```
Without getting into those rumors that upset civilians in the seaports and deranged the public mind even far inland, it must be said that professional seamen were especially alarmed. Traders, shipowners, captains of vessels, skippers, and master mariners from Europe and America
naval officers from every country, and at their heels the various national governments on these two continents, were all extremely disturbed by the business. In essence, over a period of time several ships had encountered "an enormous thing" at sea, a long spindle-shaped object
sometimes giving off a phosphorescent glow, infinitely bigger and faster than any whale. The relevant data on this apparition, as recorded in various logbooks, agreed pretty closely as to the structure of the object or creature in question, its unprecedented speed of movement, its tartling locomotive power, and the unique vitality with which it seemed to be gifted. If it was a cetacean, it exceeded in bulk any whale previously classified by science. No naturalist, neither Cuvier nor Lacépède, neither Professor Dumeril nor Professor de Quatrefages, would have accepted the existence of such a monster sight unseen-specifically, unseen by their own scientific eyes. Striking an average of observations taken at different times-rejecting those timid estimates that gave the object a length of 200 feet, and ignoring those exaggerated views that
saw it as a mile wide and three long--you could still assert that this phenomenal creature greatly exceeded the dimensions of anything then known to ichthyologists, if it existed at all. Now then, it did exist, this was an undeniable fact; and since the human mind dotes on objects of wonder, you can understand the worldwide excitement caused by this unearthly apparition. As for relegating it to the realm of fiction, that charge had to be dropped. In essence, on July 20, 1866, the steamer Governor Higginson, from the Calcutta & Burnach Steam Navigation Co., necessary to the steam of the eastern shores of Australia. Captain Baker at first thought he was in the presence of an unknown reef; he was even about to fix its exact position when two waterspouts shot out of this inexplicable object and sprang hissing into the a
 some 150 feet. So, unless this reef was subject to the intermittent eruptions of a geyser, the Governor Higginson had fair and honest dealings with some aquatic mammal, until then unknown, that could spurt from its blowholes waterspouts mixed with air and steam. Similar event
vere likewise observed in Pacific seas, on July 23 of the same year, by the Christopher Columbus from the West India & Pacific Steam Navigation Co. Consequently, this extraordinary cetacean could transfer itself from one locality to another with startling swiftness, since within a nterval of just three days, the Governor Higginson and the Christopher Columbus had observed it at two positions on the charts separated by a distance of more than 700 nautical leagues. Fifteen days later and 2,000 leagues farther, the Helvetia from the Compagnie Nationale and
he Shannon from the Royal Mail line, running on opposite tacks in that part of the Atlantic lying between the United States and Europe, respectively signaled each other that the monster had been signted in latitude 42 degrees 15' north and longitude 60 degrees 35' west of the merian of Greenwich. From their simultaneous observations, they were able to estimate the mammal's minimum length at more than 350 English feet;* this was because both the Shannon and the Helvetia were of smaller dimensions, although each measured 100 meters stem to stern.
ow then, the biggest whales, those rorqual whales that frequent the waterways of the Aleutian Islands, have never exceeded a length of 56 meters--if they reach even that. *Author's Note: About 106 meters. An English foot is only 30.4 centimeters. One after another, reports arrived
ow then, the biggest whales, those forqual whales that frequent the waterways of the Aleutian Islands, have never exceeded a length of 56 meters—If they reach even that. Author's Note, About 106 meters, those forqual whales that frequent the waterways of the Aleutian Islands, have never exceeded a length of 56 meters—If they reach even that. Author's Note, About 106 meters, and English 100 is only 30.4 centimeters. One are all another, a policy of the monster, an official report drawn up by officers on the French frigate Normandy, dead-earnest reckonings obtained by the general staff of Commodore Fitz-James aboard the Lord Clyde. In lighthearted countries, people joked about this phenomenon, but such serious, practical countries as England, America, and Germany were deeply concerned. In every big city the monster was the latest rage; they sang about it in the coffee houses, they ridiculed it in the newspapers, they dramatized it in the theaters. The tabloids found it a fine opportunity for hatching all sorts of hoaxes. In those newspapers short of copy, you saw the reappearance of every gigntle imaginary creature, from "Moby Dick," the properture of the policy of the monster was the latest rage; they are all the properture of the prop
at dreadful white whale from the High Arctic regions, to the stupendous kraken whose tentacles could entwine a 500-ton craft and drag it into the ocean depths. They even reprinted reports from ancient times: the views of Aristotle and Pliny accepting the existence of such monste
s, then the Norwegian stories of Bishop Pontoppidan, the narratives of Paul Egede, and finally the reports of Captain Harrington-- whose good faith is above suspicion--in which he claims he saw, while aboard the Castilian in 1857, one of those enormous serpents that, until then, he frequented only the seas of France's old extremist newspaper, The Constitutionalist. An interminable debate then broke out between believers and skeptics in the scholarly societies and scientific journals. The "monster question" inflamed all minds. During this memorable campa
gn, journalists making a profession of science battled with those making a profession of them even two or three drops of blood, since they went from sea serpents to the most offensive personal remarks. For six months the war seesawed. Wit
inexhaustible zest, the popular press took potshots at feature articles from the Geographic Institute of Brazil, the Royal Academy of Science in Berlin, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., at discussions in The Indian Archipelago, in Cosmos publ
shed by Father Moigno, in Petermann's Mittheilungen,* and at scientific chronicles in the great French and foreign newspapers. When the monster's detractors cited a saying by the botanist Linnaeus that "nature doesn't make leaps," witty writers in the popular periodicals parodicals parodicals parodicals parodicals parodicals parodicals it, maintaining in essence that "nature doesn't make lunatics," and ordering their contemporaries never to give the lie to nature by believing in krakens, sea serpents, "Moby Dicks," and other all-out efforts from drunken seamen. Finally, in a much-feared satirical journal, an article be
its most popular columnist finished off the monster for good, spurning it in the style of Hippolytus repulsing the amorous advances of his stepmother Phaedra, and giving the creature its quietus amid a universal burst of laughter. Wit had defeated science. *German: "Bulletin." Education by Education Seemed to be buried, and it didn't seem due for resurrection, when new facts were brought to the public's attention. But now it was no longer an issue of a scientific problem to be solved, but a quite real and serious danger to
e avoided. The question took an entirely new turn. The monster again became an islet, rock, or reef, but a runaway reef, unfixed and elusive. On March 5, 1867, the Moravian from the Montreal Ocean Co., lying during the night in latitude 27 degrees 30' and longitude 72 degrees 15', an its starboard quarter afoul of a rock marked on no charts of these waterways. Under the combined efforts of wind and 400-horsepower steam, it was traveling at a speed of thirteen knots. Without the high quality of its hull, the Moravian would surely have split open from this col
