

NOTES ON TASMANIAN WHALING.

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PRELIMINARY.

During the last twelve months three very interesting communications by Messrs. Scott and Lord have been read before the Society.

These were entitled "*Studies of Tasmanian Cetacea*," and described particularly, some skeletons preserved in the Tasmanian Museum, which had been overlooked for nearly half a century.

Certain of these remains had been presented to the Museum by my grandfather (the late Hon. Dr. W. L. Crowther) about 1866-1871, when he was collecting and forwarding such skeletons both to the British Museum and that of the Royal College of Surgeons, England.

In view of the scientific value of the work thus accomplished by him, I trust I may be pardoned for adding a brief account of his life work, before I pass to the consideration of Whaling proper.

Born in 1817, he arrived in Hobart with his father, William Crowther, M.R.C.S., by the ship "*Cumberland*" in 1824. His education took place at Norfolk Plains (Longford), which meant walking overland to school and returning in the same way to Hobart Town for his holidays. As a boy he was a very keen naturalist, and on one of these trips between school and home he shot a Tasmanian emu, which, he informed my father, was the only specimen of the same he had ever seen, and which I understand was one of the last remaining in V.D.L. By trapping and shooting he got together a very fine collection of skins of the Fauna of Tasmania, and these, with a large number of live animals and birds, he took with him to England by the ship "*Emu*" in 1839. On arrival, the collection was purchased by Lord Derby for the Zoological Society, and the proceeds of the sale gave my grandfather his medical education at St. Thomas' Hospital.

Returning to V.D.L. in 1841, he joined the Tasmanian Society, and was one of the thirty-six resident members when it became the Royal Society in 1843. In England he had begun his lifelong friendship with Sir William Flower, the great comparative anatomist, who filled successively the positions of Conservator and Hunterian Professor of the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, Director of the Natural History Museum, and President of the Zoological Society. Sir William about 1860 commenced his studies on the "*Cetacea*," and enlisted the aid of my grandfather, who during the late 50's and 60's had a whaling fleet cruising with varying success through the different whaling grounds of Oceania. The latter first sent two skeletons of Orca, which Sir William classified as *Orca meridionalis*. (P.Z.S. 1864). Other specimens were sent at intervals for several years to the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons. They embraced 34 catalogue folios and 8 genera of whales, and included 15 full skeletons. Among others the large adult skeleton of the male Sperm whale which dominates the Museum of the College of Surgeons was forwarded in 1869. In this year my grandfather was awarded the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons and their Gold Honour Medal. I believe the first occasion on which it had been conferred on an Australian. In 1878 he was Premier of the Colony, and died on the 12th of April, 1885. The fortunes of his whaling ships I shall touch on later in my paper.

INTRODUCTION.

I shall not attempt any scientific classifications of the whales met with and taken in Southern waters. The names employed are those used by the Whaling Captains for the various whales they met with while at sea.

They all, however, fall into one of two families:—

- (1) MYSTACOCETI, i.e., Whale Bone Whales.
- (2) ODONTOCETI, i.e., Tooth Whales.

ODONTOCETI.

"Sperm Whale" (*Physeter macrocephalus*). This will be dealt with fully under deep sea whaling. Ranging through the Southern Ocean and up to 80 feet in length the adult gave on an average 9 tuns of Oil. One taken by the "Marengo" gave 15½ tuns, valued at £1,500, and another taken by the "Elizabeth Jane" off the S.W. Cape, 13 tuns. The oil a clear amber colour, one-third of which came from the head.

"*Black Fish*" (*Globicephalus melas*). Pilot or Caaing whale. Not as a rule more than 20 feet in length, and giving 2 - 3 barrels of dark oil.

"*Killers*" (*Orca gladiator*), giving a clear oil. The only whale whose oil mixes, and is indistinguishable from that of the Sperm whale. Being both fierce and active, these whales were as a rule not molested by the boat's crews.

MYSTACOCETI.

"*The Right*" or "*Southern Black*" (*Balaena australis*) like the Sperm ranges very widely through the Pacific Ocean. In size up to 80 feet in length and gives 8 - 9 tuns of black oil from the blubber and tongue. The "*Baleen*" or Whale bone is a very valuable product from this whale, and as much as 5 cwt has been taken from a large "fish." From June to November Right whales used to frequent certain coasts and inlets to calve, and were taken by the Bay whalers. To this date at Twofold Bay and Norfolk Island such Bay Whaling Stations exist.

"*Hump Back*" (*Megaptera longimana*) gave short whalebone and 6 - 7 tuns of poor black oil. A deep sea whale which, though pursued by the American and Sydney ships, was not sought after by those of Hobart Town.

"*Fin Back*" (*Balaenoptera*), frequently sighted from the ships, gave both whale bone and black oil, but, being difficult to approach and fasten to, was not usually pursued.

"*Sulphur Bottom*" (*Balaenoptera australis*). A Black Whale which gave black oil and bone. Not as a rule worth taking.

"*Grampus*" and "*Cow Fish*," with other members of the Dolphin tribe, were terms applied loosely, and probably should be classed under the *Odontoceti*.

The oil taken was either:—

(1) Clear Amber colour, as from the "Sperm" and "killer."

(2) Black or Southern Oil from the "Right" whale, "Humpback," etc.

