

# The Project Gutenberg eBook of Moby Dick; Or, The Whale

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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK MOBY DICK; OR,  
THE WHALE \*\*\*

MOBY-DICK;

or, THE WHALE.

By Herman Melville

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## ETYMOLOGY.

(Supplied by a Late Consumptive Usher to a Grammar School.)

The pale Usher—threadbare in coat, heart, body, and brain; I see him  
now. He was ever dusting his old lexicons and grammars, with a queer  
handkerchief, mockingly embellished with all the gay flags of all the  
known nations of the world. He loved to dust his old grammars; it  
somehow mildly reminded him of his mortality.

"While you take in hand to school others, and to teach them by what  
name a whale-fish is to be called in our tongue, leaving out, through  
ignorance, the letter H, which almost alone maketh up the  
signification of the word, you deliver that which is not true."  
—\_Hackluyt.\_

"WHALE. \* \* \* Sw. and Dan. \_hval\_. This animal is named from  
roundness or rolling; for in Dan. \_hvalt\_ is arched or vaulted."  
—\_Webster's Dictionary.\_

"WHALE. \* \* \* It is more immediately from the Dut. and Ger. \_Wallen\_;  
A.S. \_Walw-ian\_, to roll, to wallow." —\_Richardson's Dictionary.\_

ΙΠ,	_Hebrew_.
κητος,	_Greek_.
CETUS,	_Latin_.
WHÆL,	_Anglo-Saxon_.
HVALT,	_Danish_.
WAL,	_Dutch_.

HWAL,	_Swedish_.
WHALE,	_Icelandic_.
WHALE,	_English_.
BALLENA,	_Spanish_.
PEKEE-NUEE-NUEE,	_Fegee_.
PEHEE-NUEE-NUEE,	_Erromangoan_.

EXTRACTS. (Supplied by a Sub-Sub-Librarian).

It will be seen that this mere painstaking burrower and grub-worm of

a poor devil of a Sub-Sub appears to have gone through the long

Vaticans and street-stalls of the earth, picking up whatever random

allusions to whales he could anyways find in any book whatsoever,

sacred or profane. Therefore you must not, in every case at least,

take the higgledy-piggledy whale statements, however authentic, in

these extracts, for veritable gospel cetology. Far from it. As

touching the ancient authors generally, as well as the poets here

appearing, these extracts are solely valuable or entertaining, as

affording a glancing bird's eye view of what has been promiscuously

said, thought, fancied, and sung of Leviathan, by many nations and

generations, including our own.

So fare thee well, poor devil of a Sub-Sub, whose commentator I am.

Thou belongest to that hopeless, sallow tribe which no wine of this

world will ever warm; and for whom even Pale Sherry would be too

rosy-strong; but with whom one sometimes loves to sit,

and feel

poor-devilish, too; and grow convivial upon tears; and  
say to them

bluntly, with full eyes and empty glasses, and in not  
altogether

unpleasant sadness—Give it up, Sub-Subs! For by how  
much the more

pains ye take to please the world, by so much the more  
shall ye for

ever go thankless! Would that I could clear out Hampton  
Court and the

Tuileries for ye! But gulp down your tears and hie  
aloft to the

royal-mast with your hearts; for your friends who have  
gone before

are clearing out the seven-storied heavens, and making  
refugees of

long-pampered Gabriel, Michael, and Raphael, against  
your coming.

Here ye strike but splintered hearts together—there, ye  
shall strike

unsplinterable glasses!

EXTRACTS.

“And God created great whales.” —\_Genesis\_.

“Leviathan maketh a path to shine after him; One would  
think the deep  
to be hoary.” —\_Job\_.

“Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up  
Jonah.”  
—\_Jonah\_.

“There go the ships; there is that Leviathan whom thou  
hast made to  
play therein.” —\_Psalms\_.

“In that day, the Lord with his sore, and great, and  
strong sword,  
shall punish Leviathan the piercing serpent, even  
Leviathan that  
crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is

in the sea."

—\_Isaiah\_.

"And what thing soever besides cometh within the chaos of this

monster's mouth, be it beast, boat, or stone, down it goes all

incontinently that foul great swallow of his, and perisheth in the

bottomless gulf of his paunch." —\_Holland's Plutarch's Morals\_.

"The Indian Sea breedeth the most and the biggest fishes that are:

among which the Whales and Whirlpooles called Balaene, take up as

much in length as four acres or arpens of land." —\_Holland's Pliny\_.

"Scarcely had we proceeded two days on the sea, when about sunrise a

great many Whales and other monsters of the sea, appeared. Among the

former, one was of a most monstrous size.... This came towards us,

open-mouthed, raising the waves on all sides, and beating the sea

before him into a foam." —\_Tooke's Lucian\_. "The True History\_."

"He visited this country also with a view of catching horse-whales,

which had bones of very great value for their teeth, of which he

brought some to the king.... The best whales were caught in his own

country, of which some were forty-eight, some fifty yards long. He

said that he was one of six who had killed sixty in two days."

—\_Other or Other's verbal narrative taken down from his

mouth by King  
Alfred, A.D.\_ 890.

"And whereas all the other things, whether beast or vessel, that enter into the dreadful gulf of this monster's (whale's) mouth, are immediately lost and swallowed up, the sea-gudgeon retires into it in great security, and there sleeps." —MONTAIGNE. —  
\_Apology for Raimond  
Sebond\_.

"Let us fly, let us fly! Old Nick take me if it is not Leviathan described by the noble prophet Moses in the life of patient Job."  
—\_Rabelais\_.

"This whale's liver was two cartloads." —\_Stowe's  
Annals\_.

"The great Leviathan that maketh the seas to seethe like boiling pan." —\_Lord Bacon's Version of the Psalms\_.

"Touching that monstrous bulk of the whale or ork we have received nothing certain. They grow exceeding fat, insomuch that an incredible quantity of oil will be extracted out of one whale." —  
\_Ibid\_.  
"\_History of Life and Death\_."

"The sovereignest thing on earth is parmacetti for an inward bruise."  
—\_King Henry\_.

"Very like a whale." —\_Hamlet\_.

"Which to secure, no skill of leach's art Mote him  
availle, but to  
returne againe To his wound's worker, that with lowly  
dart, Dinting  
his breast, had bred his restless paine, Like as the  
wounded whale to  
shore flies thro' the maine." —\_The Fairie Queen\_.

"Immense as whales, the motion of whose vast bodies can  
in a peaceful  
calm trouble the ocean till it boil." —\_Sir William  
Davenant. Preface  
to Gondibert\_.

"What spermacetti is, men might justly doubt, since the  
learned  
Hosmannus in his work of thirty years, saith plainly,  
\_Nescio quid  
sit\_." —\_Sir T. Browne. Of Sperma Ceti and the Sperma  
Ceti Whale.  
Vide his V. E.\_

"Like Spencer's Talus with his modern flail He  
threatens ruin with  
his ponderous tail. ... Their fixed jav'lins in his  
side he wears,  
And on his back a grove of pikes appears." —\_Waller's  
Battle of the  
Summer Islands\_.

"By art is created that great Leviathan, called a  
Commonwealth or  
State—in Latin, Civitas) which is but an artificial  
man." —\_Opening  
sentence of Hobbes's Leviathan\_.

"Silly Mansoul swallowed it without chewing, as if it  
had been a  
sprat in the mouth of a whale." —\_Pilgrim's Progress\_.

"That sea beast Leviathan, which God of all his works  
Created hugest  
that swim the ocean stream." —\_Paradise Lost\_.

—"There Leviathan, Hugest of living creatures, in the  
deep Stretched  
like a promontory sleeps or swims, And seems a moving  
land; and at  
his gills Draws in, and at his breath spouts out a  
sea." —\_Ibid\_.

"The mighty whales which swim in a sea of water, and  
have a sea of  
oil swimming in them." —\_Fuller's Profane and Holy  
State\_.

"So close behind some promontory lie The huge Leviathan  
to attend  
their prey, And give no chance, but swallow in the fry,  
Which through  
their gaping jaws mistake the way." —\_Dryden's Annus  
Mirabilis\_.

"While the whale is floating at the stern of the ship,  
they cut off  
his head, and tow it with a boat as near the shore as  
it will come;  
but it will be aground in twelve or thirteen feet  
water." —\_Thomas  
Edge's Ten Voyages to Spitzbergen, in Purchas\_.

"In their way they saw many whales sporting in the  
ocean, and in  
wantonness fuzzing up the water through their pipes and  
vents, which  
nature has placed on their shoulders." —\_Sir T.  
Herbert's Voyages

into Asia and Africa. Harris Coll\_.

"Here they saw such huge troops of whales, that they were forced to proceed with a great deal of caution for fear they should run their ship upon them." —\_Schouten's Sixth Circumnavigation\_.

"We set sail from the Elbe, wind N.E. in the ship called The Jonas-in-the-Whale.... Some say the whale can't open his mouth, but that is a fable.... They frequently climb up the masts to see whether they can see a whale, for the first discoverer has a ducat for his pains.... I was told of a whale taken near Shetland, that had above a barrel of herrings in his belly.... One of our harpooneers told me that he caught once a whale in Spitzbergen that was white all over."

—\_A Voyage to Greenland, A.D.\_ 1671. \_Harris Coll\_.

"Several whales have come in upon this coast (Fife) Anno 1652, one eighty feet in length of the whale-bone kind came in, which (as I was informed), besides a vast quantity of oil, did afford 500 weight of baleen. The jaws of it stand for a gate in the garden of Pitferren."

—\_Sibbald's Fife and Kinross\_.

"Myself have agreed to try whether I can master and kill this

Sperma-ceti whale, for I could never hear of any of that sort that

was killed by any man, such is his fierceness and swiftness."

—\_Richard Strafford's Letter from the Bermudas. Phil. Trans. A.D.\_ 1668.



"Whales in the sea God's voice obey." —\_N. E. Primer\_.

"We saw also abundance of large whales, there being more in those southern seas, as I may say, by a hundred to one; than we have to the northward of us." —\_Captain Cowley's Voyage round the Globe, A.D.\_  
1729.

"... and the breath of the whale is frequently attended with such an insupportable smell, as to bring on a disorder of the brain."  
—\_Ulloa's South America\_.

"To fifty chosen sylphs of special note, We trust the important charge, the petticoat. Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail, Tho' stuffed with hoops and armed with ribs of whale." —\_Rape of the Lock\_.

"If we compare land animals in respect to magnitude, with those that take up their abode in the deep, we shall find they will appear contemptible in the comparison. The whale is doubtless the largest animal in creation." —\_Goldsmith, Nat. Hist\_.

"If you should write a fable for little fishes, you would make them speak like great whales." —\_Goldsmith to Johnson\_.

"In the afternoon we saw what was supposed to be a rock, but it was found to be a dead whale, which some Asiatics had killed, and were then towing ashore. They seemed to endeavor to conceal

themselves

behind the whale, in order to avoid being seen by us.”  
—\_Cook’s  
Voyages\_.

“The larger whales, they seldom venture to attack. They stand in so great dread of some of them, that when out at sea they are afraid to

mention even their names, and carry dung, lime-stone, juniper-wood,

and some other articles of the same nature in their boats, in order

to terrify and prevent their too near approach.” —\_Uno Von Troil’s

Letters on Banks’s and Solander’s Voyage to Iceland in\_ 1772.

“The Spermacetti Whale found by the Nantuckois, is an active, fierce

animal, and requires vast address and boldness in the fishermen.”

—\_Thomas Jefferson’s Whale Memorial to the French minister in\_ 1778.

“And pray, sir, what in the world is equal to it?” —\_Edmund Burke’s

reference in Parliament to the Nantucket Whale-Fishery\_.

“Spain—a great whale stranded on the shores of Europe.”

—\_Edmund  
Burke\_. (\_somewhere\_.)

“A tenth branch of the king’s ordinary revenue, said to be grounded

on the consideration of his guarding and protecting the seas from

pirates and robbers, is the right to \_royal\_ fish, which are whale

and sturgeon. And these, when either thrown ashore or caught near the

coast, are the property of the king.” —\_Blackstone\_.

"Soon to the sport of death the crews repair: Rodmond  
unerring o'er

his head suspends The barbed steel, and every turn  
attends."

—\_Falconer's Shipwreck\_.

"Bright shone the roofs, the domes, the spires, And  
rockets blew self

driven, To hang their momentary fire Around the vault  
of heaven.

"So fire with water to compare, The ocean serves on  
high, Up-spouted

by a whale in air, To express unwieldy joy." —\_Cowper,  
on the Queen's

Visit to London\_.

"Ten or fifteen gallons of blood are thrown out of the  
heart at a

stroke, with immense velocity." —\_John Hunter's account  
of the

dissection of a whale\_. (\_A small sized one\_.)

"The aorta of a whale is larger in the bore than the  
main pipe of the

water-works at London Bridge, and the water roaring in  
its passage

through that pipe is inferior in impetus and velocity  
to the blood

gushing from the whale's heart." —\_Paley's Theology\_.

"The whale is a mammiferous animal without hind feet."  
—\_Baron

Cuvier\_.

"In 40 degrees south, we saw Spermacetti Whales, but  
did not take any

till the first of May, the sea being then covered with  
them."

—\_Colnett's Voyage for the Purpose of Extending the  
Spermaceti Whale

Fishery\_.

"In the free element beneath me swam, Floundered and  
dived, in play,  
in chace, in battle, Fishes of every colour, form, and  
kind; Which  
language cannot paint, and mariner Had never seen; from  
dread  
Leviathan To insect millions peopling every wave:  
Gather'd in shoals  
immense, like floating islands, Led by mysterious  
instincts through  
that waste And trackless region, though on every side  
Assaulted by  
voracious enemies, Whales, sharks, and monsters, arm'd  
in front or  
jaw, With swords, saws, spiral horns, or hooked fangs."  
—Montgomery's World before the Flood\_.

"Io! Paeon! Io! sing. To the finny people's king. Not  
a mightier  
whale than this In the vast Atlantic is; Not a fatter  
fish than he,  
Flounders round the Polar Sea." —Charles Lamb's  
Triumph of the  
Whale\_.

"In the year 1690 some persons were on a high hill  
observing the  
whales spouting and sporting with each other, when one  
observed:  
there—pointing to the sea—is a green pasture where our  
children's  
grand-children will go for bread." —Obed Macy's  
History of  
Nantucket\_.

"I built a cottage for Susan and myself and made a  
gateway in the  
form of a Gothic Arch, by setting up a whale's jaw  
bones."

—\_Hawthorne's Twice Told Tales\_.

"She came to bespeak a monument for her first love, who  
had been  
killed by a whale in the Pacific ocean, no less than  
forty years  
ago." —\_Ibid\_.

"No, Sir, 'tis a Right Whale," answered Tom; "I saw his  
sprout; he  
threw up a pair of as pretty rainbows as a Christian  
would wish to  
look at. He's a raal oil-butt, that fellow!" —\_Cooper's  
Pilot\_.

"The papers were brought in, and we saw in the Berlin  
Gazette that  
whales had been introduced on the stage there." —  
\_Eckermann's  
Conversations with Goethe\_.

"My God! Mr. Chace, what is the matter?" I answered,  
"we have been  
stove by a whale." —"\_Narrative of the Shipwreck of the  
Whale Ship  
Essex of Nantucket, which was attacked and finally  
destroyed by a  
large Sperm Whale in the Pacific Ocean\_." \_By Owen  
Chace of  
Nantucket, first mate of said vessel. New York\_, 1821.

"A mariner sat in the shrouds one night, The wind was  
piping free;  
Now bright, now dimmed, was the moonlight pale, And the  
phospher  
gleamed in the wake of the whale, As it floundered in  
the sea."  
—\_Elizabeth Oakes Smith\_.

"The quantity of line withdrawn from the boats engaged  
in the capture

of this one whale, amounted altogether to 10,440 yards  
or nearly six  
English miles....

"Sometimes the whale shakes its tremendous tail in the  
air, which,  
cracking like a whip, resounds to the distance of three  
or four  
miles." —\_Scoresby\_.

"Mad with the agonies he endures from these fresh  
attacks, the  
infuriated Sperm Whale rolls over and over; he rears  
his enormous  
head, and with wide expanded jaws snaps at everything  
around him; he  
rushes at the boats with his head; they are propelled  
before him with  
vast swiftness, and sometimes utterly destroyed.... It  
is a matter of  
great astonishment that the consideration of the habits  
of so  
interesting, and, in a commercial point of view, so  
important an  
animal (as the Sperm Whale) should have been so  
entirely neglected,  
or should have excited so little curiosity among the  
numerous, and  
many of them competent observers, that of late years,  
must have  
possessed the most abundant and the most convenient  
opportunities of  
witnessing their habitudes." —\_Thomas Beale's History  
of the Sperm  
Whale\_, 1839.

"The Cachalot" (Sperm Whale) "is not only better armed  
than the True  
Whale" (Greenland or Right Whale) "in possessing a  
formidable weapon  
at either extremity of its body, but also more  
frequently displays a  
disposition to employ these weapons offensively and in  
manner at once

so artful, bold, and mischievous, as to lead to its  
being regarded as  
the most dangerous to attack of all the known species  
of the whale  
tribe." —\_Frederick Debell Bennett's Whaling Voyage  
Round the Globe\_,  
1840.

October 13. "There she blows," was sung out from the  
mast-head.  
"Where away?" demanded the captain. "Three points off  
the lee bow,  
sir." "Raise up your wheel. Steady!" "Steady, sir."  
"Mast-head  
ahoy! Do you see that whale now?" "Ay ay, sir! A shoal  
of Sperm  
Whales! There she blows! There she breaches!" "Sing  
out! sing out  
every time!" "Ay Ay, sir! There she blows! there—there  
—\_thar\_ she  
blows—bowes—bo-o-os!" "How far off?" "Two miles and a  
half." "Thunder  
and lightning! so near! Call all hands." —\_J. Ross  
Browne's Etchings  
of a Whaling Cruize\_. 1846.

"The Whale-ship Globe, on board of which vessel  
occurred the horrid  
transactions we are about to relate, belonged to the  
island of  
Nantucket." —"\_Narrative of the Globe Mutiny\_", \_by Lay  
and Hussey  
survivors. A.D.\_ 1828.

Being once pursued by a whale which he had wounded, he  
parried the  
assault for some time with a lance; but the furious  
monster at length  
rushed on the boat; himself and comrades only being  
preserved by  
leaping into the water when they saw the onset was

inevitable."

—\_Missionary Journal of Tyerman and Bennett\_.

"Nantucket itself," said Mr. Webster, "is a very striking and peculiar portion of the National interest. There is a population of eight or nine thousand persons living here in the sea, adding largely every year to the National wealth by the boldest and most persevering industry." —\_Report of Daniel Webster's Speech in the U. S. Senate, on the application for the Erection of a Breakwater at Nantucket\_. 1828.

"The whale fell directly over him, and probably killed him in a moment." —"\_The Whale and his Captors, or The Whaleman's Adventures and the Whale's Biography, gathered on the Homeward Cruise of the Commodore Preble\_." \_By Rev. Henry T. Cheever\_.

"If you make the least damn bit of noise," replied Samuel, "I will send you to hell." —\_Life of Samuel Comstock\_ (\_the mutineer\_), \_by his brother, William Comstock. Another Version of the whale-ship Globe narrative\_.

"The voyages of the Dutch and English to the Northern Ocean, in order, if possible, to discover a passage through it to India, though they failed of their main object, laid-open the haunts of the whale." —\_McCulloch's Commercial Dictionary\_.

"These things are reciprocal; the ball rebounds, only to bound forward again; for now in laying open the haunts of the



whale, the

whalemen seem to have indirectly hit upon new clews to that same

mystic North-West Passage." —\_From\_ "\_Something\_"  
\_unpublished\_.

"It is impossible to meet a whale-ship on the ocean without being

struck by her near appearance. The vessel under short sail, with

look-outs at the mast-heads, eagerly scanning the wide expanse around

them, has a totally different air from those engaged in regular

voyage." —\_Currents and Whaling. U.S. Ex. Ex\_.

"Pedestrians in the vicinity of London and elsewhere may recollect

having seen large curved bones set upright in the earth, either to

form arches over gateways, or entrances to alcoves, and they may

perhaps have been told that these were the ribs of whales." —\_Tales

of a Whale Voyager to the Arctic Ocean\_.

"It was not till the boats returned from the pursuit of these whales,

that the whites saw their ship in bloody possession of the savages

enrolled among the crew." —\_Newspaper Account of the Taking and

Retaking of the Whale-Ship Hobomack\_.

"It is generally well known that out of the crews of Whaling vessels

(American) few ever return in the ships on board of which they

departed." —\_Cruise in a Whale Boat\_.

"Suddenly a mighty mass emerged from the water, and shot up

perpendicularly into the air. It was the whale." —  
\_Miriam Coffin or

the Whale Fisherman\_.

"The Whale is harpooned to be sure; but bethink you,  
how you would  
manage a powerful unbroken colt, with the mere  
appliance of a rope  
tied to the root of his tail." —\_A Chapter on Whaling  
in Ribs and  
Trucks\_.

"On one occasion I saw two of these monsters (whales)  
probably male  
and female, slowly swimming, one after the other,  
within less than a  
stone's throw of the shore" (Terra Del Fuego), "over  
which the beech  
tree extended its branches." —\_Darwin's Voyage of a  
Naturalist\_.

"'Stern all!' exclaimed the mate, as upon turning his  
head, he saw  
the distended jaws of a large Sperm Whale close to the  
head of the  
boat, threatening it with instant destruction;—'Stern  
all, for your  
lives!'" —\_Wharton the Whale Killer\_.

"So be cheery, my lads, let your hearts never fail,  
While the bold  
harpooneer is striking the whale!" —\_Nantucket Song\_.

"Oh, the rare old Whale, mid storm and gale In his  
ocean home will be  
A giant in might, where might is right, And King of the  
boundless  
sea." —\_Whale Song\_.

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 landsmen; 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. Yet here they  
all unite. Tell  
me, does the magnetic virtue of the needles of the  
compasses of all  
those ships attract them thither?

Once more. Say you are in the country; in some high land  
of lakes. Take  
almost any path you please, and ten to one it carries you  
down in a  
dale, and leaves you there by a pool in the stream. There

is magic in  
it. Let the most absent-minded of men be plunged in his  
deepest  
reveries—stand that man on his legs, set his feet a-  
going, and he will  
infallibly lead you to water, if water there be in all  
that region.  
Should you ever be athirst in the great American desert,  
try this  
experiment, if your caravan happen to be supplied with a  
metaphysical  
professor. Yes, as every one knows, meditation and water  
are wedded for  
ever.

But here is an artist. He desires to paint you the  
dreamiest, shadiest,  
quietest, most enchanting bit of romantic landscape in  
all the valley  
of the Saco. What is the chief element he employs? There  
stand his  
trees, each with a hollow trunk, as if a hermit and a  
crucifix were  
within; and here sleeps his meadow, and there sleep his  
cattle; and up  
from yonder cottage goes a sleepy smoke. Deep into  
distant woodlands  
winds a mazy way, reaching to overlapping spurs of  
mountains bathed in  
their hill-side blue. But though the picture lies thus  
tranced, and  
though this pine-tree shakes down its sighs like leaves  
upon this  
shepherd's head, yet all were vain, unless the shepherd's  
eye were  
fixed upon the magic stream before him. Go visit the  
Prairies in June,  
when for scores on scores of miles you wade knee-deep  
among  
Tiger-lilies—what is the one charm wanting?—Water—there  
is not a drop  
of water there! 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  
honorable 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.  
And as for going as cook,—though I confess there is  
considerable glory  
in that, a cook being a sort of officer on ship-board—  
yet, somehow, I  
never fancied broiling fowls;—though once broiled,  
judiciously  
buttered, and judgmatically salted and peppered, there is  
no one who  
will speak more respectfully, not to say reverentially,  
of a broiled  
fowl than I will. It is out of the idolatrous dotings of  
the old  
Egyptians upon broiled ibis and roasted river horse, that  
you see the  
mummies of those creatures in their huge bake-houses the  
pyramids.

No, when I go to sea, I go as a simple sailor, right  
before the mast,  
plumb down into the forecastle, aloft there to the royal  
mast-head.  
True, they rather order me about some, and make me jump  
from spar to  
spar, like a grasshopper in a May meadow. And at first,  
this sort of  
thing is unpleasant enough. It touches one's sense of  
honor,  
particularly if you come of an old established family in  
the land, the  
Van Rensselaers, or Randolphs, or Hardicanutes. And more  
than all, if  
just previous to putting your hand into the tar-pot, you  
have been  
lording it as a country schoolmaster, making the tallest

boys stand in  
awe of you. The transition is a keen one, I assure you,  
from a  
schoolmaster to a sailor, and requires a strong decoction  
of Seneca and  
the Stoics to enable you to grin and bear it. But even  
this wears off  
in time.

What of it, if some old hunks of a sea-captain orders me  
to get a broom  
and sweep down the decks? What does that indignity amount  
to, weighed,  
I mean, in the scales of the New Testament? Do you think  
the archangel  
Gabriel thinks anything the less of me, because I  
promptly and  
respectfully obey that old hunks in that particular  
instance? Who ain't  
a slave? Tell me that. Well, then, however the old sea-  
captains may  
order me about—however they may thump and punch me about,  
I have the  
satisfaction of knowing that it is all right; that  
everybody else is  
one way or other served in much the same way—either in a  
physical or  
metaphysical point of view, that is; and so the universal  
thump is  
passed round, and all hands should rub each other's  
shoulder-blades,  
and be content.

Again, I always go to sea as a sailor, because they make  
a point of  
paying me for my trouble, whereas they never pay  
passengers a single  
penny that I ever heard of. On the contrary, passengers  
themselves must  
pay. And there is all the difference in the world between  
paying and  
being paid. The act of paying is perhaps the most  
uncomfortable  
infliction that the two orchard thieves entailed upon us.



But \_being  
paid\_,—what will compare with it? The urbane activity  
with which a man  
receives money is really marvellous, considering that we  
so earnestly  
believe money to be the root of all earthly ills, and  
that on no  
account can a monied man enter heaven. Ah! how cheerfully  
we consign  
ourselves to perdition!

Finally, I always go to sea as a sailor, because of the  
wholesome  
exercise and pure air of the fore-castle deck. For as in  
this world,  
head winds are far more prevalent than winds from astern  
(that is, if  
you never violate the Pythagorean maxim), so for the most  
part the  
Commodore on the quarter-deck gets his atmosphere at  
second hand from  
the sailors on the fore-castle. He thinks he breathes it  
first; but not  
so. In much the same way do the commonalty lead their  
leaders in many  
other things, at the same time that the leaders little  
suspect it. But  
wherefore it was that after having repeatedly smelt the  
sea as a  
merchant sailor, I should now take it into my head to go  
on a whaling  
voyage; this the invisible police officer of the Fates,  
who has the  
constant surveillance of me, and secretly dogs me, and  
influences me in  
some unaccountable way—he can better answer than any one  
else. And,  
doubtless, my going on this whaling voyage, formed part  
of the grand  
programme of Providence that was drawn up a long time  
ago. It came in  
as a sort of brief interlude and solo between more  
extensive  
performances. I take it that this part of the bill must

have run  
something like this:

"\_Grand Contested Election for the Presidency of the  
United States.\_"

"WHALING VOYAGE BY ONE ISHMAEL. "BLOODY BATTLE IN  
AFFGHANISTAN."

Though I cannot tell why it was exactly that those stage  
managers, the  
Fates, put me down for this shabby part of a whaling  
voyage, when  
others were set down for magnificent parts in high  
tragedies, and short  
and easy parts in genteel comedies, and jolly parts in  
farces—though I  
cannot tell why this was exactly; yet, now that I recall  
all the  
circumstances, I think I can see a little into the  
springs and motives  
which being cunningly presented to me under various  
disguises, induced  
me to set about performing the part I did, besides  
cajoling me into the  
delusion that it was a choice resulting from my own  
unbiased freewill  
and discriminating judgment.

Chief among these motives was the overwhelming idea of  
the great whale  
himself. Such a portentous and mysterious monster roused  
all my  
curiosity. Then the wild and distant seas where he rolled  
his island  
bulk; the undeliverable, nameless perils of the whale;  
these, with all  
the attending marvels of a thousand Patagonian sights and  
sounds,  
helped to sway me to my wish. With other men, perhaps,  
such things  
would not have been inducements; but as for me, I am  
tormented with an  
everlasting itch for things remote. I love to sail  
forbidden seas, and

land on barbarous coasts. Not ignoring what is good, I am quick to perceive a horror, and could still be social with it—would they let me—since it is but well to be on friendly terms with all the inmates of the place one lodges in.

By reason of these things, then, the whaling voyage was welcome; the great flood-gates of the wonder-world swung open, and in the wild conceits that swayed me to my purpose, two and two there floated into my inmost soul, endless processions of the whale, and, mid most of them all, one grand hooded phantom, like a snow hill in the air.

## CHAPTER 2. The Carpet-Bag.

I stuffed a shirt or two into my old carpet-bag, tucked it under my arm, and started for Cape Horn and the Pacific. Quitting the good city of old Manhatto, I duly arrived in New Bedford. It was a Saturday night in December. Much was I disappointed upon learning that the little packet for Nantucket had already sailed, and that no way of reaching that place would offer, till the following Monday.

As most young candidates for the pains and penalties of whaling stop at this same New Bedford, thence to embark on their voyage, it may as well be related that I, for one, had no idea of so doing. For my mind was made up to sail in no other than a Nantucket craft, because there was a fine, boisterous something about everything connected with that famous

old island, which amazingly pleased me. Besides though New Bedford has of late been gradually monopolising the business of whaling, and though in this matter poor old Nantucket is now much behind her, yet Nantucket was her great original—the Tyre of this Carthage;—the place where the first dead American whale was stranded. Where else but from Nantucket did those aboriginal whalers, the Red-Men, first sally out in canoes to give chase to the Leviathan? And where but from Nantucket, too, did that first adventurous little sloop put forth, partly laden with imported cobblestones—so goes the story—to throw at the whales, in order to discover when they were nigh enough to risk a harpoon from the bowsprit?

Now having a night, a day, and still another night following before me in New Bedford, ere I could embark for my destined port, it became a matter of concernment where I was to eat and sleep meanwhile. It was a very dubious-looking, nay, a very dark and dismal night, bitingly cold and cheerless. I knew no one in the place. With anxious grapnels I had sounded my pocket, and only brought up a few pieces of silver,—So, wherever you go, Ishmael, said I to myself, as I stood in the middle of a dreary street shouldering my bag, and comparing the gloom towards the north with the darkness towards the south—wherever in your wisdom you may conclude to lodge for the night, my dear Ishmael, be sure to inquire the price, and don't be too particular.

With halting steps I paced the streets, and passed the sign of "The Crossed Harpoons"—but it looked too expensive and jolly there. Further on, from the bright red windows of the "Sword-Fish Inn," there came such fervent rays, that it seemed to have melted the packed snow and ice from before the house, for everywhere else the congealed frost lay ten inches thick in a hard, asphaltic pavement,—rather weary for me, when I struck my foot against the flinty projections, because from hard, remorseless service the soles of my boots were in a most miserable plight. Too expensive and jolly, again thought I, pausing one moment to watch the broad glare in the street, and hear the sounds of the tinkling glasses within. But go on, Ishmael, said I at last; don't you hear? get away from before the door; your patched boots are stopping the way. So on I went. I now by instinct followed the streets that took me waterward, for there, doubtless, were the cheapest, if not the cheeriest inns.

Such dreary streets! blocks of blackness, not houses, on either hand, and here and there a candle, like a candle moving about in a tomb. At this hour of the night, of the last day of the week, that quarter of the town proved all but deserted. But presently I came to a smoky light proceeding from a low, wide building, the door of which stood invitingly open. It had a careless look, as if it were meant for the uses of the public; so, entering, the first thing I did was to stumble

over an ash-box in the porch. Ha! thought I, ha, as the flying particles almost choked me, are these ashes from that destroyed city, Gomorrah? 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. "In judging of that tempestuous wind called Euroclydon," says an old writer—of whose works I possess the only copy extant—"it maketh a marvellous difference, whether thou lookest out at it from a glass window where the frost is all on the outside, or whether thou observest it from that sashless window, where the frost is on both sides, and of which the wight Death is the only glazier." True enough, thought I, as this passage occurred to my mind—old black-letter, thou reasonest well. Yes, these eyes are windows, and this body of mine is the house. What a pity they didn't stop up the chinks and the crannies though, and thrust in a little lint here and there. But it's too late to make any improvements now. The universe is finished; the copestone is on, and the chips were carted off a million years ago. Poor Lazarus there, chattering his teeth against the curbstone for his pillow, and shaking off his tatters with

his shiverings, he might plug up both ears with rags, and  
put a  
corn-cob into his mouth, and yet that would not keep out  
the  
tempestuous Euroclydon. Euroclydon! says old Dives, in  
his red silken  
wrapper—(he had a redder one afterwards) pooh, pooh! What  
a fine frosty  
night; how Orion glitters; what northern lights! Let them  
talk of their  
oriental summer climes of everlasting conservatories;  
give me the  
privilege of making my own summer with my own coals.

But what thinks Lazarus? Can he warm his blue hands by  
holding them up  
to the grand northern lights? Would not Lazarus rather be  
in Sumatra  
than here? Would he not far rather lay him down  
lengthwise along the  
line of the equator; yea, ye gods! go down to the fiery  
pit itself, in  
order to keep out this frost?

Now, that Lazarus should lie stranded there on the  
curbstone before the  
door of Dives, this is more wonderful than that an  
iceberg should be  
moored to one of the Moluccas. 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 blubbering 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.

CHAPTER 3. The Spouter-Inn.



Entering that gable-ended Spouter-Inn, you found yourself in a wide, low, straggling entry with old-fashioned wainscots, reminding one of the bulwarks of some condemned old craft. On one side hung a very large oilpainting so thoroughly besmoked, and every way defaced, that in the unequal crosslights by which you viewed it, it was only by diligent study and a series of systematic visits to it, and careful inquiry of the neighbors, that you could any way arrive at an understanding of its purpose. Such unaccountable masses of shades and shadows, that at first you almost thought some ambitious young artist, in the time of the New England hags, had endeavored to delineate chaos bewitched. But by dint of much and earnest contemplation, and oft repeated ponderings, and especially by throwing open the little window towards the back of the entry, you at last come to the conclusion that such an idea, however wild, might not be altogether unwarranted.

But what most puzzled and confounded you was a long, limber, portentous, black mass of something hovering in the centre of the picture over three blue, dim, perpendicular lines floating in a nameless yeast. A boggy, soggy, squitchy picture truly, enough to drive a nervous man distracted. Yet was there a sort of indefinite, half-attained, unimaginable sublimity about it that fairly froze you to it, till you involuntarily took an oath with yourself to find out what that marvellous painting meant. Ever and anon a bright, but, alas,

deceptive idea would dart you through.—It's the Black Sea  
in a midnight  
gale.—It's the unnatural combat of the four primal  
elements.—It's a  
blasted heath.—It's a Hyperborean winter scene.—It's the  
breaking-up of  
the icebound stream of Time. But at last all these  
fancies yielded to  
that one portentous something in the picture's midst.  
\_That\_ once found  
out, and all the rest were plain. But stop; does it not  
bear a faint  
resemblance to a gigantic fish? even the great leviathan  
himself?

In fact, the artist's design seemed this: a final theory  
of my own,  
partly based upon the aggregated opinions of many aged  
persons with  
whom I conversed upon the subject. The picture represents  
a Cape-Horner  
in a great hurricane; the half-foundered ship weltering  
there with its  
three dismantled masts alone visible; and an exasperated  
whale,  
purposing to spring clean over the craft, is in the  
enormous act of  
impaling himself upon the three mast-heads.

The opposite wall of this entry was hung all over with a  
heathenish  
array of monstrous clubs and spears. Some were thickly  
set with  
glittering teeth resembling ivory saws; others were  
tufted with knots  
of human hair; and one was sickle-shaped, with a vast  
handle sweeping  
round like the segment made in the new-mown grass by a  
long-armed  
mower. You shuddered as you gazed, and wondered what  
monstrous cannibal  
and savage could ever have gone a death-harvesting with  
such a hacking,  
horrifying implement. Mixed with these were rusty old

whaling lances  
and harpoons all broken and deformed. Some were storied  
weapons. With  
this once long lance, now wildly elbowed, fifty years ago  
did Nathan  
Swain kill fifteen whales between a sunrise and a sunset.  
And that  
harpoon—so like a corkscrew now—was flung in Javan seas,  
and run away  
with by a whale, years afterwards slain off the Cape of  
Blanco. The  
original iron entered nigh the tail, and, like a restless  
needle  
sojourning in the body of a man, travelled full forty  
feet, and at last  
was found imbedded in the hump.

Crossing this dusky entry, and on through yon low-arched  
way-cut  
through what in old times must have been a great central  
chimney with  
fireplaces all round—you enter the public room. A still  
duskier place  
is this, with such low ponderous beams above, and such  
old wrinkled  
planks beneath, that you would almost fancy you trod some  
old craft's  
cockpits, especially of such a howling night, when this  
corner-anchored  
old ark rocked so furiously. On one side stood a long,  
low, shelf-like  
table covered with cracked glass cases, filled with dusty  
rarities  
gathered from this wide world's remotest nooks.  
Projecting from the  
further angle of the room stands a dark-looking den—the  
bar—a rude  
attempt at a right whale's head. Be that how it may,  
there stands the  
vast arched bone of the whale's jaw, so wide, a coach  
might almost  
drive beneath it. Within are shabby shelves, ranged round  
with old  
decanters, bottles, flasks; and in those jaws of swift

destruction,  
like another cursed Jonah (by which name indeed they  
called him),  
bustles a little withered old man, who, for their money,  
dearly sells  
the sailors deliriums and death.

Abominable are the tumblers into which he pours his  
poison. Though true  
cylinders without-within, the villanous green goggling  
glasses  
deceitfully tapered downwards to a cheating bottom.  
Parallel meridians  
rudely pecked into the glass, surround these footpads'  
goblets. Fill to  
\_this\_ mark, and your charge is but a penny; to \_this\_ a  
penny more;  
and so on to the full glass—the Cape Horn measure, which  
you may gulp  
down for a shilling.

Upon entering the place I found a number of young seamen  
gathered about  
a table, examining by a dim light divers specimens of  
\_skrimshander\_. I  
sought the landlord, and telling him I desired to be  
accommodated with  
a room, received for answer that his house was full—not a  
bed  
unoccupied. "But avast," he added, tapping his forehead,  
"you haint no  
objections to sharing a harpooneer's blanket, have ye? I  
s'pose you are  
goin' a-whalin', so you'd better get used to that sort of  
thing."

I told him that I never liked to sleep two in a bed; that  
if I should  
ever do so, it would depend upon who the harpooneer might  
be, and that  
if he (the landlord) really had no other place for me,  
and the  
harpooneer was not decidedly objectionable, why rather  
than wander

further about a strange town on so bitter a night, I would put up with the half of any decent man's blanket.

"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. "Where is that harpooneer?  
Is he here?"

"He'll be here afore long," was the answer.

I could not help it, but I began to feel suspicious of  
this "dark  
complexioned" harpooneer. At any rate, I made up my mind  
that if it so  
turned out that we should sleep together, he must undress  
and get into  
bed before I did.

Supper over, the company went back to the bar-room, when,  
knowing not  
what else to do with myself, I resolved to spend the rest  
of the  
evening as a looker on.

Presently a rioting noise was heard without. Starting up,  
the landlord  
cried, "That's the Grampus's crew. I seed her reported in  
the offing  
this morning; a three years' voyage, and a full ship.  
Hurrah, boys; now  
we'll have the latest news from the Feegees."

A tramping of sea boots was heard in the entry; the door  
was flung  
open, and in rolled a wild set of mariners enough.  
Enveloped in their  
shaggy watch coats, and with their heads muffled in  
woollen comforters,  
all bedarned and ragged, and their beards stiff with  
icicles, they  
seemed an eruption of bears from Labrador. They had just  
landed from  
their boat, and this was the first house they entered. No  
wonder, then,

that they made a straight wake for the whale's mouth—the  
bar—when the  
wrinkled little old Jonah, there officiating, soon poured  
them out  
brimmers all round. One complained of a bad cold in his  
head, upon  
which Jonah mixed him a pitch-like potion of gin and  
molasses, which he  
swore was a sovereign cure for all colds and catarrhs  
whatsoever, never  
mind of how long standing, or whether caught off the  
coast of Labrador,  
or on the weather side of an ice-island.

The liquor soon mounted into their heads, as it generally  
does even  
with the arrantest toppers newly landed from sea, and they  
began  
capering about most obstreperously.

I observed, however, that one of them held somewhat  
aloof, and though  
he seemed desirous not to spoil the hilarity of his  
shipmates by his  
own sober face, yet upon the whole he refrained from  
making as much  
noise as the rest. This man interested me at once; and  
since the  
sea-gods had ordained that he should soon become my  
shipmate (though  
but a sleeping-partner one, so far as this narrative is  
concerned), I  
will here venture upon a little description of him. He  
stood full six  
feet in height, with noble shoulders, and a chest like a  
coffer-dam. I  
have seldom seen such brawn in a man. His face was deeply  
brown and  
burnt, making his white teeth dazzling by the contrast;  
while in the  
deep shadows of his eyes floated some reminiscences that  
did not seem  
to give him much joy. His voice at once announced that he  
was a

Southerner, and from his fine stature, I thought he must be one of those tall mountaineers from the Alleghanian Ridge in Virginia. When the revelry of his companions had mounted to its height, this man slipped away unobserved, and I saw no more of him till he became my comrade on the sea. In a few minutes, however, he was missed by his shipmates, and being, it seems, for some reason a huge favourite with them, they raised a cry of "Bulkington! Bulkington! where's Bulkington?" and darted out of the house in pursuit of him.

It was now about nine o'clock, and the room seeming almost supernaturally quiet after these orgies, I began to congratulate myself upon a little plan that had occurred to me just previous to the entrance of the seamen.

No man prefers to sleep two in a bed. In fact, you would a good deal rather not sleep with your own brother. I don't know how it is, but people like to be private when they are sleeping. And when it comes to sleeping with an unknown stranger, in a strange inn, in a strange town, and that stranger a harpooneer, then your objections indefinitely multiply. Nor was there any earthly reason why I as a sailor should sleep two in a bed, more than anybody else; for sailors no more sleep two in a bed at sea, than bachelor Kings do ashore. To be sure they all sleep together in one apartment, but you have your own hammock, and cover yourself with your own blanket, and sleep in your



own skin.

The more I pondered over this harpooneer, the more I abominated the thought of sleeping with him. It was fair to presume that being a harpooneer, his linen or woollen, as the case might be, would not be of the tidiest, certainly none of the finest. I began to twitch all over. Besides, it was getting late, and my decent harpooneer ought to be home and going bedwards. Suppose now, he should tumble in upon me at midnight—how could I tell from what vile hole he had been coming?

“Landlord! I’ve changed my mind about that harpooneer.—I shan’t sleep with him. I’ll try the bench here.”

“Just as you please; I’m sorry I can’t spare ye a tablecloth for a mattress, and it’s a plaguy rough board here”—feeling of the knots and notches. “But wait a bit, Skrimshander; I’ve got a carpenter’s plane there in the bar—wait, I say, and I’ll make ye snug enough.” So saying he procured the plane; and with his old silk handkerchief first dusting the bench, vigorously set to planing away at my bed, the while grinning like an ape. The shavings flew right and left; till at last the plane-iron came bump against an indestructible knot. The landlord was near spraining his wrist, and I told him for heaven’s sake to quit—the bed was soft enough to suit me, and I did not know how all the planing in the world could make eider down of a pine plank. So gathering up the shavings with another grin, and throwing them into the

great stove in  
the middle of the room, he went about his business, and  
left me in a  
brown study.

I now took the measure of the bench, and found that it  
was a foot too  
short; but that could be mended with a chair. But it was  
a foot too  
narrow, and the other bench in the room was about four  
inches higher  
than the planed one—so there was no yoking them. I then  
placed the  
first bench lengthwise along the only clear space against  
the wall,  
leaving a little interval between, for my back to settle  
down in. But I  
soon found that there came such a draught of cold air  
over me from  
under the sill of the window, that this plan would never  
do at all,  
especially as another current from the rickety door met  
the one from  
the window, and both together formed a series of small  
whirlwinds in  
the immediate vicinity of the spot where I had thought to  
spend the  
night.

The devil fetch that harpooneer, thought I, but stop,  
couldn't I steal  
a march on him—bolt his door inside, and jump into his  
bed, not to be  
wakened by the most violent knockings? It seemed no bad  
idea; but upon  
second thoughts I dismissed it. For who could tell but  
what the next  
morning, so soon as I popped out of the room, the  
harpooneer might be  
standing in the entry, all ready to knock me down!

Still, looking round me again, and seeing no possible  
chance of  
spending a sufferable night unless in some other person's

bed, I began  
to think that after all I might be cherishing  
unwarrantable prejudices  
against this unknown harpooneer. Thinks I, I'll wait  
awhile; he must be  
dropping in before long. I'll have a good look at him  
then, and perhaps  
we may become jolly good bedfellows after all—there's no  
telling.

But though the other boarders kept coming in by ones,  
twos, and threes,  
and going to bed, yet no sign of my harpooneer.

"Landlord!" said I, "what sort of a chap is he—does he  
always keep such  
late hours?" It was now hard upon twelve o'clock.

The landlord chuckled again with his lean chuckle, and  
seemed to be  
mightily tickled at something beyond my comprehension.  
"No," he  
answered, "generally he's an early bird—airley to bed and  
airley to  
rise—yes, he's the bird what catches the worm. But to-  
night he went out  
a peddling, you see, and I don't see what on airth keeps  
him so late,  
unless, may be, he can't sell his head."

"Can't sell his head?—What sort of a bamboozingly story  
is this you are  
telling me?" getting into a towering rage. "Do you  
pretend to say,  
landlord, that this harpooneer is actually engaged this  
blessed  
Saturday night, or rather Sunday morning, in peddling his  
head around  
this town?"

"That's precisely it," said the landlord, "and I told him  
he couldn't  
sell it here, the market's overstocked."

"With what?" shouted I.

"With heads to be sure; ain't there too many heads in the world?"

"I tell you what it is, landlord," said I quite calmly, "you'd better stop spinning that yarn to me—I'm not green."

"May be not," taking out a stick and whittling a toothpick, "but I rayther guess you'll be done \_brown\_ if that ere harpooneer hears you a slanderin' his head."

"I'll break it for him," said I, now flying into a passion again at this unaccountable farrago of the landlord's.

"It's broke a'ready," said he.

"Broke," said I—"\_broke\_, do you mean?"

"Sartain, and that's the very reason he can't sell it, I guess."

"Landlord," said I, going up to him as cool as Mt. Hecla in a snow-storm—"landlord, stop whittling. You and I must understand one another, and that too without delay. I come to your house and want a bed; you tell me you can only give me half a one; that the other half belongs to a certain harpooneer. And about this harpooneer, whom I have not yet seen, you persist in telling me the most mystifying and exasperating stories tending to beget in me an uncomfortable feeling towards the man whom you design for my bedfellow—a sort of connexion, landlord, which is an intimate and confidential one in the highest

degree. I now demand of you to speak out and tell me who and what this harpooneer is, and whether I shall be in all respects safe to spend the night with him. And in the first place, you will be so good as to unsay that story about selling his head, which if true I take to be good evidence that this harpooneer is stark mad, and I've no idea of sleeping with a madman; and you, sir, you I mean, landlord, you, sir, by trying to induce me to do so knowingly, would thereby render yourself liable to a criminal prosecution."

"Wall," said the landlord, fetching a long breath, "that's a purty long sarmon for a chap that rips a little now and then. But be easy, be easy, this here harpooneer I have been tellin' you of has just arrived from the south seas, where he bought up a lot of 'balmed New Zealand heads (great curios, you know), and he's sold all on 'em but one, and that one he's trying to sell to-night, cause to-morrow's Sunday, and it would not do to be sellin' human heads about the streets when folks is goin' to churches. He wanted to, last Sunday, but I stopped him just as he was goin' out of the door with four heads strung on a string, for all the airth like a string of inions."

This account cleared up the otherwise unaccountable mystery, and showed that the landlord, after all, had had no idea of fooling me—but at the same time what could I think of a harpooneer who stayed out of a Saturday night clean into the holy Sabbath, engaged in such a cannibal

business as selling the heads of dead idolators?

"Depend upon it, landlord, that harpooneer is a dangerous man."

"He pays reg'lar," was the rejoinder. "But come, it's getting dreadful late, you had better be turning flukes—it's a nice bed; Sal and me slept in that ere bed the night we were spliced. There's plenty of room for two to kick about in that bed; it's an almighty big bed that. Why, afore we give it up, Sal used to put our Sam and little Johnny in the foot of it. But I got a dreaming and sprawling about one night, and somehow, Sam got pitched on the floor, and came near breaking his arm. Arter that, Sal said it wouldn't do. Come along here, I'll give ye a glim in a jiffy;" and so saying he lighted a candle and held it towards me, offering to lead the way. But I stood irresolute; when looking at a clock in the corner, he exclaimed "I vum it's Sunday—you won't see that harpooneer to-night; he's come to anchor somewhere—come along then; \_do\_ come; \_won't\_ ye come?"

I considered the matter a moment, and then up stairs we went, and I was ushered into a small room, cold as a clam, and furnished, sure enough, with a prodigious bed, almost big enough indeed for any four harpooneers to sleep abreast.

"There," said the landlord, placing the candle on a crazy old sea chest that did double duty as a wash-stand and centre table; "there, make yourself comfortable now, and good night to ye." I turned

round from  
eyeing the bed, but he had disappeared.

Folding back the counterpane, I stooped over the bed. Though none of the most elegant, it yet stood the scrutiny tolerably well. I then glanced round the room; and besides the bedstead and centre table, could see no other furniture belonging to the place, but a rude shelf, the four walls, and a papered fireboard representing a man striking a whale. Of things not properly belonging to the room, there was a hammock lashed up, and thrown upon the floor in one corner; also a large seaman's bag, containing the harpooneer's wardrobe, no doubt in lieu of a land trunk. Likewise, there was a parcel of outlandish bone fish hooks on the shelf over the fire-place, and a tall harpoon standing at the head of the bed.

But what is this on the chest? I took it up, and held it close to the light, and felt it, and smelt it, and tried every way possible to arrive at some satisfactory conclusion concerning it. I can compare it to nothing but a large door mat, ornamented at the edges with little tinkling tags something like the stained porcupine quills round an Indian moccasin. There was a hole or slit in the middle of this mat, as you see the same in South American ponchos. But could it be possible that any sober harpooneer would get into a door mat, and parade the streets of any Christian town in that sort of guise? I put it on, to try it, and it weighed me down like a hamper, being

uncommonly shaggy  
and thick, and I thought a little damp, as though this  
mysterious  
harpooneer had been wearing it of a rainy day. I went up  
in it to a bit  
of glass stuck against the wall, and I never saw such a  
sight in my  
life. I tore myself out of it in such a hurry that I gave  
myself a kink  
in the neck.

I sat down on the side of the bed, and commenced thinking  
about this  
head-peddling harpooneer, and his door mat. After  
thinking some time on  
the bed-side, I got up and took off my monkey jacket, and  
then stood in  
the middle of the room thinking. I then took off my coat,  
and thought a  
little more in my shirt sleeves. But beginning to feel  
very cold now,  
half undressed as I was, and remembering what the  
landlord said about  
the harpooneer's not coming home at all that night, it  
being so very  
late, I made no more ado, but jumped out of my pantaloons  
and boots,  
and then blowing out the light tumbled into bed, and  
commended myself  
to the care of heaven.

Whether that mattress was stuffed with corn-cobs or  
broken crockery,  
there is no telling, but I rolled about a good deal, and  
could not  
sleep for a long time. At last I slid off into a light  
doze, and had  
pretty nearly made a good offing towards the land of Nod,  
when I heard  
a heavy footfall in the passage, and saw a glimmer of  
light come into  
the room from under the door.

Lord save me, thinks I, that must be the harpooneer, the



infernally  
head-peddler. But I lay perfectly still, and resolved not  
to say a word  
till spoken to. Holding a light in one hand, and that  
identical New  
Zealand head in the other, the stranger entered the room,  
and without  
looking towards the bed, placed his candle a good way off  
from me on  
the floor in one corner, and then began working away at  
the knotted  
cords of the large bag I before spoke of as being in the  
room. I was  
all eagerness to see his face, but he kept it averted for  
some time  
while employed in unlacing the bag's mouth. This  
accomplished, however,  
he turned round—when, good heavens! what a sight! Such a  
face! It was  
of a dark, purplish, yellow colour, here and there stuck  
over with  
large blackish looking squares. Yes, it's just as I  
thought, he's a  
terrible bedfellow; he's been in a fight, got dreadfully  
cut, and here  
he is, just from the surgeon. But at that moment he  
chanced to turn his  
face so towards the light, that I plainly saw they could  
not be  
sticking-plasters at all, those black squares on his  
cheeks. They were  
stains of some sort or other. At first I knew not what to  
make of this;  
but soon an inkling of the truth occurred to me. I  
remembered a story  
of a white man—a whaleman too—who, falling among the  
cannibals, had  
been tattooed by them. I concluded that this harpooneer,  
in the course  
of his distant voyages, must have met with a similar  
adventure. And  
what is it, thought I, after all! It's only his outside;  
a man can be  
honest in any sort of skin. But then, what to make of his

uneearthly  
complexion, that part of it, I mean, lying round about,  
and completely  
independent of the squares of tattooing. To be sure, it  
might be  
nothing but a good coat of tropical tanning; but I never  
heard of a hot  
sun's tanning a white man into a purplish yellow one.  
However, I had  
never been in the South Seas; and perhaps the sun there  
produced these  
extraordinary effects upon the skin. Now, while all these  
ideas were  
passing through me like lightning, this harpooneer never  
noticed me at  
all. But, after some difficulty having opened his bag, he  
commenced  
fumbling in it, and presently pulled out a sort of  
tomahawk, and a  
seal-skin wallet with the hair on. Placing these on the  
old chest in  
the middle of the room, he then took the New Zealand head  
—a ghastly  
thing enough—and crammed it down into the bag. He now  
took off his  
hat—a new beaver hat—when I came nigh singing out with  
fresh surprise.  
There was no hair on his head—none to speak of at least—  
nothing but a  
small scalp-knot twisted up on his forehead. His bald  
purplish head now  
looked for all the world like a mildewed skull. Had not  
the stranger  
stood between me and the door, I would have bolted out of  
it quicker  
than ever I bolted a dinner.

Even as it was, I thought something of slipping out of  
the window, but  
it was the second floor back. I am no coward, but what to  
make of this  
head-peddling purple rascal altogether passed my  
comprehension.  
Ignorance is the parent of fear, and being completely

nonplussed and  
confounded about the stranger, I confess I was now as  
much afraid of  
him as if it was the devil himself who had thus broken  
into my room at  
the dead of night. In fact, I was so afraid of him that I  
was not game  
enough just then to address him, and demand a  
satisfactory answer  
concerning what seemed inexplicable in him.

Meanwhile, he continued the business of undressing, and  
at last showed  
his chest and arms. As I live, these covered parts of him  
were  
checkered with the same squares as his face; his back,  
too, was all  
over the same dark squares; he seemed to have been in a  
Thirty Years'  
War, and just escaped from it with a sticking-plaster  
shirt. Still  
more, his very legs were marked, as if a parcel of dark  
green frogs  
were running up the trunks of young palms. It was now  
quite plain that  
he must be some abominable savage or other shipped aboard  
of a whaler  
in the South Seas, and so landed in this Christian  
country. I quaked to  
think of it. A peddler of heads too—perhaps the heads of  
his own  
brothers. He might take a fancy to mine—heavens! look at  
that tomahawk!

But there was no time for shuddering, for now the savage  
went about  
something that completely fascinated my attention, and  
convinced me  
that he must indeed be a heathen. Going to his heavy  
grego, or wrapall,  
or dreadnaught, which he had previously hung on a chair,  
he fumbled in  
the pockets, and produced at length a curious little  
deformed image

with a hunch on its back, and exactly the colour of a  
three days' old  
Congo baby. Remembering the embalmed head, at first I  
almost thought  
that this black manikin was a real baby preserved in some  
similar  
manner. But seeing that it was not at all limber, and  
that it glistened  
a good deal like polished ebony, I concluded that it must  
be nothing  
but a wooden idol, which indeed it proved to be. For now  
the savage  
goes up to the empty fire-place, and removing the papered  
fire-board,  
sets up this little hunch-backed image, like a tenpin,  
between the  
andirons. The chimney jambs and all the bricks inside  
were very sooty,  
so that I thought this fire-place made a very appropriate  
little shrine  
or chapel for his Congo idol.

I now screwed my eyes hard towards the half hidden image,  
feeling but  
ill at ease meantime—to see what was next to follow.  
First he takes  
about a double handful of shavings out of his grego  
pocket, and places  
them carefully before the idol; then laying a bit of ship  
biscuit on  
top and applying the flame from the lamp, he kindled the  
shavings into  
a sacrificial blaze. Presently, after many hasty snatches  
into the  
fire, and still hastier withdrawals of his fingers  
(whereby he seemed  
to be scorching them badly), he at last succeeded in  
drawing out the  
biscuit; then blowing off the heat and ashes a little, he  
made a polite  
offer of it to the little negro. But the little devil did  
not seem to  
fancy such dry sort of fare at all; he never moved his  
lips. All these

strange antics were accompanied by still stranger  
guttural noises from  
the devotee, who seemed to be praying in a sing-song or  
else singing  
some pagan psalmody or other, during which his face  
twitched about in  
the most unnatural manner. At last extinguishing the  
fire, he took the  
idol up very unceremoniously, and bagged it again in his  
grego pocket  
as carelessly as if he were a sportsman bagging a dead  
woodcock.

All these queer proceedings increased my  
uncomfortableness, and seeing  
him now exhibiting strong symptoms of concluding his  
business  
operations, and jumping into bed with me, I thought it  
was high time,  
now or never, before the light was put out, to break the  
spell in which  
I had so long been bound.

But the interval I spent in deliberating what to say, was  
a fatal one.  
Taking up his tomahawk from the table, he examined the  
head of it for  
an instant, and then holding it to the light, with his  
mouth at the  
handle, he puffed out great clouds of tobacco smoke. The  
next moment  
the light was extinguished, and this wild cannibal,  
tomahawk between  
his teeth, sprang into bed with me. I sang out, I could  
not help it  
now; and giving a sudden grunt of astonishment he began  
feeling me.

Stammering out something, I knew not what, I rolled away  
from him  
against the wall, and then conjured him, whoever or  
whatever he might  
be, to keep quiet, and let me get up and light the lamp  
again. But his

guttural responses satisfied me at once that he but ill comprehended my meaning.

"Who-e debel you?"—he at last said—"you no speak-e, dam-me, I kill-e."  
And so saying the lighted tomahawk began flourishing about me in the dark.

"Landlord, for God's sake, Peter Coffin!" shouted I.  
"Landlord! Watch!  
Coffin! Angels! save me!"

"Speak-e! tell-ee me who-ee be, or dam-me, I kill-e!" again growled the cannibal, while his horrid flourishings of the tomahawk scattered the hot tobacco ashes about me till I thought my linen would get on fire.  
But thank heaven, at that moment the landlord came into the room light in hand, and leaping from the bed I ran up to him.

"Don't be afraid now," said he, grinning again, "Queequeg here wouldn't harm a hair of your head."

"Stop your grinning," shouted I, "and why didn't you tell me that that infernal harpooneer was a cannibal?"

"I thought ye know'd it;—didn't I tell ye, he was a peddlin' heads around town?—but turn flukes again and go to sleep. Queequeg, look here—you sabbee me, I sabbee—you this man sleepe you—you sabbee?"

"Me sabbee plenty"—grunted Queequeg, puffing away at his pipe and sitting up in bed.

"You gettee in," he added, motioning to me with his

tomahawk, and  
throwing the clothes to one side. He really did this in  
not only a  
civil but a really kind and charitable way. I stood  
looking at him a  
moment. For all his tattooings he was on the whole a  
clean, comely  
looking cannibal. What's all this fuss I have been making  
about,  
thought I to myself—the man's a human being just as I am:  
he has just  
as much reason to fear me, as I have to be afraid of him.  
Better sleep  
with a sober cannibal than a drunken Christian.

"Landlord," said I, "tell him to stash his tomahawk  
there, or pipe, or  
whatever you call it; tell him to stop smoking, in short,  
and I will  
turn in with him. But I don't fancy having a man smoking  
in bed with  
me. It's dangerous. Besides, I ain't insured."

This being told to Queequeg, he at once complied, and  
again politely  
motioned me to get into bed—rolling over to one side as  
much as to  
say—"I won't touch a leg of ye."

"Good night, landlord," said I, "you may go."

I turned in, and never slept better in my life.

#### CHAPTER 4. The Counterpane.

Upon waking next morning about daylight, I found  
Queequeg's arm thrown  
over me in the most loving and affectionate manner. You  
had almost  
thought I had been his wife. The counterpane was of  
patchwork, full of  
odd little parti-coloured squares and triangles; and this  
arm of his

tattooed all over with an interminable Cretan labyrinth  
of a figure, no  
two parts of which were of one precise shade—owing I  
suppose to his  
keeping his arm at sea unmethodically in sun and shade,  
his shirt  
sleeves irregularly rolled up at various times—this same  
arm of his, I  
say, looked for all the world like a strip of that same  
patchwork  
quilt. Indeed, partly lying on it as the arm did when I  
first awoke, I  
could hardly tell it from the quilt, they so blended  
their hues  
together; and it was only by the sense of weight and  
pressure that I  
could tell that Queequeg was hugging me.

My sensations were strange. Let me try to explain them.  
When I was a  
child, I well remember a somewhat similar circumstance  
that befell me;  
whether it was a reality or a dream, I never could  
entirely settle. The  
circumstance was this. I had been cutting up some caper  
or other—I  
think it was trying to crawl up the chimney, as I had  
seen a little  
sweep do a few days previous; and my stepmother who,  
somehow or other,  
was all the time whipping me, or sending me to bed  
supperless,—my  
mother dragged me by the legs out of the chimney and  
packed me off to  
bed, though it was only two o'clock in the afternoon of  
the 21st June,  
the longest day in the year in our hemisphere. I felt  
dreadfully. But  
there was no help for it, so up stairs I went to my  
little room in the  
third floor, undressed myself as slowly as possible so as  
to kill time,  
and with a bitter sigh got between the sheets.



I lay there dismally calculating that sixteen entire hours must elapse before I could hope for a resurrection. Sixteen hours in bed! the small of my back ached to think of it. And it was so light too; the sun shining in at the window, and a great rattling of coaches in the streets, and the sound of gay voices all over the house. I felt worse and worse—at last I got up, dressed, and softly going down in my stockinged feet, sought out my stepmother, and suddenly threw myself at her feet, beseeching her as a particular favour to give me a good slippering for my misbehaviour; anything indeed but condemning me to lie abed such an unendurable length of time. But she was the best and most conscientious of stepmothers, and back I had to go to my room. For several hours I lay there broad awake, feeling a great deal worse than I have ever done since, even from the greatest subsequent misfortunes. At last I must have fallen into a troubled nightmare of a doze; and slowly waking from it—half steeped in dreams—I opened my eyes, and the before sun-lit room was now wrapped in outer darkness. Instantly I felt a shock running through all my frame; nothing was to be seen, and nothing was to be heard; but a supernatural hand seemed placed in mine. My arm hung over the counterpane, and the nameless, unimaginable, silent form or phantom, to which the hand belonged, seemed closely seated by my bed-side. For what seemed ages piled on ages, I lay there, frozen with the most awful fears, not daring to drag away my hand; yet

ever thinking that if I could but stir it one single inch, the horrid spell would be broken. I knew not how this consciousness at last glided away from me; but waking in the morning, I shudderingly remembered it all, and for days and weeks and months afterwards I lost myself in confounding attempts to explain the mystery. Nay, to this very hour, I often puzzle myself with it.

Now, take away the awful fear, and my sensations at feeling the supernatural hand in mine were very similar, in their strangeness, to those which I experienced on waking up and seeing Queequeg's pagan arm thrown round me. But at length all the past night's events soberly recurred, one by one, in fixed reality, and then I lay only alive to the comical predicament. For though I tried to move his arm—unlock his bridegroom clasp—yet, sleeping as he was, he still hugged me tightly, as though naught but death should part us twain. I now strove to rouse him—"Queequeg!"—but his only answer was a snore. I then rolled over, my neck feeling as if it were in a horse-collar; and suddenly felt a slight scratch. Throwing aside the counterpane, there lay the tomahawk sleeping by the savage's side, as if it were a hatchet-faced baby. A pretty pickle, truly, thought I; abed here in a strange house in the broad day, with a cannibal and a tomahawk! "Queequeg!—in the name of goodness, Queequeg, wake!" At length, by dint of much wriggling, and loud and incessant expostulations upon the unbecomingness of his

hugging a fellow male in that matrimonial sort of style,  
I succeeded in  
extracting a grunt; and presently, he drew back his arm,  
shook himself  
all over like a Newfoundland dog just from the water, and  
sat up in  
bed, stiff as a pike-staff, looking at me, and rubbing  
his eyes as if  
he did not altogether remember how I came to be there,  
though a dim  
consciousness of knowing something about me seemed slowly  
dawning over  
him. Meanwhile, I lay quietly eyeing him, having no  
serious misgivings  
now, and bent upon narrowly observing so curious a  
creature. When, at  
last, his mind seemed made up touching the character of  
his bedfellow,  
and he became, as it were, reconciled to the fact; he  
jumped out upon  
the floor, and by certain signs and sounds gave me to  
understand that,  
if it pleased me, he would dress first and then leave me  
to dress  
afterwards, leaving the whole apartment to myself. Thinks  
I, Queequeg,  
under the circumstances, this is a very civilized  
overture; but, the  
truth is, these savages have an innate sense of delicacy,  
say what you  
will; it is marvellous how essentially polite they are. I  
pay this  
particular compliment to Queequeg, because he treated me  
with so much  
civility and consideration, while I was guilty of great  
rudeness;  
staring at him from the bed, and watching all his  
toilette motions; for  
the time my curiosity getting the better of my breeding.  
Nevertheless,  
a man like Queequeg you don't see every day, he and his  
ways were well  
worth unusual regarding.

He commenced dressing at top by donning his beaver hat, a very tall one, by the by, and then—still minus his trowsers—he hunted up his boots. What under the heavens he did it for, I cannot tell, but his next movement was to crush himself—boots in hand, and hat on—under the bed; when, from sundry violent gaspings and strainings, I inferred he was hard at work booting himself; though by no law of propriety that I ever heard of, is any man required to be private when putting on his boots. But Queequeg, do you see, was a creature in the transition stage—neither caterpillar nor butterfly. He was just enough civilized to show off his outlandishness in the strangest possible manners. His education was not yet completed. He was an undergraduate. If he had not been a small degree civilized, he very probably would not have troubled himself with boots at all; but then, if he had not been still a savage, he never would have dreamt of getting under the bed to put them on. At last, he emerged with his hat very much dented and crushed down over his eyes, and began creaking and limping about the room, as if, not being much accustomed to boots, his pair of damp, wrinkled cowhide ones—probably not made to order either—rather pinched and tormented him at the first go off of a bitter cold morning.

Seeing, now, that there were no curtains to the window, and that the street being very narrow, the house opposite commanded a plain view into the room, and observing more and more the indecorous figure that

Queequeg made, staving about with little else but his hat and boots on;  
I begged him as well as I could, to accelerate his toilet somewhat, and particularly to get into his pantaloons as soon as possible. He complied, and then proceeded to wash himself. At that time in the morning any Christian would have washed his face; but Queequeg, to my amazement, contented himself with restricting his ablutions to his chest, arms, and hands. He then donned his waistcoat, and taking up a piece of hard soap on the wash-stand centre table, dipped it into water and commenced lathering his face. I was watching to see where he kept his razor, when lo and behold, he takes the harpoon from the bed corner, slips out the long wooden stock, unsheathes the head, whets it a little on his boot, and striding up to the bit of mirror against the wall, begins a vigorous scraping, or rather harpooning of his cheeks. Thinks I, Queequeg, this is using Rogers's best cutlery with a vengeance. Afterwards I wondered the less at this operation when I came to know of what fine steel the head of a harpoon is made, and how exceedingly sharp the long straight edges are always kept.

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.

CHAPTER 5. Breakfast.

I quickly followed suit, and descending into the bar-room accosted the grinning landlord very pleasantly. I cherished no malice towards him, though he had been skylarking with me not a little in the matter of my bedfellow.

However, a good laugh is a mighty good thing, and rather too scarce a good thing; the more's the pity. So, if any one man, in his own proper person, afford stuff for a good joke to anybody, let him not be backward, but let him cheerfully allow himself to spend and be spent in that way. And the man that has anything bountifully laughable about him, be sure there is more in that man than you perhaps think for.

The bar-room was now full of the boarders who had been dropping in the night previous, and whom I had not as yet had a good look at. They were nearly all whalemens; chief mates, and second mates, and third mates, and sea carpenters, and sea coopers, and sea blacksmiths, and harpooneers, and ship keepers; a brown and brawny company, with bosky beards; an unshorn, shaggy set, all wearing monkey jackets for morning gowns.

You could pretty plainly tell how long each one had been ashore. This young fellow's healthy cheek is like a sun-toasted pear in hue, and would seem to smell almost as musky; he cannot have been three days landed from his Indian voyage. 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  
whalemen!

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 Feejeeans, Tongatobooarrs,  
Erromanggoans, 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 harpooneers,  
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.  
Yet, in spite of this, nowhere in all America will you  
find more  
patrician-like houses; parks and gardens more opulent,  
than in New  
Bedford. Whence came they? how planted upon this once  
scraggy scoria of  
a country?

Go and gaze upon the iron emblematical harpoons round  
yonder lofty  
mansion, and your question will be answered. Yes; all  
these brave  
houses and flowery gardens came from the Atlantic,  
Pacific, and Indian  
oceans. One and all, they were harpooned and dragged up  
hither from the  
bottom of the sea. Can Herr Alexander perform a feat like  
that?

In New Bedford, fathers, they say, give whales for dowers  
to their  
daughters, and portion off their nieces with a few  
porpoises a-piece.  
You must go to New Bedford to see a brilliant wedding;  
for, they say,  
they have reservoirs of oil in every house, and every  
night recklessly  
burn their lengths in spermaceti candles.

In summer time, the town is sweet to see; full of fine  
maples—long  
avenues of green and gold. And in August, high in air,  
the beautiful  
and bountiful horse-chestnuts, candelabra-wise, proffer  
the passer-by  
their tapering upright cones of congregated blossoms. So  
omnipotent is

art; which in many a district of New Bedford has  
superinduced bright  
terraces of flowers upon the barren refuse rocks thrown  
aside at  
creation's final day.

And the women of New Bedford, they bloom like their own  
red roses. But  
roses only bloom in summer; whereas the fine carnation of  
their cheeks  
is perennial as sunlight in the seventh heavens.  
Elsewhere match that  
bloom of theirs, ye cannot, save in Salem, where they  
tell me the young  
girls breathe such musk, their sailor sweethearts smell  
them miles off  
shore, as though they were drawing nigh the odorous  
Moluccas instead of  
the Puritanic sands.

## 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\_ 1\_st\_, 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\_ 31\_st\_, 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\_ 3\_d\_, 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, unstirring 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  
whalemen 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.

## CHAPTER 8. The Pulpit.

I had not been seated very long ere a man of a certain  
venerable  
robustness entered; immediately as the storm-pelted door  
flew back upon  
admitting him, a quick regardful eyeing of him by all the  
congregation,  
sufficiently attested that this fine old man was the  
chaplain. Yes, it  
was the famous Father Mapple, so called by the whalemén,  
among whom he  
was a very great favourite. He had been a sailor and a  
harpooneer in  
his youth, but for many years past had dedicated his life  
to the  
ministry. At the time I now write of, Father Mapple was  
in the hardy  
winter of a healthy old age; that sort of old age which  
seems merging  
into a second flowering youth, for among all the fissures  
of his  
wrinkles, there shone certain mild gleams of a newly  
developing  
bloom—the spring verdure peeping forth even beneath  
February's snow. No  
one having previously heard his history, could for the  
first time  
behold Father Mapple without the utmost interest, because  
there were



certain engrafted clerical peculiarities about him,  
imputable to that  
adventurous maritime life he had led. When he entered I  
observed that  
he carried no umbrella, and certainly had not come in his  
carriage, for  
his tarpaulin hat ran down with melting sleet, and his  
great pilot  
cloth jacket seemed almost to drag him to the floor with  
the weight of  
the water it had absorbed. However, hat and coat and  
overshoes were one  
by one removed, and hung up in a little space in an  
adjacent corner;  
when, arrayed in a decent suit, he quietly approached the  
pulpit.

