

lives!" but we needed no such orders, whilst the flukes of the whale were cutting their capers around our heads; we therefore backed water in good earnest, and it was with the utmost hazard of life, that we escaped so dangerous a proximity.

"There she starts ahead! Take another turn around the loggerhead."

"Aye, aye, Sir."

"Hurrah! for a Nantucket sleigh ride!"

cried our men, as with the rapidity of lightning our frail bark sped through the water, now plunging so as to be almost buried in the boiling surge, now lifting herself clear on the top-mast wave, sending the spray around and behind her. The whale was going to windward; it was useless to look in that direction, for the rapidity and force with which we went, literally sent the breath once exhaled back again into our bodies—we were compelled to turn our backs on the huge specimen of aquatic royalty to which we were attached, and face to leeward.

"There he slackens; there he heaves up."

"Haul in on him my lads. We'll give him a taste of cold steel."

"The whale is making for the boats, Sir," exclaimed one of the men.

"Slack line—stern men; stern for your lives." My God he'll stave us!" Scarcely were these words uttered, when there came a crash, and away flew the boat, shattered to pieces from the violence of the concussion; and so sudden was the stroke of this huge monster, that scarcely a man in the boat knew what had happened 'till he found himself in the water amongst broken pieces of timber, line tub, oars, etc. There we lay, with nothing between us and death but an oar apiece, a poor substitute; but a drowning man will catch at a straw, and we hugged the oars closer to us with the faint hope that they would buoy us up 'till assistance reached us; the first mate was about two miles to leeward, unconscious of our situation; and as it was blowing very strong, there was quite a high sea, so that he could not distinctly see us at that distance, and the ship was still farther off, about three miles and a half—moving slowly along, closed hauled on a wind, as if in mockery of our situation.—She had her penant displayed at the mizen-peak.

The whale, as soon as he had stove us, disappeared, carrying away the line with him; and we considered it a mercy that we had escaped so imminent a peril.

But though we had been miraculously pre-

served, we were still in a very critical and dangerous position. Hope almost began to desert us, when one of the men exclaimed with a cry of joy, "They see us! Look, they are hauling aback!" Who can tell the pleasure which thrilled through our veins? But alas! it soon subsided, when we considered the great distance of the boat, and our feebleness and exhaustion, it made doubtful whether we could keep our present situation 'till assistance would arrive. But we know not what we can do; 'till danger, with all its fearful realities, stares us in the face.

The first mate had killed his whale, and perceiving the movements of the ship, and also that her colours were hoisted half-mast, was fearful something had gone wrong, and on looking to windward and seeing nothing of the boat, his fears, as he afterwards affirmed, were dreadfully awakened, and he immediately put his boat about and pulled in the direction he had last seen her.

Oh! what a joyful sight it was when we first caught a glimpse of the boat; rapidly she neared us; the brave fellows in her, with their hair streaming in the wind, and their shirt collars thrown back from their breasts and necks, were bending and straining every nerve; the mate was encouraging them, but they needed it not—the boat nearly rose clear of the water, such was the force with which they propelled her.

The boat was rapidly nearing us; when one of the men, from sheer exhaustion, was unable to hold on any longer, he therefore relaxed his grasp and at once disappeared. The brave fellow who was stationed in the bows of the boat to prevent her going over us, immediately sprung overboard to the rescue of his helpless comrade, and rose to the surface, holding by the hair of his head, the now senseless man. Assistance soon reached us, and we were all picked up, and stowed safely in the bottom of the boat, the head of which was now turned towards the ship. It was then that there arose three deafening cheers from our noble preservers! and scarcely had we proceeded twenty yards from the scene of our danger, when the fins of the sharks made their appearance above the surface of the water, no doubt attracted by the blood from the whale, with which the water was tinged.

We pulled towards the dead whale, to which having attached a warp, we took in tow, just as the other boat came up, and the lively *tally ho* came from the lungs of a dozen as merry