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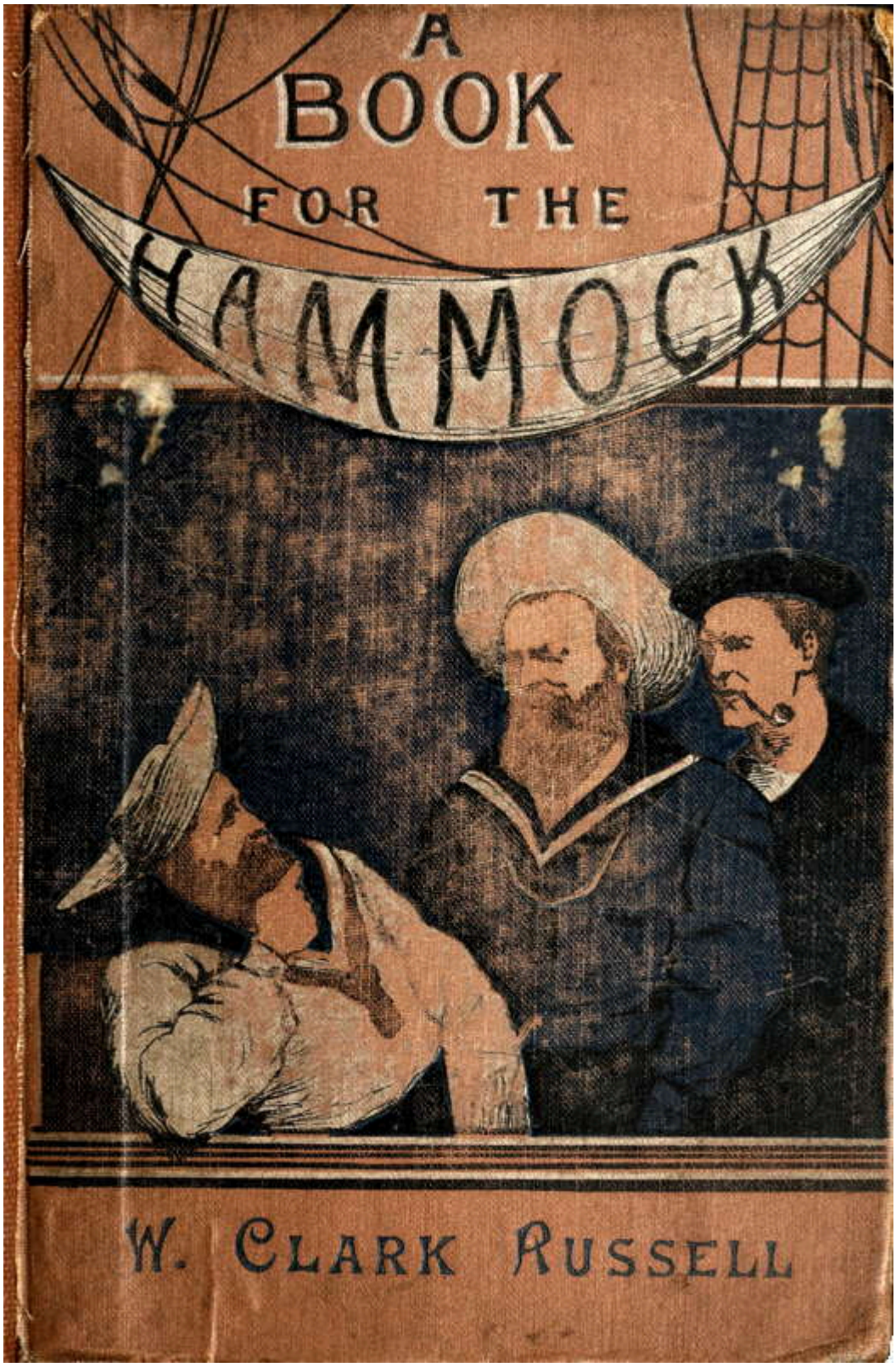
A
BOOK
FOR THE
HAMMOCK
W. CLARK RUSSELL

A BOOK FOR THE HAMMOCK

I

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A BOOK FOR THE HAMMOCK

BY

W. CLARK RUSSELL

AUTHOR OF "A VOYAGE TO THE CAPE," "ROUND THE GALLEY FIRE,"
"IN THE MIDDLE WATCH," ETC.

London
CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY
1887

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PREFACE.

The reader will please regard these papers as the mere whiskings of a petrel's pinions skimming the blue surge of deep waters. The utmost hope of the author goes no further than that here and there something may be found to pleasantly lighten the tedium of a sleepless half-hour in the bunk or hammock, or relieve the dulness of a spell of quarter-deck lounging. The articles are reprinted from *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, *The Contemporary Review*, and *Longman's Magazine*. It would have been troublesome to disturb the original text, and some new matter, therefore, has been included in the form of notes.

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A BOOK FOR THE HAMMOCK.

A NAUTICAL LAMENT.

I asked myself the question one day whilst standing on the bridge of one of the handsomest and stoutest of the Union Company's steamboats, outward bound to the Cape of Good Hope, What has become of the old romance of the sea?

"Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?"

It was a brilliant afternoon. The sunshine in the water seemed to hover there like some flashful veil of silver, paling the azure so that it showed through it in a most delicate dye of cerulean faintness. The light breeze was abeam; yet the ship made a gale of her own that stormed past my ears in a continuous shrill hooting, and the wake roared away astern like the huddle of foaming waters at the foot of a high cataract. On the confines of the airy cincture that marked the junction of sea and sky gleamed the white pinions of a little barque. The fabric, made fairy-like by distance, shone with a most exquisite dainty distinctness in the lenses of the telescope I levelled at it. The vessel showed every cloth she had spars and booms for, and leaned very lightly from the wind, and hung like a star in the sky. But our tempestuous passage of thirteen knots an hour speedily slided that effulgent elfin structure on to our quarter, where she glanced a minute or two like a wreath of mist, a shred of light vapour, and then dissolved. What has become, thought I, of the old romance of the sea? The vanished barque and the resistless power underneath my feet, shaking to the heart the vast metal mass that it was impelling, symbolized one of the most startling realities of modern progress. In sober truth, the propeller has sent the poetry of the deep swirling astern. It is out of sight. Nay, the demon of steam has possessed with its spirit the iron interior of the sailing ship, and from the eyes of the nautical occupants of that combination of ore and wire "the glory and the dream," that ocean visionary life which was the substance and the soul of the sea-calling of other days, has faded as utterly as it has from the confined gaze of the sudorific fiends of the engine-room.

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To know the sea you must lie long upon its bosom; your ear must be at its heart; you must catch and interpret its inarticulate speech; you must make its moods your own, rise to the majesty of its wrath, taste to the very inmost reaches of your vitality the sweetness of its reposeful humour, bring to its astonishments the wonder of a child, and to its power and might the love and reverence of a man. "Enough!" cries Rasselas to Imlac, "thou hast convinced me that no human being can ever be a poet." And I have convinced myself that the conditions of the sea-life in these times prohibit the most ardent of imaginative sailors from the exercise of that sort of divination which is to be found in perfection in the old narratives. The vocation is too tedious, the stress of it too harassing, the despatch insisted upon too exacting, to furnish opportunity for more than the most mechanical motions of the mind. A man is hurried from port to port with railway punctuality. He is swept headlong through calms and storms, and if there come a pause it will be found perilous; and consternation takes the place of observation. Nothing new is left. The monsters of the deep have sunk into the ooze and blackness of time and lie foundered, waiting for the resurrection that will not come until civilization has run its course and man begins afresh. All seaboards are known; nothing less than an earthquake can submit the unfamiliar in island or coast scenery. The mermaid hugging her merman has shrunk, affrighted by the wild, fierce light of science, and by the pitiless dredging of the deep-water inquirer, into the dark vaults beneath her coral pavilions. Her songs are heard no more, and her comb

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lies broken upon the sands. Old ocean itself, soured by man's triumphant domination of its forces, by his more than Duke of Marlborough-like capacity of riding the whirlwind and directing the storm, has silenced its teachings, sleeps or roars blindly, an eyeless lion, and avenges its neglect and submission by forcing the nautical mind to associate with the noblest, the most romantic vocation in the world no higher ideas than tonnage, freeboard, scantlings, well-decks, length of stroke, number of revolutions, the managing owner, and the Board of Trade!

The early mariner was like the growing Boy whom Wordsworth sings of in that divine ode from which I have already quoted—

> "But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
> He sees it in his joy;
> The Youth, who daily farther from the East
> Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
> And by the vision splendid
> Is on his way attended."

Were I asked to deliver my sense of the highest poetical interpretation of the deep, I should point into distant times, to some new and silent ocean on whose surface, furrowed for the first time by a fabric of man's handiwork, floats some little bark with a deck-load of pensive, wondering, reverential men. Yes! you would find the noblest and most glorious divination of the true spirit of the deep in the thoughts which fill the breasts of that company of quaintly apparelled souls. The very ship herself fits the revelation of the sea to those simple hearts who have hardily sailed down the gleaming slope behind the familiar horizon, and penetrated the liquid fastnesses of the marine gods and demons. Mark the singular structure swinging pendulum-like to the respirations of the blue and foamless swell. Her yellow sides throw a golden lustre under her. Little ordnance of brass and black iron sparkle on her bulwarks and grin along her sides. Her poop and top-lanthorns flash and fade with the swaying of her masts. Her pennons enrich the white sails with their dyes, and how long those banners may be let us conceive from that ancient account of the Armada in which it is written: "For the memory of this exploit, the foresayd Captain Banderdness caused the banner of one of these shippes to be set up in the great Church of Leiden in Holland, which is of so great a length, that being fastened to the very roofe, it reached down to the grounde." Her men are children, albeit bearded, and not yet upon them have the shades of the prison-house begun to close. Are we not to be pitied that all the glories which enraptured them, the wonders which held them marvelling, the terrors which sent them to their devotions, should have disappeared for ever from our sight? We have still indeed the magnificence of the sunset, the splendour of the heavens by night, the Andean seas of the tempest, the tenderness of the moonlighted calm; but these things are not to us as they were to them; for a magic was in them that is gone; the mystery and fear and awe begotten of intrusion into the obscure and unknown principalities of the sea-king have vanished; our interpretation gathers nothing of those qualities which rendered theirs as romantic and lovely as a Shakesperean dream; and though we have the sunset and the stars and the towering surge—what have we not? what is our loss? what our perceptions (staled and pointed to commonplace issues by familiarity) compared with their costly endowment of marine disclosure? You see, the world of old ocean was before them; they had everything to enjoy. It was a virgin realm, also, for them to furnish with the creations of their imagination. The flying-fish! what object so familiar now? The house-sparrow wins as much attention, to the full, in the street as does this fish from the sailor or the passenger as it sparks out from the seething yeast of the blue wave and vanishes like a little shaft of mother-o'-pearl. But in those old times they found a wonder here; and prettily declared that they quitted the sea in summer and became birds. Hear how an old voyager discourses of these be-scaled fowls:

"There is another kind of fish as bigge almost as a herring, which hath wings and flieth, and they are together in great number. These have two enemies, the one in the sea, the other in the aire. In the sea the fish which is called Albocore, as big as a salmon, followeth them with great swiftnesse to take them. This poore fish not being able to swimme fast, for he hath no finnes, but swimmeth with mooving of his taile, shutting his wings, lifteth himselfe above the water, and flieth not very hie; the Albocore seeing that, although he have no wings, yet he giveth a great leape out of the water and sometimes catcheth the fish being weary of the aire."

It is wonderland to this man. He writes as of a thing never before beheld and with a curious ambition of accuracy, clearly making little doubt that in any case his story will not be credited, and that therefore since the truth is astonishing enough, he may as well carefully stick to it. And the barnacle? Does the barnacle hold any poetry to us? One would as soon seek for the seed of romance in the periwinkle or the crab. Taking up the first dictionary at hand, I find barnacle described as a "shell-fish, commonly found on the bottom of ships, rocks, and timber." But those wonderful ancient mariners made a goose of it; as may be observed in Mr. John Lok's account of his ship which arrived home "marvellously overgrowne with certaine shells" in which he solemnly affirms "there groweth a certain slimie substance, which at the length slipping out of the shell and falling in the sea, becometh those foules which we call Barnacles." Were not those high times for Jack? A barnacle, whether by the sea-side brim or anywhere else, is to us, alas! in this exhaustive age, a barnacle, and nothing more. Or take the maelstrom—a gyration not quite so formidable as the imagination of Edgar Allan Poe would have us believe, but by report exactly one of those features of the ocean to alarm the primitive fancy with frightful ideas: "Note," says Mr. Anthonie Jenkinson in his voyage to Russia, 1557, "that there is between the said Rost islands and Lofoot a whirlepoole called Malestrand which ... maketh such a terrible noise, that it shaketh the rings in the doores of the inhabitants' houses of the sayd islands tenne miles off. Also if there cometh any whale within the current of the same, they make a pitiful crie." And so on. How fine as an artistic touch should we deem this introduction of the whale by the hand of an imaginative writer! The detail to the contemporary readers of Mr. Jenkinson's yarn would make an enormous horror of that "whirlepoole," for what should be able to swallow leviathan short of some such stupendous commotion as would be caused by the breaking up of the fountains of the waters of the earth? Let it be remembered that whales were fine specimens in that age of poetry. They were then big enough to gorge a squadron of men-of-war, ay, and to digest the vessels. We have had nothing like them since—the nearest approach to such monsters being the shark in which, on its being ripped open, there was found one full-rigged ship only, with the captain and the mate quarrelling in the cabin over the reckoning.

The age of marine romance supplied the mariner with many extraordinary privileges. We cannot control the winds as those old people did. There are no longer gale-makers from whom Jack can buy a favourable blast. The very saints have deserted us, since it is certain that—at sea—we now pray to them in vain. Observe that in fifty directions, despite our propellers, donkey-engines, steam-windlasses, and the like, the ancient mariner was out and away better off than we are. Did he want wind? Then he had nothing to do but apply to a Finn, who, for a few shillings, would sell to him in the shape of a knotted handkerchief three sorts of gale, all prosperous, but one harder than another, by which he could be blown to his port without anxiety or delay. Did a whirlwind threaten him? Then read in the Voyage of Pirard in Harris' Collection how he managed: "We frequently saw great Whirl-winds rising at a Distance, called by the Seamen *Dragons*, which shatter and overturn any Ship that falls in their way. When these appear the Sailors have a Custom of repairing to the Prow or the Side that lies next the storm, and beating naked swords against one another crosswise." Purchas, in his "Pilgrims," repeats this, and adds that this easy remedy of the sword hinders the storm from coming over their ship,

"and turneth it aside." Did human skill and judgment fail him? There were the Saints. "Before the days of insurance offices and political economy," writes the author of "Lusitanian Sketches," "merchants frequently insured their ships at the highly esteemed shrine of Mantozimbo, by presenting a sum equal to the pay of captain or mate, and that, too, without stipulating for any equivalent should the vessel be wrecked." Was it not his custom to carry the image of his patron saint to sea with him, to pray to it, to make it responsible for the winds, and, if it proved obstinate, to force it into an obliging posture of mind by flogging it? Consider what a powerful marine battery of these saints he could bring to bear upon the vexed, refractory ocean and the capricious storming of winds. St. Anthony, St. Nicholas, whose consecrated loaves of bread quelled many a furious gale, St. Roland, St. Cyric, St. Mark, St. George, St. Michael, St. Benedict, St. Clement—the list is as long as my arm, the number great enough to swell out a big ship's company. Did pirates threaten him? There was no occasion to see all clear for action. He had but to invoke St. Hilarion—who once on a time by prayer arrested the progress of a picaroon whilst chasing—and away would scuttle the black flag. Was smooth water required for safely making a port? Then no matter how high the sea ran, all that was needful was first to find a pious man on board, light tapers (where they would burn), bring up the incense, erect a crucifix, read prayers (this being done by the pious man), sprinkle the decks with holy water, and straightway the sea under the vessel's forefoot would flatten into a level lane, smooth as oil, albeit the surges on either hand continued to leap to the height of the maintop. Who now regards, save with mild curiosity, the corposant—the St. Elmo's fire —the dimly burning meteoric exhalation at the yard-arm? It is no more to modern and current imagination than the phosphoric flashes in black intertropic waters. But the ancient mariner made an omen of it—a saint—a joy to be blessed; he wrought it into a beneficent symbol, and endowed it with such powers of salvation as comforted him exceedingly whilst he kneeled on quivering knees in the pale illumination of that mystic marine corpse-candle. Who now scratches the mast for a breeze? Who fears the dead body as a storm-maker? What has become of the damnatory qualities of the cat, and who now hears the dimmest echo of comminatory power in her loudest mew? And most galling of all reflections, into what ocean unknown to man has sailed the Flying Dutchman?

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Let it not be supposed, however, that the elimination of poetry from the sea-life by the pounding steam engine and the swift voyage is deplorable on no further grounds than these which I have named. The utilitarian aspect is not the only one. There was romance and lustre outside those mere conditions of poetic seamanship which enabled the mariner to direct the wind by a knot, to control the tempest by a candle, to put the pirate to flight by an invocation. Emerge with me from the darkness of remote times into the light of the last—yes, and of the beginning of the present—century. Ladies were then going to sea, as they had in remoter times, dressed as men. They do so no longer. Who ever hears now of some youthful mariner with blooming cheeks and long eyelashes exciting the suspicions of his mahogany-cheeked mates by the shortness of his steps, or the smallness of his hands and feet, or a certain unboyish luxuriance of cropped hair? No, the blushing Pollies and Susans of the East End, resolved by love, by betrayal, or by the press-gang, into the shipping of breeks have had their day. No longer do we read of pretty ship-boys standing confessed as girls. I mourn this departed romantic forecastle feature. Even in fiction how the imagination is captivated by the clever insinuations of the author in his treatment of the youth whose sex he springs upon us presently to our glad surprise! The Edwins whom the Angelinas followed were not indeed very engaging people; but even attentive consideration of their rascalities will not neutralize the pleasant poetic bouquet that haunts the old tales of fine-eyed women going to sea for love or vengeance, living among the sailors, eating the bitter bad provisions of the forecastle, fighting the guns, doing the seamen's work, and remaining for months undetected.

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Again, whither has vanished a feature of the old sea-life even yet more romantically interesting than the nautical masquerading of black-eyed Susans and yellow-haired Molls —the flirtation of the long ocean passage? What we call flirtation now at sea is a mere shadow of a shadow as compared with the robust and solid reality of a period when it took a ship four months to sail to Bombay or Calcutta. There is no time allowed in this age for love-making. Before you can fairly consider yourself acquainted with a girl some wretch on the forecastle is singing out “land-ho!” I took particular notice of this matter on board the Union steamer in which I made the passage home from Cape Town. It must 11
certainly have ended in a proposal in the case of one couple had the propeller dropped off or a boiler burst and the ship been delayed. They only wanted another week. But the steamer was impertinently punctual, about eight hours before her time: the people went ashore at Plymouth, and, for all I can tell, the young man, in the excitement of landing and meeting his friends and seeing plenty of pretty women about, may have abandoned his intention and ended for the girl a chance that would have been a certainty in the old romantic poetical sea-days. Why, we all know how the British matron used to ship her darlings off in the East Indiamen for husbands in the country with which those vessels trafficked, and how scores and scores of these unsophisticated young ladies would land engaged, having affianced themselves to gentlemen on board in calms on the Equator or in the tail of the south-east Trades, or in a small swell with a moderate breeze off Agulhas, some possibly hesitating as far as the Madagascar parallels. How many marriages originate at sea in these times of thirteen knots an hour, I wonder? Out of the several millions of passengers who are annually sea-borne, how many pledge their vows on board ship, how many fall in love there, how many become husband and wife in consequence of meeting on ship board? But a few, I’ll warrant. But only think of the old East Indiaman; four months for Captain Thunder and Miss Spooner to be together to start with; four months, and perhaps longer, with possibly Lieutenant Griffin to give a swift maturity to emotion by importing a neat and useful element of jealousy. Oh, if moonlight and music and feeling are one ashore, what are they at sea, on the deck of a sleeping fabric lifting visionary wings to the lovely stars, when the sea-fire flashes like sheet lightning to the soft surge of the ship’s bows or counter upon the light fold of the 12
invisible swell, when the westering moon, crimsoning as she sinks, wastes her heart’s blood in the deep for love of what she is painfully and ruefully leaving, when the dew upon the bulwarks sparkles like some diamond encrustations to the starlight, when the peace of the richly clad night presses like a sensible benediction upon the breathless, enchanted, listening ship, subduing all sounds of gear-creaking in blocks, of chains clanking to the stirring of the rudder, to a tender music in sweetest harmony with the fountain-like murmur at the bows as the vessel quietly lifts to the long-drawn heave there —think of it! was there ever a bower by Bendemeer’s stream comparable as a corner for the delicate whispers of passion, for the coy reception of kisses, with some quiet nook on the white quarter-deck, shadowed from the stars and protected from the dew by the awning? If you thrill now it is because the whole ship shakes with the whirling and thrashing of those mighty beams of steel below. Emotion must be blatant or it cannot be heard. Not yet has a generation that knows I am speaking the truth in all this passed away. Confirm me, ye scores of elderly master-mariners enjoying your well-earned repose in spots hard by that ocean ye loved and sailed for years! Confirm me too, ye many survivors of a sea-going time, when the most blissful hours of your long and respectable lives were passed under the shadow of the cross-jack-yard!

I lament the decay of the old nautical costumes. There was a poetry in the dress of the people who had the handling of the big Indian ships which you will not get out of the brass buttons and twopenny cuff-rings of the contemporary skipper and mate. Nowadays it is almost impossible to tell the difference between the rigs of the mercantile captain, 13
the dock master, the Customs man, and the harbour master. But what do you say to a blue coat, black velvet lappels, cuffs and collar with a bright gold embroidery, waistcoat and breeches of deep buff, the buttons of yellow gilt, cocked hats, side arms, and so forth?

What dress has done for romance ashore we know. Pull off the feathered hats and high boots, the magnificent doublets and diamond buckles of many of those gentlemen of olden times, who show very stately in history, and button them up in the plain frock-coat of to-day, and who knows but that you might not be diverted with a procession of rather insignificant objects? In the poetical days of the sea-profession the ships very honestly deserved the dignity they got from the gilded and velveted figures that sparkled on their quarter-decks. Over no nobler fabrics of wood did the red ensign ever fly. They went manned like a line-of-battle ship. Observe this resolution arrived at by the Court of Directors (Hon. E.I.C.) held the 19th of October, 1791:—"That a ship of 900 tons do carry 110 men; 1000 ditto, 120; 1100 ditto, 125; 1200 ditto, 130."

Were not those fine times for Jack? How many of a crew goes to the manning of a 1200-ton ship nowadays? And it is proper to note that of these 130 men there were only ten servants, *i.e.* a captain's steward, ship's steward, and men to attend to the mate, surgeon, boatswain, gunner, and carpenter. Contrast these with the number of waiters who swell the ship's company of our 5000-ton mail boats. Those vessels went armed too, as befitted the majesty of the bunting under which old Dance had gloriously licked Johnny Crapeau.[1] The bigger among them carried thirty-eight eighteen pounders; they 14
were all furnished with boarding-nettings half-mast high and close round the quarters. The chaps in the tops were armed with swivels, musquetoons, and pole-axes. In those romantic times the merchantman saw to himself. There were no laminated plates formed of iron one remove only from the ore betwixt him and the bottom of the ocean; he sailed in hearts-of-oak, and the naval page of his day resounds with his thunder. The spirit of that romantic period penetrated the ladies who were passengers. Relations of this kind in the contemporary annals are common enough:

1. It is interesting to know that Sir John Franklin was in that particular fight, and worked the signals for the Commodore.

"Mrs. Macdowall and Miss Mary Harley, who lately distinguished themselves so much in the gallant defence of the ship *Planter*, of Liverpool, against an enemy of very superior force off Dover, are now at Whitehaven. These ladies were remarkable, not only for their solicitude and tenderness for the wounded, but also for their contempt of personal danger, serving the seamen with ammunition, and encouraging them by their presence."

Again: "I cannot omit mentioning that a lady (a sister of Captain Skinner), who, with her maid, were the only female passengers, were both employed in the bread-room during the action making up papers for cartridges; for we had not a single four-pound cartridge remaining when the action ceased."[2]

2. Many similar notices may be found in the *Annual Register*, the *Naval Chronicle*, and other publications of the kind.

The glory and the dream are gone. No doubt there are plenty of ladies living who would manufacture cartridges during a sea-fight with pleasure, and animate the crew by their example and presence. But the heroine's chance in this direction is dead and over. As dead and over as the armed passenger ship, the privateer, the pirate, and the plate-galleon. Would it interest anybody to know that the *Acapulco* ship was once more on her 15
way from Manila with a full hold? Dampier and Shelvocke are dead, Anson's tome is rarely looked into, the cutlass is sheathed, the last of the slugs was fired out of yonder crazy old blunderbuss ages ago; how should it concern us then to hear that the castellated galleon, loaded with precious ore minted and in ingots, with silk, tea, and gems of prodigious value, is under weigh again? Candish took her in 1587, Rogers in 1709, Anson in 1742. Supposing her something more substantial than a phantom, where lives the corsair that should take her now? The extinction of that ship dealt a heavy wound to marine romance. She was a vessel of about two thousand tons burden, and was despatched every year from the port of Manila. She sailed in July and the voyage lasted

six months—six months of golden opportunity to the gentlemen who styled themselves buccaneers! The long passage, says the Abbé Raynal, "was due to the vessel being overstocked with men and merchandise, and to all those on board being a set of timid navigators, who never make but little way during the night time, and often, though without necessity, make none at all." Anson took 1,313,843 pieces of eight and 35,682 oz. of virgin silver out of his galleon, raising the value of his cruise to about £400,000 independent of the ships and merchandise. They knew how to fillibuster in those days. How is it now? It has been attempted of late and found a glorious termination in a police court.

The buccaneer has made his exit and so has his fierce brother, the pirate. That dreadful flag has long been hauled down and stowed away by Davy Jones in one of his lockers. "The pirates," says Commodore Roggewein in 1721, "observing this disposition, immediately put themselves in a fighting posture; and began by striking their red, and hoisting a black flag, with a Death's Head in the centre, a powder-horn over it, and two bones across underneath." Alas! even the sentiment of Execution Deck has vanished with the disappearance of this romantic flag, and there are no more skeletons of pirates slowly revolving in the midnight breeze and emitting a dismal clanking sound to the stirring of the damp black gusts from which to borrow a highly moving and fascinating sort of marine poetry.

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Again, though to be sure it is not a little comforting when in the middle of a thousand leagues of ocean to feel that your ship is navigated by men furnished with the exquisite sextant, the costly chronometer, the wonderful appliances for an exact determination of position, yet there is surely less poetry and romance in the nautical scientific precision of the age, reconciling as it undoubtedly is—particularly when you are afloat—than in the old shrewd half-blind sniffing and smelling out of the right liquid path by those ancient mariners who stumbled into unknown waters, and floundered against unconjecturable continents with nothing better to ogle the sun with than a kind of small gallows called a fore-staff.

"If," writes Sir Thomas Browne to his sailor son in 1664, "you have a globe, you may easily learne the starres as also by bookes. Waggoner[3] you will not be without, which will teach the particular coasts, depths of roades, and how the land riseth upon several poynts of the compasse.... If they have quadrants, crosse-staffes, and other instruments, learn the practicall use thereof; the names of all parts and roupes about the shippe, what proportion the masts must hold to the length and depth of a shippe, and also the sayles."

3. Wagenar's "Speculum Nauticum," Englished in 1588.

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Here we have pretty well the extent of a naval officer's education in navigation and seamanship in those rosy times. The longitude was as good as an unknown quantity to them. How quaint and picturesque was the old Dutch method of navigating a ship! They steered by the true compass, or endeavoured to do so by means of a small central movable card, which they adjusted to the meridian, and whenever they discovered that the variation had altered to the extent of 22 degrees, they again corrected the central card. In this manner they contrived to steer within a quarter of a point, and were perfectly satisfied with this kind of accuracy. They never used the log, though it was known to them. The officer of the watch corrected the leeway by his own judgment before marking it down. J. S. Stavorinus, writing so late as 1768–78, says, "Their manner of computing their run is by means of a measured distance of forty feet along the ship's side. They take notice of any remarkable patch of froth when it is abreast of the foremost end of the measured distance, and count half seconds till the mark of froth is abreast of the after end. With the number of half seconds thus obtained they divide the number forty-eight, taking the product for the rate of sailing in geographical miles in one hour, or the number of Dutch miles in four hours. It is not difficult," he adds, "to conceive the reason why the Dutch are frequently above ten degrees out in their reckoning." Here we have such a

form of Arcadian simplicity, if anything maritime can borrow that pastoral word, as cannot fail to excite the enthusiasm of the romancist. A like delightful and fascinating primitiveness of sea-procedure you find in Mr. Thomas Stevens' black-letter account of his voyage; wherein he so clearly sets forth the manner of the navigation of the ancient mariner, that I hope this further extract from other people's writings will be forgiven on the score of its curiousness, and the information it supplies:—

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> You know that it is hard to saile from East to West or contrary, because there is no fixed point in all the skie, whereby they may direct their course, wherefore I shall tell you what helps God provided for these men.[4] There is not a fowle that appereth, or signe in the aire, or in the sea, which they have not written, which have made the voyages heretofore. Wherefore, partly by their own experience, and pondering withal what space the ship was able to make with such a winde, and such direction, and partly by the experience of others, whose books and navigations they have, they gesse whereabouts they be, touching degrees of longitude, for of latitude they be alwaies sure.

4. That is, for the mariners with whom he sailed.

"*Gesse whereabouts they be!*" The true signification of this sentence is the revelation of the fairy world of the deep. It was this "gessing," this groping, this staring, the wondering expectation, that filled the liquid realm with the amazements you read of in the early chronicles. It would not be delightful to have to "gess" now. It could hardly mean much more than an unromantic job of stranding, a bald prosaic shipwreck, with some marine court of inquiry at the end of it, to depress the whole business deeper yet in the quagmire of the commonplace. But attached to the guesswork of old times was the delightful condition of the happening of the unexpected. The fairy island inhabited by faultless shapes of women; fish as terrible as Milton's Satan; volcanic lands crimsoning a hundred leagues of sky with the glare of the central fires of the earth, against whose hellish effulgent background moved Titanic figures dark as the storm-cloud—of such were the diversions which attended the one-eyed navigation of the romantic days. Who envies not the Jack of that period? Why should the poetic glories of the ocean have died out with those long-bearded, hawk-eyed men? I can go now to the Cape of Good Hope—in a peculiar degree the haunt of the right kind of marvels, and the headland abhorred by Vanderdecken—I can steam there in twenty days, and not find so much as the ghost of a poetical idea in about six thousand miles of ocean. Everything is too comfortable, too safe, too smooth. There is the same difference between my mail-boat and the jolly old carrack as there is between a brand-new hotel making up eight hundred beds and an ancient castle with a moated grange. What fine sights used to be witnessed through the windows of that ancient castle! Ghosts in armour on coal-black steeds, lunatic Scalds bursting into dirges, an ogre who came out of the adjacent wood, dwarfs after the manner of George Cruikshank's fancies—in short, Enchantment that was substantial enough too. But the brand-new hotel! Why, yes, certainly, I would rather dine there, and most assuredly would rather sleep there, than in the moated-grange arrangement. What I mean is: I wish all the wonders were not gone, so that old ocean should not bare such a very naked breast.

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Observe again how elegant and splendid those ancients were in their sea notions. When they built a ship they embellished her with a more than oriental splendour of gold and fancy work. Read old Stowe's description of the *Prince Royal*: how she was sumptuously adorned, within and without, with all manner of curious carving, painting, and rich gilding. They had great minds; when they lighted a candle it was a tall one. How nobly they brought home the body of Sir Philip Sydney, "slaine with a musket-shot in his thigh, and deceased at Arnim, beyond seas!" The sails, masts, and yards of his "barke" were black, with black ancient streamers of black silk, and the ship "was hanged all with black bayes, and scorchions thereon on pastboard (with his and his wyfes in pale, helm and crest); in the cabin where he lay was the corpse covered with a pall of black velvet,

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escochions thereon, his helmet, armes, sword, and gauntlette on the corpse." In the regality of the names they gave their ships there is a fine aroma of poetry: *Henri-Grace-a-Dieu*, the *Soverayne-of-the-Seas*, the *Elizabeth-Jonah*, the *Jesus-of-Lubeck*, the *Constant-Warwick*! The genius of Shakespeare might be thought to have presided over these christenings if it were not for the circumstance of numberless squadrons of sweetly or royally named ships having been launched before the birth of the immortal bard; and a list of them harmonised into blank verse would have the organ-sounds delivered by his own great muse.

The visionary gleam has fled; the glory and the dream are over. Yes, and the prosaics of the sea have entered into the sailor's nature and made a somewhat dull and steady fellow of him, though he will shovel you on coals as well as another, and pull and haul as heartily as his forefathers. For where be his old caper-cutting qualities? Where be the old high jinks, the Saturday night's carouse, the pretty forecastle figment of wives and sweethearts, the grinning salts of the theatre-gallery, the sky-larking of liberty days, the masquerading humours, such, for example, as Anson's men indulged themselves in after the sacking of Paita, when the sailors took the clothes which the Spaniards in their flight had left behind them, and put them on—a motley crew!—wearing the glittering habits, covered with yellow embroidery and silver lace, over their own dirty trousers and jackets, clapping tie and bagwigs and laced hats on their heads; going to the length, indeed, of equipping themselves in women's gowns and petticoats; so that, we read, when a party of them thus metamorphosed first appeared before their lieutenant, "he was extremely surprised at the grotesque sight, and could not immediately be satisfied they were his own people." They were a jolly, fearless, humorous, hearty lot, those old mariners, and their like is not amongst us to-day. The sentiment that prevailed amongst them was in the highest degree respectable.

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"Yes, seamen, we know, are inured to hard gales;
Determined to stand by each other;
And the boast of the tar, wheresoever he sails,
Is the heart that can feel for another!"

And has not the passenger degenerated too? Is he as fine and enduring a man as his grandfather? is she as stout-hearted as her grandmother? The life of a voyager in the old days of the sailing-ship—I do not include John Company's Indiamen—was almost as hard as that of the mariner. He had very often to fight, to lend a hand aloft, at the pumps, at the running rigging. His fare was an unpleasant kind of preserved fresh meat—I am speaking of fifty years ago—and such salt pork and beef as the sailors ate. His pudding was a dark and heavy compound of coarse flour and briny fat, and in the diary of a passenger at sea in 1820 it is told how the puddings were cooked: "*July 16*. As a particular favour obtained a piece of old canvas to make a pudding-bag, for all the nightcaps had disappeared. The pudding being finished, away it went to the coppers, and at two bells came to table smoking-hot. But a small difficulty presented itself; for then, and not till then, did we discover that the bag was smaller at top than at bottom, so that, in spite of our various attempts to dislodge it, there it stuck like a cork in a bottle, till every one in the mess had burnt his fingers, and then we thought of cutting away the canvas and liberating the pudding." Such experiences as this made a hardy man of the passenger. There was no coddling. Everything was rough and rude; yet read the typical passenger's writings and you will see he found such poetry and romance in the ocean and the voyage as must be utterly undiscoverable by the spoilt and languid traveller of to-day, sulkily perspiring over nap or whist in the luxurious smoking-room, or reading the magazine—that outruns its currency by a week only in a voyage to New Zealand—propped up by soft cushions in a ladies' saloon radiant with sunshine and full of flowers. Like the early Jack, the early passenger came comparatively new to the sea and enjoyed

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its wonders and revelled in its freedom and drank in its inspirations. He was not to be daunted by food, by wet, by delay, by sea-sickness, by coarse rough captains. Why, here before me, in the same passenger's diary in which the above extract occurs, I find the writer distinctly noting the picturesque in that most hideous of maritime calamities, want of water! "*July 2*. All hands employed catching rain water, the fresh water having given out. 'Twas interesting and romantic to see them running fore and aft with buckets, pitchers, jars, bottles, pots, pans, and kegs, or anything that would hold water. I was quietly enjoying the scene, when the clew of the mainsail above me gave way from the weight of water that had collected there, and I received the whole contents on my devoted head." *Quietly enjoying the scene!* Is not this a very sublimation of the heroic capacity of extracting the Beautiful—not in the Bulwerian sense—out of the Dreadful!

But enough! Just as you seek for the romance and poetry of the ocean in the old books, so must you look there for the jovial tar, the jigging fellow, with his hat on nine hairs and a nose like a carbuncle; for the resolved and manly passenger, for the unaffected heroine, for the pretty masquerading lass, and for a hundred lovely gilded dreams of a delighted imagination roving wild in mid-ocean. The volume is closed; we now carry our helm amidships; it is no longer the captain but the head engineer that we think of and address ourselves to when, disordered by some inward perturbation, we sing:—

"O, pilot, 'tis a fearful night,
There's danger on the deep."

But *Philosophia stemma non inspicit*; and we must take it that in these days she knows what she is about.

SUPERSTITIONS OF THE SEA.

There is a story told of some English sailors who, passing by the French Ambassador's house, that was illuminated in celebration of a treaty of peace between France and Great Britain, observed the word "Concord" flaming in the midst of several devices. The men read it "Conquer'd," and one of them exclaiming, "*They* conquer us! they be," etc., they knocked at the door and demanded to know why such a word was put up. The reason was explained, but to no purpose, and the French Ambassador, in order to get rid of these jolly tars, ordered "Concord" to be taken down and replaced by the word "Amity."

It is to illiteracy of this kind that we are indebted for much of the romantic superstitions of the sea. In olden days the forecastle was certainly very unlettered, and the wonderful imaginings of the early navigators, whose imperfect gaze and enormous credulity coined marvels and miracles out of things we now deem in the highest degree prosaic and commonplace, descended without obstruction of learning or scepticism through the marine generations. It is easily seen on reading the old sea-chronicles how most of the superstitions had their birth, and it needs but a very superficial acquaintance with the nautical character to understand why they should have been perpetuated into comparatively enlightened times. Two capital instances occur to me, and they are both to be found in the narrative of Cowley's voyage round the world in the years 1683, '84, '85, and '86. The first relates to the old practice of choosing valentines.

"We came abreast with Cape Horn," says the author, "on Feb. 14, 1684, where we chusing of valentines, and discoursing of the intrigues of women, there arose a prodigious storm, which did continue to the last day of the month, driving us into the latitude of 60 deg. and 30 min. south, which is further than any ship hath sailed before south; so that we concluded the discoursing of women at sea very unlucky, and occasioned the storm." That such a superstition as this ever obtained a footing among mariners I will not declare. Yet it is easily seen that the conclusion the author arrived at, that the "discoursing of women at sea" is very unlucky, might engender a superstition strong enough to live through centuries. In the same book is recounted another strange matter, of a true hair-stirring pattern. On June 29, 1686, there had been great feasting on board Cowley's ship, and when the commanders of the other vessels departed they were saluted with some guns, which, on arriving on board their ships, they returned. "But," says the author, "it is strangely observable that whilst they were loading their guns they heard a voice in the sea crying out, 'Come, help! come, help! A man overboard!' which made them forthwith bring their ships to, thinking to take him up; but heard no more of him." The captains were so puzzled that they returned to Cowley's ship to see if he had lost a man; but "we nor the other ship had not a man wanting, for upon strict examination we found that in all the three ships we had our complement of men, which made them all to conjecture that it was the spirit of some man that had been drowned in that latitude by accident." Thus they resolved their perplexity, braced up their yards, and pursued their course in a composed posture of mind; and in this easy way I think was a large number of the superstitions, which fluttered the forecastle and perturbed the lonely look-out man, generated.

So of the corposant, that ghostly meteoric exhalation, which in gales of wind or in dead calms blazes at the end of yards, or hovers in bulbous shinings upon the mastheads. One readily sympathizes with the old superstitions here. To the ancient mariner it could be nothing else than some spirit hand issuing out of the dusk that kindled those magic lamps. What should they portend to the startled hearts of the Columbian and Magellanic

sailors lost in the deepest solitudes of oceans whose wastes their keels were the first to furrow? Happily they were found propitious, and superstition devised a saintly origin for them. “On Saturday,” we read in the second voyage of Columbus, “at night, the body of St. Elmo was seen, with seven lighted candles in the round top, and there followed mighty rain and frightful thunder. I mean the lights were seen which the seamen affirm to be the body of St. Elmo, and they sang litanies and prayers to him, looking upon it as most certain that in these storms, when he appears, there can be no danger.”[5] The sign that admits of an auspicious interpretation is always useful. The most literal-minded of men even in these days of hard facts is pleased when something befalls him which people say is a sign of good luck. There is a famous instance of a ship having been saved by allowing a Lascar to discharge a superstitious obligation by securing a bag of rice and a few rupees in the rigging as a votive offering to some hobgoblin. His black companions, worn out with pumping, had tumbled down into the scuppers, saying that the ship was doomed, and heaven must have its way; but when the Lascar descended the rigging and pointed to the bag swinging up there, they cried out for joy, fell to the pumps till they sucked, and enabled the master to carry his ship home. That stout old buccaneer, Dampier, tells of a tempest in the midst of which a corposant flamed out from the masthead. “The sight rejoiced our men exceedingly,” says he; “for the height of the storm is commonly over when the Corpos Sant is seen aloft, but when they are seen lying on the deck, it is generally accounted a bad sign.” Anything that heartens men in extremity is good; and in olden times there were superstitions aboard ship which did more for the salvation and deliverance of mariners than all the rum punch that was ever swallowed out of capacious jacks.

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5. Erasmus in his Dialogues, tells of a certain Englishman who, in a storm, promised mountains of gold to our Lady of Walsingham if he touched land again! Another fellow promised St. Christopher a wax candle *as big as himself*. When he had bawled out this offer, a man standing near said, “Have a care what you promise, though you make an auction of all your goods you’ll not be able to pay.” “Hold your tongue,” whispered the other, “you fool! do you think I speak from my heart? If once I touch land I’ll not give him a tallow candle!” Cardinal de Retz in describing a storm says, “A Sicilian Observantine monk was preaching at the foot of the great mast, that St. Francis had appeared to him and had assured him that we should not perish.”

One might go even further, and commit an apparent indiscretion by declaring that—so far as the sea goes—there may even be a virtue in lies. A vast amount of early marine enthusiasm is due to fibbing. The amazing yarns the old voyagers spun on their return sent others off in hot haste; and they took care not to come back without a plentiful stock of more exciting tales yet. Distinct impulse was given to Arctic exploration by an old Dutchman’s grave, schnapps-smelling twister. The story is told by Mr. Joseph Moxon,[6] who, in the seventeenth century, was member of the Royal Society. “Being about twenty-two years ago in Amsterdam,” says he, “I went into a public house to drink a cup of beer for my thirst, and sitting by the public fire among several people, there happened a seaman to come in, who, seeing a friend of his there who he knew went in the Greenland voyage, wondered to see him, for it was not yet time for the Greenland fleet to come home; and asked him what accident brought him home so soon.” This question the other answered by saying “the ship went not out to fish as usual, but only to take in the lading of the whole fleet,” and that “before the fleet had caught fish enough to lade us, we, by order of the Greenland Company, sailed unto the North Pole and came back again.” This greatly amazed Mr. Joseph Moxon, of the Royal Society, and he earnestly questioned the man, who declared that he had sailed two degrees beyond the pole, and could produce the whole body of sailors belonging to the ship to prove it. “I believe this story,” says the Royal Society man, and he delivers it to the world as a fact, disproving all that has been recorded by the Frobishers, the Willoughbys, the Davises, and the rest of those who had steered north. One Dutchman may give rise to many superstitions—does not the world owe the legend of the Phantom Ship to the Batavian genius?—and who shall tell the

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extent of the impulse contained in the fable of an old Dutch whaleman yarning over a cup of beer in an Amsterdam ale-house?

6. In Harris's Collection.

It is not clear, however, that any possible good can result from such marine credulity as that to which that notable prodigy, for instance, called the sea-serpent owes what life it has. It is interesting indeed to find one of the most amazing of the ancient myths vital in forecastles some thousands of years younger than the legend; but it is not evident that the Kraken, the Leviathan, the Titanic worm that dieth not, the monstrous snake of the deep, ever led the way into a wholesome and worthy issue, such as the discovery of lands or of fishermen's hunting-fields.[7] How often the sea-serpent has been seen it would be hard to say. If there be weight in human testimony there are surely witnesses enough to its existence. Dr. Samuel Johnson could not have pointed to a larger cloud of testifiers in favour of those shadowy beings which he believed in. "All seamen," says Olaus Magnus in his "History of the Goths," "say there is a sea-serpent two hundred feet long and twenty feet thick, who comes out at night to devour cattle. It has long black hair hanging down from its head, and flaming eyes, with sharp scales on its body." Other early writers describe its body as resembling a string of hogsheads, and affirm it to be at least six hundred feet long. Sir Walter Scott, who found the tradition he speaks of among the Shetland and Orkney fishermen, speaks of the sea-snake as a monster that rises out of the depth of the ocean, stretches to the skies his enormous neck covered with a mane like that of a war-horse, and "with his broad glittering eyes raised mast high, looks out as it seems for plunder or for victims." 29 30

7. "The steward relates," I find in a book of travels, "that in a vessel he once sailed in, a hand aloft asserted that he saw land ahead. The captain knew this to be a mistake; and on nearing it the land turned out to be the carcase of a huge whale left by the fishery, with a number of albatrosses preying on it."

A writer in the *British Merchant Service Journal* in 1879 seems to have satisfactorily solved this perplexing ocean enigma. He saw the sea-serpent three times. First in 1851, during a voyage to Tasmania. The terrifying wonder lay right in the ship's path, but the captain would not shift his helm, with the result that he sailed close past a long log of wood covered with barnacles of great length—"so long that, being attached to the logs, they necessarily took all the undulations of the waves, which gave it the appearance of a sinuous motion." Again, in 1853, bound for the Cape of Good Hope; the monster lay on the weather bow with his capacious jaws open; but for the second time the creature proved no more than the trunk of an old tree, a branch of which nicely expressed the beast's jaw. Once again in 1869, this time in seven degrees north of the equator; on this occasion the serpent exhibited long, sleek, variegated sides as the sun shone upon him. "He turned out the veriest old buck of a sea-serpent I have met with in my long career at sea. There he lay alongside from eleven a.m. until nine p.m., unable to leave such good company (we had many passengers from New Zealand); but he left with us, in token of his great regard, 186 fine large rock cod, averaging at least five pounds each. We hoped to meet him again, although he was only an old log of timber."

Many curious sea superstitions can be traced to noises which, when heard by the old navigators, were found unusual and terrifying. There is a curious passage bearing on this in the voyage of J. S. Stavorinus to the East Indies in 1768. He heard a sound just like the groaning of a man out of the sea, near the ship's side. It was repeated a dozen times over, but seemed to recede proportionally as the ship advanced until it died away at the stern. An hour afterwards the gunner came to the author and said that on one of his Indian voyages he had met with the same occurrence, and that a dreadful storm had succeeded, which forced them to hand all their sails and drive at the mercy of the wind for twenty-four hours. The author adds that when the gunner told him this there was no sign of bad 31

weather, yet before four o'clock in the afternoon they were scudding under bare poles before a violent tempest. Upon so singular an experience the sufferers might claim a right to base a superstition; and from that time any sound resembling that of a man bawling in the water over a ship's side must take a barometrical character, and prove an exhortation to the mariner to see all snug.

The nervous system need be suffering from no debilitation of superstition to find in the approaching and bursting of the cyclone much that is too terrific to leave room for the display of the qualities of sublimity, though than these revolving tempests few passionate outbreaks of nature yield more. First there is the alarming indication of the barometer, with the slow and sullen glooming over of the heavens, the wan and beamless aspect of the sun or moon, the light of all the stars—even to the most piercing of the planets—being shrouded, along with the sulky heaving of the sea, whose oppressed breathing, as it comes in clogged and thickish draughts of air from the slope of each sullen fold will often be charged with a weedy, fish-like, and decaying odour. Then there is the noise of the approaching storm, that has been described as a rising and falling sound, of a moaning and complaining nature, as though the nearer deep were something sentient and crying to be hidden from the coming furious tormentor. Some have it that this melancholy and malignant echo may be heard as far off as two hundred miles, that it is caused by the actual raging of the hurricane at that distance, and that it is not directly borne to the ear by the wind, but obliquely reverberated by the clouds. A single sentence written by a sailor taking his notes from nature will have in it a suggestion of the ominousness of storm-imports beyond the reach of the finest imaginative description, as, for instance, when the captain of the ship *Ida*, quoted by Reid, in his interesting work, says: "Fresh gales and squally weather; at four, handed the foretopsail and foresail; at intervals the wind came in gusts, then suddenly dying away, and continued so for four hours." Here, in a sentence, is fully described the advent of the cyclone, leaving to the fancy to make out for itself all that is comprised of expectation, watchfulness, and even fear in the dull and sudden dying away of the gusts and the silence of the four hours following. Then enter, very often, other formidable conditions, features of livid magnificence, and oppressive because of the confusion they import into aspects of nature familiar to the eye. Of such are the red skies, not the strong westerly glowings following the sinking of the sun, but spaces of blood red witnessed in the midnight zenith, sheets of purple splendour in the east and the like. One testimony speaks of a crimson sky beheld late at night both east and west, for three days before the gale came down; another of the sky catching a red light at sunset, and continuing to glow all over, as though incandescent till past midnight, the smooth breast of the sea reflecting the frightful and wondrous irradiation, so that the ship seemed to rest upon a floor of fire with a red-hot dome above. When finally the storm bursts, it comes in the manner faithfully described in "Purchas," in the passage referring to the tempest that wrecked one hundred Spanish ships at Tercera: "This storme continued not onely a day or two with one winde, but seven or eight days continually, the winde turninge round about in all places of the compasse at the least twice or thrice during that time, and all alike with a continuall storme and tempest most terrible to beholde, even to us that were on shore much more then to such as were at sea." In weather-aspects of the cyclonic kind we may safely seek for the origin of many a wild superstition of the ship and the sailor.

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Amongst the most enduring of salt superstitions are those connected with the wind. In a dead calm to whistle for a breeze is but one illustration of an ever-abiding faith. "Scratch the foremast with a nail: you will get a good breeze," is among forecastle saws and instances. You may raise the wind, too, by sticking a knife into the mizzen-mast, taking care that the haft points to the quarter whence you desire the breeze to blow. The cat, as we all know, is a sort of wind-broker. It is believed that pussy carries a gale in her tail. To throw a cat overboard is a storm-prescription never known to fail. In some parts of the north of England it is said it was a custom for sailors' wives to keep a black cat in

the house as a guarantee of their husband's safety whilst away. At the same time it is a cherished article of Jack's creed that if you have a cat on board and a heavy storm arises you may appease the wrath of the Fiend of the Weather by throwing the cat into the sea.

Wonderful stories are related of people who sold winds. Baxter, in his "World of Spirits," gravely tells of an old parson, who, before being hanged, confessed that he had 34
two imps, one of which "was always putting him on doing mischief, and (being near the sea) as he saw a ship under sail it moved him to send him to sink the ship, and he consented and saw the ship sink before him." This imp would have done better had he advised the parson to sell the winds. The mariner was a credulous creature then, and a prosperous gale to the Spice Islands was surely worth more ducats than a cure of souls was likely to yield. Of all the wind-brokers mentioned in history the Russian Finn has ever been accounted the most famous. In a narrative of a voyage to the north, included in Harris's voluminous collection, it is excellently told how the master of the ship in which the author of the narrative sailed, finding himself beset with calms and baffling airs on the coast of Finland, agreed to buy a prosperous wind from a wizard. The price was ten Kronen, about one pound sixteen shillings, and a pound of tobacco. The wizard presented the skipper with a woollen rag containing three knots, the rag to be attached to the foremast. Each knot held a gale of wind, the third rising to a tempest "so furious that we thought the heavens would fall down upon us; and that God would justly punish us with destruction for dealing with infernal wizards, and not trusting to his providence." So recently as 1857 a sailor was tried for the murder of a mulatto, the man's defence being that he thought the coloured fellow a Finn, and so put him out of the way of doing harm. In "Two Years Before the Mast" Dana has stated the case of the Finn delightfully, by representing a sea-cook and an old ignorant sailor talking of a wizard they knew; how he raised an unfavourable wind until the captain starved him into shifting the breeze by locking him up in the forepeak; how he got drunk every night on a bottle of rum, which, 35
nevertheless, remained full throughout the voyage; and so forth. The capriciousness of the wind renders it a very suitable agency for diabolic influence. The causes which stagnate or fix it in an unfavourable quarter are wonderfully numerous. Holcroft, the comedian, tells us in his memoirs that during a trip to Sunderland the sailors, knowing him to be an actor, concluded that he must therefore be a Jonah. Happening on an Easter Sunday to be walking the deck with a book in his hand, he was approached by some seamen, who advised him to read a prayer-book, instead of a book of plays. "By the Holy Father!" cried one of them; "I know you are the Jonas; and by Jasus the ship will never see land till you are tossed overboard—you and your plays wid ye." The origin of Jack's notorious objection to sailing with a parson on board probably lies in the old superstition that the devil, who is the greatest of storm raisers, hates priests, and whenever he can catch one at sea will send a storm to destroy him.

