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The Volunteer Review,

AND

MILITARY AND NAVAL GAZETTE.

"Unbribed, unbought, our swords we draw,
To guard the Monarch, fence the Law."

OTTAWA, TUESDAY, SEPT. 30, 1873.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Letters addressed to either the Editor or Publisher, as well as Communications intended for publication, must, invariably, be *pre-paid*. Correspondents will also bear in mind that one end of the envelope should be left open, and at the corner the words "Printer's copy" written and a two or five cent stamp (according to the weight of the communication) placed thereon will pay the postage.

It will be seen by the following article copied from the *Volunteer Service Gazette*, that the chivalry of the army and navy of Old England has not quite died out. That there is life in the old man yet is quite evident, and that it only requires a fitting opportunity to show itself.

Admiral YELVERTON is evidently a chip of the old block,—with him it is a word and a blow—and a manifest determination to stand no nonsense. With such men as he to command our fleets we have nothing to fear. England will still be mistress of the seas:—

"The cool and wise gallantry of Admiral Yelverton and his 'boys' in calmly setting at defiance the threats of the disappointed Intransigents, and quietly ignoring their far superior strength, is, we are convinced, heartily appreciated by the English nation. Without approving the somewhat hysterical raptures into which the *Daily Telegraph* has fallen on the subject, every Englishman who rejoices in a manly deed will unreservedly

condemn the faint praise and the cold sneers with which the *Pall Mall Gazette* sees fit to receive the story of an exploit which, wisely conceived and carried into effect, with an absolute indifference to immediate consequences, has about it all the old ring of the metal of the British navy, as true now as it was seventy years ago, and which will do at least something towards restoring what we must, for want of a better word, call the *prestige* of the British army, if it be true that that *prestige* has ever been impaired. We have ourselves an idea that foreign nations are not really so confident in the waning of our power as they make themselves out to be. Certainly the Spanish Communards, who are by no means averse to fighting, must have been impressed with a very wholesome conviction that the English admiral was not the representative of a decaying nation when they let him steam out of Escambray Bay with the British ensign floating at the mast heads of the *Victoria* and *Almanzi*, without daring to fire a shot after all their menaces. We are not going to discuss the question as to whether the Germans were technically right in stopping the triumphant career of these pirates, or belligerents, sailing under the red flag, or whether the English Government has or has not been made something of a catspaw of by our astute friends at Berlin. Certain it is that Admiral Yelverton had a very difficult and delicate duty cast upon him, and that by the high discipline and clear readiness to fight of every one of his officers and men, we have escaped a very dangerous complication, which might have set all Europe in a blaze.

What we have principally to deal with in this matter is the lesson which two of our contemporaries have drawn from the attitude of the British squadron, both before and during the late solution of the problem. Probably many of our readers have read the brilliant article headed "Mr. Goschen's Boys," in which the *Spectator* of last Saturday describes the street Arabs, who now form the bulk of our fighting seamen, and their docile courage and disciplined audacity. There can indeed be no sort of question, but that the men of the *Swiftsure*, the *Torch*, and the rest of our squadron, were possessed with an intense desire to fight, and that they managed somehow to impress the Spaniards very clearly with the notion that they meant to have their own way, and would not stop to count odds. The *Spectator* and the *Daily Telegraph* both deduce the same moral from this viz., that in the neglected dregs of our population we have a practically unlimited source of the best material, not only for seamen but for soldiers, and the best thing we can do is to draw upon this source freely. We must say that this does not appear to us to be the lesson we ought to read from the daring act of Admiral Yelverton and his men. The true moral is, we conceive, and we may assert it as a proved fact, without any boastfulness, that our countrymen, whether they be peers of the realm or street Arabs, are a very fierce folk, fond of having their own way, and quite ready to fight in order to get it. And whether they be dukes or ragamuffins, they are, like all other human beings, amenable to that rational discipline by which the readiness to fight is brought under control, and made as useful as it has been seen to be at Carthage. The system of training ragged-school boys at the national expense for the naval service is an excellent one, but we see a great danger in so far extending it as to lead the nation to believe that it can always get as

many cheap and efficient sailors and soldiers from this class as it may need, and may thereby relieve all its more prosperous citizens from bearing arms at all. We do not believe that the *Spectator*, which holds very sound views on national military service, would push its recommendations to this length, but it is difficult to see how it can be logically avoided. The objections to it are obvious enough. In the first place, happily, the source would not last for ever. If street Arabs are convertible at a small cost into such valuable members of society the nation will soon cease to have a monopoly of them for soldiers and sailors. And even if it continued to have such a monopoly, the danger of establishing a strong soldier caste drawn from one class of the population, and that the lowest, would soon make itself felt.

"But while we give all possible credit to the admirable result of training which our seamen have exhibited, we must not forget that the officers showed, as they have always shown, at least as much coolness and courage. We must also remember that we have one more shining proof just now before our eyes, if it were wanted, that the spirit of daring, of adventure, of high chivalrous self denial, burns as brightly among those at the head of our complicated system of society as it does in the bold A B's of the *Swiftsure* picked up from the kennel, and with only a few years of sufficient victuals and decent comfort. The moment it was known that there was work for soldiers to do, even against naked savages in a deadly climate, the only difficulty was to choose among the best blood and highest culture for possible victims to the 'customs' of Ashantee, or the miasma of an African swamp. The list of the officers chosen to accompany Sir Garnet Wolseley shows, at least, that luxury and comfort have no charms for either guards, cavalry, artillery, or line officers, when weighed against the chance of utility to the country and of fair distinction to themselves. Our knights are, at any rate, no carpet knights. It is then quite evident that the same spirit actuates those at both extremities of the social scale. We will not insult the rest of the nation by asking whether the same bold and patriotic spirit does not animate them. Wherever we seek we find the very finest material for soldiers—men of all classes, with a national taste for military arts, with immense gifts of courage, and of aptitude for all manly exercises, and of ready submission to training and organization. A minimum of teaching would turn every able bodied man into a soldier, ready to fight when needful. Train the street Arabs by all means, many of them will naturally become soldiers of our foreign Army, and will uphold the honor of the British flag as stoutly as the brilliant Guardsmen and Hussars who are gaily preparing for the fatal Gold Coast; but do not neglect to train to arms the bulk of the population, those who are neither pauper nor wealthy. If we do this, we shall have, in a very few years, a force for land service even superior to the marvellous Prussian military machine, which will make England as safe in her own island, and in her most distant dependencies, as Admiral Yelverton and Mr Goschen's boys have shown she still is on the high seas."

WE commend the following extract from a letter of Sergeant H. NOBLE, of the 1st regiment of Volunteers, Exeter, to the editor of the *Volunteer Service Gazette*, to the at-