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Title: From Lower Deck to Pulpit

Author: Henry Cowling

Release date: September 12, 2007 [eBook #22588]

Language: English

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK FROM LOWER DECK TO PULPIT ***

E-text prepared by David Scott, the author's great-grandson

Transcriber's note:

Unusual spelling and punctuation has been transcribed as in the original book.

The reader will encounter "(V12)" at various places in the text. Its meaning is inapparent, but it appears in the original book and was not changed.

FROM LOWER DECK TO PULPIT

by

REV. HENRY COWLING

With Portrait and Illustrations

London S.W. Partridge & Co. 8 and 9 Paternoster Row 1902

Preface

This little book is not written on my own initiative. I have not so much as given a hint of my 'naval days,' either from the pulpit or in conversation. But my friends have condemned me for being so reserved about the matter, and for a long time have, with persistent entreaties, been urging me to tell the story of my life. That they may now be satisfied, and that I may be left quiet, and, above all, that it may prove a blessing to all who read it, is the sincere desire of

THE AUTHOR

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CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS.

Kingsand, though but a village in size, has a history of its own. Situated about five miles from Plymouth, on the Cornish coast, and being a fishing port, the inhabitants are on intimate terms with the sea. In the summer months one may observe many an indication of this relationship or intimacy'. Youngsters run about the beach and the village barefooted, most of them wearing the orthodox blue jersey, whilst young women, and even older ones, love to sit on the rocks near the sea and work away with their sewing or knitting, and, I must not forget to add, with their tongues also. Strange and startling are the stories one may hear which have been handed down from one generation to another concerning the smuggling days of long, long ago—and yet not so long ago, for even at this time of day my mother often narrates hair breadth escapes of smugglers which happened in her girlhood. In this village I was born on the 9th of April 1874. In visiting Kingsand from time to time, I have often stood and gazed at the old house in which I was born—not that any recollections in connection with it survive in my memory, for when I was only five weeks old, my father, who was in the navy, received an appointment as a gunnery instructor in the Royal Naval Reserve battery in the far north.

Sometimes my mother indulges in a retrospect, and I love to hear her tell of that May morning when, she bade 'farewell' to her loved ones and dear old Kingsand, and how, wrapping me in a large shawl, she proceeded to Cremyll, a distance of three miles, from whence we were transported across the harbour to Plymouth in the ferry boat. Then came the long and tedious journey to Maryport. Sweet mother! how pathetic to me it all now seems.

We resided at Maryport two years, during which time my eldest sister was born. Often would my mother carry me into the battery, and at the sight of the large guns, and the queer looking helmets hanging on the walls, my little smile would be converted into vehement crying. How little I dreamed then of my familiarity with them in after years! But I must not anticipate.

After completing our stay here, my parents returned to Kingsand, but only for a brief period. It was at, this period that I met with my first accident. Crawling away from the front door I made all possible speed to a large tank of water close by. In looking upon it from an elevated bank of ground, I overbalanced myself and fell headlong into it. When rescued, my nose was bleeding profusely. It was a lesson to me, for during the few subsequent weeks we remained in Kingsand I remembered my 'dive,' and gave the tank a wide margin.

We soon removed to Millbrook, a large village situated a mile and a half from Kingsand. In those days the quay at Millbrook was picturesque with groups of watermen who gained an honest livelihood by ferrying passengers to Devonport and back. But former things have passed away; and now two sets of steamers, well adapted for shallow water (for the landing-piers at Millbrook are governed by the ebb, and flood tide), have almost entirely dispensed with passenger-boats, and the trip from Millbrook to Devonport, or vice versa, costs the modest sum of one penny. People on the town side of the harbour take advantage of this, for on public holidays thousands of towns-people may be seen wending their way through the main streets of Millbrook, bound for the famous Whitsands, there to spend the day on the seashore.

Never let anyone despise Millbrook, for, socially speaking, it may be regarded as an adjunct of Devonport. There is an interchange of passengers every day, and several hundred yardmen, who work in His Majesty's naval dockyard, together with many naval men, leave Millbrook every morning. Added to these, there are housewives, and their name is legion, who cross the harbour on Saturdays for the purpose of shopping, for they are cute enough to realise that their steamer fare can be cleared on two pounds of sugar—that is to say, the same article would cost a penny extra at home. In addition, then, to the profits gained on other articles which they purchase—for their baskets are of no mean size—the pleasant cruise across the harbour costs practically nothing. As a result of this steamer traffic, trade has dwindled considerably in Millbrook.

I speak of Millbrook as an adjunct of Devonport. Perhaps some will object to this, as both places are

located in separate counties, the former in Cornwall, the latter in Devon; others, who may be somewhat narrow in thought, may think this view of mine reduces Devonport in the scale of townships. However, as the ties between the two places are so strong that even water cannot separate them, I hope to be forgiven if my estimation of the village as an adjunct be incorrect.

The village itself is a pleasant place and lovely to behold. Like a nest built in the heart of a thick tree, so Millbrook lies within the heart of a beautiful valley. It is bounded by the Maker Heights on the right, and the high cliffs on the left and in the bend. Hard by are Mount Edgcumbe Park, and the Hamoaze in full view. Enough: I will say no more as to the description of it, lest my readers may think me vain. But I cannot refrain from asking in this connection: Who would not be proud of being a Millbrooker?

My conscious experience of life began in Millbrook. Well do I remember the morning when with a company of other little boys I was marched away from the girls' school where I had hitherto been as a young scholar, to the boys'. Then followed the long and tedious years of school-life. Did I like my school-days at Millbrook? To this question I must give an emphatic No. One day my companion and I showed this dislike in a very practical manner. It was the custom to take our books to school in the morning, and to bring them away at the expiration of the day's teaching. On the day in question we departed from this rule by bringing away our books at noon, our object being to spend the afternoon in taking a walk on the country road. When the bell rang at 2 p.m. for the purpose of resuming work, we made off in an opposite direction to the school. We considered it would not be wise to carry our slates and books in our hand, and therefore by way of protection, we stuffed them under our waistcoats. This gave us the appearance of an abnormal size, and a curious shape, at least I thought so; for everyone we met looked upon us with an air of suspicion. I have often wondered since, whether or not this suspicion grew out of experience in the life of many whom we passed that day-whether or not they really knew what we were doing. Certainly we did not know what we were doing, for we entered the village at 3.30 p.m. (school-time was over at 4 p.m.) half an hour too soon. "How is it you are out of school so early?" asked our respective mothers. What a dilemma we were in! Suffice it to say, that my mother said "she was not sure but what she should report this matter to my father." Did she? No; ere my father returned at even, I resorted to a happy way I had of rendering house-hold assistance, such as putting coal on the fire, etc., which I knew would go a long way to dull the memory of my afternoon's walk in my mother's mind. In the evening when father came home he asked the question as was his wont: "How has Henry been to-day?" "As good as gold," replied mother.

What about my companion? How fared it with him? He is able to inform you best on that point, for he learned by experience on that occasion the awful sting of a leather strap. Never since in his lifetime has he been half an hour before time. Who can tell the injury a leather strap may do!

From my very earliest days the desire to become a preacher was ever present with me, which desire became intensified as the years sped by. As a strong manifestation of this fact, I was often found in the garden addressing the cabbages, which in my youthful fancy represented the congregation, and on Sunday evenings when my parents were at chapel, a habit of mine was to rear a chair upside down against the wall, get within the bars of my chair-pulpit, and address my two sisters.

Strange to say, running parallel to this habit of preaching was a fond love for the water, and it may be said in a literal sense that I was as fond of it as a duck. I am told that when an infant under the care of any person other than my mother, nothing in the world would quiet me except a bowl of water and a sponge to play with. Naturally this liking developed, as you will see. Separated by a thick wall from the Millbrook lake is a large mill-pond, which, when emptied of water, is very muddy. How we, as schoolboys, delighted to roll in this mud (for what is dirty to a school-boy?) and then jump over the other side of the wall and swim in the wake of the paddle-wheel steamer! On one occasion, the Vicar, who from the vicarage could watch our habits, observed that during the day I had bathed nine times, which thing, he gave my parents to understand, was very weakening. "Twice a day," said he, "is often enough." I think so too, now, but did not then.

On Saturdays a party of us boys would wend our way to the Whitsands for the purpose of bathing in the open sea. This we regarded as something totally different from that of our daily bathings in the lake; and in point of fact it was, for the water was purer and fresher, and soft golden sands took the place of mud strewn with broken pieces of glass and other refuse. Oh! how we loved to rush headlong through the giant waves which came bounding in from seaward. How much better was this than learning a proposition of Euclid! The boy who swam furthest out to sea was looked upon as the hero of the hour, indeed through the whole week, until Saturday came again, when some other boy would endeavour to swim beyond the limit of the previous week. In this way we instituted a competition between ourselves in the art of swimming.

One Saturday the scene changed, for after the delight of bathing came misery; after joy came pain. It is ever so. The shadow is always with the light. After dressing ourselves, we made a hasty retreat over

the rocks, as it had now begun to rain, when lo! my foot was caught in a crevice. I wriggled it to and fro, with the hope of extricating it, but in vain. The other boys were now a long distance in front, and there with my foot jammed between the rocks was I, like a rabbit caught in the gin, shouting "Mother! Mother!" though she were four miles away. If ever I needed a trumpet voice, it was then. At length by the help of a friend who came to relieve me, I was set at liberty. For many years after this incident, my ankle-bone remained swollen—a memento of that Saturday afternoon.

But I must pass on. I was now nine years of age and organist in the Wesleyan Sunday School, having for the past two years studied music under my father. Added to this, I formed part of the Wesleyan church choir. Sunday therefore to me was a very busy day, made exceptionally so, as apart from church and school work, the intervals were filled up with music and singing at home, in which all the family joined. Our house was indeed a house of song.

It was now determined by my parents that I be sent to a Devonport school, as I had passed out of the seven standards in the school at home. Accordingly a contract was entered into between the schoolmaster and my father, forms were duly filled in, and I was to begin my schooling on the following Monday. This I looked forward to with the utmost pleasure: one reason being, and not the least, that it meant two trips in the steamer every day; but judge of my grief when on the Sunday it became apparent that I had the measles. So the next morning, instead of going off in the steamer to school, I was kept in bed, and for seven weeks was confined at home.

When well enough to go out again, I, with two other boys, decided to join the Navy (I was now twelve years old). We sauntered along the road until we reached the pier, and there, right before us, stood the leviathan training ship—H.M.S. 'Impregnable.' My little heart quailed within me at the very sight of her, a great fear overshadowed me, and I lost no time in returning to Millbrook. On my return journey I was half sorrowful and yet half glad that I did not go on board—a strange feeling. The two other boys, who were many years my senior, did not pass the medical examination, and consequently were rejected for the service.

Steps were taken again with a view to my schooling at Devonport; this time I went, and these school-days I recall with pleasure, though they were fraught with a powerful temptation, which I shall presently describe. I have a vivid recollection of the first day. Steaming up the lake at very low water, and being somewhat foggy, our boat stuck on the mud. Worst of all, it was ebb tide, and here we had to wait for the return of the in flowing tide. We schoolboys gathered together in the engine-room and did our home-lessons. In a few hours we floated and very soon reached the landing place, and we arrived at home about midnight. That was the first and last time I ever did my lessons afloat, or rather on the mud.

The object my parents had in sending me across the harbour to school was that I might receive an efficient training to enable me to pass the Dock-yard Civil Service examination which, by the way, is locally considered the highest distinction a boy can attain, providing he be qualified to pass the examiner. No romance is connected with these days, save that on one occasion my companion asked me to accompany him to Devonport Park to watch a football match instead of attending school in the afternoon. Remembering the leather strap to which I have already referred, and thinking that with this new schoolmaster I might have a second taste of what my poor friend received on that memorable day, though not with a strap, yet with something just as sweet, I considered it wise not to visit the park.