It is not very long ago (1886) that the people on board a ship which was then off the Horn, running before a small westerly gale, noticed an immense albatross following in the vessel's wake. This bird clung so obstinately to the skirts of the running ship that its identity became, in a day or two, a distinguishable thing amongst the other sea-fowl of a like kind that pursued the vessel. One day, as this huge bird was hovering at a short elevation above the taffrail, it was noticed that an object about the size of a dollar was suspended from its neck. Glasses were brought to bear, but nothing could be made of the great bird's embellishment. Thereupon everybody grew eager to catch the creature, and a hook was forthwith baited with a piece of pork and towed astern. Some of the other 36
albatrosses were caught, but the desired one was not to be entrapped. It would sail with a sweep to over the bait that hissed through the water, poise itself on a magnificent length of tremulous pinion, whilst its eyes, glowing like Cairngorm stones, inspected the greasy dainty, and then, with a scream that might have passed very well for an expression of scorn, slide away athwart the path of the wind, and fall to its old gyrations, narrowing down at last into steady pursuit.

But on the third day the noble fowl took the hook, and was triumphantly dragged on board, straining and flapping like a huge Chinese kite in a squall. It was then found that the object hanging at its neck was a brass pocket-compass case, secured to the bird by three stout strands of copper wire. Two of these wires had been severed by wear, and the box itself was thickly coated with verdigris. On opening it a piece of paper was discovered on which was written in faded ink, "Caught May 3, 1848, in lat. 38 deg. S. 40 deg. 14 min. W., by Ambrose Cocharn, of American ship Columbus." A fresh label, with the old and new dates of capture, was fastened round the bird's neck, and the great seagull was then released. Before the men let the bird fly they measured its wings, and found them to be 12 ft. 2 in. between the tips. It is perfectly reasonable to assume, with the captors, that this albatross, when taken and labelled by the people of the American ship Columbus, was four or five years old, and the story, therefore conclusively proves that the natural life of these birds is at least fifty years, though how much longer they may go on living after that period is attained has yet to be determined. For thirty-eight years this bird had been flying about with a brass pocket-compass case dangling at its throat! A writer once calculated the distance traversed by a little pilot-fish that accompanied the vessel he was in. It joined the ship off the Cape de Verd Islands, and it followed her right away round Cape Horn to as far as Callao; the whole distance accomplished having been about 14,000 miles, the time 122 days, showing a daily average of 115 miles.[8] But what should be thought of the leagues covered by that winged postman of the old Yankee ship Columbus in a flight extending over a period of thirty-eight years?

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8. Davis, in the "Nimrod of the Seas," a finely-told whaling story.

It is somewhat strange that Cornelius Vanderdecken, the well-known if not popular commander of the *Flying Dutchman*, should never have used the seabird as a messenger to his wife and children in old Amsterdam. It is part and parcel of his unhappy destiny that he shall not be able to persuade sailors to carry a letter home for him, Jack very well knowing that, airy as may be one of these phantom missives, it has weight enough of fatality in it to sink his ship. It was an old custom among seamen on catching an albatross to secure a bundle of letters for wives and sweethearts under his wing and despatch him with a loud hurrah. Not impossibly his usefulness in this direction may have suggested that his presence signified good luck.

"At length did cross an albatross.
Through the fog it came,
As if it had been a Christian soul
We hailed it in God's name."

So sings the Ancient Mariner, with this result:

"And a good south wind sprung up behind.
The albatross did follow."

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The famous old buccaneering skipper Shelvocke writes, in his voyages, "We had not the sight of one fish of any kind since we were come to the south-west of the Straits of Le Maire, nor one sea-bird, except a disconsolate black albatross who accompanied us several days, hovering about us as if he had lost himself, until Sam Huntley, my second officer, observed in one of his melancholy fits that the bird was always hovering near us, and imagined from its colour that it might be an ill-omen, and, being encouraged in his impression by the continued season of contrary weather which had opposed us ever since we had got into these seas, he, after some fruitless attempts, shot the albatross."

Who will question that in those olden times of marine superstitions the mariners of Shelvocke attributed the failure of their expedition to the shooting of that disconsolate

fowl? But these birds do not appear to have inspired maritime fancy to any marked degree. The belief of old sailors that if an albatross be slaughtered it at once becomes necessary to keep one's "weather eye lifting" for squalls, but that no harm follows if the bird be caught with a piece of fat pork, and is allowed to die a "natural" death on deck, about sums up the traditionary apprehensions in respect of the bird. Yet this meagreness of forecastle imagination is strange, for assuredly the albatross is the pinioned monarch of the deep, the majestic and beautiful eagle of the liquid, foam-capped crags and steeps of the ocean, and will for days so haunt the wakes of ships as to impart just that element of the familiar into the wild and desolate freedom of the cold grey skies and snow-swept billows of dominion which especially fertilizes the fancy of the mariner, who needs something of the prosaic to hold on by just in the same way that he swings by a rope high aloft in the middle air.

Nevertheless it is true that there are scores of comparatively insignificant sea and land birds whose feathers are supposed to cover larger powers for good or evil than even the spacious-winged albatross. 39

The common house-sparrow: here surely is a strange little fowl of the air to parallel, nay to surpass the wizard powers of the shrieking monarch of the Horn and the Southern Ocean; and yet it is gravely asserted that should sparrows be blown away to sea and alight upon a ship they are not to be taken or even chased, for in proportion as the birds are molested must sail be shortened to provide against the storm that will certainly come. In the interests of humanity nothing could be better than such superstitions. The harmless and beautiful gull, whose lovely sweepings and curvings through the air, whose exquisite self-balancing capacity in the teeth of a living gale, whose bright eyes, salt, shrewd voice, and webbed feet folded in bosom of ermine, it is impossible to sufficiently admire, though there be unhappily no lack of sea-side Nathaniel Winkles who regard this pretty creature as a mark set up by Nature for cockneys to shoot at, has a commercial virtue that sets it high in the long shoreman's catalogue of things to be approved; for when this bird appears in great numbers then is its presence accepted as an infallible sign of the neighbourhood of herring shoals.

Herman Melville has somewhere said that in his time it was reckoned a bad omen for ravens to perch on the mast of a ship, at the Cape of Good Hope. We know that the raven himself was hoarse that croaked the fatal entrance of Duncan, and there is no reason, no forecastle reason at least, why the Storm-Fiend should not have ravens harnessed to his chariot after the manner of the doves of Venus, though why these plumed steeds are peculiarly obnoxious to mariners at or off the Cape of Good Hope is not certainly known. 40

It was an old superstition that the rotten timbers of foundered ships generated birds.[9] "When," says a very Early English naturalist, "this old wrack of ships falls in the sea, it is rotted and corrupted by the sea, and from this decay breeds birds, hanging by the beaks to the wood; and when they are all covered with plumage and are large and fat, then they fall into the sea; and then God, in his grace, restores them to their natural life." It will thus be seen how intimate is the association between sailors and birds, particularly the kind of bird produced by rotten and sunken timber, and styled by the above very Early English naturalist "crabans," or "cravans," though "barnacles," perhaps, is the term to best fit the prodigy. Even a dead bird may prove a soothsayer, according to Jack, for, says he, if a kingfisher be suspended to the mast by its beak it will swing its breast in the direction of the coming wind. Easier even than whistling for a breeze, and as a weathercock worth the lordliest and more flashing of ecclesiastical vanes, which will only tell how the wind is actually blowing. This is a vulgar error in Sir Thomas Browne's list, but not exploded by that eloquent worthy. Nay, he rather explains it by remarking "that a kingfisher hanged by the bill showeth what quarter the wind is by an occult and secret property converting the breast to that part of the horizon from whence the wind doth blow. This is a received opinion, and very strange, introducing natural weathercocks

and extending magnetical positions as far as animal natures—a conceit supported chiefly by present practice, yet not made out by reason nor experience." But neither reason nor experience is desirable in superstition—that is to say if superstition is to flourish. It was long believed that gulls were never to be seen bleeding, and that the shooting stars were the half-digested food of these birds.[10] Why fancy should ever trouble itself with the blood of gulls is not clear; as to shooting stars it was reasonable that the method by which they were produced should be accurately stated and settled once for all. Some of the superstitions in connection with birds and their influence over things maritime are very curious and romantic. Anciently, swallows were deemed unlucky at sea, and we read that Cleopatra abandoned a voyage on observing a swallow at the masthead of the ship.

9. I advert to this singular article of marine superstition in another chapter.

> "Swallows have built
> In Cleopatra's sails their nests; the augurers
> Say they know not, they cannot tell, look grimly,
> And dare not speak their knowledge."

10. Both the Rev. John Ray and Dr. Edward Browne (son of the famous Norwich Knight) speak of this queer belief in their "Travels."

On the other hand, it was agreed that if a kite perched on a mast the omen was a favourable one. A crow lighting on a ship is accepted by the Chinese as a sure sign of prosperous gales, and they feed the bird with crumbs of bread by way of coaxing it to remain. The magpie is another evil bird. A sailor said to Sir Walter Scott, "All the world agrees that one magpie bodes ill-luck, two are not bad, but three are the very devil itself. I never saw three magpies but twice, and once I nearly lost my vessel, and afterwards I fell off my horse and was hurt."

It is said that fishermen in the English Channel attribute the east wind to the flight of curlew on dark nights. It is possible that such a superstition may exist, nor could a far wilder fancy be held ill-founded by one who, in midnight darkness upon the sea-shore, has heard the dismal wailings and cryings of invisible birds speeding through the blackness in detachments, and making their weird noises sound as though they were uttered by one set of fowl wheeling round and round again. But, spite of Coleridge's marvellous poem, the stately albatross, taking all the sea birds round, stands lowest in the catalogue of the feathered tribe, accredited with special necromancy in good or bad directions.[11] The little Mother Carey's chicken, the stormy petrel, the tiny swallow of the deep, is distinctly ahead of the huge creature with its span of thirteen feet, and a score of superstitions crowd about it, such as its power of evoking storms, its being the soul of a dead sailor, and so forth. The albatross is beaten out of the field, too, by the common seagull, whose familiar presence is no doubt the cause of its rich legendary and traditional endowment. But for all that the albatross remains the sovereign of the seas, and unless the average duration of its life is already positively known, the discovery made in 1886 of the bird with the compass at its neck having been alive so long ago as 1848, will be received with interest by all admirers of the lovely and noble creature.[12]

11. "About this time a beautiful white bird, web-footed, and not unlike a dove in size and plumage, hovered over the masthead of the cutter, and, notwithstanding the pitching of the boat, frequently attempted to perch on it, and continued to flutter there till dark. Trifling as this circumstance may appear, it was considered by us all as a propitious omen." This passage occurs in the account of the loss of the *Lady Hobart* in the *Mariner's Chronicle*. What sort of bird this was, unless a gull, I cannot imagine.

12. An old legend states these birds to be the disembodied spirits of captains who have been wrecked off the Cape, and who are condemned to wear the feathers for seven years by order of the demon

of the deep. An author writes fifty years ago: “Caught a splendid albatross; measured nineteen feet from the tip of each wing. He had been following the ship for many hours; but I was surprised to see what an insignificant figure he cut when dissected. He turned out all feathers.” He was no doubt a captain!

A boatman told me that once whilst fishing off the coast in forty feet of water, the tide a quarter ebb, and the sea a dark clear green, he and his mate were hanging over the boat’s side with lines in their hands when they saw a mermaid floating past under the surface by about the depth a man’s arm would penetrate. I asked him what the mermaid was like, and he replied that she was of a chocolate colour, with short black hair and very large intensely black eyes. Her figure to the waist was that of a woman; the rest of her was fish-shaped. Altogether he reckoned her to have been of the size of a thirty-pound salmon, only that she was longer than a fish of that weight would be. Her face and figure —as much of it as was human—were as small as those of a child two years old. She was an unmistakable mermaid—he’d warrant that. Might he never airn another shilling in this world if he wor telling a lie. She floated by at an oar’s length; had the sight of her left him and his mate their wits they would have secured her; but some minutes passed before they recovered from their amazement, and though they got their anchor and pulled in the direction of the creature they saw no more of her. I was glad to hear that there was, at all events, one mermaid still in existence, for I had been given to understand that the last of these ocean Mohicans had been gorged by the sea-serpent a little before the date on which her Majesty’s ship *Bacchante* sighted the *Flying Dutchman*. 43

It is customary to look into antiquity for the origin of mermaids, to trace these daughters of the deep to the Nereids and Naiads, with some reference to the Syrens and to Circe and to Hylas and the Argonautic voyages. Would it not be easier to take Jack’s word for it? There is the sea-serpent; nobody would care to say positively that the mighty snake is a myth. It is like a ghost; one would rather reserve one’s opinion on the matter. So, in spite of the Barnumisms of the aquarium, who has courage enough in the face of the testimonies of many scores of mahogany-cheeked eye-witnesses to assert with all cocksureness that there is not and never was such a thing as a mermaid? 44

At all events, Simon Wilkin, F.L.S., who edited an edition of the works of Sir Thomas Browne, has stated such a case for the mermaid as merits something better than a smile. It is the business of the learned Norwich Knight to explode the sea-nymph as a vulgar error, and he certainly bears hard upon popular faith by denying the syren to be the mermaid’s original, as “containing no fishy composure,” and, by tracing her to Dagon, of whose stump “the fishy part only remained when the hands and upper part fell before the ark.” But what writes Mr. Simon Wilkin in a note to this passage? He takes the same view that Johnson took of disembodied spirits, and says that he cannot admit the probability of a belief in mermaids having lasted from remote antiquity without some foundation in truth. He examines Sir Humphry Davy’s arguments against the likelihood of the existence of such an object as a mermaid, and agrees with that distinguished philosopher’s view that a human head, human hands, and human mammæ are wholly inconsistent with a fish’s tail, because—and the logic is good—the head, hands, and mammæ of any creature furnished also with a tail could not be human; and so, conversely, adds he, “the tail of such a creature could not be a fish’s tail.” The philosopher was personally interested in the subject, for if Mr. Simon Wilkin is to be credited, Sir Humphry, whilst swimming, was himself mistaken by some ladies of Caithness for a mermaid. Surely no scientific gentleman ever received a higher compliment. Mr. Wilkin quotes from the Evangelical Magazine of September, 1822. In that publication was printed a letter from the Rev. Dr. Philip, dated at Cape Town. The doctor said he had just seen a mermaid that was then being exhibited. The head was the size of a baboon’s, thinly covered with black hair, and there were a few hairs on the upper lip. The ears, nose, lips, chin, breasts, fingers, and nails resembled the human subject. Of the teeth there were eight incisors, four canine, and eight molars. This creature was about 45

three feet long, and covered with scales. It was caught by a Chinese fisherman, and sold to one Captain Eades, at Batavia. Sir Humphry pronounced this mermaid to be the head and bust from two apes, fastened to the tail of the kipper salmon; but this Mr. Simon Wilkin would not hear of. Sir Thomas Browne's editor is well backed. Has not Alexandre Dumas described the mermaid of the Royal Museum at the Hague? It was not a thing to be disputed about. "If after all this," says the author of *Monte Cristo*, "there shall be found those who disbelieve the existence of such creatures as mermaids, let them please themselves. I shall give myself no more trouble about them."

If Sir Humphry Davy were the mermaid that was seen at Caithness in January, 1809, it would be interesting to know what he thought of the description of him that was sent to the public journals of that date by two witnesses, one of whom was Miss Mackay, daughter of the Rev. David Mackay, minister of Reay. That Sir Humphry should have been bathing in the sea in the month of January will seem strange to persons whose blood flows languidly. But there is more to wonder at in the following particulars: Whilst Miss Mackay and another lady were walking by the shore they perceived three people who were on a rock at some distance showing signs of astonishment and terror. On approaching the ladies saw that the object of their wonder was a face resembling the human countenance, floating on the waves. The sea ran high, and as the waves advanced the mermaid gently sank under them, and afterwards reappeared. The face was plump and round, the nose small, the eyes a light grey, the head long, the hair thick, the throat slender, smooth and white. The hands and fingers were not webbed. "It sometimes laid its right hand under its cheek, and in this position floated for some time." Other witnesses declared that it disappeared on a boy crying out. It reappeared at a distance: the spectators followed it by walking along the shore, until it vanished for good.[13] Could this have been Sir Humphry Davy? The narrative was supplemented by a tale copied from an old History of the Netherlands. There was an inundation in 1403, and when the water retired a mermaid was found in the Dermet Mere, near Campear. A number of boats surrounded her; she tried to dive under them, and finding her way stopped, made a hideous deafening noise, and with her hands and tail sunk a boat or two. On being cleaned of the sea-moss and shells which covered her she was found a somewhat comely being, hair long and black, face human, figure—so far as it went—very good indeed. The rest was "a strong fish tail." She was sent to the Haerlem magistrates, who ordered her to be taught to pray and to spin, but she never could be brought to speak; possibly she did not like the Dutch tongue. She also declined to wear any kind of clothing in summer. Part of her hair was plaited in the Dutch style, and the remainder hung down her. "She would leave her tail in the water, and accordingly had a tub of water under her chair, made on purpose for her; she eat milk, water, bread, butter, and fish. She lived thus out of her element (except her tail) fifteen or sixteen years." That posterity might not doubt this prodigy ever flourished, her picture was painted and hung in the Town House of Haerlem, and her story written under it in letters of gold.

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13. Annual Register, 1809.

But we must accept the existence of the mermaid on the mariner's assurance. A fig for the dugong, and manatee, and sea-horse! Let them in certain postures look as human as they will, the ape is not more the brother of man than are those fish the originals of the wild-eyed, sweet-voiced, silver-shining, golden-haired beauties of the azure main, rising out of their palaces of pearl to ravish Jack's gaze with a picture of girlish loveliness.

"Though all the splendour of the sea,
Around thy faultless beauty shine,
The heart that riots wild and free
Can hold no sympathy with mine."

So the love-sick Tarpaulin may sigh; but though the foam-white form slide into the glassy profound with virginal fear of his pursuing eyes, let us not vulgarly call the delicate shining shape dugong, or sea-horse! Does not John of Hesse, in his travels, tell us of a land where he saw a stony and smoking mountain, and heard mermaids singing— 48
sirens who draw ships into danger by their songs? And how, if not by the witchery of their eyes and the clear melodies of their voices? And listen to the navigator, Hudson, "One of our men, looking overboard, saw a mermaid, and, calling up some of the company to see her, one more came up, and by that time she was come closely to the ship's side, looking earnestly at the men. A little after, a sea came and overturned her. Her back and breasts were like a woman's, as they said that saw her; her body as big as one of us, her skin very white, and long hair hanging down behind, of colour black. Seeing her go down, they saw her tail, which was like that of a porpoise, speckled like a mackerel."

The mermaids must be left alone. They are Jack's sweethearts, and no sacrilegious hand should be suffered to rob old ocean of those seductive spirits which sparkle in its depths or whiten with their forms and gild with their hair the weedy and shelley embroidery of the coast.

If an ill-word must be said of these creatures, let it be directed at the merman. *He* is no beauty, and I believe has no claim to be considered even respectable. They are said to be drunkards, and have green hair, red eyes, and noses distinguished for a peculiar kind of growth termed in ships' forecastles "grog-blossoms." Francis Pirard says, in the account he gives of his shipwreck, that he saw a merman, when at anchor in St. Augustine's Bay, in the Island of Madagascar. He calls it a strange phenomenon, and describes it as a monstrous fish with a head of a man and a long beard. "It plunged into the water on our approach, and we could only see part of its back, which was scaly." I can well understand the alarm confessedly felt by persons at the sight of a merman. The mermaid is an engaging and often adorable creature, and fills the mind with the softest emotions; but the 49
merman is so disgracefully ugly, and so depravedly and ironically human-like withal, that no spectacle is more shocking. The old Bishop of Norway tells of three sailors who saw something floating off the Danish coast. It proved to be an old merman. He had broad shoulders, a small head, a thin face of an abandoned and malignant cast of expression, and the usual fish-like termination. The bishop does not positively say that this merman was drunk, but he describes his postures as very uneasy—his attitudes being such as perhaps might be expected in a fish that was in liquor and that tried to balance itself on its tail—so that there is reason to suppose the worst. The same bishop tells of a parson who found a dead merman in his parish. The corpse was six feet long. It had a man's face and arms, not unlike a human being's, only that they were connected to its body by membranes. It is not impossible but that this apparent corpse was a merman overtaken in liquor.

I do not gather—at least from my studies in this direction—that these mermen are related to the mermaids. A literal-minded Swede has indeed feigned that the merman is the mermaid's husband, but on no better ground than the circumstance of having seen a male and a female amicably swimming about together. I do not mean to say that the merman, being always found alone, is a proof that he is a bachelor, but it is hard to reconcile the terrestrial and even marine customs of Nature with the pairing of such a divinity as the mermaid with such a horrid, drunken object as the merman. No; if the mermen wive at all they go for their spouses to the dugongs. The mermaids seek elsewhere for lovers than amid the ranks of fishes' tails merging into drunken old men. 50
The sailors know her as a dainty creature that floats upwards to the surface like a beam of golden light.

"Upstarted the mermaid by the ship,
Wi' a glass and a kame in her hand,
Says, 'Reek about, reek about, my merry men;
Ye are not very far from land.'"

If the mermen were the pretty creatures' husbands they would be driven wild with jealousy; for it is certain that in olden times—it may yet be the artless charmers' practice—to make love to human men, to princes as to peasants, very properly choosing the best-looking. Sometimes, it is true, their amorous emotions were inspired by motives extremely sinister. There are many stories told of these marine Becky Sharps ogling and leering at dashing and handsome and fragrant young men of quality ashore, whilst possibly some old Lord Steyne, in the shape of a hideous merman in the depths, watched the wicked comedy with sardonic sneers and laughter. A mermaid nearly drowned a certain young laird of Lorntie. The youthful nobleman saw the beautiful girl apparently struggling for life in the water; but his henchman, bawling out a hearty "God sauf us!" said that the lady was a mermaid; whereupon they galloped off whilst the marine Becky piped up—

"Lorntie, Lorntie, were it na for your man
I had gart your hairt's blood, skirl in my pan!"

Some are also charged with embracing their sweethearts from no other motive than to suffocate them, as in the story of the Manx shepherd, who was so much hurt by being squeezed that he pushed the mermaid away, for which she wounded him to death by flinging a stone at him. Of this deceitful and dangerous kind are those Swedish sea-nymphs who pass their days upon the rocks combing their hair and viewing their perfections in hand-mirrors. They are also said to amuse themselves by spreading out linen to dry, but this fancy clearly springs from the mistakes of seamen who suppose the white foam crawling about the finny maidens to be the contents of the wash-tub. If a fisherman sees one of these mermaids, he is on no account to mention it to his mates, or bad luck will follow. But other kinds of these girls of the ocean are tender, and extremely affectionate and lovable. The melancholy, melodious sounds sometimes heard breathing amid the stillness upon the deep at night are the sighs of mermaids who have loved and lost, and who rise from their coral beds, their grottoes of pearl, their pavilions and palaces of shells, to make their moan to the stars. Mermaids are great lovers of music. They have been known to sacrifice their sweethearts for a tune. A fisherman was induced to give his handsome son to a mermaid on her offering in exchange a brave reward in the shape of luck. But the boy's mother, who sang very sweetly, so charmed the mermaid's heart, that she undertook to return her adored if his mamma would favour her with another air.

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It is gratifying to find old Bailey in his "Dictionarium Britannicum" (1730), defining the word mermaid with a very sober and sturdy leaning in favour of the real existence of these ladies. "Whereas," says he, "it has been thought they have been only the product of the painter's invention, it is confidently reported that there is in the following lake fishes which differ in nothing from mankind but in the want of speech and reason. Father Francis de Pavia, a missionary, being in the kingdom of Congo in Africa, who would not believe that there were such creatures, affirms that the Queen of Singa did see in a river coming out of the lake Zaire many mermaids, something resembling a woman in the breasts, hands, and arms; but the lower part is perfect fish, the head round, the face like a calf, a large mouth, little ears, and round, full eyes. Which creatures Father Merula often saw and eat of them." Which, I may add, does not say much for Father Merula's manners and tastes, unless it is meant figuratively, as in the sense of the saying in the comedy, "Six weeks before I married her I could have eaten her, and six weeks after I was sorry I didn't." As to the face like the calf, the large mouth, and so forth, let it be remembered

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that the place Father de Pavia wrote of was the kingdom of Congo, where, to be sure, we should not expect to find even mermaids beautiful. But that these sea-nymphs, with their golden hair, their shining shapes, their teeth of pearl, their eyes of the liquid blue of their own glorious element, full of ocean mystery and the spirit of the unfathomable starless world in which they live—that they are as beautiful as dreams among shores from whose silent rocks neither the voice of a De Pavia nor a Merula has ever fetched an echo, who can doubt?

The mermaid is the sailor's love. Let us leave her to him.

OLD SEA ORDNANCE.

Not very long since a French smack fished up an old cannon a league or so to the eastward of the North head of the Goodwin Sands. It was believed to be a gun of the time of De Ruyter and "Trump," but so eaten, rusted, and defaced by time and the action of salt water that its paternity was scarcely a determinable thing.

There is no lack of reminders ashore of the sort of weapons with which our grandsires fought the battles of their country; but somehow an interest that no museum could impart attaches to an object dragged from the tomb of the deep, hauled out of the twilight of its oozy bed, and set up for all eyes to gaze at in the staring light of day. In marine collections there are still to be found tomahawks of the pattern which Nelson's men handled; but figure one of these death-dealing contrivances fished up in Cadiz Bay! strangely hooked off a tract of the sand there, over which the keels of the flaming and thunderous ships of that Titanic struggle surged in their throes of conflict!

Of all the changes which the sea-vocation has witnessed none is so complete as the battle-ship's armaments. The process has indeed been gradual; great sharpness of transition has only been visible within the last twenty-five years; yet it is not necessary to talk of hundred-ton guns to emphasize the growth of ordnance. There was a mighty difference betwixt the batteries of the old Duke of Wellington, for example, and those of the ships to which the cannon lately trawled up in the Channel belonged. But it is instructive, and certainly amusing, to go much further back still. In an ancient treatise, called "Speculum Regale," a description is given of the method of attack and defence as practised in the navy in the twelfth century. Here the mariner is told to provide himself with two spears, which he must be careful not to lose in throwing. One of them is to be long enough to reach out of one vessel into another. In addition to these spears, the sailor was to be furnished with scythes fixed to long poles, axes, boat-hooks, slings fitted to staffs,[14] barbed darts, stones for heaving, and bows for shooting. How terrible these primitive weapons were in the hands of the early mariners may be read in the old accounts of sea-fights. Describing the great naval battle between the English and French in Edward III.'s reign, Daniel in his "Collection," p. 227, writes: "Most of the French, rather than endure the arrows and sharp swords of the English or be taken, desperately leap into the sea, whereupon the French king's jester, set on to give him notice of this overthrow (which being so ill news, none else willingly would impart on the sudden) said, and oftentimes reiterated the same: *Cowardly Englishmen*, *Dastardly Englishmen*, *Faint-hearted Englishmen*. The king at length asked him *Why?* For that, said he, *They durst not leap out of their ships into the sea, as our brave Frenchmen did*. By which speech the King apprehended a notion of this overthrow." There were also contrivances called galtraps, beaks for the vessels like boars' heads armed with iron tusks, towers for the bowmen to let fly their arrows from, breastplates of linen very thick, and helmets of steel. The old Jacks fought stoutly with these barbarous weapons, but their real qualities had to lie in wait for gunpowder.

14. It was asserted that the bullet of a sling "in the course, hath continued a fiery heat in the air, yea, sometimes melted, that it killeth at one blow, that it pierceth helmet and shield, that it reacheth further, that it randoneth less" than gun shot! See Camden's "Remaines."

When it came, it brought with it some extraordinary engines. There is extant an account of a ship called the *Great Michael*, built by James IV. of Scotland, and her artillery was composed of the following: "She bare many cannons, six on every side, with three great bassils, two behind in her deck and one before; with 300 shot of small

artillery, that is to say, myand and batterd falcon, and quarter falcon, slings, pestilent serpetens, and double dogs, with hagtor and culvering, corsbows and handbows." Our ancestors, in their choosing of names for their guns, appear to have been influenced by a hope of terrifying the enemy by dreadful terms, as the Chinese try to affright their foes by painting monstrous pictures upon their shields. Batterd falcons, double dogs, hagtors, and pestilent serpetens! There is destruction in the mere names, and a stouter than Falstaff should easily run from such sounds. In Rymer's "Fœdera" appear some queer appellations for sailor's weapons. They occur in an order to the Keeper of the Private Wardrobe in the Tower to deliver to the Treasurer of Queen Philippa the following stores: Eleven guns, forty *libras pulveris* pro guns, forty *petras* pro guns, forty tampons, four touches, one mallet, two firepans, forty pavys, twenty-four bows, forty sheaves of arrows, and other matters.

They did well who in their generation used the word gun or cannon generically, and confined their definitions to calibres as we do to bores and tons. One needs a close acquaintance with old books to understand the writers when they come to talk of ships and how they went armed. Even to the learned the uses of certain old pieces are quite unintelligible. James, the historian, for instance, could not understand what was signified by "murdering pieces." These were cannon mounted upon the after-part of the forecastle, and the muzzles of them raised so as to point to the main topmast head. It is certainly difficult to gather the purpose to be served by such guns, unless, indeed, they were designed as a remedy against the invasion of the foe by the yards and rigging. But why were their muzzles pointed at one mast only? and was it possible that those ancient mariners fully understood what must follow if with their own powder and ball they succeeded in clearing their spars of the enemy by dismasting themselves? 56

The calibre and character of other old guns are fully understood. There was the "whole cannon," which carried a 60 lb. ball; there was the demi-cannon, with a 31 lb. ball; also the cannon petro, 31 lb.; whole culverine, 11 lb.; and demi-culverine, 9 lb. The cannon royal rose sometimes to a 63 lb. ball. Then there was a gun called the French cannon, 43 lb.; the Saker, 5 lb.; the Minion, 4 lb.; and the Faulcon, or Falcon, 2 lb.[15]

15. Some of these terms seem to have been supplied by the language of the falconer. Among the names mentioned by Strutt as given to different species of hawks, I find, the *faulcon*, the *bastard*, the *sacre*, and the *musket*. To this may be added the following from Camden's "Remaines," p. 208: "This being begun by him" (*i.e.* Berthold Swarte, whom he considers the inventor of gunpowder and cannons) "by skill and time is now come to that perfection, not onely in great yron and brass pieces, but also in small, that all admire it; having names given them, some from serpents or ravenous birds, as Culverines, or Colubrines, Serpentines, Basiliques, Faulcons, Sacres; others in other respects, as Canons, Demicanons, Chambers, Slinges, Arquebuze, Caliver, Handgun, Muskets, Petronils, Pistoll, Dagge, etc., and Petarras of the same brood lately invented." From the edition of 1657.

These pieces were in use in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but by degrees other names were given, so that the titles applied to cannon from, let me say, the days of Henry VIII. down to the close of the last century, should furnish out an inventory long enough to fill many pages. 57

To the above list, given by Ralph Willett in a paper on British naval architecture, other examples may be added from the researches of James. He speaks of the cannon-serpentine and bastard-cannon as corresponding with the 42-pounder. The carronade dates as late as 1779, and takes its name from the Scotch town where it was invented. Another comparatively recent gun he speaks of as Gover's, or Congreve's, the Americans naming a similar weapon a Columbiad. Other guns are not mentioned by the historian, though of all our marine artillery they played, as small weapons, the largest part in our wars last century. The swivel cannon carried a shot of half a pound; it was fixed in a socket on the ship's side, or stern, or bow, and in her tops. The socket that supported it

was bored in a piece of oak, hooped with iron, to enable it to sustain the recoil. It was, indeed, a modernized form of the old pettararoe, and was turned about at will by an iron handle affixed to its cascabel; when worked in the tops it was charged with musket-balls, and fired down at the enemy's decks. The coehorn was a small mortar, also fixed on a swivel, and chiefly used for firing grenadoes, as they were called, or bullets from merchantmen's close quarters when they were boarded. For yard-arm fighting there was the "powder-flask"—a flask charged with gunpowder, and fitted with a fuse; it was hurled into the enemy's deck immediately before the assault. Another device was the "stink-pot," still in vogue with John Chinaman, an earthen shell suspended from the yard-arm or end of the bowsprit. This machine was charged with powder mixed with materials which threw up a disgusting, suffocating smoke and smell. The notion of these apparatuses was to create confusion, in the midst of which and under cover of the thick vapour the detachment rushed aboard, cutlass, and sword, and pistol in hand. Another contrivance was the "organ," the grandfather of the Mitrailleuse—a machine formed of six or seven musket-barrels fixed upon one stock so as to be fired at once. There was also the fire-arrow, a small iron dart, furnished with springs and bars, and a match saturated with powder and sulphur, wound round the shaft. It was usually fired from a swivel, at the enemy's sails. The match was ignited by the explosion, and the dart, penetrating the sail, set the cloths on fire. The springs and bars prevented the arrow from passing through the canvas. The musquetoon was a sort of carbine, with a barrel spirally rifled from the breech; the explosion lengthened the ball to about the breadth of a finger. The old fire-pike possessed something of the character of the fire-arrow. Another weapon of the fusil pattern is indicated in Sir William Monson's "Building of Ships:" "As I have said, such a ship that has neither forecastle, copperidge head, nor any other manner of defence, but with her men only; that hath no fowlers, which are pieces of great importance, after a ship is boarded and entred, or lieth board and board; for the ordnance stands her in little stead, and is as apt to endanger themselves as their enemy; for in giving fire, it may take hold of pitch, tar, oakum, or powder, and burn them both for company; but a murderer or fowler, being shot out of their own ship, laden with dice shot, will scour the deck of the enemy, and not suffer the head of a man to appear." It is evident that the "murderer" or "fowler" was a sort of fusil.[16]

16. I find this word "murderer" frequently occurring in Hakluyt.

There are some curious features of sixteenth and seventeenth century maritime warfare preserved in this fine old captain's Naval Tracts. He tells us that the French used to conceal half their soldiers in the hold and to call them up as they were required, the others who had been fighting going below. The Dunkirkers, like the Spanish whom Anson fought,[17] flung themselves flat on the deck before the enemy, so that the shot, great and small, should fly over them. The Hollanders he charges with Dutch courage. "Instead of cables, planks, and other devices to preserve their men, the Hollanders, wanting natural valour of themselves, used to line their company in the head, by giving them gunpowder to drink, and other kind of liquor to make them sooner drunk; which, besides it is a barbarous and unchristianlike act, when they are in danger of death to make them ready for the devil, it often proves more perilous than prosperous to them by firing their own ships or making a confusedness in the fight, their wits being taken from them." It will be supposed that the seamen of Blake had a higher notion of Dutch courage than Monson.

17. See the description of the fight with the galleon in Anson's "Voyage Round the World." This book, that bears the name of Walters, Chaplain to the Centurion, was in reality written by Benjamin Robins. *Naval Chronicle*, vol. viii. 267.

It is two centuries ago since the *Sovereign* was launched, a vessel of 1657 tons. There is a curious account of her in Heywood.[18] She was a big ship for those times, and is about as good an example as I know to illustrate the mighty change that has been worked

in two hundred years. Her dimensions were—Length of keel, 128 ft.; beam, 48 ft.; length over all (that is, from the fore-end of her "beak" to the stern), 232 ft., making a difference of 104 ft. as between the length of her keel and that of her upper deck and head! She was 76 ft. high from the bottom of her keel to the top of her lantern, of which kind of furniture she carried five, in the biggest of which ten persons could comfortably stand upright. Her decorations were extraordinarily gorgeous. "All sides," we read, "were carved with trophies of artillery and types of honour, as well belonging to sea as land, with symbols appertaining to navigation; also their two sacred Majesties' badges of honour; arms with several angels holding their letters in compartiments, all which works are guilded over, and no other colour but gold and black." Her figure-head was a Cupid, or a child bridling a lion; her bows were also apparently ornamented with six figures; on the stern was carved Victory "in the midst of a frontispiece; upon the beak-head sitteth King Edgar on horseback, trampling on seven kings."[19] It would have seemed like a violation of the choicest canons of old romance to furnish such a pageant as this with the plain guns grimly generalized with which the vessels of succeeding days fought for king, commonwealth, home and beauty. We look in the description of her for culverin and cannon royal, for the chace ordnance and small artillery of those gilt, plumed, and glowing times, and find them sure enough. It must have been heartrending to the curled and booted captain of those days to have offered so gay and brilliant a fabric to the iron bullets and fiery arrows of the foe. Think of the Cupid being knocked on the head, and King Edgar violently hammered off his horse!

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18. Quoted by Ralph Willett in his "Disquisition on Shipbuilding," 1800.

19. "The prime workman," says Heywood, "is Captain Phineas Pett, overseer of the work, whose ancestors—father, grandfather, and great grandfather—for the space of two hundred years, have continued in the same name, officers and architects in the Royal Navy." This, as Willett points out, indicates a regular establishment as far back as 1437, the reign of Henry VI.

It is interesting to observe how such a ship entered into action. First, the vessel's company were divided into three parts—one to tack the ship, the second to ply the small shot, the third to attend the great guns. Sail was to be shortened to foresail, main and fore-top sail. A "valiant and sufficient man" was sent to the helm. Of course every officer was expected to do his duty; the boatswain to sling the yards, to "put forth" the flag, ancient and streamers, to arm the top and waist cloths, to spread the netting, provide tubs for water, and the like. Then the gunner was to see that his mates had care of their "files, budge barrels, and cartridges, to have his shot in a locker for every piece, and the yeoman of the powder to keep his room and to be watchful of it." A hundred years later found some enlargement of these plain prescriptions.[20] The boatswain and his mates see to the rigging and sails; the carpenter and his crew prepare shot-plugs and mauls and provide against injury to the pumps; the master and his mates attend the braces; the lieutenants visit the different decks; crows, "handspecs," rammers, sponges, powder-horns, matches, and train tackles are placed by the side of every cannon; the hatches are closed to prevent the men from deserting their posts by skulking below. The marines are drawn up in rank and file; the gun-lashings are cast adrift and the tompions withdrawn; after which the enemy is to be beaten! This is the routine of a hundred years ago. What is it now? Not less widely different from the discipline of the times of forty-two pounders, of round, grape, and canister, of chain, bar, star, and other dismantling missiles, than was the routine of the epoch of double dogs and pestilent serpetens from the days of the spears of the Picts and the coracle of the nude Briton. Yet what did those little minions and sakers do for us? We shall have reason to be well satisfied if the hundred-ton gun of to-day obtain for us one-half the triumphs which were achieved for our country by those little cannon-royal and brass swivels of the times of Raleigh, Blake, and Shovel.

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20. See Falconer's "Dictionary."

THE HONOUR OF THE FLAG.

Whatever may have been the other causes of our wars with the Hollanders, one was unquestionably the herring. No doubt the insinuations of Richelieu greatly perturbed the phlegmatic Batavian, and helped him into a fighting posture; but the bloater was at the bottom of it. We took that fish for a text whereon to discourse concerning our title to dominion over the sea; and though in these days it is as much the mackerel as the herring, as much the cod as the mackerel, as much the turbot as the cod over which the dispute continues, the old battles in the heart of which Blake curled his whiskers and Tromp flourished his broomstick are still fought, though, to be sure, without Ruyter's fire-ships or the eloquent thunder of Monk's cannon-royal.

The conflict now is shorn of its old glory. It is waged, indeed, close into the Thames, though not so high as the Hope; nor, in the direction of the Medway, does it approach Sheerness; and upon the eastern coast the struggle is often within view of Scarborough and the Norfolk cliffs. But there is no more smoke of battle. It is the Dutchman sneaking across the Englishman's trawling gear with "the devil"; it is the Frenchman shearing under cover of the blackness through the league long drift-nets of the Shoreham or Penzance smack. Years have brought to this nation the philosophic mind. Instead of declaring war we station a gunboat, put on a concerned face when we hear of the Dover and Brixham men assaulting the crews of the Boulogne and Calais craft, and read without emotion of the capture of a bellicose Hans Butter-box by a small steamer with a whip at her masthead. Yet the honour of our flag is so inextricably woven with the literature and traditions of these fishing squabbles that, spite of the insignificance to which the easy indifference of "my lords" would reduce them in our day, the reflection of a great and piercing light in our history is upon them, from the lustre of which they gather a complexion that is not wholly sentimental.

In 1609 Hugo Grotius wrote a book, which he called "Mare Liberum." It is heavy reading in these times of Wilkie Collins and Miss Braddon, and the heavier, perhaps, for being in Latin. But it was deemed a treatise of very great eloquence, especially by the Dutch, to whose ocean-rights it specially referred. In short, the object of Grotius was to prove the weakness of our title to the sovereignty of the seas, the deep, in his opinion, being a gift from God and common to all nations. This was answered by John Selden, the most amazing scholar that any age or country ever produced, of so candid and great-hearted a nature, as is particularly exhibited in his Table-Talk, that it is difficult to read his astonishing answer to Grotius without wishing that his patriotism had dealt with a subject more answerable to his convictions than this question of sea rights. But his "Mare Clausum" is a volume that one would think must be of abounding and enduring interest to Englishmen. It was translated into English by special command by Marchmont Nedham (as he spells his name), and published in that form in 1652. It probably has few readers now. Yet such was the opinion of its potency as a sustained argument that it was believed, to use the language of Nedham, "had he (*i.e.* Selden) persisted with the same firm resolution in this honourable business of the sea, as he did in other things that were destructive to the nation's interest, the Netherlanders had been prevented from spinning out their long opportunitie to an imaginarie claim of prescription; so that they would have had less pretence to act those insolencies now which in former times never durst enter the thoughts of their predecessors."

The book pre-eminently concerns the honour of our flag, of our dominion over the seas, more particularly in regard to the right of our kings and queens to grant licences to

foreigners to fish in the sea, and of the obligation on all ships of what denomination soever to strike their topsails to our flag, or in other words to salute the symbol of Britannia's sovereignty wherever they shall encounter it. For how many centuries this act of courtesy has been exacted as a right by the monarchs of England you must read Selden's book to discover. Writing in James I.'s reign, he shows how he traces it back for above four hundred years by this: That at Hastings it was decreed by King John, in the second year of his reign, with the assent of the peers, "if the governor or commander of the King's navie, in his naval expeditions (which were all in that age upon the Southern Sea) shall meet any ship whatsoever by sea, either laden or empty, that shall refuse to strike their sails at the command of the King's Governor or admiral or his lieutenant, but make resistance against them which belong to his fleet; That then they are to bee reputed enemies if they may bee taken, yea, and their ships and goods be confiscated as the goods of enemies." He points out that it was accounted treason in any man who omitted to acknowledge the King of England in his own sea by striking sail; nor would the circumstance of his country being friendly with that of the transgressor protect him. Another illustration of the antiquity of this custom, or exaction rather, Selden finds in a gold rose-noble,[21] that was coined in the reign of Edward III. The stamp on one side of it represented a ship floating on the sea, and a king, armed with sword and shield, sitting on the ship as on a throne, the device being obviously intended to represent the maritime dominion of the ocean. All that Selden has to say about fishing in the sea is full of interest. He points out that Henry VI. gave leave to the French, and other foreigners, to fish, sometimes for six months, sometimes for a year; but this leave "was granted under the name even of a passport or safe conduct; yea, and a size or proportion was prescribed to their fishing boats or busses that they should not be above thirty tons." The French had to obtain leave from the English admiral to fish for soles for the table of their own king (Henri Quatre), and such boats as were caught fishing without a licence were seized as trespassers. In the Eastern waters the Hollanders and Zealanders were forced to seek permission to fish from the Governor of Scarborough Castle, and Selden quotes Camden's expression of wonder at the vast sum of money the Hollanders made by this fishing upon our coast and at the apathy of the English, "who have ever granted them leave to fish, reserving alwaies the honour and privilege to themselves, but through a kindle of negligence resigning the profit to strangers." It is on the mass of evidence as to the antiquity of the British claim to the sovereignty of the seas that Dr. Campbell, the historian, bases his opinion respecting the naval power of the Early Britons, who are generally considered as a race of painted wild men, who speared fish or crossed their rivers and creeks in wicker boats covered with hides.

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21. The value of this coin was 6*s*. 8*d*. as money then was. The Alchymists pretended that it was made by their arts; interpreting the inscription on the reverse, *Jesus autem transiens per medium corum ibat*, to signify that gold was made by secret art amid the ignorant. Four rose-nobles weighed an ounce.

The question of this dominion became a vital one to this country with the growth and the aggressions of Holland. Was she or England to be sovereign of the sea? And was an English ship, figuratively speaking, to bow to a Dutch one when she met her? Selden offered the world precedents enough on our behalf. That King John should have claimed a universal striking to the Royal flag was surely proof that what might impress the foreigner as an extraordinary pretension was founded on the unquestioned rights of our predecessors. Edward III., in his commissions to his admirals, repeatedly styled himself sovereign of the English seas, affirming, with perfect justice, that he derived the title from his progenitors. In Hakluyt there is preserved a curious metrical admonition, presumably written in or about the sixth year of the reign of Edward IV., entitled "De politia conservatira Maris," with a heading to the general introduction that runs thus: "Here beginneth the prologue of the processe of the libel of the English policie, exhorting all England to keep the sea, and namely the narrow sea; shewing what profite commeth

thereof, and also what worship and salvation to England, and to all Englishmen." It will be owned that the anonymous author's appeal was not addressed to deaf ears. An immortal proof of British resolution in this direction occurs in the reign of Queen Mary. Lord William Howard, created Baron of Effingham, was sent with a fleet of twenty-eight sail presumably to guard the coast, but in reality to escort Philip of Spain, whose own fleet, however, consisted of one hundred and sixty vessels. His admiral came sailing along with the Spanish flag flying at his masthead, which so offended Lord William Howard that he fired a shot at him and forced him to strike or haul down his colours before he would make his compliments to the prince.[22] This was followed by another lively example of a like kind. When the Spanish fleet went to fetch Anne of Austria, who was in Flanders, Sir John Hawkins, with a small squadron of her Majesty's ships, was riding in Cattewater. The Spanish admiral endeavoured to pass without saluting. Sir John sent a shot at the Admiral's rigging, but no notice was taken of it. A second shot fired went clean through the Spaniard's hull. On this the Don sent an officer of distinction with compliments and complaints to Sir John Hawkins, who refused to admit the officer or hear what he had to say; but simply required him to tell his admiral that, having neglected to pay the respect due to the Queen of England, in her seas and port, he must not expect to lie there but to be off within twelve hours. Sir John's flag was flying on the *Jesus of Lubeck*; to this ship came the Spaniard full of remonstrance, declaring he knew not what to make of the treatment he had received, seeing that there was peace between the two Crowns. "Put the case, sir," said Sir John, "that an English fleet came into any of the King, your master's, ports, his Majesty's ships being there, and those English ships should carry their flags in their tops, would not you shoot them down and beat the ships out of your port?" The Spaniard confessed himself in the wrong, and submitted to the penalty the English Admiral imposed.

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22. To strike is to lower. The old salutation was the striking or lowering of the top-sail. The introduction of the topgallant-sail must have rendered this courtesy extremely inconvenient.

It was the Hollander, however, who gave the English most trouble in regard to the honour of the flag. In or about 1604 Sir William Monson was cruising with a fleet with instructions to assert the superiority in the British seas which came to James I. from his ancestors. Sir William has told the story himself in his "Naval Tracts." On his return to Calais in July, 1605, he found an addition of six ships to the Dutch squadron he had left off Dover three days before. One of them was the Admiral's. "Their object," he says, "in coming in shew was to beleaguer the Spaniards who were then at Dover." As Sir William approached, the Dutch Admiral struck his flag thrice, meaning that the Spaniards as well as others should conclude that, by continuing to "wear" his flag, he represented a sovereignty of the sea as complete as that of the English. Sir William requested him to take in his flag; he refused, alleging that he had struck it three times, which he held was acknowledgment enough. There was some discussion, after which he was told that if he did not salute, the British Admiral would weigh anchor and fall down to him, and then the force of the ships should determine the question; "for rather than I would suffer his flag to be worn in view of so many nations as were to behold it, I resolved to bury myself in the sea." "The Admiral, it seems, on better advice," adds Sir William, "took in his flag and stood immediately off to sea, firing a gun for the rest of the fleet to follow him. And thus I lost my guest the next day at dinner as he had promised." Amongst others who witnessed this was Sciriago, the Spanish General, who told Sir William that if the Hollanders had worn their flag, times had strangely altered in England, for he remembered his old master King Philip the Second being shot at by the Lord Admiral of England for wearing his flag in the narrow seas when he came to marry Queen Mary.

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In spite of treaties of peace between England and Holland, the trouble about the fishing continued. Disputes arose over the payment of the assize-herring in Scotland, and the Dutch sent ships of war to protect their herring-boats against the penalties which must attend the refusal to pay the licence money. In 1609 King James issued a proclamation

concerning fishing, in which it was stated that commissioners had been authorized "at London for our realms of England and Ireland, and at Edinburgh for our realm of Scotland," to issue licences to such foreign vessels as intend to fish for the whole or any part of the year, and that the licences were to be taken out "upon pain of such chastisements as shall be fit to be inflicted upon such as are wilful offenders." The fishing quarrel rose to a height again in 1618, but it does not appear that the honour of the flag was involved in these trawling politics until 1652. In that year Commodore Young encountered a Dutch man-of-war whose captain refused to salute the English colours. The commodore sent a boat with a polite request that the Dutchman would strike; but mynheer answered very honestly that the States had threatened to take off his head if he struck; whereupon a fight began, with the result that the Dutchman had to haul down his colours. This was on May 14; on the 19th Van Tromp bore down upon Blake, who was lying off Dover. Blake sent three shots at the Dutch flag as a hint; which Tromp answered with a broadside, and then followed an action that lasted till nine at night, when, Blake being reinforced, the Dutch made off. Peace was made in 1654. In that treaty nothing was 71
said as to our sovereignty in respect to the fisheries, but amongst other articles was the acknowledgment of the dominion of the English at sea and the agreement to strike to the meteor bunting. But the prowess of Admiral Blake may have provided for this without any obligation of specification; for in this year, coming to an anchor off Cadiz, a Dutch Admiral who was there would not hoist his flag whilst Blake was present. Indeed, such was the awe in which Blake was held, that the Algerines, merely with the idea of obtaining his favour, made a point of overhauling the Sallee rovers for English prisoners and sending all they found to him.

The honour of the flag seems a noticeable element in the origin of the war of 1665. Sir John Lawson, in command of a squadron of ships, was in the Mediterranean with De Ruyter. The Dutch admiral saluted the English flag, a compliment which Lawson refused to return, alleging that his orders did not allow him to strike to the subjects of any king or State whatever. It may be supposed that such treatment pretty liberally envenomed the soul of the fine old Dutchman, who, when he was shortly afterwards sent to commit hostilities against us, made sail on that adventure with a hot heart. In 1674 we find the Dutch in the treaty of peace professing to understand a point that in spite of previous treaties they had refused to admit. In the treaty with Cromwell they had agreed that their ships should salute the English, and in subsequent treaties the same undertaking appears. But their usual apology for failure was that striking was a mere matter of civility, and that if they declined to pull off their hat there was no obligation upon them to do so. But by 1674 the political atmosphere had been cleared by British cannons, and the Dutch were now able to distinguish. The treaty ended the doubt; what was before styled courtesy was 72
here confessed a right. Not only was the extent of the British sovereignty clearly defined; the State undertook that whole fleets, as well as separate ships, "should strike their sails to any fleet or single ship carrying the King's flag, as the custom was in the days of his ancestors." It was said by Secretary Coke in a letter addressed by order of Charles I. to Sir William Boswell, Ambassador at the Hague, "This cannot be doubted, that whosoever will encroach upon him (the King) by sea, will do it by land also, when they see their time. To such presumption 'Mare Liberum' gave the first warning piece, which must be answered with a defence of 'Mare Clausum,' not so much by discourses, as by the louder language of a powerful navy, to be better understood when overstrained patience seeth no hope of preserving her right by other means."

"The spirits of your fathers,
Shall start from every wave,"

sings Campbell, and in Coke's words one finds a noble example of the sort of message those spirits knew how to deliver. What has been done for the honour of the flag by a

language louder than discourses may be easily traced through the Rookes, the Shovels, the Mansels, the Howes, the Rodneys, Keppels, Nelsons.

How has that honour broadened since the days of striking topsails! Colonial men-of-war are now entitled to fly the flag of the British Navy. There was obviously much deliberation before the resolution was arrived at in respect of the Gayundah, a vessel that has the honour to signally advance that great scheme of federation which is occupying the minds of all English-speaking men. Indeed, it is perfectly obvious that no flag could be so fitly flown at the masthead or peak of our Colonial men-of-war as those same colours which the heroism of the grandsires of our distant kinsmen rendered emblematic of power, justice, and freedom. 73

The British national flag is the Union Jack. This consists of the blended crosses of St. George, red; of St. Andrew, white; of St. Patrick, red, marginating Scotland's cross so as to admit of a portion of the white being shown. These several crosses combined upon a blue ground form that meteor flag of which the poet writes, though not certainly that noble piece of bunting which, we are reminded by the same poet in the same song—

"Has braved a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze."