Like most old fashioned pulpits, it was a very lofty one,  
and since a  
regular stairs to such a height would, by its long angle  
with the  
floor, seriously contract the already small area of the  
chapel, the  
architect, it seemed, had acted upon the hint of Father  
Mapple, and  
finished the pulpit without a stairs, substituting a  
perpendicular side  
ladder, like those used in mounting a ship from a boat at  
sea. The wife  
of a whaling captain had provided the chapel with a  
handsome pair of  
red worsted man-ropes for this ladder, which, being  
itself nicely  
headed, and stained with a mahogany colour, the whole  
contrivance,  
considering what manner of chapel it was, seemed by no  
means in bad  
taste. Halting for an instant at the foot of the ladder,  
and with both  
hands grasping the ornamental knobs of the man-ropes,  
Father Mapple  
cast a look upwards, and then with a truly sailor-like  
but still  
reverential dexterity, hand over hand, mounted the steps

as if  
ascending the main-top of his vessel.

The perpendicular parts of this side ladder, as is usually the case with swinging ones, were of cloth-covered rope, only the rounds were of wood, so that at every step there was a joint. At my first glimpse of the pulpit, it had not escaped me that however convenient for a ship, these joints in the present instance seemed unnecessary. For I was not prepared to see Father Mapple after gaining the height, slowly turn round, and stooping over the pulpit, deliberately drag up the ladder step by step, till the whole was deposited within, leaving him impregnable in his little Quebec.

I pondered some time without fully comprehending the reason for this. Father Mapple enjoyed such a wide reputation for sincerity and sanctity, that I could not suspect him of courting notoriety by any mere tricks of the stage. No, thought I, there must be some sober reason for this thing; furthermore, it must symbolize something unseen. Can it be, then, that by that act of physical isolation, he signifies his spiritual withdrawal for the time, from all outward worldly ties and connexions? Yes, for replenished with the meat and wine of the word, to the faithful man of God, this pulpit, I see, is a self-containing stronghold—a lofty Ehrenbreitstein, with a perennial well of water within the walls.

But the side ladder was not the only strange feature of

the place,  
borrowed from the chaplain's former sea-farings. Between  
the marble  
cenotaphs on either hand of the pulpit, the wall which  
formed its back  
was adorned with a large painting representing a gallant  
ship beating  
against a terrible storm off a lee coast of black rocks  
and snowy  
breakers. But high above the flying scud and dark-rolling  
clouds, there  
floated a little isle of sunlight, from which beamed  
forth an angel's  
face; and this bright face shed a distinct spot of  
radiance upon the  
ship's tossed deck, something like that silver plate now  
inserted into  
the Victory's plank where Nelson fell. "Ah, noble ship,"  
the angel  
seemed to say, "beat on, beat on, thou noble ship, and  
bear a hardy  
helm; for lo! the sun is breaking through; the clouds are  
rolling  
off—serenest azure is at hand."

Nor was the pulpit itself without a trace of the same  
sea-taste that  
had achieved the ladder and the picture. 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.

"My song for ever shall record That terrible, that joyful hour; I

give the glory to my God, His all the mercy and the power."

Nearly all joined in singing this hymn, which swelled high above the howling of the storm. A brief pause ensued; the preacher slowly turned over the leaves of the Bible, and at last, folding his hand down upon the proper page, said: "Beloved shipmates, clinch the last verse of the first chapter of Jonah—'And God had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah.'"

"Shipmates, this book, containing only four chapters—four yarns—is one

of the smallest strands in the mighty cable of the Scriptures. Yet what depths of the soul does Jonah's deep sealine sound! what a pregnant

lesson to us is this prophet! What a noble thing is that  
canticle in  
the fish's belly! How billow-like and boisterously grand!  
We feel the  
floods surging over us; we sound with him to the kelpy  
bottom of the  
waters; sea-weed and all the slime of the sea is about  
us! But what  
is this lesson that the book of Jonah teaches? Shipmates,  
it is a  
two-stranded lesson; a lesson to us all as sinful men,  
and a lesson to  
me as a pilot of the living God. As sinful men, it is a  
lesson to us  
all, because it is a story of the sin, hard-heartedness,  
suddenly  
awakened fears, the swift punishment, repentance,  
prayers, and finally  
the deliverance and joy of Jonah. As with all sinners  
among men, the  
sin of this son of Amittai was in his wilful disobedience  
of the  
command of God—never mind now what that command was, or  
how  
conveyed—which he found a hard command. But all the  
things that God  
would have us do are hard for us to do—remember that—and  
hence, he  
oftener commands us than endeavors to persuade. And if we  
obey God, we  
must disobey ourselves; and it is in this disobeying  
ourselves, wherein  
the hardness of obeying God consists.

“With this sin of disobedience in him, Jonah still  
further flouts at  
God, by seeking to flee from Him. He thinks that a ship  
made by men  
will carry him into countries where God does not reign,  
but only the  
Captains of this earth. He skulks about the wharves of  
Joppa, and seeks  
a ship that's bound for Tarshish. There lurks, perhaps, a  
hitherto

unheeded meaning here. By all accounts Tarshish could have been no other city than the modern Cadiz. That's the opinion of learned men.

And where is Cadiz, shipmates? Cadiz is in Spain; as far by water, from Joppa, as Jonah could possibly have sailed in those ancient days, when the Atlantic was an almost unknown sea. Because Joppa, the modern Jaffa, shipmates, is on the most easterly coast of the Mediterranean, the Syrian; and Tarshish or Cadiz more than two thousand miles to the westward from that, just outside the Straits of Gibraltar. See ye not then, shipmates, that Jonah sought to flee world-wide from God?

Miserable man! Oh! most contemptible and worthy of all scorn; with slouched hat and guilty eye, skulking from his God; prowling among the shipping like a vile burglar hastening to cross the seas. So disordered, self-condemning is his look, that had there been policemen in those days, Jonah, on the mere suspicion of something wrong, had been arrested ere he touched a deck. How plainly he's a fugitive! no baggage, not a hat-box, valise, or carpet-bag,—no friends accompany him to the wharf with their adieux. At last, after much dodging search, he finds the Tarshish ship receiving the last items of her cargo; and as he steps on board to see its Captain in the cabin, all the sailors for the moment desist from hoisting in the goods, to mark the stranger's evil eye. Jonah sees this; but in vain he tries to look all ease and confidence; in vain essays his wretched smile. 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.' Ha! Jonah, that's another stab. But he  
swiftly calls away  
the Captain from that scent. 'I'll sail with ye,'—he  
says,—'the passage  
money how much is that?—I'll pay now.' For it is  
particularly written,  
shipmates, as if it were a thing not to be overlooked in  
this history,  
'that he paid the fare thereof' ere the craft did sail.  
And taken with  
the context, this is full of meaning.

"Now Jonah's Captain, shipmates, was one whose  
discernment detects  
crime in any, but whose cupidity exposes it only in the  
penniless. In  
this world, shipmates, sin that pays its way can travel  
freely, and  
without a passport; whereas Virtue, if a pauper, is  
stopped at all  
frontiers. So Jonah's Captain prepares to test the length  
of Jonah's  
purse, ere he judge him openly. He charges him thrice the  
usual sum;  
and it's assented to. Then the Captain knows that Jonah  
is a fugitive;  
but at the same time resolves to help a flight that paves  
its rear with  
gold. Yet when Jonah fairly takes out his purse, prudent  
suspicions  
still molest the Captain. He rings every coin to find a  
counterfeit.  
Not a forger, any way, he mutters; and Jonah is put down  
for his  
passage. 'Point out my state-room, Sir,' says Jonah now,  
'I'm  
travel-weary; I need sleep.' 'Thou lookest like it,' says  
the Captain,  
'there's thy room.' Jonah enters, and would lock the  
door, but the lock

contains no key. Hearing him foolishly fumbling there,  
the Captain  
laughs lowly to himself, and mutters something about the  
doors of  
convicts' cells being never allowed to be locked within.  
All dressed  
and dusty as he is, Jonah throws himself into his berth,  
and finds the  
little state-room ceiling almost resting on his forehead.  
The air is  
close, and Jonah gasps. Then, in that contracted hole,  
sunk, too,  
beneath the ship's water-line, Jonah feels the heralding  
presentiment  
of that stifling hour, when the whale shall hold him in  
the smallest of  
his bowels' wards.

"Screwed at its axis against the side, a swinging lamp  
slightly  
oscillates in Jonah's room; and the ship, heeling over  
towards the  
wharf with the weight of the last bales received, the  
lamp, flame and  
all, though in slight motion, still maintains a permanent  
obliquity  
with reference to the room; though, in truth, infallibly  
straight  
itself, it but made obvious the false, lying levels among  
which it  
hung. The lamp alarms and frightens Jonah; as lying in  
his berth his  
tormented eyes roll round the place, and this thus far  
successful  
fugitive finds no refuge for his restless glance. But  
that  
contradiction in the lamp more and more appals him. The  
floor, the  
ceiling, and the side, are all awry. 'Oh! so my  
conscience hangs in  
me!' he groans, 'straight upwards, so it burns; but the  
chambers of my  
soul are all in crookedness!'

"Like one who after a night of drunken revelry hies to his bed, still reeling, but with conscience yet pricking him, as the plungings of the Roman race-horse but so much the more strike his steel tags into him; as one who in that miserable plight still turns and turns in giddy anguish, praying God for annihilation until the fit be passed; and at last amid the whirl of woe he feels, a deep stupor steals over him, as over the man who bleeds to death, for conscience is the wound, and there's naught to staunch it; so, after sore wrestlings in his berth, Jonah's prodigy of ponderous misery drags him drowning down to sleep.

"And now the time of tide has come; the ship casts off her cables; and from the deserted wharf the uncheered ship for Tarshish, all careening, glides to sea. That ship, my friends, was the first of recorded smugglers! the contraband was Jonah. 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? Thy country? What people?  
But mark now,  
my shipmates, the behavior of poor Jonah. The eager  
mariners but ask  
him who he is, and where from; whereas, they not only

receive an answer  
to those questions, but likewise another answer to a  
question not put  
by them, but the unsolicited answer is forced from Jonah  
by the hard  
hand of God that is upon him.

“‘I am a Hebrew,’ he cries—and then—‘I fear the Lord the  
God of Heaven  
who hath made the sea and the dry land!’ Fear him, O  
Jonah? Aye, well  
mightest thou fear the Lord God \_then!\_ Straightway, he  
now goes on to  
make a full confession; whereupon the mariners became  
more and more  
appalled, but still are pitiful. For when Jonah, not yet  
supplicating  
God for mercy, since he but too well knew the darkness of  
his  
deserts,—when wretched Jonah cries out to them to take  
him and cast him  
forth into the sea, for he knew that for \_his\_ sake this  
great tempest  
was upon them; they mercifully turn from him, and seek by  
other means  
to save the ship. But all in vain; the indignant gale  
howls louder;  
then, with one hand raised invokingly to God, with the  
other they not  
unreluctantly lay hold of Jonah.

“And now behold Jonah taken up as an anchor and dropped  
into the sea;  
when instantly an oily calmness floats out from the east,  
and the sea  
is still, as Jonah carries down the gale with him,  
leaving smooth water  
behind. He goes down in the whirling heart of such a  
masterless  
commotion that he scarce heeds the moment when he drops  
seething into  
the yawning jaws awaiting him; and the whale shoots—to  
all his ivory  
teeth, like so many white bolts, upon his prison. Then

Jonah prayed  
unto the Lord out of the fish's belly. But observe his  
prayer, and  
learn a weighty lesson. For sinful as he is, Jonah does  
not weep and  
wail for direct deliverance. He feels that his dreadful  
punishment is  
just. He leaves all his deliverance to God, contenting  
himself with  
this, that spite of all his pains and pangs, he will  
still look towards  
His holy temple. And here, shipmates, is true and  
faithful repentance;  
not clamorous for pardon, but grateful for punishment.  
And how pleasing  
to God was this conduct in Jonah, is shown in the  
eventual deliverance  
of him from the sea and the whale. Shipmates, I do not  
place Jonah  
before you to be copied for his sin but I do place him  
before you as a  
model for repentance. Sin not; but if you do, take heed  
to repent of it  
like Jonah."

While he was speaking these words, the howling of the  
shrieking,  
slanting storm without seemed to add new power to the  
preacher, who,  
when describing Jonah's sea-storm, seemed tossed by a  
storm himself.  
His deep chest heaved as with a ground-swell; his tossed  
arms seemed  
the warring elements at work; and the thunders that  
rolled away from  
off his swarthy brow, and the light leaping from his eye,  
made all his  
simple hearers look on him with a quick fear that was  
strange to them.

There now came a lull in his look, as he silently turned  
over the  
leaves of the Book once more; and, at last, standing  
motionless, with

closed eyes, for the moment, seemed communing with God and himself.

But again he leaned over towards the people, and bowing his head lowly,  
with an aspect of the deepest yet manliest humility, he spake these words:

"Shipmates, God has laid but one hand upon you; both his hands press upon me. I have read ye by what murky light may be mine the lesson that Jonah teaches to all sinners; and therefore to ye, and still more to me, for I am a greater sinner than ye. And now how gladly would I come down from this mast-head and sit on the hatches there where you sit, and listen as you listen, while some one of you reads me that other and more awful lesson which Jonah teaches to me, as a pilot of the living God. How being an anointed pilot-prophet, or speaker of true things, and bidden by the Lord to sound those unwelcome truths in the ears of a wicked Nineveh, Jonah, appalled at the hostility he should raise, fled from his mission, and sought to escape his duty and his God by taking ship at Joppa. But God is everywhere; Tarshish he never reached. As we have seen, God came upon him in the whale, and swallowed him down to living gulfs of doom, and with swift slantings tore him along 'into the midst of the seas,' where the eddy depths sucked him ten thousand fathoms down, and 'the weeds were wrapped about his head,' and all the watery world of woe bowled over him. Yet even then beyond the reach of any plummet—'out of the belly of hell'—when

the whale  
grounded upon the ocean's utmost bones, even then, God  
heard the  
engulphed, repenting prophet when he cried. Then God  
spoke unto the  
fish; and from the shuddering cold and blackness of the  
sea, the whale  
came breaching up towards the warm and pleasant sun, and  
all the  
delights of air and earth; and 'vomited out Jonah upon  
the dry land;'  
when the word of the Lord came a second time; and Jonah,  
bruised and  
beaten—his ears, like two sea-shells, still  
multitudinously murmuring  
of the ocean—Jonah did the Almighty's bidding. And what  
was that,  
shipmates? To preach the Truth to the face of Falsehood!  
That was it!

"This, shipmates, this is that other lesson; and woe to  
that pilot of  
the living God who slights it. Woe to him whom this world  
charms from  
Gospel duty! Woe to him who seeks to pour oil upon the  
waters when God  
has brewed them into a gale! Woe to him who seeks to  
please rather than  
to appal! Woe to him whose good name is more to him than  
goodness! Woe  
to him who, in this world, courts not dishonor! Woe to  
him who would  
not be true, even though to be false were salvation! Yea,  
woe to him  
who, as the great Pilot Paul has it, while preaching to  
others is  
himself a castaway!"

He dropped and fell away from himself for a moment; then  
lifting his  
face to them again, showed a deep joy in his eyes, as he  
cried out with  
a heavenly enthusiasm,—“But oh! shipmates! on the  
starboard hand of



every woe, there is a sure delight; and higher the top of  
that delight,  
than the bottom of the woe is deep. Is not the main-truck  
higher than  
the keelson is low? 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 phrenologically  
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."

As I sat there in that now lonely room; the fire burning low, in that mild stage when, after its first intensity has warmed the air, it then only glows to be looked at; the evening shades and phantoms gathering round the casements, and peering in upon us silent, solitary twain; the storm booming without in solemn swells; I began to be sensible of strange feelings. I felt a melting in me. No more my splintered heart

and maddened hand were turned against the wolfish world.  
This soothing  
savage had redeemed it. There he sat, his very  
indifference speaking a  
nature in which there lurked no civilized hypocrisies and  
bland  
deceits. Wild he was; a very sight of sights to see; yet  
I began to  
feel myself mysteriously drawn towards him. And those  
same things that  
would have repelled most others, they were the very  
magnets that thus  
drew me. I'll try a pagan friend, thought I, since  
Christian kindness  
has proved but hollow courtesy. I drew my bench near him,  
and made some  
friendly signs and hints, doing my best to talk with him  
meanwhile. At  
first he little noticed these advances; but presently,  
upon my  
referring to his last night's hospitalities, he made out  
to ask me  
whether we were again to be bedfellows. I told him yes;  
whereat I  
thought he looked pleased, perhaps a little complimented.

We then turned over the book together, and I endeavored  
to explain to  
him the purpose of the printing, and the meaning of the  
few pictures  
that were in it. Thus I soon engaged his interest; and  
from that we  
went to jabbering the best we could about the various  
outer sights to  
be seen in this famous town. Soon I proposed a social  
smoke; and,  
producing his pouch and tomahawk, he quietly offered me a  
puff. And  
then we sat exchanging puffs from that wild pipe of his,  
and keeping it  
regularly passing between us.

If there yet lurked any ice of indifference towards me in  
the Pagan's

breast, this pleasant, genial smoke we had, soon thawed it out, and left us cronies. He seemed to take to me quite as naturally and unbiddenly as I to him; and when our smoke was over, he pressed his forehead against mine, clasped me round the waist, and said that henceforth we were married; meaning, in his country's phrase, that we were bosom friends; he would gladly die for me, if need should be. In a countryman, this sudden flame of friendship would have seemed far too premature, a thing to be much distrusted; but in this simple savage those old rules would not apply.

After supper, and another social chat and smoke, we went to our room together. He made me a present of his embalmed head; took out his enormous tobacco wallet, and groping under the tobacco, drew out some thirty dollars in silver; then spreading them on the table, and mechanically dividing them into two equal portions, pushed one of them towards me, and said it was mine. I was going to remonstrate; but he silenced me by pouring them into my trowsers' pockets. I let them stay. He then went about his evening prayers, took out his idol, and removed the paper fireboard. By certain signs and symptoms, I thought he seemed anxious for me to join him; but well knowing what was to follow, I deliberated a moment whether, in case he invited me, I would comply or otherwise.

I was a good Christian; born and bred in the bosom of the infallible

Presbyterian Church. How then could I unite with this wild idolator in worshipping his piece of wood? But what is worship? thought I. Do you suppose now, Ishmael, that the magnanimous God of heaven and earth—pagans and all included—can possibly be jealous of an insignificant bit of black wood? Impossible! But what is worship?—to do the will of God—that\_ is worship. And what is the will of God?—to do to my fellow man what I would have my fellow man to do to me—that\_ is the will of God. Now, Queequeg is my fellow man. 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.

CHAPTER 11. Nightgown.

We had lain thus in bed, chatting and napping at short intervals, and Queequeg now and then affectionately throwing his brown tattooed legs over mine, and then drawing them back; so entirely sociable and free and easy were we; when, at last, by reason of our confabulations, what little nappishness remained in us altogether departed, and we felt like getting up again, though day-break was yet some way down the future.

Yes, we became very wakeful; so much so that our recumbent position began to grow wearisome, and by little and little we found ourselves sitting up; the clothes well tucked around us, leaning against the head-board with our four knees drawn up close together, and our two noses bending over them, as if our kneepans were warming-pans. We felt very nice and snug, the more so since it was so chilly out of doors; indeed out of bed-clothes too, seeing that there was no fire in the room. The more so, I say, because truly to enjoy bodily warmth, some small part of you must be cold, for there is no quality in this world that is not what it is merely by contrast. Nothing exists in itself. If you flatter yourself that you are all over comfortable, and have been so a long time, then you cannot be said to be comfortable any more. But if, like Queequeg and me in the bed, the tip of your nose or the crown of your head be slightly chilled, why then, indeed, in the general consciousness you feel most delightfully and unmistakably warm. For



this reason a sleeping apartment should never be  
furnished with a fire,  
which is one of the luxurious discomforts of the rich.  
For the height  
of this sort of deliciousness is to have nothing but the  
blanket  
between you and your snugness and the cold of the outer  
air. Then there  
you lie like the one warm spark in the heart of an arctic  
crystal.

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  
whalemen 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. For the nonce, however, he proposed to sail about, and sow his wild oats in all four oceans. They had made a harpooneer of him, and that barbed iron was in lieu of a sceptre now.

I asked him what might be his immediate purpose, touching his future movements. He answered, to go to sea again, in his old vocation. Upon this, I told him that whaling was my own design, and informed him of my intention to sail out of Nantucket, as being the most promising port for an adventurous whaleman to embark from. He at once resolved to accompany me to that island, ship aboard the same vessel, get into the same watch, the same boat, the same mess with me, in short to share my every hap; with both my hands in his, boldly dip into the Potluck of both worlds. To all this I joyously assented; for besides the affection I now felt for Queequeg, he was an experienced harpooneer, and as such, could not fail to be of great usefulness to one, who, like me, was wholly ignorant of the mysteries of whaling, though well acquainted with the sea, as known to merchant seamen.

His story being ended with his pipe's last dying puff, Queequeg

embraced me, pressed his forehead against mine, and blowing out the light, we rolled over from each other, this way and that, and very soon were sleeping.

### 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. It was in Sag  
Harbor. The  
owners of his ship, it seems, had lent him one, in which  
to carry his  
heavy chest to his boarding house. Not to seem ignorant  
about the  
thing—though in truth he was entirely so, concerning the  
precise way in  
which to manage the barrow—Queequeg puts his chest upon  
it; lashes it  
fast; and then shoulders the barrow and marches up the  
wharf. "Why,"  
said I, "Queequeg, you might have known better than that,  
one would  
think. Didn't the people laugh?"

Upon this, he told me another story. The people of his  
island of  
Rokovoko, it seems, at their wedding feasts express the  
fragrant water  
of young cocoanuts into a large stained calabash like a  
punchbowl; and  
this punchbowl always forms the great central ornament on  
the braided  
mat where the feast is held. Now a certain grand merchant  
ship once  
touched at Rokovoko, and its commander—from all accounts,  
a very  
stately punctilious gentleman, at least for a sea captain

—this  
commander was invited to the wedding feast of Queequeg's  
sister, a  
pretty young princess just turned of ten. Well; when all  
the wedding  
guests were assembled at the bride's bamboo cottage, this  
Captain  
marches in, and being assigned the post of honor, placed  
himself over  
against the punchbowl, and between the High Priest and  
his majesty the  
King, Queequeg's father. Grace being said,—for those  
people have their  
grace as well as we—though Queequeg told me that unlike  
us, who at such  
times look downwards to our platters, they, on the  
contrary, copying  
the ducks, glance upwards to the great Giver of all  
feasts—Grace, I  
say, being said, the High Priest opens the banquet by the  
immemorial  
ceremony of the island; that is, dipping his consecrated  
and  
consecrating fingers into the bowl before the blessed  
beverage  
circulates. Seeing himself placed next the Priest, and  
noting the  
ceremony, and thinking himself—being Captain of a ship—as  
having plain  
precedence over a mere island King, especially in the  
King's own  
house—the Captain coolly proceeds to wash his hands in  
the  
punchbowl;—taking it I suppose for a huge finger-glass.  
“Now,” said  
Queequeg, “what you tink now?—Didn't our people laugh?”

At last, passage paid, and luggage safe, we stood on  
board the  
schooner. Hoisting sail, it glided down the Acushnet  
river. 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-somersets, 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. In the midst of this consternation, Queequeg dropped deftly to his knees, and crawling under the path of the boom, whipped hold of a rope, secured one end to the bulwarks, and then flinging the other like a lasso, caught it round the boom as it swept over his head, and at the next jerk, the spar was that way trapped, and all was safe. The schooner was run into the wind, and while the hands were clearing away the stern boat, Queequeg, stripped to the waist, darted from the side with a long

living arc of a leap. For three minutes or more he was seen swimming like a dog, throwing his long arms straight out before him, and by turns revealing his brawny shoulders through the freezing foam. I looked at the grand and glorious fellow, but saw no one to be saved. The greenhorn had gone down. Shooting himself perpendicularly from the water, Queequeg, now took an instant's glance around him, and seeming to see just how matters were, dived down and disappeared. A few minutes more, and he rose again, one arm still striking out, and with the other dragging a lifeless form. The boat soon picked them up. The poor bumpkin was restored. All hands voted Queequeg a noble trump; the captain begged his pardon. From that hour I clove to Queequeg like a barnacle; yea, till poor Queequeg took his last long dive.

Was there ever such unconsciousness? He did not seem to think that he at all deserved a medal from the Humane and Magnanimous Societies. He only asked for water—fresh water—something to wipe the brine off; that done, he put on dry clothes, lighted his pipe, and leaning against the bulwarks, and mildly eyeing those around him, seemed to be saying to himself—"It's a mutual, joint-stock world, in all meridians. We cannibals must help these Christians."

#### 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 loud lament the parents saw their child

borne out of sight over the wide waters. They resolved to follow in the same direction. Setting out in their canoes, after a perilous passage they discovered the island, and there they found an empty ivory casket,—the poor little Indian's skeleton.

What wonder, then, that these Nantucketers, born on a beach, should take to the sea for a livelihood! They first caught crabs and quohogs in the sand; grown bolder, they waded out with nets for mackerel; more experienced, they pushed off in boats and captured cod; and at last, launching a navy of great ships on the sea, explored this watery world; put an incessant belt of circumnavigations round it; peeped in at Behring's Straits; and in all seasons and all oceans declared everlasting war with the mightiest animated mass that has survived the flood; most monstrous and most mountainous! That Himmalehan, salt-sea Mastodon, clothed with such portentousness of unconscious power, that his very panics are more to be dreaded than his most fearless and malicious assaults!

And thus have these naked Nantucketers, these sea hermits, issuing from their ant-hill in the sea, overrun and conquered the watery world like so many Alexanders; parcelling out among them the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans, as the three pirate powers did Poland. Let America add Mexico to Texas, and pile Cuba upon Canada; let the English overswarm all India, and hang out their blazing banner from the sun;

two thirds of this terraqueous globe are the  
Nantucketer's. For the sea  
is his; he owns it, as Emperors own empires; other seamen  
having but a  
right of way through it. Merchant ships are but extension  
bridges;  
armed ones but floating forts; even pirates and  
privateers, though  
following the sea as highwaymen the road, they but  
plunder other ships,  
other fragments of the land like themselves, without  
seeking to draw  
their living from the bottomless deep itself. The  
Nantucketer, he alone  
resides and riots on the sea; he alone, in Bible  
language, goes down to  
it in ships; to and fro ploughing it as his own special  
plantation.

\_There\_ is his home; \_there\_ lies his business, which a  
Noah's flood  
would not interrupt, though it overwhelmed all the  
millions in China.  
He lives on the sea, as prairie cocks in the prairie; he  
hides among  
the waves, he climbs them as chamois hunters climb the  
Alps. For years  
he knows not the land; so that when he comes to it at  
last, it smells  
like another world, more strangely than the moon would to  
an Earthsman.  
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. 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 whalemen's 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.

"Queequeg," said I, "do you think that we can make out a supper for us

both on one clam?"

However, a warm savory steam from the kitchen served to belie the

apparently cheerless prospect before us. But when that smoking chowder

came in, the mystery was delightfully explained. Oh, sweet friends!

hearken to me. It was made of small juicy clams, scarcely bigger than

hazel nuts, mixed with pounded ship biscuit, and salted pork cut up

into little flakes; the whole enriched with butter, and plentifully

seasoned with pepper and salt. Our appetites being sharpened by the

frosty voyage, and in particular, Queequeg seeing his favourite fishing

food before him, and the chowder being surpassingly excellent, we

despatched it with great expedition: when leaning back a moment and bethinking me of Mrs. Hussey's clam and cod announcement, I thought I would try a little experiment. Stepping to the kitchen door, I uttered the word "cod" with great emphasis, and resumed my seat. In a few moments the savoury steam came forth again, but with a different flavor, and in good time a fine cod-chowder was placed before us.

We resumed business; and while plying our spoons in the bowl, thinks I to myself, I wonder now if this here has any effect on the head? What's that stultifying saying about chowder-headed people? "But look, Queequeg, ain't that a live eel in your bowl? Where's your harpoon?"

Fishiest of all fishy places was the Try Pots, which well deserved its name; for the pots there were always boiling chowders. Chowder for breakfast, and chowder for dinner, and chowder for supper, till you began to look for fish-bones coming through your clothes. The area before the house was paved with clam-shells. Mrs. Hussey wore a polished necklace of codfish vertebra; and Hosea Hussey had his account books bound in superior old shark-skin. There was a fishy flavor to the milk, too, which I could not at all account for, till one morning happening to take a stroll along the beach among some fishermen's boats, I saw Hosea's brindled cow feeding on fish remnants, and marching along the sand with each foot in a cod's decapitated head,

looking very slip-shod, I assure ye.

Supper concluded, we received a lamp, and directions from Mrs. Hussey concerning the nearest way to bed; but, as Queequeg was about to precede me up the stairs, the lady reached forth her arm, and demanded his harpoon; she allowed no harpoon in her chambers. "Why not?" said I; "every true whaleman sleeps with his harpoon—but why not?" "Because it's dangerous," says she. "Ever since young Stiggs coming from that unfort'nt v'y'ge of his, when he was gone four years and a half, with only three barrels of \_ile\_, was found dead in my first floor back, with his harpoon in his side; ever since then I allow no boarders to take sich dangerous weepons in their rooms at night. So, Mr. Queequeg" (for she had learned his name), "I will just take this here iron, and keep it for you till morning. But the chowder; clam or cod to-morrow for breakfast, men?"

"Both," says I; "and let's have a couple of smoked herring by way of variety."

## 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. \_Devil-Dam\_, I do not know the origin of; \_Tit-  
bit\_ is obvious;  
\_Pequod\_, you will no doubt remember, was the name of a  
celebrated  
tribe of Massachusetts Indians; now extinct as the  
ancient Medes. I  
peered and pryed about the Devil-dam; from her, hopped  
over to the  
Tit-bit; and finally, going on board the Pequod, looked  
around her for  
a moment, and then decided that this was the very ship  
for us.

You may have seen many a quaint craft in your day, for  
aught I  
know;—square-toed luggers; mountainous Japanese junks;  
butter-box  
galliot, and what not; but take my word for it, you  
never saw such a  
rare old craft as this same rare old Pequod. She was a  
ship of the old  
school, rather small if anything; with an old-fashioned  
claw-footed  
look about her. Long seasoned and weather-stained in the  
typhoons and  
calms of all four oceans, her old hull's complexion was  
darkened like a  
French grenadier's, who has alike fought in Egypt and  
Siberia. Her

venerable bows looked bearded. Her masts—cut somewhere on the coast of Japan, where her original ones were lost overboard in a gale—her masts stood stiffly up like the spines of the three old kings of Cologne. Her ancient decks were worn and wrinkled, like the pilgrim-worshipped flag-stone in Canterbury Cathedral where Becket bled. But to all these her old antiquities, were added new and marvellous features, pertaining to the wild business that for more than half a century she had followed. Old Captain Peleg, many years her chief-mate, before he commanded another vessel of his own, and now a retired seaman, and one of the principal owners of the Pequod,—this old Peleg, during the term of his chief-mateship, had built upon her original grotesqueness, and inlaid it, all over, with a quaintness both of material and device, unmatched by anything except it be Thorkill-Hake's carved buckler or bedstead. She was apparelled like any barbaric Ethiopian emperor, his neck heavy with pendants of polished ivory. She was a thing of trophies. A cannibal of a craft, tricking herself forth in the chased bones of her enemies. All round, her unpanelled, open bulwarks were garnished like one continuous jaw, with the long sharp teeth of the sperm whale, inserted there for pins, to fasten her old hempen thews and tendons to. Those thews ran not through base blocks of land wood, but deftly travelled over sheaves of sea-ivory. 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.

"Supposing it be the captain of the Pequod, what dost thou want of him?" he demanded.

"I was thinking of shipping."

"Thou wast, wast thou? I see thou art no Nantucketer—ever been in a stove boat?"

"No, Sir, I never have."

"Dost know nothing at all about whaling, I dare say—eh?"

"Nothing, Sir; but I have no doubt I shall soon learn. I've been several voyages in the merchant service, and I think that

—

"Merchant service be damned. Talk not that lingo to me. Dost see that leg?—I'll take that leg away from thy stern, if ever thou talkest of the marchant service to me again. Marchant service indeed! I suppose now ye feel considerable proud of having served in those marchant ships. But flukes! man, what makes thee want to go a whaling, eh?—it looks a little suspicious, don't it, eh?—Hast not been a pirate, hast thou?—Didst not rob thy last Captain, didst thou?—Dost not think of murdering the officers when thou gettest to sea?"

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."

"What do you mean, sir? Was the other one lost by a whale?"

"Lost by a whale! Young man, come nearer to me: it was devoured, chewed up, crunched by the monstrousest parmacetty that ever chipped a boat!—ah, ah!"

I was a little alarmed by his energy, perhaps also a little touched at the hearty grief in his concluding exclamation, but said as calmly as I could, "What you say is no doubt true enough, sir; but how could I know there was any peculiar ferocity in that particular whale, though indeed I might have inferred as much from the simple fact of the accident."

"Look ye now, young man, thy lungs are a sort of soft, d'ye see; thou dost not talk shark a bit. Sure, ye've been to sea before now; sure of that?"

"Sir," said I, "I thought I told you that I had been four voyages in the merchant—"

"Hard down out of that! Mind what I said about the marchant service—don't aggravate me—I won't have it. But let us understand each other. I have given thee a hint about what whaling is; do ye yet feel inclined for it?"

"I do, sir."

"Very good. Now, art thou the man to pitch a harpoon down a live whale's throat, and then jump after it? Answer, quick!"

"I am, sir, if it should be positively indispensable to do so; not to be got rid of, that is; which I don't take to be the fact."

"Good again. 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.

Seated on the transom was what seemed to me a most  
uncommon and  
surprising figure. It turned out to be Captain Bildad,  
who along with  
Captain Peleg was one of the largest owners of the  
vessel; the other  
shares, as is sometimes the case in these ports, being  
held by a crowd  
of old annuitants; widows, fatherless children, and

chancery wards;  
each owning about the value of a timber head, or a foot  
of plank, or a  
nail or two in the ship. People in Nantucket invest their  
money in  
whaling vessels, the same way that you do yours in  
approved state  
stocks bringing in good interest.

Now, Bildad, like Peleg, and indeed many other  
Nantucketers, was a  
Quaker, the island having been originally settled by that  
sect; and to  
this day its inhabitants in general retain in an uncommon  
measure the  
peculiarities of the Quaker, only variously and  
anomalously modified by  
things altogether alien and heterogeneous. For some of  
these same  
Quakers are the most sanguinary of all sailors and whale-  
hunters. They  
are fighting Quakers; they are Quakers with a vengeance.

So that there are instances among them of men, who, named  
with  
Scripture names—a singularly common fashion on the island  
—and in  
childhood naturally imbibing the stately dramatic thee  
and thou of the  
Quaker idiom; still, from the audacious, daring, and  
boundless  
adventure of their subsequent lives, strangely blend with  
these  
unoutgrown peculiarities, a thousand bold dashes of  
character, not  
unworthy a Scandinavian sea-king, or a poetical Pagan  
Roman. And when  
these things unite in a man of greatly superior natural  
force, with a  
globular brain and a ponderous heart; who has also by the  
stillness and  
seclusion of many long night-watches in the remotest  
waters, and  
beneath constellations never seen here at the north, been

led to think  
untraditionally and independently; receiving all nature's  
sweet or  
savage impressions fresh from her own virgin voluntary  
and confiding  
breast, and thereby chiefly, but with some help from  
accidental  
advantages, to learn a bold and nervous lofty language—  
that man makes  
one in a whole nation's census—a mighty pageant creature,  
formed for  
noble tragedies. Nor will it at all detract from him,  
dramatically  
regarded, if either by birth or other circumstances, he  
have what seems  
a half wilful overruling morbidness at the bottom of his  
nature. For  
all men tragically great are made so through a certain  
morbidness. Be  
sure of this, O young ambition, all mortal greatness is  
but disease.  
But, as yet we have not to do with such an one, but with  
quite another;  
and still a man, who, if indeed peculiar, it only results  
again from  
another phase of the Quaker, modified by individual  
circumstances.

Like Captain Peleg, Captain Bildad was a well-to-do,  
retired whaleman.  
But unlike Captain Peleg—who cared not a rush for what  
are called  
serious things, and indeed deemed those self-same serious  
things the  
veriest of all trifles—Captain Bildad had not only been  
originally  
educated according to the strictest sect of Nantucket  
Quakerism, but  
all his subsequent ocean life, and the sight of many  
unclad, lovely  
island creatures, round the Horn—all that had not moved  
this native  
born Quaker one single jot, had not so much as altered  
one angle of his

vest. Still, for all this immutableness, was there some lack of common consistency about worthy Captain Bildad. Though refusing, from conscientious scruples, to bear arms against land invaders, yet himself had illimitably invaded the Atlantic and Pacific; and though a sworn foe to human bloodshed, yet had he in his straight-bodied coat, spilled tuns upon tuns of leviathan gore. How now in the contemplative evening of his days, the pious Bildad reconciled these things in the reminiscence, I do not know; but it did not seem to concern him much, and very probably he had long since come to the sage and sensible conclusion that a man's religion is one thing, and this practical world quite another. This world pays dividends. Rising from a little cabin-boy in short clothes of the drabbest drab, to a harpooneer in a broad shad-bellied waistcoat; from that becoming boat-header, chief-mate, and captain, and finally a ship owner; Bildad, as I hinted before, had concluded his adventurous career by wholly retiring from active life at the goodly age of sixty, and dedicating his remaining days to the quiet receiving of his well-earned income.

Now, Bildad, I am sorry to say, had the reputation of being an incorrigible old hunk, and in his sea-going days, a bitter, hard task-master. They told me in Nantucket, though it certainly seems a curious story, that when he sailed the old Categut whaleman, his crew, upon arriving home, were mostly all carried ashore to the hospital,



sore exhausted and worn out. For a pious man, especially for a Quaker, he was certainly rather hard-hearted, to say the least. He never used to swear, though, at his men, they said; but somehow he got an inordinate quantity of cruel, unmitigated hard work out of them. When Bildad was a chief-mate, to have his drab-coloured eye intently looking at you, made you feel completely nervous, till you could clutch something—a hammer or a marling-spike, and go to work like mad, at something or other, never mind what. Indolence and idleness perished before him. His own person was the exact embodiment of his utilitarian character. On his long, gaunt body, he carried no spare flesh, no superfluous beard, his chin having a soft, economical nap to it, like the worn nap of his broad-brimmed hat.

Such, then, was the person that I saw seated on the transom when I followed Captain Peleg down into the cabin. The space between the decks was small; and there, bolt-upright, sat old Bildad, who always sat so, and never leaned, and this to save his coat tails. His broad-brim was placed beside him; his legs were stiffly crossed; his drab vesture was buttoned up to his chin; and spectacles on nose, he seemed absorbed in reading from a ponderous volume.

"Bildad," cried Captain Peleg, "at it again, Bildad, eh? Ye have been studying those Scriptures, now, for the last thirty years, to my certain knowledge. How far ye got, Bildad?"

As if long habituated to such profane talk from his old shipmate,  
Bildad, without noticing his present irreverence, quietly looked up,  
and seeing me, glanced again inquiringly towards Peleg.

"He says he's our man, Bildad," said Peleg, "he wants to ship."

"Dost thee?" said Bildad, in a hollow tone, and turning round to me.

"I \_dost\_," said I unconsciously, he was so intense a Quaker.

"What do ye think of him, Bildad?" said Peleg.

"He'll do," said Bildad, eyeing me, and then went on spelling away at his book in a mumbling tone quite audible.

I thought him the queerest old Quaker I ever saw, especially as Peleg, his friend and old shipmate, seemed such a blusterer. But I said nothing, only looking round me sharply. Peleg now threw open a chest, and drawing forth the ship's articles, placed pen and ink before him, and seated himself at a little table. I began to think it was high time to settle with myself at what terms I would be willing to engage for the voyage. I was already aware that in the whaling business they paid no wages; but all hands, including the captain, received certain shares of the profits called \_lays\_, and that these lays were proportioned to the degree of importance pertaining to the respective duties of the ship's company. I was also aware that being a green hand at whaling, my own lay would not be very large; but considering that I

was used to the  
sea, could steer a ship, splice a rope, and all that, I  
made no doubt  
that from all I had heard I should be offered at least  
the 275th  
lay—that is, the 275th part of the clear net proceeds of  
the voyage,  
whatever that might eventually amount to. And though the  
275th lay was  
what they call a rather \_long lay\_, yet it was better  
than nothing; and  
if we had a lucky voyage, might pretty nearly pay for the  
clothing I  
would wear out on it, not to speak of my three years'  
beef and board,  
for which I would not have to pay one stiver.

It might be thought that this was a poor way to  
accumulate a princely  
fortune—and so it was, a very poor way indeed. But I am  
one of those  
that never take on about princely fortunes, and am quite  
content if the  
world is ready to board and lodge me, while I am putting  
up at this  
grim sign of the Thunder Cloud. Upon the whole, I thought  
that the  
275th lay would be about the fair thing, but would not  
have been  
surprised had I been offered the 200th, considering I was  
of a  
broad-shouldered make.

But one thing, nevertheless, that made me a little  
distrustful about  
receiving a generous share of the profits was this:  
Ashore, I had heard  
something of both Captain Peleg and his unaccountable old  
crony Bildad;  
how that they being the principal proprietors of the  
Pequod, therefore  
the other and more inconsiderable and scattered owners,  
left nearly the  
whole management of the ship's affairs to these two. And

I did not know  
but what the stingy old Bildad might have a mighty deal  
to say about  
shipping hands, especially as I now found him on board  
the Pequod,  
quite at home there in the cabin, and reading his Bible  
as if at his  
own fireside. Now while Peleg was vainly trying to mend a  
pen with his  
jack-knife, old Bildad, to my no small surprise,  
considering that he  
was such an interested party in these proceedings; Bildad  
never heeded  
us, but went on mumbling to himself out of his book,  
"\_Lay\_ not up for  
yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth—"

"Well, Captain Bildad," interrupted Peleg, "what d'ye  
say, what lay  
shall we give this young man?"

"Thou knowest best," was the sepulchral reply, "the seven  
hundred and  
seventy-seventh wouldn't be too much, would it?—'where  
moth and rust do  
corrupt, but \_lay\_—'"

\_Lay\_, indeed, thought I, and such a lay! the seven  
hundred and  
seventy-seventh! Well, old Bildad, you are determined  
that I, for one,  
shall not \_lay\_ up many \_lays\_ here below, where moth and  
rust do  
corrupt. 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 disincline 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.

## CHAPTER 17. The Ramadan.

As Queequeg's Ramadan, or Fasting and Humiliation, was to

continue all  
day, I did not choose to disturb him till towards night-  
fall; for I  
cherish the greatest respect towards everybody's  
religious obligations,  
never mind how comical, and could not find it in my heart  
to undervalue  
even a congregation of ants worshipping a toad-stool; or  
those other  
creatures in certain parts of our earth, who with a  
degree of  
footmanism quite unprecedented in other planets, bow down  
before the  
torso of a deceased landed proprietor merely on account  
of the  
inordinate possessions yet owned and rented in his name.

I say, we good Presbyterian Christians should be  
charitable in these  
things, and not fancy ourselves so vastly superior to  
other mortals,  
pagans and what not, because of their half-crazy conceits  
on these  
subjects. There was Queequeg, now, certainly entertaining  
the most  
absurd notions about Yojo and his Ramadan;—but what of  
that? Queequeg  
thought he knew what he was about, I suppose; he seemed  
to be content;  
and there let him rest. All our arguing with him would  
not avail; let  
him be, I say: and Heaven have mercy on us all—  
Presbyterians and Pagans  
alike—for we are all somehow dreadfully cracked about the  
head, and  
sadly need mending.

Towards evening, when I felt assured that all his  
performances and  
rituals must be over, I went up to his room and knocked  
at the door;  
but no answer. I tried to open it, but it was fastened  
inside.  
"Queequeg," said I softly through the key-hole:—all

silent. "I say,  
Queequeg! why don't you speak? It's I—Ishmael." But all  
remained still  
as before. I began to grow alarmed. I had allowed him  
such abundant  
time; I thought he might have had an apoplectic fit. I  
looked through  
the key-hole; but the door opening into an odd corner of  
the room, the  
key-hole prospect was but a crooked and sinister one. I  
could only see  
part of the foot-board of the bed and a line of the wall,  
but nothing  
more. I was surprised to behold resting against the wall  
the wooden  
shaft of Queequeg's harpoon, which the landlady the  
evening previous  
had taken from him, before our mounting to the chamber.  
That's strange,  
thought I; but at any rate, since the harpoon stands  
yonder, and he  
seldom or never goes abroad without it, therefore he must  
be inside  
here, and no possible mistake.

"Queequeg!—Queequeg!"—all still. Something must have  
happened.  
Apoplexy! I tried to burst open the door; but it  
stubbornly resisted.  
Running down stairs, I quickly stated my suspicions to  
the first person  
I met—the chamber-maid. "La! la!" she cried, "I thought  
something must  
be the matter. I went to make the bed after breakfast,  
and the door was  
locked; and not a mouse to be heard; and it's been just  
so silent ever  
since. But I thought, may be, you had both gone off and  
locked your  
baggage in for safe keeping. La! la, ma'am!—Mistress!  
murder! Mrs.  
Hussey! apoplexy!"—and with these cries, she ran towards  
the kitchen, I  
following.

Mrs. Hussey soon appeared, with a mustard-pot in one hand and a vinegar-cruet in the other, having just broken away from the occupation of attending to the castors, and scolding her little black boy meantime.

"Wood-house!" cried I, "which way to it? Run for God's sake, and fetch something to pry open the door—the axe!—the axe! he's had a stroke; depend upon it!"—and so saying I was unmethodically rushing up stairs again empty-handed, when Mrs. Hussey interposed the mustard-pot and vinegar-cruet, and the entire castor of her countenance.

"What's the matter with you, young man?"

"Get the axe! For God's sake, run for the doctor, some one, while I pry it open!"

"Look here," said the landlady, quickly putting down the vinegar-cruet, so as to have one hand free; "look here; are you talking about prying open any of my doors?"—and with that she seized my arm. "What's the matter with you? What's the matter with you, shipmate?"

In as calm, but rapid a manner as possible, I gave her to understand the whole case. Unconsciously clapping the vinegar-cruet to one side of her nose, she ruminated for an instant; then exclaimed—"No! I haven't seen it since I put it there." Running to a little closet under the landing of the stairs, she glanced in, and returning, told me that Queequeg's harpoon was missing. "He's killed himself,"

she cried. "It's  
unfort'nate Stiggs done over again—there goes another  
counterpane—God  
pity his poor mother!—it will be the ruin of my house.  
Has the poor lad  
a sister? Where's that girl?—there, Betty, go to Snarles  
the Painter,  
and tell him to paint me a sign, with—"no suicides  
permitted here, and  
no smoking in the parlor;"—might as well kill both birds  
at once. Kill?  
The Lord be merciful to his ghost! What's that noise  
there? You, young  
man, avast there!"

And running up after me, she caught me as I was again  
trying to force  
open the door.

"I don't allow it; I won't have my premises spoiled. Go  
for the  
locksmith, there's one about a mile from here. But  
avast!" putting her  
hand in her side-pocket, "here's a key that'll fit, I  
guess; let's  
see." And with that, she turned it in the lock; but,  
alas! Queequeg's  
supplemental bolt remained unwithdrawn within.

"Have to burst it open," said I, and was running down the  
entry a  
little, for a good start, when the landlady caught at me,  
again vowing  
I should not break down her premises; but I tore from  
her, and with a  
sudden bodily rush dashed myself full against the mark.

With a prodigious noise the door flew open, and the knob  
slamming  
against the wall, sent the plaster to the ceiling; and  
there, good  
heavens! there sat Queequeg, altogether cool and self-  
collected; right  
in the middle of the room; squatting on his hams, and

holding Yojo on  
top of his head. He looked neither one way nor the other  
way, but sat  
like a carved image with scarce a sign of active life.

"Queequeg," said I, going up to him, "Queequeg, what's  
the matter with  
you?"

"He hain't been a sittin' so all day, has he?" said the  
landlady.

But all we said, not a word could we drag out of him; I  
almost felt  
like pushing him over, so as to change his position, for  
it was almost  
intolerable, it seemed so painfully and unnaturally  
constrained;  
especially, as in all probability he had been sitting so  
for upwards of  
eight or ten hours, going too without his regular meals.

"Mrs. Hussey," said I, "he's alive at all events; so  
leave us, if you  
please, and I will see to this strange affair myself."

Closing the door upon the landlady, I endeavored to  
prevail upon  
Queequeg to take a chair; but in vain. There he sat; and  
all he could  
do—for all my polite arts and blandishments—he would not  
move a peg,  
nor say a single word, nor even look at me, nor notice my  
presence in  
the slightest way.

I wonder, thought I, if this can possibly be a part of  
his Ramadan; do  
they fast on their hams that way in his native island. It  
must be so;  
yes, it's part of his creed, I suppose; well, then, let  
him rest; he'll  
get up sooner or later, no doubt. It can't last for ever,  
thank God,

and his Ramadan only comes once a year; and I don't believe it's very punctual then.

I went down to supper. After sitting a long time listening to the long stories of some sailors who had just come from a plum-pudding voyage, as they called it (that is, a short whaling-voyage in a schooner or brig, confined to the north of the line, in the Atlantic Ocean only); after listening to these plum-puddings till nearly eleven o'clock, I went up stairs to go to bed, feeling quite sure by this time Queequeg must certainly have brought his Ramadan to a termination. But no; there he was just where I had left him; he had not stirred an inch. I began to grow vexed with him; it seemed so downright senseless and insane to be sitting there all day and half the night on his hams in a cold room, holding a piece of wood on his head.

"For heaven's sake, Queequeg, get up and shake yourself; get up and have some supper. You'll starve; you'll kill yourself, Queequeg." But not a word did he reply.

Despairing of him, therefore, I determined to go to bed and to sleep; and no doubt, before a great while, he would follow me. But previous to turning in, I took my heavy bearskin jacket, and threw it over him, as it promised to be a very cold night; and he had nothing but his ordinary round jacket on. For some time, do all I would, I could not get into the faintest doze. I had blown out the candle; and the mere



thought of Queequeg—not four feet off—sitting there in that uneasy position, stark alone in the cold and dark; this made me really wretched. Think of it; sleeping all night in the same room with a wide awake pagan on his hams in this dreary, unaccountable Ramadan!

But somehow I dropped off at last, and knew nothing more till break of day; when, looking over the bedside, there squatted Queequeg, as if he had been screwed down to the floor. But as soon as the first glimpse of sun entered the window, up he got, with stiff and grating joints, but with a cheerful look; limped towards me where I lay; pressed his forehead again against mine; and said his Ramadan was over.

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.

"How long hath he been a member?" he then said, turning to me; "not

very long, I rather guess, young man."

"No," said Peleg, "and he hasn't been baptized right either, or it would have washed some of that devil's blue off his face."

"Do tell, now," cried Bildad, "is this Philistine a regular member of Deacon Deuteronomy's meeting? I never saw him going there, and I pass it every Lord's day."

"I don't know anything about Deacon Deuteronomy or his meeting," said I; "all I know is, that Queequeg here is a born member of the First Congregational Church. He is a deacon himself, Queequeg is."

"Young man," said Bildad sternly, "thou art skylarking with me—explain thyself, thou young Hittite. What church dost thee mean? answer me."

Finding myself thus hard pushed, I replied. "I mean, sir, the same ancient Catholic Church to which you and I, and Captain Peleg there, and Queequeg here, and all of us, and every mother's son and soul of us belong; the great and everlasting First Congregation of this whole worshipping world; we all belong to that; only some of us cherish some queer crotchets no ways touching the grand belief; in \_that\_ we all join hands."

"Splice, thou mean'st \_splice\_ hands," cried Peleg, drawing nearer.

"Young man, you'd better ship for a missionary, instead of a fore-mast hand; I never heard a better sermon. Deacon Deuteronomy—

why Father  
Mapple himself couldn't beat it, and he's reckoned  
something. Come  
aboard, come aboard; never mind about the papers. I say,  
tell Quohog  
there—what's that you call him? tell Quohog to step  
along. By the great  
anchor, what a harpoon he's got there! looks like good  
stuff that; and  
he handles it about right. I say, Quohog, or whatever  
your name is, did  
you ever stand in the head of a whale-boat? did you ever  
strike a  
fish?"

Without saying a word, Queequeg, in his wild sort of way,  
jumped upon  
the bulwarks, from thence into the bows of one of the  
whale-boats  
hanging to the side; and then bracing his left knee, and  
poising his  
harpoon, cried out in some such way as this:—

"Cap'ain, you see him small drop tar on water dere? You  
see him? well,  
spose him one whale eye, well, den!" and taking sharp aim  
at it, he  
darted the iron right over old Bildad's broad brim, clean  
across the  
ship's decks, and struck the glistening tar spot out of  
sight.

"Now," said Queequeg, quietly hauling in the line, "spose  
ee him whale-e  
eye; why, dad whale dead."

"Quick, Bildad," said Peleg, his partner, who, aghast at  
the close  
vicinity of the flying harpoon, had retreated towards the  
cabin  
gangway. "Quick, I say, you Bildad, and get the ship's  
papers. We must  
have Hedgehog there, I mean Quohog, in one of our boats.  
Look ye,

Quohog, we'll give ye the ninetieth lay, and that's more than ever was given a harpooneer yet out of Nantucket."

So down we went into the cabin, and to my great joy Queequeg was soon enrolled among the same ship's company to which I myself belonged.

When all preliminaries were over and Peleg had got everything ready for signing, he turned to me and said, "I guess, Quohog there don't know how to write, does he? I say, Quohog, blast ye! dost thou sign thy name or make thy mark?"

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 appellation, 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,"  
cried 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  
shrunk 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.

## CHAPTER 19. 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. 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.

"Lookie 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.

"Elijah," said I, "you will oblige my friend and me by withdrawing. We are going to the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and would prefer not to be detained."

"Ye be, be ye? Coming back afore breakfast?"

"He's cracked, Queequeg," said I, "come on."

"Holloa!" cried stationary Elijah, hailing us when we had removed a few paces.

"Never mind him," said I, "Queequeg, come on."

But he stole up to us again, and suddenly clapping his hand on my shoulder, said—"Did ye see anything looking like men going towards that ship a while ago?"

Struck by this plain matter-of-fact question, I answered, saying, "Yes, I thought I did see four or five men; but it was too dim

to be sure."

"Very dim, very dim," said Elijah. "Morning to ye."

Once more we quitted him; but once more he came softly after us; and touching my shoulder again, said, "See if you can find 'em now, will ye?"

"Find who?"

"Morning to ye! morning to ye!" he rejoined, again moving off. "Oh! I was going to warn ye against—but never mind, never mind—it's all one, all in the family too;—sharp frost this morning, ain't it? Good-bye to ye. Shan't see ye again very soon, I guess; unless it's before the Grand Jury." And with these cracked words he finally departed, leaving me, for the moment, in no small wonderment at his frantic impudence.

At last, stepping on board the Pequod, we found everything in profound quiet, not a soul moving. The cabin entrance was locked within; the hatches were all on, and lumbered with coils of rigging. Going forward to the forecabin, we found the slide of the scuttle open. Seeing a light, we went down, and found only an old rigger there, wrapped in a tattered pea-jacket. He was thrown at whole length upon two chests, his face downwards and inclosed in his folded arms. The profoundest slumber slept upon him.

"Those sailors we saw, Queequeg, where can they have gone to?" said I, looking dubiously at the sleeper. But it seemed that,

when on the  
wharf, Queequeg had not at all noticed what I now alluded  
to; hence I  
would have thought myself to have been optically deceived  
in that  
matter, were it not for Elijah's otherwise inexplicable  
question. But I  
beat the thing down; and again marking the sleeper,  
jocularly hinted to  
Queequeg that perhaps we had best sit up with the body;  
telling him to  
establish himself accordingly. He put his hand upon the  
sleeper's rear,  
as though feeling if it was soft enough; and then,  
without more ado,  
sat quietly down there.

"Gracious! Queequeg, don't sit there," said I.

"Oh! perry dood seat," said Queequeg, "my country way;  
won't hurt him  
face."

"Face!" said I, "call that his face? very benevolent  
countenance then;  
but how hard he breathes, he's heaving himself; get off,  
Queequeg, you  
are heavy, it's grinding the face of the poor. Get off,  
Queequeg! Look,  
he'll twitch you off soon. I wonder he don't wake."

Queequeg removed himself to just beyond the head of the  
sleeper, and  
lighted his tomahawk pipe. I sat at the feet. We kept the  
pipe passing  
over the sleeper, from one to the other. Meanwhile, upon  
questioning  
him in his broken fashion, Queequeg gave me to understand  
that, in his  
land, owing to the absence of settees and sofas of all  
sorts, the king,  
chiefs, and great people generally, were in the custom of  
fattening  
some of the lower orders for ottomans; and to furnish a

house  
comfortably in that respect, you had only to buy up eight  
or ten lazy  
fellows, and lay them round in the piers and alcoves.  
Besides, it was  
very convenient on an excursion; much better than those  
garden-chairs  
which are convertible into walking-sticks; upon occasion,  
a chief  
calling his attendant, and desiring him to make a settee  
of himself  
under a spreading tree, perhaps in some damp marshy  
place.

While narrating these things, every time Queequeg  
received the tomahawk  
from me, he flourished the hatchet-side of it over the  
sleeper's head.

"What's that for, Queequeg?"

"Perry easy, kill-e; oh! perry easy!"

He was going on with some wild reminiscences about his  
tomahawk-pipe,  
which, it seemed, had in its two uses both brained his  
foes and soothed  
his soul, when we were directly attracted to the sleeping  
rigger. The  
strong vapor now completely filling the contracted hole,  
it began to  
tell upon him. He breathed with a sort of muffledness;  
then seemed  
troubled in the nose; then revolved over once or twice;  
then sat up and  
rubbed his eyes.

"Holloa!" he breathed at last, "who be ye smokers?"

"Shipped men," answered I, "when does she sail?"

"Aye, aye, ye are going in her, be ye? She sails to-day.  
The Captain  
came aboard last night."

"What Captain?—Ahab?"

"Who but him indeed?"

I was going to ask him some further questions concerning Ahab, when we heard a noise on deck.

"Holloa! Starbuck's astir," said the rigger. "He's a lively chief mate, that; good man, and a pious; but all alive now, I must turn to." And so saying he went on deck, and we followed.

It was now clear sunrise. Soon the crew came on board in twos and threes; the riggers bestirred themselves; the mates were actively engaged; and several of the shore people were busy in bringing various last things on board. Meanwhile Captain Ahab remained invisibly enshrined within his cabin.

## CHAPTER 22. Merry Christmas.

At length, towards noon, upon the final dismissal of the ship's riggers, and after the Pequod had been hauled out from the wharf, and after the ever-thoughtful Charity had come off in a whale-boat, with her last gift—a night-cap for Stubb, the second mate, her brother-in-law, and a spare Bible for the steward—after all this, the two Captains, Peleg and Bildad, issued from the cabin, and turning to the chief mate, Peleg said:

"Now, Mr. Starbuck, are you sure everything is right? Captain Ahab is all ready—just spoke to him—nothing more to be got from

shore, eh?

Well, call all hands, then. Muster 'em aft here—blast 'em!"

"No need of profane words, however great the hurry, Peleg," said Bildad, "but away with thee, friend Starbuck, and do our bidding."

How now! Here upon the very point of starting for the voyage, Captain Peleg and Captain Bildad were going it with a high hand on the quarter-deck, just as if they were to be joint-commanders at sea, as well as to all appearances in port. And, as for Captain Ahab, no sign of him was yet to be seen; only, they said he was in the cabin. But then, the idea was, that his presence was by no means necessary in getting the ship under weigh, and steering her well out to sea. Indeed, as that was not at all his proper business, but the pilot's; and as he was not yet completely recovered—so they said—therefore, Captain Ahab stayed below. 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  
Pegud, 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 Pegud,  
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.”—

Never did those sweet words sound more sweetly to me than  
then. They  
were full of hope and fruition. Spite of this frigid  
winter night in  
the boisterous Atlantic, spite of my wet feet and wetter  
jacket, there  
was yet, it then seemed to me, many a pleasant haven in  
store; and  
meads and glades so eternally vernal, that the grass shot  
up by the  
spring, untrodden, unwilted, remains at midsummer.

At last we gained such an offing, that the two pilots  
were needed no  
longer. The stout sail-boat that had accompanied us began  
ranging  
alongside.

It was curious and not unpleasing, how Peleg and Bildad  
were affected  
at this juncture, especially Captain Bildad. For loath to

depart, yet;  
very loath to leave, for good, a ship bound on so long  
and perilous a  
voyage—beyond both stormy Capes; a ship in which some  
thousands of his  
hard earned dollars were invested; a ship, in which an  
old shipmate  
sailed as captain; a man almost as old as he, once more  
starting to  
encounter all the terrors of the pitiless jaw; loath to  
say good-bye to  
a thing so every way brimful of every interest to him,—  
poor old Bildad  
lingered long; paced the deck with anxious strides; ran  
down into the  
cabin to speak another farewell word there; again came on  
deck, and  
looked to windward; looked towards the wide and endless  
waters, only  
bounded by the far-off unseen Eastern Continents; looked  
towards the  
land; looked aloft; looked right and left; looked  
everywhere and  
nowhere; and at last, mechanically coiling a rope upon  
its pin,  
convulsively grasped stout Peleg by the hand, and holding  
up a lantern,  
for a moment stood gazing heroically in his face, as much  
as to say,  
“Nevertheless, friend Peleg, I can stand it; yes, I can.”

As for Peleg himself, he took it more like a philosopher;  
but for all  
his philosophy, there was a tear twinkling in his eye,  
when the lantern  
came too near. And he, too, did not a little run from  
cabin to deck—now  
a word below, and now a word with Starbuck, the chief  
mate.

But, at last, he turned to his comrade, with a final sort  
of look about  
him,—“Captain Bildad—come, old shipmate, we must go. Back  
the main-yard

there! Boat ahoy! Stand by to come close alongside, now!  
Careful,  
careful!—come, Bildad, boy—say your last. 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  
harpooneers; 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.

## CHAPTER 23. The Lee Shore.

Some chapters back, one Bulkington was spoken of, a tall,  
newlanded  
mariner, encountered in New Bedford at the inn.

When on that shivering winter's night, the Pequod thrust  
her vindictive  
bows into the cold malicious waves, who should I see  
standing at her  
helm but Bulkington! I looked with sympathetic awe and  
fearfulness upon  
the man, who in mid-winter just landed from a four years'  
dangerous  
voyage, could so unrestingly push off again for still  
another  
tempestuous term. The land seemed scorching to his feet.  
Wonderfullest  
things are ever the unmentionable; deep memories yield no  
epitaphs;  
this six-inch chapter is the stoneless grave of  
Bulkington. Let me only  
say that it fared with him as with the storm-tossed ship,  
that  
miserably drives along the leeward land. The port would  
fain give  
succor; the port is pitiful; in the port is safety,  
comfort,  
hearthstone, supper, warm blankets, friends, all that's  
kind to our  
mortalities. But in that gale, the port, the land, is  
that ship's  
direst jeopardy; she must fly all hospitality; one touch  
of land,

though it but graze the keel, would make her shudder  
through and  
through. With all her might she crowds all sail off  
shore; in so doing,  
fights 'gainst the very winds that fain would blow her  
homeward; seeks  
all the lashed sea's landlessness again; for refuge's  
sake forlornly  
rushing into peril; her only friend her bitterest foe!

Know ye now, Bulkington? 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 harpooneer, 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 honoring us whalemens, 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 honor. And as for the matter of the alleged uncleanness 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. But even granting the charge in question to be true; what disordered slippery decks of a whale-ship are comparable to the



unspeakable  
carriage of those battle-fields from which so many  
soldiers return to  
drink in all ladies' plaudits? And if the idea of peril  
so much  
enhances the popular conceit of the soldier's profession;  
let me assure  
ye that many a veteran who has freely marched up to a  
battery, would  
quickly recoil at the apparition of the sperm whale's  
vast tail,  
fanning into eddies the air over his head. For what are  
the  
comprehensible terrors of man compared with the  
interlinked terrors and  
wonders of God!

But, though the world scouts at us whale hunters, yet  
does it  
unwittingly pay us the profoundest homage; yea, an all-  
abounding  
adoration! for almost all the tapers, lamps, and candles  
that burn  
round the globe, burn, as before so many shrines, to our  
glory!

But look at this matter in other lights; weigh it in all  
sorts of  
scales; see what we whalers are, and have been.

Why did the Dutch in De Witt's time have admirals of  
their whaling  
fleets? Why did Louis XVI. of France, at his own personal  
expense, fit  
out whaling ships from Dunkirk, and politely invite to  
that town some  
score or two of families from our own island of  
Nantucket? Why did  
Britain between the years 1750 and 1788 pay to her  
whalers in bounties  
upwards of £1,000,000? And lastly, how comes it that we  
whalers of  
America now outnumber all the rest of the banded whalers  
in the world;

sail a navy of upwards of seven hundred vessels; manned  
by eighteen  
thousand men; yearly consuming 4,000,000 of dollars; the  
ships worth,  
at the time of sailing, \$20,000,000! and every year  
importing into our  
harbors a well reaped harvest of \$7,000,000. How comes  
all this, if  
there be not something puissant in whaling?

But this is not the half; look again.

I freely assert, that the cosmopolite philosopher cannot,  
for his life,  
point out one single peaceful influence, which within the  
last sixty  
years has operated more potentially upon the whole broad  
world, taken  
in one aggregate, than the high and mighty business of  
whaling. One way  
and another, it has begotten events so remarkable in  
themselves, and so  
continuously momentous in their sequential issues, that  
whaling may  
well be regarded as that Egyptian mother, who bore  
offspring themselves  
pregnant from her womb. 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 honor 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  
æsthetically 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 whalemen 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 harpooneers—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 honorable 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 honor  
and the glory  
to whaling; for a whale-ship was my Yale College and my  
Harvard.

## CHAPTER 25. 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 whalemens supply your kings and

queens with coronation stuff!

## CHAPTER 26. Knights and Squires.

The chief mate of the Pequod was Starbuck, a native of Nantucket, and a Quaker by descent. He was a long, earnest man, and though born on an icy coast, seemed well adapted to endure hot latitudes, his flesh being hard as twice-baked biscuit. Transported to the Indies, his live blood would not spoil like bottled ale. He must have been born in some time of general drought and famine, or upon one of those fast days for which his state is famous. Only some thirty arid summers had he seen; those summers had dried up all his physical superfluities. But this, his thinness, so to speak, seemed no more the token of wasting anxieties and cares, than it seemed the indication of any bodily blight. It was merely the condensation of the man. He was by no means ill-looking; quite the contrary. His pure tight skin was an excellent fit; and closely wrapped up in it, and embalmed with inner health and strength, like a revived Egyptian, this Starbuck seemed prepared to endure for long ages to come, and to endure always, as now; for be it Polar snow or torrid sun, like a patent chronometer, his interior vitality was warranted to do well in all climates. Looking into his eyes, you seemed to see there the yet lingering images of those thousand-fold perils he had calmly confronted through life. A staid, steadfast man, whose life for the most part was a telling pantomime of action, and



not a tame  
chapter of sounds. 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 endued 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 fortitude, 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, unfearing 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. For, like his nose, his short, black little pipe was one of the regular features of his face. You would almost as soon have expected him to turn out of his bunk without his nose as without his pipe. He kept a whole row of pipes there ready loaded, stuck in a rack, within easy reach of his hand; and, whenever he turned in, he smoked them all out in succession, lighting one from the other to the end of the chapter; then loading them again to be in readiness anew. For, when Stubb dressed, instead of first putting his legs into his trowsers, he put his pipe into his mouth.

I say this continual smoking must have been one cause, at least, of his peculiar disposition; for every one knows that this earthly air, whether ashore or afloat, is terribly infected with the nameless miseries of the numberless mortals who have died exhaling it; and as in time of the cholera, some people go about with a camphorated handkerchief to their mouths; so, likewise, against all mortal tribulations, Stubb's tobacco smoke might have operated as a sort of disinfecting agent.

The third mate was Flask, a native of Tisbury, in Martha's Vineyard. A short, stout, ruddy young fellow, very pugnacious concerning whales, who somehow seemed to think that the great leviathans had personally and hereditarily affronted him; and therefore it was a sort of point of

honor with him, to destroy them whenever encountered. So utterly lost was he to all sense of reverence for the many marvels of their majestic bulk and mystic ways; and so dead to anything like an apprehension of any possible danger from encountering them; that in his poor opinion, the wondrous whale was but a species of magnified mouse, or at least water-rat, requiring only a little circumvention and some small application of time and trouble in order to kill and boil. This ignorant, unconscious fearlessness of his made him a little waggish in the matter of whales; he followed these fish for the fun of it; and a three years' voyage round Cape Horn was only a jolly joke that lasted that length of time. As a carpenter's nails are divided into wrought nails and cut nails; so mankind may be similarly divided. Little Flask was one of the wrought ones; made to clinch tight and last long. They called him King-Post on board of the Pequod; because, in form, he could be well likened to the short, square timber known by that name in Arctic whalers; and which by the means of many radiating side timbers inserted into it, serves to brace the ship against the icy concussions of those battering seas.

Now these three mates—Starbuck, Stubb, and Flask, were momentous men. They it was who by universal prescription commanded three of the Pequod's boats as headsmen. In that grand order of battle in which Captain Ahab would probably marshal his forces to descend on the

whales, these three headsmen were as captains of companies. Or, being armed with their long keen whaling spears, they were as a picked trio of lancers; even as the harpooneers were flingers of javelins.

And since in this famous fishery, each mate or headsmen, like a Gothic Knight of old, is always accompanied by his boat-steerer or harpooneer, 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 harpooneers were, and to what headsmen 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 harpooneers. 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 harpooneers 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 whalers; 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, Isolatoos 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 Clootz

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 fore-castle, 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!

## CHAPTER 28. Ahab.

For several days after leaving Nantucket, nothing above  
hatches was  
seen of Captain Ahab. The mates regularly relieved each  
other at the  
watches, and for aught that could be seen to the  
contrary, they seemed  
to be the only commanders of the ship; only they  
sometimes issued from  
the cabin with orders so sudden and peremptory, that  
after all it was  
plain they but commanded vicariously. Yes, their supreme  
lord and  
dictator was there, though hitherto unseen by any eyes  
not permitted to  
penetrate into the now sacred retreat of the cabin.

Every time I ascended to the deck from my watches below,  
I instantly  
gazed aft to mark if any strange face were visible; for  
my first vague  
disquietude touching the unknown captain, now in the  
seclusion of the  
sea, became almost a perturbation. This was strangely  
heightened at

times by the ragged Elijah's diabolical incoherences  
uninvitedly  
recurring to me, with a subtle energy I could not have  
before conceived  
of. But poorly could I withstand them, much as in other  
moods I was  
almost ready to smile at the solemn whimsicalities of  
that outlandish  
prophet of the wharves. But whatever it was of  
apprehensiveness or  
uneasiness—to call it so—which I felt, yet whenever I  
came to look  
about me in the ship, it seemed against all warrantry to  
cherish such  
emotions. For though the harpooneers, with the great body  
of the crew,  
were a far more barbaric, heathenish, and motley set than  
any of the  
tame merchant-ship companies which my previous  
experiences had made me  
acquainted with, still I ascribed this—and rightly  
ascribed it—to the  
fierce uniqueness of the very nature of that wild  
Scandinavian vocation  
in which I had so abandonedly embarked. But it was  
especially the  
aspect of the three chief officers of the ship, the  
mates, which was  
most forcibly calculated to allay these colourless  
misgivings, and  
induce confidence and cheerfulness in every presentment  
of the voyage.  
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 negatived, 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. So that no white sailor seriously contradicted him when he said that if ever Captain Ahab should be tranquilly laid out—which might hardly come to pass, so he muttered—then, whoever should do that last office for the dead, would find a birth-mark on him from crown to sole.