But this boy used much persuasion, and in a short time we stood in the park watching the game, which proved not so interesting as he had anticipated. "Shall we go to school?" he asked. "We shall have time to get there before it opens." "No," I replied; "you have persuaded me to come here, and now I shall stay." We both did. I never played truant again after this day. Did the schoolmaster become acquainted with this breach of discipline? No; or I am afraid he would not have given me such a testimonial as I now hold in my possession.

At this juncture I became a member of the drum and fife band, under the supervision of the Millbrook Band of Hope Committee. Never shall I forget our bandmaster. He was a strict disciplinarian. No looseness was allowed in our playing; thoroughness was stamped on every tune we played. On practice nights he took each of the boys aside, and one by one each had to play the music as set—every note must be clear and distinct. Occasionally our band would march through the village, the drum major with his staff leading.

Those days of memory, so near and yet so far!

Then came the Sunday when he was lowered in the dark, cold grave, and we solemnly played whilst encircled around it—

"Goodnight, beloved, not farewell!"

He went home to Music-Land, where they praise Him day and night.

One day we shall all meet again, and together with him we will tune our song to harps of gold.

CHAPTER II

JOINING THE NAVY

Now about the temptation already hinted at, and all that followed in its train. The steamer in which I crossed the harbour twice daily, passed quite close to the 'Impregnable,' and thus gave me ample opportunity to scan her vast dimensions, and to gaze in wonder at her tall masts. But best of all was to see the sailor-boys on the forecastle, in the rigging, and manning the boats which were fastened to her lower booms. At the sight of all this my little life seemed to be thrilled, and oh, how I longed to become a sailor boy! I would give all the gold in the Mint did I possess it, in exchange for the realisation of my yearning desire. How nice to pull the ropes, to climb the rigging, but, above all, to wear a sailor's uniform. Thoughts such as these haunted my mind constantly, and this daily allurements only helped to swell the number.

Full well I knew my parents would not consent my joining the navy. Still, one day I ventured to broach the subject to my mother, who replied "That she could not bear to hear of such a thing." The craving still grew, and my parents, clearly understanding the bend of my inclination, made a compromise, steeped in love. This was it: "Seeing you have such a desire for the sea, we have been praying much about the matter, and after due consideration, conclude it will be far better for you to join the service as a young man, not as a poor, helpless boy. You shall have the trade of a shipwright—(the same, trade as the one I should have been apprenticed to in the dockyard, had I desired to pass the necessary qualification, but as a matter of fact, this desire for the sea swallowed up every other)—and when out of your time you will be in a different position to enter!" All this my uncle, who himself had been in the navy, corroborated by saying: "I should not put a dog before the mast—poor boys are huffed and cuffed shamefully; but when a young man has a trade, and then joins, his treatment, by reason of his manhood and trade, is totally different."

After all this advice my enthusiasm cooled down, only to reappear in a short time with greater fervour. In the meantime, I was apprenticed to a shipbuilding trade, and although seven years was the required time to learn it, I gathered it all up in one week. Wonderful! wonderful! for in that short time I was taught how to fill up a hole with putty, and this is the extent of my practical knowledge of a shipwright's task to-day. Do you mean that you only stayed a week? you ask. That is all. And my mother had kept, until within a few months ago, the little white smock-frock, which I wore in my work, as a reminder in calico of my shipbuilding days.

During this week I met with still further enticements to become a sailor boy. The building yard being in close proximity to the 'Impregnable', I could hear the brass band every morning, and what is so enticing as music? Then, again, hundreds of boys came ashore in large pinnaces, landing within a few yards from me, each carrying a rifle. This was more than I could bear by way of temptation, and impressing my parents how very much I should abhor seven years in the shipbuilding yard, intimating that nothing would satisfy me but to be a sailor-boy, they, within the course of a few weeks, very reluctantly yielded to my burning request.

Having passed all necessary requirements, I joined the navy on my fourteenth birthday. It was Monday morning, and after eating my breakfast, I rose and wished my mother and sisters 'good-bye.' Sorrow filled their hearts and tears their eyes—not so much because I was leaving home for a long time, as I should see them again before the week expired, but even this parting was considered long, for hitherto I had not slept one night away from home. I say not so much because of this fact, as that they were doubtful as to whether I was taking the right step or not. My parents impressed upon me that even now it was not too late to change my mind, even though my papers were all signed. I can remember how eagerly my mother pleaded to burn them, coaxing me to sit down and have another cup of tea, and to forget all about the navy in the drinking of it.

Truth to tell my enthusiasm was fast dwindling away, but enough was left at that moment to wish another 'farewell,' and to pass down the street With my father who walked with me to the pier and watched the boat bear me to the ship "Would to God I had never left home on that morning," was an expression often on my lips during my career in the navy. My mother's tears had been shed on the fire of my passion—it was now becoming quenched, but not until it was too late did it become extinguished—that is, when I had boarded the ship and given up my papers to the authorities.

So my readers will understand that it was with a heavy heart, yea and with a great deal of reluctancy,

that I entered the navy—that despite the great flame of enthusiasm that had been burning in my young life, it dwindled away almost to the point of being extinguished on this memorable morning; yet something within urged me quietly on and on till that which was done could not be undone.

I was now sent to H.M.S 'Circe,' the outfitting ship for young recruits, to get my uniform. On reaching the top of the companion ladder a ship's corporal (i.e. a naval policeman) approached me and asked, "Had I any money or jewellery?" If so, it must be kept in his custody until such time as I should be prepared to join the mother-ship, the 'Impregnable.' I handed him the eight pence which I carried in my pocket. After being ordered to read from a board certain rules and digest them, then came the bath, followed by the dinner, which latter consisted of a piece of fat pork (called 'dobs,' I afterward learned, in the training-ship) and a thick piece of bread, neither of which tempted my appetite.

I ate nothing that day, and when a fortnight later my civilian's suit was sent home, the sausage rolls which I carried on board with me were discovered in my pocket. I cannot hope to describe the feelings through which I passed on this first day. My poor little heart nearly broke—it was my first lesson in the school of sorrowful tears. "Oh that I had listened to my parents' advice this morning," was what I whispered to myself a hundred times before closing my eyes in sleep that night.

The day wore away slowly—oh, so slowly! I became homesick, and ran from one port-hole to the other watching the Millbrook steamers pass to and fro, endeavouring thereby to persuade myself into the belief that after all I was in touch with home. This gave me a kind of satisfaction, as it seemed to sever my thoughts, or rather to loose them, from the floating cage, and link them and my love to home, yea, and even to the passing steamers.

Just as when a traveller in a foreign land meets with a friend of his native town, and is filled with delight and fond memories of the home-land by such an event, in like manner did I regard those steamers—they were connecting links uniting my heart to my home. Nor is this comparison overdrawn, for my readers must bear in mind that I was only a little boy. And how very natural homesickness was, amidst such strange surroundings, and, with no liberty, only they who have passed through a similar experience know.

Then came the hour for 'turning in.' As I lay in the hammock that night I could not but contrast this birthday with my last. The last represented sunshine, joy, merry laughter and freedom; this, darkness sorrow, tears and confinement. The tears began to flow, and I wept myself to sleep.

More than once during my subsequent visits to Devonport have I stood on Mutton Cove pier gazing intently on groups of boys gathered thereon waiting for the ship's boat to bear them over to the 'Impregnable' with a view of joining the navy. Standing there, my sympathy has gone out toward them as a flood and I have prayed that their first night's experience afloat might not be a repetition of mine.

The three days on this outfitting ship were spent in marking my name on the clothes which constituted my kit, pumping water for the cooks' galley, helping to scrub the decks and wringing out swabs. On the Thursday, I, with other novices, was sent to the 'Impregnable' to commence my training in seamanship and gunnery. Every Thursday half a day's leave is given to the boys, and we were granted this privilege. How glad and thankful I felt! After landing, I hastened home with all possible speed. The sight of me in my uniform overcame my mother's feelings, and oh! how bitterly she wept, and how often did she ask me that afternoon whether I thought I should like the service or not.

I comforted her as best as I could upon wishing her 'good-bye' by saying I should be ashore again on the following Sunday, and with a heart as heavy as lead I trudged back to the ship.

Let me at this point give my readers an outline of the routine on the training-ship. 'All hands' rise at 5 a.m., lash up their hammocks and carry them to the upper deck for storage. One half of the boys of the watch take a bath and are inspected before dressing by the instructors. All the other boys in the ship scrub decks. Breakfast is piped at 7 a.m. At 8 a.m. the topgallant mast is hoisted, and the upper yards are crossed. Eight bells are struck, the national anthem is played, and the yards are ordered to be swayed across' at one and the same time. There is discipline! Decks are swept, the mess deck receiving special attention, the cooks of the messes (and every boy has to take his week in rotation) polish the utensils, so that they shine as bright as silver, and the watch on deck coils the ropes and polishes the brass work. At 8.45 the bugler sounds the 'general assembly.' Each watch falls in for inspection on its respective side of the deck—that is, the starboard watch on the right side, the port watch on the left. This being done, the band assembles on the poop, and the officers' call is sounded, in response to which they troop up from quarterdeck hatchways. "Attention!" shouts the instructor, at the same time saluting the inspecting officer. Every boy stands as erect as possible Then begins the inspection. Nothing escapes the eye these officers. Woe betide the boy whose duck suit is not spotlessly clean, or who has a button off his trousers, or whose suit is in need of a few stitches. He is severely reprimanded—the instructor makes a note of it in his book; and should this be repeated, the boy is put in the

Commander's report and receives six cuts with the cane.

Each officer reports to the Commander when he has inspected his division of boys, and then the bell is tolled for morning prayers, which are said by the chaplain. All Roman Catholics are weeded out of the two watches, and are marched forward under the fore-castle during prayer-time.

Now, should it be Monday morning, sail drill is engaged in until noon, but only on this day, whilst on other mornings one watch attends school, and the other, gunnery and seamanship classes. The advanced gunnery classes receive their training ashore in the drill field. Seamanship classes are held on the lower deck, and every boy has to pass out of one instruction before being admitted to the other. In these lower-deck instructions the first is the lashing up of the hammock and in the laying out of the kit in the uniform manner; then follow the 'bends and hitches' class, the reading of the semaphore, knots and splices, and so on. I may say that boat sailing and swimming and heaving the lead are also included under the seamanship course.

To most of the local boys, swimming exercise was as play, and accordingly they received V.G. (very good) on the instructor's class book on passing-out day. To pass out, the boy must be an efficient swimmer, and able to swim in a duck suit a considerable distance. Boys on the other hand who had been brought up as strangers to the sea, regard this instruction with much fear, and it becomes a terror to them. All these exercises passed through, which in most cases require a year, the boy then receives the rate of a first class boy as distinguished from a second class.

But to return to the routine. At 11.30 a.m. school and instructions are ended, the bugle call for drill aloft is sounded, and then there is a mighty tumult. Hundreds of boys are running along the decks and up the ladders, and as though they were not smart enough, ship's corporals make use of their canes very freely. At 11.45, in the midst of drill, the bugler sounds: 'Cooks.' Cooks of messes repair to the galley, fetch the dinner and lay it out under the supervision of the caterer of the mess, who is generally a senior boy. At 12 a.m. dinner is 'piped,' and every boy sits at the table according to his seniority—that is to say, if one has been in the ship six months, sitting next to him would be the boy who had joined the mess after him in the order of time. It will thus be readily seen that every boy has his own seat at the mess-table. But lest partiality should creep in amongst the boys in the messes so that A would have a far better dinner than B; and poor C all bone on his plate, or, as they say, "two spuds and a joner," this order is very often reversed, and this means that the caterer finds himself at the end of the stool with the dinner of the youngest boy before him to eat, and it also means that this last recruit in the mess finds himself possessor of the caterer's plate of dinner.

