

day would have nothing to do with it, which is saying nothing against it, as the English authorities have always—often, to do them justice, on grounds of honor and humanity—been slow to adopt destructive inventions. It was in this spirit that we seldom or never used langridge in naval warfare, except, we believe, against swarms of oriental pirates, or in some such cases, and an English officer was absolutely rebuked for inventing a gun precisely similar to the Gatling and other weapons of that sort, as too destructive to be introduced with due regard to the national honor.

It is probable that Gatlings, torpedoes, and such like gear, have dispelled a good deal of this by no means discreditable squeamishness, and it may be fortunate for us in another war if it be so. We have long inclined to the opinion that the extraordinarily rapid advance and multiplication of scientific war-appliances, taken together with the enormous expense they entail, will, at no very distant date, themselves begin to make war almost an impossibility. But the proposition which prompts this article is not of the deadly description we are accustomed to contemplate. It is said to emanate from Weston, the electrician, who suggests the use of nitrate of amyl. This drug very quickly induces insensibility in anyone breathing its fumes, and it is cheap and plentiful. Mr. Weston's idea is, of course, to fill shells with this chemical instead of powder, when, it is to be supposed, victory would lie with the side which could first lodge a shell or two on the decks of an enemy. The great iron clads, it is supposed, would be peculiarly vulnerable to this mode of warfare, as they suck down great draughts of air through their artificial ventilators, and the odor would thus soon permeate the ship.

Of course, there is a long distance, and the unforeseen contingencies are many, between theory and practice. It will probably be found that the dreaded torpedo is handicapped by so many possibilities of accident, that its practical results in actual operations will be far less important than is expected. But all things have a beginning, and it is by no means impossible that Mr. Weston's suggestion may be the first step towards a still further revolution in the operations of war.

#### EXPANSION.

Some ten or a dozen years ago, when Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was young in politics, and but a lieutenant, among others, of Mr. Gladstone, there were many who, if the taunt was with them only the cry of the mocking bird, thought it the thing to assume and express the opinion that Mr. Chamberlain was little more than a "borough politician," and had no grasp of Imperial politics. This was easy to say, but there may even have been a little truth at the bottom of the notion, for Mr. Gladstone's efforts were mostly in the direction of internal reform, and whenever he was (no doubt much against his will) driven to touch foreign or even colonial matters, his touch was sure to be conspicuously disastrous. Mr. Chamberlain, therefore, in his earlier parliamentary days, must have seen little to tempt him out of the line of those domestic considerations which probably then appeared to him to be of the chief importance. Whether or not, he then abstained from raising in muddles it was out of his power to clear. Every clever man is a gainer by extended experience, and Mr. Chamberlain is doubtless no exception to the rule. The grave consideration of the Irish question which has been forced upon him can scarcely have failed to be supplemented and connected together by what he has seen of American and Canadian institutions and their workings. His opportunities in this hemisphere were doubtless brief, and necessarily superficial; but his management of the question entrusted to him manifested diplomatic tact and grasp, and the whole experience was calculated to enlarge the scope of quick, and at the same time, sound perceptions.

Mr. Chamberlain's recently expressed broad and clear views of the miserable South African policy, and his candor in confessing and regretting his own share in it as a member of the Government, go far to satisfy those who had previously discerned in him the honesty, as well as the breadth, which must go together to make a statesman.

Mr. Chamberlain is now credited,—more or less in connection with Lord Randolph Churchill—with a scheme for Irish self-Government, as soon as the supremacy of law and order shall have been restored. It is of the nature of Provincial assemblies, and no doubt, would not, on that account, be acceptable to the Nationalists who desire one parliament for the nation. But in the course of sincere endeavors to reconcile conflicting ideas, there is an inevitable growth of recognition, expansion, conciliation, and compromise, which will flourish and mature all the more vigorously and quickly the more numerous the issues imported into the general consideration, and the more we think the matter over, the more we find ourselves impelled to agree with His Grace the Archbishop, and with the "Protestant Irishman," who favored us last week with one distinct point on the question, that Home Rule for Ireland would find itself quite naturally assisted by the success in any degree of the movement for Imperial Federation.

#### COLONEL DUNCAN, R. A.

The London *World* of the 23rd May, in one of a series of articles of considerable interest, entitled "Celebrities at Home," gives some particulars of Colonel Francis Duncan, R.A., C.B., M.P., D.C.L., L.L.D. Such an array of honorable letters would indicate the high calibre, so to speak, of any man; but when that man is both Soldier and Member of Parliament, it vouches for a talent of a large range of versatility. The name of this officer is of interest to Nova Scotia from a triple connection, that of military service, that of marriage, and that of academical distinction.

