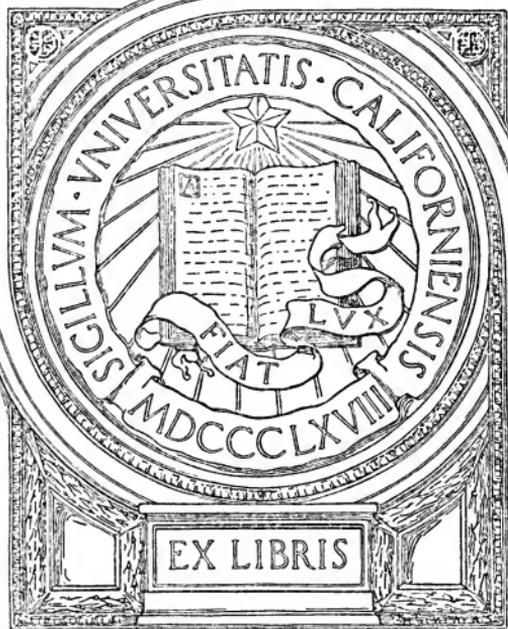
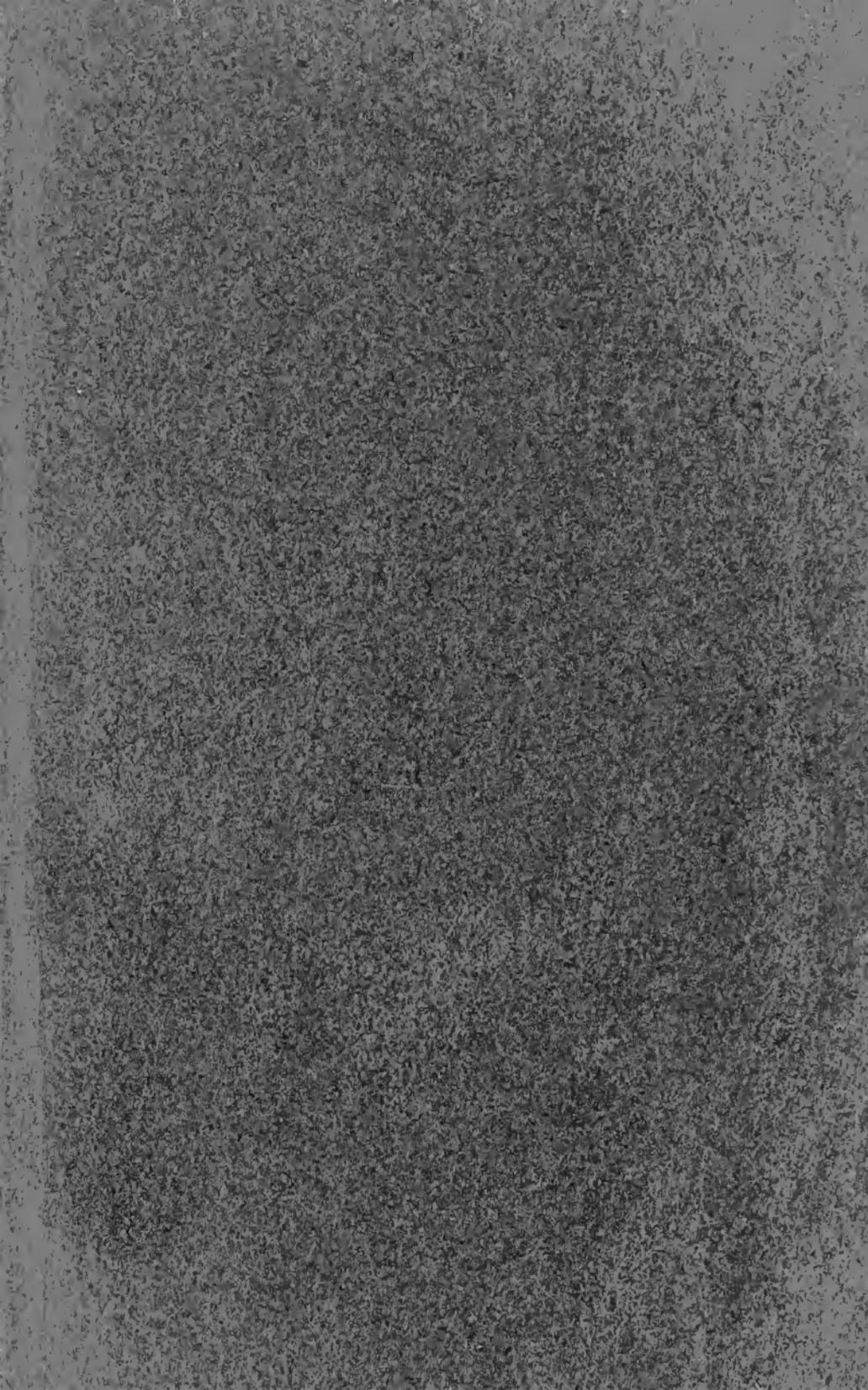


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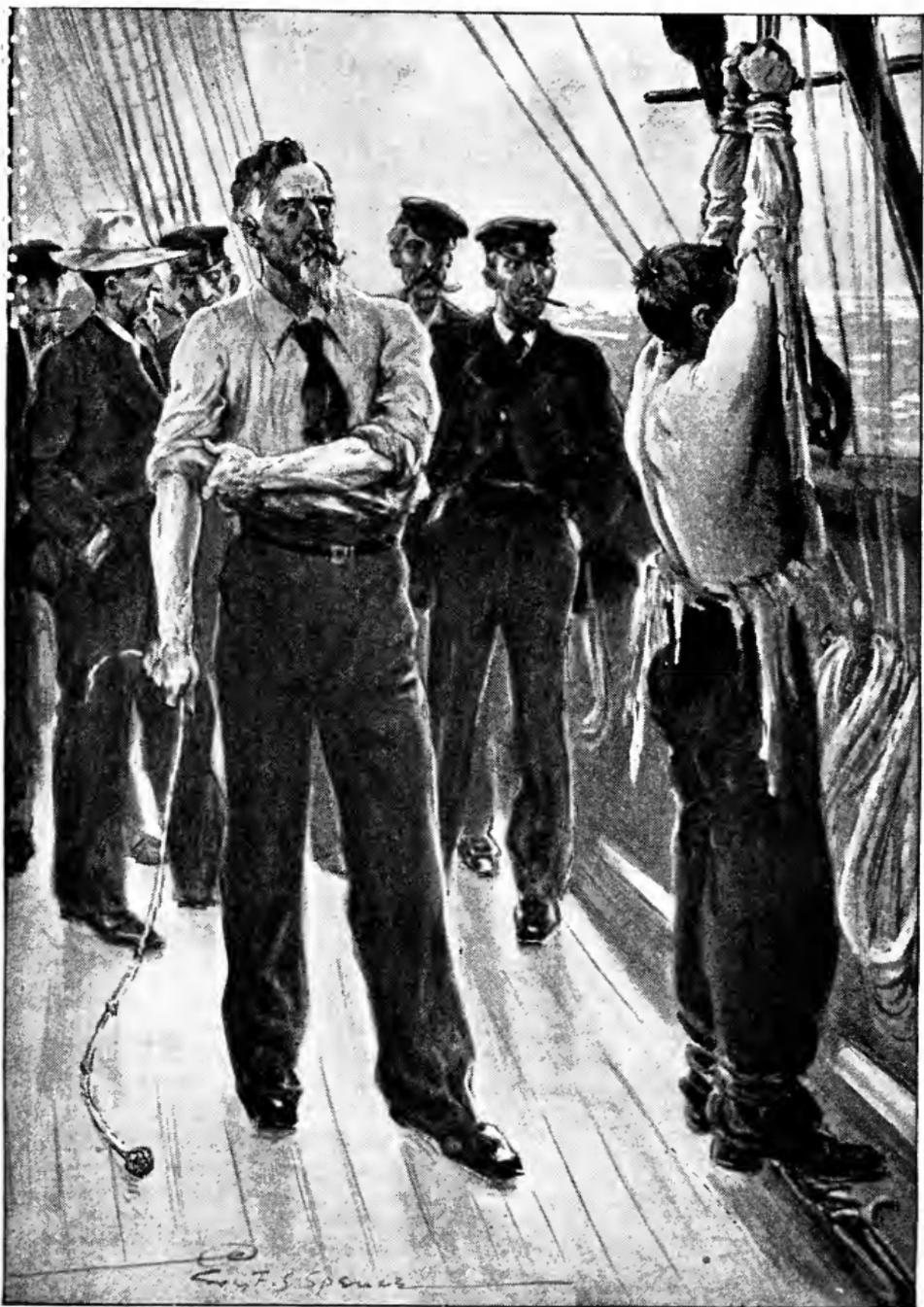


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THE SHELLBACK

or At Sea in the 'Sixties





"THEN THE SKIPPER TOOK THE YOKE ROPE."

Frontispiece.

THE SHELLBACK

BY

ALEX. J. BOYD

EDITED BY

ARCHIE CAMPBELL

WITH AN

INTRODUCTION BY MORGAN ROBERTSON



BRENTANO'S
UNION SQUARE, NEW YORK

1899

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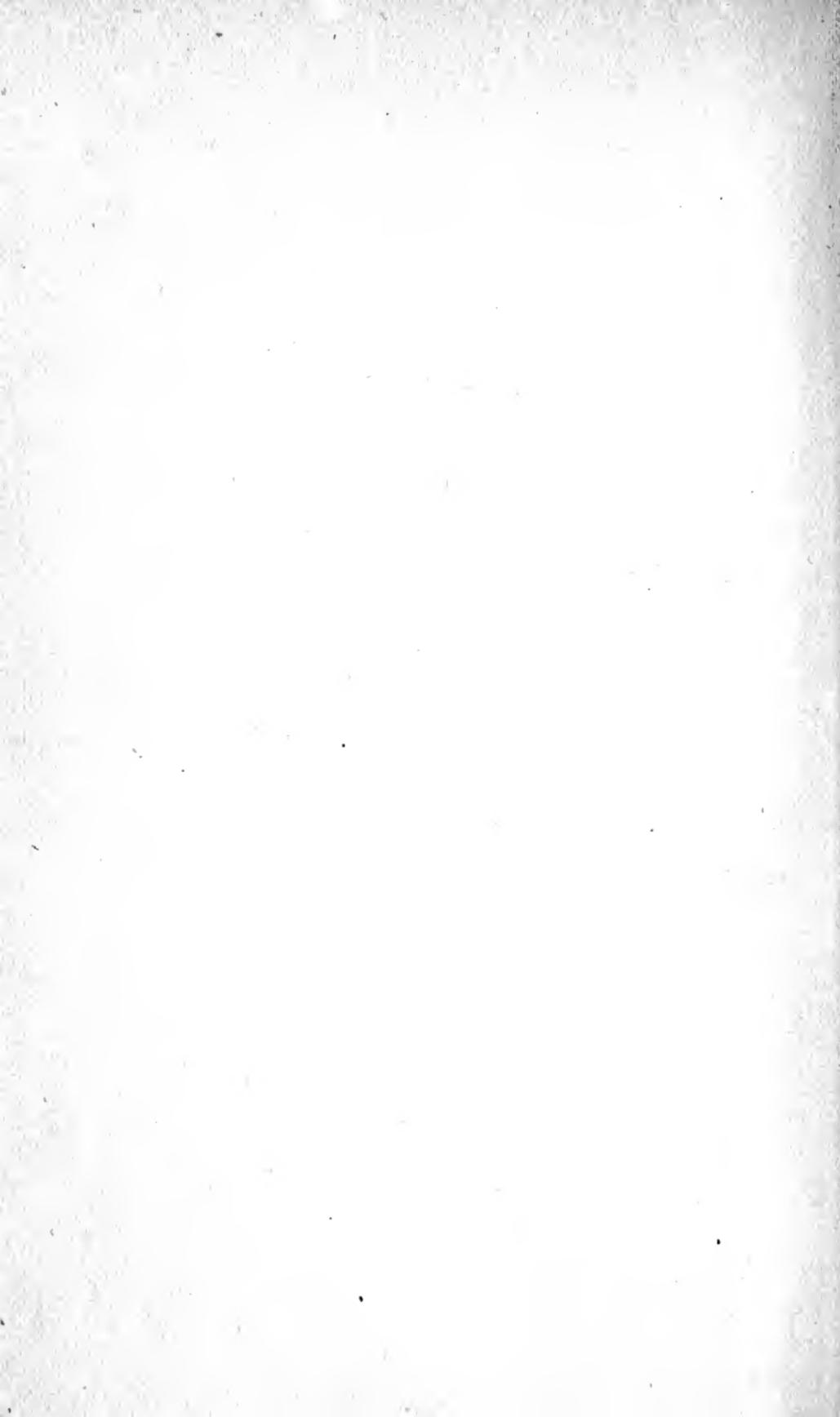
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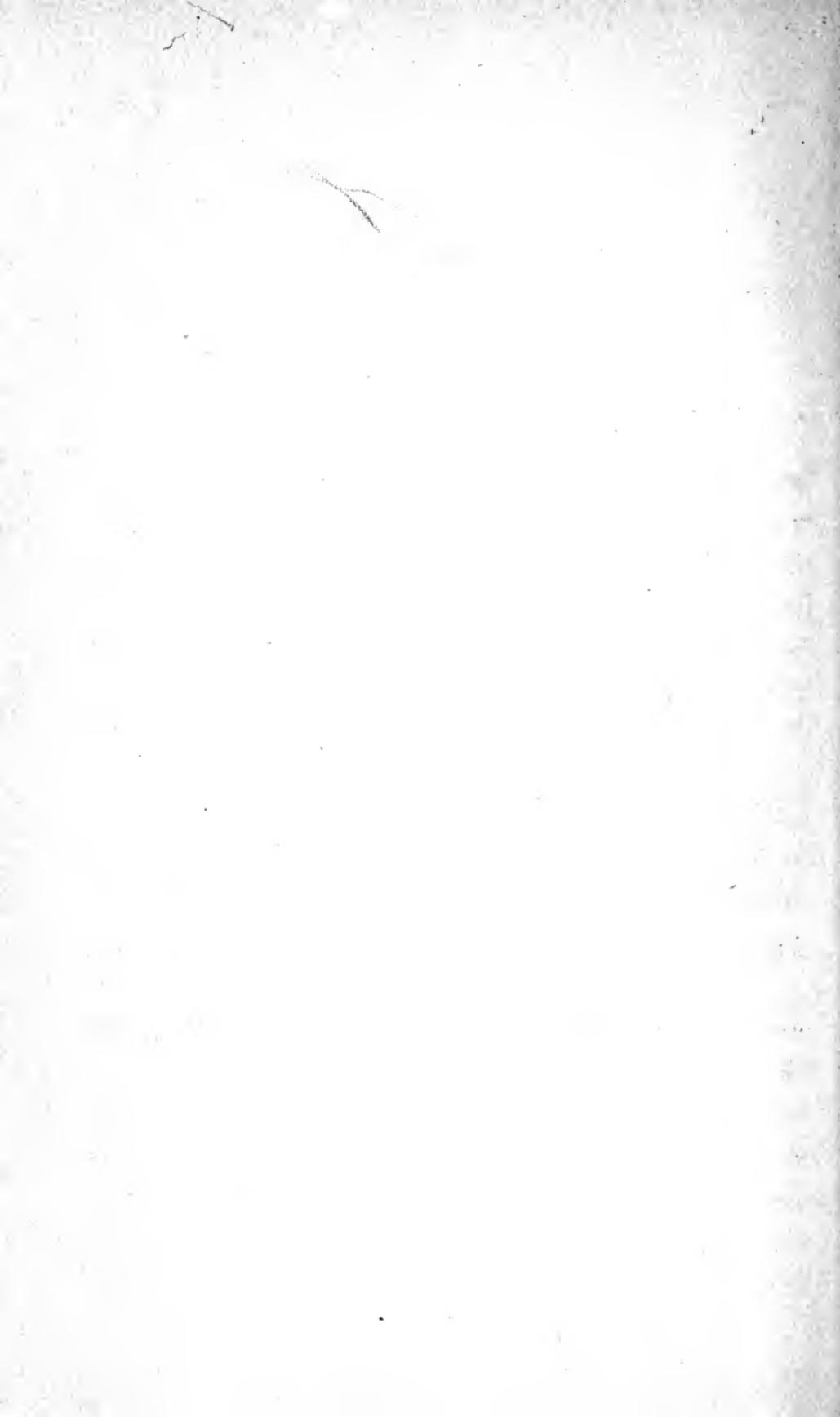
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INTRODUCTION.

FEW who have not felt the hot flush of shame and helpless resentment arising from unnamable insult—who have not known the conflict of hunger and shivering disgust incident to the eating of putrid food—who have not been beaten, starved, deprived of sleep, and hounded at useless work until self-respect and manhood become abstractions—in short, few besides slaves, Siberian exiles and merchant sailors—who know the possibilities in human savagery—may read this book without doubting the author's veracity—without wondering if the atrocious torture described herein could ever have been inflicted under the American flag, by Americans, upon men of their own race and language.

To answer and forestall such doubt and wonder, this introduction is written ; and it is written by one who knows—one who will carry to his grave scars of brass-knuckles and belaying-pins, who will suffer to the end from the ineradicable taint in his veins of scurvy, whose stature has been shortened by torturing labor in childhood, whose soul will be held while he lives by a hatred of oppression and tyranny born, not merely of

altruistic sympathy, but of his own suffering ; and in this lies his desire to speak and his claim to consideration.

It is a pity that this book is not written up to date—that it cannot tell of the Hellship of to-day as it does of the Hellship of the sixties ; for, since that time matters have not improved. Flogging has been abolished by law, but the knuckle-duster, the belaying-pin, the heaver and the handspike remain. The quality and the quantity of provisions have improved—on the statute books, but scurvy-ships still come into port with men in their forecastles swollen and foul with disease loathsome as leprosy, and men, broken and disfigured for life, who seek redress in courts that will not convict. To-day, thirty years after the period of which this book speaks, the terms Yankeeship and Hellship are synonymous, and the lofty, graceful, beautiful triumph of the ship-builder's art, which carries the Stars and Stripes to all ports of the earth, is avoided and feared by the sailors of all nations as the worse found, worse manned vessel that floats, and is known—to those who know—as the theater of inhuman barbarity that can not be paralleled in the *regime* of any Oriental despot now alive. An intelligent sailor signs in an American deep-water ship only when compelled by circumstances, and quits her when he can, often at the risk of his life by swim-

ming, always at the certainty of imprisonment if caught, and the sacrifice of wages due.

Leaving aside legal possibilities, which, under the existing methods of procedure are futile, the question naturally arises, why do men in the majority submit to such terrible minority rule. Why may not this question be settled by those involved instead of becoming a problem for the attention of law-makers and reformers? Why must twenty men living in the forward end of a ship submit to the tyranny of a quarter of their number who live in the after end?

The reason is hidden and but partly shown in the iron-hard traditions of sea-faring, which date from the days of the Phœnician galleys, when the only sailors were slaves, who pulled at their oars until they died, and were then—as has been said—chopped in pieces and passed out the port-holes. These traditions descended through the ages of militant seamanship, when sailors were armed to fight an enemy and hanged from the yard-arm for disobedience of orders. They are in full force to-day in the navies of the world, and an insubordinate, or deserting man-of-war's-man is punished with the severity accorded to criminals. These traditions reach to the merchant marine, and a sailor who wishes to quit work may do so only at the loss of the money due him, and in a foreign port, at the risk of imprisonment as a malefactor.

Thus we have masters and mates of merchant ships to-day who seem to regard their positions as sacred by divine right—as though the divinity of kings surrounded and protected them. They may insult a seaman, with an insult that would bring them instant death in a border town, and should the seaman protest he invites an authorized blow. Should he return this, or attempt to, he is a mutineer; and mutineers may be shot, and the murder is sanctioned by the law of a free country.

So much for the ethical reason of a sailor's submission to minority rule. But, strong as it is, there is a stronger behind it—the sailor is practically at a physical disadvantage. In a crew of twenty men there are not usually as many as four who are of equal size, courage, and intelligence, to the weakest of the after-guard; for this is always attended to in the picking of the crew. Sheath-knives are confiscated, or the points are broken off, when the crew joins the ship, while the mates regard revolvers as tools of their trade, and the captain puts strong faith in double-barreled shot-guns loaded with buck-shot. Belaying-pins are free for all, but these will not prevail against an equal number on the other side; and a crew, marching aft to arbitrate with the captain, must face this battery of powder and shot, and may also be cheered by the sight of the carpenter flourishing his broad-axe, and the appearance of the cook and steward carrying buckets of scalding

water and dippers with which to scatter it. Truly, a strike at sea is a serious proposition.

Were American ships manned by native-born American sailors, they could do much, far short of mutiny, to exact consideration from captains and mates ; but they are not. There are few American sailors afloat ; so, partly from necessity, partly from the captain's choice, the fore-castle of an out-bound American ship is filled with a mixed crew, hardly any three of which are of the same nationality. And this is the crew that is wanted. Let the sea ports be canvassed and a crew gathered together—the best of able seamen, strong, sober, intelligent, respectful and self-respecting men—and it is safe to say that an American shipmaster would refuse them if they were all of one nationality. The reason is plain — he could not safely ill-treat them, and he would not dare the experiment of treating them well. It is the cowardice of despotism.

But, provided he has able officers to “lick them into shape,” he will not hesitate to take his valuable ship and cargo to sea with a heterogeneous crew, representing the maritime nations of the earth, among whom only a few may speak English, and carefully chosen by himself or the crimps, not for their seamanly qualities, but for their weaknesses — their under-development, stupid faces and diverse nationality ; for he knows that this crew will be too occupied

with mutual spites and jealousies to combine and resist oppression.

Now, for the other end of the physical equation. In England, where sailors are protected, an educational qualification is demanded, and before a sailor may sign as an officer he must pass an examination and receive a certificate. But in American ships, when considerations of friendship or family relationship do not contribute, a sailor is promoted for the breadth of his shoulders and the size of his fist. Any able seaman can do a third, or second-mate's work, and, already brutalized by illtreatment, he remains so, and pays his debt of tyranny to those beneath him. He may learn enough of navigation to eventually command a ship, but he cannot escape the traditions which made him a brute, and he does his share toward perpetuating them.

And he is conscientious in his savagery—he thinks he is right; and if remonstrated with by passenger or other humane onlooker, his pained amazement would be ludicrous, were it not so abhorrent; for, though he may be naturally the kindest of men in his dealings on shore,—a lover of children and animals—he cannot comprehend that a number of human beings living in a fore-castle, who are employed merely to handle a ship and keep her in repair, may be held at work without insult and cruelty. The terrible eti-

quette of the slave galley grips his soul and limits his understanding.

Is there a remedy? Yes, several, but power of one generation to apply.

England is solving the problem by educating her officers; but an educational standard, such a she requires of second mates, suddenly enforced in this country, would disqualify most commanders and officers of American sailing ships. For it is generally conceded that very few of them can do more than take meridian observations and find longitude by chronometer sights.

Were the laws now on our statute books rigidly enforced, a large majority of American captains and mates would be sent to the penitentiary, and not a few to the gallows or electric chair.

These two remedies would paralyze our small, but growing commerce, and no thinking, observing man may hope for their application. The vast moneyed interest at stake would rise up and forbid it.

A law directed at the fountain-head—the ship-owner's pocket—would work wonders of reform, if it could be passed and enforced; but if our courts will not protect a sailor from torture, starvation and murder, how may he hope to obtain damages?

We must wait. The establishment in every seaport of schoolships—and, in view of our coming commerce

this will be found necessary—where boys may be taught seamanship and navigation without becoming dehumanized by suffering, and the extension of the cadet system now in force aboard mail steamers, will in time, as the present generation of brutes die off or retire, place upon our quarter-decks officers who have no debt to pay, and fill our forecastles with men who have none to acquire. This will eliminate the Hell-ship.

And there are some of those who know—some of those who may read this volume without wonder and doubt—who are looking forward in the bitterness of their souls to a more certain remedy—the final abolition of the sailing ship. For, surely as the American sailor is being driven from the sea because unfitted to survive in a slave's environment, so surely must the sailing ship disappear in the competition with steam.

MORGAN ROBERTSON.

THE SHELLBACK

OR

AT SEA IN THE 'SIXTIES

CONCERNING THE YARN-TELLER.

“WHAT a glorious night!”

I think if the most fastidious admirer of nocturnal beauty could have stepped out on the “Blythswood” verandah overlooking the Brisbane River that summer night he could hardly have helped echoing the exclamation.

The day had been hot, but now the evening breeze came gently sighing up the river, fanning our heated cheeks and serving to keep off the mosquitoes, whose attentions might otherwise have been too engrossing to be pleasant. The moon shone brightly overhead, bathing the whole landscape in a shimmering liquid, silvery light, which cannot be described, but requires to be seen to be appreciated.

The broad path that led down past the race-course to the river gleamed in a bold outline of white till lost in the distance, where it turned off on either hand to Breakfast Creek or the Hamilton; and the shadows cast by the fences, trees, and houses were sharp and distinct as cameos cut in ebony.

It was a glorious night; such as often succeeds the torrid day in Queensland, when, fatigued by the fervid heat, we are glad, as evening falls, to rest on the broad verandah, too listless to read, and, lacking energy to go into the heated rooms and make music, we prefer to listen to the musical plash of the little waves which the gentle night-wind now and again wafts up from the river below, and pass the time "yarning," as we say in Australia, in the complete enjoyment of the *dolce far niente*. This evening we were, as usual, all sitting out on the verandah, enjoying the luxury for the first time in fourteen hours or so of feeling comparatively cool, and the visitor who had made the natural but not startlingly original remark which begins this chapter was my old chum Alec Boyd, who had dropped in from Nundah for his customary pipe and chat.

I fancy only those who have had a considerable acquaintance with rolling stones can ever

have met such a thorough and interesting specimen of the genus. For my part, I rather like rolling stones, for though they may gather no moss, in the sense of this world's gear, for their own especial benefit, yet they contrive to wind round them many a strand of quaint experience and adventure which they occasionally unroll for the benefit of their friends.

Who that ever has seen Boyd's erect, military figure, with the unconscious swagger of a heavy dragoon, the keen blue eye, with the humorous twinkle in the corner of it, the long tawny moustache, which, like the Berserker of old, he might (at a pinch, or rather at a stretch) have tied at the back of his head—could ever forget him? Not I, i' faith, nor any of his friends! He was by way of being a Scotsman, and would have been one quite if his mother had thought fit to give him birth in the land of his forefathers; but, judging by the number of languages he knew, he must have first seen the light somewhere on the continent of Europe, and been brought up all over it, drawing them in by inspiration with his mother's milk—that is, if anything so mild ever passed his lips. If Scots he were (and I hae ma doots, for his accent in speaking the Doric smacked somewhat of the South, as if

he had picked it up by observation, not by intuition), he had dropped most of the national characteristics when he crossed the line, for he was as open-handed, open-hearted, impulsive, incautious an individual as you would wish to meet in a summer day.

The British army is believed to be capable of going anywhere and doing anything, but Boyd "goes one better," for he already has been everywhere and done everything—except make a fortune! I have known him in several different capacities myself. He was a sugar planter once, then a miner, a squatter, a Government agent on board a labour vessel in the Pacific, a newspaper editor, a school inspector, and a "dominie"—all these parts and many more, from super to leading gentleman, has old Boyd played in the comedy of life; but I have not the playbills by me, and cannot remember them every one.

But besides all that he has been, he is a major in the local artillery, a contributor to the illustrated papers, a writer for the press, a leading light in the Royal Geographical Society, an authority on botany and geology, and last, but not least, one of the buttresses of the Johnsonian Club, our representative of Bohemia in Brisbane.

How he has managed it all chronologically I

cannot imagine, for he is only in the early fifties, and where he got his education, and when, I am at a loss to conceive, for he speaks fluently French, Italian, and German (not to say anything about Welsh), while in mathematics he is such a proficient that I am credibly informed he wrote a key to the first four books of Euclid before he was twelve years old.

Be that as it may, he was, or rather is, a thoroughly interesting companion, and he and I, waifs and strays in the dry and thirsty land of Queensland, naturally "collogued," and enjoyed talking about experiences we had had in the great world beyond before we had drifted into the intellectual eddy which now held us in its circling thrall.

Boyd had been so many things that if he had announced that he once had been a dancing master it would have occasioned me no surprise; so when on this particular night he informed me that he had served his time at sea, it appeared to me the most natural thing in the world, though it added one more difficulty to the chronological puzzle. It came about in this wise. Down in the river which ran at our feet, anchored bow and stern in the Bulimba reach, lay the *Jelunga*, a huge steamer of the British India fleet. She had touched the ground and been compelled to lie

up till the flood tide came. Just behind her, also moored in the river—because the leviathan blocked the way—lay a fine American clipper ship, whose tall spars seemed to scrape the skies, and whose rigging in bewildering yet harmonious profusion of outline was sharply defined in the bright moonlight.

“Ah!” cried Boyd, “look upon this picture and on that; see that ugly iron steam tank alongside of a Yankee clipper! Why, the one is an eyesore to an old sailor, and the other a picture.”

“Yes,” said I, “that may be true enough from the old sailor’s point of view, but where’s the old sailor?”

“Why,” said he, “here he is. Would you be surprised to learn that I served my time at sea, and on board of a Yankee ship into the bargain?”

“My dear boy,” replied I apologetically, “if you told me that you had discovered Australia with Captain Cook it wouldn’t surprise me in the least, and what’s more, I would believe you! Go ahead, old man, out with it. I see you are dying to tell us a yarn.”

“Aisy there now,” whispered old Morris. “Don’t ye see he’s coming about?—and if ye disturb him you’ll make him miss stays. Let him get full on the port tack, with plenty of sea room, and I’ll

be bound he'll spin ye a yarn from here to Melbourne."

"All right," said I, "the night is young yet: it's too hot to sleep—stand by."

And we did stand by. Morris silently filled the empty tumbler which stood adjacent to our friend, while I unobtrusively passed him a plug of "ruby twist," and after Boyd had fairly set a-going his second pipe he disburdened himself of his tale of the sea, which will be found in the following pages.

When he had finished it, it seemed to us, sitting there on the verandah looking out on the peaceful scene, as if it were quite impossible that in this year of grace such terrible cruelties could be enacted as had been witnessed by our friend on board of the *Altamont*. He assured us, however, that it was by no means impossible, though very much less frequent than thirty years ago. Indeed, only a year or so before there had come into the quiet river which lay at our feet a ship on whose deck scenes as tragic, cruelties as great, had been actually proved to have occurred.

I have not put the tale before my readers quite in the sequence in which it was told. Much interesting information about a sailor's work and life, many picturesque reminiscences of peril and adventure, and many sage reflections useful to

those who might be contemplating "going down to the sea in ships" in a professional way, had been interwoven with it.

But as this might interest only a certain number of readers, I have thought it better not to interfere with the even flow of the "yarn," which I am sure will interest all, and have relegated this extraneous matter to the notes and appendix, where it will be easily available for all who wish to read it.

My fair readers who may not care for technical details will find that in the first part I have done their skipping for them, but I hope some of them may have sufficient interest in the life of "poor Jack" to follow him into the succeeding pages, and enough curiosity to take a peep into the "sailor's parlour."

There the adventurous will hear many a thrilling yarn to repay them for their trouble, but the ladies must do the skipping for themselves, for with the yarn proper my task as editor ends.

A. C.

CHAPTER I.

WHICH INTRODUCES THE "ALTAMONT."

WHY I went to sea as a sailor I can hardly say. Perhaps it was because I always loved the sea, and ships and sailors; perhaps I wished to see more of the world. There was no other reason. I was well off, and, for a lad, had a good income. Only a fortnight previously I had refused to go home in a P. and O. steamer with my brother, who was returning to England with his bride. A few days after he had left, I strolled into his office in Melbourne, where I was employed as clerk. I had had a long trip up the country beyond the Murray into the New South Wales territory, and had just received a letter from home, urging my return, as it was imperative that I should get ready as soon as possible for the Army examination. All my ancestors, from Macbeth downwards, having been men of the sword, it was only natural that I should follow suit.

Well, there was plenty of time for that, as I was already well educated for my age, so I decided to look about me a little before settling down to garrison life.

When I first entered the office I had happened to meet a very genial ship-captain named Hawkins. He was about to sail for London with a cargo of wool, tallow, hides, bones, and rags, when his ship took fire at the Williamstown Pier, and was burnt to the water's edge.

I had several talks with him about a seafaring life, and had half a mind to try it under his auspices; but the destruction of his ship put an end to that scheme. A day or two afterwards I met another captain, whose ship, the *Altamont*, had also been consigned to my brother's house. He was ready to sail, and was fixing up the last of his crew, and as names did not so much matter so long as he had the men, some of the clerks' names were put down, and mine amongst the number.

This Captain Barton was a most delightful man. I had a long talk with him, and the upshot was that I declared myself willing to sign "articles" and go with him if he would take me. He consented at once.

"I want another lad aft," he said, "and you seem just the cut of a sailor. So, if you like to go, you'll get two pounds a month, and you'll learn seamanship and navigation with the other lads. There is a cabin aft all to yourselves, so you won't be amongst the crew. I don't like my boys to



"CAPTAIN BARTON WAS A MOST DELIGHTFUL MAN."

get too much among the men. They learn a lot of bad language; and instead of working steadily with a view to commanding a ship some day, they lie about the fore-castle listening to the lying yarns of the old hands, and so get unfitted to be placed in any position of responsibility. My boys are gentlemen's sons, and I like to treat them as such. Now, I sail in three days for Callao, from there to the Chincha Islands, load up with guano, and then home to Cork for orders. So it's all settled, eh? You be aboard with your chest to-morrow, and, if you do your duty properly, I'll look after you, and you'll have a good time of it."

I assured him I would not fail to make my appearance at the appointed time. When he went away, I fell to dreaming of what was before me. There was a chance thrown in my way of seeing the world. Callao, Lima, Peru, Chili, the Andes, and all the other glorious places on the Pacific slope of South America of which I had only read—I expected to visit them all, and only longed for the eventful day to come. The three intervening days (for I afterwards arranged to remain on shore till the last moment) I spent in getting together what I considered to be a correct seaman's outfit, not forgetting an immense waterproof coat which reached to my heels—a garment very serviceable on shore,

but, as I afterwards found, very inconvenient at sea, at least for a sailor who was neither captain nor officer.

On the third day I said good-bye to my friends in Melbourne, and, hiring a boat at the pier, was pulled off to the ship. As I drew near to her, she seemed a perfect monster. Being in ballast, she floated very high and looked also a great deal larger than I afterwards found her to be.

The boatman having hooked on to the ladder, or, rather, gangway plank, I went up and got on deck, my portmanteau being hoisted on board by a couple of the men. I had not brought a sea-chest, as the leather convenience was very large, new, and stiff, and would hold as many clothes as were needed for a sailor for a year or two.

Now, although I could not at that time have given a description of the ship, I may as well do it in this place, so that I may avoid repetition hereafter.

She was a full-rigged, flush-decked wooden ship of 1,720 tons register, carrying a main royal. She was very heavily sparred, with double topsail yards. Aft there was a roomy wheelhouse, on each side of which were the berths of the mate and second mate. Amidships was the cook's galley, and forward the forecastle or "seamen's

parlour," as the men called it, to which access was obtained by a hatchway in the deck.

The decks were beautifully clean and white, and the brasswork, of which there was a great quantity, glittered like gold.

Having gazed about me in a sort of hopeless way, wondering whether I would ever be able to muster courage to climb as high as the royal yard, which looked to be about two hundred feet from the deck I got back to the after-gangway and found that my portmanteau had been removed during my absence. A couple of sailors were coming up from below, and one of them, jerking his head towards me, remarked that "he s'posed I was the Johnny as owned the leather bag."

Just then somebody in shirt sleeves roared out an unintelligible order — unintelligible to me at least—and the two men, being joined by another, began to haul on a rope, already hauled so tight that it seemed as if another pull would part it.

One of them, a great, big, burly-looking fellow, with a plug of tobacco in his mouth, told me to "tail on" to the end of the rope, and pass it through the snatch block. I understood the meaning of "tailing on" well enough, but as to the "snatch block" I was, metaphorically speaking,

“all at sea,” so I concluded to treat the big fellow with silent contempt.

As I moved off to the side of the ship, I heard him say: “Oh! here’s Lord Bugagee come aboard at last!”

I paid no attention to the sarcasm, but, seeing a shore boat alongside, I hailed it, and was just going down the gangway plank, intending to take a run on shore and make some purchases, when the man in the shirt sleeves sang out:

“Hillo! young shaver! Where are you off to?”

“Oh! Just going ashore for an hour or two,” I said.

“Ho—you are? And may I ask who gave you leave?” he inquired.

“Who gave me leave?” I echoed. “Why, nobody. Can’t I go ashore when I please?”

“Go when you please!” ejaculated he of the shirt sleeves. “Well! this is a rum start. Why d—— my eyes, do you know who I am?”

“I suppose you’re one of the sailors,” I said carelessly, “and you are not remarkable for civility or choice language. Good-morning.”

I was about to pass him and get into the boat, when he took me by the collar and pulled me inboard.

“Now jest you listen here, my lad,” he said. “I’ve been told by the captain that he’s taken

you aboard this ship, and he also told me that you were a d—— young scapegrace, that spends money faster than honest men can earn it. (God help me! That's true as regards myself)." This was a sort of "aside," and I afterwards found that he had a remarkable habit of interpolating remarks, which he supposed to be only heard by himself. "Do you know," he went on, "that you're on the articles, signed, sealed, and delivered (and a —— sight too nice a lad to be here). You're no longer your own master. When you want so much as to scratch your head, you've got to ask leave, let alone going ashore. (What the fool wanted to leave it for beats my going to sea.) And you've got to ask leave of the Almighty, and that's me aboard this here ship. Do you know what a mate is — a chief officer? I'm the mate — I, John Dickens (and a softer idiot never scraped a royal mast). I'm everything here, when the 'old man' ain't aboard. Now, can you take that in, eh—or do you want it rubbed in?"

"Pheugh!" I blew a long *sotto voce* whistle. "I have put my foot in it now," I said to myself. The chief officer! The first lieutenant (as I should then have called him), and in his shirt sleeves, too! No epaulettes, not even a brass button! How the deuce was I to know him from a common sailor,

especially as his hands were hard and horny, and his fingers more crooked than those of a navvy.

He noticed my astonishment at the appearance of the vice-captain, and replied to my looks :

“ Ah, my lad, I see you reckon I ought to be marled in a blue coat and brass fixin’s, kid gloves, and an eye-glass, with a tall complexioned hat and a ‘d——n my eyes’ necktie, don’t you? Wait a bit. When you’ve been a dog-watch at sea, you’ll know different.”

I was naturally very polite, and as I fancied I could detect a kindly twinkle in the old fellow’s eye, I feared I had hurt his feelings by supposing him to be a common sailor, so I said I was very sorry, and now I knew one part of my duty, would he mind letting me go ashore for an hour or two?

He at once gave the required consent, and suggested that if I tapped my relative’s stores and brought off a few bottles of good brandy to pay my footing when introduced to my future messmates in the boys’ berth, it would do me no harm.

I promised to attend to this important matter, and, getting into the boat, was on shore in a few minutes.

I must say I felt rather proud of belonging to that big ship, as I turned to look at her from the pier. My only regret lay in the fact that, despite

her size, she was only a merchant ship after all, and her mate wore no coat or waistcoat, and had dirty hands. However, I was soon up in Melbourne at the warehouse, busy routing out some more clothes, some tobacco, and the brandy. Laden with these stores, I hastened to Williamstown, and at the pier found a ship's boat "manned" by three boys. Two of these I had noticed on board the *Altamont*, so I asked them if they would pull me on board. They said they did not dare to leave the steps, as they had been sent to wait for the captain; but they advised me to get aboard at once, so that the "old man" might not see the medical comforts I was so unblushingly carrying.

On my saying that the "old man" had suggested my bringing them, they laughed and told me that the captain was always called the "old man," adding that they would assist at a jollification when they got aboard. I took their advice and went off in another boat.

The mate, who was on the look-out for me, now took me in charge. He first led me below and showed me the boys' berth, which was a very roomy cabin aft. There were four separate cabins in it, occupied by the four boys, the third mate, boatswain, and carpenter. In the centre was a fair-sized dining-room, through which passed the lower

portion of the mizzen-mast. There was plenty of light from a skylight overhead and from the companion way. A scuttle-butt stood at the foot of the ladder, containing our allowance of fresh water, and, as the mate said, it was splendid water, especially if something were added to it to take off the taste.

This very broad hint was not thrown away upon me. I produced a bottle of brandy, Mr. Dickens brought forth a corkscrew, and the bottle was duly sampled. We drank each other's health and rapidly became very good friends. He told me all he knew about the skipper, which was not much, as he had only been a fortnight on board, having shipped in Melbourne. He had an idea that at sea the captain would prove a bit of a bully. Even in port, he was constantly growling and swearing at his officers and men. I was rather surprised at this, as he had been so particularly affable and genial to me at my brother's office.

"Yes, my boy," said the mate, "but once we lift anchor, there'll be no more sherry and sandwiches and swell dinners at the consignee's expense, and the consignee's relative—poor devil!—will soon find the difference. Besides, he's not the regular skipper of the *Altamont*. The old skipper's laid up in New York, and our friend's only got her for this voyage, and you bet it will be a long one, 'specially as we're

bound for Callao. 'More days, more dollars' will be the old man's motto this trip. (What an old fool I am to be telling this to this boy!) Now, lad, I'm off. Keep your weather eye lifted. Do all you're told without a grunt, even if it's to clean out the old sow's sty yonder, and you'll get on right enough. Have you got a sextant and an epitome?"

I told him I had procured them by the captain's advice, and showed them to him.

"Ah! a jackass sextant, I see. However, that'll do all you want. Now, mind what I tell you. Stick to navigation, boy. The old man's death on teaching youngsters to navigate. You get the right side of him that way. Once you can navigate the ship in fair weather or foul, you're on the first step of the ladder that leads to the weather side of the quarter-deck (but not always to command, as I know too well.) Now, there's eight bells—dinner-time. I'm off."

Seeing that a lad was laying a cloth on the table in what I may henceforth call *our* berth, I concluded that dinner would soon be ready, so I lay down on my bunk to ruminate.

"Upon my word," I thought, "Alec Boyd, you seem likely to have a fair share of experience in the world before you take his Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief at the word of his letter to the

governor, and allow him to provide for your future military career—after you have passed the exam. That same examination does not at present bear the appearance of coming off in the near future, judging by the mate's report of my new master. Let's see. You've been eighteen months in Australia, and in that time have been a clerk, a timber-getter, a charcoal-burner, a storeman, a stock-man, a horse-dealer, and now you've turned sailor. What next? Why, next, of course, the army. No more knocking about like this for me. It's pleasant for a time, as a holiday; but when one is hard up it's not so pleasant. By the way, let's overhaul the purse. I wonder how much I have left?"

Five shillings, a threepenny-bit, and two coppers bearing the device of Holloway of pill and ointment fame, was the result of an inspection of purse and pockets.

"By Jove!" I pursued; "this will never do. I must get some more. But how? I can't go ashore again. Dickens plainly told me that. The captain's coming on board, and we weigh anchor this evening. What an ass I was not to ask for some in town! Then there's my fiddle. Left behind, of course. I could possibly have sold it in Callao if I wanted money. Now that chance is gone. What the deuce is to be done?"

"Below there!" sang out just then a voice which I recognised as the captain's. "Come on deck, boy. Mr. M. has brought you some more traps. D—— if you won't turn my ship into a furnishing warehouse!" and he laughed, but I did not like the laugh. It had not a healthy sound about it. I like a laugh that begins at a man's eyebrows and rolls down all over him like an avalanche, shaking the neighbourhood with its jolly rumbling. The captain's laugh was a low, smileless chuckle, very Mephistophelean in character. I had ugly evidence of the value of his laugh a few months later. On deck I found my brother's partner, who had good-naturedly brought me my fiddle, several pounds of good tobacco, an extra blanket, and a few other unconsidered trifles. He did not stay long, as he was wanted on shore; so he bade me good-bye in a very friendly manner, and I never clapped eyes on him again until thirty-one years afterwards, when on a visit to Melbourne from Queensland. He then looked exactly as he had done when I had last seen him aboard the *Altamont*. He was pulled ashore in a shore boat, and the captain ordered the boys and a few ordinary seamen to get the ship's boat hoisted up and secured.

CHAPTER II.

A SAILORS' "SHANTEY."

As soon as the boat was hoisted up, the boys went down with me into our berth, and began asking me all kinds of questions. They overhauled my "leather bag," as they called it, and passed judgment upon each item of dress. The waterproof they denounced loudly. It was a "mate's coat," they said. Mates didn't go aloft (chief mates didn't, at least), and, therefore, they could wear long coats in wet weather. Everyone else wore short oilskin jackets and trousers, which didn't flap about the legs and impede nimble motion aloft. So it was decided that if I could not effect an exchange with some foremast hand, the coat must be "razeed," *i.e.*, cut down to shorter dimensions.

When at the bottom of the "potato sack" (another name for the unfortunate portmanteau) they arrived at the brandy, they desisted from further search. The open bottle was taken out and placed on the dinner table. The third mate, Mr. See, who had just come down to dinner, was invited to drink my health, and when all

had taken a stiff tot, the steward of the berth was called by the smallest boy of the four :

"Here, Scouse! you tief! Here's a tot for you to drink your new mather's health; and bad luck to you, Scouse, if the beans are burned this day. Clear out now, ye baste, and don't be spluttering all over the table!"

Scouse, whose real name was Joseph Brown, was an amiable sort of youth about sixteen years of age, but he had a terrible impediment in his speech, and as he was not very brave, he stood in great dread of the fourteen-year-old Irish bantam cock who had just addressed him.

Before going any further, I may as well describe my shipmates, as it will save trouble hereafter.

To begin with the captain. He was a fine, handsome man, over six feet high, broad in proportion and very powerful. He had, I was told, been in the American Navy, but left after a few years and entered the merchant service. He could be a most gentlemanly and pleasant companion amongst his equals or superiors, but at sea he rarely addressed anyone except on duty, and on such occasions the best of his friends would not have the hardihood to call him polite. He was very scientific, and liked to teach the boys the use of the various

instruments used in navigation. But woe betide the unhappy foremast Jack whom he caught with a sextant. Overboard went the instrument, and the unhappy man, who had probably been master of his own ship at no distant date, was overwhelmed with torrents of blasphemy accompanied by kicks and blows, till he escaped below. But I shall have plenty to say about the captain as the story proceeds.

The chief mate was an elderly bald-headed man, naturally kindhearted, but whose kindly instincts had to be repressed when the captain was within earshot. His great fault was weakness in dealing with the men, added to which he was supposed not to be a good seaman. It is of no use for an officer to ship on any vessel unless he is full of "go," least of all on an American vessel. He must there know his duty "up to the knocker," as they say. As long as the men know him to be a good sailor, they will put up with all sorts of abuse and ill-treatment at his hands. On board a Yankee ship he must be a regular "ring-tailed roarer," smart, spry, and able to be everywhere at once, night and day. Above all, he must be able to *make* work for the crew.

Amongst such crews as were shipped in those days there were always one or two sea-lawyers, who led the rest in every act of insubordination.

They fomented discontent, and often invited their followers to open mutiny. Give such fellows a moment to themselves, and, in figurative language, there would be "hell to pay" in no time.

Good old Mr. Dickens was not made of the stuff required for a Yankee mate, a fact the men were not long in discovering, and thenceforth his life was a burden to him.

The second mate, Mr. Marshall, was of the usual type of officer who ships in a different ship every voyage. He was a poorly educated man, but a fair sailor, though the captain very seldom gave him an opportunity of showing what he could do. He, of course, kicked and bullied the men, but he rarely troubled the boys, who were under the captain's special protection.

Our third mate was Mr. See, an Englishman, a jolly sort of young fellow, always up to a lark on shore, and generally popular with everyone but the captain; but, as no one was popular with the old man, that did not much matter.

The carpenter, "Chips" as he is named on board ship, was a huge, bilious, sour, Presbyterian Scotsman, who made no friends and took a jaundiced view of life generally. Poor fellow! his carpentering and sea-going came to a painful end before he left the ship.

The next important functionary was John Foreman; the boatswain—a splendid seaman, a favourite with the men and boys, and one who had small fear of captain or mates. He knew his work. Edward Brown and Sarah his wife—coloured people—were cook and stewardess. There being no passengers, however, Mrs. Brown had a pleasant life of it, and as she was very good to us boys, we did all we could to help her in numerous little ways.

The cook, or “doctor” (to give him his sea title) is a great functionary on board ship. He rules supreme in the galley; and the foremast hands, ay, and even the officers, like to be “well in” with him. He can allow or forbid wet clothes to be hung to dry in his galley. He can provide many a surreptitious pot of coffee on a cold wet morning, and can give permission to a favoured few to sit and toast their toes and frozen fingers at the fire. He is a person worth cultivating.

I haven't yet mentioned the captain's steward. He was the best-hated man in the ship. Cringing and servile to the captain, he was offensive and insulting to the officers and boys, who dared not retaliate with the *argumentum ad hominem* for fear of the captain's wrath. It was no use to complain of him, as the captain would believe nothing against him. All the boys could do was to

christen him "Tallow Dips," and apply the epithet to him whenever he spoke to us. Of course, he could not complain of this to his master, but it enraged him so much that he put in practice every mean spite in his power to make us uncomfortable. He once tried to induce the captain to take our steward into the cabin, but the old man would not allow our one comfort to be interfered with, and all "Dips" gained by the move was an intensification of our hatred of him. The boys were a good average lot, good-tempered, up to all kinds of fun, and, of course, inclined to shirk everything in the way of duty. The cock of the berth was Banks, a little old-fashioned Irish lad of fourteen, the son of a doctor in Ireland. He was a prime little fellow aloft. During the two years he had been at sea he had learnt a surprising amount of his profession. He preferred the fore-castle to the steerage, and, spite of the captain's prohibition, he could be found there as often as in our part of the ship. Of the other two, one was a Liverpool boy named Wilkinson, better fitted for a timber drogher than for a ship like ours. He was heavy and rather illiterate. I believe his father was a wealthy ship-chandler in Liverpool.

The third was a bright, chubby, cheerful lad, always laughing. Whence Billy Sharpe came, or

who he was, I never knew, but he was a capital messmate.

I have already shown how I came to find myself on board an American merchant ship as a "boy."

Our crew were mainly "Dutchmen." This does not mean that they were Hollanders, but the Americans call sailors of every nation except themselves and the English "Dutchmen." A Frenchman or a German is a Dutchman, so is an Italian or a Greek. As a rule, a crew of Dutchmen is a difficult nut to crack. Some are good men, some mere "sojers" (useless as seamen-loafers). They do not pull well together, and when any trouble arises, there is no unanimity amongst them, and no reforms are possible. The captain and officers look upon them with contempt, and treat them far worse than dogs.

One of our crew shipped in Melbourne as an able seaman, and turned out never to have been on board any but a convict ship. He had long ago served his "time," and took the first opportunity of getting away from a country where he had doubtless had many sad experiences. The crew consisted of fifteen able seamen, five ordinary seamen, four boys; the rest included the boatswain, carpenter, cook, two stewards, three mates, and the captain.

Considering the size of the ship and the spread of her canvas, fifteen able seamen were not a large crew, but it was destined to be still further reduced before we saw old England. There was a fair lot of live-stock on board, seeing that there were no passengers. Pigs predominated, there being no less than sixteen, and a sow about to farrow. Turkeys, geese, ducks, and fowls for the cabin table constituted the feathered luxuries. Finally the living freight was made up by some dogs and cats.

Having thus cleared the way, so to speak, I will get on with the story.

Young Banks and I soon became sworn allies. Poor lad! he was never to see the green hills of Wicklow again. Had he lived, he would now have commanded a fine ship, possibly an Atlantic "greyhound." We backed each other up in all sorts of schemes and dodges which we practised for obtaining large supplies of good things out of "Dips's" pantry, and it was our glory to get this sneaking toady into a row. He, however, always escaped a rope's-ending, and managed to throw any blame which might have attached to himself on poor, unoffending, stuttering "Scouse," whom I left dishing up our dinner. The fare was excellent—soup, roast beef, roast potatoes, boiled beans, white bread and pudding. I thought if this was going to be the usual *menu* whilst I was

on board there would be no reason to complain. I mentioned this to Barney (my chum Banks's nickname).

