

Act I

305 CHORUS. I cleaned the windows and I swept the floor,
SIR J. And I polished up the handle of the big front door.
He polished up the handle of the big front door.
SIR J. I polished up that handle so carefuller
That now I am the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!
CHORUS. He polished, etc.

310 SIR J. As office boy I made such a mark
That they gave me the post of a junior clerk.
I served the writs with a smile so bland,
And I copied all the letters in a big round hand –
CHORUS. He copied all the letters in a big round hand –
SIR J. I copied all the letters in a hand so free,
315 That now I am the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!
CHORUS. He copied, etc.

SIR J. In serving writs I made such a name
That an articulated clerk I soon became;
I wore clean collars and a brand new suit
320 For the pass examination at the Institute.
CHORUS. For the pass examination at the Institute.
SIR J. That pass examination did so well for me,
That now I am the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!
CHORUS. That pass examination, etc.

325 SIR J. Of legal knowledge I acquired such a grip
That they took me into the partnership.
And that junior partnership, I ween,
Was the only ship that I ever had seen.
CHORUS. Was the only ship that he ever had seen.
330 SIR J. But that kind of ship so suited me,
That now I am the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!
CHORUS. But that kind of ship, etc.

SIR J. I grew so rich that I was sent
By a pocket borough into Parliament.
335 I always voted at my party's call,
And I never thought of thinking for myself at all.
CHORUS. He never thought of thinking for himself at all.
SIR J. I thought so little, they rewarded me
By making me the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!
340 CHORUS. He thought so little, etc.

SIR J. Now, landsmen all, whoever you may be,
If you want to rise to the top of the tree,
If your soul isn't fettered to an office stool,
345 CHORUS. Be careful to be guided by this golden rule –
SIR J. Be careful to be guided by this golden rule.
Stick close to your desks and never go to sea,
And you all may be rulers of the Queen's Navee!
CHORUS. Stick close to your desks, etc.

350 SIR JOSEPH. You've a remarkably fine crew, Captain Corcoran.
CAPT. It is a fine crew, Sir Joseph.
SIR JOSEPH (*examining a very small midshipman*). A British sailor is a splendid
fellow, Captain Corcoran.
CAPT. A splendid fellow indeed, Sir Joseph.
SIR JOSEPH. I hope you treat your crew kindly, Captain Corcoran.
355 CAPT. Indeed I hope so, Sir Joseph.

H.M.S. Pinafore

SIR JOSEPH. Never forget that they are the bulwarks of England's greatness,
Captain Corcoran.

CAPT. So I have always considered them, Sir Joseph.

SIR JOSEPH. No bullying, I trust – no strong language of any kind, eh?

360 CAPT. Oh, never, Sir Joseph.

SIR JOSEPH. What, *never*?

CAPT. Well, hardly ever, Sir Joseph. They are an excellent crew, and do their work thoroughly without it.

SIR JOSEPH. Don't patronise them, sir – pray, don't patronise them.

365 CAPT. Certainly not, Sir Joseph.

SIR JOSEPH. That you are their captain is an accident of birth. I cannot permit these noble fellows to be patronized because an accident of birth has placed you above them and them below you.

CAPT. I am the last person to insult a British sailor, Sir Joseph.

370 SIR JOSEPH. You are the last person who did, Captain Corcoran. Desire that splendid seaman to step forward.

(DICK *comes forward*.)

SIR JOSEPH. No, no, the other splendid seaman.

CAPT. Ralph Rackstraw, three paces to the front – march!

375 SIR JOSEPH (*sternly*). If what?

CAPT. I beg your pardon – I don't think I understand you.

SIR JOSEPH. If you *please*.

CAPT. Oh, yes, of course. If you please. (RALPH *steps forward*.)

SIR JOSEPH. You're a remarkably fine fellow.

380 RALPH. Yes, your honour.

SIR JOSEPH. And a first-rate seaman, I'll be bound.

RALPH. There's not a smarter topman in the Navy, your honour, though I say it who shouldn't.

385 SIR JOSEPH. Not at all. Proper self-respect, nothing more. Can you dance a hornpipe?

RALPH. No, your honour.

SIR JOSEPH. That's a pity: all sailors should dance hornpipes. I will teach you one this evening, after dinner. Now tell me – don't be afraid – how does your captain treat you, eh?

390 RALPH. A better captain don't walk the deck, your honour.

ALL. Aye; Aye!

SIR JOSEPH. Good. I like to hear you speak well of your commanding officer; I daresay he don't deserve it, but still it does you credit. Can you sing?

RALPH. I can hum a little, your honour.

395 SIR JOSEPH. Then hum this at your leisure. (*Giving him MS. music*.) It is a song that I have composed for the use of the Royal Navy. It is designed to encourage independence of thought and action in the lower branches of the service, and to teach the principle that a British sailor is any man's equal, excepting mine. Now, Captain Corcoran, a word with you in your cabin, on a tender and sentimental subject.

400 CAPT. Aye, aye, Sir Joseph. (*Crossing*.) Boatswain, in commemoration of this joyous occasion, see that extra grog is served out to the ship's company at seven bells.

BOAT. Beg pardon. If what, your honour?

CAPT. If what? I don't think I understand you.

BOAT. If you *please*, your honour.

405 CAPT. What!

SIR JOSEPH. The gentleman is quite right. If you *please*.

CAPT. (*stamping his foot impatiently*). If you *please*!

[*Exit*.]

SIR JOSEPH. For I hold that on the seas

The expression, "if you please",

410 A particularly gentlemanly tone implants.