EPUB ISBN: 978-0-908328-70-3

PDF ISBN: 978-0-908331-66-6

The original publication details are as follows:

Title: Hull down

Author: Eaddy, P. A. (Percy Allen)\

Edition: Rev.

Published: Andrew Melrose, London, England, 1955

HULL DOWN

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HULL DOWN

P. A. EADDY

WITH 25 ILLUSTRATIONS

ANDREW MELROSE
STRATFORD PLACE
LONDON

Andrew Melrose Limited
London Melbourne Sydney Auckland
Bombay Cape Town New York Toronto

First published . . 1933
Second Impression . 1933
Edited and revised and issued in The Compass Library, 1955

Printed in Great Britain
by The Anchor Press, Ltd.,
Tiptree, Essex

THIS BOOK
IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY
OF CAPTAIN ROBERT CLARK, "DAD,"
WHO WAS A LOVER OF
SAILING-SHIPS

CONTENTS

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"What is it, this restless striving
That it sets men's minds afire,
Hurries us like strong winds driving
To strange lands of our desire?
'Tis the call of all the wildness
Of the outposts of the earth,
And we answer it regardless
Of its ending or its worth."

P. A. Eaddy.

CHAPTER I

"Oh, we knew her in her hey-day
When she 'ran her easting down'
Or when beating up the old way
Loaded deep for London Town.
Now when gazing out to seaward
With a shipmate old and brown
Far across the sea of memory
We can see her yet—hull down."

P. A. EADDY

WE DECIDE TO SHIP AWAY "DEEP-WATER"

WE were seated on the verandah of a house in the western suburbs of Auckland, overlooking the Waitemata Harbour. Dusk had just fallen, and the myriad lights of the city and harbour twinkled below us. The moon was rising like a great orange-coloured orb away in the east, over the islands of Waiheke and Motuihi, lighting up the long, calm stretch of water for miles and miles in a silvery sheen. Clearly outlined in the brightest part of the moon-glade lay a natty little barque. From our point of vantage she appeared as a dainty miniature of a ship.

Half-closing my eyes I could almost fancy I was looking at one of those beautiful models fashioned by the hands of a clever seaman of the old school.

She was an arrival from London that afternoon, one of the last of her line in that trade, which has since been so completely usurped by huge modern liners.

As we sat and gazed on that moonlit scene, our talk turned to the barque, and her last port, London. There were three in our party, the old captain, Billy and I, we last two having "crossed courses" again here in Auckland, our home port. I had just been paid off from a South Sea Island trader, a barquentine of about one hundred and fifty tons. Being filled with a great longing to ship deep-water and gain some experience in large sailing-ships, and also with the object of seeing more of the world, I brought the subject up during our conversation that evening.

Billy at once fell in with the idea, and on asking the old captain his opinion he strongly advised us to give it a go.

"You'll never regret it," he assured us, "and the experience you'll gain in the big ships will always stand to you. Then again, by sailing deep-water for a few years you young fellows will probably visit most of the world's large ports, and that in itself is an education."

Thus we sat and talked that summer's evening long ago, until the moon had risen high overhead.

Away out to the north-east we could see the two round knolls of Mount Victoria and the North Head, while rising up dark and sinister-looking behind them loomed Rangitoto, the triple-coned extinct volcano that guards the entrance to the Auckland Harbour.

Next morning Billy and I were up early and strolled down to Queen Street Wharf to watch the *Lutterworth* berth. We followed every movement aboard the little deep-water barque with interest, and presently saw the hands troop up on to the fo'c'sle head and start to heave the cable in, tramping round and round the capstan.

The wind, being in from the sea, brought to us the musical clink of pawls and snatches of a capstan chanty.

"What's that they're singing?"

"I can't quite make it out, can you?" said Billy.

"I can, now," I replied, "it's 'Leave her, Johnny, leave her.' Listen," and clear and loud came the words from a dozen or more throats aboard the barque.

Oh, the times are hard and the wages low,
Oh, leave her, Johnny, leave her.
We've scrubbed the decks in the watch below,
It's time for us to leave her!

We had heard most of the old chanties in Newcastle, N.S.W., when we had been there in our own little intercolonial barques and barquentines, and therefore were quite familiar with the airs and words of nearly all of them.

"She is berthing in there by the Flour Mills; let us go round and see her come alongside," I said to Billy.

"Right oh," he replied, and off we set at a brisk walk to the berth assigned to the *Lutterworth*.

When all her mooring lines were fast, and the hustle and bustle of berthing was over, we jumped aboard by her fore-rigging and made contact with some of the crew.

"Going back in her?" said one chap, a raw-boned looking Irishman who told us he hailed from Galway, in reply to our inquiry. "No, I'm damned sure I'm not going back in her," he added, with evident scorn. "Not for three pounds a month and lime-juice tucker, when they tell me you can get six pounds a month on the coast. Sure, a man would be daft entoirely, so he would," he concluded, squirting a stream of tobacco-juice into the scuppers to emphasize his disgust.

He turned and made off into the fo'c'sle to dodge the Second Mate, who was coming along the deck from aft, roaring out, "Lay aft here, some of my watch, and flake these hawsers down!"

We fell to yarning with the old cook who was standing just inside his galley door.

"You're thinking of shipping home, eh, boys? Well, there'll be plenty of chances going in this one before she leaves," he told us.

"Yes, so it appears," I replied, thinking of our friend the Irishman.

"If I were in your place," said the old cook, "I wouldn't ship home direct from here."

"Why?" we asked.

"Well, for one thing, you'd have no pay-day at all to land ashore in London with. The Old Man won't pay any more than he is forced to, and you'd be very lucky to get four pounds a month out of him. That would mean that even if she took one hundred and odd days you'd only have fifteen or sixteen pounds to leave the ship with in London, if you took no advance here at all. No, boys," he concluded, "that amount wouldn't last you long in a big city like that, especially on your first visit, when you'd want to see all the sights."

"What do you reckon is the best way to go, then?" we asked the old fellow, who was inclined to be friendly and talkative.

"Go to Newcastle, N.S.W., and ship out of there in a deep-waterman bound for 'Frisco or the West Coast of South America. They nearly always go home from there, either with wheat from 'Frisco or nitrate from the West Coast."

The old cook turned to go on with his work in his galley, and Billy and I, after bidding him "good-bye", climbed ashore and strolled up the wharf towards Queen Street.

"The old Doctor is quite right," said Billy to me, as we turned up the main street of Auckland.

"Yes," I said, "there would be no use in landing in London for

the first time close-hauled. We'd want enough to have a good look round and then pick our ship to come out to New Zealand again."

"One more trip intercolonial, then," said Billy.

"Yes, and now for a look round to find a ship," I replied.

We stood talking for awhile on the corner of Customs Street and Queen Street, and presently we were approached by a real Bucko-Mate-Down-Easter type of a man. He was dressed in a square-cut blue serge suit, with a broad-brimmed soft felt hat on his head. He had a livid scar running right across the left side of his weather-beaten face, and altogether looked a typical hard case. "You lads looking for a ship?" he asked.

"Yes, why?"

"Oh, I could place you in a nice little barque that is just a couple of hands short."

"What ship is it and where is she bound?" we asked.

"The American barque *Hiram Emery*, now loading kauri gum from New York. She is at the railway wharf and will be sailing next week. Say the word and I'll speak to the captain at once for you."

"No, thanks," we replied, "we are looking for an intercolonial vessel, as we want to go to Newcastle and ship home from there via the West Coast of South America."

"Why, this is a better way of going home, if you ship for New York in the *Hiram Emery*. Look at the months and months you'll be aboard some hungry lime-juicer."

"It's the pay-day we're after, and we want a good long spell on one ship to get that," we explained to our would-be benefactor.

However, he would not leave us, and at once shot off on another tack.

"Well, look here, boys, now I come to think of it, I could place you in a nice little intercolonial vessel that would just suit you. What do you say to that?"

"Where is she and what's her name?" we asked.

"Will you go in her?"

"Yes, if she suits us," we replied.

"Well, it's the *Vision* brig, and she is now loading timber for Sydney at Mercury Bay. There are not many brigs knocking around these days, my lads, and here's a chance of shipping in one of the last of them."

"No, thanks," we answered.

We knew the *Vision* well; in our opinion she was one of the

leakiest old timber droghers that ever plodded her way wearily to and fro across the turbulent Tasman Sea.

"I had one experience in a vessel of her type last year," said Billy.

"What vessel was that?" asked our friend.

"The brig *Fairy Rock*," answered Billy, "and it's a pity they hadn't called her 'Half-tide Rock,' for that was what she resembled. Pump, pump, every watch," continued Billy; "she never had less than a foot or more of water in her hold, and aloft she was falling to pieces. Once when I growled about something carrying away up aloft, in our watch, the old Mate remarked 'that was nothing. It's quite a usual thing aboard here to get a crack on the head from the sheave of a block dropping from aloft when she's rolling heavy,' he said."

"No, we don't want to ship in the *Hiram Emery* or the brig *Vision*," we told our tough-looking friend.

He went off in a tantrum. "All right, my lads, don't you ever come to me to place you in a ship. You're too damned particular for my liking. Just you wait till some of the boarding-house masters in Newcastle or Nigger Thompson in Valparaiso get hold of you; *they* won't ask you whether you'll go in a ship, they'll just put you aboard."

"That remains to be seen," we told him, as he strode off down the street in high dudgeon.

"Who is he?" asked Billy, after he had gone.

"Oh, that's old Shanghai Jensen," I said. "Have you never run across him before?"

"No, that's the first time I've met him; who does he shanghai these days?"

"Nobody that I know of; he is often engaged by the masters of vessels loading at the Kaipara and such places to hunt up a few hands when they are short. There are not enough deep-watermen coming to Auckland these days for a man to make a living keeping a sailors' boarding-house and supplying captains with crews."

"It's still done in Newcastle, though," said Billy. "Only last trip when I was there in the barque *Emerald* I was nearly shanghaied through staying ashore at the Black Diamond. We were all having a few drinks in a back room, when all of a sudden I dozed off, and next thing I remember was being flung down in the bottom of a boat near the Dyke Ferry Landing."

"What happened then?" I asked.

"What happened? I up and off for my life. A big German full-rigged ship was laying out at the last farewell buoy, loaded for the West Coast, and it was for her the boat was bound."

We continued our walk and presently came to the Government Shipping Office. "Come along in and have a look at the notice-board," I said to Billy.

Soon we were busily engaged reading over the list of ships requiring men. The notices were chalked up on a big blackboard in the lobby outside the Shipping Office door. They read as follows:

Wanted for barque *Mary Moore*, 2 A.B.'s, 1 O.S.

Wanted for barquentine *River Hunter*, 1 A.B., 1 Boy.

Wanted for American ship *Henry Failing*, 10 A.B.'s, 2 Boys.

"Huh," said Bill, pointing to the last-named ship; "that's the ship that's just been towed out to an anchorage in Rangitoto Channel. They are having the devil's own job to get a crowd for her."

"Yes, I was talking to a Norwegian chap who'd cleared out from her yesterday. He told me she was no good, and that he was off up-country to try his luck at Kauri gum-digging," I replied.

"What about this one?" said Billy, pointing again to the notice-board.

Barquentine *St. Elmo* at Kaipara, 2 A.B.'s.

"She'll be loading timber for Australia, and if it's Sydney she's bound for she would just suit us," I remarked.

As we stood talking it over, I was suddenly nearly knocked off my feet by a hearty smack on the back.

Turning round quickly to see who my familiar friend might be, I found myself confronting a great hulk of a man, who thrust a hand nearly as big as the hindquarters of a sheep into mine. With a grip that brought tears into my eyes, he roared out with a voice like a bull, "Hello, Avery, where to now?"

"Hello, Mr. Moreham," I replied, wriggling my hand clear from his vice-like grip. "I'm bound nowhere in particular; my mate here and I came in to have a look at the notice-board. We are looking for a ship and want to get across to Newcastle, from where we intend shipping deep-water."

"Well, what about coming with me?" he said. "I'm Mate of the barquentine *St. Elmo*, and as you see by the notice-board, we are two able seamen short. We are going to load timber for Sydney at Kaipara and Whangape, and I'd be glad to get you both. I have

the articles with me, so you could come in and sign on right away if you like."

"What do you say, Bill?" I added. "By the way, this is Mr. Moreham; I was with him in the barque *Northern Isle*. He's one of the best," I said *sotto voce*.

We both agreed there and then to sign on the *St. Elmo*, and followed Mr. Moreham into the Shipping Office.

"Well?" said a clerk to the Mate.

"Oh, I've got two men here that I want to sign on. You have the articles of the barquentine *St. Elmo* there somewhere."

"Yes," replied the clerk, producing a soiled-looking document of stiff paper from a pigeon-hole in the wall behind him, and spreading it out on the counter.

"Your names, men, please," he asked. "Age? Place of birth? Your last discharge."

I handed him the small stiff square of paper I had received on leaving my last ship, bearing her name and description of voyage.

He glanced with some interest at the description of voyage of the *Sea Bell*. "South Sea Islands," he said aloud, his eyes lighting.

Probably the drab precincts of the Shipping Office did not appeal too strongly to the tall, pale-looking young official of the N.Z. Marine Department.

Possibly he had been reading some entertaining accounts of life among the islands, which had raised secret longings in his heart to be up and away from this humdrum city existence.

"Sign there, please," he resumed, after quickly writing all our particulars down, and gabbling through the main part of the Copy of Agreement.

We duly appended our signatures and then turned to follow Mr. Moreham out into the street.

"I forgot to ask you boys whether you wanted any advance," said the Mate, as we swung round into Queen Street once more.

On answering in the negative the Mate replied, "We'll go in here for a drink then, and then I'll get off to some other business."

We followed him into a quiet bar, a little further up the street.

"Well, here's success to your coming voyage, boys," said the Mate.

We all raised our glasses, toasting each other.

"I don't think you'll regret having a spell in the big ships, boys; I served quite a number of years deep-water," he added. "I was twenty years of age before I went to sea. I was in an office

in London up till then, and my health broke down. The doctor said a sea life was my only salvation, so I went as an apprentice in the Loch Line, and served four years in the four-masted barque *Loch Torridon.* I passed for Second Mate when I was twenty-five, and four years after that I passed for Master, in Sydney. I haven't done much good for myself since, though." He paused, eyeing us thoughtfully. "I was censured for an error of judgment when I was serving as Mate in one of the Sydney to China steamers, and since then I've never been able to get back into steam." He paused again, then added, "All the same, I like this life, and perhaps I'm just as happy knocking about in these small wind-jammers."

He certainly looked happy enough.

A great big broad-shouldered man of about forty years of age, with the look of hail-fellow-well-met stamped indelibly on his bronzed face.

His eyes were puckered to a remarkable degree, and looked at one with such a merry, good-natured expression that intimate acquaintance with him bred an eternal friendship.

I remembered him as Mate of the barque *Northern Isle* a couple of years previously, and for all his good-natured manner, I could also picture him again as a veritable tiger of a man when roused.

Hadn't he thrashed two big raw-boned Swedes up and down the Dyke in Newcastle for bullying our poor old decrepit cook when he had refused them a hand-out at his galley door?

Certainly the old sailing-ships bred some fine types of men, I mean the real deep-watermen: those who pushed ahead and rose to be Masters and Mates in the ships they knew so well.

Here's to their memory, and all I wish for now is to cross courses occasionally with some of them, and yarn over old times.

Their ranks are thinning fast now as the years slip by, but they have had their day, I suppose, and must give way before the inevitable changes that follow in the tracks of time.

Only the other day I read an account in the paper of the passing of one of these old shell-backs, a man I had sailed with in several ships; as hard-bitten an old sea-dog as one could meet in many a long day's walk, but a seaman to his finger-tips.

Even at the time I was shipmate with him he had "topped the rise," and was, in our opinion, an old fellow.

"Yes," he would say, rolling up and down the deck in a dog-watch walk, and spitting tobacco-juice right and left, "I'm nearly ready for clewing up, boys, but when I'm going out I'll say,

'Good innings, Young. Good innings!' Haven't I sailed in the *Fiery Cross* and *Harbinger*, *Mermerus* and *Samuel Plimsoll*, and a host of others, and what times we had in the different ports too. Why, I went across from Antwerp to London once, when I paid off the old 'so and so,' and for a bet I wore a high silk hat all the way. They looked at me kind of sideways at Green's Home in London when we lined up for our money and discharges, but I won my bet, boys."

Yes, I could almost pick the old chap slipping his cable, and squaring his yards for the last long voyage he was making under sealed orders, saying to himself at the last, "Good innings, Young. Good innings!"

I hope and trust that my old "sea father" is having the same "good innings" among the mythological ports to which he has taken his departure.

But to get back to the barquentine *St. Elmo*, and our joining her.

After a couple of drinks with the Mate, Mr. Moreham, we parted company with the strict injunction to meet him the following morning at nine o'clock to catch the Kaipara train.

We made our way back to our lodgings and packed our sea-chests and bags in readiness for the coming trip.

Our old friend the captain was pleased to hear that we had shipped again, and told us yarn after yarn about his own experiences deep-water.

He had had a most adventurous career, from master of big clipper ships to small schooners of the Island trade.

He had invested some money years before in a gold mine near Auckland, and was now living on the small dividends he received from it.

"I'll never go to sea again, boys; too old now, but that's where my heart is always. With the ships and the sea; and sitting out on this verandah I sail all my voyages over again. Don't forget to write and let me know how you get on, both of you; I'll always be interested to hear from you."

We promised to keep in touch with him, and turned in, to dream of black-birding round the islands, running the easting down, and strolling round the streets of a big city, which I thought must be London.

An express cart called for our luggage next morning, and after bidding all our friends good-bye, not forgetting the old skipper,

we both jumped up beside the driver and were off. At the station we met Mr. Moreham.

"I'm glad to see you on time, boys; leave that dunnage by the van here, and come and get a seat, she is pulling out soon."

We did as he bade us, and very soon after, to sundry puffs and jerks, we gathered way, and I was staring out of the window to get a last glimpse of our beloved Auckland.

I saw old Rangitoto loom up, out across the harbour, and wondered when I should see his triple cones again.

We ran through the outskirts of Auckland, puffed laboriously up over the Waitakere ranges, stopping now and then to drop a case or pick up a parcel at some little wayside station, and eventually came to rest at Helensville Station: Helensville is the port on the most southerly arm of the Kaipara.

There at the wharf lay our future ship. She was a small iron barquentine of about two hundred tons register, painted deep green, with a yellow band round her below her covering board. She still attained to the dignity of having a fore royal yard crossed, and even boasted a figurehead underneath her bowsprit—a woman with arms folded across her breasts, staring vacantly out ahead. I wondered how many strange scenes that wooden figure had gazed on in her time. Storms and calms, tropic isles, and stormy west coast bars, ports in South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, all had been scanned with the same serenity with which she now gazed on this quiet little river scene at the port of Helensville.

I found out afterwards that at one time the ship had been engaged carrying mails and passengers to and fro between Melbourne and the west coast ports of the South Island of New Zealand, when the last big gold rush was on in that part of the country.

As we approached her we could see that she was still discharging her last cargo from Sydney.

A cargo gaff swung back and forth on her main-mast, and the rattle of a wheezy steam winch, and the yells of a half-caste Maori hatchman, dominated all other sounds.

The big Mate strode along with us.

"Take one of those trucks and go along with these two young fellows, and give them a hand to get their gear aboard," called out the Mate to a greasy-looking youth in dungarees, who was sweeping up some loose coal on the fore-deck by the galley.

The youth jumped up on the wharf, and getting hold of a two-wheeled truck, turned round to us and said, "Which van is it in?"

We pointed it out to him, and he shuffled off ahead of us, murmuring something about making "two trips of it."

With our gear aboard, and safely deposited in the fo'c'sle, we had time to look round.

It was a small dark dungeon of a place, below decks, right in the eyes of the ship, and only lit by the open scuttle down which we had descended.

When I think of the great liners of the present day, with their luxurious quarters, even for the lowest ratings aboard, my mind often flies back to that fo'c'sle of the barquentine *St. Elmo*.

Yet we took it all as a matter of course in those days.

Billy and I got changed into working togs, and the Mate catching sight of us when we came on deck, said, "You and your mate, Avery, get that new fore-upper-topsail aboard from the wharf there, and send it up and bend it. We lost the old one coming across from Sydney, only part of the head and the bolt ropes being left."

We got the sail aboard, and reeving off a gantline soon had it hoisted up and bent on to the yard.

"Reeve off a couple of new buntlines, Avery; those old ones are just about done," called the Mate.

"Aye, aye, sir," we called back from aloft.

Rolling the sail up on to the yard and furling it, we returned to the deck.

The last of the cargo for Helensville was just going out, so when it was finished we put the hatches on, and cleared up the decks, in readiness for the tow to our next port, Dargaville, at the far extremity of the Kaipara Harbour.

At tea-time we met the rest of the crew, who had been down in the hold slinging the cargo. There were two other able seamen besides Billy and myself. One was a big brawny Highlander who went by the name of "Scotty," and the other was a Londoner who told us he hailed from Abbot's Road, Poplar.

He answered to the name of Green, Tom Green; whether that was his real name I could not say, as he had discharges in his possession with several different names on them. Most of his papers he showed to me on one occasion bore the name of James Whiting. Whiting would most likely have been his real name, as the description fitted him exactly, whereas had his name been Green, he

would need to have been a young man of about twenty-five, instead of being a man of over fifty.

However, that small detail did not seem to worry our happy-go-lucky shipmate. His nickname aboard this ship was "Happy," and he was one of the most light-hearted men that I've ever sailed with. He confided in me once that he had had a lot of domestic troubles, but if he had they had left no lines of care on his smiling countenance.

Scotty was a man of about thirty years of age, and as strong as a bullock. He boasted that he could set the *St. Elmo's* mainsail by himself, and to look at the man one could imagine that the feat would not be impossible. He hailed from Burntisland, on the Firth of Forth, "Buntisland" he called it. Scotty turned out to be a fine shipmate.

The remaining member of the crew for'ard was the greasy youth who had helped us aboard with our gear. He was a Sydney lad, and was making his first voyage to sea. By all accounts he had suffered greatly from sea-sickness on the way across, in consequence of which big Scotty had dubbed him "Wully Bock." Scotty explained this meant "poor Willie" in Gaelic.

Aft was the Old Man, a hard-drinking dare-devil of an old skipper, who had had command of many a large deep-water sailing-ship in his time. The drink had got him, driving him lower and lower in the class of ships he was most at home in. He often spoke to me, later on in the voyage, about the Standard Oil Company ships that he had commanded, and even now sported one of their badges on his bedraggled old cap.

The Mate we know.

The Second Mate was a hard-looking character, who had joined the ship by making a pier-head jump in Sydney. The clothes he stood up in comprised all his many years' gatherings, and like the Old Man the drink was his downfall. He cared little about his personal adornment, as long as he could get money for beer.

We heard that he had been sacked from his last ship in Sydney, a nice little deep-water barque, on which he was second mate, for landing one of the ship's light kedge anchors, and selling it to a dealer in old iron. He wanted the money to make a spree that he was on hang out a little longer.

The cook was the only other member of the little barquentine's complement; he went by the very appropriate name of Fry—Samuel Fry.

The for'ard crowd had changed it to "Some Fry", as Sam was a first-class hand with the frying-pan, but anything else in the culinary line was beyond him. He was a queer-looking little man, about sixty years of age, with a face like a bird, small and pinched, but God help any man who ran foul of him in an argument, for he had a tongue that could send forth a stream of words as bitter as gall, interspersed with adjectives both blasphemous and foul.

I caused a laugh in the fo'c'sle one day by remarking that the cook's name seemed to me to be on a par with a Chinese barber's name in Papeete. There it stood for all and sundry to look at—"Tom Lousie."

"Well, what would have suited the Chow barber better?" said Happy, grinning from ear to ear. "Only, for the Lord's sake, don't let the old Doctor hear you coupling his name with that Chinaman; he'd slate you up hill and down dale for the rest of the passage."

CHAPTER II

LOADING TIMBER ON THE NEW ZEALAND COAST

WE took our departure from Helensville next morning in tow of a small river steamer, bound for Dargaville, about sixty miles distant, in the upper reaches of the Northern Wairoa River.

The Kaipara Harbour, on the west coast of the North Island of New Zealand, is one of the most extensive inlets of New Zealand.

There are four main rivers, the Wairoa (Maori, Wai—water, roa—long), commonly known as the Northern Wairoa, owing to there being several other places and rivers of the same name in the country. The others are the Otamatea, the Kaipara, and the Oruawharo. There are three smaller rivers, namely the Arapaua, the Tapora and the Makarau.

The Wairoa River, on whose upper reaches is situated Dargaville—the largest settlement in the district—is navigable for many miles for vessels of quite a large tonnage.

All these rivers run out to the open sea through the one entrance, known as the Kaipara Bar, which has the reputation of being one of the worst bars in the world.

On its Northern Spit is the famous Graveyard, known to seamen the world over. Here are strewn dozens of wrecks, though the majority are buried out of sight in the quickly moving sand.

It was a long tow down the Kaipara River, across the entrance inside the bar, and then about forty miles up the Northern Wairoa to Dargaville.

We anchored at the Heads for the tide to turn, and then, with a four-knot current behind us, we nearly ran the little river steamer down, going through some of the reaches with a fair wind.

We berthed alongside the wharf early next morning, and after breakfast commenced landing the last of the Sydney cargo.

There is a rise and fall of twelve feet at spring-tides in the Northern Wairoa at Dargaville, and vessels moored to some of the smaller wharves, or swinging round, must take great care that they do not get aground on the inside bilge, as the tide dropping so quickly would leave them hung up on a steep shelving bank, with the danger of capsizing outwards into the deep channel.

This catastrophe happened to a barque, the *Wai-iti*, just below where we had berthed. She had grounded on the inside bilge, and the tide leaving her, she had turned completely upside down with her masts sticking into the river bed. We walked along her keel one day before she was righted.

I heard that it cost as much to get the mud and river slime out of her as it did to raise her.

While at Dargaville the Old Man spent nearly all his time up at the hotel, having drinks with any of his old cronies who chanced to meet him there.

He had a kindred spirit in the Second Mate, who slipped away whenever he got the chance, but he took good care to keep out of sight of the Old Man.

We heard that the skipper had caught sight of him one morning across the bar, and had roared out to him, "Get away back to your work, Mister. I'll have no drinking going on in working hours aboard my ship, let me tell ye."

The Second Mate's name was James Job, but the old skipper could not, or would not, remember the man's name.

He, the skipper, staggered aboard the ship one afternoon, befuddled with drink, but evidently in a frivolous state of mind. Wanting the Second Mate for some reason or other, he stood at the break of the little poop, his old battered Standard Oil Company's cap cock-billed over his right ear, calling loudly for our bold third in command: "Meester, Meester, dam' it all, where the hell are ye, Meester, Meester *Situation*. I thocht I'd get hold o' yer name some day," he added, with a great chuckle at his own wit.

Two or three days at Dargaville finished our unloading, and then we were towed to a mill wharf a few miles farther down the river. Here we were to take in some heavy flitches of kauri timber as part of our cargo for Sydney.

We spent a week-end at this wharf, and on the Sunday afternoon several of us took a walk down to Aratapu, a saw-milling settlement a few miles away down river.

Several vessels were loading here; one was a small deep-water barque loading first-class kauri for London. The others were intercolonial sailing vessels, loading for different Australian ports. Among them were the barques *Wild Wave*, *Helen* and *Mary Moore*, and the barquentine *Neptune*.

We hunted up old shipmates on several of these ships.

At the time of which I write the Kaipara was a very busy

shipping port. About half a dozen fairly large saw-mills were scattered along the banks of the Northern Wairoa alone, and hundreds of thousands of feet of saw-timber were exported annually to Australia and the Old Country.

Aratapu was a fairly busy shipping centre in those days, and often quite a large number of vessels were loading, or waiting to load, at these mills.

With the influx of several ships' crews ashore here of an evening, the local hotel bar was well patronised, and often lively scenes followed.

It was here, so the story goes, that at a dance held in the local hall, some wag had chalked up on the door, while it was in progress, the words "Sailors and Dogs not admitted."

It was like showing a red rag to a bull; in a very short space of time the much-abused sailors made short shrift of the interior of that dance-hall.

There was talk of sending down to the ships for blocks and tackle, and pulling the hall down, but the more sober-minded among the crowd were against this, and so the idea was dropped.

We tramped back to our ship that evening in company with some of the crew of an old brigantine called the *Sarah and Mary*.

To beguile the long walk, one of her crowd, an old deep-water man, sung us different chanties, we all joining in the chorus. Our vocal efforts, however, were not too well appreciated by the occupants of a small Maori village, through which we had to pass.

We were bawling "Ranzo Boys, Ranzo" to the best of our ability, when an old Maori poked his head out of his door and requested us to make less noise.

"Te Maori, he can't get to sreep," he protested. But to the tune of "Sally Brown, I love your daughter" we continued on our happy course along the quiet country road.

Away in the distance, between the snatches of song, we could hear the old Maori shouting to the whole world that we were "Bruddy well porangi"—meaning mad.

Looking back on it all, I suppose we were too; all young sailors with an over-abundance of animal spirits are, to a certain extent. At least that is the decision I have arrived at now that I have reached the age of discretion, and settled down into a law-abiding, stay-at-home citizen.

As we took the last flitch of kauri in the next afternoon the

Mate came to the open hatch and called down: "Come up now boys, and put the hatches on, and batten her down. We are leaving in tow of the tug for Whangape tomorrow morning."

Sure enough, early next morning the little steamer came ploughing up the river, blowing her screeching shrill whistle to rouse us out.

The uproar raised the anger of our worthy cook, and he let forth a stream of abuse at the tug and all aboard her.

"Quit it, Doctor," said the Mate. "Any comments to make about the tug coming alongside, *I'll* make them, not you. Go and get that coffee ready, we'll be letting go the lines presently."

Old Sam slunk into his little galley.

If there was one man aboard the ship he had any respect for, it was for our big Mate, but all the same we could still hear him cursing to himself, as he made the morning coffee.

"He'll make a bad-tempered little old man, he will," said Happy, half in jest and half in earnest.

"Don't you think he's a bad-tempered little old man already?" I remarked.

"Och, there's cooks and cooks, and I dinna ken the time I ha' been shipmates wi' a good-natured one," said Scotty.

An old white-bearded man was skipper of the small steamer, but he had a half-caste Maori with him as pilot. This man was an expert at handling vessels on the dangerous bar entrances that this part of the New Zealand coast is noted for.

They passed a towing hawser aboard us from the steamer, and when it was all fast we were quickly pulled out clear of the wharf, and started on our way down the Heads. The afternoon was well advanced when we arrived at the anchorage just inside the entrance.

Anchor watches were set; we drew up a Round Robin in the fo'c'sle to decide on their rotation. It fell to my lot to relieve the Mate, who said that he would keep the first watch from six till eight o'clock.

I went along aft at the appointed time to let the Mate see that I was on deck.

"That you, Avery?" he called out from the break of the poop.

"Yes, sir," I replied.

"Well, just watch when the wind springs up a bit more that she does not overrun her cable; tend the helm a little in that case, and pass the word along to call the Old Man should the weather

change for the worse." He added, "The man keeping the last watch will call the cook at six o'clock."

He stood studying the drift of the clouds for a while, and then turned to me and said, "Nor'-east, I hope it stays Nor'-east," referring to the light breeze that was blowing down the river. "There will be no difficulty in getting out in the morning with the wind in this quarter, which is just as well for us, as our tug-boat is none too powerful."

"Have you ever been in a mix-up on this bar, sir?" I asked him.

"No," replied the Mate, "and I don't want to be either."

"What a list it would make, all the ships that have come to grief on the Kaipara Bar, sir."

"Yes, to mention only a few would be enough to give it the bad name it has already. *Lord of the Isles*, *Northern Star*, *Salcombe Castle*, *Flying Scud*, and a host of others."

Bidding me "good-night," the mate disappeared down the after-companionway, and I commenced my two hours anchor-watch. I spent most of the time walking up and down the main-deck. The night was calm and still, save for a muffled roar which came upstream from the direction of the bar. When I turned in at four bells—ten o'clock—it was to pass the remainder of the night in a deep sleep.

"Now then, you sleepers, rise and shine! Rise and shine! D'yer want me ter bring yer breakfast down to yer?"

It was the irascible old cook, with his head half-way down the scuttle, who roused us out for breakfast in the above manner.

"Go on, Willie boy, up and get the grub from 'Old Slushy,' " said Happy, reaching over from his bunk and pulling the rugs off the hapless Willie.

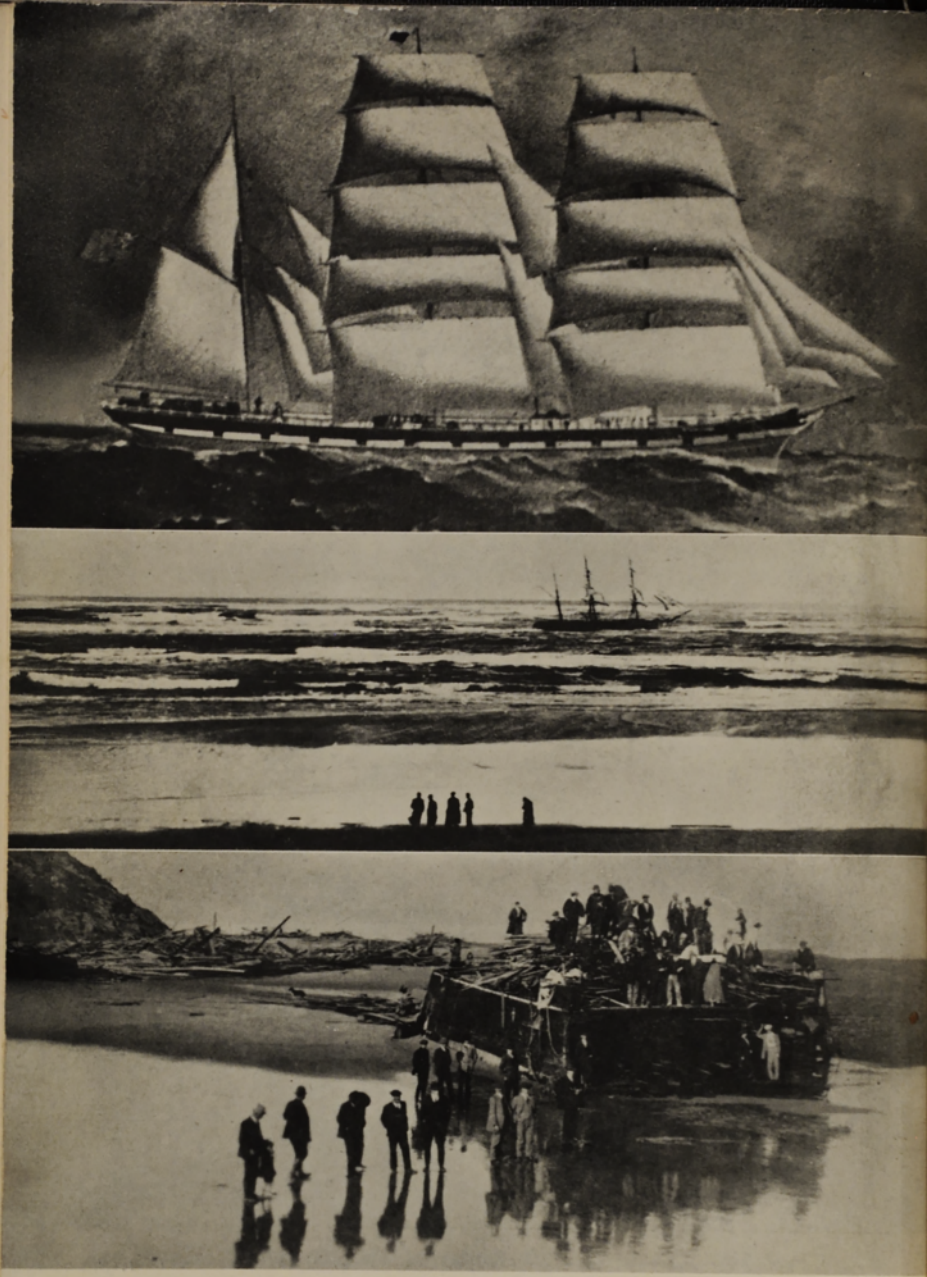
With much sleepy grumbling the boy complied, and within a few minutes all hands were out on deck, swilling our heads in buckets of water.

We dined on deck when the weather was fine; the fo'c'sle was too stuffy and dark to use as a dining-room, and up on deck in the keen morning air we enjoyed our food to the full.

This class of ship was noted for its good living in those days, that is provided we had a *cook* and not a food spoiler.

We signed on for "sufficient without waste," not the deep-water allowance of pound and pint, such as was the vogue in the real deep-water sailing-ships of those days.

1. *Senorita*



2. *Joseph Craig* (ex-*Dunblane*)
3. *Joseph Craig* wrecked on Hokianga Bar—4 p.m.
4. *Joseph Craig* next day, Hokianga Heads—the end

But a cook could make or mar a passage even in the inter-colonial trade.

Of course, having shorter periods at sea than the long voyage deep-water ship, these conditions were more easily obtained.

Fresh bread we had every day, if the cook could make bread, and fresh meat and tinned meats were more in evidence than on the real deep-watermen.

From the fore-deck where we were having our breakfast we could see several other vessels loaded and waiting their chance to work out of the entrance.

Two large sailing timber scows lay just astern of us, their decks piled high with sawn timber, which would necessitate them having to carry single reefs in their lower fore-and-afters, so that their booms would clear the deck-load when coming about. They were both bound for Auckland round the North Cape.

Scandinavians mostly manned this type of vessel, though in some cases they were manned from skipper to boy by Aucklanders.

Ahead of us, down towards the signal station, lay a topsail schooner, bound for Dunedin, and a barquentine, the *La Bella*, loaded with timber for Sydney.

Our tug, which had been at anchor inside of us, towards the Maori village at the Heads, came alongside shortly after breakfast.

"What do you think of it, Johnnie?" asked old Jock, our skipper.

"Good enough to give it a go, I reckon," replied the pilot.

"Weel, let us be off then; man the windlass, Mr. Moreham." He turned to the pilot again, "Just give us a slow push ahead till my lads get the chain up and down, pilot."

We rattled the cable in with a will, and when it was hove short, the tug went ahead on a long tow-rope, we continuing to heave until we had the anchor awash and finally catted.

As we passed outwards the signal "Bar workable" was seen flying from the flagstaff ashore, and looking astern we could see the *La Bella*, with a tug alongside, getting ready to follow our lead.

The coasters were also setting sail, taking advantage of the light land breeze that was coming down the river.

As we passed the Graveyard, on the Northern Spit, we could see the remains of some fine vessels sticking up out of the sand.

One, a vessel that had but recently gone ashore, lay over on her side. Half-buried in the sand, a couple of stumps of masts still standing, with the swirling tide tearing past her once fine old bows, she presented a truly pitiable picture. Crowds of wheeling gulls circled and bickered and fought above her poor remains. I thought of those lines by Rudyard Kipling:

For life that crammed me full,
Crowds of the screaming gull
That shriek and scrabble on the riven hatches,
For roar that dumbed the gale,
My hawse-pipe's guttering wail,
Sobbing my heart out through the uncounted watches.

I always look upon a derelict or a wreck with feelings akin to those with which I would view some living creature stricken down. I don't know why, but many sailors think of ships in much the same way. Ships, especially sailing-ships, to my mind assume personalities of their own.

A steamer is different; under the urge of powerful engines she proceeds on her way to her intended destination; head winds, fair winds, or no wind, it's all the same to her, she just carries on, as long as the weather is not too bad.

But a sailing-ship is a different proposition; she has to be coaxed, humoured, cajoled and driven during the whole of her passage, and her Master, Mates and crew must study her every whim.

Every little change of the wind, and the weather, is noted by a sailing-ship's watch-keeping officer. Every cloud-bank, every ground swell working up across the face of the ocean, are taken into account. They have to be, as possibly they spell success or failure in the making of a passage with a vessel under canvas. So sailing-ships are, to "sailors of the sail," more like animate beings than full-powered steamers.

We set the square sails on the fore, as we towed down toward the break on the bar, and then as we cleared the shoal waters, we hauled up on a northerly course and set the fore-and-afters.

As the breeze freshened up from off the land, we at times slackened up on our tow-line, and nearly ran over the tug.

After a while the pilot came along to the taffrail of the little steamer, and called out through a megaphone to us:

"Tell the Old Man to take some of the canvas off her, we don't want to be run down."

Old Jock grudgingly gave his consent to the Mate to shorten down a bit.

He was anxious to get to his final loading port, and "couldna' see why the hell yon tug-boat couldna' keep ahead of him."

It seemed to give them a more comfortable feeling aboard the tug to have us following more obediently astern, and for the rest of the afternoon, save for the man at the wheel, we saw no sign of life aboard her.

Early morning found us jogging comfortably along close inshore, with the high land of Monganui Bluff looming up dark and foreboding on our starboard hand.

"Hokianga Harbour," said the Mate to Billy and I, as we stood outside the galley door drinking our morning coffee, and he pointed in to where we saw the light on the South Head.

"A bad entrance, too, but inside is a great roomy inlet where a whole fleet of ships could moor," he told us. "It was just near the South Head there that a steamer went ashore a short while back, but it was no wonder she stranded, considering the cargo she had."

"What was that?" we asked. His answer startled us.

"Dead Chinamen," replied the Mate. "Hundreds of them in lead coffins, from the gold diggings of the South Island, being taken back to a final resting-place in the 'Flowery Land.' Yes, no wonder she went ashore," he continued. "I'm not a superstitious man myself, but I'd bar going to sea with a cargo like that; don't mind one or two, but not a cargo of them." We heartily agreed with him.

In the early morning light, with the mists rising up over the entrance to the Hokianga Harbour, and the dark heights of Monganui Bluff, towering up two thousand odd feet above us, I could almost fancy the spirits of those dead Chinamen haunting those bush-clad heights for all time.

Inshore the land was high now all the way to our destination, off which we arrived towards noon.

We could see no entrance at all from the sea; all was one long range of hills, about eight hundred or a thousand feet in height.

We worked closer inshore still, and then, from a toot on the whistle from the steamer, and her pilot pointing up to our sails, the order was given aboard us to take in everything.

Suddenly he gave a shrill blast on his whistle again, and

waving his arm out to starboard, altered his helm and swung round, heading straight for the cliffs.

"Blimey," said Happy. "Looks as if he's going to run us right ashore."

"Yes, it does," I agreed, "but you can bet your life that pilot knows these parts like a book. I've heard he was born and bred on this coast."

As I spoke we saw a deep ravine open up between the great black hills. It seemed to run in and finish up in a *cul-de-sac* among the thick bush on the mountain-side.

We shot into the entrance behind the tug with the tide in our favour. A great black rock awash, right in the middle of the entrance, swept astern; a shiver ran down my spine as I thought of the ship striking it.

Then we went tearing along, follow the leader fashion, up that narrow, swiftly running waterway, with the great cliffs towering up on each side of us.

Two blasts came from the steamer's whistle, which echoed and re-echoed all round among the hills, and she swung to port, we following in a wide circle. Right ahead of us opened up a beautiful land-locked harbour, with luxuriant native bush extending right down to the foreshore, and a bush saw-mill tucked unobtrusively away in a little corner on our port hand. We let go the towing hawser, and the tug came alongside, and soon we were lying snugly moored at the mill wharf.

It seemed as though the whole population of the place had turned out to welcome us, both whites and Maoris, though the Maoris were in the majority.

The mill boss jumped aboard, and going along aft to where our skipper was standing, he called out, "I'll have the first truck-load of your timber on the wharf in the morning, Captain."

"Aye, aye, mon," responded Old Jock, "and see as how ye'll ha' twa laddies on the wharf to sling it forbye; I hae-na got the hands to spare in this wee packet."

