

THE
NAUTICAL MAGAZINE.

NEW SERIES.

JANUARY, 1872.

EDITORIAL NOTICE.

THE New Series of the *Nautical Magazine*, which began with 1871, has been on the whole reasonably successful, and among maritime men it has undoubtedly had a very encouraging reception.

It is proposed to carry on the New Series under what it is hoped will prove to be still more favourable auspices.

For the future the Magazine will be under the joint Editorship of a gentleman of acknowledged position in the Civil Service, and well known in shipping and mercantile circles,—and of the Editor who has conducted it during the past year.

Associated with the Editors will be a number of competent and well-known writers on Navigation, Meteorology, and Astronomy; on Steam, on the deviation of the Compass, and on other matters of interest to the Royal Navy and the Mercantile Marine; and it is confidently hoped that the reputation which the Magazine has already attained for papers on scientific subjects, will thus be well maintained.

Our leading articles will, whenever practicable, be published with the names of the writers, and the articles themselves will appear fresh from the pens of the authors, without suffering any material alteration at the hands of the Editors.

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EDITORIAL NOTICE.

At the same time it is hoped that our numerous correspondents in various parts of the world will continue to send us communications* on nautical matters; and such communications will always be published if warranted by the importance of the subject.

With the view of making the *Nautical Magazine* still more useful than hitherto as a hand-book, and book of reference for persons connected with maritime affairs, it is intended to publish in each number—in addition to the particulars concerning new lights, rocks, and shoals, and other hydrographic information which has hitherto appeared in our columns—a digest of the chief maritime law cases decided in the preceding month; the substance of official enquiries into cases of wrecks, etc., and of official orders and circulars; promotions in the Royal Navy, the Royal Naval Reserve, and amongst the Board of Trade and Customs officers at the outports; and such other information as may have an interest for professional men. Whilst, however, we endeavour to make our Magazine a book of reference for naval and consular officers, and officials connected with nautical affairs in all parts of the world, for owners, masters and officers, underwriters, agents and sailors, and others immediately concerned with our great Mercantile Marine, we shall always find space for the discussion of such general, personal, and professional matters as will gratify our readers, taking especial care to avoid anything in the shape of personal grievances or party feelings.

We shall not omit to find space for such light literature as will help to relieve the tedium of long voyages; and in our next number will be commenced a serial story, written expressly for the *Nautical Magazine*, by Mr. W. Cosmo Monkhouse. We shall also present our readers from month to month with one of those pleasing productions, sometimes in prose sometimes in verse, with which Mr. Austin Dobson delights the English reader.

We look with hope for the assistance of the nautical community to render the Magazine at once characteristic and representative, feeling that genuine efforts on our parts will be rewarded by genuine and substantial appreciation by those for whom we cater.

* Communications should be addressed to the Editors, *Nautical Magazine*, 15, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W.C.

RETROSPECT OF 1871.

A BRIEF review of the principal events as regards maritime matters during the past year, will not be out of place in this first number of our journal for 1872.

The year 1871 opened under very inauspicious circumstances. The deadly struggle was raging between two great Powers on the Continent, and the other nations of the world stood, as it were, aghast, watching the terrible conflict with eager anxiety. In England the depressing effects of the dreadful calamity of the loss of the *Captain* were still operating on the public mind; the loss of the *Psyche*, the vessel employed on the Eclipse Observation Expedition, by striking on a rock near Catania, had aggravated the popular feeling of distrust, and the latent fear finding expression, the cry was heard on all sides that we were not prepared to hold our own either by land or sea in the event of our going to war.

The events that have occurred in connection with the Navy have not been so startling and important as was imagined they would be at the close of 1870.

This last year may be said to have been more occupied in developing the schemes marked out, both with regard to the *materiel* as well as the *personnel* of the Navy, than with any direct plans or resolves. The *materiel* of the Navy has progressed more with regard to coast defence than of sea-going ships, we have had the *Glatton* added to our strength, although, as far as we yet know, this powerful nondescript will only be of use for the purpose alluded to, and even doubtful in her capabilities of moving from port to port excepting under favourable circumstances. That such ships were necessary is beyond doubt, and one or two stationed at each large port will render more real service in defence than the stationary forts; but it is much to be regretted that more gunboats of the *Staunch* class have not been built, for we are persuaded they would be found most powerful auxiliaries, and would be more dreaded by an attacking force than the larger and heavier vessels.

