

THE "MERRIMAC" OF NEW YORK HARBOR.

\$150,000 Has Been Appropriated to Clear the Obstructions Which Would Have Kept Spain's Warships Out of the Famous Waters of New York Bay.

When Admiral Sampson conceived the plan of running the Merrimac under the guns of Morro Castle and sinking her across the mouth of the harbor he realized full well that by the loss of the collier worth \$25,000 he would probably save a few millions of dollars for Uncle Sam to say nothing of thousands of lives. But to the man whose eyesight was responsible for the sinking of New York Harbor's Merrimac it probably never occurred that in the loss of his crew laden with pig-iron worth prob-

ably the Massachusetts reached the anchorage at Tompkinsville she was lying so low in the water, despite the fact that her pumps had been used vigorously after she had floated off the reef, that Captain Nicol Ludlow thought best to take to the sea. At that time he ordered that only two or three of the compartments forward on the port side were flooded, but the ship was listing so much and her nose was sticking so far down in the water that it was deemed prob-

able that she would not be able to cross over to the channel between Diamond Reef and the New York shore.

The best water to be found in the best course she could pick on the day the Massachusetts touched was one foot and four inches less than the draft of the ship as she started, namely, 28 feet 2 inches.

Of course, these conditions are not normal in the harbor, but they may occur on any low tide with the wind in a certain quarter, so the matter will be brought at once to the attention of Congress with a view to securing the removal of the upper part of Diamond Reef and of the harbor's "Merrimac." It is expected that a considerable portion of the \$150,000 appropriated to New York harbor in the river and harbor bill will be devoted to this one obstruction.

While Congress is preparing to aid the commerce of this port and of the country by necessary widening and deepening of the channels leading through the lower bay to the open sea, it will not do to neglect the demand for the removal of a considerable part of Diamond Reef, and the local "Merrimac" which lies but a short distance from the Battery, and becomes more embarrassing as the length and draught of ocean-going vessels increase.

The justification for this is ample for unless the reef be reduced and the sunken barge be removed the usefulness of the Brooklyn navy yard will be greatly impaired as to our larger warships, since they will not trust themselves to enter and depart from the East river save at high water.

It is plainly absurd to continue conditions which render the navy, in the leading port of the country, dependent upon either wind or tide for reaching the navy yard after entrance to the harbor. The cost of accidents like that to the Massachusetts is of vital concern to the

Government of each family by the head of the household, and the growth of the family brings on a patriarchal government. Let a household move out into the wilderness and found a new settlement. It begins under the rule of the father, who, as new habitations are built around the family home, remains the head of the growing clan; but as age comes on, his eldest son acts more and more in his name, and at his death will be recognized as succeeding him in the headship of the community. Here is seen in the rise of the hereditary chief—first in rank of the tribe, and with more or less of real authority depending upon his personal fitness and ability.

The patriarchal system lies at the root of civilized government all over the globe. It is confined to no particular race of mankind. To us it is especially well known from the Old Testament, where it is seen in the form it takes among a pastoral people, as it still appears among the Arabs of the desert today, whose clans and tribes are governed by their patriarchs—the sheikhs.

Not less does it lie at the foundation of the political systems of the Aryan race, for its remains may still be traced in the village communities of India and Russia. Under a mild patriarchal rule a people of few wants may prosper in times of peace, in the kindly communion which is possible where there are no rich and no poor. But in such a society the affairs are regulated according to ancestral customs and administered by great-grandfathers, progress is hardly possible. But in war it often happens that a stronger and more intelligent ruler is needed than the hereditary chief, who has sufficed for times of peace. The tribe has always retained the power to set the succession aside whenever the incumbent has proved himself incapable; and on the breaking out of a war, the peace ruler is thought to be too weak or timid for his position, a warlike leader is chosen in his stead, or coming to the front in times of danger he rescues the clan from disaster and usurps the authority which was not his by right of birth.

But when once superior martial skill and valor have asserted their right to command with the acquiescence of the tribe, it is apt to go still further. Throughout history we see in troubled times the best and ablest leader gaining a supremacy which may nominally end with his victorious campaign, but which tends to pass into a practical dictatorship for life, and not infrequently establishes a new dynasty for the succeeding era of peace.

last, as often happens, beyond the immediate occasion that called them into existence, there arise nations in which the head of the strongest tribe becomes king. Tribes that thus unite are likely to be of common race, speaking kindred dialects, and when they have become fused into one people, and are known by a common name, such as Dorians or Hellenes, they are apt to imagine themselves more closely of one nation, or "birth" than they really are.