Both darker in colour and less valuable than that of the "Sperm" whale.

In ships from Hobart Town the "take" of oil was always measured by the "Tun," in American ships by the "Barrel."

The Royal Kalendar for 1849 states:—1 Tun = 8 barrels = 252 gals.

Whale Bone or "*Baleen*": from the mouth of the "Right" and other Black Whales, was a valuable product, and up to 5 cwt. was taken from that of a large whale.

As we divide the whales into two divisions, so also we find two distinct methods of whaling.

It was the habit of the "Right" whales in the winter months to come to the coasts of New Zealand and Australia to calve and feed. Some Bays were more favoured than others, and on these, shore establishments were fitted out for "Bay Whaling." Such places in the early decades of last century were Cloudy Bay, Foveaux Straits in New Zealand, and the East Coast of Tasmania, etc.

The "Sperm" whale, on the other hand, kept to the open sea in pursuit of his food, the "squid," and to take the Cachalot, ships were fitted out for lengthy cruises on the high seas.

In succession, then, will be considered these two methods of whaling, i.e.,

- (1) The Black Whale Fishery ("Bay" whaling).
- (2) The Sperm Fishery.

The former was carried out either (a) by a land establishment with boat crews, or (b) by small vessels, cruising around the Coast and Bays of V.D.L. The latter by larger ships fitted out for prolonged cruises on the high seas.

THE BLACK WHALE FISHERY.

It is very difficult to find definite data dealing with the commencement of Bay whaling in V.D. Land. It was of a different type from that of New Zealand, where the ships from U.S.A., England, or Australia selected a bay, where they landed their shore parties, the latter doing all their work from the shore stations, and the ship when full returning to its home port.

In V.D.L. it was more the practice for a station to be established at a selected Bay and for the Oil taken to be shipped by a tender to Hobart Town and thence to England. One or more boats' crews were stationed at the establishment, and a lookout posted on a favourable position. On a whale being sighted the crew pulled away, and, if possible, made themselves fast to the whale, killed it, and, often after a very long and laborious tow, brought their catch to the shore. There, there was fitted a rough

tripod scaffolding, to the base of which the whale was secured, and by the aid of which the blubber was stripped from the whale and taken on shore to be boiled down. (A most interesting painting of the station at Wineglass Bay, Freycinet's Peninsula, is in the Tasmanian room of the Museum.)

It is very difficult to obtain accurate particulars of the early history of Bay whaling in V.D.L.. The Press of that day gives only a scanty paragraph from time to time, when something of more than ordinary interest is noted. No records are available before 1816, when the Government *Gazette* was first printed, and copies of the earliest papers are not in the Government Archives. From Fenton's History we read that "between 1813-1815, under "Governor Davey, the whale fishery was carried on with "profitable results and a lucrative trade in seal skins from "the Bass Straits Islands was established." Bent, in the *H. T. Gazette* for June 24th, 1816, writes as follows in his local news:—"A great number of whales have already "made their appearance in Frederick Henry Bay, some few "have been seen as high as Sullivan's Cove (i.e., the present "location of the Hobart Wharves). Preparations are being "made by Mr. D. McCarthy and coadjutors to begin the "Fishing." The Editor adds the following:—"The very "elements contribute to our prosperity when industry leads "the way." During this year whales were taken in the Derwent proper.

In 1822 whales were again very numerous around our Southern Coast, and even in the estuary of the Derwent (Fenton).

Between 1820 and 1830, as readers of McNab's works will remember, the coasts of New Zealand were constantly visited by whaling ships from England, France, and U.S.A. (particularly the latter). These ships, observing the regular winter arrival of the "Right" whales, to favoured Bays and Inlets, gradually relinquished the deep-sea pursuit of the "Sperm" whale for the easier takings of the "Right" whales off these Bays. This whaling was done at first from the ship, which lay at anchor, and sent her boats' crews away in pursuit, the whale when captured being towed back to the ship and "tried out" on board. From this method was evolved the shore station proper, with the parties landed and living there, and trying-out their catch on shore.

Maori villages sprang up adjacent to the tents and supplied labour, food, and crews for the boats. This

cosmopolitan gathering of whalers was made possible by the fact that New Zealand was "No Man's Land" and not annexed to the Crown, and in a chosen locality as Cloudy Bay ships from Salem, Bristol, Le Havre, and Sydney lay together for months taking their catch and often assisting each other. V.D.L. being a Crown possession, as such, gave no facilities for ships or crews other than British, except for re-fitting and re-victualling. Oil taken in American and foreign ships paid a duty in England of £26 12s. per tun Imperial, whereas the duty on British Oil was 1s. per tun Imperial. The following certificate had to accompany the Oil, and was required upon the entry at the Customs House, London.

"*V.D.L.* This is to certify to all whom it may concern that the oath required by the Act of Geo. "IV. C. 69, sec. 25, has been made before me (describe "here the person administering the oath) by A.B., "shipper of casks of Oil by the "British ship for London. That the same "was bona fide the produce of fish, of creatures living "in the sea actually caught and taken wholly by His "Majesty's subjects, carrying on the Fishery from here "and actually residing in this Colony. (*H. T. Gazette*, "August 13th, 1825).

The discrimination was even greater with Whalebone, on which foreign ships paid a duty of £95, compared to our ships £1, its value at this date being £160 - £190 per tun.

