



NO one can state with certainty the origin of the Neptune ceremony. It is lost in antiquity with the Phoenecians and the Greeks, who bravely sailed far South from the Pillars of Hercules in their tiny boats. Those ancient seamen carried out ceremonies of propitiation and appeasement to Neptune, mythological god of the Seas, in which marks of respect were paid and gifts offered for his patronage. Truthful mariners of old would swear to having seen Neptune, noble and august in his chariot, drawn over the raging sea by great sea-horses and plunging dolphins. In his hand, upraised, was the dread Trident, symbol of his power, and beside him Amphitrite, tall and beautiful, with cool, white arms that are kind to drowning men. Later in history, as sailors ventured forth from Mare Nostrum, they underwent a vigorous and ceremonious ritual as they passed through the Straits into the Great

Ocean. This ritual was, to a large extent, to determine a man's fitness for the rigors of a life at sea, but behind it there remained the figure of the mythological Neptune.

The Vikings, who next became the world's great sailors, were known to have carried out similar ceremonies upon the crossing of certain parallels. It is probable that the ceremony was handed from them to the Anglo-Saxons and Normans, forebearers of the English. The ritual that we use today was developed by the English who added Davy Jones, right-hand man to Neptune, as a ceremonial figure. This character undoubtedly arose from the famous English pirate who sent so many ships to the bottom that it became known and referred to as "Davy Jones' Locker."

Today we have a ceremony that is a mixture of tradition, superstition, and merriment. Time has added many members to the