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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, TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 1873.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Letters addressed to either the Editor or Publisher, as well as Communications intended for publication, must, invariably, be *pre-paid*. 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

In another column will be found a synopsis of a lecture delivered before the Royal United Service Institution by Major MONCRIEFF, on the application of his system to Coast Defence. As our readers are aware the gallant Major is the inventor of a gun-carriage which has attained a world-wide fame, its principle being the utilization of the force imparted to the gun on its discharge technically known as *recoil*, for the purpose of bringing it under the crest of the rampart or below the top of the gun pit in order to have it reloaded, and raising it again, thereby making its fire to be delivered without exposing the gunners,

The great range of Modern Artillery demands that in order to attain its full value in shore batteries the lateral direction should not be limited by embrasures, which was a principle requisite of the old system, in order that both the gun and gunners might have the cover of the parapet; it is true that guns were mounted *en-barbette* without any parapet at all, but then musketry range did not exceed one hundred yards and artillery not over three hundred; at present the armament *en-barbette* would be all but useless. The Moncrieff system, however, affords all its advantages as well as many more in manœuvring and manipulating heavy artillery, it is indeed doubtful if the heavy guns likely to be used in future could be handled without some such mechanical application.

The lecturer shows the great advantages arising from its use and the possibility of using guns mounted on his carriages in advantageous situations, as a question of coast defence, however, we are of the same opinion with Capt. COLMAN, that the best devised system of land batteries would be useless in the face of the act, that the positions could be either turned or forced; and once the line was broken the rest would not only be useless but a positive disadvantage as retaining troops which should be concentrated to oppose the advance of an invader, no greater mistake in the defence of a country could be made than that of fortifying and guarding a great number of places. It was the ruin of the late Southern Confederacy and the fallacy of the system was proved by SHERMAN's celebrated campaigns in Georgia and the Carolinas, during which he captured the fortresses of the coast and their interior supports by simply cutting their lines of communication and outflanking them.

If the South had collected the garrisons of their great centres, thrown an army equal to SHERMAN's in numbers across his path at a key point between Atlanta and Savannah and forced him to two or three general engagements, there would have been no modern *Anabasis*, even if the Confederates had been beaten, which was not at all likely. They did exactly what Major MONCRIEFF advises should be done—fortified all the coast and covered it with strong garrisons—which were obliged to evacuate one place after another without firing a shot, as SHERMAN's army occupied the roads and railways connecting those positions with their sources of supply.

Captain COLMAN is perfectly right when he says that *gun boats* are the proper and indeed sole agents for coast defence, *inshore*, that is to prevent a landing in force, or impede it for strategical purposes. The lecture as well as modern experience points to the conclusion that a country with an extensive line of sea coast cannot be defended without a fleet, and naval supremacy is as much an element of modern warfare

as it was one hundred and fifty years ago, all the improvements in guns and ships to the contrary notwithstanding.

The true policy for Great Britain is to keep up a pre-ponderating naval force—as long as she is able to do that she will be practically free from invasion—and train her whole population to arms. Of course it will be necessary to protect her great sea ports from raids, but the large fortifications talked of are to our thinking a grave mistake, if an hostile fleet appeared before any one of them it had only one course to pursue—the city or town should surrender or be evacuated. The range of modern artillery puts that question at rest, but it should not be so defenceless that it would be obliged to submit to being plundered.

Well appointed field forces, a good fleet, and a moderate share of fortified positions appear to be the conditions necessary for successful defence, Major MONCRIEFF's lecture is well worthy attention as it is singularly instructive.

We have received the LXXI number of the Journal of the Royal United Service Institution; it contains the following very interesting articles, viz:—

The Autumn Manœuvres of 1872.

Lowering Boats at Sea.

An Account of the proceedings of the Chittagong Column of the Lushai Expedition.

Personal Experiences and Reminiscences of the Siege of Paris.

The Central Asian Question.

The Strategy of Russia in Central Asia.

All these articles were read as lectures before the "Royal United Service Institution"—amply discussed by officers and civilians of the keenest intellect and most varied experience, and contain the most valuable certain knowledge extant on the various subjects treated.

We have brought before our readers the advantages this Institution offers to its members, and especially to officers of the Canadian Army, amongst whom are several gentlemen of our acquaintance who could furnish valuable papers on the military relations of Canada to the Empire and the United States; and information which would tend to enlighten public opinion in Great Britain as to the actual value of the connection and the strategical importance of this country.

We have received from the Secretary, Captain B. BURGESS, prospectuses and papers of application for membership to the Institution, which we will be most happy to send to any of our readers desirous of becoming members, and endeavouring to serve their country through the opportunities offered by the "Royal United Service Institution."

The following notice attached to the seventy-first number will at once show the advantages offered.