By this year (1825) the "Derwent Whaling Club" had been formed, its members being:—

James Kelly, Esq.

William Wilson, Esq.

W. Angus Bethune, Esq.

C. Ross Nairne, Esq.

A prize of 8 dollars was given to the first person giving information as to a whale being in the River. Profits were divided into 7 shares, 4 to the Members, 1 to Charitable purposes, and 1 to the Native youth who displayed the greatest expertness as a headsman.

In the *Gazette*, August 13th, 1825, appears the following, which seems to show that the quantity of the train oil from V.D.L. did not compare too favourably with that from other sources:—

"The Southern Whale and Sea horse oil imported from "V.D.L. is generally found to be of dark colour and of less

“value than that oil which is paler, from its burning quality being impaired; this is chiefly owing to want of care in the boiling of the blubber. The method in use on board the British South Seamen for producing the oil of good colour and quality is mainly to keep the contents of the boiler stirred with a pole, to the end of which is attached a chain about 20 inches in length. This prevents the dregs from burning to the bottom of the boiler, and which precaution, if neglected, will eventually cause the oil to become dark and of a heavy consistency.”

In this year, 1825, although no Hobart Town Ships had departed for the South Sea Fishery, the intermediate step had been taken between it and Bay Whaling; that is to say, local vessels had commenced to take the whales around our coasts and inlets.

The Schooner “Sally” (Capt. Lovett), owner Capt. J. M. Wilson, sailed on July 9th for a Whaling cruise in D’Entrecasteaux Channel; 12 days later news came that she had already taken 2 whales. On August 21st the *Hobart Town Gazette* reports among the arrivals “The Schooner ‘Sally’ from D’Entrecasteaux Channel with oil, as she was in the Harbour on Wednesday morning, she heeled and filled with water immediately, she has since been got up.”

Evidently the ship was none the worse, as on October 13th the “Sally” is reported as leaving under Capt. Lovett with 17 men on a sealing cruise to New Zealand. Melville (Ed. *Colonial Times*) in a retrospect writes as follows on the rise of our Bay whaling:—

“Another invaluable asset to the Colony, as an export, is oil, and which is referred particularly to, both by the circumstances that attend its acquisition, and by its being a branch of a trade not capable of being over done. It may be remarked that the situation of the Island and the numerous nooks or Bays with which it abounds, render it such a place of resort for whales throughout the winter, that the equipment of a few boats, and the erection of a boiler or two upon shore for rendering down the oil, are nearly sufficient, as the outfit of what may be considered with tolerable certainty a profitable enterprise. The consequence is that each winter, fresh parties, emulating those of longer establishment, fit out whaling expeditions, and the success that has invariably attended them, is a strong inducement both to them and others, to return with energy in future seasons.

“Thus almost at our very door and threshold are we provided with the means of becoming rich with little comparative trouble or exertion; and at the same moment we are rearing up a fine and manly race of native youths, in a manner that would qualify them to contest the palm of superiority on the water with the inhabitants of any existing upon the whole face of the globe. (Melville, *V.D.L. Annual*, 1813).

The oil for export by 1826 was of considerable value in the Infant Colony. The value of it exported in the last quarter of the year was £1,180. (*H. T. Gazette*, 1826) Mr. Meredith, of Great Swan Port, in the same year, is mentioned (*H.T.G.*, 1827) as having taken a whale with blood red blubber, which when boiled down gave Oil of the same colour, also five tons of casks arrived for him in order to bring his Oil to Hobart Town for lading in the “Persian.”

The ship “Governor Sorell” during the year is reported as having been wrecked going to Slopem Island to pick up Oil—which indicates a station being situated there (*H.T.G.*, 1826).

The *Gazette* mentions “nearly every Bay and Inlet around the coast are swarming with whales, particularly at Circular Head.”

The Editor adds that there was some difficulty in obtaining casks for the export of Oil, and also a tending for the Bay Trade to cause neglect of the Sperm Fishery—“which should be the mainstay of the Trade.”

The prices of Oil in London for the year were—Sperm £65, Southern £25 per tun.

One other extract from the *Gazette*, dated May 6th, 1825, is of interest, and is given in the Editor’s own words:—

“The Whale alluded to in our last as having been seen up the River as high as New Norfolk, has since been killed on the beach at that Township above the punt ferry. It is no less remarkable than evident that this animal was bewildered, having actually run itself aground—a circumstance perhaps never before heard of on this Island.

“It was not a Specimen of the Whales usually caught in and near the Derwent, but one of that specimens of fish frequently taken at sea, and known as the ‘Fin Back.’ It was 90 feet in length, and will produce a considerable quantity of Oil.”

During the same week a Mr. Innes, an expert harpooner, killed a 4-tun whale off Hobart Town, and the Editor remarks:—"Our river and bays are at this moment full "of whales." An account of a trip to the South Cape taken in this year mentions the whaling station of Messrs. Kelly and Bethune located on Bruny Island, probably at N. Bruny.

By 1830, in addition to local whaling, our H.T. Ships had commenced to sail to the High Seas, and Ross, *H. T. Almanack*, 1830, states that in this year the "Clarence" was despatched to the Whale Fishery. This was the first H. T. Vessel to do this, and one of her officers was the late Captain McArthur (father of Capt. McArthur, the Shipping Master of Hobart). There is no word of the result of her voyage.

