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*with Lord C. Chilton's
Kiln repairs.*

10

BEREHAVEN HARBOUR

AS A

NAVAL STATION,

AND

FORTIFICATIONS

ON THE

SOUTH - WEST COAST

OF

I R E L A N D .

BATH :

H. T. JENNINGS, PRINCE'S BUILDINGS.

MDCCCLXVI.

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BEREHAVEN HARBOUR, &c.

March, 1866.

For many years past, I have anxiously endeavoured to obtain from the Government the prosecution of the Defence Works in Bantry Bay, and Berehaven and Crookhaven Harbours, which were so strongly recommended by the Defence Commissioners in 1860, and a vote for which works, was embodied in the estimates for the Session 1861, but was found to have been erased when the votes were taken for the Defences that year. In October, 1861, I applied to Lord Palmerston by letters for the commencement of these works, on the plea of giving legitimate, and nationally-reproductive employment to the people of that district, who were at the time in a very destitute condition, owing to successive bad harvests. The official answer to this application will form the commencement of a statement, which I have had printed, in order that I may more easily bring the subject under the notice of the prominent leaders of the Conservative party; having found that all matters connected with the promotion and advancement of the interests of Ireland, and even the necessary requirements for the safety of that country, have been always treated by

the Whig party with equivocation, neglect, and contempt. In January, 1864, I put together a letter I wrote to Lord Palmerston the previous month, with some remarks of my own on that statesman's conduct in treating my application and communication, in regard to the then state and future of Ireland, with what I fear was too frequently the case, flippant, may be jocular, contempt. How far these remarks of mine may have been justified in the sequel, I regret to be unable now to prove, as I lent the statement to a friend who has lost it; but having a copy by me of my letter to Lord Palmerston, I now insert it, and leave those who may read these pages to judge for themselves, as to whether or not, those warnings of mine have been prematurely shadowed forth; and whether what has already happened, and more than that, whether what is likely to come to pass, has proved or not the prophetic value of those remarks. I wish, also, to call the attention of those to whom this statement may be presented, to the great importance, and natural unrivalled capabilities and position, of Berehaven Harbour for a Naval Station, and for the construction of Docks, "if Ireland is to participate with England in these national establishments." That such ought to be the case there is no shadow of doubt, if justice is done to her, and she is to be retained as an integral portion of our empire. That there is only one locality where this naval station and these docks ought to be placed, is pointed out by Sir Arthur Wellesley; that opinion is endorsed by all practical naval and military authorities; and in the following remarks of my own on this head, I feel that I am not enunciating a single or solitary opinion, but "that" of all those who, from experience and local knowledge, have been enabled to form a correct judgment in this important matter.

In answer to my first letter to Lord Palmerston, in October, 1861, I received the following official reply from Dublin Castle.

DUBLIN CASTLE ; *Nov. 22, 1861.*

MY LORD,

Lord Palmerston has transmitted to the Irish government the letter of the 15th October last, addressed by you to his lordship, representing that the execution of certain works of defence at Berehaven, in Bantry Bay, might be undertaken, with a view to the relief of apprehended distress in that district, and I am directed by the Lords Justices to inform you that it appears from a minute of the Inspector-General of Fortifications on the subject, that the works in question, consisting of the restoration of three towers, must of necessity be executed almost entirely by mechanics, who are probably not to be found on the spot, or if they are, not of the class so urgently in need of relief; and besides being unfavorable work for winter, it would also require a large portion of the estimate to be expended in building materials, such as timber, asphalte, and other stores, not to be found in the neighbourhood. Under these circumstances, your lordship will perceive that the object you have in view, however desirable, would not be attained by the execution of the works in question. Their Excellencies, therefore, do not feel that they can further press the subject on the consideration of the War Department.

I have the honor to be, my Lord,

Your most obedient servant,

THOS. LARCOM.

On receipt of this letter, I wrote to Sir Robert Peel, requesting him to reconsider the matter, as I was aware that the arguments adduced by their Excellencies would not hold water, inasmuch as the works proposed by the Commissioners were principally an extension and alteration of the earthworks, which, with the three forts, were erected at the beginning of the present century, soon after the attempt

of the French to invade Ireland by landing in Bantry Bay, and that, therefore, the execution of these works "would" answer the purpose for which I applied, namely, to give employment to the people, as it would be almost entirely manual labour, instead of skilled labour as put forward in the reply from Dublin Castle. I may add that I received a few courteous words in answer from Sir Robert Peel, saying that the matter should be looked into, and nothing more. The matter, as usual with Whig officials, ended there; the people might starve, and the enemy might land unresisted, if he so elected; but Ireland was Ireland, and Ireland was unworthy of consideration at the hands of Whig statesmen, as long, at all events, as they could neglect and trample upon her with impunity.

The Sessions of 1862 and 1863 passed by, the vote for the Defences in Bantry Bay was not again inserted in the Estimates. Sir George Browne wrote me word that he could not press the matter again; and I saw it was useless on my part any longer to argue the point on the plea of employment to the people. But in the meantime a change took place in the political aspect of Ireland. I heard from most reliable resources that "disaffection" was fast spreading over the land, and that the people were only waiting for the termination of the American War to rise against the Queen's authority and rule. I, therefore, determined again to make an appeal to Lord Palmerston, assuming the position of a public man, finding as a private individual I could do nothing, and I called upon his lordship to prepare in time for coming events, by fortifying the Irish coasts on those points recommended by the Great Duke and the Defence Commissioners. I wrote as follows.

2, LONGCHAMP, NICE;

Dec. 26, 1863.

MY LORD,

About two years ago I wrote to your lordship, requesting you to consider the application contained in my

letter, which was, that you would allow certain Works and Fortifications in Bantry Bay to be put in execution, which had been recommended by the Defence Commission appointed for that purpose, and also by Her Majesty's Commander of the Forces, Sir George Browne. This private application of mine to your lordship, was followed by a petition from all the respectable inhabitants of the district; our object then was to give legitimate employment to the people in that district, who were in a state of great destitution, verging upon famine; and, at the same time, carry out a necessary work—what had been so strongly recommended by the Commission and military authorities in Ireland—and for which a grant of a few thousand pounds had been at the time inserted in the Estimates, but, for some cause or another, was afterwards expunged. Your lordship referred my letter to the authorities at Dublin, and a month afterwards, I received an answer, stating that the works I applied for did not answer the purpose for which I had asked them. Knowing sufficient of such matters to be aware that the reasons given for refusal were not grounded on facts, I again applied to Sir Robert Peel, but all I got in return was, what is too frequently the case in such matters, a civil acknowledgment of my letter, and total neglect and obliviousness of the subject afterwards. I at that time had the excuse, though a private individual, of asking relief in a legitimate way for the people; that excuse is now done away with, or very greatly so; for which we have to thank God, not man. But the other still remains, and as no public man has as yet come forward to advocate the claims of the neglected and defenceless harbours and coasts of Ireland, I take the liberty of again pressing the matter most urgently upon your lordship's notice, and I first take the course adopted on a former occasion, namely, of a personal application to your lordship. Perhaps my appeal will have more weight, as indeed it ought to have, when I tell your lordship that in 1807, the Duke of Wellington, then Sir Arthur Wellesley, wrote as follows regarding the

