

Finch & C^o



SAILORS SCRIMSHAW CARVED WHALEBONE WALKING CANE

A SAILORS SCRIMSHAW CARVED WHALEBONE WALKING CANE THE KNOP OF SPERM WHALE TOOTH DECORATED WITH INSETS OF BALEEN AND SILVER THE LOWER SHAFT WITH A SPIRALLING TWIST REPLICATING A NARWHAL TUSK OLD SMOOTH MELLOW CREAMY PATINA

CIRCA 1840-50

SIZE: 92CM LONG - 36¼ INS LONG

LITERATURE

SCRIMSHAW RESCUED THE WHALE MAN FROM DESPONDENCY AND KEPT HIS MIND AND HANDS OCCUPIED. ONE JOURNAL (BARBEAU) STATES: 'I AM UNSETTLED IN MIND FOR WANT OF WORK. SAW NOTHING, AND WORK ALL DUN. AN IDLE HEAD IS A WORKSHOP FOR THE DEVIL. EMPLOYED SCRIMSHAW'. THE CAPTAIN OF THE BARK, JOHN A. ROBB, WROTE IN 1861: 'TODAY, I FEEL THE BEST THAT I HAVE FOR THE LAST 8 MONTHS. COMMENCED SQUIMSHONING, THE FIRST I HAVE DONE FOR THE LAST 6 MONTHS'. IN ADDITION TO THE PROBLEMS OF BOREDOM AND DESPAIR THAT WERE THE RESULT OF A THREE OR FOUR YEAR VOYAGE, THERE WAS THE ANTAGONISM AND ANGER THAT AROSE AMONG MEN WHO WERE THROWN TOGETHER UNDER SUCH DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME. SHIPS LOGS AND JOURNALS ARE FILLED WITH COMMENTS SUCH AS: 'AFTER QUARRELLING A HALF HOUR WE COMMENCED MENDING THE SAIL.... THUS ENDS ANOTHER LONG DISAGREEABLE DAY'.