"Right oh, Captain, we'll see to that," answered the mill boss, and after a little further talk, the pair made their way below to the saloon. Old Jock would be doing the honours of his ship, we surmised.

The last rays of the evening sun lit up the peaceful scene later on, and filled the whole of the beautiful little cove with a blaze of glory. The surface of the water was like one huge mirror, the trees

and ferns on the banks showing as clearly in their inverted reflections in the water as their counterparts standing upright above them. Great punga ferns with glossy black trunks and stems graceful beyond all description bent out over the water here and there. The giant fronds of the Nikau palm gave almost a tropical appearance to the scene.

Massive kauri and rata trees towered high above the lesser growth, and on the sky-line they stood out in such sharp relief in the clear still evening air, that one could almost fancy that they were only a few hundred yards distant, instead of many miles.

As soon as the sun went down, a morepork, perched high in the trees behind the mill, gave out his doleful cry: "Morepork! Morepork!" The fluttering of wings overhead proclaimed the near presence of wild duck on their way to roost.

From the Maori village came the melodious notes of an accordion being played, and remarkably well too: a Maori girl's voice sang to the accompaniment:

Lindy, Lindy, sweet as the sugar cane;
Lindy, Lindy, won't you be mine?

Sweetly and clearly the song went on, and at the finish we of the crew of the *St. Elmo* who had been listening clapped heartily, and called loudly for an encore.

"Py corry, you ferrer know that song?" called out one of the Maori youths.

"Yes, but let us have another," we called back, and presently there came stealing across the star-lit water a haunting refrain:

Would you care if I should leave you?
Would you care if we should part?
Would you care if someone told you
That another's won my heart?

"There's more music in that Maori girl's voice, and in the tunes that fellow is getting out of his accordion, than there is in a great many of the musical items we get at some of our own concerts," said the Mate, coming along the deck to where I was standing listening.

"Yes, the Maoris are a very musical people," I replied. "As a boy I lived near a Maori village, and some of their own native

songs and tunes are beautiful. We often used to go over and listen to their singing in those days."

After listening to a few more items from our Maori friends, we all went below, and turned in for the night.

The soothing quietness of this little backwater soon lulled all hands off into a deep sleep, and for the rest of the night, save for the splash of an occasional mullet in the water, or the eerie cry of "Morepork! Morepork!" from the bush behind the mill, all was quiet and peaceful.

The old cook's rasping voice awoke us at an early hour next morning, calling us for breakfast.

At half-past seven, as the mill whistle shrieked its summons to turn-to, echoing and re-echoing round the harbour, we went down into the hold to stow our timber cargo.

The Mate, with Billy and I, stowed the port side, while the Second Mate, with Scotty and Happy, stowed the starboard side.

The boy tended the hatch, guiding the slings of timber down, and directing the Maori youth who was driving the wheezing, spluttering donkey-winch.

It was rather pleasant work, stowing the freshly sawn, sweet-smelling planks in neat tiers into the hold. We worked right across the hold from side to side, until we just had walking room beneath the deck beams, and then we built the timber up in long tiers right up to the deck beams, working from the outside, or "wings" as we called it, into the centre, or 'midships, jamming it off securely when both sides had worked out to the 'midships in the hatches.

When the hold was completely filled, we covered the hatches over with tarpaulins, and after securely battening them down, we stowed the deck-load as high as our t'gallant rail, and finally lashed it down with chains from side to side.

Within a week the loading was completed, and making all ready alow and aloft, we were fully prepared for sea.

This time we had no coastwise towing trip ahead of us; instead we had the stormy Tasman Sea to negotiate, over a thousand miles of it, and we hoped and prayed for easterly winds to give us a good run across.

The day after we finished loading, being Sunday, we got things shipshape in the fo'c'sle, sea-chests lashed, and oilskins hung up in readiness for use when required.

After dinner, the Mate strode for'ard, and called out down the fo'c'sle scuttle, "Who's for a ramble ashore?"

No response came from any of my shipmates' bunks; all were indulging in an afternoon nap. I bent over the edge of my bunk and tried to rouse Bill.

"Coming ashore, Bill?" I called out. A muffled complaint about letting a man have a snooze caused me to desist; so calling out to the Mate that I was coming, I jumped out and put my boots and jacket on, and was soon on deck with Mr. Moreham.

"I'm just taking a climb to the top of the hill there to see what it looks like outside," he said. "Do you feel like taking it on?"

"Yes," I answered. "I'm always keen on a ramble through the bush, and it may be a long while before I get another chance."

"Come on then," said the Mate, and off we set on our climb uphill through the bush.

It was hard going at times, supple-jacks and bush-lawyers caught at us and tripped us up, time and again. We kept at it, however, and eventually arrived at the top of the ridge. Hot and tired after our struggle up through the dense growth, we now were able to sit down, and survey the scene below us.

Away to seaward, and in a southerly direction, we could see the line of coast extending down towards Hokianga Heads.

A strong westerly breeze was blowing, and we could mentally picture the great rollers smashing in on this inhospitable coast.

There are no safe harbours here for vessels approaching it in bad weather, with the wind in from the sea. All have bar entrances, and are dangerous to negotiate even in fine weather by vessels under sail only.

"What's that, a sail out there to the sou'-west?" said the Mate, pointing in the direction he had indicated.

I looked, and at last picked it up.

Yes, it was a vessel; she appeared to be heading up towards the nor'-west on the port tack, and was well shortened down.

"She will be one of the Craig Line out of Auckland," said the Mate. "Probably going to load at Hokianga, for if I'm not very much mistaken that vessel is in ballast trim," he continued.

"Yes, standing off and on until the wind and sea moderate enough for him to work the bar," I replied.

We continued to sit and discuss the distant vessel, and our own chances of getting out to sea and on our way towards Sydney.

"So you still intend to ship home via the West Coast of South America when you get to Sydney, Avery," said the Mate.

"Yes," I said. "I've always had that longing to get to London

some day. You see I was born there, and the longing to go and see it has been with me for years. I was a baby when our family came to New Zealand years ago."

"Well, I think you are doing a wise thing," said the Mate. "London is a wonderful city, and to any British Colonial it should prove doubly interesting. The centre of the British Empire, and practically the centre of the world," added the Mate, with a certain amount of pride. I couldn't help remembering he was a Londoner himself.

CHAPTER III

TO SYDNEY, TIMBER LADEN

THE strong westerly wind moderated during the night, and next morning broke fine and clear with the wind round to the south.

We were expecting the tug round from Hokianga any time now, to tow us out.

Word came during the day, by telephone to the mill, that the tug would arrive early on the tide the next day.

Everything being in readiness for sea, several of us went ashore for a final look round later on in the afternoon. Billy took an old South African army rifle with him, as we had been told that there were plenty of wild pigs further back in the bush, to be had for the shooting of them.

Passing through the Maori settlement we stopped outside a natty raupo whare, and spoke to an old Maori woman who was working in the garden.

"How far to go for te wild porker?"

"Oh, too far, I tink; hold on, I ask him my husband," saying which, she went to the door and called out to somebody.

A large white-headed negro came to the door.

"Are you looking for wild pigs, boys?" he asked.

"Yes," we replied, "if there are any hereabouts."

"Wa'al, I don't know as how there are any near by, boys. I'm afraid you'll have to go a long way out into the bush to get any. Years ago, when I first came here, I was the first white man to settle hereabouts," he explained; "there were plenty of wild pigs to be had, but now the Maoris claim them all."

We smiled at his reference to being the "first white man" here, and retraced our steps back towards the mill. The evening shadows were already closing in, and we had no wish to spend the night out in the bush looking for wild pigs.

Pigs of all shapes and sizes were running about among the Maori dwellings, and Scotty suggested bagging a wee porker.

"Sure, mon, they'd never miss one," he said to me; "there's dozens of them, look ye, and think what a fine Sunday dinner we'd have at sea."

All hands agreeing, Scotty produced a small sack that he had been carrying, and from the next crowd of pigs we passed he caught a fat young porker and tumbled him into the sack. The pig yelled blue-murder from the sack, but Scotty muzzled his snout, and made off for the ship as fast as he could go.

"It's like a murderer I'm feelin', boys," he gasped, as he hurried along, with the pig in the sack tucked under his arm. "I hope to the Lord he willna' screech too loud going past these houses, boys," he said, pointing to the last of the Maori dwellings near the mill.

Our good luck held, however, and we got safely aboard with the pig.

We made a bed for him under the small fo'c'sle head, and covered him with an upturned coal basket. We dragged a small kedge anchor along and put this on top of the upturned basket to weight it down.

"I'll swear he'll na get oot o' that, boys," said Scotty, and off we all went below to turn in for our last all-night in until we reached Sydney.

The morning was perfect when we were roused out early by the Mate calling out, "Stand by the tug-boat's lines." Here was our old friend again, alongside and ready to take us out to sea.

Breakfast over, the mooring lines were singled up, and the tug passed his towing hawser aboard, and on our making all fast he steamed out ahead of us.

"Stand by to let go our lines," called out the Old Man to the men on the wharf. "A hand to the wheel, mister," he sang out a few minutes later, as the tug began to pick up the slack of the tow-rope.

Lo and behold, just as we were commencing to move out, a breathless deputation of Maoris, both men and women, rushed down the wharf. "Te porker! Te porker!" they yelled at the top of their voices. "Where te porker?"

"Hell's Bells! what the deil's the matter wi' ye? What are ye wantin'? What are ye wantin'?" roared Old Jock, up in arms at this attempt to delay his sailing. "Say what ye want, mon! Say what ye want!" he called out to the big Maori chief who stood gesticulating on the wharf.

"Te porker. Te crew he come and steal te porker last night, and take him on board te ship," he shouted.

"What?" shouted back Old Jock. "There's none o' yer blasted porkers aboard this ship."

"Any pigs aboard here, mister?" he yelled out to the Mate on the fo'c'sle head.

"No, sir, not as far as I know," answered the Mate.

Surely now, we thought, we'd have roast pork for next Sunday's dinner at sea, but no, the fates decreed otherwise.

It seemed as though the pig had been listening to all the conversation on his behalf, for with sundry grunts and squeals he upset the coal basket in a final desperate struggle, and came trotting gaily along the deck-load of timber in full view of the infuriated Maoris.

At sight of him they let out one wild yell, and jumping aboard, one hefty member of their number caught Dennis on the run, and with a violent heave sent him up into the arms of another on the wharf.

As we pulled out clear of the wharf, they cursed us both in Maori and English. They laugh best who laugh last, and those Maoris certainly had the laugh on us.

"What a dam' fuss to make over one lousy pig!" remarked Happy. "You'd have thought they'd never have missed just that one little one."

"No," said the Mate, who was standing for'ard with us as we towed out, "it puts me in mind of the old hymn about the ninety and nine sheep who were safely in the fold, and yet the one poor little blighter that was out in the cold was missed."

"I blame yon tug-boat," said Scotty. "Why the hell didn't he jerk us clear o' yon wharf when he saw the Maoris rushing down? Och, some people's too slow to catch worms."

"Well, it's no use your growling now; you've lost the pig, so there's an end of it," said the Mate, going aft.

There was little or no wind, and consequently no sea, when we towed outwards over the bar.

The tug gave us a fair offing, and then signalled to us to let go his line, and with three toots on his whistle to wish us farewell, he circled round and made off in the direction of Hokianga.

Gradually we made all sail on the little barquentine, and with our bowsprit pointing nearly due west, and the wind settling down into a good leading breeze from the south, we let her ramp along on her course.

In the second dog-watch, as dusk was closing in, I took a last long look at New Zealand.

Though I had often sailed as far as Australia and the South

Sea Islands, I had never up till now left my homeland with the intention of sailing deep-water, but the thought of seeing other lands farther afield, especially England, was compensation enough to warrant my longer absence from home.

At eight bells, eight o'clock, I went aft and relieved Scotty at the wheel.

"West-half-south," said he, relinquishing his hold.

I took the wheel from him and repeated the course, and then turned my attention to the steering.

The Mate came along and had a glance at the compass, and then let out a roar for the boy. "Get a duster and clean that glass; how do you think men are going to see through that?" he said, when the boy came aft.

The boy fished a dirty-looking rag out of his coat pocket and rubbed the glass clean.

"That's better," I said to him, as the violently jumping needle swung into line with the lubber's point, and I steadied her on her course.

The boy gave me a soulful glance, and then made a wild rush with the roll of the ship to the lee rail, and was frightfully sea-sick. The little vessel was certainly beginning to cut a bit of a caper. With the wind freshening to a strong breeze, the sea was rapidly making, and Poor Wully had not got his sea-legs yet.

"Go along for'ard and lie down on the flat of your back in the sail-locker," I said to him when the Mate had moved for'ard again. "You'll soon get over it; most of us have gone through it at one time or another."

"I'll never get over it," said the boy, between spasms. "I only wish I could have *walked* back to Sydney. When I *do* get back I'm done with this life for good."

"Get away with you," I replied, giving the wheel a heave round to keep her head out of the wind. "Why, Lord Nelson got sea-sick every time *he* went to sea and *he* stuck at it."

"Well, I'm not trying to be another Lord Nelson," said the boy, hurrying for'ard, only to stop and be sick again at the break of the poop.

"Poor little chap," I thought, but I could sympathise with him though. Hadn't I lain for three days and nights on the main hatch of a schooner, running off-shore, on my first trip to sea, so sick that I prayed that the whole box of tricks might sink and take me down with her?

It is a remarkable thing that sea-sickness, among sailors especially, is always made a joke of, and the sufferer from this distressing malady is generally treated with scant sympathy. Many a true-born sailor, with the love of the sea inherent in him, has been lost to the sea service through there being no proved cure for sea-sickness, and many a dud, with no more sea-sense in his make-up than there is in a cow, has been able to carry on with a seafaring career through being physically immune from the throes of this complaint.

Punctually at four bells, ten o'clock, Bill came along and relieved me at the wheel.

The breeze had freshened now, and showers of spray were flying all over the little vessel as she staggered along under a full press of canvas.

We kept no look-out from for'ard in these vessels; half the time, especially in bad weather, a man would not be able to stand on their small fo'c'sle heads to keep a look-out.

The officer of the watch and the man at the wheel generally kept the look-out.

In most vessels of this type their view was not obscured by boats high up on skids, and such-like obstacles, as in larger ships.

Arriving for'ard, I looked in the sail-locker, a small compartment for stowing spare sails, in the same deck-house as the galley.

The boy was lying there among the stopped-up sails; he looked more dead than alive.

"How are you feeling now?" I asked him.

"Just the same, wish I was dead," he muttered.

I left him to work out his own recovery, as I knew that I could do nothing to relieve him.

"Are you there, Avery?" called the Mate, coming along the heaving, pitching deck-load of timber, and making for the fore-royal halliards.

"Yes, sir," I called out from the lee galley door, inside which I had squeezed to keep clear of the flying spray which continually swept across our decks.

"We'll take this fore-royal in before she blows it out," he shouted, his voice at times being almost blotted out by the heavy pounding of the seas against our bows.

I hurried along as he again shouted out to me to "stand by the lee brace. That's right, slack away a little. Now take a pull on the

weather brace and point the yard into the wind." As he spoke he lowered away on the halliards, and down came the yard with the little sail threshing and jumping like a wild thing now that the steady pull of the wind was out of it.

"Clewlines and buntlines. Quick now! before we lose it altogether," said the Mate, jumping round and hauling on the gear with surprising alacrity for a man of his size.

When we had it quitened in the gear, the Mate called out, "Up aloft and make it fast, Avery; that boy is too sick to go aloft tonight, though in some ships they'd make the poor little beggar go, sick and all as he is."

Making for the weather fore-rigging I was soon on my way aloft.

On deck the motion of the ship was violent enough, but up here it took a man all his time to maintain his hold.

"One hand for yourself and the other for the ship," I told myself—remembering the old saying—as I made my way up over the futtock shrouds and into the topmast-rigging.

I was slung here, there and everywhere. A mad and soul-sickening lurch to leeward would set the rigging up bar-tight, but the next instant a wild fling back to windward would slacken it up to such an extent that at times I would make a complete "about turn," only to swing back and repeat the same gymnastic trick a few ratlines further up.

At last I reached the royal yard, and getting on to the weather foot-ropes, I quickly furled the weather side. As fast as I could I furled the bunt and the lee side also, making all well fast. Up here it was like riding a Wild West bucking bronco.

The mast would take a sudden forward plunge, and then, sweeping wildly to windward, would again as suddenly reverse its tactics, and lurch away over to leeward, into what looked like a black void of sea spume and utter darkness.

Over and still further over she would careen, till on looking downwards, one could see the seething yeast of the lee bow wave, caught in the sickly gleam of the green rays from our starboard side-light.

The deck was just a blur, with a whitish line stretching out astern to mark our wake.

The main and mizzen masts appeared like two drunken men staggering along behind me, with their wildly flinging gaffs and cross-trees signifying arms.

I was glad to make a hurried descent, and on regaining the deck, went aft to see what the next manœuvre was to be.

"That's eased her for a bit, and as she is laying her course we'll let her go at that," said the Mate, so, having nothing further to do for awhile, I went for'ard and stowed myself away out of reach of the flying spray just inside the lee galley door.

We were relieved at eight bells, midnight, by the starboard watch, and before we went to sleep we could hear them rush for'ard and take in the fore-t'gall'n'sl.

"Must be freshening," said Bill in a drowsy voice.

"Yes," I responded sleepily, but little we cared now as it was our watch below.

"*I'm* all right, to hell with *you*, Jack," is an old phrase often quoted in like circumstances at sea.

A wild sunrise greeted us as we stood the four-to-eight watch the next morning.

The barquentine was now shortened right down; it had been an "all hands" job, and loud and prolonged were the growls of our opposite numbers in the starboard watch at such a loss of sleep.

The taking in of the foresail had been a great battle, and in the end Mr. Moreham had left the deck and come aloft to assist in finally subduing it.

Old Jock eyed us from the shelter of a weather cloth, stretched across the mizzen rigging.

Every now and then he would poke his head out to glare to windward, and then shake his fist at the great white-capped tumbling seas, and scurrying, low-flying clouds.

Under shortened canvas she rode fairly comfortable, the wind had backed from the south into the west, a bad sign.

Old Jock remarked to the Mate, "Aye, aye, mon, it's na' guid, 'when the wind backs agin' the sun, trust it not, for back it'll run.' "

"Yes," the Mate had replied, "but we have a certain amount of consolation in the truth of another old doggerel, 'Long foretold, long last, short notice, soon past,' and this has not been brewing very long."

A fair wind for us was not far off, however, for all day a long, undulating swell had been working up from the north-east, in spite of the hard westerly breeze that was blowing.

All indications pointed to the wind coming away from this quarter at any time now.

It was late in the afternoon when the change came, the westerly wind flying back into the south, and then just as quickly working round into the east and then north-east.

As darkness came on it commenced to blow a gale from this quarter, accompanied by heavy, driving rain, which beat right through our oilskins, drenching us to the skin.

We had lowered the reefed mainsail down, and had also hauled the main staysail down.

The little barquentine was now surging along with the yards laid dead square, carrying her two topsails and fore-topmast-staysail.

The high westerly sea was still running, and urged along by the strong north-easter, which was gaining force all the time, we drove doggedly into it, every now and again taking it green over the fo'c'sle head, and filling the fore-deck rail high with water.

The fo'c'sle was an evil-smelling damp hole of a place in this weather; in fact the air was so foul, through having to keep the scuttle continually closed, that our solitary, smoking kerosene lamp would not burn.

We tried candles, but with no better result; after lighting one it would burn with a dim bluish flame for a few minutes and then go out, leaving us to grope around in the dark.

"Who wouldn't sell a farm and go to sea?" growled Bill.

"Yes, who wouldn't?" I gasped, striking my head against the pawl-bitts that ran down from the windlass right through our already cramped quarters.

The pounding of the heavy head seas against our bows sounded like sledge-hammer blows, and caused such a din that one had to shout to make one's self heard.

At eight bells in the second dog-watch, as it was our eight hours in, I shifted up into the sail-locker; I could stand it no longer.

"Are you putting in the watch below down here, Bill?" I enquired of my mate, as I saw him sorting his bunk out preparatory to turning in.

"Oh yes," he answered, quite unconcerned; "I don't mind being in the dark."

"Neither do I, but what about the foul air that even a candle won't stay alight in?" I asked him.

"Just push the slide back about a quarter of an inch when you get on deck, that'll do me," answered Bill.

5. *Wanganui*

5. *Daniel* towing out of Sydney. Author was on the tug

"Well, you're a glutton," I said, as I bade him happy dreams, and made my way up to the sail-locker.

Wully the boy was still down to it with continued sea-sickness, and lay like a log in among the spare sails.

I asked him how he felt.

"I think I'm getting over it a bit now; anyhow I'll give it a go to stand the middle watch with you," he said.

"That's right," I replied; "we've got a good, ramping, fair wind now, which looks as if it's going to last a day or so. As soon as this head sea gets flattened down the old girl will fairly walk along for Sydney Heads. Why, I fancy you'll be walking down George Street early next week, taking up all the footpath with the Western Ocean roll you'll have on, and all the girls admiring you for a smart young sailor."

"Cut it out," said the boy, with some heat; "if I can get a job sweeping the streets or on the rubbish van, I'll jump at it after this life."

"Why, you'll never make a sailor as long as the soles of your feet are looking downwards," I told him.

"No, and I don't want to be a sailor, that's all," said Wully. "Do *you* like the sea?" he asked me.

"Yes, I always have done and always will, I suppose."

"Why?" he inquired.

"I don't know, just can't help it, I reckon; a lot of people are born like that, you know. There's something about the sea that always gets me. It's not only the sea, it's the ships, the build and rig of them; it all appeals to me more than anything else."

"If I'm asleep give me a shake at eight bells; I think I'll be well enough to come on deck next watch," said the boy.

"Right oh," I replied, making myself comfortable in among the sails with a rug and pillow, and in a few minutes I was fast asleep.

It was my wheel at eight bells, midnight; the rain was still pouring down, and the night was as black as Hades. Flashes of lightning lit the sky at frequent intervals to the north-east, gradually working closer to us, and after each flash came great peals of thunder. The rain fell in sheets.

The Old Man stumped up and down his little poop, cursing the weather and the rain.

"Send it down, Hughie! Send it down and wet the Colonials," he muttered, as he stopped to gaze into the binnacle.

"That you, Avery?" he said, peering up at me from underneath his dripping sou'-wester.

"Yes, sir," I replied, making a frantic grab at the wet slippery spokes of the wheel, as an extra kick jerked it out of my grasp.

"How's she steering?" he shouted, above the roar of the sea and wind.

"Pretty wild; the compass card is flying about all over the place," I shouted back.

"Yes, yes, it's all this electricity in the air that's causing it to behave like that, the atmosphere is full of it tonight. Get a star to steady her by when you get a chance," he yelled.

I gazed ahead and aloft in a vain attempt to see a star; all was a black murk of heavy, low-hanging clouds.

Suddenly I saw a ball of light, larger than a man's head, appear on our starboard t'gallant yard-arm, and a few minutes after another took up its position on the main-truck. As the mate came aft in his walk, I called his attention to the phenomenon.

"Yes, 'St. Elmo's Fire'," he said; "ever seen it before?"

"Yes, up round the Islands, but it's uncanny at any time," I replied.

"It is," said the Mate, standing close by me at the wheel. "Old-time sailors believed that if the glare of one of those lights shone on their faces while up aloft, that thereafter they were doomed men."

"Yes, I've also heard that; but there is no real danger from the lights themselves, is there?" I asked.

"No," said the Mate; "only in electrical storms like this, good lightning conductors on all the masts are a safeguard."

He walked for'ard to the break of the poop, and presently was joined by the Old Man. After a bit of a confab they both came aft and stood talking by the wheel.

"This will settle down into a good steady breeze before long, and gradually work round into the north and the west; as soon as it eases at all give her sail," said the Old Man. "Give me a call if there is any change for the worse," he added, making for the companionway leading to the saloon and disappearing below.

"Aye, aye, sir," answered the Mate.

The boy came along and struck four bells, and I was very much relieved to see Bill coming to take over the wheel from me.

Drenched to the skin and shivering with cold, I was glad to go for'ard to the fo'c'sle and get into dry clothes.

When I came on deck after changing, I found the Mate standing in the shelter of a canvas dodger he had rigged up by the mizzen rigging.

"Stand here with me under the lee of this," he said, and I was glad to take advantage of his sheltered position, as the rain was still coming down fairly heavy.

Here we stood in comparative comfort, and watched the play of the vivid lightning, and the antics of the balls of light on our trucks and yard-arms.

"The witch-fires climbed our channels
And flamed on vane and truck,"

I quoted aloud.

"By the Lord, you've said it," said the Mate. "Funny thing, the man who wrote that was no sailor, and yet he can put scenes like this into a nutshell in his writings," he added. "You know there are not many true sea poets, men that can write of the sea as it really is, but when Kipling wrote 'The Merchantman' in his book *The Seven Seas*, he wrote it as a man would, who had really lived the life."

"I thought the same thing when I first read it," I agreed.

"The ordinary run of longshoremen don't appeal to me a great deal," continued the Mate. "The things that interest a sailorman are not at all interesting to them, and when I am in the company of most shore folk, I generally feel a bit at a loss as to how to keep my share of the conversation going. I suppose that comes of being so long in sail."

"Had you stayed in steam, and had to mix with passengers and people ashore more frequently, you would have had more in common with them," I suggested.

"Yes, possibly so," answered the Mate, "but all the same I feel more contented in sail, and don't hanker after the big flash liners. Once a sailor, always a sailor," he continued, "and as long as a man sticks to sail it is so, but once he gives them best, and goes into steam for good, he becomes half landsman, I think."

"By the Lord, that was a vivid flash!" he ejaculated, following a long silence since his last remark, as a particularly brilliant glare from the lightning lit up the whole scene in ghastly hues.

Every mast, spar, block, sail and rope stood out in bold relief,

while the tops of the breaking combers that pounded us towered more threateningly on either side of our swirling wake.

Crash! down came the accompanying thunder, nearly bursting our ear-drums, and dying away in the distance with reverberant rollings and mutterings.

"This will clear the air a little," said the Mate, as we stood staring ahead, into what looked like a great wall as solid as a high mountain range, comprised of heavy cloud banks.

Gradually we began to sense a lessening of the wind.

Our onward rushes on the tops of the high seas were now becoming more sluggish, and peering away astern, the Mate took his sou'-wester off to feel the force of the wind better with his bare head.

"I think we'll loose the foresail and sheet it aft. See if that boy is well enough to give you a hand with it. Go aloft with him, and after the sail is loosed, let him stay on the yard and overhaul the gear, while you give me a hand with the sheets."

"Aye, aye, sir," I replied, and hastened for'ard to execute his orders.

On explaining to the boy what we were about to do, he pleaded to be allowed to stay on deck.

"If I go aloft again now, I'll be bound to start the sea-sickness all over again."

He spoke in such a doleful tone that I took pity on him, and after telling him to go and help the Mate with the sheets, I hurried aloft to loose the sail.

The Mate and the boy sheeted it aft, and before I had finished overhauling the buntlines, the Mate was calling out, "Loose the t'gall'nt-sail while you're up there, Avery."

I made my way up the wildly swinging fore-topmast rigging, and getting on to the t'gall'nt yard footropes, commenced to cast off the gaskets.

Suddenly my hand pressed down on to something soft and warm, which quickly wriggled clear. I got the fright of my life. I saw a small, shadowy shape scuttle in towards the quarter of the yard, and jumping into some of the running gear leading down to the deck, dropped out of sight in no time. It gave me a bit of a scare at first, the warm live feel of it away up here on the t'gall'nt yard. I cudgelled my brains to think what it might have been.

Suddenly it dawned on me; it was a large rat, thirsty, and unable to find a drop of fresh water round the decks, as everything

was saturated with sea water, its instinct had told it that aloft in the crevices of the furled canvas, fresh water would be found after the heavy rain.

Hence my midnight companion on the fore-t'gall'nt yard.

"Rats are strange creatures," said the Mate when I told him about it later. "There's a lot of horse sense about them too. It's just as well he didn't bite you when he was under your hand; I've known of some nasty blood-poisoning cases over rat bites," said he.

"Talking of finding queer creatures aloft, an experience I had in one of these intercolonial timber ships was the most amusing case I've ever seen," he went on.

"I was in a little iron barque, and her topmasts, as well as her lower masts, were of hollow steel.

We had loaded timber at Hokianga, at a mill on the edge of the thick native bush.

Our loading had been delayed, owing to the sawn timber being small sizes, and a whole lot of short lengths, which took double the time to stow.

The crew had been very successful in getting two or three lots of wild honey from the hollow rata trees, which were very plentiful in that piece of bush.

Evidently a queen bee had escaped alive, and, followed by a host of workers, had started up business again in the honey trade, this time picking on the head of our hollow fore-topmast as a likely hive.

Here they were left unmolested for the two or three weeks we lay at the mill wharf loading.

Nobody had noticed anything unusual about the head of our fore-topmast, and the day we towed out clear of the bar was beautifully fine, and all sail was set without any trouble.

During the night, however, the wind increased, and in the forenoon watch, though it was fine and sunny, the wind had freshened to such an extent that the order came to 'Take in, and make fast the fore and main t'gall'nt sails.'

I had charge of the watch, and went along with the men to superintend the operation.

The Old Man stumped up and down the weather side of the poop, eyeing the whole performance with a critical eye.

In came the two sails in great style.

'Up and make them fast, boys,' I said, and away two or three hands raced up the ratlines of both riggings.

Up on the main t'gall'nt yard all went on in a seamanlike manner, and from the deck I could hear the cry of, 'Now then, up with the bunt of her, roll her up, lads.'

Not so up in the fore-topmast rigging though.

Excited voices called to one another, the men lower down evidently urging the uppermost to lay out on the yard, and let them also get on to the foot-ropes.

'Jumping Moses!' yelled one, 'what the hell's this? I'm getting stung all over.'

'Lay out, lay out on the yard, and let us get out of the rigging,' yelled the men lower down.

'Lay out yourself. Hell's Bells! there's another in the back of my shirt!'

'What's the matter with yer? Are you all gone daft up there?'

'Daft be goddamned! We're getting stung to blazes up here.'

'Fore t'gall'nt yard there!'—this from the deck. 'What the hell's the matter with you? Get that sail furled, can't you?'

An angry voice came hurtling down from aloft, 'We *can't*, sir; can't get on to the yard.'

'Why the hell *can't* you then, you damned lot of sojers?'

Back came the angry voice from aloft, 'There's a bloody bees' hive up here, that's why!'

'What's the matter with those men, Mister, can't they handle that sail?' the Old Man called out to me.

'They say there's a bees' hive up there, sir,'' I replied.

'A WHAT?' yelled the Old Man.

'Bees, a swarm of bees up there, sir,' I answered.

'Well! I'll go to hell!' yelled the Old Man, a little fussy fellow with a full whisker, and for'ard he charged along the deck-load, snorting like a war-horse.

'Out of my road!' he roared, making for the fore-rigging, up which he scrambled, muttering and cursing the while. 'Sailors! they're not even the two ends and the bight of a sailor's foot, any one of them,' he muttered. 'Frightened of a few harmless bees, are they? *I'll* show 'em.'

The men saw him coming, and to give him a clear passage, they jumped across into the lee fore-topmast rigging, and hung on out of reach of the bees, which were buzzing excitedly in and out of a large bolt-hole in the hollow mast.

With a look of determination on his face, the Old Man mounted bravely upwards.

'Have I been going to sea all these years to now have to come aloft to show a crowd of stiffs how to furl a sail? Come on with you, get up onto this yard and get this sail fast. Follow me,' he roared out to them.

Nemesis in the form of an infuriated bee, stinging him on the right ear, caused him to stop in his wild career, and beat frantically at the injured member.

Blood-curdling oaths and yells now came from the Old Man, who commenced to claw wildly at his beard and side-whiskers with his free right hand.

At the same time he beat a hasty downward retreat.

'What'll we do about the sail, sir?' called out one of the men in the rigging to him.

'*Eat* the damn thing if you like, and if I have any more of your insolence I'll log you two days' pay, and give you a bad discharge in Sydney,' he replied, and making hurriedly for the deck, he quickly disappeared aft and below."

"How did you get on about making the sail fast?" I asked Mr. Moreham, when he had finished telling the tale of the bees.

"Oh, we didn't get it furled until a few hours afterwards. The wind lulled a little, and when the sail quietened down, a couple of hands sneaked gingerly up, and made it fast. It was the sail jumping and ballooning against the mast that had disturbed the bees in the first place, and caused them to come out and investigate."

"Well, didn't you have the same thing happen every time you set the sail or took it in?" I asked.

"No, luckily for us we got a good slant, with a nice steady breeze from the north, which carried us right across till the tug picked us up outside Sydney Heads."

"And the bees?" I enquired.

"Stopped right inside that mast until we moored in Johnson's Bay in Sydney Harbour, and then one fine day they disappeared, much to our relief," answered the Mate.

All night the *St. Elmo* flew along before the north-easter, making great progress dead on her course.

During our watch below, from 4 a.m. till 8 a.m., we heard the other watch hauling away at the port braces, and shortly

afterwards singing out at the peak and throat halliards of the mainsail.

"Wind's hauling round to the north'ard, Bill," I called to my mate in the bunk below me, but the heavy breathing and loud snores soon convinced me that it was all the same to Bill whether the wind was blowing a hard gale from dead ahead, or a light air up and down the mast, in sailor parlance "Paddy's hurricane."

A good fresh breeze from the north, right abeam, kept us logging off the miles like a steamboat all the next day.

Just before noon we sighted a sail dead astern. Whoever she was, she proved herself a faster ship than ours, for by four bells in the afternoon watch we could distinguish her rig. She was a fair-sized barque, and she rapidly overhauled us. By tea-time she was abeam, and to windward of us. A signal hoist streamed out in pretty colours from her mizzen-truck, making a bright display against the dull evening sky.

"Will report you on arrival. Good-bye," read the Mate out of the signal book.

"Make this," said Old Jock to him, throwing out some flags from the pigeon-holes in the cabin companionway, after consulting the signal book. *Where's your deck-load?* our signal read.

"Och, away back and pick up your deck-load, it's ma'sel that's hung on to mine." Saying which he spat to windward to mark his disgust at the idea of his big rival jettisoning his deck-load in the gale he too evidently had experienced, and away the Old Man stumped below.

"By the Lord, the Old Man takes it hard when he is overhauled like that," said the Mate to me as I hauled the signal down and stowed the flags away.

"What ship is that, sir; do you know her?" I asked.

"I'm not sure, but it looks like the *Polly Woodside*," he answered. "He must have had a pretty rough spin away back there somewhere, to lose a whole deck-load like that," he added.

Fair winds and fine weather for four or five days longer brought us, one fine night, so close up to the Australian coast, that we could see the beams of the light on the South Head of Port Jackson, as it revolved every one and a half minutes.

The wind had hauled off the land, and was now blowing a fresh breeze right in our teeth.

When we called the other watch at midnight we told them the news. "We're the watch to do the trick," we told them. "Turn out

and have a look at the lights of Sydney, ten days from land to land; not bad for an old timber drogher, eh, boys?"

When they came on deck to relieve us, we all stood for'ard for awhile watching the long arm of light revolving round and round with monotonous regularity.

Sighting land whether by day or night is an occasion of great rejoicing aboard ship, and particularly so when the ship happens to be a wind-jammer.

There is always a grand uncertainty about making port in a sailing-ship, and often the old saying, *There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip*, turns out to be only too true.

In our case, just now, all we could talk of was getting inside those two bold headlands that mark the entrance to Sydney Harbour.

"Even if we have to beat right up to the entrance, we should be inside by tomorrow night for sure," said Bill wistfully.

"Don't you be too cocksure about that, me bold hero," answered Happy.

"I mind the time when I joined a deep-waterman in Port Adelaide to take her round to Newcastle by the run," he continued; "ten pounds we were to get for the job, and let me tell you we thought we were going to be on a bit of a win.

By the Lord, though, we were that stiff that if it had been raining pea-soup and everyone else had been rushing around with big spoons, *we*, that were taking the ship *Martha Mine* from Port Adelaide to Newcastle by the run, would have been diving about with forks.

Our troubles started when we got clear of Broadstairs Passage. We got merry hell from the sou'-sou'-west, until we sighted the light on King's Island in Bass Straits, and *then*, by the living God, if it didn't give us particular 'what for' from just about due east!

The Old Man stumped his quarter-deck in great style, and cursed and blasted Australia from Kangaroo Island to the Nobbys. In the end he let her ramp for the south of Tasmania. A howling nor'-wester struck us in about forty-five south, and off we started on the starboard tack heading north-east, going to leeward like a crab and making about east.

Over two months it took us to make Newcastle, and let me tell you we'd ha' *never* got there, only a living gale blew up from the south-east which freshened into a southerly buster.

We got a tug to the south of the Nobbys, and nearly ran her down under bare poles.

When we let go, inside, it took both anchors to hold her head to it, and when she finished dragging she was away up the river above Stockton.

No, you never know when you're going to make port in a wind-jammer, but I don't mind when I'm being paid by the month.

No more goddamn 'runs' for me though," Happy said, ending his yarn—his looks, and tone of voice, belying his nickname as he spoke.

While down below at breakfast the next morning—both watches, except the helmsman, had meals together in these ships —we suddenly heard a loud hail, and shouts of "Ahoy there! The barquentine ahoy!"

"Hullo," answered Old Jock, who was on deck, standing by the weather mizzen shrouds, holding on to steady himself against the continual rolling and pitching. "What do ye want, mon? I'm no looking for a tow from the likes of ye. Yon tug's too big an' expensive for my wee hooker."

"I'm not sent out to look for you, Captain," answered the tug-master. "I'm looking for the four-masted barque *Arracan* from Antofagasta to Sydney Heads for orders. Have you seen anything of her as you made the coast?"

"Ne'er a sign o' her," answered Old Jock.

"Well, I'll take another circle round today, and then if I don't see her, I'll have to go in, as our coal is running short."

Longingly we all gazed at the big, black-painted tug, which rolled and wallowed in the short chop of the sea to windward of us.

How we wished that we had his towing hawser fast round our fore-mast, and were forging along in his wake for the entrance.

"Tarra-lang-clang-clang!" came the sound of the telegraph on the tug's bridge, signalling the engine-room for full steam ahead, and off he went in a wide sweep on his quest for the four-masted barque *Arracan*.

We sagged along with sheets hauled flat in, and yards braced up sharp against the backstay.

Regretful eyes followed the tug until all that was visible of him was a black smudge of smoke on the horizon away out to seaward.

It was a gloomy little party that went below to finish a cold breakfast in the fo'c'sle that morning.

We cursed the unkind Fates who had ordained that the tug

should have been sent out to look for a ship which was nowhere to be seen, while we so needed him.

"Never ye mind, lads, it's ma'sel that's thinking yon tug-boat will still be after taking us in afore the nicht," said Scotty. "He'll go roond and roond, and maybe he'll come back and make an offer to Old Jock to tak' him in."

"It will need to be a very favourable offer too, I'm thinking," remarked Happy, getting up to go and relieve Bill at the wheel, with which remark I mentally agreed.

At noon the Old Man came on deck, and word was passed along to get ready to put the ship round on the other tack.

"Ready about!" roared Old Jock.

"Helm's-a-lee," he quickly shouted, and for'ard Bill and I wrestled with the head sheets.

"Fore-bowline!" yelled the Old Man, and round came the yards to long-drawn-out series of cries from Happy:

"Ay-ay-*aye*-oh-o-o-ie-ie-*ie*. Walk her round! Walk her round," and round the yards came with a run.

"Fore-sheet there, Doctor! Gather the slack in," called the Mate to the old cook, who was just then busy with getting the dinner ready to take aft.

"Damn and blast the fore-sheet! Why the hell can't you put someone else on to the fore-sheet and let me get the dinner dished up?" growled the cook.

"Take in the slack of it, and lively too, or I'll wring your neck!" shouted the Mate to him, and away went the cook, cursing and growling, but doing as the Mate told him.

If there was one man aboard that the cook did not venture to take too many liberties with, it was the big Mate; he knew he was not a man to stand any nonsense.

Round on the other tack we rolled along in a line pretty nearly parallel with our former wake.

We could now make out the dim smudge on the horizon to windward as the Australian coast.

How we longed for a slant to head us up on our course again, now that we were so near.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, the tug could be seen approaching us, coming in from well out to sea. His search for the *Arracan* had evidently been in vain, as he was now making directly for the Heads, and would pass quite close to us. In about half an hour he was surging along close to windward of us again.

"Come on, Captain, stand by to take my hawser, and I'll give you a plug in. I *have* to go in for coal, so I'll do it at a very cheap rate for you."

"Aye, mon, an' what figure would ye be askin'?" queried Old Jock in a nonchalant manner.

"Well, I'll take you right up to Johnstone's Bay, and when you've finished discharging your timber I'll arrange for you to be taken on up to Newcastle for fifteen pounds, and that's a reasonable enough offer."

"Aye, mon, but if ye cu'd do it for thirteen pounds—weel—a—I'd consider it, maybe."

We were all astounded at the miserable old blighter's offer, and all the remarks that reached his ears were not exactly in praise of him.

The Second Mate stood behind the old fellow on the poop, and made as though he were going to punch his head; in fact he got so close with some of his shadow sparring, that several times we could have sworn that he had caught the Old Man a crack.

The Mate walked away in disgust, while from the galley there came a stream of lurid adjectives, relating to Old Jock's forbears, followed by all sorts of dire predictions as to where he was bound to in the next existence.

"Thirteen pounds!" roared the tug-boat's skipper; "I'll see you in a hotter place than your native Scotland before *I'll* take you in for thirteen pounds. This is the *Hero* out of Sydney, not one of your Kaipara River log draggers."

"Allricht, away wi' ye then, and don't keep pestering me; ye're takin' a' the wind out o' ma' sails wi' yon great hulk to windward there."

Away went the tug with a clanging of telegraphs and churning of propellers as her stern kicked up on a rising sea.

Old Jock stumped up and down his poop alone in his glory.

The tug circled in a wide sweep, and finally ran by close alongside us again. "What do you say, Captain?" called the tug-master in a final appeal. "I'll take you in for fourteen pounds. Will you take my line?"

"Aye, mon, supposin' ye were to say thirteen pound ten, I'd ha' half a mind ta agree ta it," answered Old Jock.

"Go to hell! and not wishing you too much harm on account of your helpless crew, may you have to stay outside with gales and

head winds until your royal and t'gall'nt-sail get rotten in their gaskets. May your last drop of Old Scotch run dry, and your burgoo meal go weevilly, and the Lord look sideways on you for being meaner than an Aberdonian Jew. Good-bye!" he roared, and shoving his telegraph violently over to "Full Ahead" he was soon surging in towards Sydney Heads, with spray flying all over him, and showing a white smother of foam under his counter from his wildly revolving screws.

If ever a whole ship's company thought seriously of mutiny the crew of the barquentine *St. Elmo* did at that moment. Willingly we would have run the miserable old blighter up to his own fore-yard arm.

He, however, went below after the last bout with the tug-master, probably to drink to his own success at not letting him get to windward of him when it came to bargaining over towage fees. We did not see him again until next day.

The wind freshened to a howling westerly gale, and we staggered along, tacking to and fro under shortened canvas for three or four days.

Early one morning we made close in under the land up near Broken Bay, sixteen miles north of Sydney Heads.

Here the wind came up fresh from the south, and just as Old Jock was deliberating with the Mate as to whether he would run in and anchor, one of Brown's tugs, bound from Newcastle to Sydney, came close past our stern. The old man beckoned him over.

"What would he take us into Sydney for?"

"Fifteen pounds, Captain, and all your shifts inside, and then up to Newcastle if you're bound there, to load, after discharging your timber, we'll hook you on astern of a deep-waterman, Captain, and that's a cheap towing price."