position of Bantry Bay, and its use for purposes of national defence. He says, "The first point to which I will draw your attention, is the general military system adopted in Ireland, with a view to its defects. All those who have considered this subject, appear to agree in the following propositions, although they differ in opinion upon many questions of detail. That Ireland is assailable by the enemy on all parts of its southern, its western, and its northern coast; that in case it should be attacked by a body of the enemy sufficiently large to give employment to a large proportion of the regular troops, the people in all parts of the country would rise in rebellion; that Ireland must ultimately depend for its defences upon the resources of men and military equipments, which it should receive from Great Britain. There appears only one remedy for the evils stated in the first proposition. A system of fortifications upon the coasts of Ireland, such as that which have been carried into execution on the coasts of Kent and Sussex, would not answer, for many obvious reasons, even if the country could bear its expenses; and, therefore, 'the best measure would be to establish a Naval Station in Bantry Bay.' By the adoption of this measure, you would at all times have a fleet upon your 'most vulnerable point;' and you would give to the coasts of this country, the 'only general defence which they are capable of receiving.' I believe, also, a Naval Establishment at Bantry Bay would answer for many other general purposes."

This opinion which I have in print embodied with other remarks on the same locality, I shall be happy to forward to your Lordship, should you desire it, but having only one copy, I am rather loth to part with so valuable a document, should your Lordship not entertain my application. I have also the strongest opinion from Sir George Browne of the absolute necessity for putting the forts in repair, and having them properly armed and manned at the harbours on the south and south-west of Ireland. The Government will have received these suggestions and recommendations from

Sir G. Browne, *in extenso*; it is therefore needless for me to trouble your Lordship here with any details. It is sufficient to say, that Sir G. Browne and the Commissioners have recommended these works in the strongest terms; and that as yet not one spadeful of earth has been turned, not one shilling expended in the execution of these works, works of paramount necessity for the safety of the country. I have taken the liberty of again pressing this subject upon your Lordship's notice, in the hope that this time it may not be passed by, and put aside as trivial and unnecessary. A higher and more national claim is now made on Her Majesty's Government than the one put forward by me two years ago; the claim then made was to afford the means for keeping a few starving people in existence; a desideratum, judging from public enunciations at the time, not worth the consideration of the then rulers of Ireland's destinies: but now the claim is made for far more portentous reasons; nothing less than laying the foundation stone, proposed by Sir Arthur Wellesley, for the future security of the sister isle, from invasion without, and rebellion within. I will now quote a few words from communications I have lately received from Ireland, on the present state, and probable future of that country. A gentleman of high standing and undoubted veracity, writes from the west of the County Cork:—"Clubs are in every village and town in Ireland, and when once this war in America is at an end, the Government and the loyal people of Ireland will have more to do than they ever had before: I am not an alarmist, but it is folly to shut one's eyes to what is passing around us." Another letter from the same county says:—"I assure you, that this county was never in so dangerous a condition as at present. From end to end of the country a 'wide-spread conspiracy prevails.' Clubs are in every village, every townland, every town, and every city in Ireland. The young fellows are well drilled, and trained to the use of arms. Their hatred to England is so intense that they cannot conceal it, and their daily prayer is, to have the American

war over, and that then 'England's adversity will be Ireland's opportunity.' I can most confidently assure you, that in this country, the Americans would be welcomed by thousands and tens of thousands; and that the Fenian Brotherhood are waiting for the termination of the American war, and for the landing in this country of Meagher and Corcoran and the disbanded soldiers, and that then every man well disposed towards England will have to flee from this country, or fight for his life. I am not easily alarmed, but such are the signs of the times: the Government are well informed that such is the state of things, and yet, strange to say, no steps are taken to fortify the harbours and to guard our coasts." A gentleman of high reputation, well known in Dublin, writes from that city:—"The country generally—I mean Ireland—is without a future. The great mass of the people look only to America, for a home now, and for their 'deliverer' hereafter." These, my Lord, are the opinions of men who have an intimate knowledge of all that is going on in ill-fated but misguided Ireland. Surely, my Lord, though this is the application of one who is no public man, but a private individual, and though a land-owner in Ireland, is an unprejudiced Englishman; it will not be disregarded by Her Majesty's Government. With Ireland, disloyal to the backbone; with America thirsting to send her disbanded hordes to their sympathizing brotherhood in that country—a country from which most have drawn their origin; and with the bitter feeling which is ever showing itself towards England, on the other side of the Channel, feelings alone kept down and suppressed by the strong and wise hand of its imperial ruler, of an empire whose religion is in unison and sympathy with that of Ireland; I cannot for a moment suppose it possible that Her Majesty's Government will postpone further the adoption, and execution of works, which if any longer put off, may be found impossible of execution in time of need; more especially when a few thousands spent now out of the millions voted by the nation—of which Ireland is an

integral part—for such purposes, and expended entirely as yet on England's coasts, will be a saving of millions hereafter, and the prevention of calamities which are incalculable should an enemy to England once effect a landing on Ireland's coasts, and that enemy an invited and welcome guest to the great mass of the Irish people.

I remain, my Lord,

Your Lordship's obedient servant,

CHARLES P. P. CLINTON.

P.S.—I earnestly trust that this application will not be disregarded by your lordship, as I feel you would wish to do justice to every portion of Her Majesty's dominions; but should you, however, not think fit to entertain it, I must reserve to myself the right of making any use of this letter, which may be best calculated to attain the object I now so strongly advocate, namely, the adoption of the works, as before stated, before it is too late.

To the Lord Viscount Palmerston,

&c., &c., &c., London.

To the foregoing letter, I received, three weeks after, the following reply:—

10, DOWNING STREET; *Jan. 19th, 1864.*

SIR,

I am desired by Lord Palmerston to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 26th ult.

I am, Sir,

Yours obediently,

EVELYN ASHLEY.

Chas. P. P. Chuton, Esq.

On receipt of this, I may term discreditable, reply from Lord Palmerston's Secretary, I wrote the following to his Lordship :—

NICE; *Jan. 23rd*, 1864.

