

OLD TIME MIDDIES

They Were Tots of Schoolboys,
Some Not in Their Teens.

TOO YOUNG TO WEAR SWORDS

So the Midgets Were Armed With Dirk
Knives Instead—They Were Fighters,
Though, Farragut and Porter Being
in Battles at the Age of Twelve.

Something more than a hundred years ago the midshipman was, indeed, the "midskipmite" that he was popularly called, for he was but a mite of a lad, usually receiving his appointment before he reached his teens. Admirals Farragut and Porter were midshipmen, afloat and in pitched battles, at twelve years of age, and Goldsborough was appointed when only seven years old. Nowadays, however, the midshipman is quite a different person. He cannot enter the Naval academy under fifteen and is therefore when on a regular cruising ship after completing his four years' academic course usually a well developed man, physically mature and athletic and with a trained mind. He is far better equipped mentally than the lieutenants and many of the captains of even seventy years ago.

The old time middies were mere schoolboys. All the warships of any size carried in their regular complements a schoolmaster, whose duty it was to give the lads as liberal an education as possible in the odd periods between strictly professional duties. This rating of schoolmaster was abolished, in fact, only about twenty years ago, but after the establishment of the Naval academy, in 1841, these officials devoted their energies to the sailor apprentices only, the enlisted boys of the Forecastle. Even these now obtain their education on shore.

There is a tradition that the three brass buttons the midshipman wears on the sleeve of his full dress coat during his four years at Annapolis originated a century or more ago, when their presence was needed to discourage the youngsters from brushing their noses with their sleeves. This is probably a base slander, modern research indicating that the buttons are relics of the days when there was a cuff flap on the sleeve.

At all events the extreme youth of the midshipmite used to be his most conspicuous characteristic. Instead of the full sized regulation officer's sword that he now carries, he wore a little straight bladed dirk about a foot long. He was to a large extent a messenger for carrying orders about the ship, but he also took charge of boats and commanded men despite his youth. He was frequently placed in charge of a

prize captured in war, taking her into port, and not infrequently suppressing mutinies among the prisoners on board. Farragut was a prize master at twelve and got his prize safely in.

The title "midshipman" is an ancient one. He is above the seamen and the petty officers forward and below the commissioned officers in the wardroom aft; hence "midshipman." There was formerly a higher grade called passed midshipman, but this was abolished before the war between the states. Then the grade was restored, but called midshipman, the former midshipman being designated as a cadet midshipman. In 1882 the title of the latter was changed to naval cadet, which it still remains, and the midshipmen were merged with the ensigns. Accordingly the time honored title of midshipman no longer exists officially in the United States navy.

While officially a naval cadet, that young officer is still regarded and often referred to verbally as a midshipman, for he is the same creature as of old as far as his duties go. But by the side of his earlier prototype the twentieth century "middy" is a savant. Trigonometry was about as high up in mathematics as the old liner ever went. The twentieth century lad goes far beyond. He goes through analytical geometry of three dimensions, differential and integral calculus, applied mechanics.

Gunnery a hundred years ago was little more than loading, aiming and firing at short ranges. It now involves metallurgy, theory of the combustion of powder gases, stress and strain, mechanical engineering, manufacture and preservation of complex explosives and other abstruse subjects, in all of which the midshipman of the present day must be proficient.

Midshipmen were conspicuous in all our early wars, notably those with the Barbary States, with the West Indian pirates and with the British in 1812. They were equally conspicuous during our conflicts with the Spanish and Filipinos. Midshipmen, naval cadets, had charge of the extremely hazardous picket duty in the Santiago blockade, close under the Spanish batteries and often under musketry fire from shore. Cadet Powell ran his open launch right into the harbor of Santiago after the Merrimac, remained all night under the menacing guns of the inner batteries and steamed out again under their fire in the morning.—New York Press.

Blood and Fire.
A French editor, anxious for sensations, came into his office and asked his deputy what had happened. "Nothing," he was told, "except that a man's nose had been bleeding in the Place de la Concorde and a chimney is on fire in Montmartre." "Enough," said the other and wrote the placard "Blood and Fire in Paris!"

