

*THE VOLUNTEER'S RETURN: SOLILO-
QUY OF A REPENTANT HUSBAND.*

I feel it, admit it, and solemnly vow
Each glance retrospective convinces me now
'Twas a cruel diversion. My angel to thee
With a penitent heart, I bend suppliant knee,
And implore thy forgiveness, thy pardon, and
yet,
Do not only forgive me, but also, forget
My folly and wanderings. Home,—happiness,—
bills,—

I forsook for the bright smile and amorous kiss
Of a full-grown girl, I plead it, possessing a form,—
A face, bust and ankles, each fit to adorn
An ideal Beauty, Italian or Greek,
Or, as beauty is legion-named happily to speak
As appealing to each, *he's ideal*. Well, true,
She was lovely as Venus; yea fairest, as you
If you like it; as Nature; as Art;
Or, as anything else, to be brief. But the heart
Where conjugal love for a time yielded place.
To a culpable craving for each pretty face,
Grows weary of that which can neither appease
The hunger for something more real, nor ease
The suffering inflicted; the vacuum fill;
Nor stay the remorse it is destined to feel.
Out, out, on such madness! the mind reasoning
Must pause and consider—examine the thing:—
Mad exchange! give a Pearl for a Batterfly's
wing!
And a fond loving heart, for a vain empty thing;

But "Richard's himself again," sorrowing yet,
A lesson he's learned he will never forget;
And oh! the wise counsel, example and aid
Make no such impression as when one door fall
Then he sees for himself, as I do, with a sigh,
What a terrible stake he had cast on this die.
Like the Prodigal son, I'll arise and I'll own
To my fond little wife that the love she has
shown

I'm unworthy of, quite; and I only shall ask
Her forbearance and aid in the difficult task
Of forming myself with unflinching care,
By degrees to obtain even a moderate share
Of the love she once gave me; and oh! who can
tell

What the new state of things shall bring! all
may go well,

And I yet may rejoice in her love, as of yore,
When the memory of this is remembered no
more.

ARMAMENTS OF UNARMORED SHIP.

(From the Broad Arrow)

In the interests of the Services and national defence, it is perhaps somewhat to be regretted that discussions like the recent one in the *Times* on the armaments of the *Raleigh* and the *Inconstant* should be carried on in the daily papers, instead of in a more professional arena, inasmuch as it is to be feared that the manifestation of such differences of opinion tends to prejudice the public in general, and the House of Commons in particular, against spending money on war materiel, so long as conflicting views as to types and patterns are entertained by authorities on the subject.

With respect to the particular matter which has been lately argued between Mr. E. J. Reed on the one hand and "A Seaman Gunner," Sir William Palliser and Rear-Admiral Heath on the other, we may just say frankly at the outset that we are not prepared to range ourselves out and out on either side of the general question, because we think there has been a tendency to narrow unduly to single issues what is in reality a large and many-sided question; a proceeding which—however much it may facilitate arriving at just conclusions, where, as in a court of law, it is really applicable—has in ordinary discussions often the result of preventing a comprehensive view being taken

of all the circumstances of the case. What we, therefore, now propose to attempt is to unfold the subject a little more, and to indicate some of the circumstances as yet unnoted which appear worthy of being taken into consideration.

In the first place, however, it may be observed that the question being one concerning strictly naval professional, and not naval architectural matters, the views advocated by "A Seaman Gunner,"—which, we believe, are shared by naval officers generally—are *prima facie*, entitled to most respect. We cannot help thinking that Mr. E. J. Reed evinces a tendency to be too dictatorial, not to say somewhat uncourtous, considering that he is dealing with a matter which lies out of his own particular professional sphere as a naval architect. This appears in the unnecessarily strong language in which—by implication at least—he denounces "a large class of naval officers" as "mere theorists and sophists," to yield to whose "opinions" would be to "make ourselves the laughing stock of the world."