sion and gone down together with those 237 passengers it was bringing back from Canada. This accident happened around five o'clock in the morning, just as day was beginning to break. The officers on watch rushed to the craft's stern. They examined the ocean with the most sc
upulous care. They saw nothing except a strong eddy breaking three cable lengths out, as if those sheets of water had been violently churned. The site's exact bearings were taken, and the Moravian continued on course apparently undamaged. Had it run afoul of an underwater room
k or the wreckage of some enormous derelict ship? They were unable to say. But when they examined its undersides in the service yard, they discovered that part of its keel had been smashed. This occurrence, extremely serious in itself, might perhaps have been forgotten like so many others, if three weeks later it hadn't been reenacted under identical conditions. Only, thanks to the nationality of the ship victimized by this new ramming, and thanks to the reputation of the company to which this ship belonged, the event caused an immense uproar. No one is unaware of the name of that famous English shipowner, Cunard. In 1840 this shrewd industrialist founded a postal service between Liverpool and Halifax, featuring three wooden ships with 400-horsepower paddle wheels and a burden of 1,162 metric tons. Eight years later, the cor
pany's assets were increased by four 650-horsepower ships at 1,820 metric tons, and in two more years, by two other vessels of still greater power and tonnage. In 1853 the Cunard Co., whose mail-carrying charter had just been renewed, successively added to its assets the Arabia the Persia, the China, the Scotia, the Java, and the Russia, all ships of top speed and, after the Great Eastern, the biggest ever to plow the seas. So in 1867 this company owned twelve ships, eight with paddle wheels and four with propellers. If I give these highly condensed details,
  is so everyone can fully understand the importance of this maritime transportation company, known the world over for its shrewd management. No transoceanic navigational undertaking has been conducted with more ability, no business dealings have been crowned with greate
success. In twenty-six years Cunard ships have made 2,000 Atlantic crossings without so much as a voyage canceled, a delay recorded, a man, a craft, or even a letter lost. Accordingly, despite strong competition from France, passengers still choose the Cunard line in preference
o all others, as can be seen in a recent survey of official documents. Given this, no one will be astonished at the uproar provoked by this accident involving one of its finest steamers. On April 13, 1867, with a smooth sea and a moderate breeze, the Scotia lay in longitude 15 degree
2' and latitude 45 degrees 37'. It was traveling at a speed of 13.43 knots under the thrust of its 1,000-horsepower engines. Its paddle wh
                                                                                                                                                                                                                    eels were churning the sea with perfect steadiness. It was then drawing 6.7 meters of water and displacing 6,624 cubi
 meters. At 4:17 in the afternoon, during a high tea for passengers gathered in the main lounge, a collision occurred, scarcely notic
dn't run afoul of something, it had been fouled, and by a cutting or perforating instrument rather than a blunt one. This encoun f crewmen in the hold, who climbed on deck yelling: "We're sinking! We're sinking!" At first the passengers were quite frigh ided into seven compartments by watertight bulkheads, the Scotia could brave any leak with impunity. Captain Anderso by the sea, and the speed of this invasion proved that the leak was considerable. Fortunately this compartment didn't
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 ter seemed so minor that nobody on board would have been disturbed by it, had it not been for the shouts
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     tened, but Captain Anderson hastened to reassure them. In fact, there could be no immediate danger. D
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           contain the boilers, because their furnaces would have been abruptly extinguished. Captain Anders
on called an immediate halt, and one of his sailors dived down to assess the damage. Within moments they had loc
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            eters in width on the steamer's underside. Such a leak could not be patched, and with its paddle w
eels half swamped, the Scotia had no choice but to continue its voyage. By then it lay 300 miles from Cape Clear,
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               elay that filled Liverpool with acute anxiety, it entered the company docks. The engineers then p
oceeded to inspect the Scotia, which had been put in dry dock. They couldn't believe their eyes. Two and a half
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                ere gaped a symmetrical gash in the shape of an isosceles triangle. This breach in the sheet iro
was so perfectly formed, no punch could have done a cleaner job of it. Consequently, it must have been produ
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ommon toughness-- plus, after being launched with prodigious power and then piercing four of
entimeters of sheet iron, this tool had needed to withdraw itself by a backward motion truly inexplicable. This
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   ed in arousing public passions all over again. Indeed, from this moment on, any maritime cas
                                                                                                                                                                                             was the last straw, and it result
ualty without an established cause was charged to the monster's account. This outrageous animal had to sh
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     t vessels, whose numbers are unfortunately considerable, since out of those 3,000 ships where the same of the same
                                                                                                                                                                                           oulder responsibility for all derelic
ose losses are recorded annually at the marine insurance bureau, the figure for steam on sailing ships supp
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     ence of any news, amounts to at least 200! Now then, justly or unjustly, it was the "monste
who stood accused of their disappearance; and since, thanks to it, travel between the various continents he earsome cetacean. CHAPTER 2 The Pros and Cons DURING THE PERIOD in which these developments w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       the public spoke up and demanded straight out that, at all cost, the seas be purged of this
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      fic undertaking organized to explore the Nebraska badlands in the United States. In my cal
                                                                                                                                                                                 ere occurring, I had returned from a scienti
acity as Assistant Professor at the Paris Museum of Natural History, I had been attached to this expeditio
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ix months in Nebraska, I arrived in New York laden with valuable collections near the end
                                                                                                                                                                              n by the French government. After spending s
March. My departure for France was set for early May. In the meantime, then, I was busy classifying my
                                                                                                                                                                                   mineralogical.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      cal treasures when that incident took place with the Scotia. I was perfectly abreast of this qu
