

A SUPPLEMENTARY "BRITANNIA."

ANCHORED off Rock Ferry, in the River Mersey, lies H.M.S. "Conway," the school-ship where boys are trained for becoming officers in the mercantile marine; one of the two "Britannias" of the merchant service, to which the cadets now under instruction have just returned after a short vacation. As long ago as January, 1859, a large number of the merchants and ship-owners of Liverpool petitioned the Mayor of Liverpool to convene a meeting for the establishment of a floating school-ship in the Mersey, with the result that Mr. T. B. Horsfall, M.P., applied to the Admiralty for a ship for the purpose. The outcome of his efforts was that Sir John Pakington, the First Lord of the Admiralty, placed the "Conway," a 28-gun frigate, at the disposal of the Mercantile Marine Association of Liverpool. A committee of management, composed of the principal merchants, ship-owners, and ships' captains of Liverpool, was appointed, and the new institution was warmly approved by Princes and Ministers, who inspected the ship at various times and distributed the prizes. So successful was the "Conway," that two years later she was found too small for the large number of pupils, and the "Winchester," 51-gun frigate, replaced her, adopting the name of the first ship. But as time rolled on this second vessel was found inadequate to hold the increasing number of boys, and the committee had again to apply to the Admiralty for a larger ship. In 1876 the "Nile," carrying ninety guns, was handed over to the governing body, and became the present "Conway." She had formerly been Sir Alexander Milne's flag-ship in the West Indies.

The present "Conway" is a 90-gun line-of-battle screw steam-ship, of 4,875 tons, and has four decks. Her machinery has been removed, and she is ballasted with 220 tons of copper dross and 175 tons of iron. Three good iron lower masts have been placed in her, so constructed that, with perforations below and a raised cowl on the tops, they may serve the purpose of ventilation. The topmasts and top-gallant-masts, yards, rigging, etc., are all in perfect order for the instruction of the pupils in manning yards, making and shortening sail, and giving experience in all branches of nautical training. Large nets are spread round each mast to catch any boy who has lost his footing, but no boy is forced to mount the rigging. Her beam is nearly 50-ft., and her length 245-ft., the upper deck forming a capital fine weather playground for the boys. Conveniently arranged on the main deck are the fittings for the school desks and forms; a part of this deck is used as a



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THE CHAIRMAN OF THE "CONWAY" COMMITTEE.

mess-deck. Cadets obtain a practical knowledge of catering, for they have to serve as messmen in turn. The lamp-room and electric engine and dynamo rooms are here also, protected from fire by tile paving. On the starboard side are the



Photo. Walery.



ON THE MONKEY YARD.



ON THE UPPER DECK.



From Photos.

AT WORK WITH THE SEXTANT.

By a Naval Officer.

berths for the men and a hospital for special cases, so cut off from the ship as to prevent communication with the other part of the main deck. Going aft, the ward-room, fitted up for the masters and other officials, is reached. On the lower deck (within full view of the chief officer's cabin) are the library, chaplain's cabin, a large, well-ventilated sick-room, with matron's room attached, and a well-fitted lavatory. This deck is used for a wet weather playground. The lowest or orlop deck is the sleeping deck, where there are hammocks for 200 boys, each sleeper having 750 cubic feet of air. Every cadet is taught to lash and sling his own hammock. Two officers have their quarters on this deck, in order to see that all is well at night, while a night watchman patrolling the deck prevents skylarking. The hold is devoted to a large lecture-hall and a gymnasium. Parents solicitous for their sons' comfort will be interested to know that the whole ship is warmed by a hot water apparatus, and the lavish arrangement of the catering is shown by the fact that every day a large tin of fragments from the cadets' mess tables is sent ashore for the benefit of the poor.

The scheme of education carried out on board is general, besides being technical, English grammar, physics, geography, geometry, French, arithmetic, and algebra finding a place, besides nautical astronomy, chart drawing, swimming, boxing, fencing, and cutlass drill. During nautical instruction, as well as at all times when not in school, the pupils are under the commander and nautical staff, and are exercised in all the duties of a first-class ship, in splicing, reefing, furling, heaving the lead, the management of boats and steam engines, and in practical seamanship generally. Lectures upon divers interesting subjects are given weekly, besides general instruction in some of the most useful and practical departments of surgery and medicine. That physical training is not neglected can be seen by a glance at the cadets, whose robust and healthy aspect proclaims the *mens sana in corpore sano*. In addition to the vigorous exercise of rowing, two fields have been provided for the practice of cricket, football, and other outdoor games, while instruction in swimming is given daily throughout the greater part of the year. There is a resident chaplain on board the "Conway," and the religious instruction and moral tone of the boys receive the greatest attention. A league has been

formed to withstand the temptations of drinking, swearing, impurity, and smoking, which has the happiest results and an increasing number of recruits. *Esprit de corps* on board the "Conway" is fostered by a brightly-written paper, the *Cadet*, which has a large number of readers among old "Conway" boys in all parts of the world. A debating society encourages the formation of opinions.

