ADMIRAL PORTER'S REPORT

The Present Condition of the Navy as Treated by Its Highest Professional Authority.

SHALL THE NAVY BE IMPROVED?

Discussion of the Imperative Demands of the Service.

MONITORS.

Changes in Warfare and Their Influence on Shipbuilding.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Oct. 22, 1873.

SIR—I have the honor to state that since my last report ten ships of war have been inspected before going to sea, and found to be properly fitted out and in nearly every case an improvement over the previous year.

I do not know that there is anything more to be desired in the manner of fitting out vessels for sea, except that further facilities for

SAVING LIFE

should be provided. I have not yet heard of any ship going to or returning from sea, that had the means in case of fire or other accident, of providing for the safety of her crew by boats or life rafts, for it is quite certain that in the hurry of a fire or collision, proper rafts could not be improvised.

The last thing at an inspection is to see what facilities a ship has for saving her crew—a much more important problem at present than in former times, when torpedoes were not used in naval warfare. Yet, as I said before, in no instance has a United States vessel been found provided with the means of saving her crew; and our boats are even, in many instances, inferior for this purpose to those provided for ocean passenger steamers.

I have referred to this important subject in several reports to the department, and again recommend that it receive the attention it merits. No ship can carry boats enough to save her crew in a heavy sea, but life rafts can be fitted to the vessel in such a way as not to encumber her or look out of place, and with their aid a whole ship's company could be saved.

Some officers object to these life-saving appliances as unsightly, and make any excuse to leave them behind, and the gutta percha rafts are stowed away in boxes, unused and without ventilation until they become unserviceable.

I would recommend, therefore, that every ship in the navy should have a monthly exercise to test the efficiency of the means at hand for transporting the crew, and the result reported to the department. I venture to say that at every trial some useful experience will be gained, and, in case of the destruction of any of our vessels by torpedos, the good results of such practical experiments would be seen.

The best life rafts are those of Commodore Ammen, Torrey's gutta percha and the hammock life preserver, the latter recommended by Mr. R. B. Forbes, a gentleman who has at his own expense undertaken experiments in life-saving apparatus, which should properly be conducted by the government. These experiments of Mr. Forbes have shown the way to save life under all circumstances, and if the results are adopted they will prove very satisfactory to all who have to encounter the perils of the sea.

I herewith enclose one of Mr. Forbes' pamphlets on the subject.

Nine ships have been inspected on their return from sea, and without exception have been found in creditable condition. This speaks well for the zeal and energy of the commanders and officers, who have a pretty hard time in maintaining discipline among the cosmopolitan crews with which our ships are manned, with rules scarcely stringent enough even for times of peace.

CREWS.

In examining the returns of inspections abroad, I find the universal excuse for deficiencies "shortness of crews," and although in some cases these excuses are hardly admissible, yet, on the whole, our ships' companies are about fifteen per cent. below the complement, which should not be the case with vessels of war. The calculations for our ships' companies have already been made very close, and no supernumeraries, as in former times, allowed, consequently the loss of ten (10) working-men would be felt even in the largest of our vessels, and a single one must be missed in a small vessel. Yet, if a commanding officer should meet with defeat owing to the shortness of his crew, I fear that he would find little sympathy on that account.

In my last report to you I nearly exhausted this subject, but as no remedy has yet been applied to the growing evil, I again beg leave to suggest that some legislation from Congress be procured by which the navy can be properly manned, both as regards numbers and material.

After careful study and an experience of many years at sea I adhere to the opinion I have heretofore expressed in my reports from time to time to the department, that

AN APPRENTICE SYSTEM,

based on the plan I lately submitted to you, should be adopted for the service.

It has hitherto been thought that our merchant marine would be a school from which we could always recruit seamen, whereas the navy is now actually the school from which merchants obtain their best men, and the wages in the merchant marine are so much better than those in the navy, the inducements held out by the latter are insufficient to keep men in the naval service. Seamen are merchantable articles and naturally go where they can get the highest pay. They find the merchant service more desirable and more remunerative than the navy, which men enter deeply in debt for an outfit which should be furnished them free of cost.

It is possible that in adopting the apprentice system as now existing in the British Navy we might at the end of five years' apprenticeship be still furnishing men for the merchant marine, but we would get them again in time of war, and would then experience the benefit of having seamen educated in the navy and attached to their country and flag.

In all probability a large number of apprentices would elect to remain by the service and enjoy the benefits arising from continuous employment. At all events no harm could result from the adoption of the system, and we should secure a larger number of native Americans than we have at present in the service; for frequently when our ships return from a cruise about the only nationality they have is in their officers and the flag flying at the peak.

My last report was very full on this subject, and gave indisputable facts to corroborate what I now write.

I beg leave to call your attention to one defect in some of the smaller vessels, which has on several occasions been noticed by the Inspecting Board, and which is obvious to officers of the navy generally—that is, the batteries are too heavy for the vessels and the guns too large for the breadth of beam. This applies more particularly to the nine-inch guns on board vessels of the Plymouth class and those below their tonnage. The breadth of beam does not allow the working of the nine-inch guns to advantage, and in time of action they would knock themselves to pieces against the coamings. Without referring to other disadvantages, I recommend that a suitable eight-inch gun be substituted for the nine-inch. There is but little difference in the weight and range of the eight-inch shot, and its effects against a wooden vessel would be almost as destructive. Neither gun would have any effect against an ordinary iron-clad unless accidentally striking some very vulnerable part.

Some of the vessels above alluded to could probably carry a couple more of the eight-inch guns in consequence of lighter weight, owing to a decrease of calibre. The eight-inch gun could also be more rapidly handled with a fewer number of men, and in my opinion, at ordinary range, ten eight-inch guns would be superior to eight nine-inch.

