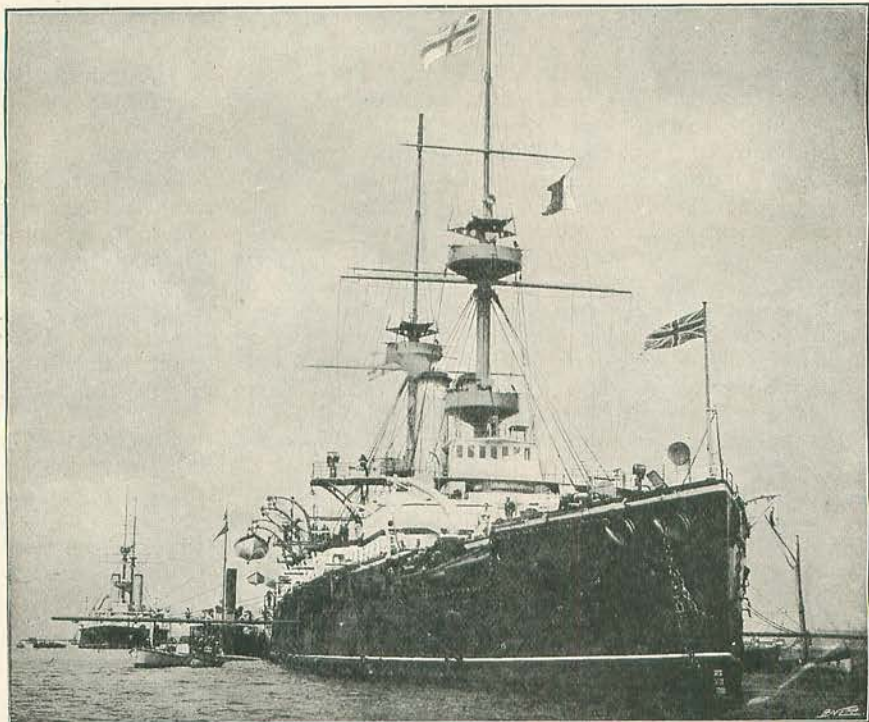


The Rank-and-File of the British Navy.

BY LORD CHARLES BERESFORD.

IN all that I have ever written with reference to the Naval Service, the question of its strength, organization, and efficiency has always been uppermost in my mind. It may be well that something should be told of its attractions, of the advantages it offers as a career to British youth—whether his lot may be to enter as a boy (bluejacket), with the prospect of a happy and vastly interesting life, ample opportunities of coming out of the crowd and becoming distinguished, respected, and popular, with perhaps in the near

efficiency of a fleet depend upon the admiral and the officers under his command. Many books and articles have been written illustrating the career of a naval officer from the day he joined the Navy till by progressive stages he arrived at the rank of admiral and held a responsible position in the most glorious Service in the world. The charm of his life, the delightful episodes connected with carrying out his interesting and ever-varying duties have been fully dilated on, from the time he learns self-restraint and how to handle men when in command of a boat's crew, to the time when he puts all his acquired



From a Photo. by

A TYPE OF A BRITISH MAN-O'-WAR—H.M.S. "MAGNIFICENT."

W. Gregory & Co.

future the chance of obtaining a commission (although, in modern days, commissions have rarely been offered to the lower deck), or to enter the engine-room department, where the throb of the mighty machines may remind him that a page of fame has yet to be written on the sea-fights of the future, which will illustrate the all-important position the boilers, engines, and those who control them must have in determining the result of an action and a campaign.

The smartness, discipline, and fighting

knowledge to use by manœuvring fleets or squadrons of the most powerful warships of the day.

In this article I propose to deal with the "man behind the gun"—the man in the engine and boiler room, the artificer, and the marine, who all form the links of a chain, and who by their individual and collective loyalty, energy, and discipline work up a modern British man-of-war to its splendid state of perfection. It is only by the loyal aid of his men that an officer can



THE CREW OF A MAN-O'-WAR.
 From a Photo. by W. Gregory & Co. By permission of "Navy & Army Illustrated."

hope to do his duty efficiently for his country and achieve success either in peace or war.

