

**NAVAL PROGRESSION,
OR, THE MIDSHIPMAN
OF THE OLD SCHOOL**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649297009

Naval progression, or, The midshipman of the old school by Philonauta

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

PHILONAUTA

**NAVAL PROGRESSION,
OR, THE MIDSHIPMAN
OF THE OLD SCHOOL**

PREFACE.

LET the wicked draw the Devil and the good pourtray virtue, for it is not possible to give any criterion to judge of the true life of the Midshipman, without alluding to indign punishment, immunity and profanation, which are calculated to make him both a blackguard and a tyrant; and this is the reason why he assumes a virtue—when he has it not—in that society on shore which will not tolerate any notoriety of bad conduct. “Those virtues of mere worldly prudence, although they change are better than none, and may lead to religious virtues which do not change.” The late Lord Byron did say, with regard to Lucifer, “It was difficult for me to make him talk like a clergyman upon the same subjects, but I have done what I could to restrain him within the bounds of spiritual politeness.” But what appears to have been fruitless with the Devil does not appear altogether hopeless with the Midshipman, since he can refrain from evil when he finds it indispensable.

Having alluded to some nuisances and abuses too prevalent in the “old school,” and which among the improvements in the new school it will be judicious to avoid, and wise not to be vaunting in any wanton vanity; for the new school has yet to recommend itself to the world in a sanguinary ordeal!! which the “old school”

PREFACE.

with all its disadvantages has done, and gained for England her acknowledged pre-eminence on the ocean, which shields the "old school" from any reproach the term would otherwise seem to imply. A period of five-and-twenty years has elapsed since the termination of the war—a time sufficient to be called a new era! Though since the death of Nelson scarcely anything of moment has occurred afloat, save at Navarino, Algiers, &c., but the improvements both by land and sea are wonderful. The advancement in science has given an impetus to maritime operations in the modern, or new, school, and therefore let it not be forgotten, that "to whom much is given, much is expected."

"There is danger in an illustration
Not turning out a picture, but obscurity."

The Midshipman, unassisted by interest, appears to be entrapped only to be deceived, encouraged to serve six years in the vain hope of a lieutenantcy, though he lays no claim to a commission until he has passed his probationary time, necessarily imposed upon to encounter the great responsibility in the charge of a national vessel. The lieutenants and commanders seem to be gulled with a hope of graduation in priority, when the majority of officers are invariably preferred through influence, almost to the exclusion of those officers who, to say the least, have a legitimate right to expect promotion by seniority—some have been promoted as infants in law, indeed as early as sixteen or seventeen years of age, to the rank of captains, which, taking the aggregate in life, is the head of the profession, when a period of forty years must elapse, ere they can become admirals. It is evident that those Flag-officers with sufficient energy for the service (save exceptions) were the favoured, a rank otherwise unattainable in life.

Senectude and puerility, though from different causes, produce the same effect.

But to select officers of acknowledged merit, and to promote them, however early in life, would excite emulation rather than jealousy!!

THE MIDSHIPMAN.



THE ABLACTATION,

OR WEANING.

From a consummation without joy,
Which might be imagin'd with "Betty Foy,
"The idiot mother of an idiot boy,"

Descended Fitz Alaric Rhone, a younger child,
Of no putative, but of a lawful sire,
Which name implies progeny from hire ;
But Rhone was a legitimate of his father's loins,
Wean'd from his mother, a wet nurse joins.

The disposition of the child was mild.
Think not such offspring always oafish,
Witless, a dolt, salacious, goatish ;
The reflection of which would inevitably cloy,
"When the father of a fool hath no joy."
They are sometimes miraculously inspir'd
With all the wisdom and energy requir'd,
For mankind would rather greet abortion,
Than human nature should suffer in distortion,

And vice ephemera, the creature of a day,
And that aconite again moulder into clay.
It is of later times I speak,
Since the infant has forgot to squeak.
Just breech'd, scarcely out of swaddling clothes,
To a matron's school the urchin goes.
During that infantile preparation
Shot forth the germ of emulation.
Thus in that favourite scion 's found
Something puisne—deem'd profound.
A father 's fit to be burnt in effigy
Who thinks his silly son a prodigy,
And *vice versa* is an absurdity
When tenacious of his son's ability.
Various schemes were form'd—some things given,
When destin'd for the Church, insured 's a living.
From the abecedenary away he went,
Then to a public school he 's sent ;
Initiated in the first rudiments,
The literature of sciences, the elements,
Grammar, arithmetic, geometry,
Rhetoric, logic, and astronomy ;
Corderii, Selectæ, Phædrus, Cæsar,
With their attendant ferula—a teaser :
The rules were not so simplified before,
The slightest task became a bore,
Scraps were scrawl'd, lessons said each matin—
Enough, in fact, he had learnt latin !
His satchel now is full of lore,
More than his brainless head can store.

