is more scarce than the milk of queens.



To dress in the dark, and eat in the dark, and stumble in darkness to his pallet, this is his usual lot.



But the whaleman, as he seeks the food of light, so he lives in light.



He makes his berth an Aladdin's lamp, and lays him down in it; so that in the pitchiest night the ship's black hull still houses an illumination.



See with what entire freedom the whaleman takes his handful of lamps--often but old bottles and vials, though--to the copper cooler at the try-works, and replenishes them there, as mugs of ale at a vat.



He burns, too, the purest of oil, in its unmanufactured, and, therefore, unvitiated state; a fluid unknown to solar, lunar, or astral contrivances ashore.



It is sweet as early grass butter in April.



He goes and hunts for his oil, so as to be sure of its freshness and genuineness, even as the traveller on the prairie hunts up his own supper of game.





But a day or two after, you look about you, and prick your ears in this self-same ship; and were it not for the tell-tale boats and try-works, you would all but swear you trod some silent merchant vessel, with a most scrupulously neat commander.



The unmanufactured sperm oil possesses a singularly cleansing virtue.



This is the reason why the decks never look so white as just after what they call an affair of oil.



Besides, from the ashes of the burned scraps of the whale, a potent lye is readily made; and whenever any adhesiveness from the back of the whale remains clinging to the side, that lye quickly exterminates it.



Hands go diligently along the bulwarks, and with buckets of water and rags restore them to their full tidiness.



The soot is brushed from the lower rigging.



All the numerous implements which have been in use are likewise faithfully cleansed and put away.



The great hatch is scrubbed and placed upon the try-works, completely hiding the pots; every cask is out of sight; all tackles are coiled in unseen nooks; and when by the combined and simultaneous industry of almost the entire ship's company, the whole of this conscientious duty is at last concluded, then the crew themselves proceed to their own ablutions; shift themselves from top to toe; and finally issue to the immaculate deck, fresh and all aglow, as bridegrooms new-leaped from out the daintiest Holland.



Now, with elated step, they pace the planks in twos and threes, and humorously discourse of parlors, sofas, carpets, and fine cambrics; propose to mat the deck; think of having hanging to the top; object not to taking tea by moonlight on the piazza of the forecastle.



To hint to such musked mariners of oil, and bone, and blubber, were little short of audacity.



They know not the thing you distantly allude to.



Away, and bring us napkins!



But mark: aloft there, at the three mast heads, stand three men intent on spying out more whales, which, if caught, infallibly will again soil the old oaken furniture, and drop at least one small grease-spot somewhere.



Yes; and many is the time, when, after the severest uninterrupted labors, which know no night; continuing straight through for ninety-six hours; when from the boat, where they have swelled their wrists with all day rowing on the Line,—they only step to the deck to carry vast chains, and heave the heavy windlass, and cut and slash, yea, and in their very sweatings to be smoked and burned anew by the combined fires of the equatorial sun and the equatorial try-works; when, on the heel of all this, they have finally bestirred themselves to cleanse the ship, and make a spotless dairy room of it; many is the time the poor fellows, just buttoning the necks of their clean frocks, are startled by the cry of "There she blows!"











Yet, oh, the great sun is no fixture; and if, at midnight, we would fain snatch some sweet solace from him, we gaze for him in vain!



This coin speaks wisely, mildly, truly, but still sadly to me.



I will quit it, lest Truth shake me falsely."



"There now's the old Mogul," soliloquized Stubb by the try-works, "he's been twiggig it; and there goes Starbuck from the same, and both with faces which I should say might be somewhere within nine fathoms long.



And all from looking at a piece of gold, which did I have it now on Negro Hill or in Corlaer's Hook, I'd not look at it very long ere spending it.



Humph!



in my poor, insignificant opinion, I regard this as queer.



I have seen doubloons before now in my voyagings; your doubloons of old Spain, your doubloons of Peru, your doubloons of Chili, your doubloons of Bolivia, your doubloons of Popayan; with plenty of gold moidores and pistoles, and joes, and half joes, and quarter joes.



What then should there be in this doubloon of the Equator that is so killing wonderful?



By Golconda!



let me read it once.



Halloa!



here's signs and wonders truly!



That, now, is what old Bowditch in his Epitome calls the zodiac, and what my almanac below calls ditto.



I'll get the almanac and as I have heard devils can be raised with Daboll's arithmetic, I'll try my hand at raising a meaning out of these queer curvicies here with the Massachusetts calendar.



Here's the book.



Let's see now.



Signs and wonders; and the sun, he's always among 'em.









What does he say, with that look of his?



Ah, only makes a sign to the sign and bows himself; there is a sun on the coin--fire worshipper, depend upon it.



Ho!



more and more.



This way comes Pip--poor boy!



would he had died, or I; he's half horrible to me.



He too has been watching all of these interpreters--myself included--and look now, he comes to read, with that unearthly idiot face.



Stand away again and hear him.



Hark!"



"I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look."



"Upon my soul, he's been studying Murray's Grammar!



Improving his mind, poor fellow!



But what's that he says now--hist!"



"I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look."



"Why, he's getting it by heart--hist!



again."



"I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look."



"Well, that's funny."



"And I, you, and he; and we, ye, and they, are all bats; and I'm a crow, especially when I stand a'top of this pine tree here.



Caw!



caw!



caw!



caw!



caw!



caw!



Ain't I a crow?



And where's the scare-crow?



There he stands; two bones stuck into a pair of old trowsers, and two more poked into the sleeves of an old jacket."



"Wonder if he means me?"



--complimentary!



--poor lad!



--I could go hang myself.



Any way, for the present, I'll quit Pip's vicinity.



I can stand the rest, for they have plain wits; but he's too crazy-witty for my sanity.



So, so, I leave him muttering."



"Here's the ship's navel, this doubloon here, and they are all on fire to unscrew it.



But, unscrew your navel, and what's the consequence?



Then again, if it stays here, that is ugly, too, for when aught's nailed to the mast it's a sign that things grow desperate.



Ha, ha!



















There would be great glory in killing him, I know that; and there is a ship-load of precious sperm in him, but, hark ye, he's best let alone; don't you think so, Captain?"



--glancing at the ivory leg.



"He is.



But he will still be hunted, for all that.



What is best let alone, that accursed thing is not always what least allures.



He's all a magnet!



How long since thou saw'st him last?



Which way heading?"



"Bless my soul, and curse the foul fiend's," cried Bunker, stoopingly walking round Ahab, and like a dog, strangely snuffing; "this man's blood--bring the thermometer!



--it's at the boiling point!



--his pulse makes these planks beat!



--sir!"



--taking a lancet from his pocket, and drawing near to Ahab's arm.



"Avast!"



roared Ahab, dashing him against the bulwarks--"Man the boat!



Which way heading?"



"Good God!"



cried the English Captain, to whom the question was put.



"What's the matter?"





# CHAPTER 101



## The Decanter



Ere the English ship fades from sight, be it set down here, that she hailed from London, and was named after the late Samuel Enderby, merchant of that city, the original of the famous whaling house of Enderby and Sons; a house which in my poor whaleman's opinion, comes not far behind the united royal houses of the Tudors and Bourbons, in point of real historical interest.



How long, prior to the year of our Lord 1775, this great whaling house was in existence, my numerous fish-documents do not make plain; but in that year (1775) it fitted out the first English ships that ever regularly hunted the Sperm Whale; though for some score of years previous (ever since 1726) our valiant Coffins and Maceys of Nantucket and the Vineyard had in large fleets pursued that Leviathan, but only in the North and South Atlantic: not elsewhere.



Be it distinctly recorded here, that the Nantucketers were the first among mankind to harpoon with civilized steel the great Sperm Whale; and that for half a century they were the only people of the whole globe who so harpooned him.



In 1778, a fine ship, the Amelia, fitted out for the express purpose, and at the sole charge of the vigorous Enderbys, boldly rounded Cape Horn, and was the first among the nations to lower a whale-boat of any sort in the great South Sea.



The voyage was a skilful and lucky one; and returning to her berth with her hold full of the precious sperm, the Amelia's example was soon followed by other ships, English and American, and thus the vast Sperm Whale grounds of the Pacific were thrown open.



But not content with this good deed, the indefatigable house again bestirred itself: Samuel and all his Sons--how many, their mother only knows--and under their immediate auspices, and partly, I think, at their expense, the British government was induced to send the sloop-of-war Rattler on a whaling voyage of discovery into the South Sea.



Commanded by a naval Post-Captain, the Rattler made a rattling voyage of it, and did some service; how much does not appear.



But this is not all.





I fancied that you could feel them, and roll them about in you after they were swallowed.



If you stooped over too far forward, you risked their pitching out of you like billiard-balls.



The bread--but that couldn't be helped; besides, it was an anti-scorbutic; in short, the bread contained the only fresh fare they had.



But the forecastle was not very light, and it was very easy to step over into a dark corner when you ate it.

But all in all, taking her from truck to helm, considering the dimensions of the cook's boilers, including his own live parchment boilers; fore and aft, I say, the Samuel Enderby was a jolly ship; of good fare and plenty; fine flip and strong; crack fellows all, and capital from boot heels to hat-band.



But why was it, think ye, that the Samuel Enderby, and some other English whalers I know of--not all though--were such famous, hospitable ships; that passed round the beef, and the bread, and the can, and the joke; and were not soon weary of eating, and drinking, and laughing?



I will tell you.



The abounding good cheer of these English whalers is matter for historical research.



Nor have I been at all sparing of historical whale research, when it has seemed needed.



The English were preceded in the whale fishery by the Hollanders, Zealanders, and Danes; from whom they derived many terms still extant in the fishery; and what is yet more, their fat old fashions, touching plenty to eat and drink.



For, as a general thing, the English merchant-ship scrimps her crew; but not so the English whaler.



Hence, in the English, this thing of whaling good cheer is not normal and natural, but incidental and particular; and, therefore, must have some special origin, which is here pointed out, and will be still further elucidated.



During my researches in the Leviathanic histories, I stumbled upon an ancient Dutch volume, which, by the musty whaling smell of it, I knew must be about whalers.



The title was, "Dan Coopman," wherefore I concluded that this must be the invaluable memoirs of some Amsterdam cooper in the fishery, as every whale ship must carry its cooper.



I was reinforced in this opinion by seeing that it was the production of one "Fitz Swackhammer."



But my friend Dr. Snodhead, a very learned man, professor of Low Dutch and High German in the college of Santa Claus and St. Pott's, to whom I handed the work for translation, giving him a box of sperm candles for his trouble--this same Dr. Snodhead, so soon as he spied the book, assured me that "Dan Coopman" did not mean "The Cooper," but "The Merchant."









Think you I let that chance go, without using my boat-hatchet and jack-knife, and breaking the seal and reading all the contents of that young cub?



And as for my exact knowledge of the bones of the leviathan in their gigantic, full grown development, for that rare knowledge I am indebted to my late royal friend Tranquo, king of Tranque, one of the Arsacides.



For being at Tranque, years ago, when attached to the trading-ship Dey of Algiers, I was invited to spend part of the Arsacidean holidays with the lord of Tranque, at his retired palm villa at Pupella; a sea-side glen not very far distant from what our sailors called Bamboo-Town, his capital.



Among many other fine qualities, my royal friend Tranquo, being gifted with a devout love for all matters of barbaric vertu, had brought together in Pupella whatever rare things the more ingenious of his people could invent; chiefly carved woods of wonderful devices, chiselled shells, inlaid spears, costly paddles, aromatic canoes; and all these distributed among whatever natural wonders, the wonder-freighted, tribute-rendering waves had cast upon his shores.



Chief among these latter was a great Sperm Whale, which, after an unusually long raging gale, had been found dead and stranded, with his head against a cocoa-nut tree, whose plumage-like, tufted droopings seemed his verdant jet.



When the vast body had at last been stripped of its fathom-deep enfoldings, and the bones become dust dry in the sun, then the skeleton was carefully transported up the Pupella glen, where a grand temple of lordly palms now sheltered it.



The ribs were hung with trophies; the vertebrae were carved with Arsacidean annals, in strange hieroglyphics; in the skull, the priests kept up an unextinguished aromatic flame, so that the mystic head again sent forth its vapoury spout; while, suspended from a bough, the terrific lower jaw vibrated over all the devotees, like the hair-hung sword that so affrighted Damocles.



It was a wondrous sight.



The wood was green as mosses of the Icy Glen; the trees stood high and haughty, feeling their living sap; the industrious earth beneath was as a weaver's loom, with a gorgeous carpet on it, whereof the ground-vine tendrils formed the warp and woof, and the living flowers the figures.



All the trees, with all their laden branches; all the shrubs, and ferns, and grasses; the message-carrying air; all these unceasingly were active.



Through the lacings of the leaves, the great sun seemed a flying shuttle weaving the unwearied verdure.



Oh, busy weaver!



unseen weaver!



--pause!







Moreover, at a place in Yorkshire, England, Burton Constable by name, a certain Sir Clifford Constable has in his possession the skeleton of a Sperm Whale, but of moderate size, by no means of the full-grown magnitude of my friend King Tranquo's.



In both cases, the stranded whales to which these two skeletons belonged, were originally claimed by their proprietors upon similar grounds.



King Tranquo seizing his because he wanted it; and Sir Clifford, because he was lord of the seignories of those parts.



Sir Clifford's whale has been articulated throughout; so that, like a great chest of drawers, you can open and shut him, in all his bony cavities--spread out his ribs like a gigantic fan--and swing all day upon his lower jaw.



Locks are to be put upon some of his trap-doors and shutters; and a footman will show round future visitors with a bunch of keys at his side.



Sir Clifford thinks of charging twopence for a peep at the whispering gallery in the spinal column; threepence to hear the echo in the hollow of his cerebellum; and sixpence for the unrivalled view from his forehead.



The skeleton dimensions I shall now proceed to set down are copied verbatim from my right arm, where I had them tattooed; as in my wild wanderings at that period, there was no other secure way of preserving such valuable statistics.



But as I was crowded for space, and wished the other parts of my body to remain a blank page for a poem I was then composing--at least, what untattooed parts might remain--I did not trouble myself with the odd inches; nor, indeed, should inches at all enter into a congenial admeasurement of the whale.

# CHAPTER 103



# Measurement Of The Whale's Skeleton



In the first place, I wish to lay before you a particular, plain statement, touching the living bulk of this leviathan, whose skeleton we are briefly to exhibit.



Such a statement may prove useful here.



According to a careful calculation I have made, and which I partly base upon Captain Scoresby's estimate, of seventy tons for the largest sized Greenland whale of sixty feet in length; according to my careful calculation, I say, a Sperm Whale of the largest magnitude, between eighty-five and ninety feet in length, and something less than forty feet in its fullest circumference, such a whale will weigh at least ninety tons; so that, reckoning thirteen men to a ton, he would considerably outweigh the combined population of a whole village of one thousand one hundred inhabitants.



Think you not then that brains, like yoked cattle, should be put to this leviathan, to make him at all budge to any landsman's imagination?



Having already in various ways put before you his skull, spout-hole, jaw, teeth, tail, forehead, fins, and divers other parts, I shall now simply point out what is most interesting in the general bulk of his unobstructed bones.