In 1855, Colonel Duncan went up direct from Marischal College, Aberdeen, and passed first of his class for the Artillery, his classmates some

twenty-two in number, having also all since held important staff appointments. Two years later, Lieutenant Duncan was on service in Canada and married a Nova Scotian lady, Miss Cogswell. He began at this early period to manifest industry and breadth by publishing an erudite essay on "The Rights of Women," under the Roman Law, which was so well thought of by King's College, Windsor, that he was awarded the Degree of D.C.L. by the faculty of that University. He took part in the Trent Affair Expedition, and afterwards, at Plymouth, wrote his first book, "Our Garrisons in the West." This was followed by his "History of the Artillery," a work so exhaustive that it elicited from the late Emperor Napoleon the comment, written in a trembling hand six weeks only before his death, that it was "a history of the progress of science, and therefore of civilization."

A graphic description of Jamaica, written during a short stay in that island, and his "English in Spain," and "Artillerist's Manual" followed.

In 1882, Colonel Duncan was appointed to command the Auxiliary Artillery, but was shortly ordered to Egypt, where he went through the terrible "cho'era campaign," passed the Khartoum refugees safely down to Assouan, and effected the evacuation of Dongola without loss of life. The C.B., the Osmanieh, brevet rank, and other honors, rewarded his energetic services, and thoroughly posted in Egyptian politics, he, after two or three unsuccessful contests in other localities, entered Parliament for the newly formed electoral division of Hulborn. He is also Honorary Chairman of the Oxford Military College. Colonel Duncan is so good a French scholar that he has lectured on the Artillery in that language, and even, it is said, in Arabic.

In Parliament he soon showed his attainment of the most valuable power of gaining the ear of the House, and his robust and telling speeches have been of great service to his party, both in and out of St. Stephen's, and he is believed to have been the first officer on active service ever selected to second the Address.

Such a man, good all round, a brave, practical, and energetic soldier, a strong and active politician, and, at the same time, of varied literary attainment, has before him, in the ordinary course of events, a brilliant career even in times of peace. Should there unfortunately be war, it may well be still more striking. In either, it will probably be watched with interest by Nova Scotians.

#### THE SHORT LINE TO MONTREAL.

It is almost certain that the Short Line to Montreal will be open for traffic the coming autumn. Under the circumstances, we should have expected that our business men would have been on the alert to provide facilities for handling the large freight business that is sure to be diverted this way. Instead, we find perfect apathy. No one seems interested in the grand future of the city, which, if it is to become great, will certainly have its greatness "thrust upon it."

While St. John, and Quebec, and Toronto, made strenuous efforts last session to secure the granting of the ocean mail subsidy to a line of steamships that would rival the lines running to New York, not a word was heard from Halifax. While the merchants and manufacturers of St. John have united, and are making every effort to make their city the Winter Terminus of the Canada Pacific, our Chamber of Commerce (?) is squabbling over politics, abusing the Government and cursing the railway policy that eventually will make this port one of the great centres of commerce.

Instead of setting our brains at work to solve the question: Are we prepared to handle the enormous quantity of freight which the opening of the Short Line will divert this way? we are going along in our usual "happy-go-lucky" style, trusting in Providence and the Government, but not putting our own slothful shoulders to the wheel. We should be on the move now, or we shall be caught napping without a doubt, and energetic St. John will be first in the field and secure all the benefits. The trouble in the want of sufficient wharfage, which was so detrimental to the trade of Halifax last winter, is being largely remedied by the action of the authorities in rebuilding and extending the Government wharves and piers, but much still remains to be done. In the first place, the railway should be extended along the whole water front of the harbor from the Deep Water Terminal to the gas wharf. With sidings extending down all the wharves, there need be no fear of want of wharf accommodation. That the extension is necessary, and would have been an accomplished fact in any other city, goes without saying, but at present nothing is being done to compass this most desired end. If we are to secure our share of the through grain traffic, our merchants should now be arranging for through freight rates from the point of shipment in the West to the point of destination in Europe. If delay is made until the completion of the Short Line, it will be then too late to secure much of this business for the coming season. Besides the grain trade, there is the flour trade, which is at present in the hands of some of our most pushing merchants, and we have hopes that they are on the alert to profit by the completion of the Short Line. But why should we have to go into details? All branches of business will profit by the completion of the line, our wharves should be lined with shipping, our population largely increased, the taxable wealth of the city doubled or trebled, real estate advanced in price, builders and manufacturers pressed with work. All this should be accomplished, but, judging from appearances to-day, who would imagine that such a boom was to be granted to Halifax? What is being done by our people to deserve the success that is bound to reward intelligent effort? Absolutely nothing.

It is time that we awoke from our Rip-Van-Winkle sleep, and by a united and determined effort placed this city in a position to meet the great increase in the business that the completion of the Short Line is bound to send this way.