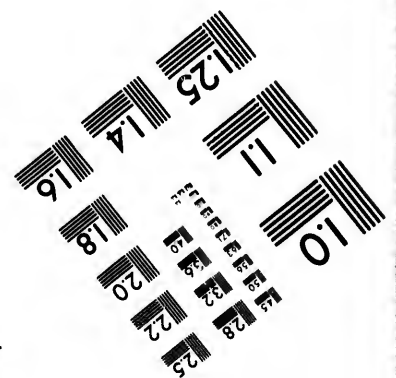
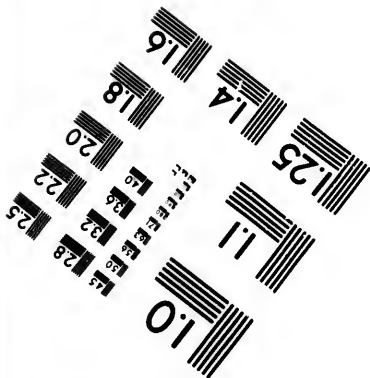
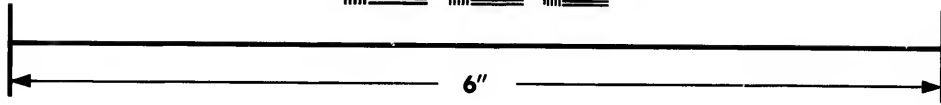
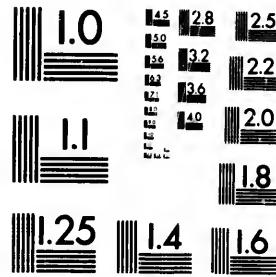


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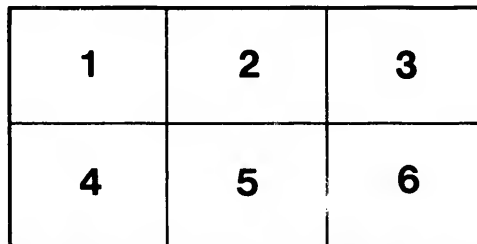
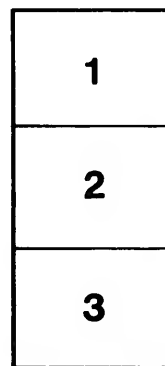
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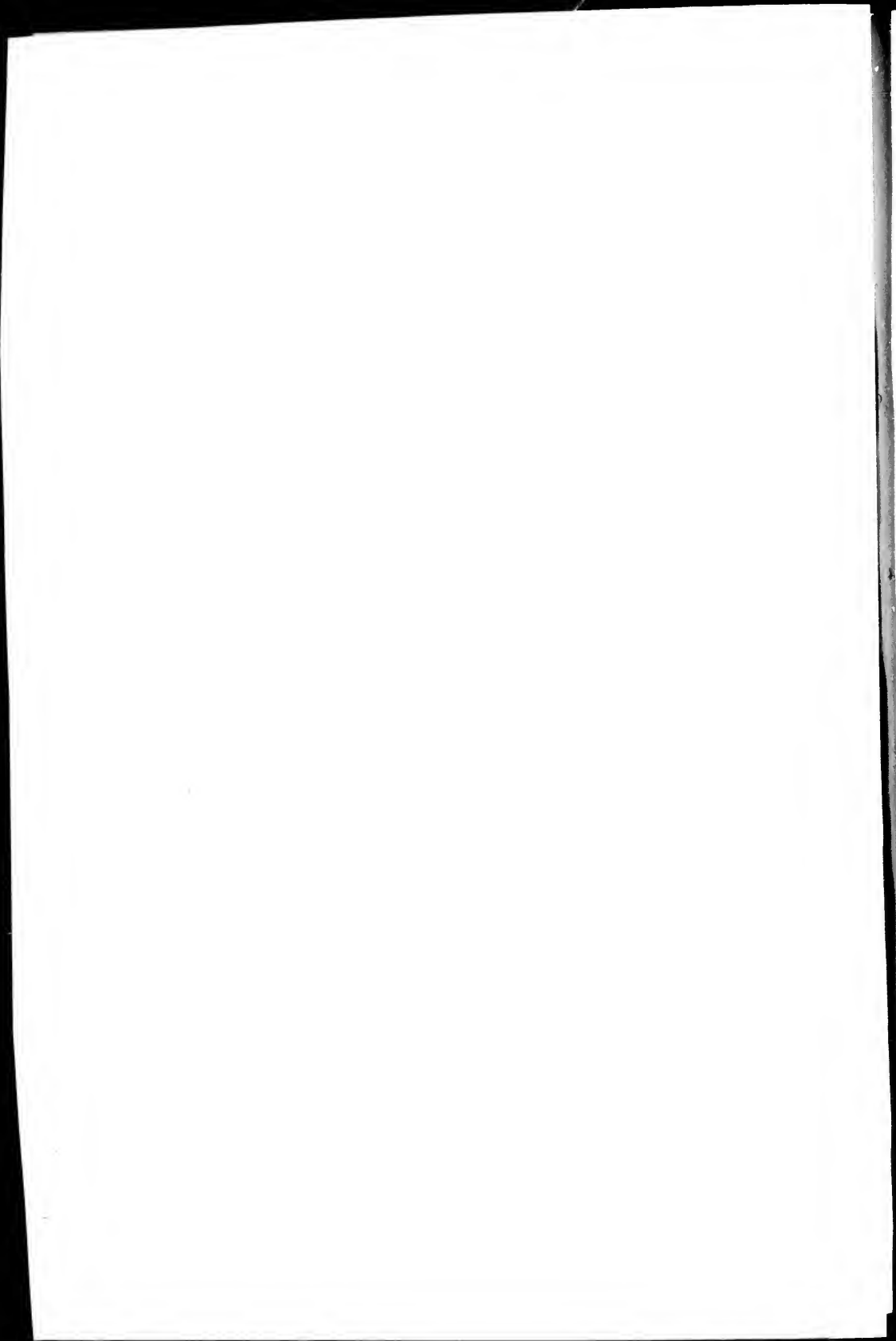
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SUGGESTIONS