It is a disputed point with some officers what constitutes heavy guns; but certainly there can be no doubt of an eight-inch being considered a heavy gun, as it is one of the favorite guns of the service, and only a few years ago but four of them were placed on board our largest frigates.

In my last report I drew your attention to the want of steam capstans in the navy, and gave reasons for their use. I recommend their adoption in the ships now building. No ship-of-war can be thoroughly efficient without them.

I also mentioned the necessity of building more buoyant steam cutters, with models better adapted to a heavy sea, such as our steam cutters are often obliged to encounter. Their machinery and boilers are now all that is required and are capable of driving boats of larger size.

Some improvements of late years have been made in the cabin allowances, but the increased price of living abroad causes officers to incur expenses far beyond their means, and at the end of a cruise they are often heavily in debt.

THE PAY OF OUR OFFICERS

may appear liberal to those accustomed to live in retired places, but when it is remembered that they have to provide for their families on shore during their absence from home and accept and return the hospitalities of foreign officers without any allowance from government, a different opinion will prevail. Naval men are proverbially hospitable, and European governments, desiring their officers to be so, afford them all necessary means. The cabins are provided with the requisite furniture and the tables are fitted to the smallest matters, and our policy should be equally liberal. Such a system makes an officer very independent and enables him to leave home to join a ship at a moment's notice, no matter in what part of the world she may be, without encumbering himself with troublesome effects and going to an expense which he can ill afford.

To show the difference between the pay of our own and foreign officers, I will compare the grade of rear admiral in the United States and in the British Navy.

The pay of an officer in the British Navy is given for the support of himself and family; but to prevent the commander of a vessel being put to pecuniary inconvenience, thus impairing his usefulness, the government allow table money and other emoluments. Thus a rear admiral or commodore of the first class receives $5,475, with an allowance of $8,210 for table money, servants, &c., amounting in all to $13,685 per annum, or more than twice as much as the full sea pay of our rear admirals afloat.

This difference is still greater when it comes to the pay of higher officers. For instance, an admiral of the fleet receives $19,160 and a vice admiral $15,510, besides other allowances. From this it will be seen how inadequate would be deemed the pay of our commanding officers by other governments. In addition to the above, all commanding officers are allowed "table money" for entertainments, which enables them to leave a sufficient amount of pay at home to support their families.

I doubt if we have an admiral, captain or commander afloat who is not sorely pinched on account of the various calls upon his hospitality, and duty on shore is naturally so much more agreeable and less oppressive that officers hesitate to seek sea service.

Some may urge that our officers abroad are not obliged to incur these expenses, but it would not look very courteous in any commander, after partaking of the hospitalities of a foreign officer, to get up his anchor and steam out of port to avoid reciprocating.

Courtesies between officers tend to cement the bond of kind feeling which one nation experiences toward another, and they should, therefore, receive the largest encouragement.

On two occasions within my knowledge the State Department have paid out some $10,000 to enable the commanding officer of the European Squadron to return civilities and do honor to our country, and these precedents it would be well to follow.

It is not just that, officers out of a pay only sufficient for the support of themselves and families, should be subjected to any expense in returning hospitalities which are absolutely of a national character. I speak in behalf of the navy, have no personal interest in the matter and trust that a liberal view will be taken of the subject and all possible allowance made to prevent officers abroad from being placed in embarrassing positions and subjected to unnecessary expense. This subject naturally belongs to Congress, but the department can in a measure regulate the matter of allowances and add to the comfort of commanding officers abroad as well as those in command of shore stations.

A PETITION

has been numerously signed by officers of the navy, including myself, asking that the flags of Admiral, Vice Admiral and Rear Admiral in existence during the war, together with the old broad pennant, be restored to the service, to take the place of the flags now worn. The present flags are distasteful to the officers and men, and do not afford the distinction between the grades that they were originally intended to effect. There are traditions connected with the old flags that are dear to the officers and men who served during the late war for the Union, and we do not want to lose the old objects so familiar to those who have served a lifetime in the navy. Admiral Farragut was allowed to retain the flag under which he had gained his renown until the day of his death, but it was then abolished and the navy now asks that it may be resuscitated. The younger officers now coming forward will look up to the old flag with more pride than to the one at present worn, which signifies nothing at all. It was incorrectly supposed that I was responsible for this change of flags, but such is not the case. I never did like the flag proposed, but the alteration was deemed advisable by the Chief of Bureau, who had charge of such matters, on the ground that the new flag would assimilate with those of foreign nations who had adopted a uniform system. This was a fact; but as there was no national sentiment connected with the foreign flags as there was with ours I think the change unadvisable. The new flag having been tried for some years and given no satisfaction, the officers of the navy have petitioned strongly for the change, which I trust you will grant.

TORPEDOES.

The torpedo system has occupied my particular attention during the past year, and although much engaged in matters relating to the building of the new torpedo vessel, I have yet found time to investigate the experiments made in other quarters.

I am confirmed in my opinion that the torpedo system, although still in its infancy, is destined to play a most important part in future naval warfare, so that the nation most advanced in torpedo science will possess great advantages over all others. To us, who seem to experience so much difficulty in maintaining a navy, it is absolutely necessary that we should devote more time and attention to the subject of torpedoes than other nations, and make a liberal outlay for this purpose. I regret [illegible] that there is not so much interest displayed in the torpedo question in our navy as its importance deserves, for I know of but two vessels that have gone to quarters and fired their torpedoes the same as if in action. I am convinced that proper attention will not be given to this subject until special instructions are issued from the department.

Although the theoretical instruction hitherto given at the torpedo station has been of a very interesting kind, I think a much larger amount of practical experiments could be substituted with advantage.

Officers would naturally feel more interested in actual practice than in mere theory. I have conversed with several who have been under instruction at the station, and, although they express themselves pleased with the information they have gained, they seem on the whole not sorry to have (as they suppose) "finished with the business."

