"JACK ASHORE."

SEAMEN IN THE CITY

Habits, Troubles, Actions, Character, and Condition of the Amphibious Bipeds.

THE BATTLES WITH "LAND-SHARKS."

& buses of the Advance-Pay and Sailor's Boarding-House Systems-Reforms Needed-Peeps at the 'Sailor's Snug Harbor" and the "Seaman's Home."

Etc., Etc., Etc., Etc., Etc., Etc.

For the Evening Telegraph.

Since the time waen men first went down to the sea in ships, the sailor has been a pet subject for the study and speculation of young and old, and of both sexes. There appears to be a sort of romantic halo thrown around the lives of those who face the storms and terrors of the deep, that makes one irresistibly drawn towards them. In childhood who has not had the longing for a life on the ocean, where everything tells of the great God of nature, and all partakes of the sublime and infinite? Who has not eagerly sought for all that relates to the sailor's life, to its hardships and its pleasures, to the exciting incidents in storm and ship wreck? Who has not, in his young, impressible years, devoured with a feverish interest the histories of the wonderful careers of the hardened, yet gallant robbers of the sea, or the wanderings upon strange and unknown shores of the ship wrecked mariner. Robinson Crusoe, the castaway, is but a sample of the exciting tales that are so dear to the youthful mind. But, as we read those high-colored accounts of THE SAILOR'S Laps, touched with the rica coloring of fancy. and embellished with all the powerful aids of rhetoric, we can gain but a faint appreciation of the real tife on board ship, such as it is and has been in nineteen-twentieths of the ships that sail the ocean. On land man is curbed by the presence or his fellow. The dread penalty of the law hangs over his head like the sword of Damocies, and he dare not swerve from the path of justice without danger of its falling upon his guilly head. The restraints of society, also, aid in keeping the passions of men within bounds. He dare not commit acts of open injustice, when there are so many jealous eyes watching his actions-when there are so many hands ready to interfere in the cause of right and law. In the great mass of combatant humanity he is but a unit, and he is self-conscious of it. But when he bids farewell to the shore-when the dim, bazy outline of the solid earth looms faintly up in the far, far distance, and the green water changes to the clear azure that tells of vast depths and of the separation from the world that is so dear to the true sailor's heart-it is then, when in their own little world, and under no government but that of the Almighty, that the true impulses and passions of men, and especially men in authority, show themselves, untrammelled by law and society's restraints. Then it is that the poor sailor, in his dependent position, feels the scourge of the cruel and heartless officer who may be placed above him. Then it is that the scales are removed from the eyes of the uninitiated, and the golden halo of romance is

dissipated by the horrid reality. Reforms in Sea Life.

It is not many years since the life of the sailor was far more arduous, far more brutal in its cruel hardships, than it is at present. Then the cat-o'-nine tails flourished in the different navies, and the men were beaten like dogs, and self-respect was utterly deadened in their breasts, Indeed, in our own navy, within the life of the present generation, the American man-o'-war's man has been "spread-eagled," and his back lacerated with the lash. But now, thanks to the efforts of enlightened reformers, all that has been done away with. The lash is heard no more in our navies, or even in our merchantmen. And now, even a greater clog on the onward wheel of progress has been thrust aside. The grog has been dashed away from the sailor's lips, and a new step taken in the way of reform that, for power and inflaence, is greater than all others.

Jack Ashore. But it is not of the sailor as he is at sea that we would more particularly dwell upon. It is when he arrives at the end of his stormy voyages, and, like the flying-fish, flees from his native element only to meet new dangers in another. It is when his vessel casts its anchor in port that Jack's real dangers begin. The storm and tempest, the hidden rock and the shark, are dangers that beset him but seldom. But when he casts his lot among those who should be his brothers, on the shore, then begins his hardships and his trials. Before the auchor has barely touched the bottom, and before the ship is cleaned, the boat of the landshark is alongside, and his fishy eyes are seen to look over the rail as he is on his search for his prey. Not that he cares for poor Jack. Oh, no! not at all. He only wants to relieve him of the care of his money, and that in the shortest possible space of time. He selects his victims. Like meek lambs they are led to the slaughter. We will try to tell how this is done. If we were going to describe the saflor boarding-houses in the city of Gotham, it would give a darker view of the sailor's shore life than in our own city, although here it is bad enough. Within the past thirty years much has been done to ameliorate the sallor's condition ashore, as we will show hereafter; but still there remains a great work before us. But, to "return to our sheep"-the LAND-SHARE, or SAILORS BOARDING-HOUSE KEEPER, boards the ship, and brings off his prey. There is no resistance, and why? you ask. Because he is like the fly in the web: there are too many threads that the sharks have wound around him, until he is like Gulliver, pound down helpless, and at their mercy. These wretches, the land-sharks, are united together n a sort of association or ring, for the better carrying out of their infamous system of plunder upon the defenseless sailor. They | room floor, they soon subside, and then all is as

