

and July, of great size; although the season is of short duration, yet large ships have obtained a full cargo before its close.

It is impossible to meet a whale-ship on the ocean without being struck by her mere appearance. The vessel under short sail, with look-outs at the masthead, eagerly scanning the wide expanse around them, has a totally different air from those engaged in a regular voyage.

But admiration is excited on becoming a looker-on at the chase and capture. When the cry from aloft of "There she spouts!" and the quick response of "Where away?" are heard, the bustle on the deck shows a state of animation that would scarcely be supposed possible among such a looking set of men. The boats are immediately put in requisition, lowered and manned, and within a few minutes the pursuit is begun. The boats dash on until the boat-steerer comes within sight of his object; the whale is soon reconnoitred, and endeavours are made to approach him unobserved, and plunge the harpoon as near the fin as possible; a wound in this place is sometimes fatal, and no further injury is necessary to secure the animal's capture.

On being struck, the whale at once dives, carrying out the line (which is kept coiled up in tubs) with great velocity, through a notch in the stem of the boat. The velocity of the line is at times so great, that in order to prevent the boat from being set on fire by the friction, water is applied. After the whale dives, some fifteen or twenty minutes pass, during which time the "fast" boat is often carried a great distance from the others, for the whale in descending generally takes an oblique course. The boat is so much buried in her rapid flight, that I have at times only been able to see the persons in her, for the water on each side was thrown so high as to conceal the hull from a distant observer, although the sea was otherwise quite smooth.

As the whale rises, a skilful boat-steerer will be ready at hand, and the moment the animal makes his appearance, lances are plunged in quick succession into his vital parts; when off he again bounds with the life-blood streaming from him, and shortly after, this huge monster is seen to turn over lifeless on his back. The shortness of time that seems to elapse from the first onset to the capture and death of so large an animal, is almost inconceivable; and the apparently insufficient means that are employed to accomplish it, are likewise remarkable.

The whale being slain, signal is made for the ship, if to windward, to come down, or if to leeward, the monster is taken in tow by the boats and brought alongside, when the "fluke hooks" and chains are used to secure him; the operation of baling out the head-matter then begins, which is followed by stripping off the blubber in large pieces, called "blankets," from four to six feet wide, to which tackles are