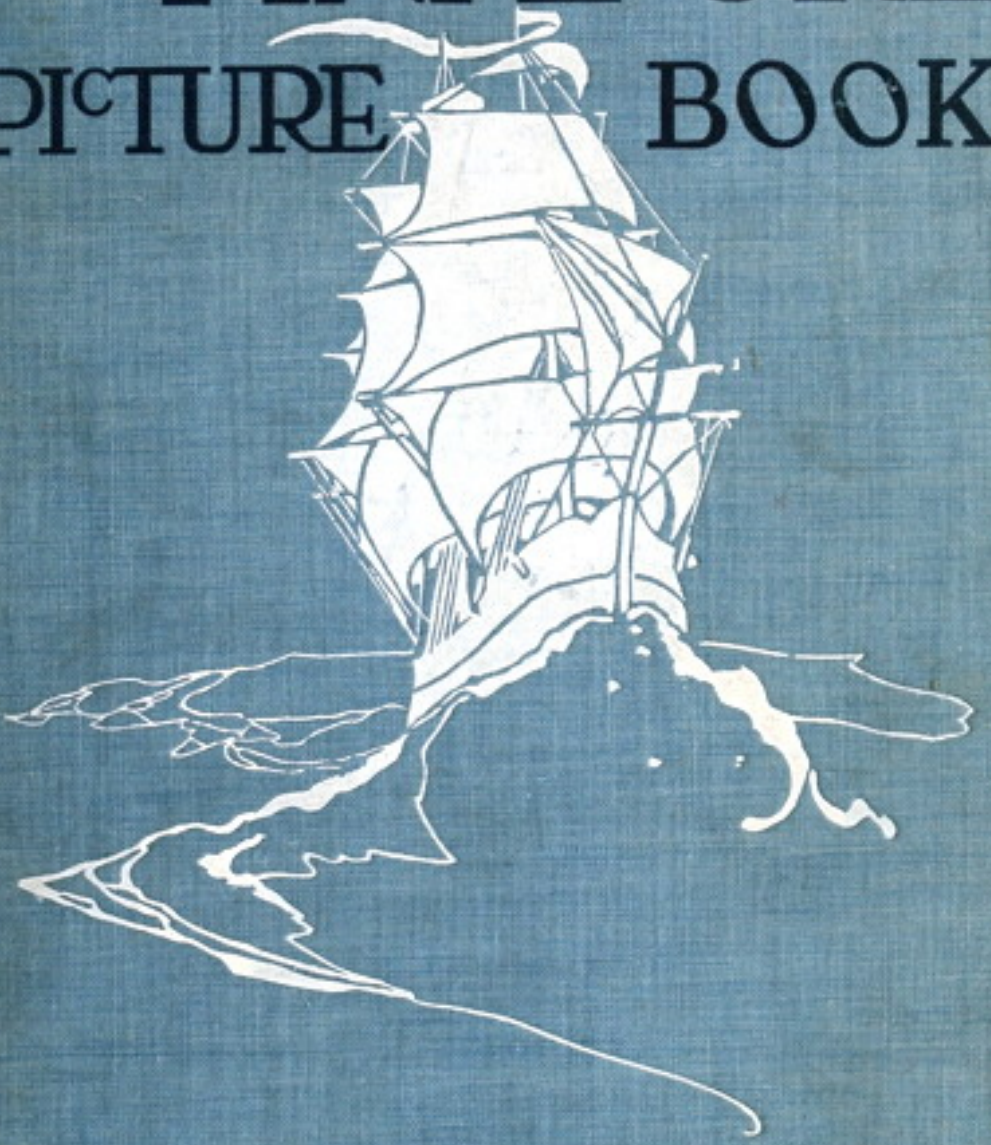
THE PINAFORE PICTURE BOOK



W. S. GILBERT

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H.M.S. “PINAFORE”

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RALPH RACKSTRAW IN THE RIGGING

The Pinafore Picture Book

The Story of H.M.S. PINAFORE Told

By

SIR W. S. GILBERT

AND

Illustrated by Alice B. Woodward

LONDON
George Bell & Sons
1908

CHISWICK PRESS: CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND CO.
TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.

TO MY YOUNG READERS

I have been asked to explain to you how it comes to pass that this, the story of a well-known Play, is now placed before you in the form of a Tale. In the first place, many very young ladies and gentlemen are never taken to the Theatre at all. It is supposed by certain careful Papas and Mamas that very young ladies and gentlemen should go to bed at an early hour, and that it is very bad for them to sit up as late as half past eleven or twelve o'clock at night. Of course, this difficulty could be overcome by taking them to Morning Performances, which are so called because they invariably take place in the afternoon; but there are drawbacks even to Morning Performances. Unless you are seated in the front row of the stalls (where the band is sure to be too loud), or in the front row of the dress circle (which is a long way off), the enjoyment of very young ladies and gentlemen is pretty nearly sure to be interfered with by the gigantic cart-wheel hats, decorated with huge bunches of wobbling feathers that ill-bred and selfish ladies clap upon their heads, nowadays, whenever they go to a theatre in the daytime. A third reason (and perhaps the best of them all) is that very young ladies and gentlemen find it rather difficult to follow the story of a play, much of which is told in songs set to beautiful music, and all of which is written in language which is better suited to their Papas and Mamas than to themselves. A fourth reason (but this is not such a good one as the other three) is that the Opera upon which this book is founded is, unhappily, not played in every town every night of the year. It should be, of course, but it is not, and it may very well happen that some poor people have to go so long as two or three years without having any opportunity of improving their minds by seeing it performed. When we get a National Theatre, at which all the best plays will be produced at the expense of the Public (who will also enjoy the privilege of paying to see the Plays after they have defrayed the cost of producing them), "Her Majesty's Ship Pinafore" will, no doubt, be played once or twice in every fortnight for ever; but as some years must elapse before this happy state of things can come to pass, and as those who are very young ladies and gentlemen now may be very middle-aged ladies and gentlemen then, it was thought that it would be a kind and considerate action to supply them at once with a story of the Play, so as not to subject them to the tantalizing annoyance of having to wait (possibly) many years before they have an opportunity of learning what it is all about.

As I would not for the world deceive my young readers, I think it right to state that this story is entirely imaginary. It might very well have happened but, in point of fact, it never did.

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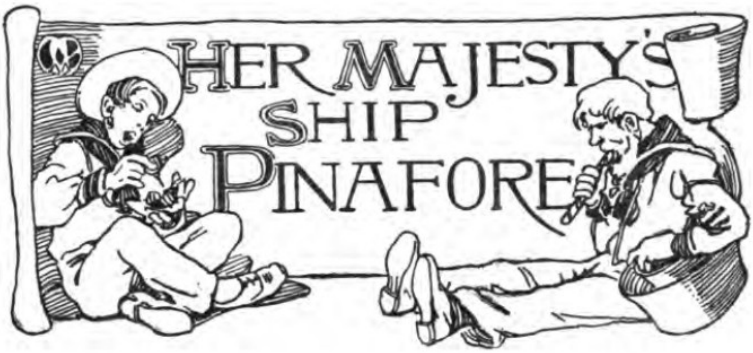


Great Britain is (at present) the most powerful maritime country in the world; she possesses a magnificent Fleet, superb officers and splendid seamen, and one and all are actuated by an intense desire to maintain their country's reputation in its highest glory.

One of the finest and most perfectly manned ships in that magnificent Fleet was Her Majesty's Ship *Pinafore*, and I call the ship "Her Majesty's" because she belonged to good Queen Victoria's time, when men-of-war were beautiful objects to look at, with tall tapering masts, broad white sails, and gracefully designed hulls; and not huge slate-coloured iron tanks without masts and sails as they are to-day. She was commanded by Captain Corcoran, R.N., a very humane, gallant, and distinguished officer, who did everything in his power to make his crew happy and comfortable. He had a sweet light baritone voice, and an excellent ear for music, of which he was extremely fond, and this led him to sing to his crew pretty songs of his own composition, and to teach them to sing to him. To encourage this taste among his crew, he made it a rule on board that nobody should ever *say* anything to him that could possibly be *sung*—a rule that was only relaxed when a heavy gale was blowing, or when he had a bilious headache. Harmless improving books were provided for the crew to read, and vanilla ices, sugar-plums, hardbake and raspberry jam were served out every day with a liberal hand. In short, he did everything possible (consistently with his duty to Her Majesty) to make everybody on board thoroughly ill and happy.

IN SHORT, HE DID EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MAKE EVERYBODY ON BOARD THOROUGHLY ILL AND HAPPY

Captain Corcoran was a widower with one daughter, named Josephine, a beautiful young lady with whom every single gentleman who saw her fell head-over-ears in love. She was tall, exquisitely graceful, with the loveliest blue eyes and barley-sugar coloured hair ever seen out of a Pantomime, but her most attractive feature was, perhaps, her nose, which was neither too long nor too short, nor too narrow nor too broad, nor too straight. It had the

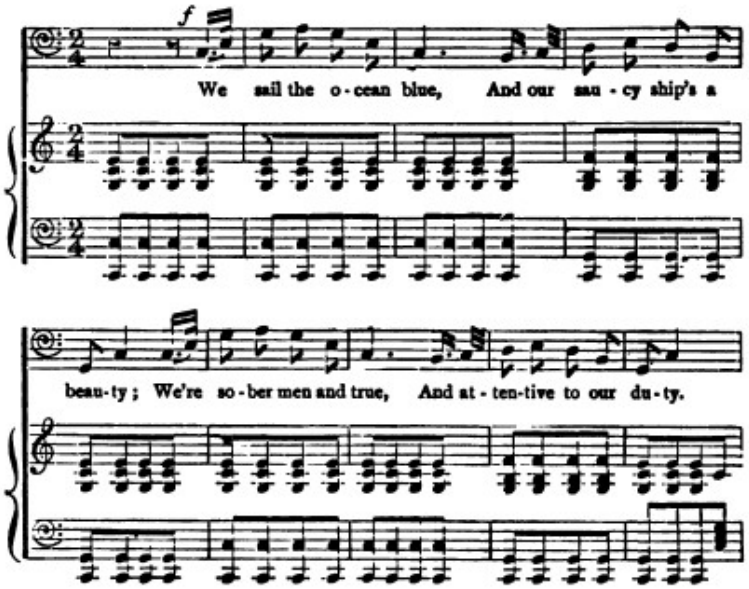
slightest possible touch of sauciness in it, but only just enough to let people know that though she could be funny if she pleased, her fun was always gentle and refined, and never under any circumstances tended in the direction of unfeeling practical jokes. It was such a maddening little nose, and had so extraordinary an effect on the world at large that, whenever she went into Society, she found it necessary to wear a large pasteboard artificial nose of so unbecoming and ridiculous a description that people passed her without taking the smallest notice of her. This alone is enough to show what a kind-hearted and self-sacrificing girl was the beautiful Josephine Corcoran.

One of the smartest sailors on board Her Majesty's Ship *Pinafore* was a young fellow called Ralph Rackstraw, though, as will be seen presently, that was not his real name. He was extremely good-looking, and, considering that he had had very little education, remarkably well-spoken. Unhappily he had got it into his silly head that a British man-of-war's man was a much finer fellow than he really is. He is, no doubt, a very fine fellow indeed, but perhaps not quite so fine a fellow as Ralph Rackstraw thought he was. He had heard a great many songs and sentiments in which a British Tar was described as a person who possessed every good quality that could be packed into one individual, whereas there is generally room for a great many more good qualities than are usually found inside any sailor. A good packer never packs anything too tight; it is always judicious to leave room for unexpected odds and ends, and British Tars are very good packers and leave plenty of room for any newly acquired virtues that may be coming along. So, although Ralph had gathered up many excellent qualities, there were still some that he had not yet added to his collection, and among these was a proper appreciation of the fact that he hadn't got them all. In short, his only fault was a belief that he hadn't any.

Ralph Rackstraw was one of the many who loved Josephine to distraction. Nearly all the unmarried members of the crew also loved Josephine, but they were older and more sensible than Ralph, and clearly understood that they could never be accepted as suitable husbands for a beautiful young lady of position, who was, moreover, their own Captain's daughter. They knew that their manners were quite unsuited to polite dining and drawing-rooms, and indeed they would have been very uncomfortable if they had been required to sit at table with gentlemen in gold epaulettes, and ladies in feathers and long trains; so they very wisely reasoned themselves into a conviction that the sooner they put Josephine out of their heads the better it would be for their peace of mind.

There is a time, between four and six in the afternoon, when the men-of-war sailors are allowed to cease their work and amuse themselves with cheerful songs and rational conversation. It is called the "dog-watch" (why, I can't imagine), and at that time all who are not engaged upon any special duty meet on the forecastle (which is the front part of the upper deck) to sing pretty songs and tell each other those harmless but surprising anecdotes which are known in the Royal Navy as "yarns." One of the most popular subjects of conversation during the dog-watch on board the *Pinafore* was the kindness and consideration shown by their good Captain Corcoran towards the men under his command, and another was the agreeable fact that the *Pinafore* was one of those jolly ships that never pitched and rolled, and consequently never made any of the sailors sea-sick. The crew, who had been carefully trained by Captain Corcoran to sing more or less in tune, always opened the dog-watch with this chorus:

We sail the ocean blue,
And our saucy ship's a beauty!
We're sober men and true
And attentive to our duty.
When the balls whistle free o'er the bright blue sea,
We stand to our guns all day;
When at anchor we ride on the Portsmouth tide
We've plenty of time to play!