The wishes of the Colonials were eminently honourable and loyal, and the gratification of their desires in respect of a flag whose glory and traditions are certainly not less theirs than they are ours should prove a source of sincere satisfaction to the people of this country. For the honour of the flag! We know what that inspiration has done for us of old, and how it must influence in the future the world-wide English-speaking races whose artillery shall thunder under the shadow of Britain's blood-red cross.[23] Without his flag what would be fighting or even mercantile Jack? We all know how old Commodore Dance, at the head of his little squadron of tea ships, put to flight the formidable Frenchman bristling with tiers of cannon. Even under the red flag, symbol of peaceful trade, there have been performed many noble and valorous exploits, and it is no doubt the memory of scores of brilliant deeds performed by the British merchant sailor that excites the regret very widely felt that in these times, when the water is smooth, and the political barometer fairly high, the foreigners in their hundreds should be driving the English mariner out of his legitimate home—the British forecastle. 74

23. In the last century the Union flag, as it was called, bore these words:— "For the Protestant Religion and for the Liberty of England." The flags of that time are thus described: THE JACK.—Blue, charged with a saltire argent and a cross gules, bordered argent. MERCANTILE FLAG: Red, with a franc-quarter argent, charged with a cross gules. There seems to have been two royal standards, the colour unsettled, some saying that it ought to be yellow, others white. One was charged with a quartered escutcheon of England, Scotland, France and Ireland.

The other royal flag is described as "quarterly, the first and fourth quarter counter-quartered, in which the first and fourth azure, three fleurs-de-lis or the royal arms of France, quartered with the imperial ensigns of England, which are in the second and third gules, eight lions passant; gardant in pale." The rest of this description, so far as I can make out the heraldic jargon, seems to represent the Royal Standard of to-day.

Formerly, if a council of war was to be held at sea, the Admiral hung his flag in the main-shrouds, that is, in the lower rigging; the vice-admiral in the fore-shrouds; and the rear-admiral in the mizzen-shrouds.

But it is to naval story that we must turn for nearly all of what pertains to the honour of the flag. The contests have been tough and sharp touching the "doffing" question. Whether it was our duty to bow first to the haughty Spaniard at sea, as he maintained, or whether it was for him to "make a leg" at the sight of good Queen Bess's flag, was a

question for Drake and Raleigh, for Hawkins and that noble gentleman Charles Howard, Baron of Effingham, to settle, just as Blake and Monk and Ascue and Commodore Young, as has been shown, decided the same matter with reference to the broomstick of the brave and desperate Dutchman. It was the sailor of Queen Elizabeth's day, however, that made the flag the emblem which the world has ever since recognized it to be. The 75
story of Sir Robert Mansell, Admiral of the "narrow seas," as the English Channel was then termed, is typical of our naval history from the first chapter of it. He went to Gravelines to receive the Spanish Ambassador, whilst Sir Jerome Turner, his Vice-Admiral, attended at Calais for the French Ambassador. "But," says the quaint historian, "the Frenchman coming first and hearing the Vice-Admiral was to attend him, the Admiral the other, in a scorn put himself in a passage boat in Calais and came forth with flag in top. Instantly Sir Jerome Turner sent to know of the Admiral what he should do. Sir Robert Mansell sent him word to shoot and strike him if he would not take in the flag. This, as it made the flag be pulled in, caused a great complaint, and it was believed it would have undone Sir Robert Mansell, the French faction put it so home; but he maintained the act and was the better beloved of his Sovereign ever after to his death."

Even the old pirates talked of the honour of their flag! a very dismal piece of bunting, indeed, consisting of a skull, cross-bones, and hour-glass on a black ground. Yet let such records as "Tom Cringle's Log," which are very true history, though disguised with the mask of fiction, bear witness to the furious heroism with which those murderous savages, in earrings and sashes, in ringlets and jack-boots, fought for the abhorred flag at their masthead, swaying in masses half-naked at their cannons, and occasionally blowing themselves to pieces in their efforts to sink the enemy, just as ancient mariners tell of mutilated sharks twisting round to get at their own wounds in their dreadfully gluttonous desire to eat themselves up. Nelson stormed in among the Frenchmen and the Spaniards with six flags flying in different parts of his rigging, because he could not endure to think 76
of the possibility of a stray shot making him look, even for a breathless moment, to have struck. There is very little change between the flags of his time and those of ours. Of course this regards the colours as shown by men-of-war; in signalling Marryatt's Code—as all other codes which existed prior to the clever combinations of the author of "Peter Simple"—has made way for the International Code. In the British Navy flags are either red, white, or blue, and are hoisted at one or another of the royal mastheads, according to the rank of the Admiral. This has been the custom for centuries. Previous to 1801 the Union flag, as it was called, bore only the Crosses of St. George and St. Andrew; but it was then, as after, appropriated to the Admiral of the Fleet, who was regarded as the first military officer under the Lord High Admiral.

Indeed, the history of our flags is the history of our Navy. Much of the interest one finds in reading the old accounts of naval battles lies in waiting to see who was the first to strike. Just as a ship looks glorified when "dressed"—that is to say, when she has hung out all her colours from peak end to mastheads, and from mastheads to the end of the flying-jibboom, and thence to the water—so is our national marine story radiant with the flags, pennons, and "ancients," which flutter through it, sometimes blowing saucily, sometimes riven and seared with flame and bullet, sometimes a mangled rag valiantly hanging by a nail at the top of the mast, or "seized" in the rigging, whilst below it the battle rages like a thunderstorm. It is, indeed, in these days, almost inconceivable that mortal men should ever have been able to achieve for the honour of their flag the triumphs which rendered the British colours the terror they became. Campbell, Brenton, 77
James, Naval Chronicles, Annual Registers, Maritime Records of all sorts and descriptions teem with illustrations of dauntless bravery, of headlong fearlessness such as might make one believe that the Jacks of those days not only bore a charmed life, but were giants as mighty in stature as the early Irish are supposed to have been, to judge from the colossal remains that are occasionally dug up in various parts of that "kingdom." It is impossible to read the voyage of Anson or the accounts of the early

explorers of the South Seas without a feeling of pity for the miserable terror aroused in the Spaniards, the half-castes, and blacks by the sight of the English flag or by the sound of an English voice. The way the story usually runs is—the vessel is seen to approach, is recognized as an English South Seaman; whereupon the Governor collects all his plate and treasure, piles it into waggons drawn by mules, which he sends up country, and then hastily follows, occasionally, in his fright, leaving his wife behind him. A wretched priest is sent off in a boat pulled by shivering blacks, and, with teeth chattering, suggests a compromise, which the English regard as a stratagem to furnish the Governor with time enough to make good his escape. So they send the priest ashore with a polite intimation that if, by a certain hour, so many thousands of ducats and dollars, not to mention silver candlesticks and golden crucifixes, are not brought off and safely stowed away in their hold, they will sack and burn the town. If the Governor fails to comply, then we are admitted to a humiliating spectacle. The English row ashore, and find the coast lined with troops; but as the boats approach the troops retire, and by the time the keels have grounded upon the beach, the Governor's army, along with a band of music and several hundreds of horsemen, are to be observed watching the proceedings of the English from the top of a very lofty hill. Such was the honour of the flag! Such is it still, and such is it sure to remain in the hands of those distant children of Old England who will grasp the halliards by which it is hoisted.

But let the humble "driver," the obscure trawler, have his merit too. Were the herring woven into the symbolism of the Royal Standard it would not be amiss. When you hear the pensive cry of "fine bloaters," or the melodious rattle of "Caller herrin," think how much the honour of the flag owes to that kind of fish. The sovereignty of the sea is still ours, but to justify our inheritance we ought really to suffer our souls to be tinged with the old Parliamentary spirit in our response to the cries of our fishermen calling upon the country to help them against the Flemish "devil" in the North Sea, and the drift-net-cutting weapon of the Calais smacksmen in our "narrow waters."

THE NAVAL OFFICER'S SPIRIT.

In Admiral Hobart Pasha's sketches are many well told stories, all of them delivered with the rough simplicity of the seamen. The most striking is a slaving yarn. Some boats were in pursuit of a vessel, full to the hatches with negroes. One of them, swept forward by desperate rowers, succeeded in getting close under her bows, and a man in her sprang aboard, "like a chamois." The slaver was going through it at six knots, and the boat, from which the man had leapt, do what the oarsmen would, dropped astern. In a few moments was heard the report of a pistol, and the vessel suddenly swept round into the wind, all aback, and her way stopped. The boats thereupon dashed alongside, and after a short struggle took possession of the brig. "There we found our lieutenant standing calmly at the helm, which was a long wooden tiller. He it was who had jumped on board alone, shot the man at the helm, put the said helm down with his leg, while in his hand he held his other pistol, with which he threatened to shoot any one who dared to touch him."

The date of this is not given, but it falls well within living, indeed, within comparatively recent memory, and, like much else that is told in this autobiography, serves as an example of the survival of a spirit which makes our naval history as lively as if the annals were due to the imagination of the Scotts, Marryats, and Coopers of romance, and certainly far more inspiring and stirring than the choicest novels could prove.

It has always seemed to me as if the whole philosophy and spirit of British naval history lay in that memorable remark of Blake: "It is not for us to mind State affairs. We are to prevent foreigners from fooling us." It is the broad humorous simplicity of the old salt, his shrewd perception and unadorned habit of going to work, that make all about him fascinating reading. Lord Anson said to Captain Campbell, after the defeat of Conflans, "The king will knight you if you think proper." "Troth, my lord," responded the captain, "I ken nae use that will be to me." "But your lady may like it," said Anson. "Weel, then," replied Campbell, "His majesty may knight her if he pleases." One finds the same curious sturdiness in demanding rights as in rejecting honours. There is nothing in this way to beat Admiral Vernon's letter, dated June 30, 1774, to the Secretary to the Admiralty. During his retirement he had been passed over in a promotion of flag-officers. "That I might not," he wrote, "by any be thought to be one that would decline the public service, I have thought proper to remind their lordships I am living, and have, I thank God, the same honest zeal reigning in my breast that has animated me on all occasions to approve myself a faithful and zealous subject and servant to my Royal master; and if the first Lord Commissioner has represented me in any other light to my Royal master, he has acted with a degeneracy unbecoming the descendant from a noble father, whose memory I reverence and esteem, though I have no compliments to make to the judgment or conduct of the son."

The first lord was Daniel, Earl of Winchelsea. Long service at the cannon had taught the old sea-dogs the virtue of thunder.

In the account of the loss of the *Earl of Abergavenny*, it is stated that a midshipman was appointed to guard the spirit-room. The sailors pressed eagerly upon him. "Give us some grog!" they cried; "it will be all one an hour hence." "I know we must die," replied the gallant young officer, coolly, "*but let us die like men*!" Armed with a brace of pistols, he kept his place even while the ship was sinking. Byron has employed this incident in "Don Juan." The captain of the *Earl of Abergavenny* was John Wordsworth, brother of the poet.

There is an extraordinary instance of naval spirit preserved in “Burnaby’s Travels in North America,” published in 1775. Captain St. Loe, commander of an English man-of-war lying in Boston harbour, being ashore on a Sunday, was taken into custody for walking on the Lord’s Day. On Monday he was carried before a justice and fined. Refusing to pay, he was sentenced to sit in the stocks one hour during the time of change. The sentence was executed. Whilst the captain sat in durance, the magistrates gravely admonished him to respect in future the wholesome laws of the province, and he was further exhorted for ever after to reverence and keep holy the Sabbath Day. At the expiration of the hour he was liberated. On regaining the use of his legs he stood up, expressed himself as greatly edified by the lesson he had learned, and declared himself so thoroughly converted as to rejoice the hearts of the Boston saints. He acted his part so well that he became extremely popular among the godly folks, who, on the day fixed for the sailing of the ship, accepted his invitation to dine with him on board. He gave them a capital dinner, plied them with bowls and bottles, and in a short time the whole ship resounded with their roaring merriment. On a sudden a body of sailors burst into the cabin, laid hold of the saints and pinioned them, then dragged them on deck, where they were stripped and tied up. How many lashes the boatswain and his mates dealt them is not stated; but the story goes that “when they had suffered the whole of the discipline, which had flayed them from the nape of the neck to the hams, the captain took a polite leave, earnestly begging them to remember him in their prayers. They were then let down into the boat that was waiting for them, the crew saluted them with three cheers, and Captain St. Loe made sail.”

82

This fairly comes under the heading of what Wordsworth calls the “good old plan.” And who can tell how much blood would have remained unshed had the nations left the settlement of personal affronts to ingenious individual retaliation? There is a most engaging and delightful history of England’s navy yet to be written on the plan of Granger’s entertaining story by biography. James is accurate, but dry; Brenton is always readable; but James and he are not both wanted. Dr. Campbell is dull. Tediousness, however, is inevitable in a narrative that does but tell the same story, somewhat varied, over and over again. One sea battle is very much like another, and the mind is quickly oppressed with details of starboard and larboard tacks, of falling top-masts, of broadsides and lowered colours. But let some diligent collector go to work on an anecdotal history of the navy, and I should say he can scarcely miss of a great audience. How lively, for example, would prove such a chapter as this of the spirit of the naval officer suggested to me by Admiral Hobart’s book! Let a few plums, picked up here and there from old records and chronicles, suffice as an example of the sort of pudding that awaits a cook.

83

On July 25, 1776, Sir Thomas Rich, in her Majesty’s ship *Enterprise*, met with a French fleet of two ships of the line and several frigates, commanded by the Duc de Chartres. The French admiral hailed the *Enterprise*, and desired the captain to come on board immediately, to which Sir Thomas replied that if the Duke had anything to communicate he must come on board the *Enterprise*, as he should not go out of his ship. The Duke insisted that he should, or he would sink him. “You can do as you please,” exclaimed Sir Thomas Rich, “but the only orders I receive are from my own admiral.” On this the Duke begged him *as a favour* to come on board, as he wished much to make his acquaintance. Sir Thomas at once went, and was received with the utmost respect.

Here is another plum from the memoirs of Sir Thomas Graves, Rear-Admiral at the Battle of Copenhagen. The scene was Noddle’s Island, off Boston. An American, more daring than the rest, advanced nearly half-way between his own people and the Marines of the squadron. Graves, who was then captain, was not a little irritated by the sight of this one Yankee insolently and contemptuously defiant of the whole of the British seamen and marines, and, borrowing a musket and bayonet from a brother officer, went out to meet the American champion in single combat. The Yankee allowed Graves to come within fifty yards of him. “The eyes of our respective parties are on us,” shouted Graves,

and, after assuring the other that he had no intention to fire "before he could feel him with the point of his bayonet," added that if the battle ended in his favour he should carry the Yankee's scalp away with him as a trophy. Just as he said this he kicked against a stone and fell headlong, whereupon the American discharged his musket at him, threw it down, and took to his heels. The shot narrowly missed Graves, who fired in his turn without hitting his man, and then retreated, receiving as he went the fire of a score or two of persons who had concealed themselves in order to assist their American champion. A ludicrous forecast of the fight between the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake* sixty or seventy years later!

84

There is wonderful spirit in that saying of old Benbow during the engagement with Du Casse. His right leg was broken to pieces by a chain shot. He was carried below to be dressed, and whilst the surgeon was at work, a lieutenant expressed great sorrow for the loss of the Admiral's leg. Benbow replied, "I am sorry for it too, but I had rather have lost them both than seen this dishonour brought upon the English nation. But, do ye hear, if another shot should take me off, behave like brave men and fight it out." That a man should talk composedly during the agonies of amputation by such surgical skill as was then to be found in the cockpit, is, I think, an extraordinary illustration of the fortitude and self-devotion of the sea-braves of those times.

"The spirit of your fathers" shows in many directions. It is related in the life of Rodney that when that fine old Admiral's poverty became a subject of public notoriety, De Sartine suggested to the Duke de Biron that the command of the French fleet in the West Indies should be offered him. On this the Duke invited Rodney to spend some weeks with him, and one morning, whilst strolling about the grounds, sounded the Admiral on the subject. Rodney, not catching the Duke's drift, thought him deranged, and began to eye him with some alarm. Eventually de Biron came out boldly with the proposal. "Those," says the biographer, "who remember the worthy Admiral, and can recollect the countenance he would assume when anything unexpectedly broke upon him, may imagine his aspect and demeanour. He answered thus: 'My distresses, it is true, have driven me from my country, but no temptation whatever can estrange me from her service. Had this offer been a voluntary one of your own, I should have deemed it an insult; but I am glad to learn that it proceeds from a source that *can do no wrong*!'"

85

It is in action, perhaps, that one finds the naval spirit, the wit, the heroism, the tenderness, the patriotism of the service best illustrated. I am fond of that anecdote of old Captain Killigrew (related by Campbell) whilst on a cruise with six frigates in 1695. He met with a couple of French men-of-war. When Killigrew came up with one of them, named the *Content*, "the whole French crew," says Campbell, "were at prayers, and he might have poured in his broadside with great advantage; which, however, he refused to do, adding this remarkable expression: 'It is beneath the courage of the English nation to surprise their enemies in such a posture.'" This sort of humanity sometimes finds form in a kind of ironical politeness. In Howe's memoirs it is related that whilst the British fleet lay off Cape Race two large French men-of-war were discovered. Howe, with a press of sail, arrived just alongside the sternmost Frenchman, the *Alcide*, the captain of which hailed to know whether it was peace or war. Howe answered, "Prepare for the worst, as I expect every moment a signal from the flagship to fire upon you for not bringing to." And then, observing a number of officers, soldiers, and ladies on deck, he pulled off his hat, and, speaking in French, begged they would go below, as they had no personal concern in the contest, and he would rather that they retired before he began the action. The French captain was again requested to go under the English admiral's stern; he refused, and then Howe told him that the signal was out to engage—a red flag hoisted at the fore-topgallant-masthead. The French commander called out, "Commencez, s'il vous plaît!" to which Howe replied, "S'il vous plaît, monsieur, de commencer!" The two ships delivered their broadsides almost simultaneously. The *Alcide* struck in half an hour. "My lads," cried Howe, to his crew, "they have behaved like men, treat them like men."[24]

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24. She carried fewer seamen than Howe's ship.

There is a good illustration of spirit in a quaint story told of Admiral Gayton. He was making his way home to England when a large man-of-war was sighted. The Admiral's vessel, the *Antelope*, was a crazy old craft, under-manned, and half-armed. Every preparation, however, was made to receive the stranger, and Gayton, himself crawling on deck, exhorted his people to behave like Englishmen. "I can't stand by you," he said, "but I'll sit and see you fight as long as you please." The stranger turned out to be an English man-of-war. Gayton's resolution was based on something more than spirit only. In fact, he had several chests of dollars belonging to himself in the ship, proceeds of the sale of American prizes. His friends pointed out the inconvenience of transporting specie, and advised him to remit his property in bills. "No," said the old sailor, "I know nothing so valuable as money itself, and should be a fool to part with it for paper." His friends then urged him to send his money home in a frigate, as the *Antelope* was old and might founder on the way. "No," answered Gayton, "my money and myself will take our passage in the same bottom, and if we are lost there will be an end of two bad things at once."[25]

87

25. The best humour of the marine annals must be sought in anecdotes of dry old sea-dogs of the pattern of Gayton. There should be some lively stories of American naval officers. This given by Nathaniel Hawthorne in his "Note Books" is good. They are dining aboard a revenue cutter. "The waiter tells the captain of the cutter that Captain Percival (commander of the navy yard) is sitting on the deck of the anchor buoy (which lies inside of the cutter) smoking his cigar. The captain sends him a glass of champagne and inquires of the waiter what Percival says to it. He said, sir, 'What does he send me this damned stuff for?' but drinks nevertheless."

Naval literature is like the ocean; many a gem of purest ray serene lies hidden in the depths of it. It is always the great conquerors one talks and thinks of; the Admiral on his quarter-deck, not Jack, half naked and mutilated, still heroically surging at his hot cannon below. It is a great many years since that an orphan, belonging to Bonchurch, Isle of Wight, was apprenticed by the parish to a tailor. As he was one day sitting alone on the shopboard—the ninth part of a man—he spied a squadron of men-of-war coming round Dunnose. Possessed by an unconquerable impulse, he ran down to the beach, cast off the painter from the first boat he saw, jumped into her, and plied the oars so well that he quickly reached the Admiral's ship. He was received as a volunteer, and the boat sent adrift. Next morning the English fell in with a French squadron, and a hot action began. The young tailor fought with great cheerfulness and alacrity, but, growing impatient after awhile, he inquired of the sailors what was the object for which they were contending. He was answered that the fight would continue till the white rag at the enemy's masthead was struck. "Oh, if that's all," he exclaimed, "I'll see what I can do." The vessels were engaged yard-arm and yard-arm, and enveloped in powder-smoke. The young tailor jumped aloft, gained the main-yard of the French Admiral, mounted to the masthead, and brought away the French flag. The English sailors, believing the enemy had hauled his flag down, shouted Victory! The French, perceiving their colours gone, ran from their guns, on which the English boarded and took the vessel. The young tailor's name was Hopson. For this heroic action he was appointed to the quarter-deck, and progressing rapidly through the several ranks of the service became Admiral, with command of a squadron.[26]

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26. This told in the *Naval Chronicle*.

The politeness of Howe as an example of spirit is not quite so common in the annals as illustrations of heroic bluntness. I find a specimen in the narrative of the action with the squadrons under Jonquierre and St. George off Finisterre, when the *Bristol*, Captain Montagu, began to engage *l'Invincible*. Captain Fincher, in the *Pembroke*, tried to get in between her and the enemy, but not finding room, he hailed the *Bristol*, and requested

Montagu to put his helm a starboard, or the *Pembroke* would run foul of his ship. Montagu answered, "Run foul of me and be, etc.; neither you nor any man in the world shall come between me and my enemy." Similar bluntness is exhibited in a story told of Admiral Sir Richard King. During an action a shot struck the head of his captain and blew his brains over King, then commodore, who never flinched.[27] On being told by the master, towards the close of the fight, that two more of the enemy's ships appeared to be coming up, and asked what he would do with the ship, "Do with her!" he exclaimed contemptuously, "Fight her, sir! fight her till she sinks." This is as good as Howe's memorable answer to the lieutenant who told him that the fire was extinguished and that he need no longer be afraid. "Afraid!" exclaimed Howe; then, fixing his eyes on the lieutenant, "Pray, sir, how does a man feel when he is afraid? I need not ask how he looks."

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27. "Captain Scott of the cutter told me a singular story of what occurred during the action between the *Constitution* and *Macedonian*—he being powder-monkey aboard the former ship. A cannon shot came through the ship's side, and a man's head was struck off, probably by a splinter, for it was done without bruising the head or body, as clean as by a razor. Well, the man was walking pretty briskly at the time of the accident; and Scott seriously affirmed that he kept walking onward at the same pace, with two jets of blood gushing from his headless trunk, till, after going twenty feet without a head, he sunk down at once, with his legs under him." *Hawthorne Note Books*. One seems to hear Mr. Burchell's "fudge!" here.

The charm of British naval biography lies in its modesty and accuracy. A pity as much cannot be said for the marine records of other countries. There is an excellent example of impudent and deliberate lying in the Memoirs of M. du Gué-Trouin, chief of a squadron in the French navy, in the time of Louis XIV. The book is scarce. It was translated in 1732, by "A Sea Officer," who in his dedication writes, after commenting on the Frenchman's account of an action with the English, "But this is scarce anything to the wonders you will find wrought by Du Gué, his people, and his consorts. For my part, I had scarce gone through his book before I expected to hear he had attempted to run away with the Land's End of England.... No 'tis in France, and France alone, where you must meet with these men who can do anything, no matter what stands in the way, no matter for the difficulties; nay, no matter whether they know what it is they are to do, they'll do it." But the Spanish and Dutch annals are too full of lies also to suffer us to consider the French singular in this way. As to the Yankees, one should read James' "Naval Occurrences" to appreciate their amazing capacity as romancers.

90

Lord Bacon amused his leisure by collecting the witty sayings of others; Horace Walpole delighted in ana; there is no choicer reading than the Menagiana, Selden's Table-Talk, and Spence's anecdotes. In the face of such precursors no apology can be felt needful from any one who should think proper to attempt an anecdotal history of the British Navy.

WOMEN AS SAILORS.

A young lady of Plymouth, having illustrated her able-seamanlike capacity by diving from the masthead of a vessel at anchor in the Sound, proceeded some time afterwards to justify her marine enthusiasm by swimming from the Breakwater to the Hoe in a tumbling sea, the distance being three miles and the time occupied within an hour and a quarter. Now, if this young lady took it into her head to start away to sea, for what aforemast capacity, from boatswain down to boy, would she not be fit? Even as a skipper might she not excel after a proper course of ogling the sun through a sextant and a well-digested commitment of Norie or Raper to heart? A girl capable of measuring three miles of turbulent surges in seventy odd minutes ought to be equal to a weather top-sail ear-ring in a whole gale; whilst the lungs that could defy a league of flying spume should be able to wake some dancing silver pipings out of a boatswain's whistle.

A good many ladies have gone to sea as sailors since the first chapters of the world's maritime history were written, and the majority of them not only made excellent seamen, but fought their countries' enemies with pike, cutlass, and pistol with a courage and determination equal to any exhibition of the same qualities in the bravest of their pig-tailed shipmates. And yet women are deemed unlucky at sea! A French tradition affirms that the ocean near Cape Finisterre swells at the sight of a woman. Possibly the old fear originated with the witches. Hideous crones who wrecked ships for lucre and drowned mariners to gratify their own spleen or that of others would necessarily taint Jack's view of "the sex" in their maritime relations. An American writer[28] quotes from Sandy's Ovid: "I have heard of seafaring men, and some of Bristol, how a quartermaster in a Bristol ship, then trading in the Streights, going down into the hold saw a sort of women, his own neighbours, making merry together, and taking their cups liberally; who having espied him, and threatening that he should report their discovery, vanished suddenly out of sight; who thereupon was lame for ever after. The ship having made her voyage, nowe homeward bound, and neere her harbour, stuck fast in the deep sea before a fresh gaile, to their no small amazement, nor for all they could doe, together with the help that came from the shore, could they get her loose, until one (as Cynothea, the Trojan ship) shoved her off with his shoulder." For bewitching the ship the ladies who had been seen taking their cups liberally in the hold were convicted and executed.

28. Mr. Bassett, of the United States Navy, who has collected much interesting information in this and the like superstitions in his work, "Legends of the Sea," New York, 1886.

But, undeterred by forecastle superstitions, the girls, whenever they had a mind to go to sea, went. In Von Archenholtz' "History of the Pirates" you read of Ann Bonny and Mary Read, two English women, as may be judged from the names, joining the buccaneers, "not from licentious motives to gratify their pleasures, but solely by a thirst of plunder, and as co-partners in their dangers as well as in their profits." To appreciate the courage of Mary Read and Ann Bonny it is necessary to understand the kind of lives the buccaneers led—moral, physical, and intellectual. The typical pirate of the Antilles—in those times—was a bruised and battered rogue, dressed in a shirt and a pair of pantaloons, both made of coarse linen cloth, dyed with the blood of animals he had killed. His unstockinged feet were protected by boots formed from hogskins, and his head was covered with a round cap. He tied a raw hide girdle round him, hung a sabre upon it and filled it with knives. He also carried a firelock that shot two balls, each weighing an ounce.[29]

29. Bailey says the word Bucanier is said to be derived from the inhabitants of the Caribee Islands who used to cut their prisoners to pieces "and laid them on hurdles of Brazil wood erected on sticks, with fire underneath, and when so broiled or roasted to eat them, and this manner of dressing was called *bucaning*. Hence our Buccaneers took their name, in that they, hunting, dressed their meat after their manner."

Such was the dainty figure whom Ann Bonny and Mary Read made a comrade of, themselves retaining the apparel of their sex, to which they added long sailors' trousers. With hair dishevelled, hangers at their waists, pistols on their breasts, and hatchets in their hands, they must have been objects nicely calculated to excite whatever of romantic enthusiasm there yet lingered in the bosoms of the cut-throats whose troop they had joined for love of blood and gold.

A more heroic female sailor, despite a fierceness that, though warrantable enough, makes an historical tigress of her, offers in the famous Jean de Belville, who vowing vengeance for the murder of her husband, De Clisson, at Paris, in 1343, fitted out a squadron of ships and swooped down upon the coast of Normandy, firing every castle that a torch could be put to, and reddening the seaboard with burning villages. She is represented to have been one of the finest women in Europe, and a sense of her beauty joining with perception of her wrongs and the brilliant loyalty of her very scheme of revenge, does unquestionably give a high quality of majesty to that posture of ferocity in which she is pictured by the historian.

94

In one of the old Dutch books of voyages—whether De Weert's, Van Noort's, or Schouten's I cannot be sure—mention is made of a discovery, when the ship was off the Horn, of one of the crew as a woman. Even in these days of science, of canned meats, condensing apparatus, ice-houses, steam-winches, double-top-sail yards, clipper keels, and short voyages, a woman would find seafaring a calling bitter enough. But think of one of the sex a member of the crew of the Dutch ship of the seventeenth century, on a voyage of discovery, struggling against the western sleet-laden tempests of the bleak, iron melancholy Horn! Ships were butter-boxes in those times,[30] sawed-off old wagons, as broad as they were long, with running gear that worked like drawing teeth, and a discipline composed of keel-hauling, fixing to the mast by driving a knife through the hand, and marooning, or, in other words, setting the culprit ashore on an uninhabited island, with a day's provisions, and without the means of obtaining more if more was to be had. That men died by the scores in those days of scurvy, months of bitter bad meat and foul water, pestiferous 'tween-deck atmosphere, supplemented by the barbarous ignorance of the chirurgeons, is readily intelligible; but that a woman should have managed to exist under such conditions all the way from the Texel to the Straits Le Maire, doing the sailors' work, and eating the sailors' food, and living in the sailors' quarters, is little short of a miracle and an amazing instance of female endurance.

95

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30. Few features of those chronicles of adventure which are included in the collections of Hakluyt, Purchas, Churchill, Harris, and others are more interesting than the descriptions given of the tonnage, arms, and crews of the vessels which discovered the Indies, penetrated the great South Sea, gave names to capes and headlands of the vast but still shadowy continent of New Holland; coasted the bleak shores of Newfoundland, and searched the ice of the Frozen Ocean for the North-west Passage. Of course, the measurements of those days are not the measurements of these. A tun might signify a capacity for different kinds of freight without reference to cubical dimensions. The capacity of some vessels in those days was measured by the number of pipes of wine which could be stowed in them. Even in recent times there is a considerable difference between old and new measurements, the old representing less than the new. Nevertheless it is impossible to read about the ships in which the early navigators sailed—it is impossible to think of their tub-like forms, their enormous top-hamper, the astonishing clumsiness of their yards and gear, their castellated poops and rampart-like quarters, without wondering how on earth such structures managed to roll in safety over the stormy ocean, and to push their way, however slowly, against opposing winds

and adverse tides. Certain expressions have changed their meaning, and on reading the old voyages one is often puzzled with names given to craft which, to modern experience, do not in the least degree correspond with their titles. For instance, the galley in our times is known as a long rowing boat, mounting so many oars. But in former days by the term galley was meant a vessel whose complement of men was one thousand or twelve hundred. She mounted a good show of ordnance, had three masts and thirty-two banks of oars, every bank containing two oars, and every oar being handled by five or six men. Equally perplexing are those names of shallops, skiffs, pinnaces, lighters, and so forth, which are met in abundance in the old stories, and which express fabrics very different indeed from the kinds of craft they now designate. For Drake's glorious voyage five ships were equipped. The *Hind* was one hundred tons, the *Elizabeth* eighty tons, the *Marigold* thirty tons, the *Swan* fifty tons, and the *Christopher* fifteen tons. The captain of this fifteen-ton pinnace was Thomas Moon, and we hear of her disappearing in great storms and reappearing in fine weather, to the general joy of the rest of the fleet. Such an old skipper as this must have made noble company over a mug of strong beer, and would have been able to tell of things even more wonderful than trees with oysters growing upon them. Schouten, who discovered and named Cape Horn, put to sea in vessels which in these days would class amongst small, inferior coasters; yet the *Unity* managed to carry nineteen pieces of cannon and twelve swivels and a company of sixty-five men. How those ancient mariners contrived to stow themselves away in their dark 'tweendecks and black forecastles, how in their little holds they could find room for sufficient provisions and water to last them for months, not to mention the gunpowder and cannon balls which they carried, surpasses modern marine comprehension. Among the ships William Funnell writes about, in a narrative that is commonly taken to be William Dampier's, was the Cinque Ports galley, for ever memorable as the craft in which Alexander Selkirk sailed. This vessel, that was equipped for a buccaneering cruise in little known waters against towering and powerful galleons, was ninety tons, a burthen which in these days would about fit a pleasure yacht intended for the blue skies and summer seas of the holiday period. Or take Sir Humphrey Gilbert's expedition, which included the *Golden Hind* of forty tons, the *Swallow* of forty tons, and the *Squirrel* of ten tons. "The resolution of the proprietors was that the fleet should begin its course northerly, and follow as directly as they could the trade-way to Newfoundland." Think of a ten-ton boat starting on such an expedition as this! Yet Sir Humphrey took command of her when her master deserted, with this sequel: that when off Cape Race homeward bound, "the storms and swellings of the seas increasing, he (namely, Sir Humphrey) was again pressed to leave the frigate (that is, the *Squirrel*), but his answer was, 'We are as near to Heaven by sea as by land.' About midnight, the *Squirrel* being ahead of the *Golden Hind*, her lights were at once extinguished, which those in the *Hind* seeing cried out 'Our general is lost!' and it is supposed she sank that instant, for she was never more heard of." Lord Byron exclaims:

> "Columbus found a new world in a cutter,
> Or brigantine, or pink, of no great tonnage,
> While yet America was in her non-age."

The conjecture—it seems no more—of Washington Irving that Columbus' ships were undecked boats "not superior to river and coasting craft of more modern days," is disproved by Lindsay in his "History of Shipping."

In the cases of women who have put on men's clothes and shipped as sailors many were incited by love or jealousy. The old ballad of Billy Taylor is representative. The best known instance is that of Hannah Snell, whose story has been often told.[31] This distinguished female was born in 1723, and married, at Wapping, one James Summs, a Dutch sailor, who spent her money and abandoned her. Thereupon Hannah made up her mind to go in quest of her faithless spouse. She dressed herself as a man, and started. Her adventures would fill three volumes. Romance and farce, tragedy and comedy are happily combined. She first went a soldiering, and, of course, a young woman fell in love with her. She deserted, re-enlisted as a marine, and saw a great deal of active service. How many men she killed is not stated, but it is conceivable that her love for the sex was not

keen, and that she never discharged a musket without an emotion of joy mingled with hope that James Summs was not far off. She was wounded on several occasions, but contrived to conceal her sex until the news reached her that her Jim, whilst a prisoner at Geneva, had committed a murder, for which he was stitched up in a bag and thrown into the sea, when, without further ado, she resumed the petticoat and returned to London. From a grateful country she obtained an annuity of £50, which with her earnings as an actress—it seems she achieved a great popularity as Bill Bobstay, a sailor—enabled her to cut a genteel figure. Growing weary of the stage, she opened a public house in Wapping that was very handsomely supported down to the time of her death by the numerous jolly tars of that marine district.

31. A very full account of this extraordinary woman is printed in a little volume entitled "Eccentric Biography," 1803.

A less known, but to the full as remarkable a case of a woman masquerading as a sailor occurs in the life of Mary Anne Talbot, "otherwise John Taylor." Her story was written and published by herself at the beginning of the present century, and may be accepted as certainly not less accurate than the memoirs of George Ann Bellamy, whose sweet face crowned with feathers still looks laughingly over the mask in her hand from the plate after Ramberg in the old collections. Miss Talbot, otherwise John Taylor, was born in 1778, and was induced by an officer in an infantry regiment to assume male attire and accompany him as his foot-boy to the West Indies. Afterwards she acted in the capacity of a drummer at the siege of Valenciennes, and was twice wounded. It is observable that this young lady, who claimed to be the natural daughter of Lord William Talbot, Baron of Hensol, began her amazing career, like Hannah Snell, as a soldier. The infantry officer having been killed, Miss Talbot threw off her drummer's dress, assumed that of a sailor, and, having made her way to Luxembourg, engaged with the captain of a French lugger, and sailed with him, in the belief that the vessel was a peaceful trader. After cruising about awhile the lugger fell in with the British fleet under the command of Lord Howe. Mary Ann refused to fight. The French captain swore at her and beat her, but she was not to be manhandled into firing upon her countrymen. The lugger hauled down her flag, and her captain and crew were taken on board the *Queen Charlotte* to be examined by Lord Howe. On being questioned Mary Anne replied that she was an English boy, and had shipped in the lugger in order to escape from France, and with the intention of deserting when the chance occurred. Fortunately Lord Howe's questions were not very minute. She was dismissed, and stationed on board the *Brunswick*, Captain Harvey. In the great sea fight that followed Mary Anne was desperately wounded, and conveyed to the cockpit, and on the arrival of her ship at Spithead was sent to Haslar Hospital, from which, after four months' attendance as an out-patient, she was discharged, partially cured. She then entered the *Vesuvius* bomb; the vessel was carried by privateers, and Mary Anne was taken to Dunkirk and lodged in the prison of St. Clair. On the prisoners being exchanged she met with an American captain, engaged with him and sailed to America as ship's steward. She resided with the captain's family at New York, and declares that she was subjected to much embarrassment on account of an attachment conceived for her by the captain's niece, who actually proposed marriage, and obtained a miniature of her beloved in the full uniform of an American officer, for which Mary Anne paid eighteen dollars. Shortly after her return to England, the press being hot, she was seized by a gang, and in the scrimmage received a severe cutlass-wound on the head. She was carried on board the tender, but having probably had enough of the sea, she revealed her sex and recovered her liberty. How much truth there is in this narrative it would now be idle to conjecture. It is certain, however, that she obtained a pension of £20 a year, and that she received her money from the Navy Office as John Taylor, the name she had assumed when she followed the officer in the walking regiment to the West Indies.

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In October, 1759, a person named Samuel Bundy, twenty years old, married a girl named Mary Parlour. He said he was ill, and his bride patiently waited until the following

March, hoping meanwhile that he would be cured. Her friends growing tired, insisted upon searching him, and to the general amazement the bridegroom proved a female. Her story was that seven years previously she had been betrayed by a sweetheart and taken away from her mother, and that to prevent her from being discovered he dressed her as a boy. They separated after a year, and she went to sea as a sailor. This life she quitted after twelve months of rough work, and apprenticed herself to a Mr. Angel who lived at the 100
King's Head, Gravel Lane, Southwark. A young woman, Mary Parlour, fell in love with Mr. Angel's brisk and saucy-looking apprentice, and they were married. The "husband" declared that his "wife" speedily found out the mistake she had made, but determined not to expose the matter. After her marriage "Samuel Bundy," as she called herself, entered on board a man-of-war, but deserted for fear of detection. She then tried a merchantman, but left her also to return to the "wife" whom, says the account, "she says she dearly loves."

In 1761, as a sergeant was drilling some soldiers aboard a transport, he was struck with the prominent breast of one of them named Paul Daniel. When the drill was over he sent for him to the cabin, where, after taxing "him" she confessed her sex. Her story was that she had a husband whom she dearly loved, and who had been reduced to beggary; he enlisted in a marching regiment and was in Germany for two years, as she believed. She had not heard of or from him in all that time, and she finally decided to hunt for him the world over. On learning that troops were being despatched to Germany she enlisted. This, to be sure, is a tale of a female soldier, but I introduce it here for its strangeness and likewise for the scene of it being on board ship.

In 1771, a man named Charles Waddall, on board the *Oxford* man-of-war, was sentenced to receive two dozen lashes for desertion; but when tied up the sailor was discovered to be a woman. She said that she had travelled from Hull to London after a man with whom she was in love, and hearing that he was a sailor on the *Oxford* she entered for that ship. When she arrived on board she learnt that her sweetheart had deserted, on which she resolved to run away too. The admiral gave the poor creature half 101
a guinea, and others connected with Chatham dockyard made up a purse for her.

The following is illustrative of the power of the passion that inspires the lass who loves a sailor: In 1808, the relatives of a girl who had given her heart to a sailor, hoped to end the attachment by procuring his impressment; but she resolved nevertheless to marry him, and he was accordingly brought ashore and escorted by the press-gang to the church, whence, after the marriage ceremony, he was again conveyed to the tender. I think I see the commiserating expression on the mahogany faces of those old Jacks, as they witness the impressed man saying good-bye to his Poll.

In 1807, a woman, dressed in sailor's clothes, was brought before the Lord Mayor of London. She said that she had been apprenticed by her step-father at Whitby to a collier called the *Mayflower*; that she had served four years out of the seven without her sex being discovered; that she was bound when she was thirteen years old, and that her step-father had likewise bound her mother to the sea—this lady being killed, whilst serving as a sailor, at the battle of Copenhagen! She said that her ship was at Woolwich, and that she had run away because the mate had rope's-ended her for not getting up. She was provided with female attire and sent to her parish.

In 1792, the Marchioness de Bouillé and Madame de Noailles arrived at Brighton from Dieppe. The marchioness crossed the channel in an open boat, and was disguised as a sailor! The other, who was in mean male attire, crossed in one of the packets, the master of the vessel having pitied her and taken her under his protection.

Another romantic instance may be quoted: it is given in the *Naval Chronicle* (1802), 102
and seems authentic enough. A gentleman, towards the end of the last century, became bankrupt. He went to Bradford with two daughters, and there died of a broken heart. The girls were left absolutely without provision. Rather than starve—or beg, which was worse

than starving to these high-spirited women—they resolved to assume the character and dress of men and enter the navy. They went to Portsmouth and obtained a situation on the quarter-deck—as the term then was—of a troopship bound to the West Indies. They were engaged, we are told, in the reduction of Curaçoa, "and served with credit in two or three actions in those seas, till one of them was wounded by a splinter in her side, when her sex being discovered, she was discharged, and came to England about six weeks since," making the date about May, 1802. Meanwhile, the other sister was ill with fever, having been put ashore at Dominica. Believing herself to be dying, she sent for one of the officers of the ship, disclosed her sex to him, and related her story. "The discovery gave tenderness to the esteem he had before entertained for his young friend; his attentions contributed to her convalescence. In short, she recovered, they were married, and are now returned to England in possession of the means to render happy the remainder of their days."

It is a common saying at sea on a fine bright day, "That if it were always such weather, ships would go manned with ladies." Possibly if the romance of women sailors terminated with handsome lovers and well-to-do husbands, there might, even in these practical days, arise the same necessity for overhauling the forecastle for masquerading girls that is now found for overhauling the hold for stowaways. But the time for Hannah Snells, for Mary Anne Talbots, otherwise John Taylors, for Ann Bonnys and Mary Reads is dead and gone. Those heroines belonged to a seafaring age of which old salts are ridiculed for deploring the extinction. And in sober truth old salts must not grumble if they are laughed at for thus lamenting, for surely better six days to New York in a steamer wholly free of Hannah Snells than four months to the same port in a ship entirely worked by Mary Anne Talbots.

FIGHTING SMUGGLERS.

I have noticed of late (1886) an exceptional degree of spasmodic vigour in the direction of the suppression of smuggling. It is not, indeed, that the Customs' people have afforded proofs more astonishing than usual of their peculiar power of discovering tobacco, spirits, eau-de-Cologne, cigars, and the like in inconceivable and apparently impracticable shipboard nooks and holes; the special display takes the comparatively unaccustomed form of small men-of-war chasing smack-rigged craft flying Dutch colours, and bearing the strange name of "coopers" or "copers." It is not known, I think, that there is any British or other law which renders illegal the act of sailing the high seas with a hold freighted with spirits, tobacco, and perfumes. That this is so may be gathered from the case of a Dutch cooper which, after an "exciting chase," was brought to and boarded by a small cruiser and carried into an English port. But she had not been long detained before orders arrived for her release. One sees in a thing of this kind how hard it is to squeeze the least drop of romance from marine events in these days. Chases may be "exciting:" but they are of the rocket pattern—fire going up and stick coming down. Where is now the burly smuggling salt with a face as big and as full of colour as a topside of beef, great fearnought trousers, and boots; a stout jacket, plentifully garnished with buttons; a striped shirt and a large silk neckerchief, and a belt broken by the shafts of knives, the hilt of a cutlass, the butt-ends and gleaming barrels of a brace or more of big pistols? "Old Stormy he is dead and gone!" is the burden of a sea-chorus that is very applicable to those heavy villains of the long-shore theatre, Dirk Hatterick and bold Will Watch. The issue of a chase in these times is strictly in correspondence with the decidedly sneaking way in which smuggling—such as it is—is carried on. The concealment of a few watches in the heels of a pair of shoes; yards of pigtail snugly coiled away in cheeses; cigars marvellously well packed in the hollow hearts of balks of timber; how dull, mean, twopenny are such devices in the face of the defiant heroism of those historic braves who, waiting for moonless nights, mastheaded their lug-sails in death-like silence, and stole out into the wide waters of the English, the Irish, the Bristol Channels, a mere blot of ink upon the dusk, crossing the hawse of cruisers like shadows of vaporous wings, and melting into the sullen gloom of some secret bay flanked by cliffs liberally honeycombed with caves and echoing corridors![32]

32. Nevertheless instances abound of extraordinary ingenuity even in the faint-hearted directions. "When," says a writer whose book now dates back many years, "I arrived the first voyage from Bombay, I had a few rows of Cornelian beads which I had purchased there for some friends at home. For some time they lay snug enough in the toe of an old shoe, at the bottom of my chest, until we got in the river, when I gave them to the second mate to place in greater security. Next day, as the men were receiving rations, the word was passed that the searchers were alongside. At the instant the second mate came running to me with my beads. He had not been able to discover a good place to conceal them. I ran to the steward; he took them, and lifting up one of his lockers, where lay a large snake coiled up like a top-sail sheet, he lifted up its terrific head and threw my beads under its straw. The searchers came, overhauled the steward's traps and lifted up the lid of the locker. The snake put forth its forked tongue—the lid dropped from the searcher's hand!"

Long antecedent to the days in which the Dutch cooper coquets with her Majesty's customs, and seduces Revenue cruisers into issueless pursuits, the smuggler gave the naval officer as much to do as the Frenchman or the Batavian. The fights were desperate; there was scarce an anker of run brandy that did not represent a life. It is not pleasant, perhaps, in the old pictures and book "embellishments" to see a smart frigate in hot

pursuit of a top-sail lugger, and to know that yon puff of smoke at the bow of the chaser represents a cannon ball fired by an Englishman at his own countrymen. Whenever that sort of thunder is raised under the British Jack, you feel that the destination of the levin-brand which preceded it ought not at all events to be an English hull or an English breast. Nevertheless the blood will tingle to those early cuts and whole-page illustrations. How grandly the cruiser looms up astern! The spray breaks as far aft as the gangway, and the silver glitter sweeps in sparkling smoke over the sprit-sail yard that has been got "fore and aft" in readiness. Her royals soar cloud-like among the clouds, and her flag, as big as the main-topgallant-sail, streams its milky splendour of white bunting, crimson-crossed and nobly jacked in the corner, from the signal halliards at the end of the spanker gaff. But the eye, and, perhaps, the heart, is with that nimble shape in the foreground. She is a three-masted lugger, with yards long enough to give as much head to the canvas as would serve to blow a *Royal George* along. What a spring she has of bow! How elegant is the sweep of the line of her lee rail, lying dark amid the wash of cream there! Not so much as a puff from a musket-barrel answers that fore-chaser, blazing away at her astern. If the 107
Revenue were not the abstraction that, with Charles Lamb, one somehow regards it, one would wish that saucy smuggler speedily overhauled. As it is, the sympathetic artist, by introducing a touch of thickness away to windward there, hints at the approach of a fog, and at the possibility, even yet, of that crouching whiskered crew successfully landing their tobacco, spirits, silk, and tea.

The old smuggling laws were somewhat stiff. Compared to them how mild are the penalties which the modern collector of Customs can press for! In the good old times, in the days of the fine old English gentleman—on whose account, by the way, it is nowhere recorded that any human being ever went into mourning—a penalty of £300 was imposed upon any master of a ship coming from abroad having more than one hundred pounds of tea on board or more than one hundred gallons of foreign spirits in casks under sixty gallons (besides two gallons for each seaman). Foreign spirits imported from any part of Europe, in a vessel containing less than sixty gallons, were forfeited along with the ship and her furniture. If any goods, such as tea or coffee, liable to forfeiture were found on board a ship bound from foreign ports, lying at anchor or "hovering" within two leagues of the coast, the ship, if not above two hundred tons, was forfeited. Any person selling coffee, tea, cocoa-nuts, or chocolate was forced to write "Dealer in coffee, etc.," over his door under a penalty of £200. Illustrations of this kind make one see the sort of risks the smuggler ran in those days. Not but that the public should have held themselves very much obliged for all these penalties and punishments. It is on record that, information having been laid against some persons living in Dorsetshire for harbouring smuggled tea, 108
their houses were searched, and there were found about thirty pounds of tea, mixed with leaves, and one thousand and thirty pounds weight of ash, elder, and sloe leaves, dried and prepared, ready for mixing with the tea! This was about the time when the poet Cowper in his nightcap was celebrating the merits of the cup that cheers. But did it not inebriate? Think of the proportion of a thousand and thirty pounds of ash, elder, and sloe leaves, to thirty pounds of the Hong merchant's sample! All these leaves were got in the summer, and I read that the poor of the district were so well paid for collecting them, that the farmers could not obtain labourers for their harvests.

The war waged by the State against the smuggler was as vengeful as the hottest against a foreign foe. As an example: in 1784 the severity of the winter had obliged the smugglers to lay up a great number of their vessels. It was suggested to Mr. Pitt that a fine opportunity offered for destroying these boats, if sufficient force could be procured to prevent the smugglers from attempting a rescue. Pitt sent word to the war office for a regiment of soldiers to be at Deal on a certain day. The officer in command of the soldiers found on his arrival that the people of the town having got scent of what was to happen, had advised the publicans to pull down their signs that the soldiers should not be able to get quarters. They consented and no quarters were to be had. Eventually the men

obtained shelter in a barn, but the officer had the utmost difficulty to procure provisions for them. Next day some cutters were seen lying off the beach and the soldiers marched down to the water. The inhabitants thought the troops would embark in the cutters. Then it was that the order was given to burn the boats, and the force being great, the people were obliged to stand idly looking on, not daring a rescue. 109

Those were days when a cruise against the smugglers promised some excellent pickings. One of the most successful of the cruising ships was the *Atalanta*, of eighteen guns, that was hardly paid off and her crew discharged when, such was her popularity, on being almost immediately re-commissioned men entered with extraordinary eagerness. In one short cruise alone she captured eight sail and nearly two thousand ankers of spirits, besides bale goods; and every man's share of the prize money amounted to twice the value of his wages. The old reports run thus: "Came in the *Atalanta*, eighteen guns, Captain Mansfield, with a fine smuggling cutter of eighty tons, called the *Admiral Pole*, of Exeter, with one hundred and seventy ankers of spirits, taken after a long chase. She was seized some months since at Weymouth for having an over quantity of spirits on board, and was liberated on bond being given to the Board of Customs and Excise." Or, "Came in, the *Eagle*, Excise cutter, Captain Ward, with a fine smuggling cutter, called the *Swift* (formerly the *Bonaparte*, French privateer), with five hundred tubs of brandy, after a long chase within the limits of the *Dodman*." Or, "Sailed on a cruise against the smugglers, the *Ranger*, cutter, Captain A. Fraser." Or, "Came in from a cruise against the smugglers, the *Galatea*, of thirty-six guns, Captain Wolfe."

It will be judged that if bold Will Watch or belted Joe Marline succeeded in running his goods it was certainly not through lack of attention to him on the part of the King's navy. And, as may be supposed, many black deeds of violence and murder are on record. The story of an assassination eminently characteristic of the old smuggling times is preserved in the Old Bailey annals. On the night of December 26, 1798, a Custom House officer went in a boat to look after smugglers near Cawsand Bay on the coast of Cornwall. He saw a sloop lying at anchor, the people of which hailed him, and asked him whose boat it was. He answered that it was a King's boat. They warned him not to approach; if he did, they would fire on him; he was then some eight or ten fathoms distant from the sloop. His men, nothing daunted, continued to row, whilst he held the Revenue colours in his hand. The smugglers fired a volley from their muskets, slipped their cable, and made off. One of the men in the boat was killed. The smugglers were apprehended on the evidence of one of their own people. This man, named Tom Rogers, said that he was a sailor on board the vessel (named the *Lottery*) on the night referred to. They had just arrived from Guernsey with a cargo of smuggled spirits, and, at the moment of the approach of the Customs' boat, they were discharging the tubs into boats alongside. The witness declared that after they had made sail, one of the crew named Potter said it was he who had fired, that he had taken good aim, and had seen a man drop in the boat. On this evidence Potter was found guilty, and hanged at Execution Dock. 110

But whatever may be thought of the morality of the smuggler, it is indisputable that his cutter or lugger was a magnificent nursery for seamen. The exploits of some of these fellows in respect of recaptures alone would fill a stout volume with wonderful instances of intrepidity and seamanship. Take the case of the *Echo*, of Poole, that was boarded by a French privateer, and retaken by the mate and a boy of twelve, who seized the helmsman, forced him below with two French seamen, battened them down, and brought them to Plymouth.

