

A·SACK·OF
SHAKINGS



FRANK·T &
& BULLEN

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A Sack of Shakings

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A Sack of Shakings

By

Frank T. Bullen, F.R.G.S.

Author of

“The Cruise of the Cachalot,” “With Christ at Sea,”

“The Men of the Merchant Service,” etc.

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Preface

Most of the Essays brought together in the present volume have been published in the *Spectator*, and are here reproduced by the kind permission of the proprietors of that journal, for which I offer them my hearty thanks. It may perhaps not be out of place to mention, for the benefit of any who may wish to know why these Articles have been published in book form, that the action has been taken in deference to the wishes of a very large number of friends who, having read the sketches in the *Spectator*, desired to have them collected in a permanent and handy shape.

Contents

	PAGE
The Orphan	<u>1</u>
A Porpoise Myth	<u>21</u>
Cats on Board Ship	<u>28</u>
The Old East Indiaman	<u>38</u>
The Floor of the Sea	<u>45</u>
Shakespeare and the Sea	<u>52</u>
The Skipper of the “Amulet”	<u>60</u>
Among the Enchanted Isles	<u>71</u>
Sociable Fish	<u>79</u>
Alligators and Mahogany	<u>101</u>
Country Life on Board Ship	<u>110</u>
“The Way of a Ship”	<u>169</u>
Sea Etiquette	<u>184</u>
Waves	<u>191</u>
A Battleship of To-day	<u>199</u>
Nat’s Monkey	<u>206</u>
Big Game at Sea	<u>218</u>
A Sea Change	<u>230</u>
Last Voyage of the “Sarah Jane”	<u>242</u>
Sea-Superstitions	<u>254</u>
Ocean Winds	<u>260</u>
The Sea in the New Testament	<u>268</u>
The Polity of a Battleship	<u>276</u>
The Privacy of the Sea	<u>284</u>
The Voices of the Sea	<u>292</u>
The Calling of Captain Ramirez	<u>302</u>
Marathon of the Seals	<u>313</u>
Ocean Currents	<u>319</u>
The Undying Romance of the Sea	<u>327</u>

Sailors' Pets	<u>334</u>
The Survivors	<u>341</u>
Beneath the Surface	<u>351</u>
By Way of Amends	<u>361</u>
The Mystery of the "Solander"	<u>371</u>
Our Amphibious Army	<u>381</u>

THE ORPHAN

Shining serenely as some immeasurable mirror beneath the smiling face of heaven, the solitary ocean lay in unrippled silence. It was in those placid latitudes south of the line in the Pacific, where weeks, aye months, often pass without the marginless blue level being ruffled by any wandering keel. Here, in almost perfect security from molestation by man, the innumerable denizens of the deep pursue their never-ending warfare, doubtless enjoying to the full the brimming cup of life, without a weary moment, and with no dreary anticipations of an unwanted old age.

Now it fell on a day that the calm surface of that bright sea was broken by the sudden upheaval of a compact troop of sperm whales from the inscrutable depths wherein they had been roaming and recruiting their gigantic energies upon the abundant molluscs, hideous of mien and insatiable of maw, that, like creations of a diseased mind, lurked far below the sunshine. The school consisted of seven cows and one mighty bull, who was unique in appearance, for instead of being in colour the unrelieved sepia common to his kind he was curiously mottled with creamy white, making the immense oblong cube of his head look like a weather-worn monolith of Siena marble. Easeful as any Arabian khalif, he lolled supine upon the glittering folds of his couch, the welcoming wavelets caressing his vast form with gentlest touch, and murmuring softly as by their united efforts they rocked him in rhythm with their melodic lullaby. Around him glided his faithful harem—gentle timid creatures, no one of them a third of their lord's huge bulk, but still majestic in their proportions, being each some forty-five feet in length by thirty in girth. Unquestionably the monarch of the flood, their great chief accepted in complacent dignity their unremitting attentions, nor did their playful gambols stir him in the least from his attitude of complete repose.

But while the busy seven were thus disporting themselves in happy security there suddenly appeared among them a delightful companion in the shape of a newly-born calf, elegantly dappled like his sire, the first-born son of the youngest mother in the group. It is not the habit of the cachalot to show that intense self-effacing devotion to its young which is evinced by other mammals, especially whales of the mysticetæ. Nevertheless, as the expectation of this latest

addition to the family had been the reason of their visit to these quiet latitudes, his coming made a pleasant little ripple of satisfaction vibrate throughout the group. Even the apparently impenetrable stolidity of the head of the school was aroused into some faint tokens of interest in the new-comer, who clung leech-like to his mother's side, vigorously draining the enormous convexity of her bosom of its bounteous flood of milk. So well did he thrive, that at the end of a week the youngster was able to hold his own with the school in a race, and competent also to remain under water quite as long as his mother. Then the stately leader signified to his dependants that the time was now at hand when they must change their pleasant quarters. Food was less plentiful than it had been, which was but natural, remembering the ravages necessarily made by such a company of monsters. Moreover, a life of continual ease and slothful luxury such as of late had been theirs was not only favourable to the growth of a hampering investiture of parasites—barnacles, limpets, and weed—all over their bodies, but it completely unfitted them for the stern struggle awaiting them, when in their periodical progress round the world they should arrive on the borders of the fierce Antarctic Zone. And besides all these, had they forgotten that they were liable to meet with man! A sympathetic shudder ran through every member of the school at that dreaded name, under the influence of which they all drew closer around their chief, sweeping their broad flukes restlessly from side to side and breathing inaudibly.

The outcome of the conference, decided, as human meetings of the kind are apt to be, by the commanding influence of one master will, was that on the next day they would depart for the south by easy stages through the teeming “off-shore” waters of South America. All through that quiet night the mighty creatures lay almost motionless on the surface, each the opaque centre of a halo of dazzling emerald light, an occasional drowsy spout from their capacious lungs sliding through the primeval stillness like the sigh of some weary Titan. When at last the steel-blue dome above, with its myriad diamond spangles, began to throb and glow with tremulous waves of lovely vari-coloured light flowing before the conquering squadrons of the sun, the whole troop, in open order about their guide, turned their heads steadfastly to the south-west, steering an absolutely undeviating course for their destination by their innate sense of direction alone. Up sprang the flaming sun, a vast globe of fervent fire that even at the horizon's edge seemed to glow with meridian strength. And right in the centre of his blazing disc appeared three tiny lines, recognisable even at that distance by the human eye as the masts of a ship whose hull was as yet below the apparent meeting-place of sea and sky. This apparition lay fairly in the path of the

advancing whales, who, unhappily for them, possessed but feeble vision, and that only at its best straight behind them. So on they went in leisurely fashion, occasionally pausing for a dignified descent in search of food, followed by an equally stately reappearance and resumption of their journey. Nearer and nearer they drew to the fatal area wherein they would become visible to the keen-eyed watchers at the mast-head of that lonely ship, still in perfect ignorance of any possible danger being at hand. Suddenly that mysterious sense owned by them, which is more than hearing, gave warning of approaching peril. All lay still, though quivering through every sinew of their huge bodies with the apprehension of unknown enemies, their heads half raised from the sparkling sea-surface and their fins and flukes testing the vibrations of the mobile element like the diaphragm of a phonograph. Even the youngling clung to his mother's side as if glued thereto under the influence of a terror that, while it effectually stilled his sportiveness, gave him no hint of what was coming. At the instance of the Head all sank silently and stone-like without any of those preliminary tail-flourishings and arching of the back that always distinguish the unworried whale from one that has received alarming news in the curious manner already spoken of. They remained below so long and went to so great a depth, that all except the huge leader were quite exhausted when they returned again to the necessary air, not only from privation of breath, but from the incalculable pressure of the superincumbent sea. So for a brief space they lay almost motionless, the valves of their spiracles deeply depressed as they drew in great volumes of revivifying breath, and their great frames limply yielding to the heave of the gliding swell. They had scarcely recovered their normal energy when into their midst rushed the destroyers, bringing with them the realisation of all those paralysing fears. First to be attacked was the noble bull, and once the first bewildering shock and smart had passed he gallantly maintained the reputation of his giant race. Every device that sagacity could conceive or fearlessness execute was tried by him, until the troubled ocean around the combatants was all a-boil, and its so recently unsullied surface was littered with tangled wreaths of blood-streaked foam. Whether from affection or for protection is uncertain, but the rest of the family did not attempt to flee. All seven of the cows kept close to their lord, often appearing as if they would shield him with their own bodies from the invisible death-darts that continually pierced him to the very seat of his vast vitality. And this attachment proved their own destruction, for their assailants, hovering around them with the easy mobility of birds, slew them at their leisure, not even needing to hamper themselves by harpooning another individual. Instead, they wielded their long lances upon the unresisting females, leaving the ocean monarch to his imminent death. So successful were these tactics that before an

hour had flown, while yet the violet tint of departing night lingered on the western edge of the sea, the last one of those mighty mammals had groaned out the dregs of her life. Flushed with conquest and breathless from their great exertions, the victors lolled restfully back in their boats, while all around them upon the incarnadined waters the massy bodies of their prey lay gently swaying to the slumberous roll of the silent swell.

Meanwhile, throughout that stark battle, what of the youngling's fate? By almost a miracle, he had passed without scathe. What manner of dread convulsion of Nature was in progress he could not know—he was blind and deaf and almost lifeless with terror. With all that wide ocean around him he knew not whither to flee from this day of wrath. Of all those who had been to him so brief a space ago the living embodiment of invincible might, not one remained to help or shield him, none but were involved in this cataclysm of blood. His kindred were cut off from him, he was overlooked by his enemies, and when he came to himself he was alone. A sudden frantic impulse seized him, and under its influence he fled, fled as the bee flies, but without the homing instinct to guide him, southward through the calm blue silences of that sleeping ocean. On, on, he fled untiring, until behind him the emerald sheen of his passage through the now starlit waters broadened into a wide blaze of softest light. Before him lay the dark, its profound depths just manifested by the occasional transient gleam of a palpitating medusa or the swift flight of a terrified shark. When compelled to break the glassy surface for breath there was a sudden splash, and amid the deep sigh from his labouring lungs came the musical fall of the sparkling spray. When morning dawned again on his long objectless flight, unfailing instinct warned him of his approach to shallower waters, and with slackening speed he went on, through the tender diffused sunlight of those dreamy depths, until he came to an enormous submarine forest, where the trees were fantastic abutments of living coral, the leaves and fronds of dull-hued fucus or algæ, the blossoms of orchid-like sea-anemones or zoophytes, and the birds were darting, gliding fish, whose myriad splendid tints blazed like illuminated jewels.

Here, surely, he might be at peace and find some solace for his loneliness, some suitable food to replace that which he had hitherto always found awaiting him, and now would find nevermore. Moving gently through the interminably intricate avenues of this submarine world of stillness and beauty, his small lower jaw hanging down as usual, he found abundant store of sapid molluscs that glided down his gaping gullet with a pleasant tickling, and were soon followed by a soothing sense of hunger satisfied. When he rose to spout he was in the

midst of a weltering turmoil of broken water, where the majestic swell fretted and roared in wrath around the hindering peaks of a great reef—a group of islands in the making. Here, at any rate, he was safe, for no land was in sight whence might come a band of his hereditary foes, while into that network of jagged rocks no vessel would ever dare to venture. After a few days of placid enjoyment of this secure existence he began to feel courage and independence, although still pining for the companionship of his kind. Thus he might have gone on for long, but that an adventure befell him which raised him at once to his rightful position among the sea-folk. During his rambles through the mazes and glades of this subaqueous paradise he had once or twice noticed between two stupendous columns of coral a black space where the water was apparently of fathomless depth. Curiosity, one of the strongest influences actuating the animate creation, impelled him to investigate this chasm, but something, he knew not what, probably inherited caution, had hitherto held him back. At last, having met with no creature nearly his own size, and grown bold by reason of plenteous food, he became venturesome, and made for that gloomy abyss, bent upon searching its recesses thoroughly. Boldly he swept between the immense bastions that guarded it, and with a swift upward thrust of his broad horizontal tail went headlong down, down, down. Presently he saw amidst the outer darkness a web of palely gleaming lines incessantly changing their patterns and extending over an area of a thousand square yards. They centred upon a dull ghastly glare that was motionless, formless, indescribable. In its midst there was a blackness deeper, if possible, than that of the surrounding pit. Suddenly all that writhing entanglement wrapped him round, each clutching snare fastening upon him with innumerable gnawing mouths as if to devour him all over at once. With a new and even pleasant sensation thrilling along his spine the young leviathan hurled himself forward at that midmost gap, his powerful jaws clashing and his whole lithe frame upstrung with nervous energy. Right through the glutinous musky mass of that unthinkable chimæra he hewed his way, heeding not in the least the wrenching, sucking coils winding about him, and covering every inch of his body. Absolute silence reigned as the great fight went on. Its inequality was curiously abnormal. For while the vast amorphous bulk of the mollusc completely dwarfed the comparatively puny size of the young cachalot, there was on the side of the latter all the innate superiority of the vertebrate carnivorous mammal with warrior instincts transmitted unimpaired through a thousand generations of ocean royalty. Gradually the grip of those clinging tentacles relaxed as he felt the succulent gelatinousness divide, and with a bound he ascended from that befouled abysmal gloom into the light and loveliness of the upper air. Behind him trailed sundry long fragments, *disjecta membra* of his

late antagonist, and upon these, after filling his lungs again and again with the keen pure air of heaven, he feasted grandly.

But in spite of the new inspiring sense of conscious might and ability to do even as his forefathers had done, his loneliness was heavy upon him. For, like all mammals, the cachalot loves the fellowship of his kin during the days of his strength; and only when advancing age renders him unable to hold his own against jealous rivals, or makes him a laggard in the united chase, does he forsake the school and wander solitary and morose about the infinite solitude of his limitless abode. And so, surrounded by the abundant evidences of his prowess, the young giant meditated, while a hungry host of sharks, like jackals at the lion's kill, came prowling up out of the surrounding silence, and with shrill cries of delight the hovering bird-folk gathered in myriads to take tithe of his enormous spoil. Unheeding the accumulating multitudes, who gave *him* ample room and verge enough, and full of flesh, he lay almost motionless, when suddenly that subtle sense which, attuned to the faintest vibrations of the mobile sea, kept him warned, informed him that some more than ordinary commotion was in progress not many miles away. Instantly every sinew set taut, every nerve tingled with receptivity, while, quivering like some fucus frond in a tide rip, his broad tail swayed silently to and fro, but so easily as not to stir his body from its attitude of intense expectation. A gannet swept over him close down, startling him so that with one fierce lunge of his flukes he sprang forward twenty yards; but recovering himself he paused again, though the impetus still bore him noiselessly ahead, the soothing wash of the waves eddying gently around his blunt bow. Shortly after, to his unbounded joy, a noble company of his own folk hove in sight, two score of them in goodliest array. They glided around him in graceful curves, wonderingly saluting him by touching his small body with fin, nose, and tail, and puzzled beyond measure as to how so young a fellow-citizen came to be inhabiting these vast wastes alone. His tale was soon told, for the whale-people waste no interchange of ideas, and the company solemnly received him into their midst as a comrade who had well earned the right to be one of their band by providing for them so great a feast. Swiftly the spoil of that gigantic mollusc was rescued from the marauding sharks, and devoured; and thorough was the subsequent search among those deep-lying darknesses for any other monsters of the same breed that might lie brooding in their depths. None were to be found, although for two days and nights the questing leviathans pursued their keen investigations. When there remained no longer a cave unfathomed or a maze unexplored, the leader of the school, a huge black bull of unrivalled fame, gave the signal for departure, and away they went in double

columns, line ahead, due south, their splendid chief about a cable's length in advance. The happy youngster, no longer astray from his kind, gambolled about the school in unrestrained delight at the rising tide of life that surged tumultuously through his vigorous frame. Ah; it was so good to be alive, glorious to speed, with body bending bow-wise, and broad fan-like flukes spurning the brilliant waves behind him, ecstasy to exert all the power he felt in one mad upward rush until out into the sunlight high through the warm air he sprang, a living embodiment of irresistible force, and fell with a joyous crash back into the welcoming bosom of his native deep. The sedate patriarch of the school looked on these youthful freaks indulgently, until, fired by the sight of his young follower's energy, he too put forth all his incredible strength, launching his hundred tons or so of solid weight clear of the embracing sea, and returning to it again with a shock as of some Polyphemus-hurled mountain.

Thus our orphan grew and waxed great. Together, without mishap of any kind, these lords of the flood skirted the southern slopes of the globe. In serene security they ranged the stormy seas from Kerguelen to Cape Horn, from the Falklands to Table Bay. Up through the scent-laden straits between Madagascar and Mozambique, loitering along the burning shores of Zanzibar and Pemba, dallying with the eddies around the lonely Seychelles and idling away the pleasant north-east monsoon in the Arabian Sea. By the Bab-el-Mandeb they entered the Red Sea, their majestic array scaring the nomad fishermen at their lonely labour along the reef-besprinkled margins thereof, remote from the straight-ruled track down its centre along which the unwearied slaves of the West, the great steamships, steadily thrust their undeviating way. Here, in richest abundance, they found their favourite food, cuttlefish of many kinds, although none so large as those haunting the middle depths of the outer ocean. And threading the deep channels between the reefs great shoals of delicately flavoured fish, beguiled by the pearly whitenesses of those gaping throats, rushed fearlessly down them to oblivion. So quiet were these haunts, so free from even the remotest chance of interference by man, their only enemy, that they remained for many months, even penetrating well up the Gulf of Akaba, that sea of sleep whose waters even now retain the same primitive seclusion they enjoyed when their shores were the cradle of mankind.

But now a time was fast approaching when our hero must needs meet his compeers in battle, if haply he might justify his claim to be a leader in his turn. For such is the custom of the cachalot. The young bulls each seek to form a harem among the younger cows of the school, and having done so, they break

off from the main band and pursue their own independent way. This crisis in the career of the orphan had been imminent for some time, but now, in these untroubled seas, it could no longer be delayed. Already several preliminary skirmishes had taken place with no definite results, and at last, one morning when the sea was like oil for smoothness, and blazing like burnished gold under the fervent glare of the sun, two out of the four young bulls attacked the orphan at once. All around lay the expectant brides ready to welcome the conqueror, while in solitary state the mighty leader held aloof, doubtless meditating on the coming time when a mightier than he should arise and drive him from his proud position into lifelong exile. Straight for our hero's massive head came his rivals, charging along the foaming surface like bluff-bowed torpedo rams. But as they converged upon him he also charged to meet them, settling slightly at the same time. Whether by accident or design I know not, but certainly the consequence of this move was that instead of their striking him they met one another over his back, the shock of their impact throwing their great heads out of the sea with a dull boom that might have been heard for a mile. Swiftly and gracefully the orphan turned head over flukes, rising on his back and clutching the nearest of his opponents by his pendulous under-jaw. The fury of that assault was so great that the attacked one's jaw was wrenched sideways, until it remained at right angles to his body, leaving him for the rest of his life sorely hampered in even the getting of food, but utterly incapable of ever again giving battle to one of his own species. Then rushing towards the other aggressor the victorious warrior inverted his body in the sea, and brandishing his lethal flukes smote so doughtily upon his foe that the noise of those tremendous blows reverberated for leagues over the calm sea, while around the combatants the troubled waters were lashed into ridges and islets of snowy foam. Very soon was the battle over.

Disheartened, sick, and exhausted, the disabled rival essayed to escape, settling stone-like until he lay like some sunken wreck on the boulder-bestrewn sea-bed a hundred fathoms down. Slowly, but full of triumph, the conqueror returned to the waiting school and, selecting six of the submissive cows, led them away without any attempt at hindrance on the part of the other two young bulls who had not joined in the fray.

In stately march the new family travelled southward out of the Red Sea, along the Somali Coast, past the frowning cliffs of Sokotra, and crossing the Arabian Sea, skirted at their ease the pleasant Malabar littoral. Unerring instinct guided them across the Indian Ocean and through the Sunda Straits, until amid the intricacies of Celebes they ended their journey for a season. Here, with richest food in overflowing abundance, among undisturbed reef-beds swept by

constantly changing currents, where they might chafe their irritated skins clean from the many parasites they had accumulated during their long Red Sea sojourn, they remained for several seasons. Then, suddenly, as calamities usually come, they were attacked by a whaler as they were calmly coasting along Timor. But never till their dying day did those whale-fishers forget that fight. True, they secured two half-grown cows, but at what a cost to themselves! For the young leader, now in the full flush of vigorous life, seemed not only to have inherited the fighting instincts of his ancestors, but also to possess a fund of wily ferocity that made him a truly terrible foe. No sooner did he feel the first keen thrust of the harpoon than, instead of expending his strength for naught by a series of aimless flounderings, he rolled his huge bulk swiftly towards his aggressors, who were busily engaged in clearing their boat of the hampering sail, and perforce helpless for a time. Right down upon them came the writhing mass of living flesh, overwhelming them as completely as if they had suddenly fallen under Niagara. From out of that roaring vortex only two of the six men forming the boat's crew emerged alive, poor fragments of humanity tossing like chips upon the tormented sea. Then changing his tactics, the triumphant cachalot glided stealthily about just beneath the surface, feeling with his sensitive flukes for anything still remaining afloat upon which to wreak his newly aroused thirst for vengeance. As often as he touched a floating portion of the shattered boat, up flew his mighty flukes in a moment, and, with a reflex blow that would have stove in the side of a ship, he smote it into still smaller splinters. This attention to his first set of enemies saved the other boats from destruction, for they, using all expedition, managed to despatch the two cows they had harpooned, and when they returned to the scene of disaster, the bull, unable to find anything more to destroy, had departed with the remnant of his family, and they saw him no more. Gloomily they traversed the battle-field until they found the two exhausted survivors just feebly clinging to a couple of oars, and with them mournfully regained their ship.

Meanwhile the triumphant bull was slowly making his way eastward, sorely irritated by the galling harpoon which was buried deep in his shoulders, and wondering what the hundreds of fathoms of trailing rope behind him could be. At last coming to a well-known reef he managed to get the line entangled around some of its coral pillars, and a strenuous effort on his part tore out the barbed weapon, leaving in its place a ragged rent in his blubber four feet long. Such a trifle as that, a mere superficial scratch, gave him little trouble, and with the wonderful recuperative power possessed by all the sea-folk the ugly tear was completely healed in a few days. Henceforth he was to be reckoned among the

most dangerous of all enemies to any of mankind daring to attack him, for he knew his power. This the whalemens found to their cost. Within the next few years his fame had spread from Cape Cod to Chelyushkin, and wherever two whaleships met for a spell of “gamming,” his prowess was sure to be an absorbing topic of conversation. In fact, he became the terror of the tortuous passages of Malaysia, and though often attacked always managed to make good his escape, as well as to leave behind him some direful testimony to his ferocious cunning. At last he fell in with a ship off Palawan, whose crew were justly reputed to be the smartest whale-fishers from “Down East.” Two of her boats attacked him one lovely evening just before sunset, but the iron drew. Immediately he felt the wound he dived perpendicularly, but describing a complete vertical circle beneath the boat he rose again, striking her almost amidships with the front of his head. This, of course, hurled the crew everywhere, besides shattering the boat. But reversing himself again on the instant, he brandished those awful flukes in the air, bringing them down upon the helpless men and crushing three of them into dead pieces. Apparently satisfied, he disappeared in the gathering darkness.

When the extent of the disaster became known on board the ship, the skipper was speechless with rage and grief, for the mate who had been killed was his brother, and very dear to him. And he swore that if it cost him a season’s work and the loss of his ship, he would slay that man-killing whale. From that day he cruised about those narrow seas offering large rewards to any of his men who should first sight his enemy again. Several weeks went by, during which not a solitary spout was seen, until one morning in Banda Strait the skipper himself “raised” a whale close in to the western verge of the island. Instantly all hands were alert, hoping against hope that this might prove to be their long-sought foe at last. Soon the welcome news came from aloft that it *was* a sperm whale, and an hour later two boats left the ship, the foremost of them commanded by the skipper. With him he took four small barrels tightly bunged, and an extra supply of bomb-lances, in the use of which he was an acknowledged expert. As they drew near the unconscious leviathan they scarcely dared breathe, and, their oars carefully peaked, they propelled the boats by paddles as silently as the gliding approach of a shark. Hurrah! fast; first iron. “Starn all, men! it’s him, d—n him, ’n I’ll slaughter him ’r he shall me.” Backward flew the boat, not a second too soon, for with that superhuman cunning expected of him, the terrible monster had spun round and was rushing straight for them. The men pulled for dear life, the steersman swinging the boat round as if she were on a pivot, while the skipper pitched over the first of his barrels. Out flashed the sinewy flukes, and

before that tremendous blow the buoyant barrico spun through the air like a football. The skipper's eyes flashed with delight at the success of his stratagem, and over went another decoy. This seemed to puzzle the whale, but it did not hinder him, and he seemed to keep instinctively heading towards the boat, thus exposing only his invulnerable head. The skipper, however, had no idea of rashly risking himself, so heaving over his remaining barrel he kept well clear of the furious animal's rushes, knowing well that the waiting game was the best. All through that bright day the great battle raged. Many were the hair-breadth escapes of the men, but the skipper never lost his cool, calculating attitude. Finally the now exhausted leviathan "sounded" in reality, remaining down for half-an-hour. When he reappeared, he was so sluggish in his movements that the exultant skipper shouted, "Naow, boys, in on him! he's our whale." Forward darted the beautiful craft under the practised sweep of the six oars, and as soon as she was within range the skipper fired his first bomb. It reached the whale, but, buried in the flesh, its explosion was not disabling. Still it did not spur the huge creature into activity, for at last his strength had failed him. Another rush in and another bomb, this time taking effect just abaft the starboard fin. There was a momentary accession of energy as the frightful wound caused by the bursting iron tube among the monster's viscera set all his masses of muscle a-quiver. But this spurt was short-lived. And as a third bomb was fired a torrent of blood foamed from the whale's distended spiracle, a few fierce convulsions distorted his enormous frame, and that puissant ocean monarch passed peacefully into the passiveness of death.

When they got the great carcass alongside, they found embedded in the blubber no fewer than fourteen harpoons, besides sundry fragments of exploded bombs, each bearing mute but eloquent testimony to the warlike career of the vanquished Titan who began his career as an orphan.

A PORPOISE MYTH

Far away to the horizon on three sides of us stretched the sea, its wavelets all sparkling in the sun-glade, and dancing under the touch of the sedate trade-wind. Above hung a pale-blue dome quivering with heat and light from the sun, that, halfway up his road to the zenith, seemed to be in the act of breaking his globular limit and flooding space with flame. Ah! it was indeed pleasant to lie on that little patch of pure sand, firm and smooth as a boarded floor, with the rocks fringed by greenery of many kinds overshadowing us, and the ocean murmuring at our feet.

The place was a little promontory on the eastern shore of Hapai, in the Friendly Islands, and my companion, who lay on the sand near me, was by birth a chief, a splendid figure of a man, with a grave, intellectual face, and deep, solemn voice that refused to allow the mangled English in which he spoke to seem laughable. I knew him to be the senior deacon of the local chapel, a devotionalist of the most rigid kind, yet by common consent a righteous man, well-beloved by all who knew him. He was my “flem” or friend, who, of his own initiative, kept me supplied with all such luxuries as the village afforded, and so great was my admiration for him as a man that it was with no ordinary delight I succeeded in persuading him to accompany me on a holiday ramble. He had led me through forest paths beset by a thousand wonders of beauty in vegetation and insect life, showing me as we went how the untilled ground produced on every hand abundance of delicious food for man, up over hills from whence glimpses of land and sea scape incessantly flashed upon the sight till my eyes grew weary of enjoying, over skirting reefs just creaming with the indolent wash of the sea, every square yard of which held matter for a life’s study, but all beautiful beyond superlatives. And at last, weary with wondering no less than with the journey, we had reached this sheltered nook and laid down to rest, lulled into dreamy peace by the murmurs of the Pacific rippling beneath us.

For some time we lay silent in great content. Every thought, every feeling, as far as I was concerned, was just merged in complete satisfaction of all the senses, although at times I glanced at my grave companion, wondering dreamily if he too, though accustomed to these delights all his life long, could feel that deep enjoyment of them that I, a wanderer from the bleak and unsettled North, was saturated with. But while this and kindred ideas lazily ebbed and flowed through

my satisfied brain, the bright expanse of sea immediately beneath us suddenly started into life. A school of porpoises, numbering several hundreds, broke the surface, new risen from unknown depths, and began their merry gambols as if the superabundant life animating them must find a vent. They formed into three divisions, marched in undulating yet evenly spaced lines, amalgamated, separated, reformed. At one moment all clustered in one central mass, making the placid sea boil; the next, as if by a pivotal explosion, they were rushing at headlong speed in radiating lines towards a circumference. As if at preconcerted signal, they reached it and disappeared. Perfect quiet ensued for perhaps two minutes. Then, in solemn measure, solitary individuals, scattered over a vast area, rose into the air ten, fifteen, twenty feet, turned and fell, but, at our distance from them, in perfect silence. This pretty play continued for some time, the leaps growing gradually less vigorous until they ceased altogether, and we saw the whole company massing themselves in close order far out to sea. A few minutes, for breathing space I suppose, and then in one magnificent charge, every individual leaping twenty feet at each bound, they came thundering shoreward. It was an inspiring sight, that host of lithe black bodies in maddest rush along the sea-surface, lashing it into dazzling foam, and sending across to our ears a deep melodious roar like the voice of many waters. Within a hundred yards of the shore they disappeared abruptly, as if an invisible line had there been drawn, and presently we saw them leisurely departing eastward, as though, playtime over, they had now resumed the normal flow of everyday duties.

While I lay quietly wondering over the amazing display I had just witnessed, I was almost startled to hear my companion speak, for he seldom did so unless spoken to first. (I translate.) “The great game of the sea-pigs that we have just seen brings back to my memory an old story which is still told among our people, but one which we are trying hard to forget with all the others, because they are of the evil days, and stir up in our children those feelings that we have fought so long to bury beyond resurrection. This story, however, is harmless enough, although I should neither tell it to, or listen to it from, one of mine own people. Long ago when we worshipped the old cruel gods, and my ancestors were chief priests of that worship, holding all the people under their rule in utter terror and subjection, our chief, yes, our only, business besides religion was war. Our women were slaves who were only born for our service, and it is not easy now to understand what our feelings then were toward the sex to whom we are now so tender. Our only talk was of the service of the gods and of war, which indeed was generally undertaken for some religious reason, more often than not to provide human victims for sacrifice. In one of these constantly recurring wars

the men of Tonga-tabu—of course each group of these islands was then independent of the others—made a grand raid upon Hapai. They were helped by some strangers, who had been washed ashore from some other islands to the northward, to build bigger and better war-canoes than had ever before been seen, for our people were never famous for canoe-building. They kept their plans so secret that when at daybreak one morning the news ran round Hapai that a whole fleet of war-canoes were nearing the shore, our people were like a school of flying-fish into the midst of which some dolphin has suddenly burst. One of my ancestors, called ‘The Bone-Breaker’ from his great strength and courage, met the invaders with a mere handful of his followers and delayed their landing for hours until he and all his warriors were killed. By this time fresh bands were continually arriving, so that the warriors from Tonga must needs fight every inch of their way through the islands. And as they destroyed band after band their war-hunger became greater, their rage rose, and they determined to leave none of us living except such as they kept for sacrifice on their altars at home. Day after day the slaughter went on, ever more feeble grew the defence, until warriors who had never refused the battle hid themselves like the pēca in holes of the rocks. Behind us, about two miles inland, there is a high hill with a flat top and steep sides. To this as a shelter fled all the unmarried girls of our people, fearing to be carried away as slaves to Tonga, but never dreaming of being slain if their hiding-place was found. Here they remained unseen for seven days, until, ravenous with hunger, they were forced to leave their hiding-place and come down. But they hoped that, although no tidings had reached them from outside, their enemies had departed. Four hundred of them reached the plain over which we passed just now, weak with fasting, with no man to lead them, trembling at every rustling branch in the forest around. All appeared as it does to-day, the islands seemed slumbering in serene peace, although they knew that every spot where their people had lived was now defiled by the recent dead.

“While they paused, huddling together irresolutely, there suddenly burst upon their ears a tempest of exultant yells, and from both sides of the hill they had lately left the whole force of Tongans rushed after them. They fled as flies the booby before the frigate-bird, and with as little hope of escape. Before them spread this same bright sea smiling up at them as if in welcome. You know how our people love the sea, love to cradle ourselves on its caressing waves from the day when, newly born, our mothers lay us in its refreshing waters, until even its life-giving touch can no longer reanimate our withered bodies. So who can wonder that the maidens fled to it for refuge. Over this shining sand they rushed, plunging in ranks from yonder reef-edge into the quiet blue beyond. Hard behind

them came the hunters, sure of their prey. They reached the reef and stared with utter dread and amazement upon the pretty play of a great school of porpoises that, in just such graceful evolutions as we have now seen, manifested their full enjoyment of life. Terror seized upon those blood-lusting Tongans, their muscles shrank and their weapons fell. Had there been one hundred Hapaian warriors left alive they might have destroyed the whole Tongan host, for it was become as a band of lost and terrified children dreading at every step to meet the vengeance of the gods. But there were none to hinder them, so they fled in safety to their own shores, never to invade Hapai again. And when, after many years, the few survivors of that week of death had repopled Hapai, the story of the four hundred maidens befriended by the sea-gods in their time of need was the most frequently told among us. And to this day is the porpoise 'taboo,' although we know now that this legend, as well as all the others which have been so carefully preserved among us, is only the imagination of our forefathers' hearts. Yet I often wish that we knew some of them were true."

CATS ON BOARD SHIP

Many stories are current about the peculiar aptitude possessed by sailors of taming all sorts of wild creatures that chance to come under their care, most of them having a much firmer basis of fact than sea-yarns are usually given credit for. But of all the pets made by Jack none ever attains so intimate an acquaintance with him, so firm a hold upon his affections, as the cat, about whom so many libellous things are said ashore. All things considered, a ship's forecabin is about the last place in the world that one would expect to find favoured by a cat for its permanent abiding place. Subject as it is at all times to sudden invasion by an encroaching wave, always at the extremes of stuffiness or draughtiness, never by any chance cheered by the glow of a fire, or boasting even an apology for a hearthrug,—warmth-loving, luxurious pussy cannot hope to find any of those comforts that her long acquaintance with civilisation has certainly given her an innate hankering after. No cat's-meat man purveying regular rations of savoury horse-flesh, so much beloved by even the daintiest aristocrats of the cat family, ever gladdens her ears with the dulcet cry of "Meeet, cassmeet," nor, saddest lack of all, is there ever to be found a saucer of milk for her delicate cleanly lapping. And yet, strange as it may appear, despite the superior attractions offered by the friendly steward at the after-end of the ship, irresponsive to the blandishments of the captain and officers, I have many times been shipmate with cats who remained steadily faithful to the fo'c's'le throughout the length of an East Indian or Colonial voyage. They could hardly be said to have any preferences for individual members of the crew, being content with the universal attention paid them by all, although as a rule they found a snug berth in some man's bunk which they came to look upon as theirs by prescriptive right, their shelter in time of storm, and their refuge, when in harbour the scanty floor place of the fo'c's'le afforded no safe promenade for anything bearing a tail. Only once or twice in all my experience have I seen any cruelty offered to a cat on board ship, and then the miscreant who thus offended against the unwritten law had but a sorry time of it thereafter.

Personally, I have been honoured by the enduring fellowship of many cats whose attachment to me for myself alone (for I had nothing to give them to eat but a little chewed biscuit) effectually settled for me the question of what some people are pleased to call the natural selfishness of cats. My first experience was on my second voyage when I was nearly thirteen years old. On my first voyage

we had no cat, strange to say, in either of the three ships I belonged to before I got back to England. But when I joined the *Brinkburn* in London for the West Indies as boy, I happened to be the first on board to take up my quarters in the fo'c's'le. I crept into my lonely bunk that night feeling very small and forgotten, and huddled myself into my ragged blanket trying to get warm and go to sleep. It was quite dark, and the sudden apparition of two glaring green eyes over the edge of my bunk sent a spasm of fear through me for a moment, until I felt soft feet walking over me and heard the pretty little crooning sound usually made by a complacent mother-cat over her kittens. I put up my hands and felt the warm fur, quite a thrill of pleasure trickling over me as pussy pleasantly responded with a loud satisfied purr. We were quite glad of each other I know, for as I cuddled her closely to me, the vibrations of her purring comforted me so that in a short time I was sound asleep. Thenceforward puss and I were the firmest of friends. In fact she was the only friend I had on board that hateful ship. For the crew were a hard-hearted lot, whose treatment of me was consistently barbarous, and even the other boy, being much bigger and stronger than I was, used to treat me as badly as any of them. But when night came and the faithful cat nestled in by my side during my watch below, I would actually forget my misery for a short time in the pleasant consciousness that *something* was fond of me. It was to my bunk she invariably fled for refuge from the ill-natured little terrier who lived aft, and never missed an opportunity of flying at her when he saw her on deck. Several times during the passage she found flying-fish that dropped on deck at night, and, by some instinct I do not pretend to explain, brought them to where I crouched by the cabin-door. Then she would munch the sweet morsel contentedly, looking up at me between mouthfuls as if to tell me how much she was enjoying her unwonted meal, or actually leaving it for a minute or two to rub herself against me and arch her back under my fondling hand. Two days before we left Falmouth, Jamaica, on the homeward passage, she had kittens, five tiny slug-like things, that lived in my bunk in their mother's old nest. The voyage ended abruptly on the first day out of harbour by the vessel running upon an outlying spur of coral only a few miles from the port. After a day and night of great exertion and exposure the ship slid off the sharp pinnacles of the reef into deep water, giving us scant time to escape on board one of the small craft that clustered alongside salving the cargo. The few rags I owned were hardly worth saving, but indeed I did not think of them. All my care was for an old slouch hat in which lay the five kittens snug and warm, while the anxious mother clung to me so closely that I had no difficulty in taking her along too. When we got ashore, although it cost me a bitter pang, I handed the rescued family over to the hotel-keeper's daughter, a comely mulatto girl, who promised me that my old

shipmate should from that time live in luxury.

From that time forward I was never fortunate enough to have a cat for my very own for a long time. Nearly every ship I was in had a cat, or even two, but they were common property, and their attentions were severely impartial. Then it came to pass that I joined a very large and splendid ship in Adelaide as second mate. Going on board for the first time, a tiny black kitten followed me persistently along the wharf. It had evidently strayed a long way and would not be put off, although I made several attempts to escape from it, feeling that perhaps I might be taking it away from a better home than I could possibly give it. It succeeded in following me on board, and when I took possession of the handsome cabin provided for me in the after end of the after deckhouse facing the saloon, it installed itself therein, purring complete approval of its surroundings. Now, in spite of the splendour of the ship and the natural pride I felt in being an officer on board of her, it must be confessed that I was exceedingly lonely. The chief officer was an elderly man of about fifty-five who had long commanded ships, and he considered it beneath his dignity to associate with such a mere lad as he considered me. Besides, he lived in the grand cabin. I could not forgather with the saloon passengers, who rarely came on the main-deck at all where I lived, and I was forbidden to go forward and visit those in the second saloon. Therefore during my watch below I was doomed to solitary state, cut off from the companionship of my kind with the sole exception of the urbane and gentlemanly chief steward, who did occasionally (about once a week) spend a fraction of his scanty leisure in conversation with me. Thus it came about that the company of "Pasht," as I called my little cat, was a perfect godsend. He slept on my pillow when I was in my bunk, when I sat at my table writing or reading he sat close to my hand. And if I wrote long, paying no attention to him, he would reach out a velvety paw and touch the handle of my pen, ever so gently, looking up at my face immediately to see if my attention had been diverted. Often I took no notice but kept on with my work, quietly putting back the intruding paw when it became too troublesome. At last, as if unable to endure my neglect any longer, he would get up and walk on to the paper, sitting down in the centre of the sheet with a calm assurance that now I must notice him that was very funny. Then we would sit looking into the depths of each other's eyes as if trying mutual mesmerism. It generally ended by his climbing up on to my shoulder and settling into the hollow of my neck, purring softly in my ear, while I wrote or read on until I was quite stiff with the constrained position I kept for fear of disturbing him. Whenever I went on deck at night to keep my watch he invariably came with me, keeping me company throughout my four hours' vigil

on the poop. Always accustomed to going barefoot, from which I was precluded during the day owing to my position, I invariably enjoyed the absence of any covering for my feet in the night watches. My little companion evidently thought my bare feet were specially put on for his amusement, for after a few sedate turns fore and aft by my side, he would hide behind the skylights and leap out upon them as I passed, darting off instantly in high glee at the feat he had performed. Occasionally I would turn the tables on him by going a few feet up the rigging, when he would sit and cry, baby-like, until I returned and comforted him. I believe he knew every stroke of the bell as well as I did. One of the apprentices always struck the small bell at the break of the poop every half-hour, being answered by the look-out man on the big bell forward. "Pasht" never took the slightest notice of any of the strokes until the four pairs announced the close of the watch. Then I always missed him suddenly. But when, after mustering the mate's watch and handing over my charge to my superior, I went to my berth, a little black head invariably peeped over the edge of my bunk, as if saying, "Come along; I'm so sleepy!" So our pleasant companionship went on until one day, when about the Line in the Atlantic, I found my pretty pet lying on the grating in my berth. He had been seized with a fit, and under its influence had rushed into the fo'c's'le, where some unspeakable wretch had shamefully maltreated him under the plea that he was mad! I could not bear to see him suffer—I cannot say what had been done to him—so I got an old marline-spike, looped the lanyard about his neck, and dropped him overboard. And an old lady among the passengers berated me the next day for my "heartless brutality"!

As a bereaved parent often dreads the thought of having another little one to lose, so, although many opportunities presented themselves, I refused to own another cat, until I became an unconsenting foster-parent again to a whole family. I joined a brig in the St. Katharine Docks as mate, finding when I took up my berth that there was both a cat and a dog on board, inmates of the cabin. They occupied different quarters during the night, but it was a never-waning pleasure to me to see them meet in the morning. The dog, a large brown retriever, would stand perfectly still, except for his heavy tail, which swayed sedately from side to side, while "Jane" would walk round and round him, arching her back and rubbing her sides against him, purring all the time a gentle note of welcome. Presently their noses would meet, as if in a kiss, and he would bestow a slaverling lick or two upon her white fur. This always ended the greeting, sending "Jane" off primly to commence her morning toilet. But alas! a blighting shadow fell upon this loving intercourse. One of the dock cats, a creature of truculent appearance, her fur more like the nap of a door-mat than

anything else, blind of one eye, minus half her tail, with a hare-lip (acquired, not hereditary), and her ears vandyked in curious patterns, stalked on board one afternoon, and took up her abode in the cabin without any preliminaries whatever. Both the original tenants were much disturbed at this graceless intrusion, but neither of them felt disposed to tackle the formidable task of turning her out. So “Jane” departed to the galley, and “Jack,” with many a loud and long sniff at the door of the berth wherein the visitor lay, oscillated disconsolately between the galley and the cabin, his duty and his inclination. The new-comer gave no trouble, always going ashore for everything she required, and only once, the morning her family arrived, deigning to accept a saucer of milk from me. As soon as she dared she carried the new-comers ashore one by one, being much vexed when I followed and brought them back again. However, her patience was greater than mine, for she succeeded in getting them all away except one which I hid away and she apparently forgot. Then we saw her no more; she returned to her duty of rat-catching in the warehouses, and never came near us again. Meanwhile “Jane” would scarcely leave my side during the day, asking as plainly as a cat could, why, oh why, didn’t I turn that shameless hussy out? Couldn’t I see how things were? or was I like the rest of the men? Her importunity was so great that I was heartily glad when the old “docker” was gone, and I lost no time in reinstalling “Jane” in her rightful realm. It was none too soon. For the next morning when I turned out, a sight as strange as any I have ever seen greeted me. There, in the corner of my room, lay “Jack” on his side, looking with undisguised amazement and an occasional low whine of sympathy at his friend, who, nestling close up to his curls in the space between his fore and hind legs, was busily attending to the wants of two new arrivals. The dog’s bewilderment and interest were so great, that the scene would have been utterly ludicrous had it not been so genuinely pathetic and pretty. How he managed to restrain himself I do not know, but there he lay perfectly quiet until pussy herself released him from his awkward position by getting up and taking possession of a cosy box I prepared for her. Even then his attentions were constant, for many times a day he would walk gravely in and sniff at the kittens, bestow a lick on the mother, and depart with an almost dejected air, as of a dog that had met with a problem utterly beyond his wisdom to solve. A visitor claiming one of the new kittens, I filled its place with the one I had kept belonging to the old “docker,” and “Jane” accepted the stranger without demur. While we were in dock I gave them plenty of such luxuries as milk and cat’s-meat, so that the little family prospered apace. As the kittens grew and waxed frolicsome, their attachment to me was great,—quite embarrassing at times, for while standing on deck giving orders, they would swarm up my legs and cling

like bats to my coat, so that I moved with difficulty for fear of shaking them off. “Jane” was a perfect “ratter,” and I was curious to see whether her prowess was hereditary in her offspring. A trap was set and a rat speedily caught, for we were infested with them. Then “Jane” and her own kitten were called, the latter being at the time barely two months old. As soon as the kitten smelt the rat she growled, set up her fur, and walked round the trap (a large wire cage) seeking a way in. “Jane” sat down a little apart, an apparently uninterested spectator. We opened the door of the trap, the kitten darted in, and there in that confined space slew the rat, which was almost her equal in size, with the greatest ease. She then dragged it out, growling like a miniature tiger. Her mother came to have a look, but the kitten, never loosing her bite, shot out one bristling paw and smote poor “Jane” on the nose so felly that she retired shaking her head and sneezing entire disapproval. The other kitten, a “tom,” could never be induced to interfere with a rat at all. My space is gone, much to my disappointment, for the subject is a fascinating one to me. But I hope enough has been said to show what a large amount of interest clusters around cats on board ship.

THE OLD EAST INDIAMAN

An enthusiastic crowd of workmen and seafarers gathered one day long ago at Blackwall to witness the launching of the *Lion*. Every man among them felt a personal interest in the majestic fabric that, under the proud labours of those skilful shipwrights, had gradually grown up out of the trim piles of oak, greenheart, and teak, and taken on the splendid shape of an East Indiaman, in the days when those grand vessels were queens of the wide sea. Green's renowned draughtsmen had lavished all their skill upon her design, every device known to men whose calling was their pride, and to whom the Blackwall Yard was the centre of the shipbuilding world, had been employed to make the *Lion* the finest of all the great fleet that had been brought into being there. Decked with flags from stem to stern, the sun glinting brightly on the rampant crimson lion that towered proudly on high from her stem, she glided gracefully from the ways amid the thunder of cannon and the deafening shouts of exultant thousands. And when, two months later, she sailed for Madras with eighty prime seamen forrard and a hundred passengers in her spacious cuddy, who so proud as her stately commander? His eye flashed as he watched the nimble evolutions of his bonny bluejackets leaping from spar to spar, and he felt that, given fitting opportunity, he would have no overwhelming task to tackle a French line-of-battle ship, even though he was but a peaceful merchantman. For ranged on either side of her roomy decks were ten 18-pounders, under the charge of a smart gunner, whose pride in his new post was a pleasant thing to see. And besides these bulldogs there were many rifles and boarding-pikes neatly stowed in a small armoury in the waist. But above and beyond all these weapons were the men who would use them,—sturdy, square-set British sea-dogs, such as you may now see any day swarming upon the deck of a British man-o'-war, but may look for almost in vain on board the swarming thousands of vessels that compose our merchant fleet.

The *Lion* soon justified all the high hopes of her builders and owners. In spite of her (then) great size and the taut spread of her spars, she was far handier than any "Billy-boy" that ever turned up the Thames estuary against a head wind, and by at least a knot and a half the fastest ship in the East India trade. Her fame grew and waxed exceedingly great. There was as much intriguing to secure a berth in the *Lion* for the outward or homeward passage as there was in those days for positions in the golden land she traded to. Almost all the hierarchy of

India spoke of her affectionately as one speaks of the old home, and the newly-arrived in her knew no lack of topics for conversation if they only mentioned her name in any company. For had she not borne safely and pleasantly over the long, long sea-road from home hundreds and hundreds of those pale-faced rulers of dusky millions, bringing them in their callow boyhood to leap at a bound to posts of trust and responsibility such as the proud old Romans never dreamed of? She was so tenderly cared for, her every want so immediately supplied, that this solicitude, added to the staunchness and honesty of her build, seemed to render her insusceptible of decay. Men whose work in India was done spoke of her in their peaceful retirement on leafy English countrysides, and recalled with cronies “our first passage out in the grand old *Lion*.” A new type of ship, a new method of propulsion, was springing up all around her. But whenever any of the most modern fliers forgathered with her upon the ocean highway, their crews felt their spirits rise in passionate admiration for the stately and beautiful old craft whose graceful curves and perfect ease seemed to be of the sea *sui generis*, moulded and caressed by the noble element into something of its own mobility and tenacious power.

It appeared almost a loss of dignity when the Company took her off the India route and held her on the Australian berth. But very soon she had taken the place that always appeared to be hers of right, and she was *the* ship of all others wherein to sail for the new world beneath us. And in due course the sturdy Empire-builders scattered all over the vast new country were speaking of her as the Anglo-Indians had done a generation ago, and the “new chum” who had “come out in the *Lion*” found himself welcome in far-away bush homes, from Adelaide to Brisbane, as one of the same family, a protégé of the benevolent old ship. She held her own well, too, in point of speed with the new steel and iron clippers, in spite of what foolish youngsters sneeringly said about her extended quarter-galleries, her far-reaching head, and immense many-windowed stern. But gradually the fierce stress of modern competition told upon her, and it needed no great stretch of the imagination to suppose that the magnificent old craft felt her dignity outraged as voyage after voyage saw her crew lists dwindle until instead of the eighty able *seamen* of her young days she carried but twenty-two. The goodly company of officers, midshipmen, and artificers were cut down also to a third of their old array, and as a necessary consequence much of her ancient smartness of appearance went with them. Then she should have closed her splendid career in some great battle with the elements, and found a fitting glory of defeat without disgrace before the all-conquering, enduring sea. That solace was not to be hers, but as a final effort she made the round voyage from

Melbourne to London and back, including the handling of two cargoes, in five months and twenty days, beating anything of the kind ever recorded of a sailing-vessel.

Then, oh woeful fall! she was sold to the Norwegians, those thrifty mariners who are ever on the look-out for bargains in the way of ships who have seen their best days, and manage to succeed, in ways undreamed of by more lavish nations, in making fortunes out of such poor old battered phantoms of bygone prosperity. Tenacious as the seaman's memory is for the appearance of any ship in which he has once sailed, it would have been no easy task for any of her former shipmates to recognise the splendid old *Lion* under her Scandinavian name of the *Ganger Rolf*, metamorphosed as she was too by the shortening of her tapering spars, the stripping of the yards from the mizen-mast, and the rigging up of what British sailors call the "Norwegian house-flag," a windmill pump between the main and mizen masts. Thus transformed she began her degraded existence under new masters, crawling to and fro across the Atlantic to Quebec in summer, Pensacola or Doboy in winter, uneasily and spiritless as some gallant hunter dragging a timber waggon in his old age. Unpainted, weather-bleached, and with sails so patched and clouted that they looked like slum washing hung out to dry, she became, like the rest of the "wood-scows," a thing for the elements to scoff at, and, seen creeping eastward with a deck-load of deals piled six feet high fore and aft above her top-gallant rail, was as pathetic as a pauper funeral. Eight seamen now were all that the thrift of her owners allowed to navigate her, who with the captain, two mates, carpenter, and cook, made up the whole of her crew, exactly the number of the officers she used to carry in her palmy days.

One day when she was discharging in London there came alongside an old seaman, weather-worn and hungry-looking. Something in the build of the old ship caught his eye, and with quivering lips and twitching hands he climbed on board. Round about the deck he quested until, half hidden by a huge pile of lumber, he found the bell and read on it, "Lion, London, 1842." Then he sat down and covered his face with his hands. Presently he arose and sought the grimy mate purposefully. At an incredibly low wage he obtained the berth of cook,—it was either that or starve, although now he had found his old ship, he felt that he would go for nothing rather than miss another voyage in her. Soon after they sailed for the "fall voyage" to Quebec, making a successful run over, much to the delight of the ancient cook, who was never weary of telling any one who would listen of the feats of sailing performed by the *Lion* when he was quartermaster of her "way back in the fifties." Urged by greed, for he was part-

owner, and under no fear of the law, the skipper piled upon her such a deck-load of deals that she no longer resembled a ship, she was only comparable to a vast timber stack with three masts. She was hardly clear of Newfoundland on her homeward passage, when one of the most terrible gales of all that terrible winter set in. Snow and sleet and frost-fog, a blinding white whirl of withering cold, assailed her, paralysing the hapless handful of men who vainly strove on their lofty platform to do their duty, exposed fully to all the wrath of that icy tempest. One after one the worn-out sails, like autumn leaves, were stripped from yard and stay; day after day saw the perishing mariners die. The sea froze upon her where it fell, so that now she resembled an iceberg; and though the remnant of the crew tried many times to get at the fastenings of the chains that secured the deck-load so as to send it adrift, they could not. At last only one man was left alive, and he, strangely enough, was the old cook. And while still the gale was at its height, he suddenly seemed to renew all his lost strength. Buckling tight his belt with firm fingers, a new light gleaming in his eyes, he strode aft and seized the long-disused wheel. Standing erect and alert he coned her gravely, getting her well before the wind. Onward she fled, as if knowing the touch of an old friend. Gradually the lean fingers stiffened, the fire died out of the eyes, until, just as the last feeble drops in that brave old heart froze solid, the *Lion* dashed into a mountainous berg and all her shattered timbers fell apart. Lovely and pleasant had she been in her life, and in her death she was no danger to her wandering sisters.

THE FLOOR OF THE SEA

Who is there among us that has ever seen a lake, a pond, or a river-bed laid dry that has not felt an almost childish interest and curiosity in the aspect of a portion of earth's surface hitherto concealed from our gaze? The feeling is probably universal, arising from the natural desire to penetrate the unknown, and also from a primitive anxiety to know what sort of an abode the inhabitants of the water possess, since we almost always consider the water-folk to live as do the birds, really on land with the water for an atmosphere. But if this curiosity be so general with regard to the petty depths mentioned above, how greatly is it increased in respect of the recesses of the sea. For there is truly the great unknown, the undiscoverable country of which, in spite of the constant efforts of deep-sea expeditions, we know next to nothing. Here imagination may (and does) run riot, attempting the impossible task of reproducing to our minds the state of things in the lightless, silent depths where life, according to our ideas of it, is impossible,—the true valley of the shadow of death.

Suppose that it were possible for some convulsion of Nature to lay bare, let us say, the entire bed of the North Atlantic Ocean. With one bound the fancy leaps at the prospect of a rediscovery of the lost continent, the fabled Atlantis whose wonders have had so powerful an effect upon the imaginations of mankind. Should we be able to roam through those stupendous halls, climb those towering temple heights reared by the giants of an elder world, or gaze with stupefied wonder upon the majestic ruins of cities to which Babylon or Palmyra with all their mountainous edifices were but as a suburban townlet! Who knows? Yet maybe the natural wonders apparent in the foundations of such soaring masses as the Azores, the Cape Verde Islands, or the Canaries; or, greater still, the altitude of such remote and lonely pinnacles as those of the St. Paul's Rocks, would strike us as more marvellous yet. To thread the cool intricacies of the "still vexed Bermoothes" at their basements and seek out the caves where the sea-monsters dwell who never saw the light of day, to wander at will among the windings of that strange maze of reefs that cramp up the outpouring of the beneficent Gulf Stream and make it issue from its source with that turbulent energy that carries it, laden with blessings, to our shores; what a pilgrimage that would be! Imagine the vision of that great chain of islands which we call the West Indies soaring up from the vast plain 6000 feet below, with all the diversity of form and colour belonging to the lovely homes of the coral insects, who build ceaselessly for

themselves, yet all unconsciously rear stable abodes for mankind.

