



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.

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.

THE CAPTAIN. THE CREW.

I am the cap-tain of the *Pin-a-fore*. And a

THE CAPTAIN.

right good cap-tain too! You're ve-ry, ve-ry good, And,

be it un-der-stood, I com-mand a right good crew.

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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,

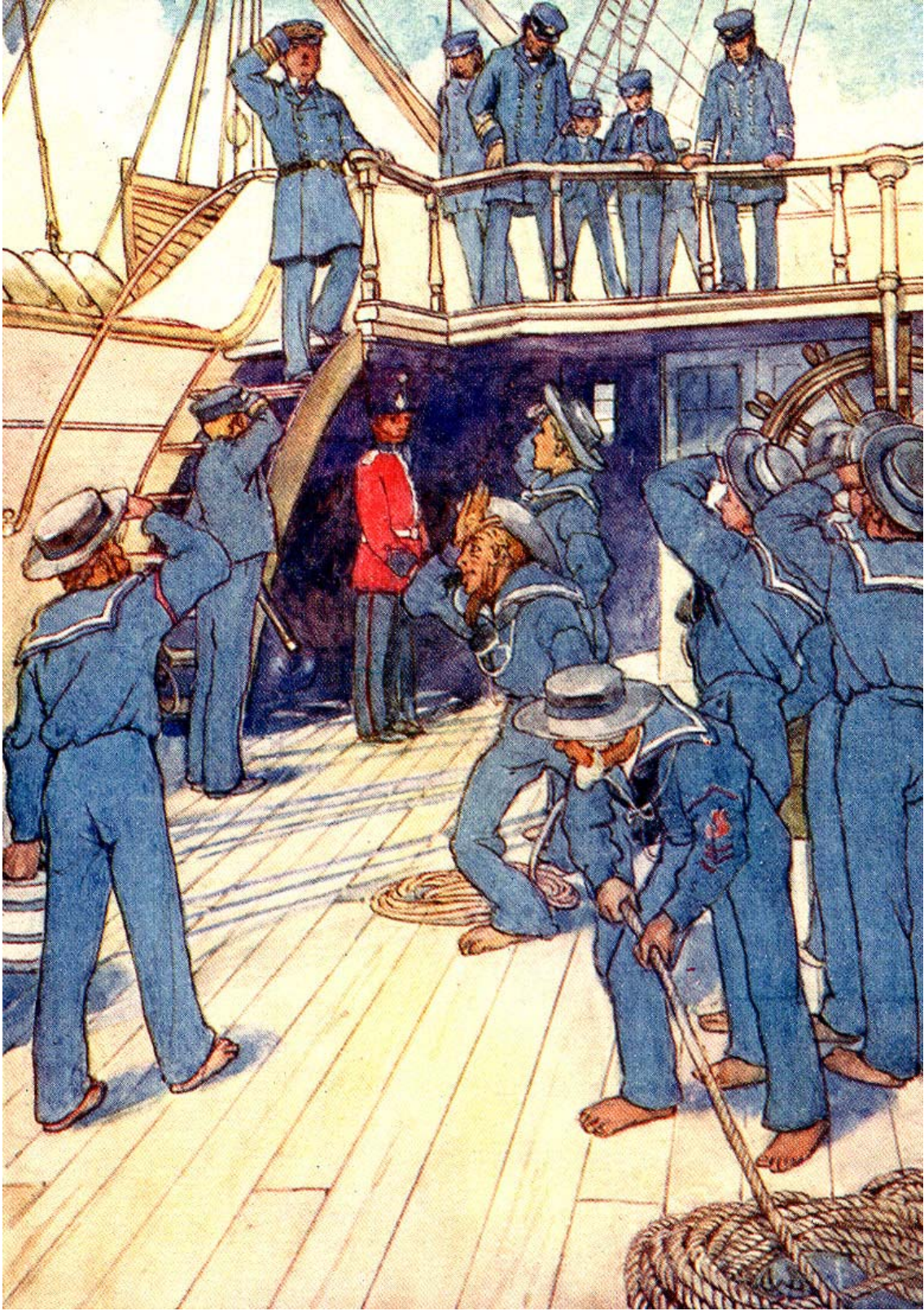
I command a right good crew!

THE CREW (*to each other*).

We're very, very good,

And be it understood,

He commands a right good crew!



