



PAPA HĀNAUMOKUĀKEA
Marine National Monument

THE DISCOVERY OF THE *TWO BROTHERS*

Excerpts from *In the Heart of the Sea*

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For his own part, Pollard did not allow the horror he had experienced in the whaleboat to defeat him, displaying an honesty and directness concerning the disaster that would sustain him all his life. Captain George Worth of the *Two Brothers* was so impressed with the integrity of the former captain of the *Essex* during the two-and-a-half month voyage back from Valparaiso that he recommended Pollard as his replacement. Soon after his return, Pollard was formally offered command of the *Two Brothers*.

Wilkes asked Pollard how, after all that he had suffered, he could dare to go to sea again? "He simply remarked," Wilkes wrote, "that it was an old adage that the lightning never struck in the same place twice." But in the case of Captain Pollard, it did.

While Nickerson was belowdecks, the ship struck something "with a fearful crash," and he was thrown to the floor. Nickerson assumed they had collided with another ship. "Judge of my astonishment," he wrote, "to find ourselves surrounded with breakers apparently mountains high, and our ship careening over upon her broadside and thumping so heavily that one could scarcely stand upon his feet." The ship was being pounded to pieces on a coral reef. "Captain Pollard seemed to stand amazed at the scene before him," Nickerson remembered.

But by the time the men begun crowding into the two boats, Pollard had lapsed into his former state of mesmerized despair. "[H]is reasoning powers had flown," Nickerson remembered, and the captain appeared unwilling to leave the ship. The waves threatened to bash the boats against the hull as the men pleaded with their commander to save himself. "Captain Pollard reluctantly got into the boat," Nickerson wrote, "just as they were about to shove off from the ship."

As Pollard predicted, his whaling career was over. The island that had rallied to quickly behind him after the sinking of the *Essex* now turned its back. He had become a Jonah – a twice-doomed captain whom no one dared give a third chance. After returning to his wife, Mary, Pollard made a single voyage in a merchant vessel out of New York. "[B]ut not liking that business," Nickerson wrote, "he returned to his home on Nantucket." He became a night watchman – a position on the lowest rung of the island's social ladder.

