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SAILORS.
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As Britain's commerce depends much on so-called "Poor Jack," let us spend, in opening the New Year, *un petit quart d'heure* in considering the brave fellow and his fortunes.

Twice a day he comes to our ports, guiding monsters of wood and iron on the uprushing flood that pours out of the Atlantic. During his absence, he has given up his personal fancies, his will, almost his individuality, to those of his officers; he has eaten food which, although he had a choice in selecting at the time he signed his agreement, is monotonous in flavour and consistency; he has been lodged in a fore-castle, which, although often healthy and comfortable for a sailor, is circumscribed, and, in some cases, a den, little less rude than the wigwam of the red man; his companions have been a miscellaneous crew of several nationalities, mostly good fellows, some few gross at times mixed with several ferocious scoundrels of the type of the pirates and freebooters of other days, all closely cribbed with him, and cabined for the voyage. These latter, mere animals, and of a dangerous kind, often make their finer-bred messmates groan under galling tyrannies; but, appalling indeed is the life poor Jack leads, if one of these sea-brutes should be his officer. Brutality on the part of officers is surely and quickly disappearing; but, in those exceptional cases, when cruelty stands in the shoes of authority; and, uncontrolled in the midst of the watery waste, executes its savage decrees on an inferior, then are consummated the most

barbarous outrages inflicted on man. On shore, the tortured slave can flee on its stable surface; but the bondsman of the deep must endure his wrongs in his floating dungeon, till his agony be terminated in port; or, leap into the fastnesses of the deep, and quench in it, for ever, his burning, outraged heart. It is not, however, of the ill-used sailor that we speak, because his number is, fortunately, small; but of the ordinary sailor, whose treatment is fairly good in most cases, and exceptionally good in many, that we write.

Freed from coercion and the manifold restrictions, which, with the kindest of officers, he must necessarily have endured afloat, Jack leaps ashore, after a long voyage, with that spirit of joyousness all confined things feel when loosed from trammels. The schoolboy from his class, the soldier from his campaign, the sailor from his cruise—all feel alike a buoyancy, a restlessness, a reckless disregard for the conventionalities of sober systematised society. Like unchained dogs, they frisk, shout, and perform fantastic tricks, that amaze, amuse, and disturb those who have never worn the collar themselves.

Of the horde of rascals that are waiting to profit by this exhilaration and make his coveted sojourn on shore as brief as possible, rendering it at length so diabolical that he is forced to take refuge in his forecabin once more—of the touts and crimps—we will say only that their profits and success are, in the United Kingdom, becoming less and less, whilst their detection and punishment here is more certain and speedy every day; although, on the Continent of America, and even within Her Majesty's dominions there, a crimp can, with impunity, in broad daylight, go on board a British ship and shoot people who oppose him. Of the Black-Eyed Susans and Wapping Old Stairs Mollys, whose affections are offered with unselfish impartiality to the whole merchant service, of these remarkable people we will say nothing, except, *en passant*, that, in despite of *The Shield*, and its advocacy of free trade in the most loathsome disease known, we think an extension of certain Acts would be of advantage to them. Jack's uprise in intelligence and fortune comes not from his connection with one or other of these. It is not to the roguery, ignorance, and filth that tend to keep him back; but to the causes that are tending to his participation in the benefits of the age that we wish to invite attention.

These, in brief, are three—The development of steam; the precision of nautical science; the social ideas of the epoch.

The plash of the paddle-wheel smiting the restless waves of the Atlantic, was the knell of old Ocean's supremacy. Hitherto he had played with the bold fellows who slid over his broad back. He had flung them, with baffling wantonness, to all points of the compass, in his merry moods; and when the old god saw that the daring fellows would not be discouraged,