It would be an awful country to view, this suddenly exposed floor of the sea. A barren land of weird outline, of almost unimaginable complexity of contour, but without any beauty such as is bestowed upon the dry earth by the kindly sun. For its beauty depends upon the sea, whose prolific waters are peopled with life so abundantly that even the teeming earth is barren as compared with the ocean. But at its greatest depths all the researches that man has been able to prosecute go to prove that there is little life. The most that goes on there is a steady accumulation of the dead husks of once living organisms settling slowly down to form who knows what new granites, marbles, porphyries, against the time when another race on a reorganised earth shall need them. Here there is nothing fanciful, for if we know anything at all of prehistoric times, it is that what is now high land, not to say merely dry land, was once lying cold and dormant at the bottom of the sea being prepared throughout who can say what unrealisable periods of time for the use and enjoyment of its present lords. Not until we leave the rayless gloom, the incalculable pressures and universal cold of those tremendous depths, do we find the sea-floor beginning to abound with life. It may even be doubted whether anything of man's handiwork, such as there is about a ship foundering in mid-ocean, would ever reach in a recognisable form the bottom of the sea at a depth of more than 2000 fathoms. There is an idea, popularly current among seafarers, that sunken ships in the deep sea only go down a certain distance, no matter what their build or how ponderous their cargo. Having reached a certain stratum, they then drift about, slowly disintegrating, derelicts of the depths, swarming with strange denizens, the shadowy fleets of the lost and loved and mourned. In time, of course, as the great solvent gets in its work they disappear, becoming part of their surroundings, but not for hundreds of years, during which they pass and repass at the will of the under-currents that everywhere keep the whole body of water in the ocean from becoming stagnant and death-dealing to adjacent shores. A weird fancy truly, but surely not more strange than the silent depths about which it is formulated.

In his marvellously penetrative way, Kipling has touched this theme while singing the "Song of the English":—

"The wrecks dissolve above us; their dust drops down from afar—
Down to the dark, the utter dark, where the blind white sea-snakes are.
There is no sound, no echo of sound, in the deserts of the deep,
On the great grey level plains of ooze where the shell-burred cables creep.
Here in the womb of the world—here on the tie-ribs of earth—

Here in the womb of the world—here on the depths of earth,
Words, and the words of men, flicker and flutter and beat—
Warning, sorrow and gain, salutation and mirth—
For a Power troubles the Still that has neither voice nor feet.”

Surely the imagination must be dead indeed that does not throb responsive to the thought of that latter-day workmanship of wire and rubber descending at the will of man into the vast void, and running its direct course over mountain ranges, across sudden abysses of lower depth, through the turbulence of up-bursting submarine torrents where long-pent-up rivers compel the superincumbent ocean to admit their saltless waters; until from continent to continent the connection is made, and man holds converse with man at his ease as though distance were not. Recent investigations go to prove that chief among the causes that make for destruction of those communicating cables are the upheavals of lost rivers. In spite of the protection that scientific invention has provided for the central core of conducting wire, these irresistible outbursts of undersea torrents rend and destroy it, causing endless labour of replacement by the never-resting cable-ships. But this is only one of the many deeply interesting features of oceanography, a science of comparatively recent growth, but full of gigantic possibilities for the future knowledge of this planet. The researches of the *Challenger* expedition, embodied in fifty portly volumes, afford a vast mass of material for discussion, and yet it is evident that what they reveal is but the merest tentative dipping into the great mysterious land that lies hidden far below the level surface of the inscrutable sea.

That veteran man of science, Sir John Murray, has in a recent paper (*Royal Geographical Society's Journal*, October 1899) published his presidential address to the geographical section of the British Association at Dover, and even to the ordinary non-scientific reader his wonderful *résumé* of what has been done in the way of exploring the ocean's depths must be as entrancing as a fairy tale. The mere mention of such a chasm as that existing in the South Pacific between the Kermadecs and the Friendly Islands, where a depth of 5155 fathoms, or 530 feet more than five geographical miles, has been found, strikes the lay mind with awe. Mount Everest, that stupendous Himalayan peak whose summit soars far above the utmost efforts of even the most devoted mountaineers, a virgin fastness mocking man's soaring ambition, if sunk in the ocean at the spot just mentioned would disappear until its highest point was 2000 feet below the surface. Yet out of that abyss rises the volcanic mass of Sunday Island in the Kermadecs, whose crater is probably 2000 feet above the sea-level. But in no

less than forty-three areas visited by the *Challenger*, depths of over 3000 fathoms have been found, and their total area is estimated at 7,152,000 square miles, or about 7 per cent. of the total water-surface of the globe. Within these deeps are found many lower deeps, strangely enough generally in comparatively close proximity to land, such as the Tuscarora Deep, near Japan, one in the Banda Sea, that is to say, in the heart of the East India Archipelago, &c. Down, down into these mysterious waters the ingenious sounding-machine runs, taking out its four miles and upwards of pianoforte wire until the sudden stoppage of the swift descent marks the dial on deck with the exact number of fathoms reached. And yet so vast is the ocean bed that none can say with any certainty that far greater depths may not yet be found than any that have hitherto been recorded, amazing as they are.

The character of the ocean floor at all these vast depths as revealed by the sounding-tube bringing specimens to the surface is identical—red clay—which strikes the fancy queerly as being according to most ancient legends the substance out of which our first ancestor was builded, and from whence he derived his name. Mingled with this primordial ooze is found the débris of once living forms, many of them of extinct species, or species at any rate that have never come under modern man's observation except as fossils. The whole story, however, demands far more space than can here be allowed, but one more instance must be given of the wonders of the sea-bed in conclusion. Let a violent storm displace any considerable body of warm surface water, and lo! to take its place up rises an equal volume of cold under layers that have been resting far below the influence of the sun. Like a pestilential miasma these chill waves seize upon the myriads of the sea-folk and they die. The tale of death is incalculable, but one example is mentioned by Sir John Murray of a case of this kind off the eastern coast of North America in the spring of 1882, when a layer of dead fish and other marine animals six feet in thickness was believed to cover the ocean floor for many miles.

SHAKESPEARE AND THE SEA

Quite recently it was suggested by the writer of an article in the *Spectator* that Shakespeare was now but little read,—that while his works were quoted from as much as ever, the quotations were obtained at second hand, and that it would be hard to find to-day any reader who had waded through all that wonderful collection of plays and poems. This is surely not a carefully made statement. If there were any amount of truth in it, we might well regard such a state of things as only one degree less deplorable than that people should have ceased to read the Bible. For next to the Bible there can be no such collection of writings available wherein may be found food for every mind. Even the sailor, critical as he always is of allusions to the technicalities of his calling that appear in literature, is arrested by the truth of Shakespeare's references to the sea and seafaring, while he cannot but wonder at their copiousness in the work of a thorough landsman. Of course, in this respect it is necessary to remember that Elizabethan England spoke a language which was far more frequently studded with sea-terms than that which we speak ashore to-day. With all our vast commerce and our utter dependence upon the sea for our very life; its romance, its expressions take little hold of the immense majority of the people. Therein we differ widely from Americans. In every walk of life, from Maine to Mexico, from Philadelphia to San Francisco, the American people salt their speech with terms borrowed from the sailor, as they do also with other terms used by Shakespeare, and often considered by Shakespeare's countrymen of the present day, quite wrongly, to be slang.

In what is perhaps the most splendidly picturesque effort of Shakespeare's genius, "The Tempest," he hurls us at the outset into the hurly-burly of a storm at sea with all the terror-striking details attendant upon the embaying of a ship in such weather. She is a passenger ship, too, and the passengers behave as landsmen might be expected to do in such a situation. The Master (not Captain be it noted, for there are no Captains in the merchant-service) calls the boatswain. Here arises a difficulty for a modern sailor. Where was the mate? We cannot say that the office was not known, although Shakespeare nowhere alludes to such an officer; but this much is certain, that for one person who would understand who was meant by the mate ten would appreciate the mention of the boatswain's name, and that alone would justify its use in poetry. In this short colloquy between the Master and boatswain we have the very spirit of sea

service. An immediate reply to the Master's hail, and an inquiry in a phrase now only used by the vulgar, bring the assurance "Good"; but it is at once followed by "Speak to the mariners, fall to't yarely, or we run ourselves aground; bestir, bestir." Having given his orders the Master goes—he has other matters to attend to—and the boatswain heartens up his crew in true nautical fashion, his language being almost identical with that used to-day. His "aside" is true sailor,—“Blow till thou burst thy wind, if [we have] room enough.” This essentially nautical feeling, that given a good ship and plenty of sea-room there is nothing to fear, is alluded to again and again in Shakespeare. He has the very spirit of it. Then come the meddlesome passengers, hampering the hard-pressed officer with their questioning and advice!—until, exasperated beyond courtesy, he bursts out: “You mar our labour. Keep your cabins. You do assist the storm.” Bidden to remember whom he has on board, he gives them more of his mind, winding up by again addressing his crew with “cheerly good hearts,” and as a parting shot to his hinderers, “Out of our way, I say.”

But the weather grows worse; they must needs strike the topmast and heave-to under the main-course (mainsail), a manœuvre which, usual enough with Elizabethan ships, would never be attempted now. Under the same circumstances the lower main-topsail would be used, the mainsail having been furled long before because of its unwieldy size. Still the passengers annoy, now with abuse, which is answered by an appeal to their reason and an invitation to them to take hold and work. For the need presses. She is on a lee shore, and in spite of the fury of the gale sail must be made. “Set her two courses [mainsail and foresail], off to sea again, lay her off.” And now the sailors despair and speak of prayer, their cries met scornfully by the valiant boatswain with “What, must our mouths be cold?” Then follows that wonderful sea-picture beginning Scene 2, which remains unapproachable for vigour and truth. A little further on comes the old sea-superstition of the rats quitting a foredoomed ship, and in Ariel's report a spirited account of what must have been suggested to Shakespeare by stories of the appearance of “corposants” or St. Elmo's fire, usually accompanying a storm of this kind. And in answer to Prospero's question, “Who was so firm?” &c., Ariel bears incidental tribute to the mariners, —“All, but mariners, plunged in the foaming brine and quit the vessel,” those same mariners who are afterwards found, their vessel safely anchored, asleep under hatches, their dangerous toil at an end.

In the “Twelfth Night” there are many salt-water allusions no less happy, beginning with the bright picture of Antonio presented by the Captain (of a war-

ship?) breasting the sea upon a floating mast. Again in Act I., Scene 6, Viola answers Malvolio's uncalled-for rudeness, "Will you hoist sail, sir?" with the ready idiom, "No, good swabber, I am to hull [to heave-to] here a little longer." In Act V., Scene 1, the Duke speaks of Antonio as Captain of a "bawbling vessel—for shallow draught, and bulk, unprizable"; in modern terms, a small privateer that played such havoc with the enemy's fleet that "very envy and the tongue of loss cried fame and honour on him." Surely Shakespeare must have had Drake in his mind when he wrote this.

Who does not remember Shylock's contemptuous summing-up of Antonio's means and their probable loss?—"Ships are but boards, sailors but men, there be land rats and water rats, water thieves and land thieves—I mean, pirates; and then there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks" (Act I., Scene 3). In this same play, too, we have those terrible quicksands, the Goodwins, sketched for us in half-a-dozen lines: "Where the carcasses of many a tall ship lie buried" (Act III., Scene 1); and in the last scene of the last act Antonio says his "ships are safely come to *road*," an expression briny as the sea itself.

In the "Comedy of Errors," Act I., Scene 1, we have a phrase that should have been coined by an ancient Greek sailor-poet: "The always-wind-obeying deep"; and a little lower down the page a touch of sea-lore that would of itself suffice to stamp the writer as a man of intimate knowledge of nautical ways: "A small spare mast, such as seafaring men provide for storms." Who told Shakespeare of the custom of sailors to carry spare spars for jury-masts?

In "Macbeth," the first witch sings of the winds and the compass card, and promises that her enemy's husband shall suffer all the torments of the tempest-tossed sailor without actual shipwreck. She also shows a pilot's thumb "wrack'd, as homeward he did come." Who in these days of universal reading needs reminding of the allusion to the ship-boy's sleep in Act III., Scene 1, of "Henry IV.," a contrast of the most powerful and convincing kind, powerful alike in its poetry and its truth to the facts of Nature? Especially noticeable is the line where Shakespeare speaks of the spindrift: "And in the visitation of the winds who take the ruffian billows by the top, curling their monstrous heads, and hanging them with deaf'ning clamours in the slippery clouds."

"King Henry VI.," Act V., Scene 1, has this line full of knowledge of sea usage: "Than bear so low a sail, to strike to thee." Here is a plain allusion to the ancient custom whereby all ships of any other nation, as well as all merchant ships, were compelled to lower their sails in courtesy to British ships of war. The picture

compelled to lower their sails in courtesy to British ships of war. The picture given in “Richard III.,” Act I., Scene 4, of the sea-bed does not call for so much wonder, for the condition of that secret place of the sea must have had peculiar fascination for such a mind as Shakespeare’s. Set in those few lines he has given us a vision of the deeps of the sea that is final.

A wonderful passage is to be found in “Cymbeline,” Act III., Scene 1, that seems to have been strangely neglected, where the Queen tells Cymbeline to remember

“The natural bravery of your isle; which stands
As Neptune’s park, ribbed and palèd in
With rocks unscaleable and roaring waters;
With sands that will not bear your enemies’ boats,
But suck them up to the top-mast.”

And again, in the same scene, Cloten speaks of the Romans finding us in our
“salt-water girdle.”

But no play of Shakespeare’s, except “The Tempest,” smacks so smartly of the brine as “Pericles,” the story of that much enduring Prince of Tyre whose nautical mishaps are made to have such a miraculously happy ending. In Act II., Scene 1, enter Pericles, wet, invoking Heaven that the sea having manifested its sovereignty over man, may grant him one last boon,—a peaceful death. To him appear three fishermen characteristically engaged in handling their nets, bullying one another, and discussing the latest wreck. And here we get a bit of sea-lore that all sailors deeply appreciate. “*3rd Fish.* Nay, master, said not I as much, when I saw the porpus how he bounced and tumbled? they say, they are half fish, half flesh; a plague on them! they ne’er come but I look to be wash’d.” Few indeed are the sailors even in these steamship days who have not heard that the excited leaping of porpoises presages a storm. The whole scene well deserves quotation, especially the true description of the whale (rorqual) “driving the poor fry before him and at last devours them all at a mouthful.” Space presses, however, and it will be much better for those interested to read for themselves. Act III., Scene 1, brings before us a companion picture to that in the opening of “The Tempest,” perhaps even more vivid; where the terrible travail of the elements is agonisingly contrasted with the birth-wail of an infant, and the passing of the hapless Princess. Beautiful indeed is the rough but honest heartening offered by the labouring sailors, broken off by the sea-command to—

“1st Sailor. Slack the bolins there; thou wilt not, wilt thou?
Blow and split thyself.

2nd Sailor. But sea-room, an’ the brine and cloudy billow kiss
the moon, I care not.”

Bolins, modern “bowlines,” were anciently used much more than now. At present they are slight ropes which lead from forward to keep the weather edges (leaches) of the courses rigid in light winds when steering full and bye. But in olden days even topgallant sails had their bolins, and they were among the most important ropes in the ship. Then we have the sea-superstition creating the deepest prejudice against carrying a corpse. And, sympathetic as the mariners are, the dead woman must “overboard straight.” Reluctantly we must leave this all too brief sketch of Shakespeare’s true British sea-sympathies, in the hope that it may lead to a deeper appreciation of the sea-lore of our mightiest poet.

THE SKIPPER OF THE “AMULET”

It has been my lot, in the course of a fairly comprehensive experience of sea-life in most capacities between lamp-trimmer and chief officer, to serve under some queer commanders, but of all that I ever endured, the worthy of whom I am about to tell was, without doubt, the most amazing specimen. I have been told, on good authority, that the tag about fact being stranger than fiction is all bosh, but for once I am going to disregard that statement. No fiction that I have ever read has told me anything half so strange, in my poor judgment, as the career of Captain Jones during the time that I was unfortunate enough to be his mate, and therefore I shall stick to fact, at least as much of it as I can tell that will be fit for publication.

In order to launch my story fairly it is necessary to go back a little. On my return to London from my last voyage, with a pay-day of some £20, I had done two important things, though with the easy confidence of youth, and especially seafaring youth, their gravity had not impressed me. I got married and “passed” for chief mate. Neither my wife nor myself had a friend in the world, any certain employment or a stick of “plenishing.” And after a honeymoon of a day or two the tiny group of sovereigns nestling at the bottom of my right-hand trousers pocket dwindled so that I could hardly jingle them. There were plenty of ships in London at the time, but although I walked the soles fairly off my boots around the dreary docks never a one could I find where a second mate even was wanted. I found a good many where the officers were foreigners; Germans or Scandinavians; still more “where they didn’t keep the officers by the ship in dock,” and one day I was offered a *chance* to go first mate of a 1500 ton tramp to the Baltic at £5 a month! In spite of the shameful inadequacy of the salary I rushed off to the Surrey Commercial Docks after the berth, and arrived on board of her breathless, only to find that another man had got to windward of me, having earlier information. Sadly I trudged back again and recommenced my search, my funds all but gone and no credit obtainable. But now I couldn’t even get a ship before the mast! Gangs of ruffianly dock-wallopers fought like tigers at the “chain-locker,” whenever a skipper seeking a hand or two poked his head out of one of the doors, flourishing their discharges (?) in the air as they surged around the half-scared man. Anxious and indeed almost despairing as I was, I could not compete with that crowd, and I don’t believe I should ever have got a ship, but that one day a stalwart, pleasant-faced man opened the door. When the

gang began to mob him he roared, "I don' want navvies—I want a sailor-man: git t' hell out o' that, and let one o' them behind ye come here." Instantly I flung myself into the crowd and thrust my way up to him. He took my proffered discharge, but handed it back at once saying, "I don't want no steamboat sailors." He didn't understand the thing, being a Nova Scotiaman. I screamed back the truth at him, and pushed my way past him into the office, my heart fairly thumping with excitement at the prospect of £3 a month to go to Nova Scotia in the middle of winter. I winced a little when I found that she was only a brigantine, but the advance note for £3 was such a godsend that I could only be thankful.

Of the passage across in the *Wanderer* I need say nothing here except that the sea kindness of the little craft (the smallest I had ever sailed in) amazed me, while, except for a disaster in the shape of a cook, the general conditions of life on board were most comfortable. After twenty days we arrived at Sydney, Cape Breton, and upon entering the harbour noticed a vessel lying disconsolately apart from the little fleet at anchor there. She was a brig belonging to Workington, exactly like an exaggerated barge as to her hull, and bearing all over unmistakable evidences of utter neglect. In fact her general appearance suggested nothing so much to me as the nondescript craft common on the Indian coast, and called by sailors "country-wallahs." She provided us with plenty of material for our evening chat, but in the morning other matters claimed our attention and we soon forgot all about her. As we had come over in ballast our stay was to be short, and on the second day after our arrival news came that we were to proceed to Lingan, a small port down the coast, in the morning, and there load soft coal for St. John, New Brunswick. But, much to my surprise, just after supper, as I was leaning over the rail enjoying my pipe, the mate approached me mysteriously and beckoned me aft. As soon as we were out of hearing of the other men, he told me that if I liked to put my dunnage over into the boat, he would pull me ashore, the skipper having intimated his willingness to let me go, although unable to discharge me in the regular way. He had heard that there was a vessel in the harbour in want of a mate, and hoped that thus I might be able to better myself. Being quite accustomed to all vicissitudes of fortune I at once closed with the offer, and presently found myself on the beach of this strange place without one cent in my pocket, in utter darkness and a loneliness like that of some desert island.

I sat quite still for some little time, trying to sum up the situation, but the night being very cold, I had to move or get benumbed. Leaving my bag and bed where

it was I groped my way into the town, and after about a quarter of an hour's stumbling along what I afterwards found was the main street, I saw a feeble light. Making for it at once I discovered a man standing at the door of a lowly shanty smoking, the light I had seen proceeding from a tallow candle flickering in the interior. Receiving my salutation with gruff heartiness the man bade me welcome to such shelter as he had, so I lugged my dunnage up and entered. He showed me an ancient squab whereon I might lie, and closing the street door bade me good night, disappearing into some mysterious recess in a far corner. I composed myself for sleep, but the place was simply alive with fleas, which, tasting fresh stranger, gave me a lively time. Before morning I was bitterly envious of the other occupant of the room, who lay on the bare floor in a drunken stupor, impervious to either cold or vermin. At the first gleam of dawn I left, taking a brisk walk until somebody was astir in the place, when I soon got quarters in a boarding-house. Then as early as possible I made for the shipping office, finding to my surprise that the vessel in want of a mate was the ancient relic that had so much amused us as we entered the harbour. After a good deal of searching, the commander of her was found—a bluff, red-faced man with a watery, wandering eye, whose first words betrayed him for a Welshman. He was as anxious to get a mate as I was to get a ship, so we were not long coming to terms—£6 per month. Her name I found was the *Amulet*, last from Santos, and now awaiting a cargo of coal for St. John, New Brunswick. No sooner had I signed articles than the skipper invited me to drink with him, and instantly became confidential. But as he had already been drinking pretty freely, and even his sober English was no great things, I was not much the wiser for our conference. However, bidding him good day, I went on board and took charge, finding the old rattletrap in a most miserable condition, the second mate in a state of mutiny, and the crew doing just whatever they pleased. I had not been on board an hour before I was in possession of the history of their adventures since leaving England eighteen months before. I found too that I was the fourth mate that voyage, and judging from appearances I thought it unlikely that I should be the last. As soon as he had finished unburdening himself to me, the second mate, who seemed a decent fellow enough, started to pack up, swearing in both Welsh and English that he was finished with her. Of course I had no means of preventing him from going even if I had wished to do so, and away he went. Then I turned my attention to the ship, finding the small crew (seven all told) desperately sullen, but still willing to obey my orders. Oh, but she was a wreck, and so dirty that I hardly knew whether it was worth while attempting to cleanse her. There was abundance of good fresh food though, and one of the men helped the grimy muttering Welsh lad who was supposed to be the cook, so that the

meals were at least eatable. According to my orders I was to report progress to the skipper every morning at his hotel, and next morning I paid him a visit. I found him in bed, although it was eleven o'clock, with a bottle of brandy sticking out from under his pillow and quite comfortably drunk. He received my remarks with great gravity, graciously approving of what I had done, and assuring me that he was very ill indeed. I left him so, thinking deeply over my queer position, and returned on board to find the second mate back again in a furious rage at not being able to get at the "old man," but resigned to going with us to St. John as a passenger. Well, as time went on I managed to get her in some sort of trim, received the cargo on board, bent the sails, and made all ready for sea, the second mate lolling at his ease all day long or in his bunk asleep. Every morning I saw the skipper, always in bed and always drunk. Thus three weeks passed away. When the vessel had been a week ready for sea, during most of which time a steady fair wind for our departure had been blowing, I had a visitor. After a few civil questions he told me he was the agent, and proposed giving the captain one day longer in which to clear out, failing which he would on his own responsibility send the vessel to sea without him. I of course raised no objection, but seized the opportunity to get a few pounds advance of wages which I at once despatched home to my wife. The agent's threat was effectual, for at noon the next day my commander came on board accompanied by a tugboat which towed us out to sea, although a fair wind was blowing. No sooner had the pilot left us to our own devices than Captain Jones retired to his bunk, and there he remained, his cabin no bad representation of a miniature Malebolge. Details impossible.

Unfortunately I had so severely injured my left hand that I could not use it at all, and the second mate, though perfectly friendly with me, would do nothing but just keep a look-out while I got some sleep; he wouldn't even trim sail. The first day out I took sights for longitude by the chronometer, which I had kept regularly wound since I had been on board, but I found to my horror that it had been tampered with, and was utterly useless. It was now the latter end of November, fogs and gales were of everyday occurrence, the currents were very strong and variable, and I was on an utterly strange coast in command for the first time in my life. When I saw the sun, which was seldom, I thought myself lucky to get the latitude, and Sable Island under my lee with its diabolical death-traps haunted me waking and sleeping. My only hope of escaping disaster was in the cod-schooners, which, as much at home in those gloomy, stormy waters as a cabman in London streets, could always be relied on to give one a fairly accurate position. Then the rotten gear aloft kept giving out, and there was nothing to

repair it with, while the half-frozen men could hardly be kept out of their little dog-hole at all. Only one man in the ship was having a good time, and that was the skipper. Hugging a huge jar of “chain lightning” brandy he never wanted anything else, and no one ever went near him except the poor little scalawag of a cook, who used to rate him in Welsh until the discord was almost deafening. But if I were to tell fairly the story of that trip round Nova Scotia it would take a hundred pages. So I must hurry on to say that we *did* reach St. John by God’s especial mercy, and laid her alongside the wharf.

I am afraid I shall hardly be believed when I say that Captain Jones reappeared on deck at once and went ashore, promising to return by six o’clock. Now the tide rises and falls in St. John’s over thirty feet, so when night came the *Amulet* was resting on the mud, and the edge of the wharf was very nearly level with our main-top. I had prepared a secure gangway with a bright lantern for my superior’s return, but about eleven o’clock that night he strolled down and walked calmly over the edge of the wharf where the gangway was not. All hands were aroused by his frantic cries of “Misser Bewlon, Misser Bewlon, for Gaw’ sake safe my lyve!” After much search we found him and hoisted him on board out of the mud in which he was embedded to the armpits. No bones were broken, and next day he was well enough to climb ashore and get into a conveyance which took him up town to another “hotel.” A repetition of the tactics of Sydney now set in, except that I did not visit him so frequently. The second mate and one of the men got their discharge out of him and left us, in great glee at their escape. Then I think some one must have remonstrated with him whose words were not to be made light of, for one day he came on board and tried to get all hands to sign a paper that he had got drawn up, certifying that he was a strictly sober man! He was so hurt at their refusal. Finally he re-embarked, bringing a tugboat and pilot with him as before, and the startling news that we were to tow right across the Bay of Fundy and up the Basin of Minas to Parrsboro’, but no sooner were we abreast of Partridge Island than again my commander disappeared below. All through the night the panting tug toiled onward with us, the pilot remaining at his post till dawn. Fortunately for my peace of mind I knew little about the perilous navigation of this great bay, the home of the fiercest tides in the world. But when, drawing near Cape Blomidon, I saw the rate at which we were being hurled along by the fury of the intrushing flood, I felt profoundly thankful that the responsibility for our safety was not upon me. However, we arrived intact that afternoon and proceeded up the river, which was as crooked as a ram’s horn, and only began to have any water in its bed when it was half flood outside. As we neared the village the pilot asked me to what

wharf we were going, as we could not lay in the dry river bed. I knew no more than he did, and neither of us could shake any sense into the unconscious skipper. So we tied her up to the first jetty we came to, and pilot and tugboat took their departure. There was a fine to-do when the wharfinger heard of our arrival, and I had to go up to the village and ask all round for information as to where we were to lie. I got instructions at last, and shifted to a berth where we were allowed to remain. Next day the old man went ashore again, saying nothing to me, and I remained in ignorance of his whereabouts for ten days. Meanwhile lumber began to arrive for us, and a scoundrelly stevedore came on board with the skipper's authority to stow the cargo. He and I quickly came to loggerheads, for I did not at all fancy the way he was "blowing her up," and the dread of our winter passage to Europe lay heavy upon me. But I found that all power to interfere with him was taken out of my hands, and I just had to stand by and see potential murder being done.

At last one day at dinner-time the old man paid us a visit, characteristically announcing himself by falling between the vessel and the wharf into the ice-laden water. Of course he wasn't hurt—didn't even get a chill, but he was taken back to his "hotel," and came no more to see us. With the completion of our deck-load my patience was exhausted, and as soon as she was ready for sea, I hunted him up and demanded my discharge. I felt prepared to take all reasonable risks, but to cross the Atlantic in December with a vessel like a top-heavy bladder under me, and myself the sole officer, was hardly good enough. Of course he wouldn't release me, and the upshot was, to cut my yarn short, that I remained ashore penniless, while he towed back to St. John, engaged another unfortunate mate, and after a week's final spree, sailed for home. As I had expected, she got no farther than the mouth of the Bay of Fundy. There her old bones were finally broken up in a howling snowstorm, in which several of the crew were frozen to death, but he escaped to worry better men again.

Two years after in the Court of Queen's Bench we met again, when I arose, the one essential witness to his misdoings, and made him feel as if my turn had come at last.

AMONG THE ENCHANTED ISLES

Enchained by the innumerable complexities of modern city existence, how strangely, how sweetly, do the dreams of roaming amid isles of perpetual summer come to the pale slave of civilisation. Leaning back in his office chair, the pen drops idly from his relaxed fingers, while the remorseless hum from the human hive without loses its distinctive note and becomes by some strange transmutation the slumberous murmur of snowy surf upon far-off coral shores. The dim ceiling, that so often has seemed to press upon his brain like the load of Atlas, melts upward into a celestial canopy of a blue so deep and pure that it is the last expression of the Infinite.

On the wings of fancy, swifter and more easeful than those of the albatross, he is wafted to those fairy shores where Nature smiles in changeless youth and winterless glow. Through every weary sinew thrills the bright message of life, the unconscious outcome of perfect health absorbed from perfect surroundings. He is back again in the days of the world's infancy, feeling his mid-millennial vigour bounding in every pulse, flooding every artery. In cunningly-fashioned canoe, with grass-woven sails, he floats upon the radiant sea, so like to the heaven above that his gliding shallop seems to swing through the boundless ether, a sprite, a fay of the fruitful brain.

Then as the flood-tide of living bubbles over the brim of restraint he lifts a mighty voice, a full-throated cry of joy wherein is no speech nor language, only exultant music welling up from deeps of fathomless satisfaction. He springs erect, with flashing eyes, and rolling muscles heaving under his shining skin, such a figure as, made in His own glorious image, the Master gazed upon—and, behold, it was very good. Far below him swim the gorgeous sea-folk, each ablaze with colour, living jewels enhanced by their setting. In mazy evolutions full of grace they woo him to join in their play, to explore with them the splendours of the coral groves, to wreath about his majestic form the tender festoons of sea-flowers and deck himself with glowing shells.

Like a dolphin he dives, deeper and deeper as with grasping hands he overcomes the resisting waters. Deeper and deeper yet until the fervent sunshine is suffused into a milder, tenderer light, and everything around is enwrapped in a beauty-

mist, a glamorous illusion that melts all angles into curves of loveliness. He enters into the palaces of the deep, and all the skill of Titanic builders on earth becomes to his mind a thing of naught. Interminable rows of columns, all symmetrical, each perfect in beauty, yet none alike, are arrayed before him; massy architraves, domes light-springing from their piers as bubbles, yet in circumference so vast that their limits are lost in shadow, slender spires of pearl, soaring upward like vapour-wreaths: and all interwoven with the wondrous design a fairy tracery of stone, appearing light and luminous as sea foam. The happy living things troop forth to meet him and sweep in many a delicate whirl around until, recalled by the need of upper air, he waves them farewell and ascends.

Oh! the fierce delight of that swift upward rush, the culminating ecstasy as he bounds into the palpitating air above and lies, so softly cradled, upon the limpid wave! There for a season he floats, drinking deep of the brine-laden air, every touch of the sea a caress, every heart-beat a well-spring of pleasure. Then with a shout he hurls himself forward as if he too were a free citizen of the ocean, emulating with almost equal grace the sinuous spring of the porpoise and the marvellous succession of curves presented by the overwhelming whale. He claims kindred with them all, embraces them; clinging lovingly to their smooth sides he frolics with them, rejoicing in the plenitude of their untainted strength.

Before him rise the islands, mounds of emerald cresting bases of silver sand. Willowy palm-trees dip their roots in the warm wavelets and rear their tufted coronets on high. Darker-leaved, the orange-trees droop their branches shot with golden gleams where the fruit hangs heavily, filling the gentle air with fragrance. Bright-plumaged birds flash amongst the verdure; along the glittering shores rest placidly the sea-fowl returned from their harvesting and comforting their fluffy broods. With huge steps he strides shorewards, and springing lightly from the sand, he reaches in a dozen bounds the crown of the loftiest palm, whose thickly-clustering fruit bids him drink and drink again.

The island folk dread him not; fear has not yet visited those sunny shores. And as he was with the sea-people so is he with their compeers on land, a trusted playfellow, a creature perfect in glory and beauty, able to vie with them in their superb activities, their amazing play of vigour, their abounding joy in the plentiful gifts of Nature.

After those sunny gambols, how sweet the rest on yielding couch of leaves, fanned by sweet zephyrs laden with the subtle scents of luxuriant flowers and

rained by sweet zephyrs laden with the subtle scents of fragrant flowers, and lulled by the slumber-song of the friendly sea. Around him, with drooping wing, nestle the birds; the bejewelled insects hush their busy songs into tenderest murmurs, the green leaves hang in unrustling shade, noiselessly waving over him a cool breath. There is peace and sleep.

“Awake, O laggard!” cry the birds; “awake and live! Joy comes anew. Love and life and strength are calling us, and every sense answers triumphantly. Sweet is the dawn when the splendid sun springs skyward and the quiet night steals away; sweet is the strength of noonday, when downward he sends his shafts of life-giving flame, and we lie in the shade renewing from his exhaustless stores of energy our well-spent strength. But sweetest of all the time when, his majestic ascension accomplished, our sun sweeps westward to his ocean-bed, and all his children hasten to revel in his tempered beams until he hides his glorious face for a season, and night brings her solemn pleasures.”

Swift upspringing the man answers gladly to the call. And forth to meet him come a joyous band of his fellows, their dancing feet scarce touching the earth. Not a weakling among them. Men and women and children alike clean-limbed and strong, with sparkling eyes and perfect gestures. Their nude shapes shine like burnished bronze with natural unguents, their white and well-set teeth glitter as they laugh whole-heartedly, their black, abundant hair is entwined with scarlet hibiscus, and their voices ring musical and full. They do not walk—they bound, they spring, and toss their arms in wildest glee.

Surrounding him, they bear him away to where a crystal river rushes headlong down through a valley of velvet green to cast itself tumultuously over a cliff-lip forty feet into the sea. As it approaches its leap the translucent waters whirl faster and faster in rising wreaths and ridges of dazzling white, until in one snowy mass, crowned with a pearly mist, it hurls itself into the smooth blue depths below. With one accord the wildly gambolling band hurl themselves into those limpid waters some hundreds of yards above the fall. As on softest couch they glide swiftly along, their peals of laughter echoing multitudinously from the green bosoms of the adjacent hills.

Faster and faster still they are borne onward until, singly and in groups, they flash out into the sunshine and plunge into the awaiting ocean. So swiftly do they pass that it seems but a breathing space since, far inland, they sprang from the banks into the river, and they now lie in blissful content upon the quiet sea, every nerve tingling from that frantic, headlong flight. Then, like the care-free

children of Nature that they are, they abandon themselves to their wild sea-sports, outdoing the fabled Nereids. Around them gather in sympathy the gorgeous dolphins, the leisurely sharks, the fun-loving porpoises, while over their heads dart incessantly in arrowy flight glittering squadrons of flying-fish.

So they frolic untiringly until, by one impulse moved, they all dash off to where, outside the enormous headland of black rock which shelters the little bay, the vast and solemn ocean swell comes rolling shoreward, towering higher as it comes, until, meeting the bright beach, it raises itself superbly in one magnificent curve of white, and dashes against the firm-set earth with a deep note as of far-off thunder.

The merry players range themselves in line and swim seaward to meet the next wave as it comes. Diving beneath it they reappear upon its creaming shoulders, and by sheer skill balance there, elated almost beyond bearing by the pace of their mighty steed. Higher and higher they rise, clothed by the hissing foam, until from its summit they spring to land and race to the woods.

Only a breathing space passes, and again they come rushing shoreward to where a mimic fleet of light canoes lies covered with boughs to shield them from the sun. As if time were all important, they fling the leaves aside and rush the frail craft into the water, springing in as they glide afloat. Two by two they sail away, an occasional persuasive touch of the paddles sufficing to guide and propel them whithersoever they will.

The sun is nearing the western edge of their world, and his slanting beams are spreading lavishly over the silken waters broad bands of rich and swiftly changing colour. A hush that is holy is stealing over all things, a stillness so profound that the light splash of a flying-fish tinkles clear as a tiny bell. The happy people float along in a delicious languor, feasting their eyes upon the doubled beauty of the landscape near the shore, where the line dividing the reality from its reflection cannot be discerned.

Beneath them are constantly changing pictures no less lovely, the marvellous surfaces of the living coral with all its wealth of tinted anemones and brilliantly-decked fish of all shapes and all hues. Carried by the imperceptible current, they pass swiftly, silently, from scene to scene, over depths so profound that the waters are almost blue-black, and as suddenly coming upon a submarine grove of rigid coral trees, whose topmost branches nearly break through the placid surface.

Presently the sun is gone, and the tender veil of night comes creeping up from the East. Already the Evening Star, like a minute moon, is sending a long thread of silver over the purpling sea. Beneath the waters the sea-folk have begun their nightly illumination, and overhead are peeping out, one by one, the vedettes of the night. Bird and beast and fish have ceased their play, and a gentle wind arises. The canoes glide shoreward noiselessly, and the voyagers seek through scented pathways their leafy homes.

“Poor fellow, you look a bit stale and overworked! You ought to run down to the seaside for a week!”

And the suddenly-awakened clerk starts up, muttering a half-intelligible apology to his employer, who stands regarding him with a look of pity. But for a few fleeting moments he has been perfectly happy.

SOCIABLE FISH

In one of the most charming chapters of that truly charming book, Gilbert White's "Natural History of Selborne," the gentle author tells of some strange instances of sociability among the denizens of the farmyard, a craving for companionship that brought into intimate acquaintanceship such widely differing animals as a horse and a hen, a doe and some cattle. This, as a proof that loneliness is an abnormal condition of life even among the lesser intelligences of creation, "gives to think," as our neighbours say; but probably few people would imagine that the same desire for society obtains even among the inhabitants of the deep and wide sea.

I do not now speak of such gregarious fish as compose the great shoals that beneficently visit the shallower waters washing populous countries, from whose innumerable multitudes whole nations may be fed without making any appreciable diminution in their apparently infinite numbers; but of those more varied and widely scattered species that are to be found near the sea-surface all over the ocean. In the ordinary routine of modern passenger traffic no observation of these truly deep-sea fish is possible, for, in the first place, the breathless panting of the propeller fills them with dread of the swiftly-gliding monster whose approach it heralds; and in the next, the would-be observer has no time to catch even a glimpse of the inhabitants of that teeming world beneath him with, perhaps, the exception of a rapidly-passing school of porpoises or the hurried vision of a sea-shouldering whale.

No, for the deliberate observation necessary in order to know something of the sea-people a sailing-ship must be chosen, the slower the better, one wherein may be felt to its fullest extent by the mindless, sightless passenger the "intolerable tedium of a long voyage." In such a ship as this the student of marine natural history, provided he be not responsible to stern owners for the length of his passage, will welcome with great delight the solemn hush of the calm, when the windless dome above him is filled with perfect peace, and the shining circle upon which he floats is like the pupil of God's eye. Then, leaning over the taffrail, looking earnestly down into the crystalline blue, you may see the bottom of the ship without visible support as if poised in a sky of deeper blue and more limpid atmosphere. The parasitic life that has already attached itself to the vessel is all busy living. Barnacles with their long, glutinous feet-stalks waving in

imperceptible motion, are expanding from between their shells delicate fringes of brown, that, all eyes to see and hands to hold, allow nothing that can feed them to pass them by. And as they flex themselves inward with the supplies they have drawn from the apparently barren water, you can fancy that the pearly whiteness of the shells gleams with a brighter lustre as of satisfaction. The dull-hued limpets, like pustules breaking out upon the ship's sheathing, may also be discerned, but less easily, because they have such a neutral tint, and love to nestle amongst a tangle of dank, deep-green sea-moss, that, except where the light from above breaks obliquely down upon it, looks almost black.

But a little patient watching will reveal a set of tiny arms forth-darting from the irregular opening in the apex of each limpet-cone. They, too, are busy continually, arresting every morsel, invisible to feeble human sight, that comes within their reach, and passing it within for the up-keep of the compact, self-contained residence. And there, can it be possible, at all this distance from land? It is not only possible but undeniable that there is a *crab*, an impudent, inquisitive little tangle of prying claws surrounding a disc about the size of a shilling. He strolls about in leisurely fashion, but making a track at all sorts of angles, among the living fixtures, skirting each barnacle or limpet with a ludicrous air of contempt, as it seems. You can almost imagine him saying: "I never saw such a lot of dead-an'-alive ornaments in my life. Say! how d'you like stoppin' in the same old spot for ever an' ever?" But, impervious to his rudeness, the busy creatures never cease their one set of movements, utterly ignoring his very existence. You cannot help but wonder what becomes of that little crab when the ship begins to move, for you know that he can't possibly hold on against the tremendous brushing past of the water. He isn't built for that.

The other parasites, whether animal or vegetable, have, you notice, been busy for who shall say how long adapting themselves to every condition of their dependent life, so that now, whatever motion be made by the ship, they present to the onrush of the water just the right angle of surface that will allow it to slip over them easily, while at the same time they are always in a position to levy contributions. There is a puzzling lead-coloured streak along the copper near the keel to which your eye returns again and again, for although it will persist in looking like a place whence a strip of sheathing has been torn, there is yet a suggestion of quivering life about it which is certainly not the tremulous outline given to every inanimate object under water. Suddenly your doubts are set at rest—the mystery is solved. The steward has cast over the side some fragments of food that settle slowly downwards, turning over and over as they sink and

catching the diffused light at every point, so that they sparkle like gems. As they pass the almost motionless keel the leaden-looking streak suddenly detaches itself, and, almost startlingly revealed as a graceful fish, intercepts and swallows those morsels one after the other. You fetch a few more fragments, and, dropping them one by one, entice your new acquaintance nearer the surface, so that you may admire the easy grace of every movement, and study at your leisure the result of this creature's development along certain lines of inventiveness.

It is a *Remora*, or "sucker," a species of shark that never exceed a dozen pounds in weight. Having all the shark's usual qualities of slothfulness, voracity, and timorousness, it is prevented from becoming ferocious also by its limitations of size and the feebleness of its teeth. And as it would be hopeless for it to attempt to prey upon other fish while they are alive, from its lack of the requisite speed as well as from the scarcity of fish of sufficiently small size in the deep waters which are its abiding-place, it has developed a parasitic habit, which saves it a whole world of trouble by insuring its protection, economising exertion, and keeping it in the midst of a plentiful food-supply. All these objects are attained in the simplest manner possible, aided by an unfailing instinct guiding the creature in its selection of an involuntary host.

On the top of its head, which is perfectly flat, it has developed an arrangement which has, perhaps, the most artificial appearance of anything found in animated Nature. It is in plan an oblong oval, with a line running along its middle, to which other diagonal lines, perfectly parallel to each other, extend from the outer edge. The whole thing is curiously like the non-slipping tread moulded upon the soles of many lawn-tennis shoes. This strangely patterned contrivance is really an adhesive attachment of such strength that, when by its means the fish is holding on to any plane surface, it is impossible to drag the body away, except by almost tearing the fish in half. Yet by the flexing of some simple muscles the fish can release its body instantly, or as instantly re-attach itself. Of course, it always adheres to its host with its head pointing in the same direction as the host usually travels, because in that manner the pressure of the water assists the grip of the sucker and keeps the whole body lying flatly close to whatever is carrying it along. In this position it can perform all the natural functions. Its wide mouth gapes; its eyes, set one on either side of its flattened head, take in a most comprehensive view of the prospect, so that nothing having the appearance of edibility can pass that way without being seen and, if the speed of its host admits, immediately investigated. Thus its sociability is obviously of the most

selfish kind. It sticketh closer than a brother, but affection for its protecting companion forms no part of its programme. Its number is, emphatically, One.

I have used the word “host” intentionally, because the remora does not by any means limit its company to ships. It is exceedingly fond of attaching itself to the body of a whale, and also to some of the larger sharks. Indeed, it goes a step further than mere outward attachment in the latter case, because well-authenticated instances are recorded where several suckers have been found clinging to a huge shark’s palate. This is another stage on the way to perfect parasitism, because under such circumstances these daring lodgers needed not to detach themselves any more. They had only to intercept sufficient food for their wants on its way from the front door to the interior departments. I have also seen them clinging to the jaw of a sperm whale, but that jaw was not in working order. It was bent outwards at right angles to the body, and afforded harbourage to a most comprehensive collection of parasites, barnacles especially, giving the front elevation of that whale an appearance utterly unlike anything with life.

But John Chinaman has outwitted the superlatively lazy remora. By what one must regard as a triumph of ingenuity he has succeeded in converting the very means whereby this born-tired fish usually escapes all necessity for energy into an instrument for obtaining gain for other people. The mode is as follows: First catch your remora. No difficulty here. A hook and line of the simplest, a bait of almost anything that looks eatable lowered by the side of a ship, and if there be a sucker hidden there he will be after the lure instantly. The only skill necessary is to haul him up swiftly when he bites, because if he be allowed to get hold of the ship again you may pull the hook out of his jaws, but you will not succeed in detaching him. Having caught a remora, the fisherman fastens a brass ring closely round its body, just at its smallest part before the spread of the tail. To this he attaches a long, fine, and strong line. He then departs for the turtle grounds with his prisoner. Arriving there he confines himself to keeping the remora away from the bottom of his boat by means of a bamboo. Of course the captive gets very tired, and no turtle can pass within range of him without his hanging on to that turtle for a rest. The moment he does so the turtle’s fate is sealed. Struggle how he may, he cannot shake loose the tenacious grip of the sucker, and the stolid yellow man in the sampan has only to haul in upon the line to bring that unwilling turtle within range of his hands and lift him into the boat. And this ingenious utilisation of the sucker’s well-known peculiarity has also commended itself to the semi-barbarous fishermen of the East African littoral, who are not otherwise notable for either ingenuity or enterprise.

Before we dismiss the remora to his beloved rest again it is worthy of notice that he himself gives unwilling hospitality to another sociable creature. It is a little crustacean, rather like an exaggerated woodlouse, but without the same power of curling itself into a ball. It is of a pearly white colour, very sluggish in its movements, but with tenacious hooks upon its many legs it holds on securely to the inside of the sucker's mouth near the gill-slits, being there provided with all the needs of its existence, without the slightest effort of its own. Its chief interest to naturalists lies in its strange likeness to the fossil trilobites so plentifully scattered among various geological strata.

But while you have been watching the remora a visitor from the vast openness around has arrived, as if glad of the society afforded by the ship. Yet in this case the idea seems a fond conceit, because the new-comer is only a "jelly-fish," or "Medusa." It is really an abuse of language to use the word "fish" in connection with such an almost impalpable entity as the Medusa, because while a fish is an animal high up the scale of the vertebrata, a Medusa is almost at the bottom of the list of created things. When floating in the sea it is an exceedingly pretty object, with its clear, mushroom-shaped disc uppermost, and long fringe of feathery filaments, sometimes delicately coloured, waving gracefully beneath with each pulsation of the whole mass. It has no power of independent locomotion, no—but, there, it is not easy to say what it *has* got, since if you haul one up in a bucket and lay it on deck in the sun, it will melt entirely away, leaving not a trace behind except two or three tiny morsels of foreign matter which did not belong to its organism at all. Yet if one of these masses of jelly comes into contact with your bare skin it stings like a nettle, for it secretes, in some mysterious way, an acrid fluid that serves it instead of many organs possessed by further advanced creatures. As the present subject passes beneath your gaze you notice quite a little cluster of tiny fish smaller even than full-grown tittlebats, perhaps a dozen or so, who look strangely forlorn in the middle of the ocean. It may be that this sense of loneliness leads them to seek the shelter of something larger than themselves, something which will be a sort of rallying-point in such a wide world of waters.

Perhaps the lovely streamers dangling have aroused their curiosity, but, whatever the motive, you see the little group, huddled round the Medusa, popping in and out from the edge of the disc, through which you can plainly see them as they pass beneath. It is quite pretty to watch those innocent games of the sportive little fish, but presently you notice that one of them doesn't play any more. He is entangled among those elegant fringes and hangs like a little silver streak,

brightening and fading as it is turned by the pulsatory movement of the Medusa. And if you could watch it long enough you would see it gradually disappear, absorbed into the jelly-like substance by the solvent secreted by the Medusa for that purpose. Still unconscious of their companion's fate, the other little victims continue to play in that treacherous neighbourhood, voluntarily supplying the needs of an organism immeasurably beneath them in the sum-total of all those details that go to make up conscious life.

Closely gathered about the rudder and stern-post is another group of larger fish, the several individuals being from 4 in. to 8 in. long, and most elegant in shape and colour. They evidently seek the ship for protection, for they scarcely ever leave her vicinity for more than 2 ft. or 3 ft. If one of them does dart away that distance after some, to you, imperceptible morsel of food, it is back again in a flash, sidling up to her sheathing closer than ever, as if dreadfully alarmed at its own temerity. A small hook baited with a fragment of meat will enable you to catch one if only you can get it to fall close enough to the rudder—no easy matter, because of the great overhang of the stern. In the old-fashioned ships, where the rudder-head moved in a huge cavity called the rudder-trunk, I have often caught them by dropping my hook down there, and very sweet-eating little fish they were. Sailors call them “rudder-fish,” a trivial name derived from their well-known habit, but they are really a species of “caranx,” and akin to the mackerel tribe, which has so many representatives among deep-water fish. They are, perhaps, the most sociable of all the fish that visit a ship far out at sea; but they present the same problem that the crab did a little while ago: What becomes of them when a breeze springs up and the vessel puts on speed?

I have often watched them at the beginning of a breeze, swimming steadily along by the side of the stern-post, so as to be clear of the eddies raised by the rudder; but it was always evident that a rate of over three knots would leave them astern very soon. Not less curious is the speculation as to whence they come so opportunely. There seems to be very few of them, yet an hour or two's calm nearly always shows a little company of them cowering in their accustomed place. As you watch them wonderingly, a broad blaze of reflected light draws your attention to the splendid shape of a dolphin gliding past and exposing the silver shield of his side to the sun's rays, which radiate from it with an almost unbearable glare. At that instant every one of the little fish beneath you gather into one compact bunch, so close to the stern-post that they look as if part of it. When they can no longer keep up with the ship's protecting bulk how do they escape the jaws of such beautiful ravenous monsters as that which has just

passed: the swift flying-fish cannot do so, even with the swallow-like speed that he possesses and the power of skimming through the air for a thousand yards at a flight. What chance, then, can our shrinking little companions possibly have, or how do they survive amidst so many enemies? It is an unsolvable mystery.

What is this cold grey shadow stealing along through the bright blue water by the keel? A shark, and a big one too. No one doubts the reason for *his* sociability; in fact, he (or she) is credited by most sailors with a most uncanny knowledge of what is going on aboard any ship he chooses to honour with his company. We need not be so foolish as to believe any of these childish stories, especially when the obvious explanation lies so closely on the surface. Heredity accounts for a great many things that have long been credited with supernatural origins, and the shark's attachment to the society of ships is so plainly hereditary that the slightest thought upon the subject will convince any unbiased person of the reasonableness of the explanation. For many generations the shark, born scavenger that he is, has learned to associate the huge shadow cast by a ship with food, not perhaps in such mountainous abundance as that provided by the carcass of a dead whale, but still scattering savoury morsels at fairly regular intervals. From its earliest days—when, darting in and out of its mother's capacious jaws, it has shared in the spoil descending from passing ships—to the end of what is often a very long life, ships and food are inseparably associated in whatever answers to its mind in the shark. Man, alive or dead, always makes a welcome change of diet to a fish that, by reason of his build, is unable to prey upon other fish as do the rest of his neighbours.

As I have said elsewhere, the shark eats man because man is easy to catch, not because he likes man's flesh better than any other form of food, as many landsmen and even sailors believe. But the shark is only able to gratify his sociable instincts in calms or very light airs. He is far too slothful, too constitutionally averse to exertion, to expend his energies in the endeavour to keep up with a ship going at even a moderate rate of speed. Let the wind drop, however, and in few parts of the sea will you be without a visit from a shark for many hours. In one vessel that I sailed in the skipper had such a delicate nose that he could not bear the stench of the water in which the day's allowance of salt meat had been steeped to get some of the pickle out of it. So he ordered a strong net to be made of small rope, and into this the meat was put, the net secured to a stout line, and hung over the stern just low enough to dip every time the vessel curtsied. The plan answered admirably for some time, until one night

the wind fell to a calm, and presently the man at the wheel heard a great splash behind him. He rushed to the taffrail and looked over, just in time to see the darkness beneath all aglow with phosphorescence, showing that some unusual agitation had recently taken place. He ran to the net-lanyard, and, taking a good pull, fell backward on deck, for there was nothing fast to it. Net and meat were gone. The skipper was much vexed, of course, that the net hadn't been hauled up a little higher when it fell calm, for, as he told the mate, anybody ought to know that 30 lbs. of salt pork dangling overboard in a calm was enough to call a shark up from a hundred miles away.

As this particular shark, now sliding stealthily along the keel towards the stern, becomes more clearly visible, you notice what looks at first like a bright blue patch on top of his head. But, strange to say, it is not fixed; it shifts from side to side, backwards and forwards, until, as the big fish rises higher, you make it out to be the pretty little caranx that shares with the crocodile and buffalo birds the reputation of being the closest possible companion and chum of so strangely diverse an animal to himself. And now we are on debatable ground, for this question of the sociability of the pilot-fish with the shark has been most hotly argued. And perhaps, like the cognate question of the flight of flying-fish, it is too much to hope that any amount of first-hand testimony will avail to settle it now. Still, if a man will but honestly state what he has *seen*, not once, but many times repeated, his evidence ought to have some weight in the settlement of even the most vexed questions. Does the pilot-fish love the shark? Does it even know that the shark is a shark, a slow, short-sighted, indiscriminating creature whose chief characteristic is that of never-satisfied hunger? In short, does the pilot-fish attach itself to the shark as a pilot, with a definite object in view, or is the attachment merely the result of accident? Let us see.

Here is a big shark-hook, upon which we stick a mass of fat pork two or three pounds in weight. Fastening a stout rope to it, we drop it over the stern with a splash. The eddies have no sooner smoothed away than we see the brilliant little blue and gold pilot-fish coming towards our bait at such speed that we can hardly detect the lateral vibrations of his tail. Round and round the bait he goes, evidently in a high state of excitement, and next moment he has darted off again as rapidly as he came. He reaches the shark, touches him with his head on the nose, and comes whizzing back again to the bait, followed sedately by the dull-coloured monster. As if impatient of his huge companion's slowness he keeps oscillating between him and the bait until the shark has reached it and, without hesitation, has turned upon his back to seize it, if such a verb can be used to

denote the deliberate way in which that gaping crescent of a mouth enfolds the lump of pork. Nothing, you think, can increase the excitement of the little attendant now. He seems ubiquitous, flashing all round the shark's jaws as if there were twenty of him at least. But when half-a-dozen men, "tailing on" to the rope, drag the shark slowly upward out of the sea, the faithful little pilot seems to go frantic with—what shall we call it?—dread of losing his protector, affection, anger, who can tell?

The fact remains that during the whole time occupied in hauling the huge writhing carcass of the shark up out of the water the pilot-fish never ceases its distracted upward leaping against the body of its departing companion. And after the shark has been hauled quite clear of the water the bereaved pilot darts disconsolately to and fro about the rudder as if in utter bewilderment at its great loss. For as long as the calm continues, or until another shark makes his or her appearance, that faithful little fish will still hover around, every splash made in the water bringing it at top speed to the spot as if it thought that its friend had just returned.

No doubt there is a mutual benefit in the undoubted alliance between pilot-fish and shark, for I have seen a pilot-fish take refuge, along with a female shark's tiny brood, within the parent's mouth at the approach of a school of predatory fish, while it is only reasonable to suppose, what has often been proved to be the fact, that in guiding the shark to food the pilot also has its modest share of the feast. It is quite true that the pilot-fish will for a time attach itself to a boat when its companion has been killed. Again and again I have noticed this on a whaling voyage, where more sharks are killed in one day while cutting in a whale than many sailors see during their whole lives.

Hitherto we have only considered those inhabitants of the deep sea that forgather with a ship during a calm. Not that the enumeration of them is exhausted, by any means, for during long-persisting calms, as I have often recorded elsewhere, many queer denizens of the middle depths of ocean are tempted by the general stagnation to come gradually to the surface and visit the unfamiliar light. Considerations of space preclude my dealing with many of these infrequent visitors to the upper strata of the sea, but I cannot refrain from mention of one or two that have come under my notice at different times. One especially I tried for two days to inveigle by various means, for I thought (and still think) that a stranger fish was never bottled in any museum than he was. He was sociable enough, too. I dare say his peculiar appearance was dead against his scraping an

acquaintance with any ordinary-looking fish, who, in spite of their well-known curiosity, might well be excused from chumming up with any such “sport” as he undoubtedly was. He was about 18 in. long, with a head much like a gurnard and a tapering body resembling closely in its contour that of a cod. So that as far as his shape went there was nothing particularly *outré* in his appearance. But he was bright green in colour—at least, the ground of his colour-scheme was bright green. He was dotted profusely with glaring crimson spots about the size of a sixpence. And from the centre of each of these spots sprang a brilliant blue tassel upon a yellow stalk about an inch long. All his fins—and he had certainly double the usual allowance—were also fringed extensively with blue filaments, which kept fluttering and waving continually, even when he lay perfectly motionless, as if they were all nerves. His tail was a wonderful organ more than twice as large as his size warranted, and fringed, of course, as all his other fins were, only more so. His eyes were very large and inexpressive, dead-looking in fact, reminding me of eyes that had been boiled. But over each of them protruded a sort of horn of bright yellow colour for about two inches, at the end of which dangled a copious tassel of blue that seemed to obscure the uncanny creature’s vision completely.