FOR THE

MORE SPEEDY EQUIPMENT

AND

BETTER MANNING

HER MAJESTY'S NAVY.

BY CAPT. BOWLES, R.N. C.B.

LONDON:
RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY.

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1840.

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SUGGESTIONS.

It is not, I think, necessary to take up the time of those who may peruse these pages, by arguments to prove the importance of the subject on which I have felt it my duty to address a few words to my fellow countrymen. No one who has attended to passing (and more especially to recent) events can be insensible to it, and when we see the principal Maritime Powers augmenting their fleets, and perfecting their arrangements, there can surely be no impropriety in reviewing our own system, and considering, while we have still time and opportunity, whether we are also advancing equally in the march of improvement, and adapting our measures to the various changes of circumstances which have taken place.

Before, however, I commence this discussion, I am most anxious to premise that I have not the slightest intention of imputing blame to any individual or department.—Our present mode of manning the Navy has existed under all governments during the last and present century, and, I trust I may be permitted to suggest some ameliorations without being considered

to cast censure on those who have hitherto been prevented by a thousand difficulties, and more especially by those fearful words "INCREASE OF EXPENSE" from effecting changes which would place our Naval organization on a more satisfactory footing.

I may perhaps be asked, why I have not submitted my suggestions to the Board of Admiralty, instead of laying them in their present shape before the public? and my reply is, that I am perfectly aware the same magical words to which I have already referred would have been used to convince me that my proposal was an impracticable one, and I have therefore preferred an appeal to those who are in truth the principal causes of the present evil, by their own injudicious clamours for reduction and retrenchment, and to call on my countrymen to untie the hands of the Admiralty, and to release the Government from engagements unwisely demanded, too hastily entered into, and too literally fulfilled.

It may perhaps also be asked what right have I, a single unit in a numerous profession, to offer my opinion at all on a subject which all will allow to be of such vital importance, and why I do not leave matters of this magnitude to the care and judgment of my superiors?

I answer, that the two greatest improvements introduced since the peace of 1815, have arisen from

the suggestions of two officers, at that time wholly unconnected with office—Sir Howard Douglas and Sir W. Symonds—and, believing as I do, that our present arrangements for the equipment of our Navy are as defective, and calling as loudly for amendment as our instruction in Artillery practice, and our Naval Architecture, at the period in question; I see no reason why an officer who has during forty-four years of service been more constantly in command, than perhaps any other of his rank and standing, and who has therefore enjoyed ample opportunities for forming a correct opinion on professional subjects, may not presume to offer that opinion in respectful and temperate language.

