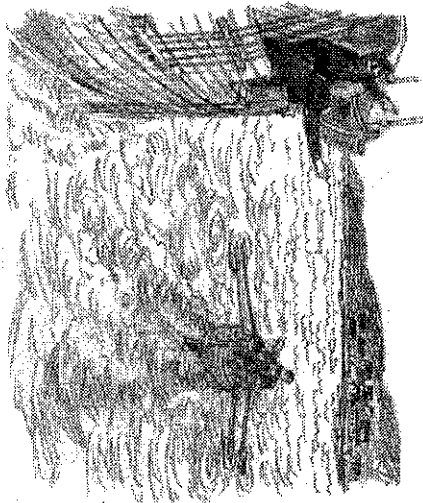




By now the sun was high in the sky. The crew began to climb aboard the ship. Around noon, when the final list of duties was complete, the *Pequod* was pushed away from the dock. At last the anchor was pulled up, the wind began to fill the sails, and off we glided. My heart was beating like a drum. What a Christmas day this was! My dream was coming true. My new adventure on the sea had begun. Bring on the whales!

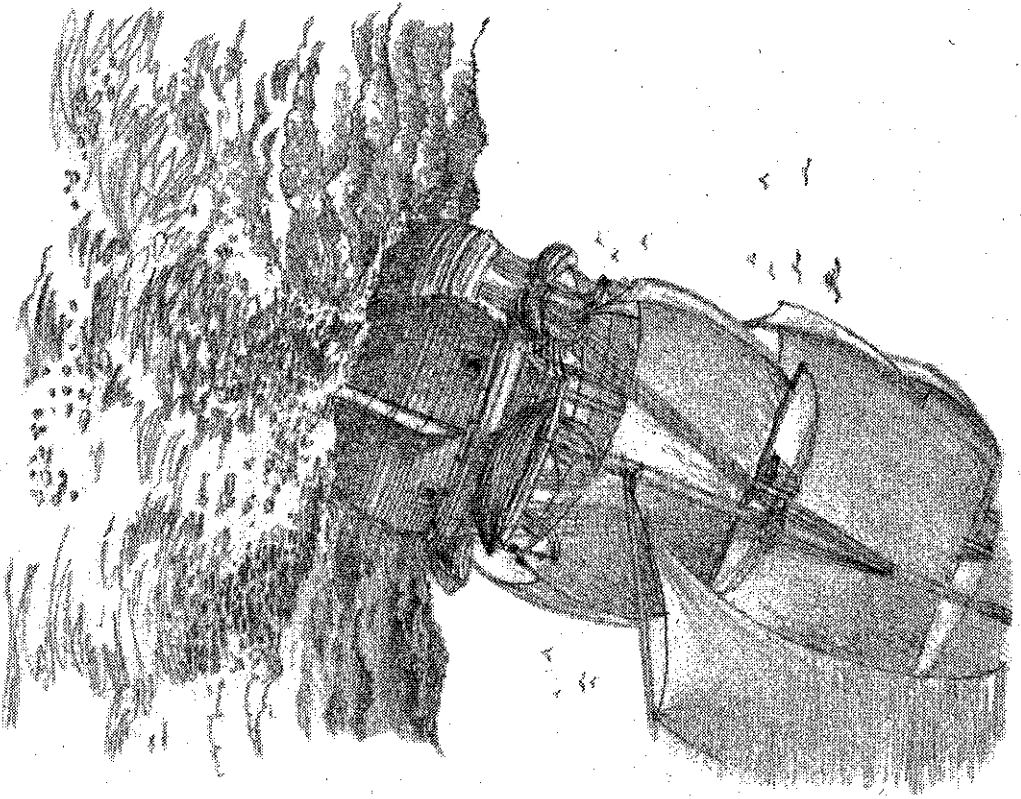


Merry Christmas

It was a cold Christmas. As the day turned into night, we found ourselves upon a wintry ocean. A freezing spray wrapped us in ice. Like the white ivory tusks of some huge elephant, giant, curving icicles hung from the ship's rails.

Once we had reached a distance from shore, the two owners' work was done. A smaller boat, which had followed us out from Nantucket, pulled alongside to take Bildad and Peleg back to shore. The old sailors said their good-byes and wished us a safe journey.

"God bless ye, and keep ye, men," said Bildad. "I hope ye have fine weather. Don't



forget thy prayers. Be careful in the hunt, mates. Watch that leak in the molasses jug..." On and on he went, until Peleg finally told him it was past time to go. I could see that these old sailors missed going to sea and were putting off returning to land as long as they could. As they climbed into the boat headed back to shore, there were tears in the eyes of the two tough whale hunters.

The smaller boat slowly disappeared from sight. A screaming bird flew over us. We gave three cheers and slid into the lonely Atlantic seas.