

SCENE IN THE LIFE OF A WHALE-CATCHER.

Translated from the French for the Museum.

On board of a French whaler; the attentive watch had announced a whale; all was in readiness; each one at his post waited but the orders of the captain, who, leaning against the drift-rails, was following the course and movements of the fish. The signal is given, two light, slender canoes rapidly divide the waters and fly towards their prey.

At the distance of twenty paces a bold hand darts the harpoon; the whale sinks, but the line follows and indicates the place where it will re-appear. The officer deals several blows with his lance, he redoubles, without perceiving his danger, and one blow of the tail shatters the canoe to splinters.

Men and wreck, all were received by the sea. Each seeks refuge on board of the captain's canoe, which still keeps fast moored to the whale.

"Captain, said the officer, we constrain your manœuvring; let them who love me follow! a quarter of an hour at sea is soon passed." Four sailors precipitate themselves into the water with him and hook themselves to the keel of the broken canoe, patiently waiting the moment when the whale would blow forth its life blood, but it makes off rapidly with the wind.

The sailors observe the captain's canoe with attention, it moves swiftly away, while the current carries them backwards. Soon, they lose sight of both ship and canoe. Night approaches: they are alone in the immensity of the sea, and they coolly discuss the blow that had broken the bark, to whose wreck they are clinging.

Time passes, the night is dark, not a light, not the least sound announces the captain; not a biscuit, not even a glass of water.It is now only that they think they are lost for ever. Adieu to the pains and pleasures of a sea-faring life! adieu the noisy orgies of return to port! adieu the gay talk of the fore-top man! For them no more hope, death awaits them.