In my opinion, no one can make a good torpedo officer unless his heart is in the work, and hence I believe it well to make the duty as attractive as circumstances will admit.

At present the torpedo station is a theoretical school without sufficient practice, and the experiments are not altogether suited to impress the students with the importance of the work on which they are engaged. I am pleased to say, however, that some very good and useful practice has lately been had at Newport while fitting the Monongahela, which will do more to impress the officers and crew of that ship with the power of torpedoes than anything else could have done. A number of officers would like to go to Newport for instruction, but some of the rules of the station seem to them inconsistent with the relations that should exist between seniors and juniors where the latter are superintendents and instructors. Now, in foreign navies—England, for instance—the torpedo instruction is under the immediate supervision of a rear admiral or officer of high rank who has the opportunity of selecting the best officers in the service as assistant instructors. Two rear admirals, ten commodores and a large number of captains and commanders are now under instruction in the British Navy, and seeing the difficulty in the way of our future progress in torpedo instruction, I recommend that a like course be pursued with us.

Among all the officers who have studied at the torpedo station I have met with none who seemed to have invented anything or proposed any improvement on what has been done before. This is, I think, because they are not sufficiently interested. It should be the policy to encourage every officer to use all his faculties to bring the torpedo system to perfection. In my several visits to the torpedo station during the present year and during my sojourn there of two months it was evident to me that the means of instruction were inadequate. There are only two or three small launches attached to the station, and they are not at all suited for the work, and there is no course of instruction whatever for defence against torpedoes. It is evident that to make the torpedo school what it should be a more liberal expenditure is required, and the cost of one small ship of war annually for this purpose would be money well spent. There should be added to the present means of instruction four large steel launches, fifty feet in length and ten feet beam, with double screws for quick manœuvring, and all other modern appliances; also the different kinds of torpedoes for harbor defence, the various nets and spars for the protection of vessels against torpedoes, and a good monitor from which to send off the Lay torpedo, for I do not believe ships will come close enough to port to be injured by that device, and we must consequently go some distance from shore to attack them.

In addition to this, there should be sections of ships or iron buoys made equally as strong, to test the effect of the different torpedoes fired from the water level to twenty feet below. Specimens of all foreign torpedoes should be bought and tested, and remedies applied against their attack. Such as prove good we should adopt into the navy, and teach our officers how to encounter and use them under all circumstances. I merely make these suggestions without going into details, but the liberal expenditure of money in this matter of torpedoes would, no doubt, give birth to many devices not thought of at present. A great deal of importance has been given to the Harvey torpedo, the Fish torpedo and the Lay torpedo, and the probability of their destroying ships under all circumstances.

No doubt all these are formidable contrivances, to a certain extent, and a commanding officer ignorant of the manner in which their attack should be met would be in danger of losing his vessel; but with an understanding of the subject and a vessel of equal speed any commander could elude and destroy either of the torpedoes mentioned.

SHIPS AND TORPEDOES.

No towing, diving or swimming torpedo yet invented is a match for a smart vessel properly armed, with her crew at the guns, and it is for this reason that I recommend the construction of so many large launches for the purpose of teaching officers how to manœuvre in attacking and repelling the attacks of torpedoes or torpedo vessels. Officers would soon find out the difficulty of destroying a ship properly handled by means of towing torpedoes, unless the torpedoes were hidden, although it might be easy enough to blow up a vessel not on the alert or one improperly handled. A vessel of equal speed need have no fear of an opponent carrying either

THE HARVEY OR FISH TORPEDO,

for these inventions can only be successfully used against ships taken by surprise or lying at anchor.

As a protection against such contrivances I would recommend that all our ships be supplied with twenty-four pound howitzers to fire at them over the stern and quarter when coming up or down upon their decks when close on board.

An intelligent commanding officer will naturally bring either of these torpedoes astern of his vessel, which it is easy to do in daylight, no matter from what direction they may approach. If from ahead he can turn on his heel; if from abeam he can change his course eight points and the Harvey torpedo vessel with all her reels and towing lines, deck crowded with men, &c., would soon be *hors de combat* unless she were shotproof, which, I presume, it is not intended such vessels should be, for a torpedo boat must be light and able to manœuvre quickly.

In fights between two or more ships, when the vessels, as is always the case, are enveloped in smoke, these torpedoes will be extremely formidable, and it will require all the ingenuity of a commanding officer to guard against their attacks. The practice I recommend, of manœuvring in steam launches, will teach officers to provide for all contingencies.

Any ship can be arranged with a heavy net all around, from the bowsprit end to the end of the spanker boom, which, fastened to her lower yards (the yards resting on the gunwale), can be kept triced up and dropped just before the Harvey or Fish torpedo gets within striking distance. The torpedo would be exploded twenty feet from the ship, and would do no harm except to the net. Nine thread ratline stuff made into a sufficiently small network to prevent one of these torpedoes passing through the interstices would explode a Harvey or Fish torpedo before it could reach the ship's side.

Here, then, is a most interesting and important experiment to try. The network is the only certain defence a ship can have against anything that dives, although it is a poor protection against a torpedo on a bar connected with a properly constructed torpedo vessel with appliances for cutting through the net.

Such a torpedo vessel will be found the most dangerous to deal with, for there will be no chance for an enemy to avoid her unless with superior speed. With iron decks and men all under cover grapeshot would do the torpedo vessel little damage, and offering but a small target to fire at solid shot would seldom strike her, especially at night or in a fog. Yet all these matters are problems only to be worked out by actual experiment, and we are solving them too slowly.

