

wash at all, in such craft; and I have known an instance of a skipper ordering a passenger not to cleanse his teeth, unless he could do it in salt water. To save the consumption of water, the practice used to be—and I believe it is still resorted to—to allow the seamen no drinking utensil but a gun-barrel, for dipping through the bung-hole of the cask,—and this precious *cup* is kept in the maintop; every seaman who wishes to drink being obliged to fetch it down, and carry it up again. It may be supposed that the badness of the water and the trouble together, tend to prevent any unnecessary expenditure: and thus more stowage room is left for the owners. And then the three-square hole, called the fore-castle, in which the poor sailors eat and drink—no, not drink—they cannot carry down the gun-barrel through the rat-hole by which they descend; but they sleep, or try to sleep, in spite of the hydrogen gas arising from the bilge water and the “sorted cargo,” which half poisons them. Then, in addition, they are liable to be rope’s-ended, and manually chastised by the captain and his mate, who may not aspire to the magnificence of the cat. And for all this endurance they receive less wages than a “long-shore-man.” Verily, there are many bad situations in this world; but were I a believer in the doctrine of transmigration, I would pray to the deity, “Make me a flying-fish; make me a South American mule; make me a London ‘maid-of-all-work’ to a furniture-broker’s wife; make me a sore-backed horse, at a cattle-hunt in the Andes; make me a red Indian, in the snow of Canada, with no game to be had; make me a ‘nigger’ in the West Indies; make me a London donkey; *aye*, make me even a silver miner of Pampatona; but do not make me a ‘gallant British tar,’ either in ‘his Majesty’s’ or the merchant service. Do not even make me a merchant’s son, apprenticed to follow the sea.” It is strange, but there is actually at this time no means of bringing a lad up to the sea, without risking the utter loss of his morals, without the risk of making him a blackguard, a drunkard, a—all that is bad. In almost every business where the learner has to go through manual labour, and also in many of the professions, physical and intellectual skill is acquired at the expense of morality. This needs looking to, in this age of reform. The first part of the “mystery of his craft” is to help the cook, and answer to the cabin call of “boy” with the tin soup tureen, moulded after the same fashion as those of the days of Van Tromp, the junk of beef, and the dough boys, the biscuit basket, and the captain’s grog, which he gets into the habit of tasting, and getting thrashed for it, or sent to perambulate the quarter-deck, shouldering a handspike like a mace—a favourite remedy for sea-sickness also. Then his sleeping-place is in the “fore-castle;” and his principal solace is the intellectual conversation of the tars, where he learns a half mutinous spirit, easily convertible into the spirit of a tyrant when he becomes a captain himself. A favourite mode of improving threadbare morals in boys formerly used to be to ‘send them to sea.’ If nothing could be made of them on shore, the sea was an infallible cure. Verily, it is a proof of the goodness inherent in human nature, that there are so few pirates in the world. The merchant service is fruitful in motives to prevent seamen from being too scrupulous in bettering their condition by the strong hand. It would be a sore temptation to an impatient spirit. And for all that I have described, and much hard work, and cold, and wet garments in addition, the sailor gets only about soldier’s wages.

Some easy landsman will, perhaps, ask, in the innocence of his heart, as the French Princess did about the starvation of her father’s subjects, “Why is it endured?” Why do seamen suffer themselves to be thus ill used?” The boatswain of Don Miguel, before alluded to, gave a conclusive answer to the Lord Mayor on the subject: “We are obliged by the law of self-preservation to accept of the less painful choice—it is better than starving. Go into the neighbour-

hood of Wapping, and you will find multitudes of willing, industrious, and efficient young seamen, ready to engage in any honest employment, but who can obtain any?” Thus it is; population progresses against the means of subsistence among sailors as well as other classes: and they are willing to go to sea in the sieves Mr. Ballingall has so well described, rather than starve. Were the insurance laws altered, these very sailors would be the most earnest in tempting ship-owners to give them employment in rotten bottoms, and do all in their power to evade the law, though it were conniving at their own drowning. They would rather drown than starve; and the former is a chance, while the latter is a certainty. An Irish labourer was once standing on a scaffold in a position more than ordinarily perilous, when a well-dressed benevolent man called out to him, in an earnest tone, to be more careful: Pat instantly replied, with a quaint smile, “Sure masher, and you are a rich man, anyhow.” The poor fellow could not imagine how a life of seven shillings a-week could be of any importance, whether it was lost or saved. Sailors think much the same of their lives. They are willing to risk losing them by death shot in the battle; and they cannot imagine it at all a more fearful thing to lose them in the salt wave, by the peril of the breeze. “Yet still,” the humane man will exclaim, “it is fitting that something should be done to prevent their lives being needlessly wasted; more especially as the same measures which would conduce to save their lives would amply pay all the expense incurred, by the corresponding saving of property to the nation.” I agree to this; and think that Mr. Ballingall is entitled to the gratitude and respect of the community, for the earnest humanity with which he has forced such an evil on the public notice; but it seems to me, that so far from interfering with the freedom of trade by meddling with insurances, the better plan would be to go to the root of the evil and educate the seamen, train their minds to reflect and reason, and assimilate them more to the character of the seamen in the United States, who gain high wages and save them, in many cases to purchase a farm, or embark in other business on shore. These are men of a reflecting character, who do not take to the sea from liking, but as a means of accumulating a small capital wherewith to begin the world, and then make way for others to follow in the same career. The American vessels on the banks of Newfoundland are commonly manned by the sons of New England farmers, who embark as partners in the fishing business; and after making several voyages, retire with their gains, and become farmers or tavern-keepers. It is by no means an uncommon thing for the same man to be an able seaman and navigator, a good driver of horses, a skillful dealer, and a competent farmer and carpenter. I remember boarding an American brig in the broad Atlantic, bound for South America. The captain had his cabin fitted up as a workshop, and amused himself at his leisure hours fabricating stick chairs, which he turned by means of a pole lathe. He calculated on making a smart handful of dollars out of the chairs, as he was bound to a good market. And this is as it should be. He is a more perfect man of the active world. But our English sailors, as a mass, are not such skillful men as they ought to be, considering they pass a whole life, according to the principle of the division of labour; being sailors, and nothing but sailors. There are a far greater number of them who rank as foremast-men than as able seamen. And those, again, who can “hand, reef, and steer” are far more numerous than those who can navigate. Were they all properly instructed, they would be able to hand, reef, steer, navigate, understand mercantile dealing, and be able mechanics; to build as well as rig a ship. Among such men, inventions for the saving of labour would constantly be introduced; and vessels would be better navigated by a less number of hands, who would constantly get higher wages. The economy of this, in a national point of view, would be very great; and