But as the colossal skull embraces so very large a proportion of the entire extent of the skeleton; as it is by far the most complicated part; and as nothing is to be repeated concerning it in this chapter, you must not fail to carry it in your mind, or under your arm, as we proceed, otherwise you will not gain a complete notion of the general structure we are about to view.



In length, the Sperm Whale's skeleton at Tranque measured seventy-two Feet; so that when fully invested and extended in life, he must have been ninety feet long; for in the whale, the skeleton loses about one fifth in length compared with the living body.



Of this seventy-two feet, his skull and jaw comprised some twenty feet, leaving some fifty feet of plain back-bone.





Only in the heart of quickest perils; only when within the eddyings of his angry flukes; only on the profound unbounded sea, can the fully invested whale be truly and livingly found out.



But the spine.



For that, the best way we can consider it is, with a crane, to pile its bones high up on end.



No speedy enterprise.



But now it's done, it looks much like Pompey's Pillar.



There are forty and odd vertebrae in all, which in the skeleton are not locked together.



They mostly lie like the great knobbed blocks on a Gothic spire, forming solid courses of heavy masonry.



The largest, a middle one, is in width something less than three feet, and in depth more than four.



The smallest, where the spine tapers away into the tail, is only two inches in width, and looks something like a white billiard-ball.



I was told that there were still smaller ones, but they had been lost by some little cannibal urchins, the priest's children, who had stolen them to play marbles with.



Thus we see how that the spine of even the hugest of living things tapers off at last into simple child's play.

# CHAPTER 104



## The Fossil Whale



From his mighty bulk the whale affords a most congenial theme whereon to enlarge, amplify, and generally expatiate.



Would you, you could not compress him.



By good rights he should only be treated of in imperial folio.



Not to tell over again his furlongs from spiracle to tail, and the yards he measures about the waist; only think of the gigantic involutions of his intestines, where they lie in him like great cables and hawsers coiled away in the subterranean orlop-deck of a line-of-battle-ship.



Since I have undertaken to manhandle this Leviathan, it behooves me to approve myself omnisciently exhaustive in the enterprise; not overlooking the minutest seminal germs of his blood, and spinning him out to the uttermost coil of his bowels.



Having already described him in most of his present habitatory and anatomical peculiarities, it now remains to magnify him in an archaeological, fossiliferous, and antediluvian point of view.



Applied to any other creature than the Leviathan--to an ant or a flea--such portly terms might justly be deemed unwarrantably grandiloquent.



But when Leviathan is the text, the case is altered.



Fain am I to stagger to this emprise under the weightiest words of the dictionary.



And here be it said, that whenever it has been convenient to consult one in the course of these dissertations, I have invariably used a huge quarto edition of Johnson, expressly purchased for that purpose; because that famous lexicographer's uncommon personal bulk more fitted him to compile a lexicon to be used by a whale author like me.



One often hears of writers that rise and swell with their subject, though it may seem but an ordinary one.



How, then, with me, writing of this Leviathan?



Unconsciously my chirography expands into placard capitals.



Give me a condor's quill!



Give me Vesuvius' crater for an inkstand!



Friends, hold my arms!



For in the mere act of penning my thoughts of this Leviathan, they weary me, and make me faint with their outreaching comprehensiveness of sweep, as if to include the whole circle of the sciences, and all the generations of whales, and men, and mastodons, past, present, and to come, with all the revolving panoramas of empire on earth, and throughout the whole universe, not excluding its suburbs.



Such, and so magnifying, is the virtue of a large and liberal theme!



We expand to its bulk.



To produce a mighty book, you must choose a mighty theme.



No great and enduring volume can ever be written on the flea, though many there be who have tried it.



Ere entering upon the subject of Fossil Whales, I present my credentials as a geologist, by stating that in my miscellaneous time I have been a stone-mason, and also a great digger of ditches, canals and wells, wine-vaults, cellars, and cisterns of all sorts.



Likewise, by way of preliminary, I desire to remind the reader, that while in the earlier geological strata there are found the fossils of monsters now almost completely extinct; the subsequent relics discovered in what are called the Tertiary formations seem the connecting, or at any rate intercepted links, between the antichronical creatures, and those whose remote posterity are said to have entered the Ark; all the Fossil Whales hitherto discovered belong to the Tertiary period, which is the last preceding the superficial formations.



And though none of them precisely answer to any known species of the present time, they are yet sufficiently akin to them in general respects, to justify their taking rank as Cetacean fossils.



Detached broken fossils of pre-adamite whales, fragments of their bones and skeletons, have within thirty years past, at various intervals, been found at the base of the Alps, in Lombardy, in France, in England, in Scotland, and in the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.



Among the more curious of such remains is part of a skull, which in the year 1779 was disinterred in the Rue Dauphine in Paris, a short street opening almost directly upon the palace of the Tuileries; and bones disinterred in excavating the great docks of Antwerp, in Napoleon's time.



Cuvier pronounced these fragments to have belonged to some utterly unknown Leviathanic species.



But by far the most wonderful of all Cetacean relics was the almost complete vast skeleton of an extinct monster, found in the year 1842, on the plantation of Judge Creagh, in Alabama.



The awe-stricken credulous slaves in the vicinity took it for the bones of one of the fallen angels.



The Alabama doctors declared it a huge reptile, and bestowed upon it the name of Basilosaurus.



But some specimen bones of it being taken across the sea to Owen, the English Anatomist, it turned out that this alleged reptile was a whale, though of a departed species.



A significant illustration of the fact, again and again repeated in this book, that the skeleton of the whale furnishes but little clue to the shape of his fully invested body.



So Owen rechristened the monster Zeuglodon; and in his paper read before the London Geological Society, pronounced it, in substance, one of the most extraordinary creatures which the mutations of the globe have blotted out of existence.



When I stand among these mighty Leviathan skeletons, skulls, tusks, jaws, ribs, and vertebrae, all characterized by partial resemblances to the existing breeds of sea-monsters; but at the same time bearing on the other hand similar affinities to the annihilated antichronical Leviathans, their incalculable seniors; I am, by a flood, borne back to that wondrous period, ere time itself can be said to have begun; for time began with man.



Here Saturn's grey chaos rolls over me, and I obtain dim, shuddering glimpses into those Polar eternities; when wedged bastions of ice pressed hard upon what are now the Tropics; and in all the 25,000 miles of this world's circumference, not an inhabitable hand's breadth of land was visible.



Then the whole world was the whale's; and, king of creation, he left his wake along the present lines of the Andes and the Himmalehs.



Who can show a pedigree like Leviathan?



Ahab's harpoon had shed older blood than the Pharaoh's.



Methuselah seems a school-boy.









Forty men in one ship hunting the Sperm Whales for forty-eight months think they have done extremely well, and thank God, if at last they carry home the oil of forty fish.



Whereas, in the days of the old Canadian and Indian hunters and trappers of the West, when the far west (in whose sunset suns still rise) was a wilderness and a virgin, the same number of moccasined men, for the same number of months, mounted on horse instead of sailing in ships, would have slain not forty, but forty thousand and more buffaloes; a fact that, if need were, could be statistically stated.



Nor, considered aright, does it seem any argument in favour of the gradual extinction of the Sperm Whale, for example, that in former years (the latter part of the last century, say) these Leviathans, in small pods, were encountered much oftener than at present, and, in consequence, the voyages were not so prolonged, and were also much more remunerative.



Because, as has been elsewhere noticed, those whales, influenced by some views to safety, now swim the sea in immense caravans, so that to a large degree the scattered solitaires, yokes, and pods, and schools of other days are now aggregated into vast but widely separated, unfrequent armies.



That is all.



And equally fallacious seems the conceit, that because the so-called whale-bone whales no longer haunt many grounds in former years abounding with them, hence that species also is declining.



For they are only being driven from promontory to cape; and if one coast is no longer enlivened with their jets, then, be sure, some other and remoter strand has been very recently startled by the unfamiliar spectacle.



Furthermore: concerning these last mentioned Leviathans, they have two firm fortresses, which, in all human probability, will for ever remain impregnable.



And as upon the invasion of their valleys, the frosty Swiss have retreated to their mountains; so, hunted from the savannas and glades of the middle seas, the whale-bone whales can at last resort to their Polar citadels, and diving under the ultimate glassy barriers and walls there, come up among icy fields and floes; and in a charmed circle of everlasting December, bid defiance to all pursuit from man.



But as perhaps fifty of these whale-bone whales are harpooned for one cachalot, some philosophers of the forecastle have concluded that this positive havoc has already very seriously diminished their battalions.



But though for some time past a number of these whales, not less than 13,000, have been annually slain on the nor'-west coast by the Americans alone; yet there are considerations which render even this circumstance of little or no account as an opposing argument in this matter.



Natural as it is to be somewhat incredulous concerning the populousness of the more enormous creatures of the globe, yet what shall we say to Harto, the historian of Goa, when he tells us that at one hunting the King of Siam took 4,000 elephants; that in those regions elephants are numerous as droves of cattle in the temperate climes.



And there seems no reason to doubt that if these elephants, which have now been hunted for thousands of years, by Semiramis, by Porus, by Hannibal, and by all the successive monarchs of the East--if they still survive there in great numbers, much more may the great whale outlast all hunting, since he has a pasture to expatiate in, which is precisely twice as large as all Asia, both Americas, Europe and Africa, New Holland, and all the Isles of the sea combined.



Moreover: we are to consider, that from the presumed great longevity of whales, their probably attaining the age of a century and more, therefore at any one period of time, several distinct adult generations must be contemporary.



And what that is, we may soon gain some idea of, by imagining all the grave-yards, cemeteries, and family vaults of creation yielding up the live bodies of all the men, women, and children who were alive seventy-five years ago; and adding this countless host to the present human population of the globe.



Wherefore, for all these things, we account the whale immortal in his species, however perishable in his individuality.



He swam the seas before the continents broke water; he once swam over the site of the Tuileries, and Windsor Castle, and the Kremlin.



In Noah's flood he despised Noah's Ark; and if ever the world is to be again flooded, like the Netherlands, to kill off its rats, then the eternal whale will still survive, and rearing upon the topmost crest of the equatorial flood, spout his frothed defiance to the skies.



# CHAPTER 106



# Ahab's Leg



The precipitating manner in which Captain Ahab had quitted the Samuel Enderby of London, had not been unattended with some small violence to his own person.



He had lighted with such energy upon a thwart of his boat that his ivory leg had received a half-splintering shock.



And when after gaining his own deck, and his own pivot-hole there, he so vehemently wheeled round with an urgent command to the steersman (it was, as ever, something about his not steering inflexibly enough); then, the already shaken ivory received such an additional twist and wrench, that though it still remained entire, and to all appearances lusty, yet Ahab did not deem it entirely trustworthy.



And, indeed, it seemed small matter for wonder, that for all his pervading, mad recklessness, Ahab did at times give careful heed to the condition of that dead bone upon which he partly stood.



For it had not been very long prior to the Pequod's sailing from Nantucket, that he had been found one night lying prone upon the ground, and insensible; by some unknown, and seemingly inexplicable, unimaginable casualty, his ivory limb having been so violently displaced, that it had stake-wise smitten, and all but pierced his groin; nor was it without extreme difficulty that the agonizing wound was entirely cured.



Nor, at the time, had it failed to enter his monomaniac mind, that all the anguish of that then present suffering was but the direct issue of a former woe; and he too plainly seemed to see, that as the most poisonous reptile of the marsh perpetuates his kind as inevitably as the sweetest songster of the grove; so, equally with every felicity, all miserable events do naturally beget their like.



Yea, more than equally, thought Ahab; since both the ancestry and posterity of Grief go further than the ancestry and posterity of Joy.



For, not to hint of this: that it is an inference from certain canonic teachings, that while some natural enjoyments here shall have no children born to them for the other world, but, on the contrary, shall be followed by the joy-childlessness of all hell's despair; whereas, some guilty mortal miseries shall still fertilely beget to themselves an eternally progressive progeny of griefs beyond the grave; not at all to hint of this, there still seems an inequality in the deeper analysis of the thing.



For, thought Ahab, while even the highest earthly felicities ever have a certain unsignifying pettiness lurking in them, but, at bottom, all heartwoes, a mystic significance, and, in some men, an archangelic grandeur; so do their diligent tracings-out not belie the obvious deduction.



To trail the genealogies of these high mortal miseries, carries us at last among the sourceless primogenitures of the gods; so that, in the face of all the glad, hay-making suns, and soft cymballing, round harvest-moons, we must needs give in to this: that the gods themselves are not for ever glad.



The ineffaceable, sad birth-mark in the brow of man, is but the stamp of sorrow in the signers.



Unwittingly here a secret has been divulged, which perhaps might more properly, in set way, have been disclosed before.



With many other particulars concerning Ahab, always had it remained a mystery to some, why it was, that for a certain period, both before and after the sailing of the Pequod, he had hidden himself away with such Grand-Lama-like exclusiveness; and, for that one interval, sought speechless refuge, as it were, among the marble senate of the dead.



Captain Peleg's bruited reason for this thing appeared by no means adequate; though, indeed, as touching all Ahab's deeper part, every revelation partook more of significant darkness than of explanatory light.



But, in the end, it all came out; this one matter did, at least.



That direful mishap was at the bottom of his temporary recluseness.



And not only this, but to that ever-contracting, dropping circle ashore, who, for any reason, possessed the privilege of a less banned approach to him; to that timid circle the above hinted casualty--remaining, as it did, moodily unaccounted for by Ahab--invested itself with terrors, not entirely underived from the land of spirits and of wails.



So that, through their zeal for him, they had all conspired, so far as in them lay, to muffle up the knowledge of this thing from others; and hence it was, that not till a considerable interval had elapsed, did it transpire upon the Pequod's decks.



But be all this as it may; let the unseen, ambiguous synod in the air, or the vindictive princes and potentates of fire, have to do or not with earthly Ahab, yet, in this present matter of his leg, he took plain practical procedures;--he called the carpenter.



And when that functionary appeared before him, he bade him without delay set about making a new leg, and directed the mates to see him supplied with all the studs and joists of jaw-ivory (Sperm Whale) which had thus far been accumulated on the voyage, in order that a careful selection of the stoutest, clearest-grained stuff might be secured.



This done, the carpenter received orders to have the leg completed that night; and to provide all the fittings for it, independent of those pertaining to the distrusted one in use.



Moreover, the ship's forge was ordered to be hoisted out of its temporary idleness in the hold; and, to accelerate the affair, the blacksmith was commanded to proceed at once to the forging of whatever iron contrivances might be needed.







You might almost say, that this strange uncompromisedness in him involved a sort of unintelligence; for in his numerous trades, he did not seem to work so much by reason or by instinct, or simply because he had been tutored to it, or by any intermixture of all these, even or uneven; but merely by a kind of deaf and dumb, spontaneous literal process.



He was a pure manipulator; his brain, if he had ever had one, must have early oozed along into the muscles of his fingers.



He was like one of those unreasoning but still highly useful, MULTUM IN PARVO, Sheffield contrivances, assuming the exterior--though a little swelled--of a common pocket knife; but containing, not only blades of various sizes, but also screw-drivers, cork-screws, tweezers, awls, pens, rulers, nail-files, countersinkers.



So, if his superiors wanted to use the carpenter for a screw-driver, all they had to do was to open that part of him, and the screw was fast: or if for tweezers, take him up by the legs, and there they were.



