

You wealthy and respectable citizens of New Bedford who have acquired their wealth by the whaling business and who are still endeavouring to augment their wealth by building and fitting more ships are but little aware how much abuse and hardships is suffered by those men who constitute the crews of their ships.

The whole drudgery and labour of procuring the voyage devolves upon them and why they should be thus overworked and neglected I think that no just reasons can be assigned.

Provisions are often put on board in sufficient quantity to last the voyage as is supposed by the agent allowing every man as much food as is necessary.

But if the ship happens to be out eight or ten months without being successful the captain becomes restless and is fearful of having to procure provisions at the expense of the owners or he obliged to return home before the ship is full.

He then begins curtailing their provisions by a fixed allowance in this situation the crew half starved and exposed to the abuse and curses of the captain and officers they are in a sad state indeed.

I must be persevering, says the ship master and make a saving voyage to the owner or else all my fondly cherished hopes of prospering by this business will be at an end and I shall be marked as a failure and one more successful will aspire to the command on the succeeding voyage.

You are often surprised to hear so many men has deserted your ships but I ask what man of common sense and in the situation here described would not grasp with eagerness the first opportunity of freeing himself from such servile bondage.

But the sailors hardships does not end here but after he has deserted the ship in a foreign port he is liable to be retaken again especially on the west american coast over the ocean which is preferred for their capture and when he is captured he is taken on board and put in irons and kept until the ship leaves port.

He is then brought forward and seized to the rigging and there flogged without mercy until he shall see to plead for his rights and now I ask what slave at the south suffers more hardships or feels more keenly the bitterness of oppression than the poor wretched sailor.

The seaman after having deserted his ship is a wanderer in a foreign country destitute and without the means of subsistence and amongst a people whose dialects is all together unintelligible to him and he is liable to be slain without knowing the cause of the offence.

But now the abuse that is practised on ship board is beyond all reason I have seen a man of noble mind and steady habits beaten over the head with a huge scrub beam by an insignificant and narrow minded mate who thought that merit consisted ^{solely} in being a good seaman or whaler and therefore never thought of cherishing those more refined feelings of human nature the man did not deny duty but he felt a moment to say that the two being