HISTORIC FIRST NIGHTS.

Red Letter Events in the Dramatic
History of France.

Perhaps the most striking events in the artistic history of France have been the first performances of some of the great French plays. In a few cases also these occasions have marked the beginning of new epochs in the social history of the country, so close is the connection between the social development of the people and its expression on the stage. Unless I am mistaken, there have been but six unforgettable first nights since theaters were established in Paris.

The first occurred in 1637, when Corneille's "Cid" took the capital by storm. Forty years later Racine's "Andromache" created a similar sensation. On the eve of the revolution, in 1784, Beaumarchais' "Marriage of Figaro" was received with such delirious enthusiasm that three people were stifled in the rush for seats. In 1830 Victor Hugo, in spite of the determined opposition of a large body of reactionaries, set all Paris in an uproar with his "Hernani."

These names should be borne in mind: Corneille, Racine, Beaumarchais and Victor Hugo. Three of them at least have no superiors in the history of French literature. Each has one amazing dramatic triumph to his credit. The other two of the six great first nights were the 25th of December, 1807, and the 7th of February, 1910. The occasions were respectively the performances of "Cyrano de Bergerac" and "Chanteclair," both by Edmond Rostand.—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

PICTURESQUE MOORS.

They Range in Color From Black to
Caucasian Fairness.

Imagine a thin, tall, bearded, clean cut individual, black hair and eyes, his complexion ranging in color from that of the negro to Caucasian fairness, clothed in richly embroidered undergarments, over which gracefully fall the folds of a finely woven hark or jellaba, his stockings feet shoved into yellow slippers, on his shaved head a red fez, about which is wound a spotless white turban—and you have a type of the town Moroccan—the Moor.

The coarse brown jellaba of camel's or goat's hair, sometimes handed down through several generations; occasionally sandals and a small, tight fitting woolen cap make up the costume of the countryman, although one finds him oftener barefoot and bare-headed, head shaved, save for the little cue which characterizes the Herber and Kabyle, who believe that at the last day this will be used as a sort of handle with which they will be hoisted up to heaven.

He is often a nomadic trader and arranges his journey so as to be at the town on certain market days, and at those times one may see these men, with their goods on heavy draft camels or overloaded donkeys, steadily trodding their way over the rough caravan trails. They earn their bare existence, indeed, which may be swept away in a moment by mountain brigands or the town robbers, who often sit in high places.—Charles W. Furlong in Outing Magazine.

Catching Wild Ducks in England.

A novel method of capturing wild ducks is used in England. On small lakes where the ducks are apt to stop for a short time a few tame ducks are kept as decoys, and a well trained dog and some wire netting do the rest. The dog is trained to act like a fox, and the wild ducks congregate in large numbers to frighten it away from a screen over which it runs back and forth. The ducks keep up a constant quacking, and the dog retreats, being pursued until the trapped fowl are caught in the network, with a portion dropped over the opening to prevent their escape. At certain seasons of the year thousands of wild ducks frequent the fen districts, and these traps have been used very successfully to provide game for some of the large preserves.—Harper's.

Contrary to Fact.

The phrenologist was examining the bumps on Sambo's head.

"Curiosity and acquisitiveness abnormally large."

Sambo rolled his eyeballs and showed two rows of white ivory.

"Inflattiveness, causality and conscientiousness small, which with your weak mouth indicates—"

"Don't you be so shu' 'bout me habbin' a weak mouf. I kin crack nuts in ma teef."—Satire.

A Pardonable Paradox.

"That young son-in-law of mine," said Mr. Cumrox, "says I'm unreasonable. And maybe he's right."

"What's the trouble?"

"Before their marriage I objected to his attentions to my daughter. Now I'm objecting to his inattention."—Washington Star.

Not a Monotonous Life.

Mrs. Hoyle—Don't you find married life monotonous? Mrs. Doyle—Not a bit of it. My husband is a most original man, and I am always looking forward to see what kind of a lie he will tell when he comes home at night.—New York Press.

Hurry and cunning are the two apprentices of dispatch and skill, but neither of them ever learns his masters' trade.—Colton.