So powerfully did the whole grim aspect of Ahab affect me, and the livid brand which streaked it, that for the first few moments I hardly noted that not a little of this overbearing grimness was owing to the barbaric white leg upon which he partly stood. It had previously come to me that this ivory leg had at sea been fashioned from the polished bone of the sperm whale's jaw. "Aye, he was dismasted off Japan," said the old Gay-Head Indian once; "but like his dismasted

craft, he shipped  
another mast without coming home for it. He has a quiver  
of 'em."

I was struck with the singular posture he maintained.  
Upon each side of  
the Pequod's quarter deck, and pretty close to the mizzen  
shrouds,  
there was an auger hole, bored about half an inch or so,  
into the  
plank. His bone leg steadied in that hole; one arm  
elevated, and  
holding by a shroud; Captain Ahab stood erect, looking  
straight out  
beyond the ship's ever-pitching prow. There was an  
infinity of firmest  
fortitude, a determinate, unsunderable wilfulness, in  
the fixed and  
fearless, forward dedication of that glance. Not a word  
he spoke; nor  
did his officers say aught to him; though by all their  
minutest  
gestures and expressions, they plainly showed the uneasy,  
if not  
painful, consciousness of being under a troubled master-  
eye. And not  
only that, but moody stricken Ahab stood before them with  
a crucifixion  
in his face; in all the nameless regal overbearing  
dignity of some  
mighty woe.

Ere long, from his first visit in the air, he withdrew  
into his cabin.  
But after that morning, he was every day visible to the  
crew; either  
standing in his pivot-hole, or seated upon an ivory stool  
he had; or  
heavily walking the deck. As the sky grew less gloomy;  
indeed, began to  
grow a little genial, he became still less and less a  
recluse; as if,  
when the ship had sailed from home, nothing but the dead  
wintry

bleakness of the sea had then kept him so secluded. And, by and by, it came to pass, that he was almost continually in the air; but, as yet, for all that he said, or perceptibly did, on the at last sunny deck, he seemed as unnecessary there as another mast. 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-cheeked, 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."

So, almost every twenty-four hours, when the watches of the night were set, and the band on deck sentinelled the slumbers of the band below; and when if a rope was to be hauled upon the forecastle, the sailors flung it not rudely down, as by day, but with some cautiousness dropt it to its place for fear of disturbing their slumbering shipmates; when this sort of steady quietude would begin to prevail, habitually, the silent steersman would watch the cabin-scuttle; and ere long the old man would emerge, gripping at the iron banister, to help his crippled way. Some considering touch of humanity was in him; for at times like these, he usually abstained from patrolling the quarter-deck; because to his wearied mates, seeking repose within six inches of his ivory heel, such would have been the reverberating crack and din of that bony step, that their dreams would have been on the crunching teeth of sharks. But once, the mood was on him too deep for common regardings; and as with heavy, lumber-like pace he was measuring the ship from taffrail to mainmast, Stubb, the old second mate, came up from below, with a certain unassured, deprecating humorousness, hinted that if Captain Ahab was pleased to walk the planks, then, no one could say nay; but there might be some way of muffling the noise; hinting something indistinctly and hesitatingly about a globe of tow, and the insertion into it, of the ivory heel. Ah! Stubb, thou didst not know

Ahab then.

"Am I a cannon-ball, Stubb," said Ahab, "that thou wouldst wad me that fashion? But go thy ways; I had forgot. Below to thy nightly grave; where such as ye sleep between shrouds, to use ye to the filling one at last.—Down, dog, and kennel!"

Starting at the unforeseen concluding exclamation of the so suddenly scornful old man, Stubb was speechless a moment; then said excitedly, "I am not used to be spoken to that way, sir; I do but less than half like it, sir."

"Avast! gritted Ahab between his set teeth, and violently moving away, as if to avoid some passionate temptation.

"No, sir; not yet," said Stubb, emboldened, "I will not tamely be called a dog, sir."

"Then be called ten times a donkey, and a mule, and an ass, and begone, or I'll clear the world of thee!"

As he said this, Ahab advanced upon him with such overbearing terrors in his aspect, that Stubb involuntarily retreated.

"I was never served so before without giving a hard blow for it," muttered Stubb, as he found himself descending the cabin-scuttle. "It's very queer. Stop, Stubb; somehow, now, I don't well know whether to go back and strike him, or—what's that?—down here on my knees and pray for him? Yes, that was the thought coming up in me; but it would be the

first time I ever \_did\_ pray. It's queer; very queer; and  
he's queer  
too; aye, take him fore and aft, he's about the queerest  
old man Stubb  
ever sailed with. How he flashed at me!—his eyes like  
powder-pans! is  
he mad? Anyway there's something on his mind, as sure as  
there must be  
something on a deck when it cracks. He aint in his bed  
now, either,  
more than three hours out of the twenty-four; and he  
don't sleep then.  
Didn't that Dough-Boy, the steward, tell me that of a  
morning he always  
finds the old man's hammock clothes all rumpled and  
tumbled, and the  
sheets down at the foot, and the coverlid almost tied  
into knots, and  
the pillow a sort of frightful hot, as though a baked  
brick had been on  
it? A hot old man! I guess he's got what some folks  
ashore call a  
conscience; it's a kind of Tic-Dolly-row they say—worse  
nor a  
toothache. Well, well; I don't know what it is, but the  
Lord keep me  
from catching it. He's full of riddles; I wonder what he  
goes into the  
after hold for, every night, as Dough-Boy tells me he  
suspects; what's  
that for, I should like to know? Who's made appointments  
with him in  
the hold? 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 plaguey juggling  
thinks over by daylight."

#### CHAPTER 30. The Pipe.

When Stubb had departed, Ahab stood for a while leaning over the  
bulwarks; and then, as had been usual with him of late, calling a  
sailor of the watch, he sent him below for his ivory stool, and also  
his pipe. Lighting the pipe at the binnacle lamp and planting the stool  
on the weather side of the deck, he sat and smoked.

In old Norse times, the thrones of the sea-loving Danish kings were  
fabricated, saith tradition, of the tusks of the narwhale. How could  
one look at Ahab then, seated on that tripod of bones, without  
bethinking him of the royalty it symbolized? For a Khan of the plank,  
and a king of the sea, and a great lord of Leviathans was

Ahab.

Some moments passed, during which the thick vapor came from his mouth in quick and constant puffs, which blew back again into his face. "How now," he soliloquized at last, withdrawing the tube, "this smoking no longer soothes. Oh, my pipe! hard must it go with me if thy charm be gone! Here have I been unconsciously toiling, not pleasuring—aye, and ignorantly smoking to windward all the while; to windward, and with such nervous whiffs, as if, like the dying whale, my final jets were the strongest and fullest of trouble. What business have I with this pipe? This thing that is meant for serenity, to send up mild white vapors 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. Yes,' thinks I, 'it was only a playful cudgelling—in fact, only a whaleboning that he gave me—not a base kick. Besides,' thinks I, 'look at it once; why, the end of it—the foot part—what a small sort of end it is; whereas, if a broad footed farmer kicked me, \_there's\_ a devilish broad insult. But this insult is whittled down to a point only.' But now comes the greatest joke of the dream, Flask. While I was battering away at the pyramid, a sort of badger-haired old merman, with a hump on his back, takes me by the shoulders, and slews me round. 'What are you 'bout?' says he. Slid! man, but I was frightened. Such a phiz! But, somehow, next moment I was over the fright. 'What am I about?' says I at last. 'And what business

is that of yours, I should like to know, Mr. Humpback? Do  
\_you\_ want a  
kick?' By the lord, Flask, I had no sooner said that,  
than he turned  
round his stern to me, bent over, and dragging up a lot  
of seaweed he  
had for a clout—what do you think, I saw?—why thunder  
alive, man, his  
stern was stuck full of marlinspikes, with the points  
out. Says I, on  
second thoughts, 'I guess I won't kick you, old fellow.'  
'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!'  
'Halloa,' 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 honor; I consider it an honor. 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 honors; 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."

Thus speak of the whale, the great Cuvier, and John  
Hunter, and Lesson,  
those lights of zoology and anatomy. Nevertheless, though  
of real  
knowledge there be little, yet of books there are a  
plenty; and so in  
some small degree, with cetology, or the science of  
whales. Many are

the men, small and great, old and new, landsmen and seamen, who have at large or in little, written of the whale. Run over a few:—The Authors of the Bible; Aristotle; Pliny; Aldrovandi; Sir Thomas Browne; Gesner; Ray; Linnæus; Rondeletius; Willoughby; Green; Artedi; Sibbald; Brisson; Marten; Lacépède; Bonnetterre; Desmarest; Baron Cuvier; Frederick Cuvier; John Hunter; Owen; Scoresby; Beale; Bennett; J. Ross Browne; the Author of Miriam Coffin; Olmstead; and the Rev. T. Cheever. But to what ultimate generalizing purpose all these have written, the above cited extracts will show.

Of the names in this list of whale authors, only those following Owen ever saw living whales; and but one of them was a real professional harpooneer and whaleman. I mean Captain Scoresby. On the separate subject of the Greenland or right-whale, he is the best existing authority. But Scoresby knew nothing and says nothing of the great sperm whale, compared with which the Greenland whale is almost unworthy mentioning. And here be it said, that the Greenland whale is an usurper upon the throne of the seas. He is not even by any means the largest of the whales. Yet, owing to the long priority of his claims, and the profound ignorance which, till some seventy years back, invested the then fabulous or utterly unknown sperm-whale, and which ignorance to this present day still reigns in all but some few scientific retreats and whale-ports; this usurpation has been every way complete. Reference

to nearly all the leviathanic allusions in the great poets of past days, will satisfy you that the Greenland whale, without one rival, was to them the monarch of the seas. But the time has at last come for a new proclamation. This is Charing Cross; hear ye! good people all,—the Greenland whale is deposed,—the great sperm whale now reigneth!

There are only two books in being which at all pretend to put the living sperm whale before you, and at the same time, in the remotest degree succeed in the attempt. Those books are Beale's and Bennett's; both in their time surgeons to English South-Sea whale-ships, and both exact and reliable men. The original matter touching the sperm whale to be found in their volumes is necessarily small; but so far as it goes, it is of excellent quality, though mostly confined to scientific description. As yet, however, the sperm whale, scientific or poetic, lives not complete in any literature. Far above all other hunted whales, his is an unwritten life.

Now the various species of whales need some sort of popular comprehensive classification, if only an easy outline one for the present, hereafter to be filled in all its departments by subsequent laborers. As no better man advances to take this matter in hand, I hereupon offer my own poor endeavors. I promise nothing complete; because any human thing supposed to be complete, must for that very reason infallibly be faulty. I shall not pretend to a

minute anatomical  
description of the various species, or—in this place at  
least—to much  
of any description. My object here is simply to project  
the draught of  
a systematization of cetology. I am the architect, not  
the builder.

But it is a ponderous task; no ordinary letter-sorter in  
the  
Post-Office is equal to it. To grope down into the bottom  
of the sea  
after them; to have one's hands among the unspeakable  
foundations,  
ribs, and very pelvis of the world; this is a fearful  
thing. What am I  
that I should essay to hook the nose of this leviathan!  
The awful  
tauntings in Job might well appal me. Will he (the  
leviathan) make a  
covenant with thee? Behold the hope of him is vain! But I  
have swam  
through libraries and sailed through oceans; I have had  
to do with  
whales with these visible hands; I am in earnest; and I  
will try. There  
are some preliminaries to settle.

First: The uncertain, unsettled condition of this science  
of Cetology  
is in the very vestibule attested by the fact, that in  
some quarters it  
still remains a moot point whether a whale be a fish. In  
his System of  
Nature, A.D. 1776, Linnæus declares, "I hereby separate  
the whales from  
the fish." But of my own knowledge, I know that down to  
the year 1850,  
sharks and shad, alewives and herring, against Linnæus's  
express edict,  
were still found dividing the possession of the same seas  
with the  
Leviathan.

The grounds upon which Linnæus would fain have banished the whales from the waters, he states as follows: "On account of their warm bilocular heart, their lungs, their movable eyelids, their hollow ears, penem intransientem feminam mammis lactantem," and finally, "ex lege naturæ jure meritoque." I submitted all this to my friends Simeon Macey and Charley Coffin, of Nantucket, both messmates of mine in a certain voyage, and they united in the opinion that the reasons set forth were altogether insufficient. Charley profanely hinted they were humbug.

Be it known that, waiving all argument, I take the good old fashioned ground that the whale is a fish, and call upon holy Jonah to back me. This fundamental thing settled, the next point is, in what internal respect does the whale differ from other fish. Above, Linnæus has given you those items. But in brief, they are these: lungs and warm blood; whereas, all other fish are lungless and cold blooded.

Next: how shall we define the whale, by his obvious externals, so as conspicuously to label him for all time to come? To be short, then, a whale is \_a spouting fish with a horizontal tail\_. There you have him. However contracted, that definition is the result of expanded meditation. A walrus spouts much like a whale, but the walrus is not a fish, because he is amphibious. But the last term of the definition is still more cogent, as coupled with the first. Almost any one must have noticed that all the fish familiar to landsmen have not a flat, but a

vertical, or up-and-down tail. Whereas, among spouting fish the tail, though it may be similarly shaped, invariably assumes a horizontal position.

By the above definition of what a whale is, I do by no means exclude from the leviathanic brotherhood any sea creature hitherto identified with the whale by the best informed Nantucketers; nor, on the other hand, link with it any fish hitherto authoritatively regarded as alien.\* Hence, all the smaller, spouting, and horizontal tailed fish must be included in this ground-plan of Cetology. Now, then, come the grand divisions of the entire whale host.

\*I am aware that down to the present time, the fish styled Lamatins and Dugongs (Pig-fish and Sow-fish of the Coffins of Nantucket) are included by many naturalists among the whales. But as these pig-fish are a noisy, contemptible set, mostly lurking in the mouths of rivers, and feeding on wet hay, and especially as they do not spout, I deny their credentials as whales; and have presented them with their passports to quit the Kingdom of Cetology.

First: According to magnitude I divide the whales into three primary BOOKS (subdivisible into CHAPTERS), and these shall comprehend them all, both small and large.

I. THE FOLIO WHALE; II. the OCTAVO WHALE; III. the DUODECIMO WHALE.

As the type of the FOLIO I present the Sperm Whale; of

the OCTAVO,  
the \_Grampus\_; of the DUODECIMO, the \_Porpoise\_.

FOLIOS. 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 Trumpha whale, and the Physeter whale, and the Anvil Headed whale, is the present Cachalot of the French, and the Pottsfich 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  
whalemen; the  
Baleine Ordinaire of the French whalemen; 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.

BOOK I. (Folio), CHAPTER III. (Fin-Back).—Under this  
head I reckon  
a monster which, by the various names of Fin-Back, Tall-  
Spout, and  
Long-John, has been seen almost in every sea and is  
commonly the whale  
whose distant jet is so often descried by passengers  
crossing the  
Atlantic, in the New York packet-tracks. In the length he  
attains, and  
in his baleen, the Fin-back resembles the right whale,  
but is of a less  
portly girth, and a lighter colour, approaching to olive.  
His great  
lips present a cable-like aspect, formed by the  
intertwisting, slanting  
folds of large wrinkles. His grand distinguishing  
feature, the fin,

from which he derives his name, is often a conspicuous object. This fin is some three or four feet long, growing vertically from the hinder part of the back, of an angular shape, and with a very sharp pointed end. Even if not the slightest other part of the creature be visible, this isolated fin will, at times, be seen plainly projecting from the surface. When the sea is moderately calm, and slightly marked with spherical ripples, and this gnomon-like fin stands up and casts shadows upon the wrinkled surface, it may well be supposed that the watery circle surrounding it somewhat resembles a dial, with its style and wavy hour-lines graved on it. On that Ahaz-dial the shadow often goes back. The Fin-Back is not gregarious. He seems a whale-hater, as some men are man-haters. Very shy; always going solitary; unexpectedly rising to the surface in the remotest and most sullen waters; his straight and single lofty jet rising like a tall misanthropic spear upon a barren plain; gifted with such wondrous power and velocity in swimming, as to defy all present pursuit from man; this leviathan seems the banished and unconquerable Cain of his race, bearing for his mark that style upon his back. From having the baleen in his mouth, the Fin-Back is sometimes included with the right whale, among a theoretic species denominated Whalebone whales, that is, whales with baleen. Of these so called Whalebone whales, there would seem to be several varieties, most of which, however, are little known. 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 appellative 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. Though their blubber is very thin, some of these whales will yield you upwards of thirty gallons of oil.

BOOK II. (\_Octavo\_), CHAPTER III. (\_Narwhale\_), that is, \_Nostril whale\_.—Another instance of a curiously named whale, so named I suppose from his peculiar horn being originally mistaken for a peaked nose. The creature is some sixteen feet in length, while its horn averages five feet, though some exceed ten, and even attain to fifteen feet. Strictly speaking, this horn is but a lengthened tusk, growing out from the jaw in a line a little depressed from the horizontal. But it is only found on the sinister side, which has an ill effect, giving its owner something analogous to the aspect of a clumsy left-handed man. What precise purpose this ivory horn or lance answers, it would be hard to say. It does not seem to be used like the blade of the sword-fish and bill-fish; though some sailors tell me that the Narwhale employs it for a rake in turning over the bottom of the sea for food.

Charley Coffin



said it was used for an ice-piercer; for the Narwhale, rising to the surface of the Polar Sea, and finding it sheeted with ice, thrusts his horn up, and so breaks through. But you cannot prove either of these surmises to be correct. My own opinion is, that however this one-sided horn may really be used by the Narwhale—however that may be—it would certainly be very convenient to him for a folder in reading pamphlets. The Narwhale I have heard called the Tusked whale, the Horned whale, and the Unicorn whale. He is certainly a curious example of the Unicornism to be found in almost every kingdom of animated nature. From certain cloistered old authors I have gathered that this same sea-unicorn's horn was in ancient days regarded as the great antidote against poison, and as such, preparations of it brought immense prices. It was also distilled to a volatile salts for fainting ladies, the same way that the horns of the male deer are manufactured into hartshorn. Originally it was in itself accounted an object of great curiosity. Black Letter tells me that Sir Martin Frobisher on his return from that voyage, when Queen Bess did gallantly wave her jewelled hand to him from a window of Greenwich Palace, as his bold ship sailed down the Thames; "when Sir Martin returned from that voyage," saith Black Letter, "on bended knees he presented to her highness a prodigious long horn of the Narwhale, which for a long period after hung in the castle at Windsor." An Irish author avers that the Earl of Leicester, on

bended knees, did likewise present to her highness  
another horn,  
pertaining to a land beast of the unicorn nature.

The Narwhale has a very picturesque, leopard-like look,  
being of a  
milk-white ground colour, dotted with round and oblong  
spots of black.

His oil is very superior, clear and fine; but there is  
little of it,  
and he is seldom hunted. He is mostly found in the  
circumpolar seas.

BOOK II. (\_Octavo\_), CHAPTER IV. (\_Killer\_).—Of this  
whale little is  
precisely known to the Nantucketer, and nothing at all to  
the professed  
naturalist. From what I have seen of him at a distance, I  
should say  
that he was about the bigness of a grampus. He is very  
savage—a sort of  
Feegee fish. He sometimes takes the great Folio whales by  
the lip, and  
hangs there like a leech, till the mighty brute is  
worried to death.  
The Killer is never hunted. I never heard what sort of  
oil he has.  
Exception might be taken to the name bestowed upon this  
whale, on the  
ground of its indistinctness. For we are all killers, on  
land and on  
sea; Bonapartes and Sharks included.

BOOK II. (\_Octavo\_), CHAPTER V. (\_Thrasher\_).—This  
gentleman is famous  
for his tail, which he uses for a ferule in thrashing his  
foes. He  
mounts the Folio whale's back, and as he swims, he works  
his passage by  
flogging him; as some schoolmasters get along in the  
world by a similar  
process. Still less is known of the Thrasher than of the  
Killer. Both  
are outlaws, even in the lawless seas.

Thus ends BOOK II. (\_Octavo\_), and begins BOOK III.  
(\_Duodecimo\_).

DUODECIMOES.—These include the smaller whales. I. The  
Huzza Porpoise.  
II. The Algerine Porpoise. III. The Mealy-mouthed  
Porpoise.

To those who have not chanced specially to study the  
subject, it may  
possibly seem strange, that fishes not commonly exceeding  
four or five  
feet should be marshalled among WHALES—a word, which, in  
the popular  
sense, always conveys an idea of hugeness. But the  
creatures set down  
above as Duodecimoes are infallibly whales, by the terms  
of my  
definition of what a whale is—\_i.e.\_ a spouting fish,  
with a horizontal  
tail.

BOOK III. (\_Duodecimo\_), CHAPTER 1. (\_Huzza Porpoise\_).—  
This is the  
common porpoise found almost all over the globe. The name  
is of my own  
bestowal; for there are more than one sort of porpoises,  
and something  
must be done to distinguish them. I call him thus,  
because he always  
swims in hilarious shoals, which upon the broad sea keep  
tossing  
themselves to heaven like caps in a Fourth-of-July crowd.  
Their  
appearance is generally hailed with delight by the  
mariner. Full of  
fine spirits, they invariably come from the breezy  
billows to windward.  
They are the lads that always live before the wind. They  
are accounted  
a lucky omen. If you yourself can withstand three cheers  
at beholding  
these vivacious fish, then heaven help ye; the spirit of

godly  
gamesomeness is not in ye. A well-fed, plump Huzza  
Porpoise will yield  
you one good gallon of good oil. But the fine and  
delicate fluid  
extracted from his jaws is exceedingly valuable. It is in  
request among  
jewellers and watchmakers. Sailors put it on their hones.  
Porpoise meat  
is good eating, you know. It may never have occurred to  
you that a  
porpoise spouts. Indeed, his spout is so small that it is  
not very  
readily discernible. But the next time you have a chance,  
watch him;  
and you will then see the great Sperm whale himself in  
miniature.

BOOK III. (\_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!

### 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 harpooneer class of officers, a  
class unknown  
of course in any other marine than the whale-fleet.

The large importance attached to the harpooneer'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  
Harpooneer. 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  
Harpooneer  
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 Harpooneer; and as such, is but one of the  
captain's more  
inferior subalterns. Nevertheless, as upon the good  
conduct of the  
harpooneers 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 harpooneers  
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 whalemén  
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 honors 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 majestical 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. Wherefore this difference? A problem? Perhaps not. 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. 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. Who has but once dined his friends, has tasted what it is to be Cæsar. 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.

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. In his own proper turn, each officer waited to be served. They were as little children before Ahab; and yet, in Ahab, there seemed not to lurk the smallest social arrogance. 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. 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. What a relief it was to choking Stubb, when a rat made a sudden racket in the hold below. And poor little Flask, he was the youngest son, and little boy

of this weary family party. His were the shinbones of the saline beef; his would have been the drumsticks. For Flask to have presumed to help himself, this must have seemed to him tantamount to larceny in the first degree. Had he helped himself at that table, doubtless, never more would he have been able to hold his head up in this honest world; nevertheless, strange to say, Ahab never forbade him. And had Flask helped himself, the chances were Ahab had never so much as noticed it. Least of all, did Flask presume to help himself to butter. Whether he thought the owners of the ship denied it to him, on account of its clotting his clear, sunny complexion; or whether he deemed that, on so long a voyage in such marketless waters, butter was at a premium, and therefore was not for him, a subaltern; however it was, Flask, alas! was a butterless man!

Another thing. Flask was the last person down at the dinner, and Flask is the first man up. Consider! For hereby Flask's dinner was badly jammed in point of time. Starbuck and Stubb both had the start of him; and yet they also have the privilege of lounging in the rear. If Stubb even, who is but a peg higher than Flask, happens to have but a small appetite, and soon shows symptoms of concluding his repast, then Flask must bestir himself, he will not get more than three mouthfuls that day; for it is against holy usage for Stubb to precede Flask to the deck. Therefore it was that Flask once admitted in private, that ever

since he had arisen to the dignity of an officer, from that moment he had never known what it was to be otherwise than hungry, more or less. For what he ate did not so much relieve his hunger, as keep it immortal in him. Peace and satisfaction, thought Flask, have for ever departed from my stomach. I am an officer; but, how I wish I could fish a bit of old-fashioned beef in the fore-castle, 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 harpooneers 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 harpooneers. While their masters, the mates, seemed afraid of the sound of the hinges of their own jaws, the harpooneers 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. Commonly, after seeing the harpooneers furnished with all things they demanded, he would escape from their clutches into his little pantry adjoining, and



fearfully peep out at them through the blinds of its door, till all was over.

It was a sight to see Queequeg seated over against Tashtego, opposing his filed teeth to the Indian's: crosswise to them, Daggoo seated on the floor, for a bench would have brought his hearse-plumed head to the low carlines; at every motion of his colossal limbs, making the low cabin framework to shake, as when an African elephant goes passenger in a ship. But for all this, the great negro was wonderfully abstemious, not to say dainty. It seemed hardly possible that by such comparatively small mouthfuls he could keep up the vitality diffused through so broad, baronial, and superb a person. But, doubtless, this noble savage fed strong and drank deep of the abounding element of air; and through his dilated nostrils snuffed in the sublime life of the worlds. Not by beef or by bread, are giants made or nourished. But Queequeg, he had a mortal, barbaric smack of the lip in eating—an ugly sound enough—so much so, that the trembling Dough-Boy almost looked to see whether any marks of teeth lurked in his own lean arms. And when he would hear Tashtego singing out for him to produce himself, that his bones might be picked, the simple-witted steward all but shattered the crockery hanging round him in the pantry, by his sudden fits of the palsy. Nor did the whetstone which the harpooneers carried in their pockets, for their lances and other weapons; and with which whetstones, at dinner,

they would ostentatiously sharpen their knives; that grating sound did not at all tend to tranquillize poor Dough-Boy. How could he forget that in his Island days, Queequeg, for one, must certainly have been guilty of some murderous, convivial indiscretions. Alas! Dough-Boy! hard fares the white waiter who waits upon cannibals. Not a napkin should he carry on his arm, but a buckler. In good time, though, to his great delight, the three salt-sea warriors would rise and depart; to his credulous, fable-mongering ears, all their martial bones jingling in them at every step, like Moorish scimetars in scabbards.

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 harpooneers 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 archæologists, 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.

Of modern  
standers-of-mast-heads we have but a lifeless set; mere  
stone, iron,  
and bronze men; who, though well capable of facing out a  
stiff gale,  
are still entirely incompetent to the business of singing  
out upon  
discovering any strange sight. There is Napoleon; who,  
upon the top of  
the column of Vendome, stands with arms folded, some one  
hundred and  
fifty feet in the air; careless, now, who rules the decks  
below;  
whether Louis Philippe, Louis Blanc, or Louis the Devil.  
Great  
Washington, too, stands high aloft on his towering main-  
mast in  
Baltimore, and like one of Hercules' pillars, his column  
marks that  
point of human grandeur beyond which few mortals will go.  
Admiral  
Nelson, also, on a capstan of gun-metal, stands his mast-  
head in  
Trafalgar Square; and ever when most obscured by that  
London smoke,  
token is yet given that a hidden hero is there; for where  
there is  
smoke, must be fire. But neither great Washington, nor  
Napoleon, nor  
Nelson, will answer a single hail from below, however  
madly invoked to  
befriend by their counsels the distracted decks upon  
which they gaze;  
however it may be surmised, that their spirits penetrate  
through the  
thick haze of the future, and descry what shoals and what  
rocks must be  
shunned.

It may seem unwarrantable to couple in any respect the  
mast-head  
standers of the land with those of the sea; but that in  
truth it is not  
so, is plainly evinced by an item for which Obed Macy,

the sole  
historian of Nantucket, stands accountable. The worthy  
Obed tells us,  
that in the early times of the whale fishery, ere ships  
were regularly  
launched in pursuit of the game, the people of that  
island erected  
lofty spars along the sea-coast, to which the look-outs  
ascended by  
means of nailed cleats, something as fowls go upstairs in  
a hen-house.  
A few years ago this same plan was adopted by the Bay  
whalemen of New  
Zealand, who, upon descrying the game, gave notice to the  
ready-manned  
boats nigh the beach. But this custom has now become  
obsolete; turn we  
then to the one proper mast-head, that of a whale-ship at  
sea. The  
three mast-heads are kept manned from sun-rise to sun-  
set; the seamen  
taking their regular turns (as at the helm), and  
relieving each other  
every two hours. In the serene weather of the tropics it  
is exceedingly  
pleasant the mast-head; nay, to a dreamy meditative man  
it is  
delightful. There you stand, a hundred feet above the  
silent decks,  
striding along the deep, as if the masts were gigantic  
stilts, while  
beneath you and between your legs, as it were, swim the  
hugest monsters  
of the sea, even as ships once sailed between the boots  
of the famous  
Colossus at old Rhodes. There you stand, lost in the  
infinite series of  
the sea, with nothing ruffled but the waves. The tranced  
ship  
indolently rolls; the drowsy trade winds blow; everything  
resolves you  
into languor. 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 whalesmen, 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  
whalemen)  
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  
honor 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  
meditativeness; and who  
offers to ship with the Phædon 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 honorable 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 Cranmer'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 Descartian 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 Ahab: 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?"

"A dead whale or a stove boat!"

More and more strangely and fiercely glad and approving,

grew the  
countenance of the old man at every shout; while the  
mariners began to  
gaze curiously at each other, as if marvelling how it was  
that they  
themselves became so excited at such seemingly  
purposeless questions.

But, they were all eagerness again, as Ahab, now half-  
revolving in his  
pivot-hole, with one hand reaching high up a shroud, and  
tightly,  
almost convulsively grasping it, addressed them thus:—

“All ye mast-headers have before now heard me give orders  
about a white  
whale. Look ye! d’ye see this Spanish ounce of gold?”—  
holding up a  
broad bright coin to the sun—“it is a sixteen dollar  
piece, men. D’ye  
see it? Mr. Starbuck, hand me yon top-maul.”

While the mate was getting the hammer, Ahab, without  
speaking, was  
slowly rubbing the gold piece against the skirts of his  
jacket, as if  
to heighten its lustre, and without using any words was  
meanwhile lowly  
humming to himself, producing a sound so strangely  
muffled and  
inarticulate that it seemed the mechanical humming of the  
wheels of his  
vitality in him.

Receiving the top-maul from Starbuck, he advanced towards  
the main-mast  
with the hammer uplifted in one hand, exhibiting the gold  
with the  
other, and with a high raised voice exclaiming:  
“Whosoever of ye raises  
me a white-headed whale with a wrinkled brow and a  
crooked jaw;  
whosoever of ye raises me that white-headed whale, with  
three holes



punctured in his starboard fluke—look ye, whosoever of ye raises me that same white whale, he shall have this gold ounce, my boys!"

"Huzza! huzza!" cried the seamen, as with swinging tarpaulins they hailed the act of nailing the gold to the mast.

"It's a white whale, I say," resumed Ahab, as he threw down the topmaul: "a white whale. Skin your eyes for him, men; look sharp for white water; if ye see but a bubble, sing out."

All this while Tashtego, Daggoo, and Queequeg had looked on with even more intense interest and surprise than the rest, and at the mention of the wrinkled brow and crooked jaw they had started as if each was separately touched by some specific recollection.

"Captain Ahab," said Tashtego, "that white whale must be the same that some call Moby Dick."

"Moby Dick?" shouted Ahab. "Do ye know the white whale then, Tash?"

"Does he fan-tail a little curious, sir, before he goes down?" said the Gay-Header deliberately.

"And has he a curious spout, too," said Daggoo, "very bushy, even for a parmacetty, and mighty quick, Captain Ahab?"

"And he have one, two, three—oh! good many iron in him hide, too, Captain," cried Queequeg disjointedly, "all twiske-tee be-twisk, like him—him—" faltering hard for a word, and screwing his hand round and

round as though uncorking a bottle—"like him—him—"

"Corkscrew!" cried Ahab, "aye, Queequeg, the harpoons lie all twisted and wrenched in him; aye, Daggoo, his spout is a big one, like a whole shock of wheat, and white as a pile of our Nantucket wool after the great annual sheep-shearing; aye, Tashtego, and he fantails like a split jib in a squall. Death and devils! men, it is Moby Dick ye have seen—Moby Dick—Moby Dick!"

"Captain Ahab," said Starbuck, who, with Stubb and Flask, had thus far been eyeing his superior with increasing surprise, but at last seemed struck with a thought which somewhat explained all the wonder. "Captain Ahab, I have heard of Moby Dick—but it was not Moby Dick that took off thy leg?"

"Who told thee that?" cried Ahab; then pausing, "Aye, Starbuck; aye, my hearties all round; it was Moby Dick that dismasted 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 harpooneers 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.  
How many  
barrels will thy vengeance yield thee even if thou  
gettest it, Captain  
Ahab? it will not fetch thee much in our Nantucket  
market."

"Nantucket market! Hoot! But come closer, Starbuck; thou  
requirest a  
little lower layer. If money's to be the measurer, man,  
and the  
accountants have computed their great counting-house the  
globe, by  
girdling it with guineas, one to every three parts of an  
inch; then,  
let me tell thee, that my vengeance will fetch a great  
premium \_here!\_"

"He smites his chest," whispered Stubb, "what's that for?  
methinks it

rings most vast, but hollow."

"Vengeance on a dumb brute!" cried Starbuck, "that simply smote thee from blindest instinct! Madness! To be enraged with a dumb thing, Captain Ahab, seems blasphemous."

"Hark ye yet again—the little lower layer. All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks. But in each event—in the living act, the undoubted deed—there, some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forth the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask. If man will strike, strike through the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me. Sometimes I think there's naught beyond. But 'tis enough. He tasks me; he heaps me; I see in him outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and be the white whale agent, or be the white whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him. Talk not to me of blasphemy, man; I'd strike the sun if it insulted me. For could the sun do that, then could I do the other; since there is ever a sort of fair play herein, jealousy presiding over all creations. But not my master, man, is even that fair play. Who's over me? Truth hath no confines. Take off thine eye! more intolerable than fiends' glarings is a doltish stare! So, so; thou reddenest and palest; my heat has melted thee to anger-glow. But look ye, Starbuck, what is said in heat, that

thing unsays itself. There are men from whom warm words  
are small  
indignity. I meant not to incense thee. Let it go. Look!  
see yonder  
Turkish cheeks of spotted tawn—living, breathing pictures  
painted by  
the sun. The Pagan leopards—the unrecking and  
unworshipping things,  
that live; and seek, and give no reasons for the torrid  
life they feel!  
The crew, man, the crew! 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 foremast-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  
harpooneers, 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. "The crew alone now drink. Round with it,  
round! Short  
draughts—long swallows, men; 'tis hot as Satan's hoof.  
So, so; it goes  
round excellently. It spiralizes in ye; forks out at the  
serpent-snapping eye. Well done; almost drained. That way

it went, this  
way it comes. Hand it me—here's a hollow! Men, ye seem  
the years; so  
brimming life is gulped and gone. Steward, refill!

"Attend now, my braves. I have mustered ye all round this  
capstan; and  
ye mates, flank me with your lances; and ye harpooneers,  
stand there  
with your irons; and ye, stout mariners, ring me in, that  
I may in some  
sort revive a noble custom of my fisherman fathers before  
me. O men,  
you will yet see that—Ha! boy, come back? bad pennies  
come not sooner.  
Hand it me. Why, now, this pewter had run brimming again,  
wer't not  
thou St. Vitus' imp—away, thou ague!

"Advance, ye mates! Cross your lances full before me.  
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 honorable 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? Oh! time was, when as the sunrise  
nobly spurred  
me, so the sunset soothed. No more. This lovely light, it

lights not  
me; all loveliness is anguish to me, since I can ne'er  
enjoy. Gifted  
with the high perception, I lack the low, enjoying power;  
damned, most  
subtly and most malignantly! damned in the midst of  
Paradise! Good  
night—good night! (\_waving his hand, he moves from the  
window\_.)

'Twas not so hard a task. I thought to find one stubborn,  
at the least;  
but my one cogged circle fits into all their various  
wheels, and they  
revolve. Or, if you will, like so many ant-hills of  
powder, they all  
stand before me; and I their match. Oh, hard! that to  
fire others, the  
match itself must needs be wasting! What I've dared, I've  
willed; and  
what I've willed, I'll do! They think me mad—Starbuck  
does; but I'm  
demoniac, I am madness maddened! That wild madness that's  
only calm to  
comprehend itself! The prophecy was that I should be  
dismembered;  
and—Aye! I lost this leg. I now prophesy that I will  
dismember my  
dismemberer. Now, then, be the prophet and the fulfiller  
one. 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,  
rebellling; 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 demigorgon. Hark! the infernal orgies! that revelry is forward! mark the unfaltering 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 unfailing 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. (\_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! 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? 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! (\_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 Cattegat, 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. Steady, helmsman! steady. This is the sort of weather when brave hearts snap ashore, and keeled hulls split at sea. Our captain has his birthmark; look yonder, boys, there's another in the sky—lurid-like, ye see, all else pitch black.

DAGGOO. What of that? Who's afraid of black's afraid of me! I'm quarried out of it!

SPANISH SAILOR. (*\_Aside\_*.) He wants to bully, ah!—the old grudge makes me touchy (*\_Advancing\_*.) Aye, harpooneer, thy race is the undeniable dark side of mankind—devilish dark at that. No offence.

DAGGOO (*\_grimly\_*). None.

ST. JAGO'S SAILOR. That Spaniard's mad or drunk. But that can't be, or else in his one case our old Mogul's fire-waters are somewhat long in working.

5TH NANTUCKET SAILOR. What's that I saw—lightning? Yes.

SPANISH SAILOR. No; Daggo 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\_.)

PIP (\_shrinking under the windlass\_). Jollies? Lord help  
such jollies!  
Crish, crash! there goes the jib-stay! Blang-whang! God!  
Duck lower,  
Pip, here comes the royal yard! It's worse than being in  
the whirled  
woods, the last day of the year! Who'd go climbing after  
chestnuts now?  
But there they go, all cursing, and here I don't. Fine  
prospects to  
'em; they're on the road to heaven. Hold on hard!  
Jimmini, what a  
squall! But those chaps there are worse yet—they are your  
white  
squalls, they. White squalls? white whale, shirr! shirr!  
Here have I  
heard all their chat just now, and the white whale—shirr!  
shirr!—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!

#### CHAPTER 41. Moby Dick.

I, Ishmael, was one of that crew; my shouts had gone up  
with the rest;  
my oath had been welded with theirs; and stronger I  
shouted, and more  
did I hammer and clinch my oath, because of the dread in  
my soul. A  
wild, mystical, sympathetical feeling was in me; Ahab's  
quenchless feud  
seemed mine. With greedy ears I learned the history of  
that murderous  
monster against whom I and all the others had taken our  
oaths of  
violence and revenge.

For some time past, though at intervals only, the  
unaccompanied,  
secluded White Whale had haunted those uncivilized seas  
mostly  
frequented by the Sperm Whale fishermen. But not all of  
them knew of  
his existence; only a few of them, comparatively, had  
knowingly seen  
him; while the number who as yet had actually and  
knowingly given  
battle to him, was small indeed. For, owing to the large  
number of  
whale-cruisers; the disorderly way they were sprinkled  
over the entire  
watery circumference, many of them adventurously pushing  
their quest  
along solitary latitudes, so as seldom or never for a  
whole twelvemonth

or more on a stretch, to encounter a single news-telling  
sail of any  
sort; the inordinate length of each separate voyage; the  
irregularity  
of the times of sailing from home; all these, with other  
circumstances,  
direct and indirect, long obstructed the spread through  
the whole  
world-wide whaling-fleet of the special individualizing  
tidings  
concerning Moby Dick. It was hardly to be doubted, that  
several vessels  
reported to have encountered, at such or such a time, or  
on such or  
such a meridian, a Sperm Whale of uncommon magnitude and  
malignity,  
which whale, after doing great mischief to his  
assailants, had  
completely escaped them; to some minds it was not an  
unfair  
presumption, I say, that the whale in question must have  
been no other  
than Moby Dick. Yet as of late the Sperm Whale fishery  
had been marked  
by various and not unfrequent instances of great  
ferocity, cunning, and  
malice in the monster attacked; therefore it was, that  
those who by  
accident ignorantly gave battle to Moby Dick; such  
hunters, perhaps,  
for the most part, were content to ascribe the peculiar  
terror he bred,  
more, as it were, to the perils of the Sperm Whale  
fishery at large,  
than to the individual cause. In that way, mostly, the  
disastrous  
encounter between Ahab and the whale had hitherto been  
popularly  
regarded.

And as for those who, previously hearing of the White  
Whale, by chance  
caught sight of him; in the beginning of the thing they  
had every one

of them, almost, as boldly and fearlessly lowered for him, as for any other whale of that species. But at length, such calamities did ensue in these assaults—not restricted to sprained wrists and ankles, broken limbs, or devouring amputations—but fatal to the last degree of fatality; those repeated disastrous repulses, all accumulating and piling their terrors upon Moby Dick; those things had gone far to shake the fortitude of many brave hunters, to whom the story of the White Whale had eventually come.

Nor did wild rumors of all sorts fail to exaggerate, and still the more horrify the true histories of these deadly encounters. For not only do fabulous rumors naturally grow out of the very body of all surprising terrible events,—as the smitten tree gives birth to its fungi; but, in maritime life, far more than in that of terra firma, wild rumors abound, wherever there is any adequate reality for them to cling to. And as the sea surpasses the land in this matter, so the whale fishery surpasses every other sort of maritime life, in the wonderfulness and fearfulness of the rumors which sometimes circulate there. For not only are whalers as a body unexempt from that ignorance and superstitiousness hereditary to all sailors; but of all sailors, they are by all odds the most directly brought into contact with whatever is appallingly astonishing in the sea; face to face they not only eye its greatest marvels, but, hand to jaw, give battle to them. Alone, in such remotest waters, that though you sailed a thousand miles,

and passed a  
thousand shores, you would not come to any chiseled  
hearth-stone, or  
aught hospitable beneath that part of the sun; in such  
latitudes and  
longitudes, pursuing too such a calling as he does, the  
whaleman is  
wrapped by influences all tending to make his fancy  
pregnant with many  
a mighty birth.

No wonder, then, that ever gathering volume from the mere  
transit over  
the widest watery spaces, the outblown rumors of the  
White Whale did in  
the end incorporate with themselves all manner of morbid  
hints, and  
half-formed fetal suggestions of supernatural agencies,  
which  
eventually invested Moby Dick with new terrors unborrowed  
from anything  
that visibly appears. So that in many cases such a panic  
did he finally  
strike, that few who by those rumors, at least, had heard  
of the White  
Whale, few of those hunters were willing to encounter the  
perils of his  
jaw.

But there were still other and more vital practical  
influences at work.  
Not even at the present day has the original prestige of  
the Sperm  
Whale, as fearfully distinguished from all other species  
of the  
leviathan, died out of the minds of the whalemen as a  
body. 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 whalemén, 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 whalemén.

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 whalemén 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, pyramidical 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. More than all, his treacherous retreats struck more of dismay than perhaps aught else. For, when swimming before his exulting pursuers, with every apparent symptom of alarm, he had several times been known to turn round suddenly, and, bearing down upon them, either stave their boats to splinters, or drive them back in consternation to their ship.

Already several fatalities had attended his chase. But though similar disasters, however little bruited ashore, were by no means unusual in the fishery; yet, in most instances, such seemed the White Whale's infernal aforethought of ferocity, that every dismembering or death that he caused, was not wholly regarded as having been inflicted by an unintelligent agent.

Judge, then, to what pitches of inflamed, distracted fury  
the minds of  
his more desperate hunters were impelled, when amid the  
chips of chewed  
boats, and the sinking limbs of torn comrades, they swam  
out of the  
white curds of the whale's direful wrath into the serene,  
exasperating  
sunlight, that smiled on, as if at a birth or a bridal.

His three boats stove around him, and oars and men both  
whirling in the  
eddies; one captain, seizing the line-knife from his  
broken prow, had  
dashed at the whale, as an Arkansas duellist at his foe,  
blindly  
seeking with a six inch blade to reach the fathom-deep  
life of the  
whale. That captain was Ahab. And then it was, that  
suddenly sweeping  
his sickle-shaped lower jaw beneath him, Moby Dick had  
reaped away  
Ahab's leg, as a mower a blade of grass in the field. No  
turbaned Turk,  
no hired Venetian or Malay, could have smote him with  
more seeming  
malice. Small reason was there to doubt, then, that ever  
since that  
almost fatal encounter, Ahab had cherished a wild  
vindictiveness  
against the whale, all the more fell for that in his  
frantic morbidness  
he at last came to identify with him, not only all his  
bodily woes, but  
all his intellectual and spiritual exasperations. The  
White Whale swam  
before him as the monomaniac incarnation of all those  
malicious  
agencies which some deep men feel eating in them, till  
they are left  
living on with half a heart and half a lung. That  
intangible malignity  
which has been from the beginning; to whose dominion even  
the modern

Christians ascribe one-half of the worlds; which the ancient Ophites of the east revered in their statue devil;—Ahab did not fall down and worship it like them; but deliriously transferring its idea to the abhorred white whale, he pitted himself, all mutilated, against it. All that most maddens and torments; all that stirs up the lees of things; all truth with malice in it; all that cracks the sinews and cakes the brain; all the subtle demonisms of life and thought; all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified, and made practically assailable in Moby Dick. He piled upon the whale's white hump the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by his whole race from Adam down; and then, as if his chest had been a mortar, he burst his hot heart's shell upon it.

It is not probable that this monomania in him took its instant rise at the precise time of his bodily dismemberment. Then, in darting at the monster, knife in hand, he had but given loose to a sudden, passionate, corporal animosity; and when he received the stroke that tore him, he probably but felt the agonizing bodily laceration, but nothing more. Yet, when by this collision forced to turn towards home, and for long months of days and weeks, Ahab and anguish lay stretched together in one hammock, rounding in mid winter that dreary, howling Patagonian Cape; then it was, that his torn body and gashed soul bled into one another; and so interfusing, made him mad. That it was only then, on the homeward voyage, after the encounter, that the final

monomania

seized him, seems all but certain from the fact that, at intervals

during the passage, he was a raving lunatic; and, though unlimbed of a

leg, yet such vital strength yet lurked in his Egyptian chest, and was

moreover intensified by his delirium, that his mates were forced to

lace him fast, even there, as he sailed, raving in his hammock. In a

strait-jacket, he swung to the mad rockings of the gales. And, when

running into more sufferable latitudes, the ship, with mild stun'sails

spread, floated across the tranquil tropics, and, to all appearances,

the old man's delirium seemed left behind him with the Cape Horn

swells, and he came forth from his dark den into the blessed light and

air; even then, when he bore that firm, collected front, however pale,

and issued his calm orders once again; and his mates thanked God the

direful madness was now gone; even then, Ahab, in his hidden self,

raved on. Human madness is oftentimes a cunning and most feline thing.

When you think it fled, it may have but become

transfigured into some

still subtler form. Ahab's full lunacy subsided not, but deepeningly

contracted; like the unabated Hudson, when that noble Northman flows

narrowly, but unfathomably through the Highland gorge.

But, as in his

narrow-flowing monomania, not one jot of Ahab's broad madness had been

left behind; so in that broad madness, not one jot of his great natural

intellect had perished. That before living agent, now became the living

instrument. If such a furious trope may stand, his



special lunacy  
stormed his general sanity, and carried it, and turned  
all its  
concentred cannon upon its own mad mark; so that far from  
having lost  
his strength, Ahab, to that one end, did now possess a  
thousand fold  
more potency than ever he had sanely brought to bear upon  
any one  
reasonable object.

This is much; yet Ahab's larger, darker, deeper part  
remains unhinted.  
But vain to popularize profundities, and all truth is  
profound. 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  
Pegud 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, Cæsarian, 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 honor; 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 honorable, 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  
imaginings? 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  
unharm'd, 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. Whether marching amid his aides and marshals in the van of countless cohorts that endlessly streamed it over the plains, like an Ohio; or whether with his circumambient subjects browsing all around at the horizon, the White Steed gallopingly reviewed them with warm nostrils reddening through his cool milkiness; in whatever aspect he presented himself, always to the bravest Indians he was the object of trembling reverence and awe. Nor can it be questioned from what stands on legendary record of this noble horse, that it was his spiritual whiteness chiefly, which so clothed him with divineness; and that this divineness had that in it which, though commanding worship, at the same time enforced a certain nameless terror.

But there are other instances where this whiteness loses  
all that  
accessory and strange glory which invests it in the White  
Steed and  
Albatross.

What is it that in the Albino man so peculiarly repels  
and often shocks  
the eye, as that sometimes he is loathed by his own kith  
and kin! It is  
that whiteness which invests him, a thing expressed by  
the name he  
bears. The Albino is as well made as other men—has no  
substantive  
deformity—and yet this mere aspect of all-pervading  
whiteness makes him  
more strangely hideous than the ugliest abortion. Why  
should this be  
so?

Nor, in quite other aspects, does Nature in her least  
palpable but not  
the less malicious agencies, fail to enlist among her  
forces this  
crowning attribute of the terrible. From its snowy  
aspect, the  
gauntleted ghost of the Southern Seas has been  
denominated the White  
Squall. Nor, in some historic instances, has the art of  
human malice  
omitted so potent an auxiliary. How wildly it heightens  
the effect of  
that passage in Froissart, when, masked in the snowy  
symbol of their  
faction, the desperate White Hoods of Ghent murder their  
bailiff in the  
market-place!

Nor, in some things, does the common, hereditary  
experience of all  
mankind fail to bear witness to the supernaturalism of  
this hue. It  
cannot well be doubted, that the one visible quality in  
the aspect of

the dead which most appals the gazer, is the marble  
pallor lingering  
there; as if indeed that pallor were as much like the  
badge of  
consternation in the other world, as of mortal  
trepidation here. And  
from that pallor of the dead, we borrow the expressive  
hue of the  
shroud in which we wrap them. Nor even in our  
superstitions do we fail  
to throw the same snowy mantle round our phantoms; all  
ghosts rising in  
a milk-white fog—Yea, while these terrors seize us, let  
us add, that  
even the king of terrors, when personified by the  
evangelist, rides on  
his pallid horse.

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  
sublimar  
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  
unrustlingly glides  
through the green of the groves—why is this phantom more  
terrible than  
all the whooping imps of the Blocksburg?

Nor is it, altogether, the remembrance of her cathedral-  
toppling  
earthquakes; nor the stampedes of her frantic seas; nor  
the  
tearlessness of arid skies that never rain; nor the sight  
of her wide  
field of leaning spires, wrenched cope-stones, and  
crosses all adroop  
(like canted yards of anchored fleets); and her suburban  
avenues of  
house-walls lying over upon each other, as a tossed pack  
of cards;—it  
is not these things alone which make tearless Lima, the  
strangest,  
saddest city thou can'st see. For Lima has taken the  
white veil; and  
there is a higher horror in this whiteness of her woe.  
Old as Pizarro,  
this whiteness keeps her ruins for ever new; admits not  
the cheerful  
greenness of complete decay; spreads over her broken  
ramparts the rigid  
pallor of an apoplexy that fixes its own distortions.

I know that, to the common apprehension, this phenomenon  
of whiteness  
is not confessed to be the prime agent in exaggerating  
the terror of

objects otherwise terrible; nor to the unimaginative mind  
is there  
aught of terror in those appearances whose awfulness to  
another mind  
almost solely consists in this one phenomenon, especially  
when  
exhibited under any form at all approaching to muteness  
or  
universality. What I mean by these two statements may  
perhaps be  
respectively elucidated by the following examples.

First: The mariner, when drawing nigh the coasts of  
foreign lands, if  
by night he hear the roar of breakers, starts to  
vigilance, and feels  
just enough of trepidation to sharpen all his faculties;  
but under  
precisely similar circumstances, let him be called from  
his hammock to  
view his ship sailing through a midnight sea of milky  
whiteness—as if  
from encircling headlands shoals of combed white bears  
were swimming  
round him, then he feels a silent, superstitious dread;  
the shrouded  
phantom of the whitened waters is horrible to him as a  
real ghost; in  
vain the lead assures him he is still off soundings;  
heart and helm  
they both go down; he never rests till blue water is  
under him again.  
Yet where is the mariner who will tell thee, "Sir, it was  
not so much  
the fear of striking hidden rocks, as the fear of that  
hideous  
whiteness that so stirred me?"

Second: To the native Indian of Peru, the continual sight  
of the  
snow-howdahed Andes conveys naught of dread, except,  
perhaps, in the  
mere fancying of the eternal frosted desolateness  
reigning at such vast

altitudes, and the natural conceit of what a fearfulness  
it would be to  
lose oneself in such inhuman solitudes. Much the same is  
it with the  
backwoodsman of the West, who with comparative  
indifference views an  
unbounded prairie sheeted with driven snow, no shadow of  
tree or twig  
to break the fixed trance of whiteness. Not so the  
sailor, beholding  
the scenery of the Antarctic seas; where at times, by  
some infernal  
trick of legerdemain in the powers of frost and air, he,  
shivering and  
half shipwrecked, instead of rainbows speaking hope and  
solace to his  
misery, views what seems a boundless churchyard grinning  
upon him with  
its lean ice monuments and splintered crosses.

But thou sayest, methinks that white-lead chapter about  
whiteness is  
but a white flag hung out from a craven soul; thou  
surrenderest to a  
hypo, Ishmael.

Tell me, why this strong young colt, foaled in some  
peaceful valley of  
Vermont, far removed from all beasts of prey—why is it  
that upon the  
sunniest day, if you but shake a fresh buffalo robe  
behind him, so that  
he cannot even see it, but only smells its wild animal  
muskiness—why  
will he start, snort, and with bursting eyes paw the  
ground in  
phrensies of affright? There is no remembrance in him of  
any gorings of  
wild creatures in his green northern home, so that the  
strange  
muskiness he smells cannot recall to him anything  
associated with the  
experience of former perils; for what knows he, this New  
England colt,



of the black bisons of distant Oregon?

No: but here thou beholdest even in a dumb brute, the instinct of the knowledge of the demonism in the world. Though thousands of miles from Oregon, still when he smells that savage musk, the rending, goring bison herds are as present as to the deserted wild foal of the prairies, which this instant they may be trampling into dust.

Thus, then, the muffled rollings of a milky sea; the bleak rustlings of the festooned frosts of mountains; the desolate shiftings of the windrowed snows of prairies; all these, to Ishmael, are as the shaking of that buffalo robe to the frightened colt!

Though neither knows where lie the nameless things of which the mystic sign gives forth such hints; yet with me, as with the colt, somewhere those things must exist. Though in many of its aspects this visible world seems formed in love, the invisible spheres were formed in fright.

But not yet have we solved the incantation of this whiteness, and learned why it appeals with such power to the soul; and more strange and far more portentous—why, as we have seen, it is at once the most meaning symbol of spiritual things, nay, the very veil of the Christian's Deity; and yet should be as it is, the intensifying agent in things the most appalling to mankind.

Is it that by its indefiniteness it shadows forth the

heartless voids  
and immensities of the universe, and thus stabs us from  
behind with the  
thought of annihilation, when beholding the white depths  
of the milky  
way? Or is it, that as in essence whiteness is not so  
much a colour as  
the visible absence of colour; and at the same time the  
concrete of all  
colours; is it for these reasons that there is such a  
dumb blankness,  
full of meaning, in a wide landscape of snows—a  
colourless, all-colour  
of atheism from which we shrink? And when we consider  
that other theory  
of the natural philosophers, that all other earthly hues—  
every stately  
or lovely emblazoning—the sweet tinges of sunset skies  
and woods; yea,  
and the gilded velvets of butterflies, and the butterfly  
cheeks of  
young girls; all these are but subtile deceits, not  
actually inherent  
in substances, but only laid on from without; so that all  
deified  
Nature absolutely paints like the harlot, whose  
allurements cover  
nothing but the charnel-house within; and when we proceed  
further, and  
consider that the mystical cosmetic which produces every  
one of her  
hues, the great principle of light, for ever remains  
white or colorless  
in itself, and if operating without medium upon matter,  
would touch all  
objects, even tulips and roses, with its own blank tinge—  
pondering all  
this, the palsied universe lies before us a leper; and  
like wilful  
travellers in Lapland, who refuse to wear coloured and  
colouring  
glasses upon their eyes, so the wretched infidel gazes  
himself blind at  
the monumental white shroud that wraps all the prospect

around him. And  
of all these things the Albino whale was the symbol.  
Wonder ye then at  
the fiery hunt?

#### 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."

"Cough be damned! Pass along that return bucket."

"There again—there it is!—it sounds like two or three  
sleepers turning

over, now!"

"Caramba! have done, shipmate, will ye? It's the three soaked biscuits ye eat for supper turning over inside of ye—nothing else. Look to the bucket!"

"Say what ye will, shipmate; I've sharp ears."

"Aye, you are the chap, ain't ye, that heard the hum of the old Quakeress's knitting-needles fifty miles at sea from Nantucket; you're the chap."

"Grin away; we'll see what turns up. Hark ye, Cabaco, there is somebody down in the after-hold that has not yet been seen on deck; and I suspect our old Mogul knows something of it too. I heard Stubb tell Flask, one morning watch, that there was something of that sort in the wind."

"Tish! the bucket!"

#### CHAPTER 44. 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 assured, indeed, is the fact concerning the periodicalness of the sperm whale's resorting to given waters, that many hunters believe that, could he be closely observed and studied throughout the world; were the logs for one voyage of the entire whale fleet carefully collated, then the migrations of the sperm whale would be found to correspond in invariability to those of the herring-shoals or the flights of swallows. On this hint, attempts have been made to construct elaborate migratory charts of the sperm whale.\*

\*Since the above was written, the statement is happily borne out by

an official circular, issued by Lieutenant Maury, of the National

Observatory, Washington, April 16th, 1851. By that circular, it

appears that precisely such a chart is in course of completion; and

portions of it are presented in the circular. "This chart divides the

ocean into districts of five degrees of latitude by five degrees of

longitude; perpendicularly through each of which districts are twelve

columns for the twelve months; and horizontally through each of which

districts are three lines; one to show the number of

days that have  
been spent in each month in every district, and the two  
others to  
show the number of days in which whales, sperm or  
right, have been  
seen."

Besides, when making a passage from one feeding-ground to  
another, the  
sperm whales, guided by some infallible instinct—say,  
rather, secret  
intelligence from the Deity—mostly swim in veins, as  
they are called;  
continuing their way along a given ocean-line with such  
undeviating  
exactitude, that no ship ever sailed her course, by any  
chart, with one  
tithe of such marvellous precision. Though, in these  
cases, the  
direction taken by any one whale be straight as a  
surveyor's parallel,  
and though the line of advance be strictly confined to  
its own  
unavoidable, straight wake, yet the arbitrary vein in  
which at these  
times he is said to swim, generally embraces some few  
miles in width  
(more or less, as the vein is presumed to expand or  
contract); but  
never exceeds the visual sweep from the whale-ship's  
mast-heads, when  
circumspectly gliding along this magic zone. The sum is,  
that at  
particular seasons within that breadth and along that  
path, migrating  
whales may with great confidence be looked for.

And hence not only at substantiated times, upon well  
known separate  
feeding-grounds, could Ahab hope to encounter his prey;  
but in crossing

the widest expanses of water between those grounds he could, by his art, so place and time himself on his way, as even then not to be wholly without prospect of a meeting.

There was a circumstance which at first sight seemed to entangle his delirious but still methodical scheme. But not so in the reality, perhaps. Though the gregarious sperm whales have their regular seasons for particular grounds, yet in general you cannot conclude that the herds which haunted such and such a latitude or longitude this year, say, will turn out to be identically the same with those that were found there the preceding season; though there are peculiar and unquestionable instances where the contrary of this has proved true. In general, the same remark, only within a less wide limit, applies to the solitaries and hermits among the matured, aged sperm whales. So that though Moby Dick had in a former year been seen, for example, on what is called the Seychelle ground in the Indian ocean, or Volcano Bay on the Japanese Coast; yet it did not follow, that were the Pequod to visit either of those spots at any subsequent corresponding season, she would infallibly encounter him there. So, too, with some other feeding grounds, where he had at times revealed himself. But all these seemed only his casual stopping-places and ocean-inns, so to speak, not his places of prolonged abode. And where Ahab's chances of accomplishing his object have hitherto been spoken of, allusion has only been made to



whatever way-side, antecedent, extra prospects were his, ere a particular set time or place were attained, when all possibilities would become probabilities, and, as Ahab fondly thought, every possibility the next thing to a certainty. That particular set time and place were conjoined in the one technical phrase—the Season-on-the-Line. For there and then, for several consecutive years, Moby Dick had been periodically descried, lingering in those waters for awhile, as the sun, in its annual round, loiters for a predicted interval in any one sign of the Zodiac. There it was, too, that most of the deadly encounters with the white whale had taken place; there the waves were storied with his deeds; there also was that tragic spot where the monomaniac old man had found the awful motive to his vengeance. But in the cautious comprehensiveness and unloitering vigilance with which Ahab threw his brooding soul into this unfaltering hunt, he would not permit himself to rest all his hopes upon the one crowning fact above mentioned, however flattering it might be to those hopes; nor in the sleeplessness of his vow could he so tranquillize his unquiet heart as to postpone all intervening quest.

Now, the Pequod had sailed from Nantucket at the very beginning of the Season-on-the-Line. No possible endeavor then could enable her commander to make the great passage southwards, double Cape Horn, and then running down sixty degrees of latitude arrive in the equatorial Pacific in time to cruise there. Therefore, he must wait

for the next  
ensuing season. Yet the premature hour of the Pequod's  
sailing had,  
perhaps, been correctly selected by Ahab, with a view to  
this very  
complexion of things. Because, an interval of three  
hundred and  
sixty-five days and nights was before him; an interval  
which, instead  
of impatiently enduring ashore, he would spend in a  
miscellaneous hunt;  
if by chance the White Whale, spending his vacation in  
seas far remote  
from his periodical feeding-grounds, should turn up his  
wrinkled brow  
off the Persian Gulf, or in the Bengal Bay, or China  
Seas, or in any  
other waters haunted by his race. 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, unappeasedly 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 forecastle 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 Cæsar. 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



landsmen 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 manœuvres 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." Again: "At  
all events, the  
whole circumstances taken together, all happening before  
my own eyes,

and producing, at the time, impressions in my mind of decided, calculating mischief, on the part of the whale (many of which impressions I cannot now recall), induce me to be satisfied that I am correct in my opinion."

Here are his reflections some time after quitting the ship, during a black night in an open boat, when almost despairing of reaching any hospitable shore. "The dark ocean and swelling waters were nothing; the fears of being swallowed up by some dreadful tempest, or dashed upon hidden rocks, with all the other ordinary subjects of fearful contemplation, seemed scarcely entitled to a moment's thought; the dismal looking wreck, and \_the horrid aspect and revenge of the whale\_, wholly engrossed my reflections, until day again made its appearance."

In another place—p. 45,—he speaks of "\_the mysterious and mortal attack of the animal\_."

Secondly: The ship Union, also of Nantucket, was in the year 1807 totally lost off the Azores by a similar onset, but the authentic particulars of this catastrophe I have never chanced to encounter, though from the whale hunters I have now and then heard casual allusions to it.

Thirdly: Some eighteen or twenty years ago Commodore J—, then commanding an American sloop-of-war of the first class, happened to be dining with a party of whaling captains, on board a

Nantucket ship in  
the harbor of Oahu, Sandwich Islands. Conversation  
turning upon whales,  
the Commodore was pleased to be sceptical touching the  
amazing strength  
ascribed to them by the professional gentlemen present.  
He peremptorily  
denied for example, that any whale could so smite his  
stout  
sloop-of-war as to cause her to leak so much as a  
thimbleful. Very  
good; but there is more coming. Some weeks after, the  
Commodore set  
sail in this impregnable craft for Valparaiso. But he was  
stopped on  
the way by a portly sperm whale, that begged a few  
moments'  
confidential business with him. That business consisted  
in fetching the  
Commodore's craft such a thwack, that with all his pumps  
going he made  
straight for the nearest port to heave down and repair. I  
am not  
superstitious, but I consider the Commodore's interview  
with that whale  
as providential. Was not Saul of Tarsus converted from  
unbelief by a  
similar fright? I tell you, the sperm whale will stand no  
nonsense.

I will now refer you to Langsdorff's Voyages for a little  
circumstance  
in point, peculiarly interesting to the writer hereof.  
Langsdorff, you  
must know by the way, was attached to the Russian Admiral  
Krusenstern's  
famous Discovery Expedition in the beginning of the  
present century.  
Captain Langsdorff thus begins his seventeenth chapter:

"By the thirteenth of May our ship was ready to sail, and  
the next day  
we were out in the open sea, on our way to Ochotsh. The  
weather was

very clear and fine, but so intolerably cold that we were obliged to keep on our fur clothing. For some days we had very little wind; it was not till the nineteenth that a brisk gale from the northwest sprang up. An uncommon large whale, the body of which was larger than the ship itself, lay almost at the surface of the water, but was not perceived by any one on board till the moment when the ship, which was in full sail, was almost upon him, so that it was impossible to prevent its striking against him. We were thus placed in the most imminent danger, as this gigantic creature, setting up its back, raised the ship three feet at least out of the water. The masts reeled, and the sails fell altogether, while we who were below all sprang instantly upon the deck, concluding that we had struck upon some rock; instead of this we saw the monster sailing off with the utmost gravity and solemnity. Captain D'Wolf applied immediately to the pumps to examine whether or not the vessel had received any damage from the shock, but we found that very happily it had escaped entirely uninjured."

Now, the Captain D'Wolf here alluded to as commanding the ship in question, is a New Englander, who, after a long life of unusual adventures as a sea-captain, this day resides in the village of Dorchester near Boston. I have the honor of being a nephew of his. I have particularly questioned him concerning this passage in Langsdorff. He substantiates every word. The ship, however, was by no means a large

one: a Russian craft built on the Siberian coast, and purchased by my uncle after bartering away the vessel in which he sailed from home.

In that up and down manly book of old-fashioned adventure, so full, too, of honest wonders—the voyage of Lionel Wafer, one of ancient Dampier's old chums—I found a little matter set down so like that just quoted from Langsdorff, that I cannot forbear inserting it here for a corroborative example, if such be needed.

Lionel, it seems, was on his way to "John Ferdinando," as he calls the modern Juan Fernandes. "In our way thither," he says, "about four o'clock in the morning, when we were about one hundred and fifty leagues from the Main of America, our ship felt a terrible shock, which put our men in such consternation that they could hardly tell where they were or what to think; but every one began to prepare for death. And, indeed, the shock was so sudden and violent, that we took it for granted the ship had struck against a rock; but when the amazement was a little over, we cast the lead, and sounded, but found no ground. \* \*

\* \* \* The suddenness of the shock made the guns leap in their carriages, and several of the men were shaken out of their hammocks. Captain Davis, who lay with his head on a gun, was thrown out of his cabin!" Lionel then goes on to impute the shock to an earthquake, and seems to substantiate the imputation by stating that a great earthquake, somewhere about that time, did actually do

great mischief  
along the Spanish land. But I should not much wonder if,  
in the  
darkness of that early hour of the morning, the shock was  
after all  
caused by an unseen whale vertically bumping the hull  
from beneath.

I might proceed with several more examples, one way or  
another known to  
me, of the great power and malice at times of the sperm  
whale. In more  
than one instance, he has been known, not only to chase  
the assailing  
boats back to their ships, but to pursue the ship itself,  
and long  
withstand all the lances hurled at him from its decks.  
The English ship  
Pusie Hall can tell a story on that head; and, as for his  
strength, let  
me say, that there have been examples where the lines  
attached to a  
running sperm whale have, in a calm, been transferred to  
the ship, and  
secured there; the whale towing her great hull through  
the water, as a  
horse walks off with a cart. Again, it is very often  
observed that, if  
the sperm whale, once struck, is allowed time to rally,  
he then acts,  
not so often with blind rage, as with wilful, deliberate  
designs of  
destruction to his pursuers; nor is it without conveying  
some eloquent  
indication of his character, that upon being attacked he  
will  
frequently open his mouth, and retain it in that dread  
expansion for  
several consecutive minutes. But I must be content with  
only one more  
and a concluding illustration; a remarkable and most  
significant one,  
by which you will not fail to see, that not only is the  
most marvellous



event in this book corroborated by plain facts of the present day, but that these marvels (like all marvels) are mere repetitions of the ages; so that for the millionth time we say amen with Solomon—Verily there is nothing new under the sun.

In the sixth Christian century lived Procopius, a Christian magistrate of Constantinople, in the days when Justinian was Emperor and Belisarius general. As many know, he wrote the history of his own times, a work every way of uncommon value. 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.

#### CHAPTER 46. Surmises.

Though, consumed with the hot fire of his purpose, Ahab in all his thoughts and actions ever had in view the ultimate

capture of Moby

Dick; though he seemed ready to sacrifice all mortal interests to that one passion; nevertheless it may have been that he was by nature and long habituation far too wedded to a fiery whaleman's ways, altogether to abandon the collateral prosecution of the voyage. Or at least if this were otherwise, there were not wanting other motives much more influential with him. It would be refining too much, perhaps, even considering his monomania, to hint that his vindictiveness towards the White Whale might have possibly extended itself in some degree to all sperm whales, and that the more monsters he slew by so much the more he multiplied the chances that each subsequently encountered whale would prove to be the hated one he hunted. But if such an hypothesis be indeed exceptionable, there were still additional considerations which, though not so strictly according with the wildness of his ruling passion, yet were by no means incapable of swaying him.

To accomplish his object Ahab must use tools; and of all tools used in the shadow of the moon, men are most apt to get out of order. He knew, for example, that however magnetic his ascendancy in some respects was over Starbuck, yet that ascendancy did not cover the complete spiritual man any more than mere corporeal superiority involves intellectual mastership; for to the purely spiritual, the intellectual but stand in a sort of corporeal relation. Starbuck's body and Starbuck's coerced will were Ahab's, so long as Ahab kept his magnet at

Starbuck's brain;  
still he knew that for all this the chief mate, in his  
soul, abhorred  
his captain's quest, and could he, would joyfully  
disintegrate himself  
from it, or even frustrate it. It might be that a long  
interval would  
elapse ere the White Whale was seen. During that long  
interval Starbuck  
would ever be apt to fall into open relapses of rebellion  
against his  
captain's leadership, unless some ordinary, prudential,  
circumstantial  
influences were brought to bear upon him. Not only that,  
but the subtle  
insanity of Ahab respecting Moby Dick was noways more  
significantly  
manifested than in his superlative sense and shrewdness  
in foreseeing  
that, for the present, the hunt should in some way be  
stripped of that  
strange imaginative impiousness which naturally invested  
it; that the  
full terror of the voyage must be kept withdrawn into the  
obscure  
background (for few men's courage is proof against  
protracted  
meditation unrelieved by action); that when they stood  
their long night  
watches, his officers and men must have some nearer  
things to think of  
than Moby Dick. For however eagerly and impetuously the  
savage crew had  
hailed the announcement of his quest; yet all sailors of  
all sorts are  
more or less capricious and unreliable—they live in the  
varying outer  
weather, and they inhale its fickleness—and when retained  
for any  
object remote and blank in the pursuit, however  
promissory of life and  
passion in the end, it is above all things requisite that  
temporary  
interests and employments should intervene and hold them

healthily  
suspended for the final dash.

Nor was Ahab unmindful of another thing. In times of strong emotion mankind disdain all base considerations; but such times are evanescent. The permanent constitutional condition of the manufactured man, thought Ahab, is sordidness. Granting that the White Whale fully incites the hearts of this my savage crew, and playing round their savageness even breeds a certain generous knight-errantism in them, still, while for the love of it they give chase to Moby Dick, they must also have food for their more common, daily appetites. For even the high lifted and chivalric Crusaders of old times were not content to traverse two thousand miles of land to fight for their holy sepulchre, without committing burglaries, picking pockets, and gaining other pious perquisites by the way. Had they been strictly held to their one final and romantic object—that final and romantic object, too many would have turned from in disgust. I will not strip these men, thought Ahab, of all hopes of cash—aye, cash. They may scorn cash now; but let some months go by, and no perspective promise of it to them, and then this same quiescent cash all at once mutinying in them, this same cash would soon cashier Ahab.

Nor was there wanting still another precautionary motive more related to Ahab personally. Having impulsively, it is probable, and perhaps somewhat prematurely revealed the prime but private

purpose of the  
Pequod's voyage, Ahab was now entirely conscious that, in  
so doing, he  
had indirectly laid himself open to the unanswerable  
charge of  
usurpation; and with perfect impunity, both moral and  
legal, his crew  
if so disposed, and to that end competent, could refuse  
all further  
obedience to him, and even violently wrest from him the  
command. From  
even the barely hinted imputation of usurpation, and the  
possible  
consequences of such a suppressed impression gaining  
ground, Ahab must  
of course have been most anxious to protect himself. 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.

