



## The Mariner's Mirror

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rmir20>

### BY-PATHS IN NAVAL LITERATURE

Charles N. Robinson R.N.

Published online: 22 Mar 2013.

To cite this article: Charles N. Robinson R.N. (1920) BY-PATHS IN NAVAL LITERATURE, *The Mariner's Mirror*, 6:9, 260-263, DOI: [10.1080/00253359.1920.10654946](https://doi.org/10.1080/00253359.1920.10654946)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00253359.1920.10654946>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is

expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

the pastel would certainly have to be withdrawn until a favourable turn of affairs enabled American collectors to make their bid.

It was while the picture was temporarily housed at the National Portrait Gallery in April, 1918, that I was enabled to pay it a visit. I was very favourably impressed with its beauty, and felt that it would be an act of sacrilege to allow such a work of art to cross the Atlantic. The portraits of our Admirals are not so numerous that we can afford to let any of them go. I therefore made frantic endeavours to save the picture for the Navy, if not for the Nation.

The thing could have been easily managed, if Osborne had been based upon stronger foundations. But the insecurity of our tenure put insuperable obstacles in the way of a subscription list, and I therefore decided that the proper place to house the pastel was the oak-panelled dining-hall at Dartmouth. My friend, Mr. Hodges, kindly helped me to proclaim the merits of the work at the other college; and Rear-Admiral W. G. E. Ruck Keene and Commander F. B. Noble, in a very public-spirited fashion, raised the purchase-money between them. Thus the portrait found a fitting anchorage in the Cadets' Mess Room, where it is handsomely set off, and draws its tribute of admiration.

The photograph which accompanies this account was taken by Mr. Emery Walker, F.S.A., through whose instrumentality I first became acquainted with the original.

---

## BY-PATHS IN NAVAL LITERATURE.

BY COMMANDER CHARLES N. ROBINSON, R.N.

THE extracts quoted below from a little pamphlet which I copied when collecting information for "The British Tar in Fact and Fiction" supply an answer to the query about the authorship of the couplets quoted by Lord Fisher and Sir Lionel Halsey (query 35, 1919). That Matthew Bishop's claim in 1713 will not hold good is clear from the note by L. G. C. L. in the February issue of this year. He traces it back to Francis Quarles in 1640, or thereabouts. He does not tell us, however, in which of the many works of this author the couplets occur. As will be seen, there

are slight differences in the wording of all the examples which have been quoted. However, in the 17th and 18th centuries the term "soldier" might apply indifferently either to the land or sea service, and this more particularly when the writer had done duty in both.

As to the couplets being written on the walls of the Admiralty; in a book entitled "Progress of a Midshipman Exemplified in the Career of Master Blockhead," there are seven coloured plates by George Cruikshank, and one of these shows the waiting room at the Admiralty, the date of publication being August 1st, 1835. On one of the walls of this room are the following lines :—

In sore affliction tried by God's commands,  
Of patience Job the great example stands,  
But in these days a trial more severe  
Had been Job's lot, if God had sent him here.

It is possible these are the lines which the correspondent refers to. Among the officers in waiting, Captain Marryat, who is said to have supplied the material to George Cruikshank, is portrayed, staring at these lines. This is the first room on the left hand as one enters the main entrance to the Admiralty, and in it the coffin containing the body of Nelson is said to have rested before it was taken to St. Paul's. It was still a waiting room in the 'sixties of the last century, and at the end of the short passage a messenger was stationed who took officers' names to the Sea Lord dealing with *personnel*. His room was just above on the next floor.

The following are the extracts mentioned above :—

*The Life and Adventures of Matthew Bishop, of Deddington, in Oxfordshire, containing an account of several actions by sea, battles and sieges by land, in which he was present from 1701 to 1711, interspersed with many curious incidents, entertaining conversations, and judicious reflections, London, 1744. 8vo. Original calf. (Noticed in the Retrospective Review, n.s. II, 42.)*

This volume once belonged to Walter Besant, and contains the following note in his handwriting : "A genuine and curious autobiography, Matthew Bishop was perhaps sixteen in 1701, or born in 1685. In 1744 when the book was published he was, therefore, 59 years of age, and may be excused his reflections on

this score." The book is dedicated to the Right Hon. the Earl of Stair, Field-Marshal and Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's Forces in South Britain.

