

reach the Kingsmill and Feejee Groups. There are, however, stragglers to be met with in this space during all seasons.

The fourth belt extends from the southern tropic to the latitude of 50° S. The most profitable time for cruising within it is in the months of March, April, and May, to the eastward of New Zealand. After that date, along and between the parallels of 22° and 28° S., from the coast of New Holland to that of South America. The portion of sea between New Holland and New Zealand, is called the "middle ground," and is frequently found very profitable.

From an examination of the particular localities in which whales are found most numerous at certain seasons, and connecting these with my own observations on currents, I am induced to believe the places of their resort will point more correctly to the neutral points, or spaces of no current, than any other data that we yet possess.

These must naturally become the rendezvous or feeding-places of these animals. The determination of these points will therefore throw additional light on the system of currents in the ocean, by pointing out the neutral spaces. The chief resort of whales will be seen on the map at one view; and when these are connected with the currents shown to exist by the observations of the Expedition and others, they will be found to correspond in a remarkable manner with the neutral spaces.

I have myself paid much attention to acquiring information in relation to the position of these grounds, from the masters of whale-ships, but have usually found their reports at variance one with another, and they have sometimes differed as much as five degrees in assigning their limits. Their position, no doubt, varies much in different years; but even this will not explain all the discrepancies of the statements.

If we examine the seasons of the appearance of whales at certain islands, they will generally be found to be between the beginning and the end of the summer of the climate, during which time animal life is most prolific, and the food of the whale consequently abounds near the particular group. I have frequently been told, and it is generally believed, that whales are partial to warmth, and frequent few places outside the tropics. This, if true, would be singular enough; but the main reason for their frequenting the summer seas at particular seasons is the procurement of food, which is there to be found in greater abundance; and there appears to be little doubt that in migrating, these animals move with the currents, until they find their food in plenty, and then continue in such locality until it is exhausted.

A number of instances are known, as will be seen by referring to the Track Map, which will be found in the atlas to these volumes, in which, at certain seasons, strong currents have been experienced in places