Yet, as previously hinted, this omnitooled, open-and-shut carpenter, was, after all, no mere machine of an automaton.



If he did not have a common soul in him, he had a subtle something that somehow anomalously did its duty.



What that was, whether essence of quicksilver, or a few drops of hartshorn, there is no telling.



But there it was; and there it had abided for now some sixty years or more.



And this it was, this same unaccountable, cunning life-principle in him; this it was, that kept him a great part of the time soliloquizing; but only like an unreasoning wheel, which also hummily soliloquizes; or rather, his body was a sentry-box and this soliloquizer on guard there, and talking all the time to keep himself awake.













In thy most solitary hours, then, dost thou not fear eavesdroppers?



Hold, don't speak!



And if I still feel the smart of my crushed leg, though it be now so long dissolved; then, why mayst not thou, carpenter, feel the fiery pains of hell for ever, and without a body?



Hah!



Good Lord!



Truly, sir, if it comes to that, I must calculate over again; I think I didn't carry a small figure, sir.



Look ye, pudding-heads should never grant premises.



--How long before the leg is done?



Perhaps an hour, sir.



Bungle away at it then, and bring it to me (TURNS TO GO). Oh, Life!



Here I am, proud as Greek god, and yet standing debtor to this blockhead for a bone to stand on!



Cursed be that mortal inter-indebtedness which will not do away with ledgers.



I would be free as air; and I'm down in the whole world's books.



I am so rich, I could have given bid for bid with the wealthiest Praetorians at the auction of the Roman empire (which was the world's); and yet I owe for the flesh in the tongue I brag with.



By heavens!



I'll get a crucible, and into it, and dissolve myself down to one small, compendious vertebra.



So.



CARPENTER (RESUMING HIS WORK). Well, well, well!





It looks like a real live leg, filed down to nothing but the core; he'll be standing on this to-morrow; he'll be taking altitudes on it.



Halloa!



I almost forgot the little oval slate, smoothed ivory, where he figures up the latitude.



So, so; chisel, file, and sand-paper, now!



# Ahab And Starbuck In The Cabin



According to usage they were pumping the ship next morning; and lo!



no inconsiderable oil came up with the water; the casks below must have sprung a bad leak.



Much concern was shown; and Starbuck went down into the cabin to report this unfavourable affair.



\* \*In Sperm-whalemen with any considerable quantity of oil on board, it is a regular semiweekly duty to conduct a hose into the hold, and drench the casks with sea-water; which afterwards, at varying intervals, is removed by the ship's pumps.



Hereby the casks are sought to be kept damply tight; while by the changed character of the withdrawn water, the mariners readily detect any serious leakage in the precious cargo.

Now, from the South and West the Pequod was drawing nigh to Formosa and the Bashee Isles, between which lies one of the tropical outlets from the China waters into the Pacific.



And so Starbuck found Ahab with a general chart of the oriental archipelagoes spread before him; and another separate one representing the long eastern coasts of the Japanese islands--Niphon, Matsmai, and Sikoke.



With his snow-white new ivory leg braced against the screwed leg of his table, and with a long pruning-hook of a jack-knife in his hand, the wondrous old man, with his back to the gangway door, was wrinkling his brow, and tracing his old courses again.



"Who's there?"



hearing the footstep at the door, but not turning round to it.



"On deck!



Begone!"



"Captain Ahab mistakes; it is I.



The oil in the hold is leaking, sir.



We must up Burtons and break out."



"Up Burtons and break out?"



Now that we are nearing Japan; heave-to here for a week to tinker a parcel of old hoops?"



"Either do that, sir, or waste in one day more oil than we may make good in a year.



What we come twenty thousand miles to get is worth saving, sir."



"So it is, so it is; if we get it."



"I was speaking of the oil in the hold, sir."



"And I was not speaking or thinking of that at all.



Begone!



Let it leak!



I'm all aleak myself.



Aye!



leaks in leaks!



not only full of leaky casks, but those leaky casks are in a leaky ship; and that's a far worse plight than the Pequod's, man.



Yet I don't stop to plug my leak; for who can find it in the deep-loaded hull; or how hope to plug it, even if found, in this life's howling gale?







## CHAPTER 110



# Queequeg In His Coffin



Upon searching, it was found that the casks last struck into the hold were perfectly sound, and that the leak must be further off.



So, it being calm weather, they broke out deeper and deeper, disturbing the slumbers of the huge ground-tier butts; and from that black midnight sending those gigantic moles into the daylight above.



So deep did they go; and so ancient, and corroded, and weedy the aspect of the lowermost puncheons, that you almost looked next for some mouldy corner-stone cask containing coins of Captain Noah, with copies of the posted placards, vainly warning the infatuated old world from the flood.



Tierce after tierce, too, of water, and bread, and beef, and shooks of staves, and iron bundles of hoops, were hoisted out, till at last the piled decks were hard to get about; and the hollow hull echoed under foot, as if you were treading over empty catacombs, and reeled and rolled in the sea like an air-freighted demijohn.



Top-heavy was the ship as a dinnerless student with all Aristotle in his head.



Well was it that the Typhoons did not visit them then.



Now, at this time it was that my poor pagan companion, and fast bosom-friend, Queequeg, was seized with a fever, which brought him nigh to his endless end.



Be it said, that in this vocation of whaling, sinecures are unknown; dignity and danger go hand in hand; till you get to be Captain, the higher you rise the harder you toil.



So with poor Queequeg, who, as harpooneer, must not only face all the rage of the living whale, but--as we have elsewhere seen--mount his dead back in a rolling sea; and finally descend into the gloom of the hold, and bitterly sweating all day in that subterraneous confinement, resolutely manhandle the clumsiest casks and see to their stowage.



To be short, among whalemens, the harpooneers are the holders, so called.











shame!"



During all this, Queequeg lay with closed eyes, as if in a dream.



Pip was led away, and the sick man was replaced in his hammock.



But now that he had apparently made every preparation for death; now that his coffin was proved a good fit, Queequeg suddenly rallied; soon there seemed no need of the carpenter's box: and thereupon, when some expressed their delighted surprise, he, in substance, said, that the cause of his sudden convalescence was this;--at a critical moment, he had just recalled a little duty ashore, which he was leaving undone; and therefore had changed his mind about dying: he could not die yet, he averred.



They asked him, then, whether to live or die was a matter of his own sovereign will and pleasure.



He answered, certainly.



In a word, it was Queequeg's conceit, that if a man made up his mind to live, mere sickness could not kill him: nothing but a whale, or a gale, or some violent, ungovernable, unintelligent destroyer of that sort.



Now, there is this noteworthy difference between savage and civilized; that while a sick, civilized man may be six months convalescing, generally speaking, a sick savage is almost half-well again in a day.



So, in good time my Queequeg gained strength; and at length after sitting on the windlass for a few indolent days (but eating with a vigorous appetite) he suddenly leaped to his feet, threw out his arms and legs, gave himself a good stretching, yawned a little bit, and then springing into the head of his hoisted boat, and poising a harpoon, pronounced himself fit for a fight.



With a wild whimsiness, he now used his coffin for a sea-chest; and emptying into it his canvas bag of clothes, set them in order there.



Many spare hours he spent, in carving the lid with all manner of grotesque figures and drawings; and it seemed that hereby he was striving, in his rude way, to copy parts of the twisted tattooing on his body.



And this tattooing had been the work of a departed prophet and seer of his island, who, by those hieroglyphic marks, had written out on his body a complete theory of the heavens and the earth, and a mystical treatise on the art of attaining truth; so that Queequeg in his own proper person was a riddle to unfold; a wondrous work in one volume; but whose mysteries not even himself could read, though his own live heart beat against them; and these mysteries were therefore destined in the end to moulder away with the living parchment whereon they were inscribed, and so be unsolved to the last.



And this thought it must have been which suggested to Ahab that wild exclamation of his, when one morning turning away from surveying poor Queequeg--"Oh, devilish tantalization of the gods!"



# CHAPTER 111



# The Pacific



When gliding by the Bashee isles we emerged at last upon the great South Sea; were it not for other things, I could have greeted my dear Pacific with uncounted thanks, for now the long supplication of my youth was answered; that serene ocean rolled eastwards from me a thousand leagues of blue.



There is, one knows not what sweet mystery about this sea, whose gently awful stirrings seem to speak of some hidden soul beneath; like those fabled undulations of the Ephesian sod over the buried Evangelist St. John.



And meet it is, that over these sea-pastures, wide-rolling watery prairies and Potters' Fields of all four continents, the waves should rise and fall, and ebb and flow unceasingly; for here, millions of mixed shades and shadows, drowned dreams, somnambulisms, reveries; all that we call lives and souls, lie dreaming, dreaming, still; tossing like slumberers in their beds; the ever-rolling waves but made so by their restlessness.



To any meditative Magian rover, this serene Pacific, once beheld, must ever after be the sea of his adoption.



It rolls the midmost waters of the world, the Indian ocean and Atlantic being but its arms.



The same waves wash the moles of the new-built Californian towns, but yesterday planted by the recentest race of men, and lave the faded but still gorgeous skirts of Asiatic lands, older than Abraham; while all between float milky-ways of coral isles, and low-lying, endless, unknown Archipelagoes, and impenetrable Japans.



Thus this mysterious, divine Pacific zones the world's whole bulk about; makes all coasts one bay to it; seems the tide-beating heart of earth.



Lifted by those eternal swells, you needs must own the seductive god, bowing your head to Pan.



But few thoughts of Pan stirred Ahab's brain, as standing like an iron statue at his accustomed place beside the mizen rigging, with one nostril he unthinkingly snuffed the sugary musk from the Bashee isles (in whose sweet woods mild lovers must be walking), and with the other consciously inhaled the salt breath of the new found sea; that sea in which the hated White Whale must even then be swimming.











# CHAPTER 113



# The Forge



With matted beard, and swathed in a bristling shark-skin apron, about mid-day, Perth was standing between his forge and anvil, the latter placed upon an iron-wood log, with one hand holding a pike-head in the coals, and with the other at his forge's lungs, when Captain Ahab came along, carrying in his hand a small rusty-looking leathern bag.



While yet a little distance from the forge, moody Ahab paused; till at last, Perth, withdrawing his iron from the fire, began hammering it upon the anvil--the red mass sending off the sparks in thick hovering flights, some of which flew close to Ahab.



"Are these thy Mother Carey's chickens, Perth?"



they are always flying in thy wake; birds of good omen, too, but not to all;--look here, they burn; but thou--thou liv'st among them without a scorch."



"Because I am scorched all over, Captain Ahab," answered Perth, resting for a moment on his hammer; "I am past scorching; not easily can'st thou scorch a scar."



"Well, well; no more.



Thy shrunk voice sounds too calmly, sanely woeful to me.



In no Paradise myself, I am impatient of all misery in others that is not mad.



Thou should'st go mad, blacksmith; say, why dost thou not go mad?"



How can'st thou endure without being mad?"







muttered Stubb, looking on from the forecastle.



"That Parsee smells fire like a fusee; and smells of it himself, like a hot musket's powder-pan."



At last the shank, in one complete rod, received its final heat; and as Perth, to temper it, plunged it all hissing into the cask of water near by, the scalding steam shot up into Ahab's bent face.



"Would'st thou brand me, Perth?"



wincing for a moment with the pain; "have I been but forging my own branding-iron, then?"



"Pray God, not that; yet I fear something, Captain Ahab.



Is not this harpoon for the White Whale?"



"For the white fiend!



But now for the barbs; thou must make them thyself, man.



Here are my razors--the best of steel; here, and make the barbs sharp as the needle-sleet of the Icy Sea."

For a moment, the old blacksmith eyed the razors as though he would fain not use them.



"Take them, man, I have no need for them; for I now neither shave, sup, nor pray till--but here--to work!"



Fashioned at last into an arrowy shape, and welded by Perth to the shank, the steel soon pointed the end of the iron; and as the blacksmith was about giving the barbs their final heat, prior to tempering them, he cried to Ahab to place the water-cask near.



"No, no--no water for that; I want it of the true death-temper.



Ahoy, there!



Tashtego, Queequeg, Daggoo!



What say ye, pagans!



Will ye give me as much blood as will cover this barb?"



holding it high up.



# CHAPTER 114



# The Gilder



Penetrating further and further into the heart of the Japanese cruising ground, the Pequod was soon all astir in the fishery.



Often, in mild, pleasant weather, for twelve, fifteen, eighteen, and twenty hours on the stretch, they were engaged in the boats, steadily pulling, or sailing, or paddling after the whales, or for an interlude of sixty or seventy minutes calmly awaiting their uprising; though with but small success for their pains.



At such times, under an abated sun; afloat all day upon smooth, slow heaving swells; seated in his boat, light as a birch canoe; and so sociably mixing with the soft waves themselves, that like hearth-stone cats they purr against the gunwale; these are the times of dreamy quietude, when beholding the tranquil beauty and brilliancy of the ocean's skin, one forgets the tiger heart that pants beneath it; and would not willingly remember, that this velvet paw but conceals a remorseless fang.



These are the times, when in his whale-boat the rover softly feels a certain filial, confident, land-like feeling towards the sea; that he regards it as so much flowery earth; and the distant ship revealing only the tops of her masts, seems struggling forward, not through high rolling waves, but through the tall grass of a rolling prairie: as when the western emigrants' horses only show their erected ears, while their hidden bodies widely wade through the amazing verdure.



The long-drawn virgin vales; the mild blue hill-sides; as over these there steals the hush, the hum; you almost swear that play-wearied children lie sleeping in these solitudes, in some glad May-time, when the flowers of the woods are plucked.



And all this mixes with your most mystic mood; so that fact and fancy, half-way meeting, interpenetrate, and form one seamless whole.



Nor did such soothing scenes, however temporary, fail of at least as temporary an effect on Ahab.



But if these secret golden keys did seem to open in him his own secret golden treasuries, yet did his breath upon them prove but tarnishing.



Oh, grassy glades!



oh, ever vernal endless landscapes in the soul; in ye,--though long parched by the dead drought of the earthy life,--in ye, men yet may roll, like young horses in new morning clover; and for some few fleeting moments, feel the cool dew of the life immortal on them.



Would to God these blessed calms would last.



But the mingled, mingling threads of life are woven by warp and woof: calms crossed by storms, a storm for every calm.



There is no steady unretracing progress in this life; we do not advance through fixed gradations, and at the last one pause:--through infancy's unconscious spell, boyhood's thoughtless faith, adolescence' doubt (the common doom), then scepticism, then disbelief, resting at last in manhood's pondering repose of If.



But once gone through, we trace the round again; and are infants, boys, and men, and Ifs eternally.



Where lies the final harbor, whence we unmoor no more?



In what rapt ether sails the world, of which the weariest will never weary?



Where is the foundling's father hidden?



Our souls are like those orphans whose unwedded mothers die in bearing them: the secret of our paternity lies in their grave, and we must there to learn it.



And that same day, too, gazing far down from his boat's side into that same golden sea, Starbuck lowly murmured:-- "Loveliness unfathomable, as ever lover saw in his young bride's eye!



--Tell me not of thy teeth-tiered sharks, and thy kidnapping cannibal ways.



Let faith oust fact; let fancy oust memory; I look deep down and do believe."



