

inference would be altogether wrong. The candidates are required to have only a fair knowledge of the elementary portions of the most rudimentary parts of a common English education, a preparation far below that of any high school; and the fact that one-fifth of the number nominated failed even in this, shows, not that the standard of admission is too high, but that the selection of candidates has been made with no proper regard either for the fitness of the candidate for the place, or the wants and interests of the government.

Again: the studies of the first year belong only to a good English education, and are simply preliminary to the specific scientific and naval training, and yet two-fifths of all admitted fail even in these. These two facts show clearly that the large number of rejections and failures is due neither to too high a standard of admission nor to the severity of the mathematical studies, since they occur before this part of the course is reached. The visitors are of opinion that, instead of lowering the standard of admission to the level of those who were rejected, it should rather be so elevated as to exclude those who, for want of suitable preparation, fail in the first year of the course.

These facts and results have led the board to an earnest consideration of the course of study, in view of the object of the government in the establishment and support of the academy. In a general sense, the purpose of the government is to provide competent and educated officers for the navy. But this proposition conveys a different meaning to different minds: some understand by a naval education only that professional training which makes the officer an accomplished seaman and commander; while others suppose that the peculiar knowledge which the sailor requires—the professional education—should be added to a general culture of the highest character, so that an officer of the American navy should be, both at home and abroad, the fit associate of educated men. This last is doubtless the true idea, and it seems to be the one which has shaped the course of study in the academy. The important question then arises, Is this purpose attained by the present system, or can it be by any effort on the part of the academic board? The visitors believe that no such result as the most thoughtful friends of the academy desire is possible, unless the system of appointments, the rules for admission, and the course of study are all materially changed. Taking the students as a majority of them now are when they enter, altogether too much is required of them during the course. An English education almost from the rudiments, a scientific education, and the professional attainments of the seaman, are all included in the course; and many of those who are expected to master this in four years are scarcely more than boys when they are expected to graduate. Manifestly, one of three results must follow as the general rule: either there will be a total failure, as is actually the case with so many, or seamanship will be neglected in favor of general culture, or the cadet will become a sailor at the expense of scientific and literary attainments, or, which is perhaps more common than either, he will be found deficient in each branch of his education. The actual results verify these suppositions. One cadet becomes a student, and his commanding officer on shipboard finds him more attached to books than to his duties as a seaman; another graduates with the proper knowledge of his profession, but perhaps his lack of general culture is so marked as to bring reproach upon the navy both at home and abroad. As a general rule, such results are due not to the scholar or the teachers, but are inseparable from the system itself.

As has been already intimated, the board is unable to discover any remedy for these except by some material alterations in the general plan for admission and instruction; and the visitors have therefore agreed to make the following suggestions: They recommend that the qualifications for admission be so changed as to require of the candidate an amount of previous study about equal to that of the first year of the present course in the academy. To show that this is not without precedent with those who have had experience in naval

education, the following list is presented of the studies required for admission at the French Naval School at Brest: arithmetic, algebra, geometry, plane trigonometry, applied mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, geography, English language, and drawing. This system requires two years of preparatory study, two years in the Naval Academy, then one year at sea, making in all a five years' course, three of which are under the supervision of the government. The board is clearly of opinion that an amount of study about equal to that of the first year in the academy should be required of candidates for admission. Some object to raising the standard of admission on the ground that it would exclude the great majority of the youth from large sections of the country where parents would find it difficult to give their sons the necessary preparation, and thus the advantages of the academy would be unequally distributed among the people. This reasoning is based upon a false conception of the purpose for which the school was founded. Its chief object, to which all else must be subordinate, is, not to give the young men an education, but to provide suitable officers for the navy. The government is under no obligation so to arrange its system as to place the privileges of the school equally within the reach of all classes of persons and all sections of the country, as if it were a national university intended for popular education. On the contrary, it will best serve the interests of the whole nation by selecting the very best material, wherever it may be found, from which to prepare the officers who are to be intrusted with the honor and safety of the state as commanders of our navy. The government is bound to expend the people's money by educating only such, so far as may be, as are best fitted for its purposes. Under the present system, very large sums are annually expended upon those who render no service whatever to the government in return. This is so manifestly wrong as to require no argument. No parent has a right to ask that his child shall be educated at the public expense, either for his own advantage or that of his son; but, on the other hand, when the government offers education, rank, honor, and emolument to a young man, it is right in demanding that his elementary studies should be pursued previous to his entering the national school. Should this suggestion in reference to the admission of scholars be acted upon, it would of course render necessary some corresponding changes in the subsequent studies.