## CHAPTER 47. The Mat-Maker.

It was a cloudy, sultry afternoon; the seamen were lazily lounging about the decks, or vacantly gazing over into the lead-coloured waters. Queequeg and I were mildly employed weaving what is called a sword-mat, for an additional lashing to our boat. So still and subdued and yet somehow preluding was all the scene, and such an incantation of reverie lurked in the air, that each silent sailor seemed resolved into his own invisible self.

I was the attendant or page of Queequeg, while busy at the mat. As I kept passing and repassing the filling or woof of marline between the long yarns of the warp, using my own hand for the shuttle, and as Queequeg, standing sideways, ever and anon slid his heavy oaken sword between the threads, and idly looking off upon the water, carelessly and unthinkingly drove home every yarn: I say so strange a dreaminess did there then reign all over the ship and all over the sea, only broken by the intermitting dull sound of the sword, that it seemed as if this were the Loom of Time, and I myself were a shuttle mechanically weaving and weaving away at the Fates. There lay the fixed threads of the warp subject to but one single, ever returning, unchanging vibration, and that vibration merely enough to admit of the crosswise interblending of other threads with its own. This warp seemed necessity; and here, thought I, with my own hand I ply my

own shuttle  
and weave my own destiny into these unalterable threads.  
Meantime,  
Queequeg's impulsive, indifferent sword, sometimes  
hitting the woof  
slantingly, or crookedly, or strongly, or weakly, as the  
case might be;  
and by this difference in the concluding blow producing a  
corresponding  
contrast in the final aspect of the completed fabric;  
this savage's  
sword, thought I, which thus finally shapes and fashions  
both warp and  
woof; this easy, indifferent sword must be chance—aye,  
chance, free  
will, and necessity—nowise incompatible—all  
interweavingly working  
together. 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  
whalemen's 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 trousers 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'ye hear?" shouting across the deck.  
"Lower away

there, I say."

Such was the thunder of his voice, that spite of their amazement the men sprang over the rail; the sheaves whirled round in the blocks; with a wallow, the three boats dropped into the sea; while, with a dexterous, off-handed daring, unknown in any other vocation, the sailors, goat-like, leaped down the rolling ship's side into the tossed boats below.

Hardly had they pulled out from under the ship's lee, when a fourth keel, coming from the windward side, pulled round under the stern, and showed the five strangers rowing Ahab, who, standing erect in the stern, loudly hailed Starbuck, Stubb, and Flask, to spread themselves widely, so as to cover a large expanse of water. But with all their eyes again riveted upon the swart Fedallah and his crew, the inmates of the other boats obeyed not the command.

"Captain Ahab?—" said Starbuck.

"Spread yourselves," cried Ahab; "give way, all four boats. Thou, Flask, pull out more to leeward!"

"Aye, aye, sir," cheerily cried little King-Post, sweeping round his great steering oar. "Lay back!" addressing his crew. "There!—there!—there again! There she blows right ahead, boys!—lay back!"

"Never heed yonder yellow boys, Archy."

"Oh, I don't mind 'em, sir," said Archy; "I knew it all

before now.

Didn't I hear 'em in the hold? And didn't I tell Cabaco here of it?

What say ye, Cabaco? They are stowaways, Mr. Flask."

"Pull, pull, my fine hearts-alive; pull, my children; pull, my little ones," drawlingly and soothingly sighed Stubb to his crew, some of whom still showed signs of uneasiness. "Why don't you break your backbones, my boys? What is it you stare at? Those chaps in yonder boat? Tut! They are only five more hands come to help us—never mind from where—the more the merrier. Pull, then, do pull; never mind the brimstone—devils are good fellows enough. So, so; there you are now; that's the stroke for a thousand pounds; that's the stroke to sweep the stakes! Hurrah for the gold cup of sperm oil, my heroes! Three cheers, men—all hearts alive! Easy, easy; don't be in a hurry—don't be in a hurry. Why don't you snap your oars, you rascals? Bite something, you dogs! So, so, so, then:—softly, softly! That's it—that's it! long and strong. Give way there, give way! The devil fetch ye, ye ragamuffin rascallions; ye are all asleep. Stop snoring, ye sleepers, and pull. Pull, will ye? pull, can't ye? pull, won't ye? Why in the name of gudgeons and ginger-cakes don't ye pull?—pull and break something! pull, and start your eyes out! Here!" whipping out the sharp knife from his girdle; "every mother's son of ye draw his knife, and pull with the blade between his teeth. That's it—that's it. Now ye do something; that looks like it, my steel-bits. Start her—start her, my silver-spoons! Start

her,  
marling-spikes!"

Stubb's exordium to his crew is given here at large, because he had rather a peculiar way of talking to them in general, and especially in inculcating the religion of rowing. But you must not suppose from this specimen of his sermonizings that he ever flew into downright passions with his congregation. Not at all; and therein consisted his chief peculiarity. He would say the most terrific things to his crew, in a tone so strangely compounded of fun and fury, and the fury seemed so calculated merely as a spice to the fun, that no oarsman could hear such queer invocations without pulling for dear life, and yet pulling for the mere joke of the thing. Besides he all the time looked so easy and indolent himself, so loungingly managed his steering-oar, and so broadly gaped—open-mouthed at times—that the mere sight of such a yawning commander, by sheer force of contrast, acted like a charm upon the crew. Then again, Stubb was one of those odd sort of humorists, whose jollity is sometimes so curiously ambiguous, as to put all inferiors on their guard in the matter of obeying them.

In obedience to a sign from Ahab, Starbuck was now pulling obliquely across Stubb's bow; and when for a minute or so the two boats were pretty near to each other, Stubb hailed the mate.

"Mr. Starbuck! larboard boat there, ahoy! a word with ye, sir, if ye please!"

"Holloa!" returned Starbuck, turning round not a single inch as he spoke; still earnestly but whisperingly urging his crew; his face set like a flint from Stubb's.

"What think ye of those yellow boys, sir!"

"Smuggled on board, somehow, before the ship sailed. (Strong, strong, boys!)" in a whisper to his crew, then speaking out loud again: "A sad business, Mr. Stubb! (seethe her, seethe her, my lads!) but never mind, Mr. Stubb, all for the best. Let all your crew pull strong, come what will. (Spring, my men, spring!) There's hogsheads of sperm ahead, Mr. Stubb, and that's what ye came for. (Pull, my boys!) 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. Those tiger yellow creatures of his seemed all steel and whalebone; like five trip-hammers they rose and fell with regular strokes of strength, which periodically started the boat along the water like a horizontal burst boiler out of a Mississippi steamer. As for Fedallah, who was seen pulling the harpooneer oar, he had thrown aside his black jacket, and displayed his naked chest with the whole part of his body above the gunwale, clearly cut against the alternating depressions of the watery horizon; while at the other end of the boat Ahab, with one arm, like a fencer's, thrown half backward into the air, as if to counterbalance



any tendency to trip; Ahab was seen steadily managing his steering oar as in a thousand boat lowerings ere the White Whale had torn him. All at once the outstretched arm gave a peculiar motion and then remained fixed, while the boat's five oars were seen simultaneously peaked. Boat and crew sat motionless on the sea. Instantly the three spread boats in the rear paused on their way. The whales had irregularly settled bodily down into the blue, thus giving no distantly discernible token of the movement, though from his closer vicinity Ahab had observed it.

"Every man look out along his oars!" cried Starbuck.  
"Thou, Queequeg, stand up!"

Nimble springing up on the triangular raised box in the bow, the savage stood erect there, and with intensely eager eyes gazed off towards the spot where the chase had last been descried. Likewise upon the extreme stern of the boat where it was also triangularly platformed level with the gunwale, Starbuck himself was seen coolly and adroitly balancing himself to the jerking tossings of his chip of a craft, and silently eyeing the vast blue eye of the sea.

Not very far distant Flask's boat was also lying breathlessly still; its commander recklessly standing upon the top of the loggerhead, a stout sort of post rooted in the keel, and rising some two feet above the level of the stern platform. It is used for catching turns with the whale line. Its top is not more spacious than the palm of

a man's hand,  
and standing upon such a base as that, Flask seemed  
perched at the  
mast-head of some ship which had sunk to all but her  
trunks. But little  
King-Post was small and short, and at the same time  
little King-Post  
was full of a large and tall ambition, so that this  
loggerhead  
stand-point of his did by no means satisfy King-Post.

"I can't see three seas off; tip us up an oar there, and  
let me on to  
that."

Upon this, Daggoo, with either hand upon the gunwale to  
steady his way,  
swiftly slid aft, and then erecting himself volunteered  
his lofty  
shoulders for a pedestal.

"Good a mast-head as any, sir. Will you mount?"

"That I will, and thank ye very much, my fine fellow;  
only I wish you  
fifty feet taller."

Whereupon planting his feet firmly against two opposite  
planks of the  
boat, the gigantic negro, stooping a little, presented  
his flat palm to  
Flask's foot, and then putting Flask's hand on his  
hearse-plumed head  
and bidding him spring as he himself should toss, with  
one dexterous  
fling landed the little man high and dry on his  
shoulders. And here was  
Flask now standing, Daggoo with one lifted arm furnishing  
him with a  
breastband to lean against and steady himself by.

At any time it is a strange sight to the tyro to see with  
what wondrous  
habitude of unconscious skill the whaleman will maintain

an erect  
posture in his boat, even when pitched about by the most  
riotously  
perverse and cross-running seas. Still more strange to  
see him giddily  
perched upon the loggerhead itself, under such  
circumstances. But the  
sight of little Flask mounted upon gigantic Daggoo was  
yet more  
curious; for sustaining himself with a cool, indifferent,  
easy,  
unthought of, barbaric majesty, the noble negro to every  
roll of the  
sea harmoniously rolled his fine form. On his broad back,  
flaxen-haired  
Flask seemed a snow-flake. The bearer looked nobler than  
the rider.  
Though truly vivacious, tumultuous, ostentatious little  
Flask would now  
and then stamp with impatience; but not one added heave  
did he thereby  
give to the negro's lordly chest. So have I seen Passion  
and Vanity  
stamping the living magnanimous earth, but the earth did  
not alter her  
tides and her seasons for that.

Meanwhile Stubb, the third mate, betrayed no such far-  
gazing  
solicitudes. The whales might have made one of their  
regular soundings,  
not a temporary dive from mere fright; and if that were  
the case,  
Stubb, as his wont in such cases, it seems, was resolved  
to solace the  
languishing interval with his pipe. 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 vapor 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 vapor 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 startingly 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 spurrings 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  
harpooneers, 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 vapor 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 vapor 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. I suppose  
then, that going plump on a flying whale with your sail  
set in a foggy  
squall is the height of a whaleman's discretion?"

"Certain. I've lowered for whales from a leaking ship in  
a gale off  
Cape Horn."

"Mr. Flask," said I, turning to little King-Post, who was  
standing  
close by; "you are experienced in these things, and I am  
not. Will you  
tell me whether it is an unalterable law in this fishery,  
Mr. Flask,  
for an oarsman to break his own back pulling himself  
back-foremost into  
death's jaws?"

"Can't you twist that smaller?" said Flask. "Yes, that's  
the law. I  
should like to see a boat's crew backing water up to a  
whale face  
foremost. Ha, ha! the whale would give them squint for  
squint, mind  
that!"

Here then, from three impartial witnesses, I had a  
deliberate statement  
of the entire case. Considering, therefore, that squalls  
and capsizings  
in the water and consequent bivouacks on the deep, were

matters of  
common occurrence in this kind of life; considering that  
at the  
superlatively critical instant of going on to the whale I  
must resign  
my life into the hands of him who steered the boat—  
oftentimes a fellow  
who at that very moment is in his impetuosity upon the  
point of  
scuttling the craft with his own frantic stampings;  
considering that  
the particular disaster to our own particular boat was  
chiefly to be  
imputed to Starbuck's driving on to his whale almost in  
the teeth of a  
squall, and considering that Starbuck, notwithstanding,  
was famous for  
his great heedfulness in the fishery; considering that I  
belonged to  
this uncommonly prudent Starbuck's boat; and finally  
considering in  
what a devil's chase I was implicated, touching the White  
Whale: taking  
all things together, I say, I thought I might as well go  
below and make  
a rough draft of my will. "Queequeg," said I, "come  
along, you shall be  
my lawyer, executor, and legatee."

It may seem strange that of all men sailors should be  
tinkering at  
their last wills and testaments, but there are no people  
in the world  
more fond of that diversion. This was the fourth time in  
my nautical  
life that I had done the same thing. 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.

#### CHAPTER 50. Ahab's Boat and Crew. Fedallah.

"Who would have thought it, Flask!" cried Stubb; "if I  
had but one leg  
you would not catch me in a boat, unless maybe to stop  
the plug-hole  
with my timber toe. Oh! he's a wonderful old man!"

"I don't think it so strange, after all, on that  
account," said Flask.  
"If his leg were off at the hip, now, it would be a  
different thing.  
That would disable him; but he has one knee, and good  
part of the other  
left, you know."

"I don't know that, my little man; I never yet saw him  
kneel."

Among whale-wise people it has often been argued whether,  
considering  
the paramount importance of his life to the success of  
the voyage, it  
is right for a whaling captain to jeopardize that life in  
the active  
perils of the chase. So Tamerlane's soldiers often argued  
with tears in  
their eyes, whether that invaluable life of his ought to  
be carried

into the thickest of the fight.

But with Ahab the question assumed a modified aspect. 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 forecastle.

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. Whence he came in a mannerly  
world like  
this, by what sort of unaccountable tie he soon evinced  
himself to be  
linked with Ahab's peculiar fortunes; nay, so far as to  
have some sort  
of a half-hinted influence; Heaven knows, but it might  
have been even  
authority over him; all this none knew. But one cannot  
sustain an  
indifferent air concerning Fedallah. He was such a  
creature as  
civilized, domestic people in the temperate zone only see  
in their  
dreams, and that but dimly; but the like of whom now and  
then glide  
among the unchanging Asiatic communities, especially the  
Oriental isles  
to the east of the continent—those insulated, immemorial,  
unalterable  
countries, which even in these modern days still preserve  
much of the

ghostly aboriginalness of earth's primal generations,  
when the memory  
of the first man was a distinct recollection, and all men  
his  
descendants, unknowing whence he came, eyed each other as  
real  
phantoms, and asked of the sun and the moon why they were  
created and  
to what end; when though, according to Genesis, the  
angels indeed  
consorted with the daughters of men, the devils also, add  
the  
uncanonical Rabbins, indulged in mundane amours.

#### 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 unnearable spout  
was cast by  
one self-same whale; and that whale, Moby Dick. For a  
time, there  
reigned, too, a sense of peculiar dread at this flitting  
apparition, as  
if it were treacherously beckoning us on and on, in order  
that the  
monster might turn round upon us, and rend us at last in  
the remotest  
and most savage seas.

These temporary apprehensions, so vague but so awful,  
derived a  
wondrous potency from the contrasting serenity of the  
weather, in  
which, beneath all its blue blandness, some thought there  
lurked a  
devilish charm, as for days and days we voyaged along,  
through seas so  
wearily, lonesomely mild, that all space, in repugnance  
to our vengeful  
errand, seemed vacating itself of life before our urn-  
like prow.

But, at last, when turning to the eastward, the Cape  
winds began  
howling around us, and we rose and fell upon the long,  
troubled seas  
that are there; when the ivory-tusked Pequod sharply  
bowed to the  
blast, and gored the dark waves in her madness, till,  
like showers of  
silver chips, the foam-flakes flew over her bulwarks;  
then all this  
desolate vacuity of life went away, but gave place to  
sights more  
dismal than before.

Close to our bows, strange forms in the water darted  
hither and thither  
before us; while thick in our rear flew the inscrutable  
sea-ravens. And

every morning, perched on our stays, rows of these birds  
were seen; and  
spite of our hootings, for a long time obstinately clung  
to the hemp,  
as though they deemed our ship some drifting, uninhabited  
craft; a  
thing appointed to desolation, and therefore fit  
roosting-place for  
their homeless selves. And heaved and heaved, still  
unrestingly heaved  
the black sea, as if its vast tides were a conscience;  
and the great  
mundane soul were in anguish and remorse for the long sin  
and suffering  
it had bred.

Cape of Good Hope, do they call ye? Rather Cape  
Tormentoso, as called  
of yore; for long allured by the perfidious silences that  
before had  
attended us, we found ourselves launched into this  
tormented sea, where  
guilty beings transformed into those fowls and these  
fish, seemed  
condemned to swim on everlastingly without any haven in  
store, or beat  
that black air without any horizon. But calm, snow-white,  
and  
unvarying; still directing its fountain of feathers to  
the sky; still  
beckoning us on from before, the solitary jet would at  
times be  
descried.

During all this blackness of the elements, Ahab, though  
assuming for  
the time the almost continual command of the drenched and  
dangerous  
deck, manifested the gloomiest reserve; and more seldom  
than ever  
addressed his mates. In tempestuous times like these,  
after everything  
above and aloft has been secured, nothing more can be  
done but

passively to await the issue of the gale. Then Captain and crew become practical fatalists. So, with his ivory leg inserted into its accustomed hole, and with one hand firmly grasping a shroud, Ahab for hours and hours would stand gazing dead to windward, while an occasional squall of sleet or snow would all but congeal his very eyelashes together. 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.

## CHAPTER 52. 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. Meantime his ship was  
still increasing  
the distance between. While in various silent ways the  
seamen of the  
Pegquod were evincing their observance of this ominous  
incident at the  
first mere mention of the White Whale's name to another  
ship, Ahab for  
a moment paused; it almost seemed as though he would have  
lowered a  
boat to board the stranger, had not the threatening wind  
forbade. But  
taking advantage of his windward position, he again  
seized his trumpet,  
and knowing by her aspect that the stranger vessel was a  
Nantucketer

and shortly bound home, he loudly hailed—"Ahoy there!  
This is the  
Pequod, bound round the world! Tell them to address all  
future letters  
to the Pacific ocean! and this time three years, if I am  
not at home,  
tell them to address them to —"

At that moment the two wakes were fairly crossed, and  
instantly, then,  
in accordance with their singular ways, shoals of small  
harmless fish,  
that for some days before had been placidly swimming by  
our side,  
darted away with what seemed shuddering fins, and ranged  
themselves  
fore and aft with the stranger's flanks. Though in the  
course of his  
continual voyagings Ahab must often before have noticed a  
similar  
sight, yet, to any monomaniac man, the veriest trifles  
capriciously  
carry meanings.

"Swim away from me, do ye?" murmured Ahab, gazing over  
into the water.  
There seemed but little in the words, but the tone  
conveyed more of  
deep helpless sadness than the insane old man had ever  
before evinced.  
But turning to the steersman, who thus far had been  
holding the ship in  
the wind to diminish her headway, he cried out in his old  
lion  
voice,—*"Up helm! Keep her off round the world!"*

Round the world! There is much in that sound to inspire  
proud feelings;  
but whereto does all that circumnavigation conduct? Only  
through  
numberless perils to the very point whence we started,  
where those that  
we left behind secure, were all the time before us.

Were this world an endless plain, and by sailing eastward  
we could for  
ever reach new distances, and discover sights more sweet  
and strange  
than any Cyclades or Islands of King Solomon, then there  
were promise  
in the voyage. 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 descrying 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 in degree, all this will hold true  
concerning  
whaling vessels crossing each other's track on the

cruising-ground  
itself, even though they are equally long absent from  
home. For one of  
them may have received a transfer of letters from some  
third, and now  
far remote vessel; and some of those letters may be for  
the people of  
the ship she now meets. Besides, they would exchange the  
whaling news,  
and have an agreeable chat. For not only would they meet  
with all the  
sympathies of sailors, but likewise with all the peculiar  
congenialities arising from a common pursuit and mutually  
shared  
privations and perils.

Nor would difference of country make any very essential  
difference;  
that is, so long as both parties speak one language, as  
is the case  
with Americans and English. Though, to be sure, from the  
small number  
of English whalers, such meetings do not very often  
occur, and when  
they do occur there is too apt to be a sort of shyness  
between them;  
for your Englishman is rather reserved, and your Yankee,  
he does not  
fancy that sort of thing in anybody but himself. Besides,  
the English  
whalers sometimes affect a kind of metropolitan  
superiority over the  
American whalers; regarding the long, lean Nantucketer,  
with his  
nondescript provincialisms, as a sort of sea-peasant. But  
where this  
superiority in the English whalemen does really consist,  
it would be  
hard to say, seeing that the Yankees in one day,  
collectively, kill  
more whales than all the English, collectively, in ten  
years. But this  
is a harmless little foible in the English whale-hunters,  
which the

Nantucketer does not take much to heart; probably,  
because he knows  
that he has a few foibles himself.

So, then, we see that of all ships separately sailing the  
sea, the  
whalers have most reason to be sociable—and they are so.  
Whereas, some  
merchant ships crossing each other's wake in the mid-  
Atlantic, will  
oftentimes pass on without so much as a single word of  
recognition,  
mutually cutting each other on the high seas, like a  
brace of dandies  
in Broadway; and all the time indulging, perhaps, in  
finical criticism  
upon each other's rig. As for Men-of-War, when they  
chance to meet at  
sea, they first go through such a string of silly bowings  
and  
scrapings, such a ducking of ensigns, that there does not  
seem to be  
much right-down hearty good-will and brotherly love about  
it at all. As  
touching Slave-ships meeting, why, they are in such a  
prodigious hurry,  
they run away from each other as soon as possible. And as  
for Pirates,  
when they chance to cross each other's cross-bones, the  
first hail  
is—"How many skulls?"—the same way that whalers hail—"How  
many  
barrels?" 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 villanous 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

harpooneer 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 trousers' 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 Stealkilt, 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 sllily 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.

“‘Aye, aye, my merry lads, it’s a lively leak this; hold  
a cannikin,  
one of ye, and let’s have a taste. By the Lord, it’s  
worth bottling! I  
tell ye what, men, old Rad’s investment must go for it!  
he had best cut  
away his part of the hull and tow it home. The fact is,  
boys, that  
sword-fish only began the job; he’s come back again with  
a gang of  
ship-carpenters, saw-fish, and file-fish, and what not;  
and the whole  
posse of ‘em are now hard at work cutting and slashing at  
the bottom;  
making improvements, I suppose. If old Rad were here now,  
I’d tell him  
to jump overboard and scatter ‘em. They’re playing the  
devil with his  
estate, I can tell him. But he’s a simple old soul,—Rad,  
and a beauty  
too. Boys, they say the rest of his property is invested  
in  
looking-glasses. I wonder if he’d give a poor devil like  
me the model  
of his nose.’

“‘Damn your eyes! what’s that pump stopping for?’ roared  
Radney,  
pretending not to have heard the sailors’ talk. ‘Thunder  
away at it!’

“‘Aye, aye, sir,’ said Steelkilt, merry as a cricket.  
‘Lively, boys,  
lively, now!’ And with that the pump clanged like fifty  
fire-engines;  
the men tossed their hats off to it, and ere long that  
peculiar gasping  
of the lungs was heard which denotes the fullest tension  
of life’s

utmost energies.

"Quitting the pump at last, with the rest of his band, the Lakeman went forward all panting, and sat himself down on the windlass; his face fiery red, his eyes bloodshot, and wiping the profuse sweat from his brow. Now what cozening fiend it was, gentlemen, that possessed Radney to meddle with such a man in that corporeally exasperated state, I know not; but so it happened. Intolerably striding along the deck, the mate commanded him to get a broom and sweep down the planks, and also a shovel, and remove some offensive matters consequent upon allowing a pig to run at large.

"Now, gentlemen, sweeping a ship's deck at sea is a piece of household work which in all times but raging gales is regularly attended to every evening; it has been known to be done in the case of ships actually foundering at the time. Such, gentlemen, is the inflexibility of sea-usages and the instinctive love of neatness in seamen; some of whom would not willingly drown without first washing their faces. But in all vessels this broom business is the prescriptive province of the boys, if boys there be aboard. Besides, it was the stronger men in the Town-Ho that had been divided into gangs, taking turns at the pumps; and being the most athletic seaman of them all, Steelkilt had been regularly assigned captain of one of the gangs; consequently he should have been freed from any trivial business not connected with truly

nautical duties, such being the case with his comrades. I mention all these particulars so that you may understand exactly how this affair stood between the two men.

"But there was more than this: the order about the shovel was almost as plainly meant to sting and insult Steelkilt, as though Radney had spat in his face. Any man who has gone sailor in a whale-ship will understand this; and all this and doubtless much more, the Lakeman fully comprehended when the mate uttered his command. But as he sat still for a moment, and as he steadfastly looked into the mate's malignant eye and perceived the stacks of powder-casks heaped up in him and the slow-match silently burning along towards them; as he instinctively saw all this, that strange forbearance and unwillingness to stir up the deeper passionateness in any already ireful being—a repugnance most felt, when felt at all, by really valiant men even when aggrieved—this nameless phantom feeling, gentlemen, stole over Steelkilt.

"Therefore, in his ordinary tone, only a little broken by the bodily exhaustion he was temporarily in, he answered him saying that sweeping the deck was not his business, and he would not do it. And then, without at all alluding to the shovel, he pointed to three lads as the customary sweepers; who, not being billeted at the pumps, had done little or nothing all day. To this, Radney replied with an oath, in a

most domineering and outrageous manner unconditionally reiterating his command; meanwhile advancing upon the still seated Lakeman, with an uplifted cooper's club hammer which he had snatched from a cask near by.

"Heated and irritated as he was by his spasmodic toil at the pumps, for all his first nameless feeling of forbearance the sweating Steelkilt could but ill brook this bearing in the mate; but somehow still smothering the conflagration within him, without speaking he remained doggedly rooted to his seat, till at last the incensed Radney shook the hammer within a few inches of his face, furiously commanding him to do his bidding.

"Steelkilt rose, and slowly retreating round the windlass, steadily followed by the mate with his menacing hammer, deliberately repeated his intention not to obey. Seeing, however, that his forbearance had not the slightest effect, by an awful and unspeakable intimation with his twisted hand he warned off the foolish and infatuated man; but it was to no purpose. And in this way the two went once slowly round the windlass; when, resolved at last no longer to retreat, bethinking him that he had now forborne as much as comported with his humor, the Lakeman paused on the hatches and thus spoke to the officer:

"'Mr. Radney, I will not obey you. Take that hammer away, or look to yourself.' But the predestinated mate coming still closer

to him, where  
the Lakeman stood fixed, now shook the heavy hammer  
within an inch of  
his teeth; meanwhile repeating a string of insufferable  
maledictions.  
Retreating not the thousandth part of an inch; stabbing  
him in the eye  
with the unflinching poniard of his glance, Steelkilt,  
clenching his  
right hand behind him and creepingly drawing it back,  
told his  
persecutor that if the hammer but grazed his cheek he  
(Steelkilt) would  
murder him. But, gentlemen, the fool had been branded for  
the slaughter  
by the gods. Immediately the hammer touched the cheek;  
the next instant  
the lower jaw of the mate was stove in his head; he fell  
on the hatch  
spouting blood like a whale.

"Ere the cry could go aft Steelkilt was shaking one of  
the backstays  
leading far aloft to where two of his comrades were  
standing their  
mastheads. They were both Canallers.

"'Canallers!' cried Don Pedro. 'We have seen many whale-  
ships in our  
harbours, but never heard of your Canallers. Pardon: who  
and what are  
they?'

"'Canallers, Don, are the boatmen belonging to our grand  
Erie Canal.  
You must have heard of it.'

"'Nay, Senor; 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 piazza, with humorous concern.

"'Well for our northern friend, Dame Isabella's  
Inquisition wanes in  
Lima,' laughed Don Sebastian. 'Proceed, Senor.'

"'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. Oh! do not bow  
and look  
surprised; you know the proverb all along this coast—  
"Corrupt as Lima."  
It but bears out your saying, too; churches more  
plentiful than  
billiard-tables, and for ever open—and "Corrupt as Lima."  
So, too,  
Venice; I have been there; the holy city of the blessed  
evangelist, St.  
Mark!—St. Dominic, purge it! Your cup! Thanks: here I  
refill; now, you  
pour out again.'

"Freely depicted in his own vocation, gentlemen, the  
Canaller would  
make a fine dramatic hero, so abundantly and  
picturesquely wicked is  
he. Like Mark Antony, for days and days along his green-  
turfed, flowery  
Nile, he indolently floats, openly toying with his red-  
cheeked  
Cleopatra, ripening his apricot thigh upon the sunny  
deck. But ashore,  
all this effeminacy is dashed. The brigandish guise which  
the Canaller  
so proudly sports; his slouched and gaily-ribboned hat  
betoken his  
grand features. A terror to the smiling innocence of the  
villages  
through which he floats; his swart visage and bold  
swagger are not  
unshunned in cities. Once a vagabond on his own canal, I  
have received  
good turns from one of these Canallers; I thank him  
heartily; would  
fain be not ungrateful; but it is often one of the prime  
redeeming  
qualities of your man of violence, that at times he has  
as stiff an arm  
to back a poor stranger in a strait, as to plunder a

wealthy one. In  
sum, gentlemen, what the wildness of this canal life is,  
is  
emphatically evinced by this; that our wild whale-fishery  
contains so  
many of its most finished graduates, and that scarce any  
race of  
mankind, except Sydney men, are so much distrusted by our  
whaling  
captains. Nor does it at all diminish the curiousness of  
this matter,  
that to many thousands of our rural boys and young men  
born along its  
line, the probationary life of the Grand Canal furnishes  
the sole  
transition between quietly reaping in a Christian corn-  
field, and  
recklessly ploughing the waters of the most barbaric  
seas.

"‘I see! 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. Fearing in his heart lest this might prove but too true, the captain a little desisted, but still commanded the insurgents instantly to return to their duty.

“‘Will you promise not to touch us, if we do?’ demanded their ringleader.

“‘Turn to! turn to!—I make no promise;—to your duty! Do you want to sink the ship, by knocking off at a time like this? Turn to!’ and he once more raised a pistol.

“‘Sink the ship?’ cried Steerkilt. ‘Aye, let her sink. Not a man of us turns to, unless you swear not to raise a rope-yarn against us. What say ye, men?’ turning to his comrades. A fierce cheer was their response.

“The Lakeman now patrolled the barricade, all the while keeping his eye on the Captain, and jerking out such sentences as these:— ‘It’s not our fault; we didn’t want it; I told him to take his hammer away; it was boy’s business; he might have known me before this; I told him not to prick the buffalo; I believe I have broken a finger here against his cursed jaw; ain’t those mincing knives down in the fore-castle there, men? look to those handspikes, my hearties. 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 forecastle,  
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,’ said 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 Stealkilt 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. That was the last night he should spend in that den. But the scheme met with no opposition on the part of the other two; they swore they were ready for that, or for any other mad thing, for anything in short but a surrender. And what was more, they each insisted upon being the first man on deck, when the time to make the rush should come. But to this their leader as fiercely objected, reserving that priority for himself; particularly as his two comrades would not yield, the one to the other, in the matter; and both of them could not be first, for the ladder would but admit one man at a time. And here, gentlemen, the foul play of these miscreants must come out.

“Upon hearing the frantic project of their leader, each in his own

separate soul had suddenly lighted, it would seem, upon the same piece of treachery, namely: to be foremost in breaking out, in order to be the first of the three, though the last of the ten, to surrender; and thereby secure whatever small chance of pardon such conduct might merit. But when Steerkilt made known his determination still to lead them to the last, they in some way, by some subtle chemistry of villany, mixed their before secret treacheries together; and when their leader fell into a doze, verbally opened their souls to each other in three sentences; and bound the sleeper with cords, and gagged him with cords; and shrieked out for the Captain at midnight.

"Thinking murder at hand, and smelling in the dark for the blood, he and all his armed mates and harpooneers rushed for the forecabin. In a few minutes the scuttle was opened, and, bound hand and foot, the still struggling ringleader was shoved up into the air by his perfidious allies, who at once claimed the honor of securing a man who had been fully ripe for murder. But all these were collared, and dragged along the deck like dead cattle; and, side by side, were seized up into the mizzen rigging, like three quarters of meat, and there they hung till morning. 'Damn ye,' cried the Captain, pacing to and fro before them, 'the vultures would not touch ye, ye villains!'

"At sunrise he summoned all hands; and separating those who had rebelled from those who had taken no part in the mutiny, he told the

former that he had a good mind to flog them all round—  
thought, upon the  
whole, he would do so—he ought to—justice demanded it;  
but for the  
present, considering their timely surrender, he would let  
them go with  
a reprimand, which he accordingly administered in the  
vernacular.

“‘But as for you, ye carrion rogues,’ turning to the  
three men in the  
rigging—‘for you, I mean to mince ye up for the try-  
pots;’ and, seizing  
a rope, he applied it with all his might to the backs of  
the two  
traitors, till they yelled no more, but lifelessly hung  
their heads  
sideways, as the two crucified thieves are drawn.

“‘My wrist is sprained with ye!’ 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.

"Just after dark that day, when one watch had retired  
below, a clamor  
was heard in the forecabin; and the two trembling  
traitors running up,  
besieged the cabin door, saying they durst not consort  
with the crew.  
Entreaties, cuffs, and kicks could not drive them back,



so at their own  
instance they were put down in the ship's run for  
salvation. Still, no  
sign of mutiny reappeared among the rest. On the  
contrary, it seemed,  
that mainly at Steelkilt's instigation, they had resolved  
to maintain  
the strictest peacefulness, obey all orders to the last,  
and, when the  
ship reached port, desert her in a body. But in order to  
insure the  
speediest end to the voyage, they all agreed to another  
thing—namely,  
not to sing out for whales, in case any should be  
discovered. For,  
spite of her leak, and spite of all her other perils, the  
Town-Ho still  
maintained her mast-heads, and her captain was just as  
willing to lower  
for a fish that moment, as on the day his craft first  
struck the  
cruising ground; and Radney the mate was quite as ready  
to change his  
berth for a boat, and with his bandaged mouth seek to gag  
in death the  
vital jaw of the whale.

“But though the Lakeman had induced the seamen to adopt  
this sort of  
passiveness in their conduct, he kept his own counsel (at  
least till  
all was over) concerning his own proper and private  
revenge upon the  
man who had stung him in the ventricles of his heart. He  
was in Radney  
the chief mate's watch; and as if the infatuated man  
sought to run more  
than half way to meet his doom, after the scene at the  
rigging, he  
insisted, against the express counsel of the captain,  
upon resuming the  
head of his watch at night. Upon this, and one or two  
other  
circumstances, Steelkilt systematically built the plan of

his revenge.

"During the night, Radney had an unseamanlike way of sitting on the bulwarks of the quarter-deck, and leaning his arm upon the gunwale of the boat which was hoisted up there, a little above the ship's side. In this attitude, it was well known, he sometimes dozed. There was a considerable vacancy between the boat and the ship, and down between this was the sea. Steelkilt calculated his time, and found that his next trick at the helm would come round at two o'clock, in the morning of the third day from that in which he had been betrayed. At his leisure, he employed the interval in braiding something very carefully in his watches below.

"'What are you making there?' 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 forecastle.

"'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.

"It was just between daybreak and sunrise of the morning  
of the second  
day, when they were washing down the decks, that a stupid  
Teneriffe  
man, drawing water in the main-chains, all at once  
shouted out, 'There  
she rolls! there she rolls!' Jesu, what a whale! It was  
Moby Dick.

"'Moby Dick!' cried Don Sebastian; 'St. Dominic! Sir  
sailor, but do  
whales have christenings? Whom call you Moby Dick?'

“‘A very white, and famous, and most deadly immortal monster, Don;—but that would be too long a story.’

“‘How? how?’ cried all the young Spaniards, crowding.

“‘Nay, Dons, Dons—nay, nay! I cannot rehearse that now. Let me get more into the air, Sirs.’

“‘The chicha! the chicha!’ cried Don Pedro; ‘our vigorous friend looks faint;—fill up his empty glass!’

“No need, gentlemen; one moment, and I proceed.—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 harpooneers, 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. He

cut it; and the whale was free. But, at some distance, Moby Dick rose again, with some tatters of Radney's red woollen shirt, caught in the teeth that had destroyed him. All four boats gave chase again; but the whale eluded them, and finally wholly disappeared.

"In good time, the Town-Ho reached her port—a savage, solitary place—where no civilized creature resided. There, headed by the Lakeman, all but five or six of the foremastmen deliberately deserted among the palms; eventually, as it turned out, seizing a large double war-canoe of the savages, and setting sail for some other harbor.

"The ship's company being reduced to but a handful, the captain called upon the Islanders to assist him in the laborious business of heaving down the ship to stop the leak. But to such unrelenting vigilance over their dangerous allies was this small band of whites necessitated, both by night and by day, and so extreme was the hard work they underwent, that upon the vessel being ready again for sea, they were in such a weakened condition that the captain durst not put off with them in so heavy a vessel. After taking counsel with his officers, he anchored the ship as far off shore as possible; loaded and ran out his two cannon from the bows; stacked his muskets on the poop; and warning the Islanders not to approach the ship at their peril, took one man with him, and setting the sail of his best whale-boat, steered straight before the wind for Tahiti, five hundred miles distant,

to procure a  
reinforcement to his crew.

"On the fourth day of the sail, a large canoe was  
descried, which  
seemed to have touched at a low isle of corals. He  
steered away from  
it; but the savage craft bore down on him; and soon the  
voice of  
Steelkilt hailed him to heave to, or he would run him  
under water. The  
captain presented a pistol. With one foot on each prow of  
the yoked  
war-canoes, the Lakeman laughed him to scorn; assuring  
him that if the  
pistol so much as clicked in the lock, he would bury him  
in bubbles and  
foam.

"'What do you want of me?' cried the captain.

"'Where are you bound? and for what are you bound?'  
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  
lightnings 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 cruisings.

"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-Fés 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 honor 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 Steelkilt 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. It looks more like the  
tapering tail of an  
anaconda, than the broad palms of the true whale's  
majestic flukes.

But go to the old Galleries, and look now at a great  
Christian  
painter's portrait of this fish; for he succeeds no  
better than the  
antediluvian Hindoo. It is Guido's picture of Perseus  
rescuing  
Andromeda from the sea-monster or whale. Where did Guido  
get the model  
of such a strange creature as that? Nor does Hogarth, in  
painting the  
same scene in his own "Perseus Descending," make out one  
whit better.  
The huge corpulence of that Hogarthian monster undulates  
on the

surface, scarcely drawing one inch of water. It has a sort of howdah on its back, and its distended tusked mouth into which the billows are rolling, might be taken for the Traitors' Gate leading from the Thames by water into the Tower. Then, there are the Prodromus whales of old Scotch Sibbald, and Jonah's whale, as depicted in the prints of old Bibles and the cuts of old primers. What shall be said of these? As for the book-binder's whale winding like a vine-stalk round the stock of a descending anchor—as stamped and gilded on the backs and title-pages of many books both old and new—that is a very picturesque but purely fabulous creature, imitated, I take it, from the like figures on antique vases. Though universally denominated a dolphin, I nevertheless call this book-binder's fish an attempt at a whale; because it was so intended when the device was first introduced. It was introduced by an old Italian publisher somewhere about the 15th century, during the Revival of Learning; and in those days, and even down to a comparatively late period, dolphins were popularly supposed to be a species of the Leviathan.

In the vignettes and other embellishments of some ancient books you will at times meet with very curious touches at the whale, where all manner of spouts, jets d'eau, hot springs and cold, Saratoga and Baden-Baden, come bubbling up from his unexhausted brain. In the title-page of the original edition of the "Advancement of Learning" you

will find some curious whales.

But quitting all these unprofessional attempts, let us glance at those pictures of leviathan purporting to be sober, scientific delineations, by those who know. In old Harris's collection of voyages there are some plates of whales extracted from a Dutch book of voyages, A.D. 1671, entitled "A Whaling Voyage to Spitzbergen in the ship Jonas in the Whale, Peter Peterson of Friesland, master." In one of those plates the whales, like great rafts of logs, are represented lying among ice-isles, with white bears running over their living backs. In another plate, the prodigious blunder is made of representing the whale with perpendicular flukes.

Then again, there is an imposing quarto, written by one Captain Colnett, a Post Captain in the English navy, entitled "A Voyage round Cape Horn into the South Seas, for the purpose of extending the Spermaceti Whale Fisheries." In this book is an outline purporting to be a "Picture of a Physeter or Spermaceti whale, drawn by scale from one killed on the coast of Mexico, August, 1793, and hoisted on deck." I doubt not the captain had this veracious picture taken for the benefit of his marines. To mention but one thing about it, let me say that it has an eye which applied, according to the accompanying scale, to a full grown sperm whale, would make the eye of that whale a bow-window some five feet long. Ah, my gallant captain, why did ye not

give us Jonah looking out of that eye!

Nor are the most conscientious compilations of Natural History for the benefit of the young and tender, free from the same heinousness of mistake. Look at that popular work "Goldsmith's Animated Nature." In the abridged London edition of 1807, there are plates of an alleged "whale" and a "narwhale." I do not wish to seem inelegant, but this unsightly whale looks much like an amputated sow; and, as for the narwhale, one glimpse at it is enough to amaze one, that in this nineteenth century such a hippogriff could be palmed for genuine upon any intelligent public of schoolboys.

Then, again, in 1825, Bernard Germain, Count de Lacépède, a great naturalist, published a scientific systemized whale book, wherein are several pictures of the different species of the Leviathan. All these are not only incorrect, but the picture of the Mysticetus or Greenland whale (that is to say, the Right whale), even Scoresby, a long experienced man as touching that species, declares not to have its counterpart in nature.

But the placing of the cap-sheaf to all this blundering business was reserved for the scientific Frederick Cuvier, brother to the famous Baron. In 1836, he published a Natural History of Whales, in which he gives what he calls a picture of the Sperm Whale. Before showing that picture to any Nantucketer, you had best provide for your summary

retreat from Nantucket. In a word, Frederick Cuvier's Sperm Whale is not a Sperm Whale, but a squash. Of course, he never had the benefit of a whaling voyage (such men seldom have), but whence he derived that picture, who can tell? Perhaps he got it as his scientific predecessor in the same field, Desmarest, got one of his authentic abortions; that is, from a Chinese drawing. And what sort of lively lads with the pencil those Chinese are, many queer cups and saucers inform us.

As for the sign-painters' whales seen in the streets hanging over the shops of oil-dealers, what shall be said of them? They are generally Richard III. whales, with dromedary humps, and very savage; breakfasting on three or four sailor tarts, that is whaleboats full of mariners: their deformities floundering in seas of blood and blue paint.

But these manifold mistakes in depicting the whale are not so very surprising after all. Consider! Most of the scientific drawings have been taken from the stranded fish; and these are about as correct as a drawing of a wrecked ship, with broken back, would correctly represent the noble animal itself in all its undashed pride of hull and spars. Though elephants have stood for their full-lengths, the living Leviathan has never yet fairly floated himself for his portrait. The living whale, in his full majesty and significance, is only to be seen at sea in unfathomable waters; and afloat the vast bulk

of him is out  
of sight, like a launched line-of-battle ship; and out of  
that element  
it is a thing eternally impossible for mortal man to  
hoist him bodily  
into the air, so as to preserve all his mighty swells and  
undulations.  
And, not to speak of the highly presumable difference of  
contour  
between a young sucking whale and a full-grown Platonian  
Leviathan;  
yet, even in the case of one of those young sucking  
whales hoisted to a  
ship's deck, such is then the outlandish, eel-like,  
limbered, varying  
shape of him, that his precise expression the devil  
himself could not  
catch.

But it may be fancied, that from the naked skeleton of  
the stranded  
whale, accurate hints may be derived touching his true  
form. Not at  
all. For it is one of the more curious things about this  
Leviathan,  
that his skeleton gives very little idea of his general  
shape. Though  
Jeremy Bentham's skeleton, which hangs for candelabra in  
the library of  
one of his executors, correctly conveys the idea of a  
burly-browed  
utilitarian old gentleman, with all Jeremy's other  
leading personal  
characteristics; yet nothing of this kind could be  
inferred from any  
leviathan's articulated bones. In fact, as the great  
Hunter says, the  
mere skeleton of the whale bears the same relation to the  
fully  
invested and padded animal as the insect does to the  
chrysalis that so  
roundingly envelopes it. This peculiarity is strikingly  
evinced in the  
head, as in some part of this book will be incidentally



shown. It is  
also very curiously displayed in the side fin, the bones  
of which  
almost exactly answer to the bones of the human hand,  
minus only the  
thumb. This fin has four regular bone-fingers, the index,  
middle, ring,  
and little finger. But all these are permanently lodged  
in their fleshy  
covering, as the human fingers in an artificial covering.  
"However  
recklessly the whale may sometimes serve us," said  
humorous Stubb one  
day, "he can never be truly said to handle us without  
mittens."

For all these reasons, then, any way you may look at it,  
you must needs  
conclude that the great Leviathan is that one creature in  
the world  
which must remain unpainted to the last. True, one  
portrait may hit the  
mark much nearer than another, but none can hit it with  
any very  
considerable degree of exactness. So there is no earthly  
way of finding  
out precisely what the whale really looks like. And the  
only mode in  
which you can derive even a tolerable idea of his living  
contour, is by  
going a whaling yourself; but by so doing, you run no  
small risk of  
being eternally stove and sunk by him. Wherefore, it  
seems to me you  
had best not be too fastidious in your curiosity touching  
this  
Leviathan.

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. Ross Browne are pretty correct  
in contour;  
but they are wretchedly engraved. That is not his fault  
though.

Of the Right Whale, the best outline pictures are in  
Scoresby; but they  
are drawn on too small a scale to convey a desirable  
impression. He has  
but one picture of whaling scenes, and this is a sad  
deficiency,  
because it is by such pictures only, when at all well  
done, that you  
can derive anything like a truthful idea of the living  
whale as seen by  
his living hunters.

But, taken for all in all, by far the finest, though in some details not the most correct, presentations of whales and whaling scenes to be anywhere found, are two large French engravings, well executed, and taken from paintings by one Garnery. Respectively, they represent attacks on the Sperm and Right Whale. In the first engraving a noble Sperm Whale is depicted in full majesty of might, just risen beneath the boat from the profundities of the ocean, and bearing high in the air upon his back the terrific wreck of the stoven planks. The prow of the boat is partially unbroken, and is drawn just balancing upon the monster's spine; and standing in that prow, for that one single incomputable flash of time, you behold an oarsman, half shrouded by the incensed boiling spout of the whale, and in the act of leaping, as if from a precipice. The action of the whole thing is wonderfully good and true. The half-emptied line-tub floats on the whitened sea; the wooden poles of the spilled harpoons obliquely bob in it; the heads of the swimming crew are scattered about the whale in contrasting expressions of affright; while in the black stormy distance the ship is bearing down upon the scene. Serious fault might be found with the anatomical details of this whale, but let that pass; since, for the life of me, I could not draw so good a one.

In the second engraving, the boat is in the act of drawing alongside the barnacled flank of a large running Right Whale, that rolls his

black weedy bulk in the sea like some mossy rock-slide  
from the  
Patagonian cliffs. His jets are erect, full, and black  
like soot; so  
that from so abounding a smoke in the chimney, you would  
think there  
must be a brave supper cooking in the great bowels below.  
Sea fowls are  
pecking at the small crabs, shell-fish, and other sea  
candies and  
maccaroni, which the Right Whale sometimes carries on his  
pestilent  
back. And all the while the thick-lipped leviathan is  
rushing through  
the deep, leaving tons of tumultuous white curds in his  
wake, and  
causing the slight boat to rock in the swells like a  
skiff caught nigh  
the paddle-wheels of an ocean steamer. Thus, the  
foreground is all  
raging commotion; but behind, in admirable artistic  
contrast, is the  
glassy level of a sea becalmed, the drooping unstarched  
sails of the  
powerless ship, and the inert mass of a dead whale, a  
conquered  
fortress, with the flag of capture lazily hanging from  
the whale-pole  
inserted into his spout-hole.

Who Garnery the painter is, or was, I know not. But my  
life for it he  
was either practically conversant with his subject, or  
else  
marvellously tutored by some experienced whaleman. The  
French are the  
lads for painting action. Go and gaze upon all the  
paintings of Europe,  
and where will you find such a gallery of living and  
breathing  
commotion on canvas, as in that triumphal hall at  
Versailles; where the  
beholder fights his way, pell-mell, through the  
consecutive great

battles of France; where every sword seems a flash of the Northern Lights, and the successive armed kings and Emperors dash by, like a charge of crowned centaurs? Not wholly unworthy of a place in that gallery, are these sea battle-pieces of Garnery.

The natural aptitude of the French for seizing the picturesqueness of things seems to be peculiarly evinced in what paintings and engravings they have of their whaling scenes. With not one tenth of England's experience in the fishery, and not the thousandth part of that of the Americans, they have nevertheless furnished both nations with the only finished sketches at all capable of conveying the real spirit of the whale hunt. For the most part, the English and American draughtsmen seem entirely content with presenting the mechanical outline of things, such as the vacant profile of the whale; which, so far as picturesqueness of effect is concerned, is about tantamount to sketching the profile of a pyramid. Even Scoresby, the justly renowned Right whaleman, after giving us a stiff full length of the Greenland whale, and three or four delicate miniatures of narwhales and porpoises, treats us to a series of classical engravings of boat hooks, chopping knives, and grapnels; and with the microscopic diligence of a Leuwenhoeck submits to the inspection of a shivering world ninety-six fac-similes of magnified Arctic snow crystals. I mean no disparagement to the excellent voyager (I honor him for a veteran), but in so

important a matter it was certainly an oversight not to have procured for every crystal a sworn affidavit taken before a Greenland Justice of the Peace.

In addition to those fine engravings from Garnery, there are two other French engravings worthy of note, by some one who subscribes himself "H. Durand." One of them, though not precisely adapted to our present purpose, nevertheless deserves mention on other accounts. 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.

CHAPTER 57. Of Whales in Paint; in Teeth; in Wood; in Sheet-Iron; in Stone; in Mountains; in Stars.

On Tower-hill, as you go down to the London docks, you may have seen a crippled beggar (or \_kedger\_, as the sailors say) holding a painted board before him, representing the tragic scene in which he lost his leg. There are three whales and three boats; and one of the boats (presumed to contain the missing leg in all its original integrity) is being crunched by the jaws of the foremost whale. Any time these ten years, they tell me, has that man held up that picture, and exhibited that stump to an incredulous world. But the time of his justification has now come. His three whales are as good whales as were ever published in Wapping, at any rate; and his stump as unquestionable a stump as any you will find in the western clearings. But, though for ever mounted on that stump, never a stump-speech does the poor whaleman make; but, with downcast eyes, stands ruefully contemplating his own amputation.

Throughout the Pacific, and also in Nantucket, and New Bedford, and Sag Harbor, you will come across lively sketches of whales and whaling-scenes, graven by the fishermen themselves on

Sperm

Whale-teeth, or ladies' busks wrought out of the Right  
Whale-bone, and  
other like skrimshander articles, as the whalemens call  
the numerous  
little ingenious contrivances they elaborately carve out  
of the rough  
material, in their hours of ocean leisure. Some of them  
have little  
boxes of dentistical-looking implements, specially  
intended for the  
skrimshandery business. But, in general, they toil with  
their  
jack-knives alone; and, with that almost omnipotent tool  
of the sailor,  
they will turn you out anything you please, in the way of  
a mariner's  
fancy.

Long exile from Christendom and civilization inevitably  
restores a man  
to that condition in which God placed him, \_i.e.\_ what is  
called  
savagery. Your true whale-hunter is as much a savage as  
an Iroquois. I  
myself am a savage, owning no allegiance but to the King  
of the  
Cannibals; and ready at any moment to rebel against him.

Now, one of the peculiar characteristics of the savage in  
his domestic  
hours, is his wonderful patience of industry. An ancient  
Hawaiian  
war-club or spear-paddle, in its full multiplicity and  
elaboration of  
carving, is as great a trophy of human perseverance as a  
Latin lexicon.  
For, with but a bit of broken sea-shell or a shark's  
tooth, that  
miraculous intricacy of wooden net-work has been  
achieved; and it has  
cost steady years of steady application.

As with the Hawaiian savage, so with the white sailor-



savage. With the  
same marvellous patience, and with the same single  
shark's tooth, of  
his one poor jack-knife, he will carve you a bit of bone  
sculpture, not  
quite as workmanlike, but as close packed in its mazziness  
of design, as  
the Greek savage, Achilles's shield; and full of barbaric  
spirit and  
suggestiveness, as the prints of that fine old Dutch  
savage, Albert  
Durer.

Wooden whales, or whales cut in profile out of the small  
dark slabs of  
the noble South Sea war-wood, are frequently met with in  
the  
forecastles of American whalers. Some of them are done  
with much  
accuracy.

At some old gable-roofed country houses you will see  
brass whales hung  
by the tail for knockers to the road-side door. When the  
porter is  
sleepy, the anvil-headed whale would be best. But these  
knocking whales  
are seldom remarkable as faithful essays. 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 whaler, 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 fasces  
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 immemorially 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!

#### CHAPTER 59. Squid.

Slowly wading through the meadows of brit, the Pequod  
still held on her  
way north-eastward towards the island of Java; a gentle  
air impelling  
her keel, so that in the surrounding serenity her three  
tall tapering  
masts mildly waved to that languid breeze, as three mild  
palms on a  
plain. And still, at wide intervals in the silvery night,  
the lonely,  
alluring jet would be seen.

But one transparent blue morning, when a stillness almost  
preternatural  
spread over the sea, however unattended with any stagnant  
calm; when  
the long burnished sun-glade on the waters seemed a  
golden finger laid  
across them, enjoining some secrecy; when the slippered  
waves whispered  
together as they softly ran on; in this profound hush of  
the visible  
sphere a strange spectre was seen by Daggoo from the  
main-mast-head.

In the distance, a great white mass lazily rose, and  
rising higher and  
higher, and disentangling itself from the azure, at last  
gleamed before

our prow like a snow-slide, new slid from the hills. Thus  
glistening  
for a moment, as slowly it subsided, and sank. Then once  
more arose,  
and silently gleamed. It seemed not a whale; and yet is  
this Moby Dick?  
thought Daggoo. Again the phantom went down, but on re-  
appearing once  
more, with a stiletto-like cry that startled every man  
from his nod,  
the negro yelled out—"There! there again! there she  
breaches! right  
ahead! The White Whale, the White Whale!"

Upon this, the seamen rushed to the yard-arms, as in  
swarming-time the  
bees rush to the boughs. Bare-headed in the sultry sun,  
Ahab stood on  
the bowsprit, and with one hand pushed far behind in  
readiness to wave  
his orders to the helmsman, cast his eager glance in the  
direction  
indicated aloft by the outstretched motionless arm of  
Daggoo.

Whether the flitting attendance of the one still and  
solitary jet had  
gradually worked upon Ahab, so that he was now prepared  
to connect the  
ideas of mildness and repose with the first sight of the  
particular  
whale he pursued; however this was, or whether his  
eagerness betrayed  
him; whichever way it might have been, no sooner did he  
distinctly  
perceive the white mass, than with a quick intensity he  
instantly gave  
orders for lowering.

The four boats were soon on the water; Ahab's in advance,  
and all  
swiftly pulling towards their prey. Soon it went down,  
and while, with  
oars suspended, we were awaiting its reappearance, lo! in



the same spot  
where it sank, once more it slowly rose. Almost  
forgetting for the  
moment all thoughts of Moby Dick, we now gazed at the  
most wondrous  
phenomenon which the secret seas have hitherto revealed  
to mankind. A  
vast pulpy mass, furlongs in length and breadth, of a  
glancing  
cream-colour, lay floating on the water, innumerable long  
arms  
radiating from its centre, and curling and twisting like  
a nest of  
anacondas, as if blindly to clutch at any hapless object  
within reach.  
No perceptible face or front did it have; no conceivable  
token of  
either sensation or instinct; but undulated there on the  
billows, an  
unearthly, formless, chance-like apparition of life.

As with a low sucking sound it slowly disappeared again,  
Starbuck still  
gazing at the agitated waters where it had sunk, with a  
wild voice  
exclaimed—"Almost rather had I seen Moby Dick and fought  
him, than to  
have seen thee, thou white ghost!"

"What was it, Sir?" said Flask.

"The great live squid, which, they say, few whale-ships  
ever beheld,  
and returned to their ports to tell of it."

But Ahab said nothing; turning his boat, he sailed back  
to the vessel;  
the rest as silently following.

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. 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 vaped 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 æsthetics 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. Nor can any son

of mortal  
woman, for the first time, seat himself amid those hempen  
intricacies,  
and while straining his utmost at the oar, bethink him  
that at any  
unknown instant the harpoon may be darted, and all these  
horrible  
contortions be put in play like ringed lightnings; he  
cannot be thus  
circumstanced without a shudder that makes the very  
marrow in his bones  
to quiver in him like a shaken jelly. Yet habit—strange  
thing! what  
cannot habit accomplish?—Gayer sallies, more merry mirth,  
better jokes,  
and brighter repartees, you never heard over your  
mahogany, than you  
will hear over the half-inch white cedar of the whale-  
boat, when thus  
hung in hangman's nooses; and, like the six burghers of  
Calais before  
King Edward, the six men composing the crew pull into the  
jaws of  
death, with a halter around every neck, as you may say.

Perhaps a very little thought will now enable you to  
account for those  
repeated whaling disasters—some few of which are casually  
chronicled—of  
this man or that man being taken out of the boat by the  
line, and lost.  
For, when the line is darting out, to be seated then in  
the boat, is  
like being seated in the midst of the manifold whizzings  
of a  
steam-engine in full play, when every flying beam, and  
shaft, and  
wheel, is grazing you. It is worse; for you cannot sit  
motionless in  
the heart of these perils, because the boat is rocking  
like a cradle,  
and you are pitched one way and the other, without the  
slightest  
warning; and only by a certain self-adjusting buoyancy

and  
simultaneousness of volition and action, can you escape  
being made a  
Mazeppa of, and run away with where the all-seeing sun  
himself could  
never pierce you out.

Again: as the profound calm which only apparently  
precedes and  
prophesies of the storm, is perhaps more awful than the  
storm itself;  
for, indeed, the calm is but the wrapper and envelope of  
the storm; and  
contains it in itself, as the seemingly harmless rifle  
holds the fatal  
powder, and the ball, and the explosion; so the graceful  
repose of the  
line, as it silently serpentine about the oarsmen before  
being brought  
into actual play—this is a thing which carries more of  
true terror than  
any other aspect of this dangerous affair. But why say  
more? All men  
live enveloped in whale-lines. All are born with halters  
round their  
necks; but it is only when caught in the swift, sudden  
turn of death,  
that mortals realize the silent, subtle, ever-present  
perils of life.  
And if you be a philosopher, though seated in the whale-  
boat, you would  
not at heart feel one whit more of terror, than though  
seated before  
your evening fire with a poker, and not a harpoon, by  
your side.

#### 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 whalers  
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  
vapory 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  
honor of the capture. It was obvious, now, that the whale  
had at length  
become aware of his pursuers. All silence of cautiousness  
was therefore  
no longer of use. Paddles were dropped, and oars came  
loudly into play.  
And still puffing at his pipe, Stubb cheered on his crew  
to the  
assault.

Yes, a mighty change had come over the fish. All alive to  
his jeopardy,  
he was going "head out"; that part obliquely projecting  
from the mad  
yeast which he brewed.\*

\*It will be seen in some other place of what a very light  
substance the  
entire interior of the sperm whale's enormous head  
consists. Though  
apparently the most massive, it is by far the most  
buoyant part about  
him. So that with ease he elevates it in the air, and  
invariably does  
so when going at his utmost speed. Besides, such is the

breadth of the  
upper part of the front of his head, and such the  
tapering cut-water  
formation of the lower part, that by obliquely elevating  
his head, he  
thereby may be said to transform himself from a bluff-  
bowed sluggish  
galliot into a sharp-pointed New York pilot-boat.

"Start her, start her, my men! Don't hurry yourselves;  
take plenty of  
time—but start her; start her like thunder-claps, that's  
all," cried  
Stubb, spluttering out the smoke as he spoke. "Start her,  
now; give 'em  
the long and strong stroke, Tashtego. Start her, Tash, my  
boy—start  
her, all; but keep cool, keep cool—cucumbers is the word—  
easy,  
easy—only start her like grim death and grinning devils,  
and raise the  
buried dead perpendicular out of their graves, boys—  
that's all. Start  
her!"

"Woo-hoo! Wa-hee!" screamed the Gay-Header in reply,  
raising some old  
war-whoop to the skies; as every oarsman in the strained  
boat  
involuntarily bounced forward with the one tremendous  
leading stroke  
which the eager Indian gave.

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.

"Wet the line! wet the line!" cried Stubb to the tub  
oarsman (him  
seated by the tub) who, snatching off his hat, dashed  
sea-water into  
it.\* More turns were taken, so that the line began  
holding its place.  
The boat now flew through the boiling water like a shark  
all fins.  
Stubb and Tashtego here changed places—stem for stern—a  
staggering  
business truly in that rocking commotion.

\*Partly to show the indispensableness of this act, it may

here be  
stated, that, in the old Dutch fishery, a mop was used to  
dash the  
running line with water; in many other ships, a wooden  
piggin, or  
bailer, is set apart for that purpose. Your hat, however,  
is the most  
convenient.

From the vibrating line extending the entire length of  
the upper part  
of the boat, and from its now being more tight than a  
harpstring, you  
would have thought the craft had two keels—one cleaving  
the water, the  
other the air—as the boat churned on through both  
opposing elements at  
once. A continual cascade played at the bows; a ceaseless  
whirling eddy  
in her wake; and, at the slightest motion from within,  
even but of a  
little finger, the vibrating, cracking craft canted over  
her spasmodic  
gunwale into the sea. Thus they rushed; each man with  
might and main  
clinging to his seat, to prevent being tossed to the  
foam; and the tall  
form of Tashtego at the steering oar crouching almost  
double, in order  
to bring down his centre of gravity. Whole Atlantics and  
Pacifics  
seemed passed as they shot on their way, till at length  
the whale  
somewhat slackened his flight.

“Haul in—haul in!” cried Stubb to the bowsman! and,  
facing round  
towards the whale, all hands began pulling the boat up to  
him, while  
yet the boat was being towed on. Soon ranging up by his  
flank, Stubb,  
firmly planting his knee in the clumsy cleat, darted dart  
after dart  
into the flying fish; at the word of command, the boat

alternately  
sterning out of the way of the whale's horrible wallow,  
and then  
ranging up for another fling.

The red tide now poured from all sides of the monster  
like brooks down  
a hill. His tormented body rolled not in brine but in  
blood, which  
bubbled and seethed for furlongs behind in their wake.  
The slanting sun  
playing upon this crimson pond in the sea, sent back its  
reflection  
into every face, so that they all glowed to each other  
like red men.  
And all the while, jet after jet of white smoke was  
agonizingly shot  
from the spiracle of the whale, and vehement puff after  
puff from the  
mouth of the excited headsman; as at every dart, hauling  
in upon his  
crooked lance (by the line attached to it), Stubb  
straightened it again  
and again, by a few rapid blows against the gunwale, then  
again and  
again sent it into the whale.

"Pull up—pull up!" he now cried to the bowsman, as the  
waning whale  
relaxed in his wrath. "Pull up!—close to!" and the boat  
ranged along  
the fish's flank. When reaching far over the bow, Stubb  
slowly churned  
his long sharp lance into the fish, and kept it there,  
carefully  
churning and churning, as if cautiously seeking to feel  
after some gold  
watch that the whale might have swallowed, and which he  
was fearful of  
breaking ere he could hook it out. But that gold watch he  
sought was  
the innermost life of the fish. And now it is struck;  
for, starting  
from his trance into that unspeakable thing called his

"flurry," the  
monster horribly wallowed in his blood, overwrapped  
himself in  
impenetrable, mad, boiling spray, so that the imperilled  
craft,  
instantly dropping astern, had much ado blindly to  
struggle out from  
that phrensied twilight into the clear air of the day.

And now abating in his flurry, the whale once more rolled  
out into  
view; surging from side to side; spasmodically dilating  
and contracting  
his spout-hole, with sharp, cracking, agonized  
respirations. At last,  
gush after gush of clotted red gore, as if it had been  
the purple lees  
of red wine, shot into the frightened air; and falling back  
again, ran  
dripping down his motionless flanks into the sea. His  
heart had burst!

"He's dead, Mr. Stubb," said Daggoo.

"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 whalemén  
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 disrated; no wonder that some of them actually burst  
their  
blood-vessels in the boat; no wonder that some sperm  
whalemén 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 whalemens 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.

CHAPTER 63. The Crotch.

Out of the trunk, the branches grow; out of them, the twigs. So, in productive subjects, grow the chapters.

The crotch alluded to on a previous page deserves independent mention. It is a notched stick of a peculiar form, some two feet in length, which is perpendicularly inserted into the starboard gunwale near the bow, for the purpose of furnishing a rest for the wooden extremity of the harpoon, whose other naked, barbed end slopingly projects from the prow. Thereby the weapon is instantly at hand to its hurler, who snatches it up as readily from its rest as a backwoodsman swings his rifle from the wall. It is customary to have two harpoons reposing in the crotch, respectively called the first and second irons.

But these two harpoons, each by its own cord, are both connected with the line; the object being this: to dart them both, if possible, one instantly after the other into the same whale; so that if, in the coming drag, one should draw out, the other may still retain a hold. It is a doubling of the chances. But it very often happens that owing to the instantaneous, violent, convulsive running of the whale upon receiving the first iron, it becomes impossible for the harpooneer, however lightning-like in his movements, to pitch the second iron into him. Nevertheless, as the second iron is already connected with the line, and the line is running, hence that weapon must, at all events, be anticipatorily tossed out of the boat, somehow and

somewhere; else  
the most terrible jeopardy would involve all hands.  
Tumbled into the  
water, it accordingly is in such cases; the spare coils  
of box line  
(mentioned in a preceding chapter) making this feat, in  
most instances,  
prudently practicable. But this critical act is not  
always unattended  
with the saddest and most fatal casualties.

Furthermore: you must know that when the second iron is  
thrown  
overboard, it thenceforth becomes a dangling, sharp-edged  
terror,  
skittishly curvetting about both boat and whale,  
entangling the lines,  
or cutting them, and making a prodigious sensation in all  
directions.  
Nor, in general, is it possible to secure it again until  
the whale is  
fairly captured and a corpse.

Consider, now, how it must be in the case of four boats  
all engaging  
one unusually strong, active, and knowing whale; when  
owing to these  
qualities in him, as well as to the thousand concurring  
accidents of  
such an audacious enterprise, eight or ten loose second  
irons may be  
simultaneously dangling about him. For, of course, each  
boat is  
supplied with several harpoons to bend on to the line  
should the first  
one be ineffectually darted without recovery. All these  
particulars are  
faithfully narrated here, as they will not fail to  
elucidate several  
most important, however intricate passages, in scenes  
hereafter to be  
painted.

## CHAPTER 64. Stubb's Supper.

Stubb's whale had been killed some distance from the ship. It was a calm; so, forming a tandem of three boats, we commenced the slow business of towing the trophy to the Pequod. And now, as we eighteen men with our thirty-six arms, and one hundred and eighty thumbs and fingers, slowly toiled hour after hour upon that inert, sluggish corpse in the sea; and it seemed hardly to budge at all, except at long intervals; good evidence was hereby furnished of the enormousness of the mass we moved. For, upon the great canal of Hang-Ho, or whatever they call it, in China, four or five laborers on the foot-path will draw a bulky freighted junk at the rate of a mile an hour; but this grand argosy we towed heavily forged along, as if laden with pig-lead in bulk.

Darkness came on; but three lights up and down in the Pequod's main-rigging dimly guided our way; till drawing nearer we saw Ahab dropping one of several more lanterns over the bulwarks. Vacantly eyeing the heaving whale for a moment, he issued the usual orders for securing it for the night, and then handing his lantern to a seaman, went his way into the cabin, and did not come forward again until morning.

Though, in overseeing the pursuit of this whale, Captain Ahab had evinced his customary activity, to call it so; yet now that the

creature was dead, some vague dissatisfaction, or  
impatience, or  
despair, seemed working in him; as if the sight of that  
dead body  
reminded him that Moby Dick was yet to be slain; and  
though a thousand  
other whales were brought to his ship, all that would not  
one jot  
advance his grand, monomaniac object. Very soon you would  
have thought  
from the sound on the Pequod's decks, that all hands were  
preparing to  
cast anchor in the deep; for heavy chains are being  
dragged along the  
deck, and thrust rattling out of the port-holes. But by  
those clanking  
links, the vast corpse itself, not the ship, is to be  
moored. Tied by  
the head to the stern, and by the tail to the bows, the  
whale now lies  
with its black hull close to the vessel's and seen  
through the darkness  
of the night, which obscured the spars and rigging aloft,  
the two-ship  
and whale, seemed yoked together like colossal bullocks,  
whereof one  
reclines while the other remains standing.\*

\*A little item may as well be related here. The strongest  
and most  
reliable hold which the ship has upon the whale when  
moored alongside,  
is by the flukes or tail; and as from its greater density  
that part is  
relatively heavier than any other (excepting the side-  
fins), its  
flexibility even in death, causes it to sink low beneath  
the surface;  
so that with the hand you cannot get at it from the boat,  
in order to  
put the chain round it. But this difficulty is  
ingeniously overcome: a  
small, strong line is prepared with a wooden float at its  
outer end,

and a weight in its middle, while the other end is secured to the ship. By adroit management the wooden float is made to rise on the other side of the mass, so that now having girdled the whale, the chain is readily made to follow suit; and being slipped along the body, is at last locked fast round the smallest part of the tail, at the point of junction with its broad flukes or lobes.

If moody Ahab was now all quiescence, at least so far as could be known on deck, Stubb, his second mate, flushed with conquest, betrayed an unusual but still good-natured excitement. Such an unwonted bustle was he in that the staid Starbuck, his official superior, quietly resigned to him for the time the sole management of affairs. One small, helping cause of all this liveliness in Stubb, was soon made strangely manifest. Stubb was a high liver; he was somewhat intemperately fond of the whale as a flavorish thing to his palate.

"A steak, a steak, ere I sleep! You, Daggoo! overboard you go, and cut me one from his small!"

Here be it known, that though these wild fishermen do not, as a general thing, and according to the great military maxim, make the enemy defray the current expenses of the war (at least before realizing the proceeds of the voyage), yet now and then you find some of these Nantucketers who have a genuine relish for that particular part of the Sperm Whale designated by Stubb; comprising the tapering extremity of the body.

About midnight that steak was cut and cooked; and lighted  
by two  
lanterns of sperm oil, Stubb stoutly stood up to his  
spermaceti supper  
at the capstan-head, as if that capstan were a sideboard.  
Nor was Stubb  
the only banqueter on whale's flesh that night. 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!"

The old black, not in any very high glee at having been previously roused from his warm hammock at a most unseasonable hour, came shambling along from his galley, for, like many old blacks, there was something the matter with his knee-pans, which he did not keep well scoured like his other pans; this old Fleece, as they called him, came shuffling and limping along, assisting his step with his tongs, which, after a clumsy fashion, were made of straightened iron hoops; this old Ebony floundered along, and in obedience to the word of command, came to a dead stop on the opposite side of Stubb's sideboard; when, with both hands folded before him, and resting on his two-legged cane, he bowed his arched back still further over, at the same time sideways inclining his head, so as to bring his best ear into play.

"Cook," said Stubb, rapidly lifting a rather reddish morsel to his mouth, "don't you think this steak is rather overdone? You've been beating this steak too much, cook; it's too tender. Don't I always say that to be good, a whale-steak must be tough? There are those sharks now over the side, don't you see they prefer it tough and rare? What a shindy they are kicking up! Cook, go and talk to 'em; tell 'em they are welcome to help themselves civilly, and in moderation, but they must keep quiet. Blast me, if I can hear my own voice. Away,

cook, and  
deliver my message. Here, take this lantern," snatching  
one from his  
sideboard; "now then, go and preach to 'em!"

Sullenly taking the offered lantern, old Fleece limped  
across the deck  
to the bulwarks; and then, with one hand dropping his  
light low over  
the sea, so as to get a good view of his congregation,  
with the other  
hand he solemnly flourished his tongs, and leaning far  
over the side in  
a mumbling voice began addressing the sharks, while  
Stubb, softly  
crawling behind, overheard all that was said.

"Fellow-critters: I'se ordered here to say dat you must  
stop dat dam  
noise dare. You hear? Stop dat dam smackin' ob de lip!  
Massa Stubb say  
dat you can fill your dam bellies up to de hatchings, but  
by Gor! you  
must stop dat dam racket!"