Bishop joined the *Swift*, a snow, Captain Wynn, commander, anchored at Blackstakes, in the Medway, when war with France was proclaimed. "From thence we went to the buoy at Nower." He was present at the capture of Vigo, describes clearing ship for action, and refers to the fact that the Eddystone was blown down in the late storm. Joins the fleet under Sir Cloudesley Shovell and is at the taking of Gibraltar; also at the battle of Malaga, and mentions Admirals Leake and Rooke. Brings the Duke of Schomberg to England. Joins the *Breda*, and is transferred to the *Fox*. Cruises in the Bay of Biscay, and returns to the Cove at Cork.

Here he is sent on shore with a gang to press men, and explains how he succeeds in making "nine clever young men, very fit to make fine sailors," enter as volunteers by a stratagem. The ship is then sent to Waterford to press more men, and here he gets up a game of football, which brings down a number of young fellows, and he eventually succeeds in persuading a number of these to join voluntarily, as the other sailors seem to have plenty of liberty and to enjoy themselves. Similarly at Dublin he pretends that he has come on shore to get up a cudgel match between six sailors and six others, and in this way induces five-and-twenty to go on board the ship, who eventually succumb to his inducements and join. The Captain congratulates him upon his genius, and he reports that these young fellows were very diligent, and in a short time became good sailors. He says that there is more prospect of making a good sailor from a landsman than from a waterman who pretends to know more than his teachers. The ship returns to the Hamoaze, where the author leaves the sea service.

Before he does this he meets a young lady and falls in love with her, marries, and is going to call upon his wife's grandfather when the following incident occurs, showing that a check shirt was at this time an indication of a sailor. "The next day when I came to dress myself in order to accompany my wife according to my promise, the maid informed me there were none but speckled shirts clean. She was very much against my going in one of them, as she said it would look disrespectful at the first visit. I said, 'Child, do you think I am ashamed of my profession? On the contrary, I am so proud of it that I do not care for all the world knew it!' With that she fetched one, but told my wife

that I insisted on one of the checkered shirts, who said to her, 'Never deny him anything for he loves to have everything his own way, and knows how to make an excuse for the shirt. Therefore, take no notice, but give him one.' The maid always observed this rule afterwards."

In 1706 he left his wife, dressed himself very clean, and put a cockade in his hat. Then he listed in the land service, and the remainder of the book is occupied with his services in the army. He is at Oudenarde, and at Malplaquet. Later on he joins an expedition to Canada, and after being present at the attempt on Quebec returns to England, and eventually obtains his discharge, when he finds his wife has married another man. She dies, and he writes her epitaph. The military part will probably be interesting to soldiers, but it has less interest from a naval point of view. Moreover, there is very little personal matter, but a great deal of marching and fighting and reflections upon the risks of the military profession. At the siege of Douay he says His Royal Highness the Prince of Hannau would come into the trenches and say, "Come, now, brave Englishmen, I am determined not to have this beard cut off till such time as the town surrenders," and he adds: "I leave you to judge, reader, whether it was not a fine black beard of ten weeks' growth." The expedition to Canada was under the command of Brigadier Hill and Admiral Walker. On the voyage out when some of his comrades were ill he took them on deck and combed their heads as a mother does her children. This, it appears, not only kept them from vermin, but assisted in curing their sea-sickness. In another place he refers to the conduct of the King at the battle of Oudenarde where His Majesty behaved incomparably well. "I remember him at the head of a squadron of his father's forces, when the French household troops were bearing down upon them, exhibiting such courage and conduct as were surprising in so young a prince. His royal person was exposed to as much danger as a common soldier."

He says that on his return to England in 1713, when the regiment was disbanded, he wrote these lines:

God and a soldier men alike adore,  
When at the brink of danger, not before;  
The danger past, alike are both requited,  
God is forgot, and the brave soldier slighted.

---