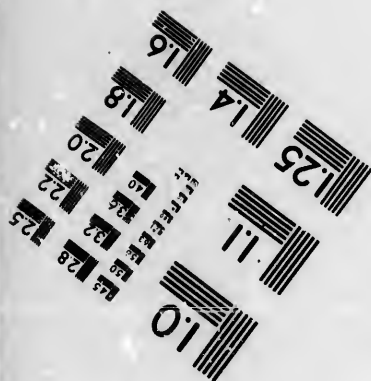
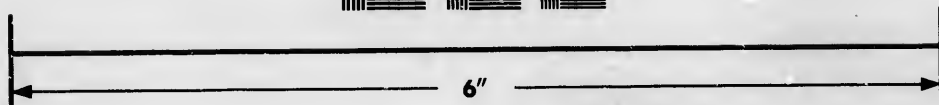
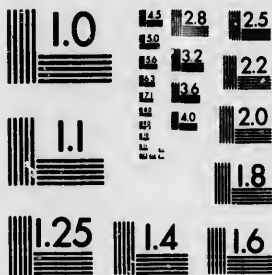


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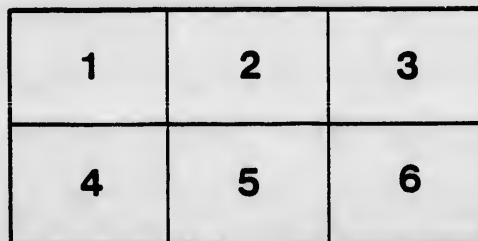
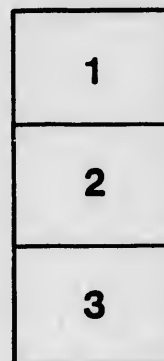
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**SPEECH**

OF

**LIEUT.-GENERAL**

**SIR HOWARD DOUGLAS, BART. M.P.**

ON

**LORD INGESTRE'S MOTION,**

FOR AN

**ADDRESS TO THE CROWN, TO ISSUE ANOTHER COMMISSION  
FOR THE INVESTIGATION AND TRIAL**

OF

**MR. WARNER'S ALLEGED DISCOVERIES.**

---

**LONDON:**

**T. & W. BOONE, NEW BOND STREET.**

**1846.**

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## S P E E C H,

*&c. &c.*

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HAVING in common with both my gallant associates, first Vice Admiral Sir Edward Owen, and then Admiral Sir Byam Martin, declined having any thing more to do with this affair, unless positively ordered upon it, as a duty which we could not disobey, I should be too happy to escape from taking any part in this discussion, had not the Noble Lord the Member for Staffordshire reflected upon the spirit and character of the Commission to which I had the honour to belong, in terms which, I think the House will admit, impose upon me the obligation of defending my gallant colleagues and myself from the imputations which the Noble Lord has cast upon our proceedings. The Noble Lord, premeditating, as it now appears, this attack, and intending to refer particularly to my name, ought, I think, to have given me notice of such an intention, as due in courtesy. But I am too much of a tactician to be taken by surprise. I could not, indeed, have expected from the Noble and Gallant Member, that such an attack as this would be made, without notice to the parties ac-

cused ; but fortunately I look at the Orders of the Day, and if I find anything likely to come on, in which I feel an interest, and may take a part, I am myself with any minutes I may have made on that matter ; and so, seeing the notice of the Noble Lord in the Order of the Day, I put in my pocket the papers which I had laid by two years ago, and thus luckily am provided with the ammunition which I am now, off-hand to use, without, however, having had time to refer to them in detail, to prepare myself the better to vindicate the conduct of the Commission, on which I served.

I shall answer, severally, in the course of what I have to say, the strictures and assertions of the Noble Lord.

First, as to the spirit and character in which our proceedings were conducted. To show this, it will be necessary to explain, in full, the stipulations and conditions under which I undertook, reluctantly, a duty which, having had a good deal to do with inventors and projectors, I foresaw would be difficult and laborious. And I request the attention of the House to a brief explanation of the several documents and minutes, which became the basis of the instructions under which we acted, and in strict conformity with which, the whole of our proceedings were regulated.

When my gallant friend, the late Master-General of the Ordnance, with the concurrence of the late Prime Minister, requested me to undertake that



duty, I did all I properly could to excuse myself, having then but recently returned from foreign service of considerable duration. But the proposition was pressed upon me in a manner which I could not decline: my acceptance, however, was conditional on certain stipulations which I made to Sir George Murray, in a letter dated the 31st of Dec. 1841, of which the following are extracts.

“The duties of the commission will certainly be difficult, and highly responsible; but I undertake this as a duty, from which I feel that I ought not to shrink; and it affords me great satisfaction to learn that I am to be associated with such a person as Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Owen.” I submitted “the necessity of coming to a clear and distinct understanding with Mr. Warner, in writing, as to the nature and extent of the preliminary experiments, and the locality where they are to be carried on; and that these be on a scale so extensive, as to ascertain, positively, the real service powers and effects of the invention.” I stated that I should decidedly “object to any thing short of experiments upon a large scale, to which, as they were to be made at the public expense, Capt. Warner could have no reason or pretence to object.” I also stipulated “that I should have nothing whatever to do, either with the principle, or amount of reward or compensation, or be committed in any way with any proceeding that has already taken place, or with any expectation held out to, or entertained by Mr. Warner, as to any pledge, expressed or implied, for the purchase of his discovery.” “I undertake this commission solely and entirely to investigate, ascertain, and verify by actual experiment the real service power, safety to the users, and practical utility of the invention, and, reporting upon these accordingly, to leave the Government perfectly free to negotiate, or act in all respects thereafter with Mr. Warner as they may judge fit, on receiving our report of the absolute

power, efficacy, and safety to the users of the invention if applied by us, and consequently the detriment that would result to the national interests, by not securing the secret to ourselves."

These conditions were expressly admitted ; I was appointed, accordingly, a member of the Commission, and, by seniority, became its chief.

Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Owen, signified to the Master-General of the Ordnance on the 5th of January, 1842, his acceptance of that duty, and expressed "great satisfaction in being associated in the inquiry with an officer, whose experience and character," he was pleased to say, "would ensure to it a searching investigation and candid interpretation ; and that in this feeling, he would meet me with every disposition to second my views in the fulfilment of our duty." I quote from this letter, as I shall from others, to shew the perfect unanimity that reigned between the members of the Commission on which I acted, to refute the allegations and fabrications which have been circulated to the contrary.

On the 22nd of January, 1842, Sir George Murray, the Master-General of the Ordnance, issued the following memorandum, which formed the basis of our instructions : a copy of that minute was previously communicated to Mr. Warner.

"1st. To agree upon a series of experiments to be made under Mr. Warner's directions, in the presence of Sir H. Douglas and Sir Edward Owen.

2nd. To frame an estimate of the expense which will attend

these experiments that it may be submitted to the Treasury previously to any expense being incurred.

3rd. That when the expense has been sanctioned by the Treasury, the experiments should proceed.

4th. That detailed minutes should be kept of every step of the investigation, *i. e.* all particulars of such experiments.

5th. That Sir E. Owen and Sir H. Douglas should draw up a report as to the result of their observations to be submitted to the Prime Minister, and to which they will be pleased to annex, as an appendix, the minutes above mentioned.

6th. Sir H. Douglas and Sir E. Owen will be pleased to consider the whole proceeding in this matter strictly confidential."

The House will perceive that in conformity with my express stipulations, and the views of her Majesty's Government, not a word of any promise or guarantee as to remuneration appears, and that the Commission should consist of two members as therein named. To this memorandum Mr. Warner expressly consented, as declared by Sir George Murray, in his letter of the 30th of April, and 13th of May, 1842, (Parliamentary Papers, pp. 25 & 28) in which he states, that Mr. Warner's refusal to proceed to the experiments for which we had made all the arrangements, unless we guaranteed remuneration, "was wholly at variance with the basis which he, Sir George Murray, had laid down, and to which Mr. Warner had expressly given his concurrence and assent." Mr. Warner accepted the proposed nomination of the members in a letter, of which the following is a copy :—

" 14th January, 1842.

" Sir, — I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 12th instant.

" Any day after Wednesday next that may be convenient to Sir Howard Douglas, Sir Edward Owen, and yourself, I shall hold myself disengaged, and shall be most happy to attend upon you at the Ordnance, as you propose.

" I would have named an earlier day, but I have some plans and drawings to replace that I have destroyed, for the sake of security.

" From the character I have heard both of Sir Howard Douglas and Sir Edward Owen, I am highly gratified with the choice the Government has made in those distinguished officers.

I am, &c.

(Signed) " S. A. WARNER."

Thus Mr. Warner entered into the most express engagement, in writing, as to the powers, instructions, number, and persons of the Commission.

It became my duty as the chairman, to prepare a minute in detail, to be submitted to the Commission, by which, if approved, their proceedings should be regulated.

The following is a copy of that minute—

" That all communications with Mr. Warner, should be made in writing; and minutes kept of all that took place in our meetings with that gentleman, in conformity with articles 4 and 5 of the Master-General's Memorandum.

" That no attempt should be made to obtain any part of Mr. Warner's secret.

" That he should be forbidden to answer any question that might in the slightest degree tend, if answered, to disclose his alleged discoveries.

“That he would be required to exhibit the practical efficacy of his inventions, on a scale sufficient to enable the Commission to ascertain and report upon their practical efficacy, and utility to the public service.

