

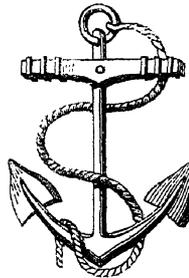
BLUE JACKETS ;
OR,
CHIPS OF THE OLD BLOCK.

A NARRATIVE OF
The Gallant Exploits of British Seamen,
AND OF
THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN THE NAVAL SERVICE,

DURING THE REIGN OF
HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY
QUEEN VICTORIA.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following pages will be found to contain accounts of a considerable number of the gallant actions performed by naval men since Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria came to the throne, rather than a complete naval history of her reign.

My chief object, when designing the work, was to show that the present Navy of Great Britain has, in no respects, degenerated from that of olden times, great and glorious as it was—that when opportunities have occurred, the Blue Jackets of to-day, both officers and men, have been found ready as ever to perform their duty—to dare and to do as was dared and done of yore ; that, in truth, they are worthy scions of the ancient race—

TRUE CHIPS OF THE OLD BLOCK.

The following accounts will, I think, also tend to prove that the British Navy is not kept up for mere pomp and parade, or for supporting in idleness any class of the community ; but that whenever hard blows have been exchanged, it has given and taken a fair share of them—that it has been ever actively employed in pro-

tecting British Colonies and British Commerce in all parts of the world—that through its means disputes have been settled, which could in no other way have been brought to a satisfactory conclusion, and might have plunged the nation in war—that it has ever been found engaged on the side of justice and humanity—that not only has it, on numberless occasions, preserved the lives and property of British subjects, but also the existence of thousands of human beings of all nations and creeds, and of every degree of civilization, who would, without its aid, have been doomed to destruction—that, by its exertions, British trade to China, South America, and many other parts of the world, has been immeasurably increased—that with much suffering and sacrifice of life it has, in the most pestiferous of climates, greatly decreased, and in some places suppressed, the nefarious slave-trade—that for the benefit of science and navigation, it has explored the most distant regions, penetrating to the icy poles as well as up the rivers of Africa—that it has surveyed a wide extent of coast, visited constantly by merchantmen, though, to their great peril, often before imperfectly known—that it has made the British name loved and respected in all lands—and that without a single exception, under circumstances the most difficult and trials the most appalling, it has ever been found willing and ready nobly to do its duty.

Feeling sensibly the importance of a work of a character like the present, I can scarcely do it adequate justice ; and this arises from no want of zeal on my part, but from the difficulty of collecting from Naval men

full accounts of the gallant deeds they have performed, their modesty often preventing them from giving their narratives with the desirable completeness. For this reason I have probably never heard of many brave acts performed by seamen; and it will therefore be my pride, when accounts of them reach me, to chronicle them in another edition of this book.

I have for years past proposed to write this work, and opinions have often been expressed that I should not find matter sufficient to fill a volume if I confined myself to the events of Queen Victoria's reign; I, on the contrary, was sure that if I attempted to embrace a period before it, I should, from want of space, be unable to do adequate justice to a large portion of them.

The list of the various exploits I have chronicled will show that I did not form my opinion without sufficient grounds;* I have therefore described only those events which have occurred since Her Majesty came to the throne. I have chronicled deeds of daring performed by British seamen, as well by those in the Merchant Service as in the Royal Navy. I have mentioned all acts of gallantry which have come to my knowledge. I

* I am much indebted to the kindness of Mr. Barrow for allowing me to look over the Naval Records in the Admiralty; and, in case any doubt should arise as to the originality of the design of my work, he will, I am sure, gladly bear witness that my visits there for the object of collecting materials preceded by several months the appearance of a little book written by one of the clerks in his office, and bearing the very title which I then mentioned it was my intention to prefix to mine as a second title. I am bound, in justice to myself, to mention the circumstance; though as the events related were of past times, and often before written, I have no reason to complain of any injury inflicted on me.