

From the N. Y. Independent.
Iron War Ships.

The ever active and inventive mind of man is continually evolving new ideas, and applying them in original modes to novel purposes. In no department of art has more boldness and originality of design ever been displayed than in the application of iron to the construction of ships for commerce and war. Our space will confine us at present to a description of vessels of the latter class, and every intelligent person now feels a deep interest in these.

It is generally admitted by those who have investigated the question, that the late Robert L. Stevens, of Hoboken, N. J.—a gentleman of very superior mechanical genius—was the first inventor who proposed and commenced the construction of an impenetrable armor steamship. His plans were laid before the American Government more than twenty years ago, and an appropriation was made by Congress to carry them into effect. The building of this floating battery was commenced, and the work on it continued for several years, until the appropriated sum was expended. This vessel was to have a thick armor, composed of thin plates, laid in layers; and it was also designed with the capacity of being partly submerged, so as to expose but a small amount of surface to the guns of the enemy. It is still in Hoboken, in an unfinished state, and has been repeatedly offered to the Government upon certain conditions. Next in order of date was the armor gunboats that were built in France and England during the Crimean war, for the reduction of some Russian fortresses. These vessels were very clumsy and slow, and were in form just like steam gunboats, having great breadth of beam. They were really the first armor vessels that were practically applied in warfare, and their success was very marked in one instance. This fact was not lost upon Louis Napoleon, although almost overlooked by the British. During this war, Captain Coles, of the English navy, designed a turreted armor ship, and the model of it was exhibited to the chief officers of the fleet. A full description of it, accompanied with illustrations, was published in *Blackwood's Magazine* for December, 1860. It is the first published record of a revolving turreted armor vessel which the writer of this has been able to find. Its revolving turret was to be twenty feet in diameter, and armed with two guns. The Emperor of France, however, first fully appreciated the great importance of armed vessels, and the plated frigate *La Glorie* was really the first armor ship that was built deserving of the name. Our present war has been the means of exciting the minds of our inventors, in a wonderful degree, to the construction of armor vessels, and we have now a great fleet of such in commission and in course of construction. The first which was completed was the original Monitor, designed by Capt. John Ericsson; but it must be confessed that the Confederates exhibited fully more enterprise than our naval authorities in the application of armor to vessels, for they covered the old frigate *Merrimac* with plates, and she came forth and sunk two of our wooden war ships that had been appointed to watch her, and she would have annihilated our whole wooden fleet at Fortress Monroe, but for the timely arrival of the Monitor—that impenetrable Yankee cheese-box—which checked her victorious career. This exciting incident won great favor for this class of vessels, and a large number of such have been built. These vessels have revolving, impenetrable, round towers of iron, each containing a battery of two large

guns. For the defence of harbors, they appear to be excellent war craft, but they are too slow and sit too low in the water for ocean navigation. Our armor fleet is now very large, numbering seventy-four vessels in different stages, carrying a total of 325 large guns. When the present war commenced, in 1861, there were but forty-two vessels in commission in the whole navy. In the short space of three years nearly double that number of iron-clad vessels alone have been added to the navy. All have been built upon original plans, and their construction exhibits the herculean energy and great resources of the country. These may be divided into four classes, namely, those having revolving towers, those formed of old wooden ships covered with plates, new armor broadside ships, and the iron-plated river boats of the West. We have only one broadside frigate formed entirely of iron, upon the principle of the English armor frigates.—This is the *New Ironsides*, which is the only ocean plated war steamer we have yet in service. No armor vessel yet built is proof against powerful artillery, but the days of wooden war ships are gone forever, as not one of such could stand five minutes before our armor ships. Our armor ships have not yet performed any brilliant feat, such as the capture of a strong fort like Sumter; but they have been exposed with impunity in situations where the best wooden frigates in the world would have been blown to pieces in a few minutes.

THE PREMIUM ON GOLD.—With the varying premium on gold, many people are puzzled to calculate the value of paper money.

