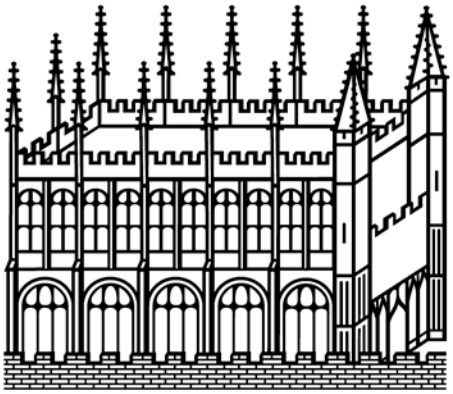

PARA BELLUM.

BRIEF SUGGESTIONS

ON THE SUBJECT OF

WAR AND INVASION;

BEING PROPOSALS FOR RAISING A NATIONAL FORCE ON THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE, AFTER THE EXAMPLE OF THE UNITED STATES, AS THE ONLY MEANS OF EFFECTUALLY SECURING THE COUNTRY AGAINST ALL HOSTILE CONTINGENCIES.

"When a strong man *armed* keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace."
LUKE xi. 21.

"Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself as a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks."—MILTON.

"UT VIVAS, VIGILA."

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PREFACE.

By nothing has the present century—the latter half of it especially—been more emphatically characterised than by a growing desire for peace. It is a sign of the times, and one of the happiest augury. And as desire is the grand master of the mind, and what we wish we are ever ready in the same proportion to believe, the result of this growing desire for peace has been a growing persuasion that peace would be maintained. So that, to listen to the rapt utterances of some men—men of sense too as well as feeling—one might almost imagine, that they thought the world had already entered on its final stage, and the millennial age been fairly inaugurated.

> "And now no longer from its brazen portals,
> The blast of War's great organ shakes the skies;
> But sweet as seraph songs of the Immortals,
> The holy melodies of love arise."

But, while we, in our still corner of the world—*toto orbe divisus*—have been dreaming of peace, the nations of the Continent have been making ready for war. And now, after sundry ineffectual shakings, our slumbers have been at length rudely broken by cries of fear,—rumours of war and invasion—

> "The noise of battle hurtles in the air."

And our eyes being now opened, we perceive that we have been asleep; a discovery which, as is usual in such cases, has been succeeded by others, calculated to throw light upon our true state, in relation to things without us *as they*

are, and not as we had been dreaming that they were. In short, we begin

"To see ourselves as others see us."

And the effect has been to produce a degree of very painful and most undignified excitement, but which,—as good is the usual "outcome" of evil, and

"Wholesome berries thrive and ripen best
Neighboured by fruits of baser quality,"

—promises to lead, ere long, to some important changes of a social character, which, though they may be attended with their drawbacks and disadvantages, just at first, will, unless I am much mistaken, lay the foundation of a new —a higher and happier—order of things.

* * * * * *

I am no writer, as the reader may well suppose, when I assure him, that I have never even written a letter to the *Times* newspaper, complaining, as a private individual, of a public grievance. But I feel too strongly on the subject now agitating the public mind—that of "our national defences," as it is called—to remain altogether silent.

An opportunity, I conceive, is now afforded us, which it behoves us to improve; an opening, a way of escape, lies before us out of our present difficulties—that Cretan maze in which we have been so long bewildered, now struggling with mad desperation, and now sitting down with folded arms in dumb despair.

Like a party of tired travellers, we have arrived at a point on our road where two ways meet—the one going downwards and leading back into the old dark way, and the other tending upwards to the light; and I rejoice, with my whole heart, to think that there is every prospect of our choosing the latter, and so getting right at last. Only we must have patience:—

"To climb high hills requires slow pace at first."

The Defensive Organization of the People is a measure I regard with the deepest interest, as it seems to me that it cannot but be attended with the happiest consequences, immediate and remote. I greet it as an earnest of more than "peace upon earth." I see in it not only the amity of nations, but the reconciliation of classes; a step towards the attainment of that end, to which, as it has been well said, "all history points" as the true *ultimatum* of Humanity—"the realization of the unity of man." I quote the words of the First Gentleman of the land, used in reference to last year's Great Wonder-work.

Not only *must* we do something, but we must do one of two things: we must either increase our national armaments, or place arms in the hands of the people, and teach them the use of them, which can only be done by organization,—an organization co-extensive with the population. Now our object is—what? to attack others, or to protect ourselves?