“That we attached by far the greatest importance to that part of his alleged discovery, which he denominated ‘The long range.’

“That we were strongly disposed to proceed at once to witness any experiments he might exhibit of the astounding powers which he attributed to that alleged discovery.

“That we were likewise ready to witness the powers of his invisible shells, if tried in an open sea-way, and in strong tides.

“That we should not report separately on the two branches of his alleged discoveries, but wait until we should have witnessed experiments, on a scale sufficient to enable us to ascertain, with certainty, the applicability, efficacy, and value, of the ‘Long Range’ to the public service.

“That these experiments should be tried in the most retired locality, and conducted with every possible regard to the retention and safety of his secret.

“That these experiments should be conducted at the public expense.”

In this we went beyond our instructions, but we were resolved to do everything in our power to bring these alleged powers to a full and conclusive test, and to do nothing that might afford Mr. Warner the slightest pretext for getting up

a grievance against the Commission, to be used as a plea for compensation, which we, at a very early period, foresaw would be attempted.

“That the experiments with the invisible shells should be such as to test their power and applicability with safety to the users, the value of the invention to us, the use to an enemy, if neglected by us; the power of controul, management, and direction, which the inventor possessed over these astounding powers; what reasonable certainty or security there might be of our retaining the exclusive use of the invention, should it be proved to possess the powers which Mr. Warner asserted; or whether, should the Government purchase his secret, there was any probability that the philanthropic and humane purpose of protecting the human race from so desolating and destructive an agent could be accomplished.

“That for the trials with the invisible shells we should provide two vessels of considerable strength and magnitude; that we should cause them to be taken to some retired bay; that Mr. Warner should have due notice to prepare his means of destruction; that the hulks should remain in our charge to the last; that he should never be permitted to visit or have any communication with them; that he should have every facility for attempting to destroy them, but not allowed to do this under circumstances which the ordinary precautions of real service would not permit.

“The trials to be made: first, against a vessel at anchor; and then against a vessel in motion; Mr. Warner having nothing to do with the traction or movement of the vessel whose destruction he was to attempt.

“The effects of the ‘long range’ to be tried at the full distance of what Mr. Warner states to be the powers of his ‘long range,’ namely, six miles.

“First, against a hulk; at anchor; then against a vessel in motion; under such circumstances of wind and weather, &c. as the Commission might propose.

“That the ‘long range’ should be tried against a fort or other building or erection to represent a fort situated on a hill, at the full distance of the ‘long range.’

“Against a real fort of considerable magnitude, which we were prepared to indicate to Mr. Warner, at the full distance of the ‘long range,’ and not much elevated above the position of the assailant.

“That the experiments with the ‘long range’ should be made from a vessel in a sea-way—first, to leeward of the hulk, and afterwards directly to windward of the vessel to be destroyed.

“That experiments should likewise be made, to enable the Commission to ascertain how far bodies, which, immersed in the sea, or used at a ‘long range,’ would explode on the slightest concussion, can be safely handled and applied, or resist, as in the case of the ‘long range,’ the percussive force of so powerful an agent.”

The Commission met on the 25th of January, 1842. At that interview I read to my colleague my letter of the 31st of December, 1841, which I had addressed to the Master-General of the Ordnance, and the minute which I had prepared, suggesting the course which our proceedings should take. In the whole of these views and propositions, Sir Edward Owen expressed his entire concurrence. We had another meeting on the 27th of January, at which it was settled, that though we attached by far the greatest importance to the "long range," and were much disposed to proceed at once with experiments to test its powers, we would consent to commence with the invisible shells, as desired by Mr. Warner, but only as a path to get at the "long range." At this meeting it was settled with Mr. Warner, that he should report to us when he was ready.

A case has been endeavoured to be gotten up, among other alleged grievances, that considerable delay then took place by my having been called away to Liverpool for my election. I went to Liverpool on the 1st of February, and on the 9th had the honour to take my seat in this House. And so far from my absence having occasioned any delay, I was ready, and Sir Edward Owen, who did not leave London to hoist his flag till towards the end of the month, was ready likewise, but during the whole of that time, we heard nothing from Mr. Warner.



On Sir Edward Owen withdrawing from the commission, he addressed a letter to Sir George Murray on the 7th of February, 1842, an extract of which will be found in the Parliamentary Papers, p. 13, to the seventh paragraph of which I particularly refer.

The time has now come, and this is the proper place, for me to deny and refute assertions and statements advanced by Mr. Warner, which have appeared in several of the public papers, and some of which it seems the Noble Lord believes. These gave me no individual concern, and I should not now condescend to notice them, did it not appear to me that the public interests require, that the House and the country should know, exactly, what sort of a person the Commission had to deal with, and the manner in which two British Admirals and a British General have been maligned in the performance of an arduous and highly responsible duty, which they have discharged to the best of their ability, acting fairly in strict conformity with the spirit and letter of their instructions.

The following paragraph appeared in several of the public papers soon after the proceedings of the Committee were brought to an abrupt termination, by Mr. Warner having refused to proceed with the experiments we had arranged, unless we complied with demands wholly at variance with the conditions to which he had assented, and which we had no authority to admit.

“ Sir Howard Douglas has represented that there was a concurrence of opinion with respect to my inventions between himself and Sir Edward Owen. I will take the present opportunity of declaring that this is a misapprehension on Sir Howard’s part. For when Sir Howard made light of some naval operations, which as a soldier officer he probably did not understand, Sir Edward Owen came forward in my defence, and expressed his belief that I could carry my plans into effect; and when to save time I offered to go down to a secluded part of the coast, and enter into some operations before Sir E. Owen, during Sir H. Douglas’s canvass at Liverpool, Sir Howard would not permit a single explanation to be entered into during his absence, though Admiral Owen reminded him with a smile, that he felt himself competent to form a judgment of any naval movements, without the gallant General’s assistance. I regret, to this hour, Sir Edward Owen’s departure for the Mediterranean, for I believe that his knowledge of seamanship and candid disposition would have brought my affairs to a different termination than has befallen them.”

I transmitted, on the 29th of August, 1842, this identical extract to Sir Edward Owen, who answered (12th of September),\* “ Decidedly no such conversation ever passed between us. There was no difference of opinion. We both considered Mr. Warner to be trifling with the inquiry. The invisible shell is an acquaintance of 40 years standing. You wished to get at once to the long range, in which I heartily concurred, and consented to go into the invisible shells as a foot-path to the long range. I was prepared for the finale of Mr. Warner’s proposition, which appeared to me to

\* I have the authority of Sir Edward Owen this day, July 21, to make this use of his letters.

contain nothing more than an unusual share of the most barefaced charlatanerie."\*

On the departure of Vice Admiral Sir Edward Owen, a successor was appointed, whose high character, eminent services and qualifications, rendered him peculiarly fit for the difficult duties, which I foresaw we should have to discharge; and it was with the highest degree of satisfaction, that I found myself acting under Admiral Sir Byam Martin, who now, by seniority of rank, became chief of the Commission. I immediately transmitted to him all the papers and documents relating to the inquiry.

On the 31st of March, 1842, I received from Sir Byam Martin a minute, dated that day, of which the following is a copy, and which I beg leave to read to the House, because it shews the

\* Mr. Warner asserts, in his letter of the 14th of Nov. 1845, to Sir George Murray, that Sir Edward Owen on his return to England, expressed himself ready and willing to witness any trials, and *wished* for the sanction of the Government, or even a simple intimation that he might attend if he pleased, and the Noble Lord, I think, stated something of the same kind. As this is at variance with what I have stated at the commencement of my speech, I think it right to say that Sir Edward Owen acquainted me in a letter dated the 4th of June, 1846, that he *declined* to do so, or to *mix in the question in any way with his consent*. That whatever he was ordered to do, he would undertake, but without such orders he refused to take any part. That Lord Ingestre called to renew the request, which he, Sir Edward Owen, *again declined*, having no desire whatever to mix again in an affair of which he had no favourable opinion.

approbation and concurrence which the lately-appointed chief expressed in the previous proceedings, and his adhesion to the proposed arrangements; thus proving the perfect harmony and unanimity which reigned throughout, between the two distinguished Admirals and myself—

“ March 31, 1842.

“ I have read the various papers delivered to me by Sir Howard Douglas on the 27th inst. respecting Mr Warner’s alleged discoveries.

“ Considering the astounding and terrific powers ascribed by Mr. Warner to his discoveries, I should shrink from any share in so difficult an undertaking were it not from the confidence I have in the \* \* \* \* \* officer with whom I am associated in this duty. His published and highly approved publications on Gunnery and on Naval Tactics point him out as the person, of all others, on whom the Government may best rely, as combining all the qualities needful in determining on the merits of Mr. Warner’s inventions. I quite agree with Sir Howard Douglas, that the Long Range, described by Mr. Warner, is that which the Commission should in the first instance proceed to investigate on a large scale. We cannot destroy fleets and armies in order to demonstrate the power which Mr. Warner asserts he has obtained by his inventions; but we must have the most full and complete proofs of such annihilating powers, and to this end the Master-General of the Ordnance may perhaps permit the experiments to be made on some old work that may be knocked down without disadvantage to the public.

“ In the 2nd paragraph of the memorandum made by the Master-General for the guidance of the Commission, dated Jan. 22nd, 1842, he requires that an estimate be made of the expense which will attend Mr. Warner’s experiments, in order that it may be submitted to the treasury, previous to any expense being incurred on the public account.

