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The Volunteer Review,

AND

MILITARY AND NAVAL GAZETTE.

"Unbribed, unbought, our swords we draw,
To guard the Monarch, fence the Law."

OTTAWA, MONDAY, JULY 1, 1872.

LIEUT.-COLONEL WAINSWRIGHT GRIFFITHS, at present on a tour through British Columbia, has kindly consented to act as the Agent for the VOLUNTEER REVIEW in that Province.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Letters addressed to either the Editor or Publisher, as well as Communications intended for publication, must, invariably, be *prepaid*. Correspondents will also bear in mind that one end of the envelope should be left open, and in 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 would appear from the leading article in *Broad Arrow* of 8th June, that our anticipations respecting the failure of the "large rifled guns," as a naval armament, have been singularly correct.

Our contemporary commenting on the system of rifling says:—"But without attempting to assert that the adoption of the faulty French rifling, and its weak projectile, was due to a want of either military experience or mechanical knowledge, we can unhesitatingly affirm that the time for enquiry into the propriety of retaining the system for the

Navy has now arrived. We believe too that our readers on learning the intelligence received, while we are writing, of the serious damage done to another of the 18-ton guns of the *Hercules*, will be of the same opinion."

The *Hercules* is an ironclad of over five thousand tons, armed with eight 18 ton guns, and of these several have been already under repair; but the late damage was caused by the premature bursting of a shell in the gun, splitting it through tube and coil so as to completely disable it.

A most instructive history in science and practical mechanics could be written from the failures of every attempt to arm the Navy of Great Britain with rifled ordnance—nearly one thousand of the 110 pounder Armstrong rifled guns—the *ne plus ultra* of artillery in their day—were manufactured with their stores of lead-coated shot before a failure was anticipated—it came in action: and £1,000,000 sterling was lost in consequence—the guns were condemned.

The present system was introduced and the result is as shown; but it is not all: the *Royal Sovereign* during a week's practice at Spithead had several 9 inch common shells broke up on firing—the boats crews about to land under such protection should be pitied.

It is stated by the Inspector of Ordnance "that three out of four 25-ton guns in the *Monarch* had their grooves slightly burred, and the fourth gun required re-venting after thirty-five rounds only of firing in three years."

It is very little wonder indeed that the people of England should experience grave doubts as to their capability of resisting the disembarkation of a well appointed invading force.

Under existing circumstances a naval battle could hardly fail to be disastrous to her, and she would not have the consolation of inflicting such a loss on the enemy as would make his victory barren; a circumstance which, on more than one occasion, saved her from utter annihilation.

The question of guns, military and naval, has yet to be solved, and if ever the monster artillery can be made available it must be in shore batteries—mechanical skill will undoubtedly overcome the difficulties indicated and existing—but the machine will never be successfully applied as a naval armament in the proper sense of that term.

We question the capability of any manageable mass of metal of which those guns could be composed withstanding the strain of a service charge for 100 rounds fired consecutively, and are pretty sure it would be unserviceable from heating before half the number were fired.

The designers of those guns must have imagined that a naval action would be decided by half a dozen shots fired at intervals of three minutes, the vessels meantime making a difference in range of over 1000 yards between each shot,—a likely condition to ensure accuracy of firing or aim and displaying

the superior excellence of delicately and artistically rifled guns.

In our issue of the 17th June, a quotation from Captain Colomb's lecture on "the attack and defence of fleets," shows conclusively the superior value of the old 68-pdr., as far as accuracy of fire is concerned.

The whole subject is of great interest and new developments may be looked for in connection therewith.

SOMEWHERE about thirty years ago military and naval philosophers had their minds exercised over the doings and pretensions of a Captain WARNER of the Royal Navy, who proposed to destroy a vessel by some secret process known only to himself, but which he would put the Government of Great Britain in possession for a consideration.

He also declared that under certain conditions he could make artillery attain a range of three miles with accuracy—his projects were ridiculed. *Punch* nicknamed him long range WARNER, and he was generally laughed at as an idle speculator by that portion of the public who did not consider him a fool or imposter—time however has queer revenges—and if poor WARNER had lived long enough he would have seen the last of his pretensions realized; while the first is declared to be superior to fleets for harbor or coast defence, and even superior to artillery for naval armaments.

There can be no question that Captain WARNER was the original inventor of the torpedo—as his only experiment was a complete success—but the question will arise as to what value is to be ascribed to either the long range or the torpedo?

Taking the former at a limit of three miles, what effect could be produced in action by shot at that distance; the resisting power of the vessel or fort &c. being measured by its penetrability at 1000 yards?

The deviation as stated, by Capt. COLOMB, with the vessel, which is the platform of the gun, rolling through an angle of 16 to 32 degrees may be at the 1000 yards range over 360 yards. At the long range the error proportionately would be over a mile, and this would occur from an error of half an inch in laying the gun, so that a shot fired at sea on either side of the point on which the gun was trained—not a very splendid or encouraging result.

It will be more difficult to define the value of a torpedo in actual warfare; it is quite possible that by using them as *caltrops* were used in ancient time to defend dead angles, or prevent the approach of cavalry—that is, to scatter them broad cast over the entrance to a bay or narrow channel, and if the enemy is uncommonly stupid he may be caught—it is as likely however that they would be just as mischievous to friends as foes—and the latter could easily devise means involving the minimum of risk for *flushing* them out.