OFFICERS' CLUB LIFE ON WARSHIP

Manly, Free Entertaining and Ever Fruitful of Self-Control.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE SAILOR

Men of Intelligence and Good Character the Only Kind Enlisted Now.

Organization of the Ship's Company Into Messes—Chaff Keeps the Wardroom Merry, but Never Passes the Bounds of Good Nature—Something Better Than Romance in the Ships of To-day—Man-o'-War Bill of Fare No Longer Includes Lobscouse or Bargoo—Fine Libraries for All Hands—The Canteen.

ON BOARD U. S. S. LOUISIANA,
U. S. BATTLE FLEET,
AT SEA IN THE PACIFIC OCEAN,
OFF PANAMA, March 6.

Socially the modern man-o'-war houses a series of clubs, one large and several small ones. They are called messes. The large club's membership, the general mess, consists of the entire crew, with the exception of the officers. Uncle Sam, through accredited agents on board, runs that club. The small clubs' membership consists entirely of officers, and these clubs are managed by the membership.

The officers' clubs are graded according to rank. On a flagship the Admiral may form a club all by himself, or he may enlarge the membership, as Admiral Evans does, by having his staff officers join his mess. The Captain is also a club of one member. The commissioned officers make up the wardroom mess. The midshipmen, junior paymaster, junior officers of the marines and the pay clerk form the steerage mess. The warrant officers—bos'n, carpenter, machinists, gunners and the like—have another mess, and the largest of the small clubs is the chief petty officers'.

With the exception of the general mess all these clubs provide their own supplies of food and drink. The Government used to allow every man on a ship, no matter what his rank, the sum of 30 cents a day for rations. The members of the crew in the old days formed various messes of from twenty to forty members. Some of these messes drew provisions from the ship's stores amounting to the value of 30 cents a day for each man. Others drew only three-quarters of the ration and commuted the rest of the 30 cents, to which they added more or less money of their own, and purchased food luxuries from time to time. The allowance of 30 cents a day to all hands was made just after the civil war, and Jack celebrated the event by a song which closed:

They gave us thirty cents a day
And stopped our grog forever.

Jack's grog did stop, although other navies still serve out liquor regularly to their sailors, but he got pretty good rations. There were times, however, when he did not fare well. Sometimes the mess treasurer would go ashore with the mess treasury and would fall into the hands of the Philistines and the mess would have to go hungry or borrow from the kindly disposed members of other messes.

Nearly ten years ago Congress cut off the 30 cents a day allowance for the officers above the rank of midshipmen. The consequence is that every commissioned officer on an American warship has to purchase his own food and other household necessities. That act of Congress cost each officer about $110 a year, a matter of at least three months board.

Naval officers must live well and must entertain when in various ports, at home and abroad, and, being persons of extremely moderate salaries and generally with families to support, they must exercise economy to make both ends meet. It is no easy task, and the communal plan of paying for food and the individual plan of paying for drinks is the best solution of the problem. The navy regulations provide for the formation of messes, tell how they shall be managed, and declare that they must show clean financial sheets to the Captain at every quarter. They must not contract debts which they cannot pay.

ORGANIZING THE MESS.

Suppose a new ship is going into commission. About fifteen officers below the Captain must mess together. The Government provides certain necessities, such as tables and chairs, and an allowance of crockery and linen, but the officers must assemble their own food and wine supplies for a cruise of say three years. It requires capital. Few officers are so forehanded that they have sufficient money to lay in supplies then for several months. They are not allowed to run in debt for them. They must eat and drink, and what do they do? They take advantage of a clause in the regulations, which shows that there are many ways to kill a cat, especially if the cat is running into debt, and which says:

"When a vessel is in a United States port and preparing to proceed on a cruise the commanding officer may sanction supplies for officers' messes being received on board, at the risk of dealers, to be paid for as consumed, in not less than quarterly instalments, provided the dealer shall agree thereto in writing."

This means that as soon as an officers' mess is organized its treasurer goes to certain dealers and contracts for a large quantity of food supplies on condition that payments shall be made at certain intervals. There are many large wholesale houses that are glad to get that kind of trade because they know that ultimately they will receive every cent due them. The members of the mess are assessed so much a month, according to experience in such matters, and the result is that the food of a naval officer costs him in the prepared state about $1 a day. A treasurer is elected once every month. He must serve, and he sits at the foot of the table, while in the wardroom mess the executive officer sits at the head. The treasurer may be elected to serve a second month, but he cannot be made to serve more than two months consecutively.