In the late experiments conducted on board the United States steamer Monongahela, where a hulk was blown up by a spar torpedo, the ship running for the quarter of the hulk, two large pieces of timber containing several bolts were thrown back on board the ship, together with some smaller fragments of débris. To avoid casualties at such times every ship in the navy should be supplied with a rope splinter netting as a portion of her regular outfit.

I feel I am touching on tender ground when I refer to the question as to how far naval jurisdiction extends in the protection of our coasts and harbors with torpedoes. No matter how well drilled a soldier may be at his several duties, he can never be as much at home in a boat or on shipboard as a seaman, nor can an army officer as well direct the management of a boat or vessel as an officer of the navy.

Torpedoes planted to defend a harbor should be laid down by men accustomed to boats and skilled in the management of lines and tackles. Along the open coast or on the ocean, torpedo duty must of necessity fall to the lot of the navy.

During the War of the Rebellion the torpedo duty of the enemy afloat, was in the hands of rebel naval officers, who managed it with great success, taking into consideration the small means at their command.

IN TIME OF WAR,

the duty of the soldier defending the harbor is in the fort, where he can protect with the fire of his guns, the torpedoes planted to obstruct the channel, for torpedoes without protection from guns on shore would be useless, and the guns on shore would not prevent the passage of vessels without the torpedoes, but in handling torpedoes in boats in all weathers, seamen alone can be relied upon.

The question then arises, will not the navy, in case of war, be called upon to protect our coast by torpedoes, and ought there not to be a system adopted and provision made to meet future emergencies?

In some countries there is a torpedo corps, composed of officers and men taken from the navy, whose sole duty it is to look after the coast and harbor defences relating to the torpedo.

I am strongly in favor of such a corps in our navy, with a permanent head, the junior officers to serve a length of time equal to that served at sea or on other duty.

The organization of a proper torpedo corps will necessarily be from the navy for the reasons I have stated, and as it will eventually become a most important part of our naval system we should take advantage of the present opportunity and commence the establishment.

It will be rather late when war breaks out to begin a discussion on a matter that is quite plain enough already to all who have examined the subject, for the enemy would pass the gates while the argument was going on.

In my opinion, it is simply the duty of the army to fire torpedoes from the stations after they have been planted. For this they should have the proper appliances and every means for knowing the arrival of an enemy's vessel over a torpedo nest.

I have said so much on this subject to show that to the navy the most important torpedo appropriation for operating on the water should be made, and for those torpedoes used on land the appropriation should be made to the army. Common sense would indeed point out that the defence of harbors and coasts where there are often dangerous bars and lines of breakers, either with floating, turning, submarine or any other kind of torpedoes in any way connected with a vessel should be manipulated by naval officers and men.

A line should be drawn between the duties of the army, and navy where one terminates and the other commences, otherwise there will be confusion.

NAVAL DRILL.

I would respectfully call your attention to the fact that the quarterly returns of exercises are not as full as the regulations require or as is desirable for the purpose of maintaining efficient drill. No ship can be a thorough man-of-war unless perfect in all her drills and ready for any emergency. A ship going into action should be able to strip for the fight in a few moments, for with all her top hamper up and rigging rove, she runs the risk of fouling her propeller should a mast be shot away, and crippling her guns by falling spars. Now that battles are to be fought under steam there is no longer any necessity for spars aloft in time of action; but constant exercises are necessary to make the ship thoroughly efficient.

EXTRAORDINARY SEAMANSHIP.

On one occasion, while in command of the Naval Academy, I saw a sloop-of-war with royal yards across, rigging rove and sails bent stripped to her lower rigging and her rigging all tallied in seventeen minutes, and this the work of young midshipmen without previous preparation. I have frequently seen the same thing done in half an hour, but I hardly think any of our ships now in commission can do as well. The reasons assigned by commanding officers for not performing all the exercises do not always seem to me valid, and frequently no explanation at all is given of omissions. Many complaints are made that the iron work on board our ships gives way during the exercises; and this is given as an excuse for not sending up and down topmasts and lower yards; for, of course, no commanding officer should risk the lives of men on doubtful iron hooks or bolts.

But there is a simple remedy for this, which is to have every bolt, bar or hook tested to see what it will bear, and a test mark put on it.

Where iron breaks it is always the case that it has been previously put together by only about one-fifth of its thickness—the fault of bad forging.

Ships stationed in the tropics have neglected their exercises on the ground of the excessive heat making them oppressive to the crews. But few of the exercises occupy over ten minutes; and if the crews are called to quarters daily, cast, loose, run in and out the guns and secure, it will do no one any harm. The sending up and down of topgallant yards and masts requires not more than three minutes, in the cool of the morning and evening; loosing and furling sails require, at the most, three minutes, and the sails are quite as well preserved on the yards as in a sail room, where they are apt to mould and rot. I think these things will strike intelligent officers as they do me.

On the whole the exercises, as far as they go considering the shortness of our crews, are fairly performed.

In endorsing the reports of commanding officers I am obliged to be governed by what is stated therein.

UNIFORMING THE SEAMEN.

I notice that the uniforms of our seamen do not yet conform to regulations, and that some officers alter it to suit their own taste, which is not warranted by custom or regulation. The present uniform is appropriate and as inexpensive as it can be made, and indicates the several distinctions among the sailors, yet I have seen the boat's crew of a ship some time in commission wearing three different varieties of uniform, none of them regulation. The only change I would recommend in the uniform is is the abolition of the dungaree collar to the blue flannel shirt, and the substitution of blue nankeen on the collars of white frocks in place of dungaree, which washes all the colors of the rainbow.

STEAM DEPARTMENT.

The seamen-firemen and seamen-coalheavers substituted in place of the old rates of firemen and coalheavers, do not like the duty assigned them when steam is raised. The duty is unpopular, because, as a rule, steam is seldom used, and the extra pay allowed for these occasions will not even pay for the clothing worn out.