At 1 p.m. instructions are resumed, and concluded at 3.30 p.m. The boatswain's mate then pipes, "Hands shift in night clothing." The uniform of the day is then taken off, and each boy wears a blue serge suit. At the call of the bugle the boys fall in on the upper deck with the clothes for washing. These are inspected by the instructors for the purpose of seeing that each boy has stops in his clothes—that is, two sets of string in each garment for hanging on the line. This inspection of stops being over, then follows the shrill cry, "Hands scrub and wash clothes."

I cannot hope to describe the scamper there is at this moment for the tubs of water, and the reason for it is this—that the tubs are limited, perhaps three allowed to each mess of twenty boys, and considering the washing has to be done in a short time, the reader will understand the cause of this dreadful war. And it happens every day with the exception of Thursdays and Saturdays, when no washing is done. The articles for washing on the various days are as follows— Monday, a duck suit; Tuesday, a day shirt, night shirt and flannel; Wednesday, a duck suit; Friday, hammock or bedcover. Clothes being hung up, the upper deck is washed down and tea is 'piped.' After this meal the boys have an hour or so to themselves—the schoolroom is opened for reading and draught-playing, etc.

At 7.45 the pipe is sounded: "Stand by for hammocks." All run (for no walking is allowed in the service when responding to duty's call) to the upper deck, where each boy gets his hammock, carries it below deck, and hangs it on the hammock hooks. The bugle call, "Turn in," is sounded an hour later, followed in five minutes with the bugle note: "Still." Not a sound is heard, for it is prayer-time. After prayers, which every boy is supposed to say in his hammock, the officer in command, with other subordinates, goes the 'rounds' to see that all is safe for the night. Thus ends the day's routine on the training ship. Very often, however, there is a departure from it, which takes place at noon, the occasion being the punishment of a boy or boys. All the crew assemble on the quarterdeck, the offender midships. The Commander reads the charge, which concludes usually:—"I hereby judge him to receive twelve strokes with the cane." The poor boy is lashed arms and legs to a wooden horse, the master-at-arms counting the strokes as the ship's corporal lays them on. The cane with which he punishes the boy is a very stout one, each end being covered with wax-string, and is reversed every fourth stroke. This caning is a punishment, and is meted out to boys who are caught smoking, to boys who may be untidy or to those who break their leave a short time. The other punishment is that of the birch—again the boy

is lashed to the horse, and this time no garment intervenes. The ship's doctor stands by with water in case of fainting, as generally the boy receives twenty-four strokes. To witness such a proceeding was to make me tremble. Here and there the ends of the birch would be scattered, and the blood flowing freely. Of course the birch is not in such frequent demand as the cane; only the boy who is insolent to his instructor, or who breaks a day's leave, or worse still, if he be committed for theft, is birched. In the case of the thief he has to wear a badge with the word 'T H I E F' printed in large, black letters on it, in front and behind for six months or even longer. During this time he is cut off from the company of other boys, and partakes of his food in the 'thieves' mess.

Now before leaving this subject, I may tell my readers that all local boys are styles 'Cossacks'; consequently I was one. The Cossacks were allowed to have a night's leave every alternate Saturday, provided the parents of the boy wrote a request to the Commander for it. The Cossacks generally brought aboard with them from their homes a large handkerchief full of good things, and they were met by the non-Cossacks in the gang-way ladder with this expression:—"Tally you your tack and plush," which being interpreted, is: "Let me have your allowance of bread and tea." It was understood that all Cossacks would have their tea ashore, and therefore would not require the naval tea when returning on board. Hence readers will now understand why it is the boys who hail from London and the provinces grow so stout in the training ship—it is because they eat, in addition to their own allowance, the Cossacks' share.

Boys who were noted for being smart and clean wore a gold badge as a token of the same. The advantages reaped from this badge were two in number (V12): an extra half day's leave on Saturday, and one penny a week additional pay. There were two other sets of boys who were entitled to the first of these privileges (V12): the advanced scholars in school, and members of the drum and fife band. Accordingly, on Saturdays during the dinner-hour the boatswain's mate would pipe: "Leave for badge-boy, advanced class, and drum and fife band;" As I was a badge boy, and an advanced scholar, and a flute-player, I nestled under the wing of this threefold privilege, and used to think in my boyish pride, Who indeed has more right to go ashore than I?

Before any boy is supposed to be ready for sea, he has to undergo in addition to the 'Impregnable' studies, a course of gunnery, and from ten to twelve weeks on a training brig. I underwent my gunnery course in H.M.S. 'Foudroyant,' one of Nelson's flagships, which lay at that time in close proximity to the 'Impregnable,' and I returned every evening to the mother-ship. The two brigs which trained her boys were the 'Nautilus' and the 'Pilot.' I was drafted to the latter for three months. Speaking generally, daily sea trips were taken—that is to say, that after making sail and slipping the buoy, we would leave Plymouth Sound for the Channel, drill all day, and return to our mooring in the evening, weary and fatigued, although, even then, we had to scrub and wash clothes. On two occasions we took longer trips, first to Dartmouth, and then to Portsmouth. Fearful was the weather we experienced sailing to the latter port—fearful, I mean, to my boyish experience, though I must say that even an old salt was heard to pronounce it "a very stormy voyage."

I met with an accident on board the 'Pilot.' One night whilst at anchor I was ordered to row the dinghy ashore. It was very wet and dark, and in the act of climbing down the painter which attached the boat to the boom, it was so slippery that I lost my grip and fell. My shoeless feet came in contact with the boat's crutch (an instrument with two arms into which the oar fits); my right foot bled profusely, as one of these arms had pierced the flesh deeply. I managed to get on board to the sick berth, and after the steward's treatment it ceased bleeding. Whilst in the act of lashing up my hammock the next morning I fell to the deck, so weak had I become by the loss of so much blood on the previous night.

The discipline on board this brig, as on the 'Impregnable,' was rigid in the extreme. On the upper deck at drill time would stand the ship's corporal with his cane, and woe betide any boy who was not putting his weight on the rope, or who was not doubling along the deck. It may be of interest to remark here, that neither in the 'Impregnable' nor the 'Pilot' did I know the queer experience of being lashed to the horse. This was due not so much because I did not deserve it, as that I was fortunate enough to escape detection. To appreciate the above remark the reader must realise the trivial offences for which a poor boy is caned, and in the light of this reflection he will wonder that any sailor boy should be a stranger to the cane during his training.

Through all my naval career I was a sufferer to sea-sickness, which began on this brig. No sooner had we passed the Plymouth Breakwater Lighthouse, when the brig would begin rolling, and I would repair to the lee-scupper. In connection with this part of my story I must not omit to say a kind word for the captain. When many of us poor boys lay strewn along the deck like stricken sheep, he, in passing from the fore-castle to poop, would not disturb us. This in itself may not appear much, but in reality it was a great kindness, and one over which I love to ponder. It was the act of a gentleman, to say the least of it, and I cannot but believe that sympathy prompted it, and in this sense it was Christlike. "Inasmuch,"

said the great Storm Walker who quieted storm-tossed Galilee "as ye do it unto one of the least of these My little ones, ye do it unto Me."

Very near the line of punishment did I approach when on this brig. Working one day on the foretopsail yard, my knife, which by some means had become detached from my lanyard, fell on the forecastle. Fortunately it struck no one, and I was reprimanded only.

The course of training being completed, I was sent back to the 'Impregnable' on draft for sea. Within a few days an order was received stating that a large company of boys were required for the North American and West Indian Station, and I was numbered amongst them.

CHAPTER III

LEAVING FOR SEA

A few days prior to our departure, Miss Weston kindly invited the draft ashore to her Sailors' Rest to tea, and presented each of us with a Bible, and gave us all a tender farewell. Never will time erase from my mind the memory of the parting with my loved ones; it pains me now even as I dwell upon it. It was Sunday afternoon, and two days prior to my sailing for Bermuda, when the heartrending parting took place. Love can never say its last 'good-bye,' and especially is this true of a mother's love. What thoughts were passing through her mind that Sunday afternoon? God knows fully. But surely they were tinged with this reflection: Would she ever see me again? A shadow deep and dark had recently fallen across the home. During my 'Foudroyant' days a messenger came on board with the sad news that my dear sister had been almost burnt to death. I will not dwell on the sadness of the awful tragedy, save to remark that she died through the cause of the terrible burns three days after the accident. The effect this had upon my mother is almost beyond expression. Her nerves were shattered and she became a physical wreck, and to this day she has never recovered from the shock. Judge then, her sorrow on the Sunday afternoon, when I was bidding 'farewell,' and within a short time of that overwhelming experience. I was now going thousands of miles away for three years, severed from paternal counsel and maternal affection, and on this occasion she was drinking the dregs of her cup of grief. Again, amidst choking sobs and scalding tears, I uttered the last 'good-bye.' The time had come for leaving, and I must depart. With two Sunday School scholars, one on either side (for I had been to my Sunday School in the afternoon for the last time), loaded with large parcels of food, we passed down the street. How easy to write it down—how heartbreaking the experience!

The great troopship's anchor was weighed on the Tuesday evening at 5 p.m., and we proceeded to sea. It was the month of October, and ere the evening shadows had stretched upon land and sea, I had gazed upon Maker church tower, at whose base my dear sister lay interred, until my eyes were strained. At last it disappeared from view, and the 'Himalaya' was far, far at sea.

She made a good passage to Madeira, arriving there on the following Sunday morning, and after coaling, we proceeded on the evening of the same day to Bermuda. In the first watch of the night the cry was heard: "Man overboard! Away lifeboat!" The lifebelt was let slip immediately by the sentinel, the engines were reversed, and the lifeboat with its crew lowered quickly from the davits. The lifeboat was one of an improved pattern, fitted with accessories, such as two calcium lights which burn for thirty minutes, and a whistle, the latter being useful to the drowning man in a fog or in darkness to indicate his-whereabouts.

Fortunately the poor man had seized the lifebelt. It was a dark night, but astern the crew of the lifeboat could observe the calcium lights burning. The boat's head was put in that direction, and in a short time the sailor was rescued and rowed back to the ship. Did this seaman accidentally fall from the rigging, or lose his grasp in any manner? No; it is the same old story. Drink was the cause of the accident. He had indulged himself in Madeira wine, which befooled him to such a degree that he deliberately threw himself overboard, the ship steaming eighteen knots an hour at the time. He was confined in a cell the remainder of the voyage, and on arrival at Bermuda was sentenced to a court-martial.

My spare time on the outward voyage was occupied in reading 'Daniel Quorm,' one of Mark Guy Pearse's books, and in attending religious meetings in the evening in the sail-maker's room. There were several relief crews on board for the various ships of the station; hence there were many Christians, and these evening gatherings were blessed by God, and made profitable to all. We had on board one whose destination was the prison at Bermuda, not to become a prisoner, by the way, but a warder. This man, at 4 a.m. every morning, would ferret out all the boys in the ship, sending them to the upper deck to undergo a salt water bath, which to us all, at that untimely hour, was a very trying ordeal.

