

within 400 or 500 yards, so that it is an advantage to have artillery in the rear. It also appeared that the Shrapnel shell fire has been developed to a range of 2,000 or 3,000 yards, and it is a far more difficult problem to find shelter from its effects than to arrange the skirmish line by a revolution in tactics.

The lecture is the most interesting we have ever read on this subject, reflects great credit on the research and practical acumen of the gallant Captain, as well as plainly proves what General Lord De Ros stated in the discussion that the English subaltern officer has never been known to be unequal to his duty in any position in which he has been placed.

The following article from a contemporary is earnestly recommended to the consideration of our readers, for the value of the lesson it teaches. The true issue of our great rifle contest is not to train sharpshooters, but to make the soldier familiar with his weapon—to perfect him in the use of it, and to give him steadiness and confidence in its use. Contests, in which the use of the military weapon alone would be permitted, should be encouraged; and, therefore, it is that our company and battalion matches have such a beneficial and peculiar value. The only use for sharpshooters would be as skirmishers, and therefore the formation that will employ the old flank companies, organized from the best shots in each battalion, should be adopted as a necessity. In order to disable artillery, prevent an advance in front, defend an important position, or drive away cavalry, the fire of the sharpshooters would be invaluable; but, as shown in this extract, it will never win a fight; and while it may contribute largely thereto, by covering the advance of the corps to which it belongs, it is a force that any skillful officer will use with extreme caution, both from certain loss it must encounter, and the difficulty of withdrawing it, if over-matched. The direction in which a reformation of minor tactics is necessary is undoubtedly in the employment of skirmishers.

“A writer in the *Journal des Sciences Militaires*, in an article on “Infantry Fire,” discusses the use made of this powerful factor in times past and how it may profitably be applied in future. Without returning, he says, precisely to those times in which generals gave command to take certain positions without firing a shot, we yet wish to assert that target-shooting alone will never gain a battle. The Austrians at Sadowa, had 20,000 experienced and skilful Tyrolean sharpshooters, and yet were beaten badly when their right was attacked by the enemy’s army. A little further on he says: Beyond the distance of 500 metres the soldier’s firing must be left to his own option. Skirmishers will endeavour to advance to about 50 metres; the supports will occupy the front rank while the reserve covers flank and rear. At 50 metres a rapid fire takes place (five to six shots) upon which tirailleurs and supports throw themselves on the

enemy, the reserve advancing to support them. So surely as French columns approach the enemy at a distance of 60 metres, so surely will the latter be overthrown; for it was French troops only that were able to storm a Malakoff tower; as it is the French soldiers alone who, impelled by their officers, will throw themselves with fiery zeal against obstacles and objects, where sure death awaits them.

Our readers will remember the mystery thrown about the retirement of Mr. REED, C. B., from the Admiralty in which he held the place of Chief Naval Constructor.

It was our expressed opinion at the time that he had been driven out from it by Mr. CHILDERS, then First Lord of the Admiralty, a man of small administrative powers but great self-sufficiency, under whose administration the Navy and its affairs became as hopelessly disorganized as CARDWELL at a late period made the army. The fact was emphatically decided by Mr. CHILDERS and his supporters—there was no difference between him and Mr. REED, not a bit, but he tried to throw the blame of the loss of the *Captain* on his shoulders nevertheless.

We have never been admirers of Mr. REED’s system of naval architecture, we hold it has failed altogether and cannot be made to succeed on her any circumstances; but we do say the country that will give pettifogging lawyers and scheming merchants the power to work out their own conceits in opposition to a trained intellect like his, deserves to suffer for their folly. We do not agree with Mr. REED in his estimate of the *Captain*’s stability—her defect was that she was over-masted. We do not love low free boards. We know that form of construction to be altogether a mockery and a snare, but the *Captain* was as great a success of the class she belonged to as the *Monarch*. The *Captain* was lost for want of seamanship, and that is an article neither Mr. CHILDERS or Mr. REED could supply. The whole affair goes to prove that no mere civilian should fill the office of First Lord of the Admiralty, and that the chief naval constructor should be a seaman.

“Mr. REED, C. B., in an electioneering speech at Hull recently, referring to the circumstances which led to his withdrawal from the Admiralty, remarked that, although he made greater changes within seven years under his administration than, perhaps, were made in naval architecture in any 700 years before, there were certain things urged to which he objected, and which he would not carry out. One of them was—to make a ship with very low sides indeed, for the purpose of reducing the quantity of armor they need put upon her, and spreading sails to propel her without the use of steam. What he said was, that to take away the sides of a ship was to take away from her that which tended to bring her upright when a gust came. A boat, if a gust of wind came, lay over into the water, which boiled up under her lee side, and so came again by the stability which she got by her sides. If the sides was so low that the wind put the gunwale under, that moment

she began to lose stability and to come into a position of danger. He said that the same principle which would hold in one case would hold in all cases, and he demonstrated, by a mathematical investigation of a somewhat novel kind, that rigged monitors must generally capsize. There was a great agitation to build turret-ships with sails, and the Admiralty said, “You are the Adviser of the Admiralty: design us a turret-ship with sails.” He replied that it could well be done if they did not insist upon low sides. He designed his ship so that it would carry a great spread of canvas. The unfortunate Captain Coles wanted an exceedingly low side, and that Mr. REED would not have. Captain Coles was asked how he liked the design, and he said he did not like it at all: he objected to its high sides. He also said that it was a burlesque upon him, and done to injure him. The Admiralty said to him!

“We shall build Mr. REED’s ship because we believe in him. You may go to any builders you like in the country; tell them what your views are, ask them to design a ship according to your wishes, and let us have a look at it.”

“The design was made, and when it was sent in he said it was a very good design in all points except, of course, the one of a low side. It was just such a ship as he would have designed had he dared to give so low a side. The Admiralty said that so many members of the House of Commons, so many newspapers urged them to build Captain Coles’s ship, and public opinion was so strong in its favor that they must build it, but that before doing so, knowing Mr. REED’s opinion they would exempt him from all responsibility about it except that there was put into the ship good materials and good workmanship. When the ship was built she actually came out with lower sides than had been contemplated. The first lord of the Admiralty heard from all naval men with whom he came in contact, all more or less having been bitten with the low sided ship mania, that the ship was better than Mr. REED’s; and he was, in fact, told that she was the best ship in the world, and he asked Mr. REED, because of the presumed success of the *Captain*, to appoint or shape some place in the Admiralty to which he would appoint Captain Coles. His answer was that the ship cost some £300,000 or £400,000, and his ship the *Monarch*, the same sum, and he thought they ought to be tried before they adopted the suggestion. He also said,

“You have spent three-quarters of a million upon these ships; try them and find out which is the best. Never mind what anybody says till the trial is over; and so convince I am I that this is a bad ship, an unsafe ship, that I will not let the designer come within the Admiralty while I am here; but if you want him I will go out and make way for him.”

The result was a degree of unpleasantness, and he was willing to make every possible excuse for the Minister. He heard so many naval men applaud the turret-ship that he thought they must be right and he wrong; but he stuck to his book, and the end of it was he came out of the Admiralty. Three months after he left the Admiralty they would remember that in half a gale the *Captain* turned bottom upwards, and his ship, the *Monarch*, went and picked up what ever was left floating about on the surface. The *Monarch* had been pronounced throughout the world a very fine ship, and by an American officer who accompanied her to America, as the finest ship he had ever seen.