

a free-and-easy lance, so to speak, whose duties were too numerous to mention, and too indefinite to understand. Most of the men were what is expressed by the phrase "no better than they should be." Some of them, indeed, were even worse than that. The wars of the period had rendered it difficult to obtain good seamen at that particular time, so that merchant skippers had to content themselves with whatever they could get. The crew of the *Water Wagtail* was unusually bad, including, as it did, several burglars and a few pickpockets, besides loafers and idlers; so that, before leaving Bristol, a friend of the skipper whose imagination was lively styled it a crew of forty thieves.

The coast of Norway was the destination of the *Water Wagtail*. She never reached the coast of—but we must not anticipate. What her object was in reference to Norway we cannot tell. Ancient records are silent on the point.

The object of Paul Burns was to gather general information. At that period the world was not rich in general information. To discover, to dare, to do—if need were, to die—was the intention of our big hero. To be similarly circumstanced in a small way was our little hero's ambition.

"Goin' to blow," remarked Skipper Trench, on the evening of the day on which he sailed, as he paced the deck with his hands in his pockets, and, as his son Oliver said, his "weather-eye" open.

It seemed as though the weather, having overheard the prophecy, was eager to fulfil it, for a squall