MY LORD,

On the 26th of last month, I addressed a letter to your lordship on the subject of fortifications on the south-west coast of Ireland, and also in reference to the present unsatisfactory state of that country. To that communication made three weeks ago, I have just received the following laconic reply from your Secretary, Mr. Ashley :—“ I am directed by Lord Palmerston to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 26th ult.” As the subject on which I wrote referred to matters of national importance, your lordship must pardon me if I say that I am not satisfied with this brief production of a three weeks' incubation in Downing Street, and I shall be obliged to your lordship if you will inform me at your earliest convenience, whether Her Majesty's Government intend to act upon the Report of the Defence Commissioners, and the strong recommendation of Sir George Browne, commanding the forces in Ireland, in reference to the fortifications on the south-west coast of Ireland; as, unless I receive a satisfactory answer from your Lordship, I intend to take steps to make the position of affairs there known to the public in general, and also to get my friends to bring the matter before the House of Commons.

I remain, my Lord,

Your obedient servant,

CHARLES P. P. CLINTON.

P.S.—Will you desire your Secretary, when he answers this, to direct to me in my proper name, Lord Charles P. P. Clinton, and not “ Charles P. P. Chuton, Esq.,” as he, in his ignorance, has designated me.

I here insert a letter from Sir G. Browne to myself.

ROYAL HOSPITAL,
9th Dec., 1863.

MY DEAR LORD CHARLES,

I felt that you might consider me remiss in not replying to your letter of 10th Sept. last, but besides that it reached me at a moment when I happened to be pressed upon by other business, I really felt as I still do, that I can do little more than I had already done towards forwarding your object. I have in no way altered, or in any way modified the strong opinion I entertain as to the importance of Bantry Bay, including Berehaven in a military or strategical point of view. I still consider it the most secure and convenient anchorage for ships of war in this country, and which opinion I have reason to believe is concurred in by all the best naval authorities. It is a position, therefore, that it is most essential should not be easily occupied by an enemy's fleet in case of war, and I accordingly strongly recommended, in a report which I submitted on the subject, that the works which were constructed there in the beginning of the present century should be restored and properly armed : but although estimates have been called for and duly furnished, with a view to the completion and repair of these works, I cannot find that any grant has been asked for by the government, for the purpose of carrying out my recommendation, which was also that of the commission appointed to report on the defences of the several harbours in Ireland ; and accordingly the works in question are left to fall more and more into a state of ruin and dilapidation, so that every succeeding year must necessarily increase the expense of placing them in a state of defence in the event of a war, when assuredly it would become indispensable to do so. The works on Whidey Island are of so substantial a description that it seems a positive reproach to the country to allow them to fall into ruin, and if those on Bere Island are of a less formidable character, still they appear sufficient for the purpose for which they were intended

and would adequately secure the anchorage in the haven, if the batteries and towers were placed in a state of repair and properly armed: as they at present stand, they are calculated rather to "invite" than to "resist" the attack of an enemy, for being totally unarmed, he might anchor in the haven, without any resistance, and by landing a few guns from his ships very soon be enabled to establish himself on the island, from which it would be very difficult indeed to expel him. Such are my opinions in regard to the importance of Bantry Bay, formed without any reference to those of the Duke of Wellington, which I was not aware of until you sent me the accompanying extract from the Dublin Evening Mail of the 12th Dec. 1859, which I now return. It is very satisfactory to me, that my opinions thus independently formed, should be sanctioned by such high authority, and your lordship is at perfect liberty to appeal or to refer to them, if you fancy they will strengthen any representation you may propose to make to the government; but having already submitted my recommendation in regard to the expediency of restoring and arming the works in this important estuary officially to the proper authorities, and thus having made my sentiments in regard to them known, you will easily understand, that in my position it will not do to repeat any representation on the subject, lest I might be considered importunate. With regard to Crookhaven, which is much frequented by merchant vessels, on their return voyage, where they are accustomed to wait for orders as to which channel they are to run for; there is abundance of water for ships of any size, and perfectly secure anchorage in all weathers. It is not of nearly the same capacity as Berehaven, and scarcely capable of containing a fleet, although a squadron of several ships of the largest class might conveniently lay there, and vessels of all descriptions are accustomed to run for it, when obliged to bear up by stress of weather. The Harbour Commission have recommended the construction of certain works for the security of this anchorage "also," and for the protection of vessels taking shelter in it in bad weather, or when

chased by privateers or enemy's ships, in all which recommendations "I entirely concur," but neither these or any other defence works in Ireland appear to be proceeded with, with the exception of those in Cork harbour, and even these are not going on with much activity. The fact is, my dear lord, that defence works in this country, as you well know, are always neglected, and repudiated in the absence of any immediate alarm, and now that we have adopted the Volunteer "delusion," we have come to be of opinion that all such expedients are utterly useless.

Yours, my dear Lord Charles,

Very faithfully,

G. BROWNE.

I need not mention here that no answer was returned to my last letter to Lord Palmerston, dated Jan. 23rd, 1864. Thus ended three years of fruitless attempts on my part, and that of the military authorities in Ireland, to rouse Her Majesty's Government to a sense of their duty in providing in time for the security of that country. The baneful effects of their apathy and neglect are now fast becoming apparent to every thinking man, in the almost universal disaffection which has spread itself over the length and breadth of that unhappy country.

I will now give the statement and letters which I drew out at the commencement of the year 1865 :—

Further Statements and Correspondence in respect of the Harbour of Berehaven, and the Fortifications in Bantry Bay.

In the month of August, 1864, the Duke of Somerset, the First Lord, and other members of the Admiralty Board, together with Lord de Grey, the Secretary at War, visited with the channel squadron, first the harbour of Queenstown, and afterwards the harbour of Berehaven and other parts of

Bantry Bay. The object of their visit was said to be, to prepare themselves, by personal inspection, for the selection of an Irish harbour, in which to construct naval dockyards, a boon to Ireland said to be then contemplated by Her Majesty's Government, and one greatly required for imperial purposes, as the docks at present existing in the English ports were neither sufficient in number or size for the requirements of the country, since the introduction of iron-clad vessels into the service. I had every confidence in the justice, judgment, and impartiality of the First Lord of the Admiralty in this selection, but I feared the pushing energy, and untiring oratory, displayed on every occasion by the ruling powers in the city of Cork, in order to gain their ends, and also the jealousy and fear ever evinced lest any other part of the country should gain an advantage over them, added to this, Berehaven was without an advocate of her very superior claims. I therefore ventured, however feebly or imperfectly, to be her champion on the occasion, trusting not to any arguments I could adduce, but to her own merits, which only required to be seen to be appreciated, or to be pointed out in order to be acknowledged. I wrote the following letter to the Duke of Somerset:—

CARLSBAD : *August 18th, 1864.*

MY LORD,

The subject of my present communication to you is one in which I have for many years taken the deepest interest, and hearing that it is the intention of the Government to establish a naval dockyard in Ireland, and knowing that you have quite recently visited Queenstown, Berehaven, and Bantry Bay, in order to judge of the relative merits of these places for the construction of the works in contemplation; I take the liberty of submitting to your notice a few facts which I hope may serve in some manner to support the selection by Government of the harbour of *Berehaven* for that purpose. I am well aware that the merits of

