

SIR,—Will you give me a little space for a few comments on recent correspondence in the *Journal*. First, I congratulate you, Sir, in particular, and “Ours” in general, upon the high tone of the many letters you have published, as well as the proof of an increasing interest in the work of the Association which such a mass of correspondence would seem to imply. To come to particulars, in comparing the letters on education, I would prefer to go on the lines advocated in the first paragraph of “Iota’s” letter, quoted by “Growler,” and endeavour to improve the standard of *General* as distinct from *Special* education, for Warrant Officers and candidates. Depend upon it, Sir, if we get better general education, our technical knowledge will not suffer, neither will our class interests, and so, I hope that if these classes which Mr. Edbrook so ably advocates are established, they will not be confined to technical subjects, but that some of the instruction given therein will be of a nature calculated to broaden the minds of the recipients, and to remove the effects of the disadvantages under which many of us have laboured from our youth up.

To turn to a different subject, Mr. J. R. May seems to have missed the point of Mr. Bennett’s letter. The latter’s contention is, that these donations are of the nature of an advertisement for the class, and a proof that we do not selfishly keep our eyes fixed upon our own wants, but wish to take a part—a small part—in alleviating the distress of the widow and the orphan; and it is the opinion of many that money so spent is not for the benefit of local members or branches, but is as truly spent on real progress work as any money ever paid from our funds. W. BACON.

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“THE GREAT SILENT NAVY.”

MR. ARNOLD WHITE, has done both the Nation and the Navy good service in his endeavour to call attention in the press to “the Great Silent Navy,” which is practically without representatives in Parliament from its own ranks. It is certainly without up-to-date authorities from this source. We of the Chief and Warrant rank have much to be thankful for in the fact that naval constituencies are represented by such able civilians as Messrs. Hudson, E. Kearley, and E. J. C. Mortou for Devonport, and Messrs. Majendie and Lucas for Portsmouth; to say nothing of the members for Chatham, Faversham and others who could be mentioned. These gentlemen have taken immense pains and showed no end of patience in mastering naval details generally; and specially to make themselves familiar with the disabilities under which their naval constituents labour. And having learnt them and assured themselves of their justice, they have persistently and consistently advocated their removal on every possible occasion in the House of Commons. It is doubtful, indeed, if any men outside the ranks of the Navy itself could have done more; while it is equally certain that many naval men could not have done so much, by reason of the feeling which oftentimes exists in the minds of members of the House that whenever service men speak of service matters, the prejudice that “there is nothing like leather” enters the civilian mind. Of course such naval advocates and men of authority as Lord Charles Beresford, Admiral Field, Captain Young and others of like ability, do not excite this feeling. They usually had the ear of the House and carried the Members of the Commons and the country with them.

Unhappily neither of these distinguished officers now have a seat in Parliament; although we may well hope to see Lord Charles back in his seat at no very

distant date, if persistent rumour to that effect should turn out to be correct. Every man on or from the lower deck would hail such an event with the keenest satisfaction, for it is no reflection on the others to say that he is probably the warmest and most earnest advocate the rank and file have ever had within the walls of St. Stephen, for the reason that his popularity and great authority carries weight with every subject which he espouses. In saying this we do not forget that we also have scores of earnest and sincere helpers among the senior naval officers of the fleet, who help us as effectually as if they advocated our cause at Westminster. To them we owe the gratitude which we all so abundantly feel. But if we put all these personal and less important matters on one side and look at naval representation in Parliament from the broader view of national and imperial interest, there is much room for regret that naval men are so seldom found giving their advice and counsel on naval matters in our legislature. We have naval men among our peers who have a seat in the House of Lords; but these are unable to instruct the nation on naval matters as freely as if they had seats in our more popular assembly. It is when naval votes in the Commons are being discussed that the most effective criticism can be uttered on naval affairs; and when the details that make for naval efficiency can be most appropriately and effectively overhauled by men familiar with weaknesses in our naval forces. Both men and material can then be dealt with, and men familiar with both can point out to their countrymen how and where improvements can be made in the first line of the Empire's defence. That such criticism is efficacious and improving is admitted on all sides; and that it is welcomed as it should be by the Government and the Admiralty, Admiral Sir John Hopkins, a late Sea Lord has more than once pointed out; for he has told us that their Lordships rely on and look for outside help and criticism to assist them in thoroughly carrying out the responsible duties which rests on their shoulders.

