

that day. Why didn't you take the remainder," queried the reporter.

"Because we got too hot a reception."

"How did the native troops behave?"

"They were no use at all. We tried to get them in front, and their white officers led them gallantly by the back 'cut' when the fire was opened from the town, and got behind us. It was one of them that shot me from behind. After we took the part of Nana's town our black troops came up. We had then entered the houses, which were built mostly of grass and wicker, and we were searching for the enemy when the black troops fired in on us. It was marvellous there were not more killed or wounded. One of the black troops was shot through the head and killed on the spot by one of his own men. The march up was the worst I ever experienced. One minute you would be on hard soil, and the next step would land you in a marsh up to your waist."

Molyneux, like Perkins, spoke of the officers in the highest manner. Their thought and care of the wounded blue-jackets was something to admire and to arouse a feeling of pride in following such leaders.

### A British Volunteer Fleet.

The report gains ground that the Admiralty have decided to make a serious effort to practically employ a considerable section of the officers and men of the Royal Naval Reserve. Some of the details of this scheme have already leaked out, and although the arrangements are not complete, there can be no doubt, we believe, that we are about to take a leaf out of the Russian book and start a British Volunteer fleet. Already something has been done in this direction, but hitherto the Admiralty have been content to secure the services of certain fine steamships of the Mercantile Marine, without making special provision for crews to man them in time of emergency. The Admiralty now pay a subsidy which entitles the country to the use of eleven fine vessels in case of need. These ships are as under:—Etruria and Umbria, of the Cunard Line; Himalaya, Australia, Victoria and Arcadia, of the P. and O. Line; Teutonic and Majestic, White Star Line; Empress of India, Empress of China and Empress of Japan, of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. In addition to these there are ten other ships of the P. and O., three of the White Star, and two of the Cunard Line for which special but less complete arrangements are to be made, but the precise details have not yet become public property. It is announced, however, and on good authority, that arrangements have already been thought out for manning the eleven ships mentioned above from the Royal Naval Reserve. The matter is not finally settled, as some points have to be submitted to the Board of Trade and the shipping companies. We have little doubt, however, that the ship-owners and shipping companies will be ready to lend their aid in putting the proposed volunteer fleet upon a firm

basis, even though some inconvenience may thus be caused to trade in the earlier stages. The Admiralty scheme is to man all these eleven steamships, and possibly the whole twenty-six, with officers and men of the Royal Naval Reserve. It is believed that special advantages will have to be offered to the crews to compensate for the sterner discipline likely to be enforced. The country is not likely to quibble about the expenditure of a few thousand pounds, more or less, provided the Admiralty scheme can be successfully carried out, and naval men will be unanimous in considering that their lordships have formulated a good scheme. It will be no small thing if we can ensure the manning of twenty-six fine steamers with reserve men exclusively, whilst it should also be beneficial to most of the shipping companies. The P. and O. ships, for example, are now chiefly manned by Lascars, and these men, though well enough in fine weather, are proverbially untrustworthy in times of emergency. We have little doubt that the company would increase its popularity with the travelling public if its ships were entirely manned by trained reserve men. The same reasoning applies to other shipping lines, the vessels of which are generally manned by a considerable proportion of foreigners. As a matter of course the respectable and well trained men of the Royal Naval Reserve will expect much higher wages than Lascars, and it is here that the Admiralty are likely to be confronted with the chief, and, indeed, the only serious difficulty in the way of their scheme. As regards the officers, we are not at all sure that any special inducements will be needed to secure their services. The Royal Naval Reserve officers already receive a substantial retaining fee, and we should think that the only further inducement needed would be some guarantee of regular and constant employment. Even, however, if the retaining fee has to be increased there should be no difficulty in obtaining a larger grant from Parliament in aid of the Royal Naval Reserve. As for the men, they, of course, will expect higher pay if they are to be subjected to stricter discipline and regular drills, but the present cost of the Royal Naval Reserve is so small that this is not likely to be regarded as a serious difficulty. The details of the scheme are awaited with considerable interest.