The latter, manifestly, and the latter only. Can we then halt between these two alternatives? Can we stand in doubt for a moment which to choose?

Useless as a national or volunteer force would be for all offensive operations, for purposes of internal defence, as I trust to show, it is precisely the force we want, and would be more effective than all the standing armaments, maritime and military, in the world; while it would not only be free from their allowed and inseparable evils, but would be fruitful in results, as I also trust to show, of such signal benefit to the community, that we ought to congratulate ourselves on the opportunity which the present war-panic affords, of so setting our house in order, and remodelling the old Gothic pile.

* * * * *

With respect to the principle of a national organization for defensive purposes, I am clear, in my own mind, that it should be purely voluntary.

"Hands off, Gentlemen," is our modern motto; and as it is the motto of loyal men and freemen, I think

it ought to be respected. As, however, we may need to be reminded that "There is a tide in the affairs of men," and that "We must take the current when it serves," I am no less strongly of opinion, that Government should charge itself with the responsibility of advising and supervising the national movement, and so lend a hand, and help us to shove off and get under way.

We want no compulsion; and it would be an affront to the country in its present forward temper to offer to employ it. We know our duty, and are fully prepared to act the generous and patriotic part; and what we ask of our rulers—and more we do not care to receive, it would be cumbering us with aid—is impulse and direction; that what we do may be well done, simultaneously and at once, "shoulder to shoulder," in soldier's phrase.

My proposition, then,—to bring my Preface to a close, is briefly this,—that we resolve ourselves, forthwith, as a nation, into an Armed Commission of the Peace, for the protection of our hearths and homes, and as a sign of fraternity to the nations, with the sanction of her Majesty's Ministers, and under the auspices of her Majesty herself. And so I say and pray devoutly,

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

Feb. 12.

The following pages had been written, and were all but ready for the press, when the announcement of the Colonial Secretary, in his speech at the opening of Parliament, to the effect that the Government intended bringing in a Bill for the re-establishment of the Militia, on a modified plan, gave me pause. For it seemed to me at first that, under these circumstances, it became me, as a humble individual, to retire from the field. How I have been since led to think otherwise I am not sure that I could very well explain, even were I so disposed. Happily, a writer is not required to turn himself inside out, or "wear his heart upon his sleeve," but rather the contrary.

All I will venture to say is, that had I been aware of

the intentions of Government on the subject, I should either have abstained from writing about it at all, or have adopted a different style,—more deferential and less absolute.

But though it appears that the reorganization of the Militia is about to be proposed to Parliament, it does not appear whether it is to be upon the voluntary plan here recommended, or upon the old compulsory principle. Should it be upon the former, the publication of what I have written will do no harm; while, should it be upon the latter, it may serve for a protest. For—I say it advisedly—I cannot well conceive anything more signally impolitic than to employ force in such a case, "when the spirit of the nation is so sprightly up," to quote the words of John Milton, in his "Defence of the English People," "as that it has not only wherewith to guard well its own safety, *but to spare;*" so that, as in the case of the Israelites and their offerings for the Tabernacle, restraint would seem rather to be called for than coercion.

It is always rash, as we know, to spur a willing horse, and may chance to prove dangerous to its rider.

Feb. 17.

I have no words to express the feelings of surprise and disappointment with which I have just read the speech delivered in the Commons' House of Parliament by the noble Lord at the head of her Majesty's Government, in proposing his new Conscription Bill, for I can characterize it by no milder term.

I am a poor student, and

> "Little do I know of this great world,
> More than pertains to feats of—"

literature—battles of books. I can but suppose, therefore, that, from viewing my subject too exclusively through the medium of some bookish theory, or metaphysical hallucination, I had formed an altogether false conception of the English character, *imputing* to it quali-

ties which were not *inherent* — a spirit, a loyalty and patriotism, a generosity and greatness of soul, now only to be met with in books and traditions of the past.

It must be so, or else this Bill is a strange solecism, framed in ignorance by those who, of all men living, ought best to know the spirit of the age, especially as manifested in the present temper of the English people. For what greater wrong—what greater indignity—what more gratuitous act of tyranny—more foolish and perverse, can be conceived, than to have recourse to coercion where none was needed?