I am ashamed to have detained my readers so long with these preliminary observations, which I felt, however, were due to them as well as to myself; and I will now endeavour to lay before them, as clearly as I can,—first, the system we have hitherto pursued in manning our Navy during peace; secondly, the objections, to which it is liable; and, thirdly, the improvements I venture to suggest.

Nothing can be more primitive and defective than our present mode of proceeding.

A ship is required to relieve another for foreign service. She is selected, reported ready for commission, the captain and officers are appointed, and then

volunteers are advertised for—They come in slowly and uncertainly, if the ship is a large one the men will not enter until the heaviest part of the work of fitting is completed, the equipment proceeds slowly and carelessly, because energy and rapidity are impracticable, but even then those who enter first feel they are unfairly worked, and the seeds of discontent and desertion are sown at the very commencement of their service.

Three or sometimes four months thus pass away before the ship's complement is complete, and in the meanwhile little progress is made in discipline or instruction. She at last sails for her destination, and relieves a ship, which having been three or four years on active service is, or ought to be, in a high state of efficiency, but on its arrival in England it is dismantled, the officers and crew are paid off, and discharged, and we thus proceed on the plan of perpetually creating and as perpetually destroying what we have with so much labour and expense endeavoured to obtain—an effective ship of war.

The objections to this mode of proceeding are so numerous, but at the same time so obvious, that they will at once suggest themselves to my readers.

To the economists the improvident expense of keeping a ship intended to relieve another three or four months in commission before she can proceed,

will be sufficiently striking; while professional men who view a ship also as a school for the rising generation, in which not only mere seamanship, but the higher qualities of energy, promptitude, and resource are to be taught, contemplate with anxiety and regret a slow and slovenly system, calculated rather to damp and deaden activity and exertion, and to train up the young beginner in exactly the way in which he *ought not* to walk, and wholly at variance with the first principles of all warlike establishments, discipline, activity, and instruction.

I will now proceed to detail the improvements which, if introduced, would, in my opinion, obviate all these inconveniences, and without any very material increase of expense, when compared with the paramount importance of the object in view.

My leading proposition is to consider a *Reserve* of, at least, 4000 or 5000 men for home service indispensably necessary.

The supply of seamen so little exceeds the demand for them, and that demand is so large and increasing, not only in the British Empire, but in almost every quarter of the habitable globe, (the United States, South America, Australia, and India absorbing very considerable numbers) that except we have foresight and arrangement enough to secure a stock in hand, (if I may so express myself) we shall always be

exposed to the greatest difficulty and danger on any emergency where circumstances may, perhaps render our having recourse to impressment impolitic or unjustifiable, although the necessity for a reinforcement to some foreign station, or an increase at home, may be extremely pressing.

The events which have occurred within the last two months, sufficiently demonstrate the correctness of my assertion.

The French have been for some time endeavouring to outnumber us in the Mediterranean, and after the occurrences of July, it became extremely desirable to dispatch the Vanguard and Rodney (both being ready for sea, and only wanting men) with the least possible delay; but volunteers came in so slowly, that not having, I believe, any disposable men elsewhere, above a month elapsed before these ships were completed, although the whole number required was probably under 500.

I will not enlarge on other recent occurrences of a similar nature, which would very materially strengthen my argument, but confine myself to observing, that in the present circumstances of Europe, and viewing the matured and perfect arrangements of other Powers for the rapid equipment of their Fleets, no time should be lost in revising our own system, and more carefully adapting it to the existing state of affairs.

The number of men I recommend keeping as a permanent reserve, large as it may at first sight appear, would be barely sufficient to equip a respectable squadron for the protection of our coasts and commerce, and to enable the Board of Admiralty to commence a course of exercise and instruction afloat, which has been too long postponed and discontinued. Few officers of the rising generation have ever witnessed the evolutions of a fleet, or received any practical education in naval tactics. Our foreign squadrons are so constantly separated, and so widely detached for the protection of trade, that it is scarcely possible ever to assemble them, and it is therefore principally at home, where no other considerations should be allowed to interfere, that this most important part of the education of every officer can be carefully attended to.