but pushed on presumptuously again and again, he would fascinate them with an enchanted calm, and hold them spell-bound on his sapphire breast, while radiant dolphins mocked them as they frolicked gaily by; or he would raise his brow into terrible furrows, and fling them on to the iron frontiers of his realm, or gulph them into his abyss-throat, never to vex him more. But the steamer changed all that. It beat a tattoo of defiance over the shoulders of the old tyrant, and the long foamy wake it left in its path seemed like an undulating flag of triumph Jack was flinging out behind him. It thundered along, as the old god slumbered in glassy silence, and when he woke raging, it split and shattered the tumbling mountains he uppled to arrest its amazing flight; it laughingly fled from the winds that roared and plunged about it, answering their dread voices by a hoarse bellow from its funnel, and by flinging in their faces its black and stifling breath—on, on it sped to its appointed haven. The re-action of this wonderful machine upon its human guide and controller was also enormous. The overmastering forces of nature that imperilled him at every hour, and the mocking uncertainty of the phenomena amidst which he laboured, had conspired to keep alive in his breast those ancient superstitions that were dead or expiring on land. Though nominally a Christian, he was practically a Pagan, for he believed that the watery world was the home of impersonated forces, that must be propitiated by acting in consonance with their desires. Thus, Friday was for some mysterious reason, sacred to them. Direct maledictions followed the impious crew who departed into their realm on that day; the titular “cherub, who sits up aloft,” fled in horror from the infamous ship, that henceforth was doomed to disease, disaster, and death. But blessed was the craft that sailed on Sunday, for the Fates loved to hear the hearty “Yo heave ho,” and the rattle and clatter of starting on that day; so, amid the quietude of the port, Jack danced gleefully round the capstan, yet with a groggy tear in his eye, as he saw the blowsy outline of his morganatic spouse melt into the crowd of other women waving rum-perfumed blue handkerchiefs. And, when the land was lost, and the routine of ship-life in full swing, and the pure breath of the deep had dissipated the alcoholic fog that had muddled his wits, Jack, purged of all the heresies of the shore, began to think of his duty to Davy Jones—his own particular fetish. For, though called by a so familiar, nay, even a jocular name, Jack believed in him, and feared him, with a reverence few abstractions obtain. The pious Catholic must have some form or similitude of his patron saint to limit and sustain his mind; and Jumbo, in the wilds of negroland, cuts out of a stick his beau-ideal of a good demon; but the sailor has never attempted to put Davy Jones into any form, sculptured or pictorial. The cause for this is to be sought, doubtless, in the vague and shifting appearances that ocean eternally presents.

The vast expanse of sea and sky is too immense for representation, and the protean billows, hurrying by, leave no *individual* impression behind. And Davy's empire was the *bottom* of the sea. There he gathered the remains of dead seamen, and when they had undergone "a sea change," he despatched them on portentous messages to surviving messmates. As mystic lights, they would flit about the ship, or, as weird voices, mutter their terrible communications in the ears of doomed men; occasionally they delivered a general epistle to the whole crew, through the medium of a fore-castle seer, who alone could interpret "airy nothings." Ah! never will spiritual *clairvoyants* on shore be so successful as the credulous, child-hearted old salts, who translated the mystic utterances of wild Nature to the passionate, wayward, reverential men before the mast. The steamer destroyed all this *religio-diablerie*. It had no respect for Friday, and snorted defiance at the Fates as it had done at the Ocean. The messengers of Davy Jones found exceeding difficulty in getting on board the marvellous vessel. And, if they did, they found the conditions required for their-sybilline confidences were altogether wanting. Gone was the witching quietude of the night watch; no longer the moonlight made marvels in the swollen canvas high up in the air, for the funnel poured out its twisted clouds amid the pale sheets in a very commonplace manner. On dark gusty nights the furnace fires shot forth a fiery glamour, that, like a new cult, made the old one tremble. *Dead* lights went out in that ruddy glow, the wail of the storm through the cordage was overpowered by the furious floats smiting the flying waters, as a minor plaint is drowned in the crash of a military march. Ah! gone was that stupendous silence, that overpowering majesty of midnight heaven and sea (amid which the mariner felt awed, tamed, frailer than a babe in a giant's arms), for he felt the tremendous pulse of the Titan quivering beneath his feet, and the thunder of his iron tread on the deep. A confidence grew that was fatal to Davy's reign; he soon shared the doom of contemned rulers, he was scorned, defied, chaffed, pelted with Yankee wit, till, to-day, none is lubber enough to do him reverence. No longer does Jack propitiate him by wearing a child's caul, he prefers a stout life-belt to all the amulets and charms in the world; instead of reading books of fate, he spends his watch below in studying those sciences that are needed for examination before a Board of Navigators, for he no longer believes in being always *poor* Jack; the quarter deck is open to all who have brains and pluck to fight their way thither.

