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“PROMOTION FROM THE RANKS.”

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**M**R. ARCHIBALD HURD, the well-known naval author and critic who has recently produced more than one interesting and valuable book, dealing with up-to-date naval subjects, writes to the Editor as follows in response to an invitation to contribute an article to this *Journal* on the lines of those recently published from the pens of Sir William Laird-Clowes and Mr. Fred. T. Jane.

“ I always feel chary of entering upon the discussion of such questions formally, but not because you have not my sympathy and advocacy for what it is worth. If you can get the pens of officers who know the service to the last man, the opinion of civilians, except such as they may express incidentally from time to time, count for little. When you have Admiral Sir Edmund Fremantle on your side and the good wishes of Lord Charles Beresford, and many others who know the peculiar conditions of the service, the fact that you have sympathisers among civilians, is not of great importance except so far as, in ordinary channels of information, they may be able to educate public opinion.

“ This I feel—that of all sailors in the world’s navies, the British inspire one most with their capacity, and in view of the advance of pay ashore and the prospects which lie before every man ashore with hands to work and head to think, the Admiralty will be compelled to institute reforms if the present standard is to be maintained. The naval life is becoming increasingly serious and purposeful. It calls for systematic thought and training on the part of all who adopt it, and the efforts of men of

“ the lower deck to rise to the necessities of the  
“ situation deserve surely more ample recognition. A  
“ working man in civilian life has the opportunity of  
“ amassing wealth and rising to a position of honour.  
“ Hundreds have done so. A man of similar powers  
“ and industry who serves the King afloat is cramped.  
“ Whatever his intellectual equipment, however  
“ earnestly he may apply himself to his duties he can  
“ never rise above the class from which he sprang.  
“ This is the striking difference between the civilian  
“ and the service man. In a highly disciplined force  
“ with its splendid traditions, it is well that social  
“ distinctions should not be ruthlessly broken down.  
“ This however is no argument against a broader  
“ outlook and a higher ambition being placed before  
“ every man of the lower deck who strives to do his  
“ duty. A selection of Chief Warrant Officers, before  
“ they get too advanced in years, could surely be pro-  
“ moted to hon. lieutenant rank, and it would not be  
“ difficult to find them congenial and useful employ-  
“ ment in the Ordnance Depôts, in minor commands,  
“ and elsewhere under circumstances where social  
“ distinctions would not operate against their comfort.”

The advice given by Mr. Hurd is sound, and we may mention that we already have, and next month we shall publish, an article on “Promotion from the Ranks,” specially written for this *Journal* by no less an authority than Admiral Sir John O. Hopkins, G.C.B.; expressing his own opinion on this important question. We shall all feel deeply grateful to Sir John for the trouble he has taken; for the personal opinions of such gallant and experienced officers as Admiral Hopkins very rightly carry great weight. We hope, later on, to be able to obtain the opinions of other officers of equal experience, for the benefit and guidance of our readers. Such opinions even though adverse are always helpful, as they tell us exactly what we want to know, viz., the difficulties which our seniors see in the way of the realization of our ambitions and the attainment of our aspirations. The Chiefs and Warrant Officers, as a body, cannot and do not expect all their seniors to see eye to eye with themselves. There is their point of view and there is ours; and if there is a middle way which can be found, or if the difficulties which our superiors see can be removed, we are quite sure no one will be more pleased than they; for we have every reason to know and believe that the vast majority of the senior naval officers are our very good friends and well wishers, and a goodly number of

them willing to show it.

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THE WHOLE OF OUR RANK must have been thrilled when they read in the papers that Rear-Admiral B. S. C. Martin had received the K.B.E. for distinguished service in the Far East during the war. He joined the Royal Navy from Greenwich School, rose to Flag rank and has now been knighted. It will be remembered that he commanded H.M.S. Dorsetshire during the war, and was despatched to deliver the death blow to the "Bismark" which he sank with torpedoes. Later he became Flag Officer of Force W, that amphibious formation which was to invade Malaya. As a rank we all shine in the reflected glory of his progress.

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Admiral Martin was a lower decker.