The result of the proposed arrangement would be, that instead of six nominal ships stationed at Sheerness, Devonport, and Portsmouth, but unmanned and wholly ineffective, we should have six fully manned, disciplined, efficient, and ready at twenty-four hours' notice to proceed to any part of the world; while an equal number of frigates might be kept in the same state of preparation for any service not requiring ships of the line.

Our Naval Arsenals, instead of being as they now

are, schools of idleness, in which officers are allowed to serve out their sea time (as it is called), without ever seeing an anchor weighed, or a sail set, would then become excellent Dépôts of Instruction, and there appears to be no reason why the routine of foreign service might not be taken by the whole Navy in commission, shortening the periods of absence, especially in unhealthy climates, and withdrawing our younger officers, as far as might be practicable, from the temptations to extravagance and dissipation, inseparable from a long confinement at Malta or Lisbon.

The confidence which a respectable reserve at home must give to any Naval Administration, would very probably tend much, on many occasions, to diminish the necessity of keeping so large a permanent force abroad, knowing as they would do, that well disciplined ships were constantly in readiness, and that not a moment's delay need elapse in dispatching reinforcements when called for.

Sir Thomas Cochrane communicated some years since to the First Lord of the Admiralty,* and has since printed for private circulation, some observations so nearly resembling, and so perfectly coinciding with my own opinions, that, I hope, although I have not at this moment an opportunity of asking his permission, that he will not object to my quoting some very

* To Lord Melville, in 1826.

striking and excellent passages from his little pamphlet in corroboration of my own assertions.

“At a time when a peace of ten years’ duration has reduced the number of ships in commission, as well as the proportion of men employed in them, to a force that formerly constituted but a small squadron, it becomes desirable to know how far the services of that force are available in the event of any unforeseen rupture—and in the persuasion that there is no person more alive to the best interests of the naval profession than your Lordship, or more convinced of the necessity of the peace establishment being in an efficient state for war, (however much we may hope for a continuance of the blessings of peace for many years to come,) I venture to address a few observations to your Lordship, being the result of nearly four years and a half’s service and experience in the command of a ship upon the peace establishment.

“I do not know whether it has or has not reached your Lordship, but it is no less true, that notwithstanding the few men employed, there is a general complaint as to their inferiority, and not one captain in ten that acknowledges his having a crew with whom, either in strength, quality, or character, he is at all satisfied; and, moreover, that although these men enter voluntarily, desertion is carried on to an extent never known in time of war. For this there cannot but be some cause, and I think it may be traced to the mode in which the peace establishment is at present conducted. When a ship is first commissioned, men are brought together from wherever they can be collected—

unknown to the officers as well as to each other: after their ship shall have been nominally ready for sea, (which is seldom under four, five, or six months,) she yet has a great deal to do with respect to her equipment and her internal arrangement, and it is still some months more before that most necessary part of their instruction is taken in hand, their gunnery, and on which the Admiralty have most justly laid considerable stress; and there is no captain who has been employed during peace that will not tell your Lordship that he did not consider his ship in all points an efficient man-of-war until she had been from twelve to eighteen months in commission, and particularly in relation to the management of her guns. However anxious a captain may be to have his ship perfect in that respect, he at first meets an obstacle at every step: to exercise the guns as they ought to be, breaks in upon the whole day's work; it is therefore postponed from time to time, and just enough exercise performed to fill up the quarterly report. I believe I exercised more in the *Forte*—certainly fully as much as any ship in the navy, and to which I was led from my anxiety to give Congreve sights (a complete set of which I had managed to obtain) a fair trial, and seldom anchored anywhere that, if time permitted, I did not put out a mark to fire at, and I know, by experience, what an inconvenience attended my first doing so.