"Aye, mon," ventured Old Jock plaintively, "how about fourteen pounds?"

"Fifteen pounds, or I'll leave you where you are, and let me tell you there's a southerly buster brewing by the look of it," answered the tug-master.

"By the Lord, ye're a har-r-rd mon," cried Old Jock, but remembering his experiences with the *Hero* he agreed at last, and very soon we had the towing hawser fastened securely round our foremast and were speeding along in her wake.

Old Jock disappeared below to hide his grief, but shortly

afterwards he was up on deck again, and walking jauntily up and down the little poop.

As we were getting mooring lines up on deck, and the gear coiled away, Wully the boy came along, and swore that he saw tears in the Old Man's eyes.

"It must be a hard knock to him to have to pay the same towage or more than what he was offered over a week ago," he said; "no wonder he's crying about it."

"Crying ma fut," said Scotty; "it's the big nips o' whisky he's been havin' to himsel' before the Customs men come aboard. They'll seal it all down once we're inside."

"Serve him damned well right," was the popular verdict round the decks, as we discussed the towage on our way in through the Heads.

Going through the entrance we got a derisive cheer from the *Hero's* crew; she was on her way out, and passed us quite close, her skipper dancing a Highland Fling outside his wheelhouse, to Old Jock's great annoyance.

We finally let go the anchor in Johnstone's Bay among a whole fleet of intercolonial barques and barquentines, and several big Yankee four- and five-masted lumber schooners from Puget Sounds.

Sydney was a great port for sailing-ships too, in those days. What a transformation now, with its great harbour bridge and giant liners, and not a square rigger to be seen anywhere. Johnstone's Bay, Darling Harbour, Miller's Point and Wooloomooloo, all were crowded with sailing-ships in the days of which I write.

No more the cry is heard outside the Government Shipping Offices on Circular Quay for "able seamen for the four-masted barque *Port Jackson*," or a whole crew for some smart little intercolonial barque.

And now I often sit and wonder whether it *is* all for the best. To my mind "sea sense," as we understood the term in those days, is now a thing of the past.

CHAPTER IV

LOOKING FOR A DEEP-WATER SHIP

"THERE'S an old saying that 'A mon who'd go ta sea for pleasure, would go to hell for pastime,' but it's masel that's thinkin' that a mon who'd leave a comfortable good living, intercolonial vessel to ship away deep-water in some hungry lime-juicer is naething more nor less than a fit candidate for a mad-hoose."

So said Old Jock, when Bill and I approached him on the subject of paying us off, the day after our arrival in Sydney.

Still further pressing our case, Old Jock at last relented, and agreed to let us go.

"Mind ye, boys, the articles will not be up for anither two months yet, but sorry an' all as I am to lose you, I'll no stand in your way, seein' as how yer so intent on this chuckle-headed scheme."

"Thanks very much, sir," we both replied, as we turned to go on deck from the little saloon.

"Meet me at the Shipping Office tomorrow morning at ten o'clock," called out the Old Man after us.

"Aye, aye, sir," we called back, and on regaining the deck we turned to with the rest rigging the cargo gear.

Later in the day a fussy little tug-boat came alongside, and after heaving our anchor up, we were towed in and berthed alongside one of the mills to discharge.

That evening, Mr. Moreham shouted both Bill and I to the theatre, and we spent a most enjoyable evening watching H.M.S. *Pinafore* being played. How we appreciated the life and gaiety all around us after our battling around in the *St. Elmo*, standing watch and watch for hours, and often wet through, and cold and miserable for hours on end.

Yet, all the same, a regular shore life did not appeal to me in the least, in fact I felt more inclined to pity a half a dozen or so city youths who were seated near us, and I thought what a humdrum existence theirs must be. Fancy having to walk down the same street every morning of their lives, into the same office or

workshop, hail, rain or snow, the regular routine would still go on. Not for me, I thought; no, *not* for me.

Let me feel the grip of the wheel again, and keep the old ship on her course, ramping full for some far strange port beyond the horizon.

These little breaks ashore were quite enough for me, I summed up, as I sat with my two friends, and watched the brightly lit stage, a-glitter with beautiful costumes, and merry with the sound of singing and laughter.

Going back to the ship in the tramcar, the Mate gave us all sorts of advice about picking a good ship when we got to Newcastle.

"Don't take the first thing that offers, boys; there's any God's amount of ships to choose from up there now. And above all things, be careful who you go and have a drink with; there's still plenty of boarding-house runners knocking around in Newcastle. Choose your own ship, and don't let those gentry put you aboard anything at all."

Next morning, with sea-chests and canvas bags packed, Bill and I took our departure from our old ship.

Our shipmates called out all sorts of good wishes after us, and big Scotty and Happy helped us ashore with our gear, which we bundled into an expressman's van, and tumbling in on top of it, off we went for the heart of Sydney.

We stayed in a little boarding-house near Wynyard Square, with an old lady with whom I had stayed on previous occasions. She gave us a great welcome.

Her husband, who was also a sailor-man, had "gone by the run," she said, to take an old steamer up to Vladivostok from Sydney, and she helped to keep the home by letting a couple of rooms.

She did not get a great deal of board money out of us this time, however, as we only spent a couple of days in Sydney.

We went up to Newcastle in the old paddle steamer *Newcastle*, sailing from Sydney late one evening, and arriving in Newcastle early the following morning.

We spent a sleepless night, as some rowdy half-drunken sailors kept up a continual hubbub all night long. They had evidently just lately paid off a deep-water sailing-ship in Sydney, and were going to Newcastle on the same errand as ourselves, looking for another ship.

Had the voyage lasted a little longer on this particular occasion,

7. *Hazel Craig*, taken from the *Ilma*
8. *Ilma*

9. *Rona*

their frolics and fun would soon have ended up in a free fight; in fact a couple of them did have a bout of fisticuffs just as we were rounding The Nobbys.

Not being able to sleep below, I turned out, and went on deck for a look round as soon as dawn began to break. It was nice and fresh on deck, a stiff west-nor'-west breeze was knocking up a bit of a chop farther off shore, but we plugged steadily into it, leaving a wake astern of us like a Cunarder.

Ahead of us, and to seaward, one of Brown's tugs with a black-and-white funnel, out of which poured great volumes of black smoke, struggled manfully onwards with a great rusty-sided, full-rigged ship, flying light in ballast trim, in tow.

The odds seemed all against her, what with the strong wind well ahead, and this great galleon to drag along astern of her, but the tug was still further handicapped by the extra weight of one of Craig's intercolonial barques hanging on astern of the deep-waterman.

The choppy sea was dotted here and there with small boats making for the incoming ships. Tailors' runners, butchers' runners, ship chandlers' runners, all were represented among this mosquito fleet, and the skill in handling their small craft out here in the open sea would have done credit to any class of small boatmen the world over.

A large four-masted barque, with painted ports along her rusty sides, was heading in for the land on the starboard tack. Two tugs were racing out towards her, followed by a miniature fleet of runners' boats.

What a bargaining for towage from the tugs and the Old Man, and what a pestering from the various Newcastle firms' representatives would soon be taking place on her poop.

"Ready about!" I fancied I could almost *hear* the order, as I saw the crew run to their stations.

"Helm's-a-lee" must have been the next order, for up she went into the eye of the wind, and from the steamer's deck I could hear the thunder of her canvas, and the threshing of her gear.

Round she went on the other tack, her great yards coming round by the run, and without losing her way, the bone in her teeth round her forefoot grew in size as she headed for the open sea once more.

What a picture for a marine artist! I thought. The great ship so completely under control under canvas, the tugs quickly

swerving round to follow her, the long-drawn-out string of small boats in her wake, and some even hanging on to her sides with grappling irons. She showed grace and vitality in every line, and in every spar, sail, and piece of gear.

Her Old Man was evidently going to cross swords for awhile with the rival tug-masters, as when we suddenly altered our course for the entrance to Newcastle Harbour, the big four-master was still flying along "full and bye" with the tugs in close attendance.

We had our gear deposited by the carrier at the door of a small hotel well along towards the western end of Hunter Street. Mine host welcomed us with open arms. On previous voyages to Newcastle in the intercolonial vessels we had stayed overnight with him, and many of the masters and mates of ships visiting the port were well known to him.

"Now, just make yourselves at home, boys, and don't be in too great hurry to pick a ship. Leave it to me a little, and I'll guarantee that you'll sail from Newcastle in as good a ship as it's possible to get, as far as lime-juicers go."

Newcastle was a busy port at the time of which I write, and sailing ships easily predominated.

Forests of masts lined the loading berths along the Dyke, and over at Stockton ships were also lying two or three abreast.

Flags of nearly every nation owning ships were to be seen flying among this cosmopolitan fleet, and strange though it may seem today, when Britain does not possess a single sea-going square-rigged ship, the majority at that time lying in Newcastle flew the Red Ensign of Old England.

As my mind goes back to that time when my mate and I strolled around day after day admiring their shapely hulls and lofty rigs, I cannot help thinking of the wonderful lines that the present Poet Laureate, Mr. John Masefield, wrote:

They mark our passage as a race of men.
Earth will not see such ships as those agen.

No, that is certain, Earth will not see their like again, unless coal and oil fuel deposits run out.

What ships there were here, to be sure: four-masted barques, full-rigged ships, three-masted barques, some with painted ports along their sides, others painted black all over, or grey or green, just as their owners fancied.

Even their names appealed to me, *Arctic Stream*, *Toxteth*, *Leyland Brothers*, *British Yeoman*, and many more fine ships.

We went aboard the full-rigged ship *Kensington*, a main-skysail yarder; she was wanting nearly all hands, but we did not sign in her; she had not finished discharging her ballast, and would be a good while yet before she went to the loading berth.

In the evenings Hunter Street, Newcastle's main thoroughfare, was a very busy street. Bill and I strolled along one evening for a walk; it was Saturday night, and the crowds jostled and pushed us here and there. In the middle of the road a Salvation Army band was playing, and a miscellaneous crowd surged round about them.

A fair-headed Scandinavian bumped into us as we stopped to listen to the band; he had a tawdry-looking lady of doubtful appearance on his arm.

"Sorry," he said, when we protested at his clumsiness.

"Let them be, Yank; what the hell do you care?" said the lady.

"Yank, *Squarehead*," said Bill disdainfully, as they lurched onwards, bumping into people right and left.

"All Squareheads are Yanks when they've made one voyage in a Yankee ship," I reminded him.

Further along, outside a public-house aptly named the Black Diamond, a free fight was going on between some deep-water sailors and a few miners. Things were getting rather mixed, when up came a couple of hefty policemen and soon dispersed the pugilistic ones.

Brassbounders by the score paraded up and down the side-walk in full regalia. They represented the half-deck personnel of most of the British ships in port. Snatches of conversation as they passed chattering along gave the clue as to which ports in the Old Country they hailed from. English boys, Scotch boys, Irish and Welsh boys, and boys from the Isle of Man, all were here in Hunter Street, Newcastle, this Saturday night.

Some were only little bits of fellows, no more than fifteen or sixteen years of age, but they had already placed half the world between themselves and their homeland, and what is more, they looked as if they were enjoying the experience.

Bill and I walked along and had a look out over the harbour. Three or four large deep-watermen lay straining at their moorings on the lower farewell buoys. They looked ghost-like and quiet out there in the gloom of the night, only faintly lit up by the

glare of the city lights. Their tall masts and spars seemed to reach up into the zenith, and then fade from sight, though in some cases, when an extra flash of light from shore momentarily lit up their yards, great white folds of snugly-furled canvas could be made out.

A police launch on duty scuttled in and out among the silent ships, but presently the stillness was broken by the sound of "four bells" being struck by their respective watchmen.

That deep-toned fellow away down there by the harbour mouth was a large four-masted German barque's bell. She had been waiting for hands for several days now. Bound to the West Coast of South America too, she was, but we heard she had a pretty bad name, and so would probably have to wait a good while for a full complement of men.

From all over the harbour ships' bells tinkled out the hour, four bells, ten o'clock.

"Come along, Bill," I said; "it's time we went home and turned in, we'll have enough of eight hours out, very shortly."

Next morning after breakfast we accosted our host as he was going into the bar. "Have you run into any likely captains looking for men, George?" we asked him.

"Yes, by jove, I have," he said; "I want you boys to be here at ten o'clock to meet Captain William Williams. He is looking for a few men, and his ship has a very good name; he himself is a fine fellow too. Don't forget, be here at ten o'clock," he said.

"Right oh," we answered, turning to go outside.

"Give it a name," said George, "and I'll do the rest; I haven't seen much of you boys since you arrived, so we'll have a drink at the house's expense."

Over the drinks we had a yarn with George, who gave us some of the gossip of the port.

"There's been hell to pay aboard one of those Yankee ships over at Stockton," George told us. "She came over in ballast from the West Coast, and the Mate was a bit of a bucko, so the crowd had it in for him when they arrived here. They nearly killed him last night down by the Dyke Ferry; in fact, if it hadn't been for some of the crew of one of your New Zealand barques, they would have made a job of him. All hands have cleared out of her, and now she's got orders to load coal for 'Frisco. Where she's going to get a crew from, I don't know," said George, shaking his head. He took a drink.

"A man's a fool to make a bad name for himself aboard any ship these days," continued George; "men won't stand for that sort of thing these times, and sooner or later they get it back on any Mate or even Skipper who tries the hazing business on."

When we returned from our walk we were introduced to Captain Williams, by our friend the hotel keeper. He seemed all that George had cracked him up to be, and we took a fancy to him at once.

After looking over our papers he told us that he would be very glad to have us as members of his crew.

"Even though half a dozen of my men have cleared out here, my ship has a good name, and I have men aboard who have been with me for years," said the captain. "The fact of men running away from a ship does not always brand her as bad; some men are only passage workers at the best of times, and would run away from a millionaire's yacht, where they would be getting the best of everything."

We asked the captain when he would want us to turn to, and he replied that in a couple of days the ship would be at the loading berth at the Dyke, and that he would sign us on then.

After Captain Williams had gone we talked things over with our friend George, the hotel keeper.

"When you go to sign on," said he, "see that there is a clause in the agreement that, should the ship not go on home from the West Coast, but come back to Australia, you can both claim your discharges on arrival back in this country. You see, you possibly may not like the ship by then, and would have to clear out and leave your wages behind you. Having that clause inserted would make it right for you whichever way the cat jumped."

We saw the force of his argument, and remembered it when we eventually signed on.

Next day we went over to have a look at our prospective ship. She was lying at Stockton, discharging ballast, and we had a good look at her. She was a large black-painted, full-rigged ship, hailing from Liverpool. (For the purpose of this narrative I will give her name as *Cambrian Lass*, though that was not her real name.)

She was a typical Welshman, as could be seen by her figure-head, a Welsh woman in national costume, even to the quaint tall hat. Stump t'gall'nt rigged she was, but she had a depth in her sails that made her as lofty as most ships with single t'gall'nts and royals.

We did not go aboard; plenty of time for that when we joined her, we thought, so we took the ferry back to Newcastle.

Two or three vessels were preparing to tow to sea, and looked their best, loaded to their marks and everything in its place aloft and on deck.

We passed close by a huge, three-masted, full-rigged American ship. She was not moored to one of the buoys, but had let go her own anchor when she had towed into stream.

A mixed crew of white and black men were on her fo'c'sle head, heaving round the capstan, singing at the top of their voices,

"Roll the cotton down."

There were some great singers among that mixed crew, and their rendering of this fine American chanty was perfect. The chanty-man's voice was a clear tenor, and we could hear every word. As the ferry passed close by her we could see that the singer was one of the negroes.

"Oh-o get my clothes in order,"

he sang,

"To roll the cotton down!"

roared the chorus of all hands.

"Oh-o get my clothes in order
To roll the cotton down!
From New Orleans to Mobile Bay,"

sang the soloist,

"We'll ROLL, boys, ROLL.
From New Orleans to Mobile Bay,
We'll ROLL the cotton down!"

The singer went on to tell how he'd often heard the "Old Man say they'd 'roll, boys, roll'," and how "a dollar a day was a white man's pay, to roll the cotton down," and then we were past her, and lost the sound of their fine singing.

Not all of the sea chanties told of rolling the cotton down, or of poor *Reuben Ranzo's* fortunes in a Yankee whaler. Others were quite different, and often waxed sentimental over the lady loves of poor deep-water Jack. As, for instance, a chanty a smart little

British barque farther up the harbour was raising her anchor to. It was

"A-roving, a-roving, no more I'll go a-roving!
No more I'll go a-roving with you, fair maid."

The words this particular chanty was sung to were not altogether complimentary to the lady in question, in fact they would give one the impression that she had been a rather fast piece of goods, but the rousing tune of a real old-time sea chanty was there.

It fairly stirred the blood, and if a man had not been a sailor already, this old sea song would have made him long to be up and away for the calling of the sea.

The old sailing-ship sailors had their own ideas as to how a chanty should be sung, and even if the wording of many of them varied with the singer, it did not matter, as long as it was one of the original tunes, with the right chorus, and sung in a seamanlike manner.

I cannot help smiling as I look back to a time when one of the popular songs of the day was one with a rollicking chorus, entitled "Dolly Gray".

We were a crowd of young fellows in a small barque, raising our mud-hook in Sydney Harbour, and the song we were roaring out was "Dolly Gray".

I shall never forget the look of absolute disgust on the faces of several of our older shipmates, who would not deign to join in a chorus so utterly devoid of all sea traditions.

What days they were, to be sure, and what a port of sailing ships was "Newcastle, N.S.W.," at that time. It was a sight worth seeing, and one that will never be forgotten by the older generation of seamen, to stand and look at those ships, and admire the fine curve of their clipper bows, and their splendid array of towering masts and yards.

The very appropriate and fitting lines, dedicated to the passing of the old China clippers in Basil Lubbock's *China Clippers*, could be just as aptly applied to these, the last of the deep-water sailing-ships:

From the haven of the present she has cleared and shipped away,
Loaded deep and running free for the port of yesterday.
But the cargo that she carried, ah! it was not China tea,
She took with her all the glamour and romance of life at sea.

True, these ships were not in it for beauty of line and rig, nor could they hold a candle to the old China tea clippers for speed, and instead of the sweetly smelling chests of tea, their cargoes were black diamonds, i.e. coal for the West Coast of South America, 'Frisco, and elsewhere.

But the glamour and romance was there nevertheless, in the cut of them laying at the farewell buoys, in their roaring, rushing flight running the easting down, in their fine career through the steady Trades, or in their sauntering languidly through the Doldrums.

Glamour, romance and fascination kept company with them through all their voyages, and possibly it was the beckoning hands of this trio that coaxed men of the sea to sail voyage after voyage deep-water.

The appointed day came when we were to sign on, and Bill and I made our way round to the Newcastle Government Shipping Office. The old shipping master glowered at us over his glasses when we told him our business, and gruffly commanded a clerk to attend to us.

This worthy produced the articles and started off reading out the Copy of Agreement to us.

> *"This is the ship* Cambrian Lass, *bound from Newcastle, N.S.W., to the West Coast of South America, and back to Sydney for orders.*
>
> *The afore-mentioned seamen to be paid off on the ship's return to Australia, or on her arrival at any port in the United Kingdom, or any port on the Continent between the Elbe and Brest."*

Followed by certain clauses to the effect that the ship was not to go north or south of certain parallels of latitude, that the seamen agreed to serve on board the said ship in a sober and honest manner, being at all times diligent in their respective duties and obedient to the commands of their superior officers, the whole finishing up with a list of the Board of Trade allowances in the way of food to each man, not forgetting the lime-juice allowances after ten days out.

"Sign here," said the clerk in the Shipping Office when he had droned through the above rigmarole, repeating it nearly word for word by memory; and taking the pen, we both in turn wrote our signatures on the Articles, and at once became members of

the crew of the good ship *Cambrian Lass*, to serve in her for good or ill till her present voyage was completed.

Later on that same morning over a glass of beer each, up at Nellie's of the Clarendon, we discussed our coming voyage, and the probabilities of our returning to Australia from the West Coast or whether the ship would get orders for home on discharge of the coal cargo out there.

"What ship do you boys belong to?" asked Nellie from behind the bar, as she wiped glass after glass on a sloppy-looking towel.

"We've just signed in the *Cambrian Lass*, full-rigged ship," said Bill.

"The *Cambrian Lass*," said Nellie. "I know her well, Captain William Williams. She has a pretty good name too, according to some of the half-deck crowd who come up here to see me sometimes."

"Yes, we heard she was not bad for a lime-juicer, that's why we picked her," said Bill. "We are used to the intercolonial ships and good living."

"Whatever has made you sign deep-water then?" asked Nellie; "I always thought intercolonial sailors were mostly steady men who stuck to that class of ship."

"So they mostly are," said Bill, "only you can't get round and see much of the world in that trade."

"No, that's right," said our lady of the bar, turning round to check some exuberant spirits among a crowd of brassbounders at the other end of the room, who would persist in roaring out at the top of their voices that "No more they'd fly to the royal masthead with a tar-pot in their hands."

"Fly to the royal masthead," said Nellie sarcastically. "Don't talk to me of sending down your royal yards or bending sail in a gale of wind; some of you couldn't knot two rope yarns, let alone make a buntline hitch, or a decent clinch in the foot of a sail."

Nellie was known all over the Seven Seas as an authority on sailorising, and the boys had evidently heard of her fame in this respect. They soon quietened down at her voice.

We stayed and had a couple of drinks, and then went back to our room, and packed our sea-chests and bags in readiness to go on board the following morning.

A cold southerly wind was blowing, with driving rain squalls every now and again, as we landed on board the next morning with our gear.

After dumping our belongings into the fo'c'sle outside of two likely-looking fore-and-aft bunks, we went aft and reported to the Mate.

"Oh, so you're the two young fellows the captain was telling me about yesterday, are you?" said he. "You've left one of those little colonial barques there, haven't you? Well, you'll be in my watch." He looked at us keenly. "Which fo'c'sle have you put your gear in?"

"The port one," we told him.

"All right, leave it there and go and get into working togs now and turn to; I'm short-handed and will be for a couple of days by the look of things," said he.

That first day was a day of toil and no mistake; the ship had just completed loading coal, and coal dust was everywhere.

The lower yards were braced and topped up at all angles to keep clear of the loading cranes.

It was one continual go from the time we started till at 6 p.m., when we had the ship shackled on to one of the farewell buoys, when the Mate came along the deck from aft and called out, "That'll do, men."

I was aching in every joint. We had braced up the yards and hauled on lifts and sheets, coiled gear and mooring lines away, and a hundred and one jobs that only a sailorman knows of. Gloomy and dark as the fo'c'sle looked that evening, when we knocked off, it seemed to me the most desirable spot on earth just then.

One of the boys who had been in the ship on the previous voyage came in with a big steaming can of tea, and being in port, there was plenty of fresh bread and some cold meat left over from dinner.

We made a good meal and then started to make our bunks a bit ship-shape, and then I for one got up into mine and stretched myself out with a sigh of relief.

There were two fo'c'sles in the one deck-house, both running fore and aft with a bulkhead between them. An alleyway ran athwartships just abaft the fo'c'sles, which both had double doors (like an ordinary door in a house, cut in half, the same as a stable door) opening out into the alley-way. There were ten bunks in each fo'c'sle, as the ship carried seven able seamen, one O.S., and one boy in every watch.

All hands were not on board yet. I could not tell how many

there were over on the other side in the starboard fo'c'sle, but in our fo'c'sle there were only four or five as near as I could make out.

In the next bunk for'ard of mine was an elderly sailorman the boy called Jock; he seemed to be a bit of an old growl, as nothing the boy could do was right in his eyes.

A young Swede was in the bunk below me; we had been working together a good bit during the day, and like most "Dutchmen," as we dubbed all Scandinavians, Germans, and most North Europeans, he was a fairly good sailorman.

A "Geordie," or Tynesider, had taken unto himself an athwartship bunk across the fore-end of the fo'c'sle.

He seemed to be a moody individual who answered every one who spoke to him with a grunt; in fact he appeared to be "up agin" all and sundry, and in consequence was left to himself.

The cook was in the galley, which was in the same deck-house as the fo'c'sle, abaft the thwartship alley-way. He, the cook, was clearing up for the night, and making a great clattering of pots and pans.

My last recollection before going off to sleep was of looking out of a port near my head, across a dark stretch of water, and seeing the twinkling lights all along the Dyke, where ships were still loading under the cranes, with great electric clusters of lights over their holds, lighting up their tall masts and yards, and transforming all their maze of standing and running rigging into delicate spider-web patterns.

In the near foreground two or three great outward-bounders like ourself lay straining at their buoys, and looking for all the world like ghost ships.

CHAPTER V

TO VALPARAISO

CLANG—*clang*—CLANG!

"Now then, below there you sleepers, rise and shine another time!"

The clanging of the bell at half-past five the next morning was far less likely to awaken a man than the hoarse voice of the old watchman, whose duty it was to rouse all hands at that unearthly hour.

There was no mistaking his unwelcome summons; it kind of hit a man below the belt, got him utterly unawares as it were.

Confused with heavy sleep, dreams and reality jostled and tumbled over one another, until at last full realisation of the present became dominant, and there was nothing for it but to "rise and shine."

A sleepy-looking boy came in from the galley with a big can of steaming black tea, and placed it on the long narrow table up against the 'midship bulkhead, a barge of biscuits was produced from a locker, and each man helped himself to a mug of tea and to one of the biscuits.

It was not a very appetising pick-me-up, the tea was black and just barely sweetened with brown sugar, no milk—milk was not on the scale of provisions at that time—and the biscuits were as hard as brickbats; they were aptly termed "Liverpool pantiles."

However, the morning was raw and cold, and the tea was wet and warm, so we made the best of it, and at four bells, when the Mate came along and turned all hands to for the day, Bill and I did not feel as bad as we thought we would.

It was sailing day, and the tug was ordered for three o'clock in the afternoon, when tide served.

The last of the crew arrived on board at midday, the police launch bringing them off, as they were men who had deserted the ship, and had been unlucky enough to hang about Newcastle until the police had roped them in with a lot of others, and placed them on board their respective ships an hour or so before sailing time.

All the morning boarding masters had been busy bringing men off, most of them being well "under the influence," and nearly all being supplied with a parting gift of "chain lightning" whisky.

About an hour after the runaway men had been placed aboard, one of them, a wild-looking Irishman, who had evidently been partaking not wisely but too well of some of the "chain-lightning" whisky in the fo'c'sle, rushed at the Mate, who was standing by the mizzen fife-rail, directing some work aloft, and just missed knocking him out with a heavy marline-spike.

The Mate, as quick as lightning, whipped out a revolver and fired at the man's feet, the bullet ploughing into the deck between his legs.

"By the Jasus, that's enough for me!" roared the Irishman. "She's a Hell ship!" and with that he jumped on to the t'gall'nt rail by the mizzen shrouds, and took a header clean over the side.

As luck happened, a police boat passing by hauled him aboard, and coming alongside quickly bundled him on board once more.

"You play those games again, look you, and I will see to it that you are kept in irons for the voyage, my man," said Captain Williams, a heavily-built, pleasant-faced man of about fifty.

"'Twas the whisky done it, sorr, and once to sea you'll find me as good as any man aboard the ship," said Ryan.

"All right, that will do then, get for'ard and get some dry things on and turn to," said the captain, turning on his heel, and walking aft to pick up his glasses, and stare at the tug with the black-and-white funnel, lying close to the town end of the Dyke, with black smoke pouring from her funnel.

Seeing the tug begin to back out, the Captain called the Mate's attention to her, and after both watching for a few minutes the Mate came to the break of the poop and roared out, "Stand by to take the tug-boat's line!"

Coming right alongside the ship, the end of the big towing hawser was passed on board us, and taken right round the fore-mast, made fast with a round turn, and hitched and stopped back with a lashing, the tug hanging on alongside until all was ready to unshackle from the buoy.

Two other deep-watermen were also getting ready to tow out with the same tide as us, one a full-rigged ship with a main-skyrail yard crossed, and the other a big four-masted barque with double t'gall'nt yards and royals.

The big barque had not been lucky enough to get a buoy, and

her crew were on the fo'c'sle head heaving her cable short, tramping round the capstan to the tune of that good old chanty, "Santa Ana, Blow your horn, Far across the plains of Mexico."

The long-drawn-out chorus, "Heave away, Santa Ana," came clear across the water to us, and the sound of it seemed to send the blood coursing through one's veins with renewed vigour, and made it feel good to be alive, and away on such a man's job as this of taking a big deep-waterman to sea.

On the fo'c'sle head the Mate's watch were busily engaged in reeving off a heavy steel wire slip-rope through the ring of the buoy and making it fast, which done, they hove the slack chain right in, when the boatman had knocked the shackle out.

"Go ahead with the tug," roared out our pilot from aft, "and send a hand to the wheel, Mister," to the Mate, who, looking round among the men, turned to me and said, "Go aft and take the wheel, Avery."

Slipping into the fo'c'sle, and putting on a warm jacket, I doubled along to the wheel.

The Captain and pilot were standing at the break of the poop, watching the tug taking up the slack of the line ahead.

"She's got our weight now, sir," said the pilot to Captain Williams.

"Yes, we are off now," answered the Captain.

"Let go your slip-line, Mister," called the pilot.

"Starboard a little," said the pilot, turning round to me.

"Starboard it is, sir," I answered, shifting the big wheel over a few spokes.

"Stead-ee."

"Stead-ee, sir."

Coming aft, and standing close by the wheel, the old pilot turned to me and said, "Just follow the tug now."

"Aye, aye, sir," I replied, and now we *were* off.

Ship after ship dropped astern as we slipped by them at their buoys, some dipping their flags to us, others taking no more notice of us than they would of the Stockton Ferry.

As we passed the *Silberhorn* four-masted barque, up went a three-flag signal. "Wishing you a pleasant voyage," one of the apprentices read out of the code-book.

"All right, run X.O.R. up," said the Captain.

Up went the bright-coloured flags to our monkey-gaff, spelling "Thank you" in the International Code.

Two or three other ships followed the *Silberhorn's* lead, and wished us "Bon voyage," and then the Bar was reached, and our great spike bowsprit began to lift and fall to the Pacific roll.

"Loose all your topsails, Mr. Craddock," called the Captain to the Mate, as soon as we were over the Bar.

"Lay aloft and shake all those topsails out," roared the Mate, and soon the yards were alive with men and boys letting sail after sail fall as the gaskets were let go.

"Sheet home your lower topsails," came from the poop, to be caught up and repeated all along the main deck, "Sheet home the lower topsails."

"Well, I'll say good-bye and get aboard the boat for the shore, sir," said the pilot, on which he signalled his boat to come alongside the ladder for him and he was off, bound in across the Bar to bring another ship out on the same tide.

"Let go the tug-boat's line," was the next order passed along the decks to the Mate on the fo'c'sle head, and on his hailing the tug, and waving both his arms, the tug eased up on the line, which was let go, and passed clear over the bows.

We were now slipping quickly through the water on our own; the tug circling round, blew three blasts on his whistle for "Good-bye," and was soon out of sight as he went back in over the Bar, we dipping our Ensign as he went.

"Fore, main, and mizzen upper topsail halliards; now then, my lads, mast-head them and give her sail," sung out the Mate, and up started the heavy topsail yards.

Jumping in among his men on the main upper topsail halliards, the little Second Mate roared out, "Sing a song! Sing a song! Are we all too dead to sing?"

On which Ryan, our bold Irishman, who had now fully recovered from his swim, started off with:

"A Yankee ship sailed down a river.
Blow, boys, blow!
A Yankee ship and a Yankee clipper,"

and the chorus,

"Blow, boys! Bully boys! Blow!"

Not to be outdone by the main, the fore started up with "Ranzo boys, Ranzo," and even the boys on the mizzen could be heard declaring that "Boney was a warrior, ye way-hey-ho."

"Belay the main, come up behind," and in turn the fore and mizzen halliards were belayed.

Soon the ship was a cloud of canvas, and reeling along before a strong west-nor'-west breeze.

Far away up aloft, a voice could be heard hailing the deck, from the main upper t'gall'nt yard, "Slack up on the starboard upper t'gall'nt buntline."

"All slack," was shouted back a few minutes after.

Gradually everything became more ship-shape.

Yards checked in well for a fair wind on the port quarter, gear coiled down neatly on deck, buntlines and spilling lines aloft, all overhauled and stopped off with twine. The patent log was set, its clock ringing off the miles on the taffrail behind me.

I was having a long trick at the wheel for a start, but I was also dodging a lot of hard work round the decks, and I was surprised at the easy manner in which the big ship steered.

Here she was, an eighteen-hundred-ton full-rigged ship running with an eight-knot breeze on the quarter, and steering like a yacht. I called to mind a brand-new, three-masted, topsail schooner I had been in once on the New Zealand coast, a vessel which gained a name for herself later on for raising blisters on her helmsman's hands.

Standing there at the wheel on this the commencement of my first deep-water voyage, all sorts of thoughts kept coming and going; thoughts of other voyages across this same Tasman Sea, and of trips to the Islands, and round the New Zealand and Australian coasts.

The true sailor is a haphazard kind of a rover, and never knows where he is bound to next, always the last ship was the best one, and the times he had in the "old so-and-so" bring a lump to his throat when he talks of them.

A verse from the "Ship of Fools" came to me as I went over it all; here it is:

We are those fools who could not rest
In the dull Earth we left behind,
But burned with passion for the West
And drank strange frenzy from its wind.

The World, where wise men live at ease,
Fades from our unregretful eyes,
And blind across uncharted seas
We stagger on our enterprise.

10. *James Craig* (ex-*Clan McLeod*)
11. *Mary Isabel*. Author served in her from 1907–11

12. *Jessie Craig*
13. *Constance Craig* (ex-*Margarita*)

As the distance from the land increased, and with the evening shadows coming on, the Australian coast-line was just a dim smudge on the horizon astern when I got relieved at the wheel.

"East half south" was the course which had been given me when the tug let go, so "east half south" I repeated to the man who relieved me (a German sailor as I found out later from the starboard watch), who repeated the course as he took hold of the wheel.

As I passed the Mate on the main deck going for'ard, I also called out the course to him, he also repeating it, and calling out "All right."

It was the second dog-watch when I got for'ard, and all hands in both watches began to get their gear into sea-going order.

Those who had sea-chests lashed them securely to bulkheads, near to their own bunks, oilskins and sea-boots were taken out of bags and put in handy places, the oilskins being all hung on pegs in the thwartship alleyway, abaft the fo'c'sles, where they swished back and forth with every roll of the ship.

I took notice that we had a pretty mixed crew, though British predominated. In our watch were two foreigners, one a German who had been shanghaied and who, strange to say, was no sailor, and the other a Swede and a good sailorman. In the starboard watch there was another German and two Norwegians, the rest being British. The carpenter was a big Swede, and the sailmaker a Norwegian, both good men too. We carried no bos'n or Third Mate, both having cleared out in Newcastle, and the Old Man had not seen fit to replace them, having two very able Mates who ran their own watches.

Mr. Craddock, our First Mate, was a fine fellow, a sailor to his finger-tips, only a young man of about twenty-five years, but he made up for his age in his size, being about six feet tall, and broad with it; he hailed from North Wales, as did the Captain.

The Second Mate, Mr. Downs, hailed from Belfast in Ireland, and he was also a young man round about twenty-three or twenty-four years of age, and like the Mate, a thorough seaman, who had put in all his time in square-rigged ships. What Mr. Downs lacked in size he made up for in energy, being about the most active man aboard the ship. He was one of those men who, in ordinary weather, could start off from the quarter of one of the topsail yards, and *walk* out to the yard-arm with as much confidence as an ordinary person would walk along a side-walk ashore.

The cook was a German with a pronounced German accent, and like most of his countrymen who were not too good with the English language, he had the habit of putting most of his sentences back to front; this being especially the case when he became excited; as, for instance, when one day a big rat was discovered in his coal locker, he called to some of the boys to help him to kill it.

The rat put up a good go for it, and at last succeeded in escaping through the galley door, the Doctor, as all sailing-ships' cooks are dubbed, after him with a poker, calling out in his queer English, "Dere he goes, dere he goes! Hit him mid de pan-fry, strike him mid de vater-hot, dere he goes amid de scupper-out."

He may have been a good citizen of the Fatherland, but as a cook, in our estimation, he could not boil salt water without burning it.

The steward was a Welshman, whose only name that I ever heard him called by was Taffy. In his own mind he was second to none to Jack Johnson, the boxer, and being diminutive, and bright red-headed, he was a bit of a joke with all hands. He stood high in his own estimation, however, and one day explained to me in all confidence that a "*Welshman* was as good as *no* man, and a tarn sight *better* too." His English also was a bit mixed at times.

By eight bells the wind had freshened considerably, and had also hauled a bit more to the nor'-west; it was the Mate's eight hours out, that is, his watch went on duty from eight to twelve, and then from 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. next morning.

We had not been on deck more than half an hour when the order was shouted along the deck, "Take in the fore, main and mizzen upper t'gall'nt-sails."

Halliards were slacked away, downhauls manned, and in came the three sails.

"Up aloft and make them fast," was the next order, and we were soon away up on the swinging yards, battling with the struggling canvas.

Bill and I were both together out on the weather main upper t'gall'nt yard; the sail would bulge out like a huge balloon in places one minute, and then slacken up when the ship rolled to leeward the next.

"Catch her in when she rolls, Bill," I said, and both working together, and watching our chance, we at last got the gasket round, and made a good stow of the sail.

We could hear a voice roaring from the deck, "What's the

matter up on the fore t'gall'nt yard there; why the hell don't you get that sail fast?"

Then we could hear Newland, one of the A.B.'s in our watch, cussing the German sailor who had been shanghaied aboard on the last day in port.

"Get down on deck, you sauerkraut-eating son-of-a-gun, you're no good up here."

And then, in a loud hail to the Mate on deck, "Send another hand up here, sir; there's a hobo up here who can't lay out on the yard."

As we were going down from the main, we saw the fore upper t'gall'nt-sail being furled, and guessed that Newland must have got more competent help than the young German.

The weather was now overcast and squally, great cloud banks were looming up out of the nor'-west. We were now running with upper and lower top-sails, and lower t'gall'nt-sails on all three masts, and foresail and two headsails.

The *Cambrian Lass* was a stump-t'gall'nt-rigged ship, that is, she carried no sails above her upper t'gall'nt-sails.

The remainder of our watch was spent by the watch on deck huddling together in all the warm places they could find round the decks.

Under the break of the poop was a good sheltered spot, and here most of us gathered, some walking to and fro in pairs, and others spinning yarns in quiet corners.

The old ship ploughed her way steadily onward across the heaving, tossing waste of waters; rearing her great fo'c'sle head high one minute, she would settle into the trough of the seas the next, and scoop a green sea in over the lee t'gall'nt rail, the lee main deck for awhile looking like a great soapy swimming pool.

Then, as she climbed the next sea, the water would clear from the main deck with loud gurgling and sucking noises from the lee scuppers.

The howl of the wind through the taut rigging, as she lurched to windward with each roll, sounded for all the world like the wail of a hundred lost souls crying in agony. A late moon shone fitfully through the clouds, which scurried across its face in one continual procession.

"The sailor's friend," said old Tom Kidd, one of our watch, to me, pointing to the moon.

"Yes, and it's well named that," said I; "no matter how

stormy the night, all work round the deck and up aloft is a hundred times easier when 'Paddy's Lantern' is hung out."

My mate Bill was at the wheel, and I was walking up and down with old Tom, telling sailor yarns, when the shanghaied German came up to me, and pointing ahead over the bows, said in an inquiring tone of voice, "Frisk?"

"What's that," I asked.

"Frisk?" he repeated.

"Oh, 'Frisco? Is that what you mean?" I asked.

"Yah, 'Frisco," said Wilhelm.

"Well, no, you're not going to 'Frisco this time, old son; you're bound for Valparaiso," I replied.

"Me sister in Frisk, boarding master he tell me ship go to Frisk," replied Wilhelm dejectedly.

"Oh, they'll tell you anything," I answered him, and muttering in German, Wilhelm went off. He was probably laying all sorts of curses on the head of that false friend, the boarding master in Newcastle, who had taken his month's advance, and promised to ship him aboard a ship bound for 'Frisco where his sister was.

"One-two, three-four, five-six," tinkled the little bell on the poop, struck by a boy who was keeping the time, and in response, from the look-out on the fo'c'sle head, came "Clang-clang, clang-clang, clang-clang," followed by the look-out's hail to the Mate, who was pacing the weather side of the poop.

"All's well—lights burning brightly, sir."

"All right," shouted the Mate.

At one bell, quarter to twelve, the other watch was called, and at eight bells all hands mustered on the main deck at the break of the poop, and the roll was called by the Second Mate.

"Davies, Davies—where's Davies? Slip into the half deck and hustle that fellow out, Evans," said the Second Mate to Evans, the senior apprentice, but just then the canvas flap across the half deck door was pushed aside, and out came Davies, rubbing his eyes.

"What the hell do you mean by keeping all hands waiting here?" said the Mate to the sleepy one; "I've a good mind to send you up aloft overhauling buntlines for the watch." But luckily for Davies nothing came of the Mate's threat, as with a curt "All right" to the Second Mate's "They're all here, sir," he called out, "That'll do, the watch. Relieve the wheel and look-out." And we of the port watch all hurried below to get what sleep we could

from 12 midnight to 4 a.m., when we would be called again to go on duty from four to eight.

. . . . .

"Square the yards. Take in the slack on the port braces." It was early morning on the third day out, and our watch was relieving the starboard watch at eight bells, when the above order was roared out from the poop.

I, with several others of the port watch, was hauling in on the port fore-braces, when all of a sudden someone called out, "Look out there on the weather fore-braces, hang on!"

Well, we hung on as best we could, but she took it green, a great wall of water came clean over the rail on top of us all —it flattened us.

It completely knocked all the wind out of us. It seemed an eternity before we could draw breath again and look round.

As luck happened, most of us had hung on to the brace on which we were hauling, the man on the end having the presence of mind to catch a turn over the belaying-pin before the sea got him.

A man named Harding, however, was not so lucky, he having lost his hold and been swept right across the deck, bringing up against one of the iron bulwark-stanchions on the lee-bulwarks.

We soon rushed over to his assistance, and, as he seemed to be suffering internally, we carried him to the chart-house on the poop, where the Captain examined him.

"Get him below into the spare cabin, steward, and see that he is made comfortable," said Captain Williams. "I think a couple of ribs are broken; I will come down and attend to him there."

Harding was duly installed in the late Third Mate's room, and we who had assisted him aft, went back to the work of trimming sails and other duties round the decks.

At four bells, ten o'clock, I went to the wheel, relieving old Tom Kidd.

"East half south," said Tom, as I gripped the spokes from behind him. "Watch her," he warned me, "since the wind hauled aft again she takes some wild runs on the tops of the big ones."

"East half south," I repeated. "All right, I'll watch her."

The strong westerly wind had raised quite a big sea, though running dead before it, as we were doing, we did not feel the force

of the wind so very much, the following seas certainly made the steering no easy job.

At one minute the bowsprit would be pointing skywards, and then a sudden fling upwards of the stern would settle the bows down into the seething, hissing cauldron of white foam until the hawsepipes were under water.

The Old Man was walking up and down on the port side of the poop. He was wearing wooden clogs, and whenever he turned in his walk to come aft, and the ship happened to be settling down by the stern, the Old Man made a little down-hill run of it, his clogs making a great clatter.

I wondered what the Second Mate thought of it; his room was right underneath the Old Man's walk, but the Second Mate's watch below didn't seem to enter into the Old Man's calculations this good morning, as he still continued on his noisy, jerky walk.

Presently he stopped when he got aft beside the wheel, and turning to me, said in his quick Welsh manner, "You belong to Auckland, don't you, Avery?"

"Yes, sir," I replied.

"Know the approach well; sailed out of there much?" said he.