have their laws and their by-laws, which are as | immutable as the laws of the Medes and the Persians, and poor Jack himself helps his destroyers. It works in this wise: - In all the sailor boarding-houses there is located a shipping agent, who attends to getting ships' crews together. He is generally in partnership with the keeper of the house himself, if he be not the actual proprietor. When a shipmaster wishes his crew, he goes to one of these places and ships them. Suppose he gets all his crew together, and just before sailing he appoints his second mate outside the ring. The sailors will have a meeting and appoint a spokesman. They wait upon the second mate and ask him where he came from, or, rather, where he was boarding when he was shipped? Did he board at one of these houses? No. Did he board with his father or mother, or any of his relatives? No. Well, who did he board with? A friend, a comrade of many years' friendship. That settled his case. He did not board with the ring, and his doom is sealed. They say nothing more to the mate, but go straight to the captain. Their spokesman will say to the captain:-"You have appointed a man outside of our ring, and must either discharge him, or we will leave." What can he do? His ship is ready for sea, and if he discharges his crew, where will he get another, for all would be against him? The mate has to go. That is how the land-sharks work their sharp game.

Sailors' Boarding-Houses.

But we will go to some of these boardinghouses. The greatest number of them is in Penn street. There are some better than others; but the best is, at best, but a very sorry specimen of a civilized home. We start in the morning, to see what it looks like in the broad light of day. We stop before a two-and-a-half-storied brick house that has evidently seen better days. There is a sign above the door that is suggestive of what is constantly going on within:-"SAILORS TAKEN IN AND DONE FOR." The proprietor evidently was not sufficiently versed in scholastic lore to see the unconscious truism he had perpetrated. But it is terribly suggestive. The poor sailor, as he staggers in with his heavy sea-chest, containing his worldly possessions, does not think, as he reads that sign, that its meaning is very much like the inscription over the gates of hell, "Leave hope behind." With his hard-earned dollars, he is received with an affected show of hospitality. The bar is open to him (for a necessary appendage to the house is a bar), and a siren is at hand to ply him with whisky. Jack's entrance into that door is like the fly's entrance into the spider's parlor. If he has a hard-earned pile of cash, it soon disappears. No matter how long or short his stay is, it is long enough to allow the keeper of the place to fleece him of every cent, and after that to run him in debt sufficiently to gain a lieu upon his two months' advance. Then he is a slave, and is as much owned by the boarding-house keeper as if he had bought him

Daily Scenes in a Sailors' Bar-Room. The boarding-house always has its bar. Rows of black bottles, with the strongest and most diery spirits, are interspersed with trophies of foreign voyages, gathered by poor Jack with an eye to enrich the parlor or cabinet of some valued friend or relative, only to be gathered in by the grasping hand of his keeper. It is day now, however, and life is not in its full flow in the den. A blowsy, red-faced wench stands behind the bar, with her sleeves rolled up, and in a shocking state of deshabille. We wonder how she could, with her ill-natured, stupid face, ever have been selected to attract custom. The men themselves, with aching head and bloodshot eyes, are lounging around in listless fashion, or are trying to drown the effects of last night's debauch, by renewed applications of the poison that has prostrated their energies, on the principle of similia similibus curantur. The dirty walls themselves are covered with prints that would naturally attract a sailor's eye. Blackeyed Susans, with most impossible figures and expressions, and scenes of ship wrecks, with a print or two of some favorite ship. Scattered over the house are also to be seen toul and filthy pictures, that, by their obscenity and lasciviousness, serve to point out the fearful im-

morality that prevails in these places.