And Stubb, fish-like, with sparkling scales, leaped up in that same golden light:-- "I am Stubb, and Stubb has his history; but here Stubb takes oaths that he has always been jolly!"



## CHAPTER 115



# The Pequod Meets The Bachelor



And jolly enough were the sights and the sounds that came bearing down before the wind, some few weeks after Ahab's harpoon had been welded.



It was a Nantucket ship, the Bachelor, which had just wedged in her last cask of oil, and bolted down her bursting hatches; and now, in glad holiday apparel, was joyously, though somewhat vain-gloriously, sailing round among the widely-separated ships on the ground, previous to pointing her prow for home.



The three men at her mast-head wore long streamers of narrow red bunting at their hats; from the stern, a whale-boat was suspended, bottom down; and hanging captive from the bowsprit was seen the long lower jaw of the last whale they had slain.



Signals, ensigns, and jacks of all colours were flying from her rigging, on every side.



Sideways lashed in each of her three basketed tops were two barrels of sperm; above which, in her top-mast cross-trees, you saw slender breakers of the same precious fluid; and nailed to her main truck was a brazen lamp.



As was afterwards learned, the Bachelor had met with the most surprising success; all the more wonderful, for that while cruising in the same seas numerous other vessels had gone entire months without securing a single fish.



Not only had barrels of beef and bread been given away to make room for the far more valuable sperm, but additional supplemental casks had been bartered for, from the ships she had met; and these were stowed along the deck, and in the captain's and officers' state-rooms.



Even the cabin table itself had been knocked into kindling-wood; and the cabin mess dined off the broad head of an oil-butt, lashed down to the floor for a centrepiece.



In the fore-castle, the sailors had actually caulked and pitched their chests, and filled them; it was humorously added, that the cook had clapped a head on his largest boiler, and filled it; that the steward had plugged his spare coffee-pot and filled it; that the harpooneers had headed the sockets of their irons and filled them; that indeed everything was filled with sperm, except the captain's pantaloons pockets, and those he reserved to thrust his hands into, in self-complacent testimony of his entire satisfaction.

As this glad ship of good luck bore down upon the moody Pequod, the barbarian sound of enormous drums came from her fore-castle; and drawing still nearer, a crowd of her men were seen standing round her huge try-pots, which, covered with the parchment-like POKE or stomach skin of the black fish, gave forth a loud roar to every stroke of the clenched hands of the crew.



On the quarter-deck, the mates and harpooneers were dancing with the olive-hued girls who had eloped with them from the Polynesian Isles; while suspended in an ornamented boat, firmly secured aloft between the foremast and mainmast, three Long Island negroes, with glittering fiddle-bows of whale ivory, were presiding over the hilarious jig.



Meanwhile, others of the ship's company were tumultuously busy at the masonry of the try-works, from which the huge pots had been removed.



You would have almost thought they were pulling down the cursed Bastille, such wild cries they raised, as the now useless brick and mortar were being hurled into the sea.



Lord and master over all this scene, the captain stood erect on the ship's elevated quarter-deck, so that the whole rejoicing drama was full before him, and seemed merely contrived for his own individual diversion.



And Ahab, he too was standing on his quarter-deck, shaggy and black, with a stubborn gloom; and as the two ships crossed each other's wakes--one all jubilations for things passed, the other all forebodings as to things to come--their two captains in themselves impersonated the whole striking contrast of the scene.



"Come aboard, come aboard!"



cried the gay Bachelor's commander, lifting a glass and a bottle in the air.



"Hast seen the White Whale?"



gritted Ahab in reply.



"No; only heard of him; but don't believe in him at all," said the other good-humoredly.



"Come aboard!"



"Thou art too damned jolly.



Sail on.





# CHAPTER 116



# The Dying Whale



Not seldom in this life, when, on the right side, fortune's favourites sail close by us, we, though all adroop before, catch somewhat of the rushing breeze, and joyfully feel our bagging sails fill out.



So seemed it with the Pequod.



For next day after encountering the gay Bachelor, whales were seen and four were slain; and one of them by Ahab.



It was far down the afternoon; and when all the spearings of the crimson fight were done: and floating in the lovely sunset sea and sky, sun and whale both stilly died together; then, such a sweetness and such plaintiveness, such inwreathing orisons curled up in that rosy air, that it almost seemed as if far over from the deep green convent valleys of the Manilla isles, the Spanish land-breeze, wantonly turned sailor, had gone to sea, freighted with these vesper hymns.



Soothed again, but only soothed to deeper gloom, Ahab, who had sterned off from the whale, sat intently watching his final wanings from the now tranquil boat.



For that strange spectacle observable in all sperm whales dying--the turning sunwards of the head, and so expiring--that strange spectacle, beheld of such a placid evening, somehow to Ahab conveyed a wondrousness unknown before.



"He turns and turns him to it,--how slowly, but how steadfastly, his homage-rendering and invoking brow, with his last dying motions.



He too worships fire; most faithful, broad, baronial vassal of the sun!



--Oh that these too-favouring eyes should see these too-favouring sights.



Look!



here, far water-locked; beyond all hum of human weal or woe; in these most candid and impartial seas; where to traditions no rocks furnish tablets; where for long Chinese ages, the billows have still rolled on speechless and unspoken to, as stars that shine upon the Niger's unknown source; here, too, life dies sunwards full of faith; but see!



no sooner dead, than death whirls round the corpse, and it heads some other way.



"Oh, thou dark Hindoo half of nature, who of drowned bones hast builded thy separate throne somewhere in the heart of these unverdured seas; thou art an infidel, thou queen, and too truly speakest to me in the wide-slaughtering Typhoon, and the hushed burial of its after calm.



Nor has this thy whale sunwards turned his dying head, and then gone round again, without a lesson to me.



"Oh, trebly hooped and welded hip of power!



Oh, high aspiring, rainbowed jet!



--that one strivest, this one jettest all in vain!



In vain, oh whale, dost thou seek intercedings with yon all-quickenng sun, that only calls forth life, but gives it not again.



Yet dost thou, darker half, rock me with a prouder, if a darker faith.



All thy unnamable imminglings float beneath me here; I am buoyed by breaths of once living things, exhaled as air, but water now.



"Then hail, for ever hail, O sea, in whose eternal tossings the wild fowl finds his only rest.



Born of earth, yet suckled by the sea; though hill and valley mothered me, ye billows are my foster-brothers!"

# CHAPTER 117



## The Whale Watch

The four whales slain that evening had died wide apart; one, far to windward; one, less distant, to leeward; one ahead; one astern.



These last three were brought alongside ere nightfall; but the windward one could not be reached till morning; and the boat that had killed it lay by its side all night; and that boat was Ahab's.



The waif-pole was thrust upright into the dead whale's spout-hole; and the lantern hanging from its top, cast a troubled flickering glare upon the black, glossy back, and far out upon the midnight waves, which gently chafed the whale's broad flank, like soft surf upon a beach.



Ahab and all his boat's crew seemed asleep but the Parsee; who crouching in the bow, sat watching the sharks, that spectrally played round the whale, and tapped the light cedar planks with their tails.



A sound like the moaning in squadrons over Asphaltites of unforgiven ghosts of Gomorrah, ran shuddering through the air.



Started from his slumbers, Ahab, face to face, saw the Parsee; and hooped round by the gloom of the night they seemed the last men in a flooded world.



"I have dreamed it again," said he.



"Of the hearses?"



Have I not said, old man, that neither hearse nor coffin can be thine?"



"And who are hearsed that die on the sea?"



"But I said, old man, that ere thou couldst die on this voyage, two hearses must verily be seen by thee on the sea; the first not made by mortal hands; and the visible wood of the last one must be grown in America."







At length the desired observation was taken; and with his pencil upon his ivory leg, Ahab soon calculated what his latitude must be at that precise instant.



Then falling into a moment's reverie, he again looked up towards the sun and murmured to himself: "Thou sea-mark!



thou high and mighty Pilot!



thou tellest me truly where I AM--but canst thou cast the least hint where I SHALL be?



Or canst thou tell where some other thing besides me is this moment living?



Where is Moby Dick?



This instant thou must be eyeing him.



These eyes of mine look into the very eye that is even now beholding him; aye, and into the eye that is even now equally beholding the objects on the unknown, thither side of thee, thou sun!"



Then gazing at his quadrant, and handling, one after the other, its numerous cabalistical contrivances, he pondered again, and muttered: "Foolish toy!"



babies' plaything of haughty Admirals, and Commodores, and Captains; the world brags of thee, of thy cunning and might; but what after all canst thou do, but tell the poor, pitiful point, where thou thyself happenest to be on this wide planet, and the hand that holds thee: no!



not one jot more!



Thou canst not tell where one drop of water or one grain of sand will be to-morrow noon; and yet with thy impotence thou insultest the sun!



Science!



Curse thee, thou vain toy; and cursed be all the things that cast man's eyes aloft to that heaven, whose live vividness but scorches him, as these old eyes are even now scorched with thy light, O sun!



Level by nature to this earth's horizon are the glances of man's eyes; not shot from the crown of his head, as if God had meant him to gaze on his firmament.



Curse thee, thou quadrant!"



dashing it to the deck, "no longer will I guide my earthly way by thee; the level ship's compass, and the level deadreckoning, by log and by line; THESE shall conduct me, and show me my place on the sea.



"Aye," lighting from the boat to the deck, "thus I trample on thee, thou paltry thing that feebly pointest on high; thus I split and destroy thee!"



As the frantic old man thus spoke and thus trampled with his live and dead feet, a sneering triumph that seemed meant for Ahab, and a fatalistic despair that seemed meant for himself--these passed over the mute, motionless Parsee's face.



Unobserved he rose and glided away; while, awestruck by the aspect of their commander, the seamen clustered together on the forecastle, till Ahab, troubledly pacing the deck, shouted out--"To the braces!



Up helm!



--square in!"



In an instant the yards swung round; and as the ship half-wheeled upon her heel, her three firm-seated graceful masts erectly poised upon her long, ribbed hull, seemed as the three Horatii pirouetting on one sufficient steed.



Standing between the knight-heads, Starbuck watched the Pequod's tumultuous way, and Ahab's also, as he went lurching along the deck.



"I have sat before the dense coal fire and watched it all aglow, full of its tormented flaming life; and I have seen it wane at last, down, down, to dumbest dust.



Old man of oceans!



of all this fiery life of thine, what will at length remain but one little heap of ashes!"



"Aye," cried Stubb, "but sea-coal ashes--mind ye that, Mr. Starbuck--sea-coal, not your common charcoal.



Well, well; I heard Ahab mutter, 'Here some one thrusts these cards into these old hands of mine; swears that I must play them, and no others.



' And damn me, Ahab, but thou acetest right; live in the game, and die in it!"

# CHAPTER 119



# The Candles



Warmest climes but nurse the cruellest fangs: the tiger of Bengal crouches in spiced groves of ceaseless verdure.



Skies the most effulgent but basket the deadliest thunders: gorgeous Cuba knows tornadoes that never swept tame northern lands.



So, too, it is, that in these resplendent Japanese seas the mariner encounters the direst of all storms, the Typhoon.



It will sometimes burst from out that cloudless sky, like an exploding bomb upon a dazed and sleepy town.



Towards evening of that day, the Pequod was torn of her canvas, and bare-poled was left to fight a Typhoon which had struck her directly ahead.



When darkness came on, sky and sea roared and split with the thunder, and blazed with the lightning, that showed the disabled masts fluttering here and there with the rags which the first fury of the tempest had left for its after sport.



Holding by a shroud, Starbuck was standing on the quarter-deck; at every flash of the lightning glancing aloft, to see what additional disaster might have befallen the intricate hamper there; while Stubb and Flask were directing the men in the higher hoisting and firmer lashing of the boats.



But all their pains seemed naught.



Though lifted to the very top of the cranes, the windward quarter boat (Ahab's) did not escape.



A great rolling sea, dashing high up against the reeling ship's high teetering side, stove in the boat's bottom at the stern, and left it again, all dripping through like a sieve.





"Here!"



cried Starbuck, seizing Stubb by the shoulder, and pointing his hand towards the weather bow, "markest thou not that the gale comes from the eastward, the very course Ahab is to run for Moby Dick?"



the very course he swung to this day noon?



now mark his boat there; where is that stove?



In the stern-sheets, man; where he is wont to stand--his stand-point is stove, man!



Now jump overboard, and sing away, if thou must!



"I don't half understand ye: what's in the wind?"



"Yes, yes, round the Cape of Good Hope is the shortest way to Nantucket," soliloquized Starbuck suddenly, heedless of Stubb's question.

"The gale that now hammers at us to stave us, we can turn it into a fair wind that will drive us towards home.



Yonder, to windward, all is blackness of doom; but to leeward, homeward--I see it lightens up there; but not with the lightning."



At that moment in one of the intervals of profound darkness, following the flashes, a voice was heard at his side; and almost at the same instant a volley of thunder peals rolled overhead.



"Who's there?"



"Old Thunder!"



said Ahab, groping his way along the bulwarks to his pivot-hole; but suddenly finding his path made plain to him by elbowed lances of fire.



Now, as the lightning rod to a spire on shore is intended to carry off the perilous fluid into the soil; so the kindred rod which at sea some ships carry to each mast, is intended to conduct it into the water.



But as this conductor must descend to considerable depth, that its end may avoid all contact with the hull; and as moreover, if kept constantly towing there, it would be liable to many mishaps, besides interfering not a little with some of the rigging, and more or less impeding the vessel's way in the water; because of all this, the lower parts of a ship's lightning-rods are not always overboard; but are generally made in long slender links, so as to be the more readily hauled up into the chains outside, or thrown down into the sea, as occasion may require.



"The rods!"



the rods!"



cried Starbuck to the crew, suddenly admonished to vigilance by the vivid lightning that had just been darting flambeaux, to light Ahab to his post.



"Are they overboard?"



drop them over, fore and aft.



Quick!"



"Avast!"



cried Ahab; "let's have fair play here, though we be the weaker side.



Yet I'll contribute to raise rods on the Himmalehs and Andes, that all the world may be secured; but out on privileges!



Let them be, sir."



"Look aloft!"



cried Starbuck.



"The corpusants!



the corpusants!"



All the yard-arms were tipped with a pallid fire; and touched at each tri-pointed lightning-rod-end with three tapering white flames, each of the three tall masts was silently burning in that sulphurous air, like three gigantic wax tapers before an altar.



"Blast the boat!



let it go!"



cried Stubb at this instant, as a swashing sea heaved up under his own little craft, so that its gunwale violently jammed his hand, as he was passing a lashing.



"Blast it!"



--but slipping backward on the deck, his uplifted eyes caught the flames; and immediately shifting his tone he cried--  
--"The corpusants have mercy on us all!"



To sailors, oaths are household words; they will swear in the trance of the calm, and in the teeth of the tempest; they will imprecate curses from the topsail-yard-arms, when most they teeter over to a seething sea; but in all my voyagings, seldom have I heard a common oath when God's burning finger has been laid on the ship; when His "Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin" has been woven into the shrouds and the cordage.



While this pallidness was burning aloft, few words were heard from the enchanted crew; who in one thick cluster stood on the forecandle, all their eyes gleaming in that pale phosphorescence, like a far away constellation of stars.



Relieved against the ghostly light, the gigantic jet negro, Daggoo, loomed up to thrice his real stature, and seemed the black cloud from which the thunder had come.