"Yes, sir, I know the entrance to both Gulf and Harbour well. I've sailed out of there in coasters."

"Well, if that man that got hurt gets any worse within the next day or so, I may run down the coast and land him at Auckland if this wind holds. I haven't got any local charts, and may have to use your knowledge of the approaches instead, in making up for pilot's boat and harbour."

"Very good, sir," I replied, and with that the Old Man resumed his walk.

I pictured what a fine sight the *Cambrian Lass* would make, laying up through Tiri passage with a westerly wind, under all sail, and what a surprise my people would get, to know that I was in Auckland again.

However, that was not to be, as a couple of days later the Mate and I were aloft up the fore-topmast rigging, having a look at some ratlines that wanted renewing, when he, the Mate, pointed straight out on the starboard beam, and said to me, "Well, you're not far from your own country now, Avery—the Three Kings lie less than twenty miles off in that direction. If the weather was clear we could see them from here."

"Is that so, sir?" I replied. "I thought we must be getting near to the top end of New Zealand by the courses we have steered and the distance she has travelled. Is the Old Man going to land that sick man in Auckland do you know, sir?"

"No," said the Mate, "he is going right on with him, and he will be sent home from Valparaiso. You're disappointed, eh? Well, so am I, for it's a place I should have liked to see. I've never touched at any port in New Zealand yet."

The wind still continued to blow from the westward, a strong whole-sail breeze for days on end.

After we passed the north end of New Zealand, we headed more to the southward, the 180 meridian was crossed on a Tuesday, and we went from eastern into western time, and our Tuesday was made into another Monday. There were great old sailor arguments in the fo'c'sle about this event, the general opinion being that it would have been a much-appreciated act on the part of the Old Man if he had made it two Sundays instead.

"I've never been in a blasted ship yet where we got two Sundays out of this business of crossing the 180 meridian," said our morose watch-mate, the Tynesider.

"No, and you never will, forby you're on some missionary hooker where they'll want to dish up two prayer meetings in the one week to all hands," said Old Jock from the depths of his bunk. "Och," he added in disgust, "any man that'll go to sea for pleasure would go to Hell for pastime."

It was our afternoon watch below, and as was sometimes the case, sleep was put aside for reading, yarning and so forth, by the majority of the watch.

Outside on deck we could hear the Second Mate and his watch bending a new fore-upper t'gall'nt-sail, the old one had been blown out just before eight bells in the morning watch.

Up aloft we could hear a faint cry, "Hoist away a bit more on your gantline," and then from the deck the Second Mate's yell, "All right, lay out on your weather yard-arm now with that head-earing."

Just as I was dozing off for a bit of a snooze, I could hear them setting the newly-bent sail, stretching the halliards up at the last with long-drawn-out cries of:

"Oh, raise me sky-high-ee,
Oh, make the ship fly-ee."

On going on deck at four o'clock (eight bells), we found the ship doing a good twelve knots; she was carrying all plain sail, with the exception of the mainsail and cro'jack, which were both furled.

There was not much clearing up round the decks required, as the main deck was continually awash from side to side.

The wind was still aft, a little on the starboard quarter now.

Away astern the sun was setting in an angry fiery-looking mood, from the lower limb to the horizon stretched long slanting rays, while the seas that were following us astern completely hid the view at times, especially when we settled down into the trough.

"Old Jamaica is setting up his backstays tonight," said old Tom Kidd to a group of us gathered together under the fo'c'sle head.

"Yes," said Chips, the carpenter, "I tink I can pick you boys doing some sail drill tonight."

"Never on your life," said Evans, the senior apprentice; "this Old Man won't start a halliard or sheet unless something blows out; it's got to blow a dam' sight harder than this before he shortens sail with a fair wind like this blowing."

"Oh, quit arguing whether the Old Man is going to shorten sail, and strike up a tune on your accordion, Avery," said one of the starboard watch.

"Yes, strike up the band," said another; so off we started with the accordion, a flute, a mouth-organ, a couple of marline-spikes for a triangle, and a drum made out of a little cask with light duck cloth stretched across it.

"There was I, waiting at the church,
Waiting at the church,
Waiting at the church,"

was our initial attempt.

We got loud and prolonged applause over this, so followed it up by "Sing a song in praise of Jack the Sailor." Song after song followed on; whenever we got stuck for one that all hands knew, one of the older men would fill the breach with an old chanty.

"Give us 'The Girl with the Black Velvet Band,' Jim," yelled some of Cockney Jim's cronies of the starboard watch; so off started the Cockney with the old song written about the time convicts were being sent out to Botany Bay:

"One night as I was walking down Wapping,
As apprentice I was bound to the sea,
I fell in with a charming young creature
While walking down Ratcliffe Highway."

Jim sung the song right through to the bitter end—how his newly-found lady-love led the young seaman astray; how he finished up by joining a gang of thieves and robbers, and eventually got arrested, and sentenced to transportation for life.

The last verse was heart-breaking:

"When the judge said to me, 'You're found guilty,
With a passage to Van Dieman's Land,
Far away from all friends and relations,
And the girl with the Black Velvet Band."

Tears were in the Cockney's eyes as he concluded; had he been one of the world's Opera favourites he could not have received more genuine applause.

Day succeeded day with hard westerly and sou'-westerly gales chasing us along; high following seas and main decks constantly awash were our daily portion now.

At night, as the watches were being relieved, it was generally the order, "Keep aft here on the poop, the watch," and all except the look-out man, and the helmsman, would make themselves as comfortable as possible under the lee of the chart-house.

Life-lines were rigged fore-and-aft along the main decks on both sides, and at one bell, when the watch coming on deck would be coming aft, all that could be seen of them were black moving objects, up to their shoulders often in the white swirl of waters, working their way aft along the life-lines.

Many a bitter cold night we put in now during the night watches, hanging on to the steeply sloping deck under the lee of the chart-house.

All were too wet and miserable to spin yarns, and I often used to long for my "wheel" to come round, so as to have something to do to keep my body warm.

One night in the middle watch Bill and I were lying close together staring out over the wild-looking scene of desolation, watching the great grey-backed combers rear up behind us, climb to their highest peak, and then crash in a smother of white foam.

All of a sudden Bill pulled my arm and yelled in my ear:

"Did you see that?"

"See what?" I yelled back.

"A light," said Bill.

"No. Where was it?" I asked.

"Just out there on the lee beam," he answered.

I stared and stared again, and then I too saw it, a white, sickly-looking light, half-hid among the swirl of spume and sea-mist.

"Yes, I see it now. We'd better tell the Mate," I called to Bill, saying which I got up and struggled over to where the Mate was hanging on to the weather mizzen shrouds.

"We can see a light down there to leeward, sir," I shouted into his ear.

"Can you? I'll come and have a look. Why hasn't the look-out reported it?"

After staring into the black void for about ten minutes the Mate turned to us and said, "Sailor's lights, that's what you saw; a large lump of phosphorescent weed or jellyfish on top of a big sea, that's all," said he, going back to his point of vantage on the weather side of the poop.

Louder shrieked the gale, and faster and faster the old ship flew along before it.

In the broad light of day it would have made a grand seascape, the hard-driven ship flying before the might of those great white-crested combers of the Roaring Forties, but at night it was awe-inspiring, to say the least of it.

The thought ran through my mind, "What if she should broach-to in this?" But I knew that the Mate's cautious sorting out of the best helmsman in the watch would eliminate this risk of disaster.

"Good God!" said one of the men who was sitting with his back to the chart-house and facing forward. "It looks to me as if that main lower t'gall'nt-sail has blown clean out of the bolt ropes."

And sure enough it had, and one of the boys who was keeping the time, mentioning the fact to the Mate, only got in reply, "Yes, I saw it go, there's nothing of it left to make fast, so we'll let the yard stay as it is till daylight."

We were not to rest for long, however, for shortly after the disappearance of the main lower t'gall'nt-sail the Mate roared out, "Gather in the slack on the weather main upper topsail brace."

Several of us did as ordered, but by the amount of slack we took in, we knew there must be something wrong with the yard aloft.

"All right, steady tight the lee brace," said the Mate; "we'll see what's the matter up there in the daylight."

In the morning, on coming on deck at eight bells, we asked the starboard watch what had gone wrong aloft up the main.

"Look aloft," they replied, "you'll soon see what's wrong."

And on looking up we saw that the great steel upper topsail yard on the main had buckled round at right angles from the quarter of the yard on the starboard side.

No wonder we could not get all the slack of the starboard brace in.

The Second Mate's watch had been aloft all the morning since daybreak, and by shortening up the wire span of the brace they had steadied the yard.

I asked the Mate during the morning watch if the yard would have to be sent down.

"No," he said, "we could not do anything with it even if we did get it down on deck; it's a job for a big foundry on shore; it'll just have to stay where it is till we get to Valparaiso."

Work of any kind round the decks was out of the question this sort of weather. Sometimes we would get the "shakings" barrel out under the fo'c'sle head and make sennit, and when not doing that we would mostly be standing by.

There was not much comfort to be had even in our watch below, as the floor of the fo'c'sle was generally awash, the water sometimes reaching up into the lower bunks.

A man would get wet through during his watch on deck, and turn in wet, to get up dry again, through the warmth of his body drying his clothes on him while asleep. Most of us got sea boils round our wrists, through the continual chafing of our wet oilskins, and a few of us, of whom I was one, suffered greatly from sea-cuts on our hands and fingers.

The food now was vile, breakfast was a farce; sometimes we would get a wet sloppy dish made of preserved potatoes, mixed with a tin of "Harriet Lane" (i.e. tinned beef). This mixture was down on the fo'c'sle menu as "Slum Gullion."

Dinner was generally a lump of salt junk with more preserved potatoes, and tea was a little of what we had left over from dinner.

The biscuit barge was our main stand-by, and at tea-time

some great old mixtures were made out of the same hard-tack. "Dandy-funk" was a favourite tea-time dish, the biscuits being pounded up to a powder, and then mixed up with a little molasses in one's own plate, and put in the cook's oven to bake.

At dinner-time, when the lump of salt junk was brought into the fo'c'sle from the galley, it was placed in a dish on the table, and the process of sharing it equally among the members of the watch was as follows: one of the able seamen would take out a good sharp sheath-knife, and ordering one of the other men out on deck, he would cut the lump of salt junk up into as many pieces as there were men in the watch; then, sticking a piece on the end of his knife, he would call out, "Whose is this?"

The man outside would call the name of one of his watch-mates.

The man who had cut the meat up would then go on holding up a piece of the meat, and calling out to know whose it was, the man outside answering, until all the members of that watch in the fo'c'sle had a piece told off to them.

It was a study in expression to see the look of utter disgust on the man's face who had been calling out the names outside if, when he came in, it was to find that the piece he had called out as his own happened to be a piece of greasy slush.

Half-warm, greasy-looking, tough as old boots, and wholly unappetising, it was no wonder a few of us swapped our share away for a little sugar or margarine.

If we had had a good cook it would have made a big difference with the food, but the German we had the misfortune to have presiding over the mysteries concocted in the galley could not make soft bread, so even that simple little luxury was denied us.

"Cook!" said old Tom Kidd; "he's neither a hasty-cook nor a pastry-cook, but a goddamn dirty cook."

"Aye, mon," said Old Jock, "the Lor-rd sent us the food, but the Devil sent us the cook."

Old Jock, who must have been between sixty-five and seventy years of age, was fast breaking up; the cold wet weather of the last couple of weeks had played havoc with his feeble old frame, and most of his time now he was confined to his bunk.

"He is another for a passage home in one of the P.S.N. mail-boats," said Thompson, the Tynesider, one afternoon as we lay in our bunks yarning—it being our watch below.

"Yes, and old Belcham in the other watch will go the same way

too, I'm thinking," said Newland. "They say he is just on eighty years of age."

"Well, the other night when it was 'all hands' setting the fore-upper topsail, old Belcham was next to me on the halliards, and he was more than throwing his weight into it," said Bill, my mate.

"Yes, but all the same it's only right that old fellows like them should have a comfortable trip home when they begin to break up, no matter what part of the world the ship is in," I replied.

On this we were all agreed, but nevertheless both watches were pretty short-handed now, and would be till we got to Valparaiso, where the Old Man would undoubtedly get some fresh hands. Harding, in our watch, was still laid up aft. He would do no more work aboard this ship.

Wilhelm, the German hobo, had been disrated to boy for bad steering—he could not steer at all, let alone go aloft and make a sail fast—so now there remained to our watch Newlands, Thompson, Holdersen (the young Swede), Bill, Tom Kidd and myself, able seamen; young Mac (a Glasgow boy), ordinary seaman, and a training-ship boy from Sydney as boy. In the half-deck we had two hefty apprentices as well in our team, Evans and Davies. They had both been in the ship some time and were as good as most young A.B.'s.

Old Jock had been a passenger to all intents and purposes the last two voyages the ship had made, so we did not miss him, but Harding was a first-class seaman, who would have made his weight tell had he not been injured.

It was a bit of a puzzle to Wilhelm to think that he, a full-grown man, should now be rated as "boy" on the ship. All we could get out of him now was, "All right, me all the same small boy now," and in everything he did he certainly acted up to it, doing as little as he possibly could, and pleading ignorance in all things whenever anyone remonstrated with him.

"Me, Valparaiso, on shore will go queeck," was his boast, when anyone asked him what he intended to do when we arrived in port.

In the four-to-six dog-watch following this little discussion we had a great old tussle with the inner jib; just as we came on deck the sheet carried away, and the jib flew forward of the stay before we could haul it down, and thrashed away there like a fiend possessed.

The Mate, with all his watch on the fo'c'sle head, could not budge it one inch down the stay by hauling on the down haul.

"Up aloft, a couple of you, and see if you can ride that sail down," said the Mate.

Bill and I jumped for the fore rigging and away up aloft.

Getting hold of the inner jib stay with both hands, and wrapping my legs round the stay also, I slid down to the head of the sail. Bill overhauled on the halliard above me, and I jumped with all my weight on to the head of the sail.

"Haul away now on the down-haul," yelled the Mate, and by jumping the sail down the stay and hauling on the down-haul we at last succeeded in getting it down on to the bowsprit.

"Make it fast, a couple of you," said Mr. Craddock.

So Evans and I set to, to make the sail fast.

This was an easy matter now, as once a headsail is down with a fair wind blowing, making it fast is child's play, a different matter altogether to making one fast when the ship is close-hauled on the wind, and a big sea running. Then it takes a man all his time to hang on to the sail, especially if the ship is jumping into a big sea.

In small sailing-vessels deeply laden, I have been out on the jib-boom furling a headsail in a big head sea, when all of a sudden she has dipped fo'c'sle head, jib-boom and me on it, clean under.

Then it has been a case of hang on till she lifts, and it takes some hanging on, too; many a man has been lost overboard at sea in this manner.

On this occasion, Evans and I furled the inner jib in a few minutes, and then we sat out there for a while looking at the picture the ship made as she flew through the water after us.

On the tops of the seas she would lift her forefoot clear of the water, showing the white boot-topping well along both sides; then, her bows in a swelter of white foam, she would settle down into the trough of the seas until her figurehead would be all but awash. Climbing the next sea, her sharp stem would part the seas like a huge knife, sending a bow wave of white foam out hundreds of yards on both sides. Through the flying spray and sea spume, the westering sun shone, forming rainbows of vivid colours. The noise of the cleaving fore-foot and bows forcing their way irresistibly through the seas was deafening.

The figurehead (painted pure white) of a Welsh woman in her

national costume, with arm outstretched, pointing forward, seemed the very embodiment of the spirit of the storm.

Standing out in perfect curves, and rising tier on tier above one another, towered the sails on the fore-mast. Foresail, lower topsail, upper topsail, lower top gallant-sail, and upper top gallant-sail, all pulling like teams of wild horses, and driving the great ship onwards to her goal.

Oh, Clipper ships, where are, where are you now?
I cry the long degrees, through foul and fair.
The trade winds sigh, I speed no Clipper bow,
The hollow Roaring Forties echo, "Where?"

How appropriately these lines describe a sailor's feelings when memory lifts the veil, and he is carried back in fancy, back into the heart of things, when all the world was young and the call of the sea meant high adventure.

"Well, Avery, getting sick of the sea and the blue ring round us all the time, with no land in sight?" said the Mate to me one morning, as I stood my trick at the wheel, from ten to twelve, steering the great ship as she tore along before the might of the strong westerlies.

"Oh no, sir, but I was just trying to figure it out, at the rate we have been travelling, we must be getting well across now, sir? Every time the log has been hove for weeks past she has been doing her ten, eleven and twelve, sometimes reaching thirteen knots."

"Yes, that's so," said the Mate. "We are now six weeks out from Newcastle, and if she keeps this up for another three or four days you'll be seeing the ships at their moorings in Valparaiso Bay."

"That'll make it about a forty-five days' passage then," I replied. "Good going, isn't it, sir?"

"Yes, it is," he answered, "but I'll bet my go-ashore hat that that big German four-masted barque, the *Lisbeth*, which was lying loaded at the farewell buoy and waiting for a crew when we left, will already be at her moorings when we arrive. They are terrors to drive their ships, the Germans." He stood in a thoughtful silence for a few moments, then went on: "When we get to Valparaiso you will have the chance of seeing one or two of the big P. line of ships, out of Hamburg; some of these ships have been known to come out of Hamburg to the West Coast of South

America in sixty days, and that after beating their way to windward round Cape Horn."

We had been gradually working our way to the northward during the last couple of weeks, and already one could detect a milder feeling in the air.

We had been below 45° south, and those latitudes in the month of July, in the Southern Hemisphere, are not noted for the mildness of the climate.

On the whole stretch across we had been convoyed by several of those lone wanderers of the Southern Ocean, the mighty albatross.

One hoary-headed old son of the Roaring Forties had stuck particularly close to us for days on end. We had first noticed him one day when the ship had been hove to, and her lee-side making a good shelter from the fury of the storm. Old "King Neptune," as we had christened him, had landed gracefully, with wings measuring a good ten or twelve feet outspread, on to the calmer waters under our lee.

Soon he was accompanied by several smaller albatrosses and a sprinkling of Cape pigeons—these last being very pretty little speckled birds about the same size as a shore pigeon.

Now, off and on for days past they had hovered over our wake, or sheered away to windward with giant wings aslant, and gleaming pure white in the wintry sunlight.

Harbour gulls, off-shore gulls, molly-hawks and petrels, all must give pride of place to the mighty albatross, who is essentially freedom personified.

One day old Belcham of the starboard watch relieved me at the wheel, and as no one was in sight on the poop, I called his attention to the "father of all albatrosses," who was wheeling high in the air over our wake.

"Isn't he a beauty?" I said to the old fellow, after giving him the course, pointing overhead to the great bird.

"Beauty be damned," said old Belcham, sourly. "I wonder what louse-bound old lime-juice skipper is cruising around inside his old hoary hide?"

"That's what you get for casting pearls before swine," I said to myself, as I went down the lee poop ladder.

But it was a firm belief of the old-time sailor that when he died his spirit would come back to earth and take unto itself the form of an albatross, and cruise forever around the stormy Southern

14. Make fast main'sl! *Grace Harwar*

15. *Louisa Craig*

Ocean where he had so often run his easting down, or beat to the westward round Cape Stiff. There are no superstitions in the make-up of the present age of seamen. Great full-powered steamers with their cut and dried routes, and time-tables as regular as a railway's, have killed all such little peculiarities in those whose business it is now to go down to the sea in ships.

Even at the time of which I write, sea styles in both men and ships were changing fast; twenty years ago, the big long-voyage lime-juicer was having her last innings, and with the opening of the Panama Canal the end of sail came very fast—ship after ship being sold foreign, or sent to the ship-breaker's yards.

The time is not far distant when men who have rounded Cape Horn under sail will be very scarce in British fo'c'sles.

Even on this voyage, old Belcham was often heard to declare that sailors, as he understood the term, were already non-existent.

"Sailors!" he would say with scorn, spitting into the scuppers. "There's no sailors nowadays! Young bloods, that's what they are, going to sea with *Tait's Seamanship* under their arms and garters on their socks! Why, when I was a lad, they'd make that much of a sailor out of a boy in one voyage that he'd come home with every hair of his head a rope-yarn, and every drop of his blood pure Stockholm tar!"

"It used to blow hard in those days, didn't it, Dan?" innocently asked young Mac, the ordinary seaman in our watch.

"You go to hell, and don't put your oar in when *men* are talking," said old Belcham, going into the starboard fo'c'sle, and getting up into his bunk in disgust.

. . . . .

Sunday at sea.

Sunday at sea in a deep-water sailing-ship—especially if the weather is fine—and nearing port means "sailor's pleasure." Then the sole topic of conversation is the port that lies so close ahead.

Sea chests are hauled out on deck, and their contents strewn higgledy-piggledy over hatches, deck-houses, fo'c'sle head, and anywhere and everywhere that so they'll get a bit of sunshine and fresh air.

Shore-going suits are taken out and carefully brushed and hung up to air, buttons are sewn on afresh, a little mending is done here and there. Old letters are sorted over, and photos taken out and scanned by eager eyes—especially if they happen to be

likenesses of the owner's young lady friends—and comments, some complimentary, and some distinctly otherwise, are flung to and fro as each lot of gear is sorted.

It was Sunday morning and our watch on deck.

The wind was out on the port beam, a steady breeze with all sail drawing well, the yards were checked in, and well off the backstays, and the old ship was reeling off a good nine knots.

"Sailor's pleasure" was in full swing—the port fo'c'sle was cleared right out, even to the bunks with their "donkey's breakfasts," i.e. straw mattresses and blankets. Those of us who had sea chests had them out on deck, and with lids thrown wide open, were busily engaged in overhauling their contents.

"Who painted that full-rigged ship on the lid of your sea chest," I asked old Tom Kidd.

"A Frenchman I was shipmate with in the old *Claverdon*," he replied, "and he could paint too," he went on. "You should have seen the lettering he did round the harness casks on her poop. No signwriter ashore could come up to him. Why, he could have made a fortune ashore if he'd only have gone in for that sort of thing."

"Why didn't he stop ashore then, and follow it up?" I inquired.

"Why didn't he?" asked Tom, a wide grin on his face. " 'Cos he was just the same as you and me, and all the rest of us."

He went on: "As soon as he was ashore for a few days and spent all his money, his first thought would be, 'Get a ship, get a ship and away to sea again as fast as I can, before the land sharks get any more out of me.' No! What would be the use of a man like that ashore? He wouldn't stick it. The regular routine, longshore men to deal with instead of sailor-men—never on your life. Different *ships*, different long *splices*—but ashore *everything's* different."

Tom was a sailor of the old school, and the shore and everything pertaining to it he viewed with suspicion. As man and boy he had followed the sea in deep-water sailing-ships for close on forty years, and what he did not know regarding "sailoring" was not worth knowing. To hear him talk of passages he had made in such famous old ships as the *Fiery Cross*, *Mermerus*, *Harbinger*, and others, made we of the younger generation of seamen turn green with envy.

"What was the name of that ship you were in, where the Old

Man died and the steward opened up a case of whisky to celebrate the event?" Evans, the senior apprentice, asked him.

"Oh, that's a long time ago now," said Tom. "I almost forget her name. Let me see—why, the *Kirkdale*. Yes, the old *Kirkdale*. We were bound from Newcastle, N.S.W., to 'Frisco, and had had a decent run up to the Line, which we crossed when we were about twenty-five days out.

The Old Man had been ailing for some days, and one morning when the steward knocked at his door with a cup of tea for him, he could get no reply. Calling the Mate, they opened the door, to find the Old Man lying dead in his bunk.

Whether the shock of finding himself master of the ship now that the skipper was dead unnerved the Mate and caused him to fly to the whisky bottle for 'Dutch courage,' or whether it was to celebrate the event in the good old style by 'shouting' for all hands, I don't know.

All that I can remember is that the steward, a Cockney from Poplar, came out of the cabin door at the break of the poop along with the Mate, who called all hands aft. 'Well, boys, the Old Man died last night,' said the Mate, 'and from now on I'll take command of the ship until we reach 'Frisco.'

'Yus,' said the Cockney steward, 'and as I says to Mr. 'Owell 'ere' (Howell was the Mate's name), 'says I, we'll open up a case of whisky and give all hands a taste, not to *rejoice* over the Old Man's death, but just to *cheer hup* the nerves.'

With that he pulls a pint bottle out of the case, and drawing the cork pours out a good Second Mate's four fingers, starting with the Mate, Second Mate, bos'n, carpenter, sail-maker, and so on till he had served all hands except the apprentices and boys. But in doing this he had to open up about half a dozen bottles.

Well, one drink followed another until we all began to see things in rosy hues.

I remember the Second Mate calling out, 'Clew up everything,' and we all rushing and pulling on down-hauls and clewlines and buntlines; there was practically no wind at the time, but I guess the Second Mate could see how things were going, and thought it best to be on the safe side.

It must have been a couple of days afterwards, I kind of lost reckoning, I think, when my mate David Long comes into the fo'c'sle and calls me, saying, 'Come on, Tom, we're going to kill one of the pigs and have some roast pork for dinner today.'

With that I tumbles out, but was still a bit shaky; so I gets a big nip to straighten myself out from a bottle which was on the fo'c'sle table. Good Lord, what a thirst I had!

But out I goes on deck, and lo and behold! there was about half of each watch, led by the carpenter, chasing that pig round the decks. Round and round they went, ducking and diving and colliding with one another and the pig, but no one could seem to get a hold of him. Talk about a greasy pig hunt at a sports show ashore, it wouldn't have had a look in with this circus. At last he made a break for the windlass under the fo'c'sle head, and here the carpenter finished him off before you could say 'Jack Robinson.'

When the steward saw us dragging him aft, he said it was up to him to treat all hands again, to celebrate the killing of the pig, so he opens up another case of whisky, and serves it round to all hands.

It must have been five or six days after that when the whisky came to an end.

The Mate had not seen daylight since the Old Man died, and the Second Mate was not much better, only he kept knocking about all the time.

I believe one of the apprentices wanted to go into the Old Man's room one day to wind the chronometer, but the Second Mate chased him to hell out of it, saying he would see to it. Anyway, he didn't, with the result that the chronometer ran down, and the ship was left with no Greenwich time. When the Mate came to, he reckoned it was time to arrange for the burial of the Old Man; but here was another puzzle—he'd lain there in his bunk so long that we could not get him through the door of his cabin. 'Go and get the carpenter to take the side of this room out,' says the Mate to one of the boys. Along comes the carpenter, and in about half an hour he had the side of the Old Man's cabin out.

The sail-maker sewed him up, and getting him up on deck the Mate looks round and says, 'Anybody here got a Prayer Book or Bible in their belongings?'

One of the apprentices had a New Testament, so out of that the Mate read a few lines which he thought seemed all right for the occasion, and that's how we buried the Old Man."

"What happened after that, Tom; did you get to 'Frisco with the ship, after all?" asked Evans.

"'Frisco? No," said Tom. "We fetched the land away up near Astoria, and a tug came out and towed us in over the Bar. I left

her there, and the Mate and the Second Mate got their walking tickets. I heard afterwards that she loaded salmon there for home, and got lost in a midwinter gale in the North Atlantic on the homeward voyage."

That night the wind headed the old *Cambrian Lass*, and we were braced up sharp on the backstays till a little after eight bells in the morning watch.

It was our watch on deck from four to eight; I had the four-to-six wheel, commonly known as the "gravy-eye wheel" among the fo'c'sle crowd. It was a true sailor term, coarse and suggestive, but very apt, as most sea-sayings are.

At two bells, five o'clock, the cook put his head out of the galley door and called out, "Coffee."

A few minutes later, young Mac, the ordinary seaman in our watch, came up the lee poop ladder and along to the wheel, and relieved me while I went forward to get my mug of coffee.

All hands in the watch were growling about the head winds coming when we were getting close to the land.

"There's a blasted Jonah in this watch," said Thompson, the Tynesider, from the depths of his bunk, where he was fumbling for his pipe.

"Might be yourself," said old Tom.

"I'm damned well sure it's not," answered Thompson, sitting down on his sea chest, and sucking at his pipe gloomily.

"Oh, well, I'm going aft to bring a *fair* wind again," said I, getting up to go back to my wheel until six o'clock (four bells).

"If you do that I'll shout for you when we get ashore," said old Tom.

Sure enough, I hadn't been back at the wheel more than a quarter of an hour when the old ship began to come up, and was soon laying her course again.

The Mate came aft rubbing his hands.

"That's better, Avery," he said; "if she gets the wind a few points free again, we should sight land some time today, or early this evening."

It was a beautifully clear fresh morning, and I quite enjoyed being at the wheel. At four bells I was relieved, and the work of washing down the decks commenced, and at seven bells (half-past seven) the other watch was called for breakfast. At eight bells we went below, had breakfast, and turned in till noon.

I was roused from a sound sleep about eleven bells (half-past

eleven) by a loud hail from aloft, caught up and repeated all round the decks by the starboard watch.

"Land oh! Land right ahead!"

Out I jumped, and running up the ladder on to the fo'c'sle head, I caught my first glimpse of South America. Towering high above the lower cloud banks were the high snow-covered peaks of the Andes. Sighting land is a great event on board of a deep-water sailing-ship. Everybody goes round smiling and happy, and the work of the ship goes with a swing.

That afternoon our watch got the anchors unlashed and over the bows, in readiness for letting go, and during the night we sighted several lights of vessels, both steam and sail, coming from and bound for Valparaiso.

Next morning when we came on deck at eight bells, a great sight met our eyes. The city of Valparaiso was in full view right ahead of us, reaching from the water-front right up to the foot-hills—a large, scattered-looking town. And there, in the roadstead, lay a fleet of fifty or sixty large deep-watermen, of all nationalities.

To quote Masefield, our Poet Laureate, it was an imposing sight, for

Riding in the anchorage, the ships of all the world
Have got one anchor down, 'n' all sails furled.

CHAPTER VI

VALPARAISO

WE anchored in the Bay well clear of the shipping, but after the Chilean Customs had been aboard, and the Port Authorities had allotted mooring buoys to us, we hove up the anchor, and were towed in and moored fore and aft in the tiers with the other shipping.

It was a beautiful morning next day when the Mate came along the deck and called out into the fo'c'sle the order "All hands man the capstan."

Both watches trooped up on to the fo'c'sle head, and shipping the capstan bars, we walked the cable to the tune of

"Sally Brown, I love your daughter,
Way-hey-roll and go!
Oh I, Sally Brown, I love your daughter,
I'll spend my money on Sally Brown."

How the old chanties made light of the heavy tasks "sailors of the sail" were called upon to do in those far-off sailoring days.

There's no call for them now, though; steam, motor and electric winches and windlasses have silenced the old songs which lightened our labours in those never-to-be-forgotten times.

About six or nine months previous to our visit, Valparaiso had been partially laid in ruins by a very severe earthquake, and the trail of it, and the tidal wave which followed, could still be plainly seen. Great tramp steamers and sailing-ships had been hurled ashore from their moorings, and now lay at all angles, piled up high and dry. When we got ashore we found the best-built half of the city in ruins, and the slum area standing intact.

Valparaiso is a fair-sized city; the population when I was there was over one hundred and eighty thousand inhabitants.

The Bay is over three miles across from the northern point, "Punta Gruera," to the southern point, "Punta Angeles," and is almost semicircular in shape.

The city stands on the southern shores of the Bay, on the slopes of the hills, which appear brown and barren from seaward.

The roadstead is quite open to the northward, and in bad weather from that quarter ships have to ride it out hanging on to their mooring buoys.

The hills at the back of the town rise bare and barren to a height of about fourteen hundred feet.

Santiago, the capital of Chile, lies inland from Valparaiso away up among the mountainous country towards the Andes.

It was slow work discharging our coal; cargo-lighters would come alongside at irregular intervals each day, and on being loaded would be towed in behind the Mole to discharge. It was several weeks before we were finished.

We had a battle-royal with some of the Chilean lightermen one evening after we knocked off. A large coil of three-inch new manilla line was left uncovered under the fo'c'sle head. We had been using it for a gantline to send down our buckled main upper topsail yard.

The lighter's crew had evidently had it spotted during the day; so while we were all at tea, one of them had climbed aboard the ship and passed the end of the line out through the starboard hawsepipe, his mates below in the lighter hauling it in for all they were worth.

The carpenter, who, with the sailmaker, had rooms under the fo'c'sle head where they lived, chanced to come out of his berth just in time to see about half of the coil gone.

He caught a turn round a bollard with the bight of the line, and called out into the fo'c'sle, "Hey! come on, you fellows, the Dagoes are getting away with a coil of new manilla line."

Out we all rushed, and up on to the fo'c'sle head.

The Second Mate joined us, and calling out, "Get that basket of coal up here," he leant over the side and roared out to the Dagoes: "If you blighters cut that line I'll sink your lighter under you. Haul away, boys, and get that line back aboard again."

We tailed on to the rope and hauled. For a time it was a tug of war between half a dozen of us and the lighter's crew, who caught a turn, and we could get no more.

"Get to work on the coal, boys, and give it to them good and strong," cried the Second Mate.

So away we started heaving great lumps of coal at the Dagoes in the lighters.

There were three lighters under the bows, loaded and ready to be towed ashore.

Their crews put up a good fight with a return of coal knobs, but we had the advantage, being well above them, and at last they gave it up and let the line go, which we quickly hauled back aboard.

"English marinero muchee malo," they shouted at us, but little we cared. We had spoiled their little thieving game that time.

As the coal was being discharged, we had a couple of gangs over the side on punts, chipping and scraping the ship's sides to the ballast-trim waterline, and when the last of the coal was out all hands were turned to painting the ship black from t'gall'nt rail to the boot-topping, which was light salmon colour.

The ballast came off in the same lighters that took the coal ashore, and the process was painfully slow.

During the time we were in port we did quite a lot of ship visiting, and renewed many old acquaintances we had made in Newcastle.

The Missions to Seamen people were real good to the visiting seamen in port, and arranged all sorts of entertainments for us.

I, with several others from the fo'c'sle and half-deck, went to the Church service on the Mission hulk one Sunday evening. The boys nearly lifted the roof singing all the old-time hymn tunes—tunes that most of us had learned as boys, such as "Eternal Father," "Will your anchor hold?" and many others.

After the service the ladies served tea and cakes round, and as each boat pulled away from the gangway for the return trip to their respective ships, the missionary, a fine fellow, called out, "Come again next Sunday, *Thistlebanks*," and "Let's see some more of you *Miltonburns*."

Swimming over the side was a great pastime for us whenever we had any spare time.

One fine Sunday morning there were about ten or twelve of us from our ship over the side, splashing and swimming about between the ships and buoys. Another chap and I thought we would take on a little longer swim than the others were having, so we struck out for a big mooring buoy between our ship and the next. We had nearly reached it, when an apparition with a face that fairly put the fear of God into us, popped up out of the sea, right in our course.

It was a huge sea-lion with whiskers and tusks and great mouth agape. If consternation showed on our faces, surprise and fright also showed on his.

"Splash like hell, Jock!" I called to my mate in the water, and both splashing and yelling like one thing, we at last had the satisfaction of seeing our bewhiskered friend disappear into the depths again.

We were both glad to scramble up on to the buoy and have a spell for awhile, and needless to say we had a good look round for sea-lions before diving in for our return swim back to the ship.

There were some fine ships laying at the buoys in Valparaiso while we were there. I remember some of them as well today as if it were only yesterday that I saw them last. Among the British ships were the *Toxteth*, *Leyland Brothers*, *Windsor Park* and *Glenalvon*, all full-rigged ships, the *Thistlebank*, *Colony*, *Miltonburn* and *Duchelburn*, four-masted barques, and a host of others flying the old Red Duster, which I can't remember by name.

It's hard to realise that today there is only *one* of all that vast fleet of British square-rigged sailing-ships in commission; the old *Juteopolis*, now known as the *Garthpool*, four-masted barque.[1]

No more can British and British Colonial boys, with the call of the sea strong within them, and the longing to form one of the crew of one of those tall-masted, clipper-bowed, sail-driven ships of their fathers and forefathers gratify their natural instinct, and pack sea chest and canvas bag, to away on some eighty, ninety or a hundred odd days deep-water voyage.

Through Trades and Tropic winds, and Roaring Forties gales, until some far seaport is reached, after much brave endeavour, when they can walk strange streets, on strange shores, with that self-satisfying feeling that a man's part has been played in the accomplishment of getting there.

German ships were there in Valparaiso also.

The *Potosi*, five-masted barque, towered above her sisters in the tiers. She was a splendid ship; the *Lisbeth*, which had beaten us from Newcastle by about ten days, the *Sophie*, *Charlotte*, and several others. But the mightiest ship of all, the largest sailing-ship in the world, came in under a cloud of canvas one day while we were taking in ballast. This ship was no other than the German five-masted, full-rigged ship *Preussen*. She was a sight to gladden any sailor's eye, and had a crew like a man-o'-war.

She came sailing into Valparaiso Bay, and rounded up and let go with as little fuss as a two-and-a-half-rater yacht in the Auckland Harbour.

[1] Wrecked since this was written.

I pictured her in the Trades with all sails set, reeling off the miles like a liner, or beating to windward off the Horn, hard driven but making splendid weather of it.

There's no mistake, the Germans are splendid seamen, and, unlike the British, are not going to let the art of taking great sailing-ships on long voyages die out with the present generation; for they are still building large deep-watermen for certain trades, wherein young German officers will be trained.

About a week previous to our being ready for sea again, we were challenged by a big four-masted British barque for a game of football, and it was decided that we should play them on a Chilian national holiday that was due to fall on the coming Saturday.

When the week-end came round there was great excitement. We who were playing football were all given twenty-four hours' liberty, and with the Mate as captain of our team, away we went ashore, and took tram round to a place called Viña-del-Mar.

The game was fast and furious, torn shirts, bleeding noses, and sundry bumps and sprains were the order of the day, but all hands on both sides were good-natured and joking through it all. Our team proved the best, and we were loudly cheered by our opponents, we in turn cheering them. We all travelled back to Valparaiso in trams, and spent a rather hilarious night ashore with several other ships' crews on leave.

At last the day came when the ballast was all in and we were ready for sea again. All sorts of rumours were floating around as to where we were bound next.

"Sydney Heads for orders," one of the crowd would say, to be instantly contradicted by the reply of another, "Get out, I heard the Mate telling the Second Mate we were bound for 'Frisco to load wheat for Capetown."

The day arrived, however, when the Old Man came off in a small tug, accompanied by a big black negro. This was none other than the famous "Nigger Thompson," boarding-house master of Valparaiso in those days.

He had in his charge several seamen of various nationalities who were joining in place of those of our old crew who had been sent home or had run away. Wilhelm, the young German hobo, had run away the day after we arrived. Some of the boys who were manning the boat had seen him working in a butcher's shop

ashore. Old Jock, Belcham and Harding had been sent home by the last mail steamer.

Hartung, a German in the starboard watch, had also deserted a few weeks previously, but in his case the fates had decreed that he should come back to his old ship, for there he was, stretched out on the fore hatch of the little tug, dead to the world under the influence of several days' drinking of Pisco, a kind of native whisky or gin.

Nigger Thompson had roped him in, not knowing he had deserted from us in the first place, and the Old Man was quite jubilant over it for two reasons, the first being that Hartung was a first-class seaman, and the second being the fact that Hartung, being already one of his crew, he would have one man less to pay Nigger Thompson for.

The Old Man brought the orders off with him, and the news flew like wildfire fore and aft. "Portland, Oregon, to load wheat for the United Kingdom."

So that was where we were bound; away to the northward, across the Line, pretty near the whole length of the Pacific, and then back again over our tracks, and round the Horn and home.

We had come between six and seven thousand miles from Newcastle, N.S.W., and now had another nineteen thousand miles to do before we would pay off in the Old Country.

Pull out, pull out on the Old Trail,
The Trail that is ever new,

sang Kipling, and so sang we as we were towed out from between the tiers of ships—only our words were different as we started the heavy topsail yards up to the tune of well-known chanties.

"Blow, ye winds, Hey Ho, for California!
Oh! there's plenty of gold, so I've been told,
On the banks of Sacramento!"

"Belay that," roared the Mate. "Sheet home your fore-lower t'gall'nt-sails."

"On the rail, boys, and return their cheer," called the Second Mate as we were passing the *Thistlebank*, whose crew had lined her t'gall'nt rail, and were giving us three hearty British cheers.

"Three cheers for the *Thistlebank*!" roared the Second Mate, and we gave it to them good and strong.

Several other ships cheered us on our way. It was typical of the goodwill that seamen of that period bore toward one another to see the whole ship's company leap on to the rail and cheer the outward- or homeward-bounder.

So here we were at sea once more; watches were set, and we all fell into the old routine again, just as though we had never broken our voyage by nearly two months' stay in Valparaiso.

CHAPTER VII

PORTLAND, OREGON, FOR ORDERS

STRONG sou'-west winds favoured us right up to the region of the south-east Trades.

We passed close by the islands of St. Felix and Juan Fernandez, the latter bringing to my mind Robinson Crusoe, that hero of all boys with salt water in their veins. How I had gloated over his adventures in my boyhood days, and longed for some strange freak of fortune to place me in the same predicament as Crusoe found himself.

The weather now began to get warmer, and the sea a deeper blue, and one morning when our watch was called at seven bells (half-past seven), Rawles, one of the able seamen of the other watch, roused us all out with the cry of "Now then, my lads, rise and shine, and come out on deck and see our old friend—the bos'n-bird with the spike for a tail."

This bird was the herald of the south-east Trade wind, for during the day the wind, which had been fitful and variable, settled down into a steady breeze from the south-east. There was no mistake about it—this was the Trade wind we desired.

With everything drawing, and light in ballast trim, the old *Cambrian Lass* fairly flew along.

We sighted the smoke of a tramp steamer one morning early. It was well ahead of us, but by nightfall we had overhauled her, and had her well astern by eight bells in the second dog-watch. This was fine going. The decks were dry and warm, and we could sleep anywhere in the open at night-time when we had no wheel or look-out duties.

One morning, however, the Mate came along and changed the whole order of things by saying, "Well, boys, from now on until we lose the north-east Trades, we are going to work both watches from six to six all day, chipping and scraping and painting the hold right through. The apprentices and boys will work the ship, watch and watch with the Old Man and the Second Mate. We'll start the new order of things now; so get all the hatches off, and we'll get below with the scrapers and chipping hammers."

At first we thought it very hard to work from six to six at sea; but we soon got to like it, and all night in bunk for a long spell on a deep-water voyage was not to be laughed at.

The beautiful weather we were now getting put all hands in a good mood, and the days just flew by.

We would be called by one of the boys on watch at five-thirty every morning except Sundays, have a drink of tea and some biscuits, and then turn to down in the hold at six o'clock.

Breakfast would be from eight to nine, dinner from twelve to one, and then at half-past five we would knock off down below and come up and put the hatches on, and batten them down for the night.

It was quite pleasant and cool down in the spacious hold. We did the 'tween decks out first—cleaned out all the coal behind the stringers, and after chipping and scraping the steel plates and angle irons, we gave all that part of the hold a coat of light blue paint.

Then we did the same to the lower hold. The object was to have the ship perfectly clean inside in readiness for loading our wheat cargo.

With the hatches off all day long, we had plenty of daylight and fresh air down the hold.

I often used to stand on the ballast in the lower hold, and look up through the hatch at the tall pyramid of sail on the main-mast —every sail standing out in perfect curves, and the draught from the foot of the huge main-course sending a cool current of air down the open hatch.

As we drew further north, the pitch was running out of the seams on deck, but down below in the big airy hold was the coolest place in the ship.

As soon as tea was over, half a dozen or so of us would congregate on the fo'c'sle head, and here we would lie down and spin yarns, sing songs and watch the gorgeous sunsets.

We did not get much time now to watch the sunrises, but the sunsets we enjoyed to the full—they were splendid.

