

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.

CAPT:.. .Indeed I hope so, Sir Joseph.

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?

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 patronize them, sir— pray don't patronize them.

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.

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!

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.

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.

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?

RALPH:.. .A better Captain doesn't walk the deck, your honour.

ALL:.. .Aye! Aye!

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

RALPH:.. .I can hum a little, your honour.

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.

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.

CAPT:.. .What!

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

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