A young man has other opportunities of serving his country besides those of enlisting as a bluejacket or stoker. He may volunteer for some of the numerous mechanical and artificer ratings which form part of the complement of every British man-of-war. It is necessary that the fleet and the vessels which form the fleet should be self-supporting. This depends upon the mechanical skill and knowledge of those who hold such ratings as:—

	Daily pay ranges from
Armourers	} 2s. 4d. to 6s.
Armourer's mate	
Armourer's crew	
Carpenter's mate	} 4s. to 4s. 9d.
Shipwright	
Leading carpenter's crew	} 2s. 4d. to 2s. 8d.
Carpenter's crew	
Blacksmith	} 1s. 8d. to 3s. 4d.
Blacksmith's mate	
Blacksmith's crew	
Plumber	} 1s. 8d. to 3s.
Plumber's mate	
Plumber's crew	
Painter, 1st or 2nd class	} 2s. 5d. to 3s.
Cooper	
Second cooper	} 2s. 6d. to 3s. 2d.
Cooper's crew, etc.	

A further opportunity of serving in the fleet is afforded by enlistment in the Royal Marines (either the Royal Marine Artillery or the Royal Marine Light Infantry). Of the Royal Marines Admiral Lord St. Vincent said: "There never was any appeal made to them for honour, courage, or loyalty that they did not more than realize my expectations. If ever the hour of real danger should come to England the marines will be found the country's sheet-anchor." These words have received thorough confirmation whenever and wherever that splendid corps has been called upon, ashore or afloat, no matter what duties have been assigned to it. The Army hails the marines as comrades; the Navy is proud to remember that they belong to the Naval Service.

If among the readers who peruse these pages there should be any who resent an attempt to arouse the warlike spirit in British boys, and lure them into that enthusiasm which has tempted so many generations of British-born youths to try their fortunes on the sea, let the lovers of peace be reminded of a truth which cannot too often be impressed upon them, namely, that "Peace, which is the greatest interest of the British Empire," can be best secured by maintaining

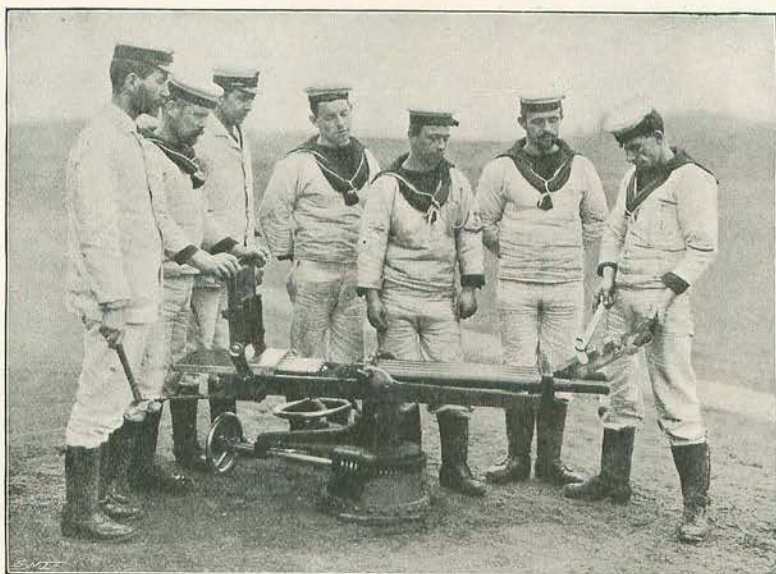
in all their traditional strength the floating bulwarks of these little sea-girt isles. There is nothing that is so excellent a check upon the predatory instincts of human nature as the ideal "strong man armed keeping watch over his goods."