Of the *Marquis of Granby*, that was captured off the Goodwins by a French lugger; the captain and two men were put into the Frenchman's boat, in order to be conveyed on board the privateer, that was giving chase to another vessel, and that, by carrying a press of sail, in a short time left the boat nearly five miles astern. On observing this the smuggling skipper wrested a sword out of the hands of the officer of the boat, and 111

compelled the French sailors to row him back to his own ship. This done, he gallantly boarded her, sword in hand, and speedily cleared the deck of the Frenchmen, who, to save their lives, jumped overboard, and were picked up by their own boat. The smuggler then proceeded on his voyage; but what became of the French sailors was never known.

Of the *William*, that was captured by a privateer off Bridlington; all the crew, except three, were taken out and five Frenchmen put on board. The three Englishmen found means to choke the pumps with ashes, and made the Frenchmen believe the vessel was sinking. Sooner than go to the bottom they agreed to make for the nearest port, and eventually they carried the *William* to Sunderland. The Frenchmen, I read, were landed the same evening, "and have since been sent to Durham gaol."

Of the *Beaver*, that was captured by a French privateer, named La Braave, of eighteen guns and seventy men. They put a prize-master and four seamen in the prize, leaving only the captain and a boy on board. The skipper contrived to secure the French prize-master by seizing him in the cabin and fastening his hands behind him; he then ran on deck with a crow-bar and a pistol, and in the scuffle the steersman fell overboard, and was drowned. The other three were aloft. The English captain, taking the helm, ordered them to remain 112
aloft, or he would shoot them. In this manner he steered the vessel all night, and next morning sighting an English frigate, signalled and was brought safely to port by her. There is something not a little humorous in the thought of those three Frenchmen hanging on aloft all night, the smuggling Britisher at the helm, steering with one hand and with the other covering them with a pistol.

These are but a plum or two from a pudding very rich with such fruit. Somehow the British mariner of that period never could be taught to respect the French seaman as an adversary. Again and again you read of a man and a boy out-manœuvring and subduing a fair ship's company of wooden-shoes. I sometimes fancy that Napoleon Bonaparte helped to confirm the Englishman's indifference to the French mariner—the intellectual heritage of years of conquest—by his coddling policy of dress and treatment. The uniform he himself designed for his nautical braves consisted of a blue jacket in the manner and of the cut of those of dragoons; red waistcoat with gilt buttons, and blue cloth pantaloons; red stockings, pointed shoes with round buckles, cropped hair "without powder!" They were ordered to change their shirts three times a week, and when on shore to wear small cocked hats. They were also provided with red nightcaps, ordered to be washed once a week. Every man had two nightcaps and two neckcloths. They were obliged to comb their hair three times in the seven days, and to be shaved twice a week. Their captains called them "mes enfans." It was impossible for Jack to have a high opinion of marine masqueraders after this pattern, and when it came to fighting, the more the merrier, as you notice in the actions of smuggling men and boys.

The smugglers often turned out some fine useful seamen. There was Mr. Harry Paulet, 113
who happened to be sneaking home with a cargo of brandy one morning when the French fleet, under Conflans, had stolen out of Brest, while Admiral Hawke lay concealed behind Ushant to watch the motions of the enemy. Paulet, loving his country better than his cargo, ran up to the British admiral, and, asking leave to speak to him, was allowed to go aboard. On his telling what he knew of the enemy, Hawke said if he was right he would make his fortune; but that if he *lied* he would hang him at the yard-arm. The fleet was instantly under weigh, and by Paulet's directions was presently brought between the enemy and the French coast. The admiral then ordered Paulet into his own vessel; but the bold smuggler begged leave to remain, that he might assist in beating the enemy. This favour was granted, a station was assigned to Paulet, who fought like a gamecock, and when the battle was over he was sent home with a pocket full of letters of commendation, and subsequently rewarded in such a manner as to enable him to live in ease during the rest of his life. The famous comedian, Parsons, used to say that "he would rather spend a crown to hear Harry Paulet relate one of Hawke's battles than sit gratis by the most

celebrated orator of the day. There was," said Parsons, "a manner in his heart-felt narrations that was certain to bring his auditors into the very scene of action; and when describing the moments of victory I have seen a dozen labouring men, at the Crown public house, rise together and, moved by an instantaneous impulse, give three cheers while Harry took breath to recite more of his exploits."

Johnson, a smuggler, achieved amazing reputation as a pilot and seaman. He was several times locked up, laid in irons, as for instance in the New Jail in the Borough, and the Fleet, but always managed to break out, and at this work was a complete Jack Sheppard. He went to Holland, and his fame as a seafarer having spread, the French Government offered to make a settlement of £600 a year upon his family if he would engage in the attempt to invade England; but the bold smuggler was a patriot, and said no. His life was then threatened, but the skill that was equal to a Borough jail was superior to a French prison. Johnson got away, came home, and received King George's pardon in consideration of "qualities which would do honour to a more elevated state." But smugglers after the pattern of Paulet and Johnson have long ceased to flourish. Well may the old tar sing:

Farewell to every sea-delight!
The cruise, with eager watchful days,
The skilful chace by glimmering night,
The well-worked ship, the gallant fight,
The lov'd commander's praise!

Will Watch has flung down his hanger and pistols, and appears in the more amiable and less hazardous part of a ship's steward, a lascar, a foremast seaman, with a few pounds of cigars in his shirt or a cube of honeydew under his bunk boards. The coastguard, it is true, still keeps a look-out; but if it were not for the gardens and lawn-tennis grounds which his superior officer sets him to work upon, he would find his calling very dull and uneventful.

SEA PHRASES.

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"The sea-language," says Sir William Monson in his "Naval Tracts," "is not soon learned, and much less understood, being only proper to him that has served his apprenticeship; besides that, a boisterous sea and stormy weather will make a man not bred to it so sick that it bereaves him of legs, stomach, and courage so much as to fight with his meat; and in such weather, when he hears the seamen cry starboard or port, or to bide aloof,[33] or flat a sheet, or haul home a clew-line, he thinks he hears a barbarous speech, which he conceives not the meaning of." This is as true now as then. But the landsman is not to blame. There is no dialect peculiar to a calling so crowded with strange words as the language of the sea. Dr. Samuel Johnson, who is never more diverting than when he thunders forth his abhorrence of naval life and of sailors as a community of persons, has in some cases perpetuated, and in some cases created, the most ludicrous errors regarding ships, their furniture and crews. If, as Macaulay declares, the Doctor was at the mercy of Junius and Skinner in many of his shore-going derivatives, he was equally at the mercy of Bailey and Harris when he came to the ocean. A few samples will suffice.

33. "Keep your luff!"

"*Topgallant*, the highest sail." "*Topsail*, the highest sail." The word topgallant, as 116
Johnson prints it, is not a sail at all. Had Johnson defined the "topgallant-sail" as the highest sail, he would have been right; for in his day there was no canvas set above the topgallant yard. But it is manifest that if the "topgallant-sail" was the highest sail, the top-sail could not be the highest too. "*Tiller*, the rudder of a boat." The proverbial schoolboy knows better than that. "*Shrouds*, the sail-ropes. It seems to be taken sometimes for the sails." It is hardly necessary to say that the shrouds have nothing whatever to do with the sails. They are ropes—in Johnson's day of hemp, in our time of wire—for the support of lower, top, and topgallant masts. "*Sheets*." This word he correctly defines, borrowing his definition from a dictionary. But he adds, "Dryden seems to understand it otherwise;" and quotes—

> "Fierce Boreas drove against his flying sails,
> And rent the *sheets*."

It is very evident that Dryden perfectly understood the term as signifying the ropes at the clews or corners of sails. "*Quarter-deck*, the short upper deck." This is as incorrect as "*Poop*, the hindmost part of the ship." The poop lies aft, to be sure, but it is no more the hindmost part of the ship than the mizzen-mast is—any more than the quarter-deck need necessarily be "short" or "upper"—in the sense clearly intended by Johnson. "*Overhale*, to spread over." Overhale then signified what is now meant by overhaul. To overhaul a rope is to drag it through a block; to overhaul a ship is to search her. It certainly does not mean "to spread over," nor, in my judgment, does Spenser employ it in that sense in the triplet that Johnson appends. "*Loofed*, gone to a distance." Loofed in Johnson's day 117
denoted a ship that had luffed—*i.e.* put her helm down to come closer to the wind. "*Keel*, the bottom of the ship." No doubt the keel is at the bottom of the ship, but sailors would no more understand it as a ship's bottom than they would accept the word "beam" as a definition of the word "deck." Johnson gives "*helm*" as "the steerage, the rudder." It is plain that he is here under the impression that "steerage" is pretty much the same as "steering." In reality the helm is no more the rudder than it is the tiller, the wheel, the wheel-chains, or ropes and the relieving-tackles. It is a generic term, and means the

whole apparatus by which a ship is steered. "*Belay*, to belay a rope; to splice; to mend a rope by laying one end over another." To belay a rope is to make it fast.[34]

34. Bailey correctly defines this word: "to fasten any running rope so that when it is haled it cannot run out again." Either Johnson doubted Bailey (whom he quotes nevertheless) as an authority, or consulted him for his sea-words at capricious intervals.

These examples could be multiplied; but it is not my purpose to criticize Samuel Johnson's Dictionary. Yet, as it is admittedly the basis of most of the dictionaries in use, it is worth while calling attention to errors which have survived without question or correction into the later compilations.

These and the like blunders merely indicate the extreme difficulty that confronts, not indeed the etymologist—for I nowhere discover any signs of research in the direction of marine originals—but the plain definer of nautical words. The truth is, before a man undertakes to explain the language of sailors he should go to sea. It is only by mixing with sailors, by hearing and executing orders, that one can distinguish the shades of 118
meaning amidst the scores of subtleties of the mariner's speech. It is, of course, hard to explain what the sailor himself could not define save by the word he himself employs. Take, for example, "inboard" and "aboard." You say of a man entering a ship that he has gone "aboard her;" of a boat hanging at the davits that it must be swung "inboard." There is a nicety here difficult of discrimination, but it is fixed nevertheless. You would not say of a man in a ship that he is "inboard," nor of davits that they must be slewed "aboard." So of "aft" and "abaft." They both mean the same thing, but they are not applied in the same way. A man is "aft" when he is on the quarter-deck or poop; you could not say he is "abaft." But suppose him to be beyond the mizzen-mast, you would say "he is standing abaft the mizzen-mast," not "he is standing aft it."

Peculiarities of expression abound in sea-language to a degree not to be paralleled by the eccentricities of other vocational dialects. A man who sleeps in his bunk or hammock all night, or through his watch on deck, "lies in" or "sleeps in." But neither term is applicable if he sleeps through his watch below. "Idlers," as they are called, such as the cook, steward, butcher, and the like, are said to have "all night in"—that is, "all night *in* their bunks or hammocks." To "lay" is a word plentifully employed in directions which to a landsman should render its signification hopelessly bewildering. "This word 'lay,'" says Richard Dana, in a note to "Two Years Before the Mast," "which is in such general use on board ship, being used in giving orders instead of 'go,' as '*Lay* forward!' 'Lay aft!' 'Lay aloft!' etc., I do not understand to be the neuter verb *lie* mis-pronounced, but to be 119
the active verb '*lay*' with the objective case understood, as 'Lay *yourselves* forward!' 'Lay *yourselves* aft!' etc. At all events, lay is an active verb at sea and means go." It is, however, used in other senses, as to "lay up a rope," "the ship lay along," the old expression for a vessel pressed down by the force of the wind. Other terms strike the land-going ear as singular contradictions, such as "to *make* land," to "*fetch* such and such a place"—*i.e.* to reach it by sailing, but properly to arrive at it by means of beating or tacking; "*jump* aloft," run aloft; "*tumble* up," come up from below; "bear a hand," look sharp, make haste; "handsomely," as in the expression, "Lower away handsomely!" meaning, lower away with judgment, but promptly; "bully," a term of kindly greeting, as "Bully for you!"[35]

35. This and other terms must now be called Americanisms. But they are Americanisms only as are other old words which the people of the United States have preserved from the language of their English forefathers, but which on this side of the water are obsolete, or employed with a different meaning.

The difficulties of the lexicographer desiring the inclusion of nautical terms in his list are not a little increased by the sailor's love of contractions, or his perversities of pronunciation. Let me cite a few examples. The word "treenail," for instance—a wooden

spike—in Jack's mouth becomes "trunnel." "To reach" is to sail along close-hauled; but the sailor calls it "ratch." "Gunwale," as everybody knows, is "gunnel," and so spelt by the old marine writers. "Crossjack," a sail that sets upon a yard called the "crossjack yard," on the mizzen-mast, is pronounced "crojjeck." The "strap" of a block is always termed "strop;" "streak," a single range of planks running from one end of the ship or boat to the other, is "strake;" "to serve," that is, to wind small stuff, such as spun-yarn, round a rope, is "to sarve." The numerous contractions, however, are pre-eminently illustrative of the two distinctive qualities of the English sailor—nimbleness and alertness. Everything must be done quickly at sea: there is no time for sesquipedalianism. If there be a long word it must be shortened somehow. To spring, to jump, to leap, to tumble, to keep his eyes skinned, to hammer his fingers into fish-hooks: these are the things required of Jack. He dances, he sings, he drinks, he is in all senses a lively hearty; but underlying his intellectual and physical caper-cutting is deep perception of the sea as a mighty force, a remorseless foe. The matter seems trifling, yet the national character is in it.

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A great number of words are used by sailors which are extremely disconcerting to landsmen, as apparently sheer violations of familiar sounds and the images they convey. To lash: ashore, this is to beat with a whip, to thrash; at sea it means to make anything fast by securing it with a rope. To foul: when a sailor speaks of one thing fouling another, he does not intend to say that one thing soils or dirties another, but that it has got mixed in a manner to make separation a difficulty. "Our ship drove and fouled a vessel astern." A line is foul when it is twisted, when it jams in a block. "Seize" is to attach: it does not mean, "to grasp." "Seizing" is the line or lanyard or small stuff by which anything is made fast. "Whip:" this word naturally conveys the idea of the implement for flogging, for driving; in reality, it signifies a line rove through a single block. "Whip it up!" hoist it up by means of the tackle called a whip. "Get it whipped!" get it hoisted by a whip. "Sweep" looks like a fellow who cleans a chimney; at sea it is a long oar. "Board" is not a plank, but the distance measured by a ship or vessel sailing on either tack, and beating against the wind before she puts her helm down for the next "ratch." "Guy" has nothing to do with the fifth of November, nor with a person absurdly dressed, but is a rope used for steadying a boom. "Ribands" are pieces of timber nailed outside the ribs of a wooden ship. "Ear-rings" are ropes for reefing or for securing the upper corners of a sail to the yard-arms.

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The bewilderment increases when Jack goes to zoology for terms. "Fox" is a lashing made by twisting rope-yarns together. "Spanish fox" is a single yarn untwisted and "laid up" the contrary way. "Monkey" is a heavy weight of iron used in shipbuilding for driving in long bolts. "Cat" is a tackle used for hoisting up the anchor. "Mouse" or "mousing" was formerly a ball of yarns fitted to the collars of stays. "To mouse" is to put turns of rope-yarn round the hook of a block to prevent it from slipping. "Spider" is an iron outrigger. "Lizard" is a piece of rope with a "thimble" spliced into it. "Whelps" are pieces of wood or iron bolted on the main-piece of a windlass, or on a winch. "Leech"[36] is the side-edge of a sail. "Sheepshank" is the name given to a manner of shortening a rope by hitches over a bight of its own part.

36. Sometimes spelt "leach," and perhaps correctly. "To leach" formerly signified to "cut up." In a sense the "leach," or "leech," may be taken as meaning the cut sides of the sail. Leach also meant "hard work."

Of such terms as these, how is the etymology to be come at? The name of the animal might have been suggested in a few cases, as in "lizard," perhaps, by some dim or fanciful resemblance to it in the object that wanted a title. But "monkey," "fox," "cat," and other such appellations, must have an origin referable to any other cause than that of their likeness to the creatures they are called after. It is possible that these names may be corruptions from Saxon and other terms expressive of totally different meanings. It will

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be supposed that “Spanish fox” comes from the Spaniards’ habit of using “foxes” formed of single yarns. We have, for example, “Spanish windlass,” as we have “French fake,” “French sennit,” etc. The derivatives of some words are suggested by their sounds. “Bowse,” pronounced “Bowce,” is a familiar call at sea. “Bowse it taut, lads!” “Take and bowse upon those halliards!” The men *pull off* upon the rope and bow it by their action. It is therefore conceivable that “bowse” may have come from “bow,” “bows.”[37] “Dowse,” pronounced “dowce,” signifies to lower, to haul down suddenly. Also to extinguish, as “dowse the glim,” “put out the light.” The French word “*douce*” is probably the godfather here. But “rouse,” pronounced “rouce”? “Rouse it aft, boys!” It means, to drag smartly. Does it really signify what it looks to express—to “rouse up” the object that is to be handled? It is wonderful to note how, on the whole, the language of the sea has preserved its substance and sentiment through the many generations of seafarers down to the present period of iron plates and steel masts, of the propeller and the steam engine. The reason is that, great as has been the apparent change wrought in the body and fabric of ships since the days of the *Great Harry* of the sixteenth century, and the *Royal George* of the eighteenth century, the nomenclature of remote times still perfectly answers to a mass of nautical essentials, more especially as regards the masts, yards, rigging, and sails of a vessel. And another reason lies in the strong conservative spirit of the sailor. There was a loud outcry when the Admiralty many years ago condemned the term “larboard,” and ordered the word “port” to be substituted. The name was not to be abandoned without a violent struggle, and many throes of prejudice, on the part of the old salts. What was good enough for Hawkins, Duncan, Howe, Rodney, Nelson, was surely good enough for their successors.

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37. Old dictionaries give “to bowse” as meaning “to drink hard.” The correct etymology might lie in this direction.

Not in many directions do I find new readings of old terms. As a rule, where the feature has disappeared the term has gone with it. Where the expression is retained the meaning is more or less identical with the original words. A few exceptions may be quoted: “Bittacle” was anciently the name of the binnacle; obviously derived from the French *habitacle* (a small habitation). “Caboose” was formerly the name of the galley or kitchen of small merchantmen. Falconer spells it “coboose,” and describes it as a sort of box or house to cover the chimney of some merchant ships. Previous to the introduction of the caboose, the furnaces for cooking were, in three-deckers, placed on the middle deck; in two-decked ships in the forecastle; and, adds my authority (the anonymous author of a treatise on shipbuilding, written in 1701), “also in all ships which have forecastles the provisions are there dressed.” “Cuddy” is a forcible, old-fashioned word that has been replaced by the mincing, affected term “saloon.” In the last century it signified “a sort of cabin or cookroom in the fore-part or near the stern of a lighter or barge of burden.” It is curious to note the humble origin of a term subsequently taken to designate the gilded and sumptuous first-class cabin accommodation of the great Indian, American, and Australian ships. “Forecastle,” again, I find defined by old writers as “a place fitted for a close fight on the upper deck forward.” The term was retained to denote the place in which the crew live.

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The exploded expressions are numerous. A short list may prove of interest. “Hulling” and “trying” were the words which answer to what we now call “hove-to.” “Sailing large,” having the wind free or quartering; this expression is dead. “Plying” was the old term for “beating”—“we plyed to windward”—*i.e.* “we beat to windward.” The word is obsolete, as is “spooning,” replaced by “scudding.” For “veering” we have substituted “wearing.” Some good strong, expressive phrases have vanished. Nobody nowadays talks of “clawing-off,” though the expression is perfect as representing a vessel clutching and grabbing at the wind in her efforts to haul off from a lee shore. For “shivering” we now say “shaking.” “The top-sail shivers in the wind!” In these days it “shakes.” We no longer speak of the “top-sail atrip,” but of the top-sail hoisted or the yard mast-headed. “Hank

for hank," signifying two ships beating together and always going about at the same moment, so that one cannot get to windward of the other, is now "tack for tack." We have ceased to "heave out stay-sails:" they are now loosed and hoisted. The old "horse" has made way for the "foot-rope," though we still retain the term "Flemish horse" for the short foot-rope at the top-sail yard-arms. The word "horse" readily suggests the origin of the term "stirrup," a rope fitted to the foot-rope that it may not be weighed down too deep by the men standing on it. It is plain that "horse" is owing to the seamen "riding" the yard by it. Anything traversed was called a "horse." The term is still used. The "round-house" or "coach" yielded to "cuddy," as "cuddy" has to "saloon." The poop remains; but the "poop-royal" of the French and the Spaniards, or the "topgallant poop" of our own shipwrights—a short deck over the aftermost part of the poop—has utterly disappeared.

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"Whoever were the inventors," writes Sir Walter Raleigh in "A Discourse of Shipping," included in his Genuine Remains, "we find that every age hath added somewhat to ships, and to all things else; and in mine own time the shape of our English ships hath been greatly bettered. It is not long since the striking of the Top-mast (a wonderful ease to great Ships both at Sea and in Harbour) hath been devised, together with the Chain Pump, which takes up twice as much water as the ordinary did. We have lately added the Bonnet and the Drabler. To the Courses, we have devised Studding Sails, topgallant Sails, Sprit-sails, Topsails. The Weighing of Anchors by the Capstone is also new. We have fallen into consideration of the length of Cables, and by it we resist the malice of the greatest Winds that can blow."

Although this passage has reference to improvements made in the fabrics of ships during the closing years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth and of the opening of that of James I., it is curious, as illustrative of the conservatism of the sailor, that by omitting the "sprit-sail" these words of Raleigh might stand for the ships of to-day. No sailor unacquainted with the archæology of his own calling would believe that the studding-sail, the bonnet, the drabbler, the chain-pump, the topgallant-sail, and even the sprit-sail (a sail that was in use down to so late a period as the close of the first quarter of the present century) were as old as Raleigh's hey-day. Certainly the terms given by Sir Walter would furnish us with a clue to the paternity of these cloths. "Studding-sail," for example. Falconer derives it from *scud*, *stead*, or *steady*. I am inclined to think it is derived from the verb "to stud"—to adorn, to cover, but not necessarily, as Johnson says, "with studs or shining knobs." It is quite conceivable to think of a forked-beard lifted over a ruff in admiration of canvas that raises the cry, "By'r Lady, but she is now studded with sail!" Assuredly we moderns would not regard a studding-sail as a steadying sail in any sense of the word. The "bonnet" mentioned by Raleigh is an additional piece of canvas made to lace on to the foot of a sail. The term *bonnet* applied to a thing worn at the *foot* advises us of an ironical derivative. But of "drabbler" the etymology is obvious. To drabble is to wet, to befoul. Now the drabbler is an additional piece of canvas laced to the bonnet, and necessarily coming very low, unquestionably takes its name from "drabbling"—getting wet. The sprit-sail and sprit-top-sail are among the vanished details; so indeed is the sprit-sail-yard, which may be said to have been conquered, like a cold young virgin, by the invention of "whiskers"—small booms or irons, one on each side the bowsprit, and formerly projecting from the *cat-heads*, whence possibly the term. Of many sea-expressions the origin is sufficiently transparent. I offer a few examples. "Bilge" is the part of a vessel's bottom which begins to round upwards. The word is corrupted from the old "bulge, the outermost and lowest part of a ship, that which she bears upon when she lies on the ground." "Butt" is the joining of two planks endways. "To start a butt" is to loosen the end of a plank where it unites with another. This word is got from "abut." "Chock-a-block," said when anything is hoisted by a tackle as high as the block will let it go. Chock here means choke, and in that sense is implied in such expressions as "chock-aft," "chock-home," etc. Formerly "jib" was spelt "gyb." A vessel in running is said to "gybe" or "jibe" when the wind gets on the lee side of her fore and

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aft sails and blows them over. As this in the old days of square rigs and "mizon yards" would be peculiar to the "gyb" or "jib," the expression is sufficiently accounted for. "To stay" is to tack; a ship "in stays" is a ship in the act of tacking. I interpret "to stay" by the verb "to stop;" "she is staying"—she is stopping; "in stays"—in the act of stopping.[38] "Tack" is the weather lower corner of a square-course when set. "To tack" may be accepted as metaphorically expressing the action of rounding into the wind in the direction of the tacks. "topgallant," says Johnson, "is proverbially applied to anything elevated or splendid," and quotes from L'Estrange: "I dare appeal to the consciences of topgallant sparks." Prior to the introduction of topgallant sails, there was nothing higher than the topsails. Taking "topgallant" as of proverbial application to whatever is elevated, if not splendid, one easily sees how the topgallant fabric of a ship—its sail, mast, and gear—obtained the name it is known by. "To luff" is to put the helm down, so as to bring the vessel closer to the wind. This word is manifestly taken from "loof," which in olden times was the term applied to the after-part of the bows of a ship. "Quick-work" was the 128
name given to that part of a ship's sides which is above the channel-wales. "'Tis commonly perform'd with Firdeal," says an old writer, "which don't require the fastening nor the Time to work it, as the other parts, but is Quicker done." The ancient spelling gives us "halyards" for "halliards"—ropes and tackles for hoisting sails and yards. To hale is to haul; so that "halyards," "halliards," is *ben trovato*.[39]

38. This may seem too obvious; but meanings may often be sought a great deal too deep. "To bring a ship upon the stays" formerly signified to luff till the vessel lost all way.

39. "Dead-eyes" were originally called "dead man's eyes." They are blocks with holes in them for setting up the rigging with.

In old marine narratives and novels the term "lady's hole" frequently occurs. I was long bothered by this expression, which I indirectly gathered to signify a sort of cabin; but in what part of the ship situated, and why so called, I could not imagine, until in the course of my reading I lighted upon a description of a man-of-war of 1712, in which it is stated that "the lady's hole" is a place for the gunner's small stores, built between the partners of the mainmast, and looked after by a man named "a lady," "who is put in by turns to keep the gun-room clean." Terms of this kind are revelations in their way, as showing for the most part the sort of road the marine philologist must take in his search after originals and derivatives. A vessel is said to be "hogged" when the middle part of her bottom is so strained as to curve *upwards*. To the shape of a hog's back, therefore, is this expression owing. But the etymology of the word "sagged," which expresses the situation of a vessel when her bottom curves *downwards* through being strained, I am unable to trace.[40] "Gangway" means the going-way—the place by which you enter or 129
quit a ship. "Gudgeons"—braces or eyes fixed to the stern-post to receive the pintles of a rudder, I find the meaning of in the old spelling for the same thing, "gougings"—the eye being *gouged* by the pintle. "Lumpers" is a name given to dock-labourers who load or discharge vessels; it was their custom to contract to do the work by the *lump*, and hence the word. "Stevedore" (one whose occupation is to stow cargoes) originates with the Spanish *estibador*, likewise a stower of cargoes. The etymology of certain peculiarly nautical expressions in common use on shipboard must be entirely conjectural. Take "swig off"—*i.e.* to pull upon a perpendicular rope, the end of which is led under a belaying-pin. The old readings give it as "swag off," "swagging off." The motion of this sort of pulling is of a swaggering kind, and I have little doubt that the expression of "swig," or "swag," comes from "swaggering."[41] "Tail on, tally on!" the order for more men to haul upon a rope, possibly expresses its origination with some clearness. "Tail on!"—lengthen the tail of pullers; "Tally on!"—add men in a countable way. It is usual to speak of a ship as being "under way." It should, I think, be "under weigh." The expression is wholly referable to the situation of a ship in the act of moving after her anchor has been lifted or "weighed." Similarly should it be, "the anchor is aweigh," not

the anchor is “away”—the mate’s cry from the forecastle when the anchor is atrip or off the ground.

40. To *sag* used to mean “to hang as a bag on one side.” I cannot find anything in this definition to correspond with the sea-term. It suggests the etymology, however, of the phrase “to sag to leeward,” applicable to a ship trending leewardly through the action of waves and wind whilst sailing.

41. Since this was written I find in Bailey, “To swag: to force or bear downwards as a weight does to hang on.” This settles the paternity of “swig.”

Blocks, a very distinctive feature in the equipment of a vessel, get their names in numerous cases from their shape or conveniency. A *cant*-block is so called because in whalers it is used for the tackles which cant or turn the whale over when it is being stripped of its blubber; a *fiddle*-block, because it has the shape of that instrument; a *fly*-block, because it shifts its position when the tackle it forms a part of is hauled upon; *leading*-blocks, because they are used for guiding the direction of any purchase; *hook*-blocks, because they have a hook at one end; *sister*-blocks, because they are two blocks formed out of one piece of wood, and suggest a sentimental character by intimate association; *snatch*-blocks, because a rope can be *snatched* or whipped through the sheave without the trouble of reeving; *tail*-blocks, because they are fitted with a short length or *tail* of rope by which they are lashed to the gear; *shoulder*-blocks, because their shape hints at a *shoulder*, there being a projection left on one side of the shell to prevent the falls from jamming. In this direction the marine philologist will find his work all plain sailing. The sources whence the sails, or most of them, take their appellations are readily grasped when the leading features of the apparently complicated fabric on high are understood. The *stay-sails* obtain their names from the stays on which they travel. “Top-sail” was so entitled when it was literally the top or uppermost sail. The origin of the word “royal”[42] for the sail above the topgallant-sail we must seek in the fancy that found the noble superstructure of white cloths *crowned* by that heaven-seeking space of canvas.

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42. This sail was, on its introduction, called “topgallant-royal.”

The etymology of “hitches” is not far to seek. But first of the “hitch” itself. “*To hitch*, to catch, to move by jerks.” I know not where it is used but in the following passage—nor here know well what it means:

> ‘Whoe’er offends, at some unlucky time
> Slides in a verse, or *hitches* in a rhyme.’—Pope.

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So writes Dr. Johnson. Had he looked into the old “Voyages,” he would have found “hitch” repeated very often indeed.[43] From the nautical standpoint, he defines it accurately enough as “to catch.” Pope’s use of the term puzzled the Doctor, and he blundered into “to move by jerks.” But Pope employs it as a sailor would; he *hitches* the culprit in a line—that is, takes an intellectual “turn” with his verse about him, or, as the poet puts it, suffers the person to “hitch” himself. To hitch is to fasten, to secure a rope so that it can run out no further. From “hitch” proceed a number of terms whose paternity is very easily distinguished. The “Blackwall hitch” takes its name from the famous point of departure of the vanished procession of Indiamen and Australian liners;[44] the “harness hitch,” from its form, which suggests a bit and reins; “midshipman’s hitch,” from the facility with which it may be made; “rolling hitch,” because it is formed of a series of rolling turns round the object it is intended to secure, and other rolling turns yet over its own part; a “timber hitch,” because of its usefulness in hoisting spars and the like through the ease of its fashioning and the security of its jamming. The etymology of knots, again, is largely found in their forms. “The figure-of-eight knot” is of the shape of the figure eight; the diamond readily suggests the knots which bear its name (single and double

diamond-knots); the "Turk's-head knot" excellently imitates a turban. To some knots and splices the inventors have given their names, such as "Elliot's splice" and "Matthew Walker" knot. The origin of this knot is thus related by a contributor to the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*:—

43. Indeed, any old Dictionary would have supplied the meaning.

44. As does the "Blackwall lead," signifying a rope taken under a pin.

"Over sixty years ago an old sailor, then drawing near to eighty years of age, said that when he was a sailor-boy there was an old rigger, named Matthew Walker, who, with his wife, lived on board an old covered hulk, moored near the Folly End, Monkwearmouth Shore; that new ships when launched were laid alongside of this hulk to be rigged by Walker and his gang of riggers; that also old ships had their rigging refitted at the same place; and that Matthew Walker was the inventor of the lanyard knot, now known by the inventor's name wherever a ship floats." 132

It has been suggested that "knot," the sailor's word for the nautical mile, springs from the small pieces of knotted stuff, called *knots*, inserted in the log-line for marking the progress of a ship through the water. It is worth noting, however, that in the old "Voyages" the word *knot*, as signifying a mile, never occurs. It seems reasonable to suppose that it is a word not much older than the close of the last century.

Amongst puzzling changes in the sea-language must be classed the names of vessels. "Yacht" has been variously defined: as "a small ship for carrying passengers;" as "a vessel of state." The term is now understood to mean a pleasure craft. "Yawl" was formerly a small ship's boat or a wherry: it has become the exclusive title of yachts rigged as cutters, but carrying also a small sail at the stern, called a mizzen. The "barge" was a vessel of state, furnished with sumptuous cabins, and canopies and cushions, decorated with flags and streamers, and propelled by a band of rowers. This hardly answers to the top-sail barges and dumb-barges of to-day! The word "bark" has been Gallicized into "barque," possibly as a marine protest against the mis-application as shown in these lines of Byron—

"My boat is on the shore,
And my bark is on the sea;"

Or the— 133

"My bark is my bride!"

of the sea-song. By bark the poets intend any kind of ship you please: but to Jack it implies a particular rig. The Americans write "bark" for "barque," and rightly; for though Falconer says that "bark is a general name given to small ships," he also adds: "It is, however, peculiarly appropriated by seamen to those which carry three masts without a mizzen top-sail." The "pink" is another craft that has "gone over." Her very narrow stern supplied the name, pink having been used in the sense of small, as by Shakespeare, who speaks of "pink-eyne," small eye. The "tartan," likewise, belongs to the past as a rig: a single mast, lateen yard and bowsprit. The growth of our ancestors' "frigott," too, into the fire-eating *Saucy Arethusas* of comparatively recent times, is a story full of interest.

I have but skimmed a surface whose depths should honestly repay careful and laborious dredging. The language of the sea has entered so largely into common and familiar speech ashore,[45] that the philologist who neglects the mariner's talk will struggle in vain in his search after a mass of paternities, derivatives, and the originals, and even the sense, of many every-day expressions. It is inevitable that a maritime nation should enlarge its shore vocabulary by sea terms. The eloquence of the forecastle is of no

mean order, and in a hundred directions Jack's expressions are matchless for brevity, sentiment and suggestion. But the origin and rise of the marine tongue is also the origin and rise of the British navy, and of the fleets which sail under the red ensign. The story of the British ship may be followed in the maritime glossaries, and perception of the delicate shades and lights, of the subtleties, niceties and discriminations of the ocean dialect is a revelation of the mysteries of the art of the shipwright, and the profession of the seaman.

45. Take as a single example the expression "The devil to pay." To "pay" is to pour melted pitch into a seam for the purposes of caulking. The "devil" is a name given by caulkers to a particular seam hard to get at. Hence, "There is the devil to pay, and no pitch hot."

THEN AND NOW.

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The occasional stranding of an ocean steamer, and the consequent transhipment or landing of the passengers, furnishes about the best illustration to be found of the extraordinary inconvenience that delay, in these days of swift and sure despatch, carries with it. The immense discomfort experienced is really a tribute to the management of the people who undertake to convey passengers. We are so habituated to precision, we are so used to confidently count not only on the hour but on the moment even of our arrival and departure, that a single failure is as much felt as though something had gone wrong in nature; and a small shock of earthquake is not more startling than detention for a day in a voyage round the world.

I was in the neighbourhood of the Downs not long since; it was blowing a fresh breeze from the westward, and I believe there could not have been less than three hundred vessels at anchor: ships of all kinds, from the large three-masted vessel down to the billyboy, from the high, light, slate-coloured steamer, down to the little schooner loaded to her ways with salt. There they lay, and there a goodly number of them had lain for some days. When they should start for their three hundred destinations depended entirely upon the wind. It was like a picture out of an ancient sea-book, an old-world pageant, 136
with something of irony in what you could not but regard as its affected correspondence with times whose true spirit found interpretation in a large steamer of the National line majestically stemming at ten knots into the wind's eye. Taking the first volume that comes to hand from a row of maritime records, and opening it at hazard, my eye lights on this: "Jan. 6, 1771.—The wind having shifted to the East, upwards of four hundred and fifty sail of ships, outward bound, which had been detained by the westerly winds many weeks, sailed from the Downs." 1771, and I, writing this in the close of 1886, am fresh from beholding just such another spectacle! How eloquent are time's comments! how everywhere, throughout all things, is old human nature breaking out! No need to wade through history to remark the character of survivals and recurrences, to note where the echoes die or where the reverberations gather fresh volume. Study the mighty page of the sea. The years, to be sure, write no wrinkles on its azure brow, but every ripple is a library, and there are more meanings in it than herrings. But to be windbound! The traveller scarcely knows the meaning of the word in this age. To lie off Deal for a space of time longer than a New Zealand steamer occupies in measuring the distance betwixt Tilbury and Wellington! Why, in these days you may be stranded thrice, thrice transhipped, and yet reach your destination in the time a ship took in the age of the fine old English gentleman to drop down to Gravesend and let go her anchor in the Downs.

Henry Fielding, when he started on his voyage to Lisbon, left his house on Wednesday, June 26, 1754. He arrived at Rotherhithe in two hours, and immediately went on board, expecting to sail next morning. On Sunday, June 30, the ship "fell down" to Gravesend. 137
Next day she got as far as the Nore, and brought up. Tuesday, July 2, they again set sail, and anchored off Deal; weighed on the 4th, and after a short struggle anchored again off Deal. Started on the 6th, and on the 11th "came to an anchor at a place called Ryde." On the 22nd they fell down to St. Helen's, and on the 25th were off the island of Portland, "so famous for the smallness and sweetness of its mutton," and anchored in Torbay. Started again August 1. On the 3rd the captain took an observation, and discovered that Ushant bore some leagues northward from him. So that it took Fielding thirty-eight days to sail from Rotherhithe to Ushant! The voyage to New Zealand is now performed in two days less.[46]

46. It does not seem that the *Lisbon Packet* forty-eight years later was much superior to the vessel described by Fielding, to judge from Byron's verses written in 1809.

"Hey day! call you that a cabin?
Why 'tis hardly three feet square!
Not enough to stow Queen Mab in:
Who the deuce can harbour there?
'Who, sir? plenty—
Nobles twenty
Did at once my vessel fill'—
Did they? Jesus,
How you squeeze us!
Would to God they did so still!
Then I'd 'scape the heat and racket
Of the good ship *Lisbon Packet*."

But the singular slowness of this journey down the Channel is by no means the strangest feature of Fielding's voyage, in respect, I mean, of the contrasts established by the great master's narrative. A man proposing a trip to Lisbon nowadays, can, if he likes, choose as a ship a fabric of above three thousand tons, with a spacious and richly decorated saloon illuminated by electric lights, a table as elegantly and hospitably furnished as that of any first-rate hotel ashore, numerous waiters to fly at his bidding, a comfortable bedroom fitted with a wire-wove mattrass and a hair bed. He may quench his thirst with choice of twenty refreshing drinks at a bar. The captain and officers are as much distinguished for their courtesy as for their seafaring qualities. The ship is despatched with the punctuality of a mail train; there is nothing in head winds or boisterous weather to detain her, and she commonly arrives at her destination before she is due. Fielding's ship was a vessel not at all unlike one of the scores of sailing colliers which to this day go on staggering down the North Sea, laden with coals from Newcastle or Sunderland. Her master was so great a ruffian that Fielding has drawn the figure of no completer character of that kind in any of his novels, not excepting "Jonathan Wild." When the novelist ventured mildly to complain of the long detention at Rotherhithe, this brutal skipper, in whose mouth every other word was an oath, declared that had he known Mr. and Mrs. Fielding were not to be pleased he would not have carried them for five hundred pounds. "He added," says Fielding, "many asseverations that he was a gentleman, and despised money, not forgetting several hints of the presents which had been made him for his cabin, of twenty, thirty, and forty guineas, by several gentlemen, over and above the sum for which they had contracted." The size and comfort of the accommodation may be conjectured from what Fielding says of the captain's snoring: "he loved to indulge himself in morning slumbers, which were attended with a wind-music much more agreeable to the performer than to the hearers, especially such as have, as I had, the privilege of sitting in the orchestra." The passage money was five pounds a head, and it was expected that passengers fed themselves. Fielding provided tea and wine, hams and tongues, and a number of live chickens and sheep; in truth, says he, "treble the quantity of provisions which could have supported the persons I took with me." A sample is given of the captain's politeness. I omit the wicked words. Fielding had objected to his cabin being littered with bottles. "Your cabin!" repeated he many times; "no, 'tis my cabin! Your cabin! I have brought my hogs to a fair market. I suppose, indeed, you think it your cabin and your ship, by your commanding in it! but I will command in it! I will show the world I am the commander, and nobody but I! Did you think I sold you the command of the ship for that pitiful thirty pounds? I wish I had not seen you nor your thirty pounds aboard of her." To appreciate all this it is necessary the reader should imagine himself dying of dropsy as Fielding was, seeking in poverty a brief prolongation of life in a more genial climate than that of England, his wife prostrated with sea-sickness

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and the agonies of tooth-ache! It is well that those days are dead and gone. Hundreds of us are every year going abroad for health;—think of embarking on that painful quest as the invalid of a century ago did—in a ship of probably a hundred tons burden, commanded by a pitiless, foul-mouthed bully, and worked by men who, to use Fielding's own expression, seemed "to glory in the language and behaviour of savages!"

It is fair to admit, however, that much of the misery endured by the sea-borne passenger was, in those and later times, limited to the short service ships. It is true that on the American route the vessels continued small and wretched down to the present century. For instance, you read of two hundred Highland emigrants embarking for Boston 140
in a snow—a kind of brig—of one hundred and forty tons. A few years ago I was in company with an old gentleman who, pointing to a small barque lying moored alongside a wharf, told me that he sailed to New York in her in 1836, and that she was esteemed a high-class commodious passenger-vessel even in those days.[47] But it must be admitted that at the period of Fielding's voyage there were ships trading to the East and West Indies of a bulk and beauty which might justly entitle them still to admiration. The craft of both the Dutch and East India Companies were as capacious and seaworthy as ships of the State: their forecastle companies were abundantly and highly disciplined; their commanders of the roughly polite type, excellently represented by the heroic old Commodore Dance. Their round-houses, or great cabins, were exceedingly handsome apartments, plentifully embellished with carpets, mirrors, flowers, hand-painted panels, and in other ways richly decorated. Such were the ships which carried Clive and 141
Hastings, and such they remained down to the time of the fine old Earl of Balcarres.

47. The following lines, published in 1832, and therefore referring to shipboard life of a date comparatively recent, illustrate the sufferings of passengers in the direction of the accommodation supplied:

"Soon as the twilight closed and I was able,
I left the cuddy and the folks at table
Reading the news; and heard not what they read,
For all I wanted was to find my bed:
Which, after searching 'tween decks all around,
Under a pile of hammocks there I found
All my clean sheets were scattered 'mongst the boxes,
My blankets, too, that I had bought at Cox's,
Laid in a corner where a dog had lain,
And, curse the dogs! they'd stole my counterpane.
I managed to obtain a berth that night
To sleep in, but they woke me ere 'twas light;
A noise above, and from below a groan,
I heard a voice say, 'Hang that holy-stone!'"

It was reserved apparently for the days of the application of steam to ships for owners of vessels to discover that passengers embarking on a short voyage stood in as much need of comfort and security as passengers embarking on a long voyage; and that more misery could be packed into the run between Dover and Calais than could be found in a journey of three years round the globe.[48] How much of suffering went to such a trip as that from Rotherhithe to Lisbon may be read, very much at large, in Fielding's wonderful narrative —the more wonderful when we reflect that the hand that penned it was a dying man's. Nor is it hard to collect similar experiences of the old passages to Ireland, to Scotland, or to near ports, such as from London to Yarmouth or from Southampton to Plymouth. The risks, the horrors, were increased by the character of the people who had charge of the vessels. There were no Board of Trade examinations in those days; no standards of excellence; no special qualifications insisted upon. That the British mariner was always a

good seaman I should be the last to deny; but he swore, he drank, he was rude, tempestuous, ruffianly, and little fitted—I am speaking of the coasting trade—to do the honours of the cabin table, or to provide by his attention and courtesy for the needs of ladies and children. Henry Taylor, writing in 1811, says, "The ship in which I engaged belonged to Hull. The captain was one who indulged himself in bed during night, in every situation; the mate—a middle-aged man—was much addicted to strong liquor. In the middle of the night, when the ship was in a perilous place, the master went to bed, and the chief mate invited the crew into the cabin to drink. In a short time he fell stupidly drunk down into the steerage. The sailors dared not arouse the master, and so took their chance of letting the ship run on until the watch was out." On another occasion Taylor was seaman in a ship in stormy weather. The captain went below to his cabin and "turned in;" the mate, standing on the windlass end, fell asleep; a young man at the helm suddenly cried out, "We are running too far in!" Taylor seized the lead, found little more than three fathoms, and sung out to the other to put the helm hard down. "So stupidly drunk and asleep was the mate that we were hauling the head yards about before he awoke." Such mariners must stand as representatives, and how passengers suffered when they took passage in vessels commanded by men of this pattern is only too painfully told in the relations of shipwrecks.

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48. The duration of the Channel passage depended of course upon the wind. Prince Charles and Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, sailed at six in the morning and arrived at two in the afternoon. Sometimes the passage occupied twelve hours, sometimes twenty-four. A fresh favourable breeze made the journey a comparatively rapid one. There is a quaint entry touching this passage in Dr. Ed. Browne's Journal (1663–4). "April 6. Betimes in the morning, wee set sayle for Calais in the packet boat; wee gave five shillings a piece for our passage and having a fair winde, wee got in four houres' time, into Calais roade, from whence a shallop fetch'd us to shoare. At our entryng of the port wee pay'd threepence a piece for our heads; they searched my portmantle at the gate and the custom house, for which I was to pay 5 sols."

Take a single incident of a gale a century ago. A vessel was proceeding on her voyage from Chester to Dublin. Her provisions, which at the start had been all too scanty for "the vast number of souls she took out with her"—as the record describes them—had been stowed on deck, to make room below for the passengers. In a very short while the sea washed them overboard. "What followed may be better imagined than expressed. The wretches were crammed into the hold, without light or air, and all on board the ship without bread or water, with scarce any other prospect of seeing an end to their sufferings but by the ship's foundering." After forty-eight hours of misery the captain made shift to enter a small Welsh port, but the distress of the passengers continued, for the village or hamlet was too small to afford them either provisions or accommodation. What became of them is not told.

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Contrast such an experience with the cabins and food of a Holyhead boat—the swift journey, be the weather what it will, the brilliant, hospitable, comfortable hotels on either side the water! Or read the account of the loss of the *Union*, the regular packet between Dover and Calais, in 1792, side by side with the description of the last steamer built for the Chatham and Dover Railway Company: how, through unnecessary delays, she had suffered the time of high tide to slip past; how, in endeavouring to turn to windward, she had missed stays, fouled the south pier, and lay beating there; how, by a miracle, the crew and passengers were rescued, but after embarking next morning in the *Pitt*, Captain Sharp, were wrecked afresh, "being driven on shore at the north head, in a violent gale, but fortunately no person was lost." One finds in such narratives as this the reason why Frenchmen for ages lived in ignorance of the true character of the English, and wrote fancifully of boule-dogs, ros-bif, Smeetfield, and Goddam. The fact is, they *durst not cross*.

Take another wreck of a Dublin boat—the *Charlemont* packet—a memorable item in the catalogue of maritime disasters. She sailed on a Wednesday, and managed to reach Dublin Bay, but was driven back by the weather. She started afresh on Friday, with the 144
number of her passengers increased to one hundred and twenty, and was again forced to put back. The people implored the master to make for Holyhead, but he said he was ignorant of the coast. After a while, however, he yielded; the mate, deceived by some lights, mistook his course, the vessel struck and went to pieces. Of the passengers, sixteen only escaped, one of them being Captain Jones, a son of Lord Ranelagh. Think of an Irish "mimber" in these days, thirsting to be in his place at Westminster at a given hour, forced to take ship after the manner of his ancestors! A gale of wind would make a large difference in the number of votes, and at times might prove superior to the closure.

War-time also communicated a degree of discomfort to voyagers beyond all capacity of realization in this age. It was common enough for an Indiaman to be engaged by an enemy's ship or a privateer which, if she did not carry and seize the vessel, repeatedly succeeded in killing and maiming the passengers amongst others. "Two gentlemen," you may read in an Annual Register of the beginning of this century, "passengers from Holland, landed at Margate. They affirm they were in the evening boarded in sight of the North Foreland by an English privateer cutter, whose crew, in disguise, confined the captain and crew of the vessel in the cabin, and then plundered it of goods to the value of £2000, demanded the captain's money, and took what the passengers had."[49] This sort of thing furnishes engaging reading to boys when told in story-books; but how about the 145
reality? To be tossed for days and days in sight of land; to be horribly sea-sick and barbarously used by captains and mates: to be battened down in foul weather in loathsome interiors, there to expire after a little of suffocation; to be coarsely fed and often starved; to be boarded and massacred and mutilated; to be plundered of the very coat on one's back—such were the pleasures of the short-voyage passengers in the good old times, of the people who went to France, or sailed to the kingdom of Ireland, or to the Scotch ports, or those of Flanders.

49. A striking example of this occurs in the narrative of the capture of the *Kent*, East Indiaman, in 1801, by a French privateer off the Sand Heads. A number of the passengers who were fighting on the quarter-deck and poop were killed by the hand grenades of the corsair. The Frenchmen boarded and a desperate fight ensued; but the enemy was greatly superior in number and arms. "A dreadful carnage followed, they showing no quarter to any one who came in their way, whether with or without arms; and such was their savage cruelty that they even stabbed some of the sick in bed."

It is not pleasant, to be sure, to be delayed four and twenty hours by the stranding of a steamer of 5000 tons. But all the same, I think we have a good deal to be thankful for.

COSTLY SHIPWRECKS.

In 1808, a shrewd and evidently a "highly-calculating" Yankee took the trouble to express the loss suffered by the United States in consequence of the then embargo, in a form very nicely designed to go straight home to the businesses and bosoms of his compatriots. The sum amounted to forty-eight millions of dollars, which, said the ingenious arithmetician, at seventeen dollars to the pound weight, would weigh two millions eight hundred and twenty-three pounds avoirdupois; and it would require to carry it one thousand two hundred and sixty waggons, allowing each waggon to carry one ton; and the distance the waggons would occupy, allowing each waggon seventy-two feet, would be seventeen miles. Forty-eight millions of dollars, placed edge to edge in a straight line, would extend over a space of one thousand one hundred and thirty-four miles. "The above sum," added the computator, "would be sufficient to furnish one hundred and twenty-one sail of the line, completely equipped for a twelve months' cruise." So much for the length, weight, and worth of an embargo in 1808.

Now, what sort of result, I wonder, would come of a calculation of the weight, and the length, and the waggon-filling capacity of all the money—in hard cash, in bars, and ingots—which will have been carried into and out of this kingdom by ships flying the mercantile ensign between January 1 and December 31 of this present year? I sometimes fancy that it needs a shipwreck and a great foundering of specie to make the "average" public realize the prodigious treasure which is at all hours of the day and night, year after year, and year after year growing vaster in bulk and in value, afloat under the colours flown by the ships of the British merchant service. Let any one, during any six consecutive days, take note of the published records of the bullion movements, and he would be astounded by the results. "The *Bokhara* has arrived at Plymouth, from China, with £42,450 in gold." "The *Khedive* has taken £81,598 in specie for the East, and the *Peshawur* £65,600." "The *Pekin* has brought £50,012 in specie." "The *Sutlej*, £16,110 from Bombay." "The *Galicia*, from Valparaiso, £80,000 in silver." "The *Iberia*, from Australia, £58,000 in gold." "The *Elbe*, from the River Plate, £93,379 in specie." "The *Kaisar-i-Hind*, £46,000 in bar silver, and £15,000 in bar gold." "The *Eider*, from New York, with £5920 in specie." "The *Trave*, from New York, £7941." "The *Carthage*, with 50,000 sovereigns from Melbourne." "The *Ruapehu*, from Wellington (N.Z.), with £10,000." And so on, and so on, day after day, month after month. Think of a year of figures to which the contribution of a single day may mean as much as half a million! But supplement this huge floating pile of gold and silver with the value of the cargoes, with the produce of the east and west and south, the tea, the silks, the cotton, the tobacco—the hundreds and thousands of packages for which the despairing cataloguist can find no better name than "sundries." Where be the old galleons, the old plate-ships, the monstrous castellated egg-shells, with their millions of pieces of eight,[50] alongside the Aladdin-like metal holds, stored with the mintage of the four corners of the earth, which, in these days, the propeller is steadily threshing through the billows of all the world's seas?

50. A strange use was made of this coin by Sir John Kempthorne. He was attacked by a large Spanish ship of war, and fought till all his ammunition was spent: "Then," says Campbell in his "Lives," "remembering that he had several large bags of pieces of eight on board, he thought they might better serve to annoy than enrich the enemy, and, therefore, ordered his men to load their guns with silver, which did such execution on the Spanish rigging, that, if his own ship had not been disabled by a lucky shot, he had in all probability got clear."