On October 2 of this year the Brig Deveron arrived from Cloudy Bay, New Zealand, with 200 tuns of Oil and 20 tons of bone. While there she had the misfortune to lose in a squall six men, including the first and third mates, one of the former being a native of Hobart Town, named Williams.

The value of the Cargo obtained on the six months' voyage was £5,000, and she was owned by Captain Wilson. These two ships are mentioned as Bay Whalers, as their catch was taken off the coast of New Zealand, and not on the high seas. The industry continued to be very successful both locally and at N.Z.

The "Dragon" in 1831 obtained a full catch in N.Z. waters, and in 1833 the same ship, which had been concerned with the Brig Elizabeth of Sydney in the massacre of Maoris, was burned by the natives. Two whales were followed into an inlet, where the crews were massacred and eaten by the Maoris and the ship burned. In the same year the "Marianne" arrived at Hobart Town from New Zealand with the splendid catch of 260 tuns of Oil (100 barrels Sperm) and 15 tons of whalebone. Only 7 months at sea, her cargo was valued at £4,500. The owners were Messrs. Hewitt and Gore. This success led to proposals to form a settlement from Hobart Town on the South Island of New Zealand, but nothing eventuated.

The following extract is of interest, particularly as it shows the rise of Launceston and its importance from the whaling standpoint, by 1834:—

"In this year there were 7 ships and 24 boats employed "in the Black Whale Fishing from Hobart Town, which

“caught 207 whales, producing Oil and whalebone to the
“value of £14,373.

“From Launceston there were 16 ships and 53 boats
“employed, which caught 130 whales and produced Oil and
“whalebone to the value of £10,921. At Great Swan Port
“there was one ship and four boats employed, which caught
“19 whales, value £900, and 50 barrels of Bream, value
“£150.” (*H. T. Almanack*, Ross, 1835.)

The indication of the great activity of the Launceston
ships conveyed by the above is of especial interest, and I
hope it may stimulate someone from the Northern City
to investigate the whaling history of that harbour.

In 1834 the *Hobart Town Courier* (June 13th) states
that “Our whaling establishment has, we rejoice to say,
“been already more successful than at the same advance
“of the season of any former year. By August 15th
“Messrs. MacLachlan and Young’s establishment had al-
“ready caught no less than 60 whales, from which nearly
“400 tuns of Oil has been obtained, and other parties have
“been proportionately successful.” (*H. T. Courier*,
August 15th.)

Capt. Kelly on October 17th lost his vessel the “Aus-
tralian” on Bruny Island.

To give an idea of the value to the Colony of this
industry in 1838, the total value of Oil exported for the
year was £137,000, compared with £172,000 for wool.
(Fenton, *History of Tasmania*, page 9 - 148.)

In 1840 and 1841 there were many applications to
the Lands Office to lease areas on various favoured Bays
and Inlets. Thirty-five such applications were granted
in 1840-41, and six refused. The latter were due for the
most part to the fact that such areas were not granted
when in the vicinity of Convict or Probation Stations, as
at Maria Island and Forestier’s Peninsula. Again others
were refused owing to no advanced payment of rent. The
terms for such leases were not severe, i.e., 3 acres, a front-
age on the sea of 3 chains, and for this a yearly rental of
5s. A map is attached showing the approximate locations
of these grants. Among those who applied were:—

Capt. Chamberlain.	Askin Morrison.
Ed. and W. Fisher.	Charles Seal.
Edward Garth.	William Young.
James Kelly.	Thomas Lucas.

tended with boats' crews and no ships, the industry developed until in 1834 there were many sea-going ships employed around the Tasmanian coast, and occasionally in New Zealand waters. Although primarily fitted out for the Black whaling, naturally if the chance arose the more valuable Sperm whale would be taken.

From the Forties, however, the ships were fitted for Blue Water cruising, with the Sperm as their objective and not the Right whale. Occasional references to the Sperm whaling are found in the early V.D.L. publications, rarely, however, with much detail.

The first ship to have rounded Cape Horn and taken whales in the Pacific appears to have been a ship from New Bedford (U.S.A.) in the year 1790 (Beddoe, *Book of Whales*).

In 1803 the "Albion," with Bowen's expedition on board, took three Sperm whales off the East Coast, and in the succeeding year the "Alexander" took Right whales in the estuary of the Derwent.

In 1816 the English whaler "Adamant" refits at Hobart Town before leaving for the whaling ground. (*H. T. Gazette*, 1816.)

The years between 1816 and 1830, as already shown, were devoted by the Hobart Town ships almost entirely to local *Black* whale fishing. The Editor of the *Gazette* in the issue of September 1st expresses the hope that the profits of this successful year will induce V.D.L. business men to take up the pursuit of the Sperm whale, which he realises to be the mainstay of whaling. (*H. T. Gazette*, September 1st, 1827.)

The tendency to sail oversea from V.D.L. coasts culminated in 1830 with the despatch of the "Clarence" to the Sperm fishing, the first Tasmanian ship to do so. (Ross, *H. T. Almanack*, 1830.)

