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**FRAGMENTS
OF
VOYAGES & TRAVELS**

**BY
CAPT. BASIL HALL,**

R.N.

VOL. I.



ANSLANDER

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1831.

FRAGMENTS.

VOYAGES AND TRAVELS,

INCLUDING

ANECDOTES OF A NAVAL LIFE:

CHIEFLY FOR THE

USE OF YOUNG PERSONS.

By CAPTAIN BASIL HALL, R.N.

F.R.S.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

THIS little work has been drawn up chiefly for the use of Young Persons ; it is therefore hoped, that should it fall under the eye of older readers, the purpose for which it is written will be kept in mind.

On the other hand, should any young person meet with passages he does not perfectly understand, he is recommended not to puzzle over them, but rather to conclude that those parts of the book may be intended for people a little further advanced.

It does not seem a settled point, whether, in the estimation of Juvenile Readers, most interest attaches to a true story, or to one entirely fictitious ; but it may be right

to mention, that all the incidents here related are real.

The advice which the author has taken the liberty of offering to his Young Friends, as well as the speculations he has occasionally introduced, contain no opinions but such as he considers might have proved useful to himself, at some stage of his own professional life.

Putney Heath,
28th March, 1831.

FRAGMENTS
OF
VOYAGES AND TRAVELS.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY PREDILECTIONS.

VARIOUS circumstances conspired to give me, very early in life, what is called a taste for the sea. In the first place, I came into the world in the midst of a heavy gale of wind; when such was the violence of the storm, and the beating of the rain, that there were some thoughts of removing the whole party to a less rickety corner of the old mansion, which shook from top to bottom. So strong, indeed, was the impression made on the imagination of those present, by the roaring of the surf close at hand, the whistling of the wind in the drenched forest, and the

obvious rocking of the house, under the heavy gusts of that memorable gale, that, as soon as I was old enough to understand any thing at all, the association between the events of my future life, and those of my birth-night, began to be sown in my mind. Thus, long before I shipped a pair of trousers, I felt that a salt-water destiny was to be mine; and as every body encouraged me to cherish these early predilections for the sea, I grew up with something of the same kind of certainty of becoming a sailor, as an elder brother does of becoming a country gentleman, from his knowing—‘for quickly comes such knowledge’—that the estate is entailed upon him.

The holydays, also, which released me from the irksome confinement of the High School of Edinburgh, were passed in the country, on a part of the rugged sea-coast of Scotland, peculiarly calculated to foster nautical propensities. During the weary months which preceded and followed these six delicious weeks of liberty, my thoughts, instead of being devoted to the comprehension of abstract rules of grammar, which it was our

worthy preceptor's sole object is to drive into us, invariably strayed back to the picturesque and iron-bound shore, as this, happily termed in naval language, along which I was wont to ramble in full enjoyment during these holydays.

So incessantly, indeed, was the contrast presented to my imagination, between the cramped routine of school discipline, and the glorious freedom of the sea-beach, that I took little or no interest even in the games which filled up the play-hours of the other boys; and, from dwelling upon these thoughts day and night, I became so gloomy and wretched, that the bare recollection of my feelings at that period often makes me shudder, though more than thirty busy years have since passed over my head. The master of our class was as excellent a man, I believe, as could be; but he would have deemed it a shocking crime against his calling—which he naturally considered the first on earth—to have allowed that any one boy possessed a particle more of feeling, or was conscious of more independence of thought, than his companions.

Still less could he understand that any boy should pretend to have aspirations and wild fancies—dreams he called them—the object of which lay far beyond the boundary walls of the play-ground. Accordingly, I dragged on a tolerably profitless and painful existence for several years; though, perhaps, with a little management, this period might have been rendered not only useful, but happy.

Once only, during my continuance in this Limbo, as the Spaniards call the Purgatory of Children, I was addressed in a very kind manner by the head master, though a severe personage in his way, as far as regarded the use of the formidable strap, or taws, which in Scotland supply the place of the wholesome birch of English seminaries. He took me on one side, and said, in a tone so unusual in the despotic government of schools in those days, that it made me start,—“How comes it, little fellow, that you are always so gloomy; and that you never play as the rest do, but look for ever as if some misfortune had befallen you?”

I answered, 'that the confinement of the school was much too great, and that I could not bear being always treated as if I had no feelings or peculiar wishes worthy of separate consideration. That it was not the number of hours' confinement I complained of, but the awkward selection of the periods.' "Let me, sir," I said, "but choose the time for study, and I will cheerfully work even much longer. At present, the day is totally cut up and destroyed."

He smiled, patted me on the head, and said the hours and discipline could not be changed, merely to suit the fantastic taste of one boy. I knew this well enough already; in fact, I was not so absurd as to suppose that a public school could be maintained on my visionary principles, or that any rules could be established for their government but such as took account of average abilities, and made allowance for an ordinary share of feeling and patience. Whether or not my quantum of sensibility may have been needlessly great, is of little consequence: it certainly was so different from that of my

companions, that it completely prevented my profiting by the opportunities of this school, and taught me to think that my only chance of happiness rested on getting away from its thralldom.

Certain very troublesome misgivings, also, as to the future, came across my juvenile thoughts about this epoch; especially as to the probabilities of happiness in that wide world of freedom for which my soul panted, and of which I knew nothing, except by description. I happened, one day, to light upon Gray's Ode on a distant Prospect of Eton College,—a poem filled with images of the highest possible beauty, both of thought and expression, but most of which are certainly far better calculated to beget despondency than hope, by teaching that school days are unavoidably happier than those of after-life.

What modern improvements may have done to alter this state of things, I cannot say, but in my time, and at the particular school alluded to, the season of boyhood was, to me at least, any thing but a happy one;

and I well remember, after reading the poem in question, exclaiming, in a state of great despair, "If it is certain that my future life is to be more wretched than this, which is now so full of misery, what, alas! is existence worth?"

In this terrified frame of mind, I dived into various other works, but, to my sorrow, very seldom met with any thing of a more consolatory nature. Nor was it till many years' trial of the wear and tear of actual life, that I came to learn the fallacy of most of these assertions respecting the comparative happiness of school; and to feel assured that the whole, or nearly the whole matter, lies essentially with ourselves, since, in any situation in life, the amount of our happiness will be found to bear, in the long run, a pretty exact ratio to the heartiness with which we perform our duty. Whereas Gray's Ode, Young's Night Thoughts, and other sombre productions, too often thrust into the hands of young people, would almost seem to inculcate the notion that the most virtuous persons are the least happy, and that life is necessarily

filled with care and remorse, instead of being, as it really is, to those who choose to make it so, a scene of high enjoyment—not, indeed, one of unmixed enjoyment, but one in which the pleasures generally far outweigh the sorrows. It has, accordingly, always seemed to me a libel on our nature, and a perverse misapplication of the gifts of Providence, to consider that the earliest days of life must of course be the happiest. It may do very well, in poetical fiction, to talk of childhood being the ‘sunshine of the breast;’ but surely the true, broad daylight of life, not poetically, but practically speaking, is to be found at a later period, when the faculties are far more matured, and the will is left free.

Be all this, however, as it may, I never lost a minute in hurrying away from school, the instant our examinations were ended. At these periodical trials, it may be well supposed I never cut any great figure; for, I contented myself with trying to keep a little above the middle, partly because some boys sat thereabouts to whom I was attached, and partly because the particular bench alluded

to was near the fire. As soon as the term of imprisonment was over, I flew to the coach-office, and never felt perfectly satisfied that all was right and safe, till fairly seated on the top, by the side of my friend the guard, and bowling along the high road. On reaching the country, the first object always was to hunt out some of the fishermen on the shore, who readily engaged to give me a row next morning. After a sleepless night of anticipated delights, I commonly found myself at sunrise, in a fishing-boat, half a league from the coast, surrounded by congenial spirits—fellows who had no idea of grammar—and who were willing, either from bribery, or from motives of professional sympathy, to consider me as somebody, and not to look upon me as a mere zero, serving no other purpose but to augment the numbers of a school, without having any value in myself.

At all events, these hardy boatmen were so much amused with my enthusiasm about their art, that they took great pleasure in feeding my young fancy with tales of nautical dangers and hardships, the joyous excitement

of which placed the dull drudgery of syntax in sad contrast. On these expeditions, however, I was always wofully sea-sick ; for the boats, or cobbles, as they are called, were not altogether so tidy as a man-of-war's gig ; besides which, they generally contained a due allowance of bilge water, and decayed remnants of forgotten fish. So that my taste for the sea had often tough work to hold its ground, against the deranged action of the stomach ; and it must be owned that I often leaped on shore again, to the enjoyment of steady footing and an atmosphere less fishified, with a half-uttered vow at my lips that I would never tempt the ocean more.

This slight infidelity to my beloved element, however, was always very transient, as it seldom lasted longer than the time it cost to climb the high, steep bank, which guarded the coast. From this elevation, the view extended far up the Firth of Forth on one hand, with many a mountain lying beyond it ; right out into the German Ocean in front ; while the scene was bounded on the right, or eastern side, by the noble pro-

montory called Fast Castle, better known as the Wolf's Crag of the Waverley Novels. To my young fancy this seemed the grandest of all landscapes—and still, after I have rambled for more than a quarter of a century over the earth's surface, and made personal acquaintance with some of the noblest works of nature, my opinion of the beautiful scenery in question is not changed, otherwise than by increased admiration. Indeed, it will often require much time, more extended means of comparison, and the assistance of those just conceptions of what is really meant by the great and beautiful in nature, which spring from experience alone, before we can fairly estimate the advantages which frequently lie at our very doors. This will apply, perhaps, to other things besides scenery—but it is of that alone I wish now to speak—and certainly few things can be imagined more brilliant than the view from the part of the coast in question. For the sea at that point being a great commercial thoroughfare, is generally studded over with vessels of various sizes and descriptions, and;

I may add, of colours. For what the lights and shades of heaven do not perform in this respect, the seamen do for themselves, by tanning their sails, and painting the ships of many different hues. As these vessels drifted past, and dropped, one by one, out of sight, beyond the horizon, I felt the most eager desire to follow their wanderings into those wide seas, about which I had so often read—where the land is lost sight of for months together, where every evening fresh stars rise into view, and every bird and fish, as well as every breath of air, indicates another climate, and almost another world.

In the meantime, however, my operations in nautical affairs were necessarily limited to the horse-pond, upon which, by the assistance of an obliging carpenter lad, I managed to make the first fair trial of that element with which, in after-life, it was my happy lot to become so familiar. Our vessel consisted of two or three rough logs, filched from the farm-yard, and sundry planks nailed or lashed across them. A mast was readily obtained by the abstraction of a bar from the

nearest paling. But considerable difficulty arose as to the sail; for canvass was a material much beyond our finances or influence. At length my ingenious companion—who, by the way, distinguished himself in after-life as a ship-builder—suggested the idea of employing one of the mats used by the gardener to protect his plants from the frost. Thus, step by step, our gallant vessel was at length rigged out; and on the second day of our labours, every thing being ready, and the wind fair, we started from one end of this inland sea; and, after a prosperous voyage of about ten minutes, by ‘God’s grace’—to use the quaint language still printed in bills of lading—more than by any skill of our own—we reached the other extremity, without any serious disaster.

The pleasure which this primitive voyage inspired, has never since been much exceeded. It was the first unalloyed happiness I had ever experienced, and at once opened up a new prospect of hope and resolution, which rendered the weary load of school existence somewhat less intolerable than

it had been before. It also gave me a fore-taste of the joys of enterprise, and independent command, which, in their turn, called up innumerable visions of successful resource, surmounted difficulties, and all the demi-savage delights of such a life as that of Robinson Crusoe, with the additional advantage of that great adventurer's experience.

Little did I then think, and, in fact, it was nearly impossible I should reasonably think, that the realities of life could ever reach these imaginary conceptions. And yet I have lived to experience that, sanguine as I then was, these anticipations fell much short of the glorious reality which is almost every where to be met with. Indeed, I may say, with perfect truth, that in all these voyages and travels, I have generally found things more curious, and more interesting, in all respects, than I had looked for—or, if the career of curiosity has at any time been checked, it has only been followed by a more ardent pursuit, and ultimately by still higher rewards.

This process of feeding the curiosity, was well enough exemplified by a series of very exciting, though often painful and seemingly discouraging incidents which occurred every year on the coast already mentioned, as forming the scene where I passed the holidays. Ten leagues, or thirty geographical miles, due north of the house in which I was born, lies the Bell Rock, just off the mouth of the Tay, and close to the northern side of the great estuary called the Firth of Forth. At the time I am speaking of, this rock was justly considered one of the most formidable dangers that the navigators of those seas had to encounter; for its head was merged under the surface during greater part of the tide, and at no time did it make any shew above the water. There was nothing to be done, therefore, but to keep well clear of the mischief, or, as seamen express themselves, to give the rock a wide birth. Ships, accordingly, bound for the Forth, in their constant terror of this ugly reef, were not content with giving it ten or even twenty miles of elbow-room, but must needs edge off a little more

to the south, so as to hug the shore, in such a way, that, when the wind chopped round to the northward, as it often did, these over-cautious navigators were apt to get embayed in a deep bight to the westward of Fast Castle. If the breeze freshened before they could work out, they paid dearly for their apprehensions of the Bell Rock, by driving upon ledges fully as sharp, and far more extensive and inevitable. Thus, at that time, from three to four, and sometimes half a dozen vessels used to be wrecked every winter, within a mile or two of our very door.

Perhaps there are few more exciting spectacles than a vessel stranded on a lee-shore—and especially such a shore—which is fringed with reefs extending far out, and offering no spot for shelter. The hapless ship lies dismasted, bilged, and beat about by the waves, with her despairing crew clinging to the wreck, or to the shrouds, and uttering cries totally inaudible in the roar of the sea—while at each successive dash of the breakers, the number of the survivors is thinned, till, at length, they all disappear—the gallant

bark goes to pieces—and the coast, for a league on either side, is strewed with broken planks, masts, boxes, and ruined portions of the goodly cargo, with which, a few hours before, she was securely freighted, and dancing merrily over the waters.

But it is the greatest of all mistakes to suppose that the actual contemplation of such disasters, still less the description of hardships, has any tendency to divert a young mind from following its original bent, towards a profession of such varied and high excitement as that of the sea. At all events, the effect of each succeeding shipwreck I witnessed, was only to stimulate me more and more to pursue the object of all my thoughts, waking or dreaming.

I can recollect, however, being conscious of a feeling of awe, approaching at times to dread, as I saw the waves curling themselves over these devoted vessels, and gradually tearing them to pieces as the tide advanced. But still there was always more of confidence and pleasure in the prospect which my mind's eye conjured up to itself beyond these stir-

ring adventures. To this day there is told a traditional story amongst our fishermen, of my having once contributed to save a ship's crew, by engaging some country people to transport a boat from a distance, across the hills, in a cart. The account farther sets forth, that I had only a few halfpence in my pocket; and that when these proved insufficient to induce the carter to go out of his way, I stoutly asserted I had authority from my father to offer five pounds for any such assistance. Upon this pledge, the cart was freighted with its unwonted cargo, and the boat was brought in time to the spot. I have no recollection whatsoever of this incident; but something of the kind may possibly have occurred, or, more probably, may have been merely talked of amongst the fishermen, my great patrons and admirers. These things, by making me feel not so utterly useless in the world, as I was made to appear at school, must have united me by still stronger ties to the animating profession for which I was brought up, apparently as a matter of course.

Future generations of the family, however,

will not have this costly and melancholy source of encouragement for their children to go to sea:—since the shipwrecks that helped to do me this good turn, are now, fortunately for commerce and humanity, hardly ever known. The fatal Bell Rock—the direct and indirect cause of so many losses—has recently been converted into one of the greatest sources of security that navigation is capable of receiving. By means of scientific skill, aided by well-managed perseverance, with the example of the Eddystone to copy from, a light-house, one hundred and twenty feet high, has been raised upon this formidable reef. So that the mariner, instead of doing all he can to avoid the spot, once so much dreaded, now eagerly runs for it, and counts himself happy when he gets sight of the revolving star on the top, which, from its being variously coloured, he can distinguish from every other light in that quarter. He is then enabled to steer directly for his port, in perfect security, though the night be ever so dark.

On returning from these scenes of real life

and activity, to that most picturesque of cities, the Old Town of Edinburgh, I was plunged into tenfold gloom; and really do not know what I should have done had I not lighted accidentally upon Shakspeare's description of the ship-boy reposing on the high and giddy mast. This idea was so congenial to the fancy of a sailor elect, and withal so exquisitely poetical, that I could not rest till possessed of a copy of the whole of his Plays, which were forthwith read over from beginning to end—to the total destruction, I am half ashamed to say, of all the little respect I then had for the ancient classics. The *Tempest* was soon learned almost by heart—the nautical part of it in particular—and I swore an eternal friendship with the boatswain, whose seamanship, by the way, though wild and strange, is, upon the whole, wonderfully correct. One would like to know how Shakspeare picked it up.

About this period, also, when my thoughts presented a strange jumble of real and imaginary shipwrecks, with the intricate niceties of Latin grammar, I met my father one day

in the streets, close to the late Lord Duncan's house.

“ Well met !” he cried, “ come along, master sailor, and you shall see the hero of Camperdown.”

I was accordingly introduced as a future brother-seaman to this great officer, whose noble appearance was in such good keeping with his renown, that I felt my respect for him rise at every moment of the interview. .

“ You are a youngster of some taste,” observed his lordship good-naturedly ; “ and if you will come here with me, I can shew you something to encourage you to stick to your business.”

So saying, he led the way to another room, where a flag he had taken from Admiral de Winter, on the 11th of October, 1797, was hanging up. This sight was interesting, to be sure ; but I was still more enchanted with the frankness and kindness of the veteran's manner,—and I could not help saying to myself, that if such a man saw reason to treat a boy with attention, I was surely entitled to something less disrespectful than I

met with at school,—and I remember, next morning, shedding a torrent of tears as I entered the scene of what I considered my imprisonment, and contrasted the master's reception with that of the admiral.

Not long afterwards, I happened to meet Professor Playfair, of Edinburgh College, at a house in the country. It was the singular fortune of this amiable and accomplished philosopher, to be equally a favourite with the young as with the old. He won the regard and the confidence of children, not only by the matchless sweetness of his disposition, but by the generous encouragement he delighted to give to their opening thoughts; whilst among men of science, or of letters, he was not more admired for the extent and variety of his attainments, than for the clear, popular, and often eloquent facility which he possessed of giving expression to the most abstruse branches of knowledge.

I found him one morning seated on the ground, taking the sun's altitude with a pocket sextant, from an artificial horizon, made by pouring some treacle into a bowl.

Upon my expressing great curiosity to know what magical operation he could be about, he at once explained, or rather endeavoured to explain, the object of such pursuits. Instead of cutting me short with some idle reply about the thing being above my comprehension, he intermitted his work, and sought earnestly to make me perceive how closely such observations were connected with the duties of a naval life. Next day he gave me a copy of Bonnycastle's Astronomy, which I possess to this hour; and I think I may date from the conversation above alluded to, the growth of a taste for this branch of professional pursuits—I mean nautical astronomy—which has not only proved at all times a source of the highest enjoyment, but, as will be seen in the sequel, has been of great use in helping me on in the world.

I shall be sorry if what I have here said dispose any idle youth who may not find himself happy at school, to try so rugged a profession as that of the sea, unless he have many other, and more substantial reasons

for preferring it to all others. The whole system of school discipline, however, has been so much changed since the present century commenced, that boys have probably much less excuse than I had for not sticking to their lessons. And yet truth forces me to confess, that the fault lay fully more with the scholar than with the school. But my head had got so filled with notions of voyaging and travelling, that, even if I had been at Eton, I dare say I should have sighed to fly away.

It is clear enough, that no boy, instructed him as we will, can form correct ideas of what he is likely to meet with in any profession; still, if his mind be ardently bent upon one particular pursuit, and it be decided to indulge this fancy, he will be bound in honour, if he have the spirit of a gentleman within him, to persevere in following up the line he has been allowed to choose for himself. The incipient difficulties and discomforts of all professions are probably pretty much alike; and the boy who has not energy enough to set his face resolutely against the

early discouragements of any particular calling, will, in all probability, be successful in no other. It is, however, so great an advantage to have a young person's own feelings, and his point of honour heartily engaged in the cause in which he has embarked, that, if circumstances render it at all expedient, or not quite unreasonable, the choice of a profession may often be conceded with advantage. But such free choice ought to be afterwards burdened with a positive interdict against change. In the case of a sea life, this appears to be quite indispensable; for the contrast is so striking, in most cases, between the comforts of home and the discomforts of a ship—to say nothing of rough fare, hard work, sea-sickness, and strict discipline—that, if an opening be constantly presented for escape, few youngsters will have resolution enough to bear up against those trials to which they must be exposed, and which they ought to hold themselves prepared to meet with cheerfulness.

Perhaps the naval profession owes a good deal of its peculiar character to these very

disadvantages, as they are called ; and though we may often regret to see young men, of good abilities, dropping out of the navy, who, if they had only cast on the right tack, might have done the service and themselves much honour—yet there is no denying that their more vigorous-minded and sterner-framed companions, whom they leave afloat, are, upon the whole, better fitted to make useful public servants.

In many other professions, it is possible to calculate, beforehand, with more or less precision, the degree and kind of work which a young man is likely to be called upon to perform ; but there is peculiar difficulty in coming to any just conclusion upon these points, even in a vague way, in the life of a sailor. His range of duties includes the whole world,—he may be lost in the wilderness of a three-decker, or be wedged into a cock-boat ;—he may be fried in Jamaica, or frozen in Spitzbergen ;—he may be cruising, or be in action during six days of the week, in the midst of a fleet, and flounder in solitude on the seventh ; or he may waste his

years in peaceful idleness, the most fatal to subordination ; or be employed on the home station, and hear from his friends every day, or he may be fifteen months, as I have been, at a time, without getting a letter or seeing a newspaper. He may have an easy-going commander, which is a very great evil ; or his captain may be one of those tight hands, who, to use the slang of the cock-pit, keeps every one on board 'under the fear of the Lord and a broomstick.' In short, a man may go to sea for twenty years, and find no two men, and hardly two days alike. All this, which is delightful to some minds, and productive in them of every kind of resource, is utterly distracting, and very often ruinous, to others. Weak frames generally sink under its severity ; and weak minds become confused with its complication, and the intensity of its action. But, on the other hand, the variety of its objects is so boundless, that if a young man have only strength of body, to endure the wear and tear of watching and other inevitable fatigues ; and have also strength of character enough to persevere,

in the certainty of openings occurring, sooner or later, by which his talents or his industry may find profitable employment,—there can be little doubt that the profession of a sailor might be made suitable to most of those who, on entering it, are positively cut off from retreat.

Supposing that this ticklish question, of the choice of a profession, has been conceded to a boy, there remains the still more perplexing problem—what is the fittest method of training him beforehand, so that he may enter his new life with best effect? The difficulty arises, I suspect, from two causes, one of which applies to education generally, the other to the particular case of a lad intended for the navy. Most people seem to think, and very naturally, that the object of a school is to teach knowledge which shall afterwards be practically available in the business of life; and they cannot well understand what is the use of teaching Latin and Greek, which appear to be so little applicable to real work. Much of this difficulty vanishes, however, if it be considered that

the chief purpose of education is to discipline the mind, and to train up the character, so that it may be found equal to any task, no matter how unlooked-for it may be. In such a view, the Classics are as good, and probably better than any other.

If the principles, the faculties, and the feelings of a boy be duly cultivated at school, he may be expected to enter the world in as fit a state to profit by the opportunities in his path, as his nature will allow of; nor does it, perhaps, much matter by what artificial machinery this degree of perfection in mental culture has been attained. All that seems essentially of importance is, that the endowments given him by nature, should have been so well exercised, that when brought to bear on the real, manly business of life, they may act with effect. If the process of education has been well managed, its utility will probably not be the least sensibly felt, in cases where the pursuits to be followed in earnest are dissimilar to those, by means of which the boy's faculties were originally developed at school.

In the instance of young men intended for the navy, I think this rule applies with particular force. The early age of thirteen, at which they must of necessity go on board ship, renders it almost impossible that they can have acquired any great stock of what is usually called knowledge. But by proper management they may, previous to that age, have secured a very large stock of that particular description of information which will be of most use to them in the outset of life; and their growing minds may have been fitted, by a good system of school discipline, to submit with cheerfulness, as well as advantage, to that singular mixture of constraint and freedom, which forms the most striking feature of a sea-life. If this be true, it is perhaps of no great consequence whether the ground-work of such an education be the ancient classics, the mathematics, or modern languages: for the real object to be arrived at, viz. mental training, may, by proper management, be equally well attained by any of these methods.

No two boys, perhaps, out of a dozen,

intended for the sea, may require the same training; but still there is no reason why the whole number should not be equally well fitted, by previous education, to advance themselves in the service, according to their respective talents, though some of them, at starting, may be altogether ignorant of those subjects, generally supposed to be of the most indispensable utility at sea.

Antecedent, therefore, to the age of thirteen, after which a boy ought never to commence his naval career, it appears to matter extremely little what he learns, provided his mind be kept fully occupied. It will be better, no doubt, if a boy's taste happen to lie in that direction, that his occupations at school have as direct a reference as possible to his future pursuits. If, for instance, he have a turn for mathematics, or for modern languages, he ought certainly to be indulged in his fancy. But the essential objects to be attended to, at this stage of his education, lie a great deal further from the surface, and consequently make much less show. The formation of character, upon the solid basis of religion, and

a due cultivation of manners, especially of those branches which relate to temper and self-denial, are quite within the range of education antecedent to the age of thirteen. If, then, a boy be only well grounded in his principles, and if he be taught to think and feel and act like a gentleman, before he is turned adrift on the wide ocean, and he have also acquired habits of industry and obedience, together with the ordinary elements of knowledge—reading, writing, and so on—it matters little, as I conceive, whether he has acquired much information besides—for all else that is wanting will follow in good time.

The consideration of what system of instruction should be pursued afterwards, at the naval college, or on board ship, is a totally different affair, and deserves to be treated by itself.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST GOING AFLOAT.

I KNOW not what other persons may have felt on these occasions ; but I must own, that, in spite of all my enthusiasm, when the actual time came for fairly leaving friends and home, and plunging quite alone and irrevocably into a new life, I felt a degree of anxiety, and distrust of myself, which, as these feelings were quite strange, I scarcely knew how to manage. I had been allowed to choose my own profession, it is true, and was always eager to be off; yet I almost wished, when the actual moment arrived, that I had not been taken at my word. For the first time in my life, I knew what was meant by the word responsibility, and all the shame of failure stared me in the face. When at school, nine-tenths of my thoughts had

always rambled abroad, to those unknown regions, upon which my imagination loved to feast, day and night. Still, I can well remember, my heart sunk within me, and I felt pretty much as if I were on the verge of death, when the carriage that was to convey me away, drove up to the door. I still believed that there was, even on this earth, a new and a much better world before me; but when I tasked my judgment, to say upon what grounds this belief rested, the answer was so meagre, that I began to dread I had done a mighty foolish thing in setting out to seek for it.

“What a scrape I shall be in,” I said to myself, “if the gloomy representations of these sad fellows the poets be true pictures of life! What if this existence of ours be but a scene of gradually-increasing misery! How shall I be able to get on at all, if a sea-life be not more enjoyable than that of the High School of Edinburgh? and what kind of figure shall I cut, when driven back, by sheer distress, to petition my father to take me home again, to eat the bitter bread of idleness, or to seek

for some other profession, wherein all the rubs and tugs may prove just as bad as those of the sea, and possibly not very much better than those of school?"

I took good care, however, to let none of these unworthy doubts and alarms find any expression in word or in look; and, with a heart almost bursting, I took leave of the holyday scenes of the country I had loved so well, and which, to my young fancy, appeared the most beautiful spot on earth, — a judgment which, as I before observed, a tolerably extensive acquaintance with the rest of the world has only tended to confirm. Of course, I had a regular interview and leave-taking with my capital friends the fishermen, whom I had long held to be the best-informed persons of my acquaintance, merely because they knew most about ropes and ship matters generally. I cannot say that these worthy mariners stood the test of after-communication, quite so well as the romantic coast scenery near which they resided. I remember, on returning from my first voyage, going down to the beach, in my uniform

jacket, and in no very modest spirit, to shew off my superior nautical attainments to these poor fellows, who had been sticking fast to their rocks during the interval, much after the fashion of their own shell-fish. Their reception, of course, was highly flattering; but their confined views of the profession, and scanty knowledge of many of its details, made me look back with wonder to the time when I had hailed them as first-rate masters in the noble art of seamanship.

On the 16th of May, 1802, I left home; and next day my father said to me, "Now you are fairly afloat in the world, you must begin to write a journal;" and, suiting the action to the word, he put a blank book into one hand, and a pen into the other, with a hint for me to proceed at once to business. The following is a fair specimen of the result, which I certainly little imagined was ever destined to attain the honour of being printed:—

"*May 17.*—Journey to London.—Left Dunghlass. Breakfasted at the Press Inn, and changed horses. Got to Belford; changed

horses. Alnwick—dined there, and got to Morpeth, where we slept. Up early; breakfasted at Newcastle. Stopped at Durham. Walked forward till the chaise should overtake us; got into the chaise. Stopped to give the horses some drink. Saw two deep draw-wells. Observed some coal-carts at Newcastle coal-pits. The wheels are so constructed, that they run down-hill upon things in the road, which are made for the purpose. The horse follows the cart, to draw it up the hill, after it has emptied the load.”

The rest of the journal is pretty much in the same style—a record of insignificant facts which lead to nothing, useless as memorandums at the time, and of course not more useful at the distance of eight-and-twenty years. I would give a good deal, at this moment, to possess, instead of these trashy notices, some traces, no matter how faint, of what was actually passing in my mind upon the occasion of this journey. The resolutions we make at such a period, together with the doubts and fears which distract us, may have a certain amount of value,

if then jotted down in good faith; but if these fleeting thoughts be once allowed to pass without record, they necessarily lose most of their force. There is always, indeed, something interesting, and often much that is useful, in tracing the connexion between sentiment and action, especially in the elementary stages of life, when the foundations of character are laid. But the capacity of drawing such inferences belongs to a very different period of life; and hence it arises, that early journals are generally so flat and profitless, unless they be written in a spirit which few people think of till too late.

I shall have so many better opportunities than the present of speaking on the copious subject of journal writing, that I shall merely remark, in passing, for the consideration of my young readers, that what most people wish to find recorded there, is not so much a dry statement of facts, however important these may be, as some account of the writer's opinions and his feelings upon the occasion. These, it may be observed, are like the lights and shades and colours of a painting, which,

while they contribute fully as much to the accuracy of a representation as the correctness of the mere outline, impress the mind of the spectator with a still more vivid image of the object intended to be described.

I ought to have mentioned before, that the purpose of this journey was to ship me off to sea; and it was arranged that I should join the flag-ship of Sir Andrew Mitchell, then fitting in the river for the Halifax station. We, of course, set out for London, as the grand focus from which every thing in the English world radiates. But I find nothing in the memorandums of that period worthy of being extracted, nor do I recollect any incident which excited me strongly, except the operation of rigging myself out for the first time in midshipman's uniform. There was something uncommonly pleasing, I remember, in the glitter of the dirk and its apparatus; and also in the smart air, as well as new cut of the dress; but the chief satisfaction arose from the direct evidence this change of garb afforded that there was no joke in the matter, but that the real business of life was actually

about to begin. Accordingly, in a tolerable flutter of spirits, I made my first appearance on the deck of one of His Majesty's ships. The meagre journal of that day is as follows:—

“Went to Deptford after breakfast in a hackney-coach—when we got there, we got out of the coach, walked down the street, and met the captain of the *Leander*. Went with him to the clerk of the cheque's office, and had my name put in some book or other. Went with him to his lodgings, where he gave us a list of some things I was to get. Got a boat and went on board the *Leander* for the first time. Came home on a stage-coach—got a boat at London bridge—went up in it to the *Adelphi*—got out and went to the hotel.”

In most other professions, the transition from the old to the new mode of life is more or less gradual; but in that of the sea, it is so totally abrupt, and without intervening preparation, that a boy must be either very much of a philosopher, or very much of a goose, not to feel, at first, well-nigh over-

whelmed with the change of circumstances. The luxuries and the kindnesses of home are suddenly exchanged for the coarse fare of a ship, and the rough intercourse of total strangers. The solicitude with which he has been watched heretofore, let the domestic discipline have been ever so strict, is tenderness itself, compared to the utter indifference, approaching to dislike, with which a youngster, or 'squeaker,' as he is well called, is received on board. Even if he possess any acquaintances amongst his own class, they have few consolations in their power; and, generally speaking, are rather disposed to laugh at the home-sick melancholy of a new comer, than to cheer him up, when his little heart is almost breaking.

