

# John Gillie

## Sea captain in the days of sail

Born 1829.

Autobiographical life story.

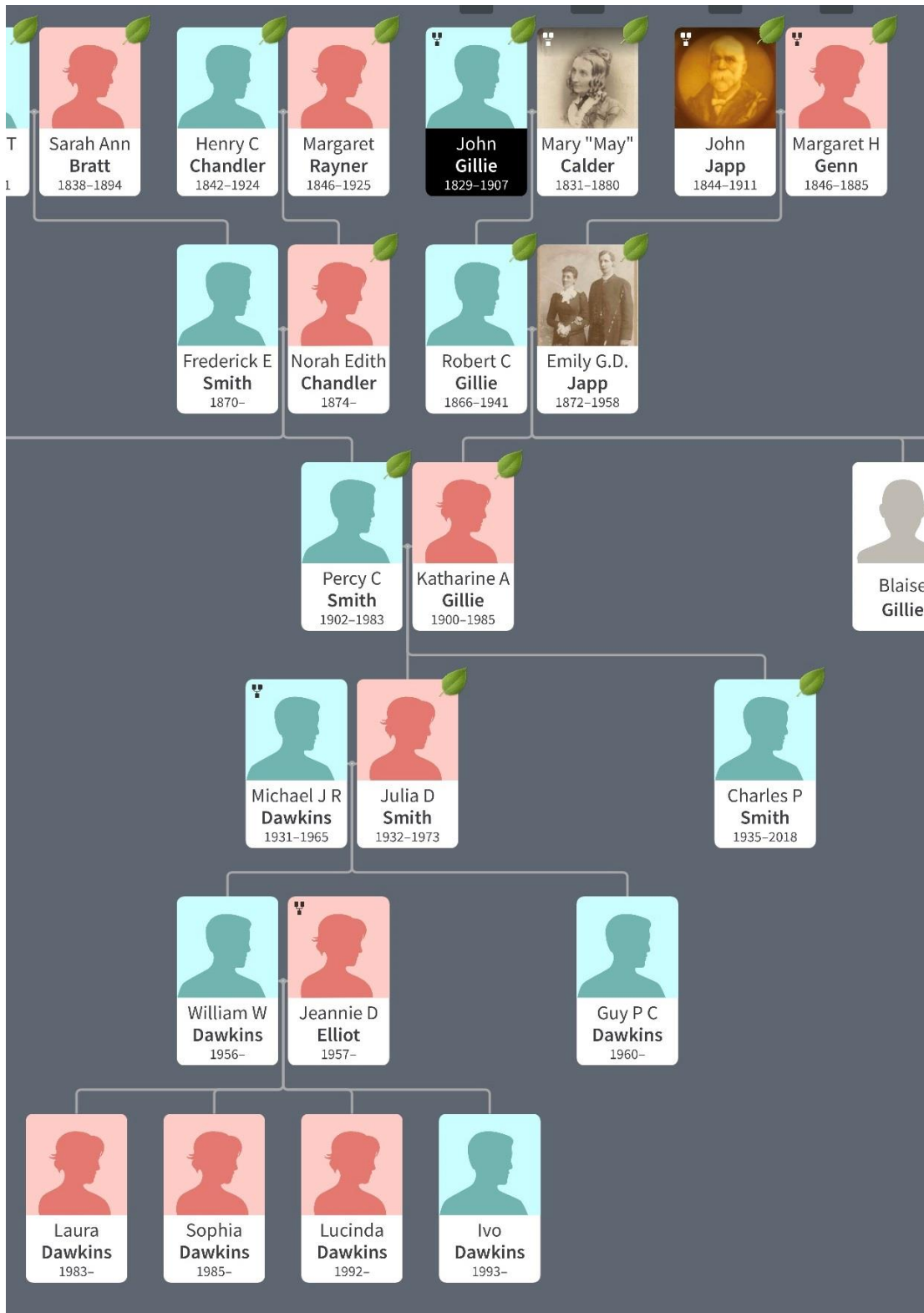
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Spyglass owned by John Gillie. Given to his brother Paul Johnstone Gillie upon Paul's departure for Canada.

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This life story was contributed to Lives Retold in 2020 by William Dawkins, great great grandson of John Gillie. The relationship is shown in the family tree above.



John Gillie in 1882, aged 53. When John Gillie was born in 1829 in Eyemouth, Berwickshire, his father, John, was 33 and his mother, Grace, was 36. He had one child with Mary "May" Calder and two other children. He died in January 1907 in South Shields, Durham, having lived a long life of 78 years.

# Memorabilia

Copy of First Mariner's Ticket  
(Aged 16)

## MARINER'S REGISTER TICKET

Issued Pursuant to the Act of 7th. & 8th. of  
Victoria, Cap. 112

NO. OF TICKET: 444,110

Four Hundred and Forty-Four Thousand One  
Hundred and Ten.

NAME: John Gillie

Born at: Eyemouth in the County of Berwick

on the : 27th October 1829

Capacity: Apprentice

Height 5 feet 8 inches      Hair: Black

Complexion: Swarthy      Eyes: Hazel

Marks on Person: Cut on Upper Lip

Bearer's Signature :

This Ticket was issued from the General Register and  
Record Office of Seamen to the Collector and  
Comptroller of Customs of the Port of : Liverpool  
for the purposes of the above mentioned Act.

Issued to the above mentioned J. Gillie by the and  
Comptroller of Customs of the Port of Liverpool  
on the 10th Jany. 1894

Copy of letter to Nellie Kier, (Niece).

20 Burr Street,  
London, E.

20 April 1858.

My dear little Ella,

When Auntie Maia & I left Elford we took the train to York and arrived at that place about half past nine that same night. York is a very old city, and has a very large church. It is not called a church but a minster. We went to see this minster and found it so large that it would have held six churches like the one at North Sunderland inside of it. But dear little Ella knows God thinks quite as much of a little church as of a big one. And also that little Ella is as precious in the eyes of our Heavenly father as the tallest lady or gentlemen in the world.

Since we came to London we have gone to see the Thames Tunnel. This is a road made underground beneath the river that runs past London, and the people instead of taking a boat to cross the water, go through this road under the water and reach the other side. Now if there was a road like this from Granton to N. S. Mama and little Ella would not require to go to sea, and be made seasick in the nasty steamer.

On Sabbath we went to hear a very old minister preach. His name is Doctor Fletcher and he is very fond of little girls like little Ella. He is anxious for little girls to love the Lord Jesus because the Lord Jesus first loved little children.

I send you a medal on which is a picture of a great ship that has been built in London. You will sometimes look at it and remember Auntie Maia & Uncle John and when you are old enough you will write to us. We are dear little Ella

your affectionate uncle & Aunt.

The following, from the Hartlepool History Then and Now website, gives details of the 'Daisy' of which John Gillie was captain and part owner. Note that his wife and child accompanied him on board.

## **Daisy - a general history**

Official No. 15995: Code Letters LVPG.

Owners: June 1857 John Robinson (South Shields) & John Gillie (Spindelston) South Shields

Masters: 1857-60 J Gillie (C.N.3508 Shields 1852): 1860 Garrick: 1863-65 John Gillie

Voyages: 1857-58 Penang for Portland, Dorset: 1858 London for Colombo: 1861 Sulina for Kinsale: 27 November 1861 from Leith for Sydney, NSW: 1865 Shields for China

The *Daisy* sailed from Shields for China in May 1864 & having called at Penang & Saigon she was on her way to Sourabaya with a cargo of salt. On 1 September 1865 she struck a reef at the entrance to Balabac Island in the China Seas & was abandoned in a sinking condition on 3 September. The crew were saved & arrived at Manilla on 26 October 1865.

### Crew September 1861-April 1862

Aikle, George, 1<sup>st</sup> mate, 22, British

Barr, Nilson, able seaman, 19, British

Brown, Thomas, ordinary seaman, 18, British

Buchanan, William, able seaman, 42, British

Burrow, William, cook/steward, 34, British

Christie, David, able seaman, 26, British

Couter, James, apprentice, 19, British

Dulenty, Michael, carpenter, 25, British

Gillie, John, master

Morgan, Charles, able seaman, 21, British

Osborn, John Conley, apprentice, 15, British

Pearson, William, boatswain, 33, British

Shea, David, apprentice, 15, British

Sinclair, Henry, able seaman, 27, British

Sutherland, George, sailmaker, 30, British

Taylor, William, apprentice, 15, British

White, Peter, able seaman, 25, British

Wilson, William, able seaman, 25, British (discharged at Leith)

### Passengers September 1861-April 1862

Gillie Mrs & child

# Life Story

## CHAPTER I

21st September 1881

My children having expressed a wish that I should write an account of my childhood and how my early years were employed, I have begun the task; but it seems to me that after I am gone to the silent land they would perhaps like to have a record of their forefathers as far back as I have been able to obtain any authentic information. I have no pretensions to be descended from rich or grand ancestors, but as far back as I can trace them our progenitors have been honest and decent people, and most of them have been God-fearing and pious, men and women. My grandfather, by my father's side, was a farmer or small farmer in the village of Coldingham, Berwickshire, where he was born in July 1745 and his descendants by his first wife, at present represented by Andrew Gillie of Berwick, still hold property there which was held by my grandfather, James Gillie.

Before the birth of my Father he had removed to Eyemouth and rented a small farm in that village. He was twice married, my father being the son of his second wife, Margaret Scott. My father was born at the North Burn, Eyemouth on the 17th January, 1796, in the same house in which I first saw the light on the 27th October, 1829. My father was a hardworking, industrious and steady man and after the death of his father, which happened on 10th December, 1816, when he was quite a young man, he by cultivating a small piece of land on his own account, soon saved a little money which enabled him to take a larger piece of land in his native village. He also occasionally bought smoked fish from the curers, and carted them to Edinburgh and sold them there, mostly at a profit, so that he was in a position to marry when he was about 24 or 25 years of age.

My Mother, Grace Johnstone, and my Father were married at Burnmouth on the 24th November 1820, by the Revd. Mr. Moro, the United Presbyterian Minister at Ayton. My Mother was a native of Cove, a fishing village near Cockburnspath. She was born there on the 24th November, 1793. Her father was Paul Johnstone a fisherman, her mother Violet Fairbairn, died shortly after her birth, and her father, Paul Johnstone, married a second wife, Anne Hardy, who lived to a great age and had a large family, who were all brought up at the village of Burnmouth, to which place my Grandfather, Paul Johnstone, had removed shortly after the death of his first wife.

The Johnstones, for many generations, were noted for being brave and resolute seamen. They often did a little smuggling, for when I was a boy visiting my Grandmother Hardy at Burnmouth I remember seeing the "Concealment" underneath the floor of the house where the ankere of spirits used to be hidden for fear of the Excisemen. This trade must have had a demoralizing effect upon Paul Johnstone's descendants, for the Burnmouth family have not turned out well but have been noted for their tippling drunken habits. Paul Johnstone lies buried in the old graveyard at Coldingham. He died at an early age of 52 in the year 1815. His wife Anne Hardy outlived him for many years, and died at the age of 84 or 85.

Before leaving my grandparents I may say that my Grandmother Margaret Scott, or Peggy Scott (as she was called even after her marriage as is the custom among humble people in Scotland at the present day),

was an excellent pious woman, and spent much of her time in reading the Scriptures and in prayer. She lived to a great age, and her body lies buried in Eyemouth Church yard. When her husband died, many years before her, there was great popular dread of resurrectionists stealing the bodies of newly-buried corpses, and my Grandmother always maintained that my Grandfather's (James Gillie's) body had been disturbed in his grave. Hence she requested my Father to bury her body in the graveyard at Eyemouth, which lay in the midst of the village, and was not so lonely as that at Coldingham. Her wish was gratified. My Father and Mother lie near her in Eyemouth Church yard.

