proper amount of beats at the hours and half
hours, began clanging away like mad, expect-
ant groups all over the ship scattered in a
twinkling, the few passengers gathering on the
hatches, while the sailors and mob of employés
clustered in an uncertain sort of way in the
waist, mostly on the port side of the ship's top-
hamper. Two lengths of three-inch hose mys-
teriously appeared from below,—one nearly half
as long as the ship, the other considerably
longer, and having a regular jet at the end,—and
were secured on to supply pipes slightly pro-
jecting from the extreme after sides of the top
hamper. Meanwhile the steward and scullion
mob on the port side of the ship, where the
shorter hose was attached, were sent aft to the
stern wheel-house for buckets, which they
brought with more or less celerity, according to
their individual inclinations, while the longer
hose was supported by the crew proper, which
consisted of only about a dozen men.

After delay enough to give the hypothetical
fire a fair start, word was got to the engineer
below having charge of the steam-pumps, and
the two hose began to eject water in consider-
able volume, but without much force. This was
not of any consequence in the case of the short
hose, which was only used for filling buckets,
and with the longer, the use of the jet made the
throw equal to some ten or twelve feet, sufficient
for ship-board purposes. The port hose was
directed successively into the immense lot of
buckets assembled in the waist, and as fast as a
bucket was filled, its contents were pitched
overboard, or into the lee scuppers, by a single
individual, who seemed to be doing most of the
work in that quarter. On the starboard side,
the stalwart tars played away vindictively at the
briny deep. The purser, a spruce young fel-
low, with an uncommonly frisky little mustache,
stood pensively at the head of the second-cabin
stairs, with the ship's mails in a tin case at his side;
and the other officers of sufficient dignity to es-
cape the deck-washing business, and with no
duties of their own but to "comfort and con-
trol the passengers," or some similar sinecure,
also stood around and smiled benignantly. The
chief cook, one of the few dignitaries whose
business it was to stay at their posts, gazed sar-
donically from his galley as if he wouldn't
mind going down with the ship in the least;
but the steerage passengers seemed interested,
and quite prepared to take a hand in the show,
the women especially appearing ready to be
saved on the slightest provocation.

The little bell having had a rest, now struck
two bells repeatedly, and the whole population
piled aft with all the buckets they could lay
hands on, swashing the bucket-hose sideways
à la Gatling-gun, to clear the way and give the
steerage passengers a sly wetting. There were
many queer specimens in this grand turn-out of
the steamer's people. The butcher, a short,
stoat, jolly Dutchman, with his tow hair cov-
ered by a low, dirty, blue jockey cap, offered an
amusing contrast to "Yawcoop," our dude
waiter in the second cabin, whose frantic efforts
to do his duty by the buckets without rumpling
his white tie or getting his feet wet, excited
general derision. A number of the hands
wore wooden shoes, which made a prodigious
racket as they trotted along the deck.

Arriving aft, the sailors spouted tranquilly
over the starboard rails, while the crowd to lee-
ward, on getting to the end of their shorter
"rope," fell gradually into a single line, which,
by the energetic efforts of the captain, who
seemed to be the only man on board having
exact idea how the thing should be done, was soon
transformed to a double one. Down one side the
buckets of water were passed from the hose, the
small amount of water left in them at the end
emptied into the scuppers, and the empty buck-
ets returned via the other side. This practice
was to enable the men to use other and nearer
supply-cocks instead of those fed by the steam-
pumps, in case the latter were for any reason
temporarily unavailable, as might often happen
with a fire occurring in some remote region
below. It was superintended by the captain in
person, around whom the bedroom steward,
whose duty as captain's messenger it was to
keep near him, while at the same time obliged
by etiquette to keep behind and not too close to