“With this view, it seems desirable that no time be lost in calling upon Mr. Warner by letter, (I think that nothing should pass that is not committed to writing) to furnish us with the information necessary to prepare an estimate of the expense of making the experiments with the Long Range and invisible shells, on such a scale as will be necessary on actual service.

“That, for the sake of secrecy, the experiment with the Long Range shall be made in some unfrequented place, and the time known only to ourselves, and such persons as Mr. Warner may require; and that he may fix upon any locality which he may think most satisfactory, provided the place affords space and convenience to test the powers of the Long Range to the extent he asserts.

“He should likewise be called upon to inform us if it is his wish to have any artillerymen, or others belonging to the public service, to assist him, or if it is his desire to be assisted only by his own people. In the first case, to state the number of men he will require, and in the last case, to state the charge he will make for the number of his own men, to be so employed.

“That we conclude from knowledge and experience he will be able to state every expense with great accuracy, and that we shall receive his statement with an understanding that nothing more shall be paid by the public than the expenses to be previously agreed upon and sanctioned by the Treasury.

“With the information thus acquired, we shall be able to present, for the consideration of the Treasury, the required estimate.

“It seems to me of the highest importance, that we should move with the utmost caution in every step we take in our communications with Mr. Warner; one precaution above all others is desirable—namely, not to attempt to elicit any thing from Mr. Warner, as to his secret; but on the contrary, to discourage and even forbid any disclosure of his power, until

he may be called upon for information, after we shall have witnessed the practical applications of his inventions.

“ If he fail to prove to our satisfaction, that he has obtained the destructive powers he asserts, I presume we should at once close our proceedings, and leave him in the full possession of his secret; the object of this precaution is, in the event of the failure of the experiments, to disarm Mr. Warner of any pretext for saying that his secret had been drawn from him, and on that ground to claim compensation for having been deprived of what he would still have regarded as a marketable property.

“ There are four documents to which I have now to refer on my first introduction to this business.

“ 1st. Sir Howard Douglas' letter of the 31st of December, 1841, to Sir George Murray, stating in clear and forcible terms the conditions and course of proceeding, which he deems it right to point out, as those on which he will undertake to join in the investigation.

“ 2nd. A minute of the proceedings of the Commission at the Ordnance Office, on the 24th of January, 1842.

“ 3rd. A minute of the 27th January.

“ 4th. A paper by Sir H. Douglas, stating the whole course of proceedings of the Commission, up to the time of Sir Edward Owen's sailing for the Mediterranean.

“ These several papers, being the proceedings of the Commission up to the time of my nomination, and I refer to them for the purpose of expressing my entire concurrence in what has already been done, and my willingness to enter upon the business as a partaker in all the responsibility which may attach to those proceedings.

“ I am now ready to meet my colleague at the Ordnance Office, on the earliest day that may suit his convenience, and ready to join in a communication to Mr. Warner, of our desire to prosecute our inquiries without delay, so far as may depend upon us.

(Signed)

“ T. BYAM MARTIN.”

With respect to the objections to the enlargement of the Commission, by the appointment of a third member, whether the Noble Lord or any other person who had previously been connected with this investigation, and which he complains of as unfair to Mr. Warner; we expressly stipulated that we should have nothing whatever to do with any previous proceedings or persons. We foresaw, distinctly, that attempts would be made to connect us with previous experiments, said to have been successful, but of which no documentary proof could be found, and which were stated to have been made in the presence of some eminent and distinguished men now no more. We undertook this as a new Commission, the terms and composition of which were, as I have said, expressly assented to, in writing, by Mr. Warner. We stated, that if his subsequent demands for the enlargement of the Commission were deemed advisable, we were ready to withdraw; but that having commenced our labours in conformity with those engagements, we would either proceed undisturbed by any alteration of the Commission, to complete the duty entrusted to us, or resign.

Soon after Sir Byam Martin's appointment, he, unfortunately, became considerably indisposed, and under those circumstances it appeared to the Master-General of the Ordnance, that if the unfavourable state of Sir Byam Martin's health should prevent the investigation from proceeding

it would be necessary to appoint another Commissioner; and accordingly Sir George Murray intended in that case to give me another colleague.

The Noble Lord, the Member for Staffordshire denies, and does not permit me to correct him, that the intention to appoint another Commissioner had reference only to the unfavourable state of Sir Byam Martin's health. I shall set the Noble Lord right, by reading from Sir George Murray's letter of the 27th of March, 1842, which I hold in my hand:—"As Sir Byam Martin's health is happily restored, and the apprehension of delay on that account has ceased, the motive for Mr. Warner's suggestion ceases also, for it must be obvious to every one, that it is both for the interest of the public, and fair towards Mr. Warner, that the investigation should be continuous, and that it should be begun and finished by the same Commission, if that can possibly be effected."

Sir Byam Martin's health having happily been speedily re-established, we met and addressed conjointly to Mr. Warner a letter, of which the following is a copy---

*" Ordnance Office, 4th April, 1842.*

"SIR,—Sir Byam Martin's health being re-established, we lose no time in acquainting you that we are ready to proceed in the investigation of your discoveries with as little delay as may be consistent with our instructions, and a full consideration of the important matters you have submitted to Her Majesty's Government.



“ We are required, in the first instance, to ascertain the expense which may attend a series of experiments, in order that such a statement may be submitted to the Treasury, previously to any expense being incurred on the public account.

“ With this view we think it right to inform you, that it is our intention, first, to have your ‘ Long Range’ exhibited, and afterwards a practical illustration of the effect of the ‘ Invisible Shells ;’ in both cases the materials to be prepared on such a scale as you may deem to be necessary for real service. For your further guidance in estimating the expense of preparing your materials, it may be proper to say, that we think the ‘ Long Range’ may be required to be shewn six times, and the ‘ Invisible Shells’ three times ; but in stating the proofs which we think might be sufficiently frequent, it is by no means our intention to put limits to the operations you may consider necessary and satisfactory.

“ You will be pleased to state if any, and what assistance of cannon or otherwise you may require from the Ordnance Department, or any other branch of Her Majesty’s service ; also, if it is your wish to be assisted by men belonging to the Royal Artillery, or if it is your intention to be assisted only by people of your own.

“ In the first case, it is necessary we should know the number of men you will require ; in the last, the charge you will make for your own men.

“ For the greater security of the secrecy you desire, we shall be very willing to have the experiments made in as unfrequented a part of the country as may be practicable, and the place and time known only to ourselves and to such persons as you may require to be present. We leave it with you to fix upon any locality in England, provided the place affords space and convenience for the purpose.

“ You shall have the earliest intimation of our being ready to proceed with the business, after you have furnished us with the estimate of the expense, and given us the information we

require, in order to ascertain the additional cost as relates to the public departments; all which will be submitted to the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, for their Lordship's consideration, as regards a practical application of your invention.

" We are, &c.

(signed)

" T. BYAM MARTIN.

" HOWARD DOUGLAS."

To this we received, on the evening of the 13th, from Mr. Warner, a letter dated the 11th, which will be found in the Parliamentary Papers, from which I read, for brevity, the following extracts:—

" You express a desire to see an exhibition of the powers of my ' Long Range' first, and then some practical illustration of the efficacy of my ' Invisible Shells.'

" With regard to the reversal of the order in which the investigation was commenced, I do not think it advisable. As I have already commenced my explanations, with reference to the ' Invisible Shells,' to Admiral Sir Edward Owen and Sir Howard Douglas, I think it better to complete that investigation first, and then proceed to the ' Long Range.' If an experiment is insisted upon, I am quite prepared to make one, and enclose, according to your request, an estimate of the probable expense as well as I can, in the absence of any specification of what you require to be done. I however submit to your consideration whether this expense might not be avoided, when I can refer, as eye-witnesses, to the following gentlemen now holding high offices of state:—the First Lord of the Treasury, the Master-General of the Ordnance, the Senior Naval Lord of the Admiralty, &c.

" With such testimony as to the actual power of explosion under my control, it may be a question worthy the consideration of Government, whether a repetition of an experiment of

an explosive character may not incur unnecessary expense and loss of time, besides the risk of attracting public notice, which to a certain extent is unavoidable, whatever precautions may be taken.

“ But I must here stipulate that in the event of the experiments (with the Invisible Shells) proving successful, I have to be paid the sum finally agreed upon, and on the receipt of the money for the Invisible Shells, will forthwith proceed to demonstrate the power of the Long Range.”

Thus the House will perceive that whilst our main object was to get to the “ long range,” and that Mr. Warner had been distinctly told by us that we had no power, whatever, to enter on the question of guarantee or remuneration, and that although he had expressly assented to arrangements which left that matter exclusively to the consideration of the Government, he now positively refused to enter on experiments at all, unless we gave some guarantee or promise on the part of the Government, as to the remuneration he demanded.

On the 16th of April the Commission addressed a letter, of which the following is an extract, to Mr. Warner; and as this contained a distinct specification of the experiments we desired to witness, it is important that I should refer to the more material passages of that letter.—See Parliamentary Papers, page 18.

“ We endeavoured to specify distinctly the experiments we wished to be made; and, referring to our letter of the 4th instant, we do not see that we could have been more explicit; but, in order that there may be no mistake as to the extent of the experiments which we must witness, we propose these must

be made with three of your invisible shells, in a tide-way in a port or roadstead of unequal depth of water; and with six of your long range against a fort or battery, and likewise against a vessel or vessels.