The illness of Mr. Childers in the early part of the year was a most unfortunate circumstance, he having commenced a reform of a sudden and almost revolutionary nature, both in the administrative and personal departments of the Navy, which he was unable to carry out, being compelled by continued ill-health, to resign his post before they were completed. The changes made in the preceding

year were of too radical a nature, and too sudden ; but Mr. Childers, ignoring the opinion of a great statesman in favour of “general improvement, no violent changes,” had no sooner assumed the reins of office, than he experienced in his own person the ill effects of haste in taking the whole responsibility of the Admiralty on his own shoulders, which responsibility the subsequent loss of the *Captain* caused him to ignore at once. We may also point to the disorganized state of some of our departments, to prove the unwisdom of the sudden dismissal of officers of experience, and the penny-wise and pound-foolish proceeding has even yet to be felt in its entirety. The scheme of naval retirement, also inaugurated by Mr. Childers, although a step in the right direction, and done with a good intention, has proved no more successful than his administrative acts, and although some of the lists of officers are reduced to the standard figure, promotion has come to a standstill, and the prospect of the junior officers is deplorable in the extreme. Mr. Goschen, the present First Lord, has a task before him this year that may well create great anxiety, but we believe he is steadily purposed to do his best, and if not too much led by one-sided professional advisers, will doubtless effect much good ; it is, however, but fair to suppose that, had Mr. Childers continued at the Board, and thus had the opportunity of completing his arrangements, much permanent good would have been effected.

Of our dockyard economy, much cannot be said ; the ultra economy—as is the case with all ultra economies—has proved anything but economy, the combining in one and the same person the master shipwright, chief engineer, and storekeeper, has failed most lamentably, breaking down the man, while the duty was inefficiently performed ; it has consequently been abandoned. The same may be said of master’s attendants of victualling yards, who were removed contrary to the advice of some of our best officers, and will, doubtless, have to be replaced, though it may be under another name.

The courts-martial on the ship’s stewards for peculation was another evidence of a want of administrative arrangements in providing a sufficient check to prevent such a thing being possible ; indeed, the pursorial duties of the paymasters have been so changed that their responsibility did not extend to one important article of consumption in a man-of-war.

The Committee on designs for ships of war, appointed in consequence of the loss of the *Captain*, has completed its labours, and if our future ships of war are not all they should be, it will not be for want of scientific investigation and experiment in regard to form for stability.

No more notable instance of gross mismanagement in naval affairs has happened during the year than the dispatching the *Megara* to the Antipodes overladen and unserviceable; the bad name she previously bore for unsoundness and consequent unseaworthiness has been sufficiently proved to be true, and that coupled with all the remonstrances that both in Parliament and out perfectly rained on the officials, made it doubly reprehensible that no further examination was instituted to ascertain the truth of the assertion on one side or the other. The officers and crew have been entirely exonerated of all blame by a court-martial, and if the Royal Commission at present sitting does not bring to light on whom the responsibility rests there will be a great miscarriage of justice.

The stranding of the *Agincourt* on the Pearl Rock in broad day, was a culpable accident that has been of some use in exhibiting some of our weak points, fortunately without having to pay too dearly for our experience. It has proved the undesirableness of divided responsibility in navigating our ships, and has stimulated an inquiry into the *modus operandi* by which these matters are governed, which has been shown to be unsatisfactory in the extreme. It has also opened up the question as to how and by whom our increasingly costly fleet is to be navigated and piloted, whether by abolishing the class of officers hitherto retained for that special service, and entrusting the duties to the general officers of the executive, or by raising the present class of navigating officers to a position commensurate with the importance of their duties, and making them (under their commanding officer) personally responsible. We believe some action has been taken, and we hope it will bear fruit in this present year, and thus set at rest for ever a question that has caused much jealousy and ill feeling.

The subject of the higher education of the officers of the Navy has been well ventilated during the year, and has greatly added to the information obtained by the Royal Commission the preceding year, so that in the creation of any college or university for the purpose, the principles on which it should be established have been well ascertained.

Greenwich Hospital has been a theme of comment as to its future use, and equivocal hints have been given that it will be devoted to a naval purpose, but nothing definite has yet transpired, although we believe we are right in saying that its destiny will be for educational purposes. A wise decision has been come to in adding 200 boys to the school. Connected with this subject is that of manning the Navy, the difficulty being an increasing one, the Naval

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Reserve not having had the effect intended, it is pretty generally admitted that we shall in the future be mainly dependent on boys to be reared and educated for the purpose.

The Flying Squadron has been perpetuated and under better auspices than formerly. In addition to its useful political effect on foreign countries visited, it is essentially a good school for our seamen, if indeed the system of disgusting them with incessant drill is not persevered in: Jack does not shrink from work as long as he sees utility in it, but the treadmill of incessantly repeating the same drill after perfectness is obtained is disheartening, and probably accounts for the numerous desertions that took place in the first Flying Squadron.