At this point the board would ask attention to another unsatisfactory feature of the present system. In the examinations upon seamanship, the naval officers at once observed, what indeed could not escape the notice even of a landsman, that the answers of the cadets appeared to be in large measure recitations from the language of text-books; and nothing is more evident than that a scholar might commit to memory whole volumes of text-books on seamanship, and yet know little or nothing of the actual working of a ship, and that such a young man, with a midshipman's commission in his pocket, would rather be an incumbrance than otherwise to a commanding officer. But it must be remembered that this deficiency, whatever it may be, is due not to the teachers or the cadets, but to the fact that the present system gives the scholar far too little opportunity for gaining a practical knowledge of seamanship before he enters the service. This fact has had much weight with the board in recommending a change in the terms of admission; for such a change would render it possible to give the cadets a longer time on board ship, and remove the objection now properly made by naval officers that the cadets, when they enter the service, are not thoroughly educated seamen.

To sum up these opinions in regard to the course of study, the visitors recommend—

First. That the amount of study required for admittance should be about equal to that of the first year's course in the academy, as now arranged.

Second. That a corresponding change should be made in the subsequent course.

Third. That after graduation from the academy the cadets should spend one

year at sea, and then pass a satisfactory examination in seamanship before receiving a midshipman's commission.

It is also recommended that the entering class should be put on board a school-ship, with one or more professors to instruct them, and should be well drilled at the great guns, in the use of small-arms, and in seamanship, until the return of the school-ships from their summer cruise. A portion of the summer cruise should be used to give the cadets a knowledge of our coast by sending the ships up and down the coast, and allowing them to visit the points of the various attacks made by our forces, and by explaining to them the advantages and disadvantages under which the operations were conducted. It is also thought that the system of leave should be modified in some such way as this. The school-ships would sail by the first of June, with all the cadets on board, and return from the cruise from the 20th of August to the 1st of September, and then all the cadets should have leave of absence until the 1st of October.

COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS.

Although the evils connected with the present system of appointments, and which are, apparently, inseparable from it, have been so often and so earnestly dwelt upon in previous reports, the board feels that it would fail in one very important duty should it neglect to ask attention to it once more. If the recommendation already made in regard to raising the standard of study for admission should be complied with, a change in the method of appointment would necessarily be made, because, as such, there would be an examination by some authorized board; but the visitors believe that whatever may be the standard of the entrance examination, there should be a radical change in the system of appointments. From the tables already quoted it appears that one-third of the whole number appointed for twelve years were rejected as unqualified, although nothing is required more than should be learned in a common school, and this is quite sufficient to show that the mode of selection is one which should no longer be tolerated. How far the influence by which candidates are appointed can be brought to bear upon their admission is unknown to the board; but the important fact appears that, after one-third of all appointed for twelve years had been rejected, that 466 of the 1,209 admitted failed on the first year's course. Then 331 of those who thus failed were allowed a second trial, and most of these failed again, so that only a small per cent. of them graduated, and only 269 of the 1,209 admitted succeeded in completing their studies.

Now, the annual expenses of a cadet is more than \$1,500, and allowing the average of the time spent at the school to be one year, then the government has expended upon these about two millions of dollars, for which it has received no return. Nor is the money lost the most important feature. Through the deficiencies of this system the government fails to obtain that number of suitable officers to which it is entitled, the places in the academy being constantly filled, in a large degree, by those who are unwilling or unable to profit by the advantages which the government so liberally offers.

In view of these results, so mortifying to the friends of the academy, and so injurious to the public interests, the board desires to submit, as its decided opinion, that the academy cannot long be maintained under the present system against the increasing dissatisfaction of the country; and that the only choice really lies between adopting important changes, and the not remote loss to the nation of this important school. The board, therefore, with great unanimity and earnestness, recommends that the system of appointments be so changed that the selections shall be made according to merit, by some plan of competitive examination, conducted in such manner as Congress may prescribe. Such a system would open the doors of the academy to the whole country upon the only proper terms of equality, while it would impartially draw out from the whole body of American

youth those only whose natural aptitude or fondness for sea life, or proper ambition for distinction, should impel them to seek admission to the school, and would select from among such those best adapted to and prepared for the government service.