Night in a Sailors' Bar-Room. But day is not a good time to see it in its glory. We will visit it about the hour of 10 in the evening. As we approach it, a strong light from the interior shows us that life is in full activity within. We open the door and enter. A foul mixture of bad liquor and bad breath, and the fumes of strong tobacco, are almost too much for any one with a moderately weak head. We, however, conquer our weakness and go in. The room is crowded with old, hardened votaries of vice and young beginners in the downward career. Women add their charms (?), and such women! Bad as the men are in their wandering life on shore, there are still some remnants of the noblest traits of humanity sturring within their bosoms. There is still that noble generosity of purpose that, even in their degradation, would spur them to the execution of a noble action, were occasion to call it forth. But what shall we say of the women we see there? It makes one shudder and teel heartfeit pity for poor Jack, with his impressible, easily led heart, that he should be exposed to their hellish arts. Painted and powdered and decked out with gewgaws, they present to his untutored eyes visions of beauty. Their hard faces, which have forgotten the blush of shame, are full of greed, as they ply their poor dupe with liquor, until he no longer can, even if he would, resist their efforts to swindle and rob him. Here and there are groups seated around tables, with packs of well-thumbed cards, eagerly engaged in games of chance, while a hoarsely muttered oath every now and then bursts from their lips,

as one or the other side loses. A Skirmish. Now a couple quarrel. With fierce oaths they jump up, and the spectators are scattered right and left, as with flaming eyes and with a fierceness of energy they clinch, and for a few moments there is a scene worthy of Pandemonium. The heavy swash of the blows that follow swift and fast, the yells and frenzied curses of the combatants, are echoed by the hardened laugh of the spectators, as they look coolly on upon the brutal scene, It is soon ended. It is nothing, only a brawl, such as may be seen any night. If the police are at hand, sometimes one or two of the active participants are, perhaps, arrested, and appear as a "drunken and disorderly" case in the morning report. Yes, it is soon over, and skaking off the sawdust that bestrews the bar-

it was before. Perhaps some aquatic minstrel [clears his pipes, and starts a song in honor of some sea experience, or more usually of an obscene and immoral character. The Interior.

The chambers are rudely furnished. In the best houses, they are moderately clean and well kept; in the lower class, they are filthy and wretched. There are some that we have seen that would shock the sensibilities of any humanitarian, and which were strongly suggestive of pestilence and disease of all kinds. With scarcely sufficient covering to protect them from the cold of winter, they suffer every discomfort rather than break through the rules of the ring. and find themselves a private boarding-house. From the moment Jack enters, the grasp of the keeper of the house is never taken from him, until he leaves it to go on a ship for another voyage. The nominal price of board at these places is from seven to nine dollars per week; but if the sailor has two hundred dollars, and only stays a week, he stays long enough to board it all out and leave himself in debt. The shipping-master has him down, and he is shipped off on another voyage, only to end in a renewal of his hard shore experience. Is It any wonder that he looks on the shore and all its belongings with dread and distrust?

How can we expect that he will be otherwise than he is, when so little is cared for his comfort, when so little is done to carry the blessings of religion and instruction into his home? From his hard-working voyage he steps on shore only to find the grasping hand of mercenary wretches ready to seize on his hardearned money, and never ready to let go until it

Even where the sailor's outward comfort is better cared for, there is the same deliberate schemes for swindling and cheating him carried on. Jack will put up at one of these places. By a series of debaucheries on his part, and extortions on the part of those who should look after his interests, his "pile" disappears. He is then run in debt, and has to find a ship to sail on another voyage. He searches around, and finds a vessel going to some port that he wishes to go to. He engages with the ship-owners to take him. The bargain is struck, not with Jack, but with the shipping master, who receives the regular fee of two dollars, and with the landlord, who receives the two months' advance pay. For two hard-working months Jack has to toil away at his hard and ofttimes dangerous post, before he is clear from his shore-contracted debts; and his memories of his stay on shore cannot be of the most pleasant character.

