

of Great Britain than all the jewels in the royal tiara or the great Koh-i-noor itself.

Among the song-writers of this and the preceding age is Thomas, or "Tom," Durfey, with whom King Charles the Second once condescended to walk through St. James's Park, arm-in-arm, his dogs and courtiers following behind. Durfey wrote five or six volumes of songs, none above mediocrity, and some far below it. Gay, the author of "The Beggar's Opera," wrote many new songs to the excellent old tunes of England, but scarcely succeeded in making the new songs more moral or less vulgar than the old, or left one great or noble sentiment on record in this form of composition, except in "Black-eyed Susan," one of the most popular songs in the English language. Shortly after his time appeared David Garrick, who wrote that vigorous sea-song which in his time was enough to transform every sailor who heard it before going into battle into a hero:—

Hearts of oak are our ships,
Hearts of oak are our men.

In the same period of literary history must be placed James Thomson, author of "The Seasons," who wrote the national anthem "Rule Britannia," a composition which had the good fortune to be associated with the music of Dr. Arne, and to be floated upon that full tide into a surer haven of immortality than it could ever have reached by its own unaided merits. Still later appeared Thomas Percy, Bishop of Dromore, the editor of Percy's "Reliques," and who wrote one song, "O Nanny, wilt thou go with me?" which received from the pen of no less a person than Robert Burns the praise of being the finest composition of its kind in the whole compass of literature.

But it was not until the bright par-

ticular star of Charles Dibdin arose, towards the close of the last century, that England recognized her greatest national songster. The ideas of some writers are of the earth, earthy. The ideas of honest Dibdin, musician and poet, were of the salt sea, salty; of the ocean, oceanic; of Great Britain, truly British. England loves her sailors; she admires their free-heartedness, their outspoken honesty, their contempt of difficulty and danger, their rollickings, their roystering good-humour, their superexuberant fun, their sublime courage; and so dearly loves them that the offence against good manners and propriety which she would severely condemn in any other, she condones or excuses in the sailor. The soldier, though highly esteemed in his own way, is not the prime favourite of the people. "Jack," as he is affectionately called, is the national hero; and Nelson ranks above Wellington, not because he did more, or was a braver and better man, but because he was a sailor, and had the failings as well as the virtues of his class. Charles Dibdin represented "Jack" in all his strength and all his weakness. How beautiful, for instance, are "Tom Bowling," "Lovely Nan," "The Sailor's Journal," and a score of others that might be cited! Dibdin said of his songs, with pardonable pride, "that they had been considered an object of national consequence; that they had been the solace of sailors in long voyages, in storms, and in battles; and that they had been quoted in mutinies to the restoration of order and discipline." Charles Dibdin left a son, who followed in his father's footsteps, and wrote some excellent sea-songs; among others "The Tight Little Island," which still holds its place in the popular affection, unimpaired by the caprices of literary fashion:—