"Cook," here interposed Stubb, accompanying the word with  
a sudden slap  
on the shoulder,—“Cook! why, damn your eyes, you mustn't  
swear that way  
when you're preaching. That's no way to convert sinners,  
cook!"

"Who dat? Den preach to him yourself," sullenly turning  
to go.

"No, cook; go on, go on."

"Well, den, Belubed fellow-critters:"—

"Right!" exclaimed Stubb, approvingly, "coax 'em to it;  
try that," and  
Fleece continued.

"Do you is all sharks, and by natur wery voracious, yet I

zay to you,  
fellow-critters, dat dat woraciousness—'top dat dam  
slappin' ob de  
tail! How you tink to hear, spose you keep up such a dam  
slappin' and  
bitin' dare?"

"Cook," cried Stubb, collaring him, "I won't have that  
swearing. Talk  
to 'em gentlemanly."

Once more the sermon proceeded.

"Your woraciousness, fellow-critters, I don't blame ye so  
much for; dat  
is natur, and can't be helped; but to gobern dat wicked  
natur, dat is  
de pint. You is sharks, sartin; but if you gobern de  
shark in you, why  
den you be angel; for all angel is not'ing more dan de  
shark well  
goberned. Now, look here, bred'ren, just try wonst to be  
cibil, a  
helping yourselbs from dat whale. Don't be tearin' de  
blubber out your  
neighbour's mout, I say. Is not one shark dood right as  
toder to dat  
whale? And, by Gor, none on you has de right to dat  
whale; dat whale  
belong to some one else. I know some o' you has berry  
brig mout,  
brigger dan oders; but den de brig mouts sometimes has de  
small  
bellies; so dat de brigness of de mout is not to swaller  
wid, but to  
bit off de blubber for de small fry ob sharks, dat can't  
get into de  
scrouge to help demselves."

"Well done, old Fleece!" cried Stubb, "that's  
Christianity; go on."

"No use goin' on; de dam willains will keep a scougin'  
and slappin'

each oder, Massa Stubb; dey don't hear one word; no use a-preachin' to such dam g'uttons as you call 'em, till dare bellies is full, and dare bellies is bottomless; and when dey do get 'em full, dey wont hear you den; for den dey sink in de sea, go fast to sleep on de coral, and can't hear not'ing at all, no more, for eber and eber."

"Upon my soul, I am about of the same opinion; so give the benediction, Fleece, and I'll away to my supper."

Upon this, Fleece, holding both hands over the fishy mob, raised his shrill voice, and cried—

"Cussed fellow-critters! Kick up de damndest row as ever you can; fill your dam' bellies 'till dey bust—and den die."

"Now, cook," said Stubb, resuming his supper at the capstan; "stand just where you stood before, there, over against me, and pay particular attention."

"All dention," said Fleece, again stooping over upon his tongs in the desired position.

"Well," said Stubb, helping himself freely meanwhile; "I shall now go back to the subject of this steak. In the first place, how old are you, cook?"

"What dat do wid de 'teak," said the old black, testily.

"Silence! How old are you, cook?"

"'Bout ninety, dey say," he gloomily muttered.

"And you have lived in this world hard upon one hundred years, cook, and don't know yet how to cook a whale-steak?" rapidly bolting another mouthful at the last word, so that morsel seemed a continuation of the question. "Where were you born, cook?"

"'Hind de hatchway, in ferry-boat, goin' ober de Roanoke."

"Born in a ferry-boat! That's queer, too. But I want to know what country you were born in, cook!"

"Didn't I say de Roanoke country?" he cried sharply.

"No, you didn't, cook; but I'll tell you what I'm coming to, cook. You must go home and be born over again; you don't know how to cook a whale-steak yet."

"Bress my soul, if I cook noder one," he growled, angrily, turning round to depart.

"Come back, cook;—here, hand me those tongs;—now take that bit of steak there, and tell me if you think that steak cooked as it should be? Take it, I say"—holding the tongs towards him—"take it, and taste it."

Faintly smacking his withered lips over it for a moment, the old negro muttered, "Best cooked 'teak I eber taste; joosy, berry joosy."

"Cook," said Stubb, squaring himself once more; "do you belong to the church?"

"Passed one once in Cape-Down," said the old man

sullenly.

"And you have once in your life passed a holy church in Cape-Town,  
where you doubtless overheard a holy parson addressing his hearers as his beloved fellow-creatures, have you, cook! And yet you come here,  
and tell me such a dreadful lie as you did just now, eh?" said Stubb.

"Where do you expect to go to, cook?"

"Go to bed berry soon," he mumbled, half-turning as he spoke.

"Avast! heave to! I mean when you die, cook. It's an awful question.  
Now what's your answer?"

"When dis old brack man dies," said the negro slowly, changing his whole air and demeanor, "he hisself won't go nowhere; but some bressed angel will come and fetch him."

"Fetch him? How? In a coach and four, as they fetched Elijah? And fetch him where?"

"Up dere," said Fleece, holding his tongs straight over his head, and keeping it there very solemnly.

"So, then, you expect to go up into our main-top, do you, cook, when you are dead? But don't you know the higher you climb, the colder it gets? Main-top, eh?"

"Didn't say dat t'all," said Fleece, again in the sulks.

"You said up there, didn't you? and now look yourself, and see where your tongs are pointing. But, perhaps you expect to get

into heaven by  
crawling through the lubber's hole, cook; but, no, no,  
cook, you don't  
get there, except you go the regular way, round by the  
rigging. 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.

#### CHAPTER 65. The Whale as a Dish.

That mortal man should feed upon the creature that feeds his lamp, and,

like Stubb, eat him by his own light, as you may say;

this seems so

outlandish a thing that one must needs go a little into the history and

philosophy of it.

It is upon record, that three centuries ago the tongue of the Right

Whale was esteemed a great delicacy in France, and commanded large

prices there. Also, that in Henry VIIIth's time, a certain cook of the

court obtained a handsome reward for inventing an admirable sauce to be

eaten with barbacued porpoises, which, you remember, are a species of

whale. Porpoises, indeed, are to this day considered fine eating. The

meat is made into balls about the size of billiard balls, and being

well seasoned and spiced might be taken for turtle-balls or veal balls.

The old monks of Dunfermline were very fond of them. They had a great

porpoise grant from the crown.

The fact is, that among his hunters at least, the whale would by all hands be considered a noble dish, were there not so much of him; but when you come to sit down before a meat-pie nearly one hundred feet long, it takes away your appetite. Only the most unprejudiced of men like Stubb, nowadays partake of cooked whales; but the Esquimaux are not so fastidious. We all know how they live upon whales, and have rare old vintages of prime old train oil. Zogranda, one of their most famous doctors, recommends strips of blubber for infants, as being exceedingly juicy and nourishing. And this reminds me that certain Englishmen, who long ago were accidentally left in Greenland by a whaling vessel—that these men actually lived for several months on the mouldy scraps of whales which had been left ashore after trying out the blubber. Among the Dutch whalers these scraps are called “fritters”; which, indeed, they greatly resemble, being brown and crisp, and smelling something like old Amsterdam housewives’ dough-nuts or oly-cooks, when fresh. They have such an eatable look that the most self-denying stranger can hardly keep his hands off.

But what further depreciates the whale as a civilized dish, is his exceeding richness. He is the great prize ox of the sea, too fat to be delicately good. Look at his hump, which would be as fine eating as the buffalo’s (which is esteemed a rare dish), were it not such a solid

pyramid of fat. But the spermaceti itself, how bland and creamy that is; like the transparent, half-jellied, white meat of a cocoanut in the third month of its growth, yet far too rich to supply a substitute for butter. Nevertheless, many whalers have a method of absorbing it into some other substance, and then partaking of it. In the long try watches of the night it is a common thing for the seamen to dip their ship-biscuit into the huge oil-pots and let them fry there awhile. Many a good supper have I thus made.

In the case of a small Sperm Whale the brains are accounted a fine dish. The casket of the skull is broken into with an axe, and the two plump, whitish lobes being withdrawn (precisely resembling two large puddings), they are then mixed with flour, and cooked into a most delectable mess, in flavor somewhat resembling calves' head, which is quite a dish among some epicures; and every one knows that some young bucks among the epicures, by continually dining upon calves' brains, by and by get to have a little brains of their own, so as to be able to tell a calf's head from their own heads; which, indeed, requires uncommon discrimination. And that is the reason why a young buck with an intelligent looking calf's head before him, is somehow one of the saddest sights you can see. The head looks a sort of reproachfully at him, with an "Et tu Brute!" expression.

It is not, perhaps, entirely because the whale is so excessively

unctuous that landmen seem to regard the eating of him  
with  
abhorrence; that appears to result, in some way, from the  
consideration  
before mentioned: \_i.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  
nailest geese to the ground and featest on their bloated  
livers in thy  
paté-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 patronize nothing but steel pens.

#### CHAPTER 66. The Shark Massacre.

When in the Southern Fishery, a captured Sperm Whale, after long and weary toil, is brought alongside late at night, it is not, as a general thing at least, customary to proceed at once to the business of cutting him in. For that business is an exceedingly laborious one; is not very soon completed; and requires all hands to set about it. Therefore, the common usage is to take in all sail; lash the helm a'lee; and then send every one below to his hammock till daylight, with the reservation that, until that time, anchor-watches shall be kept; that is, two and two for an hour, each couple, the crew in rotation shall mount the deck to see that all goes well.

But sometimes, especially upon the Line in the Pacific, this plan will not answer at all; because such incalculable hosts of sharks gather round the moored carcass, that were he left so for six hours, say, on a stretch, little more than the skeleton would be visible by morning. In most other parts of the ocean, however, where these fish do not so largely abound, their wondrous voracity can be at times considerably diminished, by vigorously stirring them up with sharp

whaling-spades, a  
procedure notwithstanding, which, in some instances, only  
seems to  
tickle them into still greater activity. But it was not  
thus in the  
present case with the Pequod's sharks; though, to be  
sure, any man  
unaccustomed to such sights, to have looked over her side  
that night,  
would have almost thought the whole round sea was one  
huge cheese, and  
those sharks the maggots in it.

Nevertheless, upon Stubb setting the anchor-watch after  
his supper was  
concluded; and when, accordingly, Queequeg and a  
forecastle seaman came  
on deck, no small excitement was created among the  
sharks; for  
immediately suspending the cutting stages over the side,  
and lowering  
three lanterns, so that they cast long gleams of light  
over the turbid  
sea, these two mariners, darting their long whaling-  
spades, kept up an  
incessant murdering of the sharks,\* by striking the keen  
steel deep  
into their skulls, seemingly their only vital part. But  
in the foamy  
confusion of their mixed and struggling hosts, the  
marksmen could not  
always hit their mark; and this brought about new  
revelations of the  
incredible ferocity of the foe. 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 whalemens. 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  
frighted 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 harpooneers 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  
whalemen 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. But what I am driving at here is this. That same infinitely thin, isinglass substance, which, I admit, invests the entire body of the whale, is not so much to be regarded as the skin of the creature, as the skin of the skin, so to speak; for it were simply ridiculous to say, that the proper skin of the tremendous whale is thinner and more tender than the skin of a new-born child. But no more of this.

Assuming the blubber to be the skin of the whale; then,  
when this skin,  
as in the case of a very large Sperm Whale, will yield  
the bulk of one  
hundred barrels of oil; and, when it is considered that,  
in quantity,  
or rather weight, that oil, in its expressed state, is  
only three  
fourths, and not the entire substance of the coat; some  
idea may hence  
be had of the enormousness of that animated mass, a mere  
part of whose  
mere integument yields such a lake of liquid as that.  
Reckoning ten  
barrels to the ton, you have ten tons for the net weight  
of only three  
quarters of the stuff of the whale's skin.

In life, the visible surface of the Sperm Whale is not  
the least among  
the many marvels he presents. Almost invariably it is all  
over  
obliquely crossed and re-crossed with numberless straight  
marks in  
thick array, something like those in the finest Italian  
line  
engravings. But these marks do not seem to be impressed  
upon the  
isinglass substance above mentioned, but seem to be seen  
through it, as  
if they were engraved upon the body itself. Nor is this  
all. In some  
instances, to the quick, observant eye, those linear  
marks, as in a  
veritable engraving, but afford the ground for far other  
delineations.  
These are hieroglyphical; that is, if you call those  
mysterious cyphers  
on the walls of pyramids hieroglyphics, then that is the  
proper word to  
use in the present connexion. By my retentive memory of  
the  
hieroglyphics upon one Sperm Whale in particular, I was

much struck  
with a plate representing the old Indian characters  
chiselled on the  
famous hieroglyphic palisades on the banks of the Upper  
Mississippi.  
Like those mystic rocks, too, the mystic-marked whale  
remains  
undecipherable. This allusion to the Indian rocks reminds  
me of another  
thing. Besides all the other phenomena which the exterior  
of the Sperm  
Whale presents, he not seldom displays the back, and more  
especially  
his flanks, effaced in great part of the regular linear  
appearance, by  
reason of numerous rude scratches, altogether of an  
irregular, random  
aspect. I should say that those New England rocks on the  
sea-coast,  
which Agassiz imagines to bear the marks of violent  
scraping contact  
with vast floating icebergs—I should say, that those  
rocks must not a  
little resemble the Sperm Whale in this particular. It  
also seems to me  
that such scratches in the whale are probably made by  
hostile contact  
with other whales; for I have most remarked them in the  
large,  
full-grown bulls of the species.

A word or two more concerning this matter of the skin or  
blubber of the  
whale. It has already been said, that it is stript from  
him in long  
pieces, called blanket-pieces. Like most sea-terms, this  
one is very  
happy and significant. For the whale is indeed wrapt up  
in his blubber  
as in a real blanket or counterpane; or, still better, an  
Indian poncho  
slipt over his head, and skirting his extremity. It is by  
reason of  
this cosy blanketing of his body, that the whale is

enabled to keep  
himself comfortable in all weathers, in all seas, times,  
and tides.  
What would become of a Greenland whale, say, in those  
shuddering, icy  
seas of the North, if unsupplied with his cosy surtout?  
True, other  
fish are found exceedingly brisk in those Hyperborean  
waters; but  
these, be it observed, are your cold-blooded, lungless  
fish, whose very  
bellies are refrigerators; creatures, that warm  
themselves under the  
lee of an iceberg, as a traveller in winter would bask  
before an inn  
fire; whereas, like man, the whale has lungs and warm  
blood. Freeze his  
blood, and he dies. How wonderful is it then—except after  
explanation—that this great monster, to whom corporeal  
warmth is as  
indispensable as it is to man; how wonderful that he  
should be found at  
home, immersed to his lips for life in those Arctic  
waters! where, when  
seamen fall overboard, they are sometimes found, months  
afterwards,  
perpendicularly frozen into the hearts of fields of ice,  
as a fly is  
found glued in amber. But more surprising is it to know,  
as has been  
proved by experiment, that the blood of a Polar whale is  
warmer than  
that of a Borneo negro in summer.

It does seem to me, that herein we see the rare virtue of  
a strong  
individual vitality, and the rare virtue of thick walls,  
and the rare  
virtue of interior spaciousness. Oh, man! 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 69. The Funeral.

"Haul in the chains! Let the carcass go astern!"

The vast tackles have now done their duty. The peeled white body of the beheaded whale flashes like a marble sepulchre; though changed in hue, it has not perceptibly lost anything in bulk. It is still colossal. Slowly it floats more and more away, the water round it torn and splashed by the insatiate sharks, and the air above vexed with rapacious flights of screaming fowls, whose beaks are like so many insulting poniards in the whale. The vast white headless phantom floats further and further from the ship, and every rod that it so floats, what seem square roods of sharks and cubic roods of fowls, augment the murderous din. For hours and hours from the almost stationary ship that hideous sight is seen. Beneath the unclouded and mild azure sky, upon the fair face of the pleasant sea, wafted by the joyous breezes, that great mass of death floats on and on, till lost in infinite perspectives.

There's a most doleful and most mocking funeral! The sea-vultures all  
in pious mourning, the air-sharks all punctiliously in  
black or  
speckled. In life but few of them would have helped the  
whale, I ween,  
if peradventure he had needed it; but upon the banquet of  
his funeral  
they most piously do pounce. Oh, horrible vultureism of  
earth! from  
which not the mightiest whale is free.

Nor is this the end. Desecrated as the body is, a  
vengeful ghost  
survives and hovers over it to scare. Espied by some  
timid man-of-war  
or blundering discovery-vessel from afar, when the  
distance obscuring  
the swarming fowls, nevertheless still shows the white  
mass floating in  
the sun, and the white spray heaving high against it;  
straightway the  
whale's unharmed corpse, with trembling fingers is set  
down in the  
log-shoals, rocks, and breakers hereabouts: beware!\_ And  
for years  
afterwards, perhaps, ships shun the place; leaping over  
it as silly  
sheep leap over a vacuum, because their leader originally  
leaped there  
when a stick was held. There's your law of precedents;  
there's your  
utility of traditions; there's the story of your  
obstinate survival of  
old beliefs never bottomed on the earth, and now not even  
hovering in  
the air! There's orthodoxy!

Thus, while in life the great whale's body may have been  
a real terror  
to his foes, in his death his ghost becomes a powerless  
panic to a  
world.



Are you a believer in ghosts, my friend? There are other ghosts than the Cock-Lane one, and far deeper men than Doctor Johnson who believe in them.

#### 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 subterraneous 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. And there with the strained craft steeply leaning over to it, by reason of the enormous downward drag from the lower mast-head, and every yard-arm on that side projecting like a crane over the waves; there, that blood-dripping head hung to the Pequod's waist like the giant Holofernes's from the girdle of Judith.

When this last task was accomplished it was noon, and the seamen went below to their dinner. Silence reigned over the before tumultuous but now deserted deck. An intense copper calm, like a universal yellow lotus, was more and more unfolding its noiseless measureless leaves upon the sea.

A short space elapsed, and up into this noiselessness

came Ahab alone  
from his cabin. Taking a few turns on the quarter-deck,  
he paused to  
gaze over the side, then slowly getting into the main-  
chains he took  
Stubb's long spade—still remaining there after the  
whale's  
decapitation—and striking it into the lower part of the  
half-suspended  
mass, placed its other end crutch-wise under one arm, and  
so stood  
leaning over with eyes attentively fixed on this head.

It was a black and hooded head; and hanging there in the  
midst of so  
intense a calm, it seemed the Sphynx's in the desert.  
"Speak, thou vast  
and venerable head," muttered Ahab, "which, though  
ungarnished with a  
beard, yet here and there lookest hoary with mosses;  
speak, mighty  
head, and tell us the secret thing that is in thee. Of  
all divers, thou  
hast dived the deepest. That head upon which the upper  
sun now gleams,  
has moved amid this world's foundations. Where unrecorded  
names and  
navies rust, and untold hopes and anchors rot; where in  
her murderous  
hold this frigate earth is ballasted with bones of  
millions of the  
drowned; there, in that awful water-land, there was thy  
most familiar  
home. Thou hast been where bell or diver never went; hast  
slept by many  
a sailor's side, where sleepless mothers would give their  
lives to lay  
them down. Thou saw'st the locked lovers when leaping  
from their  
flaming ship; heart to heart they sank beneath the  
exulting wave; true  
to each other, when heaven seemed false to them. Thou  
saw'st the  
murdered mate when tossed by pirates from the midnight

deck; for hours  
he fell into the deeper midnight of the insatiate maw;  
and his  
murderers still sailed on unharmed—while swift lightnings  
shivered the  
neighboring ship that would have borne a righteous  
husband to  
outstretched, longing arms. O head! 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 breezelessness 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 peremptorily refused to come into direct contact with the Pequod.

But this did by no means prevent all communications. Preserving an interval of some few yards between itself and the ship, the Jeroboam's boat by the occasional use of its oars contrived to keep parallel to the Pequod, as she heavily forged through the sea (for by this time it blew very fresh), with her main-topsail aback; though, indeed, at times by the sudden onset of a large rolling wave, the boat would be pushed some way ahead; but would be soon skilfully brought to her proper bearings again. Subject to this, and other the like interruptions now and then, a conversation was sustained between the two parties; but at intervals not without still another interruption of a very different sort.

Pulling an oar in the Jeroboam's boat, was a man of a singular appearance, even in that wild whaling life where individual notabilities make up all totalities. He was a small, short, youngish man, sprinkled all over his face with freckles, and wearing redundant yellow hair. A long-skirted, cabalistically-cut coat of a faded walnut tinge enveloped him; the overlapping sleeves of which were rolled up on his wrists. A deep, settled, fanatic delirium was in his eyes.

So soon as this figure had been first descried, Stubb had

exclaimed—"That's he! that's he!—the long-togged  
scaramouch the  
Town-Ho's company told us of!" Stubb here alluded to a  
strange story  
told of the Jeroboam, and a certain man among her crew,  
some time  
previous when the Pequod spoke the Town-Ho. According to  
this account  
and what was subsequently learned, it seemed that the  
scaramouch in  
question had gained a wonderful ascendancy over almost  
everybody in the  
Jeroboam. His story was this:

He had been originally nurtured among the crazy society  
of Neskyeuna  
Shakers, where he had been a great prophet; in their  
cracked, secret  
meetings having several times descended from heaven by  
the way of a  
trap-door, announcing the speedy opening of the seventh  
vial, which he  
carried in his vest-pocket; but, which, instead of  
containing  
gunpowder, was supposed to be charged with laudanum. A  
strange,  
apostolic whim having seized him, he had left Neskyeuna  
for Nantucket,  
where, with that cunning peculiar to craziness, he  
assumed a steady,  
common-sense exterior, and offered himself as a green-  
hand candidate  
for the Jeroboam's whaling voyage. They engaged him; but  
straightway  
upon the ship's getting out of sight of land, his  
insanity broke out in  
a freshet. He announced himself as the archangel Gabriel,  
and commanded  
the captain to jump overboard. He published his  
manifesto, whereby he  
set himself forth as the deliverer of the isles of the  
sea and  
vicar-general of all Oceanica. The unflinching  
earnestness with which

he declared these things;—the dark, daring play of his  
sleepless,  
excited imagination, and all the preternatural terrors of  
real  
delirium, united to invest this Gabriel in the minds of  
the majority of  
the ignorant crew, with an atmosphere of sacredness.  
Moreover, they  
were afraid of him. As such a man, however, was not of  
much practical  
use in the ship, especially as he refused to work except  
when he  
pleased, the incredulous captain would fain have been rid  
of him; but  
apprised that that individual's intention was to land him  
in the first  
convenient port, the archangel forthwith opened all his  
seals and  
vials—devoting the ship and all hands to unconditional  
perdition, in  
case this intention was carried out. So strongly did he  
work upon his  
disciples among the crew, that at last in a body they  
went to the  
captain and told him if Gabriel was sent from the ship,  
not a man of  
them would remain. He was therefore forced to relinquish  
his plan. Nor  
would they permit Gabriel to be any way maltreated, say  
or do what he  
would; so that it came to pass that Gabriel had the  
complete freedom of  
the ship. The consequence of all this was, that the  
archangel cared  
little or nothing for the captain and mates; and since  
the epidemic had  
broken out, he carried a higher hand than ever; declaring  
that the  
plague, as he called it, was at his sole command; nor  
should it be  
stayed but according to his good pleasure. The sailors,  
mostly poor  
devils, cringed, and some of them fawned before him; in  
obedience to



his instructions, sometimes rendering him personal  
homage, as to a god.  
Such things may seem incredible; but, however wondrous,  
they are true.  
Nor is the history of fanatics half so striking in  
respect to the  
measureless self-deception of the fanatic himself, as his  
measureless  
power of deceiving and bedevilling so many others. But it  
is time to  
return to the Pequod.

"I fear not thy epidemic, man," said Ahab from the  
bulwarks, to Captain  
Mayhew, who stood in the boat's stern; "come on board."

But now Gabriel started to his feet.

"Think, think of the fevers, yellow and bilious! Beware  
of the horrible  
plague!"

"Gabriel! Gabriel!" cried Captain Mayhew; "thou must  
either—" But that  
instant a headlong wave shot the boat far ahead, and its  
seethings  
drowned all speech.

"Hast thou seen the White Whale?" demanded Ahab, when the  
boat drifted  
back.

"Think, think of thy whale-boat, stoven and sunk! Beware  
of the  
horrible tail!"

"I tell thee again, Gabriel, that—" But again the boat  
tore ahead as if  
dragged by fiends. Nothing was said for some moments,  
while a  
succession of riotous waves rolled by, which by one of  
those occasional  
caprices of the seas were tumbling, not heaving it.  
Meantime, the

hoisted sperm whale's head jogged about very violently,  
and Gabriel was  
seen eyeing it with rather more apprehensiveness than his  
archangel  
nature seemed to warrant.

When this interlude was over, Captain Mayhew began a dark  
story  
concerning Moby Dick; not, however, without frequent  
interruptions from  
Gabriel, whenever his name was mentioned, and the crazy  
sea that seemed  
leagued with him.

It seemed that the Jeroboam had not long left home, when  
upon speaking  
a whale-ship, her people were reliably apprised of the  
existence of  
Moby Dick, and the havoc he had made. Greedily sucking in  
this  
intelligence, Gabriel solemnly warned the captain against  
attacking the  
White Whale, in case the monster should be seen; in his  
gibbering  
insanity, pronouncing the White Whale to be no less a  
being than the  
Shaker God incarnated; the Shakers receiving the Bible.  
But when, some  
year or two afterwards, Moby Dick was fairly sighted from  
the  
mast-heads, Macey, the chief mate, burned with ardour to  
encounter him;  
and the captain himself being not unwilling to let him  
have the  
opportunity, despite all the archangel's denunciations  
and  
forewarnings, Macey succeeded in persuading five men to  
man his boat.  
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! poor fellow! and from his wife," sighed  
Mayhew; "but let  
me have it."

"Nay, keep it thyself," cried Gabriel to Ahab; "thou art  
soon going  
that way."

"Curses throttle thee!" yelled Ahab. "Captain Mayhew,  
stand by now to  
receive it"; and taking the fatal missive from Starbuck's  
hands, he  
caught it in the slit of the pole, and reached it over  
towards the  
boat. But as he did so, the oarsmen expectantly desisted  
from rowing;  
the boat drifted a little towards the ship's stern; so  
that, as if by  
magic, the letter suddenly ranged along with Gabriel's  
eager hand. He  
clutched it in an instant, seized the boat-knife, and

impaling the  
letter on it, sent it thus loaded back into the ship. It  
fell at Ahab's  
feet. Then Gabriel shrieked out to his comrades to give  
way with their  
oars, and in that manner the mutinous boat rapidly shot  
away from the  
Pequod.

As, after this interlude, the seamen resumed their work  
upon the jacket  
of the whale, many strange things were hinted in  
reference to this wild  
affair.

## CHAPTER 72. The Monkey-Rope.

In the tumultuous business of cutting-in and attending to  
a whale,  
there is much running backwards and forwards among the  
crew. Now hands  
are wanted here, and then again hands are wanted there.  
There is no  
staying in any one place; for at one and the same time  
everything has  
to be done everywhere. It is much the same with him who  
endeavors the  
description of the scene. We must now retrace our way a  
little. It was  
mentioned that upon first breaking ground in the whale's  
back, the  
blubber-hook was inserted into the original hole there  
cut by the  
spades of the mates. But how did so clumsy and weighty a  
mass as that  
same hook get fixed in that hole? It was inserted there  
by my  
particular friend Queequeg, whose duty it was, as  
harpooneer, to  
descend upon the monster's back for the special purpose  
referred to.  
But in very many cases, circumstances require that the  
harpooneer shall

remain on the whale till the whole flensing or stripping operation is concluded. The whale, be it observed, lies almost entirely submerged, excepting the immediate parts operated upon. So down there, some ten feet below the level of the deck, the poor harpooneer flounders about, half on the whale and half in the water, as the vast mass revolves like a tread-mill beneath him. On the occasion in question, Queequeg figured in the Highland costume—a shirt and socks—in which to my eyes, at least, he appeared to uncommon advantage; and no one had a better chance to observe him, as will presently be seen.

Being the savage's bowsman, that is, the person who pulled the bow-oar in his boat (the second one from forward), it was my cheerful duty to attend upon him while taking that hard-scrabble scramble upon the dead whale's back. You have seen Italian organ-boys holding a dancing-ape by a long cord. Just so, from the ship's steep side, did I hold Queequeg down there in the sea, by what is technically called in the fishery a monkey-rope, attached to a strong strip of canvas belted round his waist.

It was a humorously perilous business for both of us. For, before we proceed further, it must be said that the monkey-rope was fast at both ends; fast to Queequeg's broad canvas belt, and fast to my narrow leather one. So that for better or for worse, we two, for the time, were wedded; and should poor Queequeg sink to rise no more, then both

usage and honor demanded, that instead of cutting the cord, it should drag me down in his wake. So, then, an elongated Siamese ligature united us. Queequeg was my own inseparable twin brother; nor could I any way get rid of the dangerous liabilities which the hempen bond entailed.

So strongly and metaphysically did I conceive of my situation then, that while earnestly watching his motions, I seemed distinctly to perceive that my own individuality was now merged in a joint stock company of two; that my free will had received a mortal wound; and that another's mistake or misfortune might plunge innocent me into unmerited disaster and death. Therefore, I saw that here was a sort of interregnum in Providence; for its even-handed equity never could have so gross an injustice. And yet still further pondering—while I jerked him now and then from between the whale and ship, which would threaten to jam him—still further pondering, I say, I saw that this situation of mine was the precise situation of every mortal that breathes; only, in most cases, he, one way or other, has this Siamese connexion with a plurality of other mortals. If your banker breaks, you snap; if your apothecary by mistake sends you poison in your pills, you die. True, you may say that, by exceeding caution, you may possibly escape these and the multitudinous other evil chances of life. But handle Queequeg's monkey-rope heedfully as I would, sometimes he jerked it so, that I



came very near sliding overboard. Nor could I possibly forget that, do what I would, I only had the management of one end of it.\*

\*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 tail. 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? That unsounded ocean you gasp in, is Life; those sharks, your foes; those spades, your friends; and what between sharks and spades you are in a sad pickle and peril, poor lad.

But courage! there is good cheer in store for you, Queequeg. For now, as with blue lips and blood-shot eyes the exhausted

savage at last  
climbs up the chains and stands all dripping and  
involuntarily  
trembling over the side; the steward advances, and with a  
benevolent,  
consolatory glance hands him—what? Some hot Cognac? No!  
hands him, ye  
gods! hands him a cup of tepid ginger and water!

"Ginger? Do I smell ginger?" suspiciously asked Stubb,  
coming near.  
"Yes, this must be ginger," peering into the as yet  
untasted cup. Then  
standing as if incredulous for a while, he calmly walked  
towards the  
astonished steward slowly saying, "Ginger? ginger? and  
will you have  
the goodness to tell me, Mr. Dough-Boy, where lies the  
virtue of  
ginger? Ginger! is ginger the sort of fuel you use,  
Dough-boy, to  
kindle a fire in this shivering cannibal? Ginger!—what  
the devil is  
ginger? 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 a 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. 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. But suddenly in the distance, they saw a great heap of tumultuous white water, and soon after news came from aloft that one or both the boats must be fast. An interval passed and the boats were in plain sight, in the act of being dragged right towards the ship by the towing whale. So close did the monster come to the hull, that at first it seemed as if he meant it malice; but suddenly going down in a maelstrom, within three rods of the planks, he wholly disappeared from view, as if diving under the keel. "Cut, cut!" was the cry from the ship to the boats, which, for one instant, seemed on the point of being brought with a deadly dash against the vessel's side. But having plenty of line yet in the tubs, and the whale not sounding very rapidly, they paid out abundance of rope, and at the same time pulled with all their might so as to get ahead of the ship. For a few minutes the struggle was intensely critical; for while they still slacked out the tightened line in one direction, and still plied their oars in another, the contending strain threatened to take them under. But it was only a few feet advance they sought to gain. And they stuck to it till they did gain it; when instantly, a swift tremor was felt running like lightning along the keel, as the strained line, scraping beneath the ship, suddenly rose to view under her bows, snapping and quivering; and so flinging off its drippings, that the drops fell like bits of broken glass on the water, while the whale beyond also rose to sight, and once

more the boats were free to fly. But the fagged whale  
abated his speed,  
and blindly altering his course, went round the stern of  
the ship  
towing the two boats after him, so that they performed a  
complete  
circuit.

Meantime, they hauled more and more upon their lines,  
till close  
flanking him on both sides, Stubb answered Flask with  
lance for lance;  
and thus round and round the Pequod the battle went,  
while the  
multitudes of sharks that had before swum round the Sperm  
Whale's body,  
rushed to the fresh blood that was spilled, thirstily  
drinking at every  
new gash, as the eager Israelites did at the new bursting  
fountains  
that poured from the smitten rock.

At last his spout grew thick, and with a frightful roll  
and vomit, he  
turned upon his back a corpse.

While the two headsmen were engaged in making fast cords  
to his flukes,  
and in other ways getting the mass in readiness for  
towing, some  
conversation ensued between them.

"I wonder what the old man wants with this lump of foul  
lard," said  
Stubb, not without some disgust at the thought of having  
to do with so  
ignoble a leviathan.

"Wants with it?" said Flask, coiling some spare line in  
the boat's bow,  
"did you never hear that the ship which but once has a  
Sperm Whale's  
head hoisted on her starboard side, and at the same time  
a Right

Whale's on the larboard; did you never hear, Stubb, that that ship can never afterwards capsize?"

"Why not?"

"I don't know, but I heard that gamboge ghost of a Fedallah saying so, and he seems to know all about ships' charms. But I sometimes think he'll charm the ship to no good at last. I don't half like that chap, Stubb. Did you ever notice how that tusk of his is a sort of carved into a snake's head, Stubb?"

"Sink him! I never look at him at all; but if ever I get a chance of a dark night, and he standing hard by the bulwarks, and no one by; look down there, Flask"—pointing into the sea with a peculiar motion of both hands—"Aye, will I! Flask, I take that Fedallah to be the devil in disguise. Do you believe that cock and bull story about his having been stowed away on board ship? He's the devil, I say. The reason why you don't see his tail, is because he tucks it up out of sight; he carries it coiled away in his pocket, I guess. Blast him! now that I think of it, he's always wanting oakum to stuff into the toes of his boots."

"He sleeps in his boots, don't he? He hasn't got any hammock; but I've seen him lay of nights in a coil of rigging."

"No doubt, and it's because of his cursed tail; he coils it down, do ye see, in the eye of the rigging."

"What's the old man have so much to do with him for?"



"Striking up a swap or a bargain, I suppose."

"Bargain?—about what?"

"Why, do ye see, the old man is hard bent after that White Whale, and the devil there is trying to come round him, and get him to swap away his silver watch, or his soul, or something of that sort, and then he'll surrender Moby Dick."

"Pooh! Stubb, you are skylarking; how can Fedallah do that?"

"I don't know, Flask, but the devil is a curious chap, and a wicked one, I tell ye. Why, they say as how he went a sauntering into the old flag-ship once, switching his tail about devilish easy and gentlemanlike, and inquiring if the old governor was at home. Well, he was at home, and asked the devil what he wanted. The devil, switching his hoofs, up and says, 'I want John.' 'What for?' says the old governor. 'What business is that of yours,' says the devil, getting mad,—'I want to use him.' 'Take him,' says the governor—and by the Lord, Flask, if the devil didn't give John the Asiatic cholera before he got through with him, I'll eat this whale in one mouthful. But look sharp—ain't you all ready there? Well, then, pull ahead, and let's get the whale alongside."

"I think I remember some such story as you were telling," said Flask, when at last the two boats were slowly advancing with their burden

towards the ship, "but I can't remember where."

"Three Spaniards? Adventures of those three bloody-minded soldadoes?

Did ye read it there, Flask? I guess ye did?"

"No: never saw such a book; heard of it, though. But now, tell me,

Stubb, do you suppose that that devil you was speaking of just now, was

the same you say is now on board the Pequod?"

"Am I the same man that helped kill this whale? Doesn't the devil live

for ever; who ever heard that the devil was dead? Did you ever see any

parson a wearing mourning for the devil? And if the devil has a

latch-key to get into the admiral's cabin, don't you suppose he can

crawl into a porthole? Tell me that, Mr. Flask?"

"How old do you suppose Fedallah is, Stubb?"

"Do you see that mainmast there?" pointing to the ship;

"well, that's

the figure one; now take all the hoops in the Pequod's hold, and string

along in a row with that mast, for oughts, do you see; well, that

wouldn't begin to be Fedallah's age. Nor all the coopers in creation

couldn't show hoops enough to make oughts enough."

"But see here, Stubb, I thought you a little boasted just now, that you

meant to give Fedallah a sea-toss, if you got a good chance. Now, if

he's so old as all those hoops of yours come to, and if he is going to

live for ever, what good will it do to pitch him overboard—tell me

that?

"Give him a good ducking, anyhow."

"But he'd crawl back."

"Duck him again; and keep ducking him."

"Suppose he should take it into his head to duck you, though—yes, and drown you—what then?"

"I should like to see him try it; I'd give him such a pair of black eyes that he wouldn't dare to show his face in the admiral's cabin again for a long while, let alone down in the orlop there, where he lives, and hereabouts on the upper decks where he sneaks so much. Damn the devil, Flask; so you suppose I'm afraid of the devil? Who's afraid of him, except the old governor who daresn't catch him and put him in double-darbies, as he deserves, but lets him go about kidnapping people; aye, and signed a bond with him, that all the people the devil kidnapped, he'd roast for him? There's a governor!"

"Do you suppose Fedallah wants to kidnap Captain Ahab?"

"Do I suppose it? You'll know it before long, Flask. But I am going now to keep a sharp look-out on him; and if I see anything very suspicious going on, I'll just take him by the nape of his neck, and say—Look here, Beelzebub, you don't do it; and if he makes any fuss, by the Lord I'll make a grab into his pocket for his tail, take it to the capstan, and give him such a wrenching and heaving, that his tail will come short off at the stump—do you see; and then, I rather guess when he

finds himself docked in that queer fashion, he'll sneak off without the poor satisfaction of feeling his tail between his legs."

"And what will you do with the tail, Stubb?"

"Do with it? Sell it for an ox whip when we get home;— what else?"

"Now, do you mean what you say, and have been saying all along, Stubb?"

"Mean or not mean, here we are at the ship."

The boats were here hailed, to tow the whale on the larboard side, where fluke chains and other necessities were already prepared for securing him.

"Didn't I tell you so?" 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 sideway 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. Nevertheless, any one's experience will teach him, that though he can take in an indiscriminating sweep of things at one glance, it is quite impossible for him, attentively, and completely, to examine any two things—however large or however small—at one and the same instant of time; never mind if they lie side by side and touch each other. But if you now come to separate these two objects, and surround each by a circle of profound darkness; then, in order to see one of them, in such a manner as to bring your mind to bear on it, the other will be utterly excluded from your contemporary consciousness. How is it, then, with the whale? True, both his eyes, in themselves, must simultaneously act; but is his brain so much more comprehensive, combining, and subtle than man's, that he can at the same moment of time attentively examine two distinct prospects, one on one side of him, and the other in an exactly opposite direction? If he



can, then is it as marvellous a thing in him, as if a man were able simultaneously to go through the demonstrations of two distinct problems in Euclid. Nor, strictly investigated, is there any incongruity in this comparison.

It may be but an idle whim, but it has always seemed to me, that the extraordinary vacillations of movement displayed by some whales when beset by three or four boats; the timidity and liability to queer frights, so common to such whales; I think that all this indirectly proceeds from the helpless perplexity of volition, in which their divided and diametrically opposite powers of vision must involve them.

But the ear of the whale is full as curious as the eye. If you are an entire stranger to their race, you might hunt over these two heads for hours, and never discover that organ. The ear has no external leaf whatever; and into the hole itself you can hardly insert a quill, so wondrously minute is it. It is lodged a little behind the eye. With respect to their ears, this important difference is to be observed between the sperm whale and the right. While the ear of the former has an external opening, that of the latter is entirely and evenly covered over with a membrane, so as to be quite imperceptible from without.

Is it not curious, that so vast a being as the whale should see the world through so small an eye, and hear the thunder through an ear

which is smaller than a hare's? But if his eyes were  
broad as the lens  
of Herschel's great telescope; and his ears capacious as  
the porches of  
cathedrals; would that make him any longer of sight, or  
sharper of  
hearing? Not at all.—Why then do you try to "enlarge"  
your mind?  
Subtilize it.

Let us now with whatever levers and steam-engines we have  
at hand, cant  
over the sperm whale's head, that it may lie bottom up;  
then, ascending  
by a ladder to the summit, have a peep down the mouth;  
and were it not  
that the body is now completely separated from it, with a  
lantern we  
might descend into the great Kentucky Mammoth Cave of his  
stomach. But  
let us hold on here by this tooth, and look about us  
where we are. What  
a really beautiful and chaste-looking mouth! from floor  
to ceiling,  
lined, or rather papered with a glistening white  
membrane, glossy as  
bridal satins.

But come out now, and look at this portentous lower jaw,  
which seems  
like the long narrow lid of an immense snuff-box, with  
the hinge at one  
end, instead of one side. If you pry it up, so as to get  
it overhead,  
and expose its rows of teeth, it seems a terrific  
portcullis; and such,  
alas! it proves to many a poor wight in the fishery, upon  
whom these  
spikes fall with impaling force. But far more terrible is  
it to behold,  
when fathoms down in the sea, you see some sulky whale,  
floating there  
suspended, with his prodigious jaw, some fifteen feet  
long, hanging

straight down at right-angles with his body, for all the world like a ship's jib-boom. This whale is not dead; he is only dispirited; out of sorts, perhaps; hypochondriac; and so supine, that the hinges of his jaw have relaxed, leaving him there in that ungainly sort of plight, a reproach to all his tribe, who must, no doubt, imprecate lock-jaws upon him.

In most cases this lower jaw—being easily unhinged by a practised artist—is disengaged and hoisted on deck for the purpose of extracting the ivory teeth, and furnishing a supply of that hard white whalebone with which the fishermen fashion all sorts of curious articles, including canes, umbrella-stocks, and handles to riding-whips.

With a long, weary hoist the jaw is dragged on board, as if it were an anchor; and when the proper time comes—some few days after the other work—Queequeg, Daggoo, and Tashtego, being all accomplished dentists, are set to drawing teeth. With a keen cutting-spade, Queequeg lances the gums; then the jaw is lashed down to ringbolts, and a tackle being rigged from aloft, they drag out these teeth, as Michigan oxen drag stumps of old oaks out of wild wood lands. 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.

## CHAPTER 75. The Right Whale's Head—Contrasted View.

Crossing the deck, let us now have a good long look at the Right Whale's head.

As in general shape the noble Sperm Whale's head may be compared to a Roman war-chariot (especially in front, where it is so broadly rounded); so, at a broad view, the Right Whale's head bears a rather inelegant resemblance to a gigantic galliot-toed shoe. Two hundred years ago an old Dutch voyager likened its shape to that of a shoemaker's last. And in this same last or shoe, that old woman of the nursery tale, with the swarming brood, might very comfortably be lodged, she and all her progeny.

But as you come nearer to this great head it begins to assume different aspects, according to your point of view. If you stand on its summit and look at these two F-shaped spoutholes, you would take the whole head for an enormous bass-viol, and these spiracles, the apertures in its sounding-board. Then, again, if you fix your eye upon this strange, crested, comb-like incrustation on the top of the mass—this green, barnacled thing, which the Greenlanders call the "crown," and the Southern fishers the "bonnet" of the Right Whale; fixing your eyes solely on this, you would take the head for the trunk of some huge oak, with a bird's nest in its crotch. At any rate, when you watch those live crabs that nestle here on this bonnet, such an idea

will be almost  
sure to occur to you; unless, indeed, your fancy has been  
fixed by the  
technical term "crown" also bestowed upon it; in which  
case you will  
take great interest in thinking how this mighty monster  
is actually a  
diademed king of the sea, whose green crown has been put  
together for  
him in this marvellous manner. But if this whale be a  
king, he is a  
very sulky looking fellow to grace a diadem. Look at that  
hanging lower  
lip! what a huge sulk and pout is there! a sulk and pout,  
by  
carpenter's measurement, about twenty feet long and five  
feet deep; a  
sulk and pout that will yield you some 500 gallons of oil  
and more.

A great pity, now, that this unfortunate whale should be  
hare-lipped.  
The fissure is about a foot across. Probably the mother  
during an  
important interval was sailing down the Peruvian coast,  
when  
earthquakes caused the beach to gape. Over this lip, as  
over a slippery  
threshold, we now slide into the mouth. Upon my word were  
I at  
Mackinaw, I should take this to be the inside of an  
Indian wigwam. Good  
Lord! is this the road that Jonah went? The roof is about  
twelve feet  
high, and runs to a pretty sharp angle, as if there were  
a regular  
ridge-pole there; while these ribbed, arched, hairy  
sides, present us  
with those wondrous, half vertical, scimeter-shaped slats  
of whalebone,  
say three hundred on a side, which depending from the  
upper part of the  
head or crown bone, form those Venetian blinds which have  
elsewhere

been cursorily mentioned. The edges of these bones are fringed with hairy fibres, through which the Right Whale strains the water, and in whose intricacies he retains the small fish, when openmouthed he goes through the seas of brit in feeding time. In the central blinds of bone, as they stand in their natural order, there are certain curious marks, curves, hollows, and ridges, whereby some whalemén calculate the creature's age, as the age of an oak by its circular rings. Though the certainty of this criterion is far from demonstrable, yet it has the savor of analogical probability. At any rate, if we yield to it, we must grant a far greater age to the Right Whale than at first glance will seem reasonable.

In old times, there seem to have prevailed the most curious fancies concerning these blinds. One voyager in Purchas calls them the wondrous "whiskers" inside of the whale's mouth;\* another, "hogs' bristles"; a third old gentleman in Hackluyt uses the following elegant language: "There are about two hundred and fifty fins growing on each side of his upper \_chop\_, which arch over his tongue on each side of his mouth."

\*This reminds us that the Right Whale really has a sort of whisker, or rather a moustache, consisting of a few scattered white hairs on the upper part of the outer end of the lower jaw. Sometimes these tufts impart a rather brigandish expression to his otherwise solemn countenance.

As every one knows, these same "hogs' bristles," "fins,"  
"whiskers,"  
"blinds," or whatever you please, furnish to the ladies  
their busks and  
other stiffening contrivances. But in this particular,  
the demand has  
long been on the decline. It was in Queen Anne's time  
that the bone was  
in its glory, the farthingale being then all the fashion.  
And as those  
ancient dames moved about gaily, though in the jaws of  
the whale, as  
you may say; even so, in a shower, with the like  
thoughtlessness, do we  
nowadays fly under the same jaws for protection; the  
umbrella being a  
tent spread over the same bone.

But now forget all about blinds and whiskers for a  
moment, and,  
standing in the Right Whale's mouth, look around you  
afresh. Seeing all  
these colonnades of bone so methodically ranged about,  
would you not  
think you were inside of the great Haarlem organ, and  
gazing upon its  
thousand pipes? For a carpet to the organ we have a rug  
of the softest  
Turkey—the tongue, which is glued, as it were, to the  
floor of the  
mouth. It is very fat and tender, and apt to tear in  
pieces in hoisting  
it on deck. This particular tongue now before us; at a  
passing glance I  
should say it was a six-barreler; that is, it will yield  
you about that  
amount of oil.

Ere this, you must have plainly seen the truth of what I  
started  
with—that the Sperm Whale and the Right Whale have almost  
entirely  
different heads. To sum up, then: in the Right Whale's

there is no  
great well of sperm; no ivory teeth at all; no long,  
slender mandible  
of a lower jaw, like the Sperm Whale's. Nor in the Sperm  
Whale are  
there any of those blinds of bone; no huge lower lip; and  
scarcely  
anything of a tongue. Again, the Right Whale has two  
external  
spout-holes, the Sperm Whale only one.

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.

## CHAPTER 76. The Battering-Ram.

Ere quitting, for the nonce, the Sperm Whale's head, I  
would have you,  
as a sensible physiologist, simply-particularly remark  
its front



aspect, in all its compacted collectedness. I would have you investigate it now with the sole view of forming to yourself some unexaggerated, intelligent estimate of whatever battering-ram power may be lodged there. Here is a vital point; for you must either satisfactorily settle this matter with yourself, or for ever remain an infidel as to one of the most appalling, but not the less true events, perhaps anywhere to be found in all recorded history.

You observe that in the ordinary swimming position of the Sperm Whale, the front of his head presents an almost wholly vertical plane to the water; you observe that the lower part of that front slopes considerably backwards, so as to furnish more of a retreat for the long socket which receives the boom-like lower jaw; you observe that the mouth is entirely under the head, much in the same way, indeed, as though your own mouth were entirely under your chin. Moreover you observe that the whale has no external nose; and that what nose he has—his spout hole—is on the top of his head; you observe that his eyes and ears are at the sides of his head, nearly one third of his entire length from the front. Wherefore, you must now have perceived that the front of the Sperm Whale's head is a dead, blind wall, without a single organ or tender prominence of any sort whatsoever. Furthermore, you are now to consider that only in the extreme, lower, backward sloping part of the front of the head, is there the slightest vestige of bone; and

not till you get near twenty feet from the forehead do  
you come to the  
full cranial development. So that this whole enormous  
boneless mass is  
as one wad. Finally, though, as will soon be revealed,  
its contents  
partly comprise the most delicate oil; yet, you are now  
to be apprised  
of the nature of the substance which so impregnably  
invests all that  
apparent effeminacy. In some previous place I have  
described to you how  
the blubber wraps the body of the whale, as the rind  
wraps an orange.  
Just so with the head; but with this difference: about  
the head this  
envelope, though not so thick, is of a boneless  
toughness, inestimable  
by any man who has not handled it. The severest pointed  
harpoon, the  
sharpest lance darted by the strongest human arm,  
impotently rebounds  
from it. It is as though the forehead of the Sperm Whale  
were paved  
with horses' hoofs. I do not think that any sensation  
lurks in it.

Bethink yourself also of another thing. When two large,  
loaded Indiamen  
chance to crowd and crush towards each other in the  
docks, what do the  
sailors do? They do not suspend between them, at the  
point of coming  
contact, any merely hard substance, like iron or wood.  
No, they hold  
there a large, round wad of tow and cork, enveloped in  
the thickest and  
toughest of ox-hide. That bravely and uninjured takes the  
jam which  
would have snapped all their oaken handspikes and iron  
crow-bars. By  
itself this sufficiently illustrates the obvious fact I  
drive at. But  
supplementary to this, it has hypothetically occurred to

me, that as  
ordinary fish possess what is called a swimming bladder  
in them,  
capable, at will, of distension or contraction; and as  
the Sperm Whale,  
as far as I know, has no such provision in him;  
considering, too, the  
otherwise inexplicable manner in which he now depresses  
his head  
altogether beneath the surface, and anon swims with it  
high elevated  
out of the water; considering the unobstructed elasticity  
of its  
envelope; considering the unique interior of his head; it  
has  
hypothetically occurred to me, I say, that those mystical  
lung-celled  
honeycombs there may possibly have some hitherto unknown  
and  
unsuspected connexion with the outer air, so as to be  
susceptible to  
atmospheric distension and contraction. If this be so,  
fancy the  
irresistibleness of that might, to which the most  
impalpable and  
destructive of all elements contributes.

Now, mark. Unerringly impelling this dead, impregnable,  
uninjurably  
wall, and this most buoyant thing within; there swims  
behind it all a  
mass of tremendous life, only to be adequately estimated  
as piled wood  
is—by the cord; and all obedient to one volition, as the  
smallest  
insect. 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?

#### CHAPTER 77. The Great Heidelburgh Tun.

Now comes the Baling of the Case. But to comprehend it  
aright, you must  
know something of the curious internal structure of the  
thing operated  
upon.

Regarding the Sperm Whale's head as a solid oblong, you  
may, on an  
inclined plane, sideways divide it into two quoins,\*  
whereof the lower  
is the bony structure, forming the cranium and jaws, and  
the upper an  
unctuous mass wholly free from bones; its broad forward  
end forming the  
expanded vertical apparent forehead of the whale. At the  
middle of the  
forehead horizontally subdivide this upper quoin, and  
then you have two  
almost equal parts, which before were naturally divided  
by an internal  
wall of a thick tendinous substance.

\*Quoin is not a Euclidean term. It belongs to the pure  
nautical  
mathematics. I know not that it has been defined before.  
A quoin is a  
solid which differs from a wedge in having its sharp end

formed by the  
steep inclination of one side, instead of the mutual  
tapering of both  
sides.

The lower subdivided part, called the junk, is one  
immense honeycomb of  
oil, formed by the crossing and recrossing, into ten  
thousand  
infiltrated cells, of tough elastic white fibres  
throughout its whole  
extent. The upper part, known as the Case, may be  
regarded as the great  
Heidelburgh Tun of the Sperm Whale. And as that famous  
great tierce is  
mystically carved in front, so the whale's vast plaited  
forehead forms  
innumerable strange devices for the emblematical  
adornment of his  
wondrous tun. Moreover, as that of Heidelburgh was always  
replenished  
with the most excellent of the wines of the Rhenish  
valleys, so the tun  
of the whale contains by far the most precious of all his  
oily  
vintages; namely, the highly-prized spermaceti, in its  
absolutely pure,  
limpid, and odoriferous state. Nor is this precious  
substance found  
unalloyed in any other part of the creature. Though in  
life it remains  
perfectly fluid, yet, upon exposure to the air, after  
death, it soon  
begins to concrete; sending forth beautiful crystalline  
shoots, as when  
the first thin delicate ice is just forming in water. A  
large whale's  
case generally yields about five hundred gallons of  
sperm, though from  
unavoidable circumstances, considerable of it is spilled,  
leaks, and  
dribbles away, or is otherwise irrevocably lost in the  
ticklish  
business of securing what you can.

I know not with what fine and costly material the Heidelburgh Tun was coated within, but in superlative richness that coating could not possibly have compared with the silken pearl-coloured membrane, like the lining of a fine pelisse, forming the inner surface of the Sperm Whale's case.

It will have been seen that the Heidelburgh Tun of the Sperm Whale embraces the entire length of the entire top of the head; and since—as has been elsewhere set forth—the head embraces one third of the whole length of the creature, then setting that length down at eighty feet for a good sized whale, you have more than twenty-six feet for the depth of the tun, when it is lengthwise hoisted up and down against a ship's side.

As in decapitating the whale, the operator's instrument is brought close to the spot where an entrance is subsequently forced into the spermaceti magazine; he has, therefore, to be uncommonly heedful, lest a careless, untimely stroke should invade the sanctuary and wastingly let out its invaluable contents. It is this decapitated end of the head, also, which is at last elevated out of the water, and retained in that position by the enormous cutting tackles, whose hempen combinations, on one side, make quite a wilderness of ropes in that quarter.

Thus much being said, attend now, I pray you, to that

marvellous and—in  
this particular instance—almost fatal operation whereby  
the Sperm  
Whale's great Heidelburgh Tun is tapped.

#### CHAPTER 78. Cistern and Buckets.

Nimble as a cat, Tashtego mounts aloft; and without  
altering his erect  
posture, runs straight out upon the overhanging mainyard-  
arm, to the  
part where it exactly projects over the hoisted Tun. He  
has carried  
with him a light tackle called a whip, consisting of only  
two parts,  
travelling through a single-sheaved block. Securing this  
block, so that  
it hangs down from the yard-arm, he swings one end of the  
rope, till it  
is caught and firmly held by a hand on deck. Then, hand-  
over-hand, down  
the other part, the Indian drops through the air, till  
dexterously he  
lands on the summit of the head. There—still high  
elevated above the  
rest of the company, to whom he vivaciously cries—he  
seems some Turkish  
Muezzin calling the good people to prayers from the top  
of a tower. A  
short-handled sharp spade being sent up to him, he  
diligently searches  
for the proper place to begin breaking into the Tun. In  
this business  
he proceeds very heedfully, like a treasure-hunter in  
some old house,  
sounding the walls to find where the gold is masoned in.  
By the time  
this cautious search is over, a stout iron-bound bucket,  
precisely like  
a well-bucket, has been attached to one end of the whip;  
while the  
other end, being stretched across the deck, is there held  
by two or

three alert hands. These last now hoist the bucket within grasp of the Indian, to whom another person has reached up a very long pole.

Inserting this pole into the bucket, Tashtego downward guides the bucket into the Tun, till it entirely disappears; then giving the word to the seamen at the whip, up comes the bucket again, all bubbling like a dairy-maid's pail of new milk. Carefully lowered from its height, the full-freighted vessel is caught by an appointed hand, and quickly emptied into a large tub. Then remounting aloft, it again goes through the same round until the deep cistern will yield no more. Towards the end, Tashtego has to ram his long pole harder and harder, and deeper and deeper into the Tun, until some twenty feet of the pole have gone down.

Now, the people of the Pequod had been baling some time in this way; several tubs had been filled with the fragrant sperm; when all at once a queer accident happened. Whether it was that Tashtego, that wild Indian, was so heedless and reckless as to let go for a moment his one-handed hold on the great cabled tackles suspending the head; or whether the place where he stood was so treacherous and oozy; or whether the Evil One himself would have it to fall out so, without stating his particular reasons; how it was exactly, there is no telling now; but, on a sudden, as the eightieth or ninetieth bucket came suckingly up—my God! poor Tashtego—like the twin reciprocating bucket



in a veritable well, dropped head-foremost down into this great Tun of Heidelburgh, and with a horrible oily gurgling, went clean out of sight!

"Man overboard!" cried Daggoo, who amid the general consternation first came to his senses. "Swing the bucket this way!" and putting one foot into it, so as the better to secure his slippery hand-hold on the whip itself, the hoisters ran him high up to the top of the head, almost before Tashtego could have reached its interior bottom. Meantime, there was a terrible tumult. Looking over the side, they saw the before lifeless head throbbing and heaving just below the surface of the sea, as if that moment seized with some momentous idea; whereas it was only the poor Indian unconsciously revealing by those struggles the perilous depth to which he had sunk.

At this instant, while Daggoo, on the summit of the head, was clearing the whip—which had somehow got foul of the great cutting tackles—a sharp cracking noise was heard; and to the unspeakable horror of all, one of the two enormous hooks suspending the head tore out, and with a vast vibration the enormous mass sideways swung, till the drunk ship reeled and shook as if smitten by an iceberg. The one remaining hook, upon which the entire strain now depended, seemed every instant to be on the point of giving way; an event still more likely from the violent motions of the head.

"Come down, come down!" yelled the seamen to Daggoo, but with one hand holding on to the heavy tackles, so that if the head should drop, he would still remain suspended; the negro having cleared the foul line, rammed down the bucket into the now collapsed well, meaning that the buried harpooneer should grasp it, and so be hoisted out.

"In heaven's name, man," cried Stubb, "are you ramming home a cartridge there?—Avast! How will that help him; jamming that iron-bound bucket on top of his head? Avast, will ye!"

"Stand clear of the tackle!" cried a voice like the bursting of a rocket.

Almost in the same instant, with a thunder-boom, the enormous mass dropped into the sea, like Niagara's Table-Rock into the whirlpool; the suddenly relieved hull rolled away from it, to far down her glittering copper; and all caught their breath, as half swinging—now over the sailors' heads, and now over the water—Daggoo, through a thick mist of spray, was dimly beheld clinging to the pendulous tackles, while poor, buried-alive Tashtego was sinking utterly down to the bottom of the sea! But hardly had the blinding vapor cleared away, when a naked figure with a boarding-sword in his hand, was for one swift moment seen hovering over the bulwarks. The next, a loud splash announced that my brave Queequeg had dived to the rescue. One packed rush was made to the side, and every eye counted every ripple, as moment followed moment,

and no sign of either the sinker or the diver could be seen. Some hands now jumped into a boat alongside, and pushed a little off from the ship.

"Ha! ha!" cried Daggoo, all at once, from his now quiet, swinging perch overhead; and looking further off from the side, we saw an arm thrust upright from the blue waves; a sight strange to see, as an arm thrust forth from the grass over a grave.

"Both! 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 tissued, 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?

## CHAPTER 79. The Prairie.

To scan the lines of his face, or feel the bumps on the head of this Leviathan; this is a thing which no Physiognomist or Phrenologist has as yet undertaken. Such an enterprise would seem almost as hopeful as for Lavater to have scrutinized the wrinkles on the Rock of Gibraltar, or for Gall to have mounted a ladder and manipulated the Dome of the Pantheon. Still, in that famous work of his, Lavater not only treats of the various faces of men, but also attentively studies

the faces of  
horses, birds, serpents, and fish; and dwells in detail  
upon the  
modifications of expression discernible therein. Nor have  
Gall and his  
disciple Spurzheim failed to throw out some hints  
touching the  
phrenological characteristics of other beings than man.  
Therefore,  
though I am but ill qualified for a pioneer, in the  
application of  
these two semi-sciences to the whale, I will do my  
endeavor. I try all  
things; I achieve what I can.

Physiognomically regarded, the Sperm Whale is an  
anomalous creature. He  
has no proper nose. And since the nose is the central and  
most  
conspicuous of the features; and since it perhaps most  
modifies and  
finally controls their combined expression; hence it  
would seem that  
its entire absence, as an external appendage, must very  
largely affect  
the countenance of the whale. For as in landscape  
gardening, a spire,  
cupola, monument, or tower of some sort, is deemed almost  
indispensable  
to the completion of the scene; so no face can be  
physiognomically in  
keeping without the elevated open-work belfry of the  
nose. Dash the  
nose from Phidias's marble Jove, and what a sorry  
remainder!  
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  
pyramidical 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 whalers 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 vertebræ to a strung necklace of dwarfed skulls, all bearing rudimental resemblance to the skull proper. It is a German conceit, that the vertebræ 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 vertebræ 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 vertebræ 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 vertebræ, 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.

## CHAPTER 81. 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.  
He's out of oil, and has come a-begging."

However curious it may seem for an oil-ship to be  
borrowing oil on the

whale-ground, and however much it may invertedly contradict the old proverb about carrying coals to Newcastle, yet sometimes such a thing really happens; and in the present case Captain Derick De Deer did indubitably conduct a lamp-feeder as Flask did declare.

As he mounted the deck, Ahab abruptly accosted him, without at all heeding what he had in his hand; but in his broken lingo, the German soon evinced his complete ignorance of the White Whale; immediately turning the conversation to his lamp-feeder and oil can, with some remarks touching his having to turn into his hammock at night in profound darkness—his last drop of Bremen oil being gone, and not a single flying-fish yet captured to supply the deficiency; concluding by hinting that his ship was indeed what in the Fishery is technically called a \_clean\_ one (that is, an empty one), well deserving the name of Jungfrau or the Virgin.

His necessities supplied, Derick departed; but he had not gained his ship's side, when whales were almost simultaneously raised from the mast-heads of both vessels; and so eager for the chase was Derick, that without pausing to put his oil-can and lamp-feeder aboard, he slewed round his boat and made after the leviathan lamp-feeders.

Now, the game having risen to leeward, he and the other three German boats that soon followed him, had considerably the start of the Pequod's keels. There were eight whales, an average pod. Aware of their

danger, they were going all abreast with great speed  
straight before  
the wind, rubbing their flanks as closely as so many  
spans of horses in  
harness. They left a great, wide wake, as though  
continually unrolling  
a great wide parchment upon the sea.

Full in this rapid wake, and many fathoms in the rear,  
swam a huge,  
humped old bull, which by his comparatively slow  
progress, as well as  
by the unusual yellowish incrustations overgrowing him,  
seemed  
afflicted with the jaundice, or some other infirmity.  
Whether this  
whale belonged to the pod in advance, seemed  
questionable; for it is  
not customary for such venerable leviathans to be at all  
social.  
Nevertheless, he stuck to their wake, though indeed their  
back water  
must have retarded him, because the white-bone or swell  
at his broad  
muzzle was a dashed one, like the swell formed when two  
hostile  
currents meet. His spout was short, slow, and laborious;  
coming forth  
with a choking sort of gush, and spending itself in torn  
shreds,  
followed by strange subterranean commotions in him, which  
seemed to  
have egress at his other buried extremity, causing the  
waters behind  
him to upbubble.

"Who's got some paregoric?" said Stubb, "he has the  
stomach-ache, I'm  
afraid. 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!"

"I tell ye what it is, men"—cried Stubb to his crew—"it's against my religion to get mad; but I'd like to eat that villainous Yarman—Pull—won't ye? Are ye going to let that rascal beat ye? Do ye love brandy? A hogshead of brandy, then, to the best man. Come, why don't some of ye burst a blood-vessel? Who's that been dropping an anchor overboard—we don't budge an inch—we're becalmed. Halloo, here's grass growing in the boat's bottom—and by the Lord, the mast there's budding. This won't do, boys. Look at that Yarman! The short and long of it is, men, will ye spit fire or not?"

"Oh! see the suds he makes!" cried Flask, dancing up and down—"What a hump—Oh, \_do\_ pile on the beef—lays like a log! Oh! my lads, \_do\_ spring—slap—jacks and quahogs for supper, you know, my lads—baked clams and muffins—oh, \_do\_, \_do\_, spring,—he's a hundred barreller—don't lose him now—don't oh, \_don't!\_—see that Yarman—Oh, won't ye pull for your duff, my lads—such a sog! such a sogger! Don't ye love sperm? There goes three thousand dollars, men!—a bank!—a whole bank! The bank of

England!—Oh, \_do\_, \_do\_, \_do!\_—What's that Yarman about now?"

At this moment Derick was in the act of pitching his lamp-feeder at the advancing boats, and also his oil-can; perhaps with the double view of retarding his rivals' way, and at the same time economically accelerating his own by the momentary impetus of the backward toss.

"The unmannerly Dutch dogger!" cried Stubb. "Pull now, men, like fifty thousand line-of-battle-ship loads of red-haired devils. What d'ye say, Tashtego; are you the man to snap your spine in two-and-twenty pieces for the honor of old Gayhead? What d'ye say?"

"I say, pull like god-dam,"—cried the Indian.

Fiercely, but evenly incited by the taunts of the German, the Pequod's three boats now began ranging almost abreast; and, so disposed, momentarily neared him. In that fine, loose, chivalrous attitude of the headsman when drawing near to his prey, the three mates stood up proudly, occasionally backing the after oarsman with an exhilarating cry of, "There she slides, now! Hurrah for the white-ash breeze! Down with the Yarman! Sail over him!"

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 vapors 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 harpooneers 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! that unfulfilments should follow the prophets. For with the strength of

a thousand thighs in his tail, Leviathan had run his head under the mountains of the sea, to hide him from the Pequod's fish-spears!

In that sloping afternoon sunlight, the shadows that the three boats sent down beneath the surface, must have been long enough and broad enough to shade half Xerxes' army. Who can tell how appalling to the wounded whale must have been such huge phantoms flitting over his head!

"Stand by, men; he stirs," cried Starbuck, as the three lines suddenly vibrated in the water, distinctly conducting upwards to them, as by magnetic wires, the life and death throbs of the whale, so that every oarsman felt them in his seat. The next moment, relieved in great part from the downward strain at the bows, the boats gave a sudden bounce upwards, as a small icefield will, when a dense herd of white bears are scared from it into the sea.

"Haul in! Haul in!" cried Starbuck again; "he's rising."

The lines, of which, hardly an instant before, not one hand's breadth could have been gained, were now in long quick coils flung back all dripping into the boats, and soon the whale broke water within two ship's lengths of the hunters.

His motions plainly denoted his extreme exhaustion. In most land animals there are certain valves or flood-gates in many of their veins, whereby when wounded, the blood is in some degree at least instantly

shut off in certain directions. Not so with the whale; one of whose peculiarities it is to have an entire non-valvular structure of the blood-vessels, so that when pierced even by so small a point as a harpoon, a deadly drain is at once begun upon his whole arterial system; and when this is heightened by the extraordinary pressure of water at a great distance below the surface, his life may be said to pour from him in incessant streams. Yet so vast is the quantity of blood in him, and so distant and numerous its interior fountains, that he will keep thus bleeding and bleeding for a considerable period; even as in a drought a river will flow, whose source is in the well-springs of far-off and undiscernible hills. Even now, when the boats pulled upon this whale, and perilously drew over his swaying flukes, and the lances were darted into him, they were followed by steady jets from the new made wound, which kept continually playing, while the natural spout-hole in his head was only at intervals, however rapid, sending its affrighted moisture into the air. From this last vent no blood yet came, because no vital part of him had thus far been struck. His life, as they significantly call it, was untouched.

As the boats now more closely surrounded him, the whole upper part of his form, with much of it that is ordinarily submerged, was plainly revealed. His eyes, or rather the places where his eyes had been, were beheld. As strange misgrown masses gather in the knot-holes of the



noblest oaks when prostrate, so from the points which the whale's eyes had once occupied, now protruded blind bulbs, horribly pitiable to see. But pity there was none. For all his old age, and his one arm, and his blind eyes, he must die the death and be murdered, in order to light the gay bridals and other merry-makings of men, and also to illuminate the solemn churches that preach unconditional inoffensiveness by all to all. Still rolling in his blood, at last he partially disclosed a strangely discoloured bunch or protuberance, the size of a bushel, low down on the flank.

"A nice spot," cried Flask; "just let me prick him there once."

"Avast!" cried Starbuck, "there's no need of that!"

But humane Starbuck was too late. At the instant of the dart an ulcerous jet shot from this cruel wound, and goaded by it into more than sufferable anguish, the whale now spouting thick blood, with swift fury blindly darted at the craft, bespattering them and their glorying crews all over with showers of gore, capsizing Flask's boat and marring the bows. It was his death stroke. For, by this time, so spent was he by loss of blood, that he helplessly rolled away from the wreck he had made; lay panting on his side, impotently flapped with his stumped fin, then over and over slowly revolved like a waning world; turned up the white secrets of his belly; lay like a log, and died. It was most piteous, that last expiring spout. As when by unseen

hands the water is  
gradually drawn off from some mighty fountain, and with  
half-stifled  
melancholy gurglings the spray-column lowers and lowers  
to the  
ground—so the last long dying spout of the whale.

Soon, while the crews were awaiting the arrival of the  
ship, the body  
showed symptoms of sinking with all its treasures  
unrifled.  
Immediately, by Starbuck's orders, lines were secured to  
it at  
different points, so that ere long every boat was a buoy;  
the sunken  
whale being suspended a few inches beneath them by the  
cords. By very  
heedful management, when the ship drew nigh, the whale  
was transferred  
to her side, and was strongly secured there by the  
stiffest  
fluke-chains, for it was plain that unless artificially  
upheld, the  
body would at once sink to the bottom.

It so chanced that almost upon first cutting into him  
with the spade,  
the entire length of a corroded harpoon was found  
imbedded in his  
flesh, on the lower part of the bunch before described.  
But as the  
stumps of harpoons are frequently found in the dead  
bodies of captured  
whales, with the flesh perfectly healed around them, and  
no prominence  
of any kind to denote their place; therefore, there must  
needs have  
been some other unknown reason in the present case fully  
to account for  
the ulceration alluded to. But still more curious was the  
fact of a  
lance-head of stone being found in him, not far from the  
buried iron,  
the flesh perfectly firm about it. Who had darted that

stone lance? And  
when? It might have been darted by some Nor' West Indian  
long before  
America was discovered.

What other marvels might have been rummaged out of this  
monstrous  
cabinet there is no telling. But a sudden stop was put to  
further  
discoveries, by the ship's being unprecedentedly dragged  
over sideways  
to the sea, owing to the body's immensely increasing  
tendency to sink.  
However, Starbuck, who had the ordering of affairs, hung  
on to it to  
the last; hung on to it so resolutely, indeed, that when  
at length the  
ship would have been capsized, if still persisting in  
locking arms with  
the body; then, when the command was given to break clear  
from it, such  
was the immovable strain upon the timber-heads to which  
the  
fluke-chains and cables were fastened, that it was  
impossible to cast  
them off. Meantime everything in the Pequod was aslant.  
To cross to the  
other side of the deck was like walking up the steep  
gabled roof of a  
house. The ship groaned and gasped. Many of the ivory  
inlayings of her  
bulwarks and cabins were started from their places, by  
the unnatural  
dislocation. In vain handspikes and crows were brought to  
bear upon the  
immovable fluke-chains, to pry them adrift from the  
timberheads; and so  
low had the whale now settled that the submerged ends  
could not be at  
all approached, while every moment whole tons of  
ponderosity seemed  
added to the sinking bulk, and the ship seemed on the  
point of going  
over.

"Hold on, hold on, won't ye?" cried Stubb to the body,  
"don't be in  
such a devil of a hurry to sink! By thunder, men, we must  
do something  
or go for it. No use prying there; avast, I say with your  
handspikes,  
and run one of ye for a prayer book and a pen-knife, and  
cut the big  
chains."

