

of being superior to the average British soldier in any capacity; and while it may be possible to handle them in peace manoeuvres, a very different state of affairs will be experienced in actual warfare.

We should like to see the whole question of skirmishing intelligently discussed, and the pending change in tactics adopted with reference to the management of a battalion under fire, and to the preservation of its organization in action. We do not believe in half battalions. It is not possible to handle such a body effectively; and we are satisfied that the whole problem of tactics must be solved by actual practice in a manner consonant with our organization.

We publish to day a letter which appeared in the *U.S. Army and Navy Journal* of 28th December, on the question of the rival torpedo boats of Messrs. Ericsson and Lay, the perusal of which will not give the reader any very satisfactory idea of the mechanical value of either.

The admission made by the gallant writer that the Lay torpedo is "intended to attack an enemy going straight for the opponent; and after performing her mission properly she will not be expected to return, is of a character to shew the impracticability of a system that will sacrifice a boat at every operation.

With all due deference to the inventors, the Board of distinguished officers and the gallant Commander KIRKLAND, the Lay torpedo boat is quite as complicated a machine as the Ericsson, and both are wholly unsuited to the objects for which they are ostensibly intended.

Capt. KIRKLAND forgets that the slack of the telegraph wire of the torpedo boat will have the effect of causing that complex machine to drift out of its course, especially if the tide is running down, so that attack at high water is only possible. Moreover, the danger of fouling is one that cannot be avoided or evaded, and the chances of rising again if submerged are very small. Altogether, it is evident such a craft will be of little use, except as a toy; and as it is not necessary for ironclads to anchor within one mile of shore, its value as a weapon of defence would be nothing. The distance cannot be increased, because the slack of her connecting cable would only add to her tendency to drift.

It is evident that torpedoes must be confined to narrow rivers; and they can only be used as obstructions, being more easily placed, but not as effective as piles.

The explosive force of a submarine mine rarely extends over a radius of fifteen or twenty feet; an ordinary seine made of two inch rope, sunk to a depth of twelve feet outside the hawse swivel of an ironclad, would render the torpedo boat useless. There are other ways of neutralizing the efforts of this puny substitute for a good gunboat.

We copy from the *Broad Arrow* an article on *American Harbor Defence*, which appears to bear out what we have always held to be the fact with respect to torpedoes, that they are auxiliaries only to be classed with piles, abatis, *chateaux de friese*, booms, or any other method of obstructing passages and holding an adversary under fire till his demoralization or destruction was accomplished, but that they could not be used as active means of offence, and that their value as defensive agents would be neutralized by simply landing a force to storm the supporting forts or turn their defences, and that they can be avoided in almost any case.

As seaports will be assailed from the sea, it is evident their first line of defence must not be close in shore, and, as *Broad Arrow* points out, any nation trusting exclusively to inshore defense, abdicates its rights as a maritime power, and relies more on the forbearance of its neighbors than on its means of active resistance.

In the event of any European contest, for the balance of this century at least, it will not be necessary to take the United States into account at all, and English statesmen should realize this fact: that she has no navy, is not in a position to create one, and that this Dominion is able to hold her military power in check, if England will only do her duty on the seaboard.

It is evident that the English military journals have at length fathomed the full depth of Yankee pretension, and that they are enabled to set a true value on the efforts our neighbors are able to make. Forty millions of people, scattered over a surface of two million square miles, are not formidable opponents; especially when every part of that territory is traversed by navigable rivers, easily accessible, and there does not exist any efficient means of keeping an enemy at arms-length.

THE DRILL SHED COLLAPSED.—Last night about half past ten o'clock, the residents in the vicinity of the Drill Shed were startled by a crashing noise, and on examination it was found that the drill shed roof had caved in, and the whole institution became flattened out. The scene today was one of general destruction, the debris being strewn around everywhere. Some of the armories were stove in, and a number of muskets stowed therein considerably damaged. Fortunately there was no fire in the building or a general conflagration and "blow up" would have been the result. No person was injured, but the family of Sergeant Major Evans, who reside in the northern part of the building, had a narrow escape. The roof had been in a shaky condition for some time, and the mass of snow accumulated on it was too much for it, and down it came. The structure was built some years ago by Messrs. Christie & Owens, and cost \$6,000 and at last it has succumbed to the tumble down fate of the drill sheds throughout the Dominion. It is somewhat marvellous that so many of them have come to grief after so short an existence.—*London Herald*, Jan. 4 1873.

The *Japan Mail* denies that the clergy have been invited by the Japanese Government to take part in the discussion of the question of religious toleration.

Many pirates have been captured and destroyed.

All actors and wrestlers in Japan have been notified that they can pursue their profession only three years longer, when they must follow some useful employment.

Males Japanese are no longer required to shave their heads, but a topknot must be retained.

The Japanese Government has granted the petition of the native merchants to be allowed to construct telegraphs and rail roads.

The Aguero expedition is reported to have made a landing in Cuba on the Edgar Stuart.

The *Herald* states that the steamer Edgar Stuart, which recently sailed from Aspinwall and Carthagena, had a full cargo of arms and ammunition and some volunteers.

The steamship Erio, Capt. Finkle Paige, of the United States and Brazil steamship Company's line, which sailed from Rio Janeiro on the 26th Dec. for New York via West India ports, was burned at sea on the 1st of January, off Pernambuco. All on board were saved.

The mail steamer from Rio de Janeiro, with advices to the 14th Dec. has arrived. There had been bloody election riots in the City of Parana, and several persons were killed.

A letter from a naval officer states that the population at Tientsin, near Peking, are much alarmed, from the fact the Chinese being liberally supplied with breech-loading arms.

The Minister of Public Works and the Minister of Justice and ecclesiastical officers have resigned. Their successors have not yet been appointed.

The obsequies of the late ex-Emperor of France were celebrated in this city today and participated in by immense crowds of people. The mayor and prefect and troops stationed in the city also took part in the ceremonies.

A boiler in a factory at Charleroi exploded this morning, with most fatal results. Four persons were instantly killed, and a large number wounded, some of them in a very serious manner.

The *Levant Times* announces that the Sultan has confided the instruction of his youngest son, Abdul-Medjid, to Halil Pasha Grand Master of Artillery. His Imperial Highness, who is not five years of age, will commence his studies after Bairam, by daily attending the gun factory, Tophaneh.