To crown all, a dorsal ridge of crimson rose quite two inches, the whole length of his back being finished off by a long spike that stuck out over his nose like a jibboom, and had the largest tassel of all depending from it. So curiously decorated a fish surely never greeted man’s eye before, and when he moved, which he did with dignified slowness, the effect of all those waving fringes and tassels was dazzling beyond expression. I think he must have been some distant relation of the angler-fish that frequents certain tidal rivers, but he had utilised his leisure for personal decoration upon original lines. This was in the Indian Ocean, near the Line; but some years after, in hauling up a mass of Gulf weed in the North Atlantic, I caught, quite by accident, a tiny fish, not two inches long, that strongly reminded me of my tasselled friend, and may have been one of the same species. I tried to preserve the little fellow in a bottle, but had no spirit, and he didn’t keep in salt water.

By far the most numerous class of sociable deep-sea fish, however, are those that delight to accompany a ship that is making good way through the water. They do not like a steamer—the propeller with its tremendous churning scares them effectually away—but the silent gliding motion of the sailing-ship seems just to their taste. As soon as the wind falls and the vessel stops they keep at a distance, only occasionally passing discontentedly, as if they wondered why their big

companion was thus idling away the bright day. Foremost among these, both in numbers and the closeness with which they accompany a ship, is the “bonito,” a species of mackerel so named by the Spaniards from their beautiful appearance. They are a “chubby” fish, much more bulky in body in proportion to their length than our mackerel, for one 18 in. long will often tip the scale at 30 lbs. Their vigour is tremendous; there is no other word for it. A school of them numbering several hundreds will attach themselves to a ship travelling at the rate of six to eight knots an hour, and keep her company for a couple of days, swimming steadily with her, either alongside, ahead, or astern; but during the daytime continually making short excursions away after flying-fish or leaping-squid scared up or “flushed” by the approach of the ship. Not only so, but as if to work off their surplus energy they will occasionally take vertical leaps into the air to a height that, considering their stumpy proportions, is amazing.

The probable reason for their sociability is, I think, that they know how the passing of the ship’s deep keel through the silence immediately underlying the sea-surface startles upward their natural prey, the flying-fish and loligo (small cuttle-fish), and affords them ample opportunities for dashing among them unobserved. In any case, to the hungry sailor, this neighbourly habit of theirs is quite providential. For by such simple means as a piece of white rag attached to a hook, and let down from the jibboom end to flutter over the dancing wavelets like a flying-fish, a fine bonito is easily secured, although holding a twenty-pounder just out of the water in one’s arms is calculated to give the captor a profound respect for the energy of his prize. Unlike most other fish, they are warm-blooded. Their flesh is dark and coarse, but if it were ten times darker and coarser than it is it would be welcome as a change from the everlasting salt beef and pork.

The dolphin, about which so much confusion arises from the difference in nomenclature between the naturalist and the seaman, has long been celebrated by poetic writers for its dazzling beauty. But between the sailor’s dolphin, *Coryphæna Hippuris* (forgive me for the jargon), which is a fish, and the naturalist’s dolphin, *Delphinus deductor*, which is a mammal, there is far more difference than there is between a greyhound and a pig. Sailors call the latter a porpoise, and won’t recognise any distinction between the *Delphinus* and any other small sea mammal (except a seal), calling them all porpoises. But no sailor ever meant anything else by “dolphin” than the beautiful fish of which I must say a few words in the small remaining space at my disposal. For some reason best known to themselves the dolphin do not care to accompany a ship so closely

as the bonito. They are by no means so constant in their attention, for when the ship is going at a moderate speed they cannot curb their impatience and swim soberly along with her, and when she goes faster they seem to dislike the noise she makes, and soon leave her. But, although they do not stick closely to a ship, they like her company, and in light winds will hang about her all day, showing off their glories to the best advantage, and often contributing a welcome mess to the short commons of the fo'c's'le. Their average weight is about 15 lbs., but from their elegant shape they are a far more imposing fish than the bonito. They are deepest at the head, which has a rounded forehead with a sharp front, and they taper gradually to the tail, which is of great size. A splendid dorsal fin runs the whole length of the back, which, when it is erected, adds greatly to their appearance of size.

No pen could possibly do justice to the magnificence of their colouring, for, like “shot” silk or the glowing tints of the humming-bird, it changes with every turn. And when the fish is disporting under a blazing sun its glories are almost too brilliant for the unshaded eye; one feels the need of smoked glass through which to view them. These wonderful tints begin to fade as soon as the fish is caught; and although there is a series of waves of colour that ebb and flow about the dying creature, the beauty of the living body is never even remotely approached again, in spite of what numberless writers have said to the contrary. To see the dolphin in full chase after a flying-fish, leaping like a glorious arrow forty feet at each lateral bound through the sunshine, is a vision worth remembering. I know of nothing more gorgeous under heaven.

The giant albacore, biggest mackerel of them all, reaching a weight of a quarter of a ton, does seek the society of a ship sometimes, but not nearly so often as bonito and dolphin. And although I have caught these monsters in the West Indies from boats, I never saw one hauled on board ship. It would not be treating the monarch of the finny tribe respectfully to attempt a description of him at the bare end of my article, so I must leave him, as well as the “skipjack,” yellow-tail, and barracouta, for some other occasion. Perhaps enough has now been said to show that sociability is not by any means confined to land animals, although the great subject of the sociability of sea-mammals has not even been touched upon.

ALLIGATORS AND MAHOGANY

Merchant seamen as a rule have very little acquaintance with the appalling alligator, whose unappeasable ferocity and diabolical cunning make him so terrible a neighbour. Had the alligator been a seafarer, it is in my mind that mankind would have heard little of the savagery of the shark, who, to tell the truth fairly, is a much maligned monster; incapable of seven-tenths of the crimes attributed to him, innocent of another two-tenths, and in the small balance of iniquity left, a criminal rather from accident than from design. But all the atrocities attributed by ignorance to the shark may truthfully be predicated of the alligator, and many more also, seeing that the great lizard is equally at home on land or in the water.

I speak feelingly, having had painful experience of the ways of the terrible saurian during my visits to one of the few places where sailors are brought into contact with him. Tonalá River, which empties itself into the Gulf of Mexico, has a sinister notoriety, owing to the number of alligators with which it is infested; and through the proverbial carelessness of seamen and their ignorance of the language spoken by the people ashore, many an unrecorded tragedy has occurred there to members of the crews of vessels loading mahogany in the river. Like all the streams which debouch into that Western Mediterranean, Tonalá River has a bar across its mouth, but, unlike most of them, there is occasionally water upon the bar deep enough to permit vessels of twelve or thirteen feet draught to enter with safety. And as the embarkation of mahogany in the open roadstead is a series of hair-breadth escapes from death on the part of the crew and attended by much damage to the ship, it is easy to understand why the navigability of Tonalá Bar is highly valued by shipmasters fortunate enough to be chartered thither, since it permits them to take in a goodly portion of their cargo in comparative comfort. Against this benefit, however, is to be set off a long list of disadvantages, not the least of which are the swarms of winged vermin that joyfully pass the short space between ship and river-bank, scenting fresh blood. The idea of there being any danger in the river itself, however, rarely occurs to a seaman until he sees, some day, as he listlessly gazes overside at the turbid current silently sweeping seaward, a dead log floating deep, just awash in fact. And as he watches it with unspeculating eyes, one end of it will slowly be upreared just a little and the hideous head of an alligator, with its cold, dead-looking eyes, sleepily half unclosed, is revealed. Just a ripple and the thing

has gone, sunk stone-like, but with every faculty alert, that rugged ironclad exterior giving no hint to the uninitiated of the potentialities for mischief, swift and supple, therein contained.

In spite of having read much about these creatures and their habits, I confess to having been very sceptical as to their agility until I was enlightened in such a startling manner that the memory of that scene is branded upon my mind. I was strolling along the smooth sandy bank of the river opposite the straggling rows of huts we called the town one lovely Sunday morning, all eyes and ears for anything interesting. After about an hour's walk my legs, unaccustomed to such exercise, begged off for a little, and seeing a stranded tree-trunk lying on the beach some little distance ahead, I made towards it for a seat. As I neared it a young bullock came leisurely down towards the water from the bush, between me and the log. I, of course, took no notice of him, but held on my way until within, I should say, fifty yards of the log. Suddenly that dead tree sprang into life and spun round with a movement like the sweep of a scythe. It struck the bullock from his feet, throwing him upon his side in the water. What ensued was so rapid that the eye could not follow it, or make out anything definitely except a stirring up of the sand and a few ripples in the water. The big animal was carried off as noiselessly and easily as if he had been a lamb, nor, although I watched long, did I ever catch sight of him again. Notwithstanding the heat of the sun I felt a cold chill as I thought how easily the fate of the bullock might have been mine. And from thenceforth, until familiarity with the hateful reptiles bred a sort of contempt for their powers, I kept a very sharp look-out in every direction for stranded tree-trunks. This care on my part nearly proved fatal, because I forgot that the alligators might possibly be lying hid in the jungly vegetation that flourished thickly just above high-water mark. So that it happened when I neared the spot where I was to hail the boat, as I nervously scanned the beach for any sign of a scaly log, I heard a rustling of dry leaves on my right, and down towards me glided one of the infernal things with a motion almost like that of a launching ship. I turned and tried to run—I suppose I did run—but to my fancy it seemed as if I had a 56-lb. weight upon each foot. Hardly necessary to say, perhaps, that I escaped, but my walk had lost all its charms for me, and I vowed never to come ashore again there alone.

But as if the performances of these ugly beasts were to be fully manifested before our eyes, on the very next day, a Greek trader came off to the ship accompanied by his son, a boy of about ten years old. Leaving the youngster in the canoe, the father came on board and tried to sell some fruit he had brought.

We had a raft of mahogany alongside, about twenty huge logs, upon which a half-breed Spaniard was standing, ready to sling such as were pointed out to him by the stevedores. The boy must needs get out of the canoe and amuse himself by stepping from log to log, delighted hugely by the way they bobbed and tumbled about beneath him. Presently a yell from the slingsman brought all hands to the rail on the jump, and there, about fifty yards from the raft, was to be seen the white arm of the boy limply waving to and fro, while a greasy ripple beneath it showed only too plainly what horror had overtaken him. The distracted father sprang into his canoe, four men from our ship manned our own boat, and away they went in chase, hopelessly enough to be sure. Yet, strange to say, the monster did not attempt to go down with his prey. He kept steadily breasting the strong current, easily keeping ahead of his pursuers, that pitiful arm still waving as if beckoning them onward to the rescue of its owner. Boat after boat from ships and shore joined in the pursuit, every man toiling as if possessed by an overmastering energy and impervious to broiling sun or deadening fatigue. For five miles the chase continued; one by one the boats and canoes gave up as their occupants lost their last ounce of energy, until only one canoe still held on, one man still plied his paddle with an arm that rose and fell like the piston-rod of a steam-engine. It was the bereaved father. At last the encouraging arm disappeared, as the alligator, having reached his lair, disappeared beneath the surface, leaving the river face unruffled above him. Quick as a wild duck the solitary pursuer swerved and made for the bank, where a score of his acquaintances met him tendering gourds of aguadiente, cigaritos, and such comfort as they could put into words. He took the nearest gourd and drank deeply of the fiery spirit, accepted a cigarette and lit it mechanically, but never spoke a word. All the while his eyes were roving restlessly around in search of something. At last they lit upon a coil of line hanging upon a low branch to dry. He rushed toward it, snatched it from its place, and taking his cuchillo from his belt felt its edge. Then roughly brushing aside all who attempted to hinder him, he boarded his canoe again, taking no notice of one of his friends who got in after him. Under the pressure of the two paddles they rapidly neared the spot where the beast had sunk. As soon as they reached the place the silent avenger laid aside his paddle, took one end of the coil in his hand and flinging the other to his companion, slipped overside and vanished. In about two minutes he returned to the surface, ghastly, his eyes glaring, and taking a long, long breath disappeared again. This time he did not return. When the watcher above felt that all hope was gone he hauled upon the line as much as he dared, but could not move what it was secured to. Soon, however, boats came to his assistance, and presently extra help raised to the surface the huge armoured body of the man-

eater, the line being fast round his hind legs. The bereaved father was clinging to the monster's throat, one arm thrust between his horrid jaws and the other hand still clutching the haft of the bowie-knife, whose blade was buried deep in the leathery folds of the great neck. With bared heads and solemn faces the helpers towed the group ashore, and reverently removing the poor remains of father and son, buried them deep under a wide-spreading tree.

In the intervals (frequently occurring) between the shipment of one consignment of logs and the arrival of another, it was part of our duties to hunt along the river banks for ownerless log-ends or even logs of mahogany or cedar which we might saw and split up into convenient pieces for broken stowage or filling up the many interstices between the logs in the hold. Naturally this led us into some queer places and not a few scrapes, but incidentally we were able to do some good service to the inhabitants by destroying many hundreds of embryo alligators. For wherever, in the course of our journeyings, we came across a swelling in the sand along the river bank, there we would delve, and we never failed of finding a deposit of ball-like stony-shelled eggs, which each contained a little devil of an alligator almost ready to begin his career of crime. Needless perhaps to say that none of those found by us in this manner ever did any harm. But while busy on one occasion destroying a clutch of these eggs, a huge specimen some sixteen feet long appeared from no one knew where, and actually succeeded in reaching with the horny tip of his tail, as it swept round, the legs of a West countryman, one of our finest seamen. Fortunately for him the bo'sun was carrying a loaded Snider rifle, and without stopping to think whether anybody else might be in the way he banged her "aloose." The alligator was at the moment in a half circle, swinging himself round to reach the fallen man with his awful jaws wide spread and displaying all their jagged yellow fangs. The heavy bullet plunged right down that stinking throat and ploughed its way out through the creature's belly into the sand. With a writhe like a snake the monster recoiled upon himself, snapping his jaws horribly and loading the air with a faint, sickening smell of musk. After two or three twists and turns he managed to slip into the water, but not before the bo'sun had fired twice more at him and missed him by yards. Poor Harry, the man knocked down, was so badly scared that he sat on a log end and vomited, looking livid as a corpse and shaking like a man of ninety. We could do nothing for him, but watched him sympathetically, hoping for his recovery, when suddenly with a wild yell he sprang to his feet and began to tear his clothes off as if he were mad. Lord, how he did swear too! We were all scared, thinking the fright had turned his brain, but when he presently danced before us in his bare buff, picking frantically at his skin, our dismay was

changed into shrieks of laughter. A colony of red ants, each about half an inch long, had been concealed in that log. They had walked up his trouser legs quietly enough and fastened upon his body, their nippers meeting through the soft skin. Hence his endeavours to get disrobed in haste. He said it was nothing to laugh at, but I don't believe the man was yet born that could have seen him and not laughed. Happily it cured him of his fright.

Whether by good luck or good management I don't presume to say, but in all our explorations we met with no accident either from snake or saurian, while the crew of a Norwegian brig lying close by us lost one of their number the second day after their arrival. They had been very short of water, and in consequence sent a boat up the river to one of the creeks for a supply. Four hands went on this errand, and, tempted by the refreshing coolness of the water, one of them waded out into the river until the water was up to his waist, and stood there baling it up with the dipper he carried and pouring it over his head. The others were in the boat laughing at his antics, when suddenly, as they described it, a dark sickle-like shadow swept round him, and with one marrow-freezing shriek he fell. All the signs of a fearful struggle beneath the water were evident, but never again did they see their shipmate, nor was it until some time afterwards that they learned what the manner of his going really was. And when they did find out, nothing would tempt any of them to leave the ship again while she lay there. One of them told me that his shipmate's last cry would be with him, reverberating through his mind, until his dying day. I am not naturally cruel, but I confess that when one day I caught one of these monsters with a hook and line while fishing for something else, I felt a real pleasure in taking the awful thing alongside, hoisting it on board, and ripping it lengthways from end to end. From its stomach we took quite a bushel basket-full of eggs, nearly all of them with shells, ready for laying, and we felt truly thankful that so vile a brood had been caught before they had begun their life of evil.

COUNTRY LIFE ON BOARD SHIP

I

At first sight, any two things more difficult to bring into intimate relations than bucolic and nautical life would appear impossible to find. Those unfortunate people who, having followed the calm, well-ordered round of pastoral progress through the steadily-succeeding seasons of many years, suddenly find themselves, by some freakish twist of fortune's wheel, transferred to the unstable bosom of the mutable deep, become terribly conscious of their helplessness in the face of conditions so utterly at variance with all their previous experience of settled, orderly life. The old order has changed with a vengeance, giving place to a bewildering seasonal disarrangement which seems to their shaken senses like a foretaste of some topsy-turvy world. Like sorrowful strangers in a strange land are they, wherein there is no sure foothold, and where, in place of the old familiar landmarks known and cherished so long, is a new element constant to nothing but change and—upon which they seem to be precariously poised—the centre of a marginless circle of invariable variability. This subversion of all precedent is of course no less disconcerting to the humbler denizens of the farmyard and meadow than it is to those who are ordinarily the august arbiters of their destinies. And a sudden change from the placid environment of the homestead, with all its large liberty and peaceful delights, to the cramped, comfortless quarters which, as a rule, are all that shipboard arrangements allow them, at once brings them to a state of disconsolate wretchedness wherein all their self-assertive individuality is reduced to a meek, voiceless protest against their hard and unmerited fate. Sea-sickness, too, that truly democratic leveller, does not spare animals, but inserts another set of totally new and unpleasant sensations into the already complicated disorganisation of their unfortunate position.

In spite of these admittedly difficult factors, I have the temerity to attempt the setting forth of certain phases of nautical life experienced by myself which have always appeared to me to bring into close contact two such widely differing spheres of existence as country life and sea life, principally in the management of farmyard animals at sea. Sailors are proverbially handy at most things, if their methods *are* unconventional, and I venture to hope that country readers will at least be amused by Jack's antics when dealing with the familiar creatures of the

countryside.

With that wonderful adaptability to circumstances which, while pre-eminently characteristic of mankind, is also a notable quality of domesticated animals, they soon recover from their stupor and malaise, arrange their locomotive powers to suit the mutations of their unsteady home, and learn (perhaps soonest of all) to distinguish the very number of strokes upon the ship's bell which announces the arrival of feeding-time. No doubt the attentions of the sailors have much to do with the rapidity of acclimatisation (if the term may be so employed) manifested by most of the animals, since sailors have justly earned a high reputation for taming and educating creatures of even the most ferocious and intractable dispositions. Nevertheless, this result is attained by some of the queerest and most ludicrous means (to a countryman) imaginable. But what does that matter, since the conditions of their existence then become, for the seaworthy animals, not only pleasant but undoubtedly profitable to their owners. And where they are presently allowed the run of the ship much fun ensues, fun, moreover, that has no parallel in country life as ordinarily understood. Perhaps my experiences have been more favourably enlarged than falls to the lot of most seafarers, for I have been in several ships where the live-stock were allowed free warren; and although the system had many inconveniences and entailed a great deal of extra labour upon the crew, there were also many compensations. But, like all things pertaining to the sea, the practice of carrying live-stock has been replaced by more modern methods. The custom of carrying fresh meat in refrigerators is rapidly gaining ground, and, in consequence, latter-day seamen find fewer and fewer opportunities for educating in seafaring behaviour the usual farmyard animals that supply us with food. By few seamen will this be regarded as a misfortune, since they find their labour quite sufficiently onerous without the inevitable and disagreeable concomitants of carrying live-stock.

By far the largest portion of my experience of farmyard operations on board ship has been connected with pigs. These profitable animals have always been noted for their adaptability to sea life, and I fully believe, what I have often heard asserted, that no pork is so delicious as that which has been reared on board ship. Be that as it may, pigs of every nation under heaven where swine are to be found have been shipmates with me, and a complete study of all their varied characteristics and their behaviour under all sea circumstances would occupy a far greater number of pages than I am ever likely to be able or willing to give. Already I have endeavoured to set forth, in a former article, a sketch of the brilliant, if erratic, career of one piggy shipmate whose life was full of interest

and his death a blaze of lurid glory. But he was in nowise the most important member of our large and assorted collection of grunTERS in that ship. Our Scotch skipper was an enthusiastic farmer during the brief periods he spent at Cellardyke between his voyages to the East Indies, and consequently it was not strange that he should devote a portion of his ample leisure to pig-breeding when at sea. For some reason, probably economical, we carried no fowls or other animals destined for our meat, with the exception of the pigs, two large retriever dogs and two cats making up the total of our animal passengers, unless a large and active colony of rats that inhabited the recesses of the hold be taken into account. The day before sailing from Liverpool a handsome young pair of porkers, boar and sow, were borne on board in one sack by the seller, making the welkin ring with their shrill protests. We already possessed a middle-aged black sow of Madras origin, whose temper was perfectly savage and unappeasable; in fact, she was the only animal I ever saw on board ship that could not be tamed. The first few days of our passage being stormy, the two young pigs suffered greatly from sea-sickness, and in their helpless, enfeebled state endured many things from the wrathful, long-snouted old Madrassee, who seemed to regard them both with peculiar aversion. She ate all their grub as well as her own, although, like the lean kine of Scripture, she was nothing benefited thereby. But the sailors, finding the youngsters amicably disposed, began to pet them, and in all possible ways to protect them from ill-usage not only by the savage Indian but by the black retriever Sailor, who had taken up his quarters in the fo'c's'le and became furiously jealous of any attention shown to the pigs by his many masters. It should be noted that, contrary to the usual practice, those pigs had no settled abiding-place. At night they slept in some darksome corner beneath the top-gallant fore-castle, wherever they could find a dry spot, but by day they roamed the deck whithersoever they listed, often getting as far aft as the sacred precincts of the quarter-deck, until Neptune, the brown retriever that guarded the after-end of the ship, espied them, and, leaping upon them, towed them forrard at full gallop by the ears, amid a hurly-burly of eldritch shrieks and rattling hoofs. I am not at all sure that the frolicsome young things did not enjoy these squally interludes in their otherwise peaceful lives. Certainly they often seemed to court rather than to avoid the dog's onslaught, and would dodge him round the after-hatch for all the world like London Arabs guying a policeman. The only bitter drop in their brimming cup of delights came with distressing regularity each morning. As soon as the wash-deck tub was hauled forrard and the fore part of the ship was invaded by the barefooted scrubbers and water-slingers, two hands would grope beneath the fo'c's'le, where, squeezed into the smallest imaginable space, Denis and Jenny were, or pretended to be, sleeping the dreamless

slumbers of youthful innocence. Ruthlessly they were seized and hauled on deck, their frantic lamentations lacerating the bright air, and evoking fragments of the commination service from the disturbed watch below. While one man held each of them down, others scrubbed them vigorously, pouring a whole flood of sparkling brine over them meanwhile, until they were as rosy and sweet as any cherub of the nursery after its bath. This treatment, so mournfully and regularly resented by them, was doubtless one reason why they throve so amazingly, although the liberal rations of sea-biscuit and peasoup supplied to them probably suited them as well as any highly-advertised and costly provender would have done. Their tameness was wonderful and withal somewhat embarrassing, for it was no uncommon thing for them to slip into the men's house unseen during the absence of the crew, and, climbing into a lower bunk, nestle cosily down into the unfortunate owner's blankets and snore peacefully until forcibly ejected by the wrathful lessee.

Our passage was long, very long, so that the old black sow littered off the Cape of Good Hope, choosing, with her usual saturnine perversity, a night when a howling gale was blowing, and destroying all her hapless offspring but one in her furious resentment at the whole thing. Jenny, like the amiable creature she always was, delayed *her* offering until we were lying peaceably in Bombay Harbour. There she placidly produced thirteen chubby little sucklings and reared every one of them. They were a never-failing source of amusement to the men, who, in the dog-watches, would sit for hours with pipes aglow sedately enjoying the screamingly-funny antics of the merry band. There is much controversy as to which of all tame animals are the most genuinely frolicsome in their youth, kittens, lambs, calves, pups, and colts all having their adherents; but I unhesitatingly give my vote for piglings, especially when they are systematically petted and encouraged in all their antics as were that happy family of ours. Generally, the fat and lazy parents passed the time of these evening gambols in poking about among the men, begging for stray midshipmen's nuts (broken biscuit), or asking in well-understood pig-talk to be scratched behind their ears or along their bristly spines, but occasionally, as if unable to restrain themselves any longer, they would suddenly join their gyrating family, their elephantine gambols among the frisky youngsters causing roars of laughter. Usually they wound up the revels by a grand *galop furieux* aft of the whole troop squealing and grunting fortissimo, and returning accompanied by the two dogs in a hideous uproar of barks, growls, and squeals.

Our stay on the coast was sufficiently prolonged to admit of another litter being

produced in Bimlia-patam, twelve more piglets being added to our already sizeable herd of seventeen. So far, these farming matters had met with the unqualified approval of all hands except the unfortunate boys who had to do the scavenging, but upon quitting the Coromandel coast for the homeward passage, the exceeding cheapness of live-stock tempted our prudent skipper to invest in a large number of fowls and ducks. Besides these, he bought a couple of milch goats, with some wild idea of milking them, while various members of the crew had gotten monkeys, musk-deer, and parrots. It needed no special gift of prescience to foresee serious trouble presently, for there was not a single coop or house of any kind on board for any of the motley crowd. As each crate of cackling birds was lowered on deck it was turned out, and by the time the last of the new-comers were free, never did a ship's decks look more like a "barton" than ours. Forty or fifty cockfights were proceeding in as many corners, aided and abetted, I grieve to say, by the sailors, who did all they could to encourage the pugnacity of the fowls, although they were already as quarrelsome a lot as you would easily get together. The goats were right at home at once; in fact goats are, I believe, the single exception to the general rule of the discomfort of animals when first they are brought on shipboard. The newcomers quietly browsed around, sampling everything they could get a purchase on with their teeth, and apparently finding all good alike. Especially did they favour the ends of the running gear. Now if there is one thing more than another that is sharply looked after at sea, it is the "whipping" or securing of ropes-ends to prevent them fraying out. But it was suddenly discovered that our ropes-ends needed continual attention, some of them being always found with disreputable tassels hanging to them. And when the mates realised that the goats apparently preferred a bit of tarry rope before anything else, their wrath was too great for words, and they meditated a terrible revenge. Another peculiarity of these strange-eyed animals was that they liked tobacco, and would eat a great deal of it, especially in the form of used-up quids. This peculiar taste in feeding had unexpected results. As before said, the *raison d'être* of the goats was milk, and after sundry ineffectual struggles the steward managed to extract a cupful from the unworthy pair. It was placed upon the cabin table with an air of triumph, and the eyes of the captain's wife positively beamed when she saw it. Solemnly it was handed round, and poured into the coffee as if it had been a libation to a tutelary deity, but somebody soon raised a complaint that the coffee was not up to concert pitch by a considerable majority. A process of exhaustive reasoning led to the milk being tasted by the captain, who immediately spat it out with much violence, ejaculating, "Why, the dam' stuff's pwushioned!" The steward, all pale and agitated, looked on dumbly, until in answer to the old man's furious

questions he falteringly denied all knowledge of any felonious addition to the milk. The storm that was raised by the affair was a serious one, and for a while things looked really awkward for the steward. Fortunately the mate had the common-sense to suggest that the malignant goat should be tapped once more, and the immediate result tasted. This was done, and the poor steward triumphantly vindicated. Then it was unanimously admitted that tarry hemp, painted canvas, and plug tobacco were not calculated to produce milk of a flavour that would be fancied by ordinary people.

II

For the first time that voyage an attempt was made to confine a portion of our farm-stock within a pen, instead of allowing them to roam at their own sweet will about the decks. For the skipper still cherished the idea that milk for tea and coffee might be obtained from the two goats that would be palatable, if only their habit of promiscuous grazing could be stopped. So the carpenter rigged up a tiny corral beneath the fo’c’s’le deck, and there, in penitential gloom, the goats were confined and fed, like all the rest of the animals, on last voyage’s biscuit and weevily pease. Under these depressing conditions there was, of course, only one thing left for self-respecting goats to do—refuse to secrete any more milk. They promptly did so; so promptly, in fact, that on the second morning the utmost energies of the steward only sufficed to squeeze out from the sardonic pair about half-a-dozen teaspoonfuls of doubtful-looking fluid. This sealed their fate, for we had far too much stock on board to waste any portion of our provender upon non-producers, and the fiat went forth—the drones must die. Some suggestion was made by a member of the after guard as to the possibility of the crew not objecting to goat as a change of diet; but with all the skipper’s boldness, he did not venture to make the attempt. The goats were slain, their hides were saved for chafing gear, sheaths for knives, &c., but, with the exception of a portion that was boiled down with much disgust by the cook and given to the fowls, most of the flesh was flung overboard. Then general complaints arose that while musk was a pleasant perfume taken in moderation, a little of it went a very long way, and that two musk deer might be relied upon to provide as much scent in one day as would suffice all hands for a year. I do not know how it was done, but two days after the demise of the goats the deer also vanished. Still we could not be said to enjoy much room to move about on deck yet. We had 200 fowls and forty ducks roaming at large, and although many of the former idiotic birds tried their wings, with the result of finding the outside of the ship a brief and uncertain abiding-place, the state of the ship’s decks was still utterly abominable. A week of uninterrupted fine weather under the blazing sun of the Bay of Bengal had made every one but the skipper heartily sick of sea-farming, and consequently it was with many pleasurable anticipations that we noted the first increase in the wind that necessitated a reduction of sail. It made the fellows quite gay to think of the clearance that would presently take place. The breeze freshened steadily all night, and in the morning it was blowing a moderate gale, with an ugly cross sea, which, with the *Belle*’s well-known

clumsiness, she was allowing to break aboard in all directions. By four bells there were many gaps in our company of fowls. Such a state of affairs robbed them of the tiny modicum of gumption they had ever possessed, and every little breaking sea that lolloped inboard drove some of them, with strident outcry, to seek refuge overboard. Presently came what we had been expecting all the morning—one huge mass of water extending from the break of the poop to the forecastle, which filled the decks rail high, fore and aft. Proceedings were exceedingly animated for a time. The ducks took very kindly to the new arrangement at first, sailing joyously about, and tasting the bitter brine as if they rather liked the flavour. But they were vastly puzzled by the incomprehensible motions of the whole mass of water under them; it was a phenomenon transcending all their previous aquatic experiences. The fowls gave the whole thing up, floating languidly about like worn-out feather brooms upon the seething flood of water, and hardly retaining enough energy to struggle when the men, splashing about like a crack team in a water-polo match, snatched at them and conveyed them in heaps to a place of security under the forecastle. That day's breeze got rid of quite two-thirds of our feathered friends for us, what with the number that had flown or been washed overboard and those unfortunates who had died in wet heaps under the forecastle. The old man was much annoyed, and could by no means understand the unwonted cheerfulness of everybody else. But, economical to the last, he ordered the steward to slay as many of the survivors each day as would give every man one body apiece for dinner, in lieu of the usual rations of salt beef or pork. This royal command gave all hands great satisfaction, for it is a superstition on board ship that to feed upon chicken is the height of epicurean luxury. Dinner-time, therefore, was awaited with considerable impatience; in fact, a good deal of sleep was lost by the watch below over the prospect of such an unusual luxury. I went to the galley as usual, my mouth watering like the rest, but when I saw the dirty little Maltese cook harpooning the carcasses out of the coppers, my appetite began to fail me. He carefully counted into my kid one corpse to each man, and I silently bore them into the forecastle to the midst of the gaping crowd. Ah me! how was their joy turned into sorrow, their sorrow into rage, by the rapidest of transitions. She was a hungry ship at the best of times, but when things had been at their worst they had never quite reached the present sad level. It is hardly possible to imagine what that feast looked like. An East Indian jungle fowl is by no means a fleshy bird when at its best, but these poor wretches had been living upon what little flesh they wore when they came on board for about ten days, the scanty ration of paddy and broken biscuit having been insufficient to keep them alive. And then they had been scalded wholesale, the feathers roughly wiped off them, and

plunged into a copper of furiously bubbling seawater, where they had remained until the wooden-headed Maltese judged it time to fish them out and send them to be eaten. They were just like ladies' bustles covered with old parchment, and I have serious doubts whether more than half of them were drawn. I dare not attempt to reproduce the comments of my starving shipmates, unless I gave a row of dashes which would be suggestive but not enlightening. Old Nat the Yankee, who was the doyen of the forecastle, was the first to recover sufficiently from the shock to formulate a definite plan of action. "In my 'pinion," he said, "thishyer's 'bout reached th' bottom notch. I kin stan' bein' starved; in these yer limejuicers a feller's got ter stan' that, but I be 'tarnally dod-gasted ef I kin see bein' starved 'n' insulted at the same time by the notion ov bein' bloated with lugsury. I'm goin' ter take thishyer kid full o' bramley-kites aft an' ask th' ole man ef he don't think it's 'bout time somethin' wuz said *an'* done by th' croo ov this hooker." There was no dissentient voice heard, and solemnly as a funeral procession, Nat leading the way with the corpuses delicti, the whole watch tramped aft. I need not dwell upon the interview. Sufficient that there was a good deal of animated conversation, and much jeering on the skipper's part at the well-known cussedness of sailors, who, as everybody knows (or think they know), will growl if fed on all the delicacies of the season served up on 18-carat plate. But we got no more poultry, thank Heaven. And I do not think the officers regretted the fact that before we got clear of the bay the last of that sad crowd of feathered bipeds had ceased to worry any of us, but had wisely given up the attempt to struggle against such a combination of trying circumstances.

The herd of swine, however, throve apace. To the manner born, nothing came amiss to them, and I believe they even enjoyed the many quaint tricks played upon them by the monkeys, and the ceaseless antagonism of the dogs. But the father of the family was a sore trial to our energetic carpenter. Chips had a sneaking regard for pigs, and knew more than anybody on board about them; but that big boar, he said, made him commit more sin with his tongue in one day than all the other trying details of his life put together. For Denis's tusks grew amazingly, and his chief amusement consisted in rooting about until he found a splinter in the decks underneath which he could insert a tusk. Then he would lie down or crouch on his knees, and fidget away at that sliver of pine until he had succeeded in ripping a long streak up; and if left undisturbed for a few minutes, he would gouge quite a large hollow out of the deck. No ship's decks that ever I saw were so full of patches as ours were, and despite all our watchfulness they were continually increasing. It became a regular part of the carpenter's duties to capture Denis periodically by lassoing him, lash him up to the pin-rail by his

snout, and with a huge pair of pincers snap off those fast-growing tusks as close down to the jaw as possible. In spite of this heroic treatment, Denis always seemed to find enough of tusk left to rip up a sliver of deck if ever he could find a quiet corner; and the carpenter was often heard to declare that the cunning beast was a lineal descendant of a survivor of the demon-possessed herd of Gadara.

In the case of the pigs, though, there were compensations. By the time we arrived off Mauritius, a rumour went round that on Friday a pig was to be killed, and great was the excitement. The steward swelled with importance as, armed with the cabin carving-knife, he strode forward and selected *two* of the first litter of piglets, the Bombay born, for sacrifice. He had plenty of voluntary helpers from the watch below, who had no fears for the quality of this meat, and only trembled at the thought that perchance the old man might bear malice in the matter of the fowls and refuse to send any pork in our direction. Great was the uproar as the chosen ones were seized by violent hands, their legs tied with spun-yarn, and their throats exposed to the stern purpose of the steward. Unaware that the critical eye of Chips was upon him, he made a huge gash across the victim's throat, and then plunged the knife in diagonally until the whole length of the blade disappeared. "Man alive," said Chips, "ye're sewerly daft. Thon's nay wye to stick a pig. If ye haena shouldert the puir beastie A'am a hog mysel'." "You mind your own business, Carpenter," replied the steward, with dignity; "I don't want anybody to show me how to do *my* work." "Gie *me* nane o' yer impidence, ye feckless loon," shouted Chips. "A'am tellin' ye thon's spilin' guide meat for want o' juist a wee bit o' knowin' how. Hae! lat me show ye if ye're thick heid's able to tak' onythin' in ava." And so speaking, he brushed the indignant steward aside, at the same time drawing his pocket-knife. The second pig was laid out, and Chips, as delicately as if performing tracheotomy, slit his weasand. The black puddings were not forgotten, but I got such a distaste for that particular delicacy from learning how they were made (I hadn't the slightest idea before) that I have never been able to touch one since.

Chips now took upon himself the whole direction of affairs, and truly he was a past-master in the art and mystery of the pork-butcher. He knew just the temperature of the water, the happy medium between scalding the hair on and not scalding it off; knew, too, how to manipulate chitterlings and truss the carcass up till it looked just as if hanging in a first-class pork shop. But the steward was sore displeased. For it is a prime canon of sea etiquette not to interfere with another man's work, and in the known incapacity of the cook,

whose duty the pigkilling should ordinarily have been, the steward came next by prescriptive right. However, Chips, having undertaken the job, was not the man to give it up until it was finished, and by universal consent he had a right to be proud of his handiwork. That Sunday's dinner was a landmark, a date to reckon from, although the smell from the galley at suppertime on Saturday and breakfast-time on Sunday made us all quite faint and weak from desire, as well as fiercely resentful of the chaffy biscuit and filthy fragments of beef that were a miserable substitute for a meal with us.

But thenceforward the joy of good living was ours every Sunday until we reached home. Ten golden epochs, to be looked forward to with feverish longing over the six hungry days between each. And when off the Western Islands, Chips tackled the wicked old Madrassee sow single-handed, in the pride of his prowess allowing no one to help him although she was nearly as large as himself—ah! that was the culminating point. Such a feast was never known to any of us before, for in spite of her age she was succulent and sapid, and, as the Irish say, there was “lashins and lavins.” When we arrived in the East India Docks, we still had, besides the two progenitors of our stock, eight fine young porkers, such a company as would have been considered a most liberal allowance on leaving home for any ship I have ever sailed in before or since. As for Denis and Jenny, I am afraid to estimate their giant proportions. They were not grossly fat, but enormously large—quite the largest pigs I have ever seen—and when they were lifted ashore by the hydraulic crane, and landed in the railway truck for conveyance to Cellardyke, to taste the joys of country life on Captain Smith's farm, there was a rush of spectators from all parts of the dock to gaze open-mouthed upon these splendid specimens of ship-bred swine. But few could be got to believe that, eleven months before, the pair of them had been carried on board in one sack by an undersized man, and that their sole sustenance had been “hard-tack” and pea-soup.

III

Such an extensive collection of farm-stock as we carried in the *Belle* was, like the method of dealing with it, probably unique. Certainly so in my experience, and in that of all the shipmates with whom I have ever discussed the matter. For this reason, a *dirty* ship upon the high seas is an anomaly, something not to be imagined; that is, in the sense of loose dirt, of course, because sailors will call a ship dirty whose paint and varnish have been scrubbed or weathered off, and, through poverty or meanness, left unrenewed. The *Belle* would no doubt have looked clean to the average landsman, but to a sailor she was offensively filthy, and the language used at night when handling the running gear (*i.e.* the ropes which regulate the sails, &c., aloft, and are, when disused, coiled on pins or on deck) was very wicked and plentiful. In fact, as Old Nat remarked casually one Sunday afternoon, when the watch had been roused to tack ship, and all the inhabitants of the farmery, disturbed from their roosting places or lairs, were unmusically seeking fresh quarters, “Ef thishyer—— old mud-scow’s out much longer we sh’ll hev’ ’nother cargo aboard when we du arrive. People ’ll think we cum fr’m the Chinchees with gooanner.”

But, as I have said, the *Belle* was certainly an exception. I joined a magnificent steel clipper called the *Harbinger* in Adelaide as second mate, and, on taking my first walk round her, discovered that she too was well provided in the matter of farm-stock, besides, to my amazement, for I had thought the day for such things long past, carrying a cow. But all the arrangements for the housing, feeding, and general comfort of the live-stock on board were on a most elaborate scale, as, indeed, was the ship’s equipment generally. The cow-house, for instance, was a massive erection of solid teak with brass fittings and fastenings, large enough to take two cows comfortably, and varnished outside till it looked like a huge cabinet. Its place when at sea was on the main hatch, where it was nearly two feet off the deck, and by means of ring-bolts was lashed so firmly that only a perfectly disastrous sea breaking on board could possibly move it. Its solidly-built doors opened in halves, of which the lower half only was kept fastened by day, so that Poley stood at her window gazing meditatively out at the blue expanse of the sea with a mild, abstracted air, which immediately vanished if any one inadvertently came too near her premises. She had a way of suddenly dabbing her big soapy muzzle into the back of one’s neck while the victim’s attention was taken up elsewhere that was disconcerting. And one night, in the middle watch, she created a veritable sensation by walking into the forecastle

unseen by anybody on deck. The watch below were all sound asleep, of course, but the unusual footsteps, and long inquisitive breaths, like escaping steam, emitted by the visitor, soon roused them by their unfamiliarity. Voice called unto voice across the darkness (and a ship's fore-castle at night is a shade or so darker than a coal-cellar), "What is it? Light the lamp, somebody"; but with that vast mysterious monster floundering around, no one dared venture out of the present security of his bunk. It was really most alarming—waking up to such an invisible horror as that, and, as one of the fellows said to me afterwards, "All the creepy yarns I'd ever read in books come inter me head at once, until I was almost dotty with 'fraid." This situation was relieved by one of the other watch, who, coming in to get something out of a chum's chest, struck a match, and by its pale glimmer revealed the huge bulk of poor Poley, who, scared almost to drying up her milk, was endeavouring to bore her way through the bows in order to get out. The butcher was hurriedly roused from his quarters farther aft, and, muttering maledictions upon ships and all sailors, the sea and all cattle, slouched to the spot. His voice immediately reassured the wanderer, who turned round at its first angry words and deliberately marched out of the fore-castle, leaving a lavish contribution in her wake as a memento of her visit.

Between the butcher and Poley a charming affection existed. She loved him most fondly, and the Cardigan jacket he wore was a proof thereof. For while engaged in grooming her, which he did most conscientiously every morning, she would reach round whenever possible and lick him wherever she could touch him. In consequence of this affectionate habit of hers his Cardigan was an object of derision to all on board until upon our arrival in Cape Town one of our departing passengers divided a case of extra special Scotch whisky among the crew. The butcher being of an absorbent turn, shifted a goodly quantity of the seductive fluid, and presently, feeling very tired, left the revellers and disappeared. Next morning he was nowhere to be found. A prolonged search was made, and at last the missing man was discovered peacefully slumbering by the side of the cow, all unconscious of the fact that she had licked away at him until nothing remained of his Cardigan but the sleeves, and in addition a great deal of his shirt was missing. It is only fair to suppose that, given time enough, she would have removed all his clothing. It was a depraved appetite certainly, but as I have before noticed, *that* is not uncommon among animals at sea. It was her only lapse, however, from virtue in that direction. Truly her opportunities were small, being such a close prisoner, but the marvel to me was how, in the absence of what I should say was proper food, she kept up her supply of milk for practically the whole voyage. She never once set foot on shore from the time the

vessel left London until she returned, and as green food was most difficult to obtain in Adelaide, she got a taste of it only about four times during our stay. Australian hay, too, is not what a dainty English cow would be likely to hanker after; yet with all these drawbacks it was not until we had crossed the Line on the homeward passage that her milk began to dwindle seriously in amount. Thenceforward it decreased, until in the Channel the butcher handed in to the steward one morning a contribution of about a gill, saying, "If you want any more, sir, you'll have to put the suction hose on to her. I sh'd say her milkin' days was done." But for long previous to this the ingenious butcher had been raiding the cargo (of wheat) for his pet, and each day would present her with two bucketfuls of boiled wheat, which she seemed to relish amazingly. Partly because of this splendid feeding, and partly owing to the regular washing and groomings she received, I imagine she was such a picture of an animal when she stepped out of the ship in London as I have only seen at cattle shows or on advertisement cards. You could not see a bone; her sides were like a wall of meat, and her skin had a sheen on it like satin. As she was led away, I said to the butcher, who had been assisting at her debarkation, "I suppose you'll have her again next voyage, won't you, butcher?" "No fear," he answered sagely. "She's gone to be butchered. She'll be prime beef in a day or two." I looked at him with something like consternation. He seemed to think it was a grand idea, although even now the mournful call of his old favourite was ringing in his ears. At last I said, "I wonder you can bear to part with her; you've been such chums all the voyage." "I don't know what you mean, sir," he replied. "I looked after her 'cause it's my bisness, but I'd jest as leave slaughter her myself as not." With that he left me to resume his duty.

But in the fervour of my recollections of Poley, I have quite neglected another most important branch of the *Harbinger's* family of animals, the sheep. Being such a large ship, she had an immense house on deck between the main hatch and the fore mast, in which were a donkey-engine and condenser, a second cabin to accommodate thirty passengers, petty officers' quarters, carpenters' shop, and galley. And still there was room between the fore end and the fore mast to admit of two massive pens, built of teak, with galvanised bars in front, being secured there one on top of the other. When I joined the ship these were empty, and their interiors scrubbed as clean as a kitchen table. That morning, looking up the quay, I saw a curious procession. First a tall man, with an air of quiet want of interest about him; by his side sedately marched a ram, a splendid fellow, who looked fully conscious that he was called upon to play an important part in the scheme of things. Behind this solemn pair came a small flock of some thirty sheep, and a

wise old dog, keeping a good distance astern of the mob, fittingly brought up the rear. They were expected, for I saw some of the men, under the bo'sun's directions, carefully laying a series of gangways for them. And, without noise, haste, or fuss, the man marched on board closely followed by the ram. He led the way to where a long plank was laid from the deck to the wide-open door of the upper pen. Then, stepping to the side of it, without a word or even a gesture, he stood quite still while the stately ram walked calmly up that narrow way, followed by the sheep in single file. The leader walked into the pen and right round it, reaching the door just as the fifteenth sheep had entered. The others had been restrained from following as soon as fifteen had passed. Outside he stepped upon the plank with the same grave air of importance, and the moment he had done so the door was slid to in the face of the others who were still following his lead. Then the other pen was filled in the same easy manner, the ram quitting the second pen with the bearing of one whose sublime height of perfection is far above such paltry considerations as praise or blame, while the dog stood aloof somewhat dejectedly, as if conscious that his shining abilities were for the time completely overshadowed by the performances of a mere woolly thing, one of the creatures he had always regarded as being utterly destitute of a single gleam of reasonableness. The ram received a carrot from his master's pocket with a gracious air, as of one who confers a favour, and together the trio left the ship. The embarkation had been effected in the quietest, most humane manner possible, and to my mind was an object-lesson in ingenuity.

We had no swine, but on top of this same house there was a fine range of teak-built coops of spacious capacity, and these were presently filled with quite a respectable company of fowls, ducks, and geese, all, of course, under the charge of the butcher. Happy are the animals who have no history on board ship, whose lives move steadily on in one well-fed procession unto their ordained end. Here in this grand ship, had it not been for the geese, no one would have realised the presence of poultry at all, so little were they in evidence until they graced the glittering table in the saloon at 6 P.M. But the geese, as if bent upon anticipating the fate that was in store for them, waited with sardonic humour until deepest silence fell upon the night-watches. Then, as if by preconcerted signal, they raised their unmelodious voices, awaking sleepers fore and aft from deepest slumbers, and evoking the fiercest maledictions upon their raucous throats. Occasionally the shadowy form of some member of the crew, exasperated beyond endurance, would be dimly seen clambering up the end of the house, his heart filled with thoughts of vengeance. Armed with a wooden belaying-pin, he would poke and rattle among the noisy creatures, with much the same result as

one finds who, having a slightly aching tooth, fiddles about with it until its anguish is really maddening. These angry men never succeeded in doing anything but augmenting the row tenfold, and they found their only solace in gloating over the last struggles of one of their enemies when the butcher was doing his part towards verifying the statement on the menu for the forthcoming dinner of “roast goose.”

But the chief interest of our farmyard, after all, lay in the sheep. How it came about that such a wasteful thing was done I do not know, but it very soon became manifest that some at least of our sheep were in an interesting condition, and one morning, at wash-deck time, when I was prowling around forrard to see that everything was as it should be, I was considerably amused to see one of the sheep occupying a corner of the pen with a fine young lamb by her side. While I watched the pretty creature, the butcher came along to begin his day's work. When he caught sight of the new-comer he looked silly. It appeared that he alone had been sufficiently unobservant of his charges to be unprepared for this *dénouement*, and it was some time before his sluggish wits worked up to the occasion. Suddenly he roused himself and made for the pen. “What are you going to do, butcher?” I asked. “Goin’ to do! W’y I’m agoin’ ter chuck that there thing overboard, a’course, afore any of them haristocrats aft gets wind of it. They won’t touch a bit o’ the mutton if they hear tell o’ this. I never see such a thing aboard ship afore.” But he got no further with his fell intent, for some of the sailors intervened on behalf of the lamb, vowing all sorts of vengeance upon the butcher if he dared to touch a lock of its wool; so he was obliged to beat a retreat, grumblingly, to await the chief steward’s appearance and lay the case before him. When that gentleman appeared, he was by no means unwilling to add a little to his popularity by effecting a compromise. It was agreed that the sailors should keep the new-comer as a pet, but all subsequent arrivals were to be dealt with by the butcher instantan, without any interference on their part. This, the steward explained, was not only fair, but merciful, as in the absence of green food there could only be a day or two’s milk forthcoming, and the poor little things would be starved. Of course, he couldn’t spare any of Poley’s precious yield for nursing lambs, besides wishing to avoid the natural repugnance the passengers would have to eating mutton in such a condition. So the matter was amicably arranged.

Thereafter, whenever a lamb was dropped, and every one of those thirty ewes presented one or two, the butcher laid violent hands upon it, and dropped it overboard as soon as it was discovered. Owing to the promise of sundry tots of

grog from the sailors, he always informed them of the fact, and pointed out the bereaved mother. Then she would be pounced upon, lifted out of the coop, and while one fellow held her another brought the favoured lamb. After the first time or two, that pampered young rascal needed no showing. As soon as he saw the sheep being held he would make a rush, and in a minute or two would completely drain her udder. Sometimes there were as many as three at a time for him to operate upon, but there never seemed to be too many for his voracious appetite. What wonder that like Jeshurun he waxed fat and kicked. He grew apace, and he profited amazingly by the tuition of his many masters. Anything less sheep-like, much less lamb-like, than his behaviour could hardly be imagined. A regimental goat might have matched him in iniquity, but I am strongly inclined to doubt it. One of the most successful tricks taught this pampered animal was on the lines of his natural tendency to butt at anything and everything. It was a joyful experience to see him engaged in mimic conflict with a burly sailor, who, pitted against this immature ram, usually came to grief at an unexpected roll of the ship; for Billy, as our lamb was named by general consent, very early in his career gat unto himself sea-legs of a stability unattainable by any two-legged creature. I often laughed myself sore at these encounters, the funniest exhibitions I had seen for many a long day, until one night in my watch on deck, during a gale of wind, I descended from the poop on to the main deck to hunt for a flying-fish that I heard come on board. I was stooping down, the water on deck over my ankles, to feel under the spare spars lashed alongside the scuppers, when I heard a slight noise behind me. Before I had time to straighten myself, a concussion like a well-aimed, hearty kick smote me behind, and I fell flat in the water like a plaice. When I had scrambled to my feet, black rage in my heart against things in general, I heard a fiendish cackle of laughter which was suddenly suppressed; and there, with head lowered in readiness for another charge, stood Billy, only too anxious to renew his attentions as soon as he could see an opening. For one brief moment I contemplated a wild revenge, but I suddenly remembered that my place was on the poop, and I went that way, not perhaps with the dignified step of an officer, because that demoniacal sheep (no, lamb) was behind me manœuvring for another assault. I lost all interest in him after that. A lamb is all very well, but when he grows up he is apt to become an unmitigated calamity, especially if sailors have any hand in his education. So that it was with a chastened regret that I heard the order go forth for his conversion into dinner. We were able to regale the pilot with roast lamb and mint sauce (made from the dried article), and the memory of my wrongs added quite a piquant flavour to my portion.

IV

It has always been a matter of profound thankfulness with me that my evil genius never led me on board a cattle-boat. For I do think that to a man who has any feeling for the lower animals these vessels present scenes of suffering enough to turn his brain. And it does not in the least matter what provision is made for the safe conveyance of cattle in such numbers across the ocean. As long as the weather is fairly reasonable, the boxed-up animals have only to endure ten days or so of close confinement, with inability to lie down, and the nausea that attacks animals as well as human beings. The better the ship and the greater care bestowed upon the cattle-fittings the less will be the sufferings of the poor beasts; but the irreducible minimum is soon reached, and that means much more cruelty to animals than any merciful man would like to witness. But when a gale is encountered and the huge steamer wallows heavily in the mountainous irregularities of the Atlantic, flooding herself fore and aft at every roll, and making the cattlemen's task of attending to their miserable charges one surcharged with peril to life or limbs, then the condition of a cattle-ship is such as to require the coinage of special adjectives for its description. Of course it will be said that human beings used to be carried across the ocean for sale in much the same way, and men calling themselves humane were not ashamed to grow rich on the receipts from such traffic; but surely that will never be advanced as an excuse for, or a palliative of, the horrors of the live cattle trade. I have passed through an area of sea bestrewn with the bodies of cattle that have been washed overboard in a gale—hurled out of the pens wherein they have been battered to death—when the return of fine weather has made it possible, and I have wished with all my heart that it could be made an offence against the laws to carry live cattle across the ocean at all.

No, the nearest approach that ever I had to being shipmates with a cargo of live stock was on one never-to-be-forgotten occasion, when, after bringing a 24-ton schooner from a little village up the Bay of Fundy to Antigua in the West Indies, I found myself, as you may say, stranded in St. John, the principal port in that island. The dry rot which seems to have unfortunately overtaken our West Indian possessions was even then very marked in Antigua, for there was no vessel there larger than a 100-ton schooner, and only two or three of them, all Yankees with one exception, a Barbadian craft with the queerest name imaginable, the *Migumoo-weesoo*. The shipping officer, seeing that I was a certificated mate, very kindly interested himself in me, going so far as to say that if I would take

his advice and assistance I would immediately leave St. John in the *Migum*, as he called her, for that the skipper, being a friend of his, would gladly give me a passage to Barbadoes. I hope good advice was never wasted on me. At any rate this wasn't, for I immediately went down to the beach, jumped into a boat, and ordered the darky in charge to put me on board the *Migum*. When we got alongside I was mightily interested to see quite a little mob of horses calmly floating alongside with their heads just sticking out of the water. The first thing that suggested itself to me was that if those horses got on board with their full complement of legs it would be little less than a miracle, the harbour being notoriously infested with sharks. But presently I reflected that there was really no danger, the darkies who were busy with preparations for the embarkation of the poor beasts kicking up such a deafening row that no shark would have dared venture within a cable's length of the spot. Everybody engaged in the business seemed to be excited beyond measure, shouting, screeching with laughter, and yelling orders at the top of their voices, so that I could not see how anything was going to be done at all. The skipper was confined to his cabin with an attack of dysentery, and lay fretting himself into a fever at the riot going on overhead for want of his supervision. As soon as I introduced myself he begged me to go and take charge, but, although I humoured him to the extent of seeming to comply with his request, I knew enough of the insubordinate 'Badian darkies to make me very careful how I interfered with them. But going forward, I found to my delight that they had made a start at last, and that two of the trembling horses were already on deck. Four or five darkies were in the water alongside, diving beneath the horses with slings which were very carefully placed round their bodies, then hooked to a tackle, by means of which they were hoisted on board, so subdued by fear that they suffered themselves to be pushed and hauled about the decks with the quiet submissiveness of sheep. There were twenty of them altogether, and when they had all been landed on deck there was not very much room left for working the schooner. However, as our passage lay through the heart of the trade winds, and nothing was less probable than bad weather, nobody minded that, not even when the remaining deck space was lumbered up with some very queer-looking forage.

