

inure them, by constant practice, to carrying the load that had to be borne on the field of battle, and also to keep their feet in proper condition. A good system of physical training ought so to inure a man to carrying his war kit, and to manipulating his rifle, that he should hardly feel their weight. Mental training was even more difficult than the training of the body, and this difficulty was not made easier by the existing system of enlistment, which took account only of the size and soundness of the recruit's body, and not of his bringing up and antecedents. No pains should therefore be spared to make the school of every regiment or battalion as systematic and perfect as possible, so that not only officers and non-commissioned officers should be taught all that they required to know, but that recruits should be brought up to become well-trained efficient soldiers. He was one of those who thought that no occupation was so honourable and so interesting, if done with method, as that of training one's fellow-men. It had great responsibilities, and who could say how an iron discipline, or a lasty word, might influence the whole future career of the men under command? A case in point occurred when he was adjutant of his regiment. It was the time of long service and heavy punishment. There was one man notorious for his bad character. No amount of imprisonment seemed to have any influence over him. He was as well known in the orderly room as the sergeant-major, and his court-martial took an hour to read on parade. It was, therefore, with something like a sigh of relief that he (Sir Richard) heard one day that a general court-martial had sentenced him to be flogged and dismissed the service. It was a trying spectacle to see such a sentence carried out. The early parade, the erection of the triangle, the march of the troops, the march of the prisoner along his comrades' ranks, the reading of the court-martial and the sentence, stripping of the uniform to the waist, the lashing of the upstretched arms to the machine while the body shivered in the cold morning air, and then the orders of the bugle-major as he called out the numbers, followed by the thud of the lash as it fell on the cringing flesh. A sigh of relief seemed to come from the silent ranks when the last stroke was given. But even then all was not over. There was the visit to the hospital, the dressing of the wounded back, and then the degrading ceremony of cutting off the facings on the barrack square, and the ignominious kicking out at the barrack gate to the accompaniment of the "Rogues' March." All through this ceremony the prisoner had not uttered a word of fear, of bitterness, or complaint. Just before the parting the officer said to him, "If while in the service you had behaved half as well as you have while undergoing your punishment, you would have made a good soldier," to which the man respectfully answered, "I would, sir, if you had been my captain." Surely, added Sir Richard, there must have been some want of system and of care in carrying out the mental training in that man's company. Coming to the question of organization, Sir Richard said it included not only the disposition and arrangement of the troops, but also the preparatory steps to be taken, such as reconnoissances, correcting maps or making new ones, the preparation of bridge trains, the provision of special clothing, and so on. The art of being able to reconnoitre well was all-in-partant, because there was hardly an operation of war in which it was not employed. A walk with two or three companies along a Devonshire lane in August would teach the necessity of keeping tight clothes, especially around the neck, of opening the

ranks for air, and of avoiding too much drink. Even water drinking to excess was bad, and the best thing to take was a little cold tea or water at the halt or the end of a march. Having lucidly explained the duties of the bivouac, Sir Richard gave an interesting account of the bivouac the night before the battle of Ulundi, in South Africa, and then passed on to consider the question of battle. In this connection he advised all students of the art of war to carefully study the histories of past campaigns, for only by so doing, and by actual experience, could any conclusion be arrived at the important practical questions, how orders were issued and carried out, how fighting was influenced by want of food or ammunition, or by want of training on the part of the men, or knowledge on the part of the officers. Illustrating his meaning, Sir Richard related, with the aid of a diagram, the incidents of a battle showing how the troops were skillfully manoeuvred from daybreak until the following night, when the attacking army bivouacked on the ground that they had won, and concluded by expressing the hope that those present would have equally good fortune when next engaged in carrying out "the war duties of a soldier."

—United Service Gazette, April 21st.

Admiral Vallon and the "Magenta."