It has evidently been through this growth of nations, going on for ages before history begins, that the higher civilization of mankind became possible. Scattered families of barbarians, in a land where there is as yet plenty of room for population to expand, may thrive without a strong government, but when men live in populous nations and crowded to preserve public order, are necessary military discipline came political order cannot be doubted. War not only put into the hands of the chieftain power over a whole people, but his army served as the model on which to organize the nation. History plainly teaches that it was through military discipline that mankind learned to submit to authority, and were taught to act in masses under command. Egypt and Babylon, with military system pervading not only the standing army, but the priestly and civilian orders, developed industry and wealth in the ancient world, and became the very founders of literature and science. They built up for future ages the framework of government, to which, with modifications, we moderns submit ourselves of our own free will, and for our own benefit.

It would be interesting, if time and space were at our disposal, to show how particular wars have contributed to the advancement of mankind, in spite of immediate results that seemed disastrous; but we must leave this development of our subject to the reflections of our readers.

CHARLES DOD.
Lexington, Va., Jan. 2, 1888.

WEBSTER'S CONFESSION OF FAITH

It is Recalled by an Editorial in The Times.

Editor of The Times: I greatly admire the high moral tone of your editorial, and the intelligent and conservative, attracted my attention, and were the cause of my subscribing to The Times. The one on "Search the Scriptures" is valuable and timely.

I have just read Daniel Webster's confession of faith. His gigantic intellect, united with his moral character, gained for him universal admiration, not only in his own country, but in the British Empire. His opinions are therefore of great value, and are entitled to the most respectful consideration. He wrote the following letter to the Rev. Thomas Worcester, formerly pastor of the Congregational church in Salisbury, N. H., which was accompanied with a confession of his religious faith:

Boscawen, Aug. 8, 1807.
Dear Sir: The other day we were conversing respecting confessions of faith. Some time ago, I wrote for my own use a few propositions in the shape of articles, intending to exhibit a very short summary of the doctrines of the Christian religion as they impress my mind. I have taken the liberty to enclose a copy for your perusal. I am, sir, with respect,
Yours, etc.,
D. WEBSTER.

"I believe in the existence of the Almighty God, who created and governs the whole world. I am taught this by the works of nature, and the words of revelation. I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the will and Word of God.

"I believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. The miracles which He wrought establish in my mind His personal authority, and render it proper for me to believe in whatsoever He asserts; I believe, therefore, all His declarations, as well when He declares any other proposition. And I believe there is no other way of salvation than through the merits of His atonement.

"I believe in the utter inability of any human being to work out his own salvation without the constant aids of the Spirit of Grace.

"I believe in those great peculiarities of the Christian religion—a resurrection from the dead, and a day of judgment. I believe in the universal Providence of God, and leave to Epicurus and his more unreasonable followers in modern times, the inconsistency of believing that God made a world which He does not take the care of governing.

"I believe that there is a matter not of demonstration, but of faith. God requires us to give credit to the truths which He reveals, not because we can

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DIAGRAM OF THE CHANNEL.

ly \$15,000—that in little more than a year he would put the government to a loss of \$50,000.

It is a fact, however, that such a loss has been entailed. And though local harbor authorities, and those interested in shipping, have endeavored to prevent this loss by having a ledge of rocks on the outer edge of a ledge of rocks near Governor's Island known as Diamond Reef, most naval officers, and the majority of the New York pilots know that this instead of being a ledge of rocks is an old saw laden with pig-iron. Indeed in naval circles there is a grim joke about the "floating rock" that lies in wait for warships. Since the Hobson exploit, however, they have usually alluded to this sunken barge as "New York Harbor's Merrimac."

Except to the people directly interested in the ownership of the craft or its cargo, the sinking of a barge in New York harbor is not a matter of very great interest. Six lines in a newspaper will tell the story of the loss and there, so far as the general public is concerned, the matter rests. So there is absolutely nothing known now or when this "Merrimac" was sunk.