Yet it is one thing to deplore the absence of naval men in the House of Commons and quite another to find a means of obtaining them. Naval men with Parliamentary aptitude are not as thick as fallen leaves in Autumn. The training of a sea life is not such that perfects men for Parliamentary duties. The ways of a sailor are generally brusque and direct. The ways of Parliament are, as a rule, proverbially slow and cumbersome in these days; and apt to be a little trying for men whose one object has always

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WHENEVER there is an opportunity for Lord *Helpful* Charles Beresford to display his practical sympathy *Help.* for any one on or from the lower deck, he never misses the chance of doing so. The latest instance of this is as happy as all the rest have been, and describes far better than words what he really thinks of his humble shipmates. Quite recently four petty officers were promoted to the rank of signal boatswains, and his Lordship, ever ready to show his appreciation of deserving men, invited them to meet the rest of their colleagues of the fleet at a dinner which he gave to all the Warrant Officers in the signal rank in the Mediterranean fleet, which were accessible to his flagship. At least so reports one of our Portsmouth contemporaries, and the act is so characteristic of Lord Charles that we can readily accept it as the truth. Signal boatswains are, of course, brought into close touch with flag officers, and are peculiarly their particular servants in a way which does not pertain to the rest of us; and so Admirals like Lord Charles, about to leave the squadrons in which they have flown their flag for a long period, might well feel inclined to mark their appreciation of the work of these officers of their staff. It is such kindly and thoughtful acts, which are becoming more frequent than they used to be, which will tend more and more to cement in closer bonds all ranks and classes of the British Navy. When the Admiral shows his appreciation of the Petty and Warrant Officers in this way, one may be sure he is likely to be repaid by full and overflowing zeal and loyalty on the part of those for whom his appreciation is thus expressed. It would be hard to increase his Lordship's popularity in the Navy, but if that is to be done this will surely be the way to do it; for to welcome four petty officers into the warrant rank in a function of this sort, arranged by a flag officer, is to give them the best possible start and to make them more fully

realise their new position, its possibilities and its responsibilities. Their officers' uniform has a more real meaning and a greater fascination for them, and the difference between the lower deck mess table and the table in an Admiral's cabin brings home to them a sense of the new kind of life they have started ; puts up fresh ideals and starts them on new lines of thought. We do not all get so good and encouraging a start, but it would be all the better if we did ; and Lord Charles Beresford deserves our deep gratitude for the example he has set in the matter. His Lordship is once more home among us and we hope shortly to see him in Parliament. We thank him for past services, and once again appeal for his help in all things in which he thinks the Chief and Warrant Officers deserve it.

At last the Admiralty have decided that Warrant Officers, like the rest of the officers of H.M.'s fleet, shall be available for pensions for wounds while on the active service list. Hitherto a man in our rank who received a wound during his period of active service obtained no sort of compensation until he retired. There has been only one exception to this during recent years, and that one of so deserving a character that it was impossible to pass it over without some recognition to the officer who was the sufferer. This is only, therefore, putting the Warrant Officers in line with other officers in this matter; and although a concession which will be very gratefully received by our class it is nevertheless only belated justice. But we are still behind and we would most respectfully remind the authorities that the children of deceased Warrant Officers are now the only children of either officer or man in the Navy who do not get some assistance from the State when their fathers are killed in action or die of wounds or disease contracted in the service of the State. Quite recently the children of the men who are killed in action or die of wounds have been provided for, and are now very rightfully helped by the State for whom their fathers laid down their lives. Why, therefore, the children of the Warrant Officers should alone remain in an anomalous position of not having any claim on the Treasury is for the authorities who control the public purse strings to explain and justify. We are of opinion that it can neither be explained or justified; and we, consequently, press it on the attention of their Lordships of the Admiralty, feeling sure they will give the subject that consideration and attention which it deserves. One by one these anomalies of centuries are being tackled and wiped out; and it is wondered why disabilities of this sort have been allowed to exist so long. Especially such disabilities as the one we are discussing for it cannot clash, or be in conflict, with the interest of any other class of naval officers or their relatives. We do not ask the country to give all those who now receive rightful aid less, we only ask that our dependents may be given more, when officers of our class die in the service of their country. We are sure, therefore, of the sympathy of every other officer in the Navy, in bringing these anomalies to the front and in seeking their removal. It is a matter which has now become more urgent on account of the recent provision of the State for the widows and children of men who die in the service of the State; and it must have our earnest attention until it is removed. While thanking, therefore, the authorities for removing one anomaly and giving W.O.'s on the active list the right to receive a pension for wounds; we would also most respectfully and earnestly request them to look into this question of compassionate allowances for our children, and legislate for them by an Order in Council.



THANKFUL AND HOPEFUL.