By 1831 the overseas movement had gained more impetus. Ross states (*H. T. Almanack*, 1831):—"Several additions have been made to our Colonial shipping during the past year, and the present spirit for embarking in the Sperm Whale Fishing is likely to increase still more."

In addition to the "Deveron" already mentioned the following ships are found on the register as having arrived back to Hobart Town during the year:—

January 1st, "Clarence," Capt. Lindsay, from N.Z., Sperm Oil.

January 24th, "Caroline," Capt. Smith, from Whaling voyage, Sperm Oil.

October 22nd, "Caroline," Capt. Smith, from Whaling voyage, Black Oil and whale bone.

December 17th, "Industry," Capt. Griffiths, Bass Straits, Seal Skins.

(Ross, *H. T. Almanack*, 1831.)

Captain Kelly, the first Harbour Master of Hobart Town, in 1832 sailed his ship, the "Venus," to the Islands of the South of New Zealand. Evidently unsuccessful in his quest for Seal Skins, he struck south to Macquarie Island, to find there no Seals, and thence to the Campbell Island grounds. Still without success, he sailed south as far as 72 degrees, eventually reaching Sydney on December 31st, 1832. Without any skins or sea-elephant Oil (R. McNab, *Early Whaling Days*.) The vicissitudes of the H. T. ship "Mary Elizabeth" when captured by Maoris in 1834 have been already alluded to, the Maoris quarrelling over the sharing of the "loot" and enabling the crew to recapture the ship.

Sperm Oil was quoted in this year at £57 a tun, Southern or Black Oil at £19 - £22 a tun, and whale bone £80 - £85. The paper of that date mentions the following ships as being due to return to the port from the South Sea whaling, i.e., "Caroline," "William IV.," "Adelaide," "Hetty," "Penelope" (at Macquarie Island for Seals and sea-elephant Oil, of which not a single barrel was obtained, the Seals having completely disappeared), "Royal William," "The Marianne," and "Lang." (*H. Town Courier*, March 27, 1834.)

Other ships mentioned during the year as discharging Oil were the "Lindsay," "Cheviot," and "Mary Elizabeth." Thus we see by this year whaling both Sperm and Black firmly established, and the year's work most successful and prosperous.

The export of Oil, computed at Colonial prices, was £45,513 for the year, compared with £43,765 for wool; and whalebone accounted for an additional £8,217. This will give an idea of the value of the industry to the Infant Colony. (Ross, *H. T. Almanack*, 1835, p 49.)

The indomitable Capt. Kelly is again noticed in the fore this year, where his small ship, the "Australian," was lost off Bruny Island. (*H. T. Courier*, October 13th, 1834.)

The industry as shown was now on a firm basis, and I do not intend to dwell on the thirties and forties, but to pass on to the "Great Age" of Hobart Town's Sperm

Whaling, viz., 1850-60 and 70. Mention, however, must be made of the "Maria Orr." This vessel, built at Macquarie Point, 1839, has been claimed as the first Tasmanian whaler to be built and manned out of Hobart Town. Her career was not a long one. About 1841 she was bought by Charles Seal, Esq., of Hobart Town, and a little later wrecked off the Acteon Reef, and became a total loss. Captain McArthur, who was in command, then returned to England, and brought out the "Aladdin" for Mr. Seal, and commanded her for several cruises.

As showing the extent of whaling by 1847, on Good Friday of that year there were no less than 37 whalers anchored in the Derwent refitting, the bulk of them being American.

In 1850 the great prosperity of Tasmanian Sperm whaling had commenced. Hobart Town was building its own vessels, and, more than that, manning them with seamen of the first quality. Whaling had cast its spell over the community, and there was no lack of either money to fit out the ships, or of men to man and sail them. The crew signed on according to the "Lay" or Share of the catch, which was proportional to the amount of Oil taken.

Mr. R. R. Rex has a copy of such an agreement, which is hereo given:—

ARTICLES of AGREEMENT made at Hobart Town in Van Diemen's Land BETWEEN George Chase of the first part and the several seamen whose names are hereto subscribed of the second part WHEREAS the several soamen have respectively agreed to engage in the Whale Fishery in the service of the said George Chase for the consideration hereinafter mentioned NOW THESE PRESENTS WITNESS that each of them the several seamen for himself agrees with the said George Chase that in consideration of the Lay or Share hereinafter mentioned and hereunder written opposite to his name he will at such time during the now approaching whaling voyage or voyages as he shall be required proceed in such vessel or boat as the said George Chase may direct to any River Creek or Place on or near the Coast of this Island New Holland New South Wales New Zealand or elsewhere on the High seas as the said George Chase or his agents may require for the purpose of killing and taking whales and trying down the same and obtaining and preserving the Oil and whalebone thereof and that he will continue in the employment of the said George Chase during the whole of the whaling voyage or voyages (or from the first day of September one