My earliest recollection is of my Father taking me with him to see the stone laid of a Primitive Methodist Chapel in Eyemouth, I must then have been about 3 or 4 years of age. Our family in the one-story house at North Burn, Eyemouth, consisted of my Father, Mother, and two brothers besides myself. At first, when very young, we three brothers went to the parish school in Eyemouth kept by a schoolmaster called Trotter, who was also parish clerk and preacher, or leader of the singing on Sundays. He was a good teacher, but as was the custom in those days a terrible man for thrashing his scholars. I do not remember suffering punishment myself, but I have seen him thresh some boys so severely that looking on made me shudder.

There was a Mr. Veitch who kept a school in another part of the village and I was sent there for a time, but on Mr. Veitch's removal to Edinburgh where he went to be headmaster of St. George's Parish School, my Father (who had some idea of making me a Minister), sent me with him. I was then about eight years of age, and can remember as if it happened yesterday, the parting with my dear Mother, and getting into the cart, filled with straw to sit on, which was to convey my father and me to Dunbar, at which place we were to take the mail coach to Edinburgh.

My father had a friend living in Leith, named Wallace, a Custom house officer, and he placed me under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Wallace and then returned home. I have had many partings with friends since that first parting, but I think I felt it more than any of the others. However, the Wallaces were very kind to me, and after a time I became content. I walked from Leith to Edinburgh every day to attend school at St. George's. Dr. Condlish was then Minister of St. George's Parish it being in the year 1838, some years before the disruption of the Church of Scotland. I remember seeing the little Minister coming occasionally to visit the school.

After remaining a year at St. George's I was removed to a school kept by a man called Scotland, in Leith, where I acquired a taste for Arithmetic and Navigation. At the end of the year my father removed from Eyemouth to a farm at old Shorastone near Bambergh, in Northumberland, and as there were no railways in those days, and travelling was expensive and difficult he sent for me home. He had to remove all his furniture and farm implements and other goods from Eyemouth to Shorastone, a distance of thirty miles, by means of carts.

It was somewhere about the month of November 1839 that my father's carts were loaded with furniture at Eyemouth, and in the middle of the afternoon we boys were put into a cart to follow the furniture to our new home. After passing Berwick a storm of hail and snow overtook us and we were glad to seek for refuge at Katie Allison's, a small public house about half way between Berwick and



10. We were a very happy family, for although my father was then somewhat stern in his manner to his children, my dear Mother was the friend and confidante of all of us.

As my father's capital was small it was necessary to make the best of everything, and we were at first obliged to live very economically. However, as time passed and the farm prospered we soon began to save money. My brother James assisted my father on the farm but Paul and I went to Bamburg Castle to school. The Castle School was at that time kept by Mr. Morris, a worthy man and an excellent teacher. I learned the usual branches including Grammar, Geography, and Arithmetic, and a little practical trigonometry and Navigation.

After I had been a year or two in England I read two or three of Marriatt's sea novels, which helped to develop my taste for a sea life. In the matter of books I was allowed to read anything that came in my way and as I was fond of reading I read a great many good books, and also I fear many bad ones. After we had been a year or two at Shoreston the rector of Bamburg died and his library was sold. My father and the neighbours round bought a good many of these books, among them were the original editions of Fielding's and Smollett's novels. These I read, and it took many years to shake off the evil impressions made upon my mind by them. Some of the principal characters of these novels were men of licentious low habits, and there is not a word of reprobation of these in the books to warn the young mind who has the misfortune to read them. Had it not been for my dear Mother's careful religious training of my brothers and myself the influence of such reading might have been very serious.

While we lived at Eyemouth my father and Mother had attended the old parish church and we had all been baptized there, but after we came to England the only Presbyterian church in the neighbourhood was at the village of North Sunderland, and was connected with the United Presbyterians. At the time we came to old Shoreston the congregation was rent in twain over what has since appeared to me a very small question. The Minister, Mr. Brougham, had a little dog, and in one of his walks abroad it had come in contact with the Church of England Minister's big dog, which being the more powerful of the two brutes, had severely bitten it, whereupon Mr. Brougham wrote to the Vicar complaining of the usage his little dog had sustained. The Vicar answered sharply and a paper war arose. Some of Mr. Brougham's congregation sided with him, while others took the part of the Vicar. It ended by a large part of the congregation leaving Mr. Brougham's Church and holding meetings in a school room.

There had been some flaw in the title deeds of the Chapel, which the seceders took advantage of to oust Mr. Brougham. After an expensive law suit and much ill will Mr. Brougham was obliged to leave, and his adherents built a chapel for themselves on the north side of the village. The seceders being now in possession of the chapel, "called" the Rev. Hugh Glover to be their Minister. I thank God that I had the happiness to hold Christian intercourse with him for many years until his death, and that I owe whatever spiritual life I may possess, to his influence, under God.

I may here take occasion to remark on what miserable little questions congregations and sometimes families, wreck their

peace and do much mischief. The village of North Sunderland being small and thinly inhabited could not support two Presbyterian congregations, as well as an English Church; and the consequence has been that instead of a strong congregation doing good work, there has been up to the present year (1882) two weak ones in the place.

My brother Paul and I were close friends, we had few companions out of school and were constantly together. On Saturdays we sometimes spent the day on the shore, where we learned to swim, but we were often employed by my father to help on the farm, or to weed the garden. I never took kindly to the work and always hankered after a sea life. There was however a great deal of herding cattle to do on the farm. This I enjoyed, as I could take a book in my pocket and spend my time agreeably, if not always profitably. Almost every field and hedgerow on the farm of old Shoreston are thus associated in my mind with books that I read while employed herding my father's cattle.

I was always of an adventurous turn of mind as a boy, and had many an escape from the consequences of my rashness. On one occasion while at Eyemouth I went into the stable and lifted up the hind foot of one of the horses, by name "Music". "Music" did not relish such familiarity and struck me a severe blow, which divided my upper lip and laid me senseless at her feet, from which perilous position I was rescued by my Mother. On another occasion I climbed a tree at Shoreston and venturing too far out on the branch, it gave way, and sent me down about 20 feet, to the peril of my neck. As I grew older, however, the habit of caution grew upon me, and all through my sea life, boldness and caution were my principal characteristics.

When I was about 15 years old it became necessary to decide whether I should take to my father's business of farming, or whether I should turn my attention to something else. I had long had a desire to go to sea, and whenever I got a chance to go into a boat I always availed myself of it. About  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a mile from Shoreston there stood a house called Monk's House, in which lived a man and his wife by the name of Robin and Hannah Paterson. He was a fisherman as well as an innkeeper, and as he had a son about my age, who went to school with me at Sumburgh, we boys were often together, and many an hour was spent in the father's Coble, which usually lay a little below the house, at a place called Shoreston Haven. Sometimes the old man would take us out among the Farn Islands, where he went to fish for crabs and lobsters, and occasionally we would knock down a young seal upon one of the low lying reefs near the islands; or collect the sea birds' eggs, which old Robin would sell to naturalists and others.

Robin could tell many stories of shipwrecks, and dangers of the sea, and tales of smuggling affairs in which he had been employed when he was young. He could also sing a good song, mostly of the sea type, and he was really quite a fascinating person for a boy to associate with. It was not therefore to be wondered at if I chose the sea for a profession. My father and mother would rather that I had settled at home, but as I saw no prospect before me but working on the farm as a ploughman, I thought it better to "push my fortune", as the Scotch say, by going to sea.

I was always of a devout turn of mind, and at one time thought of being a Minister, but as my father's affairs were not

sufficiently prosperous to enable him to send me to a university I was fain to take to a sea life. There was one good trait about my father which I have endeavoured to imitate, that was, never to force the inclinations of his boys in the choice of a profession. Therefore in the month of February in the year 1845, I was sent on board the sloop "RACHAEL" of North Sunderland, Henry Gray, Master and Owner, then lying at the Quay North Sunderland, laden with corn, bound to Alnmouth and Newcastle. My father was to go by the coach to Newcastle, and to meet me there, and try to get me bound apprentice to some foreign going ship.

Well do I remember the parting with my dear Mother, and the longing home sickness which I experienced for many a day afterwards.

The crew of the sloop consisted of Henry Gray, Master, Willie Walker, Mate, and an old man whose name I forget, Cook. We had a pleasant run to Alnmouth, where we filled up the hold with wheat, which was mostly sent by sea in those days, as there were no railways in North Northumberland. We then sailed for Newcastle, where we arrived after a pleasant run. My father met me there and he and I went to North Shields to seek a ship. We called at the offices of various shipowners; at length I was bound to Mr. Solomon Meare of North Shields, for the term of four years apprenticeship, wages £40 for the four years, with 12/- per annum washing money. The ship in which it was intended I should go had not yet arrived, and Mr. Meare sent me to board at a little inn in North Shields, called the Lord Nelson, kept by Mary Wilson, a maiden lady. The parting with my father was the last link binding me to home, and I remember I was feeling very sad, on the first evening at my new lodgings. Miss Wilson was however so very kind to me that I ever after regarded her as my second Mother. She did not stay long in the uncongenial atmosphere of a public house, but removed to a house in Norfolk Street where she kept lodgers, and where I always stayed on my visits to Shields. She lived to a great age and died only a few years ago.

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## CHAPTER II

About the end of February 1845 the ship in which I was to sail arrived at North Shields and I joined her there. When I went on board the crew were heaving her in to her moorings by the Capstan, and one of the boys was holding on the rope. It slipped by an accident, whereupon one of the Sailors raised his foot and kicked the boy. I was very much shocked at the brutality of the fellow, and my blood boiled; but I felt that being in a strange position it would not do for me to interfere; but many a time afterwards I had to tackle the bully of the fore-castle and always found him a coward.

I was, when I went to sea, 15½ years of age, about five feet ten inches in height, and stout in proportion. In fact I had attained my full height when I went to sea and never grew any taller or stouter. Compared with the stature of most seafaring men I was well able to take my own part and no one ever attempted to tyrannise over me, except the captain on one occasion, for which he was extremely sorry afterwards.

The "FOUR SISTERS", the ship in which I sailed, loaded coals at Palan Main. She was bound for Dublin, thence to Quebec. We sailed from Shields about the 1st March, 1845. She was a small barque of 320 tons, and carried 11 hands. She was commanded by Captain Stanners, a good seaman of the old school.

After getting to sea we found the wind blowing from the South, and therefore went North about. Two days after sailing we fell in with a very severe gale in the Moray Firth, which drove us for shelter into Longhope, in the Orkney Islands.

Our little vessel being deeply laden, shipped a great quantity of water, and made very bad weather of it. The pumps were kept constantly going, and glad we were to reach the shelter of Longhope. I never was seasick and being on deck all the time during the storm, received a taste of what a sea life was like, but I must say, although I have been in many a gale since, I never was so uncomfortable, or in such great danger as in that little borky in the Moray firth. Although she was only a year old, she was weak and badly fastened, and during every breeze to which she was exposed during the five years I was in her, she leaked badly and was never safe.

We spent about ten days in Longhope where we landed occasionally, and I enjoyed to the full the fine scenery of the Orkney Islands. We sailed at last and shaped our course between the Lewis Islands and the west of Scotland. Another gale sent us into Loch Sheil in the island of Barra for shelter, and it was not until a month had expired from the time of sailing that we reached Dublin.