This they used to sing as they sipped their ices, and ate their rout-cakes and almond toffee. The song might strike you at first as rather too complimentary to themselves, but it was not really so, as each man who sang it was alluding to all the others, and left himself out of the question, and so it came to pass that every man paid a pretty compliment to his neighbours, and received one in return, which was quite fair and led to no quarrelling.

As the sailors sat and talked they were joined by a rather stout but very interesting elderly woman of striking personal appearance. She was what is called a “bum-boat woman,” that is to say, a person who supplied the

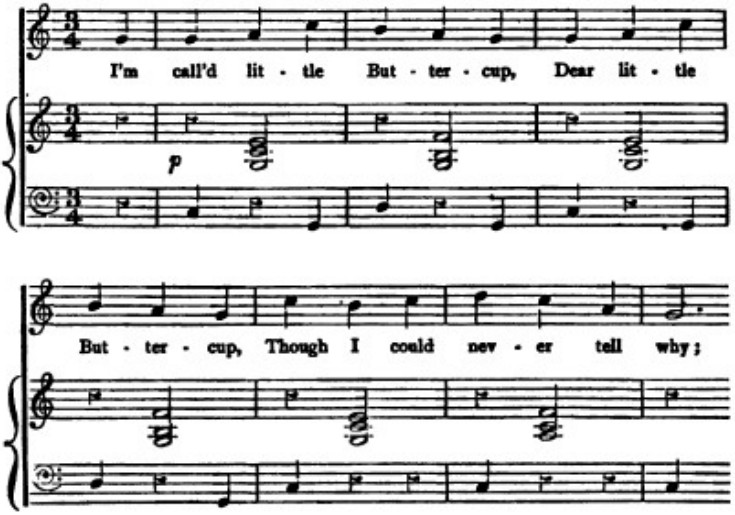
officers and crew with little luxuries not included in the ship's bill of fare. Her real name was Poll Pineapple, but the crew nick-named her "Little Buttercup," partly because it is a pretty name, but principally because she was not at all like a buttercup, or indeed anything else than a stout, quick-tempered, and rather mysterious lady, with a red face and black eyebrows like leeches, and who seemed to know something unpleasant about everybody on board. She had a habit of making quite nice people uncomfortable by hinting things in a vague way, and at the same time with so much meaning (by skilful use of her heavy black eyebrows), that they began to wonder whether they hadn't done something dreadful, at some time or other, and forgotten all about it. So Little Buttercup was not really popular with the crew, but they were much too kind-hearted to let her know it.

Little Buttercup had a song of her own which she always sang when she came on board. Here it is:

I'm called Little Buttercup—dear Little Buttercup,
Though I could never tell why,
But still I'm called Buttercup—poor Little Buttercup,
Sweet Little Buttercup, I.

I've snuff and tobaccy and excellent "jacky,"
I've scissors and watches and knives,
I've ribbons and laces to set off the faces
Of pretty young sweethearts and wives.
I've treacle and toffee and very good coffee,
"Soft Tommy" and nice mutton chops,

I've chickens and conies and dainty polonies
And excellent peppermint drops.
Then buy of your Buttercup—dear Little Buttercup,
Sailors should never be shy—
So, buy of your Buttercup—poor Little Buttercup—
Come, of your Buttercup buy!



"Thank goodness, *that*'s over!" whispered the sailors to each other with an air of relief. You see, Little Buttercup always sang that song whenever she came on board, and after a few months people got tired of it. Besides not being really popular on account of her aggravating tongue, she sold for the most part things that the liberal Captain provided freely for his crew out of

his own pocket-money. They had soup, fish, an *entrée*, a joint, an apple pudding, or a jam tart every day, besides eggs and ham for breakfast, muffins for tea, and as many scissors, pocket-knives, and cigars as they chose to ask for. So Little Buttercup was not even useful to them, and they only tolerated her because they were gallant British Tars who couldn't be rude to a lady if they tried. In point of fact they *had* tried on several occasions to say rude and unpleasant things to ladies, but as they had invariably failed in the attempt they at last gave it up as hopeless, and determined to be quietly polite under all possible circumstances. So they asked her to sit down, and take a strawberry ice and a wafer, which she did rather sulkily as no one seemed to want any of the things she had to sell.

"Tell us a story, Little Buttercup," said Bill Bobstay. Bill was a boatswain's mate, who, besides being busily occupied in embroidering his name in red worsted on a canvas "nighty case," generally took the lead in all the amusements of the dog-watch. "You can if you try, I'm sure, Miss."

"You're quite right," said Little Buttercup; "I could tell you stories about yourselves which would make you all wish you had never been born. *I* know who takes sugar-plums to bed with him" (looking at one), "and who doesn't say his prayers" (looking at another), "and who sucks his thumb in his hammock" (looking at the third), "and who makes ugly faces at his Captain when his back's turned" (looking at a fourth), "and who does his front hair with patent curlers" (looking at a fifth), "and who puts raspberry jam into his messmates' boots" (looking at a sixth).

All the sailors referred to looked very hot and uncomfortable, for their consciences told them that Little Buttercup had hit off their various weaknesses with surprising accuracy.

"Let's change the subject," said Bill Bobstay (he was the one who ate sugar-plums in bed), "we all have our faults. But, after all, we're not so bad as poor Dick Deadeye—that's one comfort!"

"I KNOW WHO TAKES SUGAR-PLUMS TO BED WITH HIM"

Now this was very unjust on the part of Mr. Bobstay. Dick Deadeye, who sat apart from the others, busy manicuring his nails, was one of the ugliest persons who ever entered the Navy. His face had been so knocked about and burnt and scarred in various battles and from falling down from aloft, that not one feature was in its proper place. The wags among the crew pretended that his two eyes, his nose, and his mouth, had been playing "Puss in the Corner," and that his left eye, having been unable to find a corner that

was unoccupied, was consequently left in the middle. Of course this was only their nonsense, but it shows what a very plain man he must have been. He was hump-backed, and bandy-legged, and round-shouldered, and hollow-chested, and severely pitted with small-pox marks. He had broken both his arms, both his legs, his two collar-bones, and all his ribs, and looked just as if he had been crumpled up in the hand of some enormous giant. He ought properly to have been made a Greenwich Pensioner long ago, but Captain Corcoran was too kind-hearted to hint that Dick Deadeye was deformed, and so he was allowed to continue to serve his country as a man-o'-war's man as best he could. Now Dick Deadeye was generally disliked because he was so unpleasant to look at, but he was really one of the best and kindest and most sensible men on board the *Pinafore*, and this shows how wrong and unjust it is to judge unfavourably of a man because he is ugly and deformed. I myself am one of the plainest men I have ever met, and at the same time I don't know a more agreeable old gentleman. But so strong was the prejudice against poor Dick Deadeye, that nothing he could say or do appeared to be right. The worst construction was placed upon his most innocent remarks, and his noblest sentiments were always attributed to some unworthy motive. They had no idea what the motive was, but they felt sure there *was* a motive, and that he ought to be ashamed of it.

Dick Deadeye sighed sadly when Mr. Bobstay spoke so disparagingly of him. He wiped a tear from his eye (as soon as he had found that organ), and then continued to manicure his poor old cracked and broken nails in silence.

"What's the matter with the man?" said Little Buttercup; "isn't he well?"

"Aye, aye, lady," said Dick, "I'm as well as ever I shall be. But I *am* ugly, ain't I?"

"Well," said little Buttercup, "you are certainly plain."

"And I'm three-cornered, ain't I?" said he.

"You *are* rather triangular."

"Ha! ha!" said Dick, laughing bitterly. "That's it. I'm ugly, and they hate me for it!"

Bill Bobstay was sorry he had spoken so unkindly.

"Well, Dick," said he, putting down his embroidery, "we wouldn't go to hurt any fellow creature's feelings, but, setting personal appearance on one side, you can't expect a person with such a name as 'Dick Deadeye' to be a popular character—now, can you?"

"No," said Dick, sadly, "it's asking too much. It's human nature, and I don't complain!"

At this moment, a beautiful tenor voice was heard singing up in the rigging:

The Nightingale
Loved the pale moon's bright ray
And told his tale
In his own melodious way,
He sang, "Ah, Well-a-day!"

The lowly vale
For the mountain vainly sighed;
To his humble wail
The echoing hills replied,
They sang, "Ah, Well-a-day!"

"Who is the silly cuckoo who is tweetling up aloft?" asked Little Buttercup, rather rudely, as she scooped up the last drops of her ice.

"That?" said Bobstay, "Why, that's only poor Ralph Rackstraw who's in love with Miss Josephine."

"Ralph Rackstraw!" exclaimed little Buttercup, "Ha! I could tell you a good deal about *him* if I chose. But I won't—not yet!"

At this point Ralph descended the rigging and joined his messmates on deck.

"Ah, my lad," said one of them, "you're quite right to come down—for you've climbed too high. Our worthy Captain's child won't have nothing to say to a poor chap like you."

All the sailors said "Hear, hear," and nodded their heads simultaneously, like so many china mandarins in a tea-shop.

"No, no," said Dick Deadeye, "Captains' daughters don't marry common sailors."

Now this was a very sensible remark, but coming from ugly Dick Deadeye it was considered to be in the worst possible taste. All the sailors muttered, "Shame, shame!"

"Dick Deadeye," said Bobstay, "those sentiments of yours are a disgrace to our common nature."

Dick shrugged his left eyebrow. He would have shrugged his shoulders if he could, but they wouldn't work that way; so, always anxious to please, he did the best he could with his left eyebrow, but even that didn't succeed in conciliating his messmates.

"It's very strange," said Ralph, "that the daughter of a man who hails from the quarterdeck may not love another who lays out on the fore-yard arm. For a man is but a man, whether he hoists his flag at the main-truck, or his slacks on the main deck."

This speech of Ralph's calls for a little explanation, for he expressed himself in terms which an ordinary landsman would not understand. The quarterdeck is the part of the ship reserved for officers, and the fore-yard arm is a horizontal spar with a sail attached to it, and which crosses the front mast of a ship, and sailors are said to "lay out" on it when they get on to it for the purpose of increasing or reducing sail. Then again, the main-truck is the very highest point of the middle mast, and it is from that point that the Captain flies his flag, while a sailor is said to "hoist his slacks" when he hitches up the waist-band of his trousers to keep them in their proper place. Now you know all about *that*.

"Ah," said Dick Deadeye, "it's a queer world!" "Dick Deadeye," said Mr. Bobstay, "I have no desire to press hardly on any human being, but such a wicked sentiment is enough to make an honest sailor shudder."

And all his messmates began to shudder violently to show what honest sailors they were and how truly Bobstay had spoken; but at that moment the ship's bell sounding four strokes gave them notice that the dog-watch had come to an end. So the crew put away their manicure boxes and embroidered "nighty cases" and dispersed to their several duties.

One of the most important personages in the Government of that day was Sir Joseph Porter, the First Lord of the Admiralty. You would naturally think that the person who commanded the entire Navy would be the most accomplished sailor who could be found, but that is not the way in which such things are managed in England. Sir Joseph Porter, who had risen from a very humble position to be a lawyer and then a Member of Parliament, was, I believe, the only man in England who knew nothing whatever about ships. Now, as England is a great maritime country, it is very important that all Englishmen should understand something about men-of-war. So as soon as it was discovered that his ignorance of a ship was so complete that he didn't know one end of it from the other, some important person said "Let us set this poor ignorant gentleman to command the British Fleet, and by that means give him an opportunity of ascertaining what a ship really is." This was considered to be a most wise and sensible suggestion, and so Sir Joseph Porter was at once appointed "First Lord of the Admiralty of Great Britain and Ireland." I daresay you think I am joking, but indeed I am quite serious. That is the way in which things are managed in this great and happy country.

Now Sir Joseph Porter was one of the many people who, having accidentally seen her without her nose, had fallen a victim to the extraordinary beauty of Miss Josephine Corcoran. He quite recognized the fact that his position as First Lord of the Admiralty of this mighty country rendered it undesirable that he should marry so obscure a lady as the daughter of a mere captain in the Navy, but Josephine's charm was so overpowering that he determined to put his pride in his pocket and condescend to bestow his hand upon her. So one day he announced to Captain Corcoran that it was his intention to visit Her Majesty's Ship *Pinafore* in order to propose for his daughter's hand.

Now most people would think that Josephine would have gladly accepted so great a man as Sir Joseph, but it so happened that that young lady was not at all impressed by the honour which he proposed to confer upon her. She did not object to him personally (indeed she had never seen him) but she was a girl of spirit with a will of her own, and had no idea of being handed over, without her consent, to any gentleman, however important a person he might be. Moreover (and this was a profound secret) she had been greatly struck with the many good qualities of Ralph Rackstraw, who never lost a chance of distinguishing himself in her eyes. Whenever he saw her looking in his direction, he assumed a series of the most graceful and captivating attitudes ever seen, and Josephine was never tired of watching him as he gradually moved from one beautiful pose to another—each more graceful and more truly artistic than the last. His lovely tenor voice also charmed her greatly, and his performances on a penny jews' harp appeared to her to excel any music that the most expensive instruments could produce. At the same time, she was much too proud and too well-behaved to allow Ralph to know that she admired him. So it was a secret between her and herself, and neither was so dishonourable as to violate the other's confidence.

