

**GUIDE TO THE ARMY-COMPETITIVE
EXAMINATIONS; BEING A
COMPENDIUM OF PRACTICAL HINTS
FOR CANDIDATES WITH REFERENCE TO
SCHOOLS, ALLOWANCE, OUTFITS, AND
OTHER EXPENSES**

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A. H. HUTCHINSON

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PRACTICAL HINTS FOR CANDIDATES
WITH REFERENCE TO
SCHOOLS, ALLOWANCE, OUTFITS,
AND
OTHER EXPENSES;
TOGETHER WITH
EXTRACTS FROM THE EXAMINATION PAPERS,
Official Rules and Regulations,
AND ALL OTHER NECESSARY INFORMATION.

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PREFACE.

HAVING been frequently applied to for advice upon the subject of Army Entrance Examinations, Schools, Outfits, Pay, &c., I thought it might be useful to collect together such information as would meet the numerous queries, even on trifling matters, which present themselves to the mind of every young man who may, for the first time, be turning his attention to the Military Profession.

Great care has been taken to procure correct and substantial details upon these various points. A minute description is given of the Chelsea Examinations, together with extracts from the Examination Papers and other statistics, most valuable to those who may have little or no acquaintance with that branch of the service to which they are about to devote themselves.

The want of such a Guide has long been felt, and it is hoped the following pages will supply the deficiency, and prove a useful and satisfactory assistant to those young men, for whose benefit they are especially intended.

Artillery Barracks,
Woolwich.

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GENERAL REMARKS.

THE profession of Arms has always been considered most noble and most honourable, and never more so than in the present day, when a considerable change has taken place in our military system. The standard of attainments, which an officer is expected to reach, has been recently raised to a very high degree. Hence a careful education, more or less scientific, must now be combined with the natural qualities of bravery, energy, and decision, to form a leader who shall possess the confidence, as well as the affection, of those he may be called upon to command.

Nor is this the only change which the progress of time has effected in our Army administration. The exclusive character of the nomination system, which for so many years restricted the patronage of the Army to a favoured class of individuals, has been extensively modified, and the new competitive system has placed the highest prizes within the grasp of the successful candidate.

For, as soon as he has completed a service of three years with his Regiment to the satisfaction of his Commanding Officer, he is at liberty to become a student in the Staff College should he be successful at the entrance Examination, and, after studying there for two years, is qualified for an appointment upon the Staff, and may thus gradually rise in his profession, until his talents and energy meet with their reward in some post of honour and distinction.

Even before the Army was thrown open by the Competitive system, how many rose to fame and important commands, unaided by interest in high places, helped forward solely by their own merit and exertions.

For instance, in our own day.

Sir Charles Napier, Sir Harry Smith, Lord Clyde, General Havelock, Sir R. Dacres, Sir Harry Jones, Sir Henry Lawrence, Colonel Edwardes, and many others.

Let the success of these encourage young men now entering the Army to make Duty their watch-word from the very commencement, so that, at some future day, their names also may be held in affectionate remembrance by their grateful countrymen.

HINTS TO CANDIDATES.

It is always advisable that a young man should, if possible, undergo a special course of training in some good military school, before offering himself as a competitor at any of the Entrance Examinations for the Army. He should devote himself entirely to the particular branch of the Service he may wish to enter, giving himself sufficient time to go steadily and carefully through the groundwork of each subject.

Many candidates have failed by not getting the required number of marks in pure mathematics, although perhaps they may have done well in mixed,—thereby shewing that their preparation has been loose and hurried, and that they have been crammed at the last moment to enable them to compete.

The practice of cramming cannot be too strongly condemned. The murder will out, as soon as the Cadet finds himself opposed to those who may be better prepared. He is continually passed over,—his stay at the College is indefinitely prolonged, (causing great additional expense to his friends,) and, to crown all, he may be unable to pass the final Examination within the prescribed time, and thus be obliged to give up all hopes of obtaining the desired commission.

Besides the Army classes which are now formed in all our large Public and Grammar schools, several private establishments, (with terms varying from £80 to £100 per annum), as well as private tutors, have sprung up to prepare the numerous candidates, who now flock to the Army Examinations.

It is not fair always to condemn a school because its pupil does not stand high on the list of the successful candidates. His inferior position may proceed from nervousness at the Examination, or other causes, and yet, notwithstanding his apparent deficiency, he may in reality be so well grounded, that, at the next trial, he will distance those who passed in before him at the Entrance Examination, but whose superiority at that time was possibly the result of a cramming preparation, the superficial character of which will be plainly discernible in after contests.

Should the candidate possess a nervous temperament it would be a good plan for his instructor to put him through a private examination beforehand, giving him papers and

limiting him to time, exactly in the same way as he will afterwards be treated at Chelsea. This will give him confidence when the time arrives, so that, instead of being excited and flurried, he will go through the ordeal, quietly and composedly.

Although a very slight knowledge of French and German is required at the Entrance Examinations, yet, before a cadet receives his commission he must have made considerable progress in the acquirement of these languages, and the best way of accomplishing this is by a short residence abroad. It might therefore be found useful for the successful candidate to pass his vacations in France and Germany respectively, domiciling himself in families where but little English is either spoken or understood.

All Army Examinations are conducted at Chelsea, under the superintendence of the Council of Military Education; and the instruction of the Officers in Her Majesty's Army, except in the case of those who may obtain direct appointments, is confined to the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, and the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. The Royal Indian College at Addiscombe has been closed in consequence of the dissolution of the Honourable East India Company. The education of the Cadets of the Royal Marines is carried on, on board H. M. Gunner Ship "Excellent," at Portsmouth.

COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS AT CHELSEA HOSPITAL.

The following is a brief account of the manner in which the Examinations are carried on at Chelsea.

On the morning of the appointed day the Candidates are shown into the Examination Hall, and called out 20 or 30 at a time in alphabetical order, to have their height taken and noted. They are then conducted to the room set apart for the medical inspection, where three Examiners—Medical Officers of the Army of skill and experience—divide the numbers between them. Each candidate approaches in turn and is closeted alone with the Medical Officer, who examines his sight to see whether there be any defect in his vision, though short sight is not a fatal objection if it can be remedied by the help of glasses. His chest is next sounded, as disease of