My gallant crew, good morning!

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.”

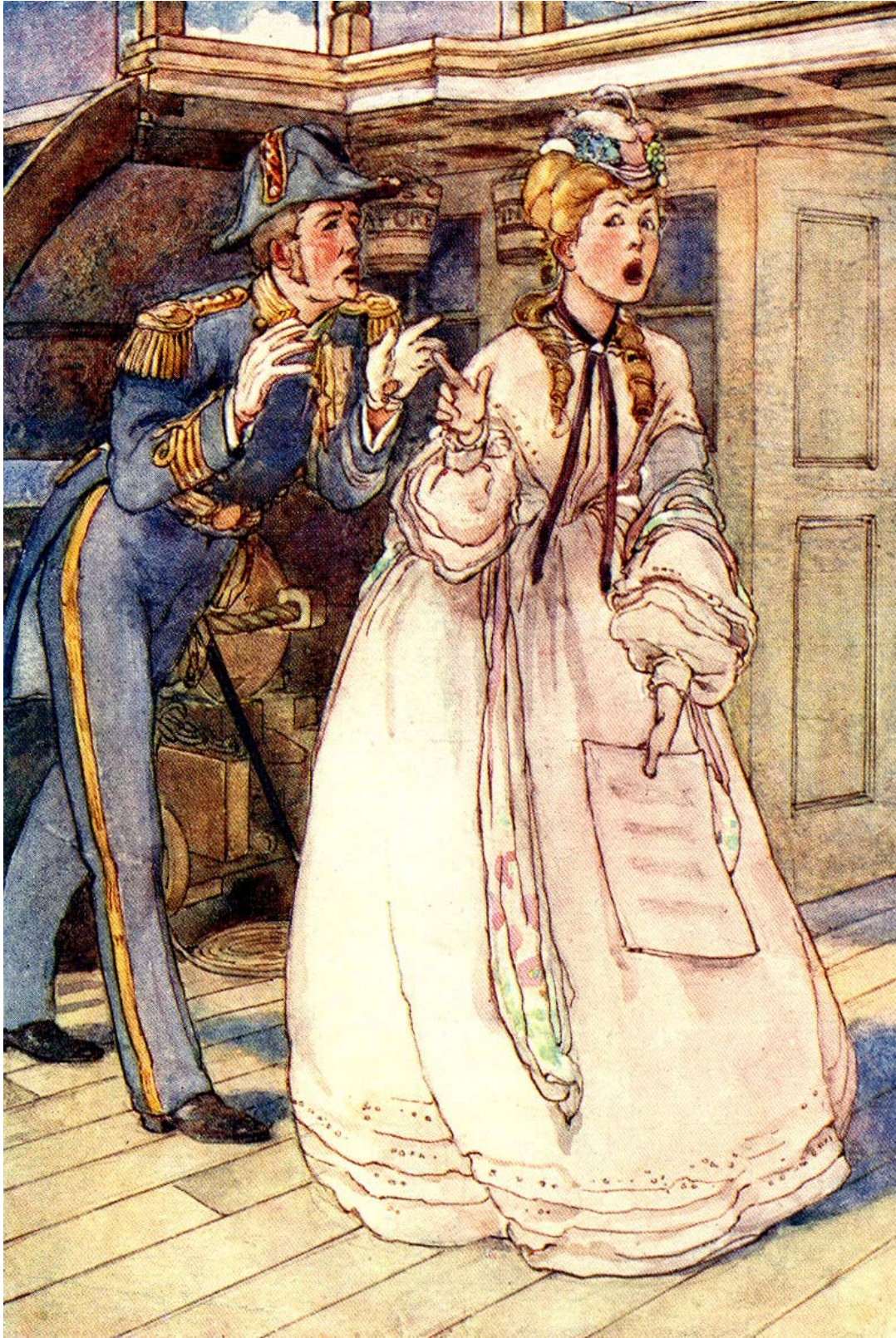
Captain Corcoran’s sentiments upon this point were so right and just that one is more sorry than ever that he should have boasted, in his song, of being related to a peer. It is just one of those unfortunate little slips that one never can quite get out of one’s mind. Personally, I hope he did it only 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!”