The precision of nautical science has greatly affected the sailor; for the methods of manipulation that suited the slumbering roll of the old "heart of oak" are unfit for the steamer. The new power is a docile slave to the

capable, but a consuming monster to the ignorant and obtuse. The sailor had to be drilled to extreme vigilance day and night to prevent catastrophe. Rigid exactitude took the place of haphazard and guess. The changeful untraceable face of the ocean was cut into "runs" and "lanes," along which rushed the vessel almost as accurately as its sister, the locomotive, over the rails on land. Little by little new tasks were imposed on the willing machine, and soon propulsion was reckoned as only one of its duties. It filled and emptied the hold, it hoisted the anchor and furled the sails. Jack's muscles had less and less to do, but his brains more. Electricity came on board, too, and offered its services, and instead of the old shouting of hoarse mandates, mixed with oaths, through a speaking trumpet, now silent signals convey to him the wishes of his officers. The winds and storms that had seemed of inscrutable generation, and mere chaotic swirls of air more or less mad, were shorn of all their mystery; their birth, career, and death clearly laid before him, and guided by his barometer, he could foretell their approach as easily as he knew the run of the trades. The currents and drifts of the ocean were studied, and the puzzling stream of warm water that he met with amid the chill waters of the Atlantic was explained as the rebound of the great rush he had noticed in the Mexican Gulf. These definite statements of cause and effect, the amazing economy displayed in shipbuilding, the endless inventions that beset him on every side forced his mind to pursue scientific methods, instead of use and wont and venerable rule of thumb. A revolution, less in degree, was going on the while in sailing ships, so that when Jack took "a spell" on one of them, he found that the fast clippers, that ran with tea from China, or with passengers to Australia and New Zealand, were almost a match in point of speed with the steamer. They were navigated with a daring velocity that would have seemed mad recklessness to the tars of other days. No longer did they creep under bare poles away from the savage pursuit of the winds. Round the wild gallop of the cyclone they went, making its frenzy subservient to the commerce it had before harassed and crippled. The terrific gales that raged round the Cape of Good Hope were no longer considered the sailor's special grief; into their midst the clipper was thrust, and went before them bounding like a wolf into the quiet of the Southern Ocean. "Softly sleeping on the billows" was now forbidden by owners and merchants. Produce was worth nothing in a ship's hold; its value existed only in the consumer's hand. The time occupied in transmitting it over the sea was a loss; the more it was abridged, the more gained. Every appliance of science and art was brought in to aid this, and Jack's wits had to be as agile under canvas as under steam.

The social ideas of the epoch have affected the seaman more, perhaps, than any man, save the miner. In little more than an age, he has changed more than he had in centuries before. In no profession is there so sharp a contrast as that which exists between the man who toils the sea to-day and the man who did it a generation ago. The cause is not remote. When the fierce uproar that old Napoleon had made for twenty years was silenced in 1815, a multitude of men were let free from the fleets to carry on the long impeded commerce of Britain. Sea dogs were they, illiterate, and embruted by the trade of war. Discipline and drink were the two conditions under which they had lived—the one on ship; the other on shore. They speedily impressed their rude conservative ideas on the whole service. The sailor was a thing apart from landsmen, a feeble, lubberly race, that were unable to look the sea in the face without shudder and sickness. To distinguish himself from these emasculates, he wore a garb that is said to have been once the fashion of Dutch fishwomen (save in the matter of pantaloons), a tarry round hat, an uncouth pea jacket, and a pair of duck trousers that fluttered like half-reefed topsails round his ancles. Occasionally he sported a glowing yellow silk handkerchief round his coppery throat, which was covered with a manly beard; itself a matter enough to contrast him with the “shavers” on shore. He swore his strange oaths in a Plymouth accent; he spoke out his notions with a blunt contempt for all others. He grumbled now and then at the skipper’s whims, but he respected authority. He was quick to anger, and deemed fighting the manliest way to settle an argument; he detested fluency of speech, save in the matter of yarn-spinning, and his terse dramatic style of narration was the opposite of that which is found in books. Glib talkers he called sea lawyers, despicable fellows, who would rather reason than stand up and have it out like a man. The very fibre of the men was different from most of their contemporaries on land, for the class was recruited from those restless, insubordinate, indocile lads, the recurring savages that reappear in the midst of civilised communities. And the long absences they made from home, the monastic habits of ship life, the lower races they met with in trading, the comfortless *ménage* of the fore-castle with its coarse food and young rum for diet, the iron discipline that forbade the officers to be on kindly familiar terms with the crew, the want of even elementary instruction, all these circumstances and dispositions intensified the distinction between the seamen of the present and those of a few years ago. The steamship was hated by them with all the comprehensiveness of ignorant wrongheadedness. The time was come for old salts to slip their cables, when navigation was to be performed with hot water! They battled with the new idea, and, as they fell, worsted, before its iron might, men of a higher breed stepped into their places. Then