Nine days after our departure from Madeira, we sighted Bermuda. So calm had been the voyage that I was not troubled by sickness. A dusky pilot came on board, and conned the ship onward through the Narrows, and within a few hours we were securely fastened in the camber at the dockyard. Then came the dispersion. Many ships of the fleet whose commission was now drawing nigh to a close, were flying their paying-off pennant, the crews of which were full of gladness at the 'Himalaya's' arrival, with reliefs, and, moreover, she was their homeward-bound ship. We boys were despatched to H.M.S. 'Terror,' a receiving ship at Bermuda. Here we were kept three weeks, during which time the other ships of the fleet steamed in from sea. One day the 'Emerald' hove in sight. All took an especial interest in this ship, as we had learned she was the worst ship in the fleet for boys—quite a 'waker-up.' Certain it was that some of us would be told off for her.

The dreaded morning came at last, and on the quarterdeck of the 'Terror' we assembled to await our destiny. "Boys whose names I now mention," said the officer, "will join the 'Bellerophon,' the flagship of the fleet." Then followed a long list of names. These 'Bellerophon' boys realised at the time it was better to be fortunate than rich. In proceeding, the officer said:—"Eight boys will join the 'Emerald.'" There was a silence that could be felt at this expression, and all, excepting those who had been told off, looked downcast and fearful. "Their names are," he continued, "so-and-so, so-and-so . . . and Cowling." "And the lot fell upon Jonah."

It took me many hours to recover from this blow, but the whole of us received the sympathy of all the other boys, who regarded us as embryo martyrs. Next day we eight were taken on board the 'Emerald' in her steam-launch, which came to fetch us. On boarding the ship, I, in looking round to observe what kind of man it was who wielded the cane, fell headlong down the hatchway with my bag of clothes. This I thought was an admirable introduction.

CHAPTER IV

THREE YEARS ON H.M.S. 'EMERALD'

I was ordered to join mess No. 7, to which belonged twenty seamen of different ratings. According to naval etiquette, the boy, together with a different seaman each day, who is termed cook of the mess, has to prepare the dinner, fetch the victuals, clean the utensils and take the dinner of any absentee to the galley to keep warm. In addition to these domestic duties, he has his work in the watch to which he belongs.

The First West Indian Cruise

Refitting work was finished, and in the month of January 1890 we left Bermuda for the West Indies. This was my first sea trip on the 'Emerald,' as I had joined her a few days prior to Christmas 1889. We visited most of the islands in the Indies, and, on the whole, it was an eventful cruise. It would be a transgression of space on my part to enter into all the details of it, such as narrating occasions when we were caught in sudden squalls and how our gallant ship acted under stress of weather, though on one occasion a large cutter was washed away from the davits. However, I will narrate in brief one or two incidents. One night whilst lying at anchor off Dominica, the searchlight was used by way of practice. It was directed toward shore, and whilst traversing it from right to left, the beams of light enveloped a negro on the beach, who stood bewildered, transfixed. After a moment's hesitation he bounded away like a hare, the rays of light still following him, caused by manoeuvring the instrument on board. Breathless he halted, and then in a most terrified manner he turned about and ran in the opposite direction. For a minute the searchlight was not moved, and the man was in the safety of darkness. Judge of his dismay when again the light was played upon him, whilst he was resting from his rapid wanderings up and down the beach. Needless to say, it had the same effect. Little did the negro dream what fun he was causing amongst the bluejackets on our fore-castle. Really, it was a shame to torment him so.

At another island I went ashore with a party of seamen, and entered a plantation, where we freely helped ourselves to bunches of bananas, cocoanuts and other fruit. We were under the impression that fruit of this kind was common property, even as blackberries are in this our own land, and this explains the weight of our heavy burdens on our return journey. But this impression was soon to be banished from our mind, for presently we came in contact with a gentleman, who, understanding whence we had come, put a price on all our fruit. The burdens in consequence became considerably lightened. I had to satisfy myself with a few cocoanuts which cost a penny each, and was compelled to leave behind my much loved bananas.

At Barbadoes each watch was granted forty-eight hours' leave. In company with others I landed to visit the sugar-cane plantations. These canes were being cut down by the thousand, and carted to the

mill, where between two immense rollers the juice was extracted. Our guide passed round to each of us a cup of this juice to taste. He then instructed us as to the different processes by which sugar is made, and gave us the opportunity to see the large tanks in which it was stowed. In these huge tanks was to be found sugar from the highest degree of refinement down to the lowest degree of inferiority. But the sight which struck me most of all was the treacle-pit. I might enlarge upon the last sentence, but I forbear.

In one harbour there was a sailing match, the competition being between the boats of the fleet. The second cutter of our ship, of which I was one of the crew, entered for the race. With the halyards, the sail was hoisted to the uppermost point, and the sheets pulled taut aft. With a fresh breeze away we scudded. The boat, was soon on her beam ends, taking in large quantities of water, which we bailed out with our caps; still, this did not matter, as she was bounding through the water like a wild thing. Crash! Crash! Went the mast, and the boat was nearly capsized. The midshipman who steered her had endeavoured to weather a schooner lying at anchor, but failed, colliding with her jib-boom. The mast was lashed in a temporary manner, and we proceeded, but not far, when a sudden gust of wind disabled us. We were signalled back to the ship and disqualified for further racing.

The cruise being over, we returned to Bermuda with the fleet, and after taking in stores, left for the Newfoundland fisheries. Two other ships accompanied the 'Emerald' (V12)—the 'Pelican' and 'Buzzard.' On this cruise, our captain being senior to the other two, we stood in the relationship of flagship to them, and flew the Commodore's flag until such time as we should again meet the Admiral's ship, when it would be struck.

Before making any observations upon some incidents of this cruise, I will give the reader in barest outline a sketch of life on board a naval sea-going ship. At sea each man gets four and six hours' rest each alternate night—that is, if he keeps the first watch of the night, 8 to 12 p.m., his resting hours are from 12 to 4. At 4 he has to rise again and scrub decks, whereas if he is in his hammock from 8 to 12, then he keeps the middle watch, returning to his rest at 4. Let us imagine the ship at sea. It is midnight. The bell is struck. Immediately is heard a deep bass voice to and fro the lower deck—"All the starboard watch! Heave out! heave out! heave out! Show a leg! show a leg! All the starboard Watch! Show a leg!" which means "Turn out of your hammock." At five minutes past midnight, a tinkle of a bell is heard, followed by the same deep voice calling "Watch to muster!" Every seaman has to run to the quarterdeck, and on the midshipman calling his name, has to give in his number. This being done the boatswain's mate pipes, "Sea-boats' crew and relieves fall in."

In answer to this call the crew of the lifeboat and certain men of the watch who have special duties to perform, called 'tricks,' during the next four hours, present themselves before the quarter-master, who, being satisfied that the correct number there, dismisses them. Two look-out men are required for each hour of the watch, four for steering, the weather and lee helmsman being relieved every two hours, eight for the chains. The uniform time for heaving the lead, by which is ascertained the depth of water, is one hour, but as circumstances alter cases, it was found necessary on our fishery cruises to reduce the time one-half. So intense was the cold that each man upon entering the chain would bathe his hands in warm grease, provided for the purpose of enabling him to heave the lead. Here is a little story in connection with this 'trick.' Two men agreed one night to toss up a penny and to decide thereby as to which of them should do the full hour, in order that one of them might be relieved from his work—for, be it said, unless there are yards to trim, or sails to furl or set, the watch on deck can lie down to rest, but under no circumstance is any seaman allowed to go below until the four hours are expired. However, after a little parleying, they came to the conclusion that each would do his own 'trick.' Accordingly one did his duty, and was awaiting, to be relieved by the other, but not a trace of him could be discovered for some time, until at length he was found sleeping behind a large gun. This man then told his mate, by way of explanation, that he had had a dream in which he dreamt they both tossed up and he had won, and that therefore the one wanting relief was to do the hour's trick.

When daylight dawns the 'look-out' is transferred from the topgallant forecastle to the forecross trees, or, if sail is set, to the foretopsail yard. Many an hour have I spent, from time to time, on the topsail yard, often sick and giddy, when the ship has been rolling and dipping. Thoughts of home would gather in my mind, and there aloft, where no human eye could see, have I cried aloud, giving vent to my pent-up feelings. Sick, I say, yes, and bareheaded, using my cap for a sanitary purpose, rather than get into trouble by being sick overt the sails.

At 9 a.m. is the inspection of uniform, followed by prayers. Should it be Tuesday or Thursday, rifles and cutlasses are inspected, and each man is supposed to wear his boots. This to many is hateful. In my watch was a man named Timothy Hennesy, who on 'small-arm' days would bind with spun-yarn his big toe, thereby giving the inspecting officer the impression he had hurt it, and was in consequence excused from wearing his boots.

Following this inspection, one watch goes below to make or mend their clothes, and the other remains on deck until noon. Dinner is piped, but it is not very tempting to one's appetite. Salt pork or beef with preserved potatoes form the menu. Spending the greater part of the three years at sea, our share of salt food was abundant, and in order to prevent scurvy, lime-juice was distributed.

After this meal the watches change again, the forenoon watch below going on deck until 4 p.m., the other remaining below.

I once endeavoured to make me a flannel. The stitches I must confess, were long and irregular; but worse than that, when attaching the sleeves to the main part, I misplaced end for end, so that when I came to try on this novel garment the wide part hung in bights around my wrist, the narrow part fitting tightly round my arm. So much for my reversed sleeves. No more sowing engaged my time in the watch below.

At 4 p.m. tea is piped. It consists of a basin of tea minus milk, and a small allowance of hard biscuit. Food being so scanty in the navy, the sailors apply this appellation to their mess, 'The Drum,' thus signifying that as far as food is concerned the mess is as empty as a drum. "Which drum do you belong to?" they ask.

Half an hour being allowed for tea, then another inspection of the crew in night clothing takes place. Sail drill is then engaged in for a couple of hours, and the routine of the day is brought to an end by the washing of clothes.

At twilight the look-out man is called down from the mast-head, and takes up his position on the forecastle, the bow lights being lit at the same time. Hammocks are hung up at 7.30 p.m., and supper is indulged in, which the messes buy at the canteen, none being provided by the Admiralty.

The life of a sailor boy is a very unpleasant one in a seagoing ship. Early in the morning he has to take his hammock on deck to undergo the inspection of the ship's corporal, who, before the boy is allowed to stow it, satisfies himself it is lashed up in the uniform manner. Then follows the inspection of knees and elbows, and should any boy not be clean, the others are deputed to scrub him. Next comes the climbing of the mast-head. These are but three of the many inconveniences he has to suffer until such time as he is rated O.D. or ordinary seaman.

Every one knows that discipline and cleanliness go hand in hand on board our men-of-war. In fact the latter is carried to an absurd extreme. From four to six in the early morning, it is almost impossible watch below to snatch a little sleep, as immediately over their heads are men scrubbing, or holystoning the upper deck. I fail to see that "cleanliness is next to godliness" under such circumstances.

Saturday is essentially a cleaning day, and nothing is overlooked. Decks are made as white and clean as possible, cables are whitewashed, guns are burnished; in short, everything appears brand new. The captain's inspection takes place every Sunday morning. So particular was our captain that he would never hesitate to descend into magazines to inspect every little corner, although the whitewash on the sides of these small rooms rubbed against his uniform at each movement.

It was ever a great load removed from the mind of the petty officer who had charge of flats and certain parts of the deck when his inspection was over. But if fault had been found great was their fear.

The payment of the crew, as in all ships, took place on the first day of each month. "Hands to muster for payment, soap and tobacco!" would shout the boatswain's mate. Any man was at liberty to forego the last two items, or the whole three for that matter. As a rule, however, most of the crew took up their money and bar of soap—two very needful requisites, the non-smokers preferring their two shillings in lieu of the two pounds of tobacco the value of which was deducted from the next month's payment.