The parted mouth of Tashtego revealed his shark-white teeth, which strangely gleamed as if they too had been tipped by corpusants; while lit up by the preternatural light, Queequeg's tattooing burned like Satanic blue flames on his body.



The tableau all waned at last with the pallidness aloft; and once more the Pequod and every soul on her decks were wrapped in a pall.



A moment or two passed, when Starbuck, going forward, pushed against some one.



It was Stubb.



"What thinkest thou now, man; I heard thy cry; it was not the same in the song."



"No, no, it wasn't; I said the corpusants have mercy on us all; and I hope they will, still.



But do they only have mercy on long faces?



--have they no bowels for a laugh?



And look ye, Mr. Starbuck--but it's too dark to look.



Hear me, then: I take that mast-head flame we saw for a sign of good luck; for those masts are rooted in a hold that is going to be chock a' block with sperm-oil, d'ye see; and so, all that sperm will work up into the masts, like sap in a tree.



Yes, our three masts will yet be as three spermaceti candles--that's the good promise we saw."



At that moment Starbuck caught sight of Stubb's face slowly beginning to glimmer into sight.



Glancing upwards, he cried: "See!



see!"



and once more the high tapering flames were beheld with what seemed redoubled supernaturalness in their pallor.



"The corpusants have mercy on us all," cried Stubb, again.



At the base of the mainmast, full beneath the doubloon and the flame, the Parsee was kneeling in Ahab's front, but with his head bowed away from him; while near by, from the arched and overhanging rigging, where they had just been engaged securing a spar, a number of the seamen, arrested by the glare, now cohered together, and hung pendulous, like a knot of numbed wasps from a drooping, orchard twig.



In various enchanted attitudes, like the standing, or stepping, or running skeletons in Herculeum, others remained rooted to the deck; but all their eyes upcast.



"Aye, aye, men!"



cried Ahab.



"Look up at it; mark it well; the white flame but lights the way to the White Whale!"



Hand me those mainmast links there; I would fain feel this pulse, and let mine beat against it; blood against fire!



So."



Then turning--the last link held fast in his left hand, he put his foot upon the Parsee; and with fixed upward eye, and high-flung right arm, he stood erect before the lofty tri-pointed trinity of flames.

? !

"Oh!



thou clear spirit of clear fire, whom on these seas I as Persian once did worship, till in the sacramental act so burned by thee, that to this hour I bear the scar; I now know thee, thou clear spirit, and I now know that thy right worship is defiance.



To neither love nor reverence wilt thou be kind; and e'en for hate thou canst but kill; and all are killed.



No fearless fool now fronts thee.



I own thy speechless, powerless power; but to the last gasp of my earthquake life will dispute its unconditional, unintegral mastery in me.









## CHAPTER 120

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# The Deck Towards The End Of The First Night Watch



AHAB STANDING BY THE HELM.



STARBUCK APPROACHING HIM.



"We must send down the main-top-sail yard, sir.



The band is working loose and the lee lift is half-stranded.



Shall I strike it, sir?"



"Strike nothing; lash it.



If I had sky-sail poles, I'd sway them up now."



"Sir!



--in God's name!



--sir?"



"Well."



"The anchors are working, sir.



Shall I get them inboard?"



"Strike nothing, and stir nothing, but lash everything.



The wind rises, but it has not got up to my table-lands yet.



Quick, and see to it.



--By masts and keels!



he takes me for the hunch-backed skipper of some coasting smack.



Send down my main-top-sail yard!



Ho, gluepots!



Loftiest trucks were made for wildest winds, and this brain-truck of mine now sails amid the cloud-scut.



Shall I strike that?



Oh, none but cowards send down their brain-trucks in tempest time.



What a hooroosh aloft there!



I would e'en take it for sublime, did I not know that the colic is a noisy malady.



Oh, take medicine, take medicine!"



# CHAPTER 121



# Midnight



--The Forecastle Bulwarks.



STUBB AND FLASK MOUNTED ON THEM, AND PASSING ADDITIONAL LASHINGS OVER THE ANCHORS THERE HANGING.



"No, Stubb; you may pound that knot there as much as you please, but you will never pound into me what you were just now saying.



And how long ago is it since you said the very contrary?



Didn't you once say that whatever ship Ahab sails in, that ship should pay something extra on its insurance policy, just as though it were loaded with powder barrels aft and boxes of lucifers forward?



Stop, now; didn't you say so?"

"Well, suppose I did?



What then?



I've part changed my flesh since that time, why not my mind?



Besides, supposing we ARE loaded with powder barrels aft and lucifers forward; how the devil could the lucifers get afire in this drenching spray here?



Why, my little man, you have pretty red hair, but you couldn't get afire now.



Shake yourself; you're Aquarius, or the water-bearer, Flask; might fill pitchers at your coat collar.



Don't you see, then, that for these extra risks the Marine Insurance companies have extra guarantees?









## CHAPTER 123



# The Musket



During the most violent shocks of the Typhoon, the man at the Pequod's jaw-bone tiller had several times been reelingly hurled to the deck by its spasmodic motions, even though preventer tackles had been attached to it--for they were slack--because some play to the tiller was indispensable.



In a severe gale like this, while the ship is but a tossed shuttlecock to the blast, it is by no means uncommon to see the needles in the compasses, at intervals, go round and round.



It was thus with the Pequod's; at almost every shock the helmsman had not failed to notice the whirling velocity with which they revolved upon the cards; it is a sight that hardly anyone can behold without some sort of unwonted emotion.



Some hours after midnight, the Typhoon abated so much, that through the strenuous exertions of Starbuck and Stubb--one engaged forward and the other aft--the shivered remnants of the jib and fore and main-top-sails were cut adrift from the spars, and went eddying away to leeward, like the feathers of an albatross, which sometimes are cast to the winds when that storm-tossed bird is on the wing.



The three corresponding new sails were now bent and reefed, and a storm-trysail was set further aft; so that the ship soon went through the water with some precision again; and the course--for the present, East-south-east--which he was to steer, if practicable, was once more given to the helmsman.



For during the violence of the gale, he had only steered according to its vicissitudes.



But as he was now bringing the ship as near her course as possible, watching the compass meanwhile, lo!



a good sign!



the wind seemed coming round astern; aye, the foul breeze became fair!



Instantly the yards were squared, to the lively song of "HO!"







I can't withstand thee, then, old man.



Not reasoning; not remonstrance; not entreaty wilt thou hearken to; all this thou scornest.



Flat obedience to thy own flat commands, this is all thou breathest.



Aye, and say'st the men have vow'd thy vow; say'st all of us are Ahabs.



Great God forbid!



--But is there no other way?



no lawful way?



--Make him a prisoner to be taken home?



What!



hope to wrest this old man's living power from his own living hands?



Only a fool would try it.



Say he were pinioned even; knotted all over with ropes and hawsers; chained down to ring-bolts on this cabin floor; he would be more hideous than a caged tiger, then.



I could not endure the sight; could not possibly fly his howlings; all comfort, sleep itself, inestimable reason would leave me on the long intolerable voyage.



What, then, remains?



The land is hundreds of leagues away, and locked Japan the nearest.



I stand alone here upon an open sea, with two oceans and a whole continent between me and law.



--Aye, aye, 'tis so.



--Is heaven a murderer when its lightning strikes a would-be murderer in his bed, tindinger sheets and skin together?



--And would I be a murderer, then, if"--and slowly, stealthily, and half sideways looking, he placed the loaded musket's end against the door.



"On this level, Ahab's hammock swings within; his head this way.



A touch, and Starbuck may survive to hug his wife and child again.



--Oh Mary!



Mary!



--boy!



boy!



boy!



--But if I wake thee not to death, old man, who can tell to what unsounded deeps Starbuck's body this day week may sink, with all the crew!



Great God, where art Thou?



Shall I?



shall I?



--The wind has gone down and shifted, sir; the fore and main topsails are reefed and set; she heads her course."



"Stern all!



Oh Moby Dick, I clutch thy heart at last!"



Such were the sounds that now came hurtling from out the old man's tormented sleep, as if Starbuck's voice had caused the long dumb dream to speak.



The yet levelled musket shook like a drunkard's arm against the panel; Starbuck seemed wrestling with an angel; but turning from the door, he placed the death-tube in its rack, and left the place.



"He's too sound asleep, Mr. Stubb; go thou down, and wake him, and tell him.



I must see to the deck here.



Thou know'st what to say."

## CHAPTER 124



## The Needle



Next morning the not-yet-subsided sea rolled in long slow billows of mighty bulk, and striving in the Pequod's gurgling track, pushed her on like giants' palms outspread.



The strong, unstaggering breeze abounded so, that sky and air seemed vast outbellying sails; the whole world boomed before the wind.



Muffled in the full morning light, the invisible sun was only known by the spread intensity of his place; where his bayonet rays moved on in stacks.



Emblazonings, as of crowned Babylonian kings and queens, reigned over everything.



The sea was as a crucible of molten gold, that bubblingly leaps with light and heat.



Long maintaining an enchanted silence, Ahab stood apart; and every time the tetering ship loweringly pitched down her bowsprit, he turned to eye the bright sun's rays produced ahead; and when she profoundly settled by the stern, he turned behind, and saw the sun's rearward place, and how the same yellow rays were blending with his undeviating wake.



"Ha, ha, my ship!



thou mightest well be taken now for the sea-chariot of the sun.



Ho, ho!



all ye nations before my prow, I bring the sun to ye!



Yoke on the further billows; hallo!



a tandem, I drive the sea!"





But in either case, the needle never again, of itself, recovers the original virtue thus marred or lost; and if the binnacle compasses be affected, the same fate reaches all the others that may be in the ship; even were the lowermost one inserted into the kelson.



Deliberately standing before the binnacle, and eyeing the transpointed compasses, the old man, with the sharp of his extended hand, now took the precise bearing of the sun, and satisfied that the needles were exactly inverted, shouted out his orders for the ship's course to be changed accordingly.



The yards were hard up; and once more the Pequod thrust her undaunted bows into the opposing wind, for the supposed fair one had only been juggling her.



Meanwhile, whatever were his own secret thoughts, Starbuck said nothing, but quietly he issued all requisite orders; while Stubb and Flask--who in some small degree seemed then to be sharing his feelings--likewise unobtrusively acquiesced.



As for the men, though some of them lowly rumbled, their fear of Ahab was greater than their fear of Fate.



But as ever before, the pagan harpooners remained almost wholly unimpressed; or if impressed, it was only with a certain magnetism shot into their congenial hearts from inflexible Ahab's.



For a space the old man walked the deck in rolling reveries.



But chancing to slip with his ivory heel, he saw the crushed copper sight-tubes of the quadrant he had the day before dashed to the deck.



"Thou poor, proud heaven-gazer and sun's pilot!



yesterday I wrecked thee, and to-day the compasses would fain have wrecked me.



So, so.



But Ahab is lord over the level loadstone yet.



Mr. Starbuck--a lance without a pole; a top-maul, and the smallest of the sail-maker's needles.



Quick!"



Accessory, perhaps, to the impulse dictating the thing he was now about to do, were certain prudential motives, whose object might have been to revive the spirits of his crew by a stroke of his subtle skill, in a matter so wondrous as that of the inverted compasses.



Besides, the old man well knew that to steer by transpointed needles, though clumsily practicable, was not a thing to be passed over by superstitious sailors, without some shudderings and evil portents.



"Men," said he, steadily turning upon the crew, as the mate handed him the things he had demanded, "my men, the thunder turned old Ahab's needles; but out of this bit of steel Ahab can make one of his own, that will point as true as any."



Abashed glances of servile wonder were exchanged by the sailors, as this was said; and with fascinated eyes they awaited whatever magic might follow.



But Starbuck looked away.



With a blow from the top-maul Ahab knocked off the steel head of the lance, and then handing to the mate the long iron rod remaining, bade him hold it upright, without its touching the deck.



Then, with the maul, after repeatedly smiting the upper end of this iron rod, he placed the blunted needle endwise on the top of it, and less strongly hammered that, several times, the mate still holding the rod as before.



Then going through some small strange motions with it--whether indispensable to the magnetizing of the steel, or merely intended to augment the awe of the crew, is uncertain--he called for linen thread; and moving to the binnacle, slipped out the two reversed needles there, and horizontally suspended the sail-needle by its middle, over one of the compass-cards.



At first, the steel went round and round, quivering and vibrating at either end; but at last it settled to its place, when Ahab, who had been intently watching for this result, stepped frankly back from the binnacle, and pointing his stretched arm towards it, exclaimed,--"Look ye, for yourselves, if Ahab be not lord of the level loadstone!"



The sun is East, and that compass swears it!"



One after another they peered in, for nothing but their own eyes could persuade such ignorance as theirs, and one after another they slunk away.



In his fiery eyes of scorn and triumph, you then saw Ahab in all his fatal pride.

9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 6 3 5 5

7 8 5 5

# CHAPTER 125



# The Log And Line



While now the fated Pequod had been so long afloat this voyage, the log and line had but very seldom been in use.



Owing to a confident reliance upon other means of determining the vessel's place, some merchantmen, and many whalemens, especially when cruising, wholly neglect to heave the log; though at the same time, and frequently more for form's sake than anything else, regularly putting down upon the customary slate the course steered by the ship, as well as the presumed average rate of progression every hour.



It had been thus with the Pequod.



The wooden reel and angular log attached hung, long untouched, just beneath the railing of the after bulwarks.



Rains and spray had damped it; sun and wind had warped it; all the elements had combined to rot a thing that hung so idly.



But heedless of all this, his mood seized Ahab, as he happened to glance upon the reel, not many hours after the magnet scene, and he remembered how his quadrant was no more, and recalled his frantic oath about the level log and line.



The ship was sailing plungingly; astern the billows rolled in riots.



"Forward, there!



Heave the log!"



Two seamen came.



The golden-hued Tahitian and the grizzly Manxman.













"There go two daft ones now," muttered the old Manxman.



"One daft with strength, the other daft with weakness.



But here's the end of the rotten line--all dripping, too.



Mend it, eh?



I think we had best have a new line altogether.



I'll see Mr. Stubb about it."









And now I'm ordered to make a life-buoy of it.



It's like turning an old coat; going to bring the flesh on the other side now.



I don't like this cobbling sort of business--I don't like it at all; it's undignified; it's not my place.



Let tinkers' brats do tinkering; we are their betters.



I like to take in hand none but clean, virgin, fair-and-square mathematical jobs, something that regularly begins at the beginning, and is at the middle when midway, and comes to an end at the conclusion; not a cobbler's job, that's at an end in the middle, and at the beginning at the end.



It's the old woman's tricks to be giving cobbling jobs.



Lord!



what an affection all old women have for tinkers.



I know an old woman of sixty-five who ran away with a bald-headed young tinker once.



And that's the reason I never would work for lonely widow old women ashore, when I kept my job-shop in the Vineyard; they might have taken it into their lonely old heads to run off with me.



But heigh-ho!



there are no caps at sea but snow-caps.



Let me see.



Nail down the lid; caulk the seams; pay over the same with pitch; batten them down tight, and hang it with the snap-spring over the ship's stern.



Were ever such things done before with a coffin?



Some superstitious old carpenters, now, would be tied up in the rigging, ere they would do the job.



But I'm made of knotty Aroostook hemlock; I don't budge.



