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The Torpedo.

[From a correspondence in the London Times.]

It may interest your readers to know that the Americans have commenced the reconstruction of their navy, in doing which they seem to be fully alive to the fact that torpedoes will in all probability become the principal and main naval weapon of the future, whether used offensively or defensively, whether by vessels designed for cruising or for harbor defense. This fact cannot be too forcibly borne in mind by us, who confidently rely on heavy guns and armored vessels designed for an artillery encounter, and not constructed so as best to manipulate and fight the torpedo. Naval authorities in the United States appear unanimously to hold the opinion that the torpedo will be the chief naval weapon of the future. Not only is it an opinion, but it is being acted upon with great energy.

A "school of torpedoing" has been formed at Newport, Rhode Island, where a number of naval officers are instructed in the practical employment of torpedoes in suitable and purpose-built vessels. As many as twenty go through the class at once, when they enter into all the details of torpedoing, theoretically and practically, just as the advanced class of artillery officers at Shoeburyness enter into the details appertaining to gunnery. The course lasts several months, and the officers have the great advantage of seeing and taking part in the numerous torpedo experiments which are constantly going on there during the mild weather. So much for education.

Each vessel of the United States navy now carries, besides a number of towing torpedoes, an arrangement whereby a torpedo containing a little over one hundred pounds of powder can be boomed out some twenty-four feet in front of the out water. The iron-clad monitors, about thirty in all, are fitted with booms for torpedoes, to be worked from their decks, and it is considered that they will thus become very formidable vessels for harbor defense, where, from a narrowness of channel and other reasons, speed is not of prime importance. Twelve powerful tugs, which were built during war, are having tubular out-riggers fitted in their fore-castles. This arrangement consists essentially of a tube, with suitable valves, through which is thrust

another and longer cast iron tube, carrying the torpedo, which can pass through the first tube on to its outer extremity. The whole apparatus is entirely hidden from the view of the enemy, who cannot, therefore, from the appearance of the vessel, divine her dangerous character. A minute description of these tubular out-riggers will be sent to the proper authorities. It is asserted that four torpedoes can be thrust out and fired per minute. These tugs are only intended for use during the night, as their engines and boilers are much exposed, and a single shot would be almost certain to disable them. These, as well as the other out-rigger torpedoes, are fired by an electrical fuse and small frictional machine.

The United States Government are so well satisfied with the torpedo experiments and their results that three special torpedo vessels have quite recently been commenced—one at the Boston navy yard, one at New York, and one in a Southern navy yard. The Boston torpedo vessel is to have a length of 175 feet; beam 35, and free board eight or nine feet; she is to be protected to a certain extent with iron, and great stress is laid on her speed, which it is hoped will exceed sixteen knots. I will not apologize for trespassing on your space, for the simple reason that no more important subject can be discussed at the present time than the probable effect that the practical application of torpedoes to sea-going vessels of high speed may have on the naval supremacy of Great Britain.

MUSICAL DICTIONARY.—What is a slur? Almost any remark one singer makes about another.

What is a rest? Going out of the choir for refreshments during sermon-time.

What is singing with an understanding? Bating time on the floor with your foot. What is a symphony? Flirting with the soprano singer behind the organ.

What is a staccato movement? Leaving the choir in a huff when one is dissatisfied with the organist.

What is a swell? A professor of music who pretends to know all about the science, while he cannot conceal his ignorance.

What is a turn? When one singer is discharged to make room for another.

How do you produce a discord? By praising one lady's singing at the expense of a rival who overhears you.

What is a pause? When the organ boy gets asleep when the choir is ready to sing.

What is a flat? A singer who supposes himself or herself indispensable to the success of the choir.

How to secure a quartette. Get two good-looking, unmarried gentlemen for bass and tenor, and there will be no trouble in securing soprano and alto.

