

and retires from his highly responsible post with the thanks of, and handsome present from his directors, passengers, and crew alike. In the ordinary way he should have retired last year, but as he neither feels nor looks 64, he readily consented to put in another twelve months' work. During the whole of the years he has been a master-mariner he has never lost a ship nor a single life—"Thank God," I add; for this is the captain's own plain, strong, earnest, but still cheery way of modifying the personal tribute.

"But what has this got to do with the newspapers?" he demands, as if giving a sharp order in a sudden fog. "It is only what I was paid to do, and I have done it."

"Not that—not that only," I persist. "You loved the sea, and you loved the responsibility."

and cargo of grain on a trip from Hamburg to Cork."

"While I was trying for my master's certificate I was also saving all I could, and when I got my certificate I decided to strike out for myself. Adding my wife's and my brother-in-law's savings to my own, I bought a share in a vessel called the Aberdeen, and took command for the first time. I sailed her for five years. Then I sold out and went to Newcastle, where I bought shares and captained another vessel. Her name was the Princess of Wales, and her tonnage only forty-one tons. She was the smallest vessel Swan and Hunter ever built, and by a remarkable coincidence I went to the same yard two years ago and took out the largest vessel ever built by the firm, or by any firm up to the present—the Mauretania.

"But I was getting tired of small

Pritchard stays with the Cunard the shorter will be the passage between England and the States."

"What do you think will be the minimum time that the journey will be done in in the future?" I asked the captain.

"I don't know what the Mauretania will do when she gets her new propellers, but I hardly think that the voyage will be reduced much more unless larger and deeper vessels are built. Her fastest westward trip was in September last, when she made the journey in 4 days 10hr. 51min., her highest average speed being 26.06. If you want it quicker than this you must build deeper boats, and if you build deeper boats you will have to build new waterways and new ports. Our boats now draw 37ft when fully provisioned and cargod, and neither New York nor Liverpool can float much more—certainly not Southampton. But I have not the slightest doubt that we British will always hold the Blue Ribbon of the Atlantic so long as we have as fine a crew as I have had under me. From first officer to cabin-boy, they'll take some beating. Even if we have to build deeper boats, we'll keep that trophy; though, mind you, it isn't entirely the engineering capacity of the boat that does it. Energy, pluck, co-operation, and determination—these are the things that count as much, if not more, and we won't lack these so long as British boats are manned by British seamen. A British-manned mercantile is a necessary as a British-manned Navy if Britain is to keep her supremacy."

I asked the captain what was the secret of his freedom from accidents and disasters.

"Well, for one thing," he replied, "I always had one motto, and that was to turn a foul wind into a fair one. When I was a younger man I had to make a German port in a sailer with a cargo from the Menai Straits. There was a bad south-west wind blowing, and quite a number of vessels were anchored waiting for better weather. Instead of waiting I headed north round Cape Wrath, and arrived at my destination while some of my marine colleagues were still anchored in the Straits. So I made a foul wind into a fair one. As to avoiding collisions and other dangers, when I am on the bridge I not only keep my eyes open, but I keep on thinking out what I should instantly do in certain contingencies. Instantaneous decision is absolutely essential if the navigator is to avoid disaster in an emergency, and to ensure this he must anticipate and know the chances. . . ."

"He must anticipate the moves of his opponent, The Unknown?"

"Exactly. Not only this, but he must learn to nurse his ship just as a rider does his horse. A ship is not a dead thing any more than a running horse. A boat may be dead in dock—I don't know—but it is alive to the smallest rivet on the seas. It has to be encouraged or nursed as the circumstances demand. Although it has been my good fortune to avoid any serious trouble, I've not gone without my 'shaves.' But that's another story."

But the captain would not tell it. Instead of that he recalled some of the distinguished people he had had the pleasure of piloting across the "pond"; well-known politicians literary men, actors,



A WELL-KNOWN BOXING REFEREE.

Mr. I. J. Fake ("Ike") is one of the best-known North Island boxing enthusiasts. He acts permanently as the referee to the Manawatu Boxing Association, and by request for the Levin and Hawke's Bay Associations. He has refereed in 154 contests, and as he disapproves of the "knock-out" in amateur contests, believing that the merits of the contestants can be ascertained before that stage is reached, there have only been three such terminations to matches under his control. Mr. Fake is one of the few referees in New Zealand who go into the ring with the men, instead of viewing the proceedings from the ring-side, and he trains as assiduously as the combatants for tournaments. He is an old-time boxer himself, and can tell many a story of old bare knuckle days.

Colonials, yachtmen, millionaires, and others. There was, for instance, Madame Adelina Patti, who sang for him "Land of my Fathers" "because I am a Welshman." And the curtain on many happy social memories, which, after all, as the captain said, will probably outlive the stern recollection of "the ruffian billows," was brought down on Christmas Day last, when a Mexican millionaire on board the Mauretania dressed himself up as Father Christmas, and went down among the steerage and third-class passengers distributing Yuletide presents and sovereigns. For the time being rich and poor, saloon passengers and steerage together, forgot one of the worst storms the giant liner has weathered in the oblivion that overtakes happy hearts—and the troubles of mal de mer.



LADY DE CLIFFORD.
(Formerly Miss Eva Carrington).

"I did that," he says, softening. "I went to sea when I was between 12 and 13 years of age, because I come of a sea-going stock, and I wanted to be a sailor. I shipped as a cook's boy on a small Welsh coasting steamer at 12/- a month, and I spent three winters and two summers in her. Then I went to Liverpool with ambitions. I wanted to see a bit of the world, and signed on a sailing ship bound somewhere East, first as a sailor and then as bos'n. It took four months to get to India, with a three months' stay in Calcutta, or twelve months' absence, and I did six or seven voyages. Then I began to think about going in for my certificate. Meanwhile I went to Bates's here (Liverpool) as second and then as chief mate, and was with them four-and-a-half years. I was first mate of the Tethys three-and-a-half years, and the very next voyage after I left her—Newcastle to Frisco—she was lost with all hands."

"Collision?"

"Collision with the Unknown; never heard of again; not a spar."

"You were fortunate!"

"It wasn't the first time. In my young days I was for a time an A.B. on the schooner Empress. I did five voyages in her, and the next one after I left her she went down with her crew

boats, and I said to myself, 'You want to get into one of the big firms. It's a big boat you are fretting for. These dab-chicks only put you to sleep.' So I applied to the White Star Company, and while I was waiting for a billet with them I heard of a vacancy with the Cunard. I was appointed fourth officer of the Samaria in March, 1880."

Since then Captain Pritchard has commanded all the Atlantic Cunarders, with the exception of the Umbria, including the new boats, Saxonia, Carmania, and Mauretania. In the year after he joined the Cunard he was instrumental in saving the crew of the barque Merry, for which he received the thanks of the Humane Society. The rescue was carried out in mid-Atlantic in the teeth of a tremendous gale, and so strong was the force of wind and wave that the boat which was gallantly manned and launched to the rescue had to be subsequently abandoned. Last January Captain Pritchard effected another rescue, when three American sailors, in a half-dying condition, were picked up in an open boat off Long Island during another great gale. For this he was presented with a fine pair of binoculars on behalf of the President of the United States, by Mr. Griffiths, the American consul at Liverpool, who, in making the presentation, remarked that "the longer Captain

To Prevent Collisions.

A new device for the prevention of train collisions was recently tested on the Erie tracks between Newark and Nutley, N.J. The device is an electric one, and is intended to obviate head-on collisions. When the fast-approaching trains equipped with the new device get within half a mile of each other, the air

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