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LIFE ON BOARD A MAN-OF-WAR.



OFF THE HIGHLANDS.

SAIL on, sail on, thou stately ship!
In roar or ripple, rest not thou!
The grand horizons grow and dip
Abaft thy wake, before thy prow!

I linger o'er an idle strain,
A song that's alien and forlorn:
In native pomp thou soar'st amain,
Like albatrosses ocean-born!

Oh, sail, sail on! for, day by day,
Fresh hope invites with each remove:
We belt the world: thy forward way
Alone may bring me to my love!

Be not surprised that I begin my sketches with the opening stanzas of a love poem, which is intended to run through them like the refrain of a ballad. For what is a sail-or without a sweetheart? A ship without a compass—a compass without a needle—or, more aptly still, that sensitive needle without a magnetic pole mysteriously and strongly to attract it. O Douglas, Douglas, tender and true! The bravest are the tenderest, the loving are the daring! The

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VOL. XLVI.—No. 274.—31

staid lieutenant has his fair Crinolina, lily-like, stately inclining out of voluminous folds. Sweet William, who dwells high upon the yard, rejoices in his buxom, black-eyed Susan, less superabundantly draped and adorned, and more prodigal of her blushes to moon or sun. We may depend upon the metallic wand or the enchanted heart whether the cynosure gladdens our eyes, or is veiled in storm and darkness—yea, when the round-backed earth shoulders it out of view altogether. Deviations owing to local attractions there may be, it must be confessed, but they are trifles due to quick sensibility, and not beyond reason or measure. Say not that a sailor's sweetheart is in every port—he is little better than one of the wicked who invented so vile a slander—but believe profoundly, O gentle Crinolina! and O lovely Susan! that there is "truth in a jacket of blue," even as there is beneath the card—or "rose," as the French more prettily term it—of the mariner's compass. May the comparison prove ever just! Under the rose and yet above-board, vibrating to a subtle secret current, and keeping the secret confided to it, yet with its truth patent on the face of it, apparently free as air, yet obedient to a law mighty in its gentleness, what fitter type of constancy, of fidelity, can smiling love desire or frowning duty demand?

Sail on, O stately frigate! Thy compasses are true, and as true are the hearts that will shape the course, and, with strong hands at the wheel, will steer by them. Those have been tested by "swinging the ship" at the "compass station"—adjusting, or noting corrections for the local deviations alluded to in my simile. These have been tried in the battle and the breeze, and have come forth, like pure gold from the refiners, out of the seven-times-heated furnace of righteous yet fratricidal war. Thou hast not loitered in port, O my ship! But a few days ago thou wert put into commission, a ceremony which transformed thee from a lonely hulk lying alongside the navy-yard into a thing of life—of many lives, indeed, upon which are hanging many times many hearts and hopes and fears and prayers—into a thing of bravery and hardihood; to go forth over remote seas, to strange lands, under unfamiliar skies; to suffer and be strong, conquering and to conquer; to uphold a nation's honor, alike in peace and war!

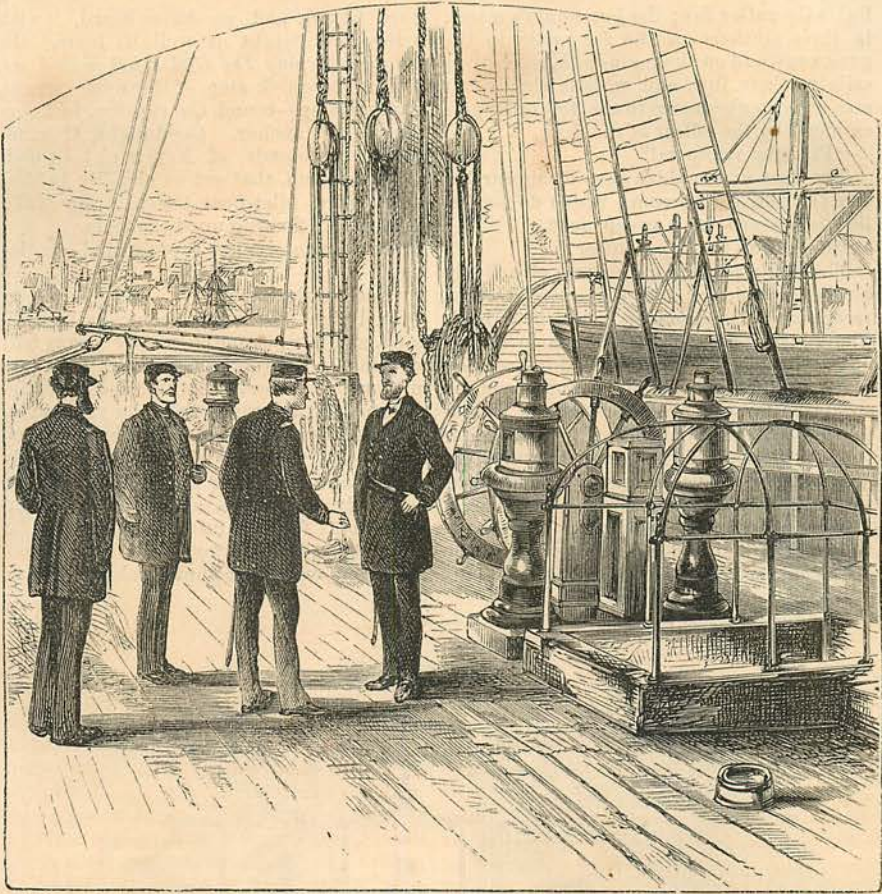
Dropping the apostrophe, let me in sober language give some idea of a man-of-war's mission. Hers is not a yachting trip. She does not idly flaunt her flag. That saucy little symbol was ample enough to cover the mere intention of American citizenship when, in the port of Smyrna, one of the mildest-mannered of navy captains cleared his ship for action, in the face of largely superior

force, and sheltered the poor Hungarian. It has been a very St. Peter's angel to more than one of our countrymen in foreign dungeons. It supports consular authority over tyrannical ship-masters and recalcitrant crews. It has saved the Feejeean "miccanniny" from being served up, hot or cold. It has let the blessed air of freedom into many a pent hold that reeked with cargo of pitiable humanity—the "black ivory" of African trade in iron shackles. In former time it cleared our Southern lagoons and the Antilles of swarming buccaneers; to-day it pursues to the death the Chinaman with his stink-pots and nameless tortures. It restrains alike the barbarian and the civilized oppressor by emblazoning the grand *morale* of a great power backed by shotted guns. For not yet, even in these days of international arbitration, has the millennium come, not yet are the battle-flags furling in the federation of the world.

