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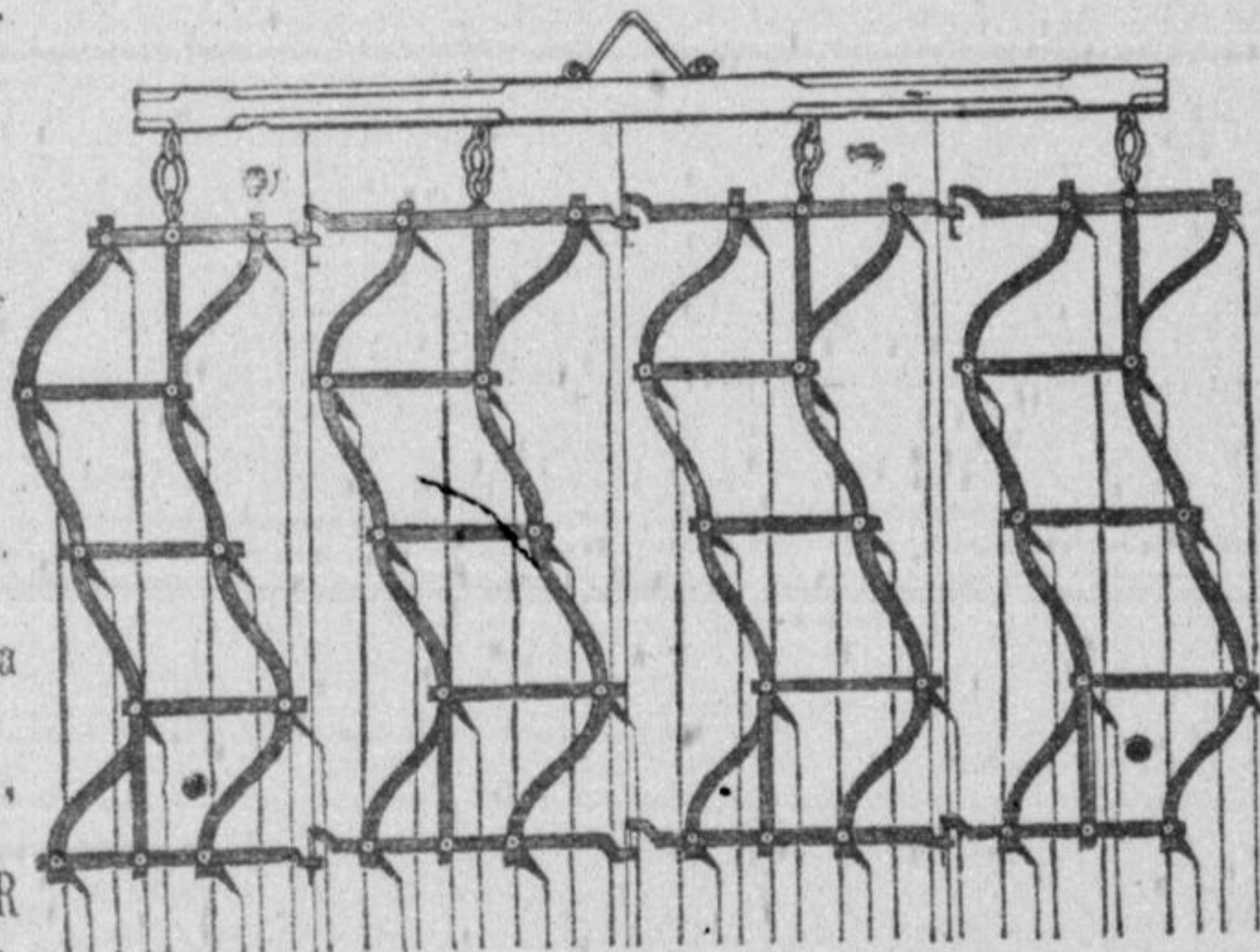


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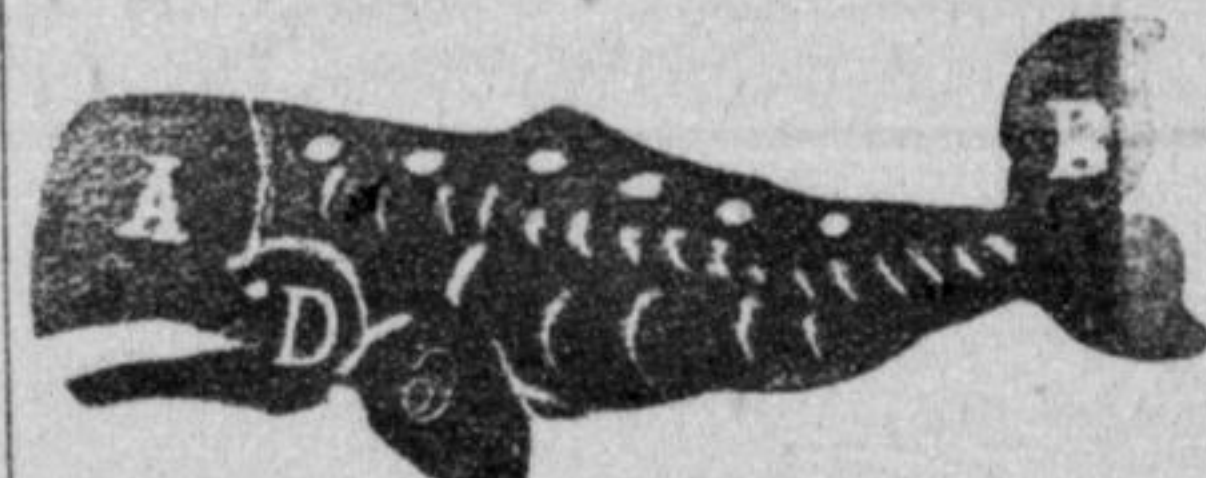
Reminiscences of Life on the Pacific.