Firemen and coal heavers being, as one may say, denizens of the lower regions in a ship of war, have stow holes or boxes allowed them in which to keep their steaming and coaling clothes, but a seaman has only his bag where he keeps his best apparel, and he cannot provide for this extra steam duty. The result is that most of the seamen-firemen and seamen-coalheavers desert, and I would recommend that the system be changed. The duties are so distinct that it is quite out of the question to make a good fireman out of a sailor.

SCHOOL SHIP.

Having visited the Naval Academy practice ship the past summer, I beg leave to submit a few remarks in relation to that vessel. Although a fine ship of her class I do not think her altogether adapted to the purpose for which she is used. The midshipmen are too much crowded together and are thrown too much with the crew, which is not at all desirable.

When the Tennessee is finished she will make an excellent school ship, and, being provided with the best kind of steam engines, will afford a fine means of instruction in that branch for midshipmen and cadet engineers. If she is kept constantly in commission with a picked crew, the ship will afford a good school of discipline, and the importance of having everything on board a ship of war kept in good order will be impressed upon the youthful mind. Besides, the midshipmen would in this way learn more of the routine of the regular service in three months than they would in three cruises in a vessel hurriedly fitted out and with a green crew on board.

I herewith inclose reports of inspection of receiving ship and the general condition of vessels of the monitor class. Those that have been reconstructed on the plan I recommended are excellent vessels, much more comfortable and efficient than before, and will be serviceable for many years to come.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

DAVID D. PORTER, Admiral.

Hon. GEORGE M. ROBESON, Secretary of the Navy.

Monitors.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Nov. 6, 1873.

SIR—As an addition to my report I beg leave to submit the following in relation to monitors:—

Since my last report the Saugus has been completely repaired, as recommended, and is now an excellent vessel and is at sea. The Manhattan has been repaired in a similar manner, and can be got ready for sea in a short time. The Wyandotte and Nahant are being repaired and will be finished in six months. The Canonicus, being repaired in a similar manner, will be ready in three months. When finished all the above named vessels will be much improved, and will last for many years with very few repairs.

The following named vessels of the Nahant class now at League Island should be repaired in the same manner as those before mentioned, as they have good hulls and machinery, although rotten in their woodwork.

Nantucket,	Catskill,
Jason,	Lehigh,
Passaic.	

These vessels can be repaired in six months by giving the work to separate firms, and would cost $180,000 each. I beg leave to renew my recommendation with regard to the Puritan. She has a fine hull, and, if finished on the new plans, will make an admirable monitor and ram. I also recommend that the Terror, one of the finest vessels in the navy, be rebuilt with an iron hull, which could be done in seven months. At the Boston Navy Yard the light draft monitors Shawnee and Wassuc should be repaired like the rest, at a cost of $140,000 each.

The Mahopac, at Norfolk, could be ready in a month at a cost of $1,000. She is a fine vessel since the alterations were made in her.

The monitor Amphitrite, at the Naval Academy, was originally one of the most formidable vessels in the navy, and, though deficient in steam power, has a good hull and turrets. She could with an outlay of $180,000 be made a most powerful vessel.

The Dictator, at New London, also requires repairs without delay. She is one of the best vessels we have, and would make a powerful ram. With the monitors thus repaired we could defend our ports against any ordinary enemy, and the work I have proposed on these vessels would not be too much to undertake at one time.

RECEIVING SHIPS.

I have examined into the condition of the receiving ships and find them kept in as good order by their commanding officers as circumstances will admit. Some of them, however, require a thorough overhauling and repairing to make them comfortable and efficient. A suitable place should be provided on board for the examination of recruits, and for this reason, if for no other, the sick bay should be placed on the gun deck of a frigate and the upper gun deck of a ship of the line. Bath rooms should also be provided for the ablutions of recruits when they come on board. This is indispensable, as the recruits nearly always present themselves in a condition too filthy for physical examination. The sick bays should be enlarged, as none of them will now accommodate more than fifteen patients. The receiving ships are properly heated in winter, and in that respect are comfortable. Respectfully submitted,

DAVID D. PORTER, Admiral.

Hon. GEORGE M. ROBESON, Secretary of the Navy.

AMUSEMENTS.

The Theatres To-Day.

To-day being celebrated as Washington's Birthday, performances will be given this afternoon at many of the theatres. At the Grand Opera House "2450" and "Humpty Dumpty Abroad" will be given, with Mr. G. L. Fox in each. Bryant's will furnish a charity entertainment for the benefit of the poor of this city, the programme including the burlesque on "Cinderella." At the Theatre Comique a bill will be interpreted identical with that of the evening, including "Little Jack Darwin" and "First Crime; or, The Felon's Wife." At the Olympic the extensive troupe will appear in a highly diversified performance. At Niblo's "Leatherstocking" will be repeated; at Wood's Museum a variety performance and a "Quiet Family" will be given at eleven in the morning, and "Dombey & Son" at two in the afternoon; at the Colosseum entertainments will be provided from ten to one and from two to five; at Tony Pastor's a programme, concluding with the burlesque, "Little Jack Sheppard," will be furnished; at the Metropolitan Theatre the Martinetti troupe and other special performers will appear; at the Bowery "Horseshoe Robinson," "Trip to Jersey" and "Tom Cringle" will be acted; at Mrs. Conway's "The Stranger" and a favorite face will be played, and at the New Park Theatre "The White Swan" will be offered. The usual evening entertainment will also be given at each of these houses.

Mme. Janauschek at Booth's To-Night.

Mme. Janauschek will this evening begin an engagement at Booth's Theatre with Lady Dedlock and Hortense in the dramatization of "Bleak House," known as "Chesney Wold." The rest of the cast will include Mr. Milnes Levick as Mr. Tulkinghorn, Mr. Charles Walcot as Sir Leicester Dedlock, Mr. Wheelock as Bucket the Detective, Mr. Pateman as Mr. Guppy and Miss Mary Wells as Mrs. Rouncewell.

