

Finch & C^o



SAILOR'S SCRIMSHAW CHILD'S WALKING CANE

A RARE SAILOR'S SCRIMSHAW CHILD'S WALKING CANE

THE UNALTERED SHORT SPIRALLING WHALEBONE SHAFT FINELY INLAID WITH TORTOISESHELL, MARINE IVORY AND WHALE BALEEN, THE OCTAGONAL HANDLE CARVED FROM A SPERM-WHALE TOOTH

IN GOOD ORIGINAL CONDITION, OLD SMOOTH PATINA

EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 63.5CMLONG – 25 INS LONG

LITERATURE

DE CREVE COEUR WRITING IN 1787 TALKS OF AMERICA'S FIRST WHALING PORT OF NANTUCKET.... 'I HAVE NEVER SEEN MORE INGENUITY IN THE USE OF THE KNIFE; THUS THE MOST IDLE MOMENTS OF THEIR LIVES BECOME USEFULLY EMPLOYED. IN THE MANY HOURS OF LEISURE WHICH THEIR LONG CRUISES AFFORD THEM THEY CUT AND CARVE A VARIETY OF BOXES AND PRETTY TOYS.... WHICH THEY BRING HOME AS TESTIMONIES OF REMEMBRANCE TO THEIR WIVES AND SWEETHEARTS. THEY HAVE SHOWED ME A VARIETY OF LITTLE BOWLS AND OTHER IMPLEMENTS EXECUTED COOPER-WISE, WITH THE GREATEST NEATNESS AND ELEGANCE.'

SCRIMSHAW WAS ACTIVELY ENCOURAGED BY SOME WHALING MASTERS TO RELIEVE THE TERRIBLE BOREDOM OF THE LONG PERIODS SPENT SAILING BETWEEN PRODUCTIVE WHALING GROUNDS. THIS PRETTY LITTLE CANE WITH ITS DECORATIVE INLAY OF GEOMETRIC DESIGNS WAS MOST PROBABLY MADE FOR A FAVOURITE CHILD, AND WOULD HAVE TAKEN THE WHALER MANY HOURS OF CAREFUL WORK.