A man-of-war has other duties, subservient to commerce. These consist of explorations and surveys. They indicate ocean highways, they secure the haven, they trace the imperiled coast. Braving the lurking shoal, and the bold, loud reef, they fix, so to speak, the form of Charybdis, and save from the jaws of Scylla. The vessel anchors in an unknown bay or sound; her boats, specially equipped, are sent in all directions. By patient process—as it appears on our working sheet, the chart growing into shape—from peak to peak, from island to island, we cover it with an aerial net-work of triangles and curves; we sound it until the plummet has stamped the depth, as it were, upon nearly every square yard of the ocean floor. It is a noble field of usefulness, and falling thereupon, the world has wept for Cook and La Perouse.

I mentioned, a little while ago, going into commission. There are ceremonies attended with more pomp and circumstance. But nothing is more characteristic of "life on board a man-of-war" than this its beginning; and wonderful is sometimes the spectacle, when there is a sufficiency of old man-of-war's men in the "fresh" crew to leaven the mass. Have you ever seen a flock of sheep divided and guided by the trained dogs? So are the greenhorns by these veteran bulldogs of the sea. But briefly to describe:

The executive officer of the yard, in presence of the commander and officers and the marine guard of the sea-going ship, gives the signal; the "coach-whip" at the main flutters out, a red and white streamer, into the blue air; and the beloved flag of the Union, gay with brand-new bunting, rises gorgeously to the peak. The marine guard presents arms, and the drums roll. Sometimes the band salutes the "star-spangled banner" with its own anthem. Then, with mutual touching of caps, command and au-



GOING INTO COMMISSION.

thority are transferred, with the simple remark,

"You are in commission."

And the captain of the new-fledged man-of-war, prepared, no doubt, to brave the battle, fire, the wreck, moves the monarch of—. But her deck is not yet peopled. Wait a moment. The crew from the receiving-ship come tumbling—there is no better expression—bag and hammock, over the side, billeted, every man of them, thanks to the preparation of the executive officer, with watch, quarter, and mess numbers. Now appears the most interesting feature. Hitherto no unoccupied dwelling of the land, empty save in the litter of the mechanics, was ever half so comfortless in prospect, so desolate, so melancholy. That crowd of blue-jackets seems but to have introduced an element of confusion into the dreariness. But no! While scarcely an order—or, at least, no series of orders—emanates from the quarter-deck, while there are no instructions placarded or chalk lines drawn, every individual and thing has dropped into his or

its place, in the most natural way in the world. Not five minutes have elapsed, and not only does the lieutenant of the day's duty walk the starboard side of the quarter-deck, with his assistant midshipmen on the other side, but the petty officers are in full swing of their several functions in separate parts of the ship, and the crew—forecastle men, fore, main, and mizzen topmen, afterguards, waistlers, and berth deck cooks—distributed on the three decks, are to a man where they belong. The hammocks are neatly stowed in the nettings, and the clothes-bags in racks on the berth deck; stow holes are found for even the little "ditty boxes" wherein Jack keeps his needle and thread, scraps of personal property which he calls "manavelings," his writing materials, if he be so clerkly, and possibly his mother's Bible. The quartermaster of the watch is on the poop, spy-glass in hand; the quarter-gunners busy themselves about the battery; the master at arms "bosses" the berth deck cooks, arranging burnished kettles, pots, pans, and spoons in the mess chests; the ship's cook

lights the galley fire; the boatswain's mates, in their stations on the fore-castle, in the gangways, and on the main-deck, raise silver calls to their lips, and whistle shrilly but musically in obedience to the first order given aloud by the officer of the deck,

"Pipe the sweepers!"

The dust and rubbish soon disappear before the new corn brooms, which do not belie the proverb—and sweep clean.

"Call away the third cutter!"

The bugle plays a bar or two of a lively air between-decks, and the selected crew, recognizing it, promptly man their boat. The routine of a man-of-war is in as full operation as if the minutes the ship has been in commission were as many months, and the spectator for the first time might be impressed with as keen a surprise and admiration as if he beheld the parts of a watch adjust themselves before his eyes, and spontaneously initiate their chronometric march.

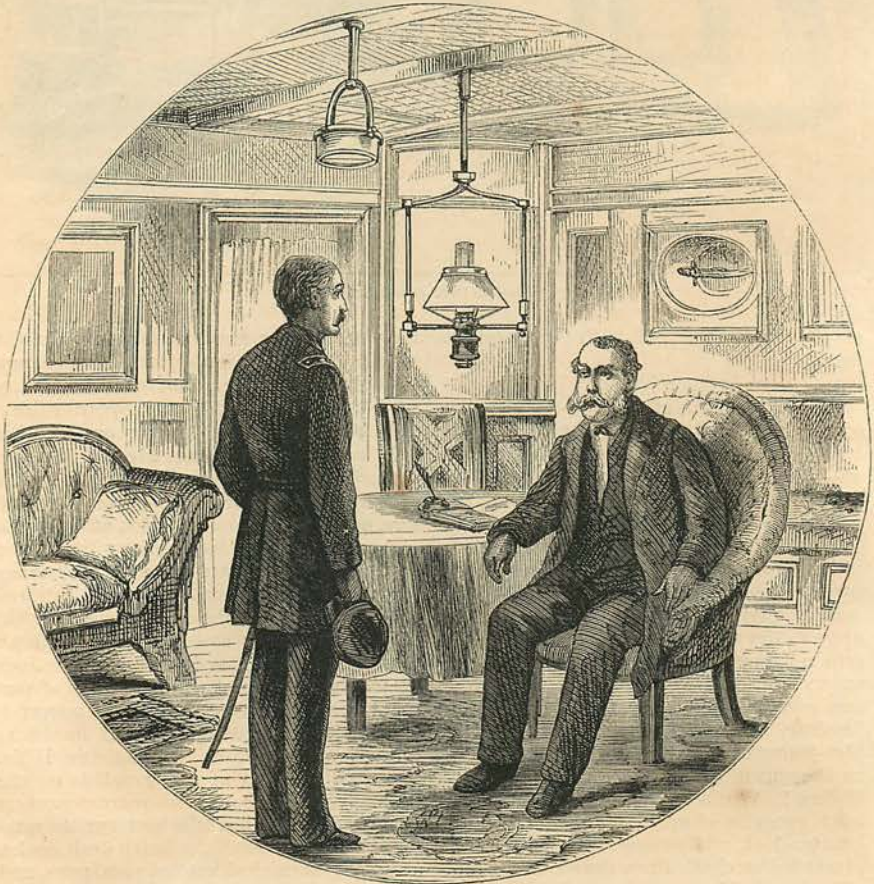
Now we are outside Sandy Hook, and hove to with the maintop-sail to the mast, in the act of discharging the pilot. We are out-