"Knife? Aye, aye," cried Queequeg, and seizing the  
carpenter's heavy  
hatchet, he leaned out of a porthole, and steel to iron,  
began slashing  
at the largest fluke-chains. But a few strokes, full of  
sparks, were  
given, when the exceeding strain effected the rest. With  
a terrific  
snap, every fastening went adrift; the ship righted, the  
carcase sank.

Now, this occasional inevitable sinking of the recently  
killed Sperm  
Whale is a very curious thing; nor has any fisherman yet  
adequately  
accounted for it. Usually the dead Sperm Whale floats  
with great  
buoyancy, with its side or belly considerably elevated  
above the  
surface. If the only whales that thus sank were old,  
meagre, and  
broken-hearted creatures, their pads of lard diminished  
and all their  
bones heavy and rheumatic; then you might with some  
reason assert that  
this sinking is caused by an uncommon specific gravity in  
the fish so  
sinking, consequent upon this absence of buoyant matter  
in him. But it  
is not so. For young whales, in the highest health, and  
swelling with  
noble aspirations, prematurely cut off in the warm flush  
and May of

life, with all their panting lard about them; even these  
brawny,  
buoyant heroes do sometimes sink.

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 unnearable 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 Honor 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 honorableness 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  
whaleman; and to  
the eternal honor 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 whalemen, 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 harpooneers of Nantucket should be  
enrolled in the most



noble order of St. George. And therefore, let not the knights of that honorable 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. If I claim the demi-god then, why not the prophet?

Nor do heroes, saints, demigods, and prophets alone comprise the whole roll of our order. Our grand master is still to be named; for like royal kings of old times, we find the head waters of our

fraternity in  
nothing short of the great gods themselves. That wondrous  
oriental  
story is now to be rehearsed from the Shaster, which  
gives us the dread  
Vishnoo, one of the three persons in the godhead of the  
Hindoos; gives  
us this divine Vishnoo himself for our Lord;—Vishnoo,  
who, by the first  
of his ten earthly incarnations, has for ever set apart  
and sanctified  
the whale. When Brahma, or the God of Gods, saith the  
Shaster, resolved  
to recreate the world after one of its periodical  
dissolutions, he gave  
birth to Vishnoo, to preside over the work; but the  
Vedas, or mystical  
books, whose perusal would seem to have been  
indispensable to Vishnoo  
before beginning the creation, and which therefore must  
have contained  
something in the shape of practical hints to young  
architects, these  
Vedas were lying at the bottom of the waters; so Vishnoo  
became  
incarnate in a whale, and sounding down in him to the  
uttermost depths,  
rescued the sacred volumes. Was not this Vishnoo a  
whaleman, then? even  
as a man who rides a horse is called a horseman?

Perseus, St. George, Hercules, Jonah, and Vishnoo!  
there's a  
member-roll for you! What club but the whaleman's can  
head off like  
that?

#### 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. But this objection likewise falls to the ground, because a German exegetist supposes that Jonah must have taken refuge in the floating body of a \_dead\_ whale—even as the French soldiers in the Russian campaign turned their dead horses into tents, and crawled into them. Besides, it has been divined by other continental commentators, that when Jonah was thrown overboard from the Joppa ship, he straightway effected his escape to another vessel near by, some vessel with a whale for a figure-head; and, I would add, possibly called "The Whale," as some craft are nowadays christened the "Shark," the "Gull," the "Eagle." Nor have there been wanting learned exegetists who have opined that the whale mentioned in the book of Jonah merely meant a life-preserver—an inflated bag of wind—which the endangered prophet swam to, and so was saved from a watery doom. Poor Sag-Harbor, therefore, seems worsted all round. But he had still another reason for his want of faith. It was this, if I remember right: Jonah was swallowed by the whale in the Mediterranean Sea, and after three days he was vomited up somewhere within three days' journey of Nineveh, a city on the Tigris, very much more than three days' journey across from the nearest point of the Mediterranean coast. How is that?

But was there no other way for the whale to land the prophet within that short distance of Nineveh? Yes. He might have

carried him round by  
the way of the Cape of Good Hope. But not to speak of the  
passage  
through the whole length of the Mediterranean, and  
another passage up  
the Persian Gulf and Red Sea, such a supposition would  
involve the  
complete circumnavigation of all Africa in three days,  
not to speak of  
the Tigris waters, near the site of Nineveh, being too  
shallow for any  
whale to swim in. Besides, this idea of Jonah's  
weathering the Cape of  
Good Hope at so early a day would wrest the honor of the  
discovery of  
that great headland from Bartholomew Diaz, its reputed  
discoverer, and  
so make modern history a liar.

But all these foolish arguments of old Sag-Harbor only  
evinced his  
foolish pride of reason—a thing still more reprehensible  
in him, seeing  
that he had but little learning except what he had picked  
up from the  
sun and the sea. I say it only shows his foolish, impious  
pride, and  
abominable, devilish rebellion against the reverend  
clergy. For by a  
Portuguese Catholic priest, this very idea of Jonah's  
going to Nineveh  
via the Cape of Good Hope was advanced as a signal  
magnification of the  
general miracle. 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 honor 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 manœuvre 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 vapor—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.

If I say, that in any creature breathing is only a  
function  
indispensable to vitality, inasmuch as it withdraws from  
the air a  
certain element, which being subsequently brought into  
contact with the  
blood imparts to the blood its vivifying principle, I do  
not think I  
shall err; though I may possibly use some superfluous  
scientific words.  
Assume it, and it follows that if all the blood in a man  
could be  
aerated with one breath, he might then seal up his  
nostrils and not  
fetch another for a considerable time. That is to say, he  
would then  
live without breathing. Anomalous as it may seem, this is  
precisely the  
case with the whale, who systematically lives, by  
intervals, his full  
hour and more (when at the bottom) without drawing a

single breath, or  
so much as in any way inhaling a particle of air; for,  
remember, he has  
no gills. How is this? Between his ribs and on each side  
of his spine  
he is supplied with a remarkable involved Cretan  
labyrinth of  
vermicelli-like vessels, which vessels, when he quits the  
surface, are  
completely distended with oxygenated blood. So that for  
an hour or  
more, a thousand fathoms in the sea, he carries a surplus  
stock of  
vitality in him, just as the camel crossing the waterless  
desert  
carries a surplus supply of drink for future use in its  
four  
supplementary stomachs. The anatomical fact of this  
labyrinth is  
indisputable; and that the supposition founded upon it is  
reasonable  
and true, seems the more cogent to me, when I consider  
the otherwise  
inexplicable obstinacy of that leviathan in \_having his  
spoutings out\_,  
as the fishermen phrase it. This is what I mean. If  
unmolested, upon  
rising to the surface, the Sperm Whale will continue  
there for a period  
of time exactly uniform with all his other unmolested  
risings. Say he  
stays eleven minutes, and jets seventy times, that is,  
respires seventy  
breaths; then whenever he rises again, he will be sure to  
have his  
seventy breaths over again, to a minute. Now, if after he  
fetches a few  
breaths you alarm him, so that he sounds, he will be  
always dodging up  
again to make good his regular allowance of air. And not  
till those  
seventy breaths are told, will he finally go down to stay  
out his full  
term below. Remark, however, that in different

individuals these rates  
are different; but in any one they are alike. Now, why  
should the whale  
thus insist upon having his spoutings out, unless it be  
to replenish  
his reservoir of air, ere descending for good? 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 vapor—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 vapor 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 vapor; 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, vapory 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 whalers, 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 vapor, engendered by his  
incommunicable  
contemplations, and that vapor—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  
vapor. 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.

But as if this vast local power in the tendinous tail were not enough, the whole bulk of the leviathan is knit over with a warp and woof of muscular fibres and filaments, which passing on either side the loins and running down into the flukes, insensibly blend with them, and largely contribute to their might; so that in the tail the confluent measureless force of the whole whale seems concentrated to a point. Could annihilation occur to matter, this were the thing to do it.

Nor does this—its amazing strength, at all tend to cripple the graceful flexion of its motions; where infantileness of ease undulates through a Titanism of power. On the contrary, those motions derive their most appalling beauty from it. Real strength never impairs beauty or harmony, but it often bestows it; and in everything imposingly beautiful, strength has much to do with the magic. Take

away the tied  
tendons that all over seem bursting from the marble in  
the carved  
Hercules, and its charm would be gone. As devout Eckerman  
lifted the  
linen sheet from the naked corpse of Goethe, he was  
overwhelmed with  
the massive chest of the man, that seemed as a Roman  
triumphal arch.  
When Angelo paints even God the Father in human form,  
mark what  
robustness is there. And whatever they may reveal of the  
divine love in  
the Son, the soft, curled, hermaphroditical Italian  
pictures, in which  
his idea has been most successfully embodied; these  
pictures, so  
destitute as they are of all brawniness, hint nothing of  
any power, but  
the mere negative, feminine one of submission and  
endurance, which on  
all hands it is conceded, form the peculiar practical  
virtues of his  
teachings.

Such is the subtle elasticity of the organ I treat of,  
that whether  
wielded in sport, or in earnest, or in anger, whatever be  
the mood it  
be in, its flexions are invariably marked by exceeding  
grace. Therein  
no fairy's arm can transcend it.

Five great motions are peculiar to it. First, when used  
as a fin for  
progression; Second, when used as a mace in battle;  
Third, in sweeping;  
Fourth, in lobtailing; Fifth, in peaking flukes.

First: Being horizontal in its position, the Leviathan's  
tail acts in a  
different manner from the tails of all other sea  
creatures. It never  
wriggles. In man or fish, wriggling is a sign of

inferiority. To the whale, his tail is the sole means of propulsion. Scroll-wise coiled forwards beneath the body, and then rapidly sprung backwards, it is this which gives that singular darting, leaping motion to the monster when furiously swimming. His side-fins only serve to steer by.

Second: It is a little significant, that while one sperm whale only fights another sperm whale with his head and jaw, nevertheless, in his conflicts with man, he chiefly and contemptuously uses his tail. In striking at a boat, he swiftly curves away his flukes from it, and the blow is only inflicted by the recoil. If it be made in the unobstructed air, especially if it descend to its mark, the stroke is then simply irresistible. No ribs of man or boat can withstand it. Your only salvation lies in eluding it; but if it comes sideways through the opposing water, then partly owing to the light buoyancy of the whale-boat, and the elasticity of its materials, a cracked rib or a dashed plank or two, a sort of stitch in the side, is generally the most serious result. These submerged side blows are so often received in the fishery, that they are accounted mere child's play. Some one strips off a frock, and the hole is stopped.

Third: I cannot demonstrate it, but it seems to me, that in the whale the sense of touch is concentrated in the tail; for in this respect there is a delicacy in it only equalled by the daintiness of the

elephant's trunk. This delicacy is chiefly evinced in the action of sweeping, when in maidenly gentleness the whale with a certain soft slowness moves his immense flukes from side to side upon the surface of the sea; and if he feel but a sailor's whisker, woe to that sailor, whiskers and all. What tenderness there is in that preliminary touch! Had this tail any prehensile power, I should straightway bethink me of Darmonodes' elephant that so frequented the flower-market, and with low salutations presented nosegays to damsels, and then caressed their zones. On more accounts than one, a pity it is that the whale does not possess this prehensile virtue in his tail; for I have heard of yet another elephant, that when wounded in the fight, curved round his trunk and extracted the dart.

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 flirited 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 vapor 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. The most direful blow from the elephant's trunk were as the playful tap of a fan, compared with the measureless crush and crash of the sperm whale's ponderous flukes, which in repeated instances have one after the other hurled entire boats with all their oars and crews into the air, very much as an Indian juggler tosses his balls.\*

\*Though all comparison in the way of general bulk between the whale and the elephant is preposterous, inasmuch as in that particular the elephant stands in much the same respect to the whale that a dog does to the elephant; nevertheless, there are not wanting some points of curious similitude; among these is the spout. It is well known that the elephant will often draw up water or dust in his trunk, and then elevating it, jet it forth in a stream.

The more I consider this mighty tail, the more do I deplore my inability to express it. At times there are gestures in it, which, though they would well grace the hand of man, remain wholly

inexplicable. In an extensive herd, so remarkable,  
occasionally, are  
these mystic gestures, that I have heard hunters who have  
declared them  
akin to Free-Mason signs and symbols; that the whale,  
indeed, by these  
methods intelligently conversed with the world. Nor are  
there wanting  
other motions of the whale in his general body, full of  
strangeness,  
and unaccountable to his most experienced assailant.  
Dissect him how I  
may, then, I but go skin deep; I know him not, and never  
will. But if I  
know not even the tail of this whale, how understand his  
head? much  
more, how comprehend his face, when face he has none?  
Thou shalt see my  
back parts, my tail, he seems to say, but my face shall  
not be seen.  
But I cannot completely make out his back parts; and hint  
what he will  
about his face, I say again he has no face.

#### CHAPTER 87. The Grand Armada.

The long and narrow peninsula of Malacca, extending  
south-eastward from  
the territories of Birmah, forms the most southerly point  
of all Asia.  
In a continuous line from that peninsula stretch the long  
islands of  
Sumatra, Java, Bally, and Timor; which, with many others,  
form a vast  
mole, or rampart, lengthwise connecting Asia with  
Australia, and  
dividing the long unbroken Indian ocean from the thickly  
studded  
oriental archipelagoes. This rampart is pierced by  
several sally-ports  
for the convenience of ships and whales; conspicuous  
among which are  
the straits of Sunda and Malacca. By the straits of



Sunda, chiefly,  
vessels bound to China from the west, emerge into the  
China seas.

Those narrow straits of Sunda divide Sumatra from Java;  
and standing  
midway in that vast rampart of islands, buttressed by  
that bold green  
promontory, known to seamen as Java Head; they not a  
little correspond  
to the central gateway opening into some vast walled  
empire: and  
considering the inexhaustible wealth of spices, and  
silks, and jewels,  
and gold, and ivory, with which the thousand islands of  
that oriental  
sea are enriched, it seems a significant provision of  
nature, that such  
treasures, by the very formation of the land, should at  
least bear the  
appearance, however ineffectual, of being guarded from  
the all-grasping  
western world. The shores of the Straits of Sunda are  
unsupplied with  
those domineering fortresses which guard the entrances to  
the  
Mediterranean, the Baltic, and the Propontis. Unlike the  
Danes, these  
Orientals do not demand the obsequious homage of lowered  
top-sails from  
the endless procession of ships before the wind, which  
for centuries  
past, by night and by day, have passed between the  
islands of Sumatra  
and Java, freighted with the costliest cargoes of the  
east. But while  
they freely waive a ceremonial like this, they do by no  
means renounce  
their claim to more solid tribute.

Time out of mind the piratical proas of the Malays,  
lurking among the  
low shaded coves and islets of Sumatra, have sallied out  
upon the

vessels sailing through the straits, fiercely demanding tribute at the point of their spears. 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. Hence it is, that,  
while other  
ships may have gone to China from New York, and back  
again, touching at  
a score of ports, the whale-ship, in all that interval,  
may not have  
sighted one grain of soil; her crew having seen no man  
but floating  
seamen like themselves. So that did you carry them the  
news that  
another flood had come; they would only answer—"Well,  
boys, here's the  
ark!"

Now, as many Sperm Whales had been captured off the  
western coast of  
Java, in the near vicinity of the Straits of Sunda;  
indeed, as most of  
the ground, roundabout, was generally recognised by the  
fishermen as an  
excellent spot for cruising; therefore, as the Pequod  
gained more and  
more upon Java Head, the look-outs were repeatedly  
hailed, and  
admonished to keep wide awake. But though the green palmy  
cliffs of the  
land soon loomed on the starboard bow, and with delighted  
nostrils the  
fresh cinnamon was snuffed in the air, yet not a single

jet was  
descried. Almost renouncing all thought of falling in  
with any game  
hereabouts, the ship had well nigh entered the straits,  
when the  
customary cheering cry was heard from aloft, and ere long  
a spectacle  
of singular magnificence saluted us.

But here be it premised, that owing to the unwearied  
activity with  
which of late they have been hunted over all four oceans,  
the Sperm  
Whales, instead of almost invariably sailing in small  
detached  
companies, as in former times, are now frequently met  
with in extensive  
herds, sometimes embracing so great a multitude, that it  
would almost  
seem as if numerous nations of them had sworn solemn  
league and  
covenant for mutual assistance and protection. To this  
aggregation of  
the Sperm Whale into such immense caravans, may be  
imputed the  
circumstance that even in the best cruising grounds, you  
may now  
sometimes sail for weeks and months together, without  
being greeted by  
a single spout; and then be suddenly saluted by what  
sometimes seems  
thousands on thousands.

Broad on both bows, at the distance of some two or three  
miles, and  
forming a great semicircle, embracing one half of the  
level horizon, a  
continuous chain of whale-jets were up-playing and  
sparkling in the  
noon-day air. Unlike the straight perpendicular twin-jets  
of the Right  
Whale, which, dividing at top, fall over in two branches,  
like the  
cleft drooping boughs of a willow, the single forward-

slanting spout of  
the Sperm Whale presents a thick curled bush of white  
mist, continually  
rising and falling away to leeward.

Seen from the Pequod's deck, then, as she would rise on a  
high hill of  
the sea, this host of vapory spouts, individually curling  
up into the  
air, and beheld through a blending atmosphere of bluish  
haze, showed  
like the thousand cheerful chimneys of some dense  
metropolis, descried  
of a balmy autumnal morning, by some horseman on a  
height.

As marching armies approaching an unfriendly defile in  
the mountains,  
accelerate their march, all eagerness to place that  
perilous passage in  
their rear, and once more expand in comparative security  
upon the  
plain; even so did this vast fleet of whales now seem  
hurrying forward  
through the straits; gradually contracting the wings of  
their  
semicircle, and swimming on, in one solid, but still  
crescentic centre.

Crowding all sail the Pequod pressed after them; the  
harpooneers  
handling their weapons, and loudly cheering from the  
heads of their yet  
suspended boats. 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 vapors, 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  
harpooneers 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.

Stripped to our shirts and drawers, we sprang to the  
white-ash, and  
after several hours' pulling were almost disposed to  
renounce the  
chase, when a general pausing commotion among the whales  
gave animating  
token that they were now at last under the influence of  
that strange  
perplexity of inert irresolution, which, when the  
fishermen perceive it  
in the whale, they say he is gallied. The compact martial  
columns in  
which they had been hitherto rapidly and steadily  
swimming, were now  
broken up in one measureless rout; and like King Porus'  
elephants in  
the Indian battle with Alexander, they seemed going mad  
with  
consternation. In all directions expanding in vast  
irregular circles,  
and aimlessly swimming hither and thither, by their short  
thick  
spoutings, they plainly betrayed their distraction of  
panic. This was  
still more strangely evinced by those of their number,  
who, completely  
paralysed as it were, helplessly floated like water-  
logged dismantled  
ships on the sea. Had these Leviathans been but a flock  
of simple  
sheep, pursued over the pasture by three fierce wolves,  
they could not  
possibly have evinced such excessive dismay. But this  
occasional  
timidity is characteristic of almost all herding  
creatures. Though  
banding together in tens of thousands, the lion-maned  
buffaloes of the  
West have fled before a solitary horseman. Witness, too,  
all human  
beings, how when herded together in the sheepfold of a  
theatre's pit,  
they will, at the slightest alarm of fire, rush helter-



skelter for the  
outlets, crowding, trampling, jamming, and remorselessly  
dashing each  
other to death. Best, therefore, withhold any amazement  
at the  
strangely galled whales before us, for there is no folly  
of the beasts  
of the earth which is not infinitely outdone by the  
madness of men.

Though many of the whales, as has been said, were in  
violent motion,  
yet it is to be observed that as a whole the herd neither  
advanced nor  
retreated, but collectively remained in one place. As is  
customary in  
those cases, the boats at once separated, each making for  
some one lone  
whale on the outskirts of the shoal. In about three  
minutes' time,  
Queequeg's harpoon was flung; the stricken fish darted  
blinding spray  
in our faces, and then running away with us like light,  
steered  
straight for the heart of the herd. Though such a  
movement on the part  
of the whale struck under such circumstances, is in no  
wise  
unprecedented; and indeed is almost always more or less  
anticipated;  
yet does it present one of the more perilous vicissitudes  
of the  
fishery. For as the swift monster drags you deeper and  
deeper into the  
frantic shoal, you bid adieu to circumspect life and only  
exist in a  
delirious throb.

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 galled 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

junction, 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 snuffling 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! him  
fast!—Who line him! Who struck?—Two whale; one big, one  
little!"

"What ails ye, man?" cried Starbuck.

"Look-e here," said Queequeg, pointing down.

As when the stricken whale, that from the tub has reeled  
out hundreds

of fathoms of rope; as, after deep sounding, he floats up again, and shows the slackened curling line buoyantly rising and spiralling towards the air; so now, Starbuck saw long coils of the umbilical cord of Madame Leviathan, by which the young cub seemed still tethered to its dam. Not seldom in the rapid vicissitudes of the chase, this natural line, with the maternal end loose, becomes entangled with the hempen one, so that the cub is thereby trapped. Some of the subtlest secrets of the seas seemed divulged to us in this enchanted pond. We saw young Leviathan amours in the deep.\*

\*The sperm whale, as with all other species of the Leviathan, but unlike most other fish, breeds indifferently at all seasons; after a gestation which may probably be set down at nine months, producing but one at a time; though in some few known instances giving birth to an Esau and Jacob:—a contingency provided for in suckling by two teats, curiously situated, one on each side of the anus; but the breasts themselves extend upwards from that. When by chance these precious parts in a nursing whale are cut by the hunter's lance, the mother's pouring milk and blood rivallingly discolour the sea for rods. The milk is very sweet and rich; it has been tasted by man; it might do well with strawberries. When overflowing with mutual esteem, the whales salute \_more hominum\_.

And thus, though surrounded by circle upon circle of consternations and

affrights, did these inscrutable creatures at the centre  
freely and  
fearlessly indulge in all peaceful concernments; yea,  
serenely revelled  
in dalliance and delight. But even so, amid the tornadoed  
Atlantic of  
my being, do I myself still for ever centrally disport in  
mute calm;  
and while ponderous planets of unwaning woe revolve round  
me, deep down  
and deep inland there I still bathe me in eternal  
mildness of joy.

Meanwhile, as we thus lay entranced, the occasional  
sudden frantic  
spectacles in the distance evinced the activity of the  
other boats,  
still engaged in drugging the whales on the frontier of  
the host; or  
possibly carrying on the war within the first circle,  
where abundance  
of room and some convenient retreats were afforded them.  
But the sight  
of the enraged drugged whales now and then blindly  
darting to and fro  
across the circles, was nothing to what at last met our  
eyes. It is  
sometimes the custom when fast to a whale more than  
commonly powerful  
and alert, to seek to hamstring him, as it were, by  
sundering or  
maiming his gigantic tail-tendon. It is done by darting a  
short-handled  
cutting-spade, to which is attached a rope for hauling it  
back again. A  
whale wounded (as we afterwards learned) in this part,  
but not  
effectually, as it seemed, had broken away from the boat,  
carrying  
along with him half of the harpoon line; and in the  
extraordinary agony  
of the wound, he was now dashing among the revolving  
circles like the  
lone mounted desperado Arnold, at the battle of Saratoga,



carrying  
dismay wherever he went.

But agonizing as was the wound of this whale, and an  
appalling  
spectacle enough, any way; yet the peculiar horror with  
which he seemed  
to inspire the rest of the herd, was owing to a cause  
which at first  
the intervening distance obscured from us. But at length  
we perceived  
that by one of the unimaginable accidents of the fishery,  
this whale  
had become entangled in the harpoon-line that he towed;  
he had also run  
away with the cutting-spade in him; and while the free  
end of the rope  
attached to that weapon, had permanently caught in the  
coils of the  
harpoon-line round his tail, the cutting-spade itself had  
worked loose  
from his flesh. So that tormented to madness, he was now  
churning  
through the water, violently flailing with his flexible  
tail, and  
tossing the keen spade about him, wounding and murdering  
his own  
comrades.

This terrific object seemed to recall the whole herd from  
their  
stationary fright. First, the whales forming the margin  
of our lake  
began to crowd a little, and tumble against each other,  
as if lifted by  
half spent billows from afar; then the lake itself began  
faintly to  
heave and swell; the submarine bridal-chambers and  
nurseries vanished;  
in more and more contracting orbits the whales in the  
more central  
circles began to swim in thickening clusters. Yes, the  
long calm was  
departing. A low advancing hum was soon heard; and then

like to the  
tumultuous masses of block-ice when the great river  
Hudson breaks up in  
Spring, the entire host of whales came tumbling upon  
their inner  
centre, as if to pile themselves up in one common  
mountain. Instantly  
Starbuck and Queequeg changed places; Starbuck taking the  
stern.

"Oars! Oars!" he intensely whispered, seizing the helm—  
"gripe your  
oars, and clutch your souls, now! My God, men, stand by!  
Shove him off,  
you Queequeg—the whale there!—prick him!—hit him! Stand  
up—stand up,  
and stay so! Spring, men—pull, men; never mind their  
backs—scrape  
them!—scrape away!"

The boat was now all but jammed between two vast black  
bulks, leaving a  
narrow Dardanelles between their long lengths. But by  
desperate  
endeavor we at last shot into a temporary opening; then  
giving way  
rapidly, and at the same time earnestly watching for  
another outlet.  
After many similar hair-breadth escapes, we at last  
swiftly glided into  
what had just been one of the outer circles, but now  
crossed by random  
whales, all violently making for one centre. This lucky  
salvation was  
cheaply purchased by the loss of Queequeg's hat, who,  
while standing in  
the bows to prick the fugitive whales, had his hat taken  
clean from his  
head by the air-eddy made by the sudden tossing of a pair  
of broad  
flukes close by.

Riotous and disordered as the universal commotion now  
was, it soon

resolved itself into what seemed a systematic movement; for having clumped together at last in one dense body, they then renewed their onward flight with augmented fleetness. Further pursuit was useless; but the boats still lingered in their wake to pick up what drugged whales might be dropped astern, and likewise to secure one which Flask had killed and waifed. 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.

## CHAPTER 88. Schools and Schoolmasters.

The previous chapter gave account of an immense body or herd of Sperm Whales, and there was also then given the probable cause inducing those vast aggregations.

Now, though such great bodies are at times encountered, yet, as must have been seen, even at the present day, small detached bands are occasionally observed, embracing from twenty to fifty

individuals each.

Such bands are known as schools. They generally are of two sorts; those composed almost entirely of females, and those mustering none but young vigorous males, or bulls, as they are familiarly designated.

In cavalier attendance upon the school of females, you invariably see a male of full grown magnitude, but not old; who, upon any alarm, evinces his gallantry by falling in the rear and covering the flight of his ladies. In truth, this gentleman is a luxurious Ottoman, swimming about over the watery world, surroundingly accompanied by all the solaces and endearments of the harem. The contrast between this Ottoman and his concubines is striking; because, while he is always of the largest leviathanic proportions, the ladies, even at full growth, are not more than one-third of the bulk of an average-sized male. They are comparatively delicate, indeed; I dare say, not to exceed half a dozen yards round the waist. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied, that upon the whole they are hereditarily entitled to en bon point.

It is very curious to watch this harem and its lord in their indolent ramblings. Like fashionables, they are for ever on the move in leisurely search of variety. You meet them on the Line in time for the full flower of the Equatorial feeding season, having just returned, perhaps, from spending the summer in the Northern seas, and so cheating summer of all unpleasant weariness and warmth. By the time they have

l lounged up and down the promenade of the Equator awhile,  
they start for  
the Oriental waters in anticipation of the cool season  
there, and so  
evade the other excessive temperature of the year.

When serenely advancing on one of these journeys, if any  
strange  
suspicious sights are seen, my lord whale keeps a wary  
eye on his  
interesting family. Should any unwarrantably pert young  
Leviathan  
coming that way, presume to draw confidentially close to  
one of the  
ladies, with what prodigious fury the Bashaw assails him,  
and chases  
him away! High times, indeed, if unprincipled young rakes  
like him are  
to be permitted to invade the sanctity of domestic bliss;  
though do  
what the Bashaw will, he cannot keep the most notorious  
Lothario out of  
his bed; for, alas! all fish bed in common. As ashore,  
the ladies often  
cause the most terrible duels among their rival admirers;  
just so with  
the whales, who sometimes come to deadly battle, and all  
for love. They  
fence with their long lower jaws, sometimes locking them  
together, and  
so striving for the supremacy like elks that warringly  
interweave their  
antlers. Not a few are captured having the deep scars of  
these  
encounters,—furrowed heads, broken teeth, scalloped fins;  
and in some  
instances, wrenched and dislocated mouths.

But supposing the invader of domestic bliss to betake  
himself away at  
the first rush of the harem's lord, then is it very  
diverting to watch  
that lord. Gently he insinuates his vast bulk among them  
again and

revels there awhile, still in tantalizing vicinity to  
young Lothario,  
like pious Solomon devoutly worshipping among his  
thousand concubines.  
Granting other whales to be in sight, the fishermen will  
seldom give  
chase to one of these Grand Turks; for these Grand Turks  
are too lavish  
of their strength, and hence their unctuousness is small.  
As for the  
sons and the daughters they beget, why, those sons and  
daughters must  
take care of themselves; at least, with only the maternal  
help. For  
like certain other omnivorous roving lovers that might be  
named, my  
Lord Whale has no taste for the nursery, however much for  
the bower;  
and so, being a great traveller, he leaves his anonymous  
babies all  
over the world; every baby an exotic. In good time,  
nevertheless, as  
the ardour of youth declines; as years and dumps  
increase; as  
reflection lends her solemn pauses; in short, as a  
general lassitude  
overtakes the sated Turk; then a love of ease and virtue  
supplants the  
love for maidens; our Ottoman enters upon the impotent,  
repentant,  
admonitory stage of life, forswears, disbands the harem,  
and grown to  
an exemplary, sulky old soul, goes about all alone among  
the meridians  
and parallels saying his prayers, and warning each young  
Leviathan from  
his amorous errors.

Now, as the harem of whales is called by the fishermen a  
school, so is  
the lord and master of that school technically known as  
the  
schoolmaster. It is therefore not in strict character,  
however

admirably satirical, that after going to school himself, he should then go abroad inculcating not what he learned there, but the folly of it. His title, schoolmaster, would very naturally seem derived from the name bestowed upon the harem itself, but some have surmised that the man who first thus entitled this sort of Ottoman whale, must have read the memoirs of Vidocq, and informed himself what sort of a country-schoolmaster that famous Frenchman was in his younger days, and what was the nature of those occult lessons he inculcated into some of his pupils.

The same secludedness and isolation to which the schoolmaster whale betakes himself in his advancing years, is true of all aged Sperm Whales. Almost universally, a lone whale—as a solitary Leviathan is called—proves an ancient one. Like venerable moss-bearded Daniel Boone, he will have no one near him but Nature herself; and here he takes to wife in the wilderness of waters, and the best of wives she is, though she keeps so many moody secrets.

The schools composing none but young and vigorous males, previously mentioned, offer a strong contrast to the harem schools. For while those female whales are characteristically timid, the young males, or forty-barrel-bulls, as they call them, are by far the most pugnacious of all Leviathans, and proverbially the most dangerous to encounter; excepting those wondrous grey-headed, grizzled whales, sometimes met,

and these will fight you like grim fiends exasperated by a penal gout.

The Forty-barrel-bull schools are larger than the harem schools. Like a mob of young collegians, they are full of fight, fun, and wickedness, tumbling round the world at such a reckless, rollicking rate, that no prudent underwriter would insure them any more than he would a riotous lad at Yale or Harvard. They soon relinquish this turbulence though, and when about three-fourths grown, break up, and separately go about in quest of settlements, that is, harems.

Another point of difference between the male and female schools is still more characteristic of the sexes. Say you strike a Forty-barrel-bull-poor devil! all his comrades quit him. But strike a member of the harem school, and her companions swim around her with every token of concern, sometimes lingering so near her and so long, as themselves to fall a prey.

#### CHAPTER 89. Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish.

The allusion to the waif and waif-poles in the last chapter but one, necessitates some account of the laws and regulations of the whale fishery, of which the waif may be deemed the grand symbol and badge.

It frequently happens that when several ships are cruising in company, a whale may be struck by one vessel, then escape, and be finally killed and captured by another vessel; and herein are indirectly comprised



many minor contingencies, all partaking of this one grand feature. For example,—after a weary and perilous chase and capture of a whale, the body may get loose from the ship by reason of a violent storm; and drifting far away to leeward, be retaken by a second whaler, who, in a calm, snugly tows it alongside, without risk of life or line. Thus the most vexatious and violent disputes would often arise between the fishermen, were there not some written or unwritten, universal, undisputed law applicable to all cases.

Perhaps the only formal whaling code authorized by legislative enactment, was that of Holland. It was decreed by the States-General in A.D. 1695. But though no other nation has ever had any written whaling law, yet the American fishermen have been their own legislators and lawyers in this matter. They have provided a system which for terse comprehensiveness surpasses Justinian's Pandects and the By-laws of the Chinese Society for the Suppression of Meddling with other People's Business. Yes; these laws might be engraven on a Queen Anne's farthing, or the barb of a harpoon, and worn round the neck, so small are they.

I. 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 waifing 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 whalemén themselves sometimes consist in hard words and harder knocks—the Coke-upon-Littleton of the fist. True, among the more upright and honorable whalemén 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. In the course of the defence, the witty Erskine went on to illustrate his position, by alluding to a recent crim. con. case, wherein a gentleman, after in vain trying to bridle his wife's viciousness, had at last abandoned her upon the seas of life; but in the course of years, repenting of that step, he instituted an action to recover possession of her. Erskine was on the other side; and he then supported it by saying, that though the gentleman had originally harpooned the lady, and had once had her fast, and only by reason of the great stress of her plunging viciousness, had at last abandoned her; yet abandon her he did, so that she became a loose-fish; and therefore when a subsequent gentleman re-harpooned her, the lady then became that subsequent gentleman's property, along with whatever harpoon might have been found sticking in her.

Now in the present case Erskine contended that the examples of the whale and the lady were reciprocally illustrative of each other.

These pleadings, and the counter pleadings, being duly heard, the very learned judge in set terms decided, to wit,—That as for the boat, he awarded it to the plaintiffs, because they had merely abandoned it to save their lives; but that with regard to the controverted whale, harpoons, and line, they belonged to the defendants; the whale, because it was a Loose-Fish at the time of the final capture; and the harpoons and line because when the fish made off with them, it (the fish) acquired a property in those articles; and hence anybody who afterwards took the fish had a right to them. Now the defendants afterwards took the fish; ergo, the aforesaid articles were theirs.

A common man looking at this decision of the very learned Judge, might possibly object to it. But ploughed up to the primary rock of the matter, the two great principles laid down in the twin whaling laws previously quoted, and applied and elucidated by Lord Ellenborough in the above cited case; these two laws touching Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish, I say, will, on reflection, be found the fundamentals of all human jurisprudence; for notwithstanding its complicated tracery of sculpture, the Temple of the Law, like the Temple of the Philistines, has but two props to stand on.

Is it not a saying in every one's mouth, Possession is

half of the law:  
that is, regardless of how the thing came into  
possession? But often  
possession is the whole of the law. What are the sinews  
and souls of  
Russian serfs and Republican slaves but Fast-Fish,  
whereof possession  
is the whole of the law? What to the rapacious landlord  
is the widow's  
last mite but a Fast-Fish? What is yonder undetected  
villain's marble  
mansion with a door-plate for a waif; what is that but a  
Fast-Fish?  
What is the ruinous discount which Mordecai, the broker,  
gets from poor  
Woebegone, the bankrupt, on a loan to keep Woebegone's  
family from  
starvation; what is that ruinous discount but a Fast-  
Fish? What is the  
Archbishop of Savesoul's income of £100,000 seized from  
the scant bread  
and cheese of hundreds of thousands of broken-backed  
laborers (all sure  
of heaven without any of Savesoul's help) what is that  
globular  
£100,000 but a Fast-Fish? What are the Duke of Dunder's  
hereditary  
towns and hamlets but Fast-Fish? What to that redoubted  
harpooneer,  
John Bull, is poor Ireland, but a Fast-Fish? What to that  
apostolic  
lancer, Brother Jonathan, is Texas but a Fast-Fish? And  
concerning all  
these, is not Possession the whole of the law?

But if the doctrine of Fast-Fish be pretty generally  
applicable, the  
kindred doctrine of Loose-Fish is still more widely so.  
That is  
internationally and universally applicable.

What was America in 1492 but a Loose-Fish, in which  
Columbus struck the  
Spanish standard by way of waifing it for his royal

master and  
mistress? What was Poland to the Czar? What Greece to the  
Turk? What  
India to England? What at last will Mexico be to the  
United States? All  
Loose-Fish.

What are the Rights of Man and the Liberties of the World  
but  
Loose-Fish? What all men's minds and opinions but Loose-  
Fish? What is  
the principle of religious belief in them but a Loose-  
Fish? What to the  
ostentatious smuggling verbalists are the thoughts of  
thinkers but  
Loose-Fish? What is the great globe itself but a Loose-  
Fish? 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 Honorary 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. Because the Lord Warden is busily employed at times in fobbing his perquisites; which are his chiefly by virtue of that same fobbing of them.

Now when these poor sun-burnt mariners, bare-footed, and with their trowsers rolled high up on their eely legs, had wearily hauled their fat fish high and dry, promising themselves a good £150 from the precious oil and bone; and in fantasy sipping rare tea with their wives, and good ale with their cronies, upon the strength of their respective shares; up steps a very learned and most Christian and

charitable gentleman, with a copy of Blackstone under his arm; and laying it upon the whale's head, he says—"Hands off! this fish, my masters, is a Fast-Fish. I seize it as the Lord Warden's." Upon this the poor mariners in their respectful consternation—so truly English—knowing not what to say, fall to vigorously scratching their heads all round; meanwhile ruefully glancing from the whale to the stranger. But that did in nowise mend the matter, or at all soften the hard heart of the learned gentleman with the copy of Blackstone. At length one of them, after long scratching about for his ideas, made bold to speak,

"Please, sir, who is the Lord Warden?"

"The Duke."

"But the duke had nothing to do with taking this fish?"

"It is his."

"We have been at great trouble, and peril, and some expense, and is all that to go to the Duke's benefit; we getting nothing at all for our pains but our blisters?"

"It is his."

"Is the Duke so very poor as to be forced to this desperate mode of getting a livelihood?"

"It is his."

"I thought to relieve my old bed-ridden mother by part of my share of



this whale."

"It is his."

"Won't the Duke be content with a quarter or a half?"

"It is his."

In a word, the whale was seized and sold, and his Grace the Duke of Wellington received the money. Thinking that viewed in some particular lights, the case might by a bare possibility in some small degree be deemed, under the circumstances, a rather hard one, an honest clergyman of the town respectfully addressed a note to his Grace, begging him to take the case of those unfortunate mariners into full consideration. To which my Lord Duke in substance replied (both letters were published) that he had already done so, and received the money, and would be obliged to the reverend gentleman if for the future he (the reverend gentleman) would decline meddling with other people's business. Is this the still militant old man, standing at the corners of the three kingdoms, on all hands coercing alms of beggars?

It will readily be seen that in this case the alleged right of the Duke to the whale was a delegated one from the Sovereign. We must needs inquire then on what principle the Sovereign is originally invested with that right. The law itself has already been set forth. But Plowdon gives us the reason for it. Says Plowdon, the whale so caught belongs to the King and Queen, "because of its superior excellence." And by the

soundest commentators this has ever been held a cogent argument in such matters.

But why should the King have the head, and the Queen the tail? A reason for that, ye lawyers!

In his treatise on "Queen-Gold," or Queen-pinmoney, an old King's Bench author, one William Prynne, thus discourseth: "Ye tail is ye Queen's, that ye Queen's wardrobe may be supplied with ye whalebone." Now this was written at a time when the black limber bone of the Greenland or Right whale was largely used in ladies' bodices. But this same bone is not in the tail; it is in the head, which is a sad mistake for a sagacious lawyer like Prynne. But is the Queen a mermaid, to be presented with a tail? 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 91. The Pequod Meets The Rose-Bud.

"In vain it was to rake for Ambergriese in the paunch of this  
Leviathan, insufferable fetor denying not inquiry." \_Sir  
T. Browne,  
V.E.\_

It was a week or two after the last whaling scene  
recounted, and when  
we were slowly sailing over a sleepy, vapory, mid-day  
sea, that the  
many noses on the Pequod's deck proved more vigilant  
discoverers than  
the three pairs of eyes aloft. A peculiar and not very  
pleasant smell  
was smelt in the sea.

"I will bet something now," said Stubb, "that somewhere  
hereabouts are  
some of those drugged whales we tickled the other day. I  
thought they  
would keel up before long."

Presently, the vapors in advance slid aside; and there in  
the distance  
lay a ship, whose furled sails betokened that some sort  
of whale must  
be alongside. As we glided nearer, the stranger showed  
French colours  
from his peak; and by the eddying cloud of vulture sea-  
fowl that  
circled, and hovered, and swooped around him, it was  
plain that the  
whale alongside must be what the fishermen call a blasted  
whale, that  
is, a whale that has died unmolested on the sea, and so  
floated an  
unappropriated corpse. It may well be conceived, what an  
unsavory odor  
such a mass must exhale; worse than an Assyrian city in  
the plague,  
when the living are incompetent to bury the departed. So  
intolerable

indeed is it regarded by some, that no cupidity could persuade them to  
moor alongside of it. Yet are there those who will still do it;  
notwithstanding the fact that the oil obtained from such subjects is of  
a very inferior quality, and by no means of the nature of attar-of-rose.

Coming still nearer with the expiring breeze, we saw that the Frenchman  
had a second whale alongside; and this second whale seemed even more of  
a nosegay than the first. In truth, it turned out to be one of those  
problematical whales that seem to dry up and die with a sort of  
prodigious dyspepsia, or indigestion; leaving their defunct bodies  
almost entirely bankrupt of anything like oil. Nevertheless, in the  
proper place we shall see that no knowing fisherman will ever turn up  
his nose at such a whale as this, however much he may shun blasted  
whales in general.

The Pequod had now swept so nigh to the stranger, that Stubb vowed he  
recognised his cutting spade-pole entangled in the lines that were  
knotted round the tail of one of these whales.

"There's a pretty fellow, now," he banteringly laughed, standing in the  
ship's bows, "there's a jackal for ye! I well know that these Crappoes  
of Frenchmen are but poor devils in the fishery; sometimes lowering  
their boats for breakers, mistaking them for Sperm Whale spouts; yes,  
and sometimes sailing from their port with their hold full of boxes of  
tallow candles, and cases of snuffers, foreseeing that

all the oil they  
will get won't be enough to dip the Captain's wick into;  
aye, we all  
know these things; but look ye, here's a Crappo that is  
content with  
our leavings, the drugged whale there, I mean; aye, and  
is content too  
with scraping the dry bones of that other precious fish  
he has there.  
Poor devil! I say, pass round a hat, some one, and let's  
make him a  
present of a little oil for dear charity's sake. For what  
oil he'll get  
from that drugged whale there, wouldn't be fit to burn in  
a jail; no,  
not in a condemned cell. And as for the other whale, why,  
I'll agree to  
get more oil by chopping up and trying out these three  
masts of ours,  
than he'll get from that bundle of bones; though, now  
that I think of  
it, it may contain something worth a good deal more than  
oil; yes,  
ambergris. I wonder now if our old man has thought of  
that. It's worth  
trying. Yes, I'm for it;" and so saying he started for  
the  
quarter-deck.

By this time the faint air had become a complete calm; so  
that whether  
or no, the Pequod was now fairly entrapped in the smell,  
with no hope  
of escaping except by its breezing up again. Issuing from  
the cabin,  
Stubb now called his boat's crew, and pulled off for the  
stranger.  
Drawing across her bow, he perceived that in accordance  
with the  
fanciful French taste, the upper part of her stem-piece  
was carved in  
the likeness of a huge drooping stalk, was painted green,  
and for  
thorns had copper spikes projecting from it here and

there; the whole  
terminating in a symmetrical folded bulb of a bright red  
colour. Upon  
her head boards, in large gilt letters, he read "Bouton  
de  
Rose,"—Rose-button, or Rose-bud; and this was the  
romantic name of this  
aromatic ship.

Though Stubb did not understand the \_Bouton\_ part of the  
inscription,  
yet the word \_rose\_, and the bulbous figure-head put  
together,  
sufficiently explained the whole to him.

"A wooden rose-bud, eh?" he cried with his hand to his  
nose, "that will  
do very well; but how like all creation it smells!"

Now in order to hold direct communication with the people  
on deck, he  
had to pull round the bows to the starboard side, and  
thus come close  
to the blasted whale; and so talk over it.

Arrived then at this spot, with one hand still to his  
nose, he  
bawled—"Bouton-de-Rose, ahoy! are there any of you  
Bouton-de-Roses that  
speak English?"

"Yes," rejoined a Guernsey-man from the bulwarks, who  
turned out to be  
the chief-mate.

"Well, then, my Bouton-de-Rose-bud, have you seen the  
White Whale?"

"\_What\_ whale?"

"The \_White\_ Whale—a Sperm Whale—Moby Dick, have ye seen  
him?"

"Never heard of such a whale. Cachalot Blanche! White

Whale—no."

"Very good, then; good bye now, and I'll call again in a minute."

Then rapidly pulling back towards the Pequod, and seeing Ahab leaning over the quarter-deck rail awaiting his report, he moulded his two hands into a trumpet and shouted—"No, Sir! No!" Upon which Ahab retired, and Stubb returned to the Frenchman.

He now perceived that the Guernsey-man, who had just got into the chains, and was using a cutting-spade, had slung his nose in a sort of bag.

"What's the matter with your nose, there?" said Stubb. "Broke it?"

"I wish it was broken, or that I didn't have any nose at all!" answered the Guernsey-man, who did not seem to relish the job he was at very much. "But what are you holding yours for?"

"Oh, nothing! It's a wax nose; I have to hold it on. Fine day, ain't it? Air rather gardenny, I should say; throw us a bunch of posies, will ye, Bouton-de-Rose?"

"What in the devil's name do you want here?" roared the Guernseyman, flying into a sudden passion.

"Oh! keep cool—cool? yes, that's the word! why don't you pack those whales in ice while you're working at 'em? But joking aside, though; do you know, Rose-bud, that it's all nonsense trying to get any oil out of

such whales? As for that dried up one, there, he hasn't a gill in his whole carcase."

"I know that well enough; but, d'ye see, the Captain here won't believe it; this is his first voyage; he was a Cologne manufacturer before. But come aboard, and mayhap he'll believe you, if he won't me; and so I'll get out of this dirty scrape."

"Anything to oblige ye, my sweet and pleasant fellow," rejoined Stubb, and with that he soon mounted to the deck. There a queer scene presented itself. The sailors, in tasselled caps of red worsted, were getting the heavy tackles in readiness for the whales. But they worked rather slow and talked very fast, and seemed in anything but a good humor. All their noses upwardly projected from their faces like so many jib-booms. Now and then pairs of them would drop their work, and run up to the mast-head to get some fresh air. Some thinking they would catch the plague, dipped oakum in coal-tar, and at intervals held it to their nostrils. Others having broken the stems of their pipes almost short off at the bowl, were vigorously puffing tobacco-smoke, so that it constantly filled their olfactories.

Stubb was struck by a shower of outcries and anathemas proceeding from the Captain's round-house abaft; and looking in that direction saw a fiery face thrust from behind the door, which was held ajar from within. This was the tormented surgeon, who, after in vain



remonstrating against the proceedings of the day, had betaken himself to the Captain's round-house (\_cabinet\_ he called it) to avoid the pest; but still, could not help yelling out his entreaties and indignations at times.

Marking all this, Stubb argued well for his scheme, and turning to the Guernsey-man had a little chat with him, during which the stranger mate expressed his detestation of his Captain as a conceited ignoramus, who had brought them all into so unsavory and unprofitable a pickle. Sounding him carefully, Stubb further perceived that the Guernsey-man had not the slightest suspicion concerning the ambergris. He therefore held his peace on that head, but otherwise was quite frank and confidential with him, so that the two quickly concocted a little plan for both circumventing and satirizing the Captain, without his at all dreaming of distrusting their sincerity. According to this little plan of theirs, the Guernsey-man, under cover of an interpreter's office, was to tell the Captain what he pleased, but as coming from Stubb; and as for Stubb, he was to utter any nonsense that should come uppermost in him during the interview.

By this time their destined victim appeared from his cabin. He was a small and dark, but rather delicate looking man for a sea-captain, with large whiskers and moustache, however; and wore a red cotton velvet vest with watch-seals at his side. To this gentleman, Stubb was now

politely introduced by the Guernsey-man, who at once  
ostentatiously put  
on the aspect of interpreting between them.

"What shall I say to him first?" said he.

"Why," said Stubb, eyeing the velvet vest and the watch  
and seals, "you  
may as well begin by telling him that he looks a sort of  
babyish to me,  
though I don't pretend to be a judge."

"He says, Monsieur," said the Guernsey-man, in French,  
turning to his  
captain, "that only yesterday his ship spoke a vessel,  
whose captain  
and chief-mate, with six sailors, had all died of a fever  
caught from a  
blasted whale they had brought alongside."

Upon this the captain started, and eagerly desired to  
know more.

"What now?" said the Guernsey-man to Stubb.

"Why, since he takes it so easy, tell him that now I have  
eyed him  
carefully, I'm quite certain that he's no more fit to  
command a  
whale-ship than a St. Jago monkey. In fact, tell him from  
me he's a  
baboon."

"He vows and declares, Monsieur, that the other whale,  
the dried one,  
is far more deadly than the blasted one; in fine,  
Monsieur, he conjures  
us, as we value our lives, to cut loose from these fish."

Instantly the captain ran forward, and in a loud voice  
commanded his  
crew to desist from hoisting the cutting-tackles, and at  
once cast  
loose the cables and chains confining the whales to the

ship.

"What now?" said the Guernsey-man, when the Captain had returned to them.

"Why, let me see; yes, you may as well tell him now that—that—in fact, tell him I've diddled him, and (aside to himself) perhaps somebody else."

"He says, Monsieur, that he's very happy to have been of any service to us."

Hearing this, the captain vowed that they were the grateful parties (meaning himself and mate) and concluded by inviting Stubb down into his cabin to drink a bottle of Bordeaux.

"He wants you to take a glass of wine with him," said the interpreter.

"Thank him heartily; but tell him it's against my principles to drink with the man I've diddled. In fact, tell him I must go."

"He says, Monsieur, that his principles won't admit of his drinking; but that if Monsieur wants to live another day to drink, then Monsieur had best drop all four boats, and pull the ship away from these whales, for it's so calm they won't drift."

By this time Stubb was over the side, and getting into his boat, hailed the Guernsey-man to this effect,—that having a long tow-line in his boat, he would do what he could to help them, by pulling out the lighter whale of the two from the ship's side. While the

Frenchman's  
boats, then, were engaged in towing the ship one way,  
Stubb  
benevolently towed away at his whale the other way,  
ostentatiously  
slacking out a most unusually long tow-line.

Presently a breeze sprang up; Stubb feigned to cast off  
from the whale;  
hoisting his boats, the Frenchman soon increased his  
distance, while  
the Pequod slid in between him and Stubb's whale.  
Whereupon Stubb  
quickly pulled to the floating body, and hailing the  
Pequod to give  
notice of his intentions, at once proceeded to reap the  
fruit of his  
unrighteous cunning. Seizing his sharp boat-spade, he  
commenced an  
excavation in the body, a little behind the side fin. You  
would almost  
have thought he was digging a cellar there in the sea;  
and when at  
length his spade struck against the gaunt ribs, it was  
like turning up  
old Roman tiles and pottery buried in fat English loam.  
His boat's crew  
were all in high excitement, eagerly helping their chief,  
and looking  
as anxious as gold-hunters.

And all the time numberless fowls were diving, and  
ducking, and  
screaming, and yelling, and fighting around them. Stubb  
was beginning  
to look disappointed, especially as the horrible nosegay  
increased,  
when suddenly from out the very heart of this plague,  
there stole a  
faint stream of perfume, which flowed through the tide of  
bad smells  
without being absorbed by it, as one river will flow into  
and then  
along with another, without at all blending with it for a

time.

"I have it, I have it," cried Stubb, with delight, striking something in the subterranean regions, "a purse! a purse!"

Dropping his spade, he thrust both hands in, and drew out handfuls of something that looked like ripe Windsor soap, or rich mottled old cheese; very unctuous and savory withal. You might easily dent it with your thumb; it is of a hue between yellow and ash colour. And this, good friends, is ambergris, worth a gold guinea an ounce to any druggist. Some six handfuls were obtained; but more was unavoidably lost in the sea, and still more, perhaps, might have been secured were it not for impatient Ahab's loud command to Stubb to desist, and come on board, else the ship would bid them good bye.

## 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 dishonor, 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  
whalemen, 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 whalemen 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  
whalemen 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 honor 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.  
For blacks,  
the year's calendar should show naught but three hundred  
and sixty-five  
Fourth of Julys and New Year's Days. Nor smile so, while  
I write that  
this little black was brilliant, for even blackness has  
its brilliancy;  
behold yon lustrous ebony, panelled in king's cabinets.  
But Pip loved  
life, and all life's peaceable securities; so that the  
panic-striking  
business in which he had somehow unaccountably become  
entrapped, had  
most sadly blurred his brightness; though, as ere long  
will be seen,  
what was thus temporarily subdued in him, in the end was  
destined to be  
luridly illumined by strange wild fires, that  
fictitiously showed him  
off to ten times the natural lustre with which in his  
native Tolland  
County in Connecticut, he had once enlivened many a  
fiddler's frolic on

the green; and at melodious even-tide, with his gay ha-ha! had turned the round horizon into one star-belled tambourine. So, though in the clear air of day, suspended against a blue-veined neck, the pure-watered diamond drop will healthful glow; yet, when the cunning jeweller would show you the diamond in its most impressive lustre, he lays it against a gloomy ground, and then lights it up, not by the sun, but by some unnatural gases. Then come out those fiery effulgences, infernally superb; then the evil-blazing diamond, once the divinest symbol of the crystal skies, looks like some crown-jewel stolen from the King of Hell. But let us to the story.

It came to pass, that in the ambergris affair Stubb's after-oarsman chanced so to sprain his hand, as for a time to become quite maimed; and, temporarily, Pip was put into his place.

The first time Stubb lowered with him, Pip evinced much nervousness; but happily, for that time, escaped close contact with the whale; and therefore came off not altogether discredibly; though Stubb observing him, took care, afterwards, to exhort him to cherish his courageousness to the utmost, for he might often find it needful.

Now upon the second lowering, the boat paddled upon the whale; and as the fish received the darted iron, it gave its customary rap, which happened, in this instance, to be right under poor Pip's seat. The involuntary consternation of the moment caused him to leap, paddle in

hand, out of the boat; and in such a way, that part of the slack whale line coming against his chest, he breasted it overboard with him, so as to become entangled in it, when at last plumping into the water. That instant the stricken whale started on a fierce run, the line swiftly straightened; and presto! poor Pip came all foaming up to the chocks of the boat, remorselessly dragged there by the line, which had taken several turns around his chest and neck.

Tashtego stood in the bows. He was full of the fire of the hunt. He hated Pip for a poltroon. Snatching the boat-knife from its sheath, he suspended its sharp edge over the line, and turning towards Stubb, exclaimed interrogatively, "Cut?" Meantime Pip's blue, choked face plainly looked, Do, for God's sake! All passed in a flash. In less than half a minute, this entire thing happened.

"Damn him, cut!" roared Stubb; and so the whale was lost and Pip was saved.

So soon as he recovered himself, the poor little negro was assailed by yells and execrations from the crew. Tranquilly permitting these irregular cursings to evaporate, Stubb then in a plain, business-like, but still half humorous manner, cursed Pip officially; and that done, unofficially gave him much wholesome advice. The substance was, Never jump from a boat, Pip, except—but all the rest was indefinite, as the soundest advice ever is. Now, in general, \_Stick to the boat\_, is your

true motto in whaling; but cases will sometimes happen when \_Leap from the boat\_, is still better. Moreover, as if perceiving at last that if he should give undiluted conscientious advice to Pip, he would be leaving him too wide a margin to jump in for the future; Stubb suddenly dropped all advice, and concluded with a peremptory command, "Stick to the boat, Pip, or by the Lord, I won't pick you up if you jump; mind that. We can't afford to lose whales by the likes of you; a whale would sell for thirty times what you would, Pip, in Alabama. Bear that in mind, and don't jump any more." Hereby perhaps Stubb indirectly hinted, that though man loved his fellow, yet man is a money-making animal, which propensity too often interferes with his benevolence.

But we are all in the hands of the Gods; and Pip jumped again. It was under very similar circumstances to the first performance; but this time he did not breast out the line; and hence, when the whale started to run, Pip was left behind on the sea, like a hurried traveller's trunk. Alas! Stubb was but too true to his word. It was a beautiful, bounteous, blue day; the spangled sea calm and cool, and flatly stretching away, all round, to the horizon, like gold-beater's skin hammered out to the extremest. Bobbing up and down in that sea, Pip's ebon head showed like a head of cloves. No boat-knife was lifted when he fell so rapidly astern. Stubb's inexorable back was turned upon him; and the whale was winged. In three minutes, a whole mile

of shoreless  
ocean was between Pip and Stubb. Out from the centre of  
the sea, poor  
Pip turned his crisp, curling, black head to the sun,  
another lonely  
castaway, though the loftiest and the brightest.

Now, in calm weather, to swim in the open ocean is as  
easy to the  
practised swimmer as to ride in a spring-carriage ashore.  
But the awful  
lonesomeness is intolerable. The intense concentration of  
self in the  
middle of such a heartless immensity, my God! who can  
tell it? Mark,  
how when sailors in a dead calm bathe in the open sea—  
mark how closely  
they hug their ship and only coast along her sides.

But had Stubb really abandoned the poor little negro to  
his fate? No;  
he did not mean to, at least. Because there were two  
boats in his wake,  
and he supposed, no doubt, that they would of course come  
up to Pip  
very quickly, and pick him up; though, indeed, such  
considerations  
towards oarsmen jeopardized through their own timidity,  
is not always  
manifested by the hunters in all similar instances; and  
such instances  
not unfrequently occur; almost invariably in the fishery,  
a coward, so  
called, is marked with the same ruthless detestation  
peculiar to  
military navies and armies.

But it so happened, that those boats, without seeing Pip,  
suddenly  
spying whales close to them on one side, turned, and gave  
chase; and  
Stubb's boat was now so far away, and he and all his crew  
so intent  
upon his fish, that Pip's ringed horizon began to expand

around him  
miserably. By the merest chance the ship itself at last  
rescued him;  
but from that hour the little negro went about the deck  
an idiot; such,  
at least, they said he was. The sea had jeeringly kept  
his finite body  
up, but drowned the infinite of his soul. Not drowned  
entirely, though.  
Rather carried down alive to wondrous depths, where  
strange shapes of  
the unwarped primal world glided to and fro before his  
passive eyes;  
and the miser-merman, Wisdom, revealed his hoarded heaps;  
and among the  
joyous, heartless, ever-juvenile eternities, Pip saw the  
multitudinous,  
God-omnipresent, coral insects, that out of the firmament  
of waters  
heaved the colossal orbs. He saw God's foot upon the  
treadle of the  
loom, and spoke it; and therefore his shipmates called  
him mad. So  
man's insanity is heaven's sense; and wandering from all  
mortal reason,  
man comes at last to that celestial thought, which, to  
reason, is  
absurd and frantic; and weal or woe, feels then  
uncompromised,  
indifferent as his God.

For the rest, blame not Stubb too hardly. The thing is  
common in that  
fishery; and in the sequel of the narrative, it will then  
be seen what  
like abandonment befell myself.

#### 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 Heidelburgh 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. But as applied by whalemén, it becomes so. A whaleman's nipper is a short firm strip of tendinous stuff cut from the tapering

part of Leviathan's tail: it averages an inch in thickness, and for the rest, is about the size of the iron part of a hoe. Edgewise moved along the oily deck, it operates like a leathern squilgee; and by nameless blandishments, as of magic, allures along with it all impurities.

But to learn all about these recondite matters, your best way is at once to descend into the blubber-room, and have a long talk with its inmates. This place has previously been mentioned as the receptacle for the blanket-pieces, when stript and hoisted from the whale. When the proper time arrives for cutting up its contents, this apartment is a scene of terror to all tyros, especially by night. On one side, lit by a dull lantern, a space has been left clear for the workmen. They generally go in pairs,—a pike-and-gaffman and a spade-man. The whaling-pike is similar to a frigate's boarding-weapon of the same name. The gaff is something like a boat-hook. With his gaff, the gaffman hooks on to a sheet of blubber, and strives to hold it from slipping, as the ship pitches and lurches about. Meanwhile, the spade-man stands on the sheet itself, perpendicularly chopping it into the portable horse-pieces. This spade is sharp as hone can make it; the spademan's feet are shoeless; the thing he stands on will sometimes irresistibly slide away from him, like a sledge. If he cuts off one of his own toes, or one of his assistants', would you be very much astonished? Toes are scarce among veteran blubber-room

men.

## 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 forecastle 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.

## CHAPTER 96. The Try-Works.

Besides her hoisted boats, an American whaler is outwardly distinguished by her try-works. She presents the curious anomaly of the most solid masonry joining with oak and hemp in constituting the completed ship. It is as if from the open field a brick-kiln were transported to her planks.

The try-works are planted between the foremast and mainmast, the most roomy part of the deck. The timbers beneath are of a peculiar strength, fitted to sustain the weight of an almost solid mass of brick and mortar, some ten feet by eight square, and five in height. The foundation does not penetrate the deck, but the masonry is firmly secured to the surface by ponderous knees of iron bracing it on all sides, and screwing it down to the timbers. On the flanks it is cased with wood, and at top completely covered by a large, sloping, battened hatchway. Removing this hatch we expose the great try-pots, two in number, and each of several barrels' capacity. When not in use, they are kept remarkably clean. Sometimes they are polished with soapstone and sand, till they shine within like silver punch-bowls. During the night-watches some cynical old sailors will crawl into them and coil themselves away there for a nap. While employed in polishing them—one man in each pot, side by side—many confidential communications are

carried on, over the iron lips. It is a place also for profound mathematical meditation. It was in the left hand try-pot of the Pequod, with the soapstone diligently circling round me, that I was first indirectly struck by the remarkable fact, that in geometry all bodies gliding along the cycloid, my soapstone for example, will descend from any point in precisely the same time.

Removing the fire-board from the front of the try-works, the bare masonry of that side is exposed, penetrated by the two iron mouths of the furnaces, directly underneath the pots. These mouths are fitted with heavy doors of iron. The intense heat of the fire is prevented from communicating itself to the deck, by means of a shallow reservoir extending under the entire inclosed surface of the works. By a tunnel inserted at the rear, this reservoir is kept replenished with water as fast as it evaporates. There are no external chimneys; they open direct from the rear wall. And here let us go back for a moment.

It was about nine o'clock at night that the Pequod's try-works were first started on this present voyage. It belonged to Stubb to oversee the business.

"All ready there? Off hatch, then, and start her. You cook, fire the works." This was an easy thing, for the carpenter had been thrusting his shavings into the furnace throughout the passage. Here be it said that in a whaling voyage the first fire in the try-works has to be fed



for a time with wood. After that no wood is used, except  
as a means of  
quick ignition to the staple fuel. In a word, after being  
tried out,  
the crisp, shrivelled blubber, now called scraps or  
fritters, still  
contains considerable of its unctuous properties. These  
fritters feed  
the flames. Like a plethoric burning martyr, or a self-  
consuming  
misanthrope, once ignited, the whale supplies his own  
fuel and burns by  
his own body. Would that he consumed his own smoke! for  
his smoke is  
horrible to inhale, and inhale it you must, and not only  
that, but you  
must live in it for the time. It has an unspeakable,  
wild, Hindoo odor  
about it, such as may lurk in the vicinity of funereal  
pyres. It smells  
like the left wing of the day of judgment; it is an  
argument for the  
pit.

By midnight the works were in full operation. We were  
clear from the  
carcase; sail had been made; the wind was freshening; the  
wild ocean  
darkness was intense. But that darkness was licked up by  
the fierce  
flames, which at intervals forked forth from the sooty  
flues, and  
illuminated every lofty rope in the rigging, as with the  
famed Greek  
fire. The burning ship drove on, as if remorselessly  
commissioned to  
some vengeful deed. So the pitch and sulphur-freighted  
brigs of the  
bold Hydriote, Canaris, issuing from their midnight  
harbors, with broad  
sheets of flame for sails, bore down upon the Turkish  
frigates, and  
folded them in conflagrations.

The hatch, removed from the top of the works, now  
afforded a wide  
hearth in front of them. Standing on this were the  
Tartarean shapes of  
the pagan harpooneers, always the whale-ship's stokers.  
With huge  
pronged poles they pitched hissing masses of blubber into  
the scalding  
pots, or stirred up the fires beneath, till the snaky  
flames darted,  
curling, out of the doors to catch them by the feet. The  
smoke rolled  
away in sullen heaps. To every pitch of the ship there  
was a pitch of  
the boiling oil, which seemed all eagerness to leap into  
their faces.  
Opposite the mouth of the works, on the further side of  
the wide wooden  
hearth, was the windlass. This served for a sea-sofa.  
Here lounged the  
watch, when not otherwise employed, looking into the red  
heat of the  
fire, till their eyes felt scorched in their heads. Their  
tawny  
features, now all begrimed with smoke and sweat, their  
matted beards,  
and the contrasting barbaric brilliancy of their teeth,  
all these were  
strangely revealed in the capricious emblazonings of the  
works. As they  
narrated to each other their unholy adventures, their  
tales of terror  
told in words of mirth; as their uncivilized laughter  
forked upwards  
out of them, like the flames from the furnace; as to and  
fro, in their  
front, the harpooneers wildly gesticulated with their  
huge pronged  
forks and dippers; as the wind howled on, and the sea  
leaped, and the  
ship groaned and dived, and yet steadfastly shot her red  
hell further  
and further into the blackness of the sea and the night,  
and scornfully

champed the white bone in her mouth, and viciously spat  
round her on  
all sides; then the rushing Pequod, freighted with  
savages, and laden  
with fire, and burning a corpse, and plunging into that  
blackness of  
darkness, seemed the material counterpart of her  
monomaniac commander's  
soul.

So seemed it to me, as I stood at her helm, and for long  
hours silently  
guided the way of this fire-ship on the sea. Wrapped, for  
that  
interval, in darkness myself, I but the better saw the  
redness, the  
madness, the ghastliness of others. The continual sight  
of the fiend  
shapes before me, capering half in smoke and half in  
fire, these at  
last begat kindred visions in my soul, so soon as I began  
to yield to  
that unaccountable drowsiness which ever would come over  
me at a  
midnight helm.

But that night, in particular, a strange (and ever since  
inexplicable)  
thing occurred to me. Starting from a brief standing  
sleep, I was  
horribly conscious of something fatally wrong. The jaw-  
bone tiller  
smote my side, which leaned against it; in my ears was  
the low hum of  
sails, just beginning to shake in the wind; I thought my  
eyes were  
open; I was half conscious of putting my fingers to the  
lids and  
mechanically stretching them still further apart. But,  
spite of all  
this, I could see no compass before me to steer by;  
though it seemed  
but a minute since I had been watching the card, by the  
steady binnacle

lamp illuminating it. Nothing seemed before me but a jet  
gloom, now and  
then made ghastly by flashes of redness. Uppermost was  
the impression,  
that whatever swift, rushing thing I stood on was not so  
much bound to  
any haven ahead as rushing from all havens astern. A  
stark, bewildered  
feeling, as of death, came over me. Convulsively my hands  
grasped the  
tiller, but with the crazy conceit that the tiller was,  
somehow, in  
some enchanted way, inverted. My God! what is the matter  
with me?  
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.

#### CHAPTER 98. Stowing Down and Clearing Up.

Already has it been related how the great leviathan is  
afar off  
descried from the mast-head; how he is chased over the  
watery moors,  
and slaughtered in the valleys of the deep; how he is  
then towed  
alongside and beheaded; and how (on the principle which  
entitled the  
headsman of old to the garments in which the beheaded was  
killed) his  
great padded surtout becomes the property of his  
executioner; how, in  
due time, he is condemned to the pots, and, like  
Shadrach, Meshach, and  
Abednego, his spermaceti, oil, and bone pass unscathed  
through the  
fire;—but now it remains to conclude the last chapter of  
this part of  
the description by rehearsing—singing, if I may—the  
romantic proceeding  
of decanting off his oil into the casks and striking them  
down into the  
hold, where once again leviathan returns to his native  
profundities,  
sliding along beneath the surface as before; but, alas!  
never more to  
rise and blow.

While still warm, the oil, like hot punch, is received  
into the  
six-barrel casks; and while, perhaps, the ship is  
pitching and rolling  
this way and that in the midnight sea, the enormous casks  
are slewed

round and headed over, end for end, and sometimes  
perilously scoot  
across the slippery deck, like so many land slides, till  
at last  
man-handled and stayed in their course; and all round the  
hoops, rap,  
rap, go as many hammers as can play upon them, for now,  
\_ex officio\_,  
every sailor is a cooper.

At length, when the last pint is casked, and all is cool,  
then the  
great hatchways are unsealed, the bowels of the ship are  
thrown open,  
and down go the casks to their final rest in the sea.  
This done, the  
hatches are replaced, and hermetically closed, like a  
closet walled up.

In the sperm fishery, this is perhaps one of the most  
remarkable  
incidents in all the business of whaling. One day the  
planks stream  
with freshets of blood and oil; on the sacred quarter-  
deck enormous  
masses of the whale's head are profanely piled; great  
rusty casks lie  
about, as in a brewery yard; the smoke from the try-works  
has besooted  
all the bulwarks; the mariners go about suffused with  
unctuousness; the  
entire ship seems great leviathan himself; while on all  
hands the din  
is deafening.

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!" and away  
they fly to  
fight another whale, and go through the whole weary thing  
again. Oh! my  
friends, but this is man-killing! Yet this is life. For  
hardly have we  
mortals by long toilings extracted from this world's vast  
bulk its  
small but valuable sperm; and then, with weary patience,  
cleansed  
ourselves from its defilements, and learned to live here  
in clean  
tabernacles of the soul; hardly is this done, when—\_There  
she  
blows!\_—the ghost is spouted up, and away we sail to

fight some other  
world, and go through young life's old routine again.

Oh! the metempsychosis! Oh! Pythagoras, that in bright  
Greece, two  
thousand years ago, did die, so good, so wise, so mild; I  
sailed with  
thee along the Peruvian coast last voyage—and, foolish as  
I am, taught  
thee, a green simple boy, how to splice a rope!

#### CHAPTER 99. The Doubloon.

Ere now it has been related how Ahab was wont to pace his  
quarter-deck,  
taking regular turns at either limit, the binnacle and  
mainmast; but in  
the multiplicity of other things requiring narration it  
has not been  
added how that sometimes in these walks, when most  
plunged in his mood,  
he was wont to pause in turn at each spot, and stand  
there strangely  
eyeing the particular object before him. When he halted  
before the  
binacle, with his glance fastened on the pointed needle  
in the  
compass, that glance shot like a javelin with the pointed  
intensity of  
his purpose; and when resuming his walk he again paused  
before the  
mainmast, then, as the same riveted glance fastened upon  
the riveted  
gold coin there, he still wore the same aspect of nailed  
firmness, only  
dashed with a certain wild longing, if not hopefulness.

But one morning, turning to pass the doubloon, he seemed  
to be newly  
attracted by the strange figures and inscriptions stamped  
on it, as  
though now for the first time beginning to interpret for  
himself in

some monomaniac way whatever significance might lurk in  
them. And some  
certain significance lurks in all things, else all things  
are little  
worth, and the round world itself but an empty cipher,  
except to sell  
by the cartload, as they do hills about Boston, to fill  
up some morass  
in the Milky Way.

Now this doubloon was of purest, virgin gold, raked  
somewhere out of  
the heart of gorgeous hills, whence, east and west, over  
golden sands,  
the head-waters of many a Pactolus flows. And though now  
nailed amidst  
all the rustiness of iron bolts and the verdigris of  
copper spikes,  
yet, untouchable and immaculate to any foulness, it still  
preserved its  
Quito glow. Nor, though placed amongst a ruthless crew  
and every hour  
passed by ruthless hands, and through the livelong nights  
shrouded with  
thick darkness which might cover any pilfering approach,  
nevertheless  
every sunrise found the doubloon where the sunset left it  
last. For it  
was set apart and sanctified to one awe-striking end; and  
however  
wanton in their sailor ways, one and all, the mariners  
revered it as  
the white whale's talisman. Sometimes they talked it over  
in the weary  
watch by night, wondering whose it was to be at last, and  
whether he  
would ever live to spend it.

