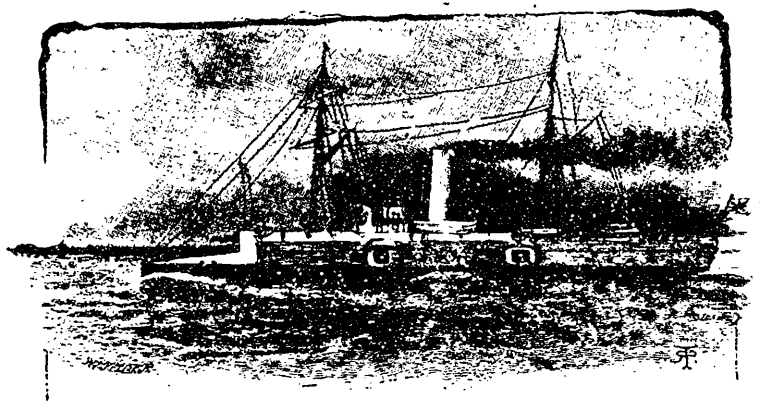


Scarcely is the vessel at rest before she is surrounded by a swarm of the peculiar high-prowed Maltese boats, the owners of which, standing while rowing, are clamorous to pull the passenger ashore ; for Malta, like its sister fortress at the mouth of the Mediterranean, does not encourage wharves and piers, alongside of which large craft may anchor and troublesome crews swarm when they are not desired. Crowds of itinerant dealers, wily people with all the supple eagerness of the Oriental, and all the lack of conscience which is the convenient heritage of the trader of the middle

turies of engineers, have been lavished on the bewildering mass of curtains and horn-works, and ravelins and demilunes, and ditches and palisades, and drawbridges and bastions, and earthworks, which meet the eye in profusion enough to have delighted the soul of Uncle Toby. Sentinels and martial music are the most familiar of sights and sounds, and after soldiers and barracks, sailors and war-ships, the most frequent reminders that Malta, like Gibraltar, is a great military and naval station.

But it is also in possession of



BRITISH GUNBOAT, "PROTECTOR."

sea, establish themselves on deck, ready to part with the laces, and filigrees, and corals, and shells, and apocryphal coins of the Knights of St. John, for any ransom not less than twice their value.

The entrance to either of the harbours enables one to obtain but a slight idea of the place. It seems all forts and flat-roofed buildings piled one above the other in unattractive terraces. There are guns everywhere, and, right and left, those strongholds which are the final purposes of cannon.

Ages of toil, millions of money, and the best talent of three cen-

some civil rights unknown to the latter. Among these is a legislature with limited power and boundless chatter, and, what is of more importance to the visitor, the citizens can go in and out of Valletta at all hours of the day and night, no raised drawbridge or stolid porculis barring their movements in times of peace. The stranger lands without being questioned as to his nationality, and the alien can circulate as freely as the lords of the soil. In Valletta many of the streets run steeply up a slope. One is made up of flights of steps, and none are level from end to end.