

THE "CAPTAIN," IRON-CLAD TURRET SHIP.

The new iron-clad turret ship *Captain*, which is now in course of being built for Government by Messrs. Laird Brothers, of Birkenhead, is far advanced towards completion, so far, indeed, that it is expected she will be completed in little more than four weeks. Her machinery and general fittings have been put in to such an extent that steam was got up this afternoon on board this ponderous vessel, with a view to testing her engines. These are of six hundred horse-power nominally, but they are calculated to work up to about three thousand. This powerful and splendid vessel, which has been constructed by Mr. J. Reed, the Admiralty constructor, under the supervision of Captain Burgoyne, who is ultimately to command her, is in every respect a magnificent specimen of naval architecture, and it is anticipated that she will prove a fast sailer and a safe sea boat. Captain Burgoyne, although comparatively a young man, has seen a good deal of service, having served in America and elsewhere under circumstances which required much energy, combined with prudence and professional skill. He is the son of Sir John Burgoyne, the venerable but highly honoured head of the engineering department of our military service. The trial of the engines to-day was in every respect most satisfactory; and the ship which has been, like the *Agincourt*, built in a dry dock, will be, it is expected, floated out in about four weeks. Another iron-clad, for which the Messrs. Laird are under contract to the Government, is likewise far advanced towards completion.

THE MILITARY TUNIC

Special attention has once again been drawn to the excessive prevalence of disease of the heart and great blood-vessels amongst our soldiers, though there is considerable difference of opinion as to the mode in which it is actually produced. The navy contrasts very favourably with the army in the matter of the existence of heart disease in its men; and it is quite clear that some very special conditions exist to obstruct the circulation in the soldier, from the influence of which the sailor is free. One day last week Mr. Myers, Assistant-Surgeon, to the Coldstream, explained to one of the medical societies the views which he holds as to the effect which the present clothing and accoutrements have in giving rise to the disease in question, two typical examples of which he brought under notice in the case of a couple of healthy-looking and well-built sergeants of his regiment, who had never had any prior ailment likely to account for the malady under which they were suffering, which malady consists in a peculiar dilatation of the great blood-vessels immediately arising from the heart, called aneurism. It can be readily understood that any obstruction to the onward passage of the blood from the heart must react upon these large vessels and the heart itself, and tend to produce dilatation in consequence of the undue force exerted upon them. Mr. Myers holds that mechanical obstruction to the flow of blood through the arteries generally is occasioned by the construction of the chest, arms, and waist, which follows the use of the present make of tunic and accoutrements, and more especially in the case of the great vessels nearest the heart, by the pressure of the tunic collar around the neck, fastened as it is by one large hook above the bony wall of the chest; the constriction exercised being

very decided when the soldier is fully equipped and actively exercising his muscles. Mr. Myers referred to the improvements which are being carried out in the clothing of the soldier under the direction of Colonel Herbert, by which the chest is allowed more play, but he believed that attention should be directed, not only, as at present, to the removal of the pressure exerted upon parts of the chest by the knapsack and dress, but also from the neck. One chief object should be, he thinks, to do away with the fastening of the tunic-collar by a single hook, as in the case of the Austrian tunic with its turn-down collar, which cannot constrict the neck in any way—the first fastening being a button situated over the upper part of the sternum, or breastbone, so as to leave the neck perfectly free to move in any direction. There is no objection to a loose stock. The plans in vogue for letting out the tunics about the chest generally, should that be desired, he regarded as very commendable. Mr. Myers advocates a very considerable increase in the circumference of the collar of the tunic, which should be made to fasten with a button, as in the Austrian pattern; the removal of the hook, and the substitution of perhaps a small catch for it. In the interests of the health and comfort of the troops the whole subject deserves to be more thoroughly inquired into than it has been hitherto.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE WONDERS OF THE CHASSE-PTOT.—A Paris correspondent of the *Nord* gives the following details of the Chassepot musket:

