

On arrival in Otago, the ringleaders were brought before the police magistrate, and sentenced to four weeks' imprisonment with hard labour for neglect of duty, and eight weeks for embezzlement of cargo.

This is by no means a solitary instance of crews plundering cargo in outward-bound ships; in fact, there is scarcely a vessel going to the colonies whose owner does not have to pay heavily for loss so occasioned; but what is of much more consequence is the danger to valuable lives by crews getting into ships' holds with naked lights amid inflammable cargoes, whereby many a good ship and many unfortunate passengers have been sacrificed, whose fate could never be told, for the ships have been posted as "missing."

While I was in New Zealand, the "Cathcart," another emigrant ship, arrived at Lyttleton with mutiny on board; the crew had plundered the cargo, got at the spirits, and such a state of things arose that in self-defence the captain armed his officers, and three of the men were wounded, for which the captain was tried and acquitted, but the men were sentenced to three months' imprisonment.

If Mr. Plimsoll would take a few trips from the docks to the Downs in some of the outward bound, he would see a little of what masters have to contend with through the drunkenness and bad conduct of "poor ill-used Jack."

Yours, &c.,
WILLIAM STUART,
Master of the "Tweed."

Sub-Enclosure 2 to Enclosure 2 in No. 1.

[*Times*, April 30.]

UNSEAWORTHY SAILORS.

To the Editor of the *Times*.

SIR,—

Having perused a letter with the above heading, inserted in the *Times* of yesterday, from Captain William Stuart, of the ship "Tweed," perhaps you may not think it out of place to insert a short narrative of my experience in command of the ship "Queen of the Age," on her late voyage to New Zealand.

The "Queen of the Age" sailed for Auckland on the 16th of November, 1873, having on board about 170 emigrants and a crew of 30 hands all told. Nothing particular occurred until the 14th of January, 1874, when the second mate reported to me that the coal-hole scuttle in the between decks, although secured by an iron bar, staples, and padlock, had been broken open by the crew; and upon going below into the coal-hole, I found that the bulkhead, separating the cargo from the coals, had also been broken through, and a number of cases opened, containing shawls, Crimean shirts, candles, anchovies, pickles, preserved salmon, and sundry other merchandise, and a large portion of their contents abstracted and gone.

Upon making this discovery, I mustered the crew, and demanded that the stolen cargo should be restored, but was met by a determined spirit of resistance on the part of several of the men, who refused to return the property or do any more duty in the ship, and even threatened the passengers with violence, who they said, had given me information about the robbery.

The passengers now appealed to me for protection, and, after consulting with the surgeon in charge, I issued loaded muskets to them, to be used in their own defence. At the same time several of the passengers volunteered to work the ship for me if the crew refused to do so. The resolute manner in which the passengers supported me and my officers overawed the seamen, who, finding a revolt would be hopeless, after some little hesitation restored the stolen property and returned to their duty.

Having again secured the forehold and placed sixty fathoms of chain cable in such a position as to prevent the possibility of any further plunder, the voyage was continued without any other incident of importance, until arrival at Auckland, on the 2nd of March, 1874, when eight of the ringleaders were sent on shore in charge of the police, and sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour.

The moral of this appears to be, that if a burglar enters a house at night and steals a few trinkets he will most likely get seven years' penal servitude, but if a seaman breaks through a strong bulkhead on board ship, and with a naked light among inflammable goods plunders the cargo, thereby endangering the lives of hundreds, he may reasonably expect to get off with three months' hard labour.

In the case of the "Tweed" and the "Queen of the Age," providentially the plunder was discovered before any injury had been sustained beyond the loss of the property; but if either of these ships had shared the fate of the unfortunate "Cospatrick," a Court of Inquiry would have been held, at which every effort would have been made to censure the captain and owners of the ship, while the noble British sailor, who caused the calamity, would have received a large measure of public sympathy.

My official log-book, in verification of the foregoing facts, has been deposited with the Board of Trade by

Your obedient servant,
EDWARD MONTGOMERY,
Master of the ship "Queen of the Age."

London, 28th April, 1875.

Sub-Enclosure 3 to Enclosure 2 in No. 1.

Messrs. JOHN MACKRELL AND Co. to the Hon. Sir J. VOGEL.

DEAR SIR,—

21, Cannon Street, London, 26th April, 1875.

By the Merchant Shipping Act the penalties imposed upon a seaman for the offence of wilfully damaging a ship, or embezzling or wilfully damaging any of her stores or cargo, is a forfeiture