

We saw but few whales around the ice only lowering twice. The first time that we lowered the about boats were about a mile from the ship when a dense fog coming on they lost sight of the ship but were all successful in finding her except the third mate. We beat about here all day blowing horns in hopes that they might find us by that means. About sunset the fog lifted as suddenly as it shut down and revealed the boat as far from us as could be seen and standing down to her we soon had the satisfaction of seeing them safe on board. If the fog had held a week or two or three days as it often does this situation would not have been very agreeable unless they had fallen in with some other ship.

One morning soon after this we fell in with a narrow collection of flocks about a mile in length and which was accompanied by plenty of whales. There were four or five ships here when we arrived and before we got there a number of whales had been struck. We lowered away and started for the ice and soon the mate was fast. As the whale did not run much we soon pulled up to him but had no sooner arrived than two or three strange boats came up and claimed him as their whale having previously struck him and losing him by their line chafing against the ice and parting. It is the custom among whalers to claim any whale that they find under any circumstances with their irons in them and if this whale after being killed should be found to contain their irons their claim would be established. The mate did not seem inclined to admit it however and so they declared their intention to help kill it and then search for their irons. An altercation ensued neither party seeming inclined to yield which was ended by our Captain going out to them and hearing the points at issue and saying that if their irons were found in him he would give him up. The

whale by this time was dead and rolling for up their irons were now plainly visible and seeing that their claim was now settled our skipper went on board of the Oregon the ship's name and tried to induce the captain of this to go halibut on the ground that if we had not fastened to it he would never have recovered it. But their proposal met with a decided refusal and so we had our pains for our labor that time.

A few days after this we entered Tekantah bay and cruised here a spell but without success. We would go off and stay a week at a time sleeping nights in the huts on shore and building a large fire before the entrance for the double purpose of keeping us warm and hindering the bears from taking too much familiarity with our persons. These shores are infested with bears who prow about feeding on the carcasses of whales that drift on shore and when hungry they will not object to a man if he comes in their way. A night or two before the hut that we at present occupied was occupied by one or two boat crews belonging to a Russian ship and two of their number having strayed a short distance from the hut in search of muskox and being badly engaged did not notice the stealthy approach of a bear until he was close upon them. They started to run but he quickly overtook one and with one stroke of his powerful paw completely stripped off his scalp and bringing him to the ground proceeded to devour him. His comrades giving the alarm the rest of his shipmates quickly came to the rescue with whatever came first at hand and succeeded in driving him off but not before he had killed him and stripped his clothes from his back and commenced eating him. They are often ^{seen} but when encountered at close quarters are dangerous animals to handle. They will not however attack a man unless pressed by hunger or first attacked. An amusing incident connected with them happened to us one day. The weather being foggy we went ashore on an island in