thousand eight hundred and fifty five and up to and until the thirty first day of August one thousand eight hundred and fifty six if so long required) and each of the several seamen hereby promises that he will diligently and faithfully do his duty by day and by night during the continuance of his term of service under this agreement and obey the lawful commands of the said George Chase or of the officer or officers from time to time appointed over him and that he will take care of all matters and things from time to time committed to his charge and assist in carrying them as he may be required AND it is distinctly agreed that in case any such seaman shall on any pretence unlawfully desert from the service of the said George Chase before the term of service hereby agreed for shall be fully ended he shall forfeit the whole of the said Lay or Share or proportion of Oil and Whale bone and all right to remuneration of any kind under this agreement or otherwise AND it is agreed that absence from the vessel or boats to which any such seaman shall for the time be attached for more than twelve hours without lawful excuse shall be deemed a total desertion and shall render the person so absent liable to such forfeiture AND it is agreed that at the close of the said term of service and as soon as the quantity of Oil and whale bone procured by the said George Chase's whaling vessel to which such seamen shall belong shall have been ascertained and shall be ready for exportation (whether landed at its final port of exportation or not) the said George Chase shall pay to the said seaman for the said Lays or Shares of and in such Oil and whalebone at the rate of Fourteen Pounds for every marketable tun of Black Oil Forty Pounds for every tun of Sperm Oil and Forty Pounds for every ton of clean and marketable whalebone and the said seamen agree to accept the same in payment of such Lays or Shares and in lieu of all wages or other compensation IT BEING UNDERSTOOD NEVERTHELESS that out of such Lays or Shares the said George Chase may deduct all advances previously made to the parties in money clothing stops or tobacco PROVIDED that in every case the seamen shall be bound (if required so to do) to assist in the actual shipment of all such Oil and whalebone or in conveying the same to Hobart Town Launceston (as the case may be) for such shipment and the service under this agreement shall not be deemed completed until such shipment or conveyance (if so required) shall have been effected LASTLY the said George Chase agrees to provide for and supply to each seaman weekly during the said term of

service the following provisions and other necessaries of good quality viz. 12 lbs of beef or mutton or ten pounds of pork twelve pounds of bread or flour one and a half pounds of sugar and a quarter of a pound of tea. All extras to be chargeable against the said seamen as in the case of clothes or money. Any wilful or negligent destruction or loss of any of the owner's property or other misconduct on the part of any seaman to the owner's damage may be set off against the Lay or Share or other claim for wages under this agreement. It is agreed that the said George Chase's whaling vessel shall man two boats.

DATED in Hobart Town this first day of September 1855.

(Signed) GEORGE CHASE.

Name.	Capacity.	Lay or Share on Sperm Oil	Lay or Share on Black Oil & Whale Bone.	Witness to Signature.
John M. Luke	Ship Keeper	30th	20th	J. Suter, J.P., 1st Sept., 1855
George Tilley	Boat Steerer & Carpenter	25th	20th	J. Suter, J.P., 1st Sept., 1855
Robert Jeffrey	Boat Steerer	30th	20th	J. Suter, J.P., 1st Sept., 1855
Henry Madge	Seaman	50th	40th	J. Suter, J.P., 1st Sept., 1855
George Calley (X) Witness, George Hawthorne	Seaman	50th	40th	J. Suter, J.P., 1st Sept., 1855
Thomas Storey (X) Witness, Geo. Hawthorne	Seaman	55th	40th	— 3rd Sept., 1853
John Duncan (X) Witness, Geo. Hawthorne	Seaman	55th	40th	G. W. King, J.P., 7th Sept., 1855
Sydney William Ellery	Seaman	55th	10th	G. W. King, J.P., 7th Sept., 1855
George Gillham	Seaman	55th	40th	G. W. King, J.P., 10th Sept., 1855
Samuel Miles	Cook & Seaman	50th	40th	G. W. King, J.P., 10th Sept., 1855
William Gubby	Seaman	55th	40th	G. W. King, J.P., 10th Sept., 1855
John Scutchings	Seaman	80th	70th	G. W. King, J.P., 10th Sept., 1855
Laurence Millar	Seaman	55th	40th	G. W. King, J.P., 13th Sept., 1855
Alex. Donaldson	Boat Steerer	30th	—	—

A skilful and determined Captain was a priceless asset to any owner, and such a man usually could command the best boat-steerers and crews, in whose interests it was

to follow a successful Captain and a lucky ship. The crews after signing on were given an advance of pay, and the ships anchored in mid-stream, and then the difficulty began. The men had to be dragged, often drugged and drunk, from the hotels to the ship, and when all (or sufficient) had been collected, the cruise, which might last two years or over, commenced.

Some of these cruises were short and highly profitable, on others a ship after months and even years at sea might make Hobart Town a "clean ship," i.e., with no oil. An instance of the former was the fitting of the barque "Asia" for sea in 1870. The cost of the ship, fitting, all stores and advances paid to the crew amounted to £6,750 18s. In ten months she had returned to Hobart with 68 tuns of sperm oil at £90 per tun of a total value of £6,120. Endless examples of unsuccessful voyages can also be given.

Among owners and ships during these three decades 1850-60-70 the names of the following owners and ships may be noticed. The list, however, is not intended to be full or complete and only touches lightly the full tally.