Who would see his country served by reluctant conscripts, the bond-slaves of the law—when thousands, tens and hundreds of thousands, were pressing forwards to tender her their services, freely, cheerfully, in singleness of heart, and only waiting for leave to arm,—to seize the sword, shoulder the musket, or take in hand that now long-neglected, but once much respected and truly national weapon,—the old English pike.

I had looked to see a national army of full 2,000,000 gallant volunteers of all ages, veterans and youngsters, such as our cousins—

> "Those roaring boys,
> On t'other side the Atlantic,—"

have long possessed. And what is the sorry vision which in its stead now rises to my view—a poor 80,000 grudging mercenaries, pricked down in their own despite, between the ages of 20 and 23.

Surely this will never do. It is not what we want. The end proposed will not be answered by it. The country could not be defended by such a force,—so small, and whimsically constituted.

We want security,—protection,—not for our corn and cattle, but for our hearths and homes, our wives and children, our faith and principles, our sacred cause. There are rocks ahead. We are in danger, and we feel it—though we may not all understand aright its nature, or appreciate its extent.

Our lives and liberties, our very being as a nation, are imperilled, and by an enemy more formidable far than France,—though I do not say we have nothing to fear from that quarter; but it is not our only or chief danger. There is another which, though remoter, haply, both in time and space, is infinitely greater, arising from a power which has been growing slowly but surely now for centuries, advancing silently and stealthily, and strengthening itself at every step—a power based on *a principle* which is our *true* natural enemy.

Away with the fond delusion that the French, or the people of any nation, are our "natural enemies!" Nowhere is man the enemy of man. Our enemies are principles; all evil principles, but most chiefly, in these our days, the principle of despotism, incarnate and fanatical for wrong, like the Church of Rome in former ages. And there is *a man* in whom this principle now lives embodied—a mortal man yet deified—not feared alone, but reverenced—by millions, and whom crowned heads bow to and are forward to obey.

The course of despotism, as its source, is "fated." It has a race to run—a pre-ordained career; it goes on gathering strength, till it attains, at length, a certain size, and then it bursts, like some huge imposthume, or rather, some vast pent-up reservoir,—an impounded sea, carrying destruction far and wide—a deluge of black waters.

This is our real danger; and unless we are prepared to meet it, and beat it back from our own shores, the day will come when we shall be all submerged and swept away together. And that we may be prepared, the nation must be armed—mere armaments are not enough. Every man should have his weapon, with the will and skill to use it.

Thus must we all mount guard upon the walls of our new rising city, with its Temple—an implement of peace in one hand, and in the other a weapon of defence. For the times are "troublous."

We make provision for our own children, and shall we make none for our country's children? Nay, are they not

the same? Shall we lay up wealth, and hand it down to our posterity, and not insure it? Besides, how do we know but what "the deluge" may come in our own days, as it did in his, the inventor of that same selfish proverb.

But I have dropped my thread. It was not my purpose to point out the inadequacy of this new Bill, call it by what name we will; what I wished was to direct attention to its *superserviceableness*. Its authors, it is clear, have no faith in the sentiment—the heroism and devotion of the country. Strongly as these have been expressed, and unambiguously, they question their sincerity; they think them hollow, superficial, not to be relied on—"words, words, words."

They may be right. They ought to be, assuredly, with their experience—their opportunities and means of knowledge. The noble Lord especially, whose "wee thing," I suppose, this Bill may be considered, has he not been a statesman, and had his finger on the nation's pulse from his youth up—can he then be in error?

I see the chances are against me. But while I *think* I must be wrong, I somehow *feel* I am not. Before I can believe my country "haggard," I must be made to see it, as Othello says,—I must have proof, and on the proof, I know what I would do. The strongest instinct of our common nature, if not perhaps the highest, would instruct me. Not rats alone forsake a falling house or foundering vessel;—and, Heaven be praised—

"There is a world elsewhere."

And what is more, *an England*—a younger land, where Shakespeare's tongue is spoken—

"The faith and morals held that Milton held."

This I say presumptively; supposing the authors of this new Bill to be in the right, which, nevertheless, however I may in modesty be bound to, I cannot, think. And should they be in error, I see a way in which it may be proved. The Bill is not yet law, and cannot be for some

weeks yet, and if in the meantime we do our duty, as good subjects, it never will be. It is not too late; England may yet rise; we may come forward, young and old, masters and men, and of our own free will do, and in over-measure, what our distrustful rulers would now compel us to. And wherefore should we not? Is the reign of force,

"The blind wild beast of force,"

to last for ever? Shall we never do what we approve as right, because we feel it a delight?—from love and not in fear?—as creatures rational, with a free moral nature, divinely led, and not as mere machines, or brutes?