Yet my veneration for the past would make me very earnestly distinguish. It is the number in our time that makes the wonder; the thought of several hundreds of great ocean steamers—English, French, Italian, Dutch—all afloat at once, heading along the thirty-two points, every one of them carrying a fortune, small or great—£10,000 or £100,000—in money, among the other commodities which form her freight; it is the fancy of this aggregate wealth as compared with the cargoes of the treasure ships of other times which gives to the sea-borne specie of this age its prodigious numerical significance. But, ship for ship, our grandsires beat us. You never hear in our time of a single steamer carrying the load of gold, silver, plate, and treasure that was heaped into the hold of the butter-box of the last and earlier centuries. Let me cite an instance or two.

On February 28, 1769, there arrived at Lisbon a ship-of-war, named the *Mother of God*, from Rio Janeiro, having made the voyage in one hundred and twenty days. She had on board nine millions of crusades in gold, two millions and a half of crusades in diamonds, and about a hundred thousand "crowns tournois" in piastres, making in the whole twenty-nine millions and fifty thousand livres tournois. So much for a single ship. In 1774 two Spanish ships from Vera Cruz and the Havannah arrived with twenty-two millions of crowns, exclusive of merchandize valued roundly at twenty-seven millions of crowns. Such examples could be multiplied. Of the cargo of an English Indiaman in 1771, one item alone—a diamond in the rough—was valued at £100,000, "coming to be manufactured here on account of one of the Asiatic Nabobs," and on the private freight of this vessel I read that policies of insurance were opened at Lloyd's Coffee House at a high premium, so costly were her contents and so doubtful her safe arrival.[51]

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51. In estimating the expressed worth of the early cargoes the relative value of money must be borne in mind.

In those early days of extraordinary long voyages, clumsy ships, and of a navigation rendered not a little insecure by the blunders or the conjectures of the chart-makers, we should expect to meet with a great number of costly disasters, the more since it was the custom to commit to a single hold the treasure that would in this day be distributed among eight or ten great and powerful steamers. Yet this sort of shipwreck is not nearly so frequently occurring in marine annals as one would suppose. When it happens it takes an historical significance much more profound than that which attaches to loss of life. The memory of the foundering of £200,000 of silver and gold will survive the drowning of a thousand souls in a *coup*. The muse of history has much in her of the philosophy of the cynic who declared that a man will forget his wife, his children, yea, and his country; but he will never forget the person who borrowed £5 from him and forgot to repay it. There was *La Lutine*, for instance. When some time ago there was talk of a proposal to recover the money that went down in her, everybody, somehow or other, seemed to remember the loss of such a ship, though it happened above eighty years ago. But suppose it had been the *Buckinghamshire* or the *Windsor Castle*?

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Yet, as a costly shipwreck, *La Lutine* deserves a reference. She was a thirty-two gun vessel, commanded by Captain Skynner, and she went ashore on the bank of the Fly Island Passage on the night of October 9, 1799. At first she was reputed to have had £600,000 sterling in specie on board. This was afterwards contradicted by a statement that "the return from the Bullion Office makes the whole amount about £140,000 sterling." "If," I find in a contemporary account, "the wreck of the unfortunate *Lutine* should be discovered, there may be reason to hope for the recovery of the bullion on board of her. In the reign of James II. some English adventurers fitted out a vessel to search for and weigh up the cargo of a rich Spanish ship which had been lost on the coast of South America. They succeeded, and brought home £300,000, which had been forty-four years at the bottom of the sea. Captain Phipps, who commanded, had £20,000 for his share, and the Duke of Albemarle £90,000. A medal was struck in honour of this event in 1687."[52]

52. The story is told at length in Beckmann's "History of Inventions and Discoveries." The author speaks of William Phipps as the son of a blacksmith, born in America. He was bred as a shipwright at Boston, and formed a project for searching and unloading a rich Spanish ship sunk on the coast of Hispaniola. Charles II. gave him a ship; he sailed in 1683, but to no purpose. The Duke of Albemarle afterwards backed him, and he started again in 1687, with the result as told above. Much about this time several companies were formed and obtained exclusive privileges for fishing up goods on certain coasts by means of divers. At the head of one of these was the Earl of Argyle. The divers of this company worked off the Isle of Mull, and descending to a depth of sixty feet, remained there sometimes a whole hour, and then brought up gold chains, money, etc. But the returns were trifling.

There was a very costly wreck in 1767. She was a Dutch East Indiaman, and foundered in a storm within three leagues of the Texel, taking down all hands but six, and £500,000. But it was not necessary that a vessel should have so much as an ounce of precious metal in her to be a rich ship. One of the costliest cargoes ever carried was found in 1764 in the galleon *Santissima Trinidad*; for she had on board the vast collection of foreign curiosities formed by Governor Pigot and shipped at Madras, consisting of wild beasts, serpents, and so forth. There was a great loss in 1773. The Dons again! You would say that the price of four such Armadas as that of 1588 went down in the last century alone in the shape of gold, silver, and plate. She was the annual register ship, as the term then was, and had in her five hundred thousand piastres and ten thousand ounces of gold on account of the king, and twice that sum on the merchants' account, making her a very rich ship. She foundered during the passage, and no man escaped to tell how and when. In the same year the Dutch lost the *Antonietta*, an Indiaman, and with her sank £700,000 sterling, besides jewels of great value. 151

In 1871 a Scotchman, named Johnston, patented a treasure safe for ships. His proposal was that the safe should be suspended at the ship's davits, ready at an instant's notice to be lowered into the sea. He contrived that the safe should detach itself in the event of a sudden calamity, and float off to be picked up by some passing ship, or washed ashore. The idea was ingenious; but it is not every captain who would relish the thought of an unsinkable chest full of gold and jewels hanging at his davits ready to the hand of the first daring Jack who should depend upon a black night and the navigable qualities of the chest to come safely off with a few hundreds of thousands of pounds. Yet what pickings the deep would have offered—would still offer—if the money and jewels carried by ships were stowed in contrivances which floated after the vessel was gone! The mind is oppressed by the splendid possibilities the fancy suggests. Here we have something beyond the dreams of avarice. Where might not such chests be sought with large promise of dazzling discovery? The ocean is a miser. Like some old woman found dead of starvation, with guineas and bank-notes stitched away in her rags, is the sea in her beggarly art of concealing treasure among the squalid weediness of her shores. "Some time ago," says an old report, "on the arrival of the *Two Sisters*, Captain O'Neale, of Bristol, at Dominica, a chest containing upwards of £40,000 in Portugal gold fell overboard as they were putting it into a boat, and was lost in ten fathoms of water." They had nothing but Dr. Halley's diving-bell in those times, and the money lies at this hour where it sank, only deeper perhaps, and very much out of sight. How such a disaster would be dealt with now may be known by reference to the comparatively recent recovery of some hundred thousand pounds off the Grand Canary from the hold of a steamer sunk, if my memory is correct, in about thirty fathoms of water. 152

There was a curious kind of smuggling practised aboard the old ships, and there is reason to believe that in many instances the actual value of the treasure in foundered vessels was never declared. An example is given of a Spanish register ship falling into the hands of the British. Certain discoveries determined the captors not to sell her, but to break her up themselves, believing that by so doing they might find valuables artfully concealed. The duty on gold was high, and to evade it many of the bars of that metal had 153

been thinly coated with pewter and denominated “fine pewter” in the invoice, by order of the Spanish merchants. The particulars of the freight are worth giving, as illustrative of the cargoes of that age (1793) and of the great value entrusted to a single ship. There were six hundred and ninety-four cases of silver, each containing three thousand dollars; thirty-three cases of gold, besides plate and jewels of the value of £500,000; seventy-two hundred of redwood; sixteen cases of silver in bars; two thousand two hundred and sixty-two quintals of bark of different weights; two thousand two hundred and forty quintals of cocoa; four thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven cases of pepper; a great number of cases of lead, wool, sugar, medical roots, gum of cocoa, together with hides, skins, barrels of honey, and eleven cases of the various productions of Peru. “This cargo,” says the account, “has been two years in collecting from different parts of the coast, and is without exception the richest that ever was trusted on board of any single ship. It is impossible to form a just estimate of its value, but it is certainly not overrated when it is stated as twelve or thirteen hundred thousand pounds. Think of the costly wreck such a vessel as this would have made! and certainly, so far as her freighters were concerned, she was as good as foundered when she was captured.”

The following illustration of the old methods of concealing treasure I find in a little sea-book published anonymously in 1834: “I once went, with others, on board a prize we had taken to make the usual search. After rummaging the sail-room, I got into the store-room, where I saw a case filled with bran, and thrusting my hand among it, for I thought it might prove a hiding-place, I found something hard wrapped up in a piece of blue cloth. Not having leisure to examine it at the moment, I slipped it into the pocket of my jacket, and was coming away, when I trod upon something, and looking down at the place, saw a potatoe that I had crushed with an English guinea peeping from its hiding place. I picked up all I could and jumped into the boat.... The murphies yielded me about thirty guineas; and when I undid the parcel there came from its swaddling clothes a most beautiful gold watch set round with diamonds.” 154

Great in its way was that treasure of seven million five hundred thousand dollars and the value of a million and a half in cochineal and other effects which five men-of-war, under the command of Rear-Admiral Don Adrian Caudron Cantin, brought to Cadiz in 1775, and the one thousand five hundred octaves of gold, two hundred thousand crusades of silver, and the eighty serons of cochineal which, in the same year, were brought by a ship to Lisbon from the Brazils. In more modern times the costliness of shipwreck is to be found in the destruction of the fabric and her cargo rather than in the loss of the treasure on board. Whatever may have been the worth of a galleon, as a ship, there need be no scruple in concluding that when brand-new her value would be but that of a toy in comparison with such ocean mail boats as now convey specie and “valuables.” The sinking of an Atlantic, Indian, or Australian liner—even with a clean hold—would represent an immense treasure if told in dollars, ducats, or piastres; and when you add the cargo of such a craft along with the passengers’ luggage, which must often include a quantity of jewellery expressing many thousands of pounds alone, some astonishing figures would be the result. As a matter of fact, our later shipwrecks do not point to the same heavy losses in specie and articles manufactured out of the precious metals as were sustained in former times. The destruction or capture of a single ship in the last and in preceding centuries would frequently signify the sinking of a million to a million and a half of pounds sterling in chests of pieces of eight, in ingots and bars, and in religious decorations, and this without reference to the cargo, the value of which may be inferred when we hear of tea selling at two guineas a pound.[53] 155

53. “Tea was first imported from Holland by the Earls of Arlington and Ossory in 1666; from their ladies the women of quality learned its use. Its price was then £3 a pound, and continued the same to 1707. In 1715 we began to use green tea, and the practice of drinking it descended to the lower class of the people.” “Johnson’s Works,” vol. ii. p. 335. At the beginning of this century tea was 25*s*. a pound.

The *Royal Charter* is the most notable modern instance of the wreck of a "treasure" ship that I can just now call to mind. She left Australia with £350,000 in her. Of this sum, says Charles Dickens in his chapter on this dreadful shipwreck in the "Uncommercial Traveller," £300,000 worth were recovered. At the time of the novelist's visit to the spot where she had driven ashore, "the great bulk of the remainder," writes he, "was surely and steadily coming up. Some loss of sovereigns there would be, of course; indeed, at first sovereigns had drifted in with the sand, and been scattered far and wide over the beach like sea shells, but most other golden treasure would be found. So tremendous had the force of the sea been when it broke the ship that it had beaten one great ingot of gold deep into a strong and heavy piece of her solid iron work, in which also several loose sovereigns, that the ingot had swept in before it, had been found as firmly embedded as though the iron had been liquid when they had been forced there." This is a curiosity of disaster, but mightily suggestive of the sea's miserly trick of concealing her plunder. Meanwhile, how much gold and silver, minted and otherwise, is annually afloat? How many millions are yearly borne over the deep to and from India, America, Australia, China, and South Africa, by English steamers alone? There should be no difficulty in making the calculation, which, when arrived at, must surely yield a fine idea of the treasure over which the red flag flies, and an excellent notion of the trust that is reposed in the British shipmaster, and of the high and sterling qualities which go to the fulfilment of it.

CURIOSITIES OF DISASTERS AT SEA.

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An old sailor once said to me, “If I were to write down one quarter of what I’ve seen, heard, and gone through, the reader would throw away the book, calling me all the evil names he could put his tongue to, afore he had read half of what I’d writ.” I remember an ingenious reviewer of a nautical romance affirming that it was impossible the author could be correct in representing such a sea as he described as running off Agulhas in a gale from the north-west, because, said the critic, “we have repeatedly crossed the Channel between Folkestone and Boulogne, in all sorts of weather, without ever having witnessed such waves as we are here told about.” Yes, sailors see and do strange things; they spend their lives on a wild and wonderful element, and are a community who generate gnats at which the landsman is prone to strain. We hear of amazing escapes on shore, but, surely, they cannot be so astonishing as the perils which men encounter at sea, or we should hearken with less incredulous souls when Jack coils his legs up under him and relates his experiences.

Some time ago I read what the newspapers called “a terrible story of shipwreck.” An American schooner came across six men washing about on the top of a deck-house. They were the survivors of a crew of Spaniards whose barque had foundered six days before. When the captain of her found that his vessel was bound to sink he set his men to work to make a raft. They were thus employed when the barque all on a sudden turned over and sank. Seven of the poor fellows were sucked down with the hull; the rest, finding the deck-house afloat, crawled on to it. For five days and nights they were beaten here and there by the seas, without drink and without food. Ashore the dangers a man confronts and escapes may be terrible; but the ground he treads is what he is born to: peril is localized or limited. He is imprisoned in a mine; he is menaced by suffocation or starvation. He loses his way on a mountain; he is threatened by death from exhaustion or by stumbling over the edge of a height. He is in the heart of a panic-stricken crowd; he stands to have his ribs crushed in and his lungs choked. He is in a house on fire; he must be burnt if he cannot escape. To be sure, danger on shore is as little agreeable as it would be in the air or under the waters; but a man may commonly say of peril on land what he cannot say of peril at sea, that he knows the form of it and what shape his destruction will take if he cannot elude it.

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But at sea you have a combination of forces working against a creature who when on the ocean is as much out of his element as the shark that ogles him would be if lifted high and dry on to a ship’s deck. Take those six Spaniards washing about on top of a deck-house. What was to be their fate? Were they to be drowned, or frozen, or starved, or be picked up raving mad with thirst and other sufferings? Think of the cruelty of the sea—fiendish in spirit as any torturer of the good old days of the Inquisition—tossing that deck-house with a horrible human-like delight in the sport that kept those white-lipped soaking rags of men holding on for their lives! Consider a little the malignant confederacy of billows wasting their giant weight, one after another, ceaselessly, restlessly, one after another, upon those miserable men made mere mocking tumblers of by the play of the waters, and looking up to God out of the supreme agony of their ocean struggles! If the surge could not tear them from their desperate hold it left them drenched to the marrow, and fit for the freezing part that it was the business of the wind to play. Or, if the wind left their hearts warm enough for life it was only that hunger should not be balked in the lodgment of its own particular anguish.

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For my part I can well understand why landsmen are incredulous when sailors who have suffered begin to talk. There is internal evidence to suggest that when the Wedding Guest left the Ancient Mariner, unpleasantly fascinated as he had been by his eye, he went to the people who had been making merry, and informed them that he had been detained by a yarn that was fit only for the marines. Why, even in the year 1800, Sir Samuel Standidge was apologizing for writing to say that he had met ice in the month of May in the Atlantic forty-five degrees north; his excuse being that it was true. The Wedding Guest flourished in an earlier reign when not very much was known about bergs, and one thinks of him as sneering when he told his friends that the Ancient Mariner said the roar of the ice breaking up was like “noises in a swound.”

In the “Pasha of Many Tales,” Captain Marryat exaggerates the proverbial “twister” of the marine. But how many experiences have sailors suffered incomparably more surprising than the most ingenious of the fictions in Marryat’s book; and more miraculous in the machinery of fortuitous escape than could ever occur to the most daring among the old Arabian inventors? There are instances of disasters so complicated by misfortune as to become sheer eccentricities of peril. I remember being much struck with a paragraph I came across in a newspaper of the last century: “Captain Lamire, commander of the *Heureux*, on April 26, being in the lat. of one deg. 2 min., and 21 deg. 28 min. long. W., reckoning from Teneriff, several of his crew, and a great number of negros on board, were seized with a disorder of their eyes, many of whom were blind for ten or twelve days; nine lost their sight entirely, and seven or eight the sight of one eye. Accidents of this kind, it is said, are not unprecedented in latitudes so near the line, but the great number affected at the same time exceeds anything that was ever heard of before.” Had that old ship carried such slender companies as vessels now go manned with, who shall say, in the face of the numbers who were blinded, that all hands would not have lost their sight? What object could the imagination fasten upon more dreadful and tragical than a ship in charge of a blind crew? What possibilities of harrowing description would such a subject offer to the romancer!

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There is preserved a curious account of the Hon. John O’Brien, a brother or near relative to the Earl of Inchiquin. He was so incessantly in jeopardy from one cause or another that his career expresses in perfection the eccentricity of disaster. A few examples will hint at his story. He was a lieutenant in the Navy in 1747, and his first mishap befel him off the coast of India, where his ship was wrecked, all hands perishing with the exception of O’Brien and four sailors. He embarked in a vessel to return to Europe, but was cast away near the Cape of Good Hope, and was the only one of a great number who contrived to escape with his life. The Dutch Governor, discovering him to be a “person of honour,” supplied him with every necessary for continuing the voyage, and gave him a cabin in one of the homeward bound East Indiamen. The Governor of another settlement, who was going home in the same ship, finding himself rather straitened for room on account of the number of his own family, begged for the exclusive use of the vessel for his suite and baggage. The Governor of the Cape complied, and procured accommodation for O’Brien in another vessel that was to sail on the same day. Shortly afterwards the ships put to sea, and it is recorded as an absolute and well assured fact that, within twenty-four hours of their leaving the Cape, O’Brien saw the ship he had quitted founder in a gale of wind, taking down with her every creature on board! A few years later this fortune-hunted gentleman was stationed on board the *Dartmouth* of fifty guns. She fell in with the *Glorioso*, a Spanish man-of-war, and engaged her for some hours. O’Brien was at his station between decks, when the gunner ran up to him, and, with wildness and despair in his look, cried out, “Oh, sir! the powder-room!” Lieutenant O’Brien heard no more, for the ship instantly blew up! Such a catastrophe as this, you would conjecture, must effectually put an end to O’Brien. In fact, if I were to write his life I should skip this little disaster for fear that it should destroy the reader’s faith in the other parts of the story. It is true, nevertheless, that O’Brien, instead of perishing, was found floating about

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on the carriage of a gun. It was supposed that he had been blown through a porthole with one of the guns. He was picked up by a privateer named the *Duke*, and as a proof that the natural sprightliness and gaiety of his character was superior to so slight an accident as that of being blown up in a man-of-war, he is recorded to have said to the captain of the 162
Duke, speaking with great gravity, "You will excuse me, sir, for appearing before you in such a dress; but the reason is I left my ship so hurriedly that I had no time to put on better clothes." But enough of the Hon. John O'Brien.

Though it might not be wise in a romancer to represent his hero as being blown up in a ship without injury, there are, for all that, several instances in the old accounts—and one or two, I think, in more recent annals—of mariners and others who have gone up like rockets and come down all alive, perfectly sound, if not in high spirits. Monsieur de Montauban, who underwent this experience off the coast of Guinea, wrote a very thrilling account of it. In his case there were two ships, both of which exploded simultaneously. "The reader," says he, "must figure to himself our horror at two ships blowing up above two hundred fathoms into the air, where there was formed, as it were, a mountain of fire, water, and wreck; the awfulness of the explosion below, and the cannons going off in the air; the rending of masts and planks, the tearing of the sails and cordage, added to the cries of the men." He was on the forecastle giving orders when the ship took fire, and attributes his preservation to his being blown so high as to go clear of the volcanic wreckage. In truth, he seems to have topped the whole blazing mass, and then fallen into clear water, under whose surface he remained so long that he was nearly spent before he rose.

The Moskito Indian and Alexander Selkirk are representative names for preservation from marooning—a situation idealized by Defoe. The "eight-and-twenty years all alone in an uninhabited island on the coast of America, near the mouth of the great river of Oroonoque," is very well for poor old Robinson Crusoe, whose life and strange, 163
surprising adventures are, perhaps, chiefly imaginary in this span of time allotted to them by the great master of English fiction. The longest period of "all-aloneness" I have encountered in my reading may be found in the memoirs of Captain Edward Thompson, who was "born at Hull, in Yorkshire, of a respectable family." But on the whole we must count him a more real person than that other gentleman of York, mariner. Thompson was the author of "A Sailor's Letters," and in a communication in which he proposes to write his life, he says, "I shall begin like Daniel Defoe, with "I, E. T., was born of respectable parents in Kingston-upon-Hull, from whence I sailed in the *Love and Unity*, (whom God preserve), anno 1750, on a voyage to Greenland." Whether his discovery was inspired by his admiration of Defoe, or whether he states a fact in what he records, I cannot say. He was an officer in her Majesty's ship *Stirling Castle*, and being at Tobago, he wandered into the woods in search of wild oranges. Whilst roaming here and there he discovered a hut, the inhabitant of which, a venerable looking man, addressed him in French, and, to his astonishment, declared that he had resided *twenty-one years* in that solitary situation, having scarcely any communication with a human being! He told Thompson that the Indians occasionally called at his hermitage whilst hunting, gave him part of their game, and shaved his beard off with a knife, but he never paid enough attention to their language to converse in it. He had been a priest at Martinique, but having in some way given offence, he was seized in the night and transported to Tobago. He declined all offers to convey him to Europe, declaring that he was reconciled to his all-alone life and happier than he could be in any other. In this, as in other respects, this singular person 164
cannot be said to have resembled Crusoe."

I find the seeds of a romance of the true old pattern combined with what may justly be termed a curiosity of disaster in this century-old report: "A vessel coming lately from Newcastle to London at sea, within five miles of the Port of Shields, took up a wooden cradle with a child in it. The child was alive and well." The old is for ever echoing into the new. Only the other day I read of a boy a few years old going adrift in a boat. He was

hunted after in all directions, but to no purpose. The parents were said to be inconsolable. The issue of this thing I know not; but who does not pray that the little fellow was found and restored? When you think of that old collier jogging along, picking up the cradle with the bairn in it, the past re-shapes itself; you see the quaint wooden cradle, the wondering eyes of the child staring into the amazed faces of the rough Jacks, whose touched hearts give a new impetus to the working of the jaws upon their quids. “The cradle,” says the account, “is supposed to have been carried to sea by an inundation in one of the places adjacent.” There should have been found a good subject for a poet, I think, even in those bewigged days of heroic measures and Johnsonian periods, in the meeting of the mother and the babe delivered back to her love by that old ocean whose tenderness is sometimes as marvellous as its cruelty is terrible and inexpressible.

Another curiosity of disaster, hardly credible, though it has been often enough related, may be found in the story of the brig *Nerina*.

She sailed from Dunkirk on Saturday, October 31, 1840, in charge of Pierre Everaert, with a cargo of oil and canvas for Marseilles, having on board a crew of seven persons, including the captain and his nephew, a boy fourteen years of age. At seven o’clock in the evening of Monday, November 16, she was lying to in a gale of wind, when she was struck by a heavy sea and turned bottom up. There was one man on deck at the time; he was instantly drowned. There were three seamen in the forecastle, two of whom, by seizing hold of the windlass bitts, succeeded in getting up close to the kelson, and so kept their heads above water. The third, letting go his hold, was drowned, and his body was never again seen. The other two, discovering that the bulkhead between the forecastle and the hold was started and that the cargo had fallen down on the deck, drew themselves towards the stern of the ship, with their faces close to the kelson. When the vessel capsized, the captain, mate, and boy were in the cabin. The mate wrenched open the trap hatch in the deck, cleared a vacant space there, and then scrambling up into it, he took the boy from the hands of the captain, whom he assisted to follow them. In about an hour they were joined by the two men from forward, who managed to scrape along the kelson to where they were. They are now described as five individuals, closely cooped together, so that as they sat they were obliged to bend their bodies for want of height above them, whilst the water reached as high as their waists. The only relief they could obtain was by one of them at a time stretching at full length on the barrels in the hold, taking care, however, to keep close to the kelson, where the air was. The 17th and 18th passed. They were without food and without water, and, as might be supposed from their situation, as certainly doomed as if they already lay dead at the bottom of the sea. They could distinguish between day and night by the light in the sea that was reflected up from the cabin skylight and thence into the space where they lay through the hatch in the cabin floor. In the middle of Wednesday night, the 18th, the vessel struck. At the third blow the stern dropped to such an extent that the men were forced forward towards the bows. Whilst making their way one of them fell down through the cabin floor and skylight, and was drowned. They noticed presently that the water was ebbing; on which the mate dropped into the cabin to seek for a hatchet that they might cut their way out, but, the water suddenly rising, he had to fly again to his former shelter. At last the day dawned, and then, perceiving a point of rock sticking into the vessel, they knew that she was hard and fast ashore. The quarter of the ship being stove, the captain looked through the rent there and cried out in French, “Thank God, my children, we are saved! I see a man on the beach.” Shortly afterwards the man approached and put in his hand, which the captain seized, to the terror of the fellow, who nearly died of fright. Several persons arrived, the side of the vessel was opened, and the four men were liberated, after having been entombed for three days and three nights.

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Any reference to such a subject as the curiosities of marine disaster must include this amazing narrative, thrice told as it may be. As an escape there is nothing to be compared to it in the maritime annals, though to be sure there is no lack of examples of miraculous

salvation from capsizals. The spot where the *Nerina* struck is Porthellick, in St. Mary's, Scilly. Two incidents in connection with this wreck increase the wonder of it. First, the want of fresh air threatening the men with death by suffocation, the mate worked with the desperation of a dying man almost incessantly for two days and one night to cut a hole with his knife through the hull. The knife broke; but for this the hole would have been made, with the result that the vessel must have instantly foundered owing to the liberation of the air that alone kept her buoyant. Second, it was afterwards shown that during the afternoon of Wednesday, the 18th, the wreck had been fallen in with, at about five miles from the island, by two pilot boats which towed her for an hour, but the ropes parting, the night approaching, and the weather looking dirty, they abandoned her, little conceiving that there were human beings alive in her hold. Had the vessel not been towed, the set of the current would have carried the wreck clear of the islands into the Atlantic!

The relater of this remarkable story states in a note that the account was furnished to him by Mr. Richard Pearce, Consular Agent for France. "As this gentleman," he adds, "took great care in his examination of the case, there cannot be a doubt of its correctness throughout."

INFERNAL MACHINES.

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The invention of a small fabric that sinks under water and rises to the surface at the will of her occupants should indicate a large approach towards the perfecting of the whole theory and practice of submarine warfare. Such a deadly, dangerous engine of destruction has been tried and not found wanting. Unhappily, I think; for unless the murderous inventions of our times are ultimately to render warfare impossible, by occasioning a common dread because of the swiftness and magnitude of the butchery—a probability not to be contemplated—one cannot but wish that the patentee would suffer some of the old elements of manhood to dignify and animate the conflicts of fleets and armies, by a succession of failures in the direction of a hidden and annihilating machinery. "So violent it is," writes honest old Camden, of the cannon, "in breaking, tearing, bruising, renting, razing, and ruinating walles, towers, castles, ramparts, and all that it encountereth; that it might seem to have been invented by practice of the Devill to the destruction of mankinde as the onely enemy of true valour and manfull couragiousness, by murthering afar off." Murthering afar off! very different, indeed, as a means of exemplifying courage from the hand-to-hand conflict of the sword and the spear. So Camden implies, speaking of the cannon of his time, a weapon that even the long-tailed guardians of the Taku forts 169
twenty-five years ago would have disdained for their own jingalls. But what would that mostly learned Clarenceux, King of Arms, have found to say on the subject of "true valour and manfull couragiousness" had his theme, instead of the primitive engine whereof the effects as he himself describes were "destruction, violence, fury, and roaring crack," been an electric boat in which men could go about their duties whilst under water, in which they could softly and hiddenly sneak under the keel of an ironclad of twelve thousand tons, containing a company of perhaps a thousand souls, and attach to her a machine that—after they had withdrawn, still under water, to a safe distance—would blow her and her people into fragments? This craft is no mere fancy; she is an accomplished fact, as the French say. It is not long since that the inventors tested her in the West India Docks. She is a cigar-shaped boat, sixty feet long, and displaces about fifty tons. They sank and raised her readily, kept her under water for some time, and then propelled her. I read that a supply of air—of fresh air—large enough to last for three days, may be stored in this terrible boat, so that the Jonahs who man her will be perhaps better off in the matter of oxygen or ozone than are the occupants of the common above-sea forecastle, even when their hatch is open.

Of course the electric feature is the novelty in this latest invented diving boat. But as a fabric that can be made to float or sink, as those who are inside her may choose, this screw-craft is by no means the first of her kind. In 1801 Fulton experimented with what he called a *Bateau-Poisson*, or fish-boat at Rouen. The first account of this invention says that the boat sank and rose seven or eight times. The longest period during which it 170
remained under water was eight minutes. The machine was entered by means of an opening shaped like a tunnel. "When those who conducted the experiment wished to descend into the river, and disappear, they let down this opening and lost all communication with the external air. The inventors of this ingenious machine are Americans, the principal of whom is called Fulton. Three of them went into the boat, and remained during the experiment. The Prefect and a vast concourse of spectators were present."[54] A fuller account, written by St. Aubin, was printed in 1802. The boat he inspected was in some respects similar to the one that had been exhibited at Rouen, Havre, and Brest. He speaks of it as a nautilus, or diving boat, invented by Mr. Fulton. It could carry eight men, and hold provisions enough for this number of persons to last

twenty days. The inventor had contrived a reservoir for air large enough to enable the crew to live under water for eight hours. The boat was of sufficient strength to plunge one hundred feet deep, and to bear the pressure of water at that depth. She was furnished with two sails, and when above water presented the appearance of an ordinary boat. Fulton, in making his experiments at Havre, not only remained an hour under water with his companions, but held his boat parallel to the horizon at any given depth. He proved the compass-points as correctly under water as on the surface, and while under water "the boat made way at half a league an hour, by means contrived for that purpose." At this point M. St. Aubin indulges in the following prophetical exclamation: "It is not twenty years since all Europe was astonished at the first ascension of men in balloons; perhaps in a few years they will not be less surprised to see a flotilla of diving boats, which, on a given signal, shall, to avoid the pursuit of an enemy, plunge under water, and rise again several leagues from the place where they descended. The invention of balloons has hitherto been of no advantage, because no means have been found to direct their course. But if such means could be discovered what would become of camps, cannon, fortresses, and the whole art of war?" He then proceeds to point out that Fulton's craft has the advantage of sailing like a common boat, and also of diving when it is pursued. It was therefore fit for carrying secret orders to succour a blockaded port and to examine the force and position of an enemy in their own harbours. He further tells us that Fulton had already added to his boat a machine by means of which he blew up a large craft in the port of Brest. He concludes: "What will become of maritime wars, and where will sailors be found to man ships of war, when it is a physical certainty that they may every moment be blown into the air by means of a diving-boat against which no human foresight could guard them?" St. Aubin does not say how the boat was sunk and raised, and how it was propelled, when sunk, at the rate of a mile and a half in an hour. But that Fulton invented such a boat as the Frenchman describes is indisputable, and it is equally certain that, although its merit as an invention was remarkable, nothing came of it.

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54. *Naval Chronicle*, 1805.

Fulton, however, was not the first. In 1774 a man named Day, who had for years been thinking over a method of sinking a vessel under water with a man in it, who should live for a certain time, and then, by his own agency, rise to the surface, fancied he had hit upon the right way at last. The story is worth telling, for it involves a singular tragedy. Day was so sanguine that he determined to test his invention at the Broads, near Yarmouth. He fitted a Norwich market boat, and sank himself thirty feet under water, where he remained for twenty-four hours. His success so elated him that he at once went to work to see how he could get money by it. He accordingly wrote the following letter to a Mr. Blake, a well-known sporting man: "Sir, I have found out an affair by which many thousands may be won. It is of a paradoxical nature, but can be performed with ease. Therefore, sir, if you chuse to be informed of it, and give me one hundred pounds of every thousand you shall win by it, I will very readily wait upon you and inform you of it. I am, myself, but a poor mechanic, and not able to make anything by it without your assistance.—Yours, etc., J. DAY." Blake wrote to Day to call upon him. They met, and Day said that he could sink a ship one hundred yards deep in the sea with himself in it, and remain therein for the space of twenty-four hours without communication with anything above, and at the expiration of the time rise up again in the vessel. Blake asked for a model, which in the course of a month was sent to him. He was struck with the invention, and supplied Day with money enough to enable him to carry out his scheme. The vessel is described as having a false bottom, standing on feet "like a butcher's block," which contained the ballast, and by the person unscrewing some pins she was to rise to the surface, leaving the false bottom behind. Plymouth was selected as the scene of the experiment. On the appointed day the vessel was towed to the place agreed upon, the inventor provided himself with whatever he deemed necessary, entered the vessel, retired to the cabin, and shut up the valve. The craft settled slowly down in twenty-two

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feet of water. The hour was two o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, June 28, and she was to rise again at two o'clock on the following morning. Day had furnished himself with some buoys or messengers, which he had arranged to send to the surface to announce his situation below; but none appearing, his patron, Blake, suspected an accident, and applied to the captain of a frigate at anchor close by for assistance. But to no purpose; every effort was made in vain to weigh the vessel, and Day perished. 173

The comments on the account of which I have given the substance are curious when read side by side with the recent newspaper narratives of the experiment at the West India Docks. "That any man should be able, after having sunk a vessel to so great a depth, to make that vessel at pleasure so much more specifically lighter than water as thereby to enable it to force its way to the surface, through the depressure of so great a weight, is a matter not hastily to be credited."

But even Day was not first. Cornelius Drebelle, by order of James I. (so says Robert Boyle), built a vessel to be rowed under water. She was furnished with a kind of chemical liquor that served to purify and renew the air. She carried twelve oarsmen besides passengers, and was tried in the river Thames, and Mr. Robert Boyle, the "Father of Modern Chemistry and the Brother of the Earl of Cork," got his account of her from a person who was in her during her submarine navigation of the river.

And who was before Cornelius Drebelle? "Novelty is only in request," says Shakespeare, "and it is dangerous to be aged in any kind of course." But what is novelty? [55]

55. Bacon, in his "New Atlantis," makes the father of Solomon's House say, "We have ships and boats for going under water, and brooking of seas; also swimming girdles and supporters."

What value the diving vessel of to-day has she owes to conditions which are scarcely much older than the date of the application of electricity to purposes of marine locomotion and to naval warfare. And even if you gave her an electric engine, but provided her with no better apparatuses of destruction than those which preceded dynamite, gun-cotton, and the like she could scarcely, for all her twin screws, her forty-five horse power, her glow lamps, condensed air, and her plates of steel prove more useful than such a boat as that of Fulton, or as that of Cornelius Drebelle, which, urged by twelve rowers, swept under the surface of what was then the silver Thames. Our enormous ordnance and the tremendous destructive forces which we have received from the laboratory of the chemist entitle us to smile, perhaps, at the sheet-lightning and faint thunders of our grandsires' conflicts. Yet, on the whole, every one must admit that they made a fine show with what they had. Individually the sixty-four-pounder would be but a mean weapon, as weapons now go; yet the flames of a triple row of them caused a mighty blaze, and could one even now hear the explosion of the broadside batteries of any wooden liner you may name the aggregate uproar might suggest the detonation of some greater engine of war than was ever cast at Elswick or at Woolwich. 174

In submarine machinery the old folks never got further than the Fenians manage to go; a clock in a barrel of gunpowder defined the extent of their genius as murderers. On the surface of the water their most formidable arrangements were the fire-ship and the bomb-vessel, the latter a ketch very strongly built and equipped with mortars. An example of what may be termed explosion-machinery dates as far back as 1585. It was used to destroy the bridge of boats at the siege of Antwerp, and consisted of a ship in which was built a vault of stone filled with two hundred barrels of powder, over which were placed stones of all sizes, together with shot, iron chains, spikes, and so forth. This mine was exploded by a secret fuse, and was so contrived that the vessel did not take fire till it bumped against the bridge, which it shivered. There is extant the description of a fire-ship, called The Infernal, that was used at the bombardment of St. Maloes in 1693. She was a new galliot of about three hundred tons. The bottom of her hold was lined with one 175

hundred barrels of gunpowder, covered with pitch, tar, brimstone, resin, tow, straw, and faggots. Over these things was a perforated platform, upon which were three hundred and forty chests or mortars filled with grenades, cannon-balls, iron chains, loaded firearms, and large pieces of metal wrapped in tarpaulins. This abominable contrivance proved a failure, for after it had sailed fairly enough to the foot of the wall to which it was to be fastened a blast of off-shore wind sent it on to a rock, where the people in charge were forced to fire her and hastily withdraw. The chests or mortars were wet, and did not blow up; but the explosion of what was dry was furious enough to level a part of the town wall and destroy the roofs and a portion of the walls of about three hundred houses.

In 1804, the English attempted to blow up some vessels off Boulogne by casks or coffers furnished with clock-work explosives. A naval officer, describing the effect of these machines, says: “Each cask was primed and set, so as to go off at any desired time after drawing out a pin. A reward depended upon bringing away this pin. We came within pistol shot of a corvette before we let go our coffers, under a fire of shot and shells from the shore. The first explosion, which took place in a few minutes, was very great, and seemed to strike the enemy with general consternation.”[56] Others were sunk, but would not go off. These coffers were made of thick plank lined with lead. When filled they were tarred, covered with canvas, and “payed” with hot pitch. They are described as exactly resembling a large coffin. They each weighed as much as two tons. To one end a line was secured to which was affixed a sort of anchor. Line and anchor were floated with pieces of cork, the idea being that the anchor would catch the cable of the ship that was to be destroyed, and cause the coffer to swing alongside. They were weighted with shot, so that they should only just float, partly that they might come along unnoticed, and partly that, if seen, they would be difficult to hit.

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56. “Naval Hist. of the Recent War, 1804.”

These primitive and, as a rule, inoperative “dodges” find another illustration in an experiment made in the Downs in 1805. A large brig was anchored abreast of Walmer Castle, about three-quarters of a mile from the shore. Two or three boats then rowed off and placed the machine across the cable of the brig. The tide in a few moments carried it under the brig, where it affixed itself. Presently the clock-work exploded the contents, a small cloud of smoke was seen to rise, and the brig is declared to have gone to pieces “without any noise or appearance of fire.” In less than the third of a minute not a vestige of her could be seen from the shore. “General Don, with a number of military and naval officers, went with Sir Sydney Smith to Mr. Pitt’s, at Walmer Castle, to witness the experiment, and expressed the utmost astonishment at the destructive powers of the invention.” This was evidently much such a contrivance as the coffers which had been used in the previous year off Boulogne, with some improvement, as perhaps in its power of sliding with the tide under instead of alongside a vessel and attaching itself to the keel.

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I find the Americans using clock-work as a means of exploding gunpowder some time before the period of its adoption by the English. In 1774, Captain Vandeput, in the *Asia*, of sixty-four guns, whilst stationed off New York, was nearly blown up by a plan to which, unhappily, we in these more civilized times are no strangers. A quantity of powder was put on board a small vessel. In one of the barrels was an alarum or piece of clock-work, that was wound up before it was placed in the barrel and attached to a musket lock that fired the powder around it. The powder was for the use of the *Asia*, and the barrels would have been received on board together, of course, with that which contained the clock-work arrangement, but for the terror of one of the American prisoners who was in the secret and communicated the plot to Vandeput. There seems a horrible meanness in this manner of waging war. Yet there is nothing more despicable in blowing up a foe by putting a barrel of powder with clock-work in it inside his ship than in annihilating him by means of a coffin load of combustibles fired by clock-work under his ship.

It has been reserved for this age, however, to carry these theories of hidden and deadly warfare to a height assuredly never dreamt of by the most visionary of the old exploders. I call them theories, for so they must remain till a war shall determine them into facts. And, indeed, I think it need not be doubted that many of what in peace-time and on paper we think will be desperately terrible features of all future naval struggles will prove mere impediments and clumsy, fallible, and misleading devices when the time to test them comes. Mr. Pitt and the military officers at Walmer Castle might justly be astonished at the sight of a stout brig crumbling away under a puff of smoke, but it was Jack's old-fashioned pike that was then doing the real work; that had begun it, and that had to complete it.

QUEER FISH.

I was lately reading an account of two queer fish which had been sent to the South Kensington Aquarium. One was a trout, three years old, that was forced to carry its tail hard a starboard—that is, the tail stands out at right angles with the fish's body. Whether this deformity is due to gout, or whether the fish is in the case of the drunken Irishman who, on becoming sober and discovering that the surgeon at a hospital had been trying, without result, to put his hip right, cried out, "I was born so!" I do not know. That a trout should be able to steer a straight course through the water, however slowly, with his helm hard over, proves that this kind of fish must have a trick of navigation above the reach of mortal mariners. The second marine oddity was a stickleback of the length of a young rat, and extremely like an old mouse. I think I see these two strokes of nature swimming in company and consoling each other. We do not require either the fables of Æsop or the maxims of Rochefoucauld to assure us that there is something in the misfortunes of our best friends that does not secretly displease us. Possibly the stickleback in his heart thinks that, on the whole, he would rather look like a mouse than carry his tail through life athwart ships. On the other hand, the trout may consider that, though the obligation of having on all occasions to struggle against a weather helm must weigh heavy on a life whose essential condition is one of fins, yet, being a fish, it is better to be distorted as a fish than to carry the emotions of a fish in the caricature of a mouse. Presuming these to be their confidential opinions, it may be supposed that their efforts to console each other would not be entirely wanting in unconscious humour.

When absurd natural touches of this kind are brought under one's attention, one gets to see how it happens that in the old voyages the relaters of the wonders they viewed sometimes wrote as if their hair stood on end. Suppose the stickleback to be a denizen of the deep; then conceive it, wearing the shape of a mouse, to rise beside some becalmed vessel filled with a company of "pilgrimes" of the kind whose narratives are preserved in "Purchas" and "Hakluyt." The object is observed by some old mariner who carries a child's eye for wonders and marvels amid the knobs and warts of his walnutshell of a face. Before he can sing out the mouse vanishes. But the ancient mariner has beheld it, and he straightway goes and reports the astonishing spectacle to two or three other ancient mariners, representing the strange fish possibly as of the size of a cat. The tale is bandied from one long-since venerable nautical mouth to another till by the time it reaches the captain's cabin the sea-mouse has grown as big as a porpoise, collecting, in the course of its enlargement, a very pretty apparel of flaming eyes, "ears which itt did cocke, nostrils whence proceeded a sort of white smoak, a skin whereof ye furre was exceeding riche, and did shine as though covered with manye gemmes of brighte and piercynge lighte."[57]

57. Take Captain Edward Haies' description of a sea-lion in his narrative of Sir Humphrey Gilbert's Voyage: "So upon Saturday in the afternoon, August 31, we changed our course, and returned back for England; at which very instant, even in winding about, there passed along between us and toward the land, which we now forsook, a very lion, to our seeming in shape, hair, and colour; not swimming after the manner of a beast, by moving of his feet, but rather sliding upon the water with his whole body. Thus he passed along, turning his head to and fro, yawning and gaping wide, with ugly demonstration of long teeth and glaring eyes, and to bid us a farewell (coming right against the Hinde) he sent forth a horrible voice, roaring and bellowing as doth a lion, which spectacle we all beheld, so far as we were able to discern the same, as men prone to wonder at every strange thing, as this doubtless was, to see a lion in the ocean sea, or fish in shape of a lion; what opinion

others had thereof, and chiefly the General himself, I forbear to deliver, but he took it for *bonum omen*, rejoicing that he was to war against such an enemy, if it were the devil."—Hakluyt's "Voyages," vol. iii. p. 154.

Few of the queer fish one reads of in the old travels but were evolved in some such fashion as this, no doubt. It was in a sort of stealthy, peering way, crossing themselves often and chanting their litanies, that the early navigators entered the deep solitudes of the great oceans. Whatever befel them was startling or affrighting, or of wild and amazing beauty. Their meteors were not the waterspouts of to-day; the eclipse provoked their *misericordias* and *Salve Reginas* and rendered ashen the chocolate cheeks of the darkest-burnt on board; the glittering exhalations, known to us as corposants, which danced in the gale or burnt in the calm at the yard-arms or on the bowsprit end, were prayed to as the spirit or presence of a saint; the very thunder, though its roar was no louder than that which broke the repose of the Portugal or Andalusian hills of the seamen, snatched a note of horror, reverberated an echo of terror, from the solemn immensity of the liquid plain into whose horizon over the ships' bows the mariners stared under the shelter of their hands, gaping for the auriferous shores which day after day for weeks their admirals, their captain-generals, had told them they should have in view anon. 181 182

"The pilot smote his breast; the watchman cried,
"Land!" and his voice in faltering accents died.
At once the fury of the prow was quelled;
And (whence or why from many an age withheld)
Shrieks, not of men, were mingling in the blast,
And armed shapes of God-like stature passed!
Slowly along the evening sky they went,
As on the edge of some vast battlement;
Helmet and shield and spear and gonfalon
Streaming a baleful light that was not of the sun!"[58]

58. "The Voyage of Columbus." There are several fine passages in this neglected poem. Rogers, in some places, has caught the spirit of the old chronicles very happily.

I am not surprised, then, that many kinds of queer fish—of fish queerer than the trout with its rheumatically-warped tail, or the stickleback with the aspect of a mouse—should figure among the astonishments which the mariners of those prying and creeping, but most bold-hearted, times, set down for the edification of posterity. You particularly notice in these records how exquisitely in keeping with the whole picture of those old ships and oddly-clad sailors, as one loves to imagine them, and with the spirit of the mystery of those unattempted seas as breathed by the salt and ancient chronicler, are the terms in which the writers convey their discoveries. As, for instance, in this passage from the first voyage of Columbus: "A Wagtail flew very near the Ship, and they perceived that the Currents ran not so strong as before, but turned back with the Tides, and there were fewer Weeds; and the Day following they took many gilt Fishes." The word may not strike others as it strikes me; but there is something in the expression "*gilt* fishes" that is like a revelation of the intertropical situation of the mariners. You think of the long bald gleaming heave of the darkly pure blue swell of the sea, the fragrance of the yet hidden islands of the Spanish main blowing sweet in the warm wind coming from the west, the liquid light of the moon showering its splendour upon the pallid fabric and her bearded men, and gemming the quaint old structure with diamonds in the dew along her rails and on her yards, lunar brilliants that shine with the glory of the stars which softly crowd the velvet deeps of the sky of the Columbian Antilles. To whom but to mariners exploring for the first time the wonderland of ocean hidden, for how many centuries? from all Europe behind the Atlantic sea line, could such a queer fish as this exhibit itself? "They saw a great Fish, like a middling Whale, and it had on the Neck a large Shell, like that of a 183

Tortoise, little less than a Target; the Head it held above water was like a Pipe or But, the Tail like that of a Tunny Fish, very large, and two vast Fins on the side."[59] Yet, queer as this marine man-in-armour seems to have been, with its target and its head like a butt, Columbus appears to have known enough of it to enable him to witness in it a barometrical signification; for "by this Fish and other observations in the sky"—the "other" here is a very fine—"the Admiral perceived there was like to be a change of Weather."

59. "The First Voyage of Columbus" in Harris's collection.

One might justly count that fish queer which was believed to breed birds. How mean as an illustration of Nature's capacity as a humourist would be the gnarled and rounded trout or the stickleback like a mouse side by side with a turtle, capable of producing, say, wrens or canaries! The reverend and learned Mr. John Ray, whilst travelling some two centuries ago through the Low Countries, took some trouble to inquire into this matter of bird-breeding by turtles and tortoises, and pronounced it—humbug! He had to oppose a very profound reasoner, no less a personage, indeed, than Michael Meyerus—of whom, of course, every schoolboy has heard—a gentleman who has devoted a whole big book to the subject. But though he terms the statement false and frivolous, there is so much of possibly designed ambiguity in his "explanation" that I confess I cannot understand what he means. The "bernacles," he says, which are said to be bred in the tortoise, are "hatch'd of eggs of their own laying, like other birds." Like *other* birds! Did the learned Mr. Ray conceive a tortoise to be a bird?[60] The Hollanders, he goes on, in their third voyage to discover the North-East Passage, found two islands, "in one of which they observed a great number of these Geese," he is talking of tortoises! "sitting on their Eggs." He sums up: "All the Ground of this fancy, as I conceive, is because this fish hath a bunch of *cirri* somewhat resembling a tuft of feathers, or the tail of a bird, which it sometimes puts out into the water, and draws back again." Here to be sure is a very great muddle of good meaning. One may take it that the sailors who believed that turtle and tortoise "engendered fowlys" were not going to suffer their solemn affirmations to be discredited by such reasoning as the Rev. John Ray's.[61]

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60. By "bernacle" I suspect he means the barnacle goose.

61. Sinbad the sailor saw "a bird that cometh forth from a sea-shell and layeth its eggs and hatcheth them upon the surface of the water and never cometh forth upon the sea upon the face of the earth." If the tortoise breeds birds time enough is vouchsafed it for that work. Grose speaks of the shells of two tortoises: one in the library at Lambeth Palace that was brought there alive in 1633, and died of the frost in 1753; the other that was brought to Fulham in 1628, and died in the same year as the other. "What were the ages of these tortoises at the time they were placed in the above gardens is not known."—*Olio*. 288.

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So far as the superstitious emotions they excited are concerned, it may be truly said of queer fish that even in their ashes live the wonted fires. As an example: the quantity of petrified fish-bones found at Malta fired the ingenious Monkish imagination with the idea of a curious fable. It was said that St. Paul when at Malta, on being bitten in the hand by a viper, did by his prayers obtain of God that all the serpents in Malta should be turned into stones. That all the petrified bones upon which this fancy was based belonged to queer fish is not to be supposed; but that many queer fish did deposit their bones on the Maltese shore in the course of ages need not be questioned, and such is my faith in the distorted trouts and mouse-formed sticklebacks of the deep that I do not scruple to count the above fable concerning St. Paul and the vipers due to the inspirations of the fossilized remains of the "queer fish" only. Was not the sea-unicorn a queer fish in the judgment of our great grandsires? If not, it is strange that they should have endowed its horn or sword with quite magical properties. It was even believed of the little *cheval marin*, or *cavaletto*, that if roasted and partly devoured, the remainder being applied to the wound,

after some preparing of it with honey and vinegar, would cure the bite of a mad dog. There is no doubt it got this reputation from its fancied resemblance to the unicorn. An old Danish traveller thought to explode this superstition of medicinal and magical virtues in the horn of the sea-unicorn: "Supposing that what has been pretended to be the true horn was really such, I will venture to affirm there is no more virtue in it than in that of a stag, a goat, or elephant's tooth, which is made use of to stop the spitting of blood, which is done by the astringent quality of these horns, and that cannot so properly be called a virtue as a malignity." Yet this writer was one of a trading party who presented the King of Denmark with two of these horns, as though they were extraordinary rareties and possessed of a score of curative qualities; and his Majesty took them to be real unicorn horns—the horns of a fabled beast—and valued them accordingly. A queer fish indeed in those old times, but common enough in these, and universally known as the "sword fish." Dr. Edward Browne when at Utrecht, two hundred years ago, saw three of such horns, one of which, tipped with silver, was used as a drinking cup; and he enters them in his notes as wonders. Possibly he was impressed by the sight of a drinking cup five feet long. But he was in the land of Mynheer van Dunk, who was probably living at that time. He tells of a Danish king that had one hundred horns of the sea-unicorn "for the making of a magnificent throne." And what finer throne should an old sea king desire to sit upon?

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It is not hard to conceive that fish undergo constitutional and organic changes in the course of centuries, and that, say, about the period of the Deluge the sea was full of objects which would strike us as extremely queer specimens now, though to Noah, Ham, and Shem they would be as familiar as the whiting or the dab is to us. But I cannot imagine that very remarkable transformations or developments could take place in three or four, or even five or six centuries. Who shall tell, for example, how many hundreds of years have gone to the making of the unhappy stickleback that was sent to the Aquarium? The changes would be gradual. Taking the evolvments in their gradations, you would possibly find the family mouse-like expression growing less and less marked as you worked your way back through this stickleback's pedigree. But the extreme circumstantiality of the old voyagers' descriptions of queer fish should almost really persuade one to suppose that what they beheld died shortly after having been viewed, so that the like has never been seen since. Here is an example of my meaning, taken from Commodore Beaulieu's voyage:

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"While the calm and the excessive heat continued we saw a certain white thing about the bigness of an ostrich-egg floating upon the water, which sunk when the ship came within fifty or sixty paces of it. It resembled a man's head without hair, and some say they observed two black eyes and a mouth upon it."

It is the "some say" of these tales which makes them so bewildering. Did this remarkable sea-face with its two black eyes wink? Did it sneer as it sank? Why did not "others say" that ere sinking it raised its thumb to its nose and extended its fingers in the form of a fan, "thereby designing an ironical salutation of farewell"?