THE men of the rank and file of the Navy, and we Chiefs and Warrant Officers who have sprung from them, have to be thankful for such small mercies in the way of promotion, and recognition for war or meritorious service, that we have once more to offer our thanks to the Admiralty for the promotion of Mr. Lyne, gunner, to the rank of Lieutenant, and the decoration of Mr. Mascull, gunner, with the Order of the Conspicuous Service Cross. These were the only two rankers of either of the fighting services of the Empire who found a place in the first Coronation Honours' List; and so we suppose that we ought to be grateful that they both fell to men from the ranks of the Navy, considering there were something like half a million of men in the rank and file at that time serving in the fighting forces of the country. We hope, however, we shall not be considered unreasonable if we declare that, in our opinion, such a small recognition to so large and gallant a body of men is little short of a national misfortune, even if it does not approach a national scandal.

We most heartily congratulate these two officers on their well-merited reward, on behalf not only of the Chiefs and W.O.'s, but also on behalf of the whole rank and file of the Navy. We are indeed making haste slowly in these matters; but still we are forging ahead, and the present may be a fit time to look back and take note of our progress during the last 15 years, as compared with the three quarters of a century which preceded it. From about 1820 to the first jubilee of our late beloved Queen, in 1887, there was not, so far as we are aware, one single promotion from men of the lower deck to a Lieutenancy in the Navy. That is a matter of 67 years. Our modern starting point, then, is the year 1887 when, mainly by the influence of Lord Charles Beresford, Chief Boatswain Webber and Gunner Cathie were promoted to Lieutenant rank, for services in different parts of the Soudan. This resuscitation of a rusty rule was brought about by the action of some young Warrant Officers of that time, and that action has since grown into a steady effort on our part to remove certain disabilities under which we still suffer—although some, we allow, have been removed. These two promotions from the lower deck to the wardroom—passing through the Chief and Warrant rank lasted until 1901 when Gunner Sims was promoted to Lieutenant rank for services at Ladysmith. And now we have Gunner Lyne, also, promoted to a Lieutenancy for services in China. Thus during a

period of steady pressure on the authorities, that totals about 15 years, we have secured four Lieutenants' commissions for men whose services during the previous 67 years would have been entirely ignored or recognised only by a "letter of thanks" or "noted at the Admiralty." But, in addition to this, during those 67 years there was not only stagnation but in some ways actual decay; as is the rule with such things. If there be not always a vigorous effort in going forward in these days of *push*, then some one climbs over our heads and we actually go back. The concessions of 1896 were the result of a fresh and more vigorous means of bringing our disabilities under the cognisance of the proper authorities, than had heretofore been practised. New times had brought new men and new methods, who had anticipated the advice of Lord Salisbury, when he said that the only way of getting grievances redressed, nowadays, was to make a noise about them.

In this way all decay was arrested, and our former state of semi-stagnation began to give way to steady progress. The spasmodic efforts of the older men who had already made some progress in a previous generation, and had fought with the weapons of their times, and the opportunities of their surroundings and circumstances, in the most praiseworthy way, was modernised and systematised, and disabilities were steadily pressed upon official and public notice on any and every occasion. The result of their efforts are worth reviewing, as they came so gradually, almost imperceptibly, that unless brought under review all together the value of the aggregate gain may be easily overlooked. There was first the promotion of a Chief and a Warrant Officer to Lieutenant rank, which had not taken place for about 70 years; and there was the granting of Lieutenant rank on retirement after three years' service as Chief, with the advantages that thus accrued to themselves, socially, and to their families. Afterwards there came the abolition of a reduced rate of pay when not holding what was called an "Admiralty appointment," *i.e.*, while officers were serving at instructional schools or in ships in the reserves. This was a grievous ill of the old times. Concessions also brought half store allowance to those very officers in ships, where not only were they on reduced pay, as we have observed, and yet in charge of stores, exactly as now when half store allowance has been granted. This is a difference of pay, while on home service, the value of which can be easily overlooked by those who never had to bear the hardships of the old conditions, when home service, in such appointments, were things to be avoided; and while compensation and lodging allowance while serving in ships in the dockyard were luxuries practically unknown. These advantages did not come alone, store allowances, as well as our pay, were also increased and instead of the "nimble tanner" for all sorts and conditions of seniorities and sets of stores, it was made 6d., 8d., 10d. and 1s; respectively. The increase of pay was not so large as it might have been, and was rather one of peace, similar to that doled out to gardeners or coachmen, than one of shillings or pounds, such as would have more befitted officers of our position and responsibilities, some of whom had served