began that vast drift of humanity to the west and south, which made the domination of the landsman perpetual. Women and children, whom he saw only at long intervals before, now went with him in hundreds every voyage; their presence melted down the rugged callosities about his heart that had grown hard by friction with men; and that gentleness and refinement he had in him was fully exercised. Then these emigrants were fleeing from "impossible Europe," inspired with ideas of independence, and expressing hatred of tyrannies in a manner that made Jack stare. His lot had always been one of dog-like submission to authority; for, even when he had kicked up a shindy ashore, and found himself in the dock for thrashing the policeman who came between him and his grog, he always took his penalty with reverence and respect for the magistrate that inflicted it. A halo of divinity still hedged King or Queen in his simple mind, and when he heard those sacred names treated with flippant contempt or denounced in vehement tirades, he had no feeling but one of violent indignation. Gradually, however, he became a tolerant and even a sympathising listener, when his personal loyalty was not concerned. The contrast, too, of the condition of the class out of which he sprang—viz., the labouring man and the artisan—on either side of the Atlantic, set him thinking. In Britain the workman was then a poor, dull fellow, untidily, inartistically attired, ill-educated, with no career before him; but to his simple mind, the American presented a smart and gentlemanly appearance, and, his working dress cast off in the evening, he took his place among his fellow-citizens and enjoyed himself reasonably, talking neatly, if not elegantly, and expressing by word and deportment a man who found the world a pleasant and hopeful abode. The influence of the American seaman upon him increased these impressions. The old differences that had existed between the two, from the time of the American war, were expiring; the triumph of the *Shannon* over the *Chesapeake* was no longer flung in the Yankee's face as if it were his particular ignominy, so the republican ideas of the one were grafted on the loyalty of the other. Books and newspapers of all sorts told their tale in the fore-castle, and kept up continued circulation of advancing notions of all sorts. The spectacle of labour in revolt on both continents finally communicated its contagion to him, and the influence of economic logic completed his subjection to civilisation. He fell under its sway, another "noble savage" constrained by the sweep of that awful force that is steadily outstamping all "peculiar people" afloat or ashore; that tremendous power that says to men and sailors, "assimilate or perish." Jack is now attired like other men, often wears a "long-faced" hat, and is only remarkable for his bronzed visage, and rolling gait. He now disdains the rude provisions offered of old for his

food. Salt horse and worm-eaten biscuits are no longer "good enough for sailors." He is looking forward towards better treatment and better accommodation. This is nothing but the natural result following on the good accommodation, good wages, and good treatment always found on good steamers. His old improvidence has given place to financial thoughtfulness. He has not, and is not likely to enter into forms of co-operation for conducting maritime affairs, similar to those that are at work on shore; but that the sons of the waves should enjoy in their fullness those blessings of progress which have already so materially increased the happiness and comfort of their brethren ashore will be gainsaid by few.

OUR GREAT PORTS.—LONDON.

Of all cities, ancient or modern, the metropolis of England is the most remarkable for its wealth and extent. To reproduce in a short notice its progress as a trading community is the present object.

It is said to have been founded by the Romans, A.D. 49. It was then named Augusta, on what account is disputed, and how long that name endured is not exactly known. During the Heptarchy it was called by various titles, such as *Caer-Lundain*, *Lundain-Byrig*, &c. In the famous Welsh Triads it is called *Llundain*; but for centuries past it has been universally known by its present appellation.

Even under its Roman conquerors it became a place of great extent and power. Tacitus states that, in the time of Nero, it was famous for its commerce. He terms it the *nobile emporium*. It was, however, destroyed by fire by the Britons under Boadicea in the year 61. Having no fortifications it suffered severely in those times from the effects of war. It was afterwards restored by the Romans, and Herodian records that, in the time of Severus, it became "a great and wealthy city." For more than a century it remained in a defenceless state, when a wall of stone and brick was raised around it. Then its extent measured from Ludgate Hill to a little beyond the Tower. Its breadth was scarcely equal to half its length and narrowed at each end.

During the long dark period from the first to the twelfth century the breath of trade appears to have been stifled, not only in England but on the Continent. Commerce, indeed, seems to have had a revival in Italy during the eleventh century, and, in the twelfth, the famous Hanseatic league was formed. It was not until the dawn of the Reformation that London appears to have enjoyed any great progress in that respect. We are indeed told by FitzStephen that, under Henry II., "no city in the world exported its merchandise to such a distance." Perhaps the first

great impetus given to the trade of the capital was by Edward III., who has been accounted by some as our first "Free Trader." He it was who invited the Flemings over to develop the woollen manufacture. There is little doubt that the commerce of England owes much to that enlightened monarch. Previous to his time it had flourished to some extent, for Customs were first levied by his grandfather, Edward I.—namely, by the 3rd Edward I., record of which is lost; but the right saved and established by 25 Edward I., cap. 27. However, it is equally true that Edward III. entertained the most enlightened views regarding "Free Trade;" a letter of his upon the subject being yet extant, and his policy was only checked by the men who now would be first to back him—viz., the merchants of this kingdom.