"Well then," he replied, "may ould Harry admire me if this isn't the last of that illigant roast we'll see. It's only in port we get fresh meat. At sea it's 'Hould on to me tight, bo', till I shplit the bafe wid the axe.' Vigitable, is it? Divil a vigitable, me darlin', will cross your purty potato-trap till yez see Calloo and the mud droghers forninst yez." The other boys corroborated this emphatic statement, which I afterwards found to be substantially true. After dinner we lighted our pipes and enjoyed a comfortable lounge till two bells (1 p.m.), when all hands were called to get ready for heaving up anchor. Boats were secured in the gripes and the tackles stopped, awnings rolled up and stowed below, new running rigging rove, the last remaining sails bent, and at last the windlass was manned.

The windlass on a sailing vessel is not unlike the old hand fire-engine as to the manner of working it. The men heave the great brakes, or handles, up and down, and slowly link after link of the great iron chain-cables comes in through the hawse-pipes, and passes round the barrel of the windlass below.

The work is always accompanied by a song

called a "shantey" (probably from the French word *chanter*, to sing).* Now, as our anchor chain was coming in, I stood by the men, listening to the grand chorus "Rolling River" and to the clank, clank of the ponderous chain as it passed in, every clank seeming to me a step nearer home and the coveted commission, when—

"Now then! what the 'tarnal thunder are you skulking about there for, you young ——? Get down to the main deck double quick, now, unless you want me to help you, —— you!" It was the "old man," the captain, the pleasant man I had met in my brother's office. There was a change with a vengeance! I felt as if I could have gone ashore with pleasure, and I believe, had there been a shore boat alongside, I would have jumped into it and made a run for it, but it was too late. I was trapped, and Callao or Cork alone could see me leave the ship.

I went down below, half-expecting the captain's boot to expedite my movements, but he took no more notice of me. I afterwards found that he had no business forward, and it was the mate's look-out if I were not put to work.

On the main deck I found the three other lads, aided by a couple of ordinary seamen hauling

* See Note I., p. 305.

in the falls of two tackles, hooked to the anchor-chains. When I say *they* were hauling, I mean the ordinary seamen were hauling and my berth-mates were simply holding on to the falls and swearing at the men. "Here, Riley!" (They thus nicknamed me on the very first day. Why, neither they nor I knew or cared. All had a nickname, so I must have one too, and Riley would do as well as any other.) "Here, Riley!" shouted Barney, "tail on and gammon to pull like anything. Johnston! you Ballarat bushranger, if you don't haul in that chain, I'll tell the old man you were trying to steal grog."

"Vy! I'm a-doin' on it all myself, s'elp me. Nobody helse hain't a-pullin' ov a hounce!" growled Johnston.

"Well, keep on never mindin', and maybe we'll find yez a tot when this blessed anchor's up," said Barney.

"Hove short, sir!" sang out the mate.

"Bully for you, old hoss!" said Mush, a Corkonian lad of our mess. "Riley! cut for the bottle while there's a chance." But there was to be no tot just then. The topsails had been loosed and sheeted home, so "Hoist away the topsail yards!" was followed by the lively shantey, "Whisky Johnny," whilst the huge yards rose

slowly above the caps. The anchor was tripped, hove up, catted and fished. More sail was made, and by tea-time both anchors were secured in-board, ropes were neatly coiled up, and the great ship, with a fair wind on the quarter, was speeding away for South America.

After tea the men were all mustered aft, and the mate and second mate picked out alternately those they thought likely men to form the port and starboard watches.

Barney and I had so arranged that we were both picked for the mate's watch, and, although I am recording my own history, I only repeat his statement some time afterwards that his boys were the two smartest in the ship.

CHAPTER III.

AT SEA UNDER THE STARS AND STRIPES.

AFTER this, watch and watch was the order of the day and night. The mate took the first watch from eight p.m. to midnight, and as the night was fine, and the mate not over-exacting, Master Barney suggested our retiring to the head of the companion-ladder, where we could sleep undisturbed until the next watch was called. I said something about having been ordered to keep the bells going every half-hour.

“Oh, bother!” said Barney; and he forthwith summoned the bushranging Johnston, and promised him a stiff glass of grog every night (“So long as mine lasts,” I thought) if he would strike the after bell at the right time. Johnston, an ex-convict and thorough soaker, was only too glad to earn a glass of good brandy by doing what was really nothing for a man of his avowedly nocturnal habits. He faithfully promised, and faithfully kept his word. The mate heard the bells struck regularly, and did not trouble himself to ascertain who struck them. In fact, I suspect he was more than once

asleep himself during his watch. Just before midnight our ally, Johnston, awoke us, and we ostentatiously paraded ourselves on the lee side of the quarter-deck in full view of the now lively executive officer, who would ask the time.

"Close on eight bells, sir," one of us would answer, but it might have been eight bells in the morning watch for all that we knew. However, that did not matter; the mate was satisfied, and, taking a look through the skylight at the cabin clock, we struck eight bells.

"Eight bells forrard there! Call the watch!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" sang out the look-out man; and forthwith the starboard watch was roused out by stamps and shouts and the banging of a handspike on the scuttle over their head, accompanied by: "Starboard watch ahoy! Eight bells! Do you hear the news down there? Turn out, star-bowlines!"

Aft one of us ran to the wheelhouse, and called the second mate, whilst the other ran down and lugged our shipmates out of their warm berth. The second mate crawled out, yawning and stretching himself, and was warmed into activity by Mr. Dickens saying:

"Bad weather brewing, Mr. Marshall. Be lively, and keep a good look-out. Mind you shorten sail

in time. It looks squally. Call the captain at six bells."

"All right, sir; good-night." And the dickey began his tramp between the wheelhouse and the break of the quarter-deck. The mate went to his berth, and we tumbled below and got between the blankets.

Scarcely had we dropped to sleep when the boatswain roared down the hatchway:

"All hands, shorten sail! Out you come, boys—smart now."

"Turn out; Riley—quick!" shouted Barney. "The old man'll be on deck in a jiffy."

"Let go the royal halliards," yelled the second mate. "Fore and mizen topgallant halliards let go!"

A tremendous black squall was upon us. The ship, being light and with all plain sail set, heeled over to it, till I thought she would capsize. The captain and mate were on deck in a moment.

"Let go the main-topgallant halliards! Clew up the mizen topsail!" shouted the mate. "Haul up your clewlines and buntlines. Look slippy, men. Away aloft, there, and take in those sails!"

Up went all the men who could be spared from the deck work, and the crashing, banging, and thrashing mass was soon reduced to order. Squall after squall followed, but the port watch

was sent below, while the starboard were kept hard at work all the watch, making and shortening sail. There was no need to call the captain. He remained on deck for the rest of the night, looking out for Port Philip Head, which we expected to pass through about three a.m.

At four a.m. we turned out again, and, ever on the alert for his little comforts, Barney roused up the coloured cook to get coffee ready. Coffee was always served out to all hands as soon after four o'clock as the cook could get his fire alight and the water boiled. The coffee was, no doubt, largely composed of beans and dandelion root and the sweetening was molasses; milk, of course, there was none; but it was hot and sweet, which made it very comforting to men who had been on deck for several hours of the night. Whilst it was getting ready, Barney and I did duty again in the companion way. The log was not hove during the night, as the position of the ship with regard to the land was easily seen.

At daylight we passed between the Heads, and the pilot left the ship. At five a.m. I was given the key of the paint-locker, with orders to serve out buckets, brooms, and holystones, ready for washing decks. These holystones are called bibles, as we had to go on our knees to use them. I

fulfilled my difficult task with much gratification to myself, as it enabled me to keep below out of the cold morning rain, and gave me a sort of official standing. By-and-by, however, I was turned to cleaning the brasswork with Bath-brick and oil, and a nasty job it was; the wretched ship seemed covered with brasswork, but the boys of the morning watch had to do it.

We were now fairly at sea, and very soon began to settle down to the regular routine of duty.

Every other day it was, of course, the turn of Barney and myself to commence our watch at noon, but the captain demanded the "day's work" every afternoon from us.

As soon as dinner was over, like good boys, we sat down to work out the latitude. So far, I had not worked at longitude; that was a longer business, and was yet to come. But we managed to make such a long business of the latitude that the mate would send the steward to hurry us up.

Poor Scouse would come half-way down the ladder, and begin:

"If you p-p-pup-puplease, mum-mum-Mr. Didi-Diki-Dickens——"

"Well," one of us would say, "what does Mr. Dickens want now?"

"Pup-please, he s-s-says as y-ye-you m-mu-must gug-gug-go on deck."

"Oh! go to the hangman, Scouse," says Barney. "Tell Mr. Dickens that the ship's in a very critical position, and the captain depinds intoirely on us to save her, as he foinds himself quoitte onaiqual to the tashk."

Scouse is about to depart, grinning, when I stop him.

"I say, Scouse, give Mr. Dickens our respectful compliments, and would he like to clear the salt air out of his throat?"

A very short lapse of time, and Mr. Dickens appears, apparently—but we know it is only apparently—very wrath.

"Now you — boys! It seems you want to take command of the ship. I've a — good mind to rope's-end you boys. You've not yet been a dog-watch in the ship, and damme if you're not cheekier than the oldest shellback forrard. Get on deck, the pack of you, before I start you up."

But the bottle is on the table, and the mate's eye softens, and I tell him that we know he doesn't mean it. He is so kind-hearted. It is not likely we'd ask a brute who would knock us about and bully us to have a drink? But we know a gentleman when we see him. So please

let him not hunt us on deck, and we would finish the work in no time.

“Now, what do you say, Mr. Dickens, to a glass of that good brandy? It will soon be all gone.”

“Well, as it's there, I don't mind just taking a little, but it's only to keep it from you boys. You have no business to drink spirits at your age.” Then he filled out a regular nor'-wester, and took it down in a couple of gulps.

“Grog's a bad thing, depend upon it, boys, and it is always the ruin of those that indulge in it. Used moderately—as a medicine—and to keep off chills—Boy!” (to the steward) “you lazy black-guard, get me a glass of water—I grant it's very serviceable.”

Meantime, Scouse, under Barney's gesture-command, had filled out another tot, putting in very little water, and now handed it to the mate.

“Ho! That's right, boy, but you were a — long time about it, all the same. Now, boys, you stick to this, and you'll never come to want.” (Pointing to the brandy in his glass.) He then swallowed the second dose, remarked that the water in our scuttle-butt wanted changing, and told us to come on deck when our work was done. We fulfilled this order by carefully lying down and going to sleep till four p.m., leaving Wilkinson and

his watch-mate to heave the log. It then became our first dog-watch. So time flew by. The winds were light and the *Altamont* very slow.

These two circumstances were fortunate for me. My hands, unused to the wear and tear of hauling on ropes, had very soon become blistered, and, as there was no rest from the work, they got raw in many places. As cleaning the brasswork was part of my duty, the verdigris soon poisoned the wounds, and both hands became a mass of festering sores. Had I been ashore, it would have been very easy to get them well again, but here there was no help. For hours I lay in agony in my watch below, as the dreadful throbbing of inflammation increased. Sometimes, as a great favour, I got a pot of hot water from the cook, and experienced a momentary relief from the pain, but the water soon cooled, and no more could be got. At last the mate advised me to go to the captain and ask him for something to cure me. I was half-afraid to go below and tackle him in his own cabin. But I was half-frantic with pain, and ventured into the sacred precincts. To my surprise, he was as nearly sympathetic as so hard-hearted a man could be. Of course, he used strong language. Then he washed my wounds with Castile soap, gave me a piece to use occasionally, and, better still, knocked

me off duty till I should be able to fist a rope again. The process of cure was slow, so slow that I tried to help it by borrowing the boatswain's razor, and cutting into the most swollen parts of my hands.

In about a week, the captain came down into our berth, and began to be ugly. He finished by telling me I must get about some work, adding, "A lower deck sailor don't look well." I quite agreed with him, and would have given a great deal to have been able to do my share of the work, but it was impossible. However, the next week I began to do light work, and my hands gradually hardened and became fit to do anything. The brasswork - cleaning was handed over to Johnston, the ordinary seaman, and I never touched it again while I was on board.

I had at first felt rather afraid of going aloft as far as the mainroyal yard. The topgallant yards I did not mind, as they seemed more substantial than the royal, which swung and jerked about in a most uncomfortable manner, especially if the ship was pitching much. It was not long, however, before the mate told me that Barney and I would have to loose and furl the royal whenever there was occasion to do so.

The occasion happened that very night. It was very dark, and a sudden squall was coming

up. The royal halliards were at once let go. Barney and I helped to haul up the clewlines and buntlines.

"Now, up we go," he said. "The sooner we're there, the sooner we'll be down." So we ran up the weather rigging, crawled over the maintop, and were over the topgallant crosstrees and on the royal yard before I realised where we were. I could scarcely see anything but the sail we were taking in; so the terrific height at which we were above the deck did not strike me. We furled the sail and came down without my having experienced any sense of giddiness. After this, I made no more of getting on the royal yard, even when it was mastheaded, than I would of standing on the deck. To continue, we made very little progress until we had been out about eighteen days, when we got a taste of a gale or two which found out the weak points of our spars and rigging. On this particular day we had fresh breezes from W. by N. and W. by S., so that we could carry all sail with advantage. The ship presented a beautiful picture as she rolled on her way, doing from eight to nine knots almost before the wind, as we were steering E. by N., throwing the water in vast masses of foam from her sturdy bows, bowing right and left like a lady in a ball-room, and whilst aloft she was dressed in all her

dimity—mainroyal, topmast, and topgallant stunsails on both sides—below she spread her vast courses, and crossjack spanker and lower stunsails. All the staysails and jibs were set, and she tore through the water at a rate that actually drew a pleased look from the captain. Unfortunately this was not to last.

Shortly after midnight the wind freshened so much and the sky had such a squally appearance, that the ship was shorn of all her beauty in a very short time. In came all the stunsails, the booms were rigged in, the mainroyal and three topgallant sails followed suit. Still the gale increased, and the puffs grew more frequent and more violent with shorter lulls, so the mainsail was furled and the mizzen topsail double-reefed. It was now that the defects in our rigging were discovered.

During the whole time this gale lasted we were continually reeving new running gear, or splicing old rotten halliards and other ropes. The clewlines and leechlines especially seemed all shoddy, but brails, sheets, lifts, and all the other kinds of "strings," as the sailors call them, seemed in a bad case—a pound or two extra strain and the ropes parted. The mate swore, the captain glared viciously, as the men put their strength into a pull, with the object, of course, of parting a rope

if possible; but no one could grumble at men doing their work with a will. The only way to save the "strings" was to give the order to belay before even the needful strain was got. But this did not save us.

At four p.m. on the following day we took in the first reef of the fore and main topsails. Now the ship was tearing through the water at some ten knots an hour, burying her chains every time she rolled, and flooding her decks as she every now and then buried her nose in some monstrous sea. Our being in ballast trim made her somewhat crank, so that caution was required in carrying sail. In the first watch we furled the upper topsails and mizzen topsail, and now the wind blew with tremendous violence; the weight of it, however, was not so much felt as it would have been had we been tacking. At midnight the order was given to furl the foresail. This was my first experience on the foreyard in a gale of wind. The footropes hung so low that I could barely reach over the yard to get a grip of the sail. Then, when the men made a combined effort to pick up the sail, their legs flew out backwards till they seemed to be lying horizontally at right angles with the yard. My legs were too short to reach so far back, so my feet instantly slipped off

the footrope, but I had a good grip of the jackstay and hung on all right till the footrope came back, and I got my feet firmly on it again. That foresail was a stiff job: it was wet and heavy, the night was pitch dark, and the gale seemed to be on all sides of us. It appeared to me like a whole watch that we were struggling with the sail; but at last it was safely furled, and secured by the gaskets, and even a good bunt was made.

The wind now blew harder than ever, and we had barely reached the deck when "Clew up the lower fore-topsail! Look spry, bullies! Get hold of your clewlines! Ease off the sheets!" sent us again aloft. We were hard at work furling the topsail when we heard a sound like a clap of thunder, followed by, "Lay down from aloft, some of you. Main topmast staysail down haul! Down with her, boys, before we lose her!"

It was the splitting of this sail which had caused the report we had heard. The ship was now driving along under her lower main topsail and fore-topmast staysail, and spanker. There was little more to be done in the way of reducing sail, so Barney and I took our usual post in the companion way, but not before we, together with all hands, had received a tot, which the captain ordered his steward to bring on deck.

I soon fell asleep, in spite of the unearthly noise of the wind screaming in the rigging, blocks rattling, masts creaking, and yards not tautly braced slapping their parrels against the masts. The roaring of the sea as dark, swirling masses of water rushed against the ship and hurled themselves on the decks, seemed to act on me as a lullaby, and I must have slept till nearly eight bells in the middle watch, when I felt myself roughly awakened.

"What's the matter now?" I grumbled. "Is the ship over the side?"

"No," shouted Barney (for it was he who had roused me), "but the masts are."

"Oh, get out of that!" I growled. "Let me finish my sleep."

"But wake up, Riley avick. Shure it's the truth I'm tellin' ye. Divil a word of a lie."

I turned out at this, and, looking aloft, sure enough there was a pretty sort of a mess. The main topmast had gone at the cap, and carried with it the fore and mizzen topgallant masts, and there hung the whole raffle—masts, yards, rigging all flying out to leeward and banging and twisting round the standing rigging in such a frantic manner that it was dangerous to life and limb to go near the flying mass. One stood as good a chance of being hanged as of being killed by a blow from a block, or

of being knocked overboard by a spar. Still, neither officers, men, nor boys shirked the danger. They went manfully to work with knife and axe, and saved everything that could be saved. The rest went overboard.

I may as well say here that an examination of the broken stump of the topmast showed that it was actually rotten, and the wonder was that it had not gone when the weight of the whole topsails and topgallant sails was on it. As may well be imagined, the captain was on deck the whole time the hurricane lasted. To give him his due, he was a splendid sailor, cool and collected in danger, never sparing himself or others, and never hampering the officers by giving counter-orders unless absolutely necessary. He did not leave the deck day or night, his steward bringing up whatever he required in the way of refreshment.

Now it unfortunately happened that the loss of the spars occurred in the middle watch, which was the mate's watch. The wrath of the captain was something terrible when the masts went. Even to our eyes and to those of the crew no possible blame could attach to the mate. The ship was under just the sail she required, and the captain was present and would not have hesitated to take the command out of the mate's hands had

he thought that anything further was necessary to be done. Nevertheless, the old man, when all was over, marched up and down the weather side of the quarter-deck, blowing clouds of smoke from a yard of clay—a kind of pipe he always smoked—and ejaculated between the puffs:

“Dickens! mate, eh! curse him for a lime-juicer.” (An English sailor, or, rather, one who serves on an English ship, which the American sailors call “lime-juicers,” in consequence of lime-juice being served out to the men.) A lime-juicer! (Puff.) Only fit for a measly tug-boat. (Puff.) Fool! (Puff.) Idiot! (Puff.) Longshore swab! He a sailor! (Puff, puff, puff.) He’s only a sojer! (Puff.) My main topmast—two hundred dollars! (Puff, puff.) Two topgall’t masts—three hundred more! (Puff.) Sails, too, d—— him!” Smash went the pipe on the deck. The tiger was now worked up. “Here, Mr. Dickens, come aft here, sir!”

To repeat the torrent of brutal profanity that fell from the captain’s lips upon the unfortunate mate, would only revolt the reader. Suffice it that, for half an hour the unhappy man underwent this storm of coarse abuse in the hearing of all the men. The result was, his influence and authority were weakened. The men openly defied him and lost no opportunity of insulting him.

CHAPTER IV.

WE LOSE OUR FIRST MATE.

I HAVE already stated that the chief officer was a kind-hearted old man, but his disposition had been soured by disappointment. He had no influential friends by whose help he might have obtained command of a ship, and saw himself doomed to remain a subordinate whilst younger men were every day rising to commands.

He never exercised any tyranny over the crew, but he was in the habit of giving contradictory orders and of making the hands do unnecessary work in order to show that he kept them employed. The consequence was that they looked on him as a fit subject for practical jokes.

One morning, the captain came on deck during the mate's watch, just as the latter was in the act of using a knife to cut a knot off a bucket-rope. Now the skipper had a mortal aversion to the cutting of ropes, if there was the remotest possibility of clearing them of knots or of a foul by the use of a marlin'-spike or pricker. So finding Mr. Dickens about to perpetrate the enormity

of cutting the Gordian (bucket-rope) knot, he exclaimed: "Aha! would you?"

The mate stopped in his work, and looked at the captain with such a comical expression that all hands near him burst out laughing. Ever after that the captain's expression to the mate was used to him on all possible occasions. If it were fair weather, and any hands up aloft, it might chance that the unhappy man went to take up a telescope, but no sooner had he laid his hand on it than "Aha! would you?" came down from aloft. The poor man, instead of taking up the instrument and ignoring the insult for the time, would look up and inquire who made the remark; upon which the men busied themselves about their work and pretended not to hear, whilst the mate growled and damned them for a pack of Yankee blackguards; a chuckling laugh being the response from the tarry cherubs above.

All the time the ship rolled along over the blue Pacific, sometimes for days together only doing four knots an hour; at others, when a gale sprang up, running ten, till she carried away some spar or other. She had a most singular knack of doing herself some damage whenever there was the least chance of getting on.

On the twenty-second day out the carpenter

had the new spars ready, and they were sent up and the sails bent and the rigging set up taut. Then began more bother with stunsails.*

We had a few days of this work, when strong S.W. winds came to our relief, and, as we expected shortly to be making the coast of Peru, the stunsails were stowed away and the booms sent down. The carpenter now examined the boats, and none were found sound. Fresh planks were put into them, and they were made as fit for service as possible; though, had we taken fire or been compelled for any other reason to abandon the ship, not one could have been depended upon to gain the shore if the slightest sea were to get up.

About this time one of the captain's cats mysteriously disappeared. The old man soon noticed its absence, and he ordered the whole ship to be searched for the animal. The lower hold being empty, except for the stone ballast, offered a possible solution to pussy's whereabouts, but, although the whole crew was employed in the search, no Thomas could be found.

The captain raved and swore, declaring he would cut the heart out of the man who had made away with his cat—if he could find him out. All, however, was of no use. The real truth I learned,

* See Note II., p. 306.

after we left the ship, from Mr. See, the third mate. He was washing decks one morning and pointed the nozzle of the hose at the cat, which was sitting on the rail to keep out of the wet. The force of the water knocked the poor animal overboard. He had not intended to do more than to give it a fright, and when he saw the result he discreetly held his tongue.

I mentioned that during the passage from Melbourne we boys had to appear on deck with our sextants between half-past eleven and noon to take the sun, and the captain took great pains to teach us how to work out the latitude. We soon became adepts at this work, and began to study the longitude, taking the altitudes of the moon and stars, and when we began this work the captain always sent one of us into the cabin to take the time of the chronometer as he took his sights. Then he would come below and show us how to work it out.

I remember on one occasion being sent down to take the time. I looked at the chronometer, and put down two o'clock on my slate. The captain soon got his first sight, and sang out, "Stop!" I noted the minutes and seconds after two p.m., and set them down. Soon came "Stop!" once more, and again a third time, which finished

the "set" of sights, the mean of which is afterwards taken as correct. He then called down to me through the skylight, telling me to work it out and bring the result to him on deck.

Very proudly I got out my Norie's "Epitome" and my Nautical Almanac and set to work. It was not long before I had a neat slateful of figures, and the longitude shown to be $113^{\circ} 35' W$.

I took up my work to the captain, feeling sure of getting praise for its neatness and correctness. He ran his eye over the slate, then glared at me. Out came the usual volley of execrations, followed by:

"Why, where in thunder have you got the ship to? Why, she's been doing a good nine knots on her course, and damme if you haven't had stern-way on her for the last twenty-four hours."

I stoutly declared the work was right. He made me bring up the books, and he worked it out himself. He couldn't make it out. I was undoubtedly correct. There was nothing to be said. *He* might have read his sextant wrong, but *my* working was the same as his.

"By the Piper!" he said. "This beats me. I must take some more sights. Down you go, boy, and don't make any more mistakes."

I went below, and as soon as I clapped eyes

on the chronometer I saw what I had done. I had read a II. instead of a III.

This time I got it down right, and worked the matter out to a very different conclusion. Fortunately, the captain had not thought of looking at the *hour* I had set down. If he had remembered that in the first calculation I had put down two o'clock and in the second working three o'clock, I should probably have suffered grievous bodily harm. But I had rubbed out the first, and if he had any suspicion and questioned me I should have stuck to it that I was right before. Of course, good people will say this was wrong, and that I should have confessed my error. Very good people would find life on board an American guano ship a simple hell if they confessed all their mistakes. The yoke rope, the rope's-end, the knuckle-duster, belaying-pin, revolver, etc., are too handy to allow people to be good. Evil captains make evil crews, and lying and cheating are brought about by the necessity for avoiding cruel punishment for trivial faults. Had I confessed to the captain, he would certainly have flogged me, not so much for my mistake as for annoyance that I knew he had not discovered. Discretion was always considered the better part of valour on board the *Altamont*.

Our greatest trouble arose from lunar and stellar observations. The captain insisted on our working these out regularly. I fortunately had a mathematical head, but poor Barney and the two others could make neither head nor tail of the work, so when they had got their sights they used to go below, take their books and slates, light their pipes, and make a tremendous show of working till I had finished. Then they all copied it, altering an unimportant figure here and there so as to make the work look *bonâ fide*, after which they boldly marched up to the captain, asked him a few questions, and retired triumphant.

On the thirty-sixth day out we sighted the first vessel we had yet met with. She passed within hail, and proved to be the French ship *Chili No. 2* from Havre to Callao. When in latitude 31.19 S. we passed several turtle and a great many sperm whales, and here for the first time I saw what I have since often had an opportunity of witnessing — a fight between a thresher and a whale. The unwieldy leviathan appeared to be quite at the mercy of the thresher, which whirled its long tail in the air like a stock-whip and brought it down with terrific violence on the whale's back. The victim tried to escape by sounding, but always came up in a minute

or two, only to be again assailed by its ferocious enemy. Whether a sword-fish was attacking the whale from beneath, as I have since seen, I cannot say; but I imagine the monster could have dived deeper than the thresher would have cared to follow, had there not been some enemy below invisible to us.

Several more ships were now seen, and one of them, the schooner *Twins*, bound for Falmouth with guano, took letters home for us. We now carried all sail to make the land before night, but, not being able to do so, we stood away to the northward. The crew were now busily employed in taking off chafing gear, furbishing up the brass-work, cleaning the decks, etc., and, as it fell a dead calm, stages were rigged over the side and scrapers and brooms put into requisition to make the ship look clean and smart. As the calm had every appearance of lasting, the captain ordered the port quarter boat to be lowered, and took us boys some distance from the ship to fish. I quite forget whether we caught anything, but we probably got some mackerel, with which these seas swarm.

At ten p.m. that night a boat from a French brig boarded us. The boat's crew consisted of four men, who looked haggard and woe-begone. They could not speak a word of English, so my

knowledge of French was brought into requisition. We learned that they belonged to a vessel bound to Coquimbo with guano. They had been so long becalmed that all their provisions and water were expended, and they were reduced to great extremities, especially being without water. We gave them a bag of bread, some beef and pork, a couple of barrels of water, pipes, tobacco, and a tot of grog a-piece, and sent them on their way rejoicing. They must have had a tremendous long pull, as no brig was then visible from our decks, but they pointed in the direction where she lay, and said they would be on board their vessel before the morning.

A little after daylight two fine American clippers passed us: one the *Morning Glory*, the other the *Hellespont*, from San Francisco. It was a beautiful sight to see these lovely models, with their deep black hulls and their towering clouds of snowy cotton canvas, slipping along, impelled by some imperceptible zephyr away aloft among their royals and skysails, whilst our massive frigate-built old liner lay like a rock, which nothing short of half a gale would galvanise into any sort of life.

On May Day we nearly had a fatal accident. The calm had been succeeded by favourable winds,

and we were slipping gently along with all sail set except the royal. One of the men was working on the main topgallant yardarm. He had just got back, on finishing his work, to the tie, and laid hold of it, when it parted. Down came yard and man. Fortunately the parrel (or hoop round the mast) jammed for a second as the yard came down, which gave him time to get hold of some other part of the rigging. On reaching the cap, the yard broke in two. We were quite used to this carrying away of gear, and were not surprised when an hour or two afterwards the spanker gaff carried away. Both spars were sent down and fished. Of course, the breeze had freshened. On the following day another man was doing something to the main topgallant stay, when it parted, and he went flying to leeward. The ship was going between three and four knots at the time. He just cleared the bulwark, and fell into the sea close alongside. As the ship slipped past him he caught hold of a mooring shackle projecting from the side, and clung to it with all his might, till the carpenter passed a bowline over his shoulders, and a rope was lowered to him by which he was able to haul himself on board, assisted by the men tailing on to the bowline. As soon as he got on deck he shook himself and

went aloft again as unconcerned as if nothing had happened. I should have mentioned that when our new topgallant masts were sent up they had been altered so that we could carry a fore- as well as a main-royal, and, to make things shipshape, the mizzen had also a royal added, so that now we carried three royals instead of one, and we boys were proportionately disgusted at the increase of work which fell to our lot when we had to shorten sail.

We were now drawing in with the land, and were passed by the French frigate *Bayonnaise*, which we had been told was on the Callao station. On the forty-eighth day we sighted San Lorenzo light, and all hands were employed getting the anchors ready and laying out ranges of cable. Sail was then shortened to close-reefed topsails, and at midnight we hove to till daylight. At four a.m. we went into port, and dropped anchor in sixty fathoms. All sail was furled, and the captain went on shore to report the ship's arrival. The ship must certainly have presented a handsome, if not imposing, spectacle as she slowly swept up the harbour. Her immense size and, owing to being in ballast trim, her great height out of the water, her painted ports, her slender masts, looking as if they would poke holes in the sky, with her

long tapering royal poles, all contributed to give a favourable impression of the vessel. The captain, as an old man-of-warsman, was very particular about the whiteness of the deck and the cleanliness of the paint and brasswork. Every rope in the vessel was as taut as in a warship, and, to crown all, a whiplike pennant floated from our main-truck, the United States ensign was at the gaff; the house flag and number were also displayed. We certainly made a noble picture at sunrise.

Soon after our arrival we parted with our good-natured friend, Mr. Dickens, who was heartily glad to leave the ship. The captain was mean enough to refuse to allow him a boat to go ashore in. He had to pay for a shore-boat, and, as we lay a long way out from the mole, he no doubt had to pay a heavy fare. We were sorry we could not ask the old gentleman to come into our berth and have a farewell glass, but my small stores of creature comforts had long since disappeared. However, we all shook hands with him as he went over the side. He warned us to look out for squalls on the passage home, as, in his opinion, the old man was a "terror," who would show what he was made of once the ship had her jibboom pointed towards Cape Horn. When he was gone, the second mate, Mr. Marshall, was appointed acting

mate. The third, Mr. See, took the second mate's birth, he being replaced by the boatswain, John Foreman.

We boys were now relieved of most ship's duty, as we had to form the captain's boat's crew, but after the novelty wore off we would have given a great deal to have been left quietly on board. To begin with, the boat we usually used was the stern-boat, very leaky and very old, and very heavy to pull. I never could understand how it was that a man who was so very particular about appearances should have been blind to the fact that his "gig," as he called it, was the worst amongst the crowd of gigs belonging to the ships in port. We used to feel quite ashamed of her. In spite of all our endeavours to make her look smart, she never could rise to look like anything but a collier brig's boat. At last she became so bad that the port quarter-boat was used as the gig. She was still heavier to pull, but at all events a new plank or two, some putty and paint, a decent grating in the sternsheets, and a long tiller with a neatly carved head, gave her a more jaunty appearance.

On the day after our arrival we were ordered to pull the captain to the mole. The weather was magnificent, the sea smooth, and the old man in a

fairly good temper, so we rather enjoyed the long pull. Talk of a scene of confusion at the mole! It was bewildering. Such a babel of tongues, such varieties of complexions and dresses, could scarcely be got together in any other part of the world. It was a time when the guano trade was in full swing. Hundreds of ships from all parts of the world came then to the Western Pacific coast to load up this valuable manure. The selling price at home, compared with the purchasing price at Callao, must have left immense profits to the shipowners. Callao is not a beautiful place. It may be summed up as being very dirty, unadorned and over-populated. In fact, it is merely the seaport of Lima, and has most of the characteristics of other seaports. The prevailing colour of the buildings is yellow. The population at the time of my visit was about 20,000. A railway connects it with Lima, the capital of Peru, distant some six miles from the coast. Callao has so often been destroyed by earthquakes and tidal waves that one is sensible of an uncomfortable feeling whilst in the town. In 1746 what is known as Old Callao was almost entirely submerged. Even at anchor in the roadstead one feels that the entire visible surroundings lie upon a slumbering magazine which at any moment may explode and blow the whole place sky-high without notice. Numerous

springs containing sulphuretted hydrogen bubble up ceaselessly out of the water, probably from the interior of some dormant submarine volcano. To say the least, this is an uncomfortable state of affairs, and I was not sorry when our ship was caulked and ready to proceed to the Chincha Islands, some ninety miles from Callao.

As soon as a vessel has reported and entered at the Customs at the above port she is surveyed, and, whether staunch and tight or not, she has to be thoroughly caulked—of course, I speak of wooden ships. A red mark is then placed on her side by the Peruvian authorities, showing to what depth she may be loaded. This is a very necessary precaution. Old sailors will remember what leaky ships used to cross the ocean so late as thirty-five years ago.*

Having complied with all necessary formalities, we hove up anchor and made sail for the guano islands. A dreary beat it was, the wind in our teeth the whole way. We made very slow progress, but still we succeeded in carrying away a spar—this time it was the fore topgallant mast. If the second mate, who was in charge of the port watch, had only taken a pull on the weather topgallant and royal braces in time, the mishap would probably not have

* See Note III., p. 307.

occurred. Barney and I were in blissful ignorance of what had happened, as we were at the time sound asleep in our usual camping place. The second mate, however, had us out in time to let the captain know that it was six bells in the middle watch. Nothing further worthy of note occurred during the ten days this little trip occupied us, and at last, after the longest and slowest beat I ever remember, we sighted a forest of masts and three small brown-looking islands. Then we knew that we had reached our destination, and that our voyage was over for several months to come.

We sailed slowly up to our indicated anchorage, nearly running foul of the guardship in doing so. We just cleared her, and let go the anchor about a mile from the nearest island.

CHAPTER V.

WE SHIP A YANKEE MATE.

As soon as the sails were furled and the decks cleared up I had time to take a look round. It appeared to me as if there must be at least eight hundred or a thousand vessels of all kinds of build, rig, and nationality lying around us. There were men-of-war of different nations—French, British, American, Peruvian, Chilian, German; there were merchant steamers (these were in the minority), full-rigged ships, barques, brigs, schooners, brigantines, and nearly all the sailing vessels appeared to have the whole ship's company's oilskins hung out to dry, but with the sleeves missing. I subsequently discovered that these were sealskins. The Chincha Islands abound with seals and sea-lions, which find splendid camping ground on the rocky shelves and in the caverns of these barren islets.

The crews of the ships often received permission to take one of the boats on Sundays for fishing purposes, and on these occasions chasing seals was the favourite pastime. It was very hard work, though, because the seals used to swim a long way

under water before coming up to breathe, and the boat had to be pulled rapidly in the direction where the poor beast would probably rise. It was very much like playing at whaling, and a couple of hours often elapsed before the harpooner, who stood in the bow, got a chance to throw his weapon. Still, large numbers of seals were captured, and their skins, which are valuable, could, as I said, be seen in all directions stretched out in the rigging to dry.

Before going any further, it is necessary to give a short description of the islands. Of course, their appearance has greatly changed since I was there, but the rocks have probably not changed their position, unless an earthquake has swallowed up one or all of them. They have been at least denuded of their deposits of guano, as I find that in 1873 only 11,684 tons were obtained, and in 1874 the population had dwindled to 105. The intervening years have in all probability seen the islands once more abandoned to the sea-birds.

There are three principal islands—the North, Middle, and South Islands, situated in lat. 13 deg. 40 min. S., and long. 76 deg. 13 min. W. These rocky islets, which are of volcanic formation, principally granite, are about a hundred feet in height, and in 1861 were covered with a solid layer of

guano over a hundred feet thick. The North Island at the time I was there had a population of some 3,000 persons, consisting entirely of Government officials, traders, soldiers, convicts, and others interested in the guano trade.

The houses were of the very flimsiest description, as no provision had to be made for rain or storms. A wooden pier, called the "Mole," ran out for some distance, for the convenience of the multifarious boats and barges which were constantly plying between the ships and the shore. Harbour there was none; the vessels lay quite securely anchored in the deep water of the ever-calm Pacific, and only on very rare occasions was the surface of the sea sufficiently ruffled to prevent the deeply laden barges from sweeping off with their odoriferous cargoes to the ships.

The guano has the appearance of light brown earth, and emits a most pungent smell. This is in consequence of its being impregnated strongly with carbonate of ammonia and with phosphates of high fertilising power. The ammonia occurs in such quantities that large nodules of the alkali may be found scattered thickly through the earth. Humboldt was the first to draw attention to the value of the deposits, in 1804. The name "huano," which we term "guano," is a word signifying in

Spanish "manure." Since Humboldt's discovery much discussion has arisen as to the origin of the vast deposits, which existed not only at the Chinchas, but also on many other islands and coast tracts of Western South America. Some said it was volcanic, others that it was an organic deposit. The general conclusion now accepted is that guano is the deposit of birds during countless ages, mixed with the *débris* of fish and marine plants which formed their food. If this be so, and there seems little room to doubt it, the birds must have been far more plentiful in primeval times than they were in my day, for the few marine birds which nestled amongst the rocks were not even sufficiently numerous to give life to the scene—unless pelicans may be considered as imparting an air of festivity to the locality; these were very numerous.

However this may be, there were the islands; there was the guano, and there, on the unruffled surface of the broad Pacific, lay hundreds of vessels busily engaged in loading up the precious fertiliser.

Its commercial value depends, amongst other things, upon the amount of decomposition it has been subjected to, and to its not having lost any of its volatile salts by the agency of the atmosphere, rain, or sea-water. The poorest guano is

that which has parted with most of its ammonia, and contains little more than the earthy phosphates of the alluvial deposits mixed with sand. The proportion of ammonia per cent. varies from 7·3 to 1·47 per cent., and its agricultural value depends upon the quantities of ammonia, soluble and insoluble phosphates, and alkaline salts which it contains. The greatest quantity ever imported into England was in 1870, when 280,311 tons, valued at £1,500,000, left the islands for Great Britain. It was first exported in 1832, and in 1853 a survey by the Peruvian Government showed that on these islands alone 12,376,100 tons were available. Foreign export was closed in 1872. In 1864 the Spanish Admiral Pinzon seized the islands to compel the Peruvian Government to apologise and make amends for their ill-treatment of the immigrants from Biscay. The profits made by the importers of guano at that time must have been considerable. I do not profess at this distant date to be correct in my figures, but I think the amount paid to Peru was £1 10s. per ton, and freight home from £1 10s. to £2 per ton, and as it was usually greatly adulterated with earthy matter, and was sold at from £15 to £20 per ton, there seems reason to suppose that someone made a large profit by the trade.

From base to summit the island (North) was divided into strips about six feet in width, running straight to the top of the deposit. The labourers—generally convicts or kidnapped Chinese—had each a strip to himself. As he dug out the guano (which, by the way, often required blasting, owing to its compactness), he allowed it to roll down the hill to the bottom of his section. A narrow wall separated him on each side from his fellow-workmen, so that none interfered with the other. At the base of the cuts ran a tramway carrying trollies. As fast as the latter were loaded, they were drawn to a short jetty provided with shoots, the contents were tipped, and were thus discharged into heavy punts carrying from thirty to ninety tons each. These punts, usually worked by the sailors, carried the guano to the ships, where it was taken on board by means of baskets and whips from the yardarm. The first part of the cargo—that in the lower hold—was put into gunny bags to avoid the choking of the pumps in case of springing a leak, which would naturally happen if it were tumbled in loose. After a layer or two was thus stowed the baskets were emptied into the hold. The men below, who trimmed the cargo, were enveloped in a cloud of ammoniacal dust, which often caused the blood to flow from the

ears and nostrils, owing to its extreme pungency. For this reason, all the men wore a wad of oakum rolled up in a handkerchief, tied over the mouth and nostrils. The loading of large vessels was a tedious affair occupying some months. Every vessel, therefore, proceeding to Callao *en route* for the Chincha Islands, was allowed a certain number of what are called "laying days." The number of these days varied according to the size of the ship.

In our case we were allowed a hundred days. This period often elapsed before an ounce of guano could be got on board, the demand being greater than the facilities for supply. Smaller vessels were better off. They were enabled to run close under the rocks of the South Island, where long canvas shoots hung over the precipices a hundred feet above sea-level. The shoots were passed into the vessel's hold.

Of course, they were securely moored fore and aft, and secured from getting too near the rocks. The trollies tilted their cargoes down these shoots, and the guano was thus conveyed directly into the hold.

It has happened on more than one occasion that some wretched Chinaman, tired of his miserable life of slavery, has deliberately precipitated himself down a shoot in company with a load of

guano, arriving, of course, quite dead, having been suffocated by the guano.

There is excellent cod-fishing close to the rocks, and we often had an opportunity of fishing when the captain had a fancy for amusing himself in that way. Certainly we were expected to open the mussels for bait, bait the captain's hooks, take off his fish, disentangle his line, and perform other little offices for "his highness"; but nevertheless we enjoyed these little excursions.

The loss we boys had sustained by the dismissal of the mate has already been mentioned. In his place the captain now shipped a very hard-looking, clean-shaven American. Our first interview with him struck terror into our hearts. He was not one of the low, bullying, half-Irish, half-American sort of men who are called "whitewashed Yankees." He did not curse *very* fluently, nor did he do what Americans are erroneously accused of doing—talk or drawl through his nose. He was rather a gentlemanly man, but he had a cruel-looking face, which, we thought, betokened a lurking tiger in him. He came off in a shore-boat, and we (that is, the boys) happened to be skylarking about the quarter-deck, and took very little notice of him. He brought us up with a round turn: "Do all you boys belong to the ship?"

"Yes, sir," said we.

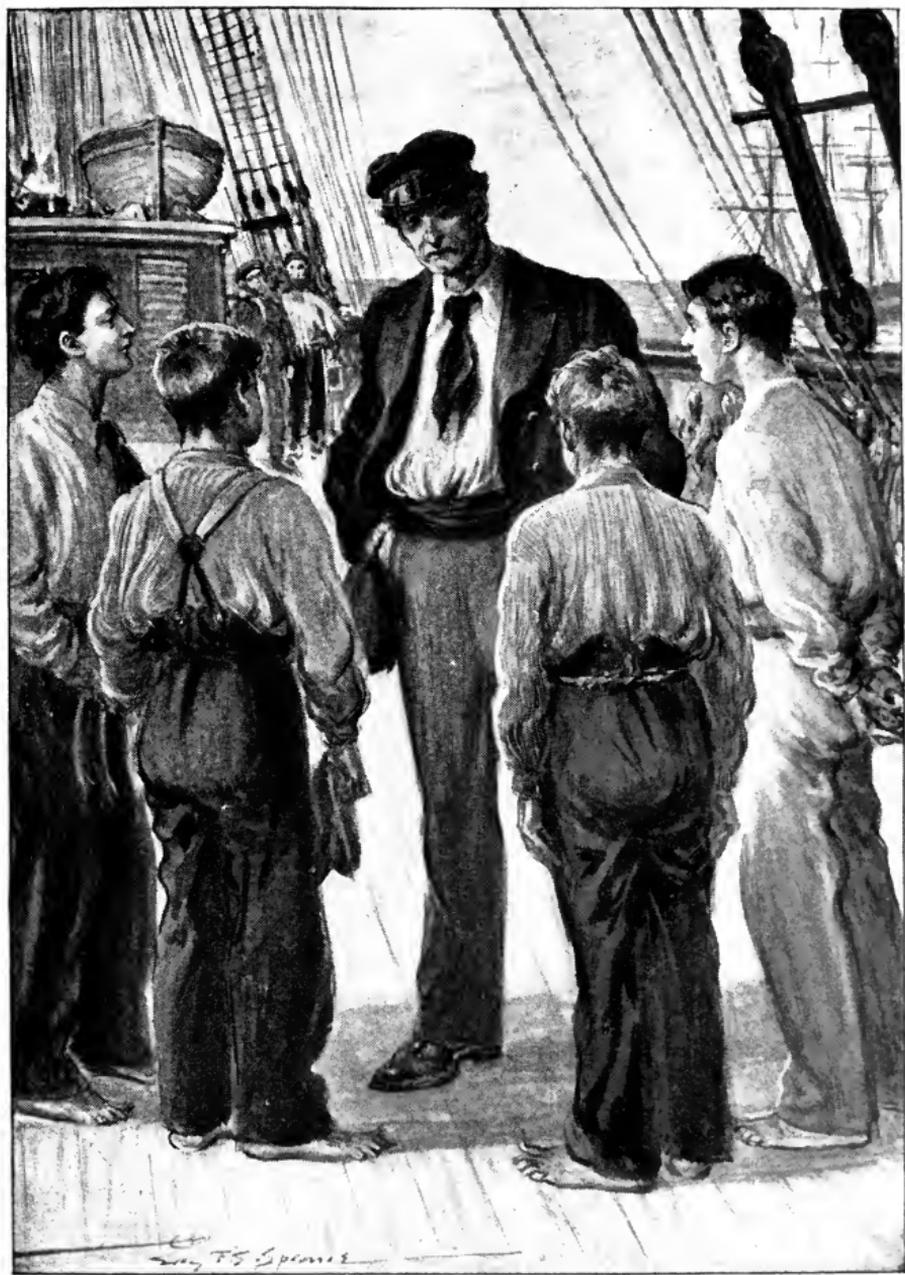
"Well, now, I just want you to take a good look at me. Look me straight in the eye," he went on.

We began to suspect that this was a new mate, so we respectfully gazed at him.

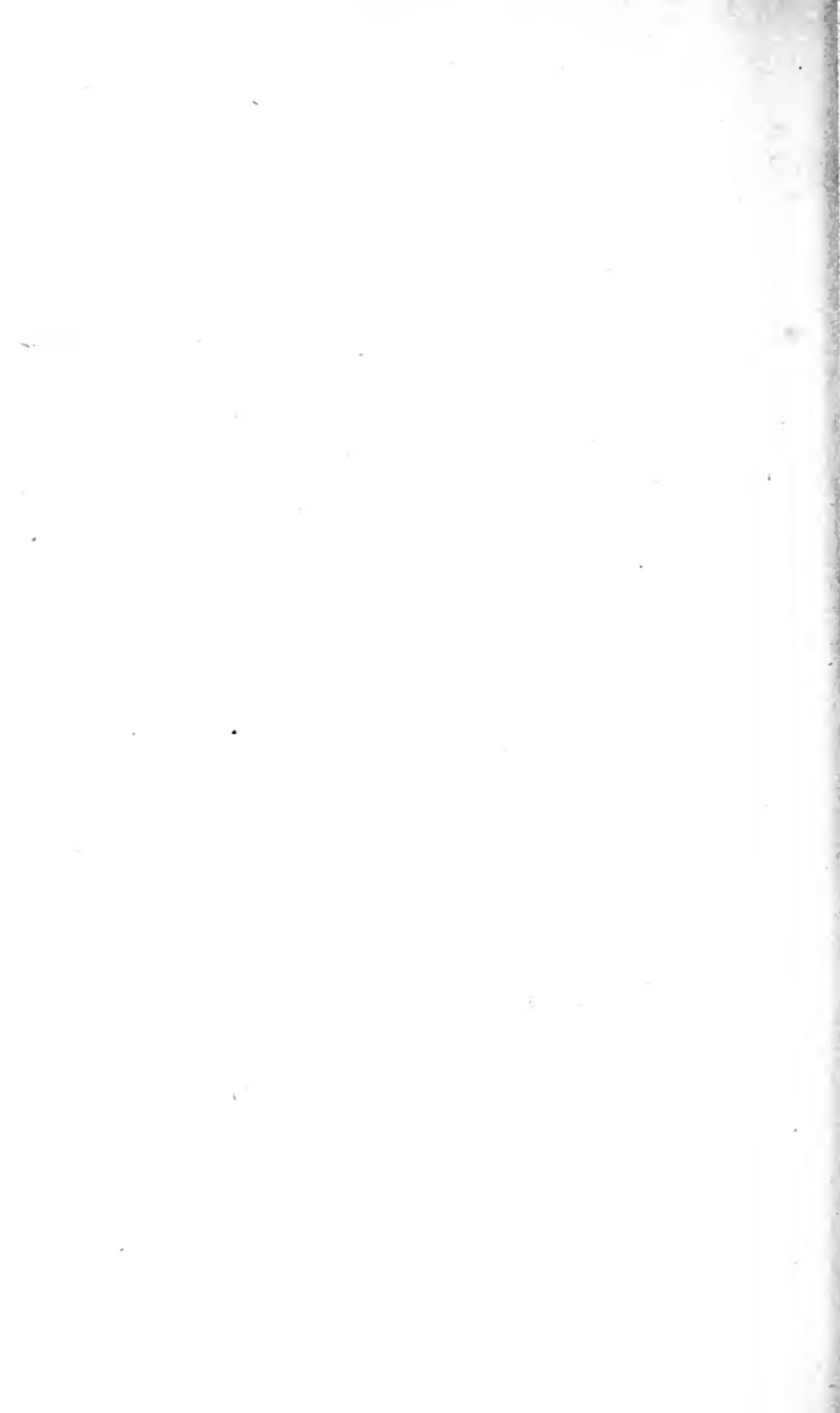
"Now," he said, "you'll know me again. Do I look as if you could play any tricks on me, eh? Do I look as if I could chaw you up, eh? You bet you've got to toe a line now. My name isn't Dickens, and my favourite weapon is a yoke-rope. That's all. Where's Mr. Marshall?"

It was quite evident that the captain had told him all about poor old Dickens, and probably had not given him an exalted idea of Mr. Marshall. We pointed out that much-suffering officer to him, and were diving below, when he called out: "Come back here. I don't make it eight bells yet. Just you get into that boat and clean her out so as you could eat your dinner off any part of her. That'll give you an appetite. Now, Mr. Marshall, sir."

The second mate, who was rather surly-looking, slouched up to him. "How d'ye do, sir?" said the new man. "My name's Williams. I've shipped as mate aboard here for the run home, and I just want to let everybody know in one word—I'm



“DO I LOOK AS IF I COULD CHAW YOU UP, EH?”



smart, and I expect everybody on board to be smart. I hope you and I will be good friends. Will you show me my berth?"

Mr. Marshall took him to the mate's berth in the wheelhouse, and we bobbed over the side and got to work at the boat. When eight bells struck we did not like to go on board for fear of the mate's yoke-rope, but scarcely had the last double stroke rung out, when he looked over the side and called out, "Now you — boys! I s'pose you're so fond of work you could lie down and go to sleep alongside of it. Come on deck and go to dinner."

So up we came and went down to our berth, to dine and discuss the new mate. Somehow, we came to the conclusion that he would not prove such a Tartar as he gave himself out to be, and of this we soon had proof.

It was not long before the captain found out that, although the new mate's credentials might show him to be a smart seaman, yet he was not the tool he wanted—he was not enough of a bully, and hence arose a dislike for him in the captain's mind. There was no love lost on the mate's part either, and at last to such a pitch did this mutual hatred and distrust arrive that neither of the two men ever walked the deck

without loaded revolvers being concealed somewhere about their persons. They seldom exchanged a word with each other, save the few words necessary to carry on the ship's duty. The fact was, the captain was a confirmed bully and tyrant. He was now in waters where complaint to any authorities on the men's part would be almost useless, and he meant to show the cloven hoof. But, although he made the bullets, he wanted a coadjutor to fire them, and Mr. Williams, our new mate, was not savage enough to carry out the captain's tyrannical ideas. I may give one small instance of this in my own person.