The board confidently believes that such changes as have been proposed in the preparatory studies and in the mode of admission would remove at once, and effectively, the most formidable difficulties which the academy has hitherto had to encounter; would relieve it from a dead weight of useless material which now clogs its operations and sinks it in public estimation; would save the government from a very large and quite useless expenditure; would elevate its tone and character; and would supply the navy with officers from the very best material which the country affords.

AGE OF THE CANDIDATES.

In addition to the changes which have been mentioned, the board would recommend that cadets should not be admitted to the academy before the age of sixteen (seventeen) years. This alteration is suggested because if the elementary studies, now pursued in the early part of the course, are required previous to admission, then the scholar would naturally reach about the age of seventeen in his preparatory studies. There are, however, other important reasons why an age more advanced and greater maturity of mind are desirable in the candidates. The conditions and methods of naval war have been so completely changed ever since the beginning of our recent conflict that mere courage or skill in seamanship, as that term has hitherto been understood, will no longer secure a victory. The profoundest science, the highest art, the nicest skill, and the inventive power which have filled the world with wonder-working machinery, have been applied to the art of war; they have produced ships and weapons bearing little resemblance to anything known before, while the more scientific application of steam to the ordinary vessel, and the new and more formidable character of the armament, have made the management of a war-ship quite a different matter from what it was even four years ago.

The man who would fight a successful battle in such ships as will hereafter compose the American navy should possess, not only all the qualifications needed by an officer years ago, but should add to these both a scientific and practical knowledge of the new instruments placed in his hands, so that he may comprehend, not only the manner of their working, but also the principles on which their successful operation depends. It is an imperative necessity that the officers of our navy should hereafter be thoroughly educated in everything connected with the structure and working of modern war-ships, and with the manufacture and use of the new weapons employed; for the science and skill, the wealth and the inventive genius of Europe will be brought into requisition to discover some form of a ship and some weapon that shall be more than a match for our own. The powers of western Europe are not yet ready to concede to Americans the control of this continent and the adjacent seas, and it is wise to prepare for the issue which is sure to be presented to us, by providing young men, with minds somewhat mature, instead of boys, for the lower ranks of the navy. Hereafter the navy will, of course, be composed entirely, or nearly so, of steamships; but economy in fuel, and other reasons, will, in many cases, render necessary a combination of steam and sails, and it is deemed, therefore, very important that the practice-ship in which the summer cruise is made, should be a steam-propeller and a full-rigged ship, so that the study of seamanship and of steam-engineering may be united.

The importance of having a full-rigged ship is shown by the fact that some of those who have graduated, and have spent some time at sea, have no practical knowledge of certain matters relating to full-rigged ships, which it is absolutely

necessary for an officer to know. The practical exhibition by the cadets of their knowledge of seamanship was on board the sloop-of-war Marion. There were on board 290 cadets, who, for the occasion, formed the crew of the ship. She is an old vessel, and, in the opinion of the board, unfit, both by her style of rigging and her condition, for the purpose for which she is used. The cadets cannot be taught on such a vessel to handle quickly and gracefully a first-class modern ship. The Marion was got under way from single anchor, under topsails, jib, and spanker; the anchor was catted and fished and the courses set, all of which was fairly performed; but the board was less favorably impressed by the exercises on the Marion than by any other which they witnessed; and these defects in seamanship show the necessity of spending more time on shipboard than the summer cruise affords, giving weight, as is thought, to the suggestion already made, that the cadets, after graduation at the academy, should spend a year at sea, as in the French service, before they receive a midshipman's commission.

It is quite unreasonable to expect that a boy entering the academy at the age of fourteen or fifteen, and with only the attainments now required for admission, should, during the course, so lay even the foundation of the knowledge he will need that, after entering upon actual service, he may rear the proper superstructure. But with proper previous study, and by delaying the entrance to the school until a more advanced age, when the mind is more mature, and with a year on board a ship after graduation, before receiving a commission, the young officers of the navy would not only enter the service thorough seamen, but would be able to meet, with credit to themselves and the country, the grave responsibilities which henceforth are to be laid upon them as the representatives of the nation's power and civilization, and the guardians of her honor.