Now those noble golden coins of South America are as  
medals of the sun  
and tropic token-pieces. Here palms, alpacas, and  
volcanoes; sun's  
disks and stars; ecliptics, horns-of-plenty, and rich  
banners waving,

are in luxuriant profusion stamped; so that the precious gold seems almost to derive an added preciousness and enhancing glories, by passing through those fancy mints, so Spanishly poetic.

It so chanced that the doubloon of the Pequod was a most wealthy example of these things. On its round border it bore the letters, REPUBLICA DEL ECUADOR: QUITO. So this bright coin came from a country planted in the middle of the world, and beneath the great equator, and named after it; and it had been cast midway up the Andes, in the unwaning clime that knows no autumn. Zoned by those letters you saw the likeness of three Andes' summits; from one a flame; a tower on another; on the third a crowing cock; while arching over all was a segment of the partitioned zodiac, the signs all marked with their usual cabalistics, and the keystone sun entering the equinoctial point at Libra.

Before this equatorial coin, Ahab, not unobserved by others, was now pausing.

"There's something ever egotistical in mountain-tops and towers, and all other grand and lofty things; look here,—three peaks as proud as Lucifer. The firm tower, that is Ahab; the volcano, that is Ahab; the courageous, the undaunted, and victorious fowl, that, too, is Ahab; all are Ahab; and this round gold is but the image of the rounder globe, which, like a magician's glass, to each and every man in turn but

mirrors back his own mysterious self. Great pains, small gains for those who ask the world to solve them; it cannot solve itself. Methinks now this coined sun wears a ruddy face; but see! aye, he enters the sign of storms, the equinox! and but six months before he wheeled out of a former equinox at Aries! From storm to storm! So be it, then. Born in throes, 'tis fit that man should live in pains and die in pangs! So be it, then! Here's stout stuff for woe to work on. So be it, then."

"No fairy fingers can have pressed the gold, but devil's claws must have left their mouldings there since yesterday," murmured Starbuck to himself, leaning against the bulwarks. "The old man seems to read Belshazzar's awful writing. I have never marked the coin inspectingly. He goes below; let me read. A dark valley between three mighty, heaven-abiding peaks, that almost seem the Trinity, in some faint earthly symbol. So in this vale of Death, God girds us round; and over all our gloom, the sun of Righteousness still shines a beacon and a hope. If we bend down our eyes, the dark vale shows her mouldy soil; but if we lift them, the bright sun meets our glance half way, to cheer. 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 twiggling 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. Hem, hem,  
hem; here they  
are—here they go—all alive:—Aries, or the Ram; Taurus, or  
the Bull and  
Jimimi! here's Gemini himself, or the Twins. Well; the  
sun he wheels  
among 'em. Aye, here on the coin he's just crossing the  
threshold  
between two of twelve sitting-rooms all in a ring. Book!  
you lie there;  
the fact is, you books must know your places. You'll do

to give us the  
bare words and facts, but we come in to supply the  
thoughts. That's my  
small experience, so far as the Massachusetts calendar,  
and Bowditch's  
navigator, and Daboll's arithmetic go. Signs and wonders,  
eh? Pity if  
there is nothing wonderful in signs, and significant in  
wonders!  
There's a clue somewhere; wait a bit; hist-hark! By Jove,  
I have it!  
Look you, Doubloon, your zodiac here is the life of man  
in one round  
chapter; and now I'll read it off, straight out of the  
book. Come,  
Almanack! To begin: there's Aries, or the Ram-lecherous  
dog, he begets  
us; then, Taurus, or the Bull—he bumps us the first  
thing; then Gemini,  
or the Twins—that is, Virtue and Vice; we try to reach  
Virtue, when lo!  
comes Cancer the Crab, and drags us back; and here, going  
from Virtue,  
Leo, a roaring Lion, lies in the path—he gives a few  
fierce bites and  
surly dabs with his paw; we escape, and hail Virgo, the  
Virgin! that's  
our first love; we marry and think to be happy for aye,  
when pop comes  
Libra, or the Scales—happiness weighed and found wanting;  
and while we  
are very sad about that, Lord! how we suddenly jump, as  
Scorpio, or the  
Scorpion, stings us in the rear; we are curing the wound,  
when whang  
come the arrows all round; Sagittarius, or the Archer, is  
amusing  
himself. As we pluck out the shafts, stand aside! here's  
the  
battering-ram, Capricornus, or the Goat; full tilt, he  
comes rushing,  
and headlong we are tossed; when Aquarius, or the Water-  
bearer, pours  
out his whole deluge and drowns us; and to wind up with



Pisces, or the  
Fishes, we sleep. There's a sermon now, writ in high  
heaven, and the  
sun goes through it every year, and yet comes out of it  
all alive and  
hearty. Jollily he, aloft there, wheels through toil and  
trouble; and  
so, alow here, does jolly Stubb. Oh, jolly's the word for  
aye! Adieu,  
Doubloon! But stop; here comes little King-Post; dodge  
round the  
try-works, now, and let's hear what he'll have to say.  
There; he's  
before it; he'll out with something presently. So, so;  
he's beginning."

"I see nothing here, but a round thing made of gold, and  
whoever raises  
a certain whale, this round thing belongs to him. So,  
what's all this  
staring been about? It is worth sixteen dollars, that's  
true; and at  
two cents the cigar, that's nine hundred and sixty  
cigars. I won't  
smoke dirty pipes like Stubb, but I like cigars, and  
here's nine  
hundred and sixty of them; so here goes Flask aloft to  
spy 'em out."

"Shall I call that wise or foolish, now; if it be really  
wise it has a  
foolish look to it; yet, if it be really foolish, then  
has it a sort of  
wiseish look to it. But, avast; here comes our old  
Manxman—the old  
hearse-driver, he must have been, that is, before he took  
to the sea.  
He luffs up before the doubloon; halloa, and goes round  
on the other  
side of the mast; why, there's a horse-shoe nailed on  
that side; and  
now he's back again; what does that mean? Hark! he's  
muttering—voice  
like an old worn-out coffee-mill. Prick ears, and

listen!"

"If the White Whale be raised, it must be in a month and a day, when the sun stands in some one of these signs. I've studied signs, and know their marks; they were taught me two score years ago, by the old witch in Copenhagen. Now, in what sign will the sun then be? The horse-shoe sign; for there it is, right opposite the gold. And what's the horse-shoe sign? The lion is the horse-shoe sign—the roaring and devouring lion. Ship, old ship! my old head shakes to think of thee."

"There's another rendering now; but still one text. All sorts of men in one kind of world, you see. Dodge again! here comes Queequeg—all tattooing—looks like the signs of the Zodiac himself. What says the Cannibal? As I live he's comparing notes; looking at his thigh bone; thinks the sun is in the thigh, or in the calf, or in the bowels, I suppose, as the old women talk Surgeon's Astronomy in the back country. And by Jove, he's found something there in the vicinity of his thigh—I guess it's Sagittarius, or the Archer. No: he don't know what to make of the doubloon; he takes it for an old button off some king's trowsers. But, aside again! here comes that ghost-devil, Fedallah; tail coiled out of sight as usual, oakum in the toes of his pumps as usual. 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! old Ahab! the White Whale; he'll nail ye! This is a pine tree. My father, in old Tolland county, cut down a pine tree once, and found a silver ring grown over in it; some old darkey's wedding ring. How did it get there? And so they'll say in the resurrection, when they come to fish up this old mast, and find a doubloon lodged in it, with bedded oysters for the shaggy bark. Oh, the gold! the precious, precious, gold! the green miser'll hoard ye soon! Hish! hish! God goes 'mong the worlds blackberrying. Cook! ho, cook! and cook us! Jenny! hey, hey, hey, hey, Jenny, Jenny! and get your hoe-cake done!"

#### CHAPTER 100. Leg and Arm.

The Pequod, of Nantucket, Meets the Samuel Enderby, of London.

"Ship, ahoy! Hast seen the White Whale?"

So cried Ahab, once more hailing a ship showing English colours, bearing down under the stern. Trumpet to mouth, the old man was standing in his hoisted quarter-boat, his ivory leg plainly revealed to the stranger captain, who was carelessly reclining in his own boat's bow. He was a darkly-tanned, burly, good-natured, fine-looking man, of

sixty or thereabouts, dressed in a spacious roundabout,  
that hung round  
him in festoons of blue pilot-cloth; and one empty arm of  
this jacket  
streamed behind him like the broidered arm of a hussar's  
surcoat.

"Hast seen the White Whale?"

"See you this?" and withdrawing it from the folds that  
had hidden it,  
he held up a white arm of sperm whale bone, terminating  
in a wooden  
head like a mallet.

"Man my boat!" cried Ahab, impetuously, and tossing about  
the oars near  
him—"Stand by to lower!"

In less than a minute, without quitting his little craft,  
he and his  
crew were dropped to the water, and were soon alongside  
of the  
stranger. But here a curious difficulty presented itself.  
In the  
excitement of the moment, Ahab had forgotten that since  
the loss of his  
leg he had never once stepped on board of any vessel at  
sea but his  
own, and then it was always by an ingenious and very  
handy mechanical  
contrivance peculiar to the Pequod, and a thing not to be  
rigged and  
shipped in any other vessel at a moment's warning. Now,  
it is no very  
easy matter for anybody—except those who are almost  
hourly used to it,  
like whalemén—to clamber up a ship's side from a boat on  
the open sea;  
for the great swells now lift the boat high up towards  
the bulwarks,  
and then instantaneously drop it half way down to the  
kelson. So,  
deprived of one leg, and the strange ship of course being

altogether  
unsupplied with the kindly invention, Ahab now found  
himself abjectly  
reduced to a clumsy landsman again; hopelessly eyeing the  
uncertain  
changeable height he could hardly hope to attain.

It has before been hinted, perhaps, that every little  
untoward  
circumstance that befell him, and which indirectly sprang  
from his  
luckless mishap, almost invariably irritated or  
exasperated Ahab. And  
in the present instance, all this was heightened by the  
sight of the  
two officers of the strange ship, leaning over the side,  
by the  
perpendicular ladder of nailed cleets there, and swinging  
towards him a  
pair of tastefully-ornamented man-ropes; for at first  
they did not seem  
to bethink them that a one-legged man must be too much of  
a cripple to  
use their sea bannisters. But this awkwardness only  
lasted a minute,  
because the strange captain, observing at a glance how  
affairs stood,  
cried out, "I see, I see!—avast heaving there! Jump,  
boys, and swing  
over the cutting-tackle."

As good luck would have it, they had had a whale  
alongside a day or two  
previous, and the great tackles were still aloft, and the  
massive  
curved blubber-hook, now clean and dry, was still  
attached to the end.  
This was quickly lowered to Ahab, who at once  
comprehending it all,  
slid his solitary thigh into the curve of the hook (it  
was like sitting  
in the fluke of an anchor, or the crotch of an apple  
tree), and then  
giving the word, held himself fast, and at the same time

also helped to  
hoist his own weight, by pulling hand-over-hand upon one  
of the running  
parts of the tackle. Soon he was carefully swung inside  
the high  
bulwarks, and gently landed upon the capstan head. With  
his ivory arm  
frankly thrust forth in welcome, the other captain  
advanced, and Ahab,  
putting out his ivory leg, and crossing the ivory arm  
(like two  
sword-fish blades) cried out in his walrus way, "Aye,  
aye, hearty! let  
us shake bones together!—an arm and a leg!—an arm that  
never can  
shrink, d'ye see; and a leg that never can run. Where  
did'st thou see  
the White Whale?—how long ago?"

"The White Whale," said the Englishman, pointing his  
ivory arm towards  
the East, and taking a rueful sight along it, as if it  
had been a  
telescope; "there I saw him, on the Line, last season."

"And he took that arm off, did he?" asked Ahab, now  
sliding down from  
the capstan, and resting on the Englishman's shoulder, as  
he did so.

"Aye, he was the cause of it, at least; and that leg,  
too?"

"Spin me the yarn," said Ahab; "how was it?"

"It was the first time in my life that I ever cruised on  
the Line,"  
began the Englishman. "I was ignorant of the White Whale  
at that time.  
Well, one day we lowered for a pod of four or five  
whales, and my boat  
fastened to one of them; a regular circus horse he was,  
too, that went  
milling and milling round so, that my boat's crew could

only trim dish,  
by sitting all their sterns on the outer gunwale.  
Presently up breaches  
from the bottom of the sea a bouncing great whale, with a  
milky-white  
head and hump, all crows' feet and wrinkles."

"It was he, it was he!" cried Ahab, suddenly letting out  
his suspended  
breath.

"And harpoons sticking in near his starboard fin."

"Aye, aye—they were mine—my irons," cried Ahab,  
exultingly—"but on!"

"Give me a chance, then," said the Englishman, good-  
humoredly. "Well,  
this old great-grandfather, with the white head and hump,  
runs all  
afoam into the pod, and goes to snapping furiously at my  
fast-line!

"Aye, I see!—wanted to part it; free the fast-fish—an old  
trick—I know  
him."

"How it was exactly," continued the one-armed commander,  
"I do not  
know; but in biting the line, it got foul of his teeth,  
caught there  
somehow; but we didn't know it then; so that when we  
afterwards pulled  
on the line, bounce we came plump on to his hump! instead  
of the other  
whale's; that went off to windward, all fluking. Seeing  
how matters  
stood, and what a noble great whale it was—the noblest  
and biggest I  
ever saw, sir, in my life—I resolved to capture him,  
spite of the  
boiling rage he seemed to be in. And thinking the hap-  
hazard line would  
get loose, or the tooth it was tangled to might draw (for



I have a  
devil of a boat's crew for a pull on a whale-line);  
seeing all this, I  
say, I jumped into my first mate's boat—Mr. Mounttop's  
here (by the  
way, Captain—Mounttop; Mounttop—the captain);—as I was  
saying, I jumped  
into Mounttop's boat, which, d'ye see, was gunwale and  
gunwale with  
mine, then; and snatching the first harpoon, let this old  
great-grandfather have it. But, Lord, look you, sir—  
hearts and souls  
alive, man—the next instant, in a jiff, I was blind as a  
bat—both eyes  
out—all befogged and bedeadened with black foam—the  
whale's tail  
looming straight up out of it, perpendicular in the air,  
like a marble  
steeple. No use sterning all, then; but as I was groping  
at midday,  
with a blinding sun, all crown-jewels; as I was groping,  
I say, after  
the second iron, to toss it overboard—down comes the tail  
like a Lima  
tower, cutting my boat in two, leaving each half in  
splinters; and,  
flukes first, the white hump backed through the wreck, as  
though it was  
all chips. We all struck out. To escape his terrible  
flailings, I  
seized hold of my harpoon-pole sticking in him, and for a  
moment clung  
to that like a sucking fish. But a combing sea dashed me  
off, and at  
the same instant, the fish, taking one good dart  
forwards, went down  
like a flash; and the barb of that cursed second iron  
towing along near  
me caught me here" (clapping his hand just below his  
shoulder); "yes,  
caught me just here, I say, and bore me down to Hell's  
flames, I was  
thinking; when, when, all of a sudden, thank the good  
God, the barb

ripped its way along the flesh—clear along the whole length  
of my  
arm—came out nigh my wrist, and up I floated;—and that  
gentleman there  
will tell you the rest (by the way, captain—Dr. Bunger,  
ship's surgeon:  
Bunger, my lad,—the captain). Now, Bunger boy, spin your  
part of the  
yarn."

The professional gentleman thus familiarly pointed out,  
had been all  
the time standing near them, with nothing specific  
visible, to denote  
his gentlemanly rank on board. His face was an  
exceedingly round but  
sober one; he was dressed in a faded blue woollen frock  
or shirt, and  
patched trowsers; and had thus far been dividing his  
attention between  
a marlingspike he held in one hand, and a pill-box held  
in the other,  
occasionally casting a critical glance at the ivory limbs  
of the two  
crippled captains. But, at his superior's introduction of  
him to Ahab,  
he politely bowed, and straightway went on to do his  
captain's bidding.

"It was a shocking bad wound," began the whale-surgeon;  
"and, taking my  
advice, Captain Boomer here, stood our old Sammy—"

"Samuel Enderby is the name of my ship," interrupted the  
one-armed  
captain, addressing Ahab; "go on, boy."

"Stood our old Sammy off to the northward, to get out of  
the blazing  
hot weather there on the Line. But it was no use—I did  
all I could; sat  
up with him nights; was very severe with him in the  
matter of diet—"

"Oh, very severe!" chimed in the patient himself; then suddenly altering his voice, "Drinking hot rum toddies with me every night, till he couldn't see to put on the bandages; and sending me to bed, half seas over, about three o'clock in the morning. Oh, ye stars! he sat up with me indeed, and was very severe in my diet. Oh! a great watcher, and very dietetically severe, is Dr. Bunger. (Bunger, you dog, laugh out! why don't ye? You know you're a precious jolly rascal.) But, heave ahead, boy, I'd rather be killed by you than kept alive by any other man."

"My captain, you must have ere this perceived, respected sir"—said the imperturbable godly-looking Bunger, slightly bowing to Ahab—"is apt to be facetious at times; he spins us many clever things of that sort. But I may as well say—en passant, as the French remark—that I myself—that is to say, Jack Bunger, late of the reverend clergy—am a strict total abstinence man; I never drink—"

"Water!" cried the captain; "he never drinks it; it's a sort of fits to him; fresh water throws him into the hydrophobia; but go on—go on with the arm story."

"Yes, I may as well," said the surgeon, coolly. "I was about observing, sir, before Captain Boomer's facetious interruption, that spite of my best and severest endeavors, the wound kept getting worse and worse; the truth was, sir, it was as ugly gaping wound as surgeon ever saw;

more than two feet and several inches long. I measured it with the lead line. In short, it grew black; I knew what was threatened, and off it came. But I had no hand in shipping that ivory arm there; that thing is against all rule"—pointing at it with the marlingspike—"that is the captain's work, not mine; he ordered the carpenter to make it; he had that club-hammer there put to the end, to knock some one's brains out with, I suppose, as he tried mine once. He flies into diabolical passions sometimes. Do ye see this dent, sir"—removing his hat, and brushing aside his hair, and exposing a bowl-like cavity in his skull, but which bore not the slightest scarry trace, or any token of ever having been a wound—"Well, the captain there will tell you how that came here; he knows."

"No, I don't," said the captain, "but his mother did; he was born with it. Oh, you solemn rogue, you—you Bunker! was there ever such another Bunker in the watery world? Bunker, when you die, you ought to die in pickle, you dog; you should be preserved to future ages, you rascal."

"What became of the White Whale?" now cried Ahab, who thus far had been impatiently listening to this by-play between the two Englishmen.

"Oh!" cried the one-armed captain, "oh, yes! Well; after he sounded, we didn't see him again for some time; in fact, as I before hinted, I didn't then know what whale it was that had served me such a trick,

till some time afterwards, when coming back to the Line,  
we heard about  
Moby Dick—as some call him—and then I knew it was he.”

“Did’st thou cross his wake again?”

“Twice.”

“But could not fasten?”

“Didn’t want to try to: ain’t one limb enough? What  
should I do without  
this other arm? And I’m thinking Moby Dick doesn’t bite  
so much as he  
swallows.”

“Well, then,” interrupted Bunger, “give him your left arm  
for bait to  
get the right. Do you know, gentlemen”—very gravely and  
mathematically  
bowing to each Captain in succession—“Do you know,  
gentlemen, that the  
digestive organs of the whale are so inscrutably  
constructed by Divine  
Providence, that it is quite impossible for him to  
completely digest  
even a man’s arm? And he knows it too. So that what you  
take for the  
White Whale’s malice is only his awkwardness. For he  
never means to  
swallow a single limb; he only thinks to terrify by  
feints. But  
sometimes he is like the old juggling fellow, formerly a  
patient of  
mine in Ceylon, that making believe swallow jack-knives,  
once upon a  
time let one drop into him in good earnest, and there it  
stayed for a  
twelvemonth or more; when I gave him an emetic, and he  
heaved it up in  
small tacks, d’ye see. No possible way for him to digest  
that  
jack-knife, and fully incorporate it into his general  
bodily system.

Yes, Captain Boomer, if you are quick enough about it,  
and have a mind  
to pawn one arm for the sake of the privilege of giving  
decent burial  
to the other, why in that case the arm is yours; only let  
the whale  
have another chance at you shortly, that's all."

"No, thank ye, Bungler," said the English Captain, "he's  
welcome to the  
arm he has, since I can't help it, and didn't know him  
then; but not to  
another one. No more White Whales for me; I've lowered  
for him once,  
and that has satisfied me. 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  
Bunger, 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? He was heading east, I think.—Is your Captain crazy?" whispering Fedallah.

But Fedallah, putting a finger on his lip, slid over the bulwarks to take the boat's steering oar, and Ahab, swinging the cutting-tackle towards him, commanded the ship's sailors to stand by to lower.

In a moment he was standing in the boat's stern, and the Manilla men were springing to their oars. In vain the English Captain hailed him. With back to the stranger ship, and face set like a flint to his own, Ahab stood upright till alongside of the Pequod.

#### 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 & 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. In 1819, the same house fitted out a  
discovery whale ship  
of their own, to go on a tasting cruise to the remote  
waters of Japan.  
That ship—well called the "Syren"—made a noble



experimental cruise; and  
it was thus that the great Japanese Whaling Ground first  
became  
generally known. The Syren in this famous voyage was  
commanded by a  
Captain Coffin, a Nantucketer.

All honor to the Enderbies, therefore, whose house, I  
think, exists to  
the present day; though doubtless the original Samuel  
must long ago  
have slipped his cable for the great South Sea of the  
other world.

The ship named after him was worthy of the honor, being a  
very fast  
sailer and a noble craft every way. I boarded her once at  
midnight  
somewhere off the Patagonian coast, and drank good flip  
down in the  
forecastle. It was a fine gam we had, and they were all  
trumps—every  
soul on board. A short life to them, and a jolly death.  
And that fine  
gam I had—long, very long after old Ahab touched her  
planks with his  
ivory heel—it minds me of the noble, solid, Saxon  
hospitality of that  
ship; and may my parson forget me, and the devil remember  
me, if I ever  
lose sight of it. Flip? Did I say we had flip? Yes, and  
we flipped it  
at the rate of ten gallons the hour; and when the squall  
came (for it's  
squally off there by Patagonia), and all hands—visitors  
and all—were  
called to reef topsails, we were so top-heavy that we had  
to swing each  
other aloft in bowlines; and we ignorantly furled the  
skirts of our  
jackets into the sails, so that we hung there, reefed  
fast in the  
howling gale, a warning example to all drunken tars.  
However, the masts

did not go overboard; and by and by we scrambled down, so sober, that we had to pass the flip again, though the savage salt spray bursting down the fore-castle scuttle, rather too much diluted and pickled it to my taste.

The beef was fine—tough, but with body in it. They said it was bull-beef; others, that it was dromedary beef; but I do not know, for certain, how that was. They had dumplings too; small, but substantial, symmetrically globular, and indestructible dumplings. 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 fore-castle 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." In short, this ancient and learned Low Dutch book treated of the commerce of Holland; and, among other subjects, contained a very interesting account of its whale fishery. And in this chapter it was, headed, "Smeer," or "Fat," that I found a long detailed list of the outfits for the larders and cellars of 180 sail of Dutch whalers; from which list, as translated by Dr. Snodhead, I transcribe the following:

400,000 lbs. of beef. 60,000 lbs. Friesland pork. 150,000 lbs. of stock fish. 550,000 lbs. of biscuit. 72,000 lbs. of soft bread. 2,800 firkins of butter. 20,000 lbs. Texel & Leyden cheese. 144,000 lbs. cheese (probably an inferior article). 550 ankers of Geneva. 10,800 barrels of beer.

Most statistical tables are parchingly dry in the reading; not so in the present case, however, where the reader is flooded with whole pipes, barrels, quarts, and gills of good gin and good cheer.

At the time, I devoted three days to the studious digesting of all this beer, beef, and bread, during which many profound thoughts were incidentally suggested to me, capable of a transcendental and Platonic application; and, furthermore, I compiled supplementary tables of my own, touching the probable quantity of stock-fish, etc.,

consumed by  
every Low Dutch harpooneer in that ancient Greenland and  
Spitzbergen  
whale fishery. In the first place, the amount of butter,  
and Texel and  
Leyden cheese consumed, seems amazing. I impute it,  
though, to their  
naturally unctuous natures, being rendered still more  
unctuous by the  
nature of their vocation, and especially by their  
pursuing their game  
in those frigid Polar Seas, on the very coasts of that  
Esquimaux  
country where the convivial natives pledge each other in  
bumpers of  
train oil.

The quantity of beer, too, is very large, 10,800 barrels.  
Now, as those  
polar fisheries could only be prosecuted in the short  
summer of that  
climate, so that the whole cruise of one of these Dutch  
whalemen,  
including the short voyage to and from the Spitzbergen  
sea, did not  
much exceed three months, say, and reckoning 30 men to  
each of their  
fleet of 180 sail, we have 5,400 Low Dutch seamen in all;  
therefore, I  
say, we have precisely two barrels of beer per man, for a  
twelve weeks'  
allowance, exclusive of his fair proportion of that 550  
ankers of gin.  
Now, whether these gin and beer harpooneers, so fuddled  
as one might  
fancy them to have been, were the right sort of men to  
stand up in a  
boat's head, and take good aim at flying whales; this  
would seem  
somewhat improbable. Yet they did aim at them, and hit  
them too. But  
this was very far North, be it remembered, where beer  
agrees well with  
the constitution; upon the Equator, in our southern

fishery, beer would  
be apt to make the harpooneer sleepy at the mast-head and  
boozy in his  
boat; and grievous loss might ensue to Nantucket and New  
Bedford.

But no more; enough has been said to show that the old  
Dutch whalers of  
two or three centuries ago were high livers; and that the  
English  
whalers have not neglected so excellent an example. For,  
say they, when  
cruising in an empty ship, if you can get nothing better  
out of the  
world, get a good dinner out of it, at least. And this  
empties the  
decanter.

#### CHAPTER 102. A Bower in the Arsacides.

Hitherto, in descriptively treating of the Sperm Whale, I  
have chiefly  
dwelt upon the marvels of his outer aspect; or separately  
and in detail  
upon some few interior structural features. But to a  
large and thorough  
sweeping comprehension of him, it behooves me now to  
unbutton him still  
further, and untagging the points of his hose, unbuckling  
his garters,  
and casting loose the hooks and the eyes of the joints of  
his innermost  
bones, set him before you in his ultimatum; that is to  
say, in his  
unconditional skeleton.

But how now, Ishmael? How is it, that you, a mere oarsman  
in the  
fishery, pretend to know aught about the subterranean  
parts of the  
whale? Did erudite Stubb, mounted upon your capstan,  
deliver lectures  
on the anatomy of the Cetacea; and by help of the

windlass, hold up a  
specimen rib for exhibition? Explain thyself, Ishmael.  
Can you land a  
full-grown whale on your deck for examination, as a cook  
dishes a  
roast-pig? Surely not. A veritable witness have you  
hitherto been,  
Ishmael; but have a care how you seize the privilege of  
Jonah alone;  
the privilege of discoursing upon the joists and beams;  
the rafters,  
ridge-pole, sleepers, and under-pinnings, making up the  
frame-work of  
leviathan; and belike of the tallow-vats, dairy-rooms,  
butteries, and  
cheeseries in his bowels.

I confess, that since Jonah, few whalemens have penetrated  
very far  
beneath the skin of the adult whale; nevertheless, I have  
been blessed  
with an opportunity to dissect him in miniature. In a  
ship I belonged  
to, a small cub Sperm Whale was once bodily hoisted to  
the deck for his  
poke or bag, to make sheaths for the barbs of the  
harpoons, and for the  
heads of the lances. 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 vertebræ 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 vapory 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!—one  
word!—whither flows the fabric? what palace may it deck?  
wherefore all  
these ceaseless toilings? Speak, weaver!—stay thy hand!—  
but one single  
word with thee! Nay—the shuttle flies—the figures float  
from forth the  
loom; the freshet-rushing carpet for ever slides away.  
The weaver-god,  
he weaves; and by that weaving is he deafened, that he  
hears no mortal  
voice; and by that humming, we, too, who look on the loom  
are deafened;  
and only when we escape it shall we hear the thousand  
voices that speak  
through it. For even so it is in all material factories.  
The spoken  
words that are inaudible among the flying spindles; those  
same words  
are plainly heard without the walls, bursting from the  
opened  
casements. Thereby have villainies been detected. Ah,  
mortal! then, be  
heedful; for so, in all this din of the great world's  
loom, thy  
subtlest thinkings may be overheard afar.

Now, amid the green, life-restless loom of that  
Arsacidean wood, the  
great, white, worshipped skeleton lay lounging—a gigantic  
idler! Yet,  
as the ever-woven verdant warp and woof intermixed and  
hummed around  
him, the mighty idler seemed the cunning weaver; himself  
all woven over  
with the vines; every month assuming greener, fresher  
verdure; but  
himself a skeleton. Life folded Death; Death trellised  
Life; the grim  
god wived with youthful Life, and begat him curly-headed  
glories.

Now, when with royal Tranquo I visited this wondrous  
whale, and saw the  
skull an altar, and the artificial smoke ascending from  
where the real  
jet had issued, I marvelled that the king should regard a  
chapel as an  
object of vertu. He laughed. But more I marvelled that  
the priests  
should swear that smoky jet of his was genuine. To and  
fro I paced  
before this skeleton—brushed the vines aside—broke  
through the ribs—and  
with a ball of Arsacidean twine, wandered, eddied long  
amid its many  
winding, shaded colonnades and arbours. But soon my line  
was out; and  
following it back, I emerged from the opening where I  
entered. I saw no  
living thing within; naught was there but bones.

Cutting me a green measuring-rod, I once more dived  
within the  
skeleton. From their arrow-slit in the skull, the priests  
perceived me  
taking the altitude of the final rib, "How now!" they  
shouted; "Dar'st  
thou measure this our god! That's for us." "Aye, priests—  
well, how long

do ye make him, then?" But hereupon a fierce contest rose among them, concerning feet and inches; they cracked each other's sconces with their yard-sticks—the great skull echoed—and seizing that lucky chance, I quickly concluded my own admeasurements.

These admeasurements I now propose to set before you. But first, be it recorded, that, in this matter, I am not free to utter any fancied measurement I please. Because there are skeleton authorities you can refer to, to test my accuracy. There is a Leviathanic Museum, they tell me, in Hull, England, one of the whaling ports of that country, where they have some fine specimens of fin-backs and other whales. Likewise, I have heard that in the museum of Manchester, in New Hampshire, they have what the proprietors call "the only perfect specimen of a Greenland or River Whale in the United States." 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. Attached to this back-bone, for  
something less  
than a third of its length, was the mighty circular  
basket of ribs  
which once enclosed his vitals.

To me this vast ivory-ribbed chest, with the long,  
unrelieved spine,  
extending far away from it in a straight line, not a  
little resembled  
the hull of a great ship new-laid upon the stocks, when  
only some  
twenty of her naked bow-ribs are inserted, and the keel  
is otherwise,  
for the time, but a long, disconnected timber.

The ribs were ten on a side. The first, to begin from the  
neck, was  
nearly six feet long; the second, third, and fourth were  
each  
successively longer, till you came to the climax of the  
fifth, or one  
of the middle ribs, which measured eight feet and some  
inches. From  
that part, the remaining ribs diminished, till the tenth  
and last only  
spanned five feet and some inches. In general thickness,  
they all bore  
a seemly correspondence to their length. The middle ribs  
were the most  
arched. In some of the Arsacides they are used for beams  
whereon to lay  
footpath bridges over small streams.

In considering these ribs, I could not but be struck anew  
with the  
circumstance, so variously repeated in this book, that  
the skeleton of  
the whale is by no means the mould of his invested form.

The largest of  
the Tranque ribs, one of the middle ones, occupied that  
part of the  
fish which, in life, is greatest in depth. Now, the  
greatest depth of  
the invested body of this particular whale must have been  
at least  
sixteen feet; whereas, the corresponding rib measured but  
little more  
than eight feet. So that this rib only conveyed half of  
the true notion  
of the living magnitude of that part. Besides, for some  
way, where I  
now saw but a naked spine, all that had been once wrapped  
round with  
tons of added bulk in flesh, muscle, blood, and bowels.  
Still more, for  
the ample fins, I here saw but a few disordered joints;  
and in place of  
the weighty and majestic, but boneless flukes, an utter  
blank!

How vain and foolish, then, thought I, for timid  
untraveller man to try  
to comprehend aright this wondrous whale, by merely  
poring over his  
dead attenuated skeleton, stretched in this peaceful  
wood. No. 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 vertebræ 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 archæological,  
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 vertebræ, 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. I look round to shake  
hands with Shem. I  
am horror-struck at this antemosaic, unsourced existence  
of the  
unspeakable terrors of the whale, which, having been  
before all time,  
must needs exist after all humane ages are over.

But not alone has this Leviathan left his pre-adamite  
traces in the  
stereotype plates of nature, and in limestone and marl  
bequeathed his  
ancient bust; but upon Egyptian tablets, whose antiquity  
seems to claim

for them an almost fossiliferous character, we find the unmistakable print of his fin. In an apartment of the great temple of Denderah, some fifty years ago, there was discovered upon the granite ceiling a sculptured and painted planisphere, abounding in centaurs, griffins, and dolphins, similar to the grotesque figures on the celestial globe of the moderns. Gliding among them, old Leviathan swam as of yore; was there swimming in that planisphere, centuries before Solomon was cradled.

Nor must there be omitted another strange attestation of the antiquity of the whale, in his own osseous post-diluvian reality, as set down by the venerable John Leo, the old Barbary traveller.

"Not far from the Sea-side, they have a Temple, the Rafters and Beams of which are made of Whale-Bones; for Whales of a monstrous size are oftentimes cast up dead upon that shore. The Common People imagine, that by a secret Power bestowed by God upon the Temple, no Whale can pass it without immediate death. But the truth of the Matter is, that on either side of the Temple, there are Rocks that shoot two Miles into the Sea, and wound the Whales when they light upon 'em. They keep a Whale's Rib of an incredible length for a Miracle, which lying upon the Ground with its convex part uppermost, makes an Arch, the Head of which cannot be reached by a Man upon a Camel's Back. This Rib (says John Leo) is said to have layn there a hundred Years before I saw it. Their

Historians affirm, that a Prophet who prophesy'd of Mahomet, came from this Temple, and some do not stand to assert, that the Prophet Jonas was cast forth by the Whale at the Base of the Temple."

In this Afric Temple of the Whale I leave you, reader, and if you be a Nantucketer, and a whaleman, you will silently worship there.

#### CHAPTER 105. Does the Whale's Magnitude Diminish?—Will He Perish?

Inasmuch, then, as this Leviathan comes floundering down upon us from the head-waters of the Eternities, it may be fitly inquired, whether, in the long course of his generations, he has not degenerated from the original bulk of his sires.

But upon investigation we find, that not only are the whales of the present day superior in magnitude to those whose fossil remains are found in the Tertiary system (embracing a distinct geological period prior to man), but of the whales found in that Tertiary system, those belonging to its latter formations exceed in size those of its earlier ones.

Of all the pre-adamite whales yet exhumed, by far the largest is the Alabama one mentioned in the last chapter, and that was less than seventy feet in length in the skeleton. Whereas, we have already seen, that the tape-measure gives seventy-two feet for the skeleton of a large sized modern whale. And I have heard, on whalemen's

authority,  
that Sperm Whales have been captured near a hundred feet  
long at the  
time of capture.

But may it not be, that while the whales of the present  
hour are an  
advance in magnitude upon those of all previous  
geological periods; may  
it not be, that since Adam's time they have degenerated?

Assuredly, we must conclude so, if we are to credit the  
accounts of  
such gentlemen as Pliny, and the ancient naturalists  
generally. For  
Pliny tells us of whales that embraced acres of living  
bulk, and  
Aldrovandus of others which measured eight hundred feet  
in length—Rope  
Walks and Thames Tunnels of Whales! And even in the days  
of Banks and  
Solander, Cooke's naturalists, we find a Danish member of  
the Academy  
of Sciences setting down certain Iceland Whales (reydan-  
siskur, or  
Wrinkled Bellies) at one hundred and twenty yards; that  
is, three  
hundred and sixty feet. And Lacépède, the French  
naturalist, in his  
elaborate history of whales, in the very beginning of his  
work (page  
3), sets down the Right Whale at one hundred metres,  
three hundred and  
twenty-eight feet. And this work was published so late as  
A.D. 1825.

But will any whaleman believe these stories? No. The  
whale of to-day is  
as big as his ancestors in Pliny's time. And if ever I go  
where Pliny  
is, I, a whaleman (more than he was), will make bold to  
tell him so.  
Because I cannot understand how it is, that while the  
Egyptian mummies

that were buried thousands of years before even Pliny was born, do not measure so much in their coffins as a modern Kentuckian in his socks; and while the cattle and other animals sculptured on the oldest Egyptian and Nineveh tablets, by the relative proportions in which they are drawn, just as plainly prove that the high-bred, stall-fed, prize cattle of Smithfield, not only equal, but far exceed in magnitude the fattest of Pharaoh's fat kine; in the face of all this, I will not admit that of all animals the whale alone should have degenerated.

But still another inquiry remains; one often agitated by the more recondite Nantucketers. Whether owing to the almost omniscient look-outs at the mast-heads of the whale-ships, now penetrating even through Behring's straits, and into the remotest secret drawers and lockers of the world; and the thousand harpoons and lances darted along all continental coasts; the moot point is, whether Leviathan can long endure so wide a chase, and so remorseless a havoc; whether he must not at last be exterminated from the waters, and the last whale, like the last man, smoke his last pipe, and then himself evaporate in the final puff.

Comparing the humped herds of whales with the humped herds of buffalo, which, not forty years ago, overspread by tens of thousands the prairies of Illinois and Missouri, and shook their iron manes and scowled with their thunder-clotted brows upon the sites



of populous  
river-capitals, where now the polite broker sells you  
land at a dollar  
an inch; in such a comparison an irresistible argument  
would seem  
furnished, to show that the hunted whale cannot now  
escape speedy  
extinction.

But you must look at this matter in every light. Though  
so short a  
period ago—not a good lifetime—the census of the buffalo  
in Illinois  
exceeded the census of men now in London, and though at  
the present day  
not one horn or hoof of them remains in all that region;  
and though the  
cause of this wondrous extermination was the spear of  
man; yet the far  
different nature of the whale-hunt peremptorily forbids  
so inglorious  
an end to the Leviathan. 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 seas in  
immense  
caravans, so that to a large degree the scattered  
solitaries, 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.

#### CHAPTER 107. The Carpenter.

Seat thyself sultanically among the moons of Saturn, and take high abstracted man alone; and he seems a wonder, a grandeur, and a woe. But from the same point, take mankind in mass, and for the most part, they seem a mob of unnecessary duplicates, both contemporary and hereditary. But most humble though he was, and far from furnishing an example of the high, humane abstraction; the Pequod's carpenter was no duplicate; hence, he now comes in person on this stage.

Like all sea-going ship carpenters, and more especially those belonging to whaling vessels, he was, to a certain off-handed, practical extent, alike experienced in numerous trades and callings collateral to his own; the carpenter's pursuit being the ancient and outbranching trunk



of all those numerous handicrafts which more or less have to do with wood as an auxiliary material. But, besides the application to him of the generic remark above, this carpenter of the Pequod was singularly efficient in those thousand nameless mechanical emergencies continually recurring in a large ship, upon a three or four years' voyage, in uncivilized and far-distant seas. For not to speak of his readiness in ordinary duties:—repairing stove boats, sprung spars, reforming the shape of clumsy-bladed oars, inserting bull's eyes in the deck, or new tree-nails in the side planks, and other miscellaneous matters more directly pertaining to his special business; he was moreover unhesitatingly expert in all manner of conflicting aptitudes, both useful and capricious.

The one grand stage where he enacted all his various parts so manifold, was his vice-bench; a long rude ponderous table furnished with several vices, of different sizes, and both of iron and of wood. At all times except when whales were alongside, this bench was securely lashed athwartships against the rear of the Try-works.

A belaying pin is found too large to be easily inserted into its hole: the carpenter claps it into one of his ever-ready vices, and straightway files it smaller. A lost land-bird of strange plumage strays on board, and is made a captive: out of clean shaved rods of right-whale bone, and cross-beams of sperm whale ivory, the carpenter

makes a pagoda-looking cage for it. An oarsman sprains his wrist: the carpenter concocts a soothing lotion. Stubb longed for vermillion stars to be painted upon the blade of his every oar; screwing each oar in his big vice of wood, the carpenter symmetrically supplies the constellation. A sailor takes a fancy to wear shark-bone ear-rings: the carpenter drills his ears. Another has the toothache: the carpenter out pincers, and clapping one hand upon his bench bids him be seated there; but the poor fellow unmanageably winces under the uncompleted operation; whirling round the handle of his wooden vice, the carpenter signs him to clap his jaw in that, if he would have him draw the tooth.

Thus, this carpenter was prepared at all points, and alike indifferent and without respect in all. Teeth he accounted bits of ivory; heads he deemed but top-blocks; men themselves he lightly held for capstans. But while now upon so wide a field thus variously accomplished and with such liveliness of expertness in him, too; all this would seem to argue some uncommon vivacity of intelligence. But not precisely so. For nothing was this man more remarkable, than for a certain impersonal stolidity as it were; impersonal, I say; for it so shaded off into the surrounding infinite of things, that it seemed one with the general stolidity discernible in the whole visible world; which while pauselessly active in uncounted modes, still eternally holds its peace, and ignores you, though you dig foundations for

cathedrals. Yet was  
this half-horrible stolidity in him, involving, too, as  
it appeared, an  
all-ramifying heartlessness;—yet was it oddly dashed at  
times, with an  
old, crutch-like, antediluvian, wheezing humorousness,  
not unstreaked  
now and then with a certain grizzled wittiness; such as  
might have  
served to pass the time during the midnight watch on the  
bearded  
forecastle of Noah's ark. Was it that this old carpenter  
had been a  
life-long wanderer, whose much rolling, to and fro, not  
only had  
gathered no moss; but what is more, had rubbed off  
whatever small  
outward clingings might have originally pertained to him?  
He was a  
stript abstract; an unfractioned integral; uncompromised  
as a new-born  
babe; living without premeditated reference to this world  
or the next.  
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-filers, 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 hummingly soliloquizes; or  
rather, his  
body was a sentry-box and this soliloquizer on guard  
there, and talking  
all the time to keep himself awake.

## CHAPTER 108. Ahab and the Carpenter.

### The Deck—First Night Watch.

(\_Carpenter standing before his vice-bench, and by the  
light of two  
lanterns busily filing the ivory joist for the leg, which  
joist is  
firmly fixed in the vice. Slabs of ivory, leather straps,  
pads, screws,  
and various tools of all sorts lying about the bench.  
Forward, the red

flame of the forge is seen, where the blacksmith is at work.\_)

Drat the file, and drat the bone! That is hard which should be soft,  
and that is soft which should be hard. So we go, who file old jaws and shinbones. Let's try another. Aye, now, this works better (\_sneezes\_).

Halloa, this bone dust is (\_sneezes\_)-why it's (\_sneezes\_)-yes it's (\_sneezes\_)-bless my soul, it won't let me speak! This is what an old

fellow gets now for working in dead lumber. Saw a live tree, and you don't get this dust; amputate a live bone, and you don't get it

(sneezes). Come, come, you old Smut, there, bear a hand, and let's have that ferule and buckle-screw; I'll be ready for them presently.

Lucky now (\_sneezes\_) there's no knee-joint to make; that might puzzle

a little; but a mere shinbone-why it's easy as making hop-poles; only I should like to put a good finish on. Time, time; if I but only had the

time, I could turn him out as neat a leg now as ever (\_sneezes\_)

scraped to a lady in a parlor. Those buckskin legs and calves of legs

I've seen in shop windows wouldn't compare at all. They soak water,

they do; and of course get rheumatic, and have to be doctored

(sneezes) with washes and lotions, just like live legs. There; before

I saw it off, now, I must call his old Mogulship, and see whether the

length will be all right; too short, if anything, I guess. Ha! that's

the heel; we are in luck; here he comes, or it's somebody else, that's

certain.

AHAB (\_advancing\_). (\_During the ensuing scene, the  
carpenter continues  
sneezing at times.\_)

Well, manmaker!

Just in time, sir. If the captain pleases, I will now  
mark the length.  
Let me measure, sir.

Measured for a leg! good. Well, it's not the first time.  
About it!  
There; keep thy finger on it. This is a cogent vice thou  
hast here,  
carpenter; let me feel its grip once. So, so; it does  
pinch some.

Oh, sir, it will break bones—beware, beware!

No fear; I like a good grip; I like to feel something in  
this slippery  
world that can hold, man. What's Prometheus about there?—  
the  
blacksmith, I mean—what's he about?

He must be forging the buckle-screw, sir, now.

Right. It's a partnership; he supplies the muscle part.  
He makes a  
fierce red flame there!

Aye, sir; he must have the white heat for this kind of  
fine work.

Um-m. So he must. I do deem it now a most meaning thing,  
that that old  
Greek, Prometheus, who made men, they say, should have  
been a  
blacksmith, and animated them with fire; for what's made  
in fire must  
properly belong to fire; and so hell's probable. How the  
soot flies!  
This must be the remainder the Greek made the Africans

of. Carpenter,  
when he's through with that buckle, tell him to forge a  
pair of steel  
shoulder-blades; there's a pedlar aboard with a crushing  
pack.

Sir?

Hold; while Prometheus is about it, I'll order a complete  
man after a  
desirable pattern. Imprimis, fifty feet high in his  
socks; then, chest  
modelled after the Thames Tunnel; then, legs with roots  
to 'em, to stay  
in one place; then, arms three feet through the wrist; no  
heart at all,  
brass forehead, and about a quarter of an acre of fine  
brains; and let  
me see—shall I order eyes to see outwards? No, but put a  
sky-light on  
top of his head to illuminate inwards. There, take the  
order, and away.

Now, what's he speaking about, and who's he speaking to,  
I should like  
to know? Shall I keep standing here? (\_aside\_).

'Tis but indifferent architecture to make a blind dome;  
here's one. No,  
no, no; I must have a lantern.

Ho, ho! That's it, hey? Here are two, sir; one will serve  
my turn.

What art thou thrusting that thief-catcher into my face  
for, man?  
Thrusted light is worse than presented pistols.

I thought, sir, that you spoke to carpenter.

Carpenter? why that's—but no;—a very tidy, and, I may  
say, an extremely  
gentlemanlike sort of business thou art in here,  
carpenter;—or would'st

thou rather work in clay?

Sir?—Clay? clay, sir? That's mud; we leave clay to ditchers, sir.

The fellow's impious! What art thou sneezing about?

Bone is rather dusty, sir.

Take the hint, then; and when thou art dead, never bury thyself under living people's noses.

Sir?—oh! ah!—I guess so;—yes—oh, dear!

Look ye, carpenter, I dare say thou callest thyself a right good workmanlike workman, eh? Well, then, will it speak thoroughly well for thy work, if, when I come to mount this leg thou makest, I shall nevertheless feel another leg in the same identical place with it; that is, carpenter, my old lost leg; the flesh and blood one, I mean. Canst thou not drive that old Adam away?

Truly, sir, I begin to understand somewhat now. Yes, I have heard something curious on that score, sir; how that a dismasted man never entirely loses the feeling of his old spar, but it will be still pricking him at times. May I humbly ask if it be really so, sir?

It is, man. Look, put thy live leg here in the place where mine once was; so, now, here is only one distinct leg to the eye, yet two to the soul. Where thou feelest tingling life; there, exactly there, there to a hair, do I. Is't a riddle?



I should humbly call it a poser, sir.

Hist, then. How dost thou know that some entire, living, thinking thing may not be invisibly and uninterpenetratingly standing precisely where thou now standest; aye, and standing there in thy spite? 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 Prætorians 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! Stubb knows him best of all, and Stubb always says  
he's queer; says nothing but that one sufficient little word queer;  
he's queer, says Stubb; he's queer-queer, queer; and keeps dinning it  
into Mr. Starbuck all the time-queer-sir-queer, queer, very queer. And  
here's his leg! Yes, now that I think of it, here's his bedfellow! has  
a stick of whale's jaw-bone for a wife! And this is his leg; he'll  
stand on this. What was that now about one leg standing in three  
places, and all three places standing in one hell-how was that? Oh! I  
don't wonder he looked so scornful at me! I'm a sort of strange-thoughted sometimes, they say; but that's only haphazard-like.  
Then, a short, little old body like me, should never undertake to wade  
out into deep waters with tall, heron-built captains; the water chucks  
you under the chin pretty quick, and there's a great cry for  
life-boats. And here's the heron's leg! long and slim, sure enough!  
Now, for most folks one pair of legs lasts a lifetime, and that must be  
because they use them mercifully, as a tender-hearted old lady uses her  
roly-poly old coach-horses. But Ahab; oh he's a hard driver. Look,  
driven one leg to death, and spavined the other for life, and now wears  
out bone legs by the cord. Halloa, there, you Smut! bear a hand there  
with those screws, and let's finish it before the resurrection fellow  
comes a-calling with his horn for all legs, true or false, as  
brewery-men go round collecting old beer barrels, to

fill 'em up again.  
What a leg this is! 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!

#### CHAPTER 109. 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 semi-weekly 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—Nippon, 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? Starbuck!  
I'll not have the  
Burtons hoisted."

"What will the owners say, sir?"

"Let the owners stand on Nantucket beach and outyell the  
Typhoons. What  
cares Ahab? Owners, owners? Thou art always prating to  
me, Starbuck,  
about those miserly owners, as if the owners were my  
conscience. But  
look ye, the only real owner of anything is its  
commander; and hark ye,  
my conscience is in this ship's keel.—On deck!"

"Captain Ahab," said the reddening mate, moving further  
into the cabin,  
with a daring so strangely respectful and cautious that  
it almost  
seemed not only every way seeking to avoid the slightest  
outward  
manifestation of itself, but within also seemed more than  
half  
distrustful of itself; "A better man than I might well  
pass over in  
thee what he would quickly enough resent in a younger  
man; aye, and in  
a happier, Captain Ahab."

"Devils! Dost thou then so much as dare to critically  
think of me?—On  
deck!"

"Nay, sir, not yet; I do entreat. And I do dare, sir—to  
be forbearing!  
Shall we not understand each other better than hitherto,  
Captain Ahab?"

Ahab seized a loaded musket from the rack (forming part  
of most  
South-Sea-men's cabin furniture), and pointing it towards  
Starbuck,  
exclaimed: "There is one God that is Lord over the earth,

and one

Captain that is lord over the Pequod.—On deck!"

For an instant in the flashing eyes of the mate, and his fiery cheeks, you would have almost thought that he had really received the blaze of the levelled tube. But, mastering his emotion, he half calmly rose, and as he quitted the cabin, paused for an instant and said: "Thou hast outraged, not insulted me, sir; but for that I ask thee not to beware of Starbuck; thou wouldst but laugh; but let Ahab beware of Ahab; beware of thyself, old man."

"He waxes brave, but nevertheless obeys; most careful bravery that!" murmured Ahab, as Starbuck disappeared. "What's that he said—Ahab beware of Ahab—there's something there!" Then unconsciously using the musket for a staff, with an iron brow he paced to and fro in the little cabin; but presently the thick plaits of his forehead relaxed, and returning the gun to the rack, he went to the deck.

"Thou art but too good a fellow, Starbuck," he said lowly to the mate; then raising his voice to the crew: "Furl the t'gallant-sails, and close-reef the top-sails, fore and aft; back the main-yard; up Burton, and break out in the main-hold."

It were perhaps vain to surmise exactly why it was, that as respecting Starbuck, Ahab thus acted. It may have been a flash of honesty in him; or mere prudential policy which, under the circumstance, imperiously forbade the slightest symptom of open disaffection,

however transient,  
in the important chief officer of his ship. However it  
was, his orders  
were executed; and the Burtons were hoisted.

#### 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 whalemén, the harpooneers are the holders, so called.

Poor Queequeg! when the ship was about half disembowelled, you should have stooped over the hatchway, and peered down upon him there; where, stripped to his woollen drawers, the tattooed savage was crawling about amid that dampness and slime, like a green spotted lizard at the bottom of a well. And a well, or an ice-house, it somehow proved to him, poor pagan; where, strange to say, for all the heat of his sweatings, he caught a terrible chill which lapsed into a fever; and at last, after some days' suffering, laid him in his hammock, close to the very sill of the door of death. How he wasted and wasted away in those few long-lingering days, till there seemed but little left of him but his frame and tattooing. But as all else in him thinned, and his cheek-bones grew sharper, his eyes, nevertheless, seemed growing fuller



and fuller; they became of a strange softness of lustre;  
and mildly but  
deeply looked out at you there from his sickness, a  
wondrous testimony  
to that immortal health in him which could not die, or be  
weakened. And  
like circles on the water, which, as they grow fainter,  
expand; so his  
eyes seemed rounding and rounding, like the rings of  
Eternity. An awe  
that cannot be named would steal over you as you sat by  
the side of  
this waning savage, and saw as strange things in his  
face, as any  
beheld who were bystanders when Zoroaster died. For  
whatever is truly  
wondrous and fearful in man, never yet was put into words  
or books. And  
the drawing near of Death, which alike levels all, alike  
impresses all  
with a last revelation, which only an author from the  
dead could  
adequately tell. So that—let us say it again—no dying  
Chaldee or Greek  
had higher and holier thoughts than those, whose  
mysterious shades you  
saw creeping over the face of poor Queequeg, as he  
quietly lay in his  
swaying hammock, and the rolling sea seemed gently  
rocking him to his  
final rest, and the ocean's invisible flood-tide lifted  
him higher and  
higher towards his destined heaven.

Not a man of the crew but gave him up; and, as for  
Queequeg himself,  
what he thought of his case was forcibly shown by a  
curious favour he  
asked. He called one to him in the grey morning watch,  
when the day was  
just breaking, and taking his hand, said that while in  
Nantucket he had  
chanced to see certain little canoes of dark wood, like  
the rich

war-wood of his native isle; and upon inquiry, he had learned that all whalemen who died in Nantucket, were laid in those same dark canoes, and that the fancy of being so laid had much pleased him; for it was not unlike the custom of his own race, who, after embalming a dead warrior, stretched him out in his canoe, and so left him to be floated away to the starry archipelagoes; for not only do they believe that the stars are isles, but that far beyond all visible horizons, their own mild, uncontinented seas, interflow with the blue heavens; and so form the white breakers of the milky way. He added, that he shuddered at the thought of being buried in his hammock, according to the usual sea-custom, tossed like something vile to the death-devouring sharks. No: he desired a canoe like those of Nantucket, all the more congenial to him, being a whaleman, that like a whale-boat these coffin-canoes were without a keel; though that involved but uncertain steering, and much lee-way adown the dim ages.

Now, when this strange circumstance was made known aft, the carpenter was at once commanded to do Queequeg's bidding, whatever it might include. There was some heathenish, coffin-coloured old lumber aboard, which, upon a long previous voyage, had been cut from the aboriginal groves of the Lackaday islands, and from these dark planks the coffin was recommended to be made. No sooner was the carpenter apprised of the order, than taking his rule, he forthwith with all the indifferent

promptitude of his character, proceeded into the  
forecastle and took  
Queequeg's measure with great accuracy, regularly  
chalking Queequeg's  
person as he shifted the rule.

"Ah! poor fellow! he'll have to die now," ejaculated the  
Long Island  
sailor.

Going to his vice-bench, the carpenter for convenience  
sake and general  
reference, now transferringly measured on it the exact  
length the  
coffin was to be, and then made the transfer permanent by  
cutting two  
notches at its extremities. This done, he marshalled the  
planks and his  
tools, and to work.

When the last nail was driven, and the lid duly planed  
and fitted, he  
lightly shouldered the coffin and went forward with it,  
inquiring  
whether they were ready for it yet in that direction.

Overhearing the indignant but half-humorous cries with  
which the people  
on deck began to drive the coffin away, Queequeg, to  
every one's  
consternation, commanded that the thing should be  
instantly brought to  
him, nor was there any denying him; seeing that, of all  
mortals, some  
dying men are the most tyrannical; and certainly, since  
they will  
shortly trouble us so little for evermore, the poor  
fellows ought to be  
indulged.

Leaning over in his hammock, Queequeg long regarded the  
coffin with an  
attentive eye. He then called for his harpoon, had the  
wooden stock

drawn from it, and then had the iron part placed in the coffin along with one of the paddles of his boat. All by his own request, also, biscuits were then ranged round the sides within: a flask of fresh water was placed at the head, and a small bag of woody earth scraped up in the hold at the foot; and a piece of sail-cloth being rolled up for a pillow, Queequeg now entreated to be lifted into his final bed, that he might make trial of its comforts, if any it had. He lay without moving a few minutes, then told one to go to his bag and bring out his little god, Yojo. Then crossing his arms on his breast with Yojo between, he called for the coffin lid (hatch he called it) to be placed over him. The head part turned over with a leather hinge, and there lay Queequeg in his coffin with little but his composed countenance in view. "Rarmai" (it will do; it is easy), he murmured at last, and signed to be replaced in his hammock.

But ere this was done, Pip, who had been slily hovering near by all this while, drew nigh to him where he lay, and with soft sobbings, took him by the hand; in the other, holding his tambourine.

"Poor rover! will ye never have done with all this weary roving? where go ye now? But if the currents carry ye to those sweet Antilles where the beaches are only beat with water-lilies, will ye do one little errand for me? Seek out one Pip, who's now been missing long: I think he's in those far Antilles. If ye find him, then comfort him; for he

must be very sad; for look! he's left his tambourine behind;—I found it. Rig-a-dig, dig, dig! Now, Queequeg, die; and I'll beat ye your dying march."

"I have heard," murmured Starbuck, gazing down the scuttle, "that in violent fevers, men, all ignorance, have talked in ancient tongues; and that when the mystery is probed, it turns out always that in their wholly forgotten childhood those ancient tongues had been really spoken in their hearing by some lofty scholars. So, to my fond faith, poor Pip, in this strange sweetness of his lunacy, brings heavenly vouchers of all our heavenly homes. Where learned he that, but there?—Hark! he speaks again: but more wildly now."

"Form two and two! Let's make a General of him! Ho, where's his harpoon? Lay it across here.—Rig-a-dig, dig, dig! huzza! Oh for a game cock now to sit upon his head and crow! Queequeg dies game!—mind ye that; Queequeg dies game!—take ye good heed of that; Queequeg dies game! I say; game, game, game! but base little Pip, he died a coward; died all a'shiver;—out upon Pip! Hark ye; if ye find Pip, tell all the Antilles he's a runaway; a coward, a coward, a coward! Tell them he jumped from a whale-boat! I'd never beat my tambourine over base Pip, and hail him General, if he were once more dying here. No, no! shame upon all cowards—shame upon them! Let 'em go drown like Pip, that jumped from a whale-boat. Shame! 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.  
Launched at  
length upon these almost final waters, and gliding  
towards the Japanese  
cruising-ground, the old man's purpose intensified  
itself. His firm  
lips met like the lips of a vice; the Delta of his  
forehead's veins  
swelled like overladen brooks; in his very sleep, his  
ringing cry ran  
through the vaulted hull, "Stern all! the White Whale  
spouts thick  
blood!"

## CHAPTER 112. The Blacksmith.

Availing himself of the mild, summer-cool weather that  
now reigned in  
these latitudes, and in preparation for the peculiarly  
active pursuits  
shortly to be anticipated, Perth, the begrimed, blistered  
old  
blacksmith, had not removed his portable forge to the  
hold again, after  
concluding his contributory work for Ahab's leg, but  
still retained it  
on deck, fast lashed to ringbolts by the foremast; being

now almost  
incessantly invoked by the headsmen, and harpooneers, and  
bowsmen to do  
some little job for them; altering, or repairing, or new  
shaping their  
various weapons and boat furniture. Often he would be  
surrounded by an  
eager circle, all waiting to be served; holding boat-  
spades,  
pike-heads, harpoons, and lances, and jealously watching  
his every  
sooty movement, as he toiled. Nevertheless, this old  
man's was a  
patient hammer wielded by a patient arm. No murmur, no  
impatience, no  
petulance did come from him. Silent, slow, and solemn;  
bowing over  
still further his chronically broken back, he toiled  
away, as if toil  
were life itself, and the heavy beating of his hammer the  
heavy beating  
of his heart. And so it was.—Most miserable!

A peculiar walk in this old man, a certain slight but  
painful appearing  
yawing in his gait, had at an early period of the voyage  
excited the  
curiosity of the mariners. And to the importunity of  
their persisted  
questionings he had finally given in; and so it came to  
pass that every  
one now knew the shameful story of his wretched fate.

Belated, and not innocently, one bitter winter's  
midnight, on the road  
running between two country towns, the blacksmith half-  
stupidly felt  
the deadly numbness stealing over him, and sought refuge  
in a leaning,  
dilapidated barn. The issue was, the loss of the  
extremities of both  
feet. Out of this revelation, part by part, at last came  
out the four  
acts of the gladness, and the one long, and as yet

uncatastrophied  
fifth act of the grief of his life's drama.

He was an old man, who, at the age of nearly sixty, had postponedly encountered that thing in sorrow's technicals called ruin. He had been an artisan of famed excellence, and with plenty to do; owned a house and garden; embraced a youthful, daughter-like, loving wife, and three blithe, ruddy children; every Sunday went to a cheerful-looking church, planted in a grove. But one night, under cover of darkness, and further concealed in a most cunning disguise, a desperate burglar slid into his happy home, and robbed them all of everything. And darker yet to tell, the blacksmith himself did ignorantly conduct this burglar into his family's heart. It was the Bottle Conjuror! Upon the opening of that fatal cork, forth flew the fiend, and shrivelled up his home. Now, for prudent, most wise, and economic reasons, the blacksmith's shop was in the basement of his dwelling, but with a separate entrance to it; so that always had the young and loving healthy wife listened with no unhappy nervousness, but with vigorous pleasure, to the stout ringing of her young-armed old husband's hammer; whose reverberations, muffled by passing through the floors and walls, came up to her, not unsweetly, in her nursery; and so, to stout Labor's iron lullaby, the blacksmith's infants were rocked to slumber.

Oh, woe on woe! Oh, Death, why canst thou not sometimes be timely?  
Hadst thou taken this old blacksmith to thyself ere his

full ruin came  
upon him, then had the young widow had a delicious grief,  
and her  
orphans a truly venerable, legendary sire to dream of in  
their after  
years; and all of them a care-killing competency. But  
Death plucked  
down some virtuous elder brother, on whose whistling  
daily toil solely  
hung the responsibilities of some other family, and left  
the worse than  
useless old man standing, till the hideous rot of life  
should make him  
easier to harvest.

Why tell the whole? The blows of the basement hammer  
every day grew  
more and more between; and each blow every day grew  
fainter than the  
last; the wife sat frozen at the window, with tearless  
eyes,  
glitteringly gazing into the weeping faces of her  
children; the bellows  
fell; the forge choked up with cinders; the house was  
sold; the mother  
dived down into the long church-yard grass; her children  
twice followed  
her thither; and the houseless, familyless old man  
staggered off a  
vagabond in crape; his every woe unreverenced; his grey  
head a scorn to  
flaxen curls!

Death seems the only desirable sequel for a career like  
this; but Death  
is only a launching into the region of the strange  
Untried; it is but  
the first salutation to the possibilities of the immense  
Remote, the  
Wild, the Watery, the Unshored; therefore, to the death-  
longing eyes of  
such men, who still have left in them some interior  
compunctions  
against suicide, does the all-contributed and all-

receptive ocean  
alluringly spread forth his whole plain of unimaginable,  
taking  
terrors, and wonderful, new-life adventures; and from the  
hearts of  
infinite Pacifics, the thousand mermaids sing to them—  
"Come hither,  
broken-hearted; here is another life without the guilt of  
intermediate  
death; here are wonders supernatural, without dying for  
them. Come  
hither! bury thyself in a life which, to your now equally  
abhorred and  
abhorring, landed world, is more oblivious than death.  
Come hither! put  
up \_thy\_ gravestone, too, within the churchyard, and come  
hither, till  
we marry thee!"

Harkening to these voices, East and West, by early  
sunrise, and by  
fall of eve, the blacksmith's soul responded, Aye, I  
come! And so Perth  
went a-whaling.

#### 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? Do the heavens yet hate thee, that thou can'st not go mad?—What wert thou making there?"

"Welding an old pike-head, sir; there were seams and dents in it."

"And can'st thou make it all smooth again, blacksmith, after such hard usage as it had?"

"I think so, sir."

"And I suppose thou can'st smoothe almost any seams and dents; never mind how hard the metal, blacksmith?"

"Aye, sir, I think I can; all seams and dents but one."

"Look ye here, then," cried Ahab, passionately advancing, and leaning with both hands on Perth's shoulders; "look ye here—

\_here\_—can ye  
smoothe out a seam like this, blacksmith," sweeping one  
hand across his  
ribbed brow; "if thou could'st, blacksmith, glad enough  
would I lay my  
head upon thy anvil, and feel thy heaviest hammer between  
my eyes.  
Answer! Can'st thou smoothe this seam?"

"Oh! that is the one, sir! Said I not all seams and dents  
but one?"

"Aye, blacksmith, it is the one; aye, man, it is  
unsmoothable; for  
though thou only see'st it here in my flesh, it has  
worked down into  
the bone of my skull—\_that\_ is all wrinkles! But, away  
with child's  
play; no more gaffs and pikes to-day. Look ye here!"  
jingling the  
leathern bag, as if it were full of gold coins. "I, too,  
want a harpoon  
made; one that a thousand yoke of fiends could not part,  
Perth;  
something that will stick in a whale like his own fin-  
bone. There's the  
stuff," flinging the pouch upon the anvil. "Look ye,  
blacksmith, these  
are the gathered nail-stubbs of the steel shoes of racing  
horses."

"Horse-shoe stubbs, sir? Why, Captain Ahab, thou hast  
here, then, the  
best and stubbornest stuff we blacksmiths ever work."

"I know it, old man; these stubbs will weld together like  
glue from the  
melted bones of murderers. Quick! forge me the harpoon.  
And forge me  
first, twelve rods for its shank; then wind, and twist,  
and hammer  
these twelve together like the yarns and strands of a  
tow-line. Quick!  
I'll blow the fire."

When at last the twelve rods were made, Ahab tried them, one by one, by spiralling them, with his own hand, round a long, heavy iron bolt. "A flaw!" rejecting the last one. "Work that over again, Perth."

This done, Perth was about to begin welding the twelve into one, when Ahab stayed his hand, and said he would weld his own iron. As, then, with regular, gasping hems, he hammered on the anvil, Perth passing to him the glowing rods, one after the other, and the hard pressed forge shooting up its intense straight flame, the Parsee passed silently, and bowing over his head towards the fire, seemed invoking some curse or some blessing on the toil. But, as Ahab looked up, he slid aside.

"What's that bunch of lucifers dodging about there for?" 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. A cluster of dark nods replied, Yes. Three punctures were made in the heathen flesh, and the White Whale's barbs were then tempered.

"Ego non baptizo te in nomine patris, sed in nomine diaboli!" deliriously howled Ahab, as the malignant iron scorchingly devoured the baptismal blood.

Now, mustering the spare poles from below, and selecting one of hickory, with the bark still investing it, Ahab fitted the end to the socket of the iron. A coil of new tow-line was then

unwound, and some  
fathoms of it taken to the windlass, and stretched to a  
great tension.  
Pressing his foot upon it, till the rope hummed like a  
harp-string,  
then eagerly bending over it, and seeing no strandings,  
Ahab exclaimed,  
"Good! and now for the seizings."

At one extremity the rope was unstranded, and the  
separate spread yarns  
were all braided and woven round the socket of the  
harpoon; the pole  
was then driven hard up into the socket; from the lower  
end the rope  
was traced half-way along the pole's length, and firmly  
secured so,  
with intertwistings of twine. This done, pole, iron, and  
rope-like the  
Three Fates—remained inseparable, and Ahab moodily  
stalked away with  
the weapon; the sound of his ivory leg, and the sound of  
the hickory  
pole, both hollowly ringing along every plank. But ere he  
entered his  
cabin, light, unnatural, half-bantering, yet most piteous  
sound was  
heard. Oh, Pip! thy wretched laugh, thy idle but  
unresting eye; all thy  
strange mummeries not unmeaningly blended with the black  
tragedy of the  
melancholy ship, and mocked it!

#### 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  
forecastle, 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  
forecastle; 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. Hast lost any men?"

"Not enough to speak of—two islanders, that's all;—but  
come aboard, old  
hearty, come along. I'll soon take that black from your  
brow. Come  
along, will ye (merry's the play); a full ship and  
homeward-bound."

"How wondrous familiar is a fool!" muttered Ahab; then  
aloud, "Thou art  
a full ship and homeward bound, thou sayst; well, then,  
call me an  
empty ship, and outward-bound. So go thy ways, and I will  
mine. Forward  
there! Set all sail, and keep her to the wind!"

And thus, while the one ship went cheerily before the  
breeze, the other  
stubbornly fought against it; and so the two vessels  
parted; the crew



of the Pequod looking with grave, lingering glances  
towards the  
receding Bachelor; but the Bachelor's men never heeding  
their gaze for  
the lively revelry they were in. And as Ahab, leaning  
over the  
taffrail, eyed the homeward-bound craft, he took from his  
pocket a  
small vial of sand, and then looking from the ship to the  
vial, seemed  
thereby bringing two remote associations together, for  
that vial was  
filled with Nantucket soundings.

#### 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-  
quickenings  
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."

"Aye, aye! a strange sight that, Parsee:—a hearse and its plumes floating over the ocean with the waves for the pall-bearers. Ha! Such a sight we shall not soon see."

"Believe it or not, thou canst not die till it be seen, old man."

"And what was that saying about thyself?"

"Though it come to the last, I shall still go before thee thy pilot."

"And when thou art so gone before—if that ever befall—  
then ere I can  
follow, thou must still appear to me, to pilot me still?—  
Was it not so?  
Well, then, did I believe all ye say, oh my pilot! I have  
here two  
pledges that I shall yet slay Moby Dick and survive it."

"Take another pledge, old man," said the Parsee, as his  
eyes lighted up  
like fire-flies in the gloom—"Hemp only can kill thee."

"The gallows, ye mean.—I am immortal then, on land and on  
sea," cried  
Ahab, with a laugh of derision;—"Immortal on land and on  
sea!"

Both were silent again, as one man. The grey dawn came  
on, and the  
slumbering crew arose from the boat's bottom, and ere  
noon the dead  
whale was brought to the ship.

#### CHAPTER 118. The Quadrant.

The season for the Line at length drew near; and every  
day when Ahab,  
coming from his cabin, cast his eyes aloft, the vigilant  
helmsman would  
ostentatiously handle his spokes, and the eager mariners  
quickly run to  
the braces, and would stand there with all their eyes  
centrally fixed  
on the nailed doubloon; impatient for the order to point  
the ship's  
prow for the equator. In good time the order came. It was  
hard upon  
high noon; and Ahab, seated in the bows of his high-  
hoisted boat, was  
about taking his wonted daily observation of the sun to  
determine his  
latitude.

Now, in that Japanese sea, the days in summer are as  
freshets of  
effulgences. That unblinkingly vivid Japanese sun seems  
the blazing  
focus of the glassy ocean's immeasurable burning-glass.  
The sky looks  
lacquered; clouds there are none; the horizon floats; and  
this  
nakedness of unrelieved radiance is as the insufferable  
splendors of  
God's throne. Well that Ahab's quadrant was furnished  
with coloured  
glasses, through which to take sight of that solar fire.  
So, swinging  
his seated form to the roll of the ship, and with his  
astrological-looking instrument placed to his eye, he  
remained in that  
posture for some moments to catch the precise instant  
when the sun  
should gain its precise meridian. Meantime while his  
whole attention  
was absorbed, the Parsee was kneeling beneath him on the  
ship's deck,  
and with face thrown up like Ahab's, was eyeing the same  
sun with him;  
only the lids of his eyes half hooded their orbs, and his  
wild face was  
subdued to an earthly passionlessness. 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  
teldest 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  
dead-reckoning, 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 actest 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.

"Bad work, bad work! Mr. Starbuck," said Stubb, regarding  
the wreck,  
"but the sea will have its way. Stubb, for one, can't  
fight it. You  
see, Mr. Starbuck, a wave has such a great long start  
before it leaps,  
all round the world it runs, and then comes the spring!  
But as for me,  
all the start I have to meet it, is just across the deck  
here. But  
never mind; it's all in fun: so the old song says;"—  
(sings.)