Such names include:—

<i>Charles Seal, Esq.,</i>	<i>Dr. W. L. Crowther,</i>
Prince Regent	Elizabeth Jane, Schooner,
Maria Orr (lost 1841)	Captain Abbott
Aladdin	Offley, Barque, Captain
Sussex	Robinson
Southern Cross	Sapphire, Barque, Captain
Pride (Brig)	Sanderson
	Velocity, Schooner
<i>McGregor Bros.</i>	Flying Squirrel, Schooner
Flying Childers	Isabella, Barque, Captain
Derwent Hunter	Chamberlain
Asia	<i>A. Sherwin, Esq.,</i>
Emily Downing	Marie Laurie
	Louisa
<i>H. Bayley, Esq.,</i>	Zephyr
Runnymede	<i>Capt. E. Lucas,</i>
	Isle of France
<i>—, Johnston, Esq.,</i>	<i>H. Hopkins, Esq.,</i>
Othello	Nautilus

The "Othello" being perhaps the most consistently lucky and successful ship sailing out of Hobart.

Captain A. B. Robinson, who commanded in succession the "Velocity," "Emily Downing," and "Othello," is living now at Glenorchy, and it is to him I am greatly indebted for much of the information in reference to the Whaling grounds and taking of the Sperm whales.

In 1855, the late John Ross completed his patent slip at Secheron, and Messrs. McGregor also laid down a slip at the Domain Yards. This enabled repairs to be carried out, and gave a tremendous impetus to Hobart Town whaling.

In 1857 the Brig "Grecian" (Chas. Seal, owner) when cruising off the South West Cape "rose" Sperm Whales. The boats were lowered in chase, and that of R. Marney, the chief mate, made fast to one. The whale at once made away, towing the boat after it. Night came on rapidly, and during the darkness flares were lit from the "Grecian" and guns let off. However, no trace was ever again found of the boat or its crew.

In the same year the late Dr. W. L. Crowther fitted out an expedition to take Sea elephant oil from Kerguelen Island (Desolation Land). The "Offley" (barque, Capt. J. W. Robinson, sailed for her destination, Christmas Harbour, Kerguelen Island, with shore parties on board and fitted out at great expense. The sea elephants were to be taken from Hurd's Island, which had no Harbour, and only one open roadstead. For the expedition to be successful a tender to land the shore parties and supplies, and to bring off the barrels of oil to the larger ship was essential. The Schooner "Elizabeth Jane" was despatched to the rendezvous at Christmas Harbour for this purpose. The "Offley" made the Harbour in good time and waited for her tender. The latter, meeting heavy weather, leaked a little, and, putting into Mauritius, was condemned and sold. To take her place the "Flying Squirrel" (schooner) was at once fitted out and despatched; the crew, however, mutinied and returned to Hobart. By this time the "Offley," after months of delay, had "mated" with the "Mary Powell," an American Schooner, landed her shore party at Hurd's Island and collected much oil. Eventually when 400 tuns had been got on the "Mary Powell," a sudden storm arose, the ship was driven on shore, and the crew were only saved by a miracle. The "Offley," with 100 tuns on board, then returned to Hobart Town, and the venture financially was a very big loss to my grandfather.

On the other hand, the "Elizabeth Jane," a small schooner and two boat ship, had in a short cruise of a few weeks off the South West Cape, some years previously, returned to port with £2,600 worth of Sperm oil.

Dwelling as I have on the voyages of individual ships, I have neglected to write of the pursuit of the Sperm

Whale itself. The Whale was found particularly in the neighbourhood of the S.W. Cape as it passed East and West in its pursuit of the "Squid." The smaller ships from Hobart Town cruised off the Cape and towed the Whales they secured into Port Davey or Recherche to "try" them out. The larger ships passed by way of the South West Cape to the various whaling grounds, i.e.—

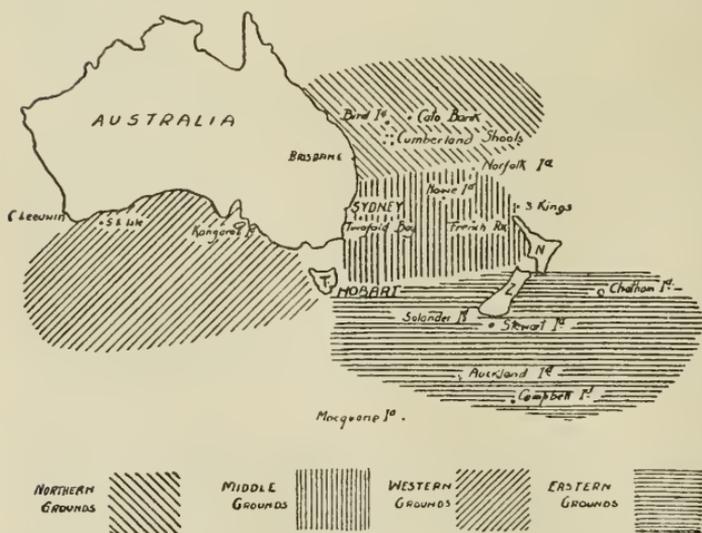
Middle Grounds—Which lay between Sydney and New Zealand and South of Norfolk Island. The famous "Three Kings" and French Rock lay within the Middle Grounds.

Northern Grounds—Which were north of Norfolk Island and between the Australian Coast and New Caledonia. These included Cato's Banks, Woodlark Island, St. Christoval's, and the Cumberland Shoals.

Western Grounds—From South West Cape to the Leeuwin, and including Kangaroo Island, South East Island, Portlock's Reef, and Grindley's Island (at West and East end of Great Australian Bight).

Eastern Grounds—The Solanders, west of Foveaux Straits, and Chatham Islands (in whaling times the Pyramid).