After discharging our cargo we sailed for America. When on the banks of Newfoundland we came upon a deserted ship, which had struck an iceberg and had been abandoned by her crew. Her name was the "Auxiliar" of Shields. We boarded her with a boat and brought away a good deal of stores such as we needed. I went in the boat with the Mate, and remember being very much struck with

the vessel's appearance. She lay over on her beam ends, with her lee rail in the water. The great hole in her bows made by the iceberg had been patched up by sails and tarpaulings, but still let in a little water which soon after we left her sent her to the bottom.

We arrived all well at Quebec after a long passage. I was always fond of admiring the works of Nature, and never tired of gazing at the grand scenery of the St. Lawrence. One night we were awakened by the watch and found that a fire had broken out in the city. Nearly the whole of Quebec was burned that night and I shall never forget the grandeur of that scene. I find that I must really condense my description, or instead of one of these little books in which I am writing, I shall need a dozen before I finish.

Although the voyage commenced with a storm and I encountered great hardships during the first voyage, yet I found when I arrived at Liverpool, where we discharged our cargo, that I really had a liking for a sea life, and would therefore continue at it.

It may be interesting if I finish this chapter by giving an account of the Captain and some of the crew of the "FOUR SISTERS". Captain John Stanners, a seaman of the old school, was fairly educated, and was on the whole a kind Master. Although when he was crossed his temper was somewhat fiery and not to be depended on, he was a first rate practical seaman, and I often admired the way in which he handled the ship in narrow waters. The greatest blot on his character was his propensity to drinking. In those days grog was served out to all hands as regularly as the provisions, and it is not to be wondered at that many fell victims to its influence. However, it was only on rare occasions that Captain Stanners forgot himself.

Lancelot Dickman, the Chief Mate of the "FOUR SISTERS" was a little man about five feet high, a splendid sailor, as agile as a monkey, but unfortunately he was also fond of drink. He had a curious peculiarity; when any one was sent to call him up from sleep, he never awoke except when touched by the hand. The moment he felt the touch he used to strike out with his fists, while half asleep. The boys who were sent to awake him always took the precaution of taking a broom handle with them and so kept beyond his reach, using the handle to poke "Lencie" up instead of touching him by hand. I never knew what became of him. He was appointed Master of a vessel, but took to drink and lost his situation, and I have long since lost sight of him.

Captain Stanners, after he left the sea, acted as North Sea Pilot, but was drowned some years ago in the North Sea, the ship in which he was having been lost, with all hands.

Sinclair Manson, the Second Mate, was a native of John o'Grats in Caithness. He was a big raw Scotchman, but on the whole a fair seaman; fond of whiskey but did not get drunk very often. His after-history was a sad one. He got a berth on shore as a Custom house officer, and died in a lunatic asylum in Scotland.

There were four other apprentices besides myself, William Wilson, Henry Riddle, William Stoker and Matthew Ellison. Riddle was afterwards Master of the ship "Western Ocean", and sailed from port

and was never afterwards heard of. Stoker became Master of a ship and died between the Cape and St. Helena. Matthew Ellison also became Master but was lost at sea coming from America. Wilson still lives and is employed in the service of the Tynes Commissioners. These lads were pretty decent well behaved fellows, and many a pleasant day we had together, whether spinning tough yarns under the lee of the long boat in gales of wind, or stowed away in the fore-castle after the day's work were over.

Some years ago I wrote some sea sketches for the "Shields Daily News" describing some of the scenes of sea life, in which I took part. I cannot do better than put them in here, as showing some of the characteristics of life at sea forty years ago. The advent of steamers is totally changing the habits of sailors, and in a few years it will be difficult to find any of the old school remaining to tell what kind of a life was led on board of merchant vessels in the middle of the Nineteenth Century.

LEAVES FROM THE LOG OF AN OLD SHIELDS  
-----SKIPPER-----

Sir,

Sometime ago, whilst rummaging an old sea chest, which had been the companion of my wanderings through many a long year on the ocean wave, I came upon a bundle of old papers which I had written during my idle hours, containing a record of various incidents illustrative of nautical life, which had occurred while I was at sea. As I can vouch for the facts, and as a large number of your readers are connected with the sea, it has occurred to me that these papers might be both interesting and useful to them; and if you consider them suitable for the columns of your paper, they are quite at your service.

An Old Shields Skipper.

No. 1 - THE EFFECTS OF NEW RUM

After wintering at Odessa we came down the Black Sea, and anchored in the beautiful Bay of Bayukdero, for the purpose of filling our water casks. The captain had gone to Constantinople to clear at the Custom-house, and the mate was left in charge of the ship. Early on that balmy spring morning we were, all hands, astir; and the prospect of visiting the shore made us all as brisk as bees. After an early breakfast, the long boat was hoisted out, the water casks lowered with her, and all hands left the ship, except a young boy, and old Lobskaus the cook. The wall was at some distance from the beach, and we required to carry the water in buckets from it to the boat. A little way along the beach stood some houses, where fruit and vegetables were exposed for sale. Occasionally one or two of the men would pay a visit to these houses; and I noticed that after their return to the wall, some of them began to exhibit a strange unsteadiness in the legs, and instead of making a straight course to the boat they required to make two or three tacks, and sometimes a sternboard. This behaviour on their part caused great astonishment to the boy Tom, who had charge of the boat, he being a "green" country lad on his first voyage to sea. However the casks were at last filled, and after we had waited some time, first

and nearly drowned all his crew, and of course was deposed from his command. Poor Douglas died many years ago of delirium tremens, and most of the others lie in unknown graves in foreign lands.

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The above is a description of a scene which occurred on board the "FOUR SISTERS".

#### NO. 11 - HOW THE THIEVES WERE PUNISHED

Although sailors are fed upon coarse fare, yet they are sometimes strangely fastidious. When they are at sea their usual food consists of salt beef and salt pork on alternate days, with a due allowance of biscuit, rice, pea soup, and flour pudding. In harbour the salt meat is discontinued, and fresh beef is served out instead of it. Jack looks with great suspicion on any change that may be made in his diet, and is a strict Conservative in this respect.

A sea captain was at Cronstadt, where geese were plentiful and cheap, and wishing to give his men a treat, sent on board a number of geese, and ordered the cook to prepare them for the crew. Now, thought he, this will satisfy my crew; I shall hear no more grumbling. But he was mistaken, for before the end of the week his crew went aft in a body, and told him that they were tired of his geese, and that they wished to be put upon their usual fare of salt beef and pork.

Another shipmaster, who knew seamen well, had on board a quantity of pickled herring for his own use. His ship was about to enter the tropics, and he knew that the herrings would not keep good, but he also knew that were he to serve them out to the men, they would be contemptuously thrown over the bows. He therefore ordered the steward to hang up a few dozens to the spar amidships, well knowing that the herrings would surely vanish during the night. A fresh supply was hung up each day until the whole was consumed.

On our passage round Cape Horn we were much provoked by some person or persons unknown who, every morning, stole a part of the cabin breakfast. A quantity of melted butter invariably disappeared from the cook-house; and the steward long watched in vain to find out the thieves. At length he hit upon a plan which proved successful. One morning he prepared the melted butter, and in it mixed some emetic powder. As usual the butter disappeared, but only to reappear again, very much to the thieves' dismay, but to the steward's intense satisfaction. It had not been long carried off when we observed three lads, with woefully long faces, vomiting over the bows. The steward's ready wit invented a scheme to punish them still more. He went forward and remarked, in the hearing of the thieves - "I hope no one has taken that stuff that I prepared for the rats." The thieves pricked up their ears at this; and the horrible thought occurred to them that they had been poisoned. The steward then said that they had better go aft to the captain, who would try what could be done for them. He then led the three hopefuls aft to the poop. The captain put on a grave face, and told the steward to make them drink a large quantity of warm water, to cut off their hair, and to apply blisters behind their ears! The captain himself stood ready with the lancets, and remarked that if

the warm water and the blisters failed to exercise the desired effect it would be necessary to bleed them. The youths were naturally anxious to rid their stomachs of the supposed poison; they therefore retched and grieved in terror, and vomited a great deal more than the melted butter. But at last they began to recover slowly from the effect of the emetic; and the captain told them that they were safe and might go forward; but cautioned them never again to take anything out of the cookhouse unless they knew what it contained.

This remedy, though somewhat rough, effected a perfect cure; for during the remainder of the voyage our breakfast was left untouched, except by those who had a legal right to it. Moreover, the true state of the case oozed out among the men, and the thieves were, ever after, quizzed most unmercifully about the melted butter.

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This comedy occurred on board the "FAIRY", off Cape Horn, while I was in command, on a voyage from Barcelona to Mexico. - J.G.

No. III - "OUTWARD BOUND"

We can no longer stay on shore,  
We are so deep in debt;  
A voyage to India we must make,  
Some money for to get.

Old Song

The blue Peter flies at the fore, and the onsign at the peak. The topsail yards are hoisted up, and the yard arm gaskets are loose. The landsharks and crimps have squeezed the last shilling out of poor Jack, and they are anxious for him to be gone and make room for other victims. They say to him as plainly as locks can say - "Rise up, Jack, and let John sit down." "Get you out, old Jack, to sea, and make some more money." "Come in, honest John." "When did you leave Canton?" Poor Jack heaves a deep sigh, takes up his oilskin bag half filled with his scanty wardrobe, and staggers away, three sheets in the wind, to his ship. Is that hollow-eyed, shakey, dissipated-looking wretch, the same healthy, sun-burnt, jolly-looking fellow who came in from sea only three weeks ago? Alas! yes. And this is the work of the landsharks who batten upon his hard earnings. Jack's bag, with three pair of dungaree trousers, two shirts, and a pair of old slippers, presents a great contrast to the well-filled chest, the ample bedding of the man who has just bade farewell to his happy home, and to his loving wife and children. Jack has no wife; he once had a mother, but she lies below the green sod in the distant country churchyard. In the night watches at sea, Jack often dreams of his mother's cottage, and of a blue eyed lassie who haunted it, and each voyage he resolves to visit his mother's grave, and see if the blue eyed lassie still lingers there; but alas! when he comes on shore he "falls among thieves", and all his good resolutions are blown to the winds. But now the stern chains are cast off and the ship is held by a hawser.



The steward is at his wits' end to know how to stow the thousand and one articles which are at the last moment sent on board. The mate musters the crew, and finds that two of them are a-missing; but just then the captain comes alongside with the chronometers and the missing men. The pilot is anxious to be off, for it is nearly high water, and it threatens to blow from the north-east. The steamer takes the tow-ropes, the stern hawser is slipped, and the ship moves slowly out of the tier.

As they pass the Sand end a mournful group of sweet-hearts and wives wave their handkerchiefs, and bid them a long farewell.

The heavy topsails are now sheeted home, and the jib set; and when she is outside the port, the pilot shakes hands with the master and mate, wishes them a good voyage, and gets into his cable, which has been towing astern.

At nightfall the decks are cleared away, and everything put into its proper place, and made ship-shape. The crews are divided into two watches, and at eight bells the starboardlines are sent below, where they may sleep and dream of home until midnight, when they will be required to take their turn on deck until the morning watch.

#### HOMEWARD BOUND

In common with all mankind, a sailor has many hardships and trials to endure, his life is certainly not a bed of roses, but all his troubles are forgotten in the delightful feeling of being homeward bound.

Some hours before the ship makes the English land, each one is on the alert to catch a glimpse of it, and when the cry of "land ho" resounds fore and aft, each face wears a pleasant smile, and the watch below thrust their heads through the scuttle hatchway, and gaze long and anxiously at the dim cloudlike outline upon the distant horizon. In a short time, as the ship draws near the coast, the features of the land become more distinct, and green fields and farm houses appear, and although it is more than ten miles away, old Lobekous, the cook, maintains that he can smell the land. During the night there is no sleeping on watch, for everyone keeps a sharp look-out ahead for the shore lights as they appear like specks in the distance, and become brighter and brighter until they are abreast, and then disappear astern in the gloom.