Perhaps the simplest mode for common use, and that the most easily remembered is to divide the number of cents in a hundred dollars by the quoted price, whatever it may be, of gold, and the quotient is the value of the dollar in cents. Thus at 150 per cent., the value of the paper dollar is 66 2-3 cents; at 200 per cent. 50 cents; at 500 per cent. 20 cents, at 1,000 per cent. 10 cents; and at 2,000 per cent., which was about the average premium at Richmond before the 1st of April, when the whole rebel currency was required to be funded, the paper dollar was worth 5 cents.

REBEL LOSSES DURING THE WAR.—A Chattanooga correspondent of the Cincinnati *Commercial*, professes to give a genuine copy of rebel official documents, showing the losses on both sides since the commencement of the rebellion. The following is a table of rebel losses up to Sept. 1, 1863:

	Killed.	Wounded.	Prisoners.	Total.
1861.....	1,270	3,955	2,772	7,997
1862.....	14,559	47,204	15,876	77,645
1863.....	12,321	48,300	71,211	131,832
Total.....	28,147	99,459	89,859	217,565

Rebels died of disease and sickness from commencement of war to present time, 130,000. This gives a total of 347,465 as the enemy's loss during the war.

REVERDY JOHNSON AND SLAVERY.—In a letter written the day after the late Maryland election Hon. Reverdy Johnson said:

"I am delighted to hear the result of yesterday's election. A new era is now dawning on our State. Slavery ended, and it will be, as Washington said it would be, in that event, 'the garden spot' of the United States. He said so in a letter to St. John Sinclair, in '96.

"If it is done the whole country—as I think it will be—great as our prosperity has been in the past, and high as has been our name with the nations of the world, both will be almost immeasurably enhanced. And God grant that it may be so."

Colored Soldiers to be Protected.

As the language of the President, at the opening of the Baltimore Sanitary Fair, relative to the duty of the government to protect the colored soldier, has been extensively quoted and criticised, we have concluded that the publication of the following synopsis of his speech on that occasion will be of interest to our readers:—

"Many supposed the government did not intend to do its duty in regard to the protection of these colored soldiers. He desired to say that all such were mistaken. When the question of employing colored men as soldiers was left to the government, it rested very much with himself whether he should make soldiers of them or not. He pondered the matter carefully, and when he became convinced that it was a duty to so employ them, he did not hesitate. He stood before the American people responsible for the act—responsible for it he should stand in the eye of the historian—responsible for it he stood before God—and he did not shrink from the decision he had made, for he believed it was right.—But when government determined to make soldiers of these colored people, he thought it only just that they should have the same protection as the white soldiers. [Applause.] And he hesitated not to declare that the government would so protect them to the utmost of its power.

Whenever a clear, authenticated case should be made out retribution would follow. It had hitherto been difficult to ascertain with that certainty which should govern a decision to a matter so serious. But in the affair at Fort Pillow he thought they were likely to find a clear case. The government had no direct evidence to confirm the reports in existence relative to the massacre, but he feared that the facts as related were true. When the Government does know the facts from official sources, and they substantiate the reports, retribution will surely be given. [Great applause.]

But how should retribution be administered was the question still to be settled. Would it be right to take the life of prisoners in Washington, in Fort Delaware or elsewhere, in retaliation for acts in which they had not shared? Would it be right to take a prisoner captured, say at Vicksburg and shoot him for acts of which he was not guilty, and which, it probably will be found, were the ordering of only a few individuals, or possibly of only one man? The President reiterated the declaration that the government would not fail to visit retribution when the acts were clearly proven.

LOYALTY.—"To volunteer life and liberty for the country; to stand fast when leaders are incompetent, and armies reel away in panic before the foe; to send off to the field, as bravely consenting women do, husbands, sons, and brothers, the props and protectors of home; to wrestle day and night in prayer as Christian souls are wont, bearing the nation as their secret burden, when from sex; or age, or infirmity they cannot do more; to come forward as protectors and helpers of the children made fatherless; to give money and prepare expeditions of love to mitigate the hardships of the wounded in the hospitals; to vote with religious fidelity for what will help save the country, rising wholly above mercenary motives and selfish trammels of party—this, and nothing less than this, is loyalty."

An Indian and a white man were passing along Broadway, New York, when the former espied a window full of wigs, and pointing to the owner, who stood in the doorway, said: "Um"—him great man—big brave—take many scalps.