Unfortunately—or perhaps we should rather say fortunately—everybody is more or less of a theorist in discussing the circumstances of a naval conflict between vessels of the latest types; but naval officers are obviously more competent than naval architects to estimate the probable practical circumstances of the case. This country has certainly been greatly indebted to the skill of private engineers and naval architects for improvements in war materiel, but this has been attended with the unsatisfactory result that naval and military matters are nowadays too much discussed from what may be termed the workshop point of view. It is naturally difficult for those who look at matters in this light to realise the fact that more powerful guns and thicker armour are not always an unmixed advantage if, indeed, in particular cases, they are an advantage at all. For example, some mechanical engineers would be surprised to hear that from a purely military tactical point of view the comparative effect of rifled field guns is less than that of the old smooth bores. It is in virtue of this practical professional knowledge that "A Seaman Gunner," and the other naval officers who agree with him have so far—let it be noted we only say so far—the advantage of Mr. Reed, who is really the party, if any deserving to be in this matter regarded as a "mere theorist."

For the fact is that naval men know that ironclads are practically much stronger, that it is to say, more impenetrable, vessels than Mr. E. J. Reed and those who like him base their arguments on mere target experiments, are thereby led to imagine, for "A Seaman Gunner" says, "every naval officer knows full well that in an action between two ships under steam direct fire must be the exception, and oblique fire the general condition under which the sides of the ship will be struck." Nevertheless, while fully admitting the very great importance of this point, we cannot help thinking, as already indicated, that Sir William Palliser and "A Seaman Gunner" are wrong in narrowing the question to the alternative, "ought a swift unarmored cruiser to accept or decline battle with an ironclad?"—as everything depends upon the strength of the ironclad her armament, her nationality as influencing the style in which she would be fought and handled, her speed the weather the place, and other detailed circumstances of the supposed conflict. While, therefore,

—see "Operations of War," by Colonel Hamley, page 130.

we are not prepared to endorse Mr. Reed's opinion that "the *Inconstant*, with her powerful broadsides of heavy guns, can destroy at least two thirds of the ironclads of the world"; we, nevertheless, incline to the opinion that there are at least some thinly armored vessels which she could successfully encounter, and which it is highly desirable that a vessel of her class, like the *Raleigh*, should be able to encounter. Our readers may be here reminded that the armament of the *Inconstant*, 15 guns, is ten 9 inch and six 7 inch rifled guns; while that of the *Raleigh*, 23, is two 9 inch, fourteen 7 inch, and six 64 pounders, the bursting charges in one broadside of common shell being 124lbs and 117lbs. respectively.

Although, then, we agree in a general way with "A Seaman Gunner's" view that "the right principle to adopt in the armament of unarmored vessels is that which will enable the greatest amount of destruction to be inflicted upon other unarmored vessels with the addition of a powerful armour piercing chase gun both forward and aft, to meet the case of chasing at long range or being chased by an armor plated ship," still we think that considering the number of weak ironclads still in existence, it would, on the whole, have been better to arm the *Raleigh* and the *Shah* on the same principle as the *Inconstant*. In other words, looking at the progressive construction of our Navy with reference to existing foreign fleets, it seems to us that, as regards frigates at least, we are not to put too fine a point upon it—introducing "A Seaman Gunner's" principle just a few ships too soon. It would have been better to have armed our new frigates of the *Inconstant* class in the same way as that ship, and waited to have seen if the change now actually exemplified in the *Raleigh* would ever be really required. For it must by no means be assumed that thinly armored vessels will assuredly soon become things of the past in foreign navies. On the contrary, it is quite possible that if, as we think probable, the next serious hostile encounter between ironclads shows that (in account of the necessary prevalence of oblique fire, as pointed out by "A Seaman Gunner") armour plating is practically a stopper defence than has been exposed from target experiments, certain foreign nations—especially second and third-rate Powers which have not the mechanical and dockyard appliances for producing powerful ironclads—may consider it to be worth their while to build thinly armored vessels, for the express purpose of advantageously encountering unarmored vessels. The importance of arming swift, powerful frigates on the *Inconstant* principle would, under these by no means unlikely circumstances, be obvious.

As regards the corvette and sloop classes, however, which under no circumstances can be contemplated as engaging ironclads, we are disposed to agree more unreservedly with "A Seaman Gunner," and accordingly to consider that the changes in the armaments of the *Vulgar* and the *Eclipse* have been decidedly for the better. The importance of a powerful broadside in these vessels is undeniable. For, as it is the proposition may perhaps appear, it must be remembered that, unless heavily armed with a broadside, there is great danger of our unarmored vessels, regarding them as specially constructed engines of war, being comparatively less effective than the old sailing frigates and corvettes; for this reason, that it is easier to extemporise an unarmored screw corvette carrying a few heavy guns (heavy, that is to say, compared