Grand Opera House—Sunday Concert.

The third Sunday concert at this house took place last evening, and although the attendance was by no means as large as on the two preceding occasions, yet it was of dimensions respectable enough to warrant belief in the popularity and success of these entertainments. There were three attractive features. Mlle. Ostava Torriani, the deserving prima donna of the Strakosch troupe, sang the grand scene of Agatha from "Der Freischütz" with the feeling and expression it demanded, and showed in the brilliancy and clearness of her voice no trace of the trying operatic campaign she has just concluded in the West and in Boston. M. Victor Maurel, of the same company, created a species of popular furor by his noble rendering of Mahomet's grand war song from Rossini's "Siege of Corinth." Gilmore's Twenty-second Regiment Band played selections from Meyerbeer, Verdi, Rossini, and Gilmore, and two of the members of this eminent body of musicians, Messrs. Arbuckle and Lefebre, were heard in solos for the cornet and saxophone. An entire change of programme will occur on next Sunday evening.

Musical and Dramatic Notes.

The Caroline Richings-Bernard Musical Union appear this evening at Steinway Hall.

"Sunlight Through the Mist," embracing three continents, four acts, five characters and six years, is the new play at the Bowery.

The spring season of Italian opera will be inaugurated this evening at the Academy of Music by the Strakosch company with Verdi's "Aïda."

Mr. Fred. Rullmann announces a brief season of German opera at the Stadt Theatre, commencing early in March, with Mme. Pauline Lucca as the chief attraction.

Mr. Stoddart has been acting in "The Long Strike" out West with an enthusiasm which is described as having been highly prejudicial to the wig of one of the most gifted actresses in his company.

At the Academy of Music next Saturday night an entertainment will be given by the Charity Amateur Dramatic Association for the benefit of the Hebrew Relief Society and the Hebrew Benevolent Fuel Association. "Love's Sacrifice" will be presented.

"Le Démon de Jeu," played at the Holborn Theatre, London, is said to be a very clever drama, in which the unconquerable infatuation of the confirmed gamester is powerfully and artistically treated. In spite of its sensational title a high comedy tone is said to pervade the dialogue throughout, and the play is described as remarkable for the natural and lifelike representation it affords of scenes which have too frequently been treated, both by dramatists and actors, in an exaggerated and violent fashion.

The Cluny Theatre, Paris, has revived "Le Crime de Faverne," in order to afford its patrons an opportunity of seeing the veteran Frederick Lemaitre in the part of Seraphin. The small compass of the house is said to be to a certain extent favorable to the decayed voice of the famous artist, and some remnant of his "wonted fires" yet lives in his impersonation of the touching *rôle* of the Notary; but (says a correspondent) it is a grave error he commits to keep on thus playing long after his powers are spent. His old popularity still clings to him, however, and at times his feeble outbursts of passion are sufficiently appreciated to bring down the house.

TERRIBLE MINING ACCIDENT.

WILKESBARRE, Pa., Feb. 22, 1874.

A portion of the roof of shaft No. 4 of the Empire Mines fell in to-day, crushed the engines, injured the engineer seriously, and John Russ, the fireman, fatally.

THE IRISH ELECTIONS' CANVASS.

Progress of the Great Constitutional Struggle in the Green Isle.

PROVINCIAL DIVISION IN POLITICS.

Home Rule, Tenant Right, Public Education and the Question of the Churches.

DUBLIN, Feb. 7, 1874.

However surprising may have been the results of the English elections to liberal politicians, the conclusion of the Irish contests thus far can scarcely be said to have been unexpected. The issues before the electors here were simplicity itself compared to the complicated considerations, sectarianisms and feelings affecting the electors on the other side of the channel. As completely as at any previous election in Ireland have the questions on which the contest hinges been defined, but more than on almost any previous occasion have the objects and aims of Irish electors and Irish election managers been separated from the present objects and aims of English political parties.

We have still, of course, liberals and conservatives, and we have still the respective cries of these two parties. I may add, too, that, so far as the tories are concerned, some local questions have to a certain extent complicated their candidatures here; yet the Irish conservative is in very much the same position and condition as the English conservative. He has the same hopes and fears. He must, from the necessities of his position, in a sharp electoral canvass be more pronounced in his professions of Protestantism, for he has to gratify the Orangemen, with whom Protestantism is everything; but even in this respect the Irish tory during the present contest has not presented such a marked contrast as his English *confrère* has on some former occasions. There has been a deal of Protestant feeling imported into the present struggle on the English side of the channel. It has, of course, existed also in Irish conservative quarters; but, so far as I have been able to observe, it has not been so pronounced as in previous contests. Other questions have forced themselves on the attention of politicians. I shall endeavor to explain

WHY THIS IS SO.

In this, as in many other great electoral battles, the Northern and Southern divisions of Ireland roughly represent two well defined divisions of opinion. Mark me, I speak only roughly, for what I may call the Southern opinions have made inroads on the Northern province, and have even gained some slight victories. I need hardly say that these Southern political views are summed up in the great question of home rule. It has absolved every other political consideration. It was supposed that it would sweep all before it in the South; that no candidate would have the smallest hope or chance of success who did not profess the strongest faith and reliance on home rule principles, as represented and defined by the Dublin Conference. As a consequence, the great majority of the candidates before the constituencies were home rulers. Not all, however. A good many—a very respectable minority, indeed—appeared on the old liberal ticket, some few on the conservative platform and others on a liberal and modified home rule programme. But in the main the deciding question was the approval or the reverse by candidates of home rule principles.