The organization of the other messes is similar to that of the wardroom mess. The wine mess is composed of such officers as wish to join it. They get their supplies from a dealer who backs them, and to make up for breakage and loss they charge 10 per cent. more than the cost prices of the wines, beers, waters and cigars consumed. The officers are not allowed to have distilled spirits in the wine mess.

PITFALLS TO BE AVOIDED.

When you have a dozen or more men eating together three times a day and for weeks confined to their clubrooms the social life of the company is likely to be beset with pitfalls and shoals. You can imagine how it would be on land, especially if military rule prevailed in a club and every member was compelled to spend all his time in it and was superior or inferior in rank to every other man. This matter of rank has to be taken into consideration. The members of the mess are seated according to rank. Still they are equal in the matter of membership of the mess, and between this matter of rank and social equality some delicate situations arise. The man who may cause you to be disciplined sits close to you in the bonds of supposed good fellowship, and to preserve the club feature of the mess calls for a display of restraint that develops character.

It is a primary rule of the military service of the country that an officer must be a gentleman. That means that good breeding, consideration for the feelings of others, kindness, tact and all the other well known qualifications used in defining the word gentleman must govern the conduct of an officer. Good form also requires that there must be no discussion of subjects in the mess that would lead to discord, such as religion or politics. The result is that to the person not familiar with the traditions an officers' mess on board a warship seems to be a place for small talk or else for shop talk. Really there are few places in the world where the word gentleman has a better exemplification. The officers adapt themselves to the situation of enforced close intimacy of months and months in a way that excites admiration. You see, you've got to live with a person to find him out. When you touch elbows with him all the time all his little peculiarities stand out and all his annoyances of manner become conspicuous. The one social task on a ship is to ignore all these things and to try to have a companionship as genial as if one's good points alone were on view for a day or two.

GOOD HUMOR THE KEYNOTE.

Keeping in good humor is the trick. One way in which this is done on ship is by a light chaffing that runs through the intercourse of the members of the mess. Probably no more skilful skating on thin ice takes place around any board than in the wardroom of a warship. Good natured thrusts and parries are going on all the time, and just as the danger point of going too far in personal matters is reached the talk is shifted in some mysterious way, and a new tack is taken.

A favorite means of fun is to tackle the mess caterer, as the treasurer is called, and tell him what poor food he is serving. Now, every man knows he is trying to make the mess money go as far as possible, and also to provide good food. He has a thankless job and the members of the mess like to run him, as the expression goes. Suppose he serves up that delightful concoction of domestic economy, meat balls. The running fire of comment on such fare would make any ordinary man's hair gray in a month. The members of the mess even go so far as to tell him that when he dies his monument should be topped with a marble representation of a dish of meat balls.

Let some man appear in evening dress after word has been passed that for once such a costume may be omitted at dinner. The luckless one is howled out of the wardroom and invited to set 'em up when he comes back. Let a man make some wild or foolish statement or boast; he never hears the last of it. Perhaps the chief engineer may get permission not to wear evening dress for an evening or two while he is fixing up some dirty work in the engine room. Some one will sing out:

"Captain, I work so hard; please excuse me from dressing for dinner." Forthwith the Fourth Ward, as the lower end of the table is called, gets up a yell and at a signal this is heard:

Bill Johnson! Bill Johnson! Bill Johnson!
I—work—so—hard!
Johnson, Johnson, Johnson!
Bill says it is on him and what'll ye have?

Let some one declare that he is on the water wagon and decline to join in a friendly glass. Forthwith over his place at the table will appear the H. T. T. banner, which, being interpreted, means Holier Than Thou, and the man says he'll stay on the wagon if you don't object, but will the others please order what they'd like at his expense.

Lovesick members of the mess get it unmercifully, but when the glasses come on the table at dinner some evening and the lovelorn man smiles and announces his marriage engagement, hearty, indeed, are the congratulations and the girl's health is drunk with gusto. Let some member have a birthday. Again good wishes predominate. All hands make speeches. Poems are presented. Hits and grinds are got off. It all goes to make the men of the mess forget that they are made of human clay, the kind that grows brittle and crumbles upon close contact.