The First Newfoundland Cruise

Now for the first fishery cruise. Halifax was our next port of call after leaving Bermuda. Halifax seemed dear to us after we had paid our first visit there, the reason being rather a curious one. Bum-boat men were wont to visit the ships with large quantities of sausages, which were quickly bought up, being regarded as a luxury. I have seen the cook's galley crowded with seamen frying these sausages, and on several occasions a sentry was placed to prevent a crush. Halifax! Sausages! The two names were synonymous to our crew, and even to-day I cannot partake of sausages without my thoughts wandering off to Halifax. Who can tell the laws of mental association! It was here that I first saw the present Prince of Wales, who then was in command of the gun-boat 'Thrush.' Ere leaving this port each man of the three fishery ships was served out with a pair of sea-boots and warm underclothing, in preparation for the intense cold we should feel on the Newfoundland and Labrador coasts. I understand the Canadian Government were responsible for this, kindly distribution. We left for St. John's,

Newfoundland, and this port was our headquarters for the next few months. In cruising around the island from time to time, the most awe-inspiring sights were the ice-bergs and ice-fields which we passed day by day. Forteau Bay, the place where the gun-boat 'Lily' was wrecked, was pointed out to me. Sad to relate, we lost a shipmate on this voyage. Scudding along one morning under a fair wind with all sail set, and the crew cleaning guns, suddenly there arose the cry "Man overboard! Away lifeboat!" The order was "Heave to!" The poor fellow, however, had sunk beneath the sea almost instantly. The water being so bitterly cold it was supposed the cramp seized him. He, at the time of the accident, was outside the ship cleaning the muzzle of a gun, when she gave a lurch which overbalanced him into the sea. No frivolity was there that day, or for the ensuing week, amongst the crew. The unhappy event had a moral effect upon us all, and a deep solemnity prevailed.

Leaving the fisheries, bound for Bermuda, we called at Halifax to return loan-stores, such as our boots and warm clothing. Arriving at Bermuda, our ship was put in the floating dock and overhauled preparatory to our second visit to the West Indies. Here again we spent our second Christmas. Just a word about it. Christmas day in the navy is recognised as the day of days. Even the ordinary routine is reversed, so that instead of the seamen pumping water, and sweeping decks, and similar duties, the petty officers do it. Then, I may say, nothing is overlooked in the way of choice victuals. Each man, as Christmas approaches, contributes to the caterer of his mess, so that no luxury may be lacking on Christmas day. Added to this, the canteen allowed each man six shillings, and this of course meant several pounds to each mess. Stint is a foreign word to most naval men, and Christmas-tide is a demonstration of this fact.

Messes emulate each other as to decorations. Many crafty and dexterous men are there in all our ships who take a delight in this kind of work: they also vie with each other as to the quality of their plum puddings. Time would fail to tell you the ingredients with which they are made. This I know, that if one 'duff' should contain an extra ingredient to any other, that same 'duff' is pronounced the best. The number of ingredients, then, forms the standard of judgment for naval plum puddings.

On this occasion a Dutch ship was lying near to the 'Emerald.' Most of the crew paid a visit on board, and having an abundance of good things, we welcomed them to enjoy them with us. To be sure no objection was raised on their part. Having thoroughly enjoyed their dinner, they exclaimed in broken English: "Good English Navy, we should dike to be in you navy to have food dike dis—we git no good dhings dike dese." Poor souls! evidently they understood we had at all times a similar mid-day meal, but this belief would have been contradicted by experience had they sat to dinner with us within three days. The Dutch sailors grew fond of us, and we of them, and this bond of social friendship was created on Christmas day, which I think was rather unique, as it fulfilled the spirit of the words:—

"Peace on earth, goodwill to men."

On the fisheries the captain had met with an accident, and was granted six weeks' leave at Bermuda. It being noised abroad that both he and his lady were coming on board at Christmas to inspect the decorations, special interest therefore was taken in the same, and the decorators excelled themselves in their art, far beyond the limit of the previous year's display. No pains were spared, no time begrudged to make everything as beauteous as possible. I have a secret notion that although the captain had not been on board for several weeks, being an invalid ashore, that such lovely decorations were not altogether a manifestation of sympathy on the part of the crew toward him, but rather the motive power, or the cause, of which the decorations were the effect, lay in the fact that his lady was accompanying him. That explains it. A word to the wise is sufficient.

The idlers' mess (all tradesmen in the navy are termed idlers with the exception of carpenters) made an artificial fountain. It was surrounded with huge stones and dripping moss, and several spouts were in full play. It was most certainly a work of skill.

All hands were on the watch for the approach of the steam launch bearing the two distinguished visitors. Presently she hove in sight, and also another from the 'Bellerophon' bringing the Admiral of the Fleet. In a short time the three were inspecting the lower deck. In each mess stood the cook, holding on a plate a piece of plum pudding for them to taste. As they entered each compartment pop-guns were fired as a salute.

Over one mess were inscribed these words:—

"Sir Baldwin's proved a noble man
Around the coast of Newfoundland,
And we hope the Queen will make him K.C.B."

When the inspection was over the boatswain's mate piped—"Clear lower deck: hands cheer Captain and his lady," and ere the two had reached the upper deck, the drum and fife band played

"For he's a jolly good fellow."

Three cheers for the captain and his lady were heartily shouted by the crew. So overcome by these expressions of loyalty was the captain that he gave orders to the master-at-arms to inform the ship's company that words failed him to give an adequate reply.

The Second West Indian Cruise

On the 4th of the next month we departed for our second West Indian cruise with the fleet. I may here remark that we had three men on board who bore the names of Shrodnisky, Taglabeau, and Dobrisky, their nationality being Russian, French, and Dutch respectively. The former had the honour of being the ship's organist, but for some reason now resigned. The chaplain understanding I could play, sent for me, and asked if I would accept the post of organist and commence the duty on the following Sunday. I was very glad and thankful of such an opportunity presented to me, and replied in the affirmative, not entirely because it meant fivepence a day extra to my service pay, though of course this was a consideration, but mainly for the reason that it would afford me privileges for musical culture.

The Sunday came, and I must have played the instrument satisfactorily, as at the conclusion of the service the captain congratulated me, intimating also that free access to his cabin, in which the organ was kept, should be afforded me whenever he was staying ashore at any port on the station. I thanked him, and seized such opportunities as they presented themselves for the purpose of practising.

It may be of interest to remark that when church was 'rigged,' capstan bars supported by a bucket at each end constituted the extempore pew.

I have often wished that such arrangements might be made in some places of worship. It would ensure a wide-awake congregation, for the seats would then be three inches in width without a back.

On this second visit to the West-Indies we had many poor Sundays— poor, I mean, from a sailor's point of view. The organ was often lashed, and I had enough to do to keep my balance, the crew on such occasions clinging to fixtures such as hatchways and stanchions with one hand, and holding the hymn-book in the other, singing heartily:—

"Eternal Father! strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave."

But some may ask, Had the desire to become a preacher diminished? Not at all; it was always present with me, and truth to tell, I was ever informing those around me, and even civilian friends ashore, that on reaching England I should enter the ministry, though at that time of day I knew not how my freedom was to be brought about. But confident I was that this passion for preaching was not implanted within me to be quenched by adverse circumstances, and often would this verse appeal to me forcibly: "O rest in the Lord; wait patiently for Him, and He shall give thee thy heart's desire."

Sometimes a religious meeting was held in the cell flat, conducted by the chaplain and a lieutenant, and my attendance at these meetings helped me to form a slight acquaintance with the latter. On Sunday afternoon he sent for me, saying that in the evening he was going ashore to take the service in a large church, and asked if I would accompany him and address the congregation. I went to my mess, and there in quietude—for on Sunday afternoons sailors indulge in a nap, and it was invariably so on the 'Emerald,' some asleep on the lockers, others under the mess-table, the ditty box of each man being the pillow—I prepared my discourse. The church was crowded that evening, and following the lieutenant's address, a hymn was sung, and it was singing! I have heard none like it since. I now preached to this multitude, and how attentive they were! That was many years ago, and I like to think that my first sermon was preached to a negro audience in the West Indies at the age of sixteen. The subject was Joseph as a type of Christ.

On this second West Indian cruise the ships of the fleet took part in a sailing match from St. Lucia to Jamaica, the 'Bellerophon' departing a day or two in advance of the other ships. When clear of St. Lucia the screws were lifted, as no steaming was allowed, though I think the flagship used both steam and sail. Be that as it may, no other ship did. This match was a great competition, each commander doing his utmost to trim the sails to the best advantage. The 'Pelican's' commander ordered all the heavy shot to be brought astern of his vessel, and all manner of schemes were resorted to to increase the speed. On the fifth day at sea we sighted the 'Bellerophon' on the horizon, and in a few hours overhauled her, thus gaining the position of the leading ship, which was maintained until we reached Jamaica. As the 'Emerald' passed her that day the brass band assembled on the poop to play "See the Conquering Hero comes." The last ship to pass her was the 'Canada,' the band playing—"Where have you been all the day?" which undoubtedly they thought very appropriate. The second best ship in the fleet for sailing

was the 'Pelican,' and for days she kept very close to the 'Emerald,' but never overtook her.

As I now write, there hangs before me on the wall a picture illustrating this race, bearing this inscription:—

H.M.S. 'Emerald'—12 guns.

From St. Lucia to Jamaica, January 19, 1891. The fleet racing, the 'Emerald' beating every other ship. Band of Admiral's ship playing—"See the Conquering Hero comes."

At length the fleet reached Jamaica. Two ships (V12), the 'Bellerophon' and 'Thrush,' proceeded up Kingston harbour, and on the night upon which the Great Exhibition was opened—and I think Prince George, the commander of the 'Thrush,' opened it—all the fleet was decorated aloft with incandescent lights—a truly grand sight. Two Russian ships were present, and their decorations surpassed our English display. One of them had the initial P shining between the foremast and mainmast, and G between the main mast and mizenmast. This was in honour of Prince George.

Just another incident in connection with this cruise. Our ship lay anchored off Curaçoa, and one morning whilst hoisting the foretopgallant mast, the mast' rope entwined round the foot of a seaman, causing him to fall from the topsail yard to the topgallant forecastle. He lived but a short time afterward. A coffin was made and covered in blue cloth—the custom of the service—and we followed him ashore to the grave. There was in harbour at the same time a Dutch ship—in fact, the very ship whose crew we had invited on board at Bermuda on Christmas day. The Dutchmen landed, bringing on shore with them three beautiful wreaths, thus manifesting their sympathy and respect. At the graveside many of them begged to be allowed to throw in the grave a shovelful of earth, a still further proof, I take it, of their kindly feeling toward the 'Emerald's' crew in their loss of a shipmate.

The fleet returned to headquarters. We prepared for the fishery cruise, believing it to be our last. The flag-ship had now received orders to leave for England as soon as the 'Blake' should arrive. One morning it was reported that the flag-ship's relief was coming up the Narrows. We had heard of this wonderful ship, of her heavy armament, and the electric lighting system on all her decks. What wonder, then, that we were anxious to behold her? As she drew nearer every eye was upon her, with the exception, however, of one man, who evidently took no interest in her arrival. He and I were together in a boat, and whilst I was gazing on the 'Blake,' he leaned over the side of the boat, and seized something that was floating along. He pulled it out of the water, and threw it on my foot. In less than a minute I was in an agony of pain, my foot swelled and burned with fiery heat, and I jumped about like a madman. I was taken to the sick berth, and the doctor treated it with oil and flour, which gave me a little ease.

Now this, that my companion threw on my foot, was a fish known as a Portuguese man-of-war—at least, that is the name by which naval men know it. When floating on the water it resembles a glass bottle, but under the surface it has long fangs several inches in length, and it was these which stung me. He was very sorry that he did such a stupid act, but I suppose having read or heard about this class of fish, he thought he would put to an experimental test the power of its sting, and chose my foot for that purpose.

