

to her without water. In every ship's bottom are built tanks, which, upon every possible occasion, are filled from the distilled-water hydrants in the dockyards. But where a ship does not go to the water, the water comes to her, carried in a specially-constructed vessel armed with mighty pumps, which, lying alongside, transfers the precious fluid to her bigger comrade, and then goes back to shore for more.

But there are stations where even water-tankers cannot come, and the ship must depend upon herself for her drinking and washing water. And what is more, she must get this fluid from the salt, salt sea.

In every ship of any size condensers are fitted capable of distilling as much water as can possibly be required for any purpose. And when the condensers, the distillers, and the aerators have finished with the salt sea fluid, the resultant water is almost as good as that which Nature herself supplies, without any admixture of chemicals, and, though very "hard," distilled water can be used for drinking, cooking, or ablutions of body or attire.

But it usually happens that when a ship gets down to drinking condensed water, she is also feeding upon tinned and preserved provisions, and the two things in combination tend to give the sailormen that dread maritime disease—scurvy. But—the Navy never leaves an emergency open, if possible—"provisions" here again step in; the paymaster opens his special cases, and from small blue-glass bottles serves out to each man a certain quantity of lime-juice, which, besides being a beverage, is at the same time a cure for, and a preventative of, scurvy. Truly the paymaster is the ship's housewife; and Jack's larder the best stocked store-cupboard in the whole world.