But a mere bald head with black eyes and a mouth floating about the sea is but a twopenny queer fish compared with the marine curiosities which ancient mariners have beheld and even given portraits of. Figure a hairy whale, four acres big, with eye-sockets so capacious that fifteen men could sit in each of them, as in a public house parlour, and pass jacks of whiskey about; the eyes themselves of ten cubits in circumference! or hear Père Fournier tell of the monster that "in the reign of Philip II. of Spain"—the epoch of marine chimeras dire!—"appeared in the ocean with two great wings, and sailing like a ship. A vessel saw it, and breaking one of its wings with a cannon ball, the monster swiftly entered the Straits of Gibraltar with horrible cries, and finally came ashore at Valentia, where it was found dead." Then follow these circumstantial strokes: "Its skull was so large that seven men could enter into it. A man on horseback could enter its throat.

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The jaw-bone, seventeen feet long, is still in the Escurial." Most readers would feel inclined to say of this monster, "Very like a whale!"

Unhappily conjecture is blinded by imaginative touches, such as those of the eyes and mouth of the bald-headed fungus of Beaulieu's voyage. Queer fish as big as islands are constantly occurring in the old accounts. The whale was Job's Leviathan in those days, and the goggling sailor was easily persuaded by his terrors to multiply the mountain of blubber by two or three hundred. A man saw a whale in the sea of Zendi that was nearly forty-five thousand cubits long—about a mile, if the cubit be eighteen inches. Sinbad wrote in perfect correspondence with the spirit of the Ancient Mariner when he describes his landing on an island which suddenly trembled and proved the back of a prodigious fish. Others tell of fish like cows and camels; of fish dressed like monks and bishops, cowled and mitred, and gazing up at the ship with austere and lenten countenances. Others arrived home with the news of the kraken, that "hugest of living things" as Sir Walter Scott describes it, whose horns would be seen "welking" and waving over the heights of a fog-bank, to the horror and consternation of even the hardiest fishermen, who made haste to bear away under all press of oar and sail. Others, again, would tell of cuttle fish, or squid, so vast in size and titanic in power that they easily coiled their serpentine membranes round about the masts of ships of a thousand tons and quietly capsized them.

Where have all these queer fish gone? Why did they exhibit themselves only in the middle ages and down to about old Sir Thomas Browne's time? No account of any prodigies such as ravished or affrighted the ancient seaman is to be met in the records of the *Beagle* or the *Challenger*. Yet let us take heart. The stickleback like a mouse is indeed a meagre substitute for the kraken; and the hard-alee trout looks mean alongside a whale a mile long. But their existence serves to assure us that the age is not wholly barren in wonders, and that there are still some queer fish about.

STRANGE CRAFT.

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In the beginning of the seventeenth century one Peter Jansen, a Dutch merchant, ordered a ship to be built for him on the lines of Noah's ark. Of course, as this vessel was designed to contain only a few animals, and those chiefly men, her size was not that of her famous prototype. The Dutchman's orders were that the vessel should exactly answer proportionally to the dimensions of the fabric that was stranded on Ararat. Jansen flourished in pre-scientific times; but this notion of his went so far beyond the most extravagant credulities of the period that the scheme was viewed as a mere fanatical whim of a Mennonite, to which sect our friend belonged. He persevered, however, in spite of being heartily jeered at, more particularly by the seafaring folk who assembled to view the shipwrights at work; but when the vessel was eventually launched it was discovered that ships built in this manner were, in times of peace, commodious above all others, because they would convey one-third more cargo than other holds, and yet be navigated by the same number of hands which other forecastles carried. Those who would hear more of this ark may consult—if they can find it—the "Bibliotheca Biblia," vol. i.[62]

62. The story is there related: "Peter Jansen, a Dutch merchant, caused a ship to be built for him, answering in its respective proportions to those of Noah's ark. At first this ark was looked upon as no better than a fanatical vision of this Jansen; but afterwards it was discovered that ships built in this manner were, in times of peace, beyond all others most commodious," etc.

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That Jansen erred, according to the light of his times, who shall declare? Sir Thomas Browne, who lived much about that period, would prove—I do not say he does—that Noah's ark was the swiftest vessel that ever drove a keel through a surge—nimbler than the Baltimore clippers, the Mediterranean fruiters, the slavers of the Spanish main; in fact, very nearly as fast as the Atlantic expresses which storm through the ocean between the Mersey and New York. I find in the "Extracts from Commonplace Books" in Browne's works this passage: "Whether Noah might not be the first man that compassed the globe? Since, if the flood covered the whole earth, and no lands appeared to hinder the current, he must be carried with the wind and current according to the sun, and so in the space of the deluge might near make the tour of the globe. And since if there were no continent of America, and all that tract a sea, a ship setting out from Africa without other help would at last fall upon some part of India or China." This is as much as to say that Noah sailed round the world in forty days! Smart work when you consider that it takes a twelve-knot mail-boat thirty-seven days to steam to New Zealand.

It cannot, however, be concluded from her dimensions that, even though blown along by a gale of wind right over her stern, the ark equalled the speed of a Union or Royal Mail steamer. Sir Walter Raleigh, in his "History of the World," a mine of exquisite thought and of sweet and noble expression, devotes a page or two to consideration of the size and form of Noah's ship; and what a man who was as great a sailor as he was poet, philosopher, and soldier, and who lived near to Jansen's time, has to say of her must be worth hearing in this particular connection. He is unable to point to the place where the ark was "framed," but suspects it was near the Caucasus where grew "goodly cedars." "It was thought to have a flat bottom, and a crested roof, and the wood gopher of which it was made was very probably cedar, being light, easy to cut, sweet, and lasting." The pitch he thinks was bitumen. Her length was six hundred feet, the breadth one hundred feet, and the depth sixty feet. He calculates her internal capacity in cubical cubits, four hundred and fifty thousand, "which is sufficient for an hundred kind of beasts and their

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meat in the lower and second stories, and two hundred and eighty fowls, with Noah and his family, in the third." So far as beam and length go she was considerably narrower than the ships in Jansen's day, which were commonly about three and a half times as long as they were broad. But what of her bows? Had she a run? Had she the flat bottom of a barge or the moulded depth of the clipper? But it matters not; Jansen's inspiration found no copyists; his fabric has floated solitarily down to us as a strange ship; and now that we have viewed her she may brace round her top-sail yard again and proceed on her phantom course.

I do not think, however, that we can find much title in our own marine performances to justify laughter at the old folks' ships. Is it conceivable that ugly as Jansen's Noah's ark must have been she would not have looked comely alongside some of the metal horrors of recent and contemporary invention? Something of the indefinable charm you find in the simpering shepherds and shepherdesses of the crockery age of literature, in Melibœus piping to the skipping lambkins on an oaten pipe and Daphne toying with a lover's true-knot under some spreading shade, enters into those vanished ships with their black or yellow sides, their rows of little guns, their gay and fluttering finery of masthead streamers, ancients, pennons, and the like. I know more than one war ship now afloat that you might "dress" from stem to pole-masthead and overboard aft, turn her into a rainbow of bunting, without achieving more than the accentuation of her ugliness. No! it is not for us, forsooth, to talk of taste, smile as we may at the illustrations of our grandsires' sturdy struggles towards that imperial fruition in which we, their inheritors, find our most reasonable and sovereign boast.

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I find a pretty fancy, and an audacious one, too, in an account of a strange ship in 1769. In that year there arrived at Naples from Palermo a small vessel, whose length of keel was twelve feet. She was ship-rigged—that is to say, she had three masts, with all the yards that ships then carried across, and her ship's company was composed of one man only. She is described as being the model of a man-of-war of sixty guns. Her builder, who navigated her, was a carpenter; he had worked in an Italian arsenal, then went to Trieste, where he built his ship, embarked in her with two men for Messina, then proceeded alone to Palermo and Naples to present his wonderful model to the King. She is probably the only full-rigged model of a ship actually sailed by a man in her from one port to another on record. Figure the blue Italian waters and this lovely toy, with the sunshine flashing up its canvas into satin, blandly leaning over from the fragrant breeze, and slipping through the liquid sapphire with a little curl of silver at her stem!

The model craft exercises a fascination that is felt beyond boyhood. Many a long hour have I spent on the shores of the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens, watching the tiny fleets there till imagination has been transported by the charming miniature imagery into the heart of a horizon capacious enough to hold some scores of Londons with their metropolitan suburbs. This diversion seems to have delighted the fastidious and elegant taste of Nathaniel Hawthorne, who, in his "American Note Books," speaks of frequent visits to the "Frog Pond" merely to see the boys sail their ships. "There is a full-rigged man-of-war," he says, "with, I believe, every spar, rope, and sail, that sometimes makes its appearance; and when on a voyage across the pond it so identically resembles a great ship, except in size, that it has the effect of a picture. All its motions—its tossing up and down on the small waves, and its sinking and rising in a calm swell, its heeling to the breeze—the whole effect, in short, is that of a real ship at sea; while, moreover, there is something that kindles the imagination more than the reality would do." I have a note of another beautiful model constructed so long ago as 1767. It was a little ship of sixty-four guns, completely rigged—four inches long! The materials of which it was composed were gold, silver, steel, brass, copper, ivory, ebony, and hair. The hull, masts, yards, and booms were of ivory; the guns, blocks, anchors, and dead-eyes silver; the colours—the Royal Standard, the Admiralty and union flags, the jack and ensign—were of ivory. The sixty-four guns weighed fifty grains. The scale was forty feet to one inch. His Royal

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Highness the Duke of York was so delighted with its singular minuteness and the exquisite delicacy of its workmanship, that he recommended it to the attention of his Majesty, who was graciously pleased to place it in his cabinet of curiosities. The artist was an officer in the navy, and I hope the royal admiration was accompanied by recognition of the sailor's genius. 195

Herman Melville, in "Redburn," speaks of an old-fashioned glass ship, about eighteen inches long, of French manufacture. "Every bit of it was glass, and that was a great wonder of itself; because the masts, yards, and ropes were made to exactly resemble the corresponding parts of a real vessel that could go to sea. She carried two tiers of black guns all along her two decks; and often I used to try to peep in at the portholes to see what else was inside.... Not to speak of the tall masts and yards and rigging of this famous ship, among whose mazes of spun glass I used to rove in imagination till I grew dizzy at the main truck, I will only make mention of the people on board of her. They, too, were all of glass, as beautiful little glass sailors as anybody ever saw, with hats and shoes on, just like living men, and curious blue jackets with a sort of ruffle round the bottom. Four or five of these sailors were very nimble little chaps, and were mounting up the rigging with very long strides; but for all that, they never gained a single inch in the year, as I can take my oath. Another sailor was sitting astride of the spanker-boom, with his arms over his head, but I never could find out what that was for; a second was in the foretop with a coil of glass rigging over his shoulder; the cook with a glass axe was splitting wood near the fore hatch; the steward in a glass apron was hurrying towards the cabin with a plate of glass pudding; and a glass dog with a red mouth was barking at him; whilst the captain in a glass cap was smoking a glass cigar on the quarter-deck."

Among strange vessels may be classed fabrics—no matter of what size—of copper, leather, canvas, cloth, and (for the age) iron. The ancient Briton's coracle was the leather boat. This is Rees' presumption, in his "Beauties of South Wales," from the circumstance of the fishermen in certain Welsh rivers using a corwg, or coracle, "which," says he, "is probably coeval with the earliest population of the island." The form of the coracle was nearly oval, its length five feet, and its breadth four. The frame was formed of split rods, plaited like basket-work and covered with raw hide. It was a portable boat, and its owner carried it on his back when he wished to convey it to or from his home. How far iron, as a material for the construction of ships, can be traced back I do not know. Grantham, a sound authority, gets no further than 1787. I can beat that record by ten years. In the "Annual Register" for 1777, under the month of June, I find, "A new pleasure-boat, constructed of sheet-iron, was lately launched into the river Foss, in Yorkshire. She is twelve feet long, sailed with fifteen persons, and is so light that two men may carry her." Clearly a strange ship to those who beheld her! Twelve years later another strange craft was sent afloat: "A very curious experiment was tried—that of proving how far an entire copper vessel would answer the purpose of sailing. Mr. Williams, a joint proprietor of the great copper mines, was the projector, and a very numerous party attended the experiment. It was launched at Deptford, and promises to answer every purpose for which it was designed. Should it do so entirely it will prove a very singular advantage to the British navy." The joint proprietor's patriotic scheme apparently bore no fruit. What would the ship-builder of this day think of copper vessels? 196

A cheaper experiment in strange craft was adventured in the direction of cloth. What particular merit this boat had is not stated. It was the invention of a Frenchman named Desquinemara. The fabric was said to be impermeable to air and water. All that I can learn of this boat is, the experiments proved so successful that an account of them was sent to the class of the Physical and Mathematical Sciences of the Institute, in order that a decision should be come at as to the useful purposes to which this novel invention was applicable. After which this cloth boat, sliding past on Time's current, slips into blackness and disappears. Of a strange vessel made of canvas I find a tolerably full account. She was the invention of a certain Colonel Brown, whose brother, a lieutenant in the Royal 197

Navy, accompanied by thirty persons, crossed the Thames in her, and passed through one of the arches of Westminster Bridge, in the view of many thousands of spectators. She is described as a military batteau made of prepared canvas, so as to be impervious to water. Her length was seventeen feet, width five feet, and depth three feet, and when loaded with thirty people she drew only three inches. She was capable of carrying one hundred soldiers with arms, accoutrements, and baggage, fifty of them sitting and fifty lying. She weighed sixty pounds, and could be taken to pieces and put together again in three minutes. I do not learn that this strange vessel was ever employed.[63]

63. In "Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea," vol. i. (1812), there is preserved a singular narrative of an escape of some men from captivity by means of a canvas boat. The title is quaint: "A small monument of great mercy, in the miraculous deliverance of five persons from slavery at Algiers, in a canvas boat; with an account of the great distress and extremities which they endured at sea." By William Okeley, 1644.

Another account of a strange craft I find in 1793. This was a vessel intended to "sail" against wind and tide, and on trial she managed to do it at the rate of four knots an hour. 198
She was fitted with a pump of a diameter of two feet, worked by a steam engine, by means of which a stream of water was driven through the keel. The impetus of the water forced through the square channel against the exterior water acted as an impelling power. This idea has been again and again revived, possibly by some who considered their scheme as surprisingly novel and revolutionary.

One of the strangest vessels which ever floated was the paddle-wheel boat of 1472. A sketch of one form of this boat[64] exhibits a periagua-shaped vessel, sharp at both ends, and fitted with five sets of paddles fitted to beams, which work in orifices like tholes. A somewhat similar boat is heard of in 1681, in which year a vessel, fitted with revolving oars or paddles, distanced the King's barge, leaving her far astern, though she was manned by sixteen rowers. An ingenious gentleman, in the Middle Ages, invented a mode of propulsion by erecting an immense bellows in the stern of a vessel. He thought that, when the wind dropped, there was nothing to do but fill his sails with the bellows, and so blow himself along his course. He hardly foresaw that the bellows and the sails would act against each other, and leave the ship motionless; or worse yet, in a calm, give her a small sternway. Jonathan Hull's ship of 1736 would also be reckoned by his contemporaries a strange vessel. She was, indeed, the first steamer that ever blackened the surface of water with the reflection of the smoke of coal. His patent was for "a machine for carrying ships and vessels out of or into any harbour or river against wind and tide, or in a calm." Hull's was a stern-wheel boat, and adaptation of his invention of late years has familiarized to 199
us an object that would have been viewed with wonder even a quarter of a century since.

64. Lindsay's "History of Shipping."

An illustrated history of shipbuilding would furnish the student with a series of plates of objects quite as astonishing for variety of shapes and freaks of taste as anything to be found in pictures in books of zoology and the physiology of fishes. The summit of perfection in form, beauty, in an almost spirit-like interpretation of the poetry of the sea, moulded and embodied by the hand of the shipwright and the rigger, was reached in some of the frigates afloat at the period of the introduction of iron. Grace and loveliness are now perpetuated by the yacht builder. Some of the iron sailing ships are, it must be admitted, framed with much elegance of judgment. But the vicious obligations of economy, supplemented by the severe conditions which now enter into naval arming, have forced us into many hideous forms, and render this age in the matter of marine taste the heaviest sinner of all the centuries. The uncouthness of the junk, the clumsiness of the galliot, the absurd freeboard, crowning poops, square bows, and tower-like rigs of the ships of olden times are admitted features; but all staring qualities were sobered by an atmosphere of quaintness, a complexion of romance, by elements of colour and furniture

and apparel, which did somehow greatly help the imagination into ideal surveys and considerations. But is there anything to idealize in the leviathan mass of twelve-inch plates that floats past like a gasworks gone adrift? And what of poetry may we find in a metal tube that shows nothing above water but a short polemast and a conning-tower?

MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCES.

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"Land in your eye!" said the mate, who was looking through the telescope.—*Two Years Before the Mast*.

Something of humour goes to the fancy of a shipmaster homeward bound with a mind oppressed by the discovery of land that is literally "all in his eye." The emotions excited by Samuel Weller's lantern in the soul of the scientific gentleman would be trifling compared with the *fine* triumph of a man who is the first to discover land. Though it be but a rock—nay, a reef or shoal—is it not a surer hand than that of the greatest poet for the carrying of one's name down to the remotest posterity? What as a memorial so excellent and enduring as a piece of mother-earth? Every new chart enlarges the bounds of the discoverer's fame. Take such a man as Bugsby. In what old black-letter book the life of him lies pierced through and through by worms I know not. I might search Limehouse and Poplar and find no oldest inhabitant able to tell me a word about Bugsby, whether he was a great merchant or a haggard water-thief, whether he fetched his last breath in Execution Dock, or died very honestly in a four-poster. Yet so long as the silver Thames continues to flow, so long (I am afraid) will its translucent tide—particularly in the neighbourhood of the East India Docks and the aromatic Isle of Dogs—go on murmuring the elegant name of Bugsby. Bugsby's Reach! Think of the enormous fame of Bugsby! Then should not a master-mariner, sailing home with an entry concerning a discovery of land in his log-book, feel extremely boastful and happy? Supposing it to be, as it almost always is in this age of an exhausted world, an island or a rock entirely "in his eye:" it will be the same to him; he will go to his grave as cocksure about it as if he had landed, hoisted the Union Jack, taken possession of it in the Queen's name, and called it by his own. Several nations may send forth ships to examine the spot: all whose commanders shall return and say there is nothing to be seen. But the first discoverer of land is a being not to be easily cheated out of his convictions. "Land-ho?" "Whereaway?" "Dead abeam!" And there it must stand, a piece of holy ground in our skipper's faith, latitude unquestionable, longitude exact, though a shift of wind or a new complexion of light would attenuate the solid object into a texture considerably thinner than the most difficult of the difficult airs of the mountaintops.

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Some islands have been unaffected dreams. Such was that shore which at the dawning of the day proved to be "a land flat to our sight, and full of boscage, which made it show the more dark," called by its discoverer New Atlantis. Such was that happy republic whose "figure is not unlike a crescent; between its horns the sea comes in eleven miles broad, and spreads itself into a great bay." Such, too, are the queer countries of Swift and Rabelais, and of several philosophers and poets, both of ancient and modern times. But, on the other hand, many of the old sea-girt demon-haunted rocks, the sunny and spice-sweetened and flower-coloured dominions of the ocean fairies, the little surf-washed principalities of dead seamen's souls, were as real as immoderate private conviction could render them. They had been seen! the ancient mariner, with a beard as long as his whom Henrie Lane writes of in "Hakluyt"—"At their rising, the prince called them to his table, to receive each one a cup from his hand to drinke, and tooke into his hand Master George Killingworth's beard, which reached over the table, and pleasantly delivered it to the Metropolitane, who seeming to blesse it, sayd in Russe, this is God's gift. As, indeede, at that time it was not onely thicke, broad, and yellow-coloured, but in length five foot and two inches of assize"—the ancient mariner, I say, staring under the sharp of his hand, with eyes on fire with alarm and amazement, his mighty beard blowing like

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smoke upon his breast; this ancient mariner, standing on his tall poop near to the great lanthorn, with pennons many ells in length streaming from the topmast heads, the bonaventure mast sloping well aft, the sprit-top-sail glancing under the yawn of the forecourse like a sheet of silk, beheld the magic islands with his own fiery eyes under his own shaggy white brows, and on his return did depose to them with awful solemnity, calling upon many saints to bear witness to his veracity, and expressing himself as being perfectly willing to be boiled, fried, burnt, or in any other way "dressed," if his statement could be proved a lie.

His voyages furnished him with queer relations to deliver. The ocean was a huge mystery; and things which familiarity has long ago rendered mean were instinct with the terror, the splendour, the power, the majesty of the ocean, marvellous with the spirit of the measureless surface and the unfathomed depths, in the midst of which the early mariner found them. The enchanted island was real enough then. The sea-life was in its beginning: it was credulous as a man's childhood is; and, childlike, it took wonders and astonishments and impossibilities for the truth, and by sheer stress of prodigious faith made them so.

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It must have been a noble time to go to sea in. A boy starts now as a sailor for India or China, and his head is full of fancies of elephants, ivory, gleaming towers, wild beasts, coloured men, and strange coins. His imagination reaches no further than his reading, or what has been told him. He pretty well knows what he is to see, and of course, what he sees falls infinitely short of his expectations. But the ocean to the ancient mariner was pure Wonderland. Read what he has to say of the whale, the albatross, the iceberg. Coleridge catches the infantile awe and astonishment of the early voyagers in that exquisite "rime" of his, in which the commonplaces of the deep show mighty and fearful, as a sort of prodigies indeed, in the organ-utterance of the aged seaman of lean and Ember-week-like aspect. In these days if a man arrives home with a yarn of an uncharted rock his tale is to the last degree prosaic. The primitive navigator, on the other hand, would have found it a heap of extraordinary sights, a mass of miracles. Of course he had this advantage over us moderns: he could hint at its situation with such happy ambiguity as would defy discovery of it, even if the astrolabe and the cross-staff had been as precise as the sextant and the chronometer. But then he credited his own detections. His tales rendered his charts as queer to the eye as a star-map outlined with the zodiacal symbolism; and the ocean was like Spenser's poem for witcheries, marvels, necromancies, monstrous shapes, dreadful sounds, and mysterious islands. A romantic marine age, indeed, when Cape Fly-away was to be doubled, and No Man's Land made!

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Of the unparalleled isles of the ancient mariner many descriptions are extant. We hear of floating islands, verdant with tropic vegetation, suddenly rising to the surface of the sea, then foundering; of islands, covered with medicinal herbs of greater efficacy even than the most largely advertised of modern pills, approaching the coast once in every seven years; of islands inhabited by women only; of islands merely enchanted, such as the old New England voyager's: "very thick foggie weather, we sailed by an inchanted island, saw a great deal of filth and rubbish floating by the ship;" of islands formed of green meadows, which, says Mr. Wirt Sikes, "were supposed to be the abode of the souls of certain Druids who, not holy enough to enter the heaven of the Christians, were still not wicked enough to be condemned to the tortures of Annwn, and so were accorded a place in this romantic sort of purgatorial paradise."—"British Goblins." Here is one of Mandeville's twisters:—

"In an isle clept Crues, ben schippes withouten nayles of iren, or bonds, for the rockes of the adamandes; for they ben alle fulle there aboute in that see, that it is marveyle to spaken of. And gif a schippe passed by the marches, and hadde either iren bands or iren nayles, anon he sholde ben perishet. For the adamande of this kinde draws the iren to

him; and so wolde it draw to him the schippe, because of the iren; that he sholde never departen fro it, ne never go thens."[65]

65. Quoted by Simon Wilkin in his edition of Sir Thomas Browne's Works.

How must the apprehension of encountering such islands as this, capable of wrecking a stout ship by magnetically extracting her iron bolts and so dissolving her, have set the knees of the sturdiest old sailors knocking one against another! Or figure the emotions with which they would view the prospect of going ashore upon such an island as we have here: "There came a southe winde, and drof the shyppe northward, whereas they saw an ylonde full dirke and full of stench and smoke; and then they herde grete blowinge and blasting of belowes, but they might see noothynge, but herde grete thunderyng."[66] 205

66. The Golden Legend.

But these wonderful isles of the sea differed widely, some being very horrible and some being delightful. "Oh," sings Thomas Moore—

"Oh, for some fair Formosa, such as he,
The young Jew fabled of in the Indian sea,
By nothing but its name of Beauty known,
And which Queen Fancy might make all her own,
Her fairy kingdom—take its peoples, lands,
And tenements into her own bright hands,
And make at least one earthly corner fit
For love to live in, pure and exquisite!"

Such an island as this was discovered and duly reported. First by a monk, who after sailing three days due east beheld a dark cloud, which when it cleared, revealed an island where "was joy and mirthe enough." This monk had apparently been induced to put to sea by the assurance of a mariner that he had met Judas floating on a rock! It was reserved for St. Brandau, however, to christen this delectable spot, and he called it the Blessed Island. Though its existence was fully believed in, its reputation faded as the years rolled by and nobody came home to say he had seen it. Then, all on a sudden, a Lisbon pilot stumbled upon it in a gale of wind, and so excited the appetite of a Spanish nobleman for its felicities that his lordship fitted out an expedition for no other purpose than to find it. Happier for him had it remained a secret of the deep! he was wrecked upon it, fell into a trance that lasted some years, woke up mad, and returned to Spain with a long story of its being populated and ruled by a descendant of the last King of the Goths. The Spanish nobleman's experiences of its blessedness did not weaken the general faith in this ocean paradise; search was made for it so late as 1721, after which it disappears. Possibly it was the account of some such an island as this that addled the brains of King Gavran and sent him seeking for the enchanted fairy meadows which floated upon the sea. He took his family with him, and he and they were never heard of more. But does not one see in all this how real those islands were, how seductive or repellant, and how delightfully different from the plain discoveries of the modern mariner, whether fancied or real? 206

"There are traditions," says Mr. Wirt Sikes, "of sailors who in the early part of the present century actually went ashore on the fairy islands, not knowing that they were such until they returned to their boats, when they were filled with awe at seeing the islands disappear from their sight, neither sinking in the sea nor floating away upon the waters, but simply vanishing suddenly."

There is pleasantness and softness in the fancy of men in olden days putting forth to sea in search of islands of bliss, of insulated paradises as visionary as the poet's dream-like shore dimly resounding the wash of fairy breakers.[67] The mariner must have spun

his yarn to some purpose to awaken that thirsty desire of emigration. Many wonders, which might have remained hidden for ever in the dark ocean solitude, were lighted on by elderly gentlemen with long hair and in costumes like bed-gowns, who were abroad searching for spots which the Jacks of that age had declared to be out and away superior to Eden. Maildun, a Celtic hero, one of these searchers, came across several islands filled with demons and monsters. He also encountered a Circe, and eventually the terrestrial paradise. But nothing particular seems to have come of these discoveries, and it is to be suspected that he did not take the trouble to verify their position. Another person, a saint, after a long search, found a holy island inhabited by twenty-four monks. How these monks managed to get there, in what condition the saint found them, whether they were spontaneous growths or a kind of melancholic survival of a state of society whose origin is hopelessly indeterminable, we are not told. The same saint also met with an island whose inhabitants were fallen angels, and an island populated by fiends, who fell upon him and forced him to fly. In fact, if this saint is to be believed, he was quite the Captain Cook of his day. Yet his search after the Australia Incognita of bliss must, I think, be pronounced distinctly unsatisfactory, though one cannot but respect a theory of life that could impart the animation of adventure to a monastic bosom.

67.

"Magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn."—KEATS.

But much of what old ocean has of romance in its history lies in the ancient reports of its wonders, and in the interpretation of its legible characters by the child-like vision of the vanished shipmen. Remove those Fortunate Islands, those Blessed Islands, those islands haunted by "demon women wailing for their lovers:" strike out from the annals those fables, faint with a strange light, of venturesome marine saints, of marvelling, bright-eyed, hook-nosed "marineeres;" and I am afraid that what else of human poetry remains must be sought in the ship's forecastle. The very fish they saw, sporting in the yeast over the side, were as astonishing as the islands they passed. "Along all that coast," wrote Mr. Thomas Stevens, "we often times saw thing swimming upon the water like a cock's combe (which they call a ship at Guinea), but the colour much fairer; which combe standeth upon a thing almost like the swimmer of a fish in colour and bignesse, and beareth underneath in the water, strings, which save it from turning over."[68] "Od's fish!" would seem an appropriate expression in the mouths of such navigators. What sort of thing is this cockscomb with strings? They wrapt up what they saw in quaint dark words; and their imagination operating on what they beheld set life a-teeming with marvels. Or mark them sailing past a headland: "At this Cape lieth a great stone, to the which the barkes that passed thereby, were wont to make offerings of butter, meale and other victuals, thinking that unlesse they did so, their barkes or vessels should there perish, as it hath been oftentimes seene; and there it is very darke and mistie."[69] Thus these poor old fellows, crossing themselves and singing a litany the while, propitiate the demon of the place with offerings of wet and dry stores, and you see them in fancy grouped in a body upon the deck, watching with bowed heads and level, alarmed gaze the sullen and dismal loom of the coast slowly veering away upon the quarter, as though the rugged, fog-swollen mass might at any moment shape itself into the titanic proportions of the fiend-king of the cold and barren land.

68. Hakluyt.

69. "Jenkins's Voyage." Hakluyt.

To those early eyes such monsters revealed themselves, that the like was never heard of before or since. A crew would come home and say that they had met with an extraordinary animal that had a horse's body and a pig's head; another, that they had seen

a similar wonder, only in this case it was a stag's body with horns; a third, that one day, the sea being calm, there rose close to the ship an animal that had the head and snout of a boar, and that spurted water through a tube at the top of its head. Those were the halcyon days of the mermaid and the merman; leviathan then sported in twenty different terrible shapes, with mouth most hideously garnished with quadruple rows of teeth, gaping moonwards; the sea-serpent wrapped the spinning globe about with a million leagues of scales; strange voices whispered in mysterious accents under the still intertropic starlight, and shapes like the shadows of pinions moved upon the midnight air; spectral lanthorns were hung up by spirit-hands at the yard-arms and on the bowsprit-end, and, by their dull, graveyard illumination, cast a dismal complexion of death upon the upwards-staring faces of the mariners. I find those early seamen always sailing along as if possessed with an uncontrollable awe and reverence; they are punctual in their prayers; the whole story of their navigation is but a single-hearted reference to the majesty and mercy of the Most High; the atmosphere about them trembles to their devout muttering of *Aves* and the low chanting of psalms. The ocean was a mystery, the home and the haunt of creatures and objects not to be conceived by the understanding of men. The spirit and influence of the liquid solitude beyond the familiar line, over whose edge the sun rose or sank every day, you will find expressed with artless, most impressive power in the narrative of the first 210
voyage of Columbus in Harris's Collection, briefly recited as the great admiral's adventures there are. For such and for earlier mariners—as indeed for later, down even to the times of Dampier, Shelvocke, Cowley, and the Dutch and French explorers of the early years of the last century—the sea could not but hold islands of enchantment, green places deep in its heart, on whose sands the water-nymphs fresh from their coral pavilions, sat combing their yellow hair; paradisaical abodes whose soil was brilliant with gold dust, over whose trees, radiant with fruit, flew birds of a plumage of dazzling splendour, in whose central valley girls of startling beauty might be seen in the moonlight threading with languid eyes the mazes of some amorous dance. Did not even Herman Melville, so recently as 1830 or 1840, find some such enchanted island as this in the Marquesas group?

The sudden emergence or subsidence of land would also help to confirm the ancient mariner in his belief in magic isles, and in their controlment by spells of necromancy. In an old nautical magazine, dated 1802, I find the following: "On the seventh of June, 1790, the *Seahorse*, Captain Mayo, of Boston, from the coast of Africa, saw (in lat. 73 south) *a large point of land* sink in one moment into the unfathomable deep! As soon as the crew recovered from the inexpressible horror which so tremendous a spectacle must have impressed on their minds, they steered to some ships catching whales, and found that their men had been spectators of the same awful scene. The seamen involuntarily dropped down upon their knees and thanked God for their escape, having been on the same point of land a short time before its sudden disappearance."

They saw the land disappear; but suppose no other vessels had been in company, and it 211
had chanced that none of the crew had seen the land sink, you have then the seeds of an amazing relation. Figure a dead calm, all hands below at dinner, and nobody on deck but the man at the wheel nodding drowsily over the spokes. The land was plain enough in sight, a mile distant, perhaps, when the crew left the deck; when they return it has vanished. Had it been a ship they would, of course, suppose that she had foundered. But land! is it possible that a tall, substantial mass of land shall vanish on a sudden like a wreath of tobacco smoke? Had the vessel been whirled away out of sight of it by a fierce current? Had she been insensibly blown some leagues along by a stout breeze of wind? No. The man at the wheel is questioned; he rubs his eyes, stares; it is the same marvel to him as to the others. Knowing something of the sailor's character, I will venture to say that had not those men of the *Seahorse* actually seen the land go down, two-thirds of them would have gone to their graves persuaded that there had been witchcraft in the business. But put the date back three centuries, into the period of the real Ancient

Mariner. He shall behold the cliff founder, if you please, and yet land at Plymouth or Erith with an imagination charged to bursting point with this obvious Satanic engorgement. I think I see him telling the story. Can his hearers, gazing upon his mahogany face, doubt that there are islands which rise and sink? and how can they rise or sink without magical possession, without being under the government of something to direct them? The ancient mariner may, indeed, be beforehand with a solution by importing, let me say, one jaw of a monstrous fish that did "suck ye londe down to ye admiration of ye beholders." But failing some such explanation, the reason must be sought for devil-wards. The island or cliff easily becomes the abode of demons or of 212
ocean-spirits, who use their dominions as a sort of ship, and who, when they desire a change of air or scene, alter their latitude and longitude by the easy expedient of a submarine excursion. Such a solution could not long miss of confirmation. For presently arrives some *Elizabeth-Jonah*, or some *Ascension*, of London, or *Jesus*, of Hull, with an extraordinary and incredible report: to wit, that being about fifty leagues to the westwards of the island of Madeira, there did happen a mighty commotion in the sea; the water boiled furiously, and out of the midst of it there arose a great flame that was followed by a thick black coil of smoke which emitted a most detestable stench. This, rising, did overspread the heavens with a sable canopy, through which the sun, that had before been ardent, glowed ruefully with a most affrighting face. When the atmosphere had somewhat cleared, and the sea fallen flat again, they observed a great heap of black land floating just where the flame had been; but now, to their great joy, a small gale happening, they hastily trimmed their sails to it and departed, with hearty thanksgiving for their merciful deliverance from a hideous and diabolic spot. There would be to the full as much truth in this as in the account of the subsidence. In every century there have been submarine volcanic disturbances which have dislodged or uphove points of land, rocks, little and even big islands. Suppose what these cheery old mariners beheld was, instead of land, a body of compacted weed; or, not impossibly, a dead whale. No matter! home with the thrilling story; and let any man be pilloried who shall dare to doubt that the rock that came up is not the very identical rock that went down!

I find a singular example of the credulity that gives to the sea the choicest flavour of 213
romance in a note to the life of Sir William Gascoigne, Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench in the reign of King Henry IV., in the first edition (1750) of the "Biographia Britannica":—

"When the said Sir Bernard Gascoigne" (the writer is referring to a descendant of Sir William) "returned from his embassy into England, he took shipping at Dunkirk, and one of the passengers who came over with him was Mrs. Aphra Behn, the ingenious poetess. It is asserted by the writer of her life that in the course of their voyage they all saw a surprising *Phænomenon*, whether formed by any rising exhalations or descending vapours shaped by the winds and irradiated by refracted lights, is not explained; but it appeared through Sir Bernard's telescopes, in a clear day at a great distance, to be or to resemble a fine, gay, floating fabrick, adorned with figures, festoons, etc. At first they suspected some art in his glasses, till at last, as it approached, they could see it plainly without them; and the relater is so particular in the description as to assert that it appeared to be a four-squared floor of various coloured marble, having rows of fluted and twisted pillars ascending, with cupids on the top circled with vines and flowers, and streamers waving in the air. 'Tis added of this strange visionary, if not romantic or poetical, pageant —for fancy is an architect that can build castles in the clouds as well by sea as land—that it floated almost near enough for them to step out upon it; as if it would invite them to a safer landing than they sought by sailing; or pretended that the one should be as dangerous and deceitful as the other; for soon after the calm which ensued there arose such a violent storm that they were all shipwreckt, but happily in sight of land, to which by timely assistance they all got safe."

Here, to be sure, we have a very circumstantial account of a very astonishing apparition. This would seem to have been the Blessed Island for which the saints and a noble Spanish lord made search in earlier times. It is a pity that the story comes to us in the life of so lively a romancer as Mrs. Aphra Behn; one would rather have had the grave and wary Sir Bernard's version. Certain points suggest the legend of Vanderdecken, as for example the circumstance of the storm rising and shipwreck following the approach of the island-pavilion. This fabric of fluted pillars and radiant banners must count among the mysterious disappearances. Why, when these phenomenal glories of the deep floated into full view of the mariner—why had not he the heart to straightway launch his shallop, row with anchor and cable to the magic strand, and "fix" the place, as the Yankees would say, for the satisfaction and diversion of posterity? Why should all those wonders have been in vain? If the modern seaman lack the poetic vision of the early navigator, he is more generous in his detections; he desires the world to share in his own satisfaction, and goes very painfully and exactly to his relation, though it does but concern an iceberg or a body of vapour. The gallant Rodney, when Commodore (1752), was sent cruising in search of an island which one Captain W. Otton, of the snow[70] *St. Paul*, of London, discovered in his passage from South Carolina, about three hundred leagues west of Scilly. The record in Otton's journal was extremely minute. He gave the date and hour—March 4, 1748–9, two in the afternoon—on which he made the land. He related how it bore, how he tacked, how the wind was, and what the latitude and longitude:—

70. A snow is a brig.

"This island stretches N.W. and S.E., about five leagues long and about nine miles wide. On the south side five valleys and a great number of birds. This day a ship's masts came alongside. On the south point of said island is a small marshy island."

As though all this should not be deemed confirmatory enough of his discovery, the Captain added that he thought he saw a tent on the island, and would have gone ashore, "but had unfortunately stove his boat." Rodney, in company with Captain Mackenzie, a distinguished mathematician, cruised for many days, but to no purpose. The island was entirely in the eye of the captain of the snow *St. Paul*. An old saint or ancient Spanish nobleman would not have let us off so easily. The comparatively modern skipper tells of an ordinary island, prosaically but generously invites all mariners to participation in his discovery, but humanely leaves land-going imagination and curiosity unvexed. The saint or the nobleman would probably have heard the sound of viols, perhaps an organ; the hymning of a collection of monks would have been a distinguishable music; the more erotic vision of the nobleman might have witnessed lovely forms and the seductive beckoning of foam-white hands. We should have had gilded dolphins gambolling among the breakers, and been tickled by a hundred tales more startling than Marryat's Pasha was regaled with.

Of what material are these fantastic fabrics, real to the beholders, manufactured? Imagination is the loom, but whence comes the stuff? Yet there are many spectacles at sea which the meditative, artless fancy may easily work into creations of beauty, or fear, or brilliance, melancholy, and horror. You must go back—put yourself in the place of the mariner newly arrived in an ocean-waste whose surface his keel is the first to furrow. Then think how the iceberg in the heart of the black gale will strike you: the pallid mountain-mass flashing out to the wild violet lightning dart, the vision or phantasm of a city of pinnacles, spires, minarets, with the crystal smoke of the storm whirling in clouds about its towering heights, whose ravines and scars thunder back in echoes the cannonading of the rushing surges hurling their madness upon the side of that mass of rocky faintness. Or consider the magnificence and splendour of the Northern sunset—different, indeed, from the bald glory of the sinking of the rayless tropic orb—viewed by one who, having for days stemmed towards the Pole, penetrates for the first time the wide white silence of the Greenland parallels. From those dyes of the luminary, or the more

amazing coruscations of the aurora borealis, what shadows of realities might not the wondering eye of the mariner evoke, observing rainbow islands to repose on seas of gold, lands of delicate effulgence and of tints too exquisitely beautiful to serve for less than the home of a race of beings whose idea and raiment must be sought in those classic poems in which the gods of the Greeks and the Romans are described! From the texture of the shoulders of rising clouds, from shifting veins of moonlight in the lace-like drapery of white mist, from the luminous shadow of the waterspout with its wing-shaped peak and boiling base, the new imagination, far out upon the bosom of nameless waters, would readily snatch material enough for half those wonders of magic spaces of shore which in those times dotted the oceans of the world from the latitude of Schouten's iron headland to the height of Nova Zembla. Or, to descend to homelier stuff, omitting the mirage—perhaps the fancy's noblest opportunity on the deep—there is the ship bottom up; the inverted hulk that for months may have been washing about until she has gathered to her sodden timbers a large estate of sea-weed and marine fungi. The Telmaque rock had undoubtedly no better foundation than this. The passengers—it was in 1786—saw green grass and moss on the rock. This settled the matter; the new island was duly logged and then charted; yet what could it prove but a capsized hull? So of the famous Ariel Rocks, which, in my humble opinion, must be put down to a dead whale or two.

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"Captain T. Dickson, of the *Ariel*, when on a voyage from Liverpool to Valparaiso, December, 1827, saw something of a reddish appearance about a quarter of a mile from the vessel; sounded in forty-seven fathoms, fine grey sand. Approaching the object it seemed about six feet above water, when another appeared about three feet below the surface; the sea broke on both; much sea-weed and many birds around; the position was determined by good mer. alt. of sun, and by lunar and chronometric observations."[71]

71. "South Atlantic Directory," 1870. A long list of apocryphal islands, rocks, and shoals is given in this volume.

H.M.S. *Beagle*, with the late Dr. Darwin on board, passed several times over the position assigned to these rocks, but found nothing—yes, her people found this: "A heavy swell arose on the quarter which struck our weather-quarter boat, and turned her in upon the deck.... I thought we had indeed found the rocks, *and the huge black back of a dead whale which just then showed itself very near the vessel, much increased the sensation*."

In more ways than one may the mysterious disappearance of islands be accounted for. The sternly prosaic mariner will desire nothing in this direction that is not real, and of this as little as possible. But happily for the poetic student these disappearances stop short at the precincts of ocean literature. Enter, and the magic is all before you, perennial in its gorgeousness or terror, its sweetness or extravagance of horror. Who would wish one of those enchanted islands away? No prow built by human hands need fear them as a danger; they lie in a daylight or a midnight of their own, washed by the elfin surf of faery-land, lashed by the storms of high imagination, phantoms under phantom suns and stars, dreams of the young-eyed mariner. They are uncharted; but love has their bearings, and memory holds them fondly to their moorings. Of the sea they form the daintiest romance, and they give a colouring of poetry even to the dry and austere perpetuation of such things in these days of scientific exactness and the occasional blunders of the triumphant discoverer.

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RICH CAPTURES.

On October 4, 1799, despatches were received at the Admiralty from Captain Young, of the *Ethalion* frigate, announcing the capture of a Spanish vessel named the *Thetis*, from the Havannah, with one million and a half of dollars on board, besides a quantity of merchandise. Shortly after this came news of the capture of another Spanish galleon, the *Santa Brigida*, with treasure estimated at between two and three millions of dollars, in addition to a valuable cargo of cochineal, sugar, coffee, and the like. A few days later it was rumoured that Lord Bridport's share alone of the prize-money amounted to £125,000. But the excitement caused by this great capture had led to much exaggerated gossip, and it was shown that if the prizes yielded £800,000, then Lord Bridport, who, as commander-in-chief, shared one-third of an eighth, would get about £33,000. The other two-thirds of an eighth went to subordinate flag officers, who reckoned on £10,000 apiece, whilst the four captains of the frigates divided £50,000.

On the 29th of the same month a singular procession in honour of this great capture passed through Stonehouse and Plymouth to the dungeons of the Citadel. First went a trumpeter of the Surrey dragoons, sounding a charge; then followed two artillery conductors, an officer of the Surrey dragoons, an officer of artillery, Surrey dragoons, two and two, with drawn sabres; a band of drums and fifes, playing "Rule Britannia" and "God save the King;" then *sixty-three waggons full of dollars*, in nine divisions of seven waggons. On the first waggon a seaman, carrying the British over the Spanish jack, and two officers of marines, armed. On the centre waggon a seaman carrying the British ensign over the Spanish ensign, midshipmen armed with cutlasses. On the last waggon a seaman with the British pendant flying over the Spanish pendant; armed mariners and seamen, two and two: a band of drums and fifes playing "Britons, strike home!" armed seamen with cutlasses; an artillery officer; two officers of marines, armed; Surrey dragoons, two and two, with drawn sabres, and two trumpeters sounding a charge closed the procession. Both to larboard and starboard of this procession walked a number of armed sailors and midshipmen.

It is eighty-seven years since this remarkable parade took place. Long ago death wrested the bugle from the trumpeter in the van and sounded *his* charge. Those dollars lying piled in sixty-three waggons have been spent a hundred times over. The ringing cheers of the thousands of spectators "who testified their satisfaction by repeated huzzas at seeing so much treasure, once the property of the enemy of old England, soon to be in the pockets of her jolly tars and marines," have been silenced ages agone by that same choking dust, out of which Spaniards, equally with Englishmen, are manufactured. The Don and the Briton are now excellent friends, and one need not be a holder in Spanish securities to heartily hope that the Spaniard's shadow may never be less. But one cannot help one's instincts. In this pacific age it must be wrong to feel elated over old triumphs; yet I confess, somehow or other, I cannot listen to the cheers—how infinitely dim and distant soever—of the spectators of that procession of soldiers and sailors, marching with conquering banners, without an unsounding, yet distinct, lifting up of the voice within me in a huzza of my own. "Our echoes roll from soul to soul," says Tennyson; and I defy a true-born Englishman to watch those waggons of dollars, those rolling seamen, those brave soldiers and valiant marines, those little cocked-hatted middies, passing along over the fairy-like soil of history to the elf-like strains of "Rule, Britannia" and "Britons, strike home!" without joining in the procession and cheering with all his might the thin phantasm of a once brilliantly real pageant.

'Twas a fine haul for Jack. Sixty-three waggons of dollars! How many jorums of grog lay in those piles? How much fiddling, jigging, caper-cutting? But those waggons only represented a part. It was not until the last day of the month that the remaining chests of the Spanish treasure were lodged in the dungeons of the Citadel, and then the record runs: From *El Thetis* four hundred and twenty-seven boxes of dollars; from *Santa Brigida* five hundred and eight boxes of dollars, containing nearly three million dollars, besides very valuable cargoes of cocoa, indigo, cochineal, and sugar, "all safely landed and warehoused in Plymouth, under the Excise and Custom House locks." Booty of this kind makes one think of the old South Seaman, of the big caracks of the spice islands and Western American seaboard, of Dampier, Shelvocke, Clipperton, and Betagh, and of the grand old Commodore Anson. His was possibly as big a bag as ever fell to the mariner's lot. The galleon he captured had in her one million three hundred and thirteen thousand eight hundred and forty-three pieces of eight, and nearly thirty-six thousand ounces of silver, which, with the treasure already taken by the *Centurion*, amounted to about £400,000, "independent," says the writer of the voyage, "of the ships and merchandize which she either burnt or destroyed, and which, by the most reasonable estimation, could not amount to so little as £600,000 more; so that the whole damage done the enemy by our squadron did doubtless exceed a million sterling." 222

The Acapulco galleons had long inspired the dreams of the English freebooters. All the wonder and romance of the great South Sea, with its coasts and islands gilded by an imagination of more than Oriental ardency, had entered into those vast floating castellated fabrics, and the magnificence of the New Jerusalem as beheld by the holy seer, was faint in comparison with the substantial splendours which the English sailor with his mind's vision viewed in the holds of the tall Manila ships. Diamonds of incomparable glory, rubies, sapphires, and other gems of a beauty inexpressible; sacks full of rix dollars, ducatoons, ducats, and Batavian rupees; chests loaded with massy plate, gold and silver, with flagons, goblets, crucifixes, and candles—here, to be sure, were temptations to court Jack from places more distant than Wapping and Gravesend, and to invite him to a contest with seas more ferocious than those which shattered the squadron of Pizarro.

In all naval history I can find nothing more remarkable than the immense courage and wonderful persistency of those old freebooters. Follow Dampier as he traverses the deep and outlives a terrible gale in a small canoe; and Shelvocke as he launches his wretched boat, which he called the *Recovery*, and sails away in her, loaded with seamen, who had scarce the space to lie down in, and victualled with nothing better than smoked conger eels, a cask of beef, and four live hogs. "We were upwards of forty of us crowded together, and lying upon the bundles of eels, and being in no method of keeping ourselves clean, all our senses were as much offended as possible. There was not a drop of water to be had without sucking it out of the cask with the barrel of a musquet, which was used by everybody promiscuously, and the little unsavoury morsels we daily ate created perpetual quarrels among us, every one contending for the frying pan." Yet despite their miserable condition, these stout hearts attacked the first Spaniard that came in their way, took her, and used her in their subsequent marauding adventures. The voyage had a dismal issue, yet they managed to pick up a little booty here and there. Some curious old Spanish stratagems are exhibited. In one prize they found a quantity of sweetmeats, which were divided among the messes. One day a seaman complained that he had a box of "malmalade," which he could not stick his knife into, and asked that it might be changed. Shelvocke opened it, and found inside a cake of virgin silver, moulded on purpose to fit such boxes; and, says he, "being very porous, it was of near the same weight of so much malmalade." They overhauled the rest, and found five more of the boxes. "We doubtless," exclaims the old buccaneer in a grieving way, "left a great many of these boxes behind us, so that this deceit served them in a double capacity—to defraud their king's officers and blind their enemies."[72] 223

72. Lord Byron would have us believe that the Corsair's life was a dainty one; but of all the seafaring classes, none "roughed it" more thoroughly than the pirate and privateersman. Dampier says grimly, "'Tis usual with seamen in those parts to sleep on deck, especially for privateers; among whom I made these observations. In privateers, especially when we are at anchor, the deck is spread with mats, to lie on each night. Every man has one, some two; and this, with a pillow for the head, and a rug for a covering, is all the bedding that is necessary for men of that employ." (Dampier's "Voyages," vol. ii., 1699.) Some curious descriptions of the habits and appearance of the typical pirate of the last century will be found in "A New Account of Guinea and the Slave Trade," written by Captain William Snelgrave, and published in 1754. This man was taken by pirates during a voyage to the coast of Guinea in 1718. "There was not in the cabbin," says he, "either chair or anything else to sit upon; for they always keep a clear ship ready for an engagement; so a carpet was spread on the deck, upon which we sat down cross-legg'd." When night came the captain was asked to provide Snelgrave with a hammock, "for it seems every one lay rough, as they called it, that is, on the deck, the captain himself not being allowed a bed." He gives us a taste of their manners. "I got into the hammock, though I could not sleep in my melancholy circumstances. Moreover, the execrable oaths and blasphemies I heard among the ship's company, shocked me to such a degree, that in Hell itself I thought there could not be worse; for though many seafaring men are given to swearing and taking God's name in vain, yet I could not have imagined human nature could ever so far degenerate as to talk in the manner those abandoned wretches did." I find a formidable figure in this portrait. "As soon as I had done answering the captain's questions, a tall man, with four pistols in his girdle and a broadsword in his hand came to me on the quarter-deck!"

It always seems to be the haughty Don who, in the old stories, yields Jack the rich booties. Here, for example, is a passage from the "Annual Register" of 1762: "The *Hermione*, a Spanish register ship, which left Lima the 6th of January, bound for Cadiz, was taken the 21st of May off Cape St. Vincent, by three English frigates, and carried into Gibraltar. Her cargo is said to consist of near twelve millions of money, registered, and the unregistered to be likewise very considerable, besides two thousand serons of cocoa, and a great deal of other valuable merchandize." Take these items from her papers: One thousand one hundred and ninety-three quintals of tin—a quintal, I may say, is one hundred pounds—two millions two hundred and seventy-six thousand seven hundred and fifteen dollars in silver and gold, coined; twenty-five arobes of alpaca wool, and five thousand two hundred and forty-three arobes of cocoa. A man did not need more than one capture after this pattern to settle him as a fine old English gentleman, and to qualify him to start a noble family. The mere rumour of such a haul as this would suffice, in those fighting days, to cover the seas with privateers.

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Another paragraph, one year later: "Five waggon loads of money, escorted by a party of soldiers, were lately brought to the Bank from Portsmouth, by the *Rippon*, man-of-war, from the Havannah." In these piping times of peace one is apt to forget how very well the mariner did in the years when his cutlass was never out of his hand. The value of the prize-goods taken at the Havannah in 1763 amounted to £154,855 10*s*. 11*d*., of which the admiral took nearly £90,000, the commodore £17,206, captains £1125 each, and the lieutenants £86 1*s*. each. And the privateerman fared as well as the naval officer. Not long after the *Centurion* took the Manila ship, two privateers, the *Ranger*, of Bristol, and the *Amazon*, of Liverpool, captured the *Sancte Ineas*, a Spanish man-of-war, bound from Manila to Cadiz, laden with gold, silver, silk, coffee, china, cochineal, and indigo, and declared to be the richest prize taken since the galleon by Admiral Anson. All through the story, from Elizabeth to the beginning of this century, you hear of the privateers arriving with rich prizes. "Letters from Fowey state the arrival there of the *Lord Middleton*, richly laden with cocoa, indigo, coffee, quicksilver, valued at £45,000, taken by the *Maria* privateer, of this port." "Came in the *Earl St. Vincent*, fourteen guns, Captain Richards, privateer, of this port, with the *New Harmony* of Altona, from Smyrna to Amsterdam, with cargo valued at £80,000." And so on by scores.

