

restricted in food by his commander may receive an equivalent in money.

The ration has been hitherto left to the master and owner, and although it is the true interest of the latter that the crew of his ship should be well fed, yet there are many who think and practise the contrary. I see no reason why there should not be a lawful ration fixed as well in the merchant service as in the navy, and when it is not supplied in full, that the crew shall be entitled to be paid for the deficiency; it then could be no object for a master or owner to stint them. I have generally observed that by far the greater part of the complaints arise from this cause, and when the master is part owner they are almost invariably made.

Another cause of complaint arises from the practice of issuing slops to the crews instead of money, and giving the supply of these to the master as a perquisite. I was not a little surprised when I learned that this perquisite had amounted to eighteen hundred dollars with a crew of about thirty men. It, in fact, sometimes reaches the amount of between two and three thousand dollars; and it will naturally excite some curiosity to know how so large a net gain could accrue from sailors whose ordinary dress is but a pair of coarse blue trousers and red flannel shirt. There is, however, no difficulty in the explanation. The crew, in the first place, get an outfit in clothing as an advance, which is charged to them at a profit of one hundred per cent.; they then when allowed liberty on shore are obliged to draw these goods or clothing, in lieu of money, and cannot exchange them on shore for more than one-fourth of what they are charged for them. In this way a debt is accumulated against the "lay" of the seaman, until he finds before the end of the voyage that the whole amount that ought to accrue to him is dissipated. This naturally leads to discontent against the persons whom he knows or believes to be the authors of his loss, and for whose gain all his labours have gone. This state of things unavoidably produces difficulties, more or less serious according to the number of the crew who find themselves thus circumstanced. I am not prepared to say how this can be avoided, but I am well satisfied it would be for the interest of the owners to reserve this supply to themselves, and charge it to the crew, at such advance on the cost as will just secure themselves from loss. By doing this they would find that the expenses caused by detention and the many vexations and quarrels would be saved. It is inconceivable how much time is lost in port by these difficulties between the master and crew.

Many difficulties would certainly be prevented by the government sending men-of-war to the ports at the time they are frequented by the