

No 21

Bark Daniel Webster Coast of Patagonia

May 5th 1849

W. L. N. Swift

New Bedford

Dear Sir

As the greater part of the ships cruising here are expecting to go in to Montevideo soon I embrace the opportunity of writing to you by ^{one} of them, I am now bailing my 3^d whale taken here caught here yesterday. I have already bailed 100 blb. will ^{make} near 140 blb. the 3 whales 350 blb. - Least the largest southern R. T. whale I ever saw last Thursday 3^d mate fastened just at night and the whale ran and sounded. Mr. R. had but one chance to get a bomb into the whale and then the gun misfired. He held on about three hours after dark then cut, ^{no judge what could happen} but that one chance with Colquhoun's Gun would have saved us the whale. I think they are the only reliable gun used in whaling they are water proof. In rough weather and spray flying constantly into the boat it is impossible to load and use Brand's Gun without wetting them, then they become useless ^{during} the remainder of the chase and are laid aside. In R. T. whaling I think much of Pierce's Darting Gun. The whale yesterday was killed with one, on striking. On the 14th of April I saw my first R. T. whale. On the 18th took one and 16 another, the two making 210 blb. The whales are very wild and there is but a few on the ground. I am in hopes the whales will become more quiet and that we may get some ^{oil} after the fleet leaves for port, say about the mid. of this month.

I have made a Draft on you of \$100 @ 10 Days on you in favor of Jesse S. Sherman, to be expended in potatoes &c at Montevideo by Capt. Sherman for my vessel. I have thought of putting my Bone saw 2000 lbs. in order and forwarding by some ship to Montevideo for shipment home, but it seems impossible to dry it enough for that purpose here on this coast by reason of the humid atmosphere. Capt. Colson by report has seven men now down with scurvy. Three days ago he buried one, and has two very low. I shall not go into port for some time

and then not into Montevideo unless I have enough oil and bone to make it worth while to ship. I think Montevideo expensive, but it is the only place in S. U. that we can depend on for potatoes or other vegetables required by whaling ships. I suppose I must go there some time before Oct. and I am in hopes that by that time the Daniel Webster may be on an equal footing as regards oil and bone as the average of cruisers on this coast.

I shall remain here as long as possible, the want of water will oblige me to go in somewhere else and go and could I get 500 blb. before my water gives out think I should go to Montevideo and ship my catchings but if my water gives out before getting that amount of oil, think of going to the Falklands for water. Should I be fortunate enough to get my potatoes by Sherman & my water at the Falklands think I can remain out until Sept. or Oct. There must be very few cruising here next season, and I at present think of trying the River for Sperm after this cruise and then the False Banks for R. T. the latter part of the season, unless there is good report from the Christian ground which might induce me to go there.

Capt. Long & Ellis both were out on the False Banks and the 49th Grounds the past season, but saw nothing. I have a great deal of confidence in the F. Banks in the month of Feb. I used to cruise there many years ago and have seen some good whaling there. But I cannot say anything definite in regard to cruises in the future until this cruise is up, then I shall be better able to determine. All well on board excepting Davis, boatsteerer, he has an affection of the liver. Mrs. Borden joins in regards to yourself and family. Thanks for Shipping List rec^d by Capt. Ellis R. Ohio

Yours Most Respectfully
J. B. Borden