There were Customs' seizures, too, such as we never hear the like of now. You read of an officer of Excise at Falmouth seizing on board a ship twenty-seven thousand five hundred and twenty-nine pounds of tea, and nine thousand gallons of brandy! "The officer by this gets £3000. It is the greatest seizure of tea ever known." Or, "Arrived, the *Providence*, smuggling lugger, of Palferro, with nine hundred and seventy ankers of brandy and thirteen tons of tobacco, sent in by *l'Oiseau*, of thirty-six guns, Captain Linzee." The old reports teem with examples of this kind. 226

Yet, spite of rich prizes, smuggling captures, and the like, Jack was always hard up, and by impecuniosity in a chronic state of being "forced from home and all its pleasures." There was alive in 1790 an old man, one John Holmes, the only survivor of the crew who accompanied Anson round the world. He was in the most distressing poverty. He would tell the story of the fight between the *Centurion* and the galleon, and of the prize-money that fell to the men's shares; but when asked what he had done with the substantial sum which had come to him, his answer was, "Alas! sir, I was a sailor." Sir George Rooke put it more nobly, if less pathetically. When he was making his will, some friends who were present expressed their surprise that he had not more to bequeath. "I do not leave much," answered the old heart of oak, "but what I do leave was honestly acquired; it never cost a sailor a tear or my country a farthing."

The wonder is that ships went so richly laden in those war times. If it was thought proper to convoy vessels of comparatively small value, it was surely desirable to guard against the cruisers and the privateers the vast accumulations of money and plate which were to be met with in Spanish, French, and Dutch bottoms in the corsair-infested Narrow Seas, in Biscayan parallels, and in the wide Pacific Ocean. Anson's galleon was, 227
indeed, a powerful ship for those times, yet she proved no match for the slender and crippled company of men who attacked her. Had she been convoyed, had she been in company with other vessels of her nation, the British commodore must have languished in vain for the immense treasure in her. The need of a guard, an auxiliary, of some protection to supplement her own powder and shot seems to us, gazing backwards with clear perception of the issues which followed, essential to the safety of the plate or treasure ship in times when it would appear that the stoutest-hearted of Spanish or French captains were unable to rally their men when the English colours at the masthead acquainted them with the nationality of the foe. For example: On November 6, 1799, there arrived at Dartmouth a Spanish ship, of six hundred tons burden, named the *N.S. de Piedat*, prize to a privateer called the *Dart*. She mounted sixteen carriage guns, carried seventy men, and was fitted up for close quarters, that is to say, she was furnished with "barricadoes" as a refuge for her crew in case of being boarded. She struck to the privateer, however, after firing only two guns, though the Englishmen mounted but fourteen four-pounders. Nevertheless, seventy seamen—Spanish sailors—in a ship of six hundred tons seem a feeble company to send along with such wealth as lay in the *N.S. de Piedat's* hold. Here is her value: one hundred and forty-two thousand one hundred and seventeen silver dollars, thirty-eight thousand nine hundred and forty-nine dollars in gold doubloons, thirty-one ingots of gold, five ingots of silver, forty-two bales of fine beaver, twenty-one thousand and sixty-one hides in the hair, three bales of fine wool, one bale of fine fur. The rest of the cargo, exclusive of the gold and silver, was valued at £80,000. 228
The *Dart* carried sixty seamen. What conceivable chance would seventy Spaniards have against such a crew as the *Dart* could oppose to them—fellows whose living depended upon plunder, and who could almost count upon the enemy's striking after the first hail or after the first two shots? It was a very cosy haul for the *Dart's* people. Small wonder that the privateer should have formed an abounding ocean element, when the character of the prey and the quality of the baggings are considered. "Eight ships long expected from New Spain, and another from Buenos Ayres, arrived at Cadiz the 21st of this month. The cargoes of these ships are valued at eleven millions of dollars, of which the registered

gold and silver amount to near nine millions." Such paragraphs are again and again to be met with in the news sheets of old times.

And depend upon it, if the privateersman's mouth watered over such items of intelligence, they were also read with a swelling heart by the King's Navy man. Prize-money is sweet, and it ought to be sweet, for no reward is more gloriously and heroically earned. What is there in cash—be it prompt or otherwise—to compensate a man for a leg or an eye? "Went down into the Sound, *La Nymphe*, of thirty-six guns, Captain Douglas. She received this afternoon nearly £30,000 prize-money, and sailed directly on a cruise." How agreeable this is to read, though it is all over, years and years ago! In fancy I behold the jolly red faces of those lively salts, pigtails on back, and quids standing high under their cheekbones, sheeting home the *Nymphe's* topsails, their hearts full of the Sukes and Sals who have faded out with the receding shore, and their minds busy with dreams of the dollars this new cruise shall tassel their pocket-handkerchiefs with. "The great sales for prize-goods captured in different vessels of the enemy by our cruisers and sent in here (Plymouth) began this day. The prize-vessels and goods of different kinds fetched great prices, and were bought up with avidity by purchasers from London, Liverpool, Bristol, Falmouth, Exeter, etc., much to the satisfaction of the captors." Much to the satisfaction of the captors! The fancy leaps to the sound of these century-old words. Hamoaze is full of prizes—the brilliant victor with the proud St. George's Cross at her peak strains lightly at her hempen cable in the Sound, her yards braced to a hair, the white line of hammock cloths crowning her defences, her tompioned guns grinning like muzzled mastiffs through her ports, the red-coats of marines dotting her almond-white decks, an epaulet or two flashing aft, and the sale proceeding ashore "much to the satisfaction of the captors." Ay, Jack's grin, though one, two, or three centuries old, is a living thing yet. The trophies of an amazing naval history are wreathed around his purple smile. What, after all, was Britannia's true Archimedean lever but the mariner's pigtail; and what the fulcrum but the mountain of treasure from which the sailor gathered his little pocketful under the name of Prize Money?

PECULIARITIES OF RIG.

230

I had been talking with an old seaman about the races between an English and an American yacht. My companion was a man who had spent the greater part of his life at sea, and was a sailor in the sense that includes not only smartness, alertness, and skill in those duties expected of seamen, but thorough knowledge of all that concerns ships, both in the fabrics of their hulls, and in their masts, yards, rigging, and canvas. He said to me that he was not sorry the Yankee had beaten the Englishman, because it might cause yachtsmen to see that beam must still be regarded as a condition of speed, and that the notion that swiftness was to be obtained by a shape that answered to Euclid's definition of a line had been carried considerably too far. One thing leading to another, he spoke of schooner yachts, and said that, so far as racing was concerned, he fancied that the schooner rig was gradually sliding out of date.

"And yet," said he, "I'm certain that if the prejudices of yachting skippers and yachting crews could be overcome, and owners induced to see the thing in its right light, the schooner yacht could be rendered a faster craft than the most splashing and frothing of the yawls or cutters which now seem capable of sailing round them. It was only the other day I was looking at a yacht race. There was a middling breeze blowing. I turned the 231
glass upon a schooner that was in the race; she was ratching through it with spars almost erect, whilst the yawls lay down till their rail looked to be under. Why was that? Would not you say because the schooner hadn't canvas enough? She was showing all she had; but she wanted more, and if more had been given her she would have been leading instead of hanging in the wake of the toys that were swirling ahead of her. What other canvas would I give her? Why, of course, I'd give her a fore-yard and a top-sail and a topgallant yard. Consider what a square sail would have done for that schooner. I've been sailing in a vessel of that rig when we've taken the square top-sail off her, and the moment that bit of canvas was clewed up you might have felt the way deadened in her as if she'd lost her life—as if all impulse was gone. The yachting skippers have got a prejudice against square canvas. It comes, in my opinion, in a good many cases, from the feeling that if they were shipmates with a top-sail-yard they wouldn't quite know what to do with it. I've spoken to a good many of them upon the subject, and asked how it is that they don't recommend their gents to rig their vessels with square yards forward; but their regular answer is, 'Pooh! we don't want no square sails. Who's going to be bothered with bracing yards about and mucking up aloft after shipshape bunts when gaffs and booms 'll blow us along as fast as we need to go?' That's what it comes to. 'Who's going to be bothered?' A skipper said to me: 'Take a vessel in stays. You've got your top-sail aback, and instead of shooting ahead as a fore-and-after will, she stops dead while she slowly comes round.' That shows his ignorance. I've been ratching down the Mersey in a clipper schooner, and such way did she get from her square canvas, and such little notice did she 232
take of her top-sail coming aback, that I've seen the skipper head her for the shore with a slow putting down of his helm to let her edge along, and I've watched her run for a good spell parallel with the shore before she came round on the other tack. The increased way the square canvas gives a schooner counterbalances whatever loss of way an aback top-sail is supposed to cause her. My own opinion of the advantage of that canvas is such that I'd undertake to fit a schooner yacht with a square rig forward on these terms: That I was allowed to sail her first; that if she beat I was to receive double pay for my services, and if she lost what I'd done should be at my own expense, and I'd restore her to her old rig free. Only fancy in ratching the pulling power you'd be giving to a schooner. Your foreyard is suspended by a truss, and if you choose you could sweat it fore and aft if you

liked. There's nothing in square canvas to prevent a schooner from lying up as close as if she was fore-and-aft rigged. Naturally schooners 'll go to leeward and be lost sight of as racers if the canvas they compete under is out of all proportion with the canvas that yawls and cutters spread. This is my notion, anyway, and such is my faith in my own opinion that I'm willing to stand or fall by it on the terms I've given you, if so be any owner of a schooner yacht is agreeable to give me the chance."

I have no comment to offer on this sailor's observations. My knowledge of racing yachts, their qualities and requirements, does not carry me nearly far enough to form any approach to a judgment upon the use that might be made amongst competing schooners of square sails and square topsails. I may say, in the language of the old sea-song, "I served my time in the Blackwall Line." I went to sea at the age of thirteen and a half in 233
Duncan Dunbar's service, and kept to the life until I was nearly two and twenty. Few sailors combine a knowledge of fore-and-aft with square-rig seamanship. There is as great a difference between them as there is between steam and sail. For my own part, I must confess to knowing very little about yachts and yachting. The point that struck me most in this man's conversation was the vast amount of experience that must obviously be embodied in the innumerable rigs which are found afloat in all parts of the world. A single sail will make all the difference between two vessels; nay, even the shape of a sail will as completely distinguish one craft from another as the uniform of a soldier distinguishes him from a policeman. Think of the years of weather, of violent seas, of smooth waters lightly fanned, of strong head breezes, and soft airs blowing over the stern, which have entered into the creation of those hundred different types of canvas—square, oblong, pyramidal, angular, jib-headed, long-headed, and the rest of it, which pass and repass our shores. Here is an old sailor declaring that schooner yachts ought to be square-rigged forward, and he says that nearly all the yacht captains he has talked to upon this subject are opposed to his ideas. One can perceive in this the difficulty there must have been in the beginning to settle the question of canvas, a question only to be dealt with by experience, but an experience so varied and immense that it is impossible for any man, capable of rightly compassing the character of it, not to find something absolutely impressive in its way in every cloth that gleams upon the sea.

I remember once being in the smoking-room of a large hotel, and hearing two men, in the presence of several companions of theirs, arguing about what a billyboy was. One 234
man said it was a kind of barge, the other maintained that it was a sloop-rigged vessel similar to the old hoy. Much nonsense was talked, yet the people sitting about them listened with attention, emptied their glasses, and looked as though they thought that no matter which of the disputants was wrong—and one must be wrong—both of them evidently knew a very great deal about rigs. At last an elderly man, with a velvet collar to his black cloth coat, coming out of his chair in a corner, said, "I beg pardon for intruding, but I happen to know something about billyboys; in fact, I own a couple. What sort of a billyboy do you gentlemen mean? Is it a sloop-billyboy, or a schooner-billyboy, or a ketch-billyboy?" The company looked hard at him, for it was plain a general misgiving as to his seriousness seized them when he spoke of a ketch-billyboy. "The sort of billyboy we are arguing about," was the answer, "is just simply—a billyboy." "Well," said the other, "as I told you gents, I own two. One's ketch-rigged, and t'other's cutter-rigged. The billyboy," he added, "is a round starned vessel with standing bowsprit and jib-stay, and mostly she's all hatchways." That was his definition, and it was accepted, the man who argued that the billyboy was rigged like a sloop looking particularly pleased.

Now one would wish to know whether a billyboy, no matter how many masts she carried, would still be called a billyboy if she had a running instead of a standing bowsprit? This is one of those delicate points over which I will venture to say many a hoarse argument has been roared out amidst clouds of tobacco smoke and the fumes of old Jamaica.

"There," said I one day, pointing to a very smart schooner that was passing, "goes a pretty little vessel."

"Aye," answered the 'longshoreman whom I had addressed, "a butterman." 235

"Freighted with butter, eh?" said I, not doubting that that was what he meant.

"Butter!" he ejaculated, "No. What I mean is she's butter-rigged."

"And pray what is butter-rigged?" said I, for I protest I had never heard the expression before.

"Why," he said, "a butter-rigged schooner's a vessel that sets her t'gall'nt sail flying. The yard comes down on the taw'sa'l yard, and the sails is furled together."

And this is a butter-rigged schooner! A well-defined distinction as rigs go, and all because the topgallant yard has no lifts! A long while after I asked an old sailor if he knew how it was that the term "butter-rigged" came to be applied to vessels furnished with this kind of topgallant yard, and he answered that he believed the name was given in consequence of numbers of this kind of craft trading to Holland for butter.

Niceties in nomenclature may be found as low down even as the humble barge. For instance, there is the well-known sprit-sail barge; a vessel with a mainsail that sets on a sprit—that is, a long pole, if I may so describe it, that stretches the outer head of the sail, from the foot of the mast. The mainsail of a sprit-sail barge is brailed up when taken in, and one must be careful that she has brails in talking to sailors about her, otherwise one's ignorance will be greatly laughed at, sometimes secretly, and quite as often openly. For the landsman must know that there is another species of barge called a boomsail barge, which is a vessel with a gaff and a boom; so here you have throat and peak halliards, and brails are not required. Again, there is the ketch-barge, a long vessel constructed on modern lines, and rigged with a standing bowsprit and jibboom, a gaff mainsail and a 236
gaff mizzen. Let these fine distinctions be remembered in speaking of the barge to the bargee, for here already we see very nearly as many types of barges as there are types of yachts.

Take the ketch. To the untutored eye she resembles a barge, yet she is no more a barge than a barque is a ship. And why? Because, says the nautical man, a ketch is a vessel with a top-sail and small mizzen; and that settles it. Nor can the list of barges be held as complete without reference to the dumb barge, that is, a barge without rigging or masts. Few ship-captains who have occasion to navigate the Thames but execrate the name of this kind of barge as one of the fruitfullest sources of their marine troubles and perplexities. This wretched, naked, darksome, and grimy object is incessantly floating under ships' bows, bringing-up in wrong places, getting cut down round corners, generally with the destruction of one man, the other man nearly always holding on to something, and in many other ways constantly producing much small vexatious county-court litigation. The dumb barge is very happily named, and the term smells strongly of the bridge.

Some of the terms given to certain descriptions of rig mark a degree of forecastle scorn and illustrate the power of marine irony. As an example take the "jackass barque." Only the eye of a mariner would distinguish any difference between a vessel so termed and the fully rigged barque. And what is the distinction? A jackass barque has fore and main topmasts and topgallant masts in one. This is why, I suppose, sailors call her jackass. Perhaps the term mule would have been more correct; and yet the polacre, that outdoes the jackass barque, in respect of spars, is suffered to pass without a derisive appellation. 237
Here you have a vessel with masts all in one to as high as the topmast crosstrees, after which you come to separate topgallant masts, fidded.[73] Commonly, in consequence of there being no tops, the sailors climb aloft by means of a "Jacob's ladder" that starts from the eyes of the lower rigging and ascends to the height of the crosstrees. Thus we find

distinctions owing to masts simply, and not to the number of masts, but the manner in which they are fashioned. So a sailor speaks of skysail poles, of short royal mast heads, of stump or short topgallant masts; the vocabulary is apparently endless.

73. A *fid* is a bar of wood or iron passed through the fid-hole to support an upper mast. A fidded topmast or topgallant mast, is a mast erected above its lower mast, and supported by the fid.

And yet one word means only one thing, and every one is totally different from another. As a single example, when you speak of skysail poles you are talking of a length of mast continued above the royal mast, upon which a skysail yard may be crossed. When you speak of stump topgallant masts you refer to a mast that is neither royal mast nor skysail mast, and upon which only a topgallant-sail can be set, thus losing the two sails which the existence of the skysail pole admits of.

It is noteworthy that the only vessel to which a mast more or less makes no difference is a ship—that is, a ship in the sailor's meaning of the word, and not according to Act of Parliament. For here let me say that the law defines a ship to be any fabric that is not propelled by oars, a piece of absurdity forced upon general acceptance by its conveniency. The proper definition of a ship is a vessel with three masts, each mast being square-rigged. She would be a ship, even if she did not carry anything above her crosstrees, for she is made so by her crossjack and mizzen top-sail yard and mizzen top; 238
[74] yet, if you add a fourth mast to a ship she is still a ship, even if it be what is termed a spanker mast—that is, a mast rigged like the mizzen-mast of a barque. Four-masted ships are now common. They seem comparatively recent; but in reality they are as old at least as that noble American clipper, the *Great Republic*, that was afloat some twenty or thirty years ago. These fourth masts in ships are supposed to have been introduced on account of the length of the vessels; but I have seen ships as small as any three-masted craft rigged with four masts. They say that these four-masted concerns are handy in stays, that, proportionally, they need fewer hands than three-masted ships, and captains have told me that they have watched them thrashing to windward in a strong breeze with the power of an ocean passenger-steamer. I should think this very likely, if it were not that every vessel of this type which I have watched sailing or towing away, outward bound, has been so deep as to look amidships as if there was nothing but the thickness of her covering-board between her and the water.

74. "All the yards of a ship," says Falconer, in his "Marine Dictionary," "are square, except that of the mizzen." In Falconer's day the mizzen was set on a lateen yard, long since replaced by the gaff. There was then a crossjack yard to which the clews of the mizzen top-sail were sheeted home, but no crossjack was carried. There was in the last century (perhaps in the beginning of this) a vessel called *Bilander*. She was a brig, but with this peculiarity, that her mainsail was set on a lateen yard. The tack was secured to a ring-bolt in the middle of the vessel, and the sheet to another ring-bolt in the taffrail.

Many changes have been made in the rig of ships which have not altered their character. Double topgallant yards leave a ship a ship, though an alteration of this sort probably in another kind of vessel would cause sailors to invent a new name for her. Take, for example, that most familiar craft, the brig. If the trysail of this vessel sets 239
directly upon her mainmast, then she is a brig; but if you affix a little mast abaft her mainmast, and call it a trysail mast, and then set your trysail upon this mast, the brig, by this very trifling change, becomes what is called a "snow." A landsman might be defied to detect any difference between a snow and a brig, and even when the distinction was pointed out to him he would scarcely understand what it consisted of. Nevertheless, the addition or want of a trysail mast creates two kinds of vessels rigged absolutely alike in all other respects, and so far from the terms being interchangeable, as might be imagined of names applied to what looks to be the same thing, the word "snow" is used in advertisements of sales by auction in order that it may be known the vessel offered is not

a brig; and thus you may see in the shipping papers advertisements announcing that "On Thursday the snow *Aunt Sally* will be sold, etc.," and, perhaps under it, "On Tuesday next, the brig *Ann Maria*."

These are queer niceties, and of very little use that I can see; but sailors insist upon them, and Jack must be allowed to have his way.

Take, again, the yawl and the dandy. Both vessels are cutter-rigged forward, with a mizzen-mast aft, upon which they set a small sail. To the inexperienced eye they are exactly alike. What, then, is the difference? It lies in the little sail that is set upon the mizzen-mast. A yawl has a lug-mizzen, the foot of which sets on a spar that projects over the stern. The dandy's mizzen has a gaff and boom, though the mizzens of some dandies, I believe, are what is termed jib-headed. The distinction is minute, and yet the difference when looked into is found to be decided enough. The yawl is chiefly the pleasure craft, the dandy the fishing vessel.

Amongst fishing craft the varieties of rigs are few. They consist of the dandy, the lugger, and the smack. The smack is a vessel that is rigged like a cutter, and it is not necessary that a vessel should be a fishing boat in order to be called a smack. 240

To people who care about the sea there is much that is interesting in rigs. The variations are curious as illustrating experiments, and the resolution to adopt certain forms useful in particular trades. There is the barque, a three-masted vessel square-rigged on her fore and main masts, and with fore-and-aft sails on her mizzen-mast; she is varied by the barquentine, a vessel rigged like a brig, or indeed like a barque or ship on her foremast, but with fore-and-aft sails only on her main and mizzen-masts.[75] Then out of the brig you get the snow, and out of the snow the hermaphrodite brig, which is a vessel with a brig's foremast and a schooner's mainmast, and out of the hermaphrodite brig comes the brigantine, that, unlike the hermaphrodite, carries a square top-sail at the main, and, unlike the brig, has no maintop. In the same way there are different types of schooners, such as the three-masted schooner, the fore-and-aft schooner, the top-sail schooner, and the two-top-sail schooner. Differences of cut, numbers of masts, spread of sail, give distinctions to the smallest and humblest class of boats. Thus a tosher is not a long-shore driver, though both little vessels are employed in catching what they can close into the land. 241

75. The nomenclature of the sea has been so varied by successive generations that it is extremely difficult to arrive at the paternity of sails, to ascertain when such and such canvas was introduced and why the names it bore were given. In some respects Sir Walter Raleigh helps us in a passage in his "Discourse of Shipping." "We have lately," says he, "added the bonnet and the drabler; to the courses we have devised studding sails, topgallant sails, spritsails, and topsails." By "topsails," I take it, he means spritsail-topsails, for the top-sail was long anterior to the canvas he specifies. The sails thus named are manifestly then as old as the closing years of the reign of Elizabeth and the beginning of that of James I. The stay-sail I find plentiful in the days of Queen Anne. In an old volume of shipbuilding, written by an anonymous author who claims for his work, "'Tis the product of thirty-two years study and experience; for it is very well known that I have been so long imploy'd in her Majesty's service, and that of her Royal Predecessors"—I find the following: "There are other sails called stay-sails, used almost on every stay; as the main stay-sail, main-topmast stay-sail, fore-topmast stay-sail, mizon stay-sail, and sometimes on the mizon-top-mast stay and topgallant stay. And such sails are very useful, if the ship goes anything from the wind, that is, when the sails are constantly full and not shivering. There is another sail call'd a flying-gib, a sail of good service to draw the ship forward, but very prejudicial to the wear of the ship forward." Towards the close of the last century ships went so numerously clothed that it really seems as though nothing but their prodigious beam enabled them to stand up to the press of canvas. There were two jibs, fore topmast stay-sail, sprit-sail and sprit-top-sail, and fore stay-sail. Here you have six sails for the bowsprit and jibbooms. Royals were by this time used and were called the topgallant royals. Over the driver was carried a gaff top-sail, outside which was set another sail

bent to a light yard. Ring-tails and water-sails were common, the latter projecting far beyond the stern. There were nine stay-sails, besides those carried at the fore. A ship with studding-sails out on either side exposed no less than forty-two sails. The present century has added little to sails. I can only think of the skysail. But there have been great changes in shape. Formerly the mizzen was set on a lateen yard. Stay-sails were shaped like trysails, the stay on which they were hoisted shaping them as a gaff does a spanker. Sprit-sails long ago disappeared, and the tendency of late years has been to diminish canvas, insomuch that studding-sails are no longer common.

One needs a good memory to bear even a few distinctions in mind. I remember once standing on the banks of the Tyne and hearing a man, pointing to a vessel like a lighter, call her a wherry. To my South-country notions, of course, a wherry was a small open boat in which people are rowed by a waterman, or which they hire for excursions. Close alongside this gigantic Tyne wherry, which, by the way, if my memory serves me rightly, was half full of coal, lay a similar-looking craft that the same man spoke of as a keel. I asked him why one should be called a keel and the other a wherry, when they were both very much alike, and I am under the impression, though I cannot be sure at this distance of time, that he said the difference lay in one being carvel built, that is, with the outer planks coming together and forming a perfectly smooth side, and the other being clincher-built, a term applied to planks when they overlay one another. Be this as it may, it is at least certain that a wherry in the north is different from a wherry in the south, and really when one comes to consider the infinite variety of rigs and builds, and the almost imperceptible subtleties amongst them which make the same name utterly inapplicable to what looks exactly like the same thing, nautical gentlemen, individuals who are not exactly sailors, but who nevertheless know a very great deal indeed about the sea, insomuch that they are prepared to instruct, at a moment's notice, the most ancient mariner they can come across in his business—such people ought to be a little more compassionate than they are usually found in dealing with those errors or oversights in marine technicality which landsmen are repeatedly guilty of, and which writers and others who ought to know better are occasionally chargeable with.

HOW THE OLD NAVIGATORS MANAGED.

It is extremely difficult to understand how the old navigators contrived to convey their ships from port to port. I do not mean the ancients, who are supposed to have kept the land aboard and to have steered by the stars, though it is certain that they must again and again have been blown out to sea and yet made shift to get home again; but those early voyagers who travelled to the Indies by way of the Cape and to the American seaboard. They had no conception of longitude; they had no means to determine it; and their latitude was extremely vague. An old chart or map is often a strange sight. The figuration of continents and islands is as little like the reality as a child's fanciful drawing of such things would be. The longitude is mere guesswork, and the "heights" or parallels are leagues out. Yet these old people managed to reach the places they started for. Sometimes, to be sure, if the trip were a long one, they found themselves off the land at a distance of a hundred miles or so north or south, as it might be, of their port; but, when you consider that even their knowledge of the variation of the compass was extremely imperfect—that the compass with them was a sluggish primitive appliance—that they could be sure of nothing but their dead-reckoning and the North Star—it should be amazing to us, who live in the age of the exquisite sextant, the superb chronometer, Sir William Thompson's compass, the patent revolving log and Admiralty charts, that mariners from the days of Diaz, Columbus, and Magellan, down to the period of Dr. Maskelyne, the "Nautical Almanac," and the establishment of the Board of Longitude in the last century, should have been able, without hesitation or difficulty, to push on their hundred different ways through the ocean, and duly arrive at the parts they weighed for.

A list of the instruments in use at sea two centuries ago is published as a supplement to Captain James's "Strange and Dangerous Voyage in his intended Discovery of the North-West Passage into the South Sea, in the years 1631 and 1632," contained in "Churchill's Collection," vol. ii., 1704. The captain took with him a quadrant, "of old season'd pear-tree wood, artificially made, and with all care possible divided into diagonals, even to minutes." It was four-foot semi-diameter, adds the captain. In addition to this he had an equilateral triangle of the same wood, "whose radius was five foot at least;" a second quadrant with a semi-diameter of two feet; a staff for taking altitudes and distances seven feet long, "whose transome was four foot, divided into equal parts by way of diagonals, that all the figures in a radius of ten thousand might be taken out actually;" another staff six feet long, a cross-staff, three Jacob's staves, and two of "Mr. Davis's back staves." These huge unwieldy instruments seem entirely appropriate to the age of folios. James took with him other appliances which he called horizontal instruments. Among these were two semi-circles "two foot semi-diameter, of seasoned pear-tree wood," six "meridian compasses," four needles in square boxes, "moreover, four special needles (which my good friends Mr. Allen and Mr. Marre gave me) of six inches diameter, and toucht curiously with the best loadstone in England;" a loadstone with the poles marked for fear of a mistake, a watch-clock, "a table every day calculated, correspondent to the latitude, according to Mr. Gunter's directions in his book, the better to keep our time and our compass and judge of our course," log-lines and glasses, "two pair of curious globes, made purposely," and finally "I made a meridian line of 120 yards long, with six plumb lines hanging in it, some of them being above 30ft. high, and the weights hung in a hole in the ground, to avoid wind. And this to take the sun's or moon's coming to the meridian. This line we verified, by setting it by the pole itself, and by many other ways." Such was the scientific equipment of a man bound on a Polar expedition in the year 1631.

There is an interesting appendix to this voyage "touching longitude," written by the astronomer Gellibrand. "The longitude of a meridian," he says, "is that which hath, and still wearieth, the greatest masters of geography." He ridicules the notion that longitude may be ascertained by watching the variation of the needle, though it is worth noting that this belief continued strong for many years later, as may be gathered from a passage in the introductory essay to "Churchill's Navigantium atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca:" "One thing more we shall observe before we quit this subject, and it is this, that the several methods for finding the longitude before mentioned depend upon astronomical observations, and those too very nice and exact, which at sea it is very difficult at any time, and very often impracticable, to make; whence arises the necessity of finding out 246
some other way of discovering the longitude, for which hitherto nothing has bid so fair as a perfect finding out the variation of the magnetic needle, which being adjusted to a table of longitudes, they would then reciprocally show each other." Gellibrand regards eclipses, more especially of the moon—"whose leisure, however," he adds, "we must often wait, and perhaps go without, if the heavens be not propitious to us"—as the most satisfactory means of determining the longitude. But at sea people want something more prompt than an eclipse to find out where they are.

For generations, then, the mariner was left to depend upon his dead-reckoning, which, as one method of navigating a ship, is still in force, and I do not know that we have in any way altered this old practice of computing, save by the introduction of the patent log, whose indications are still in some directions checked by the log-reel of our forefathers. Dead-reckoning simply consists of ascertaining how fast the ship sails by heaving the log, by entering the courses sailed, by allowing for leeway. The ship, let us say, steered north-east for one hour, north-east by north during the following hour, north-north-east for the third hour, and then during the fourth hour came up to north-east again. In those four hours her rate varied: at one o'clock the log showed her sailing at seven knots; at two, five-and-a-half knots; at three, four-and-three-quarter knots; at four, six knots; and her leeway was sometimes three-quarters of a point, sometimes one point, sometimes more. Her place, then, on the chart may be easily set down or "pricked" out of these entries in the log-slate. In thick weather there is no other way of computing a ship's progress and position. The sky may be obscured for days, and all that a man can do is to 247
heave his log, watch how the ship heads, and observe her leeway. It was in this fashion that the ancient mariner contrived to crawl about the ocean, and it is worth observing that the log he measured his way with we still possess and use. No ship, I should think, goes to sea without the reel, the line, and the glass. The rotating logs tell you how far you have gone in a given time with tolerable accuracy; but the reel-log is the only appliance that I am acquainted with which will tell you how fast you are going at the moment.

Seamen have told me that with their eye they can tell the speed of their ship more accurately than with the log-line. I do not believe this, and on testing these cocksure men I have never once found them right within half a knot. Of course this refers to sailing ships. A steamer goes along steadily, and it is quite conceivable that a person accustomed to steamships could tell correctly the speed of one by looking over the side. But a sailing vessel varies her rate with every puff. Under certain conditions the increased sail that seems to be thrashing her through it with greater velocity has diminished her speed. I particularly recollect an instance. A dynamometer was attached to the taffrail of a large full-rigged ship; to it was affixed a line which it dragged through the water. The pull of the line was equivalent to a weight of sixty pounds. The vessel was then sailing with the wind a point before the beam, under all plain sail, the breeze fresh. The foretopmast studding-sail was set, and the hand of the dynamometer went back, showing that the speed had been decreased to the extent illustrated by this diminution of weight in the pull of the line by the setting of the studding-sail. The chief officer, however, was so certain that the ship had improved her speed, despite the unmistakable indications of the 248
dynamometer, that to prove his judgment he ordered the log to be hove, with the result

that the speed was less by a knot (I think) than it had been before the studding-sail was set. The fact is, the ship had sail enough; the additional canvas simply buried, and so retarded her. Yet this same mate was one of many seamen who had assured me that they could tell the speed of a vessel better with the eye than with the log.

It is true, nevertheless, that the mariners of certain nations in former times chose the eye in preference to the knotted line. The Dutch, in particular, though they always took the reel and glass to sea with them, seldom used them. There looks to have been something of laziness in their habit. An account of the Hollander's slatternly trick of navigation may be found in a note to "Voyages to the East Indies by the late John Splinter Stavorinus," in 1768–71–74 and '75. This author tells us that the Dutchmen of his own and of earlier times steered by the true compass, or rather endeavoured to do so, "by means of a small central movable card, which they set to the meridian; and whenever they discover the variation has altered twenty-two degrees since the last adjustment, they again correct the central card. This is steering within a quarter of a point without aiming at greater exactness." There was the same guesswork in their dead-reckoning. They hove no log, says Stavorinus. The officer of the watch corrected the course for leeway by his own judgment before marking it down on the logboard. They computed their speed by measuring a distance of forty feet along the ship's side. "They take notice of any remarkable patch of froth when it is abreast of the foremost end of the measured distance, and count half-seconds till the mark of froth is abreast of the after end. With the number 249
of half-seconds thus obtained they divide the number forty-eight, taking the product for the rate of sailing in geographical miles in one hour, or the number of Dutch miles in four hours." One finds the same phlegmatic indifference in their manner of taking sights. "It is not usual to make any allowance in the sun's declination on account of being on a different meridian from that for which the tables are calculated. They in general compute the numbers just as they are found in the tables. From all this," drily adds Stavorinus, "it is not difficult to conceive the reason why the Dutch are frequently above ten degrees out in their reckoning."

The Spaniards and the Portuguese were more wary, if not more knowing, than the Dutch. Extreme vigilance in conning ship was apparently a feature of the navigation of those old and famous races of mariners. Sir Richard Hawkins (Purchas, vol. iv.) is express in this. I will let him deliver himself in his own quaint inimitable tongue. "In this point of steeridge (steering) the Spaniards and Portugalls do exceede all that I have seene, I meane for their care, which is chiefest in navigation. And I wish in this, and in all their workes of discipline and reformation, we should follow their examples, as also those of any other nation. In every shippe of moment, upon the halfe-decke or quarter-decke, they have a chaire or seate, out of which, whilst they navigate, the pilot, or his adjutants (which are the same officers which in our shippes we term the master and his mates) never depart day nor night from the sight of the compasse, and have another before them, whereby they see what they doe, and are ever witnesses of the good or bad steeridge of all men that take the helme." A later generation of sailors, "Portugalls" as well as others, 250
knew better than to suffer men on the look-out, whether officers of the watch or quarter-masters, to be seated.

The common contrivance for taking the height of the sun at sea in order to obtain the latitude was the cross-staff or fore-staff. It was composed of a wooden staff, upon which was marked a scale of degrees and parts of degrees; it was also fitted with crosspieces for sliding along it at their middle parts. The smallest crosspieces were used for observing the least altitudes. The observation of the sun's height was taken by means of the shadow which the extremity of the crosspiece cast on the staff when the instrument was adjusted. Contrast this humble, uncouth engine with the sextant of to-day! The back-staff was another implement, the invention of Davis, the Arctic explorer, by the help of which the ancient mariner made his way about the ocean. He had also the astrolabe. Clarke, in his "Progress of Maritime Discovery," speaks of the sea-astrolabe as deriving its name from

the "Armillary sphere invented by Hipparchus at Alexandria." He finds it first in use among the Portuguese, perhaps because they claim its introduction into Portugal by Martin de Boerina in 1485. The introduction of the cross-staff, on the other hand, is attributed to Warner, who published an account of it at Nuremberg in 1514. As regards the astrolabe, there is certainly a mistake in the date, for we find Chaucer writing a treatise on this instrument in 1391. The method indicated by the old poet for ascertaining the latitude may be accepted as the one employed by the mariners of his own and of much later periods. One special article in his Treatise is entitled by the poet, "Another conclusion to prove the latitude of a region that ye ben in," and the whole passage is so quaint and interesting withal that every nautical reader of this volume will, I am sure, thank me for transcribing it. I quote from the edition of the Treatise published by Mr. A. E. Brae in 1870. 251

"If," writes Chaucer, "thou desire to know this latitude of the region, take the altitude of the sonne in the myddle of the daye, when the sonne is in the hed of Aries or of Libra, for than movethe the sonne in the lyne equinoctial, and abate the nombre of that same sonne's altitude out of 90 degrees, and than is the remnaunt of the nombre that leveth the altitude of the region; as thus—I suppose that the sonne is thilke daye at noon 38 degrees of heyght; abate, than, 38 degrees out of 90, so leveth ther 52, than is 52 degrees the latitude. I saye not this but for ensample, for wel I wot the latitude of Oxenforde is certain minutes lesse. Nowe, if it so be that thou thinketh too long a tarrying to abyde til that the sonne be in the hed of Aries or Libra, than waite when that the sonne is in any other degree of the zodiake, and consider if the degree of his declinacion be Northward from the equinoctial; abate than from the sonne's altytude at none the nombre of his declinacion, and than hast thou the height of the hedes of Aries and Libra; as thus—my sonne, peraventure, is in the 10 degree of Leo, almost 56 degrees of height at none, and his declinacion is almost 18 degrees Northward from the equinoctial; abate than thilke 18 degrees of declinacion out of the altitude at none, than leveth 38 degrees—lo there the height of the hed of Aries or Libra and thyn equinoctial in that region."

So, then, all the ancient mariner had to do was to take the height of the sun, subtract or add the declination, and accept the remainder as his latitude. An easy process, that gives us Cape Horn on the fifty-second parallel and Valdivia on the forty-third![76] And yet they managed excellently well, hove their log, turned their hour-glasses, and arrived in due course, their ships covered with barnacles and themselves with glory. In one sense it was the marine age of gold. There were no Board of Trade examinations, no certificates of competency, no obligation to find the time by equal altitudes, or the longitude by chronometer or by lunar observations. The whole art of the navigation of our ancestors is summed up in the account of a voyage sent by Thomas Steevens to his father in 1579, in which he tells him that it is hard to sail from east to west, or contrary, because there is no fixed point in all the sky whereby to direct a course. "I shall tell you," says he, "what helps God provideth for these men." And he informs his father that not a "fowle" appears, nor a sign in the air or in the sea which has not been written about by those who make the voyage—that is, to the East Indies. "Wherefore, partly by their own experience, and pondering withal what space the ship was able to make with such a winde, and such direction, and partly by the experience of others whose books and navigations they have, they gesse whereabouts they be."[77] 252

76. That is, according to one or two old maps I have seen.

77. I have elsewhere quoted this and other passages. Many of these papers were written at long intervals, and I could not charge my memory with references already made use of.

And accurately enough they "gessed," too. But then there was no dispatch; every owner of a bottom took his own risks, and a few months sooner or later (chiefly later) was nothing to people who could find a dry dock on every beach, and a market for

trucking wherever there was a coloured man. Many generations were born and died before real help came to the mariner, and he was able to sail as securely east or west as north or south. There was no “Nautical Almanac” till the year 1769. This invaluable compilation was originally proposed and then calculated by Dr. Maskelyne, and published by order of the Commissioners of Longitude. So conservative, however, is the character of the seaman that he candidly owned himself but very little obliged to Dr. Maskelyne and the Admiralty. So long afterwards as 1794 I find William Hutchinson, mariner, in a very admirable and voluminous treatise on Naval Architecture, writing in defiant terms touching the “Nautical Almanac.” “The Board of Longitude,” he says, “in order to facilitate the discovery that is expected to be made by this last-mentioned method,” namely, the “Nautical Almanac,” “has ordered that the masters for the Royal Navy must qualify themselves by learning to pass an examination to show that they understand the ‘Nautical Almanac,’ which is a task, in my opinion, that cannot be expected from many of our most hardy and expert navigators, whose education has been mostly from early youth through the hard, laborious, busy scenes of life at sea, and who have never had the opportunity to get the learning that is necessary to understand the true principles of this Almanac.”

Possibly even in this day it might not be hard to find sea veterans who would secretly agree with Mr. Hutchinson’s protest, and lament the extinction of an epoch when the quadrant and the log-line were thought “larning” enough. At any rate, I have a lively recollection of reading something closely corresponding to such views in the *British Merchant Service Journal*, the organ of the London Shipmasters’ Society, for 1879–80.

PLATES AND RIVETS.[78]

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78. Written in 1882.

The great shipping question of the day is the loadline. Who is to be responsible for Plimsoll's mark? Is the shipowner to go on fixing it at his own risk, or will the Government fix it for him? and if so, where? Is the carrying power of a vessel to be calculated by her surplus buoyancy, or is her clear side to be taken in relation to her depth of hold?—and is it possible to fix one loading point for all vessels, whether they be well-decked ships, or flush-decked ships, or hurricane-decked ships? All these are scientific conundrums, which will have to be solved sooner or later. They are certainly of the gravest possible moment to the shipping interests. As the law now stands, a shipowner is permitted to determine at what height on the vessel's side a loadline shall be fixed; but, if, in the opinion of the officials, the loadmark does not furnish sufficient freeboard, the ship can be stopped, and forced to discharge as much of her cargo as shall raise her to the height the officials may consider she requires. The injustice of this is tolerably obvious. Practically, the Board of Trade have their preconceived theory of the proper freeboard of every vessel. They or their representatives say, "Yonder is a vessel of three thousand tons. She needs so many feet of clear side. Her owners, in our opinion, are overloading her. 255
But let them proceed. When she is full, her stores, crew, and passengers aboard, and everything ready for the voyage, we will stop her and force her to disgorge." Now, if the Board of Trade can decide after, why can they not decide before? Why should shipowners be obliged to guess at the theories of freeboard which the Board have in their mind, and be visited with the penalty of a costly delay if their conjectures should be wrong? The Government authorities say, We will not fix the loadline: you must do that at your own risk. But practically they *do* fix the loadline by empowering their representatives to stop ships which look to be overloaded. Surely it would be more consistent with common sense and common justice to determine a loadline for the shipowner before he fills up his ship than to keep the determination carefully concealed from him until his vessel is about to start or actually has commenced her voyage.

This, then, as I have said, is the great shipping question of the times, and it is the outcome of the wise and humane consideration how to diminish the perils of the deep for those who have to seek a living upon it. It is to be hoped that the numerous scientific controversies which have grown out of the subject of the loadline may not overcloud and conceal the object the Plimsoll disc was intended to effect. That object was to prevent owners from sending human lives to sea aboard ships so deeply freighted that the first heavy gale of wind was bound to sink them. Unhappily departmental timidity has gone very near to neutralizing a great and beneficent measure without satisfying the class who were to be appeased and quieted. Many overladen ships contrive somehow to sneak off to sea unnoticed by those functionaries whose duty it is to stop such vessels. If they founder with all hands the law considers itself sufficiently avenged by mulcting the owners and 256
imprisoning them. Unfortunately, this does not save the sailor's life. It is another illustration of the truth that every special interest is bound to suffer from the lack of thoroughness in the measures of those to whom it looks for protection. One seems to find the same perfunctoriness in most of the legislation that deals with sailors. It was a good thing to extinguish the old floating coffins. And yet it was but a half-measure, too. It was merely the lopping of a few twigs from a great rotten branch. A much larger evil than the despatching of unseaworthy ships was left untouched—I mean the construction of unseaworthy ships. It was monstrous, indeed, that men should be allowed to send on a dangerous voyage vessels which had been afloat for years and years, cobbled-up old

fabrics which leaked like sieves, but whose safety was a matter of profound indifference to their owners, because of the insurance that must make whatever happened good luck to them. But it seems to me much more monstrous that men should be allowed to build ships—every one of which carries as large a company of souls as would equip a whole fleet of the old condemned coasters—whose iron frames and whose iron plates are fit for nothing but to be branded with the word "Murder," so that when the metal fragments come ashore the beholder may know for what purpose they were designed.

Legislation has protected the sailor; but read the reports of the marine inquiries held. Take the trouble to count for yourself the number of missing ships—missing nobody knows how or why—which are catalogued in a short twelvemonth. Glance at the depositions of the men brought ashore from vessels which have foundered under their feet. Here are facts speaking with a trumpet-tongue, sounding a deep and bitter reproach 257
upon our British ears, and converting our legislative efforts into mere irony. Will any seaman pretend that Plimsoll's mark, as we now have it, has abridged, by so much as one sixty-fourth part of the whole, the perils he had to face before the question of freeboard was ever made a subject of discussion? Will he assert that the extinction of the "floating coffin" has increased the chances of his safety, in the face of the innumerable iron ships which are, month after month, slipped along the ways into that ocean whose bottom they are bound to sound in due course? I am not speaking of the great ocean passenger steamship; she, no doubt, in point of construction and strength, may be as perfect as she looks, with the exterior gilt and paint, and the interior sumptuousness of velvet, and silk, and polished panelling. I am referring to the class of vessels which are doing the work of the old condemned coasters, and more than the work, since we find them pushing into seas into which the "coffin" never ventured. "The vessel did not arrive at her destination," runs the report of a recent inquiry held by Mr. H. C. Rothery; "it may, therefore, fairly be concluded that she has gone to the bottom, and the object of the present inquiry is to ascertain, if possible, how she has been lost." If possible!

To show the character of that possibility the *Annex* prints it thus "..."

Could anything be more eloquent? Will the builder interpret those points to signify his rivet-holes?

Or take from a late deposition the narrative of a shipmaster, who relates that "he proceeded;" the wind was so and so; such and such a light bore N.W., the land was three miles distant, the sea smooth, and the vessel steaming full speed. On a sudden it was 258
noticed that the ship was down by the head. The engineer sounded the forehold, and found nearly four feet of water in it. Then all hands were called on deck and the steam pumps set to work. But the water gained on the pumps, and meanwhile the vessel steadily continued to settle down by the head. The fore hatches were removed, and nearly six feet of water found. The pumps continued working, and the crew baled with might and main with buckets. But all was of no good, so deponent got the boats ready for use. He tried to drive his ship shorewards, but she would not answer her helm, on which he stopped the engines and lowered the boats. They were picked up by another vessel, and shortly after they were aboard the ship they had quitted went down head foremost.

This occurred close to the land, where there was plenty of help, and so we get the poor shipmaster's deposition. But it might have occurred leagues out at sea, where there was no succour, and then the ship would have been missing, "nothing heard of the crew," and the formal marine inquiry would have wound up with another handful of dots. And what caused that steamer to go down head foremost on a fine clear day, and in smooth water? There was no collision; there were no shoals. Had a butt started? Had a head-plate worked loose? One is inclined to say *ex pede Herculem* of such disasters as this. They should save marine courts a deal of brain-cudgelling over incidents which, in the days of teak, and oak, and treenails, would truly take very solemn rank among the "unaccountables."

This deposition worked very strongly in my head the other day when I happened to find myself standing under the bends of the towering iron skeleton of a ship that, when completed, would be 100 A 1, and qualified to carry three thousand tons of merchandize. The hammering all about me was sharp and furious, the sparks flew wildly, and as the white-hot rivets popped out of the holes they were cut and hammered by the men as though they were carrots. There were other ships on a line with this, one completely plated and painted, another half-finished, a third a mere outline of frames and keelson and stern-post and stem-pieces. The scene was an imposing one, and especially imposing was the appearance of the completed ship with the polish of her clean metal run and the gilt tracings about her figurehead and quarters. And yet when I turned my eyes from her to the skeleton under which I was standing I felt a good deal of my admiration leaking away from me. I called to a man who was hammering close beside me. "Do you know what clagging is, my friend?" 259

"Ay," said he, looking at me with a broad grin, "ye dorn't need to go very fur to find out the meanin' o' that word."

"These things," said I, striking a long curve of metal, "which in a wooden ship would be spoken of as ribs, are called frames, aren't they?"

"Ay, those are the frames," he answered.

"I suppose they have a good deal of weight to bear, a good deal of pressure to resist?" said I.

"Why," he replied, "they're pretty nigh the ship, man!"

"Then what do you make of that flaw there, and that crack there, and there, and there?" said I, pointing to the places as I spoke.

"Pooh!" said he, "when the plates are on that's all covered up."

"Yes," said I, "so I suppose; but do you know I don't see a frame that hasn't three or four—and yonder is one with six—of those cracks and flaws plain to be viewed upon it. Considering the dimensions of this vessel, do you think it wise—I'm speaking in the interest of human lives, my man—to put in such defective iron as this?" 260

He made no answer, and was about to resume his work.

"Here," said I, "there is no thirstier work than hammering," and I gave him a shilling. "How do you get the iron plates which cover these ribs to fit?"

"They're rolled," he replied, pocketing the shilling with a look around.

"The part of the plate that overhangs another," said I, "is, I think, called the landing?"

"Ay," said he, "the lannin', that's right."

"Do you see this landing, here?" I asked. "I'm not sure that I couldn't put my little finger between."

"Oh, the rivets 'll draw that into its place," said the man.

"True," I exclaimed; "but you wouldn't call it a fit?"

"No," he answered; "I wouldn't call it a fit, but the rivets 'll make it one."

"But, don't you see," said I, "that by prizing these plates together with the rivets you are putting work on the rivets for which they are not designed? If the blow of a sea springs the rivets, the plates must yawn. At this rate it seems to me that the rivets not only keep the plates together, but actually give the hull its shape."

"What are ye, sir?" said he to me; "a surveyor?"

"No, my man," I replied; "if I were, I should be talking to your master, not to you. Here's another point that strikes me as worth noticing. Look at these rivet-holes. They're 261

all punched, I observe."

"Certainly they're punched," he answered.

"But don't you think they ought to be drilled?" I asked. "Punching is bound to weaken the rivet-holes, by cracking and dislocating the fibres of the metal around them, and rendering them the less fit as a hold for the rivets."

"Drilling 'ud be much better, of course," said the man; "but it 'ud pretty nigh double the expense, and that 'ud be going the wrong way to what the shipowners want."

"But here again I see another curious feature," said I. "Look through these rivet-holes, one after another, as many as you choose. There's not a single hole in the front plates that corresponds with the holes in the plates at the back. How on earth are you going to drive a rivet through such a hole as that, for instance?" said I, pointing to a hole so much lower than the hole behind it that the apertures where the two plates met resembled a half-moon.

"Oh, we'll rivet 'em somehow," he answered, laughing, and without even glancing at the holes to which I sought to direct his attention.

At this juncture somebody who might have been the manager came sniffing curiously about me; the man went on with his work, and I moved off. Before quitting the yard, however, I walked over to the other vessels—the incomplete ones, I mean—and had a look at them. Here I found precisely the same kind of workmanship and material—the frames full of cracks and flaws, the rivet-holes roughly punched, and not a single hole corresponding with the holes behind; the "landings" yawning and waiting to be prized 262
and warped and severely strained into their places by the rivets. I am not writing learnedly; I am avoiding all technicalities, as I wish the land-going public who know nothing about marine terms to understand me. Neither do I assert that this shipbuilding yard which I inspected is a typical one. But this much I will say, and as a man who has some small knowledge of the power and fury of the sea in a time of tempest—that were I a forecastle-hand and had to choose between one of these brand-new, A 1 iron steamships of from two thousand to three thousand tons gross and one of the old coasters which have long since been condemned and rendered impossible, I should be perfectly content to let the toss of a coin decide for me, satisfied that, so far as security at sea goes, there would be just as much promise of my speedy dissolution aboard such a brand-new steamer as aboard the sieve-like old coffin. It is not hard to understand what a reproach this kind of vessel is to us as a maritime nation and how it has come about. The same fierce competition that covers our tables with butter made of fat, and coffee made out of old beans, is covering the ocean with the sort of ships I am writing of. The problem is now how to build the cheapest steamer to carry a maximum cargo on a minimum draught of water, and to pass the surveyors as fit to go to sea. The shipbuilders are not to blame. They will do good work for good money; but if good money be not forthcoming, though some kind of work be expected, then they will give you frames which are only fit to sell for old iron; the workmanship will be mere "clagging," the plates will be wrenched and warped into any kind of abominable fit by the rivets; the whole structure and the lives of the people who commit themselves to it will be made to depend upon points which no 263
honest shipwright would dream of reckoning as factors in the binding and holding powers of the fabric; and the false and frail contrivance, doctored up and smothered over with paint, will be launched with all haste, and the next order proceeded with at once.

Therefore, in so far as the loadline is designed for the protection of the sailor against the rapacity of those owners who would load their vessels down to their waterways, if they could only manage to make them float at that, there must always be a most unpleasant quality of insufficiency in the controversies the subject has excited, so long as they exclude consideration of the kind of vessels which are launched month after month and year after year from many shipbuilding yards. The absurdity of painting or nailing a

loading disc upon the side of a vessel which is to a strong well-constructed ship what a cheap suburban villa built with nine-inch walls is to a house in Grosvenor or Berkeley-square, struck me forcibly, as I stood the other day looking at the flimsy metal skeletons which, when plated with thin sheets of iron and loaded with the dead weight of coal and freight and engines, are to confront and give battle to the terrible sea. I shall be asked if no protection is afforded the sailor against the deadly risks such shipbuilding as this involves by those marine surveyors, whose duties as inspectors are very clearly and precisely laid down for them by the authorities they represent? I answer, let those interested in the subject make a tour of inspection for themselves—slip in quietly, as I did, into those shipbuilding yards where cheap steamers are manufactured, and judge with their own eyes to what extent I am inaccurate in affirming that a proportion of the ships which are built in this country are renewing with tenfold disgrace those maritime 264
crimes which were supposed to have been ground out of our civilization, and reviving with tenfold horror those peculiar forms of marine disasters which were hopefully assumed to have been shelved along with the old wooden craft.