Various expedients for making social life delightful are tried. Take the Kansas, for instance. Go over to dinner there some night and you will find the usual good natured raillery going on all the time, but at the end of nearly every course some one will get up and go to the piano and sing a song, a good one, too. They have half a dozen singers on that ship, and you can scarcely spend a more delightful evening anywhere. Perhaps they have invited Father Gleeson of the Connecticut over, and after suitable urging this accomplished chaplain priest will tell some Irish stories or will sing "The Wearin' o' the Green" for you. And then the ordnance officer will probably step up and sing some rare English ballads, and you make him sing half a dozen times that old gypsy song "Dip Your Fingers in the Stew."

COCK ROBIN'S SAD FATE.

Perhaps you go to the Minnesota. That ship has the prize runners. They do josh a man for certain. There's Henry Ball, for instance, only that isn't his name. Down at one corner some man will cry out:

"Who killed Cock Robin?"

At the far end another will respond:

"I," said the sparrow."

In the middle will come a voice:

"'With my bow and arrow.'"

And down and around will go the details of the dreadful tragedy of the death of Cock Robin. It's a mournful tale, but as the details are set forth loudly there comes a twinkle in the eyes of certain men, and then after Cock Robin is buried decently a shout will come:

"Who knows it all?"

Another shout will answer:

"Henry Ball, Henry Ball!"

Another voice:

"He knows it all!"

Still another voice:

"With his brass and gall!"

Mr. Ball has been guilty of the assumption of too much knowledge and he must take his medicine and grin.

The luckless newspaper man who is a passenger on a warship does not escape. He's meat for these flesh eaters. THE SUN man mentioned one day that he was sorry he had missed a certain piece of news because it was something that would interest everybody, millions of people, in fact.

"How many millions of people, for example?" asked an innocent voice.

"Well, there are more than three millions of people in New York city alone," was the reply. It was a mistake. Scarcely a day has passed on the cruise when some one at the wardroom table does not say in the proper tone of voice and just at the psychological moment:

"Three millions of people made happy!"

That moment comes often in port after some one has asked the correspondent if he has cabled such and such a piece of news. He usually says he has.

Up rises the table and a 12 inch roar shakes things.

"Three millions of people made happy!"

PATIENCE WITH THE BORES

A mess attendant drops a dish and the accident starts a discussion as to the large amount of breakage of crockery. One member who has been afflicting the mess with the recital of numerous details of his household affairs, having been married only a year and a half, protests against the carelessness of mess attendants. He says it is an outrage the way the mess crockery is broken. There is no excuse for it. Downright carelessness it is, and something ought to be done about it right away.

"Why," he says, "do you know that in our married life we have had just one servant and I give you my word, she has not broken one single piece of crockery. That's a fact."

"What do you use in your home, Jackson—agate ware?" asks a rogue across the way, and for the rest of the meal the mess is relieved from any more details of Jackson's domestic affairs.

Just on the edge of the Fourth ward is a lieutenant who has a wonderful baby. The mess hears all about that kid whenever a fresh mail arrives. The child must be pretty fine and the mess puts up with the narration of his superior points and cunning ways with a kindly indulgence and restraint. The conversation drifts one evening to the case of a seaman who was sick all night and unable to sleep and the big doctor, as the ranking surgeon is called, is telling about the way the man must have suffered before he complained. The father of the baby takes the matter up at once and says:

"Doctor, Mrs. Williams writes me that the other night the baby cried all night long. Neither she nor the baby got a wink of sleep. What do you do for a baby who cries all night without stopping?"

"Take it out the next morning and choke it to death," growls the doctor.

Williams is puzzled at the shout that goes up and while he is trying to fathom its meaning the mess rises up and, pointing its collective finger at the big doctor, hurls this shout at him:

"Cruel man! Cruel man! Cruel man!"

Williams's baby never cries all night again for that mess.

Chaffing like this is going on in all the ships constantly. At every opportunity the fun takes a wider scope. For example, on St. Valentine's day every one on the Louisiana got a wireless message transmitted from home in some mysterious way through the flagship; at least that is what the messages said. The messages contained roasts that set the wardroom in an uproar. THE SUN man was notified by his managing editor that "Three millions of people were made happy" by what he had written. Peculiar messages signed Sweetheart and other endearing terms reached some of the younger members. The proud father of a new baby got word of the usual cutting of the first tooth. The man who was living on a "dead horse" received word that the increased pay bill might fail.

Taken all in all, this chaffing is similar to a Clover Club, a Gridiron Club or an Amen Corner lambasting. It is given and taken in good part. Years of skill have taught the naval officer how far to go and when to stop to avoid pitfalls. The man who shows anger or resentment gets it all the more. There is a delicacy of adjustment in it all that commands admiration.

