

An Old Sailor's Story.

"No, no, I shan't stay here: I'm going home. You can't cut me up and stuff me with sawdust."

These words were addressed by an old sailor to the doctors in an hospital. He had weathered many a gale and faced without fear other perils of a roving career, but that group of scientific gentlemen with sharp and shining knives terrified him. No great wonder either. To be slashed in a fight is one thing and to be slashed when lying helpless on one's back is quite another. It's all meant for one's good to be sure, but none the more welcome for that. This was only the other day, so to speak. Before we can come at the details of it there's a short yarn to be spun.

Dick Wadhams, when a mere lad, ran away from a fishing smack and went to sea in dead earnest.

Some time or other almost every English boy must have felt the impulse to go to sea. It is in the blood of the race. Englishmen would not have planted colonies and done business in all parts of the earth if they were afraid of the water.

Dick's first voyage was from Liverpool to Melbourne in the good ship "Victory." She was a sailing vessel, of course. The days of steamers making a six weeks' run of it were yet in the future. The "Victory" did it in 105 days, which was a quick passage. She carried a full cargo and 480 passengers.

From Melbourne the "Victory" spread her wings for India, touching at Colombo, now an important shipping and commercial point in Ceylon. On that island—the isle of Bishop Heber's "spicy breezes"—our sailor lad saw the coolies picking moonstones and other valuable jewels out of the beds of run-

ning streams; but to his regret he was not allowed to gather any on his own account. Thence to Bombay and finally to Calcutta sailed the "Victory," where Dick was paid off and had time to look with wondering eyes at the strange things India—that land of magic and mystery—showed him at every point of the compass.

Whether it was while he was in India that he—But, hold on! There's no use of guessing at anything. We have facts enough if we overhaul them.

Well, then, after having swallowed all of India that his young British stomach and conscience could stand, Dick signed articles on the Blackwall ship "Canning," bound for Demerara with a load of coolies. From Demerara the ship took a cargo of rum and sugar to the West India Dock, London, where Dick was glad to arrive after so many thousand miles of tossing sea.

But did his experience—much of it very rough—cure our English lad of his love for a maritime life? What a question! No, it didn't. Old Neptune had got his grip on the boy, and drew him back to salt water as a magnet draws an iron filing. But we cannot follow him on all his numerous and long voyages. Off to India again, then to China, then to America, and so on to almost every quarter of the globe. Howling storms, sickening calms, heat, cold, and more incidents than could be crammed into a book, made up his experience as they do in the case of all sailors. Meanwhile the boy grew to be a man, with toughened hands, a bronzed face, and hard muscles; yet with the same kindly honest heart that he carried in his breast when he ran away to see the world a mere lad of seventeen.