SIR JOSEPH PORTER WAS ONE OF THE MANY PEOPLE WHO HAD FALLEN A VICTIM TO THE BEAUTY OF MISS JOSEPHINE CORCORAN

On the eventful morning of Sir Joseph's intended visit, Captain Corcoran came on deck as soon as he had finished his breakfast. Captain Corcoran had arranged a pretty little musical method of greeting his crew, and the crew practised it with him until they were perfect. This was how he greeted his crew every day:

My gallant crew, good morning!

And they would reply:

Sir, good morning!

Then he would say:

I hope you're all quite well!

And they would answer:

Quite well, and you, Sir?

And he would reply:

I am in reasonable health, and happy
To see you all once more.

And they would sing:

You do us proud, Sir!

Of course, when he was not quite well he would alter the words to suit his condition, like this:

I have a dreadful toothache, yet I'm happy
To see you all once more!

Or,

I have a housemaid's knee, yet I am happy
To see you all once more!

And so forth, for Captain Corcoran never intentionally said anything that was not strictly true.

After this introduction he used to tell them something about himself:

THE CAPTAIN. I am the captain of the *Pinafore*!

THE CREW. And a right good captain too!

THE CAPTAIN (*politely*).

You're very, very good,
And be it understood,
I command a right good crew!

THE CREW (*to each other*).

We're very, very good,
And be it understood,
He commands a right good crew!

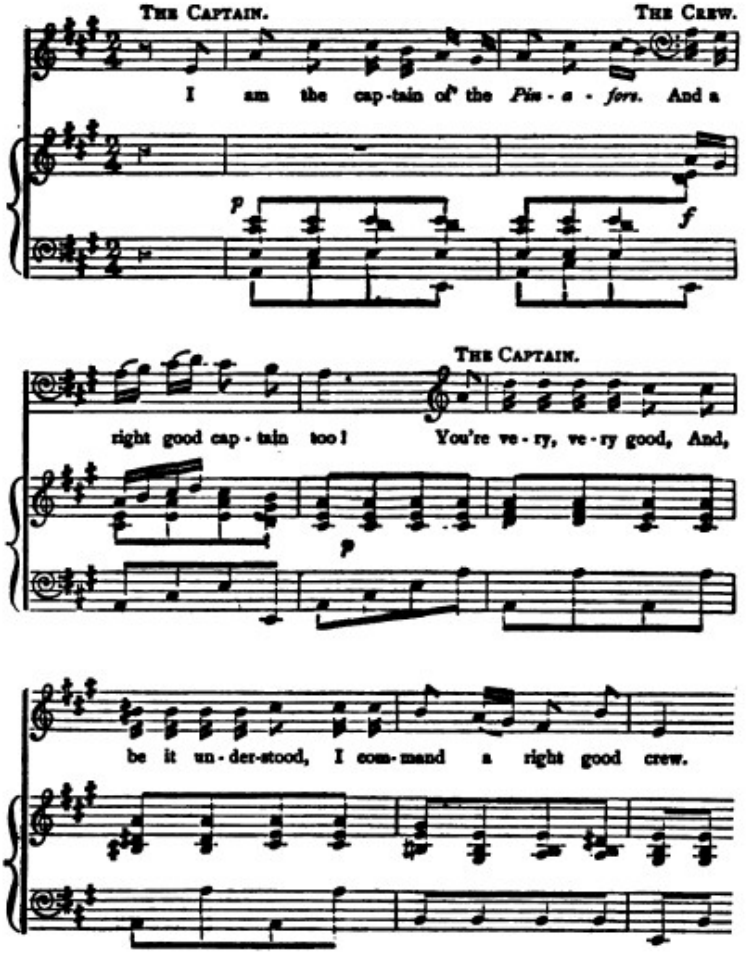
THE CAPTAIN. Though related to a peer[1]
I can hand, reef, and steer,[2]
And ship a selvagee.
I am never known to quail
At the fury of a gale,
And I'm never, never sick at sea!

THE CREW (*who know better*). What, never?

THE CAPTAIN (*mere forgetfulness*). No, never!

THE CREW (*who remember one instance*). What, *never*?

“MY GALLANT CREW, GOOD MORNING!”


THE CAPTAIN.
THE CREW.
I am the cap-tain of the Pin-a-fore. And a
p
f
THE CAPTAIN.
right good cap-tain too! You're ve-ry, ve-ry good, And,
p
be it un-der-stood, I com-mand a right good crew.

THE CAPTAIN (*who now recollects the occasion they are referring to*).
Hardly ever!

THE CREW (*delighted, at having caught him tripping*).

He's hardly ever sick at sea!
Then give three cheers and one cheer more
For the hardy Captain of the *Pinafore*!

THE CAPTAIN. I do my best to satisfy you all!

THE CREW. And with you we're quite content.

THE CAPTAIN. You're exceedingly polite,
And I think it only right,
To return the compliment!

THE CREW (*to each other*).

We're exceedingly polite
And he thinks it only right
To return the compliment!

THE CAPTAIN. Bad language or abuse
I never, never use,
Whatever the emergency;
"How tiresome!" I may
Occasionally say,
But I never use a big, big B![3]

THE CREW (*who remember a certain occasion*). What, never?

THE CAPTAIN (*the circumstance had slipped his memory*). No, never!

THE CREW (*who don't mean to let him off*). What, *never*?

THE CAPTAIN (*the incident suddenly occurring to him*). Hardly ever!

THE CREW (*who have scored*).

Hardly ever says a big, big B!
Then give three cheers and one cheer more
For the well-bred Captain of the *Pinafore*!

And they gave three of the heartiest cheers you ever heard. After this pretty little ceremony (which might with advantage be more generally adopted throughout the Navy), the officers and sailors employed themselves with a variety of easy little tasks suited to rather lazy people on a very fine warm day. Captain Corcoran (who was never idle) was about to retire to his cabin to arrange the figures of a minuet which he intended to teach his men

to dance, when his attention was arrested by Josephine, who at that moment came on deck. The poor young lady was very sad, and sang a remarkably beautiful song of her own composition.

It ran like this:

Sorry her lot who loves too well,
  Heavy the heart that hopes but vainly,
Sad are the sighs that own the spell
  Uttered by eyes that speak too plainly!
Heavy the sorrow that bows the head
When Love is alive and Hope is dead!

The good Captain was distressed to see his dear daughter in this bilious frame of mind.

"My child," said he, "I grieve to see that you are a prey to melancholy."

"There's another verse, Papa," said Josephine, who rather resented interruption.

"Don't sing it, my child; your music depresses us both. I want you to look your best to-day, for Sir Joseph Porter will arrive presently to claim your promised hand."

"Nay, father," said Josephine, "I can esteem, reverence, even venerate Sir Joseph, for I shouldn't be surprised if he is a great and good man, but I cannot love him, for, alas! my heart is given!"

"Given!" exclaimed her father, "and to whom? Not to some gilded lordling?"[4]

"No, Papa," said she, "the object of my affection is no lordling. Oh, pity me, for he is but a humble sailor on board your own ship!"

"Impossible!" said Captain Corcoran.

"Yet it is true," replied Josephine, "too true!"

"A common sailor!" exclaimed the Captain, "oh, fie!"

"I quite feel the 'fie,' " said she, "but he's anything but common."

"Come, my child," said her father, "let us talk this over. In a matter of the heart I would not control my daughter. I attach little value to rank or wealth, but the line must be drawn somewhere. A man in that lowly station may be brave and worthy, but at every step he would make dreadful

blunders that Society would never pardon. He would drop his h's, and eat peas with his knife."

THE GOOD CAPTAIN WAS DISTRESSED TO SEE HIS DEAR DAUGHTER IN THIS BILIOUS FRAME OF MIND

Captain Corcoran's sentiments upon this point were so right and just that one is more sorry than ever that he should have boasted, in his song, of

being related to a peer. It is just one of those unfortunate little slips that one never can quite get out of one's mind. Personally, I hope he did it only because he wanted a rhyme to "steer," but, after all, that's a very poor excuse.

"All that you say is true," replied Josephine, "but fear not, Papa; I have a heart, and therefore I love; but I am your daughter, and therefore I am proud. Though I carry my love with me to the tomb he shall never, never know it!"

Poor girl, she thought so at the time, but as the result will show, she sadly over-estimated her strength of mind, and the consequence was a pretty kettle of fish, I promise you!

At this point a message was brought to the Captain by Lieutenant Hatchway, that the ship's barge was approaching with Sir Joseph on board, accompanied by his two plain sisters, his three ugly aunts, and ever so many pretty cousins, their daughters. Sir Joseph was a gentleman of great refinement, who was very easily shocked, and as he knew that the society of charming ladies had the effect of making everybody polite and considerate, he never travelled any great distance without them.

"Pipe the side and man ship," said the Captain, which meant that he wished all the officers to stand in a row to salute the First Lord, and all the crew to stand upright on the various spars that crossed the three masts, which is the way in which superior persons were always received on a man-of-war. The Captain of Marines (who are a kind of military sailors or nautical soldiers) brought up his men that they might "present arms" with their rifles at the word of command, and the ship's band were ready with all their instruments to play "God save the Queen" at the proper moment.

All these preparations were ready by the time the ship's barge (which is a very large and handsome boat rowed by twelve sailors, seated two and two) was alongside, and in a few moments Sir Joseph Porter and his female relations stepped on board. The Officers saluted, the Marines presented arms, the drums rattled, the band struck up the National Anthem, and nine-pounder guns were fired from the middle deck.

Sir Joseph, who was quite as fond of music as Captain Corcoran, had composed these remarkable verses which he always sang whenever he went on board a man-of-war.

SIR JOSEPH. I'm the monarch of the sea,
The ruler of the Queen's Navee,
Whose praise Great Britain loudly chaunts!

And the Ladies sang:

And we are his sisters, and his cousins, and his aunts!

SIR JOSEPH. When at anchor here I ride
My bosom swells with pride,
And I snap my fingers at a foeman's taunts!

ALL THE LADIES. And so do his sisters, and his cousins, and his aunts!

SIR JOSEPH. But when the breezes blow
I generally go below,
And seek the seclusion that a cabin grants!

ALL THE LADIES. And so do his sisters, and his cousins, and his aunts.
His sisters and his cousins,
Whom he reckons up by dozens,
And his aunts!

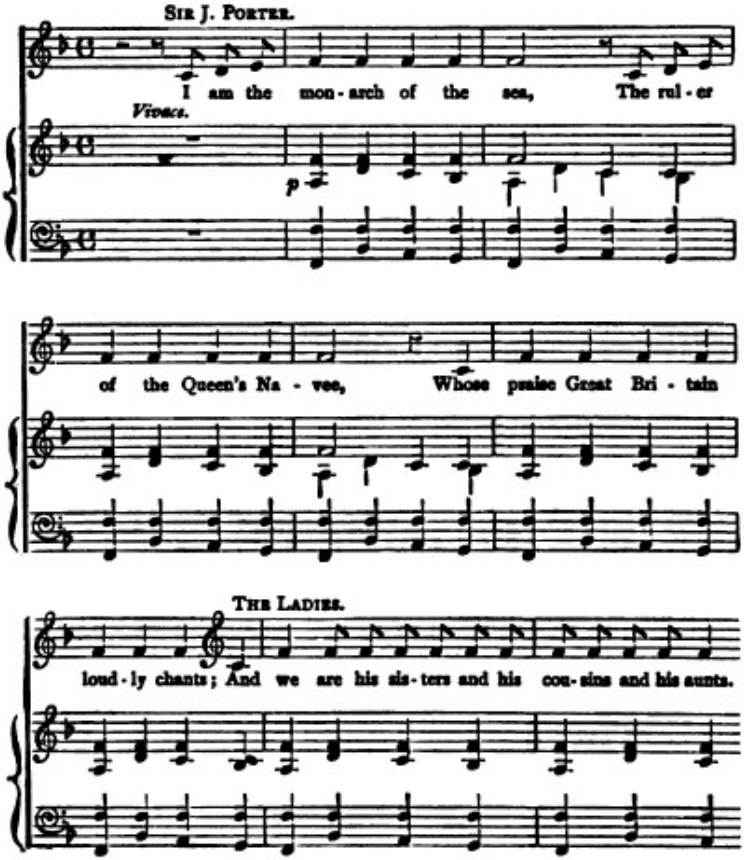
Then Sir Joseph (who was proud of his lowly origin, and who thought that a short sketch of his career would afford a useful example to ambitious persons in a humble rank of life) was so good as to sing the following song:

When I was a lad I served a term
As office-boy in an attorney's firm;

I cleaned the windows and I swept the floor,
And I polished up the handle of the big front door.
I polished up that handle so successfullee
That now I am the Ruler of the Queen's Navee.

As office-boy I made such a mark
That they gave me the post of a junior clerk;
I served the writs with a smile so bland,
And I copied all the letters in a big round hand.
I copied all the letters in a hand so free
That now I am the Ruler of the Queen's Navee.