It so happened that I knew no one on board the ship, excepting two middies similarly circumstanced with myself. I was introduced also to a very gruff, elderly, service-soured master's mate, to whose care, against his own wishes, I had been consigned by a mutual friend, a captain with whom he had formerly served. Our own excellent

commanding officer had a thousand other things to look after, far more pressing than the griefs and cares of a dozen of boys under his charge.

I felt bewildered and subdued by the utter solitude of my situation, as my father shook me by the hand, and quitted the ship. I well recollect the feeling of despair when I looked round me, and was made conscious of my utter insignificance. "Shall I ever be able," thought I, "to fill any respectable part in this vast scene? What am I to do? How shall I begin? Whom can I consult?" I could furnish no satisfactory answer to these queries; and though I had not the least idea of shrinking from what I had undertaken, yet, I confess, I was not far from repenting that I had been so decided about the matter.

There is a vehement delight, no doubt, in novelty—but we may have too much of it at once; and certainly, if my advice were asked as to this point, in the case of another, I should recommend that a boy be gradually introduced to his future home; and, if pos-

sible, placed under the auspices of some one older than himself, and who, from having a real interest in him, might soften the needless rigours of this formidable change. I had no such preparation; and was without one friend or even acquaintance on board, who cared a straw for me. I was also very little for my age, spoke broad Scotch, and was, withal, rather testy in my disposition. The cock-pit, it is true, is a pretty good place to work the bad humours out of a crotchety young fellow, and to bring him to his due bearings; but I think I have seen a good many tenderer plants than I was, crushed down under the severity of this merciless discipline. Perhaps it is all for the best; because youngsters who cannot, or will not stand this rough rubbing, are just as well out of the way, both for themselves and the public.

There is one practice, however, which, as I invariably followed it myself, I know to be in every boy's power, and I venture strongly to recommend it to others in the same situation; nor is it very likely that many will be

exposed to greater trials, in a small way, than I was at first. The maxim is, always, in writing home, to put the best face upon matters, and never, if possible, to betray any inevitable unhappiness. Such a practice is doubly useful—for it contributes essentially to produce that character of cheerfulness in reality, which is partly assumed at the moment of writing, in order to save our friends from distress on our account. It would be wrong, indeed, to say, in writing home, that we are very happy, when in truth we are very much the reverse; but, without stating any falsehood, or giving in to any subterfuge—which is still worse—those particular things may very fairly be dwelt upon which are agreeable, almost to the exclusion of those which are otherwise. We should learn, in short, to see and to describe the cheerful things; and, both in our practice and in description, leave the unpleasant ones to take care of themselves.

For example, I remember, as well as if the incidents had occurred yesterday, most of the details which are stated in the follow-

ing letter, written only the day after I was left to my fate—amongst strangers—in the unknown world of a man-of-war. I certainly was far from happy, and might easily have made my friends wretched by selecting chiefly what was disagreeable. I took a different course.

*“ H. M. Ship Leander, June 12, 1802,
Cock-pit.*

“ DEAR FATHER,

“ After you left us, I went down into the mess-room; it is a place about twenty feet long, with a table in the middle of it, and wooden seats upon which we sit. When I came down, there were a great many cups and saucers upon the table. A man came in, and poured hot water into the tea-pot. There are about fourteen of us mess at the same time. We were very merry in this dark hole, where we had only two candles.

“ We come down here, and sit when we like; and at other times go upon deck. At about ten o'clock we had supper upon bread and cheese, and a kind of pudding which

we liked very much. Some time after this I went to a hammock, which was not my own, as mine was not ready, there not being enough of clues at it, but I will have it to-night. I got in at last. It was very queer to find myself swinging about in this uncouth manner, for there was only about a foot of space between my face and the roof—so, of course, I broke my head a great many times on the different posts in the cock-pit, where all the midshipmen sleep. After having got in, you may be sure I did not sleep very well, when all the people were making such a noise going to bed in the dark, and the ship in such confusion. I fell asleep at last, but was always disturbed by the quartermaster coming down to awake the midshipmen who were to be on guard during the night. He comes up to their bed-sides and calls them; so I, not being accustomed to it, was always awaked too. I had some sleep, however, but, early in the morning, was again roused up by the men beginning to work.

“There is a large hole which comes down from the decks, all the way through to the

hold, where they let down the casks. The foot of the hammock that I slept in was just at the hole, so I saw the casks all coming down close by me. I got up at half-past seven, and went into the birth (our mess-room), and we were all waiting for breakfast till eight, when the man who serves and brings in the dishes for the mess came down in a terrible passion, saying, that as he was boiling the kettle at the stove, the master-at-arms had thrown water upon the fire and put it out. All this was because the powder was coming on board. So we had to wait our breakfast for once. But we had a piece of bread and butter; and as we were eating it, the master-at-arms came down, and said that our candles were to be taken away: so we had to eat our dry meal in the dark.

“ I then went upon deck, and walked about, looking at the Indiamen coming up the river, till eleven, when I and one of my companions went and asked the lieutenant if he would let us go on shore in the jolly-boat, as it was going at any rate. We

intended to take a walk in some of the fields. We got leave, and some more of the midshipmen went with us. There are about six men row the boat, and we sit any where we like. Got on shore, and ran about the park you were mentioning when in the boat. Then came back to an inn, where we had some rolls and butter and coffee, to make up for the loss of our breakfast in the morning. We then took a walk to the church at Dartford, where we lounged about till we were tired—then came back through the fields to the boat, which we got into, and made the ship.”

Professional eyes will detect a curious mixture of ignorance and knowledge in the above production, in which, if the nautical terms—such as ‘hole’ for hatchway—be not too severely criticised, the information may pass pretty well for twenty-four hours’ experience.

In a letter written a few days afterwards, from the Nore, I find some touches of the same kind.

“ On Sunday, about three o'clock in the morning, I was awakened by a great noise of the boatswain's mates and the captain bawling for all hands up to unfurl the sails. As I thought I could not sleep much more, I got up in the dark and went upon deck. All the men were hauling the anchor in: they were a good while about it. As soon as the anchor was got in, all the men ran up the masts like so many cats, and went out on the yard-arms and untied the sails. In a little while all the sails were set, and we scudded down the river, very quick. Got to the Nore about twelve o'clock, where we now lie for three or four days.”

In another letter, of the same date, after giving an account of the “ confounded noise made by the men, and the boatswain's mates ordering the anchor to be drawn up”—and describing, more correctly than in the above extract, that the sailors “ ran up the shrouds,” I proceed to plume myself, rather prematurely, upon being already a voyager.

“ About twelve o'clock we made the Nore—the first time I have been in open sea!”

I half suspect that the motion of the ship, which, even at that stage of our progress, began, as I well remember, to overturn the serenity of my stomach, may have led me to conclude we were at sea. In the same epistle, in spite of the open ocean, there occur the following sentences:—

“ I like my station very much indeed. Have some very agreeable messmates, and the schoolmaster is a very pleasant man, who has travelled a great deal. We have not begun our school yet, as we are all in confusion, but shall, as soon as we have tripped our anchor for Halifax.”

The next letter was written from Spithead, and is characteristic enough.

“ *H. M. S. Leander, Spithead, June 18.*

“ I am much better pleased with my situation than I suspected I would at my first coming on board. We have in our mess four Scotchmen, six Englishmen, and two Irish, so that we make a very pleasant company down in the cock-pit. We dine at twelve, and breakfast at eight in the morn-

ing. At breakfast we get tea and sea cake ; at dinner we have either beef, pork, or pudding. But when we come into a harbour or near one, there are always numbers of boats come out with all sorts of vegetables, and fresh meat, which are not left long in the boat—for the people all run and buy up the soft bread, and fresh provisions.

“ About nine o'clock on the 17th, we anchored in the Downs—the famous Downs—but, instead of seeing a large fleet of great ships thundering out a salute to us on our entrance, there was not one but a Dane and a Swede; so we had to moor ship in the now solitary Downs. All the hills along the coast are chalk. I should have liked to have gone on shore at Dover to get you a piece of the rock, but could not, as the ship was sailing as we passed it.

“ We saw the coast of France, but were not near enough to see any thing that was going on in the French territories.

“ We midshipmen are upon watch every night for four hours together; we do nothing but walk the quarter-deck, if the ship

is not sailing. There is always half the crew upon deck when the ship is sailing, and we and the lieutenants order them to do so and so about the ropes and sails. All the men's hammocks are brought upon deck, and laid in places at the side for the purpose, both to give room for the men to work under the decks, and to give them air. All the decks are washed and well scrubbed every morning, which is very right, as they are often dirtied.

“ There is a sort of cylinder of sail-cloth, about two feet in diameter, which is hung above the deck, and is continued down through the decks to the cock-pit. The wind gets in at the top, and so runs down and airs the cock-pit, which is a very pleasant thing, down here, at the bottom of the ship.

“ This morning, about eight o'clock, we arrived at Spithead, and saw the celebrated Portsmouth, but I did not go ashore the first day, as so many others were going; but I intend to go as soon as I get leave. As we were coming along we saw the Isle

of Wight; it is very pretty indeed, viewed from the ship, whatever it might be were we on it. I saw some pretty places there, with plenty of wood round them. The sun was fast setting on the water in the opposite horizon, which had a fine effect, and cast a light upon the island, which I cannot describe to you, as it is such a rich country, and contains so many objects—it is too pretty to describe. There are some ships at Spithead, both large and small. In my next letter, if I go to Portsmouth, I will give you an account of all the harbour and docks, &c. &c. We remain here for ten days, I believe.”

These extracts, though of course sufficiently boyish, help to shew what may be made out of the most common-place details, when all things are totally new both to the writer and the reader. It is on this account I give a place to these juvenile lucubrations; for it is not about the particular incidents that we care, in such cases, so much as the state of feeling and genuine opinions of a young person, exposed, for the first time, to the actual

contact of the world. It would be unreasonable to expect such ideas to be expressed in so many words; but they may be picked up, in some degree, by the very terms used in describing the most ordinary transactions.

The following letter shews how little difficulty people find in expressing themselves, when well charged with their topic. On reading it over at the distance of nearly thirty years, I cannot help remarking how different, and yet how much alike, the same person may be at various periods of his life—how much changed in thought—in sentiment—in action! It is curious also to discover, how independent the man at one stage of life is of the same man at another stage—though, after all, they may possibly be more nearly allied in character, at bottom, than any two other persons who could be placed in comparison. At the same time, under the circumstances described in this letter, I really do not see that I should act differently at this hour.

“ Portsmouth, June 19.

“ We were very near all being destroyed, and blown up, last night, by an alarming fire on board. As I was standing making my hammock, last night about ten o'clock, near two others making theirs, we were alarmed by seeing a large burst of sparks come from one corner of the cock-pit. Without going to see what was the matter, I ran into our birth, or place where we mess, and got hold of all the pots of beer which the midshipmen were going to drink. I returned with these, and threw them on the fire, while others ran for water.

“ When I came back, I saw the purser's steward covered with fire, and rubbing it off him as fast as he could, with a pile of burning sheets and blankets lying at his feet. One of us ran up to the quarter-deck, and seizing the fire-buckets that were nearest, filled them, and brought them down. We also got some of the men out of their hammocks, but took good care not to awaken any of the rest, for fear of bustle and confusion.

“ The sentry, as soon as he discovered the smell, went down to the captain and lieutenants, who immediately came to the cockpit, and whispered out ‘ Silence ! ’ They then got more buckets of water, and quenched the flames, which, as they thought, were only in the purser’s steward’s cabin. But one of the men opened the door of the steward’s store-room, and saw a great deal of fire lying on the floor. Water, of course, was applied, and it also was quenched ; the store-room was then well flooded.

“ The captain ordered the purser’s steward to be put in irons directly, as well as his boy, who had stuck the light up in the cabin. The captain next went with the master-at-arms into the powder magazine, which was close to the purser’s steward’s cabin, and found the bulkhead or partition half-burnt through by the fire in the cabin !

“ All this mischief was occasioned by sticking a naked light upon the beam above the cabin, from whence it had fallen down and set fire to the sheets. The steward, in trying to smother it with more, had set fire

to the whole bundle, which he then flung in a mass into the store-room. There was a watch kept all night near the spot. Nobody has been hurt.

“ I am very sorry for the purser’s steward, for he was a very good-natured and obliging man, and much liked by all of us. He gave us plums, &c. when we asked them from him. He is broke, I fear. I will give you the issue in my next letter.”

This incident served, in a small way, to bring me into notice; for the very next day, to my great satisfaction, I was ordered by the first lieutenant to go in the jolly-boat, ready manned alongside, with some message to a ship which he named, lying near us at Spithead. I hesitated; and upon his asking me why I did not ‘ be off,’ I replied that I did not know which was the ship in question. “ Oh,” said he, looking over the gangway hammocks, “ that ship with the top-gallant-masts struck.”

Now, I had not the remotest idea what the term ‘ top-gallant-mast struck’ might

mean; but as the officer seemed impatient, I hurried down the side. The bowman shoved the boat off, and away we rowed, making a very zig-zag course; for though I had the tiller in my hand, I knew very imperfectly how to use it. The strokesman of the boat at last laid his oar across, touched his hat, and said, "Which ship are we going to, sir?"

I answered, in the words of the first lieutenant, "the one with the top-gallant-masts struck."

"Oh, sir," exclaimed the fellow, smiling, "we have passed her some time—there she lies," pointing astern.

Round we pulled—and I was much inclined to ask the man to steer the boat; for, although my old associates, the fishermen on the coast of Scotland, had edified me a little on this matter, I found it quite a different affair to take a boat alongside a man-of-war at Spithead, in a tide's way, from what it had been to run a cobble on the beach. Accordingly, I first ran the jolly-boat stem on, and, in trying to remedy this lubberly blunder, gave orders which

had the effect of bringing the boat head and stern—which is about as wrong in seamanship, as it would be in a horseman to put his right foot into the stirrup in mounting, which, of course, would bring him with his face to the tail.

Nevertheless, I crawled up the side, gave my message, and returned to report the answer. The only salutation I received from the first lieutenant was in the following words—uttered in a sharp, angry tone:—

“Where the deuce have you been, youngster, all this time? and what possessed you to go cruising about amongst the whole fleet at such a rate?”

“I hope I shall learn to do better, sir,” I stammered out.

“There is much room for improvement, I am sure,” he cried.

I was made painfully sensible, by the tartness of this reproach, that there was no very extraordinary degree of professional sagacity in what I had recently done about the fire near the magazine. I had been taking some credit to myself for not bawling out ‘fire!

fire!' and especially for having thought of the pots of beer—but this brilliant piece of service seemed now all forgotten!

Officers, and other persons in authority, should therefore be careful how they strike young folks with their tongues; for, although the wounds made do not shew upon the skin like those caused by steel or lead, they often sink deeper into the feelings, and frequently remain rankling there much longer than was intended, or than is useful.

Of course, I was excessively mortified; but the justice of the officer's censure was so obvious, and the ridicule of the seamen in the boat, even subdued as it was, so fair, that I soon saw I had nothing to do but to set about learning to steer forthwith, and to lose no time in finding out what 'striking top-gallant-masts' could possibly mean.

CHAPTER III.

SPECIMENS OF COCK-PIT DISCIPLINE.

I SKIP over many other anecdotes at Portsmouth, in order to get fairly out to sea; for I never felt completely disengaged from the thralldom of school, and fully adrift on the wide world of independent life, till we had left the white cliffs of old England many leagues astern. The following brief despatch was penned just before starting; and I can remember the mixture of exultation, and undefined dread of something that was to come which I experienced, while I was writing it:—

“ H. M. S. Leander, Spithead, July 11, 1802.

“ Yesterday the captain received his sailing orders, and we have now got up a Blue Peter at the fore-top, which is a signal for

immediate sailing. We are just going to unmoor ship, and shall sail for Halifax immediately. So farewell to England!"

Off we set, accordingly; and it may be interesting, and perhaps useful, for youngsters in similar circumstances, to know, that all the pleasurable anticipations came to pass sooner than any of those which were gloomy in their promise. Yet it is curious, that, since those days, when I was first launched upon blue water, I have very rarely set out upon a voyage without experiencing many misgivings, often amounting almost to a wish that some accidental incident might arise to check the expedition altogether. This is the more strange, as I have seldom, if ever, failed to find the reality more delightful than was expected, the difficulties more easily overcome, and the harvest of amusement and instruction more fertile, than any previous reading or conversation had led me to suppose the jog-trot course of a professional life could possibly afford.

I don't deny that I had sometimes a plaguy

tough job of it to keep my spirits up to this mark ; and though I never quite lost heart, I was often very low in the scale of resolution. So much so, that, on looking back to those times, I fear I can discover moments when, had good opportunities offered, I might perhaps have been tempted to cut and run. Fortunately for me, however, there never was the least choice left between perseverance and poverty ; and I had been long taught to consider, that the bread of idleness, however supplied, was the most degrading food a gentleman could eat. It is true I was not then so strongly convinced as I am now, that many of the essential advantages of the primogeniture law, lie on the side of the younger sons ; yet I always felt, that it was my duty, as well as my interest, to illustrate, practically, the truth of this seeming paradox.

The first damper to this magnanimous resolution, of making myself useful in the world, was caused by a speech of our excellent captain, who calling all the youngsters into his cabin, a few days after we were

out of sight of land, addressed us in the following words:—

“ Now, younkers, I have sent for you all, to tell you that you are not of the smallest use on board the ship; in fact, if any thing, you are rather in the way: but since you are here, I have no objection to your learning your business, if you have a mind to do so. You shall, therefore, have your choice, either to keep watch or not, exactly as you please; only, recollect this,—if any of you decide to do your duty in the way proposed, you shall be made to perform it in earnest. So, mind what you are about, and give me an answer to-morrow morning. Now, little fellows, be off with you!”

Out of about a dozen, I think there was only one other besides myself who decided upon keeping watch. Most of this party had been a cruise or two at sea before, and knew that pacing up and down the deck for four hours in the night, over and above the tasks of the day, was no joke; and they rather chuckled at the prospect of being let off so easily. For my part, I was so grievously

annoyed at the contemptuous official assurance of being of no use, that I never hesitated an instant, but caught eagerly at any opening which promised me the means of belying this disparaging assertion. Of course, I knew little or nothing of the duties which would be required; but I had a pretty distinct notion, that, provided any person has a specific course chalked out for him to follow, no matter how humble that path may be, there must be a better and a worse way of going over it; and, if so, that there will be a certain amount of distinction due to him who, in the first instance, resolves to do his business properly, and has afterwards perseverance enough to make good his pledge.

To a lad who has health and spirits, keeping watch is rather agreeable than otherwise. I speak from about twelve years of almost uninterrupted experience of the practice, when I say that, upon the whole, its pleasures outweigh its annoyances. There is no opiate, that ever was devised, which gives such hearty relish to sleep, as a good four

hours' night-watch. Without refining or philosophising too deeply, every one, I am sure, who has tried the experiment, will recollect the sort of complete self-satisfaction with which he has 'turned in,' after having gone through his work, and stripped off his dripping clothes. Still less will he forget the delighted kind of hug, which he has bestowed upon himself, when fairly under the blankets. All the world is then forgotten; the gale may be rising; the ship in no great safety; the labours of the night just beginning—no matter, his watch is out—his task is done. "I'll go to sleep," he says; and, sure enough, a young midddy, after the weary watch is out, lies down as perfect a personification of Shakspeare's ship-boy as imagination could desire. Though not literally perched on the high and giddy mast, he is pretty nearly as soundly rocked; for, after being bagged up in a hammock, and hoisted close to the beams, in the cable tier, with only a foot and a half of space above, and not half a foot below him, he is banged, at every roll, against the stanchions, or driven

by the motion of the ship against the deck over-head. In spite of all this, added to the loud creaking of the lower-deck guns, and the hundred-and-fifty other noises above and below him, he sleeps through all, and sleeps soundly ; or, as the Spaniards say, ' Rienda suelta,'—at full gallop.

There is another very satisfactory result of keeping watch, besides the certainty of insuring good sleep. It not only defines the duty to be performed, but the period in which it is to be done, so exactly, that all the rest of the time is free for us to make use of, in the way that most suits our own pleasure. To a person disposed to turn his spare moments to account, such privilege is a great affair, independently of the moral advantage of having a precise task to execute at stated hours. This obligation of working periodically seems, indeed, to act as a sort of hone, on which our intellects, as well as our industry, may be sharpened. Some reasoners and refiners on this matter go so far as to say, that a man of talents and fancy will often be able to turn his gifts to greater account, if forced

to give up a considerable portion of his day to dull, or even disagreeable drudgery, than if he had the whole twenty-four hours to himself. It has even been said, that the most successful and imaginative writer of our times, considers himself indebted, for some of his happiest flights, to the necessity of plodding round and round the dull routine of a court of law, for many hours of every day; for when he takes wing to the country, in the vacation, the spring of his energies is vastly more elastic, than if he had not been chained to a desk for many months before.

Be this as it may, I, for my own part, certainly took great delight in keeping watch, and even rejoiced, now and then, in catching a good sound ducking, as it tended to assure me that there was no play, but real earnest, in what I was about. During these early times, my chief apprehension seems to have been that I should be considered useless.

In some other respects, likewise, keeping watch possesses its advantages. Nothing else produces such punctual habits, or contributes more directly to cast both mind and

body into those trains of thought and of action which lead to certainty of purpose, by teaching us how much we may accomplish when we set about things regularly. The practice, also, of early trust is extremely salutary; and although the youngster of a watch has but a small charge, what little he has soon makes him acquainted with the meaning of the word responsibility, and he is thus gradually brought up to court, rather than to shrink from, the exercise of high duties. He learns that the first object of his professional life is to perform what is required by the rules of the service in a proper manner, careless of the consequences. He is likewise taught the wholesome lesson, that any praise for so doing is not only quite a secondary affair, but that such commendation essentially belongs only to those grand efforts, when an officer of enterprise and resource, in the midst of difficulties, adopts that particular line of conduct which the result proves to be best calculated to accomplish some high purpose.

At the same time, although praise is not

an article much used in naval discipline, I know few things which tend more directly to stimulate exertion, and confirm the best resolutions of a young officer, than some mark, no matter how small, of well-timed approbation. There is hardly any man so dull or so wicked, so old or so young, as not to be keenly alive to the influence of such commendation at the right moment. It is both interesting and practically important, also, to observe, that praise, like charity—of which it may be called a branch—can be dispensed by every man. There is no person so low in station, who, if he be inclined, may not do works of kindness to some of his shipmates. In fact, a ship's crew are so isolated from the rest of the world, and thrown so constantly together, that they can influence one another's happiness even more effectually than neighbours on shore have it in their power to do. Accordingly, there is no officer, man, or boy, in a ship of war, so circumstanced, who, in the exercise of his ordinary duties, and without departing from strict truth, may not give much pleasure to those

under him or about him, and thus essentially tend to advance the best interests of the service, by making the motives to action spring from a desire to do well. This, after all, is the great secret of discipline.

In large ships especially, if they be destined, as the *Leander* was, to bear an admiral's flag, there are always many more midshipmen on board than are absolutely necessary for performing the duty. These young gentlemen, therefore, are divided into three watches, and the individuals of each set are stationed on different parts of the deck. The mate of the watch, who is the principal person amongst them, with two or three youngsters, walks on the quarter-deck, always, of course, on the lee-side. Another midshipman, generally the second in seniority, has the honour of being posted on the fore-castle; while a third, stationed abaft, walks on the poop. To these is added, sometimes, a signal-mid, whose business, as will be understood without minute explanation, is to watch the communications made by other ships in company, or to convey

orders to them, by means of flags, which are generally hoisted from the poop.

After a certain probation, I was promoted from youngster on the quarter-deck to have charge of the poop; and in the hope of being advanced, in due time, to the dignity of fore-castle-midshipman, became extremely assiduous—rather too much so, as it would appear.

It was a positive order, and a very proper one, that no clothes should be hung up to dry except on the clothes' lines, or in the weather rigging, and even there only by permission of the officer in charge of that part of the ship. Every one, of course, is aware that nothing is considered so sluttish as hanging clothes below the gunwale, and especially on the davits or guys of the quarter boats. But all poop middies who have tried to keep these ropes clear of shirts and jackets, know that it is not very easy to exact obedience to these orders. In all well-regulated ships, however, these apparently small matters are found to contribute to the maintenance of uniformity and good order. They

form the tracery or fringe, as it were—the ornamental parts of discipline—which, if properly attended to, generally imply that the more substantial requisites are not neglected. At all events, our first lieutenant was most particular on this subject; and when any shirt or pair of trousers was detected by his piercing eye, which had escaped the vigilance of the midshipman of the poop, the young gentleman was sure to fall under his biting censure, or, in the slang of the cock-pit, was certain to ‘catch it.’

I had constitutionally from my infancy—and doubly so from the first day I went afloat—a great horror at being reproached, or ‘wigged,’ as we called it; and therefore laboured at all times with prodigious ardour to escape the torture of that direct, cutting, merciless sort of censure, which so many persons consider the only proper vehicle of instruction when reproofing the rising generation. Of course, therefore, as soon as I was placed in command of the poop, I waged fierce war against the wet shirts of the sailors, or the still more frequent abomina-

tion of the well-pipe-clayed trousers of the marines, who naturally affect that part of the ship, and are seldom seen forward amongst the seamen. All experience shews, however, that there is no due proportion between the difficulty of getting a trifling order obeyed, and that of accomplishing a great affair. People are apt to forget, that the obligation of obedience does not always turn upon the greater or less importance of the measure commanded, but upon the distinctness of the injunction. At all events, the unhappy poop-mids of my day were in hot water, almost every morning, about this petty affair, which the men, to our great plague, were exceedingly slow to take up, without more severe punishments than the first lieutenant was generally disposed to inflict. "It is entirely owing to your negligence, young gentlemen," said he to us one day, "that these wet things are so continually hung up, to the disgrace of the poop. If you would only contrive to keep your sleepy eyes open, and look about you, during your watch, instead of snoosing in the hammock

netting, with the fly of the ensign wrapped about you, the men would never think of hanging up their clothes in such improper places."

We used to marvel much how he managed to point his sarcastic censure so exactly as to hit the precise fault we had been guilty of, and we resolved in future to keep out of its reach, so far as these eternal wet things went. Yet, in spite of all sorts of attention, the day seldom broke without some provoking article of dress making its fluttering appearance—though how on earth it got there, often baffled conjecture. Upon one occasion, my juvenile bile was fairly capsised, and having given warning, as I declared, for the hundred-and-fiftieth time, and all to no effect, I pulled out my knife, and cut the stops which tied a shirt to the jolly-boat's tackle-fall. Had I proceeded no further, all would have been right and proper; but, in my zealous rage, I leaped beyond the lines of my duty, and fairly threw the offending garment overboard!

Just as the sun peeped above the horizon,

our most systematic of first lieutenants made his periodical appearance. I watched his eye as it glanced towards my department, and I chuckled a good deal, when I saw that my activity had baffled every attempt to detect a square inch of the forbidden drapery.

The decks, however, were hardly swabbed up before I saw a scamp of a mizen-top-man, with his hat in one hand, and smoothing down the hair in front of his head with the other, while he shifted his balance from leg to leg, address himself to the first lieutenant, evidently in the act of lodging a complaint. In the next minute I was called down, and interrogated as to my proceedings. The fact of my having thrown the lad's shirt overboard being admitted, I was desired to recompense him for his loss, by paying him the value in money—while he, in like manner, was punished for disobedience in hanging it up in so improper a situation.

A common-place person would have stopped short there; but this judicious officer was of a different stamp—and I have often lamented, since those days, that he did not live to

receive the grateful acknowledgments experience has taught me were his due, for this and many other lessons which at that time I could not justly appreciate.

It was his practice every evening, just before going to bed, to give to the mate of the watch a written order of what he wished executed in the course of the night, or early in the morning; and many an injunction, it may be supposed, his little neatly-bound order-book contained against the particular kind of delinquency above noticed. On the present occasion, however, the night orders consisted of these words only:—

“ Mr. Hall is the only gentleman who attends to his duty on the poop.”

It was needless to point more distinctly, even to the youngest squeaker amongst us, how adroitly the scales of justice and good sense were balanced in this case. On my side, it was quite clear I had no business wantonly to cast away another man's property, merely because that property was not in its right place; and accordingly I was compelled to make full restitution. This, of

itself, was a considerable censure. But as the fault really arose from disinterested zeal, in furthering the objects of the service, the first lieutenant, by one of those well-timed notes of approbation, which bind inferiors to their duty far more strongly than punishments ever deter them from neglecting it, took care to improve the lesson to my advantage, by putting his official sense of that zeal upon record. Small as the incident was, there are few things which have since happened, that have given me more permanent satisfaction than this slight, passing notice. From the strong manner, also, in which it disposed me to esteem the person who thus distinguished me, I can understand the secret by which great commanders rivet the affections and secure the best services of the people about them. The opposite course, it should not be forgotten, holds still more true. While half-a-dozen words, such as these, written at the proper time, may fix the gratitude of a whole life, a single careless word, spoken at the wrong season, or in the wrong tone of voice, though perhaps

void of hurtful intention, will often rankle for years, and permanently estrange men from one another, who might otherwise be truly attached.

The excellent officer above alluded to, I am grieved to say, was lost to the service a few years afterwards. When lieutenant of the *Conqueror* in 1808, on her passage to Lisbon, he, and about half the ship's company, were seized with ophthalmia. He never fully recovered his sight, and, though eventually promoted to the rank of commander, he was not able to serve long, and finally became stone blind. He still, however, expected his post promotion with so much anxiety, that when he found the Admiralty passed him over, the disappointment preyed so deeply on his mind, once so vigorous, that it broke to pieces! His intellects were literally destroyed, by the mere denial of an honour which must have been purely nominal, as he never could have gone afloat. Had he but retained his sight, however, he would, in all probability, have now been one of the most valuable officers in his majesty's

service. But his fate was different, and he died blind, insane, and broken-hearted!

I have already mentioned, I think, that I was very little for my age, and somewhat impatient in disposition, and, further, that I spoke the hideous patois of Edinburgh, with the delectable accompaniment of the burr of Berwick. These circumstances, which ought, perhaps, to have excited pity, acted and reacted upon one another somewhat to my disadvantage, and in no very agreeable style.

In addition to other sources of annoyance, I was more than usually subject to seasickness whenever there was the least breeze of wind, and about once a-week was pestered with the toothache. In the midst of these mortifications, I reckoned with confidence on the support of my own countrymen, of whom there were several amongst the elder mids—an error into which I was led by having often heard of the way in which Scotchmen hang together in foreign parts. But these wicked fellows, though very truly my friends, were not always disposed to aid and assist me in the precise way I wished; and young folks,

as well as their seniors, do not like to be obliged except on their own terms. I had also unluckily taken it into my head that I spoke English with remarkable purity—a sad mistake! Upon one occasion I missed some money; and a brother mid seeing me in distress, asked what was the matter.

“ Oh,” said I, “ I have tint a half-guinea.”

“ Tint!” cried the other, “ what’s that?”

At this moment one of my quizzing countrymen happening to pass, and hearing the question, burst into a laugh, and explained, that ‘ tint,’ being interpreted, meant ‘ lost;’ adding, “ none but Sawney from the north” would have used such a barbarous word, unknown in England.

“ Eh, Saunders, where are ye gawin?” and many other taunting expressions to the disparagement of my country, which will hardly bear the press, were flung at me from the English portion of the circle now assembled to hear this confusion of tongues. If the Scotch, in its purity, be bad enough, it is truly savage in the mouth of a pretender; and I was doubly provoked to hear its Doric beau-

ties marred by southern lips. I made play, therefore, for some time, but presently became quite angry, which was exactly what the rogues desired. Then, suddenly seized with a bright thought, I turned short round on the original framer of the mischief, whose interpretation of my native word 'tint' had brought the laugh upon me, and said, in a rage, "I dare say it was you that stole the half-guinea!"

For one moment, and no more, I had the laugh with me; but in the next instant, a shower of thumps from the accused party vindicated the freedom of cock-pit justice, and set the whole posse of us small fry to the right and left, like a shoal of flying fish sprung upon by a dolphin.

This affair had scarcely blown by, when I got into a second scrape, also with a countryman, who was then, and still is, one of the best friends I have, but whose fate it was, at that early period, to inspire me with many doubts as to the value of his good offices, albeit they were every way kind and disinterested.

There is no class of persons in His Majesty's naval service who have such ravenous appetites as the younger class of middies—in-
deed their plates and platters leave the birth, generally, as clean as they were before the dinner entered. What may be the cause of this voracity it is needless to inquire—the fact of their prodigious appetites is universal. And it will easily be imagined that, in such a community, the Esquimaux maxim of first come, first served, would sometimes introduce itself into the practice of those polished young gentlemen. One day, after keeping the forenoon watch, I went down at half-past twelve to dinner, but found nothing left on the board but a morsel of the ship's beef, which we generally called salt junk, and sometimes believed to be salt horse, resembling very much a piece of mahogany, and often quite as sapless. To this was added a very small portion of suet pudding, called in our lingo, dough, or duff, and differing but little in aspect and weight from good honest pipe-clay. It has been very properly observed of a young midshipman,

that, 'although God may turn his heart, the devil cannot turn his stomach;' and certainly, upon this occasion, I made no sort of objection to the victuals set before me—except as to the quantity. In five minutes, the dish and the plate had returned to that habitual state of purity, which would have rendered the office of scullion a complete sinecure, had we been honoured with such an attendant.

