

mous that not only can they meet the demands of the mercantile marine in its busy time of peace, but they can turn out war vessels for our possible enemies, by scores. They would be idle in war, and available for the construction and repair of war ships. There are no such private naval resources away from English shores, and therefore at present for aid, for reinforcements, and for maintenance the enormous Pacific fleet responsible for the safety of half the world must in war rely on private and public yards crowded together in a small island in the north-west corner of the Atlantic ocean! To use a homely phrase, "all our naval eggs are in one basket," and though we may lay them one side of the globe, the communications on the other may be exposed or shut out from us while they are being hatched.

(To be continued.)

Military News.

—Sir Garnet Wolseley's opinion on drill, a highly valuable one, it is needless to add, is a good deal in accordance with that of the first French conquerors of Africa, who sought to make their men limber and ready, rather than to look to parade movements and appearance on drill. It is to be remembered that the seeming stiffness of the British soldier was borrowed from the school of England's royal and loyal ally, Frederick the Great.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON DEFENCE.—The Royal Commission on the Defences of the Colonies and India will not conclude their labours for two or three years. The evidence already taken shows an extraordinary lack of anything like a systematic plan for the protection of imperial commerce. Vancouver's Island and the Australian colonies are absolutely at the mercy of the Russian Pacific fleet. It is expected that the first report of the Defence Commission will assume the character of a confidential document for the information and guidance of the Government. A point of some interest connected with this circumstance is the movement which has been lately started by the Agents-General of the Colonies in London to bring about closer relations between the mother-country and her dependencies. The programme of that scheme includes not only tariff and emigration questions, but also the question of colonial defence.

—The German military and naval authorities are evidently determined that the shores of Germany shall be rendered as secure against attack as they can possibly be made. Assuming in any future war Germany found herself opposed to an enemy mistress of the sea, the latter might possibly, were the shores of the Baltic and North Sea unprotected, attempt to reach Berlin by landing an expeditionary force at some convenient point, establishing there a naval base of operations and advancing thence on the capital, while the bulk of the German army might be employed in defending some distant frontier. Accordingly of late years the German shores have been closely studied, fortifications have been constructed at the points which seem to lend themselves most to attack, and a system of defence has been carefully worked out, and arrangements for resisting attack have been perfected as far as possible even to the minutest detail. Last month strong detachments of the troops who, in the event of war, will be called upon to garrison the coast defences of the empire were exercised in target practice with the heavy guns mounted in the works. The exercises were continued for fourteen days; the value of the ammunition expended exceeding, it is estimated, a quarter-of-a-million marks, or £12,500. The heaviest gun used during the firing was the 28-centimetre Krupp piece, which weighs 27½ tons, and which, according to calculations made by German authorities, can at a range of 360 yards send its projectile

through the most strongly protected part of the side of an ironclad afloat, with the exception of the "Dandolo," "Dulio," "Ajaz," "Agamemnon," and "Inflexible." The 40-centimetre Krupp gun, which, it is stated can pierce an iron plate 24 inches thick at a distance of 4,000 metres, and which, therefore, can at that distance send its projectile through the armour of the strongest man-of-war of any navy, is, however, about to be added to the armament of some of the more important of the coast fortifications; but the manner in which they are to be mounted has not yet been definitely decided upon.

—Colonel Feiss, in an essay upon the military organization of Switzerland, states that the Confederation possesses an army of 202,477 men, consisting of 4,316 officers and 101,109 soldiers of the elite, and of 3,548 officers and 93,506 men of the landwehr. Colonel Feiss, who enters very fully into the questions of pay and exemption from service, says that the proportion of recruits unable to read or write was about one in six last year, and that for the last four years the proportions of recruits rejected as physically unfit for service has been steadily diminishing; while 57 per cent. were passed in 1877, the percentage fell to 49 in 1878 and 1879, and to 43 this year. The largest proportion of qualified recruits has always come from the cantons of Geneva, Vaud, Haut-Valais, Thurgau, Zurich, Appenzell, and St. Gall, but there has been a considerable falling-off even in them of late.

—A German medical paper gives a list of some of the most notable instances where in weather such as we have lately had bodies of troops on the march have suffered severely from the heat. During the Seven Years' War, when Frederick the Great was marching from Marienstern upon Bautzen, no fewer than 300 men died on one day—the 6th of August, 1760—from sunstroke. On the 21st of May, 1827, while the Guard Corps was manœuvring between Berlin and Potsdam, the men, exhausted by the heat, "fell down in masses" on the road, and the whole force became a mere rabble, some struggling on in vain attempts to keep their places in the ranks, others lying down and dying by the wayside. On the 8th of July, 1853, at the conclusion of some manœuvres in the camp of Beverloo two battalions were ordered to march to the adjacent station of Hasselt to proceed by special train to Brussels; but before the former place could be reached so many men had died from sunstroke, or had fallen down exhausted by the heat, that of the 600 men originally comprised in the two battalions, 150 only arrived at Brussels. Assistance was sent from Hasselt on the state of affairs becoming known, and throughout the night the bodies of those who had died from sunstroke and the bodies of those who had fallen down exhausted were brought in on wagons and carts sent out to collect them. In the following year a column of Prussian troops suffered in a similar manner, and during one of the marches of the French army in the Dobrudscha an equally great mortality ensued. In the campaign of 1866 the troops engaged suffered very little from the heat and in the war of 1870-71 there were also comparatively few cases of sunstroke, but during the operations connected with the occupation of Bosnia, large numbers of men fell victims to the heat, a single Austrian regiment marching from Brod to Derwent on the 30th of July leaving behind 320 men, thirty-one of whom died almost as they fell down exhausted. The summer of 1873 was exceedingly hot on the Continent, and many soldiers succumbed to the heat on the line of march or during exercise in the field; but this year, although the season has again been a warm one, comparatively few cases of sunstroke among troops have been reported, owing presumably to the additional precautions now taken in every army when men are exposed to the sun, and to the attention which has been given by army doctors and others to the investigation of the preventive measures to be adopted.