One Sunday morning the mate called me out of my bunk (we had no hammocks in this ship) to come on deck. I went up and found I was to receive a dozen with a rope's end for leaving the boat's tiller athwart ship on the gunwales, instead of laying it fore-and-aft in the stern-sheets.

"I'm very sorry, boy, to have to 'lash' you down for such a trifle, but the old man says it's got to be done, and I reckon, if I do it, you'll come off better than if he lays it on. Now, how'll you take it — like a man at the capstan, or must I seize you up in the mizzen rigging?"

I elected to play the man, and the executioner

took his favourite weapon, his yoke-rope. I was to be the first to try its virtues.

Now let me describe this instrument of torture. It is about six feet long, nicely wormed (that is, a piece of line is twisted round it, filling up the groove between the strands). At one end is a man-rope or rose-knot, about the size of an average apple. At the other end it is prettily pointed, a method of finishing off the ends of fancy ropes which I have described in the Appendix (p. 319). There are one or two pretty little rings called "Turks' heads" worked on to it. Finally it is painted white; the knot point and Turks' heads, blue. Its legitimate use, as most people know, is to steer a boat when a rudder head but no tiller is used.

But the mate had found another use for it, and I was about to ascertain by practical experience whether that new use was one to be condemned as unpleasant or otherwise.

Accordingly I leaned my arms against the capstan, and Mr. Williams whirled the rope through the air with a vicious energy that made it whistle as it revolved. The first blow fell. I thought he had dropped it gently on my back just to measure his distance, but the next blow would barely have killed a fly. I smiled pleasantly as the rope screamed through the air and fell harmlessly nine

times. I had just come to the conclusion that a yoke-rope in the mate's hands was rather an amusing toy, when, as ill-luck would have it, the captain appeared on deck.

"Lay it into the — young scoundrel, Mr. Williams! Lay it on hot! I'll teach him how to risk the loss of the owner's property. Cut his — back off!"

So quoth the gentle skipper. Much against his will, the mate swung the rope round his head, and it descended whistling on my back.

"Great Cæsar's ghost!" I exclaimed as the awful lash caught me round the ribs. And there were yet two more to come. The captain stood looking on, and I set my teeth tight. Down came another. I felt as if I was cut in two. The last was enough. I should have screamed with pain, I think, had there been more to follow.

"Now go below, — you," he said. "Next time I'll strip you and give you five dozen."

Then followed a shower of blasphemy, amidst which I escaped below. Down into the berth I went, to plot mutiny, murder, arson, or suicide. I was in a towering rage at the disgrace. I expected all hands to rise and avenge the insult I had received. But the other fellows only laughed and said:

“Wait a bit. That’s only the old man’s fun. Somebody’s got to be killed aboard here yet.”

So I swallowed my wrath and my breakfast and elected to wait. I determined that this should be both the first and the last time that captain or mate should lay a hand on me.

CHAPTER VI.

A TASTE OF THE CAT.

ON the 24th of June we received the welcome intelligence that we were to get our first barge-load of guano. One load a day was to be our first allowance to enable us to begin loading. Whilst waiting for our cargo we had not been idle. All the sails had been unbent and stowed away in the sail locker, all useless raffle was cleared away, the pumps had been well cased-in, and we had got rid of our stone ballast. There used to be a law that no vessels were to discharge their ballast into the harbour, if the open roadstead could be called a harbour. This regulation was doubtless meant to prevent the filling up of the anchorage by the millions of tons of sand, gravel, and stone which would be thrown overboard by the vast fleet of vessels which were daily arriving in ballast.

How the Peruvian Government could imagine that any number of vessels could fill up a depth of from ninety to a hundred fathoms of the Pacific Ocean to the shoaling point, I cannot say, but what I do know is, that every ship merrily tumbled

its ballast into the sea day after day till the hold was empty, and nobody seemed to be a bit the wiser. We got ours over the side very soon, and now hauled into our loading berth, which was at no great distance from the mole.

It so happened that we had a pretty idle day previous to this. All odds and ends of rope had been picked into oakum, all the old rope yarns had been made into "sinnit," all the waste Manila worked into thrummed mats, the brasswork was bright, the decks holystoned, masts scraped—what could a poor skipper invent to avoid giving the crew a spell?

Every seaman was getting £4 a month, every boy £2. How could a conscientious captain save his owners from being robbed of a day's pay all round?

By Jove! Happy thought! The hold was cleared out—the bolt-heads could be polished!

The next thing we heard was—

"All hands into the lower hold!"

Down we all tumbled, and each man was provided with an iron bolt, with orders to pound the rust off every bolt in the timber and scrub them with sand and canvas! A hold that was next day to receive a cargo of damp earth!

But there was no help for it. The men cursed

and tapped and hammered, swore and growled, and the ship resembled an iron-founder's yard when boilers are being riveted together.

Next day the boatswain and a crew went off to the mole to take possession of a large punt which had been assigned to us, and in due time came off with a heavy load of bagged guano. Of course, we were all anxiety to get the first pickings out of the bags, so we boys swung ourselves down into the punt and were busy ripping open the bags and letting out their contents, when the boatswain suggested our going into the hold, where it would be all scattered about, and the ammonia nuggets ready to pick up.

We confidently did so, and by-and-by down came bag after bag. A terrific cloud of dust arose. Choking and half-suffocated, we fled on deck, only to be received with diabolical chuckles from the fiendish boatswain and his crew. After this experience we became more careful, and obtained plenty of ammonia. Before the ship was filled, every man on board must have had from a dozen to three dozen fruit- and pickle-bottles full of it.

We used to go ashore every morning to fetch down beef and vegetables, and several times we had an opportunity of slipping away to the workings, where, in exchange for a piece of pork, we could

often obtain fine white specimens. Of course, the diggers were not allowed to make away with any, but nevertheless it was constantly done. We would take a nice bit of Irish pork of about two pounds' weight (surreptitiously abstracted from the harness-cask, whenever we could find it unlocked). With this wrapped in a handkerchief, we would walk along the tramway and begin running along the rails. By-and-by one of the Chinamen would give us a signal meaning that he had some ammonia. We then played about near the man, dropped the handkerchief containing the pork, and passed on. Soon afterwards we came back and the man would call out: "Sailor-boy! hi! Hanklech'f b'longee you?"

We, of course, claimed the handkerchief, and usually found in it a fine white nodule of ammonia, weighing perhaps a pound or two.

I never saw such a place for mackerel as the seas round the Chincha Islands. The fish swarmed in all directions. As far as the eye could reach sometimes the calm surface was ruffled by millions of them. Every now and then there would be a rush—the water was lashed into foam for several yards round, and the fish disappeared. This meant seals, and in a minute or two half a dozen black flat heads emerged shining from the water with a

prolonged "pouf" as the seal rose to breathe, and every mouth held a mackerel.

At night the effect was marvellous, owing to the wonderful luminosity of the water. The sea teems with small medusæ, whose phosphorescence is given out as the fish and seals dash through them. It was like an exhibition of fireworks.

As for the method of catching the mackerel, it could scarcely be called fishing. We simply threw out hooks baited with a piece of red rag, and hauled them in by hundreds. Another way was to solder three hooks into a piece of lead and throw the contrivance, at the end of a line, into a school of fish. Then we "jigged" them, often catching three at a time. At last it became a case of *toujours perdrix*. However much we enjoyed the fish at first, we got tired of them, and they were condemned as unfit for human food; besides, they helped to save the ship's rations, which was not to be tolerated. Luckily, the captain discovered rock-cod near the shore, and as he now kept away from the dirt and smell of the ship as much as possible, we were always either cod-fishing, shooting, boat-racing, or picnicking on the mainland.

One of the great events of this monotonous life was to attend the departure of a loaded vessel.

On these farewell occasions numbers of boats crowded round the happy ship. The captains went on board and hob-nobbed, the crews remained in the boats and were either pulled or towed along for two or three miles. Then the red-faced skippers, full of whisky and excitement, rolled up from the cabin and jumped into their respective boats. A farewell hurrah was given for those homeward bound, who responded lustily, and then began a mad race "home." On one occasion we won a long race against twenty other boats. All the way the captain cursed and swore at us, promising us all the penalties in his code if we lost. Heavy bets were always made on these races, and he, in common with all the other masters, had bet largely on his own boat. How he expected us to bring in his heavy quarter-boat ahead of any of the smart gigs competing against us I cannot conceive, much less how he could have the folly to bet as heavily as we heard he had done. However, much as we should have liked to see the captain crawling home at the tail of the race, we had our own honour to think of. We did not wish to be chaffed by all our friends on the other ships, so we laid our backs into it and pulled our hardest. We were all strong men and in good training, and the way we made that

tub of a boat jump must have made it wonder what was happening. Gradually we drew ahead; the captain, now frantic with excitement, was yelling and swearing, every now and then shouting: "Give it her, lads!" "Now then, shake her up lively. Pull, you devils, pull! Rip the guts out of her!" and so on. The other captains were equally noisy, and the boats flew across the water. But we determined to die before we would be beaten. We were ahead and meant to keep there, and keep there we did. We reached the gangway just as the boat belonging to the next ship had crept up to our stern. We were dead-beat with this tremendous pull, but the captain's only acknowledgment was to d—— our eyes for a lot of British "sojers," and to turn us at once to work till knock-off time.

About this period it seemed as if the vials of his spleen were full to overflowing. He gave us a sample of his ferocity the very day after the race.

There had been a grand ball that night on board the American ship *Napier*, in honour of the officers of an American man-of-war, *Wyoming*, which had just arrived on the station. Musicians for the orchestra had been sought for all round the merchant fleet, and the only available talent was found in me and the mate of the American ship *West Wind*. We were requested to give our

services, and after I had given my captain a specimen of sundry pieces of dance music, I was ordered to go on board the *Napier* with my violin at eight p.m. On arrival, I was installed with my brother in affliction on an improvised daïs. We tuned our fiddles and compared notes as to what we knew. Soon quadrille sets were formed, and we were ordered to pipe away. We got through the quadrille beautifully, and the dancers voted the music excellent. The succeeding dances—polka, schottische, galop, and waltz—went fairly well. By - and - by, a mazurka was called. I remembered half a one—my fellow-fiddler nothing at all. However, I boldly struck up the first few bars, and my assistant manfully played a second to me. Then we tried giving the first bars over again, but it would not do. Cries of “Go on! go on! Give us the rest!” arose; so we improvised some diabolical noises purporting to be a mazurka, but which had nothing but the time to recommend them to the ear as a dance of any description. I shall never forget the sympathising air with which one of the naval officers came to me and said, “I think, my lad, you must be tired. You and your friend had better come and get some refreshment.”

• He took us to the supper-room, and we had a

first-class supper and some champagne. After this we got on better, till it came to the Sir Roger de Coverley. There we drew the line. We utterly broke down, and, despite all entreaties, we retired to the supper-room till it was time to take our sleepy, quarrelsome captain home.

Next day, the unhappy boys who had been sitting all night in the boat, and I who had been fiddling all night, were ordered on deck at the usual hour of six a.m. Dropping with sleep, I did not get on deck as soon as the others. It appeared they did not turn to, but hung about watching the carpenter, who was at work on a new fore-royal yard. The second mate bullied them for idling; they retorted, and he knocked one of them down. Barney and Wilkinson immediately picked up a piece of wood each and rushed at the officer, when a regular tussle ensued, in the midst of which the captain appeared on deck. I emerged from our berth at the same moment. The boys dropped the wood, and the second mate, like a good fellow, tried to screen the boys. But it was too good a chance for the exercise of a piece of cruelty, and our gentle chief could not allow it to slip. He first flew at the second mate, caught him by the throat, and shook him as a terrier shakes a rat. "You — infernal son of a sea-

cook! You no man sailor, you! D—— you, I've a mind to break your —— face off you, you —— sojer! Call yourself a sailor or an officer, and let two —— boys lick you! Go for the irons, or by —— I'll trice you up to the spanker boom and kick you overboard afterwards. Now, stir yourself, you no man—you —— hound!"

The poor man said nothing, but brought the irons and put them on the boys' wrists. Their shirts had already been removed. The third mate was ordered to seize them up in the mizzen rigging. This officer was an Englishman, and very kind to the boys. He berthed with us, and we had good reason to like him. He got a couple of ear-rings, passed them round the handcuffs, and proceeded to tie them up; but his mode of going to work was far too gentle for our fiendish captain. He threw him on one side, cursing him for a useless loblolly boy, only fit for a canal boat, seized the earing and posted it high up over a ratline, jammed his knee into the boy's back, and hauled taut on the earing, so that the lad was stretched to the utmost. He then tied his legs to bolts on the deck, and poor Barney was ready for the sacrifice.

The brute now took off his coat and waistcoat, took a yoke-rope, and lashed the boy's fair white back, rising and swinging half round to get in a heavier

stroke. When the first cruel lash fell, the poor lad cried out:

“Oh, Mary! Oh, Mother of Mercy!”

“Mother of Mercy, eh?” foamed the captain. “Pray to me, you young son of an Irish swine. I’m the father and mother of mercy in one, and this is the mercy you’ll get!” Down came the awful weapon again on the unfortunate screaming victim. Six times it fell, and the boy’s back was raised in six great black-and-blue wales. The inhuman monster rested for a bit, and then went at it again with a relish. The next six strokes cut through the flesh, and the blood streamed in small black rivulets from his back. “There,” said the captain, “you’ll do. Cast him off, Mr. See, and trice up Wilkinson.” The latter was at once seized up in the same fashion, and suffered the same awful torture.

One would have thought that the infernal skipper would be satisfied with this cruel punishment, but he was only suffering for fresh victims. He turned to me and Sharpe: “Were you two in it? D—— you, were you? Speak up, you —— young whelps, or I’ll cut your livers out!”

He got us both by the hair and knocked our heads so violently together that I thought my skull was cracked.

He longed to tie us up; but the second mate, braving the captain's rage, said:

"No, Captain Barton, they were not in it; and allow me to say you have done an unwarrantably cruel thing, which will be brought against you, sir, in a court of law, if ever this b——y vessel reaches England. I shall no longer stay in this ship, and I demand my discharge."

The captain was speechless for a moment. To think that a mere second mate, and he only a Britisher, should dare to beard him on his own deck in this bold manner! He glared at Mr. Marshall, feeling at the same time in his pocket, probably for a pistol, which, fortunately for both of them, was not there, and then said: "Take the young hound down. You want your discharge, do you? Yes, you shall have it by ——, *when I've done with you.* You have sided with mutiny, remember. You're amenable to the law. I never forget. I always get even with folks. Send those two to the fore- and mainroyal yards, and they'll come down, mind, when *I* call them—not before."

With these words, the captain turned and went below. Poor Mr. Marshall was very much cut up at this result of his bullying the boys. But they told him not to mind. It was their fault, and he did his best to save them. They had no grudge

against him, and thanked him for his bold stand. This happened before breakfast. No breakfast was sent to the two sufferers, so I went to the cabin skylight and looked down. The skipper was lying down on the sofa, reading. I called Sharpe, and told him to keep an eye on him. I then went and got some beef and a couple of good large boiled "batatas" and some biscuits, made two parcels of them, and bent them on to the signal halliards; I also included pipes, tobacco, and matches. These two bundles of comfort I succeeded in running up to them without that scoundrel in the cabin being any the wiser.

When eight bells (noon) was struck, I thought I would try the old man. He was then on deck so I marched up to him and said:

"Please, sir, may I take up a bit of dinner to the masthead? They've had no breakfast."

No answer. By-and-by he walked aft. I called after him:

"Did you say I might, sir?"

He reached the cabin stairs, then turned round, and, fitting all the lurid adjectives he could get out in the time to the words "young fool," finished by saying I might have done it without asking.

I did not mind his swearing a bit, so I ventured to ask if I might call them down to dinner. "Call

them to hell, if you like, and go there yourself!" was the gracious answer.

I wanted no more. I told Mr. Marshall what the captain had said, but he would not call them down.

"The old man said they were to come down when *he* called them. I've had hell and Tommy enough for one day," he growled.

So I decided to call them down in the captain's name. I went and stood right at the open skylight, and then shouted:

"Mastheads, there!"

"Ay, ay!" came down. "What's up, Riley?"

"The captain says you're to come down."

I cocked my eye down the skylight, but there was no sound from below.

Barney and Wilkinson came crawling down and went to dinner. We dressed their lacerated backs, but it was some time before they got over the punishment. The captain, however, treated them somewhat better after this. I rather think the second mate's threat of a court of law had some effect on him.

I had now had personal experience of a rope's-ending. I had seen the unhappy Scouse rope's-ended time and again. I had seen men knocked down, kicked, and battered with belaying pins;

but this was the first time I had witnessed a regular flogging. It was not to be the last. But I there and then mentally determined to put it out of the captain's power to inflict such a disgraceful and brutalising punishment on me.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ANCIENT MARINER.

THE 4th of July now came round. This day is always celebrated with festivities wherever the Stars and Stripes fly. It commemorates the great day of the Declaration of the Independence of the United States. Elaborate preparations were made for dressing our ship in all the available bunting on board.

Lines were rove from the taffrail to the mizzen, main, and fore trucks, thence to the flying jib-boom end in readiness for the dressing of the ship. At sunrise on the "Glorious Fourth" she was in a perfect blaze of gay colours, streaming in a breeze just sufficient to display them, from fore and aft and aloft.

All hands were knocked off work; liberty was given to go ashore, and grog was served out three times instead of once. We had two twelve-pounder guns on board, and these were got ready for a salute. Cartridges were made up; the second mate was placed in charge of one gun, the third mate looked after the other. The captain had a

fancy for firing ball out of the port gun. No ships lay in that direction, so there was no danger.

At the appointed time all hands mustered for the firing of the salute, which was to be prolonged by firing at forty-second intervals. We boys had charge of iron rods, which we heated at the galley fire and brought forward as required. The captain stood by, watch in hand. With him were the captains of the *Bridgewater*, *Earl of Elgin*, and of several American ships.

At the proper time the captain sang out:

“All ready, starboard?”

“All ready, sir!” was the reply.

“All ready, port?”

“All ready, sir!”

“Starboard! Fire!” came the command.

Bang went the starboard gun, the white, sulphurous smoke blowing away to leeward and enveloping the admiring crews of the ships lying in that direction.

“Port! Fire!”

Bang went the port gun, and the ball howled through the air and ricocheted several times on the water. It was magnificent.

The starboard gun was again duly fired.

The port gun hung fire.

“Port! Fire! D—— you!” roared the captain.

The second mate poured a quarter of a pound of powder on the vent-hole.

“Bring a white-hot iron, boy! Quick!” he said.

“Port! Fire!” yelled the angry captain. “What the ——’s the matter? Are you gone to sleep? Fire your gun, sir!”

The second mate applied the heated iron to the mass of priming, which fizzled off, but no report followed.

The captain’s rage was terrible. He had brought a party of ship-masters and shore folk to see how he could inaugurate “the Fourth”—to show off, in fact—and this was the result! It was maddening. He would gladly have blown the unfortunate second mate from the gun. But swearing was of no use. The salute was completed with the starboard gun, and then the captain and his visitors inspected the port gun. They pushed a pricker down the vent. They poured powder down it, but it obstinately refused to go off.

At last the English captain suggested that perhaps the ball had been rammed in first. The wadhook was passed down the muzzle, and, sure enough, the cartridge was withdrawn. The unhappy “dicky” had rammed home the ball first!

There was a general titter. This in itself was more than enough to enrage the captain still more.

“ You infernal mugwump ! ” was all he could get out. The second mate growled something about not being a — gunner, which speech would have brought a volcano of abuse upon him from the captain, had it not fortunately happened that some more visitors arrived to breakfast. So he turned away, ordering the guns to be secured, and the men to be sent aft for grog.

After breakfast, the boat was got ready. A mast and sails were put into her, together with baskets of provisions and liquors, and four of the *Elgin's* boys joined us four in pulling her over to Pisco, a town on the mainland, about twelve miles from the Chinchas, our captain and two others occupying the sternsheets. It was a beautiful day, but what wind there was was against us. Still there was no very great hardship in eight hearty lads pulling twelve miles. But our merciless skipper would give us no rest. Every now and again he called out :

“ Pull, you young dogs ! Pull ! Lay your backs into it ! ”

He kept his eye on each of us. The captain of the *Elgin* suggested we should have a spell, and

something to wet our whistles. He even got out the lemonade basket, and a couple of pannikins, but our amiable gentleman would hear of nothing but constant bending to it.

“D—— ’em! what right have they to be thirsty? I’m not thirsty,” he said. “Let ’em drink when we land.”

We undoubtedly were thirsty, and we were nearly three hours getting across, during which time we did not get a moment’s respite from pulling. I thought the Englishman would have ordered his boys to rest, but I suppose he concluded that for the present they were under our captain’s orders, so they suffered as well as we.

As soon as we had beached the boat and carried up the anchor on to the sand, we took out the provisions and brought them to the ground selected for the picnic. Then, before we were allowed anything to eat or drink, we were sent up to the town to order down pumpkins, green corn (cobs of unripe maize), and other vegetables. When we got back we found that the skippers had finished their dinners, and we were told to get ours.

Eight hungry lads did not require twice bidding, so we sat down and soon made a tremendous hole in the provisions. Nothing had been

said for or against our having something to drink, but, of course, we intended to have our share. Waiting till the chiefs had strolled away, we opened four bottles of ale and drank our own healths and bad luck and confusion to all Yankee ships and Yankee skippers, our dear Captain Barton being named specially in connection with the toast.

By - and - by we saw the bags of pumpkins, etc., being carried down to the end of the pier. This pier was a splendid iron structure, built on screw piles, and made enormously strong, as it had to resist the tremendous Pacific rollers which often swept its deck. As the pier was very long, it was provided with iron shelters at intervals, where passengers crouched when a roller passed over it.

As ill-luck would have it, we had not told the people in the town to bring the produce down to the beach, so it was deposited at the end of the pier. Now, the only way to get it was to pull the boat up to a buoy, which was moored at some distance from the pier, and connected with it by a chain. We got to the buoy, then, watching a favourable opportunity, we hauled the boat swiftly to the steps, ran up, bundled a bag of pumpkins into the boat, and hauled off to the buoy again to wait till the big rollers had passed, when we repeated the performance till all the bags were in

the boat. We ran a tremendous risk of being dashed to pieces against the pier—in which case it would have been all over with us—but we managed successfully, got back to the beach, packed up the provisions, and received a tot of grog each. If the ale was missed, nothing was said to us about it. We then loaded the boat, and, as the wind was favourable, there was no pulling to do. The sails were hoisted, and we sailed pleasantly back in two hours. The boat was then unloaded, hoisted half-way up, and we got below to our tea, having had a rather jolly day of it, if the outward pull is put out of the question.

Next day we were set to work at the guano. What for, we had no idea. We were supposed to keep ourselves clean and tidy, so that we might be ready at any time to take the captain ashore or to some other ship. He frequently visited other captains on board their vessels, and always gave us, on these occasions, strict orders not to leave the boat. Sometimes he would go to dinner on board a ship a couple of miles away, and we had to lie alongside—often till after midnight—whilst he was enjoying himself playing cards, smoking and drinking in the cabin. But he had not the smallest regard for our comfort. On the contrary, the more uncomfortable he could make things for us, the better he

was pleased. He used to forbid us taking a monkey-jacket with us at night when we had to wait for him, and sometimes the nights were chilly, whilst the dews were as heavy as rain. Our only protection was the ensign which was laid over the after-seats.

Whenever we went on board the *Earl of Elgin* we had rather a good time. The apprentices on that ship were gentlemen's sons like two of us. They used to invite us into their berth and keep a sharp look out for our captain. For an hour or two we ate, drank, smoked, sang songs, and told yarns until discretion warned us to return to the boat. There was one especially nice lad about fifteen years of age amongst them. He was very handsome, with aristocratic features, and had a beautiful voice. We always made him sing a favourite song about the Australian diggings, which he did in such a refined manner that his captain used often to get him to sing in the cabin when he had visitors on board. He was a charming little fellow to be thrown into the midst of such a rough, blasphemous crowd as the Chincha Island fleet could show. I often wonder where he is; whether he has risen to command or remained before the mast, or whether he has gone where all good sailors go. I have been in a dozen ships

since then, but never fell in with a single one of my old shipmates.

Whilst we were loading guano our captain relaxed no portion of the work of ship-cleaning. Ships were there which never washed down decks, sides, or rigging except on Saturdays and Sunday mornings. What was the use? The planks were scarcely dry, when off would come a cargo of guano. The first few basketfuls sent showers of yellow dust all over the decks, where it was speedily converted into mud, and they might just as well never have been touched at all. But our captain sent the ordinary seamen round the ship every morning in the stern boat to scrub the vessel's sides. The decks were scrubbed and often holystoned, rigging was washed down, and scarcely was this work finished than guano-loading began, the men barely having time for breakfast.

Before we left the island Captain Murphy, of the ship *Gipsy Bride*, held a grand regatta. There were sailing races, pulling races, tub races, and all kinds of aquatic sports. The men-of-war's boats entered for some of the events, and there was a capital day's sport, marred only by one accident. A boat belonging to the *Athenais* capsized, and one man was drowned.

One most extraordinary boat entered for one of

the races. She was ancient and weatherbeaten, green weed grew from her keel to her water-line. The oars were fished and the blades splintered and held together with bands of Muntz metal. The sides were tarred instead of painted, and the tar could have been chopped off, so thickly had successive tarrings coated the ancient craft. The rudder-head was split, and was lashed together by rope-yarns to keep the tiller in its place. The crew consisted of four aged, careworn-looking men and a weird, wizened boy, who crouched in the stern-sheets and baled incessantly. This wreck belonged to a ship in the harbour called *The Ancient Mariner*. Many a time did we pull round that wonderful fabric. She must have been owned by some eccentric individual who laid down her lines on an idea inspired by Coleridge's poem. Paint and she had apparently parted company years before. Her grey, weatherbeaten sides gaped, and the oakum hung in strips from the seams. Her rigging was slack and grey for want of tarring down, the braces hung loosely, allowing the yards to swing about and point anywhere. She had a figurehead, but it might have been Britannia, or Nelson, or a Unicorn, for all an observer could tell, so broken and battered was it. Altogether she presented the most perfect picture of marine



"SHE ROUNDED THE BUOY . . . AND CAME IN A WINNER."

desolation I have ever seen. She lay isolated from the rest of the ships, and had such a reputation that few sailors cared to pass too closely to her after dark. All sorts of stories were afloat concerning her, the principal idea running through all of them being that she was haunted, that her crew were only resuscitated during the day, being corpses at night. Nobody would have cared to board her alone at midnight. She was looked upon as a stationary *Flying Dutchman*. Not an ounce of guano was ever seen to go into her hold, but she floated deep as if already loaded and ready to sail. I think now that she must have been detained for debt and afterwards condemned, for never could she have been taken round the Horn in ballast, nor could she even have carried a cargo to Callao.

Well, the old boat entered for a pulling race, and the four old spectres solemnly strained at the ancient, dilapidated oars. Somehow she seemed to keep ahead. The boats could not catch up to her. Possibly the superstitious crews of the other boats felt a creepy sensation at approaching her, and did not lay themselves out to do their best. Certain it is that she rounded the buoy ahead of the rest, and came in a winner by several lengths. After receiving the prize, the

ghostly boat slipped silently away, and was seen no more that day.*

We continued making excursions to Pisco, as it formed the only pleasant change from the dead monotony of guano-loading, mackerel-catching, and seal-hunting.

On one of our trips the mate of the *Elgin* went some distance inland with his gun. On his return, we saw him carrying two enormous birds, which he told us were bald-headed eagles, but I think they were condors. He was a very tall, stout man, yet, when he held the bird over his head by the neck, he was quite hidden in the enormous wings. They were certainly splendid specimens, and he had them skinned to take home with him. I had always thought that these birds frequented the highest peaks of the Andes, and was much surprised to hear that he had shot them among the low hills bordering the coast. I do not remember having seen any sharks about the islands. We used to bathe every day and swim out some distance from the ship, but no one was ever touched by a shark. I had a rather bad scare once, though. We were all swimming one evening, when someone on board sang out: "Come on board quick! There's a big shark coming this way." We all struck out

* See Note IV. p., 307.

furiously to reach the ship. The only means of getting on board on this side of the ship was a Jacob's-ladder hanging from the guess-warp boom. With the number of men crowding round it, I saw I had no chance, so I swam for a rope I saw hanging over the side. I caught hold of the rope, but it was covered with guano, and greasy as butter. It was quite impossible to climb up by it, so I had to swim back again to the ladder, and as the men were now all on board, my chance was a good one, providing the shark did not get me before I was on the ladder. I expected every moment to be pulled down. But I reached the ladder, and soon hauled myself out of danger. I saw no shark, but the man on deck declared it was one, and that it was heading straight for the ship.

The sea-lions used sometimes to be aggressive, and I shall never forget my terror when bathing from the boat near the rocks one day, when I came up from a dive between two huge ones. They did not make off, but I did, and tumbled head over heels into the boat. When we pulled away, these curious brutes accompanied us for nearly a quarter of an hour. We could easily have harpooned one, if we had had the necessary tackle in the boat.

CHAPTER VIII.

A REIGN OF TERROR.

Now my turn came for being worried by the mate. It came about in this way. The captain had parted with Mr. Williams, and for a day or two we had no mate, and everything went on pleasantly under Mr. Marshall (who had no idea of getting boys or men flogged again after his last experience) and Mr. See, the third mate. The captain ordered me one day to put my best "togger" on and go ashore with him. I, of course, pulled my oar in the boat as usual, but on landing at the mole, he took me up to the agent's store, gave me a cigar and a drink, and told me to wait. He went away and soon returned, accompanied by a dapper little man, who looked quite a dwarf beside our gigantic captain.

When they came in, the captain asked him to "liquor up," and when the glasses were filled, both lighted cigars, and a conversation began of which I only heard fragments.

"Now, Mr. Sheman," the captain said at last, "you can make up your mind. Those are the terms,

and you won't beat them. Mates hereabouts are as thick as blackberries at home. If you're spry and *suit me*, fifty dollars a month; if you don't *suit*, you go ashore and take seaman's wages."

"Vell, Capen Barton," replied the little man, "I don't shust know how dot vill be. Maybe, no matter vot I does, you says to me ven ve gets home, 'Sheman,' says you, 'mine goot friend, you vas not *suit me*,' und vot den? I hev done de mate's duty, and you pays me, 'cordin' to agreement, seaman's vages, und I cannot get righted, because I hev sign on on dem terms. No, I dinks dot von't *suit dis chile nohow*, capen."

"All right," said the captain; "then we'll consider the thing off and no harm done. I reckon it's easy enough to find a good man on the same terms."

"Here, boy!" (to me) "come and have a drink, and then take those parcels to the boat. This is one of my boys, Mr. Sheman. He's a brother of the Melbourne agent, the Prussian Consul there. The lad's going to sea for pleasure and to wear out his old clothes."

"Vell, youngster," said the would-be, or rather wouldn't-be, mate, "I dinks you hev a good ship und a goot captain." (Here the captain tried to look lamblike.) "But I also dinks dot young

shentlemens vot goes to sea for bleasure vould go to hell for pastime." (Here the captain looked black.)

I left them then and went down to the boat. It was quite two hours before the captain came down. He looked pleased, and talked a good deal to us whilst we were pulling off to the ship. Next morning, to my surprise, this Mr. Sheman came on board with his traps. He had evidently changed his mind or had made a different agreement with the captain as to wages. At all events, there he was, and he at once took charge.

It was not long before he began to show whether he would suit the captain or not. He was looking down into the hold from the maindeck when he saw two men leaning on their shovels.

This was his first opportunity, and he spread himself for action.

He first sent a volley of mixed Germano-Yankee blasphemy at the men, and one of them, not knowing who he was, taking him probably for the mate of some other ship, growled to the other: "Who the —— have we got here? What's this darned Dutchman got to do with us?"

In a twinkling the little monkey-like mate was down amongst them with a knuckle-duster on his fist.

“I’ll show you, you etc., etc., etc., what ‘dis darned Dutchman’ has got to do with you! You dare open your beastly mouth to look of me, und I break it off your oogly vace, you —— swine.” He then jumped at the man, got him down and pounded his face with the knuckle-duster till the man was covered with blood. He then kicked him all over the body, picked up a shovel, and knocked him about the head with it, and finally ordered him to turn to work, or he would do for him and the rest of the crew.

“Mein Gott! I vill show you you hev a man to deal wid—not a crawler.” He walked off towards the ladder, not deigning to look behind him, and none of the other men dared offer even a remark on his brutality. When he got on deck, he saw me looking down into the hold. “Vell, you —— young skulker! Vot might you be doing dere? I shoost vont to tell you somethings. De old man told me yesterday as you vas a shentleman. Now mind dis — *I hate a shentleman*. I make a shentleman of you! By Gott! Ven I hev done mit you, you vill be the sickest shentleman I knows of. You vill vish you vas de capen’s cat. Go and get a tar-pot. Off mit you, or I start you dobbble quick!”

I saw that if he was to be the mate there was

no use in "riling" him, so I went to the locker and got a tar-pot. When I returned, he ordered me to tar down all the royal backstays. I was, as usual, dressed in a clean white shirt, black silk necktie, and had my go-to-meeting shoes on. I merely said "Ay, ay, sir," and turned to go down into the berth to change my clothes.

He jumped at me like a wild cat. "Vere are you going? Vot did I tell you to do?"

"To tar down the royal backstays, sir," I said, "and I was going to get my dungarees * on."

"Tunkarees pe tammed!" he cried. "Go as you are, you shentleman. A pretty shentleman you vill look ven I hev worked you up a bit, and I mean to, — you!"

It was rather hard to ruin my good clothes, but refusal to go aloft would have been madness. The captain himself in that case would have backed up the mate. So up I went.

Now, to do any tarring down whilst guano was being hoisted on board was a simple waste of tar, but that was none of my business, so up I went, and began at the main royal backstay. I had been at work about an hour, during which time I wasted a quantity of tar on my face and clothes, when I

* A "dungaree" suit is a suit of light blue cotton stuff, much worn by sailors when at work.

saw the captain come on deck, and managed to hear him tell the mate to order the boat.

“Hurrah!” I thought. “Now for getting that little beast into a row.” I took my oakum wad and deliberately painted my face, shirt, and trousers with tar. My hands and arms were already dirty enough. I also left my shoes and stockings in the topgallant crosstrees, and painted my feet, especially the soles of them. It was not decent Stockholm tar, but that sickening abomination coal-tar.

By-and-by the mate hailed me:

“Aloft, there!”

“Ay, ay, sir!” I sang out, in reply.

“Lay down from aloft,” came back.

Down I came.

“Go into the boat,” he snarled.

I tramped over the nice clean quarter-deck, leaving tarry footprints as I went. The mate did not notice this, as he was looking over the side, busy swearing at the other boys. I ran down the ladder, leaving the stamp of a “shentleman” everywhere I placed my hands or feet. Over each white - and - blue thwart I walked to my place. I sat down, and, as I pulled stroke oar, I would face the captain, who steered.

I could feel the tar clinging to the seat,

and could imagine the state in which the boat would be.

"Don't grin, you fellows," I said. "I'm trying to get that devilish little mate into a row." So they said nothing.

In a few moments down came the captain. He noticed nothing till he had seated himself and faced me. It was all I could do to keep myself from bursting out laughing when he grasped the situation, and at the thought of the wonderful figure I must cut. He first turned red, then he unshipped the tiller and swung it as if he meant to knock me overboard with it. I looked quite solemn.

At last he gasped out:

"What the —— do you mean, you infernal young hound, by making my boat in such a —— of a mess?"

"I only obeyed orders, sir," I whimpered, trying to squeeze out a few crocodile tears. "I didn't want to go in the boat before I changed my clothes, but Mr. Sheman wouldn't let me change. He told me to go as I was, and be d—— to me."

This, of course, was a reversal of facts. The mate certainly had refused to allow me to change, but that was before I went aloft, when he told me to "go as I was." But the mean tyranny of such

fellows as he compelled his victims to use all means for their own defence.

“Oh! the mate sent you, did he? Very well; keep your seat. Shove off; give way.”

We all knew now that *I* was safe, but the captain undoubtedly had something up his sleeve for the mate.

We pulled aboard the *Sarah M.*, and then to the *Minnehaha*. Here the captain wrote a note and gave it to me to give Mr. Sheman when we got back. What would not we have given to know what was in that note! Had it been unsealed or only gummed together we could have managed it, and should have made no scruple at reading it, because we simply looked upon it as “despatches of the enemy” legally intercepted. However, we dare not break the sealing-wax, so we pulled on board. I went up the side and gave the note to the mate. He opened it, read it, and glanced viciously at me.

“I suppose I’m to go on with tarring down, sir?” I asked demurely.

“Tarring down, be ——!” he exclaimed. “Get below und glean yourself, you dirty, lying yong ——.”

“Thank you, sir,” I said, and moved off.

“Here! coom pack here! Vot vos dot as you said?” he shouted.

"Nothing, sir," I respectfully replied.

"Now you shoost best take care of yourself, I dell you. I make your life aboard dis ship one bad hell for you. You mind me. Go und dell Johnston to get to vork und glean dot poat."

So I made my escape below, and got into a clean suit, after expending a couple of pounds of slush (fat) in getting the tar off my skin. Then the little fiend set us to work knotting rope-yarns.

When the captain came back, he called Mr. Sheman into the cabin. What he said to him I do not know, although we got close to the skylight and listened the best we could, but for a few days after the tar episode we boys had a fairly peaceful time of it. But the treatment of the men was as bad as ever, and one day it culminated in a kind of mutiny.

There was a barge-load of guano alongside which had arrived just about four bells (6 p.m.), when the men were always knocked off. They were sent to their tea at the usual time, but as they went forward the mate sang out—

"You no need to glean yourselves, men; I vant dot bunt emptied to-night."

Of course, there were thunderous growls from the forecastle, but nothing was said that the mate could take notice of. After tea, they were ordered

to turn to, but they refused, and came aft in a body, demanding to see the captain. The latter came on deck and blandly asked them what they wanted.

One of the crew, a big, red-headed man named Vaughan, was put forward as spokesman.

“Well, it’s this ’ere way, Captain Barton, sir,” he said. “We’ve done a hard day’s work already, and it ain’t fair to ax us for to turn to and unload that there barge to-night. There ain’t no sea on, and no wind, and ’tain’t likely as she’ll come to any grief. We’ll tarn to at four bells to-morrow, but no more to-night. We ain’t no Virginy niggers.”

“You ain’t niggers, ain’t you, you ——? Then, by all the snakes in Virginy I’ll make niggers, and a —— sight worse than niggers of you. *I’ll* drive you. *I’ll* take hell out of you, you d—— set of skulking Dutchmen. Turn to, —— you, or I’ll work every mother’s son of you till daylight, and then you’ll turn to at four bells. I’ll make you wish you’d never been born! Turn to, d’ye hear?” and he strode up to Vaughan with his fists clenched. Vaughan tore off his dungaree jacket and squared up manfully to the captain, but the latter was an old hand at this game. He merely said, “Now, Mr. Sheman, Mr. Marshall, Mr. See, give ’em hell

The mates had already armed themselves with

belaying pins, and the little Dutchman advanced upon Vaughan. The latter turned round to stop him, and as he did so, the captain dashed his huge fist into his face and had him down in an instant. He jumped on to his body, he grasped his throat with both hands till the man's tongue protruded and he was black in the face, shouting to the second mate to bring the irons.

"My Gawd!" roared Johnston; "'e'll 'ave Billy scragged in a minute. Stand by, you hothers."

Scarcely had he uttered the words when the mate's belaying pin came crash on his skull, and the wretched cockney convict lay stunned. Both men were handcuffed before the cowardly crew could make up their minds to action. Meanwhile the steward had brought the captain's pistols, the mate whipped one out of his pocket, and with the second and third mate armed with iron belaying pins, these four faced twenty men who were anxious to rescue their shipmates, but could not muster courage to make a rush.

Seeing us near him, the captain said:

"Get out of this, you boys. Go into the cabin. You'll not be wanted this trip."

We went away, but only as far as the wheelhouse, where we could see what was going on.

"Now go forward, every man of you!" roared

the captain. "If there's one single man left aft when I've counted three, that man goes down with a hole in his skin. You've not seen me shoot yet. When I do, I mean business. Bosun, turn the hands to and unload that barge!"

The boatswain had great influence over the men. He said: "Now, bullies, 'tain't no sorter use risin' the ole man's dander. He's bound to win anyhow you fix it, so you'd just best go and turn to."

The men took his advice, and went growling to work. The captain gave the steward his pistols and called to us: "Get the boat alongside, boys." Wilkinson and Sharpe went to get the boat alongside, and Barney and I, pretending to busy ourselves getting oars and cushions, saw the end of the performance.

"Mr. Sheman," said the captain, "bring those — swine along here."

Johnston had by this time partly recovered his senses. The two men were dragged to the spanker boom, and then Mr. See was sent for some earings. When he brought them, he and the second mate lashed the men's ankles firmly. An earing was then passed through the handcuffs and the end thrown over the boom.

"Hist away," said the mate, and the two poor wretches were triced up to the boom at the full

stretch of their arms and bodies. They could barely touch the deck with their toes.

Then the captain descended to his boat. We had expected to witness another flogging business, but it was evident the captain had something else in view. We pulled as hard as we could to the guardship. The captain went on board, and after a short interview with the naval commandant, he returned on board, and as we pulled away we heard the Peruvian boatswain piping away a boat's crew.

The two unhappy men were still in the same position, no notice being taken of them by the officers. In a quarter of an hour after our arrival a boat from the guardship came alongside, and a number of dirty-looking, bare-footed soldiers, headed by a marine officer, made their appearance on deck. They seemed to have already had their cue as to how they were to proceed. Six of them stood at intervals at the break of the quarter-deck with muskets loaded and bayonets fixed. The others let down the men from the boom and handed them into the boat. Our crew made no sign, and the whole business was carried out without any trouble. The boat pushed off with the prisoners, and the captain, after saying something to the mate, went below to his dinner.

When the barge was empty and the hatches

put on, the mate called out: "Lay aft here, all hands."

The men came aft, wondering what was to be the next move. It was soon explained by the captain's steward appearing at the head of the companion way with a large jug and a pannikin. Grog was to be served out!*

So ended the mutiny.

Soon after this episode, the captain bought, or had presented to him, an immense dog. It was either a St. Bernard or a Newfoundland. This animal was a great enemy of the crew. He always flew at any man coming aft. At first he also objected to the boys' presence on the quarter-deck, and we never dared to run when we were sent about any job, for he was at us at once, and we went about in fear of our lives owing to this brute. He stuck to the captain's side of the deck, and if we had to go and speak to him we took good care to draw his attention to the presence of the dog.

One day, I was sharply called by the captain, and, forgetful of the dog, I ran up and passed between two quarters of beef which were hanging on the spanker boom. The dog was lying watching the meat, and I did not notice him. In a

* See Note V., p. 308.

moment, he was up and had me down on the deck.

The captain released me, and asked why the devil I did not come slowly. Had I gone slowly he would have cursed me for a slouch.

That animal disappeared one night, and nobody knew what had become of him. The belief was that the mate had sent it on a long voyage to that bourne whence there is no return. I rather think that the captain himself was glad to get rid of the beast, for there was no fuss made over its disappearance as there was when the cat could not be found.

CHAPTER IX.

A DASH FOR LIBERTY.

As the loading went on, the decks began to look dirty, in spite of the continual daily scrubbing, so the captain had them stained brown. After this there was no more holystoning, and the men rejoiced exceedingly.

I now began to get very tired of the mate's continual bullying. Not a day passed but I was put to some objectionable work. One evening, after we had had tea, I got over into the main chains to fish, and I little thought that this simple thing was to relieve me from the mate for ever. I have said that all the boys had nicknames—mine being Riley—but neither captain nor officers ever called us by these names. They were only for use amongst ourselves.

I had not been fishing long, when I heard someone inboard call out:

“Riley!”

Thinking it was one of the boys, I sang out:
“Hullo! What's up?”

A head was put over the bulwarks. I looked

up, and there was the flat Russian cap and there were the wicked little eyes of the mate.

“You say ‘hello’ to me, do you? Come on deck here. I’m going to mash you up.”

I clambered over the bulwarks, and he made a blow at me and hit his fist against a dead-eye. This made him furious. “Mein Gott! I shoot you dead, you yong scoundrel. I make dead meat of you.” He rushed for his berth in the wheel-house. I rushed after him, never doubting but that he was mad enough to carry out his threat, and that he was going for his shooting-iron. I flew to the companion-way and got there just in time, for as he entered his berth, I flew down the cabin stairs and ran bolt up against the captain, who was about to go on deck.

“Now then, boy! What is it? Where in thunder are you going to?” he asked.

“The mate’s going to shoot me, sir,” I gasped.

“Mate going to shoot you, is he? Very kind of him. I’ve half a mind to save him the trouble. But let me pass, and go into the cabin till I want you.”

He pushed me in as he spoke and went up. There stood the mate at the head of the companion with his revolver. Purple with rage, the captain flew up the remaining steps, and with one blow levelled the little ruffian.

“Shoot my boys, will you? You d—— sneaking, white-livered Dutchman! You just get up and put that shooting-iron away before I tie you to it and put you in the drink (throw you overboard), you miserable hound. You’ll clear out of this vessel as soon as I’ve done with you. *You don’t suit me.*”

“Und dot vill be shoost now den, Capen Barton. You see me now? I vont shtop von minute more in dis d—— old dung barge. You shofe me ashore und tam ter seaman’s vages. I goes mitout.” He was taken at his word and straightway bundled on shore, the men giving him a hearty and well-deserved groan as we shoved off.

When we landed him at the mole, I assisted to get his chest out of the boat. Somehow or other, my end of it slipped, and souse it went overboard. I pushed it towards the steps, with the boat-hook, took off my Blackwall cap and wished him a pleasant time in his next ship. The little brute danced with rage, but he had no revolver, and there was not even an iron belaying-pin handy, so we shoved off and laughed at him from a safe distance.

After this, I began to mature my plan for leaving the ship and getting home either in some other vessel or trying my luck in the country. I

had plenty of opportunities for communicating with the shore, as the boat went every morning for beef, and we often took the captain to the mole, where we lay for hours at a time, whilst he enjoyed his euchre or poker at the agent's. On these occasions, an ordinary seaman, shipped under the name of Murray, but nicknamed Ballarat, was sometimes sent with us to carry the beef from the store to the boat. This Ballaratee told me he was only watching an opportunity to get away. Seeing that he was determined, I confided my plans to him and we agreed to go together. We got hold of a Pisco market-boatman, and made all arrangements with him to take us and our traps to the mainland, whence we made no doubt we should be able to find our way to Callao, Iquique, or else to some Chilian port. At all events we were not at all particular whither good or evil fortune might lead us. The main object was to get clear away from the den of brutality to which we were unhappily bound.

It was above all things necessary that the crew should be on our side. So one night I went down into the forecastle with Barney, and after sounding the men carefully I found they could be depended upon to help us. Father Parkes, as he was called (his real name was Parker Castner),

although he was only about five-and-twenty years old—a regular “down Easter,” from Connecticut, U.S.—was the man who fixed up all the details of the escape. He was a most singular-looking man—tall, thin, slab-sided, with long arms and slender fingers, not the least like those of a hairy-breasted old salt, whose hands curve like a lobster’s claw, and whose every stumpy broken-carrot-like finger is merely a piece of machinery for hooking on to a rope. His hair was straight, black, and long. As to his face, it was long and rather refined. He shaved off clean all but a drooping silky moustache. The corners of his mouth turned down like an arch, and he had the most beautiful brown languishing eyes, large and with long dark lashes, that I ever saw in a man. Like all the rest of the hands he was constantly chewing tobacco, and this habit nearly led to his committing murder on one occasion. Father Parkes was much looked up to by men and boys, as he was a good and daring seaman, but gentle as a woman. He was the only man in the ship who spoke with a genuine Yankee drawl, and it was natural to him. I have been particular in describing this man, as it is rare to meet such a man in a ship’s fore-castle.

As soon as we were all seated on the chests and bunks, Parkes sent an ordinary seaman named

Cook to sit at the fore-castle hatch and give notice if any of the officers or the rascally steward came prowling about. At this moment nobody was on deck except the anchor-watch, consisting of two sailors forward and one boy aft. So we felt pretty secure.

"Naow," began Parker, "I reckon as this little fakement has got to be fixed up slick and smart. My opinion is that when you go for the beef to-morrow you'd jest best fix the thing right up with one of them Dago boatmen, and try and git to-morrow night. What d'yer say, Moss?"

Moss was a staid, middle-aged man of about forty. He was an Englishman who had sailed for years out of Boston, and had been master of a ship, but having had the ill-fortune to lose his vessels on two occasions, he had drifted away as mate, second mate, boatswain and A.B., till finally he reached Victoria in Australia. There he settled down for a time, but wishing to get back to America, he had shipped with us before the mast. He was fairly well educated, and when Mr. Dickens was on board, he used often to bring up his sextant and take the sun, without incurring that easy-going officer's displeasure.

Well, Moss concluded it was a bad business to run away from a ship like ours, because, if we were

caught, there would be no mercy shown by the captain. He would certainly tie us up and flog us almost to death, and was quite capable of "keel-hauling" us or giving us half a dozen dips from the foreyard. I saw both these punishments inflicted on lads in a small schooner, and should not have liked to experience either of them. The lad who was keel-hauled was made fast to two lines, one passing underneath the ship and brought inboard through a snatch-block, the other lying ready to be paid out as rapidly as the sub-navical journey was performed. He was then stood on the rail and compelled to jump overboard. As soon as he disappeared, the men tailing on to the hauling line ran quickly aft with it, and the unhappy lad was thus hauled, underneath the vessel, from port to starboard. He was nearly drowned by the journey, and much cut by the copper and barnacles he had scraped against in his passage.

The dipping is not so bad. The lad, in this case, was hauled up to the foreyard arm and let go by the run. Down he went, feet first. He was immediately run up again, and the performance was repeated three times, and not a murmur was heard amongst the crew. They *dare not* grumble aloud in an American ship.

"However," Moss went on, "I don't blame any

one for trying to get out of this hell. I'd do it myself if I thought I had the ghost of a chance. So I'm willing to help. What say, bullies? Are you game to help 'em, and afterwards keep your mouth shut?"

"You bet!" was the general reply. So it was settled that the attempt should be made the very next night, at midnight. The conference then broke up.

Next day, as usual, we went in the boat for the beef. The captain's steward went with us, and he and Ballaratee went up to the butcher's shop. Our Pisco boatman was lying smoking on the mole, but got up and came to the boat as soon as he saw the steward well away. I arranged that he was to pull off to the ship at midnight and lie under the bows, fast to the anchor-chain, till he got a signal from the head. I also paid him a couple of dollars as a retaining fee.

Everything went on as usual during the day, but as evening approached I got alarmed for the success of the scheme. The captain came on deck fully-dressed about six bells, and we thought he was going out for the night aboard one of the ships in the harbour. If so, it was good-bye to our escape, as he would probably keep us alongside

whatever vessel he went to till one or two in the morning.

To my delight he said :

“Any boat alongside, boy?”

“No, sir,” I answered; “the boat’s fast to the guess-warp boom forrard.”

“I don’t mean our boat,” he snarled; “I mean a boat from the *Elgin*.”

“No, sir; but I see one coming now.”

“All right,” said he, going to the side; “show a light at the gangway.”

I got a lantern and stood at the gangway, and in a few minutes the *Earl of Elgin’s* boat came alongside. My friend, the young English apprentice, was in her. He ran up the gangway plank and burst out: “By Jove, Riley, you fellows are in luck! We’ve got to take your old man off and bring him back again. That means all night for us, while you beggars are snoring in peace.”

I could not tell him I was sorry, for it just fitted in nicely with my plot. But I was heartily sorry to part with a lad to whom I had become sincerely attached, and I said good-bye to him in such a manner that he said:

“What’s up, Riley, old man? One would think your old barky was full up and leaving to-morrow. What’s the matter with you?”

I could not help it. I swore him to secrecy, and told him what I proposed to do. He was very sorry to lose me, but said he would have cut and run long ago if he had had such treatment as he had seen us get. "Our old man isn't such a bad fellow, and when he does cut up rusty he never takes to flogging and booting like yours," he said.