The Second Newfoundland Cruise.

The 'Bellerophon' left for Plymouth the day after. Whilst all the crews cheered her from aloft she steamed amongst the ships, her band playing meantime 'Auld Lang Syne' and 'Home Sweet Home.' There was more than one on the 'Emerald' who desired to be on the flag-ship that day. We left Bermuda shortly after the 'Bellerophon' for another fishery cruise, calling at the Port of Sausages for warm clothing— yes, and for more sausages. At this time I was rated an O.D., which meant that I was regarded as a man. The dish-cloth was hung up in the mess as an outward and visible sign that we had parted company—for I may say until a boy is rated ordinary seaman, he is a slave to domestic work in his mess. Another change was made with this rating— I was transferred from the quarter-deck part of the ship to a flying-jib stower. A word of explanation here. The flying-boom is the furthestmost pole projecting from the ship's bow, and the sail which is furled upon it is called the flying jib. Many narrow escapes had I on the flying-boom, having to cling to it for dear life when the ship dipped in the trough of the sea, causing me to be drenched through and through; then like a fearless bird she would rise quickly toward the sky, only to descend just as rapidly in the hollow of the next oncoming wave. Giddy, sick, and faint have I furled with my mate the flying jib, pinched with the cold and wet. It is impossible for me to put down on paper what the bitterness of my life then was—it cannot be reduced to writing. Often I found relief by stealing away to the topgallant forecastle, and on the wash-deck locker lay with my face buried in my arms and sob, praying to God to deliver me.

A very monotonous cruise was this one. Anticipating as much, I bought a melodeon at Halifax, and in my evening watch below would play some of Sankey's hymns. The men were only too glad to sing, and presently the whole mess deck would ring with bright and hearty singing. This was as a tonic to me then, and is now, for nothing, to my mind, is so inspiring as music accompanied with powerful song.

What was our surprise one day when steaming into St. John's harbour to find the city devastated by fire, which in some parts was still smouldering! It appeared that the fire had broken out a day or two previous to our arrival, and that it swept through the city in a maddening rush, accelerated by the high winds, and the dearth of water whereby to extinguish it. The heat, whilst the fire was raging, was so intense that all craft in the harbour had to put to sea in order to escape their sails being singed. Rich men's safes were taken to the water and cast in, and our divers were given the task of finding them again subsequently. We had looked forward to forty-eight hours' leave, but it was out of the question now. The Governor of the colony being absent from the capital, our captain took pre-eminence, and placed the inhabitants under martial law. Public houses were closed, and we patrolled the city night and day with blank and ball cartridges, for it was thought a panic might ensue, or worse still, that evil-disposed persons might set fire to the other side of the harbour, where were stored thousands of tons of cod-liver oil. A strict watch was kept afloat also, our steam-launch patrolling the harbour all night with an armed crew.

What about the dangerous ruins—should they be left standing? A party of bluejackets went ashore with charges of dynamite to blow them down. In the execution of their duty one of them found a part of the silver communion plate which belonged to the English cathedral buried in the debris. He brought it on board, and a skilled tradesman converted it into various articles. I bought a ring which was made out of it, but unfortunately lost it overboard. As to places of worship, I think the only two which remained intact were the barracks of the Salvation Army. As a relic of that great fire, I have in my possession the stamp with which the books and papers in the Atheneum reading room were marked.

There were landed from our ship quantities of stores, such as canvas to shelter the homeless people, and barrels of salt provisions as their victuals. The inhabitants after a while becoming somewhat reconciled to their misfortune, we left St. John's to see it no more, or so we then understood. We sailed for Bermuda, calling on the way at Halifax. "Just another cruise to the West Indies, boys, and then to dear old England," was the comforting assurance with which we often hailed one another. As on two previous occasions, so now again, we spent our Christmas at Bermuda with the fleet. The decorations on this our third Christmas-tide were not to be compared with the preceding year—a significant sign that there had been more scope for harmonious feeling between officers and men during the last twelve months. "Never mind, lads, we shall spend next Christmas at home," was the word of consolation passed from one mess to another.

It was customary when the fleet was thus assembled to hold battalion-days—that is to say, that all the various crews would land with their rifles and cutlasses, and a field gun from each ship. Headed by the flag-ship's band, we would be marched to a plain, and there engage in infantry drill as a battalion. Meantime the guns' crews were competing with each other as to their qualifications for smartness. The guns would be taken to pieces, unlimbered, and scattered on the ground, and the wheels of the gun-carriage wheeled away a considerable distance. On the order being given to "Limber up, and fire!" the crew which mounted its gun and fired the first shot earned the laurels. On one occasion the gun's crew of the 'Bellerophon' gained the honour, but unfortunately, through the neglect of one to serve the vent, the poor fellow lost his right arm, which was blown into atoms. I am pleased to add that every man and officer in the fleet freely gave him a day's payment, which in its totality amounted to nearly a thousand pounds.

It was during this stay at Bermuda that I was nearly shot dead. With others, I had landed to do my annual firing, which is required of every man in the navy. We had to fire ten shots from each firing point, which were separated a hundred yards apart from each other. There were six firing points, and therefore the limit for firing at the target was six hundred yards. I had fired my ten shots from the first point, and now had receded to the two hundred yards range. We fired in couples. I had made eight bull's eyes on the target, which delighted me, and after discharging my tenth shot my shipmate had still to fire his. He held the rifle in the firing position, and was in the act of pulling the trigger, when I passed within two inches of his muzzle. I just cleared it when the bullet was fired. It would have been my fault wholly and solely had an accident happened, as I ought to have dropped to the rear, instead of passing to the front. How can I doubt Providence in the light of this incident? It was God who made the trigger hard to pull that day, and I am positive that had it been an easy pull-off, the bullet would have passed through my head, as my mate fired from the kneeling position.

At Halifax all men who had no tunic were ordered to get one. A tailor came on board and took the measurement of such men, taking on shore the cloth to make the tunics. Twenty-six shillings were deducted from my payment, this being the price of my tunic, as I belonged to the class who were

deficient of this article of uniform. Strange to say, a notice was hung up on the board a few weeks later, stating that tunics would henceforth be abolished in Her Majesty's navy. Then followed abundant complaint. "This is a hoax," said one. "Better far had we spent the twenty-six shillings in sausages," remarked another. At the time this notice appeared, I had not even tried on my tunic, and by way of comfort, it was pointed out by the officials that the tunics might be exchanged for fruit in the West Indies. This did not appeal very strongly to any.

For a long time a pet goat was kept on board. (By the way, I may say it was more of a pest than a pet.) It was the most curious animal that ever I had seen. It took a walk around the lower deck almost every night, making a dreadful noise which, of course, proved the means of awaking many sailors. The mess deck in the morning was usually strewn with boots and shoes, and the general cry was—"Where are my shoes?" for you may be sure that he who threw such weapons at the goat would not throw his own. Hence, if a man were looking for his shoes in the morning, it was a sure sign that he had not been annoyed by the goat's lower-deck visit during the night, or in other words, that he was a very sound sleeper.

To the carpenters, however, the goat was useful, as it had a habit of eating the shavings which fell from their benches. That, to my mind, was the one redeeming feature of this goat.

While we were at Bermuda it died. Scores of men went to its funeral. We managed to get a trolley and laid 'Billy' upon it. The procession was formed, and away we marched through the dockyard. Some of us were glad that we should see its face no more, others were rather sorrowful, and expressed their sorrow by wrapping around the goat their tunics. Never was a goat buried with such honours. I cannot tell you how many new tunics were buried with it, but there were many, and when it is remembered that the cost of each was twenty-six shillings one is right in concluding it was rather an expensive funeral.

The Third West Indian Cruise.

Away to the West Indies for the third and last time. We caught a large shark during this trip. Laying at anchor one afternoon in water which was infested by this class of fish, suddenly someone shouted, "There's a shark caught astern!" All hands hurried aft on the poop to see this sight. The bait, consisting of a large piece of pork, had invited this monster, which was now writhing in pain in the water. The gunnery instructor shot it, and with a jigger we hauled it aboard. It was then cut open, and a dexterous marine took out its back-bone, which he cleaned and varnished, and passing a steel rod through the various parts made an admirable walking-stick.

Rowing ashore in the cutter one morning I espied on the landing steps of the pier at Jamaica a large octopus. It had been left high and dry, and was therefore "like a fish out of water." Understanding it was a deadly enemy, I seized a long boat-hook, with which I pierced it to death; then drawing near, I examined it thoroughly, and counted its suckers.

I was at this time put in charge of the small-arm magazine, and whenever the ship was in mock-action—usually on Friday mornings—it was my duty to descend into the magazine, and hook on boxes of ammunition, which were pulled up by marines to the lower deck. Carriers would then run away to the upper deck with them, from which place they would be hoisted aloft, for the sharpshooters in the fore and main tops. The duty of the men aloft in the time of war would be to shoot the officers on board the enemy's ships.

Occasionally the bugle would sound 'Action' by night. No specified night was set apart for this evolution, hence it always came as a surprise. "Coming events cast their shadow before," but this is not applicable to 'Action' by night at sea; it is left entirely to the captain's pleasure. The response to the bugle call is a sight never to be forgotten. Every man dresses hurriedly—no, that is the wrong word, for I have known them in their haste put the leg of their trousers over their head in mistake for their jumpers, and others, including myself, put their feet through the sleeves of the jumper, mistaking them for trousers. And what wonder such errors are made, when at sea no light is allowed on the lower deck by night, and all is like sevenfold darkness! Each man has to put three hitches around his hammock—seven are the uniform number—but the enemy is in sight, therefore three hitches have to suffice to keep blanket and bedding together. The hammock is then unhooked, and if the bluejacket belongs to the former part of the ship, he has to bear it away for storage on the topgallant forecastle; if to the after-part, he carries it away to the poop. The reason for the hammocks being stowed on these two places, is to provide a breakwater for the enemy's shots.

Every man rushes away to his respective station. Sharpshooters seize their rifles and climb the rigging; captains of broadside guns and guns' crews repair to their guns and cast off the securing chains; magazine men with a lantern descend the magazines. One who had never seen this sight would find it difficult to believe with what rapidity the movement is carried out. Two minutes after the bugle

has sounded, some such order as this is given from the officers' bridge. "Enemy off the port bow! make ready with shrapnell shell. Distance three thousand yards. Elevation twenty degrees." The gun loaded, the breech-block closed, every captain of his gun stands to the rear with the lanyard in his hand awaiting the order "Fire!" which when given, the gun is fired, sponged and reloaded. The order might then be given—"Prepare to ram," in which case the sights are made ready for eight hundred yards, and the guns are fired by electricity, the guns' crews lying down under cover of their respective guns. Other drills are engaged in, until the bugle sounds:—"Cease firing," "Return stores." The men after obeying this command take their hammocks below deck, and providing they belong to the watch below, 'turn in' and resume their sleep; if to the watch on duty, they repair to the upper deck.

One night whilst engaged in action an ammunition box fell upon my hand, taking off four finger-nails. This is only one of the accidents which happen at sea when the ship rolls heavily.