While I was ruminating upon this meagre fare, one of the oldsters bawled out to me, "Come, youngster, you have done your dinner—march off! I want your place at the table to write my log up—so scull away with you!" And, in spite of Lord Chesterfield, which he was constantly reading, he instantly shovelled me right into the cockpit. What with the indignity of my exit, which I cannot more particularly describe, without a greater breach of the graces than I choose to risk even at this long interval of time, and what with the empty state of my stomach, I mounted upon deck again, of course in a precious bad humour, not a

quarter of an hour from the time I had dived.

“Hollo! Maister Saunders,” cried one of my Scotch friends, “what’s the matter with you? You look as black as your countryman when he was caught half-way through a hole in the orchard wall.”

“Why,” said I, glad to find some vent for my disappointment, “to tell you the truth, I have not got my share of the pudding to-day.”

“Oh! ho! that’s it—is it? Capital! Your share of the pudding?—excellent!” And away he shot down the ladder, to pass the joke amongst the rest below; so that, by and by, I was assailed at every turn with inquiries touching my ‘share of the pudding;’ and my unfortunate speech, translated into various dialects of what they all thought Scotch, merely because it was not like English, was sung out like a ballad, for the amusement of the whole fraternity, for the next week.

This, like the half-guinea story, would soon have passed off for something else, had not

one of the mess been reading Sir Launcelot Greaves, in which book one Justice Gobble is described as a great glutton. The malicious young reader no sooner came to the place than he roared out that he had found a name for me! and I was dubbed forthwith Mr. Justice Gobble, which title I retained till another, somewhat more to my taste, and more appropriate, I hoped, was given in exchange.

I had heard or read somewhere, that if a bottle, well corked, were let down into the sea for a hundred fathoms or so, and then drawn up again, it would be found full of fresh water. Like most modern inventors, I took upon me to suppose that this experiment had not been properly tried before. So, one fine, calm morning, I borrowed a couple of cod lines, which were then in grand preparation for the banks of Newfoundland, and having stowed myself out of sight, under the breast of one of the lower deck guns, I plunged my bottle overboard. Some one detected me when I was just beginning to haul in the apparatus; and,

before it reached the surface, half-a-dozen of my less scientific messmates were perched on the neighbouring guns and chests, cracking their jokes upon my proceedings. A huge horse-laugh was got ready to explode upon me as I examined the bottle, and found the cork in its place, but inverted, and the contents as salt as need be.

“Well, now,” said one of the party, “this is funny enough—Justice Gobble is turned Experimental Philosopher; who would have thought it?” and off they scattered to laugh at something else—light-hearted, and careless of all things about them—up to any mischief or any business, and gradually forming themselves, by an involuntary process, for the right performance of those varied duties which belong to their calling, and which, like the elements they have to deal with, are scarcely ever two days alike.

Some of these lads had a turn for mechanics, some for navigation; others devoted much of their time to rigging, and different branches of seamanship—their hands being constantly in the tar-bucket. A few applied

themselves to reading and drawing ; several desperate hands stuck resolutely to the flute ; one or two thought of nothing but dress ; and a few swore a pretty steady friendship to the grog-bottle ; while every now and then a sentimental youth deemed himself inspired, and wrote execrable verses, which we thought capital. By far the greater number of these promising young men have since found graves, some on land—some in the deep sea!

On crossing the banks of Newfoundland, the ship was hove to, for the purpose of sounding ; and the quarter-master having tied a baited hook to the deep-sea lead, a noble cod was drawn to the surface, from the depth of ninety fathoms. Upon this hint, the captain, very considerably, agreed to lie by for an hour or two ; and some fifty lines being put over, the decks were soon covered, fore and aft, with such a display of fish as Billingsgate has rarely witnessed.

People who know nothing of a sea life fancy that fish is not a rarity with us ; but there is nothing of which we taste so little ; so that the greatest treat by far, when we

come into port, is a dish of fresh soles or mackerel; and even the commonest fish that swims is looked upon as a treasure. It is only in soundings that any are to be met with; for, in the open and bottomless ocean, we meet with nothing but whales, porpoises, dolphins, sharks, bonitas, and flying fish. I shall, perhaps, have occasion to describe the mode of catching, dressing, and eating all of these: for we demolish every one of them, excepting only the shark, between which and the sailors there rages an interminable war—something not unlike that which exists, from age to age, between the Indians and the Esquimaux—in which the sharks may be compared to the Indians, who eat their prisoners, and we to the Esquimaux, who only kill their captives, but prefer eating something else.

I never could conceive, or even form a probable conjecture, how it is that some persons manage to catch fish, and others none. It is easy to understand, that in angling, a certain degree of skill, or choice of situation, may determine the probable amount

of success. But when a line is let down to the depth of eighty or a hundred fathoms, or even to twenty or thirty feet, quite out of sight, what has skill to do there? And yet, in a ship on the banks of Newfoundland, or in a boat on the Thrumcap shoals in Halifax harbour, I have seen one man hauling in cods or haddocks as fast as he could bait his hooks; while others, similarly circumstanced in all apparent respects, might fret and fidget for half a day without getting more than a nibble.

There can be no doubt, of course, that intellectual power must be in operation at one end of the line, otherwise no fish will come to the other; - but the puzzle is, by what mysterious process can human intelligence manage to find its way, like electricity, down the line to the bottom of the sea? I have often asked successful fishermen what they did to make the fish bite; but they could seldom give any available answer. Sometimes they said it depended on the bait. "Well, then," I have answered, "let me take your line, and do you take mine." But in two

minutes after we had changed places, my companion was pulling in his fish as fast as ever, while not a twitch was given to my new line, though, just before, the fish appeared to be jostling one another for the honour of my friend's hook, to the total neglect of that which had been mine, now in high vogue amongst them.

There is some trick, or sleight of hand, I suppose, by which a certain kind of motion is given to the bait, so as to assimilate it to that of the worms which the fishes most affect in their ordinary researches for food. But, probably, this art is no more to be taught by description, or to be learnt without the drudgery of practice, than the dexterity with which an artist represents nature, or a dancer performs pirouettes. Uninstructed persons, therefore, who, like myself, lose patience because they cannot catch fish at the first cast of the line, had better turn their attention to something else.

Almost the only one I ever caught was during this first voyage across the Atlantic, when, after my line had been down a whole

weary hour, I drew it up in despair. It felt so light, that I imagined the line must have been accidentally broken; but presently, and greatly to my astonishment, I beheld a huge cod float to the top, swollen to twice the usual dimensions by the expansion of its sound, as the air-bag is called, which lies along the back-bone. At the depth of eighty or ninety fathoms, this singular apparatus is compressed by the enormous addition of fifteen or sixteen atmospheres. But when the air is relieved of this weight, by approaching the surface, the strength of the muscles proves inadequate to retain it in its condensed form; and its consequent expansion not only kills the fish, but often bursts it open as completely as if it had been blown up with gunpowder.

After a passage of about six weeks, we reached Halifax, in Nova Scotia; and I can perfectly recollect the feelings with which I first put my foot on shore in the New World. "At last," I said to myself, "I am decidedly abroad; and it shall go hard with me but this round globe shall be well tramped over

by these feet before I rest!" This resolution has been tolerably well kept; but it is perhaps worthy of remark, that almost the whole of the journeys alluded to have been accomplished in the jog-trot routine of professional avocations, and generally without any express design on my part. It is true I once took a hasty scamper over Europe, and, more lately, a deliberate jaunt in North America; but with these exceptions, and a small trip to Prince Edward's Island, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, to which I shall possibly advert again,—every league of my voyaging and travelling has been at the expense of His Majesty, that is to say, in the exercise of purely professional duties.

I have mentioned this, merely because I think it furnishes a sort of encouragement to naval officers, of all ranks and ages, who, unless they be very stupid, or very unfortunate, or both, may, in the course of their lives, probably have nearly as ample means of observation in foreign parts, as if they had been born to fortunes, and spent them in the sole occupation of travelling. It is surely a

pleasant affair to be carried about from place to place free of cost; and perhaps there is also some advantage in our being thus tossed about without any free choice of our own. There is often bitter disappointment, it is true, in being hurried away before our remarks are half made, with our curiosity only half satisfied, to be plunged into new scenes, piping hot from those we have left. But by this means the attention is kept briskly alive; and the powers of observation, being forced to act on the instant, are certainly rendered more acute. From so much, and such varied practice, also, the mind becomes more decided and clear, as well as more prompt, in its conclusions. And in consequence of this accumulation of knowledge, every new country visited appears to be more fertile than the last in objects of interest; till at length the field of view seems so thickly crowded, that the naval traveller, instead of having to search for materials, is generally overpowered by their abundance, and scarcely knows which to lay his hand upon, in order to describe the effect produced.

It is the curious property of well-directed inquiry into any branch of natural knowledge, that the thirst for such investigations generally goes on increasing with the indulgence; and what is equally or more to the purpose, the motives to perseverance are proportionably augmented. I believe there are few exceptions to this rule; and I think it may be observed, that, in the Navy, precisely as an officer rises in the service, so his means of travelling to good purpose are improved likewise. As he advances in rank, his introductions to society become more easy and extensive, and his facilities for seeing strange things are multiplied at every step, till at length, when he arrives at the command of a ship, he finds himself in one of the most agreeable situations, perhaps, that the nature of things admits of, for viewing the world to advantage.

It must be recollected, too, that the chief interest of most countries, and especially of new countries, lies on their sea-coasts, where the first towns are naturally erected. In those cases where this rule does not hold

good, naval officers often contrive to visit the interior: and wherever they go, they are sure of a hearty welcome, and a ready access to all that is worthy of investigation. Their best passport, in fact, is their uniform—their best letters of introduction, the columns of the Navy list; and if in any case they fail to profit by the opportunities thus placed within their reach, the fault lies with the dull nature of the particular parties themselves, and not with their glorious profession. In all probability, the very same persons who, as officers, can turn their naval life to no account in the way of travelling, would have done no better in any other situation in life.

This reminds me of a tailor at Halifax, who, on being sadly provoked by some of the scampish band amongst us, for not paying his abominably long bills, said, in a rage, in the cock-pit, before us all, that after having tried his son in half-a-dozen professions, without any chance of success, he was now resolved, as a last resource, to make a midshipman of him! This sarcasm was uttered during

the short peace of Amiens, when we first visited Halifax,—a period when the mids had so little real business to attend to, that they seized eagerly upon any opening for a joke. As soon, therefore, as the tailor had quitted the ship, it was resolved to punish him for his uncourteous speech.

It had not escaped the notice of his tormentors, that this vulgar fraction of his species prided himself, in a most especial degree, on the dignity of a very enormous tail or queue, which reached half-way down his back; and it was resolved in secret council, that this appendage should be forthwith docked.

Nothing, I must fairly own, could be more treacherous than the means devised to lower the honour and glory of the poor tailor. He was formally invited to dinner with us; and, being well plied with grog, mixed according to the formidable rule for making what is called a Northwester, which prescribes that one half of each glass shall consist of rum, and the other half of rum and water, our poor guest was soon brought under the table.

Being then quite incapable of moving, he was lifted in noisy triumph out of the birth, and placed in the tier, across the bends of the small bower cable, where, after many a grunt and groan at the rugged nature of his couch, he at length fell asleep.

His beautiful tail, the pride of his life! was presently glued by means of a lump of pitch to the strands of the cable; and such was the tenacity of the substance, that in the morning, when, on the daylight gun being fired directly over his head, poor snip awoke, he could no more detach himself from the spot on which he lay, than could Lemuel Gulliver in like circumstances. His noddle was still so confused, that he knew not where he lay, nor what held him down. After tugging at his hair for a minute or two, he roared out lustily for help. One of the mids, seized with the brilliant idea of making the tailor the finisher of his own fate, hurried to his assistance, and handing him a knife, roared out, "by all means to make haste, as the devil had got hold of him by the tail!"

The poor tradesman, terrified out of his wits, and in great horror at his mysterious situation, instantly did as he was desired, and cut away lustily, little dreaming that his own rash hand was shearing the highest and most cherished honours of his house! On turning round, he beheld with dismay the ravished locks, which, for half a century and more, had been the joint delight of himself and his tender partner Rebecca. As the thought of returning tail-less to his home crossed his half-bewildered brain, he exclaimed, in agony of spirit, to his treacherous tormentors—"Oh Lord! oh Lord! I am a lost man to my Becky!"

The revenge of the malicious middies was now complete; and this expression of being a 'lost man to one's Becky' became a by-word in the ship, for many years afterwards, to denote the predicament of any one who got into a scrape, and came out of it with loss.

Being then quite incapable of moving, he was lifted in noisy triumph out of the birth, and placed in the tier, across the bends of the small bower cable, where, after many a grunt and groan at the rugged nature of his couch, he at length fell asleep.

His beautiful tail, the pride of his life! was presently glued by means of a lump of pitch to the strands of the cable; and such was the tenacity of the substance, that in the morning, when, on the daylight gun being fired directly over his head, poor snip awoke, he could no more detach himself from the spot on which he lay, than could Lemuel Gulliver in like circumstances. His noddle was still so confused, that he knew not where he lay, nor what held him down. After tugging at his hair for a minute or two, he roared out lustily for help. One of the mids, seized with the brilliant idea of making the tailor the finisher of his own fate, hurried to his assistance, and handing him a knife, roared out, "by all means to make haste, as the devil had got hold of him by the tail!"

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CHAPTER IV.

BERMUDA IN THE PEACE.

THE *Leander* was a fifty-gun ship, and well known to the profession, as having formed one of the line of battle in the action of the Nile, though not strictly of that class, and for having afterwards maintained a glorious, though unsuccessful fight with a large French seventy-four, the *Généreux*, by which she was taken when on her way to England with Nelson's despatches. She was a pretty ship of her class, and became permanently endeared to the memory of all who sailed on board, especially to those who first went to sea in her, and there found a practical illustration of the beautiful thought—that our 'march is on the mountain wave, our home is on the deep.'

This character, indeed, gives the Navy of England its peculiar distinction, and mainly contributes to its success. We do truly make the ship our home; we have no other thoughts

of professional duty or of happiness, but what are connected with the vessel in which we swim; we take a pride in her very looks, as we might in those of a daughter; and bring up her crew to honourable deeds, as we should wish to instruct our sons. The rate of sailing of each ship in a fleet, is a subject of never-ending discussion amongst all classes of the officers, midshipmen, and crews, every one of whom considers his own individual honour involved in all that his ship does, or is capable of doing. This is true, almost universally; but it is most striking, no doubt, in our first ship, which, like our first love, is supposed to drink up, from the opening flower of our young feelings, the richest drops of sentiment, never to be outdone, or even equalled, by future attachments! I owe, indeed, much good companionship and many sincere obligations to other vessels; yet I am sure that, if I live to be Lord High Admiral, the old Leander must still remain nearest and dearest to my nautical heart. I remember every corner about her—every beam—every cabin—every gun. I even look

back to the strict school on board of her, with much of that affectionate sort of interest with which I observe Eton men regard the place of their education. Whenever any of the old set meet, who were shipmates together at the happy time I speak of, every other topic is swept from the board, and, for hours together, the boyish adventures, and even the most ordinary events of the dear old ship, form, out of all sight, the most delightful subject of conversation. It signifies nothing, that every one of the party has gone over the same round of stories and jokes, in the same company, fifty times; they invariably come back again, recommended by increasing interest, and by that genuine freshness of spirits, so 'redolent of joy and youth, it breathes a second spring.'

Most of the survivors, indeed, have experienced, that the summer of life which succeeded to this opening season of our professional existence in the *Leander*, has been as full of enjoyment as we had hoped for, and that life has gone on to furnish us only with more extensive views and higher motives to

action. It has also taught us to discover, that the real and permanent pleasures of life lie close alongside of its duties, and that as very much of our success certainly depends upon ourselves, so does very nearly all our happiness likewise.

On the 6th of December, we sailed from Halifax, with a fresh north-westerly wind, in a bitter cold day, so that the harbour was covered with a vapour called 'the barber,' a sort of low fog, which clings to the surface of the water, and sweeps along with these biting winter blasts, in such a manner as to cut one to the very bone. It is evidently caused by the condensation of the moisture close to the water in the severe cold. The thermometer, when we sailed, was eleven degrees below zero; and nothing but the violence of the wind, which broke the surface into a sheet of foam, prevented our being frozen in, like the north-western voyagers at Melville Island.

As we shot past one of the lower wharfs of the town of Halifax, just before coming to the narrow passage between George's

Island and the main land, on the south side of this magnificent harbour, a boat put off with a gentleman, who, by some accident, had missed his passage. They succeeded in getting alongside the ship; but, in seizing hold of a rope which was thrown to them from the main chains, the boatmen, in their hurry, caught a turn with it round the after-thwart, instead of making it fast somewhere in the bow of the boat. The inevitable consequence of this proceeding was, to raise the stern of the boat out of the water, and, of course, to plunge her nose under the surface. Even a landsman will comprehend how this happened, when it is mentioned that the ship was running past at the rate of ten knots. In the twinkling of an eye, the whole party, officer, boatmen, and all, were seen floating about, grasping at the oars, or striking out for the land, distant, fortunately, only a few yards from them; for the water thereabouts is so deep, that a ship, in sailing out or in, may safely graze the shore.

As the intensity of the cold was great, we were quite astonished to see the people

swimming away so easily; but we afterwards learned from one of the party, that, owing to the water being between forty and fifty degrees warmer than the air, he felt, when plunged into it, as if he had been soused into a hot bath. The instant, however, he reached the pier, and was lugged out, like a half-drowned rat, he was literally enclosed in a firm case of ice from head to foot! This very awkward coat of mail was not removed without considerable difficulty; nor was it till he had been laid for some hours in a well-warmed bed, between two other persons, that he could move at all, and, for several months afterwards, he was not well enough to leave his room.

For us to stop, at such a time and place, was impossible; so away we shot like a spear, past Chebucto Head, Cape Sambro, and sundry other fierce-looking black capes of naked rock, smoothed off, apparently, by the attrition of some huge deluge, that must, I think, have submerged all that part of America, as far as I have examined it, between the shores of Lake Erie on the west, and Boston and New York on the south and east.

But we had no time, on the day I speak of, for any such speculations. The breeze rapidly rose to a hard gale, which split our main-topsail to threads, and sent the fragments thundering to leeward in the storm, in such grand style, that, to this hour, I can almost fancy I hear the noise in my ears. I know few things more impressive than the deep-toned sounds caused by the flapping of a wet sail, in such a fierce squall as this, when the sheets are carried away, and the unconfined sail is tugging and tearing to get clear of the yard, which bends and cracks so fearfully, that even the lower mast sometimes wags about like a reed. I certainly have heard thunder far louder than the sounds alluded to; but have seldom known it more effective or startling than those of a sail going to pieces in such a tempest of wind and rain.

I was standing, where I had no business to be, on the weather side of the quarter-deck, holding on stoutly by one of the belaying pins, and wondering where this novel scene was to end, but having an obscure idea

that the ship was going to the bottom. The admiral was looking up at the splitting sail as composedly as possible, after desiring that the main-top-men, whose exertions were quite useless, should be called down, out of the way of the ropes, which were cracking about their heads. Every now and then I could see the weather-wise glance of the veteran's eye directed to windward, in hopes that matters would mend. But they only became worse; and at last, when the foremast seemed to be really in danger, for it was bending like a cane, though the foresail had been reefed, he waited not to run through the usual round of etiquettes by which an admiral's commands generally reach the executive on board ship, but exclaimed, with a voice so loud, that it made me start over to the lee side of the deck:—

“Man the fore-clue garnets!”

In the next minute the sail rose gradually to the yard, and the groaning old ship, by this time sorely strained to her innermost timber, seemed to be at once relieved from the pressure of the canvass which had borne her

headlong, right into the seas, and made her tremble from stem to stern, almost as if she were going to pieces.

The next thing to be done was to get in the jib-boom, in order to ease the bowsprit. In effecting this rather troublesome operation, one of the primest seamen we had fell overboard. He was second captain of the forecastle, the steadiness of whose admirable skill as a steersman had, one day, elicited the complimentary remark from the captain, that he must surely have nailed the compass card to the binnacle. On this, and other accounts, he was so much esteemed in the ship, that more than the usual degree of regret was felt for his melancholy fate. I saw the poor fellow pitch into the water, and watched him as he floated past, buoyant as a cork, and breasting the waves most gallantly, with an imploring look towards us, which I shall never forget. In less than a minute he was out of sight. A boat could hardly have lived in such weather, and no further attempt was made, or could have been made, to save him, than to throw over ropes, which all fell

short of their mark. Although we soon lost all traces of him, it is probable he may have kept sight of us, as we drifted quickly to leeward under our bare poles, long after we had ceased to distinguish his figure in the yest of waves.

This gale, the first I ever saw, was also, I can recollect, one of the fiercest. It lasted for three days, totally dispersed our little squadron, well nigh foundered one of them, the Cambrian, and sent her hobbling into Bermuda, some days after us, with the loss of her main-mast and all three top-masts.

Bermuda seemed to us mid a very barren place, as it produced few articles of any great utility—at least such as we required. There were then so few bullocks or sheep reared on the island, that I remember it was rather a wonder to see fresh meat on any table; and amongst the lower classes such a luxury was never known in those days. What may be the case now, I know not. The ships did get fresh meat now and then, but only very seldom; whereas in all other places, we were

supplied regularly with fresh grub, as we called it, every day.

The Bermudas consist of upwards of a hundred little islands, clustered round two or three large ones. The seat of government is in St. George's Island, which is between three and four miles long, by less than a mile broad, and very low. The town is built on the south-east side, on a gentle and very pretty declivity which fronts the harbour. None of the houses have more than two stories, and they are all built of the soft free-stone, of which all these islands are composed. Most of these dwellings have but one chimney. In walking through the streets in hot days, such is the extreme whiteness of the walls, that the glare is most painful to the eyes. But as many of the buildings are surrounded by bananas, calabashes, orange-trees, and by various members of the palm tribe, the disagreeable effect of the light is not felt, except in the open streets. This pretty town is about half a mile each way, and is mostly inhabited by blacks; but a great many of these possess houses, and

have gained their freedom by some means or other. What is curious enough, all these manumitted negroes hold slaves as black as themselves; of course the whites own them in still greater numbers. The slaves are never allowed to have fire-arms in their hands, for fear of revolt; indeed it is said they are considerably more numerous than the freemen in the island; and no slave is allowed to go about the streets after nine o'clock at night.

We found the black people, generally speaking, gentle, docile, and kind. If we entered any of their houses, though they had but little to offer us, that little was always given with much simple hospitality. To say the truth, we saw much less reserve amongst the blacks than amongst those of our own colour. It must be owned that their means of entertaining strangers are but scanty; for the inhabitants, even of the better class, we were told, live mostly upon salt meat, brought from America in vessels which pass, like market-boats, backwards and forwards during all the year.

We had read somewhere in fanciful tales,

of countries in which the forests were of cedar; but, until we visited Bermuda, we hardly believed in such stories. At that fairy island, however, this tree constitutes the chief wood; so that every ship and boat built there is made of it: the beams also, and the furniture of the houses, are likewise constructed out of this fragrant timber. It is not the cedar of Lebanon, but that of which our pencils are made; and when growing, it resembles in appearance the yew of England, though it seldom grows to the same height. It has an agreeable smell, and bears a little blue berry, about the size of a pea, which, though sweet to the taste, is very dry. The wood, after it is cut up and planed, looks well for a little while, but it soon turns pale and chalky; nor is it capable of receiving a good polish. For ship-building, it is much esteemed on account of its durability. We saw orange and lemon-trees growing, also, in such abundance, that at first we were enchanted to see the fruit thickly clustered upon all the branches. But when we climbed up and picked them off, in hopes of a grand feast,

we found them all of that bitter kind which, though very excellent for making marmalade, are good for nothing else.

Except a few wild pigeons, hardly any birds are to be seen, the most common being of blue and red colours, about the size of a fieldfare. The blue kind is pretty enough, but they do not sing any more than the red birds; so that, in the midshipman's birth, we had no scruple of conscience about baking many a score of them in our pies.

Besides St. George's, there are numerous lesser islands, and a large district, called the Continent, from its being by far the most extensive in the cluster, no less, I believe, than twelve or fifteen miles from end to end! At the north-western end of the group lies Ireland Island, on which an extensive naval establishment has of late years been erected; close to that spot is now the anchorage for ships of war. The population of those islands was calculated, at the time I speak of, at near twenty thousand, the greater part of whom were blacks, and principally slaves.

The rock of the islands of Bermuda is of

a very soft coarse freestone, full of pores ; so soft, indeed, that if it be required to make an additional window in a house, there is nothing to be done, we were told, but to hire a black fellow, who, with a saw, could speedily cut an opening in any part of the wall.

How far this sketch of Bermuda, taken from old scanty notes and faint recollections, may now be true, I cannot say. The cedar-trees and oranges, the blue birds, the rocks, the negroes, and the islands, I dare say, all remain just as before ; but I think I have heard that the seat of government has been changed to the western end of the island ; and now the men-of-war, instead of lying in Murray's anchorage, on the north side of St. George's, find, as I have said before, a far more secure roadstead.

There is nothing more remarkable in this singular cluster of islands than the extensive coral reefs which fend off the sea on the northern side, and stretch out in a semi-circular belt, at the distance of two or three leagues from the land. If I recollect rightly,

only one of these ledges, called the North Rock, shews its head above water. All the others lie out of sight below the surface, and consequently form one of the most dangerous traps that nature has ever set in the path of mariners. On these treacherous reefs we saw many a poor vessel bilged, at moments when, from seeing the land at such a distance, they fancied themselves in perfect security.

Dangerous though they be, however, there are few things more beautiful to look at than these corallines when viewed through two or three fathoms of clear and still water. It is hardly an exaggeration to assert, that the colours of the rainbow are put to shame on a bright sunny day, by what meets the view on looking into the sea in those fairy regions. On the other hand, there are not many things, in the anxious range of navigation, more truly terrific, or, in fact, more dangerous, than these same beautiful submarine flower beds, raising their treacherous heads, like the fascinating sirens of old, or the fair and false mermaids of a later epoch.

If, by sad fortune, the sailor once gets entangled amongst them, it is too well known that his chance of escape is but small.

They tell a story at Bermuda—‘the still vexed Bermoothes,’—of a boatman who, it was said, lived by these disasters, once going off to an unlucky vessel, fairly caught amongst the coral reefs, like a fly in a cobweb, not far from the North Rock. The wrecker, as he was called, having boarded the bewildered ship, said to the master,

“What will you give me, now, to get you out of this place?”

“Oh, any thing you like—name your sum.”

“Five hundred dollars?”

“Agreed! agreed!” cried the other. Upon which this treacherous pilot ‘kept his promise truly to the ear, but broke it to the hope,’ by taking the vessel out of an abominably bad place, only to fix her in one a great deal more intricate and perilous.

“Now,” said the wrecker to the perplexed and doubly-cheated stranger, “there never was a vessel in this scrape, that was known

to get out again; and, indeed, there is but one man alive who knows the passages, or could, by any possibility, extricate you — and that's me!"

"I suppose," drily remarked the captain, "that 'for a consideration' you would be the man to do me that good service. What say you to another five hundred dollars to put me into clear water, beyond your infernal reefs?"

This hard bargain was soon made; and a winding passage, unseen before, being found, just wide enough, and barely deep enough, for the vessel to pass through, with only six inches to spare under her keel, in half an hour she was once more in blue water, out of soundings, and out of danger.

"Now, master rascallion of a wrecker," cried the disentangled mariner, "tit for tat is fair play all the world over; and, unless you hand me back again my thousand dollars, I'll cut the tow-rope of your thievish-looking boat, and then, instead of returning evil for evil, as I ought by rights to do, I'll be more of a Christian, and do you a very great ser-

vice, by carrying you away from one of the most infamous places in the world, to the finest country imaginable—I mean America. And as you seem to have a certain touch of black blood in your veins, I may chance to get good interest for my loan of these thousand dollars, by selling you as a slave in Charleston negro-market! What say you, my gay Mudian?"

We lay, moored in Murray's anchorage at Bermuda, for the greater part of the winters both of 1802 and of 1803. The war had not yet broken out, and, in the absence of active service, we were fain to catch hold of any thing to amuse and occupy ourselves. The master, and a gang of youngsters who were fond of navigation, set about surveying the coral reefs already mentioned. This party of philosophers, as they were of course dubbed, landed on St. David's Head, and other conspicuous points of land, to ascertain the longitude with more care; to observe the latitude and the variation of the compass; or to measure the perpendicular rise and fall of the tides; or, lastly, and much the most fre-

quently, to have a good hour's swim in the deliciously-warm sea. It will be easily understood, that all and each of these inquiries furnished to those persons, whose duty and pleasure it was to attend to them, an inexhaustible field of occupation, and of interest likewise.

At first sight, many of these pursuits may appear trivial; but it ought to be recollected, that, although it be easy enough to make the observations enumerated, and many others of the same nature, in a rough sort of way, there is hardly any one of them which, if it be required to be done in the best possible style, does not demand much attention and labour. For example, it seems a very simple affair to draw a base or straight line on the ground; but if this line is required to be, very exactly, of a particular length, so as to be neither more nor less, the problem is one of the utmost difficulty, which has fully exercised, and still employs, the talents of some of the ablest engineers of the day. In fact, these refinements in surveying and in observing, are pretty much like the pound of flesh ques-

tion in the Merchant of Venice; with one comfortable difference, that the philosopher's neck is not in such danger, even if, in a base of half-a-dozen miles, he should happen to err in the estimation of half-a-dozen hairs-breadths! It is well for young officers to recollect, however, that there is still a tolerably formidable professional tribunal, before which a man who undertakes such tasks is apt to be arraigned, and, if found wanting, pretty severely dealt with.

Sailors, like the element upon which they are tossed about, are scarcely ever at rest, and are seldom satisfied with what has been done before them. Consequently, the moment a ship arrives at a port, the navigators straightway erect their observatory, fix up their instruments, set their clocks a-going, and commence an attack, like the giants of old, upon the very heavens themselves,—and all for what? They say to themselves, that this is done for the benefit of science, for the advancement of geographical or astronomical knowledge—and so it is. But, along with these pure and lofty motives,

there may enter some others, not quite so sublime, but perhaps equally operative in producing diligence. We have a lurking kind of malicious expectation of discovering that our predecessors have not made out their latitudes, or longitudes, or whatever the observations be, with the precision we ourselves hope to attain. It does not much matter whether the superior accuracy we expect to reach arises from our having better instruments in our hands, or from having more leisure, or better opportunities at command. So long as we contrive to do the required job better than it has been done before, so long do we count upon getting the credit due to superiority. These honours, it is true, are worn only till somebody coming later shall jostle us out of our seats, by substituting still better work. The desire to avoid being thrust on one side in this way, and forgotten, is a strong motive to vigorous application on the occasions alluded to, and helps essentially to quicken that delightful interest which almost always attends an investigation of the properties of natural objects.

It is probably requisite to this enjoyment, that the pursuit followed should have some specific purpose in view ;—if professional, so much the better. If a man, quite uninstructed, shall start up and say, in the abstract, “ I mean to study botany—or astronomy”—or whatever else his fancy may select, he will, in all probability, find the pursuit as great a bore to himself as it will inevitably prove to those friends whom he endeavours to persuade that it is the most delightful thing in the world to be a savant. Still, young folks, in any situation, and most of all in the Navy, need not be afraid ; for they can hardly ever be cast into situations where, if their minds have been properly trained, first at school, and then on board ship, they may not hit upon ample materials to keep their heads and hands in motion, and at the same time to advance their professional objects.

One of our party of mids, who has since turned out a valuable and enterprising officer, took it in his head to make a trip in one of the whale-boats of the Bermuda fishery.

Having ascertained the time of starting, he obtained leave to go on shore, and completely succeeded in his object by being present at the capture of a whale. The monster, however, led them a considerable dance off to sea, and it was long after the time appointed for his return, when the youth made his appearance, delightfully perfumed with blubber, and with a glorious tale to tell of his day's adventures.