CHINESE BEGGARS AND DWARFS.—China is a curious place, and various and varied are the customs of that celestial region. A common business there is the making of dwarfs and beggars. The process of making dwarfs is beautiful in its simplicity. In the first place a child of three or four years is taken, and then a heavy porcelain vase is put over him so that the head alone is free. With an unexpected consideration for the prospective dwarf's feelings, this vase is removed at night so that he may sleep (the child, not the vase), but both are restored to their former relationship in the morning. The child thus advances in age in his inflexible mould until he can no longer grow when the vase is broken. The process of making the beggars is more complicated, and not so likely to commend itself to the public favor. At Peking, eyes are taken out and limbs broken, in order to excite the proper degree of commiseration.

HORACE GREELEY.—Well he has left the old party. We are sorry. It comes from the bottom of our soul. We are sorry that the old relations must be severed. We are sorry in many instances—but most of all we sorrow for Greeley. The party will miss him—but the party can get along without him. The party is stronger and wiser than one man who ever stood within its ranks, though he be a Greeley! The party will march as steadily forward to its well planned victory as though a "star" had not fallen! But Greeley himself! To think that he has gone over to the assistant Democrats, and with a declaration, too, which gives the direct lie to all his teachings on protection against free trade, as will be seen by consulting the dispatches! Poor Greeley! He has been too greatly tempted, and human nature in the best of us is weak!

The Perils of Shaving.

A worthy citizen undertook to trim his whiskers, a short time since, and by a slip of the scissors spoiled the cut. He trimmed a little more, and still it would look lopsided; so he went to the barber and got shaved, for the first time for twelve years. He was very busy and business detained him in his office until a late hour of the night, and when he went home he found that his family had retired. This was not an unusual occurrence, so he silently entered by means of a pass key, sought his own room, and undressed without lighting the gas. He got partly into bed, when his wife astonished him by uttering a loud and prolonged scream. He was very much alarmed for her, and feared she had lost her reason. He implored her to tell him what was the matter.

At the sound of his voice she screamed; "Oh! Edward, come quick and save me!"

"I am here, dear," said he, but she only screamed the louder at the words.

He sprang out of bed, and had just struck a light, when his brother-in-law, a muscular six-footer, rushed into the room and fired a revolver at his head. Luckily, it missed, but his fist did not, for in a minute a pale-faced man, with a long, white beard, staggered under a blow that doubled the size of his organ of comparison.

"My God!" exclaimed the husband, are you all crazy?"

"Bless my heart!" exclaimed the muscular brother-in-law, "if it ain't Ned himself. Why, what on earth tempted you to get yourself up in that style?"

"What style?" asked the much abused husband, as he rubbed the growing lumps on his forehead.

"When did you shave?"

It was all clear to him then. His wife had put up her hand in the dark, and meeting the shaved face of a man, took her husband for an intruder. She recognized his voice at first, but the second time he spoke her terror was too great, and she fainted. When the brother-in-law rushed in he saw a thin-faced man with slightly bald head, in a long, white night-gown, and in his rage at the supposed outrage fired at him, missed, and then knocked him down with his fist. Fortunately his voice saved the husband from a second shot. His wife recovered from her faint only to faint again at the recognition of her husband's shaven face, and the pistol shot.

He finally got to bed and slept very well until morning, when "the baby," a child of about two years, approached the bed, as he had been used to do, and frightened at the sight of a stranger ran screaming from the room. Tripping on the carpet the poor child received a severe bump on its little head.

Matters were finally straightened up at home, but on the street his friends passed without speaking, and at the bank he was not only refused payment of a draft, but threatened him with arrest for signing his own name in indorsing it. Of course a little explanation brought the various affairs all right, but it took so much time to explain, and for the contusion on his forehead to get well, that the aforesaid citizen vows he will never shave again as he considers it a habit dangerous to peace, and even to life.