Let us, then, assert for once our dignity; it is high time, and we could not have a fairer opportunity; and having made a beginning, we shall then go on, and others will soon follow where we lead, and thus the better age will be inaugurated. Let us speak out with emphasis, and not only speak, but act out, *act ourselves out*,—that is the phase,—and so "confound their politics."

This is not treason; quite the contrary. It is the Gospel principle *versus* the law, which demands of us not less, but more—the allegiance of the heart, and not the mere obedience of the will. No demagogue am I. I am a loyal subject; I love my country and respect her laws, and would oppose the traitor, as I would the tyrant, to the death. And it is to all for which I love my country and respect her laws—it is to that imperial heart, of which, in the person of the Sovereign, I recognise the visible breathing symbol—

"That soul of state,
Which hath an operation more divine
Than our mere chroniclers dare meddle with—"

that free human nature of which we all partake, and which, as an old "judicious" writer very wisely says, "being much more delighted to be led than driven, doth ofttimes stubbornly resist authority, when to suggestion it easily

yieldeth,"—that I now appeal. I say not, *disobey the law;* but what I say is—*anticipate the law.* Let us not wait to be commanded, but command ourselves;—serve one another cheerfully in love, and so be free from all men—our own masters.

If in the heart of any reader my words awake an echo, let him assist me by his voice and vote. There are hearts, I know, that will respond to them, and I think their name is *Legion;* therefore, in scorn of censure, and of my own first thoughts, I will put off no longer to commit what I had some time written to the press.

Understanding that Government had it in purpose to propose a measure, having for its object to improve and render more efficient our national defences, I thought myself in a manner bound to withhold my own opinions till the Bill had been brought forwards, and its provisions set forth and submitted to the judgment of the country, conceiving they might be of such a nature as considerably to modify my own previous views, and perhaps render any expression of them superfluous. But now I feel that I am free to speak; yea, rather bound.

Feb. 23.

"Blessed condition!—blessed figs-ends! blessed pudding!"

Where are we now? Is it up or down, backwards or forwards, some whither or no whither that all this tends? And what's to be the end? Who knows?

Is chaos come again? the chaos of no-rule, the headless State? A second Cabinet crisis within the twelvemonth? It looks like it.

In the meantime, however—to gather honey from the lion's carcass—how fine the moral of it all! How full of deep significance, had we but the wit to seize, and grace to profit by it!

In this little incident, the last of its kind, haply, and prelude to some great—but we will not anticipate—we see, as in a mirror, an image of our present state—the true condition of the world, and these our "intricate obstructed

times," with all their evolutions, their involutions, and their revolutions, their contrarieties and contradictions, their preposterosities and their montrosities.

England's Prime Minister—the head of her Majesty's Government cuts its right hand off—the Government's right hand—his own right hand; but, instead of dropping dead, as naturally it ought, it rises up and strikes, and the body itself drops dead, like Sisera at the feet of Jael, pierced through the temples with a nail; and all is in commotion and wide-eyed wonderment—"and so the whirligig of Time brings in his revenges."

And then the ground of quarrel, the occasion of this "great quell." O ye gods! ye gods and little fishes! An affair of words, and—shall we say—honour or humour. *Grammatici certant.* Here 's more instruction for us. For is it not herein a type of all our modern differences? Are they not all resolvable at last into mere verbal altercations, or, like the tunics of an onion, with nothing at the core, utterly vain and void,—from the high mysteries of theologians—regeneration, prevenient grace, and priestly absolution—downwards? We "bite and we devour one another," in scorn of apostolic admonition; and then, when it 's all over, and nothing's left of us for burial but just a little *fluff* and our two tails, it comes out in evidence, on a *post-mortem* examination, that both parties were substantially agreed, and differed simply as to *the wording of the Bill.*

The late noble Premier submits to Parliament a proposition for the establishment of what is called a "regular" Militia, but in his Bill he prefers to call it "local." To this his once right hand, the Foreign Secretary, objects, and very naturally; but his noble friend, though explaining, at the same time, that the difference between them is strictly one of words, refuses all concession on the subject, and it becomes a combat—*regular* and *local*—then and there—after the true Homeric fashion.