This was voted by acclamation to be 'something like an expedition;' and the youngster, of course, gained great credit for his spirit. I was one of another party who, I suppose, being a little jealous of our companion's laurels, took the earliest opportunity of trying to signalize ourselves in a similar way. A monstrous whale was seen one morning playing about the Leander, in Murray's anchorage, and, of course, far within the belt of reefs already described as fringing the roadstead on its eastern and northern sides. How this great fellow had got into such a scrape, we could not conjecture. Possibly, in placing himself alongside of the

rugged coral ledges, to scrub off the incrustations of shell-fish which torment these monsters of the deep, he had gradually advanced too far;—or, more probably, he may have set out in pursuit of some small fry, and, before he was aware of it, have threaded his way amongst this labyrinth of rocks, till escape was impossible. At all events, he now found himself in comparatively deep water, from eight to ten fathoms, without any visible means of retreat from his coral trap. All hands crowded into the rigging to see the whale floundering about; till at length some one proposed—rashly enough, certainly,—to pay him a visit in one of the ship's boats, with no better implements, offensive or defensive, than the ordinary boat-hooks. These are light poles, not unlike a shepherd's crook, with a spike at the end; not bad things for fishing up a turtle when caught napping, but slender reeds, in all conscience, against a fish forty or fifty feet long!

Away we went, however, in our wild-goose, whale chase, without any precise idea as to what we were to do if we should come up

with the game. When we got near the great leviathan, his aspect became more and more formidable; and it was necessary to think of some regular plan of attack, if any were to be made. As to defence, it may easily be imagined that was out of the question; for one whisk of his tail would have sent the cutter and her crew, boat-hooks and all, spinning over the fore-yard arm of the flagship. All eyes were now upon us, and, after a pause, it was agreed unanimously, that we should run right on board of him, and take our chance. So we rowed forward; but the whale, whose back was then shewing just above the water, like a ship keel upwards, perhaps not approving of our looks, or possibly not seeing us, slipped down, clean out of sight, leaving only a monstrous whirlpool of oily-looking water, in the vortex of which we continued whirling round for some time, like great ninnies as we were, and gaping about us. At this time, we were not above half a ship's length from the *Leander*, so that our disappointment caused considerable amusement on board, and the people came

laughing down from the rigging, where they had been perched, to see the grand fight between the whale and the young gentlemen!

As we were lying on our oars, and somewhat puzzled what to do next, we beheld one of the most extraordinary sights in the world;—at least I do not remember to have seen many things which have surprised me so much, or made a deeper impression on my memory. Our friend the whale, probably finding the water disagreeably shallow—for, as I have said, it was not above fifty or sixty feet deep—or perhaps provoked at not being able to disentangle himself from the sharp coral reefs, or for some other reason of pleasure or of pain,—suddenly made a spring out of the water.

So complete was this enormous leap, that for an instant we saw him fairly up in the air, in a horizontal position, at a distance from the water not much short, I should think, of half his own breadth! His back therefore, must have been at least twenty feet, in perpendicular height, over our heads!

While in his progress upwards, there was in his spring some touch of the vivacity with which a trout or a salmon shoots out of the water; but he fell back again on the sea, like a huge log thrown on its broadside; and with such a thundering crash as made all hands stare in astonishment, and the 'boldest held his breath for a time.' Total demolition, indeed, must have been the inevitable fate of our party, had the whale taken his leap one minute sooner, for he would then have fallen plump on the boat! The waves caused by the explosion spread over half the anchorage; nor, if the *Leander* herself had blown up, could the effects have extended much further. As we rolled about in the cutter from side to side, we had time to balance the expediency of further proceedings, against the tolerable chance of being smashed to atoms under the whale's belly at his next leap.

All idea of capturing him was now, of course, given up; if, indeed, any such frantic notion could ever seriously have entered our heads. But our curiosity was vehemently

roused to witness such another feat; and, after lying on our oars for some time, we once more detected the whale's back at a little distance from us.

“ Let us poke him up again !” cried one of the party.

“ Agreed ! agreed !” roared out the others ; and away we dashed, in hopes of producing a repetition of this singular exploit. The whale, however, did not choose to exhibit any more, though we were often near him. At last he fairly bolted, and took the direction of the North Rock, hoping, perhaps, to make his escape by the narrow passage known only to the most experienced pilots of those intricate regions.

It was not until after we had entirely lost sight of the chase, and when we had rowed so far, that we could just see the top of St. George's Island astern of us, that we had leisure to remark the change of weather which had taken place during this absurd pursuit. The sky had become overcast, and the wind risen to such a smart breeze from the south-west, that, when we again put the

boat's head towards the island, it was quite as much as we could do to make any headway at all, and sometimes we hardly held our own. Had the wind increased only a little more, we must inevitably have been blown to sea—and even as it was, it cost us many hours of severe tugging at the oars to regain the anchorage, just before night-fall, completely worn out.

I have not related this story of the whale's leap without considerable hesitation, the source of which distrust will be found, better than I can express it for myself, in the following anecdote, related to me by Sir Walter Scott, and which I recommend to the attention of travellers who have any thoughts of communicating to the public what they have seen in distant lands.

It appears that Mungo Park, the first, and still, perhaps, the most interesting of African travellers, was in the habit of relating, in a quiet way, to his most confidential friends, many curious and highly amusing incidents, which had occurred to him during his celebrated journey in search of the Niger.

Of these anecdotes, however, no mention is made in his printed statements—while others are inserted, not nearly so interesting as these rejected stories.

“How is this?” asked his friends. “Why did not you put these things also into your book?”

“Oh,” replied Park, “the case is simply this:—I was sent to Africa for certain public purposes, and expressly required to investigate particular points. Now, it seemed to me of consequence not only that these inquiries should be carefully made, but that a credible, as well as a faithful account should be rendered to the world.”

“Very true,” resumed his friends; “but as there is nothing which you have now told us, in addition to what you have printed, which is not strictly true, while the suppressed stories are certainly very entertaining, why should you wantonly deprive your book of so much that would recommend it still more to general favour?”

“There is nothing wanton in what I have done,” answered the traveller; “indeed, it

is precisely because I believed it would have had no such good effect as you suppose, that I have kept out the matters alluded to. It might, indeed, have gained for the work a little more temporary popularity; but that was not what I desired. At all events, I had, as I conceived, a still higher duty to perform. Being sent to execute a given service, I performed my task to the best of my ability. But on returning, I felt I had another obligation to attend to, not less binding, which was, to give such an account as, besides being strictly true, should carry with it such evidence of its own good faith, as might insure every part of my narrative being credited. These stories, however, which I venture to tell you only because you have known me all my life, I have shrunk from repeating to the world, whose knowledge of my character is drawn from this book alone. In short, I did not feel that I was at liberty to shake my own credit, or even to risk its being shaken, by relating anecdotes so much out of the ordinary line of events as some of these adven-

tures are. As a servant of the public in the great field of discovery, I considered my character for veracity as part of their property, which was not to be trifled with, merely to make idle people laugh or stare a little more. And I feared, that even one doubtful point in such a work, no matter how small, or how true, might have weakened the authority of the whole; and this I did not choose to hazard."

After Park's death, and when a biographical sketch of this most amiable and persevering traveller was in the course of preparation, one of this circle of friends, of a very retentive memory for such things, was applied to for these suppressed anecdotes, the existence of which had, somehow or other, transpired. After a moment's reflection, he said—

"No!—I won't repeat one word of them to you. If my friend Park, in his soberest and most reflecting moments, considered it proper to keep these things out of his book, and betrayed them even to his intimates only over a glass of toddy, I consider we

should not be acting a generous part by his memory to publish them after he is gone, though we are convinced they are all quite true."

After preparing the above adventure of the whale's leap for the press, I felt, on Park's principle, a certain hesitation as to trusting it before the public; but in order to fortify myself by an authority of the highest rank in whaling matters, I wrote the following letter to my friend Captain Scoresby:—

" More than twenty-eight years ago, I saw a whale leap right out of the sea, in Murray's anchorage at Bermuda. The depth of water, if I recollect right, was about ten fathoms, and he had, somehow or other, got inside the barrier of coral reefs which gird these islands on the north. When the whale was at his greatest elevation, his back may have been twenty or thirty feet above the surface of the water, and at that moment he was in a horizontal position. His length could not have been less, I should imagine,

than fifty or sixty feet. As I never saw such a thing before or since, I am a little afraid of relating it, and have no mind to risk my credit by telling a story too big to be swallowed by the average run of gullets, however true in point of fact. You will oblige me, therefore, very much, by telling me whether, in the course of your extensive experience, you have seen one or more such incidents. If not, I fear my story of the whale's jump at Bermuda must be kept out of a little work I am now preparing for the use of young folks. But if I have your authority to back me, the anecdote shall stand, and so take its chance for being valuable in the way of information."

To this I received the following reply from Captain Scoresby, who, as all the world will admit, is the highest authority on such questions:—

"Liverpool, 25th August, 1830.

* * * * *

"And now having come to the subject, which, I allow, is one of magnitude, I have

much pleasure in being able to speak to the point, in attestation of the not infrequency of the exhibition of the huge leaps which you witnessed, however ignorance might charge it as 'very like a whale.' Whilst engaged in the northern whale fishery, I witnessed many similar exploits of the whales in their frisks. Generally, they were of a middle size; but I think I have seen instances of full-grown fish, of forty or fifty feet in length, forgetting their usual gravity, and making out these odd exhibitions of their whole form from head to tail. Certainly, I have several times seen whales leap so high out of the water as to be completely in air, which, reckoning from the surface of the back (the real extent of the leap), could scarcely be less than twenty feet, and possibly might be more. I have, at different times, gone in pursuit of these frolicsome fish; but in all cases they avoided either catastrophe—the leaping upon the boat, or allowing the boat to pull upon them.

“By the way, whilst the breathing of the whale has been magnified into a resemblance

of water-works, to the abuse of the credulous, the frolic feats of the leaping whales have been neglected as a source of interest. In referring to my account of the arctic regions, I perceive the fact is named, but with little commentary for general amusement.”*

* For further information on this point, see Capt. Scoresby's exceedingly curious and valuable Account of the Whale Fishery in the Arctic Regions, vol. i. p. 467.

CHAPTER V.

MIDSHIPMEN'S PRANKS.

DURING the long winters of our slothful discontent at Bermuda, caused by the Peace of Amiens, the grand resource, both of the idle and the busy, amongst all classes of the Leander's officers, was shooting—that never-ending, still-beginning amusement, which Englishmen carry to the remotest corners of the habitable globe—popping away in all countries, thinking only of the game, and often but too reckless of the prejudices or fears of the natives. This propensity is indulged even in those uninhabited regions of the earth which are visited only once in an age; and if Captain Parry had reached the Pole, he would unquestionably have had a shot at the axis of the earth!

In the mean time, the officers and the young gentlemen of the flag-ship at Bermuda, in the beginning of 1803, I suppose to keep their hands in for the war which they saw brewing, and hourly prayed for, were constantly blazing away amongst the cedar groves and orange plantations of those fairy islands, which appeared more and more beautiful after every such excursion. The midshipmen were generally obliged to content themselves with knocking down the blue and the red birds with the ship's pistols, charged with His Majesty's gunpowder, and, for want of small shot, with slugs formed by cutting up His Majesty's musket-bullets. The officers aimed at higher game, and were, of course, better provided with guns and ammunition. Several of these gentlemen had brought from England some fine dogs—high-bred pointers; while the middies also, not to be outdone, must needs have a dog of their own: they recked very little of what breed; but some sort of animal they said they must have.

I forget how we procured the strange-looking beast whose services we contrived

to engage; but, having once obtained him, we were not slow in giving him our best affections. It is true, he was as ugly as any thing could possibly be. His colour was a dirty, reddish yellow; and while a part of his hair twisted itself up in curls, a part hung down, quite straight, almost to the ground. He was utterly useless for all the purposes of real sport, but quite good enough to furnish the mids with plenty of fun when they went on shore—in chasing pigs, barking at old, white-headed negroes, and other amusements, suited to the exalted taste and habits of the rising generation of officers.

People will differ as to the merits of dogs; but we had no doubts as to the great superiority of ours over all the others on board, though the name we gave him certainly implied no such confidence on our part. After a full deliberation, it was decided to call him Shakings. Now, it must be explained that shakings is the name given to small fragments of rope yarns, odds and ends of cordage, bits of oakum, old lanyards, — in short, to any kind of refuse arising out of the wear

and tear of the ropes. This odd name was perhaps bestowed on our beautiful favourite in consequence of his colour not being very dissimilar to that of well-tarred Russia hemp; while the resemblance was increased by many a dab of pitch, which his rough coat imbibed from the seams between the planks of the deck, in the hot weather.

If old Shakings was no great beauty, he was, at least, the most companionable of dogs; and though he dearly loved the midshipmen, and was dearly beloved by them in return, he had enough of the animal in his composition to take a still higher pleasure in the society of his own kind. So that, when the high-bred, shewy pointers belonging to the officers came on board, after a shooting excursion, Mr. Shakings lost no time in applying to them for the news. The pointers, who liked this sort of familiarity very well, gave poor Shakings all sorts of encouragement. Not so their masters;—they could not bear to see such an abominable cur, as they called our favourite, at once so cursedly dirty and so utterly useless, mixing with their sleek and

well-kept animals. At first their dislike was confined to such insulting expressions as these; then it came to an occasional kick, or a knock on the nose with the but-end of a fowling-piece; and lastly, to a sound cut with the hunting-whip.

Shakings, who instinctively knew his place, took all this, like a sensible fellow, in good part; while the mids, when out of hearing of the higher powers, uttered curses both loud and deep against the tyranny and oppression exercised against an animal which, in their fond fancy, was declared to be worth all the dogs in the ward-room put together. They were little prepared, however, for the stroke which soon fell upon them, perhaps in consequence of these very murmurs. To their great horror and indignation, one of the lieutenants, provoked at some liberty which Master Shakings had taken with his newly-polished boot, called out, one morning,—

“Man the jolly-boat, and land that infernal, dirty, ugly beast of a dog belonging to the young gentlemen!”

“Where I shall take him to, sir?” asked the strokesman of the boat.

“Oh, any where; pull to the nearest part of the shore, and pitch him out on the rocks. He’ll shift for himself, I have no doubt.” So off went poor dear Shakings!

If a stranger had come into the midshipmen’s birth at that moment, he might have thought His Majesty’s naval service was about to be broken up. All allegiance, discipline, or subordination, seemed utterly cancelled by this horrible act. Many were the execrations hurled upwards at the offending ‘knobs,’ who, we, thought, were combining to make our lives miserable. Some of our party voted for writing a letter of remonstrance to the admiral against this unheard-of outrage; and one youth swore deeply that he would leave the service, unless justice were obtained. But as he had been known to swear the same thing half-a-dozen times every day since he joined the ship, no great notice was taken of this pledge. Another declared, upon his word of honour, that such an act was enough to make a man turn Turk, and fly

his country! At last, by general agreement, it was decided that we should not do a bit of duty, or even stir from our seats, till we obtained redress for our grievances. However, while we were in the very act of vowing mutiny and disobedience, the hands were turned up to 'furl sails!' upon which the whole party, totally forgetting their magnanimous resolution, scudded up the ladders, and jumped into their stations with more than usual alacrity, wisely thinking, that the moment for actual revolt had not yet arrived.

A better scheme than throwing up the service, or writing to the admiral, or turning Mussulmen, was afterwards concocted. The midshipmen who went on shore in the next boat easily got hold of poor Shakings, who was howling on the steps of the watering-place. In order to conceal him, he was stuffed neck and crop, into the captain's cloak-bag, brought safely on board, and restored once more to the bosom of his friends.

In spite of all we could do, however, to keep Master Shakings below, he presently found his way to the quarter-deck, to re-

ceive the congratulations of the other dogs. There he was soon detected by the higher powers, and very shortly afterwards trundled over the gangway, and again tossed on the beach. Upon this occasion he was honoured by the presence of one of his own masters, a midddy, sent upon this express duty, who was specially desired to land the brute, and not to bring him on board again. Of course, this particular youngster did not bring the dog off; but, before night, somehow or other, old Shakings was snoring away in grand chorus with his more fashionable friends the pointers, and dreaming no evil, before the door of the very officer's cabin whose beautifully-polished boots he had brushed by so rudely in the morning,—an offence that had led to his banishment.

This second return of our dog was too much. The whole posse of us were sent for on the quarter-deck, and in very distinct terms positively ordered not to bring Shakings on board again. These injunctions having been given, this wretched victim, as we termed him, of oppression, was once more

landed amongst the cedar groves. This time he remained a full week on shore ; but how or when he found his way off again, no one ever knew ; at least no one chose to divulge. Never was there any thing like the mutual joy felt by Shakings and his two dozen masters. He careered about the ship, barked and yelled with delight, and, in his raptures, actually leaped, with his dirty feet, on the milk-white duck trousers of the disgusted officers, who heartily wished him at the bottom of the anchorage ! Thus the poor beast unwittingly contributed to accelerate his hapless fate, by this ill-timed shew of confidence in those who were then plotting his ruin. If he had kept his paws to himself, and staid quietly in the dark recesses of the cock-pit, wings, cable-tiers, and other wild regions, the secrets of which were known only to the inhabitants of our sub-marine world, all might yet have been well.

We had a grand jollification on the night of Shakings' restoration ; and his health was in the very act of being drunk, with three times three, when the officer of the watch,

hearing an uproar below, the sounds of which were conveyed distinctly up the wind-sail, sent down to put our lights out; and we were forced to march off, growling, to our hammocks.

Next day, to our surprise and horror, old Shakings was not to be seen or heard of. We searched every where, interrogated the coxswains of all the boats, and cross-questioned the marines who had been sentries during the night on the forecastle, gangways, and poop; but all in vain!—no trace of Shakings could be found.

At length, the idea began to gain ground amongst us, that the poor beast had been put an end to by some diabolical means; and our ire mounted accordingly. This suspicion seemed the more natural, as the officers said not a word about the matter, nor even asked us what we had done with our dog. While we were in this state of excitement and distraction for our loss, one of the midshipmen, who had some drollery in his composition, gave a new turn to the expression of our thoughts.

This gentleman, who was more than twice as old as most of us, say about thirty, had won the affections of the whole of our class, by the gentleness of his manners, and the generous part he always took on our side. He bore amongst us the pet name of Daddy; and certainly he was like a father to those of us who, like myself, were quite adrift in the ship, without any one to look after them. He was a man of talents and classical education; but he had entered the Navy far too late in life ever to take to it cordially. His habits, indeed, had become so rigid, that they could never be made to bend to the mortifying kind of discipline which it appears essential every officer should run through, but which only the young and light-hearted can brook. Our worthy friend, accordingly, with all his abilities, taste, and acquirements, never seemed at home on board ship; and unless a man can reach this point of liking for the sea, he is better on shore. At all events, old Daddy cared more about his books than about the blocks, and delighted much more in giving us as-

sistance in our literary pursuits, and trying to teach us to be useful, than in rendering himself a proficient in those professional mysteries, which he never hoped to practise in earnest himself.

What this very interesting person's early history was, we never could find out; nor why he entered the Navy; nor how it came, that a man of his powers and accomplishments should have been kept back so long. Indeed, the youngsters never inquired too closely into these matters, being quite contented to have the advantage of his protection against the oppression of some of the other oldsters, who occasionally bullied them. Upon all occasions of difficulty, we were in the habit of clustering round him, to tell our grievances, great and small, with the certainty of always finding in him that great desideratum in calamity — a patient and friendly listener.

It will easily be supposed, that our kind Daddy took more than usual interest in this affair of Shakings, and that he was applied to by us at every stage of the transaction.

He was sadly perplexed, of course, when the dog was finally missing; and, for some days, he could give us no comfort, nor suggest any mode of revenge which was not too dangerous for his young friends to put in practice. He prudently observed, that as we had no certainty to go upon, it would be foolish to get ourselves into a serious scrape for nothing at all.

“There can be no harm, however,” he continued, in his dry and slightly-sarcastic way, which all who knew him will recollect as well as if they saw him now, drawing his hand slowly across his mouth and chin, “There can be no harm, my boys, in putting the other dogs in mourning for their dear departed friend Shakings; for, whatever is come of him, he is lost to them as well as to us, and his memory ought to be duly respected.”

This hint was no sooner given than a cry was raised for crape, and every chest and bag ransacked, to procure badges of mourning. The pointers were speedily rigged up with a large bunch of black, tied in a

handsome bow upon the left leg of each, just above the knee. The joke took immediately. The officers could not help laughing; for, though we considered them little better than fiends at that moment of excitement, they were, in fact, except in this instance, the best-natured and most indulgent men I remember to have sailed with. They, of course, ordered the crape to be instantly cut off from the dogs' legs; and one of the officers remarked to us, seriously, that as we had now had our piece of fun out, there were to be no more such tricks.

Off we scampered, to consult old Daddy what was to be done next, as we had been positively ordered not to meddle any more with the dogs.

"Put the pigs in mourning," he said.

All our crape was expended by this time; but this want was soon supplied by men whose trade it is to discover resources in difficulty. With a generous devotion to the cause of public spirit, one of these juvenile mutineers pulled off his black handkerchief, and, tearing it in pieces, gave a portion to

each of the circle, and away we all started to put into practice this new suggestion of our director-general of mischief.

The row which ensued in the pig-sty was prodigious — for in those days, hogs were allowed a place on board a man-of-war, — a custom most wisely abolished of late years, since nothing can be more out of character with any ship than such nuisances. As these matters of taste and cleanliness were nothing to us, we did not intermit our noisy labour till every one of the grünters had his armlet of such crape as we had been able to muster. We then watched our opportunity, and opened the door so as to let out the whole herd of swine on the main-deck, just at a moment when a group of the officers were standing on the fore part of the quarter-deck. Of course, the liberated pigs, delighted with their freedom, passed in review under the very nose of our superiors, each with his mourning knot displayed, grunting or squealing along, as if it was their express object to attract attention to their domestic sorrow for the loss of Shakings.

The officers were excessively provoked, as they could not help seeing that all this was affording entertainment, at their expense, to the whole crew ; for, although the men took no part in this touch of insubordination, they were ready enough, in those idle times of the weary, weary peace, to catch at any species of distraction or devilry, no matter what, to compensate for the loss of their wonted occupation of pommeling their enemies.

The matter, therefore, necessarily became rather serious ; and the whole gang of us being sent for on the quarter-deck, we were ranged in a line, each with his toes at the edge of a plank, according to the orthodox fashion of these gregarious scoldings, technically called ‘ toe-the-line matches.’ We were then given to understand that our proceedings were impertinent, and, after the orders we had received, highly offensive. It was with much difficulty that either party could keep their countenances during this official lecture, for, while it was going on, the sailors were endeavouring, by the direction of the officers, to remove the bits of

silk from the legs of the pigs. If, however, it be difficult — as most difficult we found it — to put a hog into mourning, it is a job ten times more troublesome to take him out again. Such at least is the fair inference from these two experiments — the only ones perhaps on record ; for it cost half the morning to undo what we had effected in less than an hour — to say nothing of the unceasing and outrageous uproar which took place along the decks, especially under the guns, and even under the coppers, forward in the galley, where two or three of the youngest pigs had wedged themselves, apparently resolved to die rather than submit to the degradation of being deprived of their sable badges.

All this was very creditable to the memory of poor Shakings ; but, in the course of the day, the real secret of this extraordinary difficulty of taking a pig out of mourning was discovered. Two of the mids were detected in the very fact of tying on a bit of black buntin to the leg of a sow, from which the seamen declared they had already cut

off crape and silk enough to have made her a complete suit of black.

As soon as these fresh offences were reported, the whole party of us were ordered to the mast-head as a punishment. Some were sent to sit on the topmast cross-trees, some on the top-gallant yard-arms, and one small gentleman being perched at the jib-boom end, was very properly balanced abaft by another little culprit at the extremity of the gaff. In this predicament we were hung out to dry for six or eight hours, as old Daddy remarked to us with a grin, when we were called down as the night fell.

Our persevering friend, being rather provoked at the punishment of his young flock, now set to work to discover the real fate of Shakings. It soon occurred to him, that if the dog had really been made away with, as he shrewdly suspected, the butcher, in all probability, must have had a hand in his murder; accordingly, he sent for the man in the evening, when the following dialogue took place: —

“ Well, butcher, will you have a glass of grog to-night ? ”

“Thank you, sir, thank you. Here’s your honour’s health!” said the other, after smoothing down his hair, and pulling an immense quid of tobacco out of his mouth.

Old Daddy observed the peculiar relish with which the butcher took his glass; and mixing another, a good deal more potent, placed it before the fellow, and continued the conversation in these words:

“I tell you what it is, Mr. Butcher—you are as humane a man as any in the ship, I dare say; but, if required, you know well, that you must do your duty, whether it is upon sheep or hogs?”

“Surely, sir.”

“Or upon dogs, either?” suddenly asked the inquisitor.

“I don’t know about that,” stammered the butcher, quite taken by surprise, and thrown all aback.

“Well—well,” said Daddy, “here’s another glass for you—a stiff north-wester. Come! tell us all about it now. How did you get rid of the dog?—of Shakings, I mean?”

“Why, sir,” said the peaching rogue, “I put him in a bag—a bread bag, sir.”

“Well!—what then?”

“I tied up the mouth, and put him overboard—out of the midship lower-deck port, sir.”

“Yes—but he would not sink?” said Daddy.

“Oh, sir,” cried the butcher, now entering fully into the merciless spirit of his trade, “I put a four-and-twenty-pound shot into the bag along with Shakings.”

“Did you?—Then, Master Butcher, all I can say is, you are as precious a rascal as ever went about unchanged. There—drink your grog, and be off with you!”

Next morning when the officers were assembled at breakfast in the ward-room, the door of the captain of marines’ cabin was suddenly opened, and that officer, half shaved, and laughing through a collar of soap-suds, stalked out, with a paper in his hand.

“Here,” he exclaimed, “is a copy of verses, which I found just now in my basin. I can’t tell how they got there, nor what they are about;—but you shall judge.”

So he read the two following stanzas of doggerel :—

“ When the Northern Confed’racy threatened our shores,
And roused Albion’s Lion, reclining to sleep,
Preservation was taken of all the King’s Stores,
Nor so much as a *Rope Yarn* was launched in the
deep.

“ But now it is Peace, other hopes are in view,
And all active service as light as a feather,
The Stores may be d—d, and humanity too,
For SHAKINGS and *Shot* are thrown o’erboard
together !”

I need hardly say in what quarter of the ship this biting morsel of cock-pit satire was concocted, nor indeed who wrote it, for there was no one but our good Daddy who was equal to such a flight. About midnight, an urchin—who shall be nameless—was thrust out of one of the after-ports of the lower deck, from which he clambered up to the marine officer’s port, and the sash happening to have been lowered down on the gun, the epigram, copied by another of the youngsters, was pitched into the soldier’s basin.

The wisest thing would have been for the

officers to have said nothing about the matter, and let it blow by. But angry people are seldom judicious—so they made a formal complaint to the captain, who, to do him justice, was not a little puzzled how to settle the affair. The reputed author, however, was called up, and the captain said to him—

“ Pray, sir, are you the writer of these lines?”

“ I am, sir,” he replied, after a little consideration.

“ Then—all I can say is,” remarked the captain, “ they are clever enough, in their way—but take my advice, and write no more such verses.”

So the affair ended. The satirist took the captain’s hint in good part, and confined his pen to topics below the surface of the water.

As in the course of a few months the war broke out, there was no longer time for such nonsense; and our generous protector, old Daddy, some time after this affair of Shakings took place, was sent off to Halifax, in charge of a prize. His orders were, if possible, to rejoin his own ship, the Leander,

then lying at the entrance of New York Harbour, just within Sandy Hook light-house.

Our good old friend, accordingly having completed his mission, and delivered his prize to the authorities at Halifax, took his passage in the British packet sailing from thence to the port in which we lay. As this ship sailed past us, on her way to the city of New York, we ascertained, to our great joy, that our excellent Daddy was actually on board of her. Some hours afterwards, the pilot-boat was seen coming to us, and, though it was in the middle of the night, all the younger mids came hastily on deck to welcome their worthy messmate back again to his ship.

It was late in October, and the wind blew fresh from the north-westward, so that the ship, riding to the ebb, had her head directed towards the Narrows, between Staten Land and Long Island: consequently, the pilot-boat,—one of those beautiful vessels so well known to every visitor of the American coast,—came flying down upon us, with the wind nearly right aft. Our joyous party were

all assembled on the quarter-deck, looking anxiously at the boat as she swept past us. She then luffed round, in order to sheer alongside, at which moment the main-sail jibed, as was to be expected. It was obvious, however, that something more had taken place than the pilot had looked for, since the boat, instead of ranging up to us, was brought right round on her heel, and went off again upon a wind on the other tack. The tide carried her out of sight for a few minutes, but she was soon alongside, when we learned, to our inexpressible grief and consternation, that, on the main-boom of the pilot-boat swinging over, it had accidentally struck our poor friend, and pitched him headlong overboard. Being encumbered with his great-coat, the pockets of which, as we afterwards learned, were loaded with his young companions' letters, brought from England by this packet, he in vain struggled to catch hold of the boat, and then sunk to rise no more!

CHAPTER VI.

DIVERSITIES IN DISCIPLINE.

It was our fortune in the *Leander* to change captains very frequently; and, as most of the plans of those officers were dissimilar, the perplexity which such variations produced is not to be described. Fortunately, however, there is so much uniformity in the routine of naval discipline, that, in spite of any variety in the systems established by a succession of commanding officers, things do somehow contrive to run on to their final purpose pretty well. It is true the interests of the service often suffer for a time, and in a small degree; but public-spirited and vigilant officers know well how to extract lasting profit even from the unsettled, revolutionary state of affairs which is apt to occur at these periods. On the other hand, it is at these

times also that the class called skulkers most easily shirk their duty, while those who really like their business, are even at the time more certain of being favourably noticed than at any other moment ; because it becomes obvious, that, without them, things would not go on at all. Although the variety of methods, therefore, introduced by different captains in succession, is apt to distract and unhinge the discipline, it certainly teaches much that is useful, to those who are on the alert, and who wish to improve.

I was too young and inexperienced, at that time, to profit by these repeated changes, as I might have done had I been duly aware that there were so many advantages to be found in observing their effects. And it is chiefly on this account that I now mention the circumstance, in order to recommend young men to avoid the very common practice, on board ship, of despising, in such sweeping style, all the plans introduced by the new officer, and lauding to the skies the practices of the captain who has been super-

seded. It is not such an easy affair as they suppose, let me tell them, to regulate the internal affairs of a ship; and, however clever they may fancy themselves, they will find their best interest in trying, upon these occasions, not so much to detect points of censure, as to discover, and impress on their memory, topics of practical utility, hints for the solution of future difficulties, and methods of turning their own resources to professional account.

Even at this distance of time, and although most of the officers I am now speaking of have long since been dead and gone, I still feel that it would be a sort of disrespectful liberty in me, and perhaps not very useful, to point out, with any minuteness of detail, those particular points in their modes of management which struck me as being faulty at the time, or which now seem worthy of commendation. I shall merely mention a trait of character by which two of them were contradistinguished from each other; and I do so the more readily, as the example seems to contain a lesson nearly as applicable, perhaps,

to domestic matters, as to those of a stern profession like the Navy.

Whenever one of these commanding officers came on board the ship, after an absence of a day or two, and likewise when he made his periodical round of the decks after breakfast, his constant habit was to cast his eye about him, in order to discover what was wrong—to detect the smallest thing that was out of its place—in a word, to find as many grounds for censure as possible. This constituted, in his opinion, the best preventive to neglect, on the part of those under his command; and he acted in this crusty way on principle.

The attention of the other officer, on the contrary, appeared to be directed chiefly to those points which he could approve of. For instance, he would stop as he went along, from time to time, and say to the first lieutenant, "Now, these ropes are very nicely arranged; this mode of stowing the men's bags and mess-kids is just as I wish to see it." While the officer first described would not only pass by these well-arranged things,

which had cost hours of labour to put in order, quite unnoticed, but would not be easy till his eye had caught hold of some casual omission, which afforded an opening for disapprobation. One of these captains would remark to the first lieutenant, as he walked along, "How white and clean you have got the decks to-day! I think you must have been at them all the morning, to have got them into such order." The other, in similar circumstances, but eager to find fault, would say, even if the decks were as white and clean as drifted snow—"I wish to Heaven, sir, you would teach these sweepers to clear away that bundle of shakings!" pointing to a bit of rope yarn, not half an inch long, left under the truck of a gun.

It seemed, in short, as if nothing was more vexatious to one of these officers, than to discover things so correct as to afford him no good opportunity for finding fault; while to the other, the necessity of censuring really appeared a punishment to himself. Under the one, accordingly, we all worked with cheerfulness, from a conviction that nothing

we did in a proper way would miss approbation. But our duty under the other, being performed in fear, seldom went on with much spirit. We had no personal satisfaction in doing things correctly, from the certainty of getting no commendation. The great chance, also, of being censured, even in those cases where we had laboured most industriously to merit approbation, broke the spring of all generous exertion, and, by teaching us to anticipate blame, as a matter of course, defeated the very purpose of punishment when it fell upon us. The case being quite hopeless, the chastisement seldom conduced either to the amendment of an offender, or to the prevention of offences. But what seemed the oddest thing of all was, that these men were both as kind-hearted as could be, or, if there were any difference, the fault-finder was the better natured, and in matters not professional the more indulgent of the two. The line of conduct I have described was purely a matter of official system, not at all of feeling. Yet, as it then appeared, and still appears to me, nothing could be more com-

pletely erroneous than the snarling method of the one, or more decidedly calculated to do good than the approving style of the other. It has, in fact, always appeared to me an absurdity, to make any real distinction between public and private matters in these respects. Nor is there the smallest reason why the same principle of civility, or consideration, or by whatever name that quality be called by which the feelings of others are consulted, should not modify professional intercourse quite as much as it does that of the freest society, without any risk that the requisite strictness of discipline would be hurt by an attention to good manners.