In the Northern division of the country it was very different. A home rule candidate was there scarcely heard of. In Cavan there are two. In Monaghan there is one, Mr. John Madden, a celebrated Orangeman, who refuses to be comforted for the disestablishment of the Irish Church, and has become tory home ruler to despite the government. But home rule has not penetrated further into Ulster than those places; and I don't know that it is of very vigorous growth even there. In Belfast, though there are some home rulers, they have taken no prominent part in the election; and what they have done has been done as liberals in support of the liberal candidate. In the principal Ulster towns—Belfast, Newry and Londonderry—the contest has been fought and decided on the old and well defined party principles. In the counties and the smaller boroughs the chief questions at issue have been tenant-right reform of the Grand Jury laws and also of the Fishery laws, though these last occupy quite an insignificant position in the programme. The farmers are thoroughly roused on the subject of tenant right. They wish it secured by law; they wish it thoroughly well defined; they wish it to be settled in their favor continuously on paying a fair rent, with a periodical reverberation; and I verily believe that, could the tenant farmers of Ulster but once feel sure that the landlords would never know how they voted, they would to a man vote against their present representatives.

LANDLORD IN IRELAND.

But it is hard to convince them of this. It is true they have the ballot; and it is humiliating to confess that a line of men, usually considered so sturdy and even bold, should fear to vote openly for what is so manifestly their own interests. But it must be remembered that for long generations they have been at the absolute mercy of their landlords, who were not always overscrupulous in their dealings with their tenants. The picture of Burns was often realized—

Puir tenant bodies scant o'cash,
How they maun thole the factor's trash.

That and more—sometimes a good deal more. The system practised by the Western landlords was a refined, but cruel and most oppressive system of despotism. They were kind at times. They allowed occasionally on extensive estates the farmers to sell their tenant rights; but then these kindnesses were mainly the rewards of political and practically feudal subserviency. Independence, individual uprightness, was severely punished. The landlord insisted upon being absolute master and ruler over the wills and consciences of his tenants. They dared not think according to their convictions or consciences; they must consider how the landlord thought and go in that groove or they might find themselves turned out of house and home, penniless, and without the smallest hope of redress. They were never left in doubt as to what were the landlord's general opinions. The agent lived in "the office." He distilled the landlord's views to the bailiffs, who swarmed over many estates—a band of spies and eavesdroppers, who not only domineered over the tenants, but conveyed to the agent all they saw and heard. Thus the tenant would never be sure when his complaints, if he made any, might not be overheard by some creature of "the office," and transmitted thereto with considerable coloring. He was never sure when punishment for some rash word or deed might not be hanging over him. Disobedience at the poll was ruthlessly punished. There was no pardon for that sin. In the old days of open voting tenants were absolutely driven to the poll in droves like cattle. The man who dared to be independent was mercilessly evicted from his land and hunted from the country.

THE CAUSE OF THE TENANT.

Need we wonder, therefore, that the present race of tenants, those who have chosen to remain and submit to such a state of things, are still fearful of the machinations of the landlords and doubtful even of the secrecy of the ballot? The tenant wants tenant right, but he is fearful that the landlord might find out how he voted and punish him accordingly. The landlords and their agents know the condition of the tenants' mind, and even now they are working upon it. It is a mean thing to do, but they do it. Still the farmers are more thoroughly aroused on this subject at present than ever I have seen them at any former election. This feeling has already contributed powerfully to the loss of such seats to the landlord class as Coleraine, Dungannon and Carrickfergus. It will, unless I am very much mistaken, lose many seats to the same class in the counties. There are contests now going on in county Antrim, county Down, county Derry, county Donegal and county Armagh. In all these the principal question discussed is tenant right. In all these the landlords have candidates and the tenants have opposing candidates. The whole force of landlord power is being exerted to secure their men and perpetuate their system. On the other hand, the tenants undoubtedly feel keenly. In their hearts they desire most ardently the success of the tenant righters; but whether they will have the courage to express their opinions by voting for the men who represent these opinions is what I would not venture to pronounce judgment upon. In this respect, however, the present election is by far the most important which has taken place for generations in the North of Ireland. The farmers may trust in the secrecy of the ballot; they may return their chosen representatives by decisive majorities; and if they do, whatever may be the conservative majority returned in England, the results of the North of Ireland contests will give a most powerful impetus to land reform, not only in Ireland but in the United Kingdom.

AT THE MANCHESTER OF THE NORTH.

In Belfast, as I have said, the home rulers did not put forward a candidate. They, so far as they took any part in the election, supported the liberal candidate. Yet this gentleman—Mr. Thomas McClure—who has sat for five years as the representative of Belfast in the House of Commons, has been on the present occasion defeated by a majority of more than two to one. The result surprised both liberals and conservatives. It was wholly unexpected, and many explanations have been given of it; but from what I have been able to hear even liberal Presbyterians became frightened by the no-Popery and home rule bugbears. They do not like home rule. They have a modest, timorous and not very tolerant horror of what they call Popery, and believing or fearing that the liberal candidate was allied with both, they voted, even against their cherished political convictions, for the two candidates—Messrs. Johnston and Corry—who proclaimed uncompromising hostility to both home rule and Popery. But, though Belfast be lost, say the liberals, we have gained Coleraine and Dungannon. And, considering that these two towns have been represented by tory members for a time almost beyond the memory of men—beyond the memory, at least, of any ordinary mortal—it must be confessed that the liberals in this have some reason to pride themselves.

SENTIMENT AT THE SOUTH.

Turning to the South again, as I have already said, there is there no really disturbing element in the political waters. The question is home rule or no home rule. It is plainly put, and a direct and plain answer has been requested. It is, of course, too soon yet to form a decisive judgment on the relative strength on members of the home rule vote. Many elections have yet to be decided where the home rule question is the sole subject of consideration. But it is to be noted—and I speak as an impartial observer, endeavoring to weigh the matter fairly—that, while the home rulers here, up to the present, have returned twenty-six members, they have scarcely returned one without a contest, and in no instance where there was a contest was the home rule candidate returned by what can be called a commanding majority.