Queenstown will be advocated most zealously by a large and influential community in the city of Cork, who will lose no opportunity to bring all their powers of eloquence and persuasion to bear in its favour. 2ndly, I know that at Queenstown there is a large population, Government store-houses, and a convict depôt, all of which will be brought forward in support of its selection. In these particulars, and at first sight, it may be argued that it is superior to Berehaven: but will you allow me to suggest that, with these particulars, the superiority of Queenstown ceases, and that even some of these are questionable, as—1st, it is very doubtful whether a large population and extensive mercantile community is an advantage in conjunction with a naval establishment. 2ndly, Whether a *naval* establishment conduces to the advancement of mercantile operations and prosperity. In regard to the disadvantages of Queenstown, I need hardly allude to the fact, that although the harbour is very extensive, there is *very* little *deep* water, and it is incapable of holding any large amount of men-of-war owing to this circumstance. As an instance in proof of this, when Admiral Hope, a few years since, was in command at Cork, his flag-ship was anchored in the only deep water, which is in mid-channel, some merchant vessels either on entering or leaving the harbour had run foul of the flag-ship. A deputation from the town authorities waited upon the Admiral, and requested him to move his ship elsewhere, as it impeded the course of the merchant vessels. The Admiral refused compliance on the ground that there was no other place in the harbour where he could place his vessel. This incident was related in a Cork paper at the time; and if required, no doubt Admiral Hope would supply all particulars. I have not the paragraph with me here, or would enclose it, but I mention it to you as one of the reasons in proof of the “inferiority” of Queenstown to Berehaven, both in size and capability.

Berehaven, though it cannot boast of a large city, with

eloquent members and an interested press, possesses natural capabilities which are unrivalled in any harbour in the United Kingdom. As a *position* in case of war, Berehaven not only cannot be surpassed, but must become an *absolute necessity* for the protection of our commerce passing across the Atlantic, and for the protection of the country itself. I have taken the liberty of enclosing to your Grace the opinion of the late Duke of Wellington, which I am sure you will be interested in reading, and with which Her Majesty's Government may be glad to be acquainted, as the opinion of so great a man must always carry its weight with it. The harbour of Berehaven is seven miles in length, and on an average over one mile in width; it has first-rate anchorage, is perfectly protected, has two entrances, and an enormous acreage of *deep* water; the depth across the harbour at the eastern entrance is along the whole extent 19 fathoms, and could, if wished, contain the whole of Her Majesty's navy—but this your grace has seen with your own eyes. The island is over 3000 acres in extent, and is admirably adapted for a convict depôt and garrison, and in some parts the docks are actually half-made already by nature—I refer to Lawrence's Cove, which I know Admiral Dacre very minutely examined. There is also on the opposite side (mainland) a large extent of coast, where docks of *any* size, *depth*, and *extent* might be constructed. In addition to these advantages, I can hold out that as the whole of the island, and most of the mainland around the harbour belongs to me, I can offer it to the Government on such moderate terms, that *thousands* may be saved to the country, which I have no doubt will be a satisfaction to your lordships and the House of Commons who will have to vote the estimates; whereas at Queenstown the price of land would be equal to building land in London. The rural population is large, with small holdings—the landlords have in some parts been rather glad of the recent enlarged emigration; there will therefore be no difficulty in finding labour, which will be much cheaper

than at Cork. Should Berehaven be selected, perhaps it may be rather an advantage that the Government cannot be interfered with by other conflicting interests, but having the whole district to themselves, they can select their own position, and be unfettered in their choice and movements. There is no doubt a railway would again be projected, should the Government decide on Berehaven—one *was* projected three years ago and energetically supported by H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge and Sir J. Burgoyne for military purposes, but the Committee of the House of Commons threw out the Bill, and selected the competing and less nationally useful line. I have no doubt you have before you the various reports which from time to time have been made upon the harbour of *Berehaven*; you will find that there is not one dissentient voice as to its great natural capabilities and unrivalled position, so I will not trouble your grace further with any remarks of my own on this national and most important question. I feel confident that neither the importunity of friends nor threats of opponents will ever bias your decision, and I feel satisfied that the solution of this question will be come to on *merit* alone, guided by economical and prudential considerations; and may we hope that whatever the selection may be, it may prove to be for the lasting advancement of the interests of the country at large.

I remain, my Lord,

Your Grace's very obedient Servant,

CHARLES P. CLINTON.

His Grace the Duke of Somerset.

To this letter I received a very courteous and obliging reply from the Duke of Somerset, which I do not feel myself justified in inserting in this statement, as I have not asked for or obtained his Grace's leave to do so. I may

say, however, that the Duke stated that my communication should have due consideration whenever the question was discussed.

Since writing the above, I have had one paragraph in my letter to the Duke, namely, whether “an extensive mercantile community is an advantage in conjunction with a naval establishment,” fully borne out and corroborated, by an opinion I have received from a high naval authority, who wrote to me as follows: “Berehaven as a naval station, quite irrespective of its great natural facilities for such a purpose, possesses the *indispensable* desideratum of not being near any commercial establishment. In England, we do not allow any commercial establishment near our dockyards, and those on the River Thames, at Deptford and Woolwich (where this could not be avoided), are to be sold. The two cannot subsist together, the differences in wages to the operatives, the facility to plunder the Government stores, &c., &c., would cause the greatest embarrassment in carrying on the duties.”

I find that *one* Dock is to be made at Queenstown, or rather has been promised to the people of Cork, and was promised before the visit of the Duke of Somerset and the Lords of the Admiralty, as mentioned above, to Queenstown and Berehaven. This Dock is obviously ceded for electioneering purposes, as the estimate is for about £150,000, and for the present year only £5000 is to be asked for, which, at a like annual rate, would take thirty years to finish the Dock. A gentleman from the county of Cork (not the city of Cork) writes, “No Dock will be made there. I saw it stated in a Cork paper that £200,000 had been put in the Estimates for this purpose, and that £50,000 was to be expended this summer; but I now find that only £5000 is to appear in the Estimates,—this is a sop to Maguire and Pope Hennessy, and a bid for popularity at the coming elections; and the money will be squandered on the reports of officials, the surveys, inspections, and

