

INTRODUCTION

ISLANDERS differ from people who live a long way from the sea. The British, being an island nation, find in the sea their defence, and on the sea an open road to all parts of the earth. The sea is all one. To the sailors of Britain we owe the fact that we are a nation. By our seamen and by our navy we have been saved from foreign war on our own soil for nearly a thousand years. The Kings of England, statesmen, merchants, men of science, lawyers, reformers, schoolmen and soldiers have done great things in building up Britain, but none of them have done for the nation what the seamen have done. The sea has always been calling to the land, but landsmen are busy with their pleasures and work, and seldom heed the call of the sea.

Men, women and children who live in homes that are inland never see a ship; rarely a sailor. They take for granted their safety, though most of their food comes to them from over the sea. Only command of the sea and the skill and courage of those who go down to the sea in ships stand between Britain and starvation.