DIAGRAM OF WHALING GROUNDS
OF HOBART-TOWN SHIPS
Circa 1850-60-70



LEGEND.

A Diagram attached illustrates these various grounds. The Captains of the ship worked as a rule from ground to ground. In a log of the "O'h'lo," Capt. A. B. Robinson, every one of the four was visited in turn, resulting in an excellent catch.

In the ship's log entries were made of all whales seen from the masthead, with special notes for Sperm.

One reads from day to day of the following having been sighted:—Sperm, Humpback, Finback, Sulphur bottom, Black Fish, Killers, Grampus, Cow fish, and Sunfish. The two first named only were pursued by the Tasmanian ships.

The Sperm whales moved singly or in "pods," i.e., groups of two or three with Bulls on the outside. The Sperm whale was approached very quietly from behind, and made fast by one or more lances being darted into him. Once fast more were secured to the whale until it was dead. The Boat's steerer who "darted" the lances endeavoured to make fast well forward and to avoid hitting a rib. If not secured in a vital spot the whale either sounded or ran, and in the former case might go so deeply as to take all the lines and then be lost. Bombs from guns were used as well as lances, in order to kill the whale.

The Right whale was approached head to head by the boat's crew. Once killed the boat's crew waited for the ship to run down to them and make fast to the whale, and the "cutting-in" commenced. The first stage was to remove the whale's head and get it on board. This was done, because in the Sperm whale one third of the total quantity of Oil is found in the head. The latter consisted of two parts—the "Case" and the "Junk."

The "Case" contained the clear oil and head matter. This was called the "Spermaceti" (Spermatozoa of the Whale) under misapprehension as to its function. It was contained in a bony cavity outside the cranium proper. The oil from the case is a clear amber colour and amounts to one third of the total from the whale. A hole was cut into the cavity and the oil bailed direct into barrels placed for that purpose on either side of the gangway. From these barrels it was taken to the "Try Works" and used later to commence the process of trying out.

The "Junk." The remaining portion of the head contained a large amount of Oil in its cellular tissues, which was comparable to Hency in the Comb. This substance the Sailors called "white horse." The Junk when

cut up was taken at once to the blubber room to prevent the loss of its Oil, its own weight causing it to ooze from the tissues.

The "Body." After the removal of the head the Body was treated and the blubber removed as follows:—Hooks were lowered from a yard and secured in the blubber. On traction being made men with sharp spades cut long strips from the body. These "Blanket pieces," a couple of feet in breadth, when five to six feet long, were cut off and hove into the blubber room, and there divided into much smaller pieces. These small pieces were then taken to the Mincer near the "Try Works" and then when the Oil in the pot was heated, thrown in, and boiled down. When boiled the oil was bailed out into "Coolers" on either side of the Try Works, thence to the tanks, and from the tanks to casks and stowed below.

For the above description of "Trying-out" a Sperm whale I again have to thank Captain A. B. Robinson.

During this year the Australian and New Zealand whaling grounds were populous with ships, particularly in well known whaling localities. Every Captain logged any whaler spoken to, giving his catch and time at sea, and this information was published on his return to port, and so the public were given some idea of the fortunes of the ships still at sea.

The following entry in the "Othello" log for Saturday, November 20th, 1869, gives some idea of the number of ships in the neighbourhood of Norfolk Island:—"Light Easterly and variable winds—at 9.30, and we ran off shore "to the West." The following named ships are either at the Island or have been here very lately. I give the report as furnished by Mr. Fred. Young of N.Z.

B.k. Hunter, Captain Chase, 23 months; 1,650 barrels of Sperm.

B.k. The Ionia, Captain Norton, 30 months; 500 barrels of Sperm, 600 Black Oil.

B.k. Highland Mary, Captain French, a long time; 15 barrels of Sperm.

Abraham Barker, 36 months; 2,900 barrels of Sperm.

Corral, Captain Potter, 15 months; 500 barrels of Sperm, 1,000 Black Oil.

Northern Light, Captain Baker, 1,200 barrels of Sperm, 450 Black Oil.

Napoleon, 17 months; 750 barrels of Sperm.

Petrel, Captain Worth, 40 months; 1,100 barrels of Sperm.

Europa, Captain Rye, 24 months; 900 barrels of Sperm, 800 Black Oil.

Onward, Captain Allen, 8 months; 180 barrels of Sperm, 25 Black Oil.

Fanny Fisher, Captain Mayhew, 1 month; clean.

The American ships away 2-3 years from Salem or New Bedford carried little or no money. It was their custom to pay for fresh food and stores with American Agricultural Implements, as ploughs, etc., in this way helping the trade of U.S.A.

In 1870 Sperm Oil was £120 a tun, causing a revival in the trade, which had been on the decline for a few years.

After 1886 the trade fell away until only the "Waterwitch" was left. An attempt was made in 1893 to revive the industry, and the barque "Helen" was fitted out. She went to the Campbell Islands, where the Black whale was said to have its quarters, but the venture was not a financial success.

In writing the latter part of these notes I have received the greater part of information from gentlemen who have been interested in or connected with the old whaling fleets. Particularly I wish to thank my father (Dr. E. L. Crowther), Captain A. B. Robinson, R. R. Rex, Esq., A. C. Hume, Esq., and Captain McArthur for their assistance and great help.