

formed ivory sheave for the halyards to run on. In this boat we found but little to purchase, with the exception of oil. Another commodity however was offered, in the shape of a young child, which, as it really appeared, the mother would have sold me. I had a knife, and a piece of iron in my hand, and with the latter wished to purchase a seal's skin, but the woman having taken a fancy to the knife, endeavoured to obtain it by alternate offers of seal's skins and bags of oil. At length, of her own accord, she lifted up a little child, of about four years of age, and apparently a girl, offering it with one hand, and holding out the other to receive the knife. Can it be possible that in three instances I should have been mistaken, and that the women would not sell their infants? All I can learn of these people certainly gives them great praise for affection to their children. This however may at some future time be cleared up.

An old man had charge of the ladies as usual, and was not very ceremonious with them, giving to those who stood in his way pretty smart shoves and blows with his elbows. Amongst the traders was one man who afforded much amusement by lying at a short distance, and holding up a raw and bloody piece of blubber, for which he demanded a nail in exchange: showing at the same time his high sense of the value of the equivalent by uttering loud cries, and licking the inviting morsel with as many smacks of the lips, and expressions of satisfaction, as a young child would discover while attacking a rich sweetmeat.

There was another man, who possessed a far more enticing piece of goods, a fine unicorn's horn; but when he had received a piece of iron in exchange for it, he, with a shout of triumph, shoved off, without giving for the horn. He appeared perfectly insensible to all stratagems to allure him alongside, and in vain were glittering knives and other treasures displayed for the purpose. During this time the other poor wretches were eagerly selling all their possessions, and stripping themselves of every article of dress which could find a purchaser.

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