“The expense of preparing your means of making these experiments, we call on you to estimate and report the amount to us. We will make the necessary arrangements for providing the vessel or vessels against which your long range will be tried, and will indicate the fort or battery, or other building or position against which your long range may be directed, and also the vessel or vessels which, by your invisible shells, you engage to destroy. All these arrangements, as to the objects for the experiments, we will take care shall be prepared, so that no delay, or as little delay as possible, may rest with us.

“In the execution of the very responsible duty with which we are charged, it is our earnest desire to pursue the course most satisfactory to yourself, only stipulating on our part that your powers must be shewn to us on such a scale as is suited to real service, and in both cases under circumstances of ordinary occurrence at sea and on shore.

“We therefore readily assent to your wish that the invisible shells may be first tried; but our report must embrace both classes of experiments, and cannot be made until both have been concluded.

“The Commission, now composed of the undersigned, as well as of those who first met you at the Ordnance Office on the 24th of January, come to this decision from the impressions made on their minds, on reading your papers, that the long range is infinitely more important than the invisible shells, and that the experiments should therefore be directed more particularly to ascertain the powers, accuracy, and safety of that power. It was consequently decided to make it the first object of our attention; but in deference to your wishes, it shall be the last; subject, however, to the distinct understanding we have before expressed.

“ You say in your letter now before us, ‘ I, however, submit to your consideration whether this expense might not be avoided, when I can refer, as eye-witnesses of an experiment, to the first Lord of the Treasury, the Master-General of the Ordnance, the Senior Naval Lord of the Admiralty, the Secretary at War, Lord Hardwicke, and Lord Ingestre.’

“ If we were to be satisfied with the opinions of others, our Commission would be an absurdity ; and we frankly tell you we cannot permit ourselves to be influenced by any thing which has hitherto occurred.

“ We have nothing whatever to do with any previous experiment, admission or understanding ; we have been named a Commission, to witness and report upon the practical efficacy of your inventions, which you denominate invisible shells and long range, as set forth in your papers, and this we are prepared to enter on whenever you are ready.

“ Our wish is that these should be conducted with the greatest delicacy to yourself, and not to extort, nor even permit you to divulge your secret. Charging ourselves, as we have before stated, with making an estimate for providing at the public expense all the objects, materials, or means for making the experiments, which do not involve any knowledge of the principle or materials of the destructive power which you assert to be in your possession ; and with reference to your observation, that you have spent all your means in perfecting this invention, and cannot prepare for these experiments at your own cost, we call upon you to furnish us with an estimate of the amount of the expense for preparing the means which you only can make, without divulging your secret. With an estimate from you of this description, and our statement of what is necessary to be provided by the Government, we shall be able, agreeably to our instructions, to submit the whole expense to the Treasury, which we shall lose no time in doing, so soon as you comply with this requisition.

“ You say in another part of your letter, or rather in concluding the previous quotation, ‘ With such testimony as to the actual power of explosion under my control, it may be a

question worthy the consideration of the Government, whether a repetition of an experiment of an explosive character may not incur unnecessary expense and loss of time, besides the risk of attracting public notice, which to a certain extent is unavoidable, whatever precautions may be taken. I can, however, but reiterate my readiness to comply with your wishes on this head, if you think good to renew them.'

"To us, it does not appear that any experiments have been made either on a scale, or under circumstances, or in a manner to warrant a conclusion that the power, whatever it may be, which you call invisible shells, is applicable, or practicable, under all the conditions and circumstances of real service; and with respect to the long range, to which we attach, from your own assertions of its prodigious powers, a degree of importance infinitely beyond any that can be assigned to any submarine mines or fougasses, whatever be the force of the explosive composition they contain, or the mode of action; we have nothing but statements which you made of a power so astonishing and omnipotent as must, by your own admission, be incredible to those who have not witnessed it. Nothing, therefore, can satisfy us but practical proofs on a large scale, and under circumstances common to land and sea service in time of war.

(signed) "T. BYAM MARTIN,  
"HOWARD DOUGLAS."

With respect to the vessel or hulk, against which the experiments were to be tried, we acquainted Mr. Warner that we could not consent to his proposition to provide, or cause to be constructed, the hulk against which he was to try his alleged powers. We intimated to him, that we charged ourselves with this, as with every thing else that the public could provide without prying into his secret; and that conducting the

experiments in a real service manner, he would not be permitted to communicate with, or go nearer the vessel to be destroyed, than he would be allowed to board or approach an enemy's ship; that when he reported himself ready, we should convey the hulks to the locality selected for the experiments; and that the movement or traction of the vessel to be attacked in motion, would be managed by the Commission and not dragged by the assailants to certain destruction. The Noble Lord denies that Mr. Warner insisted on providing the vessel himself. The Noble Lord is again in error, as the following "Estimate," transmitted to us by Mr. Warner in his letter of the 11th of April, will shew—

"To construct a stout vessel, and strengthen her hull beyond the ordinary strength of a line of battle ship's sides, so as to prove the force of the explosive power beyond all dispute; to convey this to an eligible site, fill her up on the spot; for waste of materials and incidental expenses, would amount to some sum between 1,500*l.* and 2,000*l.*

"I will take this opportunity of observing that a tenth part of the force applied in the experiment witnessed by the gentlemen within named, would have destroyed the largest ship which ever floated.

"I think it would be better to construct the vessel at a private yard, but previously to being blown up, Government carpenters may superintend her being filled up solid, so that every suspicion may be removed of there being any internal preparation to accomplish her destruction."

I now come to some other assertions made by Mr. Warner, which I shall characterize by no other term, than that of being wholly and entirely ground-

less; and which, as I am not fond of bandying strong words, I shall at once dispose of—

“Sir Howard, in a very peremptory manner, told me I must disclose my secret agent, and explain its nature, properties, and composition, as well as exhibit and explain my mode of operation. This I at once declined, when Sir Howard said, without such disclosure he could not recommend my inventions to Her Majesty’s Government.”—*Extract of a Statement which appeared in the Times, Morning Post, Naval and Military Gazette.*

To this, I adduce first the minutes of proceedings of the 19th day of April, 1842, annexed to our report, in conformity with articles 4 and 5 of the Master-General’s memorandum of the 22nd January, 1842.

“Present:—Admiral Sir T. Byam Martin, Lieutenant-General Sir Howard Douglas.

“Having at our last meeting, on the 16th instant, decided upon the answer to be given to Mr. Warner’s letter of the 11th, he was appointed to meet us, this day, at three o’clock.

“Mr. Warner was called in, and the two following paragraphs read to him:

“You have desired in your letter of the 11th instant to stipulate for a reward for the disclosure of your secret, and remuneration of your expenses, if your inventions are proved to our satisfaction.

“The letter now about to be delivered to you is in answer to yours, in which you are informed that we have no authority to entertain any such proposition. We think it right to tell you this before we ask any questions, in order that you may exercise your own discretion as to whether or not you will answer them.

“Mr. Warner made no objection to the questions being put.



“We then read to him this paragraph, viz, Before we proceed to ask any questions respecting the practical application of your inventions, we think it right *again* to warn you not to impart to us any part of what you term your secret; if you do so, it will be your own fault, and contrary to our wishes. You will therefore decline to answer any questions you may think objectionable.”

The House will perceive from this, that in our letters to Mr. Warner, and in all our meetings with him, we invariably charged him not to answer any question, or say any thing that could in the least tend to divulge any part of his secret, and that we as invariably acquainted him that we had no authority to entertain any proposition or stipulation relating to remuneration.

Two days after this meeting we received a letter, of which the following is a copy, from Mr. Warner, which proves that after everything was prepared, he did refuse to come to the point, unless we made promises or gave guarantees wholly at variance with the conditions to which he had assented.

“ *Clarence Chambers, 12, Haymarket,  
19 April, 1842.* ”

“Gentlemen,—I have most respectfully to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 16th instant, in which you state that you have no authority whatever to enter into any agreement as to reward or remuneration.

“As I made this the basis of my offer to Her Majesty’s Government, I feel it impossible to proceed any further until you have received authority to promise me, on the part of the Government, the remuneration I ask, in the event of my

proving to your satisfaction my ability to effect what I have unfolded in the document, to which you have done me the honour to refer.

“ It will be unnecessary for me to trouble you with a more detailed answer to the other parts of your letter, until the obstacle above adverted to is removed.

I am, &c.

(Signed)

“ S. A. WARNER.”

To Sir Thomas Byam Martin and  
Sir Howard Douglas,  
&c. &c. &c.

On the 20th of May, we wrote to Mr. Warner as follows :—

“20th May, 1842.

“ SIR,—We are to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th instant.

“ Our functions having ceased by your ‘ finally’ declining to proceed to the experiments upon which we were prepared to enter (unless under a guarantee, which we are not authorized to give), we should have confined ourselves simply to an intimation of the transmission of your letter to the Master-General of the Ordnance, were it not for that passage in it wherein you say, ‘ I put it to your candour, whether I have not already made many important disclosures to yourselves.’

“ To this appeal we give a decided negative, not only for ourselves, but for the Commission as originally constituted. In all our communications with you, either personally or by letter, we told you, in terms incapable of being misunderstood, that it was not our intention, or our wish, to draw from you any part of your secret; we did more, we warned you not to answer any questions that might in the least lead to the disclosure of your inventions, and, in point of fact, you have not made any important disclosures to us; you have made many large assertions, but we have been afforded no opportunity of

fulfilling the chief object of our Commission, namely, the testing your discoveries by actual experiments.