ward bound, and we have heard, "with smiles that might as well be tears," the fife merrily play *The Girl I left behind me*, timing the quick step of the men—tramp, tramp, tramp—round the capstan, in heaving up the anchor. Good-night, O glimmering highlands of Neversink! Good-night, fair sun, that set so cloudily behind them! The pilot-boat tosses in our wake lightly, as if floating upon the foam.

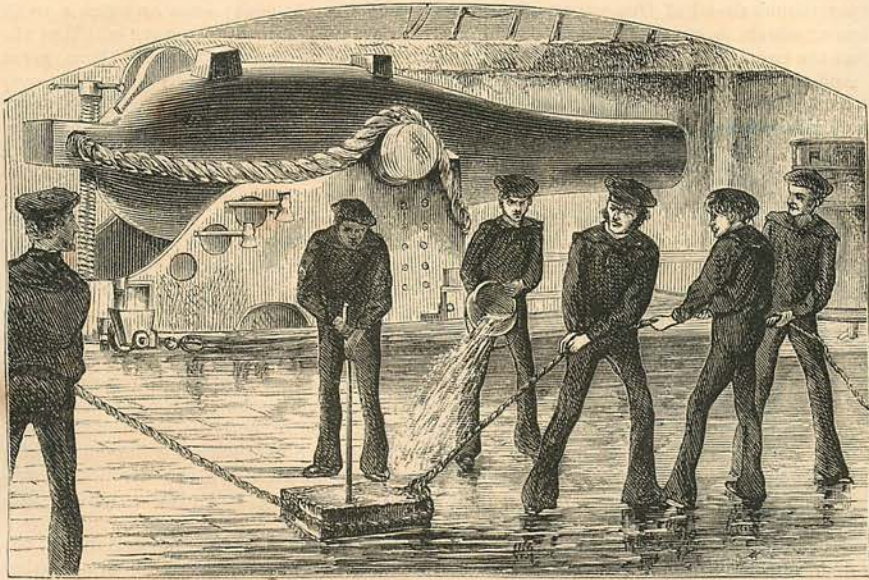
"A pleasant cruise, captain and gentlemen."

"Good-night, pilot."

Good-night, old man, I continue in soliloquy, and fair fortune crown every gray hair of thine, so thou guardest with kindly care my farewell letter! The tall and beautiful maintop-sail is braced full, the yet ampler cloths of flowing mainsail are boarded and hauled aft, the bow of Anakim is tightly strung, and trembling to her keel, and impetuously singing as she goes, the great ship shoots forward into the night, and far away over a half-stormy ocean. The throbbing glow-worm light-houses shrink to fire-



EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT TO THE CAPTAIN.



SCRUBBING DECKS.

fly specks, and vanish. With far other feelings than his of dark exultation do I echo Childe Harold's "My native land—good-night!"

Oh, soft may be your southern sky,
But Love, the angel, dwells not here:
The tents where I have found him lie
As distant as that home is dear.

I saw them last in summer-time:
I see them now: 'tis summer still:
The glory of June's crescent prime
Is August, mellow on the hill;

And riper is the rippled corn;
Still the elms gurgle into song;
Eyes hazy blue, and mild as morn,
Watch the far bay, wistful and long;

Fair fingers flake a white moss-rose—
Their wandering touch shows memory true—
Ah! each still petal there that snows
Might charm long leagues of barren blue!

But sail, sail on, thou stately ship!
Not thine the picture: pause not thou:
Thy retrospects in ocean dip;
Fresh prospects widen from thy prow!

Yes! we have come far south, "dragging at each remove a lengthening chain;" but new scenes—new "sea landscapes," as Mrs. Trollope Hibernianly calls them—the life of the sea, and man-of-war routine, charm us nevertheless, and distract our thoughts with occupation. I have traveled in passenger vessels, and have felt, as wearily as did any landsman, the listlessness of nothing to do, the monotony of the blank horizons, the impatience to arrive in port. The *dolce far niente* is not sweet on board ship. I can, therefore, appreciate the difficulty with which they of the land can be brought to comprehend the quiet content which, despite twinges of homesickness, steals over

the mariner in his floating home. In that word lies the secret. Officer or man is one of a small community, isolated from all the world. Each has his circle of companions and friends, saving always the captain, who, even more than the "sacred might" of Homeric kings, is hedged about by etiquette and a certain awe and reserve, which exist quite independently of the character of the man. He, more than any other human being, may be styled monarch of all he surveys, but he is very lonely in his dignity. Still, by way of compensation, he is far more spacioously and sumptuously lodged than any one else. He has his books about him, and his little comforts. And, more than all, potent to dispel every shade of *ennui*, is his sleepless and omnipresent responsibility. Ship and subordinates are to him wife and children. They are his constant care; and care makes him keen-eyed and sharp-witted, equally so on deck and in his cabin. There the chart is ever open on the table before him; the tell-tale (or reversed compass) over his head shows the slightest deviation from the vessel's course, whether the wind heads her off or she is negligently steered; his eye, by long experience, tells him very nearly her rate of speed; his ear, if she is steaming, "the very pulse of the machine;" the barometer hangs in view; the rising squall on the horizon's edge is visible from his cabin windows. So, while in receiving a report he may appear absorbed in the pages of the last new novel, the officer of the deck is frequently surprised at the captain's knowledge of every thing transpiring. And the frolic midshipman has an almost

superstitious dread of this apparent omniscience, which is cognizant of more things than the caprices of wind and weather.

