

## **Gilbert And Sullivan**

### **"When I Was A Lad"**

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Sir Joseph.

When I was a lad I served a term  
As office boy to an Attorney's firm.  
I cleaned the windows and I swept the floor,  
And I polished up the handle of the big front door.

Chorus.

He polished up the handle of the big front door.

Sir Joseph.

I polished up that handle so carefullee  
That now I am the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!

Chorus.

He polished up that handle so carefullee,  
That now he is the ruler of the Queen's Navee!

Sir Joseph.

As office boy I made such a mark  
That they gave me the post of a junior clerk.  
I served the writs with a smile so bland,  
And I copied all the letters in a big round hand.

Chorus.

He copied all the letters in a big round hand.

Sir Joseph.

I copied all the letters in a hand so free,  
That now I am the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!

Chorus.

He copied all the letters in a hand so free,  
That now he is the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!

Sir Joseph.

In serving writs I made such a name  
That an articled clerk I soon became;  
I wore clean collars and a brand-new suit  
For the pass examination at the Institute.

Chorus.

For the pass examination at the Institute.

Sir Joseph.  
That pass examination did so well for me,  
That now I am the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!

Chorus.  
That pass examination did so well for he,  
That now he is the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!

Sir Joseph.  
Of legal knowledge I acquired such a grip  
That they took me into the partnership.  
And that junior partnership, I ween,  
Was the only ship that I ever had seen.

Chorus.  
Was the only ship that he ever had seen.

Sir Joseph.  
But that kind of ship so suited me,  
That now I am the ruler of the Queen's Navee!

Chorus.  
But that kind of ship so suited he,  
That now he is the ruler of the Queen's Navee!

Sir Joseph.  
I grew so rich that I was sent  
By a pocket borough into Parliament.  
I always voted at my party's call,  
And I never thought of thinking for myself at all.

Chorus.  
He never thought of thinking for himself at all.

Sir Joseph.  
I thought so little, they rewarded me  
By making me the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!

Chorus.  
He thought so little, they rewarded he  
By making him the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!

Sir Joseph.  
Now landsmen all, whoever you may be,  
If you want to rise to the top of the tree,  
If your soul isn't fettered to an office stool,  
Be careful to be guided by this golden rule.

Chorus.  
Be careful to be guided by this golden rule.

Sir Joseph.  
Stick close to your desks and never go to sea,  
And you all may be rulers of the Queen's Navee!

Chorus.  
Stick close to your desks and never go to sea,  
And you all may be rulers of the Queen's Navee!

#### DIALOGUE

Sir Joseph.  
You've a remarkably fine crew, Captain Corcoran.

Captain Corcoran.  
It is a fine crew, Sir Joseph.

Sir Joseph. (examining a very small midshipman)  
A British sailor is a splendid fellow, Captain Corcoran.

Captain Corcoran.  
A splendid fellow indeed, Sir Joseph.

Sir Joseph.  
I hope you treat your crew kindly, Captain Corcoran.

Captain Corcoran.  
Indeed I hope so, Sir Joseph.

Sir Joseph.  
Never forget that they are the bulwarks of England's  
greatness,  
Captain Corcoran.

Captain Corcoran.  
So I have always considered them, Sir Joseph.

Sir Joseph.  
No bullying, I trust - no strong language of any kind,  
eh?

Captain Corcoran.  
Oh, never, Sir Joseph.

Sir Joseph. What, never?

Captain Corcoran.  
Hardly ever, Sir Joseph. They are an excellent crew,  
and do  
their work thoroughly without it.

Sir Joseph.

Don't patronise them, sir - pray, don't patronise them.

Captain Corcoran.

Certainly not, Sir Joseph.

Sir Joseph.

That you are their captain is an accident of birth. I  
cannot permit  
these noble fellows to be patronised because an  
accident of birth  
has placed you above them and them below you.

Captain Corcoran.

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)

No, no, the other splendid seaman.

Captain Corcoran.

Ralph Rackstraw, three paces to the front - march!

Sir Joseph. (sternly)

If what?

Captain Corcoran.

I beg your pardon -- I don't think I understand you.

Sir Joseph.

If you please.

Captain Corcoran.

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 don't walk the deck, your honour.

All.

Aye; Aye!

Sir Joseph.

Good. I like to hear you speak well of your commanding officer;  
I daresay he don'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  
over 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.

Captain Corcoran.

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.

Boatswain.  
Beg pardon. If what, your honour?

Captain Corcoran.  
If what? I don't think I understand you.

Boatswain.  
If you please, your honour.

Captain Corcoran.  
What!

Sir Joseph.  
The gentleman is quite right. If you please.

Captain Corcoran. (stamping his foot impatiently)  
If you please!

(Exit.)

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