As soon as the horses were on board we weighed, and stood out of harbour with a gentle, leading wind that, freshening as we got farther off the land, coaxed the smart craft along at a fairly good rate. This lasted until midnight, when, to the darkies' dismay, the wind suddenly failed us, leaving us lazily rocking to the gently-gliding swell upon the wine-dark bosom of the glassy sea. Overhead, the sky, being moonless, was hardly distinguishable from the sea, and as every

brilliant star was faithfully duplicated beneath, it needed no great stretch of imagination to fancy that we were suspended in the centre of a vast globe utterly cut off from the rest of the world. But the poor skipper, enfeebled by his sad ailment and anxious about his freight, had no transcendental fancies. Vainly I tried to comfort him with the assurance that we should certainly find a breeze at daybreak, and it would as certainly be fair for us. He refused consolation, insisting that we were in for a long spell of calm, and against his long experience of those waters I felt I could not argue. So I ceased my efforts and went on deck to enjoy the solemn beauty of the night once more, and listen to the quaint gabble of the three darkies forming the watch on deck.

Sure enough the skipper was right. Calms and baffling airs, persisting for three days, kept us almost motionless until every morsel of horse provender was eaten, and—what was still more serious—very little water was left. All of us wore long faces now, and the first return of steady wind was hailed by us with extravagant delight. Continuing on our original course was out of the question under the circumstances, so we headed directly for the nearest port, which happened to be Prince Rupert, in the beautiful island of Dominica. A few hours' sail brought us into the picturesque harbour, with its ruined fortresses, once grimly guarding the entrance, now overgrown with dense tropical vegetation, huge trees growing out of yawning gaps in the masonry, and cable-like vines enwreathing the crumbling walls. Within the harbour there was a profound silence; the lake-like expanse was unburdened by a single vessel, and although the roofs of a few scattered houses could be seen embosomed among the verdure, there was no other sign of human occupation. We lowered the little boat hanging astern and hastened ashore. Hurrying toward the houses, we found ourselves in a wide street which from lack of traffic was all overgrown with weeds. Here we found a few listless negroes, none of whom could speak a word of English, a barbarous French patois being their only medium of communication. But by signs we made them comprehend our needs—fodder for the horses, and water. After some little palaver we found that for a few shillings we might go into the nearest thicket of neglected sugar-cane and cut down as many of the feathery blades that crowned the canes as we wanted, but none of those sleepy-looking darkies volunteered their assistance—they seemed to be utterly independent of work. Our energy amazed them, and I don't think I ever saw such utter contempt as was expressed by our lively crew—true 'Badians born—towards those lotus-eating Dominicans. We had a heavy morning's work before us, but by dint of vigorous pushing we managed to collect a couple of boatloads of cane-tops, carry them on board, and return for two casks of water which we had left one of our number

ashore to fill. Some deliberate fishermen were hauling a seine as we were about to depart, and we lingered awhile until they had finished their unusual industry, being rewarded by about a bushel of “bill-fish,” a sort of garfish, but with the beak an extension of the lower jaw instead of the upper. I offered to buy a few of the fish, but the fishermen seemed mightily careless whether they sold any or not. After much expenditure of energy in sign language, I managed to purchase three dozen (about the size of herrings) for the equivalent of twopence, and, very well satisfied, pushed off for the schooner, leaving the fishermen standing on the beach contemplating their newly-acquired wealth, as if quite unable to decide what to do with it.

It was worth all the labour we had expended to see the delight with which those patient horses munched the juicy green tops of the cane, and drank, plunging their muzzles deep into the buckets, of the clear water we had brought. And I felt quite pleased when, upon our arrival in Barbadoes two days after, I watched the twenty of them walk sedately up a broad gangway of planks on to the wharf, and indulge in a playful prance and shake when they found their hoofs firmly planted upon the unrocking earth once more.

I hope I shall not be suspected of drawing a *longue beau* when I say that I was once in a big ship whose skipper was an ardent agriculturist. On my first visit to the poop I saw with much surprise a couple of cucumber frames lashed in secure positions, one on either side of the rail at the break of the poop. When I fancied myself unobserved, I lifted the top of one, and looked within, seeing that they contained a full allowance of rich black mould. And presently, peeping down the saloon skylight, I saw that carefully arranged along its sides, on brackets, were many large pots of flowering plants, all in first-rate condition and bloom. It was quite a novel experience for me, but withal a most pleasant one, for although it did appear somewhat strange and incongruous to find plant-life flourishing upon the sea, it gave more of a familiar domestic atmosphere to 'board-ship life than anything I have ever known; much the same feeling that strikes one when looking upon the round sterns of the Dutch galliots, with their square windows embellished by snowy beribboned muslin curtains. When we got to sea, and well clear of the land, so that the skipper's undivided attention could be given to his beloved hobby, there were great developments of it. For not content with growing lettuces, radishes, endive, and such “garden-sass,” as the Yankees term it, in his cucumber frames, he enlarged his borders and tried experiments in raising all sorts of queer seeds of tropical fruits and vegetables. His garden took up so much room on the poop that the officers fretted a good deal at the

circumscribed area of their domain, besides being considerably annoyed at having to cover up the frames, boxes, &c., when bad weather caused salt spray to break over them. But this was ungrateful of them, because there never was a skipper who interfered less with his officers, or a more peaceable, good-natured man. Nor was the frequent mess of salad that graced the table in the saloon to be despised. In that humid atmosphere and equable temperature everything grew apace; so that for a couple of months at a time green crisp leaves were scarcely absent from the table for a day. Mustard and cress were, of course, his main crop, but lettuce, radishes, and spring onions did remarkably well. That was on the utilitarian side. On the experimental side he raised date-palms, coco-palms, banana-palms, mango trees, and orange trees, dwarfing them after a fashion he had learned in China, so that in the saloon he had quite a conservatory. But there were many others of which none of us knew the names. And all around in the skylight, beneath the brackets whereon the pots of geranium, fuchsia, &c., stood, hung orchids collected by the skipper on previous voyages, and most carefully tended, so that some lovely spikes of bloom were always to be seen. That saloon was a perfect bower of beauty, and although the ship herself was somewhat dwarfed by comparison with the magnificent clippers we forgathered with in Calcutta, few vessels had so many visitors. Her fame spread far, and nearly every day the delighted skipper would be busy showing a string of wondering shorefolk over his pleasaunce.

We went thence to Hong-Kong, and there, as if in emulation of the “old man’s” hobby for flowers, all hands went in for birds, mostly canaries, which can be obtained in China more cheaply, I believe, than in any part of the world. Sampans, loaded with cages so that nothing can be seen of the hull, and making the whole harbour melodious with the singing of their pretty freight, are always in evidence. For the equivalent of 3s., if the purchaser be smart of eye, he can always buy a fine cock canary in full song, although the wily Chinese never fails to attempt the substitution of a hen, no matter what price is paid. There arose a perfect mania on board of us for canaries, and when we departed for New Zealand there were at least 400 of the songsters on board. Truly for us the time of singing of birds had come. All day long that chorus went on, almost deafeningly, until we got used to it, for of course if one bird piped up after a short spell of quiet all hands joined in at the full pitch of their wonderful little lungs; so that, what with birds and flowers and good feeling, life on board the *Lady Clare* was as nearly idyllic as any seafaring I have ever heard of.

V

It might readily be supposed that in such leisurely ships as the Southern-going whalers, calling, as they did, at so many out-of-the-way islands in the South Pacific, there would have been more inducement than usual to cultivate the bucolics, if only from sheer desire for something to break the long monotony of the voyage. And so, indeed, there was, but not to anything like the extent that I should have expected. On board the *Cachalot* we were handicapped considerably in this direction by reason of several of the officers having an unconquerable dislike to fresh pork, which was the more remarkable because they never manifested the same aversion to the rancid, foul-smelling article supplied to us every other day out of the ship's salt-meat stores. Whence, by the by, is ship salt pork obtained? Under what conditions do they rear the animals that produce those massy blocks of "scrunchy" fat, just tinged at one side with a pale pink substance that was once undoubtedly flesh, but when it reaches the sailor bears no resemblance to anything eatable? And how does it acquire that peculiarly vile flavour all its own, which is unlike the taste of any other provision known to caterers? I give it up; I have long ago done so, in fact. Men do eat it, although I never could, except by chopping it up fine with broken biscuit and mixing it with pea-soup, so that I could swallow it without tasting it. But the only other creatures able to do so are pigs and sharks. Sailors have all kinds of theories respecting its origin, of which I am restricted to saying that they are nearly all unprintable. But I do wish most fervently that those who supply it for human food, both dealers and ship-owners, were, as their victims are, compelled to eat it three times a week or starve. Just for a month or two. Methinks it would do them much good. But this is a digression.

Most of us had our suspicions that our officers' dislike was not so much to fresh pork as to live pigs, and truly, with our limited deck space, the objection was most reasonable. Moreover, the South Sea Island pig is a questionable-looking beast at the best, not by any means tempting to look at, and of uncertain dietary. They affect startling colours, such as tortoise-shell and tabby, are woolly of coat, lengthy of snout, and almost as speedy as dogs. When fed, which is seldom, ripe cocoa-nut is given them, as it is to all live stock in the islands. But they make many a hearty meal of fish as they wander around the beaches and reef-borders, and this gives a flavour to their produce which is, to say the least of it, unexpected. But as if to make up for our lack of pigs we had the most elaborate fowlery fitted up that I ever was shipmates with. Its dimensions were about 8 ft.

long, 6 ft. wide, and 5 ft. high. It was built of wood entirely, and exactly on the principle of an oblong canary-cage that is unenclosed on any side. Plenty of roosts and nests, plenty of pounded coral and cocoa-nut, and—as the result—plenty of eggs. But such queer eggs. The yolk was hardly distinguishable from the white, and they had scarcely any taste at all. Occasionally we got a brood hatched, but for some reason I don't pretend to understand our fowls didn't "go much on feathers," as the skipper said. Not to put too fine a point on it, they never missed an opportunity of plucking one another's feathers out and eating them with much relish. So that they all stalked about in native majesty unclad, doubtless rejoicing in the coolth, and occasionally scanning their own bodies solicitously for any sign of a sprouting feather, of which they themselves might have the first taste. This operated queerly among the young broods, who never got any chance of being fledged, and whose mothers were always fighting about them; but I believe as much that they (the mothers) might eat all the feathers themselves as to protect them from any fancied danger. These naked birds certainly looked funny; but the cook, who was an ingenious South Carolina negro, used to gaze at them earnestly and say, "Foh de good Lawd, sah; ef I aint agwine ter bring hout er plan ter raise chicken 'thout fedders altogedder. W'y, jess look at it. All de strenf dat goes ter fedders 'll go ter meat—an' aigs—kase dem chickens ez fatter den ever I see 'bord ship befo'; an den only tink ob de weary trubble save in pluckin' ob 'em. Golly, sah, et's a great skeem, 'n I'se right on de top ob it." And, really, there did seem to be something in it.

Fowls were plentiful in Vau-Vau—fairly good ones, too; but it was entirely a mystery to me how any individual property in them was at all possible. For no native had any enclosure for them, or seemed to take any care of them. They just ran wild in the jungly vegetation around the villages and roosted on the trees; but as a result, I suppose, of the persistence through their many generations of their original fellowship with mankind, they never strayed far away from the houses. Our friends brought them on board at our first arrival in such numbers that no man was without a pair of fowls, and in sore straits where to keep them. The difficulty was soon solved by the skipper, who said that in his opinion it would soon be inconvenient for the fore-mast hands to see any difference between their fowls and his. Yes, and it was even possible that having eaten their own fowls they might forget that trifling fact, and absent-mindedly mistake some of the skipper's poultry for their own. In order to prevent such mistakes he issued an edict that no more fowls were to be entertained by the crew or cooked for them by the "Doctor." And although this was undoubtedly the wisest solution of our puzzle, there was thereat great discontent for a time, until the ingenious Kanakas

took to cooking the fowls for us ashore, and bringing them on board ready for eating. Being plentiful, as I said, poultry was cheap, the standard price being a fathom of calico of the value of 6d. for two, for ship's stock, while our private friends furnished them to us for nothing. And there are also in the South Pacific many small islands unpeopled upon which that most sensible and practical of navigators, James Cook, had left both fowls and pigs to breed at their own sweet will. These islets have always many cocoa-nut trees, the fruit from which affords plentiful food for the pigs, who show great ingenuity in getting at the contents of the fallen nuts, while the fowls apparently find no difficulty in picking up a comfortable livelihood. By tacit agreement these lonely ocean store-houses of good food are allowed to remain undisturbed by both the natives of adjacent islands and passing ships, except in cases of necessity. We once broke this unwritten law, for although we had not long left Fiji, we landed upon one of these oases in the blue waste, and had a day's frolic there. It was a veritable paradise, although not more than three acres in area. Its only need seemed to be fresh water, for as it had grown to be an island by the deposit of sand upon the summit of a coral reef, there were of course no springs. And yet it was completely clothed with vegetation, the cocoa-palms especially growing right down to the edge of the sea, so that at high water the wavelets washed one side of their spreading roots quite bare. Being no botanist, I cannot describe the various kinds of plants that luxuriated there, having, I suppose, become accustomed to the privation of fresh water, as the fowls and pigs had also done. But I did notice that the undergrowth seemed to consist principally of spreading bushes, rising to a height of about 5 feet, and bearing, in the greatest abundance, those tiny crimson and green cones known to most people as bird's-eye chillies. We all had cause to remember this, for thrusting our way through these bushes under the burning rays of the sun, we got in some mysterious way some of their pungent juices upon our faces and arms. And the effect was much the same as the application of a strong mustard plaster would have been.

We did not commit any great depredations. The second mate shot (with a bomb-gun) a couple of pigs, and we managed to catch half-a-dozen fowls, but they were so wild and cunning here, that except at night it was by no means easy to lay hands upon them. As so often happened to us, we found our best catch upon the beach, where just after sunset we waylaid two splendid turtle that had just crawled ashore to deposit their eggs. The advantage of such a catch as this was in the fact that turtle may be kept alive on board ship for several weeks, if necessary, by putting them in a cask of sea-water, and though unfed, they do not seem to be perceptibly impoverished. We also collected a goodly store of fresh

unripe cocoa-nuts, which are one of the most delicious and refreshing of all tropical fruits. I do not suppose it would be possible to bring them to England without their essential freshness being entirely dissipated, for in order to enjoy them thoroughly they should be eaten new from the tree. They would be a revelation to people whose acquaintance with cocoa-nut is limited to the fully ripe and desperately indigestible article beloved of the Bank Holiday caterer, and disposed of at the favourite game of "three shies a penny." In that form no native of cocoa-nut-producing countries ever dreams of eating them. For they are really only fit for "copra," the universal term applied throughout the tropics to cocoa-nut prepared for conversion into oil. When the nuts are fully ripe, a native will seat himself by a heap of them, a small block of wood before him with a hollow in its centre, and an old axe in his hand. Placing a nut on the block, unhusked, of course, he splits it open by one blow of the axe and lays the two halves in the sun. By the time he has split open the last of the heap, he may begin at the first opened nuts and shake their contents into bags, for they will be dried sufficiently for the meat to fall readily from the shells. That is "copra." But before the husk has hardened into fibre, even before the shells have become brittle, when it is possible to slice off the top of the nut as easily as you would that of a turnip, the contents almost wholly consist of a bland liquor, not cloyingly sweet, cool even under the most fervent blaze of the sun, and refreshing to the last degree. Around the sides of the immature shell there is, varying in thickness according to the age of the nut, a jelly-like deposit, almost tasteless, but wonderfully sustaining. I have heard it vaunted as a cure for all diseases of malnutrition, and I should really be inclined to believe that there was some basis for the claim. The juice or milk, if allowed to ferment, makes excellent vinegar.

A long spell of cruising without touching at any land having exhausted all our stock of fowls, to say nothing of fruit and vegetables, of which we had almost forgotten the taste, it was with no ordinary delight that we sighted the Kermadec group of islands right ahead one morning, and guessed, by the course remaining unaltered, that our skipper was inclined to have a close look at them, if not to land. As we drew nearer and nearer our hopes rose, until, at the welcome order to "back the mainyard," we were like a school full of youngsters about to break up. Few preparations were needed, for a whaler's crew are always ready to leave the ship at any hour of the day or night for an indefinite period. And in ten minutes from the time of giving the first orders, two boats were pulling in for the small semi-circular bay with general instructions to forage for anything eatable. A less promising place at first sight for a successful raid could hardly be imagined, for the whole island seemed composed of one stupendous mountain

whose precipitous sides rose sheer from the sea excepting just before us. And even there the level land only appeared like a ledge jutting out from the mountain-side, and of very small extent. As we drew nearer, however, we saw that even to our well-accustomed vision the distance had proved deceitful, and that the threshold of the mountain was of far greater area than we had supposed, being, indeed, of sufficient extent to have afforded shelter and sustenance to quite a respectable village of colonists had any chosen to set up their homes in such a lonely spot. But to the instructed eye the steep beach, wholly composed of lava fragments, gave a sufficient reason why such a sheltered nook might be a far from secure abiding-place, even had not a steadfast stain of dusty cloud poised above the island in the midst of the clear blue sky added its witness to the volcanic conditions still ready to burst forth. But these considerations did not trouble us. With boisterous mirth we dodged the incoming rollers, and, leaping out of the boats as their keels grated on the shore, we ran them rapidly up out of the reach of the eager surf, delighted with the drenching because of its coolness. Dividing into parties of three, we plunged gaily into the jungly undergrowth, chasing, as boys do butterflies, the brown birds, like overgrown partridges, that darted away before us in all directions. We succeeded in catching a few, finding them to be what we afterwards knew in New Zealand as “Maori hens,” something between a domestic fowl and a partridge, but a dismal failure in the eatable way, being tough and flavourless as any fowl that had died of old age. Of swine, the great object of our quest, we saw not a hoof-print; in fact, we assured ourselves that whatever number of these useful animals the family that once resided in this desolate spot had reared, they had left no descendants. It was a grievous disappointment, for it threw us back upon the goats, and goat as food is anathema to all sailors. But it was a fine day; we had come out to kill something, and, as no other game appeared available, we started after the goats. It was a big contract. We were all barefooted, and, although on board the ship we had grown accustomed to regard the soles of our feet as quite impervious to feeling as any leather, we soon found that shore travelling over lava and through the many tormenting plants of a tropical scrub was quite another pair of shoes. We did capture a couple of goats, one a patriarch of unguessable longevity with a beard as long as my arm, and the other a Nanny heavy with kid. These we safely conveyed on board with us at the close of the day. But *the* result of our day’s foraging, overshadowing even the boat-load of magnificent fish we caught out in the little bay, was the discovery of a plant known in New Zealand as “Maori cabbage.” It looks something like a lettuce run to seed, and has a flavour like turnip-tops. I do not suppose any one on shore can realise what those vegetables meant to us, that is, the white portion of the crew. For it was well-nigh two years

since we had tasted a bit of anything resembling cabbage, and our craving for green vegetables and potatoes was really terrible. It is one of the most serious hardships the sailor has to endure, the more serious because quite avoidable. Potatoes and Swede turnips are not dear food, and, if taken up with plenty of mould adhering to them and left so, will keep for six months in all climates. They make all the difference between a good and a bad ship. I am sure no banquet that I have ever sat down to since could possibly have given me a tithe of the epicurean delight I felt over a plentiful plate of this nameless vegetable and a bit of hard salt beef that evening.

Although the addition to our stock of provisions, excepting the fish, was but small, we had an ideal day's enjoyment, and the fun we got out of Ancient William, the patriarch, was great. We had him tame in two days, and trying butting matches with the Kanakas; in spite of his age I don't know what we didn't teach him that a goat could learn. Nanny presented us with a charming little pet in the shape of a kid two days after her arrival on board, but to the grief of all hands her milk dried up almost immediately afterwards, so that to save the little creature from starvation, as there was not even a drop of condensed milk on board, we were compelled to kill it. The Kanakas ate it, and pronounced it very good. Then William the Ripe, in charging a Kanaka, who dodged him by leaping over the fo'c's'le scuttle, hurled himself headlong below, breaking both his fore legs. We could have mended him up all right, but he seemed to resent getting better, refused tobacco and all such little luxuries that we tried to tempt him with, and died. *I* think he was broken-hearted at the idea that a mountaineer like himself, who for goodness knows how many generations had scaled in safety the precipitous cliffs of Sunday Island, should fall down a stuffy hole on board ship, only about eight feet deep, and break himself all up.

VI

Some delightfully interesting articles on the ancient sport of “hawking,” or falconry, whichever is the correct term to use, in *Country Life* have vividly recalled to me a quaint and unusual experience in that line, which fell to my lot while the vessel of whose crew I was a very minor portion was slowly making her way homewards from a port at the extreme western limit of the Gulf of Mexico. We were absolutely without live stock of any kind on board the *Investigator*, unless such small deer as rats and cockroaches might be classed under that head. And, as so often happens at sea when that is the case, the men were very discontented at the absence of any dumb animals to make pets of, and often lamented what they considered to be the lonely condition of a ship without even a cat. But we had not been out of port many days when, to our delight as well as amazement, we saw one sunny morning hopping contentedly about the fo’c’s’le a sweet little blue and yellow bird about the bigness (or littleness) of a robin. Being well out of sight of land, no one could imagine whence he came, neither did anybody see him arrive. He just materialised as it were in our midst, and made himself at home forthwith, as though he had been born and bred among men and fear of them was unknown to him. We had hardly got over the feeling of almost childish delight this pretty, fearless wanderer gave us when another appeared, much the same size, but totally different in colour. It was quite as tame as the first arrival, and did not quarrel with the first-comer. Together they explored most amicably the recesses of the fo’c’s’le, apparently much delighted with the cockroaches, which swarmed everywhere. And before long many others came and joined them, all much about the same size, but of all the hues imaginable. They were all alike in their tameness, and it really was one of the most pleasant sights I ever witnessed to see those tiny, brilliant birds fluttering about our dingy fo’c’s’le, or, tired out, roosting on such queer perches as the edge of the bread-barge or the shelves in our bunks. Their presence had a most elevating influence upon the roughest of us—we went softly and spoke gently, for fear of startling these delicate little visitors who were so unafraid of the giants among whom they had voluntarily taken up their abode. At meal-times they hopped about the fo’c’s’le deck picking up crumbs and behaving generally as if they were in the beautiful glades and aromatic forests whence they had undoubtedly come. For it is hardly necessary to say that they were all land birds; and when during a calm one day one of them, stooping too near the sea, got wet, and was unable to rise again, August McManus, as tough a citizen as ever

painted the Highway red, leapt overboard after it, and, with a touch as gentle as the enwrapping of lint, rescued it from its imminent peril.

This strange development of sea-life went on for a week, the weather being exceedingly fine, with light winds and calms. And then we became suddenly aware that some large birds had arrived and taken up positions upon the upper yards, where they sat motionless, occasionally giving vent to a shrill cry. What they were none of us knew, until shortly after we had first noticed them one of our little messmates flew out from the ship's side into the sunshine. There was a sudden swish of wings, like the lash of a cane through the air, and downward like a brown shadow came one of the watchers from aloft, snatching in a pair of cruel-looking talons the tiny truant from our midst. Then the dullest of us realised that in some mysterious way these rapacious birds, a species of falcon, had become aware that around our ship might be found some of their natural food. Now we were not less than 200 miles from the coast at the time, and to my mind it was one of the strangest things conceivable how those hawks should have known that around a solitary ship far out at sea would be found a number of little birds suitable to their needs. The presence of the small birds might easily be explained by their having been blown off the land, as high winds had prevailed for some little time previous to their appearance, but as the hawks did not come till a week afterwards, during the whole of which time we had never experienced even a four-knot breeze, I am convinced that the same theory would not account for their arrival. It may have been a coincidence, but if so it was a very remarkable one; and in any case what were these essentially land birds of powerful flight doing of their own free will so far from land? Unless, of course, they were a little band migrating, and even then the coincidence of their meeting our ship was a most strange one.

We, however, troubled ourselves but little with these speculations. The one thing patent to us was that our little pets were exposed to the most deadly peril, that these ravenous birds were carrying them off one by one, and we were apparently powerless to protect them. We could not cage them, although the absence of cages would have been no obstacle, as we should soon have manufactured efficient substitutes; but they were so happy in their freedom that we felt we could not deprive them of it. But we organised a raid among those bloodthirsty pirates, as we called them, forgetting that they were merely obeying the law of their being, and the first dark hour saw us silently creeping aloft to where they had taken their roost. Two were caught, but in both cases the captors had something to remember their encounter by. Grasping at the shadowy birds in the

darkness with only one free hand, they were unable to prevent the fierce creatures defending themselves with beak and talons, and one man came down with his prize's claws driven so far into his hand that the wounds took many days to heal. When we had secured them we couldn't bring ourselves to kill them, they were such handsome, graceful birds, but had they been given a choice in the matter I make no doubt they would have preferred a speedy death rather than the lingering pain of starvation which befell them. For they refused all food, and sat moping on their perches, only rousing when any one came near, and glaring unsubdued with their bold, fierce eyes, bright and fearless until they glazed in death. We were never able to catch any more of them, although they remained with us until our captain managed to allow the vessel to run ashore upon one of the enormous coral reefs that crop up here and there in the Gulf of Mexico. The tiny spot of dry land that appeared at the summit of this great mountain of coral was barren of all vegetation except a little creeping plant, a kind of *arenaria*, so that it would have afforded no satisfactory abiding-place for our little shipmates, even if any of them could escape the watchful eyes of their enemies aloft. So that I suppose after we abandoned the ship they remained on board until she broke up altogether, and then fell an easy prey to the falcons.

This was the only occasion upon which I have known a vessel at sea to be visited by so varied a collection of small birds, and certainly the only case I have ever heard of where land birds have flown on board and made themselves at home. When I say at sea, of course I do not mean in a narrow strait like the Channel, where passing vessels must often be visited by migrants crossing to or from the Continent. But when well out in the North Atlantic, certainly to the westward of the Azores, and out of sight of them, I have several times known a number of swallows to fly on board and cling almost like bats to whatever projections they first happened to reach. Exhausted with their long battle against the overmastering winds, faint with hunger and thirst, they had at last reached a resting-place, only to find it so unsuited to all their needs that nothing remained for them to do but die. Earnest attempts were made to induce them to live, but unsuccessfully; and as they never regained strength sufficient to resume their weary journey, they provided a sumptuous meal for the ship's cat. Even had they been able to make a fresh start, it is hard to imagine that the sense of direction which guides them in their long flight from or to their winter haunts would have enabled them to shape a course from such an utterly unknown base as a ship at sea must necessarily be to them.

While making a passage up the China Sea vessels are often boarded by strange

bird visitors, and some of them may be induced to live upon such scanty fare as can be found for them on shipboard. I once witnessed with intense interest a gallant attempt made by a crane to find a rest for her weary wings on board of an old barque in which I was an able seaman. We were two days out from Hong-Kong, bound to Manila, through a strong south-west monsoon. The direction of the wind almost enabled us to lay our course, and therefore the “old man” was cracking on, all the sail being set that she would stagger under close-hauled. Being in ballast, she lay over at an angle that would have alarmed anybody but a yachtsman; but she was a staunch, weatherly old ship, and hung well to windward. It was my wheel from six to eight in the evening, and as I wrestled with it in the attempt to keep the old bark up to her work, I suddenly caught sight of the gaunt form of a crane flapping her heavy wings in dogged fashion to come up with us from to leeward, we making at the time about eight knots an hour. After a long fight the brave bird succeeded in reaching us, and coasted along the lee side, turning her long neck anxiously from side to side as if searching for a favourable spot whereon to alight. Just as she seemed to have made up her mind to come inboard abaft the foresail, a gust of back-draught caught her wide pinions and whirled her away to leeward, about a hundred fathoms at one sweep, while it was evident that she had the utmost difficulty in maintaining her balance. Another long struggle ensued as the gloom of the coming night deepened, and the steady, strenuous wind pressed us onward through the turbulent sea. The weary pilgrim at last succeeded in fetching up to us again, and with a feeling of the keenest satisfaction I saw her work her way to windward, as if instinct warned her that in that way alone she would succeed in reaching a place of rest. Backward and forward along our weather side she sailed twice, searching with anxious eye the whole of our decks, but fearing to trust herself thereon, where so many men were apparently awaiting to entrap her. No, she would not venture, and quite a pang of disappointment and sympathy shot through me as I saw her drift away astern and renew her hopeless efforts to board us on the lee side. At last she came up so closely that I could see the laboured heaving of her breast muscles, and I declare that the expression in her full, dark eyes was almost human in its pathos of despair. She poised herself almost above the rail, the vessel gave a great lee lurch, and down the slopes of the mizen came pouring an eddy of baffled wind. It caught the doomed bird, whirled her over and over as she fought vainly to regain her balance, and at last bore her down so closely to the seething tumult beneath her that a breaking wave lapped her up and she disappeared. All hands had witnessed her brave battle with fate, and quite a buzz of sympathy went up for her in her sad defeat.

That same evening one of the lads found a strange bird nestling under one of the boats. None of us knew what it was, for none of us ever remembered seeing so queer a creature before. Nor will this be wondered at when I say that it was a goat-sucker, as I learned long afterwards by seeing a plate of one in a Natural History I was reading. But the curious speculations that its appearance gave rise to in the fo'c's'le were most amusing. The wide gape of its mouth, so unexpected when it was shut, was a source of the greatest wonder, while the downy fluff of its feathers made one man say it reminded him of a "nowl" that a skipper of a ship he was in once caught and kept alive for a long time as a pet.

Of the few visitors that board a ship in mid-ocean none are more difficult to account for than butterflies. I have seen the common white butterfly fluttering about a ship in the North Atlantic when she was certainly over 500 miles from the nearest land. And in various parts of the world butterflies and moths will suddenly appear as if out of space, although the nearest land be several hundreds of miles distant. I have heard the theory advanced that their chrysalides must have been on board the ship, and they have just been hatched out when seen. It may be so, although I think unlikely; but yet it is hard to imagine that so fragile a creature, associated only in the mind with sunny gardens or scented hillsides, could brave successfully the stern rigour of a flight extending over several hundred miles of sea. All that is certain about the matter is that they *do* visit the ships at such distances from land, and disappear as if disheartened at the unsuitability of their environment. Lying in Sant' Ana, Mexico, once, loading mahogany, I witnessed the labours of an unbidden guest that made me incline somewhat to the chrysalis theory about the butterflies. Our anchorage was some three miles off shore in the open roadstead, where the rafts of great mahogany logs tossed and tumbled about ceaselessly alongside. They had all been a long time in the water before they reached us, and were consequently well coated with slime, which made them an exceedingly precarious footing for the unfortunate slingsman, who was as often in the water as he was on the raft. One evening as I lay in my bunk reading by the light of a smuggled candle, I was much worried by a persistent buzz that sounded very near, and far too loud to be the voice of any mosquito that I had ever been unfortunate enough to be attended by. Several times I looked for this noisy insect without success, and at last gave up the task and went on deck, feeling sure there wasn't room in the bunk for the possessor of that voice and myself. Next day after dinner I was again lying in my bunk, resting during the remainder of the dinner hour, when to my amazement I saw what I took to be an overgrown wasp or hornet suddenly alight upon a beam overhead, walk into a corner, and begin the music that had so worried me

overnight. I watched him keenly, but could hardly make out his little game, until he suddenly flew away. Then getting a light, for the corner was rather dark, I discovered a row of snug apartments much like acorn-cups, only deeper, all neatly cemented together, and as smooth inside as a thimble. Presently along came Mr. Wasp, or Hornet, or whatever he was, again, and set to work, while I watched him as closely as I dared without giving him offence, noticing that he carried his material in a little blob on his chest between his fore legs. It looked like mud; but where could he get mud from? I could swear there was none on board under that fierce sun, and I couldn't imagine him going six miles in five minutes, which he must needs have done had he gone ashore for it. So I watched his flight as well as I could, but it was two days before I discovered my gentleman on one of the logs alongside, scraping up a supply of slime, and skipping nimbly into the air each time the sea washed over his alighting-place. That mystery was solved at any rate. I kept careful watch over that row of dwellings thereafter, determined to suppress the whole block at the first sign of a brood of wasps making their appearance. None ever did, and at last I took down the cells with the greatest care, finding them perfectly empty. So I came to the conclusion that my ingenious and industrious guest had been building for the love of the thing, or for amusement, or to keep his hand in, or perhaps something warned him in time that the site he had selected for his eligible row of residences was liable to sudden serious vicissitudes of climate. At any rate, he abandoned them, much to my comfort.

“THE WAY OF A SHIP”

Solomon had, among the many mighty qualities of mind which have secured his high eminence as the wisest man of the world, an attribute which does not always accompany abundant knowledge. He was prompt to admit his limitations, as far as he knew them, frankly and fully. And among them he confesses an inability to understand “the way of a ship in the midst of the sea.” It may be urged that there was little to wonder at in this, since the exigencies of his position must have precluded his gaining more than the slightest actual experience of seafaring. Yet it is marvellous that he should have mentioned this thing, seemingly simple to a shore-dweller, which is to all mariners a mystery past finding out. No matter how long a sailor may have sailed the seas in one ship, or how deeply he may have studied the ways of that ship under apparently all combinations of wind and sea, he will never be found to assert thoughtfully that he *knows* her altogether. Much more, then, are the myriad idiosyncrasies of all ships unknowable. Kipling has done more, perhaps, than any other living writer to point out how certain fabrics of man’s construction become invested with individuality of an unmistakable kind, and of course so acute an observer could not fail to notice how pre-eminently is this the case with ships.

Now, in what follows I seek as best I may to show, by a niggardly handful of instances in my own experience, how the “personality” of ships expresses itself, and how incomprehensible these manifestations are to the men whose business it is to study them. Even before the ship has quitted the place of her birth, yea, while she is yet a-building, something of this may be noted. One man will study deepest mathematical problems, will perfectly apply his formulæ, and see them accurately embodied in steel or timber, so that by all ordinary laws of cause and effect the resultant vessel should be a marvel of speed, stability, and strength. And yet she is a failure. She has all the vices that the sailor knows and dreads: crank, slow, leewardly, hanging in stays, impossible to steer satisfactorily. Every man who ever sails in her carries in his tenacious sea-memory, to the day of his death, vengeful recollections of her perversities, and often in the dog-watch holds forth to his shipmates in eloquent denunciation of her manifold iniquities long after one would have thought her very name would be forgotten. Another shipbuilder, innocent of a scintilla of mathematics, impatient of diagrams, will begin apparently without preparation, adding timber to timber, and breast-hook to stem, until out of the dumb cavern of his mind a ship is evolved, his inexpressible idea manifested in graceful yet massive shape. And that ship will

inexpressible idea manifested in graceful yet massive shape. And that ship will be all that the other is not. As if the spirit of her builder had somehow been wrought into her frame, she behaves with intelligence, and becomes the delight, the pride, of those fortunate enough to sail in her.

Such a vessel it was once my good fortune to join in London for a winter passage across to Nova Scotia. Up to that time my experience had been confined to large vessels and long voyages, and it was not without the stern compulsion of want that I shipped in the *Wanderer*. She was a brigantine of two hundred and forty tons register, built in some little out-of-the-way harbour in Nova Scotia by one of the amphibious sailor-farmers of that ungenerous coast, in just such a rule-of-thumb manner as I have spoken of. When I got on board I pitied myself greatly. I felt cramped for room; I dreaded the colossal waves of the Atlantic at that stormy winter season, in what I considered to be a weakly built craft fit only for creeping closely along-shore. We worked down the river, also a new departure to me, always accustomed hitherto to be towed down to Beachy Head by a strenuous tug. The delicate way in which she responded to all the calls we made on her astonished our pilot, who was loud in his praises of her “handiness,” one of the most praiseworthy qualities a ship can have in a seaman’s eyes. Nevertheless, I still looked anxiously forward to our meeting with the Atlantic, although day by day, as we zigzagged down Channel, I felt more and more amazed at the sympathy she showed with her crew. At last we emerged upon the wide, open ocean, clear of even the idea of shelter from any land; and as if to show conclusively how groundless were my fears, it blew a bitter north-west gale. Never have I known such keen delight in watching a vessel’s behaviour as I knew then. As if she were one of the sea-people, such as the foam-like gulls or wheeling petrels, next of kin to the waves themselves, she sported with the tumultuous elements, her motion as easy as the sway of the seaweed and as light as a bubble. And even when the strength of the storm-wind forbade us to show more than the tiniest square of canvas, she answered the touch of her helm, as sensitive to its gentle suasion as Hiawatha’s Cheemaun to the voice of her master. Never a wave broke on deck, although she had so little free-board that a bucket of water could almost be dipped without the aid of a lanyard. That gale taught me a lesson I have never been able to forget. It was, never to judge of the seaworthy qualities of a ship by her appearance at anchor, but to wait until she had an opportunity of telling me in her own language what she could do.

Then came a spell of favourable weather—for the season, that is—when we

could carry plenty of sail and make good use of our time. Another characteristic now revealed itself in her—her steerability. Once steady on her course under all canvas, one turn of a spoke, or at most of two spokes, of the wheel was sufficient to keep her so; and for an hour I have walked back and forth before the wheel, with both hands in my pockets, while she sped along at ten knots an hour, as straight as an arrow in its flight. But when any sail was taken off her, no matter which, she would no longer steer herself, as if the just and perfect balance of her sail area had been disturbed; but she was easier to steer than any vessel I have ever known. Lastly, a strong gale tested her powers of running before it, the last touch of excellence in any ship being that she shall run safely dead before a gale. During its height we *passed* the Anchor liner *California*, a huge steamship some twenty times our bulk. From end to end of that mighty ship the frolicsome waves leaped and tumbled; from every scupper and swinging-port spouted a briny flood. Every sea, meeting her mass in its way, just climbed on board and spread itself, so that she looked, as sailors say, like a half-tide rock. From her towering hurricane-deck our little craft must have appeared a forlorn little object—just a waif of the sea, existing only by a succession of miracles. Yet even her muffled-up passengers, gazing down upon the white dryness of our decks, looked as if they could dimly understand that the comfort which was unmistakably absent from their own wallowing monster was cosily present with us.

Another vessel, built on the same coast, but three times the size of the *Wanderer*, was the *Sea Gem*, in which I had an extended experience. Under an old sea-dog of a captain who commanded her the first part of the voyage, she played more pranks than a jibbing mule with a new driver. None of the ordinary manœuvres necessary to a sailing-ship would she perform without the strangest antics and refusals. She seemed possessed of a stubborn demon of contrariness. Sometimes at night, when, at the change of the watch, all hands were kept on deck to tack ship, more than an hour would be wasted in futile attempts to get her about in a seamanlike way. She would prance up into the wind gaily enough, as if about to turn in her own length, and then at the crucial moment fall off again against the hard-down helm, while all hands cursed her vigorously for the most obstinate, clumsy vessel ever calked. Or she would come up far enough for the order of “mainsail haul,” and there she would stick, like a wall-eyed sow in a muddy lane, hard and fast in irons. With her mainyards braced a-port and her foreyards a-starboard, she reminded all hands of nothing so much as the old sea-yarn of the Yankee schooner-skipper who for the first time found himself in command of a bark. Quite scared of those big square sails, he lay in port until, by some lucky

chance, he got hold of a mate who had long sailed in square-rigged vessels. Then he boldly put to sea. But by some evil hap the poor mate fell overboard and was drowned when they had been several days out; and one morning a homeward-bounder spied a bark in irons making rapid signals of distress, although the weather was fine, and the vessel appeared staunch and seaworthy enough. Rounding to under the sufferer's stern, the homeward-bound skipper hailed, "What's the matter?" "Oh!" roared the almost frantic Yankee, "for God's sake send somebody aboard that knows somethin' about this kind er ship. I've lost my square-rigged mate overboard, an' I cain't git a move on her nohow!" He'd been trying to sail her "winged out," schooner fashion. So disgusted was our skipper with the *Sea Gem* that he left her in Mobile, saying that he was going to retire from the sea altogether. But we all believed he was scared to death that she would run away with him some fine day. Another skipper took command, a Yankee Welshman by the name of Jones. The first day out I heard the second mate say to him deferentially, "She's rather ugly in stays, sir." "Is she?" queried the old man, with an astonished air. "Wall, I should hev surmised she was ez nimble ez a kitten. Yew don't say!" Shortly after it became necessary to tack, and, to our utter amazement, the *Sea Gem* came about in almost her own length, with never a suggestion that she had ever been otherwise than as handy as a St. Ives smack. Nor did she ever after betray any signs of unwillingness to behave with the same cheerful alacrity. Had her trim been different we could have understood it, because some ships handy in ballast are veritable cows when loaded, and *vice versâ*. But that reasoning had here no weight, since her draft was essentially the same.

Not without a groan do I recall a passage in one of the handsomest composite barks I ever saw. Her name I shall not give, as she was owned in London, and may be running still, for all I know. My eye lingered lovingly over her graceful lines as she lay in dock, and I thought gleefully that a passage to New Zealand in her would be like a yachting-trip. An additional satisfaction was some patent steering-gear which I had always longed to handle, having been told that it was a dream of delight to take a trick with it. I admit that she was right down to her Plimsoll, and I will put it to her credit that she was only some dozen miles to leeward of the ill-fated *Eurydice* when that terrible disaster occurred that extinguished so many bright young lives. But the water was smooth, and we had no long row of lower-deck ports open for the sea to rush in when the vessel heeled to a sudden squall. It is only her Majesty's ships that are exposed to such dangers as that. In fact, for the first fortnight out she was on her extra-special behaviour, although none of us fellows for'ard liked a dirty habit she had of

lifting heavy sprays over fore and aft in a whole-sail breeze. Presently along came a snifter from the south-west, and every man of us awoke to the fact that we were aboard of a hooker saturated with every vicious habit known to ships. There was no dryness in her. You never knew where or when she would bow down to a harmless-looking sea and allow it to lollop on board, or else, with a perversity almost incredible, fall up against it so clumsily that it would send a blinding sheet of spray as high as the clues of the upper topsails. Words fail me to tell of the patent atrocity with which we were condemned to steer. Men would stand at the wheel for their two hours' trick, and imagine tortures for the inventor thereof, coming for'ard at four or eight bells, speechlessly congested with the volume of their imprecations upon him. Yet I have no doubt he, poor man, considered himself a benefactor to the genus seafarer. In any weather you could spin the wheel round from hard up to hard down without feeling the slightest pressure of the sea against the rudder. And as, to gain power, speed must be lost, two turns of the wheel were equal to only one with the old-fashioned gear. The result of these differences was to a sailor simply maddening. For all seamen steer as much by the *feel* of the wheel as by anything else (I speak of sailing-ships throughout), a gentle increase of pressure warning you when she wants a little bit to meet her in her sidelong swing. Not only so, but there is a subtle sympathy (to a good helmsman) conveyed in those alterations of pressure which, while utterly unexplainable in words, make all the difference between good and bad steering. Then, none of us could get used to the doubling of the amount of helm necessary. We were always giving her too much or too little. As she was by no means an easy-steering ship, even had her gear been all right, the consequence of this diabolical impediment to her guidance was that the man who kept her within two points and a half, in anything like a breeze, felt that he deserved high praise.

Still, with all these unpleasantnesses, we worried along in fairly comfortable style, for we had a fresh mess and railway-duff (a plum at every station) every Sunday. Every upper bunk in the fo'c's'le was leaky, and always remained so; but we rigged up water-sheds that kept us fairly dry during our slumbers. So we fared southward through the fine weather, forgetting, with the lax memory of the sailor for miserable weather, the sloppy days that had passed, and giving no thought to the coming struggle. Gradually we stole out of the trade area, until the paling blue of the sky and the accumulation of torn and feathery cloud-fields warned us of our approach to that stern region where the wild western wind reigns supreme. The trades wavered, fell, and died away. Out from the west, with a rush and a roar, came the cloud-compeller, and eastward we fled before it.

An end now to all comfort fore and aft. For she wallowed and grovelled, allowing every sea, however kindly disposed, to leap on board, until the incessant roar of the water from port to starboard dominated our senses even in sleep. A massive breakwater of two-inch kauri planks was fitted across the deck in front of the saloon for the protection of the afterguard, who dwelt behind it as in a stockaded fort. As the weather grew worse, and the sea got into its gigantic stride, our condition became deplorable; for it was a task of great danger to get from the fo’c’s’le to the wheel, impossible to perform without a drenching, and always invested with the risk of being dashed to pieces. We “carried on” recklessly in order to keep her at least ahead of the sea; but at night, when no stars were to be seen, and the compass swung madly through all its thirty-two points, steering was mental and physical torture. In fact, it was only possible to steer at all by the feel of the wind at one’s back, and even then the best helmsman among us could not keep her within two points on each side of her course. We lived in hourly expectation of a catastrophe, and for weeks none of us forward ever left off oilskins and sea-boots even to sleep in. At last, on Easter Sunday, three seas swept on board simultaneously. One launched itself like a Niagara over the stern, and one rose on each side in the waist, until the two black hills of water towered above us for fully twenty feet. Then they leaned toward each other and fell, their enormous weight threatening to crush our decks in as if they had been paper. Nothing could be seen of the hull for a smother of white, except the forecastle-head. When, after what seemed an age, she slowly lifted out of that boiling, yeasty whirl, the breakwater was gone, and so was all the planking of the bulwarks on both sides from poop to forecastle break. Nothing was left but to heave to, and I, for one, firmly believed that we should never get her up into the wind. However, we were bound to try; and watching the smooth (between two sets of seas), the helm was put hard down and the mizen hauled out. Round she came swiftly enough, but just as she presented her broadside to the sea, up rose a monstrous wave. Over, over she went—over until the third ratline of the lee rigging was under water; that is to say, the lee rail was full six feet under the sea. One hideous tumult prevailed, one dazzling glare of foaming water surrounded us; but I doubt whether any of us thought of anything but how long we could hold our breath. Had she been less deeply loaded she must have capsized. As it was, she righted again, and came up into the wind still afloat. But never before or since have I seen a vessel behave like that hove to. We were black and blue with being banged about, our arms strained almost to uselessness by holding on. Beast as she was, the strength of her hull was amazing, or she would have been racked to splinters: for in that awful sea she rolled clean to windward until she filled herself, then canted back again until she lay nearly on

her beam-ends; and this she did continually for three days and nights. At the first of the trouble the cabin had been gutted so that neither officers nor passengers had a dry thread, and of course all cooking was impossible. I saw the skipper chasing his sextant (in its box) around the saloon-table, which was just level with the water which was making havoc with everything. And not a man of us for'ard but had some pity to spare for the one woman passenger (going out with her little boy to join her husband), who, we knew, was crouching in the corner of an upper bunk in her cabin, hugging her child to her bosom, and watching with fascinated eyes the sullen wash of the dark water that plunged back and forth across the sodden strip of carpet.

In spite of all these defects in the ship, she reached Lyttelton in safety at last; and I, with more thankfulness than I knew how to express, was released from her, and took my place as an officer on board a grand old ship three times her size. Unfortunately for me, my sea experience of her extended only over one short passage to Adelaide, where she was laid up for sale; and of my next ship I have spoken at length elsewhere, so I may not enlarge upon her behaviour here. After that I had the good fortune to get a berth as second mate of the *Harbinger*, to my mind one of the noblest specimens of modern shipbuilding that ever floated. She was lofty—210 feet from water-line to skysail truck—and with all her white wings spread, thirty-one mighty sails, she looked like a mountain of snow. She was built of steel, and in every detail was as perfect as any sailor could wish. For all her huge bulk she was as easy to handle as any ten-ton yacht—far easier than some—and in any kind of weather her docility was amazing. No love-sick youth was ever more enamoured of his sweetheart than I of that splendid ship. For hours of my watch below I have sat perched upon the martingale guys under the jib-boom, watching with all a lover's complacency the stately sheer of her stem through the sparkling sea, and dreamily noting the delicate play of rainbow tints through and through the long feather of spray that ran unceasingly up the stem, and, curling outward, fell in a diamond shower upon the blue surface below. She was so clean in the entrance that you never saw a foaming spread of broken water ahead, driven in front by the vast onset of the hull. She parted the waves before her pleasantly, as an arrow the air; graciously, as if loath to disturb their widespread solitude.

But it needed a tempest to show her “way” in its perfection. Like the *Wanderer*, but in a grand and gracious fashion, she seemed to claim affinity with the waves, and they in their wildest tumult met her as if they too knew and loved her. She was the only ship I ever knew or heard of that would “stay” under storm-

staysails, reefed topsails, and a reefed foresail in a gale of wind. In fact, I never saw anything that she would not do that a ship should do. She was so truly a child of the ocean that even a bungler could hardly mishandle her; she *would* work well in spite of him. And, lastly, she would *steer* when you could hardly detect an air out of the heavens, with a sea like a mirror, and the sails hanging apparently motionless. The men used to say she would go a knot with only the quartermaster whistling at the wheel for a wind.

Then for my sins I shipped before the mast in an equally large iron ship bound for Calcutta. She was everything that the *Harbinger* was not—an ugly abortion that the sea hated. When I first saw her (after I had shipped), I asked the cook whether she wasn't a razeed steamboat—I had almost said an adapted loco-boiler. When he told me that this was only her second voyage I had to get proof before I could believe him. And as her hull was, so were her sails. They looked like a job lot scared up at ship-chandlers' sales, and hung upon the yards like rags drying. Our contempt for her was too great for words. Of course she was under water while there was any wind to speak of, and her motions were as strange as those of a seasick pig. A dredger would have beaten her at sailing; a Medway barge, with her Plimsoll mark in the main-rigging, would have been ten times as comfortable. Somehow we buttocked her out in 190 days with 2500 tons of salt in her hold, and again my fortunate star intervened to get me out of her and into a better ship as second mate.

Of steamers I have no authority to speak, although they, too, have their ways, quite as non-understandable as sailing-ships, and complicated, too, by the additional entity of the engines within. But everything that floats and is built by man, from the three-log catamaran of the Malabar coast, or the balsa of Brazil, up to the latest leviathan, has a way of its own, and that way is certainly, in all its variations, past finding out.

SEA ETIQUETTE

Nothing is more loudly regretted by the praisers of old times than the gradual disappearance of etiquette under the stress and burden of these bustling days, and nowhere is the decay of etiquette more pronounced than at sea. Romance persists because until machinery can run itself humanity must do so, and where men and women live romance cannot die. But were it not for the Royal Navy, with its perfect discipline and unbroken traditions, etiquette at sea must without doubt perish entirely, and that soon. Such fragments of it as still survive in the Merchant Service are confined to sailing-ships, those beautiful visions that are slowly disappearing one by one from off the face of the deep. Take, for instance, the grand old custom so full of meaning of “saluting the deck.” The poop or raised after-deck of a ship over which floated the national flag was considered to be always pervaded by the presence of the Sovereign, and, as the worshipper of whatever rank removes his hat upon entering a church, so from the Admiral to the powder-monkey every member of the ship’s company as he set foot upon the poop “saluted the deck”—the invisible presence. As the division between men-of-war and merchantmen widened so the practice weakened in the latter, and only now survives in the rigidly enforced practice of every person below the rank of Captain or mate coming up on to the poop by the lee side. And among the officers the practice is also observed according to rank, for with the Captain on deck the chief mate takes the lee side. But since in steamers there is often no lee side, the custom in them has completely died out. To etiquette also belongs the strict observance of the rule in all vessels of tacking “Sir” on to every reply to an officer, or the accepted synonym for his position to a tradesman who is a petty officer, as “Boss” for boatswain, “Chips” for carpenter, “Sails” for sailmaker, and “Doctor” for cook. A woeful breach of etiquette is committed by the Captain who, coming on deck while one of his mates is carrying out some manœuvre, takes upon himself to give orders direct to the men. It is seldom resented by junior officers for obvious reasons, but the chief mate would probably retire to another part of the vessel at once with the remark that it was “only one man’s work.”

In many cases etiquette and discipline are so closely interwoven that it is hard to know where one leaves off and the other begins, but in all such cases observance is strictly enforced as being one of the few remaining means whereby even a simulacrum of discipline is maintained in undermanned and oversparred sailing-

ships—such as the repetition of every order given by the hearer, the careful avoidance of any interference by one man with another's work in the presence of an officer, and the preservation of each officer's rightful attitude toward those under his charge and his superiors. Thus during the secular work of the day, work, that is, apart from handling the ship, the mate gives his orders to the boatswain, who sees them carried out. Serious friction always arises when during any operation the mate comes between the boatswain and his gang, unless, as sometimes happens, the boatswain be hopelessly incompetent.

In the private life of the ship every officer's berth is his house, sacred, inviolable, wherein none may enter without his invitation. And in a case of serious dereliction of duty or disqualification it becomes his prison. "Go to your room, sir," is a sentence generally equivalent to professional ruin, since a young officer's future lies in the hollow of his Commander's hand. The saloon is free to officers only at meal-times, not a common parlour wherein they may meet for chat and recreation, except in port with the Captain ashore. And as it is "aft" so in its degree is it "forrard." In some ships the carpenter has a berth to himself and a workshop besides, into which none may enter under pain of instant wrath—and "Chips" is not a man to be lightly offended. But in most cases all the petty officers berth together in an apartment called by courtesy the "half-deck," although it seldom resembles in a remote degree the dingy, foetid hole that originally bore that name. Very dignified are the petty officers, gravely conscious of their dignity, and sternly set upon the due maintenance of their rightful status as the backbone of the ship's company. Such a grave breach of etiquette as an "A.B." entering their quarters, with or without invitation, is seldom heard of, and quite as infrequent are the occasions when an officer does so. In large ships, where six or seven apprentices are carried, an apartment in a house on deck is set apart for their sole occupation, and the general characteristic of such an abode is chaos—unless, indeed, there should be a senior apprentice of sufficient stability to preserve order, which there seldom is. These "boys' houses" are bad places for a youngster fresh from school, unless a conscientious Captain or chief mate should happen to be at the head of affairs and make it his business to give an eye to the youngsters' proceedings when off duty. Of course etiquette may be looked for in vain here, unless it be the etiquette of "fagging" in its worst sense.

The men's quarters, always called the forecastle, even when a more humane shipowner than usual has relegated the forecastle proper to its rightful use as lockers for non-perishable stores and housed his men in a building on deck, is

always divided longitudinally in half. The port or mate's watch live on the port side, the starboard or second mate's watch on the starboard side. To this rule there is no exception. And here we have etiquette *in excelsis*. Although the barrier between the two sides is usually of the flimsiest and often quite imaginary in effect, it is a wall of separation with gates guarded and barred. The visitor from one side to the other, whatever his excuse, approaches humbly, feeling ill at ease until made welcome. And from dock to dock it is an unheard-of thing for any officer save the Captain to so much as *look* into the forecabin. Of course, exceptional circumstances do arise, such as a general outbreak of recalcitrancy, but the occasion must be abnormal for such a breach of etiquette to be made. Some Captains very wisely make it their duty to go the round of the ship each morning, seeing that everything is as it should be, and these enter the forecabin as a part of their examination. But this is quite the exception to the general rule, and is always felt to be more or less of an infringement of immemorial right.

In what must be called the social life of the forecabin, although it is commonly marked by an utter absence of social observances, there are several well-defined rules of etiquette which persist in spite of all other changes. One must not lock his chest at sea. As soon as the last landsman has left the ship, unlock the "donkey," throw the key ostentatiously into the till, and, letting the lid fall, seat yourself upon it, and light your pipe. It is a Masonic sign of good-fellowship, known and read of all men, that you are a "Sou' Spainer" indeed, at home again. The first time that the newly assembled crew sit down gipsy fashion to a meal (for tables are seldom supplied), there may be one, usually a boy, who fails to remove his cap. Then does the nearest man's hand seek the "bread-barge" for a whole biscuit, generally of tile-like texture and consistency. Grasping it by spreading his fingers all over its circumference, the mentor brings it down crushingly upon the covered head of the offender, who is thus initiated, as it were, to the fact that he must "show respect to his grub," as the term goes. But often when the commons have been exceptionally short or bad an old seaman will deliberately put on his cap again with the remark "'Tain't wuth it." If a man wants to smoke while a meal is in progress let him go outside, unless he desires deliberately to raise a storm. And when on the first day of serving out stores a man has been induced to undertake the onerous duty of dividing to each one his weekly portion—"whacking out"—gross indeed must be his carelessness or unfairness before any sufferer will raise a protest. It used to be the practice to load the boys or ordinary seamen (a grade between "A.B." and boy) with all the menial service of the forecabin, such as food-fetching, washing up utensils,

scrubbing, &c. But a juster and wiser plan has been borrowed from the Navy, whereby each man takes in rotation a week as “cook of the mess.” He cooks nothing, the “Doctor” will take care of that, but he is the servant of his house for that week, responsible for its due order and cleanliness. The boys are usually kept out of the forecastle altogether, and berthed with the petty officers, a plan which has with some advantages grave drawbacks. One curious old custom deserves passing notice. Upon a vessel’s arrival in ports where it is necessary to anchor, it is usual to set what is called an “anchor-watch” the first night. All hands take part in this for one hour each, or should do so, but that sometimes there are too few and sometimes too many. As soon as the order is given to “pick for anchor-watch” an old hand draws a rude circle on the deck, which he subdivides into as many sections as there are men. Then one man retires while all the rest come forward and make each man his private mark in a section. When all have contributed, the excluded one (whose mark has been made for him by deputy) is called in and solemnly rubs out mark after mark, the first to be rubbed out giving its owner the first hour’s watch, and so on.