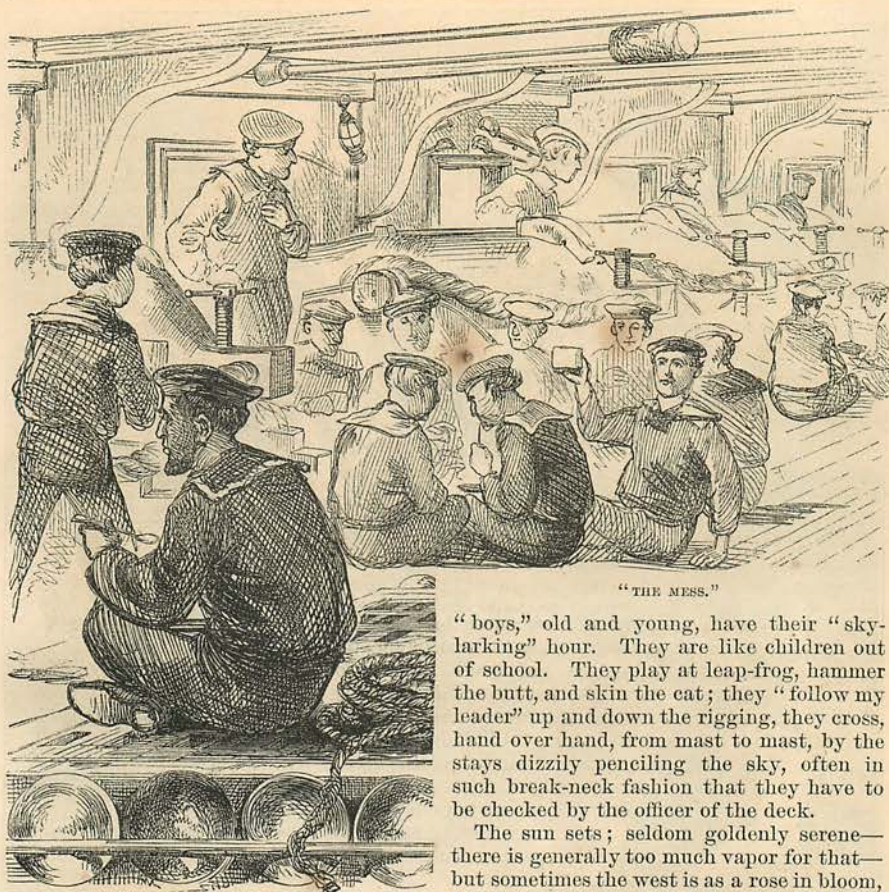
And now for a day of man-of-war routine at sea. The watches are four hours long, the bell striking half-hourly from one to eight. The lieutenants are divided into watches according to their number; the midshipmen in the *Benbow* days invariably into three, but now less cruelly into four watches, which give these growing lads a "sleep in" every fourth night; the firemen, when steaming, into three watches; the crew into watch and watch, starboard and port. In order that their night-watches shall be equalized, the watch from four to eight in the evening is subdivided into two, and these are called "dog-watches," because, according to Captain Marryat, they are curtailed. Nor is this severe (not the pun). There is no comparison between the hardships of men-of-war's men and of merchant sailors. The number of a man-of-war's crew—proportioned to the guns to be fought, and not to handing and reefing—makes all seaman's work light. In fine weather the former, with the exception of the helmsmen and those at various look-outs and stations, may coil themselves between the guns or in the tops, and sleep if they will, but sleep lightly, promptly to obey a sudden call. Every morning the watch scrub clothes, twice a month their hammocks. Every morning the decks are scrubbed with sand

and hickory brooms; once or twice a week they are holy-stoned. It seems odd that the watch below can sleep with those great sandstones dragged heavily to and fro over their heads; but their nerves get used to it, like those of eels to skinning. Then the "bright work" is cleaned, and every thing put in order for the day, either before the eight-o'clock breakfast or immediately after "turning to" at nine. A pattern housewife might be proud of the immaculate cleanliness resulting. At four bells (ten o'clock) the beat to quarters throbs through the ship. Every day one or more divisions are exercised at the great guns. Once or twice a week are general quarters, when the whole crew are carried through the incidents of an engagement—the cannonade, the boarding and repulse, and the resources to meet accidents. Sometimes we have surprise midnight quarters, or the drum-beat and a rapidly ringing bell startle with a fire-alarm.

Occasionally, at the discretion of the captain—not unfrequently in heavy weather—the men are exercised in the more purely nautical duties of remedying imaginary injuries from stress and strain, "unbending" the old and "bending" new sails, shifting one spar or another, even to a ponderous topmast, while the vessel still holds her way; and it is marvelous how quickly these things are done. In the words of a captain of the old school, of him who did not believe



THE NAVIGATING OFFICER'S STATE-ROOM.



"THE MESS."

more than half the *Arabian Nights*—how little imagination the old fogey had!—we "guard against every precaution." Dinner at noon, when reported by the navigating officer, and "made so" by the captain, who is a sort of Joshua. The navigator at this time takes the altitude of the sun for latitude, as morning and evening, when the sun is nearest east and west, he measures it for local time, obtaining his longitude from his well-rated chronometers. After one o'clock the various divisions are exercised as light infantry, in company or battalion drill, also the marines; and quite as well as the marines the sailors go through the manual and evolutions. Jack no longer handles his musket as awkwardly and grimly as a bear, and thinks it seaman-like not to be a soldier. Field artillery is also taught, and the broadsword exercise. At three o'clock (usually) the drum beats the *Roast Beef of Old England*, and during the ward-room dinner the band plays on the main-deck. How many a merry and genial hour I have passed at that table! Supper for the crew at four o'clock, afterward evening quarters for seeing the battery secure; and then the

"boys," old and young, have their "skylarking" hour. They are like children out of school. They play at leap-frog, hammer the butt, and skin the cat; they "follow my leader" up and down the rigging, they cross, hand over hand, from mast to mast, by the stays dizzily penciling the sky, often in such break-neck fashion that they have to be checked by the officer of the deck.

The sun sets; seldom goldenly serene—there is generally too much vapor for that—but sometimes the west is as a rose in bloom, and often the whole heavens strung with illuminated clouds, wonderful in glowing bronze or rich grass-green. The look-outs are called from aloft; others at different points are stationed for the night. The sun sets; the moon is up; the side and mast-head lanterns are lit, and green and red reflections mingle with the white moonlight. The band plays on the quarter-deck. Lovely sounds, gay or sad, go wandering over the waters. Our hearts are brimmed with memories, and our eyes with childish tears, which we can not laugh away. Meanwhile, on the forecastle,

"Some rude Arion's skillful hand
Wakes the brisk harmony that sailors love;"

and they foot it deftly in jig and hornpipe.