It is but another Illustration of "man's inhumanity to man," the way in which he is treated whilst in our midst. We went to see one of these boarding-house keepers a few days ago. After looking at his accommodations, which, though scanty, had at least the merit of cleanliness, he gave us a frank statement of one of the ways in which extortion is practised upon the sailor. It was somewhat in this wise: -A ship-owner sends to a house for a crew for one of his ships. A crew is soon made up. Perhaps one or several of those whose names are already down will make known their intention of going to sea. The shipping-master asks him where he wants to go. Jack scratches his head for a moment, and then says, perhaps, to the Mediterranean. Now that is where the ship is going that the list is already made out for, and the man is already down upon that list. But the master does not tell him of that. He asks him what it would be worth to him to go there. The sailor does not know. He is then told that if he will pay five, ten, or even fifteen dollars, he can get a berth. Of course, he demurs. But what can he do? His board and other expenses are eating up his scant pile, and he has to submit to the payment of the bonus. He assents, and is told to call again in an hour or two.

There are some places, though they are very few in number, where even worse practices are carried on; where the mariner is drugged with poisonous liquor, and in that state is carried aboard ship, insensible to everything, until he wakes up far out at sea, and his first waking impressions are the forcible contact of the mate's boot with his ribs and his hard hand on his ears. There are dens of infamy which, holding out their allurements to his senses, draw him within their walls, only to send him out again blind with flery poison, and minus everything except the clothes on his back, and sometimes not even all of them.

But, as we have said, the worst phases of Jack's life ashore are not to be seen in our city such as they can be met with in New York or Boston. Ours is not so much of a seaport, and the number of sailors, in comparison to the great mass, are but few. There, abuses are more open and glaring to the sight, and there, also, the systems of charity are more wide y extended and ramified throughout the different communities.

As a general thing, the men who follow the sea for a hving are separated, in a measure, from all the rest of mankind. Strong in their natures and their impulses and passions, and hard-hauded in their dealings, they keep aloof from their fellow-men on shore. They will suffer injustice, and allow the landsharks to bleed them remorselessly, without complaint to the law, until their grievances are entirely unendurable. A lawyer they regard as a disciple of the Devil, and shun him. Hence, there are very seldom instances of extortion and swindling brought before the notice of the Courts or the magistrates. Jack prefers to grin and bear his sufferings.

Measures of Reform.

It is time that Congress should enact a law, making it imperative that our merchants should have apprentices for their ships-say one apprentice for every hundred tons burden the ship may be. Then in a few years we should have good American seamen, and good officers commanding, as now, our merchant vessels are manned principally by foreigners. Oftentimes, seven-eighths of the crew are composed of all nations; some so stupid that, on their arrival in a port of discharge, after being on a voyage of from four to six months, they cannot tell what name they shipped by. And many times, after being at sea two and three days, after their departure will ask the captain the name of the vessel which they are on board of, and where bound, and still the captalu having their contract for the voyage duly signed. Now, is it any wonder that we constantly hear of mutinies on shipboard, when nearly all crews are composed of such a set of illiterate men?

The advance system should be broken up. It is this that gives so much encouragement to the land-sharks, at times when few sailors are in

port, and one or two large ships expect to sail within a few days of each other. Then the land-sharks secrete the sailors in some low place, and feed them on the vilest kind of Jersey lightning, thereby making them insensible. When the captain calls at the shipping office for a crew, he is told that scamen are scarce, and it will be hard to procure a crew. Suppose at the time the current wages by the run to England be \$75, he tells the captain that if he will pay \$100 to \$120 by the run, he may be able to procure a crew-he knowing all the time that he knows where to get the sailors in ten minutes' notice. The captain communicates these facts to his owner; he pauses awhile, say ing that it is too bad, etc., still he is anxious to have his ship sall; so he and the captain conclude to give the demand. He notifies the shipping officer, and gets the crew. They come on board with their outfit, viz., sheath-knife and belt, one pound of tobacco, one jumper and pair of overalls, tin pan and pot, and a mineral water bottle of whisky. This is a splendid condition to put a sailor on board ship to cross the Atlantic! This is all the sailor receives out of his advance, and is obliged to do the work. The land sharks, after the vessel leaves the wharf, meet and divide the money they have swindled the poor sailor out ot, and come to the conclusion that they did not make so much after all, and that they must run the advance up higher on the next ship.

