

service has gone to the dogs since something or another has happened: but my informant always takes care to fix some date that shall not include himself. It was my good fortune to enter the service just before pepper and mustard became part of the daily rations; so, you see, I really am a salt of the olden time. The good old days had their charms certainly, and there is some truth in the lament:

“When sailors fed on mouldy bread  
And lumps of rusty pork,  
No Frenchman dared his nose to show  
Between the Downs and Cork:  
But now that Jack gets beef and greens,  
And next his skin wears flannel,  
We've not an ironclad to show  
In plight to keep the Channel.”

One afternoon, when we were sailing in line of battle, with a steady breeze, the signal was hoisted for the Fleet to heave-to; we anxiously watched the flag-ship to see the cause of the stoppage, when to my astonishment I saw my own name flying at her mast-heads; the Admiral had recollected a request I made a short time before to be transferred to another ship, and this was the signal that my request was granted. I had forgotten all about it, and thought that the Admiral had so too, and was not in the least prepared. Of course, it became now a point of honour for my captain to show how smart he could be in obeying the signal: you may suppose he was not particularly well pleased at my wishing to go, and did not think what my feelings were likely to be: indeed, I never heard that a midshipman was allowed to have feelings. I rushed down to pack my things up; there was my proverbial midshipman's chest, “everything uppermost, and nothing at hand;” my messmates did what they could to help me, jumping on the lid when it hopelessly gaped; a cutter was lowered and manned; in ten minutes my chest was hoisted out, and with all my worldly goods I was pulling towards my new home. From every ship telescopes were levelled at me to discover what belonged to this name which had been advertised as the reason of delay to the whole Fleet: for the moment I knew and felt what it was to have greatness thrust on me; but in a few minutes my chest was again swinging in the air, myself and my traps were passed on board my new ship, and in half an hour the Fleet had made sail again. Of course I left a great many things behind; some I did not get back for weeks, others I am still in search of; some chocolate and a silver tork I at once abandoned all hope of.

It was dreary enough to find myself suddenly dropped into a new world among perfect strangers; I was at once put into a

watch, and found my duty would begin that night, from midnight till 4 A.M. At twelve o'clock I came on deck; my watchmates were friendly enough, and at once proposed that we should make some coffee. With the senior midshipman of the watch I went down to the gunroom: “Now,” said he, “you bring the spoons and the coffee, and I'll bring the cups and saucers.” I thought it very considerate of him to offer to carry the fragile china; and so it afterwards proved. We made our coffee successfully, and at four o'clock went to bed again. The next morning at seven I was washing in the cockpit in scant apparel, when the senior mate of the mess came forward with a dog-whip. “Which of you youngsters was it took silver spoons out of the mess last night?” I innocently confessed that I had: he then slowly and carefully explained to me that it was contrary to the rules of the mess, and that I must not forget it: he emphasized his remarks and pointed his observations with repeated cuts of his dog-whip, and so, you see, I have not forgotten it unto this day.

Making coffee in the night-watches was one of the principal employments of the youngsters. Sometimes we had “conjurers” to make it in; but as a conjuror only made a little at a time, and as the spirits of wine for the lamp was expensive, we oftener lighted a small fire in a corner of the galley-range, and made it in a saucepan. The cook did not always approve of having his saucepans dirtied: one night, when I went as usual to make coffee, I found he had locked up everything except a frying-pan. I went to the mate of the watch, and told him: his memorable answer was, “Youngster, if you don't make some coffee, you'll be licked.” With a heavy heart and a shallow frying-pan I set about my task, and at last succeeded in producing a smoked infusion of coffee-grounds. I brought it on deck to the midshipmen of the watch, who were surreptitiously smoking their cigars between the boom-boats: they desired me to keep it hot till they had finished their smoke. In vain I pleaded that coffee would not retain its caloric in a coverless frying-pan: “If it gets cold you'll be licked,” was the answer. I will not linger over the harrowing details; it *did* get cold, and those prophetic words were literally fulfilled.

These are some of my “Professional Recollections of Seaman'ship and Discipline,” to borrow the title of a well-known book. These are some of the incidents of life in that Mediterranean Fleet, whose like we ne'er shall see again, and whose softly-pensive career was rudely broken in upon by the Russian War.