



OLD WHALING DAYS

By Captain William Barron

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OLD WHALING DAYS By Captain William Barron

Written in 1895 by Captain William Barron. (211 pages) It is a personal narrative of his varied experiences in the Northern regions during his 17 years in the Whaling, and Sealing industry working out of Hull from his apprenticeship through his sailing as Captain of a whaling ship.

Excerpt:

.....A person who admires scenery has many opportunities of observing it from the crow's nest of a whaler, especially when the ship is not on the whaling grounds. There his mind is centered upon his occupation, and his eyes ache with the constant use of the spyglass; yet there are times afforded for study, and grand sights to be seen from that elevated place. Now supposing the ship is made fast to an iceberg, close to the land, waiting for an opening of the ice, and the time midnight, weather clear and calm, the sun shining beautifully. In the offing nothing is to be seen but close packed ice and numerous icebergs of all shapes and sizes. All is so quiet that stillness appears oppressive, yet the beauties of nature are so varied as to wear off that quietness.....

.....We shot several bears, and brought two on board alive. One of them was not quite half grown. After securing it to a ring bolt in the deck, and in the act of taking the other on board, a man accidentally let go the rope which held the former and the deck was cleared in a very short time. Some of the sailors took refuge in the rigging, others below, and it was really laughable to see how quickly Bruin had the deck to itself. Though only a small animal, no one cared for a bite. It was immediately lassoed and secured in a cask for transportation home. A fine bear would fetch about £35 from a zoological garden.

.....I must confess that sealing is very cruel work, but the fiat of a remorseless and callous fashion demands the sacrifice, and the demand must be met by the supply. The poor animals have the most beautiful large, round eyes, especially the young.

Also contains an Appendix, and nautical whaling Glossary

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