"Yes," I replied. "You sail under the British flag. There is some law and justice to be got on board a limejuicer; but with us, what can we do? Go to the captain and he tells you to go to hell. Go to the American consul. He asks where the ship hails from. 'Boston? New York? Well, I can do nothing. You must go and lodge your complaint there.' Then get to Boston or New York, what happens then? You will be asked: 'Where did this happen?' 'At the Chinchas,' you say. 'Ah, well, that's out of this jurisdiction. You should have applied to the consul there.' No; I mean to cut it and make my way home in a British ship somehow or other."

Just then the captain, who had gone below, returned on deck, and I reported the boat as just arrived. He growled a bit and went down the plank. I devoutly hoped and believed that that was the last time I should see his portly back.

Everything was now playing beautifully into

our hands. The watchful skipper was away. The second mate would not awaken till daylight, once he was asleep, neither would the third mate. The carpenter and boatswain had leave ashore for the night, so it was all plain sailing. About six bells (11 p.m.), in the first watch, Barney and I carried my portmanteau to the forecastle. Sharpe and Wilkinson remained aft to watch the officers and to keep the bells going. Very punctually the shore boat arrived. Parkes and Hedges lowered the "leather bag" into her. Ballaratee and I shook hands all round, and were about to slip down the rope over the bows, when Parkes said:

"Stop! I reckon we're all in this swim, and I want to know what you're goin' to do, s'posin' you're caught. Air you gwine to give us away, or air you not?"

Both of us swore on our words of honour that if we were caught no punishment should make us say one word to implicate any of the crew.

"Waal, sonny," said Parkes, "we'll take your word. That's enough. You're a gentleman; so good-bye, and good luck!"

We slid down the rope, and the boatman pulled away towards the mole. We were about halfway between the ship and the shore when we heard a boat pulling in our direction, and a number of

men talking Spanish. We could not possibly avoid them, so we boldly pulled close to them. They proved to be a number of Peruvian officers going off to a man-of-war in the harbour. They hailed us and ordered us to stop. We had no option, so we told our boatman to 'vast pulling.

"Who you?" asked one.

"Apprentices," I replied.

"Where you go? What ship you belong?"

"The *Gipsy Bride*," I promptly said, mentioning the name of a ship that lay farthest out to sea. I did this in the hope that if they meant to go to the ship and make inquiries, the time they would take would enable us to get ashore and stow away before they got back. My only fear was that they might insist on our accompanying them.

"Where you go? You no say where you go," persisted one of these most inquisitive gentlemen. Of course, they had seen the portmanteau.

"What a mercy," I thought, "that it *is* a portmanteau." Had it been a common wooden seaman's chest, they might have been less satisfied with my answer.

"Going to the agent's, sir, with the captain's portmanteau, and then to the guardship to fetch his overcoat, which he left there this morning."

I thought that ought to convince them, and

so it did, for they merely said: "All right; go on. Good-night," and went on their way.

After this little interruption we reached the mole in safety, got the portmanteau ashore, and started for the boatman's hut, when we heard voices and a clanking of swords coming along the mole. Luckily, we were just abreast of some piles of lumber, so we slipped behind these, and through the chinks we saw several officers go past. They were evidently another detachment of the same party we had met in the boat, and it was just as well that we were able to escape being questioned by them. It was just possible this lot might not be so simple as to believe such a lame story as that the captain would send his portmanteau ashore at midnight, or send for his overcoat to the guardship at that hour.

When the coast was clear we got away from the mole, and went a little distance along the rocks, when we came to the boatman's hut. It was a wretched contrivance of sticks and mats, and, of course, there was no furniture. However, that did not trouble us. We wanted him to run us over to Pisco that night, and had he consented this story would have been very differently written, and to-day I might either have been in command of a Chilian or Peruvian ironclad, or killed in the

war between those two countries; or I might have turned out a wealthy *ranchero*. I do not believe I should have gone to England, as I was too fond of adventure not to try to see something of Spanish-American life.

But the man refused. He had to get some money next day, and he must wait for it. But at eleven o'clock the following night he would start. Meanwhile, he assured us we were quite safe where we were. For supper he gave us some dried salt fish, onions, and batatas, and a drink of Pisco (white rum). We made a good meal on these savoury viands, then lighted our pipes and sat down to consider our future.

Whilst we were talking, a young sailor-looking fellow came in, and said he was a runaway from his ship, and was going over to the mainland with us. He became quite friendly and confidential, and we told him all about ourselves. As he said he had bolted, taking nothing with him but the dungaree suit he was wearing, I gave him a new pair of blue cloth trousers. He talked for some time, and at last went off. We lay down to try to get some sleep, but we had a most miserable time of it. The place was infested with huge Norway rats, and these gruesome beasts ran over our bodies and faces all night. Fortunately, they

did not bite us, but it was a dreadful experience. Next morning we were up by daybreak. We got some sort of breakfast, and then our boatman came and demanded the rest of his money. I pointed out that he had not yet carried out his contract. He had already had two dollars simply for putting us ashore. The rest was for the more dangerous service of running us clear of our own ship and of the guardship and *mén-of-war*, and placing us in safety on the beach at Pisco.

But the villain declared he would not move that night, unless we paid him there and then.

“S’posa me tella cap’en wherea boy ’top, eh? Think I getta money? Oh yes—plenty.”

The scoundrel had us in his power then, but what assurance had we that, even if we paid his demand, he would take us across? I put this to him, and he laid his hand on his heart, and replied grandiloquently: “Ze honor of von gentleman, zar!”

We very much doubted the honour of “von (so very seedy, ragged and dirty-looking) gentleman,” and we half made up our minds to let him go, watch him to town, then seize his boat and sail boldly through the ships, trusting to luck not to be detected in the crowd of shore boats which were continually pulling about the harbour.

But on reflection we saw that we should be at once stopped by the other boatmen, who probably knew all about the job the fellow had in hand, so we gave up that idea. There was no help for it, and eight dollars were handed over to the rapacious scoundrel, who pocketed them with a sneering sort of grin of triumph.

At midday we were just about to dine, when the mat at the door of the tent was torn aside, and there stood a Peruvian marine officer with his sword drawn, and half a dozen *vigilantes* with bayonets fixed, close to the entrance.

“Avanti!” cried the officer. “Sailorman! come out—kveek! If you run, you die! See, behold!” and he pointed to the soldiers. Who should be with them but our rascally boatman and the English sailor lad who had visited us on the previous evening, and to whom I had presented the trousers!

We now saw the whole plot. The boatman had told this sailor, who was a crimp’s tout from Callao, as we afterwards discovered, and the latter must have suggested getting a reward for delivering us up. For the miserable sum of five dollars they had betrayed us, and in addition had got ten dollars out of me. We were in a trap, and surrendered at discretion. The sailor boy wanted to

decamp, but the officer detained him, and made him and the boatman carry my portmanteau to the boat.

We were placed in front, and the fellows with their bayonets at the charge followed close to us. The officer, whose knowledge of English seemed very limited, declared every now and then: "To fly, it is ze dead for you."

We had no intention of flying, for there was nowhere to fly to, so we walked quietly to the guardship boat, and were rapidly pulled on board. Ballarat said: "I mean to mash one of them *vigilantes* as soon as I get a chance." And as the chance occurred very soon, he kept his word.

The boat had been taken to a swinging boom projecting from the bows, and from the boom depended a Jacob's ladder. I was ordered up first, then followed Ballarat, and after him a *vigilante* close at his heels. As the former reached the boom he drew up his leg, and landed a crushing blow with the heel of his great sea-boot right in the soldier's face. The fellow dropped back into the boat nearly stunned. I am sure he must have lost some teeth. There was a prodigious outcry, but we were hurried down a couple of ladders into the hold. As soon as our eyes got accustomed to the gloom, we saw a double row of men, of

many colours and doubtless many crimes—certainly of much dirt—sitting on a layer of coal with their legs passed through shackles on a couple of iron bars, which ran the whole length of the ship. The heat and stench were awful.

“Good God!” I thought, “are we to be treated like these naked wretches?”

We were not left long in doubt, but were marched to nearly the after end of the bar, compelled to sit down, and our feet were at once secured by the shackles. By this time we were terribly thirsty, and asked for water.

“Water—no,” said the gaoler, or whatever he was called. “Ze water done to-day. To-morrow eight bells, one bucket six man.”

It was of no use asking or grumbling. Not a drop of water was to be had till eight o'clock next morning, and now it was about four in the afternoon. This was anything but an agreeable prospect, but “what can't be cured must be endured.” Ballarat had some tobacco, so we stayed our hunger and thirst by chewing. The noise and blasphemy in this pandemonium were awful. No warders checked the row. The prisoners could not possibly escape, as the ladders were drawn up after every fresh arrival. Had the ship taken fire there must have been a tremendous loss

of life, as without doubt these Peruvian curs would have fled from her without giving a thought to the manacled prisoners below.

At five o'clock we were supplied with biscuits and fish—*salt* fish—and nothing to drink with it. It was the refinement of cruelty. About half-past six or seven, a man came down, unlocked our shackles (that is, those of Ballarat and myself), and told us to go on deck. We could not imagine what was in the wind now, but on emerging from the hold an officer came to us and said he had orders to give us some food and drink. So we sat down, and who should bring us the refreshments but our old shipmate Vaughan, who had squared up to the captain in the mutiny.

He told us the captain had given him his discharge, and he had joined the Peruvian Navy. As may be imagined, he looked after us well, and gave us not only plenty of good chocolate but a drink of brandy, which did us both good.

The fact of Vaughan having got his discharge made us hopeful that the skipper would treat us in a like manner. But Vaughan had his doubts. The captain was afraid of him, as he had openly sworn to kill him on the passage home, and I suppose the old man thought it would be safer to get rid of the man.

We congratulated our old shipmate on the happy termination of his imprisonment, and after a couple of hours in the fresh air we were again sent below, but this time we were not put on the bar. I fancy that the Peruvian commandant, an Irishman named O'Brien, was at the bottom of this leniency, having heard from Vaughan who we were and what sort of a man our captain was.

CHAPTER X

▲ POOR SEAMAN'S TORTURE.

NEXT morning, after a good breakfast, we were ordered on deck and sent aft, where we were introduced into the commandant's cabin. The great man sat in the centre of a long table running athwartships. Our captain and several other men, evidently merchant captains of Yankee ships, by the look of their square-cut, black "store" clothes, and their hard, shaven faces, sat near him.

Ballarat was first arraigned.

"Well, my man," began the commandant, "why did you run away from your ship?"

"Because, your honour, I wanted to join the Peruvian Navy," was the reply.

Ballarat was taking a hint from Vaughan's experience.

I heard our captain mutter to his friends, "Peruvian service! d—— him! I'll give him Peruvian service when I get him on board!"

"Well, I'm sorry for you, my lad," pursued the commandant. "You have, in the first place, gone the wrong way about it, because no man would be

accepted in our service unless he had been legally discharged from his ship."

"Then let Captain Barton give me my discharge, your honour," interrupted Ballarat.

"Yes, my lad, I'll give it you, certainly," purred our gentle skipper; "but it will be when I've done with you. You know me."

"I refuse to go back aboard the *Altamont*," persisted Ballarat.

"Your refusal will not alter the law, my friend," replied the commandant. "You've deserted your ship, and the matter now stands thus: Your captain can take you back at once, if he likes, and I shall impose a heavy fine on you. Or you may be sent to prison until the ship leaves, when you will be returned on board with the loss of your wages. It is for Captain Barton to decide what course he will pursue."

"Then, sir," said Captain Barton, "if you will be good enough to order him aboard my ship at once, the matter may be considered settled."

"Yes," replied the commandant; "but the man's wages are forfeited from the date of his leaving Melbourne to to-day. Take him to the boat."

I was next brought forward. The commandant smiled affably, and I smiled in return—although, to confess the truth, I was in a terrible fright,

thinking of what the-fates might have in store for me when I was once more in the captain's power.

"Will you allow me, sir," asked the latter, "to put a question to the boy?"

"Certainly, Captain Barton," was the polite rejoinder.

"All I want to ask, then, is: Who induced you to leave me? Have I not always treated you kindly? Just give me the names of those who helped you to desert, and I will quite overlook this piece of folly of yours."

I looked the brute straight in the face as I replied:

"No one induced me to leave. No one helped me. You have not treated me kindly, because you have allowed the mates to illtreat me, and you have only defended me from one attack. You promised my brother I should be well treated, and you have not kept the promise. I, like all the rest, have a dog's life on board, and never know, from one minute's end to the other, when I am going to be stripped, tied up and flogged, like you——"

"Now don't talk nonsense," interrupted the captain, who was afraid I was going to tell of his barbarity to the two boys Banks and Wilkinson. "Did I ever tie you up and flog you?"

But I was determined to publish his cruelty, no matter what the consequences to myself might be, so I went on, as if no interruption had occurred:

“Like you flogged Banks and Wilkinson, and then mastheaded them for eight hours without food. Besides, I don’t like you, and I don’t like your ship. That’s my only reason for running, and I settled it all myself, and I persuaded Ballarat to come with me, and I got away all by myself.”

“Look here, boy, don’t lie,” said the commandant. “That boatman says the crew helped you to leave the ship.”

“That boatman is a liar,” I said, “and so is any man who repeats his lies. He robbed me of ten dollars, and he took money from you or Captain Barton to give me up, like a sneaking Peruvian blackguard, and he never saw a soul help me.”

The commandant looked very black at this sort of talk, but I was in a reckless sort of humour, and would have thought nothing of telling both of them that they were worse than the boatman.

As for the latter saying he saw the crew help me off, I was strictly within the truth in contradicting his statement, because the bulwarks of the ship were very high and close, the night was dark,

and the portmanteau went down into the boat before we did. He was under the swell of the bow, and it was impossible he could have seen a face, or recognised it if he had.

"Well, that will do, boy," said the commandant. "You consent, Captain Barton, to take this boy back?"

"Yes; I'll take him back, and not deal hardly with him."

("Oh, yes!" I thought. "Much I believe of that, you crocodile.") "But first, I want this fellow" (indicating the crimp's young tout) "punished for robbery. He is actually wearing my lad's trousers at this minute."

But here I interposed. Scoundrel as the young fellow was, I did not want him punished for what he had not done, so I said I had voluntarily given him the trousers.

"Never mind," the commandant remarked, "I'll send the fellow on to Callao. We don't want animals like that here."

Then I was ordered to go into our boat, whither my mate in affliction and my portmanteau had preceded me. I went down and sat in the bows next to Ballarat. My three old chums were full of sympathy.

"Never mind, Riley," said Barney; "a licking is soon over, and if you're mastheaded, begorra,

it's not tay you'll want, nor a tot of grog either, if I have to shtale it from the doctor's [cook's] wife."

They all tried to cheer us both up as well as they could, for they foresaw the terrible punishment we were sure to get before eight bells.

Then the captain came down. Seeing me in the bows, he called to me to take my oar.

"I'm a prisoner," I said doggedly.

"Come and take your oar! D'ye hear?" he shouted.

"Yes, sir, I hear, but I'll not work and be flogged as well."

"Now don't be a young fool. Come aft here and behave yourself properly."

Something in his tone made me think he did not mean to proceed to extremities with me, so I thought it best not to exasperate him. I went aft, rather sheepishly, I must say, and helped to pull back to the ship.

I noticed that another boat arrived alongside at the same time as we did, and directly afterwards a third, both with several American captains in them.

As soon as we got on board, I was told to stand at the capstan, whilst poor Ballarat was handcuffed by the third mate. He made a

desperate attempt to escape. He rushed to a bitt, and dashing his clenched hands on it the handcuffs sprang open. Two officers, however, grappled with him, and threw him on the deck. He was then securely ironed. Meanwhile the captain and his visitors, having fortified themselves in the cabin, again appeared on deck. They looked—the visitors, I mean—a melancholy crew, rigged out in their square black coats as if they were going to meeting. They resembled local preachers, but each local preacher had his hands in his pockets, and a cigar or a chew in his mouth. I pretty well guessed why they were there, and why they so carefully kept their hands in their pockets. The captain walked up to Ballarat.

“Take your shirt off,” he curtly said.

“I can’t. Take the handcuffs off,” replied the victim.

“Curse you, then. I’ll take it off for you,” snarled the skipper, and he tore it off the man’s back in shreds.

“What are you going to do to me?” the latter asked.

“What am I going to do to you, you run-away hound? I’m just going to give you Peruvian service. That’s what I’m going to do to you. I’m going to cut you into dog’s meat, you hound. That’s what I’m going to do to you.”

"If you lay a hand on me," shouted the man, "I'll have the law of you, as sure as my name's Murray. Them men"—pointing to the local preachers—"them men is witnesses of what you does."

For reply, the captain seized him by the throat, and Ballarat drove the handcuffs into his stomach. The captain let the man go, and turning to the preachers, said—

"You're all witnesses that this man struck me?"

"I reckon we air. He did let out some," drawled one of them.

"Yaas," said the others. "We saw the mean cuss hit you, Captain Barton."

"Ef it was me," another said, "guess he'd have been laid out and ready for the cold meat box by now."

"Trice him up, Mr. Marshall. Boatswain! Bring the lashings," yelled the now furious captain.

"Ay, ay, sir," said the boatswain, and he went along the starboard side of the ship forward, whilst the whole crew came along the port side aft. The boatswain was in no hurry. He did not want to side with a mutiny, neither did he want to assist at half killing a shipmate.

As the hands came aft I noticed that rascally cabin steward coming up the companion with a cutlass.

The men came right on to the quarter-deck. The captain turned and faced them.

"Well, men! What do you want aft?" he asked.

"What are you going to do to that man?" demanded the spokesman, a prime young seaman named Hedges.

"What the devil has that got to do with you?" the captain retorted. "Get away foward, all of you."

"I axes you, Cap'en Barton, quite respectful like, what you're a-goin' to do to Murray. The ship's company wants to know," repeated Hedges.

"Oh, the ship's company wants to know, do they? Well, I'm going to flog him within an inch of his life, closer if he gives any lip, as I'll do to every mother's son of you if you don't git at once."

"You'll not flog him," said Hedges coolly, "if I've anything to say to it," and he rolled up his sleeves.

"No, nor while I'm here," said Parkes. Thompson, Denny, and Lee declared loudly Murray should not be flogged.

The captain gave one look at the speakers.

"I've marked *you* down, my men, and the Lord help you, that's all. Steward! my cutlass!" he shouted.

The officious Dips was at hand. The captain seized the cutlass and ferociously attacked Hedges. Before the latter could either fight or retreat, he was terribly gashed about the head, face, and arms. Then the captain drew a revolver, and swore he would have the lives of the men who had spoken unless they at once went forward. The only Spaniard in the crew first sneaked off, then followed the Swedes and Danes and Germans, and the young ordinary seamen. Only five or six of the best sailors in the ship stood their ground.

"Are you men going?" the captain quietly asked.

"Go forrard, mates; go forrard," said Ballarat. "You can't help me now."

"No, my man," said the captain, smiling. "No, God Almighty daren't try and save you now. He knows I've got you. I'm your salvation, and you're going to work it out."

The noble seamen gave one look at the captain's revolver, and another at the pockets of the "local preachers," and, seeing they were overmatched, went "forrard," vowing loudly that they would yet have their revenge.

The captain smiled, and remarked that they were a "d—— set of cowardly curs."

Just then the rascally Spaniard came up with

the lashings, which the boatswain had determined not to bring himself. Ballarat was seized up in the mizzen rigging, his feet lashed to an iron bar which ran along the scuppers and was used for hooking a snatchblock to. And now all was ready. Then the skipper took the yoke-rope; but instead of using the pointed end, he used that finished by a rose-knot. He then took off his coat, rolled up his sleeves, and slowly approached the man. I felt sick with terror, especially as I felt sure that in a few minutes I should be triced up to the same rigging, to suffer the same punishment.

The great brute swung the murderous rope round, and brought it down with his full strength on the man's back. It was a frightful blow, but Ballarat never winced. Again, and a third time, the lash came down. Still not a word from the sufferer. Then the captain paced backwards and forwards for a little before going on with the flogging, and as he passed me he said:

“Do you see what you're in for, you whelp? Do you see it? Do you imagine how it will feel? I'll lay it on to you, my joker! I'll make you smell h-ll before another ten minutes.”

As I now felt sure that nothing could save me from this maddened demon, I determined to

exasperate him still more. He could not do worse to me than this.

"You make me smell h—ll, you coward," I said. "You'd be afraid to fight a woman if she was free. You're only game to tackle a boy like me, and a man tied up tight like that. You wouldn't dare to stand up to him, nor even to me, if you met us alone on shore. You're only plucky because you've got a lot of men behind you with pistols in their pockets."

Some of the hands came out of the pockets of the local preachers, and they grinned. This was a bit of first-class entertainment for them.

"I shall tell my brother, if I live to get out of your hands, what a bold hero you are."

"My gosh!" one of the local preachers ejaculated. "Barton will skin that young devil alive now."

"Yes," said the captain, "and I'll let your brother know what an impudent young scoundrel you were, and how you had to be licked into shape, as you will be directly. Now, shut up and be d—— to you!"

"You touch me, if you dare," I retorted. "I've done nothing to deserve a cutting up like this, and by heaven I'll make you smart for it when we get home. We're going to Cork, not to New York, and don't you forget it."

I know I was mad for the moment, but I rushed blindly on my fate, and lashed the captain into such a fury that the wonder was he did not rush at me and pound me to death where I stood.

The local preachers all smiled in a ghastly sort of fashion. They meant to laugh, I suppose, but it was a melancholy attempt. The skipper, however, only glared at me and ground his teeth, but said no more.

He now applied himself with still greater energy and ferocity to the flogging of Ballarat. After three or four more lashes the poor wretch gave a groan.

"Aha! I've fetched you at last, have I, you dog?" chuckled the captain. "We'll lay a few more on the same spot." Down came the lash, and the tortured man gave a frightful scream. The captain fairly danced with delight now. He hopped about, showering blows till the flesh of the man's back and ribs was raised into a horrid-looking mass of blue and red bumps and wales. Then the inhuman monster turned the pointed end of the yoke rope and lashed the victim till all the wales were cut, and the thick blood came pouring out and ran on to the deck. But there were no more signs of agony. The man had fainted.

Only then did the captain desist.

"There," he said, "I think he'll remember the Peruvian service. Take him down and fasten him up in the lazaret."

Imagine a man in this condition being shut up in the storeroom, which was below the main deck, and the only entrance to which was through a hatch under the captain's chair at the head of the cabin table!

As soon as Ballarat was cast adrift I walked up to Mr. See and held out my hands.

"What do you want, sonny?" he exclaimed, astonished.

"My turn now, sir, I suppose, if Captain Barton isn't tired of his fun," I said.

The third mate looked at the captain inquiringly.

"Get below out of this, you darned young idiot," said the latter, and he and his friends left the deck and went to lunch. When I got to our berth, there was, of course, no end of talk over the affair.

"Look here, Riley dear," cried Barney, "for God's sake don't split on the men. It will be bad enough on them as it is, but it will be ten times worse if you let on that they helped."

"I say, Barney," said I, "have you any particular desire to be kicked into the middle of

next week? What do you take me for? Didn't those beasts try their hardest on board the 'guardo' to make me tell? Do you know why little Sheman used to work me up?"

"Why, because he hated a gentleman," said Wilkinson.

"That's it," I said. "And that's the men's guarantee that those Yankee blackguards will get nothing out of me."

I then set to work to get something to eat, and was just making a beginning, when the voice of Scouse, our steward, fell upon our ears, saying:

"The captain wants you down to lunch." This with the usual embellishment of monstrous stutterings.

"You can tell the captain, Scouse, that I'm at my breakfast and lunch here, and that he may go to Jericho, or farther, just as it may happen to suit him. Git!"

By-and-by the boatswain looked in.

"Guess, boy, you'd jes' best go to the old man without no darned nonsense."

"Guess, Bo'sun," I replied, "the old man had jes' best come and fetch me, and bring his darned yoke rope with him."

I was quite desperate, and felt as if I were

drunk. But it was with rage at the brutality I had witnessed.

In a few minutes more the captain's steward came down.

"The captain wants you, Riley, to lunch in the cabin."

"Well," I said, "I may as well go and see if there is anything in it."

So I let fly a big biscuit at Dips, gave him a volley of semi-Irish Yankee abuse, and told him to tell the captain I was coming. When I at last condescended to enter the sacred precincts of the cabin, I found the six clean-shaven, lantern-jawed skippers—the local preachers out of work—seated at the table enjoying a breakfast that made my mouth water. Everybody looked so kindly at me that I began to smell a rat, so I got my quills ready to bristle, and was quite on my guard. The captain made no allusion to my tremendous insolence, but said quite calmly and pleasantly:

"Sit down, boy, and have some breakfast. You had none this morning, I suppose, aboard the 'guardo'?"

"Oh yes, sir, I did," I replied. "Vaughan—you remember Vaughan, sir" (the skipper looked ugly), "Vaughan brought me a good feed and a tot. He's joined the Peruvian service."

I saw the old man did not like my allusion to Vaughan, so I was going on to say some more about how happy Vaughan was, and what good tucker they got on the "guardo," when he interrupted me with:

"Oh, d—— the 'guardo'! That's been a little unpleasant experience for you, that's all. Do you no sort of harm. Steward! bring a clean plate here. Give the youngster a cup of coffee."

All this was very jolly. I ate, I drank, and I ran that rascally Dips about in fine style. It was, I reckoned, the only chance I should ever have, and I kept asking him for this, that, and the other, till I believe he would have poisoned me, if he could.

Then I thought: "Hang it! He can't mean to flog me after this!"

No, he did not mean to flog me, but he had a deeper design. As soon as lunch, or breakfast, as I called it, was over, he said:

"Now, I wonder what on earth could have induced you to run away from the ship, youngster? You've been aboard other ships, you've been aboard limejuicers. Have you ever seen one ship where the boys are berthed as comfortably as you are? Have you seen better food than you get here? Where would you see white bread like this"

(holding up one of our American biscuits), "served out forrard? Where do you find the men laying aft for Grog ho! every evening? You are not over-worked, and I take the trouble to teach you your profession—seamanship and navigation. What more can you expect of me?"

"Good—hear him—hear him!" was the chorus of the local preachers.

"I don't complain of anything," I said, "except your cruelty and the mate's bullying. I never know when my turn will come. Look at Murray to-day. I don't know why I wasn't served in the same manner, but the anxiety of expecting it made it a cruelty to me."

"Why didn't I flog you, boy? Because I like you. I've taken it into my head that there's the making of a good sailor in you, and I don't want to drive you out of the profession. That's why I've never flogged you, and why I *never shall*. But, tell me, how did you manage to get that great heavy leather box of yours over the side? I suppose Murray was in the boat to receive it?"

"Ho! ho!" thought I. "Now I see the little game. You want to pump me. You'll have to get up before you go to bed if you want to catch me splitting on shipmates."

"No, sir, Murray and I lowered it down, and the Dago in the boat received it."

"Well, but when you were both in the boat," he continued, "how could the rope you went down by get on deck again?"

This was a cunning question, but I was equal to it.

"As soon as we were in the boat, sir, Murray coiled up the rope and hove it on board again." I had him there, I thought.

"Reckon you keep anchor watch some, don't you, cap'en?" asked one of the preachers.

"Yes, of course," replied the captain hastily. "Where was the anchor watch when you were getting away?"

Now this very difficulty Father Parkes had foreseen, and had provided for. The two men of the watch had been instructed that, if questioned, they were to say that I had brought them a message from the captain that they were to keep watch at the break of the quarter-deck. So I was quite ready for the question "Where were the anchor watch?" "Aft, sir," said I.

"Aft, eh? What in the 'tarnel thunder was them men doin' aft?" asked another melancholy individual.

"They got word passed from the captain that they were to keep watch aft, sir."

"Got word from me, boy! I gave no such fool of an order," said the captain.

"Well, I expect I thought you did, sir," I said. "Now I expect I thought wrong. Anyhow, I passed the order on to them."

"'Cute! darnation cute!" said one of the solemn ones.

"Now listen here, boy," said the captain. "Nothing will come of what you say here. I only want to know if I'm right in my idea of the Dutchmen."

"The Dutchmen, sir," I said, "are a d—— pack of slouches. I wouldn't trust them if they swore on a shipload of Bibles."

As for the rest of the crew, I stoutly denied that any of them had helped us to get away.

They all tried me, these captains, coaxing and bullying by turns, but it was only a waste of their breath. One great sad-looking skipper took me on his knee, and stroked my hair, and gave me a drink out of his tumbler, and "reckoned I'd let *him* know." But I finished his liquor for him, stuck to my colours, and implicated no one. The skipper—my skipper, I mean—heaved a heavy sigh, and said—

"Well, never mind, lad; if you won't tell, you won't. But, boy, you grieved me to the soul when you said you did not like me or my ship. There,

go on deck, and don't be foolish any more. Try to look on me as your friend, for I wish to be a friend to you."

"Then you'll let Murray off, sir?" I asked.

"Didn't I say 'cute? Darnation 'cute? Eh, cap'en?" said the former maker of this remark.

"Hum!" grunted Captain Barton. "Tell the other boys to get ready to go in the boat."

"Yes, sir. And you'll let Murray off, sir?"

"Oh, go to h——, boy!" he snapped. "I'll see about it to-night."

"Good," I thought. "Murray, poor fellow! will at least suffer no more cruelties this time"; and I went off delighted to have escaped so splendidly. The three boys had been listening at the skylight, and duly reported everything to the men forward. So they felt safe, as far as I was concerned.

But the sage Father Parkes said: "Bullies! We ain't done with the old man by a long chalk. Do you mind what he said?—'I've marked you men.' That was us as held out till them white-livered swabs began feelin' for their shootin' irons. He'll play us a dog's trick yet."

And Parkes was right.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BLUE PETER AT LAST!

WE boys got the boat ready and pulled to the guardship. The captain went on board and reported his crew in a state of mutiny, and asked for assistance. A boatload of soldiers was at once sent to the ship, and six of our best men were taken off to be kept in prison until the ship left. Thus only one man, Vaughan, succeeded in getting clear of our pandemonium. Half a dozen "chow-lies" came on board to work cargo instead of our own so-called mutineers.

After this there occurred nothing particularly exciting. We made a few more trips to the mainland, and saw the last of Pisco and its splendid pier, built, I believe, by Messrs. Peto, Brassey and Betts, renowned for their railway contracts in Australia, and yet further well known in the person of Lord Brassey, who toured the world in his yacht *Sunbeam*, and who afterwards became Governor of the colony of Victoria.

The pier and town have, I believe, since been overwhelmed by a tidal wave, and are utterly destroyed.

The day after his punishment Ballarat had been

sent forward, and in ten days was at work again. Johnston, who had been brought back from the "Guardo," also was turned to.

One day, just previous to our departure, the ship *Hellespont* came in to load. In entering the roads she ran over a Pisco market-boat, and the boatman, being unable to swim, was drowned. The man was identified as the very fellow who had so treacherously betrayed us. Then she dropped her anchor before way was off her, and the cable parted, thus causing her to lose an anchor and fifty or sixty fathoms of chain. It was the clumsiest bring-to we had seen since our arrival five or six months ago.

Before leaving the island I may as well describe the country about Pisco. It is (or, rather, was) situated on the coast, surrounded by beautifully kept vegetable and fruit gardens. There was no rain to irrigate the land, but a heavy dew (*garua*) fell every evening and supplied the necessary moisture. The land was marvellously fertile, and the crops produced were equal to anything I have seen in countries favoured with a regular rainfall.

At the back of the town rose the coast range of sandy hillocks, piled fantastically one behind and above the other. Beyond these lay fertile valleys, and beyond the valleys rose the magnificent chain

of the Andes. The river Amazon rises near Huanco, a town situated in a plain between the Andes and the coast range, which is a continuation of the plain behind Pisco. No remarkable peaks are visible from here, but the grand ranges rising to beyond the region of cloud and perpetual snow give a good idea of the stupendous western watershed of South America.

We never saw a shower of rain nor experienced a strong breeze whilst we lay at the Chinchas. The ocean here may well claim the name of Pacific—from May to October, at any rate.

At length the joyful day arrived when the last bargeload of guano came off. The lower hold was full, and guano was piled up above this in the form of a house roof. This method of stowing was to prevent the dead weight from working the ship too much. As it settled it would solidify into a solid mass, and there would be no danger of shifting cargo. The hatches were put on for the last time, and at once battened down.

Now that the time for sailing was actually within measurable distance, the men worked with a will. For five months they had been heaving in cargo and trimming it below with shovels in a suffocating atmosphere of ammoniacal dust. When not employed at this work, they were sent over

the side or up aloft scrubbing and cleaning, besides washing and holystoning decks. Their labours began at six a.m. and ended at six p.m., and during the whole of that time they worked under the eye of officers who would not give them a moment's spell. For the time being their lot was far harder than that of a farm labourer at home, and they were constantly in dread of being brutally assaulted. At sea it was very different, and all were cheerfully looking forward to "blue water" again.

I have given my last look at the Chincha Islands, at the guano, the chowlies, the *vigilantes*, the old guardship, and at Pisco and its market-boats (I shall always hate the name of a Pisco market-boat). I and my mates have hoisted up the captain's boat for the last time in these waters. We have stowed away the oars and the fancy tiller, and I presented Barney and Wilkinson each with a yoke rope to put away carefully until required for use by the captain. Somehow my forethought was not appreciated by these young sea-cubs. And now we stand idly looking about before tea. All the sails have been bent. There will be no more "foul hawse" to clear, as we are riding at single anchor, the starboard anchor having been hove up and catted. It would not be fished till to-morrow. The men are having a jolly time in the forecastle. Two

hands had been sent ashore in the afternoon to bring off some stores, but when the boat left the mole for the last time they were missing. It was generally thought that they had run, and, as the vessel was to sail next day, they were congratulated on the lucky chance. But about six bells in the second dog-watch, a shore-boat came alongside in a desperate hurry, and a long way astern of her was a police-boat in full chase. The shore-boat contained our two men, who ran up the Jacob's ladder at the swinging boom and popped down into the forecastle. By-and-by the police-boat came alongside, and a petty officer strutted up to the second mate and demanded the two men.

"What two men d'ye mean?" asked the latter.

"Vy, ze two prijonares," said the Peruvian official.

"Two prisoners? We've got no prisoners. You've made a mistake. Get your eyes skinned by the nearest barber. This isn't the 'Guardo,'" said the second mate.

"No, no, sair! No ze guardsheep. Ze man wid ze bottle."

"What the deuce is the man talking about, Mr. See?" asked Mr. Marshall of the third mate who was standing by, grinning.

"Be hanged if I know, sir. I expect he's drunk," replied Mr. See.

"Dronk, sare!" gasped the enraged little Peruvian. "I sall make you to know zat ze Peruvian gentleman nevare get drunk, sare. Are you ze capitain?"

Now, as Mr. Marshall happened to be in full charge whilst the captain was on shore, and we had no mate, he was, for the moment, as good as captain, so he drawled out:

"Waal, yaas, I jes' calk'late you can go your bottom dollar that I'm boss of the ranche at this identical moment."

He could imitate the drawl to perfection when he liked.

"You 'ave ze name Barton, eh?" inquired the officer, bowing and smiling.

"I guess ef that name fits any grinning idiot, it'll fit me, signor," said Mr. Marshall.

"Zen, Capitan Barton, zare, I demand ze two men—my priijionares—zay escape from ze calaboose—zay shomp in ze vatare, and svim for zis sheep!" screamed the little man.

"Swom out identically to this ship, did they? My gosh! they're smart—some! Eh! Mr. See, you reckon them men smart, I guess?" he asked.

"Con-siderable smart — yes, sirree. I reckon

they're ring-tailed roarers; they're fly, horse, tail, buggy, and all," replied Mr. See, keeping up the joke.

"Reckon Jonah was a fool to them two, Mr. See?"

"Jonah insider the whale couldn't swim worth shucks 'longer them tew, sir," quoth Mr. See.

The second mate turned to the officer again, who was impatiently waiting for this absurd dialogue to terminate.

"Did I onderstand yew tew say as them tew men of mine tumbled into the drink [the sea], and swummed off to this ship, sir?" he asked.

"Yeez! yeez! zey svim. I see zem vith dis eye!" exclaimed the Peruvian.

"Waal, sir," retorted Mr. Marshall, "you must have darnation 'cute sight tew be able to see what never happened. There ain't none of my swine come off thet way," Mr. Marshall protested.

"Zen, sare, I vill look de sheep trough—now—on ze moment!" the officer declared.

"Waal, naow, I swow! Du tell! You'll look through my ship, will you? You're tew darn smart, you air. Mind you don't bore a hole in her side with them crossjack-eyed gimlets o' yourn. But I guess nobody ain't a-gwine to sarch this barky without my leave. Hev I give leave, or hev I not, Mr. See?"

"Nary leave, sir!"

"Waal, naow, look hyar, mister. You ain't got no leave to sarch this ship, nor you ain't a-gwine to git no leave nohow as you kin fix it; so I'll be consarned obliged to yer ef yer'll git," said Mr. Marshall, who was getting angry.

"Git?" replied the would-be searcher. "Git? Vat sall I git? Ze men?"

"Men! No, darn yer yaller skin!" roared the second mate. "Ef you don't reckon to make out good American talk, I'll explanify to you. 'Git' means 'git out'! Vamoose the ranche! *Anda! via!* or overboard you go, so sure as my name ain't Barton. Here, d'Oliver!"—to our Spanish hand—"lay aft here. Just you explain to this gentleman that I'm obliged to him for his visit, but that I'm not a long-sufferin' cherub; my wings ain't growed yet; and if he don't clear out of this in quick sticks I'll chuck him in the drink."

D'Oliver was delighted to interpret this. It was amusing to see the little officer. He clapped his hand to his sword. Mr. Marshall and Mr. See rolled up their sleeves. This was enough for the Dago. He spluttered and swore all sorts of "Carajos!" and "Carambas!" went over the side into his boat, and that was the last we ever heard or saw of him.

The two men were then ordered to come aft, and

they said, as it was the last day ashore, they ran up to get a drink after putting the things in the boat, and they forgot the time. At last they each bought a bottle of Pisco, hung them round their necks by a lanyard of spun yarn, and rolled down towards the mole, roaring out songs and damning all Peruvians for a set of mugwumps. This brought the *vigilantes* on them. The sailors bolted; the soldiers set off in chase of them. At the end of the mole were more soldiers; so the sailors, partially sobered, ran along the rocks and jumped into the sea, swearing they would swim off to the ship. According to their own account, the soldiers did not fire, but flung their muskets at them as they swam, then ran back to the mole to get a boat. Meanwhile, a shore-boat picked them up, and for a dollar brought them off to the ship.

"And where's the grog? Lost it, I suppose?" asked Mr. Marshall.

"No darn fear, sir! We brought that off right enough," they said.

"Then bring it aft here at once," was the reply. "How dare you bring grog aboard the ship to make the hands unfit to heave up to-morrow morning? Go and bring it aft, or I'll report you to the captain."

The two men looked at each other and grinned.

"The best part of it is aft, sir," said one.

"Oh, I s'pose you got it from them, Mr. See, did you?" suggested Mr. Marshall.

"No, sir; no, sir. I didn't know they had any," said our third.

"Then where is it, men, if it's aft? Point it out. None of your fooling!"

Each of the men laid his hand on his stomach. "Here, sir," they said.

"Go forrard out of this, and no more of your dog's tricks!" growled the second mate, feeling that he had been made a fool of.

The men slouched forward, and the two officers burst out laughing.

"Sold again, Mr. Marshall," said **L**.

"Rather, sonny," he said.

Soon afterwards the anchor watch was set, and we all turned in. No more "all night in" for us after this. But we did not know the ropes. We thought we were going to sail straight for the Horn.

Next morning, a little after daylight, a boat from the guardship brought off our imprisoned men. The captain and agent came in another. The men were sent down to the main deck, where there were half a dozen empty cabins, which, when passengers were carried, used to be the second cabin quarters. They were locked up, and a

Peruvian sailor was placed on guard outside the doors, with a drawn cutlass. They were informed that any attempt to break out would be punished by a severe flogging.

And now the joyful words were passed. First from the captain came: "Boy, go to the flag locker, and bring the Blue Peter. Mr. Marshall, get the anchor, sir."

"Man the windlass," roared the second mate. "Down below, two hands, and hook on the tackles. Smart now! The Boston girls have got hold of the tow-rope."

The men jumped to the windlass.

"Loose the topsails! Away aloft, some of you!"

The idea of at last getting away from this dismal place put life and activity into the men. The sails were loosed, sheeted home, and the yards mastheaded.

The windlass breaks went smartly up and down, and the men broke into the grand old "shanty" "Shenendoah."

"Oh, Shannador, I love your daughter,
Hooroar, you rolling river.
Oh, Shannador, I love your daughter,
Ah-ha! We're bound away
For the bright Missouri.

“For seven long years I courted Sally,
Hooroar, you rolling river.
And seven more I could not gain her.
Ah-ha! We’re bound away
For the bright Missouri,” etc. etc.

Then the “shanty” changed to “John’s gone, hilo!” And before long the cry came from the fore-castle head: “Hove short, sir!”

The head sails were set, a hand went aft to the wheel, the captain waved his hand, and with a few “Heave her down, lads! Shake her up!” from the boatswain the ponderous anchor was broken from its hold, and was soon hanging to the cathead. One of our celebrated guns was fired—this time without ball—the yards were trimmed, and the ship slowly came round, and began her return trip to Callao. The breeze was very light, and the crowd of boats that accompanied us had no difficulty in keeping alongside. Our dear old chums, the *Earl of Elgin’s* apprentices, came on board, and we all had a farewell yarn and glass in our berth. For two miles, about, the boats kept with us, when the captains and civilians who had breakfasted on board went down into their respective boats. We gave them another gun, the men jumped into the rigging and gave them a rousing cheer, whilst I ran aft

and dipped the Stars and Stripes three times. An answering cheer came back from a hundred throats, and we were left to watch the race back—a race we had more than twenty times taken our part in. We felt naturally a little sad at parting with our friends, but a sailor has no time or inclination to be unhappy. "Begone, dull care," is his motto. Besides, we were homeward bound, which was everything. Soon the islands and shipping faded in the distance and became a mere dream of the past. I registered a vow then and there that with my own consent, barring being wrecked and picked up at sea, or on an island in the Pacific, I would never put foot on board a ship bound for Callao and the Chinchas. One such experience is enough for a lifetime.

We now made all sail, and before noon, with every stitch of canvas set that would draw, we bowled along before a freshening breeze, and made a splendid passage of thirty-six hours.

As soon as the ropes were coiled up, and the ship generally put in some decent order, the fish davit was rigged and the anchors got over the bows inboard; the watches were chosen, and then the captain called us boys down into the cabin. He was all amiability as he told us to sit down. He called the steward to open some bottled ale

and bring in bread and cheese. He told us we should clear from Callao in about a week, and go to Cork for orders, and, continuing, said:

“Now, boys, you have a long passage before you. The ship, as you know, is not a clipper, nor even a decently fast sailer, so you will have plenty of time to learn seamanship and navigation. Take my advice, and make the most of it. If we get bad weather off Cape Horn or the River Plate, you will stand a chance of learning more than I should care for you to learn, if I could help it. But a sailor has got to be prepared for all possible emergencies. We don't want to be dismasted, nor lose a rudder, nor take fire, nor spring a leak; but any one of these things may happen, and if you never see it done, how can you rig a temporary rudder when it comes to your turn to do it? You can't do it altogether out of books, although they are a great help. Now, see that you work, and I'll help you. Two of you have had an experience which will, I hope, last you your lifetime; and you, Boyd, were nearly getting the like experience. You've all got the makings of good sailors in you, so don't throw away this opportunity. Now, I'm going to entrust you with the guarding of the men below. You'll take two hours each.

But mind! Not a word to them! If I hear you utter one syllable to them below there, I'll stop your leave in Callao, and punish you otherwise besides. You, Banks and Wilkinson, take care never to strike a superior officer again. In the United States Navy, in which I have served, it is death. Put up with anything; come to me, if you have any reasonable cause of complaint; but don't make silly complaints about being hard-worked. If you get your regular watches below, you cannot be over-worked. Now, finish this beer, and go on deck. Remember what I've told you."

To this remarkable harangue we could only say, "Thank you, sir," and leave the cabin. But when we were out of earshot Barney said:

"Gammon, Riley, all gammon!"

"Is he drunk, do you think?" I asked.

"Drunk be blowed!" said Wilkinson. "He's got some point to work, you bet he has."

"Well, Oi don't know," said Sharpe; "but faith! the dhrink was moighty refreshin'."

Barney took first guard over the men, and his tongue was in his cheek as he dived down the ladder.

In two hours I went below to the 'twopen decks to relieve Barney.

"Where's the old man, Riley?" he asked.

"In the cabin," I replied.

"That's bully. I'll be back directly," and Barney made off up the ladder.

I sat down at the foot of it, and began my watch. Barney was back in a few minutes. He had some pieces of boiled beef with him.

"Slip up, Riley, and kape your eye on the companion. If the old man comes up, moind yez have not relieved me yet, but are just goin' to do it. I'll know what it means whin I hear yez coming."

I saw at once what he was at, so I went up on deck and walked about with my eye on the cabin companion. In about a quarter of an hour Barney sang out:

"Riley! Isn't it about time you came and stood watch here instead of me?"

"All right, Barney, I'm coming," I replied, and I went down as he came up. I was just about to signal to Parkes in one of the berths, when I saw the captain's boots coming down the ladder. As I knew he would be in them, I quickly sheered off from the berths and got over to the starboard side, the men being in the port cabins. Down he came and looked at me. I looked as innocent and demure as a cat who has successfully stolen the cream.

"Have the men been talking to you?" he asked, suspiciously.

"No, sir; I've only just this minute relieved Banks."

"Hum!" he grunted. "Remember what I told you"; and he marched up on deck again. He was a very cunning man, our skipper, but we boys were quite a match for him.

The cook, Edward Brown, and his wife Sarah, had a berth on the starboard side, right opposite the prisoners' berths. What more natural than that the lovely Sarah should be coming down with a pot of hot water at any time to her cabin? Singularly enough, Sarah came down five or ten minutes after the captain had gone on deck.

"Hello, Riley!" she said. "Are you on guard now? Guess you'd best not open you mouth to them trash in there. Ef you dew, I'm boun' to tell de ole man."

Then she looked at me in a peculiar manner, and rather shaped the words with her mouth than whispered:

"Ole man on watch close to ladder."

I winked to show that I understood, and said aloud:

"You don't catch me getting into trouble, Sarah, for keeping my mouth too wide open I'e

only two hours to do, and I can keep it shut for that length of time, anyhow. I say, Sarah——”

“Well, what is it? Course, I ’spect you want something.”

“Sarah, doesn’t the doctor [cook] keep a tot of something good in the cabin, eh?” I asked coaxingly.

“Ah! g’long, you young scamp! Boys like you don’t want no tots,” she said.

“Oh, but I say, Sarah, listen, you know. Fancy staying down here for two mortal hours without a soul to talk to! A drop of real Monongahela or even Pisco would do me good,” and I winked at her again.

This good soul understood.

“Well,” she said, apparently relenting, “ef you’re a good boy and obeys orders, and promises me as you won’t go near them prisoners, I’ll see by-and-by when I comes back.”

She then went on deck. In half an hour the cook himself came down, opened his cabin door, and went in. In a minute or two he opened it again, and whispered:

“Hi, sonny! Look sharp! You jes’ pass dat ar in, slick and smart. Sarah’s a-lookin’ out. Yah! Yah!”

So saying, he handed me a small medicine

measuring glass, which I saw would easily pass through one of the openings in the fancy latticed ventilators over the cabins. I jumped over to the port side and scratched at the prisoner's door.

"Parkes!" I whispered.

"Ay, ay, sonny!" was the reply.

"Keep your eye on the ventilator."

"Right you air, my son. Heave ahead."

The cook filled the glass with rum, and I managed to pass it through to Parkes.

This performance was repeated three times at each berth.

"For Gorryamity's sake, sonny, light your pipe quick! De whole cabin smell ob rum," ejaculated the doctor. "De ole man he smell a rum, den he smell a rat, and den you an' me smell hell. Yah! Yah!"

I at once lighted up and blew big clouds at the port side. At that moment Sarah came down a sign that the captain was coming.

"Put your pipe away, Riley," she said hurriedly. "De ole man's here."

Then, turning to her husband, she raised her voice:

"Ned, what are you smokin' down here for—and in the cabin, too? Ef you don't stop it, I tell de ole

man, s'elp me! You know I can't abide de smell of smoke down here."

The captain was again in the 'tween decks. He was as watchful of those men as we were, only with a different object in view.

"Now, I say, cook, you know I don't allow smoking down here," said he. "What the deuce do you do it for?"

"S'elp me God, sar, Cap'en Barton, sar, I wasn't smokin'—no, sar, for shure! I shove de pipe in my pocket when I come down, and, s'elp me, it gone keep alight, for shure!" he protested.

"Well, you'd better get back to the galley now," said the captain.

"Yes, sar, cap'en, sar. I go d'reckly I find lilly bit tobacco," was the cook's reply.

"I just came down, Sarah," the captain then said, "to tell you to go and get a couple of shirts out of my cabin that want buttons. You'll find them on the sofa."

As soon as the cook and his wife were gone, the captain asked me if I had spoken to the men. I declared I had not spoken to the *men*—which was quite true, as I had only spoken to Parkes. He then asked if they had tried to speak to me. I said no, and I did not think they would, as they had been warned they would get into more trouble if they did.

He seemed satisfied, but insisted that I should report at once to him if they attempted to attract my attention. He then went away. I had got my cue from him. The *men* were not to draw my attention. I was not to speak to the *men*. Well, I would only speak to *one* man, and *I* would draw *his* attention to me.

The fact is, we boys, the cook and his wife, and all hands, including even the officers, sympathised with the poor fellows. We knew as well as they did what was in store for them on the passage home. And what had they done? Tried to save a messmate from a cruel flogging. For this they were imprisoned and were being half-starved on one biscuit (Callao bread) and a quart of water twice a day. So we determined to outwit the captain, and by dint of lying and prevarication we succeeded to perfection.

Accordingly, we determined they should have plenty of food, grog, and tobacco whilst we had charge of them. We saved meat from every meal, and cut it in pieces small enough to pass through the lattice-work. We passed in tobacco and lots of biscuits, and every evening each man got his stiff tot of grog supplied by the kindly hearted black cook and his charitable wife. Our wily captain had not the slightest suspicion of what was going on under his very nose, although he was constantly

creeping down to the 'tween decks trying to surprise us; but he might as well have tried to catch the proverbial weasel napping. Like the Australian bush-rangers, we had our bush telegraphs everywhere.

When any one of the prisoners was let out on deck, one of us went with him, and of course we took the opportunity to get a smoke. Equally of course, if the old man was not about, we passed the pipe to the prisoner, and he got a comfortable few draws before going below again. On the whole, the men had a good time of it—no work, plenty of good food, tobacco, and sleep.

CHAPTER XII.

SHIP ON FIRE

HAD the captain discovered us, I do not know what would have been the result, but we had firm and cunning allies in the cook and his wife. Besides, as we were only six-and-thirty hours running back to Callao, we were not long enough on guard to run much risk.

We were still out of sight of land when Captain Barton determined to have a little ball practice with his guns. There was a schooner at some distance from us, heading in the same direction. Whether our captain wanted to have some fun with her, or whether it was accident, I do not know; but the first shot fell close to her bows, and the next must have whistled between her masts. Her captain probably took us for a pirate, for he hove-to at once, and hauled down the flag he had been dipping to us a moment before. He might possibly have mistaken us for a man-of-war. However that may be, our old man continued to practise with the other gun, firing out to sea, and took no notice whatever of the Don, who by-and-by filled his topsail and continued on

his course. How the affair would have ended had the schooner been going into Callao, or had a war ship hove in sight, I cannot say; but before night she hauled her wind, and we soon lost sight of her.

That evening we ran into the harbour, and anchored between two men-of-war, to whom the captain intimated that his crew had mutinied and were confined on board, requesting at the same time that they would keep an eye on the ship.

Before we left the islands, the captain of the *Earl of Elgin* and our captain, who were great cronies, had a bet on as to which vessel would be in Cork harbour first, both being bound to that port for orders. We boys also had little bets on with the *Elgin* boys. When "good-bye" was said, the captain of the *Elgin* invited our skipper to lunch on board his vessel on her arrival at Cork. "For, of course," he said, "I shall be there long before the *Altamont*."

