

After the inspection the men marched past in splendid style. Lord Selborne was greatly pleased with the smartness of all the men who took part in the parade, which was witnessed by an immense number of spectators, amongst whom were the Lords of the Admiralty, Major-General Lord Congleton, commanding the Infantry Brigade at Malta, and his staff, Lord Rosebery, a number of military officers, civilians, and others. Eighteen guns were landed for the occasion, and it is easy to understand that the display was as attractive to the military spectator as to the civilian. Further evidence, if any were needed, of the intimate association of Malta with British Naval power is to be found in another of our pictures. It shows the very innocent-looking torpedo-testing station in Sliema Creek, which is itself an opening out of the Quarantine Harbour. It is very shallow, and thus admirably adapted for torpedo purposes. Sliema itself consisted some years ago of a few houses isolated in their own grounds among the fields, but it is now one of the fashionable suburbs of Valetta.

Malta is only some seventeen miles in length and nine miles in breadth, with a total area of less than ninety-two miles. Gozo is less than twenty-five square miles, and Comino about one square mile. And yet these islets contain a population of 178,000, inclusive of the garrison. Apart, indeed, from big cities, Malta is more densely populated than any spot in Europe. Its fertility too, is remarkable, particularly when it is remembered that every bit of the soil has been imported. Even now it is shallow, the rock cropping through in all directions, and the Maltese plough, with its wooden share shod with iron, light and easily lifted when rock is encountered, is adapted to the conditions. At one time every ship which entered the port had to deposit a quantity of earth in proportion to its tonnage, but this regulation is no longer in force. The island, too, is utterly devoid of water, except that which is saved when the heavy winter rains fall, and which is stored in cisterns. There is no river, not even a mere streamlet, and it might seem that under these conditions the

prospects of a productive soil were not encouraging. The Maltese, however, are an industrious race. They call their island "the flower of the world," and by dint of hard work they succeed in producing two, and even three, crops in the year. When Malta was annexed to the powerful Roman State in the year 216 B.C., it was a famous and flourishing colony. Ovid talks of its fertility; Cicero mentions cushions stuffed with its rose leaves. Roses, indeed, with cotton, and honey of exquisite flavour, were in those days its principal productions, and cotton continued to be so up to quite a recent period. It may even be said that it is so still, but of late years there has been a tendency to devote more attention to the growth of vegetables and fruit—early potatoes and such-like—for the English market; but wheat and other grain is grown. Malta oranges are of world-wide renown, and the island produces luscious grapes, as well as peaches, figs, melons, and olives. Cattle, sheep, and particularly goats are reared, and there is a fine breed of mules, which are used for agricultural purposes. One of our pictures shows a mule at

work, and affords an illustration of the primitive methods which are still adopted for the accomplishment of some of the necessary farming operations. A mule and a donkey are harnessed together, and driven round and round in a circle by a boy. In this way they tread out the corn, while a man occasionally shakes up the grain. Truly a primitive method of thrashing, that must have come down, one imagines, from a remote antiquity. When we remember, too, that Malta is within convenient reach of three continents, and in the track of the huge traffic which passes through the Suez Canal, it is easy to recognise the commercial importance of the island. Its imports are considerable, but it is as a port of call it is most useful. Valetta is the seat of a large trade, and its busy docks and the work connected with the ships entering its ports find employment for a large number of men. The average Maltese, too, is exceedingly thrifty, and there is a considerable sum in the Government Savings



FAMILIAR TO VISITORS TO VALETTA.  
*The Gateway to the Floriana Gardens.*



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*'Navy & Army.'*

## A PRIMITIVE MODE OF THRASHING CORN.

*Treading Out the Grain by a Donkey and a Mule.*