As a ship's company our character would compare favourably with that of any other crew on the station. There were only eight desertions, and one court-martial case in three years. The 'Emerald' was anchored off Dominica. One evening an order was received to prepare for sea immediately, and proceed to St. Lucia to undergo the Admiral's inspection the next morning. The capstan was rigged, the anchor weighed, and soon we were at sea, and every man as busy as a bee. The main yard was lowered and scrubbed, decks received special attention; in fact, we were cleaning all night. In the morning we took up our anchorage at St. Lucia. "All hands" were rushing about their work like madmen. There was no help for it, so short had been the Admiral's notice of his inspection. One bluejacket was whitewashing the inboard part of the cable. The boatswain, believing he was not doing it as quickly as he might, passed a deprecating remark. The sailor in an instant seized a broom which lay near, and lifted it to strike the boatswain, but hesitated, and laid it down. He was put under arrest then and there, the charge against him being "Attempting to strike a superior officer." The boatswain demanded a court-martial, which was held later at Jamaica, the court passing a sentence of eighteen months' imprisonment upon the doomed man. This poor fellow in former years had been a heavy drinker, but during our commission had not taken a drop of liquor—not even his daily allowance of rum. It was understood that ere he left England he had promised a dying sister that he would not touch intoxicants again, and hitherto was faithful to his vow. He received the sympathy of the captain, officers and crew. As his pay would henceforth be stopped, though he were supporting a widowed mother, this sympathy took a practical form. A subscription list was opened, and all subscribed. In this way his poor mother received her half-pay as formerly, the captain sending it home monthly.

As a matter of fact he had served a previous term of imprisonment, which was much in his disfavour, and he knew full well this would be taken into consideration by the court. With this thought weighing upon his mind, and whilst waiting his turn to appear before his judges, he wept like a child—he who was always so brave, courageous and manly. This is a touching instance—an instance of a poor soul striving to do right, striving to be faithful, amid daily temptation, to a sister who had gone before, yet because in a moment of weakness he was overtaken in a fault, he was treated in such a harsh and cruel manner. Certainly discipline must be maintained in the service, and had the matter been settled by the captain, his punishment would have been very lenient in comparison with that meted out by the court. But the boatswain demanded a court-martial. I will not dilate on his action, but remember the Master's words—"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Concerning minor punishments, they were meted out almost daily, such as fourteen days in a cell, seven days IOA or IOB. To be confined in a cell is the penalty for returning on board ship intoxicated, or for breaking several days' leave. For prudential reasons the knife and lanyard of a seaman is taken away when the sentence of cell confinement is passed. In his cell he has to pick a pound of oakum daily, which is weighed every night by the ship's corporal, and his food consists of bread and water, and for the greater part of the confinement he is deprived of his bedding. Let me give an amusing incident in connection with cell punishment. We had shipped at St. John's a young man as an assistant to the captain's cook. Departing from the naval rule of discipline, he received seven days' cell seclusion. One night when the doctor went his usual round asking each prisoner if all were well, this poor fellow replied: "No, sir, I have not enough to eat; I should like a pound of cheese from the canteen." Needless to add he obtained no cheese, and his very request indicates how greatly he lacked knowledge concerning naval discipline, but he learned it in the school of experience.

I mentioned seven days IOA. Now, although I passed through my training days without being beaten by many stripes, I was not so fortunate in the 'Emerald,' though my punishment is but a pin-prick, hardly worth mentioning, but I do so in order to point out that I was no superior being. Strange man indeed would he be who, on such a ship as the 'Emerald,' never stood as a defaulter on the quarterdeck. Yes, I once received seven days IOA, which being interpreted means—That the bluejacket's rum is, stopped; that he is not allowed to smoke; that he only gets thirty minutes to dinner, and has to eat it with other IOA men off a piece of canvas spread out on the upper deck, and the other half of the dinner hour he has to whitewash spare cells: moreover, that he has to rise at 4 a.m.

mornings and scrub decks—all this included in IOA. My readers will readily notice that the first clause is a means of strengthening the temperance cause, and non-smokers will see no punishment in the second clause, whilst those who are fond of picnics will consider the third clause a pleasure, but the pinch is felt in the fact that during IOA one's leave is cancelled. Now, IOB is similar to IOA with one or two slight modifications.

Although I was not a smoker I once spat on the deck, and was marked doing so by the first lieutenant. He ordered me to patrol the deck in my spare time with a cutlass, and to capture the first man who repeated the sin, Next day I discovered a transgressor and took him aft to the officer of the day, before whom he confessed and was ordered to relieve me of the cutlass. The sin was a general one, I take it, if judged by the number of men to whom the sword was transferred.

The Third Newfoundland Cruise.

The last southern cruise was drawing to an end, and many were the conjectures as to which place we should depart for England, but the general belief was that it would be Bermuda. When arriving here, at the conclusion of the cruise, we heard news which faded the brightest hope and caused much murmuring. It was to the effect that we had to sail to the fisheries once more. Away to Halifax for another share of warm clothing' and at this port complaining ceased, and I will let you into a secret—the sausages proved the remedy. Who could grumble when living upon such dainties?

On reaching St. John's we saw great improvements in the city. During our absence wooden buildings had been erected, and the appearance of a devastated place had vanished. I will write of two incidents which occurred—the first being pleasant, the second unpleasant. Our ship had moored one evening in a creek on the west of Newfoundland. It was a notorious place for salmon. A large net was put across the creek at its narrowest width, and on hauling it into the boat ninety salmon were caught. These were distributed to the messes, who all enjoyed the salmon dinner, being a pleasant change from salt meat.

Sailing in the second cutter with a high wind blowing and having 'put about,' I noticed the lee-mainstay was not made fast, but was dangling outside the boat. I rose from the bottom of the cutter and stretched out my hand to seize it, when instantly the lee gunwale dipped under water and so did I, with the exception of my right leg, which was jammed crossways in the rowlock. In this position I was carried along for a distance of forty yards, and when the squall had passed over, the boat's crew pulled me in. When naval cutters are under sail the rowlock fittings are filled up with a piece of wood, which corresponds to the fitting. Someone had neglected to slip this piece of wood into the rowlock which held me by the foot. Thank God for that neglect; it was a kindly Providence, for it saved my life from drowning.

CHAPTER V

HOMEWARD BOUND

Homeward Bound! All our stores which we borrowed from Halifax were transferred to the 'Pelican' for her to return. We left St. John's harbour one Sunday evening en route to Plymouth. The crews of the 'Buzzard' and 'Pelican' hailed us 'farewell' as we slowly steamed away from our moorings, and crowds of people gathered on the wharfs to witness our departure. The paying-off pennant was streaming far astern, and every heart felt glad to see it. It was a sign of something beyond expression. Just one more look at the city, a hastening glance at our two companion ships, and we had cleared the harbour. In an hour the land was lost to view, and we were in a dense fog, ploughing the deep, bound for Old England. The wind proving favourable, plain sail was made, and for the next five days we made rapid headway. On the sixth day the wind veered round to the opposite quarter, and in consequence sails were furled, and our speed decreased. However, we were able to make sail again on the ninth day.

What was my intense joy when on the morning of the eleventh day the man on the look-out shouted "Eddystone Lighthouse off the port bow, sir!" This delightful cry had almost the same effect as if the boatswain's mate had piped, "Clear lower deck," as nearly all hands rushed on deck. Breakfast was piped shortly afterwards, but only a scanty number went below to partake of it. I stood entranced with the old familiar scenes which were now becoming more and more visible; in fact, I cannot tell what feelings took possession of me. I have often since felt that the three years' separation from home and loved ones were compensated by the joy of home-coming.

Yes, there was Maker Tower—the last object I beheld when leaving Plymouth in the 'Himalaya' three years before. Nearer and nearer we sailed until all the surroundings became distinct. Rame Head was passed, then Penlee Point, and now the Breakwater Lighthouse loomed in sight.

"Clear lower deck! Hands shorten and furl sail!" was the order. "Come along, lads, it is the last time," said some sympathetic voices.

The guns were made ready for saluting the Admiral and the Port. Then, having anchored, the salute was fired, the port guard-ship replying. A dense fog now settled down on Plymouth Sound, much to my disappointment, for I was on the look-out for my father's approach. Soon there was a cluster at boats round the ship, which had conveyed from the shore all manner of commercial men—Jews with watches for sale, and tailors with their patterns—for no bluejacket would be without his private suit—and others with articles of food. Only a limited number, however, were allowed on board.

My uncle, who resided at Kingsand, had noticed our early arrival in the Sound. He had been requested by my mother to keep a sharp look-out for the 'Emerald.' She had given him money to purchase some food to bring afloat to me. He fulfilled his request with the greatest satisfaction, for an hour after we had anchored, he was on board, with a basket of provisions, enquiring for me. I gave him a hearty welcome, all the more so on account of the basket he bore, as I had foregone my biscuit and cocoa that morning and had had nothing to eat. I will just add that the contents of his basket were eagerly devoured by me and my mess-mates.

My father, so it afterward proved, had been on the Hoe every morning recently, to see if the 'Emerald' had arrived, but on account of the fog this morning he did not walk there, knowing that such a fog would hide the Sound from view, so he contented himself with making enquiries, and was told that no ship had come from sea. As the day wore on he chanced to be in a shop in Plymouth, when one of the stewards of the 'Emerald' entered it, to purchase. That was enough! He flew away, bringing with him a large box of the best provisions that money could buy—it had been packed a whole week in readiness for my home-coming, so as there should be no delay when the ship arrived. A waterman rowed him down the Sound. In my heart I knew there was some mistake, as otherwise my father would have been one of the first to board the ship.

However, about 3 p.m. someone called down the hatchway for me. Instantly I bounded away to the gangway, there to greet my father, who was now on board. We spent an hour together, and at 4 p.m. all visitors were 'piped' out of the ship. The coal was shipped—for we had been coaling all day.

The boats were hoisted, and the anchor weighed. Being a member of the drum and fife band on the 'Emerald,' whose work was to play marches while the capstan was being manned, I must say that our march on this occasion was out of place. A gallop would have been suitable. With four men on each capstan bar, it was nothing less than a maddening whirl, whilst the cry sounded—

"Heave ho! The last time my hearties."

We left Plymouth for Portsmouth to payoff. One of the Portsmouth outfitters had made it his business to come to Plymouth, and to take the return passage in our ship. Truly he was a highly favoured man. Nor was he idle, for he was measuring men for suits of clothes the most of the night. I suppose he did not mind such night-work. We sighted Portsmouth in the morning, and after doing the customary steam trials, proceeded up harbour. Here, as at Plymouth, there were all classes of business men waiting in boats to besiege the ship. Most of them met with disappointment, as only a few were allowed on board. This matter was the cause of complaint being made in an evening paper, which said: "No such restriction was ever manifested by any other ship coming home from a foreign station," and after dwelling on the treatment which had been shown to many who had come alongside the 'Emerald,' the paragraph concluded with words to this effect:—"That the 'Emerald's' commission had been far from being a happy one," words which contained a great deal of truth.

In the course of a few days we made fast alongside the jetty, and returned stores. This taking a month, then came paying-off day. This day is generally associated with the idea of a nice sum of money, but it was far from being so in my case as you shall see. My father had asked me at Plymouth if I should have sufficient money to pay my railway fare from Portsmouth to Devonport. Anticipating I should receive enough for this purpose on paying-off day, I replied in the affirmative. But during the month at Portsmouth it gradually dawned upon me that my money due would amount to but a very little. Accordingly, I wrote home, informing my parents of the same, requesting them to send me three pounds.

Having no curios with me save a folding looking-glass which I bought at Cape Breton Island, and a figured handkerchief from the Jamaica exhibition, I went ashore one evening at Portsmouth and bought a few little presents to carry home to my relatives in order that they should possess something to regard as a token of the 'Emerald's' home-coming. I did not inform them they were bought at Portsmouth, and for a time they were prized as presents brought home from foreign parts. I gave my father a walking-stick, but I rather think that he from the first knew it was a native of England. Anyhow, the joke has been discovered since, and has caused much laughter from time to time in the home circle.