                                                                                                                                                                                                           botanical, and zoologi
estion, which was the big news of the day, and how could I not have been? Mad read and reread every A
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      without being any farther along. This mystery puzzled me. Finding it impossible to form an
                                                                                                                                                                                    merican and
                                                                                                                                                                                                           European newspaper
views, I drifted from one extreme to the other. Something was out there, that much was certain, and an
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    to place his finger on the Scotia's wound. When I arrived in New York, the question was at
                                                                                                                                                                                       doubting 7
                                                                                                                                                                                                          homas was invited
boiling point. The hypothesis of a drifting islet or an elusive reef, put forward by people not quite in the
                                                                                                                                                                                      r right min
                                                                                                                                                                                                           ds, was comple
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   tely eliminated. And indeed, unless this reef had an engine in its belly, how could it move about
with such prodigious speed? Also discredited was the idea of a floating hull or some other enormous w
                                                                                                                                                                                     reckage, an
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                cause of this speed of movement. So only two possible solutions to the question were left, crea
                                                                                                                                                                                                              d again be
ng two very distinct groups of supporters: on one side, those favoring a monster of colossal strength; o
                                                                                                                                                                                    n the other, t
othesis was completely admissible, it couldn't stand up to inquiries conducted in both the New World an
                                                                                                                                                                               d the Old. That a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       in these disaster-filled times, when men tax their ingenuity to build increasingly powerful aggressive w
d he built it, and how could he have built it in secret? Only some government could own such an engine o
ipons, it was possible that, unknown to the rest of the world, some nation could have been testing such a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 hine. The Chassepot rifle led to the torpedo, and the torpedo has led to this underwater battering ram, whicl
  turn will lead to the world putting its foot down. At least I hope it will. But this hypothesis of a war mach
                                                                                                                                                                                         ne collapsed in the f ace of formal denials from the various governments. Since the public interest was at stake and transoceanic travel was
s suffering, the sincerity of these governments could not be doubted. Besides, how could the assembly of
and certainly impossible for a nation whose every move is under constant surveillance by rival powers. So,
                                                                                                                                                                                           fter inquiries conducted in England, France, Russia, Prussia, Spain, Italy, America, and even Turkey, the hypothesis of an underwater N
nitor was ultimately rejected. And so the monster surfaced again, despite the endless witticisms heaped on
                                                                                                                                                                                           t by the popular press, and the human imagination soon got caught up in the most ridiculous ichthyological fantasies. After I arrived in N
                                                                                                                                                                                         ublished a two-volume work, in quarto, entitled The Mysteries of the Great Ocean Depths. Well received in scholarly circles, this book had
established me as a specialist in this pretty obscure field of natural history. My views were in demand. As long
                                                                                                                                                                                                  as I could deny the reality of the business, I confined myself to a flat "no comment." But soon, pinned to the wall, I had to explain n
 rself straight out. And in this vein, "the honorable Pierre Aronnax, Professor at the Paris Museum," was summo
                                                                                                                                                                                                   ned by The New York Herald to formulate his views no matter what. I complied. Since I could no longer hold my tongue, I let it was
 discussed the question in its every aspect, both political and scientific, and this is an excerpt from the well-pad
                                                                                                                                                                                                     ded article I published in the issue of April 30. "Therefore," I wrote, "after examining these different hypotheses one by one, we a
e forced, every other supposition having been refuted, to accept the existence of an extremely powerful marine an
                                                                                                                                                                                                             "The deepest parts of the ocean are totally unknown to us. No soundings have been able to reach them. What goes on in th
ose distant depths? What creatures inhabit, or could inhabit, those regions twelve or fifteen miles beneath the surfa
                                                                                                                                                                                                      e of the water? What is the constitution of these animals? It's almost beyond conjecture. "However, the solution to this problem
submitted to me can take the form of a choice between two alternatives. "Either we know every variety of creature pop