Cruppered with a coffin!



# CHAPTER 127



# The Deck



THE COFFIN LAID UPON TWO LINE-TUBS, BETWEEN THE VICE-BENCH AND THE OPEN HATCHWAY; THE CARPENTER CAULKING ITS SEAMS; THE STRING OF TWISTED OAKUM SLOWLY UNWINDING FROM A LARGE ROLL OF IT PLACED IN THE BOSOM OF HIS FROCK.



--AHAB COMES SLOWLY FROM THE CABIN-GANGWAY, AND HEARS PIP FOLLOWING HIM.



"Back, lad; I will be with ye again presently.



He goes!



Not this hand complies with my humor more genially than that boy.



--Middle aisle of a church!



What's here?"



"Life-buoy, sir.



Mr. Starbuck's orders.



Oh, look, sir!



Beware the hatchway!"



"Thank ye, man.



Thy coffin lies handy to the vault."



"Sir?



The hatchway?



oh!



So it does, sir, so it does."



"Art not thou the leg-maker?



Look, did not this stump come from thy shop?"



"I believe it did, sir; does the ferrule stand, sir?"



"Well enough.



But art thou not also the undertaker?"



"Aye, sir; I patched up this thing here as a coffin for Queequeg; but they've set me now to turning it into something else."



"Then tell me; art thou not an arrant, all-grasping, intermeddling, monopolising, heathenish old scamp, to be one day making legs, and the next day coffins to clap them in, and yet again life-buoys out of those same coffins?



Thou art as unprincipled as the gods, and as much of a jack-of-all-trades."



"But I do not mean anything, sir.



I do as I do."



"The gods again.



Hark ye, dost thou not ever sing working about a coffin?



The Titans, they say, hummed snatches when chipping out the craters for volcanoes; and the grave-digger in the play sings, spade in hand.



Dost thou never?"



"Sing, sir?



Do I sing?



Oh, I'm indifferent enough, sir, for that; but the reason why the grave-digger made music must have been because there was none in his spade, sir.



But the caulking mallet is full of it.



Hark to it."



"Aye, and that's because the lid there's a sounding-board; and what in all things makes the sounding-board is this-- there's naught beneath.



And yet, a coffin with a body in it rings pretty much the same, Carpenter.



Hast thou ever helped carry a bier, and heard the coffin knock against the churchyard gate, going in?



"Faith, sir, I've--" "Faith?



What's that?"



"Why, faith, sir, it's only a sort of exclamation-like--that's all, sir."



"Um, um; go on."



"I was about to say, sir, that--" "Art thou a silk-worm?



Dost thou spin thy own shroud out of thyself?



Look at thy bosom!



Despatch!



and get these traps out of sight."



"He goes aft.



That was sudden, now; but squalls come sudden in hot latitudes.



I've heard that the Isle of Albemarle, one of the Gallipagos, is cut by the Equator right in the middle.



Seems to me some sort of Equator cuts yon old man, too, right in his middle.



He's always under the Line--fiery hot, I tell ye!



He's looking this way--come, oakum; quick.



Here we go again.



This wooden mallet is the cork, and I'm the professor of musical glasses--tap, tap!"



(AHAB TO HIMSELF.



) "There's a sight!



There's a sound!



The grey-headed woodpecker tapping the hollow tree!



Blind and dumb might well be envied now.



See!



that thing rests on two line-tubs, full of tow-lines.



A most malicious wag, that fellow.



Rat-tat!



So man's seconds tick!



Oh!



how immaterial are all materials!



What things real are there, but imponderable thoughts?



Here now's the very dreaded symbol of grim death, by a mere hap, made the expressive sign of the help and hope of most endangered life.



A life-buoy of a coffin!



Does it go further?



Can it be that in some spiritual sense the coffin is, after all, but an immortality-preserver!



I'll think of that.



But no.



So far gone am I in the dark side of earth, that its other side, the theoretic bright one, seems but uncertain twilight to me.



Will ye never have done, Carpenter, with that accursed sound?



I go below; let me not see that thing here when I return again.



Now, then, Pip, we'll talk this over; I do suck most wondrous philosophies from thee!



Some unknown conduits from the unknown worlds must empty into thee!"



## CHAPTER 128

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# The Pequod Meets The Rachel



Next day, a large ship, the Rachel, was descried, bearing directly down upon the Pequod, all her spars thickly clustering with men.



At the time the Pequod was making good speed through the water; but as the broad-winged windward stranger shot nigh to her, the boastful sails all fell together as blank bladders that are burst, and all life fled from the smitten hull.



"Bad news; she brings bad news," muttered the old Manxman.



But ere her commander, who, with trumpet to mouth, stood up in his boat; ere he could hopefully hail, Ahab's voice was heard.



"Hast seen the White Whale?"



"Aye, yesterday.



Have ye seen a whale-boat adrift?"



Throttling his joy, Ahab negatively answered this unexpected question; and would then have fain boarded the stranger, when the stranger captain himself, having stopped his vessel's way, was seen descending her side.



A few keen pulls, and his boat-hook soon clinched the Pequod's main-chains, and he sprang to the deck.



Immediately he was recognised by Ahab for a Nantucketer he knew.



But no formal salutation was exchanged.



"Where was he?"



--not killed!



--not killed!"



cried Ahab, closely advancing.



"How was it?"



It seemed that somewhat late on the afternoon of the day previous, while three of the stranger's boats were engaged with a shoal of whales, which had led them some four or five miles from the ship; and while they were yet in swift chase to windward, the white hump and head of Moby Dick had suddenly loomed up out of the water, not very far to leeward; whereupon, the fourth rigged boat--a reserved one--had been instantly lowered in chase.



After a keen sail before the wind, this fourth boat--the swiftest keeled of all--seemed to have succeeded in fastening--at least, as well as the man at the mast-head could tell anything about it.



In the distance he saw the diminished dotted boat; and then a swift gleam of bubbling white water; and after that nothing more; whence it was concluded that the stricken whale must have indefinitely run away with his pursuers, as often happens.



There was some apprehension, but no positive alarm, as yet.



The recall signals were placed in the rigging; darkness came on; and forced to pick up her three far to windward boats--ere going in quest of the fourth one in the precisely opposite direction--the ship had not only been necessitated to leave that boat to its fate till near midnight, but, for the time, to increase her distance from it.



But the rest of her crew being at last safe aboard, she crowded all sail--stunsail on stunsail--after the missing boat; kindling a fire in her try-pots for a beacon; and every other man aloft on the look-out.



But though when she had thus sailed a sufficient distance to gain the presumed place of the absent ones when last seen; though she then paused to lower her spare boats to pull all around her; and not finding anything, had again dashed on; again paused, and lowered her boats; and though she had thus continued doing till daylight; yet not the least glimpse of the missing keel had been seen.



The story told, the stranger Captain immediately went on to reveal his object in boarding the Pequod.



He desired that ship to unite with his own in the search; by sailing over the sea some four or five miles apart, on parallel lines, and so sweeping a double horizon, as it were.



"I will wager something now," whispered Stubb to Flask, "that some one in that missing boat wore off that Captain's best coat; mayhap, his watch--he's so cursed anxious to get it back.



Who ever heard of two pious whale-ships cruising after one missing whale-boat in the height of the whaling season?



See, Flask, only see how pale he looks--pale in the very buttons of his eyes--look--it wasn't the coat--it must have been the--" "My boy, my own boy is among them.



For God's sake--I beg, I conjure"--here exclaimed the stranger Captain to Ahab, who thus far had but icily received his petition.



"For eight-and-forty hours let me charter your ship--I will gladly pay for it, and roundly pay for it--if there be no other way--for eight-and-forty hours only--only that--you must, oh, you must, and you SHALL do this thing."



"His son!"



cried Stubb, "oh, it's his son he's lost!



I take back the coat and watch--what says Ahab?



We must save that boy."



"He's drowned with the rest on 'em, last night," said the old Manx sailor standing behind them; "I heard; all of ye heard their spirits."



Now, as it shortly turned out, what made this incident of the Rachel's the more melancholy, was the circumstance, that not only was one of the Captain's sons among the number of the missing boat's crew; but among the number of the other boat's crews, at the same time, but on the other hand, separated from the ship during the dark vicissitudes of the chase, there had been still another son; as that for a time, the wretched father was plunged to the bottom of the cruellest perplexity; which was only solved for him by his chief mate's instinctively adopting the ordinary procedure of a whale-ship in such emergencies, that is, when placed between jeopardized but divided boats, always to pick up the majority first.



But the captain, for some unknown constitutional reason, had refrained from mentioning all this, and not till forced to it by Ahab's iciness did he allude to his one yet missing boy; a little lad, but twelve years old, whose father with the earnest but unmisgiving hardihood of a Nantucketer's paternal love, had thus early sought to initiate him in the perils and wonders of a vocation almost immemorially the destiny of all his race.



Nor does it unfrequently occur, that Nantucket captains will send a son of such tender age away from them, for a protracted three or four years' voyage in some other ship than their own; so that their first knowledge of a whaleman's career shall be unenervated by any chance display of a father's natural but untimely partiality, or undue apprehensiveness and concern.



Meantime, now the stranger was still beseeching his poor boon of Ahab; and Ahab still stood like an anvil, receiving every shock, but without the least quivering of his own.



"I will not go," said the stranger, "till you say aye to me.



Do to me as you would have me do to you in the like case.



For YOU too have a boy, Captain Ahab--though but a child, and nestling safely at home now--a child of your old age too--Yes, yes, you relent; I see it--run, run, men, now, and stand by to square in the yards."



"Avast," cried Ahab--"touch not a rope-yarn"; then in a voice that prolongingly moulded every word--"Captain Gardiner, I will not do it.



Even now I lose time.



Good-bye, good-bye.



God bless ye, man, and may I forgive myself, but I must go.



Mr. Starbuck, look at the binnacle watch, and in three minutes from this present instant warn off all strangers: then brace forward again, and let the ship sail as before."



Hurriedly turning, with averted face, he descended into his cabin, leaving the strange captain transfixed at this unconditional and utter rejection of his so earnest suit.



But starting from his enchantment, Gardiner silently hurried to the side; more fell than stepped into his boat, and returned to his ship.



Soon the two ships diverged their wakes; and long as the strange vessel was in view, she was seen to yaw hither and thither at every dark spot, however small, on the sea.



This way and that her yards were swung round; starboard and larboard, she continued to tack; now she beat against a head sea; and again it pushed her before it; while all the while, her masts and yards were thickly clustered with men, as three tall cherry trees, when the boys are cherrying among the boughs.



But by her still halting course and winding, woeful way, you plainly saw that this ship that so wept with spray, still remained without comfort.



She was Rachel, weeping for her children, because they were not.



# CHAPTER 129



# The Cabin



(AHAB MOVING TO GO ON DECK; PIP CATCHES HIM BY THE HAND TO FOLLOW.



) "Lad, lad, I tell thee thou must not follow Ahab now.



The hour is coming when Ahab would not scare thee from him, yet would not have thee by him.



There is that in thee, poor lad, which I feel too curing to my malady.



Like cures like; and for this hunt, my malady becomes my most desired health.



Do thou abide below here, where they shall serve thee, as if thou wert the captain.



Aye, lad, thou shalt sit here in my own screwed chair; another screw to it, thou must be."



"No, no, no!



ye have not a whole body, sir; do ye but use poor me for your one lost leg; only tread upon me, sir; I ask no more, so I remain a part of ye."



"Oh!



spite of million villains, this makes me a bigot in the fadeless fidelity of man!



--and a black!



and crazy!



--but methinks like-cures-like applies to him too; he grows so sane again."



"They tell me, sir, that Stubb did once desert poor little Pip, whose drowned bones now show white, for all the blackness of his living skin.



But I will never desert ye, sir, as Stubb did him.



Sir, I must go with ye."



"If thou speakest thus to me much more, Ahab's purpose keels up in him.



I tell thee no; it cannot be."



"Oh good master, master, master!



"Weep so, and I will murder thee!



have a care, for Ahab too is mad.



Listen, and thou wilt often hear my ivory foot upon the deck, and still know that I am there.



And now I quit thee.



Thy hand!



--Met!



True art thou, lad, as the circumference to its centre.



So: God for ever bless thee; and if it come to that,--God for ever save thee, let what will befall."



(AHAB GOES; PIP STEPS ONE STEP FORWARD.



) "Here he this instant stood; I stand in his air,--but I'm alone.



Now were even poor Pip here I could endure it, but he's missing.



Pip!



Pip!



Ding, dong, ding!



Who's seen Pip?



He must be up here; let's try the door.



What?



neither lock, nor bolt, nor bar; and yet there's no opening it.



It must be the spell; he told me to stay here: Aye, and told me this screwed chair was mine.



Here, then, I'll seat me, against the transom, in the ship's full middle, all her keel and her three masts before me.



Here, our old sailors say, in their black seventy-fours great admirals sometimes sit at table, and lord it over rows of captains and lieutenants.



Ha!



what's this?



epaulets!



epaulets!



the epaulets all come crowding!



Pass round the decanters; glad to see ye; fill up, monsieurs!



What an odd feeling, now, when a black boy's host to white men with gold lace upon their coats!



--Monsieurs, have ye seen one Pip?



--a little negro lad, five feet high, hang-dog look, and cowardly!



Jumped from a whale-boat once;--seen him?



No!



Well then, fill up again, captains, and let's drink shame upon all cowards!



I name no names.



Shame upon them!



Put one foot upon the table.



Shame upon all cowards.



--Hist!



above there, I hear ivory--Oh, master!



master!



I am indeed down-hearted when you walk over me.



But here I'll stay, though this stern strikes rocks; and they bulge through; and oysters come to join me."



# CHAPTER 130



# The Hat



And now that at the proper time and place, after so long and wide a preliminary cruise, Ahab,--all other whaling waters swept--seemed to have chased his foe into an ocean-fold, to slay him the more securely there; now, that he found himself hard by the very latitude and longitude where his tormenting wound had been inflicted; now that a vessel had been spoken which on the very day preceding had actually encountered Moby Dick;--and now that all his successive meetings with various ships contrastingly concurred to show the demoniac indifference with which the white whale tore his hunters, whether sinning or sinned against; now it was that there lurked a something in the old man's eyes, which it was hardly sufferable for feeble souls to see.



As the unsetting polar star, which through the livelong, arctic, six months' night sustains its piercing, steady, central gaze; so Ahab's purpose now fixedly gleamed down upon the constant midnight of the gloomy crew.



It domineered above them so, that all their bodings, doubts, misgivings, fears, were fain to hide beneath their souls, and not sprout forth a single spear or leaf.



In this foreshadowing interval too, all humor, forced or natural, vanished.



Stubb no more strove to raise a smile; Starbuck no more strove to check one.



Alike, joy and sorrow, hope and fear, seemed ground to finest dust, and powdered, for the time, in the clamped mortar of Ahab's iron soul.



Like machines, they dumbly moved about the deck, ever conscious that the old man's despot eye was on them.



But did you deeply scan him in his more secret confidential hours; when he thought no glance but one was on him; then you would have seen that even as Ahab's eyes so awed the crew's, the inscrutable Parsee's glance awed his; or somehow, at least, in some wild way, at times affected it.