"That may be," replied Captain Barton; "but I should strongly advise you to have those dollars ready, as I mean to realise the stakes."

We also told the boys we would have tea all ready for them on their arrival—that is, if we had not by that time discharged cargo and sailed for New York or San Francisco.

The captain, having now placed his ship, so to speak, under surveillance, ordered us to pull him ashore the

next morning after breakfast. We got ourselves up in our go-ashore clothes. The quarter boat had been painted; nice gratings had replaced the old boards in the sternsheets; cushions were used instead of flags the famous tiller had been scraped and sandpapered till it looked quite lovely; and the now historical yoke ropes had been freshly painted white, the Turks' heads, rose-knots, and points being picked out with sky-blue.

As soon as the captain had landed we asked permission to go ashore. This he granted, on condition that one boy stayed to take care of the boat. The question then arose, Who should stay? Now Billy Sharpe (otherwise Mush) was very fond of fruit; so we engaged to supply him with oranges and cherimoyas (custard apples) if he would remain and look after her. He did not care for sight-seeing, but preferred sleeping.

"You see," he used to say, "I've made a calculation that the old hooker will take at least six months to land me among the Lord's own people at Cork's own town. That means only three months' sleep, and if you add to that another month taken out of your watch below for 'all hands' and dog-watches, I shall only get two months' sleep out of six, so it's a duty I owe to myself to get all the sleep I can. You send

down the fruit, and I'll eat and sleep till you come back.'

We laughed, and jumped ashore. We bought enough fruit to keep Billy going for two or three hours, including his interludes of sleep, and then away we went. The first thing we did was to stuff ourselves with fruit, and then we wandered about the streets, making fun of the extraordinary-looking people we met. We saw some Peruvian swells, dressed in tall hats and ponchos, looking contemptuously on everyone else. Probably the poor beggars had not an ounce* in the world to bless themselves with, but they were as proud and as dirty as any of their Spanish hidalgo ancestors. They considered themselves, I suppose, as *hijos de algo* (sons of somebody). Everybody was smoking—women as well as men and boys.

When the women wanted to gossip, they put their cigars behind their ears, as clerks do a pen. Having amused ourselves for a couple of hours, we reckoned it was time to go to the boat, if we did not want to find the captain waiting, in which case our future leave would be stopped.

When we got to the mole I was hailed by a big black-bearded man, whom I soon made out to be Captain Hawkins of the *Phœnix*, which vessel

* Ounce, a gold coin worth about £3.

I mentioned as having been burnt at the Williamstown Pier in Melbourne.

“Great thunder, boy!” he exclaimed. “Whar hev you sprung from?”

I told him that, as I was unable to go in his ship, I had shipped aboard the *Altamont*.

“Waal, I am of opinion,” he said, “that by this time you wish you’d stayed in Melbourne, eh? Come over here and hev a snifter.”

We went into a store and had what he called a “snifter,” and I told him rapidly as much as I could of what I had seen and experienced since leaving Melbourne, but added that I liked the sea-faring part of the business, but what I did not like was the bullying and flogging and “working-up.”

“Oh! So yer don’t like being ‘hazed,’ don’t yer, boy? Why, ye ain’t seen half what’s to come. Do you know your old man’s shipped a new mate?”

“No,” I said. “He’s been quick about it. What’s his name? What’s he like? Where does he hail from?”

“Waal, he’s just a smart man; as smart as they make ’em, is Barney Bray. That’s his name. As to what he’s like. Waal, I seen a play onst, and thar war a man in it called Mephistoles dressed in red——’

"Mephistopheles?" I suggested.

"Maybe," said Hawkins. "It's all the same, but Barney's him to a hair. He's the divil, and I should say he hails from the same location. What he don't know in the way of workin' up a crew of scowbankers ain't worth knowing nor yet makin' a three-volume novel about."

"Is he American or English?" I asked.

"An Englishman! A darn limejuicer! Waal, sonny, you make me smile, yew do. An Englishman? No. He hails from somewhere down about New England States, either Boston or Bristol or Portland—I don't know which, but he's smart. He was with me once, but after he'd pounded two men to death, gouged out the eyes of four more, and shot my steward at the table, I thought it was goin' jest a trifle too far. I wouldn't have complained about the gougin' or shootin', only it left me with four blind men as wasn't no sorter use, and there warn't a man aboard as could make pastry like my steward, so I gave him an A1 recommend, and parted with him. Oh, you bet he's a very smart man."

At this moment our captain came along, and, seeing Captain Hawkins, he came up to us. They had a few moments' conversation, and then I was ordered to go to the boat, so I heard no more for

the time being of the new mate. What I had heard, however, I retailed on board for the benefit of all hands, and it was unanimously decided that we might look out for squalls. By-and-by a couple of Indian half-breeds came down to the boat carrying baskets of fruit and vegetables and a quantity of fresh meat. We pushed off and struggled our way through the mass of boats, which are always thickly congregated at the mole, and pulled back to the ship.

We were now set to work to make our floating home look as smart as if she were not a floating mud-barge. Cleaning and scraping were the order of the day. It is a remarkable fact that we did not notice any offensive odour now; even the fumes of the ammonia were to us imperceptible. Whether it was that we had got so accustomed to the smell during our stay at the islands, or that there really was no exudation from our cargo, I cannot say, but we were never in the least incommoded by it. It might have been a cargo of railway iron for all we knew.

The carpenter had made two fine-looking top-gallant and royal masts and yards out of spare spars, and these had been sent aloft, replacing those we had lost previously. On the run back to Callao, the sails had been bent and running

rigging rove, so that we looked quite smart. But bitterly we used to anathematise these same royals on the passage home.

We did not mind the main royal. It was a sensible sail of good dimensions, and we often carried it when fore and mizzen royals were out of the question. But I must not anticipate.

We were still working short-handed, as our six prisoners, on our arrival at Callao, had been sent to the guardship to remain there till we were ready to leave. Nevertheless, the ship was rapidly got ready for sea. Everything that might fetch away in heavy weather was firmly lashed to cleats and ringbolts in the deck. The boats, with the exception of the port quarter boat, were secured inboard, and the gripes passed round them. All the spare spars were securely lashed, and everything generally was done to keep all deck hamper in its place. Nothing remained but to fill up our water-casks and take our bread and a few quarters of fresh beef on board. These things done, the men would get a day's holiday ashore, and then, ho! for the stormy Horn!

One fine morning a barge came alongside, laden with bags of bread (by bread biscuits are always to be understood). This bread was fearful-looking stuff. It was impossible to break it without

employing either a hammer or a belaying-pin. It was a brownish-grey colour, the size of a dinner plate, and an inch thick. Ground bones and rye mixed with cement seemed to be the principal component parts of it. Many a time have I taken one of these "crusts of bread" on deck, to eat by way of killing time in the watch on deck at night. I have started nibbling round the edge at one bell, and at eight bells the biscuit still held out bravely against the attacks of my teeth, which were pretty good. Unless it were pounded up, no human teeth could make any impression on this "Callao bread." If we could get the cook to dip it in his slush tub, and then put it in the oven, it became brittle, and we could manage it fairly well. And this was to be our sole food, in conjunction with the most mahogany-like salt beef, during the whole voyage home.

I may as well describe the beef on which we were henceforth destined to feed. To begin with, there was not an ounce of fat on it. When it was boiled, it sent out an odour not of bad meat but of French polish or varnish. Its hardness was phenomenal. I had never before seen meat so extraordinarily hard, nor have I ever come across its equal in any other ships I have sailed in. The knife could not get through it without

great violence being used. The best knife to cut it with was one with a saw-blade. The taste was much like the smell. No one would have imagined it to be beef. There was a saying on board that it had been put up in 1854 for the use of the British fleet in the Black Sea, at the commencement of the Crimean War, and had been condemned because a board of butchers could not decide what meat it was. It was then sold by auction, so the legend ran, was bought up by some Yankee speculator, a brother of Captain Barton, who exchanged it with the latter for the beef supplied by the owners as soon as he was placed in command of the *Altamont*. Of course, this was all nonsense, but any yarn suits Jack, especially if it tells against the skipper.

The pork was a dreadful mass of greasy abomination. Imagine an enormous piece of yellow pig's blubber on the table. not a sign of lean on it, nothing but the flabby, fat tissue, which could be cut with a piece of string.

But enough on this unsavoury topic. These were to be our rations for from five to six months. Visions of that sea - scourge, scurvy, floated before our eyes, but we were helpless in the matter.

To return to the bread barge, which I left

alongside. All hands were told off to carry the bags up the gangway plank. Now our gangway plank was very long, very steep (in spite of our deep loading), and very springy, and it was only protected by a life-line passing through the eyes of three stanchions. I believe the captain reckoned on a mishap, for he issued an order to the effect that anyone who allowed a bread-bag to fall overboard should have nothing to eat but the damaged bread till he had finished it.

The work of transhipping began. Amongst the rest, we boys must go and help carry it up, although we were not obliged to do so. We thought it fun, because we could stagger up the plank with a bag on our backs and block all the men on it, until they were in a perpetual state of growl, as they could not rest their bags on the frail, yielding rope, whilst we, being at the top, placed ours on the rail, and laughed at them till the second mate hunted us off. But Nemesis was on our trail, at least on mine, and swift retribution fell upon me, who suffered for the rest. I had got halfway up with a bag, when it suddenly slewed round on my back. I lost my balance, and over I went, souse into the sea, bread and all! It was lucky the barge was moored well abaft the plank, or I might have been killed. The captain, happening

to be on deck, looked over the side, laughed, and said :

“You had better get on deck, boy, and dry your rations.”

I swam to the plank, and came dripping up the side. The soaked bread was hauled on board by a tackle, and I spread it all out on the quarter-deck to dry. I saw starvation staring me in the face, for I knew the captain was a man of his word, but I was determined I would not eat the vile stuff.

Next day the captain called the boys into the cabin. We wondered what was going to happen. But all turned out as on the occasion of the fatherly lecture he gave us on leaving the Islands. Now, as then, he was all affability. He opened the well-remembered beer, and gave us the lunch of doughboys and cheese as before. Then he suggested that no doubt we would like to see Lima before we left, so he would give us leave and put us on our honour not to bolt if we got ashore.

“Give me your words that you will be at the mole by eight in the evening, and you may go as early as you like to-morrow,” he said.

Of course, we faithfully promised, and we all meant to keep the promise. I, for my part, should

not have thought of running again. I now felt pretty sure I should get over the voyage home without being flogged, and as we were to sail at once, nothing would be gained by trying for another ship.

He then gave us each ten dollars to spend, and we retired to spend the rest of the day in gleeful anticipations of the jolly time in store for us.

It happened to be my first anchor watch that night, and I was walking up and down, smoking, and thinking what I would do with my money, when my attention was drawn to a bright light on a vessel a little over a mile from us seawards. I knew that a Yankee vessel, the *Lucy L. Hale*, was anchored somewhere thereabouts. She had a bad reputation from a seaman's point of view. It was well known that belaying-pins, handspikes, and heavers were put to other uses than those they were intended for, by the mates.

I watched the light, because it seemed too bright for an ordinary riding light. By-and-by I saw it flicker, then flare up, and sparks fall into the sea. I jumped down the companion, and roused out the captain, who was lying down asleep.

“What's the matter, boy?” he asked.

"I think the *Lucy L. Hale* is on fire, sir!" I said.

"The devil she is!" she ejaculated. "Up on deck with you, and call all hands!"

I rushed up, woke up the mates, carpenter, and boatswain, and in a couple of minutes the whole ship was alive.

"Lower away the port and starboard quarter boats!" shouted the captain, who had gained the deck. "Boatswain! get away in the stern boat. In with you, boys, before the boat's lowered. Two extra hands in the port quarter boat! Overhaul your tackles! Cast off! Be smart, men!"

In a minute more the boats touched the water simultaneously. We unhooked the tackles, hauled our boat to the gangway, the captain jumped in and shouted to us to give way. As we passed one of the warships he hailed her:

"*Wyoming*, ahoy! Do you see that ship on fire?"

"Ay, ay," was the response, but immediately we heard the boatswain's pipes sounding all over the ship.

"Give way, you young dogs, give way! Lay your backs into it. Don't let Uncle Sam's men overhaul you!" shouted our excited skipper.

We pulled like mad, two men double-banking

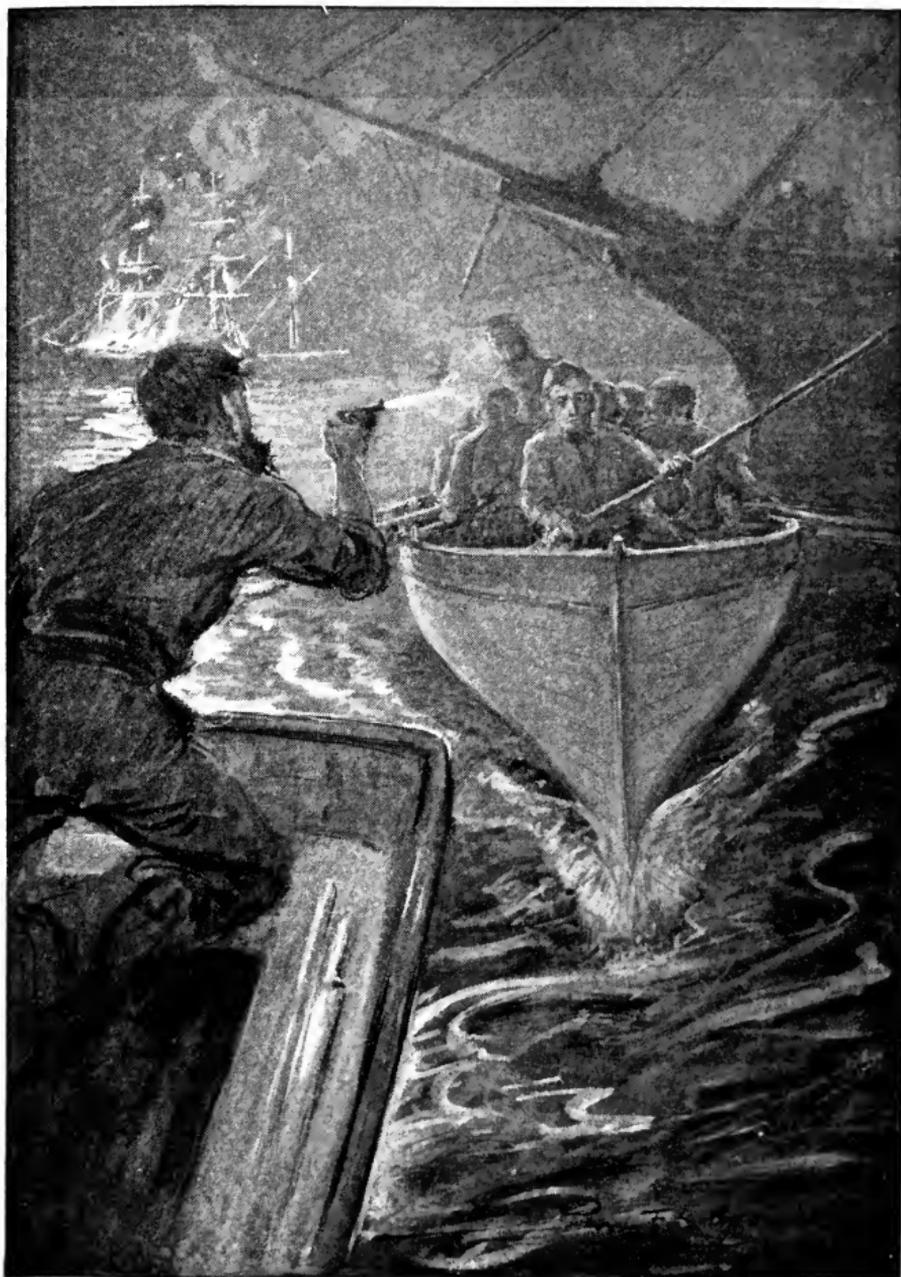
the oars. The ship was now beginning to pour out volumes of smoke, and tongues of lurid flame issued from the fore-hatch and the fore-castle.

We were still a hundred yards from her when we saw a boat, with two men in her, leaving the burning vessel.

"After them, lads!" yelled the captain. "Pull like hell! I'll have those two scoundrels! Give way! D—— you! Lay your backs into it!"

We did our utmost. The long ash sticks bent to the strain, and the boat flew through the water.

Hand over hand we came up with the chase, which tried to avoid us by dodging under the shadow of the ships, but we fairly ran her down. The captain steered us right alongside. Two revolver shots rang out, but no one was hurt, and at the moment of collision Captain Barton seized the man in the stern sheets by the collar and dragged him into our boat. He struggled and fought, but our skipper was a big, powerful man, and he seized the fellow by the throat and throttled him into submission. The other man jumped overboard, but we soon had him also in our boat.



"TWO REVOLVER SHOTS RANG OUT."



"Just you sons of —— move one inch," said our captain, producing a revolver, "and I'll drop you. This is the worst night's work you have done for some time."

At this moment one of the man-of-war boats dashed up. We hailed her, and handed over our prisoners.

The spot was now alive with boats from the shipping. The various warships had sent strong crews armed with buckets. In a moment they were on board the now furiously burning ship. They seemed to be like salamanders, and not to feel the fire which was licking up the rigging, up which the plucky fellows had run. French, English, and American seamen were all working together like brothers. They poured buckets of water from aloft on the burning shrouds and yards, and those below flooded the lower decks and fore-castle with water. All of a sudden I saw the mainmast quiver and sway.

"Lay down from aloft for your lives, men!" roared a hundred voices. "The mainmast's going!"

Down slid and dropped the men, and only just in time. Directly they reached the deck the mast fell with a crash over the side, dragging the fore topmast and the fore topgallant mast with

it. A minute later, and the warning cry would have been useless. Nearly a hundred gallant men would have fallen with the wreck of the masts. The fire-fighters now devoted all their attention to the hull, and in about two hours more the fire was got well under.

It was then found that the two men we had captured had remained on board to slip the anchor and let the vessel drift out to sea. But the business had been gone about in a most bungling manner. No preparation had been made to unshackle the anchor chain, and the two scoundrels must have lost their heads when they heard the men-of-war piping all hands, for they got the cook's axe and had been trying to cut the chain with it. Then they had only fired the fore part of the ship, instead of making sure of their nefarious work by setting her on fire both fore and aft and amidships. As it was, the hull was saved, and there would be a good deal of salvage cargo.

The prisoners turned out to be the master and carpenter of the ship. What became of them I never heard, but probably they got off with a light sentence, or perhaps none at all, in that justice-corrupting part of the world.

A few of the men-of-war men were left on board the hulk to watch that the fire did not

break out again, and then the boats returned to their respective ships.

Our captain was no niggard in dispensing creature comforts. He gave a tot of grog to all hands, and then we were sent below, Wilkinson keeping the anchor watch aft.

CHAPTER XIII.

"SHANGHAIED!"

WE turned out very early next morning and set to work to beautify ourselves previous to going ashore. We had no need to shave, because not one of us could raise even a down on his lip; but the boatswain declared we could not go ashore without being shaved, so he made us sit down in a row, and he and three men set to work to lather our smooth cheeks and shave us. The second mate came along as this absurd performance was going on, and he roared with laughter to see four beardless boys solemnly undergoing the operation of shaving. The boatswain declared he found a hair in the lather, but, if he did, it must have been a remnant of his own. For my part, I had no sign of moustache or beard until five years later. We then got a good tubbing, oiled up our long hair (in those days people wore their hair long and used pomatum or hair oil), put on our smartest worked-front shirts, our best jackets, with four close rows of buttons, our best trousers and hats, and stood ready for a glorious day's outing. The captain had given us

our ten dollars the evening before in the cabin. We would not wait for breakfast, only taking a mug of scalding hot bean-coffee and molasses. The proper meal we proposed to take in Peruvian fashion ashore. We had plenty of money, and, sailor-like, meant to spend it all before we got on board again.

Going on deck, we “ordered” a couple of ordinary seamen to get the boat to the gangway. We were off duty to-day—gentlemen at large—and not a boat-fall, painter, or oar would we touch. The boat was duly hauled to the gangway, and we marched down into her. I took the tiller, the others sat next to me in the stern sheets. Barney gave the command to shove off, adding “and be d——d to you.” At intervals one of us would act the skipper and swear at the men, telling them to lay their lazy backs into it, and threatening them with all sorts of horrors when we got back on board. With the usual amount of yelling and swearing and crashing into other boats’ sides, we succeeded in getting to the steps at the mole.

We took our “crew” up to the store and gave them a couple of good stiff tots, told them to be at the mole at eight p.m., and saw them shove off. Just as we were about to leave the mole two incidents happened. A Peruvian man-of-war’s boat, pulling sixteen oars—the cutter, I suppose they

called her—came dashing into the mole. If any one sang out “in bow” or “way enough,” at all events neither order was obeyed. On came the big boat with a rush, and crashed bows on into the side of some ship’s boat. She cut clean into her, and the latter filled at once. Such a hullabaloo as there arose I have rarely heard. There were six or eight officers in the Peruvian boat, and they and the sixteen men all screamed together. They jumped on the thwarts, yelled and gesticulated like a lot of monkeys, and the boat’s crew seemed to have just as much to say in the matter as the officers. The shore boatmen joined in the row. I expected to see knives and swords drawn, but it was all a battle of words. I thought of what would probably happen on board the warship this boat came from in a regular sea fight, if she collided with another one. No wonder that some years afterwards the Chilians had very little difficulty in thrashing such a yelling, chattering, undisciplined crowd. The amusing part was that the Peruvian “swells” on the mole smoked calmly on and paid no attention to the turmoil. Before we left a couple of boats ran in and landed a dozen of the most miserable objects I have ever seen. They were Chinamen or Lascars in every stage of scurvy. They crawled on hands and knees up the steps, looking, some of them, as if they

would drop dead on the mole. I suppose they had formed part of the crew of a whaler which had been on salt provisions for a long time. These whalers, especially sailing out of New Bedford, sometimes keep to sea for two or three years at a stretch, occasionally making some South American port for water and fresh provisions, and it was no uncommon thing to hear of scurvy having broken out amongst their crews. Although the disease is so terrible when it attacks a crew, there is no disease which can so easily be cured if appliances are at hand. When the diet is changed from salt meat to fresh, and the patients are plentifully supplied with vegetables, fruit, and lime or lemon juice, they recover as if by magic. I have never been shipmates with the scurvy, but other men have told me their experiences and the marvellous effect of the above diet on the disease. Having had enough of the mole and its ceaseless noise, we went into the town to get breakfast. This was soon procured, and consisted of fried fish, eggs, omelettes, onions, garlic, fruit, and wine. The inner man having been thus fortified, we sallied forth to "do" Callao. There was not much to be seen, and an hour of the dirty port sufficed us, when we set off to explore the suburbs. We came across some very pretty villas about half a mile beyond

the town, which struck us as being very sensibly built for a hot climate.

First, there were four stone or *adobe* (sun-dried brick) walls, not white but yellow-washed. A large gate on one side gave admission to a lovely garden within the inclosure. We peered through a grating, longing to go inside, and wondering how we could gain admittance. Sharpe suggested getting over the wall. Barney thought an alarm of fire would bring out the dwellers in this elysium; but we were saved all trouble by the appearance of a disgracefully ugly old Indian woman, who, on catching sight of us, lifted up her voice and screamed shrilly at us in some outlandish dialect, which did not strike us as being Spanish, English, or Aztec.

Of course, we could not understand a word, but Barney, who was always equal to the occasion, said:

“Whisht now, all of yez! Sure, I’ll discourse the illigant crayther, and incense her with what we want.”

He took off his cap, made the old hag a low, sweeping bow, and began:

“I say, señora——” I fancied the old girl looked pleased at the title of señora, for she stopped screaming and listened.

Barney went on: “Señora nobilissima! Jardino—you know—intra muros. (Begobs, boys, that’s

Latin, and it'll fetch her; she'll take me for Father Hooloochan that's parish priest in Wicklow.) Mon-gooso—paysano—tumba—carajo! Mucho bueno Ave Maria! Catholico! (That's better, boys, she'll know we are Christians, anyhow.) More better as good, eh, old lady! Señora, come on, lettez vous us into your jardino.”

The woman looked puzzled. She evidently understood the “Ave Maria” and “Catholico,” but the “carajo” which followed—what about that wicked swear word? She crossed herself very devoutly. So did we, but we were certainly as far as ever from coming to an understanding, and time was passing. If we were to get inside, we must adopt some other means of conciliating the old Indian harridan.

“Barney,” said I, “you'll have to tackle her again, but don't put any more carajos into it; she does not seem to like it. Look! hang me if she hasn't crossed herself again! Drop the swear word, Barney.”

“Faith!” he replied, “I don't know any more, so I don't. My Continental education was neglected by rayson that I was so long in l'arnin' to spake at all.”

Whilst we were debating we heard a peal of laughter on the piazza inside, and at the same moment a very pretty young lady, smoking a cigarette, came out and said :

“Ole Pepina no make understand. Who you little boys?”

Although we did not altogether relish being called little boys, seeing that the youngest of us was nearly thirteen, we bowed very politely, and unblushingly stated that we belonged to a large warship in port and were anxious to see a little of the country before we left.

“Oh, you sall see, little sailor boys. Come in,” she said pleasantly.

Then she ordered Pepina to open the gate, and we entered.

First she pointed to a little table, on which were some fruit and some iced wine in a tiny decanter. The wine being just enough for one, I speedily made away with it.

Seeing this, she laughed, and sent Pepina to get a good supply. Now conversation began, and we understood her to say that the whole place belonged to us, and everything in it, and everybody there was our slave.

“Faith!” said Sharpe, “I vote we take possession, shut the gates, get two big cannon, and shoot the skipper if he comes for us”

“That being the case” said Barney, “I’d be for takin’ possession of your purty self, Miss Donna Señorita.”

She laughed again, but did not understand Barney's semi-Irish vernacular.

But I had read somewhere that this wonderful generosity was nothing but polite Spanish formality, and I thought, if we attempted to enter upon our suddenly acquired inheritance, relying on such an invitation, we should speedily find ourselves hustled out of the gates again by the *peons* standing and lying about the garden. So we elected to be satisfied with an inspection of our doubtful property.

There was not much to see. A low, one-storeyed building, built of the same material as the wall, ran round three sides of the square. This building contained a drawing-room, dining-room, and a few cell-like bedrooms, all very bare of decent furniture. Mats were on the floor, and mats were hung at the verandah entrances. In one or two of the bedrooms there were *cuartos* instead of bedsteads and mattresses. The *cuarto* is nothing but a bullock's hide stretched to four stout posts, with no mattress on it. It is comfortable enough, but has a great tendency to bulge down, hammock-like, in the centre. There were a few grass hammocks hanging under the verandah roof, and these seemed to complete the sleeping arrangements. A deliciously cool fountain was playing in the centre, fed by water drawn from

the Callao river. It was surrounded by plantains, ferns, creepers, and ravishingly scented flowers.

Having satisfied our curiosity, we thanked our pretty hostess, who gave us each a couple of cigars and a quantity of fruit. Of course, we tipped the old janitress, who grinned her approval. We bowed ourselves out, and the great gate was locked again. We had gone a dozen yards on our return when Barney stopped:

“Begorra, boys!” he exclaimed, “I must go back; I forgot something.”

We asked him what he had forgotten.

“Why, to kiss the señorita’s purty lips, to be sure! Didn’t I see she was longing for a kiss, only she didn’t like to ax me for it with you three ugly ruffians looking on?”

We all laughed and went on our way. This was all we saw at Callao, except the forts and docking appliances. On our return to the town we heard that a terrible accident had happened to a Peruvian frigate, which was being repaired on a floating dock. We were told that she capsized whilst scores of workmen and visitors were on board and underneath her, that numbers had been crushed to death or maimed for life, and that a procession of corpses had left the mole not long before.

We now made our way to the railway station,

a structure which I indistinctly remember as being principally constructed of saplings painted yellow. It was our intention to take a run up to the capital, as we might never again have an opportunity of seeing this fine city. It was not a long journey, Lima being only some ten miles from the coast. But travelling by rail in Peru is a slow business, although it is now rendered attractive by the fact that lofty heights can be reached in comfort by the Oroya Railway, which attains an elevation of 15,645 feet. The climate and general aspect of Peru are calculated to leave a lasting impression on the traveller, as almost every variety of scenery can be viewed, from the surf-bound shores of the Pacific to the lofty heights of the Andes. As we left the coast the view was very fine. In the background rises the great Cordillera of the Andes, with its innumerable peaks, regions of perpetual snow, avalanches, and volcanic eruptions. West of the great range lies a vast fertile plain, bounded towards the coast by a series of numberless conical hills, dry and barren, whilst thence to the sea one passes through fertile country, groves of orange trees, pretty gardens, and well-cultivated fields. Away, behind us, the lighthouse on Cape San Lorenzo was visible. The boundless Pacific and the port, with its myriads of vessels, complete the picture.

In about an hour we had reached our destination and set foot in Lima, the capital city of Peru, founded by Pizarro in 1535, after his cruel subjugation of the Incas.

We first visited the cathedral, a magnificent pile, recalling the splendour of the cathedrals of Continental Europe, many of which I had seen. The city itself presents an imposing appearance, owing to the existence of magnificent squares and magnificent public buildings fronting the Grand Square—an open space containing about fifteen acres. In the middle of this square is a splendid fountain, on the top of which stands a large bronze statue of Fame with her brazen trumpet. Eight lions are couched round the statue, and from their open mouths, as well as from the trumpet, the clearest water issues. We drank some, and found it deliciously cold.

This water, I believe, comes from the River Limac, which divides Lima into two parts, one called the suburb of San Lazaro. Over the river is a fine stone bridge with a most elegantly carved gate, which forms the entrance to the city and leads to the Grand Square.

It is a pity that some of the towns of Australia do not take a leaf out of Lima's book. I have been in every seaport and capital of Australasia,

but nowhere have I seen water utilised as it is here. The Dutch in Batavia are the only people in the Eastern Pacific countries who seem to utilise the superabundant water of their country.

In Lima the streets are all provided with canals arched over, and these canals communicate with the houses by branches. Most of the houses have gardens, as I have already described, and the water serves to keep them constantly fresh and green.

The churches, as in most South American cities, are very large and numerous, adorned with very fine statues and pictures; some of the latter are said to be of very great value, but of that I was at the time no judge. Lima appeared to us to be a very holy city, there were so many churches, chapels, nunneries, and other religious institutions; whilst every third passer-by appeared to be a priest, monk, or sister of some religious order. As any of these passed the country people, the latter usually dropped on one knee. I was told, however, that whatever the external appearances of religion might be, the outside of the platter was the only clean part of the show—it was no index of the inside—immorality and depravity being rampant amongst all classes, religious as well as lay.

Certainly, there must be a great deal of the

devil's work going on when it requires such an army of priests to keep him at bay.

The people, who consist of Spaniards, negroes, Indians, mestizoes, and other half-breeds proceeding from these, are, as a rule (especially the females), good-looking whilst young, with wonderful eyes, and they are very graceful in their motions. They are as gay and delightful as they are good-looking, and are passionately fond of dress. Even the commonest women wear bright-coloured dresses, and silver and gold bracelets, beads, and necklaces.

We found the weather cool rather than hot during our sight-seeing, but we felt a nervous dread of earthquakes. We were told that in the year 1746 the whole city was destroyed in three minutes, and there had been fifteen earthquakes in Lima since 1500. A destructive earthquake every twenty-four years should provide plenty of work for builders, carpenters, and other tradesmen; but I found that, owing to these earthquakes, the private houses are seldom built of stone, but usually of plastered wood painted to look like stone. Hence the magnificence of the city is greatly detracted from by the small altitude of the houses.

Having done a fatiguing day of sight-seeing, we returned to the railway station about six o'clock

p.m., and were just in time to catch a train. Getting on board, we made much better travelling going down to Callao than in going up to Lima, and in about three-quarters of an hour we were getting something to eat and drink before going on board.

It was a glorious evening. Hundreds of people were out enjoying the cool breeze. As we sat on the steps of the mole after our tea, an affable-looking naval officer came up and began a conversation with us. We told him who we were, and how we had spent the day, and he said he was waiting for his boat, but if we would put him on board his ship, the *Wyoming*, he would go in our boat. Of course, we were very pleased to meet so affable a lieutenant, who condescended to talk with boys of a merchant ship. So we said we would be very glad to put him on board, telling him that our boat would be at the steps at eight o'clock.

"Oh!" he exclaimed. "In that case, then, you have nearly an hour to spare. I suppose you youngsters have no objection to a glass of wine at my expense? You won't see much wine, you know, once you leave port till you get to the old country."

We concluded that as we had been very abstemious in the matter of everything but fruit,

we deserved something, so we agreed, and he led the way from the mole.

"Now," said our friend, "I'm going to show you how to get a glass of really good stuff—not the trash sailors get at the drink stores. I suppose you've been in there?" pointing to a well-lighted, respectable-looking saloon.

We said, "Yes, we had been there in the morning."

"I thought so," he said. "You deserve to have been poisoned. Now I happen to be a friend of the agent of your ship. He is a first-class fellow, and keeps the best of liquors and cigars, but not in the general shop. We don't go there when I'm with him, but he has a little snugger only known to his friends. That's where we are going, and we shall probably find him there."

We turned down a by-street or two, and by-and-by arrived at a kind of store with barred windows. He tapped at the door and called out:

"It is only I, Harry, Lieutenant Long. Let me in. There's not much time to lose."

The door opened, and we went into a kind of ship chandler's store, very badly lighted.

"Ah, Harry! Business over for to-day, I suppose?"

"Yes, leftenant. Guess we aint naygurs, to work night and day. The boss has just gone."

“Well, that’s a pity, for I’ve brought four of the *Altamont’s* youngsters to give them a decent drink, which they can’t get elsewhere in this beastly hole of a Callao,” he said.

“Waal, leftenant, I don’t ’zackly know. The boss is pertickler, and I wouldn’t give shucks for my berth here ef he heern tell as I let strangers in here.”

“Oh! that will be all right,” said the officer. “You let us into the back room and bring us a bottle of the right sort, and then we must be off.”

“I hardly dussent do it, leftenant, but if you’ll make it right with the boss,” said the man called Harry, “I’ll risk it. So go in quick, and I’ll bring a bottle.”

Our conductor then opened a door at the back of the store, and we passed into a sort of cellar full of barrels of pitch and tar, and coils of rope. Then he opened a second door, and we entered a room fitted up as a ship’s forecandle with bunks all round. A man was lying on one of the bunks. Our guide asked us to sit down, and taking a bottle from one of the shelves said:

“Oh! here we are, all ready to our hand, but we must wait for glasses.”

Just then Harry came in with a bottle and

some glasses. Seeing the lieutenant with the other bottle on the table, he whispered something to him.

"Oh!" said the officer in response. "That's the wretched stuff you got yesterday? Mustn't poison our young friends, eh, boys? Try this," and he handed us the fresh bottle. Each of us helped himself to a drink. Then our guide looked at his watch and said: "Harry, could you get us a bit of supper quick? We'll have to be off in half an hour at the latest. Meanwhile we'll have another appetiser." It seemed very singular to me that one glass of Pisco should have the effect of making me heady. In fact, we all four got boisterous, I especially, as I was not used to much liquor. Our friend then said:

"We can't wait any longer for that supper. One more drink and we'll up stick and away. Your boat will be at the mole in a few minutes, and you mustn't be late."

But we stupidly gazed at him, and shook our heads. There was no doubt that we were hopelessly drunk, and could not account for it, as all we had taken during the day was the light wine at breakfast and these two glasses of Pisco. Each movement now made us more excited, and things were beginning to look very serious for us, when the aspect of affairs changed. A battering at the outer door proclaimed

the arrival of someone in authority. The *soi-disant* lieutenant dived through a trap in the floor, which was doubtless put there, as I can see now, to enable him and his villainous crew to escape from the police. In another moment a petty officer of the Peruvian Navy entered the room where we were. Four or five sailors followed him. By this time we were (as we were afterwards told) in a frantic state of delirium, but the men managed to carry us out and convey us to the mole, where we were put into our own boat, in which the captain was already seated, awaiting our arrival. I have an indistinct idea of what followed, for the fresh evening air had somewhat revived me. My three messmates were better off than I was, for they were nearly insensible. I can remember standing up in a boat as we passed various vessels, waving my cap and yelling derisive abuse at them, and of being feebly abetted by the other boys. I even remember telling the captain he was drunk and ought to be flogged. It ended in our being held down in the bottom of the boat, where we rolled and jabbered like lunatics. Arrived at the ship, we were dragged up the side, the captain gave us some strong dose, and we were put to bed, where we soon fell into a stupefied sleep.

Next morning I awoke with a tormenting thirst and a racking headache, added to which I was

heartily ashamed of having been made drunk for the first time in my life. I felt such a sense of humiliation and shame that I thought all the men would point at me as the boy who got drunk. I dreaded meeting the captain. However, he sent Sarah to us, and she gave us some tea, and after a couple of hours we got up, went to the head, and sluiced each other with buckets of water, which made us feel nearly well. Then the captain sent for us to the cabin.

We obeyed orders and went down looking and feeling very sheepish and miserable.

“Well!” he began, “you infernal young fools! Do you know what has happened to you? If I did right I should seize every one of you up in the mizzen rigging, and give you four dozen apiece. But I reckon you’ve about had enough, you miserable-looking sick baboons. You’ll know after this what’s meant by ‘Shanghaiing.’ Now sit down, you poor young devils, and I’ll explain it to you; but before I let you out of my sight again, I’ll send for your mothers and lash you fast to their apron-strings.”

He then explained to us that the pleasant-looking officer who had taken us in tow was nothing but a rascally crimp, who looked out for liberty-men from ships about to sail. He tackled them as he had tackled us, decoyed them to the den we had been taken to, then hocused their liquor. As the men would drink

far more than we could be induced to take, they were speedily made unconscious, and were kept in this place till the ship had sailed. A day or two afterwards they were allowed partially to recover their senses, and were shipped on board other vessels requiring crews. The crimp received the sailors' advance notes—that is, a month's advance of pay which men get on shipping or being shipped. As the wages out of Callao were then £5 a month, the fellow would have received £20 for us, and the only outlay on his part was the grog, which was poisoned to such an extent that a couple of glasses were sufficient to put men into such a state of drunkenness that they were easily dealt with for a few days, during which time the crimp was careful to keep up the supply of hocused liquor. By these means crimps manage to make a large amount of money. As for the poor sailors, they were taken aboard their new ship just before she hove up anchor. They were still under the influence of liquor, and only came to their senses to find themselves at sea, without a chest, which, of course, was on board the old ship, and with no clothes but what they stood up in. Their new captain, of course, did **not** care. He wanted men, and the crimps supplied them, and he knew that when the new men got sober they would turn out to be as good men as the average of sailors. They

got a few clothes out of the ship's slop-chest, and ended by settling down to work and dismissing the whole affair by anathematising the crimp.

After this explanation, which was accompanied, as the reader may imagine, by a running fire of interjectory profanity, the captain said we had better cool our hot coppers and keep out of such scrapes in future.

The cooling of our coppers was accomplished, as on previous occasions, by a couple of bottles of ale from the captain's locker.

As we were to sail next day, there seemed little chance of our running the risk of being "Shanghaied" a second time; so, having complied with our considerate commander's request to cool our coppers, we made our bow and got on deck, glad to be let off so easily.

CHAPTER XIV.

HO ! FOR THE STORMY HORN !

ALL this time we had been without a chief mate. The duties had been performed by the second mate, and there had been no trouble. But to-day there came on board the most wicked-looking specimen of humanity it has ever been my misfortune to sail under. I may as well describe him.

He was about six feet two in height, thin as a host, with a yellowish complexion, bloodless lips, thin and tightly set together, black whiskers, and small, glittering, dangerous-looking eyes, which, with their overarching brows, reminded one somewhat of a venomous snake. He did not walk boldly, but shuffled along silently, and was close to you when you thought he was at the other end of the ship. He had an unmistakable Yankee drawl which was natural to him, besides which he possessed the largest and most unique vocabulary of choice blasphemy and profanity which (until I heard the Australian shearer) I ever imagined it possible for a man to possess. I verily believe the man must have spent his watches below in inventing new and extraordinary

oaths. His invariable address to the men forward was an invocation of the infernal regions coupled with the name of the Deity. I heard him once coolly rebuked by a gentleman to whom he had addressed the remark: "Where in hell have I seen you before?" To which the other made answer: "If you will tell me in what part of those regions you have usually resided, I may be able to answer the question."

This was the smart man Captain Hawkins had told me about. He was shipped, I heard, under the same conditions as our late Dutch-Yankee mate, Mr. Sheman. He was to receive eighty dollars a month if he suited the captain, but only twenty (seaman's wages) if otherwise. If this man brought any clothes aboard with him, they must have come wrapped up in his oilskin suit, for we saw no chest, nor even a bag. We peeped into his cabin when he went below to dinner, and on the bunk were a knuckleduster, a couple of revolvers, and a slung shot. I believe he guessed our curiosity would lead us to look in, and so left them there on purpose, laid out as a warning.

His first proceeding after going to his berth was to muster the hands aft and make them an address. That address cannot be set down here. Few men have minds evil enough to imagine the tissue of blasphemy, cruelty, and atrocious sentiments of which it was made up. It was a harangue such as one

would expect a bloodthirsty pirate captain to make to a crew of abandoned ruffians. As one of the men afterwards said: "The ship was going to be a hell afloat, since the devil himself had come on board."

He gave them to understand that he was not to be trifled with, that the hands would have to toe the mark night and day, or he'd mark them for life—he would "haze" them till they would be glad to jump overboard. We listened to this worthy's speech, and thought of all that might happen between this and the dropping of the anchor in Cork harbour. However, there he was, and we were, of course, powerless to mend matters. We were in the tiger's grip.

Early next morning the sails were loosed, and it was "All hands up anchor!"

But the said anchor was down in fifty or sixty fathoms, and our "all hands" consisted of eight men "farrard" and four boys, not counting the cook, boatswain, carpenter, and steward. The rest were still in prison. The windlass was manned, and we hove short, but there was no breaking the anchor from the ground.

"Up with her bullies!" shouted the boatswain. "Heave and raise the dead!"

But the dead refused to be raised. All the mate's swears and prayers, all the "shanteys"—"Only one more day, my Johnny!" "Across the Western Ocean!"

“John’s gone hilo!” “Shenendoah!” etc. etc.—were all of no avail; the anchor was hove short, and remained hove short. The mate then reported to the captain that the lazy Dutch swine refused to get the anchor. The captain thereupon applied to the U.S. warship *Wyoming* for assistance, and the request was at once complied with. About forty smart men tumbled on board and manned the windlass. The captain, with his usual liberality, served out the grog. Up and down went the breaks; in came the chain hand over hand. The mate kicked and swore at our men, who were making sail. Then the main yard was backed, and we hove-to under topsails, topgallant sails, fore topmast staysail and jib; the courses not being set, there was no need to haul up the mainsail. Grog was again served out. There was an old Scottish skipper on board who had had more than his allowance in the cabin. He protested against the captain’s liberality.

“Hech, mon!” said he, “’tis an awfu’ waste o’ guid liquor! I just gi’e ma men a glass o’ grog on Hogmanay, and no a drappie mair.”

“Oh, it won’t hurt those fellows,” said the captain, “nor the owners either. I work the marrow out of ’em, and put it in again with a tot. I get full value for it, you bet!”

The man-of-war’s men, when they saw how the

mate carried on, declared they would not sail in our ship for a thousand dollars a month, unless they might pitch the mate overboard before sailing. They said all sorts of insulting things about him in his hearing; but he appeared to notice nothing. He reckoned to take his revenge out of the helpless crew when they were in blue water.

A boat now came alongside bringing our refractory crew.

As soon as they got on board one of them came aft and asked to be allowed to get some clothes suitable for cold weather, as they had nothing but light clothes. The mate jumped at him, knocked him down, pinned him by the throat, and battered his head against the deck.

“You white-livered ’longshore loafers! You — mutineering scowbankers! You want to be kept warm, do you? By —, I’ll make it so hot for you, you won’t want any clothes. Yah! You beast! Git forrard to your kennel!”

It was lucky for the mate that the *Wyoming’s* men had left the ship, for I believe they would have half killed the savage. So these poor fellows were to start on a voyage round Cape Horn with no warm clothes, nor any little comforts for the long cold night watches, when the howling blasts from the Antarctic Ocean were sweeping across the

ship, and chilling the very heart's blood of the men up aloft.

Our men being on board, the main yard was now swung, and we filled away. Sail was packed on the ship, and she swept proudly away from her late anchorage. She dipped her flag to the men-of-war as she passed. The salute was returned, but the men on the forecastle stood up and gave three hearty cheers for the men and three heavy groans for the mate. But the noble ship swept on past the San Lorenzo light, out into the blue Pacific—a glorious picture externally, a mass of misery, rebellion, and evil within.

Still, it was with a feeling of pleasure that we bustled about, getting the ship in good sailing trim, giving an extra drag on halliards and sheets till every sail was drawing with a taut leech.

We made a gallant show as we left the coast on our southward voyage. The ship, although carrying over 2,000 tons of guano, did not float so deep as might have been expected. She was as tight as a bottle, and although every night the pumps were manned, eighteen inches was the most water that ever she made, being just about enough to keep her sweet.

I now resumed my old occupation of serving out buckets, brooms, and holystones every morning,

but a sudden stop was put to the sweet sleeps Barney and I used to indulge in during our night watches. When the watches were picked on the first night after leaving Callao, Barney and I were still in the port watch. We were glad of this, for several reasons. One was that the mate was sure to find fault with anything that was done by the starboard watch, whilst there was no one to say a word to him as to how the duty was performed by his own watch. He was also quite capable, we thought, of calling all hands for no earthly reason but to gratify his love of petty annoyance, and we thought, however often he might see fit to rouse out the second mate's watch, he would not be likely to allow ours to be turned out unless in cases of absolute necessity, because that meant keeping the deck himself. As soon as the watches were arranged, he said:

“Before you go below, I want you all to understand that there's going to be no skulking aboard this ship. The watch on deck will keep at the break of the quarter-deck, and keep moving. The Lord help the man or boy I catch sitting down, that's all! Go below, the starboard watch.”

Here was a treat! In fine weather, with the trade wind bowling us along, and not the slightest fear of squalls or light winds, we were to keep on

the move, and not only that but we were to be kept right under his eye, so that there would be no possibility of snatching forty winks. If curses could kill, the mate's lease of life would have been a short one. But there was no help for it, and the port watch stood about doing nothing but keeping awake for four hours, from eight p.m. till midnight. One man leaned over the lee rail. He had not been there five minutes when the mate sneaked up behind him, seized him by the collar, dragged him backwards on to the deck, and pounded his face with his fists, at the same time calling him all the opprobrious names he could think of. It was merely a sample of what was to follow.

After this began a series of such atrocities that an occasional account of what passed will give a fair idea of the life we led under this ruffian's rule. Cruelty and abuse were the order of the day.

When the watch was called, the mate would sometimes stand at the fore-castle hatch armed with a belaying pin. The last man up was felled, then jumped upon, kicked about the head and face, and generally brutally ill-used.

"Reckon you'll find it pay to be smarter next time, you sleepy hound. Get aft double quick, or I'll help you along," he would say.

I will give two illustrations of the mate's mode

of proceeding with the crew, one in fine weather, the other in bad. During a calm, he determined to have the outside of the ship scraped ready for painting. Scaffolds and stages were rigged over the side, and I was ordered to serve out scrapers. A scraper is not a valuable instrument. It is merely a triangular piece of steel with a handle fitted in the centre, and is used for scraping barnacles, weeds, and tar off the ship's sides. As the men were going over the side to work he said:

"I guess some of you had better lose a scraper overboard." It was all he said, but it was very significant. The men knew from his look that some cruel punishment would follow the loss of a scraper, and some of them were 'cute enough to sling them round their necks by a lanyard, so that in case the tool did slip out of their hands, it would not be lost. In about an hour's time one unhappy man came inboard.

"Please, sir, I've dropped a scraper. It was the head came off. Here's the heft of it. It wasn't my fault, sir."

"H—l! You've dropped your darned scraper, hev you? Waal, I guess you'd jes' best get another and get away to your work darned quick."

Wondering at getting off so easily, the man got a fresh scraper and returned to his work.

I watched the mate. I was not deceived by his apparent calmness. I saw him go into his berth. "Ho ho!" thought I. "Knuckledusters!" I knew he always carried his revolver in his pocket. He came out again, and I saw him saunter to the side and look over. Suddenly he sprang over the rail, slid down the guys of the scaffolding, and gripped the man who had lost the scraper. The ship was rolling very lazily on the glassy sea, just enough to plunge the staging a few inches under water at every roll. Down went the man on his back on the plank. He seized the mate, and both fought desperately on the narrow plank. Why both did not roll off into the sea I cannot imagine, unless the mate held on to the lashings with his legs. Smash into the man's face went the mate's knuckledusters. Then the ship rolled, and the wretch held the man's face under water till she came up again. Again and again did this happen, till the brute was tired. Then he released his half-conscious victim, but refused to allow him to come on deck. When the watch was over he ordered him to stand another four hours' watch on deck; and as the next watch would be his again, the poor fellow had twelve hours' straight away, eleven of them passed in great pain and suffering from the inhuman treatment he had received. Out of

twenty hours he only got three and a half hours' sleep.

One night it came on to blow pretty hard, and as the wind was increasing the fore and mizzen royals were stowed. The main royal was still carried. The second mate suggested clewing it up, upon which the mate sang out: "Clew up the mizzen topgallant sail. Let go the halliards, boy." (to me). "Away aloft there, and get in that sail. Slack up the sheets. Haul up your clewlines. Be smart now! Do you want the darned stick out of her? Haul up your buntlines and leechlines. So! that'll do. Make fast. Get a pull on the lee brace. That'll do. Belay!"

The second mate now said something again about the main royal, but I was too busy to hear what it was; but I heard the mate reply:

"When I want a darned living man to teach me my business, I'll advertise for him in the *New York Herald*; but till that ad. appears I'll trouble you to mind your own business, sir."

Barney and I stood watching the main royal with great anxiety. It was our business to furl it, and the wind had now increased to such an extent that the mast was bending like a whipstick, and when we did go up we stood to have a fall of over two hundred feet. We made sure the

mast would go, but what if it did not go till we were on the yard?

"Riley," whispered Barney, "the mate means it."

"Means what?" I asked.

"Why, look at that royal," he replied. "Whose business is it to take it in?"

"Why, yours and mine, I suppose," I sulkily answered.

"Yes," he went on; "and how do you think that yard's going to stand you and me and the sail on it if it blows another pound?"

"What?" I said. "Do you think he means to carry on till he concludes that you and I will go to leeward with the mast?"

"Do I think so, Riley? I'm d—— well sure of it. He wants to get rid of you and me. I heard him call us the captain's pet monkeys, but he'd give us monkey's allowance the first chance he got."

"Right!" I said. "I'm not on for a cold bath to-night, and I don't suppose either of us wants to leave our carcass in the Pacific, so here goes to ask him to take it in."

I walked boldly up to the mate and said: "Please, Mr. Bray, let Barney and me take in the main royal. It'll be a dangerous job by-and-by."

He turned on me and snarled: "Oh, hell!

You darned young fool! You superannuated young idiot! Do you think I'm going to let you useless young dogs fool away your lives up there? Shet your baboon's gash and get to loo'ard, darn yer skin!"

I felt immensely relieved. He meant to kill somebody, but it was certainly not the pet monkeys.

A quarter of an hour passed. I could hear the men talking, and they felt certain the royal mast, and possibly the topgallant mast, would be over the side very shortly.

Suddenly the mate drawled out:

"Clew up the main royal!"

I flew to the halliards and let them go, but the force of the wind would not let the yard come down at once.

"Get on to the weather royal brace, darn yer picters! Haul in on it. In with it and spill the sail. Up with them clewlines. Slack off the lee brace. So, make fast. Git aloft there, two hands. Johnston" (calling to the ordinary seaman before mentioned), "you too, Murray, up you go! Come, look spry! What are yer gapin' at? Reckoning you'll let it blow away and pay for it, eh?" He ran to the rail and whipped out his favourite instrument—a belaying pin.

