

Again, the employment of the sailor has been ill-paid, because it has been invested with all the charms which belong to an adventurous life. "The dangers," says Adam Smith, "and hair-breadth escapes of a life of adventures, instead of disheartening young people, seem frequently to recommend a trade to them. A tender mother among the inferior ranks of the people is often afraid to send her son to a school at a seaport town, lest the sight of the ships, and the conversation and adventures of the sailors should entice him to go to sea. The distant prospect of hazards from which we can hope to extricate ourselves by courage and address is not disagreeable to us, and does not raise the wages of labour in any employment."

In pointing out that in foreign-going sailing-ships generally, and especially in those which have been the property of men of limited capital, the wages have not been sufficient to attract good men into the employment, I do not imply that there has been a selfish unwillingness on the part of the shipowners to do justice to the seamen. I am simply pointing out that the conditions offered have been less attractive than those presented by other employments.

Quite recently the wages of seamen have been advanced, doubtless in consequence of the competition for labour, caused by the unprecedented activity of other branches of trade. It cannot now be said that the seaman is insufficiently rewarded. The rapid advance in the rate of pay, which has lately taken place, will in time produce its effect, and probably encourage a large number of the youth of this country to look for employment afloat. Seamen, however, cannot be made in a day. The benefits to be derived from the increased supply of trained men will not be realised until the boys, who are now being attracted to the sea, have had sufficient time to learn their business.

Bad treatment has been assigned as one of the reasons why in some vessels a difficulty has been experienced in regard to manning. Whenever it has been alleged that the scale of provisions in any ships in the merchant service is insufficient, universal indignation has been expressed by shipowners. In order, therefore, to prove that there is a foundation for what has been stated, I quote the following passage from the Report of Dr. Roe, Surgeon to the British Seamen's Hospital at Callao, in answer to a circular issued from the Board of Trade by Mr. Shaw Lefevre:—"By far the greater number of British vessels which visit this port are those which have made long voyages; they have taken cargoes to some port in China, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, the East Indies, or elsewhere, and they have come on here to load with guano, having been on the average upwards of a year in performing the voyage from England to Callao. Amongst the crews of these vessels desertions are very frequent, the principal causes being—

- "1. The physical condition of the seamen.
- "2. The fact that a considerable sum of money is due to each man on his arrival here.
- "3. The system prevailing at this port of paying three months' wages in advance to each man who ships.