HE WAS CONSERVATIVE.

The Old Man Bitterly Opposed New
Fangled Methods.

In Pennsylvania not many years ago dwelt the descendants of an ancient German settler. The farm had descended for generations from father to son, and the original customs had been faithfully adhered to. But a youth was born to the family who had imbibed some of the modern racial ideas and was likely to come into conflict with his father's stolid conservatism.

One day Johannes was told to saddle the horse and take the grist to the mill. It had been the practice from time immemorial to place the grist in one end of the bag and a large stone in the other end to balance it, and so throw it across the horse's back. But Johannes on the present occasion managed to get the grist divided between the two ends of the bag, so that there was no end of the stone.

"Oh, daddy, come and see! There ain't no use for the stone."

The old gentleman calmly surveyed the device, and with a severely reproachful aspect remarked to his exulting son:

"Johannes, your fader, your grandfader and your great-grandfader all went to de mill wid de stone in one end of de bag und de grist in de odder. Und you, a mere boy, sets yourself up to know more as dey do. Yust put dat stone in de bag and never lets me hear no more of such foolishness as dat."—Life.

A Doctor of Dancing.

In France during the reign of Louis XIV, dancing took a very prominent position among court festivities, and many members of the royal family took part in the complex ballets of the time. Louis himself, no mean performer, took lessons for twenty years from Beauchamps, who was called the father of all dancing masters and upon whom the king conferred the title doctor as a special mark of favor. Beauchamps had the honor of appearing as partner with the king in the minuet, a dance which was introduced in 1650 in France, and no court ball was opened in Europe for a century and a half without it. About the year 1661 a royal academy of dancing was formed under the auspices of Beauchamps, Lull, Moliere and others, the object of which was to elevate the art and check all abuses. Of this academy Beauchamps was chief, with the title of director.

Dogs That Eat Crabs.

There are crab hunting and crab eating dogs in Brazil. The dogs are half fox, but they do not seem to care very much for poultry. They have been known to turn up their noses at nice fat pullets and go fishing for crabs instead. The dogs hunt in packs along

the banks of the rivers in the Amazon valley, and the crawfish and land crabs of that region are their especial prey. The crabs often put up a vigorous fight, but the dogs have a way of turning them over and biting them in a vital spot just as the thoroughbred terrier polishes off a rat.—New York World.

Too Much For Him.

"Allow me," said the fresh young man in the Pullman dining car as he passed the sugar bowl to a shy young girl; "sweets to the sweet, you know." "Allow me," said the girl as she handed him a plate of crackers; "crackers to the cracked, you know."—Ladies' Home Journal.

Gone, Perhaps.

"The professor is in the laboratory conducting some chemical experiments. The professor expects to go down to Ysterity."

From the laboratory—Br-r-r, bang! The Visitor—I hope the professor hasn't gone.—Harlem Life.

Worse Than Creditors.

Marks—Why do you allow your wife to run up such big bills? Parks—Because I'd sooner have trouble with my creditors than with her—that's why.—Boston Transcript.

Modesty should be the virtue of those who possess no other.—Liechtenberg.

Thinking While Asleep.

It is rather startling to hear that man thinks as intelligently asleep as awake, but no less an authority than Sir Arthur Mitchell admits that thinking is essential to life, says the Chicago Tribune. Thinking when we sleep may be different from when we are awake, but the process goes on just the same. Man cannot think unless he is alive, and he cannot be alive without thinking. Dreams are not as confused as we think. They become confused from the standpoint of memory, but are not from the point of the dream organs. Memory half blurred in trying to recall them makes dreaming seem confused. Dreams born under normal conditions are normal. It is only those that are created under abnormal conditions that are strange, for, as Cicero said: "It cannot be doubted the number of true dreams would be greater if we were to fall asleep in a better condition. Filling ourselves with wine and flesh obscures our dreams."

Different Aspects.

"Gerald, dear, papa thinks we ought to postpone our wedding awhile on account of the shortage in the money market." "Great Scott, Mildred! That's why I want to hurry it up!"—Chicago Tribune.

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