

liamentary inquiry, for it is one of no small importance, and could be undertaken only by the Government. Our correspondent the veteran Major Haviland, in a recent letter to us, points out the disadvantages of scarlet as a military colour, enumerating, amongst others, its liability to turn black in this smoky climate, to spot with seawater, and to make its wearer a visible mark to a sharp sighted enemy. It is true that the major enumerates these disadvantages of scarlet as a reason for its non-adoption by Volunteers, but we must point out that these objections are equally valid against its use in the Line.

The associations connected with the colour are however, so varied and important that we offer no strong opinion with regard to a change. We only desire to emphasise the point to which we have alluded. The conditions of the case are wholly altered since scarlet was fixed upon as the national colour. But whether a change is made or not we are sure that the best public opinion, both in the Army and out of it will cheerfully yield to the Auxiliary forces their common right to wear the common colour.—*Broad Arrow*, 15th May.

Naval Guns.

Attention has been more than once directed in these columns to the expediency of introducing a greater amount of co-operation than at present exists between the War Office and the Admiralty, inasmuch as in consequence of the insular position of this country we can engage in no operations of war, either defensive or offensive, without both our naval and military establishments being called more or less into play. Nevertheless, although some general administrative improvements of this kind appear desirable, it is somewhat curious to note that in one particular and very important matter, namely, artillery, there now exists what might at first sight be loosely termed almost too much co-operation between the Army and Navy, although the real state of affairs would be more accurately described by saying that sufficient attention is not paid to the respective and often different requirements of the two Services in the matter of ordnance; that the military authorities, as represented by the Royal Artillery and the Woolwich officials, have too exclusive a voice in the matter, to the prejudice of naval interests; and that accordingly there is after all no real co-operation between the War Office and the Admiralty as regards the manufacture of heavy guns but simply a tacit disposition to allow the respective claims of the Army and Navy in connection with the question to be injudiciously confounded and regarded as identical; the military authorities, as just indicated, laying down the law, and dictating the course to be pursued with reference to the subject. In a word, the principle hitherto acted upon, with reference to the construction of heavy guns, seems to a great extent to have been that a good gun for the Army must necessarily also be a good gun for the Navy. It is easy to see how this notion has arisen, namely, from the fact that all our guns, whether for land or sea-service, come from Woolwich, which is essentially a land artillery establishment, while the breaking up to the dockyards there and at Deptford has tended to some extent to widen the breach between the Arsenal authorities and the Navy. It will be well if the new Naval College at Greenwich shall act in some de-

gree as a corrective in this respect, by developing among the naval officers studying at that institution an interest in the manufacture of ordnance as carried on in the neighbouring workshops.

The recent paper on "Naval Guns" read by Mr. Scott Russell, at the Royal United Service Institution, and the motion made in the House of Lords by the Duke of Somerset for a return of full particulars respecting the different classes of guns now in use in the Navy seem to indicate that the question of guns for sea-service will receive ere long special attention, on its own merits, apart from the ordnance for land-service.