PROOF OF THE LOYALTY OF PARENTS OR GUARDIANS SHOULD BE REQUIRED.

There being now no rule requiring evidence of the loyalty of the parents or guardians of applicants for admission, it is recommended that the parent, if there be one, or if none, the guardian, shall be required by oath, or in such other manner as may be directed by the Secretary of the Navy, to give evidence of his or her loyalty before the examination of the candidate. It is evident that the government cannot safely rely upon the oath of an inexperienced boy, if after he is educated he is to be placed under the influence of disloyal parents, or friends, as has sometimes been the case heretofore, so that the education which the government has bestowed has been used as a powerful instrument for its destruction. Knowledge is a power which the nation cannot afford to place gratuitously in the hands of its enemies.

RECITATIONS AND EXERCISES ON SHORE AND ON BOARD THE SHIPS.

As a general thing the board was well satisfied with the recitations of the different classes and sections. The recitations in seamanship have already been mentioned. In mathematics and natural science, in ethics and moral philosophy, in international and constitutional law, in gunnery and steam-engineering, and in the modern languages, the cadets showed a proficiency which was very gratifying to the visitors, and honorable both to teachers and scholars.

The exercises both on board the ships and on shore were varied and interesting, and gave the visitors an opportunity to judge of the amount of practical knowledge which the cadets had gained. The first visit of the board was to the two practice-ships, Constitution and Santee, where, for the want of suitable accommodations on shore, the third and fourth classes have their quarters. Both these vessels were inspected from the spar-deck to the keelson, and in every part of the ships good order and perfect cleanliness were found. The vessels are probably as convenient for the purpose as ships of this kind can be made, but the many disadvantages which are inseparable from keeping the

cadets apart are so many and so great that arrangements will soon be made by which the whole school will be located on shore.

These ships are not fully rigged, and lack many of the appliances necessary for making the cadets accomplished sailors. It is believed that it would be a material improvement on the present plan if one of these vessels were kept partly manned and fully officered, and the routine of the navy were daily observed so as to render the cadets familiar with every duty of an officer on board a man-of-war.

ORDNANCE PRACTICE ON BOARD THE MACEDONIAN.

This ship was manned by the cadets, and in the management of the guns, and in the exercise of boarding and repelling boarders, and in the various manoeuvres of actual battle, their performances were highly satisfactory, and, in the opinion of the naval officers present, were equal to those of the best vessel in the navy. Some of the guns and equipments were of an old pattern; and it is deemed a matter of importance that the scholars should be supplied with guns and equipments of the latest and best forms, so that they may become familiar with the very instruments which will be put into their hands when they enter the service. No mechanic learns to become a first-rate workman by the use of poor tools, no one is made a marksman by an inferior gun, nor can one become a perfect sailor in an old unseaworthy ship.

INSPECTION OF THE SABINE.

While the examinations were going on at the academy, the frigate Sabine, the school and practice-ship for naval apprentices, under the command of Captain R. B. Lowry, came into the harbor, and an order was received from the Navy Department directing that she should be inspected by the board of visitors. This fine frigate was fully manned by the apprentices, and all were greatly surprised and gratified at the scene presented on board. It did not seem possible that a ship of this class, with her battery, could be so finely handled by boys so young. In the various exercises of loosening and fastening the heavy sails, in working the guns, and in the drill with small-arms, the board found only what was worthy of praise. The complete order and the perfect neatness of the vessel in every part were worthy of the highest commendations, and great credit is due to Captain Lowry for this most gratifying exhibition of what the apprentice system may do for the navy when worked by firm and skilful hands. The board deems it worthy of consideration whether a larger number might not be annually selected from these boys for admission to the academy.

The howitzer drill and the target practice by the cadets were very creditable performances, and secured the decided approval of the board. The target was placed at a distance of eleven hundred yards, and was struck five times and completely demolished. The accuracy of the firing elicited much praise from the naval officers present.

FISCAL AFFAIRS.

The paymaster, storekeeper, and commissary produced their books, with original vouchers, to the committee of the board of visitors appointed to examine into the condition of this department, and furnished every facility for the investigation of their respective accounts. It is due to these officers to report that a careful scrutiny of their accounts for the year proved that they had been accurately kept, and in the forms prescribed by the regulations of the academy. The cost of everything needed by the midshipmen was higher than in former years, yet the means of inquiry and comparison at the command of the committee satisfied them that it was just, and as moderate as the state of the market would permit.