> "Ira fuit capitalis, quod virtus in utroque
> Summa fuit."

And after sundry "traverses, alarums and excursions," they disappear "fighting," and the curtain falls; lights are extinguished, and the bewildered public is left in darkness and in doubt.

"Is there not laughter at such work in heaven?"

Or do "the angels,"—or "jackasses" according to Mr. Carlyle's new reading,—rather weep over it?

But that is not the question. The question is, How ought we poor mortals, whose dearest interests it involves, to be affected by all this? How should we act? Now that our Chief Rulers would seem to have fallen out hopelessly among themselves, shall we look idly on, as unconcerned spectators? Shall we not rather —I put it to you, mine honest friends, I put it to you— shall we not rather, like our old friend Renard, in the fable, who interposed his offices between the lion and that other beast, to put an end to their contentions, improve the opportunity and seize our own? We hear of statesmen "making capital," as it is called, out of the current chances of the day; why should not we turn capitalists, for the nonce, after this figurative sort, and make our fortunes?

We want *no* Militia Bill, "local" or "regular," founded on "the 42nd" or "58th of George III." What we want is arms—"arms and the man" to teach us how to use them; not a poor 80,000 discontented conscripts—and very reasonably discontented—all of an age—the age which Falstaff held the prime of life for what he euphuistically calls "a gentleman of the shade,"—"Oh for a "fine young thief of one or two and twenty, or thereabouts,"—but an armed nation, that so we may maintain our own against all comers, and defy the—Enemy, let him assume what shape he may.

But truly it is no jesting matter: at least the question has its tragic side. Our state has long been critical, and it is now more critical than ever. Dangers encompass us—from within and from without, from peace and war; the latter being, for the most part, engendered of

the former. There is a true and also a false peace, which is but another name for apathy. We have carried our "modest stillness," than which, in time of peace, "there's nothing more becomes a man," a thought too far. We are too still; it resembles too much the stillness of the grave, or, at best, of a sick man's chamber. We make no way. We lie becalmed under "a copper sky,"

> "As idle as a painted ship
> Upon a painted ocean."

> "O England! full of sin, but most of *sloth*,
> Spit out thy phlegm, and fill thy breast with glory;
> Thy gentry bleat as if thy native cloth
> Transfused a sheepishness into thy story;
> Not that they all are such, but that the most
> Are gone to grass, and in the pasture lost."

Sloth! sloth! sloth!—the sloth that comes of being born to wealth, and all that men most covet—rank, dignity, position—*without labour*. But far worse than this, the sloth that comes of labouring too industriously for trash—"the meat that perishes"—and then consuming it too greedily—in our own persons, or our children's—

> "Like rats that ravin down their proper bane,"

ignoble money-grubbing! which contracts the soul, and genders to that "spiritual drowsiness" which, like an eating canker, "rots the bones."

This is our present malady, and our most imminent danger. Who does not feel it? And who can feel it—who can feel his country is in danger—and not yearn to save it?

But this no one man can do. It is a work for all—or none, and to accomplish it we must be united. Let us then unite; "the power and corrigible authority is in ourselves;" we only have to will, and all is done. Let us unite, I say,—yea *conspire*, in the true sense—all breathe together as one man. Let us unite our voices and our hands; and, like a crew of jolly mariners, bend

to our oars, and sing the while in chorus, as we row, "Steady, boys, steady," and we shall soon be in deep water, the breath of heaven swelling out our sails, and the vast blue above us and around,—*pontus et aer*. But enough. I have said enough; perhaps too much; certainly much more than, a week ago, I could have believed it possible I should have dared to say; but

"Courage mounteth with occasion."

"Now my work is well begun,
I can fly, or I can run."

BRIEF SUGGESTIONS,

ETC., ETC.

MEN of England! Fellow-subjects! Gentles and Commons! how long, I pray you, how long is this to last? Are we never to sit down in quietness, every man under his own *roof-tree*, none making us afraid? Are we never to be freed from this miserable bondage? For what but bondage is it to live thus in perpetual fear—a prey to the weakest of all passions, like a peevish patient in a quartan-ague? Where is our old renown? Where our dignity as a nation?—our self-respect? It is in vain that we shout in chorus, and protest—

"Britons never will be slaves."

We *are* slaves—"slaves by our own compulsion"—slaves to fear.