Johnston was the man who had lost the scraper,

and Murray was the so-called Ballarat who had tried to get away with me. They saw the danger of getting in the sail, but, as Johnston said afterwards, they would have been just as glad if they had gone to leeward with the mast that night as to stay and be worked up and bullied for another five months. So he and Murray sprang into the weather rigging and were soon laying out on the yard. We watched them against the sky. The sail, now that it was clewed up, thrashed about furiously and gave dangerous jerks to the yard. I really believe that the mate silyly eased off the lee brace and conveniently forgot to haul in on the weather royal brace. The yard swung about so fearfully that this must have been the case.

A couple of men, however, came without orders and hauled the lee brace taut. The two men succeeded in taking in the sail and securing it in the gaskets. As they were coming down the mate said to me: "Waal, now, I do declare! I didn't expect to see them two come down so slow. The yard was sprung two days ago."

So this fellow actually had examined the yard, had seen that it was sprung, yet said nothing to either carpenter or boatswain, who both should have known it had they done their duty. Then the mate kept it dark, apparently in order that he

might wreak his spite on a poor sailor by indirectly murdering him. The ship on this occasion was going eight knots, and there was a tidy sea on, so that I am sure the captain would not have risked lowering a boat. But we had not yet done with troubles. The wind gained in strength, and a big sea was getting up, which brought the captain on deck. He looked up at the fore and main topgallant sails.

"'Bout time to strip her a little more, Mr. Bray," said he.

"Very good, sir," replied the mate, and he immediately gave the order:

"Clew up the fore and main topgallant sails." The halliards were promptly let go, sheets eased off, clewlines hauled up, and in a couple of minutes four hands were running up the main and four up the fore rigging to stow the sails. The mate kept up a running fire of bad language at them for being so slow. As a matter of fact, for a merchant ship the work was as smartly done as I have ever seen it done since.

The wind was now rapidly increasing to a gale, and it was full time a reef was taken in the top-sails.

"Haul up the crossjack!" was the next order, but he paid no attention to how this was executed.

He had his eye on the men on the main topgallant yard. He would not assist them by trimming the yard so as to spill the sail, and it blew over them like a balloon. At last they beat it down, secured it, and came down.

“Waal, you b—— lot of sojers. Was yer concludin’ to doss down up there? I’ll give yer another chance, d—— if I don’t. *Loose the main topgallant sail!*” he yelled.

The captain never said a word, but he smiled. I saw the smile by the light of the cabin coming through the skylight. He evidently thought he had got the right man at last.

“Lay aloft, ye scowbankers! Lay aloft, there! Up with yer before I start yer!” and he flourished his belaying pin as if ready for a rush at them.

Away aloft went the same four men, although two or even one was enough to loose a sail like that. The sail was loosed and sheeted home.

“Now overhaul yer gear up there! D’ye hear? Lay down from aloft all but one hand!” Three men came down. The yard was hoisted. By this time the gale was on us in earnest. It was a source of positive danger to go aloft and furl the sail again. The mast might go at any moment unless the sail blew out of the bolt ropes. We knew that the topmast was none of the soundest,

and that might also have gone whilst this devil was fooling away men's lives to vent his spite. I never could understand why the captain took such a risk. The mate waited till the men were on deck, and then gave the order to clew up the sail. It was duly clewed up, but not a man stirred to go aloft.

"Lay aloft there, three hands! What the — are you thinking about? Do you want to see the stick carried away?" roared the mate.

"No! but you do," said a voice out of the dark mass of the crew. "And you want to see us go with it."

It was too dark to distinguish faces, so the speaker escaped.

"Go into them, Mr. Bray," said the captain quietly. "Mutiny again, by —"

The mate was no coward, cruel as he was. He changed his wooden belaying pin for an iron one, and dashed in among them. They scattered in all directions.

Now it happened that the old sow's stye stood at the foot of the mainmast, and, owing to the rolling of the ship, the greasy slush from the food trough had run over the deck. As the mate sprang on the men, his foot slipped, and he fell full length. At that moment a sheath knife buried

its point in the deck close to his head. I saw the knife raised, but it came down before I had time to say a word in the way of warning, and as no harm came of it I held my tongue afterwards. At once three men sprang aloft, and the sail was soon secured. The mate got up and walked aft without another word. He called to Mr. See:

“Call all hands, Mr. See, to shorten sail.”

The starboard watch tumbled up directly.

Now if this brute had only carried on the duty in a rational manner, and shortened sail gradually as the wind freshened, there would have been no need to call all hands. We were not a strong crew, but with double topsail yards a topsail is almost reefed when the upper yard is let go, and it is no great feat for ten men and four boys to reef or double reef the upper topsail. But he must needs worry the men, and the consequence was that all hands were kept on deck, reefing topsails and stowing the mainsail, until far into the next watch.

I have mentioned that he issued an order for the watch on deck to gather near the quarter-deck and to keep moving. His great delight was to catch a man sitting down. He would sneak up to him and take him by the heels and drag him

violently on to the deck, and then play a tattoo on the poor fellow's face with his sea boots. We boys did not altogether escape our share of the nightly worry. Although he never actually ill-treated us, still he refused to sanction our unhallowed sleeps in the companion way. We were compelled to keep the bells going ourselves; there was no deputing the matter to an ordinary seaman. One night I was snoozing, in spite of my dread of a rough awakening, when I felt myself pinched on the ear, and heard the well-known drawl of the mate:

"What time is it, boy?"

I started up, and, knowing as much about the time at that moment as I did of the millennium, I stammered out:

"Five bells, sir."

The last I had heard was four.

"Five bells, eh? Oh, h—l! Guess you'd best put three more on to that, and pretty slick too, or there'll be h—l to pay in your case, my lad," said the mate.

I was so stupid with sleep that I did not know where I was, and when he told me to strike eight bells I started to run forward, when he stopped me with:

"Whar' in the 'tarnal thunder are you bound for? Can't you find the after bell yet?"

This brought me to my senses. I went to the bell and rapped a quartette of double strokes, feeling sure that I was in for a second dose of four hours on deck. However, my tricky friend was very amiable on this occasion, and he actually recommended me to sleep double tides before four o'clock, when it would again be my watch. I dived below, feeling actually grateful to the brute.

It would be wearisome to go over the details of the everyday cruelties and annoyances to which the crew were subjected during the passage home. I shall only recur to them again as occasion may require.

CHAPTER XV.

A "PAMPERO" OFF THE PLATE.

IN Mr. Dickens's time we boys were required to give in the "day's work" every afternoon, and as we now had the longitude to work out as well, this found us profitable occupation for about three hours in every afternoon watch. The mate grumbled and said he never could find a boy on deck, but the weather was fine, the ship making good headway, and he did not interfere.

One afternoon I had been in the captain's cabin getting a lesson in lunar observation, when there arose a tremendous row on deck. The ship heeled over till everything slid off the cabin table and the glass rack and lamp overhead almost touched the beams. Then followed orders thick and fast:

"All hands shorten sail! Tumble up! Tumble up, there!"

"Let go the topgallant halliards! Topsail halliards, let go! Let go all and clew up."

Then came such a thrashing and slatting and banging of sails that pandemonium seemed let loose. The mates were shouting and swearing, and

generally there was a row which usually ends in the ship being reduced to short canvas, and the watch below being sent down to finish their sleep.

I jumped up at once to run on deck, but the captain said:

“Stay where you are. It’s only a squall, and you’re not wanted,” and went on deck.

I was quite satisfied with the arrangement. I took a book and lay down on the sofa to read, whilst the other fellows spent a couple of lively hours shortening and making sail and clearing up the raffle of running gear which strewed the deck. I imagined myself the captain, and that my officers and crew were carrying out my orders; and so pleased was I with myself that I walked to the captain’s end of the table, where was a decanter of wine, and pouring out a glass drank my own health.

By-and-by all was quiet; the ship was under easy sail, and the captain came down again. He began by abusing me roundly for not being on deck, and only desisted when I told him I was going on deck the moment I had heard the squall strike the ship, but he had ordered me to remain in the cabin. Then he became more amiable, and sent me up. On deck I found my watch just about to go below, so I fared well on that occasion.

We were now getting into high latitudes, and the weather was becoming cold, and ice might be looked for.

Every other morning, when I had served out the wash-deck stores, the mate sent me aloft to sit on the royal yard and look out for icebergs. I used to put on a muffler and a pair of mittens and a monkey-jacket, and sit there till it was time to rouse out the watch below for breakfast. I liked this business, as I was clear away from all work and bother, and could indulge in a pipe.

When I got on deck I used to report: "Nothing in sight, sir"; and the customary reply was: "All right; go and call Mr. Marshall."

I said that we had a sow on board. She was provided with a very large sty with a cover on hinges, which could be let down in heavy weather. We were just getting into the cold latitudes when this animal became the mother of a fine litter of ten. The captain was delighted, and he took as much care of them as if they were children. Pig-like, the mother developed a taste for sucking-pig.

As soon as it was known that she had devoured one of her offspring, the old man took prompt measures. He ordered Johnston to get into the sty and keep guard. This was a service of some danger, for the sow was a savage old brute. But

it was more dangerous to refuse, so poor Johnston got into the sty with the swine and spent his watch there, only coming out occasionally to stretch his legs. He was armed with a belaying pin, and he had two or three battles with the old mother, and once she bit him badly in the leg.

The captain and mate had now discovered a capital method of punishing men who slept during their watch on deck—they were clapped into the pig-stye! The mate suggested that the apprentices might be employed at this work, but the captain did not entertain the idea.

Once, on a bitterly cold night, Barney thought it would be a nice warm berth, so he got Johnston out and took his place. He fell fast asleep, and it was not long before there was a regular squealing match. The mate rushed to the sty just in time to save a little grunter from being crushed to death by the mother. Barney was kept in the sty and was ordered to continue talking loudly to Johnston for the rest of the watch, to show that he was awake. After this experience, he preferred the fresh air of the deck.

The weather gradually got colder, and it was bitter work at night. We had a great deal of rain, and occasionally a snowstorm, but there was no really bad Cape Horn weather. We sighted a few

icebergs, but steered clear of them without any trouble. We saw one magnificent berg, or island of ice, rather. It had perpendicular sides and rose at least two hundred feet above the surface of the sea. The top seemed to be a table-land. It showed no fantastic peaks or overhanging masses, but seemed to be a huge oblong mass of ice broken away from the Antarctic ice-barrier. Everywhere the sides came sheer down to the water. I thought what a terrible thing it would be to run against such a mass on a black night driving before a hurricane. There could be no possible salvation for a single man. The ship's bows would be stove in like the top of an egg, and she would go down in a few minutes with all hands. And even supposing that a boat could have been launched, what hope could there be of anyone in her surviving a single night in such terrible weather, with the thermometer below zero?

Now it was that the unfortunate men who had been imprisoned felt severely the want of warm clothing. Their messmates did what they could for them, but that was very little, as a sailor's kit is not lavishly supplied with extra clothing. The weather was frightfully cold, and the work of shortening sail in a gale which cut a well-clad man through like a knife, with its keen icy blast, was

terribly trying. Of course, we had to take off our mittens when going aloft, as every finger was required to hold on to the rigging. There was not the slightest chance for a man if he went overboard at such times. No boat could have lived in the tremendous seas which we encountered after leaving our ice island astern. Even if the ship could be hove to, it would not have been of the slightest use. Thus a slip from aloft meant certain death. We were, however, fortunate on this voyage, for we did not meet with continuous heavy weather, and as we rounded the terrible Cape we were carrying all plain sail. We passed close enough to the rocky islet which forms the southernmost point of South America to get a capital view of it. The Horn is usually wreathed with mist or driving snow, sleet, and rain, but it happened to be perfectly clear as we went by. We could plainly discern the naked black rocks of the southernmost of the group of islands at the Cape, against which the vast rollers of the Antarctic Sea broke with a ceaseless roar. I was very anxious to see some of the natives of the Chileno-Patagonian race, who gain a wretched living by fishing and seal-hunting on this bleak and barren coast, but although we could see the coast and even the beach with the glasses, not a sign of life was perceptible.

The captain told us that he had once been ashore at Tierra del Fuego, and in spite of the terrible cold of a country where snow, sleet, rain, and frost are of daily occurrence, the Fuegians wore no clothing beyond a piece of sealskin thrown over their shoulders, and that when fishing from their canoes they discard even this. We, I know, felt the cold bitterly, and I shall never forget the abject misery in which I spent a whole watch one night. I had just come on deck at midnight, well wrapped up in warm clothing—a couple of warm flannel shirts, a woollen jersey, and over all a thick monkey-jacket, warm baize-lined india-rubber sea boots, a warm cap with big ear-flaps, and finally a thick comforter and double-lined mittens.

As I walked over to the lee side, the captain called to me, and asked me what clothes I had on. I told him.

“My goodness, boy! Why, what chance would you have if you fell overboard with all that on? Take off that jacket and muffler.”

I took them off, and he then helped me to drag off my jersey. I now stood exposed to the biting, icy wind in only my flannel shirts.

“There,” he said; “now you’ll feel more free to swim if you go over. You’d no chance before.”

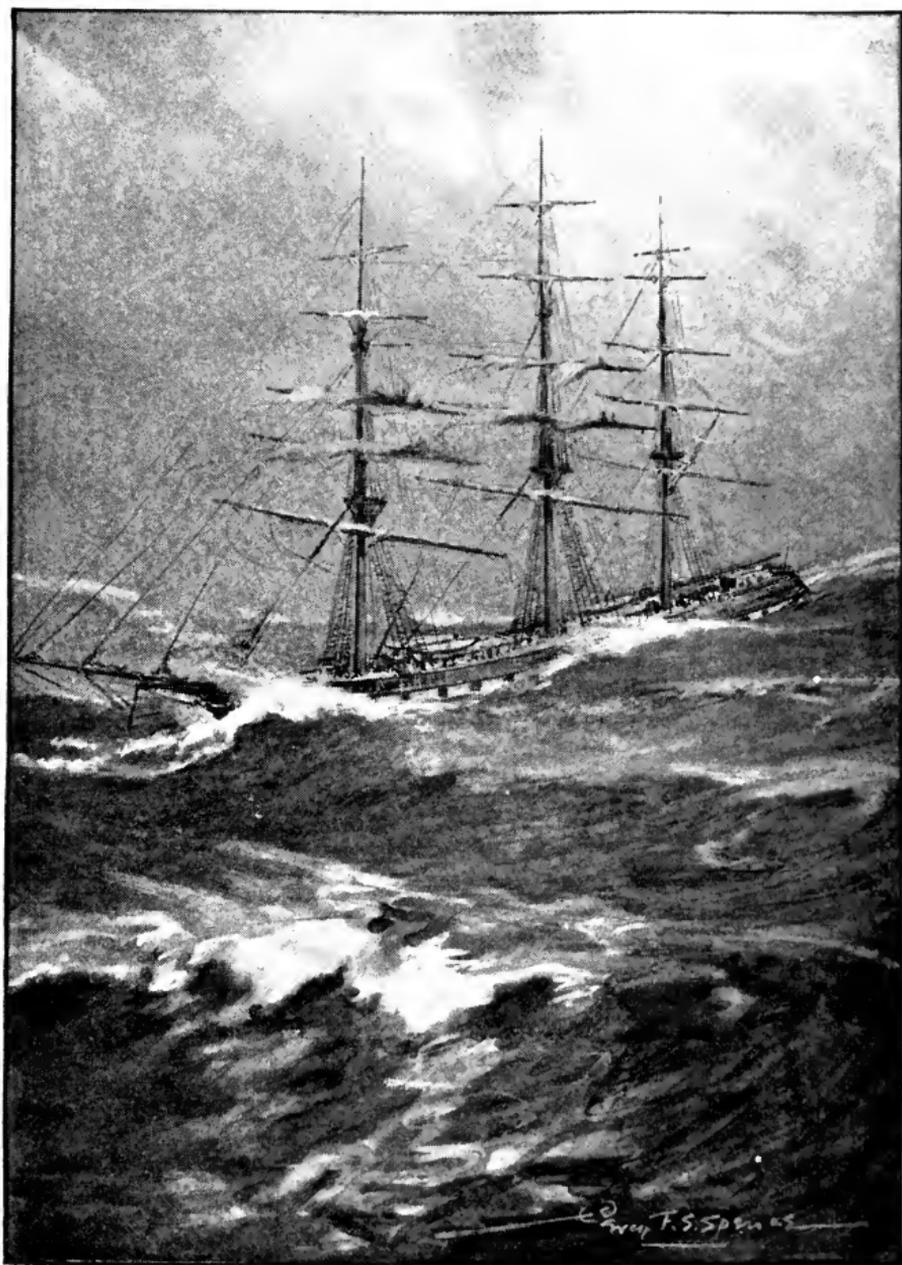
And in order to give me a chance to try the correctness of his view, he added:

“Just go up on the mizzen topsail yard and cool yourself.”

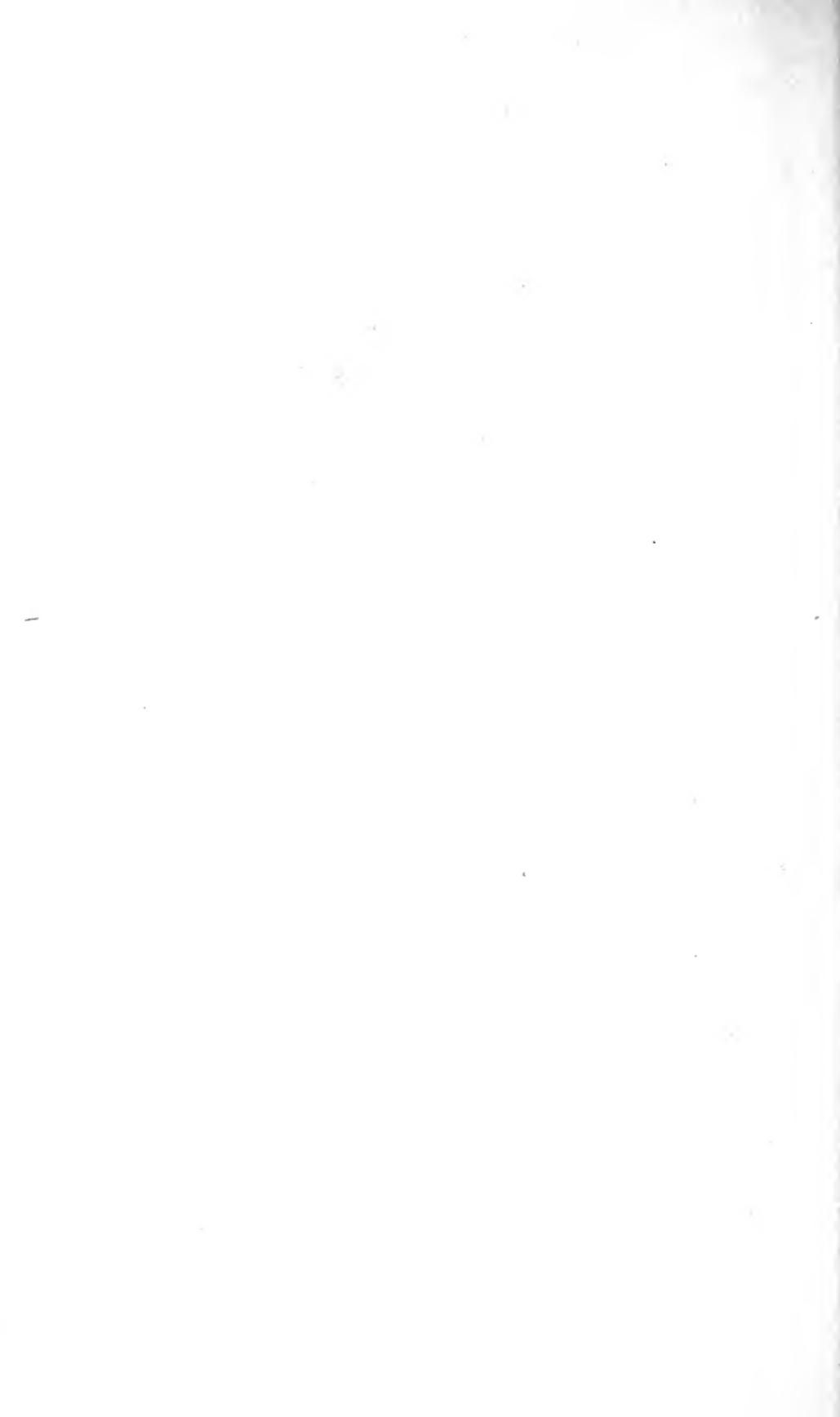
I was already shivering with cold. I felt I was turning blue; but up I had to go, and sit on the upper topsail yard, exposed not only to the wind blowing over the quarter but to the blast downward from the topgallant sails above me. There was, of course, not the slightest shelter, and it was not long before I was so numbed that when he hailed me to come down I could not answer, and my fingers were so cramped by holding on that a man had to come up and loosen my grip, and half carry me down to deck. Why the captain served me in this manner I never found out. He himself was wrapped up at the time like a Newfoundland banksman.

No chance for him if he happened to drop into the sea!

After this we got a splendid south-easterly wind, and gradually left these bleak, icy regions. But, soon after rounding the Horn, this breeze freshened up to a heavy gale, which necessitated our heaving to for a night. On the following morning the gale broke, but although it was a fair wind for us, the captain still kept the ship under short canvas, and



“ALL DAY LONG SHE FLEW BEFORE IT.”



we were merely head-reaching along in company with a deeply-laden Norwegian barque. Every now and then a heavy fall of snow hid everything from view. During a long interval between the snow-storms we beheld a most magnificent sight. A large vessel came thundering along, throwing billows of white spume in clouds of spray from her bows. She was coming up hand over hand with us, bowing and ducking as she heeled over to the strong breeze. On she came, and passed between us and the Norwegian. We recognised her at once. It was the famous *Great Britain*, then under the command of the noble and popular but ill-fated Captain Gray. What a magnificent vessel she looked! Those who admired her in port could not dream of the sight she presented in the circumstances in which we saw her. She was so close that the two captains were able to speak through the trumpets, and as she heeled over towards us we could see the Australian passengers on her decks looking over the bulwarks at us, and probably wondering to see a ship as large as their own, apparently, wallowing through the water with only topsails, spanker, fore topmast stay sail and jibs set, while they were tearing along with topmast studding sails set and preventer braces rove. She was soon obscured from view by the snow and

sleet, which seemed to swallow her up while we were gazing at her. Such a sight was not calculated to improve our captain's temper, and all hands had a miserable time of it for long afterwards.

Off the Rio de la Plata we experienced the worst weather we had yet seen, but long ago our rotten gear had been replaced, and we had one of our strongest suits of sails bent. As the "pampero" came down upon us we took the cloths off her one after the other till she was running under close-reefed upper fore and main topsails, fore topmast stay sail, and fore sail. A mountainous sea got up, and the gale came in fits and starts—heavy squalls and partial lulls between. All hands were standing by ready for whatever might happen. The ship was deluged with water fore and aft, and at times she rolled till her lower yard arms touched the water. Suddenly a terrific squall struck us. Captain and mate roared out together to let go everything, but it was too late. The whole of the sails blew clean out of the bolt ropes, leaving us under bare poles. Now the gale blew up into a furious hurricane. There could be no question of trying to heave to. In that mountainous, confused sea we should have foundered to a certainty. There was nothing for it but to let her drive under bare poles, and all day long

she flew before it, the vast seas running right over her. We scarcely expected her to live through it, but she did, and went at a rate of quite seven knots without a rag of canvas on her. Towards evening the weather moderated, but just as we had started to unbend the remains of the lost sails it piped up again, and we again had to run before it. This lasted for three days, during which time no man had turned in or taken off his oilskins, nor had there been anything to eat but biscuits washed down with rum and water.

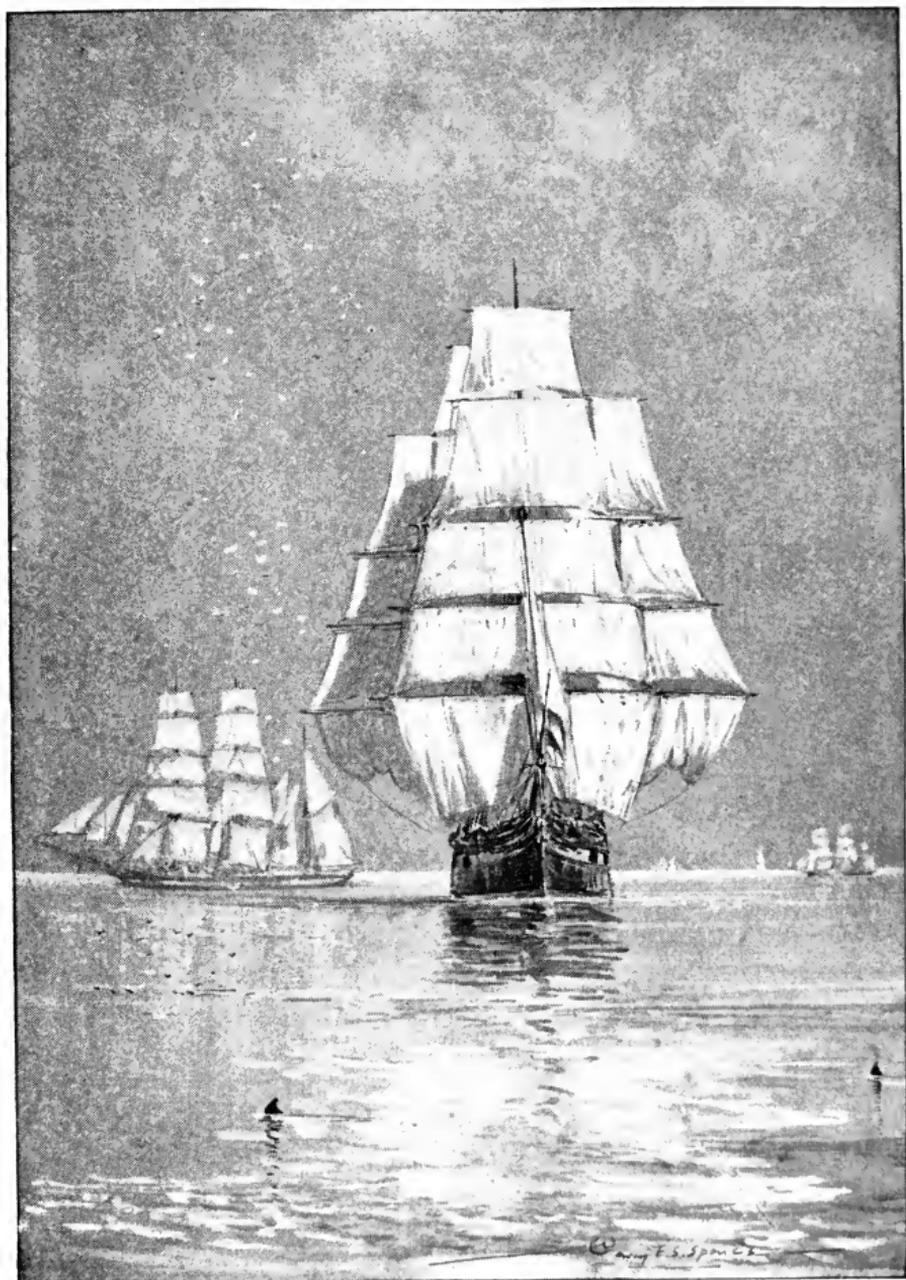
After the third day the weather moderated, and we soon had repaired damages. Now we slipped away northwards into a region of detestable calms—the calms of Capricorn. Day after day the ship either lay like a log or we got a head wind which again changed to a southerly puff, which in its turn faded away into a mere catspaw, leaving the ocean as still, calm, and greasy-looking as a stagnant pond.

Only sailors can appreciate what a hard time this is for Jack. In a perfectly dead calm, of course, he has nothing to do but go about various jobs; but when there is an occasional gentle breath which fills the sails for a quarter of an hour, and when this is succeeded by the vessel being taken aback, in fact, when the calm is

interrupted by puffs of wind from every point of the compass—a soldier's wind—then it is that Jack's trouble begins. A dozen times during a watch he hears: "Lee fore brace! Sweat 'em in, bullies!" and ten minutes afterwards: "Weather main brace! Round in them yards lively, men! The Cork girls have got hold of the rope this time! Hurrah! There she goes! Put your nose into it, you old hooker!" and other lively exclamations from the boatswain, which would cheer the men up for a little. But this fair spell never lasted. The inevitable "Lee fore brace!" the sign of the wind heading us, would be certain to come and strike a knell upon our hearts. The yards would be sweated up till they were jammed hard against the lee shrouds to get what little wind could be got from the right direction, and yet every now and then came the order for another pull on "them lee braces."

This went on till all hope of ever again getting a breeze began to die in us. We thought we should lie here for ever and become a "phantom ship," with the difference that that fabulous vessel had the advantage of being able to sail everywhere except round the Cape of Good Hope.

The expression in Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," "The very deep did rot," is a very apt way of



"THE VERY DEEP DID ROT."



describing the appearance of the ocean during a protracted calm. It has a greasy, dirty look, like soapy water or the surface of a pond near a factory. All sorts of waifs and strays of wood, weed, and animals are seen lying about the surface.

Occasionally a shark comes along and leaves a long, greasy-looking wake behind him, but generally there is no life visible, and the calm has a most depressing effect. When the calm came upon us, or rather, I suppose, when we ran into it, no vessel was in sight from our main royal yard. But by the time it had lasted a week there must have been at least fifty vessels of all kinds in sight. I suppose they drifted along with currents imperceptibly. On one or two occasions the smaller vessels put out boats and towed the vessels' heads round to prevent them from colliding with the larger vessels, owing to the attraction of the larger body drawing them together.

After about a fortnight of this wretched work, a sail was sighted astern of us, and to our astonishment it grew every hour, showing that she at least was making headway. Perhaps she was bringing a breeze along with her. We watched her all the morning, and about four p.m. she was close enough for us to make her out. She proved to be the

Young America, a fine Baltimore clipper which had left Melbourne three months after we did, to go and load at the Chinchas. She must have left the islands six weeks or two months after us, and yet here she was, about to pass us.

It is true that after the hurricane we had shortened sail every night, the captain saying he anticipated a hurricane, as the glass fell so seriously. This was another aggravation of our petty worries. We would be rolling along on our course at six or eight knots with a fine fair wind, and all sail to topgallant studding sail set, when suddenly would come the order, "All hands shorten sail!" The ship would be stripped to close-reefed topsails, and there we would lie till daylight, when sail was again made. Ten nights of this told heavily against a quick passage. Whether the barometer actually fell so low as to warrant this extra carefulness, or whether it was (as Mr. Dickens had said) that the captain was acting on the principle of "More days, more dollars," no one will ever know, but the fact remained that no hurricane made its appearance, and vessel after vessel passed us during these nights with all sail set.

Now here was the *Young America* adding to our disgrace. We were certainly a slow ship, which could barely reel off ten knots with half a gale on

her quarter, but it was very galling, nevertheless, to be so disgracefully beaten.

However, our captain said he was glad to see the *Young America* in such calm weather, as we had run short of Stockholm tar, and he hoped to get some from her. When she was near enough to be hailed our captain jumped on to the wheelhouse, and, after the usual salutation and inquiries, asked if the captain could spare him a barrel of tar.

The captain of the stranger, a dapper, wiry-looking little fellow, stood up on the rail holding on by the backstay, and said:

"Tar? Waal, no! I reckon I can't let you have no tar, but I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll let you have a few bar'ls of flour and a bag or two of bread. I guess you'll want some before that water-logged old timber drogher of yourn gits home!" The *Young America's* crew burst into a roar of laughter. The rage of Captain Barton can be imagined. The interview abruptly closed. The Yankee dipped his flag, and I ran aft to bend on our ensign and return the salute when I got a swinging box on the ear which sent me sprawling.

"Let that flag alone, b—— you!" said my irate chief. He was in no humour to be polite.

The Yankee, after dodging about us for a little while, stood his course, dipping his colours again

and again in derision. Before night he was out of sight. At last we got the S.E. trades, and made some (for us) good runs. There being now little to do in attending to the sails, the captain decided to have white decks again. They had been stained brown at the islands to make the dirt less conspicuous. Every morning the holy-stones were in requisition, and the decks were ground down until in some places the bolt-heads were exposed. The staining had sunk in deeply, and to get it out the wood was scrubbed away by the bucketful. These operations continued till not a speck of stain was to be seen.

One day the captain took it into his head to believe that the vanes at the mastheads did not work properly, and that they must want greasing.

It happened to be my watch on deck. He called me over and asked:

“Boy, can you go up and bring those vanes down?”

I looked at the beautiful tapering poles rising ten or fifteen feet above the eyes of the royal rigging, and hesitated. It was my first voyage at sea, and although I was like a cat among the rigging and felt no fear (when I had a rope handy to get a grip of) in the wildest night I ever saw, yet when it came to climbing a smooth pole at a

height of two hundred and odd feet from the deck, with the ship pitching in a rather lively manner, I had some natural misgiving.

He saw I hesitated, so went on:

"Oh, well! if you're afraid I'll send up a boy with more pluck."

This decided me. I would not let any man or boy on board think I was afraid, so I said:

"Afraid, sir! I'm not afraid of going up there. I was only thinking how I should bring them down."

"Why, that's easy enough," he said. "When you've lifted the vane out, slip down to the royal yard and bend it on to the signal halliards, and you can send it down."

So up I went. When I reached the royal yard, which was hoisted, I looked up at the vane. The bare pole seemed a tremendous height, and of course there was nothing to lay hold of but the pole itself; it would not do to trust to the signal halliards, which were rove through a sheave in the truck. I nerved myself to the task, gripped the pole, and shinned up. I had already loosed the knot of the halliards on deck, and carried one end up with me. I now made this end of the halliard fast to the vane. Then, clinging by both legs, I used both hands to lift the gilt ball, which had a

rod of iron about eighteen inches long attached to it, and sunk into the top of the pole. I just had strength to lift it out, and then I slid down into the royal yard to get breath. On looking up, to my dismay I saw that I had got a turn of the signal halliards round the mast, and that I also had a turn round the running part.

There was nothing for it but to climb again. I then had to hold tight on to the vane, cast off the bend, clear the halliards, and make fast again. This I did, and felt that if my life depended upon it I could not go up a third time. The ship, as I said, was pitching and rolling a little, and there was I, clinging only by my legs like a monkey on top of a pole. It was a ticklish piece of work, but luckily I had it all right this time, and I lowered it to the deck. I was about to go down when the captain hailed me.

“Stay where you are, and I’ll send it up again.”

I was in despair. I knew I must shin up that wretched pole again, but should I be able to do it?

The captain had the iron rod cleaned and fresh greased, and then it came swaying up to me again. I pulled myself together, and once more climbed the pole. I never felt so near falling in my life. I was not in the least giddy, but the power of clinging seemed to have left my legs. Had the

work lasted two minutes longer, I should certainly have fallen. I just managed to cast off the halliards after dropping the vane into its place, then I put the end of the halliards in my teeth and reached the royal yard in safety. But there were two more vanes, the mizzen and the fore, to be brought down. To my great delight, I had only reached the top on my way down when I saw Johnston and Sharpe going up. I have never again been sent up for a vane at sea. It is an experience one would not care to have often.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE YANKEE MATE.

I HAVE not as yet said much about our chief mate. He carried on the duty in the same brutal way all the way home. Whilst we were in the cold weather I never once saw him with an overcoat. He crawled about in indiarubber boots, and his only outer dress was an alpaca coat. Mittens he never wore. The man seemed quite insensible to cold or heat. He did not retain his original dislike to the "captain's pet monkeys," Barney and me. On the contrary, he took rather a liking to us, and rarely interfered with us. When it was our watch on deck, if it were a fine night, he would call one of us over to the weather side and walk up and down, telling us yarns about slavery in the Southern States and about slave ships. From what he said, I rather think he must at one time have been engaged in the slave trade, and learnt his cruelties on board those ships. Some of his stories, if true, showed that he was a good seaman. On one occasion he was in a ship in the Gulf of Guinea, off Lagos. They were caught in a tremendous gale.

The captain got drunk, and the ship was driving fast on to a lee shore. He determined to club-haul the ship, having seen it done once. It was the only chance to save her. The ship was at the time under a close-reefed main topsail only. There were twenty fathoms of water and it was slowly shoaling. The close-reefed fore topsail was set, together with the close-reefed foresail, jib, outer jib, and main topmast staysail. The head sails were thrown aback, wheel reversed, and the vessel began to get stern way. The anchor was let go, and as soon as she began to pay off the anchor was slipped at the fifth shackle. Slowly she came round, the head sails filled. Then the close-reefed mainsail was set, and she weathered the point they expected to have left their bones on.

One night he happened to talk about the captain, and, referring to his size, he said:

“Ef I had him down south, I could paint him black and sell him for a buck nigger for a thousand dollars.”

He was not talking in a low voice, and the cabin skylight was open. Directly afterwards the captain came on deck. He had already had one or two disagreements with the mate, and he now found fault with the set of the sails and the trim of the yards. He asked the mate if he knew he

was off his course, and generally let him know that he was not satisfied with him.

Next day one of the seamen brushed past the carpenter, who was making a new grating for the wheel-house. The latter jumped up and gave the man a tremendous blow in the face. The mate immediately went up to him and said:

“Here, Chips; I shipped to do the fighting aboard here, so you keep your hands off the men.”

The carpenter gave him some surly answer, on which the mate rushed at him, but tripped over the man on the deck. His wrath immediately vented itself on the helpless seaman, whose face was soon pounded to a swelled mass of flesh streaming with blood.

One afternoon, just after eight bells, three of the men came aft with a kid of beef. The captain looked at them and asked them what they wanted. The spokesman asked him to look at that muck, and smell it and see if it was fit for Christians to eat.

“Hand it over here,” said Captain Barton.

The man handed him the kid. He smelt the beef and said it was quite sweet.

“Here,” he said, “smell it yourself.”

The man approached and put his nose to the kid, when suddenly the captain knocked him down,

jammed the beef kid into his face, rubbed the beef into him, and kicked him in the ribs, the mate assisting the other two forward by a few hearty kicks.

“Fit for Christians!” roared the captain. “No, but it’s too good for — idle hounds like you. You’re a nice dainty lot. Perhaps you’d like soft tack and roast turkey? I’ll bring you to your bearings. I’ll stop your meat for a week. I’ll take my oath you’ll be glad to gnaw the bones by that time. Get forward, you hound. And just you try coming aft on that errand again, that’s all!”

The unfortunate man went forward, and of course no redress was obtained. Captain Barton was a singular compound of good nature and cruelty. We never could tell which quality would predominate from one day to the other. Witness his telling me to remain in comfort in his cabin whilst my watch was up aloft furling and reefing, and afterwards coming below and damning me for a lazy scowbanker.

In ordinary weather, and especially when we were on a wind, he used to send us boys to the wheel. His main injunction, when the ship was closehauled, was to watch the weather leech of the main topsail.

"If it shivers," he used to say, "let her fall off a little, but luff at once afterwards."

We used to watch that leech with intense anxiety, and when it shook, round would go the wheel till we had her a couple of points off, and the mate would come aft to see if there had been a shift of wind. Usually the old man stood by us and kept on saying:

"Luff, boy, luff! Mind your luff! Where the —— are you going to?"

Then we luffed and luffed till every sail began to shiver and slat against the mast. Then would follow a volley from the captain. But on one occasion the volley was too late. I luffed until I had the sails all aback. I did not know at the time whether I was to be flogged, hove overboard and keel-hauled, or what; but the rage of the captain was so terrible that it had the effect of giving me an inclination to enrage him still more.

"D'ye see what you've done, you infernal young devil?" he yelled.

"Yes, sir," I replied; "that comes of obeying your orders. You said 'Luff,' and I said, 'Luff it is, sir.' You kept on telling me to keep her up, and I kept her up. She's up now. It's your fault, not mine."

I thought he would have knocked me down, but

he gave the necessary orders and got the ship on the port tack again.

“Now, Mr. Impudence,” he resumed, “you’ve got to put the ship about, but by——, if she gets in irons or misses stays, look out for yourself. Banks, take the wheel.”

The wind was fairly light, and, as a matter of fact, this putting her about was merely a practice for us apprentices. Nothing could well go wrong, even if we did miss the critical moment to haul round the topsail yard. Still, I was in great trepidation, although I had put the ship about once or twice before.

“Now boy, go on,” the captain cried. “’Bout ship.”

I knew all the words of command perfectly, so I yelled out:

“Ready about! Stations!”

The men all flew to their stations. I ordered Banks to put the helm down. As soon as I saw that done I shouted: “Helm’s a lee!”

The mate forward repeated, “Helm’s a lee! Let go the head-sheets.”

Then came from me, “Tacks and sheets.” The clews of the courses are hauled up, and everything is ready for a swing round. Now was the critical moment, upon which depended the coming round of the ship

successfully. Whenever the captain put her about he always told us to watch carefully the first quiver of the main topsail, and to haul at that moment. I thought the weather leech would never lift, but at last I saw a decided shiver.

“Main topsail haul,” I shouted. Round came the yards with a rush, the lee braces having been let go, and the weather braces rounded in as the swinging of the yards slacked it up. I now had to attend to the after sail.

“Brace up the crossjack yard! Belay! Ease over the spanker boom! Well, the boom. Haul aft the main sheet. Stand by the head yards!”

Now all hands stand by the head braces. I was not quite sure of the time to let go, so I looked at the old man.

“Hurry up, you —— young fool!” he said softly, “Do you want to get the ship in irons?”

“Let go and haul,” I shouted.

The head yards are swung round, and I am saved. The mate now looks after the proper trimming of the yards.

“Round in their braces; smart, men! Well, the fore yard—well, the fore topsail yard,” and so on, till he at last sings out:

“Well of all! Get this gear cleared up.”

Then the main and fore tacks are boarded. I

train the after yards under the captain's instructions, and the third mate orders the men to clear up the decks and coil up the running gear.

My turn of putting the ship about has come off successfully, but it is a very delicate operation, either in a light wind or a heavy blow. We boys were only allowed to do it with an ordinary breeze, and always in the captain's presence. It was splendid practice, and we enjoyed it greatly.

Whilst we were running along, or rather dodging along, north of the N.E. trades, the mate had a small staging rigged on the martingale under the bowsprit, on which he used to stand to harpoon porpoise or dolphin. To reach the staging safely, he had passed a life-line of ratline stuff from the head to the martingale. One day he got over the bows with his harpoon and started out to the staging. The ship was going along about four knots, and there was very little swell. He got halfway out, when he stopped and came back. Parker, Murray, and two or three men besides the boys were on the fore-castle as he came in.

"Reckon you hounds meant to put me in the drink, didn't you?" he said.

Of course the men protested they knew nothing about it. But the mate knocked them both down, and as usual jumped on their bodies and battered

their faces. He then went aft. We asked him what was the matter, and he told us to go and see. So I went forward, got over the bows, and moved out on the bowsprit guys towards the martingale. I noticed then that the life-line was cut through, so that only half a strand remained intact. Had the ship lurched and had the mate trusted to that line, he would infallibly have gone overboard, when a kind-hearted shark might have relieved us of him for ever. But he was too wide awake for the men, and seemed to bear a charmed life. Two attempts had failed.

Shortly afterwards a third attack was made. He and I were, as usual, walking the weather side of the quarter-deck one night. Some work was going on in the main top—getting a topmast studding sail out, I think, and the mate walked close under the top. He had stood there about a minute when a sheath-knife came down from aloft. It was well aimed, for it fell between us, near his feet, and buried its point deep in the deck.

Mr. Bray stooped and picked it up. He carried it aft to the binnacle light and examined it all over. No mark denoting ownership could be found on it. He threw it overboard and remarked:

“That warn’t meant for you, boy.”

“No, sir,” I said; “it was you they wanted.”

"Yaas," he drawled. "Them men's laying down now from aloft. Call the watch aft."

So I told the third mate the men were to lay aft. As the watch reached the deck they came aft.

"Naow," said the mate, with a wicked smile, "I want to see all yer knives!"

He went along the line, and every man showed his sheath-knife.

One man said :

"What the h—l does this mean?"

The mate heard him and went for him at once, and the usual booting and face-beating took place.

Then he said: "I see you've all got yer knives, and you see I've taken my satisfaction out of one of yer. I ain't dead by a long chalk yet, and you're not in New York yet, and don't forget it! Go forward."

I heard afterwards that the man who dropped the knife, and who attempted his life on the two previous occasions, was the Spaniard. He was cunning enough to have a second knife with him in the top, fearing the search which actually took place; and thus he escaped detection.

After this I never felt comfortable when walking with the mate.

We now began tarring down. This is a very dirty but very necessary operation, both for the preservation and appearance of the rigging. All day long

men and boys were hard at work scraping masts and booms and riding down the stays with tar-pots slung round their necks and a wad of oakum in their hands, with which the tar was rubbed into the standing rigging. Riding down a stay for the first time is not a pleasant experience. A line is passed through a block at the head of the stay, usually the staysail halliards. The end is made fast to a bowline at the upper end of the stay. The seaman seats himself in the bowline, which travels on the stay, and gives the word to those on deck to lower away gently. As he tars the stay he is lowered foot by foot, and thus swings in midair between the masts. Should the stay part, the man would probably not go overboard but would be dashed with violence against the mast and thus be killed or severely hurt. I have related how one man went overboard when a stay parted, but he was not seated in a bowline or in a boatswain's chair, and so was free to fly to leeward.

Poor Johnston had just ridden down the fore topmast stay, and had, as he thought, made his bowline secure to the fore topgallant stay to be run up again. Unfortunately, another bowline was then not fastened to the stay, but to this he bent the end of his halliard. He put his legs through it, preparatory to sitting down, and gave the word to "Hoist away."

The men attending him gave a swift hoist and

lifted him off his feet off the bowsprit; but, the bow-line not being secured, he came inboard with a rush. His tar-pot, a square one, flew up to his face, and he was smashed against the bitts, the tar-pot taking the force of the blow. The man was hauled in senseless, and it appeared at first sight as if his cheek bones were broken in. He was carried to the 'tween decks and put in a berth. When the tar which coated his face was removed, it was seen that he was severely cut by the four edges of the pot, and the bones were somewhat splintered.

The captain dressed the wounds and left him to get well.

This was a splendid opportunity for Johnston, who was a confirmed loafer and malingerer. For a few days the captain sent him food from the cabin, as the man affirmed that he was unable to move his jaws. But after a week an examination was made, and, in spite of his agonising cries, his mouth was forced open, and under the threat of a flogging he confessed that he was quite able to turn to.

I had a very narrow escape also. I was coming down the mizzen royal backstay, tarring as I went; and when I reached the rail I had just planted my two feet on it, and had let go my hold of the stay, when it parted up aloft. Had it gone when I started to tar down, I should have been killed to a certainty.

It used to be a common practice of ours to come down from aloft by slipping down the backstays instead of crawling down the ratlines, and over the top down the futtock shrouds; but after this we preferred the slower and safer way, and eschewed backstays.

I have said that we had holystoned the decks till they were spotlessly white. When the tarring down business began, the mate warned all hands that he would have no drops of tar fall from aloft. Now it is impossible to dip one's hand into a full tar-pot and not to let some drops fall, however careful one may be; and it would have been easy for the mate to order some old canvas to be laid down on the deck to preserve its spotlessness. But he wanted to have an excuse to thrash somebody. One man, a loutish fellow named Scottie, was his particular aversion, and on him he kept his eye. It was not long before poor Scottie let fall half a dozen splashes of tar on the deck. The mate said nothing, but waited till the man came down to replenish his tar-pot. Then he seized him, dragged him over to the tar-spots, threw him on the deck and rubbed his nose in it; then lifted his head by the ears, and battered his face savagely on the deck. The wretched man was almost insensible before the mate allowed him to get up.

Just as we were getting out of the Tropics the captain ordered the boys to wake him at five in the morning. It was good for boys, he said, to have a little medicine when running from hot into cold weather, and he would give us a good black draught next day. Of course we did not like the idea, but we were obliged to obey, and accordingly presented ourselves at the captain's door at five next morning.

He awoke directly we knocked, and called out:

"That you, boys? All right. Call the steward and tell him to bring the medicine in."

Wilkinson called the steward, who turned out grumbling. Why the idle brute should grumble, I could not see. His work was done at latest at eight p.m., and he had all night in every night, whilst we had our watches to keep, no matter what the weather was, and on this particular morning two of us had been bundled out of bed just one hour after coming off the middle watch, and all because the captain wanted to try his hand at amateur doctoring.

As soon as the steward was out, he brought in a tray with two black bottles unlabelled and four tumblers. The captain appeared in his pyjamas, and gave us a dissertation on keeping the blood in a healthy condition. Black draught, he said,

was the best and easiest medicine to take. So saying, he uncorked the bottles and poured out four tumblers of what looked very unlike black draught. It was bright and sparkling, and had a creamy foam on it.

"Why," whispered Barney, "I'll be shot if it isn't bottled ale, boys!"

I suggested the possibility of the medicine being disguised in it.

"Now, lads," cried the captain, "down with it—and no wry faces!"

We each took our tumbler and found he had given us some first-class bottled ale. This was grand medicine, and a well-pleased smile stole over our faces. He made us finish the two bottles, and ordered us to present ourselves again at the same hour next morning.

It may be imagined that we were punctual to the appointment. Again two bottles and four tumblers made their appearance. We winked at each other, anticipating the pouring forth of the inspiring beverage. But when the tumblers were filled no amber liquor was there, but in its place a flat, turbid, inky-looking draught.

"Down with it!" said the captain.

The wretched steward stood grinning at us in delight. We poured down the nauseous stuff, and

on the captain inviting us to finish the bottles we respectfully declined, as we also did a further invitation to call on him again next day. We assured him our blood would require no further purifying.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LAST OF POOR BARNEY.

WE were now in more frequented waters. The only land we had seen since leaving Cape Horn was the Islands of Tristan d'Acunha, Trinidad, Fernando de Noronha, Martin Vas, the Cape Verde Islands, and Azores. We were now in the track of ships from Africa, the West Indies, the Mediterranean, and the United States, and every day saw more vessels passing or overtaking us. I do not remember that we ever overtook one ourselves. The weather had become exceedingly raw after leaving the latitude of the Azores, and as we got farther to the north it was regular February weather, and our warm clothes were again in requisition. On the 20th of that month we sighted Cape Clear light, the southernmost point of Ireland. Everything was ready for letting go anchor, and we kept a look-out for a pilot, but none came off. We were greatly disappointed. Ever since leaving the Western Islands we had had heavy easterly gales, and we did not care to run off the coast again for an indefinite period. We burnt blue lights, sent

up rockets, and fired two guns, but it was all of no use. The Corkonians or Queenstonians had apparently gone to bed, so we ran off the shore and beat about all night.

Next morning a pilot came and took us in to the harbour, and we dropped anchor off Spike Island. In a very short space of time the sails were furled, and the mate took a great deal of trouble to square the yards properly. He even went ahead in a boat, and kept us hauling at lifts and braces till she must have looked as trim as a warship.

The captain went ashore directly after dinner, and we were set to work to clean the ship. She was washed and scrubbed inside and out, her brass-work polished, her two guns painted and brought aft for show, and by the afternoon of next day she presented little appearance of having been as good as eleven months out from Melbourne.

The captain came on board again in the evening, and said that the *Earl of Elgin* had not yet been heard of, so his big bets and our little ones were won. But, Lord! we thought, what a tub she must be to let us run away from her like this! We had certainly never run away from any vessel on the passage home. To see a sail on the horizon astern, looking like a bird's wing on the water,

was to feel sure that before night some vessel would be passing us.

We remained at anchor here for ten days, and had the pleasure of meeting our *Elgin* chums once more, as the ship arrived two days before we sailed. They had had a terrible time of it round the Horn. The ship leaked badly, and the water had got amongst the guano, and it was pump for dear life every watch for a couple of hours. At last the leak unaccountably took up, and although they had to keep the pumps going the whole voyage, more or less, still they did very well on the whole, but calms and headwinds had delayed them as they had us. The bets were all duly settled, and we spent most of the money in a pleasant jollification in our berth. No leave was granted at this port. I suppose the captain was afraid most of the men would desert—at any rate, those who had lost three months' wages, so I got no opportunity of seeing the city.

But one afternoon the mate ordered us to get the boat ready. We soon had her alongside, and as there was a nice steady breeze we sailed past Spike Island and landed at Queenstown. The mate left us, giving us leave to go into the town two at a time. We profited by this permission to buy a lot of fresh bread and butter, onions, cheese, and

bottled stout, as we were determined to get something better than our usual fare now that we were in port.