It would take an abler pen than mine to describe their grandeur; the vivid colours, the castles, towers, mountains and seas studded with tropic isles, all would be shown us in quick rotation in the rapidly changing western sky—and then, with one final blaze of splendour, "Old Jamaica" would plunge below the horizon.

When the stars came out the heavens were even more beautiful. The Milky Way stretched like the tail of a huge comet across the sky overhead, while high up hung the Southern Cross, that emblem of the Southern Seas.

The brighter stars and planets stood out from among their lesser kind with dazzling brilliance, while every now and then one or the other would be temporarily blotted out by wisps of Trade wind clouds, which scurried across the sky.

The air now at night was mild and warm, so warm in fact that we deserted the stuffy fo'c'sle for the hatches and coils of rope round the decks for sleeping places.

Many were the times, when sleeping out on the hatches after a hard day's work down in the hold, we would hear the cry, "Lee fore-brace," and up we would jump and run to that cussed piece of rope and haul away sleepily, but with a right good will, until the order came "Belay that," and then all of a sudden we would realise that we had been doing a bit of overtime.

Sometimes we would get, "Thank you, you fellows; it's very good of you," from one of the apprentices, in a voice nearly choking with laughter, and at other times some old cynical sea-lawyer would rise on one elbow from his bed on deck and gruffly inquire, "What the hell's the matter with you fellows; are you looking for two discharges when you pay off?"

Working through the Doldrums we often had to come on deck and give the boys a hand, hauling the yards round, or clewing up some of the larger sails in squally weather. When we crossed the Line and picked up the steady north-east Trade, we got back to regular work in the hold once more.

The time came at last when the hold was finished; a few more days would see us out of the Trade wind, and it was with mingled feelings that we went back watch and watch again.

On one of our last evenings on the fo'c'sle head we held a bit of a concert to celebrate the breaking up of the "All day men's union," as we called it.

We had band selections and songs for a couple of hours, and some good old sailor talent was unearthed.

One of the new men—called Liverpool Jack—who had shipped in Valparaiso was called upon for a song. He excused himself as being only a passage-worker in ships all his life, but said he would do the best he could by singing "Johnnie lay back, Take in the slack," so off he started with:

16. Deck scene on intercolonial barque—
Manunui (ex-Danish *Thora*)

17. Quieter hours in port

18. *Volador* coming to anchor
19. *Manicia* abandoned at sea. The end of a proud ship

"Oh! on the twenty-fifth of last November
I was hard up and all my money spent.
The day I do not quite remember,
But straightway to the Shipping Office went.
For there was a great demand for sailors,
For India, China, Java, back to France,
So I shipped on board the 'Oxford'
And on the booze I went with my advance."

CHORUS:

"Oh! Johnnie, lay back, take in the slack,
Heave around the capstan, heave a pawl,
'Bout ship stations, boys, be handy,
Raise tacks, sheets, and mains'l haul!"

There were two or three other verses telling of poor Johnnie's trials and tribulations on joining the *Oxford*, and how he wished he was back in the Jolly Sailor's Inn, drinking whisky with "Big Irish Kate." Liverpool Jack sang the whole lot to us.

We clapped and cheered Liverpool for an encore, but he said singing always made him terrible thirsty, so he could not oblige —being a matter of a few thousand miles from the nearest pub.

Gradually the brave north-east Trade wind petered out, leaving us eventually to roll and bang about for the whole of the middle watch, which it was our misfortune to have.

I was at the wheel from two to four, and had the good luck to miss a whole lot of pulley-hauley work.

We had not been on deck a minute before we lost the wind altogether, and the rolling and banging and slatting of the sails got so bad that the last half of the watch was spent in trying to quieten things a bit.

"Haul all those staysails down," sang out the Mate from the fore-part of the poop, and a few minutes afterwards halliards were let go and down came the staysails. "Let go your sheets and tacks and haul up the foresail and mainsail." And soon after, I heard my mates hauling away on the clewlines and buntlines of the two big courses.

The cro'jack was already fast and furled on the yard. We had unbent our spanker in the south-east Trades, and had been using the spanker-boom to spread a large awning over the biggest part of the poop in the hot weather, so we did not have any spanker to worry about.

A big fore-and-aft sail with boom and gaff is a very unhandy sail to manage in a flat calm and a heavy roll, and if the watch are not very quick with the boom-guy-tackles, it would quickly take charge.

After bracing sharp on one tack, and then hauling the yards round again a couple of times, the wind came away from the nor'-west a dead muzzler, and when our watch went below at 4 a.m., it was to leave the old ship bucking and jumping into a nasty head sea, and going to leeward like a crab.

"What course did you give when you left the wheel, Avery?" asked young Mac as we were turning in.

"Course?" I repeated. "She's not going her course, she's about four points off it. Full and bye, that's what she is steering."

"I can see us having about an eighty days' passage this time," observed Thompson from his bunk.

"Well, more days, more dollars," said one of the men who shipped at Valparaiso.

We were awakened during our watch below by the noise of the other watch taking in the upper sails.

"Stand by your fore, main and mizzen upper t'gall'nt halliards," roared out the Second Mate, and there was a great clattering and banging round the decks when the order came to let them go and man the downhauls and buntlines.

When we came on deck at eight bells next morning we found the ship snugged down to the two topsails on each mast, a reefed foresail, two headsails and main and mizzen topmast stay-sails.

The Old Man was thumping up and down the weather side of the poop, with a look in his eye that spelt ill for anybody who fell foul of him this good day.

We spent a miserable morning watch, making sennit under the fo'c'sle head, and repairing damaged coal baskets.

Being light in ballast we had no water round the decks, but the way the old packet jumped about, she made it very uncomfortable for all hands, especially for the cook.

We could hear him in the galley trying to capture his runaway pots and pans, some of which had jumped over the fiddley irons, and were careering up and down from one side of the galley to the other.

"Donner und Blitzen! God-ful-damn, everyting vos come to a still-stand. Dere vill pe some allowance short dis day."

Poor old Doctor; he was getting a bad run this morning, but nobody had much sympathy for him.

"Serves the old grub-spoiler right," remarked old Tom Kidd to me as we went below at eight bells. "Even in the best of weather he can't cook, so it doesn't make any difference to us."

The head wind persisted for a couple of days, and then hauled round to the sou'-west, and we went romping off again on our course.

The change came in the early morning watch between four and six o'clock. The old Doctor had just put his head out of the galley and roared out "Coffee!" when the wind began to come aft.

The Mate sent one of the apprentices along to the fo'c'sle to tell us to hurry up with our coffee and be ready to check the yards in.

"Square the yards—ease up your tacks and sheets. Haul away on the weather fore-braces," and willingly we jumped to do his bidding.

"That'll do the fore-braces, now the main," called out the Mate, and soon we had all the yards checked in with the wind on the quarter.

This was our old ship's strong suit—a good breeze on the quarter. The modern iron or steel sailing-ship is not built for beating to windward in ballast trim.

"You might as well try to beat an Auckland timber scow to windward without lowering her centre-board," I happened to remark one evening, as a crowd of us from both watches were yarning together under the fo'c'sle head in the second dog-watch.

"What are your Auckland scows like, Avery; just big flat punts that they tow round the harbours and rivers?" asked Evans.

"Well, no, that's the impression a lot of people have about scows, but they are altogether wrong as far as the Auckland timber scow is concerned. Their hulls are certainly flat and square, but they have a good clean run aft, and fine bows with a good lift in their decks. The larger scows have two centre-boards, and sometimes a smaller one, called a fin, fore-part of the fore-mast.

The majority are rigged like two-masted fore-and-aft schooners but I have sailed in a couple that were three-masted, fore-and-aft schooner rigged, and some were rigged like three-masted topsail schooners.

They have long sticks in them too, and carry an enormous

amount of sail. Their great beam and their shallow depth of hold tend to make them very stiff in the strongest breezes—in fact they are as stiff empty as when they are loaded, and the peculiar thing about them, especially from your deep-waterman's point of view, is that they carry no cargo underneath their decks at all —that is, the biggest majority of them, carrying mostly logs and sawn timbers.

They load it all on their decks, and it is held on by great parbuckling chains, bolted into the covering boards on each side, and set up across the top of the load with strong screws.

They can sail, too, and with a strong breeze on the quarter they would take some catching, especially when empty.

At beating to windward they are not so bad either, for with their centre-boards down they draw quite a lot of water. On the wind, with no centre-board down, they would behave just like one of these big deep-watermen light in ballast."

"I suppose they only trade on the coast, though, and don't go far off-shore?" said Evans.

"No, you're wrong there again," I said.

"As a matter of fact they have done some very creditable trips across the Tasman Sea, which is no millpond at any time of the year. Give me a good big Auckland timber scow, with a good crowd aboard her, and I guarantee she would be fit to go anywhere, and stand up to any weather."

Memories of many happy days I had spent in the vessels we had been discussing came to me as I turned in at eight bells.

For the next few days both watches, as they came on deck to relieve one another, were kept busy taking off the canvas coverings on the rigging screws, cleaning the threads of the screws, and then smearing them with a mixture of white lead and tallow, and recovering them again with canvas. After that we ran melted white lead and tallow into the holes through which the rods ran, and setting up the rigging to the required tautness, passed the rods through and seized them off neatly to prevent their working slack again.

We worked in pairs at this job, generally an able seaman and an apprentice or boy working together.

It was nice easy work, and we used to take a pride in sewing the canvas covers neatly on again, so that there would be no crinkles showing when it was painted."

"Have you ever been in a ship with lanyard rigging?" asked

Davies, one of the apprentices who was working with me one afternoon.

"Yes, several of them, only small vessels, though," I replied. "There's more trouble in setting up rigging with lanyards than we have with this screw rigging. After reeving them off correctly, and setting them up taut with two tackles, some very good rackings need putting on, so that when you come up the tackles nothing will be lost by the lanyard slipping through the 'dead-eyes'.

I was shipmates once with an old bo'sun in a small barque trading between Australia and New Zealand, who took such pride in setting up rigging, that he'd allow no one but himself to put the rackings on after we had hauled the lanyard taut with the two tackles, and those rackings of his were a picture to look at, all put on figure of eight fashion, and no one turn riding out of its place on top of another.

The same with splicing wire—he could get hold of a refractory piece of wire rope and stick a splice into it, while another man would be whipping the ends, and all the time he was doing it he would be cursing it, cajoling it and humouring it, until, with a few final taps with his marline-spike, he would throw it down, a neatly-finished splice.

They say the Dutchmen are the best sailors, but that old fellow was a Londoner, and what he didn't know no Dutchman would ever be able to show him.

As the Italian said of the Britisher, 'Engleeshman very good sailorman, but too muchee the tap-tap-tap.'

He could have easily left the tap-tap-tap out of it, and then been right."

"Well, look at our Old Man here, where would you find a better sailorman? And he's no Dutchman. A North Welshman, who started off at sea as boy in the Welsh schooners, been at sea all his life in sail. Why, I heard him putting old Sails right the other day, when they were cutting out that new storm-canvas foresail," said Davies, with manifest pride in his countryman's achievement.

"Now then, you fellows, as soon as you finish that last screw on the fore-rigging here, go out on the jib-boom and start on the head-gear," said Mr. Craddock, coming along just as Davies and I finished talking.

At eight bells, Hartung and an ordinary seaman from the starboard watch came out of the bows to relieve Davies and I,

and it being the first dog-watch and a fine evening, the majority of our watch gathered together under the fo'c'sle head to yarn and smoke.

"Well, I don't know vot it is dat brings all jou fellows outside my door every evening to smoke and yarn," said Chips, our big Swede carpenter. "Perhaps I must be very fine fellow, eh?"

"You?" said old Sails. "They don't come to see you. They come to see me. Ain't that right, boys?"

"Well, we come to see both of you," said Bill, my mate. And as a matter of fact that was just what we did go there for, for both Chips and Sails were very popular with all hands. Both were first-class men at their own trades. To see that carpenter handle an adze was a sight well worth seeing. He could chip off a shaving as thin as a sheet of paper.

Hew to the line, let the chips fly where they will,

quoth the poet, and our Chips could hew to the line with the best shipwright that ever trod a ship's deck.

As for Sails, the art of cutting out and sewing, and roping big ships' sails will possibly die right out, but the memory of old Sail's skill at his job will remain as long as life lasts with his shipmates.

Chips was busy this evening making a model of a four-masted full-rigged ship, and she was going to be a clipper too, by the look of her. To see his great hands working in and out among her fragile spars and rigging, fitting a block here, setting taut a stay or shroud elsewhere, was definite proof that no matter how big and strong a man's hands may be, in work such as this, where lightness of touch is everything, he could excel, through having a special knowledge of his task.

"What's her name going to be, Chips?" asked one of the boys.

"The *Liverpool* of Liverpool," answered Chips. "She is the model of her, and a fine ship she was too. I sailed in her once. She is lost now, and so I make a model of her. Yes, she was a fine big ship."

"What are you going to do with her at the end of the voyage?" someone else asked.

"Do with her? I'm going to give her to my wife who lives in Middlesborough in England. She will look fine in a glass case in our little front parlour."

Chips was very proud of the fact that his wife was English. He hardly ever spoke of his native Sweden—it was always his home in England that he spoke of.

Although away two or three years at a time on deep-water voyages, Chips lived for his home and wife and children in England, and was always making or saving something to take home at the end of the voyage.

The wind hauled more abeam during our watch on deck from eight to twelve that night, but it did not hinder the old ship's speed at all, as coming from the direction it now did, every sail, including staysails and headsails, were drawing to their best advantage.

I was on the look-out from ten to twelve, and it was fine to see the big ships laying down to it like a yacht in a strong breeze, and sending a smother of foam out on the lee bow that shone white and glistening in the pale light of a westering moon.

It was always our custom to keep up a bit of a walk from side to side of the fo'c'sle head while on the look-out, but on this particular night this was impossible, owing to the heeling of the ship as she tore along with the strong beam wind, every now and again taking a lurch to leeward that would throw one off one's feet had there not been a rail handy to hang on to.

Though she was light in ballast, and high out of the water still, every now and again the fo'c'sle head was drenched with flying spray, making the decks slippery to walk on, and an oilskin and sou'wester were necessary on look-out duty.

The watch came along to heave down on the foretack, and also to haul out on the fore-bowline a bit more. Some of them had been asleep in cosy corners round the decks, and were not prepared for the flying spray on the fo'c'sle head as the old ship shouldered her way through it. Many and varied were the curses bestowed on the apprentice at the wheel as she dipped to a big comber, and sent the spray swishing across like an April shower.

Ting-ting, ting-ting, ting-ting-*ting!* sounded the little bell aft on the poop at half-past eleven, and reaching over and grasping the lanyard of the big fo'c'sle-head bell, I answered it with as many clang-clangs!

And then, getting up to the weather side of the fo'c'sle head, and putting both hands up cup-fashion to my mouth, I called out to the Mate aft on the poop in a long, drawling hail, "All's—well. Lights—burning—brightly—sir."

"All right," came the Mate's reply, nearly blotted out by the roar of the foam round her bows, and the howl of the wind under the arching foot of the great foresail above my head.

Shortly after, I heard one bell struck aft on the poop, to which I replied with one ring on the for'ard bell.

A muffled roar and indistinguishable words came from the region of the starboard fo'c'sle door, and I knew that the watch was being called to relieve us.

It was with pleasure that I welcomed my relief, Rawles, from the other watch, and doubling aft along the deck to the break of the poop, I called out to the Mate, who was standing at the rail on the weather side, talking to the Second Mate, "Rawles on the look-out, sir."

"All right," came the answer, and away I sped to get turned in as quickly as possible.

It seemed as though I had only been asleep a few minutes when an infernal yelling and commotion on deck roused me.

Dominating all other sounds, though, came the insistent shouting through the fo'c'sle door of that call which all sailors in sail learn to obey with alacrity.

"All—hands—on—deck—and—shorten—*sail*!"

Out we jumped, bemuddled with sleep and cursing the fates which had ordained that it should be in our watch below that the wind should freshen to such an extent as to necessitate the calling of all hands.

The ship was laying over at an alarming angle—orders were flying thick and fast round the decks.

"Clew up the fore, main and mizzen lower t'gall'nt-sails. Haul the mainsail up, mizzen topmast-staysail downhaul. Get a move on, you lads."

"Where's the port watch?"

"Come for'ard here, my watch, and man the foreclew garnets," yelled the Mate, tearing along the slippery heaving deck.

We followed him, and after a superhuman fight managed to get the foresail hauled up and fairly quietened by means of spilling lines and buntlines.

"Outer-jib down! Now then, boys, man the downhaul, on to the fo'c'sle head some of you, and get that sail down."

One by one we got the sails off her, until at last we had her under the upper and lower topsails on the fore and main, lower topsail on the mizzen, and fore and main topmast staysails.

We spent a couple of hours of hard toil making the sails fast.

The starboard watch had managed to get the mainsail furled before the full force of the blow struck us, but it took both watches to furl the foresail.

"Muzzle her, boys, muzzle her, and hang on to what you get," yelled the Second Mate from the quarter of the yard, and straining every sinew, we fought the huge, jumping, ballooning, struggling sail, until we had it securely fast with the gaskets to the yard.

It was a wild sight from aloft; looking down all we could see was the dim outline of the ship's deck with here and there a dull light showing from a sky-light or port.

Round the bows was a swirl of white foam as she surged along through the high tumbling seas, and away aft streamed the wake, like a straight white track ending in nothingness.

Regaining the deck, we stood around in little groups in sheltered corners, waiting to see if any more sail had to be taken in, but apparently the Old Man was satisfied with the way she was behaving now, as presently we heard the Mate's roar along the deck from the break of the poop.

"That'll do, the port watch."

There was a scamper for the fo'c'sle and half-deck, and weary men and boys tumbled into their bunks for the remaining hour of their watch below, the majority of them turning in "All standing like a soldier's horse," as old Tom Kidd put it, meaning with all their clothes on.

"Land is in sight away out on the starboard bow," said Bill, my mate, to me one morning a few days after that hard blow.

We were turned in in our watch below, and the loud talking on deck had awakened Bill, just before the watch was called at noon.

"How do you know land is sighted?" I asked Bill, who was in the bunk below me.

"How do I know? Didn't you hear young Jones the nipper yelling it out as he came down from aloft after overhauling the fore upper t'gall'nt buntlines? And now they are all talking about it all round the decks."

When the watch was called most of us went out to have a look at the newly sighted land.

We could see it stretching, a dark smudge, on the horizon to leeward, as far as the eye could see.

To several of us in the ship's company this was our first sight of the United States.

It seemed wonderful and strange to me to think that within sight of us now was another great English-speaking country, where people lived and toiled and spent their lives in great cities or the open country, much the same as we in New Zealand or Australia.

The wind held good and strong, about a point free on the port tack, and the old ship was fairly romping along all our afternoon watch on deck.

We drew closer in to the land towards morning, and at seven bells when we called the starboard watch for breakfast, the shore line was plainly visible.

To windward of us were two more vessels bound also for Portland, Oregon, one, a full-rigged ship, the *Windsor Park*, and the other the four-masted barque *Miltonburn*.

Both had been in Valparaiso and Newcastle, N.S.W., with us, so they seemed like old friends showing up again.

They made a pretty picture laying over to the strong westerly breeze, and when they rolled to leeward we could see their decks and the men on them quite plainly.

A Yankee pilot-boat came rolling and tumbling along towards us, and from her white-painted wheel-house, perched high, just forward of her funnel, a uniformed figure leaned through a window and hailed us through a megaphone.

"Where from, Cap'n?"

"Valparaiso," called back our Old Man.

"How many days out are you, Cap'n?"

"Forty-five!" replied Captain Williams.

The pilot-boat took a wide sweep round, and coming up on our weather side from round our stern, we saw them preparing to get their boat over.

"Back the main-yards, Mr. Craddock," called the Old Man to the Mate.

"Weather main-braces; walk them in, lads," cried the Mate, and as it was now all hands on deck we soon had the way off the ship with the main-yards aback.

The pilot-boat put her dinghy over, and, tossed and flung about like a cork, she made for us, and came round our stern and up on our lee side.

A line was flung to them and a rope ladder put over the

side, up which the pilot scrambled, followed by the port doctor.

"All hands lay aft for the doctor," was presently shouted along the decks, and we all trooped aft and lined up at the break of the poop.

The doctor came along the line of men and made a particular examination of each man's eyes.

"What's he looking for?" asked Bill of the steward who was standing next to him.

"Trachoma, a disease of the eyes," answered the steward. "They are very frightened of it here. When we arrived at Puget Sounds a couple of voyages ago it was just the same, and when the doctor came staring into my eyes like that I asked him if he thought I was an escaped criminal from Australia," continued Taffy, waxing indignant at the recollection.

"Perhaps he thought you were a second Butler," I suggested to Taffy.

"Butler? Who is Butler?" answered Taffy, up in arms at once, in case he was being made a fool of.

"Oh, it's too long a yarn to tell now," I answered, "but some time later on I'll let you have it."

But it was on the homeward passage that I had to tell Taffy the following true yarn.

"Butler was a man who, round about thirty years ago, advertised for a partner to go prospecting with him out back in N.S.W.

The advertisement was put in a Newcastle paper, and was answered by a man with a Master-Mariner's certificate. I forget his name now, but it was something like Weller or Welber.

Anyway, Butler accepted Weller's offer of joining forces with him, and off went the two of them up-country to go prospecting. That was the end of Weller, and some months after, Butler shipped out of Newcastle on the four-masted barque *Swanhilda* in Weller's name, and on Weller's papers. The *Swanhilda* was bound to San Francisco.

Those were the days when wireless was an unheard-of thing, but suspicions had been aroused in Newcastle, and a couple of weeks or so after the *Swanhilda* had sailed she was sighted and spoken by a steamer near Fiji, and informed that it was possible that she had Butler, the murderer of Weller, aboard, and that detectives would board her with the Health Officer on arrival at 'Frisco.

When she eventually arrived at 'Frisco, sure enough the detectives came off with the doctor, and arrested Butler while the men were lined up for medical inspection.

He was brought back to Australia in the steamer *Mariposa*. I was in Auckland when he passed through, and it was said at the time that some local ladies were so positive of his innocence that they presented him with large bouquets of flowers while the *Mariposa* lay at the Queen Street wharf.

Anyway, their fond beliefs in the man were sadly shattered, for on arrival in Australia he was tried and found guilty of the murder of Weller. He was strongly suspected of being implicated in the disappearance of several other men who had answered his advertisements to go prospecting with him. They hanged him for the murder of Weller, so that put a stop to his little schemes."

But to get back to the doctor's inspection aboard our own ship.

Not having any infectious diseases among the ship's company, we were granted *pratique*, and a tug which had now come out over the Bar took our towing-hawser aboard, and soon we were bowling along in his wake, bound for the entrance.

The mouth of the Columbia River is reputed to have one of the worst Bars in the world, but the day we crossed inwards over it, it was not so bad—in fact, the *Windsor Park* sailed in over it without the assistance of a tug and anchored shortly after us off Astoria, just inside the Heads.

"What's that away over there on the starboard hand on the sand-spit?" said Bill to me, as we were towing up to the anchorage. "It looks like a ship trying to sail on dry land."

"So it is," I answered, "it's a ship ashore all right."

The Second Mate happening to come along the deck towards us at the time, we asked him what ship it was.

"That's the *Peter Iredale*," answered the Second Mate. "The pilot said she went ashore there a week or so back. She's a gone coon now, by the look of her."

And so she was, lying there with half her sails still set, high and dry on the sand-spit. She looked very forlorn and out of her element.

It was my lot to see another ship, years afterwards, in the same sad case—only this time the scene was shifted to New Zealand. The ship was the barque *Anglo-Norman*. She had gone ashore on what was known as the "Graveyard," on the northern

side of the entrance to the Kaipara River, and here she had piled up, and was abandoned with all sail set, and drawing to a fresh sou'-west breeze.

The Kaipara Bar is another bad entrance and, like the Columbia River Bar, has claimed many a victim.

On the way in over the Bar and up to the anchorage all hands had been kept busy clearing up, hauling down and making sails fast, so that when the tug rounded us up against the tide in readiness to let go the anchor, all was snug aloft.

"Stand by your anchor, Mr. Craddock," called out the Old Man.

"Stand by the anchor," was repeated from the fo'c'sle head, to be followed a few minutes later by a roar from aft.

"Let go!" and with a roar and rattle of chain tearing out through the hawse-pipes, down plunged the great port anchor, and we swung to the tide in the mouth of the great river, with the town of Astoria jutting out on piles into the river on our port side.

We lay at anchor until the next morning, when at six o'clock it was "All hands man the capstan" once more.

"Come on, you fellows, shake a leg and get those capstan bars shipped," said the Mate, as we trooped up the fo'c'sle-head ladders in the half-dark of a cold winter's morning.

Snow was falling lightly all round and the horizon was very limited, but close up on our port quarter came a big Yankee river boat, painted white all over, with three decks and square glass windows all round her cabins, and a huge stern paddle-wheel. She looked to me the nearest approach to a big floating tram-car that I'd ever seen.

"Stand by and take the steamer's lines, you boys there," called the Mate to the apprentices who were coming out of the half-deck, and soon the big fresh-waterman was tied up alongside and ready to push us to Portland.

"Heave away, Mr. Craddock," came from aft.

"Heave away it is, sir. Now then, my lads, walk that chain in," and round and round the capstan we went to the tread of feet and clink of pawls.

"Strike up a song someone! What's the matter with a capstan chanty?" suggested Evans.

So Rawles led the way with an old favourite—"Heave away, Rolling River."

In the still morning air the old tune rose and fell and drifted away to leeward, to be listened to for a few minutes by some early risers on the Astoria waterfront who would probably dismiss the plaintive notes with a "Huh! some lime-juicer lifting her mud-hook outa' the river."

"Anchor's away, sir," called the Mate to the Old Man, who was stumping up and down the poop in his wooden clogs.

"All right, heave it right up," came the reply as the huge stern-wheel of the steamer began to splash around, and away we went up the Columbia River, with the *Harvest Queen* straining and pulling at us alongside.

Sawmill after sawmill was passed on both sides, all the way up to Portland, with three-, four- and five-masted Yankee lumber schooners laying at the wharves of most of them—filling up with great flitches of Oregon pine, destined for far-distant ports in Australia and New Zealand, Chile and Peru.

We moored the old ship that night alongside a ballast wharf at Portland.

Though it is now over twenty years since I was at Portland, Oregon, I remember it as a fine large city. It is built on both banks of the Willamette River, close to the junction of that stream and the Columbia River, and is about one hundred and twenty miles from the sea by water. Four or five bridges crossed the river in different parts of the town, and there were numerous parks and gardens and also a first-class Zoo, which we visited several times while there.

What struck me on first arriving there was the large number of Japanese and Chinese in the place; they seemed to overrun some parts of the town.

On my remarking to a resident whom I met at the Seaman's Institute that we were a long way from salt water, away up here, he told me that the river steamers traded one hundred miles farther up the Willamette and Columbia Rivers.

"By jove, the fellows running those packets would be proper fresh-water sailors," I said.

"Yes," he answered, "they could tie up to the bank every night if they wished; that's what some of you lime-juicers often wish to do, out at sea in bad weather, don't you?"

I agreed with him there, as many a time I'd heard the wish expressed that we were in a fresh-water river trade, instead of barging about all over the wide ocean.

One day, while at Portland, a party of us went with Chips in one of the boats, to get some boat spars. We pulled a good way down the river until we came to a fairly large clump of Douglas fir trees, growing right down to the bank. Making the boat fast alongside the bank, we all set off for a ramble among the huge trees, some of which towered to a great height above us.

After our long spell on shipboard, the smell of the pine woods acted like a tonic on the majority of us, and our party being comprised of mostly young fellows, soon fell to skylarking and chasing one another round and round among the trees.

Old Chips wandered about with a huge squaring axe slung over his shoulder, looking for likely saplings for boat masts.

Whenever he came to a suitable one, he felled it with a mighty slash or two of his great axe, and then would call loudly for some of us to drag it down to the boat, while he went in search of another.

We had taken some lunch with us, and at dinner-time we boiled the billy and made some hot tea. We spent a most enjoyable day getting those boat spars; in fact we treated the whole thing as a real holiday jaunt.

Certain little scenes and happenings of the past often stand out in bold relief when one looks back over the years, and tend to brighten the times we live in, when we recall them. That boat trip down the Willamette River long ago is now a treasured memory with me.

A shore gang discharged the ballast, while some of us worked with Chips, lining the hold with light planking, and covering the whole with scrim, in readiness for the wheat cargo.

The carpenter also made a new main t'gall'nt mast as the old one had rotted at the hounds of the rigging—so we sent it down and sent the new one up in its place. A cold job it was too, blowing and snowing all the time we were at it.

Stevedores loaded the wheat, and a pretty wild gang they were too, but they knew their job all right and the bags were stowed so that even had the ship been nearly on her beam ends I doubt if it would have shifted.

The usual tailors' and photographers' runners were aboard us almost as soon as the ship had berthed. These gentry were very liberal in dealing out a few dollars in cash along with whatever goods any of us purchased from them, but when the day of reckoning came, and we had to sign our sheets so that the Old

Man could square them out of each man's account before sailing day, we found that we had been robbed right and left.

However, we had to raise the wind somehow or other, as the dollar or so each we received from the Old Man every Saturday night while in port was not nearly enough to meet the average sailorman's needs for a week.

One night a crowd of us from our ship went up to the Seaman's Institute for the evening. Several ships were loaded, and waiting to be towed down to Astoria, and the shore folk were giving us a bit of a send-off. We spent a real good evening there.

The stage was fitted up with a mast and yards, the topsail-halliards leading right down the aisle between the seats in the middle of the hall.

The missionary, after a few words of welcome to the assembled crews, finished up by saying, "I'll now call on the First Mate of the ship *Port Patrick* to superintend the setting of the main upper topsail, just to show us shore-going folk how, and when, a topsail-halliard-chanty is sung."

"Now then, my lads, main upper topsail halliards," called out the Mate of the *Port Patrick*, and in a few minutes the whole length of the aisle was lined with men and boys tailing on to the halliards.

We hoisted the yard to the tune of:

"A Yankee ship sailed down a river,
Blow, boys, blow!"

and were loudly applauded by the audience.

Songs and recitations followed in quick succession, and some good talent was unearthed amongst the different ships' companies.

One item was loudly encored, though I doubt if hardly any of the British ships' crews understood the words. This was a song in French from one of the seamen off the French full-rigged ship *Saint Mirren*. "Good on you, John-France-oh!" yelled some of the boys; "give us another," but the Frenchman had given us his turn, and would not come back.

The Institute people served tea and cakes to all hands, and we parted company with those real sailors' friends, with all best wishes for a good voyage Home to the Old Country—and, as it was just on Christmas-time—all the best compliments of the season.

CHAPTER VIII

HOMEWARD BOUND

TO the howl of a rising northerly gale, with the view on deck obscured every now and again by driving snow, we were turned out next morning at six o'clock to straighten up the ship round the decks and up aloft, in readiness for our tow down to Astoria.

"Lay aft here and drag this hawser for'ard," roared the Second Mate from aft by the break of the poop—and away some of the starboard watch slouched, growling at the earliness of the hour on such a morning to start and flake heavy hawsers along the deck. With hands and fingers numbed with cold, and the heads of some, at least, suffering from the after effects of indulging in long schooners of steamed beer, and various small mugs of "Tom and Jerry," partaken the night before—no one was in the mood for such work at such an early hour.

Several of us of the Mate's watch were employed until we went to breakfast, lashing spare spars each side of the for'ard house.

"Heave those turns good and taut," said the Mate. "We don't want them floating around the main deck the first bit of bad weather we get. Frap each lashing well, and stop the ends back."

All day long we were kept at it making order out of chaos, and by evening we were all feeling like a real good rest.

During the day a couple of new men joined us in place of men who had run away, and old Slushy, our German cook who had been on a bit of a "burst," and who had been paid off by the Old Man, was replaced by a rather seedy-looking individual who claimed to hail from Erin's isle.

"Judging by looks, it seems to me as if it's a case of the blind leading the blind," said old Tom Kidd to me, pointing to old Slushy showing the new cook round the galley.

"Yes," I replied. "It certainly doesn't look as if we're going to benefit much by this change. But who in the hell's this coming aboard with the Old Man?"

"Looks like the President of the United States and his

aide-de-camp," said old Tom, as two gentlemen with fur overcoats came up the gangway.

The Old Man led them aft, and they disappeared inside the chart-house door on the poop.

"Who's that, Taffy?" we asked the steward, who had just come for'ard to the galley.

"Who? Those toffs?" said Taffy. "Why, the younger fellow is coming with us this voyage—to the Old Country. Don't know whether it's for his health, or whether he's a young wild 'un whose people want to get rid of him for a while. Anyhow, he's going to live aft and mess with the afterguard, makin' more work for me whateffer," remarked Taffy, banging some dishes down on the galley table with a great clattering to mark his displeasure.

"Well, this is our last night ashore in U.S.A.," said Bill to me, as we went ashore after tea for a last run round.

"Yes," I answered. "I suppose the next time we'll be strolling round ashore together we'll be in the Old Country somewhere.

"Let's go and have a final 'Tom and Jerry' before we go back aboard; they tell me they don't sell them in England," said Bill, as we turned the last corner to go back to the ship. So we went in for our final "*Doch and Doris*".

The bar was crowded, and we had quite a while to wait, until at last a barman found time to serve us.

"Vos you two jung fellers pelong to vun of dose Got-tam lime-yuicers vot is loaded und vaiting to tow down to Astoria in te morning?" asked a big raw-boned Swede who was standing next to Bill.

"You've struck it," said Bill; "you seem to have a hell of a set on lime-juicers too."

"Of course I've got a set on them," said the Swede; "they are the most miserablest sheeps I've ever sailed in, de lousy British b——s. It takes us Janks to show dem de way how."

"Does it?" said Bill. "Well, try that to show *you* the way how—from a Colonial Britisher—you white-washed Yank from the Baltic."

Well, before you could say "Jack Robinson" we were in the thick of one of the toughest scraps I've ever been in.

The bar was full of white-washed Yanks, from Norway, Sweden, and other Baltic countries, and it would have gone ill

for us against such odds, had not the Yankee police arrived on the scene in good numbers, and laid about them right and left with their batons.

During the general hubbub, Bill and I managed to slip out unobserved, and made our way back to the ship.

Here there seemed to have been trouble also, as most of the port watch were nursing wounds in the fo'c'sle, and discussing some big battle with another ship's crowd who had been aboard on a kind of farewell visit.

The Second Mate was walking up and down the deck under the boat-skids aft, threatening to annihilate all and sundry should they attempt to come up the gangway.

But unluckily for him, just as he had worked himself up into a good fighting pitch—the last of the 'Tom and Jerry's' within him calling loudly to his muddled brain for just one more strenuous bout—the Old Man mounted the gangway, coming aboard after attending a final send-off from his friends ashore.

The Second Mate, thinking he was one of the enemy, crept along in the shadow of the bulwarks, and just as the Old Man put his foot on the deck he stopped a whack on the point of his chin which sent him staggering across the deck.

Pulling himself together, he went for the Second Mate like a wild bull.

"God-damn-hell, what is the meaning of this?" he roared, sailing into the Second Mate. Bang! "I'll teach you." Bang! "To treat me like this on my own deck whateffer!" Bang! The Second Mate, too late, realized his mistake, and was trying to make his apologies, but the Old Man would have none of it.

"Get to your room, you drunken reprobate, I'll disrate you in the morning for this. To your room, you jumped-up brass-bounder." He was boiling with rage.

And the Second Mate stood not on the order of his going.

"All hands on deck, stand by the tug-boat's lines. Come on, you fellows, lively now," called out the Mate into the fo'c'sle door next morning about six o'clock, and tumbling out, we saw in the dim morning light a great stern-wheeler coming alongside us—the counterpart of the river-boat that had brought us up from Astoria.

After making the steamer fast alongside on the port side, we of the Mate's watch all made for the fo'c'sle head in readiness to take in the headlines.

"Let go everything for'ard, Mr. Craddock," called the Old Man from aft.

"Let go everything it is, sir," replied the Mate, and for a while we were kept busy hauling in the heavy wire hawsers which had been holding the ship to the wharf. The ship's head swung out into mid-stream, and with steam escaping from the tug's exhausts, and sounding two prolonged blasts on her whistle to let other craft know that we were altering our course to port, we were once more headed for the open sea.

When all hands went to breakfast we were well on our way down the river—the *Oklahoma* tugging at us alongside and leaving a wake astern as broad as a main highway.

When we at last let go our anchor once more off Astoria, everyone aboard was feeling more fit and ready for the long voyage ahead of us, "Home, round Cape Horn."

We spent Christmas Day swinging to our anchor off Astoria.

A steamer came alongside from Portland, and dumped a whole lot of good things aboard from the Institute people, a last gift to us before sailing.

Besides a big heap of good eatable stuff and tobacco, there were piles of mufflers, socks, mitts and gloves, which were greatly appreciated by all hands. I got a pair of leather gloves, lined with wool, which I would not have parted with down off Cape Stiff for half my pay.

There was not much work done between Christmas and New Year's Day—the weather was bad, blowing and snowing the whole time.

The ship *Rajore* came back into port after having been out a week; she had had a bad time outside.

On New Year's Eve all hands trooped aft at a late hour and sang, "For he's a jolly good fellow," which had the desired effect of causing the Old Man to send the steward out with a tot of rum for the crowd.

The day after New Year's Day, the weather having moderated, it was "All hands man the windlass" at an early hour, as the tug could be seen coming to take us out over the Bar.

We hove the chain in with a right good will. There was no need this time for the Mate to call for a song.

"We're Homeward Bound, I hear them say,
Good-bye. Fare you well—Good-bye. Fare you well."

How we sang it, making the cold frosty air fairly ring with its old-time melody!

"Rolling Home to Merry England."

"Give us Rolling Home, someone," and up started old Tom Kidd with that old song that deep-water sailors loved so well:

"Call all hands to man the capstan,
See your cable runs all clear,
For the first thing in the morning
For old England we will steer.

CHORUS:

Rolling Home, Rolling Home,
Rolling home across the sea.
Rolling home to Merry England,
Rolling home, dear land, to thee.

If you'll all heave with a will, boys,
Soon our anchor we will trip,
And across the deep blue ocean
We will steer our gallant ship.

CHORUS:

Rolling Home. . . .

Farewell now, to Portland's daughters,
We would give a fond adieu,
But we'll not forget the sweet hours
That we've spent along with you.

CHORUS:

Cheer up, Jack, bright smiles await you,
And the lass you leave behind,
Rolling Home to Merry England
Where are friends both dear and kind.

CHORUS:

And the wide blue seas around us
Seem to murmur as we go
Homeward, Homeward, ever Homeward,
To the land that we love so."

There were several more verses to this old favourite, but the anchor was away, and soon up to the hawse-pipe, so old Tom had

to belay, and now we were off once more, thirteen thousand miles, and Old England at the end of it.

CHORUS:

"For it's time to clear and quit
When the hawser grips the bitt,
And we'll pay you with the fore-sheet
And a promise from the Sea."

Away ahead on a long tow-line went the tug, and as she neared the Bar we could see her begin to lift and roll as the ocean swell came pounding in over the entrance.

At one minute the long steel wire hawser and heavy cable-laid coir spring would be bar-tight as both vessels rose on the tops of the seas, and then, with a splash, they would sink right under out of sight, to appear again with the water dripping from them the whole length as the strain came upon them once more.

Away to port on the sand-spit still lay the wreck of the *Peter Iredale*, her tattered sails still hanging from her yards, as though in mute protest at this dire fate that had befallen them and the gallant ship they had been so proud to drive.

No more would eight bells peel out the hour along her decks, and the watches muster at the break of the poop and answer the roll-call.

No more would she feel the steady onward thrust of the strong Trade winds, or scud under lower topsails past the Diego Ramirez, or work her way through the Doldrums until the Channel was reached, and Queenstown or Falmouth anchorage made. No, her day was done and here on Astoria Bar she would lie and fall to pieces—but what would you? She died in harness, and no coal-hulk mooring would hold her as they did so many of her kind.

The same thoughts were evidently running through old Tom's mind, as after watching her for a bit, he turned and said to me quietly, "May we never grow to be old and helpless, but die in harness as the *Peter Iredale* has done."

"Loose all the topsails," came the order from aft.

"Now then, my lads, up aloft with you and shake those sails out," called the Mate.

And soon the work of making all sail was in progress as we cleared the Bar, and stood well to seaward in the wake of the tug.

The three topsail halliards were manned and yards mast-

headed to the tune of such well-known chanties as "A long time ago, Ranzo, Boys, Ranzo" and "Blow, Boys, Blow."

With yards just off the backstays, and all plain sail set, we let go the tug-boat's line, and, dipping our Ensign in answer to her three blasts of farewell from her whistle, we stretched out on the starboard tack, heading well off-shore on the first leg of our long passage.

"Round the Horn and home again, that's the sailor's way," said old Tom to me as the port watch went below, when everything was cleared up round the decks.

. . . . .

"Now then, below there, you sleepers. Rise—and—shine, another—time!"

Turning over in my warm snug bunk I listened again, still only half convinced that we were at sea again. But sure enough there was one of the men from the starboard watch in dripping oilskins and sea-boots standing at the entrance of our doorway doing his best to rouse the recumbent figures of the port watch. They all lay stretched out in their bunks, one above the other, sleeping the sleep of dog-tired men.

"What about it? Is nobody going to stir at all this watch?" he cried out again. "Rise and shine, rise and shine. Come on, now, my hearties."

"You go to hell, we're all awake. Who the hell could sleep with you standing there yelling for all you're worth?" came in a deep growl from Thompson's bunk.

"All right, I'll leave you to it now, then, only don't say as how you weren't called when eight bells strikes, that's all," replied the disturber of the peace, making for the deck through the lee fo'c'sle door.

As an afterthought, he put his head inside the door once more and called out, "You'll want oilskins and sea-boots this watch, boys, it's blowing and raining like one thing."

A couple of the new hands who had been shipped just before we left Portland had come aboard pretty well "parish rigged," to use an old sailor term for a man going to sea short of clothes.

"Strike me pink," said old Tom, as he dug up an old coat for one of them out of his sea-chest, while another of us fitted his mate out with an old oilskin coat and a muffler, "some of you coves come to sea like as if you were going to church these days.

Did you think we were going to get flying-fish weather all the way this voyage?"

All arguments were dropped, however, when eight bells clanged out loudly from the big bell on the fo'c'sle-head and the watch trooped out on deck in hard-weather, deep-water regalia. There we stood in oilskins, sou'westers, sea-boots and soul-and-body lashings—these last being lashings of rope or spun-yarn round the legs of the oilskin trousers, and round the sleeves of the coat just above the wrists, and one also round the middle to stop the coat from blowing over a man's head as he lay out on the yards furling sail.

Out on deck the night was black and wild looking.

The ship was heeling over to a strong breeze and bucking and jumping into a high head sea, slinging showers of spray and sea-spume over the fo'c'sle head and as far aft as the main rigging.

All hands mustered at the break of the poop, the roll was called, and then came the Mate's "Relieve the wheel and look-out."

It was my wheel, and as I stepped up on to the grating behind Rawles of the starboard watch, he gave me "Full and bye" to steer by.

"Full and bye," I replied, and then I asked him, "How's she steering?"

"Taking a lot of weather helm. She'll be better when they get that cro'-jack off her," he answered.

Getting a good hold of the wheel I found that what Rawles had told me was correct, and at times it took me all my time to keep her out of the wind.

The Old Man had evidently asked to be called at midnight, as he was stumping up and down the weather side of the poop when I took the wheel.

Presently he came along and took a glance into the binnacle.

"What's she making?" he asked me after watching the compass swinging in its gimbals for a few minutes.

"Sou'-sou'-west, sir," I replied.

"'Hum, steering hard?" he asked.

"She's taking a lot of weather helm," I answered.