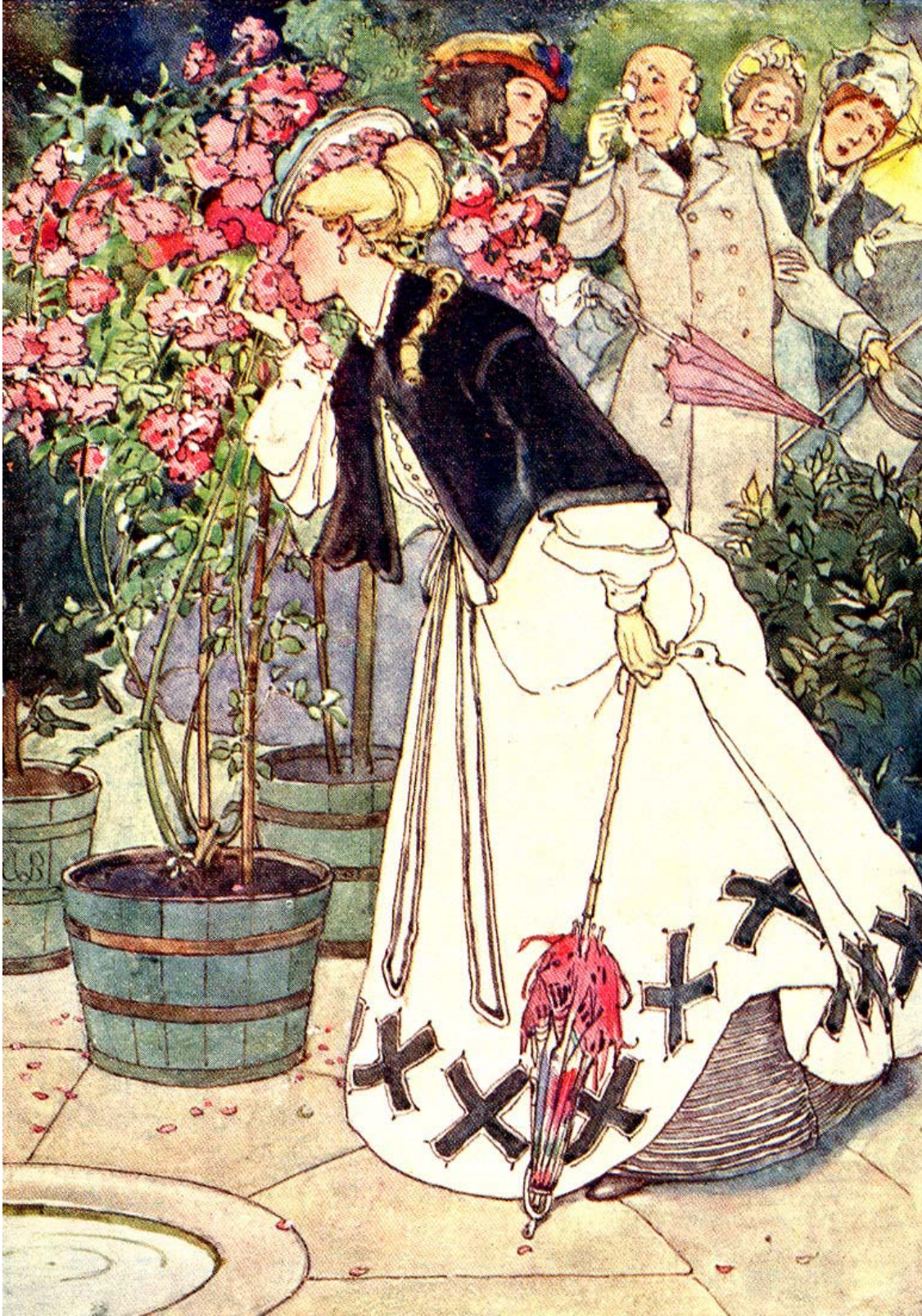
Poor girl, she thought so at the time, but as the result will show, she sadly over-estimated her strength of mind, and the consequence was a pretty kettle of fish, I promise you!

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

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



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



Sir Joseph Porter was one of the many people who had fallen victim to the beauty of Miss Josephine Corcoran.

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 J. PORTER.

Vivace.

p

of the Queen's Na - vee, Whose praise Great Bri - tain

THE LADIES.

loud-ly chants; And we are his sis-ters and his cou-sins and his aunts.

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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 successfuller
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.