At daydawn the pilot comes on board. His face is probably the first strange one they have seen for four long months. Each one is eager to hear the news. As the men lie aft to "square the main yard," they linger upon the poop, on pretence of coiling up the ropes, but really to try and catch some stray bit of news which the pilot may let fall. The boy Tom, whose knowledge of geography is not very profound, brings forward the astounding intelligence that the "Dutch have taken Holland!"

And now they approach the well known headland that overlooks the port, they cross the bar, and shoot into the narrows. The pilot gives his orders in sharp peremptory tones. The royals and topgallant sails are furled, and the topsails and courses hang to the yards in graceful festoons. The mate stands by the stopper, and when the word is given, the anchor leaves the bows, and descends

with a splash into its dark bed below. The work of mooring is soon complete, for the men work with a will, knowing that there are loving hearts and open arms ready to receive them.

On their way to their homes, as they hurry up the Wooden Bridge-bank, that dingy place looks bright and pleasant, and if they had time to think of anything else but home, they would wonder what made the old street wear such a pleasant aspect.

It has been our Jack's first voyage to sea; and when he reaches the end of the street where his widowed mother lives, he quickens his pace, and quickly gains the door. A tremendous knock startles the old woman, but only for an instant, for well she knows who is there; she hastens to open to receive her son. How bright the little room looks with its old familiar furniture; the little supper is soon prepared; and the mother looks so delighted, and the sisters have so many questions to ask, that Jack cannot find time to eat. The time flies quickly, and it is midnight before they separate for the night, but not before they have offered up praise to the God of the widow and the fatherless, and rendered thanks for the safe return of the only son.

#### NO. IV - TOM TARBUCKET'S FIRST VOYAGE

Tom was brought up at one of the fishing villages on the Northumberland coast. While yet a boy he pored over the voyages of Drake, and Dampier, and Cook, until he became quite in love with a seafaring life. But as Tom had no thoughts of remaining a common Jack Tar all his life, and had resolved to rise to be a mate at least, he, under the tuition of the village schoolmaster, learned the elements of trigonometry, and acquired some little knowledge of navigation.

Tom's parents were hardworking, honest, God-fearing folks, and as they had given him a religious training, and as good an education as their circumstances would allow, they saw no particular reason why he should not go to sea. They therefore provided him with a supply of clothing, a sea chest, and a Bible; and Tom took leave of them, and made the best of his way to Shields.

A young lad who is going to serve on board ship has the choice of two different modes of doing so. He may go to sea as an ordinary seaman, and engage himself for one voyage only; or he may bind himself as an apprentice for a term of years. Now Tom had heard his father say "that a rolling stone never gathers moss," and he decided upon going as an apprentice. He accordingly shipped as a boy on board the Dauntless, which was a stout ship of 300 tons, then lying at Pelaw Main, loading coal for Quebec.

There were no railways in those days, and travelling by coach was expensive, so Tom took his passage from Shields to Pelaw on board a keel. The wind was blowing fresh with a strong flood tide running, and the keel missed stays and ran athwart hawse of a brig of war which was then lying in the river. An officer looked over the bows and enquired of the keelman "if he knew the consequence of getting athwart the hawse of one of Her Majesty's ships?" The skipper, nothing daunted, replied, "Dee ye know the consequence o' woor keel losen her tide?"

In the afternoon Tom got on board his ship. The other apprentices assisted him to carry his chest and bedding to a berth in the fore-castle, and helped him to sling his hammock. The fore-castle was a dark hole of a place, and presented a great contrast to the clean, tidy cottage at home; but Tom had made up his mind to rough it, and it took a great deal to frighten him. As soon as he had finished with his hammock, he was ordered by the mate to sweep the decks. He went about that job with alacrity; and resolved to try and please the mate, and to be civil and obliging to every one on board. By the time that he had finished sweeping the decks, the supper was ready.

In the middle of the fore-castle, upon the floor or decks, stood a large platter or kit of beef, and alongside of it a great oblong box called a bread-barge, containing a large quantity of biscuit. There were no chairs, but the men and boys sat upon their chests, which were arranged round about the fore-castle. Very few had plates, but a biscuit made an excellent substitute, and it had this advantage, it could be eaten when not wanted as a plate. The boys were not allowed to touch anything until the men had helped themselves; neither was anyone allowed to handle the beef except at the part intended to be cut off. After supper the men went on shore, and on the next day was Sunday, they did not return until Monday morning, and Tom and another apprentice were left on board by themselves.

At bedtime he had considerable difficulty in getting into his hammock, for going about it incautiously, it slipped away from under him, and he fell behind a chest, but Jack, the other lad, good humouredly showed him how to get safely into it.

Next morning Tom, as youngest apprentice, went to kindle the fire in the cookhouse, but never having seen a ship's stove before, he put the fire into the oven instead of into the fireplace; and was astonished that the water in the coppers would not boil. Jack laughed heartily at the mistake, and called Tom "a greenhorn!"

On the Sunday afternoon, his shipmate being asleep, Tom felt very lonely. He could not help thinking of home and the dear ones there. Now it happened that the jolly boat lay alongside and every time that he looked over the side the boat seemed to say to him "Come and have a sail." He resisted the temptation manfully for a time, but at length he yielded, and was soon in the boat and out into the middle of the river. Whilst sculling the boat, with the oar in the notch over the stern, it slipped out and sent him head and ears into the water. Being a good swimmer, he soon rose to the surface, and tried to get up into the boat again, but the weight of his boots and clothing prevented him. He then left the boat, and turned himself to swim to the river bank, which he reached very much exhausted.

No lad ought to go to sea before he has learned to swim; for many sailors perish every year for want of this necessary accomplishment.

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\*\* From this point to the end was my experience on board the "Four Sisters" at Pelaw Main.

No. V - "TAPPING THE ADMIRAL"

A story is current among sea men, that after the battle of Trafalgar, the body of Lord Nelson, preserved in a cask of rum, was sent home to England. Some days before the ship in which it was sent reached the channel, it was observed that one of the sailors was constantly drunk, and no one on board could tell where he procured the liquor. He was severely punished, but punishment had no effect, for he still persisted in getting drunk. At length the captain threatened to flog him; and Jack was accordingly tied down to a grating to receive castigation with the cat o' nine tails. Just as the boatswain was about to raise that dreaded instrument over his head, to bring it down again upon Jack's hide, the poor fellow confessed that he had "tapped the Admiral".

Whether this story be true or no I cannot tell; but to this day, whenever a spirit cask is breached on board ship, it is called "tapping the Admiral".

A most melancholy instance of drunkenness at sea which was attended with fatal results, came under my notice while I was serving as second mate in the Europa East Indiaman. We were bound from London to Madras, with three hundred troops for the East India Company's Service. The spirit room was situated in the afterpart of the ship just under the poop and gun room. A sentry was constantly stationed at the door; and it was well secured by a strong lock and also a padlock. One morning, shortly after we had crossed the line, the third mate reported that the spirit room had been broken into. The captain and the Commanding Officer of the troops having consulted together, guards were placed over all the hatchways. A strict search was then made throughout the 'tween decks, among the soldier's kits, and also on the upper deck and topgallant fore-castle, but nothing was found tending to implicate anyone. Last of all they examined the spirit room; and far back in one of the recesses they found a man lying under a spirit cask. He was quite insensible, and while the rum ran over his face from the spile hole, could only mutter, "No more, thank you," "No more, thank you". He was speedily conveyed to the upper deck and the stomach pump applied, but it was too late, for he had actually poisoned himself with rum. He lingered on for a few weeks, but at last he died, a sad instance of the baneful effects of grog when taken to excess in a warm climate.

When the spirit room was examined, it was found that the contents of two cases of gin had also been stolen, and although the sentries and others were closely questioned, nothing was discovered until the evening. Now it so happened that the boatswain, Jack Stephens, or "Stormy Jack", as he was called, had been up at the foretopgallantmast-head overhauling the rigging; and being a lover of nature, he had squatted himself down in the crosstrees to see the sun go down. After that he had fallen into a reverie - as sailors sometimes do - and had forgot himself until his attention was aroused by a number of soldiers climbing up into the foretop just below him. The Europa's top was a very large one, capable of holding thirty men, and it being railed round, and boarded underneath, the soldiers were unseen from the deck, but they were quite visible to Jack in the crosstrees. He wondered what they could be about in the top after dark; and his surprise was great when he saw them pull out several bottles of gin from beneath the

### CHAPTER III

At the close of my first voyage the "Four Sisters" discharged her cargo of timber in Liverpool, and was fixed to come round to the Tyne with a cargo of salt. It was at the close of the year 1845 that we left Liverpool for the Tyne. We at first tried the North passage intending to go round the north of Scotland, but after clearing the North Channel, between Scotland and Ireland, a tremendous gale of wind arose from the N.W., which drove us back, and we were glad to run for shelter to Belfast Loch. We had been a fortnight out from Liverpool and our provisions, owing to the Owner's parsimony, began to be short. We had no biscuit, and could not get any at Bangor, a little place in Belfast Loch. We however got a sack of potatoes which were very acceptable. We then tried the North Passage again, but the wind coming to blow from the North, we bore up South about, and after a rough passage in which we suffered great hardships we at last arrived at Shields, just one month after we left Liverpool. As the ship was to be laid up for a month I was allowed to go home.

I left North Shields on a cold, frosty morning about 5 a.m., in a carrier's cart, intending to catch the Newcastle and Berwick coach at Morpeth. Oh, the delight of setting out for home after a few months' absence! At Morpeth I took an outside seat on the coach. We passed through Felton and Alnwick, and about 6 o'clock of a winter's evening the coach arrived at North Charlton, a famous inn in those times, where I left it and commenced my walk of 6 miles to old Shoreston, where my father and Mother lived. My parents did not know that I was on the road, and I anticipated with pleasure, the surprise in store for them. I think that I ran nearly the whole way home, wondering all the time how Mother would look when I presented myself at the door.

At last I arrived at the dear old home. The night was pitch dark, and I made my way to the kitchen door. After knocking the maid servant came to the door, and I enquired in a feigned voice for Mrs. Gillis. My Mother happened to be in the kitchen and knew my voice; who can deceive a Mother? We were soon in each other's arms and I was overwhelmed with questions. Tea was soon served in the dear old parlour, and my Father and Mother, and my two brothers, vied with each other to make me eat. I shall never forget the taste of Mother's scones, having been fed on hard biscuit for 6 months, I could fully appreciate their excellence. Of course I was the hero of the hour and had to give an account of all that I had seen during the voyage. How delightful was the family worship before retiring. I think I can remember the very tones of my father's voice as he read from the sacred volume. And how sweet and pure and soft was the old bed which I again re-occupied. It was worth all the hardships and toils that I had gone through to have such a delightful welcome, and to experience the new sensations of pleasure in again finding myself at home.

I am writing now in 1884, and of all the members of the family of 5, two only are left, my brother Paul who is in British Columbia, and myself. I do hope that we shall all meet again, on the other side, and that our family meeting will be far more delightful than the one I have described, for there will be many more dear friends there, my dearest wife among the number.

After a brief visit home I returned to my ship and we sailed for the Mediterranean, discharging a cargo of coal at Malta, and proceeding to the Black Sea, and to Kertch and Tegenrog in the Sea of Azoff, to load grain. I enjoyed the stay at Malta, but a sight of the shores of the Greek islands, and Dardanelles and Bosphorus quite delighted me and filled me with enjoyment. I revelled in the beautiful scenery, and experienced a pure pleasure in looking upon Nature; a taste that I have never lost, and which, together with my religious feeling, kept me out of the paths of vice. At every port I was often pressed to accompany some of my shipmates ashore to questionable places, but I always had grace to decline.