We are, Sir, &c.

(signed) "T. BYAM MARTIN, Admiral.

S. A. Warner, Esq. "HOWARD DOUGLAS, Lieut.-General."

The Noble Lord makes a serious charge against the Commission, that the minutes of what passed between the Commission and Mr. Warner on the 19th of April, 1842, were written, unfairly, after the meeting, instead of being taken down at the time in his presence and with his knowledge. This is another error amongst the many into which the Noble Lord has been led by his client, and another injustice he has done to the Commission, by believing this, to their prejudice. The whole of the minutes, questions, and answers, annexed to the proceedings, to which the Noble Lord refers, were written down at the time by Sir Byam Martin, as enjoined by our instructions, in the presence of Mr. Warner, with his knowledge, and without any appearance or expression of objection. The Noble Lord complains that these minutes should have been produced! Why he moved for the production of the papers: the minutes of the proceedings were inseparably connected, by our instructions, with the despatches of which they were enclosures; and the Government had no alternative but to give all or none. This brought to light the affair of the Nautilus, and the destruction of the two French privateers off Folkestone, to which the Noble Lord has adverted, as to

a fact that should have satisfied us.\* Then Mr. Warner has stated, and the Noble Lord seems to

\* The letter, from Sir Byam Martin, and the other documents, annexed to this note, relating to the destruction of two French vessels blown up with all their crews, by Mr. Warner, show the references that were made to the Admiralty, and Foreign Office, to procure the most exact information as to the exploit which Mr. Warner adduced of his own accord, in the subjoined extract from the Parliamentary Papers, moved for by Lord Ingestre, page 20 :—

“ How long is it since you satisfied yourself of the powers of your Long Range and Invisible Shells?—About 12 years the Long Range, and 27 or 28 the Invisible Shells; I sunk two privateers with them at the end of the war, one off Folkestone, the other in St. Valery Bay.

What vessel were you in when you did this?—The Nautilus, hired into the King’s service.

Who was the Nautilus hired of?—My father.

What was his name?—William Warner.

How long was the Nautilus in the King’s service, and at what date?—About four years; I do not recollect the date, but will let you have the particulars to-morrow.†

Such an extraordinary circumstance was of course reported to the Admiralty?—No, it was not reported to the Admiralty; we were not under the Admiralty.

Who was the vessel hired by, and how was she employed?—Hired by the Secretary of State, and employed under Lord Castlereagh in landing spies.

Was the destruction of the vessels reported to the Secretary of State?—I do not know that it was; it might have been.

Were the facts recorded in the log-book of the Nautilus?—We did not keep a log-book.

As the vessel was in the King’s service, did you receive

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† These were never given.

believe it, that I made observations which led Mr. Warner to suppose that after he had proved all he head money for the crews of the privateers so destroyed?—No, it was not claimed.

Were any of the men saved from the privateers?—Not one; no one knows the circumstance but myself and another. They were all blown up.

What is the name of the other man?

Can you give the date and particulars of this extraordinary circumstance?—You shall have it all to-morrow.”

*Matlock, Sept. 5th, 1844.*

MY DEAR SIR HOWARD,—I have just now received a printed copy of the Warner papers.

Amongst the manuscript documents delivered by me there are two notes, one from Mr. Bedford, a clerk in the Admiralty Office, the other from the office of Secretary of State, in answer to my inquiry—whether any trace could be found of the name of the Nautilus, or Captain Warner?

The answer from both departments shows the diligence with which the search had been made, and the complete absence of every thing that could warrant Mr. Warner's assertion, that a vessel of that name, commanded by his father, had ever been employed in the public service.

This appears to me to furnish such conclusive proof of the fabrication of the story about blowing up the two privateers, as would at once satisfy the country of the little credit due to my assertions made by Mr. Warner.

I have written to Sir George Clerk to point out the omission, leaving it with him to determine whether it shall be corrected by the introduction of a fly leaf with a note, of which you will herewith receive a copy.

(Signed)

J. BYAM MARTIN.

(Copy.)

“Admiralty, 27th April, 1842.

“William Warner, stated to have had the command of a hired vessel named the ‘Nautilus,’ at some time between the

professed to do, he should receive no remuneration —that I made remarks from time to time to the effect, that after the disclosure shall have been made by him, what was to prevent me from asking £400,000. for the secret.\*

beginning of the year 1809, and the middle of the year 1815; to have been employed by the Foreign Secretary of State; and to have performed some service, or exploit, of a distinguished character, on the coast of France.

“No allusion whatsoever, of even the slightest nature, either to the man, or to the vessel, is to be found in the papers of the Admiralty, for the period.

“And it appears by the enclosed letter from the Foreign Office, that there is not any record of the case, in that department; and that all that can now be looked for to elucidate the matter, is that the Under-Secretary for the time (who is about to be referred to), may have some remembrance of the subject.

(Signed)

“HENRY BEDFORD.”

“Mr. Hamilton, who was Under-Secretary for the department of France during the time to which you allude, as that in which William Warner was concerned in the Foreign Office, has no recollection of any such person; nor has the gentleman who was then at the head of the details of the department; nor has the person who had the care of the papers; nor do the existing papers furnish any clue to the transaction supposed.

(Signed)

“JAMES BANDINAL.”

“*Foreign Office, April 27th, 1842.*”

\* The subjoined questions in which the £400,000. mentioned, were put to Mr. Warner by Sir Byam Martin, to obtain some suggestion from Mr. Warner, as to securing the

I positively deny that any such conversation took place. The whole of the questions put that day, with the exception of those which followed incidentally from the reference to the affair of the two privateers sunk off Folkestone, were prepared by Sir Byam Martin previously, were put by him, and the answers written down by him, and I am now in possession of that document, to which, as I now perceive, Sir Byam Martin affixed at the time the following minute.

secret for the exclusive use of the country, in the event of its being bought by the Government.

“If this be the case, the secret would no sooner be bought than it would be lost, unless the Government gave £400,000. to every person who may become acquainted with it, and even then they must depend on the integrity of the persons so to be bought; perhaps you may suggest some way of securing the secret which does not occur to us?—If you tell people, they will of course be in the secret; but no one ought to have it but the Prime Minister, and one person under him to manufacture it.

Then, at any rate, the man who works under the Prime Minister must have his £400,000., or he would betray the secret?—Oh, I do not think an Englishman would do such a thing; I think it might be kept a secret.

But you are an Englishman, and want to sell the secret yourself?—Yes; but only see what I have done to secure the secret to my country.

Do you, in point of fact, believe it possible to keep it secret?—I am sure it is.

How?—By placing it in the hands of the Prime Minister, and only one other person.”

“ Mr. Warner has been treated with great favour and indulgence ; and if all the sanguine projectors who may be expected to present their contrivances, are to have them proved at the public expense, and with stipulated promises of reward, the national Revenue would scarcely be sufficient to meet their demands.

“ T. B. M.”

I transmitted on the 3rd of September, 1844, Mr. Warner's assertions, as above, to Sir Byam Martin, and received the following answer.

“ During the time I had the satisfaction to be joined with you in that duty, I can safely say that no conversation of the nature stated in his letter ever took place in my presence, and, as far as I saw, the whole bearing of your conduct towards Mr. Warner, was the reverse of what is described in his published letter.

“ So far from desiring to procure from Mr. Warner a knowledge of his secret, you cordially agreed with me in forbidding him to answer any question that could have the least tendency to draw from him any thing leading to its disclosure. You will no doubt recollect, that in order to give this warning the greater force, I committed it to writing, and read it to Mr. Warner before any question was asked of him. This I trust will appear in the papers which, by his desire, are about to be laid before the public.

“ No projector was ever more favoured by the Government ; he had every assistance offered to him, men, vessels, and materials, free of all charge, and I can confidently assert, that he received from us every fair consideration and attention.

“ Ever truly yours,

“ T. BYAM MARTIN.”

In reply to the many insinuations or assertions that the Master-General of the Ordnance attributed



the abrupt termination of the proceedings to any error or failure on the part of the Commission, or that we had acted in any way contrary to the letter and spirit of his instructions, or that Her Majesty's Government disapproved of our proceedings, it is only necessary to refer to the letters\* which we received from the Master-General, approving of our having refused Mr. Warner's proposition, as wholly at variance with his, the Master-General's, memorandum, and with the arrangements to which Mr.

\* "Ordnance Office, 30th April, 1842.

"GENTLEMEN,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th instant, by which I am informed that the investigation of Mr. Warner's alleged discoveries has been brought by him to an abrupt close, in consequence of Mr. Warner's having by a letter, dated the 19th instant, 'declined to give you any practical illustration of his powers until he obtains from the Queen's Ministers a guarantee for the payment of £400,000. in the event of proving them to your satisfaction.'

"Your letter further informs me, that, as you 'know nothing practically to enable you to affirm or to deny the usefulness of Mr. Warner's inventions, you are prevented making the report required of you in the fifth paragraph of my memorandum of the 22nd of January last.'