There have been great efforts made to ameliorate the condition of the sailor during the past thirty years, and his character has been better appreciated. We do not now look upon him as an outcast from civilization, and its privileges and comforts. Isolated from his fellows for such a great portion of his life, and unused to the restraints and incessant strifes that are so unceasing among his fellows ashore, he is simple-hearted and free, and is more liable to the successful attacks of sharpers and swindlers. That same impressibility renders him as capable of being improved in his moral and mental nature, and there have been wise and philanthropic men who have, within the past generation or two, made noble endeavors to effect an amelioration in the satlor's condition on shore. More than sixty years ago, Robert Richard Randall, of New York, a wealthy merchant, died, and left in his will directions to invest the proceeds of his estate, after the payment of a few legacies, in a home for destitute and aged seamen. It was not until thirty years after that, that his legacy had accumulated to such an amount as to warrant the building of such a home. It was, however, built in 1833, and was dedicated to the cause of poor and aged mariners under the name of the

Sailors' Snug Harbor. It then had an income of about six or eight thousand dollars. Under a wise and careful administration, its income has increased to nearly one hundred thousand dollars at the present time. It has furnished accommodations to tens of thousands of our American seamen who have been thrown upon our shores penniless and sick. Its influence is widely known and felt. Philadelphia has no such institution in her midst, but she has others which, in a preatly interior way in point of wealth and power, are still striving to ameliorate the poor sailor's lot. We have a branch association of the SEAMEN'S FRIEND SOCIETY of Pennsylvania, which, in its unpretending way, is doing a great amount of good. The "Home" of the Association is located in Front street, near South. It is in the immediate neighborhood of the boarding-houses and shipping offices, and consequently well placed for the convenience of its lodgers. In this house there is no liquor allowed to be sold. The rooms are kept clean and in good order, and the inmates are obliged to observe the rules of the house, and behave in a quiet and orderly manner. A laundry is attached to the premises, and every room is well ventilated. The regular charges are one dollar and a quarter per day. When the Home started, the boarding-houses of the "ring" were savage in their assaults upon it, and the most stringent rules were made by them to keep its inmates from getting situations on board of vessels loading in the port. But by the energy of the present superintendent, Mr. Daniel Tracy, the order of things has been changed, and those who board at the Home have at least as good a chance, if not better, than those from the vile dens of Penn street. The Home does not confine its good work to those who are boarders within its walls. It assists the aged and destitute, and provides help for the families of those who have been shipwrecked, or have died in the harness. It is an auxiliary branch of the American Seamen's Friend Society, which wields a mighty influence over the great marine interests of the nation. At the Home religious services are held every evening at 7 o'clock and every morning at 8 o'clock. There is also a prayermeeting held every Monday evening, to which all, whether inmates or outsiders, are cordially

Religious Influences.

Besides the Baptist, Methodist, and Episcopalian Bethels, there is, separate and distinct from them, a sailor's church called the Eastburn Bethel. Their influence is widely extended, and is felt on almost every ship that leaves this port. Still, we must say that these institutions are not as well supported as they should be, There appear to be an indifference and neglect shown towards the sailor by our citizens that is almost a disgrace. For some time the Home itself was closed for want of proper support. No one ever thinks of inquiring into poor Jack's condition, and he is left to his own resources, to get along as best he can.

At the Home there is also a shipping office, and as the general character and rebability of the men obtained there is better than at the Penn street places, ship-owners find it to their interest to patronize it.

Perhaps there are iew persons who are aware of the real extent and influence of the Seamen's Friend Society. It has ramifications not only all over the Union, but even in foreign ports and in the islands of the Pacific. Its income is over one hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year, and is kept up by contributions from the merchant marine and by Government. By it thousands and tens of thousands of destitute and shipwrecked sailors are succored, and their families relieved from want and suffering.

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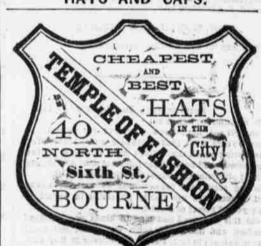
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