

Sunday Examiner Magazine

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THE FUTURE OF THE SUBMARINE

By Jules Verne.

FOR some inexplicable reason, many people insist upon regarding me as the inventor, or the imaginer, of the submarine, and that, no doubt, is the reason of the flattering request made to me to give my views upon its future.

I find the task no easy one. To begin with, I am not in any way whatever the inventor of submarine navigation, and reference to the authorities will show that many years—fully fifty, I should say, before I wrote about the Nautilus—the Italians were at work upon submarine war vessels, and other nations were busied with them. All that I did was to avail myself of the great privileges of the fiction writer, and fancy's seven-league boots and create on paper what other men were planning out in steel and other metals.

The future of the submarine as I regard it—and let me here disclaim all gift of prophecy—is to be wholly a war future. The Nautilus, as I have written of it, will never be, I think, an actual fact, and I do not think that under-sea ships will be built in future years to carry traffic across the ocean bed to America and Australia. Even if the air difficulty were successfully encountered (and I have my grave doubts as to the possibility of that) what would be gained by any such sub-ocean traffic, except freedom from sea-sickness? No submarine would ever cross the bed of the Atlantic faster than a ship upon the waves would traverse it, and surely freedom from that bugbear and danger is not a sufficient incentive for the creation of a Cunard line beneath the sea.

No Commercial Future.

I am an old man now, and working, as upon my 102d volume of boys' stories, and as I look back on the years which have passed since I first wrote the life story of the Nautilus, and of its owner, I see no progress in the submarine which makes me hope for its use as a commercial medium. It has been wonderfully improved, I grant you—miraculously improved almost—but I even think that in the distant future the submarine may be the cause of bringing battle to a stoppage altogether, for fleets will become useless, and as other war material continues to improve war will become impossible.

As time goes on each nation will acquire a large and very rapid fleet of submarines. Each little vessel (I am inclined to think that in the future they will be smaller than they are to-day, and manned by one or two men only) will be absolutely in control, and will be able with scientific accuracy to place torpedoes underneath the greatest vessels, and to blow those vessels up. I do not think that any apparatus will be found to counteract the intense rapidity and certainty of the submarine, and eventually, when every



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