When the mate came down the wind had increased very much, but we pushed off and stood out towards the ship. As we got away from the land some rather ugly squalls struck us. The mate, therefore, decided to shorten sail before opening out the harbour beyond the island, where we should probably find more wind than we bargained for.

“Can you boys get a couple of reefs in that sail?” he asked.

“We’ll try, sir,” said we.

Barney let go the peak and throat halliards, but the sail would not come down. Something was jammed up aloft, and it was necessary to climb the mast. I was just going up when the mate cried out: “Stand by! Up with the peak, quick! Give a pull on the throat halliards! Sit low now, boys, we’re in for it.”

We flew past the island, and then caught the full force of the wind. The boat lay down to it till the water poured over the lee gunwale. We all hung over to windward, expecting her to go over every minute, or to see the mast carried away. But nothing happened. The mate handled her well, and we tore through the water at a

tremendous rate, and eventually reached the ship drenched through, the boat nearly half full of water. But we had fairly well saved our fresh bread. We had each covered a loaf with our monkey jackets. The butter was all right in the locker, and the stout, of course, could take no harm. We now had to bale out the boat and hoist her up, lay the sails out to dry, and then go below and make ourselves comfortable.

We soon changed our wet clothes, and then got the comestibles spread out. We attacked the bread and butter and raw onions and cheese, and drank stout till we were satisfied. How we did relish that supper! I am sure that no soft tack or porter has since tasted to me as that did. It seemed a feast fit for a king. Imagine us subsisting for six months on that Callao bread, and then to get beautiful freshly made bread and sweet butter! Those who want to know what real luxuries these are should make a long voyage (in a whaler, for preference), and on first arrival in port make a feast on bread and butter and stout. They would not turn up their dainty noses and grumble, "Nothing but bread and butter for tea," but would eat, and bless the kind Providence that provided such luxurious delicacies.

By the bye, I must not forget to state what I

did with the bag of biscuits which accompanied me in my fall overboard at Callao. It will be remembered that I was condemned to eat them all. They were saturated with salt water and swelled to the size of a soup plate. Every time I passed the drying-ground I picked up half a dozen and threw them overboard, and as I often had access to the bread-locker afterwards, I secreted numbers of them in my shirt and fed the fishes with them; so it was not long before the whole bagful was disposed of.

After lying ten days in Cork harbour, we got orders to go to Leith, and took a pilot to carry us there. The weather was abominable. It blew in heavy squalls, and showers of sleet flew over us. The sky, when it could be seen, was of a leaden hue, and the sea looked green and angry. All night it was almost impossible to see a hundred yards ahead, but the pilot could grope his way with the lead through the blackest night, and we drove along bravely, our only fear being collision with some other vessel. At first, the captain thought of avoiding the English Channel and of passing to the North by way of St. George's Channel and the Irish Sea; then, passing to the northward of the Orkney Islands, we should have possibly made a shorter passage and should have escaped the risk of collision with one of the hundreds

of vessels which crossed the Channel. But the pilot dissuaded him from this course, considering it the more dangerous route. So we ran to the Land's End, and here it was that I lost my much-loved little shipmate, Barney Banks.

The weather had so moderated during the afternoon that we had been carrying the main-royal. At two bells (nine p.m.) it began to breeze up again, and the order was given to clew up the sail. Barney and I ran aloft to furl it. The night was very dark, so dark in fact that when I was on the weather yard arm I could not see Barney on the lee side. It was desperately cold up there, and I sang out to him to light up to windward. I got no answer, and the sail continued to thrash about. I shouted to him again, but finding he did not reply, I slipped round the mast and then found he was not there. Worse still, the gasket had been cast adrift from the tie and was blowing out to leeward. I had to get out to the extreme lee yard arm to get hold of it. I thought Barney had played me a trick, so I furled the sail by myself with some trouble, and then slipped down the backstay (forgetful of resolutions) to the deck. Here I found everyone in a state of great excitement, the captain, pilot, and officers standing in a group in the centre of the men. I pushed through them and

found my poor little mate lying on the deck in a pool of blood, calling upon God and the Blessed Virgin to help him. The poor boy was conscious and able to explain. He got hold of my hand and said, "Oh, Riley, Riley! You'll be alone now. Did you get that gasket? I got on the yard and used both hands to loose the gasket, when the sail bellied over me and knocked me over. Oh, Mother of Mercy! I'm done for."

He was evidently in terrible pain. Had he fallen straight on deck from that awful height, he would have been killed outright, and this would have saved him some hours of awful agony. But in falling he came feet foremost on to the sheer-pole of the main rigging, and was actually split in two. The boatswain was close to the spot where he fell, and seizing a lantern he went to him.

So natural was the lad's position that the boatswain, when lifting him off, said:

"Hurrah, sonny! You're all right. The rigging saved you!"

But when he was laid on the deck the awful nature of his injury made it clear that there could be no hope of his surviving it. He was laid on a mattress, and everything was done to make him as easy as was possible in the terrible circumstances. The captain and mate cursed a

little about the white decks being spoilt with the blood, and then walked away. We were now off Penzance. Next morning it was blowing rather heavily, but one or two of those wonderful Cornish boatmen came out to us. As they ran close to us and kept within hailing distance, the captain asked them if they would take Barney ashore. They agreed, but drove a very hard bargain. I believe it was £20 the captain said he had to agree to pay them before they would consent to receive him.

So poor Barney was got on to a roughly made stretcher ready for transhipping. But the difficulty was to lower a boat in the heavy sea which was running, and afterwards to lower the stretcher gently into it.

By dint of great care the boat was lowered with poor Barney in it. We all said good-bye to our shipmate, and knew we should never see him again in this world. The coble was hove to close by, but was playing such extraordinary pranks that I did not see how the men could possibly get the stretcher on board. At one moment she seemed to stand on her nose, and the next instant the position was reversed. Then she would balance herself on the top of a great sea, when we could see all her keel except the midship part. Next she would swoop down, bows first, into the swirling valley beneath

her and roll over till she was buried above the combing of her hatchway. The work of transshipping was, however, most skilfully performed.

Whilst the coble was frantically reeling about, and while our boat was emulating her, a big burly man, swathed in a vast mass of jerseys, mufflers, and woollen stockings, leaned against the mast, calmly smoking his pipe, without his equilibrium being disturbed for a moment. He seemed to take no interest in the proceedings, but just as the two boats rolled towards each other, he and one of his men stepped gently into ours. Then one took the head and the other the foot of the stretcher, our men meanwhile having all their work to fend off. Two other men on board the coble stood ready to receive the stretcher, and it was transferred to the deck with scarcely a shake. The coble then stood in for the land. We got our boat hoisted up, the mainyard swung round, and we kept away on our course. We heard later that poor Barney died on reaching the hospital. After this, my watches were very lonely. The sprightly little Irish lad helped to while away many a tedious hour during our night-watches, and he was liked by all the ship's company for his good-nature and generosity.

One of the other boys was now put in my

watch, and an ordinary seaman filled his place in the starboard watch. As we were going up Channel, the weather seemed to get worse, and we were in constant dread of running into some vessel. Off Shields we got a fair wind on the starboard beam, and were going through the water very fast, when we noticed a collier brig, which was beating down, coming right across our bows. We were going too fast to allow her to do this with safety, but as we were going free, and she was jammed on a wind, it was clearly our duty to give way to her. The master of the brig jumped on to the rail and yelled at us, making frantic gestures, but of course we could not hear what he said. The rule of the road at sea is so clearly laid down that our holding on in this case was a deliberately wrongful act on the part of our captain. The vessel was close-hauled, and we were going free, as I said, and it was plainly to be seen that her bearing was not rapidly altering, so that it was our duty to alter our course. But we kept steadily on, and just as steadily on came the brig. Her master showed no hesitation, so we had no excuse to say that he was yawing, or steering wildly, thus leaving us in doubt of his intention.

Our boatswain ran forward and shouted out:

“It’s all up with her, sir! We’re atop of her!”

Suddenly, when a collision seemed inevitable, the brig's yards swung round, and she filled on the other tack. So close was the shave that the two jibbooms seemed actually to touch each other. The affair was duly entered in the log-book, and no more was said about it.*

As we approached the Frith of Forth, the wind changed, and at the same time increased in violence. We were close-reefed, and were being driven away northwards between the coast of Scotland and the Dogger Bank. The weather continued thick, and we had an anxious time of it for over a week, before we finally entered the frith, and dropped anchor to await the arrival of a tug-boat.

Ever since the pilot came on board there had arisen a great coolness between the captain and mate. The former lost no opportunity of abusing the latter before the men countermanding his orders, and on one occasion ordering him to his berth.

The mate openly spoke against the captain, and all he said was duly reported, for the brutal officer had, as may well be imagined, made no friends among the crew, and we boys sided with the men. He was now about to reap the reward of his infamous treatment of his crew.

* See Note VI, p 309.

We had dropped anchor at about 8 a.m., and in a couple of hours we had four tug-boats down, all anxious for the job of towing us in. For the last time came the order: "All hands up anchor!" The men jumped about as lively as kittens. The end of their troubles had arrived.

The captain, by the way, had left the ship, and had gone to Leith to report our arrival to the agents, and the mate was left in charge. Up and down went the windlass brakes, the men roaring out the chorus, "Only one more day, my Johnny," every line being an improvised abuse of mate, captain, ship, food, steward, etc. The mate ordered them to stop singing, but they went on, and the men on the tug-boats roared themselves hoarse with laughing at the song. At last the anchor was hove short stay apeak, and one of the tugs made fast to us.

Just as the anchor was tripped a stiff breeze struck the ship on the port side, and all the efforts of the tug to bring her head round were unavailing. A second tug came to the assistance of the first, but their combined strength failed to bring her round to the wind. So the mate sang out, "Stand by to let go the anchor!" The carpenter was ready with his hammer. One of the tugs had cast off, when the master of the first yelled out:

“Hold on, sir! One more minute and I’ll fetch her.”

The mate held on, and, as good luck would have it, the breeze slackened off; the tug-boat started ahead, and gradually brought us round, so there we were, fairly off for Leith docks. Near the dock-head we cast off the tug and sent warp ashore. The captain was standing on the dock-head with some other gentlemen, watching the mate’s proceedings.

The turn round the dock-head was very sharp, and by some mismanagement the ship’s head was not cast in sufficient time to clear it. The consequence was that we crashed into it, carrying away a large portion of it, and also damaging our own bulwarks.

The captain’s face was an edifying sight to behold, but he said nothing until the ship was made fast in her berth alongside the quay. Then he came on board and treated the mate to a revised edition of his sea-going repertory, much to the delight of the crowds who had assembled to witness our entry. As a parting shot, he said to the mate:

“So you’re the — who would like to paint me black, and sell me down South for a thousand dollars, eh! When you talk to boys in future

you'd better go forward, or see that the cabin skylight's closed, you — herring-gutted Bluenose." *

He went ashore again, and in a couple of hours afterwards the steward came on board with a letter which he gave to the mate.

It was a note from the captain, dismissing him from the ship, and notifying him that he could go for his wages "with the rest of the foremast hands" when the ship was paid off.

The steward waited for an answer, and meanwhile we boys got to the gangway each with a couple of feet of ratline stuff. The mate saw what we were about, and he called out:

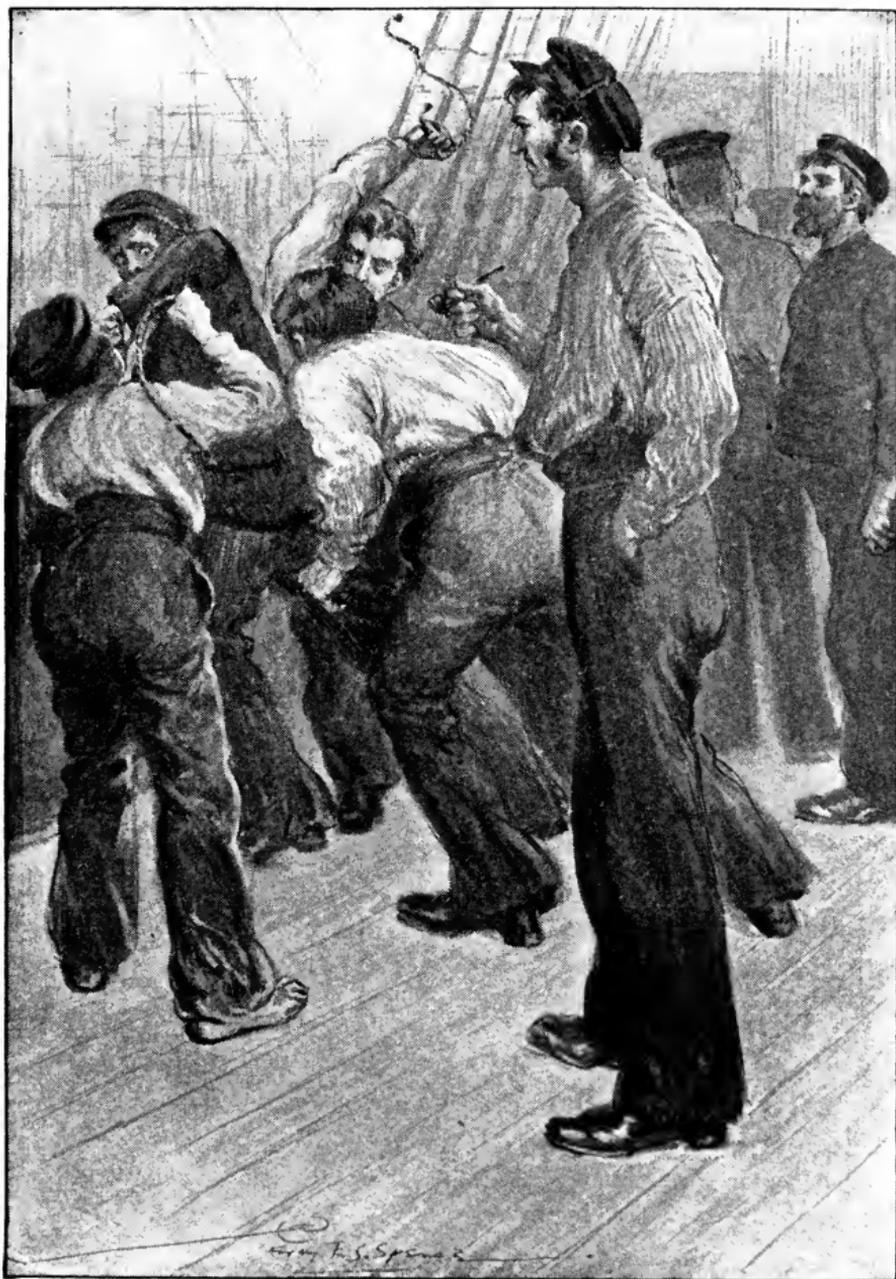
"Hi! boys! give this scowbanker his answer."

We did not want any repetition of the invitation. Our moment for revenge had arrived. We went for that steward and gave him a most unmerciful cutting up, before he made his escape from the ship.

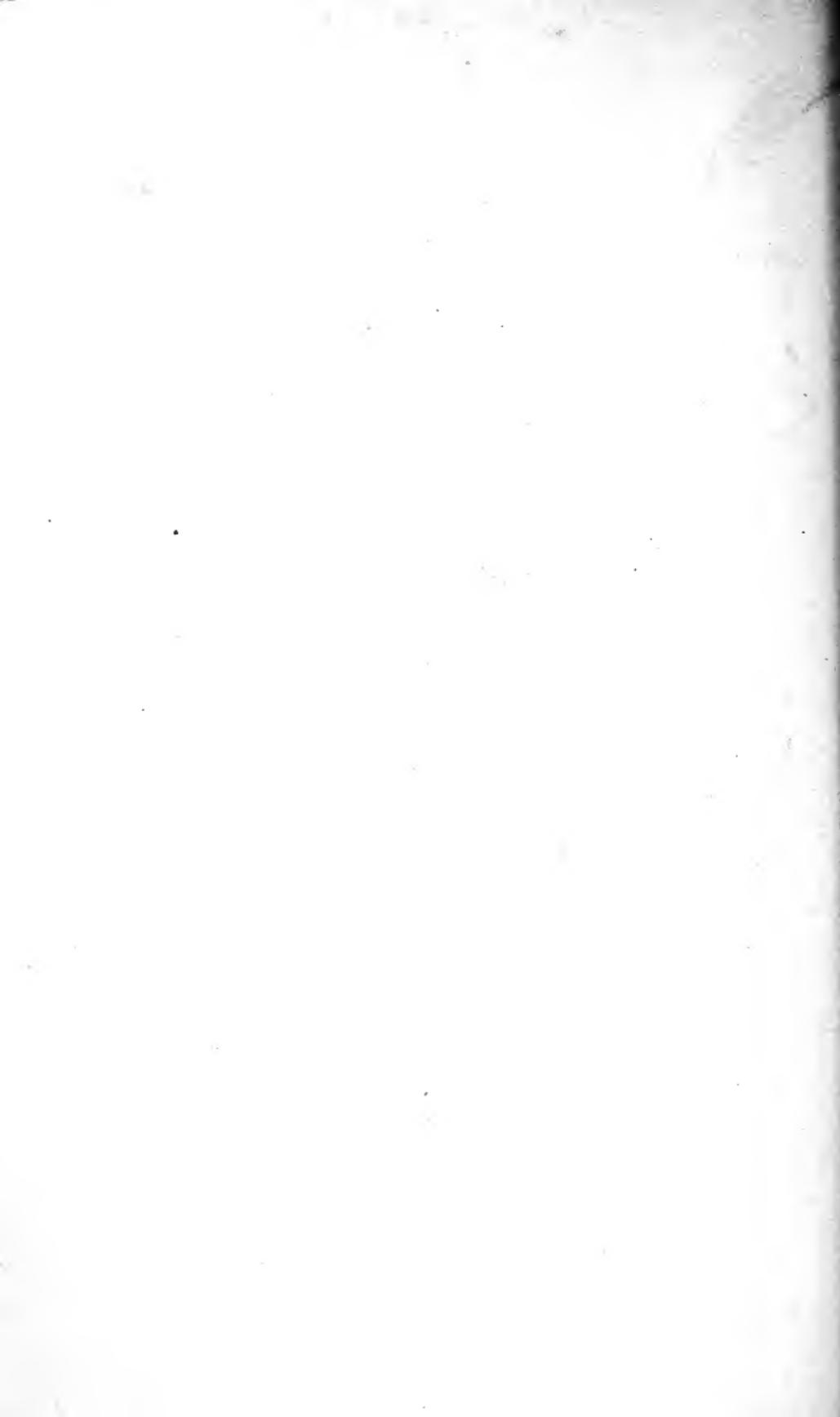
During the afternoon the captain came on board, and as soon as he saw the mate, he ordered him off the ship. The mate said he wanted his discharge.

"Well," snapped the captain, "you'll get it to-morrow—an A. B.'s discharge. Meanwhile, the quicker you get out of the ship the better you'll please me."

* Bluenose is the name given to the natives of Nova Scotia.



“HI! BOYS! GIVE THIS SCOWBANKER HIS ANSWER.”



The mate got his few things together and walked off. There now remained only the second and third mates, the boatswain and us three boys. The poor carpenter had got his fingers crushed in the windlass some days before, and had been obliged to leave the ship at once to have them amputated. The poor man's going to sea as "Chips" was thus put an end to for ever. He was an excellent carpenter, and not bad-hearted, but he was a bilious individual, and seemed to be soured with the world. The men, of course, had all left the ship as soon as she was made fast. They had completed the round voyage.

The captain ordered us down into the cabin, and after giving us each a glass of grog, he got out a quantity of fine American tobacco in large plugs, and told us to secrete it about our bodies and bring it to him at his hotel. We packed ourselves with tobacco, and then went and packed up our things.

As soon as the captain had gone, we got a couple of porters and had our chests and bags carried to a hotel, the third mate going with us. We found that a steamer would be leaving next evening for Liverpool, from Glasgow, so we laid ourselves out for a jolly evening, intending to get our pay and be off next day. We called at the

captain's hotel and delivered our tobacco, the Customs' people not having taken the trouble to examine three ship's boys.

We found the captain delightfully amiable—he had rigged himself in his shore-going manners.

He told us that if we would stay with him he would make thorough sailors of us.

“As for you, Boyd,” he said, “I'll make you the youngest captain that ever crossed the Atlantic if you will remain with me.”

I thanked him, but said I had other views. My experience of American ships was not so pleasant as to make me wish to continue at sea under the Stars and Stripes. I meant to go home and consider matters.

“Very well,” he said, “but you're a darned young fool, and you'll live to repent changing the devil you do know for the devil you don't.”

Now that we were safely ashore, some of the men, who, as I said, had been shipmasters, determined to prosecute the captain for cruelty. They went to the Scottish authorities and laid a complaint. “Very dreadful,” said these gentlemen. “The matter must be looked into, and depend upon it you will get redress. To what port does your ship belong?”

“To New York,” said the men.

“Oh! To New York! Well, we must act legally. Your proper course is first to see the American consul.”

So away to the American consul went the sailors. They again preferred their complaint.

“Yes, yes,” said that functionary. “It is undoubtedly a case to be inquired into. But, you see, I am powerless. The ship hails from New York—you shipped there, and you must go there with the ship and lay your complaint before the American courts.”

“Yes, sir! Very well, but what can we do? We can’t stay here till the ship sails, and besides, she may not go back to New York, and we’ve already lost three months’ wages.”

“Ah! I’m very sorry,” said the consul, “but there is no other legal way of proceeding. You must either go to New York and prosecute the captain there, or else you must grin and bear it. If you take my advice you’ll let the thing drop, for you’ve got all you’re likely to get, if you wait till Doomsday.”

The men consequently had to give up all idea of obtaining redress, and within a week most of them were afloat again to undergo much the same experience.

We—that is, the third mate, boatswain, and

three boys—set out after tea to enjoy ourselves, so we ran up to Edinburgh and went to the theatre, after which we had a glorious supper, and sat so long eating, drinking, yarning, and smoking that we found ourselves at one a.m. without provision for a night's lodging. We went out into the silent streets and looked about. All was dark as a vault. No lights in any houses.

"Now," said the third mate, "we're in a pretty fix. This is Scotland, mind, and now it's Sunday morning. It'll be a chance if we get a bed anywhere."

I suggested looking for a policeman. It was a happy thought, so we walked on till we found one, and we asked him if he could show us any place where we could get a bed.

"Ay, laddies, I nicht," he replied; "come awa wi' me."

So we followed him for a short distance, and at last he stopped at a tall house. He knocked, but there was no response. Again he tried, with no better result. "Hech, sirs!" he said, "ye ken it's the Sawbath the noo. I'm thinking we maun gang elsewhere."

A few doors further on we were more successful. The policeman stopped at a public-house, which he said was a kind of a night-house for travellers.

The landlord opened the door, and we asked the friendly policeman to come in and take a drink.

“Did I no tell ye ’twas the Sawbath, laddies? Wad ye hae an honest man risk his immortal saul for a dram on the Sawbath?” he exclaimed.

We did not wish to offend him, so we said, “Thank you, and good-night,” and were about to close the door, when he turned his back to it, and put his coat-tails between it and the door-post, saying:

“Ye nicht, maybe, be pittin’ a botle intil ma po-ket, and I wadna ken naethin’ about it till I get hame.”

We took the hint, and slipped a bottle of whisky into his coat-tail pocket, and he went away to commune with his “immortal saul” on this “Sawbath morn.”

We were given very comfortable beds, and next morning, or, rather, the same morning, for it was now past two a.m., intended to start for Glasgow, but we had forgotten about this being Sunday. Of course, we could not get paid, and we would not go without our money. Each boy had about sixteen pounds to draw, and the third mate and boatswain about fifty pounds each, and that was too much to lose, so we made up our minds

to spend the day in seeing the sights of "Auld Reekie."

Edinburgh has been described so often that I need say nothing about it here. I am not writing a guide-book. We walked about all the morning, then went back to our hotel and dined. We had a short "watch below" afterwards in the shape of a two hours' sleep, and then set off to walk back to Leith. We strolled very leisurely along, and got back to our abode by tea-time.

Next morning we went to the shipping office to get paid off. We found all our old crew waiting to be paid. When we entered the room where the captain was sitting, the first thing he asked us was:

"What are you boys doing here? Who gave you permission to leave the ship?"

We said that all hands had left her, and we were not bound apprentices, so we could leave as well as the rest.

He looked very savage, and then asked us each separately if we would go back. We all said we would not.

"For my part," I said, "I have seen so much needless cruelty and persecution of defenceless men and boys during the passage from Melbourne that

I would not return even if you offered to make me second mate next voyage."

The captain at once paid off Sharpe and Wilkinson, and then said to me :

"Now listen to me, boy. You're a born sailor, and if you stick to me, I'll do as I said before—enable you to get your master's certificate before some men have got a second mate's. Now, be advised. I told you I had taken a fancy to you, and you never can say you were ill-treated. I let you off punishment, when you richly deserved it, for deserting at the Chinchas, and I've done all I can to make a navigator of you. I can't tell you what I felt when you told me before the Peruvian Commandant O'Brien that you did not like me nor my ship. Those words cut me to the heart."

I was nearly giving in and going back to the ship, when the third mate, who had been paid, and was waiting at the end of the room, near the door, for me, said to the boys :

"That canting hypocrite will get over Riley, if he doesn't look out."

I heard him, and the remark decided me. I told the captain I was much obliged to him, but I had sworn never to set foot in an American ship again, and I would keep my oath in spite of everything.

The captain said I should live to regret my decision, paid me off, gave me a plug of his good tobacco, which had not paid duty, and shook hands with me. I have never seen him since; but before I left Leith I heard that the *Altamont's* former captain had come down to Leith to take charge of the ship, so that, had I returned to her, I should have exchanged captains, perhaps for the better, perhaps not.

Looking back now, after thirty-three years, I feel sure that had I stuck to Captain Barton's fortunes I should have undoubtedly risen very quickly, and might now have still been at sea in command of some great Atlantic steamer. But you cannot put old heads on young shoulders. I was thoroughly disgusted, not with the sea, for I loved it, but with the cruel treatment of seamen in American ships. I had seen horrid brutality, not only in my own ship, but in several others; so I determined I would never put foot on board a Yankee as long as I lived. The Stars and Stripes may be a very fine flag, but give me the old Union Jack before the flag of any other nation under the sun.

After this we got our traps together, and started for Glasgow. We went to a hotel on the Broomielaw, and found we should not have much time to

spare, as the steamer *Leopard* would leave for Liverpool at nine in the evening. We went to look at her, and, thinking it unmanly to want a regular berth for a short run, we took deck passages. I can remember nothing about the Glasgow of that period, although I have often been there of late years, so I pass over the few hours we spent in the city. At the appointed time we went on board the *Leopard*. The weather had been getting very bad. It was pitch dark and raining heavily, and when we got through the North Channel and were off the Mull of Galloway the short confused sea was pitching the steamer about like a cork. I had never been sea-sick in my life, but the motion of the boat was quite a new experience. At last I could stand it no longer. There was no shelter, it was bitterly cold, and, although not actually sick, I gave five shillings to a sailor to find me a dry bunk and get my jacket and trousers dried at the stoke-hole. I tried to persuade the others to do the same, but they said they were drenched through, and a few hours more would make no difference, so I went and turned in, and slept till morning, awaking to find the weather a little clearer and the *Leopard* nearing the Mersey. Arrived at Liverpool, we at once made for a hotel, where we had a good berth, a change of clothing, and a

first-rate breakfast. I wrote at once to some relatives at Holywell, in Flintshire, and in a day or two got a pressing invitation to go and take up my quarters with them. So I bade farewell to my old shipmates, and took a small steamer which used to run across to the Dee. In a few hours I was once more in comfort and luxury. I have never seen one of my shipmates again, although I have crossed the various oceans many a time since then. I suppose they stuck to American ships, and as I carried out my vow to sail in future under the British flag, this will account for our never meeting.

I wrote to poor Barney's father at Wicklow, giving him a full account of his son's death, but received no reply.

Such was my introduction to the sea and sea-life. It was a hard experience in one way, but it might have been worse.

NOTE I.

"SHANTEYS."

SOME of the "shanteys" are very musical, but the words are generally absurd. Take, for instance, the following:—

"Bony was a general,
 Way hay yah!
 Bony licked the Rooshians,
 Jean François.
 Bony licked the Rooshians,
 Way hay yah!
 Bony licked the Rooshians,
 Jean François," etc.

Here is another good topsail-halliard "shantey":—

"Oh! whisky is the soul of man,
 Whisky, Johnny.
 Oh! whisky is the soul of man,
 Whisky for my Johnny.
 Whisky tried to make me drunk,
 Whisky, Johnny.
 Oh! whisky tried to knock me down,
 Whisky for my Johnny.

"Whisky hot and whisky cold,
 Whisky, Johnny.
 Oh! whisky for a sailor bold,
 Whisky for my Johnny.
 Whisky's gone, what shall I do?
 Whisky, Johnny.
 Oh! whisky's gone, and I'll go too,
 Whisky for my Johnny," etc.

A man with a good voice leads off with a line of the song, and the others join in the chorus, which is made to

time with the pull on the halliards, or the stroke of the pump brakes. Sometimes a single and sometimes a double pull is required, and the choruses vary as given above. There are "shanteys" adopted for almost all "pully-hauley" work on board ship; some slow and drawling, others smart and lively. I shall never forget the "shantey," I heard once, when I went aloft in a heavy blow for the first time to assist in furling the foresail. The sail was stiff and frozen, and when at last we were ready to haul up the bunt, the shanteyman broke into song.

All hands took a good grip, and waited. There we lay along the yard, the gale howling in our teeth, our fingers freezing, listening to a song. It seemed to me a dreadful waste of time, especially as we were wet and cold, and I wanted to get below out of the cutting wind and sleet. The "shanteyman," however, drawled out clear enough, in spite of the howling of the wind—

"Who sto-o-ole my b-o-ots?
That dirty Blackball sailor.
Who sto-o-ole my b-o-ots?
Ah—ha!!"

With the "Ah—ha!" chorused by all hands, the sail was rolled up in a jiffy, the gaskets passed, the bunt neatly made, and we got down from aloft far quicker than if we had fumbled about in a disconnected "Pull you, Johnny, I pulled last" kind of fashion.

NOTE II.

STUNSAILS (STUDDING SAILS).

I BELIEVE that few ships nowadays make use of these troublesome additions. They cause an immense amount of labour without a corresponding gain in speed. I have seen,

in light, variable winds, the stunsails set and taken in five or six times during a watch. Boxing about the yards in these winds is a great trial to the men's patience, but when the rigging out and in of stunsail booms, setting and taking in the sails, is added to other labour, then is the time to hear Jack in his character of champion growler.

NOTE III.

LOADLINE : THE "PLIMSOLL" MARK ANTICIPATED.

THE ship was caulked, and a red mark was placed on her by the Peruvian authorities to show to what depth she might be loaded. This was a most necessary precaution, as the utmost recklessness used to be exhibited in loading the vessels. I have seen a large ship leaving the islands so heavily laden that it was easy to step from a boat on to her deck, and this in the face of a perilous voyage round Cape Horn in September or October, when heavy easterly gales and icebergs might be expected to be met with. We heard afterwards that the Peruvian authorities lightened this vessel considerably before giving the captain his clearance at Callao.

NOTE IV.

THE ANCIENT MARINER v. AMERICAN CLIPPERS.

IN vivid contrast with *The Ancient Mariner* were the American clipper ships. Most of these were magnificent specimens of naval architecture. Broad in the beam, floating low on the water with a graceful sheer, clean run, rounded stern, and bows like a knife, they lay like graceful birds on the water. The hulls of all were painted black,

some having a narrow white streak and some a red one running round the side, relieving the general sombre hue. The spars were delicate and tapering as those of a yacht, towering high into the air, and, unlike the squat-looking British stump-royal masts, terminated in slender skysail poles. They all carried very square yards, double topsails, and some had double topgallant yards. Their decks were unhampered by houses, the after-deck being clear right from the wheel to the galley amidships. I have met many of these vessels at sea both in calm and in heavy weather, as well as in a topgallant-studding-sail breeze, and whether staggering along under close-reefed topsails, or bowling along with a fair wind on the quarter with skysails and royal studding sails bellying out to the favouring breeze, they present one of the grandest pictures the eye can rest upon. Amongst these were the *Napier*, *West Wind*, *Morning Glory*, *Sarah M.*, and *Young America*. We had a sample of their sailing powers in the last-named ship, which is mentioned in the text.

NOTE V.

SEAMEN'S PHILOSOPHY.

ONE would have thought that the men would have been too savage and sulky to take the grog, but that would not have helped them. All they would have gained, or lost rather, by refusing it, would have been that they would not get a drop of anything comforting in the bitter cold weather and icy gales which might be expected on the run home. There would certainly have been no tea or coffee for them, except once a day in the morning watch and once at tea-time, for the captain was generous in nothing but rum, and that was served out once a day regularly, and always after reefing topsails. So they took their grog. We boys were

expected to take our share, and, considering the miserable food supplied to us at sea, we were glad to get something to season it.

NOTE VI.

DANGERS OF COLLISION—PECULIAR STATES OF THE
ATMOSPHERE.

THIS reminds me of a case which occurred when I was in the Mediterranean in a large steamer. I was on the bridge one lovely moonlight night, and the chief officer said to me :

“Now, doesn't it seem absurd that it should be necessary to keep a strict look-out on a night like this? Why, one could see a boat five miles away!”

The night certainly appeared marvellously clear. There was not a cloud in the sky, and the surface of the sea was gently rippling under the influence of a soft breeze. Undoubtedly, I should have agreed with him that a vessel could be seen miles away.

As he was speaking, he was leaning his back to the bows on the bridge rail. I stood facing him, looking forward. Suddenly I noticed a felucca with two large lateen sails close on our starboard bow. “By Jove!” I sang out. “Look at that! Shift the helm, or they'll all be in glory in two minutes!”

The chief took one look at the apparently doomed vessel, and then signalled the engine-room “Stop,” and ported the helm. There was but just time. The felucca crossed our bows so close that we could see the man at the tiller, and several forms apparently fast asleep on deck. Not a word did one of them utter. I believe the steersman was half-asleep, or perhaps half-drunk, or they never would have attempted to pass so close ahead of a mail steamer going at the rate of fifteen knots.

When all was over, the mate said : "By the living Jingo ! There's a lesson for you, young man, to keep your eyes skinned on the clearest night."

Yes, I thought, and a lesson for you too, my friend, for I saw her when you did not. I asked him how it happened we had not seen her before, the night being so fine. He said he supposed that for some time there had been a kind of impalpable haze over the water, and the felucca not coming before the wind, the sails had not been visible ; but there was no doubt she ought to have been seen by the look-out and by us sooner than that.

APPENDIX.

Sailing Ship and Steamer—The British Tar: inveterate Growler and Potential Hero—A Typical A.B.—Life and Work at Sea—Punishments—Sea Bullies—Hazing—Euchred!—Amusements—A Gale in the Bay of Biscay—The wreck of the *Gothenburg*—A Gruesome Salvage.

THE incidents related in the preceding pages are not drawn from imagination, but are a true description of the events which occurred when first I went to sea. The only fiction is in the names of the ship, the captain, and officers, which for obvious reasons I have altered. It will be said that things have changed since my day. In English sailing vessels this is so, but there are constantly cases of shooting and ill-treatment of sailors by their officers cropping up at our police courts, and the delinquents generally sail under the United States flag. Quite recently a man was "hazed" to death on board a vessel arriving in Brisbane, Queensland, and the facts were brought out by an inquiry held there. These facts quite bear out everything that I have written about savage officers; indeed, the ill-treatment of the man in this case was worse than anything I have set down. Passengers rarely see

anything of this, because, if any brutality takes place, it is under cover of night, and they are in their berths. And another reason is that passengers, except sometimes emigrants, are rare nowadays in sailing vessels. They prefer travelling by steamers, where there is very little bullying, short, quick passages not affording scope for it, besides which the captain and officers are usually gentlemanly in their behaviour, and do not condescend to conduct and language such as I have described.

On overhauling my old "sea log," I find one entry which marks an epoch in my life.

The date is Thursday, April 5th, 1860, and it relates very briefly that I, Alexander J. Boyd, shipped as a boy on board the American vessel *Altamont*. She was a large full-rigged ship bound from Melbourne to Callao—the port of Lima, in Peru—in ballast, thence to proceed to the Chincha Islands, and there load a cargo of guano for Cork "for orders." Brief, businesslike, and in itself almost uninteresting, and yet it was the beginning of a momentous change for me—the first page of my life at sea. Furthermore, it is an episode in an almost forgotten "trade," a page in the history of commerce which can hardly turn up again. Whoever hears nowadays of Peruvian guano and the Chincha Islands!

My old sea-log! What a flood of reminiscences does this faded, yellow collection of facts and figures, trivialities and dangers, adventure, reality, and romance, bring before my mind! Less than thirty-four years ago I was a young, hearty, careless sailor, taking no thought for the future beyond hoping that molasses would form an adjunct to the bi-weekly pork at dinner, or that the night would pass without my being roused out of my bunk to spend on deck what ought to be a watch below.

To-day I am sitting on this comfortable verandah wondering where I should have been had I stuck to the sea.

I confess to a lingering regret for the old life. I still love to find myself at sea in a stout sailing vessel, driving before the S.E. trade wind, with her topmast stunsails and topgallant stunsails bellying out and bending the straining booms, the running gear "stopped up" clear of the rail, a bright sun or clear moon overhead, and the long Pacific rollers rushing past the ship as if challenging her to a race. What can compare to the excitement of a mad fight between the gallant ship, goaded by the furious blasts of a southerly gale off the Horn or Cape Leeuwin, and the tremendous seas that rear their vast crested height above her, and threaten to bury her and her toiling crew in the tumbling swirl? Many will

say (and especially will sailors declare) that this is all very well to read about when the observer of a hurricane views it from the shore, but that the actual experience is not a thing to be desired.

What pleasure, or what comfort can there be in rolling about upon decks flooded with water—often coated with ice? What sane man would think of admiring the awful magnificence of a hurricane in winter, latitude 60° south, when he is lying out on the fore-yard, clothed in frozen oilskins, hanging on by “the skin of his eyelids,” with the blinding hail and sleet cutting his face and hands for, perhaps, two hours at a stretch, getting a reef in a sail which is frozen to the hardness of a sheet of iron?

Well, the pleasure may be a doubtful one, but I know that all the miseries of a voyage are lost to memory when Cape Clear light is sighted, and the pilot gets over the side. Thoughts of the nearness of home and friends crowd out all dark reminiscences. Still, a true lover of the sea will always cherish a pleasing memory of the weeks, months, aye, or years, he has passed amidst the ever-varying scenes of a sailor's life. To me the very smell of pitch and tar is as the odour of Jockey Club to a lady, and never fails to bring back a secret regret that the days of my sailing are for ever passed away. I was one day sitting on the wharf watching the men bending

the sails on board a large sailing vessel, which had completed her loading of wool, and was getting ready for the homeward voyage, when, looking across the river, I saw one of the huge British India steamers heaving out cargo, and I thought of the time now rapidly approaching when the dear old sailing vessels would be shouldered out by these great iron boxes. In a very few years it will be, I thought, like "Tales of a Grandfather" to tell our boys of the beautiful clippers, the splendid frigate-built liners, the graceful schooners and clumsy brigs, which at one time covered the ocean. What conception will they be able to form of the rough-and-ready life of the fore-castle, such as I have seen it, from visiting the quarters of the sailors on board a mail steamer of the present day? How could they imagine a voyage lasting one, two, or three years, when the remotest countries of the world are brought within days of each other by the all-powerful steam? In the preceding pages I have endeavoured to keep alive the memory of the past, and to bring before the reader as vividly as possible the events of the first portion of my life at sea. In those which follow, I shall indulge in a few personal reminiscences of the ocean, and shall give some idea of what life at sea in the sixties was in general, and discuss the *pros* and *cons* for a seaman's life.

These observations have at least the merit of being made by one who ought to know—who has tempted fortune in many forms, both afloat and ashore, and who can claim the same sort of consideration for his opinion as the old Scotsman who averred that honesty really was the best policy. “A ken,” said he, “for A hae tried baith.”

Although it is customary for most sailors to run down the sea, to declare that a sailor has a dog’s life and that once ashore they will never put foot on ship-board again, their statements have to be taken, not in their literal sense, but merely as the natural expression of a sailor’s love of growling. I think that the more a sailor growls, the better seaman he is. It is said that the privilege of “writing to the papers” to ventilate grievances is the safety valve of the British people. In like manner, a good growling match is the safety valve of the fore-castle.

Talking of growling, the most singular specimen I ever heard was on board the Peninsular and Oriental steamer *Simla* from Suez to Melbourne. The coal in the bunkers had taken fire, and immense exertions were made by officers and crew to get the fire under. There were some ninety saloon, and an equal number of second cabin, passengers on board, and a panic might easily have arisen.

But the demeanour of the ship’s company was

such that everybody felt that there could be no real danger. The sailors worked like heroes in the heat and stifling smoke without a murmur, and they succeeded in getting the fire under, but not until many of the cabins had to be abandoned by the passengers owing to the heat beneath them. A day or two afterwards the same sailors came aft with a roast turkey or two, roast and boiled fowl, and wished to know if that was food fit for hard-working men! They were being fed on the best provisions from the saloon table, and growled because it was not salt beef! But that is Jack all over. Work him hard, house him badly, feed him on the coarsest food, and he will growl. Reverse all this. Give him good quarters, good food, and little work—still he will growl. And here it should be stated that sailors require to be kept constantly at work. Idleness, on board a sailing-vessel at least, if not on board a steamer, is the source of discontent. In a ship where the men are regularly employed during their day-watches on deck, there is very little opportunity for hatching trouble; and thus every mate who knows his duty will take care to find work for the men. To a landsman it would seem that when the decks have been scrubbed, the paint and brass-work cleaned, the running gear neatly flaked or flemished down, nothing of moment can remain to be done. But there is usually more work

to be done on board ship than there is time to do it in. When a ship puts to sea, everything is at first like a midshipman's chest—"Everything uppermost, nothing at hand." Sail-locker, paint-locker, bread-locker, boatswain's locker, all sorts of lockers, have to be set in order, so that whatever is wanted in a hurry can be got at a moment's notice, as well in the blackest darkness and wild uproar of a hurricane as in broad daylight and fine weather. Then there is an incredible quantity of small stores required, which are always made by the crew on board. Such are thrummed mats, spun yarn, Spanish foxes, chafing-gear of all kinds, swabs, etc., etc. The chafing-gear consists of mats, battens, canvas, etc., which are "seized on" to any parts of the standing rigging that are liable to be chafed by the constant friction of the running gear. This constantly requires renewing. Then various ropes have to be "wormed," "parcelled," and "served." Hundreds of fathoms of "sinnit," or five-yarn plait, have to be made. A good day's work of "sinnit" making is supposed to produce sufficient to reach from the jibboom end to the spanker boom end. It may be well to admit that this depends upon the size of the ship. The boys are usually employed at this work, as well as in knotting rope-yarns and making bucket-ropes. The rigging, too, is being frequently overhauled, ratlines secured,

backstays set up, stays tautened; and all this work leads to more, because every part of the standing-rigging is so intimately connected that if one part is altered it necessitates operations on another. A considerable portion of time is taken up in mending sails. The constant friction of the running gear, such as the buntlines and clewlines and leechlines, and the violent thrashing and slatting when sheets, tacks, and halliards are let go in a breeze of wind or during squalls, give rise to chafes, rents, and holes, which have to be carefully attended to. Besides all this, the ends of all the ropes are whipped to prevent them being unlaid, whilst grummets, man-ropes, yoke-ropes for the boats are made at odd times; the latter, called fancy ropes, are pointed at the ends by unlaying a few inches and again laying up the fibres in "knittles," which are laid up together, decreasing towards the point, where they are securely finished off. All these and a hundred other things are being always done during fine weather on deck, and the work is only intermitted for the actual working of the ship—hauling on the braces, shortening and making sail, etc. There is a story of a mate who was at his wits' ends to find a job for the men, and he said as much to the captain.

"Never mind," said the latter. "You just listen to what the men say when they go to dinner. They

know as well as we do what has to be done. One of them is sure to let out something."

So the mate listened and heard:

"Well, I wonder what the next bloomin' job'll be, Bill?"

The reply was:

"Why, the bloomin' long-boat ain't broken up yet nor the keel ain't holystoned," was the reply from another tarry-fisted joker.

The mate said to himself:

"Ah! I never thought of that."

So when the port-watch came on deck he called to the boatswain:

"Bosun! Send along the port-watch to break up the long-boat."

The men lumbered along, and began to tear the best boat in the ship to pieces. Just at that moment the captain came on deck.

"Hullo!" he cried. "What in thunder are you about, Mr. ——?"

"Well, sir," said the mate, "you reckoned the men would know as well as you what work was to be done, and you told me to listen to them. I heard them say the long-boat was to be broken up and the keel holystoned. They're at the boat now. But, if you like, I'll take them off and set 'em to work at the keel." And he grinned at the captain.

“I think, Mr. ——,” said the latter, “I think you had better conclude in future to know better than the men.”

This is probably a yarn, but *se non è vero è ben trovato*. It goes, however, to show how an officer's wits must often be set to work to keep the ship's company employed.

Now just let us consider the work of a sailor, and his mode of life. In the first place, he lives in the forecastle, facetiously called “the seamen's parlour.” Most forecastles are alike, and they are certainly not havens of bliss. The forecastle of the *Altamont* was not such a bad den as I have seen in some ships. It was roomy, but very dark. Entrance was gained by means of a hatch in the deck. There were no hammocks, but a row of bunks ran round the sides of the ship in tiers of two, one above the other; alongside the bunks were the men's chests, which served at once as tables, chairs, and lounges. Everywhere could be seen oilskins, monkey jackets, dungarees, and sea-boots, hanging to the stanchions of the bunks. When a spell of wet weather occurred, it may be imagined what the smell was arising from twenty or thirty suits of wet clothes, and from as many pairs of boots.

The only light was shed by a swinging oil lamp of tin, with a spout like a tea-kettle, which held

the flaring, spluttering wick. In fine weather the men did not use the fore-castle much, but preferred eating and sleeping on deck. The great windlass barrel took up a considerable part of the cramped accommodation, and generally there was water running along the deck under the men's chests, which oozed in from the sides, from overhead, or from the hawse-pipes. Add to all this discomfort the noise occasioned by the thunderous blows of the seas as they struck the bows and fell in tons on the deck overhead, and it will be conceded that Jack has a rather hard time of it below as well as on deck. But it should be remembered that at the time I write of, few sailors had any idea of a greater elysium than the public-house. As soon as a ship's crew were paid off, they made straight tracks for some favourite public-house, and had a drink all round. I do not wish it to be understood that they went to the public-house, gave the landlord their money, and, like the old-fashioned Australian shepherd, set themselves to work to drink it all in one bout. Jack, as a rule, does not care for such brutish work as that. He is a jovial, convivial soul, fond of singing and dancing. He likes the company of women, and unfortunately for him the class of women he generally gets in tow with is that of merciless harpies

who drink with him, dance with him, coax him and pet him, and rob him of his hard-earned money at the same time. If he should find the woman out in her robberies, all he does is to get rid of her with a "Sheer off, my lass. You and me's got to part company. Come and have a glass for old acquaintance' sake, and kiss good-bye." So he pays for a couple of drinks, perhaps gives her a dollar or two, and straightway falls into the snares of another, although he swears that Dolly Mops isn't going to send him to sea again before his time.

But all old "shells" do not spend their money in this way. Many of them have mothers, wives and sweethearts at home, and after one night's carouse ashore with their mates, they make their way home, and after a few days, or weeks, they leave them all the money they can possibly spare, and go off to ship for another long voyage. Some of the younger ones, who have ambition to rise in their calling and to reach the quarter-deck, go to a nautical school after every voyage, and qualify themselves for the position of second mate. Such men, who have, as they say at sea, "crawled in at the hawse-pipes"—that is, risen from the fore-castle—often make the best and ablest of mates and masters. They have learned by experience the troubles and trials of the foremast hands which

few who have got in "through the cabin windows" have any idea of beyond what comes under their immediate notice as officers. But hundreds, thousands of men never rise beyond the rank of A.B., or able seaman. Many men who take to the sea for a living find too late that they have mistaken their vocation, and go to sea year after year as ordinary seamen.

The difference between an able seaman and an ordinary seaman is this: The able seaman has passed through his apprenticeship as a boy in the fore-castle, or perhaps as an apprentice aft. He has learnt to hand reef and steer. He can make, mend rope, or put a cloth in a sail. He knows every knot, bend, and splice which sailor ingenuity has invented. He can carry out any given order, and often anticipate one, and stands by till it is given. On the blackest night, with a furious gale lashing the sea into vast crests and cavernous hollows, when it is impossible to tell where the sea ends and the sky begins, then it is that the A.B. shows what he is made of. He can put his hand on any rope, tack, sheet, clew-line, bunt-line, halliard, or downhaul without the use of his eyes. He will run aloft at such times and pass an ear-ring as unconcernedly as if he were sitting jockeying a spar on deck. He does not know what fear means.

On board the *Altamont* our boatswain was typical of this class. He knew his work, and was a thoroughgoing old shellback, although only about thirty years of age. No one could ever get to the weather earring at reef-topsails as quickly as he. I have seen him, when by accident half a dozen men got on to the yard before him, get on to the foot rope, and calling out, "Hurrah, bullies! Hold on by your eyelids! Knickerbocker's round you!" would haul himself out beyond them by holding on to them. It was no use anyone trying to move on till he had passed, as he would have fallen, and probably dragged the other man with him; and at the angle at which the ship was then lying over, a fall from the weather yardarm meant death by falling on the deck. Many a time he ran up ahead of the others, and whilst they would be crawling out by the footropes, every finger cramped into the jackstay, he would slide down the lift and have his earring passed and be singing out to haul out to windward before half the men were laying out on the yard.

As long as the ship will hold together the A.B. will stand by and obey orders. I have seen ships at sea with the pumps going, sending up *clear* water in streams, and only kept from sinking by dint of sheer pumping. Nothing harasses the men so much as this work, especially when the pumps

are manned in every watch. We passed one ship off Cape Horn, wallowing in the huge cavernous seas from the icy south, and were close enough to see that she must be in a very bad way, for the pumps were clanking dismally, and we could see the bilge pumps going. Thick, yellow, muddy-looking water was pouring from her scuppers, showing that the water had invaded the guano in the hold. In the face of the dreary voyage before them, with the certainty of having to pump the whole way home, and the great probability of never reaching it, the gallant crew gave us a cheer as we passed, while the captain and mates waved a jolly farewell to us, as if their ship were as tight as a bottle, and they were only making a fine weather trip across the Channel. Such is the pluck of British merchant seamen of the old stamp. I will back them against any other class of men for growling, but when courage, endurance, and self-denial are demanded they are never found wanting.

I have seen a ship come into an Australian port—she was a brig which had been out cruising for three years on a trading voyage about the South Sea Islands—I have seen her come into port at Townsville in North Queensland “frapped”—that is, chains were passed round the vessel beneath her bottom and round over her decks, the chains being

hove taut with handspikes. This was done to prevent her falling to pieces, and yet the old sea-dog who owned and sailed her considered her quite safe! She was seized by a British man-of-war for some breach of the Queensland Polynesian Labour Act. This occurred in 1872 or 1873, I forget exactly which.

Now in one of those admirable sea stories of Mr. Clark Russell, I have read of a similar occurrence. It is told in "The Mystery of the Ocean Star" (Hazardous Voyages), where an instance is given of "the triumph of spirit and perseverance." In this case the ship had been "frapped" as I have described; the decks and sides were covered with canvas, and her back was "hogged" (broken). She had left Bombay on the 16th December, and was off Spithead on the 11th July following, having been seven months making the passage, and most of that time in this condition. So badly damaged was she that the shipwrights and caulkers who had gone on board to make repairs were afraid to take off the frapping, and left the ship in a hurry for fear she might fall to pieces and sink under them. What must we think of the dogged pluck and patient endurance of the seamen who stuck to their ship in such desperate straits?

These are the circumstances in which the able seaman shows the stuff he is made of.