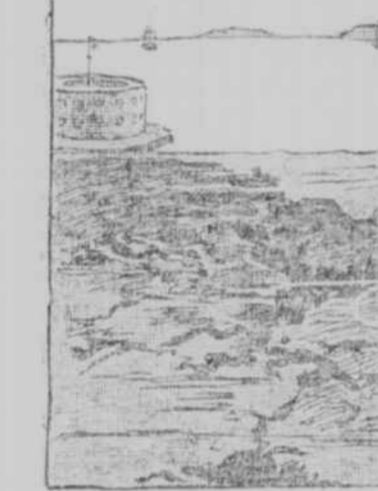
To the navy, however, the wreck began to attract attention to itself in the early part of 1897 when the cruiser Montgomery struck the "floating rock" and in endeavoring to sheer away from the obstruction ran ashore on Diamond Reef. This reef extends from Governor's Island toward Liberty Island and has always been a source of anxiety to the pilots particularly in the winter season when the northwest winds drive the water out of the harbor. When these winds have lasted for a couple of days there is one foot less water over the "Merrimac" and Diamond Reef than is sufficient to float a heavily laden war vessel.

When the Montgomery was hauled off and towed back to the navy yard it was found that several of her propeller blades were broken. It took four days to repair the damage at a cost of \$5,000. Some months later the auxiliary cruiser Mayflower struck the "Merrimac" and also went ashore. This resulted in a lot of sprung plates, five days in the dry dock, and an expense of \$12,000. The naval officers coming in or going out of the Brooklyn navy yard begin to tell weird tales about the "floating rock" off

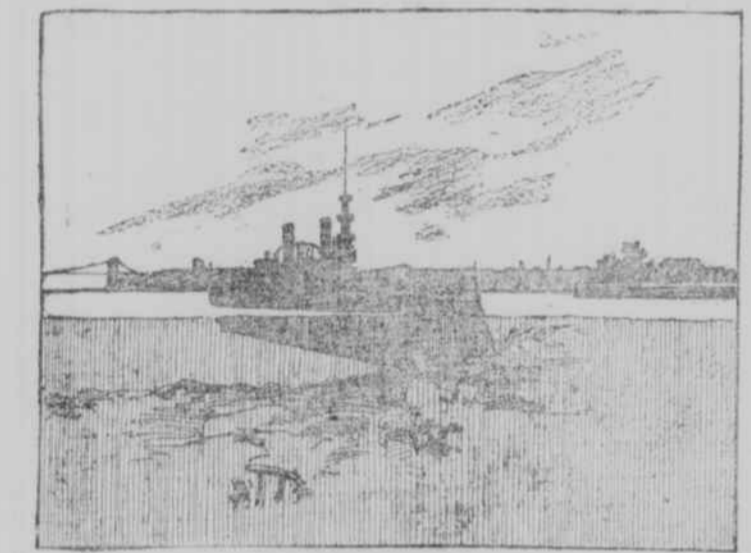
dent to get back into the shallow water in the yard.

The result of the third accident was damage to the battleship's bilge keels, a greater number of broken and sprung plates, three weeks in the dry dock, and

an estimated loss of \$30,000. Thus within a year a \$15,000 cargo of pig-iron cost the government of the United States \$45,000 in money to say nothing of the loss of the vessel's services and all the upsetting of the machinery of the navy's plans for the time being.



DIAMOND REEF OFF THE BATTERY.



THE INJURY TO THE MASSACHUSETTS.

Diamond Reef. And although it was treated in the light of a joke it began to be a very grim one for commanding officers.

No further attention was paid to the obstruction than to include it in the general plan for the improvement of New York Harbor when the next appropriation was asked for in the river and harbor bill. On the tenth of last December the necessity of immediate action in clearing away the "Merrimac" was pointed out very clearly by the battleship Massachusetts striking it on the afternoon of that day and doing a great deal of damage to her hull and bilge keels.

Coaled and probed for six months, absence the Massachusetts left the navy yard at 11 o'clock on the morning of that day. The sound of the salute from her guns and those on the Cob Dock had hardly died away, the echoes of the noise occasion from the river craft were hardly silent, and the big warship was grimly gliding along near Governor's Island when suddenly she seemed to stop and tremble.

The black smoke belching from her funnels became fleetly transparent and the white steam poured out in volumes from her open safety valves.

