

"TILL THE SEA GIVES UP ITS DEAD."

Some few years ago, when stationed at Kiel, as first-lieutenant of the German training ship *Kondor*, the following curious incidents came under my notice, part being related to me by brother officers, and the sequel witnessed by myself.

On board the *Kondor*, at the time I refer to, there were two lieutenants, Krantz and Aggersberg. The former I afterwards relieved. The *Kondor* had on board some seventy or eighty boys, training for the Imperial navy. She was an old line-of-battle ship, and had been purchased from the British Government for her present purpose. The boys slept in hammocks on the main deck, from which much of the furniture and the guns had been removed to improve the ventilation, and to give more space for drilling and exercising. From the cabins abaft to the sick bay, or hospital, forward, there was nothing to intercept the view beyond a few models and a large iron water-tank standing nearly to the height of the deck, at the bottom of the main ladder leading from the upper deck.

Complaints had been made, from time to time, by the boys of a man, or men appearing at night on this sleeping deck, and looking into their hammocks; but as the instructors, who visited the deck at stated times, and the sentries, who were stationed at the after-end near the cabin door, had invariably poch-pooled the notion, little notice was taken of the matter until one night in December, 1876. That night, the boys had been giving an entertainment to their friends, and lieutenant Aggersberg, who had only joined a few days previously, in going round the decks to see that all lights were out, saw, sitting by the tank, as he supposed, one of the boys in masquerade attire. On his nearer approach, however, the person rose, and uttering a piercing scream, or yell, disappeared up the ladder.

A thorough search was at once instituted for the delinquent, but fruitlessly; and an investigation next morning led to the knowledge that this supposed masquerader corresponded, in dress and appearance, with the intruder, whose visits had been mentioned by the boys themselves. Curiously enough, too, several of the lads, who

had been scared by the stranger, affirmed that it was only on the 24th of the month that he had made his appearance, and this was so well understood that those of them whose hammocks were hung near the tank, or ladder-way, removed if possible to another billet on some pretext for that night. Furthermore, two boys, who had run from the ship nearly a year previous, and who had been subsequently caught and punished for desertion, now stated that it was in consequence of their having been frightened by a man with a horrible gash across his face, who looked over their hammocks and muttered at them in a strange language.

Among the officers the prevalent belief was that the affair was the result of a conspiracy, probably instigated by these two boys, but to what end did not seem clear, unless from mere love of mischief. The captain, however, when the matter was reported to him, decided to put an additional sentry at the top of the main-ladder, and ordered that, for the future, no hammocks were to be slung near the tank.

It was not until the following April that, one morning about two, this sentry gave the alarm, "Man overboard from the fore-castle." A boat was at once lowered and search was made, but without success. On the sentry being questioned, he stated that soon after three bells (1.30 a.m.), attracted by a noise at the foot of the ladder, he had looked down on the main deck, expecting to catch one of the lads out of his hammock; but on stretching over the combing of the hatch, he saw a man moving round the tank, dressed something like a soldier, but with odd-looking gaiters buttoned up to his thighs. The man turned the corner of the tank, and then he saw that he carried a bayonet. As the sentry rose from his kneeling position, to make a closer investigation, he heard a shriek, some one rushed up the ladder, and, running forward to the fore-castle, disappeared with a groan. He then gave the alarm. None of the officers, who were on deck, had noticed a noise or splash, and the sentry being a newly-joined man who, nevertheless, had been told something of what was known on board as the story of the ship's ghost, it was inferred, rather hastily, that a vivid imagination, excited by the loneliness of his position at night, combined with the, to him, unaccustomed movement of a big