

Early Days of
the British Navy.

After the days of "Good Queen Bess" and the glorious story of the defeat of the Spanish Armada was a period of gloom upon history's page, our country began to go down as steadily as the sun had previously risen. The Earl of Arundel, who was still High Admiral, was growing old and careless, and James I. came to the throne, and under his management and the general stupidity of the King, things went from bad to worse. Naval punishment at this time were both cruel and severe. For sleeping on his watch a man was lashed to the bowsprit of his vessel and left to die of exposure and starvation. Knocks on the head, starting with hot irons, and severe whippings were all in vogue. Many of the events took place during the reign of James I., the Navy continued even more, until in an Admiral of the Navy, Lord Arundel, affirmed that "his the honour of the and loyalty of his drooping." When the War broke out, after Charles carried his high-handedness too far, discontent was so prevalent in the Navy that hundreds of sailors quitted service, and offered themselves as volunteers. After the tragic death of the Oliver Cromwell, as Protector, a great deal to raise the status of the Navy, and under his rule much of the drunkenness, cruelty and crime was wiped out. Naval life became a more orderly and a haphazard episode in the life of a sailor was then modified in a way that was named "The Thirty-nine Articles of War." These were strictly enforced, and led to the establishment of law and order where chaos had reigned. The expenditure on naval affairs during the period was enormous—£2,600,000 in one year. No man was worn either by officers or sailors. Ship clothes of a uniform were obtainable, but they were unpopular and each man dressed to his taste. Henry VIII. had introduced a naval uniform which was worn during his reign, but it gradually disappeared entirely. The first frigate built in a British shipyard was launched on June 8, 1648, "Constant Warwick," thus introducing a new era in naval architecture. After Cromwell's death, the ship was said to be by his endeavours to none, and had risen entirely to the weak state in which he left it.

Famous
British Novelist.

June 9, 1870, there passed away one of the greatest of English novelists—Charles Dickens—the "Prince of Writers." Although even in these days Dickens appeals to us as a great writer, not in the latter years of his life was a great reader or reciter of his own works. He had much dramatic power, a fine presence, and all the gifts of the natural born actor. His series of readings commenced in 1858 when he went to Ireland, and then North of England, etc., and he was enthusiastically received. The second series commenced in 1860 when he visited the Scottish coast and also Norwich, Lancaster, St. Edmunds, Cheltenham, Carlisle, Hastings, Plymouth, Birmingham, Torquay, Preston, Ipswich, Manchester, Brighton, Colchester, Newcastle and Chester. When he went the halls were packed and to overflowing many hundreds of people were waiting outside the hall to obtain admission. So the series of readings that Dickens gave a third series in 1864, and then the whole country through. He would be at St. James' Palace, the next at Bradford, then Edinburgh, then Glasgow, then London, then back to Glasgow, and then on to Manchester, and then to London, and then all over the country. The success was greater than the previous ones, and in 1867 he went to America for a fourth series of readings. The scenes of enthusiasm which place in all the great cities of America have never been approached since at any similar event. He waited outside the hall all night in the bitter cold in order to obtain admission. All seats were sold in advance and the people went crazy with enthusiasm. He was received by the President, Grant, and then to Canada, and then to America. On his return to England he commenced his last reading series in 1870—and these were, if not more popular than any before, certainly more so. There is no doubt that the tremendous strain upon his health and led up to the death which caused his death at the relatively early age of 58. When news became known there was a sorrow throughout the whole speaking world. It was as if a great movement had befallen the world.

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