In the old days when the press-gang scoured the streets of our seaside towns, and swept up anyone that was able-bodied, the lower deck could hardly have been the best place for a youth to commence life in. Bad food, harsh treatment, and but few kind words were the men's lot. To-day the life and surroundings of the lower deck have entirely changed, and the most careful parent may, without fear, let a sturdy boy enter the British Navy, secure in the knowledge that good food, good treatment, fair wages, an excellent education, and many opportunities of distinguishing himself will be afforded

and that it will become possible for more seamen to attain the rank of lieutenant.

There have only been three commissions offered to naval men who have entered the Service as bluejacket boys in the last fifty years.

When a lad intending to become a bluejacket joins the Navy he is provided with an outfit free, and is paid at the rate of sixpence a day, a sum which he can increase by good conduct. He is sent to one of the training ships, generally one of the old "wooden walls of England" like the *Impregnable*, the *Lion*, or the *Ganges*, or to one of the other training ships. Here he has an open-air life, plenty of good plain food, an excellent school where he can complete his education, and no lack of amusements. Part of his pay is remitted to his friends at home, if he so wishes, and part is punctually paid him as pocket-money.



From a Photo. by

ON WHALE ISLAND—ARMOURERS AT WORK.

[W. Gregory & Co.

him, and the better bred the youngster and the sounder his education the more chance he has of getting on in his chosen profession. It is true that, by the force of circumstances which now present great difficulties, it is almost impossible at present for a youngster who chooses the Navy to emulate the example of such gallant soldiers as Major-General Macdonald, and many others who have gained the highest ranks of their profession after having started on the bottom rung of the ladder.

It is to be hoped that these circumstances may shortly be taken under consideration,

In course of time he becomes a 1st class boy. He is sent in the brig to learn seamanship, and possibly in the Training Squadron visits other countries and sees a good deal of life. If a picked lad, he may even for a time be attached to Nelson's old flagship the *Victory*, and wear on his hat-ribbon the name of the ship on board of which the immortal hero gave up his life in the hour of his country's triumph.

At eighteen years of age the boy has become a fine, well-filled-out young man and is rated ordinary seaman, with a man's pay and privileges. He now receives 1s. 3d. a

day, which may be increased to 1s. 7d. a day by his showing proficiency enough to be rated able seaman. After this comes a course at Whale Island, or at the Gunnery School at Plymouth or Sheerness, where he may pass as seaman gunner and perhaps be sent on to pass through a torpedo course in the *Vernon* or *Defiance*, which adds to his pay. Or he may elect to pass for a qualified signalman. As seaman gunner he receives the pay of an able seaman (1s. 7d. a day) plus 4d. (if he has a first-class certificate) — total 1s. 11d.—and plus 1d. a day for each good conduct badge. Or if he has qualified as a torpedo man, as well as seaman gunner, 6d. a day extra instead of 4d.

If qualified and steady he can increase his pay and improve his position by being rated leading seaman (1s. 9d. a day), petty officer, 2nd class (2s. a day), petty officer, 1st class (2s. 2d. to 2s. 5d. a



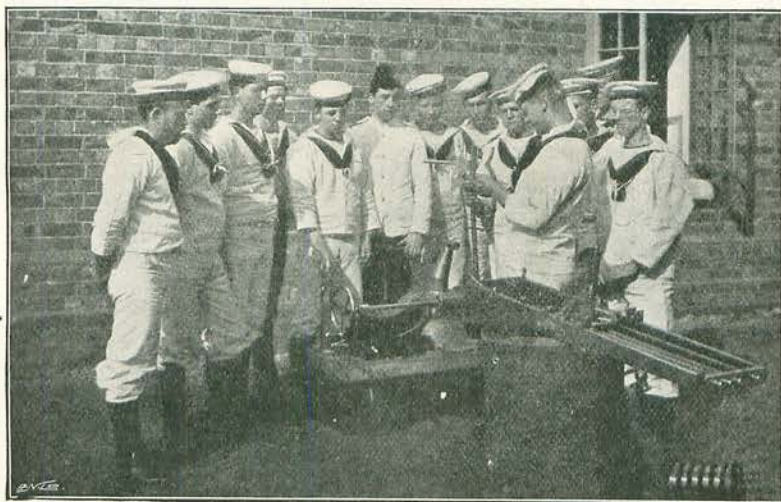
A PETTY OFFICER.