examinations of engineers and the rate-payers." This of course means "preliminary expenses," in the distribution of which the *right* electors of the city will no doubt largely participate. To those who have seen the violent speeches against and the exceptions made to the Galway and Dover contracts by the present Government, this certainly does appear to be a case far more assailable than the two above quoted. They were intended for the public good, and if success did not attend them it was no fault of the Government then in power. The case of the dock at Queenstown is very different; it is for no "public good"—how could a dock which is to take 30 years in constructing claim such a virtue? For what, then, is £5000 of the public money to be squandered? If in bringing Whig electors to the poll, it is no doubt an item in the estimates which ought to be thoroughly sifted, and if "found wanting" to be strongly animadverted upon and disallowed on the estimates. Before leaving the subject of a naval station and dockyards at Berehaven, and proceeding with the case of the *fortifications* in Bantry Bay, the subject of my statements last year, I will state that, following the recommendations of the great Duke of Wellington, I shall urge upon Her Majesty's Government as the best means of securing the safety of Ireland from foreign aggression, and providing against the chance of internal commotions or disloyal sympathisers, that *Berehaven* shall be made a naval station, with dockyards, and all means for repairing men-of-war shall be provided for in that harbour, and that Bere Island and other parts of Bantry Bay shall be properly fortified and garrisoned. From this harbour and station in time of war, an escort can be constantly supplied for the merchant vessels which are the carriers of our enormous commerce between Canada, the American States, and the West Indies, all of which passes off Cape Clear, and not many miles from the entrance of Bantry Bay. The position of this harbour is also such, that a fleet kept there could by means of the telegraph already

laid down to Crookhaven, be sent off to any part of America or the West Indies, with greater facility and in much less time than from any port in England, and should a war take place with the American States, it will then be found to be a *necessity* both for the rapid transmission of our fleets, and for the protection of our commerce; and who knows how soon that necessity may arise? To effect this great national object, as I stated above, I propose for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government that Berehaven shall be made a naval station, with docks for repairing and perhaps building men-of-war. In addition to this, I should propose that a Coal Depôt should be established at *Crookhaven*, a harbour from which the American mail packets are now intercepted, expediting telegraphic news from America by five hours' gain over the old system from Queenstown. As in time of war, Her Majesty's ships must *cruise* off the extreme southwest of the coast of Ireland, a Coal Depôt at Crookhaven would be most desirable to enable the cruisers guarding our passing commerce to run in and coal, without losing much time or being for long absent from their cruising ground. I have made these few remarks as applicable to the advancement of the object I wish to attain, namely, putting the coast of Ireland in a proper state of defence, and advancing the interests of the United Kingdom by placing a naval station and dockyard in its proper place, and one which nature and reason has pointed out as such, and which I feel only requires to be pointed out to be appreciated and taken up by any Ministers of the Crown who have the best interests of this country at heart. In reference to my remarks respecting the intended dock at Queenstown, I may observe that I believe the dock is intended for cleaning the bottoms of the ironclads in Her Majesty's navy, which can only remain three or four months at sea at a time, and must then be docked for the purpose above named. It is therefore obvious that if this dock is intended for this purpose, and to accommodate ships in that part of the

kingdom by obviating the necessity of having to return to the English ports for that purpose, it is playing on the credulity of the public to undertake a work which is to be finished in 30 years' time, when in all probability ironclads will only be a matter of history; or at all events the ingenuity of man will by that time have discovered some means by which iron ships may remain afloat as long as our wooden ones have hitherto done without damage to their efficiency and motive powers.

I will now proceed with my statement respecting the Fortifications in Bantry Bay, the subject of the lengthened statements transmitted by me last year, 1864. Being satisfied that the best and quickest way of getting these Fortifications put in order and enlarged according to the recommendation of the Defence Commission, and of the General Commanding the Forces, Sir George Brown, which I had for three years vainly endeavoured to obtain from Lord Palmerston, would be first to get a Convict Depôt established on the Island, I wrote to Lord Wodehouse through some of the prison authorities, requesting him to consider my proposal offering the Government a selected location for that purpose. This letter was not presented to the Lord Lieutenant for some weeks, owing to the indisposition at the time of the bearer. To this letter I received a courteous reply from Lord Wodehouse, followed by an official answer, which I now give:—

DUBLIN CASTLE; *Feb. 11th, 1865.*

MY LORD,

I am directed by the Lord Lieutenant to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's letter, of the 16th of December last, relative to the establishment of a Convict Depôt at Bere Island, and I am to acquaint you in reply that the works at Spike Island and the Forts at the mouth of Queenstown harbour, and also the works now contemplated by the Lords of the Admiralty will render it

impossible to remove the depôt of prisoners from Spike Island for some years to come.

I have the honor to be,

&c., &c., &c.,

THOS. LARCOM.

Lord C. Clinton;
Biaritz.

As my application for and proposal of a Convict Establishment at Bere Island was only made to smooth the way for, and facilitate the carrying out of the proposed fortifications by means of cheap labour, and not having, as seen above, succeeded in these efforts, I determined again to appeal to the Executive, and endeavour, if possible, to obtain for the country the execution of these most important and national defence works, and this time from the Lord Lieutenant what I had before in vain demanded of the Prime Minister. I therefore wrote to Lord Wodehouse as follows:—

BIARITZ; *Feb. 20th, 1865.*

MY LORD,

I have to thank you for the receipt of your obliging letter of the 10th inst., and in explanation of that part of my letter in which I stated my belief that the works at Queenstown would soon cease to afford adequate employment for the convicts stationed there, I wish to name to your lordship that my statement was founded upon information which I had received to that effect from persons in whom I trusted for accurate information, but which, from your letter, I now find was not correct. Had it been otherwise, I feel assured that, with your lordship's anxious desire for the safety and welfare of the United Kingdom under your rule, you would have complied with my application, and ordered the removal of a portion of the convicts to a locality where their labour is so much wanted. Here I must state to your

lordship my conviction, that although no particular object for the removal of these convicts to Berehaven was named in my letter, you did not for one moment entertain the idea that it was asked for the satisfaction of having convicts located on my property. My object was very different. I asked it, as the first advisable movement to be made in order to prepare by cheap labour for the execution of works in Bantry Bay, to which I have already called the attention of Government. I refer to the repairs and extensions of the fortifications on that vulnerable and important portion of the Irish coasts, which works were some four years ago recommended for execution by the Defence Commissioners and General Commanding the Forces, Sir George Brown. Now I do not in any way pretend to an entirely disinterested position in these matters. I freely acknowledge that these works and others which must eventually follow them, would greatly enhance the value of my property; but, my lord, as owner of that property, and taking the greatest interest in that locality and its people, I feel that I should not be doing my duty either to myself or them, were I, like many other Irish proprietors, to remain an idle looker-on, on the large sums of money expended from the public purse on works in other parts of the empire, which can never bring a hundredth part of the advantages in return for the outlay, which might be obtained from the works whose claims on your lordship's and the Government's consideration I now advocate. Last autumn the Duke of Somerset, the Secretary at War, and several other members of the Admiralty Board visited Queenstown and Berehaven harbours, in order to satisfy themselves of the relative merits of each for the contemplated establishment of a naval dockyard in Ireland. On that occasion I pointed out to the Duke the vast superiority of Berehaven over its rival harbour. In his reply, his Grace in no way denied my assertions, and I know as a fact that all experienced navy men are perfectly aware of and acknowledge that superiority.

