



Photo. R. Ellis, Maita.

Copyright.—Hudson & Kearns

THE CAPTAIN OF A BATTLE-SHIP COMING ON BOARD.

DEGREES of dignity are very clearly defined on board a man-of-war, increasing in importance from the lower ranks to the captain. It is doubtful if anyone who has not lived a short time in a man-of-war could appreciate the supreme position occupied by the captain of a battle-ship. The quarter-deck, being that part of the upper deck occupied by the officers, and from which the officer of the watch and commanding officer give their orders, where also officers arriving and leaving are received, has always been treated with great respect. Anyone coming on the quarter-deck has to salute; no noise or skylarking is allowed; the seamen are only permitted to pass on one side of it, unless actually necessary to go to the other. This was all very well in the old class of vessels, but in the modern ones it is often difficult to decide where the quarter-deck should be. A bridge between the masts, well forward, is now the promenade of the captain and officers when the ship is under way; but still, in harbour, the after-part of the upper deck over the officers' accommodation is kept sacred. The accompanying illustration shows the incident of Captain Churchill, of the battle-ship "Nile," coming on board his ship. The group shown consists, on the right, of the lieutenant who is officer of the watch, next to him the midshipman of the watch, and then the boatswain's mate; Captain Churchill is in the entry on the left. The signalman having reported the captain's boat approaching the ship, those shown repair to the gangway and wait for his arrival. As the boat comes alongside the boatswain's mate gives a prolonged wail with his pipe, everyone on deck stands to "attention" and salutes, and the pipe is repeated as the captain steps on to the deck. This ceremony is performed every time the captain leaves the ship and returns. The officer of the watch then reports to him any signals that have been made, or anything of importance that has occurred during his absence.