He stumped forward to the break of the poop where the Mate was standing and after a few minutes' talk I saw him disappear inside the lee chart-house door.

The Mate came aft, and stood by the weather side of the wheel-grating. "Hard on the helm, Avery?"

"Yes, sir, she is a bit heavy at times in the squalls."

"Right oh, we'll ease her a bit," said the Mate, going for'ard to the break of the poop and calling out to the watch, "Haul the cro'-jack up," and shortly afterwards I heard the order—"Up aloft and make it fast, some of you."

Shadowy forms were soon to be seen ascending the weather mizzen rigging, and sundry remarks and orders were passed between those on the yard.

"Now then, boys, up with the bunt of her, altogether now, on deck! Take another pull on the weather clew-garnet."

At last the sail was furled snug on the yard, and the ship was much easier on the helm.

The squalls increased as the watch wore on, but there was no sign of shortening sail as far as the Mate was concerned.

I could see his tall frame pacing up and down the weather side of the poop, stopping now and then with his sou'wester off—and held in his hand—the better to feel the strength of the wind with his bared head.

One heavy blast succeeded another, but she was going her course, and blow high or blow low, the mate was not taking any sail off her until absolutely forced to do so. We were making a good ten knots and this was good going for our old ship, with the yards just off the backstays.

"Let her ramp," said the Mate to me, "we'll make the best use of this wind now we've got it, so don't let even your t'gall'nt-sails lift, keep her a good full."

"Aye, aye, sir," I replied, getting my knee under a spoke to ease my hands in getting the wheel up a bit further.

Three bells tinkled from the small bell on the break of the poop, and I could see the boy who was keeping the time slip down the lee poop ladder.

The echo came from for'ard, and also the lookout's assuring hail of "All's—well. Lights—burning—brightly, sir."

Half an hour to go and I would be relieved. It was hard work at the wheel tonight and I would not be sorry when my trick was over.

Suddenly, without a word of warning, we heard a yell from the look-out, "Hard up! Hard up your helm! Light right ahead! Hard up the helm! A big ship is right on top of us."

"Hard up! Hard over!" roared the Mate, rushing to help me at the wheel. "I see her," he gasped, "just over the weather

cat-head now. Keep putting her over. Thank God we're going off quickly, and he's luffing."

I stole a glance over my right shoulder and there she was. A huge four-masted barque with painted ports, carrying all plain sail, even to royals above her double t'gall'nt-sails.

She was coming up into the wind as she passed us to windward, and the slatting and banging of her sails and gear was deafening.

She surged past in a swelter of foam and a babel of sound. Orders fast and furious were being flung to and fro around her decks, while we were momentarily bereft of the brave wind that had been chasing us along, by her lofty spread of canvas coming to windward of us.

"Watch her now—watch her, as we pick up the wind again—don't let her come too high," cautioned the Mate, as with a crack like the shot out of a gun the wind took hold of us again and stretched our sails out stiff like curved boards, and sent us once more reeling along on our way.

In the middle of the excitement of the other ship nearly running into us, the Old Man came up from below and stood by the weather poop rail in pyjamas and dressing-gown, watching our own and the other ship's movements. But not a word did he say until she was past and clear.

Then turning round, he said to the Mate, "You did not recognise her, did you?"

"No, sir, I could not place her," answered the mate. "He was on the giving way tack, however, his lights must have been out, and just lit as he sighted us. I did not notice him until he was right on top of us, and our look-out reported him at the same time. It was a narrow shave whatever."

"It was," agreed the Old Man, "and one that I would not like to have repeated too often."

Turning round at the chart-house door, he said to the Mate, "Hang on to all that she will carry while she is going her course, and give me a call if there is any change."

"Very good, sir," replied Mr. Craddock, walking for'ard and taking up his point of vantage once more by the weather mizzen rigging.

By and by I heard him call out, "Evans! Evans! Are you keeping the time?"

"Yes, sir," replied Evans, coming up the lee poop ladder at the double.

"Well, make it four bells then. It's five minutes after it now. If I catch you boys sleeping when you're time-keeping, I'll make you put the watch in aloft overhauling buntlines."

A young Swede who had shipped in Portland came along and relieved me at four bells. I gave him "Full and bye" to steer by, and repeating the same to the Mate as I passed him at the break of the poop, I quickly joined the rest of the watch who were sheltering in snug corners round the decks.

"That was one of the nearest goes I've ever had of being run down," said old Tom Kidd to me as we walked the decks together, during the last hour of our watch on deck.

"Yes," I replied, "it was touch and go all right."

"I had one experience of making a boat voyage in mid-ocean and I don't want another," said Tom, as we paced up and down together.

"Well, at the rate we were both travelling, and the sea that is running tonight, you may not have even had a chance to make a boat voyage, had we hit that big fellow a little while ago," I said.

"No, that is so," said Tom.

"And then think of the disasters that have happened at sea, even in broad daylight, and often only a few have been saved," I remarked.

"Yes," Tom replied, "I remember I was in Portsmouth when the frigate *Eurydice* capsized when approaching Spithead. She was returning from an exercising cruise to the West Indies, as she was a sea-going training-ship for young seamen of the Royal Navy. The Old Man was evidently hanging on to a lot of sail, as when she got close in under the land a violent squall caught her unprepared and capsized her within a few minutes. They said afterwards that her lower deck gunports were open, and that when she heeled over suddenly they had no time to get them closed, and she quickly filled and sank."

"Who was captain of her, Tom?" I asked.

"Captain Hare, I think, if I remember rightly. I believe he wrote a poem some time previously called 'Sorrow on the Sea'."

"Why, it seems as if he must have had a premonition of some disaster awaiting him, to write a poem with a title like that," I said.

"Yes," answered old Tom. "And it *was* a disaster, too," he

added. "Out of three hundred and twenty-eight men only two were saved alive. I remember their names now, as if it were only yesterday that it happened."

"Do you, Tom; who were they?" I asked.

"An A.B. named Benjamin Cuddiford, of Plymouth, and a boy named Sydney Fletcher, of Bristol," answered old Tom.

"How long ago did it happen?" I inquired, as we continued pacing up and down the deck.

"It was on a Sunday, 24th of March, I think, in the year 1878," answered my old watch-mate. "I remember it quite well, and the stir it caused at the time."

"I should think you *would* remember a disaster like that; fancy all those men being lost, and so near home too, it seems hardly credible," I said, half to myself and half aloud.

"But what about that boat voyage you spoke of, Tom. When did that happen, and what ship were you in then?" I asked the old fellow as we paced up and down, up and down.

Often and often I recall those walks with an old shipmate, while keeping the night watches at sea.

How vividly the scenes return—the steady tramp on a clean, moonlit deck, the caulked deck seams showing up like straight pencilled lines, the pronounced slant under foot as the ship heeled to the press of a cloud of canvas, in the steady Trade wind.

The towering pyramids of canvas above us, casting shadows which swayed back and forth across the deck, as the ship breasted the long ocean swell.

The rush of white swirling water speeding away astern overside, and the wide stretch of lone dark ocean away out to leeward, over the lee t'gall'nt rail lit up here and there in a silvery sheen by the light of the tropic moon.

And then again, in more stormy latitudes, when our walks were often interrupted by the cry of "In upper t'gall'nt-sails and make them fast!" or some similar order.

Often on these nights, it would be too cold to sit about in some corner idle, if there were no wheel or lookout to be kept, or sail drill to keep one warm.

Those were the nights when we had to take the risk of a ducking by a flying sea over the weather rail, as we paced the slippery decks, and our walks now were not the pleasant even pacings of the Trade wind weather.

But still we always paced the watches out with a favourite

shipmate, and many were the good old yarns spun on these occasions.

I call to mind how, years after I had given up deep-water sailoring, when going as passenger in a coastal steamer, I was beguiling the time by taking a walk on deck by myself before turning in for the night.

Presently I was approached by a steward, "Would you care for a cup of hot coffee before going below?" he inquired. And on my thankfully accepting the offer, he said, "I could pick you for a sailorman by your walk, and that was the reason I came and asked you."

Yes, the walks and talks of the night watches at sea in the days of sail, what old sea-dog does not remember them?

But to get back to old Tom and his boat voyage.

"Well, lad," he said slowly, "that's a good while ago now, but as near as I can remember it was when I was homeward bound in the full-rigged ship——from 'Frisco, with wheat, same cargo as we have now, and pretty nearly the same voyage, only now we are coming from a little farther north.

We had made a good run to the Line, and had worked down to about twenty south, and were in the vicinity of longitude one hundred and thirty-five west.

'Too far to the westward,' I had overheard the Old Man say irritably to the Mate one day, after working out the position.

'We must make some easting, Mister; keep her up all you can until we pick up the westerlies,' he had ordered.

But it was easier said than done.

Besides the south-east Trade wind heading her off all the time, a strong current must have been setting to the westward also.

One night we were bowling along on the port tack with all plain sail set, steering 'full and bye' and keeping her a good clean full too, so she was running through the water at a good pace.

I was a 'farmer' that night," said old Tom, "not having any wheel or look-out, I was not bothering much about anything," he continued.

"I was counting up my pay-day, I think, and had just about made it up to nearly thirty-five pounds, when strike me up a mulberry tree! Bumpety-bump she goes, hard and fast up on some blasted coral reef. You never saw such an unholy mess in all your born days," said old Tom.

He went on, "When she struck, down came the fore-t'gall'nt

mast with all its gear, making the for'ard end of the old packet look as if she'd been struck by a typhoon, wreckage everywhere. Out from the fo'c'sle tumbled the watch below in undress uniform.

'What the hell's the matter?' yelled a dago in his shirt tails, catching me by the arm.

'Can't you see what's the matter? The bloody ship's ashore,' I answered him, shaking him clear and making aft to see what was doing."

Old Tom strode up and down for a while without speaking, his mind far away. The old fellow was thinking back over the years.

"You must have been in among some of the coral reefs of the Low Archipelago, Tom," I suggested, as I mentally visualised the map of that part of the South-east Pacific Ocean.

"No," Tom replied, "the Old Man reckoned it was an outlying reef in the Gambier Group. Lucky for us there was not much of a sea running at the time we struck, and the old ship never budged an inch after grounding. She must have slid up on to a shelving bank of coral and there she stopped.

The Old Man roared out for Chips to sound the well, and on his reporting that the ship was not making any great amount of water, the Old Man decided to let everything stand over till daylight."

"How did you get on, then?" I asked.

"Well, when the morning came we could see that we were ashore on the fringing reef of a low-lying island about half a mile off. There was a lagoon between us and the island, which was only about half a mile long; not much better than a reef it was, only it was covered with coconut trees and heavy undergrowth.

We got the boats into the water at daylight, and loaded them all with food and water, and set off on our first trip to the island.

The Old Man kept us at it all day, bringing stuff ashore from the ship."

"He was frightened she'd break up at the first change for bad weather, eh?" I suggested.

"Yes," answered Tom. "And he was right, too, for when a couple of days after it did start to breeze up, and the seas began to sweep across her, it did not take long to make a sorry-looking picture of our fine old ship.

A gale of wind from the nor'-west flattened the old packet right out about a week after we had landed, leaving only the bare hull of her broken in halves, hanging on to the reef.

Our trouble was fresh water, as there was none to be found on the island. The Old Man put us all on an allowance as soon as we landed.

Of course we had brought as much ashore in casks as we could, but even then it would not last for ever."

"I suppose the coconuts would have been a great help towards conserving your fresh water, though?" I said, thinking of my own experiences while in the South Sea Island trade.

"Yes, they were," answered my old shipmate. "By the Lord Harry, though, we even had to go easy with them, as the island was so small, and twenty-five men would soon have made a hole in their numbers if we had not been strongly advised by the Old Man and the Mate not to use any more of them than was absolutely necessary."

"What did you do to put the time in, while you were stranded there?" I asked him.

"Do?" said old Tom rather impatiently. "Any God's amount to do, my boy," he continued.

"We hadn't been ashore more'n about two days, when the Mate sets to with Chips and Sails to convert one of the lifeboats into an ocean-going yacht.

'Look here, boys,' says the Mate. 'Look you,' he says, 'we might stay on this blasted coral bank for six months or twelve months, or possibly years, waiting for a ship to come close enough to see us and take us off. Don't forget lads,' says he, 'the Lord helps them that help themselves. So we'll help ourselves by getting a boat into sea-going order, and when she's ready I'll call for volunteers to come with me in her. We'll make for Papeete, where there'll be a chance of getting a schooner to come back in, and take off those who are left behind.'

That Mate, he was a tiger for work," said Tom. "I can see him now, a big hefty young fellow from Swansea, slogging in at that boat-building job with Chips, a tall Scotty from Leith. Work, they did work, and kept us all at it, too. We pulled one of the smaller boats to pieces, and used her planking to half-deck the lifeboat, and let me tell you," said Tom with emphasis, "our carpenter was a first-rate boat-builder. He made a rattling good job of it, and then we rigged her yawl-rigged, with a small yard and a square-sail for setting on the fore when running.

The day came when she was ready for sea, and I remember now how proud the Mate was of her," said Tom. "He said he'd

be game to run the easting down in her," said Tom; "and he meant it, too, let me tell you," he added.

"Roughly speaking we would have six or seven hundred miles to do in a west-nor'-west direction, but the mate was confident that the boat would make Papeete as comfortably as the old ship herself would have done," Tom continued.

But his story was halted at this point—the big bell on the fo'c'sle head clanged once, in answer to the time being struck on the poop bell.

"I'll have to spin the rest of that yarn another time," said Tom, as the other watch began to come out on deck in readiness to muster for the midnight roll-call at the break of the poop.

It was a few nights later that old Tom continued his yarn. We were pacing the weather main deck once more in our watch on deck.

"Yes," said old Tom, "when that boat was at last ready for the long trip ahead of her, our mate was as proud of her as a child would be with a new toy.

At the last minute the Old Man reckoned that it would be just as well for all concerned if the Second Mate sailed in her, in case, he said, of anything happening to the Mate. Just as well to have another navigator aboard, the Old Man said.

So there were the two Mates, Andrew, a Russian Finn, Bob French, a young chap from Deal, and myself, five in all for the crew of the boat.

The Mate would not carry any more hands on account of the food and water supply having to be so much more, so with all sorts of best wishes from those left behind, away we went with a good fair wind from about due east. By the Lord Harry, that boat could fairly slip through the water," said old Tom.

"At the end of the third day out the Mate reckoned we had run about three hundred and fifty miles on our course, and that is not bad going for a small boat. On the fourth night, however, things began to change for the worse. The wind swung round into the north, raising a big lump of a sea, and conditions became pretty uncomfortable aboard our little hooker.

The Mate gave orders to shorten down, which we did, and then we ran on for a while under a double-reefed mainsail.

Our Mate was a splendid seaman, and luckily for us he was a great man at handling a small boat under sail, a thing you can't say for many deep-water sailors. There he sat at the tiller nursing

20. Deck scene on four-masted barque *Pamir*. Taken by the author's nephew, who was apprentice on board

21. "A fair wind and following sea". Scene from *Manuui*

that little bit of a boat in a sea that was running high enough to swamp her a hundred times over. It was just the tail-end of the hurricane season, and the Mate reckoned that it was quite likely we were in for a proper dusting.

He sent the Second Mate to have a look at the barometer, and when he heard that the reading was 29.55, he told the Second Mate to watch it all the time.

By this time the gale had increased to such a force that we had, on the Mate's orders, taken in the sail altogether, and put the sea-anchor out, with oil bags streaming out on each bow. During the night the gale reached hurricane force, and the barometer fell to 28.55. This was the lowest reading, but the gale blew harder than ever. We were tossed and flung about like a cork.

With much difficulty we unstepped both the little masts, as we thought they would get snapped clean off by the weight of the wind. It was an awful night," said old Tom.

"The howling gale and the teeming rain made it impossible to talk, the words would be forced back into our throats. Everything we wanted to let one another know had to be done by signs.

The Mate yelled into the Second's ear that we were on the left-hand side of the centre of the storm.

The Second Mate told me that the wind would change very shortly, and all of a sudden it did, chopping right round into the south from north-east."

"Yes," I said, interrupting him, "there is a rhyme in connection with the laws of storms that tells you how to find the centre of one of those hurricanes. I think it goes like this:

> For *centre*, first the wind you face;
> Eight points to *left* show's centre's place.
> And next, when on storm's *right-hand* track
> The wind is always found to back.
> Then to storm's *left*, it's very clear
> The wind is always bound to veer."

"Well, that's handy to know," said old Tom. "Where did you pick that up?"

"In an old book on the laws of storms we were looking at the other day. Evans had it stowed away in his sea-chest, and he has lent it to me," I replied.

"Huh," said Tom, "shouldn't wonder as how we'll have a long passage this trip, with all you would-be navigators aboard."

"Well, how did you get on with the gale you were speaking of?" I asked, ignoring his sarcasm.

"Well, it blew itself out in the following afternoon, but not until it had put the fear of God into every one of us. *Blow*, it *did* blow! It blew as hard from the south-west as what it had from the north-east. You can imagine the pickle we were in, in that small boat with the cross sea that was set up. The seas came at us from all directions, and all the oil in the world wouldn't have kept them down. They just reared up over our heads, as it were, and fairly fell all over us.

It was a good thing we had had a good boat-builder on the job of decking the lifeboat in.

We needed all the strong deck beams he had put into her, in that sea, I can tell you.

Andrew the Finn got down on his knees and prayed that the sea would go down, and I've heard tell as how Russian Finns can control the weather. They're all wrong. Andrew had no more hope of controlling that wind and sea than he had of jumping to the moon. However, about eight bells in the afternoon watch the next day it blew itself out, as I told you.

As the sea began to go down we stepped the masts again, and put sail on to our little packet once more, as the wind had worked round into the south, and still gave us a good slant well abaft the beam.

With the sails set, and a moderate steady breeze blowing once more, we were able to get things ship-shape below in our little cabin.

Here everything had been turned topsy-turvy, blankets and bedding being messed up with tea, biscuits, flour and coconuts. It was an unholy mess, and no mistake. The sea-water had got into nearly everything. The blankets were wet, and the foodstuffs half spoiled, the only things that it hadn't harmed being the coconuts.

However, we set to work and made as good a job of cleaning up the wreck before nightfall as we possibly could, and when all was fairly straight once more the mate suggested that we should have a good cup of hot coffee all round, with some of the driest of the biscuits for our supper.

It was Bob French who made the sad discovery about the fresh water. He goes to fill the little kettle that we had brought with us—we had a small kerosene stove from the cabin aboard

for cooking purposes—and Bob was going to boil the water, and make the coffee.

'Well, I'll go to hell,' says he. 'Who left the bung out of the water breaker? All the water is brackish now; taste that, sir,' he says, handing a dipper full up to the Mate.

The Mate tasted it and spat it out. 'It's brackish all right. How did that happen?' he asked. 'Oh, I see, in the rolling and knocking about, and hauling the sails and gear over it, the bung has been knocked out, and nobody noticed it; we should have had the cask housed inside the cabin, instead of out here in the cockpit. Well, it's no use crying about it now boys,' he said, 'We've still got that little ten-gallon cask stowed away up in the bows, where the salt water couldn't get at it, and from now on we'll have to go on an allowance with that and the green coconut milk. Damn good job we brought such a big stock of them with us, even if they do take up a lot of room,' he said.

So it was a pretty dry and thirsty boat's crew we were at times after that big blow. The weather was fine for the remainder of the passage, but the heat in the middle of the day, especially when there was little or no wind, played up the devil with us.

Our drinking supply got lower and lower in spite of the Mate dealing it out very carefully, and by the Lord, how we did long for a real good drink when the sun was shining down fiercely on us during the middle part of the day.

At last things began to look serious, the coconuts were all done, and there was only about a gallon of fresh water left in the cask.

The Mate and the Second Mate had a long confab one morning, after studying the chart for an hour or more. 'There's only one thing to do now,' said the Mate, 'and that's make for the nearest island.'

'How do we know there's going to be water on them when we do strike one?' said the Second Mate.

'Well, I chips in,' said old Tom, 'if there's no water there'll most likely be plenty of coconuts, and they'll keep us alive, won't they?'

'The thing now is which land to make for, there are any God's amount of islands hereabouts; look here,' said the Mate, pointing to the chart, 'here is Tekokoto or Doubtful Island.'

'Doubtful Island?' says the Second Mate, 'sounds a bit as if they're not sure of it being there, doesn't it?'

'Probably it's not, either,' said the Mate. And then he started

to tell us of an island in the Friendly Group, which sometimes was there and sometimes was not," said old Tom, continuing his narrative.

"Yes," I replied, "your Mate was right, the island he meant would be Falcon Island in the Tongan Group; it is volcanic, and active at that. I've seen it several times when I was in the Island trade out of Auckland. It has disappeared altogether on several occasions, I believe, but it always pops up again."

"Well, I'm glad we didn't land on it," said old Tom, "I don't like those queer kind of places."

"Well, how did you get on? Did you get a landing on any of those islands you were talking about?" I asked.

"No," he answered.

"The Mate said besides Doubtful Island there were Croker Island and Bird Island nearby, and so we set our course for the nearest. I forget where he was making for now, but we didn't fetch it all the same.

Up springs the breeze from the north'ard, and drives us away to the south'ard; we made a little westing though, and after a few more days of thirst and misery we sighted land and made for it, using the oars as well as the sails. We were getting desperate, I can tell you."

"Did you make it?" I asked, curious to know the outcome of Tom's long voyage.

"Yes, thank God, we did, but only after a hell of a battle for it," answered the old fellow.

"It turned out to be an island in the Tubai Group, called Vavitao. There were reefs all round the damn place, and very strong tide rips. The mate said there was a good harbour, round on the nor'west side, so we made for it. After a hard and tiring pull we got inside, and found a well-sheltered harbour.

It wasn't a very big island, but high and thickly wooded, and here we had a really good spell. Plenty to eat and drink, and the natives did all they could for us.

I was sorry when the day came for us to leave," said old Tom, staring away out over the tumbling ocean, and probably thinking of the Island friends he made at Vavitao.

"But the Mate was set on getting to Papeete, and chartering a small schooner to go back for our marooned shipmates; so off we went on our way once more, but this time with a good supply of water well stowed, as well as plenty of tucker.

From Vavitao we made a good run in our boat to the north'ard, as the south-east Trade winds were beginning to set in again, and blew fairly strong, well out on our quarter.

We sighted the high land of Tahiti early one morning, and we must have been fifty or sixty miles off. The loftiest peak, 'Orohena,' is over seven thousand feet in height, and can be seen a very long distance off.

The Mate hauled the boat's head up till it looked as if the course we were steering would take us past the island altogether, and away to the eastward.

'What's the idea?' I asked the Second Mate.

'Well, if we were to head straight for Papeete harbour from here, we should have to row the boat the greater part of the way,' said the Second Mate. 'The peaks of Tahiti rise to such a height that they divert the regular Trade winds, and cause calms to leeward of the islands for a great distance. We are going to pass to the eastward of the island, and then run along its northern coast-line to the entrance of the harbour at Papeete,' said the Second Mate. "By doing this we will keep a good steady breeze with us all the way, and won't have to take to the oars at all."

"I was glad to hear that," said old Tom, "but that just shows the average deep-water sailor doesn't know much about finding his way round for all the long voyages he may have done. If I'd been in charge of that boat, I'd have headed straight for Tahiti as soon as I sighted it," said old Tom.

"Yes, and pulled the boat for miles and miles through calms, under a tropical sun," I remarked.

"Of course. But our Mate was a good man, and knew his job from A to Z. Looking back, I still think of him as one of the best seamen I've ever sailed with," said Tom. "Well, anyhow, we kept that good breeze, and sailed our boat right in through the reefs to Papeete.

It was a Sunday morning when we arrived. I remember it quite well—as the church bells were ringing when we pulled in towards a little jetty not far from the mail steamer's berth.

The Frenchies gave us quite a good reception. They gave the two Mates a room up at one of the hotels, while Andrew, Bob and I were allowed to use a small empty house over near the ship-building yards."

"Did you go back to the island with the Mate in a schooner to get the rest of the crew?" I asked.

"No, none of us did," said Tom. "The Second Mate went home in a mail steamer via San Francisco. Andrew the Russian Finn went native. The last time I heard of him, he was living away up in the hills with the natives. Bob French went up to the Marquesas in a pearling schooner. I took the place of an A.B. who dropped dead from sunstroke in Papeete on a Sydney-bound steamer—which I left there—and shipped deep-water again out of Newcastle, N.S.W.

The Mate went back to the island on a Tahitian schooner with a native crew, and brought the whole crew back to Papeete, months after we'd all left there. I heard this while in Sydney."

"So that was the end of your boat voyage, Tom?" I remarked.

"Yes, that was the end of it, and I'm not looking for any more," said the old fellow.

"Have you heard the news about Louis—that passenger fellow—who came aboard with so much swank in Portland?" asked Evans, coming along to where old Tom and I were walking up and down.

"No, what is it?" we asked.

"Well, he has turned out to be a bit of a bad egg," said Evans, "and the Old Man is kicking him out of the cabin in the morning."

"Why, what has he been up to?" I asked. "I thought his father was a great friend of the Old Man."

"So he is, but that doesn't alter the fact that his son is a bit of a stinker," said Evans. "While we were laying off Astoria, the Mate missed several of his belongings. One day he took a look through Louis' gear on the quiet, and sure enough he found his silver-mounted cigarette-holder, and several other little articles that he valued, stowed away in Louis' box.

He didn't say anything at the time, but when the Second Mate and steward began losing things, the Mate got hold of Mr. Louis and took him to the Old Man's room, where, in front of the Old Man, he admitted it all.

So now they're chucking him out of the cabin. The worst of it is, they are putting him into the half-deck with us fellows, and if that's the sort of a coon he is, even a fellow's 'whack' won't be safe."

"Well, knock seven bells out of him if he comes those games when he gets with you," I replied.

"We'll do that all right," said Evans, slipping away to make it one bell.

CHAPTER IX

SAILMAKING AND YARNING

IN the days of the deep-water sailing-ships, work was commenced early on the homeward-bound voyage, alow and aloft, in order to bring the ship into her final port of discharge in first-class order, all "ship-shape and Bristol fashion," as the old sea saying puts it.

One of our first jobs on this voyage was to get all our standing and running rigging into good order, before we blackened down aloft. This was real sailorising work, and work that every real sailorman took a pride in.

We would spend watch after watch, when the weather allowed it, perched high aloft with marline-spike and ditty bag, repairing seizings, parcelling or serving chafed rigging, seeing to foot-ropes and stirrups, lifts, braces and gaskets. We would examine and overhaul all the hundred and one little intricacies and gadgets that go to form part of the network of gear in the make-up of a full-rigged ship's top-hamper.

To a landsman it would all appear to be a maze of ropes and rigging leading to nowhere in particular, a kind of Chinese puzzle, but to the "Sailor of the Sail" it was a work of art, a thing of beauty, and therefore, to him, a joy for ever.

Many and many a time have I seen old Mates, and sometimes young ones too, both at sea and in port, after a long day's work with a good willing crowd overhauling everything aloft, lay over the poop rail, pipe in mouth, and gaze long and lovingly aloft at the work of their hands. Many a kindred spirit these same mates had in those days among the men for'ard. The old-time sailor, officer or man, was fiercely proud of his ship and every stitch, spar and line in her.

To our watch was entrusted the care of the fore-mast and all the gear belonging to it, and great was the rivalry between us and the starboard watch as to who should have their masts looking most ship-shape.

The apprentices looked after the mizzen mast under the Mate's careful supervision, and most of the two or three voyage

boys in those days would know enough to show the present-day steamboat A.B. round aboard a sailing-ship as well as an old-time bos'n teaching a first voyager the run of the ropes.

One bright sunshiny morning when we had been out about two weeks, Cockney Jim—who had been shifted into our watch on leaving Portland—and I were up aloft repairing the ratlines on the fore-topmast rigging.

We had had some good slants since leaving, and had worked well to the south'ard, in consequence of which the weather was considerably warmer, and we were all anticipating a good run into the north-east Trades.

"What's the row down on deck there?" called out Jim to me, from the fore-top where he was clearing his coil of ratline stuff.

"Where?" I asked, looking down from my perch half-way up the port topmast rigging.

"Along by the half-deck," answered Jim.

"Oh, I've got it now, they're chucking that hobo, Louis, out of the half-deck."

And sure enough they were—we could hear the Mate in angry tones calling out, as with a kick aimed at the unfortunate Louis' afterpart, he said: "Go along now for'ard and put your gear into the port fo'c'sle—from now on you can live with the men and see if *they* will stand your dirty thieving ways." And along poor Louis went, bag and baggage, and was duly installed in a lower bunk in the port fo'c'sle.

At dinner-time Louis was given scant courtesy, being treated as one of the boys, and ordered to the galley to help the other boy bring the dinner in. Not that there was much fear of the other boy being over-burdened with his load—"Old Slushy" would see to that—but just to give *Mr.* Louis a gentle reminder that from henceforth he was to consider himself a boy, and be prepared to do a boy's work aboard the ship.

It transpired afterwards that Louis had also been helping himself to the boys' "whacks," i.e. their allowances of sugar and marmalade, whenever he got a chance, hence his sudden eviction when the apprentices complained to the Mate.

There was great excitement in the two dog-watches this day. Young Mac, our ordinary seaman, came bounding into the fo'c'sle at tea-time, yelling out that the Old Man had opened the slop-chest, and that one of the most important articles he had for sale was condensed milk at one shilling per tin (sea price).

On this news being made known, there was a general exodus aft of both watches to lay in a stock of this delicacy.

Some of the new hands who had shipped at Portland also made their way aft to get their rather scanty wardrobes replenished.

Some of the stuff they brought for'ard with them was real trash, and would not have brought a quarter of the price ashore.

"Let me have a look at those blankets you got out of the slop-chest, Oscar," said Cockney Jim, to one of the new men, a young Norwegian who had been one of the last to join us.

"Here dey are," said Oscar, unrolling them on the fo'c'sle table.

"Gor-blimey, I thought so," said Jim, feeling them. "Pure dog's wool and oakum, that's what I call 'em."

"Vell, I don't care, dey have got to see me round Cape Stiff, anyvays," answered the Norwegian, slinging them up into his bunk.

"It's a queer thing," said old Tom Kidd. "We know very well that we're going to be robbed when we ship away in one of these deep-watermen parish-rigged, and yet at some time or other most of us have been in the same fix, and have had to get an outfit from the ship's slop-chest when the ship had got to sea.

These lime-juice skippers pick up nothing but rubbish for a mere song, and then sell it to us poor simple blasted sailormen at a fancy sea-price.

It always puts me in mind of the yarn about the two Dutchmen ashore for a night's spree in a dance house in New York one mid-winter.

Says Hans to his mate, 'Go a bit easy mitt your money, Vilhelm, yust remember you haf to get dot monkey-pea-yacket before ve sail!'

'To hell mitt the monkey-pea-yacket, play up mitt de fiddle,' answered Wilhelm.

But when the ship got to sea, the first night out, Wilhelm poked his nose out of the fo'c'sle door and says, 'Blow yently, good nor'-vester, I vos only yoking mitt you at de yance house.' "

There was a general laugh at old Tom's little story, but it was very true nevertheless. In the days of the deep-water sailing-ships, small wages and hard living at sea drove the men who manned them to excesses ashore with their hard-earned money, when they did get paid.

But the modern steamboat sailor, with his regular hours, shorter periods at sea and bigger pay, lives a quieter and more sober life ashore.

Watch after watch now was put in getting the ship spick and span up aloft, and all hands took a thorough interest in the work.

As we worked more to the south'ard, we most of us looked forward on coming on deck to a nice little sailorising job away up aloft with a good mate for company, where we could work and yarn away to our hearts' content.

Coming out of the fo'c'sle one morning, however, the Mate said to old Tom Kidd and I, "Hold on a minute, I've got another job for you two for a while."

Old Tom and I followed him, wondering what was in the wind.

Reaching a little hatch between the half-deck and the break of the poop, we met old Sails coming up from his sail-locker.

"Here's your two men, Sails," said the Mate. "They can work with you till you have finished that new hard-weather foresail."

"Right oh, sir," said Sails. "Come on, you chaps, and we'll stretch it out on the deck here while the weather is fine."

After much pulling and hauling we got the new sail, which was just started, stretched out on deck, and then, getting our palms and needles, we set to, along with old Sails, at sewing the seams.

It was interesting work this, and the watch seemed to last no time. Old Sails put us up to many a wrinkle about sewing sails, putting in cringles and roping a sail correctly.

I had done a good deal of overhauling and repairing sails in smaller vessels, but had never worked with a first-class sailmaker, such as Old Sails certainly was. He had been in this ship over three years, and had made nearly every sail in her; he took a pride in his job, too, and there was not a sail on the ship that didn't set like a board.

Great were the yarns we three had as we sat there on our little low sailmaker's benches, working away at the new storm foresail day after day.

Old Sails could spin a yarn, too—he told us of sails he had made aboard the crack wool-clippers from the Colonies—of storm lower topsails and foresails that were set on leaving Australia or New Zealand, and never furled, no matter how it blew, until The Horn was rounded, and they were changed for old light-weather rags in the Trades in the South Atlantic.

He could tell us of great fore-and-afters that he had made for three, four and five-masted Yankee schooners trading between the Pacific Slopes and the Colonies; vessels which, when they were becalmed in a heavy roll, would set their sails slatting to such an extent that whole seams would open up from the boom to the gaff, unless they were quickly lowered down and not set again until the wind came.

Old Tom, too, had some very interesting experiences to relate —one yarn in particular I remember, that he told us, was a real thrilling story of the sea. I forget for the time the name of the ship concerned.

"We were bound from Cardiff with patent fuel for the West Coast of South America" said old Tom. "All had gone well until we started to beat to the westward off the pitch of The Horn. It was mid-winter, and we had been getting a hell of a doing. Three times we had weathered the Diego Ramirez, only to be driven back to leeward of it by a succession of gales from the west and nor'-west.

Things were beginning to look desperate, all hands were suffering from seaboils on wrists and necks, caused by the constant exposure to the icy cold salt seas, which continually had our decks flooded, and to the chafing of wet oilskins, which we were forced to wear every watch on deck.

The cold was intense, so we had a bogey stove alight in the fo'c'sle day and night, but even with the fire in it going all the time, there wasn't a chance of drying all the wet clothes that had accumulated in those weeks of misery.

The fo'c'sle was a wet, evil-smelling hole, filled with the steam from the wet clothes drying round the stove, and with water slushing backwards and forwards across the floor with every roll of the ship.

One day the steward who had been down the lazarette aft for stores, came up and reported to the Mate that he thought he could smell something burning down there.

The Mate at once went down himself to investigate.

'Sure enough,' he said, 'there's something burning all right somewhere—but where? That's the question.'

'Let's try the fore-peak,' said the Mate, after talking the matter over with the Old Man.

So down the fore-peak he went, taking a couple of us along with him. Here he could feel the warmth through the bulkhead

so we up on deck again, and very carefully raised a corner of the tarpaulin on the fore-hatch.

A whiff of smoke escaped from under the hatch, so we quickly jammed it on again, so that the draught would not fan it any more.

'Rig a hose on to the head pumps, get all your buckets going, and try with the water down the for'ard ventilators,' said the Mate.

We started watch and watch, pumping water into her, pouring it down with buckets filled from the main deck which was constantly awash. After about twenty-four hours of this, the Old Man had all hands at it all the time. Now there was so much water in the ship that she was getting very sluggish in the heavy sea that was running, and the pumps had to be manned to keep it down.

As we went on pumping it out, the water was coming up out of the bilge quite warm, but still the fire had a good hold, and the constant toil of the pumps and buckets, and also working the ship, at last began to tell on most of the crew. Several of the older men had laid up, too knocked out to carry on, and a couple of the apprentices went down under the strain.

The Old Man, a hard-bitten Welshman, but a seaman, every inch of him, took his turn with the rest of us at the fire-fighting. He took no rest. He would stand for hours under the shelter of a weather-cloth in the mizzen rigging conning the ship, as she battled to windward against the Cape Horn rollers. He hoped, as we all hoped, that the wind would haul to the south'ard, and let us lay our course for some safe harbour, where we could deal with the fire.

But it was not to be, for about the fourth or fifth day after we discovered she was on fire we had to quit the fo'c'sle—a house on deck too it was—and move aft into a store-room fore part of the half-deck, as we expected it to break through the decks for'ard at any time.

The Old Man still drove the ship to windward, looking for his southerly slant all the time.

This state of affairs lasted another day or two. The decks for'ard got so hot that the seas coming aboard dried almost at once when the planking was left bare of water for a few minutes. We hopped around like cats on hot bricks when we had to go for'ard to the head sheets when tacking ship.

At last, one morning about four o'clock, the flames broke through the decks, and in a few minutes had set fire to all the sails and gear on the fore-mast. That was a terrible sight—the glare lit up the sea for miles around, and the scared faces of all hands as they rushed out on deck when the alarm was given showed white against the glare of the flames.

Those who had been fighting the fire till the last came rushing aft helter-skelter, while the Old Man strode to the break of the poop and roared out 'Square the yards, quickly, men, get her dead before it.'

Running dead before the wind, the fire played havoc with all the fore part of the ship.

The fore-mast, being of steel, stood, but the top-mast and t'gall'nt mast and upper yards were soon a mass of flames, and came tumbling down on deck and over the side in red-hot cinders. We all gathered aft on the poop, as far away from the heat of the fire as we could get.

We could do nothing now but try and keep the ship dead before the wind, and trust to some passing vessel taking us off.

A few hours after the fore-mast with all its sails and gear went up in smoke the main caught fire, and it was not long before we only had the mizzen standing.

We unbent the spanker, and trailed it aft on a long hawser, with weights on it to act as a sea anchor, to hold our stern to keep the big Cape Horn rollers from pooping us as we sagged sluggishly along before them.

All through the following night we drifted along in this fashion, the sky was lit up for miles around with the glare of the flames.

Both the fore- and main-mast had buckled with the heat, and now lay like drunken men hanging over the side. Every time a bigger sea than usual filled our main decks there was such a hissing and steaming of boiling water that nothing else could be heard above the din of it for awhile—while the view for'ard would be completely shut out by the clouds of steam.

Towards daylight the ship became more sluggish with the water that was constantly finding its way down below through the burnt-out decks, and we could see that ship or no ship coming in sight, we would very soon have to abandon her.

At daylight we managed to drag one lifeboat along on to the poop, and also a smaller boat that had been lashed on top of the store-room fore part of the half-deck house.

We intended to launch them when she rolled to leeward, by cutting away the poop rail, and shoving them straight out over the side.

We put all the provisions we could get hold of into them, along with a couple of casks of fresh water, and then we all stood by, waiting for the Old Man to give the order to leave her.

About two bells in the forenoon watch the cry of 'Sail O!' was raised by the Mate, and sure enough there she was, a big black-painted four-masted barque away down to leeward.

There was no need to worry about not being seen, dense clouds of black smoke were pouring out of our burning holds, and soon we saw the big barque come round on the other tack and lay a course pretty nearly straight for us.

As he got nearer we could see a three-flag signal flying from his monkey gaff, 'We'll heave to, to leeward of you,' and then shortly after, another signal went up, 'Can you board me in your boats?'

We signalled 'Yes' in answer to his last signal, whereupon he hove to, dead to leeward of us, but a good distance off.

There were twenty-one of us all told, so the Old Man told off fourteen of us to go with him in the lifeboat, leaving five of us to go with the Mate in the small boat.

Some of the men were in a pretty bad way. What with exposure to the vile weather we had been having for some weeks past, and sea boils, and a few with burns from gear that had fallen from aloft, it took us all our time to get the boats over the side.

We let more oil go out to windward, and then at the first smooth sea each crew shot its boat out through the break we had made in the poop rail.

We, with the Mate's small boat, got away first, and then the Old Man and his crew safely followed.

It was just touch and go reaching the lee side of that big barque.

The distance was a good deal further than it looked, but by good handling on both the Mate's and the Old Man's part we managed it.

The crew of the other ship helped us aboard; some of our men were too weak to get up over the sides themselves.

'Cut those boats adrift,' called out the skipper of the big barque, when all hands were out of them. 'We don't want to be

bothered with hoisting *them* aboard,' and away our two boats went and were soon lost to view in the big seas.

Well, we had a rotten time aboard that ship and no mistake," said old Tom. "She had been a good time out, and like our lost ship, she was loaded deep with patent fuel for Valparaiso.

Food was not too plentiful, especially now as we were double crews, but on top of the hard living, that louse-bound lime-juice skipper of the big four-master kept us at it watch and watch with his own crew and even had our sick men out on deck.

'Watch on deck, stay on deck,' his Mate would say when mustering the crowd at eight bells in the night watches, and us with only the clothes we stood up in too, down off The Horn in mid-winter."

"Didn't your own skipper interfere on your behalf?" I asked old Tom.

"Yes, he did, several times, and mentioned that he had sick men among his crew, but all he got was: 'That's all right, Captain So-and-so, *I* happen to be master of *this* ship, and will run her as I see fit.'

'Yes,' said our Old Man, 'and I will report you to the proper authorities as soon as we arrive at Valparaiso.' "

"And did he?" I asked.

"You bet he did," said old Tom with a chuckle, "and Mr. God Almighty and his Mate were dismissed from their ship by a captain of a British cruiser, which happened to be there when we arrived."

"And serve them blasted well right," said old Sails, stabbing his great roping needle in through the foot of the new storm fore-sail. "May the Lord look sideways on all such cows of skippers!"

CHAPTER X

TRADE WINDS AND DOLDRUMS

GRADUALLY we drew into the region of the north-east Trade winds—after two or three days of baffling winds—during which time we were kept busy every watch on deck hauling the yards around, first on one tack and then on the other, till at last we were utterly sick of it.

Then one night in our watch from twelve to four, it came away steady, first from the east and then veering into the north-east, a real good whole-sail breeze, the north-east Trades once more.

It was full moon, and a real pleasure to be at the wheel in weather like this. I had the trick from two to four, and generally felt sleepy and tired at this hour, but a man couldn't feel sleepy on a night like this.

The Trade wind was now blowing good and strong out on our port quarter. We were fairly bowling along, doing a good nine or ten knots, every sail we could set was on her, and all pulling to their best advantage.

The curves in the foot of each square sail were so set and rigid as though each had been carved out of stone. The full moon's light showed up each mast with its pyramid of canvas in picturesque effect.

I found myself quoting the lines about the Trade wind:

I'm strongest at noon,
But under the moon
I stiffen the bunt of a sail.

"Well, Avery, this is the wind we sighed for, eh?" said the Mate, coming along the weather side of the poop rubbing his hands. "You hear men talking of more days more dollars, and the big pay-day that they'll have at the end of a long voyage, but I don't believe there was ever a sailor-man who went to sea in sailing-ships who didn't like fair winds. Give me a fair wind every

22. *Manunui:* timber laden from New Zealand to Australia

23. *Garthsnaid.* "Here it comes". Shipping it green

24. (*Overleaf*) "Hang on for your life!" Aloft on *Garthsnaid.*

time, and the best fair wind a ship can get is the Trade wind. Wasn't it Kipling who wrote that bit about:

There are triple ways to take
Of the eagle or the snake
Or the way of a man with a maid.
But the sweetest way to me
Is a ship upon the sea
In the heel of the north-east Trade?

"My sentiments are there with him in that," said the Mate. "Yes," he went on, "if going to sea meant all Trade wind weather, the profession would be overrun in no time."

Down through the Trades we romped in great style. For two days we kept company with a lofty, white-painted French full-rigged ship. She came up with us one morning from over the horizon astern. Away in the distance, hull down.

We picked her for a Frenchman by the cut of her sails—square in the courses and finishing up with little pocket-handkerchiefs of royals above her double t'gall'nts.

She gradually overhauled us and passed us, however, carrying a far larger sail area than we did, and having finer lines, although she did not look as big as us.

