

previous attempts to produce similar books as 'extremely imperfect – voluminous but very deficient in the most necessary articles – vague, perplexed and unintelligible'.

Hutchinson, one feels, was a much happier man, and aware of his own shortcomings; thus 'as an author, he would be glad of any remarks candidly pointed out how to improve his defects'. Also a more humble man; in discussing Privateering he remarks that he 'never had the advantage' of service in 'our incomparable Royal Navy. I hope my defects will be thought the more excusable.'

His work is also much enlivened by many anecdotes drawn from his own experience. They would be more valuable to historians if he had included more details of the men, ships, date and circumstances which surround each of them; but this he largely omitted. Nevertheless, there is much to delight the lay reader, and the historian, in remarks such as:

'In the latter part of the last foreign war, in the evening, I saw one of His Majesty's scows of war with all sail set crowding away with a large wind at S.S.E. and rainy weather, with about 140 pressed men on board, that night the wind blew suddenly round to the opposite point N.N.W. and blew a storm that must have overset and sunk her, for no remains was ever found but her barge that had floated off the booms.'

(This, Hutchinson reckons, with a logic I cannot follow, should 'go against that vile and cruel practice of pressing seamen for government's service).

'On getting a Pilot on Board in bad Weather at Sea: This is sometimes attended with so much danger, that the Pilot sloops belonging to Liverpool, rather than run the risk of boarding a ship from their own sloop, sometimes go no nearer to the ship than to have a small rope thrown to or veered a-stern to them, which they make fast about the pilot's body under his armpits, he then goes overboard into the sea when as near the ship as they dare venture, and he is hauled on board the ship by the rope.'

(A practice unlikely to meet with approval from the pilots of 1969! And yet there are similarities between the Treatise of 1777, and the Admiralty Manual of Seamanship of 1964. None more striking than the comparison of 'stiff' and 'crank' ships, (Hutchinson); and 'lively' and 'sluggish' ships, (Admiralty). Apart from the evolution of different terminology, the 1964 edition could easily be a simple re-draft of the 1777 one.)

On Letter of Marque Ships and Privateers: 'I have known our people vastly at a loss, both in privateers and merchants ships, when a war happens after a long peace; as in the first part of the war before last, I was in an East India ship of 32 guns, and a letter of mart ship in the Jamaica trade, where our great guns and small arms were never