

"We have stated that ministers seemed to feel, when framing the Mercantile Marine Act, that they ought to have introduced more simple, prompt and stringent measures; but fearing the opposition of the professed philanthropists of the House, they contented themselves with the clauses which were adopted. These are, however, from the machinery with which they are clogged, of little value, and in many cases actually worse than worthless. It may be true, as has been remarked in an able article on desertion which recently appeared in the "Shipping and Mercantile Gazette,"—that the law now gives the shipowner the power, and that it is his own fault if he does not exercise it. We admit that it is the shipowner's duty to bring the offender to justice; but the difficulty, the labour, inconvenience, and expense in most cases overrule duty. What we advocate may not be in accordance with the views of professed philanthropists; but it is common sense; and they would do well to consider *that the best and surest way to suppress crime is to make the proof simple and void of all superfluous legal technicalities and quibbles, and the punishment severe*, more especially when the crime itself is injurious to the seaman, a heavy loss to the shipowner, seriously detrimental to the best interests of our commercial marine, and, considering our isolated position, dangerous to the State, and ruinous to all attempts at discipline and good government on board ships."

It will be readily observed by those previously unacquainted with the *system* under which the merchant navy has been plundered, that desertion is the bane of the shipping trade, and that all masters, owners, and consignees of vessels, should lend their aid in subduing the evil. He must be a heartless