Work round the decks and up aloft was going on apace now every watch, and the rigging and gear was beginning to look a picture—not a rope-yard out of place—and it was the Mate's intention to keep it like that for the rest of the voyage.

Inside the bulwarks and round the houses on deck had received one coat of paint all over, and it brightened the look of things considerably.

The Mate and Second Mate were tigers for work, and while the weather was fine not a minute was wasted by anyone. Even Louis, the erstwhile cabin passenger—but now rated as ordinary seaman—had proved himself quite adaptable, and was shaping well for quite a good hearing from his watch-mates for the rest of the voyage.

Old Tom and I were still kept sailmaking with Sails in our watch on deck, while Rawles and Hartung relieved us in the other watch.

The Old Man was taking a great interest in the new storm foresail now, and would spend hours sewing and sometimes spinning yarns with the rest of us.

He had worked his way up from the fo'c'sle, and there wasn't a man aboard the ship that could teach the Old Man anything about sailoring, or navigation either, for that matter.

He told me once that he had started off in little Welsh schooners out of Portmadoc, and at the age of twenty-four held a foreign-going, square-rigged master's certificate.

He often spoke Welsh to the mate, and some of the Welsh apprentices. Once when my mate Bill was at the wheel when a dialogue in this strange language was going on between the Old Man and the Mate, it caused him to grin sheepishly. The Old Man turned round and catching him, said in his jerky Welsh manner, "Ah—you—*laugh*. But—you—laugh—because—you—cannot—speak—*Welsh*."

On Bill relating this little episode in the fo'c'sle afterwards, Cockney Jim remarked, "Strike me, but that's not as bad as what old Captain David Davies said to me once when I served under him."

"What was that, Jim?" someone asked.

"Why," said Jim, "another cove and I were sand and canvasing the weather poop ladder one day, and had unshipped it, and had it lying on deck sofas to get at it better. Old Captain Davies comes to the break of the poop to come down the ladder, and seeing it removed, calls out to me, ' 'Arris, 'Arris, why did you take that ladder away when you could see I was half-way down?' "

Cockney Jim was an artist in tattooing and had with him a tattooist's outfit in the shape of a small electric battery fitted with needles, with which he was only too keen to practise on anyone who wished to be permanently marked with designs of his own creation.

One fine Sunday afternoon he was seated on the fore-hatch busily engaged in working a design on young Mac's right arm. He roughly sketched it out first with a damp ink-pencil, being severely criticised the while by members of both watches who were gathered around.

"There, 'ow do yer like that?" he asked of his helpless victim who sat with bared arm on the hatch beside him.

"I can't get a proper view of it," said young Mac, straining his neck to see the picture, which, being on his arm above the elbow, made it difficult for him to see.

"Wot's he think of it?" said one of the critics. "Well, if he

thought of it at all, he wouldn't have the blasted thing on his arm at all, it's all to blazes."

"So's yer old aunt's cat's whiskers all to blazes. Wot the hell do *you* know abart it?" retorted the artist.

The design in question was a girl on the shore waving farewell to her sailor lad, who could be seen at the taffrail of a departing ship, waving his cap in reply to her.

"O' *course* it's all to blazes," answered Jim's critic; "the sailor's bigger'n the after part of the ship, and the girl's hair is blowin' inshore, while the ship's runnin' with square yards, with a fair wind orf the land."

"Gor-blimey, you're too bloody partickler *altogether*," said Jim disgustedly. " 'As *hanybody helse* got hany remarks to pass before I goes on wiv the job?"

"Well, there's quite a lot could be said on the question," said Evans, "but if Mac's satisfied, that's all that matters, I suppose."

"How the hell's Mac to know, when he can't see the damned thing?" said the first critic.

"Wot do you say, Mac?" asked Jim of his client. "It's for you to say as you're payin' to 'ave it done."

"Alter the girl's hair, and finish it," said Mac. "What does it matter if the sailor *is* too big for the size of the ship? It's the *design* I like, so let's have it," he concluded.

"Some folks has got a queer idea of tattoo designs," said old Tom Kidd to me as we stood watching the operation. "I was shipmates with a cove once, a fine young feller he was too, as steady a man as you'd find anywhere, and he never made a practice of gallivanting off shore in port and getting drunk and the like.

We made the round voyage from Cardiff out to the West Coast, and back to the Continent.

We had to wait a day for the steamer to take us all over to London to pay off, and what does my young feller-me-lad do but go and get just enough liquor aboard to make him a bit of a fool.

With some of the others off the ship, he lands into a tattoo artist's show in a back street round St. Pauli in Hamburg, and gets a design put across his chest.

It was a drawing of a young sailor saying good-bye to his sweetheart, and holding each other in their arms.

The German artist had written a German girl's name round the band of the girl's hat, and underneath had printed, 'The Sweetheart's Farewell.'

Everything would have been all right, only this particular young feller had got married just before he sailed on this voyage, and when he got home, and his wife saw this picture on him, you can imagine the dust-up there was.

I met him later on, and he told me his wife had made him go and have a wreath of flowers tattooed round the girl's head, over the name.

He said it took weeks and weeks of explaining to make his wife believe it was only the outcome of a bit of a spree."

"Talking about awkward fixes tattoo marks get a man into," said another of the crowd, "I was shipmates with a Second Mate once, who'd been a bit of a hard case at one time, though when I was with him he'd gone a bit barmy on religion.

He'd had a couple of dancing girls in ballet skirts tattooed on the back of his right hand, and a bleedin' heart with a dagger through it, between his thumb and forefinger on his left hand.

I met him years afterwards in Sydney, and, strike me pink, there he was, a full-fledged parson!

Him with his dancing girls and bleedin' heart for all the world to see, 'struth, it fair knocked me flat aback."

"Anyhow, some of the young ladies of the sewing guild might have been all the more interested in him," ventured one of the half-deck crowd.

All hands roared at the thought of the predicaments the sailor-parson must have sometimes found himself in.

"One of the hardest cases I've ever sailed with, and a man who'd just as soon curse his own mother as one of his shipmates, had the head of Christ, with a crown of thorns, tattooed on his chest," said old Tom Kidd.

"Why?" he was asked.

"Now, how could I know? He wasn't a man you could get into a proper talk with," said Tom.

"He may have thought the picture would prove his saving grace in the end," said Evans.

"Don't know about saving grace," said old Tom. "I heard he was lost in a vessel that foundered with all hands, years afterwards."

Cockney Jim finished the design on young Mac's arm, and

then looked round to see whether any other clients were waiting.

"Wot abart some of you arf-deck boys, don't hany of yer want a nice fancy design worked on yer? Wot abart you, Hevans? I'll do yer a ship, flags and anchor on yer arm fer arf a dollar."

"No," said Evans, "I don't fancy having myself branded for life with any tattoo marks at all, thank you all the same."

"Yer don't, eh?" answered Jim. "An' yer calls yerself a sailor?"

"Whether I'm tattooed or not tattooed won't make me any better as a sailor," answered Evans.

Others came forward, however, and the afternoon was fully occupied by our artistic shipmate, working fancy designs in blue and red ink on his various shipmates' bodies and limbs.

A young Swede got the idea that his feet would look the better for having a pretty coloured butterfly on each instep, while a young fellow hailing from the Isle of Man thought that the Three Legs of Man tattooed on his chest greatly improved his appearance when, with shirt thrown open in front, he could strut up and down the decks in the warm weather, the cynosure of his shipmates' eyes.

The custom has died out long since, at sea now, except that in the Navy one might often come across examples of it.

But the old designs of full-rigged ships and four-masted barques tattooed on the chest have gone, and also the "Sailor's Farewell" scenes.

Like everything else, the tattoo designs have changed with the times, and before long I suppose we shall be seeing aeroplanes looping the loop, and such-like subjects, as tattoo designs.

Even now I hear that it is not the custom for seafaring men to be tattooed, but that young modern *flappers* have taken it upon themselves to see that the custom does not die right out.

Shades of the old hard-case, tattooed deep-water Jacks of the sailing-ship days!

For several days now discontent had been brewing about the food we were getting. We were getting the quantity all right, but the quality—owing to the way our Irish Doctor was dishing it up to us—made it often uneatable, especially as the weather got warmer as we approached the Line.

Complaint after complaint we made to him, sometimes both watches together, but all we got from "Old Slushy" was, "Sure, I'm doing the best I can for yez, it's not Cunard passengers yez are altogether, me lads, me jewels."

"No," said Cockney Jim, "an' hif it was a job hon the culinary staff of a Cunarder that was going an' you were one of the happlicants, yer wouldn't get a job heven as spud-peeler, let alone a cook!"

"Sure, and it's meself that's having the hard luck to have had to ship as cook of a lime-juicer," said Old Slush. "First the Old Man comes fussin' around in the galley lookin' for all the dirthy spots, then the crowd goes aft and complains about the way I'm cookin' the grub—to *hell* wid the job of cook aboard a lime-juicer, I'm sick of it for sure."

However, after several more rows on the subject of his cooking, the Doctor pulled himself together, and for a while we fared a little bit better. His bread and duffs, though, were still a long way short of what they could have been.

One day the starboard watch greatly insulted Old Slushy by heaving one of his leather-jacket duffs out of the fo'c'sle with a watch-tackle, to the accompaniment of a little old-time chanty which went with a swing as follows:

"Oh, once I was in Ireland,
A-diggin' up pertaters and
Away, Haul-away, Haul-away, and Haul.
But now I'm in a Packet ship
A-hauling sheets and braces and
Away, Haul-away—Haul-away, and Haul!"

Old Slushy put his head out of the galley, and after looking at them in disgust for a few minutes, he sang out, "Och! yer a lot of damn sojers, and there's not a sailor-man amongst yer."

All he got in return was a roar of derision, as with a final jerk they pulled the duff to the t'gall'nt rail, and let it go with a splash over the side.

At last the Line was reached once more, the last of the north-east Trade wind chasing us across one night in the middle watch. Thunder, lightning and tropical downpours kept us company all night long, and in the morning we were left rolling and slatting about without a breath of wind.

Once again we were kept on the go all the watch from eight to twelve, pulling the yards round, first on one tack and then on the other. No sooner had we finished coiling up the gear, than along the yell would come, "Haul the yards round," followed by "Lee fore-brace—lively now, men!"

"Damn and blast the lee fore-brace," muttered old Tom; "why the hell can't he let them stay for a while till the true wind comes?"

"There's no true wind here, Tom, all flukes and cat's-paws, and the Mate's in a hurry to get home," I answered him. Old Tom took no notice, however, but just went on muttering to himself.

For several days we were kept humbugging about with light variable breezes, and then at last we picked up a little breeze from the eastward, which gradually freshened and veered away into the south-east, and off we went once more, with the yards just off the backstays—"clean full" for the South Pacific and Cape Horn!

For a week or more we romped along in great style. It was a pleasure to go to the wheel either by day or night, for here everything could be seen to the best advantage.

By day the air was warm and sunny, the sky a tropical blue, with great white Trade-wind clouds flying along like old-time Spanish galleons with all sail set, and great high poops towering up abaft everything.

Schools of flying-fish would every now and then start up right under the bows, or away out on either side, their wet transparent wings and silvery bodies gleaming in the brilliant sunlight.

They would fly just clear of the tops of the seas for a hundred yards or so, and then as suddenly as they had shot up out of the sea they would disappear again into it. They would be followed a few minutes later by another school, which had either been startled by the ship's onward rush, or by some larger fish chasing them.

Early one Sunday morning, it being the port watch (ours) on deck from four till eight, young Mac rushed breathlessly into our fo'c'sle on the port side, and in a subdued whisper, so that he would not awaken the sleeping members of the starboard watch on the other side of the bulkheads, bade us come out on deck.

Sometimes in fine weather on Sundays, even if it was our watch on deck, we used to lie in, fully dressed, ready for a call during the early morning watch.

The Mate did not mind, providing that the wheel and the look-out were relieved promptly, and as long as the rest of us who were "farmers" turned out and got dressed in readiness for a call.

We used to look forward to this little relaxation, once in a while, and it was a most unsympathetic audience that received Mac on this good morning.

Swiftly and quietly he went from bunk to bunk whispering his exciting news.

"Come out and have a look at the albacore and bonito. There's dozens round the bows. Come and give us a hand to hook some of them!"

Vehement protests were howled at him from half a dozen different bunks. "Get to hell out of here; go and catch the blasted albacore yourself!" growled one old salt. "Can't sleep yourself, and won't let anybody else have a doze," muttered a drowsy voice from under a blanket in one of the lower bunks.

Not to be deterred, young Mac at last reached Billy's bunk. "Come on, Bill, come and give us a hand to hook some of these fish; there's dozens of them playing round underneath the bows."

"Fish?" echoed Bill drowsily.

"Yes, and some of them are whoppers too," said Mac eagerly. "Albacore and bonito; I've been watching them ever since it got daylight," he added.

Bill was out of his bunk in a twinkling. "I'm with you, Mac. Got lines ready?"

"Yes," answered Mac, delighted beyond measure at getting a mate, and whispering excitedly the pair made a hurried exit from the fo'c'sle.

At last curiosity got the better of me, so I, too, rolled out of my bunk, and made for the fo'c'sle-head to see what luck my two young watch-mates were having.

Mac was astride the bowsprit, and swishing a long line up and down in the water. He had secured a long piece of bright red bunting round the hook, and was doing his best to make it imitate the flight of a flying-fish.

Bill was further in towards the fo'c'sle head and, being an older hand at the game than Mac, he had provided himself with a small gunny-bag, in case he had the luck to hook a fish. I stood watching their efforts.

It was a beautiful morning, and the sun, which had just risen above the horizon away in the east, had not yet taken the keen morning nip out of the air.

The ship was slipping quietly along through the water, doing about four or five knots. Every stitch of canvas was on her, and,

the wind being a few points free, caused every sail to show up to advantage from where I viewed them up here on the fo'c'sle-head. Presently I was joined by Olaf, the young Norwegian.

After looking at our fishermen out on the bowsprit for a while, he turned to me and said, "Dot jung ornary seamans shapps vill be in fix eef he vos haf de luck to hook vun of dose beeg fellows."

"You mean young Mac?" I inquired.

"Yass," answered Olaf. "He vos not take a bag out along mid him."

Olaf had not passed the remark more than a few minutes when, with a yell of triumph, Mac hooked a huge bonito.

Olaf yelled at the top of his voice, advising Mac to get nearer Bill, who had a bag ready to put the fish in. "Vork him in, play him in da vater until you get alongside Bill," he shouted. "Suppose you pull him up out dere, you vos lose him for sure!"

But Mac was too engrossed with his prize, dangling below him, to heed Olaf or his warnings, and straightway began to haul the fish up out of the water.

In a few minutes he had the fish up, and having nothing to put it in, he sat out there clasping the struggling, slippery bonito in his arms.

Twisting his feet around the bowsprit guys, he clung to his catch in desperation, yelling out for Bill to bring the gunny-bag to him.

"Quick, Bill, for God's sake!" he yelled, as the fish with a desperate heave shot up through his arms, and hung perilously poised round the back of Mac's neck, Mac hanging on to the bare end of it, near the tail.

Bill hurried out towards him along the foot-ropes, cursing him for not also having a bag. "You'll lose him, as sure as God made little apples," gasped Bill, as he struggled out along the bowsprit.

"No I won't," answered Mac, making another frantic grab, as the fish shot round the back of his head, and down in front of him again. "I've still got the hook in him," he yelled triumphantly.

At last Bill reached him with the bag, and after a lot of manœuvring they succeeded in getting the fish safely stowed away.

Olaf and I laughed at the whole performance till the tears rolled down our cheeks, until Mac—catching sight of us—advised

us to come out and give it a go, and see how *we'd* get on with a slippery fish in our arms.

"I vould take a bag along mid me ven I goes fishing," retorted Olaf.

"Yes," said the Mate, who had come for'ard to see what was going on. "Moral, never go fishing from the bowsprit without taking something with you to put your fish in," he said, laughing.

Mac and Bill continued their fishing, while a few of us stood round watching them from the fo'c'sle head. All sorts of advice was tendered to them, but they were too much engaged with their sport to pay much heed to any of it.

"Try for that big fellow there, Bill. Look, he's nosing around after your hook," suggested one.

"No, give that one close in there by the fore-foot a go," said another.

"Go and get a line and try for yourself," said Bill. "You're all very good at giving advice, aren't you?"

"I suppose on the coast round your country there's plenty of fish to be had, Avery?" said the Mate, turning to me.

"Yes," I replied, "some places are especially good. There's the Pandora Bank of Cape Maria van Dieman, where in calm weather the fishing is very fine."

"What kind of fish?" asked one.

"Schnapper," I replied. "I've seen them caught there by the dozen, when drifting across the bank in a calm. But I had an experience once with fish that I'll never forget, and it was not on the coast either," I continued.

"We were on our way back to Auckland from the Islands in one of the Island traders, and must have been about half-way between the Kermadec group of islands and the Great Barrier Island, outside Auckland. The weather was fine with just a nice light sailing breeze. Away ahead, on the weather bow, we caught sight of hundreds of sea-birds wheeling and circling round and round above some object in the water.

The Old Man, who was on deck, ordered the man at the wheel to let her come up a bit, so that we would pass close to it.

We had a Norfolk Islander as bos'n aboard. He had spent years in the whaling ships, and as we got closer to the object he got his harpoon ready.

He thought it might turn out to be a whale that had been killed by a thresher shark.

As we came up close alongside it, the bos'n took a shot at it with his harpoon, and then we saw that the sea around it was just one seething mass of fish, jumping and fighting to get to it. Yellow-tail they were, and king-fish, millions of them. The sea was alive with them.

And what do you think it was they were feeding on?"

"What?" asked my listeners.

"Just a big round butcher's block, about four or five feet in diameter, such as is used on some of the big mail steamers. But it had evidently been in the water for a long time, as it was simply covered in long sea growth.

That kind of stuff that fouls vessels trading round the Tropics —long seaweed trailers with shell-fish hanging on to the end of each piece.

We had been trading round the Islands for over nine months, and were also very foul below water-line. Attached to our copper sheathing were the same long trailers and shell-fish ends, and as we came up alongside the block, the fish turned to it also.

We all ran and got lines and rods, and with white pieces of rag fastened to the hooks, we started fishing.

Well, we fished and fished until we got tired, and still those yellow-tail and king-fish went for the hooks. We caught hundreds of them that day. In fact the Old Man came along at last and told us not to catch any more. The deck was full of fish, and the old half-French, half-German cook we had was frantic about it.

He swore he'd never be able to cook anywhere near the quantity we had caught, and that as for frying them, we'd need all the grease aboard the ship to fry even a quarter of them.

However, we had fried fish, boiled fish, and fish soup for days after, so much so that we got utterly sick of it. We salted a whole lot down, and gave them away when we arrived in port.

There must have been something remarkably tasty about that sea-growth on our copper sheathing, for though the fish stayed round the butcher's block in hundreds, yet hundreds more left it and followed us.

They even kept company with us as far as the Great Barrier Island, as the wind being light and fair, with no sea running, we could see them any time we liked to look over the side."

Mac and Bill fished right on until our watch went to breakfast, but all they got in addition to Mac's bonito was a small albacore.

The fish seemed to sense that something was wrong, for

eventually they all disappeared. Then we saw a few small pilot fish, indicating the near approach of *their* lord and master, the shark, and this may possibly have done more to frighten the fish away than Mac's or Bill's lines and rods.

For days on end we never touched a brace, halliard or sheet, except to clap a handy-billy or watch-tackle on to the topsail and t'gall'nt halliard sometimes of an evening to stretch them up a bit tauter.

The course was always "full and by." "Keep her a clean full, and let her ramp," the Mate would say. "She will make up for it on the other tack later on when we get the strong westerlies further south."

And let her ramp we did; the old packet simply flew along, sending out an acre of foam under her lee bows and leaving a wake behind her like a mail steamer.

Turning out at 4 a.m. in the early morning watch in this kind of weather was not at all unpleasant. In fact I was rather keen on it, for to be on deck, in these latitudes, at this hour of the day, was something worth-while—if only to watch the glorious tropical sunrise.

I hear them talking nowadays in cities ashore of such and such a splendid picture that is being screened, and of the thousands that will go and see it. I believe there's not a picture yet screened that could come up to a real tropical sunrise in the steady south-east Trades, as viewed from the wheel of a big deep-wáter ship.

Standing on the raised grating, gripping the spokes of the wheel of an eighteen hundred tons full-rigged ship, meeting her and checking her as she sweeps grandly on, with every sheet and halliard stretched nearly to breaking point, hatless, bootless and coatless, I treasure those memories today as some of the happiest moments of my life.

"Keep her off a point, Avery," said the Mate, coming along towards the wheel, with a mug of steaming coffee in his hand. "We will be sighting land some time this watch, and the Old Man is after some fresh fruit and also some poultry, if there's any to be had."

"What land will that be, sir?" I asked.

"Well, come now, you, with several of the others, have been studying navigation for'ard there for the last three or four months. What land do you think we should be sighting away out here?"

"Is it Pitcairn Island?" I asked.

"To be sure it's Pitcairn," answered Mr. Craddock, "and lying right in our course. We are going to back the main-yards in Bounty Bay for a few hours, and have some visitors aboard from the island."

About three bells, half-past five, the cry was raised, "Land O! Land O!" and peering away out ahead by the lee fore-rigging I could make it out from the wheel. A little hilly-looking island rising up quite alone, out of all the vastness of our sea-girt world.

We rapidly approached it, and by seven bells, half-past seven, when we called the other watch, we were heading in under the land, and preparing to bring the ship to.

On shore we could see the roofs of houses on the hill-sides among the palm trees and thick tropical growth, and at the top of a long flagstaff fluttered the Red Ensign of Old England.

The Mate, who was standing near me at the wheel, from which in the excitement of sighting land I had not yet been relieved, turned round, and pointing to the old Red Ensign flying ashore, said, "Yes, it's true enough."

Never was Isle so little,
Never was sea so lone,
But over the sand and the palm trees
An English flag was flown.

"Ever read 'The Flag of England' in Kipling's *Barrack Room Ballads*, Avery?" asked the Mate, turning round with the light of enthusiasm in his eyes, as he quoted the verse.

"Yes," I replied, "and he hits the nail on the head. When one arrives at places like this, one sees for oneself the truth of his words."

When the order came to back the main-yards, both watches tailed on to the braces, and the yards came round by the run, and soon the ship lost her way, and lay with scarcely a movement under the lee of the island.

Meanwhile, from the shore two white-painted whale-boats had set out heading straight for us. Manned by their lusty island crews, all rowing in time, they made a pretty picture on the blue water with the vivid tropical green of the island in the background.

Suddenly someone called out "Sail O! Sail O!" and rushing to the other side of the ship we saw a big black-painted, wooden barque flying the Stars and Stripes, and the four square flags of

the International Code indicating his name, heading in under the land under all plain sail.

We ran our number up to the monkey-gaff on the mizzen, and then told him by flags where we were from, and where bound. He replied by telling us that he was from Newcastle, N.S.W., bound for San Francisco with coal.

One of the two boats from the shore sheered off at a tangent, and made for the Yankee barque. The other came straight on to us and was soon alongside, and her crew scrambling aboard.

She was loaded deep with fruit, green coconuts, fresh vegetables and fowls. There must have been a dozen or more fowls lying in the bottom of the boat, tied by the legs, and these were quickly handed up aboard, along with the fruit and vegetables.

I asked one of the Islanders if he had any curios with him. "Curios?" he replied. "I'm a curio enough myself, aren't I?"

But I was thinking of Niue Island, or Savage Island, and of the model canoes and fans and hats one could always get there, and was a bit disappointed at the big Pitcairner's answer.

However, later on they came along with all sorts of curios too; there were little baskets made out of empty coconut shells, with scrolls of flowers painted on them, and slabs of bright yellow island wood prettily painted, and some with "Love from Pitcairn" painted on them.

In the end we had quite a lot of curios stowed away in our sea-chests, while as for fruit, it was many a long day since we had seen oranges and bananas in such quantities.

The Old Man had his gramophone brought up on the poop, and played all sorts of music for the Islanders, but even the gentle swell in the bay caused a couple of young women who had come off in the boat to become quite sea-sick, so I don't think that they, in particular, enjoyed their visit overmuch.

The men, more used to knocking around the island in their whale-boats, were not in the least affected by the ship's movement, and thoroughly enjoyed their stay with us.

In conversation with them I inquired of one big fellow what his name might be. "My name," he answered, "is Christian, while my friend here is a McCoy."

My mind flew back to the mutiny of the *Bounty*, as I had read of it, particularly to Louis Becke's version of it in his book *The Mutineer*. In fancy I could see the *Bounty* heading in under this same land as where we were now, Fletcher Christian, the

Master's mate, scanning the island, and thinking of the settlement he would establish there, now that they had got rid of Bligh.

For the life of me I can never think kindly of Bligh. He alone, it appears to me, was the cause of the mutiny of the *Bounty*. Arrogant and domineering, he was a man who, had he sailed in command of men in more modern times, would have been for ever changing crews, until his owners, had he been in the Mercantile Service, would have tired of him and tried another Master.

Still, had Bligh not been a martinet, and a hard taskmaster, there would have been no mutiny of the *Bounty*, and no Pitcairn Island as we know it now.

Pitcairn I think is, or rather was, one of the most interesting and romantic little spots in the whole of the scattered British Empire. The opening of the Panama Canal and the regular calling of big mail steamers took away a lot of its loneliness, and in consequence some of its romance.

Our stay there, short though it was, will always be remembered by me as one of those bright little episodes that crop up now and again to break the monotony in this matter-of-fact, humdrum existence.

As we filled the main-yards and gathered way once more on our long run to Cape Horn, our island friends lay on their oars, and sang us a plaintive farewell hymn, "We are sailing o'er an ocean to a far and foreign shore." The words came clear to us across the water at first, but as the distance increased we lost the sound of their singing, and could only see their farewell waving of hats and hands, until they too dropped below the horizon.

The Yankee barque had taken his departure before us, after dipping his ensign and signalling us *bon voyage*.

The last I saw of Pitcairn was a dim smudge on the horizon, far away astern, late that afternoon, as we romped along under all sail heading S.S.E.

Years afterwards I called at Pitcairn once more, but oh! how different everything was. The Panama Canal was then opened, and I was on board a large passenger steamer travelling back to New Zealand after the Great War.

We were crowded with troops and passengers and made a short stay off the island. A boat came off, but owing to influenza on the island only one man was allowed on board. This time there were no little friendly talks with the Islanders, no

exchange of old clothes, musical instruments and such-like, for fruit and curios.

Just a hurried call and off again. To me Pitcairn seemed to have lost all its romance and attraction. Half the people aboard the transport did not seem to realise what an historical little spot they had called at—nor would they have cared.

CHAPTER XI

SOUTH-EAST FOR CAPE HORN

THE work of changing the light-weather sails—mostly old patched and weather-worn rags—for the hard storm-weather canvas sails for negotiating Cape Horn is quite a big job aboard a big deep-water sailing-ship.

A fine day with settled weather is generally picked upon, and then, in the morning watch from eight to twelve, both watches stay on deck and work their own masts. The Mate with his men on the head sails and square-sails on the fore. The Second Mate with his watch on the main. In our case the Old Man himself took over the mizzen-mast with the apprentices and boys.

From the time we started sending down the old sails on the fore, till we had the last head earring fast, and gear secured on to the heavy hard-weather sails it was a case of "go for your life" to beat the Second Mate's watch on the main.

A roar from a hoarse voice would come down from the fore-upper t'gall'nt yard, "Lower away on your fore-upper t'gall'nt gantline!" and down would come the unbent sail in a bunch by the run, the man on the gantline lowering away, being constantly urged on by the Mate with such remarks as, "Lower away, lower away handsomely. Lower! I tell you, let the damn thing down. What are you hanging on to it for?"

From the main-mast the same rush and tear was going on, the little Second Mate was everywhere. One minute we would see him aloft, perched high away out on a topsail yard-arm struggling with a refractory shackle, then something holding up operations on deck, he would take the nearest way down by sliding down a backstay to the deck. Landing among a group of his watch, he would start the job rolling again by settling an argument over a sail about to be sent aloft for bending.

"Upper topsail? Of course it's the upper topsail; you didn't think it was the main-course, did you? Up with her lads, tail on to that gantline and keep her walking until she is two-blocks."

And so the work went on, sail after sail was unbent and replaced by the hard-weather sails.

It was strenuous work all through, the dragging of the heavy

stopped-up sails up from the sail-locker in the 'tween-decks under the break of the poop, hauling them forward along the decks, and heaving them aloft on their respective gantlines until they were high enough to stretch out on the yards for bending.

Hauling out on head-earrings, making fast sheets, bunt-lines, spilling-lines, clewlines, and then setting them after they were bent.

Then down again on deck to stop up, and stow away, all the old suit of sails that had been unbent. It was hard work all through.

When the end of the day came—and we were watch and watch again—with all gear round the decks cleared up ship-shape and Bristol fashion, all hands were quite ready to enjoy the spell the two dog-watches gave us.

Just before we went to tea at five o'clock, the Mate came out of his room at the break of the poop, and called out, "All hands lay aft for grog." Never was order obeyed so quickly, and never was a drop of rum appreciated so much.

As our red-headed steward served out the issues to each man, he felt himself for the time being to be the most popular man aboard of the ship.

Many were the little bits of advice he got as he went on filling glass after glass. "Make it a good Second Mate's four-fingers, Taffy," hinted one hardened old sea warrior from the starboard watch, but Taffy had his own ideas as to what was due to each man and would have none of his advice.

"I will give you a fair thing and no more, look you," was Taffy's reply to everyone, and with that they had to be content.

It did not take much to put the average deep-water sailorman at sea in a good humour in those times, and after tea was over, tired and all as most were, an impromptu concert was held in the port fo'c'sle.

Some of our old favourites obliged us with well-known songs, then we would strike up a tune on all the instruments we possessed and all hands would sing choruses together.

Even Chips and Sails came along to enjoy the fun, until someone called on Chips for a song.

Chips demurred a bit, saying he couldn't sing a song at all, but after a lot of persuasion we got him going.

"Vell, here it is," said Chips, striking up with the following old sea song, in a strong Swedish accent:

"One night off Cape Horn, I remember it well,
The wind was sou'-west with a heavy ground swell.
She was dipping bows under, the sailors she wet,
She was logging sixteen with her main-skysail set!"

"All hands with the chorus," called Chips, and all hands joined in with:

"And we'll roll, roll, cheery lads, ROLL,
For the Liverpool girls they have got us in TOW!"

Clang! went the big bell on the fo'c'sle-head. "One bell in there," called out an apprentice. "The watch coming on deck will want their oilskins," with which cheery remark he slipped away aft as fast as he could leg it for the half-deck.

"Good Lord, who wouldn't sell a farm and go to sea?" growled old Tom Kidd, struggling into his oilskin trousers over his heavy leather sea-boots.

"Yes, who wouldn't," I answered him, reaching into my bunk for a woollen muffler, as we were beginning to feel a bit of a nip in the air at night-time.

When both watches mustered at the break of the poop at eight bells, the night was beginning to look wild and stormy, the wind was north-east, and the old ship was simply flying along with the strong breeze on her port quarter, heading sou'-sou'-west.

All plain sail was on her, excepting the cro'jack which the boys had made fast in the second dog-watch.

"Keep handy, the watch!" called the Mate from the top of the weather poop ladder, when the starboard watch had gone below.

We all kept handy by sheltering from the driving rain, and flying spray, under the break of the poop.

Three or four of us actually jammed ourselves inside the lamp-locker for shelter. The smell of the kerosene was overwhelming, but we didn't mind that as long as we could keep a bit dry.

We who were crowded into the lamp-locker must have dozed off to sleep, with the warmth and heaving motion of the old ship. Presently one of the boys, who was acting as "policeman" (one of the watch who is told off to rouse the rest, should the Mate suddenly want them), came banging on the lamp-locker door, calling out, "Four bells! Four bells! Whose wheel is it in there?"

"Spare my days! It's my wheel," said I, suddenly realising that I mustn't be late with my relief, and jumping up and capsizing all my drowsy watch-mates in the lamp-locker.

"What the hell's the matter? Don't walk all over me," growled one.

"What is it? Ship running ashore?" asked another sleepily, as he was pushed out of the way to allow me to gain the doorway.

I took the lee poop ladder in one bound, and was soon taking hold of the spokes and getting the course from Olaf, the Norwegian who had shipped in Portland.

"Sou'-sou'-east," said Olaf as he relinquished his hold on the wheel, "you'll want to watch her, she is jumping about a bit."

"Right oh, I've got her," I replied. "Sou'-sou'-east it is," and straightway gave all my attention to the steering.

I heard Olaf call out the course to the Mate as he went down the lee poop ladder, "Sou'-sou'-east, sir," and the Mate's "All right," and so my two hours' wheel started.

The Mate came striding along the weather poop-deck, catching now and again at the rail to prevent himself getting flung to leeward with the heavy rolls the ship made every now and then.

"That you, Avery?" he asked as he came and stood by the wheel.

"Yes, sir," I replied.

"Don't let her come anything to windward of that course," he added, "let her romp along."

"We'll make as much use of this wind as we can, for by the way the glass is falling, it looks as if we shall have a whole lot more of this before it has blown itself out. If it comes to that it may mean heaving-to. I don't like the look of it," added the Mate.

"It looks to me like one of those black north-easters we get round the New Zealand coast sometimes," I replied.

"Well, I'm glad we're not on the coast tonight," replied the Mate. "I like plenty of sea room in this weather."

The wind and sea continued to increase, and at last the order came, "Take in the three upper t'gall'nt-sails," to be followed by "Haul the mainsail up."

The watch got through the operation in good time, and we romped along till eight bells (twelve o'clock), when we gave over our charge to the other watch.

Turning in for a four-hour watch below, with a rising gale and the ship not properly shortened down, always made a very light

sleeper of me. So it was when we were below this watch, I lay half awake and half asleep in my bunk, expecting every minute to hear the cry, "All hands shorten sail."

However, we did not get a call, though the starboard watch took in a lot more sail before we were called again at one bell, quarter to four.

When we came on deck again the ship was under the three lower topsails, foresail, fore-topmast staysail, and main and mizzen staysail.

"He is going to heave her to before we go below," said Rawles, who had called us at one bell, and no sooner were all hands mustered than the Mate called out, "Haul the foresail up and make it fast, and all hands stand by to heave-to."

Getting the foresail off her proved to be quite a big job, while we were manning the gear, and hauling it up, all hands got thoroughly drenched, as the old ship took it green over the fo'c'sle-head.

There was a sea like great mountains running, and the wind had increased to gale force.

"Able seamen up aloft and furl the sail. Boys stay on deck and clear up the gear," called the Mate, and away about fifteen of us went, helter-skelter up the weather fore-rigging, over the futtock shrouds, and out on to the weather yard-arm to furl the sail.

It was a case of hang on for dear life, "one hand for yourself and the other for the ship," as the saying went.

The great storm foresail jumped and ballooned about like a mad thing. Time after time we caught it in as it slackened, only to have it tear adrift again from our grasp, and repeat the whole mad performance.

The Mate was in at the quarter of the yard with the Second Mate just outside him to windward.

Now and again we could hear them yelling out, "Now then, lads, in with her," "Muzzle her and get a turn with your gaskets," but it was fully an hour before we got the weather side in and subdued.

The lee yard-arm was child's play after we had got the weather side fast.

Down on deck once more we all stood by waiting for the Old Man to pick a calm astern, before putting the helm down and bringing her up into the wind.

At last the order came, "Down helm! Let your yards go for'ard!" and round she came up into the wind. Twice she filled the main decks up to the t'gall'nt rail, and it was hang on for dear life till they cleared.

When head to it, however, she rode the mountainous seas "like a duck," only light spray flying across the decks as the tops of some of the seas broke under our bows.

As the day broke the view along the decks was wet and forlorn. Now and again an extra heavy roll would send her over till all the lee side of the main decks would fill with a white swirl of water, then, as she rolled to windward, the ports would let it go streaming out with loud gurglings until they were slammed shut with another leeward roll.

The three lower topsails stood out in dark relief against a lowering sky, while our trucks and upper yards described wide circles in the air above them with each violent roll of the ship.

The gale continued from the north-east for twelve hours, and than as suddenly as it had started it fell away to a calm, leaving us rolling our t'gall'nt rails under all the next night, when the wind, coming away out of the west again, sent us off once more on our way to the southward.

As day succeeded day now preparations were being made all the time for the dirty run we expected rounding The Horn.

The poultry we had taken aboard at Pitcairn Island were all comfortably housed in a large house the carpenter had made for them. This we had lashed on top of the midship house just for'ard of the half-deck. It was a favourite game of young Mac and a couple of Sydney training-ship boys to go along in the early morning watch and steal a few eggs now and again.

As they had no means of cooking them—it was not cold enough yet for the fo'c'sle bogey fire to be lit—they would suck the eggs raw. Strange to say they were never caught robbing the fowls' nests by either of the Mates. But the Mate got on young Mac's trail, over another matter, one dog-watch after he had been helping the steward down in the lazarette with the stores.

Young Mac was very partial to brown sugar, and before coming up on deck he had filled his dungaree jacket pockets with a good couple of pounds to take for'ard with him. Unluckily for Mac, one of his pockets had a small hole in it, and in his wake, all along the decks to the fo'c'sle, was a thin trail of brown sugar.

Bosun. Boatswain.
Bowsprit. Spar for head-sails rigged over bows of ship.
Brace. Ropes for hauling the yards round.
Braced. Yards trimmed to the wind.
Brassbounders. Apprentices in uniform.
Break of poop. Forward end of poop or quarter-deck.
Brig. A two-masted vessel square-rigged on both masts.
Bucko. A bully.
Bulwarks. Built-in rail round ship's deck.
Bum-boats. Small boats from shore with goods for sale.
Bunt. The midship or centre part of a square sail.
Buntlines. Running gear for hauling up a square sail ready for furling.
By the run. To engage to work a ship from one port to another for a specified sum, and not the usual monthly wages.
Cable. Mooring chain, anchor chain.
Canvas dodger. Same as weather cloth. *q.v.*
Cape Stiff. Sailor's term for Cape Horn.
Catted. Anchor stowed on ship's rail forward.
Cat-head. A projecting structure over each bow for securing the anchors.
Channels. Built-out structures outside bulwarks to give extra spread to lower rigging.
Chanty. A sea song with chorus, sung by sailing-ship sailors when performing heavy work, such as raising anchors or setting heavy sails.
Chart-house. Small deck-house on poop.
Clew-lines. Running gear on the clews of square sails for hauling up same.
Close-hauled. Sailing by the wind, or as close into the wind as possible.
Cock-billed. Aslant, ready to slip off.
Covering board. Deck-line.
Cringles. Round iron thimbles worked into the roping of sails.
Cro'jack. Cross-jack, the lowest square sail on mizzen-mast.
Crossed courses. In sea parlance, shipmates meeting again.
Cross-trees. Thwartship pieces of timber, at junction of lower and topmasts.
Davits. Curved iron arms projecting from ship's rail on which the boats are hoisted or lowered overside.
Davit-falls. Tackle on davits.
Diego Ramirez. Group of islands off Cape Horn.
Discharge. Certificate seamen receive when leaving a ship.
Ditty-bag. A small round canvas bag sailors kept their working gear in.
Doctor. Cook on sailing-ships.
Dog-watch. Watches from 4 to 6 p.m. and 6 to 8 p.m.
Doldrums. Calm stretches of ocean near Equator.

The Mate, seeing this, followed quickly on his heels, and caught him emptying his pockets out into his sugar whack tin. "You come along with me, young feller-me-lad," said the Mate, gripping him by the scruff of the neck. "I'll take you to the Old Man and see what he says about it."

Mac struggled and resisted, but it was no use, and half an hour later we saw him on his way up the main topmast rigging with a hank of buntline stops hanging from his belt, putting in his dog-watch below, overhauling buntlines.

"What did the Old Man have to say about you pinching the sugar?" Bill asked him as we were all turning in for the middle watch below.

"Oh, he asked me if I didn't get enough sugar in my whack without pinching it, and I told him no, and that there were a lot of things I didn't get enough of to eat.

So he turns round to the Mate and he says, 'See that he doesn't go short of overhauling buntlines, Mr. Craddock. We must let him have plenty of something whatever.' The lousy, mean old Welsh sailor's robber."

We were now fairly in the grip of the strong westerlies once more, and the Old Man was driving her for all she was worth.

One day in the morning watch I was at the wheel. We were running heavy with mountainous seas chasing us up astern, and it took a man all his time to hold her steady on her course.

The Old Man came along and stood by the wheel for awhile, and then he turned to me and said, "If we keep this up we should be round The Horn with the rest of those ships that got away just before we did from Astoria. We have been very lucky with good slants ever since we started, and one thing this old ship can do well is to run."

"Do you think we shall catch up on the *Miltonburn* and *Windsor Park*, sir?" I asked him. These ships had sailed just before us.

"Well, I think we will make either Queenstown or Falmouth along with them," the Old Man replied, stumping forward again in his wooden clogs, which he always wore in cold weather.

The Old Man had great faith in his ship's ability, but when I thought of some of the other fine ships that were also racing home with wheat from both Portland, Oregon, and 'Frisco, this same voyage, I could not imagine our old packet leading the van.

The *Queen Margaret, Rajore, Port Patrick, Miltonburn, Windsor*

Park, and a host of others were all fine ships, and some would probably sail us out of sight—especially beating to windward.

However, we continued to make great progress day by day, shortening up our longitude wonderfully as we made to the southward and eastward.

Watch after watch, we flew along before it, main decks full to the t'gall'nt rail, sails and spars and gear straining to just off breaking point.

Several of the bad helmsmen had been chased away from the wheel—the Old Man often standing aft on the poop for hours at a time, conning the ship and watching the steering.

To see her run to the top of a huge Cape Horn greybeard, and then take a header down the slope of the next one, into what looked like a veritable valley in the middle of the ocean, was an awe-inspiring sight. To the helmsman the wild sheers and runs that had to be met and checked, as the ship was caught up and flung like a cork from the crest of one huge comber to the hollow between the next, were a stern test of his ability as a helmsman, and to the steadiness of his nerves.

But still it was a great life, and though distance may be lending a certain amount of enchantment to the view, and the lapse of time softening the memory of the rugged hardships we endured, still for a young man, with the call of the sea in his blood, there is no calling now that I know of to equal it.

Looking back, my sentiments are with the old sailor who wrote—calling to mind the last time he ran his easting down:

D'ye mind the day when we squared away
And ran her east by south.
When she trampled down the big grey seas
With a roaring bone in her mouth;
When the best hands twirled the bucking wheel
An' dare not look behind
At the growling greybeard in her wake?
D'ye mind, old pal, d'ye mind?

The constant hanging on to sails, and driving her, began to tell on some of our sails and gear.

One night in a howling blizzard we lost the mizzen lower t'gall'nt sail, it getting blown clean out of its bolt-ropes, with a crack like the report of a gun. One morning a day or so afterwards,

our watch came on deck to find the mizzen lower topsail yard had dropped down about three or four feet, and buckled the heavy iron standards supporting it, causing the lower topsail to set like a bag through the yard being too low down.

"Come along, lads, we must get that standard sent down and try and straighten it," said the Mate as we came out on deck.

So away four or five of us went with the Mate, and after about two or three hours tussling with heavy hammers and spanners, we succeeded in getting it adrift, and slung in a gantline, and lowered to the deck.

It was bitter cold up aloft, and all the time we were up there the hard hail and sleet squalls would sweep down on us from astern like a band of furies, blotting out all view of the deck and near surroundings, and making our hands so numb with the cold, that the only way we could hang on was by wrapping our arms round the topmast rigging in the mizzen-top.

The ship was scudding along before it with heavy seas chasing her all the time, the main deck never being clear of water.