And now let me say here a few words on the subject of marine surveying.

If there be one class of responsible men more than another who should be wholly above suspicion, who should be possessed of a moral courage equal, under all circumstances, to the unbending and unfaltering discharge of the duties accepted by them, they should consist, one would think, of the men employed by Lloyd's and the Board of Trade to inspect the construction of ships, and to pronounce upon their fitness as sea-going fabrics. You have only to consider what is involved in the duties of marine surveyors to appreciate the high and extraordinary character of their obligations. Upon their capacity to distinguish between good and bad work, and upon their courage as judges to whom their employers entrust the exercise of the widest possible discretion, practically depends the life of every human being who goes to sea as a sailor or as a passenger. Of course, the difficulties of the vocation, humanly speaking, are not hard to understand. We may appreciate the embarrassment a surveyor labours under in having to condemn the work of a shipbuilder with whom he is on very friendly terms, to say no more. The temptation to inspect any other part of the fabric than that which imperatively calls for condemnation must, under certain circumstances, be very great. But let all this be freely admitted. Life is more precious than class sensibilities, and if an evil is to flourish only on the condition that nothing is said about it, most of us will agree that it is 265
high time to cultivate candour, in that direction at least.

I have no hesitation in saying that a large proportion of the marine surveying of the day is one of the most glaring, as it certainly is the cruellest, of the shams of the period. Samples of work are passed which, were there the least sincerity and conscience in the minds of those who decide upon them, could under no possibility have left the yards in which they were produced. Men, women, and children are sent to sea in structures which never would have been permitted to quit the only place they are safe on—I mean the dry land—had the surveyors put any shadow of honesty into the duties they are appointed to discharge.

"Look," said a gentleman to me the other day in a shipbuilding yard, "Look at that faulty work there! is it possible that Mr. —— (naming the surveyor) means to pass it?"

The surveyor stood at a distance; the gentleman called him and pointed out the defective work. The surveyor seemed surprised, and shook his head. "Ah," said he, "that is too bad. I shan't be able to pass that." But he *did* pass it, for the gentleman some days after wrote to tell me that the faulty points had not been remedied, and that the ship was to be launched just as she was.

"What," cries an American writer, in a Yankee shipping journal, "What of the *Ismailia*, *Bernina*, *Bayard*, *Homer*, *Stamfordham*, *Telford*, *Zanzibar*, *Toxford*, *Sylvia*, *Surbiton*, *Joseph Pease*, and the forty British steamers which foundered last year, and scores of

others which have gone to Davy Jones's Locker?" We are constantly boasting of the vastness and sovereignty of our mercantile marine; but we shall have to acquire a new theory of bragging if we are to reconcile our self-complacency with such plain-speaking as this, which comes to us in our own tongue from across the seas. 266

"Far less need of hospitals, did they use us well,
Were this forecastle of ours fit wherein to dwell.
Ships are coffins nowadays, life is but a toy,
'Jerry' murders millions, Board of Trade ahoy!"

sings the contemporary sailor; but there is very little use in his shouting "Ahoy," if the only response he gets is the appointment of men who, filling offices designed for his protection, deliberately ignore their most grave and great responsibilities and lure him, by what are absolutely false representations, into committing his life to unseaworthy ships. Unhappily in marine topics public interest is only to be awaked by reiteration. But let it be remembered that it is not only Jack's life that is jeopardized by our new shipbuilding departures. The subject is one that concerns every living being that crosses the ocean or who has friends at sea. The sailor, we know, is an abstraction. Nautical as we are as a people, we barely take count of him unless as a stage show, or as the pig-tailed Jack Pudding of a romance. But when we think of passengers we think of our friends and of ourselves. Is the loss of the *Clan Macduff* still within living memory? Everybody was much shocked at the time by that dreadful wreck. But shore-going people would have been more shocked had they taken the trouble to master the meaning of the Wreck Commissioner's finding, when, by absolving the owner from all responsibility on the grounds that the vessel had been passed by a Board of Trade surveyor, he practically decided that the Board of Trade, through the official who certificated the *Clan Macduff*, was answerable for the dreadful disaster that befel her. At this rate what assurance have 267 the travelling public, leaving sailors out of the question, that their lives are in any degree cared for? Apparently the Board of Trade are not to be reached if one of their servants passes a ship which goes to pieces as an ill-built, crazy machine in the first gale of wind she encounters; whilst the owner of the sea-coffin becomes an irresponsible being on the merits of a certificate cunningly courted and fraudulently given. If the Wreck Commissioner's law be sound, then the criminality of certificating unseaworthy ships is intensified by the fact that it secures the owners against all penalties. Of course, both the Board of Trade and Lloyd's act with perfect sincerity. They appoint the best men they can get for the trifling wages they give to do certain work, and it is not their fault that some of these men should prove unfaithful. But since nothing can be more certain than that the whole system of marine surveyorship, as we have it, is deceptive, blundering, and in a high degree obnoxious to human life and property, is it not about time that we set to work to invent some better method for guaranteeing, so far as shipbuilding workmanship and material go, the lives and property of the hundreds and thousands of people who go to sea as sailors and passengers? No society nor Government department has a right to subject men invested with powers made solemn by their involvement of precious life to the temptations to faithlessness which surround the marine surveyor.

"How on earth did the builders manage to get that cruelly ill-built vessel passed?" was asked not long since.

"Why, sir," was the answer, "by taking care that the surveyor saw her through no other 268 medium than a bottle of champagne."

A glass of liquor may cost a hundred lives; but the surveyor still keeps his place, and draws his little salary, and goes on passing bad work, with every shipwright in his district sniggering over the man's complaisance. Is it a system proper to denounce? I think it is; and no disinterested person who is in the secret but must deplore it as deeply dishonouring to the highest and most opulent and fertile branch of British industry, and as

a species of legalized and truly rank conspiracy against the lives of passengers and sailors.

I have briefly referred to the case of the *Clan Macduff*; it will serve my purpose to give a more particular instance of marine surveying as I found it reported at length in one of the shipping journals. The brig *Scio* was a wooden vessel built in 1839, and she was still afloat in 1881. She was the property of a Mr. Blumer Bushell, of South Shields, who had purchased her for £110, probably quite as much as she was worth. She was docked and repaired at a cost of £336. Her first start, after leaving the doctor's hands, was unfortunate, for she went ashore at Kunda and damaged her keel. This was repaired, £84 being spent upon her. Next voyage she went to sea with a crew of eight hands, and a load of four hundred and twenty-nine tons of coal, her registered tonnage being a trifle over two hundred and sixty-five. Scarcely was she at sea when she was found to be making water. The master's attention was engrossed by the job of pumping, in the midst of which the wind breezed up hard, the vessel fell off, the mainboom jibed and broke in halves, one piece of which, falling upon a boy, struck him down dead. The leak increased, and the crew compelled the master to run for Leith Roads. Here the vessel was placed on the 269
mud, and caulked as high as nine feet of water around her would let the irons go. Thus soldered, she started once more, and plumped on to Inchkeith. She was towed off after discharging fifteen tons of cargo, and was docked with four hundred and fourteen tons of coal in her bottom. A portion of her crew now refused to share any more of her fortunes, so they were discharged and others shipped in their room. Once more this noble brig proceeded, but had not put fifteen miles betwixt her and the land when the crew came aft in a body, swore that the water was coming in fast and must presently drown the ship, and begged the master to put back. This he did, in the face of a strong head wind, which obliged him to beat up the Firth of Forth in short tacks. By-and-by a squall came along and blew the lower fore-top-sail out of the bolt-ropes. Soon afterwards the *Scio* struck on some sands off Buckhaven, but managed to beat over them. The master said he now wanted to haul his brig off the land, but that the men refused to turn to. The crew denied this, but, let the truth be what it would, not long after the vessel had beaten over the sands she went ashore somewhere north of Kirkcaldy, on which the crew very sensibly got out. Such is the picturesque history of a brig which no man will believe could by any possibility have been found afloat in these days of the stringent Merchant Shipping Act, and of surveyors appointed by the Board of Trade to stop rotten vessels from proceeding to sea. It was declared at the re-hearing—for a good deal of litigation was generated by this dismal old brig—that two shipwright surveyors, who were officers of the Board of Trade, inspected the vessel whilst under repairs, visiting her several times and pointing out what should be done. Yet you will have observed that the *Scio* never quitted the dock 270
without all hands going to the pumps, only to knock off in order to come aft and request the skipper to put back to save their lives. And, as if this most unimpeachable testimony to the value of Board of Trade surveying was not of sufficient weight, there comes a Mr. Turner into court with samples of the timbers and planks of the wreck which he had inspected on the beach, and this gentleman deliberately declares—pointing to the samples as he speaks—that, from the survey he made of the wretched old hooker's remains, she was unseaworthy.

There is no arrogance in pretending to wisdom after the event has happened. The surveyors might affirm what they chose, but we, having the end of the story under our eyes, are at full liberty to say that no declarations that the brig was seaworthy can make her seaworthy in the face of the water that ran into her bottom, and that kept the crew pumping and hurrying back to land to save their lives. Theories are excellent things in the absence of facts; but when a fact comes in the road the biggest theory must make way. The pumping and the putting back are the most satirical commentaries which can be imagined on the declarations of the Board of Trade surveyors. What is their notion of seaworthiness? Is it pumping morning, noon, and night, and all hands imploring the

skipper to put his helm up and try back? If it be not that, if, on the contrary, they define seaworthiness to consist of a tight, well-found craft, how are they going to reconcile the results of their survey of the brig *Scio* with the results of her attempted voyages?

I quote this example of surveying because it is illustrative of the worthlessness of the supervision practised by the Board of Trade under the present system of protecting life and property, and because it is typical of much of the work that is done in that way by the men who are paid to look after the interests they represent. The land-going justices who sat at a re-hearing of the first investigation absolved the owner on the grounds that he did all that he could to render his brig seaworthy—that is to say, "taking into consideration the precautions taken by the owner, under the surveillance of the Board of Trade surveyors at Shields and at Leith, and having all the work executed by practical men of long standing, the Court could come to no other conclusion than that set forth in the judgment." 271

But what said the assessors, the nautical element in this investigation? "We do not concur in this judgment ... and will furnish our own report." That report is the only endurable supplement to the justices' annex that could be devised. The writers declare that the brig was not properly and efficiently repaired, and that she was not in a good and seaworthy condition when she left Leith; "that, in their opinion, the *Scio* was in all probability in a worse state when she left Leith on November 26th than when she left the Tyne on the 2nd." They deny that the owner used all those reasonable means in opening the *Scio* out and ascertaining her exact condition which, as a practical man, he should have known a vessel of her age required, "and which he had such ample and available means of doing in his own dock, thereby neglecting to ensure her being sent to sea in a seaworthy condition."

The whole story bears out this decision; and, the assessors' judgment being unquestionably correct, what are we to think of the surveyors who could allow the brig to go to sea leaking like a sieve and then come into court and speak well of the vessel on the grounds that they had superintended the repairing of her and had even pointed out what should be done? In this case, happily, no lives were lost; the brig went ashore and her people left her. But, suppose she had gone down and drowned her crew out of hand, would not the Board of Trade, in the person of their representative, have been morally guilty of the death of the men? Assuredly they accepted the responsibility of that brig being in a fit condition to go to sea, as they accept the responsibility of every vessel which their representatives pass being seaworthy. This consideration ought surely to give significance to the system of supervision they now practise; and to make them ask themselves whether, having regard to the weight and solemnity of their self-imposed obligations, they have any right, as servants of the public, to persist in multiplying the perils of the deep by a sham and hollow method of inspection. There is not a shipmaster in the country who is not sensible of the necessity of a speedy reform in this matter; and there is not a passenger who would not eagerly join in the cry for reformation were even but a very little bit of the truth published in language which should be intelligible to the landsman.[79] 272

79. This was written five years ago. In five years, at the present rate of living, many changes happen; yet I do not find a single statement made in this paper that I can expunge or modify as a fact of to-day, as it was a fact five years since.

FRENCH SMACKSMEN.

I will not say that the Chinese junk is a handsomer and handier ship than the three-masted top-sail lug-rigged French smack that hails from Boulogne or Gravelines or Calais; but, viewed from a distance, they are not at all unlike. In truth, the horizon of these seas really offers nothing more gaunt, primitive, and cumbersome than the French lugger-rigged smack with her immensely round bows, great spring forward, raking pole-masts crowned with fantastic vanes, brown sails almost as square at the head as at the foot, and cut with an inclination towards the bows like those of a junk, showing more freeboard than many a seven hundred ton steam collier goes to sea with, her decks full of men dressed in a queer kind of blouses, huge sprawling boots and immense earrings, six sweeps or long oars perhaps over either side, an old man steering, and half a dozen women in red or blue petticoats and handkerchiefs tied over their heads, bustling about—the whole of them, from the ancient chap at the tiller to the small boy gutting fish on the forecastle, talking at once, and dropping their various jobs of sweeping, repairing nets, stringing fish, and the like, to gesticulate.

Where do all these people sleep? How do they manage to stow themselves away? I once counted twenty-three men, women, and boys aboard a French smack that certainly did not exceed five and twenty tons. Three or four men—two of whom probably might be youngsters—would have been thought as many hands as that smack wanted had she been an English vessel. And yet, numerous as those French men and women were—and the ladies lent a hand, pulling and hauling with the rest—they worked their ship so slowly and laboriously, and made so much noise, that any one would have supposed she was under-manned and all hands abusing the skipper for putting to sea without a proper complement. The wind was an inshore breeze, and they had to beat out of harbour. It was enough to make one split one's sides to see the fellows tumbling and floundering over one another whenever the helm was put down. Every man seemed skipper, bawled out orders in a lingo compared to which the accents of a Newcastle pitman excited by whisky would be considered chaste music, and I looked to see half of them in their frantic hurry topple overboard. It so happened that at the particular moment when the Frenchman had rounded on the starboard tack for the purpose of making another board so as to fetch the open water, a large passenger steamer was entering the harbour at the rate of eight or nine miles an hour. The men on the pier roared to the French smack to get out of the road. "Yash, yash!" answered the old fellow at the tiller, waving his hand, but he never shifted his helm, either not understanding what was said, or else supposing that the steamer would go clear of him. What followed happened in a breath. The steamer could not stop her way, though her engines were by this time reversed and the wheels sending a whole surface of foam sluicing towards her bows; her sharp stem took the Frenchman right amidships, there was a crash of splintered wood, and, the vessels immediately going clear, I saw that the unfortunate smack was cut down to the water's edge.

And her people? As I live to write it, all hands were overboard! They had jumped—men, women, and boys—over the rail when they saw that the steamer was bound to come, and the foaming eddies thrown along by the racing reversed wheels of the steamboat were full of revolving red caps, and earrings, and white handkerchiefs. It was wonderful to see them all in the water, supporting themselves with the utmost ease, half of them breast high, waiting until they should cease to rotate that they might "fix" their vessel and observe whether she meant to float or sink. Before any boat could put off to them they had made up their minds, and were swimming towards the smack, over whose sides they clambered, until her decks were once more filled with them, and there they

stood, with the water streaming from their clothes, anathematizing the steamer in one voice, and with every contortion of figure it was possible for their ungovernable rage to fling them into. However, nobody was hurt, and the smack, throwing her sweeps out, was got alongside one of the wharves, where all hands promptly fell to drying themselves.

These vessels are very common objects in some of our English harbours; but, familiar as they are, there is a deal of amusement to be obtained by standing and looking down on their decks. If they hailed from a country ten thousand miles distant the manners, appearance, customs of the crews could not be more totally different from those of our own smacksmen. It makes one think of the Spaniards at Trafalgar hanging big wooden crosses on their spanker-boom ends before going into action, to see these poor fellows when they leave Boulogne—and may be the other ports they belong to for all I know— 276
kneel down in their immense boots upon the deck and offer up a prayer to the cross on the church on the summit of the rocks. I have watched the English smacksman leave a good many harbours, but never observed him in a devotional posture. Perhaps on these occasions he withdraws into his little cabin, taking care to assemble the apprentices first. Be this as it may, the French smack's deck in harbour is a real study, and one I never tire of watching. The craft is so crowded that she seems full of business. If it is summer time five or six brawny yellow-skinned lads are taking the diversion of a bath over the side, while the ladies of the extensive company go quietly on with their mending of nets or stockings. The men smoke, argue, grease their boots, peel potatoes, clean fish, and the gruff murmur of a wild *patois* floats up, amid which the most accomplished French scholar can only now and again hear a word that reminds him of the French language. They and their ship make somehow—ugly as their vessel is—a prettier picture than an English smack to fit a summer day. It is no doubt the numerous crew, the oddness and wildness of their appearance, the dress of the women. Some of the boats are extraordinarily massive, perfect beds of timber with immensely round bows and enormously thick scantling. The vanes at their mastheads are often real marine curiosities; even the west country fishermen cannot beat them. You can always tell a Frenchman by his vane though he should lie in the middle of a whole forest of Dartmouth, Penzance, Brixham, Shoreham, and other spars. You may also know him by the smell of the smoke from his galley chimney—the little funnel that rises out of his deck, and discharges a fish-like vapour, made even worse than ancient to the British nostril by—what shall I say? what mystery of vegetable, seasoning, stirring, and 277
peppering?

I suppose the *chasse-marée* is the lineal descendant of those formidable French privateers, which in the old wars used to sneak about the Channel in search of our sugar-boxes and tea-waggons. But there is something in the sight of the French lug-rigged smack, with her two or three masts and decks crowded with men, that always recalls the old St. Malo, Ste. Brieux, Havre, Dieppe, and Boulogne picaroons—those pests of the sturdy old British merchantmen of other days. To see her pulling away out of harbour on a moonlit night, her long sweeps rising and falling like the fibrine limbs of some gigantic marine insect, is to bring up recollections of many a furious conflict under the very shadow of the white heights of this perfidious island. There is the stout high-pooped merchantman at rest, after a voyage of five months from the East Indies, under the lee of the towering North Foreland. At regular intervals the sound of her bell floats down upon the light air, blowing so softly that the shadows of the clouds upon the hazy stretch of moonlit water seem to be at rest. And now creeping round the huge point of land, urged by her sweeps and her dark sails goose-winged or boomed out on either side, comes a fac-simile of that French smack we have watched leaving the harbour. She is alongside the slumbering ship in a trice, lights flash, pistols explode, and in a few minutes behold! the cable is cut, and the ship, with her sails loosed, is standing south-by-west for Boulogne or the forts that way, the sneaking lugger ahead of her, black as ink against the

silver splendour of the water in the south, and all hands keeping a breathless look-out for British cruisers.

But though there may be a deal of the poetry, or at least the romance, of history in the 278
suggestions to be got from the form and rig of the French smack, there goes to the making of her every-day life as many hard, stern facts as ever a Gradgrind could desire. She sees as much weather of all kinds as our own fishermen experience; and suffers, having regard to proportion of numbers, as many disasters. The shipping reports are constantly mentioning her. One day she is stranded, and her crew burning flares and owing their lives to the lifeboat. Another day she is found abandoned, and towed into harbour with nothing standing save three or four feet of her mainmast. Or else a steamer plumps into her and drowns the whole of her company but two. As bad a wreck as ever I heard was that of *La Reine des Agnes*. The story was told by Adolphe Derevières, one of the crew, and it is worth repeating as a sample of the various misfortunes which follow in the wake of the French smacksman. Adolphe's English was exceedingly good. He had learnt it, he told me, from intercourse with the English at Boulogne, and by constant visits and long detentions in harbour in this country.

"I sall hope," he began, "to make you comprehend. I most speak slow, for dere is no language more difficult nor de Angleesh. De boat vas vhat you call a dandy—not a loggaire: you know vhat dandy means, hein? her name vas *La Reine des Agnes*; she vas forty-five torns; and ven ve left ze Nort Sea ve had vhat de Angleesh fishermen call twenty-tree last of herring in barrels, and loose in de bottaum. De veddaire had been very bad in de Nort Sea—mosh rain, heavee wind, and roff vaves. Ve had von boat only, and von day we lose her. She vas dragging behind ven soddenly a vave make de rope go and she go too. Dere vas too mosh vind to stop, so ve continue sailing for Boulogne. Eighteen men did form our companee. It vas four o'clock on de morning of de tirteenth of 279
Septembre. Ve vas in a nasty part of de sea, off Yarmout, vid de Crosby and de Cross sands as we tink vell to de nor', and ve to de souse, so as to bring de Newvarp light on our righthand. I say, dis vas as ve suppose. It vas veree dark, still mosh vind, and heavee vaves. Ve vas sailing fast, ven soddenly de vessel stop. Many of us tumble and cry out. Dere vas noting to be seen. Dem as tumble got up, and ve all ran about. De confusion was terrib. Eighteen men, you see, sare, de ship small, and her deck full of de herring barrels. Ve first take de barrels and trow dem overboard; ve had to feel, ve could not see, and all de time de vessel keep bomp, bomp, making us fall. Dere vas no telling de place vere ve vas wrecked—one say dis, anoder say dat, and everybody keep crying out. Dat is de worst of us Franchmen, sare. You Angleesh in dangaire are quiet; ve are as brave as you, but ve make too mosh noise, dere is not de ordaire, each man tink he know best, and, besides, de sea is not our province like it is yours. Some got pieces of vhat you call oakum and dipped dem in oil and made fires, and de rest, knowing dere vas no boats, made a raft composed of two spar and a lot of barrels. It vas a fearful sight—de red flame, de vataire vashing over, de sea all black around. Vell, juste vhen de raft vas ready, de vessel left de sand and began to sink. Mon Dieu! dat vas a horrib moment. Ve got pieces of rope, and tied ourselves to de raft, and put it into de sea, and den de vessel sank. It vas fearfullee cold. Ve vent op and down, op and down, and I feel de sea trying to tear me avay. It vas like an animal vid its claws dragging. Ve vere all on de raft ven de daylight came. Oh sare, tink of dat sight! eighteen men clinging to de barrels. Few could 280
speak; ve vas all full of salt vataire, and I could not open my teeth—dey vas hard set vid de cold. De capitaine say it vas de Meedle Cross Sand de vessel strike. But it did not mattaire; she vas sunk: von sand vas as bad as anoder; and dere vas ve going op and down, op and down, noting in sight, no help coming—and all of us so seek, so veak, so miserable!

"Soon after it vas light a large vave came and covered us all; I did tink it had tore de raft to pieces; dere vas several dreadful cries, and vhen de vataire vas passed I look and see dat five of my comrades vas vashed avay. Sare, I envied dem. Oh, better to be drown,

to know noting, to feel noting, dan to be on dat terrib raft vaiting each von his turn, and looking at von's grave. Presentlee von of de men let go vid his hands, and de sea break his rope and vash him avay. Den anoder give op vid a fearful groan, and de sea take him too. Dis go on until five men vas perished, making ten, so dat dare vas only eight left. Ah, vhat a frightful time did follow! All day long ve did drift here and dere, here and dere upon dat raft. De land vas near—ve knew dat; dere vas Yarmout and dere vas Lowestoff vidin six mile, but had dey been Boulogne, had dey been Finisterre, dey could not have been farder off for us.

"Vell, sare, I do not know enough of your language to tell you all dat vas in my torts, de appearance of my companions, de cries and groans dat break from dem, de roff vaves, de cold, all de horrib pain and misery of dat incredib time. Vhen de evening came ve see a large steamboat. Ve all cry and cry to her vid our hands to our mouts, and she heard us, and came to vere ve vas. Oh, sare, vhat is dare in Angleesh, vhat is dare in Fransh, in any language dat is spoke by human creature, to express our joy ven de steamer lowered a boat, and ve did see it coming to us? I could have cried like a leetel girl, sare, but I vas too veak—all de tears vas vashed avay. Some of us tried to embrace de brave Angleeshmen dat saved us, but our legs at de joints gave vay—ve could not stan'. Vell, after ve had been in de steamboat a letell vile, a lifeboat come near, and dey told us dey had seen de flames ve made in de morning and gone to us, but dat ve had disappear, and dat dey had been looking and looking for us op to dis time! Ah, vhat a noble service—how estimable, how brave is de Angleesh lifeboat! Your countree, sare, has von a hundred battles on de ocean; but not von of dem for glory comes op to de solitary victoire of a lifeboat dat fights vid de terrib vaves and saves de poor sailor, no matter vedder he is Fransh, or Italian, or German. De steamer put us into de lifeboat, and ve vas taken to Yarmout, vere seven of us did go to de Sailors' Home. But one—poor François Libert—vas so ill dat he vas carried to de hospital."

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Having arrived at this point poor Adolphe burst into French, and, regardless of my assurance that my knowledge of that useful tongue was growing every month more and more imperfect, he rattled himself into a violent fit of emotion, praising the English, lamenting his comrades, grieving over his past sufferings in the dialect any man may hear who will take a turn through the fish market at Boulogne, or linger on the quay there when a fleet of smacks is coming into the harbour. I was truly sorry not to get his story in his own tongue. How could he do justice to his terrible shipwreck in any other language than his? All his gesticulations went for little alongside his "dats" and "deys," otherwise not a posture but would have helped the wild hoarse flow of recollection poured forth in French—the panic of the men rushing and stumbling upon the barrel-crowded deck; the horrible illumination of the oakum torches with the fires of the flaming paraffin oil streaming from them; the unspeakable anguish of the long twelve hours spent upon that raft, the land in sight, and the rough seas for ever trampling upon them. Is it because they go so heavily manned that disasters to French smacks rise to a height of tragedy that needs the loss of an English vessel of seven or eight hundred tons to parallel? Here was a vessel of forty-five tons furnished with a crew of eighteen souls. Why, a Blackwall liner would hardly need more seamen to work her, if, in calling over the muster-roll, you omit the "idlers." And another feature that often makes disasters to French smacks peculiarly dreadful is their fashion of taking a number of women to sea with them. I cannot say whether or not they carry the ladies with them into the North Sea, but seldom a French fishing boat puts into an English harbour but half a dozen women and girls may be seen among the crowd of red and blue nightcap-shaped headgear worn by the men. One really cannot be surprised at the old British notion that one Englishman is equal to six Frenchmen when one compares a large Ramsgate, Grimsby, or Yarmouth dandy of fifty or sixty tons going for a six weeks' cruise in the North Sea in winter manned by four or five men, with the lubbersome, apple-bowed, black-sided, heavily-timbered French three-masted lugger of forty tons, with her decks so crowded with fishermen and women that it

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seems impossible they can move without getting into one another's road. Meanwhile, it is to be hoped that the long conference held at the Hague, the correspondence relative to which makes a volume of alarming dimensions, may be accepted as a preliminary to something like a good understanding subsisting among the smacks of various nationalities which drag their nets in the North Sea. Unquestionably the English fisherman has had a very great deal to complain of in the rough and cowardly treatment he has experienced at the hands of French, Dutch, and Belgian smacksmen. It is not only that his costly fishing gear has been irreparably ruined again and again by that mean and treacherous contrivance known as "the devil;" he has even been fired into, and his temper taxed so repeatedly by the basest professional treatment and the most studied insults, that the time was when those interested in the English fishermen expected day after day to hear of desperate battles at sea—small Trafalgars, Niles, and Copenhagens—between the fleets of Yarmouth, Grimsby, and the North and the allied squadrons of Belgium, France, and Holland.

OLD SEA CUSTOMS.

The changes which have taken place in the sea-life cannot be wholly restricted to the transformations of the shipbuilding yard. There is a mighty difference indeed between the line-of-battle ship of fifty years ago and the armour-clad of to-day—between the Atlantic passenger clippers of which Fenimore Cooper wrote and the iron mail steamers which have succeeded them; but there are changes in other maritime directions fully as remarkable, though perhaps not so deeply accentuated to the shore gaze. Where are the old customs of the ocean? Whither has fled the traditionary character of the sailor? His canvas remains. He still has his topsails (albeit halved) to hoist, his topgallant sails to sheet home, his royals to set; spite of steam, there are still scores of the old-fashioned windlasses for him to bawl his hurricane songs over; still scores of the old-fashioned capstans for him to wind round, "drunk, monotonous, and melodious," davits at which he may cat his anchor, as did his forefathers, forecastles as clammy as the most reeking of the holes in which the Jacks of other days lay snoring, with purple faces, in clouds of cockroaches.

But, for all that, it will not do to pretend that the sailor is what he was. I do not speak of the caricatures of the fictionist; the monstrous pig-tailed figures with lanthorn jaws, broken teeth, wooden legs, and bloodshot eyes, the race of Hatchways, Trunnions, and Pipses, who stagger, full of drink and oaths, in clamorous procession through the pages of the sea novelists, losing, to be sure, something of their inexpressible garnishings as they enter the truer oceanic atmosphere of the Coopers and the Marryats of the present century. I refer simply to the old sailor, to the plain man-o'-warsman and merchantman of bygone years, not to the Frankenstein in flowing breeches and hat on nine hairs who trod the stage and procured his circulation in one, two, and three volumes, in the respectable name of Jack, prior even to the days when Sir Launcelot Greaves found the irresponsible anatomy willing to ship

"The broad habergeon,
Vant brace and greves and gauntlet."

Let me be understood. The British or American mariner of to-day is as hearty, nimble, dexterous, determined a fellow as ever he was at any time during the choicest and most glorious period of his nation's history. He needs but opportunity to test him. It is in his traditions, habits, superstitions, that he differs from his predecessors. I do not think it is the iron of his latter-day calling that has entered his soul and changed him. The very distinguishable difference is owing to a natural decay of marine sentiment. He is no longer superstitious—possibly because he is not without a tincture of education. Hard wear has attenuated his prejudices, and custom has lost its hold upon him. It would be difficult now, I should think, to find in any forecastle such a superstitious sea-dog as the old salt who, in Dana's "Two Years Before the Mast," agreed with the black cook as to the malignant and wizard qualities of the Finns. Familiarity with the grand liquid amphitheatre into which he descends and toils for his bread may have helped to rob the modern sailor of what I must call the romantic features of the seaman's nature. In olden times the voyage was long, the art of navigation crude and halting; the wonders of the deep were many, at least they were found so; a man passed so long a while at sea that he was saturated with the spirit of it. Superstitions salt as the billow from which they were wrought begot peculiar forms of thought; customs grew out of the strange fancies and

interpretations, and that they should now be dead means simply that they flourished for centuries, and that they died very hard at last.

How wide the difference is between the shipboard life of the mariners of the past and that of the present race of seamen may be collected by looking into a few of the customs which are now as extinct as the timbers of Noah's ark. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was a practice on board Italian and Spanish, and possibly Portuguese ships, for the sailors on crossing the equator to erect a canopy on the forecastle, under which three seamen, absurdly dressed, seated themselves. One was called the president, the others judges. They started first with trying the captain, then the officers, finally the passengers. A sailor, dressed up as a clerk, read the indictments, after which the judges pronounced sentence of death. Careri, in his "Voyage Round the World," explains the purpose of this tomfoolery. "The sentence of death," says he, "was immediately bought off with money, chocolate, sugar, biscuit, flesh, sweetmeats, wine, and the like. The best of it was that he who did not pay immediately, or give good security, was laid on with a rope's end, at the least sign given by the President Tarpaulin." Apparently heavier punishments than rope's-ending attended the poverty or contumacy of the convicted, for 287
the same author tells of a passenger who was drowned on board a galleon through being keel-hauled for refusing to conform to this singular marine custom. The sport—if sport it can be called—lasted all day, and then at sundown the fines or forfeits were divided among the sailors.

It is possible that out of this old sea-joke rose the stupid and irritating practice of ducking men on their crossing the equator for the first time. This imbecile piece of horse-play was wonderfully popular among seamen down to quite recent days. I don't think Jack ever saw much humour himself in the mere dressing up as Neptune and acting Jack Pudding in the waist; what he relished was the privilege, by prescription, of lording it over the captain and officers for a few hours, and tarring and soaking people to whom at other times he would have to pull his forelock, with the whole length of the ship between him and their nobility.

Another curious custom was to be found on board Dutch vessels. When a ship entered the 39th parallel "every one," writes John Nieuhoff (1640), "of what quality or degree soever, that has not passed there before, is obliged to be baptized or redeem himself from it. He that is to be baptized has a rope tied round his middle, wherewith he is drawn up to the very top of the bowsprit, and from thence three times successively tumbled into the water." A man was at liberty to get another to take his place by paying him. Plenty of money and other good things must have been earned by sailors out of this custom, for one may conceive that a nervous passenger would pay handsomely to escape so formidable a ducking as the tall bowsprits of those days promised, whilst, on the other hand, a seasoned mariner would look upon such sousings as mere child's play—think no 288
more of it than a man in a regatta now thinks of walking out upon a greasy boom to loose the pig in the sack at the end of it. The practice, however, eventually led to such riots, broils, and bloodshed, that it was forbidden by the Dutch Government.

It was long continued, however, in the British navy as a punishment. In the "Annual Register" for 1797 there is an account of four naval officers who were soused by a mutinous crew on board his Britannic Majesty's ship *Sandwich*. The writer calls it a "curious ceremony." The unhappy naval officers must have thought it so! "They tie the unfortunate victim's feet together, and their hands together, and put their bed at their back, making it fast round them, at the same time adding an eighteen-pounder bar-shot to bring them down. They afterwards made them fast to a tackle suspended from the yard-arm, and hoisting them nearly up to the block all at once let go, and drop them souse into the sea, where they remain a minute, and then are again hoisted and let down alternately, till there are scarce any signs of life remaining." When the miserable victims are ducked enough—according to the fancy of their judges—they are triced up by the heels that the

water may run out of them, and then stowed away in their hammocks. This kindness was denied to the four naval officers, who, after having hung head down for some time, were tumbled into a boat and sent ashore.

The Portuguese had a custom of their own on crossing the Line. It was curiously tinctured with the superstitions of that age. Those on board who had never "cut the Equator," were compelled to give the sailors money, or provisions, or wine. No one was excused, "not even the Capuchins," says the missionary Angelo of Gattina, writing in 1666, "of whom they take beads, *agnus Deis*, or such-like things; which being exposed to sale, what they yield is given to say masses for the souls in Purgatory." If any one declined to give he was carried before a forecastle tribunal by sailors habited as officers. A seaman dressed as a judge, in a long gown, passed sentence, and the victim was straightway hoisted to the yard-arm and ducked. This custom was not confined to the Equator. "The same," says Angelo, "is practised in passing the Straits of Gibraltar and the Cape of Good Hope."

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The Italian fashion was somewhat similar. Sailors apparelled as judges sat at a table, and those who had never before crossed the Line were brought before them. The judges reproached them contemptuously for daring to live so long in the world without passing the Equator, and fined them according to their condition. Ducking followed refusal to pay. Merolla, in his "Voyage to Congo" (1682), says: "From this punishment or a fine none are exempt, and it is said that with the latter they maintain a church." A livelier, and certainly a less cruel custom, I find in Spanish ships, in the form of a bull-fight. This was contrived by a man dressing himself up so as to resemble a bull. He took care to equip himself with an ugly pair of horns. Another fellow, mounted upon two men, attacked the bull with a spear. The humour lay in the two men who formed the horse being tied back to back with a saddle between them, on which sat the rider. The bull, it may be supposed, usually had the best of it. I am reminded here of a stroke of original humour on the part of some midshipmen. It is illustrative of the reefer's theory of wit. They got some hencoops and formed them into a cockpit, and, making a circle by coiling ropes, they pitted a couple of cocks. The cocks did their best to fight, but they staggered so oddly that they could scarce strike each other. It was at last admitted that they had been fed with barley soaked in rum. The midshipmen supposed that the spirit would fortify the hearts of the birds, but they had over-dosed them, and the creatures were too drunk to fight.

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Drinking is a sea custom not yet dead—at least, if it is dead the fault is not Jack's. But, even though the economical principles of owners had suffered perpetuation of the practice on shipboard, I question whether the most bibulous of the present race of sailors could carry it to the height to which it was formerly raised. I suppose the very biggest drink on record is that related by Dampier. He says that there came on board his ship one Captain Rawlins, the commander of a small New England vessel, along with a Mr. John Hooker. They were asked into the cabin to drink, and a bowl was made containing six quarts, "Mr. Hooker being drunk to by Captain Rawlins, who pledged Captain Hudswell, and, having the bowl in his hand, said that he was under an oath to drink but three draughts of strong liquor a day, and putting the bowl to his head turned it off at one draught, and so making himself drunk, disappointed us of our expectations till we made another bowl." Six quarts at a draught! Twelve pints at a swallow, without a sigh between! But then hard drinking was the custom, not of the privateers only, but of the whole seafaring races of early times. They were educated to it by liberal doses of grog. The allowance sometimes rose to a pint of rum per man a day. In the French, Spanish, and Portuguese ships, and very often in the Dutch, the sailors' courage before an action was nearly invariably helped with jacks of brandy, and the doses were repeated whilst the fight proceeded, a bumper being handed between the guns. The men, frenzied by drink, would mix gunpowder with the spirits, supposing that, thus prepared, there was no better liquor for heroes. I think it need not be doubted that more actions were lost than gained by this custom. How should a drunken gunner aim his piece? and what mischief—save to

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one another—could a mob of inebriated small-arms men do in the tops or along the quarter-deck?

But if privateersmen could be found able to swallow six quarts at a draught, they had customs besides that of drinking which must have tended to render them desperately hard and seasoned men. It was their practice to keep their ships clear, so that the deck was the only bed they had to lie upon. No hammocks were allowed, no chairs or tables; they took their meals upon the deck and lay upon it; preserving, in this direction, the old tradition of the buccaneers, who denied themselves every imaginable comfort and convenience that they might never be mistaken for anything else than the savage beasts they were.

It is in the superstitions of the sea that we must search for the beginning and history of many of the customs which, in modified forms, lingered down to the period of a late generation of seafarers. They veined the life with elements both of humour and romance, and I do not scruple to say that much of the poetry of the profession of the sea has perished with the extinction of the simple forecastle credulities of other ages. In the beginning of European navigation, in the times of Diaz, Cabot, Columbus,[80] De Gama, and earlier yet, the mariner was a Roman Catholic, devout, profoundly superstitious, 292
perpetually invoking the protection of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints of Heaven, finding miracles in the common operations of Nature, peopling the deep with wondrous monsters, glorifying its blue breast with the gleam and colour of the enchanted island, gazing awe-struck about him as he sailed along, and willing to believe anything he was told. I could give you no better illustration of this than the remark of the Jesuit Anthony Sepp, in his account of a voyage from Spain to Paraguaná: “Towards the evening,” says he, “we saw an entire rainbow quite across the sky, resembling our rainbows.” *Resembling our rainbows!* As though the worthy father supposed that rainbows in those unfamiliar seas were very different from the same radiant arches which span the showers of Italy, Spain, and Germany! They were prepared for all sorts of wonders, and their imaginations created what their eyes could not see. The lightning was not that of Europe; the thunder was the reverberation of some hellish conflict between armies formed of fiends of Satanic stature; the very rain was unnatural, being coloured. Religion, or superstition if you will, interposed to mitigate the horrors of a perfervid fancy, wrought familiar appearances into celestial expressions, and instructed poor Jack to calm his perturbed soul, to quell the tempest, to exorcise the mermaid, to smooth the waters, to 293
disperse the horrid shadows of the electric storm with litanies, effigies of saints, and spells of many different sorts. Thus Pirard de Laval (in “Churchill’s Collection of Voyages,” Vol. i. p. 702) says, “We frequently saw great whirlwinds rising at a distance, called by the seamen *dragons*, which shatter and overturn any ship that falls in their way. When these appear the sailors have a superstitious custom of repairing to the prow, or the side that lies next the storm, and beating naked swords against one another crosswise.” This custom long prevailed. Scores of similar practices may be traced to the primitive superstitions of sailors. They unquestionably colour the old marine life, and their extinction leaves the calling uncomfortably bald, I think. The stars in those aged stories seem to glow the richer for the incense floating up to them from the little altar on the forecastle, and for the tender strains of a hundred voices rising in some solemn, melodious canticle. The glory of the setting sun makes cloth of gold of the sails of those castellated fabrics, and they look to float over faery seas of purple as we view them through that atmosphere of superstition, in the midst of which those young and awe-struck imaginations made their miraculous voyages to the Indies and to the mighty shores of Columbia.

80. Washington Irving gives several instances of Columbus’ superstitious nature. As an example: “Seeing all human skill baffled and confounded, Columbus endeavoured to propitiate heaven by solemn vows and acts of penance. By his orders, a number of beans, equal to the number of persons on board, were put into a cap, on one of which was the sign of the cross. Each of the crew made a vow that, should he draw forth the marked bean, he would make a pilgrimage to the shrine

of Santa Maria de Guadalupe, bearing a wax taper of five pounds' weight. The admiral was the first to put in his hand, and the lot fell upon him. From that moment he considered himself a pilgrim bound to perform the vow." Other vows were made and solemn promises fervently addressed to heaven; but the storm continued to rage, and eventually the saints were quitted for seamanship and the ship saved.

WHO IS VANDERDECKEN?

A scientific American gentleman has been endeavouring to determine the paternity of the grisly and spectral commander of the *Flying Dutchman*. I wish he had been successful, for ever since I read the "Cruise of the *Bacchante*" I have been bewildering my brains with the same problem. The princely word of the Royal midshipmen must be taken, and it is plainly stated that at four o'clock a.m. on July 11, 1881, "the *Flying Dutchman* crossed our bows." Nothing can be clearer than that; and, besides, there is the additional testimony of the reverend gentleman who accompanied the Princes and edited their interesting observations. "A strange red light as of a phantom ship all aglow, in the midst of which light the masts, spars, and sails of a brig two hundred yards distant stood out in strong relief as she came up." This appearance is in strict correspondence with the tradition, but I wish the vessel had not been a brig. I should not like to put my hand to it that such a rig as that of the brig was known in Vanderdecken's days.[81] You had four-masted craft in plenty, the fourth mast being called the bonaventure; also abundance of three-masted vessels, the third mast rigged with a lateen sail; but no fabric answering to what we term a brig.

81. There was a kind of vessel called *brigandines*, but they carried the rig of neither the brig nor the brigantine as we understand the term.

That Vanderdecken ever shifts his flag is not to be supposed. Yet there could be no mistake, for mark what follows: "Thirteen persons altogether saw her, but whether it was *Van Dieman* or the *Flying Dutchman*, or who else, must remain unknown." The ships in company flashed to know if the people of the *Bacchante* had seen the strange red light, so that probably no "shadowy being" was ever testified to by a greater number of eyewitnesses. But the thing is placed beyond dispute by what followed. "At 10.45 a.m. the ordinary seaman who had this morning reported the *Flying Dutchman* fell from the fore-topmast-crosstrees, and was smashed to atoms." And then, "at the next port we came to the admiral was also smitten down." There was nothing less to expect, but indeed a very great deal more. An old sailor to whom I related this story said that certainly the appearance looked uncommonly like the *Flying Dutchman*, and for his part he was willing enough to believe it was; if he had a misgiving, it lay in the smallness of the trouble that followed. "The fallin' of a young seaman from the masthead and the sarcumstance of a hadmiral being took wuss wasn't consequences sufficient if that there wessel wur the genuine Phantom. The *Baykant* (so he called her) herself oughter ha' got lost. That's what would have happened when I was fust goin' to sea; but there's bin a good many changes since then, and who's agoin' to say that that there curse ain't growed weak like physic wot's kept too long?"

But, be this as it may, there can be no doubt that Vanderdecken is still afloat, cruising about in a ship that glows at night, and whose rotten timbers are charged with the villainous quality of causing disaster and misery to vessels within the sphere of the horizon the ancient Batavian floats in.

This is a scientific age, and it is really time that we found out who this Dutchman is or was. Is there no man clever enough to devise a specific for the neutralization of the evil influence of an endevilled structure? Let such a medicine be discovered, and I'll warrant no lack of able-bodied Jacks willing to embark in quest of the spectral pest. It would be a venture worth starting a company to undertake. "This company is intended to supply a want that has long been felt." The object would be twofold: first, to render Britannia's dominion of the sea more comfortable than it can be whilst Vanderdecken is suffered to

sail aimlessly about with a freight of curses in his hold, and Death keeping a look-out at the masthead; and, secondly, to supply the public with an attraction. Well, it will be admitted that the *Flying Dutchman* would prove a lucrative "draw." Think of her moored just below London Bridge, and the charge a shilling a-head to view her, small boys half-price! We may take it that Vanderdecken is heartily sick of his hard-up and hard-down life off Agulhas, and would gladly settle down to an immortality of still water (and Hollands), without expecting an apology for the quality of the air of the Pool and the Isle of Dogs.

I think I see the ship in my mind's eye; a true portrait of a craft of the seventeenth century—great round barricadoed tops, pink-sterned and crowned there with a poop-royal, of a faded yellow, a green-coated swivel or two aft, and a few rusty cannon lodged in wooden beds on her main deck. And what would a chat with Vanderdecken be worth, over a steaming bowl of punch, in his darksome cabin? Rip Van Winkle would be a mere youth—equal to a hornpipe or a waltz—alongside this Dutch skipper; and what yarns could he spin of the Amsterdam of his day, of old Schouten over at Hoorn, of Van this and Van that, of the Dutch Admirals, of the fights in the narrow seas, of their High Mightinesses' opinion of Cromwell, and of the hydropathic treatment of the English at Amboyna! 297

Who is he? Marryat tells us that he was a sea captain, whose wife lived with her son Philip on the outskirts of the small but fortified town of Terneuse, situated on the right bank of the Scheldt. But he starts as a spectre, and remains undeterminable down to the last chapter, when he, along with his ship and his son, falls to pieces weeping tears of joy. I love the yarn, but doubt the man. If Marryat is right Vanderdecken is dead and gone. His curse endured long enough only to enable his son to become an old man—call it fifty years—for Philip was twenty or thereabouts when his father's ghost flew through the window. Now, we know only too well that Vanderdecken is still alive. Besides taking a strictly nautical view of the question, I am disposed to question the accuracy of the novelist on such grounds for example, as these: he represents the *Flying Dutchman* sailing along with royals and flying jib, when this canvas, as Marryat paints it, was not in use until the close of the last century;[82] also he depicts her as at one time being so extremely ethereal as to be able to sail through a ship, as though the phantom was formed of mist and snow, and at another time as being substantial enough to support the highly material form of Philip when he stands upon her deck with his father.

82. I do not find the "royal" in use much before Howe's and Jervis's time. The "flying gyb" of the beginning of the eighteenth century (at which date it first appears), was not the sail it now is.

Literature abounds in spectral ships; but there is only one Vanderdecken. And how consistently the old Dutchman fits in with the roughness and wildness of typical sea-fancies, one quickly sees when he is matched in his unearthly integrity with the refined but entirely faithless interpretations or reconstructions of the legend by the poet or the romancer. Take, for instance, Thomas Campbell's "Spectre Boat," where a certain "false Ferdinand," having broken a maiden's heart, is visited by her ghost at sea. 298

"'Twas now the dead watch of the night, the helm was lashed a lee,
And the ship rode where Mount Etna lights the deep Levantine sea;
When beneath its glare a boat came, row'd by a woman in her shroud,
Who, with eyes that made our blood run cold, stood up and spoke aloud."

What the wraith said was to this effect: That Ferdinand was a false traitor, for whom his sweetheart's ghost wanders unforgiven, and that he was to come down—in other words jump overboard—to appease her indignation for his having forced her to break her peace with heaven. As in the case of Coleridge's Mariner, the spectre has her will; and the last we hear of her and Ferdinand and the boat is—

"And round they went, and down they went, as the cock crew from the land."

How poor is all this superfine business of broken vows and revengeful spectres, side by side with the rugged, schnapps'-smelling figure of old Vanderdecken viewing the horny moon with a curse in his eye, or stumping the weather side of his castellated poop with a speaking-trumpet under his arm! Campbell has also put into swinging, melodious verse an old Scandinavian legend, which he calls the "Death-boat of Heligoland." In this poem he represents a boat furiously rowed by ghosts, whose shrouds were like plaids flying loose to the storm. The watchman sings out to know who they are; and is answered — 299

> "'We are dead; we are bound from our graves in the West,
> First to Hecla and then to'— —unmeet was the rest
> For man's ear,"

says Campbell.

All this is not Vanderdecken, but the poet finely refers to the old Dutchman when he sings of those curses which make horror more deep by the semblance of mirth, and which at "mid-sea appal the chill'd mariner's glance." Coleridge also sends a spectral ship to his Ancient Mariner in the vessel that approaches him without a breeze or without a tide, and whose sails glance in the sun, "like restless gossamers." But, instead of Vanderdecken, we have Death playing at dice with a woman. How heartily the Ancient Mariner must have prayed that the woman would win! Certainly he could be no true sailor who would not so pray.

This gambling fancy may be found in old German legends relating to the death-ship. There is no lack of stories referring to miscreants of all shades who sail about in phantom-ships in company with Satan, who plays day and night with them for their souls. But, as though the artless yarn of Vanderdecken—simple in its elements as a tale by Defoe, and exquisitely in keeping with the stormy seas of that part of the world to which Jack has strictly confined it—were not strong and good enough, a number of monstrous perversions have been launched, and the tradition buried under a hill of absurdities. For example, there is the German notion of a ship whose portholes grin with skulls instead of cannons; she is commanded by a skeleton who holds an hour-glass, and she is manned by the ghosts of sinners. But even here the inventor is unable to manage without our old 300
friend Vanderdecken, and so he affirms that any ship that encounters this horrid craft is doomed. Another version represents the *Flying Dutchman* as being very nearly as big as the world. The masts are so lofty that when a boy goes up to furl a sail years elapse before he is again seen, and he then comes down an old, white-bearded man. The germ of this may perhaps be found in that wondrous fabric of which Sir Thomas Browne writes: "It had been a sight only second unto the Ark to have beheld the great *Syracusia*, or mighty ship of Hiero, described in Athenæus; and some have thought it a very large one, wherein were to be found ten stables for horses, eight towers, besides fish-ponds, gardens, tricliniums, and many fair rooms paved with agath and precious stones." The enormous phantom ship takes seven years in tacking, whales tumble aboard of her when she rolls just as flying-fish dart into the portholes or channels of earthly vessels; her smallest sail is as big as Europe, and there is a public house, a "free-and-easy," in every block.

One has to search elsewhere for Vanderdecken. That he was a Dutchman and that the story is Dutch ought to be presumed from the round, plain, bald, and salt character of the yarn. It is a thorough Dutch-cheese of a story. Spain may supply versions charged with spiritual elements and suggesting the Inquisition with the embellishments of silver flames and death's heads; the French may make a purgatorial job of the fancy and ruin it by an

importation of priestly conceptions widely remote from the sea inspirations; German imaginations may garnish it with unnecessary horrors; but it is in the Holland version that we find the true ocean tincture, and the only narrative likely to be accepted by such complete sea-dogs as fill the Dutch, the English, and the American forecastles. 301

Yet, who was Vanderdecken? An American writer, founding his presumption on a German publication, says that the master of the Phantom Ship was one Bernard Fokke, who lived in the seventeenth century. He was noted for his recklessness and daring, and cased his masts with iron to enable him to carry canvas. Having contrived to sail to the East Indies in ninety days, he was looked upon as a sorcerer. At last he and his ship disappeared, and everybody said he had been carried off by the Devil and forced to confine his navigation to the ocean between the two Southern Capes. Of his crew none remain but the boatswain, cook, and pilot. “He is still to be seen, and always hails ships and asks questions; but they should not be answered—and then his ship will disappear. Sometimes a boat is seen to approach his bark, but when it reaches her all vanish suddenly.” Others say he was a nobleman named Falkenberg, who murdered his brother and his wife and was condemned eternally to sail about the North Sea. On his arrival at the sea-shore he found a boat with a man in it awaiting him. The man said in Latin, “I have been expecting thee.” On which, accompanied by the ghosts of his murdered brother and wife, Falkenberg embarked, and was rowed over to a Phantom Ship that lay off the coast. This vessel is described as painted grey, with coloured sails, and a pale flag. She has no crew, and may be known at night by flames which issue from her masthead.

But all this will not do. Vanderdecken is no nobleman. There was a time when I was disposed to regard him as the Wandering Jew, who, having grown sick of marching about the world, had taken ship for a cruise that, though it lasted several centuries, would be short in comparison with the time his grand tour would occupy. The idea possessed me on hearing of a book entitled “News from Holland,” in High Dutch, printed at Amsterdam in 1647, in which is unfolded the story of two contemporaries of Pontius Pilate, one a Jew, the other a Gentile, both then alive. But it is not to be supposed that the Wandering Jew, whose name was Cartaphilus, and who was keeper of the Judgment Hall in Jerusalem, would voluntarily accept an obligation so naturally obnoxious to the hydrophobic soul of the Asiatic as must be involved in many centuries of trying to get to windward of the Cape. Yet if he be not the Wandering Jew, or Falkenberg, or Fokke, or Klaboteeman, whose ship, according to Longfellow, is called the *Carmilhan*, or Captain Requiem, of the *Libera Nos*, or Washington Irving’s Ramhout van Dam, who *is* Vanderdecken? 302

THE END.

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- Transcriber's Notes:
  - Missing or obscured punctuation was silently corrected.
  - Typographical errors were silently corrected.
  - Inconsistent spelling and hyphenation were made consistent only when a predominant form was found in this book.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A BOOK FOR THE HAMMOCK ***

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