

lance, the whale generally plunges, and throws itself in all directions, lashing the water with its tail. The dying struggles are sometimes tremendous, and the boats at this time generally keep aloof, as otherwise they might be dashed to pieces.

The larger Whales, such as yield eighty or more barrels of oil, not being nearly so active, are generally, by expert Whalers, killed easily and with less danger than smaller ones. These enormous creatures, however, are sometimes known to turn upon their persecutors with unbounded fury, destroying every thing that meets them in their course. Mr Beak was witness of an occurrence of this sort, off the Coast of Japan, in July, 1832. Captain William Swain of the Sarah and Elizabeth of London had, with two other boats, been engaged in chasing a large Whale, nearly the whole of the day. At four P. M. the Captain was considerably a-head of the other boats, and had succeeded in harpooning it; and, being a dexterous whaler, he succeeded in lancing the animal twice before it recovered from the blow; these wounds having penetrated, caused an abundant ejection of blood through the spiracle: it however suddenly descended to the depth of about forty fathoms, and as suddenly rose, striking the boat with excessive force, which threw it into the air in fragments, with the men and every thing it contained. The men, though much bruised, managed to support themselves with oars, &c. for about three quarters of an hour, when they were relieved by the arrival of another of the boats. All this time the Whale continued near them, and several sharks, attracted by the blood. The Whale was finally secured.

Numberless stories are told of fighting whales, one or two of which we shall mention. In the year 1804, the ship *Adonis*, being in company with several others, struck a large whale off the coast of New Zealand which "stove" and destroyed nine boats before breakfast, and the chase was consequently given up. After destroying the boats belonging to many ships, this whale was at last captured, and many harpoons of various vessels were found in its body. This whale was extensively known

under the designation of "New Zealand Tom," and many traditions about it are carefully preserved.

But it is not boats only, for ships even are sometimes destroyed by these powerful creatures. It is a well authenticated fact, that the American ship, the *Essex*, was destroyed in the South Pacific Ocean by an enormous Sperm Whale. When the greater part of the Crew were absent in the boats killing whales, the few people remaining on board saw an enormous whale coming up to the ship, and when very near it appeared to sink down for the purpose of avoiding the vessel; and in doing so, struck its body against some part of the keel, which was broken off by the force of the blow and floated to the surface. The whale was then observed to rise a short distance from the ship, and to come with apparently great fury towards it, striking one of the bows with its head with amazing force, and so completely staved it in. The ship of course immediately filled, and fell over on her side; in which dreadful position the poor fellows in the boats saw their only home, and many hundred miles distant from the nearest land! On returning to the wreck, they found the few who had been left on board, hastily congregating in the remaining boat, in which they had scarcely taken refuge when the vessel capsized. With much difficulty they obtained a scanty supply of provisions from the wreck, their only support for the long and dreary passage before them to the coast of Peru, whither they endeavoured to make their way. Three only of the whole crew survived; the remainder having perished under unheard of suffering and privations, over which we willingly draw a veil. These three were found in a state of stupefaction, allowing their boat to drift along where the wind and waves listed. One of the survivors was the master, and by kind and careful attention they were eventually rescued from the jaws of death.

The flensing or "*cutting in*" process is somewhat peculiar. On being attached to the side of the vessel, a frame-work is thrown over the fish, and a strap of blubber is cut in a spiral direction, which being raised by certain purchases, turns the fish