Nothing has been said about etiquette in the Royal Navy, because there it is hardly ever to be distinguished from disciplinary rule. Nor has allusion been more than casually made to steamships, whose routine excludes etiquette, having no more room for it than it has for seamanship, except upon rare occasions.

WAVES

Beloved of the poet and the painter, appealing by the inimitable grace of their curves and marvel of their motion to all mankind, the waves of the sea take easily their high place with the stars and the mountains as some of the chief glories attendant upon the round world. Only an artist, perhaps, could do justice to the multiplicity of lovely lines into which the ruffled surface of the ocean enwreathes itself under the pressure of the storm. Yet any one with an eye for the beautiful will find it hard to leave a sight so fair, will watch unweariedly for hours the gliding, curling masses as they rise, apparently in defiance of law, subside and rise again and yet again.

Sailors often speak of an “ugly” sea, but the adjective has quite another meaning to that usually attached to it. They do not mean that it is ugly in appearance, for they well know that the beauty of a wave is as much a part of it as is the water—it cannot be otherwise than beautiful, as it cannot cease to be wet. What they mean is a dangerous sea. And by “sea” they always mean wave. A sailor never speaks of a “high wave,” “cross waves,” “heavy waves”; in fact, on board ship, except when passengers are getting information from officers, you will not hear the word “wave” mentioned at all. It is necessary to mention this purely nautical detail to save constant explanation and digression. To return, then, to the sailor’s “ugly” sea. Its ugliness may be due to many different causes, but in the result the waves do not run truly with the wind; they rise unexpectedly and confusedly, changing the natural motion of the ship into a bewildered stagger, such as one will sometimes see in a horse when a brutal, foolish driver is beating him over the head and wrenching first at one rein and then the other without knowing himself what he wants the poor brute to do. It is very pitiful, too, to watch a gallant ship being pressed through an ugly, untrue sea—such, for instance, as may be met with in the North Atlantic with a south-west gale blowing, and the vessel in the midst of the Gulf Stream. The conflict between wind and current, all the more terrible for its invisibility, is deep-reaching, so deep that every excuse must be found for those who have spoken of seas running mountains high. As the steady, implacable thrust of the storm booms forth, the black breadths of water rise rebellious; they would fain flow in the face of the wind, but that cannot be. So they rise, sullenly rise, peak-like, against their persecutor, until his might compels them forward against the mighty stream beneath, and their shattered crags and pinnacles tumble in ruinous heaps around.

Even this, however, is less dangerous than that time—to be spoken of by those who have seen it, and live, with bated breath—when, rotating like some wheel of the gods, the tropical cyclone whirls across the Indian seas. Round and round blow the incredibly furious winds, having a centrifugal direction withal, and yet the whole mighty system progresses in some given direction, until towards its centre there is a Maelstrom indeed—a space where the wind hath left, as it were, a funnel of calm in the world-tumult. And there the waves hold high revel. Heap upon heap the waters rise, without direction, without shape, save that of fortuitous blocks hurled skyward and falling again in ruin. The fountains of the great deep appear to be broken up, and woe to man's handiwork found straying there in that black hour.

All those who have ever “run the Easting down” will remember, but not all pleasurably, the great true sea of the roaring “forties” or “fifties.” How, unhindered in its world-encircling sweep, the premier wind of all comes joyously, unwaveringly, for many a day without a pause, while the good ship flies before it with every wing bearing its utmost strain. In keeping with the wind, the wave—the long, true wave of the Southern Seas, spreading to infinity on either hand, a gorgeous concave of blue, with its direction as straightly at right angles to the ship's track as if laid by line, and its ridge all glistening like a wreath of new-fallen snow under silver moon or golden sun. It pursues, it overtakes, rises astern with majestic sound as of all the war-chariots of Neptune; then, easily passing beneath the buoyant keel, it is gone on ahead, has joined its fellows in their stately progress to the East. Adown its far-spreading shoulders stream pennons of white; in the broad valley between it and the next wave the same bright foam creams and hisses until wherever the eye can rest is no longer blue but white—a wilderness of curdling snow just bepatched with azure.

The strong, exultant ship may rejoice in such a scene as this, but it is far otherwise with the weakling. Caught up in this irresistible march of wind and wave, she feels that her place is elsewhere; it is not hers to strive with giants, but to abide by the stuff. Then do the hapless mariners in charge watch carefully for a time when they may lay her to, watch the waves' sequence, knowing that every third wave is greater, and leaves a broader valley of smooth behind it than its fellows; while some say that with the third sequence of three—the ninth wave—these differences are at their maximum. Why? Who knows? Certain it is that some waves are heavier than others, and equally certain it is that in the case of a truly running sea these heavier seas appear at regularly recurrent intervals of three. And that is all sailors know. Sufficient too, perhaps, as with their weak

and overladen ship they watch the smooth, to swing her up between two rolling ranges of water, and without shipping more than thirty or forty tons or so, heave her to, her head just quartering the oncoming waves, and all danger of being overwhelmed by them removed.

Curious indeed are the waves to be found over uneven bottoms with strong undercurrents—as, for instance, on the coast of Nova Scotia—and known as “overfalls.” Sufficiently annoying to vessels of large size that get among them, they are most dangerous to small craft. The water rises in masses perpendicularly, and falls a dead weight without apparent forward motion—a puzzling, deadly sea to meet when a howling gale is driving your small vessel across those angry waters. But the overfall character is common to nearly all waves raised in shallow seas and tidal streams. It adds to the dangers of navigation immensely, and although the eye must be charmed when from the lofty cliff we see the green-bosomed, hoary-shouldered wave come thundering shoreward, we need not expect those to greet him lovingly who must do so in weakness and undefended.

What of the tidal wave; that mysterious indispensable swelling of the waters that, following the “pull” of the moon, rolls round this globe of ours twice in each twenty-four hours, stemming the outflow of mighty rivers, penetrating far inland wherever access is available, and doing within its short lease of life an amount of beneficent work freely that would beggar the wealthiest Monarchy of the world to undertake if it must needs be paid for? Mysterious it may well be called, since, though its passage from zone to zone be so swift, it is, like all other waves, but an undulatory movement of that portion of the sea momentarily influenced by the suasion of the planet—not, as is vulgarly supposed, the same mass of water vehemently carried onward for thousands of miles. No; just as a tightly stretched sheet of calico shows an undulation if the point of a stick be passed along beneath its surface and pressed upward against it, an undulation which leaves every fibre where it was originally, so does the whole surface remain in its place while the long, long wave rolls round the world carrying up to their moorings the homeward-bound ships, sweetening mud-befouled tidal harbours, and giving to forlorn breadths of deserted shallows all the glory and vitality of the youthful sea.

To meet a tidal wave at sea is in some parts of the watery world a grim and unforgettable experience. Floating upon the shining blue plain, with an indolent swelling of the surface just giving a cosy roll to your ship now and then, you suddenly see in the distance a ridge, a knoll of water that advances vast, silent,

menacing. Nearer and nearer it comes, rearing its apparently endless curve higher and higher. There is no place to flee from before its face. Neither is there much suspense. For its pace is swift, although it appears so deliberate, from the illimitable grandeur of its extent. It is upon the ship. She behaves in accordance with the way she has been caught and her innate peculiarities. In any case, whatever her bulk, she is hurled forward, upward, backward, downward, as if never again could she regain an even keel, while her crew cling desperately to whatever holding-place they may have reached, lest they should be dashed into dead pieces.

Some will have it that these marvellous upliftings of the sea-bosom are not tidal waves at all—that they do not belong to that normal ebb and flow of the ocean that owns the sway of the moon. If so, they would be met with more frequently than they are at sea, and far more disasters would be placed to their account. This contention seems reasonable, because it is well known that lonely islets such as St. Helena, Tristan d’Acunha, and Ascension are visited at irregular intervals by a succession of appalling waves (rollers) that deal havoc among the smaller shipping, and look as if they would overwhelm the land. The suggestion is that these stupendous waves are due to cosmic disturbance, to submarine earthquakes upheaving the ocean-bed and causing so vast a displacement of the ocean that its undulations extend for several thousands of miles.

As to the speed of waves, judging from all experience, they would seem never to exceed sixteen to eighteen knots an hour in their hugest forms. And yet it is well known that they will often outstrip the gale that gave them birth, let it rage never so furiously. Lying peacefully rolling upon the smoothest of summer seas, you shall presently find, without any alteration in the weather, the vessel’s motion change from its soothing roll to a sharp, irritable, and irritating movement. And, looking overside, there may be seen the forerunners of the storm that is raging hundreds of miles away, the hurrying waves that it has driven in its path. So likewise, long hours after a gale is over, the waves it has raised roll on, still reluctant to resume their levelled peace, and should a new gale arise in some contrary direction, the “old” sea, as the sailor calls it, will persist, making the striving ship’s progress full of weariness and unease to those on board. Of the energy of waves, of the lessons they teach, their immutable mutability, and other things concerning them that leap to the mind, no word can now be spoken, for space is spent.

A BATTLESHIP OF TO-DAY

Last year it was my pleasant privilege to lay before the readers of the *Spectator* a few details upon the polity of a battleship, and from the amount of interest shown in that subject, it would seem acceptable to supplement it by a few more details upon the mechanical side. First, then, as to the ship herself. Complaints are often heard of the loss of beauty and ship-like appearance consequent upon the gain of combative strength in these floating monsters. And it cannot be denied that up till a few years ago in our own Navy, and at the present date among the *cuirassés* of France, the appearance of the vessels made such a complaint well founded—such ships as the *Hoche* and *Charlemagne*, for instance, from which it may truly be said that all likeness to a ship has been removed. But in our own Navy there has been witnessed of late years a decided return to the handsome contour of vessels built, not for war, but for the peaceful pursuits of the merchant service. And this has so far been attended by the happiest results. These mighty ships of the *Majestic* class, on board of one of which I am now writing, have won the unstinted praise of all connected with them. This means a great deal, for there are no more severe critics of the efforts of naval architects than naval officers, as would be naturally expected. In these ships the eye is arrested at once by their beautiful lines, and the absence of any appearance of top-heaviness so painfully evident in ships like the *Thunderer*, the *Dreadnought*, and the *Admirals*. Their spacious freeboard, or height from the water-line to the edge of the upper deck, catches a seaman's eye at once, for a good freeboard means not only a fairly dry ship, but also plenty of fresh air below, as well as a sense of security in heavy weather. It is not, however, until their testing time comes, in a heavy gale of wind on the wide Atlantic, that their other virtues appear. Then one is never weary of wondering at their splendid stability and freedom from rolling, which makes them unique fighting platforms under the worst weather conditions. They steer perfectly, a range of over three and a half degrees on either side of their course being sufficient to bring down heavy censure upon the quartermaster. They have not Belleville boilers, and so enjoy almost complete immunity from breakdowns, maintaining their speed in a manner that is not approached by any other men-of-war afloat. In addition to great economy of coal usage they have, for a ship of war, very large coal bunkers. In fact, in this respect their qualifications are so high that there is danger of being disbelieved in giving the plain facts. On a coal consumption of 50 tons per day for *all* purposes a speed of eight knots per hour can be

maintained for forty days. Of course, with each extra knot of speed the coal consumption increases enormously, reaching a maximum of 220 tons a day for a speed of fifteen knots with forced draught. It is necessary to italicise *all* purposes, for it must always be remembered that there is quite a host of auxiliary engines always at work in these ships for the supply of electric light, ventilation, steering, distilling, &c. And this brings me to a most important detail of the economy of modern ships of war—their utter dependence for efficient working upon modern inventions, all highly complicated, and liable to get out of order. As, for instance, the lighting. It is quite true that the work of the ship can be carried on without electric light, but when one considers the bewildering ramifications of utterly dark passages in the bowels of these huge ships, and remembers how accustomed the workers become to the flood of light given by a host of electric lamps, it needs no active exercise of the imagination to picture the condition of things when that great illumination is replaced by the feeble glimmer of candles or colomb lights. Truly they only punctuate the darkness, they do not dispel it, and work is carried on at great risk because of its necessary haste. Then there is the steering. Under ordinary circumstances one man stands at a baby wheel upon a lofty bridge, whence he has a view from beam to beam of all that is going on, of the surrounding sea. At a touch of his hand the obedient monster of 150 horse-power, far down in the tiller-room aft, responds by exerting its great force upon the rudder, and the ship is handled with ridiculous ease. Use accustoms one to the marvel, and no wonder is ever evinced at the way in which one man can keep that giant of 15,000 tons so steady on her course. But of late we have had an object-lesson upon the difference there is between steering by hand without the intervention of machinery and steering with its aid. In the next water-tight compartment forward of the tiller-room, there are four wheels, each 5 feet in diameter, and of great strength of construction. Some distance in front of these there is an indicator—a brass pointer moving along a horizontal scale marked in degrees. Forward of this again, but about 2 feet to port of it, there is a compass, and how any compass, however buttressed by compensators, can keep its polarity in the midst of such an immense assemblage of iron and steel furniture is almost miraculous. By the side of the compass is a voice-tube communicating with the pilot-bridge forward. To each of the wheels four men are allotted, sixteen in all. A quartermaster watches, with eyes that never remove their gaze, the indicator, which, actuated from the pilot-bridge 300 feet away, tells him how many degrees of helm are needed, and he immediately gives his orders accordingly. One man watches the compass, another attends the voice-tube, listening intently for orders that may come in that way from the officer responsible for the handling of the ship. Two men also watch in the tiller-

room for possible complications arising there. Total, twenty-one men for the purpose of steering the ship alone, or a crew equal to that of a sailing-ship of 2000 tons, or the deck hands of a steamship of 6000 tons. Yet this steering crew is only for one watch. Of course, this steering by hand is a last resource. The engines which move the rudder are in duplicate, and there are seven other stations from which they can be worked—viz., one on the upper bridge, one in each of the conning-towers, one at each steering-engine, and two others on different decks in the lower fore-part of the ship. It is certainly true that some of these wheels actuate the same connection, so that one break may disable two, or even three, wheels; but even granting that, there still remains a considerable margin of chances against the possibility of ever being compelled to use the hand steering-gear. Those awful weapons of war, the barbette guns, may also be handled by manual labour, but it is instructive to compare the swift ease with which they, their containing barbettes (each weighing complete 250 tons), their huge cartridges of cordite and 850 lb. shells, are handled by hydraulic power, and the same processes carried out by hand. And so with all other serious operations, such as weighing anchor, hoisting steamboats, &c. The masses of weight to be dealt with are so great that the veriest novice may see at one glance that to be compelled to use hand labour for their manipulation in actual warfare would be equivalent to leaving the ship helpless, at the mercy of another ship of any enemy's not so situated. Yes, these ships are good, so good that it is a pity they are not better. In the opinion of those best qualified to know, they have still a great deal too much useless top-hamper—nay, worse than useless, because in action its destruction by shell-fire and consequent mass of débris would not only mean the needless loss of many lives, but would pile up a mountain of obstacles in the way of the ship's efficient working. Also, the amount of unnecessary woodwork with which these vessels are cumbered is very great, constituting a danger so serious that on going into action it would be imperative to put a tremendous strain upon the crew in tearing it from its positions and flinging it overboard. Upper works of course there must be, but they should be reduced to their simplest and most easily removable expression, and on no account should there be, as there now is, any battery that in action would be unworkable, and consequently only so much lumber in the way. Remembering the enormous cost of the flotilla of boats carried by these ships, three of them being steamers of high speed, it comes as somewhat of a shock to learn that upon going into action one of the first things necessary would be to launch them all overboard and let them go secured together so that they might possibly be picked up again, although not easily by the ship to which they belonged. It is only another lurid glimpse of the prospective horror of modern naval warfare. There will be no

means of escape in case of defeat and sinking, for nothing will be left to float. Finally, after all criticisms have been made it remains to be said that it is much to be regretted that we have not double the number of these splendid battleships furnished with boilers that can be relied upon as the present boilers can. Other ships of their stamp are being built, but with Belleville boilers, of which the best that can be said is that our most dangerous prospective foe is using them exclusively also. But she, again, is rushing blindly upon certain disaster in the direction of accumulating enormous superstructures which are certain to be destroyed early in any engagement, and being destroyed will leave the ship a helpless wreck. We have shown our wisdom by reducing these dreadfully disabling erections, and shall yet reduce them more. Why not go a step farther, and refuse longer to load our engineers with the horrible incubus of boilers that have not a single workable virtue but that of raising steam quickly, and have every vice that a vehicle for generating steam can possibly possess?

NAT'S MONKEY

When Nathaniel D. Troop (of Jersey City, U.S.A.), presently A.B. on board the British ship *Belle*, solemnly announced his intention of investing in a monkey the next time old Daddy the Bumboatman came alongside, there was a breathless hush, something like consternation, amongst his shipmates. It was in Bombay and eventide, and all we of the foremast hands were quietly engaged upon our supper (tea is the name for the corresponding meal ashore), with great content resting upon us, for bananas, rooties, duck-eggs and similar bumboat-bought luxuries abounded among us. So that the chunk of indurated buffalo that had resisted all assaults upon it at dinner-time lay unmolested at the bottom of the beef-kid, no one feeling sufficiently interested to bestow a swear on it.

For some time after Nat's pronouncement nobody spoke. The cool breeze whispered under the fo'c's'le awning, the Bramley-kites wheeled around whistling hungrily and casting their envious watchful eyes upon our plates, and somewhere in the distance a dinghy-wallah intoned an interminable legend to his fellow-sufferers that sounded like the high-pitched drone of bees on a sultry afternoon among the flowers. Then up and spake John de Baptiss: "Waffor, Nat? Wah we ben dween t'yo. Foh de Lawd sake, sah, ef yew gwain bring Macaque 'bord dis sheep you'se stockin trubble' nough ter fill er mighty long hole." "'Sides," argued Cockney Jem, "'taint 'sif we ain't got a monkey. 'Few wornt any monkey tricks played on us wot price th' kid 'ere," and he pointed to *me*.

"Naow jess yew hole on half a minnit," drawled Nat, "'relse yew'll lose your place. Djer ever know me ter make trubble sense I ben aboard thishyer limejuice dog-basket? Naw, I've a learnt manners, *I* hev, 'n don't never go stickin' my gibbie in another man's hash I don't. But in kase this kermunity sh'd feel anyways hurt at my perposal, lemme 'splain. I s'pose I ain't singler in bein' ruther tired er these blame hogs forrad here. Hogs is all right, ez hogs, but they don't make parler pets wuth a cent. N'wen I finds one biggern a porpuss a wallerin' round in my bunk 'n rootin' 'mong the clean straw my bed's stuffed with, its kiender bore in erpon me that fresh pork fer dinner's wut I ben pinin' fer a long time. Naow I know thet I kin teach a monkey in about tew days 'nough ter make him scare the very chidlins er them hogs inter sossidge meat if they kum investigatin' where he's on dooty. 'N so I calkerlate to be a sorter bennyfactor ter my shipmates, though it seems 'sif yew ain't overnabove

grateful.”

By this time the faces of Nat’s audience had lost the look of apprehension they had worn at first. Everybody had an account to settle with those pigs, which swarmed homelessly about the fore part of the deck, and never missed an opportunity of entering our domicile during our absence, doing such acts and deeds there as pigs are wont to perform. As they were a particular hobby of the skipper’s we were loth to deal with them after their iniquities, the more so as she was a particularly comfortable ship. And if Nat’s idea should turn out to be a good one we should all be gainers. Consequently when Daddy appeared in the morning Nat greeted him at once with the question, “Yew got monkey?”

Promptly came the stereotyped answer, “No, Sahib. Eberyting got. Monkey no got. Melican war make monkey bery dear.” However, as soon as Daddy was persuaded that a monkey really was desired he undertook to supply one, and sure enough next morning he brought one with him, a sinister-looking beast about as large as a fox-terrier. He was secured by a leathern collar and a dog-chain to the fife-rail of the foremast for the time, and one or two of the men amused themselves by teasing him until he was almost frantic. Presently I came round where he was lurking, forgetting for the time all about his presence. Seeing his opportunity, he sprang on to my shoulder and bit me so severely that I carry his marks now. Smarting with the pain I picked up a small piece of coal and flung it at him with all the strength I could muster. Unfortunately for me it hit him on the head and made it bleed, for which crime I got well rope’s-ended by Nat. And besides that I made an enemy of that monkey for the rest of his time on board—many months—an enemy who never lost a chance of doing me an ill turn.

He took to his master at once, and was also on nodding terms with one or two of the other men, but with the majority he was at open war. Nat kept him chained up near his bunk, only taking him out for an airing at intervals, and at once commenced to train him to go for the pigs. But one day Nat laid in a stock of eggs and fruit, stowing them as usual on the shelf in his bunk. We were very busy all the morning on deck, so that I believe hardly a chance was obtained by any one of getting below for a smoke. When dinner-time came Nat went straight to his bunk to greet his pet, but he was nowhere to be seen. The state of that bed though was something to remember. Jocko had been amusing himself by trying to make an omelette, and the débris of two dozen eggs was strewn and plastered over the bunk, intermingled with crushed bananas, torn up books, feathers out of Nat’s swell pillow, and several other things. While Nat was ransacking his memory for some language appropriate to the occasion, a yell arose from the

other side of the fore-castle where Paddy Finn, a Liverpool Irishman of parts, had just discovered his week's whack of sugar *and* the contents of a slush-pot pervading all the contents of his chest. Other voices soon joined in the chorus as further atrocities were discovered, until the fo'c's'le was like Bedlam broken loose.

"Pigs is it ye'd be afther complainin' of, ye blatherin' ould omadhaun. The divil a pig that iver lived ud be afther makin' sich a hell's delight ov a man's dunnage as this. Not a blashted skirrick have oi left to cover me nakidness wid troo yure blood relashin. Only let me clap hands on him me jule, thet's all, ye dhirty ould orgin-grinder you."

High above all the riot rose the wail of Paddy Finn as above, until the din grew so great that I fled dismayed, in mortal terror lest I should be brought into the quarrel somehow. It was well that I did so, for presently there was what sailors call a regular "plug-mush," a free fight wherein the guiding principle is "wherever you see a head, hit it." The battle was brief if fierce, and its results were so far good that uproarious laughter soon took the place of the pandemonium that had so recently reigned. Happily I had not brought the dinner in when the riot began, so that still there was some comfort left. Making haste I supplied the food, and soon they were all busy with it, their dinner hour being nearly gone. The punishment of the miscreant was unavoidably deferred for want of time to look for him, for he had vanished like a dream. But while we ate a sudden storm of bad language rose on deck. Hurrying out to see what fresh calamity had befallen we found the nigger cook flinging himself about in a frenzy of rage, while half-way up the main-stay, well out of everybody's reach, sat Jocko with a fowl that he had snatched out of the galley while the cook's back was turned, and was now carefully tearing into fragments. Rushing to the stay, the men shook it till the whole mainmast vibrated, but the motion didn't appear to trouble the monkey. Holding the fowl tightly in one hand he bounded up into the main-top and thence to the mizen-topmast stay, where for the time he had to be left in peace.

As soon as knock-off time came a hunt was organised. It was a very exciting affair while it lasted, but not only were the men tired, but that monkey could spring across open spaces like a bird, and catching him was an impossible task. The attempt was soon given up, therefore, and the rest of the evening after supper devoted to repairing damages. For the next three days she was a lively ship. That imp of darkness was like the devil, he was everywhere. Like a streak

of grey lightning he would slide down a stay, snatch up something just laid down, and away aloft again before the robbed one had realised what had happened. All sorts of traps were laid for him, but he was far too wise to be taken in any trap that ever was devised. I went in terror of him night and day, for I feared that now he was free he would certainly not omit to repay me for his broken pate. And yet it was I who caught him. For the moment I had forgotten all about him, when coming from aloft and dropping lightly with my bare feet upon the bottom of one of the upturned boats on the roof of our house, I saw something stirring in the folds of the main-topmast staysail that was lying there loosely huddled together. Leaping upon the heap of canvas I screamed for help, bringing half-a-dozen men to the spot in a twinkling. Not without some severe bites, the rascal was secured, and by means of a stout belt round his waist effectually prevented from getting adrift again. I looked to see him summarily put to death, but no one seemed to think his atrocious behaviour merited any worse punishment than a sound thrashing except the cook and steward, and they being our natural enemies were of course unheeded. The fact is Jocko had, after his first performance, confined his attentions to the cabin and galley, where he had done desperate damage and made the two darkies lead a most miserable life. This conduct of his I believe saved his life, as those two functionaries were cordially detested by the men for many reasons. At any rate he was spared, and for some time led a melancholy life chained up on the fore-castle head during the day, and underneath it at night. Meantime we had sailed from Bombay and arrived at Conconada, where the second mate bought a monkey, a pretty tame little fellow that hadn't a bit of vice in him. He was so docile that when we got to sea again he was allowed to have the run of the ship. Petted by everybody, he never got into any mischief, but often used to come forward and sit at a safe distance from Jocko, making queer grimaces and chatterings at him, but always mighty careful not to get too near. Jocko never responded, but sat stolidly like a monkey of wood until the little fellow strolled away, when he would spring up and tear at his chain, making a guttural noise that sounded as much like an Arab cursing as anything ever I heard. So little Tip went on his pleasant way, only meeting with one small mishap for a long time. He was sitting on deck one sunny afternoon with his back against the coamings of the after-hatch, his little round head just visible above its edge. One of the long-legged raw-boned roosters we had got in Conconada was prowling near on the never-ending quest for grub. Stalking over the hatch he suddenly caught sight of this queer little grey knob sticking up. He stiffened himself, craned his neck forward, and then drawing well back dealt it a peck like a miniature pick-axe falling. Well, that little monkey was more astonished than ever I saw an animal in my life. He

fairly screamed with rage while the rooster stood as if petrified with astonishment at the strange result of his investigations.

Owing to the close watch kept upon Jocko he led a blameless life for months. Apparently reconciled to his captivity he gradually came to be regarded as a changed animal who had repented and forsaken his evil ways for life. But my opinion of him never changed. It was never asked and I knew better than to offer it, but there was a lurking devil in his sleepy eyes that assured me if ever he got loose again his previous achievements would pale into insignificance before the feats of diabolical ingenuity he would then perform. Still the days and weeks rolled by uneventfully until we were well into the fine weather to the north'ard of the Line in the Atlantic. We had been exceptionally favoured by the absence of rain, and owing to the exertions of the second mate, who was an enthusiast over his paint-work, her bulwarks within and her houses were a perfectly dazzling white, with a satiny sheen like enamel. In fact I heard him remark with pardonable pride that he'd never seen the paint look so well in all his seven voyages as second of the *Belle*. Tenderly, as if it were his wife's face, he would go over that paint-work even in his watch below, with bits of soft rag and some clean fresh water, wiping off every spot of defilement as soon as it appeared. Tarring down was accomplished without a spot or a smear upon the paint, and the decks having been holystoned and varnished, the second mate now began to breathe freely. No more dirty work remained to be done, and he would have a lot more time to devote to his beloved white paint. We had been slipping along pretty fast to the north'ard, and one afternoon the old man had all hands up to bend our winter suit of sails. Every mother's son of them were aloft except me, and I was busy about the mainmast standing by to attend to the running gear, as I was ordered from above. As they had hoisted all the sails up before they had started aloft, they were there a long time, as busy as bees trying to get the job finished. At last all was ready and down they came. One of them went forrard for something, and immediately raised an outcry that brought all hands rushing to the spot, thinking that the ship was on fire or something. The sight they saw was a paralysing one to a sailor. On both sides of the bulwarks and the lower panels of the house were great smears and splashes of Stockholm tar, while all along the nice blue covering-board the mess was indescribable. With one accord everybody shouted "That—— monkey." Yes, as they spoke there was a dull thud and down from aloft fell a huge oakum wad saturated with tar. They looked up and there he sat, an infernal object, hardly distinguishable for a monkey, being smothered from head to tail-end with the thick glutinous stuff. But his white teeth gleamed and his wicked eye twinkled merrily as he thought of the

heavenly time he'd been having, a recompense for what must have seemed years of waiting. Too late, the men now remembered that the tar barrel, its head completely out, had been left up-ended by the windlass where it had been placed for convenience during tarring down. It was there still, but leading from it in all directions were streams of tar where Jocko had dragged away the dripping wads he had fished out of its black depths. I was never revengeful, but if I had been I should have felt sorry for the second mate, my old tyrant, now. He drooped and withered like a scarlet runner under the first sharp frost. Not a word did he say, but he looked as if all the curses in every tongue that ever were spoken were pouring over his brain in a flood. Pursuit of the monkey was out of the question. Clambering over the newly tarred rigging was bad enough when done with all care, but in a chase, especially over places where it had been freshly anointed by the fugitive, we should have had all hands captured like flies on a gummed string. They all stood and glared at the mess like men not knowing how to adjust their minds to this new condition of things, nor, when the skipper and mate came forrard to see what was the matter, did they contribute any words good, bad, or indifferent. Apparently they would have remained there till they dropped, fascinated by the horrible sight, but suddenly piercing screams aft startled everybody. Jocko had crept down the mizen rigging and pounced upon poor little Tip, who was delicately combing himself (he was as daintily clean as a cat) on the after hatch. And now Jocko was perched on the cro'jack yard vigorously wiping his tar-drenched fur with Tip as if he had been a dry wad. The second mate started from his lethargy and sprang aloft to the rescue of his screaming pet with an agility scarcely inferior to that of Jocko. Rage seemed to give him energy, for presently he pressed Jocko so hard (he let poor little Tip go as soon as he saw his pursuer) that he ran out along the mizen topsail brace, and, balancing himself for a moment, covered his eyes with his hands and sprang into the sea. Bobbing up like a cork, he struck out away from the ship which was only just moving, but in less than five minutes he repented his rashness and swam back. A line was flung to him, he promptly seized it and was at once a captive again. The men were so impressed by his prowess that they refused to allow the second mate to touch him, nor did any of them even beat him lest they should have bad luck. But they replaced the chafed-through ring he had broken by a massive connecting-link, and when Jamrach's man came aboard in London Jocko was sold to him for five shillings. Tip went to the Crystal Palace and met a worse fate.

BIG GAME AT SEA

Sportsmen of ample means and unlimited leisure often deplore the shrinkage which goes on at an ever-accelerating rate of such free hunting-grounds as still remain. Owing to the wonderful facilities for travel allied to increased wealth, they foresee, not, perhaps, the extinction of the great wild animals which alone they consider worthy of their high prowess, but such close preservation of them in the near future that the free delight of the hunter will surely disappear.

Therefore it may be considered opportune to point out from the vantage ground of personal experience some aspects of sport at sea which will certainly not suffer by comparison with any hunting on land, no matter from what point we regard it. It will readily be conceded that one of the chief drawbacks to the full enjoyment of sport in wild lands is the large amount of personal suffering entailed upon the hunters by evil climates and transport difficulties. It is all very well to say that these things are part of the programme, and that taking the rough with the smooth is of the very essence of true sportsmanship. That need not be disputed while denying that there is anything attractive in the idea of becoming a permanent invalid from malaria or being harassed to the verge of madness by the unceasing oversight of a gang of wily children of nature saturated with the idea that the white maniac is delivered over to them as a prey by "the gods of things as they are." The fascination of sport consists in the dangers of the chase, the successful use of "shikar," the elation of conscious superiority over the lords of the brute creation, and not, as some dull souls would assert, in the gratification of primitive instincts of blood-lust, or the exercise of cruelty to animals for its own sake. Neither does it consist in wading across fetid swamps, groping through steaming forests, or toiling with leathern tongue and aching bones over glowing sands, a prey to all the plagues of Egypt augmented by nearly every other ill that flesh is heir to. No; few of us need persuading that any of these horrors are the unavoidable necessary concomitants of sport, they are endured because to all appearance any hunting worthy the name is not to be obtained apart from them.

From all such miseries sport at sea is free. A well-appointed yacht, built not for speed but for comfort, need not be luxurious to afford as satisfactory a "hunting-box" as any sportsman could reasonably desire. And for the question of cost—it may be high enough to satisfy the craving for squandering felt by the most wealthy spendthrift, or so low as to become far cheaper than a hunting

expedition to Africa or the Rockies. For a successful sporting voyage a sailing vessel, or at most an auxiliary screw-steamer of low power, is best, for the great game of the ocean is full of alarms, and must needs be approached with the utmost silence and circumspection. As for the question of equipment, it seems hardly necessary to say that everything should be of the very best, but not by any means of the most expensive quality procurable. All such abominations as harpoon-guns, bombs, &c., should be strictly barred, the object being sport, not slaughter. Given sufficient outlay, with the resources of science now at the purchaser's disposal, it is quite possible to reduce whaling, for instance, to as tame an affair as a hand-fed pheasant battue or tame-rabbit coursing, neither of which can surely by any stretch of courtesy be called sport. The old-fashioned hand harpoons, the long, slender lances that, except for excellence of workmanship and material, are essentially the same as used by the first followers of the vast sea-mammals, these should be the sportsman's weapons still if he would taste in its integrity the primitive delight of the noblest of created beings in the assertion of his birthright, "Dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth."

The best type of vessel for a sporting cruise at sea is what is known to seamen as a "barquentine," a vessel, that is to say, of some 250 tons register, with three masts, square-rigged at the fore—after the style of the well-known *Sunbeam*. In her davits she should carry three whaleboats, such as the Americans of New Bedford or Rhode Island know so well how to build, the handsomest and most sea-worthy of all boats ever built. The whaleboats built in Scotland, though strong and serviceable, are less elegant and handy, being more fitted for rough handling among ice-floes, into which rough neighbourhoods the sea-sportsman need never go—should not go, in fact, for the best display of his powers. The whale-line, made in the old whaling ports of New England—tow-line as it is locally termed—cannot be beaten. It possesses all the virtues. Light, silky, and of amazing strength, it is a perfect example of what rope should be, and is as much superior to the unkind, harsh hemp-line of our own islands as could well be imagined. From the same place should be obtained the services of a few whaling experts, accustomed, as no other seafarers are, to the chase of the sperm-whale, the noblest of all sea-monsters. Advice as to fishing-tackle would be out of place, except the general remark that, as in the deep seas the angler will meet with the doughtiest opponent of his skill the ocean contains, he must needs lay in a stock of tackle of the very strongest and best. Tarpon fishing is a fairly good test of the trustworthiness of gear, but whoso meets the giant albacore in mid-ocean, and overcomes him, will have vanquished a fish to which the tarpon is

but as a seven-pound trout to a lordly salmon. All the appliances known to naturalists for the capture and preservation of the smaller habitants of the deep sea ought to be carried, for, although not strictly sport, this work is deeply interesting and useful, besides affording a pleasant variety of occupation.

But, passing on to the actual conditions of conflict, let us suppose the sportsman cruising in the North Atlantic between the Cape Verde Islands and the West Indies—a wide range, truly, but no part of it barren of the highest possibilities for pleasure. A school of sperm whales is sighted, the vessel is carefully manœuvred for the weather-gage of them, and this being obtained, the boats are softly lowered, sail is set, and, with the fresh trade-wind, away they go leaping to leeward. The utmost precaution against noise must be taken, because the natural susceptibility of the whale to sound is as delicate as the receiver of a telephone. No amount of oral instruction would here be of any avail without long experience, which, since it can be hired, there is no need to waste time and patience in acquiring. Assuming, therefore, that the preliminary difficulty of approach to the sensitive monsters has been overcome, and there remains but a few fathoms of rapidly lessening distance between the boat and the unconscious whale, who could satisfactorily describe the sensations crowded into those few remaining moments of absolute quiet, the tension of expectation, the uncertainty of the result of the approaching conflict? The object of attack is the mightiest of living animals, he is in his own element, to which the assailant is but a visitor on sufferance, and he may retaliate in so fierce and tremendous a fashion that no amount of skill, courage, or energy shall suffice to protect the aggressor from his fury. But there is no thought of drawing back, the swift-gliding boat rushes high up on to the broad bank of flesh, and with a long-pent-up yell the harpoon is hurled. It enters the black mass noiselessly, the weight of its pole bends the soft iron shaft over as the attached line stretches out, and as the boat slowly, so slowly, backs away, the leviathan, amazed and infuriated, thrashes the quiet sea into masses of hissing foam, while the thunder of his blows resounds like the uproar of a distant cannonade. At this time certain necessary rearrangements, such as furling and stowing sail, make it impossible, even if it were wise, to approach the indignant whale, and as a general thing by the time these preparations are complete he has sought the shelter of the depths beneath, taking out flake after flake of the neatly coiled line. With ordinary care, especially where only one boat is engaged, it would seldom happen that all the line would run out, and the game be lost. Usually, after an interval of about twenty minutes, during which the line is slacked away as slowly and grudgingly as possible, it is felt to give, and the slack must be hauled in with the utmost smartness, a sharp

look-out being kept meanwhile upon the surrounding surface for a sudden white glare beneath—the cavity of the whale’s throat, as he comes bounding to the surface with his vast jaws gaping wider than a barn-door. It is at this time that the true excitement, the joy of battle, begins. For in most cases the huge animal has come to fight, and being in his turn the aggressor, his enemies must exert all their skill in boatsmanship, preserve all their coolness and watchfulness, since a mistake in tactics or loss of presence of mind may mean the instant destruction of the boat, if not the sudden and violent death of some of her crew. As a general rule, however, after a few savage rushes avoided by wary manœuvring on the part of the hunters, the whale starts off to windward at his best speed (from twelve to fourteen knots an hour), towing the boat or boats after him with the greatest ease. This is a most exhilarating experience. For the mighty steed, ploughing his strenuous way through the waves, seems the living embodiment of force, and yet he is, as it were, harnessed to his exulting foes, compelled to take them with him in spite of his evident desire to shake himself free. While he goes at his best speed a near approach to him is manifestly impossible; but, vast as his energies are, the enormous mass of his own body carried along so rapidly soon tires him, and he slows down to five or six knots. Then all hands, except the one in charge and the helmsman, “tail on” to the line, and do their best to haul up alongside the whale. The steersman sheers the boat clear of his labouring flukes as she comes close to him, and then allows her to point inward towards his broad flank, while the lance-wielder seeks a vulnerable spot wherein to plunge his long, slender weapon. It is of little use to dart the lance as the harpoon is flung; such an action is far more likely to goad the whale into a new exhibition of energy than to do him any disabling injury. Being at such close quarters, it is far more sportsmanlike, as well as effectual, to thrust the lance calmly and steadily into the huge mass of flesh so near at hand. If the aim has been well taken—say, just abaft and below the pectoral fin—more than one home-thrust will hardly be needed, even in a whale of the largest size, and a careful watch must be kept upon the spout-hole for the first sign of blood discolouring the monster’s breath. For that is evidence unmistakable of the beginning of the end. It shows that some vital part has been pierced, and although the whale-fishers always continue their “pumping” with the lance up to the very verge of disaster, once the whale has begun to spout blood it is quite unnecessary to continue the assault. Still, at this stage of the proceedings the primitive instincts are usually fully aroused, and nothing seems to satisfy them but persistent fury of attack, until the actual commencement of the tremendous death-agony or “flurry” of the noble beast gives even the most excited hunter warning that it is time to draw off and endeavour to keep clear of the last Titanic convulsions of the expiring monster.

No other created being ever furnishes such a display of energy. Involuntarily one compares it with the awful manifestations of the earthquake, the volcano, or the cyclone. And when at last the great creature yields up the dregs of his once amazing vitality, no one possessing a spark of imagination can fail to be conscious of an under-current of compunction mingling with the swelling triumph of such a victory.

But the seeker after big sea-game should attack the rorqual if he would see sport indeed. For this agile monster has such a reputation for almost supernatural cunning that even if he were as valuable as he really is valueless commercially, it is highly doubtful if he would ever be molested. As it is, all the tribe are chartered libertines, since no whaler is likely to risk the loss of a boat's gear for the barren honour of conquest. And not only so, but the rorquals, whether "fin-back," "sulphur-bottom," or "blue-back," as well as the "hump-back" and grampus, make it a point of honour to sink when dead, unlike the "cachalot" or "Bowhead," who float awash at first, but ever more buoyantly as the progress of decay within the immense abdominal cavity generates an accumulating volume of gas. Any old whaler would evolve in the interests of sport no end of dodges for dealing with the wily rorqual, such as a collection of strongly attached bladders affixed to the line to stay his downward rush, short but broad-barbed harpoons, to get a better hold upon the thin coating of blubber, &c. In this kind of whaling there is quite sufficient danger to make the sport exciting in the highest degree. Not, however, from the attack of the animal hunted, but because his evolutions in the effort to escape are so marvellously vivacious that only the most expert and cool-headed boatsmanship can prevent a sudden severance of the nexus between boat and crew. A splendid day's sport can be obtained with a school of blackfish. Although seldom exceeding a ton and a half in weight, these small whales are quite vigorous enough to make the chase of them as lively an episode as the most enthusiastic hunter could wish, especially if two or even three are harpooned one after the other on a single line, as the whalers' custom is. The sensation of being harnessed as it were to a trio of monsters, each about 25 feet long, and 8 feet in girth, every one anxious to flee in a different direction at the highest speed he can muster, and in their united gambols making the sea boil like a pot, is one that, once experienced, is never likely to be forgotten. The mere memory of that mad frolic over the heaving bosom of the bright sea makes the blood leap to the face, makes the nerves twitch, and the heart long to be away from the placid round of everyday life upon the bright free wave again. Even a school of porpoises, in default of nobler game, can furnish a lively hour or two, especially if they be of a fair size, say up to three or four hundredweight each.

But of a truth there need be no fear of a lack of game. The swift passage from port to port made by passenger vessels is apt to leave the voyager with the impression that the sea is a barren waste, but such an idea is wholly false. Even the sailing-ships, bound though they may be to make the shortest possible time between ports, are compelled by failure of wind to see enough of the everyday life of the sea-population to know better than that, and whoso gives himself up to the glamour of sea-study, making no haste to rush from place to place, but leisurely loitering along the wide plains of ocean, shall find each day a new world unfolding itself before his astonished eyes, a world of marvels, infinitely small, as well as wondrous great—from the thousand and one miracles that go to make up the “Plankton” to the antediluvian whale.

Fishing in its more heroic phases is obtainable in deep-sea cruising as nowhere else. The hungry sailor, perched upon the flying jib-boom end, drops his line, baited with a fluttering fragment of white rag, and watches it with eager eyes as it skips from crest to crest of the foam-tipped wavelets, brushed aside by the advancing hull of his ship. And although his ideas are wholly centred upon dinner—something savoury, to replace the incessant round of salt beef and rancid pork—he cannot help but feel the zest of sport when upward to his clumsy lure come rushing eagerly dolphin, bonito, or skipjack. But if—putting all lesser fish to flight—the mighty albacore leaps majestically at his bait, prudence compels him to withdraw from the unequal contest; he knows that he stands not the remotest chance of hauling such a huge trophy up to his lofty perch, or of holding him there, should he be able to get a grip of him. To the scientific angler, however, equipped with the latest resources of fishing-tackle experts, and able to devote all the manipulation of his vessel to the capture of such a trophy, the fishing of the albacore would be the acme of all angling experiences. Good sport can be got out of a school of large dolphin or bonito, their vigorous full-blooded strife being a revelation to those who only know the lordly salmon or skittish trout, but the albacore is the supreme test of the angler’s ability. Shark-fishing is very tame after it. For the shark, though powerful, has none of the dash and energy which characterise the albacore, and would soon be an object of scorn to a fisherman who had succeeded in catching the monarch of the mackerel tribe. But if the fisherman, cruising near the confines of the Caribbean Sea, should come across one of those nightmares known as alligator-guards or devil-fish, a species of ray often one hundred and twenty feet in area, he would find a new sensation in its chase and capture, besides being the possessor of such a marine specimen as is at present lacking to any museum in the world.

And this brings the reflection, which may fittingly draw this article to a close, that not the least of the delights which such a cruise must bring to one fortunate enough to enjoy it would be the incalculable service rendered to marine natural history. This branch of science offers an almost illimitable field to the student. It is nearly a new world awaiting its Columbus, and it is not difficult to foresee that before very long it will have found its votaries among men of wealth, leisure, and energy, delighted to enter into the joy of a happy hunting-ground of boundless extent and inexhaustible fecundity.

A SEA CHANGE

Night was unfolding her wings over the quiet sea. Purple, dark and smooth, the circling expanse of glassy stillness met the sky rim all round in an unbroken line, like the edge of some cloud-towering plateau, inaccessible to all the rest of the world. A few lingering streaks of fading glory laced the western verge, reflecting splashes of subdued colour half-way across the circle, and occasionally catching with splendid but momentary effect the rounded shoulder of an almost imperceptible swell. Their departure was being noted with wistful eyes by a little company of men and one woman, who, without haste and a hushed solemnity as of mourners at the burial of a dear one, were leaving their vessel and bestowing themselves in a small boat which lay almost motionless alongside. There was no need for haste, for the situation had been long developing. The brig was an old one, whose owner was poor and unable to spare sufficient from her scanty earnings for her proper upkeep. So she had been gradually going from bad to worse, not having been strongly built of hard wood at first, but pinned together hastily by some farmer-shipbuilder-fisherman up the Bay of Fundy, mortgaged stroke by stroke, like a suburban villa, and finally sold by auction for the price of the timber in her. Still, being a smart model and newly painted, she looked rather attractive when Captain South first saw her lying in lonely dignity at an otherwise deserted quay in the St. Katharine's Docks. Poor man, the command of her meant so much to him. Long out of employment, friendless and poor, he had invested a tiny legacy, just fallen to his wife, in the vessel as the only means whereby he could obtain command of even such a poor specimen of a vessel as the *Dorothea*. And the shrewd old man who owned her drove a hard bargain. For the small privilege of the skipper carrying his wife with him 50s. per month was deducted from the scanty wage at first agreed upon. But in spite of these drawbacks the anxious master felt a pleasant glow of satisfaction thrill him as he thought that soon he would be once more afloat, the monarch of his tiny realm, and free for several peaceful months from the harassing uncertainties of shore-life.

In order to avoid expense he lived on board while in dock, and made himself happily busy rigging up all sorts of cunning additions to the little cuddy, with an eye to the comfort of his wife. While thus engaged came a thunderclap, the first piece of bad news. The *Dorothea* was chartered to carry a cargo of railway iron and machinery to Buenos Ayres. Had he been going alone the thing would have

annoyed him, but he would have got over that with a good old-fashioned British growl or so. But with Mary on board—the thought was paralyzing. For there is only one cargo that tries a ship more than railway metal, copper ore badly stowed. Its effect upon a staunch steel-built ship is to make her motion abominable—to take all the sea-kindness out of her. A wooden vessel, even of the best build, burdened with those rigid lengths of solid metal, is like a living creature on the rack, in spite of the most careful stowage. Every timber in her complains, every bend and strake is wrenched and strained, so that, be her record for “tightness” never so good, one ordinary gale will make frequent exercise at the pump an established institution. And Captain South already knew that the *Dorothea* was far from being staunch and well-built, although, happily for his small remaining peace of mind, he did not know how walty and unseaworthy she really was. A few minutes’ bitter meditation, over this latest crook in his lot, and the man in him rose to the occasion, determined to make the best of it and hope steadily for a fine run into the trades. He superintended her stowing himself, much to the disgust of the stevedores, who are never over particular unless closely watched, although so much depends upon the way their work is done. At any rate, he had the satisfaction of knowing that the ugly stuff was as handsomely bestowed as experience could suggest, and, with a sigh of relief, he saw the main hatches put on and battened down for a full due.

In the selection of his crew he had been unusually careful. Five A.B.’s were all that he was allowed, the vessel being only 500 tons burden, two officers besides himself, and one man for the double function of cook and steward. Therefore, he sought to secure the best possible according to his judgment, and really succeeded in getting together a sturdy little band. His chief comfort, however, was in his second mate, who was a Finn—one of that phlegmatic race from the eastern shore of the Baltic who seem to inherit not only a natural aptitude for a sea life, but also the ability to build ships, make sails and rigging, do blacksmithing, &c.—all, in fact, that there is to a ship, as our cousins say. Slow, but reliable to the core, and a perfect godsend in a small ship. In Olaf Svensen, then, the skipper felt he had a tower of strength. The mate was a young Londoner, smart and trustworthy—not too independent to thrust his arms into the tarpot when necessary, and amiable withal. The other six members of the crew—two Englishmen and three Scandinavians—were good seamen, all sailors—there wasn’t a steamboat man among them—and, from the first day when in the dock they all arrived sober and ready for work, matters went smoothly and salt-water fashion.

It was late in October when they sailed, and they had no sooner been cast adrift by the grimy little “jackal” that towed them down to the Nore than they were greeted by a bitter nor’-wester that gave them a sorry time of it getting round the Foreland. The short, vicious Channel sea made the loosely-knit frame of the brig sing a mournful song as she jumped at it, braced sharp up, and many were the ominous remarks exchanged in the close, wedge-shaped fo’c’s’le on her behaviour in these comparatively smooth waters, coupled with gloomy speculations as to what sort of a fist she would make of the Western Ocean waves presently. Clinkety-clank, bang, bang went the pumps for fifteen minutes out of every two hours, the water rising clear, as though drawn from overside, and a deeper shade settled on the skipper’s brow. For a merry fourteen days they fought their way inch by inch down Channel, getting their first slant between Ushant and Scilly in the shape of a hard nor’-easter, that drove them clear of the land and 300 miles out into the Atlantic. Then it fell a calm, with a golden haze all round the horizon by day, and a sweet, balmy feel in the air—a touch of Indian summer on the sea. Three days it lasted—days that brought no comfort to the skipper, who could hardly hold his patience when his wife blessed the lovely weather, in her happy ignorance of what might be expected as the price presently to be paid for it. Then one evening there began to rise in the west the familiar sign so dear to homeward-bounders, so dreaded by outward-going ships—the dense dome of cloud uplifted to receive the setting sun. The skipper watched its growth as if fascinated by the sight, watched it until at midnight it had risen to be a vast convex screen, hiding one-half of the deep blue sky. At the changing of the watch he had her shortened down to the two lower topsails and fore-topmast staysail, and having thus snugged her, went below to snatch, fully dressed, a few minutes’ sleep. The first moaning breath of the coming gale roused him almost as soon as it reached the ship, and as the watchful Svensen gave his first order, “Lee fore brace!” the skipper appeared at the companion hatch, peering anxiously to windward, where the centre of that gloomy veil seemed to be worn thin. The only light left was just a little segment of blue low down on the eastern horizon, to which, in spite of themselves, the eyes of the travelling watch turned wistfully. But whatever shape the surging thoughts may take in the minds of seamen, the exertion of the moment effectually prevents any development of them into despair in the case of our own countrymen. So, in obedience to the hoarse cries of Mr. Svensen, they strove to get the *Dorothea* into that position where she would be best able to stem the rising sea, and fore-reach over the hissing sullenness of the long, creaming rollers, that as they came surging past swept her, a mile at a blow, sideways to leeward, leaving a whirling, broadside wake of curling eddies. Silent and anxious, Captain South hung with one elbow

over the edge of the companion, his keen hearing taking note of every complaint made by the trembling timbers beneath his feet, whose querulous voices permeated the deeper note of the storm.

All that his long experience could suggest for the safety of his vessel was put into practice. One by one the scanty show of sail was taken in and secured with extra gasket turns, lest any of them should, showing a loose corner, be ripped adrift by the snarling tempest. By eight bells (4 A.M.) the brig showed nothing to the bleak darkness above but the two gaunt masts, with their ten bare yards tightly braced up against the lee backstays, and the long peaked forefinger of the jibboom reaching out over the pale foam. A tiny weather-cloth of canvas only a yard square was stopped in the weather main rigging, its small area amply sufficing to keep the brig's head up in the wind except when, momentarily becalmed by a hill of black water rearing its head to windward, it relaxed its steadfast thrust and suffered the vessel to fall off helplessly into the trough between two huge waves. Now commenced the long unequal struggle between a weakly-constructed hull, unfairly handicapped by the wrench of a dead mass of iron within that met every natural scend of her frame with unyielding brutality of resistance, and the wise old sea, kindly indeed to ships whose construction and cargo enable them to meet its masses with the easy grace of its own inhabitants, but pitiless destroyer of all vessels that do not greet its curving assault with yielding grace, its mighty stride with sinuous deference of retreat. The useless wheel, held almost hard down, thumped slowly under the hands of the listless helmsman with the regularity of a nearly worn-out clock, while the oakum began to bulge upward from the deck seams. As if weary even unto death, the brig cowered before the untiring onslaught of the waves, allowing them to rise high above the weather rail, and break apart with terrible uproar, filling the decks rail-high from poop to forecastle. Pumping was incessant, yet Svensen found each time he dropped the slender sounding-rod down the tube a longer wetness upon it, until its two feet became insufficient, and the mark of doom crept up the line. And besides the ever-increasing inlet of the sea, men stayed by the pumps only at imminent risk of being dashed to pieces, for they were, as always, situated in the middle of the main deck, where the heaviest seas usually break aboard. There was little said, and but few looks exchanged. The skipper had, indeed, to meet the wan face of his wife, but she dared not put her fear into words, or he bring himself to tell her that except for a miracle their case was hopeless. He seldom left the deck, as if the wide grey hopelessness around had an irresistible fascination for him, and he watched with unspeculative eyes the pretty gambols of those tiny elves of the sea, the Mother Carey's chickens, as they fluttered

incessantly to and fro across the wake of his groaning vessel.

So passed a night and a day of such length that the ceaseless tumult of wind and wave had become normal, and slighter sounds could be easily distinguished because the ear had become attuned to the elemental din. Unobtrusively the impassive Svensen had been preparing their only serviceable boat by stocking her with food, water, &c. The skipper had watched him with a dull eye, as if his proceedings were devoid of interest, but felt a glimmer of satisfaction at the evidence of his second mate's forethought. For all hope of the *Dorothea's* weathering the gale was now completely gone. Even the blue patches breaking through the heavy cloud-pall to leeward could not revive it. For she was now only wallowing, with a muffled roar of turbid water within as it sullenly swept from side to side with the sinking vessel's heavy roll. The gale died away peacefully, the sea smoothed its wrinkled plain, and the grave stars peered out one by one, as if to reassure the anxious watchers. Midnight brought a calm, as deep as if wind had not yet been made, but the old swell still came marching on, making the doomed brig heave clumsily as it passed her. The day broke in perfect splendour, cloudless and pure, the wide heavens bared their solemn emptiness, and the glowing sun in lonely glory showered such radiance on the sea that it blazed with a myriad dazzling hues. But into that solitary circle, whereof the brig was the pathetic centre, came no friendly glint of sails, no welcome stain of trailing smoke across the clear blue. But the benevolent calm gave opportunity for a careful launching of the boat, and as she lay quietly alongside the few finishing touches were given to her equipment. As the sun went down the vessel's motion ceased—she was now nearly level with the smooth surface of the ocean, which impassively awaited her farewell to the light. Hardly a word was spoken as the little company left her side and entered the boat. When all were safely bestowed the skipper said, "Cut that painter forrard there," and his voice sounded hollowly across the burdening silence. A few faint splashes were heard as the oars rose and fell, and the boat glided away. At a cable's length they ceased pulling, and with every eye turned upon the brig they waited. In a painful, strained hush, they saw her bow as if in stately adieu, and as if with an embrace the placid sea enfolded her. Silently she disappeared, the dim outlines of her spars lingering, as if loth to leave, against the deepening violet of the night.