There has of late been an attempt to get up a panic about breech loading *versus* muzzle-loading for heavy guns. We have been told that France, Germany, and Italy in consequence of the lessons of the Franco-German war, have adopted the breechloading system at great cost, and that we, through our pertinacious obstinacy in adhering, in the face of this fact, to muzzle loading, are jeopardising our artillery—hitherto the main feature in our warlike establishments which we could point to with pride and satisfaction. However, on the principle of considering the respective ordnance requirements of the Army and Navy separately it is apparent that "the lessons of the Franco-German war" have no great bearing on the question of naval gunnery, for there were no naval engagements during that conflict. In so far as they can be appealed to, they tell, if anything, rather against the breechloading system, as exemplified in the guns manufactured by Krupp, some 200 of which are said to have burst, or otherwise committed suicide, during the war. Now in these days, when ships of war carry so few guns compared with former times, it is a serious matter for even one of them to be disabled, and accordingly strength and simplicity of action, coupled with penetrating power and general efficiency, are the great requisites in a good naval gun. Captain Selwyn, R. N., expressed this in admirable terms at a meeting of the United Service Institution, in February, 1872, when he said: "I want a gun which will stand the most hard wear, the most wear and tear with the least damage, which will give the best general results, and which will be ready at all times for action; and which will not be probably liable in the heat of action to report from the gunnery officer to the commanding officer, 'Three guns disabled, and you have only got four.' Just picture the commanding officer of a ship receiving such a report!" Now, our muzzle-loading guns unquestionably possess these great advantages of strength and simplicity, the only objection being the difficulty of sponging, loading, and ramming home the charge in the case of the heavier calibres; but even this point has been made rather too much of, at all events as respects the guns under thirty five tons. It should be remembered that the muzzle-loading system was not adopted without the most careful consideration, the whole subject having been carefully investigated between the years 1864 and 1870 by numerous committees, who reported unanimously and with wonderful unanimity as regards individual members, in favour of muzzle loaders. Although the Navy was inadequately represented at some of these inquiries, yet there was no breechloader suggested at any of them which would have proved superior for naval purposes; the guns now on board Her Majesty's ships. It is said that better breechloaders could now be con-

structed than those which were then decided against; if so, we are glad to hear it, for it is evident that the Duke of Somerset is correct in his recent assertion that "a proper breechloader is, after all, the gun for the Navy." It cannot, however, be denied that this proper breechloader is as yet merely an idea which has never actually been fully and satisfactorily realized. For naval purposes it must be both strong and simple, in spite of the practical and sensible remark made by Capt. Scott, R. N., on Mr. Scott Russell's recent paper, to the effect that "now, when we have got complicated hydraulic carriages, it is high time to go into breech loaders." That remark must not be taken to imply that with hydraulic carriages it does not matter how further complicated the breechloading arrangement of a naval gun may become. This would be a strange fallacy, for if we are compelled to use "complicated hydraulic carriages" in order to work the heavy guns now carried, there is all the more reason for making the guns themselves as strong and simple in construction as possible. Complication, in itself, is an evil, though sometimes a necessary evil. On the whole, it must be acknowledged that a case has been made out for an inquiry as to whether it is possible to construct "a proper breechloader" for the Navy, and this can only be determined after exhaustive experiments. As these ordnance investigations will be undertaken for the joint benefit of both Services, it is to be hoped that the interests of the Navy may be more largely represented and considered than has been the case on former occasions of a similar description.—*Broad Arrow*.

LONDON, June 25.—Advices from Calcutta received this morning are reassuring, and state that the probability of an Anglo-Burmese war nowhere exists, and that the hostile movements on the Chinese and Burmah frontiers have ceased. It is officially announced that the King of Burmah had given a satisfactory explanation of his course to Sir Douglass Forsyth, British Envoy. Burmah further agrees to allow the British to pass through the Northern territory into Western China if necessary; it also admits the independence of the Kirona territory and agrees to respect it hereafter. War now is considered improbable. Confidence is returning in business circles here, which were greatly depressed over the warlike situation. Advices from China say the disorder in Chin Kiang growing out of the arrest of two soldiers for insulting the American Consul and his wife, has subsided. And the concentration of Chinese troops at that point has been discontinued. The Chinese Government has agreed to apologize and make reparation, and Burmah has agreed to render a satisfactory explanation to the Anglo-Indian Government.

Iron Duke, 14, double-iron screw ship. The London correspondent of the *Hampshire Telegraph* says:—"I hear from the *Iron Duke* that they expect to take a high place in the return of prize-firing for the year 1874, the practice having been exceptionally good." This system of prize firing undoubtedly works much benefit by stimulating a healthy competition between the ships of the fleet, and Captain Hood may congratulate himself on the success of the scheme as developed under his guidance when holding the appointment of Director of Naval Ordnance.