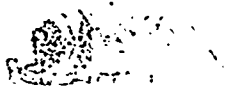


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The Volunteer Review,

AND

MILITARY AND NAVAL GAZETTE.

"Unbought, unbought, our swords we draw,
Togaard the Monarch, fence the Law."

OTTAWA, TUESDAY, NOV. 18, 1873.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Letters addressed to either the Editor or Publisher, as well as Communications intended for publication, must, invariably, be *pre paid*. Correspondents will also bear in mind that one end of the envelope should be left open, and at the corner the words "Printer's copy" written, and a two or five cent stamp (according to the weight of the communication) placed thereon will pay the postage.

It was long held as a true maxim that the strength of a ship or fortress should be measured by the number of men inhabiting it, all other accessories being equal; and there is nothing yet, in all the mechanical changes which have so modified the character of naval or military architecture, to prove the proposition either false or obsolete. The system of floating batteries, of which Mr. REID is at once the inventor and the apostle, are said to have all their requirements fulfilled by a few artillery men, a few stokers, a few firemen, a corporal's guard of mines, and a sufficient sprinkling of officers to command the whole—the total, from captain to cabin boy, ranging from 150 to 500, according to size. For purposes of mere harbour defence, and as sea-crows, it is quite possible that such a ship's company is quite sufficient;

but a seagoing fleet is a necessity, and the efficiency of such an armament is to be measured by the number of able seamen that man it, quite as much as by the offensive and defensive capabilities of the machines employed.

It is also evident that mere floating coffins or cheese boxes like the *Devastation* are not calculated for the active requirements of naval warfare, and that, except as an auxiliary to be carefully husbanded, steam as a motive power is not destined to be the main agent in the propulsion of ocean cruisers.

As coming events cast their shadows before, so the return of the British Admiralty to a sound state of mind, as evidenced by the construction of the *Shah*, leads to the conclusion that the day for the exhibition of the best qualities of *able seamen* have not passed away, and that our fleets will be commanded by something more nearly resembling the men of NELSON's time than the present combination of engineers and artillery officers in command of the Royal Navy.

Of course, like all other general rules this is proved by exceptions, and we are happy to say they are neither few nor far between; but it is impossible to read one of the valuable papers on naval subjects which have of late years appeared in the Journals of the Royal United Service Institution without being struck with the evidence of a lack of knowledge of seamanship which pervades the Royal Navy; and for this there is good reason. When an officer finds that he has not the control of the motive power which propels his vessel, he is only to study the conditions under which it can be applied. As long as *sail power* was the *motor*, the atmospheric conditions were necessarily keenly studied, and the mechanical application of the power under any or every phase of the varying elements in which it was to be applied eagerly investigated. The proper disposition of a sail at the right moment effected the object sought, and a thorough knowledge of the complicated mechanism of a sailing vessel, with the ability to reduce it to practice, displayed the able seaman.

When steam superseded sail power, another state of things was seen. The *navigating* lieutenant, who had superseded the sailing master, was actually only accountable for the *trim* of the vessel. He neither had nor could have more control over his engine than any other outsider whose orders to go ahead or astern should be obeyed by the engineer; consequently, it was not a matter of primary necessity that he should know more than the tendency of the specific gravity of the mass with which he had to deal when in motion. The change that would substitute for such a state of things seamanship in its proper acceptance would be a much desired improvement.

The sixth of October will be a memorable day in the annals of *La Belle France*, for on that day was arraigned at the bar of a court martial, presided over by a Prince of the blood of one of the three dynasties now struggling for the throne of that unlucky country, a soldier grown grey in her service, eminent alike for his military abilities, his undaunted courage, and his overwhelming misfortune, — Marshal BAZAINE, the commander in chief of more than thirty legions of the soldiers of the late French empire, and the unlucky General, who, by a series of rapidly succeeding events, was obliged to submit to the disgrace of the *Caudine Fork*, without benefitting his country.

The soldier that has followed intelligently the series of events that led to the surrender of Metz will feel a pang of sorrow for the disgraceful manner in which the first soldier of France has been treated by the Government and people of that country, and will be at no loss to understand why donkeys will bray at the captive lion.

There can be very little doubt that the defence will show plainly the state of disorganization into which the French troops must have fallen was not confined to the rank and file alone, and that many of the Marshal's accusers did more by their own neglect and insubordination to bring disaster and disgrace on their country than the cowardice and want of discipline so freely charged against their soldiers; hence it is convenient and a highly politic act on their part to join in the cry against the man whose misfortunes are greatest, and whose ill fortune it has been to hold the command of demoralized troops and political Generals.

It is not necessary to go over the charges against the Marshal; but it is an evil precedent to deal thus with a brave and gallant soldier for evils which were the result of the plottings of a set of scoundrels in Paris. The rascally agitators that crippled the energies of the Empire, prostrated their country in the dust, murdered her most eminent citizens, and burned her capital, are allowed to walk at large, and find it their interest to make the first soldier in France a scapegoat to hide their own villainies.

It is not surprising to see the grandson of the infamous L'Egalite presiding at such a mockery of a court martial. He sacrificed his kinsman and sovereign to the *sacred* *culottes* of Paris, in hopes to fill the throne, while his descendant is quite willing to please the Communists by sacrificing a scapegoat to their thirst for innocent blood, a soldier who might have stood in the way of a similar ambition.

The following description of the scene in court, and comments on this extraordinary case, are from our contemporary the *Broad Arrow*, whose report of the trial will be found in another page:

"Round the horse-shoe table, covered with green cloth, are seated ten general