Oh! jolly is the gale, And a joker is the whale, A'  
flourishin' his  
tail,— Such a funny, sporty, gamy, jesty, joky, hoky-  
poky lad, is the  
Ocean, oh!

The scud all a flyin', That's his flip only foamin';  
When he stirs in  
the spicin',— Such a funny, sporty, gamy, jesty, joky,  
hoky-poky lad,  
is the Ocean, oh!

Thunder splits the ships, But he only smacks his lips,  
A tastin' of  
this flip,— Such a funny, sporty, gamy, jesty, joky,  
hoky-poky lad,  
is the Ocean, oh!

"Avast Stubb," cried Starbuck, "let the Typhoon sing, and  
strike his  
harp here in our rigging; but if thou art a brave man

thou wilt hold  
thy peace."

"But I am not a brave man; never said I was a brave man;  
I am a coward;  
and I sing to keep up my spirits. And I tell you what it  
is, Mr.  
Starbuck, there's no way to stop my singing in this world  
but to cut my  
throat. And when that's done, ten to one I sing ye the  
doxology for a  
wind-up."

"Madman! look through my eyes if thou hast none of thine  
own."

"What! how can you see better of a dark night than  
anybody else, never  
mind how foolish?"

"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  
forecastle, 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 Herculaneum, 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,  
placeless power; but to the last gasp of my earthquake  
life will  
dispute its unconditional, unintegral mastery in me. In  
the midst of  
the personified impersonal, a personality stands here.  
Though but a  
point at best; whencesoe’er I came; wheresoe’er I go; yet  
while I  
earthly live, the queenly personality lives in me, and  
feels her royal  
rights. But war is pain, and hate is woe. Come in thy  
lowest form of  
love, and I will kneel and kiss thee; but at thy highest,  
come as mere  
supernal power; and though thou launchest navies of full-  
freighted  
worlds, there’s that in here that still remains  
indifferent. Oh, thou  
clear spirit, of thy fire thou madest me, and like a true  
child of  
fire, I breathe it back to thee.”

[\_Sudden, repeated flashes of lightning; the nine flames  
leap



lengthwise to thrice their previous height; Ahab, with  
the rest, closes  
his eyes, his right hand pressed hard upon them.\_]

"I own thy speechless, placeless power; said I not so?  
Nor was it wrung  
from me; nor do I now drop these links. Thou canst blind;  
but I can  
then grope. Thou canst consume; but I can then be ashes.  
Take the  
homage of these poor eyes, and shutter-hands. I would not  
take it. The  
lightning flashes through my skull; mine eye-balls ache  
and ache; my  
whole beaten brain seems as beheaded, and rolling on some  
stunning  
ground. Oh, oh! Yet blindfold, yet will I talk to thee.  
Light though  
thou be, thou leapest out of darkness; but I am darkness  
leaping out of  
light, leaping out of thee! The javelins cease; open  
eyes; see, or not?  
There burn the flames! Oh, thou magnanimous! now I do  
glory in my  
genealogy. But thou art but my fiery father; my sweet  
mother, I know  
not. Oh, cruel! what hast thou done with her? There lies  
my puzzle; but  
thine is greater. Thou knowest not how came ye, hence  
callest thyself  
unbegotten; certainly knowest not thy beginning, hence  
callest thyself  
unbegun. I know that of me, which thou knowest not of  
thyself, oh, thou  
omnipotent. There is some unsuffusing thing beyond thee,  
thou clear  
spirit, to whom all thy eternity is but time, all thy  
creativeness  
mechanical. Through thee, thy flaming self, my scorched  
eyes do dimly  
see it. Oh, thou foundling fire, thou hermit immemorial,  
thou too hast  
thy incommunicable riddle, thy unparticipated grief. Here  
again with

haughty agony, I read my sire. Leap! leap up, and lick  
the sky! I leap  
with thee; I burn with thee; would fain be welded with  
thee; defyingly  
I worship thee!"

"The boat! the boat!" cried Starbuck, "look at thy boat,  
old man!"

Ahab's harpoon, the one forged at Perth's fire, remained  
firmly lashed  
in its conspicuous crotch, so that it projected beyond  
his whale-boat's  
bow; but the sea that had stove its bottom had caused the  
loose leather  
sheath to drop off; and from the keen steel barb there  
now came a  
levelled flame of pale, forked fire. As the silent  
harpoon burned there  
like a serpent's tongue, Starbuck grasped Ahab by the arm  
—"God, God is  
against thee, old man; forbear! 'tis an ill voyage! ill  
begun, ill  
continued; let me square the yards, while we may, old  
man, and make a  
fair wind of it homewards, to go on a better voyage than  
this."

Overhearing Starbuck, the panic-stricken crew instantly  
ran to the  
braces—though not a sail was left aloft. For the moment  
all the aghast  
mate's thoughts seemed theirs; they raised a half  
mutinous cry. But  
dashing the rattling lightning links to the deck, and  
snatching the  
burning harpoon, Ahab waved it like a torch among them;  
swearing to  
transfix with it the first sailor that but cast loose a  
rope's end.  
Petrified by his aspect, and still more shrinking from  
the fiery dart  
that he held, the men fell back in dismay, and Ahab again  
spoke:—

"All your oaths to hunt the White Whale are as binding as mine; and heart, soul, and body, lungs and life, old Ahab is bound. And that ye may know to what tune this heart beats; look ye here; thus I blow out the last fear!" And with one blast of his breath he extinguished the flame.

As in the hurricane that sweeps the plain, men fly the neighborhood of some lone, gigantic elm, whose very height and strength but render it so much the more unsafe, because so much the more a mark for thunderbolts; so at those last words of Ahab's many of the mariners did run from him in a terror of dismay.

CHAPTER 120. 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-scud. 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? Here are  
hydrants, Flask.  
But hark, again, and I'll answer ye the other thing.  
First take your  
leg off from the crown of the anchor here, though, so I  
can pass the  
rope; now listen. What's the mighty difference between  
holding a mast's  
lightning-rod in the storm, and standing close by a mast  
that hasn't  
got any lightning-rod at all in a storm? Don't you see,  
you  
timber-head, that no harm can come to the holder of the  
rod, unless the  
mast is first struck? What are you talking about, then?  
Not one ship in  
a hundred carries rods, and Ahab,—aye, man, and all of  
us,—were in no  
more danger then, in my poor opinion, than all the crews  
in ten  
thousand ships now sailing the seas. Why, you King-Post,  
you, I suppose  
you would have every man in the world go about with a  
small  
lightning-rod running up the corner of his hat, like a  
militia  
officer's skewered feather, and trailing behind like his  
sash. Why  
don't ye be sensible, Flask? it's easy to be sensible;  
why don't ye,  
then? any man with half an eye can be sensible."

"I don't know that, Stubb. You sometimes find it rather  
hard."

"Yes, when a fellow's soaked through, it's hard to be  
sensible, that's

a fact. And I am about drenched with this spray. Never mind; catch the turn there, and pass it. Seems to me we are lashing down these anchors now as if they were never going to be used again. Tying these two anchors here, Flask, seems like tying a man's hands behind him. And what big generous hands they are, to be sure. These are your iron fists, hey? What a hold they have, too! I wonder, Flask, whether the world is anchored anywhere; if she is, she swings with an uncommon long cable, though. There, hammer that knot down, and we've done. So; next to touching land, lighting on deck is the most satisfactory. I say, just wring out my jacket skirts, will ye? Thank ye. They laugh at long-togs so, Flask; but seems to me, a long tailed coat ought always to be worn in all storms afloat. The tails tapering down that way, serve to carry off the water, d'ye see. Same with cocked hats; the cocks form gable-end eave-troughs, Flask. No more monkey-jackets and tarpaulins for me; I must mount a swallow-tail, and drive down a beaver; so. Halloa! whew! there goes my tarpaulin overboard; Lord, Lord, that the winds that come from heaven should be so unmannerly! This is a nasty night, lad."

## CHAPTER 122. Midnight Aloft.—Thunder and Lightning.

The main-top-sail yard.—Tashtego passing new lashings around it.

"Um, um, um. Stop that thunder! Plenty too much thunder up here. What's

the use of thunder? Um, um, um. We don't want thunder; we want rum; give us a glass of rum. Um, um, um!"

#### 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! the fair  
wind! oh-ye-ho, cheerly men!\_” the crew singing for joy,  
that so  
promising an event should so soon have falsified the evil  
portents  
preceding it.

In compliance with the standing order of his commander—to  
report  
immediately, and at any one of the twenty-four hours, any  
decided  
change in the affairs of the deck,—Starbuck had no sooner  
trimmed the  
yards to the breeze—however reluctantly and gloomily,—  
than he  
mechanically went below to apprise Captain Ahab of the  
circumstance.

Ere knocking at his state-room, he involuntarily paused  
before it a  
moment. The cabin lamp—taking long swings this way and  
that—was burning  
fitfully, and casting fitful shadows upon the old man’s  
bolted door,—a  
thin one, with fixed blinds inserted, in place of upper  
panels. The



isolated subterraneousness of the cabin made a certain humming silence to reign there, though it was hooped round by all the roar of the elements. The loaded muskets in the rack were shiningly revealed, as they stood upright against the forward bulkhead. Starbuck was an honest, upright man; but out of Starbuck's heart, at that instant when he saw the muskets, there strangely evolved an evil thought; but so blent with its neutral or good accompaniments that for the instant he hardly knew it for itself.

"He would have shot me once," he murmured, "yes, there's the very musket that he pointed at me;—that one with the studded stock; let me touch it—lift it. Strange, that I, who have handled so many deadly lances, strange, that I should shake so now. Loaded? I must see. Aye, aye; and powder in the pan;—that's not good. Best spill it?—wait. I'll cure myself of this. I'll hold the musket boldly while I think.—I come to report a fair wind to him. But how fair? Fair for death and doom,—\_that's\_ fair for Moby Dick. It's a fair wind that's only fair for that accursed fish.—The very tube he pointed at me!—the very one; \_this\_ one—I hold it here; he would have killed me with the very thing I handle now.—Aye and he would fain kill all his crew. Does he not say he will not strike his spars to any gale? Has he not dashed his heavenly quadrant? and in these same perilous seas, gropes he not his way by mere dead reckoning of the error-abounding log? and in this very

Typhoon, did he not swear that he would have no lightning-rods? But shall this crazed old man be tamely suffered to drag a whole ship's company down to doom with him?—Yes, it would make him the wilful murderer of thirty men and more, if this ship come to any deadly harm; and come to deadly harm, my soul swears this ship will, if Ahab have his way. If, then, he were this instant—put aside, that crime would not be his. Ha! is he muttering in his sleep? Yes, just there,—in there, he's sleeping. Sleeping? aye, but still alive, and soon awake again. 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, tinding 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 suddenly reined back by some counter thought, he hurried towards the helm, huskily demanding how the ship was heading.

"East-sou-east, sir," said the frightened steersman.

"Thou liest!" smiting him with his clenched fist.

"Heading East at this  
hour in the morning, and the sun astern?"

Upon this every soul was confounded; for the phenomenon  
just then

observed by Ahab had unaccountably escaped every one  
else; but its very  
blinding palpableness must have been the cause.

Thrusting his head half way into the binnacle, Ahab  
caught one glimpse  
of the compasses; his uplifted arm slowly fell; for a  
moment he almost  
seemed to stagger. Standing behind him Starbuck looked,  
and lo! the two  
compasses pointed East, and the Pequod was as infallibly  
going West.

But ere the first wild alarm could get out abroad among  
the crew, the  
old man with a rigid laugh exclaimed, "I have it! It has  
happened  
before. Mr. Starbuck, last night's thunder turned our  
compasses—that's  
all. Thou hast before now heard of such a thing, I take  
it."

"Aye; but never before has it happened to me, sir," said  
the pale mate,  
gloomily.

Here, it must needs be said, that accidents like this  
have in more than  
one case occurred to ships in violent storms. The  
magnetic energy, as  
developed in the mariner's needle, is, as all know,  
essentially one  
with the electricity beheld in heaven; hence it is not to  
be much  
marvelled at, that such things should be. Instances where  
the lightning

has actually struck the vessel, so as to smite down some of the spars and rigging, the effect upon the needle has at times been still more fatal; all its loadstone virtue being annihilated, so that the before magnetic steel was of no more use than an old wife's knitting needle.

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 uncomplainingly 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 harpooneers 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 subtile 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.

#### 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 whalemén, 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.

"Take the reel, one of ye, I'll heave."

They went towards the extreme stern, on the ship's lee side, where the deck, with the oblique energy of the wind, was now almost dipping into the creamy, sidelong-rushing sea.

The Manxman took the reel, and holding it high up, by the projecting handle-ends of the spindle, round which the spool of line revolved, so stood with the angular log hanging downwards, till Ahab advanced to him.

Ahab stood before him, and was lightly unwinding some thirty or forty turns to form a preliminary hand-coil to toss overboard, when the old Manxman, who was intently eyeing both him and the line, made bold to speak.

"Sir, I mistrust it; this line looks far gone, long heat and wet have spoiled it."

"'Twill hold, old gentleman. Long heat and wet, have they spoiled thee? Thou seem'st to hold. Or, truer perhaps, life holds thee; not thou it."

"I hold the spool, sir. But just as my captain says. With these grey hairs of mine 'tis not worth while disputing, 'specially with a superior, who'll ne'er confess."

"What's that? There now's a patched professor in Queen Nature's granite-founded College; but methinks he's too subservient. Where wert thou born?"

"In the little rocky Isle of Man, sir."

"Excellent! Thou'st hit the world by that."

"I know not, sir, but I was born there."

"In the Isle of Man, hey? Well, the other way, it's good. Here's a man from Man; a man born in once independent Man, and now unmanned of Man; which is sucked in—by what? Up with the reel! The dead, blind wall butts all inquiring heads at last. Up with it! So."

The log was heaved. The loose coils rapidly straightened out in a long dragging line astern, and then, instantly, the reel began to whirl. In turn, jerkingly raised and lowered by the rolling billows, the towing resistance of the log caused the old reelman to stagger strangely.

"Hold hard!"

Snap! the overstrained line sagged down in one long festoon; the tugging log was gone.

"I crush the quadrant, the thunder turns the needles, and now the mad sea parts the log-line. But Ahab can mend all. Haul in here, Tahitian; reel up, Manxman. And look ye, let the carpenter make another log, and mend thou the line. See to it."

"There he goes now; to him nothing's happened; but to me, the skewer seems loosening out of the middle of the world. Haul in, haul in, Tahitian! These lines run whole, and whirling out: come in broken, and dragging slow. Ha, Pip? come to help; eh, Pip?"

"Pip? whom call ye Pip? Pip jumped from the whale-boat. Pip's missing. Let's see now if ye haven't fished him up here, fisherman. It drags hard; I guess he's holding on. Jerk him, Tahiti! Jerk him off; we haul in no cowards here. Ho! there's his arm just breaking water. A hatchet! a hatchet! cut it off—we haul in no cowards here. Captain Ahab! sir, sir! here's Pip, trying to get on board again."

"Peace, thou crazy loon," cried the Manxman, seizing him by the arm.  
"Away from the quarter-deck!"

"The greater idiot ever scolds the lesser," muttered Ahab, advancing.  
"Hands off from that holiness! Where sayest thou Pip was, boy?"

"Astern there, sir, astern! Lo! lo!"

"And who art thou, boy? I see not my reflection in the vacant pupils of thy eyes. Oh God! that man should be a thing for immortal souls to sieve through! Who art thou, boy?"

"Bell-boy, sir; ship's-crier; ding, dong, ding! Pip! Pip! Pip! One hundred pounds of clay reward for Pip; five feet high—looks cowardly—quickest known by that! Ding, dong, ding! Who's seen Pip the coward?"

"There can be no hearts above the snow-line. Oh, ye frozen heavens! look down here. Ye did beget this luckless child, and have abandoned him, ye creative libertines. Here, boy; Ahab's cabin shall be Pip's

home henceforth, while Ahab lives. Thou touchest my  
inmost centre, boy;  
thou art tied to me by cords woven of my heart-strings.  
Come, let's  
down."

"What's this? here's velvet shark-skin," intently gazing  
at Ahab's  
hand, and feeling it. "Ah, now, had poor Pip but felt so  
kind a thing  
as this, perhaps he had ne'er been lost! This seems to  
me, sir, as a  
man-rope; something that weak souls may hold by. Oh, sir,  
let old Perth  
now come and rivet these two hands together; the black  
one with the  
white, for I will not let this go."

"Oh, boy, nor will I thee, unless I should thereby drag  
thee to worse  
horrors than are here. Come, then, to my cabin. Lo! ye  
believers in  
gods all goodness, and in man all ill, lo you! see the  
omniscient gods  
oblivious of suffering man; and man, though idiotic, and  
knowing not  
what he does, yet full of the sweet things of love and  
gratitude. Come!  
I feel prouder leading thee by thy black hand, than  
though I grasped an  
Emperor's!"

"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."

## CHAPTER 126. The Life-Buoy.

Steering now south-eastward by Ahab's levelled steel, and

her progress  
solely determined by Ahab's level log and line; the  
Pegquod held on her  
path towards the Equator. Making so long a passage  
through such  
unfrequented waters, descrying no ships, and ere long,  
sideways  
impelled by unvarying trade winds, over waves  
monotonously mild; all  
these seemed the strange calm things preluding some  
riotous and  
desperate scene.

At last, when the ship drew near to the outskirts, as it  
were, of the  
Equatorial fishing-ground, and in the deep darkness that  
goes before  
the dawn, was sailing by a cluster of rocky islets; the  
watch-then  
headed by Flask-was startled by a cry so plaintively wild  
and  
unearthly-like half-articulated wailings of the ghosts of  
all Herod's  
murdered Innocents-that one and all, they started from  
their reveries,  
and for the space of some moments stood, or sat, or  
leaned all  
transfixedly listening, like the carved Roman slave,  
while that wild  
cry remained within hearing. The Christian or civilized  
part of the  
crew said it was mermaids, and shuddered; but the pagan  
harpooners  
remained unappalled. Yet the grey Manxman-the oldest  
mariner of  
all-declared that the wild thrilling sounds that were  
heard, were the  
voices of newly drowned men in the sea.

Below in his hammock, Ahab did not hear of this till grey  
dawn, when he  
came to the deck; it was then recounted to him by Flask,  
not  
unaccompanied with hinted dark meanings. He hollowly

laughed, and thus  
explained the wonder.

Those rocky islands the ship had passed were the resort  
of great  
numbers of seals, and some young seals that had lost  
their dams, or  
some dams that had lost their cubs, must have risen nigh  
the ship and  
kept company with her, crying and sobbing with their  
human sort of  
wail. But this only the more affected some of them,  
because most  
mariners cherish a very superstitious feeling about  
seals, arising not  
only from their peculiar tones when in distress, but also  
from the  
human look of their round heads and semi-intelligent  
faces, seen  
peeringly uprising from the water alongside. In the sea,  
under certain  
circumstances, seals have more than once been mistaken  
for men.

But the bodings of the crew were destined to receive a  
most plausible  
confirmation in the fate of one of their number that  
morning. At  
sun-rise this man went from his hammock to his mast-head  
at the fore;  
and whether it was that he was not yet half waked from  
his sleep (for  
sailors sometimes go aloft in a transition state),  
whether it was thus  
with the man, there is now no telling; but, be that as it  
may, he had  
not been long at his perch, when a cry was heard—a cry  
and a  
rushing—and looking up, they saw a falling phantom in the  
air; and  
looking down, a little tossed heap of white bubbles in  
the blue of the  
sea.

The life-buoy—a long slender cask—was dropped from the stern, where it always hung obedient to a cunning spring; but no hand rose to seize it, and the sun having long beat upon this cask it had shrunk, so that it slowly filled, and that parched wood also filled at its every pore; and the studded iron-bound cask followed the sailor to the bottom, as if to yield him his pillow, though in sooth but a hard one.

And thus the first man of the Pequod that mounted the mast to look out for the White Whale, on the White Whale's own peculiar ground; that man was swallowed up in the deep. But few, perhaps, thought of that at the time. Indeed, in some sort, they were not grieved at this event, at least as a portent; for they regarded it, not as a foreshadowing of evil in the future, but as the fulfilment of an evil already presaged. They declared that now they knew the reason of those wild shrieks they had heard the night before. But again the old Manxman said nay.

The lost life-buoy was now to be replaced; Starbuck was directed to see to it; but as no cask of sufficient lightness could be found, and as in the feverish eagerness of what seemed the approaching crisis of the voyage, all hands were impatient of any toil but what was directly connected with its final end, whatever that might prove to be; therefore, they were going to leave the ship's stern unprovided with a buoy, when by certain strange signs and inuendoes Queequeg hinted a hint concerning his coffin.



"A life-buoy of a coffin!" cried Starbuck, starting.

"Rather queer, that, I should say," said Stubb.

"It will make a good enough one," said Flask, "the carpenter here can arrange it easily."

"Bring it up; there's nothing else for it," said Starbuck, after a melancholy pause. "Rig it, carpenter; do not look at me so—the coffin, I mean. Dost thou hear me? Rig it."

"And shall I nail down the lid, sir?" moving his hand as with a hammer.

"Aye."

"And shall I caulk the seams, sir?" moving his hand as with a caulking-iron.

"Aye."

"And shall I then pay over the same with pitch, sir?" moving his hand as with a pitch-pot.

"Away! what possesses thee to this? Make a life-buoy of the coffin, and no more.—Mr. Stubb, Mr. Flask, come forward with me."

"He goes off in a huff. The whole he can endure; at the parts he baulks. Now I don't like this. I make a leg for Captain Ahab, and he wears it like a gentleman; but I make a bandbox for Queequeg, and he won't put his head into it. Are all my pains to go for nothing with that coffin? 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  
tinkerings; 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! Sailing about with  
a grave-yard  
tray! But never mind. We workers in woods make bridal-  
bedsteads and  
card-tables, as well as coffins and hearses. We work by  
the month, or

by the job, or by the profit; not for us to ask the why  
and wherefore  
of our work, unless it be too confounded cobbling, and  
then we stash it  
if we can. Hem! I'll do the job, now, tenderly. I'll have  
me—let's  
see—how many in the ship's company, all told? But I've  
forgotten. Any  
way, I'll have me thirty separate, Turk's-headed life-  
lines, each three  
feet long hanging all round to the coffin. Then, if the  
hull go down,  
there'll be thirty lively fellows all fighting for one  
coffin, a sight  
not seen very often beneath the sun! Come hammer,  
caulking-iron,  
pitch-pot, and marling-spike! Let's to it."

#### 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 greyheaded  
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. 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. And that shadow was always hovering there.  
For not by  
night, even, had Fedallah ever certainly been known to  
slumber, or go  
below. He would stand still for hours: but never sat or  
leaned; his wan  
but wondrous eyes did plainly say—We two watchmen never  
rest.

Nor, at any time, by night or day could the mariners now  
step upon the  
deck, unless Ahab was before them; either standing in his  
pivot-hole,  
or exactly pacing the planks between two undeviating  
limits,—the  
main-mast and the mizen; or else they saw him standing in  
the  
cabin-scuttle,—his living foot advanced upon the deck, as  
if to step;  
his hat slouched heavily over his eyes; so that however  
motionless he  
stood, however the days and nights were added on, that he  
had not swung  
in his hammock; yet hidden beneath that slouching hat,  
they could never  
tell unerringly whether, for all this, his eyes were  
really closed at  
times; or whether he was still intently scanning them; no  
matter,  
though he stood so in the scuttle for a whole hour on the  
stretch, and  
the unheeded night-damp gathered in beads of dew upon  
that stone-carved  
coat and hat. The clothes that the night had wet, the  
next day's  
sunshine dried upon him; and so, day after day, and night  
after night;



he went no more beneath the planks; whatever he wanted  
from the cabin  
that thing he sent for.

He ate in the same open air; that is, his two only meals,  
—breakfast and  
dinner: supper he never touched; nor reaped his beard;  
which darkly  
grew all gnarled, as unearthed roots of trees blown over,  
which still  
grow idly on at naked base, though perished in the upper  
verdure. But  
though his whole life was now become one watch on deck;  
and though the  
Parsee's mystic watch was without intermission as his  
own; yet these  
two never seemed to speak—one man to the other—unless at  
long intervals  
some passing unmomentous matter made it necessary. Though  
such a potent  
spell seemed secretly to join the twain; openly, and to  
the awe-struck  
crew, they seemed pole-like asunder. If by day they  
chanced to speak  
one word; by night, dumb men were both, so far as  
concerned the  
slightest verbal interchange. At times, for longest  
hours, without a  
single hail, they stood far parted in the starlight; Ahab  
in his  
scuttle, the Parsee by the mainmast; but still fixedly  
gazing upon each  
other; as if in the Parsee Ahab saw his forethrown  
shadow, in Ahab the  
Parsee his abandoned substance.

And yet, somehow, did Ahab—in his own proper self, as  
daily, hourly,  
and every instant, commandingly revealed to his  
subordinates,—Ahab  
seemed an independent lord; the Parsee but his slave.  
Still again both  
seemed yoked together, and an unseen tyrant driving them;  
the lean

shade siding the solid rib. For be this Parsee what he may, all rib and keel was solid Ahab.

At the first faintest glimmering of the dawn, his iron voice was heard from aft,—“Man the mast-heads!”—and all through the day, till after sunset and after twilight, the same voice every hour, at the striking of the helmsman’s bell, was heard—“What d’ye see?—sharp! sharp!”

But when three or four days had slid by, after meeting the children-seeking Rachel; and no spout had yet been seen; the monomaniac old man seemed distrustful of his crew’s fidelity; at least, of nearly all except the Pagan harpooneers; he seemed to doubt, even, whether Stubb and Flask might not willingly overlook the sight he sought. But if these suspicions were really his, he sagaciously refrained from verbally expressing them, however his actions might seem to hint them.

“I will have the first sight of the whale myself,”—he said. “Aye! Ahab must have the doubloon!” and with his own hands he rigged a nest of basketed bowlines; and sending a hand aloft, with a single sheaved block, to secure to the main-mast head, he received the two ends of the downward-reeved rope; and attaching one to his basket prepared a pin for the other end, in order to fasten it at the rail. This done, with that end yet in his hand and standing beside the pin, he looked round upon his crew, sweeping from one to the other; pausing his glance long

upon Daggoo, Queequeg, Tashtego; but shunning Fedallah;  
and then  
settling his firm relying eye upon the chief mate, said,—  
"Take the  
rope, sir—I give it into thy hands, Starbuck." Then  
arranging his  
person in the basket, he gave the word for them to hoist  
him to his  
perch, Starbuck being the one who secured the rope at  
last; and  
afterwards stood near it. And thus, with one hand  
clinging round the  
royal mast, Ahab gazed abroad upon the sea for miles and  
miles,—ahead,  
astern, this side, and that,—within the wide expanded  
circle commanded  
at so great a height.

When in working with his hands at some lofty almost  
isolated place in  
the rigging, which chances to afford no foothold, the  
sailor at sea is  
hoisted up to that spot, and sustained there by the rope;  
under these  
circumstances, its fastened end on deck is always given  
in strict  
charge to some one man who has the special watch of it.  
Because in such  
a wilderness of running rigging, whose various different  
relations  
aloft cannot always be infallibly discerned by what is  
seen of them at  
the deck; and when the deck-ends of these ropes are being  
every few  
minutes cast down from the fastenings, it would be but a  
natural  
fatality, if, unprovided with a constant watchman, the  
hoisted sailor  
should by some carelessness of the crew be cast adrift  
and fall all  
swooping to the sea. So Ahab's proceedings in this matter  
were not  
unusual; the only strange thing about them seemed to be,  
that Starbuck,

almost the one only man who had ever ventured to oppose him with anything in the slightest degree approaching to decision—one of those too, whose faithfulness on the look-out he had seemed to doubt somewhat;—it was strange, that this was the very man he should select for his watchman; freely giving his whole life into such an otherwise distrusted person's hands.

Now, the first time Ahab was perched aloft; ere he had been there ten minutes; one of those red-billed savage sea-hawks which so often fly incommodiously close round the manned mast-heads of whalemens in these latitudes; one of these birds came wheeling and screaming round his head in a maze of untrackably swift circlings. Then it darted a thousand feet straight up into the air; then spiralized downwards, and went eddying again round his head.

But with his gaze fixed upon the dim and distant horizon, Ahab seemed not to mark this wild bird; nor, indeed, would any one else have marked it much, it being no uncommon circumstance; only now almost the least heedful eye seemed to see some sort of cunning meaning in almost every sight.

"Your hat, your hat, sir!" suddenly cried the Sicilian seaman, who being posted at the mizen-mast-head, stood directly behind Ahab, though somewhat lower than his level, and with a deep gulf of air dividing them.

But already the sable wing was before the old man's eyes;  
the long  
hooked bill at his head: with a scream, the black hawk  
darted away with  
his prize.

An eagle flew thrice round Tarquin's head, removing his  
cap to replace  
it, and thereupon Tanaquil, his wife, declared that  
Tarquin would be  
king of Rome. But only by the replacing of the cap was  
that omen  
accounted good. Ahab's hat was never restored; the wild  
hawk flew on  
and on with it; far in advance of the prow: and at last  
disappeared;  
while from the point of that disappearance, a minute  
black spot was  
dimly discerned, falling from that vast height into the  
sea.

#### CHAPTER 131. 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! Tempered in blood, and tempered by lightning are these barbs; and I swear to temper them triply in that hot place behind the fin, where the White Whale most feels his accursed life!"

"Then God keep thee, old man—see'st thou that"—pointing to the hammock—"I bury but one of five stout men, who were alive only yesterday; but were dead ere night. Only that one I bury; the rest were buried before they died; you sail upon their tomb." Then turning to his crew—"Are ye ready there? place the plank then on the rail, and lift the body; so, then—Oh! God"—advancing towards the hammock with uplifted hands—"may the resurrection and the life—"

"Brace forward! Up helm!" cried Ahab like lightning to his men.

But the suddenly started Pequod was not quick enough to escape the

sound of the splash that the corpse soon made as it  
struck the sea; not  
so quick, indeed, but that some of the flying bubbles  
might have  
sprinkled her hull with their ghostly baptism.

As Ahab now glided from the dejected Delight, the strange  
life-buoy  
hanging at the Pequod's stern came into conspicuous  
relief.

"Ha! yonder! look yonder, men!" cried a foreboding voice  
in her wake.

"In vain, oh, ye strangers, ye fly our sad burial; ye but  
turn us your  
taffrail to show us your coffin!"

#### CHAPTER 132. 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! But so  
have I seen  
little Miriam and Martha, laughing-eyed elves, heedlessly  
gambol around  
their old sire; sporting with the circle of singed locks  
which grew on  
the marge of that burnt-out crater of his brain.

Slowly crossing the deck from the scuttle, Ahab leaned  
over the side  
and watched how his shadow in the water sank and sank to  
his gaze, the  
more and the more that he strove to pierce the  
profundity. But the  
lovely aromas in that enchanted air did at last seem to  
dispel, for a  
moment, the cankerous thing in his soul. That glad, happy  
air, that



winsome sky, did at last stroke and caress him; the step-mother world, so long cruel—forbidding—now threw affectionate arms round his stubborn neck, and did seem to joyously sob over him, as if over one, that however wilful and erring, she could yet find it in her heart to save and to bless. From beneath his slouched hat Ahab dropped a tear into the sea; nor did all the Pacific contain such wealth as that one wee drop.

Starbuck saw the old man; saw him, how he heavily leaned over the side; and he seemed to hear in his own true heart the measureless sobbing that stole out of the centre of the serenity around. Careful not to touch him, or be noticed by him, he yet drew near to him, and stood there.

Ahab turned.

"Starbuck!"

"Sir."

"Oh, Starbuck! it is a mild, mild wind, and a mild looking sky. On such a day—very much such a sweetness as this—I struck my first whale—a boy-harpooneer of eighteen! Forty—forty—forty years ago!—ago! Forty years of continual whaling! forty years of privation, and peril, and storm-time! forty years on the pitiless sea! for forty years has Ahab forsaken the peaceful land, for forty years to make war on the horrors of the deep! Aye and yes, Starbuck, out of those forty years I have not

spent three ashore. When I think of this life I have led;  
the  
desolation of solitude it has been; the masoned, walled-  
town of a  
Captain's exclusiveness, which admits but small entrance  
to any  
sympathy from the green country without—oh, weariness!  
heaviness!  
Guinea-coast slavery of solitary command!—when I think of  
all this;  
only half-suspected, not so keenly known to me before—and  
how for forty  
years I have fed upon dry salted fare—fit emblem of the  
dry nourishment  
of my soil!—when the poorest landsman has had fresh fruit  
to his daily  
hand, and broken the world's fresh bread to my mouldy  
crusts—away,  
whole oceans away, from that young girl-wife I wedded  
past fifty, and  
sailed for Cape Horn the next day, leaving but one dent  
in my marriage  
pillow—wife? wife?—rather a widow with her husband alive!  
Aye, I  
widowed that poor girl when I married her, Starbuck; and  
then, the  
madness, the frenzy, the boiling blood and the smoking  
brow, with  
which, for a thousand lowerings old Ahab has furiously,  
foamingly  
chased his prey—more a demon than a man!—aye, aye! what a  
forty years'  
fool—fool—old fool, has old Ahab been! Why this strife of  
the chase?  
why weary, and palsy the arm at the oar, and the iron,  
and the lance?  
how the richer or better is Ahab now? Behold. Oh,  
Starbuck! is it not  
hard, that with this weary load I bear, one poor leg  
should have been  
snatched from under me? Here, brush this old hair aside;  
it blinds me,  
that I seem to weep. Locks so grey did never grow but  
from out some

ashes! But do I look very old, so very, very old,  
Starbuck? I feel  
deadly faint, bowed, and humped, as though I were Adam,  
staggering  
beneath the piled centuries since Paradise. God! God!  
God!—crack my  
heart!—stave my brain!—mockery! mockery! bitter, biting  
mockery of grey  
hairs, have I lived enough joy to wear ye; and seem and  
feel thus  
intolerably old? Close! stand close to me, Starbuck; let  
me look into a  
human eye; it is better than to gaze into sea or sky;  
better than to  
gaze upon God. By the green land; by the bright hearth-  
stone! this is  
the magic glass, man; I see my wife and my child in thine  
eye. No, no;  
stay on board, on board!—lower not when I do; when  
branded Ahab gives  
chase to Moby Dick. That hazard shall not be thine. No,  
no! not with  
the far away home I see in that eye!"

"Oh, my Captain! my Captain! noble soul! grand old heart,  
after all!  
why should any one give chase to that hated fish! Away  
with me! let us  
fly these deadly waters! let us home! Wife and child,  
too, are  
Starbuck's—wife and child of his brotherly, sisterly,  
play-fellow  
youth; even as thine, sir, are the wife and child of thy  
loving,  
longing, paternal old age! Away! let us away!—this  
instant let me alter  
the course! How cheerily, how hilariously, O my Captain,  
would we bowl  
on our way to see old Nantucket again! I think, sir, they  
have some  
such mild blue days, even as this, in Nantucket."

"They have, they have. I have seen them—some summer days  
in the

morning. About this time—yes, it is his noon nap now—the boy  
vivaciously wakes; sits up in bed; and his mother tells him of me, of  
cannibal old me; how I am abroad upon the deep, but will yet come back  
to dance him again."

"'Tis my Mary, my Mary herself! She promised that my boy, every  
morning, should be carried to the hill to catch the first glimpse of  
his father's sail! Yes, yes! no more! it is done! we head for  
Nantucket! Come, my Captain, study out the course, and let us away!  
See, see! the boy's face from the window! the boy's hand on the hill!"

But Ahab's glance was averted; like a blighted fruit tree he shook, and  
cast his last, cindered apple to the soil.

"What is it, what nameless, inscrutable, unearthly thing is it; what  
cozening, hidden lord and master, and cruel, remorseless emperor  
commands me; that against all natural lovings and longings, I so keep  
pushing, and crowding, and jamming myself on all the time; recklessly  
making me ready to do what in my own proper, natural heart, I durst not  
so much as dare? Is Ahab, Ahab? Is it I, God, or who, that lifts this  
arm? But if the great sun move not of himself; but is as an errand-boy  
in heaven; nor one single star can revolve, but by some invisible  
power; how then can this one small heart beat; this one small brain  
think thoughts; unless God does that beating, does that thinking, does  
that living, and not I. By heaven, man, we are turned

round and round  
in this world, like yonder windlass, and Fate is the  
handspike. And all  
the time, lo! that smiling sky, and this unsounded sea!  
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.

### CHAPTER 133. The Chase—First Day.

That night, in the mid-watch, when the old man—as his  
wont at  
intervals—stepped forth from the scuttle in which he  
leaned, and went  
to his pivot-hole, he suddenly thrust out his face  
fiercely, snuffing  
up the sea air as a sagacious ship's dog will, in drawing  
nigh to some  
barbarous isle. He declared that a whale must be near.

Soon that  
peculiar odor, sometimes to a great distance given forth  
by the living  
sperm whale, was palpable to all the watch; nor was any  
mariner  
surprised when, after inspecting the compass, and then  
the dog-vane,  
and then ascertaining the precise bearing of the odor as  
nearly as  
possible, Ahab rapidly ordered the ship's course to be  
slightly  
altered, and the sail to be shortened.

The acute policy dictating these movements was  
sufficiently vindicated  
at daybreak, by the sight of a long sleek on the sea  
directly and  
lengthwise ahead, smooth as oil, and resembling in the  
pleated watery  
wrinkles bordering it, the polished metallic-like marks  
of some swift  
tide-rip, at the mouth of a deep, rapid stream.

"Man the mast-heads! Call all hands!"

Thundering with the butts of three clubbed handspikes on  
the forecastle  
deck, Daggoo roused the sleepers with such judgment claps  
that they  
seemed to exhale from the scuttle, so instantaneously did  
they appear  
with their clothes in their hands.

"What d'ye see?" cried Ahab, flattening his face to the  
sky.

"Nothing, nothing sir!" was the sound hailing down in  
reply.

"T'gallant sails!—stunsails! alow and aloft, and on both  
sides!"

All sail being set, he now cast loose the life-line,  
reserved for

swaying him to the main royal-mast head; and in a few moments they were hoisting him thither, when, while but two thirds of the way aloft, and while peering ahead through the horizontal vacancy between the main-top-sail and top-gallant-sail, he raised a gull-like cry in the air. "There she blows!—there she blows! A hump like a snow-hill! It is Moby Dick!"

Fired by the cry which seemed simultaneously taken up by the three look-outs, the men on deck rushed to the rigging to behold the famous whale they had so long been pursuing. Ahab had now gained his final perch, some feet above the other look-outs, Tashtego standing just beneath him on the cap of the top-gallant-mast, so that the Indian's head was almost on a level with Ahab's heel. From this height the whale was now seen some mile or so ahead, at every roll of the sea revealing his high sparkling hump, and regularly jetting his silent spout into the air. To the credulous mariners it seemed the same silent spout they had so long ago beheld in the moonlit Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

"And did none of ye see it before?" cried Ahab, hailing the perched men all around him.

"I saw him almost that same instant, sir, that Captain Ahab did, and I cried out," said Tashtego.

"Not the same instant; not the same—no, the doubloon is mine, Fate reserved the doubloon for me. I only; none of ye could

have raised  
the White Whale first. There she blows!—there she blows!—  
there she  
blows! There again!—there again!" he cried, in long-  
drawn, lingering,  
methodic tones, attuned to the gradual prolongings of the  
whale's  
visible jets. "He's going to sound! In stunsails! Down  
top-gallant-sails! Stand by three boats. Mr. Starbuck,  
remember, stay  
on board, and keep the ship. Helm there! Luff, luff a  
point! So;  
steady, man, steady! There go flukes! No, no; only black  
water! All  
ready the boats there? Stand by, stand by! Lower me, Mr.  
Starbuck;  
lower, lower,—quick, quicker!" and he slid through the  
air to the deck.

"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. As now he thus vainly strove, the jaw slipped  
from him; the  
frail gunwales bent in, collapsed, and snapped, as both  
jaws, like an  
enormous shears, sliding further aft, bit the craft  
completely in  
twain, and locked themselves fast again in the sea,  
midway between the  
two floating wrecks. These floated aside, the broken ends  
drooping, the  
crew at the stern-wreck clinging to the gunwales, and  
striving to hold  
fast to the oars to lash them across.

At that preluding moment, ere the boat was yet snapped,  
Ahab, the first  
to perceive the whale's intent, by the crafty upraising  
of his head, a  
movement that loosed his hold for the time; at that  
moment his hand had  
made one final effort to push the boat out of the bite.  
But only  
slipping further into the whale's mouth, and tilting over  
sideways as  
it slipped, the boat had shaken off his hold on the jaw;  
spilled him  
out of it, as he leaned to the push; and so he fell flat-  
faced upon the  
sea.

Ripplingly withdrawing from his prey, Moby Dick now lay  
at a little  
distance, vertically thrusting his oblong white head up

and down in the  
billows; and at the same time slowly revolving his whole  
spindled body;  
so that when his vast wrinkled forehead rose—some twenty  
or more feet  
out of the water—the now rising swells, with all their  
confluent waves,  
dazzlingly broke against it; vindictively tossing their  
shivered spray  
still higher into the air.\* So, in a gale, the but half  
baffled Channel  
billows only recoil from the base of the Eddystone,  
triumphantly to  
overleap its summit with their scud.

\*This motion is peculiar to the sperm whale. It receives  
its  
designation (pitchpoling) from its being likened to that  
preliminary  
up-and-down poise of the whale-lance, in the exercise  
called  
pitchpoling, previously described. By this motion the  
whale must best  
and most comprehensively view whatever objects may be  
encircling him.

But soon resuming his horizontal attitude, Moby Dick swam  
swiftly round  
and round the wrecked crew; sideways churning the water  
in his vengeful  
wake, as if lashing himself up to still another and more  
deadly  
assault. The sight of the splintered boat seemed to  
madden him, as the  
blood of grapes and mulberries cast before Antiochus's  
elephants in the  
book of Maccabees. Meanwhile Ahab half smothered in the  
foam of the  
whale's insolent tail, and too much of a cripple to swim,  
—though he  
could still keep afloat, even in the heart of such a  
whirlpool as that;  
helpless Ahab's head was seen, like a tossed bubble which  
the least

chance shock might burst. From the boat's fragmentary stern, Fedallah incuriously and mildly eyed him; the clinging crew, at the other drifting end, could not succor him; more than enough was it for them to look to themselves. For so revolvingly appalling was the White Whale's aspect, and so planetarily swift the ever-contracting circles he made, that he seemed horizontally swooping upon them. And though the other boats, unharmed, still hovered hard by; still they dared not pull into the eddy to strike, lest that should be the signal for the instant destruction of the jeopardized castaways, Ahab and all; nor in that case could they themselves hope to escape. With straining eyes, then, they remained on the outer edge of the direful zone, whose centre had now become the old man's head.

Meantime, from the beginning all this had been descried from the ship's mast heads; and squaring her yards, she had borne down upon the scene; and was now so nigh, that Ahab in the water hailed her!—"Sail on the"—but that moment a breaking sea dashed on him from Moby Dick, and whelmed him for the time. But struggling out of it again, and chancing to rise on a towering crest, he shouted,—“Sail on the whale!—Drive him off!”

The Pequod's prows were pointed; and breaking up the charmed circle, she effectually parted the white whale from his victim. As he sullenly swam off, the boats flew to the rescue.

Dragged into Stubb's boat with blood-shot, blinded eyes,  
the white  
brine caking in his wrinkles; the long tension of Ahab's  
bodily  
strength did crack, and helplessly he yielded to his  
body's doom: for a  
time, lying all crushed in the bottom of Stubb's boat,  
like one trodden  
under foot of herds of elephants. Far inland, nameless  
wails came from  
him, as desolate sounds from out ravines.

But this intensity of his physical prostration did but so  
much the more  
abbreviate it. In an instant's compass, great hearts  
sometimes condense  
to one deep pang, the sum total of those shallow pains  
kindly diffused  
through feebler men's whole lives. And so, such hearts,  
though summary  
in each one suffering; still, if the gods decree it, in  
their life-time  
aggregate a whole age of woe, wholly made up of  
instantaneous  
intensities; for even in their pointless centres, those  
noble natures  
contain the entire circumferences of inferior souls.

"The harpoon," said Ahab, half way rising, and draggingly  
leaning on  
one bended arm—"is it safe?"

"Aye, sir, for it was not darted; this is it," said  
Stubb, showing it.

"Lay it before me;—any missing men?"

"One, two, three, four, five;—there were five oars, sir,  
and here are  
five men."

"That's good.—Help me, man; I wish to stand. So, so, I  
see him! there!  
there! going to leeward still; what a leaping spout!—



Hands off from me!

The eternal sap runs up in Ahab's bones again! Set the sail; out oars; the helm!"

It is often the case that when a boat is stove, its crew, being picked up by another boat, help to work that second boat; and the chase is thus continued with what is called double-banked oars. It was thus now.

But the added power of the boat did not equal the added power of the whale, for he seemed to have treble-banked his every fin; swimming with a velocity which plainly showed, that if now, under these circumstances, pushed on, the chase would prove an indefinitely prolonged, if not a hopeless one; nor could any crew endure for so long

a period, such an unintermitted, intense straining at the oar; a thing barely tolerable only in some one brief vicissitude. The ship itself, then, as it sometimes happens, offered the most promising intermediate

means of overtaking the chase. Accordingly, the boats now made for her,

and were soon swayed up to their cranes—the two parts of the wrecked

boat having been previously secured by her—and then hoisting everything

to her side, and stacking her canvas high up, and sideways

outstretching it with stun-sails, like the double-jointed wings of an

albatross; the Pequod bore down in the leeward wake of Moby-Dick. At

the well known, methodic intervals, the whale's glittering spout was

regularly announced from the manned mast-heads; and when he would be

reported as just gone down, Ahab would take the time, and then pacing

the deck, binnacle-watch in hand, so soon as the last second of the allotted hour expired, his voice was heard.—“Whose is the doubloon now? D’ye see him?” and if the reply was, No, sir! straightway he commanded them to lift him to his perch. In this way the day wore on; Ahab, now aloft and motionless; anon, unrestingly pacing the planks.

As he was thus walking, uttering no sound, except to hail the men aloft, or to bid them hoist a sail still higher, or to spread one to a still greater breadth—thus to and fro pacing, beneath his slouched hat, at every turn he passed his own wrecked boat, which had been dropped upon the quarter-deck, and lay there reversed; broken bow to shattered stern. At last he paused before it; and as in an already over-clouded sky fresh troops of clouds will sometimes sail across, so over the old man’s face there now stole some such added gloom as this.

Stubb saw him pause; and perhaps intending, not vainly, though, to evince his own unabated fortitude, and thus keep up a valiant place in his Captain’s mind, he advanced, and eyeing the wreck exclaimed—“The thistle the ass refused; it pricked his mouth too keenly, sir; ha! ha!”

“What soulless thing is this that laughs before a wreck? Man, man! did I not know thee brave as fearless fire (and as mechanical) I could swear thou wert a poltroon. Groan nor laugh should be heard before a wreck.”

"Aye, sir," said Starbuck drawing near, "'tis a solemn sight; an omen, and an ill one."

"Omen? omen?—the dictionary! If the gods think to speak outright to man, they will honorably 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.

#### CHAPTER 134. The Chase—Second Day.

At day-break, the three mast-heads were punctually manned  
afresh.

"D'ye see him?" cried Ahab after allowing a little space  
for the light  
to spread.

"See nothing, sir."

"Turn up all hands and make sail! he travels faster than  
I thought  
for;—the top-gallant sails!—aye, they should have been  
kept on her all  
night. But no matter—'tis but resting for the rush."

Here be it said, that this pertinacious pursuit of one  
particular  
whale, continued through day into night, and through  
night into day, is  
a thing by no means unprecedented in the South sea  
fishery. For such is  
the wonderful skill, prescience of experience, and  
invincible  
confidence acquired by some great natural geniuses among

the Nantucket  
commanders; that from the simple observation of a whale  
when last  
descried, they will, under certain given circumstances,  
pretty  
accurately foretell both the direction in which he will  
continue to  
swim for a time, while out of sight, as well as his  
probable rate of  
progression during that period. And, in these cases,  
somewhat as a  
pilot, when about losing sight of a coast, whose general  
trending he  
well knows, and which he desires shortly to return to  
again, but at  
some further point; like as this pilot stands by his  
compass, and takes  
the precise bearing of the cape at present visible, in  
order the more  
certainly to hit aright the remote, unseen headland,  
eventually to be  
visited: so does the fisherman, at his compass, with the  
whale; for  
after being chased, and diligently marked, through  
several hours of  
daylight, then, when night obscures the fish, the  
creature's future  
wake through the darkness is almost as established to the  
sagacious  
mind of the hunter, as the pilot's coast is to him. So  
that to this  
hunter's wondrous skill, the proverbial evanescence of a  
thing writ in  
water, a wake, is to all desired purposes well nigh as  
reliable as the  
steadfast land. And as the mighty iron Leviathan of the  
modern railway  
is so familiarly known in its every pace, that, with  
watches in their  
hands, men time his rate as doctors that of a baby's  
pulse; and lightly  
say of it, the up train or the down train will reach such  
or such a  
spot, at such or such an hour; even so, almost, there are

occasions  
when these Nantucketers time that other Leviathan of the  
deep,  
according to the observed humor of his speed; and say to  
themselves, so  
many hours hence this whale will have gone two hundred  
miles, will have  
about reached this or that degree of latitude or  
longitude. But to  
render this acuteness at all successful in the end, the  
wind and the  
sea must be the whaleman's allies; for of what present  
avail to the  
becalmed or windbound mariner is the skill that assures  
him he is  
exactly ninety-three leagues and a quarter from his port?  
Inferable  
from these statements, are many collateral subtle  
matters touching the  
chase of whales.

The ship tore on; leaving such a furrow in the sea as  
when a  
cannon-ball, missent, becomes a plough-share and turns up  
the level  
field.

"By salt and hemp!" cried Stubb, "but this swift motion  
of the deck  
creeps up one's legs and tingles at the heart. This ship  
and I are two  
brave fellows!—Ha, ha! Some one take me up, and launch  
me, spine-wise,  
on the sea,—for by live-oaks! my spine's a keel. Ha, ha!  
we go the gait  
that leaves no dust behind!"

"There she blows—she blows!—she blows!—right ahead!" was  
now the  
mast-head cry.

"Aye, aye!" cried Stubb, "I knew it—ye can't escape—blow  
on and split  
your spout, O whale! the mad fiend himself is after ye!"

blow your  
trump—blister your lungs!—Ahab will dam off your blood,  
as a miller  
shuts his watergate upon the stream!"

And Stubb did but speak out for well nigh all that crew.  
The frenzies  
of the chase had by this time worked them bubblingly up,  
like old wine  
worked anew. Whatever pale fears and forebodings some of  
them might  
have felt before; these were not only now kept out of  
sight through the  
growing awe of Ahab, but they were broken up, and on all  
sides routed,  
as timid prairie hares that scatter before the bounding  
bison. The hand  
of Fate had snatched all their souls; and by the stirring  
perils of the  
previous day; the rack of the past night's suspense; the  
fixed,  
unfearing, blind, reckless way in which their wild craft  
went plunging  
towards its flying mark; by all these things, their  
hearts were bowled  
along. The wind that made great bellies of their sails,  
and rushed the  
vessel on by arms invisible as irresistible; this seemed  
the symbol of  
that unseen agency which so enslaved them to the race.

They were one man, not thirty. For as the one ship that  
held them all;  
though it was put together of all contrasting things—oak,  
and maple,  
and pine wood; iron, and pitch, and hemp—yet all these  
ran into each  
other in the one concrete hull, which shot on its way,  
both balanced  
and directed by the long central keel; even so, all the  
individualities  
of the crew, this man's valor, that man's fear; guilt and  
guiltiness,  
all varieties were welded into oneness, and were all

directed to that  
fatal goal which Ahab their one lord and keel did point  
to.

The rigging lived. The mast-heads, like the tops of tall  
palms, were  
outspreadingly tufted with arms and legs. Clinging to a  
spar with one  
hand, some reached forth the other with impatient  
wavings; others,  
shading their eyes from the vivid sunlight, sat far out  
on the rocking  
yards; all the spars in full bearing of mortals, ready  
and ripe for  
their fate. Ah! how they still strove through that  
infinite blueness to  
seek out the thing that might destroy them!

"Why sing ye not out for him, if ye see him?" cried Ahab,  
when, after  
the lapse of some minutes since the first cry, no more  
had been heard.  
"Sway me up, men; ye have been deceived; not Moby Dick  
casts one odd  
jet that way, and then disappears."

It was even so; in their headlong eagerness, the men had  
mistaken some  
other thing for the whale-spout, as the event itself soon  
proved; for  
hardly had Ahab reached his perch; hardly was the rope  
belayed to its  
pin on deck, when he struck the key-note to an orchestra,  
that made the  
air vibrate as with the combined discharges of rifles.  
The triumphant  
halloo of thirty buckskin lungs was heard, as-much nearer  
to the ship  
than the place of the imaginary jet, less than a mile  
ahead-Moby Dick  
bodily burst into view! For not by any calm and indolent  
spoutings; not  
by the peaceable gush of that mystic fountain in his  
head, did the



White Whale now reveal his vicinity; but by the far more wondrous phenomenon of breaching. Rising with his utmost velocity from the furthest depths, the Sperm Whale thus booms his entire bulk into the pure element of air, and piling up a mountain of dazzling foam, shows his place to the distance of seven miles and more. In those moments, the torn, enraged waves he shakes off, seem his mane; in some cases, this breaching is his act of defiance.

"There she breaches! there she breaches!" was the cry, as in his immeasurable bravadoes the White Whale tossed himself salmon-like to Heaven. So suddenly seen in the blue plain of the sea, and relieved against the still bluer margin of the sky, the spray that he raised, for the moment, intolerably glittered and glared like a glacier; and stood there gradually fading and fading away from its first sparkling intensity, to the dim mistiness of an advancing shower in a vale.

"Aye, breach your last to the sun, Moby Dick!" 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 manœuvred,  
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, aloft,  
cabin,  
forecastle—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 dismasted  
frigates in a  
gale; and I may look so. But ere I break, ye'll 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.

So once more the sail was shortened, and everything passed nearly as on the previous night; only, the sound of hammers, and the hum of the grindstone was heard till nearly daylight, as the men toiled by lanterns in the complete and careful rigging of the spare boats and sharpening their fresh weapons for the morrow. Meantime, of the broken keel of Ahab's wrecked craft the carpenter made him another leg; while still as on the night before, slouched Ahab stood fixed within his scuttle; his hid, heliotrope glance anticipatively gone backward on its dial; sat due eastward for the earliest sun.

#### 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. And yet, I've sometimes thought my brain  
was very  
calm-frozen calm, this old skull cracks so, like a glass  
in which the  
contents turned to ice, and shiver it. And still this  
hair is growing  
now; this moment growing, and heat must breed it; but no,  
it's like  
that sort of common grass that will grow anywhere,  
between the earthy  
clefts of Greenland ice or in Vesuvius lava. How the wild  
winds blow  
it; they whip it about me as the torn shreds of split  
sails lash the  
tossed ship they cling to. A vile wind that has no doubt  
blown ere this  
through prison corridors and cells, and wards of  
hospitals, and  
ventilated them, and now comes blowing hither as innocent  
as fleeces.  
Out upon it!—it's tainted. Were I the wind, I'd blow no  
more on such a  
wicked, miserable world. I'd crawl somewhere to a cave,  
and slink

there. And yet, 'tis a noble and heroic thing, the wind!  
who ever  
conquered it? In every fight it has the last and  
bitterest blow. Run  
tilting at it, and you but run through it. Ha! a coward  
wind that  
strikes stark naked men, but will not stand to receive a  
single blow.  
Even Ahab is a braver thing—a nobler thing than \_that\_.  
Would now the  
wind but had a body; but all the things that most  
exasperate and  
outrage mortal man, all these things are bodiless, but  
only bodiless as  
objects, not as agents. There's a most special, a most  
cunning, oh, a  
most malicious difference! And yet, I say again, and  
swear it now, that  
there's something all glorious and gracious in the wind.  
These warm  
Trade Winds, at least, that in the clear heavens blow  
straight on, in  
strong and steadfast, vigorous mildness; and veer not  
from their mark,  
however the baser currents of the sea may turn and tack,  
and mightiest  
Mississippies of the land swift and swerve about,  
uncertain where to go  
at last. And by the eternal Poles! these same Trades that  
so directly  
blow my good ship on; these Trades, or something like  
them—something so  
unchangeable, and full as strong, blow my keeled soul  
along! To it!  
Aloft there! What d'ye see?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Nothing! and noon at hand! The doubloon goes a-begging!  
See the sun!  
Aye, aye, it must be so. I've oversailed him. How, got  
the start? Aye,  
he's chasing \_me\_ now; not I, \_him\_—that's bad; I might  
have known it,

too. Fool! the lines—the harpoons he's towing. Aye, aye, I have run him by last night. About! about! Come down, all of ye, but the regular look outs! Man the braces!"

Steering as she had done, the wind had been somewhat on the Pequod's quarter, so that now being pointed in the reverse direction, the braced ship sailed hard upon the breeze as she recharged the cream in her own white wake.

"Against the wind he now steers for the open jaw," murmured Starbuck to himself, as he coiled the new-hauled main-brace upon the rail. "God keep us, but already my bones feel damp within me, and from the inside wet my flesh. I misdoubt me that I disobey my God in obeying him!"

"Stand by to sway me up!" cried Ahab, advancing to the hempen basket. "We should meet him soon."

"Aye, aye, sir," and straightway Starbuck did Ahab's bidding, and once more Ahab swung on high.

A whole hour now passed; gold-beaten out to ages. Time itself now held long breaths with keen suspense. But at last, some three points off the weather bow, Ahab descried the spout again, and instantly from the three mast-heads three shrieks went up as if the tongues of fire had voiced it.

"Forehead to forehead I meet thee, this third time, Moby Dick! On deck there!—brace sharper up; crowd her into the wind's eye.

He's too far  
off to lower yet, Mr. Starbuck. The sails shake! 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. I am old;—shake hands with me, man."

Their hands met; their eyes fastened; Starbuck's tears  
the glue.

"Oh, my captain, my captain!—noble heart—go not—go not!—see, it's a brave man that weeps; how great the agony of the persuasion then!"

"Lower away!"—cried Ahab, tossing the mate's arm from him. "Stand by the crew!"

In an instant the boat was pulling round close under the stern.

"The sharks! the sharks!" cried a voice from the low cabin-window there; "O master, my master, come back!"

But Ahab heard nothing; for his own voice was high-lifted then; and the boat leaped on.

Yet the voice spake true; for scarce had he pushed from the ship, when numbers of sharks, seemingly rising from out the dark waters beneath the hull, maliciously snapped at the blades of the oars, every time they dipped in the water; and in this way accompanied the boat with their bites. It is a thing not uncommonly happening to the whale-boats in those swarming seas; the sharks at times apparently following them in the same prescient way that vultures hover over the banners of marching regiments in the east. But these were the first sharks that had been observed by the Pequod since the White Whale had been first descried; and whether it was that Ahab's crew were all such tiger-yellow barbarians, and therefore their flesh more musky to the senses of the sharks—a matter sometimes well known to affect

them,—however it was, they seemed to follow that one boat without molesting the others.

“Heart of wrought steel!” murmured Starbuck gazing over the side, and following with his eyes the receding boat—“canst thou yet ring boldly to that sight?—lowering thy keel among ravening sharks, and followed by them, open-mouthed to the chase; and this the critical third day?—For when three days flow together in one continuous intense pursuit; be sure the first is the morning, the second the noon, and the third the evening and the end of that thing—be that end what it may. Oh! my God! what is this that shoots through me, and leaves me so deadly calm, yet expectant,—fixed at the top of a shudder! Future things swim before me, as in empty outlines and skeletons; all the past is somehow grown dim. Mary, girl! thou fadest in pale glories behind me; boy! I seem to see but thy eyes grown wondrous blue. Strangest problems of life seem clearing; but clouds sweep between—Is my journey’s end coming? My legs feel faint; like his who has footed it all day. Feel thy heart,—beats it yet? Stir thyself, Starbuck!—stave it off—move, move! speak aloud!—Mast-head there! See ye my boy’s hand on the hill?—Crazed;—aloft there!—keep thy keenest eye upon the boats:—mark well the whale!—Ho! again!—drive off that hawk! see! he pecks—he tears the vane”—pointing to the red flag flying at the main-truck—“Ha! he soars away with it!—Where’s the old man now? see’st thou that sight, oh Ahab!—shudder,



shudder!"

The boats had not gone very far, when by a signal from the mast-heads—a downward pointed arm, Ahab knew that the whale had sounded; but intending to be near him at the next rising, he held on his way a little sideways from the vessel; the becharmed crew maintaining the profoundest silence, as the head-beat waves hammered and hammered against the opposing bow.

"Drive, drive in your nails, oh ye waves! to their uttermost heads drive them in! ye but strike a thing without a lid; and no coffin and no hearse can be mine:—and hemp only can kill me! Ha! ha!"

Suddenly the waters around them slowly swelled in broad circles; then quickly upheaved, as if sideways sliding from a submerged berg of ice, swiftly rising to the surface. A low rumbling sound was heard; a subterraneous hum; and then all held their breaths; as bedraggled with trailing ropes, and harpoons, and lances, a vast form shot lengthwise, but obliquely from the sea. Shrouded in a thin drooping veil of mist, it hovered for a moment in the rainbowed air; and then fell swamping back into the deep. Crushed thirty feet upwards, the waters flashed for an instant like heaps of fountains, then brokenly sank in a shower of flakes, leaving the circling surface creamed like new milk round the marble trunk of the whale.

"Give way!" cried Ahab to the oarsmen, and the boats

darted forward to  
the attack; but maddened by yesterday's fresh irons that  
corroded in  
him, Moby Dick seemed combinedly possessed by all the  
angels that fell  
from heaven. The wide tiers of welded tendons  
overspreading his broad  
white forehead, beneath the transparent skin, looked  
knitted together;  
as head on, he came churning his tail among the boats;  
and once more  
flailed them apart; spilling out the irons and lances  
from the two  
mates' boats, and dashing in one side of the upper part  
of their bows,  
but leaving Ahab's almost without a scar.

While Daggoo and Queequeg were stopping the strained  
planks; and as the  
whale swimming out from them, turned, and showed one  
entire flank as he  
shot by them again; at that moment a quick cry went up.  
Lashed round  
and round to the fish's back; pinioned in the turns upon  
turns in  
which, during the past night, the whale had reeled the  
involutions of  
the lines around him, the half torn body of the Parsee  
was seen; his  
sable raiment frayed to shreds; his distended eyes turned  
full upon old  
Ahab.

The harpoon dropped from his hand.

"Befooled, befooled!"—drawing in a long lean breath—"Aye,  
Parsee! I see  
thee again.—Aye, and thou goest before; and this, \_this\_  
then is the  
hearse that thou didst promise. But I hold thee to the  
last letter of  
thy word. Where is the second hearse? Away, mates, to the  
ship! those  
boats are useless now; repair them if ye can in time, and

return to me;  
if not, Ahab is enough to die—Down, men! the first thing  
that but  
offers to jump from this boat I stand in, that thing I  
harpoon. Ye are  
not other men, but my arms and my legs; and so obey me.—  
Where's the  
whale? gone down again?"

But he looked too nigh the boat; for as if bent upon  
escaping with the  
corpse he bore, and as if the particular place of the  
last encounter  
had been but a stage in his leeward voyage, Moby Dick was  
now again  
steadily swimming forward; and had almost passed the  
ship,—which thus  
far had been sailing in the contrary direction to him,  
though for the  
present her headway had been stopped. He seemed swimming  
with his  
utmost velocity, and now only intent upon pursuing his  
own straight  
path in the sea.

"Oh! Ahab," cried Starbuck, "not too late is it, even  
now, the third  
day, to desist. See! Moby Dick seeks thee not. It is  
thou, thou, that  
madly seekest him!"

Setting sail to the rising wind, the lonely boat was  
swiftly impelled  
to leeward, by both oars and canvas. And at last when  
Ahab was sliding  
by the vessel, so near as plainly to distinguish  
Starbuck's face as he  
leaned over the rail, he hailed him to turn the vessel  
about, and  
follow him, not too swiftly, at a judicious interval.  
Glancing upwards,  
he saw Tashtego, Queequeg, and Daggoo, eagerly mounting  
to the three  
mast-heads; while the oarsmen were rocking in the two

staved boats  
which had but just been hoisted to the side, and were  
busily at work in  
repairing them. One after the other, through the port-  
holes, as he  
sped, he also caught flying glimpses of Stubb and Flask,  
busying  
themselves on deck among bundles of new irons and lances.  
As he saw all  
this; as he heard the hammers in the broken boats; far  
other hammers  
seemed driving a nail into his heart. But he rallied. 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.

At length as the craft was cast to one side, and ran ranging along with the White Whale's flank, he seemed strangely oblivious of its advance—as the whale sometimes will—and Ahab was fairly within the smoky mountain mist, which, thrown off from the whale's spout, curled round his great, Monadnock hump; he was even thus close to him; when, with body arched back, and both arms lengthwise high-lifted to the poise, he darted his fierce iron, and his far fiercer curse into the hated whale. As both steel and curse sank to the socket, as if sucked into a morass, Moby Dick sideways writhed; spasmodically rolled his high flank against the bow, and, without staving a hole in it, so suddenly canted the boat over, that had it not been for the elevated part of the gunwale to which he then clung, Ahab would once more have been tossed into the sea. As it was, three of the oarsmen—who foreknew not the precise instant of the dart, and were therefore unprepared for its effects—these were flung out; but so fell, that, in an instant two of them clutched the gunwale again, and rising to its

level on a  
combing wave, hurled themselves bodily inboard again; the  
third man  
helplessly dropping astern, but still afloat and  
swimming.

Almost simultaneously, with a mighty volition of  
ungraduated,  
instantaneous swiftness, the White Whale darted through  
the weltering  
sea. But when Ahab cried out to the steersman to take new  
turns with  
the line, and hold it so; and commanded the crew to turn  
round on their  
seats, and tow the boat up to the mark; the moment the  
treacherous line  
felt that double strain and tug, it snapped in the empty  
air!

"What breaks in me? Some sinew cracks!—'tis whole again;  
oars! oars!  
Burst in upon him!"

Hearing the tremendous rush of the sea-crashing boat, the  
whale wheeled  
round to present his blank forehead at bay; but in that  
evolution,  
catching sight of the nearing black hull of the ship;  
seemingly seeing  
in it the source of all his persecutions; bethinking it—  
it may be—a  
larger and nobler foe; of a sudden, he bore down upon its  
advancing  
prow, smiting his jaws amid fiery showers of foam.

Ahab staggered; his hand smote his forehead. "I grow  
blind; hands!  
stretch out before me that I may yet grope my way. 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! oh, oh!  
thou grinning whale, but there'll be plenty of gulping  
soon! Why fly ye  
not, O Ahab! For me, off shoes and jacket to it; let  
Stubb die in his  
drawers! A most mouldy and over salted death, though;—  
cherries!  
cherries! cherries! Oh, Flask, for one red cherry ere we  
die!"

"Cherries? I only wish that we were where they grow. Oh,  
Stubb, I hope  
my poor mother's drawn my part-pay ere this; if not, few  
coppers will  
now come to her, for the voyage is up."

From the ship's bows, nearly all the seamen now hung  
inactive; hammers,  
bits of plank, lances, and harpoons, mechanically  
retained in their  
hands, just as they had darted from their various  
employments; all  
their enchanted eyes intent upon the whale, which from  
side to side  
strangely vibrating his predestinating head, sent a broad  
band of  
overspreading semicircular foam before him as he rushed.  
Retribution,  
swift vengeance, eternal malice were in his whole aspect,



and spite of  
all that mortal man could do, the solid white buttress of  
his forehead  
smote the ship's starboard bow, till men and timbers  
reeled. Some fell  
flat upon their faces. Like dislodged trucks, the heads  
of the  
harpooneers aloft shook on their bull-like necks. Through  
the breach,  
they heard the waters pour, as mountain torrents down a  
flume.

"The ship! The hearse!—the second hearse!" cried Ahab  
from the boat;  
"its wood could only be American!"

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.

"I turn my body from the sun. What ho, Tashtego! let me  
hear thy  
hammer. Oh! 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! must ye then  
perish, and  
without me? Am I cut off from the last fond pride of  
meanest  
shipwrecked captains? Oh, lonely death on lonely life!  
Oh, now I feel  
my topmost greatness lies in my topmost grief. Ho, ho!  
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! 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. Sink all coffins and all hearses to one  
common pool!  
and since neither can be mine, let me then tow to pieces,  
while still  
chasing thee, though tied to thee, thou damned whale!  
\_Thus\_, I give up  
the spear!"

The harpoon was darted; the stricken whale flew forward;  
with igniting  
velocity the line ran through the grooves;—ran foul. Ahab  
stooped to  
clear it; he did clear it; but the flying turn caught him  
round the  
neck, and voicelessly as Turkish mutes bowstring their  
victim, he was  
shot out of the boat, ere the crew knew he was gone. Next  
instant, the  
heavy eye-splice in the rope's final end flew out of the  
stark-empty  
tub, knocked down an oarsman, and smiting the sea,  
disappeared in its  
depths.

For an instant, the tranced boat's crew stood still; then  
turned. "The  
ship? Great God, where is the ship?" Soon they through  
dim, bewildering  
mediums saw her sidelong fading phantom, as in the  
gaseous Fata  
Morgana; only the uppermost masts out of water; while  
fixed by  
infatuation, or fidelity, or fate, to their once lofty  
perches, the  
pagan harpooneers still maintained their sinking lookouts  
on the sea.  
And now, concentric circles seized the lone boat itself,  
and all its  
crew, and each floating oar, and every lance-pole, and  
spinning,  
animate and inanimate, all round and round in one vortex,  
carried the

smallest chip of the Pequod out of sight.

But as the last whelmings intermixingly poured themselves over the sunken head of the Indian at the mainmast, leaving a few inches of the erect spar yet visible, together with long streaming yards of the flag, which calmly undulated, with ironical coincidings, over the destroying billows they almost touched;—at that instant, a red arm and a hammer hovered backwardly uplifted in the open air, in the act of nailing the flag faster and yet faster to the subsiding spar. A sky-hawk that tauntingly had followed the main-truck downwards from its natural home among the stars, pecking at the flag, and incommoding Tashtego there; this bird now chanced to intercept its broad fluttering wing between the hammer and the wood; and simultaneously feeling that etherial thrill, the submerged savage beneath, in his death-gasp, kept his hammer frozen there; and so the bird of heaven, with archangelic shrieks, and his imperial beak thrust upwards, and his whole captive form folded in the flag of Ahab, went down with his ship, which, like Satan, would not sink to hell till she had dragged a living part of heaven along with her, and helmeted herself with it.

Now small fowls flew screaming over the yet yawning gulf; a sullen white surf beat against its steep sides; then all collapsed, and the great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago.

## Epilogue

"AND I ONLY AM ESCAPED ALONE TO TELL THEE" Job.

The drama's done. Why then here does any one step forth?—  
Because one  
did survive the wreck.

It so chanced, that after the Parsee's disappearance, I  
was he whom the  
Fates ordained to take the place of Ahab's bowsman, when  
that bowsman  
assumed the vacant post; the same, who, when on the last  
day the three  
men were tossed from out of the rocking boat, was dropped  
astern. So,  
floating on the margin of the ensuing scene, and in full  
sight of it,  
when the halfspent suction of the sunk ship reached me, I  
was then, but  
slowly, drawn towards the closing vortex. When I reached  
it, it had  
subsided to a creamy pool. Round and round, then, and  
ever contracting  
towards the button-like black bubble at the axis of that  
slowly  
wheeling circle, like another Ixion I did revolve. Till,  
gaining that  
vital centre, the black bubble upward burst; and now,  
liberated by  
reason of its cunning spring, and, owing to its great  
buoyancy, rising  
with great force, the coffin life-buoy shot lengthwise  
from the sea,  
fell over, and floated by my side. Buoyed up by that  
coffin, for almost  
one whole day and night, I floated on a soft and  
dirgelike main. The  
unharming sharks, they glided by as if with padlocks on  
their mouths;  
the savage sea-hawks sailed with sheathed beaks. On the  
second day, a  
sail drew near, nearer, and picked me up at last. It was  
the

devious-cruising Rachel, that in her retracing search  
after her missing  
children, only found another orphan.

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