“About the period before mentioned, a ship becomes in all respects in a state a man-of-war ought to be: the men know and agree with each other, they work together, and are comfortable in their messes; the drudgery of the exercise of sails, guns, arms, &c., is over, and desertion ceases,

and the officers begin to reap the benefit of their exertions. The ship being complete in all respects, the exercising of guns, sails, &c., goes on regularly and without interruption; and this continues for a twelvemonth or a little more, when the prospect of paying off comes in view, and then discipline, exercise, &c., begin to relax, and, if at home, the ship is paid off at the end of three years, and all belonging to her dispersed. Re-commission this ship the next day, and she is perfectly a new creation, and the same routine to be repeated already stated to your Lordship. The men who were lately in her have no more inducement to return to that ship than any other, as she is but the shell they formerly inhabited; and although a crew may be collected, all of men lately serving in a man-of-war, yet you will have the same complaint from the present as from her former captain, as to their inefficiency and want of union, and the same discontent will for an equal period exist, and the ship be in a similar state of inefficiency for a similar length of time.

“I have always considered that a peace establishment was as much a preliminary preparation for war as for any other service; that consequently your ships thus employed should be manned with picked men, and that they should be in that state of training and efficiency that each ship, on a rupture taking place, could turn over one watch to form the groundwork of another vessel to be fitted out. To accomplish this much-desired end, allow me to suggest to your Lordship the following plan.

“That when a ship is commissioned, she should never be entirely paid off—that if the ship herself become unservice-

able, that the whole be transferred to another of equal size—let the captain and officers be appointed for the period they are now kept in employment, and the men be entered for a period not under five years, and as much longer as they please; and instead of paying off altogether, the captain, officers, and men be discharged respectively as their period of service expires; and that if the ship be employed on a foreign station, the men whose time is up, and who wish their discharge, to be sent home in the first man-of-war, or allowed to find their own way.

“The advantage to be derived from this plan I conceive to be the following: first, that as before mentioned, at the end of eighteen months, the ship’s company have become known and attached to each other—they have got over the drudgery and annoyance of fitting out—of exercising in all its various branches—and have only to keep the ship in the state she is then in; there is no general looking forward to discharge. In a frigate of a complement of three hundred, after the first four years, the number to be discharged will be about three per month. Supposing a ship is out five months, and, returning into port, discharges fifteen men, these men, instead of going on shore in a herd with two or three hundred others, without a home, or one place more than another of which to make choice, each encouraging the other in every species of dissipation and vagrancy, they are landed with the knowledge that they have left a home where they might have remained and continued in the enjoyment of every comfort; they have no multitude to keep them in countenance in their debaucheries, and the want of old associates soon makes them

tired of their present life, and cast an eye to the home and messmates they have left; but they know too the ship is but fifteen short of complement, and that their places may be filled up; and I am much mistaken, unless the ship has something in her that makes her very unpopular, if ten out of the fifteen do not return, or if, before quitting her, they do not give in their names to return again after their cruise is out. It must be quite clear to your Lordship that any man would rather return to a comfortable, well-regulated mess of old acquaintances, and the drudgery of equipping over, than go where he would meet none but strange faces and all the vexation of first fitting out. Even the new men, who are to supply the five the ship is now short of, will instantly partake of the comforts of the rest of the crew—they will in a few days fall into the mode of discipline preserved in the ship, and be as expert at their duty as any others of equal talents who may be on board; and here another advantage, with respect to discipline or the mode of carrying on duty, will be obtained. It must be well known to your Lordship, as it is quite notorious, that there are almost as many systems of carrying on duty as there are officers in command; and that men, on first coming together, are for some time at a loss to find out the system to be observed; but if a ship has been commanded by an officer of any professional talent for three years, and shall have been brought to that proper efficient state a man-of-war ought to be in, it is impossible but his successor will more or less follow the plans heretofore adopted; for whatever his fancies and caprices may be, he must be devoid of all sense to entirely overturn a system that has

been pursued with success; and while he tries to bend others to his ways, he insensibly falls into those already adopted, and neither officers nor crew will feel that change which they inevitably must do in joining a newly-commissioned ship.

“With respect to desertion—which is now carried on to a most extraordinary pitch—I am quite persuaded the want of comfort on board a newly-commissioned ship has much to do with it. In corroboration I may mention, that three weeks after the *Forte* was paid her advance, on being first commissioned, she was obliged to be docked at Portsmouth, and during that period she lost fifty men. I was told I only met the fate of others; but fearing that the cause might be dissatisfaction, either at the conduct o’ some of the officers, or discontent with my own, I privately sent for some of the oldest petty officers on several occasions, and begged them to tell me fairly if any cause of complaint existed, when they assured me that none whatever did; that they had no fault to find with my arrangements, nor with the conduct of the officers; and although they could give no satisfactory account for the desertions, yet they allowed the people were not happy among themselves—that they were new to each other, and constantly quarrelling; and I am quite persuaded that this accounted for most of the desertions that had taken place. The attachment of men to ships to which they have for some time belonged is very great, and I entertain little doubt but many would serve their whole time in the same vessel.”