                                                                                                                                                                                                                ating our planet, or we do not. "If we do not know every one of them, if nature still keeps ichthyological secrets from us
nothing is more admissible than to accept the existence of fish or cetaceans of new species or even new genera, animals
                                                                                                                                                                                                                    with a basically 'cast-iron' constitution that inhabit strata beyond the reach of our soundings, and which some developments
 oment or other, an urge or a whim if you prefer, can bring to the upper level of the ocean for long intervals. "If, on the other
                                                                                                                                                                                                                     hand, we do know every living species, we must look for the animal in question among those marine creatures alrea
y cataloged, and in this event I would be inclined to accept the existence of a giant narwhale. "The common narwhale, or sea u
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      nicorn, often reaches a length of sixty feet. Increase its dimensions fivefold or even tenfold, then give this cetacear
a strength in proportion to its size while enlarging its offensive weapons, and you have the animal we're looking for. It would hav
                                                                                                                                                                                                                     e th e proportions determined by the officers of the Shannon, the instrument needed to perforate the Scotia, and the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 xpressed it. It's a king-sized tooth as hard as steel. Some of these teeth have been found buried in the bodie
 of baleen whales, which the narwhale attacks with invariable success. Others have been wrenched, not without difficulty, from the u
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ndersides of vessels that narwhales have pierced clean through, as a gimlet pierces a wine barrel. The m
seum at the Faculty of Medicine in Paris owns one of these tusks with a length of 2.25 meters and a width at its base of forty-eight centi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       meters! "All right then! Imagine this weapon to be ten times stronger and the animal ten times more po
werful, launch it at a speed of twenty miles per hour, multiply its mass times its velocity, and you get just the collision we need to cause th
ned away--unless it's something else entirely, which, despite everything that has been sighted, studied, explored and experienced, is still possi
                                                                                                                                                                                      as elepha
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      nts or rhinoceroses are mere dwarves. The liquid masses support the largest known speci
                                                                                                                                                                                          ate, such
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         as 100-meter lobsters or crabs weighing 200 metric tons! Why not? Formerly, in prehistor
c days, land animals (quadrupeds, apes, reptiles, birds) were built on a gigantic scale. Our Creator cast th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         sses undergo almost continuous alteration? Couldn't the heart of the ocean hide the last
emaining varieties of these titanic species, for whom years are centuries and centuries millennia? Bu
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      't let these fantasies run away with me! Enough of these fairy tales that time has changed t
                                                                                                                                                                                                   t I mustn
r me into harsh realities. I repeat: opinion had crystallized as to the nature of this phenomenon, and
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    without argument the existence of a prodigious creature that had nothing in com
                                                                                                                                                      re practical pe
                                                                                                                                                                                                        ople, esp
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      cially in America and England, were determined to purge the ocean of this daur
 ing monster, to insure the safety of transoceanic travel. The industrial and commercial newspap
                                                                                                                                                 ers dealt with the q
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        hiefly from this viewpoint. The Shipping & Mercantile Gazette, the Lloyd's List
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          eir premium rates-- were unanimous on this point. Public opinion being pror
 France's Packetboat and Maritime & Colonial Review, all the rags devoted to insurance compan
                                                                                                                                               ies--who threatened t
ounced, the States of the Union were the first in the field. In New York preparations were under
                                                                                                                                            way for an expedition de
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            chase this narwhale. A high-speed frigate, the Abraham Lincoln, was fitted
out for putting to sea as soon as possible. The naval arsenals were unlocked for Commander
                                                                                                                                                                                                              etically for
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ward with the arming of his frigate. But, as it always happens, just when a
                                                                                                                                        Farragut, who pressed energ
decision had been made to chase the monster, the monster put in no further appearances. Fo
                                                                                                                                       r two months nobody heard a w
                                                                                                                                                                                                               ord about i
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             t. Not a single ship encountered it. Apparently the unicorn had gotten wis
e to these plots being woven around it. People were constantly babbling about the creature, e
                                                                                                                                      ven via the Atlantic Cable! According
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            as claimed that this slippery rascal had waylaid some passing to
                                                                                                                                      fearsome fishing g
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      where to steer it. And impatience grew until, on June 2, word came that the Tam