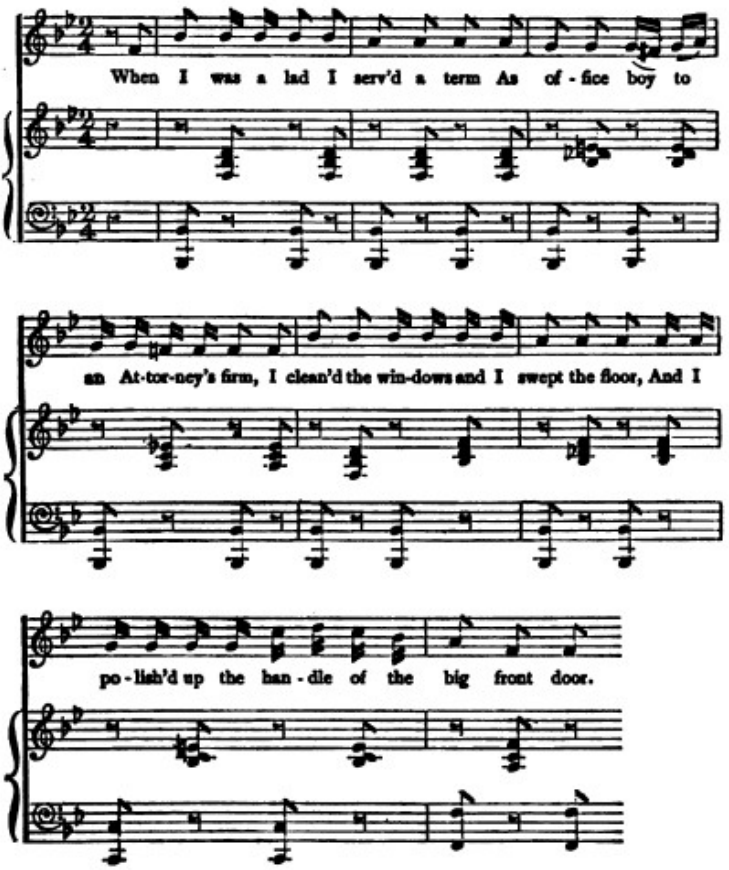
In serving writs I made such a name,
That an articled clerk I soon became;
I wore clean collars and a bran-new suit
For the pass-examination at the Institute.
That pass-examination did so well for me
That now I am the Ruler of the Queen's Navee.



Of legal knowledge I acquired such a grip,
That they took me into partnership,
And that junior partnership I ween
Was the only ship that I had ever seen.
    But that same ship so suited me
    That now I am the Ruler of the Queen’s Navee.

I grew so rich that I was sent
To the House as a Member of Parliament,
I always voted at my party’s call,[5]
And I never thought of thinking for myself at all.
    I thought so little they rewarded me
    By making me the Ruler of the Queen’s Navee.

Now landsmen all, whoever you may be,
If you want to rise to the top of the tree—
If your soul isn't fettered to an office-stool
Be careful to be guided by this golden rule—
    Stick close to your desks and never go to sea,
    And you all may be rulers of the Queen's Navee.



(Between ourselves, I think this last suggestion was rather silly, for he was addressing people who had already gone to sea, and consequently could not possibly act on his advice. But I'm afraid that Sir Joseph, though a very distinguished man, was, like a good many other very distinguished men, a bit of a goose.)

"You've a remarkably fine crew, Captain Corcoran," said Sir Joseph when he had finished his song, and was quite sure that they didn't want him to sing it again.

"It *is* a fine crew," said Captain Corcoran.

"I hope you treat them kindly, Captain Corcoran?"

"Indeed, I hope so, Sir Joseph."

"No bullying, I trust; no strong language of any kind?"

"Oh never, Sir Joseph!"

"What, *never*?" said Sir Joseph, who had heard rumours to the contrary.

The Captain's eye met those of some of his crew, who shook their fingers significantly at him.

"Well, hardly ever," said the Captain, "they are an excellent crew, and do their work thoroughly without it."

Sir Joseph was one of those people whom it is extremely difficult to satisfy, for you never quite knew whether what you said would please him or make him angry, and it generally did the latter. He was very fond of popularity, and as there were five hundred sailors on board the *Pinafore*, and only one Captain, he thought it a good plan to snub the Captain in order to make friends of the crew. It is true that he was in love with the Captain's daughter, but he felt sure that the Captain was so anxious to have such a great and powerful man as the First Lord of the Admiralty for a son-in-law, that a few snubs more or less might be safely indulged in. So when Captain Corcoran praised his crew so highly, Sir Joseph Porter said to him, very angrily:

"Don't patronize them, sir. That you are their Captain is a mere accident of birth. I cannot permit these noble fellows to be patronized because an accident of birth has placed you above them, and them below you."

Poor Captain Corcoran turned very red and felt extremely tingly down the back at being so publicly rebuked. It is always a mistake to rebuke people in the presence of those who have to obey them, if it can possibly be avoided.

"I am the last person to insult a British sailor, Sir Joseph," said he.

"You are the last person who did," said Sir Joseph, snappishly.

I feel quite sorry for Captain Corcoran, who really meant as well as possible. He was a much truer gentleman than Sir Joseph, though I can't quite forget that unfortunate remark of his about being related to a Peer.

During this conversation, Ralph Rackstraw had assumed in succession several of his choicest attitudes, and these naturally attracted Sir Joseph's attention.

"Captain Corcoran," said he, "desire that splendid seaman to step forward."

"Rackstraw," said the Captain, "three paces to the front, march!"

Sir Joseph pretended to be greatly shocked at this abrupt command.

"If what?" said Sir Joseph very sternly.

The Captain was puzzled.

"I beg your pardon," said he, "I don't quite understand."

"If you *please*," said Sir Joseph, with a very strong emphasis on the "please."

Now it is not usual in the Navy to say "if you please" whenever you give an order. It would take up too much time. But Captain Corcoran was bound to obey the great man, though you will observe that the great man never said "if you please" when he addressed Captain Corcoran.

The Captain, looking as if he had just bitten a pill, said "Oh yes, of course. If you *please*."

And accordingly, Ralph Rackstraw took three paces to the front, and if ever a Captain in the Navy said "Bother" under his breath, Captain Corcoran was that man.

"You're a remarkably fine fellow," said Sir Joseph, addressing Ralph.

"Yes, your honour," replied Ralph, who was too well acquainted with his duty to presume to differ from the First Lord of the Admiralty.

"And a first-rate seaman, I'll be bound."

"There's not a smarter sailor in the Navy, your honour," said Ralph, "though I say it who shouldn't."

This sounds rather conceited of Ralph, but he had learnt from Captain Corcoran to speak the exact truth on all occasions. Besides, he wanted to convince Sir Joseph how right he was in the opinion he had formed.

"Now tell me, Ralph—don't be afraid—how does your Captain treat you?"

"A better Captain don't walk the deck, your honour!"

And all the rest of the crew said "Hear, hear!"

This was not quite what Sir Joseph wanted. He would rather that Ralph had said, "Well, he does his best, poor chap," or something of that half complimentary kind. However, he managed to conceal his disappointment.

"Good," said he, "I like to hear you speak well of your commanding officer. I dare say he doesn't deserve it, but it does you credit. Now, Captain

Corcoran, a word with you in private."

"Certainly, Sir Joseph," replied the Captain, "Boatswain," said he, turning towards Mr. Bobstay, "in commemoration of Sir Joseph's visit, see that an extra tub of raspberry jam is served out to the ship's company."

"Beg pardon," said Mr. Bobstay, who hadn't forgotten Sir Joseph's lesson in politeness, "if *what*, your honour?"

Captain Corcoran could scarcely believe his ears.

" 'If what?' " said he, "I don't—I really don't think I understand you!"

"If you *please*, your honour!"

The Captain looked thunderstruck, when Sir Joseph interposed.

"The gentleman is quite right. If you *please*."

The Captain had almost let out another "Bother!" but he gulped it down with a great effort.

"If you *please*!" said he, and Sir Joseph entered the cabin with Captain Corcoran, followed by his two plain sisters, his three ugly aunts, and all his pretty cousins. Refreshments had thoughtfully been provided for them in the ward-room, (which is the apartment assigned to the lieutenants on board a man-o'-war), and they enjoyed a delightful luncheon in the agreeable society of the junior officers in gilt buttons and gold epaulettes, who paid even more attention to Sir Joseph's plain sisters and ugly aunts than they did to his younger and more attractive relations; which shows what thoroughly well-bred gentlemen British naval officers are. Plain elderly people are just as hungry as young and pretty ones; and nobody ought to make any distinction between them. While Sir Joseph communicated his matrimonial intentions at great length to Captain Corcoran in his private cabin, the crew broke up and withdrew to the forecastle to discuss the events of the morning.

LUNCHEON IN THE WARD-ROOM

“Ah!” said Mr. Bobstay, “Sir Joseph’s a true gentleman; courteous and considerate to the very humblest.”

“Well spoke! Well spoke!” they all cried. (They should have said “spoken,” and would have done so if their education had been properly attended to.)

You see, these poor ignorant sailors were not shrewd enough to understand that Sir Joseph had his reasons for flattering them so

outrageously. He longed for "popularity," and determined to acquire it at any price, and it is quite clear that, as far as the crew of the *Pinafore* was concerned, he had fully achieved his object.

"Hold hard!" said another of the crew, Bill Bowling by name, "we are not as humble as all that. Sir Joseph has explained our true position to us, and if he says that a British sailor is any man's equal, why it's our duty to believe him!"

"That's right enough!" muttered all the sailors, except Dick Deadeye, who knew better.

"You're on the wrong tack," said he, "and so's Sir Joseph. He means well, but he don't know. When people have to obey other people's orders, equality's out of the question."

I really believe that if the crew had not been restrained by humane consideration, they would have pulled Dick Deadeye's hair.

"Dick Deadeye," said Mr. Bobstay, "if you go for to infuriate this here ship's crew too far, I won't answer for being able to hold them in. I'm shocked, that's what I am, shocked."

"Messmates," said Ralph, who had been greatly impressed by what Sir Joseph had said, "my mind's made up. I'll speak to the Captain's daughter, and tell her, like an honest man, of the honest love I have for her!"

The crew cheered loudly.

"Is not my love as good as another's?" continued Ralph, "Is not my heart as true as another's? Have I not hands and eyes and ears and limbs like another?"

"You've got as pretty an outfit of them useful articles as any man on board," said Mr. Bobstay.

"True," said Ralph, rather despondently, "I lack birth."

Here Bill Bowling interfered with a rather silly joke.

"Not a bit of it," said Bill, "you've got a berth on board this very ship!"

"Well said," replied Ralph, who, sailor-like, jumped at any argument, however ridiculous, that he thought would help his case, "I had forgotten that. Messmates, don't you approve my determination?"

There was a general murmur of "Aye, aye," "we do," and "right you are."

"I don't—no, I do *not*!"

Of course it was Dick Deadeye who said this.

Bill Bobstay was in despair.

"What is to be done with this here hopeless chap?" said he. "Suppose we sing him the official Admiralty song that Sir Joseph wrote and caused to be distributed through the Fleet? It may bring this here miserable creetur to a proper state of mind!"

Ralph gave the key-note on his jews' harp, and they all struck up in chorus. Notwithstanding Ralph's thoughtful precaution, they began on seven different notes, but by the time they had finished the third line they had wobbled into something like an agreement as to the key in which it was to be sung:

A British Tar is a soaring soul
  As free as a mountain bird;
His energetic fist should be ready to resist
  A dictatorial word.

His nose should pant and his lip should curl,
His cheeks should flame and his brow should furl,
His bosom should heave and his heart should glow,
And his fist be ever ready for a knock-down blow.

  His eyes should flash with an inborn fire,
    His brow with scorn be wrung;
  He never should bow down to a domineering frown
    Or the tang of a tyrant tongue.

His foot should stamp and his throat should growl,
His hair should twirl and his face should scowl,
His eyes should flash and his chest protrude,
And this should be his customary attitude.

And as they sang the last line, they all, except Ralph, assumed fighting attitudes as if they were inviting the whole world to "come on." Ralph stood apart in the pose of Ajax defying the lightning, for it was his strict rule to assume classical attitudes only.

[1] I'm afraid this was rather snobbish on Captain Corcoran's part. But as the least little bit of snobbishness was his only fault (and I am sorry to say that a great many highly respectable people are afflicted with it) I think we may forgive him this once. But if he does it again we shall have to take serious notice of it.

[2] These are various simple nautical operations which your kind papa will explain to you.

[3] He meant "Bother!"—a vulgar expression that only the strongest provocation can excuse.

[4] I should have thought he would have liked a gilded lordling, but you never can tell.

[5] This means that he always did exactly as he was told by those who knew better than he did. I hope my readers will all imitate his example, and then, perhaps, when they grow up they will also be rewarded by being placed at the head of an important Public Department.

The ward-room lunch was finished, and all the ladies were playing "Bridge" for nuts with the officers, except Josephine, whose thoughts were too much occupied with other and more important matters. So she came on deck to indulge in a *rêverie* all alone.

"It is useless," said she to herself; "Sir Joseph's attentions disgust me. I know that he is a truly great and good man, for he told me so himself, and of course he would know;[1] but to me he seems tedious, fretful, and dictatorial. Yet his must be a mind of no common order, or he would not dare to teach my dear Father to dance a hornpipe on the cabin table."

It was Sir Joseph's firm belief that if Great Britain were to retain her proud position as the most powerful naval country in the world, it was essential that all her sailors should learn to dance hornpipes. It was all he knew about the Navy, and he had been three years learning that.