PROGRAMME OF A CAMPFIRE.

Occasionally there will be something formal in the roasting process. For instance on the Vermont they have what they call Campfire No. 6 of the Spanish War Veterans. Its members consist of a correspondent and officers who served in the Spanish war. They meet at stated intervals. They hold long sessions. These are supposed to consist of recitals of heroism, hairbreadth escapes, devotion to duty and the like. They had one of their meetings on December 31 last. The members of the campfire were surprised to find a printed programme of the evening's entertainment. The correspondent member is J. B. Connolly, the sea story writer and the President's friend. This was the programme:

1. The old favorite
WILD BILL TARDY
familiarly known to theatregoers as the
BIG CHIEF OF MONOLOGUE
Mr. Tardy has consented to recite the touching poem "My bullies sha'n't play ball to-day."

2. LITTLE ABE BRINSER
the peerless, precocious sharpshooter. The feature of this act will be the shooting of a clay pigeon before it leaves the trap.

3. That wonderful Oriental Magician
RAJAH PALMER
In plain view of the audience, he will grow a horse chestnut into a bull weighing 1,728 pounds
N. B. First time on any stage.

4. The blacksmiths of Journalism
CONNOLLY and PATCHIN
This act is REALLY great consisting of Novel writings and rhetorical spasms.
P. S. Audience requested not to go to sleep.

5. STEVE ROWAN
The clever character sketch comedian.
Will faithfully portray noted English characters, viz.: BEAU BRUMMEL, LORD CHUMLEY, LAWRANCE D'ORSAY, &c.

6. Those smooth canteen idols
Jack HIGGINS and DOUGLASS Spike
In a screaming farce entitled
SKIN'EM AND CHEAT'EM

7. The Alexander Salvini of polite vaudeville
L. C. BERTOLETTE
The great emotional tragedian in the
BALCONY SCENE FROM ROMEO & JULIET
Positively pathetic, piercing and painful

The names of these officers of the campfire were printed on the back:

"Roast Master," C. P. Snyder; "Libation Master," L. M. Overstreet; "Keeper of the Logs," F. M. Furlong; "Keeper of the Alarm Clock," A. B. Drum; "Bouncer," B. L. Canaga.

If there is any man who can write verse or jingles he has to exercise his muse when any gala day comes. Here is what Mr. Connolly produced when the Vermont crossed the line:

SUBPŒNA.
Vale of Seaweed, Hall of Atlantus.
HEAR YE, HEAR YE.

In this my sacred realm, where lively dolphins leap
And beauteous mermaids round and round me sweep,
In this fair sea where warm south trades
Do toss the gentle ocean 'bove the whirling blades,
Has come, I learn, a battleship first rate,
And at her peak the flag of nation great—
Her name Vermont, with many turret guns,
Of twenty thousand horse-power and sixteen thousand tons.

And learning this, I, Neptunus, and of Ocean King,
Do don my trident and my signet ring
To mark which of her white clothed numerous crew
Are known to me, which to my realm are new.
Your name, strange sir, I find not on my roster—
A most disgraceful thing, and branding you imposter;
Appear you, then, that this foul blackest stain
By baptism be cleansed in our domain.

All ye firemen, water tenders and greasy oilers,
All ye mess lads, commissaries and chicken broilers,
All ye boat destroyers and gun busters,
All ye marines, signal boys and jack-o'-dusters,
All ye topsiders, warrants and enlisted men,
No matter where ye shipped or when,
All ye who are not of the slush anointed,
Appear, I say, before the Court appointed.

Fail to appear and ever rue the day
My kingly law you dared to disobey.
Attest: OCTOPUS, Executus Officerius.
January 4, 1908.

There is always a good deal of serious conversation, especially as to naval matters. Reuterdahl was a constant topic. He had a good many supporters in his assertions that the ships of the fleet were not what they should be and what most people thought they were. Then there was the everlasting discussion of the pay bill and its chances before Congress. Always there was talk of naval history, incidents of old cruises, Naval Academy reminiscences, and not a day passed without earnest shop talk, how to improve this or that thing, how to add to the fighting efficiency of the ship. All this talk is from a lofty and patriotic standpoint, and the one thing that impresses the outsider is the intense loyalty to the flag.

LITTLE GAMBLING ON SHIPS.

