

**THE DOCKYARDS,  
SHIPYARDS AND  
MARINE OF FRANCE**

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The Dockyards, Shipyards and Marine of France by P. Barry

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**P. BARRY**

**THE DOCKYARDS,  
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MARINE OF FRANCE**



Henry Harding

THE  
DOCKYARDS, SHIPYARDS,  
AND  
MARINE OF FRANCE.

BY  
P. <sup>o</sup> B <sup>ARRY</sup>,  
B A R R Y,

AUTHOR OF

"DOCKYARD ECONOMY AND NAVAL POWER," &c.

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LONDON:  
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.,  
STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

1864.

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TO

DE S. E. LE COMTE DE CHASSELOUP-LAUBAT,

MINISTRE SECRÉTAIRE D'ÉTAT DE LA MARINE,

ET DES COLONIES;

THE ADMIRALS COMMANDING IN THE FRENCH DOCKYARDS;

THE OFFICERS COMMANDING THE FRENCH IRONCLADS;

THE RESIDENT CONSULS,

AND OTHERS, WITH WHOM I CAME IN CONTACT,

OR WHO DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY

ASSISTED ME IN PROSECUTING MY INQUIRIES INTO

THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF THE PRESENT VOLUME,

MY BEST THANKS ARE DUE.

## P R E F A C E.

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The writer of the present volume visited the French dockyards and shipyards for the purpose of ascertaining by personal observation what France really is about, and what France really is capable of doing, in the event of a European war. This information the writer desired that, in his profession as a public writer on ships of war and guns, he might the more efficiently discharge his daily duty. The French Government, assured by the friendly tone of the writer's previous book on the English dockyards, at once acceded to his wishes, and without stipulation or restriction opened their establishments.\* As Lord Clarence Paget, our

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\* Cabinet du Ministre  
Mouvements.

Année 1864,  
Mois de Janvier et de Février.

### MARINE ET COLONIES.

Monsieur P. Barry, Rédacteur du \_\_\_\_\_, est autorisé à visiter les établissements de la Marine à Cherbourg, Brest, Lorient, Rochefort, et Toulon.

Le Ministre Secrétaire d'Etat de la  
Marine et des Colonies,

Signature du Porteur,  
P. Barry.

LE COMTE CHASSELOUP-LAUBAT.

Nota.—Sur la présentation de cette carte il sera délivré par les Préfets maritimes ou par les directeurs hors des Ports les permissions nécessaires pour visiter les établissements de la Marine.

Naval Attaché, the engineers sent by Mr. W. S. Lindsay and Sir Morton Peto, and the officers of the *St. George* accompanying Prince Alfred, have met with rebuffs and exclusion, the fact of an humble member of the London press, in his official capacity, receiving *carte blanche*, is perhaps one of the greatest compliments ever paid to the Fourth Estate by a Foreign Government.

On returning from France, and resolving to write the present volume, the question of the plan to be adopted at once occurred. The book might be written in two very different ways: first, the writer might work up a series of propositions which might or might not be warranted by what he saw and heard; or, second, he might merely state what he saw and heard, leaving the public to form their own opinions. Against the first course there was the objection of assuming the position of a pleader; and against the second there was the objection that, by investigating the facts of the case, matter of a less or more tedious character would probably be introduced, and necessarily there would be a certain amount of verbal repetition. What was to be done? A moment's deliberation was enough. On so important a question as the French Dockyards and Shipyards, Englishmen will prefer anything to what might appear to be the fancies or prejudices of any one. Arriving at that conclusion, it then seemed desirable to open the subject of the Dockyards with a general chapter, in which topics common to all the French Dockyards might be discussed, and to open the subject of the Shipyards in the same manner. These



general chapters written, it further appeared that if they were followed by the facts in special chapters the book would resolve itself into two syllogisms,—the general chapters being the conclusions, and the special chapters the premises, from which the conclusions followed. The idea seemed a good one, and with ample leisure might have been neatly worked out, but unfortunately the writer has no leisure, and at the present time the subject of the French Dockyards and Shipyards is one that will not “keep.” It therefore remained to do the best under the circumstances, and the best appeared to be to make every French feature or point a peg on which to hang a short discussion, until the entire field of naval controversy was fully covered. So the reader—the candid reader—desiring to be informed of French naval matters and their bearings, should wade through the book, from the first page to the last, because passages not in themselves obvious are pretty sure to be cleared up before the book is closed and laid away. Indeed, it has been the constant aim of the writer either to give his authority or to furnish the proof of what he states.

One word more. The writer has throughout the volume expressed himself as becomes his subject. He has spoken the truth, the whole truth, and, as far as he is aware, nothing but the truth. England, above all things, ought to know what France is doing, and what is inevitable in case of a rupture with France, should the British Navy remain the mere convenience of the Administration of the day. In the present condition

of the British Navy, war with France would bring England to its knees in a single week or fortnight; but war with France, in the condition in which the British Navy might be placed by such men as Richard Cobden or Lord Stanley at the Admiralty, would assuredly bring Frenchmen and France to grief. As long as England is afflicted with a weak Government, no administrative reform worth a farthing rushlight will be ventured on; and as long as a system so incapable and *effete* as that represented by the Admiralty is tolerated by Parliament and the public, naval pre-eminence and glory are impossible. To affirm with Lord Palmerston that the British fleet is ready to go anywhere and to accomplish anything is to assume that the Navy is controlled by wise heads and vigorous hands; while to affirm with the writer that without amendment the British fleet has only to show itself against France to be thrashed and sunk, or captured, is to assume that the Navy in its management is rather more than a century behind the times. At no period in the country's history has the British Navy been practically more useless than it is at present. Send our handful of a Channel fleet to Denmark, and if in the Austro-Prussian service there is a Cochrane or a Napier, he has only to lay hands on a Channel pilot to be enabled to burn Woolwich. For the constant defence of England the writer enjoins the presence of the bulk of the commissioned ships in English waters; and for the supremacy of the British Navy he thinks there is nothing requisite but better guns

and faster ships. In the opinion of the French naval officers commanding the French ironclads he concurs, that as good guns and ammunition will sink even that latest prodigy the *Lord Warden* by a few fair rounds, the time has come when ironclad and iron-armoured shipbuilding should make a pause.

A considerable amount of matter, some of great interest, will be found in the form of foot-notes. Such matter would have proved an incumbrance to the text.

LONDON, JULY 6TH, 1864.