Pot-hooks and hangers, you 'll understand,
 Are sufficient for a hieroglyphic hand,
 Illegibly to scrawl out franks,*
 Which in bills of exchange answer for blanks,
 Refus'd as protested bills in banks.
 How irksome 'twas to study for the Church ;
 In examinations, Rhone 's always in the lurch.
 Elsewhere he'd appear to have an education,
 Such as a scoolest, a smattering of all,
 With a superficial knowledge of nothing at all.
 Rhone relinquishes the Church for a profession,
 Or rather one was chosen for him,
 To 'scape the rod gratifies the whim.
 Alaric yields to the decision satisfied,
 With all parties th' arrangement 's ratified :
 In the break out o' war, there 's a glittering bait
 Which reconciles to an impending fate.
 The gold of Peru, on the liquid element,
 And the gems of Golconda a luring sediment,
 Ingots, dollars, and ducats, doubloons,
 Are the ballast in the caracs or gall'ons ;
 Which appear sufficient to cover the whole,
 And indemnify man for the loss of his soul.
 Give but the idea and the fortune 's made,
 It shocks the gent's son—the drudgery in trade—
 Forgetting that the prize in the lottery may fail,
 A blank in ideal fortune ever to bewail ;
 Which makes the poor gentleman an “ Earl of poverty,”
 A stalking pauper with no property.

* Which puzzle the post-office.

Thus it is ordained—now mark this well—
In seeking a secular advantage you're given hell.

THE PREPARATION.

Fitz Alaric Rhone, who's taken for a prodigy,
Is now metamorphos'd into a *protégé*.
The unconscious lad is full of glee,
Elate with joy, Rhone goes to sea.
The first expense is rather heavy,
To equip him for the royal navy.
He kisses his sisters, embraces mamma,
Ready to set off with papa.
The family parting with the manikin's o'er,
Who takes his departure in a chaise and four,
At a bustling sea-port soon arrive,
Where all seems pageantry—all is alive ;
In dazzling uniforms, gorgeous regimentals,
Where our hero's fitted with all the essentials.
In requisition were the waggons and carts,
And the infantry arriving from all parts ;
An armament's equipping fast,
The expedition sails at last,
Favour'd by a slanting breeze,
Receding from view a forest of masts,
Which in the distance resembl'd trees
Running foul of each other tangl'd and fast.
Some were laden, and others were light,
And fainter appear running out of sight ;

Fitz Alaric Rhone, in his nautical dress,
 A huge cock'd-hat and a little dirk,
 A flush on his cheek, a significant smirk,
 As a rated midshipman—nothing less.
 Mids were not always rated so soon,
 But Rhone had an aristocrat's boon.*
 And is dubb'd Mister, no longer Master,
 Which elsewhere would create laughter,
 And 'scaping such a sad disaster,
 Becomes a subject for the poetaster.

Sojourning at the hotel, they breakfast there,
 The chamber-maids at the little midshipman stare,
 Bless and caress him as he runs down stairs,
 Telling him not to forget his prayers.
 He saunters about the town, looking everywhere.
 His friends from the tavern to the beach repair,
 Inquiring for Captain Tartar, o' his Majesty's ship
 Népenthe.

Far in the offing she is descried, at length
 They jump into a wherry—away it glides
 With Rhone, his father, and a friend besides.
 And as the skiff rapidly advances
 At the huge hulks Alaric glances,
 When the salt water *sans cérémonie* dash'd,
 Rhone and his friends got preciously splash'd.
 Their "hearts are in their mouths," the scene not
 bright'ning;
 The drenching water and velocity 's fright'ning.

* "A corrupt system formerly prevailed of rating children in the royal navy as midshipmen a day or two after their birth."