Among the novelties of the year is the birth of the "Woolwich Infant," which has been tested, and found wanting, but the practical knowledge gained by the creation of this enormous piece of ordnance is well worth the large sum expended on it; and, although the crack in the steel lining has not entirely rendered the gun *hors de combat*, it is a grave consideration what effect it will have on its future use, and for which purpose it has been determined to continue to fire from it before re-lining it. This accident to the thirty-five-ton gun, and the bursting of one of the Krupp steel guns at Kronstadt, has caused some anxiety to be felt on the subject of steel, and partially steel ordnance.

As regards the Mercantile Marine, things have not been so unsatisfactory. Although merchant shipping legislation has been dangled before the eyes of the public, and withdrawn again, as soon as hope was excited in regard to it, owing to the pressure of more important matters, yet there is much cause for congratulation at the general progress and present condition of our Mercantile Navy. The war certainly closed a great many ports, and operated prejudicially against trade generally; but, on the conclusion of peace, business again grew brisk, and the thriving ports of North Germany, closed during the war, again became busy marts; the French people, with crippled energies, addressed themselves to the task of regaining their departed commerce, and the merchant vessels of all nations again sailed into the ports of the late belligerents, without fear of infringing the international laws respecting blockade or contraband of war. The reaction soon made itself felt in England, in the shape of increased exports, and increased tonnage for carrying produce of other countries; large demands from the two bleeding combatants created a brisk supply from our own and other countries.

Moreover, as regards the general progress of our commercial

enterprise, we have no cause whatever to be dissatisfied. Whichever quarter of the globe we turn our attention to, there we find British commerce extending itself; pushing up into remote and uncivilized regions, finding new markets for our exports, and new products for importation. By the enterprise of our navigators, great rivers are now made to bring down from the interior of rich and hitherto undeveloped lands, the valuable produce of those regions, The Suez Canal, the Panama and Pacific Railways, the Indian and Australian Railways, the Submarine Telegraph Cables, and all the rest of the host of the great and successful works which especially mark these times of progress, add their facilities to inter-communication; and British ships, laden with merchandise, British men-of-war, the police of the world's highway, British courage and British influences are to be met with all over the world in stronger force than ever.

The official returns for the eleven months ended November last, show an increase in the tonnage of British vessels, engaged in foreign trade of more than a million tons, and of upwards of half a million in the general coasting trade, over the similar periods of 1869 and 1870. The value of the imports for the same period exceeded that of the two previous periods by between forty and fifty million pounds sterling, and the value of the exports of British and Irish produce, shows an increase of upwards of thirty millions. These very encouraging facts show us that British energy and enterprise are as vigorous as ever; and we would remark that this success may fairly be attributed to that energy and enterprise, and not in any special manner to the successful administration of the Government of the country; for, although not exercising any restrictive influence on the progress of our Mercantile Marine, the Government has done little or nothing* to encourage or to afford special facilities for commercial enterprise, and have year by year shirked the task of remedying many defects in the Merchant Shipping Laws, which cry aloud for redress. We certainly have to express our regret that the huge Bill, brought forward so ostentatiously early in the session, a Bill full of promise for the remedy of the many anomalies in our Mercantile Marine, should have been pushed out to make room for one hardly knows what. But still the mountain did not labour altogether in vain. True it is that anxious eyes were on the look out, and expected some prodigious legislative result from the bulky Merchant Shipping Code Bill, with

* If we accept the settlement of the *Alabama* claims, about which, now the question is settled, the less said perhaps the better.

its six hundred and ninety-six clauses, but, after all, the effort brought forth only a mouse; a very small piece of legislation, principally with reference to the seaworthiness of merchant ships, was carried through, in deference to the public wish that some check should be placed on the proceedings of negligent or unprincipled owners. To knowingly or negligently send a ship to sea, in an unseaworthy condition, so as to endanger life, is made a misdemeanour; and seamen have it in their power to call attention to unseaworthiness, before they commence a voyage, and sundry provisions are made for the protection of owners against false accusations. The concession is small, but good as far as it goes. The subject of pilotage has been very much agitated during the past year. A Bill was brought into the House of Commons for the Abolition of Compulsory Pilotage, and it was understood that the Government would make a genuine effort to pass it. But Ministers were overwhelmed, some show of fight was made in regard to the Bill, and with as little fuss as possible they silently shirked the struggle, and shelved the Bill. In the early part of the year, the Trinity House showed some disposition to throw open, to some extent, the monopoly of licensed pilotage in the Thames, by licensing any one who could prove his qualifications to pilot vessels between London and Gravesend. After considerable discussion, the proposal took definite shape, and notice was published of the intention to make a Bye-Law to that effect, but no further action appears to have as yet been taken in respect of the proposed new arrangement. The incidence of light duties has been modified in such a manner as to bear with less hardship in particular cases, and to generally relieve the shipowner. We learn that the estimated reduction of income would amount to £50,000 per annum, to which extent the shipowner is relieved. Increased trade, however, will, probably, lessen this loss to the Exchequer, and will, it is hoped, in time enable the Government to make still further reductions. The lighthouse system of our coasts maintains its efficiency. During the year, one new lighthouse (Souter Point) has been established in England, and several are in course of construction in Scotland and Ireland. The electric light is slowly gaining ground in England. The difficulties attending its management are gradually vanishing before experience and improvements in the apparatus. It shines out now from three lighthouses—Dungeness, South Foreland, and Souter Point, and its application will, no doubt, be further extended as opportunities offer. We are informed that there are numerous projects afloat for utilising this most brilliant light for other purposes connected with navigation, such as ships' side and anchor lights, etc. Efforts have