"Let us go forward, now that the band has been dismissed," I say to one of the young officers.

The scene is curious. Not far from the dancers is another group, indulging in vocal efforts. There is a movement to rise and touch hats, but I check it. One singer, whose hoarse voice has been tuned at the "weather-earring," informs his "Mary Ann" that "the ship is ready, and the wind it is



THE STORY OF CHARLESTON HARBOR.

fair," and that he "is bound for to sea;" and another, who has swallowed not quite so much fog and east wind, vows in emphatic negatives that

"No never, no never, no never no more,
He never will play the wild rover no more;"

while a youth of a patriotic and warlike turn chants in *alto hoo*

"The *Guerriere* frigate bold
O'er the foaming ocean rolled."

But hark to better metal! "This fellow has a voice," I murmur; and he sings that dear old Scottish ballad, so popular in its modern form, all joining in the chorus *con amore*.

"Each heart recalls a different voice,
But all sing *Annie Laurie*."

Now we come upon a more retired group, sitting in the black shadow of the moon-lit sails, upon whom the saddening eve seems to have exercised a sobering effect; for one is reciting something in a low tone, and the

rest are listening open-mouthed, as if to drink it all in the better.

"What is this, youngster?"

"It is a fairy tale, Sir," whispers the midshipman.

"Spinning a yarn, is he? It seems to be as long as the maintop-bowline."

"Yes, Sir; and the *raconteur*," continued the lad, proud of his French, "could beat *Scheherezade*, and her sister too, and furnish them with a new *répertoire*."

It is an odd jumble, *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *Sindbad the Sailor* seeming to be the somewhat incongruous types—impossible giants, inconceivable palaces, smoking genii, fiery dragons, a sorcerer patterned from a tobacconist's sign, a beautiful fairy and a more beautiful heroine, who are but bar-maids in masquerade—a tale of enchantment ludicrously mixed with a sailor's familiar experience, and, O happy climax! *Jack marries the princess!* O rude of speech, simple-minded, soft-hearted seamen! One touch of *romance* makes the whole world kin.

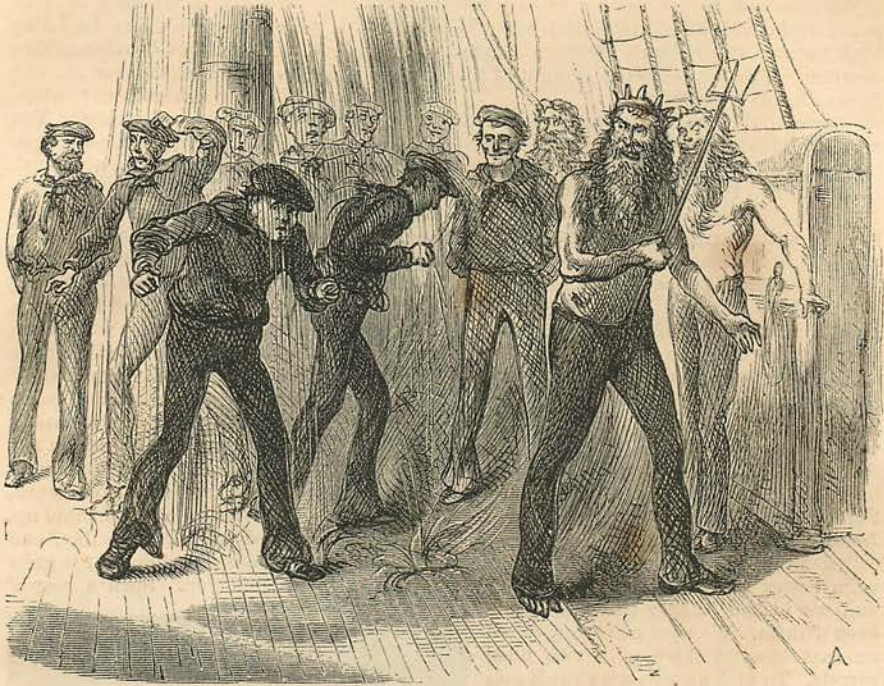
We move on to yet another group, composed exclusively of old tars, withdrawn in high debate, like Milton's chiefs in Pandemonium. The white-haired captain of the fore-castle has "the floor."

"Some of you chaps," he growls out, with much involving of parentheses and revolving of his quid, "blow about New Orleans and Mobile. I don't blame you, howsumever, for they were pretty scrimmages, and I sailed with Farragut onst myself, when I was younger than I am now, and he was first lieutenant: he was about the liveliest one you ever saw, you better believe. God bless him! if that isn't a Roman Catholic prayer. But I was in the hottest place out o' hell, begging pardon of such as is pious, though I mean it, notwithstandin'. Boys, I was in the little *Keokuk* with Rhind—a live man, every inch o' him. Were any o' you there at Charleston when Dupont (wasn't he a grand old gentleman?) first attacked Fort Sumter, in that black-looking *New Ironsides*, with the six cheese-boxes on a raft, called Monitors, and *us*? Them Monitors were better iron-clads than our'n, though, and we looked mighty little alongside even o' them. We were what they called an experimental thing, with two fixed turrets. To pick up my yarn afore it gets adrift, if you weren't there you missed a grand sight. We got under way, and steamed up in line o' battle along the sand-hills of Morris Island quiet enough at first. But we expected lively work,

though I for one hardly thought to take Charleston without any sodgers to belay what we got; and all that beach-combing general did was to say, God bless us, and what his name was. When we beat to quarters I felt a little cur'ous and excited. You all know what that beat is, when you're going into a fight. It begins like a funeral, and makes you feel solemn and all-overish like; and then the drumsticks tap quicker and quicker until your pulse jumps a hundred to a minute, and you're all afire for battle. Fort Wagner (I forget its first name) opened on us, but we didn't mind *her* much. Ahead of us was Sullivan's Island, with Moultrie and the other brimstone-colored batteries among the green trees, showing hundreds o' black muzzles ready to bark; and great, round Sumter (it wasn't knocked into a cocked hat as yet) was looming up on our port hand, higher and higher and darker and darker as we kept on. Well, as we opened, the steeples of Charleston clear-channel up, the ball commenced 'all along the line,' and when we ranged alongside o' Sumter it grew hot and heavy, I tell you. Such a roar o'



THE WATCH BELOW.