I took the liberty on that occasion to send the Duke the opinion of the Duke of Wellington fifty years ago, which was published in some of the Irish papers, with other remarks on that locality, a few years back. I now enclose the same paper for your lordship's perusal, if you would like to see it, and as I requested of the Duke, I will now also request of you to return me the paragraph when you have done with it, as it is the only copy I have of it. The opinion given by the Duke at that time equally applies to the present, indeed with more force, on account of the introduction of steam power into the fleets of all nations. I am not, however, now advocating the establishment of a naval dockyard and station at Berehaven, the time *must* come when *necessity* will create what false economy has hitherto prevented. My present subject is, the advocacy of the speedy commencement of the works recommended by the Defence Commissioners for securing the safety of the south-western coast of the kingdom. Your lordship will I know read with interest the Duke of Wellington's opinion on this subject in reference to Bantry Bay; indeed what man in the United Kingdom is to be found who would disregard advice emanating from a source never disputed, indeed unimpeachable? But even this highest of authorities, is not the only one I can quote in this case. I venture to state and to challenge contradiction that there is not a naval or military authority in the whole kingdom who is in the slightest degree acquainted with the natural capabilities, both for offence and defence, of this magnificent harbour, and the peculiar position of Bantry Bay as regards the west of the kingdom, as a locality the most accessible to an enemy in its present unprotected and neglected state, and the very great advantages possessed by it, for securing safety to the country, both internally and externally, in case of any hostile invasion on the Irish coasts, or war with either America or France, who would not come forward and corroborate every word that I am now asserting to your

lordship. May I ask you, as a favor, to see Sir George Brown on this subject? When I before applied to the Government for the execution of these works, I did not do so without first obtaining Sir George's sanction and approval; and, about a year ago, on again communicating with him on the subject, I found him as strong as ever advocating the execution of these works of defence, and had his gratuitous sanction to make use of his opinions on this matter. Delay, my lord, in such national objects and requirements is, believe me, dangerous and unwise. The people of Ireland, with whom I do not include the gentry, are, especially in the western and south-western districts hostile to the English rule; and I have it from the best authority—a fact better known, no doubt, to your lordship than myself—that the great mass of the people in those districts are awaiting, with no good will towards England, the termination of the war between the Northern and Southern States of the Union, and the hoped-for rupture between the Northern States and ourselves; and no man, who has calmly watched the course of events of late, will deny our relation with those States looks less happy now than for years past—indeed, any day we may be drawn into a war with them. Whenever this comes, all agree that that portion of the coast to which I refer, will be the one on which their eyes will be fixed, as the nearest, the most vulnerable, and as a locality whose people are bound up with them in the common ties of thought and action: the one actuated by the thirst of vengeance for former supposed wrongs, the other from an innate hatred of English rule. I am no Irish agitator, but I cannot be blind to the marked difference made in the appropriation of Government money in public works between the two countries. Many millions are voted for fortifications, and of these millions only a few thousands have been allowed for Irish purposes; and what little has been doled out to her has all gone to the City of Cork and Queenstown Harbours. I believe

the insignificant sum of £7000 was four or five years ago inserted in the estimates for the fortifications in Bantry Bay. Let me beg of your lordship to urge upon the Government the immediate appropriation of this mere drop in the ocean for the purposes for which it was then intended, but *not* voted, having been cut out of the estimates. The rule of all Governments hitherto has been to help England first, even to luxuries, and when she is satisfied, the offal is offered to the sister country. Let me beg of you to insist upon this rule (I cannot as an Irish proprietor designate it as a golden one) being at last broken through; and do not, my lord, allow any more precious time to be lost, and whilst there is yet time to avert danger and obtain security at a trifling cost to the public purse, let me urge upon you to insist upon no further delay or postponement of these works, or the time may come when millions will be required to effect that for which a few thousands would now suffice. Protecting Cork is not ensuring the safety of other portions of the coast; even the making of railways to bring that city and its military garrisons into communication with the unprotected and vulnerable, but equally important, harbours of the south-west, has received no Government encouragement, and they are making but slow progress towards the West; the work of private enterprise. The public works in the south of Ireland may be compared to the nature of the hare, which thinks it has secured safety by covering its head. So it is with these works; Cork certainly is being slowly made safe from assault, but the rest of the body corporate is left exposed; and be assured, my lord, that as the fox is not very particular what part of the hare he seizes on as long as he possesses himself of his victim, so it will be with our friends in America, the disloyal off-shoots of the Emerald Isle; they will not go to protected Cork, but will at once direct their course and hopes to the nearest and most inviting and unprotected position of our coasts, and that position is *Bantry Bay*, which, as it is now situated, is, as

Sir George Brown very justly and aptly designated it, "a position inviting an enemy to enter and take possession." As no portion of the convicts can be spared from Spike Island, I can assure your lordship that cheap labour can be procured on the lands round Bantry Bay, and I may add that the presence of English inspectors and foremen may be most beneficial in engendering a more loyal and contented spirit in that hitherto neglected district. Before closing this, I may mention to your lordship that after many years of anxiety and labour on my part, the telegraph has at last been laid down to Crookhaven, where we now obtain the American news many hours earlier than formerly procured "*Via Queenstown.*" Defence works were included in the report of the Commissioners for Crookhaven as well as Berehaven, and now that the American news is intercepted from that harbour, it will call the attention of Americans or others hostilely inclined towards England to that locality; and this, whilst it gives great facilities of communication to the Government, will also create a greater necessity for securing the safety of the whole of that portion of the Irish coast. I will close by asking you, my lord, to pardon this very long letter. I must plead as my excuse the urgency of the case, and the great national objects which it embraces. Hoping that you will not allow this subject to be laid aside any longer, and that you will kindly consult with Sir George Brown on the matter in question.

I remain, my Lord,

Very faithfully and truly yours,

CHARLES P. CLINTON.