d was making the most of it. So the frigate was equipped for a far-off voyage and armed with
                                                                                                                                                                  ear, but no
                                                                                                                                                                                                                body knew
pico, a steamer on the San Francisco line sailing from California to Shanghai, had sighted the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                 s before in t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       he northerly seas of the Pacific. This news caused intense excitement. Not eve
                                                                                                                                       animal again, thr
                                                                                                                                                                    ee week
n a 24-hour breather was granted to Commander Farragut. His provisions were loaded on boa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    g. Not a crewman was missing from his post. To cast off, he needed
                                                                                                                                       rd. His coal bun
                                                                                                                                                                    kers we
                                                                                                                                                                                                                 re overflowi
only to fire and stoke his furnaces! Half a day's delay would have been unforgivable! But Com
                                                                                                                                                                   ragut wa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                  nted nothing
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     more than to go forth. I received a letter three hours before the Abra
ham Lincoln left its Brooklyn pier;* the letter read as follows: *Author's Note: A pier is a type of
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      de for an individual vessel. Pierre Aronnax Professor at the Paris
                                                                                                                                                                   wharf exp
                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ressly set asi
Museum Fifth Avenue Hotel New York Sir: If you would like to join the expedition on the Abraham
                                                                                                                                                                 Lincoln, the g
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        the Union will be pleased to regard you as France's representative
                                                                                                                                                                                                                 overnment of
e in this undertaking. Commander Farragut has a cabin at your disposal. Very cordially yours, J. B.
                                                                                                                                                             HOBSON,
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          Navy. CHAPTER 3 As Master Wishes THREE SECONDS before t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ecretary of the
                                                                                                                                                         est Passage.
he arrival of J. B. Hobson's letter, I no more dreamed of chasing the unicorn than of trying for the Northw
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          fter reading this letter from the honorable Secretary of the Navy
                                                                                                                                                                                                                  hree seconds a
I understood at last that my true vocation, my sole purpose in life, was to hunt down this disturbing monster and rid the world of it.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                   Even so, I had
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          just returned from an arduous journey, exhausted and badly ne
                                                                                                                                                                                                                 early beloved co
eding a rest. I wanted nothing more than to see my country again, my friends, my modest quarters by the Botanical Gardens, my d
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          liections! But now nothing could hold me back. I forgot everythin
                                                                                                                                                                                                                 mused, "all roa
g else, and without another thought of exhaustion, friends, or collections, I accepted the American government's offer. "Besides,"
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ds lead home to Europe, and our unicorn may be gracious enough to t
ake me toward the coast of France! That fine animal may even let itself be captured in European seas--as a personal favor to m
                                                                                                                                                                                                                e--and I'll bring b
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   ack to the Museum of Natural History at least half a meter of its ivory
ance!" But in the meantime I would have to look for this narwhale in the northern Pacific Ocean; which meant returning to Fr
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ipodes. "Conseil!" I called in an impatient voice. Conseil was
                                                                                                                                                                                                               ance by way of th
my manservant. A devoted lad who went with me on all my journeys; a gallant Flemish boy whom I genuinely liked and wh
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                pliment; a born stoic, punctilious on principle, habitually har
                                                                                                                                                                                                              o returned the com
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                counsel," never giving advice-- not even the unsolicited kin
dworking, rarely startled by life's surprises, very skillful with his hands, efficient in his every duty, and despite his having a
                                                                                                                                                                                                               name that means "
d! From rubbing shoulders with scientists in our little universe by the Botanical Gardens, the boy had come to know
                                                                                                                                                                                                            thing or two. In Con
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 seil I had a seasoned specialist in biological classification.
