

knowledge of the English language"—a pretty severe commentary on the class of seamen we enlist in the Navy. It is very desirable that we should adopt some system by which we could obtain enough bona fide American seamen to leaven the crowd of foreigners now on board a United States vessel of war. The crews of our ships of war are generally made up of men from all parts of the world, largely from the Scandinavian race, who do not care what flag they serve under. There are the descendants of the Huns, Goths, and other barbarians who once overran Europe. They enlist in our Navy softened in character, but still free lances as of old. They serve for money, with no sentiment for flag or nationality, and possibly if it came to an action with a ship of their own or a neighboring nation, they would haul down the American flag and hoist that of their own country.

The same qualities required for the seamen of fifty years ago are required for the seamen of vessels of war to-day. The better the seaman the more easily he will learn the improvements in gunnery and seamanship, and the best seamen in the world are those who come from the New England fisheries. They are the strongest, hardest class of men I know of. They are exposed to all weathers and bear the severest tempests. They are seamen all over, and I will merely add that in 1812 the old *Constitution*, whose career is familiar to every American, was manned almost altogether by Massachusetts fishermen.

As to any extra science being required to man our present and projected ships of war, I would remark that the management of a ship is easier than it used to be, but we require the same good seamanship we had in days gone by. With a steam-captain and steam-which twenty men can get a large vessel under way. An officer on deck, a man at the wheel, and one at the lead, with the above number on deck for general purposes, and the ship can go to sea with the rest of the crew in their hammocks. But when the machinery is disabled and the ship must rely on her ponderous yards and sails, we want every man to understand English and be a seaman from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot. The modern guns, it is true, are larger than of old, the machinery to work them is a little more intricate, but a week's good drilling would teach native-born seamen all that is essential, and a ship of war at the end of that period would be ready for inspection by the board of inspection. When the board of inspection finish their examination of a ship, she must go to sea ready to meet any enemy of equal force, so that what happened previous to 1812, when the *Chesapeake* was disgraced by the British ship *Leopard*, can never again occur as long as the board of inspection exists.

If we can in a week drill a mongrel crew so that every man knows his various stations on shipboard, how much easier would it be for us to do the same thing with a crew of New England fishermen, hardy and active in their persons and intelligent beyond any set of foreign seamen.

The question of protection to the New England fisheries and their seamen does not admit of argument, and in my zeal on the subject I may have gone out of my way to prove to you that which you know already.

I inclose you some statistics which, if you have not already got them, will give you the status of our fisheries throughout the United States.

If there is anything bearing on this subject you would like me to hunt up, please let me know, and I will endeavor to obtain it.

The statistics I inclose show at a glance the immense money value of our fisheries and their importance to the country. If it had not been for the fisheries, New England would never have been settled, for on the first landing on those stormy shores it is likely the emigrants would have been forced to go elsewhere but for the quantities of fish, a most fortunate circumstance for the Union, to which New England has added so many true and loyal States.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

DAVID D. PORTELL, *Admiral*.

HON. GEORGE F. HOAR,
United States Senate.

The statistics which were inclosed with the above letter will be found in the appendix to these remarks (D).

Nearly every important maritime power of ancient or modern times has owed the foundation of its commercial prosperity and its naval strength to its fisheries. When these flourished, its strength increased. When these went to decay, the power of the nation had departed. Professor Huxley tells us, that Sidon signifies "a fishing place." Tyre was settled by a colony of fishermen from Sidon. The power of Carthage was built up by the fisheries. Venice was founded by fugitives from the north, who betook themselves to the avocation of fishermen. Genoa, the birthplace of Columbus, laid the foundation of her strength by usurping the fisheries of the Bosphorus. The first wharf in London