The Boats of a Man of War and their use.
BY HUGH BOSCAWEN.
LATE ROYAL NAVY.

Illustrated by the Author.

LANDSMEN seeing boats going to and from a Man-of-War, fancy that the only use those boats have is for communication with the shore—but this is not so. Since a man-of-war existed her boats have played an important part in conjunction with her, in time of war. In the old days, before steam, in the event of a calm, the boats towed a ship into action. If the enemy were in a harbour where it was unwise for the blockading ships to enter, the boats were "manned and armed," and a cutting out expedition organized, which generally succeeded in capturing the ships of the enemy from under the shore batteries, cutting their cables and taking them off as prizes. It was on an expedition of this sort at Santa Cruz that Nelson lost his arm.

The old pulling launches and pinnaces are now things of the past, they have been superseded by steam launches, pinnaces, and cutters.

Between the years 1860 and 1870, the Gold Coast of Africa was blockaded by our ships to prevent the slaves being exported to Brazil and elsewhere, the actual work was practically done by the ships' boats. A ten-oared cutter was dropped, manned by an officer (a midshipman), coxwain, and ten men, fully armed and provisioned for a month, with instructions to cruise up and down the coast within certain specified points. In about three weeks the ship would return and relieve the crews, meanwhile the boat might or might not have captured a slaver, but the effect was to stop slaving on that coast. On the East Coast of Africa, to a small extent, this nefarious traffic is still carried on by slave dhows in spite of ships' boats.

Some of the most heroic deeds recorded in naval history have been done in boat actions. In the Crimean war the boats took an active part.

It is not only in war that the boats' crews risk their lives. On a dark night with a gale of wind blowing, that dread cry, "Man overboard!" may be heard. In about two minutes a cutter, with her crew in her is lowered from the davits, and they pull away with heavy seas breaking over them, the