As Josephine soliloquized, she saw Ralph Rackstraw advancing towards her with an undulating swan-like motion that teemed with unspeakable grace.

"Ralph Rackstraw!" she exclaimed, withdrawing from her pocket the false nose which she always put on when she thought she was going to be too much admired.

"Nay, lady," said he, "put away yon pasteboard mockery. The matchless beauty of the real one is so deeply graven in my memory that I can see it

even through that hollow absurdity."

"In that case," said she, "it is of course useless to wear it, for it is uncomfortable wear on a warm day." And she returned it to her pocket.

"Lady," said Ralph, "I have long wished to meet you alone."

SO SHE CAME ON DECK TO INDULGE IN A *RÊVERIE* ALL ALONE

"That's nonsense," she replied, "you can't be alone if I am here, you know."

“An unworthy quibble,” said he. “You know perfectly well what I mean. It is unladylike to sneer at a poor sailor-man because his education has been neglected.”

“It is true,” she replied. “I beg your pardon.”

“Granted,” said he, with the ready urbanity of one of Nature’s noblemen.

Poor Josephine was much touched by this generous and freely accorded forgiveness, and the affection that she had long entertained for him struggled with her sense that it would never do to unite herself with a humble and illiterate sailor. Moreover, she had promised her papa that no consideration should induce her to let Ralph Rackstraw know her real sentiments towards him, so she drew a “Diabolo”[2] from her pocket and pretended to be wholly absorbed in the game. She usually played it with great skill, throwing the Diabolo as high as the mast head and catching it on the string with her eyes shut; but so great was her agitation that she missed it every time, to the serious damage of her renowned nose.

“Nay, lady,” said Ralph, “I see that my presence has unsettled you—I will withdraw.”

“No, Ralph, you may remain,” she said. She did not like him to go away with the impression that she was but a clumsy player after all. And again she tossed the “Diabolo” high into the air, and again it came down on her beautiful little nose.

“Lady,” said he, “put aside that silly toy and listen. I am a poor uneducated fellow who has dared to love you, but before you dismiss me with contempt, do not forget that I am a British sailor. It is important to bear that in mind.”

Josephine was much moved, and though she was a girl of great strength of mind she would not trust herself to speak. So she merely exclaimed “Pooh!” and again threw up the toy, with the same painful results.

“Nay, lady,” said he, “I feel that this indifference is assumed. I distinctly see a tear trembling in your left eye.”

“It—it was the Diabolo,” she said (not quite truthfully), “it hurt.”

“Then—you reject me?” said he.

“Sir,” said she, “you forget the disparity in our ranks.”

“I forget nothing, haughty girl,” said Ralph. “Give me hope, and what I lack in education and polite accomplishments, I will endeavour to acquire.

Drive me to despair, and in death alone I shall look for consolation. I am proud, and cannot stoop to implore. I have spoken and I await your word."

As he finished, he assumed an attitude of such extraordinary dignity that Josephine was on the point of saying "Take me and be happy," but the noble girl called all her resolution to her aid, and haughtily replied:

"You shall not wait long—your proffered love I contemptuously reject. Go, sir, and learn to cast your eyes on some village maiden in your own poor rank—they should be lowered before your Captain's daughter!"

And so saying, with the tell-tale tears streaming down her face, she strode magnificently to her cabin, where she almost sobbed her little heart out. Poor Josephine!

Ralph Rackstraw was furious. In defiance of all ship-rules he loudly summoned all the crew to the quarterdeck.

"Why! what's all this?" said Mr. Bobstay. "Is the ship on fire, or have they made you Port Admiral?"

"Neither," gasped Ralph. "I have told Josephine of my love, and she has scornfully rejected me!"

"Ah! what did I tell you!" said the crew, as one man.

"Well, Ralph," said Bobstay, "I was afraid you were over sanguine."

"Aye, aye," said Dick Deadeye, "it was too much to expect."

"Will somebody, please, take this chap away and put his head in the flour-bin," said Mr. Bobstay. "His sentiments are simply disgraceful."

And two brawny sailors took poor Dick away (kicking meekly) and dipped his head into the flour-bin until he assured them that he would behave better in future.

"Life is no longer worth living," said Ralph. "Has anybody got such a thing as a pistol handy?"

SO SAYING, WITH TELL-TALE TEARS STREAMING DOWN HER FACE, SHE STRODE MAGNIFICENTLY TO HER CABIN

Mr. Bobstay was overcome with emotion, for he loved Ralph rather better than his own mother; and the crew, quite unmanned, sobbed on each other's shoulders.

"Come," says Ralph, "a pistol!"

Mr. Bobstay, who was one of the most tender-hearted creatures living, could never refuse anything to the friend of his heart. So the good fellow reluctantly produced a full-sized horse-pistol and proceeded to load it as quickly as his hiccupping sobs would allow him, while Ralph was taking an affectionate leave of his beloved ship-mates.

“Here you are, Ralph,” he said, handing him the loaded pistol. “Bless you, my boy. Be cool and aim straight. It—it’ll be soon over!”

And the brawny seaman fairly sobbed like a girl.

“My friends,” said Ralph, “for the last time, farewell! And when I am dead convey my respectful compliments to Miss Josephine and tell her that she’s done it and I hope she likes it.”

So saying, he placed the pistol to his head while all the crew stopped their ears, for if there was one thing they hated more than another, it was the bang of an exploding fire-arm.

But you will be surprised to hear that Ralph was not to die just then. Josephine, who had been watching all this through her cabin window (which

looked on to the quarterdeck), couldn't stand it any longer. Forgetting her family pride, her brilliant prospects, and even her promise to her papa, she rushed out and flung herself into Ralph's arms with a shriek in which devoted love, acute anguish, humbled pride, wild determination, and maidenly reserve were perceptibly blended. She had often practised this shriek, so as to have it ready for emergencies, and it was much admired by her family and friends.

Ralph, visibly moved, flung away the pistol, which exploded as it fell, making all the crew jump and cutting off poor Deadeye's only remaining little toe. Ralph embraced Josephine rapturously as the crew danced, shouted, and flung up their caps for very joy. It was arranged that the happy pair, accompanied by the ship's company, should steal away that very night at twelve, in order to be married without a moment's delay, and as they all knew a chorus which happened to fit the situation exactly, they sung it as loud as they could:

Let's give three cheers for the sailor's bride,
Who casts all thoughts of rank aside,
Who gives up home and fortune too,
For the honest love of a sailor true!

All this time Sir Joseph, in the Captain's cabin, was so busily occupied in explaining to Captain Corcoran, at great length, how tremendous a sacrifice he was making in condescending to marry Josephine, and the Captain was listening to him so attentively, that neither of them heard anything of the noisy rejoicings I have just described.

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[1] Sir Joseph was mistaken, but, to do him justice, he believed that he was telling the truth. Josephine's estimate of his character was much nearer the mark.

[2] "Diabolo" was not publicly played at the date of my story. The game was invented by Josephine, and she reserved it at first for her own entertainment; but eventually Messrs. Ayres of Aldersgate Street were induced to make it public, with considerable pecuniary results, all of which she handed over, like a good girl, to the Sailors' Institute.

It was night, and a beautiful crescent moon was shining over the placid blue waters of Portsmouth Harbour. All the hammocks had been taken from the receptacles on deck called hammock-nettings in which they were kept during the day, carried below, and hung up from hooks in the beams of the lower decks. The sailors who were not required on deck were supposed to be fast asleep in them, but I'm afraid they slept with one eye open, because it would soon be time for them to escape secretly from the ship in order to accompany Ralph Rackstraw and the beautiful Josephine to Portsmouth Town to be married. Josephine did not go to bed at all, but was busily occupied in packing up a few indispensable necessaries (not forgetting her pasteboard nose) in a small handbag, and in writing an affectionate farewell letter to her kind Papa. Now I want it to be distinctly understood that Josephine was very much to be blamed for the step she was about to take. In the first place, a young lady should, under no circumstances, fall in love with a young man greatly beneath her in social rank, and in the second place, no young lady should ever take such an important step as getting married without her Papa's express approval. In this case, Josephine had distinctly promised her Papa that she would never, under any circumstances, let Ralph Rackstraw know even that she had fallen in love with him, whereas here she was, actually preparing to leave the ship with him secretly in order that they might be married! It is true that it is some excuse for her that she revealed her affection for Ralph as the only means of preventing him from killing himself, but, having done that, she should have gone to her Papa without a moment's delay, and explained to him the dreadful

circumstances under which she had felt bound to disclose her secret. Captain Corcoran had shown himself to be a most affectionate and sympathetic father, and he would, no doubt, have made every allowance for the distressing situation in which she found herself. He might even have gone so far (and I think he would) as to have provided masters for Ralph who would have taught him to spell and dance, drink soup without gobbling, eat peas with a fork, play bridge, and, in short, make him fit to take his place creditably among ladies and gentlemen.

Poor Captain Corcoran had also been greatly worried by the events of the day. He had been severely rebuked by Sir Joseph, in the presence of his crew, for not having said "if you please" when he gave them an order; he had been greatly upset by his daughter's determination to decline Sir Joseph's handsome offer (and also by her short and snappish replies to Sir Joseph's pretty speeches at dinner that evening) and, to crown everything, Sir Joseph had threatened to have him placed under arrest and tried by Court Martial because he did not rebuke Josephine for her rudeness to him at dinner. Of course, if the First Lord of the Admiralty had known anything whatever about the Navy, he would have been aware that no Court Martial would have punished Captain Corcoran for his daughter's rudeness; but he knew nothing at all about the Navy, having, as we know, been brought up in a solicitor's office.

HER SHORT AND SNAPPISH REPLIES TO SIR JOSEPH'S PRETTY SPEECHES AT DINNER

So instead of going to bed at his usual hour Captain Corcoran brought his banjo on deck and began to sing to the moon, as sentimental people will do who find themselves in such low spirits that they cannot sleep. He had written and composed the song in his cabin (after Sir Joseph had retired to rest) and when he had practised it until he knew it by heart, he came up on deck to sing it. The moon was behind a cloud at the time but as soon as she

became aware that a gentleman was going to sing to her, she politely blew the cloud aside and listened to hear what he had to say.

This was the pretty song that he sang:

Fair moon, to thee I sing
  Bright regent of the heavens,
Say, why is everything
  Either at sixes or at sevens?
I have lived hitherto
  Free from the breath of slander,
Beloved by all my crew—
  A really popular commander.
But now my kindly crew rebel,
  My daughter to a Tar is partial,
Sir Joseph storms, and, sad to tell,
  He threatens a Court Martial!
Fair moon, to thee I sing,
  Bright regent of the heavens,
Say, why is everything
  Either at sixes or at sevens?

The moon not being in the position to give him the required information, withdrew behind her cloud, and was seen no more.

Captain Corcoran had no idea that anyone except the moon was listening to him, as he sang, but in point of fact, Little Buttercup, who was concealed by the mizen-mast, had heard his beautiful light baritone voice, and her attention was arrested by the charm of the dainty melody.

Now I must tell you something about Little Buttercup, who had had a very adventurous career. At the time of my story, she was a buxom, well preserved person, about sixty-five years of age. She had known Captain Corcoran all his life, and when he was a handsome young lieutenant of twenty-five I am sorry to say she fell hopelessly in love with him, although the old goose was at least twenty years older than he. Lieutenant Corcoran (as he was then) commanded a little gun-boat called the *Hot Cross Bun*, and I should explain that a gun-boat, in those days, was a very small vessel, rigged something like a miniature ship, and was armed with one, two, or three big guns. Lieutenant Corcoran was then in the very flower of manly beauty, and all the young ladies of Portsmouth were quite as much in love with him as Little Buttercup was. Of course, Lieutenant Corcoran scarcely noticed Little Buttercup—she used to wash for the ship, and he only saw her

now and then, when she brought his linen aboard. At length the *Hot Cross Bun* was ordered to make ready to go to sea, and Little Buttercup, who couldn't bear the thought that she might never see him again, dressed herself in sailor's clothes, and presented herself on board, as a (not very) young man who wanted to go to sea. Captain Corcoran, who, as a matter of course, did not recognize her in this disguise, accepted her as a member of his crew, and when the *Hot Cross Bun* sailed Little Buttercup sailed with it. She was extremely clumsy as a sailor, but the kind-hearted Lieutenant, who couldn't bear to hurt anybody's feelings, overlooked her awkwardness in consideration of the eager alacrity with which she endeavoured, however unsuccessfully, to obey all his commands. Indeed the crew, generally, were much more remarkable for gentle politeness and cheerful goodwill than for mere pulling and hauling. They were, without exception, most amiable and well-behaved young persons, with beautiful complexions, very dainty white hands, small delicate waists, and a great quantity of carefully dressed back-hair. Lieutenant Corcoran was bound to admit that as sailormen they were not everything that could be desired, (being all very sea-sick when it was not quite calm), but, in his opinion, they more than compensated for this drawback by their singularly polite and refined demeanour when they were quite well.

One day (and it was a terrible day for Little Buttercup) he went on shore for a couple of hours, and returned with a beautiful young lady, whom he presented to his crew as his newly-wedded wife; upon which, to his intense discomfiture, all the crew gave a gurgle, and fell down in so many separate fainting fits, and he then discovered that, without a single exception, they were Portsmouth maidens who had dearly loved him and who had taken the very steps that Little Buttercup herself had taken, in order that they might not be separated from their adored Lieutenant! Of course they were all discharged at once (his bride insisted on that), and Little Buttercup did not see him again for twenty long years. By this time he had been promoted to be Captain of the *Pinafore*; his wife had died, and he was left a widower with one daughter, the beautiful Josephine, who is the heroine of my story.