The following is a translation of the concluding portion of Admiral Vallon's report upon the *Magenta*, the debate upon the adoption of which led to excited arguments before the French Extra-Parliamentary Commission. The personal character of the views expressed has caused the commissioners to call upon the Admiral to revise the report, in conjunction with two of his colleagues. It will be noted that in it he made himself the spokesman of the *Jeune Ecole* :—

"From the whole of these observations, we conclude that the *Magenta* is neither better nor worse than the other modern battleships of our Fleet, although her stability, fully charged, seems a little less assured. If she should heel, there would be risk. Even the very perfection of her arrangements is a danger to constructors influenced by example, by superior orders, or by what may be called progress without experience; this perfection is too much (*elle surprend*) also for our seamen, to whom it leaves the solution of that complicated problem—the most advantageous employment of modern battleships to be adopted in the next naval war. We shall certainly recover for superstructures, with their immense weight of artillery, whereof the *Magenta* appears to be the extreme exaggeration, to which we have been beguiled, doubtless by foreign constructions presenting the same defects and the same dangers. It is high time to cry to the constructors 'Halte là! You are astonished at the boldness of your own work, and almost shake the confidence of those called upon to put it to use; return therefore to simpler and more manageable constructions!'

"The captain, shut up in his armoured conning-tower, with the deadly voice of the guns in his ear, assisted only by a few chosen individuals, will be given up entirely to the handling of his ship. He will not see his men; he cannot animate them by his presence or his example, nor communicate to them his orders, save by wires or speaking tubes, which have many chances of being cut in their long circuits. If he has not beforehand given precise instructions to his officers, if these have not identified themselves with his ideas, and, on their part, inculcated them upon those under them, and if finally, each seaman

does not understand the details and the importance of the duties he has to execute, there will remain, at the moment of combat, no assured communication with the captain, and each gang of men, shut up in a compartment, will wonder anxiously what is taking place in that next to it. We will not expatiate further upon a situation which can be fully realised only after a naval battle; but we firmly believe, with the beet of our engineers and seamen, that a return to greater simplicity, and to the employment of human powers, would be real progress. As we have said, there are in the *Magenta* 109 auxiliary machines, steam and electric, giving life to the complicated organs of this huge body. For machinery so delicate, and so easily deranged, we must have trained men, almost scientists; and the difficulties of the new training to be given to our old personnel, drawn from the *inscription maritime*, can be imagined.

"For two years we have had a programme which, before 1902, should substitute for the fleet of 1870 modern constructions three times as costly. Is it to provide our fleet with *Magenta*, whose type even before they leave the slips, has become antiquated? This question demands consideration. The *Magenta* and her congeners have insufficient speed; they should steam at 17 or 18 knots with natural draught. Their stability is destroyed by certain injuries to their hulls. Their range of action is limited by their insufficiency of coal, and hence their offensive value is that of simple coast-defence vessels manoeuvring about their coaling stations. Shall we persist in this course?

"The war of squadrons can only be thought of with forces almost equal. In the ocean and the Channel we shall be confronted by an adversary who, even after a victory for our arms, would remain, whatever we might do, mistress of the seas by virtue of her numbers. In the Mediterranean we should find an enemy who would hide herself by her superior speed, and would despatch swift cruisers against our coasts and our commerce, to oppose which we could now with difficulty muster a few vessels of the same strength and the same speed.

"We shall presently, in another part of our inquiry, in examining the decennial programme of new constructions, endeavour to arrive at the best system of rebuilding a fleet whose objects change from year to year, which system it is unwise to seek to establish beyond the period of construction of a single vessel. This, consequently, is not the place to deal with the matter. But our modern battleships, unable to go far from their coaling stations, appear to constitute merely a defensive force. What is ordinarily spoken of as progress in their construction has become, by reason of their elaboration, an imprudence which places us in the presence of the unknown in regard to the employment of them, and perhaps points to a backward step. Let us seek something more practical for wide offensive action, something which answers better to the desires and the character of our seamen."

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