From a Photo. by W. Gregory & Co.

8d. a day extra. These advancements depend entirely on his qualifications and merits. By this time the bluejacket is a splendid specimen of British manhood. He is sent on foreign service for three years. He sees more of the world and strange countries than many a gentleman with a private income can do. He has plenty of leave, quite as much liberty as is possible consistent with discipline, and, best of all, he has around him chums and comrades such as no life will produce better than a sea life. At sea each man's life may depend on the man next to him in a moment of emergency, even in the piping times of peace, and the result is that between bluejacket and bluejacket and between bluejacket and his officer there are ties which no other Service

can equal or surpass.

A steady lad with his head screwed on right, and not too much of a "sea-lawyer," if



From a Photo. by]

A MACHINE-GUN INSTRUCTOR.

[W. Gregory & Co.

day), and eventually chief petty officer (2s. 8d. to 3s. 2d. a day). He may also qualify for, and become, an instructor, which gives him

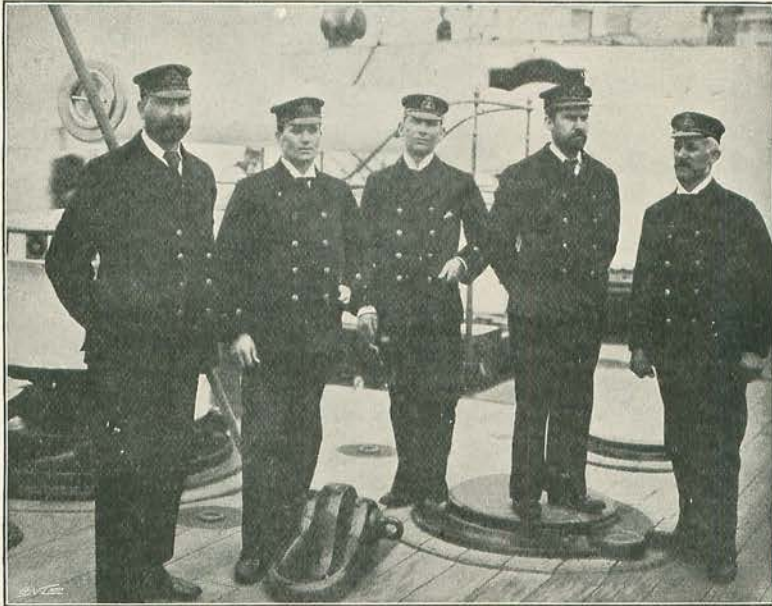
he is the sort of man who makes the most of his abilities and opportunities and attends to his duty, may leave the Service at the

age of forty, a young man, in the prime of life and the best of health, with a few pounds in his pocket, a vast store of useful knowledge, and a pension for life of over £40 a year. Of course, it is not possible for everyone to do as well as this, but the chance is there, and the best man takes advantage of it.

After leaving the Service pensioned there is never any difficulty in getting employment. Employers are only too glad to get hold of a "handy man," and many have written to me at various times to send them a naval pensioner, while the Naval Employment

a prospect of retiring with the honorary rank of lieutenant and a pension of £150 a year.

Of course, there is another side to the picture. The trials, the vexations, and the disappointments inseparable from any career abound in that of a seaman. In many particulars much might yet be done to improve the prospects, the pay, the comfort, and the general well-being of many ranks in the Service. There is, however, a time and place for everything, and this is not the occasion upon which to discuss those points in which officers and men would



From a Photo. by]

WARRANT OFFICERS—H.M.S. "TERRIBLE."

[W. Gregory & Co.

Agency can always find work for men of good conduct and a first-class record in the Service.