This desire of discovering that things are right, accompanied by a sincere wish to express that approbation, are habits which, in almost every situation in life, have the best possible effects in practice. They are vastly more agreeable certainly to the superior himself, whether he be the colonel of a regiment, the captain of a ship, or the head of a house; for the mere act of approving, seldom fails to put a man's thoughts into that pleasant

train which predisposes him to be habitually pleased, and this frame of mind alone, essentially helps the propagation of a similar cheerfulness amongst all those who are about him. It requires, indeed, but a very little experience of soldiers or sailors, children, servants, or any other kind of dependents, or even of companions and superiors, to shew that this good-humour, on the part of those whom we wish to influence, is the best possible coadjutor to our schemes of management, whatever these may be.

The approving system is also, beyond all others, the most stimulating and agreeable for the inferior to work under. Instead of depressing and humiliating him, it has a constant tendency to make him think well of himself, so long as he is usefully employed; and as soon as this point is gained, but seldom before, he will be in a right frame of mind to think well of others, and to look with hearty zeal to the execution of his duty. All the burdens of labour are then lightened, by the conviction that they are well directed; and, instead of his severest tasks

being distasteful, they may often, under the cheering eye of a superior who shews himself anxious to commend what is right, become the most substantial pleasures of his life.

I need scarcely dwell longer on this subject, by shewing that another material advantage of the approving practice consists in the greater certainty and better quality of the work done by willing hands, compared to that which is crushed out of people by force. No man understood this distinction better than Lord Nelson, who acted upon it uniformly, — with what wonderful success we all know. Some one was discussing this question with him one day, and pointing out the eminent success which had attended the opposite plan, followed by another great officer, Lord St. Vincent:—

“Very true,” said Lord Nelson; “but, in cases where he used a hatchet, I took a pen-knife.”

After all, however, it is but too true, that, adopt what course we will of commendations or other rewards, we must still call in punish-

ments to our assistance, from time to time. But there can be little doubt that any well-regulated system of cheerfulness, and just approbation of what is right, followed not from caprice, but as an express duty, gives into our hands the means of correcting things which are wrong, with greater effect, and at a much less cost of suffering, than if our general habit were that of always finding fault. For it is obvious, that when affairs are carried on upon the cheerful principle above described, the mere act of withholding praise becomes a sharp censure in itself—and this alone is sufficient to recommend its use. It doubles the work done, by quickening the hands of the labourers—doubles the happiness of all parties, both high and low—and it may also be said to double our means of punishing with effect; for it superadds a class of chastisements, dependent solely upon the interruption of favours, not upon the infliction of actual pain. The practical application of these rules to the ordinary course of naval discipline I shall probably have frequent opportunities of shewing.

In the mean time, I shall merely remark, that in every situation in life, perhaps without any exception, much of our happiness or misery, as well as much of our success in the world, depends less upon the circumstances about us, than upon the manner in which, as a matter of habit and principle, we choose to view them. In almost every case there is something to approve of, quite as distinct, if we wish to see it, as there is of censure, though it may not otherwise be so conspicuous. It will, of course, very often be quite necessary to reprobate, without any sort of qualification, what passes before us; still, without in the smallest degree compromising our sense of what is wrong, there will always be a way—if there be a will—of expressing such sentiments as shall not be unsuitable to the golden precept which recommends us to take a cheerful view of things.

There is one practical maxim, trite, indeed, though too little acted upon, but which bears so directly on this subject, that I wish exceedingly to urge it upon the notice of my

young friends, from its being calculated to prove of much use to them in the business, as well as the true pleasures of life. In dealing with other men—no matter what their rank or station may be—we should consider not so much what they deserve at our hands, as what course is most suitable for us to follow.

“ My lord,” says Polonius to Hamlet, in speaking of the poor players, “ I will use them according to their desert.”

“ Odd’s bodikin, man, much better !” is the answer of the judicious and kind-hearted prince. “ Use every man after his desert, and who shall ’scape whipping ? Use them after your own honour and dignity : the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty.”

Most people, however, reverse this beautiful maxim, which breathes the very soul of practical charity, and study to behave to others in a manner suitable to the desert of those persons, while they leave out of the question entirely the propriety and dignity of their own conduct, as if that were a

minor, and not the primary consideration! Does not this occur every time we lose our temper? At all events, the maxim applies with peculiar force on board ship, where the character and conduct of every officer are daily and hourly exposed to the searching scrutiny of a great number of persons who have often little else to do but watch the behaviour of one another.

It may safely be asserted, indeed, that in no instance whatsoever can we exercise any permanent or useful influence over the opinions, feelings, or conduct of others, unless in our intercourse with them we demean ourselves in a manner suitable to our own station; and this, in fact, which, in the long run, is the measure of all efficient authority, is also the principal circumstance which gives one man the ascendancy over another, his equal in talents and information, and whose opportunities are alike. It is probably to the same class of things that one man owes his transcendent popularity and success in society, while another, equally gifted, and enjoying similar opportunities, is shunned

or neglected. If we hear a person constantly finding fault—however much reason he may have on his side—we take no pleasure in his company. We soon discover, that if there be two things presented to his view, one which may be made the subject of praise, the other of censure, he will catch at the disagreeable point, and dwell upon it, to the exclusion of that which is agreeable, although the circumstances may not be such as to have required him to express any comparative opinion at all. And as the taste for finding fault unfortunately extends to every thing, small as well as great, constant food is sure to be furnished, at every turn, to supply this disparaging appetite. If the sky be bright and clear, the growler reminds you that the streets are dirty under foot;—if the company be well selected, the dinner good, the music choice, and all things gay and cheerful, he forces upon your attention the closeness of the rooms, the awkward dress of one of the party, or the want of tune in one of the strings of the harp. In speaking of the qualities of a friend, your true snarler is

certain to pick out the faults, to dash the merits; and even when talking of himself, he dwells with a morbid pleasure on his want of success in society, his losses in fortune, and his scanty hopes of doing any better in future. The sunshine of day is pale moonlight to such a man. If he sees a Sir Joshua, it is sure to be faded;—the composition and execution he takes care not to look at. If he hears of a great warrior or statesman, whose exploits have won the applause of the whole world, he qualifies the admiration by reference to some early failure. In short, when we find ourselves in such a person's company, we feel certain that the bad side of every thing will inevitably be exposed to us. And what is the result? Do we not shun him? And if we should have the means of introducing him to others, or of putting him into a situation to benefit himself and the public, are we not shy of trusting him with a degree of power which he appears determined shall not be productive of good?

The truth is, that by an involuntary pro-

cess of the mind, we come to judge of others, not nearly so much by direct examination as by means of the reflected light which is sent back from the objects surrounding them. If we observe, therefore, that a man's general taste is to find fault rather than to be pleased, we inevitably form the conclusion that he is really not worth pleasing; and as he is not likely to gratify others, we keep him, as much as we can, out of the way of those we esteem.

In very many cases, however, probably in most cases, this temper is merely a habit, and may, at bottom, often be quite unsuitable to the real character. So much so, that if the opposite practice, from whatever motive, be adopted by the same person, even where the disposition may fundamentally not be good, the result will often be a thousand times more amiable and useful, not only to the party himself, but to all those with whom he has any dealings; and his companionship will then be courted, instead of being shunned, as it had been before.

In the free and open world of busy life,

men are generally made so fully sensible, sooner or later, of the truth of these maxims, that few of the growling tribe are ever known to advance far in life. But on board ship, where the distinctions of rank are strongly marked, and the measure of each man's authority exactly determined by established laws and usages, officers are frequently much too slow to discover that the principles above adverted to are applicable to their own case; and thus they sometimes fling away advantages of the highest price, which lie easily within their reach, and adopt, instead, the cold, stern, and often inefficient operations of mere technical discipline.

This very technical discipline, indeed, like any other machinery, is admirable if well worked, but useless if its powers are misapplied. It is not the mere elastic force of the steam that gives impulse to the engine, but a due regulation of that elasticity. So it is with the use of that mysterious, I had almost said magical sort of power, by which the operations of moral discipline are carried on, especially at sea, where the different

component parts of the machine are so closely fitted to one another, and made to act in such uniform order, that no one part can go far wrong without deranging the whole.

I would fain, however, avoid narrowing the principle to any walk of life, though its operation may be more obvious afloat than on shore. And any young person, just setting out in the world, whatever his profession be, will do well to recollect, that his own eventual success, as well as happiness in the meantime, will mainly depend upon his resolute determination to acquire the habit of being pleased with what he meets, rather than of being sharp-sighted in the discovery of what is disagreeable. I may add, that there is little or no danger of the habit recommended degenerating into duplicity; for, in order to its being either useful in the long run, or even agreeable at the moment, its practice, like every thing else that is good, must be guided throughout by sterling principle.

CHAPTER VII.

GEOLOGY—NAUTICAL SQUABBLES.

ABOUT this period I began to dabble a little in geology, for which science I had acquired a taste by inheritance, and, in some degree, from companionship with more than one of the Scottish school, who, at the beginning of this century, were considered more than half-cracked, merely for supporting the igneous theory of Dr. Hutton, which, with certain limitations and extensions, and after thirty years of controversy, experiment, and observation, appears to be now pretty generally adopted. Sailors, indeed, have excellent opportunities of making geological observations, for they have the advantage of seeing Nature, as it were, with her face washed, more frequently than most other

observers ; and can seldom visit any coast, new or old, without having it in their power to bring off something interesting to inquirers in this branch of knowledge. That is, supposing they have eyes to see, and capacity to describe, what meets their observation. Some people cannot go beyond a single fact or two actually lying under their very noses ; and you might as well expect them to fly as to combine these particulars, or to apply them to the purposes of science at large. Others, again, from the same want of accurate comprehension, or from sheer mental indolence, jump at once from the most trifling local circumstances to the broadest and most unwarranted generalisations.

It would be difficult, if not quite impossible, by dint of any number of precepts, to drive geology, or any other kind of instruction, into the noddles of some folks ; so that it will often seem an even chance, with a blockhead, whether, when he is obliged to think, he will generalise too much or too little. I remember, for example, once lying at anchor, for some weeks, in the harbour

of Vigo, on the west coast of Spain, during which time, for a piece of fun, the first lieutenant desired one of the youngsters on board to write a letter to his friends at home.

“What in the world, sir, am I to say?” asked the noodle of a fellow, after pondering over the subject for a long time.

“Say?—Why, describe the country, and the manners of the people—tell how they behaved to you.”

To work went the youth, sorely bothered; and though he had been on shore many times, he could extract nothing from his memory. The first lieutenant, however, who was inexorable, insisted upon the letter being written, and locked him up in his cabin till he intimated, by a certain signal, that the epistle was ready for inspection. The following was the result of four hours' painful labour:—

“All Spain is hilly—so is this. The natives all wear wooden shoes, and they are all a set of brutes, of which I take this to witness, that one of them called me a Picaroon.

“I remain, &c.”

Although geology be a topic often intensely interesting on the spot, it is not always easy to give it this character to people at a distance, who care very little whether the world has been baked or boiled, or both, or neither. Most persons, indeed, remain all their lives quite indifferent whether the globe has come into its present shape by what is called Chance, — that is, I suppose, by means which we cannot investigate, and can only guess at, — or whether its various changes are susceptible of philosophical examination, and their history of being recorded with more or less precision. The sound geologist of the present day, it will be observed, professes to have nothing to do with the origin of things, but merely investigates the various physical revolutions which have taken place on the earth's surface, by the instrumentality of natural causes. The great charm of this fascinating science, accordingly, though it may be difficult to say why, consists in the manner in which the Reason and the Imagination are brought together, in regions where two such travellers could hardly have been expected to meet.

Many practical and popular questions also mingle themselves up with the scientific inquiries of geology. I remember, for instance, even when a boy, taking a great interest, on this account, in the plaster of Paris quarries of Nova Scotia. This formation shews itself generally above ground, and is of a dingy white colour, the parts exposed to the air being crumbly or decomposed. The workmen having removed the superincumbent earth, and the rotten rock, as they call it, blast the solid gypsum with gunpowder, and, having broken it into blocks sufficiently small to be handled, sell it to the American dealers. A number of vessels are daily employed in carrying it to New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. In my early notes, I find it gravely stated, as a thing generally understood, that most of this gypsum was sold to the millers in the United States, for the purpose of adulterating their flour! Prejudice apart, however, the fact is quite the reverse of what I believed in my youth; for, by an ingenious system of regulations, the Americans contrive that the best quality should have an

advantage over bad in leaving the country. Such, indeed, is the success of these measures, that I can safely say I never saw a barrel of it that was not excellent.

Besides this capital flour, the Americans export biscuit of a delicious quality to all parts of the globe; and those only who have known the amount of discomfort produced by living on the 'remainder biscuit after a voyage,' perhaps not good of its kind originally, can justly appreciate the luxury of opening a barrel of crackers from New York! By the way, it is a curious and not unimportant fact in nautical affairs, though only discovered of late years, that the best way to keep this description of bread is to exclude the air from it as much as possible. In former times, and even for some years after I entered the navy, the practice was, to open the bread-room frequently, and, by means of funnels made of canvass, called windsails, to force the external air amongst the biscuit, in order, as was supposed, to keep it sweet and fresh. Nothing, it now appears, could have been devised more destructive to it; and the

reason is easily explained. It is only in fine weather that this operation can be performed, at which seasons the external air is generally many degrees hotter than the atmosphere of the bread-room, which, from being low down in the ship, acquires, like a cellar, a pretty uniform temperature. The outer air, from its warmth, and from sweeping along the surface of the sea, is at all times charged with a considerable degree of vapour, the moisture of which is sure to be deposited upon any body it comes in contact with, colder than the air which bears it along. Consequently, the biscuit, when exposed to these humid currents, is rendered damp, and the process of decay, instead of being retarded, is rapidly assisted by the ventilation. This ancient system of airing is now so entirely exploded, that in some ships the biscuit is placed in separate closed cases, in which it is packed like slates, with great care, and the covers are then caulked or sealed down. By this contrivance no more biscuit need be exposed than is absolutely necessary for the immediate consumption of the crew. If I am

not mistaken, this is the general practice in American men-of-war, and it certainly ought to be adopted by us.

I remember once, when sailing in the Pacific Ocean, about a couple of hundred leagues to the south of the coast of Peru, falling in with a ship, and buying some American biscuit which had been more than a year from home. It was enclosed in a new wine puncheon, which was, of course perfectly air-tight. When we opened it, the biscuit smelled as fresh and new as if it had been taken from the oven only the day before. Even its flavour and crispness were preserved so entire, that I thought we should never have done cranching it.

We were not particularly fortunate in making many captures on the Halifax station, in our early cruises, after the war broke out. But the change which the renewal of hostilities made in our habits was great. Instead of idly rotting in harbour, our ship was now always at sea, on the look-out,—a degree of vigilance, which, as will be seen, had its reward in due season. In the mean-

time, we discovered that a midshipman's life was full of interest and curiosity, especially to those who thirsted to see new countries and new climates. Of this matter of climate I find a characteristic enough touch in one of my early letters.

“ We have been on a cruise for many months ; but we did not take a single prize, although all the rest of the ships of the station have been making captures. I hope we shall be more fortunate next time, as we intend to go to a better place. Our last cruise carried us a long way to the southward, where the weather was so very hot, that it became impossible to do any thing in comfort, night or day. In the night-time we could hardly sleep, and in the day we were scorched by the sun. When our candles were lighted, they melted away by degrees, and often tumbled on the table by their own weight, or, perhaps, fell plump into the victuals !”

Even at this distance of time, I have a most painfully distinct recollection of these dirty tallow candles in the midshipmen's birth—dips, I think, they were called—

smelling of mutton fat, and throwing up a column of smoke like that from a steam-boat's chimney. These 'glims' yielded but little light, by reason, possibly, of a huge wick occupying more than half the area of the flame, and demanding the incessant application of our big-bellied snuffers to make the darkness visible.

This, in its turn, reminds me of a piece of cock-pit manners, which truth obliges me to divulge, although, certainly, not very much to our credit. It was the duty of the unfortunate wight who sat nearest the candle—grievously misnamed the 'light'—to snuff off its monstrous cauliflower of a head from time to time; and certainly his office was no sinecure. Sometimes, however, either from being too much absorbed in his book, or from his hand being tired, he might forget to 'top the glim,' as it was called—glim being, I suppose, a contraction of the too obvious word glimmer. On these occasions of neglect, when things were returning fast to their primeval darkness, any one of the company was entitled to call out "Top!"

upon which all the rest were bound to vociferate the same word, and he who was the last to call out "Top!" was exposed to one of the following disagreeable alternatives — either to get up and snuff the candle, at whatever distance he might be seated, or to have the burning snuff thrown in his face by any one who was within reach, and chose to pinch it off with his finger and thumb. It is true there was always some trouble in this operation, and some little risk of burning the fingers, to say nothing of the danger to His Majesty's ship; but the delightful task of teaching a messmate good breeding by tossing a handful of burning tallow-candle snuff in his eyes, was, of course, a happiness too great to be resisted.

In speaking thus of the midshipmen's birth, and of their occasional ruggedness of manners, I should be doing wrong to leave an impression that they were a mere lawless set of harumscarum scamps. Quite the contrary; for we had a code of laws for our government, which, for precision and distinctness of purpose, might have rivalled

many of those promulgated by the newest-born states of the world, in these days of political parturition. I observe, that young countries, like young people, whether in a midshipman's mess, or any where else, delight in the indulgence of the fond and false idea, that it is easy to regulate the fluctuations of human nature exactly as they please, by the mere force of written constitutions. They always 'remember to forget,' that institutions, to be in the smallest degree effective in practice, must be made to fit the existing state of society, and that society cannot possibly be made to fit them. They almost all run away, however, with the vainest of vain notions, that established habits, old prejudices, with all the other fixed and peculiar circumstances of the time and place in which they find themselves, have become, of a sudden, so pliable, that they can be essentially and speedily modified by artificial legislation alone! On this fallacious principle we framed a set of regulations for our mess, of which I recollect only one, giving, I admit, rather a queer idea of the state of things in our

maritime world. It ran thus:—"If any member of the larboard mess shall so far forget the manners of a gentleman as to give the lie direct to one of his messmates, he shall be fined one dollar."

This fine, it must be observed, was intended purely as a propitiation to the offended dignity of the mess, and was quite independent of the personal arrangements which, on such occasions, generally took place in the cock-pit outside. These battles royal were fought across a chest,—I don't mean with pistols, but with good honest fisty-cuffs. The only difficulty attending this method of settling such matters consisted in the shifts to which the parties were compelled to resort, to conceal the black eyes which, in most cases, were the result of these single combats. It would, of course, have been quite incorrect in the commanding officer to have overlooked such proceedings—even supposing the parties to retain a sufficiency of optics to do their duty. The usual resource was to trust to the good-nature of the surgeon, who put the high contending parties

on the sick-list, and wrote against their names "Contusion;" an entry he might certainly make with a safe conscience!

This innocent way of settling disputes was all very well, so long as the mids were really and truly boys; but there came, in process of time, a plaguy awkward age, when they began to fancy themselves men, and when they were very apt to take it into their heads that, on such occasions as that just alluded to, their dignity, as officers and gentlemen, would be compromised by beating one another about the face and eyes across a chest, and otherwise contusing one another, according to the most approved fashion of the cock-pit. Youths, at this intermediate age, are called *Hobbledehoys*, that is, neither man nor boy. And as powder and ball act with equal efficacy against these high-spirited fellows as against men of more experience, fatal duels do sometimes take place even amongst midshipmen. I was once present at a very foolish affair of this kind, which, though it happily ended in smoke, was so exceedingly irregular in all its parts, that, had any one

fallen, the whole party concerned would most probably have been hanged!

A dispute arose between three of these young men, in the course of which, terms were bandied about, leaving a reproach such as only the ordeal of a duel, it was thought, could wipe out. It was late in the day when this quarrel took place; but as there was still light enough left to fire a shot, the party went on deck, and quietly asked leave to go on shore for a walk. I happened to be the only person in the birth at the time who was not engaged in the squabble, and so was pressed into the service of the disputants to act as second. There would have been nothing very absurd in all this, had there been another second besides me, or had there existed only one quarrel to settle—but between the three youths there were two distinct disputes!

One of these lads, whom we shall call Mr. A, had first to fight with Mr. B, while Mr. C was second to Mr. B; and then Mr. A, having disposed of Mr. B, either by putting him out of the world, or by adjusting the

matter by apologies, was to commence a fresh battle with Mr. C, who, it will be observed, had been second to his former antagonist, Mr. B! The contingency of Mr. A himself being put hors de combat appears not to have been contemplated; but the strong personal interest which Mr. C (the second to Mr. A's first antagonist) had in giving the affair a fatal turn, would have been the ticklish point for our poor necks, in a court of justice, had Mr. A fallen. Poor fellow! he was afterwards killed in action.

More by good luck than good management, neither of the first shots took effect. At this stage of the affair, I began to perceive the excessive absurdity of the whole transaction, and the danger of the gallows, to which we were all exposing ourselves. I therefore vehemently urged upon the parties the propriety of staying further proceedings. These suggestions were fortunately strengthened by the arrival of a corporal's guard of armed marines from the ship, under the orders of an officer, who was directed to arrest the whole party. There was at first

a ludicrous shew of actual resistance to this detachment; but, after some words, the affair terminated, and the disputants walked off the field arm in arm, the best friends in the world!

CHAPTER VIII.

MAST-HEADING A YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

ON the 8th of January, 1804, we sailed from Halifax, and, after a long and tedious passage, arrived at Bermuda. The transition from the intense frost of a Nova Scotian winter, during which the mercury was generally below zero, to a temperature of 70° or 80°, was exceedingly agreeable to those who had constitutions to stand the sudden rise of more than half a hundred degrees of the thermometer. After a few days' stay at Bermuda, we set off for the United States, where we were again frozen, almost as much as we had been at Halifax. The first land we made was that of Virginia; but owing to calms, and light foul winds, we failed in getting to Norfolk in the Chesapeake, and therefore bore up for New York, which we reached

on the 19th of February, and there anchored about seven miles from that beautiful city.

It was not thought right to let any of us young folks visit the shore alone; but I was fortunate in being invited to accompany one of the officers. To the friendship of this most excellent person, at the periods of most need, I feel so much more indebted than I can venture to express without indelicacy, that I shall say nothing of the gratitude I have so long borne him in return. Perhaps, indeed, the best, as being the most practical, repayment we can ever make for such attentions is, to turn them over, again and again, to some other person similarly circumstanced with ourselves at those early periods. This would be acting in the spirit with which Dr. Franklin tells us he used to lend money, as he never gave it away without requiring from the person receiving such assistance, a promise to repay the loan, not to himself, but to transfer it, when times improved, to some one else in distress, who would enter into the same sort of engagement to circulate

the charity. On this principle, I have several times, in the course of my professional life, rather surprised young middies by giving them exactly such a lift as I myself received at New York—shewing them strange places, and introducing them to the inhabitants, in the way my kind friend adopted towards me. These boys may perhaps have fancied it was owing to their own uncommon merit that they were so noticed; while all the time I may have merely been relieving my own conscience, and paying off, by indirect instalments, a portion of that debt of gratitude which, in spite of these disbursements, I find only increases in proportion as my knowledge of the world gives me the means of appreciating its value.

That it is the time and manner of doing a kindness which constitute its chief merit, as a matter of feeling at least, is quite true; and the grand secret of this delicate art appears to consist in obliging people just at the moments, and, as nearly as possible, in the particular way, in which they themselves wish the favour to be done. However per-

verse their tastes may be, and often, perhaps, because they are perverse, people do not like even to have favours thrust upon them. But it was my good fortune on this, and many other occasions in life, early and late, to fall in with friends who always contrived to nick the right moments to a hair's-breadth. Accordingly, one morning, I received an invitation to accompany my generous friend, one of the lieutenants, to New York, and I felt, as he spoke, a bound of joy, the bare recollection of which makes my pulse beat ten strokes per minute quicker, at the distance of a good quarter of a century!

It would not be fair to the subject, nor indeed quite so to myself, to transcribe from a very boyish journal an account of this visit to New York. The inadequate expression of that period, compared with the vivid recollection of what I then felt, shews, well enough, the want of power which belongs to inexperience. Very fortunately, however, the faculty of enjoying is sooner acquired than the difficult art of describing. Yet even this useful and apparently simple science of making the

most of all that turns up, requires a longer apprenticeship of good fortune than most people are aware of.

In the midst of snow and wind, we made out a very comfortless passage to New York ; and, after some trouble in hunting for lodgings, we were well pleased to find ourselves snugly stowed away in a capital boarding house in Greenwich Street. We there found a large party at tea before a blazing wood fire, which was instantly piled with fresh logs for the strangers, and the best seats relinquished for them, according to the invariable practice of that hospitable country.

If our hostess be still alive, it is hoped she will not repent of having bestowed her obliging attentions on one who, so many years afterwards, made himself, he fears, less popular in her land, than he could wish to be amongst a people to whom he owes so much, and for whom he really feels so much kindness. He still anxiously hopes, however, they will believe him when he declares, that, having said in his recent publication no more than what he conceived was due to

strict truth, and to the integrity of history, as far as his observations and opinions went, he still feels, as he always has, and ever must continue to feel towards America, the heartiest good-will.

The Americans are perpetually repeating, that the foundation-stone of their liberty is fixed on the doctrine, that every man is free to form his own opinions, and to promulgate them in candour and in moderation. Is it meant that a foreigner is excluded from these privileges? If not, may I ask, in what respect have I passed these limitations? The Americans have surely no fair right to be offended because my views differ from theirs; and yet, I am told, I have been rudely enough handled by the press of that country. If my motives are distrusted, I can only say I am sorely belied; if I am mistaken, regret at my political blindness were surely more dignified than anger on the part of those with whom I differ; and if it shall chance that I am in the right, the best confirmation of the correctness of my views, in the opinion of indifferent persons, will perhaps be found in

the soreness of those who wince when the truth is spoken.

Yet, after all, few things would give me more real pleasure than to know that my friends across the water would consent to take me at my word ; and, considering what I have said about them as so much public matter—which it truly is—agree to reckon me in my absence, as they always did when I was amongst them—and I am sure they would count me if I went back again—as a private friend. I differed with them in politics, and I differ with them now as much as ever ; but I sincerely wish them happiness individually ; and as a nation, I shall rejoice if they prosper. As the Persians write, “What can I say more ?” And I only hope these few words may help to make my peace with people who justly pride themselves on bearing no malice. As for myself, I have no peace to make ; for I have studiously avoided reading any of the American criticisms on my book, in order that the kindly feelings I have ever entertained towards that country should not be ruffled. By this abstinence,

I may have lost some information, and perhaps missed many opportunities of correcting erroneous impressions. But I set so much store by the pleasing recollection of the journey itself, and of the hospitality with which my family were every where received, that, whether it be right, or whether it be wrong, I cannot bring myself to read any thing which might disturb these agreeable associations. So let us part in peace! or rather, let us meet again in cordial communication; and if this little work shall find its way across the Atlantic, I hope it will be read there without reference to any thing that has passed between us; or, at all events, with reference only to those parts of our former intercourse which are satisfactory to all parties.

After leaving the American coast, we stood once more across the gulf stream for Bermuda. Here I find the first trace of a regular journal, containing a few of those characteristic touches which, when we are sure of their being actually made on the spot, however carelessly, carry with them an easy, familiar kind of interest, that rarely belongs

to the efforts of memory alone. It is, indeed, very curious how much the smallest memorandums sometimes serve to lighten up apparently forgotten trains of thought, and to bring vividly before the imagination scenes long past, and to recall turns of expression, and even the very look with which these expressions were uttered, though every circumstance connected with them may have slept in the mind for a long course of years.

It is, I believe, one of the numerous theories on the mysterious subject of dreams, that they are merely trains of recollections, touched in some way we know not of, and influenced by various causes over which we have no sort of control; and that, although they are very strangely jumbled and combined, they always relate, so exclusively, either to past events, or to past thoughts, that no ideas strictly new ever enter our minds in sleep.

Be this true or false, I find, on reading over the scanty notes above alluded to, written at Bermuda more than six-and-twenty years ago, that I am made conscious of a feeling a good deal akin to what is produced by dreaming.

Many objects long forgotten are brought back to my thoughts with perfect clearness; and these, again, suggest others, more or less distinctly, of which I possess no written record. At times a whole crowd of these recollections stand forward, almost as palpably as if they had occurred yesterday. I hear the well-known voices of my old mess-mates — see their long-forgotten faces — and can mark, in my memory's eye, their very gait, and many minute and peculiar habits. In the next instant, however, all this is so much clouded over, that by no effort of the imagination, assisted even by the journal, can I bring back the picture as it appeared to stand only a moment before. It sometimes also happens in this curious retrospect, that a strange confusion of dates and circumstances takes place; with a vague remembrance of hopes, and fears, and wishes, painful anticipations, and bitter passing thoughts, all long since gone. Anon, these day dreams of the past sometimes come rushing back on the fancy, all at once, but in so confused a manner, that they look ex-

ceedingly like what we often experience in sleep. Is there, in fact, any other difference, except that, in the case of slumber, we have no control over this intellectual experiment, and, in the other, we have the power of varying it at pleasure? When we are awake we can steer the mental vessel with more or less precision—but in sleep our rudder is carried away, and we must be content to drift about at the capricious bidding of our senses, over a confused sea of recollections.

It may be asked, what is the use of working out these speculations? To which I would answer, that it may often be highly useful, in the practice of life, for people to trace their thoughts back, in order to see what have been the causes, as well as the effects, of their former resolutions. It is not only interesting, but may be very important, to observe how far determinations of a virtuous nature had an effectual influence in fortifying us against the soft insinuations, or the rude assaults of temptation; or how materially any original defect or subsequent omission in such resolutions

may have brought us under the cutting lash of self-reproach.

It would probably be very difficult, if not impossible, for any person to lay open his own case so completely to the view of others, that the rest of the world should be enabled to profit, as he himself, if he chooses, may do, by his past experience in these delicate matters. I shall hardly attempt such a task; however; but shall content myself with saying, that, on now looking back to those days, I can, in many instances, lay my hand upon the very hour, the very incident, and the very thought and feeling, which have given a decided direction to many very material actions of the intervening period. In some cases, the grievous anguish of remorse has engraved the lesson so deeply on the memory, that it shews like an open wound still. In others, it has left only a cicatrice, to mark where there has been suffering. But even these, like the analogous case of bodily injuries, are liable to give their twitches as the seasons vary.

It is far pleasanter, however, and a still

more profitable habit, I am quite sure, to store up agreeable images of the past, with a view to present and future improvement, as well as enjoyment, than to harass the thoughts too much by the contemplation of opportunities lost, or of faculties neglected or misused. Of this cheerful kind of retrospect, every person of right thoughts must have an abundant store. For, let the croakers say what they please, 'this brave world' is exceedingly fertile in sources of pleasure to those whose principles are sound, and who, at all times and seasons, are under the wholesome consciousness, that while, without higher aid, they can essentially do nothing, there will certainly be no such assistance lent them, unless they themselves, to use a nautical phrase, 'bend their backs like seamen to the oar,' and leave nothing untried to double the Cape of their own life and fortunes. It is in this vigorous and sustained exertion that most persons fail — this 'attention suivie,' as the French call it, which, as it implies the absence of self-distrust, gives, generally, the surest earnest of success.

It has sometimes struck me as not a little curious, that, while we have such unbounded faith in the constancy of the moon's motions, and rest with such confidence on the accuracy of our charts and books, as to sail our ships, in the darkest nights, over seas we have never before traversed; yet that, in the moral navigation of our lives, we should hesitate in following principles infinitely more important, and in which we ought to have a faith at least as undoubting. The old analogy, indeed, between the storms of the ocean, and those of our existence, holds good throughout this comparison; for the half-instructed navigator, who knows not how to rely on his chart and compass, or who has formed no solid faith in the correctness of the guides to whom he ought to trust his ship, has no more chance of making a good passage across the wide seas, than he whose petty faith is bounded by his own narrow views and powers, is likely to be successful in the great voyage of life.