His Excellency
the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

To this appeal, I received a few lines from Lord Wodehouse in a courteous tone, but not being actually official I do not give the words. His lordship stated, that he was

not competent to express an opinion on a question which the military and naval authorities must determine, and which, as they had so recently visited Bantry Bay, they had full means of doing. These few words have again, for another year, burked this important question. I have only to add that Sir George Brown was *not* consulted; so we may reasonably assume that he, the General commanding the forces in Ireland is not ranked under the head of "Military Authorities." The fact is, that his opinions are well known, and it would be very inconvenient to consult him again now upon the eve of a general election. The military authorities therefore are I presume two noble lords, one of no very mature age, and both civilians, who, though they may be admirably adapted for *political*, can know little or nothing of military organizations; but whoever may be the officials coming under "Whig designation" of military authorities, matters little to Ireland, for the present government appear to be determined to get rid of her, and her importunities. It may be that Ireland is ranked by them amongst our Colonies, which it is now the fashion to say, add nothing to the coffers of the Revenue, and if they like to leave the mother country, they can go, and welcome. We may reasonably suppose that this is the case from the conduct of Government, and their suicidal policy regarding Ireland, as will be shown in the following letter of Sir George Brown which I have lately received, and to which I particularly call the attention of those members of the Lords and Commons, to whom I present this statement. Sir George Brown has kindly allowed me to make use of his valuable letter, and I trust that those into whose hands I sincerely hope the reins of Government may soon be placed, will, supported by the almost universal suffrages of the Country, at once reverse the folly of past years, and by a kind and liberal spirit towards the sister Isle, disarm disloyalty and discontent, and protect her by naval stations and efficient fortifications against the designs of foreign aggressors. I conclude this

statement by quoting the following letter from Sir George Brown:—

ROYAL HOSPITAL,
DUBLIN, *Feb.* 27, 1865.

MY DEAR LORD CHARLES,

I have received your letter of the 20th, and beg to assure your lordship in reply, that I have in no respect altered the very strong opinions I entertain, and have expressed in my reports in regard to the importance of the defensive works in Bantry Bay, and other points on the southern and western coasts of this Country. Should Lord Wodehouse come on the subject with me, I shall assuredly not fail to urge on him the importance of maintaining these defences, as I have invariably done when the subject has been brought under discussion by those in authority, but I have not the slightest hope or expectation that my opinion will have any weight, or in any means influence the conduct and proceedings of the Government which seems resolved to repudiate the necessity of all other defensive works, but those of Cork Harbour. For the works there, as your lordship is aware they have taken a small grant, which they are meting out sparingly in the repairs and enlargement of Carlisle and Camden forts, at the mouth of the harbour, the works at which are going on languidly by means of convict labour. I observe also that they propose to restore the dockyard establishment there on a small scale, but so far from constructing new works of defence, on other parts of the coast, or of placing those in existence in a creditable state of repair, they are dismantling those they have, and withdrawing the armament from others, as if this was a country replete with strong internal military positions, or that the existing state of things was to be interminable, or that we were never again to have war. In the mean time all the works in Bantry Bay are falling more and more into a state of dilapidation, and of course every succeeding win-

ter only adds to the expense that must be incurred, should it be determined to place them in a state of defence. As already stated, I myself attach the highest importance to Bantry Bay as a naval station, and believe it to be the best anchorage in Ireland for ships of war. I am of opinion too, that the works constructed for its defence in the beginning of the century were constructed on well considered plans, and it seems to me like a national reproach that they should be prematurely allowed to fall into a state of ruin. In these peaceful times however, other considerations occupy the minds of men to the exclusion of what may be required hereafter, and I accordingly have no hope that any thing that your lordship can urge, or that I can say on this important subject will have any weight with the financial authorities of the country.

I remain, my dear Lord,

Very faithfully yours,

GEORGE BROWN.

Lord C. Clinton.

It will be seen by the foregoing letter of Sir G. Brown, which was received on the same day with that of the Lord Lieutenant, in which he stated that the military authorities were the proper judges in such matters, that I am borne out in my assumption that the Commander of the Forces and other military officers of high rank in Ireland do not come under the designation of military authorities, in the eyes of the present and then rulers of that country, and consequently that any advice or opinion given by them was not worthy of consideration. I am also aware that the present distinguished General and Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hugh Rose, has strongly recommended the adoption of the report of the Defence Commission, which was, as related in these pages, so energetically supported by Sir G. Brown; with what success, and whether he also is placed, in Whig parlance,

out of the pale of recognized military authorities, will be seen by reading Lord Hartington's answer to General Dunne in the debate on the Army Estimates.

I have been lately informed, on reliable authority, that Sir G. Brown advised, nearly a year before he relinquished his command, that all the regiments then in Ireland should be withdrawn and others sent in their place, to avoid any chances of contamination from long intercourse with the disaffected in that country; and that he laid particular stress on the necessity for keeping the troops from the public houses, the known resorts of the disaffected. That this wise precautionary advice was not followed, subsequent facts will testify; and in the latter case it is now universally known and acknowledged that the public houses were the localities in every instance chosen for corrupting the soldiery and drawing them off from their rightful allegiance to their Sovereign.

With these facts before them, carried over a period of five years, and showing the unchanged and unchangeable determination of Government during that time neither to listen to warnings nor advice of the competent military authorities, nor in the slightest degree to meet the wishes or just demands of the Irish nation for any reciprocity of feeling or fair and equal participation with England in the recognized assistance of the State; the unprejudiced portion of the English people—and I more especially address myself to the loyal Conservative party—will acknowledge that if disaffection or discontent in a nation is, under any circumstances or in any degree, to be palliated, excused, or accounted for, it ought to be in the Irish people at the present time, who have for so many years been deceived by Whig promises, made only to be broken; and who have had the misfortune of being ruled over by a party who have indirectly encouraged and nurtured disaffection, by a recognized system of inaction, in order to serve their own political ends; though, as the foregoing pages will show,

they were unmistakably and repeatedly forewarned, and therefore ought now to have been thoroughly prepared and forearmed against any emergency.

The following appeared in the "*Dublin Evening Mail*" in December, 1859. As this paragraph has been several times mentioned in this statement, I here insert it:—

THE DEFENCE OF IRELAND.

In the Irish correspondence of the Duke of Wellington during the period in which he held the office of Chief Secretary—a valuable addition to his military despatches just published by Murray—will be found a most interesting paper on the defence of Ireland, which cannot fail to have great weight with the Commissioners now travelling through the country to report on that very subject. Whatever that report may eventually recommend we should be ready, notwithstanding the change of civil and military matters in the last half century, to back the Duke's, or as he then was, Sir Arthur Wellesley's scheme, against any that Burgoyne, Jones, and Co., may think fit to propose.