From the moment that Little Buttercup learnt that Lieutenant Corcoran was a married man she determined, as a matter of course, to think of him no more, and, by a tremendous effort, she succeeded in banishing him altogether from her mind; but, now that he was a widower and again free to marry, all her old affection revived. By this time, as you know, she was a bum-boat woman, and in that capacity she enjoyed many opportunities of seeing and talking to Captain Corcoran, who hadn't the remotest idea that she had formerly been one of the lady-like crew of the *Hot Cross Bun*, and

Little Buttercup never mentioned the circumstance, as, to tell the plain truth, she was not particularly proud of it.

As the Captain sang his song, Little Buttercup wondered what was the matter with him.

"How sweetly he carols forth his melody to the listening moon," said she to herself. "Of whom is he thinking? Of some high-born beauty? It may be! Who is poor Little Buttercup that she should expect his thoughts to dwell on one so lonely?"

"Ah, Little Buttercup," said Captain Corcoran, as he caught sight of her, "still on board? That is not quite right, little one—all ladies are requested to go on shore at dusk."

"True, dear Captain," she replied, "I tried to go, but the recollection of your pale and sad face seemed to chain me to the ship. I would fain see you smile before I leave."

"I will try," said he.

He endeavoured to smile, but it was little more than a creaky mechanical grin.

"Not good enough, Captain," replied Little Buttercup, "don't be faint-hearted; try again, because I want to go home."

Again he tried to smile, but without success.

"Ah, Little Buttercup," said he, "I fear it will be long before I recover my accustomed cheerfulness, for misfortunes crowd upon me, and all my old friends seem to have turned against me!"

"Do not say 'all,' dear Captain," exclaimed Little Buttercup. "That were unjust to one, at least!"

"True," said Captain Corcoran, "for you are staunch to me. Good old Buttercup!"

At this point poor Little Buttercup's resolution gave way. With a bitter cry she knelt at his feet, and sobbed loudly as she kissed his hand.

"Little Buttercup," said Captain Corcoran, "it would be affectation to pretend that I do not understand your meaning. I am touched to the heart by your innocent regard for me, and were we differently situated, I think I could have returned it. As it is, I regret to say that I can be nothing to you but a friend."

LITTLE BUTTERCUP AND THE CAPTAIN

Little Buttercup, who always knew more about people than anybody else, knew a good deal of Captain Corcoran's history, as will presently appear. *He was not really Captain Corcoran*, and she knew it. More than that, she knew who he really was, but it did not suit her to tell him just then. I believe that this mysterious Little Buttercup was able to prove, from the hidden depths of her miscellaneous information, that every human being alive was somebody else, and that no human being alive was what people really supposed him to be. Fortunately, she only revealed her knowledge bit

by bit as it suited her, but it is terrible to think what an amount of confusion she might have created in highly respectable families if she had chosen to disclose all she knew at once.

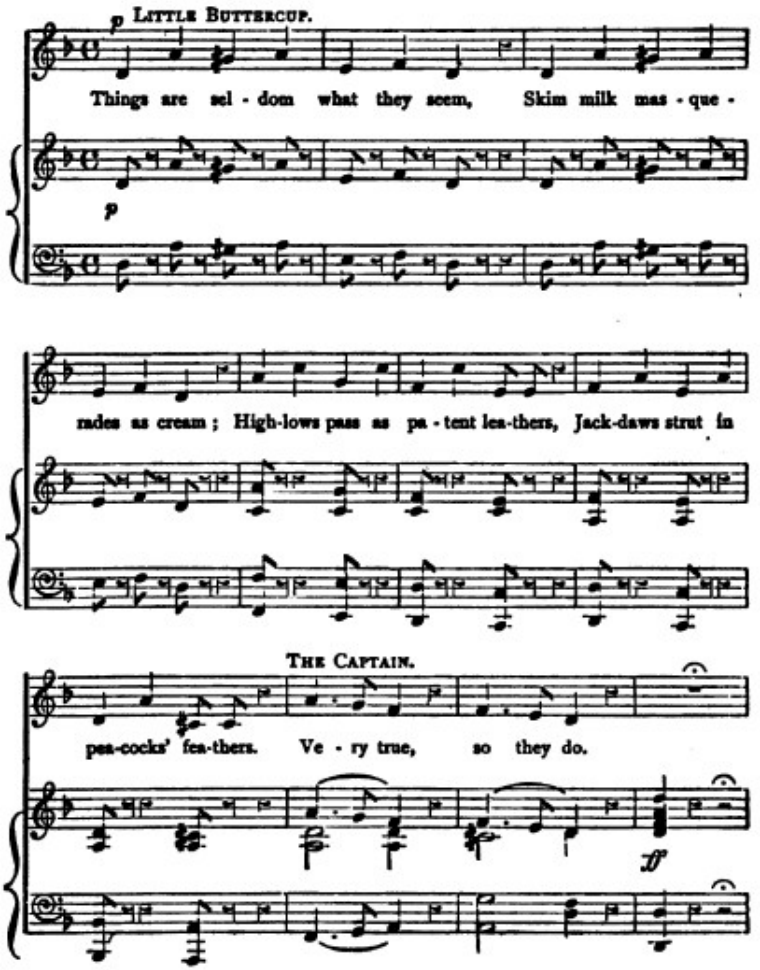
Knowing who Captain Corcoran was, and how little reason he really had to plume himself on his superior position as a Captain in the Navy, Little Buttercup's naturally hasty temper began to simmer. The gipsy blood that ran in her veins gave her a curious power of prophesying backwards. I mean that she could foretell what you were, and remember what you will be, which is quite unlike the usual kind of fortune-telling that comes of crossing a gipsy's hand with a sixpence. She also possessed a remarkable power of expressing herself in rhyme without ever having to hunt for the last words of her lines, which gave a peculiar force and emphasis to her words, and convinced everybody that what she said was supernatural, and consequently true.

So, getting gradually more and more angry with Captain Corcoran for despising her, as she called it (though he was the last person in the world to despise anybody) she summoned her remarkable rhyming ability to her aid in the following utterances:

> Things are seldom what they seem (said she)
> Skim-milk masquerades as cream;
> High-lows pass as patent leathers;
> Jackdaws strut in peacocks' feathers.

Rhyming is rather infectious, so Captain Corcoran, catching the disease, replied (rather puzzled)

> Very true,
> So they do!



(It was an easy rhyme, suited to a mere beginner.)

Black sheep dwell in every fold; (said she)
All that glitters is not gold;
Storks turn out to be but logs;
Bulls are but inflated frogs.

The captain thought *he* could do as well as this, but he considered that it was best to confine himself at present to quite easy rhymes, so he said:

So they be
Frequentlee.

Buttercup resumed:

Drops the wind and stops the mill;
Turbot is ambitious brill;
Gild the farthing if you will,
But it is a farthing still.

The Captain replied:

Yes, I know
That is so.

Then, beginning to feel his feet, as the saying is, he ventured into deeper water:

Though to catch your drift I'm striving,
It is shady—it is shady.

(He repeated "it is shady" to give him time to think of the next rhyme, though he pretended that the repetition was part of the structure of the verse.)

I don't see at what you're driving,
Mystic lady—mystic lady!

Having discovered that this sort of rhyming was much easier than it appeared at first sight to be, he determined to show her that other people were just as smart as she was, and (if you come to that) even a little bit smarter.

So he began:

Though I'm anything but clever,
I could talk like that for ever.
Once a cat was killed with care:
Only brave deserve the fair.

Very true,
So they do.

said Little Buttercup (mimicking his own way of replying to her). The Captain continued:

Wink is often good as nod;
Spoils the child who spares the rod;
Thirsty lambs run foxy dangers;
Dogs are found in many mangers.

Here he paused to consider what he should say next, and Little Buttercup (to give him time) said, just as before:

Frequentlee,
I agree.

By this time the Captain had thought of something more:

Paw of cat the chestnut snatches;
Worn-out garments show new patches;
Men are grown-up "catchy-catches."

Yes (said Little Buttercup) I know
That is so.

Then she sang, under her breath, so that nobody at all should hear her.

Though to catch my drift he's striving,
I'll dissemble—I'll dissemble—
When he sees at what I'm driving
Let him tremble—let him tremble!

and, muttering to herself in a fashion which might be described, musically, as a triumph of *pianissimo*, she disappeared mysteriously into the forward part of the ship.

Captain Corcoran—though very uneasy at her portentous utterances—was rather disposed to pat himself on the back for having tackled her on her own ground in the matter of stringing rhymes, and (as he thought) beaten her at it. But in this he was wrong, for if you compare her lines with his, you will see that whereas her lines dealt exclusively with people and things who were not so important as they thought themselves to be, his lines were merely chopped-up proverbs that had nothing to do with each other or with anything else. Still it wasn't bad for a first attempt, and although we must give her the prize, I think he deserves a "highly commended."

Now although Sir Joseph had gone to bed, he was so worried about Josephine that he couldn't get a wink of sleep. So as it was a beautiful warm night, and everybody (as he supposed) asleep, he thought he would go on deck in his pyjamas, and console himself with a cigar. Accordingly he went on deck, but finding that the Captain was in close conversation with a lady, he very properly retired to his cabin to put on the beautiful and expensive uniform of a Cabinet Minister which he had worn during the day, and which were the only clothes he had brought with him. He had completed his toilet and returned to the deck just as Captain Corcoran was endeavouring to pat

himself on the back for his cleverness in stringing rhymes with Little Buttercup.

"What are you trying to do?" said Sir Joseph, as he noticed that the Captain had some difficulty in reaching the exact part of the back which he wished to pat. "Can I help you?"

"Thank you, Sir Joseph," replied the Captain, "I have a particular reason for wishing to pat myself between the two shoulder blades, and—and it's not easy to get at."

"Allow me, Captain Corcoran," and he obligingly patted him on the very spot.

"Thank you, Sir Joseph, that is capital," said Captain Corcoran, much relieved, "but I am sorry to see your Lordship out of bed at this hour. I hope your crib is comfortable."

"Pretty well," said Sir Joseph, who made it a rule never quite to approve of anything that was done for him, "the fact is I am worried about your daughter. I am disappointed with her. To tell the plain truth, I don't think she'll do."

"I'm sorry to hear that, Sir Joseph," replied the Captain, "Josephine is, I am sure, sensible of your condescension."

"She naturally would be," said Sir Joseph, who was really too conceited for words.

"Perhaps your exalted rank dazzles her," remarked Captain Corcoran.

Here again we become conscious of that nasty irritating little blot on the good Captain's character. He attached so much importance to mere rank that I am afraid we must put him down as just a teeny-weeny-wee bit of a sn-b.

"WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO?" SAID SIR JOSEPH

"Do you really think it does?" asked Sir Joseph.

"Well, she is a modest girl, and, of course, her social position is far below that of a Cabinet Minister. Possibly she feels that she is not worthy of you."

Captain Corcoran knew better than that, but his natural kindness of heart would not allow him to tell Sir Joseph the plain truth—that Josephine looked

upon him as a conceited donkey, because he was afraid that, being a touchy old gentleman, he might not like that.

"That is really a very sensible suggestion," said Sir Joseph.

"See," said the Captain, "here she comes. If you would kindly reason with her and assure her officially, that it is a standing rule at the Admiralty that love levels all ranks, her respect for an official utterance might induce her to look upon your offer in its proper light."

"It is not unlikely," said Sir Joseph, "and I am glad I am not wearing my pyjamas. Let us withdraw and watch our opportunity."

So they withdrew behind the mast, as Josephine stepped upon deck.

Poor Josephine was very uneasy and conscience-stricken at the unjustifiable step she was going to take that night. As the moment for her flight approached, she became more and more uncomfortable; and as her cabin was hot, and the night lovely, she thought she would wait more comfortably on deck until the fatal moment for her departure.

Naturally a good and honourable young lady, she felt that she was doing an unpardonable thing in leaving her good Papa secretly in order to marry a man of whom she knew that he disapproved. In common fairness, however, it should be explained that it was the first time she had ever left her father in order to be secretly married to *anybody*, and she resolved that, after this once, nothing on earth should ever induce her to do so again.

Josephine had a neat literary turn, and it was her practice to express, in poetical form, the various arguments for and against any important step that she contemplated taking. She had amassed quite a large amount of these effusions, which she was in the habit of singing, on appropriate occasions, to any airs that would fit them. So, finding herself quite alone (as she supposed) it occurred to her to sing, in subdued tones, a composition which had direct reference to her misguided affection for Ralph.

This was the song:

The hours creep on apace,
   My guilty heart is quaking;
Oh, that I might retrace
   The step that I am taking!
Its folly it were easy to be showing;
What am I giving up, and whither going?

On the one hand, papa's luxurious home,
   Hung with ancestral armour and old brasses,
Carved oak, and tapestry from distant Rome,
   Rare "blue and white," Venetian finger glasses,
Rich oriental rugs and sofa pillows,
And everything that isn't old, from Gillows'.