an enthusiast who could run with acrobatic agility up and down the whole ladder of branches, groups, classes, su
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ilies, genera, subgenera, species, and varieties. But there
                                                                                                                                                                                                          bclasses, orders, fam
his science came to a halt. Classifying was everything to him, so he knew nothing else. Well versed in the theory
hat he could tell a sperm whale from a baleen whale! And yet, what a fine, gallant lad! For the past ten years, Co
                                                                                                                                                                                                          of classification, he w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  as poorly versed in its practical application, and I doubt t
                                                                                                                                                                                                       nseil had gone with me
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    wherever science beckoned. Not once did he comment o
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 go, no matter how far off it was. He went here, there, and e
n the length or the hardships of a journey. Never did he object to buckling up his suitcase for any country
                                                                                                                                                                                                    atever, China or the Con
verywhere in perfect contentment. Moreover, he enjoyed excellent health that defied all ailments, owne
                                                                                                                                                                                                  d solid muscles, but hadn
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  t a nerve in him, not a sign of nerves-- the mental type, I m
ean. The lad was thirty years old, and his age to that of his employer was as fifteen is to twenty. Plea
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       rhanded way of admitting I had turned forty. But Conseil had one fl
                                                                                                                                                                                               se forgive me for this unde
aw. He was a fanatic on formality, and he only addressed me in the third person--to the point where
                                                                                                                                                                                            tiresome. "Conseil!" I repeat
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ed, while feverishly beginning my preparations for departure. To be
                                                                                                                                                                           it got
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               was at issue that could drag on indefinitely, a hazardous un
sure, I had confidence in this devoted lad. Ordinarily, I never asked whether or not it suited him to
                                                                                                                                                              go with me on my journeys; but this time an expedi
dertaking whose purpose was to hunt an animal that could sink a frigate as easily as a walnut shell!
                                                                                                                                                        There was good reason to stop and think, even for the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 world's most emotionless man. What would Conseil say?
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 re departing in two hours." "As master wishes," Conseil r
nting, just squeeze it all in-and hurry!" "What about master
nd master's other fossil skeletons?" "The hotel will keep t
to France." "Then we aren't returning to Paris?" Conseil a
Conseil!" I called a third time. Conseil appeared. "Did master summon me?" he said, entering
                                                                                                                                                      "Yes, my boy. Get my things ready,
                                                                                                                                                                                                    get yours ready. We
eplied serenely. "We haven't a moment to lose. Pack as much into my trunk as you can, m r's collections?" Conseil ventured to observe. "We'll deal with them later." "What! The a hem for us." "What about master's live babirusa?" "They'll feed it during our absence. sked. "Yes, we are . . . certainly . . . ," I replied evasively, "but after we make a detour." "W m Lincoln." "As master thinks best," Conseil replied placidly. "You see, my friend, it's an
                                                                                                                                                y traveling kit, my suits, shirts, and sock
                                                                                                                                              rchaeotherium, hyracotherium, oreodonts, c
                                                                                                                                                                                                             potamus, a
                                                                                                                                        Anyhow, we'll leave instructions to ship the whole hatever detour master wishes." "Oh, it's nothing rea
                                                                                                                                                                                                                nagerie
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 e slightly less direct, that's all. We're leaving on the Abraha
                                                                                                                                                                                                                A rout
                                                                                                                                        ssue of the monster, the notorious narwhale. We're go
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 id the seas of it! The author of a two-volume work, in quart
                                                                                                                                                                                                                ng to r
o, on The Mysteries of the Great Ocean Depths has no excuse for not setting sa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 a dangerous one! We don't know where it will take us! The
                                                                                                                                     with Commander Farra gut. It's a gl orious mission bu
se beasts can be quite unpredictable! But we're going just the same! We have
                                                                                                                                    a commander who's g
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      at master does, I'll do," Conseil replied. "But think it over, because
                                                                                                                                                                                      am e for anything!