“If any difficulty should be started with respect to ships on foreign stations being able to replace the men they

occasionally discharge, it would be quite easy to supply them with volunteers by the ships from time to time joining the station from England—not that I consider such to be necessary, as there is no want of men abroad with whom to fill up the vacancies that may occur, even should most of the men take advantage of their discharge—which I am persuaded would not be the case. On this system being first adopted, there would be a little inconvenience at the end of the first five years, as many having entered at the same period would be entitled to their discharge at the same time. To remedy this, I would recommend discharging, at the end of the first three years, a certain portion of such as did not intend to enter again for a second term, after which, the entering and discharging would proceed regularly. The army did formerly enlist men in a very similar way, and found no inconvenience from it; but what state would each regiment be in, if disbanded at the end of every three years?

“I will offer no apology for having troubled your Lordship at length on a subject of such vital importance to the naval profession and country at large. I only earnestly request your Lordship’s attention to the hints I have thrown out, as, if they strike you as they do myself, I am persuaded in the detail you may so much improve upon them, as not only to secure to the service a better class of seamen, and in a great degree check desertion, but to reap advantages for the efficiency and discipline of our fleets that have not entered into my contemplation.”

If the system on which the Army recruit was more closely followed, volunteers would be raised for the

Navy much more rapidly and satisfactorily; a more respectable set of officers and men would perform this service with greater credit to themselves and their profession. Pensioners carefully selected, and encouraged, exhibiting in their own persons the reward of long service and good conduct, would be the best class of men (under proper officers) for this purpose, and if my suggestions shall be thought worthy of attention, I see no reason why tall, active young landsmen, between 18 and 22, and not under 5ft. 7in., should not be admitted into the *Reserve*, and raised in the Inland Districts as well as at the Sea Port Towns.

Six months of instruction and discipline at Portsmouth, Devonport, or Sheerness, would make these very useful men, especially when the want of strength in our ships' companies during peace is considered, the merchant service taking the most powerful men, and refusing the small ones. We see how well our new system of taking boys answers, and how soon they become valuable seamen, but this might be still further improved, by having at each Port a small frigate fitted on the plan of the Marine Society's ship at Deptford, with guns and sails, in which the boys might be better looked after, and receive some schooling, and where the young landsmen might also be sent to improve themselves, when exercising on board their own ships was inconvenient.

It is very interesting to observe how soon the Marine Society boys, few of whom have ever seen a ship in their lives, become extremely smart in crossing topgallant yards, furling and reefing sails, &c.; and there is not the least reason to suppose that lads of the age I recommend, would not, under proper care, and with sufficient instruction, make an equal progress. I do not mean to assert that a good seaman would not be preferable, but as the Merchant Service gives higher wages to this class of men than we can (or choose) to offer, we must endeavour to manufacture for ourselves an inferior article, if we cannot afford to pay the full price for the best.

Having thus stated, in as full detail as appears necessary, the improvements I venture to suggest, to those with whom their adoption and execution must rest, I will not detain my readers by any further arguments in support of them. Nobody will, I think, deny that a maritime power, like Great Britain, if she intends to preserve her naval superiority, must be prepared at home as well as abroad; and that in proportion as affairs become more serious and critical at a distance, and the necessity of reinforcing foreign stations more apparent, of so much more urgent importance is a well organized reserve at home, since no country can be considered as displaying due vigour, foresight, or arrangement, if, when apprehend-

ing and preparing against collision abroad, it is deficient in those precautions for the protection of its own coast and commerce, which at such a moment should be most seriously attended to.

The annexed extract, from the *Journal des Debâts*, may not be uninteresting to those who wish for information on the present state of the French Navy, and the progress it has made; while their remarks on our own, and the accurate accounts they appear to possess respecting it, are not less deserving our attention.

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APPENDIX.

TRANSLATION FROM THE "JOURNAL DES DEBATS,"
OF THE 21st SEPTEMBER 1840.

