

A work has been transmitted to us by the publishers which we think cannot be too soon recommended to the notice of naval officers, on account of its professional utility, and to the public in general for the curious and interesting information it affords respecting the various branches of maritime economy, the details of discipline, the interior arrangements, and the classification and distribution of labours and duties whereby order and regularity are maintained in the navy, amidst the greatest difficulties and dangers—in a word, on all the springs and influences, moral and physical, which contribute to the efficient working of that extraordinary machine a ship of war. We allude to a book in two volumes, entitled *The Naval Service, or Officers' Manual, for every Grade employed in His Majesty's Ships*. By Captain W. N. Glascock, R.N. Few, except those who have paid particular attention to the subject, are aware of the amount of scientific acquirement, and of the great variety of knowledge, theoretical and practical, which a naval officer who hopes to distinguish himself in his profession ought to possess. The perusal of these volumes will serve to remove much prejudice with respect to the qualifications requisite for maritime command, and to prove the advantage of subjecting the young aspirant to a judicious course of preliminary education. The author describes the conduct and behaviour expected from officers of every rank. He commences with the volunteer novice, and proceeds onward through every gradation of the service to the highest, and his explanations of duties attached to the respective situations are often illustrated by anecdotes at once entertaining and instructive. It is truly remarkable that this is the first manual for the use of naval officers which has appeared in the English language. Such a work was much wanted, and we are glad to see the deficiency so well supplied. The following heads of chapters will give some idea of the extent and the variety of the subjects on which the author treats:—Volunteer, Midshipman, Mates, Captain's Clerk, Assistant-Surgeon, Carpenter, Boatswain, Gunner, Purser, Naval Jurisprudence, Surgeon, Master, Officers of the Watch, Flag-Lieutenant, First Lieutenant, Captain, Naval Battles.

We shall now add a few extracts:—

“PUTTING FIRST TO SEA.

“SEA-SICKNESS.—The best specific that can be offered for this unmanly malady is to persevere in a spirited determination to conquer it. Lying in bed, or lounging below, will be of no avail; on the contrary, such practices tend only to prolong suffering and debilitate the body. However ‘sick,’ determine to keep the deck, inhale the open and scabred breeze, and, though an awkward stagger be discernible in the step, persevere in the ‘walk’ fore-and-aft. Sea-legs will imperceptibly come, and sea-sickness gradually subside.

“GOING ALOFT.—As soon as ‘sea-legs are found,’ and sea-sickness is fairly overcome, the young gentleman should habituate himself in going aloft; but, in ascending the shrouds, caution is emphatically directed against trusting too much to the rattlings of the rigging (the steps of the ladder). The shroud, and not the rattling, should be grasped by the hand. Should the seizing of the rattling go, or the rope be rotten, the body may lose its balance, and, in all probability, a promising life be lost to His Majesty’s service.

“OATHS AND IMPRECATIONS.

“The vulgar practice of swearing, of uttering profane imprecations and opprobrious epithets in the exercise of official duties, warrants a suspicion that he who indulges in them feels it necessary to cloak by bravado his own insufficiency. ‘Show me a confirmed and habitual swearer,’ said a celebrated admiral, ‘and I’ll show you a bad officer.’

“Seamen soon become callous to repeated imprecations: these, indeed, strike the ear, but produce no effect on the mind. Were it only in consideration of the mere idleness of the habit (to say nothing of the wretchedness of the taste), it would be well to discontinue the practice. How frequently have such words been said aside, ‘Never mind him,—he’s all froth and fire,—it’s not in his nature to speak to a man like a man.’

“MARKING THE LOG-BOARD.

“It would be difficult to name any official record or public document which is more constantly called for, or more frequently appealed to in disputed points, than the log-book of a vessel-of-war. Yet, singular as the assertion may seem (though, indeed, anomalies have long appeared to flourish afloat), no public register is so faulty in its notation of time, so careless of construction, or so truly unimportant in ‘remark,’ as those which are cautiously treasured in the archives of Somerset-house. †

“GUNNER.

“Amongst the many anomalies which have long ‘held their own’ in His Majesty’s service, none appear to carry with it more of professional reproach than that of conferring on an individual a calling; which, in his own ears, must always sound like a libel. For what possibly can be more incongruous than to expect that a man totally unacquainted with the properties and power of powder, devoid of the slightest knowledge and practice of projectiles, and untrained in the intricacies relating to the elevation of cannon, can be competent to discharge, with any degree of efficiency, the duties delegated to the naval gunner?

“It is true that, previously to obtaining his warrant, he is compelled to pass an examination, to undergo an ordeal (anything but fiery), before a tribunal officially convened, and consisting of a captain, a master, and three gunners. The president of this conclave probably directs the master to examine the candidate in seamanship. The master proceeds, and finds him perfectly at home at bending a buoy-rope, splicing a cable, fitting mast-head slings, or turning-in a dead-eye; and concludes his part of this important examination with a few interrogations, touching ‘relieving’ tackles, the lead, the marks and deeps of the line.