In 1845 the quarantine laws were very strict, not only in Russia but also all over Europe, and when we arrived at Kertch the Russian Authorities compelled us to ride in quarantine one month. On the first day two officers came on board and although we were all in good health they fumigated the ship. After a week's probation all hands went on shore to be examined by the doctors, and were stripped perfectly naked and directed to run across a little green field to a building on the other side, where a fumigated suit of clothes had been provided for each one. Such were some of the absurd precautions adopted by the government of that day, to prevent the introduction of the plague.

We loaded a cargo of wheat at Tegenrog. The place is situated at the mouth of the "Don", and as the water is very shallow the ship could not approach nearer the town than 8 or 10 miles, and when the cargo was on board, she lay over 20 miles off. Our communication with the shore was made by means of the longboat. She was fitted with a mast and sails (smack rigged) and one of the other boys and I formed the crew. We had tarpaulings in the boat to shelter us, and we swung our hammocks fore and aft. We put the Captain on shore, and had sometimes to wait 4 or 5 days until he was ready to go off again. Occasionally he would send us off with provisions or a message to the ship. I thus had an excellent opportunity of knowing how to handle a boat under sail, which turned out of great advantage to me afterwards.

The passage home from Kertch was without anything remarkable, but I must leave the next voyage for another chapter.

### THE STORY OF THE HAUNTED SHIP

Written Expressly for the "Shields Daily News"

" The father sat and told them tales  
Of wrecks in the great September gales,  
Of pirates upon the Spanish Main,  
And ships that never came back again. "

- Longfellow

Some years ago, having injured my health by a too close attention to business, in one of our inland towns, I was advised by my medical attendant to visit the pleasant seaside village of Tynemouth. I spent the first week of my sojourn at the seaside very pleasantly, rambling along the sands, admiring the beautiful sea, and occasionally chatting with the rough north country boatmen. Very interesting it was to while away the time amongst the

ruins of the old Abbey, reading the quaint inscriptions on the tombstones which nestle in the shadow of the old walls. It is not very easy for a person accustomed to an active life to subside at once into idleness, and I soon began to tire of Tyne-mouth and its attractions. I then extended my rambles to North Shields, and spent many hours loitering on the Bank-top, near the lighthouse, surveying the ships passing into and out of the harbour. Sometimes as many as a hundred sail would pass out to sea in an hour or two, many of them bound to far-away regions, some of them probably never to return but to leave their timbers to bleach on the shores of distant lands, or perhaps founder in the deep sea, far from the shore, and become coffins for their crews.

I think that the principal events in the lives of folks connected with the sea must be the meetings and partings. The good man comes home from a long voyage; has a pleasant meeting with his wife and family; enjoys a few weeks of happiness, and then takes his departure to sea again. Or it may be instead of the pleasant meeting which he has been looking forward to, on his return he finds that death has knocked at his door and taken away some of his loved ones; and there is nothing left to him in this world but one or two green hillocks in the graveyard.

As I was leaning over the rails in front of Dockwray Square, on a pleasant afternoon, musing on the uncertainty of a sailor's life, my attention was attracted by a group of elderly, seafaring men, who were discussing the comparative merits of two ships which were just then passing down the lines. A bluff-looking, stout old gentleman appeared to be the "Sir Oracle" of the party, and his opinion was evidently received with deference by his companions. He wore a broad-rimmed hat, a dress-coat, buttoned tightly across his chest, and a pair of gray trousers. He carried a stout oak sapling, and he seemed to be a likely man to make use of it across the shoulders of any one who might happen to offend him.

As the old town clock struck three, these ancient mariners walked along Tyne-street, and disappeared within a snug-looking inn which stood a little way back from the street. It was none of your staring gin palaces, all front, to attract visitors, but had an air of quiet modesty about it. It was not a place where you were likely to meet a lot of rollicking-roaring scamps of the Young Shields type, who never go home till morning, but a decent hostelry, the door of which was closed every night at ten o'clock; and whose host would not tolerate any disorderly conduct within its walls.

I accosted the landlord, and inquired the name of the stout gentleman in the broad-brimmed hat. "That gentleman, sir, is Captain Thomas Treenail, the best hand at spinning a yarn in the north." I also learned that these "old men of the sea" were in the habit of taking their grog, and smoking their pipes, at this house, every afternoon and evening, and that a pleasant upper room, overlooking the river, was set apart for their sole use. Having expressed a wish to be admitted to this old Skippers' Club, the landlord went upstairs to ask Mr. Treenail's permission. He soon returned, and introduced me to that worthy; and I was ever afterwards allowed the freedom of the clubroom. Many a story of the sea had I the pleasure of listening to; one of these I will endeavour to repeat to the readers of the Shields Daily News.

### CAPTAIN TREENAIL'S STORY

During the height of the Australian gold fever, I was appointed to the command of the Lord Clive, a ship of 800 tons, then loading in the London docks, for Sydney. She was a bluff-bowed bruiser of the old school, built of teak at Bombay, and had been employed, for many years, in the country trade between Bombay and China. During one of her voyages to the East the crew of Malays had mutinied, with the intention of murdering the captain and officers, and running away with the ship to one of the solitary islands in the Sooloo Sea. The mutineers were, however, overpowered; nine of them were shot down in the fight, and the ringleader was hanged at the foreyard arm as a warning to the rest. When I went on board to see the ship, her appearance was certainly not prepossessing. Her cabins were gloomy and dark - overrun with rats and cockroaches, and everything about them dirty and neglected. Sailors are not usually very particular about the appearance of their ships when in dock, as it is impossible to keep a ship clean and tidy while the labour of loading or discharging cargo is going on, but the Lord Clive was certainly the ugliest and dirtiest ship that I had seen. Had it not been for the thought that there were six little Treenaile at home all looking to me for their support, I should certainly have resigned my command, and sought for employment elsewhere. But a man must do a great many things when he is hard up that he would never think of doing when he has a good balance at his banker's, and so I resolved to make the best of it, and leave the rest to Providence.

I set about shipping a crew. A placard was put up at the Shipping Office in Well-street, setting forth that Captain Treenaile, of the Lord Clive, would be at that place at a certain hour, to ship twenty-five able seamen, and the usual proportion of officers. Next day, I was surprised to find that not a man had come forward to give in his name as being willing to ship, although there were plenty of men knocking about the docks unable to find employment. I accepted a smart sailor .....

at ..... bells I went below and turned in. I soon went to sleep, but was roused by a heavy sea which broke over the poop, and came down with a thud over my head. I lay awake, listening to the roar of the wind, and the creaking of the bulkheads. All at once I heard a deep groan close to my elbow. As my cot swung over to leeward, it brought my arm within reach of a stand of cutlasses. Laying hold of one of these, I resolved to punish the joker, whoever he was, that dared to play pranks on the commander of the Lord Clive; but I watched and listened in vain, for I was not again disturbed during my watch below. Next day the mates and steward stealthily conveyed their beds out of the cuddy into the carpenter's berth, and in future slept there. The crew were now fairly frightened, the sole topic of conversation amongst them being the Malay's ghost. The boatswain reported that the jib had been cast adrift during the night and nearly blown away, although it had been secured with double gaskets. One man declared that while he was assisting to furl the foretop-sail he saw the Malay in the lee fore-rigging with a rope round his neck. I was annoyed at hearing these foolish stories, and I felt pretty sure that some person on board had been trying to play tricks on the after-guard, and I determined to keep a sharp lookout to detect him and bring him to punishment.



We made sail during the day, but in the first watch of the night it came on to blow harder than before; and at eleven p.m. all hands were turned up to shorten sail. The maintopsail was close-reefed, and the foretopsail clewed up and being furled. While the hands were furling the sail, I was surprised to see some of them descending the rigging in great confusion, leaving the bunt of the sail unfastened, and on sending the mate forward to know the meaning of this lubberly action, I learned that the Malay had been seen on the yard along with the men; and that they now refused to go aloft again. I ordered them aft to splice the mainbrace, and after the steward had served out the grog I told them how foolish they were to make fools of themselves by believing in ghosts; they then went aloft again to secure the sail, but evidently with great reluctance. When all had been made snug, and the watch had gone below, I took the opportunity of lecturing Mr. Brown on his credulity. He maintained that he could not be mistaken about seeing the Malay; and told me that he had misgivings about the ship ever since the day before the gale, when he saw, amongst a flock of stormy petrels that flew across the stern, his old messmate, Jack Stevens, who was drowned in the Lord Nelson when that ship foundered off the Cape and drowned all hands. "But how could you recognise your friend's likeness in a Petrel?" I said. He gave me no answer, but seized my arm in his powerful grasp, and pointed towards the lee foretopsail yardarm. The night had been pitch dark, but just then a rift in the clouds had allowed a few stars to peep out, and by their light I could plainly see the figure of a black man hanging at the extreme end of the yard arm; his body swinging to and fro with every roll of the ship. The sight was so horrible that Tom Brown fainted away at my feet, and I myself had to lean against the bulwarks for support .....

but the figure was gone. Was it possible that the disembodied spirit of a wretch of a Malay would be permitted to prowl about in bodily shape? No, it could not be, there must be some villainous deception. And yet I saw the figure so distinctly that there could be no mistake. Besides it was hardly possible for any man to get up and down the rigging without being seen. I ran aloft, thinking the person might be concealed in the foretop. I even lay out on the yard arm and examined it, but without discovering the slightest clue to the mystery. Affairs now began to look serious; every part of the ship even to the lazaretto was closely examined. I did fancy that I saw the marks of a naked toe on the gunroom floor, beneath the cabin, but this might have been made by one of the crew. I slept with a loaded pistol under my pillow, determined that any one disturbing me, whether ghost or no ghost, should have a taste of its contents. One evening the steward had accidentally spilt some flour on the cuddy-deck. In the morning I noticed unmistakable marks of a naked foot in the floor. I know that none of the crew went barefooted, the weather being too cold for that. Whose, then, was the footprint? It was small enough for a lady, and no ghost left footprints, as far as I had ever heard or read. A light was now beginning to break upon my mind. Aha! Mr. Ghost, take care how you trifle with me. Full of these thoughts I went to bed in the daytime and watched in the cabin at nights. One night I heard the gunroom hatch creak on its hinges. There was no light in the cabin, but the moonlight streamed down through the skylight. By and by I saw a black head appear above the hatchway. I covered the head with my pistol, and with my finger on the trigger, I was about to fire, but my better reason came to my aid and prevented me from doing an act which I might have regretted all my life. The Malay peered cautiously

round, and then made for the store-room. He was just in the act of walking away with some biscuits, when I seized him from behind and held him fast. "You scamp," I said, "How dare you play tricks on board of this ship?". "Oh, Massa, Massa, forgive me, and I will tell you all". I carried him to the deck, where Tom Brown seemed to be as much frightened as on the night when the rascal had hung at the yard-arm. It was amusing to see the poor wretch cowering at my feet, and to watch the looks of the seamen as they seemed uncertain whether he was really a man or a ghost. The Malay confessed that he had been one of the crew who brought the ship to London, and being of an indolent disposition, had stowed himself away on board in order to get a free passage out. He had hidden himself amongst the bales and boxes of the cargo, and had taken care to keep open a communication through a bulk-head into the gunroom, and thence into the cabin, where he managed to pick up supplies of food which were not missed. He had, however, become tired of his seclusion, and on dark nights had gone on deck, and even aloft. He had heard some of the crew talking about the ghost, and knowing the history of the mutiny, he played off the trick of hanging to the yard-arm by the flemish foot-rope. I sent him to assist the cook in the galley; but Tom Brown never could bear him, and he was sent adrift at Sydney.