—Experiments with this arm have shown that the present military manœuvres must necessarily be changed. The execution made with it is such that entire battalions would be swept down as if by a cannonade. The men must present the smallest surface possible. They must be taught to spread themselves out as sharpshooters, and to form groups behind trees, and on advantageous positions. A proposal was made that when the troops are formed in a line of battle, they should dig a trench and throw up the earth before them to form a rampart; but for that to be done the soldiers would require to be armed as sappers; and some time would be necessary to execute such entrenchments. As a substitute, the men's knapsacks will be piled before the first line. In any case, the formation of squares will be entirely abandoned, as they do not resist the enemy, and the troops on the flanks cannot fire at present to resist the heaviest shock of cavalry. All that will be necessary is two lines, the second of which will load the arms of the first. The part to be played by mounted soldiers in battle appears to be so much reduced that three-fourths of them might be suppressed, the heavy cavalry especially. The only use of the horse will now be to make reconnaissances or pursue fugitives. In the next campaign a matter of importance will be for the army to understand the power of the musket, and not fall into confusion before the Prussian needle-gun. The war should necessarily be one of attack and not of defence, as what is wanted is not so much troops who stand firm as soldiers who advance. The Zouaves and native regiments of Algeria would be of great utility.

THE IMPERIAL VISIT TO CORSICA.—It is authoritatively stated at Paris that the Emperor will not go to Corsica till August, and that then he will sail, not in the new yacht *Herondelle*, now building at Havre, but in the well-known iron-clad *Magenta*.

ADVENTURE OF THE KING OF PRUSSIA AT A MASKED BALL.—The Crown Prince of Prussia gave a grand *bal masqué* which went off with great spirit, and not without a few humorous incidents. As the Crown Prince wished to preserve his incognito even to his own servants, he left his palace on foot, dressed elsewhere, and returned in one of the common *droschkes* or cabs, which, according to the regulations, were only allowed to set down at a back entrance to the palace. The King, with a similar object, came in a hired glass coach, and was at first driving up to the front entrance. The mounted policeman, however, who was stationed near the palace gate to keep order, would not allow such a shabby vehicle to set down at the grand entrance, and obliged the coachman to turn back, and drive round to the other street. How Majesty, esconced in mask and domino, must have enjoyed the joke of being ordered about by one of his own police! The King's figure is not such as to make concealment particularly easy, but with the aid of a repeated change of domino he succeeded pretty well. On one occasion, after he had quizzed a young lady—the Countess L.—beyond the bounds of human endurance, but at least of female curiosity, she suddenly made a snatch at his mask, when, to her own horror and the King's amusement, she found herself confronted by Majesty himself.

A CLEVER BOY.—The *New York Sun* having made some severe strictures on the bungling manner in which General Grant commenced his administration, was accused of making an outrageous attack upon General Grant. The *Sun* rejoined by giving the following anecdote of Grant's boyhood, to show that he bungled things a little then just as he does now. The *Sun* says: His story is that when Ulysses was a boy, old man Grant said to him one day:—

"Ulysses, get on to that horse and ride him down to neighbor Blank's, and tell him that I want to swap horses with him. Here is fifteen dollars. Take that. Swap even if you can, and if not, offer him fifteen dollars to boot."

Ulysses mounted, and whether he "taught Dave to pace" on the way or not we are not informed. But, arrived at the place of destination, he found neighbor Blank, and delivered himself thus:

"Father sent me down here to trade horses with you. He told me to swap even if you could, if not, to offer you fifteen dollars to boot."

An old gentleman, travelling on the western railroad, had two ladies, sisters, as companions. The younger, an invalid, soon fell asleep, and the old gentleman expressed his regret to see so charming a young lady in ill health. "Ah, yes, indeed," sighed the elder sister, "a disease of the heart." "Dear me," was the sympathetic response, "at her age! Ossification, perhaps?" "Oh, no, no, sir,—an ossifer—a lieutenant."

The Admiralty is about to make an experiment which offers advantages analogous to those which would attend the brigading of volunteers with the regular troops. We (*John Bull*) allude to the squadron, composed of coast guard ships, which is to assemble at Portland in May, when it is proposed that the vessels shall be officered and manned, in part, from the naval reserve. It is stated that the squadron will be sent out on a cruise which will probably last a fortnight, thus giving the men, and those by whom they are commanded, an excellent opportunity of learning something of manœuvres afloat.