

intelligence that he had arranged matters satisfactorily with the Captain of the "Commodore" who was to keep a light in one of the stern windows, unknown to the pilot, giving us the option of following or not as we pleased.

As the tide would not be full until eleven o'clock, our Captain had plenty of time in which to put his ship in proper trim for the occasion. Furling all sail except the fore and main top-sails, spanker and jib we, to use nautical phraseology, "stood off and on," keeping as near to the "Commodore" as we could, without attracting too much attention and anxiously waiting for the vessel to start direct for the dangerous entrance before us. About this time also the moon rose, casting every now and then, as she shone between the heavy broken clouds, a fitful and uncertain light over the scene, and, as the wind was gradually rising with the prospect of a heavy "blow" before morning, our anxiety to be safe within the Heads was increasing every hour.

Shortly after ten o'clock, we heard the orders given in the other ship, and as soon as her stern came within the line of vision, lo! our beacon light was there as promised. Immediately our Captain sprang on the fore-castle to con the vessel's course and he quickly gave his orders, "Haul in the weather braces," "Port your helm" and ready was the answer, "ay, ay, sir, port it is," and off we went in full pursuit. In about an hour we were abreast of Port Nepean and sufficiently near the other ship to be able in the dim obscurity to note her slightest change of course. On she went in charge of a skillful mariner, who apparently had no more uncertainty, than if he were navigating the streets of a well lighted city, and we plunged blindly forward in her wake. It was however while passing through the "Rip" i.e., the narrow entrance between "Point Nepean" and "Shortlands Bluff," that we ran the greatest danger and realized the most intense anxiety, for the moon becoming more than usually obscured, we did not notice as promptly as was desirable a change in the "Commodore's" course, and in two minutes more our ship would have been on the same reef on which a few years later the ill-fated "Sa-

cramento" was lost, had it not been for the care and skill of our gallant Captain. "Port your helm," "hard a-port" he called in quick succession, and sharp was the answer "ay, ay, sir, hard it is," as the vessel slowly sheered off and passed safely the dangerous spot.

In another hour we had passed the "Swan Spit" light, and the morn having attained sufficient altitude to render our sight more certain, we soon discovered the line of buoys, marking out the channel: thus making our future course easier and less dangerous. We now began to breathe freely, and our congratulations to the Captain were such as his skill well merited.

Having a clearly defined channel before us and being a much faster sailor than our useful pioneer, whose invaluable services were no longer required, we became impatient to arrive at the end of our long voyage; so shaking out more sail we very soon left her behind, exchanging as we passed, several verbal courtesies, such as bidding them good bye with a promise to report their safe arrival, and various others not usually heard by ears polite. Passing each other within easy hailing distance the pilot on board of the "Commodore" gave vent to his over-wrought feeling of indignation, at our imprudence in daring to enter the harbour without a pilot of our own, in a nautical "blessing" much more emphatic than elegant, in spite of which, however, we arrived quite safe in Hobson's Bay, about an hour after day-light, and thus our voyage was brought to a close.

What a marvellous change has been wrought within a comparatively short time in Melbourne and all its surroundings. Then, where the thriving port of Sandwich now stands with its fine railway piers and extensive wharfage, only one house stood on what was called in those days Liardits Beach and I well remember how a few of us landed in a shore boat after breakfast on the morning of our arrival in order to make a short-cut overland to the City before finally leaving the ship. Then the whole distance from the beach to the city, about three miles, was an open waste without the slightest evidence, or intimation of the presence