A man has the option of retiring from the Navy (without pension) after twelve years' service, or if he wishes to leave before then he can purchase his discharge at a rate depending on the length of time he has served.

On the other hand, if he obtains warrant officer's rank and remains in the Service, he has the position and the treatment of a gentleman, and may earn the respect and goodwill of all his brother officers, who are only too proud to be shipmates with those men of merit who, starting on the lower rungs of the ladder, have reached the highest point the present rules of the Service permit them to attain.

As a warrant officer his pay begins at 5s. 6d. and may rise to 12s. a day, and he has

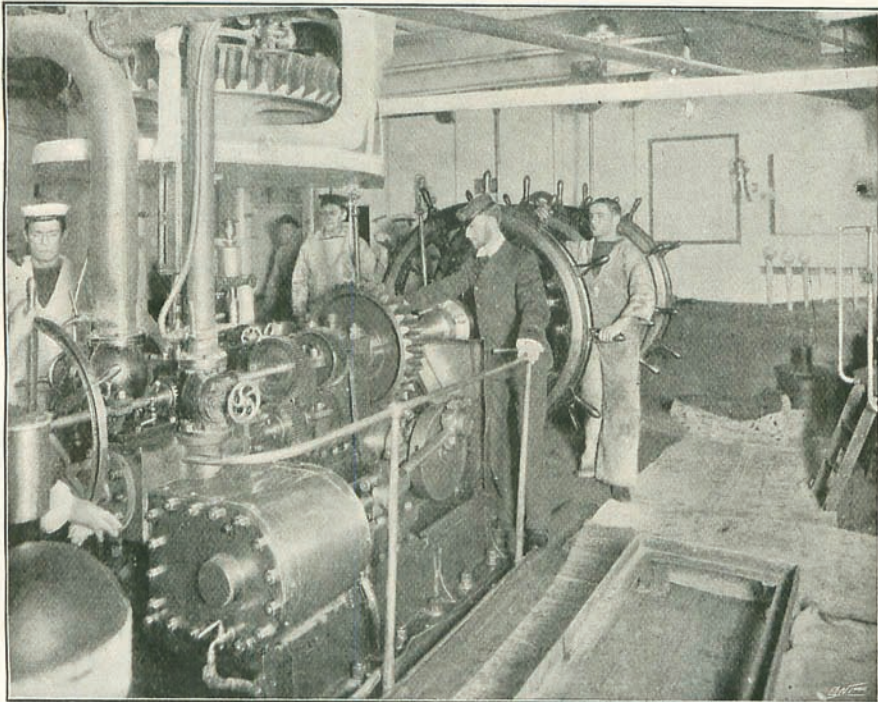
like to see reform or alteration. It need only be mentioned in passing that perhaps the chief bar to the Naval Service securing full attention from a grateful country is that it is so little in the public eye: all its duty is done away from the public gaze, except on those rare occasions when it is able to help on shore in some operation which brings it into the glare of publicity.

With all its drawbacks, however, which none of us would dignify with the name of grievances, there is no seaman worth his salt in the British Navy who would not confess that his life's work has a peculiar charm and variety which appertain to no billet on shore. There is something in "A life on the ocean wave" which has its own fascination. There is infinite variety on the sea and all connected with it. Even a landsman can appreciate the many changes of a seaman's

life. The difference in the ships he may serve in is alone remarkable. From the three-decked wooden walls of Nelson's day—now, alas! only hulks, but belonging to a class that some of the older seamen have sailed in—to the modern mobile floating fort, a lad may pass through such different types of craft as the *Alexandra*, or other of the early ironclads, to the latest battleship in commission, such as the *Magnificent*. He may serve in the thirty-knot torpedo-boat destroyer or the splendid cruiser *Powerful*, or navigate

things ashore than in the days of sailing ships, when they spent six and nine months at sea at a stretch.

