

AN OLD SAILOR'S YARNS.¹

One of the best-known figures on "Newspaper Row" in this city is that of Captain Coffin, general reporter of ships and yachting news for the "World" newspaper. Sprung from one of the famous sailor families of Nantucket, he went early to sea, as a matter of course, and in due time reached that summit of every eastern coast boy's ambition—the quarter deck of a sailing ship. Steam and the decline of the merchant marine caused him to turn his attention to literature, and a few years ago a series of tales under the above title began in the "World," and soon attracted the attention of all lovers of sea literature. There was about them a certain salt and tarry flavor that is rarely found in a sea story, simply because few genuine sailors possess the literary instinct, and because literary men are rarely good sailors. Captain Coffin happily combines both qualifications, and his stories are told just as an old "packetarian" might tell them. The fifteen "yarns" included in the present volume are, in general, judiciously selected, though we miss several which might well have been included in the list. If the public, however, appreciates as it ought this first installment, there remains an abundant store from which to make other equally entertaining selections, and the publisher will no doubt be ready to meet any reasonable demands. The author occasionally makes characteristic digressions into the purely technical realm of seamanship, as, for instance, when he tells how to close-reef a main topsail when running before a gale. Of course such directions are interesting only to people who know "tacks" and "sheets" from "buntlines" and "braces," but there is a certain quaint forecastle phraseology which has a fascination of its own; and, in any event, as the technical paragraphs are short, it is easy for any one to skip them if so minded. Should any more of these tales be published, we trust that the experiences of the Captain who took his "old woman" to sea with him will not be omitted.

BOOKS OF THE WEEK.

Scribner & Welford (London and New York) send us A. R. Colquhoun's *Among the Shans*, an interesting book of travel, from which extracts are to be found on another page; *Paying the Ransom*, by Dr. James Beatty; and *The Question of Questions, Is Christ Indeed the Saviour of the World?*

¹ *An Old Sailor's Yarns*. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls. "Standard Library.")

by the Rev. Thomas Allin.—From Lee & Shepard (Boston) we have received Dr. B. F. Tift's *Evolution and Christianity; or, an Answer to the Development Infidelity of Modern Times*; and Dr. A. F. Baisdell's *Our Bodies; or, How We Live*, an elementary text-book on physiology and hygiene.—White, Stokes & Allen (New York) have added to their handsome reprints the *Poems of Præd*, a complete revised edition; *Fifty Salads*, by Thomas J. Murray, is a dainty little book, which presents a vast amount of information on one of the most interesting subjects in the culinary line; *Birthday Flowers* is the latest addition to the very attractive series of floral books issued by these publishers, and contains poems by prominent authors arranged and illustrated by Susie B. Skelding.—*The People's Bible* (London: Richard Clarke) is the first volume of a "pastor's commentary" on vital portions of the Bible, by the Rev. Joseph Parker, D.D.