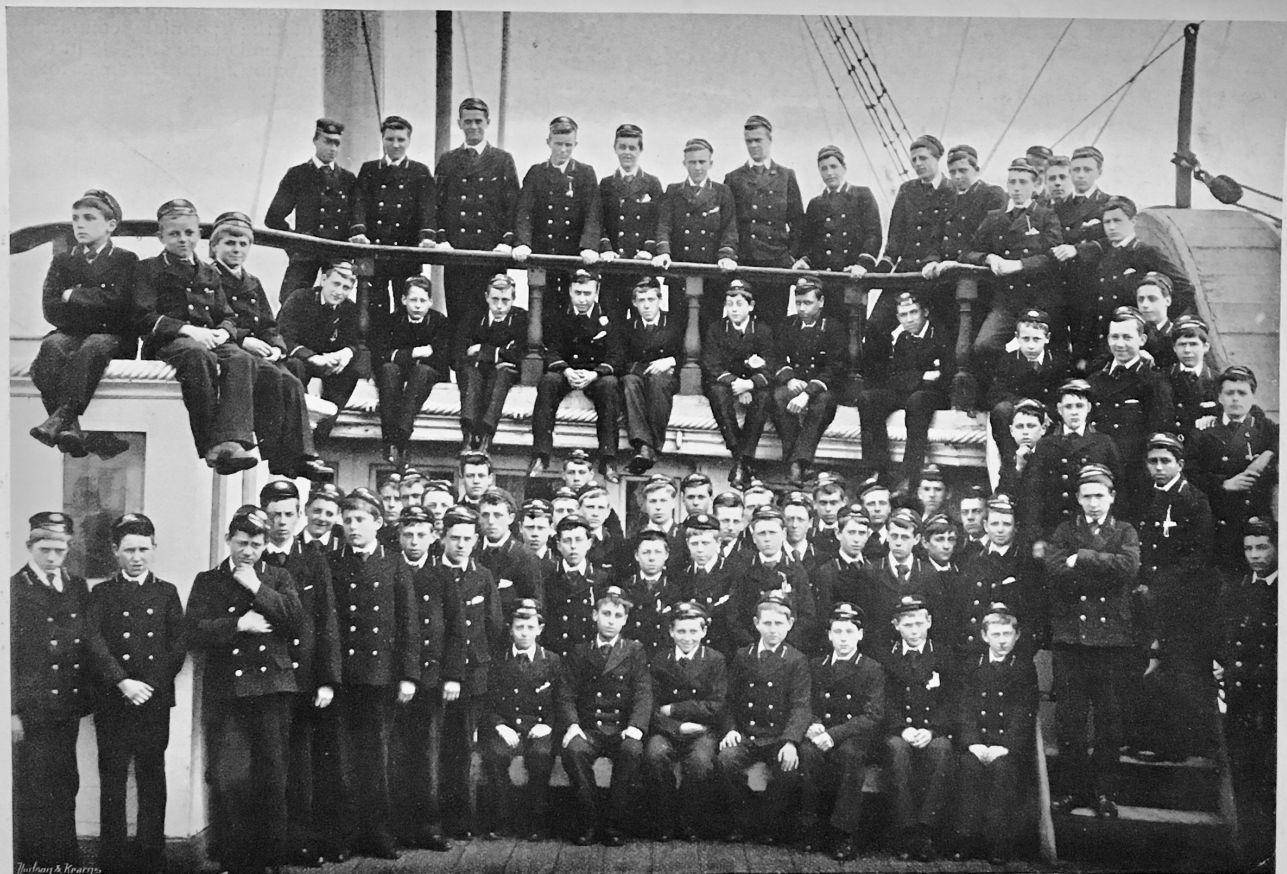
Every year a gold medal is given by the Queen to the cadet who, in her opinion, possesses the qualities which will make the finest sailor, and the further interest taken by her in the ship is shown by the fact that she gives a yearly prize of a pair of binocular glasses and £35 to the boys who compete for the Naval cadetship. Besides these there are many annual prizes. A number of appointments as midshipmen in the Royal Naval Reserve are annually granted by the Lords of the Admiralty, and appointments in the Bengal Pilot Service (in which the emoluments reach to £1,200 per annum in the higher grades) are awarded by the Secretary of State for India.