In the earlier days ships were sometimes the better part of a year without letters from home. They were at sea for months together; now mails are sent and received regularly at short intervals. The food formerly was bad compared with the rations of to-day; salt beef and pork and weevily biscuit, combined very often with a short allowance of water, have now been replaced



THE STEERING ENGINEERS.

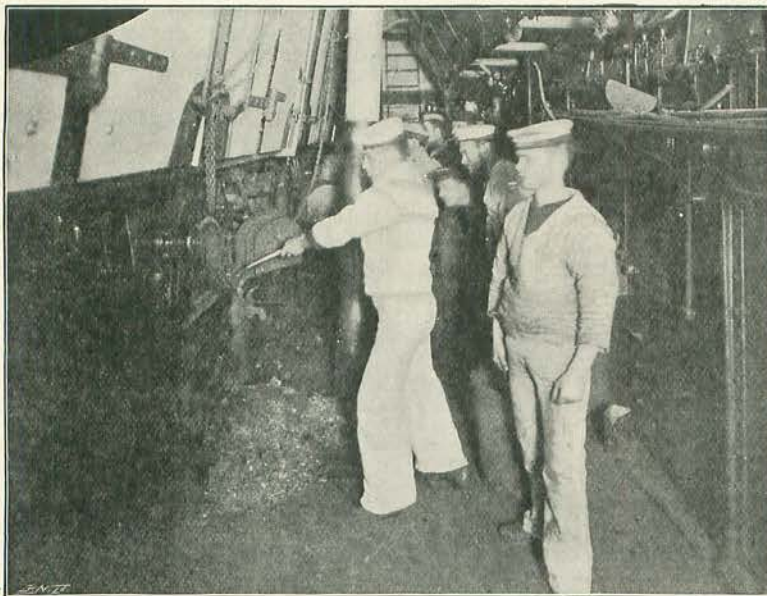
From a Photo. by W. Gregory & Co. By permission of "Navy & Army Illustrated."

a Chinese river in the little gunboats which are the latest specimen of the ubiquitous nature of the British Navy.

Ashore at Plymouth or Portsmouth a bluejacket may find in Miss Weston's splendid buildings a cheap but luxurious club, which offers him advantages the value of which cannot be overrated. The times have changed, indeed, but the same spirit is still there. The men are cast in gentler moulds, and do not need the spur of harsh treatment to get the most out of them. Humanizing influences have been at work, and with all the old courage, energy, quickness of decision, readiness of resource, and rapidity of action the seamen of to-day have a better education and a wider knowledge of

by food better suited to the human appetite and by a free tank.

It is necessary in describing the change which has taken place since steam and screws have replaced masts and yards to say something of what has brought about this change. If the old seamen of Nelson's day could come back to revisit the British Navy, nothing would astonish them more than the engine-room on board a modern man-of-war. Steam is not only used for propelling the ship, but for steering it, loading the guns, hoisting ammunition, lighting the ship by electricity, and for every conceivable purpose where mechanical power can replace manual labour. The consequence is that in the last half century an



THE STOKERS.

From a Photo. by W. Gregory & Co. By permission of "Navy & Army Illustrated."

entirely new department has been created in the Navy. The engineer and his officers and men take the place of those who worked their ships into action at Trafalgar.

The captain of to-day depends upon the

with the steadiest nerve in all parts of a ship, in the next naval war, but nowhere will such characteristics be so absolutely necessary as in the engine and boiler rooms. We may feel confident that the engine-room depart-

obedience to orders, although shut down with water-tight doors closed, and the chances of death by scalding steam added to the risks of being rammed or torpedoed. They will have none of the fun of the fight, or the delight and interest of watching the blows their ship is administering to the enemy. The engine-room staff will need to be made of the stuff of heroes. We shall want the best of British pluck, combined



From a Photo. by]

PLUMBERS REPAIRING TOP-GALLANT-YARD.

[W. Gregory & Co.

courage and endurance of those in the engine and boiler rooms to put his ship into the position of advantage, the possession or loss of which may win or lose an action. To the qualities of courage and endurance these men must add discipline and prompt

ment of the fleet will maintain the traditional superiority of British man-of-war's men, and the officers and men "behind the guns" will always gratefully and gracefully acknowledge this.