By way of other diversion there is always harmless card playing of one kind or another after dinner and the day's work is over. Chess and checkers are played also. It is a mistake to think that there is gambling on warships as a rule. Bridge has its devotees. Many people believe that naval officers are inveterate poker players. They may have been in the past, but if the cruise of the Louisiana is a criterion it has disappeared. THE SUN correspondent has been in a position to know the facts and he asserts with the utmost positiveness that there has not been a single game of poker played by the officers of this ship on the present cruise. Heaven knows naval officers, just like other folks, have enough of human frailties to answer for, but they rise superior to many folks in that they have not the sin of poker playing to explain away, at least not in the modern conditions of naval life at sea. This form of gambling may exist on some ships but if what the officers of the Louisiana say is true it is rarely nowadays that it is practised in the navy.

Social amenities are observed most carefully by these men. Every mess has its social secretary, who looks after social correspondence. The mess has its social card. When a ship reaches port where there are other ships of the navy or where there are foreign warships the niceties of calling and entertaining etiquette are observed. A naval officer would no more neglect observing all social proprieties than he would appear without his proper uniform on the quarter deck.

Many officers spend a large part of their time in reading. They are an unusually well informed set of men. Their wide travel conduces to this. Some of them are musically inclined and many an evening is spent in the steerage where there is a piano. It takes only a few minutes to get up an improvised orchestra of a couple of violins, a guitar, a mandolin and a horn or two. Songs soon begin to be heard and the music fest often develops into a story telling contest and all hands turn in late after a jovial evening.

Officers' club life on warships is run on good, wholesome lines. It is manly, free, entertaining, fruitful of self-control and always in keeping with the responsible station of men who have sworn to defend with their lives the honor and integrity of their country.

BETTER MEN FOR SAILORS THAN FORMERLY.

There are those who lament that in these days of steel ships and electrical appliances all the picturesque side of a sailorman's life on a warship has disappeared. They talk of the old days of romance and poetry and sentiment aboard ship. Well, things have changed for the sailorman, but those who know how much his creature comforts have been improved, how his health is safeguarded, how his mental necessities are looked after, are glad with him that there has been a change. A warship is not intended to be a poetry factory. It's a fighting machine and with the best guns that you can get you need the best men available to shoot them.

No longer is the navy the last refuge of the scum of town and country, the receptacle of jailbirds temporarily at large, the resort of men not fit for any decent toil on land. The navy needs men of intelligence and good character, the bright boys from the farm; young lads from the city, who otherwise would have to spend their lives in factories. The navy needs these men, and it is getting them all the time. Why? Because largely there have been many changes from the old methods, because no workingmen in the world have better food, more comfortable clothes, more sanitary housing, more opportunities for mental improvement, more wholesome recreations.

It is true that Jack no longer has to do duty as a captain of a top, no more does he receive orders to cockbill spars, square yards, man the main clew garnets and buntlines, man the weather fore and main cro'jack braces, as in the old days. The old horse block, as the platform where the officer of the deck formerly stood to give his orders at sea was called, can be found no more on warships. The old sports of head bumping, hammer and anvil and sparring, old style, have gone. Here is what sparring used to be:

"Sparring consists of playing single stick with bone poles instead of wooden ones. Two men stand apart and pummel each other with their fists (a hard bunch of knuckles permanently attached to the arms and made globular or extended into a palm at the pleasure of the proprietor) till one of them, finding himself sufficiently thrashed, cries enough."

Pretty good swatting that.

No more are Wednesdays and Saturdays the regular shaving days with every man restricted to two shaves a week. No more are the sick bays the most cramped and worst ventilated places in the ship. A lot of these things have disappeared, just as flogging has disappeared, and if the romance of the sea has gone with the passing of sailing ships and the development of steel ships into great factories and arsenals the general condition of Jack has improved in inverse proportion and the country can say good-by to the old ways with no regrets.

GENERAL MESS A GREAT IMPROVEMENT.

When the general mess of the crew was formed in recent years there were those who said it would never do. Croakers and obstructors of new things abound in all walks of life and at all times. The result has been that one wonders how a warship ever managed to get along without the mess. One man now has charge of the feeding of all the men. There are no longer thirty or forty messes with varying grades of food. The navy regulations declare that so much material shall be fed to the crew for each man. He gets that allowance, and it is as wholesome food as any person can eat.