We dragged the heavy iron standard along for'ard, and getting some large iron plates, we built a good fire on top of them with some of our dunnage timber and Newcastle coal, and laying the standard on the fire, we kept it there until it was red hot. Then out with it, and getting it on top of the heavy iron mooring bollards near the fo'c'sle head ladder, we held it in place while the carpenter came down on it with a heavy top-maul.

We had to repeat the heating process a dozen times or so, as every now and again an extra heavy sea would invade the main deck, and come sweeping along for'ard, putting our fire out.

At times we were half roasted one side and frozen on the other, as we dodged around that fire, juggling with the heavy piece of ironwork.

By dint of steady perseverance and wordy encouragement from the Mate we at last got it back into its normal shape, and hoisted up aloft again into its right place.

The Old Man made a name for himself by "turning it on," for those who had been aloft all the time—sending the standard down and then up again. The tot of good old Jamaica rum we got when we at last got down on deck went a long way towards getting the circulation back again into our benumbed hands.

We had the bogeys going in each fo'c'sle now, and they warmed the cold damp places considerably.

Some weird mixtures were concocted in tin-plates over the fires. "Harriet Lane" and hard tack were cooked in half a dozen different ways, whilst "dandy-funk" was often on the menu.

How we used to long for a good square meal of beef-steak pudding and nice green vegetables, but off Cape Horn in a wind-jammer is no place to get such luxuries, so it was no use wishing for them.

CHAPTER XII

COLLISION WITH AN ICEBERG

OF all the most depressing conditions to put up with at sea, especially in the cold weather latitudes, fog takes a lot of beating.

For several days now, we had rolled along, with the wind moderating at times almost to a calm, and our ship enveloped for the greater part of the time in heavy fog-banks.

The wind still continued to keep abaft the beam but had hauled from the sou'-west into the nor'-west; the weather was bitterly cold, and the ghostly-looking driving fog-banks sent a shudder down one's spine as one came on deck each watch.

Save for the slapping of gear aloft, and the gurglings and splashings as the deck ports clanged open and drained the main deck every now and again, the silence was remarkable.

Even the dreary dirge of the foghorn, sending three prolonged blasts every few minutes from the look-out's post on the fo'c'sle head, sounded muffled and strange. His cry every half-hour of "All's well" came eerily through the murk of fog, reminding one of a seagull's call on an outlying rock that was being passed by, close to, at night.

The Old Man stumped up and down the poop, stopping at frequent intervals to listen, and peer out ahead, the picture of a man very ill at ease.

"Let two men keep the look-out for'ard there, Mr. Craddock, one each side of the fo'c'sle head, and keep two boys handy aft here on the poop, and let them keep a look-out on each quarter. By the feel of the air at times I fancy ice is not far distant. Let the foghorn be kept going frequently and listen for any echo which may come. Call me at once should any change come, or if you sight anything."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied the Mate as the Old Man stepped inside the chart-house door on his way below for a rest, as he had been on deck most of the night.

It was our watch on deck in the early morning from four o'clock till eight; the fog still persisted, but the Mate was anxious to get on with the "sand and canvasing" of the bright work.

At six o'clock, when the Old Man went below, the Mate, after posting the extra look-outs, got the remainder of the watch on to the sand and canvasing. We were employed thus when seven bells was struck, and the other watch called.

Just as they had tumbled out, and were getting their breakfast in from the galley, old Tom Kidd, who was on the look-out, on the port bow for'ard on the fo'c'sle head, startled the whole ship's company with the cry of "Ice! Ice right ahead! Port your helm, port your helm! Hard up with it, sir; we are right on top of it!"

Surprise and consternation were on every face as we rushed to the weather rail to look for the ice.

"Why, it's only drift ice," said Thompson, who was standing next to me looking over the rail on the main deck near the break of the poop.

"No, it's not, look higher," I replied, gazing at a great whitey-grey wall that was taking on a more definite shape all along our port side, the nearer we approached it.

It appeared like a monstrous white sheet hanging down through the fog, which even at this near distance almost obliterated it.

The ship was swinging off to starboard, the Mate having rushed to the wheel at old Tom's first cry, and helped the helmsman to swing her hard over.

We were on the port tack with the yards off the backstays, and were carrying all plain sail but the cro'jack, which was furled, and the mainsail, which was hauled up in its gear under the yard.

The minutes seemed like hours, and we were beginning to wonder if we should escape hitting it when *"Crash!"* The weather fore-yard arm, and the end of our big spike jib-boom, took the impact simultaneously.

Down came the hundred-foot steel yard, with a crashing and tearing of gear and sails, and fell with a giant thud across the fore-deck and over the lee rail, the fore lower topsail hanging in festoons from its yard above it.

The great steel jib-boom was buckled upwards, parting bobstay and backropes from under it, and as the ship still moved ahead the port anchor was driven through the fo'c'sle head decking.

The figurehead, which had been our pride, was smashed into small splinters, and the pretty curve of our clipper bow was dented inwards considerably.

As we eventually came to a standstill under the lee of the berg, the sails hung limp from our yards, the wind all being taken out

of them by the height of the berg, which towered above our t'gall'nt yards.

Great lumps of ice, some weighing half a ton or more, fell from the top of the iceberg down on to our decks, which soon presented a sorry sight.

One of our boats on the for'ard house had her sides stove in with falling ice, while one of the large lifeboats on the after-skid was badly holed.

The donkey-boiler and winch on the fore deck also suffered a lot of damage, while the carpenter's shop on the port side, under the fo'c'sle head, was knocked all out of shape, when her bow struck the ice.

In several places on the main deck, great lumps had fallen right through the decking, and had landed on top of the wheat below.

Luckily no one was injured, for as soon as she struck, the Old Man had roared out, "All hands lay aft on the starboard side of the poop," and here we all stopped until the ship came to a standstill.

"Sound the well, carpenter," said the Old Man to Chips when we had sidled up alongside the berg and lay quietly with no more ice falling down.

"She is not making any water, sir," called Chips to the Old Man after taking his first sounding.

"All right, try again in a few minutes," said the Old Man.

But after several tries with the sounding-rod it was proved that the only damage we had was all above the water-line.

After a day of strenuous toil by all hands, we succeeded in getting things a bit ship-shape once more. The fore-yard was cut clear from its gear, where it hung balanced on the starboard rail, and was given a watery grave, taking with it the remains of our new hard-weather foresail. The decks were cleared of ice, and temporary patches of canvas and timber nailed over where the ice had broken right through.

Towards evening we had drifted a little way away from the berg we had collided with and, as the day wore on, the fog lifted and let us see more of our surroundings. All round us were icebergs of all shapes and sizes. There was no opening at all visible, right ahead, when viewed even from the height of our upper t'gall'nt yards.

The berg we had hit was over one hundred and fifty feet in

height, and approximately three miles long, while farther ahead was a long low berg which the Mate calculated was about twelve miles long.

There were small icebergs all round us. Some rose like great buildings and church spires, while others were squat and low in the water.

During the day, one of the tall church-like ones, about a mile distant from us, out on the starboard side, capsized with a roar and a great splashing and upheaval of the water in its vicinity.

We seemed to have run right into the centre of a large ice-field, and the only way out now open to us was to double back on our tracks, and get out the way we had come in.

Late that afternoon a large four-masted German barque, painted black, passed close to us and made his number, afterwards asking us whether he could give us any assistance.

As our reply was being made the fog descended once more and blotted him out, leaving us to put in another night in company with the icebergs which we could not see, though we could plainly hear some of them grinding all night long.

For the next couple of days, the weather, luckily for us, was beautiful, and gave us a great chance to get the ship into sea-going order once more.

We had to repair the whole of our port fore-lower rigging as it had all been badly damaged in the collision.

Where the shrouds had been parted, we had to turn the broken ends in, and shackle on mooring chains to make them long enough to reach the screws.

We also had to pass a mooring chain right round the ship, with a large shackle at its centre under the keel forward, on to which we shackled a temporary bobstay to heave the bowsprit down again.

Having no spar that would serve for a fore-yard, we had to dispense with two of our most useful sails, the fore-lower topsail, and the foresail.

There was some talk of sending the cro'jack yard down, and sending it up on the fore, in place of the fore-yard, but owing to the badly damaged state of our rigging on the fore, this was not done. In any case it would not have been nearly long enough.

The day after the collision the Old Man called all hands aft, and put it to the whole ship's company as to whether we should, in our damaged condition, take the ship in to the Falkland

Islands, which were about two hundred miles distant, or carry her right home as she was.

The verdict, by a big majority, was to take the ship right home as she was; so we worked both watches all day from daylight to dark, to make her ready for the long passage that still lay ahead of us.

Even though the weather was fine, working with heavy chains and wire seizing all day was cold work, and none of us was sorry when at last the job was completed, and we were standing well to the northward, and away clear from the ice-fields.

CHAPTER XIII

NORTHWARD HO!

ALTHOUGH we had no fore-yard, and consequently no foresail, or fore-lower-topsail now, still the old ship made some good runs. Two or three weeks after our collision with the iceberg, we were once more bustling along with the south-east Trades, steadily urging us on, and the girls at home in the Old Country taking in the slack of our tow-rope hand over hand.

Sweepstakes were got up, and the betting in fo'c'sle and half-deck caused quite a lot of excitement, some betting that she would arrive at either Queenstown or Falmouth early in May, others saying that it would be the end of June or beginning of July before we made our first port for orders.

When at last we lost the south-east Trades and got backing and filling about in the Doldrums near the Line, the optimistic ones got a big setback when, after a fortnight's drifting about, there was still no sign of us getting a start to send us on our course once more.

"I told you so," said Thompson, the pessimist in the fo'c'sle, one afternoon in our watch below; "we'll have another couple of months yet aboard this old hooker, you see if we don't. She's one of those unlucky hoodooed ships, that's what she is." And still continuing his doleful predictions against the ship and all aboard of her, he crawled into his bunk to mumble to himself.

We were busily employed painting the yards and masts while the weather was favourable, and one day whilst hauling the yards around in our watch, someone had left a foot-rope on the main upper-topsail yard, stopped to the topmast rigging with a spun-yarn seizing.

"Up aloft there, someone with a good sharp knife, and cut that stop," said the Mate, pointing aloft to the foot-rope on the main upper-topsail yard, which was stretched bar-tight with the pull of the braces against it.

My mate jumped into the main rigging, and was soon aloft at the scene of the trouble.

Whipping out his sheath-knife, he reached out from the main topmast rigging, and drew the sharp blade across the spun-yarn seizing.

"Ping!" went the seizing, and the released rigging, flying back into place like the string of a bow, threw Bill from the rigging like a stone from a catapult, and sent him hurtling down through space.

We all saw him falling, and all we could do in those few seconds was to pray that he would not hit the deck, but go clean over the side.

He struck the main-top, just above the futtock-rigging, a glancing blow and then hit the main lower rigging about half-way down, tearing off two or three round rod-iron ratlines in his rapid descent.

This last obstacle was the saving of Bill, for the spring of the main rigging when he hit it sent him with a rebound right over the side. The huddled-up shape of him saved him also, as he seemed to fall like a round ball, arms, legs and body all doubled up together.

He hit the water with a splash, like a shell landing into the ocean from a heavy cannon, after his eighty-foot fall, and down he went like a stone, to reappear a few minutes after, about half a dozen yards from the ship, with a red stain of blood all round him from a huge gash on his head.

As he rose to the surface the Second Mate, who had rushed out of his room at the commotion, threw a line over the side, and calling on me to get another and follow him, went over the side after Bill.

I followed with another line, and both of us getting hold of the injured man, we passed a bowline round him under his arms, and sang out to the people on deck to haul him up.

They quickly had him up over the rail, and when the Second Mate and I reached the deck Bill was laid out on the deck under the break of the poop, with the Old Man shaving the top of his head in readiness for sewing the wound together.

The steward was here, there and everywhere, and after shaving and bathing the injured head, the Old Man got to work with his surgical needle and catgut thread from the medicine chest, and put seventeen stitches into Bill's thick cranium.

"He has a hide like a bullock, look you," said the Old Man to the Mate, as he pushed the stitches through, but Bill, being only in a semi-conscious state, didn't seem to feel it much, and save for an occasional groan, took no notice of the operation.

After bandaging him up and feeling him all over for any broken

bones, we got him into the spare cabin, and laid him in a comfortable bunk.

The heat worried him, and he began to get delirious, so the Old Man sent for me as we were from the same place, and had been shipmates before joining this ship.

"You stop aft while he is like this, Avery, and watch him. Don't let him get up, and humour him a bit when he gets talking to himself, we must keep him quiet for a few days."

"Aye, aye, sir," I replied, and so was duly installed as Bill's nurse until he got over the worst of his fall.

Bill, however, was young and hardy, and had the constitution of an ox, and within a week or so he was convalescent, and sitting out on deck in one of the big wicker chairs from the cabin, and after about three weeks he insisted on coming for'ard to his own bunk among the rest of us.

Though he had had a bad fall, and had been pretty badly knocked about, still he had had a lot of luck. If he had not hit the main rigging, he might have fallen on the deck and been killed at once. Then again, had the ship been moving quickly through the water (at the time she was only just holding steerage way) we would have been longer getting him aboard, and most probably he would have sunk with his injuries, before we could have reached him.

Lastly, had we not caught an eight-foot shark just before Bill fell from aloft, the shark would probably have got him when he hit the water, especially as he was bleeding like a pig with its throat cut.

When they hauled him back on deck, the shark and Bill lay side by side for a few minutes, and the thought came to many a mind that it was a very lucky thing Mr. Shark had been caught when he was.

One man among our ship's company had more reason than the rest of us to remember this particular shark. In the excitement of everybody getting a whack at him to put him out of action, Olaf, who had joined the ship at Portland, had ventured just a little bit too near his vicious jaws. They had shut with a vicious snap, taking away the tip of Olaf's rubber sea-boot, which he was wearing at the time, and also the tip of Olaf's big toe.

And so the days passed as we pulley-hauled our way through the flukey winds of the Doldrums.

One day a big Dutch cargo steamer passed close by us, and

we signalled him, and asked him to report us to our owners, and say that we had been in collision with ice.

On another day, in a flat calm, no less than six sailing-ships, two four-masted barques, three ships and one three-masted barque, drifted into sight, though some could only be seen by climbing to the upper t'gall'nt yards.

We all went over the side on stages, and painted the ship black down to the water-line one day in a dead calm, and great was the controversy in the fo'c'sle as to whether the Mate could *insist* on this job being done at sea.

Some of our old sea-lawyers had it that it was distinctly against the law, and not at all the right thing to ask men to do, according to "Gunter".

However, we did the job, and in spite of our disabled look for'ard, it improved the look of the old ship wonderfully.

All hands were busy painting sea-chests, and making round sea-bags for clothes, and small ones with fancy sennit lanyards for ditty-bags. Chips still laboured at his models in his workshop under the fo'c'sle-head.

The *Liverpool* of Liverpool was a finished job now, as were a couple of four-masted barques he had been working on, and they were all pictures to please any sailor-man's eye.

At last after about three weeks of pulley-haul, and backing and filling around, we got a good slant which eventually worked round into the north-east Trade wind, and off we went to northward and westward in great style. Head-winds and calms delayed our progress after about a week of steady north-east Trades.

We did no good at all with a head-wind now, missing our foresail and fore-lower-topsail more than ever.

The ship was getting very foul underneath, and on looking over her side when she was rolling heavy, we could see long streamers of sea-growth hanging to her.

Early one morning we came on deck to find the ship sailing through miles of Gulf weed. There was not much wind, and the long, slow-running ocean swell had the appearance of solid land, so thick was the weed on it. We put a draw-bucket over and got a bucketful of it on deck. There were thousands and thousands of miniature crayfish in it, and also several very small jelly-fish with long feelers.

The steward took one of these last in his hand to have a better look at it, but it stung him so severely that he soon dropped it,

and had to hurry aft and smother his hand in iodine to ease the pain of the sting.

We sighted the smoke of several steamers these last few days, but none near enough to signal.

All hands were beginning to get irritable with one another, and quarrels and arguments arose over very trivial matters. The passage was getting too long drawn out altogether. It was bad enough to have a disabled ship to handle, but a succession of head-winds and calms on top of that misfortune did not tend to improve the tempers of any one aboard the ship.

The Old Man was unapproachable, and kept strictly to himself, spending most of his time below, and when he did come on deck, it was woe betide the helmsman who was not watching his steering.

Even good-natured old Chips would not have anyone in his workshop to yarn with him now, and, superstitious Swede that he was, he would come out from under the fo'c'sle-head, and stick his knife in the spider band round the foot of the foremast, with the handle pointing the way he wished the wind to come from.

"Dot vill bring the vind to blow de right vay," he would say to us when we laughed at his superstition. He firmly believed it, and looked on us as a lot of greenhorns for not seeing eye to eye with him.

At last one night in the middle watch, a heavy roll began to work up from the sou'-west, it was the forerunner of a good fair wind right aft, and blowing half a gale.

"Go it, old girl," said the Mate, "we'll show them now what an old 'lame duck' can do; keep it up, and another couple of weeks will see us picking up the Fastnet Light."

The weather now put a stop to our painting and cleaning, which had kept all hands employed every fine day for weeks past, but with all our work we could not make the ship neat and natty with the for'ard end of her so much knocked about.

Day succeeded day, and still we held a good fair wind. We worked gradually into the regular track of shipping, and vessels, both steam and sail, were often sighted now.

One of the boys from the other watch rushed into the fo'c'sle one day to call us at one bell, a quarter to twelve, and he could hardly talk for excitement.

"Come along, hurry out and see all the trawlers; they are all around us!" he cried, and sure enough, when we got on deck there were fully half a dozen large trawlers all fairly close to us.

The Old Man beckoned to the man at the wheel to put his helm up a bit, and run down to the near one.

On getting within hailing distance, the Old Man got his megaphone and called out, "What is my true position from the Fastnet Light?"

We all waited on the tip-toe of excitement for the answer.

Back it came across the intervening stretch of water in real good "Old Country" English.

"Seventy-five miles nor'-west, Captain."

"Thank you," responded the Old Man.

"Have you got any hard tobacco and a bottle or two of 'Old Scotch,' Captain?" next called the trawler skipper. "If you can let me have some, I'll fill your boat with fresh fish when you send her over."

"Right you are," our skipper shouted.

He turned inboards, yelling to the Mate. "Back the main yards, Mr. Craddock, and put a boat over the side."

Willingly we ran to the main braces and backed the yards, and then as the ship lost her way, we lowered one of the boats off the for'ard house over the side.

The steward came along with a small bag of tobacco, whisky, and some salt junk.

"Over the side, four or five of you," said the Mate, naming several of us as a boat's crew, and over we climbed into the boat, the Mate quickly following, and soon we were pulling across the long heaving rollers towards the nearest trawler.

On reaching the decks, the trawler's cook came along to us as our Mate was talking to the skipper, and calling us to follow him, he took us to the galley, and said, "I'm sure you fellows could go a bit of fresh tucker—there you are, help yourselves."

Well, if ever a meal was enjoyed by anyone, that one was by us. We had fresh roast beef, fresh potatoes, and above all things, cabbage, and then a great big plateful of rice pudding with eggs in it.

I've enjoyed many a good meal since that, but none have ever quite come up to the dinner aboard that trawler, after one hundred and fifty-three days of deep-water fare.

The trawler's crew gathered round us as we ate, and gave us the latest happenings ashore. We were keen for any news, as from the second of January to the beginning of June is a long spell to be cut off from the world. "Campbell Bannerman is dead, and

Asquith is now Prime Minister," said one of our hosts, following this news item with the last doings on the racecourse, Channel swimming and much more.

We drank it all in like veritable Rip Van Winkles.

"Come on, boys, lay along here, and give a hand to get the trawl aboard," called our Mate, and what we lacked in skill in handling trawls, we made up for by hard pulling as the fish came up alongside.

Once on deck, there seemed to be tons of fish, and as the skipper had promised, they nearly filled our boat with them.

"Drop aft with your boat, mister, and we'll give you a tow over to your ship," said the trawler skipper, and hanging on astern of the trawler with a long line, we were soon alongside our old ship once more.

Somehow, viewing her from the boat, she looked altogether different, and not at all like the familiar old floating home we had been living aboard all this time as seen by us every day from her decks.

In spite of our cleaning and painting she looked battered and weather-worn, especially for'ard, where the damage had been done, and every time she rolled great patches of sea-growth were exposed on her boot-topping below the water-line.

Hooking on to the davit falls, we were soon on deck giving a hand to the rest of the crowd in hoisting the boat in.

What a meal of fish all hands had for tea that good night! Our Irish cook was nearly distracted by the constant raids made on his galley for more fried fish.

"May the devil fly away wid yer," he called to some of the boys whose demands were incessant. "Sure, and it's a foine thing that we're nearly home, or you'd go hungry for fat to fry all your fish in, me lads, me jewels."

CHAPTER XIV

LAND HO!

THAT night in the middle watch, I smelt hay in the fields as plainly as if I were walking along a country road. The Mate also smelt it, for walking along to me, where I stood at the wheel, he said, "Do you smell that, Avery? The green fields of Old Ireland are not far distant now."

"Yes," I replied, "I've been smelling it ever since I've been up here at the wheel. Shall we be in under the land in the morning, sir?"

"Yes, if the wind keeps up we should be passing Cape Clear about noon tomorrow."

There was great excitement now all over the ship, and after turning in at 4 a.m., I for one could hardly close my eyes, so anxious was I to get my first glimpse of the Old Country.

Anyhow, it was broad daylight now at 3 a.m., so there was not much chance of sleeping, especially when the watch on deck were walking up and down, conversing in loud tones as to what they intended doing when they got paid off.

"Land ho! Land ho!" at 6 a.m., came the cry from one of the men perched high aloft, taking off old chafing gear from the rigging.

Most of us from the port watch could restrain our curiosity no longer, so out we rushed, and up on to the fo'c'sle head to try and make it out. Yes, there it was, sure enough, dim and cloud-like at first, but gradually taking shape, till at last headlands, hills and valleys all became visible.

Here and there the smoke of steamers pursuing their regular tracks, and, as we worked closer in under the land, smaller vessels and villages ashore could be plainly seen.

Off Cape Clear several other deep-watermen were recognised, and we had not been so slow after all, for there was the *Miltonburn* and several others who were in Portland, Oregon along with us.

Our old "lame duck" had not done so badly after all, for here we were in company with some of our old friends from the other side of the world.

Towards noon several tugs appeared on the scene, and after

much bargaining on the part of our Old Man, and the tug-boat skipper, we took the line of one from Glasgow, a big, black-painted, paddle-wheel tug called the *Flying Fox*.

What a relief to know now, as we lay out on the yards furling most of our square sails, that we were done with pulley-hauling these sails at last.

"Give them a good harbour stow, lads," called the Mate from on deck, and we rolled them up and put a good neat "skin" on each sail.

As we skirted the coastline from Cape Clear to Queenstown Harbour, numerous shore boats put out and hooked on alongside; the majority were bum-boats selling eggs, butter, fresh bread and such-like; deep-water Jack was an easy mark for these fellows. Starvation diet had for so long been the vogue that we could hardly wait until port was reached and fresh stores got aboard.

We anchored in Queenstown Harbour, well out in the middle, and moored the ship with both anchors.

As the great chains ripped out through the hawse-pipes, we all gave a sigh of relief to think that at last we could turn in for all night long without the fear of the cry "All hands on deck and shorten sail" breaking in on our slumbers.

Yet pleasant memories were attached to the voyage also; it was something to be looked back upon in after years with a certain amount of pride and satisfaction. We too felt that we could say with Kipling:

> *Let go, let go the anchors, now shamed at heart are we,*
> *To bring so poor a cargo home, that had for gift the sea.*
> *Let go the great bow anchors. Ah! fools we were and blind,*
> *The worst we stored with utter toil, the best we left behind.*

How quiet and peaceful everything looked to us that fine summer evening, and what a change it was to have the ship lying perfectly still.

Looking aloft, the spars and rigging looked uncommonly bare and lifeless, now that all the sails were snugly furled; the decks also seemed quite different, and appeared to us now like great level dry spaces of planking, inviting us to pace up and down, up and down, with a fellow shipmate, yarning about all the wonderful things we meant to do when we got paid off.

Ahead and inside of us, more towards the town, were quite a

fleet of ships riding to their anchors, ships that had made Queenstown for orders the same as we had.

In the distance we could pick the *Queen Margaret* standing out like a great square-rigged pleasure yacht among a host of others.

The *Celtic Race, Lady Wolseley, British Yeoman, Miltonburn, Duchelburn,* all homeward-bounders, could also be picked out, their long race run, and a spell in dock in different ports awaiting them.

For twelve days we lay at anchor, and during that time we touched the ship up again over the side, with black paint.

I spent quite a lot of time in one of our smaller boats with four apprentices, sailing the Old Man ashore in the mornings, and bringing him off again in the evenings.

Sometimes we would spend pretty well the whole day ashore in Queenstown waiting on the skipper, and then have a race off with several other boats in the evening. If it happened that the skippers had been a bit liberal in handing round a little cash among the different crews, the going would be very willing on the way out.

Queenstown is a picturesquely situated town, and I should say that the harbour is, in my opinion, one of the best in the world. It could accommodate a whole fleet of ships, and I suppose in its time it has done so. It was named Queenstown after the visit of Queen Victoria in 1849; previous to that, it was known as the Cove of Cork.

A twelve-mile run in the train takes one in to the City of Cork. The houses are built one above the other up on the hill-sides, in the form of terraces. There are forts on both headlands at the entrance to the harbour, and also a fort on Spike Island.

Spike Island and Haulbowline Island, used in connection with the Naval Dockyard, conjure up memories of the fleets of years gone by, when the great three-deckers, and smart frigates put in here for repairs. An Admiral's flagship was always stationed here. Here also is the oldest yacht club in the United Kingdom, The Royal Cork Yacht Club, founded in 1720.

Connecting Queenstown with Rushbrook, a favourite watering-place, is a fine promenade, over a mile in length. Walking along here, one can obtain fine views of the harbour's shipping.

The *Mauretania,* then a new ship, came in one day, and anchored not far from us, while tenders brought passengers and mail off, bound for New York.

She was the largest ship I had ever seen, and I could never forget the fine lines of her, as she swept by us on her way out, for, huge and massive as she seemed, she had the lines of a yacht. Our Ensign was dipped from our monkey-gaff as she passed us, and, as prompt as a man-o'-war, she returned the salute.

Eventually our final orders came off with the Old Man one afternoon, "Hamburg to discharge," so that put an end to all our guessing. Fleetwood, Bristol, London, all had been guessed at, but no, it was to Hamburg we must go before we would hear the Mate's final "That'll do, you men," as we made the last mooring line fast.

We had to wait a couple of days, however, before our tug arrived. Though we had sailed the ship in a disabled condition from Cape Horn to Ireland, we were not to sail her on this, the last lap of our voyage.

For this we were very thankful, however, and when the *Atlas*, a large ocean-going tug, arrived from the Hook of Holland, to take us to our final destination, we gave her a rousing cheer as she came up alongside us.

She was a Dutch tug, and fitted up with all the latest salvaging appliances, and she looked as if she could tow us across the Western Ocean, just as easily as she could tow us to Hamburg.

It was quite a long job clearing our cables, and getting our anchors both hove up, but with the help of a lot of Queenstown bumboat men, who stuck to us to the last, we managed it all right.

The Irish boatmen kept up a continual run of old sea-chanties, and at last, to the tune of "Paddy West," we had our second anchor awash.

Oh, he sent me up to the garret,
No main-royal could I find,
So I jumps upon the window-sill
And furls the window-blind.

"Belay that! Into your boats, you fellows, unless you want to come to Hamburg with us," called the Mate to our Irish friends, and with many hearty handshakes they left us, and soon dropped astern as the tug ahead of us gathered way.

Wolf Rock was passed close to the next day; we gave her all the sails on the main as the wind was favourable going up Channel, and passing Dungeness the next night we carried quite a strong breeze with us.

The run across the North Sea was beautifully fine. We passed quite close to a large ocean yacht race; the big yachts looked splendid, carrying all sail, and making a great pace.

Off Cuxhaven a river pilot came aboard us, and the *Atlas* cast off, and gave us over to two smaller tugs, one going ahead, and the other alongside.

During the long tow up the Elbe River, we unbent and sent down all the sails. It was a great job, for away up aloft we could see for miles around. All kinds of craft were passing us, and overhauling us, but the ones that interested me most were the quaint-looking Dutch galliots with their natty light paintwork, and prettily curtained cabin windows.

At last the City of Hamburg loomed into view ahead; it is seventy-five miles up-river from Cuxhaven, but it being mid-summer, we had daylight all the way, as we had arrived off Cuxhaven early in the morning.

As we passed Blankenese and Altona, some of we colonials began to realise how small our own towns were, compared to these old-world cities.

Just above the city we moored the ship to dolphins in the middle of the river, and no sooner was the first line fast to a pile than our decks were overrun with boarding-house runners, tailors' runners, photographers, butchers, and every kind of tradesfolk.

"You come along to my house, Jack," one would have yelled in his ear, as he was busy stopping a wire hawser to the bollards. "Come with me, Jack. Here is a small bottle to have a taste," would say another, thrusting a bottle of some chain-lightning whisky stuff into a jacket pocket.

To one and all of these gentry, the majority of us turned a deaf ear. Pity help the homeward-bounder with a fairly good pay-day who allows himself to fall into their clutches. Within a week he would find himself "broke to the world," and outward bound again the first thing the boarding-house master could find for him.

"Put another bight out on that headline, boys," said the Mate, and then, when it was taken round the bollards and securely stopped off, came the long-looked-for order that most of us had even dreamed of in our watches below for the last few months.

"That will do, you men."

With a wild yell we made a rush for the fo'c'sle to complete packing sea-chests and bags.

Boarding-house runners are pushed aside out of the way. Old clothes, sea-boots, oilskins, and all sorts of things that we had treasured as priceless, running the easting down, and off Cape Horn, are now discarded and slung here, there and everywhere. Chests and bags are packed as light as possible with the best of our belongings.

"Who's for the Board of Trade? Who's for the Board of Trade?" cries out the Board of Trade's official from out on deck, and out most of us rush, and make arrangements with him for our passage to England.

The boarding-house runners glare at him as though he had done them a great injury by booking us up for the trip to London; but little cares the Board of Trade man or we either, we are off as soon as the steamer will take us.

We troop aft eventually, and say good-bye to the Mate who is staying by the ship for a while. Over a tot of rum in his cabin he wishes us luck wherever we are bound.

Then for the shore, where we spend the night, in readiness to catch the steamer for Harwich in the morning.

We sample the German lager beer, and pronounce it good, and also get a good square meal at a big restaurant.

Bill and I took a room for the night over in St. Pauli. An old German and his wife, who were the occupants of the house, did their best to make us comfortable. Speaking of these people as I found them, I must say that they were most hospitable.

When I think of the Great War, and the hatred that was stirred up against the Germans, I can hardly realise that the quiet, inoffensive old couple we stayed with in Hamburg were of the same race as the enemy we were up against in later years. What a difference war makes!

Hamburg is a fine city, with some wonderful streets and buildings. The Jungfernstieg is a fine street, with large shops and hotels facing the waters of Binnen Alster, while the Hermann-strasse and Grosse Bleichen are busy business thoroughfares. Along the waterfront there are six miles of shipping in a continuous line.

On board the steamer the next day, we fell in with another couple of ships' crews, homeward bound like ourselves, but after being so long together we did not feel like breaking up our old ship's party and mixing too freely with strangers.

The run across to Harwich was made in fine weather, and on

arrival there a train with carriages marked for "Ships' Crews Only" was waiting to carry us all to Liverpool Street Station, London.

It was with mingled feelings that I stepped ashore, and trod, for the first time, on the soil of Old England. This was the country of my birth, but I had left here as an infant, by sailing-ship for New Zealand. Right from boyhood I had promised myself that I would come and see this old land, and now here I was.

The smell of the hemp and the tar,
And the set of the sails on the yard,
And the network of gear, and the courses we steered
With the lubbers' point true on the card.
And the ports that we made, when as boys,
We saw Capetown, or 'Frisco, or Hull,
And the chanty well sung of the homeward-bound joys,
The bustle of London, the streets and the noise,
And the firesides gleam and the lull.

P.A.E.

A.B., Able Seaman. A seaman who has served his time as a boy, and who, in sailing-ships, must be able to hand reef and steer. A sailing-ship Able Seaman also has a thorough knowledge of knotting and splicing either wire or steel ropes, as well as any splice in hemp or manilla ropes. It used to take four years of sea service in sail, as boy and ordinary seaman, to qualify for able seaman's rating.

Advance note. A note given to seamen on joining a ship in lieu of money, to the value of one month's pay. It is payable to the person who cashes it three days after the ship has sailed, providing the said seaman sails in the said ship.

Aft or abaft. Towards the stern.

Anchor watch. Watches kept while ship is at anchor.

Articles. Ship's papers with crew list.

Athwartship. At right angles to the fore and aft line of ship.

Backstays. After-stays on ship's standing rigging.

Ballast trim. No cargo in, only ballast to enable the ship to stand up under sail. Flying light.

Bar entrance. A harbour entrance with a sandbank across its mouth.

Bare poles. No sails set.

Barque. A three-masted vessel, square-rigged on the fore and main-masts only.

Barquentine. A three-masted vessel square-rigged on the foremast only.

Beat. To tack with a head wind.

Belay. Make it fast.

Belaying-pin. Pin through railing to make fast ropes to.

Bend. To make fast.

Bent. Sail made fast onto yard for use.

Bight. The loop of a rope.

Bilge. The round of a vessel's hull where the bottom meets the sides.

Binnacle. Compass stand.

Blackbirding. Kidnapping of South Pacific islanders for labour. Practice has long ceased.

Boarding-house master. A proprietor of a sailors' boarding-house.

Boatskids. Places to house the ship's boats.

Bogey-stove. Small stove to heat fo'c'sle.

Bollard. Shipboard deck fittings to which are made fast mooring lines and other heavy ropes.

Bolt-ropes. Roping round a sail.

Bone in her teeth. White foam around the bows.

Boot-topping. Paint along the ship's water-line.

Downhaul. Rope to haul sail down.
Dunnage. Luggage.
Eyes of a ship. As far forward in a ship as possible, where the sides meet the stem under the decks.
Farewell buoys. Mooring buoys for ships waiting to sail.
Farmer. A seaman on watch with no turn to take at the steering-wheel or lookout.
Figurehead. Ornamental figure on stem head of ships.
Flitch of timber. Heavy pieces. Baulk timber.
Flying-fish weather. Fine weather.
Fo'c'sle. Seamen's quarters on board ship.
Fo'c'sle-head. Raised deck right in bows of ship.
Foot-ropes. Ropes stretched along under the yards for men to stand on when loosing or furling sail.
Fore-bowline. Rope used to stretch forepart of foresail for'ard when sailing by the wind. When the order comes to let it go when ship is coming round, it is the signal to haul the foreyards round.
Fore-foot. Part of stem nearest to keel.
Fore-peak. Small compartment right in bows of ship.
Fore-royal. Uppermost yard on foremast.
Fore-royal halliards. Tackle for hoisting fore-royal-yard.
Foresail. Lowest square sail on foremast.
Fore-sheet. Rope to haul aft the clew of foresail.
Fore-tack. The clew or lower corner of foresail hove down to set the sail on the fo'c'sle head.
Fore-t'gall'n'sl. Fore-topgallant-sail, square sail below royal.
Fore-topmast. Topmast on foremast.
Fore-topmast staysail. The innermost head-sail on bowsprit.
Fore-upper topsail. The third square sail on the foremast.
Forenoon watch. Watch from 8 a.m. till 12 noon.
Four-masted barque. Four-masted sailing vessel square-rigged on three masts.
Frap. A crossed lashing.
Full and bye. Sailing clean full on the wind, all sails drawing.
Full-rigged ship. A three-masted vessel square-rigged on all three masts.
Furl. To make a sail fast, to stow it when clewed up.
Futtock-shrouds. Ratlines leading up over tops at lower mast-heads.
Gaff. Upper spar on a fore-and-aft sail.
Gantline. Rope rove off for hoisting up a sail to be bent, or a yard to be crossed.
Gaskets. Small ropes used to bind round and round a sail when furling.
"Girls taking in the slack of towrope." An old sailor's saying when a homeward bound ship gets a good fair wind.

Greenhorn. A beginner aboard ship.
Gunter. An early English mathematician who invented the quadrant and other nautical instruments.
Half-deck. Apprentices' quarters.
Handy-billy. A small handy tackle.
Hand-out. A gift of food.
Hawse-pipes. Leads in bows of ship for cable to run out.
Hawser. Heavy rope for towing.
Hazing. Working up jobs for the crew, unnecessary work.
Head-earring. Lanyard or lashing in sail to bend it on to yard.
Head-gear. The rigging leading on to the bowsprit.
Head-sail. A sail out on the bowsprit, a jib.
Helm's a-lee. Announcing that the helm is put hard over to bring ship's head to wind when tacking ship.
Hobo. A useless man aboard ship, no seaman.
Hull down. A vessel sighted in the distance with her hull below the horizon, and only her masts and sails visible.
Inner jib. The second sail out on the bowsprit.
Kauri-gum. The gum of the kauri pine tree in New Zealand, valued for varnish-making purposes. Where ancient forests have stood, this gum is found by digging for it.
Kedge anchor. Small anchor for running out in a boat.
Lame duck. Disabled ship.
Lanyard. Lashings to set up rigging. A bell rope.
Lay aft. Come aft, or go aft.
Laying her course. Going in right direction.
Lazarette. A small compartment where stores are kept under the cabin floor aft.
Leading breeze. Wind well abeam favourable for course.
Lee side. The side of the ship not facing the wind.
Lifts. Gear supporting yard arms and booms.
Log. Sea instrument for measuring distance run. Ship's book in which events aboard are recorded.
Log dragger. Small tug used in towing rafts of logs.
Long splice. Neat way of splicing two ropes together; several ways of doing it.
Lubber's point. The mark inside the binnacle which indicates the ship's head or bow.
Luffing. Ship's head coming up into the wind.
Lulled. Died down, or fell calm.
Main-course. Mainsail of a square-rigged ship.
Main-skysail. Small square sail above main royal.
Main-staysail. Fore-and-aft sail between main and foremasts.
Marline-spike. A long, round, pointed piece of steel for splicing
Mizzen. The aftermast of a three-masted vessel.

Mizzen-fife-rail. A rail for belaying-pins round mizzen-mast.
Mizzen-rigging. Rigging of mizzen-mast.
Monkey-gaff. A small gaff on mizzen-mast for signalling purposes.
Monkey-pea-jacket. A thick double-breasted coat.
Niue Island, or *Savage Island.* An island between the Friendly Islands and Cook Island.
Nobbys. "The Nobbys," the South Head of Newcastle, N.S.W., harbour.
Offing. Safe distance from land in case of calms.
Old Man. Captain, in sea parlance.
O.S. Ordinary seaman, a young seaman who has not qualified for A.B.
Overhauling buntlines. Going aloft and slacking up running gear over the set sails to save chafing.
Paddy's Hurricane. Sea term for flat calm.
Paddy's Lantern. Sea term for the moon.
Palms. Sailmaker's protective hand appliances for pushing sail needles through the canvas when sewing.
Parcelling. Covering wire ropes with oiled or tarred bagging, before serving over with spun-yarn.
Pawl-bitts. Heavy upright piece of timber which runs from centre of windlass down to keelson.
Pawls. Heavy iron stops on windlass barrel.
Peak halliards. Rope to set peak, or highest part of fore-and-aft sail.
Port side. Left hand side of ship, looking forward.
Port tack. Sailing close-hauled with wind on port side.
Pound and pint. Deep water ships' crews signed on for a specified scale of provisions weighed to the ounce.
Rackings. Seizings of spun-yarn or some light line round parts of heavier ropes to prevent them slipping while extra turns are being taken.
Ramp along. Sailing with all sails drawing to the wind.
Rata trees. A native tree of New Zealand.
Ratlines. Rope ladders in ship's rigging.
Raupo. New Zealand native swamp plant with long thick leaves, used by the Maoris for hut building.
"Ready about." Order given to get ready to put ship round on other tack.
Red Duster. Red Ensign: flown by British merchant ships.
"Roaring Forties." Parallels of latitude below 40° South.
Round Robin. A circular piece of paper with names round the edge, drawn as in a lottery.
Running gear. Ropes used for setting and taking in sail.
Running the Easting down. Running to the eastward in the Roaring Forties, before the prevailing strong westerly gales.
Sails. Sailmaker.
Sail-locker. Place for stowing sails not in use.

Sand and canvas. Cleaning woodwork with a piece of canvas dipped in sand.
Sauerkraut. German pickled cabbage.
Schooner. Fore-and-aft rigged vessel.
Scuppers. Opening along bulwarks on deck-line to let water run off deck.
Scuttle. Entrance to place below deck.
Sealed orders. Sealed letter with ship's orders to be opened at sea.
Second dog-watch. From 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Second Mate. Next in command to First Mate, and has charge of the starboard watch.
Second Mate's four fingers. A full glass.
Seizings. Small spun-yarn lashings.
Sennit. Plaited rope-yarn.
Serving. Binding wire rope with spun-yarn.
Shakings. Fag ends of old ropes.
Shanghai. To ship seamen away against their wishes by drugging them.
Sheet. Rope to haul in the clew of a sail.
Shellback. Old sailor: applied only to men who served in the old sailing-ships.
Slant. A leading or favourable wind.
Slipping the cable. Unmooring ship by letting the end of cable go from on board.
Slop-chest. Sea stores on sale by the captain.
Southerly buster. Strong southerly Pacific wind peculiar to Sydney and Newcastle, N.S.W.
Sou'wester. Oilskin hat.
Spanker. The fore-and-aft sail on the mizzen-mast, like a schooner's mainsail.
Spider-band. A small band round lower part of mast to hold belaying-pins.
Squaring the yards. Bracing yards square for a fair wind.
Standing rigging. Rigging which is stationary, such as shrouds and stays, to keep masts in place.
Starboard. Right-hand side of ship, looking forward.
Starboard tack. Sailing with the wind on the starboard side.
Starboard watch. Captain's watch, run by Second Mate.
Staysails. Small fore-and-aft sails on stays between the masts.
Stiff. A term for hard luck. Sailor's term for one who cannot do his duty aboard ship.
Stiff under sail. Sailor's term for a vessel that is able to carry a lot of sail in a strong breeze.
Stirrups. Short ropes at intervals along foot-ropes for support for same.
Stump t'gall'nt. Ship not having royal yards above t'gall'nt. Often referred to by sailors as a bald-headed ship.

Taffrail. Rail round after end of ship.
Taking it green. A ship in heavy seas: waves sweeping the decks.
Tarpaulins. Canvas hatch covers treated with Stockholm tar and oil.
Tend. See to it, look after it.
Three Kings. Group of islands off north end of New Zealand.
Throat halliards. Rope to set throat of fore-and-aft sail, part next mast.
Timber scows. Shallow-draught sailing vessels peculiar to Auckland.
Tom and Jerry. An American cocktail.
T'gall'nt rail. Top rail on the bulwarks.
Topsail schooner. Fore-and-aft rigged sailing vessel fitted with square topsails on foremast.
Trick at the wheel. Spell of duty at steering-wheel.
Trucks. Tops of masts.
Two blocks. Both blocks of a tackle pulled close together.
Vane. Small arrangement on swivel at masthead to show wind's direction.
Watch-tackle. A small handy set of blocks and tackle for use round the decks.
Weather-cloth. A shelter provided by a piece of canvas rigged up to break force of wind. Also known as *Canvas dodger.*
Weather-side. Same as windward, side facing the wind.
Whack. Share of provisions.
Windjammer. Sailing-ship.
Windlass. For heaving up anchor in small vessels; capstans are used in larger ships.
Yawl-rigged. A small, two-masted vessel, the aftermast being the smallest and placed well aft.

HULL DOWN

P. A. EADY