

Wm B. Ballie May 15th 1857

13th - very difficult job in furling the main
sail. It is a new sail & at this time
regarded with pain & snow & on more precise
before the wind it seemed almost impossible
to get the whole water third mat. & all to
get the sail on the yard arm. This was
done by us and at last we got it furlled
which I came down on Deck my hands &
fingers ached most bitterly. I put them in
salt water & they soon felt all right again.
The operation was to hoist up the boat
on pulley then check against the davits
& then all hands blow. You may depend
on me not slow in doing this last order.
The yards are square & running right
before the wind & under the mast.

14th - The Gale still continues & the waves as
the night sail for running mountains high
all hands blow & keep five min. in and
having, say times in the forenoon singing
playing on fiddle flute tambourine & bones
& singing in Duff every day as sailors make
dip. On Deck the music whistles & roars
through the rigging so that you cannot
hear yourself speak & cold I don't speak
of it. If you go on deck it will be a
wonder if you are not thoroughly drenched
with a fresh washing over your head. There
are the delights of a whaler's life on
the Norwest coast. Phil looked

15th - This morning very moderate breeze for the place
for it had been blowing a gale of wind most
of the time since we have been up here
we lowered the sails, shook out reefs
and commenced making sail again. Just
not in the morning have you seen as
yet. Thank for long morning the Captain has

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15th - not been able to get the gun with his Quadrant
or sextant for 8 days past so that we are
obliged to go on the Dead Reckoning system
and that is thought very unsafe by all navigators.
But in the absence of a better plan we are obliged
to take up with this. We are having leather
mats for night now. Chased down and up
for 4 miles at 4 P.M. I have just finished
reading the life of the celebrated Commander P. B. Barrow
of the American Museum New York City. I read
along for the benefit of the Americans in our watch
they are all delighted with it. My eyes still continue
very weak so that I could read but a few pages
in each watch. It has taken me many two
months to finish it. Steaming close to the ground
making a course about N.W.C. There has been
several fine tracks of Walrus & Sperm bottoms seen
but nothing as yet answering the description of a
Right Whale.

16th - No wind of any account this morning. Sperm
Walrus & Sperm bottoms blowing from all points
around the ship about 10 and 12 to the Portagee
said there was a large school of Blackfish
on the water. Low. They soon came close
to the ship on call. The other watch found
them chased away the boats & after the
Blackfish we started as it was a dead
calm we were obliged to use our oars. As
soon as we would get near them they would
hear the noise & go down. we could not
keep them off after trying about 2 hours
we must have heard I should say there was
500 Blackfish in the school. Our watch turned
in after dinner all of us were asleep
when the watch of 5 A.M. saw a school
about 1000 out to stand by the boat
another school of Blackfish were along side
of the ship. Mr. Stiers must have seen