THE SUN correspondent knows, for he has eaten with these men. Many a time has he seen members of the wardroom mess send out for some of the food the sailormen were eating at that moment, the officers preferring it to the food of their own mess. Every man on a warship has his pound and three-quarters of meat a day. He must be provided with it, the regulations say, no matter what the cost. He must have a certain allowance of this and that, and a general steward sees that it is made up into attractive dishes.

The sailorman no longer eats his meals sitting on a deck with the food spread out before him on a piece of canvas. He has tables and benches and plated knives and forks. His dishes are washed by machinery, his tables scrubbed until they are as clean as any housewife could make them. And when he is through his meal all are triced up out of the way, in what a landsman would call the rafters, practically out of sight.

Gone are the days of scouse, lob scouse, skillagalee, burgoo, lob dominion. Gone are the days when the men divided themselves up into societies for the destruction of salt beef and pork. Slush, as the duff made from large quantities of beef fat was called, is one of the absent morsels of food. You don't hear anything more of dunderfunk. What was dunderfunk? Well, it has been defined by sea sharks in this way: "As cruel nice a dish as man ever put into him." It was made of hardtack hashed and pounded, mixed with beef fat, molasses and water, and it was baked in a pan. No, the men nowadays have cottage pudding, tapioca pudding, ice cream, if you please. Their meats are of the finest. Every article of food is the best that can be bought. It's plain food, true, but no food was ever better than the best of plain food. Here is a menu of one week picked at random from the collection:

SUNDAY.
Breakfast.
Baked Pork and Beans.
Tomato Catsup.
Bread and Butter.
Coffee.
Dinner.
Roast Pork.
Apple Sauce.
Brown Gravy.
Potatoes.
String Beans.
Bread and Butter.
Coffee.
Supper.
Cold Corned Beef.
Tinned Fruit.
Cake.
Bread and Butter.
Coffee.

MONDAY.
Breakfast.
Corn Meal Mush.
Milk.
Fried Pork Sausage.
Bread and Butter.
Coffee.
Dinner.
Vegetable Soup.
Roast Beef.
Gravy and Potatoes.
Bread and Butter.
Coffee.
Supper.
Beef Pot Pie.
Jelly.
Bread and Butter.
Tea.

TUESDAY.
Breakfast.
Ham Hash.
Tomato Catsup.
Bread and Butter.
Coffee.
Dinner.
Fricasee of Veal.
Green Peas.
Potatoes.
Bread and Butter.
Coffee.
Supper.
Frankfurters.
Hot Slaw.
Bread and Butter.
Tea.

WEDNESDAY.
Breakfast.
Baked Pork and Beans.
Tomato Catsup.
Bread and Butter.
Coffee.
Dinner.
Tomato Soup.
Boiled Ham.
Potatoes.
Bread and Butter.
Coffee.
Supper.
Hamburg Steak.
Onion Gravy.
Potatoes.
Bread and Butter.
Tea.

THURSDAY.
Breakfast.
Fried Pork Chops.
Onion Gravy.
Potatoes.
Bread and Butter.
Coffee.
Dinner.
Roast Beef.
Brown Gravy.
Potatoes.
Bread and Butter.
Coffee.
Supper.
Cold Corned Beef.
Fried Potatoes.
Bread and Butter.
Tea.

FRIDAY.
Breakfast.
Oatmeal and Milk.
Fried Bacon.
Bread and Butter.
Coffee.
Dinner.
Pot Roast Beef.
Brown Gravy.
Macaroni and Tomatoes.
Potatoes.
Bread and Butter.
Coffee.
Supper.
Tinned Salmon.
Potato Salad.
Bread and Butter.
Tea.

SATURDAY.
Breakfast.
Beef Stew.
Bread and Butter.
Coffee.
Dinner.
Bean Soup.
Boiled Pork.
Pickles.
Potatoes.
Bread and Butter.
Coffee.
Supper.
Bologna Sausage.
Rice Pudding.
Jelly.
Bread and Butter.
Tea.

The menus of every ship have to be forwarded to the flagship every week so that the Admiral may observe whether the men have had the proper kind of food. No, Jack no longer kicks seriously about his food on a warship. No workingman in the world gets better.

EXCELLENT LIBRARIES ON BOARD.

