THE Whig-radical Government of England in their zeal for Army and Navy reorganization and in the effort, as the *Broad Arrow* phrases it, to eliminate the *Tory* principle from the services—have so far succeeded in throwing both into inextricable confusion.

Under their regime sailors instead of being taught to go aloft to hand topsails were drilled to form squares, to receive cavalry, and as a consequence the disasters are more numerous than could be reckoned during a smart war under the old management.

When seamen are more expert at handling a rifle, and in the manual and platoon exercise than launching a boat in a sea-way such accidents as that occurring on board the *Ariadne* may be looked for as a regular occurrence.

We have heard of and seen a seaman fall from the fore topsail yard in a heavy gale, but he was first beat senseless with the slack of the fore topsail, the halliards having been carried away, now-a-days they have improved on that practice, and will fall from the main top cross trees being probably too well drilled as infantry to have much activity in hanging on to a lift or brace. We should not wonder to hear of cavalry manœuvres being next taught and Jack turned into a veritable *horse marine* before Mr. Goschen is done with improving the Naval administration.

The climax of absurdity has however been reached in another direction, and in none more fatal if possible to the future of the British Navy, for it appears that the armament of the fleet had been handed over to a board of Artillery officers with no less a personage than that universal genius the great Sir Henry Storks at its head, a man whose qualifications fit him equally for pacifying rebellious *niggers* in Jamaica, commanding the Army, inventing controul, manning and arming the Navy, and making equal impartial and disastrous failures in each and every operation in which he has been engaged.

The *Broad Arrow*, if not a very active friend of the Whig-radicals is at least not a foe, treats the question of Naval armament in its issue of 9th March as follows:—

"We understand that the 6½ ton naval guns are at the present moment ordered to be turned down to 4½-tons, to meet the want or supposed want, of the Navy for guns of this weight. The waste involved in this proceeding is obvious, for the 4½-ton gun could be made at half the cost for which the 6½ ton guns were manufactured, There are about 700 of these guns, the whole provided with costly iron carriages, which must also be sacrificed if the turning-down process is continued; or, are we to believe, that it is intended to replace the guns turned down by new 6½ ton guns?"

On the 16th *Broad Arrow* says.

"We have reason to believe that it is the intention of the Government to institute an inquiry into the present system of rifling naval guns, which are now so frequently injured by their own projectiles as to suggest a grave doubt whether it is advisable to continue the use of studs to give rotation. The latest instance of failure is that of the guns of the *Royal Oak*, one of which was injured by the breaking up of a Palliser shot, and another by the premature bursting of a shell. These accidents, following the disasters to the guns of the *Hercules* and the *Bellerophon* and the recent splitting of the tube of the 35-ton gun, have caused serious apprehensions to be entertained as to the endurance of our guns were it unfortunately necessary to use them in actual warfare."

On the 23rd ult:

"The question we raised last week, as to the cutting down of 6½ ton guns into 4½-ton guns for the Naval Service, *has not remained* long without an answer. On Tuesday Major Arbuthnot put the question in the House of Commons, and received an answer from Sir Henry Storks, speaking on behalf of the War Office. After the hints we gave on the subject, it is scarcely needful to observe that the only satisfactory part of the answer is that only one gun has been, as yet reduced below efficiency; but that the responsibility of the acts of naval men should be assumed by the War Department *is*, in the opinion of several officers of distinction with whose remarks we have been favoured, of grave import, and may hereafter result in national disaster"

And on the 30th ult:

"From the growing interest excited by our remarks on the conversion of the 7-inch 6½-ton guns into 4½ ton guns for the Navy, we were satisfied that the maladministration arising from the interference of the War Department with the armament of the Navy, is beginning to be seen in its true light. Our well-informed contemporary the *Globe*, in its issue of the 26th instant, speaks of the uneasiness prevalent in naval and military circles respecting the sweeping changes that are made in the *personnel* and *matériel* of war and alludes to the fact that hundreds of 7 inch breech-loading guns have been rejected as useless for naval purposes, and returned to the War Department. These useless guns have cost a million sterling, and looking at the amount of money wasted on rash and ill-advised changes, we cannot but think it is in this direction that our statesmen should aim at economy, in combination with increased efficiency. A Parliamentary Committee put an end to the expenditure on the now discarded breech-loaders and lead-coated shot, which would otherwise, in all probability, have continued to the present hour, We suggest, therefore, that another Parliamentary inquiry would afford the best means of bringing to light the causes of the present misdirection in the departments alluded to, and also of utilising the mechanical science of the country in such a way as to perfect the naval armament, upon which the very existence of our great maratime power, humanly speaking, depends. To revert to the subject which suggested these remarks, can we believe, if the Admiralty, instead of the War Office, had been responsible for the manufacture of guns and carriages for the Navy, that a million sterling would have been expended on the now discarded breechloaders, and that the manufacture of wooden and other inferior gun carriages would have been continued so long after their inefficiency had been proved? Would guns have been made of one size and then cut down to another, at double the cost for which the smaller size actually required might have been produced? Sir Henry Storks must be as well aware as we are that it is only throwing dust in the eyes of the House of Commons to talk of technical mysteries in connection with a subject which, when stripped of official mystification, is as easy to be understood as a sum in arthmetic.

While our authorities (we don't know whether naval or military, or neither is responsible) are busily engaged in lessening the power of our 6½-ton guns by reducing the thickness of the wrought iron coils, on which their strength and safety from breaking up (even if hit by light projectiles) depends, Sir Joseph Whitworth, as *Naval Science* informs us, is moving in the opposite direction, and has succeeded in very greatly increasing the power of guns by means of a new and simple breech-loading apparatus, combined with an enlarged powder chamber. This arrangement, Mr. E. J. Reed states, "will add enormously to our offensive power." The Whitworth breech-loader recently experimented with, is only of the size of the Service 12-pounder, but has a penetration far surpassing the heavier newly-adopted 16-pounder—a gun which is now considered by the majority of Artillery officers to have too large a bore. Where, we ask, are our pilots? and who is at the helm? but more than *all*, who is responsible for this comprehensive scheme of Artillery?

The history of reckless extravagance, impotence and efficiency never reached a tithe of what those extracts disclose under the most inefficient and corrupt Tory administration England ever had since she possessed a Navy.

Well might the Duke of Somerset taunt his associates with having troops that could not march and ships that would not swim, imbecility and incapacity are the leading characteristics of Gladstone's administration.

The launch of the *Thunderer* at Pembroke on the 25th March was an event even in the history of the mechanical wonders of the creation of the British Navy. The *Broad Arrow* from whose columns we extract an account of the operation, appeared in a previous issue to be doubtful of its success which it views with no little exultation. The *Thunderer* weighs 5,000 tons of iron and when fully equipped will weigh nearly 10,000, she will depend on steam alone carrying neither masts nor sails, is a monitor with a free board of 4½ feet above the water,

Broad Arrow says the greater part of her crew will be *stokers* and we presume the balance artillerymen; she is no ship in the common acceptation of the term, but a floating battery and it is very doubtful whether she could be safely sent across the Atlantic even though she could carry 1750 tons of coal.

She has every fault of her class, will be unmanageable in a sea way, and her ability in action will be doubtful.

Under the old system of ship building the most successful ships and best specimens of Naval architecture both as adapted to the particular service, and for practical purposes was designed and built under the supervision of the Naval officer whose life and professional character were at stake in the issue.