

great expence to which Europeans, engaged in that pursuit, put themselves, without becoming more certain of success.

When a whale is seen within a moderate distance of the shore, basking, as they often do for hours together, with little intermission, during the heat of the day, the fishermen put off in their canoes, which are excavated from large trees, and equipped with out-riggers on each side. Generally, each canoe carries from four to six persons; but those which are intended to approach the whale, give over their crew, with the exception of one spearsman, and one paddler, to the other canoes.

The paddler urges his canoe very gently, until within about eight or ten yards of the whale; sidling up with extreme caution so as to be parallel with its shoulders; this is done to avoid that lash of the tail which the fish invariably gives, as he plunges downwards, on feeling the spear enter his flesh. The weapons used on this occasion are about five feet long, extremely elastic, and loaded at each end with iron or lead; whereby not only the impetus is increased, but the vibration, occasioned by the opposite weights, causes the point, which is of iron, very acute and barbed, to wriggle deeper into the flesh. Previous to striking, the head of the canoe is turned towards the whale, and a slight retrocessive motion is given; so that, at the very