Take the libraries nowadays. There are two of them on every ship, the ship's library and the crew's library. The officers use the ship's library. It is scattered about the officers' quarters in various cases, some in the wardroom, some in the Captain's or Admiral's quarters, some in the steerage. There are about thirty classifications, dealing with technical subjects, with history, travel, adventure, poetry, a limited amount of fiction and so on. The crew's library is three times larger. There is a great deal of history and travel and adventure and some science in it, but the larger part is made up of as good fiction as the English language provides. The classic authors are represented, but a large amount of the newer fiction is also represented. You find Kipling, Anthony Hope, E. W. Hornung, W. W. Jacobs, Jack London, Weir Mitchell, Booth Tarkington, S. J. Weyman, along with Bret Harte, Mark Twain, R. L. Stevenson, Scott, Thackeray, Charles Reade, Washington Irving, Bulwer-Lytton and so on.

And the men read these books! Far into the night you will come across some youngster whose hammock is near a light and who cannot sleep straining his eyes in reading some book. At any time when the smoking lamp is lit and the men have knocked off work if you walk through the ship you will probably find 150 men reading books. Their association with the best fiction and best history is constant. They discuss these books and they get a fund of information that no other grade of men in a factory receive.

And how was it in the old days? Melville tells about it in his "White Jacket," the book that relates to the old frigate United States in 1843. He says:

"There was a public library on board paid for by Government and entrusted to the custody of one of the marine corporals, a little, dried up man of a somewhat literary turn. He had once been a clerk in a post office ashore, and having been long accustomed to hand over letters when called for he was now just the man to hand over books. He kept them in a large cask on the berth deck, and when seeking a particular volume had to capsize it like a barrel of potatoes. This made him very cross and irritable, as most all librarians are. Who had the selection of these books I do not know, but some of them must have been selected by our chaplain, who so pranced on Coleridge's 'High German Horse.'"

Mason Good's "Book of Nature," a very good book, to be sure, but not precisely adapted to literary tastes, was one of these volumes; and Macchiavelli's "Art of War," which was very dry fighting; and a folio of Tillotson's sermons, the best of reading for divines indeed, but with little relish for a main top man; and Locke's Essays, incomparable essays, everybody knows, but miserable reading at sea; and Plutarch's Lives—superexcellent biographies, which pit Greek against Roman in beautiful style, but then, in a sailor's estimation, not to be mentioned with the lives of the Admirals; and Blair's Lectures, University Edition, a fine treatise on rhetoric, but having nothing to say about nautical phrases, such as "splicing the main brace," "passing a gammoning," "puddin'ing the dolphin," and "making a Carrick-bend," besides numerous invaluable but unreadable tomes that might have been purchased cheap at the auction of some college professor's library.

RECREATIONS OF THE MEN.

The sailorman has lots of recreation nowadays. Three times a week, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday nights, the band plays for him on the fo'c's'le deck. He seizes his mate and he dances wildly, madly or slowly and gracefully, as he pleases. You see as fine dancing there as you can see in a fashionable ballroom in any capital of the world. He has his cards, his pets—dogs, cats, birds—and he foregathers from time to time to sing. He likes to box and play baseball and to row, and the Government provides for suitable athletic equipment for his sports. He loves a boxing contest on the quarter deck with all the officers looking on and the rules of the ring enforced rigidly. It gladdens his heart to applaud and to hear others applaud, and he was much rejoiced in Callao when several Peruvians who were the guests of the New Jersey's wardroom at a boxing contest sang out in their delight:

"Viva la box fight!"

Jack laughed at that long and hearty. He loves rowing contests and he and his mates on a single ship frequently wager as much as $10,000 on their own crew. Jack goes broke for months sometimes on these races. Sometimes a man will bet from $500 to $1,000 or $1,200 on his crew and he'll be all in for months afterward, but he likes a run for his money. When he wins all hands know it at the next liberty and Jack and his friends have trouble in toeing a seam, but Lord! what a good time they've had!

THE SHIP'S CANTEEN.

Then there is the ship's canteen that ministers to Jack's comfort. The canteen is not like what an army canteen used to be, a place where drinks were served, but it's a country store. In it Jack can buy tobacco, stationery, soap, little articles of clothing, thread and needles, knick-knacks—and above all things eles, candy. You see, Jack gets nothing to drink but water in various forms on ship and he runs to sweets. Many a ship carries away with her on a cruise two or three tons of candy in starting out. In less than six weeks the Louisiana's canteen had sold more than $2,000 worth of candy to the crew.

The canteen makes a small profit so as to overcome losses by the deterioration of goods, but all its wares are sold practically to Jack at cost price. It is for his benefit exclusively and he gets the best quality of goods at the lowest prices. It is under charge of the ship's paymaster and it is financed much as the ship's messes are. What profits there are go to swelling the athletic fund or perhaps to provide for a minstrel show; anyhow, it all goes toward making Jack's life on ship as comfortable as possible.

