

passing—the rebels sent forth their cruisers to scare their enemy's merchantmen into the protection of neutral registry, and so saved to the nation what would otherwise have been crushed out of existence before the close of their egregious warfare by the hostile influences of the "Morrill Tariff" and mis-adjusted taxation. In all history there is but one greater blunder than the presentation of the "Alabama Claims," to wit, their recognition and payment. But the English mind was conscious of guilty intent. Twelve years ago, the largest ship-building and ship-owning firms in all the world were "located" in the United States. There were single houses in New York and Boston, whose magnificent fleets would have been alone adequate to the demands of such a commerce as that of Venice or Genoa in its days of maritime supremacy; and which contained ships unrivalled anywhere in speed, size, "character," and equipment. They were considered, indeed, by the seamen of all nations, as being absolutely beyond competition on many points. Even their sturdiest rivals, the keen Scotch builders of Aberdeen and the Clyde, admitted that for the most successful assimilation of the two opposing desiderata of speed and carrying capacity, the American ships were without rival. While, for the coasting trade—saving only that of China, which beyond doubt equals that of all other countries combined, in point of magnitude, wealth and volume—in that, naval excellence was even more manifest, whether in number of vessels, aggregate of tonnage, or superiority of class; besides the important feature of special adaptation to special purpose; in which, saving again the Chinese, they had the field entirely to themselves. The characteristic inventiveness of the "Yankee" had flowered forth here too, making him master of a department altogether unknown in the naval science of Europe, a fact perhaps more conclusively evidenced by the old-world sailor's continual misappreciative laughter at "Yankee non-

descripts," than by any other indication whatever, and which Jonathan himself cuts a joke at in the old song, beginning:

"Me 'n' daddy 'n' Uncle Sam,
"Bilt a slupe th' shape 'f a clam."

A laughter which has ceased, however, and which has been replaced by a thoughtful gravity, since the time when the skill developed in the manufacture of "nondescripts" branched off under war pressure into the significant shapes of "cheese-boxes-on-a-raft," and "double-enders," which it may be added, were merely the fighting types of certain successful adaptations of principle, already for generations under practical test in localities where exceptional character of navigation combined with trade peculiarities and exigencies to produce them. Stevens' ram was a compend; a treatise in live oak-wood and iron, instead of muslin and paper, on the philosophy of *nautical warfare*; and remains still far in advance of the constituted naval authorities of Christendom, whose lack of eclecticism prevents them from utilizing any idea, no matter how useful, if it did not originate within the narrow bounds of admiralty cognizance. Even the "double-ender," slight advance as it is, had remained unrealized—had faded for ever perhaps, when Ellets' busy brain was stilled, but that the exigencies of the United States' service had compelled the "conversion" of sundry New York ferry steamers into "paper gun-boats," and thereby given something near the holy sanction of "precedent" to the innovation. This peculiarly American department of naval art constituted a tremendous armoury of ideas, in which the germs of many other still unthought-of weapons and engines lay undeveloped. But the consummate sailor of America has become already obsolete, and the great school wherein he was formed now totters on the verge of extinction. And yet the United States fancies itself a naval power, and that, too, in the teeth of the biting lesson ren-