With one arm around his wife, the skipper sat at the tiller, a small compass before him, by the aid of which he kept her head toward Madeira, but, anxious to husband energy, he warned his men not to pull too strenuously. Very peacefully

passed the night, no sound invading the stillness except the regular splash of the oars and an occasional querulous cry from a belated sea-bird aroused from its sleep by the passage of the boat. At dawn rowing ceased for a time, and those who were awake watched in a perfect silence, such as no other situation upon this planet can afford, the entry of the new day. Not one of them but felt like men strangely separated from mundane things, and face to face with the inexpressible mysteries of the timeless state. But it was Svensen who broke that sacred quiet by a sonorous shout of "Sail-ho!" With a transition like a wrench from death to life, all started into eager questioning; and all presently saw, with the vigilant Finn, the unmistakable outlines of a vessel branded upon the broad, bright semi-circle of the half-risen sun. No order was given or needed. Double-banked, the oars gripped the water, and with a steady rush the boat sped eastward towards that beatific vision of salvation. Even the skipper's face lost its dull shade of hopelessness, in spite of his loss, as he saw the haggard lines relax from Mary's face. Quite a cheerful buzz of chat arose. Unweariedly, hour after hour, the boat sped onward over the bright smoothness, though the sun poured down his stores of heat and the sweat ran in steady streams down the brick-red faces of the toiling rowers. After four hours of unremitting labour they were near enough to their goal to see that she was a steamer lying still, with no trace of smoke from her funnel. As they drew nearer they saw that she had a heavy list to port, and presently came the suggestion that she was deserted. Hopes began to rise, visions of recompense for all their labour beyond anything they could have ever dreamed possible. The skipper's nostrils dilated, and a faint blush rose to his cheeks. Weariness was forgotten, and the oars rose and fell as if driven by steam, until, panting and breathless, they rounded to under the stern of a schooner-rigged steamer of about 2000 tons burden, without a boat in her davits, and her lee rail nearly at the water's edge. Running alongside, a rope trailing overboard was caught, and the boat made fast. In two minutes every man but the skipper was on board, and a purchase was being rigged for the shipment of Mrs. South. No sooner was she also in safety than investigation commenced. The discovery was soon made that, although the decks had been swept and the cargo evidently shifted, there was nothing wrong with the engines or boilers except that there was a good deal of water in the stokehold. She was evidently Italian by her name, without the addition of Genoa, the *Luigi C.*, being painted on the harness casks and buckets, and her crew must have deserted her in a sudden panic.

Like men intoxicated, they toiled to get things shipshape on board their prize, hardly pausing for sleep or food. And when they found the engines throbbing

beneath their feet they were almost delirious with joy. Opening the hatches, they found that the cargo of grain had shifted, but not beyond their ability to trim, so they went at it with the same savage vigour they had manifested ever since they first flung themselves on board. And when, after five days of almost incessant labour, they took the pilot off Dungeness, and steamed up the Thames to London again, not one of them gave a second thought to the hapless *Dorothea*. Twelve thousand pounds were divided among them by the Judge's orders, and Captain South found himself able to command a magnificent cargo steamer of more than 3000 tons register before he was a month older.

THE LAST VOYAGE OF THE “SARAH JANE”

There was no gainsaying the fact that the *Sarah Jane* was a very fine barge. Old Cheesy Morgan, whose *Prairie Flower* she had outreached in the annual barge regatta by half a mile, owned up frankly that the *Sarah Jane*, if she *had* been built out of the wreckage of a sunken steamboat looted by the miserly old mudlark who owned her, could lay over any of his fleet, and when *he* gave in as far as that you might look upon the discussion as closed. Her skipper and mate, Trabby Goodjer and Skee Goss, were always ready (when in company) to punch any single man's head who said a word against her, and many sore bones had been carried away from the “Long Reach House” in consequence. Not that these two worthies were ever sparing of their extensive vocabulary of abuse of their command when working up or down the Thames, especially when she missed stays and hooked herself up on a mudbank about the first of the ebb, making them lose a whole day.

Ever since her launching she had been regularly employed in the Margate trade from London with general merchandise and returning empty. Even this double expense for single freight paid the Margate shopkeepers better than submission to the extortionate railway charges, while their enterprise was a golden streak of luck for the owner of the *Sarah Jane*, and her consorts. When she commenced the memorable voyage of which this is the veracious log, she had for crew, besides the two mariners already named, a youngster of some fifteen years of age as near as he could guess, but so stunted in growth from early hardships that he did not look more than twelve. He answered to any name generally that sounded abusive or threatening, from long habit, but his usual title was the generic one for boys in north-country ships—Peedee. He had already seen a couple of years' service in deep-water vessels, getting far more than his rightful share of adventurous mishaps, besides having done a fairly comprehensive amount of vagabondage in the streets of London and Liverpool. But being so diminutive for his years he found it difficult to get a berth in a decent-sized ship, and in consequence it was often no easy matter for him to fill even his small belly, for all his precocious wits. Fate, supplemented by his own fears, had hitherto been kind enough to keep him out of a Geordie collier or a North Sea trawler, but on the day he met Trabby Goodjer outside the “King's Arms” in Thames Street, and asked him if he wanted a boy, his evil genius must have been

in the ascendant. He hadn't tasted food for two days with the exception of a fistful of gritty currants he had raked out of a corner on Fresh Wharf, and as the keen spring wind shrieking round the greasy bacon-reeking warehouses searched his small body to the marrow he grew desperate. Thus it was that he became the crew of the *Sarah Jane*. Properly, she should have carried another man, but following the example of their betters in the Mercantile Marine the skipper and mate trusted to luck, and found under-manning pay. The owner lived at Rochester, and rarely saw his vessel except through a pair of glasses at long intervals as she passed the entrance to the Medway. So the payment of the crew was in the skipper's hands entirely, left to him by the London agent who "managed" her. By sailing her a man short, and giving a boy 10s. a month instead of a pound, Captain Goodjer and chief officer Goss were able to enjoy many cheap drunks, and have thrown in, as it were, the additional enjoyment of ill-using something that was quite unable to turn the tables unpleasantly.

Between this delightful pair therefore, whose luck in getting backwards and forwards to Margate and London was phenomenal, Peedee had a lively time. Especially so when, from some unforeseen delay or extra thirst, the supply of liquor in the big stone jar kept at the head of the skipper's bunk ran short and they were perforce compelled to exchange their usual swinish condition of uncertain good-humour for an irritable restlessness that sought relief by exercising ingenious forms of cruelty upon their hapless crew. Occasionally they had a rough-and-tumble between themselves, once indeed they both rolled over the side in a cat-like scrimmage, but there was nothing like the solace to be got out of that amusement that there was in beating Peedee. But he, preternaturally wise, was only biding his time. The score against his persecutors was growing very long, but a revenge that should be at once pleasant, enduring, and final, slowly shaped itself in his mind. Accident rather than design matured his plans prematurely, but still he showed real genius by rising to the occasion that thus presented itself and utilising it in a truly remarkable manner.

One Friday evening in the middle of October the *Sarah Jane* was loosed from the wharf where she had received her miscellaneous freight, and with the usual amount of river compliments and collisions with the motley crowd of craft all in an apparently hopeless tangle in the crowded Pool, began her voyage on the first of the ebb. The skipper and the mate were both more than ordinarily muzzy, but intuitively they succeeded in getting her away from the ruck without receiving more than her fair share of hard knocks. Once in the fairway the big sprit-sail and jib were hove up to what little wind there was, and away she went at a fairly

good pace. Peedee did most of the steering as he did of everything else that was possible to him, receiving as his due many pretty bargee-compliments from his superiors as they sprawled at their ease by the bogie funnel. They reached Greenhithe at slack water, where, the wind veering ahead, they anchored for the night at no great distance from the reformatory ship *Cornwall*. The sails were furled after a fashion, and with many a blood-curdling threat to Peedee should he fail to keep a good look-out, Trabby and his mate went below into their stuffy den to sleep. Somewhere about midnight the shivering boy awoke with a start, that nearly tumbled him off his perch on the windlass, to see two white figures clambering on board out of the river. Wide awake on the instant he saw they were boys like himself, and whispered, "All right, mates, here y'are." Noiselessly he showed them the fo'c's'le scuttle, where they might get below and hide. When they had disappeared he crept to the side of the darksome hole and held a whispered conversation with the visitors, finding that they were runaways from the *Cornwall*, and immediately his active brain saw splendid possibilities in this accession of strength if only he could conceal their presence from his enemies aft. For the present, however, there was nothing to be done but lie quietly and wait events. Daring the risk of awakening the "officers" he made a raid upon the grub-locker aft, securing half a loaf and a lump of Dutch cheese, which he carried forward to the shivering stowaways. His own wardrobe being on his back he could not lend them any clothes, but they comforted themselves with the thought that they would soon be dry. And assisted by Peedee they made a snug lair in the gritty convolutions of a worn-out mainsail that was stowed in their hiding-place, finding warmth and speedy oblivion in spite of their terrors.

The slack arrived some little time before the pale, cheerless dawn, and with it a small breeze fair for their passage down. Unwillingly enough Peedee aroused his masters from their fetid hole, getting by way of reward for his vigilant obedience of orders a perfectly tropical squall of curses. Nevertheless they were soon on deck, having turned in like horses, "all standing." Without speaking a word to each other, they proceeded to get the anchor, but so out of humour were they that Peedee had much more than his usual allowance of fresh cuts and bruises before the barge was fairly aweigh. Gradually the wind freshened as if assisted by the oncoming light, so that before the red disc of the sun peeped over the edge of London's great gloom behind them, the *Sarah Jane* was making grand progress. Again Peedee took the wheel, while the skipper and mate retired to the cabin for a drink. Suddenly sounds of woe arose therefrom. The agonising discovery had been made that the precious jar was empty. It had been capsized during the night, and the bung, being but loosely inserted, had fallen out. Its contents now

lay in a sticky pool behind the stove, mixed with the accumulated filth of two or three days. It was a sight too harrowing for ordinary speech. They glared at one another for a few seconds in silence, until Trabby with a vicious set of his ugly mouth growled, "Thet—— young mudlawk." "Ar," said the mate, with an air of having found what he wanted, "I'll—— well skin 'im w'en I goo on deck." But though the thought was pleasant and some relief to their feelings, they remembered, being sober, that if they were not a little less demonstrative in their attentions to the boy they would certainly have to do his work themselves. That gave them pause, and they discussed with much gravity how they might deal with him without inconvenience to themselves, until breakfast time. When they had in hoggish fashion satisfied their hunger (their thirst no amount of coffee could quench) they lit their pipes and lay back to get such solace as tobacco could afford, and ruminate also upon the possibility of replenishing the stone jar. Peedee steered on steadily, breakfastless, and likely to remain so. Swiftly the barge sped down the reaches in company with a whole fleet of her fellows "cluttering up the river," as an angry Geordie skipper, who had just shaved close by one of them, remarked, "like a school o' fat swine in a tatty field." So they fared for the whole forenoon without incident, until with a savage curse and a blow Trabby took the wheel from the hungry lad, bidding him go and get their dinner ready. While he was thus engaged a thick mist gradually closed in upon the crowded river, reducing its vivid panorama to an unreal expanse of white cloudiness through which phantom shapes slowly glided to an accompaniment of unearthly sounds. Suddenly to Peedee's amazement the big sail overhead began to flap, the jib-sheet rattled on the "traveller," and Skee Goss, striding forward, let go the anchor. Then the two men brailed in the mainsail, allowed the jib to run down, and without saying a word to the wondering boy, shoved the boat over the side, jumped into her, and were swallowed up in the fog. The instant they disappeared Peedee stood motionless, his ears acutely strained for the measured play of the oars as the skipper and mate pulled lustily shorewards. When at last he could hear them no longer, he rushed to the scuttle forward, and dropping on his knees by its side, called down, "Below there! 'r y' sleep? On deck with ye 's quick 's the devil'll let ye." Up they came, looking scared to death. Without wasting a word, under Peedee's direction the three hove the anchor up, although Peedee was artful enough to lift the solitary pawl so that it could make no noise. By the time they got the anchor they were all three streaming with sweat, but without a moment's pause Peedee dropped the pawl, and taking a turn with the chain round the windlass end in case of accidents, cast off the brails, letting the great brown sail belly out to the fresh breeze. Having got the sheet aft with a tremendous struggle, he took the wheel, saying, "Now you two fellers, git

farrard 'n histe thet jib up, 'n look lively too 'less you want ter be dam well murdered." In utter bewilderment as to what was happening the two lads blundered forward, and guided by the energetic directions of their self-appointed commander, soon got the sail set. Fully under control at last, the *Sarah Jane* sped away seaward before a breeze that, freshening every minute, bade fair to be blowing a gale before night.

But Peedee, transformed into a man by his sudden resolve and its successful execution, called his crew to him, and while he skilfully guided the barge down the strangely quiet river, endeavoured to explain to them what he had done and why; together with his plans for the future. He was utterly contemptuous of their seafaring abilities, telling them that "he'd teach 'em more in two days than they'd learn aboard that ugly old hulk in a year," and although they were each quite a head and shoulders taller than himself, he treated them as if they were mere infants and he was an old salt. And there was a light in his eye, an elasticity in his movements that impressed them more than all his words. Woe betide them had they dared to cross him! For in that small body was bubbling and fermenting the sweet must of satisfied revenge, strengthened by conscious power and utterly unadulterated by any sense of future difficulty or responsibility. Higher rose the wind, driving the mist before it and revealing the broad mouth of the river all white with foam as the conflicting forces of storm and tide battled over the labyrinth of banks. Obviously the first thing to do was the instruction of his crew in steering, for as soon as he found time to think of it he felt faint with hunger. Fortunately one of the runaways had been coxswain of a boat, and very little sufficed to show him the difference between a tiller and a wheel. And all untroubled by the rising sea, the deeply-laden barge ploughed on far steadier than many a vessel ten times her size would have done. Relieved from the wheel, Peedee hastened to the caboose and found some of the dinner he had been preparing still eatable. Supplementing it by such provisions as he could easily lay hands on in the cabin, the trio made a hearty meal, winding up with a smoke all round in genuine sailor fashion.

With hunger appeased and perfect freedom lapping them around, who shall say that they were not happy? Occasionally a queer little tremor, a premonition of a price by-and-by to be paid for their present adventure, thrilled up the spine of each of the two runaways, but when they stole a glance at the calm features of their commander they were comforted. So onward they sailed, through the tortuous channels of the Thames' estuary, scudding before a stress of wind under whole canvas at a rate that made Peedee rejoice exceedingly, although every few

minutes a green comber of a sea swept diagonally across the whole of the low deck, but never invaded the cabin top. Night fell, the side-lights were exhibited, and like any thousand-ton ship the *Sarah Jane* stood boldly out into mid-channel, Peedee shaping a course which would carry them down well clear of all the banks. Morning saw them off the Varne shoal, the objects of eager curiosity to the gaping crew of a huge four-masted barque that passed them within a cable's length. And as the sun rose the weather cleared, the sky smiled down upon them, the keen wind and bright sea gave them a delicious sense of freedom, while the grand speed of their ship stirred them to almost delirious delight. This ecstatic condition lasted for two days until, no definite land being in sight, and passing vessels becoming fewer, the two new hands began to feel that dread of the unknown that might have been expected of them. Timidly they appealed to Peedee to tell them what he was going to do. But with bitter scorn of their fears, all the fiercer because he didn't in the least know what was going to happen, he railed upon them for a pair of cowardly milksops, and suggested hauling up for some West-country port and dumping them on the beach. Truth to tell he was becoming somewhat anxious himself as to his whereabouts, for the stock of water was getting very low, although there was enough food in the hold to have lasted them round the world. Fate, however, served them better than design. When night fell a heavy bank of clouds which had been lowering in the west all day suddenly began to rise, and soon after dark, in a sudden squall, the wind shifted to that quarter with mist and rain. Under these new conditions Peedee lost his bearings and allowed his command to run away with him into the darkness to leeward. At about four o'clock in the morning he heard a dreadful sound, well known to him from experience, the hungry growl of breakers. But before he had time to get too frightened there was a sudden turmoil of foaming sea around them in place of the dark hollows and white summits of the deep water, and with a tipsy lurch or so the *Sarah Jane* came to a standstill. She lay so quietly that Peedee actually called his crew to brail up the mainsail and haul down the jib in sailor fashion. Daylight revealed the fact that she was high and dry, having run in past all sorts of dangers until she grounded under the lee of a beetling mass of rock and there remained unscathed. While they were having a last meal they were startled by seeing some uncouth-looking men coming at top speed over the rugged shore. But they lowered themselves down over the side and ran to meet them, finding them foreigners indeed. Before long the whole scanty population was down and busy with the spoil thus providentially provided, while the three boys were hailed as benefactors to their species, and made welcome to the best that the village contained. And two tides after the *Sarah Jane* was as though she had never been, while the wanderers, well provided with necessities, were off

for an autumn tour on foot through Southern Brittany.

SEA-SUPERSTITIONS

Not the least of the mighty changes wrought by the advent of steam as a motive-power at sea is the alteration it has made in the superstitious notions current among seamen from the earliest days of sea-faring. In the hurry and stress of the steamboat-man's life there is little scope for the indulgence of any fancies whatever, and the old sea-traditions have mostly died out for lack of suitable environment. Indeed, a new genus of seafarers have arisen to whom the name of sailors hardly applies; they themselves scornfully accept the designation of "seanavvies"; and many instances are on record where, it having become necessary to make sail in heavy weather to aid the lumbering tramp in her struggle to claw off a lee-shore, or keep ahead of a following sea, the master has found to his dismay that he had not a man in his crew capable of tackling such a job.

Perhaps the first old belief to go was that sailing on a Friday was to court certain disaster. All old sailors dwell with unholy gusto upon the legend of the ship that was commenced on a Friday, finished on a Friday, named the *Friday*, commanded by Captain Friday, sailed on a Friday, and—foundered on the same luckless day with all hands, as a warning to all reckless shipowners and skippers never again to run counter to the eternal decrees ordaining that the day upon which the Saviour of the world was crucified should be henceforth accursed or kept holy, according to the bent of the considering mind. But steam has changed all that. When a steamer's time for loading or discharging began to be reckoned not in days but in hours, the notion of detaining her in port for a whole day in deference to an idea became too ridiculous for entertainment, and it almost immediately died a natural death. This, of course, had its effect upon the less hastily worked sailing vessels, although there are still to be found in British sailing ships masters who would use a good deal of artifice to avoid sailing on that day. Among the Spanish, Italian, Austrian, and Greek sailing vessels, however, Friday is still held in most superstitious awe. And on Good Friday there is always a regular carnival held on board these vessels, the yards being allowed to hang at all sorts of angles, the gear flung dishevelled and loose, while an effigy of Judas is subjected to all the abuse and indignity that the lively imaginations of the seamen can devise. Finally, the effigy is besmeared with tar, a rope attached to it which is then rove through a block at the main yard-arm, it is set alight, and amid the frantic yells and execrations of the seamen it is slowly swung aloft to dangle and blaze, while the excited mariners use up their

remaining energies in a wild dance.

Another superstition that still survives in sailing vessels everywhere is, strangely enough, connected with the recalcitrant prophet Jonah. It is, however, confined to his bringing misfortune upon the ship in which he sailed, and seldom is any allusion made to his miraculous engulfing by the specially prepared great fish. It does not take a long series of misfortunes overtaking a ship to convince her crew that a lineal descendant of Jonah and an inheritor of his disagreeable disqualifications is a passenger. So deeply rooted is this idea that when once it has been aroused with respect to any member of a ship's company, that person is in evil case, and, given fitting opportunity, would actually be in danger of his life. This tinge of religious fanaticism, cropping up among a class of men who, to put it mildly, are not remarkable for their knowledge of Scripture, also shows itself in connection with the paper upon which "good words" are printed. It is an unheard-of misdemeanour on board ship to destroy or put to common use such paper. The man guilty of such an action would be looked upon with horror by his shipmates, although their current speech is usually vile and blasphemous beyond belief. And herein is to be found a curious distinction between seamen of Teutonic and Latin race, excluding Frenchmen. Despite the superstitious reverence the former pay to the written word, none of them would in time of peril dream of rushing to the opposite extreme, and after madly abusing their Bibles, throw them overboard. But the excitable Latins, after beseeching their patron saint to aid them in the most agonising tones, repeating with frenzied haste such prayers as they can remember, and promising the most costly gifts in the event of their safely reaching port again, often turn furiously upon all they have previously been worshipping, and with the most horrid blasphemies, vent their rage upon the whilom objects of their adoration. Nothing is too sacred for insult, no name too reverend for abuse, and should there be, as there often is, an image of a saint on board, it will probably be cast into the sea.

But one of the most incomprehensible forms of sea-superstition is that which has for its object that most prosaic of all sea-going people, the Finns. Russian Finns, seamen always call them, although there is far more of the Swede than the Russian about them, and their tongue is Swedish also. They are perhaps the most perfect specimens of the ideal seafarer in the world, although the Canadian runs them closely. All things that appertain to a ship seem to come easily to their doing, from the time of first laying the vessel's keel until, with every spar, sail, and item of running gear in its place, she trips her "kellick" and leaves the harbour behind her for the other side of the world. And even then the Finn will be found to yield to none in his hardihood of navigation. Although his hardi-

be round to yield to none in his knowledge of navigation. Although his hands may be gnarled and split with toil, and his square, expressionless face look as if “unskilled labourer” were imprinted upon it, much difficulty would be found in the search for a keener or more correct hand at trigonometrical problems, or a better keeper of that most useful document, a ship’s log-book.

Yet to these men, by common consent, a supernatural status has been assigned. Whether among the Latins the same idea holds is somewhat doubtful, but certainly in British, American, and Scandinavian vessels Finns are always credited with characteristics which a century ago would have involved them in many unpleasantnesses. Chiefly harmless, no doubt, these weird powers, yet when your stolid shipmate is firmly believed to control the winds so masterfully as to supply his favoured friends with a quartering breeze while all the rest of the surrounding vessels have a “dead muzzler,” any affection you may have had for him is seriously liable to degenerate into fear. It is perhaps hardly necessary to say that from whatever the original idea of Finnish necromancy originally arose, a whole host of legends have grown up, many of them too trivial for print, some delightfully quaint, others not less original than lewd, but all evidently grafts of fancy upon some parent stock. Thus, while there is a rat in the ship no Finn was ever known to lose anything, because it is well known that any rat in the full possession of his faculties would be only too glad to wait upon the humblest Finn. And the reason why Finns are always fat is because they have only to go and stick their knives in the foremast to effect a total change in their meat to whatever they fancy most keenly at the time. It is well that they are mostly temperate men, since everybody knows that they can draw any liquor they like from the water-breaker by turning their cap round, and they never write letters home because the birds that hover round the ship are proud to bear their messages whithersoever they list. The catalogue of their privileges might be greatly extended were it needful, but one thing always strikes an unbiassed observer—the Finn is, almost without exception, one of the humblest, quietest of seafarers, whose sole aim is to do what he is told as well as he can, to give as little trouble as possible, and where any post of responsibility is given him to show his appreciation of it by doing two men’s work, filling up his leisure by devising schemes whereby he can do more.

Of the minor superstitions there is little to be said. Few indeed are the old sailors now afloat who would cuff a youngster’s ears for whistling, fearing that his merry note would raise a storm. Whistling for wind, however, still persists, as much a habit as the hissing of a groom while rubbing down a horse, but a very

sceptical laugh would meet any one who inquired whether the whistler believed that his *sifflement* would make any difference to the force or direction of the wind. Fewer still are those who would now raise any objections to the presence of a clergyman on board. But the belief that a death, whether of a man or an animal, *must* be followed by a gale of wind is perhaps more firmly held than any other, unless it be the notion that sharks follow any ship wherein is an ailing man or woman, with horrible anticipation.

OCEAN WINDS

Whatever of beauty the sea possesses it owes primarily to the winds—to the free breath of heaven which sweeps joyously over those vast lonely breadths, ruffling them with tiniest ripples by its zephyrs, and hurling them in headlong fury for thousands of miles by its hurricanes. It may be said that the term “ocean” cannot rightly be applied to winds at all, since they are common to the whole globe, and are not, like waves and currents, confined to the sea. But a little consideration will surely convince that it is just and right to speak of distinctive ocean winds which by contact with the great, pure plains of the sea acquire a character which a land wind never has or can have. In fact, it may be said with perfect truth that but for the health-bearing winds from the sea, landward folk would soon sicken and die, for our land winds are laden with disease germs, or, as in the mistral, the puña, the sirocco, and the simoom, to mention only a few of these terrible enemies to life, are still more deadly in their blasting effect upon mankind. From all these evil qualities ocean winds are free, and he who lives remote from the land, inhaling only their pure breath, knows truly what health is, feels the blood dance joyously through his arteries, aerated indeed.

As a factor in sea traffic ocean winds are popularly supposed to have become negligible. Indeed, the remark is often heard (on shore) that the steamship has made man independent of wind and tide. It is just the kind of statement that would emanate from some of our pseudo-authorities upon marine matters, and akin to the oft-quoted opinion that the advent of the steamship has driven romance from the sea. In the first place, seamen know how tremendously the wind affects even the highest-powered steamship, and although some sailors will talk about an ocean liner ploughing her way through the teeth of an opposing gale at full speed, it is only from their love of the marvellous and desire to make the landsman stare. They know that such a statement is ridiculously untrue. Leaving the steamship out of the question, however, there are still very large numbers of vessels at sea which are entirely dependent upon the winds for their propulsion, their transit between port and port. They grow fewer and fewer every year, of course, as they are lost or broken up, because they are not replaced, yet in certain trades they are so useful and economical that it is difficult to see why they should be allowed to disappear. Masters of such ships are considered to be smart or the reverse in proportion to their knowledge of ocean winds, where to steer in order to get the full benefit of their incidence, what latitudes to avoid

because there winds rarely blow, and how best to manœuvre their huge-winged craft in the truly infernal whirl of an advancing or receding cyclone. For such purposes ocean winds may roughly be divided into two classes—the settled and the adventitious: those winds that may fairly be depended upon for regularity both as to force and direction, and those whose coming and going is so aptly used in Scripture allegory. Taking as the former class the Trade winds of the globe, it is found that they are also subject to much mutability, especially those to the northward of the Equator known as the “North-East Trades.” Old seamen speak of them as do farmers of the weather ashore—complain that neither in steadiness of direction nor in constancy of force are they to be depended upon as of old. Of course they vary somewhat with the seasons, but that is not what is complained of by the mariner; it is their capricious variation from year to year, whereby you shall actually find a strong wind well to the southward of east in what should be the heart of the North-East Trades, or at another time fall upon a stark calm prevailing where you had every right to expect a fresh favouring breeze.

Still, with all their failure to maintain the reputation of former times in the estimation of sailors (as distinguished from steamship crews), even the much maligned North-East Trade winds are fairly dependable. The South-East Trades, again, are almost as sure in their operation as is the recurrence of day and night. The homeward-bound sailing ship, once having been swept round the Cape of Good Hope in spite of adverse winds by the irresistible Agulhas current, usually finds awaiting her a southerly wind. Sailors refuse to call it the first of the Trades, considering that any wind blowing without the Tropics has no claim to be called a “Trade.” This fancy matters little. The great thing is that these helpful breezes await the homeward-bounder close down to the southern limit of his passage, await him with arms outspread in welcome, and coincidentally with the pleasant turning of his ship’s head homeward, permit the yards to be squared, and the course to be set as desired. And the ship—like a docile horse who, after a long day’s journey, finds his head pointing stablewards and settles steadily down to a clinking pace—gathers way in stately fashion and glides northward at a uniform rate without any further need of interference from her crew. Throughout the long bright days, with the sea wearing one vast many-dimpled smile, and the stainless blue above quivering in light uninterrupted by the passage of a single cloud, the white-winged ship sweeps serenely on. All around in the paling blue of the sky near the horizon float the sleepy, fleecy cumuli peculiar to the “Trades,” without perceptible motion or change of form. When day steps abruptly into night, and the myriad glories of the sunless hours reveal themselves

shyly to an unheeding ocean, the silent ship still passes ghost-like upon her placid way, the steadfast wind rounding her canvas into the softest of curves, without a wrinkle or a shake. Before her stealthy approach the glittering waters part, making no sound save a cool rippling as of a fern-shadowed brooklet hurrying through some rocky dell in Devon. The sweet night's cool splendours reign supreme. The watch, with the exception of the officer, the helmsman, and the look-out man, coil themselves in corners and sleep, for they are not needed, and during the day much work is adoining in making their ship smart for home. And thus they will go without a break of any kind for over two thousand miles.

Next to the Trades in dependability, and fairly entitled to be called sub-permanent, are the west winds of the regions north and south of the Tropics, or about the parallels of 40° north or south. Without the steadiness of these winds in the great Southern Sea, the passage of sailing ships to Australasia or India would indeed be a tedious business. But they can be reckoned upon so certainly that in many cases the duration of passages of ships outward and homeward can be predicted within a week, which speaks volumes for the wonderful average steadiness of the great wind-currents. Although these winds bear no resemblance to the beautiful Trades. Turbulent, boisterous, and cruel, they try human endurance to its utmost limits, and on board of a weak ship, fleeing for many days before their furious onslaught, anxiety rises to a most painful pitch with the never-ceasing strain upon the mind. They have also a way of winding themselves up anew, as it were, at intervals. They grow stronger and fiercer by successive blasts until the culminating blow compels even the strongest ships to reduce canvas greatly unless they would have it carried away like autumn leaves. Then the wind will begin to shift round by the south gradually and with decreasing force until, as if impatient, it will jump a couple of points at a time. Then, in the "old" sea, the baffled, tormented ship staggers blindly, making misery for her crew and testing severely her sturdy frame. Farther and farther round swings the wind, necessitating much labour aloft for the shipmen, until in the space of, say, twenty-four hours from its first giving way, it has described a complete circle and is back again in its old quarter, blowing fiercely as ever. Not that this peculiar evolution is always made. There are times when to sailors' chagrin the brave west wind fails them in its proper latitudes, being succeeded by baffling easterlies, dirty weather of all kinds, and a general feeling of instability, since to expect fine weather in the sense of light wind and blue sky for any length of time in those stern regions is to reveal ignorance of their character. Yet it is only in such occasional lapses from force and course of the west wind of the south that the hapless seaman seeking to double Cape Horn

from the east can hope to slip round. So that while his fellows farther east are fleeing to their goal at highest speed, he is being remorselessly battered by the same gale, driven farther and farther south, and ill-used generally, and only by taking advantage of the brief respite can he effect his purpose.

The monsoon winds of the Indian seas are most important and unique in their seasonal changing. For six months of the year the wind in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea will be north-easterly and the weather fine. Over the land, however, this fine wind is bearing no moisture, and its longer persistence than usual means famine with all its attendant horrors. "Fine weather" grows to be a term of awful dread, and men's eyes turn ever imploringly to the south-west, hoping, with an intensity of eagerness that is only felt where life is at stake, for the darkening of those skies of steely blue, until one day a cloud no bigger than a man's hand arises from the sharply defined horizon. Swiftly it expands into ominous-looking masses, but the omens are of blessing, of relief from drought and death. The howling wind hurls before it those leaden water-bearers until, one by one, they burst over the iron-bound earth, and from station to station throughout the length and breadth of Hindostan is flashed the glad message, "The monsoon has burst." Out at sea the great steamships emerging from the Gulf of Aden are met by the turbulent south-wester, and have need of all their power to stem its force, force which is quite equal to that of a severe Atlantic gale at times. And all sailors dread the season, bringing as it does to their sorely tried bodies the maximum of physical discomfort possible at sea in warm climates.

Of the varying forces of winds, from the zephyr to the hurricane, it would be easy to write another page, but this subject is not strictly within the scope of the present article, and must therefore be left untouched.

THE SEA IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Remembering gratefully, as all students should do, the immense literary value of the Bible, it is not without a pang of regret that we are obliged to confess that its pages are so meagre of allusions to the grandest of all the Almighty's works—the encircling sea. Of course we cannot be surprised at this, seeing how scanty was the acquaintance with the sea enjoyed by ancient civilised peoples, to whom that exaggerated lake, the Mediterranean, was the “Great Sea,” and for whom the River Oceanus was the margin of a boundless outer darkness. Yet in spite of this drawback, Old Testament allusions to the sea then known, few as they are, remain unsurpassable in literature, needing not to withdraw their claims to pre-eminence before such gems as “Ocean's many-dimpled smile” or the “Wine-dark main” of the pagan poets. In number, too, though sparsely sprinkled, they far surpass those of the New Testament, which, were it not for one splendid exception, might almost be neglected as non-existent.

Our Lord's connection with the sea and its toilers was confined to those petty Syrian lakes which to-day excite the traveller's wonder as he recalls the historical accounts of hundreds of Roman galleys floating thereupon; and all his childish dreams of the great sea upon which the Lord was sailing and sleeping when that memorable storm arose which He stilled with a word suffer much by being brought face to face with the realities of little lake and tiny boat. St. John and St. James show by their almost terror-stricken words about the sea what they felt, and from want of a due consideration of proportion their allusions have been much misunderstood. No man who knew the sea could have written as one of the blissful conditions of the renewed heaven and earth that there should “be no more sea,” any more than he could have spoken of the limpid ocean wave as casting up “mire and dirt.”

But by one incomparable piece of writing Paul, the Apostle born out of due time, has rescued the New Testament from this reproach of neglect, and at the same time has placed himself easily in the front rank of those who have essayed to depict the awful majesty of wind and wave as well as the feebleness, allied to almost presumptuous daring, of those who do business in great waters. Wonder and admiration must also be greatly heightened if we do but remember the circumstances under which this description was written. The writer had, by the sheer force of his eloquence, by his daring to await the precise moment in which

to assert his citizenship, escaped what might at any moment have become martyrdom. Weary with a terrible journey, faint from many privations, he was hurried on board a ship of Adramyttium bound to the coast of Asia (places not specified). What sort of accommodation and treatment awaited him there under even the most favourable circumstances we know very well. For on the East African coast even to this day we find precisely the same kind of vessels, the same primitive ideas of navigation, the same absence of even the most elementary notions of comfort, the same touching faith in its being always fine weather as evinced by the absence of any precautions against a storm.

Such a vessel as this carried one huge sail bent to a yard resembling a gigantic fishing-rod whose butt when the sail was set came nearly down to the deck, while the tapering end soared many feet above the masthead. As it was the work of all hands to hoist it, and the operation took a long time, when once it was hoisted it was kept so if possible, and the nimble sailors with their almost prehensile toes climbed up the scanty rigging, and clinging to the yard gave the sail a bungling furl. The hull was just that of an exaggerated boat, sometimes undecked altogether, and sometimes covered in with loose planks, excepting a hut-like erection aft which was of a little more permanent character. Large oars were used in weather that admitted of this mode of propulsion, and the anchors were usually made of heavy forked pieces of wood, whereto big stones were lashed. There was a rudder, but no compass, so that the crossing of even so narrow a piece of water as separated Syria from Cyprus was quite a hazardous voyage. Tacking was unknown or almost so, and once the mariners got hold of the land they were so reluctant to lose sight of it that they heeded not how much time the voyage took or what distances they travelled.

The nameless ship of Adramyttium then at last ventured from Sidon and fetched Cyprus, sailing under its lee. How salt that word tastes, and what visions it opens up of these infant navigators creeping cautiously from point to point along that rugged coast, heeding not at all the unnecessary distance so long as they were sheltered from the stormy autumn weather. Another perilous voyage across “the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia” (another purely maritime term) and the harbour of Myra was gained. Great were the rejoicings of the voyagers, but premature, for every day that passed brought them nearer to the time of tempest, and consequently of utmost danger. In fact the memorable voyage of St. Paul may be said to begin here. The crossing of the Great Sea had been accomplished without incident, although doubtless occupying so many days that the landmen were by this time somewhat accustomed to the misery of life at sea in those

days, when in coarse weather sea-sickness was one of the least of their woes.

The shipment by the centurion of his prisoners on board of the Alexandrian wheat-ship marked the commencement of a series of troubles. In the first place, for such a ship and such a voyage the number of people on board was far too great, even if we accept the lower estimate—seventy-six—which is placed on her complement by some ancient authorities. If she carried two hundred and seventy-six she must have been like an Arab dhow running a full cargo of slaves, and it is difficult to see how, even taking into consideration the way in which both mariners and passengers were inured to hardship, she could have carried them all through the wild weather and weary days following without some deaths. “And when we had sailed slowly many days” (what a world of suffering can be read into those few pathetic words), they fetched under the lee of Crete with all the thankfulness that might be expected from men who had been so pitilessly exposed to the fury of the open sea. With difficulty they crept along the coast until they got into the Fair Havens and refreshed their weary hearts.

No wonder they were reluctant to put again to sea, even though they knew that every day brought wilder weather, and their chance of wintering in their present harbour safely was poor, from its exposed position. And now we find St. Paul taking the risky step of advising seafarers as to the proper conduct of their own business—risky because while no man likes to be interfered with at his work by one whom he considers an outsider, sailors are perhaps more touchy upon this matter than most people. True, the science of navigation and seamanship was in its infancy, and no such gulf of knowledge separated landsmen from seamen in those days as existed afterwards, but one can easily picture the indignation of the commander of the ship (curiously enough here called the owner, the very same slang title given to the Captain of a man-of-war by his officers and crew to-day) when he heard this presumptuous passenger-prisoner thus daring to give his unasked advice. Besides, Paul’s motive for wishing to remain in port was one easily misconstrued.

Therefore the centurion’s refusal to listen to Paul’s suggestion was quite natural; nay, it was inevitable. Still, there was evidently no intention of persevering with the voyage upon getting under way, only of entering the nearest harbour that might afford sufficient shelter against the fury of the winter gales. With a gentle southerly breeze they left Fair Havens, and moved along the shore. But presently down from the Cretan mountains Euraquilo came rushing, the furious Levanter, which is not surpassed in the world for ferocity, hurling their helpless cockle-shell off shore. Their fear of the storm was far greater than their fear of the land,

for unlike the sailors of to-day, to whom the vicinity of land in a gale is far more dreaded than the gale itself, they hugged the small island, Clauda, and succeeded in their favourite manœuvre, that of getting under the lee of the land once more. It was high time. The buffeting of the ship had weakened her to such an extent that she must have threatened to fall asunder, since they were driven actually to “frap” her together, that is, bind their cable round and round her and heave it taut—a parlous state of things, but one to which sailors have often been brought with a crazy ship in a heavy gale.

In this dangerous state they feared the proximity of hungry rocks, but instead of reducing sail and endeavouring to get along in some definite direction, they lowered down the big yard and let the ship drive whithersoever she would. The storm continued, the poor, bandaged hull was leaking at every seam, a portion of the cargo, called by St. Paul by its true nautical name “freight,” was jettisoned. But that did not satisfy them, and they proceeded to the desperate extremity of casting overboard the “tackling,” the great sail and yard, and all movable gear from the upper works except the anchors.

Then in misery, with death yawning before them, already half drowned, foodless, and hopeless, they drifted for many days into the unknown void under that heavy-laden sky before the insatiable gale. In the midst of all this horror of great darkness, the dauntless prisoner comforted them, even while unable to forbear reminding them that had they listened to him, this misery would have been spared them. His personality never shone brighter than on this occasion; the little ascetic figure must have appeared Godlike to those poor, ignorant sufferers.

At the expiration of a fortnight, the sailors surmised that land was near, although it was midnight. How characteristic is that flash of insight into the sea-faring instinct, and how true! They sounded and got twenty fathoms, and in a little while found the water had shoaled to fifteen. Then they performed a piece of seamanship which may be continually seen in execution on the East African coast to-day—they let the anchors down to their full scope of cable and prayed for daylight. The Arabs do it in fair weather or foul—lower the sail, slack down the anchor, and go to sleep. She will bring up before she hits anything.

Unfortunately, space will not admit of further dealing with this great story of the sea, so familiar and yet so little understood. The sailors’ cowardly attempt at escape, the discipline of the soldiers foiling it, the arrangements for beaching her by the aid of what is here called a foresail, but was probably only a rag of sail

rigged up temporarily to get the ship before the wind, and the escape of all as foretold by St. Paul, need much more space for dealing with than can be spared.

But the one thing which makes this story go to the heart of every seaman is its absolute fidelity to the facts of sea-life; its log-like accuracy of detail; its correct use of all nautical terms. In fact, some old seamen go so far as to aver that St. Paul, having kept an accurate record of the facts, got the captain of the ship to edit them for him, as in no other way could a landsman such as Paul have obtained so seaman-like a grip of the story, both in detail and language.

Note.—It will of course be noted that while the general opinion is in favour of assigning to Luke the authorship of the narrative commented upon above, I have credited Paul with it. I have my reasons, but because of controversy I refrain from stating them.

THE POLITY OF A BATTLESHIP

Among the many interesting features of life at sea, few afford studies more fruitful in valuable thought than the internal economy of that latest development of human ingenuity—a modern battleship. It is not by any means easy for a visitor from the shore, upon coming alongside one of these gigantic vessels, to realise its bulk; the first effect is one of disappointment. Everything on board is upon a scale so massive, while the limpid space whereon she floats is so capacious that the mind refuses to take in her majestic proportions. And a hurried scamper around the various points of chief interest on board leaves the mind like a palimpsest where one impression is superimposed upon another so swiftly that the general effect is but a blur and no detail is clear. Besides, in such a flying visit the guide naturally makes the most of those wonders with which he himself is associated in his official capacity, and thus the visitor is apt to get a very one-sided view of things. Again, in the course of a hurried visit in harbour the mind gets so clogged with wonders of machinery and design, that the human side, always apt to keep itself in the background, receives no portion of that attention which is its due. From all of which causes it naturally follows that the only way in which to obtain anything like a comprehensive notion of the polity of a battleship is to spend at least a month on board, both at sea and in harbour, and waste no opportunity of observation of every part of the ship's daily life that may be presented. Such opportunities, naturally, fall to the lot of but few outside the Service, and from the well-known modesty of sailors, it is next to hopeless to expect them to enlighten the public upon the most interesting details of their daily lives.

The mere statement of the figures which belong to a modern battleship like the *Mars*, for instance, is apt to have a benumbing effect upon the mind. She displaces 14,900 tons at load draught, is 391 ft. long, 75 ft. wide, and nearly 50 ft. deep from the upper deck to the bottom. She is divided into 232 compartments by means of water-tight bulkheads, is protected by 1802 tons of armour, is lit by 900 electric lights, steams 16½ knots, carries 82 independent sets of engines, mounts 54 different cannon and 5 torpedo tubes, and is manned by 759 men.

Now it is only fair to say that such a hurried recapitulation of statistics like these gives no real hint as to the magnitude of the ship as she reveals herself to one

after a few days' intimate acquaintance. And that being so, what is to be said of the men, the population of this floating cosmos, the 759 British entities ruled over by the Captain with a completeness of knowledge and a freedom from difficulty that an Emperor might well envy? As in a town, we have here men of all sorts and professions, we find all manner of human interests cropping up here in times of leisure, and yet the whole company have one feeling, one interest in common—their ship, and through her their Navy.

First of all, of course, comes the Captain, who, in spite of the dignity and grandeur of his position, must at times feel very lonely. He lives in awful state, a sentry (of Marines) continually guarding his door, and although he does unbend at stated times as far as inviting a few officers to dine with him, or accepting the officers' invitation to dine in the ward-room, this relaxation must not come too often. The Commander, who is the chief executive officer, is in a far better position as regards comfort. He comes between the Captain and the actual direction of affairs, he has a spacious cabin to himself, but he takes his meals at the ward-room table among all the officers above the rank of Sub-Lieutenant, and shares their merriment; the only subtle distinction made between him and everybody else at such times being in the little word "Sir," which is dropped adroitly in when he is being addressed. For the rest, naval *nous* is so keen that amidst the wildest fun when off duty no officer can feel that his dignity is tampered with, and they pass from sociability to cast-iron discipline and back again with an ease that is amazing to a landsman. The ward-room of a battleship is a pleasant place. It is a spacious apartment, taking in the whole width of the ship, handsomely decorated, and lit by electricity. There is usually a piano, a good library, and some handsome plate for the table. It is available not only for meals, but as a drawing-room, a common meeting-ground for Lieutenants, Marine officers, surgeons, chaplain, and senior engineers, where they may unbend and exchange views, as well as enjoy one another's society free from the grip of the collar. A little lower down in the scale of authority, as well as actually in the hull of the ship, comes the gun-room, the affix being a survival, and having no actual significance now. In this respect both ward-room and gun-room have the advantage over the Captain's cabin, in which there are a couple of quick-firing guns, causing those sacred precincts to be invaded by a small host of men at "general quarters," who manipulate those guns as if they were on deck. The gun-room is the ward-room over again, only more so—that is, more wildly hilarious, more given to outbursts of melody and rough play. Here meet the Sub-Lieutenants, the assistant-engineers and other junior officers, *and* the midshipmen. With these latter Admirals in embryo we find a state of things

existing that is of the highest service to them in after life. Taking their meals as gentlemen, with a senior at the head of the table, meeting round that same table at other times for social enjoyment, once they are outside of the gun-room door they have no more privacy than the humblest bluejacket. They sleep and dress and bathe—live, in fact—*coram publico*, which is one of the healthiest things, when you come to think of it, for a youngster of any class. Although they are now officers in H.M. Navy, they are still schoolboys, and their education goes steadily on at stated hours in a well-appointed schoolroom, keeping pace with that sterner training they are receiving on deck. The most grizzled old seaman on board must “Sir” them, but there are plenty of correctives all around to hinder the growth in them of any false pride.

On the same deck is to be found the common room of the warrant officers, such as bo’sun, carpenter, gunner; those sages who have worked their difficult way up from the bottom of the sailor’s ladder through all the grades, and are, with the petty officers, the mainstay of the service. Each of them has a cabin of his own, as is only fitting; but *here* they meet as do their superiors overhead, and air their opinions freely. But, like the ward-room officers, they mostly talk “shop,” for they have only one great object in life, the efficiency of their charge, and it leaves them little room for any other topics. Around this, the after part of the ship, cluster also another little body of men and lads, the domestics, as they are termed, who do their duty of attendance upon officers and waiting at table under all circumstances with that neatness and celerity that is inseparable from all work performed in a ship-of-war. Body-servants of officers are usually Marines, but the domestics are a class apart, strictly non-combatant, yet under naval law and discipline. Going “forrard,” the chief petty officers will be found to make some attempt at shutting themselves apart from the general, by arrangements of curtains, &c., all liable and ready to be flung into oblivion at the first note of a bugle. For the rest, their lives are absolutely public. No one has a corner that he may call his own, unless perhaps it is his “ditty box,” that little case of needles, thread, and etceteras that he needs so often, and is therefore allowed to keep on a shelf near the spot where he eats. Each man’s clothes are kept in a bag, which has its allotted place in a rack, far away from the spot where his hammock and bed are spirited off to every morning at 5 A.M., to lie concealed until the pipe “down hammocks” at night. And yet by the arrangement of “messes” each man has, in common with a few others, a settled spot where they meet at a common table, even though it be not shut in, and is liable to sudden disappearance during an evolution. So that a man’s mess becomes his rallying-point; it is there that the young bluejacket or Marine learns worldly wisdom, and many other things. The

practice of keeping all bedding on the move as it were, having no permanent sleeping-places, requires getting used to, but it is a most healthy one, and even if it were not it is difficult to see how, within the limited space of a warship, any other arrangement would be possible. Order among belongings is kept by a carefully graduated system of fines payable in soap—any article found astray by the ever-watchful naval police being immediately impounded and held to ransom. And as every man's kit is subject to a periodical overhaul by officers any deficiency cannot escape notice.

Every man's time is at the disposal of the Service whenever it is wanted, but in practice much leisure is allowed for rest, recreation, and mental improvement. Physical development is fully looked after by the rules of the Service, but all are encouraged to make the best of themselves, and no efforts on the part of any man to better his position are made in vain. Nowhere, perhaps, is vice punished or virtue rewarded with greater promptitude, and since all punishments and rewards are fully public, the lessons they convey are never lost. But apart from the Service routine, the civil life of this little world is a curious and most interesting study. The industrious man who, having bought a sewing-machine, earns substantial addition to his pay by making every item of his less energetic messmates' clothes (except boots) for a consideration, the far-seeing man who makes his leisure fit him for the time when he shall have left the Navy, the active temperance man who seeks to bring one after the other of his shipmates into line with the ever-growing body of teetotalers that are fast altering completely the moral condition of our sailors, the religious man who gets permission to hold his prayer-meeting in some torpedo-flat or casemate surrounded by lethal weapons—all these go to make up the multifarious life of a big battleship.

And not the least strange to an outsider is the way in which all these various private pursuits and varied industries are carried on in complete independence of each other, often in complete ignorance of what is going on in other parts of the ship. News flies quickly, of course, but since every man has his part in the ship's economy allotted to him, it naturally follows that he declines to bother his head about what the other fellows are doing. Sufficient for him that his particular item is to hand when required, and that he does it as well and as swiftly as he is able. If he be slack or uninterested in what concerns himself many influences are brought to bear upon him. First his messmates, then his petty officer, and so on right up to the Captain. And through all he is made to feel that his *laches* affects first the smartness of his ship, then the reputation of the great British Navy. So the naval spirit is fostered, so the glorious traditions are kept up, and it continues

to be the fact that the slackest mobilised ship we can send to sea is able to show any foreign vessel-of-war a lesson in smartness that they none of them are able to learn. And in the naval battle of the future it will be the few minutes quicker that will win.

THE PRIVACY OF THE SEA

Whether expressed or implied, there is certainly a deep-rooted idea in the minds of shore-dwellers that the vast fenceless fields of ocean are in these latter days well, not to say thickly, populated by ships; that, sail or steam whither you will, you cannot get away from the white glint of a sailing ship or the black smear along the clean sky of a steamship's smoke. There is every excuse for such an attitude of mind on the part of landward folk. Having no standard of comparison against which to range the vast lonely breadths of water which make up the universal highway, and being mightily impressed by the statistics of shipping owned by maritime nations, they can hardly be blamed for supposing that the privacy of the sea is a thing of the past. One voyage in a sailing ship to the Australasian Colonies or to India, if the opportunities it afforded were rightly used, would do far more to convince them of the utterly wrong notion possessing them than any quantity of writing upon the subject could effect. But unhappily, few people to-day have the leisure or the inclination to spend voluntarily three months upon a sea passage that can be performed in little more than one. Even those, who by reason of poverty or for their health's sake do take such passages, almost invariably show signs of utter weariness and boredom. As day after day passes, and the beautiful fabric in which they live glides gently and leisurely forward, their impatience grows until in some it almost amounts to a disease. This condition of mind is not favourable, to say the least, to a calm study of the characteristic features of ocean itself. Few indeed are the passengers, and fewer still are the sailors who will for the delight of the thing spend hour after hour perched upon some commanding point in wide-eyed, sight-strengthening gaze out upon the face of the sea.

Upon those who do there grows steadily a sense of the most complete privacy, a solemn aloofness belonging to the seas. The infrequent vessel, gentle though her progress may be through the calm waters of the tropics, still strikes them as an intruder upon this realm of silence and loneliness. The voices of the crew grate harshly upon the ear as with a sense of desecration such as one feels upon hearing loud conversation in the sacred peace of some huge cathedral. And when a vessel heaves in sight, a tiny mark against the skyline, she but punctuates the loneliness, as it were—affords a point from which the eye can faintly calculate the immensity of her surroundings.

Quite differently, yet with its own distinctive privacy, do the stormy regions of the ocean impress the beholder. In the fine zones the wind's presence is suggested rather than felt, so quiet and placid are its manifestations. Its majestic voice is hushed into a murmur undistinguishable from the musical rippling of the wavelets into which it ruffles the shining sea-surface. But when beyond those regions of perpetual summer the great giant Boreas asserts himself and challenges his ancient colleague and competitor to a renewal of the eternal conflict for supremacy, there is an overwhelming sense of duality which is entirely absent in calmer seas. As the furious tempest rages unappeasable, and the solemn ocean wakes in mighty wrath, men must feel that to be present at such a quarrel is to be like some puny mortal eavesdropping in full Sanhedrim of the High Gods. Apart altogether from the imminent danger of annihilation, there is that sense of intrusion which is almost sacrilege, of daring thus to witness what should surely be hidden from the profane eyes of the sons of men. All thoughtful minds are thus impressed by the combat of gale and sea, although their impressions are for the most part so elusive and shadowy that any definite fixing thereof is hopeless. Especially is this form of the solemn privacy of the sea noticeable in the Southern Ocean. Along the line, untraced by mortal hand except upon a Mercator's Chart, favoured by the swift sailing ships between South America and Australasia, the vastest stretch of ocean known is dotted only at enormous intervals by the fleets of civilisation. Day succeeds day, lengthening into weeks, during which the brave intruder is hurled upon her headlong way at the rate of eight or nine degrees of longitude in the twenty-four hours without a companion, with no visible environment but sea and sky. And do what the intelligent novice will, he cannot divest himself of the notion, when drawing near the confines of New Zealand, seeing how minute that beautiful cluster of islands appears upon the chart, that it would be so easy to miss them altogether, to rush past them under compulsion of the mighty west wind, and waste long painful days struggling against its power to get back again to the overrun port.

Once in the writer's own experience an incident occurred that seemed almost to justify such a fear. Only sixty days had elapsed since leaving Plymouth with four hundred emigrants on board, and during the last fortnight the west wind had blown with terrific violence (to a landsman). But the master, in calmest satisfaction, with fullest confidence in the power of his ship, had steadfastly refused to shorten sail. He seldom left the deck, the spectacle of his beautiful command in her maddened rush to the east being to him apparently sufficient recompense for loss of rest. At last we flew past the Snares, those grim outliers of the Britain of the South, and it became necessary to "haul up" for Port

Lyttelton. To do this we must needs bring that great wind full upon our broadside, and that, with the canvas we were carrying, would have meant instant destruction. So all hands were called, and the work of shortening her down commenced. Several of the lighter sails, at the first slackening from their previously rigid tension, gave one despairing flap and vanished to join the clouds. But furious toil and careful skill through long hours of that dense night succeeded in reducing the previously great sail area down to three lower-topsails, reefed fore-sail, and fore-topmast staysail. Then after much careful watching of the waves that came fatefully thundering on astern until a lull momentarily intervened, the helm was suddenly put down, and the gallant vessel swung up into the wind. Nobly done, but as she wheeled there arose out of the blackness ahead a mountainous shape with a voice that made itself heard above the gale. Higher and higher it soared until smiting the bluff of the bow it broke on board, a wave hundreds of tons in solid weight. The stout steel ship trembled to her keelson, but she rose a conqueror, while the avalanche of white-topped water rushed aft dismantling the decks, and leaving them, when it had subsided, in forlorn ruin. But she was safe. Justifying the faithfulness and skill of her builders, she had survived where a weaker ship would have disappeared, beaten out of the upper air like a paper boat under a stone flung from the bank. Slowly and laboriously we fore-reached to the northward, until under the lee of the land the wind changed, and we entered port in triumph.

This sense of solitude induced by contemplation of the ocean is exceedingly marked even on the best frequented routes and the most crowded (?) waters. To enter into it fully, however, it is necessary to sail either in a cable ship, a whaler, or an old slow-going merchant sailor that gets drifted out of the track of vessels. Even in the English Channel one cannot but feel how much room there is. In spite of our knowledge of the numbers of ships that pass and repass without ceasing along what may truthfully be termed the most frequented highway in the watery world, there is an undoubtedly reasonable sense induced by its contemplation that however much the dry land may become overcrowded the sea will always be equal to whatever demands may be made upon it for space. There are many harbours in the world, at any rate landlocked bays that may rightly be called harbours, wherein the fleets of all the nations might lie in comfort. And their disappearance from the open sea would leave no sense of loss. So wide is Old Ocean's bosom. Perhaps this is even now more strongly marked than it was fifty years ago. The wonderful exactitude with which the steam fleets of the world keep to certain well-defined tracks leaves the intermediate breadths unvisited from year to year. They are private places whither he who should

desire to hide himself from the eyes of men might he and be certain that but for the host of heaven, the viewless wind, and the silent myriads beneath, he would indeed be alone. They are of the secret places of the Almighty.

Occasionally the great steamships that lay for us the connecting nerves of civilisation penetrate these arcana, for their path must be made on the shortest line between two continents, heedless of surface tracks. And the wise men who handle these wonderful handmaids of science know how private are the realms through which they steadily steam, leaving behind them the thin black line along which shall presently flash at lightning speed the thought-essence of mankind. The whaler, alas! is gone; the old leisurely South Seaman to whom time was a thing of no moment. Her ruler knew that his best prospect of finding the prey he sought was where no keel disturbed the sensitive natural vibrations of the wave. So these vessels saw more of sea solitude than any others. Saw those weird spaces unvisited even by wind, great areas of silky surface into whose peaceful glades hardly rolled a gently undulating swell bearing silent evidence of storms raging half a world away. So too upon occasion did, and does, a belated sailing-ship, such as one we met in the Southern Seas bound from the United Kingdom to Auckland, that had been then nine months on her passage. Into what dread sea-solitudes she had intruded. How many, many days had elapsed during which she was the solitary point rising from the shining plain into the upper air. Her crew had a wistful look upon their faces, as of men whose contact with the world they dimly remembered had been effectually cut off. And truly to many, news of her safety came in the nature of a message of resurrection. Books of account concerning her had to be reopened, mourning garments laid aside. She had returned from the silences, had rejoined the world of men.