"The memorandum to which you refer formed the basis of the proceedings entered upon with reference to Mr. Warner's discoveries, *and having been accepted as such by that gentleman*, I felt a confident hope that some conclusive result would be arrived at by pursuing the course therein laid down. *Mr. Warner's present proposition appearing, however, to be wholly at variance with the basis laid down in my memorandum, and to which Mr. Warner's assent was given, I can only state in*

Warner had assented ; that we had judged rightly in what we had done ; that he, the Master-General,

*reply to that proposition that I am without any authority from the Government to entertain it.*

“ I shall retain in my possession the several documents which accompanied your letter of the 25th instant.

“ I have, &c.

(Signed) “ G. MURRAY.”

“ Admiral Sir Byam Martin, G.C.B. and  
Lieut.-Gen. Sir Howard Douglas, Bart., G.C.B.”

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“ *Ordnance Office, 13th May, 1842.*

“ GENTLEMEN,—I have received and read attentively your letter of the 9th instant, and have also carefully perused that addressed to you by Mr. Warner on the 6th.

“ *The perusal of Mr. Warner's letter has not enabled me to see matters in a different light from that in which they appeared to me when I wrote to you on the 30th of April.*

“ The investigation which you were commissioned to make of Mr. Warner's discoveries was to proceed upon the principle of that gentleman enabling you, by a series of experiments, to form a judgment of the power and applicability of the means which he had found out, and of the detriment to this country which might result from these means being placed by him at the disposal of any other State. But no experiments, it would appear, have as yet been exhibited to you ; and Mr. Warner seems now to demand, that before any experiments are made, a guarantee shall be afforded to him that he is to receive £400,000. in the event of the result of the proposed experiments being such as to satisfy the Commissioners that his discoveries possess the power and applicability which he himself has attributed to them.

“ *You have rightly judged that your Commission does not*

had no authority for such a preliminary guarantee as Mr. Warner *now* requires, nor would recommend such a proposition to the Government; and Sir George Murray, moreover, communicated this to Mr. Warner himself in his letter of the 4th July, 1842.

“ *Ordnance Office, 4th July, 1842.* ”

“ SIR,—Since receiving your letter of the 1st instant, I have re-perused the original memorandum drawn up by me with reference to the mode in which it seemed to me that Government might proceed with regard to your discovery. *You were*

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*convey to you the power of affording to Mr. Warner such a guarantee. It authorizes you merely to report, in the first place, the amount of the expense which a series of experiments would occasion, that the Government may be enabled to decide whether it will or will not sanction that outlay; and, in the second place, it requires you to report, after witnessing such experiments as Mr. Warner may exhibit before you, whether these experiments warrant the opinion which Mr. Warner has himself formed of the importance and utility to the public of his discoveries.*

“ My understanding has throughout been, that Mr. Warner had given his concurrence to the investigation being conducted upon the principles and in the manner which I have mentioned; and I have no authority from the Government to hold out such a preliminary guarantee as Mr. Warner now requires; nor do I think myself entitled to recommend such a proposition to the Government.

“ I have, &c.

(Signed)

“ G. MURRAY.”

“ Admiral Sir Byam Martin, G.C.B.

Lieut.-General Sir Howard Douglas, Bart., G.C.B.”

*informed of the contents of that paper, and have, if I mistake not, a copy of it. It was submitted by me in the outset to Sir Robert Peel, and it having received his sanction, I proceeded, as you are aware, to act upon it.*

*"I retain the opinion I had then formed, that the mode of proceeding suggested by the memorandum above-mentioned is one which is fair and just both towards yourself and towards the public; and I have no authority to pursue any other course.*

"The perfect knowledge which you possess of the nature of your discovery, and of the result of the various trials to which you have seen it subjected, may have satisfied your mind fully of the great power of the agent which you employ, of the safety and facility of its application, and of the high value of your secret to any country which obtains the exclusive possession of it. But before the Government of this country can pledge itself to a remuneration so large as that which you claim, it seems reasonable that it should obtain some practical evidence that the opinions and expectations which you yourself entertain with regard to your discovery rest upon solid grounds, and have been formed after a full and impartial investigation of the subject.

(Signed)

"G. MURRAY."

On the 25th of April, we reported to the Master-General, that our proceedings, in the investigation of Mr. Warner's alleged discoveries, had been brought to an abrupt close, by his refusing to observe the terms and conditions to which he had assented, and we made the following Report, to which I now particularly request the attention of the House, and claim the support of Her Majesty's Government, in adhering to the resolution which we finally came to, and which her Majesty's late Government

determined to observe—that Mr. Warner should be pushed to submit immediately to extensive experiments with the “Long Range,” at a distance of six miles, to prove that the “Long Range” can be applied, with perfect safety to the users; that these astounding powers may be safely and accurately directed: that if he shall effectually destroy a work and its defences, and a hulk or hulks at that distance; if he can prove that this may be effected at any time and under any circumstances of wind and weather, by exhibiting it, first directly from the leeward, and then directly from the windward of the ship or fort to be destroyed; we shall report that he has made an omnipotent discovery, which will place him pre-eminent in the annals of the world, and entitle him to liberal reward for a discovery of such immense magnitude and importance, as to be, in Mr. Warner’s own words, “perfectly incredible.” But after having devoted a life to the study and practice of such matters, I avow my entire incredulity, as to the existence of any such power, or if it did exist, the physical impossibility of the “Long Range.”

The Noble Lord has spoken of this as one of the most important of modern inventions, and which, in his judgment, classes Mr. Warner with the sages to whom the world is indebted,—for gas, railways, and, I think, the Noble Lord said steam, and far superior to the invention of gunpowder. This leads me, likewise unexpectedly and off-hand,

to make a few observations on the Noble Lord's philosophy, and I think I said credulity. It is true, that gas for illuminating our streets, and the giant power of steam, are now effecting, what would have been deemed impossible and visionary half a century ago. But these agents are latent powers of nature, set free by discoveries made, and gradual improvements, pursued, through the paths of science. Gas is distilled from coal—steam vapourised from water; and these most useful and powerful agents act according to the immutable laws of nature. But Mr. Warner asserts a power which sets the most important laws of nature at defiance. Gravitation, by which the system of the universe is maintained—resistance, by which some of the most benign purposes of Providence are accomplished, are nothing to Mr. Warner. When Colonel Chalmers, a member of the late Commission, cautioned Mr. Warner of the prodigious powers of resistance to his Long Range, he exclaimed,\* “Who can frame laws to govern a force which has never before been heard of—a force a hundred times greater than that of gunpowder!” More was urged by the Colonel, but, as he says, Mr. Warner was too dogmatical to reason with. Who can frame laws to control such a force as Mr. Warner imagines! Why, the Almighty Maker of the universe. Does the Noble Lord not know, that the doctrine which excludes

\* Parliamentary Papers, Minutes of Proceedings, page 44, line 16.

resistance, would assign powers of range to projectiles surpassing infinitely any that ever has been attained, or can be reached? A projectile, whose random range is about 1300 yards, with a velocity of 600 feet per second, would range three times as far, were it not for the resistance of the air: and this, which, with moderate velocities, is as their squares, increases in a higher ratio with greater celerities. When a projectile is forced through the atmosphere, with a velocity greater than that with which air can rush into vacant space, (and which, in a mean state of atmospheric pressure, is about 1400 feet in a second) a vacuum is formed behind the projectile, by which the resistance suddenly and greatly increases. It rises to a higher ratio with a greater velocity, and a solid shot projected with 3,000 feet velocity, which would range only about 3,000 yards would, by the parabolic theory, attain to forty times as far! This, I think, must be the theory of the 'long range.' It is precisely because Mr. Warner's alleged projectile force is, as he says, a hundred times greater than that of gunpowder, that it would be met by a resisting force greater in an increased ratio, by which the projectile would be opposed, controlled, and reduced to moderate velocities and limited ranges. We possess in gunpowder a greater force than we require. We reject the random use of it, to gain accuracy. The mighty power by which one of the cliffs of Albion was recently blown into the sea, and the Royal George out

of it, is more than adequate to any, that war requires, or can be used with advantage in projectiles. A shot discharged with great initial velocity is, by the resistance to its flight, reduced, after passing over certain spaces, to the celerity which it would have, at that point, if projected with a lesser charge, that is, with a moderate velocity. The greatest range that ever yet has been attained was by the mortar or howitzer, the trophy that now stands in Saint James's Park, which threw a shell filled with lead about three miles into Cadiz, but with such random effect, as to do little or no harm.

By using the denser metal, lead, that range was procured, and the momentum of the shell, so filled, augmented. A British 13-inch shell filled with lead discharged from a mortar with the full charge, may be projected about as far as the Cadiz mortar threw its shell. I do not say that greater ranges may not be attained, but taking the relation between the calibre and the projectile, length, magnitude, and weight of gun, charge and elevation, and applying these to compute the powers of artillery of size beyond any thing at present in use, or that can possibly be used in war, no great increase, even of random range could be obtained, by increasing the magnitude of the gun to almost any size. And even then it would be a random range, ascending to an immense height to fall upon a *point* in an amplitude of 31,600 feet, to compute which, according to the doctrine



of chances, might require experiments or practice of twenty years duration, before a vessel could be touched, if such a long range, by any projectile power, were physically possible. My life has been devoted in a great degree to matters of this kind, and I assert, that it is physically impracticable to procure a range of six miles by any projectile force. Mr. Warner first asserted, that his Long Range was not a projectile, he has since asserted, that it is. But it may be a balloon, or a kite: if so it is old, and nothing worth.\* It may be a compound of projection and propulsion. This were still more ridiculous.