                                                                                                                                 hich people don't alw ay
I don't want to hide anything from you. This is one of those voyages from w
                                                                                                                                                                                          s come back!" "As ma
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ster wishes." A quarter of an hour later, our trunks were ready. Cons
eil did them in a flash, and I was sure the lad hadn't missed a thing, becau
                                                                                                                            se he classified shirts an
                                                                                                                                                                   d suits as exp
                                                                                                                                                                                            er tly as birds and m am
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    mals. The hotel elevator dropped us off in the main vestibule on the
                                                                                                                                                                                              ys under siege
                                                                                                                                                                                                ys under siege by a co
se il at my heel s, l ju mp
mezzanine. I went down a short stair leading to the ground floor. I settled
                                                                                                                          my b ill at that huge co u
                                                                                                                                                                 nter that was alwa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          nsiderable crowd. I left instructions for shipping my containers
of stuffed animals and dried plants to Paris, France. I opened a line of cred
                                                                                                                              suffic ient to cover t
                                                                                                                                                               he babirusa and, Con
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           ed into a carriage. For a fare of twenty francs, the vehicle went
down Broadway to Union Square, took Fourth Ave. to its junction with Bower
                                                                                                                               S t., turned into Kat
                                                                                                                                                              rin St. and halted at Pie
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            in ferry transferred men, horses, and carriage to Brooklyn, that
great New York annex located on the left bank of the East River, and in a few
                                                                                                                               m inu tes we arriv e
                                                                                                                                                              d at the wharf next to w
                                                                                                                                                                                                  hi ch the Abraham
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           ncoln was vomiting torrents of black smoke from its two funnel
s. Our baggage was immediately carried to the deck of the frigate. I r
                                                                                                                                s hed aboard. I a s
                                                                                                                                                              ked for Commander Farr
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           sailors led me to the afterdeck, where I stood in the presence of
a smart-looking officer who extended his hand to me. "Professor P
                                                                                                                                e rre Aronnax?" he
                                                                                                                                                               said to me. "The same,
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           nder Farragut?" "In person. Welcome aboard, professor. Your c
abin is waiting for you." I bowed, and letting the commander atten
                                                                                                                                 to g etting under w
                                                                                                                                                               ay, I was taken to the c
                                                                                                                                                                                                a bin that had be e
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          set aside for me. The Abraham Lincoln had been perfectly chose
n and fitted out for its new assignment. It was a high-speed frigat
                                                                                                                               furnished with sup er
                                                                                                                                                                                               ha t allowed the te ns io
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        n of its steam to build to seven atmospheres. Under this pressure
                                                                                                                                                                heating equipment t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        r g igantic cetacean. The frigate's interior accommodations compleme s. "We'll be quite comfortable here," I told Conseil. "With all due respect to ma
the Abraham Lincoln reached an average speed of 18.3 miles pe
                                                                                                                           r hour, a considerable s
                                                                                                                                                                  peed but still not
                                                                                                                                                                                               e nough to cope wi th ou
nted its nautical virtues. I was well satisfied with my cabin, whic
                                                                                                                            h was located in the stern
                                                                                                                                                                                            ed into the officer s' mes
                                                                                                                                                                       and open
ster," Conseil replied, "as comfortable as a hermit crab inside the sh
                                                                                                                                ell of a whelk." I left Co ns
                                                                                                                                                                                        eil to the proper stow in
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        g of our luggage and climbed on deck to watch the preparations for getting un
                                                                                                                                                                                  g th e Abraham Lincoln to
der way. Just then Commander Farragut was giving orders to cast of
                                                                                                                                    f the last moorings ho Idin
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             its Brooklyn pier. And so if I'd been delayed by a quarter of an hour or eve
                                                                                                                                       e missed out on this une arthly, extraordinary, and single day, or even a single hour, in making for those seas
n less, the frigate would have gone without me, and I would h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               inconceivable expedition, whose true story might well meet with some s
                                                                                                                                     e missed out on this une
kepticism. But Commander Farragut didn't want to waste a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              where the animal had just been sighted. He summoned his engineer. "Are
we up to pressure?" he asked the man. "Aye, sir," the engi
                                                                                                                                         neer replied. "Go ahead, then!" Commander Farragut cal
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              led. At this order, which was relayed to the engine by means of a compres
sed-air device, the mechanics activated the start-up wheel.