The great battleship was aground. It was for an instant only, but that instant was enough. The engines which had been stopped began to work again. The ship moved forward slowly, grating a little as she dragged herself over the hidden obstruction and then, free once more, she proceeded under forced draught to an anchorage off Tompkinsville.

As the Massachusetts began to clear from the obstruction she signaled to Governor's Island for help. From there word was telegraphed to Rear Admiral Bunce, commandant of the navy yard, that the Massachusetts had struck on Diamond Reef, and that three tugs were needed. This request was quickly changed, however, and only one tug was asked for, as the battleship was churning the water in the race to reach Tompkinsville.

Navy Department, and in certain circumstances the embarrassment might be most serious.

War as a Civilizer.

There is some soul of goodness in things evil, Would men observingly distil it out.

Oh, yet we trust that somehow good Will be the final goal of ill.

It is the creed of the optimist that there is no such thing as absolute evil in the universe. Partial ill there are, from which society suffers in some of its members or in some of its interests for a while, but the ultimate result is always the attainment of the greatest good by the greatest number and the elevation of humanity to a higher plane of civilization than it would ever have reached without the antecedent evil phase through which it passed in its development.

In these modern times no calamity that can befall a nation is so much dreaded as war. And indeed, it is impossible to exaggerate "the horrors of war." The sudden cutting off of the flower of a land by the sword certainly seems an unmitigated evil, and the philosophy of optimism is powerless to stifle the sob of bereaved parents when their brave darlings are torn to pieces by shot and shell.

Yet war, in times past, has played an important part as a civilizer, and has, in truth, been an indispensable agent in the advancement of mankind. This sociological fact is tersely stated in a sentence by Taylor in his work on "Anthropology," forming part of the International Scientific Series:

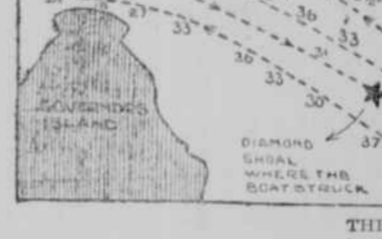
"The changes which have shaped the descendants of wild hordes into civilized nations have been in a great measure the work of the war chief."

If we look into the origin of government among men we can readily understand why this is true.

Travelers in barbaric lands, who have witnessed the assembling of wild tribes to repel invasion or attack an enemy, describe as wonderful the change that takes place in these rude and loosely-formed communities when controlled by a competent and trusted leader. Provisions and property of all kinds are brought into a common stock; warriors submit their unruly wills to the discipline of a leader, and private quarrels are forgotten and sunk in the larger

passion of patriotism. Distant clans of kindreds come together against the common enemy, and neighboring tribes without this natural bond of union ally themselves for the occasion, their chiefs consenting to serve under the orders of the chosen leader.

Here we see in their simplest form two of the great facts of history—the organized army, in which the several forces are led by their own captains under a general, and the confederation of tribes, such as in a higher civilization leads to political federations of States, like those of Greece and Switzerland.



THE COURSE.

of such tribe-alliances, when they prove them, but because he declares that when the mind is reasonably convinced that the Bible is the Word of God, the only remaining duty is to receive its doctrines, with full confidence of their truth, and practice them with a pure heart.

"I believe that the Bible is to be understood and received in the plain and obvious meaning of its passages; since I cannot persuade myself that a so-called intended for the instruction and conversion of the whole world, should cover its true meaning in such mystery and doubt, that none but critics and philosophers can discover it.

"I believe that the experiments and subtleties of human wisdom are more likely to obscure than to enlighten the revealed will of God, and that he is the most accomplished Christian scholar who has been educated at the feet of Jesus, and in the College of the Fishermen.

"I believe that all true religion consists in the heart and the affections, and that, therefore, all creeds and confessions are futile and uncertain evidences of evangelical piety.

"Finally, I believe that Christ has imposed on all His disciples a life of active benevolence; that he who refrains only from what he thinks to be sinful, has performed but a part, and a small part, of his duty; that he is bound to do good and communicate, to love his neighbor, and to give food and drink to his enemy, and to endeavor, so far as in himself, to promote peace, truth and happiness, in a wicked and fallen world, believing that in the great day which is to come there will be no other standard of merit, no other criterion of character, but that which is already established. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.'"

L. A. CUTLER.
Louis, Va., Jan. 6th.

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