

glory and an Admiral's cocked-hat awaited him if he would but enter Her Majesty's Navy; so in August, 1851, he joined the Naval schoolship "Britannia," preparatory to becoming a Government Jack-tar. After four months he was transferred to the schoolship "Neptune," and when he had completed his course of instruction he was sent on board H.M.S. "Termagant," which during a voyage to Lisbon, soon afterwards, nearly foundered in a gale in the Bay of Biscay.



Bartlett, GEORGE HILL, N.Z.C. Photo.

She was sent back to Portsmouth, and her crew were transferred to H.M.S. "Leopard." The "Leopard" was one of the old-style frigates, belonging to the early era of steam in the Navy. She was a ship-rigged paddle-wheel frigate, carrying a great spread of canvas, and also steaming well. By this time the Russian War had broken out, and the Flying Squadron, consisting of four paddle-wheel frigates, including the "Leopard," was ordered to the Baltic, under Admiral Plumridge, in order to bombard forts there.

The Flying Squadron sailed into the Baltic Sea, and up to the Gulf of Bothnia, where four Russian forts were bombarded and destroyed. The capture of Bomarsund fort was the most important result of the expedition. After a sharp engagement, the fort was taken, together with a large number of prisoners. Young Hill, as a seaman-gunner, was engaged with his fellow-sailors in working the six 68-pounder and twelve 32-pounder muzzle-loading guns which formed the "Leopard's" armament.

AT THE CRIMEA.

After the "Leopard" returned to England from the Baltic, she was sent out from Queenstown with troops for the Crimea, where the war was then proceeding. The British troops were landed at Balaklava, on the famous peninsula; and now it was that the hero of our tale did his share against the grey-coated Russians. "The 'Leopard,'" says Hill, "was sent round to Suja-Kalch, in company with the 'Highflyer,' 'Swallow,' and a French man-of-war, and we bombarded the place; but the Russians beat us off. One man was killed aboard our ship. Then I was at the taking of Kertch. We took the 42nd Regiment there from Sebastopol, and helped to bombard it. We had a good deal of work at the siege of Sebastopol. We had to take our turn at running into the harbour, steaming round it, and firing our broadsides at the forts—our four upper-deck guns, and six on the main-deck—and then clearing out again. Occasionally we would be landed outside Sebastopol for working parties. All the four fleets were there—English, French, Turkish, and Sardinian. At Kimburn we landed some of the 57th Regiment, and after bombarding the forts we took the place and a lot of prisoners."

The boom of big guns, the hiss of shot and shell and rattle of musketry, were the most familiar of sounds to Seaman Hill by the time the fall of Sebastopol was accomplished, in 1856. Then the "Leopard" returned to England, and Hill received the Baltic medal, and the Crimea medal and Sebastopol bar.