CROSSING THE LINE.

the biggest guns in the world! such rollin', chokin' powder-smoke, spittin' fire, shells burstin' all about, bricks and mortar flyin', round shots hittin' every pop!

'Look a-starboard, look a-larboard, look a-weather, look a-lee,'

it was worse than the coast of Barbary (that's po'try). The other fellows stood it well enough; but Rhind, who wasn't afraid of the devil (you know he commanded the powder-ship at Fort Fisher, where his chance o' life was little better than 'heads you win, tails I lose'), took us in closer than any of 'em. (He was a kind-hearted captain, for all he looked so stern.) It was short work for us. An iron-clad, were we? Blast my starry top-lights and top-gallant eyebrows! shiver my timbers (hers weren't worth much)! she was made o' pasteboard! We were riddled. I felt more aggravated than scared as the shot went through and through our poor thin sides. Still it was awful—it made one feel qualmish—to see his poor shipmates killed like rats in a trap, the sanded deck licking up their blood, and to hear the wounded scream out when struck, and groan afterward—their pluck, poor fellows! couldn't quite choke it back, man fashion! To make a long story short, boys, the holes in us were beneath as well as above the water-line, and we were reported to the captain as sinking. Did we sheer off then? Bless you, no! We manned the pumps, and fought on until the admiral

made signal to 'discontinue the action,' and we all left together. When we reached Folly Inlet the other craft anchored, and so did we—for good. We didn't save a rag, only what we stood in. The poor little *Keokuk* lies there now, not only under water, but Heaven knows how many fathoms deep under the sands. 'Strike the bell eight! Call the watch! D'ye hear that? Shipmates, good-night.'

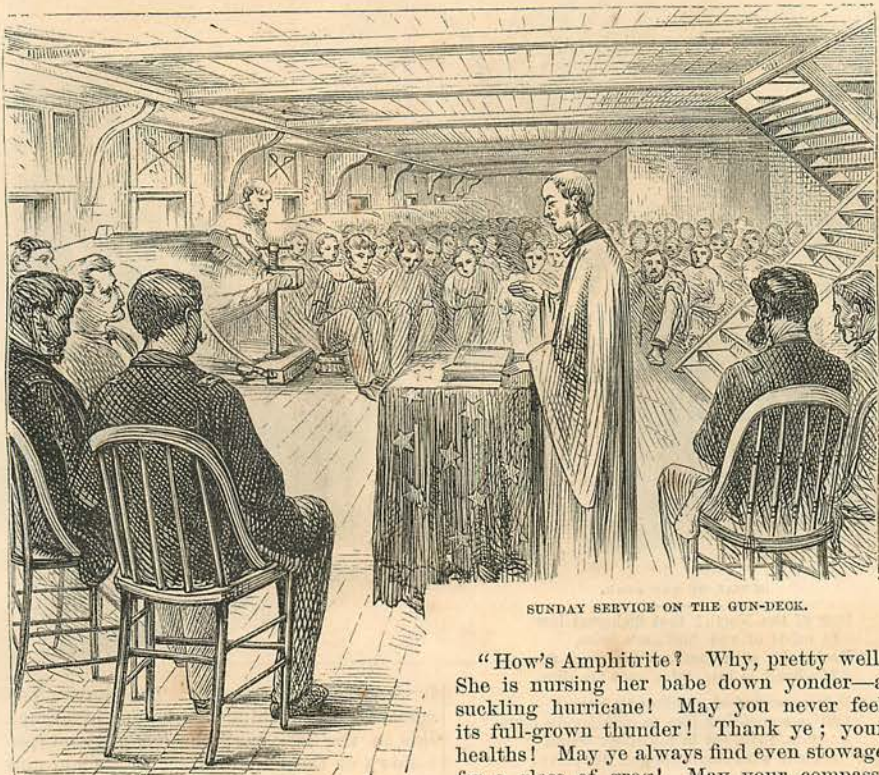
Southwardly still, through the Sargasso Sea, with its floating meadows, and through wonderful phosphorescences; and now the northeastern trades have fallen light, and we are slowly approaching the equator.

White clouds of summer in our sail
Press soft as kisses on the mouth;
They fill with their voluptuous gale
The purple chambers of the south;

The wandering winds of summer-tide,
That ripen sweet to east and west,
The orange blossom for the bride,
The heart's-case for the lover's breast.

But sail, sail on, thou stately ship!
In dimpling azure stay not thou;
Old constellations waning dip,
New heavens are beacons o'er thy prow!

We are on the line: the latitude at noon has indicated the time. The bell strikes seven in the second dog-watch, the son'west wind blows hazily, and the frigate plunges through the sparkling brine on its lazy undulations. Sadly I watch the index stars declining, pointing to a vanished loadstar. On a sudden, close to the lee bow, a hoarse



SUNDAY SERVICE ON THE GUN-DECK.

summons is heard, "Ship ahoy! Heave to!" and man and boy, mustering full five hundred, the crew hurry to the spar-deck. Obedient to the mysterious command, the main-sail is hauled up, and the mizzen top-sail braced aback. Grimly over the gangway, with Arion blowing a huge conch, and followed by a train of grotesque Tritons, marches his quaint divinity, Neptune! His face is tarry, a rope-yarn beard hangs to his waist, and in his right hand, to represent the trident, he carries a harpoon impaling a live flying-fish! He is received on the quarter-deck by the demure captain and officers, the admiral quietly smiling in the background, not unobserved by the Sea-King; and his discourse is in this fashion, somewhat amplified:

"What cheer, my hearties? Ho, admiral, you are nearly as reverend as I am! I must apologize for forgetting; but did we last meet in the Trojan war? I hope your honor's health is as vigorous as your laurels are green!"