After the bombardment of Alexandria



BLACKSMITHS ON A MAN-O'-WAR.

From a Photo. by W. Gregory & Co. By permission of "Navy & Army Illustrated."

the ship's company of the *Condor* were fallen in on deck, and the executive branch gave three hearty cheers for the men "down below," who had done so much to silence Fort Marabout.

In the action fought by the *Safia* with the fort of Wad-el-habeshi it was the engineer and his artificers who saved the ship and helped to beat the enemy and to rescue Sir Charles Wilson's party. The action of Mr. Benbow in repairing the boiler under fire was only in naval annals regarded as an act of duty, but a deed commensurate with it on shore would have undoubtedly won the Victoria Cross. Mr. Benbow's handiwork not only saved Sir Charles Wilson's party, but, it is reported, saved the column at Metemneh.

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Some of the British youths who are fond of mechanical engineering, and intend to make it their profession, would do well to study the advantages of the British Navy as an opening. A man who enters the Navy as engine-room artificer, an easy task to any ordinary skilled mechanic, receives a chief



GUNNERS.

From a Photo. by W. Gregory & Co. By permission of "Navy & Army Illustrated."

petty officer's rank at once and pay at the rate of over £100 a year to commence with. He may easily rise to warrant rank, and men of education and ability will find in the Service a sure employment, with prospects of promotion and pension equal to or better than anything the shore can offer them.

In other departments the engine-room offers attractions, and many a fine young man might do worse than accept the 1s. 8d. a day rising to 2s. of a stoker who enters the Navy for continuous service. By qualifying for stoker, mechanic, and diver he can increase his pay by 3d., and 1d. a day respectively, in addition to 1d. a day extra for each good conduct badge he may have earned. He may rise through the grades of leading stoker, 1st and 2nd class, to chief stoker at 3s. a day, with progressive pay reaching a possible rate of 5s. a day.

If he prefers it he can join the Service in one or other of the following ratings, representing other branches and departments, whose respective rates of pay, on entry, are quoted against them:—

Cooper's crew	2s. 6d.	} a day.
Plumber's crew	1s. 8d.	
Blacksmith's crew	1s. 8d.	
Armourer's crew	2s. 4d.	
Third writer.....	2s. 0d.	
Sick berth attendant	1s. 4d.	

The highest rating obtainable by a third writer is that of chief writer, with pay of



From a Photo. by] — A CHIEF WRITER. [W. Gregory & Co.

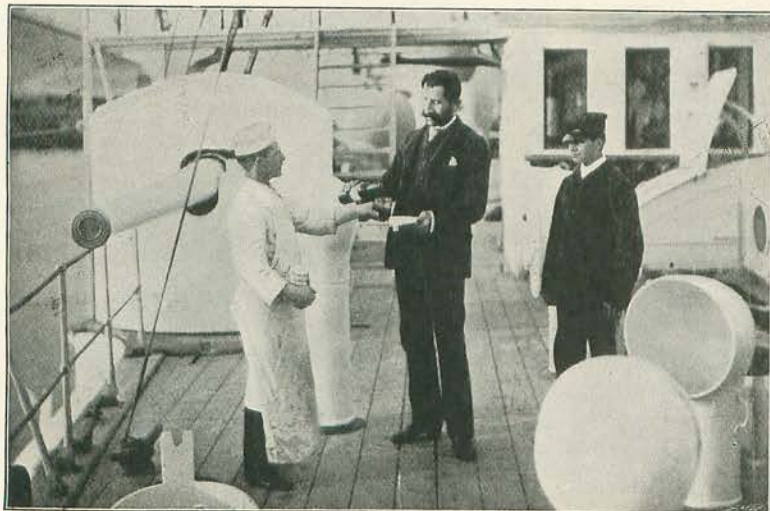
5s. a day, progressing to a possible 6s. a day.