There is a term in use at sea called 'backing and filling,' which consists at one mo-

ment in bracing the yards so that the wind shall catch the sails in reverse, and, by bringing them against the masts, drive the ship stern-foremost; and then, after she has gone far enough in that direction, in bracing up the yards so that the sails may be filled, and the ship again gather head-way. This manœuvre is practised in rivers when the wind is foul, but the tide favourable, and the width of the stream too small to admit of working the vessel regularly, by making tacks across. From thus alternately approaching to the bank and receding from it, an appearance of indecision, or rather of an unwillingness to come too near the ground, is produced, and thence the term is used to express, figuratively, that method of speaking where reluctance is shewn to come too near the abrupt points of the subject, which yet must be approached if any good is to be done. I confess, accordingly, that, just now, I have been 'backing and filling' with my topic, and have preferred this indirect method of suggesting to my young friends the fitting motives to action, rather than

venturing to lecture them in formal terms. The paths to honour, indeed, every man must trace out for himself; but the discovery will certainly be all the easier if he knows the direction in which they lie.

The following brief specimen of a midshipman's journal will shew, as well as a whole volume could do, the sort of stuff of which such documents are made. The great fault, indeed, of almost all journals consists in their being left, like Chinese paintings, without shading or relief, and in being drawn with such a barbarous perspective, that every thing appears to lie in one plane, in the front of the picture.

“ Bermuda, Sunday, April 22.

“ Wind south. Last night I had the first watch. Turned out this morning at seven bells. Breakfasted on a roll and some jelly. Wind blowing pretty hard at south. Struck lower yards and top-gallant masts. After breakfast read one or two tales of the Genii. Dressed for muster, and at six bells beat to divisions. I asked leave to go on shore to

dine with Capt. O'Hara, but was refused. So I dined upon the Old thing—salt junk and dough. The captain landed in the pinnace. Employed myself most of the afternoon in reading Plutarch's Lives. Had coffee at four o'clock. Blowing harder than ever, and raining very much. Read the Bible till six; then went on deck. At nine went to bed. Turned out at four in the morning.

“Monday, 23d April.—Made the signal for sailing. At noon, the same old dinner—salt horse! The two pilots, Jacob and Jamie, came on board. Employed getting in the Admiral's stock.”

These two names, Jacob and Jamie, will recall to people who knew Bermuda in those days many an association connected with that interesting island. They were two negroes, pilots to the men-of-war, who, in turn, took the ships out and in. Their wives, no less black and polished than themselves, were the chief laundresses of our fleet; while at their cedar-built houses on shore, we often procured such indifferent meals as the narrow

means of the place allowed. I only remember that our dinner, nine times in ten, consisted of ham and eggs. I forget whether or not these men were slaves; I think not: they were, at all events, extremely good-natured fellows, and always very kind and obliging to the midshipmen, particularly to those who busied themselves in making collections of shells and corallines, the staple curiosities of the spot.

It is needless to quote any more from the exact words of this matter-of-fact journal. I find it recorded, however, that next morning a boat came to us from the *Boston*, a frigate lying near the *Leander*. The captain of that ship was then, and is now, one of my kindest and steadiest friends. And right well, indeed, did he know how to confer a favour at the fitting season. The boat contained one of the most acceptable presents, I will answer for it, that ever was made to mortal—it was truly manna to starved people—being no less than a famous fat goose, a huge leg of pork, and a bag of potatoes!

Such a present at any other time and

place would have been ludicrous; but at Bermuda, where we had been starving and growling for many months without a fresh meal—it was to us hungry, salt-fed boys, the ‘summum bonum’ of human happiness.

Next day, after breakfast, the barge was sent with one of the lieutenants for the Admiral, who came on board at eleven o'clock. But while his excellency was entering the ship on one side, I quitted my appointed station on the other, and, without leave, slipped out of one of the main-deck ports into the pilot-boat, to secure some conch shells and corals I had bespoken, and wished to carry from Bermuda to my friends at Halifax. Having made my purchases, in the utmost haste and trepidation, I was retreating again to my post, when, as my ill stars would have it, the first lieutenant looked over the gangway. He saw at a glance what I was about; and, calling me up, sent me as a punishment to the mast-head for being off deck when the Admiral was coming on board. As I had succeeded in getting hold of my shells, however, and some lumps of coral, I

made myself as comfortable as possible in my elevated position; and upon the whole rather enjoyed it, as a piece of fun.

We then hove up the anchor, and as we made sail through the passage, I could not only distinguish, from the mast-head, the beautifully coloured reefs under water, but trace with perfect ease all the different channels between them, through which we had to thread our winding, and apparently dangerous, course. As the ship passed, the fort saluted the flag with twelve guns, which were returned with a like number; after which we shaped our course for Norfolk, in Virginia.

So far all was well. I sat enjoying the view, in one of the finest days that ever was seen. But it almost makes me hungry now, at this distance of time, to tell what followed.

From the main-top-mast cross-trees, on which I was perched for my misdeeds, I had the cruel mortification of seeing my own beautiful roast goose pass along the main-deck, on its way to the cock-pit. As the scamp of a servant boy who carried the dish came abreast of the gangway, I saw him

cock his eye aloft to discover how I relished the prospect. No hawk, or eagle, or vulture, ever gazed from the sky more wistfully upon its prey beneath, than I did upon the banquet I was never doomed to taste. What was still more provoking, each of my mess-mates, as he ran down the quarter-deck ladder, on being summoned to dinner, looked up at me and grinned. One malicious dog provoked me a good deal by patting his fat paunch—as much as to say, ‘What a glorious feast we are to have! Should not you like a bit?’

CHAPTER IX.

KEEPING WATCH.

WITH a few exceptions, every person on board a man-of-war keeps watch in his turn: and as this is one of the most important of the wheels which go to make up the curious clock-work of a ship's discipline, it seems to deserve a word or two in passing.

The officers and midshipmen are generally divided into three watches—First, Second, and Third. As the senior lieutenant does not keep watch, the officer next in rank takes the First, the junior lieutenant the Second, and the master the Third watch, in ships where there are not more than three lieutenants. Under each of these chiefs there is placed a squad of midshipmen; the principal one of whom is mate of the watch,

the next in seniority is stationed on the fore-castle, and after him comes the poop mid. The youngsters remain on the lee-side of the quarter-deck, along with the mate of the watch. For it must be observed, that no one but the captain, the lieutenants, the master, surgeon, purser, and marine officer, is ever allowed, upon any occasion whatsoever, to walk on the weather side. This custom has become so much a matter of course, that I hardly remember asking myself before, what may have been the origin of the regulation? The chief purpose, no doubt, is to draw a strong line of distinction between the different ranks; although, independently of this, the weather side is certainly the most convenient to walk upon when the ship is pressed with sail: it is also the best sheltered from wind and rain; and the view both low and aloft is more commanding than it is from to leeward.

Every person, also, not excepting the captain, when he comes on the quarter-deck, touches his hat; and as this salutation is supposed to be paid to this privileged spot

itself, all those who at the moment have the honour to be upon it are bound to acknowledge the compliment. Thus, even when a midshipman comes up, and takes off his hat, all the officers who are walking the deck, the Admiral included, if he happens to be of the number, touch their hats likewise.

So completely does this form grow into a habit, that in the darkest night, and when there may not be a single person near the hatchway, it is invariably attended to, with the same precision. Indeed, when an officer of the Navy happens to be on board a merchant ship, or a packet, he finds it difficult to avoid carrying his hand to his hat every time he comes on deck. I, for one, at least, can never get over the feeling, that it is rude to neglect this ceremony, and have often, when on board passage-vessels, wondered to see gentlemen so deficient in good breeding, as to come gaping up the hatchway, as if their hats were nailed to their heads, and their hands sewed into their breeches-pockets!

Of course, each person in the watch has a specific duty to attend to, as I shall endeavour to describe presently; but, first, it may be well to mention the ingenious arrangement of the hours by which the periods of watching are equally distributed to all.

In speaking of the three watches, it will perhaps avoid confusion, and rather simplify the description, to call them, for a moment, not First, Second, and Third, as they are named on board ship, but to designate them by the letters A, B, and C.

Let us begin, then, by supposing that A's watch commences at 8 o'clock in the evening; the officer and his party remain on deck till midnight, four hours being one period. This is called the First watch. B is next roused up, and keeps the Middle watch, which lasts from midnight till 4 o'clock. C now comes up, and stays on deck till 8, which is the Morning watch. A then returns to the deck, where he walks till noon, when he is relieved by B, who stays up till 4. If C were now to keep the watch from 4 to 8, of course A would again have to keep

the First watch on the second night, as he did at first starting; and all the others, in like manner, would have to keep, over again, exactly the same watches, every night and day. In order to break this uniform recurrence of intervals, an ingenious device has been hit upon to produce a constant and equitable rotation. When or where this plan was invented, I do not know, but I believe it exists in the ships of all nations.

The period from 4 o'clock in the afternoon till 8 in the evening, instead of constituting one watch, is divided into two watches, of a couple of hours each. These, I don't know why, are called the Dog watches. The first, which lasts from 4 to 6 o'clock, belongs, on the second day, according to the order described above, to C, who is, of course, relieved at 6 o'clock by A. This alteration, it will be observed, gives the First watch (from 8 to midnight) to B, on the second night; the Middle (from midnight to 4) to C; and the Morning watch (from 4 to 8) to A; the Forenoon watch (from 8 to noon) to B; and the Afternoon (from noon to 4) to C.

The first Dog watch (from 4 to 6) will now be kept by A, the second Dog watch (from 6 to 8) by B, and so on, round and round. By this mechanism, it will easily be perceived, the officers, on each succeeding day, have a watch to keep, always one stage earlier than that which they kept on the day before. Thus, if A have the Morning watch one night, he will have the Middle watch on the night following, and the First watch on the night after that again. The distribution of time which this produces is very unequal, when the short period of twenty-four hours only is considered; but the arrangement rights itself in the course of a few days. On the first day, A has ten hours' watch to keep out of the twenty-four, B eight, and C only six. But on the next day, A has only six hours, while B has ten, and C eight; while, on the third day, A has eight, B six, and C ten hours' watching; and so on, round and round, from year's end to year's end.

This variety, to a person in health and spirits, is often quite delightful. Each watch

has its peculiar advantages; and I need hardly add, that each likewise furnishes an ample store of materials for complaining, to those discontented spirits whose chief delight is to coddle up grievances, as if, forsooth, the principal object of life was to keep ourselves unhappy, and to help to make others so.

The First watch (8 o'clock to midnight) which comes after the labour of the day is done, and when every thing is hushed and still, carries with it this great recommendation, that, although the hour of going to bed is deferred, the night's rest is not afterwards broken in upon. The prospect of 'turning in' at midnight, and being allowed to sleep till seven in the morning, helps greatly to keep us alive and merry during the First watch, and prevents the excitement of the past day from ebbing too fast. On the other hand, your thorough-bred growlers are apt to say, it is a grievous task to keep the First watch, after having gone through all the toil of the day, and, in particular, after having kept the After-

noon watch (noon to 4 o'clock,) which, in hot climates, is always a severe trial upon the strength. Generally speaking, however, I think the First watch is the least unpopular; for, I suppose, no mortal, whatever he might think, was ever found so Quixotic as to profess openly that he really liked keeping watch. Such a paradox would be famously ridiculed on board ship.

The Middle watch is almost universally held to be a great bore; and certainly it is a plague of the first order, to be shaken out of a warm bed at midnight, when three hours of sound sleep have sealed up our eyelids all the faster, and steeped our senses in forgetfulness, and in repose, generally much needed. It is a bitter break, too, to have four good hours sliced out of the very middle of the night's rest, especially when this tiresome interval is to be passed in the cold and rain, or, which is often still more trying, in the sultry calm of a smooth, tropical sea, when the sleepy sails, as wet with dew as if they had been dipped overboard, flap adly against the masts and rigging, but so very

gently as barely to make the reef points patter-patter along the canvass, with notes so monotonous, that the bare recollection of their sound almost sets me to sleep, now.

Nevertheless, the much-abused Middle watch has its advantages, at least for those ardent young spirits who choose to seek them out, and whose habit it is to make the most of things. There are full three hours and a half of sound snooze before it begins, and as long a 'spell of sleep' after it is over. Besides which, the mind being rested as well as the body, before the Middle watch begins, both come to their task so freshly, that, if there be any hard or anxious duties to execute, they are promptly and well attended to. Even if there be nothing to do but pace the deck, the thoughts of an officer of any enthusiasm may contrive to find occupation either in looking back, or in looking forward, with that kind of cheerfulness which belongs to youth and health usefully employed. At that season of the night every one else is asleep, save the quarter-master

at the conn, the helmsman at the wheel, and the look-out men at their different stations, on the gangways, the bows, and the quarters. And except, of course, the different drowsy middies, who, poor fellows ! keep tramping along the quarter-deck backwards and forwards, counting the half-hour bells with anxious weariness ; or looking wistfully at the sand-glass, which the sentry at the cabin-door shakes ever and anon, as if the lazy march of time, like that of a tired donkey, could be accelerated by jogging.

But the joyous Morning watch is very naturally the universal favourite. It is the beginning of a new day of activity and enterprise. The duties are attacked, too, after a good night's rest ; so that, when the first touches of the dawn appear, and the horizon, previously lost in the black sky, begins to shew itself in the east, there comes over the spirits a feeling of elasticity and strength, of which even the dullest are not altogether insensible. In war time, this is a moment when hundreds of eyes are engaged in peer-

ing all round into the twilight; and happy is the sharp-sighted person who first calls out, with a voice of exultation—

“ A sail, sir—a sail !”

“ Whereabouts ?” is the eager reply.

“ Three or four points on the lee-bow, sir.”

“ Up with the helm !” cries the officer.

“ Set the top-gallant and royal studding-sails—rig out the fore-top-mast studding-sail boom ! Youngster, run down and tell the captain there is a stranger on the lee-bow—and say that we are making all sail. She looks very roguish.”

As the merry morning comes dancing gloriously on, and other vessels heave in sight, fresh measures must be taken, as to the course steered, or the quantity of sail to be set. So that this period of the day, at sea, in a cruising ship, gives occasion, more perhaps than any other time, for the exercise of those stirring qualities of prompt decision, and vigour in the execution of every purpose, which, probably, form the most essential characteristics of the profession.

The Morning watch, also, independent of

the active employment it hardly ever fails to afford, leaves the whole day free, from eight o'clock till four in the afternoon. Many a previously broken resolution is put off to this period, only to be again stranded. To those, however, who choose to study, the certainty of having one clear day in every three, free from the distraction of all technical duties, is of the greatest consequence; though, it must be owned that, at the very best, a ship is but a wretched place for reading. The eternal motion, and the infernal noise, almost baffle the most resolute students.

For a hungry midshipman (when are they not hungry?) the Morning watch has attractions of a still more tender nature. The mate, or senior man amongst them, is always invited to breakfast with the officers at eight o'clock; and one or two of the youngsters, in turn, breakfast with the captain at half-past eight, along with the officer of the morning watch and the first lieutenant, who, in many ships, is the constant guest of the captain, both at this meal and at dinner.

The officer of the Forenoon watch, or that

from eight to noon, invariably dines with the captain at three o'clock; and as the ward-room dinner is at two, exactly one hour before that of the captain, the officer who has kept the Forenoon watch again comes on deck, the instant the drum beats "The Roast Beef of Old England," the well-known and invariable signal that the dinner of the officers is on the table. His purpose in coming up is to relieve, or take the place of his brother-officer who is keeping the Afternoon watch, till three o'clock arrives, at which hour the captain's dinner is ready. The same interchange of good offices, in the way of relief, as it is called, takes place amongst the midshipmen of the Forenoon and Afternoon watches. It is material to observe, however, that all these arrangements, though they have the graceful air of being pieces of mutual and voluntary civility, have become quite as much integral parts of the ordinary course of nautical affairs as any other established ordinance of the ship.

On Sunday, the captain always dines with the officers in the ward-room; and although

'shore-going people' sometimes take upon themselves to quiz these periodical, and, Heaven knows! often formal dinner parties, there can be no doubt that they do contribute, and that in a most essential degree, to the maintenance of strict discipline on board ship. Indeed, I believe it is now generally admitted, that it would be next to impossible to preserve good order in a man-of-war, for any length of time, without this weekly ceremonial, coupled, of course, with that of the officers dining, in turn, with their captain.

We know that too much familiarity breeds contempt; but, in situations where there is of necessity much intercourse, too little familiarity will as inevitably breed ill-will, distrust, apprehension, and mutual jealousy. The difficulty lies in regulating with due caution this delicate sort of intimacy, and in hitting the exact mean between too much freedom and too much reserve of manner. The proverb points out the evil clearly enough, but leaves us to find the remedy. In the Navy, long experience seems to have shewn, that this important purpose can be best

accomplished by the captain and his officers occasionally meeting one another at table—not capriciously, at irregular intervals, or by fits and starts of favour, as the humour suits, but in as fixed an order, as if the whole of this social intercourse were determined by Admiralty regulation.

It will readily be understood by any one who has attended much to the subject of discipline, and will be felt, I should think, more or less, by all persons who have been engaged personally in the management of a house, a regiment, a ship, a shop, or any other establishment in which distinctions of rank and subdivisions of labour prevail, that nothing ever does, or can go on well, unless, over and above the mere legal authority possessed by the head, he shall carry with him a certain amount of the good-will and confidence of those under him. For it is very material, in order to balance, as it were, the technical power with which the chief of such establishment is armed, that there should be some heartiness—some real cheerfulness, between him and those he com-

mands. Accordingly, the obedience which they yield to him should not be entirely the result either of mere habit, or of the still more frigid motive of fear, but should be made to spring, if possible, out of sincere good-will, as an essential, if not the principal ingredient in the stimulus. In ordinary times, it is true, the duty goes on pretty well in a ship-of-war, by the sheer momentum of an established routine.

It may be added, that things often proceed with a degree of success almost as miraculous, in the apprehension of the ignorant, as the movements of a watch appear to the eyes of a savage. But in times of danger, when doubts and difficulties beset an officer, or protracted labours fatigue his crew, and untried resources and exertions are called for every moment, it is discovered that mere routine, (though, even at such periods, it does a great deal,) will not accomplish all that is required. The captain then finds out, often when it is too late, that unless motives of a more generous and stirring nature come into play, to give fresh vigour to the formalities

of his discipline, not only his own reputation, but some of the great ends of the public service, may be lost.

The nature of our profession is so complicated, and the occasions are so frequent in which these well-known principles are brought into action, that, I believe, it almost invariably happens, when the captain and his officers are not on terms, or do not pull together, that the ship falls, more or less, out of discipline. This occurs even when the officers and their captain are sufficiently public-spirited, to desire sincerely not to allow private differences to interfere in any degree with the course of official duty. For the sailors are exceedingly quick-sighted to such matters, and both they and the midshipmen, not only discover immediately when there is any coolness between the captain and his officers, but are naturally prone to exaggerate the cause and consequences of such differences. If, however, as generally happens, the crew know nothing of the real points in dispute, they fall into a worse error by inventing the most preposterous stories to

account for those misunderstandings which they see exist between the higher powers. Advantage, also, is very soon taken of these disagreements, by such persons amongst the crew as are always ready to escape from the restraints of good order, and who imagine, too often with reason, that the officer who is not on pleasant terms with his captain will not be duly supported by him. In a word, when the officers and captain cease to respect one another, or, what comes exactly to the same thing, appear to have lost that mutual respect for one another, of which an easy sociability of intercourse is one of the most obvious proofs, they speedily lose the respect of the people under their command. I can compare the harsh and grating state of affairs on board ship, when, unhappily, there exists bad blood between the captain and officers, to nothing so well as to an engine, amongst the machinery of which a handful of gravel has been cast.

It may be asked, how can the simple operation of dining together once or twice a week stave off so great an evil? But the

answer is easy; for every one must be aware, that it is by small beginnings and slight causes of imaginary offence—by trivial misunderstandings unexplained—or by real but small causes of just indignation not apologised for, that the bitterest heartburnings of life too often arise. If, however, these seeds of dissension can only be weeded out before they begin to germinate, their evil growth may not only be checked, but actual good, in most instances, be made to spring up in their place.

In order to make the practical operation of these things quite clear, I shall state two cases, both of which I have seen occur on board ship a hundred times, and of which I can speak with some confidence, as I have myself often acted a part on different sides, and therefore know their bearings from actual trial.

Suppose, in the first place, that the captain comes upon deck just before noon, and, on seeing something wrong—the main-yard not braced up enough, the lee foretop-gallant sheet not home, or the jib not quite hoisted

up; and suppose that, as these are points upon which, whether whimsically or not, he is very particular, he express himself to the officer in terms rather too strong for the occasion. Without reflecting upon the injustice he is guilty of, the captain may perhaps, in this way, be punishing a zealous and hard-working man, for a mere trifle, almost as severely as if he had been found sleeping on his watch, or was guilty of some offence caused by wilful neglect.

The officer, however, who can say nothing, bows and submits. In a few minutes, the sun comes to the meridian, and it is made twelve o'clock. The boatswain pipes to dinner, the deck is relieved, and the lieutenant of the forenoon watch goes down below, in a high state of irritation with his captain, at what he conceives the undue severity of the reprimand. The first thing he does, on entering the ward-room door, is to fling his hat the whole length of the apartment; so that, unless it be adroitly caught by the marine officer, who is generally playing the flute on the lockers abaft, it would stand a chance of

going out of the stern windows. ~~THE SONG~~
of course, thus called upon to look up, ~~stops~~
in the middle of the second bar of ~~"God save~~
the King," or "Robin Adair," at which he
has been hammering, in company with the
master of the band, for the last three months,
and says,

"Holla! man—what's the matter?"

"Matter!" cries the other. "I'll be shot
if it is not enough to make a man run stark
staring mad!"

"What is the matter, I ask you?" begs
the marine, preparing to recommence the
eternal tune.

"Why, there have I been working, and
slaving, and wearing my life and soul out,
all the forenoon, to please that ill-tempered,
snappish, ill-to-please knob of a skipper of
ours; and what do I get? Why, he takes
mighty good care to shut his eyes to all the
good a fellow does, but catches hold eagerly
enough of the smallest omission in his thou-
sand-and-one whims (none of which are of
any consequence!), in order to indulge himself
in one of his reprimands. It's quite clear,"

adds the officer, warmed by this explosion of his own passion, "that the captain has a spite at me, and is determined to drive me out of the ship, to make way for some follower of his own."

"Stuff and nonsense!" exclaims the peace-making man of war; "the captain is the best friend you have."

"Friend!" roars the other; "I tell you what——"

But just at this moment the captain's steward enters the ward-room, and going up to the enraged officer of the forenoon watch, says mechanically to him—

"The captain's compliments, sir, and will be glad of your company to dinner."

To which the officer replies, quite as mechanically—

"My compliments, and I'll wait on him."

But as soon as the door is shut, he turns again to the marine, and says—

"I'm deucedly sorry, now, that I did not refuse."

"Are you?" says the soldier, relapsing into his loyal tune again.

By and by, however, comes two o'clock; the ward-room dinner is placed on the table; the drum beats the 'Roast Beef;' the officer of the forenoon watch is sent for, as usual, to relieve his messmate on deck, as I have before described; and, in due course, after strutting and fretting his hour upon the stage, in 'full togs,' nursing his anger, in order to let the captain see that he is hurt, he is told that dinner is ready in the cabin. In he marches, accordingly, and there takes his appointed seat as doggedly as if he were nailed to the chair. The pease-soup is discussed in pretty solemn silence; but while the remove is under adjustment, the captain says to his offended officer, "Come, Mr. Haultight, shall you and I have a glass of wine? What shall it be?" By these few magical words, and in this single glass of sherry, is forgotten, for ever and ever, all the previous irritation. It is not by the words, so much as by the tone and manner of saying them, that the captain makes the officer feel how anxious he is to have the good understanding restored, or that he regrets what has passed.

Of course, if the officer be not one of those pig-headed and inflexible fellows, upon whom all sense of kindness is wasted, he seizes the bottle, and filling his glass replies,

“ With all my heart, sir.”

And there, in all probability, is an end of a matter which, but for this early opportunity of putting things to rights, might perhaps have rankled long in the mind of the officer, and given rise to acts of insubordination, as injurious to himself as to the public service.

It may not be useless to suggest here, to young people, that in most cases of dispute that arise between gentlemen, the smallest voluntary apology is beyond calculation more satisfactory, from its affording a far more complete reparation to wounded honour, than any conceivable amount of compulsory acknowledgment. The rough savage, who is acquainted with no measure in these things, takes his revenge at the point of the scalping-knife. But a gentleman, in a widely different spirit, and who knows that even the slightest admission of error causes more pain

than he can ever deliberately wish to inflict, will always catch with eagerness at the first symptoms of regret on the part of his antagonist, being quite certain that the less he exacts, the more of what is really worthy of his acceptance will be given him. Besides which, instead of urging another into permanent mortification and perhaps enmity, he may manage to secure, by well-timed moderation, both the gratitude and the respect of a man who might otherwise become permanently his foe.

I am not aware that, by any other means, the numerous misunderstandings which occur on board ship could be arranged without great risk of injuring discipline. In cases where the matter in dispute is small, or where the fault is equally shared between the parties, formal explanations are not only useless, but often ridiculous, and generally prove as annoying to one side as to the other. Where the dispute, on the other hand, is really of consequence, there may often be a serious and hurtful loss of official dignity, on the part of the superior, if he make too

express an apology. These occasional, but uniformly-recurring opportunities of meeting at table, however, furnish not only ready but very ample means of finally accommodating such things, in every case which can fall within the proper range of compromise. If officers be only influenced by a right spirit of public duty, and always recollect what is due to private dignity of character, it will rarely happen that arrangements, creditable alike to both parties, and useful to the service, may not be easily effected.

The above example is one in which the superior is supposed to have been in the wrong; but, as may be imagined, the opposite case will often happen likewise. I have seen an officer go on, for several days together, purposely teasing his captain, but all the time taking the greatest possible care to keep within the law. Who, I may ask, that has had to do with command of any kind, whether afloat or on shore, in the Navy or in the nursery, has not felt the provocation of such petty hostility? For my part, I can compare it to nothing but the stinging of a

mosquitto, which you spend half the night in trying to catch, losing your rest and your temper to no purpose, owing to the dexterity of your antagonist, who thus shews that, though he be small, he is far from insignificant.

But if, while this sort of snapping and snarling is going on, Sunday comes about, all is settled. On this day the captain invariably dines in the ward-room; and when once there, he is received, as a matter of course, with attention by all—Mr. Mosquitto inclusive. It is the general custom, on these occasions, to unbend a little of the straight-lacedness of our discipline, so that a kind of regulated, starched familiarity is permitted to appear above the surface. This the captain rather encourages, though, of course, in a cautious way, but more than he ever permits himself to allow at his own table.

During dinner, all the officers drink wine with their guest; and when this office of hospitality is performed by the tormenting officer, above alluded to, the captain, if he be a man of sense, will not fail to play off a little of his agreeableness upon the person who has

been buzzing round him during the preceding week. By this means, or some one of the numberless little devices by which people who are met together professedly to be social, and wish to be on good terms with one another, always know how to hit upon, all such scores as this, and many others, may be wiped off. Without some safety-valve of this kind to the high pressure of naval discipline, I really do not know how so enormous and complicated a contrivance could go on at all. I believe, accordingly, it is now pretty generally allowed in the Navy, that in those ships where the captain either lives altogether alone, or altogether with his officers, or where they sometimes dine with one another, and sometimes not, instead of following the established routine of the service, and meeting at regular periods, the discipline is found greatly wanting, and all parties, high and low, speedily become discontented.

I have already mentioned, that the First watch begins, nominally, at eight, and ends at midnight; but people are much mistaken, who suppose that a sleepy-headed midship-

man, with the prospect of a cold Middle watch before him, and just awakened out of a sound nap, is disposed to jump up at once, dress himself, and run upon deck. Alas! it is far from this; and no one who has not been exposed to the trial can conceive the low ebb to which patriotism, zeal, public spirit—call it what you please—sinks at such an hour, in the breast of the unhappy wretch who, in the midst of one of those light and airy dreams, which render the night season of young people such a heaven of repose, is suddenly roused up. After being awakened by a rude tug at the clews of his hammock, he is hailed, after the following fashion, by the gruff old quarter-master.

“ Mr. Doughead !”

No answer. Another good tug at the hammock.

“ Mr. Doughead ! it’s twelve o’clock, sir !”

“ Very well—very well; you need not shake me out of bed, need you ? What sort of a night is it ?”

“ It rains a little, sir, and is just beginning to blow. It looks very black, sir.”

“ Oh, plague take it! Then we shall have to take in a reef, I suppose?”

“ It seems very like it, sir. It is beginning to snuffle.”

With this, Mr. Doughead gives himself a good shrug in his blanket, turns half round, to escape the glare of light from the quarter-master's lantern, hung up within six inches of his face, expressly to keep him awake, and in ten seconds he is again tightly clasped in the arms of Morpheus, the presiding deity of the cock-pit at that hour. By and by comes down the quarter-master of the Middle watch, who, unlike the young gentleman, has relieved the deck twenty minutes before.

“ Mr. Doughead! it's almost one bell, sir.”

“ Indeed!” exclaims the youth. “ I never knew any thing of it. I never was called.”

“ Oh yes, you were, sir. The man I relieved said you asked him what sort of weather it was, and whether we should have to take in a reef.”

“ I ask about the weather? That's only one of the lies he always tells, to get me into a scrape.”

While they are speaking, the bell strikes one, indicating that half an hour has elapsed since the first conversation took place, touching the weather; and presently, before Mr. Doughead has got his second foot over the side of his hammock, the mid who is to be relieved by him comes rattling down the cock-pit ladder, as wet as a shag, cold, angry, and more than half asleep.

“ I say, Master Doughy, do you mean to relieve the deck to-night? Here it’s almost two bells, and you have hardly shewn a leg yet. I’ll be hanged if it is not too bad! You are the worst relief in the whole ship. I am obliged to keep all my own watch, and generally half of yours. I’ll not stand it any more; but go to the first lieutenant tomorrow morning, and see whether he cannot find ways and means of making you move a little faster. It’s a disgrace to the service!” To all this Duffy has only one pettish, dogged reply —

“ I tell you again, I was not called.”

The appeal to the first lieutenant, however, is seldom made; for all the parties

concerned are pretty much alike. But the midshipmen are not slow at times to take the law of these cases into their own hands, and to execute summary justice, according to their own fashion, on any particularly incorrigibly 'bad relief,' as these tardy gentlemen are aptly termed.

One of the most common punishments, on these occasions, is called 'cutting down'—a process not quite so fatal as might be imagined from the term. Most people, I presume, know what sort of a thing a hammock is. It consists of a piece of canvass, five feet long by two wide, suspended to the deck overhead by means of two sets of small lines, called clews, made fast to grummets, or rings of rope, which, again, are attached by a lanyard to the battens stretching along the beams. In this sacking are placed a small mattress, a pillow, and a couple of blankets, to which a pair of sheets may or may not be added. The degree of nocturnal room and comfort enjoyed by these young gentlemen may be understood, when it is mentioned that the whole of the appa-

ratus just described occupies less than a foot and a half in width, and that the hammocks touch one another. Nevertheless, I can honestly say, that the soundest sleep, by far, that I have ever known, has been found in these apparently uncomfortable places of repose; and though the recollection of many a slumber broken up, and the bitter pang experienced on making the first move to exchange so cozy a nest, for the snarling of a piercing north-west gale on the coast of America, will never leave my memory, yet I look back to those days and nights with a sort of evergreen freshness of interest, which only increases with years.

The wicked operation of 'cutting down,' may be managed in three ways. The mildest form is to take a knife and divide the foremost lanyard or suspending cord. Of course, that end of the hammock instantly falls, and the sleepy-headed youth is pitched out, feet foremost, on the deck. The other plan, which directs the after-lanyard to be cut, is not quite so gentle, nor so safe, as it brings down the sleeper's head with a sharp bang on the

deck, while his heels are jerked into the air. The third is to cut away both ends at once, which has the effect of bringing the round stern of the young officer in contact with the edge of any of the chests, which may be placed so as to receive it. The startled victim is then rolled out of bed with his nose on the deck; or, if he happen to be sleeping in the tier, he tumbles on the hard bends of the cable coiled under him. This flooring is much more rugged, and not much softer than the planks, so that his fall is but a choice of miserable bumps.

The malice of this horse-play is sometimes augmented by placing a line round the middle part of the hammock, and fastening it to the beams overhead, in such a way that, when the lanyards at the ends are cut, the head and tail of the youth shall descend freely; but the nobler part of him being secured by the belly-band, as it is called, the future hero of some future Trafalgar remains suspended ingloriously, in mid air, like the golden fleece over a woolen-draper's shop.

These are but a few of the tricks played

off upon those who will not relieve the deck in proper time. I remember an incorrigible snooser, who had been called three or four times, but still gave no symptoms of any intention of 'shewing a leg,' the only allowable test of sincerity in the process called 'turning out.' About five o'clock, on a fine tropical morning, when the ship was cruising off the Mono Passage, in the West Indies, and just before the day began to dawn, it was resolved, in a full conclave of the middies of his own watch, assembled on the lee side of the quarter-deck, that an example should forthwith be made of the sleeper.