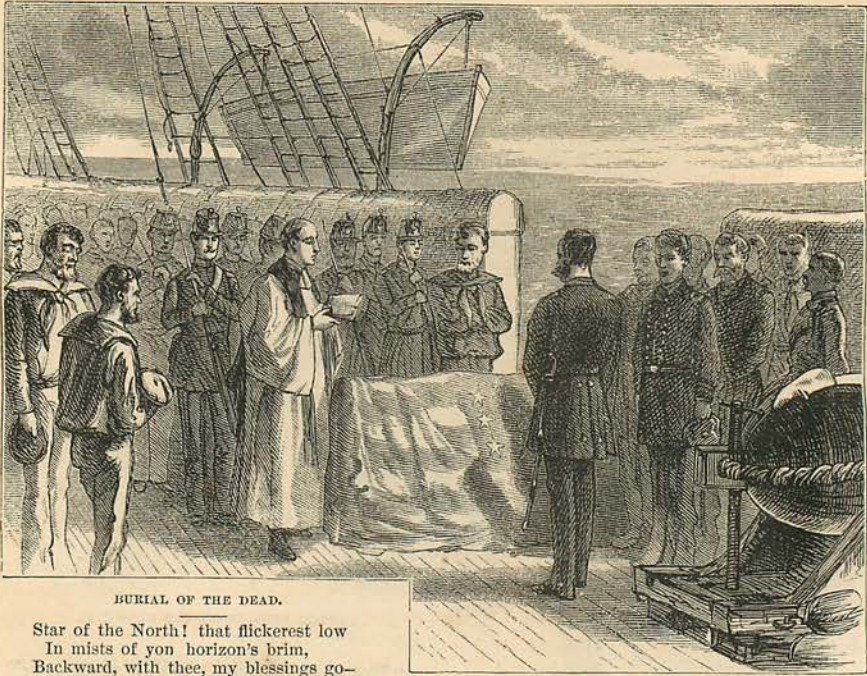
"The admiral thanks you," replies the captain, with admirable gravity; "but your majesty should remember that the question of age is a delicate one. Ask Amphitrite! By-the-way, why did she not grace us with a visit?—and how is she?"

"How's Amphitrite? Why, pretty well. She is nursing her babe down yonder—a suckling hurricane! May you never feel its full-grown thunder! Thank ye; your healths! May ye always find even stowage for a glass of grog! May your compass, your log, and lead be true, and prosperous your voyage of life! Ever be loving and loyal, my gallant tars, with a seaman's frank devotion! To your sweethearts and wives! To the Stars and Stripes! True blue forever! Come, see me off!"

And a crowd of greenhorns rush after him to the gangway, when, with a roar of laughter, such a deluge falls upon them from aloft as if a water-spout had broken up. The topmen, with the connivance of the executive officer, have been slyly making preparations during the afternoon. The ship fills away on her course; and now what seems an illuminated barge drifts slowly astern. I have a suspicion that it is a barrel of burning pitch. But I watch it with a vague persistence as, from crest to crest of the billows that roll darkening away, it gleams and vanishes and glimmers again. And as voices of Ocean round us whisper old secrets and moan old pain, I can almost fancy myself

"A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;"

that I am fellow-voyager with Jason (our southern course has revealed the great constellation Argo), and believe that the Monarch of Waves has indeed been on board, and that the sea-nymphs are calling for Hylas!



BURIAL OF THE DEAD.

Star of the North! that flickerest low
 In mists of yon horizon's brim,
 Backward, with thee, my blessings go—
 My heart is low, mine eyes are dim.

Fair cynosure of childhood's home!
 Stirs something like to childhood's tears
 As thou, involved in phosphor foam,
 Sink'st with Arcturus and his peers;

With Cassiopea—Charles's Wain—
 And, like a violet in the sky,
 Sweet Lyra, that hath charmed the pain
 Of memory like a melody!

The Antarctic constellations rise
 In vain to compensate our loss,
 Though, moon-like, Argo sails the skies,
 And glorious is the Southern Cross.

Ah! still magnetic to the North,
 The heart recalls all lovely lights
 That, in the heaven or by the hearth,
 Set never on our Northern nights.

I play with types. Yet, true my love,
 Thou that the loadstar art to me,
 Whatever star or cloud's above,
 I turn to thee—I turn to thee!

But sail, sail on, thou stately ship!
 By line or tropic, halt not thou;
 For sun and moon and stars shall dip
 In tempests, gathering o'er thy prow.

Tempests gather, and will come. They constitute a common danger, to which custom makes us more or less insensible. But into this, our floating citadel, steals sometimes a "single sombre warrior," and smites in our midst. Young Hylas is gone from among the Argonauts. All last night lay a still form on the "half-deck"—very still and rigid, and dark, though the sentinel-lamp at the cabin door streamed upon it. It was screened from the slumberers in the neighboring hammocks, breathing a deeper awe than they—"for sleep is awful;" it was draped over by the union-jack, and beside

it was a solitary watcher. The morrow has come. The sunshine laughs out of argent lids in the heavens; the "mighty purple billows of the much-rolling sea" foam and flash. The ship swings dashing forward, the startled flying-fish twinkles, the sea-bird circles and yelps—all is life. Hark! it is the boatswain's pipe; but it is blown in lower key than wont, and it has a long-drawn note of wail.

"All hands bury the dead!"

A solemn summons! The ship's bell tolls solemnly. The courses are all hauled up; the maintop-sail is braced aback, the frigate's way is deadened as much as may be, and then the silence is broken only by the hollow beat of waves, and the subdued, murmurous sound of men mustering by hundreds, slowly and gravely though it be. The officers, in glittering uniforms, are grouped on the *lee* side of the quarter-deck; the marines are drawn up opposite, in full dress; the crew, in their snowy "line frocks," cluster about the "booms" and gangways. The body of the poor sailor boy—how sad his fate!—closely sewed up in his little hammock, and placed upon a rude bier, is borne from below on the shoulders of his mess-mates—how neatly rigged these pall-bearers, and what softness in those weather-beaten faces!—and is rested gently on the ship's midside. The chaplain, in his robes, approaches; all uncover.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live!"

The words fall upon the ear and heart—in that presence, on the “pure, unsearchable sea,” dark, not from obscurity, but from vastness—like a revelation newly heard. Over the boy are the stars of his country in pall—the Stars of Immortality in assurance! A light cloud passes; there is a soft sprinkle of rain. Those drops are the last touches of freshness in vital air, ere, at the words, “We therefore commit his body to the deep,” the spangled drapery is lifted, and the hammock is shot forward, to drop with a thrilling splash, and to sink ghastly glimmering into the salt depths. The marines fire three volleys—an honor accorded to the humblest of those who wear their country’s livery—the ship and ship’s life move gayly on, and the rest of grief is for them who are far away.

“O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor, while thy head is bowed
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave!”