Dolly Varden after whom the fashionable dress of the coming season was named, was the daughter of a London locksmith, Gabriel Varden by name, and lived in the reign of George the Third. She afterwards married Joseph Willett, The New York Mail, while answering a correspondent on the subject, says: "For further information we would refer our inquirer to a certain book of reference called 'Barnaby Rudge' written by one Charles Dickens, an author of some local reputation. Whether the lady in question was given to wearing materials of a startling loud character in color and pattern, this deponent has no knowledge nor information sufficient to form a belief. About a year ago, however some inspired Modiste rechristened what were then known as 'eretomes,' and called them 'Dolly Vardens.' The name was at first confined to chintzes, but it spread to other materials. At a late dry goods exposition 'Dolly Varden silks' were exhibited, and now whole costumes whose like was never seen on sea and shore are named after the charming and coquetish little daughter of a London locksmith.

It is said that in five years the wine crop of California, estimated at 30 c/s a gallon, will be worth more than the wheat crop of 1871, with not over 40,000 acres of vineyard.

The Lash in Canada.

The Toronto Telegraph gives a description of the flogging, in the prison yard, of a man named Charles Johnson, recently convicted of an attempt to commit rape. The young man was pinioned to a post in one part of the yard, and the flogger, a dark, sinister looking man, took his position, and at the orders given by the sheriff, he brought the lash down upon the bare back of the prisoner, each stroke being followed by a quick jerk, and it was plied with considerable vigor. At the fifth lash the blood began to swell up, the skin to blister and the sufferer to writhe. At the twelfth stroke the sheriff paused, apparently regarding the punishment as severe, but resumed in a moment; and the remainder of the strokes were delivered with less force and precision. Their effect, however was sufficiently painful, as was testified by the writhings and contortions of the sufferer, and a tear or two which welled up despite his desperate efforts to restrain them. The moans which seemed to be starting to his lips as each successive lash flayed his back into a dark hue, were stifled to the end with dogged courage, and there seems to be an iron obstinacy in the lad, which, if not properly directed in the future, will probably lead him to a punishment more ignominious and fatal.

The lash was wielded by the flogger with rare skill, for though the strokes were powerful enough under the circumstances, they were given with an intensity of will which was to a considerable extent self-seeming. Several of them were little better than ticklers while the last one fell harmless, in consequence of falling short of the object, and a portion of the lash coming off a stinging and a blushing back was, however, developed, and when the sufferer was relieved from his thoughts, he walked restlessly about the corridors for a few minutes, writhing under the pain.

By order of the surgeon he was returned to his cell, having manifested a studied and dogged silence during the entire proceedings.

His whole demeanor betokened determination to exhibit as little feeling as possible, and certainly his powers of endurance under punishment are considerable for one so young. Had a few more lashes been the sentence, however, he would probably have been forced to give vent to the moans which he repressed with so much effort. Some of the prisoners who witnessed the flogging blanched when the whip began to exorcise, and a couple of females who happened to be visiting at the jail were moved to tears, and had to retire before the punishment was concluded. The efficacy of such a mode of punishment has not yet been fully tested; but from observation made yesterday, it is probable that its deterring effect on the sufferer's fellow prisoners is considerable.

A most extraordinary attempt to commit suicide is reported from Sherborne, England. A man employed as a fence at Sherborne Castle was found by a woman, in her kitchen, sitting by the fire, with blood issuing from his mouth, blood being upon the floor, and his neckchief on fire. She asked him what he had done, and he replied that he had tried to blow his brains out. Assistance was immediately obtained, when the nozzle of a pair of bellows was found lying by his side. The old man said he had only half done it; his old head was too thick to blow off. It seemed the would be suicide had been carrying fuses and rock powder about him, and had drilled a hole in the nozzle of a bellows, converting it into a kind of cannon, and inserting the end of it into his mouth. He had been addicted to drink, and had before threatened "to make a hole in the water."

A curious phase of the "duello" has just come to light in the French papers. Pending the first siege of Paris, two French officers had a quarrel, and a duel was decided upon. The conditions were left to the colonel. He ordered both to march right to the enemy's outpost, killing as many Prussians as they could, the survivor of the two was to return. Soon one of the antagonists was shot, and the other carried the body back to camp.

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