### The German Navy.

Since the year 1889 the German Government has launched a number of small ironclads of a class which is unrepresented in the British Navy, and which, says the *Times*, appears to deserve more attention than it has hitherto received in this country. The first of the series, the *Siegfried*, was launched from the Germania Yard at Kiel in 1889; the next, the *Beowulf* (late commanded by Prince Henry of Prussia) and the *Frithjof*, were launched from the Weser Yard at Bremen in 1890 and 1891 respectively; the fourth, the *Heimdall*, was launched from the Imperial Yard at Wilhelmshaven in 1892; the fifth and sixth, named *Hildebrand* and *Hagen*, were launched from the Imperial Yard at Kiel in 1892 and 1893 respectively; and the seventh and eighth, known provisionally as the T and V, are now ready for launching, the former at Kiel and the latter at the latter at the Imperial Yard at Dantzic, a yard which, by the way, has never before built an ironclad and has hitherto undertaken

only wooden or composite vessels. The ironclads of this class were originally designed as coast defence-ships, and were more expressly destined for the protection of the two ends of the North Sea and Baltic Canal; but they have proved more suited for service as small battle-ships than for coast-defence work, and their sea-keeping and fighting qualities are now considered so good that they are now classed as fourth-class battle-ships. During the recent manœuvres some of them formed the fourth division of the Evolutionary Fleet, and the captains' reports spoke most highly of all of them. The eight ships resemble one another very closely, though the latter ones embody certain improvements which the earlier ones lack. For instance, those of more recent construction have nickel-steel armor, and the T has water-tube instead of locomotive or cylindrical boilers. All are remarkable for the very small amount of wood that has been employed in their construction; and this fact, in the light of the great number of fires caused by bursting shells in both Japanese and Chinese ships during the recent action off the Korean coast, shows the prescience of the German Admiralty. Indeed, in the latest ships of the series there is hardly any wood at all. They are also steam-heated throughout. These little ironclads are 239 feet 6 inches long, 49 ft. 3 in. broad, and, at a displacement of 3,500 tons, draw 17 ft. 9 in. of water. The engines, driving twin-screws, are of 4,800 indicated horse power, and give a speed of between 15 and 16 knots. The armor consists of a complete all-round belt 7 feet 6 inches broad and 9 1/4 inch thick, of two covered barbettes of 8 inch steel, of a 1 3/4-inch steel deck, covering engines, boilers, torpedo rooms, and magazines, and of steel shields for all guns. The armament consists in each case of two 9 1/4-inch long Krupp breech-loading guns in the forward barrette, of one similar gun in the aft barrette, and of six 3 1/4-inch Krupp quick-firing guns, disposed three on each broadside. There are, besides, four torpedo ejectors, one being forward, one aft, and one on each beam. Two tubes are submerged. The torpedo armament of each ship has cost £27,800, and the gun armament £76,500; and the mean total cost per vessel is £322,800. Steam-heating and electric-lighting arrangements are fitted in all, and each craft has two very powerful search-lights. The *Siegfried*, *Beowulf*, *Frithjof*, *Heimdall* and *Hildebrand* are already attached to the North Sea Fleet, and the *Hagen* forms part of the Baltic Fleet, to which the T and V will be added as soon as they are completed. It is probable that at least one more ship of the class, to be provisionally known as the W, will presently be laid down, although no definite provision for it has yet been made. Of ironclads of a larger class—namely, of 10,040 tons displacement—Germany has launched since 1890 the *Brandenburg*, *Kurfurst*, *Friedrich*, *Wilhelm*, and *Weissemburg* at Wilhelmshaven, and the *Worth* at Kiel—four sister ships. A fifth vessel of a similar type is about to be laid down at Kiel.

Private Thomas Brown, was born in London town

And 'listed in the Fifth one day.

A pull a thing about, and turn it inside out,

Always was his pleasant little way.

Whilst firing on the range, he thought it rather strange,

His gun refused to act.

To find the reason why, Private Brown applied his eye to the muzzle—and he found it, that's the fact!

And the verdict was—

Raw recruit—Hang-fire round—

Inquiring mind—Underground—