This is now the third time, since the accession of her present Gracious Majesty—whom Heaven defend and bless!—that our island,

"The inviolate island of the brave and free,"

has been startled from her propriety by the same pusillanimous cry. And though nothing may ensue this time to justify it, more than on former occasions, the old fable might admonish us, not to presume too far upon our past

impunity, or tempt our star. Of this we may be sure, that were there no danger, there would be no cry. Like individuals, nations have their instincts of alarm, which are truer, and more to be depended upon, than all the inferences of dogmatic reason. Can any one persuade himself, that with despotism erect and dominant, as it now is, and as there is every prospect of its continuing for some time to come, over the whole Continent of Europe, that the cry will not be raised again, and yet again—with reason or without—till haply, being regarded each time less and less, it is raised once too often, and once too late, unless we now bestir ourselves, rub off our rust—*ærugo peculi*—and set to work in right good earnest to place our island in a condition to repel, instead of inviting, the invader.

Our present fears may be mistaken, they may be exaggerated; but they are surely not unnatural, nor, as it seems to me, unreasonable. It may be that the danger is less considerable or less imminent than some suppose; it may be that it is rather Russia than France we have to fear; or that it is not so much the hostility of any single State as an armed conspiracy and coalition of the great European powers to put down liberty throughout the world, and having for its more immediate and specific aim the conquest of England and dismemberment of the British Empire, as the grand material obstacle to the triumph of reactionism and the despotic cause. These are questions for the consideration of the statesman and philosopher. It is enough for a plain man, that *there is danger*, be its nature and extent what they may. And that there is danger we see and feel; and it would be the height of pedantry to attempt to convince any man to the contrary, whose eyes are where they ought to be—not in his pocket, but in his head.

Who can see a heap of gunpowder at his feet, and not fear an explosion? Who can see the heavens black with clouds without apprehension of a storm? And who can, at the present time, with his mind's eye look right and left, at home and abroad, and see, on the one hand, his

own small island, with its mismanaged and dwarf resources; its navy, with its ships "squandered abroad," dismantled and unmanned, ill-provisioned and ill-found; and, above all, its army, with its shrunk proportions, scarce 50,000 strong, dispersed over the wide world—its head too big for its body, a glut of officers and a lack of men, badly accoutred and worse armed; and, on the other, the great Continent of Europe, "black with the masses of the enemy," one vast swarming military hive;—France, Austria, Russia, Prussia, each with its army of some 500,000 men, all well equipped and disciplined, in prime campaigning order, and having seen just service enough to give them an appetite for more;—who can see these things without making comparisons and drawing conclusions, however reluctantly? Who, I say, can look thus at home and abroad, and not bethink him straight of war and invasion? more especially when he considers that these four powers do in effect, at the present time, make up the Continent; and that in three of them, at least, if not in all, a policy prevails, between which and that of a free country there is, and ever must be, the most inveterate antagonism; so that their aspect towards us being, thence, inevitably malign, if they do not some day, sooner or later, combine for our destruction, it will not be for want of the will, but of the power—because they dare not, "like the poor cat in the adage."

It is impossible but that a despotic Government must look with jealousy and aversion on a free State — not only on account of the asylum it affords to the victims of its oppression, but on account of the encouragement it holds out in its history and institutions to that spirit of liberty which is ever struggling to assert itself, however feebly and ineffectually, even under the most arbitrary Government. And both these grounds of enmity exist, in our case, under circumstances of peculiar aggravation; so that it may be said to be our *fate* to be hated by the continental nations; and

"Hates any man the thing he would not kill?"

Our neighbourhood is dangerous to them, and therefore theirs is dangerous to us. It has nothing to do with morals, and is, therefore, no theme for virtuous indignation. It is not because the Emperor of all the Russias is a bad man that we ought to beware of him. I am far from sure myself that he is a bad man. He has emancipated his serfs, curbed the licence of his nobles, and done many other things which incline me to think him an honest patriot, after his fashion—a King who really desires his people's happiness, according to his own conception of a happy people, which of course is a peculiar one, and very different from ours, as his point of view is different, for which allowance must be made. But being a born despot, just as Naaman the Syrian was a born leper, I consider him as *therefore* only so much the more to be feared; inasmuch as he must hate us upon principle, fanatically. For a believer in the Divine right of kings, it has always seemed to me, if a good man, must look with much the same feelings upon a free State with which a believer in the Holy Catholic Church looks upon a Protestant State; and the tendency of the feeling in both cases is the same, viz., to make extermination, whenever it is possible, a religious duty—" very stuff of the conscience."