A detachment, consisting of four stout hands, were sent to the hammock of the culprit. Two of them held the youth firmly down, while the others wrapped the bed-clothes round him, and then lashed him up—that is, strapped him tightly in by means of the lashing—a long cord with which the hammocks are secured when brought upon deck in the day-time. No part of the unfortunate wight was left exposed except his face. When he was fairly tied in,

the lanyards of his hammock were cast off, and the bundle, half midshipman half bedding, was dragged along, like a log of wood, to the square of the hatchway.

Meanwhile, the confederates on deck had thrown the end of the signal-haulyards down the cock-pit wind-sail, a wide canvass pipe, by which, in hot climates, air is sent to the lower parts of the ship. These signal-haulyards, I must explain, are led through small sheeve-holes in the truck, a little turban-shaped, wooden cap, fitted on the royal mast-head. The ordinary purpose of the signal-haulyards, as their name points out, is to display the flags necessary in communicating with other ships; but, upon this occasion, they were fastened to one of the grummets of the unhappy sleepy-headed reefer's hammock.

When all was secure, the word 'haul up!' was given from below, upon which the party on deck hoisted away. The sleeper awakened vanished from the cock-pit, only to make his appearance, in a few seconds, at the mouth of the wind-sail, half way between

the quarter-deck and the mizen-stay. Of course, the boys watched their opportunity, when the officer of the watch had gone forward on the gangway, to see how the head-yards were trimmed; but long before he came aft again, their victim was lowered down, and the signal-haulyards unbent. What to do with the wretch next was a great puzzle; till one of them said, "Oh! let us stick him up on his end, between two of the guns on the weather side of the deck, and perhaps the officer of the watch may take him for an Egyptian mummy, and have him sent to the British Museum as a present to the king." This advice was instantly followed; and the enraged, mortified, and helpless youngster, being placed so that the first rays of the sun should fall on his countenance, there was no mistaking his identity.

I need scarcely mention, that the lieutenants and other commissioned officers cannot be 'served up' in this way, which is almost a pity, for they are sometimes as abominably lazy as the most pudding-pated midshipman of their watch. It too often happens that,

instead of being the first, they are the very last persons to relieve the deck. There is hardly any thing more annoying than being detained on deck half an hour, and sometimes more, for want of our relief, after the watch we have kept is ended. This extra, and most tedious period, often looks longer than double the same length of time passed in our own proper turn of duty; and the dislocation of temper it produces is very difficult of repair. Many a time and oft, when I have been kept waiting for the officer who was to relieve me, long, long beyond the proper time, I have inwardly sworn deeply, that, if ever I came to the command of a ship, I would reform this intolerable abuse; and I flatter myself I made good my promise. I gave positive orders, and took measures to have them duly obeyed, that the usual mustering of the watch whose turn it was to come on deck, should take place, not, as it generally does, at the half hour, but exactly at ten minutes after the bell struck, which announced the close of the preceding watch. And I directed—and carefully enforced my

directions—that this ceremony of mustering the fresh watch should take place under the superintendence of the officer whose turn of duty it now became. Thus, the deck was always relieved considerably within a quarter of an hour after the former watch was ended.

In addition to this, I made it an invariable rule, the instant it struck eight in the evening, to begin mustering the people of the First watch, of course under the superintendence of the lieutenant of that watch: so that the men who were to be called up at midnight might tumble into their beds at once, and have their full period of four hours' rest before being 'turned out' to keep the Middle watch. I take the liberty of recommending these plans to my brother-officers afloat, as, I can assure them, they answer exceedingly well in practice.

The officers and midshipmen are divided into three watches, as I have described above; but the crew, in most ships, are divided into only two watches. By taking a good deal of care, however, in arranging the people properly, the seamen and marines, almost

in every case, may likewise be put at three watches, instead of what is termed 'watch and watch,' which is simply, turn about.

The illustrious voyager Captain Cook was, I believe, the first who introduced this admirable practice, as may be seen in his Essay on the Method of preserving the health of the crew of the Resolution, printed in the Philosophical Transactions for 1776, vol. lxvi. p. 402. From that masterly paper we discover that many of the most important of our modern improvements in naval discipline are essentially due to the sagacity of that great navigator. Of all officers that ever lived, Captain Cook may be said to have taken the best way of establishing the soundness of his principles—that of invariable practical success—not in one or two situations only, but in the midst of so great a variety of circumstances, that no part of his system remained untried. His plans were found applicable in the coldest regions, when his people were exposed to severe hardships in their attempts to reach the South Pole; and not less so when they became acquainted

with the luxurious climate and voluptuous manners of the South Sea Islands.

Unfortunately, the science of discipline cannot be reduced to rule and compass, like that of navigation; but a great deal has already been done, and may still be done, to establish some leading principles of this important branch of the profession, round which its numerous details revolve. It appears, however, that much remains to be accomplished towards its improvement. Nor am I aware of any greater benefit that could be conferred upon the Navy, than the composition of a perfectly intelligible, popular treatise on discipline, which should include all that is known, and has actually been tried by the best authorities, together with such examples of the operation of these principles as appear capable of useful application to general practice.

Such, however, is the diversity of our nature, that, supposing a work of this kind to be distributed throughout the Navy, and supposing it possible to have it made as complete as the condition of things will allow,

there would still remain, I suspect, an ample field for the exercise of any amount of talents and resource on the part of officers. So far, indeed, from such a methodised system acting as any constraint upon the conduct of a judicious officer, the chances are, that he would only derive from it fresh suggestions, or hints, for rendering his discipline still more perfect; while at each fresh increment of knowledge he would be made sensible how much more he had still to learn.

I do not state this idea either as new, or as applicable solely to naval affairs. The same thing occurs, in a still more striking degree, in politics, and, generally, in all those branches of civil as well as military authority, or any other kind of rule, where the passions and interests of men are placed under the guidance of their fellow-creatures. But, without launching forth on such a sea of topics, it will be admitted to be highly important that officers, and particularly young officers, should be made sensible how much caution is necessary in their discipline, since we know that even the wisest and the most

experienced arrive, at last, only at this conclusion, that much still remains beyond their grasp, which they have not yet learned; and that every day may be expected to produce complicated cases of such doubt and difficulty, as will require the exercise of all their patience and attention.

But, although we cannot get to the bottom of the subject, or ever hope to frame a set of regulations to meet one-thousandth part of the cases of ordinary discipline, we ought not to despair upon this point, any more than upon other perplexing questions. Nor should we relax in our efforts to investigate those laws in the moral organization of our nature, merely because they are complicated. It is a fine remark of La Place, that even the motes which we see dancing in the sun-beam are regulated, in their apparently capricious movements, by the very same laws of gravitation and momentum which determine the orbits of the planets. In like manner, there can be no doubt that, if we only knew how to trace it, this beautiful analogy would be found to extend to the laws regulating the

minutest of those moral influences, which we are apt so hastily to pronounce irregular and uncertain.

The science of moral government, whether afloat or on shore, and whether the scale be great or small, is like that of physical astronomy, and has what may be called its anomalies and disturbances, sometimes very difficult to be estimated, and requiring numberless equations, or allowances, to set them right; but the pursuit is not, on that account, one whit the less true to our nature, or less worthy of that patient investigation by which alone truth can ever be reached, and all such apparent discordances reconciled.

CHAPTER X.

DANGERS OF A NOVA SCOTIA FOG.

ON the 9th of May, we reached Halifax, off which port we were detained in a very disagreeable way; for we had the misfortune to be kept three whole days off the harbour, in one of those Nova Scotia fogs, which are celebrated all over the world. I can hardly give by description an idea of how gloomy they are; but I think their effects can be compared to those of the sirocco; with the further annoyance, that, while they last, we are not able to see far beyond our noses. They are even worse than rain, for they seem to wet one through sooner; while they make every thing appear dreary, and certainly render all the world lazy and discontented.

On the day we made the land, we had great hopes of being able to enter the harbour, as the wind was fair: when, all at once, we were surrounded by so thick a mist, that, for the three succeeding days, we could not see above twenty yards on any side.

There are few things, indeed, more provoking than these fogs off Halifax; for, as they happen to be companions of that very wind, the south-east, which is the best for running in, the navigator is plagued with the tormenting consciousness, that if he could be allowed but a couple of hours' clear weather, his port would be gained, and his troubles over. The clearing up, therefore, of these odious clouds or veils is about the most delightful thing I know; and the instantaneous effect which a clear sight of the land, or even of the sharp horizon, when far at sea, has on the mind of every person on board, is quite remarkable. All things look bright, fresh, and more beautiful than ever. The stir over the whole ship at these moments is so great, that even persons sitting below

can tell at once that the fog has cleared away. The rapid clatter of the men's feet, springing up the hatchways at the lively sound of the boatswain's call to 'make sail!' soon follows. Then comes the cheerful voice of the officer, hailing the topmen to shake out the reefs, trice up the staysails, and rig out the booms. That peculiar and well-known kind of echo, also, by which the sound of the voice is thrown back from the wet sails, contributes, in like manner, to produce a joyous elasticity of spirits, greater, I think, than is excited by most of the ordinary occurrences of a sea life.

A year or two after the time I am speaking of, it was resolved to place a heavy gun upon the rock on which Sambro light-house is built; and, after a good deal of trouble, a long twenty-four pounder was hoisted up to the highest ridge of this prominent station. It was then arranged that, if, on the arrival of any ship off the harbour, in a period of fog, she chose to fire guns, these were to be answered from the light-house; and in this way a kind of audible, though invisible,

telegraph might be set to work. If it happened that the officers of the ship were sufficiently familiar with the ground, and possessed nerves stout enough for such a groping kind of navigation, perilous at best, it was possible to run fairly into the harbour, notwithstanding the obscurity, by watching the sound of these guns, and attending closely to the depth of water.

I never was in any ship which ventured upon this feat; but I perfectly recollect a curious circumstance, which occurred, I think, to His Majesty's ship *Cambrian*. She had run in from sea towards the coast, enveloped in one of these dense fogs. Of course they took for granted that the lighthouse and the adjacent land, Halifax included, were likewise covered with an impenetrable cloud or mist. But it so chanced, by what freak of Dame Nature I know not, that the fog, on that day, was confined to the deep water; so that we, who were in the port, could see it, at the distance of several miles from the coast, lying on the ocean like a huge stratum of snow, with an

abrupt face, fronting the shore. The Cambrian, lost in the midst of this fog bank, supposing herself to be near the land, fired a gun. To this the light-house replied; and so the ship and the light went on, pelting away, gun for gun, during half the day, without ever seeing one another. The people at the light-house had no means of communicating to the frigate, that, if she would only stand on a little further, she would disentangle herself from the cloud, in which, like Jupiter Olympus of old, she was wasting her thunder.

At last the captain, hopeless of its clearing up, gave orders to pipe to dinner; but as the weather, in all respects except this abominable haze, was quite fine, and the ship was still in deep water, he directed her to be steered towards the shore, and the lead kept constantly going. As one o'clock approached, he began to feel uneasy, from the water shoaling, and the light-house guns sounding closer and closer; but, being unwilling to disturb the men at their dinner, he resolved to stand on for the remaining

ten minutes of the hour. Lo and behold! however, they had not sailed half a mile further, before the flying-jib-boom end emerged from the wall of mist—then the bowsprit shot into daylight—and, lastly, the ship herself glided out of the cloud into the full blaze of a bright and ‘sunshine holyday.’ All hands were instantly turned up to make sail; and the men, as they flew on deck, could scarcely believe their senses when they saw behind them the fog bank, right ahead the harbour’s mouth, with the bold cliffs of Cape Sambro on the left, and, farther still, the ships at their moorings, with their ensigns and pendants blowing out, light and dry, in the breeze.

A far different fate, alas! attended His Majesty’s ship *Atalante*, Captain Frederick Hickey. On the morning of the 10th of November, 1813, this ship stood in for Halifax harbour in very thick weather, carefully feeling her way with the lead, and having look-out men at the jib-boom end, fore-yard-arms, and every where else from which a glimpse of the land was likely to be obtained.

After breakfast, a fog signal-gun was fired, in the expectation of its being answered by the light-house on Cape Sambro, near which it was known they must be. Within a few minutes, accordingly, a gun was heard in the N.N.W. quarter, exactly where the light was supposed to lie. As the soundings agreed with the estimated position of the ship, and as the guns from the *Atalante*, fired at intervals of fifteen minutes, were regularly answered in the direction of the harbour's mouth, it was determined to stand on, so as to enter the port under the guidance of these sounds alone. By a fatal coincidence of circumstances, however, these answering guns were fired, not by Cape Sambro, but by His Majesty's ship *Barrossa*, which was likewise entangled by the fog. She, too, supposed that she was communicating with the light-house, whereas it was the guns of the unfortunate *Atalante* that she heard all the time.

There was, certainly, no inconsiderable risk incurred by running in for the harbour's mouth under such circumstances. But it will

often happen that it becomes an officer's duty to put his ship, as well as his life, in hazard ; and this appears to have been exactly one of those cases. Captain Hickey was charged with urgent despatches relative to the enemy's fleet, which it was of the greatest importance should be delivered without an hour's delay. But there was every appearance of this fog lasting a week ; and as he and his officers had passed over the ground a hundred times before, and were as intimately acquainted with the spot as any pilot could be, it was resolved to try the bold experiment ; and the ship was forthwith steered in the supposed direction of Halifax.

They had not, however, stood on far, before one of the look-out men exclaimed, " Breakers ahead ! Hard a-starboard ! " But it was too late, for, before the helm could be put over, the ship was amongst those formidable reefs known by the name of the Sisters' Rocks, or eastern ledge of Sambro Island. The rudder and half of the stern-post, together with great part of the false keel, were driven off at the first blow, and

floated up alongside. There is some reason to believe, indeed, that a portion of the bottom of the ship, loaded with 120 tons of iron ballast, was torn from the upper works by this fearful blow, and that the ship, which instantly filled with water, was afterwards buoyed up merely by the empty casks, till the decks and sides were burst through or riven asunder by the waves.

The captain, who, throughout the whole scene, continued as composed as if nothing remarkable had occurred, now ordered the guns to be thrown overboard; but before one of them could be cast loose, or a breeching cut, the ship fell over so much that the men could not stand. It was, therefore, with great difficulty that a few guns were fired as signals of distress. In the same breath that this order was given, Captain Hickey desired the yard tackles to be hooked, in order that the pinnace might be hoisted out; but as the masts, deprived of their foundation, were tottering from side to side, the people were called down again. The quarter boats were then lowered into

the water with some difficulty; but the jolly-boat, which happened to be on the poop undergoing repairs, in being launched overboard, struck against one of the stern davits, bilged, and went down. The ship was now falling fast over on her beam ends, and directions were given to cut away the fore and main-mast. Fortunately, they fell without injuring the large boat on the booms — their grand hope. At the instant of this crash, the ship parted in two, between the main and mizen-masts; and, within a few seconds afterwards, she again broke right across, between the fore and main-masts: so that the poor *Atalante* now formed a mere wreck, divided into three pieces, crumbling into smaller fragments at every send of the swell.

By this time a considerable crowd of the men had got into the pinnace on the booms, in hopes that she might float off as the ship sunk; but Captain Hickey, seeing that the boat, so loaded, could never swim, desired some twenty of the men to quit her; and, what is particularly worthy of remark, his

orders, which were given with the most perfect coolness, were as promptly obeyed as ever. Throughout the whole of these trying moments, indeed, the discipline of the ship appears to have been maintained, not only without the smallest trace of insubordination, but with a degree of cheerfulness which is described as truly wonderful. Even when the masts fell, the sound of the crashing spars was drowned in the animating huzzas of the undaunted crew, though they were then clinging to the weather gunwale, with the sea, from time to time, making a clean breach over them, and when they were expecting every instant to be carried to the bottom!

As soon as the pinnacle was relieved from the pressure of the crowd, she floated off the booms, or rather, was knocked off by a sea, which turned her bottom upwards, and whelmed her into the surf amidst the fragments of the wreck. The people, however, imitating the gallant bearing of their captain, and keeping their eyes fixed upon him, never, for one instant, lost their self-possession.

By dint of great exertions, they succeeded not only in righting the boat, but in disentangling her from the confused heap of spars, and the dash of the breakers, so as to place her at a little distance from the wreck, where they waited for further orders from the captain, who, with about forty men, still clung to the poor remains of the gay *Atalante*—once so much admired!

An attempt was next made to construct a raft, as it was feared the three boats could not possibly carry all hands; but the violence of the waves prevented this, and it was resolved to trust to the boats alone, though they were already, to all appearance, quite full. It was now, however, absolutely necessary to take to them, as the wreck was disappearing rapidly; and in order to pack close, most of the men were removed to the pinnace, where they were laid flat in the bottom, like herrings in a barrel, while the small boats returned to pick off the rest. This was no easy matter in any case, while in others it was impossible; so that many men had to swim for it; others were dragged

through the waves by ropes, and some were forked off by oars and other small spars.

Amongst the crew there was one famous merry fellow, a black fiddler, who was discovered, at this critical juncture, clinging to the main chains, with his beloved Cremona squeezed tightly but delicately under his arm—a ludicrous picture of distress, and a subject of some joking amongst the men, even at this moment. It soon became absolutely necessary that he should lose one of two things—his fiddle or his life. So, at last, after a painful struggle, the professor and his violin were obliged to part company!

The poor negro musician's tenacity of purpose arose from sheer love of his art. There was another laugh raised, however, about the same time, at the expense of the captain's clerk, who, stimulated purely by a sense of duty, lost all recollection of himself, in his anxiety to save what was intrusted to his care, and thus was very nearly being drowned. This zealous person had general instructions, that whenever guns were fired, or any other circumstance occurred likely to shake

the chronometer, he was to hold it in his hand, to prevent the concussion deranging its works. As soon, therefore, as the ship was dashed against the rocks, the clerk's thoughts naturally turned exclusively on the time-piece. He caught the watch up, and ran on deck; but as he was no swimmer, he was obliged to cling to the mizen-mast, where he stuck fast, careless of every thing but his important charge. When the ship fell over, and the mast became nearly horizontal, he managed to creep along till he reached the mizen-top, where he seated himself in some trepidation—grinning like a monkey that has run off with a cocoa-nut—till the spar gave way, and he was plunged, chronometer and all, right overboard. Every eye was turned to the spot, to see whether this most public-spirited of scribes was ever to appear again; when, to the great joy of all hands, he emerged from the waves—watch still in hand! and was with great difficulty dragged into one of the boats, half drowned.

With the exception of this fortunate chro-

nometer, and the Admiral's despatches, which the captain had secured when the ship first struck, every thing on board was lost.

The pinnace now contained seventy-nine men and one woman, the cutter forty-two, and the gig eighteen, with which cargoes they barely floated. Captain Hickey was, of course, the last man who left the wreck; though, such were the respect and affection felt for him by his crew, that those who stood along with him on this last vestige of the ship, evinced the greatest reluctance at leaving their commander in such a perilous predicament. So speedy, indeed, was the work of destruction, that by the time the captain was fairly in the boat, the wreck had almost entirely 'melted into the yest of waves.' The crew, however, gave her three hearty cheers as she went down, and then finally abandoned the scattered fragments of what had been their house and home for nearly seven years.

The fog still continued as thick as ever; the binacles had both been washed overboard, and no compass could be procured.

As the wind was still light, there was great difficulty in steering in a straight line. Had there been a breeze, it would perhaps have been easier to have shaped a course. In this dilemma a resource was hit upon, which, for a time, answered pretty well to guide them. It being known, loosely, before leaving the wreck, in what direction the land was situated, the three boats were placed in a row pointing that way. The sternmost boat then quitted her station in the rear, and pulled ahead till she came in a line with the other two boats, but took care not to go so far as to be lost in the fog; the boat which was now astern then rowed ahead, as the first had done; and so on, doubling along, one after the other. This tardy method of proceeding, however, answered only for a time; and at length they were completely at a loss which way to steer. Precisely at this moment of greatest need, an old quarter-master, Samuel Shanks by name, recollected that at the end of his watch-chain there hung a small compass-seal. This precious discovery was announced to

the other boats by a joyous shout from the pinnace.

The compass being speedily handed into the gig, to the captain, was placed on the top of the chronometer, so nobly saved by the clerk; and as this instrument worked on jimbles, the little needle remained upon it sufficiently steady for steering the boats within a few points.

This was enough to insure hitting the land, from which they had been steering quite wide. Before reaching the shore, they fell in with an old fisherman, who piloted them to a bight called Portuguese Cove, where they all landed in safety, at the distance of twenty miles from the town of Halifax.

The fishermen lighted great fires, to warm their shivering guests, most of whom were very lightly clad, and all, of course, dripping wet; many of them, also, were miserably cramped by close packing in the boats. Some of the men, especially of those who entered the boats last, having been obliged to swim for their lives, had thrown off every

thing but their trousers; so that the only respectably-dressed person out of the whole party was Old Shanks, the owner of the watch and compass-seal—a steady, hard-weather sailor, who took the whole affair as deliberately as if shipwreck had been an every-day occurrence. He did not even take off his hat, except, indeed, to give his good ship a cheer as she went to the bottom.

The future measures were soon decided upon. The captain carried the three boats round to the harbour, taking with him the men who had suffered most from fatigue, and those who were worst off for clothes. The officers then set out with the rest, to march across the country to Halifax, in three divisions, keeping together with as much regularity as if they had been going upon some previously-arranged piece of service. Very few of the party had any shoes, an inconvenience which was felt more severely than it would otherwise have been, from their having to trudge over a country but partially cleared of wood. Notwithstanding all this, there was not a single straggler;

and the whole ship's company, officer, man, and boy, assembled in the evening at Halifax, in an exact order as if their ship had met with no accident.

I have been more particular in describing this shipwreck, from its appearing to offer several uncommon and some useful details, well worthy, I think, of the notice of practical men.

It is rather an unusual combination of disasters for a ship to be so totally wrecked, as to be actually obliterated from the face of the waters, in the course of a quarter of an hour, in fine weather, in the day-time, on well-known rocks, and close to a light-house; but without the loss of a single man, or the smallest accident to any one person on board.

In the next place, it is highly important to observe, that the lives of the crew, in all probability, would not, and perhaps could not, have been saved, had the discipline been, in the smallest degree, less exactly maintained. Had any impatience been manifested by the people to rush into the boats, or had the captain not possessed sufficient

authority to reduce the numbers which had crowded into the pinnace, when she was still resting on the booms, at least half of the crew must have lost their lives.

It was chiefly, therefore, if not entirely, to the personal influence which Captain Hickey possessed over the minds of all on board, that their safety was owing. Their habitual confidence in his talents and professional knowledge had, from long experience, become so great, that every man in the ship, in this extremity of danger, instinctively turned to him for assistance, and, seeing him so completely master of himself, they relinquished to his well-known and often-tried sagacity, the formidable task of extricating them from their perils. It is at such moments as these, indeed, that the grand distinction between man and man is developed, and the full ascendancy of a powerful and well-regulated mind makes itself felt. The slightest hesitation on the captain's part, the smallest want of decision, or any uncertainty as to what was the very best thing to be done, if betrayed

by a word or look of his, would have shot, like an electric spark, through the whole ship's company—a tumultuous rush would have been made to the boats—and two out of the three, if not all, must have been swamped, and every man in them drowned.

Captain Hickey and his crew had been serving together in the same ship for many years before, in the course of which period they had acquired so thorough an acquaintance with one another, that this great trial, instead of loosening the discipline, only augmented its compactness, and thus enabled the commander to bring all his knowledge, and all the resources of his vigorous understanding, to bear at once, with such admirable effect, upon the difficulties by which he was surrounded.

There are some men who actually derive as much credit from their deportment under the severest losses, as others earn by brilliant success; and it may certainly be said that Captain Hickey is one of these: for, although he had the great misfortune to lose his ship, he must enjoy the satisfaction

of knowing, that his skill and firmness, rendered effective by the discipline he had been so many years in perfecting, enabled him to save the lives of more than a hundred persons, who, but for him, in all human probability, must have perished.

CHAPTER XI.

BLOCKADING A NEUTRAL PORT.

IN the summer of 1804, His Majesty's ships *Leander* and *Cambrian* were ordered to proceed off New York, to watch the motions of two French frigates lying in that harbour. On board of one of these, I forget which, Jérôme Buonaparte had taken his passage to Europe.

This plan of lying off a neutral port to watch for the departure of an enemy riding at anchor within it, is, I believe, still considered, by some people, a measure of questionable propriety, in a national point of view. It is one of those topics, however, which will probably never be quite settled; as circumstances must arise in every war to render it less inexpedient to risk offending a neutral power, on a doubtful point

of international usage, than to suffer an enemy to escape. Be the political aspect of this point, however, what it may, there can be no doubt of the excessive and very reasonable annoyance of such a proceeding to the neutral nation, whose rights of hospitality are thus, more or less, virtually infringed. It is pretty certain, I believe, that our lying so long off the harbour of New York, blockading these two French ships, contributed materially to foster those angry feelings against us, which, some years afterwards, broke out into open war.

The blockading service at any time is a tedious one; but upon this occasion we contrived to enliven it in a manner, which, whether legitimate or not, was certainly highly exciting, and sometimes rather profitable to us.

New York, every one knows, is the great sea-port of America, into which, and out of which, many dozens of ships sail daily. With the outward-bound vessels we had little or nothing to do; but with those which came from foreign parts, especially from France,

then our bitter enemy, we took the liberty—the Americans said, the improper liberty—to interfere. I speak not of French ships, or those which avowed themselves to be such, and hoisted enemy's colours; for of these we, of course, made prize, without scruple, whenever we could catch them beyond the limits of the American neutrality. But this very rarely happened, and the ships we meddled with, so much to the displeasure of the Americans, were those which, to outward appearance, belonged to citizens of the United States, but on board which we had reason—good or bad—to suspect there was cargo owned by the enemy. Nothing appears to be so easy as to forge a ship's papers, or to swear false oaths; and accordingly, a great deal of French property was imported into America, in vessels certainly belonging to the United States, but covered, as it was called, by documents implying an American or neutral right in it. In the very same way, I suppose, much Spanish property was, for a long course of years, imported into South America, in English

bottoms, when Spain was at war with her Colonies. England, in that case, acted the part of a neutral, and learned, in like manner, for the lucre of gain, to trifle with all the obligations of an oath. During the period of Buonaparte's continental system, especially, about the year 1810, many persons in England engaged largely in what was called the licensed trade, the very essence of which was false swearing, false papers, and the most unprincipled collusion of every kind. A horrible way of making money, of which the base contamination, in the opinion of some of our best merchants, is not yet quite washed away. So that poor Bony, directly and indirectly, has enough to answer for!

At the time I speak of, 1804, when we were stationed off New York, and the French and English nations were at loggerheads, Jonathan very properly stepped in to profit by the fray, exactly as John Bull afterwards did when Old and New Spain were at war—except, indeed, that in the contraband, or covered carrying trade with the revolted Spanish colonies, we had to share the profits

with our transatlantic brethren, while the two belligerents, shutting their eyes to their own true interest, allowed others to run off with the advantages.

All this looks simple enough on paper; and a moment's reflection shews that such must ever be the consequence of a similar state of things. For when shrewd nations, like the United States, have the art to keep out of the fight in which others are engaged, they will, of course, be able to play into the hands of the different parties, whose whole thoughts are occupied in injuring one another, instead of interchanging benefits. The adroit neutral, by watching his time, can always minister to the several necessities of the combatants, sometimes to one, sometimes to the other, according as the payment is good or bad, and in such a manner as to be sure of his own profit, reckless at whose cost. At the same time, he must naturally lay his account with provoking the displeasure of the powers at war, who, in their turn, will, of course, do all they possibly can to prevent the neutral from

lending assistance to their opponents respectively.

Conflicting nations, accordingly, have always claimed, and, when they can, will never cease to enforce, this right of searching neutral ships, in order to discover whether or not there be enemy's property on board. But the practice, it may easily be imagined, is full of many sore heart-burnings, and all kinds of "hard words, jealousies, and fears," which often, as old Hudibras has it, "set folks together by the ears," who ought, perhaps, never to have become foes.

Every morning, at daybreak, during our stay off New York, we set about arresting the progress of all the vessels we saw—firing off guns to the right and left, to make every ship that was running in, heave to, or wait, until we had leisure to send a boat on board, "to see," in our lingo, "what she was made of." I have frequently known a dozen, and sometimes a couple of dozen ships, lying a league or two off the port, losing their fair wind, their tide, and, worse than all, their market, for many hours, sometimes the whole

day, before our search was completed. I am not now inquiring whether all this was right, or whether it was even necessary, but simply describing the fact.

When any circumstance in the ship's papers looked suspicious, the boarding officer brought the master and his documents to the *Leander*, where they were further examined by the captain; and if any thing more important was then elicited, by an examination of the parties or their papers, to justify the idea that the cargo was French, and not American, as was pretended, the ship was forthwith detained. She was then manned with an English crew from the ships of war, and ordered off to Halifax, to be there tried in the Admiralty Court, or adjudicated, as the term is; and either released with or without demurrage, if proved to be truly neutral property, or condemned, if it were shewn to belong to the enemy.

One can easily conceive how this sort of proceeding, in every possible case, must be vexatious to the neutral. If, in point of fact, the whole, or a part of the ship's cargo, really

belong to that ship's belligerent party, whose enemy is investigating the case, and this be clearly made out, it is still mortifying to the neutral to see the property taken away which he has undertaken to cover so effectually as to guard it from capture. If, on the other hand, the cargo be all the while, *bonâ fide*, the property of the neutral whose flag it is sailing under, the vexation caused by this interruption to the voyage is excessive. In the event of restoration or acquittal, the owner's loss, it is said, is seldom, if ever, adequately compensated for by the awarded damages. In most cases there are found a number of suspicious circumstances sufficient to justify the detention, but not enough to lead to a condemnation; and in these instances the remuneration is not great.

If the case, then, be annoying in any view of it, supposing the neutral ship to have been met with on the wide ocean, what must be the aggravation when the vessel is laid hold of at the instant she has all but reached her own home? when half an hour's further sailing would have ended the voyage

successfully, and put it beyond the power of either of the belligerents to have asked any questions about the nature of her objects, or the ownership of her cargo ?

We detained, at that period, a good many American vessels, on the ground of having French or Spanish property on board. One of these, a very large ship from Lima, filled with cocoa, was clearly made out to be a good prize, and was condemned accordingly. Three or four others, I remember, were restored to their owners by the decision of the Admiralty Court ; and two of them were forcibly recaptured by the Americans, on their way to Halifax. On board one of these ships, the master, and the few hands left in her to give evidence at the trial, rose in the night, overpowered the prize-master and his crew, nailed down the hatches, and having put the helm up, with the wind on land, gained the coast before the scale of authority could be turned. In the other ship, the English officer in charge imprudently allowed himself to be drifted so near the land, that the people on the beach, suspecting what had happened,

sent off armed boats in sufficient number to repossess themselves of the property. Possession in such cases being not nine, but ten points of the law, we were left to whistle for our prizes!

There was another circumstance connected with our proceedings at that time, of still more serious annoyance to the Americans, and one requiring, in its discussion, still greater delicacy of handling. I shall not, indeed, presume to enter upon its very difficult merits, but, as before, content myself with merely describing the circumstances. I need hardly mention that I allude to the impressment of those seamen whom we found serving on board American merchant ships, but who were known to be, or supposed to be, British subjects. What the strict letter of the law is now, I am not aware—I mean, what would be considered the ‘law of usage’ in the event of another war. But I presume we should act pretty much as we did before, and consequently incur the risk, whatever that might be, of converting a neutral into an enemy, rather than agree to relinquish

our right to command the services of any British-born subject, whenever we found him on the high seas. At all events, it seems quite clear that, while we can hold it, we will never give up the right of search, or the right of impressment. We may and ought, certainly, to exercise so disagreeable a power with such temper and discretion as not to provoke the enmity of any friendly nation.

But at the time I speak of, and on board our good old ship the *Leander*, whose name, I was grieved, but not surprised, to find, was still held in detestation three or four and twenty years afterwards at New York, I am sorry to own that we had not much of this discretion in our proceedings; or, rather, we had not enough consideration for the feelings of the people we were dealing with. We have since learnt to respect them more — or, as they prefer to express it, they have since taught us to respect them: be it either way, it matters not much; and if it please the Americans more to say they have instructed us in this point of good manners, than to allow that we have come to a know-

ledge of better habits, well and good. I am grievously afraid, however, that if we come again to be placed in like circumstances, and our ships of war are in want of men, whilst Englishmen are to be found in numbers on board American ships, we shall always fall upon some good excuse for impressing His Majesty's liege subjects, find them where we may. However civilly we may then set about this duty—as a duty it certainly will appear—the old charges, I fear, will again be raised up against us.