Whenever I allude to the ghost story, honest Tom does not say much, but tells me if it turned out not to be a ghost, it might have been one.

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Written by me for the Shields Daily News. It is one of my earliest efforts. - J. Gillie.

#### CHAPTER IV

After the "Four Sisters" returned from the voyage to the Sea of Azoff described in the preceding Chapter, she was again sent to the Black Sea and continued in that trade during the whole of my apprenticeship. We took coal to some port in the Mediterranean, and then proceeded in ballast to Odessa or Kertch and Taganrog in the Sea of Azoff where we loaded grain for England or Belgium. In this way I visited the ports of Malta, Alexandria, Ancona and Constantinople. We were twice wintered in Odessa, having been shut in by the ice, but on the whole we seamen did not much regret being icebound, as we had little to do, and plenty to eat. The cold was sometimes very severe, but we managed to keep ourselves pretty comfortable by means of warm clothing and good fires. The quantity of beef consumed by each man was something enormous.

We sailed from Odessa for Antwerp on the breaking up of the ice sometime about the end of February 1847 or 8. On our way between the Archipelago and the west point of Sicily we encountered a very heavy gale from the South. The ship was put under two close reefed topsails, but during the storm she shifted her cargo and fell over very much to starboard. The quarter boat was washed away, and much damage done to the ship. Well do I remember the awful night off the south coast of Sicily. We were within a few miles of the shore, the ship labouring on the port tack to get round the west point. The ship was leaking badly and all hands were called to the pumps, but all our exertions were vain, as the water gained upon us. About midnight the gale was at its height and the foretopsail split and had to be taken in. Another lad (Bill Stoker) and I were left at the pump, the rest of the crew were sent aloft to furl the sail. The ship was deeply laden and great seas were ever and anon washing over us, so that we had to let go the pump handle and grasp the rail to hold on, and then resume our work at the pump. We had been two days and nights without sleep, and with very little food, but we still laboured on. Our perceptions were however very much dulled, so much so that we began to look on death with calmness. I remember how strong my faith was on that night, that death would only be a means of sending us to be with the Lord, and I often wish I had that simple faith again.

At day dawn, very much to our relief, we saw that we had weathered the West point of the island of Sicily, and we bore away to take shelter under the island of Farignand, lying off the west coast of Sicily, and in a short time anchored there. The ship was so near going down that in passing near the island, some of us stripped off our upper garments, so as to be able to swim to the land. After we anchored we fully expected the ship to go down, and hoisted out the longboat to leave her, there being 9 feet of water in the well. But oddly enough after the anchor had been down some time the water did not increase and it was found on examination, that the cause of the leak was one of the davit bolts of the quarter boat which had drawn when the boat was washed away, and so made a hole in the ship's side. When the sail was taken in and the ship at anchor, the hole was raised above water.

Every one on board was exhausted, and all hands lay down, some on deck and others below, and slept a long sleep of 15 or 16 hours. We were awoke by some Sicilians who boarded the ship.

Next morning we lifted the anchor, and bore away for the Bay of Trapani, a port on the west coast of Sicily, where we discharged our cargo of damaged wheat, and repaired the ship as well as we could, and then took in the dry portion of the cargo and sailed for Antwerp. While we lay off Trapani the revolution took place. The townspeople rose and overpowered the garrison of Neapolitans. But outside of the town there was a strong fort, still held by the Neapolitans. As soon as the town was in the hands of the townspeople the fort opened fire on the town.

The town lay right between our ship and the fort, and for 12 hours the shot that missed the town passing over the tops of the houses, fell very near to us. We showed our English colours, but that did not seem to have much effect, as the shot still kept dropping too near the ship to be pleasant. There was a dry sandbank about half a mile away. Many shot struck the sandbank and ricocheted high in the air. At last an American ship riding near us, was struck by a cannon ball, which shot away his mainyard. This was the finishing stroke to our crew. Hitherto we had been gazing at the hot firing, but after the American was hit our crew tumbled down the ladders into our hold pell mell, to be out of danger. Towards evening the townspeople sallied out and carried the fort by assault, which put an end to the firing, very much to our satisfaction.

After taking our undamaged wheat on board we sailed for Antwerp, where Capt. Stanners left us, and another Captain took command. The new Captain was named Coulson. He was a tall, powerful man, had been a ship carpenter, but had risen to his present position by indomitable perseverance. He was a man who never seemed to know fear. We carried sail until the poor old ship was sorely pressed, and when it was difficult and dangerous to go aloft to take it in; he himself was never afraid to go aloft to assist to take in the canvas. I remember one awful night in the Gulph of Venice, he had carried the main top gallant sail until it was impossible to take it in. The hands tried to furl it but could not. Capt. Coulson went aloft himself and while trying to master the sail was whirled around the yard arm three several times. He was obliged to come down without effecting his purpose and the sail soon after blew to pieces.

Captain Coulson took quite a fancy to me, and made me Second Mate, and afterwards First Mate, but he was such a desperate fellow for carrying sail that I left him a short while after I was out of my apprenticeship. On one occasion while running up the English Channel I had charge of the watch. The wind was right aft and increasing. We had studding sails set on both sides, and as I did not like the look of the weather I began to take them in. He was down below in bed, but hearing the noise came on deck in his night clothes. He spoke with a strong Sunderland accent, and thus accosted me, "What are yee doin' John?" "Taking in the storn sails, Sir." "Hoot man what are yee doin' that for? It's a fine wind, up with them again." I obeyed the order, but the sails had not been up five minutes before a squall of wind came furiously along and blew away the booms on both sides, splitting the sails to ribbons. The Captain popped his head up again, and coolly ordered me to get new booms on the yards. Fortunately, however, there were no spare ones left and we had to send aloft a spare topgallant mast for a temporary studding sail boom.

During the last voyage I made with Captain Coulson I had letters from home telling me of my Mother's illness. On our arrival at Dover, I received a letter from my Father with the melancholy news that my dear Mother was dead. This was my first sore bereavement. I loved my Mother with a passionate love, and the news of her death was a sore trial to me. I have felt nothing like it since, except my dear Wife's death which was the greatest trial I have ever had. I have however the sweet consolation of meeting them both again on the other side. Oh for a strong faith in the Saviour, so that I may hold fast this hope while my life shall last.

I left the ship at Dover in the Autumn of 1849, travelled to London by rail, and shipped on board the brig "Jessie" at London, to go to Shields. My old Mate "Lancie" Dickson was master of her. On my arrival at Shields I made the best of my way home. But alas, home was not like it used to be. My dear Mother was gone. I stayed home all the winter of 1849. It was then I met the lady who was to be my wife. It was at the house of her Aunt, Mrs. Leybourn, at Fowberry, near to Shoreston. I was invited to tea there, and among the guests was May Calder. I was attracted by my first sight of her, but learned that she was engaged to a gentleman in London. Of course as an honourable man to show her any attention was out of the question, but eight years afterwards I learned that she was still unmarried and was free. I was then Master and part owner of the "Daisy" and on a memorable afternoon while driving her, in a gig, between Seodnel and Elford (her father's farm), she promised to be my wife, and we were married at North Sunderland Presbyterian Chapel on the 15th April, 1858. Ah me, what changes have taken place since that happy day. Her Father and my Father and many friends who were present at the wedding are gone to the silent land, and she herself followed on the 23rd July 1880, after a happy married life of 22 years and 3 months. She lent to me to brighten my life and cheer me for so many years. "God gave and He hath taken away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord."

I buried her remains in the cemetery at Westre, on the 27th July, 1880.

## CHAPTER V

During the time that I was at home in the winter of 1849 I wrote to my Father's friend, Capt. Willis of London, a successful Shipowner, asking him to interest himself in my behalf. He promised to do so, and I left home for London about February 1850. Through the influence of Capt. Willis I obtained the berth of Second Mate on board of the "China" East Indiaman, bound from London to Madras with about 300 soldiers and officers of the East India Company's Army. The wages were small, only about £3. 10s. per month, and the work was pretty hard, but the experience I gained (in what was then considered a very large vessel about 1,000 tons) was of great service to me all my life. The Captain was an Aberdonian, a terrible martinet, who managed to quarrel with everyone of his officers by turns, and also with the East India Company's officers who were in charge of the troops. All the Mates were sent off duty several times except myself, and I daresay he would have sent me too, if he had been able to carry on the work without me. But as I had charge of the hold, and the serving out of the stores to the soldiers, and knew where all the stores were stowed he could not very well dispense with my services. The "China" was an old fashioned frigate built ship with high poop and huge quarter galleries, not unlike the old craft of Elizabeth's days but a very good sea-boat, much safer than the ordinary cargo carrying modern screw steamer. We sailed from Gravesend in March 1851, with about 300 soldiers of the Company, and a proportion of officers and soldiers' wives and children. The officers were pleasant, gentlemanlike men, Capt. Johnstone was in command and there were under him were Lieutenants, Pierce and Hutchinson, and Dr. Showan was the Medical Officer. Among the soldiers were two graduates of Oxford who had fallen into wild habits and had run away from home. One of them edited the "China Gazette," a paper published on board weekly, in manuscript. I contributed two or three little articles, but the paper came to an untimely end. One of the graduates had been punished by the captain of the ship for spitting upon the deck. He retaliated by caricaturing the captain in the pages of the newspaper, whereupon it was suppressed, on the ground that it had a tendency to lower the discipline of the ship.

On the whole we had a pleasant passage to Madras, although there were squabbles between the captain of the ship and the officers in charge of the troops. But they were very friendly to me, and showed me great kindness both on board and at Madras. While I was serving out the provisions to the troops one day, being in the hold with a gang of soldiers helping me, one of the soldiers took advantage of the semi-darkness in the hold, and managed to broach a rum cask, out of which he drank until he was speechless. My attention was attracted to him, and I had him hoisted on deck, but he was nearly dead. It was many hours before he was out of danger, and he never completely recovered while he was on board, but was sent home an invalid. This was only one among many cases that came under my notice of the injury done by drink.

After getting rid of the troops at Madras we took in about 400 coolies and proceeded to Mauritius. They were very peaceable passengers and nothing occurred worth mentioning until we arrived at Mauritius, where we discharged them and took in another lot of returned coolies for Calcutta. It was in the height

of the S.W. monsoon that we arrived at Calcutta. I had always been a strong, healthy young fellow but the great heat of Calcutta and the moisture of the climate brought on an attack of dysentery which reduced me to death's door. The ship left Calcutta for London carrying me with her, but owing to springing a leak was obliged to cut into Point de Galle in the island of Ceylon. I was put on shore for medical advice and lodged with a native, who showed me great attention, but unfortunately I got into the hands of a drunken doctor who nearly killed me by blistering my side until the flesh was raw. I must have been very weak, for I forget how the days went by, and one night I awoke by hearing some very sweet singing in the house. I fancied that my Spirit had escaped from the body and that these were the sweet songs of the blessed that I heard. But it turned out afterwards that an English policeman lodged in the house, and it was his voice that I heard chanting the sweet songs of his native land. However, I soon recovered and joined the ship before she sailed, although the doctor predicted that I should die in Ceylon.