A sick berth attendant has a chance of eventually attaining warrant rank as head wardmaster in one of the naval hospitals, with pay rising from 5s. 6d. to 9s. a day.

The pay of a private R.M.L.I. is 1s. 2d. a

day, to which he can add 1d. a day by proficiency in gunnery; and that of a gunner, R.M.A., is 1s. 5¼d. a day. Both branches of the Royal Marines are eligible to receive good conduct badge pay at 1d. a day for each badge worn, the greatest number of badges obtainable being six.

A man, after serving as petty officer in the Navy or as non-com-



From a Photo. by] — A MAN-O'-WAR STEWARD. [W. Gregory & Co.

missioned officer in the Marines, may, if he chooses and provided he is found properly qualified, join the ship's police, with pay commencing at 2s. 4d. a day and rising by length of service to a possible 6s. a day.

Again, a youth desiring to serve in the accountant department may join the Service as a ship's steward's boy at 7d. a day, whence in course of time he may rise to be ship's steward, the pay of which rating ranges from 3s. to 7s. a day according to length of service.

To briefly touch on another branch, that of domestics, good cooks may get as much as £100 or more a year, including private pay from their admirals or captains, and stewards £60 or more, in addition to their quarters and rations.

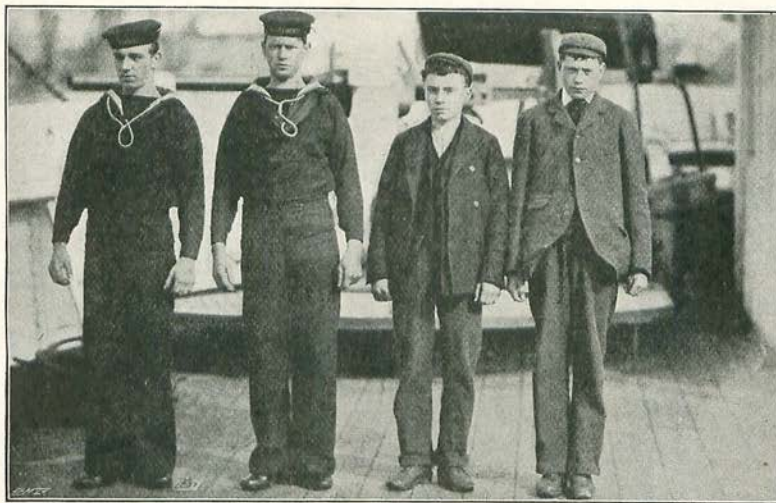
Men of all ratings (except as stated below) who complete a period of twenty-two years' continuous service from the age of eighteen get a pension varying from £15 to £45 a year, according to the ratings they hold and the length of time they have been petty officers.

Marines and domestics are granted pensions after twenty-one years' service from the ages of eighteen and twenty respectively. For marines they range from £12 to £54 a year, and for domestics from £15 to £31 a

year. These rates also depend on the rating held, and on extent of service as petty or non-commissioned officer.

After over forty years' service in the British Navy, and an intimate acquaintance with its little disadvantages, I can still find in it so many good points that they quite outweigh the drawbacks, and every year the Navy is being improved and made more attractive. In the new patriotic spirit of militarism which the nation is exhibiting it is to be hoped that the Senior Service will not be forgotten, and that the lads of the British Empire will be as ready in the future as in the past to sail under the flag which floated over Drake and Nelson, besides a host of other gallant seamen, who from the time when King Alfred created the British Navy down to the age of Queen Victoria have kept awake that pride of race which has been so worthily upheld by the mariners of our country.

In this short article it has not been possible to do more than briefly touch upon some of the ratings in the Service, and to emphasize only a few points little known to the British public, in the hope that they will appeal to the mothers of the Empire who hesitate to trust their sons to the fancied perils of a sea career.



RECRUITS, COMPARED WITH BOYS OF THREE MONTHS' TRAINING.
From a Photo. by W. Gregory & Co.