Sir Arthur had been but a few weeks at Dublin Castle when, in May, 1807, he forwarded to London his view of the danger Ireland was exposed to, and of the means that should be adopted for its protection. It will be seen from an extract which we shall give presently, that his plan consisted of two suggestions—namely, that there should be fortified places in each province, and in addition, a naval station in Bantry Bay. At *that* period Sir Arthur considered Ireland, in a military point of view, so entirely as a hostile country, "that in case it should be attacked by a body of French sufficiently large to give employment to a large proportion of the regular troops, the people in all parts would rise in rebellion, and that Ireland would then ultimately have to depend for its defence upon the resources of men and military equipments it should receive from Great Britain." He thought that the hostility of the people would be most active, and that "there was not one point throughout the whole country on which, as a military man, he could rest with security; that there was no secure depôt of provisions; no military station or place in the country which the rebels could not take possession of when

under the direction of French officers." To meet this contingency Sir Arthur recommended the construction of fortified places not liable to be carried by a *coup de main*, or to be reduced except by the adoption of the regular and protracted operations of a siege. The position of these is not indicated further than that there should be one for each province, Ulster, Munster and Connaught, and two for Leinster. These places, thus fortified, would serve as refuges and rallying points for the loyal ; would give time to Government to sustain the war by reinforcements from England, and as military *points d'appui* for the King's army in the field against the enemy. This is at least a simple and intelligible plan of resistance to an invading enemy, and if likely to be effectual at a period of disaffection, then perhaps general, but certainly not now characteristic of the whole, or we would fain hope any considerable portion of the population, it would, of course, be still more effectual when actively assisted. The following is the passage from Sir Arthur's letters, to which we have alluded above :—

"The first point to which I will draw your attention, is the general military system adopted in Ireland, with a view to its defects. All those who have considered this subject appear to agree in the following propositions, although they differ in opinion upon many questions of detail. That Ireland is assailable by the enemy on all parts of its southern, its western, and its northern coast ; that in case it should be attacked by a body of the enemy sufficiently large to give employment to a large proportion of the regular troops, the people in all parts of the country would rise in rebellion ; that Ireland must ultimately depend for its defences upon the resources of men and military equipments which it should receive from Great Britain. There appears only one remedy for the evils stated in the first proposition. A system of fortification upon the coasts of Ireland, such as that which has been carried into execution on the coasts of Kent and Sussex would not answer, for many obvious reasons, even if the country could bear its expense, and, therefore, the best measure would be to establish a naval station in Bantry Bay. By the adoption of this measure you would at all times have a fleet upon your most vulnerable point, and you would give to the coasts of this country the only general defence which they are capable of receiving. I believe, also, a naval establishment at Bantry Bay would answer for many other general purposes."

It is not very probable that the Duke made any military error in suggesting, fifty years ago, as a part of the defences of Ireland, the formation of this naval station ; and we should suppose, as ships of war are but floating batteries, only more formidable by being moved by steam instead of by sails, that the weight of his opinion ought to be quite as great now as at that time.

It is possible that the Duke may not even have been fully aware of

the extraordinary natural qualifications of Bantry Bay and its harbours for such a naval station as he proposed in 1807. At the present day there are not two opinions upon Berehaven's preeminence as the finest natural harbour in the United Kingdom for ships of war—for a large fleet—besides the remarkable advantage that it possesses in its geographical position; and there is also at the upper end of Bantry Bay, a station inside of Whiddy Island "where a fleet might anchor." These are the words of Captain George Evans, R.N., in his evidence before the commissioners for inquiring into the ports suitable for an Irish Transatlantic Packet Station. For that purpose other harbours might be preferred to Berehaven, but for men-of-war it was considered, by every naval officer who gave evidence, beyond comparison with any other. Captain Evans said, "there is no harbour anywhere in Ireland equal to it; it has two entrances; when difficulties were thrown in the way of a railway to Berehaven, I proposed that the packets should run up to Bantry, inside of Whiddy Island, where a fleet might anchor. When you get into Bantry Bay there is not a rock all the way up to Whiddy Island anchorage." On this it may be mentioned that, "on the 30th December, 1796, two French 74 gun ships, and two frigates, came to anchor opposite Whiddy Island, on the north side, close to the mainland. It is so stated in a journal, kept during the stay of the French fleet in Bantry Bay, published at Cork at that period, and that, from the windows of Bantry House, all that was doing on board could be distinctly seen." In the report of the Transatlantic Commission there is an interesting letter from the late Mr. Puxley, of Dunboy Castle, a gentleman of large fortune in that quarter; it is addressed to Admiral Gordon, "who fortunately," Mr. Puxley says, "had had an opportunity of judging of Berehaven from experience."

"I take it for granted that you do not agree with friend Bright, and the other members of the Peace Congress, that we are never to have war again (written in 1851), and if we have one with France, Ireland would assuredly be the first point of attack. Numerically, the greatest proportion of the population of Ireland are adverse to the government of Great Britain, and that feeling will not be lessened by late occurrences. Where could there be a more favourable spot to establish themselves in than Berehaven harbour? Steam navigation has so done away with all that uncertainty occasioned by a shift of wind or weather affecting sailing vessels, that a powerful fleet of steamers, with a well-appointed army on board, might run over and find themselves safe there, even before it was known to the Government they had left France; and you know how easily (Admiral Gordon had

commanded the Channel squadron in Berehaven), and *in how short a time, they could put it into such a state of defence as to resist almost any force that could be brought against them* (unless we should anticipate them, as suggested by the Duke of Wellington). It is little known how narrow an escape we had in 1796, when the French made the attempt to land an army there. The Frenchmen mistook the Dursey Head for the Mizen, and, with the wind at south-east, they ran down so far to leeward that it took them three days to beat up as far as the eastern point of Bere Island, between which and the southern shore of Bantry Bay, they were obliged to come to anchor. The gale increased so, that they veered out second cables to each anchor, and after all they were obliged to slip them and go to sea, and that was the reason why the body of the fleet, when returned to the mouth of the bay, made signals to the few ships that got up to Bantry to join them, as they had no cables with which to come to anchor again. With the wind at south-east, as it was at the time, if I had been on board one of their ships, I could have taken the whole fleet through the narrow entrance, and placed them in safety in Berehaven harbour on the first of those three days, if I had been so inclined. In the evening of a winter's day, in the year 1802, during the short peace, I happened to be shooting on the cliffs, near the western entrance, when I saw six heavy ships firing signal guns off the Mizen Head, and I sent a yacht out to pilot them in. They proved to be a squadron of six three-deckers detached from the Channel fleet, under the command of Sir Andrew Mitchell.

“The yacht fortunately reached them just as they had determined to stand off the land for the night, as the gale was increasing from the south-east, and the crew brought them in through the narrow entrance, and they were soon at anchor. It saved them a night's encounter with perhaps the heaviest storm that had been witnessed for that year. I hope the government will not rue their economy in the defences of both countries. For the accommodation of a large number of vessels, there is nothing on the coast of England or Ireland to be put in comparison with Berehaven. The masts might be blown out of a vessel in Berehaven before the anchor would stir.”

The circumstances of the present time surely confirm the prescient sagacity of the Duke, his unerring sense, and instinct of military genius, not only of what should be done, but how it should be done. Here, at least, is a scheme of defence proposed by an Irish military authority second to none, and plainly not hard to be carried into execution. Let it be insisted upon if no other, or no other practicable one within a reasonable space, be propounded by the Commission of Defence.

