

the surface of the body, by reason of the external water, renders the emptying of the lungs very easy, and the out-rush is not only swift and powerful enough to clear the complicated nasal passages, but to throw up the vapoury breath to a considerable height ; as we have seen.

I have on many occasions been privileged not only to examine the carcases of these gigantic creatures after capture, but to see them at close quarters when enjoying themselves in active life. On the Pacific coast, while cruising up the great inlets, and between the numerous islands, along the British Columbia sea-board, I frequently found myself in the midst of a school of whales, numbering in some cases at least twenty. The sea was as calm as a lake, and in the cool still atmosphere, the great clouds of vapour shot up at intervals all around, while the monsters glided with slow gracefulness after the shoals of minute animals on which they were feeding. At times one, in a fit of playfulness, would cause a great commotion, and with his flippers and tail throw up a storm of spray and foam ; but the school as a whole moved leisurely and noiselessly like dark shadows rising and sinking in the water. On certain occasions, when engaged in fishery investigations on the Scottish coast I found myself in close proximity to schools of gigantic Rorquals. They rose around our fishing yawl on all sides, and constantly threw up columns of white vapour accompanied by a deep bass snort or sigh like the gasp of the piston in a Cornish engine. When one of these mighty creatures, fifty or sixty feet in length, spouted within a few yards of us, the vibration made our vessel tremble, and one can understand the feelings of the novice on board ship who, in the long night watch, saw clouds of vapour and heard terrific sighs and snorts, and asked appealingly "How soon will I be off this perilous duty with those great guns afiring off so close to me ?"

This process, by which whales breathe, may be likened to