Such is my candid theory of the man from whom, as it appears to me, this country has at present most to fear, being, as he is, the acknowledged head of the absolutist party, in whose person the despotic principle may be said to be now incarnated—its last and living Avatar.

With regard to Louis Napoleon the case is somewhat different. Of him I have no fixed theory. His position is ambiguous, and his policy not yet *pronounced*. While reprobating much that he has done, the blood he has spilt, and the acts of violence he has committed, I nevertheless cannot look upon him as the horned monster which a large portion of the public press in this country delights to paint him. For I hold it for a principle in judging others, that whatever a man's past conduct may have been, so long as there is room to insinuate a hope,

we are bound in charity to give him the benefit of it. And there is another thing which I think we are bound in charity to do, and that is, to consider that all nations have not the same standard of right and wrong. For myself, could I once feel sure that Louis Napoleon was so far honest as to believe that he had a mission, as he says, I should cease to have any fear of him; as it is certain he can never believe it to be his mission to play the part of an Agamemnon or an Orestes; nor do I see myself how he can believe it to be anything but what he professes to believe it, viz., *to organize the Democracy, and so close the era of Revolutions*—a work which requires peace above all things as the condition of its performance—

"And yet,
How Nature erring from herself."

Then life, as we are wont to say, is uncertain; and who shall be surety for his successor?

In short, when we set ourselves to calculate chances in such a world as ours, we find ourselves adrift—a weed upon the waters—*πολλοις διαυλοις κυματων φερουμενον.* The subject is too vast for us; we can neither span nor fathom it. One thing alone seems certain, that if we would live at peace with our neighbours, we must prepare for war: like those brave knights of old who took for the motto of their shields—*Sic querimus pacem;* for as sure as there is truth in arithmetic, if we remain much longer in our present defenceless state—a Daniel among lions—mischief will befall us.

It may be said, and truly, that our state is not so defenceless as it appears. And Shakespeare may be quoted to prove that there is in your Englishman that spirit, that pluck, that mettle, that inexplicable but indomitable something, which more than makes up for all seeming deficiencies—"negligences and ignorances"—as that—

"Nought shall make us rue,
If England only to herself be true."

That "England"—

> "This royal throne of kings, this sceptered isle,
> This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
> This fortress built by Nature for herself,
> Against infection, and the hand of war;
> This precious stone, set in the silver sea,
> Which serves it in the office of a wall,
> Against the envy of less happy lands;—"
>
> "Never did, and never shall,
> Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror."

In fine, that—

> "Come the three quarters of the world in arms,
> And we should shock them."

Now this is all very well, and may be perfectly true, and I dare say is; and were there nothing short of actual subjugation, the thought of which ought to cause us any uneasiness, there might be some argument in it. But we must recollect that there is such a thing as invasion, with a view to subjugation. And, though it may be security enough against actual subjugation, that we are what we are, to secure us against the attempt at subjugation, *i. e.*, invasion, we must appear what we are. The old maxim of the schools, that "concerning things which are not, and things which do not appear, it is all one"—*eadem est ratio*—is no less applicable in the case of nations than of individuals; for nations, like individuals, must judge mainly by appearances, and it therefore behoves nations, like individuals, to regard appearances. Now whatever we may be, or conceit ourselves to be, I think it must be admitted, that our attitude at the present time is not calculated to impress foreigners with a very formidable idea of us. It is too careless, too "negligently grand," too much like that of her allegorical Majesty in the picture, sitting on the shore, a trident—a useful implement enough, no doubt, in its way—in one hand, and the other resting on a mediæval shield, while an ancient lion crouches at her feet, manifestly asleep.

Nations should beware of straining the historical argument, or argument from the analogy of their past history,

too far. That England never has been conquered, were it true, would be no reason why England never should be conquered. To be truly safe, a great nation, like Cæsar's wife, must not only be inviolate, but above all suspicion of being violable.