All the tracks along which ships travel are but threads traversing these private waters, just little spaces like a trail across an illimitable desert. And even there the simile fails because the track across the ocean plain is imaginary. It is traced by the passing keel and immediately it is gone. And the tiny portion of the sea-surface thus furrowed is but the minutest fraction of the immeasurable spaces wherein is enthroned the privacy of the sea.

THE VOICES OF THE SEA

Not the least of the many charms exercised by the deep and wide sea upon its bond-servants are the varied voices by which it makes known its ever-changing moods. They are not for all ears to hear. Many a sailor spends the greater part of a long life in closest intercourse with the ocean, yet to its myriad beauties he is blind; no realised sense of his intimacy with the immensity of the Universe ever makes the hair of his flesh stand up, and to the majestic music of the unresting deep his ears of appreciation are closely sealed. Not that unto any one of the sons of men is it ever given to be conversant with all the countless phases of delight belonging to the sea. For some cannot endure the call of deep answering unto deep, the terrible thundering of the untrammelled ocean in harmony with the uttermost diapason of the storm-wind. All their finer perceptions are benumbed by fear. And other some, who are yet unable to rejoice in the sombre glory of the tempest-tones, are intolerant of the lightsome glee born of zephyrs and sunlight when the sweet murmur of the radiant breaths is like the contented cooing of care-free infancy, and every dancing wavelet wears a many-dimpled smile. For them there must be a breeze of strength with a strident, swaggering sea through which the well-found ship ploughs her steady way at utmost speed with every rounded sail distent like a cherub's cheek, and every rope and stay humming a merry tune. Least of all in number are those who can enjoy a perfect calm. Indeed, in these bustling, strenuous days of ours opportunities of so doing are daily becoming fewer. The panting steamship tears up the silken veil of the slumbering sea like some envious monster in a garden of sleep making havoc of its beauty. She makes her own wind by her swift thrust through the restful atmosphere, although there be in reality none astir even sufficient to ruffle the shining surface before her.

Still, the fact must not be overlooked that many sea-farers do verily enjoy to the full all sea-sights and sea-sounds, but of their pleasures they cannot speak. Deep silent content is theirs, a perfect complacency of delight that length of acquaintanceship only makes richer and more satisfying, until, as the very structure of the Stradivarius is saturated with music, so the mariner's whole being absorbs, and becomes imbued with, the magic of wind and wave. This incommunicable joy a monarch might well envy its possessor, for it is independent of environment, so that although the seafarer may grow old and feeble, be far away from his well-beloved sea, even blind and deaf, yet within his soul will still vibrate those resounding harmonies, and with inward eyes he

his soul will still violate those resounding harmonies, and with inward eyes he can feast a farther-reaching vision than ever over those glorious fenceless fields.

The voices of the sea are many, but their speech is one. Naturally, perhaps, the thought turns first to the tremendous chorus uplifted in the hurricane, that swells and swells until even the tropical thunder's deafening cannonade is unheard, drowned deep beneath the exultant flood of song poured forth by the rejoicing sea. Many epithets have been chosen to characterise the storm-song of the ocean. None of them can ever hope to satisfy completely, for all must bear some definite reflex of the minds of their utterers, according as they have been impressed by their experiences or imaginings. But to my mind most of the terms used are out of place and misleading. They generally endeavour to describe the tempestuous sea as a ravenous monster, a howling destroyer of unthinking ferocity, and the like. Alas, it is very natural so to do. For when this feeble frame must needs confront the resounding main in the plenitude of its power, our mortal part must perforce feel and acknowledge its insignificance, must dwindle and shake with fear, although that part of us which is akin to the Infinite may vainly desire to rejoice with all seas and floods that praise Him and magnify Him for ever. Not in the presence of ocean shouting his hymn of praise may we satisfy our desire to join in the triumphant lay, although we know how full of benefits to our race are the forces made vocal in that majestic Lobgesang. As the all-conquering flood of sound, with a volume as if God were smiting the sapphire globe of the universe, rolls on, we may hear the cry, "Life and strength and joy do I bring. Before my resistless march darkness, disease, and death must flee. When beneath my reverberating chariot-wheels man is overwhelmed, not mine the blame. I do but fulfil mine appointed way, scattering health, refreshment, and well-being over every living thing."

But when as yet the sky is serene above and the surface of the slumbering depths is just ruffled by a gentle air, there may often be heard another voice, as if some gigantic orchestra in another star was preparing for the signal to burst forth into such music as belongs not to our little planet. Fitful wailing notes in many keys, long sustained and all minor, encompass the voyager without and within. Now high, now low, but ever tending to deepen and become more massive in tone, this unearthly symphony is full of warning. It bids the watchful seaman make ready against the advent of the fast approaching storm, that, still some hundreds of leagues distant, is sending its pursuivants before its face. Nor are these spirit-stirring chords due to the harp-like obstruction offered by the web of rigging spread about the masts of a ship to the rising wind. It may be heard even more

definitely in an open boat far from any ship or shore, although there, perhaps because of the great loneliness of the situation, it always seems to take a tone of deeper melancholy, as if in sympathy with the helplessness of the human creatures thus isolated from their fellows. It belongs, almost exclusively, to the extra-tropical regions where storms are many. And within a certain compass, its intimates find little variation of its scale. Always beginning in the treble clef and by regular melodic waves gradually descending until with the incidence of the storm it blends into the grand triumphal march spoken of before. But when it is heard within the tropics let the mariner beware. None can ever mistake its weird lament, sharpening every little while into a shrill scream as if impatient that its warning should be heeded without delay. It searches the very marrow of the bones, and beasts as well as men look up and are much afraid. For it is the precursor of the hurricane, before which the bravest seaman blanches, when sea and sky seem to meet and mingle, the waters that are above the firmament with the waters that are under the firmament, as in the days before God said "Let there be light."

Far different again is the cheerful voice of the Trade wind over the laughing happy sea of those pleasant latitudes. No note of sadness or melancholy is to be detected there. Brisk and bright, confident and gay, it bids the sailor be glad in his life. Bids him mark anew how beautiful is the bright blue sea, how snowy are the billowy clouds piled peacefully around the horizon, while between them and the glittering edge of the vast circle shows a tender band of greyish green of a lucent clearness that lets the rising stars peep through as soon as they are above the horizon. Overhead through all the infinite fleckless dome eddy the friendly tones. Yet so diffused are they, so vast in their area that if one listen for them he cannot hear aright—they must be felt rather than heard. Well may their song be of content and good cheer. For they course about their ordained orbits as the healthful life tides through the human body, keeping sweet all adjacent shores and preventing by their beneficent agitation a baleful stagnation of the sea. By day the golden sun soars on his splendid road from horizon to zenith until he casts no shadow, and all the air quivers with living light, then in stately grandeur sinks through the pure serenity of that perfect scene, the guardian cumuli clustering round his goal melting apart so that, visible to the last of his blazing verge, he may go as he came, unshadowed by haze or cloud. Then, as the radiant train of lovely rays fade reluctantly from the blue concave above, all the untellable splendours of the night come forth in their changeless order, their scintillating lustre undimmed by the filmiest veil of haze. One incandescent constellation after another is revealed until, as the last faint sheen of the

departing day disappears from the western horizon, the double girdle of the galaxy is flung across the darkling dome in all its wondrous beauty. And unceasingly through all the succeeding beauties of the day and night that flood of happy harmony rolls on.

How shall I speak of the voice of the calm? How describe that sound which mortal ear cannot hear? The pen of the inspired writers alone might successfully undertake such a task, so closely in touch as they were with the Master Mind. "When the morning stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy." Something akin to this sublime daring of language is needed to convey a just idea of what floods the soul when alone upon the face of the deep in a perfect calm. The scale of that heavenly harmony is out of our range. We can only by some subtle alchemy of the brain distil from that celestial silence the voices of angels and archangels and all the glorious company of heaven. Between us and them is but a step, but it is the threshold of the timeless dimension. Again and again I have seen men, racked through and through with a very agony of delight, dash aside the thralls that held them, sometimes with passionate tears, more often with raging words that grated harshly upon the velvet stillness. They felt the burden of the flesh grievous, since it shut them out from what they dimly felt must be bliss unutterable, not to be contained in any earthen vessel. On land a thousand things, even in a desert, distract the attention, loose the mind's tension even when utterly alone. But at sea, the centre of one vast glassy circle, shut in on every hand by a perfect demi-globe as flawless as the mirror whereon you float, with even the softest undulation imperceptible, and no more motion of the atmosphere than there is in a perfect vacuum, there is absolutely nothing to come between the Soul of Man and the Infinite Silences of Creation. There and there only is it possible to realise what underlies that mighty line, "There was silence in Heaven for the space of half-an-hour." Few indeed are the men, however rough and unthinking, that are not quieted and impressed by the marvel of a perfect calm. But the tension is too great to be borne long with patience. Men feel that this majestic environment is too redolent of the coming paradise to be supportable by flesh and blood. They long with intense desire for a breeze, for motion, for a change of any sort. So much so that long-continued calm is dreaded by seamen more than any other phase of sea-experience. And yet it is for a time lovely beyond description, soothing the jarring nerves and solemnising every faculty as if one were to be shut in before the Shekinah in the Holy of Holies. It is like the Peace of God.

Thus far I have feebly attempted to deal with some of the sea-voices untinctured

by any contact with the land. But although the interposition of rock and beach, cliff and sand-bank introduces fresh changes with every variation of weather, new combinations of sound that do not belong solely to the sea, any description of the sea-music that should take no account of them would be manifestly one-sided and incomplete. And yet the mutabilities are so many, the gamut is so extended that it is impossible to do more than just take a passing note of a few characteristic impressions. For every lonely reef, every steep-to shore has an infinite variety of responses that it gives back to the besieging waves. Some of them are terrible beyond the power of words to convey. When the sailor in a crippled craft, his reckoning unreliable, and his vigour almost gone by a long-sustained struggle with the storm, hears to leeward the crashing impact of mountainous waves against the towering buttresses of granite protecting a sea-beset land, it is to him a veritable knell of doom. Or when through the close-drawn curtains of fog comes the hissing tumult of breaking seas over an invisible bank, interpolated with the hoarse bellowing of the advancing flood checked in its free onward sweep, bold and high indeed must be the courage that does not fail. The lonely lighthouse-keeper on the Bishop Rock during the utmost stress of an Atlantic gale notes with quickening pulse the change of tone as the oncoming sea, rolling in from freedom, first feels beneath it the outlying skirts of the solitary mountain. Nearer and deeper and fiercer it roars until, with a shock that makes the deep-rooted foundations of the rocks tremble, and the marvellous fabric of dovetailed stone sway like a giant tree, it breaks, hurling its crest high through the flying spindrift over the very finial of the faithful tower.

But on the other hand, on some golden afternoon among the sunny islands of summer seas, hear the soft soothing murmur of the gliding swell upon the slumbering shore. It fills the mind with rest. Sweeter than lowest lullaby, it comforts and composes, and even in dreams it laps the sleeper in Elysium. The charm of that music is chief among all the influences that bind the memory to those Enchanted Isles. It returns again and again under sterner skies, filling the heart with almost passionate longing to hear it, to feel it in all its mystery once again. Still when all has been said, every dweller on the sea-shore knows the voice of his own coast best. For him it has its special charm, whether it shriek around ice-laden rocks, roar against iron-bound cliffs, thunder over jagged reefs, or babble among fairy islets. And yet all these many voices are but one.

THE CALLING OF CAPTAIN RAMIREZ

When two whale-ships meet during a cruise, if there are no signs of whales near, an exchange of visits always takes place. The two captains foregather on board one ship, the two chief mates on board the other. While the officers are thus enjoying themselves, it is usual for the boats' crews to go forrard and while away the time as best they can, such visitors being always welcome. This practice is called "gamming," and is fruitful of some of the queerest yarns imaginable, as these sea-wanderers ransack their memories for tales wherewith to make the time pass pleasantly.

On the occasion of which I am writing, our ship had met the *Coral* of Martha's Vineyard off Nieuwe, and gamming had set in immediately. One of the group among whom I sat was a sturdy little native of Guam, in the Ladrone Islands, the picture of good-humour, but as ugly as a Joss. Being called upon for a song, he laughingly excused himself on the ground that his songs were calculated to give a white man collywobbles; but if we didn't mind he would spin a "cuffer" (yarn) instead. Carried unanimously—and we lit fresh pipes as we composed ourselves to hear of "The Calling of Captain Ramirez." I reproduce the story in a slightly more intelligible form than I heard it, the mixture of Spanish, Kanaka, &c., being a gibberish not to be understood by any but those who have lived among the polyglot crowd in a whaler.

"About fifteen years ago now, as near as I can reckon (for we don't keep much account of time except we're on monthly wage), I was cruising the Kingsmills in the old *Salem*, Captain Ramirez. They told me her name meant 'Peace,' and that may be; but if so, all I can say is that never was a ship worse named. Why, there wasn't ever any peace aboard of her. Quiet there was, when the old man was asleep, for nobody wanted him wakened; but peace—well, I tell ye, boys, she was jest hell afloat. I've been fishing now a good many years in Yankee spouters, and there's some blood-boats among 'em, but never was I so unlucky as when I first set foot aboard the *Salem*. Skipper was a Portugee from Flores, come over to the States as a nipper and brung up in Rhode Island. Don't know and don't care how he got to be skipper, but I guess Jemmy Squarefoot was his schoolmaster, for some of his tricks wouldn't, couldn't, have been thought of anywheres else but down below. I ain't a-goin' to make ye all miserable by telling you how he hazed us round and starved us and tortured us, but you can let

your imagination loose if you want to, and then you won't overhaul the facts of his daily amusements.

“Well, I'd been with him about a year when, as I said at first, we was cruising the Kingsmills, never going too close in, because at that time the natives were very savage, always fighting with each other, but very glad of the chance to go for a ship and kill and eat all hands. Then again we had some Kanakas aboard, and the skipper knew that if they got half a chance they would be overboard and off to the shore.

“Sperm whales were very plentiful, in fact they had been so all the cruise, which was another proof to all of us who the skipper was in co. with, for in nearly every ship we gammed the crowd were heart-broken at their bad luck. However, we'd only been a few days on the ground when one morning we lowered for a thundering big school of middling-size whales. We sailed in full butt, and all boats got fast. But no sooner was a strain put on the lines than they all parted like as if they was burnt. Nobody there ever seen or heard of such a thing before. It fairly scared us all, for we thought it was witchcraft, and some of 'em said the skipper's time was up and his boss was rounding on him. Well, we bent on again, second irons, as the whales were all running anyhow, not trying to get away, and we all got fast again. 'Twas no good at all; all parted just the same as before. Well, we was about the worst galled lot of men you ever see. We was that close to the ship that we knew the old man could see with his glasses everything that was going on. Every one of us knew just about how he was bearing it, but what could we do? Well, boys, we didn't have much time to serlilerquise, for before you could say 'knife' here he comes, jumping, howling mad. Right in among us he busted, and oh! he did look like his old father Satan on the rampage. He was in the bow of his boat, and he let drive at the first whale he ran up against. Down went the fish and pop went the line same as before. Well, I've seen folks get mad more'n a little, but never in all my fishing did ever I see anything like he showed us then. I thought he'd a sploded all into little pieces. He snatched off his hat and tore it into ribbons with his teeth; the rattle of Portugee blasphemion was like our old mincing-machine going full kelter, and the foam flew from between his teeth like soapsuds.

“Suddenly he cooled down, all in a minute like, and said very quiet, ‘All aboard.’ We were all pretty well prepared for the worst by this time, but I do think we liked him less now than we did when he was ramping around—he looked a sight more dangerous. However, we obeyed orders smart, as usual, but he was aboard first. Myl boy, that heat of his just flew. ’Twas like a race for life

he was aboard first. My: how that boat of his just flew. I was like a race for me.

“We were no sooner on board than we hoisted boats and made them fast. Then the skipper yelled, ‘All hands lay aft.’ Aft we come prompt, and ranged ourselves across the quarter-deck in front of where he was prowling back and forth like a breeding tigress. As soon as we were all aft he stopped, facing us, and spoke. ‘Somebody aboard this ship’s been trying to work a jolt off on me by pisonin’ my lines. Now I want that man, so’s I can kill him, slow; ’n I’m going to have him too ’thout waiting too long. Now *I* think this ship’s been too easy a berth for all of you, but from this out until I have my rights on the man I want she’s agoing to be a patent hell. Make up yer mines quick, fer I tell yer no ship’s crew ever suffered what you’re agoin’ to suffer till I get that man under my hands. Now go.’

“When we got forrard we found the fo’c’s’le scuttle screwed up so’s we couldn’t get below. There was no shelter on deck from the blazing sun, the hatches was battened so we couldn’t get into the fore-hold, so we had to just bear it. One man went aft to the scuttle butt for a drink of water, and found the spigot gone. The skipper saw him, and says to him, ‘You’ll fine plenty to drink in the bar’l forrard,’ and you know the sort of liquor *that’s* full of. Some of us flung ourselves down on deck, being dog tired as well as hungry and thirsty, but he was forrard in a minute with both his shooting-irons cocked. ‘Up, ye spawn, ’n git some exercise; ye’r gettin’ too fat ’n lazy,’ says he. So we trudged about praying that he might drop dead, but none of us willing as yet to face certain death by defying him. The blessed night came at last, and we were able to get a little rest, he having gone below, and the officers, though willing enough to keep in with him at our expense, not being bad enough to drive us all night unless he was around to see it done. Along about eight bells came the steward, with a biscuit apiece for us and a bucket of water—about half a pint each. We were so starved and thirsty that the bite and sup was a godsend. What made things worse for us was the suspicion we had one of the other. As I said, we was, as usual, a mixed crowd and ready to sell one another for a trifle. He knew that, curse him, and reckoned with considerable certainty on getting hold of the victim he wanted. Well, the night passed somehow, and when morning came he was around again making us work, scouring iron-work bright, holy-stoning decks, scrubbing overside, as if our very lives depended on the jobs being done full pelt.

“We was drawing in pretty close to a small group of islands, closer than we had been yet in those waters, and we all wondered what was in the wind. Suddenly

he gave orders to back the mainyard and have the dinghy lowered. She was a tiny tub of a craft, such as I never saw carried in a whaler before, only about big enough for three. A little Scotchman and myself was ordered into her, then to our amazement the old man got in, shoved off, and headed her for the opening through the reef surrounding the biggest island of the group. It was fairly well wooded with cocoa-nut trees and low bushes, while, unlike any of the other islets, there were several big rocks showing up through the vegetation in the middle of it. We weren't long getting to the beach, where we jumped out and ran her up a piece so's he could step out dry. We waited for a minute or two while he sat thinking, and looking straight ahead of him at nothing. Presently he jumped out and said to me, 'Come,' and to Sandy, 'Stay here.' Off he went up the beach and straight into the little wood, just as if somebody was calling him and he had to go. Apparently there wasn't a living soul on the whole island except just us three. We had only got a few yards into the bush when we came to a little dip in the ground: a sort of valley. Just as we got to the bottom, we suddenly found ourselves in the grip of two Kanakas, the one that had hold of the skipper being the biggest man I ever saw. I made one wriggle, but my man, who was holding my two arms behind my back, gave them a twist that nearly wrenched them out of their sockets and quieted me good. As for the skipper, he was trying to call or speak, but although his mouth worked no sound came, and he looked like death. The giant that had him flung him on his face and lashed his wrists behind him with a bit of native fish-line, then served his ankles the same. I was tied next, but not so cruel as the skipper, indeed they didn't seem to want to hurt me. The two Kanakas now had a sort of a consultation by signs, neither of them speaking a word. While they was at it I noticed the big one was horribly scarred all over his back and loins (they was both naked except for a bit of a grass belt) as well as crippled in his gait. Presently they ceased their dumb motions and came over to me. The big one opened his mouth and pointed to where his tongue had been, also to his right eye-socket, which was empty. Then he touched the big white scars on his body, and finally pointed to the skipper. Whole books couldn't have explained his meaning better than I understood it then. But what was coming? I declare I didn't feel glad a bit at the thought that Captain Ramirez was going to get his deserts at last.

“Suddenly the giant histed the skipper on his shoulder as if he had been a baby, and strode off across the valley towards the massive heap of rocks, followed by his comrade and myself. We turned sharply round a sort of gate, composed of three or four huge coral blocks balanced upon each other, and entered a grotto or cave with a descending floor. Over the pieces of rock with which the ground was

strewn we stumbled onward in the dim light until we entered water and splashed on through it for some distance. Then, our eyes being by this time used to the darkness, the general features of the place could be made out. Communication with the sea was evident, for the signs of high-water mark could be seen on the walls of the cave just above our heads. For a minute or so we remained perfectly still in the midst of that dead silence, so deep that I fancied I could hear the shell-fish crawling on the bottom. Then I was brought a few paces nearer the Captain, as he hung upon the great Kanaka's shoulder. Taking my eyes from his death-like face I cast them down, and there, almost at my feet, was one of those enormous clams such as you see the shells of thrown up on all these beaches, big as a child's bath. Hardly had the horrible truth dawned on me of what was going to happen than it took place. Lifting the skipper into an upright position, the giant dropped him feet first between the gaping shells of the big clam, which, the moment it felt the touch, shut them with a smash that must have broken the skipper's legs. An awful wail burst from him, the first sound he had yet made. I have said he was brave, and he was, too, although such a cruel villain, but now he broke down and begged hard for life. It may have been that the Kanakas were deaf as well as dumb; at any rate, for all sign of hearing they showed, they were. He appealed to me, but I was as helpless as he, and my turn was apparently now to come. But evidently the Kanakas were only carrying out what they considered to be payment of a due debt, for after looking at him fixedly for awhile, during which I felt the water rising round my knees, they turned their backs on him and led me away. I was glad to go, for his shrieks and prayers were awful to hear, and I couldn't do anything.

"They led me to where they had first caught us, made me fast to a tree, and left me. Overcome with fatigue and hunger I must have fainted, for when I came to I found myself loose, lying on the sand, and two or three of my shipmates attending to me. As soon as I was able to speak they asked me what had become of the skipper. Then it all rushed back on me at once, and I told them the dreadful story. They heard me in utter silence, the mate saying at last, 'Wall, sonny, it's a good job fer yew the Kanakers made ye fast, or yew'd have had a job ter clear yersef of murder.' And so I thought now. However, as soon as I was a bit rested and had something to eat, I led them to the cave, keeping a bright look-out meanwhile for a possible attack by the Kanakas. None appeared though, and the tide having fallen again we had no difficulty in finding the skipper. All that was left of him, that is, for the sea-scavengers had been busy with him, so that he was a sight to remember with a crawling at your stomach till your dying day. He was still fast in the grip of the clam, so it was decided to

leave him there and get on board again at once.

“We did so unmolested, getting sail on the ship as soon as we reached her, so as to lose sight of that infernal spot. But it’s no use denying the fact that we all felt glad the skipper was dead; some rejoiced at the manner of his death, although none could understand who called him ashore or why he obeyed. Those who had whispered the theory of the finish of his contract with Jemmy Squarefoot chuckled at their prescience, as fully justified by the sequel, declaring that the big Kanaka whom I had seen was none other than Satan himself come for his bargain.

“Matters went on now in quite a different fashion. The relief was so great that we hardly knew ourselves for the same men, and it affected all hands alike, fore and aft. The secret of the breaking line was discovered when Mr. Peck, the mate, took the skipper’s berth over. In a locker beneath the bunk he found the pieces of a big bottle, what they call a ‘carboy,’ I think, and in hunting up the why of this a leakage through the deck was found into the store-room where the cordage was kept. Only two other coils were affected by the stuff that had run down, and of course they were useless, but the rest of the stock was all right. Now, I don’t know what it was, nor how it came there, nor any more about it, and if you ain’t tired of listening I’m mighty tired of talking. Pass that ‘switchel’^[1] this way.”

^[1]A drink of molasses, vinegar, and water.

MARATHON OF THE SEALS

Far beyond the roaring track of the homeward-bound merchantman, lie in the South Pacific the grim clusters of salt-whitened isles marked on the chart as the South Shetlands. Many years have come and gone since their hungry shores were busy with the labours of the sealers, that, disdainful of the terrors of snow-laden gale and spindrift-burdened air, toiled amid the Antarctic weather to fill their holds with the garments of the sea-folk. Then, after perils incredible, the adventurers would return to port, and waste in a week of debauch the fruit of their toil, utterly forgetful of crashing floe or hissing sea, frozen limbs or wrenching hunger pains. When all was spent they would return, resolutely forgetting their folly and wreaking upon the innocent seal all the rage of regret that *would* rise within them. They spared none—bull, cow, and calf alike were slain, as if in pure lust of slaughter, until the helplessness of utter fatigue compelled them to desist and snatch an interval of death-like sleep, oblivious of all the grinding bitterness of their surroundings. Life was held cheap among them, a consequence, not to be wondered at, of its hardness and the want of all those things that make life desirable. And yet the stern existence had its own strong fascination for those who had become inured to it. Few of them ever gave it up voluntarily, ending their stormy life-struggle in some sudden ghastly fashion and being almost immediately forgotten. Occasionally some sorely-maimed man would survive the horrors of his disablement, lying in the fetid forecastle in sullen endurance until the vessel reached a port whence he could be transferred to civilisation. But these unhappy men fretted grievously for the vast openness of the Antarctic, the gnashing of the ice-fangs upon the black rocks, the unsatisfied roar of the western gale, and the ceaseless combat with the relentless sea.

Many years came and went while the Southern sealer plied his trade, until at last none of the reckless skippers could longer disguise from themselves the fact that their harvest fields were rapidly becoming completely barren. Few and far between were the islets frequented by the seals, the majority of the old grounds being quite abandoned. One by one the dejected fishermen gave up the attempt, until in due time those gaunt fastnesses resumed their primitive loneliness. The long, long tempest roared questioningly over the deserted islands, as if calling for its vanished children, and refusing to be comforted because they were not. Years passed in solitude, but for the busy sea-fowl, who, because they had no

commercial value, were left unmolested to eat their fill of the sea's rich harvest, and rear among the bleak rock-crannies their fluffy broods. At last, out of the midst of a blinding smother of snow, there appeared one day off the most southerly outlier of the South Shetlands a little group of round velvety heads staring with wide, humid eyes at the surf-lashed fortresses of the shore. Long and warily they reconnoitred, for although many generations had passed since their kind had been driven from those seas, the memory of those pitiless days had been so steadily transmitted through the race that it had become a part of themselves, an instinct infallible as any other they possessed. No enemy appearing, they gradually drew nearer and nearer, until their leader, a fine bull seal of four seasons, took his courage in both flippers and mounted the most promising slope, emerging from the foaming breakers majestically, and immediately becoming a hirpling heap of clumsiness that apparently bore no likeness to the graceful, agile creature of a few moments before. Obediently his flock followed him until they reached a little patch of hard smooth sand sheltered by a semi-circle of great wave-worn boulders, and admirably suited to their purpose. Here, with sleepless vigilance of sentinels, they rested, rather brokenly at first, as every incursion of the indignant sea-fowl startled them, but presently subsiding into ungainly attitudes of slumber.

Whence they had come was as great a mystery as all the deep-water ways of the sea-people must ever be to man, or how many halting-places they must have visited and rejected at the bidding of their unerring instinct warning them that the arch-destroyers' visits were to be feared. However, they soon made themselves at home, fattening marvellously upon the innumerable multitudes of fish that swarmed around the bases of those barren islands, and between whiles basking in the transient sun-gleams that occasionally touched the desolate land with streaks of palest gold. And as time went on, being unmolested in their domestic arrangements, the coming generation tumbled about the rugged shore in those pretty gambols that all young things love, learning steadily withal to take their appointed places in the adult ranks as soon as they had proved their capability so to do. Thus uneventfully and happily passed the seasons until the little party of colonists had grown to be a goodly herd, with leaders of mighty prowess, qualified to hold their own against any of their kind, and inured to combat by their constantly recurring battles with each other, their love affairs, in which they fought with a fury astonishing to witness.

But one bright spring morning, when after a full meal the females were all dozing peacefully among the boulders, and the pups were gleefully waddling and

tumbling among them, there came a message from the sea to the fighting males, who instantly suspended their family battles to attend to the urgent call. How the news came they alone knew, its exact significance was hidden even from them, but a sense of imminent danger was upon them all. The females called up their young and retreated farther inland among the labyrinth of rocky peaks that made the place almost impossible for human travel. The males, about forty of them, ranged uneasily along the shore, their wide nostrils dilated and their whiskers bristling with apprehension. Ever and anon they would pause in their watchful patrol and couch silently as if carved in marble, staring seaward with unwinking eyes at the turbulent expanse of broken sea. Presently, within a cable's length of the shore, up rose an awful head—the enemy had arrived. Another and another appeared until a whole herd of several scores of sea-elephants were massed along the land edge and beginning to climb ponderously over the jagged pinnacles shoreward. Not only did they outnumber the seals by about four to one, but each of them was equal in bulk to half-a-dozen of the largest of the defenders. Huge as the great land mammal from whom they take their trivial name, ferocious in their aspect, as they inflated their short trunks and bared their big gleaming teeth, they hardly deigned to notice the gallant band of warriors who faced them. Straight upward they came as if the outlying rocks had suddenly been endowed with life and were shapelessly invading the dry land. But never an inch did the little company of defenders give back. With every head turned to the foe and every sinew tense with expectation they waited, waited until at last the two forces met. Such was the shock of their impact that one would have thought the solid earth trembled beneath them, and for a while in that writhing, groaning, roaring mass nothing could be clearly distinguished. Presently, however, it could be seen that the lighter, warier seals were fighting upon a definite plan, and that they carefully avoided the danger of being overwhelmed under the unwieldy masses of their enemies. While the huge elephants hampered each other sorely, and often set their terrible jaws into a comrade's neck, shearing through blubber and sinew and bone, the nimbler seals hung on the outskirts of the heavy leviathans and wasted no bite. But the odds were tremendous. One after another of the desperately fighting seals fell crushed beneath a mammoth many times his size; again and again a fiercely struggling defender, jammed between two gigantic assailants, found his head between the jaws of one of them, who would instantly crush it into pulp. Still they fought on wearily but unflinchingly until only six remained alive. Then, as suddenly as if by some instant agreement, hostilities ceased. The remnant of the invaders crawled heavily seaward, leaving the rugged battle-ground piled mountainously with their dead. The survivors sank exhausted where they had fought such a

memorable fight, and slept securely, knowing well that their home was safe, the enemy would return no more. And the rejoicing, ravenous birds came in their countless hosts to feast upon the slain.

OCEAN CURRENTS

So mysterious are all the physical phenomena of the sea that it is, perhaps, hardly possible to say of any particular one that it is more wonderful than the rest. And yet one is sorely tempted thus to distinguish when meditating upon the movements of the almost inconceivable mass of water which goes to make up that major portion of the external superficies of our planet which we call “the sea.” In spite of all the labours of investigators, notwithstanding all the care and patience which science has bestowed upon oceanography, it is nevertheless true that, except in a few broad instances, the direction, the rate, and the dependability of ocean currents still remain a profound mystery. Nor should this excite any wonder. If we remember how great is the influence over the sea possessed by the winds, how slight an alteration in the specific gravity of water is sufficient to disturb its equilibrium and cause masses hundreds of square miles in area to exchange levels with the surrounding ocean, we shall at once admit that, except in those few instances hinted at which may be referred to constant causes, ocean currents must of necessity be still among the phenomena whose operations cannot be reckoned upon with any certainty, but must be watched for and guarded against with the most jealous care by those who do business in great waters.

Perhaps one of the commonest of the many errors made in speaking of marine things is that of confounding current with tide. Now tide, though a variable feature of the circulation of the waters near land, is fairly dependable. That is to say, the navigator may calculate by means of the moon’s age and the latitude of the place not only the time of high water, but knowing the mean height at full and change of the moon, he may and does ascertain to what height the water will rise, or how low it will fall at a certain place on a given date. True, a heavy gale of wind blowing steadily in or against the same direction of the ebbing or flowing tide will accelerate or retard, raise or depress, that tide at the time; but these aberrations, though most unpleasant oftentimes to riparian householders, are rarely of much hindrance or danger to navigation. This cannot be said of the currents of the sea. The tides have their limits assigned to them both inland and off-shore, although in the latter case it is almost impossible to tell exactly where their influence becomes merged in the vaster sway of the ocean currents, with all their unforeseen developments. The limits of tidal waters in rivers, on the other hand, being well under observation at all times, may be and are determined with the greatest exactitude.

With regard to the few instances of dependability among ocean currents, the first place will undoubtedly by common consent be given to the Gulf Stream. Owing its existence primarily to the revolution of the earth upon its axis, its outflow through the tortuous channel connecting the Gulf of Florida with the North Atlantic is more constant and steady in direction than any ebbing or flowing tide in the world, inasmuch as its "set" is invariably upon one course. Its rate is not so uniform, varying somewhat with the season, but in the narrowest part of the channel remaining fairly constant at about four knots an hour. Yet sail but a few score leagues into the Florida Gulf whence this great river in the sea takes its apparent rise, and its influence disappears! The mariner may seek there in vain for that swift, silent flow which in the Straits of Florida sweeps him north-eastward irresistibly in the teeth of the strongest gale. What has happened? Does the mighty stream drain westward into that great land-locked sea by hundreds of channels from the Equatorial regions, but far below the surface, and, obeying some all-compelling impulse, rise to the light upon reaching the Bahama Banks, pouring out its beneficent flood as it comes at the rate of a hundred miles per day? It sweeps into the broad Atlantic, and immediately spreads out into a breadth to which the Amazon is but a brooklet, losing its velocity meanwhile, until, having skirted the North American coast as far as the Grand Banks, it rolls in sublime grandeur eastward towards these "fortunate isles." As it does so the mystery attendant upon it deepens. Its balmy presence cannot be mistaken, for the air on either side of it may be piercing in its keenness, while immediately above it there is summer. A gale blowing at right angles to its course will raise that terrible combination of waves which gives alike to the "Western Ocean" and the "pitch of the Cape" their evil reputation as the most dangerous in the world; and yet who among navigators has ever been able to determine what, if any, rate of speed it has in mid-Atlantic? Look through hundreds of log-books kept on board ships that are, perhaps, more carefully navigated than any others, the North Atlantic liners, and you shall not find a trace of the Gulf Stream "set" mentioned. In order to make this clear, it should be said that in all properly navigated ships the course steered and the speed made are carefully noted throughout the twenty-four hours; and this course, with distance run, calculated from the position accurately fixed by observation of the celestial bodies at the previous noon, gives the ship's position by "dead reckoning." The ship's position being also found by the celestial bodies at the same time, the difference between the latter and the "dead reckoning" position should give the "set" and direction of the current for the twenty-four hours. And in vessels so carefully

steered, and whose speed is so accurately known, as the great liners are, such current data are as trustworthy as any nautical data can be. But according to the records kept by these able navigators, there is no current setting eastward across the North Atlantic. Perhaps the explanation is that it is so very sluggish as to be unnoticeable, for those dreadful monuments of misfortune to themselves and others, the derelict ships, have been known to drift completely backwards and forwards across the Atlantic, finding not only a current to carry them eastward, but its counter-current to carry them back again.

But who among us with the slightest smattering of physiography is there that is not assured that but for the genial warmth of this mighty silent sea-river our islands would revert to their condition at the glacial epoch; who is there but feels a shiver of dread pass over his scalp when he contemplates the possibility of any diversion of its life-giving waters from our shores? The bare suggestion of such a calamity is most terrifying.

As steady and reliable in its operations is the great Equatorial current which, sweeping along the Line from east to westward, is doubtless the fountain and origin of the Gulf Stream, although its operations among that ring of islands guarding the entrance to the Mexican Gulf are involved in such obscurity that none may trace them out. And going farther south, we find the Agulhas current, beloved of homeward-bound sailing-ships round the Cape of Good Hope, pursuing its even, resistless course around the Southern Horn of Africa changelessly throughout the years. How its stubborn flow frets the stormy Southern Sea! No wonder that the early navigators doubling the Cape outward-bound, and fearing to go south, believed that some unthinkable demon held sway over those wild waves. The passage of Cape Horn from east to west holds the bad eminence to-day among seafarers of being the most difficult in the world, but what the outward passage around the Cape of Storms must have been before men learned that it was possible to avoid the stream of the Agulhas current by going a few degrees south we of these later days can only imagine. What becomes of the Agulhas current when once it has poured its volume of Indian Ocean waters into the Atlantic? Does it sink below the surface some hundreds of fathoms, and silently, smoothly, glide south to the confines of the Antarctic ice barrier, or does it wander northward into warmer regions? In any case, it fulfils the one grand function of all currents, whether of air or water—the avoidance of stagnation, the circulation of health among the nations of the earth.

Coming northward in the Pacific, let us note the counterpart of the Gulf Stream,

the Kuro Siwo, or Black River of Japan, with the multitudinous isles of the East Indian Archipelago for its Caribbean Sea, and Nippon for its British Isles. It is, however, but a poor competitor in benevolence with our own Gulf Stream, as all those who know their Japan in winter can testify. Others there are that might be noted and classified if this aimed at being a scientific article, but these will suffice. These are surely wide fields enough for the imagination to rove in, wonderful depths of energy in plenty wherein the reverent and thoughtful mind may find all-sufficient food for its workings. Remembering that the known is but the fringe of the unknown, and that the secrets of the ocean are so well kept that man's hand shall never fully tear aside the veil, we may patiently ponder and wonder. That great sea of the ancients beyond whose portals, according to their wisdom, lay Cimmerian darkness—what keeps its almost tideless waters sweet? Unseen currents enter and leave by the Pillars of Hercules at differing levels, and could we but penetrate those dim regions we should doubtless find the ingress and egress of that incalculable mass of water proceeding continually, the one above the other, renewing from the exhaustless stores of the Atlantic the staleness of the great midland lake, itself apparently remaining in unchanging level.

But when all these great well-known movements of the ocean have been considered, there still remain an infinite number of minor divagations influenced by who knows what hidden causes. The submarine upheavals of central heat, when from out of her glowing entrails the old earth casts incandescent stores of lava, raising the superincumbent mass of water for many square miles almost to boiling-point—who can estimate the effect that these throes have upon the trend of great areas of ocean? The almost infernal energy of those gyrating meteors of the tropics as they rage across the seas—how can any mind, however acute, assess the drag upon the whole body of surface water that is manifested thereby? To say nothing of the displacement caused by the less violent but far more frequent stress laid upon the much-enduring sea by extra-tropical gales, whereby the baffled mariner's calculations are all upset, and his ship that should be careering safely in the wide offing is suddenly dashed in ruins upon the iron-bound shore!

Great efforts have been made to lay down for the benefit of seafarers a comprehensive scheme of ocean currents all over the watery surface of the globe, but in the great majority of cases the guidance is delusive, the advice untrustworthy, through no fault of the compilers. They have done their best, but mean results can never help particular needs. And so the wary mariner, as far as

may be, trusts to the old-fashioned three "L's,"—lead, log, and look-out; knowing full well how little reliance is to be placed in the majority of cases upon any advice soever concerning the mystery of ocean currents.

THE UNDYING ROMANCE OF THE SEA

Some of the greatest among men have spoken and written regarding the material progress of mankind as if every new invention for shortening distance, for economising time or labour, and increasing production were but another step in the direction of eliminating romance from the weary world.

Especially has this been said of sea traffic. We are asked to believe that in the tiny vessels of Magalhaens, the pestilential hulls of Anson's squadron, or the cumbrous wooden walls of Trafalgar, there dwelt a romance which is now non-existent at sea—that the introduction of the steam-driven ship has been fatal to a quality which in truth belongs not at all to material things, but holds its splendid court in the minds of men. Do they, these mourners over departed romance, hold, then, that misery is essential to romance? Is it essential to romantic interest at sea that because of the smallness of the ships, their lack of healthful food, their clumsiness of build and snail-like progress, men should suffer horribly and die miserably? Truly, if these things are necessary in order that romance shall flourish, we may find them still amongst us both at sea and on land, though happily in ever lessening proportion to an improved order of things.

But sober consideration will surely convince us that as far as true romance is concerned the modern ironclad warship, for instance, need abate no jot of her claim to the three-decker of last century or the *Great Harry* of our infant Navy. The sight of a 15,000-ton battleship cleared for action and silently dividing the ancient sea in her swift rush to meet the foe, not a man visible anywhere about her, but all grim, adamantine, and awe-inspiring—in what is she less romantic than the *Victory* under all canvas breaking the line at Trafalgar? As an incentive to the exercise of the imagination, the ironclad certainly claims first place. Like some fire-breathing dragon of ancient fable she comes, apparently by her own volition, armed with powers of destruction overtopping all the efforts of ancient story-tellers. Yet to the initiated she is more wonderful, more terror-striking, than to the unknowing observer. For the former pierce with the eye of knowledge her black walls of steel, and see within them hundreds of quiet, self-possessed men standing calmly by gun-breech, ammunition-hoist, fire-hose, and hospital. Deep under the water-line are scores of fiercely toiling slaves to the gigantic force that actuates the whole mass. Hardly recognisable as human,

sealed up in stokeholes under abnormal air pressure, the clang of their weapons never ceases as they feed the long row of caverns glowing white with fervent heat. All around them and beneath them and above, clearly to be discerned through all the diabolical clamour of engines and roaring of furnaces, is that sense of invisible forces subdued by the hand of man, yet ferociously striving against restraint, a sense that makes the head of the new-comer throb and beat in sympathy until it seems as if the brain must burst its containing bone.

Just abaft these chambers of accumulating energy are the giants being fed thereby. Unhappy the man who can see no romance in the engine-room! Nothing exalting, soul-stirring, in the rhythmical race of weariless pistons, no storm-song in their magnificent voices as they dash round the shaft at ninety revolutions per minute. Standing amid these modern genii, to which those of “The Thousand and One Nights” are but puny weaklings, the sight, the senses are held captive, fascinated by so splendid a manifestation of the combination of skill and strength. And when unwillingly the gazer turns away, there are the men; the grimy, greasy, sweat-stained men. Watchful, patient, cat-like. Ready at the first hint, either from the racing Titans themselves or from the soaring bridge away up yonder in the night, to manipulate lever, throttle-valve, and auxiliaries as swiftly, deftly, and certainly as the great surgeon handles his tools in contact with the silent, living form under his hands.

What a lesson on faith is here. Faith in the workmanship of the complicated monsters they control, faith in one another to do the right thing at the right moment when a mistake would mean annihilation, faith in the watcher above who is guiding the whole enormous mass amidst dangers seen and unseen. This, too, is no blind faith, no mere credulity. It is born of knowledge, and the consequences of its being misplaced must be constantly in mind in order to insure effective service in time of disaster. It would surely be a good thing if more poetry were written on the lines of “McAndrew’s Hymn,” always supposing the poets could be found; greater efforts made to acquaint us who lead comfortable lives ashore with the everyday heroism of, the continual burnt-offering rendered by, the engineer, fireman, and trimmer. Perhaps we might then begin to discern dimly and faintly that so far from the romance of the sea being destroyed by the marine engine, it has been strengthened and added to until it is deeper and truer than ever.

And as with the men in the bowels of the ship so with those above. Commanding such a weapon of war as hinted at in the preceding lines, see the central figure in

his tower of steel, surrounded by telephones, electric bells, and voice-tubes. Every portion of the ship, with its groups of faithful, waiting men, is within reach of his whisper. Behind him stands a man like a statue but for the brown hands grasping the spokes of the tiny wheel which operates the 150 horse-power engines far away in the run, which in their turn heave the mighty steel rudder this way or that, and so guide the whole fabric. This man in command wields a power that makes the mind reel to consider. A scarcely perceptible touch upon a button at his side and away speeds a torpedo; another touch, and two guns hurl 850 lbs. of steel shell filled with high explosive to a distance of ten miles if necessary. Obedience instant, perfect, yet intelligent is yielded to his lightest touch, his faintest whisper. So too his subordinates, each in their turn commanding as well as being commanded, and each saturated with the idea that not merely obedience, but obedience so swift as to be almost coincident with the order, is essential. Yet above and beyond all this harmony of discipline is the man who controls in the same perfect way the working, not only of one ship, but of a whole fleet. He speaks, and immediately flags flutter if by day, or electric lights scintillate if by night. Each obedient monster replies by fulfilling his will, and the sea foams as they swoop round each other in complicated evolutions, or scatter beyond the horizon's rim to seek the common enemy. It is the triumph of discipline, organisation, and power under command.

As it is in the Navy so it is in the Mercantile Marine. Here is a vessel of a capacity greater than that costly experiment born out of due time, the *Great Eastern*. Her lines are altogether lovely, curves of beauty unexcelled by any yacht afloat. With such perfect grace does she sit upon the sea that the mere mention of her size conveys of it no conviction. Her decks are crowded with landward folk, for whose benefit naval architects and engineers have been busy devising ways and means of bridging the Atlantic. Every comfort and convenience for the poor, every luxury for the rich, is there. Majestically, at the stroke of the hour, she moves, commences her journey. Amid all the hubbub of parting friends, the agony of breaking up home bonds, the placid conductors of this floating city attend to their work. Theirs it is to convey on scheduled time from port to port across the trackless, unheeding ocean all this multitude of units, each a volume of history in himself or herself of most poignant interest could it be unfolded. And oh, the sinuous grace, the persistent speed, the co-partnership of affinity held between man's newest and God's oldest work. Its romance is beyond all power of speech to describe. Silent, speechless marvel only can be tendered unto it. The very regularity and order which prevails, the way in which arrivals may be counted on, these are offences in the eyes of some would-be

defenders of romance. They are not apparently offended at the unerring regularity of natural phenomena. How is it that the same quality manifested by man's handiwork in relation to the mutable sea gives occasion of stumbling? A hard question. Not that the mere regularity alone is worthy of admiration, but the triumph of mind over matter, manifested as much in the grimmest little tug crouching behind a storm-beaten headland watching, spider-like, for a homeward-bound sailing-ship, or in the under-engined, swag-bellied tramp creeping stolidly homeward, bearing her quota of provision for a heedless people who would starve without her, is everywhere to be held in admiration as fragrant with true romance, the undying romance of the sea.

SAILORS' PETS

Whether there be anything in their surroundings at sea that makes animals more amenable to the taming process is, perhaps, not a question to be easily answered. But one thing is certain: that nowhere do animals become tame with greater rapidity than they do on board ship. It does not seem to make a great deal of difference what the animal is, whether bird or beast, carnivore or herbivore, Jack takes it in hand with the most surprising results, evident in so short a time that it is often difficult to believe that the subject is not merely simulating tameness in order to exercise his powers upon his master or masters in an unguarded moment.

Of course, on board merchant ships the range of variety among pets is somewhat restricted. Cats, dogs, monkeys, pigs, sheep, goats, musk-deer, and birds (of sorts) almost exhaust the list; except among the whale-ships, where the lack of ordinary subjects for taming lead men to try their hand upon such queer pets as walruses, white bears, and even seal-pups, with the usual success. Few pets on board ship ever presented a more ungainly appearance than the walrus. Accustomed to disport its massive bulk in the helpful wave, and only for very brief intervals hooking itself up on to a passing ice-floe as if to convince itself that it really is one of the amphibia, the change in its environment to the smooth deck-planks of a ship is truly radical. And yet it has often been known not only to survive such a change, but to appear contented and happy therein. Its uncouth gambols with the sailors are not to be described; but they are so funny that no one could witness them without laughter, especially when the sage, hoary appearance of even the most youthful walrus is remembered—and, of course, only very young specimens could possibly be obtained alive. But, after all, the morse has its limitations as a pet. Tamed as it often has been, and affectionate as it undoubtedly becomes, it never survives for a great while its privation of sea-bathing, and to the grief of its friends generally abandons the attempt to become permanently domesticated before the end of the season. The white bear, on the other hand, when caught sufficiently young is a great success as a pet, and develops a fund of quaint humour as well as intelligence that one would certainly never suspect from the appearance of the animal's head. Bears are notably the humorists of the animal kingdom, as any one may verify for himself who chooses to watch them for a few days at the Zoological Gardens, but among them all for pure fun commend us to *Ursa Polaris*. Perhaps to appreciate the

play of a pet white bear it is necessary to be a rough and tough whaleman, since with the very best intentions his bearship is apt to be a little heavy-pawed. And as when his claws grow a very slight mistake on his part is apt to result in the permanent disfigurement of his playmate, his days of pethood are always cut suddenly short as he approaches full growth. Seal-pups have no such drawbacks. They are pretty, affectionate, and domestic, while an occasional douche of salt water from the wash-deck tub will suffice to keep them in good health and spirits for a long time. Such favourites do they become that it is hard to understand how the same men, who will spend much of their scanty leisure playing with the gentle, amiable creatures, can at a moment's notice resume the crude barbarity of seal-slaughtering with all its attendant horrors of detail. Apart from his cumbrous movements on deck, the seal seems specially adapted for a ship's pet. He is so intelligent, so fully in touch with his human playmates, that after a short acquaintance one ceases to be surprised at his teachability; it is taken as a matter of course.

Ordinary merchant ships are, as before noted, confined to a limited range of pets. Chief among them is the harmless necessary cat, about which the present writer has written at considerable length in a recent number of the *Spectator*. But the cat's quiet domesticity never seems to take such a firm hold upon seamen's affections as does the livelier friendship of the dog. A dog on board ship is truly a favoured animal. So much so that dogs will give themselves almost as many airs and graces as the one unmarried young lady usually does in the midst of a number of male passengers, and with much the same results. Once, indeed, the presence of two dogs on board of a large ship on an East Indian voyage nearly led to a mutiny. They were both retrievers, the property of the master. But almost from the commencement of the voyage one of them, a fine black dog, "Sailor," deliberately cast in his lot with the men "forrard," where he was petted and spoiled, if a dog can be spoiled by petting. The other dog, a brown, dignified animal called "Neptune," kept to the officers' quarters. And presently the two pets by some sort of tacit understanding divided the deck between them, the main hatch constituting a sort of neutral ground beyond which neither might pass without a fight. Now, there were also some pets on board of a totally different kind, to wit, three fine pigs, who, contrary to the usual custom, were allowed to roam unpenned about the decks. A fellow-feeling, perhaps, led "Sailor," the forecastle dog, to fraternise with the genial swine, and the antics of these queerly assorted playmates gave many an hour's uproarious amusement. But the pigs loved to stray aft, far beyond their assigned limits. Whenever they did so, but a short time would elapse before "Neptune" would bound off the poop, and

seizing the nearest offender by the ear, gallop him “forrard” in the midst of a perfect tornado of squeals and clatter of sliding hoofs. This summary ejection of his friends was deeply resented by “Sailor,” who, with rigid back and gleaming eyes, looked on as if ready to interfere if “Neptune” should overstep the boundaries of his domain. One day the foreseen happened. In the fury of his gallop “forrard” Neptune reached the galley door before he released the pig he had been dragging, then suddenly recollecting himself, was trotting back with deprecatory demeanour, when he met “Sailor” coming round the after end of the house. The two heroes eyed one another for a moment, but only a moment. “Sailor” felt doubtless that this sort of thing had gone far enough, and with a snarl full of fury they joined battle. The skipper was “forrard” promptly, armed with a belaying-pin, and seizing “Sailor” by the neck, began to belabour him heavily. It was too much for the men, who by this time had all gathered around. They rushed to the rescue of their favourite, forgetting discipline, rights of ownership, everything but the unfairness of the proceeding. The belaying-pin was wrested from the captain’s grasp, the dogs torn apart, and with scowling faces the men stood confronting the raging skipper, who for some moments was hardly able to speak. When he was, he said many things, amongst others that he would shoot “Sailor” on sight; but it is perfectly certain that had he carried out his threat he would have had a complete mutiny on his hands. The matter blew over, but it was a long time before things had quite resumed their normal calm. A keen watch was kept over “Sailor” by the men for the rest of the voyage, lest evil should befall him.

Monkeys are, as might be expected, popular as pets. Unfortunately, they disturb the harmony of a ship more than any other animal that could be obtained. For their weird powers of mischief come to perfection where there are so many past masters in the art of animal training, and nothing affords greater amusement to everybody but the sufferer when “Jacko” takes it into his impish head to get loose and ravage the contents of some fellow’s bunk or chest. So much is this the case that many captains will not allow a monkey on board their ship at all, feeling sure that, however peaceable a lot of men he may have found his crew to be before, one monkey passenger is almost sure to be the fountain and origin of many fights after his advent. The things that monkeys will do on board ship are almost beyond belief. One instance may be noted where a monkey in a ship named the *Dartmouth* gave signal proof of his reasoning powers. He was a little black fellow from Sumatra, and from the time of his coming on board had seemed homesick, playing but few tricks, and only submitting passively to the petting he received. Passing through Sunda Straits he sat upon the forecastle

head looking wistfully at the distant land with quite a dejected pose of body. As we drew near the town of Anjer (it was before the awful convulsion of Krakatoa) he suddenly seemed to make up his mind, and springing up he covered his face with his hands and leapt shoreward. We were only going about two knots an hour, happily for him. He struck out vigorously for the shore, but suddenly realised the magnitude of his task apparently, for he turned sharply round and swam back. One of the officers threw him the end of the main-topsail brace, which he grasped and nimbly climbed on board, a wiser monkey. Thenceforward his behaviour was quite cheerful and tricky, until his lamented demise from a chill caught off the Cape. Goats, again, are great favourites on board ship, when they have been taught to let the running gear alone. But their inveterate habit of gnawing everything largely discounts their amiability. The pretty little mongoose, too, until he begins to fraternise with his natural enemies, the rats, is a most pleasant companion, full of play, and cleanly of habit. So is the musk-deer, but it is so delicate that few indeed of them reach home that are bought by sailors among the islands of the East Indian Archipelago. The same fate overtakes most of the birds, except canaries, that sailors buy abroad, and teach on the passage home no end of tricks. Yet deeply as these exotic pets are loved by forecastle Jack, and great as is the pleasure he undoubtedly derives from them, the majority of them fall into the hands of Jamrach and Cross, or other keen dealers in foreign birds and beasts, when the ship reaches home. For it is seldom poor Jack has a home whereto he may bring his pets.

THE SURVIVORS

Evening was just closing in, heralded by that indescribable feeling of refreshment in the torrid air always experienced at sea near the Equator when the sun is about to disappear. The men in the “crow’s nests” were anxiously watching the declining orb, whose disappearance would be the signal for their release from their tedious watch. But to the chagrin of every foremast hand, before the sun had quite reached the horizon, the officer up at the mainmast head, taking a final comprehensive sweep with his glasses all around, raised the thrilling cry of “Blo—o—o—o—w.” And despite the lateness of the hour, in less than ten minutes four boats were being strenuously driven in the direction of the just-sighted whale. Forgetting for awhile their discontent at the prospect before them, the crews toiled vigorously to reach their objective, although not a man of them but would have rejoiced to lose sight of him. It was not so to be. At another time he would probably have been startled by the clang of the oars as they turned in the rowlocks, but now he seemed to have lost his powers of apprehension, allowing us to come up with him and harpoon him with comparative ease. The moment that he felt the prick of the keen iron, all his slothfulness seemed to vanish, and without giving one of the other boats a chance to get fast also, he milled round to windward, and exerting all his vast strength, rushed off into the night that came up to meet us like the opening of some dim portal into the unknown. Some little time was consumed in our preparations for the next stage of our proceedings, during which the darkness came down upon us and shut us in with our prey, blotting out our ship and the other boats from the stunted horizon left to us, as if they had never been. By some oversight no compass was in our boat, and, a rare occurrence in those latitudes, the sky was overcast so that we could not see the stars. Also there was but little wind, our swift transit at the will of the whale alone being responsible for the breeze we felt. On, on we went in silence except for the roar of the parted waters on either hand, and unable to see anything but the spectral gleam ahead whenever the great mammal broke water to spout. Presently the headlong rush through the gloom began to tell upon everybody’s nerves, and we hoped, almost prayed for a slackening of the relentless speed kept up by the monster we had fastened ourselves to. The only man who appeared unmoved was the second mate, who was in charge. He stood in the bows as if carved in stone, one hand grasping his long lance and the other resting on his hip, a stern figure whose only sign of life was his unconscious balancing to the lively motion of the boat. Always a mystery to us of the crew,

he seemed much more so now, his inscrutable figure dimly blotched against the gloom ahead, and all our lives in his hand. For a year we had been in daily intercourse with him, yet we felt that we knew no more of the man himself than on the first day of our meeting. A strong, silent man, who never cursed us as the others did, because his lightest word carried more weight than their torrents of blasphemy, and withal a man who came as near the seaman's ideal of courage, resourcefulness, and tenacity as we could conceive possible. Again and again, as we sped onwards through the dark, each of us after his own fashion analysed that man's character in a weary purposeless round of confused thought, through the haze of which shot with dread persistence the lurid phrase, "a lost boat." How long we had thus been driving blindly on none of us could tell—no doubt the time appeared enormously prolonged—but when at last the ease-up came we were all stiff with our long constraint of position. All, that is, but Mr. Neville our chief, who, as if in broad day within a mile of the ship, gave all the necessary orders for the attack. Again we were baffled, for in spite of his unprecedented run the whale began to sound. Down, down he went in hasteless determined fashion, never pausing for an instant, though we kept all the strain on the line that was possible, until the last flake of our 300 fathoms left the tub, slithered through the harpooner's fingers round the loggerhead, and disappeared. Up flew the boat's head with a shock that sent us all flying in different directions, then all was silent. Only for a minute. The calm grave tones of Mr. Neville broke the spell by saying, "Make yourselves as comfortable as you can, lads, we can do nothing till daylight but watch for the ship." We made an almost whispered response, and began our watch. But it was like trying to peer through the walls of an unlit cellar, so closely did the darkness hem us in. Presently down came the rain, followed by much wind, until, notwithstanding the latitude, our teeth chattered with cold. Of course we were in no danger from the sea, for except in the rare hurricanes there is seldom any wind in those regions rising to the force of a gale. But the night was very long. Nor did our miserable anticipations tend to make our hard lot any easier.