To place the full annoyance of these matters in a light to be viewed fairly by English people, let us suppose that the Americans and French were to go to war, and that England for once remained neutral—an odd case, I admit, but one which might happen. Next, suppose that a couple of French frigates were chased into Liverpool, and that an American squadron stationed itself off that harbour to watch the motions of these French ships, which had claimed the protection of our neutrality, and were accordingly received into 'our waters,'—I ask, "would

this blockade of Liverpool be agreeable to us, or not?"

Even if the blockading American frigates did nothing but sail backwards and forwards across the harbour's mouth, or occasionally run up and anchor abreast of the town, it would not, 'I guess,' be very pleasant to be thus superintended. If, however, the American ships, in addition to this legitimate surveillance of their enemy, were to detain off the port, with equal legitimacy of usage, and within a league or so of the light-house, every British ship coming from France, or from a French colony; and if, besides looking over the papers of these ships, to see whether all was regular, they were to open every private letter, in the hope of detecting some trace of French ownership in the cargo, what should we say? And if, out of some twenty ships arrested daily in this manner, one or two of our ships were to be completely diverted from their course, from time to time, and sent off under a prize-master to New York for adjudication, I wonder how the Liverpool folks would like it? But if,

in addition to this perfectly regular and usual exercise of a belligerent right on the part of the Americans, under such circumstances, we bring in that most awkward and ticklish of questions, the impressment of seamen, let us consider how much the feeling of annoyance, on the part of the English neutral, would be augmented.

Conceive, for instance, that the American squadron, employed to blockade the French ships in Liverpool, were short handed, but, from being in daily expectation of bringing their enemy to action, it had become an object of great consequence with them to get their ships manned. And suppose, likewise, that it were perfectly notorious to all parties, that, on board every English ship arriving or sailing from the port in question, there were several American citizens, but calling themselves English, and having in their possession 'protections,' or certificates to that effect, sworn to in regular form, but well known to be false, and such as might be bought for 4s. 6d. any day. Things being in this situation, if the American men-of-

war, off the English port, were then to fire at and stop every ship, and, besides overhauling her papers and cargo, were to take out any seaman, to work their own guns withal, whom they had reason, or supposed, or said they had reason, to consider American citizens, or whose country they guessed, from dialect, or appearance; I wish to know with what degree of patience this would be submitted to on the Exchange at Liverpool, or elsewhere in England?

It signifies nothing to say that such a case could not occur, as the Americans do not impress seamen; for all who have attended to such subjects know, well enough, that if they come to be engaged in a protracted war, especially at a distance from their own shores, there is no other possible way by which they can keep their armed ships manned. This, however, is not the point now in discussion. I merely wish to put the general case broadly before our own eyes, in order that we may bring it distinctly home to ourselves, and then see whether or not the Americans had reason for their indignation.

The truth is, they had very good reason to be annoyed; and if the guiding practical maxim amongst nations be, that 'might makes right,' as I conceive it always has been, and ever will be, so long as powder and shot exist, with money to back them, and energy to wield them,—then we really cannot pretend to find fault with the Americans, because they took advantage, or tried to take advantage, of that moment when our 'right' being the same, our 'might' appeared to be waning. I allude to their declaring war against us in 1812, when we, fighting single-handed, in the cause of European independence, were so hard pressed by Napoleon and others. For the Americans to have taken an earlier share in the struggle against us, when we were lords of the ascendant, would have been the extremity of Quixotism. But when John Bull was pressed on all hands by numbers, and his strength exhausted by long contests, albeit in the cause of liberty, which his brother Jonathan professes to adore, he, Jonathan, would have been a fool, a character which he certainly never

was accused of enacting, if he had not taken advantage of the moment to try his strength. The provocation we gave was certainly considerable, and the retort, it must be owned, very dexterously managed. The result, I trust, is, that things are on a better footing than before; both parties have learned civility and caution, and they will not agree the worse on that account. To forgive and forget, is the old English maxim, as our friends well know. Let them imitate us in this respect, and they will be all the happier, and not a whit less powerful.

In putting a parallel case to ours off New York, and supposing Liverpool to be blockaded by the Americans, on the ground of their watching some French ships, I omitted to throw in one item, which is necessary to complete the parallel, and make it fit the one from which it is drawn.

Suppose the blockading American ships off Liverpool, in firing a shot ahead of a vessel they wished to examine, had accidentally hit, not that vessel, but a small coaster, so far beyond her, that she was not

even noticed by the blockading ships. And suppose, further, this unlucky chance-shot to have killed one of the crew on board the said coaster: the vessel would, of course, proceed immediately to Liverpool with the body of their slaughtered countryman; and in fairness, it may be asked, what would have been the effect of such a spectacle on the population of England—more particularly if such an event had occurred at the moment of a general election, when party politics, raging on this very question of foreign interference, was at its height?

This is not an imaginary case; for it actually occurred in 1804, when we were blockading the French frigates in New York. A casual shot from the *Leander* hit an unfortunate sloop's main-boom; and the broken spar striking the mate, John Pierce by name, killed him instantly. The sloop sailed on to New York, where the mangled body, raised on a platform, was paraded through the streets, in order to augment the vehement indignation, already at a high pitch, against the English.

Now, let us be candid to our rivals ; and ask ourselves whether the Americans would have been worthy of our friendship, or even of our hostility, had they tamely submitted to indignities which, if passed upon ourselves, would have roused not only Liverpool, but the whole country, into a towering passion of nationality ?

CHAPTER XII.

THE SCHOOLMASTER AFLOAT.

THE union of abstract or theoretical study with actual practice, is one of the most important characteristics of a naval life; and the distinction is rendered still more remarkable, from its extending throughout the whole range of an officer's career, from the very hour he enters the service as a midshipman, till he ends his life in battle, like Nelson, or worn out, like Collingwood, in command of a fleet. Every officer in the Navy, in short, who really cares about his business at all, may be said to be perpetually learning his profession, and as perpetually putting in practice what he learns; for by no exertion of talents or industry, can he ever expect to reach the top of his knowledge, or that point where further

instruction will no longer prove useful to himself and his country. A naval man, therefore, however professionally employed, is kept constantly alive and active, as far as the pursuit of information is concerned. For there is a permanent and high bounty, as it were, upon every fresh acquirement; and the advantages of each new attainment are so great, and generally so soon felt, that, with a little address on the part of the higher authorities, there can never be wanting opportunities for bringing such information into useful operation. As, therefore, there is very seldom any want of stimulus amongst the young men on board a well-regulated ship; it becomes of great consequence, not only to create and keep alive this impulse, but also to give it a right direction, and so to guide its energies, that the result may be productive of benefit, not merely to the officers themselves, but to their country.

The nature of the sea-service is such, that it must be entered at an early age, otherwise its duties are sure to disgust. But unless a boy happens to be one of those

prodigies, (who, in the long run, seldom turn out worth sixpence !) he must almost necessarily be very ignorant when he commences his sea-life. Once afloat, however, the occupations of the ship are quite sufficient to keep his body in healthful exercise, and the variety of new objects he sees will generally prevent his mind from ever wearying. Yet unless some consistent, uniform means be taken to cherish his nascent mental energies, and to give a right direction to that desire for knowledge which belongs to his age, and, above all, to found and regulate his principles ; the chances are but too great that he may speedily run to weeds and waste, in spite of the best possible disposition on his part to do right.

Persons who have not had the means of becoming acquainted with the dangers that beset a young man, on his first going to sea, and even for some time afterwards, can form no adequate conception of the risk which he incurs of having his taste and morals corrupted, and the best faculties of his mind not only neglected, but often irretrievably

shaken. Nor must people hope, that by sending a boy under the protection of the captain, or one of the officers, these evils will always be warded off. The danger may be lessened, it is true; but it cannot be effectually guarded against, and for a very plain reason. In ships actively employed, hardly any officer has leisure to devote the requisite amount of time to the superintendence of a boy under his charge; and still less frequently has he either capacity or temper for the arduous task of education. To which it may be added, that, even under favourable circumstances, the duties of an officer, and his assigned position in the ship, generally keep him too much apart from the midshipmen to enable him to exercise, to the extent we could wish, that degree of watchfulness over his protégé's habits, without which the utmost care may often prove ineffectual in maintaining his young friend in the right path.

The kindness of a captain, or any other of the officers, certainly goes a long way to render the situation of a youngster on board

ship happy, and useful. But these advantages can be fully extended only to a few cases, even in ships where the captain's disposition has that kindly bent which takes delight in opening his cabin to the midshipmen, and prompts him to go out of his way in other respects, to make them pleased with their situation. It is deeply to be regretted, indeed, that in most ships in His Majesty's service, no such advantages can be reckoned upon; and unless there be something more direct and imperative than the mere goodwill of the captain, too many youngsters will inevitably be neglected, not only to their own loss and eventual sorrow, but to the manifest injury of the public interests.

There is a very mistaken notion entertained by many officers in the Navy, who conceive that parental care and kindness to the midshipmen under their command, do not fall within the strict line of their duty. And this would not be unreasonable, if it were the practice to govern His Majesty's ships exclusively by the strict letter of the Printed Instructions and the Articles of War.

But how could the service go on for a single day on such principles? Every thing falls within the line of a captain's duty which contributes to the advancement of the public good; and who shall say that an attention to the morals and manners of those young men, who are destined to command the ships and fleets of the country, is not an object of vital public interest?

There is no law, strictly so called, by which parents on shore are compelled to educate their children, or to shew them kindness; but what father of a family will plead this omission in the statutes in excuse for neglecting his family? Yet the case is even stronger on board ship, where the dangers of evil communication—that corrupter of good manners—are far greater, and where the value of kindness is enhanced a hundred-fold, by the many hardships and privations to which the poor boys must be exposed.

To say that these young persons are merely public servants—that they must take their chance with the rest of the crew—and that a captain has enough to do besides making

himself a dry-nurse for every child sent on board his ship, is a bitter and most unworthy mockery, implying little genuine public spirit, and still less private feeling.

At the very best, as I have already said, the captain cannot accomplish all the objects that could be desired; but in every case, even of the most actively employed ships, the exercise of his authority, in a generous and kindly spirit, must contribute, in a most essential degree, not only to the present comfort, but to the solid virtue of the youngsters on board. Indeed, these two results must always go together, afloat as well as on shore; and exactly in proportion as the captain can ameliorate the habits of his young officers, or win them to a conviction of the value of acting upon principle, so will they become happier men and more useful public servants.

It has already been stated, that a captain's time is generally so much taken up with official duties, that, even if he be so inclined, he cannot devote an adequate portion of his attention to the moral care of

the important class of rising officers of whom we are speaking. But it requires only a slight acquaintance with any description of public business to shew, that although a commanding officer may often not be able to execute a required task himself, he may usefully superintend its right performance by another. Indeed, it will happen, in most cases, that such work will actually be better done by another person, under his inspection, than it could have been done by the chief himself. This observation applies, in a remarkable manner, to the numerous and varied duties on board a man-of-war. Nor is it too much to say, that in a well-regulated ship the captain is bound not to attempt the execution of all, or, perhaps, any of these duties himself, but rather to devote his attention to their right performance by the officers especially named to such charges.

It is on this principle—that is to say, exactly in the same spirit by which every other duty is carried on afloat—that I consider it of so much importance to the well-being of the Navy that the captain should be

provided with a duly-qualified officer in a most essential department of his discipline, at present absolutely vacant. He cannot, by any exertion, execute the duties of instruction himself; nor is there any other person on board to whom he can delegate them, at least as things are now constituted; and the consequences, we all know, are in many cases every way deplorable.

Fortunately, the remedy for these evils appears neither difficult of discovery, nor costly in its application; and as it has had the advantage of frequent and successful trial, it is to be hoped that, ere long, its adoption as a matter of official regulation will become general throughout the Navy.

It must have occurred to every one who has attended personally to this subject, that the duty of superintending the progress of youngsters circumstanced as the mids are, to any good purpose, can be performed only by a person who shall have this exclusive business to attend to, or whose chief duty and interest it shall be. Neither can there be a doubt, that if a proper salary were

given, in connexion with some advantages which would cost the country nothing, a class of officers, fully competent to this high and important task, might soon be created, and placed as much at the disposal of the administrators of our naval affairs, as any other description of public servants. I use the word officers instead of schoolmasters, because it appears to me quite essential to the success of the measures under consideration, that the person having the superintendence of the young gentlemen in one of His Majesty's ships should be permanently placed, as nearly as possible, in the situation eventually to be filled by his pupils, in order that he may become practically familiar with those professional feelings and habits, the value of which it is his duty to teach, along with those still more important principles, and sacred instructions peculiarly his province to inculcate.

Many of these useful refinements, however, cannot be looked for in men who are not placed in situations in which alone, as all experience shews, they can be acquired; it

therefore becomes indispensable, as I have said before, that the instructors of our naval youth should be made to feel that they really are officers, to all intents and purposes, not only in rank, but in the enjoyment of every other technical advantage possible.

A preceptor, under any circumstances, but most particularly on board ship, in order to have the power of doing any permanent good, should not only respect himself, but ought to be supported in such a way as to command, at all times, the respect, not alone of his pupils, but likewise of the people about them. Unfortunately, few things can be more inefficient, or, generally speaking, more ridiculous, than the present situation of a schoolmaster afloat; and until his position there be materially improved, it is almost hopeless to look for any good results.

“The average pay of schoolmasters,” observes a well-informed writer, “is about £50 and their provisions. They rank with the ship’s cook, mess with the midshipmen, and have no cabin. With so small a pittance, and with such rank and accommoda-

tions, it would be unreasonable to suppose that a very highly-educated class of persons could be obtained; and consequently we find, that many ships are totally unprovided. Where they are found, they are often persons who make it convenient to serve for a time; but it rarely happens that they continue in the business. No prospect of advancement is held out to them, nor are they in any way recompensed or provided for when their term of service is complete. The naval instructions ordain that 'the school-master is not only to instruct his pupils in mathematics, but to watch over their general conduct, and to attend to their morals; and if he shall observe any disposition to immorality or debauchery, or any conduct unbecoming an officer or a gentleman, he is to represent it to the captain.' This appears very plausible in the printed instructions; but its execution, under the circumstances just detailed, must be pronounced chimerical. It may readily be supposed, how totally inconsistent with this dignified surveillance, living in the same hole with their pupils

must be, particularly when the democratical form of government, or club-law, which is generally to be found there, is remembered. The habits and awkwardness of a landsman are of themselves a constant theme of irresistible ridicule with their joyous associates; and when it is considered that the highest authority often finds it difficult to restrain their happy thoughtlessness and practical jokes, what, it may be asked, must be expected to be the fate of an unhappy equal?''*

This is by no means an exaggerated picture of the situation of a schoolmaster on board a man-of-war; and whatever the remedy be, I believe there can hardly exist a difference of opinion amongst professional men as to the great improvement of which

* I quote from a paper on the State of Education in the British Navy, printed in the United Service Journal, Part XI. for October 1830. The performance and the promise of the very rising officer who wrote this article, help to furnish the fairest practical answer to those who object to the early advancement of young men of rank in the Navy.

this department of the service is susceptible.

In the able paper above quoted, the well-known advantages of uniting the two situations of chaplain and schoolmaster, are stated with considerable force; the practical good results, indeed, which have attended many of the experiments which have been made of that union, are so generally recognised, that in a short time we may expect to see it established in every ship. But the pay of either of these situations is too trifling to render it a sufficient motive for a man of abilities and classical knowledge to go on board ship. The consequence is, either that most of our ships are left without such instructors; or that these stations are not very well filled; or, finally, if occupied by qualified persons, they are held by men who accept them only for a time, till something better shall offer.

In the *Leander*, on the Halifax station, we had an excellent schoolmaster for about a year, when the situation of professor of one of the colonial colleges happening to fall vacant, we lost his services immediately;

and although ours was the flag-ship, on board of which the inducements were considerably beyond the common run, we could never afterwards procure a proper person to fill the office. The youngsters, therefore, who, as usual, flocked on board the Admiral's ship, were ever after left completely adrift.

What would become of the arrangements of a man-of-war, I should like to ask, if any one of the other officers—the first lieutenant, for instance, the purser, or the boatswain—were at liberty, without warning, to quit the ship the instant he saw an opportunity of bettering himself? And yet, if there existed no prospective benefit in these officers remaining, on what principle could we expect to maintain any permanent hold over them? How then can we wonder that chaplains and schoolmasters, whom as yet we have taken no pains to form into a distinct, respectable, and well-paid class of officers, should scruple so little about abandoning a service in which no proper means have yet been adopted to give them, as in the case of every other officer, a determinate life-interest?

The obvious remedy, as has been urged a hundred times, seems to lie in this plan of uniting the situations of chaplain and school-master, and joining the pay of the two. In all probability, the truest economy will be found in still further augmenting this pay, so as to make it really worth the while of properly-educated men to look to it, not merely for a season, but as a fixed provision. The discomforts, however, of a midshipman's birth—to all but the mids themselves, who are hastening to get out of it—are so intolerable, that hardly any amount of pay will ever be thought a full recompense for the sacrifices which a person grown up to man's estate, and properly qualified in other respects, would be called upon to make, were he required to mess in the cock-pit. In the event, therefore, of such union of offices, the gentleman in whom they are joined ought to bear a regular commission, mess with the commissioned officers, and walk the weather side of the deck; perhaps also he might advantageously wear a suitable uniform. At all events, he ought to

possess a distinct rank, and be considered as essentially a part of the ship's complement as the surgeon, purser, or any other officer in the civil department of the fleet.

People unacquainted with the nature of naval discipline may smile, perhaps, at some of the privileges glanced at above, as essential to the right exercise of power. But long experience has shewn, that the distinctions in question are the recognised symbols or indexes of due subordination and general good order. They unquestionably contribute, indirectly, to the maintenance of that prompt and effective obedience, and respect to constituted authority, which, combined with self-respect, go so far to form the sinews of naval strength. If, therefore, it be of real utility to have the schoolmaster's work as well executed as that of the other officers, it surely follows that he ought to be placed in a situation to command, not merely the dogged attention of the midshipmen, but in one which will insure the official reverence of the boys, together with a proportionate degree of consideration from those whom they com-

mand. If these minute particulars in balancing the scales of discipline be not duly attended to, the respect of the pupils will dwindle into familiarity, and the school-master, if he be not a strong-minded person, may end by losing his own self-confidence. All lessons then become a farce, and the teacher either relapses into a useless appendage to the ship, or, if forcibly sustained by the stern authority of the captain, he is apt to degenerate into a mere pedagogue. -

It may safely be laid down as a pretty general rule, that to render any man of much use, he must be placed permanently in a station, which of itself, and by the ordinary workings of the established order of things, will insure attention both from superiors and inferiors. Without this adjustment, there can be no good service performed any where — on land or at sea.

It is sometimes not sufficiently recollected, that schooling on board ship differs materially from what it is on shore; for it not only treats of very different matters, but has other objects in view, both immediate and remote. Before a young person actually

engages in a profession, the great purpose of a school appears to consist in mere training—that is to say, in carrying his faculties through a course of preparatory discipline, without any more specific object than mental exercise. But when the youth is once fairly embarked in the pursuit which is to furnish employment for his life, an immediate modification takes place. The system which it is necessary to follow at sea is then placed in distinct contrast to that previously observed.

On shore, education and business are two separate things, one of which does not begin till the other ends; while, on board ship, the two always go hand in hand. As the lessons of the teacher may be put in practice immediately, the utility of theoretical knowledge is exhibited on the spot; and thus a gradually increasing impulse is given to the whole course of study. A boy who learns from his master what the word Latitude means, and what is the method of obtaining it, instantly runs upon deck, takes a quadrant in his hand, observes the sun's meridional altitude, and is filled with amaze and delight

on discovering within what small limits he has been able to determine the ship's place relatively to the equator. Next day he sets to work with increased eagerness to conquer the more difficult problem of finding the Longitude, which he has immediate opportunities of bringing to the test of actual experiment. The theory of Gunnery, likewise, when studied by itself, is frequently found to be intricate, and often far from satisfactory; but, when all its results can be brought to the test of experiment, the aspect which this very important pursuit assumes is totally different. How few officers, for instance, understand correctly the meaning of the elementary term Point Blank, or have any useful conception of the mathematical principles which it involves! How often do we hear people gravely assuming that the shot rises between the gun and the point-blank mark! The laws which regulate the action of fluids directed against plane surfaces are by no means easily explained when grappled with alone; but, when brought to bear on the use of the rudder, or the trim

of the sails, there is hardly a boy afloat who fails to appreciate the value of true science over what is called 'rule of thumb;' or rather, who may not soon be taught to feel the mighty advantage of uniting the two, so as to make theory and practice mutually assist each other.

Nearly the same thing may be said of almost every other branch of knowledge: with languages, for instance—I mean more particularly the modern languages—French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian, most of which are made to tell generally as soon as acquired. The Mathematics in all their wonderful branches, and Science in almost every department, furnish ample objects to fill up the leisure hours of an officer. Geography, history, and the law of nations, come into professional play at every turn. A young man, therefore, of any capacity or industry, is nearly sure of rendering himself useful in a short time, be his particular pursuits what they may, provided only that his zeal is duly encouraged by the captain, and seconded by the ready assistance of a properly qualified

preceptor whom he has been taught to respect. It must never be forgotten, however, that along with all this knowledge of a professional, literary, or scientific nature, there ought to be mixed up instructions of a still more important description, upon which the formation of a young man's character will mainly depend, whether we view him merely as an officer, or in his wider capacity as a member of the civil community.

Every one acquainted with the difficult task of bringing boys safely through the intricate labyrinth of temptations which must be encountered in the early stages of a sea life, will acknowledge, that the superintendent of a young man's habits has little or no chance of success, unless he can secure the confidence of his pupil. I very much fear, however, that there can be little hope of establishing such a relation between them, unless the preceptor be truly the superior, not only in station but in attainments, and unless it be his peculiar study to acquire this ascendancy over his pupil's mind, in order to the better regulation of his manners. I use

the word manners in its largest sense ; and it is clear that, unless the schoolmaster have leisure to keep these objects constantly in view, he cannot hope to gain the proper degree of influence over any boy's mind. As chaplain of the ship, however, his religious duties, so far from interfering with the objects alluded to, would blend admirably with all of them, and furnish the best means, and, if it were needed, the best excuse, for a judicious and parental sort of interference. To expect that any such interference of the schoolmaster, under the present system, can be efficacious, is, I much fear, a complete delusion ; and this furnishes a strong reason for uniting in one person the kindred duties of chaplain and teacher. It shews, at the same time, how inefficient any such union must be, unless care be taken to secure fitting persons to fill a joint office of such delicacy.

There is still another, and by no means an unimportant benefit, which might arise to the naval service from this improvement : I mean its effect on the higher classes of officers. • If there be nothing more shocking

than a disreputable clergyman in a mess-room, so, on the other hand, I conceive there can be nothing more useful, in many very material respects, than the constant companionship of a right-minded and well-educated person of this description. I say nothing of the obvious and salutary influence which his presence never fails to exercise over the manners of men, already too much disposed to laxity in their habits : but it may be well to consider, likewise, the great additional benefits which may arise to the officers from their possessing the means of instructing themselves in the different branches of knowledge, with which a chaplain, regularly qualified to teach, would be able to impart.

Except on board ship, and at sea, few of the senior officers of the Navy, in war time, have the opportunity, and still fewer the means, of improving their acquaintance with those pursuits, of which, in the earlier periods of their service, they may have gained a smattering. I allude to the classics, to modern languages, and the belles lettres

generally, to the higher branches of mathematics, and to many of those sciences formerly deemed abstruse, but which have lately become popular; such as chemistry, geology, and natural history in all its departments.

The time is not remote when it was held by high naval authorities, that all or any of these refinements, instead of being useful to an officer, actually stood in his way; and, as far as they went, interfered with the due execution of his duty. Nor can it, or ought it, to be denied, that the principle of extra instruction is very apt to be carried too far, and the refining system overdone. Nor must it ever be forgotten in these discussions, that the service—that is to say, the hard, regular, seamanlike round of official duties, in all seasons, and under all circumstances, ought always to be the primary objects of an officer's thoughts, before which every thing else is not only to bend, but, if need be, must break. And it is chiefly on the principle of rendering an officer only the more fit for such technical routine, that any of the pursuits alluded to can ever be considered as

having legitimate claims on his attention. If such studies become so engrossing as to detach his thoughts from his sterner duty; to make him a scholar instead of a seaman, a dandy instead of a disciplinarian; or if he allow himself to attend to these extraneous matters with any other view than to his improvement as a strictly professional man, he will, of course, find them, one and all, prejudicial, and not be encouraged. Under proper regulation, however, there seems little or no danger of any thing of this description proving injurious to an officer's character, as a useful, hard-working servant of the public.

It was formerly thought, that high-born, high-bred, and even well-educated men, were less fitted to make good officers for the ordinary course of professional work, than persons who had sprung from a lower origin, or whose education was limited to the mere technicalities of the profession, and who were without taste and without manners—men of the Hawser Trunion school, in short. But the copious experience of the late arduous war seems to have shewn, both in the

army and in the navy, that the contrary is the true state of the case. And certainly, as far as my own observation and inquiries have gone, I have found reason to believe that those officers who are the best informed and the best bred, and who possess most of the true spirit of gentlemen, are not only the safest to trust in command over others, but are always the readiest to yield that prompt and cheerful obedience to their superiors, which is the mainspring of good order. Such men respect themselves so justly, and value their own true dignity of character so much, and are at all times so sensitively alive to the humiliation of incurring reproach, that they are extremely cautious how they expose themselves to merited censure. From the early and constant exercise of genuine politeness, they become habitually considerate of the feelings of others; and thus, by the combined action of these great principles of manners, officers of this stamp contrive to get through much more work, and generally do it much better, than persons of less refinement. Moreover, they consider no-

thing beneath their closest attention which falls within the limits of their duty ; and, as a leading part of this principle, they are the most patient as well as vigilant superintendents of the labours of those placed under their authority, of any men I have ever seen. It is not that they watch their inferiors with a view to entrap and pounce upon them, but solely with the public-spirited and generous object of keeping all parties right, in order, by checking errors in the outset, before they have grown into crimes, to prevent the hard necessity of punishment.

This is a pretty fair sketch of the method of acting observed by a thoroughbred, gentlemanlike, well-instructed officer ; and every one who has been in command, and in protracted difficulties, or has merely been employed in the ordinary course of service, will readily admit that, with the assistance of such men, every department of his duty has gone on better and more pleasantly than it could have possibly done if the persons under his command had been of a coarser stamp.

It is quite true that the full degree of re-

finement alluded to can hardly ever be fully taught on board ship. But it may often be approximated to good purpose. It is quite within our power, for example, so to train up young men, that they shall gradually acquire not only that sort of knowledge, but also those habits, which experience has shewn to have the most direct tendency to enlarge the understanding, and to chastise the taste. Precisely as this amount of intelligence increases, so will the capacity of an officer to do good service increase likewise; and it is absurd to suppose that he will be less disposed to do his duty well, from knowing better how to comply with its obligations.

Weak minds and perverse dispositions, under any system of instruction or of discipline, will, of course, defeat these calculations; and there will, therefore, always be many effeminate and idle persons in a fleet, who, by mistaking mere acquirements for the knowledge of how to turn them to useful account, deserve the title they receive of 'the King's hard bargains.' But, taking the average run of officers in the Navy, it may

safely be expected, that if, in other respects, they are kept to their duty, and if they themselves have a real interest in the service, the more information they can acquire upon every subject worthy of a gentleman's attention, the better will they be fitted for the performance not only of those higher exploits which all the world understand and admire, but even of those humble and unseen professional avocations, which make up by far the greater and the most important part of our daily duties.

If, then, we can furnish all ranks of our naval officers afloat with a ready and agreeable means of filling up their time, of which most of them have a good deal to spare, we may fairly hope that they will not be slow to avail themselves of the opportunities placed within their reach. In order, however, to render these measures of any extensive utility, this plan of furnishing assistance must be carried a long way. A chaplain-school-master should be allowed even to the smallest class of ships on board which, by any contrivance, the proper degree of accommoda-

tion can be obtained. And if these ideas were followed up in the admirable spirit with which some recent improvements have been carried into effect in the Navy, for instance, in the discipline, victualling, payment of wages, ratings, and other matters, a very great boon would be conferred on the service.

It is not likely that the measure proposed would materially augment the expenses of the Navy, if, indeed, it had that effect at all; since both a chaplain and schoolmaster are expressly allowed to all ships, from the first to the sixth class, inclusive. But, even supposing the expense were to be augmented, there can be no doubt, I should conceive, in the mind of any person who has reflected seriously on these subjects, that the return for such outlay would be speedy and certain. The religious, moral, and intellectual character of officers, on whose good conduct so much depends, must, in every conceivable state of things, be an object of material consequence to the country. And it were really almost a libel on the nation, to imagine that

they would not cheerfully agree to the additional expenditure which might be required; if the advantages be such as are stated. There can be no truer economy, than expending money for the promotion of virtue and sound knowledge amongst this class of public servants. For their duties, it must be recollected, generally lie so far beyond the reach of ordinary scrutiny, that almost the only security we have for their good conduct rests on their own sense of honour. A dishonest officer on a foreign station might often divert from its proper purpose, by a single stroke of his pen, and without much danger of detection, more of the public money than would furnish the Navy with chaplains and schoolmasters for ten years.

It is to accomplish only one-half the great task of instruction merely to fill a boy's head with technical information—his principles and habits ought to be likewise taken into our safe keeping. It is also greatly to be desired, that, when the period arrives at which he is expected to become, as it is called, his own master, he should find no

difficulty in continuing, from choice, those pursuits to which he had previously applied himself on compulsion, or merely as a means of promotion. And there seems to be no method more likely to accomplish this desirable purpose, than affording the young commissioned officer the companionship of an instructor, or, at all events, of a person whose duty it should be, if required, not only to continue, in the ward-room, the course of information commenced in the cock-pit, but whose aim ought to be, so to modify these studies as to adapt them to the altered circumstances of the pupil, and to win his attention to their pursuit by rendering them agreeable and useful.

It is not pretended, by any means, that such a task is an easy one; on the contrary, it will require not only considerable abilities, but high attainments, and no inconsiderable degree of good taste, together with a long apprenticeship of self-discipline, and an exclusive application to these arduous duties, as the grand object and business of the instructor's life.

There really appears, however, to be no situation but that of a clergyman which offers any reasonable chance of these conditions being fulfilled. And as the education of such a person is necessarily expensive, and the double office which it is proposed he should fill, one of great responsibility, labour, and difficulty, as well as one of peculiar and irremediable discomfort and privation, without any of those energetic excitements which stimulate every other class of officers to exertion, the remuneration ought clearly to be very considerable, otherwise no set of properly qualified men will engage permanently in its pursuit.

A distinct class of officers, of this sacred character, although as yet they do not exist, might be readily created. If the emoluments of the chaplain of a man-of-war were respectable, the situation rendered as agreeable, in point of comfort, as the nature of the elements will admit of, and if the prospects of future provision be made certain, or contingent only upon a right performance of duty, there cannot, I think, be a doubt that, in a

short time, there would be an ample and steady supply of chaplains, as highly qualified, in point of attainments, as the Admiralty might choose to fix on the scale.

If this important professional object were once fairly carried into effect, we should probably soon discover an improvement in the whole system of naval discipline, the best evidences of which would be, the increased efficiency of the whole service, arising out of the gradually ameliorated habits and higher intellectual cultivation, as well as improved tastes and more rational happiness, of every class of the officers, from the oldest captain down to the youngest first-class boy, just untied from his mother's apron-string.

In all that has been said, I have taken into view almost exclusively the advantages which would accrue to the officers from the adoption of this plan of uniform instruction. It is to them, individually as gentlemen, and collectively as a body, upon the certainty of whose hearty exertions the government can at all times depend, that the country must

ever look for that energetic momentum in our naval strength, upon which the national power, in this department, essentially rests. Surely, however, it is not too much to say, as a matter of experience, that the influence of a resident clergyman on board ship, wherever there is one, over the minds of the crew, is felt to be quite as salutary, when properly exercised, as it is to the labourers in any parish of the empire.

It signifies nothing to say that the structure of naval discipline is widely different from the civil administration of the land; for the very same principles, and, more or less, the very same motives to right or wrong action, must always be in play in both cases. A judicious chaplain, therefore, who shall have become acquainted by personal experience with the habits, tastes, feelings, and pursuits of the seamen, may undoubtedly contribute an important share to the efficiency of the whole of our naval system. So far from interfering with, or in any way checking the strict course of nautical affairs, I conceive that the chaplain's

influence, rightly exercised, acting in cordial understanding with the captain, and sanctioned by his authority, might advance the best interests of the service by greatly diminishing offences, and thus lessening the melancholy necessity of punishments. Whenever this benevolent purpose can be effected, in a greater or less degree, both those who obey and those who command are sure to be better pleased with one another, and, it is reasonable to suppose, far more desirous of co-operating heartily in the accomplishment of the common purpose for which they are brought together.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON:

J. NOYES, TOOM'S COURT, CHANCERY LANE.