PARIS, 20th September.—A review specially devoted to the English Navy and Army, and which enjoys in England a character almost official, the "United Service Journal" contains in its last number, a comparative statement of the Navies of France and England. While we admit the exactness of the figures given, and the fidelity of the quotations made by the author of this article, we cannot, however, prevent ourselves from finding fault with a tone of "hauteur" and arrogance in it, which is becoming to no one; pride is an evil counsellor, which often prepares cruel deceptions for its dupes: which leads its victims by ways so deceitful, that even in letting them set out from bases just in appearance—as in the present case, it conducts them to false and inapplicable conclusions, as happens to the author of the article in question.

Doubtless, we do not mean to dispute in any manner the numerical superiority of the English Navy, both in men, and in vessels (*materiel*.) But, it does not follow from this, that when they have exhibited to us a threatening display of 105 ships of the line, and 86 frigates, in comparison with our 46 ships of the line, and our 56 frigates, we ought immediately to lower our colours, and return to

our ports, with the shame and confusion of children, who should be surprised in attempting to ape the attitudes and bearing of grown men. There is now-a-days, almost a blind reliance on figures; they are regarded with too much complaisance as the most authentic elements of certainty; they offer so much facility to the carelessness and incapacity of men's minds, that it is not sufficiently recollected, that figures are themselves the results of intellectual operations in which error may have mingled; and as there is nothing which so absolutely resembles one figure as another figure, we too often allow ourselves to compare together, things which are essentially different, or which, resembling in appearance, are subject to conditions of existence entirely different. This very article of the "United Service Journal," will show us the fallacy of some of those comparisons which are founded on a great display of figures.

Let us speak in the first place of the "*materiel*" considered in itself, and afterwards of the wants which it is called to satisfy in the two countries.

What do the 105 English ships of the line consist of? This total comprehends, even according to the showing of the English writer of 28 line-of-battle ships, armed, or kept in a condition of being so, more or less advanced; 54 ships disarmed, and afloat; and finally, 23 ships building.

Of the 28 ships of the line "in commission," as the English say, we shall see in the first place, seven which are now incapable of warlike service, viz:—the "San Joseph," taken from the Spaniards, in 1797: the "Victory," 104, on board of which Lord Nelson died, at Trafalgar; (this ship is now 75 years of age;) the "Ocean," 80, which serves as a depôt at Sheerness; the "Donegal," 78, recalled to England to be paid off; the "Excellent," 76, which serves as a school for seamen-gunners, at Portsmouth; the "Magnificent," 72, turned into a hulk at Jamaica; the "Poictiers," 72, is the depôt of the port of Chatham.

The 54 ships of the line afloat, are composed of 13 ships, from 100 to 120 guns; 8 ships of 84 guns, and 33 ships of from 72 to 78 guns. We ought to admit that we possess no sufficient means of ascertaining with any degree of certainty, the actual state of these vessels. But however, it must be said, that in 1815, at the close of the continental war, England had in commission more than 200 ships of the line and frigates of all classes, and that she hastened to pay them off for the most part, when the peace had reduced the work of the Royal Navy to cruizing against slavers, or Malay pirates, watching the coasts, and the carrying of garrisons and dispatches over the immense extent of the British empire. It is the remains of these vast armaments of 1815, which now still composes the great mass of the "*materiel*" afloat in the English ports: the great number of vessels which were possessed beyond what were required for the wants of the service, and which there were no means of turning to account, was a reason why few have since been built. We shall see a proof of this in the names of these vessels, of which a good number were known in the time of the continental war. Another indication of what we advance, is, that two-thirds of these ships are "seventy-fours," that is to say, vessels of a model and scantling, which are given up now-a-days, when the force of ships in artillery is almost unreasonably augmented. Now, what is in 1840 the effective value of all this floating "*materiel*?" This is, what we confess that we do not know: this is, what no one perhaps can tell exactly; not even the Admiralty; but this is what we may affirm—that these 54 ships of the line afloat, are very far from representing 54 ships ready to be put into commission.

As to the 23 ships of the line building, we have nothing to say of them, unless it be, that they confirm what we have just advanced; for of this number there are only three "74s," and they besides, were perhaps already on the stocks at the peace of 1815.

