

The Boy's Manual of Seamanship & Gunnery



THE BOY'S MANUAL OF SEAMANSHIP AND GUNNERY Compiled for the use of the Training Ships of the Royal Navy

Preface

This manual has been written for the use of boys under training for Her Majesty's Navy. My principal object has been to explain everything simply and clearly, to enable him to pass with facility from one thing to another and prevent him becoming a 'backward boy.'

I wish to add here a few words by way of advice to the boys; I would impress upon a boy's mind that he has chosen one of the most honourable professions, that of defender of his country, one in whose hands very often its honour and standing with other nations is entrusted. He is received into the Navy at an early age, at great expense to the country, to be thoroughly trained. But all the training in the world will avail to nothing if good conduct is not added to good qualifications.

It will not take him long to distinguish between the good and the bad boys; then let him avoid the latter in every possible way. Boys of good character are allowed to land from the ship twice a week for a walk or to meet friends residing in the neighbourhood. My advice therefore is to prize this privilege without infringing upon it, as any deviation from the rules often leads a boy into loose habits, and the first step down the ladder of destruction is commenced.

A mean or cowardly boy will sometimes rather risk incurring the displeasure of his superiors by wilfully breaking the regulations laid down for his guidance, than stand the scorn and derision of the bad boys, who will in every way induce him to do wrong, and laugh at him for being afraid if he refuses. But the brave, honest boy who fears nothing but the displeasure of his Commanding Officer for direct disobedience of orders, his great aim is to go forth maintaining a good character.

When on shore avoid all intoxicating drinks and the use of tobacco in every shape. Never enter a public house. Allow no inducement to cause you to turn aside from the straight and narrow path you have marked out. Be cleanly in your habits; careful of your kit; always ready to obey orders.

If you commence life in a training ship with dirty habits, inattention to your drills and a disregard to good order when on shore, you will leave with an indifferent character. If you start badly you may be sure you will end your course badly; perhaps be dismissed from the service with disgrace, or discharged from your ship on paying off as an objectionable character, being ever after shunned by your old shipmates as a man unworthy of being known, thus becoming a burden to yourself and die at an early age, unregretted and uncared for.

Staff-Commander C. Burney, R.N., F.R.G.S
Royal Hospital Schools, Greenwich April 1871

**QD34: Originally appeared In the "Quarterdeck" magazine
Ref: 2009 Issue 2 (Summer) page 7**