Without “odorous” comparison, our profession in time of peace is more stirring and interesting than that of a sister service. The navy needs not to ennoble it and render it romantic the smell of battle afar off, the silence deep as death, as drifting steadily on the foe the boldest hold their breath for a time; the spurting red fire, the spectral smoke-wreath, the hurtling storm of missiles, the clash of conflict, and the clinch of death! Not the amazing passage of impediments, forts, gun-boats, and fire-ships, by the

“iron hearts in wooden walls”—the lurid hot flames making wrathful the night, and affronting the cool gray dawn—in the Lower Mississippi; not the competitive grandeur and glory of Mobile; not the thundering ellipses of victory at Port Royal, nor the endurance of the Monitors, upon whose turrets, as an anvil proof, beat the Thor-hammers of the shot, at Charleston; not the tremendous cannonade and gallant assault of Fort Fisher; not the *Kearsarge*, unharmed, sinking her equal, the *Alabama*, with the precision of target-firing; not the dauntlessness in despair, the laughing death in the face with defiant cheers, on board the *Cumberland*, going down with her unlowered flag! Even in peace we have the noise of the captains and the shoutings. Even in pleasant latitudes come the sudden, dangerous squalls. He who holds the trumpet of command must be ready—ay, ready in professional resource—to combat and conquer the elements. There is a cloud no bigger than a man’s hand on the horizon. It grows, it advances, it over-spreads, till the heavens are rolled in disastrous twilight, and the sea blackens in ridges. Harken to the quick, stern commands:

“Man the top-gallant clew-lines! Main clew-garnets and buntlines! Up mainsail, and in top-gallant sails! Top-sail clew-lines and buntlines and weather-braces! Round in the braces! Settle away the top-sail hal-yards! Clew down! Hard up the helm!”



THE TYPHOON.

It is "clew up and clew down." The frigate careens fearfully to the blast; then her bows fall off, and she foams through the water until the tempestuous burst is over-past, and, perchance, the rainbow builds our Arch of Triumph! Tales could I tell of the meteor-maelstrom of typhoon that would amaze you; of the huge ship, with her strong storm-sails blown into ribbons, lying for hours on her beam ends, pressed down by "the great shoulders of the hurricane;" of bulwarks stove, of copper sheathing stripped in streaks from the exposed bottom. The unutterable and unimaginable violence of the wind—as much exceeding an ordinary gale as a gale a calm—smites off the heads and shoulders of the seas, and hurls them solidly against the laboring ship. Air and water are made one in wild confusion, and you breathe the brine. Crouched under the weather-bulwarks, as the adventurous tourist behind the sheeted Niagara, the cataract of storm sweeps over you as massively, as tumultuously, with a savageness of roar and yell and *shout* that would strike the dismayed thunder dumb!

Ye Clouds! ye Winds! not always soft
Are ye, and beautiful and mild;
Meteors of Storm! exulting oft
In your dark strength, the day grows wild!

Yet, or in calm, or breeze, or gale,
In adverse or propitious sea,
The hope, sweetheart, grows never pale
Which floats on waifs of song to thee!

Ah! not all lorn are they who roam
Wilds where the winged Storm-Fiend screams,
When, Ariel-footed on the foam,
Comes a home-angel to their dreams;

For oft my slumbers hold thy form:
I wake: the touch of perfumed tress
Yet thrilling, and my cheek yet warm
With flush of thine in soft caress.

Sail on, sail on, thou stately ship!
There comes a time—so faint not thou—
When shall the last sea-circle dip,
The haven's arms embrace thy prow!

Sail on! By headlands of Good Hope,
To margins of the Orient move,
And, rounding up the world's great slope,
Still onward, bear me to my love!

We will not anticipate the time when our hearts will leap to the "Land, ho!" as never before, and our eyes will gloat on that faint horizon cloud, as it darkens, and then breaks into the silver shores and wooded crests of Neversink! Meanwhile we glide joyously into many another port; into crowded city haven, where the "bumboat" abounds, profuse of "soft tack" and redolent of oranges for the sailor boy, or into unfrequented bay in palmy isles, where the glossy brown mermaids come dripping over the side to greet him. The anchor drops, the sails are furled as a sea-bird closes its wings, and for a season we are at rest.

So, too, is my half-rhythmical strain. Let me strike a battle-chord in conclusion, and

repeat a brief poem to the illustrious, lamented Farragut:

When the gallant old Admiral was lashed in the shrouds,
Overlooking his battle-deck's sulphurous clouds,
As the bay of Mobile curled with phantoms of death,
And the iron-clad sank with the hell-bolt beneath,
We heard a voice—"Forward!"*

In pomp and bold purpose as grandly he passed,
No banner of bunting is nailed to the mast.
True, the flag of his country flings splendors in air,
But its living, invincible heart, too, is there,
Aloft, going forward.

"By this sign I conquer!" was Constantine's cry,
As the cruciform miracle flamed in the sky.
"To our aid, Santiago!" Spain's knighthood implores—
On the field of Clavijo are scattered the Moors,
As the White Horse leads forward.

Was the Cross to the imperial convert revealed?
Did chivalry's saint drive the Crescent afield?
From the clear sky above was it Heaven that spoke,
Or the ghosts of dead heroes that called from the smoke,
As Farragut went forward?

Who shall measure for great hearts, in greatness of time,
These visions of glory and voices sublime?
Illumined by duty, unclouded by fear,
In the Admiral's soul, as it seemed to his ear,
A Divine voice said, "Forward!"

The battle of life he has fought to the close:
"Well done, faithful servant!" has crowned his repose.
But in that proud ensample, to us and to all,
Is the lesson of courage, the high duty-call:
God's commandment bids—Forward!

THREADS OF SONG.

From its nest a bird went lightly soaring,
Vanishing along
Like a spirit, from a full heart pouring
Its sweet tide of song.
Hill and dale with radiance were shining;
Peace, unclouded, rested over all;
Light and fragrance every where were twining,
Held forever in harmonious thrall
By a thread of song!

Through the golden arches of the morning,
Far beyond our sight,
Earthly summons or our guidance scorning,
Still it holds its flight:
Into all our days new brightness weaving,
Sending gladness into every heart;
From celestial ones its skill receiving,
All its matchless and melodious art,
All its wealth of song!

Through the forests go the minne-singers,
Weaving melodies
That some truant breeze will surely bring us
Other days than these:
Echoes lingering when the summer's over,
In our hearts new melodies awake;
And though we may miss the tuneful rover,
E'en his absence from us can not break
These sweet threads of song!

* Vide Rev. Dr. Montgomery's funeral address.