The ordinary seaman is a man who knows something about the work on board ship, but is never entrusted with any important job. I never saw an ordinary seaman able to turn in a dead-eye or put a cloth in a sail, or even rope a sail. His duties are confined mainly to washing decks, tarring down, taking his trick at the wheel, and going aloft to furl royals and topgallant sails. At reef topsails he generally lays out between the bent and the yardarm and knots the reef points. Even this last work he will often bungle by making Granny's knots* instead of reef knots. Many ordinary seamen, however, turn out first-class A.B.'s. I think, taking the general work of a ship into consideration, that a sailor has far better times than a shore labourer—that is, where the captain and officers are humane men, and good seamen themselves. Captains and mates who are not thoroughly up in every detail of working a ship often harass the crew unnecessarily. All hands are called when one watch would suffice for the work. Sail is taken in and made again under the sudden impulse of the moment, and the men are robbed of their rest, whilst there is no corresponding benefit to ship or owners.

A sailor's day's work may be said to begin at

* Knots that "run," *i.e.* do not hold.

eight bells in the second dog watch—that is, at 8 p.m. The crew are divided into two watches, port and starboard. The mate always takes the port watch, the second mate (or “dickey”) the starboard, called the captain’s watch. The third mate is in the port and the boatswain in the starboard watch.

These watches are so arranged that the same watch is not on deck at the same hours every day. If the watches were all four hours long, it is clear that the men who go on watch at 8 p.m. one night will go on deck at the same hour every night, and thus would have only four hours below between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m. But the watch from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. is divided into what are called dog watches of two hours each. Thus, when the port watch comes off at 4 p.m., the starboard watch takes the deck till 6 p.m., when the port watch is again on duty till 8 p.m. This breaks the continuity, and gives each watch “eight hours in” on alternate nights. As a rule, the men are not expected to go below in the dog watches. They usually sit about and mend clothes, read, or do anything they please to pass the time. I suppose they are called dog watches because they have an eye about them, although they are not actually on duty—watching, like a dog sleeps, with one eye lifting. I soon got so used to turning in at breakfast

or dinner time that I could go to sleep at those hours as easily as at night; but I do not know at what hour a hard-worked ship's boy could not go to sleep.

At eight bells our watch—say the port—goes below to sleep, the starboard remaining on deck in charge of the second mate. The watch below turns in, and the men get all the sleep they can until eight bells (midnight), when they are roused up by a roar down the fore-castle hatch:

“Port watch, ahoy! Eight bells, below there! Turn out! Don't you hear the good news?” this accompanied by the pounding of a handspike on the deck immediately above the sleepers' heads. In two or three minutes all are out. One man goes aft to relieve the wheel, two relieve the look-out men forward, and the starboard watch then goes below. The boys rouse out the mate, who relieves the deck—*i.e.* takes over charge from the second mate. The two officers have a few moments' conversation relative to the courses steered, the state of the wind, speed of the ship, or any other topic of duty or interest. Then the second mate retires to his cabin, and the chief officer stumps the weather side of the quarter-deck, the two boys of his watch the lee side.

In some ships the watch on deck in fine weather are allowed to sit about and doze, but the

look-out men must bore holes in their eyes to assist their vision. Every half hour one of the boys strikes the after bell, and the number of strokes is repeated immediately by the ship's bell forward. Every fourth hour eight bells is struck, the time being calculated from noon, when the observations are taken. The half hours are odd numbers; thus half-past twelve is one bell, half-past four and half-past eight are one bell; noon, 4 p.m., 8 p.m., midnight, 4 a.m., and 8 a.m. are eight bells, and so on. As soon as the bell strikes during the night watches, the look-out men sing out, "Port cat-head!" "Starboard cathead!" "All's well!" Then silence reigns until another half hour has passed, when the same hails are repeated. Every now and then the captain comes up to have a look round. He seldom stays long unless it happen to be the second mate's (which is the captain's) watch. If all is going well, he rarely interferes. But in heavy weather, when all hands are called to take charge, the ship is worked under his orders. During the two night watches from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. there is no other work done beyond trimming the sails, and when a ship is running before the trade winds there is little of that. The log is hove every two hours, and the rate recorded on the slate. At eight bells (4 a.m.) the cook is called, and he sets to

work to get the galley fire lighted and boil coffee for the men. By two bells (5 a.m.) the coffee has been served out, and at four bells (6 a.m.) the work of washing decks begins. The ropes are all coiled over the belaying pins, the pump is rigged, the hose laid along the deck, and brooms and holystones are served out. The boatswain or third mate takes the hose, the pump clanks, and the decks are soon deluged with water. Buckets are filled from the hose, and all corners, deck-houses, hen-coops, pigsties, and boats are sluiced down. Then sand is scattered over the decks, and the men go on their knees with their "bibles" (holystones) and scrub away. Many hands make light work, even of the detestable work of holystoning. The scrubbing is over in an hour. The sand is hosed off into the scuppers. Then "squeegees" are employed to squeeze the water out of the surface of the timber. The squeegee is a piece of galvanised rubber or gutta-percha compressed between two flat pieces of wood. A long handle is set into the wood, and the instrument is pushed along the decks, and as the rubber projects half an inch from the wood, it pushes the superabundant water before it, and partially dries the decks. Then swabs (great bundles of ropeyarns "seized" to a grummet for a handle) are flopped about from right to left, and

these take up the remaining moisture. The running gear is then flaked down neatly ready for running—the topsail halliards coiled down in racks; the gratings, which have been duly scrubbed, are replaced at the wheel and in front of the cabin companion way. Then the fowls and pigs are fed. Meanwhile all the brass-work has been polished with bath brick and oil, the wheel has also been polished, the wheel ropes attended to, and by seven bells the ship has resumed her usual neat appearance. Buckets, brushes, holystones, etc., have all been stowed in the lockers. The mate off duty goes to breakfast, the watch below are roused out, and have to finish their breakfast and be on deck by eight bells to relieve the watch on deck. The latter then go below, get their breakfast, and turn in if they so please, till half-past eleven, which is their dinner hour. At that time the captain, officers, and apprentices are all on deck to take the sun. As soon as the sextant observations show the sun to be crossing the meridian, the captain calls out, "Eight bells!"

"Make it eight bells then, one of you," says the mate.

The observations are then compared by the officers. The apprentices show their sextants to the captain, and he sends them below to dinner and to work out the "day's work," as it is called.

By the "day's work" is meant the calculation of the ship's position as to latitude at noon, both by observation of the altitude of the sun and by "dead reckoning." The longitude also has to be calculated, and so, by means of the two, the ship's position fixed.

Dead reckoning is a means of obtaining the position of the ship, when no sun, moon or stars are visible, by means of the distance run by log, and by noting the courses steered. It is only a makeshift, but is very necessary at times, and our captain, sun or no sun, instructed us to make both calculations and compare them every day.

Although I said that the seaman's day's work begins at 8 p.m., it must not be understood that the sea-day begins then. The sea-day is calculated from noon of one day to noon of the next. The last watch ends at 4 p.m., when the two dog watches begin.

These have already been explained. During the day watches, the crew are employed on any necessary work, such as sail mending, splicing and serving ropes, putting on and changing chafing-gear, painting and scraping boats, oars and masts, making sinit, spun-yarn, sword and thrummed mats—all light work requiring no heavy manual labour. The work is only interrupted by an occasional call to haul the yard round, shorten sail, reef topsails, or

make sail. Thus in ordinarily fine weather the work, although constant, cannot be called laborious. Besides, there are many interludes. Men are called to numberless trifling jobs, which might come under the head of time-killers rather than under that of work.

The apprentices have even easier times, because they have to learn their navigation, take a trick at the helm, learn knotting and splicing, and a variety of things necessary for a seaman and an officer to know. They also have the duty of heaving the log every two hours. When the officer of the watch wishes to know the rate at which the ship is sailing, he gives the order: "Heave the log." One boy immediately gets the reel on which the log line is wound, the other fetches the minute-glass. The mate arranges the log "chip," which is a triangular piece of wood, one side of which is weighted to enable it to float upright. A short lanyard furnished with a wooden peg fitting into a socket on the line causes it to maintain the upright position. The mate runs off a few yards of the line which he coils up in his hand and throws overboard with the chip. This slack line allows the chip to get well clear of the ship's wake. When this occurs, he calls out:

"Turn!" The boy turns the glass, and the sand begins to run into the lower globe. The line, if

the ship is going very fast, runs out at a rapid rate from the reel held over the boy's head by both handles. So fast does it run that sometimes the reel boy has to check the speed to prevent a foul as the line jumps from it. When the sand has all run out, the boy calls out "Stop!" upon which the mate instantly checks the line, reads off the number of the last knot nearest the reel, and records it on the slate. He then gives a jerk or two to release the chip, which, floating perpendicularly, offered resistance to the water, and consequently remained almost stationary during the running out of the line. It now floats flat on the water, and two or three boys walk it in whilst the other winds it up on the reel.

In heavy weather, when the ship is battling with a mountainous sea, and a furious gale is blowing, all work is stopped. The men stand by in their oilskins, for at any moment the ship's safety may depend upon their alertness and prompt obedience to orders. Besides, no work could well be carried on with the ship's decks constantly flooded with water, and sometimes swept from end to end.

As long as it is possible to work the ship with one watch, most captains will do so. Thus the men have nearly four hours' rest after four hours' work.

In my time seamen's wages were twenty dollars a month, boys ten dollars. Besides this, they had their lodging and food, such as they were, a glass of grog every day, and tobacco of the best kind which paid no duty. The life is a very healthy one, as the appearance of all sailors will testify. Contrast with this the life of a farm labourer with wages at the rate of ten or twelve shillings a week in England, up at four or five in the morning, slaving at downright hard manual labour till dark, living on bread and bacon or cheese, buttermilk or small beer. Or take an Australian farm labourer to-day. He gets from eight to twelve shillings a week and rations of salt beef, flour, tea, sugar, besides anything else he can afford to buy. He lives either in a slab hut with mud floor or in a barn, and often has to cook for himself. Contrast these with Jack's life and fare.

His food in port I have already shown to be excellent. At sea, naturally, he fares harder. His rations consist of salt beef, salt pork, biscuit, tea, coffee or chocolate (the latter ready for him when he turns out in the morning), salt fish, beans, and molasses. The cook often makes him a splendid sea-pie. On Wednesdays and Sundays, and on special holidays, he gets as much "duff," or plum-pudding as he can eat, and every evening in some

ships he gets a tot of grog to keep his digestion in order. When fish or porpoises are caught Jack gets his share. When he is sick, the captain has a medicine chest and does his best for him. If he is on board an emigrant ship there is a doctor, and any amount of extra provisions.

As for his clothes, any good sailor can make and mend his own sea clothes, and if he keeps from drink can well afford to buy his shore-going togs. As to his lodging, let us take another look into Jack's parlour. It is always more or less like what I have described in the case of the *Altamont*. It is situated in the bows, and its boundaries run right up to the eyes of the ship. The windlass barrel is there at his parlour door, the hawse-pipes are also there. In deep-waisted ships it is entered by a door from the main decks. In flush-decked ships Jack descends by a hatchway and down a ladder. There is no light except what enters by the door or passes down through the hatch. In some ships there may be a port-hole, but I never saw one. The bunks are ranged round two sides in two tiers, meeting at the head. Each man's chest is a suite of furniture in itself, serving as chair, table, wardrobe and bookcase. In all directions may be seen hanging up suits of oilskin, sou'-wester hats, ditty bags, and

possibly sacks, which contain the articles so necessary to a sailor's comfort, such as needles and thread, buttons, palm and needles, etc., etc. Here and there may be seen specimens of their skill in wool mat making, knitting, embroidery, wood carving. Perhaps also there will be a fiddle hanging up. These things constitute the whole of the furniture of Jack's drawing-room. But what more does he want? These are the things he has been used to from the time he was a boy in a Newfoundland fishing smack or a North River sloop. He has few books, not more than a corner of his chest will hold. He is not given to writing, so a table is not required. In fine weather he prefers to sleep on deck and spend his watch below there. In bad weather he is almost constantly on deck. When he goes below it is usually to tumble into his bunk and go sound asleep.

If the reader has ever been in a ship's fore-castle when the ship was hove to in a gale, or boring her way into the teeth of it, braced up sharp with the yards within six points of the wind, he will remember the awful sounds which greeted his ears. The thunder of blows delivered by the seas against the bows, blows whose violence seemed capable of bursting through the solid oaken walls; the grinding, creaking, straining and agonised

shrieking of every beam and timber; the crash overhead as an avalanche of green seas fell on the forecastle head—all these varied sounds, intensified by their proximity to the forecastle, which invade Jack's home, may be awful to a landsman, but to the sailor who is used to them, they convey no impression beyond a feeling of content that he is in warmth and security.

No; Jack's quarters may not be luxurious, nor sweet-scented, nor dry, but such as they are, he is as happy there as the skipper is aft, and has been heard to say, on coming down half-frozen from his middle watch, when off the Horn:

“Snug as a bug in a rug here, Billy, eh? I wonder how them misfortnit beggars ashore is weatherin' this?”

I am, of course, not describing seamen's life as it is in all ships. The voyage, for instance, which this tale describes would not bear out such a description.

It must not be supposed, because, in the preceding pages, I have written mainly about the doings of the boys, that the foremast hands had a good time of it. On board most of the American ships their life was worse than that of a dog. They were hard-worked, bullied, thrashed, knocked down, and kicked on all possible occasions. I have been an eye-witness of these things over

and over again. On one occasion I saw a mate jump down into the hold, seize a guano-shovel, and cut a man down senseless with a furious blow on the head, following this up by kicking the prostrate man savagely in the ribs and in the face. Not one of the other men dared to interfere.

What would they have got for their pains? The mate would have used his revolver, and they knew well enough that if they killed him they would be placed in the dock and condemned to death for murder; but if he killed them, he would be praised for his prompt action and pluck in thus preventing a mutiny which would have endangered the safety of the ship and the lives of the other officers as well as his own. No; in those seas, and under the American flag, there was then no safety or justice for poor Jack. His officers were savage tyrants, and his shipmates were a mixture of Danes, Swedes, Germans, Italians, and Greeks, amongst whom there was no cohesion, and who, very often, as was the case in whalers, were the cream of the scum of the crimping houses of New York, Boston, and San Francisco.

I know very well that sailors must be kept well in hand; so must soldiers, so must even schoolboys — those domestic anarchists; otherwise they will kick over the traces and defy authority.

and once discipline is relaxed, the whole ship's company, the cargo, the passengers, and the ship itself is endangered. Therefore, the officers must keep a taut hand over them.

But there can be no justification for the atrocious cruelties which I have seen practised on these helpless men in the power of tyrants. Once let a captain or mate get a grudge against a man, and that man's life is not worth living. He will be worked up—or "hazed," as it is called—until he is unfit for duty, or dies in consequence of the brutality of which he has been the victim.

Some mates invent ludicrous punishments. One of ours, wishing to punish the boys for going to sleep in their night watches, sent two on to the cross-jack yardarms and two on to the main-yard. They had to sit at the outer yardarm with only the lifts to hold on to. Every time the bell struck they were ordered to sing out, one after the other, "All's ruck in the moon!" whatever that meant. They remained there during the whole four hours' watch, unless sail had to be made or shortened, when they did their share of the work, coiled up the ropes, and resumed their places.

I was once ordered to go on to the main-royal yard every hour to see if land were in sight, when

we knew we were a thousand miles from any known land. I turned this punishment to my own advantage afterwards by going aloft to report as soon as I had had my morning coffee and holy-stoning decks began. I used to sit there and smoke till I saw the swabs at work below, and then came down and solemnly reported to the mate, "No land in sight, sir." He never stopped me until he began to have a grudge against me, and then I was "worked up" in a different fashion.

Sometimes we were ordered to ride the spanker-boom. To a landsman it would not appear a very difficult feat to sit straddle-legs on a large horizontal spar, only seven or eight feet above the deck, but, from my experience, I prefer the royal-yard infinitely. When there is a jump of a sea on, that is the time when the lively steed has its involuntary riders. Every moment the boom is brought up with a jerk by the port or starboard tackles. When this sideway motion is over, a plunge of the bows, with a corresponding lift of the stern, causes the rider to hold on tight. The sensation is much like riding a horse that shies and pig-jumps. One of our mates used to arm men with handspikes and make them march up and down the deck like soldiers. They hated this more than any other "fancy" punishment. "They

shipped as sailors—not as sojers,” and it was a cruel insult to them.

Everything in the *Altamont* was done to make the lives of men and officers miserable. Such ships, thank God, and such captains, are few and far between; but still both captains and mates are met with who do not hesitate to work men to death.

I used to wonder how men could be found willing to ship a second time with the bullying captains. They were all well known to sailors, and yet they could always find crews; but the latter were usually two-thirds “Dutchmen,” put on board by the crimps. There was one notorious captain, “Bully Sharp,” who had great difficulty in getting a crew at all times, his cruelties were so well known among the men. But he shipped a crew once who “euchred” him. Two crews had been put on board him once, and both had deserted before the vessel sailed. She was bound from New York to San Francisco, round the Horn, and the captain and the mates showed their colours too soon, so the two crews left after having been a day or two on board. Then a third lot was got together, and duly came off. When they got alongside, every man was seen to have a revolver lashed to his sea-chest. The captain looked at the revolvers, then called the men aft, and ordered them to hand them over. The

men made no reply, but one of them hailed some shore-boats to come alongside.

“What’s that for?” demanded the captain.

“Waal, Capen,” said the spokesman, “we reckon to keep our shootin’ irons, or else we goes ashore. The chice is with you.”

The bully saw he had got a crew who would refuse to be bullied, so he merely said—

“Keep ’em, and go forrard.”

On their return to New York, the men said it was a most peaceable voyage, and the captain was the best they ever sailed with. No doubt it was, for the men declared that the first officer who laid a hand on them or “jagged” them would be shot, or “spilled in the drink.”

Of course it is always a dangerous thing for sailors to take the law into their own hands. If it comes to shooting or knifing between officers and crew, it is bound to end badly for the latter, no matter how victorious they may be while at sea.

If the captain shoots a man, it is justifiable homicide, for he can always prove that the safety of the ship was endangered by the mutinous attitude of the men, and an American law-court invariably sides with the captain. Poor Jack has not the ghost of a chance there. The captain or officer who kills him is, as I have said, praised for his prompt

and gallant action, but if the sailor kills an officer in self-defence, or in revenge for the brutality practised on him, he is called a murderer, and the poor friendless man is condemned to death. The captain is the supreme arbiter on board his ship at sea, and if he has his officers on his side, the evidence of the hands forward is not worth a straw.

Shipping on board of a vessel for the first time was, and no doubt still is, always a bit of a lottery. The captain is the unknown quantity, and on his character depend the happiness and comfort of all below him.

We on board the *Altamont* had drawn an unlucky number, that was all. At the same time as I was going through my initiation, there were ships about us whose crews took a pride in their ships and in their work because the owner and the captain took care of the comfort and wellbeing of their men. The worst tyrants were found aboard the American ships; but I never heard a charge brought against the captains of starving their crews. That was not one of their vices. "Feed them well, and work them up," seemed to be the owners' motto.

Singular to say, I heard to-day this very same remark made by an officer of the *Loch Bredan*, an English ship.

On our ships, whilst in port, we fared well,

All the time we lay at the islands we had fresh roast beef, baked and boiled sweet potatoes, stewed meat with onions and carrots, baked beans and molasses, dry hashes (a favourite American dish) boiled and fried mackerel, a "duff" with molasses on Wednesdays and Sundays, and tea or coffee at every meal. This was excellent fare for seamen. The third mate, carpenter, and boatswain lived with us, and took no undue advantage over us in sharing out the provisions. We had soft tack (baker's bread) sometimes, but the usual thing was biscuit. The biscuits were excellent while they lasted. They were American, square in shape, and quite white. Very different was the Callao bread we had to eat on our passage home.

Many a time have apprentices on board English and Scotch ships been glad to get some of our American biscuits, not in exchange, for at that time we would not have condescended to eat the mouldy, weevil-infested bread provided for them. The English ships also used American pork, but the Americans used Irish pork—a vast difference. The American peach-fed pork when put on the table looked like a vast evil-smelling lump of brown blubber—the lean wanted looking for. The fat was often eight inches thick—the lean one-eighth of an inch. But the Irish pork was such as might have been eaten at table

on shore—streaky, white, and not at all salt. These Englishmen did not get as much pudding as we did, nor as much molasses, but they got lime-juice to preserve them from the effect of the salt provisions.

However, putting all these evils and counter-evils on one side, there is this in favour of a sea life as against a life as a labourer ashore—light work, warm quarters, plentiful though rough food, fair wages, liberty on shore occasionally when in port, and, unless a man ships in a whaler, an engagement lasting from four to twelve months, with a re-engagement at any moment he pleases. Then there is the Sailors' Home for him if he chooses to go there, where he can live cleanly, comfortably, and reasonably. He has opportunities to study and rise in his calling, and has the means to pay for instruction.

It must not be supposed that Jack before the mast is a drunken, tarry, blaspheming, watch-boiling blackguard, whose language is garnished with unintelligible sea phrases. Sailors do not indulge in sea phrases except for amusement. They talk like ordinary mortals. I have heard a sailor exclaim: "My tarry toplights and topgallant eyebrows!" but this was merely as a joke. They never "shiver their timbers." I don't think they know what it means. I am sure I do not, and I have used the

sea for more than a dog-watch. When a sailor wants a drink he does not inform you that "he's going to bring up under the lee of the 'Three Jolly Sailors,' let go his mudhook, and bowse up his jib." That is all nonsense, and may go down on the stage or in "Penny Dreadfuls." Sailors will jokingly talk of going aloft as going "upstairs," and invite a friend into the "drawing-room," *i.e.* the forecastle; but sea lingo is not in favour with them, any more than tuning up one of their "shantys" when spending a carnival evening. I believe if anyone at a sing-song were to start the windlass shanty "Shenendoah," beautiful as it really is, he would be told to "stow that" and give us "Fair, Fair, with Golden Hair," or "Maryland," or "Old Potomac's Shore." They don't dance hornpipes, either, on every possible occasion; but when the fiddle or concertina gets to work these hairy monsters hug each other and dance a waltz or polka in preference.

In the preceding narrative a good deal has been said about serving out "grog," and it may seem an extraordinary thing that boys of our age should drink rum at four in the afternoon and beer at five o'clock in the morning, but it must be remembered what fare we had on the voyage home. For months we tasted nothing but the eternal

mahogany beef, the greasy pork, rotten salt fish, and those abominable biscuits. Something was wanted to give us an appetite for such food, and to help us to digest it. We were allowed no cocoa or lime juice. Coffee was only to be had in the morning watch, and as for our usual drink, the water in the scuttle butt, that was often so nauseous that it was sickening even to smell it. Again, the quantity we got was so small that it could do little harm, and however wholesome it may have been, it was not so delicious as to tempt us to make a practice of rum-drinking once we had left the ship. The captain once tried to substitute gin for rum. The men all came aft as usual, but as soon as they found it was gin every man refused it. When it came to our turn we also declined to drink it. The smell was enough for us. We, however, were not to be let off. The captain picked up the end of the main brace, and we looked at the old man. The survey decided us to drink the gin. From that day to this I have not been able to stand the smell of the stuff. It always brings this unpleasant quarter of an hour to my recollection.

No; we read of lads at sea learning to drink and to use bad language, but in reality these things (at least the drinking) are *not* learnt at sea. I do not think any man or boy saw enough grog

on board a sailing-vessel to make him see double. As to swearing, they hear enough of it from the mates and often from the captains, but they hear very little amongst the men. There is more bad language used in the streets of a town than in a ship's fore-castle. Sailors undoubtedly frequently use coarse and forcible expressions, but for rank blasphemy the fore-castle cannot hold a candle to the quarter-deck. I have seen a mate during a long calm whistling for a wind, and at last throw his cap on deck and invite the Almighty to come down and fight him for a wind and ten dollars a side! I never heard anything to equal that in a ship's fore-castle. The men are often very gentle in their language to the boys, and use very little swearing before them. For drinking and swearing, and for rapidly acquiring proficiency in these arts, the shore is the place—not the sea. Of that anyone who has tried both must have had ample evidence.

So much for what a sailor does not do. A few years ago I went on board a sailing vessel lying at the wharf, and seeing a very respectable well-dressed man walking about the dock smoking (it was on a Sunday), I got into conversation with him. From his talk no one would have dreamed of his being a sailor, and as for myself, it was over twenty years since I had left the sea for a

shore life. I asked him how long he had been at sea.

"Let me consider, sir," he said. "I went to sea in 1858, and now it's December, 1894. That makes thirty-six years. How long have you used the sea?"

"Me!" I said; "what makes you suppose I have been a sailor?"

"I knew it the moment you came over the rail. A landsman never comes aboard like a sailorman. Then the first thing you did on the wharf was to look up aloft before you looked at the ship. Am I about right?"

I had to plead guilty to having been at sea, and to having begun with my hands in the tar-bucket. Shortly after that I met the mate of the ship, and after introducing ourselves to each other, he said:

"I s'pose when you came aboard you were taking stock of those royal masts?"

I wanted to see what he would say, so I echoed: "Royal masts! What are they?"

"Oh! no, sir! That won't do," he said. "I know a poker from a pricker. It's not the first time by a long chalk that you've been on the weather side of the poop, and mayhap in the forecastle too."

"Well," I suggested, "those masts would stand a little scraping, wouldn't they now?"

"There you are," he laughed; "I knew when I saw you looking at them for so long, what you were thinking of."

After this we struck up a friendship and had a long talk about seamen and their woes. Much of what I have written on the bright side of a sailor's life received proof here. In the bad times of '94, the men in that ship had seventeen shillings a week clear, over and above board and lodging. As the mate said: "There's no ordinary working man here in Queensland that I can hear of that has five shillings clear at the week's end." And he was right.

When I left the *Altamont*, and from pressure of circumstances had given up all idea of the army, for which I was originally intended, I thought, after a spell ashore, of shipping in a whaler, and had talked to some Dundee and New Bedford whaling men about the life on board. But when I heard all about it—about the dirt and smell, the food, and the length of voyage, all desire to become a whaler rapidly left me. By comparison, the life I had lately led at sea was smooth water.

We boys used to have many an argument in our night watches as to the advantage or disadvantage of going to sea "through the hawse-pipes" and "through the cabin windows."

Barney maintained that by going to sea before the mast, a lad learnt his seamanship much quicker than if he paid a heavy premium, mounted a lot of "brass furnishing," and called himself a midshipman. "Yes," someone would say, "but what about the navigation part of it, and the education? You've no chance for that in a fore-castle. What would Barton have done if one of his hands brought a sextant on deck? Besides, you've no inclination for study in a fore-castle."

"Well, when you go ashore," said Barney, "you go to a navigation school."

"And lose three or four months' wages, besides spending all you've earned on last voyage," said Wilkinson. "I believe in picking up all you can of seamanship, and going in for navigation just how and when you can. Every month at sea is so much off your time."

As to the merits of the two plans, I think both have their disadvantages. For a delicately brought-up, gentlemanly boy to be suddenly plunged into the society of lads who have roughed it in a midshipman's berth for some years, is a trial to him which in some cases will not be stood with the necessary pluck. All male communities, whether of boys or men, become rough and ready, often coarse and brutal in their conversation and dealings

with each other, and seamen especially do so, as they are constantly away from the refinement and humanising influence of the other sex. If coarseness and tyranny often appear aft, what must it be forward in the fore-castle amongst a crowd of generally illiterate men whose lives have been spent in a dirty, evil-smelling, dark, wet fore-castle, varied by periodical visits to some favourite public-house—men who have been bullied and starved and thrashed into abject submission to their tyrants? And yet there is amongst these men a certain nobility of character, a courage and devotion in time of danger, which go far to condone their coarse language and rough manners.

But still, such a place is no school for a lad who has been brought up at home in comfort and trained in religious habits. He will first be horrified and disgusted at all his surroundings, and eventually accustom himself to them, and possibly remain at that level and make no attempt to rise above the rank of A.B., or at the most of boatswain. I have seen numbers of cases of this kind. One of our men told me that he had run away to sea some twenty years before I met him. His father was a wholesale fruit merchant in Dublin in a large way of business. As a boy he was sent to a boarding-school, and only returned home for the

holidays. These holidays were seasons of dread to the lad. The father was a morose, hard Calvinist, who ruled his household as would a Puritan in Cromwell's time. Any sort of pleasure, which in this house was called levity, profanity, and godlessness, was strictly suppressed. Long prayers, graces, and lectures filled every spare moment, and if, with the natural instinct of a boy, he sang or whistled, the most severe floggings were followed by deprivation of liberty and semi-starvation. Consequently, the boy was only too delighted when the holidays were over and he could return to school.

When his father removed him and brought him home for good, matters became so irksome and life such a burden to him that he determined to leave a home which religion (so mis-called) made unbearable to him. One day, his father went to Cork on business, and took the lad with him. Whilst there he received letters which necessitated a trip to London. As he could not conveniently allow the boy to accompany him, he engaged a passage for him in some small sailing craft which was going to Kingstown.

During the passage the master of the boat took a great liking for the boy, and on the latter telling him how miserable he was at home, and of

his determination to run away, he promised to help him to a berth on board a vessel belonging to a friend of his. On arrival at his destination the boy was taken on board a small brig which traded to various English ports, and occasionally to the West Indies.

The captain of this vessel agreed to take him, and in a few days he was at sea in the capacity of captain's boy. He received very fair treatment, and remained in the brig till she was sold at Jamaica.

Having by this time acquired a fair knowledge of his work, he shipped in a vessel for New Orleans, and thence went to Liverpool.

From this place he wrote to his father; but his letter was returned to him with an intimation from this Christian gentleman that he had made his own bed, and for the future must lie on it. After this he became reckless. He often determined he would go to a nautical school and try and pass for second mate, but that resolution was never carried out. Each time that he returned from a voyage his money was spent in carousing ashore, and nothing was left for him but to ship before the mast, and to-day he is a grizzled, rough-looking customer, although only about thirty-five years of age, who, but for the stern, unyielding discipline of his father, might have been in

command of a ship, but was now condemned to pass the remaining years of his life in the fore-castle.

Thus it comes to pass that hundreds of sailors are to be found who, given the opportunity, would have been in a far different position in life.

It may be asked: "Why do they not leave the sea and get a living on shore?"

The reason is that there is a fascination about the sea, and about ships, which always draws men back to the salt water, almost in spite of themselves. It is a common thing to hear men say that "this is their last voyage; once ashore, they will never go to sea again. But how many carry out the idea? Few, if any. Once ashore, all the ills of the past are swept into oblivion by the transient joys of the present, and Jack only remains on shore long enough to spend his money, when he again presents himself at the shipping office and cheerfully enters on another era of hard work, hard food, and hard usage.

When I contrast the life of seamen on board the large mail steamers, and on the fine boats running short passages between the different colonies, with that of long-voyage men in deep-sea sailing vessels, I wonder how it is that men can be found to man the latter. On the steamers there is no laying out of reef topsails on roaring black nights,

no boxing the yards about in variable winds, no turning out night after night from a warm berth to face the icy blasts, the sleet and driving rain of North Sea or Southern Ocean gale, no short commons, hard biscuit, and rotten beef—none of the hundred and one miseries to which the *real* sailor is subjected.

I say “real” sailor because the actual business of a sailor is a thing of the past since huge floating iron palace-hotels have taken the place of the grand old clippers of former days. What can sailors do with ships such as those of the Orient, P. and O., and British India Companies, or with those of the Guion, White Star, Cunard or Messageries Companies and other great lines of mail boats, when a propeller shaft breaks, or a propeller is broken or lost? There are no spare spars with which to rig jury masts, and if there were, of what use would they be in giving even steege way to the now unwieldy mass of iron whose very life depends on its engines? A crew of engineers and blacksmiths could manage the vessel better than the smartest crew of sailors that ever slept in a forecastle.

No; the true glory of the sea—all its romance, all its terrors—will have departed when the last sailing vessel shall be laid up. But the sea will

still provide dangers to be braved. Steamers take fire, and steamers founder, and, indeed, the latter is a far more terribly certain calamity when a leak occurs on a large steamer, than when it happens to a wooden sailing vessel. Let a hole be torn in the side of a wooden sailing ship, and under favourable circumstances the carpenter can stop the leak, or sailors will thrum a mat and pass it underneath, when the indraught sucks it into the hole and gives a chance to keep the vessel afloat by pumping. But if a similar accident occurs to an iron steamer, even when she is provided with water-tight compartments, a few minutes, at most a few hours, often decide her fate, and not seldom that of passengers and crew.

We need only recall the terrible wreck of the *Quettah*, R.M.S. of the British India line a few years ago on the Queensland coast, when this magnificent vessel with a full cargo, a large complement of passengers, and a numerous crew, struck on a rock in Albany Passage and went down in deep water *in three minutes*, carrying nearly all on board to the bottom; of the s.s. *Gothenburg*, which ran on the Barrier Reef, also off the coast of Queensland, and slipping off, sank before the passengers were aware of the danger. The *Singapore*, of the E. and A. Co., was also lost in like manner, in

sight almost of the townspeople of Mackay, on the same coast.

We have also seen how the most magnificent ironclads, with all their wonderful appliances for safety, can be sunk in a few minutes, their crews shut up like rats in a trap in the cavernous stoke-holes and engine-rooms. The loss of life on such occasions is appalling.

On the other hand, how many a timber-ship wallows across the North Sea, water-logged, swept by every sea that surges up and towers over her as she lies sluggish in the trough, and yet manages to reach her destination in safety?

The salvation of the sailing vessel depends on the skill and cool courage of the captain and officers, and on the seamanlike qualities and training of the men. These avail little with a semi-mastless steamship. If the engines hold out and the vessel is tight, all is well; but let anything go wrong with the former, or a plate or rivet start in the bottom or side, then no seamanship, in the sense of managing the vessel, is of any avail. Two blacksmiths and a diver might patch her up if the weather were calm, but no seaman could help in the slightest degree.

I remember being very nearly lost in a large steamer in the Bay of Biscay. She was a vessel

of nearly four thousand tons, bound for Australia. Whilst crossing the Bay the weather got very bad. All day the barometer had given indication of worse to come. Towards evening the glass went alarmingly low, and by 10 p.m. the sea was one raging roaring mass of black mountains capped with white foam, which the howling gale tore off and hurried away to leeward. The inky blackness of the sky was a reflex of the blackness below, and it was impossible to tell where the sea ended and sky began. The ship was deeply laden, and crowded with passengers. These latter were all kept below, as it would have been impossible for any landsman to have held on on deck. Every few minutes the ship was completely buried in the hissing cauldron. At such times one could see nothing over her but the bridge, funnel, masts, and some of the boats. All the deck was completely under water. It soon became impossible to stand on the upper bridge; in fact, I expected to see it carried away at every thundering blow it received from the tremendous seas that burst against it. Soon two of the boats were torn from the davits, and everything loose or lashed was swept off the deck. The captain told me to go below and see how the passengers in the saloon were faring. I crawled down the ladder

and, watching a chance, opened the slide of the companion-way and went below. The noise there was something to terrify any landsman. I never imagined an iron ship could creak and groan so fearfully. Of course, it was the woodwork which created most of the din, but it was a worse chorus than I had ever heard before. Added to this uproar were the wailing and shrieking of frightened women and children, and the cowardly exclamations of some who called themselves men. There was a dim lamp burning in the saloon but everyone was in his or her cabin. To reassure them I sang out at the berth doors that the barometer was rising and the sea would soon be going down. "Thank God!" I heard from several.

"Then is there no danger?" a lady asked.

"None at all," I lied; "nor has there been any. It's all this groaning and creaking and crockery smashing that makes you think the ship's overboard. She's as right as a trivet."

What was the use of frightening these poor people by telling them the real state of the case, which was that the captain and officers expected the ship to founder within two hours at the most, and that as no boats could live in such a furious sea, or be even launched from the skids, not a soul on board would ever touch dry land again?

Besides this, we had already lost two or three boats, so there would not have been room for half the living freight if they could have been got over.

Having calmed the human uproar by a series of stupendous untruths, I again went on the bridge and lay down alongside the captain, standing being impossible. We had to lay our heads together and shout as loudly as we could to enable each to hear what the other said.

"Did you ever see anything worse than this, Boyd?" asked the captain.

"Only once," I replied, "when I was hove-to off the River Plate in a 'pampero' in a sailing vessel. But I felt safer then than I do now."

"Holy frost!" the captain exclaimed. "Will she come up again or go over?"

He might well exclaim as he did. At that moment the ship had taken a roll to windward, and then came back with a lee roll which buried her above the hatches. She seemed about to turn turtle. I had no time to think then of centres of gravity, but looking at it afterwards it struck me that the ship actually was over the centre and about to turn bottom up, when a tremendous wave caught her amidships on the lee side and threw her back again. Had a moderate sea struck her port side, nothing could have saved her, and some

seven hundred souls would have gone to their account.

What a magnificent sea boat she was! As she came back she shook herself, and appeared for a little while entirely above water.

We breathed again. For myself I had clenched my teeth and held my breath. What for, I don't know, as one or two minutes in that hell of waters would have been sufficient to drown a man effectually.

"Send for the chief engineer," said the captain. That functionary appeared.

"Mr. —, the gale's getting worse. I've sent for you to tell you I mean to heave the ship to."

"Heave to, sir!" ejaculated the engineer. "Well all I can say is that, with that sea on, if you heave her to we may all say our prayers. My boiler stays have started already. Once get her in the trough of that sea and it'll be good-bye to the boilers."

"I command this ship, Mr. —," the captain replied, "and I shall do what I think necessary to keep her afloat. You can go below again."

"Very well, Captain —," said the engineer, "you will do as you please; but please to remember that I have reported the state of the boilers, and before these gentlemen," pointing to us who were with the captain, and he turned and went below to the engine-room.

The captain consulted with the chief officer, and I went to have another look at the saloon passengers. Just as I got to the deck, a sea tore off the tarpaulin of the skylight over the emigrant girls' quarters, and lifting one of the flaps of the skylight, tons of water began to pour into her. I rushed for the carpenter, and he and four men waded up to their waists to the spot with hammers and canvas. A sea seized the carpenter and carried him up on to a deck house. Had it not been for his striking a boat, he would have been swept clean overboard. Terrible screams issued from the girls' quarters, but the men after infinite trouble, succeeded in securing the skylight. In the saloon, terror had again seized the people. Many had been thrown out of their berths by that fearful roll. But there was not so much screaming; they seemed resigned. I said nothing, but helped myself to a glass of grog and crawled back to the bridge. As I passed the chart-room I looked mechanically at the barometer.

"Hallo!" I said; "why, the glass is rising!"

I watched for a little time, then called the captain. He looked at it, and became quite another man. His conference with the mate had decided him not to risk heaving to, and now he said that he knew it would have been the last chance, and a very risky one too.

It was surprising to see how quickly the gale broke. Before daylight, stars appeared, and by breakfast time the ship was steaming along as if nothing had happened.

Now what could sailors have done in this case? Absolutely nothing. There were about a hundred Lascars in the forecastle who were too frightened to move. One of the engineers had to stand on guard at the stokehole hatch, and another at the engine room, armed with a club, to keep those curs from sneaking down into the stokehole, and several of the coloured firemen could only be kept at work by blows and threats.

So much for steamers, black crews, and black firemen.

It is, however, not my intention to descant upon the merits or demerits of alien seamen. My object was to show what may await a lad on the threshold of his sea life—not with any idea of deterring him from entering the profession, but merely to prepare him to find a different state of things from what he may possibly have imagined to be the case by reading sensational sea stories, in which merchant midshipmen are depicted as walking the quarter-deck in uniform, the officers as being all day in uniform and very familiar with the passengers, the anchor as being pulled up by a capstan, merrily spun round

by fifty stout fellows in tight and loose trousers, and pumps to the tune of a fiddle. In such books sailors have a fine time on Saturday night drinking cans of grog to "Sweethearts and Wives"; Neptune and his court come on board on the Line; games of "Sling the monkey," "Tremble," and drowning the dead horse are always being played by the happy crew, whilst the passengers give the sailors money, and the genial captain orders extra supplies of grog. This is all rank nonsense. On board the swift mail steamers which make rapid passages and often touch a port and work cargo every week, there is no time for this sky-larking. Men and officers have quite enough to do without that, and when a spell does occur on a Saturday, the men usually start a dance among themselves to the strains of a concertina.

It is a very amusing thing to watch half-a-dozen couples of sailors hugging each other and solemnly going through a waltz—waltzing, as I have stated, is their favourite dance. I never saw a sailor dance a hornpipe at sea. I saw it danced once, but that was in a very low drinking saloon at Leith, and the performer was very drunk, and was continually being pulled to the ground by a couple of drunken women. The spectacle was anything but edifying.

Long-voyage ships, such as make passages from New York to San Francisco, or Liverpool to Hong-

Kong, are often too short-handed, and the crews too hard-worked to admit of much jollity. There is really no romance about the sea nowadays, and there are not many sailors who, like the inimitable Clark Russell, can appreciate the glorious beauty of a magnificent clipper-ship, clothed in a towering cloud of white cotton canvas, sweeping over the seas like some beautiful creation endowed with life. Still fewer can see any beauty in the hurricane, or feel any religious awe at the dreadful hush that precedes the bursting of a typhoon. The crashing of thunder, the continued blaze of forked lightning, the weird look of St. Elmo's lights at the yard-arm and mastheads are to the majority nothing but so many obstacles in the way of a quick passage, and are anathematised accordingly. The only effects are to make the skipper's temper unbearable, the officers sulky, the men surly, and to procure for the boys what is known as "monkey's allowance"—more kicks than halfpence.

But there is still the same old spirit abroad amongst seafaring men, and it is when disaster overtakes a ship that their British pluck, endurance, and heroism shine out in their full effulgence. Every week, almost, we read in the daily papers of acts of devotion on the part of sailors, engineers, and firemen. The latter often lose their lives by

courageously sticking to their posts deep in the bowels of the ship, whence there is no escape if the vessel suddenly goes down. The only alleged instance which has of late come under my notice of officers and seamen of a British ship failing in their duty was in the disastrous wreck of the Union Steamship Company's steamer *Wairarapa* on the Barrier Island, off the New Zealand coast.

In this case, for some reason attributed to fever, from which he was recovering, the captain, in a dense fog, refused to slow down or allow the usual signals to be made, such as blowing the fog-horn, etc. The result was that the ship went on to the rocks, and after she struck it is publicly stated that only one officer—the third—behaved like a hero; the rest and the sailors did nothing, the engineers and firemen alone, by their courageous conduct, maintaining the *prestige* of the British seaman.

When the steamship *Gothenburg*, which I mentioned as having been lost on the Great Barrier Reef, went down, the engineers and firemen were drowned, shut up below like rats. But such cases are usually passed over with only a newspaper-paragraph to record the heroism of the noble fellows.

I happened to be in Townsville at the time

the latter wreck occurred, and was asked to make one of a party who went out in a small Government steamer to search for survivors. The scene of the wreck was about fifty miles east of Bowen, on the north-east coast of Queensland, and to reach it, it was necessary to steam over several dozen miles of unsurveyed waters, bristling with coral reefs. Of course, a good look-out was kept forward. The water was marvellously clear, and, fortunately, the day was calm, or our boat must infallibly have struck upon one of the numberless masses of coral which strewed the ocean floor. Viewed through the clear fluid, they looked like gigantic toadstools, and so deceptive was the depth that I several times held my breath, expecting the vessel to strike on a mass that seemed to be within a foot or two of the surface when in reality there were twenty feet of water over it. Altogether it was a very risky passage, and I was heartily glad when, after some six hours' steaming, we sighted the ship's masts and jibboom showing above the surface of the sea. What a desolate place is this Great Barrier Reef! For miles to the northward and miles to the southward nothing is to be seen but a wide expanse of green, shallow water, with here and there a mass of broken coral, thrown up into a hillock by the action of the sea. Over this

reef, which lies perfectly level, except for the coral heaps noticed, the vast billows of the South Pacific come rolling irresistibly along, pausing to hurl themselves against the sea-face, where a constant, thundering roar is heard, which is defined by the first line of white breakers. The shallow water on the reef has a cold, green look about it which adds to the awful desolation of the scene. When we came to anchor we found another terrible element in these solitudes—sharks.

I never saw so many ground-sharks and tiger-sharks as were gathered here. They were probably attracted by the great feast that was provided for them by the unfortunate victims of the wreck. They sailed past the steamer, turning their cruel eyes upwards as if they scented further prey. It seems absurd to say that one of the brutes swimming close to the surface, distinctly winked at us. It was so ludicrous that I called a friend's attention to it. He also saw the wink. It seemed as if the creature said: "Yes, I'm waiting for you, just come down here for a moment." I afterwards found that sharks every now and then clear their eyes by means of a membrane which rapidly sweeps them, giving the semblance of a wink.

We soon had a boat over the side, and pulled towards the wreck. When we reached her we could

clearly see the whole of her deck at a depth of about sixteen feet. She was lying on a shelf of the reef in an upright position. Above the skylights the calm surface of the water was covered with a greasy film, which too well proclaimed the presence of dead bodies in the cabins and in the stoke-hole. On the after-deck lay a box which had apparently burst its way out of the captain's cabin. This box contained gold which had been put on board at Port Darwin. I at once suggested the feasibility of recovering it by making a large windsail of one of the sails and sinking it by weights on to the deck. This would render that part of the deck safe from sharks. It would then have been an easy matter to go down and pass lines round the box and bring it to the surface. I offered to do the business myself, but the Government red-tapists would not agree to the proposal, and thus our captain and crew lost a grand piece of salvage. The gold was afterwards recovered by Captain Phillips, of the A. S. N. steamer *Florence Irving*. He engaged a diver named Putman, in Sydney, placed him at the wreck with a boat and a crew, and in a quarter of an hour after he had started operations he recovered the gold. I believe the box contained eight thousand pounds' worth, of which Captain Phillips obtained the lion's share. It was, however, nearly lost entirely, for Putman, tired of waiting for

the return of the steamer from Cooktown, started in his boat for Bowen, taking the gold with him. The boat leaked badly, and it was blowing too freshly for such a craft. He had to bale for his life, and was just about to throw the box overboard when the *Leichhardt* steamer hove in sight and rescued him.

Finding that nothing was to be done about the gold box, we climbed into the fore rigging, and found that some of the people must have taken refuge there from the heavy seas which broke over the ship below. They had evidently lashed themselves to the rigging with tablecloths, as the remains of these, torn to ribbons, were fluttering in the breeze.

There being no sign of any living thing about the wreck, we regained the boat, and just as we passed the bowsprit a swollen body rose from under it. It was a most gruesome sight. As it rose above the surface it kept an upright position, quite half the body standing above the water. Then the arms fell forward, and the huge swollen mass floated on the surface. The body was perfectly nude, and a canvas belt round the waist showed that the man had prepared himself for a swim, and had taken the precaution to sew his valuables into the belt. We pulled alongside, and took off the belt. It was an unpleasant business, the body being terribly decomposed. No result rewarded our search

for any possible marks by which the body might be identified, There was nothing to give any clue to his identity, nor was there a scrap of writing in his belt, which held nearly two hundred English, Scottish, and Australian Chartered Bank notes. As there was no dry land where the body could be decently buried, we were fain to let it drift away, and it was not two boats' length from us when the sharks dashed at it. These huge brutes tore it limb from limb, and we could hear the cracking of the bones as they severed the head and limbs from the body. It was a horrible sight, and gave us a realistic idea of what would happen to any of us who might fall overboard.

Leaving the scene of the wreck, we steered for Holborn Island, about twenty miles distant, and there had the happiness of rescuing four men who had succeeded in getting away from the wreck with a boat, into which the ship's mails had been thrown. The boat was stove in on landing, and they had lived here for several days, supporting life on bird's eggs, which were very plentiful. Water they had in abundance. We took them and the mail-bags on board, and then made a systematic search along the coast, calling at Whitsunday Island, where we took up two native blacks who had come out in a bark canoe. These men told us they had

seen "Whitefellow canoe 'longa beach." Guided by their statement, we steamed across to a long, white, sandy beach on the mainland, and found that the boat they had seen was one belonging to another search party from Bowen.

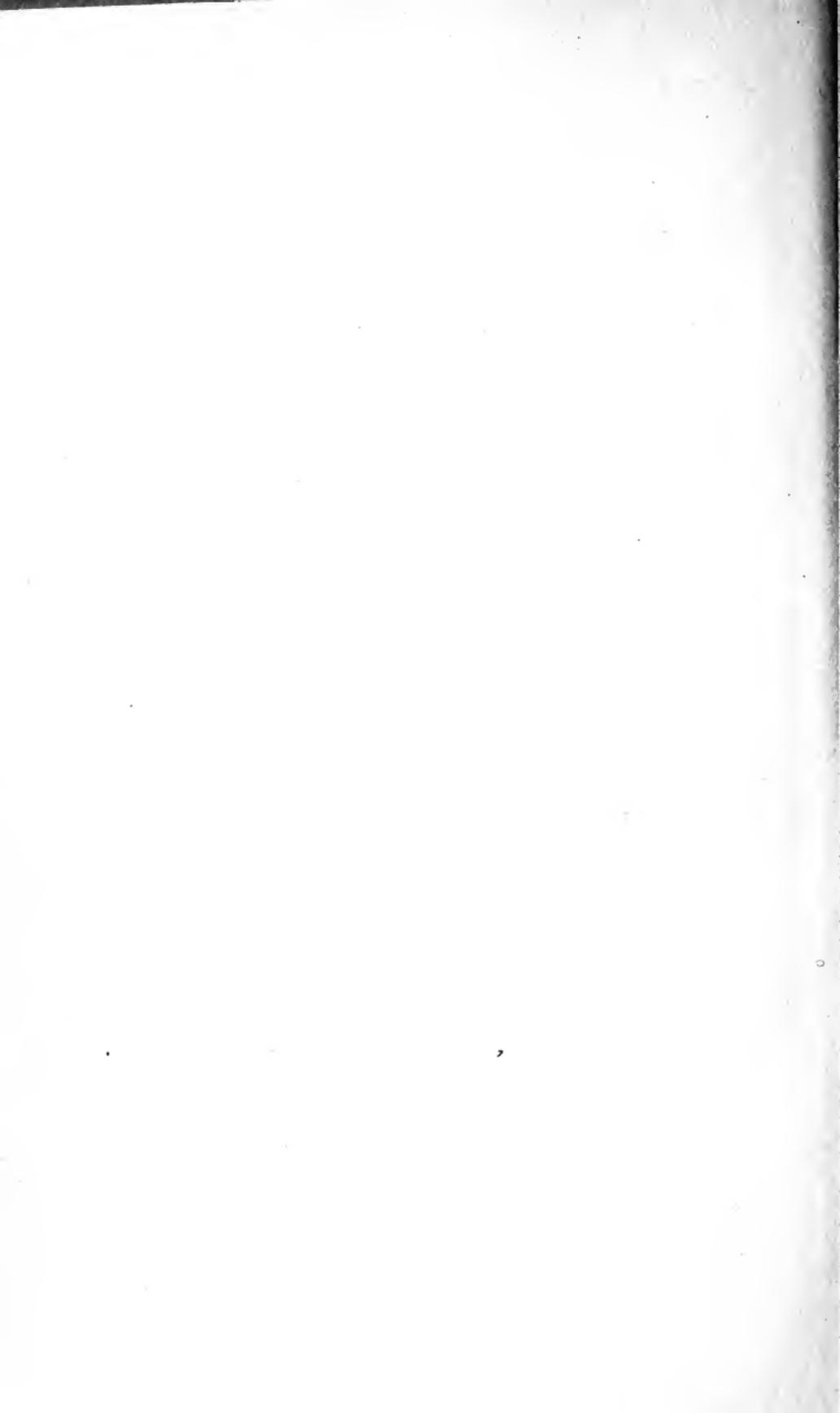
Giving the blacks some bread and tobacco, we dropped them overboard, and they paddled off to their island again. One man, when the diver left with the gold for the mainland, remained on the wreck in a nest he made in the foretop. There he fished for sharks by noosing them. He caught several, and on opening them recovered a quantity of rings, watches, and money.

With this story, which is yet fresh in the memory of Australians, I close my reminiscences, in the hope that what I have written may not have the effect of deterring young lads from taking to the sea, and in the further hope that it may induce shipowners to take a more lively interest in those hardy men to whose devoted services they owe the safety of their ships and the building up of the commercial greatness of the country.

THE END.

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