So low did we feel that when at last the day dawned we could not fully appreciate the significance of that heavenly sight. As the darkness fled, however, hope revived, and eager eyes searched every portion of the gradually lightening ring of blue of which we were the tiny centre. Slowly, fatefully, the fact was driven home to our hearts that what we had feared was come to pass; the ship was nowhere to be seen. More than that, we all knew that in that most unfrequented stretch of ocean months might pass without signs of vessel of any kind. There were six pounds of biscuits in one keg and three gallons of water in

another, sufficient perhaps at utmost need to keep the six of us alive for a week. We looked in one another's faces and saw the fear of death plainly inscribed; we looked at Mr. Neville's face and were strengthened. Speaking in his usual tones, but with a curiously deeper inflexion in them, he gave orders for the sail to be set, and making an approximate course by the sun, we steered to the N.W. Even the consolation of movement was soon denied us, for as the sun rose the wind sank, the sky overhead cleared and the sea glazed. A biscuit each and half-a-pint of water was served out to us and we made our first meal, not without secretly endeavouring to calculate how many more still remained to us. At Mr. Neville's suggestion we sheltered ourselves as much as possible from the fierce glare of the sun, and to keep off thirst poured sea-water over one another at frequent intervals. Our worst trial for the present was inaction, for a feverish desire to be doing—something—no matter what, kept our nerves twitching and tingling so that it was all we could do to keep still.

After an hour or two of almost unbroken silence Mr. Neville spoke, huskily at first, but as he went on his voice rang mellow and vibrant. "My lads," he said, "such a position as ours has been occupied many times in the history of the sea, as you all well know. Of the scenes that have taken place when men are brought by circumstances like these down from their high position in the scale of Creation to the level of unreasoning animals, we need not speak; unhappily such tragedies are too clearly present in the thoughts of every one of us. But in the course of my life I have many times considered the possibilities of some day being thus situated, and have earnestly endeavoured to prepare myself for whatever it had in store for me. We are all alike here, for the artificial differences that obtain in the ordinary affairs of life have dropped away from us, leaving us on the original plane of fellow-men. And my one hope is, that although we be of different nationalities, and still more widely different temperaments, we may all remember that so long as we wrestle manfully with the beast that is crouching in every one of us, we may go, if we must go, without shame before our God. For consider how many of those who are safe on shore this day are groaning under a burden of life too heavy to be borne, how many are seeking a refuge from themselves by the most painful byways to death. I am persuaded, and so are all of you, if you give it a thought, that death itself is no evil; the anticipation of pain accompanying death is a malady of the mind harder to bear by many degrees than physical torture. What I dread is not the fact of having to die, although I love the warm light, the glorious beauty of this world as much as a man may, but that I may forget what I am, and disgrace my manhood by letting myself slip back into the slough from which it has taken so many ages to raise

me. Don't let us lose hope, although we need not expect a miracle, but let each of us help the other to be a man. The fight will be fierce but not long, and when it is won, although we may all live many days after we shall not suffer. Another thing, perhaps some of you don't believe in any God, others believe mistily in they know not what. For my part I believe in a Father-God from whom we came and to whom we go. And I so think of Him that I am sure He will do even for an atom like me that which is not only best for me but best for the whole race of mankind as represented in me. He will neither be cruel nor forget. Only I must endeavour to use the powers of mind and body He has given me to the best advantage now that their testing-time has come."

With eyes that never left that calm strong face we all hung upon his words as if we were absorbing in some mysterious way from them courage to endure. Of the five of us, two were Scandinavians, a Swede and a Dane, one, the harpooner, was an American negro, one was a Scotchman, and myself, an Englishman. Mr. Neville himself was an American of old Puritan stock. When he left speaking there was utter silence, so that each could almost hear the beating of the other's heart. But in that silence every man of us felt the armour of a high resolve encasing him, an exalting courage uplifting him, and making his face to shine.

Again the voice of our friend broke the stillness, this time in a stately song that none of us had ever heard before, "O rest in the Lord!" From thenceforward he sang almost continually, even when his lips grew parched with drought, although each of us tendered him some of our scanty measure of water so that he might still cheer us. Insensibly we leant upon him as the time dragged on, for we felt that he was a very tower of strength to us. Five days and nights crept away without any sign of change. Patience had become a habit with us, and the scanty allowance of food and drink had so reduced our vitality that we scarcely felt any pain. Indeed the first two days were the worst. And now the doles became crumbs and drops, yet still no anger, or peevishness even, showed itself. We could still smile sanely and look upon each other kindly. Then a heavy downpour of rain filled our water-breaker for us, giving us in the meantime some copious draughts, which, although they were exquisitely refreshing at the time, racked us with excruciating pains afterwards. The last crumb went, and did not worry us by its going, for we had arrived by easy stages at a physical and mental condition of acquiescence in the steady approach of death that almost amounted to indifference. With a strange exception; hearing and sight were most acute, and thought was busy about a multitude of things, some of them the pettiest and most trivial that could be imagined, and others of the most tremendous import. Speech

was difficult, impossible to some, but on the whole we must have felt somewhat akin to the Hindu devotees who withdraw themselves from mankind and endeavour to reduce the gross hamperings of the flesh until they can enter into the conception of the unseen verities that are about us on every side. What the mental wrestlings of the others may have been they only knew; but to outward seeming we had all been gently gliding down into peace.

The end drew near. Nothing occurred to stay its approach. No bird or fish came near enough to be caught until we were all past making an effort had one been needed. We had lost count of time, so that I cannot say how long our solitude had lasted, when one brilliant night as I lay in a state of semi-consciousness, looking up into the glittering dome above, I felt a hand touch me. Slowly I turned my head, and saw the face of the negro-harpooner, who lay by my side. I dragged my heavy head close to his and heard him whisper, "I'm a goin' an I'm glad. What he said wuz true. It's as easy as goin' ter sleep. So long." And he went. What passed thereafter I do not know, for as peacefully as a tired man settles himself down into the cosy embrace of a comfortable bed, heaving a sigh of utter content as the embracing rest relaxes the tension of muscles and brain, I too slipped down into dreamless slumber.

I awoke in bitter pain, gnawing aches that left no inch of my body unwrung. And my first taste of life's return gave me a fierce feeling of resentment that it would all have to be gone through again. I felt no gratitude for life spared. That very night of my last consciousness the whaler that rescued us must have been within a few miles, for when we were sighted from her crow's-nest at daybreak we were so near that they could distinguish the bodies without glasses. There were only three of us still alive, the fortunate ones who had gone to their rest being Mr. Neville, the harpooner, and the Swede. The rescuers said that except for the emaciated condition of our bodies we all looked like sleepers. There were no signs of pain or struggle. It was nearly two months before we who had thus been brought back to a life of care and toil were able to resume it, owing to our long cramped position as much as to our lack of strength. I believe, too, that we were very slow in regaining that natural will-to-live which is part of the animal equipment, and so necessary to keep off the constant advances of death. And, like me, my companions both felt that they could not be grateful for being dragged back to life again.

BENEATH THE SURFACE

While the whaler to which I belonged was lying at Honolulu I one day went ashore for a long ramble out of sight and hearing of the numerous questionable amusements of the town, and late in the afternoon found myself several miles to the southward of it. Emerging from the tangled pathway through which I had been struggling with the luxuriant greenery, I struck the sand of a lovely little bight that commanded an uninterrupted view to seaward. Less than a mile out a reef of black rocks occasionally bared their ugly fangs for a brief space amidst the sleek waters, until the sleepily advancing swell, finding its progress thus hindered, rose high over their grim summits in a league-long fleece of dazzling foam, whose spray glittered like jewels in the diagonal rays of the declining sun.

Upon a little knoll left by the receding tide sat a man staring stolidly out to sea. As I drew near, my approach making no noise upon the yielding sand, I saw that he was white. By his rig—a shirt and trousers, big grass hat, and bare feet—I took him for a beach-comber. These characters are not often desirable companions—human weeds cast ashore in such places, and getting a precarious living in dark and devious ways without work. But I felt inclined for company and a rest after my long tramp, so I made for him direct. He raised his head at my nearing him, showing a grizzled beard framing a weather-beaten face as of a man some sixty years old. There was a peculiar, *boiled* look about his face, too, as if he had once been drowned, by no means pleasant to see.

He gave me “Good evening!” cheerfully enough as I sat down beside him and offered my plug of tobacco. Cutting himself a liberal quid, he returned it with the query, “B’long ter wun er the spouters, I persoom?” “Yes,” I replied; “boat-header in the *Cachalot*.” “Ah,” he replied instantly, “but yew’re no Yank, neow, air ye?” “No, I’m a Cockney—little as you may think *that* likely,” said I; “but it’s a fact.” “Wall, I don’no,” he drawled, “I’ve a-met Cockneys good’s I want ter know; ’n’ why not?”

The conversation then drifted desultorily from topic to topic in an aimless, time-killing fashion, till at last, feeling better acquainted, I ventured to ask him what had given him that glazy, soaked appearance, so strange and ghastly to see. “Look a-heah, young feller,” said he abruptly, “heouw old je reckon I mout be?” Without the slightest hesitation I replied, “Sixty, or thereabouts.” He gave a

quiet chuckle, and then said slowly, “Wall, I doan’ blame ye, nuther; ’n’ as to feelin’—wall, sumtimes I feel ’s if I’d ben a-livin’ right on frum the beginnin’ ov things. My age, which ’s about the one solid fact I kin freeze onter now’ days, is thutty-two. Yew won’t b’lieve it, of course; but thet’s nothin’ ter what ye *will* hear, ef yew wait awhile.

“What I’m goin’ ter tell ye happened—lemme see—wall, I doan’ no—mebbe two, mebbe four er five year sence. I wuz mate of a pearlin’ schooner b’longin’ ter Levuka, lyin’ daouwn to Rotumah. Ware we’d ben workin’ the reef wuz middlin’ deep—deep ’nuf ter make eour b’ys fall on deck when they come up with a load, ’n’ lie there like dead uns fer ’bout ten minnits befo’ they k’d move ag’in. ’Twuz slaughterin’ divin’; but the shell wuz thick, ’n’ no mistake; ’n’ eour ole man wuz a hustler—s’long’s he got shell he didn’t vally a few dern Kanakers peggin’ eout neow ’n’ then. We’d alost three with sharks, ’n’ ef ’twan’t thet th’ b’ys wuz more skeered of old Hardhead than they wuz of anythin’ else I doan reckon we sh’d a-got any more stuff thet trip ’t all. But ’z he warn’t the kind er blossom to play any games on, they kep’ at it, ’n’ we ’uz fillin’ up fast. The land was ’bout ten mile off, ’n’ they wuz ’bout fifty, er mebbe sixty fathom water b’tween the reef we wuz fishin’ on ’n’ the neares’ p’int. Wall, long ’bout eight bells in the afternoon I uz a-stannin’ by the galley door watchin’ a Kanaker crawlin’ inboard very slow, bein’ ’most done up. Five er six ov ’em uz hangin’ roun’ ’bout ter start below agen, ’n’ th’ ole man uz a-blarsfemion gashly at ’em fer bein’ so slow. Right in the middle of his sermont I seed ’im go green in the face, ’n’ make a step back from the rail, with both hans helt up in front ov ’im ’s if he uz skeered ’most ter de’th. ’N’ he wuz, too. There cum lickin’ inboard after him a long grey slitherin’ thing like a snake ’ith no head but a lot uv saucers stuck onto it bottom up. ’N’ befo’ I’d time ter move, bein’ ’most sort er paralised, several more ov the dern things uz a-sneakin’ around all over the deck. The fust one got the skipper good ’n’ tight ’ith a round turn above his arms, ’n’ I saw him a-slidin’ away. The schooner wuz a-rollin’ ’s if in a big swell—which there warn’t a sign of, ’s I c’d see. But them snaky grey things went quicker ’n’ thinkin’ all over her, ’n’ befo’ yew c’d say ‘knife’ every galoot, includin’ me, wuz agoin’ ’long with ’em back to where they’d come from.

“Say, d’yew ever wake up all alive, ’cep’ yew couldn’ move ner speak, only know all wuts goin’ on, ’n’ do the pow’flest thinkin’ ’bout things yew ever did in yer life? Yes, ’n’ that’s haow I wuz then. When thet cold gristly sarpint cum cuddlin’ roun’ me, ’n’ the saucers got onto me ’s if they’d suck out me very bow’ls, I’d a gi’n Mount Morgan ter died; but I couldn’t ev’n go mad. I saw the

head ov the lining them arms D long a ter, 'n 'twuz wuss 'n the horrors, 'cause I wuz sane 'n' cool 'n' collected. The eyes wuz black, 'n' a foot or more across, 'n' when I looked into 'em I see meself a-comin'."

He was silent for a minute, but shaking as if with palsy. I laid my hand on his arm, not knowing what to say, and he looked up wistfully, saying, "Thenks, shipmate; thet's good." Then he went on again.

"The whole thing went back'ards, takin' us along; 'n I remember thinkin' ez we went of the other Kanakers below thet hedn't come back. I he'rd the bubbles 's each of us left the sunshine, but never a cry, never another soun'. The las' thing I remember seein' 'bove me wuz th' end of the schooner's mainboom, which wuz guyed out to larberd some, 'n' looked like a big arm struck stiff an' helpless, though wishful to save. Down I went, that clingin' snaky coil round me tighter 'n my skin. But wut wuz strangest ter me wuz the fact that not only I didn't drown, but I felt no sort er inconvenience frum bein' below the water. 'N' at last when I reached the coral, though I dessay I looked corpse enough, 'twuz only my looks, fur I felt, lackin' my not bein' able ter move, breathe, er speak, ez peart 'n' fresh ez I dew naow. The clutch thet hed ben squeezin' me so all-fired tight begun to slack, 'n' I felt more comf'ble; 'n' ef 't 'adn't ben fer the reck'lection uv them eyes 'n' thet berryin'-groun' ov a mouth, I doan'no but wut I might ha' been a'most happy. But I lay thar, with the rest uv my late shipmates, sort er ready fer consumpshun, like the flies in the corner of a spider's web; 'n' thet guv me a pow'ful heap ov a bad time.

"After a while the quiet of the place begun ter breed strange noshuns in my hed—jest like 's if I wuz dreamin', though wide awake 's ever I wuz in all my life. I jest 'peared to be 'way back at the beginnin' uv things, befo' they wuz anythin' else but water, 'n' wut life there wuz in them early days hed ter dew 'ithout air er sun er light. I'd read the Bible some—not ter say frequent, 'n', bein' but a poor skollar, Jennersez wuz 'bout 's fur 's I got. But onct a Blue-nose I uz shipmates with wuz pow'ful fond uv one er the Bible yarns he called the Book of Jobe, 'n' he use' ter read thet off ter me 'twell I nearly got it through my he'd solid. Anyway, much ov it kem back ter me neow—bits 'beout the foundayshons ov the world, 'n' the boun's ov the sea, 'n' suchlike.

"'N' all the time overright me in the mouth ov a gret cave, with them res'less thutty-foot feelers ever a-twistin' 'n' wrigglin' aroun', wuz the Thing itself, them awful eyes jest a-showin', like moons made ov polished jet, in the dimness. Some ov my shipmates wuz gone, the skipper among 'em; but some, like me,

wuz layin' quiet 'n' straight; while all about us the fish, ov every shape 'n' size, wuz a-gliden' slow 'n' stealthy, like as if ever on the watch 'gainst some enemy er anuther.

"It seemed so long I laid thar thet I felt able to remember every bush 'n' bough ov coral, every boulder, that in queerest shapes yew ever see lay scattered aroun'. At last, never havin' quite los' sight of thet horrible ungodly Thing in the cave yander, I see It kem eout. I never knowed thar wuz a God till then. Sence thet time, whenever I hear some mouthy critter *provin'* ez he calls it, poor child! thet ther ain't, 'n' cain't be, any God, I feel thet sorry fer him I c'd jest sail right in 'n' lam the foggy blether out'n his fool-skull. But ez I wuz a-sayin, eout kem the Thing till I see the hull gret carcass ov It, bigger 'n the bigges' sparm whale I ever see, jest a haulin' 'n' a warpin' along by them wanderin' arms over the hills 'n' hallers ov the reef t'ords me. It floated between me 'n' wut light ther wuz, which wuz suthin' ter be thankful fer, fer I'd a gi'n my life ter be able to shet my eyes from it 'n' wut wuz comin'. It hung right over me, 'n' I felt the clingin' suckers closin' all aroun' me, when all of a sudden they left me ag'in. The gret black shadder moved ter one side 'n' daown through that clear water cum a sparm whale, graceful 'n' easy's an albacore. I never thought much of old squar'head's looks before, but I'm tellin' ye, *then* he looked like a shore-nough angel 'longside thet frightful crawlin' clammy bundle of sea sarpients.

"But I hedn't much time ter reflec', fer thet whale had come on bizness, 'n' ther wa'n't any percrastinatin' 'bout him. When he got putty cluss up to the Thing that wuz backin' oneasily away, he sorter rounded to like a boat comin' 'longside, only 'sted ov comin' roun' he come over, clar he'd over flukes. His jaw wuz hangin' daown baout twenty foot with all the big teeth a shinin', 'n' next I knew he'd got thet gol-durned Thing in his mouth with a grip right behin' them awful Eyes. Roun' come the tangle of arms like the sails of a windmill lacin', clutchin', tearin' at the whale's head. But they might so well hev hugged the Solander Rock. It made no sorter diffrunce ter him, 'n' his jaw kep' on workin' fer all it wuz worth a-sawin' off the tremenjus he'd of the Thing. Then the light went eout. My gosh! thet water wuz jest turned inter ink, 'n' though yew c'd feel the sway 'n' swirl ov thet gret struggle like the screw race ov some big liner ther wa'n't nothin' ter be seen. So I reckon the Thing I'd been puzzlin' ter fine a name fer wuz jest the Gret Mogul ov all the cuttle-fish, 'n' bein' kinder hard prest wuz a-sheddin' the hull contents ov his ink-tank.

"Wall, I wuz sorter int'rested in this mush 'n' very much wanted ter see it

through, but thet satisfacshun wuz denied me. All the churnin' 'n' thrashin' went on jest above me in pitch-dark 'n' grave-quiet. Bimeby the water ceased to bile aroun' 'n' got clearer, till after a while I c'd see gret shadders above movin' swiffly. The sea took on another colour quite familiar ter me, sorter yaller, a mixin' ov red 'n' blue. Funniest thing wuz the carm way I wuz a takin' ov it all, jest like a man lookin' out'n a b'loon at a big fight, er a spectayter in a g'lanty show hevin' no pusnal concern in the matter 't all. Presently sneakin along comes a white streak cluss ter me. Long befo' it touched me I knew it fer wut it wuz, 'n' then I wuz in de'dly fear less the hope uv life after all sh'd rouse me eout uv thish yer trance or whatever it wuz. 'Twuz a whale-line frum some whaleship's boat a-fishin' overhe'd. It kem right to me. It teched me 'n' I felt 's'if I must come to 'n' die right there 'n' then. But it swep' right under me, 'n' then settled daown coil after coil till I wuz fair snarled erp in it. By this time the water'd got so soupy thet I could'n' see nothin', but 'twa'n't long befo' I felt myself a-risin'—eout uv the belly uv Hell ez Jonah sez.

“Up I kem at a good lick till all uv a sudden I sees God's light, smells His air, 'n' hears voices uv men. Gosh, but wa'n't they gallied when they see me. Blame ef I did'n' half think they'd lemme go ag'in. The fust one ter git his brains ter work wuz the bow oarsman, a nigger, who leaned over the gunnel, his face greeny-grey with fright, 'n' grabbed me by the hair. Thet roused the rest, 'n' I wuz hauled in like a whiz. Then their tongues got ter waggin', 'n' yew never heard so many fool things said in five minutes outside er Congress.

“It didn' seem ter strike any ov 'em thet I moun't be so very dead after all, though fortnitly fer me they conclooded ter take me aboard with 'em. So I laid thar in the bottom ov the boat while they finished haulin' line. Ther wuz a clumsy feller among 'em thet made a slip, hittin' me an ugly welt on the nose as he wuz fallin'. Nobody took any notice till presently one ov 'em hollers, ‘Why dog my cats ef thet corpse ain't got a nosebleed.’ This startled 'em all, fer I never met a galoot so loony ez ter think a de'd man c'd bleed. Hows'ever they jest lit eout fer the ship like sixty 'n' h'isted me aboard. 'Twuz er long time befo' they got my works a-tickin' ag'in, but they done it at last, 'n' once more I wuz a livin' man amon' livin' men.

“Naow ov course yew doan' b'lieve my yarn—yew cain't, tain't in nacher, but, young feller, thar's an all-fired heap o' things in the world that cain't be beleft in till yew've 'speriunced 'em yerself thet 's trew's gospel fer all thet.”

I politely deprecated his assumption of my disbelief in his yarn but my face

I politely deprecated his assumption of my absence in his yam, but my face belied me, I know; so, bidding him "S'long" with a parting present of my plug of tobacco (it was all I had to give), I left him and by the failing light made all speed I could back to my ship.

BY WAY OF AMENDS

Hans Neilsen was a big Dane, with a great wave of blond beard blowing from just below his pale blue eyes, and a leonine head covered with a straw-coloured mane. Although he was a giant in stature he was not what you would call a fine figure of a man, for he was round-shouldered and loosely jointed. And besides these things he had a shambling, undecided gait and a furtive side-long glance, ever apparently searching for a potential foe. Yet with all his peculiarities I loved him, I never knew why. Perhaps it was the unfailing instinct of a child—I was scarcely more—for people whose hearts are kind. He was an A.B. on board of a lumbering old American-built ship owned in Liverpool and presently bound thence to Batavia. I was “the boy”—that is to say, any job that a man could possibly growl himself out of or shirk in any way rapidly filtered down to me, mine by sea-right. And in my leisure I had the doubtful privilege of being body servant to eighteen men of mixed nationalities and a never-satisfied budget of wants. Of course she wasn’t as bad as a Geordie collier, the old *Tucson*. I didn’t get booted about the head for every little thing, nor was I ever aroused out of a dead sleep to hand a fellow a drink of water who was sitting on the breaker. Nevertheless, being nobody’s especial fancy and fully conscious of my inability to take my own part, I was certainly no pampered menial.

They were a queer lot, those fellows. Nothing strange in that, of course, so far, remembering how ships’ crews are made up nowadays, but these were queer beyond the average. In the first place no two of them were countrymen. There were representatives of countries I had till then been ignorant of. The “boss” of the fo’c’s’le was a huge Montenegrin, who looked to my excited fancy like a bandit chief, and used to talk in the worst-sounding lingo I ever heard with Giuseppe from Trieste and Antone from Patras. Louis Didelot, a nimble black-avised little *matelot* from Nantes, was worst off for communication with his shipmates, not one of whom could speak French, but somehow he managed to rub along with a barbarous compound of French, Spanish, and English. Neilsen chummed, as far as an occasional chat went, with a swarthy little Norwegian from Hammerfest (I believe he was a Lapp), whose language did not seem to differ much from Danish. The rest of the crew were made up of negroes from various far-sundered lands, South American hybrids including one pure-blooded Mexican with a skin like copper, a Russian and two Malays. That fo’c’s’le was Babel over again, although in some strange manner all seemed to find some

sufficient medium for making themselves understood. On deck of course English (?) was spoken, but such English as would puzzle the acutest linguist that ever lived if he wasn't a sailor-man too. Nothing could have borne more conclusive testimony to the flexibility of our noble tongue than the way in which the business of that ship was carried on without any hitch by those British officers and their polyglot crew. And another thing—there were no rows. I have said that Sam the Montenegrin (Heaven only knows what his name really was) was the boss of the fo'c's'le, but he certainly took no advantage of his tacitly accorded position, and except for the maddening mixture of languages our quarters were as quiet as any well-regulated household.

But as long as I live I shall always believe that most, if not all, of our fellows were fugitives from justice, criminals of every stamp, and owing to the accident of their being thus thrown together in an easy-going English ship they were just enjoying a little off-season of rest prior to resuming operations in their respective departments when the voyage was over. I may be doing them an injustice, but as I picked up fragments of the various languages I heard many strange things, which, when I averaged them up, drove me to the conclusion I have stated. From none of them, however, did I get anything definite in the way of information about their past except Neilsen. He spoke excellent English, or American, with hardly a trace of Scandinavian accent, and often, when sitting alone in the dusk of the second dog-watch on the spars lashed along by the bulwarks, I used to hear him muttering to himself in that tongue, every now and then giving vent to a short barking laugh of scorn. I was long getting into his confidence, for he shrank from all society, preferring to squat with his chin supported on both hands staring at vacancy and keeping up an incessant muttering. But at last the many little attentions I managed to show him thawed his attitude of reserve towards me a little, and he permitted me to sit by his side and prattle to him of my Arab life in London, and of my queer experiences in the various ways of getting something to eat before I went to sea. Even then he would often scare me just as I was in the middle of a yarn by throwing up his head and uttering his bark of disdain, following it up immediately by leaving me. Still I couldn't be frightened of him, although I felt certain he was a little mad, and I persevered, taking no notice of his eccentricities. At last we became great friends, and he would talk to me sanely by the hour, when during the stillness of the shining night-watches all our shipmates, except the helmsman and look-out man, were curled up in various corners asleep.

So matters progressed until we were half-way up the Indian Ocean from St.

Paul's. One night in the middle watch I happened to say (in what connection I don't know), "It's my birthday to-day. I'm thirteen." "Why, what day is it den?" he said listlessly. "The 25th of June," I replied. "My God! my God!" he murmured softly, burying his face in his hands and trembling violently. I was so badly scared I could say nothing for a few minutes, but sat wondering whether the moon, which was literally blazing down upon us out of the intense clearness above, had affected his weak brain. Presently he seemed to get steadier, and I ventured to touch his arm and say, "Ain't you well, Neilsen? Can I get you anythin'?" There was silence for another short spell. Then he suddenly lifted his head, and said, not looking at me, but straight before him, "Yes, I vill tell him. I must tell him." Then, still without looking at me, he went on—"Boy, I'm goin' t' tell ye a yarn about myself, somethin' happened to me long time ago. Me an' my chum, a little Scotch chap, was 'fore de mast aboard of a Yank we'd shipped in in Liverpool. She wuz a reg'lar blood-boat. You've herd o' de kind, I 'spose, no watch an' watch all day, everythin' polished 'n painted till you c'd see y'r face in it 'low and aloft. Ole man 'n three mates alwas pradin' roun' 'ith one han' on their pistol pockets 'n never a 'norder give widout a 'Gaw-dam-ye' to ram it down like. I tell ye wot 'tis; sailors offen tawk 'bout hell erflote, but der ain't menny off 'em knows wot it means, leest not nowadays. I've sailed in de packets, the Westerun oshun boats I mean, under some toughs, 'fore steam run 'em off, an' I 'low dey wuz hard—forrard's well's aft—but, boy, dey wuz church, dey wuz dat, 'longside the '*Zekiel B. Peck*. W'y! dey tort nuttin', nuttin' tall, ov scurfin' ye way frum de wheel, you a doin' yer damdest too, ter pint her troo d' eye ov a needle, 'n lammin' th' very Gawdfergotten soul out ov yer jest ter keep der 'and in like. I wuz a dam site biggern dose days den I am now, fur I wuz straight ez a spruce tree 'n limber too, I wuz; but I got my 'lowance reglar 'n took it lyin' down too like de rest. 'N so I s'pose 'twoud a gone on till we got to 'Frisco an' de blood-money men come and kicked us out ov her as ushal. Only suthin' happend. Seems ter me suthin's alwas a happenin' wot ye ain't recknd on, but sum things happen like 's if de devil jammed a crowbar inter ye somewheres 'n hove de bes' part of ye inter hell wile de rest ov ye goes a grubbin' along everlastingly lookin' fer wot ye lost an' never findin' it. Well, 'twuz like dis; we wuz a creepin' along up de coast ov Lower California, de weadder bein' beastly, nuttin' but one heavy squall on top of anoder, 'n de wind a flyin' all round de compass. It wuz all han's, all han's night'n day, wid boot 'n blayin' pin ter cheer us up, till we wuz more like a crowd o' frightend long-shoremen dan a crew o' good sailor-men. One forenoon, 'bout seven bells, we'd ben a shortenin' down at de main 'n wuz all a comin' down helter-skelter, de mate n' tird mate standin' by in the skuppers as ushal to belt each man as he

touched de deck fer not bein' smarter. I come slidin' down de topmast backstays 'n dropped on to de deck jest be'ind de mate as Scotty, my chum, landed in front ov him. De mate jest let out and fetched Scotty in the ear. Pore ole chap, he flung up his arms, 'n spoutin' blood like a whale, dropped all ov a heap in his tracks. I don't rightly know how 'twuz, but next ting I'd got de mate ('n he wuz nearly as big as Sam) by de two ankles, a swingin' him roun' my head 'sif he wuz a capsan-bar. He hit sometin', I spose it wuz de topsl-halliard block, 'n it sounded like a bag ov eggs. De rest ov de purceedins wuz all foggy like to me, 'cept dat I was feelin' 'bout as big 'n strong as twenty men rolled inter one 'n I seemed ter be a smashin' all creation into bloody pieces. I herd de poppin' ov revolver shots in hunderds, but I didn't feel none ov 'em. Presently it all quieted down 'n dere wuz me a settin' on de deck in de wash ov de lee scuppers a nursin' Scotty like a baby 'n him a lookin' up at me silly-like. The ship was all aback an de rags ov most ov the canvas wuz slattin' 'n treshin' like bullock whips, while long pennants of canvas clung to de riggin' all over her. I put Scotty down 'n gets up on my feet to hev a look roun'. De deck was like a Saladero, dead bodies a lyin' about in all directions. Seein' Scotty standin' up holdin' on ter de pin-rail I sez to him, 'Scotty, what in hell's de matter, hev we ben struck by lighntnin'?' He jest waggled his head 'sif he wuz drunk 'n sez, 'Yes, chum, I guess we hev. Ennyhow I'm glad ter see it's hit de right ones.' 'N den he laughed. 'Sounded like breakin' dishes it did.' Well, I begun to git scared 'cause I couldn't sort it out at all, until some ov de other fellers come from somewhere, 'n we sot down along de spars while dey told me, all de while keepin' deir eyes on me, 'n lookin' 's if dey wuz ready to git up and scoot if I moved. It 'peared I'd simply sailed in 'sif I'd ben made of iron, 'n slaughtered dem officers right an' left with nottin' but me bare hands 'n takin' no more notice of deir six-shooters dan if dey'd ben pea-guns. I wonderd wot made me feel so stiff an' sore here and dere, seems I'd got two or tree bullets plugged inter me while we wuz playin' de game. 'N right in de dick of it, down comes a reglar hurrikin squall ketchin' her flat aback 'n rippin de kites offn her 'sif dey wuz paper. Most o' de fellers, seein' de hand I had, chipped in, 'n two ov em laid quiet 'longside ov de der corpses. It wuz a reglar clean sweep. All tree mates, carpenter, and stooard, *an'* de ole man, blast him, wuz dead, 'n dey said I'd killed em all. Well, I cou'dn't conterdict em, but somehow I didn't feel s'if 'twas true, I didn't feel bothered a bit about it, 'n as ter feelin' sorry—why I wuz just as contented as a hog in a corn-bin. But sometin' had ter be done fer we none of us tought de late officers ov de '*Zekiel B. Peck* wort hangin' fur, so we made shift to run her in fur de land, due East. When we got widin twenty mile ov it we pervisioned a couple ov boats an' set fire to her, waitin' till she got well a goin', 'n den lowerin 'n pullin'

fur de beach. We didn't take nuttin' but some grub, dere warnt a pirut among us, an we 'ranged ter separate soon's we got ashore, after we'd smashed de boats up. It come off all right, 'n me and Scotty wandered up country till we got steady work on a ranch (sort o' farm) an' we 'lowed we wouldn't never go to sea no more. We wuz very happy for 'bout a year until Scotty begun ter weaken on me. He'd picked up wid some gal at a place a few mile off 'n I wuz out of it. He useter leave me alone night after night, knowin' he wuz all de world ter me, knowin' too det I'd gin a good many men's blood fer his'n. Last we fell out, 'n after a many words 'd been slung between us, he upn and call me a bloody murderer. 'Twuz all over in a second, 'n I wuz nussin' him in my arms agen like I did once before, but his head hung over limp, his neck wuz broke. 'N I ben talkin' to him ever sence 'n tellin' him how I'd gin forty lives ef I had'm ter see him chummy wit me agen, but I never get no answer."

He stopped, and almost immediately "eight bells" struck. I went below and slept my allotted time, waking at the hoarse row of "Now then you sleepers, seven bells," to get the breakfast in. The morning passed in humdrum fashion, the wind having dropped to almost a dead calm. After dinner I was looking over the side at the lovely cool depths smiling beneath, and the fancy suddenly seized me to have a dip, as I had often done before, although never in that ship. I could swim, but very little, so I made a bowline in the end of a rope, and making it fast so that about a couple of fathoms would trail in the water, I stripped in the chains, slipped the bowline over my head and under my arms, and slid down into the sea. It was just heavenly. But I found the ship was slipping along through the water just a little. So much the better. Putting my left arm out like an oar I sheered away from the side until the rope that held me was out straight, and there was a wide gap of blue between me and the black hull of the ship. I was enjoying myself in perfect fashion when suddenly I saw a huge black shadow stealing upward from under the ship's bottom towards me, and immediately, my bowels boiling with fear, I lost all my strength, my arms flew up and I slipped out of the loop. I heard a splash, and close beside me an awful struggle began while I lay in full possession of all my senses, just floating without motion. Neilsen had sprung into the sea and seized the shark by the tail, being all unarmed. Suddenly I felt the coils of a rope fall upon me, and with a sense of returning life I clutched them, and was presently hauled on board. I must have fainted, for when I again realised my surroundings Neilsen was lying on deck near me, a wide red stream creeping slowly down from him to the scuppers. Opening his eyes as I staggered to my feet, he said feebly, "Dis'll pay, won't it, boy?" and died.

THE MYSTERY OF THE “SOLANDER”

Towering in lonely majesty for two thousand feet above the blue waters of Foveaux Strait, the mighty mass of the Solander Rock seems to dominate that stormy region like some eternal sentinel set to hail the coming of the flying fleets of the northern hemisphere to the brave new world of New Zealand. To all appearance it is perfectly inaccessible, its bare weather-stained sides, buffeted by the tempests of ages, rising sheer from a depth of hundreds of fathoms without apparently a ledge or a crevice wherein even a goat could find precarious foothold. Not that landing would be practicable even were there any jutting shelves near the water's edge; for exposed as the rock is to the full range of the Southern Ocean, it must perforce meet continually with the effects of all the storms that are raging right round the southern slopes of this planet of ours, since there is absolutely nothing to hinder their world-engirdling sweep in those latitudes. Even when, as happens at rare intervals, the unwearying west wind stays for a brief space its imperial march to meet the rising sun, and the truce of storm and sea broods over the deep in a hush like the peace of God, the glassy bosom of the ocean still undulates as if with the throbbing of earth's heart, a pulse only to be timed by the horology of Creation. That almost imperceptible upheaval of the sea-surface, meeting in its gliding sweep with the Solander Rock, rises in wrathful protest, the thunders of its voice being audible for many miles; while torn into a thousand whirling eddies, its foaming crests chafe and grind around the steadfast base of the solitary mountain, in a series of overfalls that would immediately destroy any vessel of man's building that became involved therein. And this in a stark calm. But in a gale, especially one that is howling from Antarctica to Kerguelen—from Tristan d'Acunha to the Snares—over the most tremendous waste of waters this earth can show, then is the time to see the Solander. Like a never-ending succession of mountain ranges with snowy summits and gloomy declivities streaked with white, the storm waves of the Southern Sea come rushing on. Wide opens the funnel of Foveaux Strait before them, fifty miles from shore to shore at its mouth, and in its centre, confronting them alone, stands the great Rock. They hurl themselves at its mass, their impact striking a deeper note than that of the storm; as if the foundations of the earth were jarred and sent upward through all her strata a reply to the impetuous ocean. Baffled, dashed into a myriad hissing fragments, the sea recoils until the very root-hold of the rock is revealed to the day, and its strange inhabitants blink glassily at the bright glare of the sun. Then are the broken masses of the beaten

wave hurled aloft by the scourging wind until the topmost crag streams with the salt spray and all down the deeply-scored sides flows the foaming brine. So fierce and continuous is the assault that the Rock is often invisible, despite its huge mass, for hours together, or only dimly discernible through the spindrift like a sombre spectre, the gigantic spirit of the storm. Only the western face of the Solander is thus assaulted. For to the eastward the Straits narrow rapidly until at their outlet there is but two or three miles of open water. Therefore that side of the Rock is always comparatively peaceful above high-water mark. During the fiercest storm, the wind, meeting this solid obstruction, recoils from itself, making an invisible cushion of air all around the mountain, within the limits of which it is calm except on the side remote from the wind, where a gentle return breeze may be felt. But down below a different state of things prevails. The retreat of the mighty waves before that immovable bastion drags after them all the waters behind it, so that there is created a whirlpool that need fear no comparison with the Maelström. Its indraught may be felt at a great distance, and pieces of wreckage are collected by it until the tormented waters are bestrewn with débris twirling in one mad dance about those polished cliffs.

It is therefore easy to understand why the Solander Rock is left lonely. Passing merchantmen give it a wide berth, wisely judging the vicinity none too safe. Fishermen in this region there are none. Only the whalers, who knew the western end of Foveaux Straits as one of the most favourite haunts of the sperm whale, cruised about and about it for weeks and months at a stretch, like shadowy squadrons of a bygone day irresistibly held in a certain orbit by the attraction of the great Rock and doomed to weave sea-patterns around it for ever. One by one they have disappeared until now there are none left, and the Solander alone keeps the gate.

Now at a certain period of a long voyage I once made as a seaman on board a South Sea "Spouter," it befell that we descended from the balmy latitudes near the Line, where we had been cruising for many months with little success, to see whether better luck might await us on the stormy Solander "ground." From the first day of our arrival there the old grey mountain seemed to exercise a strange fascination upon the usually prosaic mind of our elderly skipper. Of romance or poetic instinct he did not seem to possess a shade, yet for many an hour he would lean motionless over the weather rail, his keen eyes steadily fixed upon the sphinx-like mass around which we slowly cruised. He was usually silent as if dumb, but one morning when we were about ten miles to the westward of the Rock, I happened to be at the wheel as the sun was rising. The skipper was

lolling over the quarter, pipe in mouth, his chin supported upon his left hand, apparently lost in thought. Suddenly the dark outlines of the Rock became illuminated, the abrupt angles of its crags took on a shimmering haze of tenderest glow, while from the jagged summits a lovely coronal of radiant colour shot forth delicate streamers into the clear morning sky. Towards us from the Rock's black base crept a mighty sombre shadow whose edges were so dazzling in brilliance as to be painful to look upon. As this marvellous picture caught my dull eyes I held my breath, while a strange tightening of the skin over my head bore witness to the awe I felt. Then the skipper spoke, unconscious I believe that he was uttering his thoughts aloud—"Great God! haouw merv'llous air Thy works. The hull airth an' the sea also ez full o' Thy glory." There was utter silence again while the glow deepened into blazing gold, crimson lances radiated from the central dark into the deep blue around until they mellowed off into emerald and violet, and then—the culminating point of the vision—the vast fervent disc of the sun crowned the mountain with a blaze of ineffable splendour.

Meanwhile we were steadily nearing the Rock, and as the wind freed a point or two we headed straight for its centre, the vessel being close-hauled on the starboard tack. The bright day came full circle, the ordinary everyday duties of the ship began, but still the skipper moved not, still I steered directly for the mountain's broad base. I noted several curious glances cast by the two busy officers, first at the Rock and then at the motionless skipper, but they offered no remarks. Nearer and nearer we drew until a great black space opened up in the centre of the huge cliffs, looking like some enormous cave extending far into the heart of the mountain as we rapidly lessened our distance from it, and what was at first only a supposition became a certainty—that enormous mass of rock was hollow. At last when we were within a mile of it the skipper ordered me to keep her away a couple of points, and had the yards checked in a little. Then, binocular in hand, he mounted to the main-top and gazed long and earnestly into the gloom of that tremendous cavern, whose floor was at least fifty feet above high-water mark. In and out of it flew a busy company of sea-birds, their snow-white wings gleaming brightly against the dark background. We were so close now that we could hear the sullen murmur of the restless waters about the base of those wall-like cliffs, and even with the unassisted eye could see a considerable distance within. Much anxiety began to be manifested by all except the skipper, for everybody knew well how strong an inset is always experienced in such positions. And as we got dead to leeward of the rock we lost the wind—it was shut off from us by that immense barrier. All hands were now on deck, and as "eight bells" was struck the crisp notes came back to us with startling

distinctness from the innermost recesses of the great cavern. It was undoubtedly a trying moment for us all, for we did not know what was going to happen. But the old man descended leisurely, saying to the mate as his foot touched the deck, "I'd give five hundred dollars to be able to look round that ther hole. Ef thar ain't suthin' on-common to it I'm a hoss." "Wall, Cap'n," answered Mr. Peck, "I guess one o' these yer Kanakas 'd hev'n all-fired hard dig at it fur a darn sight less 'n that. But doan' ye think we mout so well be gittin' a bit ov'n offin'? I'm er soshibul man m'self, 'n thet's a fack, but I'll be gol durned ef I wouldn't jest 's lieve be a few mile further away 's not." As he spoke the reflex eddy of the wind round the other side of the rock filled our head sails and we paid off to leeward smartly enough. A sensation of relief rippled through all hands as the good old tub churned up the water again and slipped away from that terribly dangerous vicinity.

The old man's words having been plainly heard by several of us, there was much animated discussion of them during that forenoon watch below to the exclusion of every other topic. As many different surmises were set afloat as to what the mystery of that gloomy abyss might be as there were men in our watch, but finally we all agreed that whatever it was the old man would find a way to unravel it if it was within the range of human possibility. A week passed away, during which the weather remained wonderfully fine, a most unusual occurrence in that place. A big whale was caught, and the subsequent proceedings effectually banished all thoughts of the mystery from our minds for the time; but when the ship had regained her normal neatness and the last traces of our greasy occupation had been cleared away, back with a swing came the enthralling interest in that cave. Again we headed up for the rock with a failing air of wind that finally left us when we were a scant two miles from it. Then two sturdy little Kanakas, who had lately been holding interminable consultations with each other, crept aft and somehow made the old man understand that they were willing to attempt the scaling of that grim ocean fortress. Their plan of campaign was simple. A boat was to take them in as close as was prudent, carrying three whale lines, or over 5000 feet. Each of them would have a "Black fish poke" or bladder which is about as big as a four-gallon cask, and when fully inflated is capable of floating three men easily. They would also take with them a big coil of stout fishing-line which when they took the water they would pay out behind them, one end being secured to the boat. Thus equipped, they felt confident of being able to effect a landing. Without hesitation, such was his burning desire to know more about that strange place, he accepted the brave little men's offer. No time was lost. In less than a quarter of an hour all was ready, and away went the

boat, manned by five of our best men and steered by the skipper himself. She was soon on the very margin of safety, and without a moment's hesitation away went the daring darkies. Like seals they dodged the roaring eddies, as if amphibious, they slacked off their bladders and dived beneath the ugly combers that now and then threatened to hurl them against the frowning face of the rock. Suddenly one of them disappeared entirely. We thought he had been dashed to pieces and had sunk, but almost immediately the other one vanished also. Hardly a breath was drawn among us, our hearts stood still. The skipper's face was a study in mental agony. Silently he signed to us to pull a stroke or two although already we were in a highly dangerous position. What we felt none of us could describe when, sending all the blood rushing to our heads, we heard an eldritch yell multiplied indefinitely by a whole series of echoes. And there high above our heads on the brink of the cave stood the two gallant fellows apparently frantic with delight. A big tear wandered reluctantly down each of the skipper's rugged cheeks as he muttered "Starn all," and in obedience to his order the boat shot seaward a few lengths into safety. Thus we waited for fully an hour, while the two Kanakas were invisible, apparently busy with their explorations. At last they appeared again, holding up their hands as if to show us something. Then they shouted some indistinct words which by the gestures that accompanied them we took to mean that they would now return. Again they disappeared, but in less than five minutes we saw them battling with the seething surf once more. Now we could help them, and by hauling steadily on the fishing-lines we soon had them in the boat and were patting their smooth brown backs. They said that they had found a sort of vertical tunnel whose opening was beneath the water, which they had entered by diving. It led right up into the cave, which was of tremendous extent, so large, in fact, that they had not explored a tenth of it. But not far from its entrance they had found the bones of a man! By his side lay a sheath-knife and a brass belt buckle. Nothing more. And the mystery of the Solander was deeper than ever. We never again attempted its solution.

OUR AMPHIBIOUS ARMY

Once more the logic of events is compelling the attention of all and sundry to the fact, hardly realised by the great majority of people, that in the personnel of the Navy we have a force of warriors that on land as well as at sea have not their equals in the world. The overwhelming preponderance of our naval power deprives these magnificent men of the opportunity to show an astounded world what they are capable of on their own element; how they can handle the terrible engines of war with which modern engineering science has equipped them; but in spite of the fact that as a nation we know little of the doings of our new Navy upon the sea, there is undoubtedly a solid simple faith in its absolute pre-eminence. Like the deeds of all true heroes, the work of our sailors is done out of sight; there are no applauding crowds to witness the incessant striving after perfection that goes on in our ships of war. We rarely see a company of bluejackets ashore unless we have the good fortune to live at some of the ports favoured by men-o'-war. There, if we feel interested, we may occasionally get a glimpse of a drill-party landed, and watch the way in which Jack handles himself and his weapons freed from the hampering environment of his ship's decks. And to those who enjoy the spectacle of a body of men at the highest pitch of physical development, clothed in garments that permit the utmost freedom of limb, and actuated every one by an intelligent desire after perfection, the sight is worth any trouble to obtain. Really, it is "heady" as strong wine. To the dash and enthusiasm of public-school boys the men unite an intense pride in their profession and an intellectual obedience that is amazing to the beholder.

Yet it should be remembered that shore-drill is for them only a small interlude, an occasional break in the constant stream of duties that claims every unit on board of a man-o'-war throughout each working day. There is so very much to do in the keeping up to perfect fitness of the vast complication of a modern ship of war that only the most careful organisation and apportionment of duties makes the performance possible. But sandwiched in between such routine work comes so great a variety of marine evolutions that the mind is staggered to contemplate them. It would be well for all landsmen reading of the doings of a Naval Brigade ashore to remember this—to bear in mind that if Jack excels as a soldier, preparation for which duty is made in the merest fag-ends and scraps of his time, he is superexcellent in the performance of his main business, which he does in the privacy of the sea, with only the approval of his superior officers—

and his pride in the British Navy—to encourage him. How would it be possible to convey to the lay mind the significance of even one of these complicated evolutions that are sprung upon Jack at all sorts of times without a moment's warning? How reveal the significance of such a manifestation of readiness for all emergencies as is shown by, say, the bugle-call "Prepare for action"? The ship is in a state of normal peace. Every member of the crew is engaged either upon such private matters as making or mending clothes, school-room duties, or other domestic relaxations peculiar to a watch below; or on the never-ending work of cleaning steel and brass, &c., that must be done whatever goes undone. At the first note of alarm every one springs to attention, before half the tune has vibrated they are swarming like bees round an overturned hive, and by the time that any ordinary individual would have realised the import of the command the whole interior of the ship is transformed. Great masses of iron that look immovable as if built into the hull have disappeared, every aperture whereby water could gain access below is hermetically sealed, each subdivision of the ship is isolated by water-tight doors, and from hidden depths with ponderous clangour is rising the food for the shining monsters above. The racks are stripped of revolvers and cutlasses, the mess-traps and tables have disappeared from the lower deck, and, showing all her teeth, the mighty weapon of war is ready for the foe. If the watchful head of affairs has noted with satisfaction the number of minutes absorbed in this general upheaval of things, his word or two of approval circulates with electric swiftness from fighting-top to torpedo-flat; should he frown darkly upon a few seconds' delay, there is gloom on all faces and frantic searching of heart among those who may be held responsible therefor.

For be it noted that the perfunctory leisurely performance of any duty is unthinkable in the Navy. The Scriptural injunction, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," is fully acted upon there, not only by command, but with the gleeful co-operation of those commanded. And hence it is that whenever a Naval Brigade is called upon for service ashore, their behaviour is such as to call for wonder and admiration even from those who know least about the difficulties they overcome. Their high spirits, the frolicsome way in which they attack the most tremendous tasks, compel even their bitterest enemies to bear witness in their favour, while hardships that would disable or dishearten landmen only seem to heighten their enjoyment. It has often been said that during one of our West African campaigns the conduct of the Naval Brigade in one peculiar direction was unique. Orders had been given that in consequence of the danger of lying on the ground every man should collect a sufficient pile of brushwood upon which to raise his body while he

slept. To the rank-and-file of the Army this duty, coming at the end of a fatiguing day's march, was a terrible one, although it was practically their only safeguard against disease. They wandered wearily about in the darkness seeking sticks for their couch, and trying all kinds of dodges to evade the salutary regulation. But Johnny Haul-taut thought it fine fun. Not only was his pile of sticks collected in double-quick time, but he was noways backward in lending a helping hand to his less adaptable march-mates of the Army, and after that he had still so much superfluous energy to spare that he must needs dance a great deal before retiring to rest, flinging himself about in uproarious merriment while tired soldiers were still seeking material for their couches.

Amid all the revenges that time affords the sons of men, could there be anything more dramatic than that exemplified by the relative positions of soldier and sailor to-day? Recall the infant days of the Navy, when the sailor was looked upon as a base mechanic, one degree perhaps better than the galley-slave who, chained to the oar, enacted the part of machinery whereby the warship was brought into action, and lived or died as it might happen without ever having a say in the matter or an opportunity for self-defence. Picture the proud mail-clad warriors striding on board the ships, hardly deigning to notice the mariners who trimmed the sails and handled the vessels—mere rope-haulers, coarse and uncouth, destitute of any military virtues, and only fit, indeed, to be the humble attendants upon the behests of warlike men. Think of the general taking command of a fleet, fresh from leaguers and pitched battles ashore, and giving his orders to the ships as to a troop of horse. And then remember the great change in the relations of soldier and sailor now. Not only is the sailor a man of war from his youth up, but all his training tends to bring out resourcefulness, individuality, and self-reliance, not only in the officer but in the humblest seaman. Without in the least intending the very slightest disparagement to our gallant and able Army officers—men who have proved their ability as well as their courage on so many battlefields—it may be permissible to quote the recent words of a first-class petty officer, a bos'un's mate on board of one of her Majesty's ships, who said: "There ain't a General livin' as can handle a fleet, but I'll back e'er a one of our Admirals to handle an army agenst the smartest General we've got." He probably meant an army of sailors, for the behaviour of even the finest troops would hardly satisfy the ideas of smartness held by an Admiral. He has been taught to expect his men to combine the characteristics of cats, monkeys, game-cocks, and bulldogs, with a high order of human intelligence to leaven the whole. Remembering all this, it would be interesting to know, if the knowledge were to be had, the history of the struggle that resulted

in the sailor throwing off the rule of the soldier at sea. That it was long and bitter, admits of no doubt, for it has left its traces even now, traces that it would, perhaps, be invidious to point out. Foreign critics sneer at most things English, and institute unfavourable comparisons, but it is gratifying to note that such comparisons are never made between the British naval officer and any other warriors soever. The task would, indeed, be an ungrateful one for any critic attempting it in the hope of proving shortcomings on the part of these splendid sailors—well, perhaps the word “sailors” will hardly fit them now. The handling of ships still forms an important part of their manifold duties, but when one realises what their scientific attainments must be in order to discharge all those duties, it becomes quite a mental problem how ever the naval officer of to-day manages to know so much at such an age as he usually is when he becomes a Lieutenant. That he does manage it we all know, and not only so, but, instead of shrivelling up into a sapless, spectacled student, he retains a sparkling boyishness of demeanour, a readiness for fun and frolic of all kinds that is contagious, making the most morbid visitor admitted to intimate acquaintanceship with the life of a warship feel as if the weight of years had suddenly been lifted from him.

With that keen insight which always characterises him, Mr. Kipling has noted in marvellous language what he terms the almost “infernal mobility” of a battleship’s crew—how at a given signal there suddenly bursts from her grim sides a fleet of boats, warships in miniature, each self-contained and full of possibilities of destruction. The sight of “Man and arm boats” simultaneously carried out in less than a dozen minutes by every ship in a squadron, the sudden mobilisation of an army numbering between two and three thousand perfectly equipped sinewy men in whose vocabulary the word “impossible” has no place, is one that should be witnessed by every thoughtful citizen who would understand the composition of our first line of defence. Better still, perhaps, that he should see the operation performed of transshipping guns, such guns as those landed by the tars of the *Powerful* and used with such effect at Ladysmith. One would like to know for certain whether it is true, as reported, that her 6-inch rifles were landed as well as the 4.7 guns. The latter were a handful, no doubt, but the former! They are twenty feet long, they weigh seven tons, and have a range of 11,000 yards;—penetration at 1000 yards, 11.6 inch of iron. Yet it is reported that some of these pretty playthings were landed by the bluejackets, mounted on carriages designed by one of their officers and built by the ship’s artificers, and taken up country into action. Truly a feat worthy of Titans.

Is it any wonder that Jack is proud of his shore-fighting record? Wherever and whenever he has been permitted to join in the work of the Army he has made his mark so deeply that he has come to be looked upon as indispensable, invincible. His effervescent humour never seems to desert him, as the following anecdote, told the writer recently, fairly well illustrates. It was at Gingihlovo, and the Naval Brigade was face to face with an apparently overwhelming force of Zulus, numbers of whom were armed with rifles. The sailors were reserving their fire, only sending an occasional volley when a favourable opportunity presented itself. Forth from the Zulu host stepped a warrior laden with an ancient firearm, which he calmly mounted upon a tripod in the open, while the sailors looked on admiring his pluck, but wondering much what he was proposing to do. At last one jovial tar suggested that their photographs were going to be taken, and, by common consent, no shots were sent at the supposed photographer. Having loaded his piece with great deliberation, the Zulu primed it, sighted, and, leaning hard against its breech, he fired. The recoil—for the thing was much overloaded—knocked him head over heels backward, while a great roar of laughter went up from the delighted sailors. He sat up looking hurt and dazed, and then, the amusement over, he, along with a suddenly charging *impi* of his countrymen, were annihilated by a volley from the steadily aimed pieces of the little cheerful band of bluejackets.

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Inconsistencies in hyphenation and spelling such as “sea-worthy/seaworthy” and “Maelström/Maelstrom,” have been maintained.

Obsolete spellings such as “bolin” for “bowline” have been maintained.

1. [Page 64](#): Changed “first words bewrayed” to “first words betrayed”.
2. [Page 101](#): Changed “very little acquaintance” to “very little acquaintance”.
3. [Page 131](#): Changed “Next mornind” to “Next morning”.
4. [Page 164](#): Changed “able seamen” to “able seaman”.
5. [Page 177](#): Changed “fo’c’sle” to “fo’c’s’le”.
6. [Page 178](#): Changed “fo’c’sle” to “fo’c’s’le”.
7. [Page 186](#): Deleted duplicate “a” in “resembles in a a remote”.
8. [Page 334](#): Changed “dissport” to “disport”.

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