

apt not to look forward, and though ships had increased to nearly double their former size we were reluctant to improve our dock accommodation till it proved to be quite insufficient, so arrears had to be made up, and under Lord Spencer and Lord Goschen we have undoubtedly entered upon an era of stone and cement. In some respects the demand for defensive works against torpedo attack may have been overdone, the result undoubtedly of military ideas, and a long immunity from the realities of maritime warfare. It is remarkable that Lord St. Vincent who had been an eye-witness of the retreat of the British fleet in the Channel before the Franco-Spanish fleet under M. d'Orvilliers in 1779 which he states left him "in the most humbled state of mind he ever experienced," nevertheless, six years later, as a member of a Royal Commission, successfully defeated Pitt's scheme for spending a large sum of money in permanent fortifications for Plymouth and Portsmouth.

This is a large question, but it appears clear, to sailors at least, that much money has been uselessly expended on the defences of naval ports in the last forty years to which it would be unpatriotic to direct special attention, but in illustration of this general statement I cannot resist referring to one instance, namely, the Zalinsky gun at Pembroke, which had only a range of 2000 yards, yet which was assumed capable of preventing our shipbuilding yard at Pembroke Dock from being bombarded. This wonderful invention was fortunately condemned as a failure after several trials at which the late Commander-in-Chief and Staff assisted, but it was intended to provide against an eventuality which was about as probable as the destruction of our naval arsenals by bombs from Count Zeppelin's aerial ship.

I have now touched on the more important of Mr. Bellairs' suggestions, and the deficiencies in our training as to which I concur partly or fully, but his conclusion that what he calls the "academic" instruction of our officers should be relaxed, is, I submit, simply retrograde and dangerous to the best