Such an added, gliding strangeness began to invest the thin Fedallah now; such ceaseless shudderings shook him; that the men looked dubious at him; half uncertain, as it seemed, whether indeed he were a mortal substance, or else a tremulous shadow cast upon the deck by some unseen being's body.









# The Pequod Meets The Delight



The intense Pequod sailed on; the rolling waves and days went by; the life-buoy-coffin still lightly swung; and another ship, most miserably misnamed the Delight, was descried.



As she drew nigh, all eyes were fixed upon her broad beams, called shears, which, in some whaling-ships, cross the quarter-deck at the height of eight or nine feet; serving to carry the spare, unrigged, or disabled boats.



Upon the stranger's shears were beheld the shattered, white ribs, and some few splintered planks, of what had once been a whale-boat; but you now saw through this wreck, as plainly as you see through the peeled, half-unhinged, and bleaching skeleton of a horse.



"Hast seen the White Whale?"



"Look!"



replied the hollow-cheeked captain from his taffrail; and with his trumpet he pointed to the wreck.



"Hast killed him?"



"The harpoon is not yet forged that ever will do that," answered the other, sadly glancing upon a rounded hammock on the deck, whose gathered sides some noiseless sailors were busy in sewing together.



"Not forged!"



and snatching Perth's levelled iron from the crotch, Ahab held it out, exclaiming--"Look ye, Nantucketer; here in this hand I hold his death!"



# The Symphony



It was a clear steel-blue day.



The firmaments of air and sea were hardly separable in that all-pervading azure; only, the pensive air was transparently pure and soft, with a woman's look, and the robust and man-like sea heaved with long, strong, lingering swells, as Samson's chest in his sleep.



Hither, and thither, on high, glided the snow-white wings of small, unspeckled birds; these were the gentle thoughts of the feminine air; but to and fro in the deeps, far down in the bottomless blue, rushed mighty leviathans, sword-fish, and sharks; and these were the strong, troubled, murderous thinkings of the masculine sea.



But though thus contrasting within, the contrast was only in shades and shadows without; those two seemed one; it was only the sex, as it were, that distinguished them.



Aloft, like a royal czar and king, the sun seemed giving this gentle air to this bold and rolling sea; even as bride to groom.



And at the girdling line of the horizon, a soft and tremulous motion--most seen here at the Equator--denoted the fond, throbbing trust, the loving alarms, with which the poor bride gave her bosom away.



Tied up and twisted; gnarled and knotted with wrinkles; haggardly firm and unyielding; his eyes glowing like coals, that still glow in the ashes of ruin; untottering Ahab stood forth in the clearness of the morn; lifting his splintered helmet of a brow to the fair girl's forehead of heaven.



Oh, immortal infancy, and innocence of the azure!



Invisible winged creatures that frolic all round us!



Sweet childhood of air and sky!



how oblivious were ye of old Ahab's close-coiled woe!













Look!



see yon Albicore!



who put it into him to chase and fang that flying-fish?



Where do murderers go, man!



Who's to doom, when the judge himself is dragged to the bar?



But it is a mild, mild wind, and a mild looking sky; and the air smells now, as if it blew from a far-away meadow; they have been making hay somewhere under the slopes of the Andes, Starbuck, and the mowers are sleeping among the new-mown hay.



Sleeping?



Aye, toil we how we may, we all sleep at last on the field.



Sleep?



Aye, and rust amid greenness; as last year's scythes flung down, and left in the half-cut swaths--Starbuck!"



But blanched to a corpse's hue with despair, the Mate had stolen away.



Ahab crossed the deck to gaze over on the other side; but started at two reflected, fixed eyes in the water there.



Fedallah was motionlessly leaning over the same rail.









"He is heading straight to leeward, sir," cried Stubb, "right away from us; cannot have seen the ship yet."



"Be dumb, man!"



Stand by the braces!



Hard down the helm!



--brace up!



Shiver her!



--shiver her!



--So; well that!

Boats, boats!"



Soon all the boats but Starbuck's were dropped; all the boat-sails set--all the paddles plying; with rippling swiftness, shooting to leeward; and Ahab heading the onset.



A pale, death-glimmer lit up Fedallah's sunken eyes; a hideous motion gnawed his mouth.



Like noiseless nautilus shells, their light prows sped through the sea; but only slowly they neared the foe.



As they neared him, the ocean grew still more smooth; seemed drawing a carpet over its waves; seemed a noon-meadow, so serenely it spread.



At length the breathless hunter came so nigh his seemingly unsuspecting prey, that his entire dazzling hump was distinctly visible, sliding along the sea as if an isolated thing, and continually set in a revolving ring of finest, fleecy, greenish foam.



He saw the vast, involved wrinkles of the slightly projecting head beyond.



Before it, far out on the soft Turkish-rugged waters, went the glistening white shadow from his broad, milky forehead, a musical rippling playfully accompanying the shade; and behind, the blue waters interchangeably flowed over into the moving valley of his steady wake; and on either hand bright bubbles arose and danced by his side.



But these were broken again by the light toes of hundreds of gay fowl softly feathering the sea, alternate with their fitful flight; and like to some flag-staff rising from the painted hull of an argosy, the tall but shattered pole of a recent lance projected from the white whale's back; and at intervals one of the cloud of soft-toed fowls hovering, and to and fro skimming like a canopy over the fish, silently perched and rocked on this pole, the long tail feathers streaming like pennons.



A gentle joyousness--a mighty mildness of repose in swiftness, invested the gliding whale.



Not the white bull Jupiter swimming away with ravished Europa clinging to his graceful horns; his lovely, leering eyes sideways intent upon the maid; with smooth bewitching fleetness, rippling straight for the nuptial bower in Crete; not Jove, not that great majesty Supreme!



did surpass the glorified White Whale as he so divinely swam.



On each soft side--coincident with the parted swell, that but once leaving him, then flowed so wide away--on each bright side, the whale shed off enticings.



No wonder there had been some among the hunters who namelessly transported and allured by all this serenity, had ventured to assail it; but had fatally found that quietude but the vesture of tornadoes.



Yet calm, enticing calm, oh, whale!



thou glidest on, to all who for the first time eye thee, no matter how many in that same way thou may'st have bejuggled and destroyed before.



And thus, through the serene tranquillities of the tropical sea, among waves whose hand-clappings were suspended by exceeding rapture, Moby Dick moved on, still withholding from sight the full terrors of his submerged trunk, entirely hiding the wrenched hideousness of his jaw.



But soon the fore part of him slowly rose from the water; for an instant his whole marbleized body formed a high arch, like Virginia's Natural Bridge, and warningly waving his bannered flukes in the air, the grand god revealed himself, sounded, and went out of sight.



Hoveringly halting, and dipping on the wing, the white sea-fowls longingly lingered over the agitated pool that he left.



With oars apeak, and paddles down, the sheets of their sails adrift, the three boats now stilly floated, awaiting Moby Dick's reappearance.



"An hour," said Ahab, standing rooted in his boat's stern; and he gazed beyond the whale's place, towards the dim blue spaces and wide wooing vacancies to leeward.



It was only an instant; for again his eyes seemed whirling round in his head as he swept the watery circle.



The breeze now freshened; the sea began to swell.



"The birds!



--the birds!"



cried Tashtego.



In long Indian file, as when herons take wing, the white birds were now all flying towards Ahab's boat; and when within a few yards began fluttering over the water there, wheeling round and round, with joyous, expectant cries.



Their vision was keener than man's; Ahab could discover no sign in the sea.



But suddenly as he peered down and down into its depths, he profoundly saw a white living spot no bigger than a white weasel, with wonderful celerity uprising, and magnifying as it rose, till it turned, and then there were plainly revealed two long crooked rows of white, glistening teeth, floating up from the undiscoverable bottom.



It was Moby Dick's open mouth and scrolled jaw; his vast, shadowed bulk still half blending with the blue of the sea.



The glittering mouth yawned beneath the boat like an open-doored marble tomb; and giving one sidelong sweep with his steering oar, Ahab whirled the craft aside from this tremendous apparition.



Then, calling upon Fedallah to change places with him, went forward to the bows, and seizing Perth's harpoon, commanded his crew to grasp their oars and stand by to stern.



Now, by reason of this timely spinning round the boat upon its axis, its bow, by anticipation, was made to face the whale's head while yet under water.



But as if perceiving this stratagem, Moby Dick, with that malicious intelligence ascribed to him, sidelingly transplanted himself, as it were, in an instant, shooting his pleated head lengthwise beneath the boat.



Through and through; through every plank and each rib, it thrilled for an instant, the whale obliquely lying on his back, in the manner of a biting shark, slowly and feelingly taking its bows full within his mouth, so that the long, narrow, scrolled lower jaw curled high up into the open air, and one of the teeth caught in a row-lock.



The bluish pearl-white of the inside of the jaw was within six inches of Ahab's head, and reached higher than that.



In this attitude the White Whale now shook the slight cedar as a mildly cruel cat her mouse.



With unastonished eyes Fedallah gazed, and crossed his arms; but the tiger-yellow crew were tumbling over each other's heads to gain the uttermost stern.



And now, while both elastic gunwales were springing in and out, as the whale dallied with the doomed craft in this devilish way; and from his body being submerged beneath the boat, he could not be darted at from the bows, for the bows were almost inside of him, as it were; and while the other boats involuntarily paused, as before a quick crisis impossible to withstand, then it was that monomaniac Ahab, furious with this tantalizing vicinity of his foe, which placed him all alive and helpless in the very jaws he hated; frenzied with all this, he seized the long bone with his naked hands, and wildly strove to wrench it from its gripe.











If the gods think to speak outright to man, they will honourably speak outright; not shake their heads, and give an old wives' darkling hint.



--Begone!



Ye two are the opposite poles of one thing; Starbuck is Stubb reversed, and Stubb is Starbuck; and ye two are all mankind; and Ahab stands alone among the millions of the peopled earth, nor gods nor men his neighbors!



Cold, cold--I shiver!



--How now?



Aloft there!



D'ye see him?



Sing out for every spout, though he spout ten times a second!"



The day was nearly done; only the hem of his golden robe was rustling.



Soon, it was almost dark, but the look-out men still remained unset.



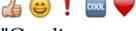
"Can't see the spout now, sir;--too dark"--cried a voice from the air.



"How heading when last seen?"



"As before, sir,--straight to leeward."



"Good!



he will travel slower now 'tis night.



Down royals and top-gallant stun-sails, Mr. Starbuck.



We must not run over him before morning; he's making a passage now, and may heave-to a while.



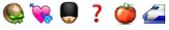
Helm there!



keep her full before the wind!



--Aloft!



come down!



--Mr. Stubb, send a fresh hand to the fore-mast head, and see it manned till morning."



--Then advancing towards the doubloon in the main-mast--"Men, this gold is mine, for I earned it; but I shall let it abide here till the White Whale is dead; and then, whosoever of ye first raises him, upon the day he shall be killed, this gold is that man's; and if on that day I shall again raise him, then, ten times its sum shall be divided among all of ye!



Away now!



--the deck is thine, sir!"



And so saying, he placed himself half way within the scuttle, and slouching his hat, stood there till dawn, except when at intervals rousing himself to see how the night wore on.











cried Ahab, "thy hour and thy harpoon are at hand!"



--Down!



down all of ye, but one man at the fore.



The boats!



--stand by!"



Unmindful of the tedious rope-ladders of the shrouds, the men, like shooting stars, slid to the deck, by the isolated backstays and halyards; while Ahab, less dartingly, but still rapidly was dropped from his perch.



"Lower away," he cried, so soon as he had reached his boat--a spare one, rigged the afternoon previous.



"Mr. Starbuck, the ship is thine--keep away from the boats, but keep near them.



Lower, all!"



As if to strike a quick terror into them, by this time being the first assailant himself, Moby Dick had turned, and was now coming for the three crews.



Ahab's boat was central; and cheering his men, he told them he would take the whale head-and-head,--that is, pull straight up to his forehead,--a not uncommon thing; for when within a certain limit, such a course excludes the coming onset from the whale's sidelong vision.



But ere that close limit was gained, and while yet all three boats were plain as the ship's three masts to his eye; the White Whale churning himself into furious speed, almost in an instant as it were, rushing among the boats with open jaws, and a lashing tail, offered appalling battle on every side; and heedless of the irons darted at him from every boat, seemed only intent on annihilating each separate plank of which those boats were made.



But skilfully manoeuvred, incessantly wheeling like trained chargers in the field; the boats for a while eluded him; though, at times, but by a plank's breadth; while all the time, Ahab's unearthly slogan tore every other cry but his to shreds.



But at last in his untraceable evolutions, the White Whale so crossed and recrossed, and in a thousand ways entangled the slack of the three lines now fast to him, that they foreshortened, and, of themselves, warped the devoted boats towards the planted irons in him; though now for a moment the whale drew aside a little, as if to rally for a more tremendous charge.



Seizing that opportunity, Ahab first paid out more line: and then was rapidly hauling and jerking in upon it again--hoping that way to disencumber it of some snarls--when lo!



--a sight more savage than the embattled teeth of sharks!



Caught and twisted--corkscrewed in the mazes of the line, loose harpoons and lances, with all their bristling barbs and points, came flashing and dripping up to the chocks in the bows of Ahab's boat.



Only one thing could be done.



Seizing the boat-knife, he critically reached within--through--and then, without--the rays of steel; dragged in the line beyond, passed it, inboard, to the bowsman, and then, twice sundering the rope near the chocks--dropped the intercepted fagot of steel into the sea; and was all fast again.



That instant, the White Whale made a sudden rush among the remaining tangles of the other lines; by so doing, irresistibly dragged the more involved boats of Stubb and Flask towards his flukes; dashed them together like two rolling husks on a surf-beaten beach, and then, diving down into the sea, disappeared in a boiling maelstrom, in which, for a space, the odorous cedar chips of the wrecks danced round and round, like the grated nutmeg in a swiftly stirred bowl of punch.



While the two crews were yet circling in the waters, reaching out after the revolving line-tubs, oars, and other floating furniture, while aslope little Flask bobbed up and down like an empty vial, twitching his legs upwards to escape the dreaded jaws of sharks; and Stubb was lustily singing out for some one to ladle him up; and while the old man's line--now parting--admitted of his pulling into the creamy pool to rescue whom he could;--in that wild simultaneousness of a thousand concreted perils,--Ahab's yet unstricken boat seemed drawn up towards Heaven by invisible wires,--as, arrow-like, shooting perpendicularly from the sea, the White Whale dashed his broad forehead against its bottom, and sent it, turning over and over, into the air; till it fell again--gunwale downwards--and Ahab and his men struggled out from under it, like seals from a sea-side cave.



The first uprising momentum of the whale--modifying its direction as he struck the surface--involuntarily launched him along it, to a little distance from the centre of the destruction he had made; and with his back to it, he now lay for a moment slowly feeling with his flukes from side to side; and whenever a stray oar, bit of plank, the least chip or crumb of the boats touched his skin, his tail swiftly drew back, and came sideways smiting the sea.



But soon, as if satisfied that his work for that time was done, he pushed his pleated forehead through the ocean, and trailing after him the intertangled lines, continued his leeward way at a traveller's methodic pace.



As before, the attentive ship having descried the whole fight, again came bearing down to the rescue, and dropping a boat, picked up the floating mariners, tubs, oars, and whatever else could be caught at, and safely landed them on her decks.