And, on the other, a dark dingy room
   In some back street, with stuffy children crying,
Where organs yell and clacking housewives fume,
   And clothes are hanging out all day a-drying:
With one cracked looking-glass to see your face in,
And dinner served up in a pudding basin.

Oh, god of Love and god of Reason—say
Which of you twain shall my poor heart obey?

But the two potentates, so pathetically appealed to, declined to undertake the responsibility of advising her. I expect they both thought that she was quite old enough to judge for herself.

Poor Josephine was greatly distracted at the ugly prospect of love in a back street that she had conjured up for herself, and her resolution began to waver. The social difference between her and her chosen husband was so enormous, and the discomforts that she would be obliged to endure in the humble surroundings that awaited her presented themselves to her mind so vividly, that she had almost resolved that instead of eloping with Ralph, she would unpack her dressing-bag, put her hair up in Hinde's curlers, and go to bed like a good girl. I regret to think that, in contemplating this step, she was influenced solely by the fact that if she married Ralph she would have to surrender all the luxuries she was accustomed to, and that remorse for being about to break the heart of her affectionate and indulgent father did not appear to influence her in the least. I am very partial to Josephine, but I cannot regard her in the light of a thoroughly estimable young lady.

Sir Joseph endeavoured in vain to catch the words of Josephine's song, but she had been taught the Italian method of singing, which consists in "la-laing" all the vowels and allowing the consonants to take care of themselves, and consequently the words of her song were quite unintelligible to him—indeed they might have been Hebrew for anything he could tell. So when she had finished, he and Captain Corcoran approached her.

"Madam," said he, "it has been represented to me that you are appalled by my exalted rank. I desire to convey to you, officially, my deliberate assurance that if your hesitation is attributable to that circumstance, it is unequivocally uncalled for."

It is a rule at the Admiralty that when a person in authority has to make an announcement he is bound to use all the longest words he can find that will express his meaning.

"Oh, indeed," replied Josephine; "then your Lordship is of opinion that married happiness is *not* inconsistent with discrepancy in rank?"

This was artful on Josephine's part, for if Sir Joseph agreed, he would practically be admitting that there was no reason why Josephine should not

condescend to marry a common sailor if she had a mind to do so.

"Madam," said Sir Joseph, loftily, "I am officially of that opinion," and he took a pinch of snuff with an air that suggested that he had finally settled the question once for all.

"I thank you, Sir Joseph," she replied, with a low curtsey. "I *did* hesitate, but I will hesitate no longer." And with another curtsey she retired to her own cabin, muttering to herself, "He little thinks how successfully he has pleaded his rival's cause!"

The Captain, who shared Sir Joseph's impression that Josephine had made up her mind to accept him, was overjoyed.

"Sir Joseph," said he, "I cannot express to you my joy at the happy result of your eloquence. Your argument was unanswerable."

"Captain Corcoran," replied Sir Joseph, "it is one of the happiest characteristics of this inexpressibly fortunate country that official replies to respectfully uttered interrogatories are invariably regarded as unanswerable."

And Sir Joseph, having discharged this mouthful of long words, withdrew to complete his night's rest.

Captain Corcoran could not conceal his exultation. Indeed, there was no reason why he should as he was entirely alone. He clasped his hands, smiled broadly, took a long breath of relief and had just begun to dance the hornpipe that Sir Joseph had taught him (to see if he remembered the steps) when he was interrupted by the unexpected appearance of poor deformed Dick Deadeye, who approached him with the irregular jerky action of a triangle that is being trundled like a hoop.

"Captain," whispered he, "I want a word with you!" And he placed his hand impressively on the Captain's wrist.

"Deadeye!" said he, "*you* here? Don't!"

"Ah, don't shrink from me, Captain!" replied Deadeye. "I'm unpleasant to look at and my name's agin me, but I ain't as bad as I look!"

"What do you want with me at this time of night?" said Captain Corcoran.

Deadeye looked round mysteriously to make quite sure that they were unobserved.

"I've come," said he, "to give you warning!"

“Indeed!” exclaimed the Captain, who was delighted to think that there was a chance of getting rid of Deadeye without hurting his feelings. “Do you propose to leave the Navy, then?”

“No, no,” said Deadeye, “I don’t mean that. Listen!”

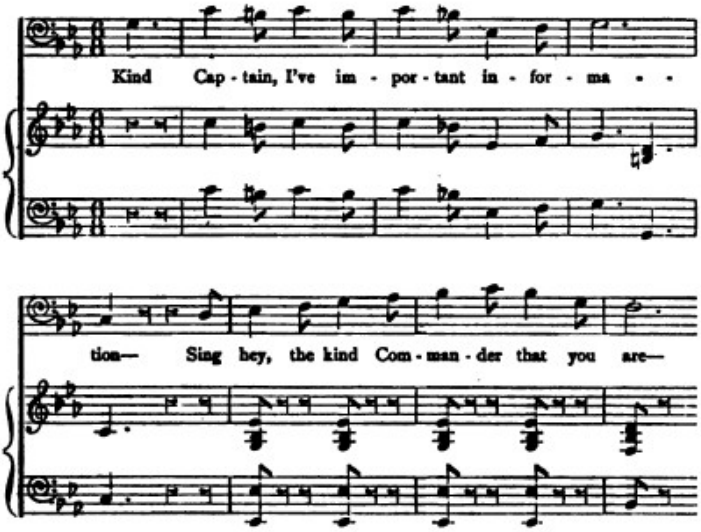
The Captain was disappointed, but he listened, nevertheless.

And in accordance with the standing rule that no one was ever to *say* anything to the Captain that could be *sung*, Dick Deadeye struck up as follows:

Kind Captain, I’ve important information
(Sing hey, the kind Commander that you are),
About a certain intimate relation
(Sing hey, the Merry Maiden and the Tar!).

The Captain (who had his book of rhymes handy), consulted it for a moment and then replied:

"DEADEYE!" SAID THE CAPTAIN, "*YOU* HERE? DON'T!"



Good fellow, in conundrums you are speaking
(Sing hey, the mystic sailor that you are),
The answer to them vainly I am seeking
(Sing hey, the Merry Maiden and the Tar!).

Of course the Captain was completely puzzled, having no idea what Deadeye was alluding to. So Dick explained:

Kind Captain, your young lady is a sighing
(Sing hey, the simple Captain that you are),
This very night with Rackstraw to be flying
(Sing hey, the Merry Maiden and the Tar!).

Captain Corcoran was dreadfully distressed at this piece of information, but he pulled himself together with an effort and replied (after a moment with his rhyming dictionary):

Good fellow, you have given timely warning
(Sing hey, the thoughtful sailor that you are),
I'll talk to Master Rackstraw in the morning!
(Sing hey, the cat-o'-nine-tails and the Tar!)

And, so singing, Captain Corcoran produced from his pocket a beautifully inlaid little presentation "cat-o'-nine-tails," and, as he flourished it, he brought it down accidentally (but heavily) on poor Dick's back. Dick,

grateful for any attention, pulled his forelock respectfully and trundled off into the fore-part of the ship.

I ought to explain that the cat-o'-nine-tails is a cruel kind of whip with nine thongs, which was, at that time, commonly used in the Navy to punish badly behaved seamen, but Captain Corcoran was much too humane a man to use it. It happened to be in his pocket because it was a present from his dear old white-haired apple-cheeked grandmama which had only arrived that day.

Dick Deadeye had warned the Captain just in time; for as Dick crept off, the Captain saw a large body of the crew, with Ralph among them, advancing on tip-toe towards the boats which were hanging from irons, called davits, in the ship's side, and at the same time Josephine came out of her cabin with her handbag in her hand, and crept silently to where Ralph was standing. It was more than flesh and blood could stand, and, in the anger of the moment, the Captain exclaimed "Bother!" and brought the cat-o'-nine-tails down on the breach of a gun which happened to be handy.

All the crew were dreadfully startled.

"Why! what was that?" said Bob Buntline, one of the sailors who had not yet spoken.

"It was only the cat," said Bill Boom.

Bill Boom was perfectly right. It *was* the "cat."

As Josephine met Ralph, and while the crew were mustering on the quarterdeck, the Captain glanced hastily through his rhyming dictionary, and, having found what he wanted, revealed himself, exclaiming "Hold!"

Much alarmed and greatly astonished to find their Captain among them, they all held.

Captain Corcoran advanced and seizing his daughter by the hand twirled her away from Ralph Rackstraw, who looked like the Apollo Belvedere struck stupid.

Naughty daughter of mine (*sang the Captain*)
I insist upon knowing
Where you may be going
With these sons of the brine?
For my excellent crew,
Though foes they could thump any,
Are scarcely company
For a lady like you!

Ralph wasn't going to stand this. He had been taught by the First Lord of the Admiralty that a British sailor is the finest fellow in the world, and if you can't believe a First Lord, whom can you believe? So, pulling himself together he began:

"Haughty Sir, when you address"—

"Poetry, please," said Captain Corcoran, "I allow no sailor to address me in prose."

Ralph thought for a moment, and then declaimed (in the key of G):

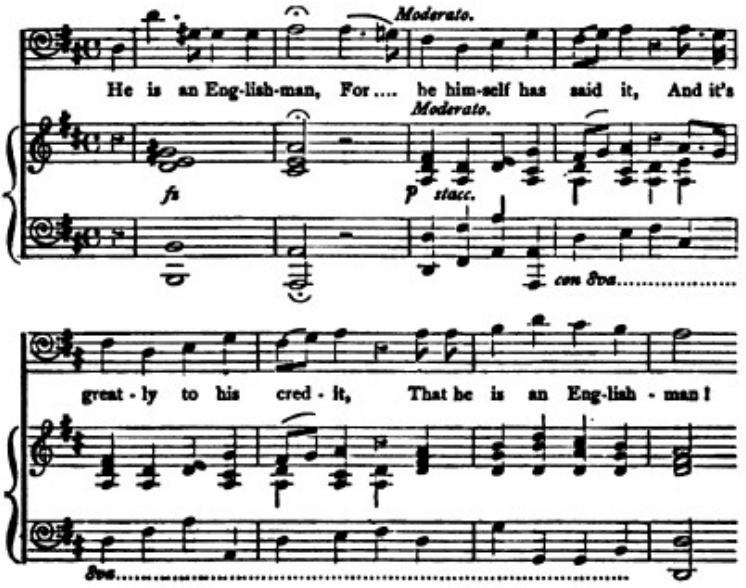
Proud officer, that haughty lip uncurl! (*the Captain uncurled his haughty upper lip as desired*)
Vain man, suppress that supercilious sneer! (*he suppressed it at once*)
For I have dared to love your matchless girl—
A fact well known to all my messmates here!

I, humble, poor, and lowly born,
The meanest in the port division—
The butt of epauletted Scorn—[1]
The mark of quarterdeck derision—

Have dared to raise my wormy eyes
Above the dust to which you'd mould me;
In manhood's glorious pride to rise,
I am an Englishman—behold me!

And at once all the crew, carried off their feet with enthusiasm, shouted their own domestic National Anthem, led by the energetic Mr. Bobstay:

He is an Englishman!
For he himself hath said it,
And it's greatly to his credit
That he is an Englishman!
For he might have been a Rooshian
A French, or Turk, or Prooshian,



Or perhaps I-tal-i-an!
But, in spite of all temptations
To belong to other nations,
He remains an Englishman!

And when they had finished, all the crew wiped their eyes (which were full of manly tears), and shook hands with each other until their emotion had in some degree subsided. Indeed three or four of them were carried off in hysterics, and had to be revived with eau-de-Cologne, a tub of which always stood on the forecastle. Speaking for myself, I do not quite see that Ralph Rackstraw deserved so very much credit for remaining an Englishman, considering that no one seems ever to have proposed to him that he should be anything else, but the crew thought otherwise and I daresay they were right.

Captain Corcoran hardly knew how to act, for he so seldom got into a tearing rage that he didn't know what it was considered usual for a man in tearing rage to do. He was anxious not to overdo it, and at the same time he felt that it was necessary to let them know that a tearing rage was what he was in. After some reflection, and a glance at his dictionary, he concluded that the best way was to depart from his usual calm correct way of speaking, and horrify them by introducing some really unpardonable language. So he exclaimed:

In uttering a reprobation
To any British Tar,
I try to speak with moderation,
But you have gone too far.
I'm very sorry to disparage
A humble foremast lad,
But to seek your Captain's child in marriage,
Why, hang it, it's too bad!
Yes, hang it, it's too bad!
(I don't care, I will say it, and risk the consequences)—
Yes, hang it, it's too bad!

The crew were awestruck, for they had never, in all their experience of Captain Corcoran, known him to forget himself as far as to use an expression of this description. Three times too—not once, but *three* times, as if he revelled in his wickedness! And what made the circumstance more impressive was that as their amazement and agitation subsided, they saw the First Lord of the Admiralty standing, apparently thunderstruck, in their midst!

"I am appalled," said Sir Joseph, as soon as he could control his tongue. "Simply appalled!"

There was no mistake about it—he was quite white with the shock that the Captain's language had given him. He was no longer a First Lord—he was a Monument of Pathetic Imbecility.

"To your cabin, Sir," said he, trembling with emotion, "and consider yourself under the strictest arrest."

"Sir Joseph," said Captain Corcoran, "pray hear me—"

"To your cabin, Sir!"

And a couple of marines marched him off under the command of the smallest midshipman in the ship.

