

watch them, or leave a buoy, and then not unfrequently they may be swept off by the under-current, or lost by bad weather.

Although the high latitudes offer great inducements on account of the number and size of the whales, yet there are many difficulties existing, that render it preferable to pursue the game in the low latitudes. The weather, even in the summer season, is often tempestuous, which makes it dangerous to lower boats; and there are, even in the fine season, fogs, which not only tantalize, but prevent the chase from being extended to any distance from the ship, without the risk of losing both boats and crew. I have been told that it has frequently happened that boats have been separated from the ship for several days, thus not only producing great anxiety, but often much distress from want of provisions and water. Our whalers feel that there is quite enough of adventure and peril in following their employment in the lower and less boisterous latitudes.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the favourite and most successful ground for the right whale, is between the fiftieth and fifty-fifth parallel of north latitude, where vast numbers have been recently taken in June 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