After having quoted these imposing figures, it seems that we

might experience some embarrassment in speaking of the 46 ships of the line which France possesses (23 armed, or afloat, and 23 upon the stocks). It must be said, however, that we do not reckon among them any hulk; for, as soon as any of our vessels become unseaworthy, she is forthwith removed from the lists; it must be said that of our 23 ships afloat, there are 18 completely armed, or about to become so, and of the five others perhaps one only which requires some repairs. It must be said that in general our ships of the line (we by no means speak of the extent or courage of the seamen by which they are manned) are materially superior to the English ships, in the excellence of their construction, the perfection of their armament, the solidity of their scantling, the number of guns which they mount, and the dimensions of the calibre of their guns.

As to the 23 ships of the line which we have on the stocks, we may say, that their state of advancement, expressed according to the usage by 24ths, represents 17 ships of the line afloat.

Little is proved, therefore, in comparing the 105 English line-of-battle ships with the 46 French ships; still less is proved in comparing purely and simply the number of frigates possessed by the two navies. Of late years France has constructed a good many of those formidable frigates which reckon on their upper decks 30 thirty-pounder carronades or mortar guns, and on their main decks 28 long thirty-pounders, and 2 eighty pounder mortar guns. A frigate of this force would sustain, without much difficulty, the attack of a 74 gun ship of the old class, which only mounts twenty-four and eighteen-pounder guns; the broadside of the one certainly weighs as much as that of the other, without reckoning that the frigate possesses nautical qualities, and advantages in sailing and manœuvring, which the line-of-battle ship does not. France has 10 of these frigates afloat, and 9 on the stocks, which might almost all be launched. *England has not yet built a single one of these*

frigates. As to the frigates of the 2nd class, that is to say of 50 guns, if the English Navy reckons 18 of them, which are partly old ships of the line "razéd," the French Navy reckons on its side 19, which are almost all new vessels. It is only when we talk of frigates of the 3rd class that England recovers her numerical superiority. But among these frigates, how many are there which, having been paid off in 1815, would now be unfit to send to sea? To what degree would these vessels, which are so convenient for performing the police of the seas—for transporting the great personages and the garrisons which England moves about the ocean, be prepared to enter upon a contest with a great maritime power like France, which has of late years so greatly increased the effective force of its vessels of war?

But without going into further length on this subject, we cannot do better than to quote what we read in the "Times," to-day, and which fully confirms what we advance.

[Here follows a long extract from the "Times," of the 18th of September.]

The French writer then continues:—

But, if the calculation of figures teach us but little respecting the comparative force of the vessels which the two Navies are composed of, they become still more insufficient when we come to consider the wants which they have to provide for in the fleets of the two countries. England possesses an immense colonial empire, which also requires an immense protection. There is not a sea, nor a part of the world where she is not vulnerable, and consequently where she ought not to be ready to repulse the attacks of an enemy. She must face him on a front of marvellous extent, that is to say, must fix her forces on a host of points. And not only are there islands and countries in which her power must always make itself

felt, it is besides a vital condition of her existence to be in every sea ready to protect the going and coming of the merchant vessels which feed her gigantic industry, and which themselves pay in duties or customs almost the half of her budget. There is in that, one of the inconveniences of greatness,—an inconvenience which it is glorious to endure, but which an enemy, like France, would know how to turn to account. France, in fact, which possesses, so to speak—hardly any colonies,—which trades but little by sea, and which draws almost all its budget from her internal resources, would have the advantage at present in a maritime war, of being able to assemble all her ships on the point which would suit her—to choose her own field of battle—and by throwing upon it superior force—perhaps to determine the victory over an enemy who might reckon nevertheless, dispersed over the ocean, more ships of the line and seamen than France.

Behold moreover, what is at this moment the distribution of the armed vessels of the English Navy on the principal stations which she occupies.

[Here follows an account, apparently drawn from English official sources, of the amount and distribution of the ships at home and abroad.]

In conclusion, we ought to repeat that we have not intended to contrast in any manner the numerical superiority of the English Navy, as well in men as in material of every kind. We have only sought to shew that comparisons of abstract figures prove but little; and that, thank Heaven! there is no enemy, however powerful, against whom France is not in a condition henceforward to maintain an honourable contest, if unjust aggressions should force her, after ten years of sacrifices to the peace of the world, to repel force by force.

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