

indeed. They have put it down in black and white, and I think it is an admirable answer to my friend Mr. Brassey's question, as to "How best to improve and keep up the number of seamen of the country," because the men here speak their own words on the matter. With respect to the nature of the ships themselves, that also has been a fruitful source of the men leaving the Mercantile Marine. There is hardly an employment on shore for which a sailor is not fitted, for we must all admit that the sailor is a very handy man. One of the best merchant seamen I ever met is a man I have picked up, and is now my under gardener, and he can do almost anything. There is no doubt whatever that these men can get employment on shore, and there is no doubt whatever the reason they leave the Merchant Service is because it is in such a condition that a good man won't stop. To my certain knowledge, in the group of collieries round about Shields, there are no less than 400 English seamen working under ground at this moment, all ready to answer the beck and call of the mother institution, the Mutual Seamen's Protection Society in London. I believe they would come forward in the event of a war directly, but at the present moment they are earning a living in the bowels of the earth in preference to going to sea. I have taken the opportunity of bringing down a little model with me, to show one reason why seamen do not care to go to sea in the ships of the present day. The new-fashioned ships of the present day are altogether unlike what we used to know and love so much when I was a young man. That (taking up the model) is the shape of the ship, three and a-half or four times her beam, in which we went to sea when we were young. Thirty odd years ago, when I went to sea, we had *more* ships than we have at the present moment. I admit we have more tonnage now, but we have a less number of ships. No doubt we have a much larger tonnage now, but we had more ships then. And did we ever hear of collisions coming into court in those days? Why, I have been amongst 300 ships in the Chops of the Channel, and if we collided with another ship we swore a little, but the damaged ship was patched up by those on board, and away we went. We never went into court and made a fuss about it as we do now. The vice of the matter is simply this: the shipowner who has an old-fashioned steamer cuts her in half amidships, adds about half her length, and so produces the ship of the present day (holding up the model), showing 10 times the beam for length. When you come to look at it, it is really no laughing matter. That long ship has of course to seek her displacement; she is 300 feet long by 30. Suppose she is between two Atlantic waves (illustrated by model), she has to seek her displacement, and down she goes between the waves, the result being that the sea fills inboard over her stem and her stern at the same time. There is no doubt the "London" went down through that, and there is no doubt that the 200 odd steamers which have vanished in the last year highly classed—for we lose four ships a day in this country—of these there is no doubt that at least 200, with ten times their beam for length, have been lost simply in seeking their displacement, a big wave coming over the bow and stern at the same moment, or swamping them amidships. That is one reason why men won't go to sea in a merchant ship. It is perfectly clear that this ship is built to go through the waves, and not to go over the waves, and the consequence is the man knows what it is not to have a dry shred upon him, or any of his clothes dry down below. You cannot expect them to stand that if they can get employment on shore which will give them bread and cheese. Last year I read a paper on this subject at the Society of Arts, and I will just read to you the remedy I proposed, because it is no use to enter upon a loud growl and not to suggest something to be done to remedy these fearful evils. The remedy I proposed last year was simply this:—First, a responsible head of the Mercantile Marine. Secondly, a maritime Lord Campbell's Act. I am perfectly certain if the owner of a ship had to see that his ship went to sea perfectly found and fitted, you would not want Mr. Plimsoll's services any longer. The owner would take precious good care not to run the risk of an action brought against him for the loss of the life of any one on board. Thirdly, I propose a Mercantile Marine Medical Service, not merely for the medical examination of seamen, but a hospital for the men to go to when they are sick. Go to the United States. Look at their sea-ports, and you will see magnificent hospital accommodation for the merchant seamen of that country. We are the only nation of the world where there is no hospital accommo-