

*Naval  
Handiness.*

A NOTE now and again from the busy men in the ships on the South African Station just gives us a glimpse at the kind of work they are called upon to do. We wish more correspondents would drop the Editor a line now and again, from all parts of the world, but more especially where they are engaged or taking part in any expedition or special duties of that kind. From a note to hand we find that all the naval ingenuity was not expended in mounting 4.7 and 12-pr. and 12 cwt. guns by the *Terribles*. The officers of the little *Magpie* have also been exercising their ingenuity in the matter of gun-mounting. A party of 12 men were landed under Mr. Gidley to assist the Town Guard in the defence of Port Nolloth, from which place Copper ore is exported. It being also necessary to take ashore and mount a couple of Nordenfelt guns, some thinking had to be done. But not much, for over went a

AMID all the high jinks and junketings which meet the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York at every port at which they call, the royal pair do not forget an old face when they meet it, or pass its owner unrecognised. One of the instances of this is recorded by the *Sydney Evening News*, in describing the "Naval day," when their Royal Highnesses were at that port and in which one of our own class figured as the receiver of that royal recognition that the Duke, no less than his Royal father, knows so well how to tactfully and graciously bestow. There are so few naval officers nowadays who are churlish to their Chiefs and Warrant Officers, that we may well believe such examples as the Duke of Cornwall and York is so often showing in acknowledging old shipmates from the rank and file has had a very general and praiseworthy effect. This is the incident as described by the *Sydney Evening News* :—

"It was just after this ceremony that a particularly pleasant incident occurred, showing H.B.H.'s affability and his resemblance to his father, the King, in his recollection of old friends, acquaintances, or even casual faces. The Duke beckoned up to him a Warrant Officer, and remarked, "How do you do! You were on the *Bacchante* weren't you?" "No, Sir," was the reply, "I was with your Royal Highness on the *Thunderer* in 1885." "Ah, yes," said the Duke, "I remember. We had some nice times together," and then he chatted for several minutes with his old shipmate, who was Mr. Courtneil, torpedo gunner of H.M.S. *Katoomba* now, and a gunner of H.M.S. *Thunderer* in the Mediterranean sixteen years ago. Mr. Courtneil had much to tell of his acquaintance in 1885 with the Duke, who who was then a lieutenant on the *Thunderer*, how he used to keep his wutch with the other officers, and how he was generally liked

## SHOOTING IN THE NAVY.

SIR,—The very able article in your issue of the 20th instant on "Our Position in the Mediterranean," will, it is hoped, arouse widespread interest and materially assist those who are working—including, apparently, Lord Charles Beresford—to get the Mediterranean fleet brought up to a proper standard of strength. There is one matter, however, which Col. Verner, in the "Fortnightly Review," Mr. H. Wilson in the "Pall Mall Gazette," and your own leader writer have either overlooked or forgotten. I allude to the strength that may be added to the fleet without increasing it by a single ship. What an enormous advantage our ships would have in an engagement with an equal, or even superior, force if they could all make such good shooting against their opponents as the *Terrible's* men recently made against a prize-firing target. The issue would probably be settled in the first five minutes, at anything like a moderate range, for no ship's company could fail to be utterly demoralised in that time if shot and shell rained upon them with the same accuracy as Col.

*Naval  
rations.*

WE are at last coming up very near to the time when seamen's rations will be mended. We say this in a spirit of prophecy which amounts to a certainty; because all sorts and conditions of

men have been discussing the subject during the last few weeks, and particular kinds of men have been tasting them. It is from the latter and not from the former reason that we feel convinced a change cannot be long delayed; for Mr. Yerburgh and Mr. Arnold White—two members of Parliament on the victualling committee—have been staying on board his flagship with Lord Charles Beresford and living on seamen's rations. This experience, however, was for "one day only"—which smacks of the travelling circus play bill. Longer than that they could not, apparently abide by the food on which fleetmen have to live the best part of their lives, or at least would so have to live did they not spend money out of their own pocket to supplement it. Of course they were roundly chaffed by both Admirals of the Mediterranean fleet, and when tempted by the C.-in-C. to lunch with him, after little more than a twelve hours' trial of seamen's diet, they signalled back "fasting but firm." That word *fasting* is significant. It shows that a pint of cocoa and a piece of biscuit at an early hour of the morning, which stood for breakfast, was not altogether to their liking. Considering that they had only been "supposed," as Sir John Fisher put it, to have been scrubbing decks and canvas gear since five o'clock in the morning, we wonder if they

We are glad to learn that the R.N.R. men at present serving in H.M.S. *Charybdis*, who are all from Newfoundland, are making steady and favourable progress under the painstaking teaching of the officers of that ship. These fifty men are being trained in the use of the *Charybdis's* guns, which are 6-in. as well as 4.7 and 12-pors., and are showing aptitude and considerable efficiency in their work; although they are only about six months on board. They are being taught helm, lead and boat work, and modern seamanship only, as well as their practical gunnery. The report is a good one, and confirms our view that they will just be getting really useful men at the expiration of their period. In three years they could have been made men-of-war's men.

