



POOR JACK AND HIS FRIEND.

ing of the welfare of the men, as well as the number of the ships, as was plainly shown the other day. Large numbers of stokers are entering the navy. These men are very frequently married men with families—men who have been out of work—by their misfortune or their fault—and are reduced to the lowest round in the social ladder. When the man joins the reserve ship he is put at once on weekly pay, subject to certain stoppages for uniform, and there is at any rate bread in the cupboard. Then he is drafted to a sea-going ship, and his wages become monthly, and herein lies a great pinch for wife and family. In old days when a man was drafted away, and sent to join, say H.M.S. *Pinafore* at Hong Kong, his pay could not be made out until he had joined his ship, and by the time his wife could draw it at H.M. dockyard some three months had passed away, during which the wife and family had starved. Miss Weston represented the matter some two or three years ago

to the Accountant-General of the Navy, and the Admiralty took steps to remedy it, and by the present regulations a stoker can make out his half-pay to his wife before leaving England, and if he is in debt to the Crown she can draw the 15s. monthly.

The Deputy Accountant-General called at the Sailors' Rest to see Miss Weston, and consult with her as to how this good scheme—'her scheme,' as he was pleased to call it—worked. It seems to work well, but poor human nature cannot stand a month's starvation, and this is the Gordian knot, for until the man has earned his wages it seems extreme to expect Government to pay them. Still the case of married stokers seems to demand special

legislation, and they are a body of men to be largely increased with the increase of the navy. A wife with three little children and a baby in arms, absolutely destitute, the children in rags, and shoeless, pinched and starving, the baby dying from insufficient nourishment, is a sad sight. Many of these families have been supported from the Sailors' Rest with milk, oatmeal, soup, etc., until the welcome half-pay came; but we hope that it may be possible for the authorities to arrange some scheme to tide over the month of utter destitution."

But Miss Weston thinks also of poor Jack's soul. While she endeavors to keep him from all evil habits, she also tries to reason with him on spiritual things. Thus she writes to sailors in what she calls one of her "monthly chats" with them:—

"The Bible is thrown on one side by sceptics because it contains a great deal that they cannot understand; but a revelation from God is sure to contain many weighty, deep, mysterious truths, -