Going down the Mozambique Channel we encountered a cyclone which knocked away our rudder, and sprung our foremast. We put into Algon Bay near the Cape for repairs. After being there some time we left for London, where we arrived in due course, after a very long passage of nearly 9 months from Calcutta. There I left the "China" and returned home. After a short stay at home I went to Shields to look for a berth, and was fortunate enough to meet with Capt. Geo. Paul, Master of a new vessel the "Fairy", a barque of about 400 tons, which was fitting out at W. Hartlepool, and bound to the Mediterranean. I sailed two voyages with him as Mate, and was then promoted to the command of the "Fairy". I sailed from Shields to Genoa, and from thence to the Black Sea, and home. The ship was owned by Mr. John Robinson of South Shields, who became my friend, and who has continued ever since to treat me with the greatest kindness. Well do I remember the sensation of pleasure of my first voyage as Master. A coasting Pilot went with me to the Downs; afterwards I felt that the little world of the "Fairy" looked to me for safety and guidance. With what care I examined the Chart to shape a course from the start to Ushant, and across the Bay of Biscay, along the coast of Spain and Portugal, and after being out of sight of land for some days it was to me delightful to find the ship make the point for which I had steered, and to find that my calculations came out correctly.

It was just at the beginning of the Russian war, and in going up the Bosphorus I saw the English fleet which were in a few weeks to bombard Odessa. However, while some masters were afraid to venture up the Black Sea for fear of capture by the Russians, I pushed on for Odessa, got my cargo on board in a few days, and was just preparing to leave, when an officer and soldiers came on board and took myself and crew to prison. There we were kept for a few hours, but in the meantime the owner of the cargo made it all right with the authorities and I was let go on board, with a hint from the Russian officer that if he found the ship there in the morning he would seize her and keep us altogether. It was not long before we tripped our anchor and made sail for Constantinople. Outside of the Bosphorus I met the English fleet on their way to commence hostilities. But I had a splendid freight amounting to almost as much as the ship was worth, and did well for my owners. My next voyage with the "Fairy" was to Genoa,

Marseilles, Barcelona and Malaga, where I loaded on assorted cargo for Mazatlan on the West Coast of North America.

This was an interesting voyage, the parts of the world visited being quite new to me.

## CHAPTER VI

The "Fairy" loaded part cargo at Genoa and then proceeded to Marseilles and Barcelona and Malaga, where we finished loading. I remember running for Barcelona in a gale of wind. I had never been at that port but having studied the Chart of the Coast, and the plan of the harbour, I resolved to bear up and take my chance of going into the harbour with safety. About daylight in a November morning I found myself in a gale of wind from the N.E. about 10 miles to windward of Barcelona. The ship was under double scud top sails and foresail and I bore away bringing the wind on my starboard quarter, I was obliged to carry a press of sail, and when we bore up the little "Fairy" seemed as if she were endued with life. All my preparations were made beforehand, the anchors ready and the chain ranged along. We neared the Mole and I directed the man at the wheel to pass close to it, as we required to luff up round it in order to reach the harbour. The ship behaved beautifully and my crew executed the orders smartly and I had the gratification of dropping my anchor in a snug berth in the harbour, without the aid of a pilot. As we rounded the end of the Mole a pilot boat came out from its shelter and hailed us to heave to, but it would have endangered the ship to do so and I stood on regardless of the frantic calls of the Spaniards.

I enjoyed our stay at Barcelona and Malaga, visiting the fine churches and remains of Moorish fortifications which still exist along the South and East coasts of Spain. In December we sailed from Malaga, directing our course through the Straits of Gibraltar. We had fine weather until we were to the south of Madeira, when it began to blow hard from the S.W. and for 10 days we made little or no progress. One of my men had deserted in Marseilles and I had shipped another in his room. He turned out a very lazy fellow and often skulked below on pretence of illness. One dark night the ship was standing in on the starboard tack towards the African land, blowing hard, when I suddenly saw a light loom out of the darkness. I ordered the ship to be put about on the other tack. She came round splendidly but the wind increasing I told the man to climb up to the foot of the mizen and fasten the sail which had blown adrift. It is only about 4 feet from the deck and a shot of perfect safety but the lazy fellow pretended that he had had a fall from the top of the companion and pretended to faint. I saw that he was shamming and to test the man's sincerity, I ordered the steward, in a loud voice, to bring up the lancets so that I might blood him. He recovered instantly, and soon marched along the deck to his duty. Sailors do not often pretend sickness, but when they do are easily found out.

We had a pleasant passage through the trade winds, along the coast of Brazil to the south of the River Plate. One day we experienced the full effects of a "Pampero" or sudden squall which



prevail in these regions, but the crew of the "Fairy" were so smart that soon all danger was over. Near the Falkland Islands on a fine afternoon going along with all sail, I noticed to windward a peculiar shaped cloud like an inverted funnel. This cloud gradually approached and turned out to be what is called off Cape Horn a "Willy Won" squall. Small in extent, but most furious and violent, our canvas was reduced just in time. The squall caught us under close reefs, but fortunately our spars held fast. Another ship in company with us lost her foretopmast and jib boom. We rounded Staten Island with a gale of wind from the west, and very bleak it looked, the high mountains covered with snow. We were now off the Horn, and wild and cold the weather was. It needs a good ship and a good crew to battle with the elements. The changes are so sudden and capricious. Sometimes the ship may be going along with topgallant set, and in a few minutes, without warning of any kind a gale may come on, which makes it necessary to close reef the topsails. As soon as the wind lulls sail must be again quickly made, as the wind blows mostly from the west, and every effort must be made to take advantage of a slant, so as to gain ground. After hammering away for three weeks we at last reached the west of Cape Pillar, and I was glad to bear away to the north, with our bow towards the island of Juan Fernandez. I intended to call there to fill up on water but passed it in the night, and I did not care to lose time. It was off Cape Horn that the amusing incident of stealing the melted butter took place (see printed slip in first volume). The steward mixed an emetic with the butter and allowed the thieves to take it, which soon discovered who were the thieves.

We sailed away north past the Galapagos Islands up to the north of the Gulph of California. The voyage on which I was engaged was somewhat peculiar. We were bound to Mazatlan but owing to the unsettled state of the government of Mexico we had strict orders not to approach the shore nearer than three miles until we had made certain private signals and had been boarded by a canoe bearing a white flag, from which we were to take our instructions.

We arrived off Mazatlan on a fine afternoon and after lying off for a while were boarded by a canoe, who gave us instructions to lie off all night, until the consignee had arranged with the Mexican Governor, I suppose a big enough bribe. Next day we anchored abreast of the town. We lay here for three weeks and I had an opportunity of visiting many of the interesting places in the neighbourhood. After discharging our cargo at Mazatlan we sailed for a little village of Altata about 50 miles higher up the coast. As the charts of the coast were very imperfect I took a pilot, a cross breed between the Spaniard and Mexican, but a very smart seaman. There was no harbour here. We lay outside the reefs at single anchor, ready to slip and go to sea in the event of a gale. The logwood of which our cargo consisted was brought down the river in small boats.

While I lay at Altata a catastrophe occurred. A small Mexican vessel was loading gunpowder and the crew were carelessly smoking cigars, which set fire to the powder and blew up the vessel. The burning fragments of the vessel ignited the powder lying on the beach and burned the whole village except one or two houses. I was coming on shore in my boat and was about a mile from the village when the accident happened. About 30 men were

killed, and the same number seriously burned. There was no medical man within 100 miles of the place and so I tried what I could do in relieving and nursing the sufferers. We buried the dead and conveyed the wounded into some houses that had escaped the fire; some of the injured ones died, but a few recovered. After I had taken in the logwood I went to sea keeping out of sight of land during the day, but standing towards the shore after dark with a mountain bearing in a certain direction. About midnight a large boat came alongside and put on board a large quantity of silver from the mines. I waited off the coast for a week, and every night the boat brought off a cargo of silver, until we had received all that was ready. This smuggling, if it could be called by that name, was done to evade the extortionate governor of the province, who not content with levying the legitimate taxes, was bent on extorting blackmail on the owners of the mine. One day while we were standing off and on waiting for the silver, a Mexican man of war hove in sight and signalled that he wanted to come on board. The "Fairy" being a very smart vessel could easily have run away but I thought it better to wait and see what the Mexican wanted. A whale boat from the Mexican came alongside and an officer jumped on board. Being about 10 miles from the shore I knew it would be illegal for him to search my vessel; but he thought of nothing of the kind. It appeared that his vessel was bound from the Blas to Guaymas, and he not being a navigator had lost his way and "would I show him his position on the Chart?" I was glad to do so, and also to supply him with provisions and water which he was very much in need of.

At last we bade farewell to California and sailed for Liverpool. We had a pleasant passage home, rounded the Horn in fine weather and arrived safe in Liverpool, where I delivered my cargo, both logwood and silver, and where I left the dear old "Fairy". It was arranged that I should take command of the "Dailey", another vessel which Mr. Robinson was building at Hartlepool, and so I went home for a few months to visit my Father and two Brothers. My Father had by this time removed to Spindlestone, a farm a few miles from Shoreston, and 2 miles from Bamburgh.

## CHAPTER VII

(Written in London, 1888)

I spent some happy weeks at Spindlestone. We had no female relatives near us, and I spent a good deal of time visiting at the neighbouring farms, especially at Elford. I had always admired May Calder, and finding that she was now free from a former engagement I was soon her accepted lover, and spent many happy days at her home at Elford. We agreed to be married on my return from my first voyage in the "Daisy", but I have already given an account of this in a former chapter.

One Sunday morning, I think it was the 4th Jan, 1857, my father and I were driving from Spindlestone to North Sunderland to go to church. The snow was falling blinding showers and the wind blowing a gale from the East was so strong that we could scarcely face it. However, my father never missed going to church on Sunday if he could help it and persevered onwards. Jenny the pony was a hardy brute and surmounted the snow wreathes nobly. Between Bamburgh and Greenhill we saw the masts of a small vessel evidently in distress. I jumped out and forced my way over the sand hills towards her, and found her half a mile from the shore with both anchors down and in a dangerous position. A few men were trying to launch the life boat. I stepped in as one of the crew but the sea was so heavy that the boat was driven back with all her starboard oars broken and we had to give up the attempt. The ship, however, which proved to be the "Harmonie" of Liverpool, bound to the Tyne, continued to drift to the northwards, and at last struck on the dangerous Ross Sands. The life boat was dragged round by the Hill Road and brought to Waren Water where we again manned her and after struggling with the fierce wind and sea we at last got under the ship's lee and picked off her crew. It was dangerous work for us in the lifeboat as well as for the crew, for they had to jump into the boat as best they could. One young fellow, the Steward, missed his mark and fell overboard. I saw him disappear into the angry water. As he went down his outstretched hand was just visible and in another minute he would have been drowned. I was in the bow of the boat and seizing the boat hook I thrust it against his body. It struck one of his ribs, and he grasped it with both hands, and I had the inexpressible pleasure of saving the life of a fellow creature. The old gray-haired Captain got into the boat last of all, and we soon had the pleasure of landing safely every one of the crew, 13 in number.

The Captain's name was Duncan Smith. I carried him to Spindlestone, gave him dry clothes and kept him for a week. A few friends of his in Liverpool, with himself, sent me a beautiful silver snuff box with an inscription commemorating the event.

Only twelve months afterwards poor Smith was going off to a vessel in the Mersey to see a friend away. He slipped his foot and sank, and his body was never recovered. The weather was fine at the time, but the tide was running so rapidly that his body was probably carried out to sea.

In May of this year 1857 I started on my first voyage in the "Daisy" to Penang. We had a pleasant and profitable voyage. We returned to London, and I set off as soon as possible to be married. It was a great day in North Sunderland, for your Mother was liked very much by all the County folks. After marriage we

stayed in London for a few weeks and I went on a voyage to the Black Sea, your Mother remaining at home with her Father.