(Continued from last week.)

Life on board a whaleship 40 years ago was a mixture of easy times and hard work. Sometimes we would go for weeks with only ordinary routine of working ship, mending and making sails, tarring rigging &c. The mast-heads were constantly manned from daylight till sunset, being relieved every two hours. The crews varied in number. A five-boat ship required thirty hands to man the boats, besides ship-keepers, consisting of the cooper, carpenter, steward, cook, and four or five other hands. The boats' crews consisted of the captain and mates as headsmen with the respective boatsteerers and four men to each boat, the boat steerer pulling the bow oar and the captain steering the boat till the whale was harpooned, which was done by the boatsteerer at the command of the officer. They then changed places, and the officer lanced and killed the whale, the boatsteerer steering the boat. The killing of the whale was sometimes a lengthy job, especially with Sperm whales, which could stay under water nearly an hour. The right, or train-oil, whale could stay down only twenty minutes without breathing. Each boat carried about 3,000 feet of whale-line, about ¾ inch in thickness, but very strong, soft and flexible, coiled with great care in two tubs, passed round a logger-head in the stern, then along the centre of the boat between the oarsmen through a leaded notch in the bow and fastened to the harpoon which rested in a receptacle fitted for it. When the officer judged the boat near enough, he gave the signal to the boatsteerer to "stand up," who, first peaking his oar, would grasp the harpoon and heave it into the monster's side. "Stern all!" shouts the officer, and quick as thought the motion of the boat is reversed and the whale starts off away from his enemies, though sometimes he seems scarcely to notice the attack and lies like a log, or, perhaps, just settles himself in the water; other times the whale will start off at an almost incredible speed, so rapid, indeed, that they have been known to run out the whole line before a drag could be attached or an extra turn taken round the logger-head. I remember once in the N. Pacific attacking one of those lazy ones and getting a ducking. The captain had changed places with his boatsteerer and was getting out his lance to kill the monster when he very quickly rose right under the boat, lifting it entirely out of the water and tipping us all over. It was done in a second before any one could imagine what was up, and there we were the whale and his enemies, boat and contents, all of a jumble. Luckily his lordship lay perfectly still. As I broke water, I found myself in close proximity to the whale, so close, in fact, that as I struck out I kicked against him, at the same time I heard our midship oarsman, a huge Cape Verde Negro, yelling "Oh! golly, oh! golly," and looking over my shoulder I saw the old fellow in the act of jumping off the monster's back. Strange as it may

seem, it is nevertheless true, that within two hours the old fellow's wool was changed to a snowy hue with the fright, and so remained as long as I knew him. One of the boats picked us up and carried us on board. The other gave chase to the whale and succeeded in killing him without further trouble. He was a fine fat fellow and made nearly 200 bbls. of oil. "Cutting-in" the whale as it is called, is a big, dirty job of hard work. When brought alongside it is secured by the flukes (or, as a landsman would call it, the tail) with a heavy chain passed through a hawse hole in the bow to the windlass. Heavy tackle secured to the main lower mast-head are then lowered over the side and a boat-steerer attaches a strap round one of the fins. The head is the first part attended to; if a sperm whale, this is a peculiar operation. Fancy a skull the shape of a duck's head, 6, 8, or 10 feet long, 4 or 6 feet wide at the junction with the spine, then imagine a huge mass of blubber or fat from four to six feet in diameter on top of that, and then you will have some idea of it. Right in the centre is found a quantity of pure spermacetti in a semi-liquid state, so much so, that it is often pailed out. After the "head-matter" is taken care of, the capstan is set to work heaving away and the blubber is peeled off the carcass in "blanket-pieces," about two or three feet wide and ten feet long, in thickness varying from 8 to 20 inches. When hoisted high enough a hole is cut through at the lower end and another strap and tackle attached below the first cut off, and so one blanket-piece after another is hoisted in till the carcass is stripped to the flukes, when it is cut loose and the "trying-out" commences. This is done as follows:—The blanket pieces are lowered down the main hatchway to the blubber room, cut up in "horse-pieces," about 6 inches wide and 20 to 24 inches long. From the blubber room they are taken to the mincing tubs where they are sliced up about an inch thick, and thence to the boilers—two huge kettles holding three or four bbls. each. When sufficiently rendered it is run into large copper coolers and from thence into casks. It doesn't take long after once started to render out the oil, and the scraps or refuse serves as fuel for the furnaces.

This diagram will give our readers some idea of the form of a sperm whale, and serve to explain the above:



- A—Mass of blubber.
- B—Flukes, or tail.
- C—Fin.
- D—Skull.

oooo—Blanket pieces.

(Continued in our next.)

EURT NOTICE

The Scott Act campaign is being actively pushed in Kingston, Frontenac and Hastings. In Hastings the petitions have been filed and voting will take place in June.