In Limerick city Mr. Butt and Mr. O'Shaughnessy, working together on the same platform, were returned at the head of the poll, but not so far ahead as might have been expected in the case of the father of home rule. There were five candidates. Mr. Butt had 856 votes; Mr. O'Shaughnessy, 848; but next to him comes a conservative—Mr. Speight—with 587 votes; next came a liberal, with only 291 votes. And indeed, here, as in other places, the liberals have suffered more from the home rulers than the conservatives. In Ennis the home rule candidate was defeated—by a very narrow majority, it is true, but still he was defeated. In Athlone it is not yet sure that Mr. Shiel, the home ruler, will be in. It was a tie between him and the liberal candidate, and the question is yet to be decided as to who will get the seat. It is well to note these things in this, the first electoral contest in which home rule has been the prominent and testing question.

The elections have been, on the whole,

QUIETLY CONDUCTED.

In Limerick county there have been some serious riots, and one man was shot dead. But otherwise there has been no serious disturbance. I may resume the subject when the elections have concluded, and when there will be better materials for forming a judgment; but at present I am bound to incline to the belief that the home rule agitation has not taken hold of the minds of the Southern portion of Ireland—not to speak of the national mind—with that passionate zeal which characterized the repeal movement, for example. But let us not dogmatize. Many elections are yet to come, and when these are concluded we shall have much better and fuller materials for forming a judgment.

THE MURDER OF NEAL.

A Cold Blooded and Cowardly Assassination—Full Details of the Crime—Verdict of the Coroner's Jury.

RICHMOND, Va., Feb. 20, 1874.

Further details received from Statesville, N. C., go to show that the murder of the youth Thomas Charles T. Neal, of this city, heretofore reported in the HERALD, was one of the most shocking and cold blooded on record. Young Neal was the son of Mr. Thomas D. Neal, of this city, one of the most estimable gentlemen in the community. About six months ago he went to Statesville and engaged in the tobacco trade with a man named McElwee. While there he boarded at the St. Charles Hotel, of which H. C. Elliott is the proprietor. Some three or four weeks ago young Neal paid a visit to this city, where his family resides, stating when he left that he would be absent about two weeks. At the time he left Statesville his hotel bill amounted to some $40 or $50, which remained unpaid, but as Neal was in business there and expected to return soon he did not regard the bill as of any great importance.

SLANDERS AGAINST NEAL.

Circumstances, however, combined to render Neal's return at the expiration of two weeks impossible, owing to which it began to be freely spirited about that he had "run away without paying his debts," several of which besides the hotel bill were not paid, and that he did not intend to return there. Subsequent investigations go to prove that it was Joseph D. Elliott, son of the hotel proprietor, who gave currency to these malicious and unwarranted reports. In corroboration of this fact it is further stated that young Elliott said that if Neal did not return at the expiration of a certain period he would write to his father in this city, and request him to forward the amount of his indebtedness. Contrary to young Elliott's slanders, however, Neal did put in an appearance on Tuesday last, the 17th inst., and it was not long before he was fully informed of the manner in which he had been calumniated. This naturally enough excited him and aroused his indignation, and he manfully went to young Elliott about the matter, when

SOME SHARP WORDS

were passed between them. This was repeated frequently when the parties met for the next two days, the altercations becoming more aggravated at each encounter. One report states that Neal remarked, "If Joe. Elliott fooled with him he would kill him;" but this is denied by those familiar with the entire circumstances of the case. It is admitted, however, that Neal did say he "believed he would thrash out the whole set and go to the other hotel." Neal did not leave, as he doubtless intended, and on Wednesday evening both the young men met in the office of the hotel, where the quarrel was resumed. Several epithets were given by each to the other, with the usual result of inflaming both, though it appears that Neal had the best of the war of words. In the midst of the quarrel, Elliott, finding he was getting the worst of it, and likely to fare still worse if he resorted to blows or began a fight, rushed from the room, and, going to his father, who was in the rear portion of the hotel, told him if he did not put Neal out of the house

"HE WOULD KILL HIM."

Upon this Elliott, Sr., seeing the exasperated condition of his son, became incensed himself, and came back into the office an excited partisan of Elliot, Jr. Without any intimation he caught hold of young Neal, who was quietly sitting before the fire, and told him to leave his house, as he did not want him there any longer. Neal had both his hands in his pockets, and, as he did not get up promptly, Elliott seized him by both shoulders, from the rear, and began violently dragging him to the door. Neal did not resist, but protested quite loudly against such treatment, saying, "Wait, let me tell you;" but Elliott, without paying any attention to his entreaties, continued to haul him to the door, repeating all the while that he did not want him in the house any longer, and that he must leave. Several parties who were in the room and others from without, now crowded around the hotel keeper and the young man. Just as Elliott, Sr., had Neal near the door pushing him by his shoulders from the rear, young Elliott sneaked up behind both, and, reaching his cowardly arm around young Neal, placed the muzzle of a heavy revolver against his breast. This was seen by all the spectators, but ere any of them could interfere and save the life of the young man the trigger had been pulled and the report reverberated like a torpedo explosion. Young Charlie Neal stood for an instant, reeled, and falling into the arms of a bystander exclaimed "You did it, but in a cowardly way." In a moment the young Virginian was dead. The ball entered the right breast and, ranging crosswise, entered the heart. The murderer was arrested, and a coroner's inquest rendered a verdict in accordance with the facts as above stated. There is great indignation here at this cowardly assassination. Young Neal's remains arrived to-night and will be buried to-morrow.