

**THE YOUNG MAN-OF-
WAR'S MAN: A
BOY'S VOYAGE
ROUND THE WORLD**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649257515

The young Man-of-war's man: a boy's voyage round the world by Charles Nordhoff

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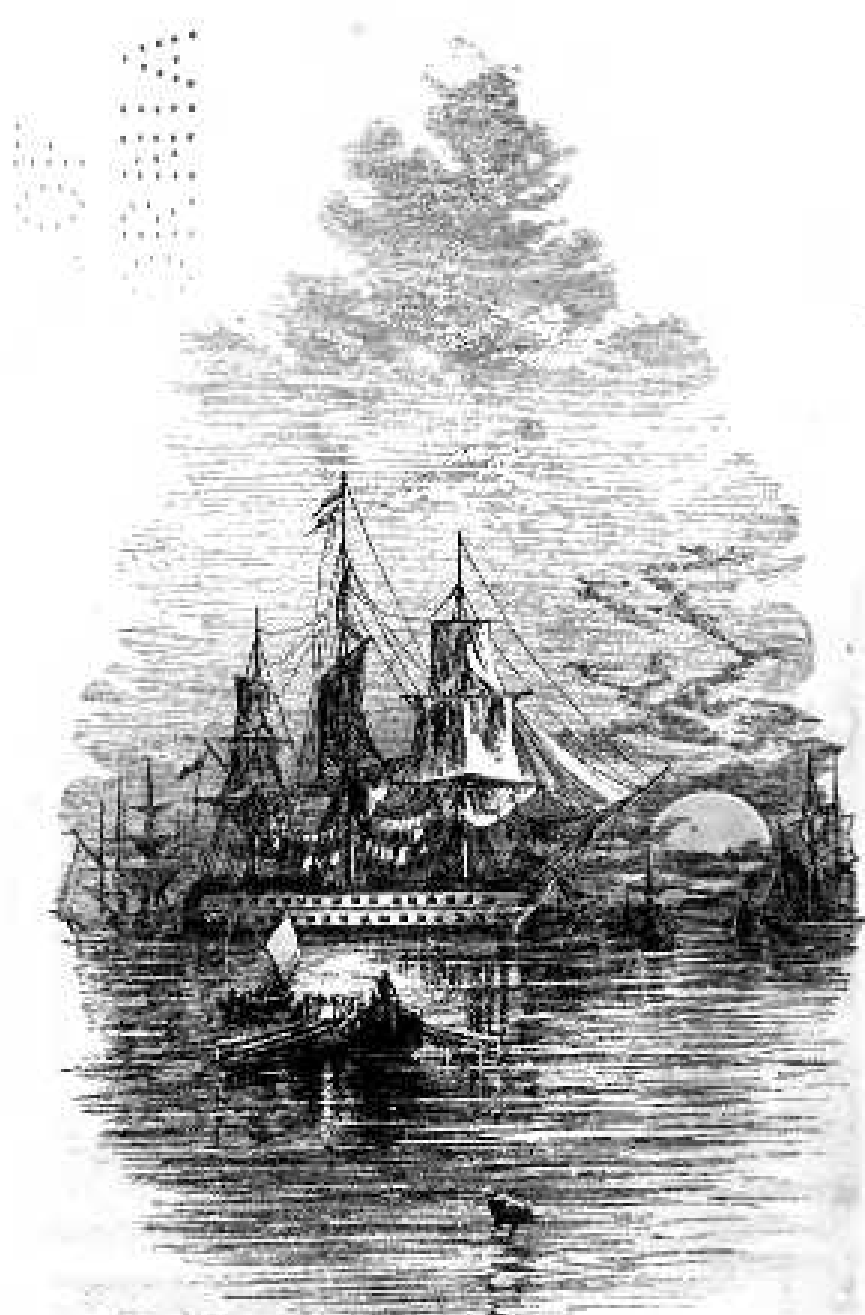
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CHARLES NORDHOFF

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THE YOUNG MAN OF WAR'S MAN.

THE
YOUNG MAN-OF-WAR'S MAN:

A
Boy's Voyage Round the World.

THE
ADVENTURES OF
ALFRED RABBIT

BY
CHARLES NORDHOFF.

EDINBURGH:
WILLIAM P. NIMMO.

G 549

N 6

1874

NO 1111
M 10 10 10

EDINBURGH
PRINTED BY SCHEPCK AND M'FARLANE,
ST JAMES' SQUARE.

