

furled but the barest scrap of canvas, in the grip of a howling gale, far out of the track of most shipping. And this not for one or two days but for all the best years of a man's life. So that occasionally even he makes mistakes, detected at once by the keen sensitiveness of the sailor, but looked upon most indulgently in his case because of the general accuracy of his knowledge and the intense sympathy with his subject manifested in all he does. That savage, brutal energy so apparent in his verse appeals powerfully to the sailor. It is of the sea, it rings true, as truly as does his much maligned rhyme of the engine-room to the practical, inaudible engineer.

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High appreciation of the splendid deeds of a bygone day, such as that of Mr. Henry Newbolt's "Admirals All," massive, spirit-stirring and historically true, can and does appeal to the men in the navy; but, after all, these fine poems deal with the warlike doings of men almost exclusively, and only by the subtlest of touches is the wide salt atmosphere of the ancient yet ever youthful sea conveyed. Over the heads of the hardly bestead merchant seamen these poems glide forcelessly. A rugged chantey like the "Ballad of the Bolivar," with all its merciless over-emphasis, its savagery, its Berserker bitterness, finds their heart's core at once. Reading it or hearing it they feel the brine scorching their sea-split hands and feet, they hear the hiss of the curling wave-summit as it threatens to overwhelm their ungainly craft, the broken groans of the tortured engines beneath their feet grind upon their soul-strings, and they see reflected in each other's faces the fundamental fact of the imminence of death.

Therefore it is that in considering sea-poetry I would unhesitatingly give the pre-eminent position to such men as can by their primitive, rugged words, full of the elemental power that is characteristic of the

ocean, strike more directly at the sailor's heart. What does it matter if occasionally there be to the sensitive ear of the highly-educated critic a jarring note? May it not be that he whose life is being passed in the careful balancing of measured language, who has all the literary artist's delight in the coruscations of faceted words, may not understand the need there is for direct, primitive, forceful expression of so mighty a chorus of voices as those of the immortal sea? The sailor feels always, although in almost every case he lacks utterly the ability to interpret his feelings by the spoken word, that the strong wine of his life is apt to lose its headiness, its savor, when presented in a chased and jewelled goblet whose very glitter makes him fear to take it in hand; feels, too, if I may use a coarse simile, very much like the dog in the manger because he himself cannot deliver his soul of its depth of experimental knowledge, because, while the innermost chords of his being vibrate fiercely as the song of the sea sweeps against them, he has no power to tune them so that those who are without shall be able to hear and understand, therefore, no mere dilettante landmen, no petty amateur looking upon the sea from the comfortable height of the promenade deck, ought to be credited with the ability to interpret these sensations which the sailor has insensibly grown to regard as almost too sacred for expression.

The time is fully ripe for the advent of the sailor poet and the marine engineer poet. Whether they write in terms of rhyme or no I care not. A virgin field awaits them, a noble inheritance maturing for ages. They can, if they come, utterly refute the false and foolish prattle of the armchair philosophers, and prove triumphantly that, so far from the romance and poetry of the sea being dead, it has hardly yet been given any adequate expression whatever.—Literature.