

thought and allusion ; but its chief charm is its freedom from all scholastic rules and conventions. Melville is a Walt Whitman of prose.

Like Browning he has a dialect of his own. The poet of *The Ring and the Book* translates the different emotions and thoughts and possible words of pope, jurist, murderer, victim, into one level uniform Browningsese ; reduces them to a common denominator, in a way of speaking, and Melville gives us not the actual words of American whalemén, but what they would say under the imagined conditions, translated into one consistent, though various Melvillesque manner of speech. The life he deals with belongs already to the legendary past, and he has us completely at his mercy. He is completely successful in creating his "atmosphere." Granted the conditions, the men and their words, emotions and actions, are all consistent. One powerful scene takes place on the quarter-deck of the "Pequod" one evening, when, all hands mustered aft, the Captain Ahab tells of the White Whale, and offers a doubloon to the first man who "raises" him :

" ' 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, tree—oh good many iron in him hide, too, Ca' tain,' cried Queequeg, disjointedly, ' all twisktee 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 fan-tails like a split jib in a squall.'

The first mate, Starbuck, asks him, ' 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