

## Whaling Adventures in the Southern Ocean.

Like the lion of the forest, the Whale has ever been the acknowledged monarch of the ocean, and hence mankind never weary of history and tales concerning his habits and sufferings, as inflicted by the creature man, who, for selfish purposes, invades him in his native element. The public have been recently treated to a banquet of curious facts by the Rev. H. T. Cheever,—a book which has been edited by the well-known Dr. Scoreby, once himself somewhat famous for maritime operations. It is not the business of the work in question to detail the history and statistics of the trade, at length, or to set forth a full embodiment of well-ascertained information respecting the physiology, lustory, and habits of the Whale, although at these points a passing glance is given—all that the bulk of readers will require; but it is the facts which will mainly interest the multitude, and a portion of these we shall now set before our readers:—

## CHASE AND CAPTURE.

"All at once," says an old whaler, in a yarn of random recollections of his youth, "All at once a voice, clear as the lark—and to the ear of the whaleman, far sweeter—rang through the ship. There she blows!" Again and again it is repeated at regular intervals. Now the captain hails the mast-head: "Where away is that whale, and what do you call her?"

"Sperm whale, sir, three points on the weather-bow; not over two miles off."

"Get your boats ready: slack down the fires; and stand by to lower away!"

"The boats' crews each stand by their own boat; some of the men help to put in the tub of line, others lay down the boat-tackle falls, in such a way that they will run clear. The boat-steerer bends on his harpoons, the gripes are cast clear of the boats, and now comes the word, "Hoist and swing!" In a moment the boats are hanging by their tackles, and clear of the chains, ready for the word, "lower away." The mates in the meantime were aloft, watching the movements of the whale, in order to judge how to pull for her.

"Now comes the word, 'Lower away.' In a moment all the boats are off, and in a chase at a good speed, in order to see who will be up with the whale first.

"Down to your oars, lads; said the captain, in whose boat I was. 'Give way hard!' Now then the little boat jumps again, sending the spray in rainbows from the bows. 'Spring hard, my dear fellows; if she blows a dozen times more the mate will fasten. There she blows. Oh, she's a beauty! A regular old sog! A hundred-barrel! There she lays, like a log. Oh, what a lump! Stand up, David, (the name of the mate's boat-steerer.) There goes one iron into her, and there he gives her a second one; he is fast solid! Now then, my boys, let us be up among the suds. Stand up!" shouted the captain to me, as he laid his boat square on to her. In goes two more harpoons, and our boat is fast.

"The whale settled away under water after she felt the lance, and I kept a look out for her, expecting that she would break water near the head of the boat. Pretty soon I saw her whiten under water, and got my lance ready as soon as she should come to the surface; the next moment I was flying in the air, and a moment after was several fathoms under water. The whale came up head foremost, hitting the boat a tremendous knock under my feet, sending me all flying. The captain at the same time seized his steering oar, and overboard he went also. Fortunately I could swim well, and soon came up to blow; but I had hardly time to spout, before I found that I was in

a very disagreeable situation. Putting out my arm to swim, I hit the whale on his head, and at the same time saw the boat three or four rods from me. I confess I did not feel exactly right; but it was no use for me to lie still, and be picked up like a squid; so I made a regular shove off with my feet against the whale's head, and struck out for the boat. I saw that all was confusion in the boat, and that the men did not notice me at all. I had on thick clothes, and found it hard swimming. Finally one of the men saw me, and stopped the boat, which some of them were steering away from me as fast as they could.

"As I got in at the bow, I saw the captain come over the stern, 'Halloo!' said he, 'where have you been to?' 'After the whale,' said I. 'And I have been after you,' said the captain. We had a good laugh; wrung our hair, and started for the whale again. She lay still, with her jaws open, and head towards the boat; the rest of her body was under water, so that she gave no chance to kill. We lay still, watching her motions. All at once she let her jaws fly back, striking the boat in the bow, and smashing a hole through her. The boat began to fill; but, fortunately, we had a jacket ready, and stopped the hole up, and so we kept from filling, and pulled up to the whale again.

"This time she headed the mate, and lay her whole length broadside towards us. We had nothing to do but pull up and in lance, the whale lying perfectly still at the same time. In twenty minutes she went into her flurry, and soon after lay fin out. We took her alongside the ship, and commenced cutting her in; but it took all the next day to get her her all in. She measured over seventy-five feet in length, and between fifty and sixty feet round the largest part of the body; her jaw was seventeen and a half feet long, and her flukes seventeen feet broad. She stowed us down one hundred and twenty-five barrels of sperm oil."