I have said, that we possess in gunpowder explosive force quite adequate to effect what Mr. Warner asserts in his invisible shells, and more than sufficient as a projectile force. Captain Harvey of the Navy, soon after I made this observation, exhibited very sufficient proofs of this in his very ingenious experiments, in which he destroyed a vessel quite as expertly and effectually as Mr. Warner did at Brighton, and I believe no

\* It was proposed during the threat of invasion in the late war, to endeavour to destroy the Boulogne flotilla by such agents, but this was laughed at. It is well known that Sir W. Congreve proposed to destroy towns and forts by the aid of kites. They were to be made of canvas, and of a very large size, so as to be able to carry very great weights. When the kite had reached its place of destination, and stood over the devoted fort, camp, or ship, the shell was to be dropped into the midst of the place or vessel.

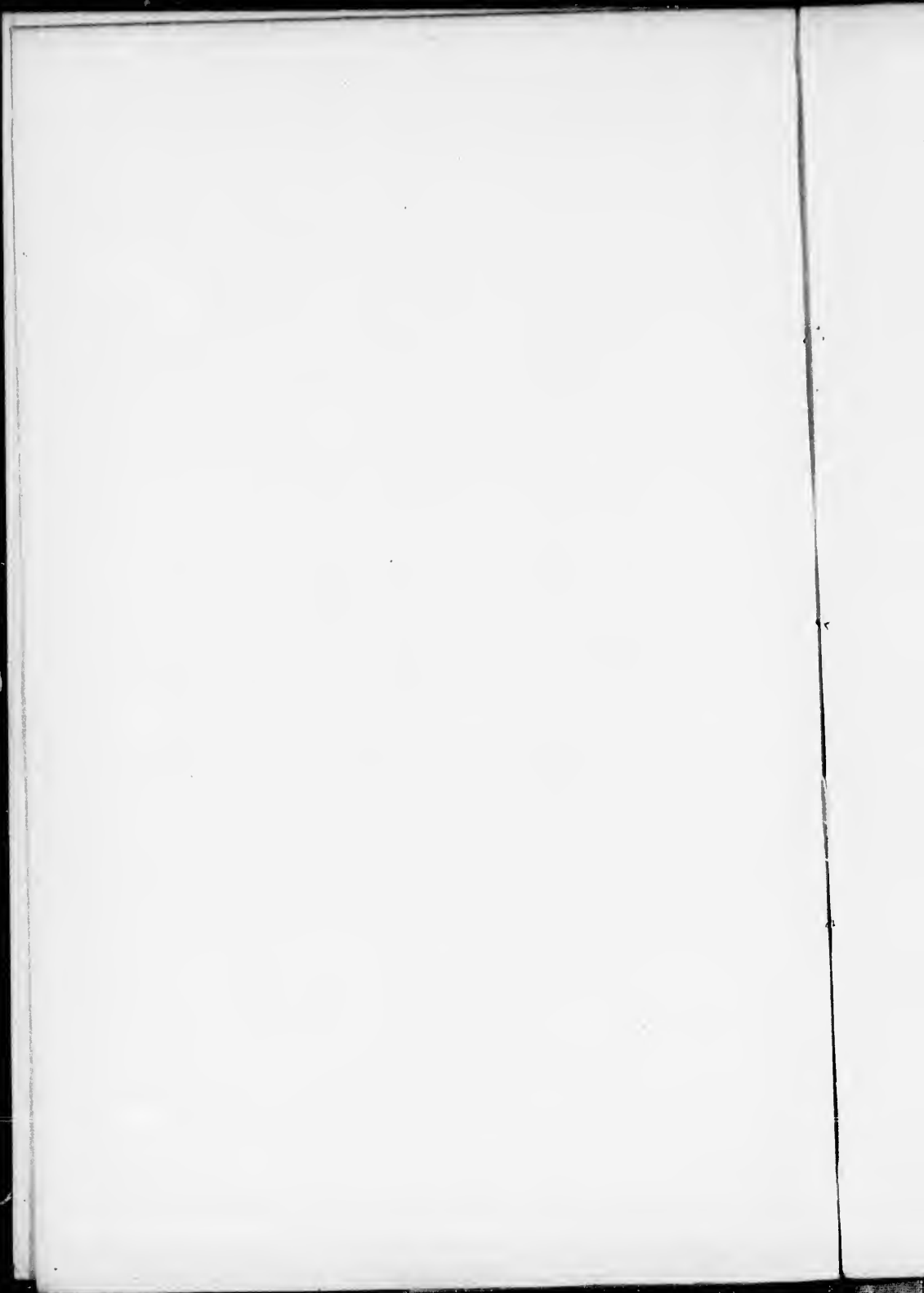
other agent was used than gunpowder and, perhaps, some "ready-light" match. I do not deny that Mr. Warner may have hit upon some explosive compound more potent than gunpowder, and some improved mode of causing it to explode, either by mechanical or chemical action, but as to the *modus operandi*, so far from there being anything new in Mr. Warner's process, I hold in my hand a work published at Paris five and twenty years ago,—*"Memoire sur les Mines Flottantes et les Petards Flottans, ou Machines Infernales Maritimes ; par Montgery, Officier de Marine,"*—containing a history of many different modes of blowing up ships by marine fougasses from very early times. This work has for its frontispiece, the destruction of a vessel by an invisible shell loaded with gunpowder, which did its work more effectually than in the case of the *John o' Gaunt*. Mr. Montgery details in this work, different processes for blockading vessels in bays or harbours, by laying down "*torpilles à ligne d'accouplement,*" across their entrances, these torpilles being made invisible by being retained below the surface of the sea by anchors, and connected with each other by lines, so that no vessel could pass, without coming in contact, either with a torpille, or with the line connecting one with another, causing both to collapse, strike the vessel, and explode.

Mr. Montgery likewise details the process by which a vessel in chase of another may be destroyed



P. S. Aron

"Mémoire sur les Mines Flotantes et les Petards Flottans, ou Machines Infernales Maritimes, par Montgéry, Officier de Marine."



by the use of two torpilles, connected to each other by a line.

“Vessels of all sizes, but above all steam-boats, may make use of these torpilles connected with each other by lines. A vessel may even sink another by torpilles connected with each other by lines. Vessels or boats chased by superior forces, may deliver themselves from their enemies, by throwing into the sea one or more of these mines flottantes connected with each other. The operation of shutting up an enemy's port, ought to be executed at night, otherwise the enemy having knowledge of it, would easily frustrate the attempt.”\*

This is exactly the Brighton experiment, as the extracts to which I advert shew.†

\* “Des navires de toute grandeur, mais surtout des bateaux à vapeur, parce qu'ils n'auraient pas besoin du vent, pourraient, comme les embarcations, faire usage de torpilles à ligne d'accouplement. Un seul navire pourrait même entreprendre d'en défoncer un autre, en traînant après soi plusieurs torpilles unies l'une à l'autre par un cordage qui laisserait un certain espace entre elles.

“Deux navires, ou deux embarcations, chassés par des forces supérieures, qui se tiendraient dans leurs eaux, pourraient aussi s'en délivrer, en abandonnant à la mer une ou plusieurs drômes semblables à celle décrite.”

† “It was, however, near five o'clock, P.M. before the John o' Gaunt began to make any way towards the point. She was then towed steadily by the steamer. One man was left on board the John o' Gaunt to steer her; a boat left her with this man about ten minutes before six o'clock. So soon as this boat was quite clear, Mr. Warner dropped his shell and a buoy into the water. The steamer on which Mr. Warner was

“ The most perilous part of the operation will be to anchor, and to remove, if necessary, these *barrières à torpille*, from fear they should explode by touching the cords which unite them. These torpilles should be immersed about 10 feet below the surface of the sea. The torpilles are retained into proper position when immersed in the sea by lines attached to small floats or corks, and connected to each other by lines fastened to the triggers or pistons, and other arrangements to maintain always the torpilles at the same distance below the surface of the sea, whatever be its rise or fall.\*

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aboard was then about 100 yards ahead of the *John o' Gaunt*, towing her and directing her carefully between the buoy and the shell. The shell came in contact with the ship on her starboard side, about midships, and under her bilge. The explosion took place about three minutes after Mr. Warner had dropped his shell.”—*Colonel Chalmers: see Parliamentary Papers, 1846, page 13, line 10 of the letter.*

\* “ L'opération la plus périlleuse serait de mouiller et de relever les barrières à torpilles ; sans que les leviers s'engagessent quelque part et principalement avec les cordes unissant chaque torpille l'une à l'autre.

“ Le poids des torpilles serait tel qu'elles s'enfoncraient seulement d'une dizaine de pieds audessous de la surface de la mer ; on fixerait du liège sur la partie avoisinant le levier, afin que celui-ci fût toujours plus élevé que le reste de la machine. Les deux bouts de chaque torpille auraient un piton, auquel serait amarrée une corde qu'on chargerait, de distance en distance, avec des petits morceaux de plomb, pour la faire plonger plus bas que les torpilles, et ne pas l'exposer à s'engager avec les leviers. La longueur de cettessorte de chaîne ou barrière, et les dispositions que nous venons de voir, empêcheraient les cordages d'être bien tendus, et procureraient beaucoup d'élasticité à tout le système ; circonstance qui main-

It were easy to adduce from Mr Montgery's work, and many others, abundant proofs that there is nothing new in the proposition for submarine mines, as suggested by Mr. Warner.\*

tiendrait toujours les torpilles a peu près à la même distance de la surface de la mer, surtout lorsque l'élévation et l'abaissement des marées, ne seraient pas excessifs."