                                                                                                                                            Steam rushed whistling into the gaping valves. Lon
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           g horizontal pistons groaned and pushed the tie rods of the drive shaft. The
blades of the propeller churned the waves with increasing
                                                                                                                                               speed, and the Abraham Lincoln moved out maje
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          stically amid a spectator-laden escort of some 100 ferries and tenders.* *Aut
hor's Note: Tenders are small steamboats that assist the b
                                                                                                                                             ig liners. The wharves of Brooklyn, and every part o
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         f New York bordering the East River, were crowded with curiosity seekers. De
                                                                                                                                   ccession. Thousands of handkerchiefs were waving above these ti
parting from 500,000 throats, three cheers burst forth in su
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ghtly packed masses, hailing the Abraham Lincoln until it reached the waters of
the Hudson River, at the tip of the long peninsula that forms New
                                                                                                                                     York City. The frigate then went along the New Jersey coast--the w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  erful right bank of this river, all loaded down with country homes-- and passed by t
                                                                                                                                 oln replied by three times lowering and hoisting the American er bay formed by the spit of Sandy Hook, it hugged this san left us when we came abreast of the lightship, whose two signal ligh le schooner waiting for him to leeward. The furnaces were stoked; the p
he forts to salutes from their biggest cannons. The Abraham Linc
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         flag, whose thirty-nine stars gleamed from the gaff of the mizzen sail; then, changing spee
d to take the buoy-marked channel that curved into the inn
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      d-covered strip of land where thousands of spectators acclaimed us one more time. The esc
ort of boats and tenders still followed the frigate and only
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ts mark the entrance of the narrows to Upper New York Bay. Three o'clock then sounded. The
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   ropeller churned the waves more swiftly; the frigate skirted the flat, yellow coast of Long Islan waters of the Atlantic. CHAPTER 4 Ned Land COMMANDER FARRAGUT was a good seaman,
harbor pilot went down into his dinghy and rejoined a litt
d; and at eight o'clock in the evening, after the lights of F
                                                                                                                                sland had vanished into the northwest, we ran at full steam onto the d
                                                                                                                                  . He was its very soul. On the cetacean question no doubts arose in k of Job--out of faith, not reason. The monster existed, and he had d vow
worthy of the frigate he commanded. His ship and he wer
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ind, and he didn't allow the animal's existence to be disputed aboard his vessel. He believed in
it as certain pious women believe in the leviathan from th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                ed to rid the seas of it. The man was a sort of Knight of Rhodes, a latter-day Sir Dieudonné of Go
zo, on his way to fight an encounter with the dragon devas
                                                                                                                                      the island. Either Commander Farragut would slay the narwh ale, or
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               the narwhale would slay Commander Farragut. No middle of the road for these two. The ship's of
                                                                                                                                         cussing, arguing, calculating the different chances of a n enco
                                                                                                                          ng, dis
ave cur
ficers shared the views of their leader. They could be heard chatti
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               unter, and observing the vast expanse of the ocean. Voluntary watches from the crosstrees of the
                                                                                                                                             sed such toil under any other circumstances. As oln's stempost hadn't even cut the susp ire. Besides, Commander Fa rrag
topgallant sail were self-imposed by more than one who would h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               s the sun swept over its daily arc, the masts were populated with sailors whose feet itched and co
uldn't hold still on the planking of the deck below! And the Abra
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               ters of the Pacific. As for the crew, they only wanted to encounter the unicorn, harpoon it, haul it
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              mentioned that a certain sum of $2,000.00 was waiting for the man who first sighted the animal, er exercise aboard the Abraham Lincoln. As for me, I didn't lag behind the others and I yielded to g itself the Argus, after that mythological beast with 100 eyes! The lone rebel among us was Cons
on board, and carve it up. They surveyed the sea with scrupu
                                                                                                                                   lous care.
                                                                                                                                                                                                          rragut had
                                                                                                                                        cide whether
be he cabin boy or sailor, maté or officer. I'll let the reader de
                                                                                                                                                                                                 eyes got prop
no one my share in these daily observations. Our frigate wou
                                                                                                                                               Id have had fivescore good reasons for renamin
eil, who seemed utterly uninterested in the question exciting
                                                                                                                                                      us and was out of step with the gen
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                eral enthusiasm on board. As I said, Commander Farragut had carefully equipped his ship with a
Il the gear needed to fish for a gigantic cetacean. No whaling
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 vessel could have been better armed. We had every known mechanism, from the hand-hurled ha
rpoon, to the blunderbuss firing barbed arrows, to the duck gu
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   with exploding bullets. On the forecastle was mounted the latest model breech-loading canno
n, very heavy of barrel and narrow of bore, a weapon that would f
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   e in the Universal Exhibition of 1867. Made in America, this valuable instrument could fire a fo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    without the least bother. So the Abraham Lincoln wasn't lacking in means of destruction. But
ur-kilogram conical projectile an average distance of sixteen kilometers
it had better still. It had Ned Land, the King of Harpooners. Gifted wit
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      h uncommon manual ability, Ned Land was a Canadian who had no equal in his dangerous
rade. Dexterity, coolness, bravery, and cunning were virtues he pos
perm whale to elude the thrusts of his harpoon. Ned Land was about
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        sessed to a high degree, and it took a truly crafty baleen whale or an exceptionally astute s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          forty years old. A man of great height--over six English feet--he was powerfully built, seri
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