It is a fine thing for young people to sit at the winter fire, while the oil of the whale yields them a brilliant light, and there in cozy comfort, to read terrible tales of the harpoon, with the conflicts and the horrors which sometimes follow; but it is not so comfortable to proceed to the Frozen Seas, or even to the Southern Pacific, in quest of the moving mass of fat and blubber, as will appear from the following:—

"In giving an account of the accident and his singular escape, he said that as soon as he discovered that the line had caught in the bow of the boat, he stooped to clear it, and attempted to throw it out from the 'chock,' so that it might run free. In doing this he was caught by a turn round his left wrist, and felt himself dragged overboard. He was perfectly conscious while he was rushing down, down, with unknown force and swiftness; and it appeared to him that his arm would be torn from his body, so great was the resistance of the water. He was well aware of his perilous condition, and that his only chance of life was to cut the line. But he could not remove his right arm from his side, to which it was pressed by the force of the element through which he was drawn. When he first opened his eyes, it appeared as if a stream of fire was passing before them; but as he descended it grew dark, and he felt a terrible pressure on his brain, and a roaring as of thunder in his ears. Yet he was conscious of his situation, and made several efforts to reach the knife that was in his belt. At last as he felt his strength failing and brain reeling, the line for an instant slackened; he reached his knife, and instantly that the line became again taut, its edge was upon it, and by a desperate effort of his exhausted energies he freed himself. After this he only remembered a feeling of suffocation, a gurgling spasm and all was over, until he awoke to an agonized sense of pain in the boat."

We have seen a crowd of boys gathered upon a

pier as some ten or a dozen whaling ships had weighed anchor to commence their adventurous voyage, while a thousand young hearts felt a sensation of envy at the well dressed and jolly tars who mounted the rigging and manned the yards, as, half sad, half drunk, they huzzaed, and shouted, and waved their caps, bidding adieu to friends and companions on the shore. The only cure for such enthusiasm, perhaps, is the perusal of such facts as the following:—

"But the most dreadful display of the whale's strength and prowess, yet authentically recorded, was that made upon the American whale-ship *Essex*, Captain Pollard, which sailed from Nantucket for the Pacific Ocean in August, 1819. Late in the fall of the same year, when in latitude 40 degrees of the South Pacific, a shoal of sperm whales were discovered, and three boats were manned and sent in pursuit. The mate's boat was struck by one of them, and he was obliged to return to the ship in order to repair the damage.

"While he was engaged in that work, a sperm whale, judged to be eighty-five feet long, broke water about twenty rods from the ship, on her weather bow. He was going at the rate of about three knots an hour, and the ship at nearly the same rate, when he struck the bows of the vessel just forward of her chains.

"At the shock produced by the collision of two such mighty masses of matter in motion, the ship shook like a leaf. The seemingly malicious whale dived and passed under the ship, grazing her keel and then appeared at about the distance of a ship's length, lashing the sea with fins and tail as if suffering the most horrible agony. He was evidently hurt by the collision, and blindly frantic with instinctive rage.

"In a few minutes he seemed to recover himself, and started with great speed directly across the vessel's course to windward. Meantime, the hands on board discovered the ship to be gradually settling down at the bows, and the pumps were ordered to be rigged. While working at them, one of the men cried out, 'God have mercy! he comes again!' The whale had turned at about one hundred rods from the ship, and was making for her with double his former speed, his pathway white with foam. Rushing head on, he struck her again at the bow, and the tremendous blow stove her in. The whale dived under again and disappeared, and the ship filled and fell over on her broadside, in ten minutes from the first collision.

"After incredible hardships and sufferings in their open boats, on the 20th of December the survivors of this catastrophe reached the low island called Ducies, in latitude 24 deg. 40 min. south, longitude 125 deg. 40 min. west. It was a mere sand-bank, nearly barren, which supplied them only with water and, very scantily, sea fowl. On this uninhabited island, dreary as it was, three of the men chose to remain, rather than again commit themselves to the uncertainties of the sea. They have never since been heard from, the island being seldom visited.

"On the 27th of December the three boats, with the remainder of the men, put away together for the island of Juan Fernandez, at a distance of 2,000 miles. The mate's boat was taken up by the 'Indian,' of London, on the 19th of February, ninety-three days from the time of the catastrophe, with only three survivors.

"The captain's boat was fallen in with by the 'Dauphin,' of Nantucket, on the 23rd of the same month, having only two men living, whose lives had been eked out only through that last resort of hunger in the wretched, which words shudder to relate. Out of a crew of twenty, five only survived to make the ear of the world tingle at their strange, eventful story."

THE CAPTAIN TURNED PREACHER.—A lady, who was actively engaged in the distribution of the