been and are being made to discover some reliable and effectual method of signalling in fog, but the results as yet have not been of any especial significance. The life-boat services of the year have been marked by great personal courage, and hundreds of lives have been saved through their instrumentality. The sympathy and liberality of the public have enabled the Institution to place many new life-boats in localities where their use will be undoubted. The energy and vitality of the Royal National Life-boat Institution, together with the admirable organisation of their labours, have conduced in no small degree to the success of their humane efforts. The life-saving apparatus, under the management of the Board of Trade, has also been established in many places, and used with much success. We may certainly assume that a marked progress has been made during the past year in all that relates to the safety of navigation near our own shores.

In other countries, we notice that Germany has been making extraordinary efforts to obtain some sort of status as a maritime power. The war demonstrated her weakness in this respect, and since the conclusion of peace all her energies seem to have been bent on developing the resources of her limited seaboard, of building new ships both for war and commerce, and of extending her trade in all parts of the world. The Americans are also giving their serious attention to maritime matters, and are bent on developing their enormous resources. The Russians, Turks, Austrians, Italians, Danes, and Dutchmen, are pushing onward. The Japanese have made some remarkable advances. France shows signs of recovery from the crushing blow she received, but as yet we are unable to chronicle any progress. Spain seems to have lost the spirit which animated her early navigators; she remains passive on the sea. Norway and Sweden have not developed their marine to any greater extent; they continue to hold about the same position as hitherto.

We have to notice the result of the Eclipse observations; they have thrown much light on the constitution of the Sun's body, and added much to scientific knowledge. Dr. Carpenter's researches on the subject of oceanic circulation have created much interest and discussion during the past year, and the subject will, no doubt, attract considerable attention in the ensuing year, as Dr. Carpenter has brought forward some strong additional evidence in favour of his theory. The Arctic regions have again been explored, and a German expedition has discovered open water in latitude 79° between Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla. Sundry other expeditions have proceeded to those regions, but none from England. The development of

the torpedo as an offensive weapon in naval warfare is also one of the particular results of the past year.

In surveying the events of the year now past, as regards our own maritime matters, two points stand out with marked distinctness. One is, that as far as our war Navy is concerned, things have not by any means gone well with it; the other, with reference to our merchant fleet, is that, generally speaking, all has gone well with it. We are unable to conceal from ourselves that our position as the great naval power of the world is not fixed on so secure a foundation as before this disastrous year. The record of our naval transactions for 1871 tells of real and terrible disasters; of constant official enquiries and courts-martial; of internal administrative dissensions; of costly experiments which generally have led to nothing; of mistakes and mismanagement in high places; and of ominous mutterings of dissatisfaction in the service.

One great hobby has been unscrupulously ridden to the detriment of everything and everybody connected with the Naval Service—"Cut down the expenses" has been the guiding influence, and the Government in vainly grasping at this will-o'-the-wisp Economy, have been losing hold of the real substance of our naval power. It is false economy if such disasters as have recently been experienced are in a measure brought upon us by the save-all and makeshift principle. If men are discontented servants; if they doubt the good intentions of those who rule them; if they are sent in rotten ships on long voyages; how much confidence will they have in the governing powers? And will their service be hearty and enthusiastic? This wretched shriek about economy and retrenchment has been the curse of the year as regards our Navy. We disapprove of it altogether. Because some niggardly taxpayers grudge the small percentage on their incomes, is our chief protection to be weakened, and our pride and boast to become our shame? Not so. We at least will utter our protest against it, and we doubt not that the sympathy of most men will be with us. We are glad that the errors of naval administration have been well commented on. Truth is a healing balm, and when hidden defects are brought to light and boldly examined, the first step is taken towards remedying them. Therefore we hopefully enter upon this new year, trusting that the good sense of our administrators will influence them to desist from pursuing mere theoretical ideas of perfection, and to address themselves to the great practical work of making the defensive element of our maritime power thoroughly effective both as regards our war ships and those who man them. It is the desire of all true Englishmen that we should maintain our naval