The "Daisy" was mostly employed in the East India trade. During my voyage as Second Mate in the "China" I had been seized with fever and ague at Calcutta and during the voyage home it developed into chronic dysentery which hung about me for years and always returned when I remained any length of time in the tropics, and so it was thought prudent for your Mother to sail with me on several of my voyages. The first voyage she made with me was from Shields to Aden, thence to Colombo in the island of Ceylon, and home to London. I was very unwell during a part of the voyage, and well it was for me that your Mother was with me. And here I desire to put on record, that looking back on my long illness in India in the light of better knowledge of my body's requirements, I feel perfectly sure that if I had paid attention to take a little opening medicine once a week or so, while I was in India, I would probably never have been ill at all. This I totally neglected, and I have reason to believe that my liver became torpid and was the cause of all my trouble. In the artificial life we lead the body requires a certain amount of aperient medicine, not only in warm countries but in cold climates. It is now the year 1890, and the good health I have enjoyed for many years arises principally from my habit of attending to these matters at least once a week.

After returning from the Aden and Ceylon voyage I remained at home a voyage, and my First Mate, Captain Henderson, took command on a voyage to the Black Sea. He had served his apprenticeship with me and had risen to be second and first Mate. He is still living at Liverpool; our friendship has been very close, in fact brothers could not have trusted each other more than we have done. While I had been in command I followed what was supposed to be the good old custom of giving the men a glass of grog occasionally when at hard work, or when called upon to shorten sail during the night, but on the voyage with Captain Henderson in command, coffee instead of grog was served out to the crew, with the best results, and so when I resumed command, and ever afterwards, coffee instead of grog was given to the crew. On our return from the Colombo voyage I left the ship at London, and there at 21 Burr Street, just behind St. Katherine's Dock, Helen was born. We remained a few weeks in London, and then your Mother and I took our passage to Newcastle by steamer, from whence we went to Elford by train. This was the farm occupied by your grandfather, Robert Calder. The other inmates of the house were Ellen Koir, your Mother's sister and her husband and child. It was a happy household, only clouded occasionally by your grandfather indulging too much in strong drink. He never became incapable, but from morning until night, the toddy ladle was seldom out of his hand, and he certainly shortened his days by indulgence. He was a splendid man, about 6 feet in height, a strong will, yet kindly nature. I shall draw a veil over this part of my story, but cannot refrain from writing that at least five of your dear Mother's relatives took too much drink, and three of my own blood relations seriously injured themselves by over indulgence. Hence my extreme repugnance to strong drink in every form, and my desire to rear my family as total abstainers. I have suffered more anxiety by my relatives indulging in drink than by all the other trials of my life put together. Your dear Mother cordially helped me in resolving to banish it from our house, and had it not been

for your good and kind influence, I don't know what might have been the consequences to some of her relatives.

I wish to place on record that my experience at sea, in almost all climates and under most depressing circumstances, whether the labour be bodily or mental, that strong drink is not only useless, but positively hurtful. It may be that in some extreme case of serious illness, when a stimulant is required, that it may be found useful, but it should never be taken habitually, but should be discontinued as soon as the crisis is over. I warn my children and theirs, that there was an hereditary tendency in your forefathers to indulge in stimulents, which will require the greatest caution on their part, and I trust they will be on their guard against its insidious influence; and I pray God to guard them from this and all other sins.

## CHAPTER VIII

But now I must hurry onwards with the story of my life. Having recovered my health sufficiently during the voyage I stayed at home, I resumed command of the "Daisy". We loaded at Leith for Sydney in Australia, and left Leith in the early part of February 1862, I think, but I am not quite sure of the date. Your Mother and Helen were on board. Off the Orkney Isles we had a tremendous gale of wind which drove us from abreast of Cape Wrath right through between the Orkney and Shetland islands, but the "Daisy" was a splendid seaboard and a strong ship, and so under God's blessing we escaped scatheless, only detained a few weeks longer on our voyage. Off Cape Finisterre we fell in with a French ship bound to New York, with loss of rudder and leaking. I offered to take the crew off, but the Captain would not allow them to leave, and asked me to tow him. This I did for 12 hours when the towrope broke and we parted company in the night, and never saw him again. I never heard whether he reached port but rather think he foundered with all hands in a gale which began to blow the same night. We reached Sydney in safety; from thence we went to Newcastle (N. South Wales) where we loaded for Shanghai. I lost most of my crew by desertion, and had to ship many other hands, at high wages.

We had a delightful passage from Newcastle up to Shanghai, where your Mother was confined of Grace, on board the "Daisy" lying in the Woosung River, which flows past the city of Shanghai; she was baptized by the Rev. Mr. Muirhead of the London Missionary Society. The Cholera was fearfully fatal among the shipping, but happily there was no sickness on board the "Daisy". I had taken the precaution of filling all my water tonks with water at Sydney, a sufficient supply to serve the crew all the time we lay at Shanghai, so that while other ships whose crews drank water from the shore, lost many men, our crew were perfectly healthy. After remaining here six weeks we sailed for London, passing down the China Sea through the Straits of Java. We touched at Anger in Java Straits, for fruit and fresh provisions. We were all delighted with the beautiful scenery around Anger, little thinking what a terrible havoc would be made there a few years later by the earthquake which submerged the beautiful town of Anger, and sunk a large island called Crocatra, completely altering the channel for many miles.

After a pleasant passage home we arrived in London, where, being still troubled with my old complaint, chronic dysentery, I decided to leave the sea for good, and look out for something to do on shore. This was in January, 1863. I returned to Spindleston with your Mother and Helen and Grace, and took up our abode in a nice little cottage of three rooms at the extreme east end of the servants' houses at Spindleston. Your Grandfather, John Gillie, was then tenant of the farm, my brother James managing for him. My brother Paul had been settled in Queen's County, Ireland, for some years. I spent a few weeks very pleasantly at Spindleston helping your Grandfather to do little jobs about the farm, and occasionally going out with the gun to shoot a rabbit or two for the pot. But one day in the month of August 1863 I received a telegram from my old employer, Mr. John Robinson, followed by a letter, informing me that the office of Examiner in Navigation to the ports of Newcastle and Sunderland was vacant. I lost no time in going to South Shields to see Mr. Robinson, and eventually very

much owing to his kindness, I was elected to fill the appointment. I accepted it with fear and trembling, knowing that a very severe examination had to be faced before the appointment could be confirmed by the Board of Trade. However, I set off to Liverpool to undergo the exam, and after a week's hard work, Mr. Townson, the Examiner informed me that I had passed. I rushed off to the telegraph office to wire the news to your Mother, and you may be sure I soon followed homewards.

I commenced work at the Local Marine Board, Newcastle, on the 1st October, 1863, and now it is December 1890, and I have been mercifully preserved all through these years. I have had many, many happy days and special happy events in my life, but that day on which I wired from Liverpool to your Mother was one of the happiest. We took up our residence at Preston, North Shields, first in 1, Popplewell Terrace, where Jack was born, afterwards we removed to Preston Terrace, where Bob and May were born. In April, 1870, we removed to Westra Crescent, South Shields, where I built myself a house, and where Annie was born. This year I lost my dear Father; he died at Eyemouth, where he had removed to spend his last days. He was 75 when he died, and he lies buried in Eyemouth church yard, alongside of my Mother. He had paid us long visits when we lived at Preston, and intended if he had lived to come often to Westra, but God called him away. He was a great favourite with you children, and was a ripe Christian character. But he had none of the narrow bigotry of many old men of his day, being very broad in his sympathies. He had a remarkable fund of dry humour, some of his sayings were well worth repeating. Next year my brother James died at Eyemouth, and so there were only two of the family left, my brother Paul and myself. Paul occupied Spindlestone farm for some years after Father left it, but he eventually emigrated to Nicola Valley, British Columbia, where he still is. We exchange letters at about a fortnight interval, and we keep up a brotherly interest and love for each other. He has paid two visits home since he left. And now the remainder of my Autobiography will be written about what happened during the years of your childhood, about events that most of you can remember yourselves; and so will probably not be so interesting to you as the story of my early life, but if God spares me, I intend to set down anything interesting that has happened during the year of our life at Westra. But this may well be reserved for the beginning of another Chapter.

## CHAPTER IX

I was always better pleased to live in the country than in the town. During my visits to South Shields I had on some occasions walked up to the village of Westre, and liked the appearance of it so much that I contracted with a builder to build me a house in Westre Crescent. We used to spend our summer holidays at Sainthca where your Uncle and Aunt Keir lived, and many happy days were spent there. But your Uncle Keir was what is called a speculative man, and often tried expensive experiments which seldom turned out profitable. And so it came about that he lost his capital and was obliged to leave his farm. They came to live at Shields for a while, and he tried to get into business as a commission agent, but did not succeed. Then he got a situation as a land agent in Nottinghamshire, where he continued a very short while. After that he went to manage a farm at Nairnside near Cawdor, but poor man he lost this too owing to the owner leaving the farm. At last he died at Nairnside, I fear of a broken heart, and lies buried in Nairn Cemetery. He was a well educated, clever man, but never seemed able to manage a farm to make it pay, from some defect in judgment I think. But a sweeter disposition and a kinder and more unselfish man never lived than Uncle Keir.

Our residence at Westre brought us in contact with a new set of acquaintances and friends, Mr. Mather Coy being my colleague at the office, we saw a good deal of him and his wife and family, and after being a few weeks in South Shields we joined the Presbyterian Church in Mile End Road, of which Mr. Steele was Minister. I engaged in Sunday School and Band of Hope work and enjoyed working in connection with the Congregation. I had not been very long a member however before I noticed that the Minister and office bearers did not pull very well together. On the one side the office bearers were very jealous of the Minister interfering with any of the business matters of the Congregation, and on the other side the Minister felt sore that he was excluded from taking what he thought was his proper share of the management. We rubbed along for a number of years until matters came to a crisis on a point so small that it is almost incredible that sensible people would have got to loggerheads about it. The choir practice was held on Saturday night, by the Minister's wish, the elders wished to have it on the Thursday night, neither party would give way, and so after a great deal of wrangling the elders and the Minister got into strained relations with each other. But, as I hinted above there was an accumulation of small differences between them, and the dispute about the choir practice was the last straw that broke the peace. I had always been very friendly with both Minister and Elders, and I went to the Minister's house one night to try to smooth the differences between them; but instead of being received as a peace maker the Minister charged me with trying to poison the minds of the congregation against him. I was conscious of always acting justly to both parties and I asked the Minister either to withdraw the offensive charge, or to substantiate it. He would do neither, and so after waiting a couple of months, and still attending Mile End Road I withdrew from Mile End Road, and joined St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Westre Lane where I have been ever since. A year or two after I joined St. Paul's (1888) I was elected an Elder. Your dear mother did not live to join St. Paul's. She died about twelve months before. In moving to St. Paul's I have reason to believe it was a beneficial change. The distance from our house is much shorter, and I could attend the Sunday School and both services with more comfort than by going to Mile End Road.



## CHAPTER X

After the death of your Mother I remained a Widower for 5 years. Our summer holidays were mostly spent in Caithness and Sutherland, at Colgower. While at Colgower I had several years, met Miss Ina Tulloch, who kept her brother's house at Helmsdale. Dr. Tulloch was your aunt's medical attendant, and Miss Tulloch was very often at Colgower on a visit. Your aunt and she were great friends, and so it happened one day that I asked her to be my wife. I was so much her senior in years that I scarcely hoped to be accepted but very much to my delight she did not refuse me and we were married at Nairn on the 22nd January 1886. I consulted all of you before taking the final step; and have to thank you all for the kind way in which all of you have contributed to our happiness. We have been very happy and the house has been brightened by the addition of two little boys, George and Eric, both born at Westra; George on the 29th May 1888 and Eric on the 18th October, 1890.

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Model of one of Captain John Gillie's ships, the barque Nymph II. Housed at the offices of Gillie & Blair, Newcastle.