When I was a lad I serv'd a term As of - fice boy to

an At-tor-ney's firm, I clean'd the win-dows and I swept the floor, And I

po - lish'd up the han - dle of the big front door.

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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 landmen 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.)



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.

“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.

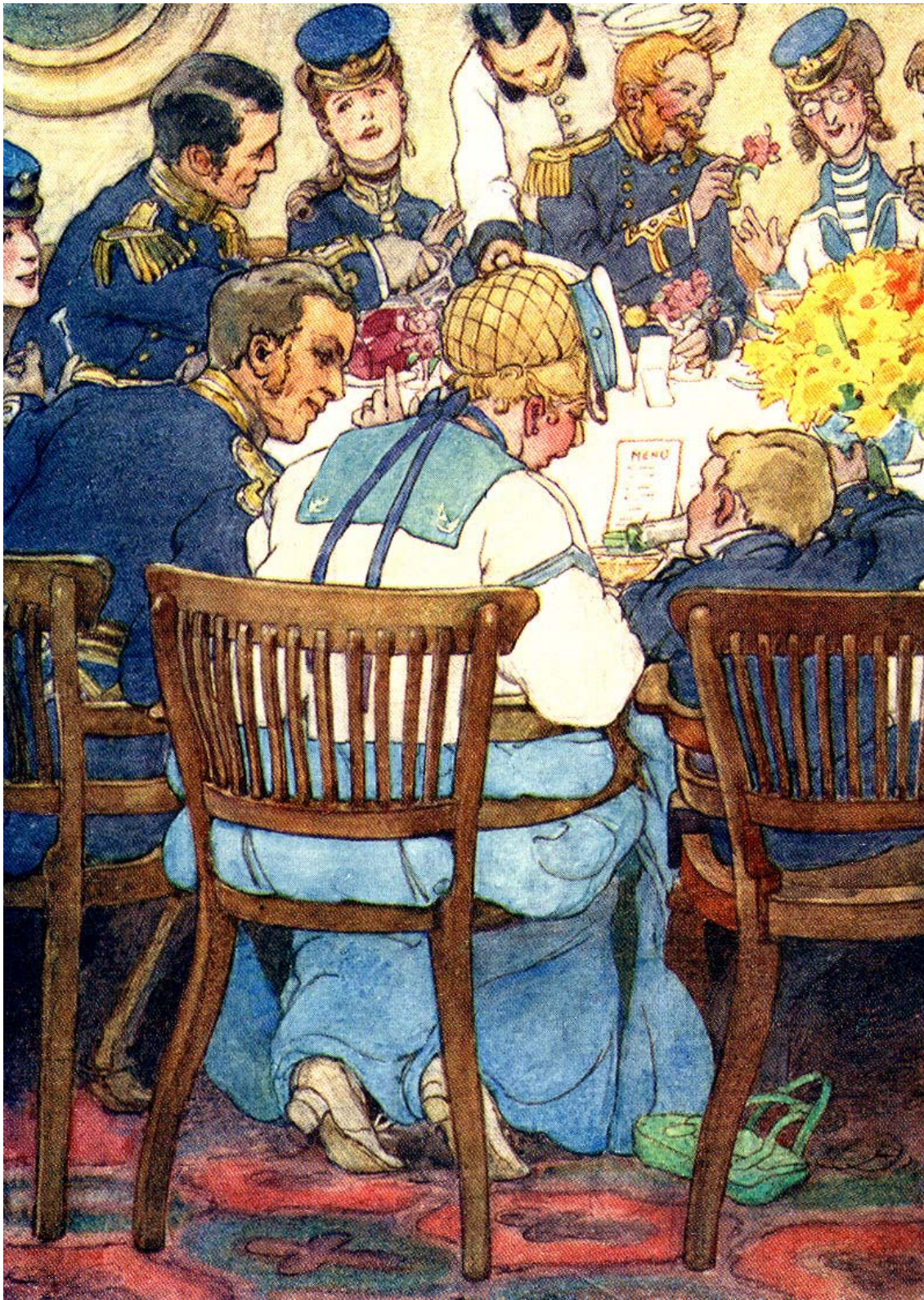
“The gentleman is quite right. If you please.”

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 forecabin to discuss the events of the morning.

“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.)



Luncheon in the ward-room.

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 clown 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.