" Cette opération devrait être exécutée de nuit seulement, sans quoi l'ennemi en aurait connaissance et éviterait facilement la rencontre des torpilles.

" Ces mêmes drômes pourraient se placer de nuit devant l'embouchure d'un port ou d'une rade ennemie. Et, pour fixer la position des drômes, il conviendrait que leurs extrémités fussent garnies d'ancre. Ce système reviendrait, comme on le voit à celui des barrières décrites pour la défense."

\* We find the following in Pepys' Diary:—

" In the afternoon come the German de Knuffler to discourse with us about his engine to blow up ships. We doubted not the matter of fact, it being tried in Cromwell's time, but the safety of carrying them in ships. But he do tell us, that when he comes to tell the king his secret, for none but the kings successively, and their heirs" (to this Mr. Warner adds Prime Ministers) "must know it, it will appear to be of no danger at all. We concluded nothing; but shall discourse with the Duke of York to-morrow about it."

To these I may add an infinity of names mentioned by Monsieur Montgery from the earliest times. And in our own refer to Bushnel, 1787; Torpedo war and submarine explosions, by Robert Fulton, Fellow of the American Philosophical Society, and of the United States Military and Philosophical Society, New York, 1810; De la machine infernale maritime, ou de la tactique-offensive et défensive de la torpille, etc. par M. E. Nunez de Taboada, etc. Paris, 1812; Colt, see New York Weekly Sun; Monsieur Jobart, of Brussels, &c. &c.

After bestowing a great deal of consideration and research on this subject, the Commission was of opinion that Mr. Warner's invisible shells were of very minor importance, and we attached very little value to them; we consented to witness that class of Mr. Warner's experiments as the only way of getting at the Long Range. We were of opinion that the Government and the country might safely abandon the invisible shell, to any use that the projector can make of it; but having failed in our endeavours to bring Mr. Warner to the test of his Long Range, upon the fair, liberal and equitable terms which we proposed, according to arrangements to which he expressly assented, we urged the Government to have nothing more to do with Mr. Warner, unless he would forthwith exhibit to competent persons the actual powers of his Long Range, which, after all that has been said and written, he *confesses he never has tried against a ship, vessel, or building.*\* Let

\* "Can you give any distinct and positive proofs of the severe effect of your Long Range?"

"At the Bayonne Islands, at a distance of six miles, if there had been 100,000 men on the island they would have been destroyed. I could sweep every creature from the Rock of Gibraltar, and could blow up the foundations of the battery called the Devil's Tongue.

"(N.B.—Mr. Warner was reminded that this is assertion, not proof.)

"From what vessel did you fire at the Bayonne Islands at a distance of six miles?"

"From a Portuguese schooner in Don Pedro's service.



him place his vessel or apparatus where he likes ;  
let the vessel to be destroyed be brought on a given

“ Have you, in point of fact, ever tried your Long Range against any ship or vessel or building, so as to produce the destruction said to be in your power ?

“ No ; but I undertake to forfeit my existence if I do not do so.”

The following is Mr. Warner's specification of the effects which he attributes to his invention, in his letter dated the 2nd Nov. 1841, addressed to the Earl of Hardwicke, Parliamentary Papers, page 7 :—

“ My system is quite apart from any accustomed system of naval tactics, and entirely novel ; but so simple, that it would be advisable an enemy should be induced, if possible, to look in a diametrically opposite quarter for danger to that whence it will assail him. The most difficult mountain passes might be maintained by means of this power, and hill forts, however lofty their site, be attacked or defended with a very small body of men, and without any battering train, or costly yet perishable stores of ammunition. I could, by means of my inventions, have bombarded the town of Boulogne, destroyed the flotilla, and Napoleon's camp on the heights beyond, with a single vessel, and without risk of the loss of a man. If I had been employed to defend Acre, I could have prevented the approach of the British fleet to within gunshot of its shores ; I could, by means of my Long Range, have bombarded Acre from a single vessel, placed in security quite out of the reach of the garrison artillery. I could bring such a fire to bear upon any fortress strong as Gibraltar, that in a few hours not a man should be left alive in it, and I do not withdraw these words. With respect to certainty of aim, I can in the highest sea ensure my aim at a range beyond any distance hitherto attained by any battery afloat. I may say how almost impossible it is, in a heavy sea way, to obtain a sight so as to point a gun on a fixed carriage with any tolerable certainty of hitting an object whose position

day, by a steam-tug to within six miles of his position, and there anchored or cast loose, directly to windward of his position; let the same thing be done from the leeward: if under these circumstances he succeed in destroying or damaging the

alters nearly every second, as must be the case with a pitching and rolling ship, and can therefore duly appreciate the importance of having surmounted this difficulty. I wish not to disparage the efforts which have for now many years been made to improve the theory and practice of naval gunnery, but I plainly assert, that while the efforts have been highly praiseworthy, the success has been very inconsiderable. I could have demolished Algiers, instead of damaging it only, as Lord Exmouth did with his splendid fleet, and that in a vessel which should not have exceeded in the cost of its construction and outfit, ammunition to be consumed on the siege included. 100,000*l.* I would have undertaken in a few days after to proceed and destroy Toulon. Were I to publish such statements in the columns of a newspaper, or promulgate them to the multitude, I could only expect to be derided as an impostor, or pitied as the dupe of my own vain fancy; but now that I am required to state distinctly, for the information of her Majesty's Government, what I am actually able to accomplish, I feel in honour and in duty bound, at any temporary risk to my credibility, to disclose the extent of the amazing powers over which, after years of toil, study and expense, I have obtained complete control—I say temporary risk, because I have a firm confidence that time and trial will establish my veracity.

“ In conclusion, my Lord, I submit the terms on which I am willing to dispose of my inventions to the Government. For the first-mentioned, my Invisible Shells, 200,000*l.*; and for the second, which I have designated my Long Range, also 200,000*l.* The time and mode of payment I leave for future arrangement.”

hulk, I shall retract all I have said ; allow that the studies of a life are at one blow overthrown, and I shall admit that Mr. Warner has made an omnipotent discovery, which will give him that high place among the sages of the world, which the Noble Lord would assign him, and supersede all existing modes of warfare.

Sir, I must say that the manner in which this affair has been treated and the terms in which the Commissioners have been maligned, is not very creditable to the science, or public press of the country, or to the service to which we belong. I say nothing of myself ; I, individually, entirely despise such attacks and misrepresentations ; but two British Admirals and a British General have been accused of treating unfairly, partially, and unfeelingly ; a projector whom it was their duty to treat, and whom they did treat, with urbanity, consideration, and the utmost liberality. Some, indeed, of the scientific and literary journals did review and express themselves upon this very important and interesting case in an able, creditable, scientific manner, and in a fair and liberal spirit. The Artizan,\* (article ix. 1844)

\* "The experiment off Brighton, indeed, we consider completely failed to prove the invention to possess any remarkable and hitherto unknown power of destruction. There were no sufficient precautions taken to prevent any trick, if any such had been intended. The question is, does the invention of Captain Warner, as shewn in the destruction of the ship off Brighton, present anything in its mode of operation, or in its effects, greatly differing from previous inventions ? In our opinion it does not. It is known that Mr. Fulton, the American engi-

a valuable and well-conducted periodical; the Polytechnic Review, which I regret to find is discontinued; the Athenæum, (No. 881, p. 829) and some of the daily and weekly journals, have likewise treated this matter fairly and learnedly; some great organs have been led into error by their mathematical department; but I have been most surprised at the articles which have appeared in a highly respectable military journal, the editor of which ought to have known better.\*

I trust the Noble Lord will see how grievously he has been imposed upon; that the House will think that I have completely vindicated the Com-

neer, devoted much attention to the construction and application of a similar shell. In the latter way he succeeded in destroying the hulk of a vessel in the Hudson river, and he was still more successful in the destruction of a ship of 200 tons off Walmer Castle, then the residence of Mr. Pitt, under circumstances very similar to Captain Warner's experiment at Brighton. Mr. Warner must expect his averments of the extent of the power at his command, to be considered as the exaggerations of a sanguine temperament, until he proves he can accomplish what he affirms."—*Artizan*.

\* A friend, eminent in military science and literature, who for many years conducted with distinguished ability, a military journal, with that high feeling, nice sense of honour, elevated notions, and regard for the character of the service, which should peculiarly distinguish a journal devoted to that honourable profession, shewed to the editor of the *Naval and Military Gazette*, the authentic documents, upon which I have now effectually rebutted the charges and fabrications which that journal admitted into its pages, and thus have vindicated the conduct of the Commission to which I had the honour to belong.

mission, of which I was a member, from the imputations, aspersions, and fabrications, with which it has been assailed; that the country will see the manner in which Mr. Warner has endeavoured to practise upon public credulity; and, in conclusion, Sir, I trust it will be admitted that the Commission did its duty fairly, impartially, liberally, and considerately towards Mr. Warner, in conformity with the spirit and letter of our instructions: that we had made every preparation that depended upon us, to enable Mr. Warner to prove the existence and efficacy of the astounding powers which he asserts, and that the proceedings of the Committee were brought to a termination, by his flying from the engagements into which he had expressly entered with Her Majesty's Government.

THE END.