The present arrangement with the commissary requires that the cost price be charged for such supplies as he contracts to furnish; and he is allowed to add thereto the sum of \$250 per month for the eight months of the session, as commission, in lieu of the profit which he formerly derived from the contract then existing, by which board was furnished to midshipmen at a stipulated sum per month. His accounts are rendered monthly, and after examination by the committee of officers appointed for the purpose by the superintendent, and approved by him, they are referred for payment to the paymaster. The committee were satisfied that the provisions were excellent, and ample in quality. They were often present in the mess-room at the hours of meals, and ever found the arrangements of the tables, and the cooking, neat and wholesome, and both officers and midshipmen testified that the food and furniture on these occasions, when the committee were present, were such as were uniformly provided.

Under this system the commissary's bills have fluctuated largely with the condition of the country, and of the currency, and corresponding changes have necessarily followed in the rate of board. The following statement drawn from the monthly bills shows the frequency and extent of these fluctuations for seven months, viz:

November 19, 1864.	Number of midshipmen..	493	Board per month, each.....	\$19 46
December 19, 1864.	do.....	461	do.....	19 70
January 16, 1865.	do.....	464	do.....	20 99
February 17, 1865.	do.....	437	do.....	20 16
March 23, 1865.	do.....	399	do.....	20 06
April 26, 1865.	do.....	391	do.....	21 29
May 15, 1865.	do.....	398	do.....	20 40
Average	432.6	Average.....	20 29	

To the board bill is added \$3 per month for washing and sundry small items, amounting to \$1 25.

The goods kept by the storekeeper, and exhibited with the invoice thereof, were carefully examined and the quality generally found to be good; they seemed also to be fairly charged.

During the year, owing to the derangements of the currency, the contractors for midshipmen's clothing demanded increased prices for every article furnished. This led to an attempt by the superintendent to procure cloths at cheaper rates from the wholesale dealers in New York and Boston. On comparison by skilful dealers of the new offers with the old contract, it was obvious that this, considering both quality and price, was the cheapest. Therefore no change was made in the contracts.

The total of all expenditures from July 1, 1864, to May 1, 1865, as reported by the paymaster, is as follows, viz:

Pay of commissioned and warrant officers, midshipmen, seamen, and others.....	\$309, 487 81
Pay of professors and assistants.....	36, 258 29
Expenses of the academy, school and practice ships, surgeons' necessaries, contingent expenses, and repairs of all kinds...	107, 736 98
	<u>453, 483 08</u>

As statistical information, and for the convenience of reference, the following statement is made of the total of all expenditure by the paymaster, since May 8, 1861, when the Naval Academy was removed to Newport, to March 31, 1865, viz:

For the pay of commissioned and warrant officers, civil professors, assistant professors and others.....	\$1, 093, 692 00
For the wages of watchmen, and contingent expenses of the Naval Academy.....	241, 231 38
For the current expenses and repairs of the school and practice ships, for provisions, surgeons' necessaries, mileage, &c....	80, 594 50
Total.....	<u>1, 415, 517 88</u>

The cost of educating each student who finally enters the naval service seems to the board to be enormous, and not over-rated in the report of 1864; and this waste of the public money, and loss of the highest advantages to the country that might be derived from the Naval Academy, can hardly be obviated, so long as the present system of introducing new pupils with inadequate preparation shall be allowed to exist.

The report upon the financial condition of the academy is herewith submitted as it was presented by the committee. (See No. 36.)

The board, having completed its examination and expressed its opinions upon the various topics which came up for consideration, adjourned on the — day of June, with the understanding that the final report should be held open for a time, with the expectation that the visitors might be ordered to reassemble at Annapolis after the return of the school-ships from the summer cruise, when any additional matter might be considered, and the report be submitted for final action.

Contrary to expectation no order was given to reassemble at Annapolis, and the board, therefore, concludes its report by expressing the confident hope that, if the proper authorities should see fit to adopt the suggestions which have been made, the academy will at once be regarded by the people with new interest and favor, and will become, within its sphere, a fit representative to other nations of the naval power and resources of our country.

All of which is respectfully submitted in behalf of the board.

D. G. FARRAGUT,

Vice-Admiral and President.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,

Secretary of the Navy.

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