LOUISIANA'S MINSTREL SHOW.

So Jack eats well and sleeps well and he works and plays with zest. He sings and dances and perhaps he gets more fun out of a minstrel show on board than any other thing. In Callao harbor the Louisiana had its minstrel show. On the after part of the quarter deck was a stage about twenty by twenty-five feet. It had flies and wings and all the upper and lower entrances. It had three drop curtains, one of them with "Asbestos" painted on it. It had footlights and spotlights. It had red lights with "Exit" and "Fire Escape" lettered on them. Every bit of the stage scenery was painted by expert men on the ship. Every bit of electric lighting was done by the ship's crew. It was as creditable as most of the scenic and stage work in a large theatre. The quarter deck was all shut in and canopied and you could scarcely realize that you were not in a modern theatre.

All the crew attended the show. Delegations of twenty-five men from each of the battleships in the fleet came. They were met at the port gangway by ushers who had reserved seats for them. Programmes, the woodcuts for which were made on board—and the entire printing was done there as well—were handed out to each person as he took his place. The officers were given programmes at the starboard gangway by pages in bolero jackets and plush breeches and silk stockings. An old naval custom was revived by having side boys with lanterns.

It was the old fashioned minstrel show, with end men and jokes and songs for the first part and stunts and sketches for the second. More than 1,600 men looked on. Imagine 1,600 men seated in comfort on a quarter deck! My, how the ships of the navy have grown! The 12 inch guns were tilted down and seats covered with flags built on them. The turret was utilized for a gallery. The after bridge took the place of nigger heaven. There was no sign of a warship about, all the implements of trade being hidden. Only the uniforms of the men suggested the thought of a navy: those and the grinds on the officers and ships.

The singing was quite as good as that of any travelling minstrel show. The company had a manager, secretary, treasurer, pianist, electrician, stage manager, master of properties, costumer, carpenter and all the rest of a regular theatrical outfit, and all hands voted it as good as anything you could see in that line on any stage.

And when it was all over flags were dropped, ropes loosened and the trappings came down in a jiffy, just as a circus packs up its effects. The visitors were marched to certain gangways. They went down as their boats, which were lying alongside, were called, and in thirty minutes all the guests were gone, all the trappings put away and the routine of ship life was in progress as if there never had been the slightest interruption. But Jack had had a night of nights.

JACK'S DEVOTION TO DUTY.

It is by making Jack happy and comfortable, giving him wholesome pleasure as well as wholesome food, that the best fighting results are obtained. There is no better sailor afloat, mentally or morally. He is intelligent, willing and he loves his flag. Of course, he's human. He will streak for a saloon when he gets liberty. What manner of man wouldn't when he has been shut up in a ship for days and weeks with not even a glass of beer to drink. He spends his money on shore foolishly. He's a child in many respects, for Uncle Sam looks after him on shipboard paternally, tells him what to wear and when, gives him his food in scientific measure, looks after his health, provides amusement and mental diversion for him. He gets in the brig occasionally and he's mighty sorry for it. He gets scolded now and then, but he tries to do his duty. Watch his enthusiasm when target practice approaches and see him sneak out before breakfast and do extra work just for the love of it and you'll appreciate what it means.

Growl? Lord bless your soul! he wouldn't be happy and the ship wouldn't be happy and the officers would be alarmed if he didn't growl. But sulk? Not on your life! He wants his ship to get the record in shooting, rowing, boxing, economic consumption of coal, signal work, speed and every other contest that enters into fleet life. He'll back his money on his own ship and when he fights he's willing to go down fighting with her if that's to be his fate.

Dibdin's ballads of the true English sailor are as true to-day as when they were written, a century ago. And they are as true of the American sailor as of the English. Here is one that sums up Jack's seagoing life:

Jack dances and sings and is always content;
In his vows to his lass he'll ne'er fall her.
His anchor's a-trip when his money's all spent;
And this is the life of a sailor.

And so you see that a warship may have guns and magazines and ponderous engines and coal bunkers and deep recesses in her hold, and her purpose may be to destroy and kill, but with it all there's good fellowship abounding in her gradation of compartments, and perhaps on reading this you get some indication of what was meant in the beginning of this article by the statement that socially a warship houses a series of clubs. Good clubs they are, too.

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