Sir Joseph had by this time somewhat recovered his composure.

"Now tell me, my fine fellow," said he, addressing Ralph Rackstraw, "How came your Captain so far to forget himself?"

"Please your honour," said Ralph, pulling respectfully at his forelock, "it was thus wise. You see I'm only a topman—a mere foremast hand—"

"Don't be ashamed of that," said Sir Joseph, "a topman is necessarily at the top of everything."

This, of course, was not the case, but Sir Joseph, having been a solicitor, did not know any better.

"Well, your honour," said Ralph, "love burns as brightly on the forecastle as it does on the quarterdeck, and Josephine is the fairest bud that ever blossomed on the tree of a poor fellow's wildest hopes!"

Sir Joseph could scarcely believe his ears.

"Are you referring to—er—Miss Josephine Corcoran?" gasped Sir Joseph.

"That's the lady, Sir," said Ralph, "in fact here she is, bless her little heart!"

And Josephine rushed into Ralph's outstretched arms.

"She's the figure-head of my ship of life—the bright beacon that guides me into the port of happiness—the rarest, the purest gem that ever sparkled on a poor but worthy fellow's trusting brow."

The crew burst into tears at this lovely speech and sobbed heavily. It had quite a different effect on Sir Joseph who, forgetting all his dignity, danced about the deck in a blind fury.

"You—you impertilent presumtiful, disgracious, audastical sommon cailor," exclaimed Sir Joseph, chopping up and transposing his letters and syllables in a perfectly ridiculous manner, "*I'll* teach you to lall in fove with your daptain's caughter! Away with him to the barkest bungeon on doard!" Of course he meant to say "the darkest dungeon on board" and *would* have said it if he had had his temper under proper control.

A COUPLE OF MARINES MARCHED HIM OFF UNDER THE COMMAND OF THE SMALLEST MIDSHIPMAN IN THE SHIP

Josephine clung to Ralph and declared that as he was to be shut up in a cell, she would go with him, but they were violently torn asunder, and, a pair of handcuffs having been placed on Ralph's wrists by the serjeant of the marines, he was taken away in custody. At this point Sir Joseph became calm and coherent again.

“And as for you, Miss Corcoran—” he began, but before he could say what he was going to say (whatever it was) Little Buttercup came forward, and exclaimed “Hold!”

“Why?” Sir Joseph asked, not unnaturally.

“Because I have a tale to unfold,” she replied.

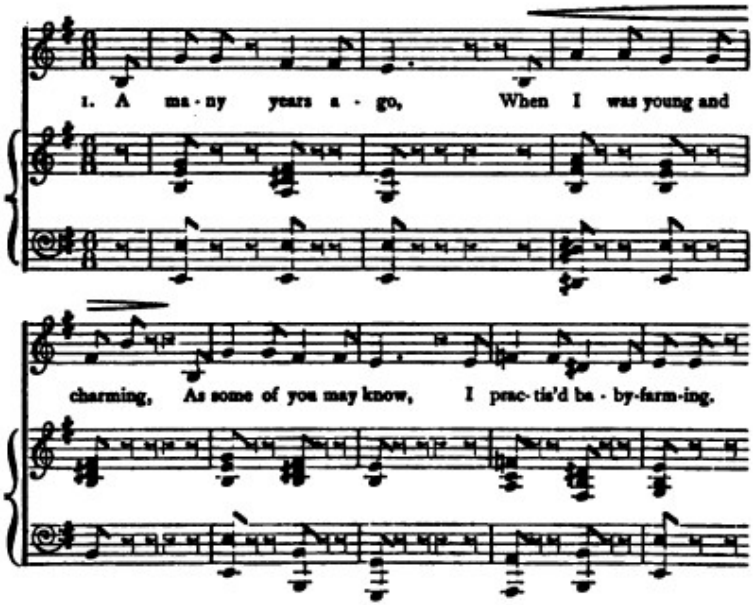
“We are all attention,” said Sir Joseph. “Proceed.”

And Little Buttercup proceeded thus:

A many years ago,
When I was young and charming,
As some of you may know,
I practised baby-farming,[2]

The crew were most interested in this piece of news, and, expecting that she was about to reveal something that would entirely alter the aspect of affairs, they muttered to each other:

Now this is most alarming—
When she was young and charming
She practised baby-farming
A many years ago!



Little Buttercup continued:

Two tender babes I nussed,
One was of low condition,
The other "upper crust,"[3]
A regular patrician!

Again the crew said to each other, by way of explaining how the case stood:

Now this is the position—
One was of low condition,
The other a patrician,
A many years ago!

This having been made quite clear to them, Little Buttercup continued the story:

Oh, bitter is my cup,
However could I do it?
I mixed those children up,
And not a creature knew it!

This was quite an inexcusable piece of carelessness on the part of Little Buttercup. If she had any doubt which was which, she could so easily have tied a bit of blue ribbon round the neck of one, and a luggage-label round the neck of the other. The sailors were surprised at this culpable neglect of duty and replied:

However could you do it?
Some day no doubt you'll rue it,
Although no creature knew it
So many years ago!

Little Buttercup, not heeding their interruption, concluded her confession thus:

In time each little waif
Forsook his foster-mother,[4]
The well-born babe was Ralph—
Your Captain was the other! ! !

Again the crew explained the situation to each other, that there might be no mistake about it:

They left their foster-mother;
The one was Ralph, our brother,
Our Captain was the other,
A many years ago! ! !

Here was a pretty kettle of fish! Ralph was, properly speaking, a Captain in the Navy, and Captain Corcoran was only a common sailor!

"Am I really to understand," said Sir Joseph, "that during all these years, each has been occupying the other's position?"

"I MIXED THOSE CHILDREN UP"

"That," said Little Buttercup, "is the idea I intended to convey."

"And you've done it very well," said Sir Joseph, and all the crew applauded so vigorously that Little Buttercup thought they wished to hear it all over again, and had actually got so far as "A many years ago," when Sir Joseph interrupted her:

"Let them both appear before me at once," said he.

And immediately Ralph appeared dressed in Captain Corcoran's uniform as a captain in the navy, and Captain Corcoran in Ralph's uniform as a man-o'-war's man!

This had been carefully arranged by Little Buttercup herself. Knowing that the time had come when it would be necessary that she should reveal her secret, she had previously caused one of Captain Corcoran's uniforms to be conveyed to Ralph's quarters, and one of Ralph's uniforms to be placed in Captain Corcoran's cabin, with a note, pinned to each bundle, explaining the condition of affairs. *Now* we see what Little Buttercup meant when she sang those mysterious lines to Captain Corcoran about things being seldom what they seem, skim-milk masquerading as cream, and so forth. Oh, she was a knowing one, I can tell you, was Little Buttercup!

As Corcoran (no longer a captain) stepped forward, Josephine rushed to him in amazement.

"My father a common sailor!" she exclaimed.

"Yes," said Corcoran, "it is hard, is it not, my dear?"

During this time Ralph was too much occupied in trying to catch sight of the two epaulettes which glistened on his shoulders, to attend to anything else.

"This," said Sir Joseph, "is a very singular occurrence, and, as far as I know, nothing of the kind has ever happened before. I congratulate you both."

Then, turning towards Captain Rackstraw, as we must now call him, he said (indicating Corcoran), "Desire that remarkably fine seaman to step forward."

"Corcoran," said Captain Rackstraw, "three paces to the front—march!" just as Corcoran, when he was a captain, had said to Ralph.

Corcoran, however, knew his rights, and wasn't going to stand being spoken to in this abrupt fashion.

"If *what*?" said Corcoran, touching his cap.

"I don't understand you," said Captain Rackstraw haughtily.

"If you *please*," said Corcoran, with a strong emphasis on the "please."

"Perfectly right," said Sir Joseph, "if you *please*."

"Oh, of course," said Captain Rackstraw, "if you please."

And Corcoran stepped forward and saluted, like the smart man-o'-war's man that he was.

"You're an extremely fine fellow," said Sir Joseph, turning him round as he inspected him.

"Yes, your Honour," said Corcoran, who was still too good a judge to contradict a First Lord of the Admiralty.

"So," observed Sir Joseph, "it seems that you were Ralph and Ralph was you."

"So it seems, your Honour," said Corcoran, with a respectful pull at his forelock.

"Well," said Sir Joseph, "I need not tell you that, after this change in your condition, a marriage with your daughter will be out of the question."

"Don't say that, your Honour," replied Corcoran, "Love levels all ranks, you know!"

Sir Joseph was rather taken aback by being confronted with his own words. But, having been a solicitor, he was equal to the occasion.

"It does to a considerable extent," said Sir Joseph, "but it does not level them as much as that. It does not annihilate the difference between a First Lord of the Admiralty and a common sailor, though it may very well do so between a common sailor and his Captain, you know."

"I see," said Corcoran; "that had not occurred to me."

"Captain Rackstraw," said Sir Joseph, "what is your opinion on that point?"

"I entirely agree with your Lordship," said Ralph, whose love for Josephine overcame all other considerations. "If your Lordship doesn't want her, I'll take her with pleasure."

He said this because, fine fellow as he was, and deeply as he loved Josephine, he considered that it was his duty, as an officer in the Navy, to give Sir Joseph the first choice.

"Then take her, sir, and mind you make her happy."

And Captain Rackstraw arranged with Josephine that they would go on shore at once and be married at once. Fortunately the clergyman was still waiting for them, although he had become rather impatient at the delay.

During this conversation, Corcoran had a word or two with Buttercup, who took that opportunity of revealing herself to him as one of the maidenly crew of the *Hot Cross Bun* of twenty years ago. He was greatly touched at the story of her faithful devotion to him, and determined to repay it.

"My Lord," said he to Sir Joseph, "I shall be quite alone when Josephine marries, and I *should* like a nice little wife to sew buttons on my shirt and mend my socks."

"By all means," said Sir Joseph. "Can you suggest anybody?"

Corcoran presented blushing Little Buttercup to Sir Joseph, who gave her sixpence on the spot as a wedding present. Little Buttercup was so touched by Sir Joseph's liberality that she burst into tears.

Corcoran, overjoyed, at once broke into song, adapting, on the spur of the moment, the well-known and familiar words with which he used to greet his crew every morning, thus:

I was the Captain of the *Pinafore*!

And all the crew chorused:

And a right good Captain too!

CORCORAN. And though before my fall
I commanded of you all,
I'm a member of the crew!

I shall marry with a wife
In my humble rank of life,
And you, my own, are she!
[*Indicating* LITTLE BUTTERCUP.

I must wander to and fro,
But, wherever I may go,
I shall never be unkind to thee!

CORCORAN PRESENTED BLUSHING LITTLE BUTTERCUP TO SIR JOSEPH, WHO GAVE HER SIXPENCE ON THE SPOT

And the crew sang, rather slyly:

What, never?

Replied he:

No, never!

The crew, more slyly still:

What, *never*?

And the Captain, whose experience of his former wife had taught him that even the most amiable married people *will* fall out occasionally, replied:

Hardly ever!
Hardly ever be unkind to thee!

And they all sang:

Then give three cheers and one cheer more
For the hardy seamen of the *Pinafore*!
For he is an Englishman,
And he himself hath said it,
And it's greatly to his credit
That he is an Englishman!
For he might have been a Rooshian,
A French, or Turk, or Prooshian,
Or perhaps I-tal-i-an!
But, in spite of all temptations
To belong to other nations,
He remains an Englishman!

In short, there were general rejoicings all round. Lemon ice, shoulders of mutton, ginger-beer and *meringues-à-la-crème* were served out in profusion, and Sir Joseph, who happened to know a number of surprising conjuring tricks, brought a rabbit smothered in onions out of his left boot, to the intense delight of the crew. All the sisters and cousins and aunts of Sir Joseph tumbled out of bed as soon as they heard the news, and came on deck after a hasty toilette. A general dance followed in which Ralph and Josephine particularly distinguished themselves, and then they all went on shore that the clergyman (who had nearly grown tired of waiting and wanted to go home to his breakfast bacon) might join the happy couple in matrimony. Corcoran was married at the same time to Little Buttercup, and Captain Rackstraw most kindly gave him a week's leave that he and his wife might go and enjoy some sea-bathing at Ventnor.

Captain Rackstraw proved to be a most excellent Commander, and was just as much beloved as Captain Corcoran had been, while Corcoran took up Ralph's duties with enthusiasm, and became one of the smartest top-men on board. It is an excellent test of a man's character when he resigns himself with cheerfulness to a sudden change from dignified affluence to obscure

penury, and I can't help thinking that, on the whole, he was a very fine fellow.

But still I do wish he had not made that very unfortunate remark about being related to a peer.

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[1] The idea of Scorn wearing epaulettes is rather a fine figure of speech. I do not remember to have met it before.

[2] By 'baby-farming' she meant that she earned her living by taking in little children to nurse, while their Papas and Mamas were travelling on the Continent.

[3] A vulgar expression intended to imply that one of them belonged to a family of some social importance. It is not an expression that I can recommend for general use, but Little Buttercup wanted a rhyme for 'nussed,' and there was no other word handy that would do.

[4] That is to say, when their respective parents returned to England and reclaimed them.


THE END

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TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Illustrations have been relocated due to using a non-page layout.

[The end of *The Pinafore Picture Book; The Story of HMS Pinafore* by Sir W. S. Gilbert]