

“ Now, it is always worth while to remember that, with regard to sailors as well as to other classes of men — professions, trades, religious orders and congregations — common repute is not to be held as the faithful exponent or the infallible guide of correct judgment. The men of the sea have their faults, it is true, but they have their many great virtues as well. Look at that graceful ship weighing anchor and about to sail for her far-off haven ! From the moment she clears her dock until she lies at mooring in her port of destination, the men of the sea are at their several posts of duty. During the whole voyage they so manage that, at every single moment of the day or night, some one is on the lookout for dangers ahead, some one is steadily keeping watch to guide the ship directly on her course, many are busy in keeping her decks clean, and her sails well set to catch the favouring breeze. They watch for indications from the sun and the moon and the stars. They make the soundings and test the temperature of the water. They are always under the very strictest discipline, working and eating and resting according to the most exact rule, giving their thoughts and their time, their care and their labour, both individually and in combination, to the one great end and aim — to keep the ship in fit condition, to guard her against danger and to guide her ever onward to the port. And, in carrying out their purpose, it seems true to say that there is no class of men who work with greater earnestness or more unremitting toil than sailors during a voyage. Idleness seems to have no dwelling-place on board ship. Yet theirs is not the dogged sullenness of labour sometimes to be observed in workers in mines, in whom the very sinews and muscles seem to be stimulated by the overmastering greed of gain. Oh, no ; your rollicking, jolly tar seasons his labours with mirth and song, and seems to glory in his “ life on the ocean wave,” for its own sake. Splendid, cheerful, hard-working, pains-taking, honest-hearted fellows are the men of the sea.”