Gift of
Harry East Miller

THE
YOUNG MAN-OF-WAR'S MAN.

CHAPTER I.

I JOIN THE SERVICE.

I WENT to school until I was thirteen years of age. While there I was very attentive to my lessons, and picked up the rudiments of a good useful education, which proved of immense value to me in after life; and I acquired a very strong love of reading. I was then apprenticed to a printer, when I had many opportunities of indulging in my favourite study, and took great pleasure in reading books of travel and adventure. At this time my constitution was not strong, and I began to be afraid that I would not be able to continue successfully at the printing; in fact, the books I read put erroneous notions into my head, and I conceived a great desire to go to sea. I applied to several ships in the harbour for a boy's place, but unsuccessfully. The first question put to me by the master invariably was, "Has your

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parents sent you to sea?" I had no parents, and I said so at once; on which I was told to be begone, for a good-for-nothing little scoundrel!

At length I learned that the United States ship *C*—— was about to sail on a long voyage, and that several boys were wanted on board. Here was an opportunity too good to be missed, and I at once applied; but, alas! the consent of my parents was again wanted. What could I do? I had none, indeed I had not a friend in the world to whom I could refer.

At length it occurred to me that my master could assist me; so to him I went and stated my case as effectively as I could. My request evidently surprised him, but at last he consented to give me a note to Commodore Elliott.

I got it next day, and lost no time in presenting it at the commodore's office.

After deliberately reading it over, he turned to me and said—

"You young scoundrel, you want to ruin yourself, do you? You want to go to sea. Haven't you a father or mother?"

"No, sir."

"No guardian?"

"No, sir."

"What do you do here?"

"I am errand-boy, sir."

"Why do you want to go to sea?"

"I want to see the world."

"You want to what! You ought to be sent to the house of correction. Look here, my lad; take my advice; get this crazy notion out of your

head; learn your trade; study your books; continue a good boy, and you will grow up to be a useful man. If you go to sea, you will be nothing all your life but a vagabond, drunken sailor—a dog for every one to kick at." Then getting up to leave, he added: "Stay in your place, and be contented to let those who are bigger fools go to sea. Look at me; I have been in the navy all my life, and an officer, which is more than you would ever get to be; but see what a miserable old hulks I am. Boy, if I had a dozen sons, I would gladly see them all in their graves, sooner than at sea."

With these words he went out of the room, leaving me disappointed, despairing almost, of accomplishing my object; but I was too thoroughly determined, to be put off by one denial. Waiting two or three days, I waylaid the commodore, and told him, that after considering upon all he had said to me, I was still as strongly inclined for sea as ever; and beseeched him to write for me the few necessary words to the recruiting officer.

"Confound the boy," said he; "I suppose I shall have to do what he wants."

He wrote: "Officer of the naval rendezvous will ship the bearer—a boy.—Com. C. ELLIOTT," and threw it to me. I thanked him, and took the nearest way to the rendezvous. The shipping-officer was standing at the office-door as I came up, and at the sight of my rather too well-known face, he said pettishly—

"Boy, I've told you a dozen times that we can't ship you. Go away, and don't let me see you any more."

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In reply to this, I quietly handed to him the note from the commodore. He looked at it, then at me; then at that again. Then his whole manner changed—he politely asked me to take a seat. I did so.

“This note alters the case, my lad,” said he, in the tone of a gentleman—a tone I had not known him to assume before. “So your father is acquainted with Commodore Elliott?” “I mechanically said, “Yes.”

He did not hear me. There was no explanation needed. I possessed the magic signet before which all doors flew open—all difficulties vanished. The articles of agreement were read over to me, and I was asked if I, of my own free will, did propose to sign them—a question which, in my ignorance, I considered highly superfluous, seeing that I had been at so much pains to obtain the chance so to do. I was requested to walk into an adjoining room, where a naval doctor examined into the stoutness of my frame and lungs, and the general soundness of my constitution. A report of the result was placed in my hands, which I rendered up to the officer, who expressed his satisfaction thereat; and, in conclusion, I was asked if I was fully aware of all the responsibilities I was about to take upon myself, and would swear to submit to the rules and regulations laid down for the government of the seamen in the United States Navy—questions which I did not presume to answer—told me to “touch the pen,” while he very ingeniously wrote my name for me—a matter that I could have performed much