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*Our  
Association's  
work.*

The members of the Association serving abroad will be glad to know, for the benefit of themselves and the members of the class around them, that the last payment of the Association to a deceased member's widow, (the executors of the will of the late Mr. John C. Cowdrey, ret. chief bos., R.N.,) was £60 0s. 0d.

Making a total disbursement during the existence of the Death Benefit Association of £15,369 18s. 0d.

Members of the class not belonging to the Association, and not assured outside to the amount they can now afford, would do well to consider whether £60 0s. 0d. for an average payment of about 16s. per annum is not much better terms than they can obtain elsewhere.

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Mr. James Robert Long, head wardmaster, has joined the R.N. Hospital, Stonehouse, for duty. Mr. Long comes from the Royal Naval Hospital at Chatham, where he has been serving as wardmaster for over seven years. Before leaving Chatham the members of the sick-berth staff presented him with a cocked hat, sword and belt, on his promotion to the rank of Warrant Officer, as a mark of respect in which he was held whilst there. Wardmaster W. Austen made the presentation, which included a handsome silver-mounted briar pipe.



*Most desirable.* We are glad to see there is a growing practice for the Admiralty to allow the Warrant Officers in gunboats and small ships to mess *from* the wardroom. The difference between this and messing *in* the wardroom is, of course, considerable. But where there is not a general mess for all officers, and where the Warrant Officers have no mess, but are compelled to have their meals in their cabins (badly-cooked and ill-served as they generally are) life is not quite all one would like it to be. The officers themselves are generally far too busy to give much thought or attention to "what they shall eat or what they shall drink" and the pay of a Warrant Officer's servant is not such as to attract the best class of domestic or one who can be relied on to relieve the minds of his masters of any anxiety in regard to the buying, preparation and cooking of their food. Consequently after a hard and worrying forenoon on deck the Warrant Officer finds something in the shape of a "burnt-offering" on the table for his dinner. 'Tis then he envys his better catered for brother officers of the wardroom, and sighs for membership of that mess. Now, however, the Admiralty are finding a solution for this problem of preventing a W.O. getting angry because he is hungry by allowing the members of the wardroom

We are glad to hear that our topmates in the Pacific fleet, with Mr. Case, chief boatswain at the head, are still striving hard to bring a club into existence. An application has been made to the Admiralty for an allowance of £60 per annum for three years. We sincerely hope that recent precedents will be followed and that this will be given; as the Chiefs and W.O.'s will have to purchase their own ground and raise their own building, which will be a heavy expense for such a few officers. Therefore there is lots of room for help if anyone should feel inclined to cast their bread on the waters and help rear a club at Esquimaux which they may some day be glad to use. Subscriptions to Mr. Case, please.

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## D.B. AND OTHER REFORMS.

SIR,—While all out here cannot but thank you for your constant appeals to all Chiefs and W.O.'s on the station to become members of the Malta club yet there are several who will not throw in their lot with us, although they must benefit in several ways from the good the club does in making our duty as well as our pleasure more pleasant in the Dockyard and on shore.

There was one thing, however, that struck me in reading the letter of "Reformer" in your July issue. Why is it that Malta has a club and none exists in the home ports?

Portsmouth used to have one where retired and other officers could meet together in social intercourse, but now even that is abolished, and I have seen the secretary sitting in "splendid isolation" in a room twice as large as the old one, and surrounded with about 30 highly polished chairs.

Cannot this be altered as I am sure from what I know of him it is not his wish to monopolise such an expensive place all to himself. A place screened off in the corner would answer the secretary's purpose, and the presence of our own members would not be objectionable to our wives and friends making their payments. If retired and other officers cannot assemble and use this place as they did the old one, then another should be found, as the rest of the place is wasted. Money could be collected and committee meetings held in the *Journal* office for which rent I presume has also to be paid from honorary funds. Such a place is not wanted for general meetings which are held elsewhere, and so much honorary money is being actually wasted. It appeared

## NAVAL WARRANT OFFICERS' REWARDS.

SIR,—As a speaker reminded us at a public dinner recently, the rewards for services rendered by Naval Warrant Officers in South Africa and China are a long time in coming. Still, if they are satisfactory at last, they will be worth waiting for. But there is one matter in connection with these rewards, by promotion, which should be once more pointed out to the Admiralty before further injustice is done to senior Warrant Officers by promoting young men over their heads to the Chiefs' list. At present Warrant Officers have but one promotion during the whole of their officers' career; at least, there has been but three exceptions to this rule, viz., Lieuts. Webber, Cathie, and Sims—during the last 80 years. From the time a man is promoted to warrant rank until he gets chief—his one and only step, an average period of