In the year 1355, the first statistical gleam of light is thrown upon the value of our imports and exports—the former being valued at £38,978, and the latter at £294,184. The goods sent out of the kingdom consisted of wool, coarse cloths, and leather; whereas those imported were fine cloths, linen, mercery, wine, wax, and groceries. About this time a stimulus was given to the trade of London by the immigration of a number of Lombards. The city of Lucca was then governed by a tyrant named Castrucci Castracani, who, in 1310, banished 900 families from that flourishing place, so famed for its manufactures of silks, velvets, and brocades. Of this exodus, thirty-one families are said to have settled in Venice, and the rest were scattered over Europe, some finding their way to our metropolis, where they found a welcome and secure asylum, and where they conferred, by their great industry and business capability, as great a benefit as they received. During the two following centuries, nearly all the trade of Europe was in their hands, and still, long after their decline, the name of Lombard Street is famous and continues to perpetuate their memories. At an early period, London adopted the plan of incorporation for the benefit and extension of particular trades. So early as 1296, the company of "Merchant Adventurers" was formed first by the Duke of Brabant. It extended to England in Edward III.'s reign, and was incorporated by Charter in 1564. Another famous company was that of the "Merchant Tailors," of which no less than seven of our kings have been members. Others, such as the "Drapers," "Fishmongers," &c., have a history of their own intimately intertwined with that of our great city.

One of the most interesting measures of those early times were the "Navigation Laws," which were first decreed by Richard I. of England, in 1194, at Oleron, in France, hence commonly called the "Laws of Oleron." These early statutes have been much admired. Others have followed, from time to time, variously affecting the well-being of our maritime relations. In 1381, 1541, 1646, 1786, 1833, the more

extensive Acts have been passed, till their final repeal in 1849, and the introduction of an entirely new policy.

In the meantime, various schemes have been put forth by some of our kings to foster the Mercantile Marine. In 1449, Henry VI. granted several privileges to one John Taverner, of Hull, who had built the largest ship then seen in England, which the King named the *Grace Dieu Carrack*. A licence was granted to this person, and its tenour was as follows:—That he be allowed to export “wool, tin, skins, leather, and other merchandise, from the ports of London, Southampton, Hull, and Sandwich, belonging either to English or foreign merchants; and freely to carry the said merchandise through the Straits of Morocco, into Italy, he paying alien’s duty on the same, and *upon firm expectation that he would, in return, bring such merchandise of other nations as were most wanted in England, as bow-staves, wax, &c.*, whereby a great increase of the duties and customs to the Crown would ensue, and much gain to the subject.” At that time, according to Hakluyt, the value of shipping was about 30s. per ton, at which price merchants of the present day would, doubtless, like to purchase. In the reign of Henry VI., a London company sent a number of ships, with general cargoes, valued at £24,000—a large sum then—to trade with Morocco, but the expedition was destroyed by the Genoese, who were jealous of the interference with their trade. At the commencement of the reign of the next Henry, *i.e.*, 1485, London merchants first began to trade regularly with Italy, and a Consul was thereupon appointed for the protection of their interests at Florence. But, according to the testimony of Sir William Cecil, a London merchant, there were not above four merchant vessels exceeding the burden of 120 tons, belonging to the Thames, up to the time of Henry VIII., and that “there was not a city in Europe, having the occupying that London had, that was so slenderly provided with ships.” In this reign an Act was passed to encourage the art of shipbuilding, by means of a Government bounty, paid to the owners, of 12s. per month, when such vessels were used for the purposes of war.

It was, however, in the time of “good Queen Bess,” that commerce began really to bud into life. In 1559, when she began to reign, an Act was passed to regulate the collection of the Customs’ duties, by compelling the landing of goods at certain places; and about the same time a new Custom House was built west of the Tower.

The next great lever to lift up the trade of London was the settlement, at Spitalfields, in the sixteenth century, of a number of French silk manufacturers. After that, the fine cloth manufacture was introduced from Flanders. In 1559, the East India Company was formed in London, and opened up that immense commerce with the east, which