Within the last few years a great change has come over the merchant fleet; sailing ships are rapidly becoming extinct, steam ships replacing them everywhere. When one of the former is lost or broken up, she is usually replaced by a steamer. Of the new tonnage built during the past year, according to Lloyd's Register, no less than 98 per cent. was of steamers, with the result that the total of apprentices carried has diminished from about 18,000 to 2,000. Formerly a boy destined to become an officer in the merchant service had to serve a lengthy term as apprentice on board a sailing ship, where a rough life of hardships had to be endured, combined

with a great amount of personal risk, and the undesirable contact with "pitch." Now, thanks to the enterprise and energy of the commander and the committee of the "Conway," all this has been changed. Cadets can now pass direct from the school-ship on board many of the principal steamers as midshipmen to train for certificated officers in steam without paying premiums. They receive special consideration and treatment on board, and are seldom absent from home for more than a couple of months at a time, instead of years as formerly—an inestimable advantage only to be fully realised by those who have gone through the mill of apprenticeship. The parchment certificate of two years' service on the "Conway" is reckoned by the Board of Trade as one year passed at sea out of the four which are necessary to qualify for a second mate's certificate. In one matter the "Conway" lads



CAPTAIN MILLER AND THE JUBILEE REVIEW PARTY.



From Photos.

A GROUP OF THE "CONWAY" CADETS.

By a Naval Officer.

are exceptionally lucky, for they are qualifying for a profession which is the reverse of overcrowded. Besides the appointments offered by the Admiralty and Secretary of State for India there is a constant demand for cadets upon the principal liners. "I could to-day place forty or fifty of our cadets in first-class steamers, but have none to send," writes Captain Miller.

Over 200 ex-"Conway" boys are in the Royal Navy and the Royal Naval Reserve, fifty others are in the P. and O. Line, and no less than seventy have joined the Bengal Pilot Service, while a very large proportion of officers of the Indian Marine owe their success to the school-ship. In all parts of the world old "Conway" boys have distinguished themselves by acts of bravery; the gallant conduct of Captain de Berry and Lieutenants Dobbin and Goldsmith on the occasion of the loss of the "Aden" last summer, which brought them the recognition and thanks of the Indian Government, is still fresh in people's minds. Both gold and silver medals

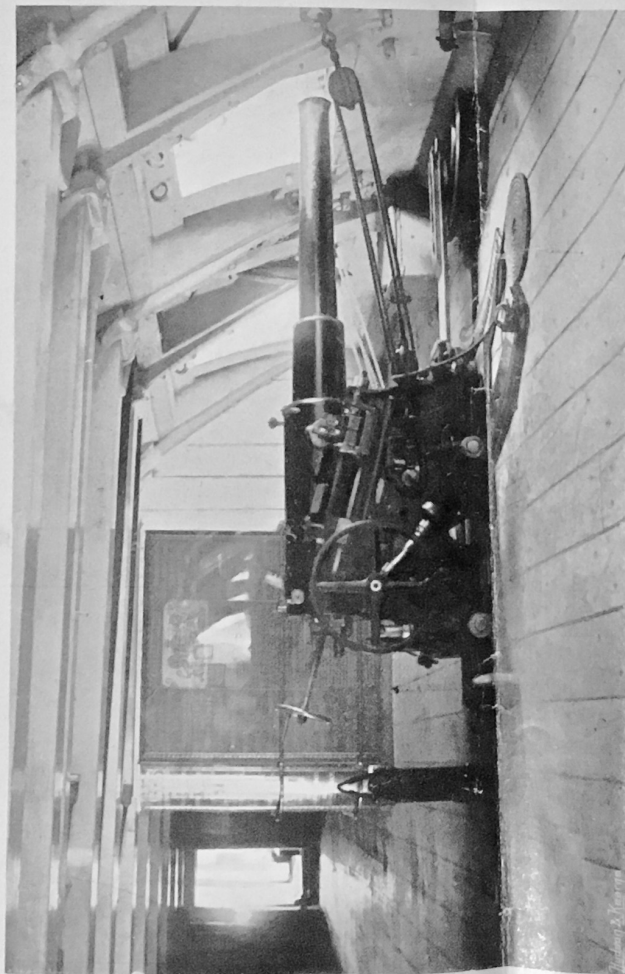


THE READING-ROOM.

of the Royal Humane Society, together with the Albert Medal for bravery at sea, have also been won by former cadets—Captain Irving, late of the White Star Line, Lieutenant Wood-Robinson, R.N., Lieutenant Huddleston, R.I.M., and Mr. Stanley Prior. The late Captain Webb, of Channel fame, first learned to breast the waves when a "Conway" boy.

Visitors to Liverpool should not miss the opportunity of inspecting the "Conway," for they cannot fail to be interested in the ship's routine. Wednesdays are visiting days, when a boat waits at Rock Ferry Slip at 1.45 p.m. to take visitors on board, but admission can be had on other days by an order from the commander.

To Mr. T. B. Royden, J.P. (formerly M.P. for Liverpool), the chairman of the committee, is owing in a large measure the success of the school-ship. Himself a ship-owner on a large scale, he was one of the first to take cadets direct from school upon his steamers, and with his name must be associated that of the popular commander, Captain Miller, who is indefatigable in working for and promoting the interests of his pupils on board the "Conway."



From Photos.

THE "CONWAY'S" 4-in. BREECH-LOADER.

By a Naval Officer.