Three days before the dispersion the chaplain sent for me. On going aft to his cabin, he said, "Cowling, you may have the harmonium." I thanked him heartily for this present. Not desiring to take it home with me, I sold it to a local musician for seventeen shillings, with which I bought a reefer jacket to wear home. At last the happy day came. The captain, with his officers grouped on the quarterdeck, and the paymaster with his staff, began the work of payment. On the seaman's name being called, he stepped toward the pay-table and gave his number on the ship's book; then receiving the money due to him walked out of the gangway. It was now my turn, and although some of the men received from sixty to eighty, and one a hundred pounds, mine was the modest sum of three shillings and sixpence, despite the fact that I had been receiving eightpence a day in addition to most of them—five pence as the organist, and threepence for being a flute-player.

How do I account for the contrast? In this way. Some men did the washing of others, charging threepence per piece, and a shilling for scrubbing a hammock, and others owned a sewing-machine with which in spare time they made uniform suits. Washing and sewing men were bent upon having a good pay-day. These two classes of men would seldom buy any article from the canteen. I should not say they were niggardly or selfish—their course probably was governed by self-denial, or it may be that their future marriage day was the solution of their conduct. As for myself, I never could eat with relish any service food, consequently most of my wages was spent in canteen food, and the remainder on shore. Therefore on paying-off day I received my few shillings as contentedly as those did who were the recipients of many pounds, for I had utilised my money in one way, and they were about to do so in another. That is all.

Little groups of men gathered on the wharf to wish each other 'good-bye,' as it was not likely they would ever meet again. I often think of Collins, who belonged to the same section of the starboard watch as I. He was a very witty fellow. He was asked one day where his messmate Jack Frost was? In reply he answered, "He is on the fore-yard shooting sparrows for the sick." This was amusing, considering at the time we were in a heavy gale far out at sea. On another occasion a civilian at Halifax asked him, "What do you sailors get to eat at sea?" "We live on wind and chew daylight," was his answer.

When outside the dockyard gates I made off to a restaurant for refreshment, and then caught the train for Devonport, reaching it at 8 p.m. My father and a friend were on the platform to meet me. We took a cab to the quay, from which a waterman rowed us across the harbour. Then a journey of another three miles in a carriage, and I was at home, sweet home. My mother and sisters, who had been on the tiptoe of expectation for the last hour, now bounded out of the room as the front door was opened, and I cannot describe what transpired in the lobby for the next few minutes. The tears of joy being wiped away, we all sat down to supper, my companion—he who tasted the leather strap in our school days—being invited to swell the number, and to complete the welcome home. Supper ended, I was made the recipient of various gifts from my parents and sisters. Amongst other things which my mother gave me was a jersey which she had knitted—every stitch of it. It happened one day that my sister took the work in hand and did a little in the making of it, but when my mother discovered this transgression, she lovingly unravelled the stitches, for she said "she desired to make it all herself." Such is a mother's love! Every winter since I have worn the jersey, and even now am wearing it on this cold December day as I pen these lines.

Six weeks' leave were granted me for my absence of three years, which is the naval scale—that is a fortnight for each year, and I carried in my pocket the liberty ticket. Let me tell you what is written on it: The bearer's name, his height; the complexion of his hair, the colour of his eyes, his visible marks (if any) and the nature thereof, also a statement to the effect that he is free from arrest up to a given date which is specified—if not on board his ship at the authorised hour on that date he is regarded as a leave-breaker and punished accordingly.

The six happy weeks passed away all too quickly, and I returned to the Royal Naval Barracks, or, as is understood in naval circles H.M.S. 'Vivid' From here, I was drafted to the gunnery college, H.M.S. 'Cambridge.' It was on this ship that I first saw our present King, he having come on board to inspect the guns' crews at drill, accompanied by his brother, the Duke of Edinburgh, who at the time was Commander-in-Chief of Devonport. After passing through a course of gunnery, which lasted eighteen months, I was sent back to the 'Vivid.' Being entirely out of touch with a seaman's life, I requested to "see the captain" with a view of changing my rating to that of a ship's writer. He granted my appeal conditionally, which meant, that if I were in harbour when the next examination took place, I should be allowed to sit, but if away on a foreign station, of course it would be impossible. To qualify myself in order to succeed in passing this examination I received private tuition when ashore, for which I paid very dearly. Meantime an order was received by the officials to send a draft of bluejackets to Portsmouth to bring to Devonport H.M.S. 'Rupert.' We went to Portsmouth by train. Whilst engaged in taking ammunition on board, a box of heavy cartridge fell on my right foot, and took off the tip of a toe.

I was barefooted, as it was a wet day. Being carried to the sick berth, my foot was treated and bound, and I was ordered to my hammock. On arrival at Devonport, the sick-berth steward took me to the hospital in the naval barracks, where I lay in bed six weeks. You will perceive that my right foot has been unfortunate. It was the right foot which was jammed in the crevice of the rocks the right foot upon which the Portuguese man-of-war was flung, and now again the right foot which received the fall from the ammunition box.

Time wore away, and I was in a state of expectation as to what date the examination would take place. To my bitter disappointment I was told there was to be none that year. Then I began to fear lest before the next I should be sent away to sea, and thus lose my opportunity to enter. Again I was drafted to the 'Cambridge,' as one of her ship's company, and I still resumed my scholastic tuition ashore. A thrill of dread used to seize me when observing the ship's corporal walking along the deck bearing a slate, as it was an indication that someone was to be called upon to prepare for sea. Is it I? was the thought which filled my mind. However, the year had nearly passed away, and I was deeply anxious over the forthcoming examination. "Surely there will be one this year, as there was none last." Such was my reasoning.

One day at the conclusion of my lesson, my tutor said he had very, unpleasant news to break to me. It was this:—That an examination would be held for civilians only, and that an order had been received stating that no seaman should be allowed to change his rating. Oh, I thought, was ever any disappointment so vexatious as mine? I left his house with a wounded spirit, and, having crossed the harbour, walked toward home, a journey of three miles, weeping bitterly and praying nearly all the way. The very heavens above seemed to me as brass, and my horizon appeared dark as the blackness of night; not a streak of light could I find. For two years I had been studying and working hard to qualify for this examination, and had spent most of my earnings in tuition, and now the issue was that in spite of my utter dislike to a naval life as a sailor, I must still pursue it.

The memory of that awful journey comes to mi mind very forcibly at times, and when I hear or know of any sore disappointment occurring in one's life, I fervently pray to God that such disappointment may be immersed in the waters of kindly help and sympathy. May the Christ of Gethsemane comfort all wounded hearts, all crushed spirits, and make sorrow the seed of a new hope, even as He did in my life.

On reaching home that evening my parents observed that I had been weeping, and on asking the cause, the pent-up grief again burst forth. Gradually I became calm, and conveyed to them the news which I had received from my tutor, the naval schoolmaster. They both agreed there and then, that by God's help I should be released from my unbearable life, and that steps should be taken immediately to that end.

Shortly after I came home from sea I attended the Congregational Church at Cawsand, and here, under the influence of my pastor's preaching, made a decision for Christ. He soon put me in harness in church work, and for more than two years I studied theology under him, he kindly coming to my home every Monday evening to help me in that direction. Occasionally he set me an examination paper, and assisted me educationally in every way. This course of theological study began while I was yet in the navy, and often when boat-keeper at the lower boom of the 'Cambridge' have I spent hours in study. To test my preaching abilities, the Rev. Stephen Stroud, for such was my pastor's name, would take me into his church, where in a pew he would sit as a listening critic, while I preached from the pulpit.

The next day I went to him and intimated my parents' decision in consequence of my vexation, and that they wished to purchase my discharge if possible, whereupon he gave me a letter to take to the commander of the ship. In the course of a few days I stood before him on the quarterdeck, and made known my desire to quit the service, and my detestation of a sailor's life. He did not thwart me in any way, but said the request would have to be brought before the Commander-in-Chief of the port, and the Admiralty.

CHAPTER VI

LEAVING THE NAVY

Nearly three weeks had passed—oh, what an anxious time it was! Was there another sorrow in store for me? God forbid. Well, one day at noon, just as I had reached the ship in the staff gig, to which boat I belonged, the quartermaster rushed to the gangway and shouted— "Cowling, you are wanted on the quarterdeck immediately." I lost no time in getting there. In another minute I stood face to face with the captain, who informed me that the Admiralty had granted my discharge. "Right-about-turn! Quick march," was the order of the master-at-arms, but, believe me, it was more of a run than a march. My messmates were forehead awaiting the result, and as I approached them a dozen voices shouted—"How

goes it?" "All's well," I replied. "You are fortunate," said they. Dinner was now piped, but I wanted none—my desire was to get on terra firma as speedily as possible. I pulled my bag from the rack, turned it upside down on the deck, distributing all the clothes contained therein, to the value of fifteen pounds. Then I wished my messmates 'good-bye' and went ashore in a gig, feeling like a bird released from a cage. Thus ended my naval career, extending to a period of seven years and nine days. I keep in my study an envelope containing my discharge paper and the receipt for same, which cost eighteen pounds. In reading it, as I sometimes do, my thoughts are carried backward to the day of liberation.

My messmates had decided to present me with a beautiful Bible, which I never received, for this reason. Scarcely a week had passed from the day I stepped on shore a free man, when an order was sent from headquarters for a large draft of seamen to be sent to different parts of the world. Nearly all my former mates were numbered amongst the draft. Consequently they were scattered far apart, and no steps could be taken to carry out their intention. The kind feeling which prompted it I appreciate and accept, as showing what they would have done had the opportunity been forthcoming.

Even in the weeding out of the 'Cambridge' this large company of men, I observe God's providence at work in my own life, for doubtless I should have been included in the draft, having been in harbour three years, which is considered a long stay. My discharge was granted me in the nick of time. "He doeth all things well."

I found employment on shore in Plymouth as a contractor's clerk, and devoted more time to religious studies, for I now felt that as the greatest obstacle in my path had been removed, God would surely open my way to enter His service. He did. By the recommendation of my pastor I was admitted into Cliff College, Derbyshire, completing my training in London.

* * * * *

Though for six years I had nearly become a Baptist, that is, a Congregationalist, I now stepped over the line, having studied the New Testament with an unbiassed mind, to get at the real truth of Scriptural baptism. Being convinced that immersion was the Scriptural mode, I forthwith became baptised in Bow Street Baptist Church, London.

Shortly afterwards, I was invited to the pastorate of a Baptist Church in New Whittington, Derbyshire, where I laboured for a brief period, and at which place I first met the young lady who is now my wife. In the autumn of 1899 I accepted the call to my present pastorate, that of the Ashwater district of Baptist Churches. Understanding that under the new regulations existing which precludes Cliff College students from being recognised as fully accredited ministers, I set to work to overcome the difficulty by passing the two Baptist Union examinations.

Such, then, in brief are a few outstanding incidents of my life, and such is the road I have travelled to enter the ministry—a hard road and painful, bedewed with tears, and strewn with withered leaves of disappointment and weary watchings, but I am bound to confess that it was the path marked out for me. No better training was ever afforded any minister, and to-day I can thank God for it all. What is the great truth which my career teaches me? This: that "God is in the heart of things, and all is well." That He is in every human life, directing, controlling, and superintending it. That nothing happens by chance, and that it is He alone who can transform the wilderness of blighted hope into a paradise of joy; can convert the vale of tears into the sunny path that leads upward to His throne—He alone who can chase away the darkness of night and bring in the sunshine of morning. Unto His name be all the glory!

I cannot but hope that should any darkened life read this little sketch, that such an one may be inspired and comforted by so doing, believing that He who gently cleared my way, granting me the fulfilment of my heart's desire, will in like manner repeat His loving-kindness in that one's life.

"Lead, kindly light,

.

Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me."

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