Some sprained shoulders, wrists, and ankles; livid contusions; wrenched harpoons and lances; inextricable intricacies of rope; shattered oars and planks; all these were there; but no fatal or even serious ill seemed to have befallen any one.



As with Fedallah the day before, so Ahab was now found grimly clinging to his boat's broken half, which afforded a comparatively easy float; nor did it so exhaust him as the previous day's mishap.



But when he was helped to the deck, all eyes were fastened upon him; as instead of standing by himself he still half-hung upon the shoulder of Starbuck, who had thus far been the foremost to assist him.



His ivory leg had been snapped off, leaving but one short sharp splinter.



"Aye, aye, Starbuck, 'tis sweet to lean sometimes, be the leaner who he will; and would old Ahab had leaned oftener than he has."



"The ferrule has not stood, sir," said the carpenter, now coming up; "I put good work into that leg."



"But no bones broken, sir, I hope," said Stubb with true concern.



"Aye!



and all splintered to pieces, Stubb!



--d'ye see it.



--But even with a broken bone, old Ahab is untouched; and I account no living bone of mine one jot more me, than this dead one that's lost.



Nor white whale, nor man, nor fiend, can so much as graze old Ahab in his own proper and inaccessible being.



Can any lead touch yonder floor, any mast scrape yonder roof?



--Aloft there!



which way?"



"Dead to leeward, sir."



"Up helm, then; pile on the sail again, ship keepers!



down the rest of the spare boats and rig them--Mr. Starbuck away, and muster the boat's crews."



"Let me first help thee towards the bulwarks, sir."



"Oh, oh, oh!"



how this splinter gores me now!



Accursed fate!



that the unconquerable captain in the soul should have such a craven mate!"



"Sir?"



"My body, man, not thee.



Give me something for a cane--there, that shivered lance will do.



Muster the men.



Surely I have not seen him yet.



By heaven it cannot be!



--missing?



--quick!



call them all."



The old man's hinted thought was true.



Upon mustering the company, the Parsee was not there.



"The Parsee!"



cried Stubb--"he must have been caught in--" "The black vomit wrench thee!



--run all of ye above, aloof, cabin, forecandle--find him--not gone--not gone!"



But quickly they returned to him with the tidings that the Parsee was nowhere to be found.



"Aye, sir," said Stubb--"caught among the tangles of your line--I thought I saw him dragging under."



"MY line!



MY line?



Gone?

--gone?



What means that little word?



--What death-knell rings in it, that old Ahab shakes as if he were the belfry.



The harpoon, too!



--toss over the litter there,--d'ye see it?



--the forged iron, men, the white whale's--no, no, no,--blistered fool!



this hand did dart it!



--'tis in the fish!



--Aloft there!



Keep him nailed--Quick!



--all hands to the rigging of the boats--collect the oars--harpooneers!



the irons, the irons!



--hoist the royals higher--a pull on all the sheets!



--helm there!



steady, steady for your life!



I'll ten times girdle the unmeasured globe; yea and dive straight through it, but I'll slay him yet!



"Great God!



but for one single instant show thyself," cried Starbuck; "never, never wilt thou capture him, old man--In Jesus' name no more of this, that's worse than devil's madness.



Two days chased; twice stove to splinters; thy very leg once more snatched from under thee; thy evil shadow gone--all good angels mobbing thee with warnings:-- "What more wouldst thou have?



--Shall we keep chasing this murderous fish till he swamps the last man?



Shall we be dragged by him to the bottom of the sea?



Shall we be towed by him to the infernal world?



Oh, oh,--Impiety and blasphemy to hunt him more!"



"Starbuck, of late I've felt strangely moved to thee; ever since that hour we both saw--thou know'st what, in one another's eyes.



But in this matter of the whale, be the front of thy face to me as the palm of this hand--a lipless, unfeatured blank.



Ahab is for ever Ahab, man.



This whole act's immutably decreed.



'Twas rehearsed by thee and me a billion years before this ocean rolled.



Fool!



I am the Fates' lieutenant; I act under orders.



Look thou, underling!



that thou obeyest mine.



--Stand round me, men.



Ye see an old man cut down to the stump; leaning on a shivered lance; propped up on a lonely foot.



'Tis Ahab--his body's part; but Ahab's soul's a centipede, that moves upon a hundred legs.



I feel strained, half stranded, as ropes that tow dismayed frigates in a gale; and I may look so.



But ere I break, yell hear me crack; and till ye hear THAT, know that Ahab's hawser tows his purpose yet.



Believe ye, men, in the things called omens?



Then laugh aloud, and cry encore!



For ere they drown, drowning things will twice rise to the surface; then rise again, to sink for evermore.



So with Moby Dick--two days he's floated--tomorrow will be the third.



Aye, men, he'll rise once more,--but only to spout his last!



D'ye feel brave men, brave?"



"As fearless fire," cried Stubb.



"And as mechanical," muttered Ahab.



Then as the men went forward, he muttered on: "The things called omens!"



And yesterday I talked the same to Starbuck there, concerning my broken boat.



Oh!



how valiantly I seek to drive out of others' hearts what's clinched so fast in mine!



--The Parsee--the Parsee!



--gone, gone?"



and he was to go before:--but still was to be seen again ere I could perish--How's that?



--There's a riddle now might baffle all the lawyers backed by the ghosts of the whole line of judges:--like a hawk's beak it pecks my brain.



I'LL, I'LL solve it, though!"



When dusk descended, the whale was still in sight to leeward.





# CHAPTER 135



## The Chase



--Third Day.



The morning of the third day dawned fair and fresh, and once more the solitary night-man at the fore-mast-head was relieved by crowds of the daylight look-outs, who dotted every mast and almost every spar.



"D'ye see him?"



cried Ahab; but the whale was not yet in sight.



"In his infallible wake, though; but follow that wake, that's all.



Helm there; steady, as thou goest, and hast been going.



What a lovely day again!



were it a new-made world, and made for a summer-house to the angels, and this morning the first of its throwing open to them, a fairer day could not dawn upon that world.



Here's food for thought, had Ahab time to think; but Ahab never thinks; he only feels, feels, feels; THAT'S tingling enough for mortal man!



to think's audacity.



God only has that right and privilege.



Thinking is, or ought to be, a coolness and a calmness; and our poor hearts throb, and our poor brains beat too much for that.









Stand over that helmsman with a top-maul!



So, so; he travels fast, and I must down.



But let me have one more good round look aloft here at the sea; there's time for that.



An old, old sight, and yet somehow so young; aye, and not changed a wink since I first saw it, a boy, from the sand-hills of Nantucket!



The same!



--the same!



--the same to Noah as to me.



There's a soft shower to leeward.



Such lovely leewardings!



They must lead somewhere--to something else than common land, more palmy than the palms.



Leeward!



the white whale goes that way; look to windward, then; the better if the bitterer quarter.



But good bye, good bye, old mast-head!



What's this?



--green?



aye, tiny mosses in these warped cracks.

No such green weather stains on Ahab's head!



There's the difference now between man's old age and matter's.



But aye, old mast, we both grow old together; sound in our hulls, though, are we not, my ship?



Aye, minus a leg, that's all.



By heaven this dead wood has the better of my live flesh every way.



I can't compare with it; and I've known some ships made of dead trees outlast the lives of men made of the most vital stuff of vital fathers.



What's that he said?



he should still go before me, my pilot; and yet to be seen again?



But where?



Will I have eyes at the bottom of the sea, supposing I descend those endless stairs?



and all night I've been sailing from him, wherever he did sink to.



Aye, aye, like many more thou told'st direful truth as touching thyself, O Parsee; but, Ahab, there thy shot fell short.



Good-bye, mast-head--keep a good eye upon the whale, the while I'm gone.



We'll talk to-morrow, nay, to-night, when the white whale lies down there, tied by head and tail."



He gave the word; and still gazing round him, was steadily lowered through the cloven blue air to the deck.



In due time the boats were lowered; but as standing in his shallop's stern, Ahab just hovered upon the point of the descent, he waved to the mate,--who held one of the tackle-ropes on deck--and bade him pause.



"Starbuck!"



"Sir?"



"For the third time my soul's ship starts upon this voyage, Starbuck."



"Aye, sir, thou wilt have it so."



"Some ships sail from their ports, and ever afterwards are missing, Starbuck!"



"Truth, sir: saddest truth."



"Some men die at ebb tide; some at low water; some at the full of the flood;--and I feel now like a billow that's all one crested comb, Starbuck.













And now marking that the vane or flag was gone from the main-mast-head, he shouted to Tashtego, who had just gained that perch, to descend again for another flag, and a hammer and nails, and so nail it to the mast.



Whether fagged by the three days' running chase, and the resistance to his swimming in the knotted hamper he bore; or whether it was some latent deceitfulness and malice in him: whichever was true, the White Whale's way now began to abate, as it seemed, from the boat so rapidly nearing him once more; though indeed the whale's last start had not been so long a one as before.



And still as Ahab glided over the waves the unpitying sharks accompanied him; and so pertinaciously stuck to the boat; and so continually bit at the plying oars, that the blades became jagged and crunched, and left small splinters in the sea, at almost every dip.



"Heed them not!



those teeth but give new rowlocks to your oars.



Pull on!



'tis the better rest, the shark's jaw than the yielding water."



"But at every bite, sir, the thin blades grow smaller and smaller!"



"They will last long enough!



pull on!



--But who can tell"--he muttered--"whether these sharks swim to feast on the whale or on Ahab?"



--But pull on!



Aye, all alive, now--we near him.



The helm!



take the helm!



let me pass,"--and so saying two of the oarsmen helped him forward to the bows of the still flying boat.





Is't night?"



"The whale!



The ship!"



cried the cringing oarsmen.

"Oars!



oars!



Slope downwards to thy depths, O sea, that ere it be for ever too late, Ahab may slide this last, last time upon his mark!



I see: the ship!



the ship!



Dash on, my men!



Will ye not save my ship?"



But as the oarsmen violently forced their boat through the sledge-hammering seas, the before whale-smitten bow-ends of two planks burst through, and in an instant almost, the temporarily disabled boat lay nearly level with the waves; its half-wading, splashing crew, trying hard to stop the gap and bale out the pouring water.



Meantime, for that one beholding instant, Tashtego's mast-head hammer remained suspended in his hand; and the red flag, half-wrapping him as with a plaid, then streamed itself straight out from him, as his own forward-flowing heart; while Starbuck and Stubb, standing upon the bowsprit beneath, caught sight of the down-coming monster just as soon as he.



"The whale, the whale!



Up helm, up helm!



Oh, all ye sweet powers of air, now hug me close!



Let not Starbuck die, if die he must, in a woman's fainting fit.



Up helm, I say--ye fools, the jaw!



the jaw!



Is this the end of all my bursting prayers?



all my life-long fidelities?



Oh, Ahab, Ahab, lo, thy work.



Steady!



helmsman, steady.



Nay, nay!



Up helm again!



He turns to meet us!



Oh, his unappeasable brow drives on towards one, whose duty tells him he cannot depart.



My God, stand by me now!"



"Stand not by me, but stand under me, whoever you are that will now help Stubb; for Stubb, too, sticks here.



I grin at thee, thou grinning whale!



Who ever helped Stubb, or kept Stubb awake, but Stubb's own unwinking eye?



And now poor Stubb goes to bed upon a mattress that is all too soft; would it were stuffed with brushwood!



I grin at thee, thou grinning whale!



Look ye, sun, moon, and stars!

I call ye assassins of as good a fellow as ever spouted up his ghost.



For all that, I would yet ring glasses with ye, would ye but hand the cup!



Oh, oh!



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--the second hearse!"

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cried Ahab from the boat; "its wood could only be American!"

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Diving beneath the settling ship, the whale ran quivering along its keel; but turning under water, swiftly shot to the surface again, far off the other bow, but within a few yards of Ahab's boat, where, for a time, he lay quiescent.

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"I turn my body from the sun.

? ! ? ! 🧐

What ho, Tashtego!

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let me hear thy hammer.

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Oh!

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ye three unsundered spires of mine; thou uncracked keel; and only god-bullied hull; thou firm deck, and haughty helm, and Pole-pointed prow,--death-glorious ship!

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must ye then perish, and without me?

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Am I cut off from the last fond pride of meanest shipwrecked captains?

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Oh, lonely death on lonely life!

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Oh, now I feel my topmost greatness lies in my topmost grief.

😞 ⚠️ 🧐 ! ✨ 🔔

Ho, ho!

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from all your furthest bounds, pour ye now in, ye bold billows of my whole foregone life, and top this one piled comber of my death!

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Towards thee I roll, thou all-destroying but unconquering whale; to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake I spit my last breath at thee.

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Sink all coffins and all hearses to one common pool!

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and since neither can be mine, let me then tow to pieces, while still chasing thee, though tied to thee, thou damned whale!

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THUS, I give up the spear!"







# BACKERS' EMOJI



"Loves the son/stood stammering elocution/while the poor ship in flames went down."

- Leah R. Shafer



"This is pretty good for something invented by a gray blob the size of a shoebox, you know?"

- Rich Magabiz



"Only those without imagination can fail to love Moby Dick in emoji."

- Ken Liu



"Nails That Stick Up Get Hammered Down"

- Andy M.



"I wasted time, and now doth time waste me." - William Shakespeare

- Sam Winston



"The sea was all that had been written of it," William Gass said.

- Royden Kadyschuk



"A great man once said..."

- Thessaly La Force



"Proud supporter of the punny arts."

- Benjamin R. Dryden



"Ruby runs freely, with little leaps of joy, taunting the waves crash."

- Christina Jo Bollinger - Dog Mom



"Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery."

- DrDub



"One Look is Worth A Thousand Words."

- Alexander S.



"Stay strong, even in the face of adversity."

- Avery



"Picking emoji is difficult!"

- Robert B. Staehlin



"Emoku Reading, 5/7/5: umami lip gloss / nascent tongues slur and stammer / while the rest just sleep"

- sir alexander c snacobs



"Khan!!!!!"

- Glenn Platt



"Now, Mr. Melville, a smile is [truly] the chosen vehicle of all ambiguities, isn't it."

- *Connie Blauwkamp*



"Writing is not dead."

- *John Olivares Espinoza*



"The great aim of education is not knowledge but action." - Herbert Spencer

- *Nicholas Bergson-Shilcock*



"we laugh we cry we tell old stories"

- *Meerkat*



"Melville wrote a book, Fred (et al) Emojied it, and we all lived happily ever after"

- *Lauren Shockey*



"Well done, Monteforte"

- *Marco Monteforte*



"As far as you've come can't be undone."

- *Rita J. King*



"I wasted time, and now doth time waste me."

- *Martin G.*

B O R \$ C ♃ 🌴

"BORSCHT"

- *Reyner*



"The fish was delish and it made quite a dish."

- *James Wherley*



"Yo momma is so fat when she was lying on the beach Green Peace tried to push her back in the water."

- *Ryan and Paige*



"I came, I saw, I conquered"

- *Brett Camper*



"The wind crosses the desert and so can the stream. (Whew, that's hard.)"

- *Havi Hoffman*



"My dog has no nose. How does he smell? Terrible!"

- *Ken Yasumoto-Nicolson*



"I rode a camel in a far land where ocean was blue and air was pure."

- *Songul*

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