

P R E F A C E .

IN placing the Second Volume of our New Series before our readers we avail ourselves of the opportunity which a Preface affords for offering a few remarks that cannot well find a place elsewhere.

We would first express our thanks for the firmness with which men of scientific tastes and pursuits continue to support, in its new form, this Magazine, which other pens than ours made popular many years ago. A thousand things have shown us during the past year that those old friends who long looked upon this journal with even more than a friendly interest, have not had their regards alienated by either the external or the internal changes which it has of late undergone. We have likewise had many proofs of the support which new friends are in various ways according us. By all these manifestations of good feeling we are delighted, and for them we are grateful.

Many subjects of great importance have engaged our attention during the half-year which now expires. Among the earliest of them was that Admiralty Committee on Dockyard Economy, upon which some thousands of pounds of public money were squandered, and which did its best to effect changes involving the squandering of many thousands more. We have good reason to believe that our simple explanations on this subject have left the Committee but little hope of accomplishing its designs. The Coinage of the Realm is another subject that has been discussed with manifest effect in our columns. The manufacture of the new bronze coinage, now in course of preparation, is an acknowledged concession to our representations and efforts. In the present activity of the War Department and the Admiralty in reference to Rifled Ordnance we believe we see a consequence of our urgent remonstrances, followed up as they were by the speeches of that veteran patriot, Lord Lyndhurst, in the House of Peers. The Great Eastern has occupied much of our attention, not altogether, we trust, without effect. It was not possible to speak of her in terms that would be pleasant to all parties, because, as a commercial speculation, she has excited an immense amount of partizanship; moreover, since the memorable explosion which we had the pain of witnessing on her first sea trip, she has been continuously enveloped in a blaze of raging controversy. Happily we have had no interest in her to blind us, and no antipathies to colour what we have seen; so that we have been able to offer unprejudiced and fearless criticisms on this subject, which have not, as we are often assured, been valueless. The abuse of the British Association—by which it was rendered a medium “for advertising inventions” rather than for advancing science—to which we, and we only, drew attention in October last, will in future, we are informed, be guarded against. The Royal Navy, to which we give much attention, and with which we claim a real although humble association, was never in a more prosperous or more efficient condition than it is at present. The movement made by the French in respect of iron-coated ships has been met in a most spirited manner by our Admiralty, and the remonstrances which we publicly made on this subject in May last have been followed by the issue of contracts for no less than *four* iron-defended ships for Her Majesty's Navy—all of them vessels which promise to be of unparelled power and invulnerability. Our articles on the Theory of Ship-building and Laying-off have been slowly but steadily and carefully proceeded with, and will be continued until they become complete. In reference to Naval Architecture generally we have not been inactive, as is evidenced by the hostility which certain amateur writers on this subject are evincing towards us. The complaint of these gentlemen is, not that we do not understand naval architecture, or that we are devoid of the ability to express ourselves clearly in a literary sense, but that we have too much confidence in ourselves—too little respect for others—for *them* they mean, of course. We can only say we hope this is not so; we shall certainly not believe it is until *competent* judges express the opinion. We will leave this subject by promising to all who are concerned in it—friends and “unfriends”—an interesting novelty, which will come before them, we doubt not, before we pen another preface—a novelty that will gladden the hearts of all true lovers of the noble art of shipbuilding. We must not say more just at present.

But we have said enough in this egotistical strain, and will therefore end here—end with the hope that, notwithstanding the proud burst of new literature with which the year 1860 is opening, our voice will still be waited for with interest, and listened to with attention.

THE EDITORS.

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