One cannot help, however, suspecting the perfect sincerity of these modern soothsayers, who would persuade us that we have no cause for fear. There is a certain mock heroic air, and affectation of *nonchalance* about them, which reminds one of a man who tries, by loud whistling and talking big, to make you believe that he is not in the least afraid, when it is evident enough, from the colour of his cheek, that he is. It is not, I am apt to think, that they are less afraid, but only more afraid of being thought afraid. Besides, do they not perceive the dilemma they are in? Whatever *they* may be, it is evident that the nation is under very considerable alarm just at present. If, therefore, there is really no danger, as they say, it follows that we must be a nation of cowards, thus to fear where no fear is; and, as such, justly contemptible in the eyes of other nations; and a nation, once despised, is a nation no longer safe.

There is another consideration which bears upon the subject, of too much importance to be overlooked. What is the great end of all civil government? Is it not this, to provide for the safety of the public? that every man may not only be, but *feel* himself to be, safe; for it is not enough that our lives and properties are secured unless we at the same time *feel* that they are. A nation, therefore, that wants this feeling of security, which, like the keystone of the arch, sustains and keeps together the whole social fabric—the feeling that what we sow it will be ours to reap; that the house we build it will be ours to inhabit; and that, in short, whatever our hand finds to do, the fruit and profit of it will be ours, and not go to enrich a stranger, still less an enemy—a nation, I say, that wants this feeling, is a nation the Government of which has not done its part. And just in proportion as the feeling is weakened or relaxed in any

country, in the same proportion has the Government failed in its office. If everything has been done that could have been done, under the circumstances, the Government stands exonerated; but if anything has been left undone which might have been done, it is verily to blame. But, in a free State, what is the fault of Government is the fault of every man.

But why insist upon the duty of doing something, when the necessity is universally admitted, and the only question is—what is best to be done?

Now, bearing in mind that the problem to be solved is, how to place the country in such a state as to render, not only its conquest, but any invasion of it with a view to conquest, a virtual impossibility, I submit, that we are shut up to a choice between these two alternatives—the reinforcement of our national armaments, and the arming of the nation.

After much careful consideration, I have come to the conclusion, that of these two alternatives the latter is the one which it would be most advisable to adopt.

When we take into account the inevitable consequences to the invader of an unsuccessful attempt upon such a country as England—that is, of an invasion not followed by conquest—we may feel morally certain that no attempt will be made, unless the condition of the country be such as to justify a pretty strong persuasion that invasion will be followed by conquest. Granting, therefore, that what we have to fear is only the lesser danger, or danger of invasion; what we have to guard against is the greater danger, or danger of conquest. So that the question resolves itself practically into this—whether the reinforcement of our national armaments, or the arming of the nation, would tend most effectually to impress an enemy with a persuasion of our invincibility.

National armaments are of two kinds—naval and military; and there are two ways of strengthening them—by multiplying their number and increasing their efficiency. Now the question is, could we, by resorting to both these modes, and strengthening our armaments to the utter-

most, render our state absolutely secure? Might not the largest and best-appointed fleet be eluded, and the largest and best-appointed army which it would be in our power to equip, be beaten? I say, which it would be in our power to equip; for, owing to the limitation of our material resources, as compared with those of the continental nations, it would evidently be impossible for us so to strengthen our armaments, as to secure ourselves against the risk of being overwhelmed by a sheer preponderance of numbers. Let us suppose, then, the landing of an hostile army upon our coast to be effected, owing either to our fleet being eluded or disabled; and that our troops, after a desperate resistance, were at length fairly overpowered by numbers, and the flower of English chivalry, with all our best and bravest officers, slain; and let us suppose further, that the enemy, flushed with victory, were then to march straight upon London, before the inhabitants had time to recover from their first panic, *is it not probable* that London would be taken? and London being taken, *is it not probable* that the conquest of England would follow? Let me request the reader to ponder these questions, and answer them at his leisure, first for himself, and then for—whoever he may think most likely to meditate the invasion of England. And, if he will only bear this in mind, that as an Englishman would naturally consider them with a *home bias*, so an enemy would naturally consider them with a *foreign bias*, I think, however, he may answer them for himself, when he came to answer them for—the Emperor of Russia—shall we say?—or Louis Napoleon, or one of his Algerine Generals?—his cheek could hardly fail to bate somewhat of its wonted colour. And why?—Why would it appear to him probable, that to any hostile or even unbiassed mind, the Capital of England being taken, after the defeat and dispersion of her army, the conquest of England would appear certain? Because England's sole stay would then be broken; because, being unarmed, after the defeat and dispersion of our army, we should have nothing in reserve—nothing to fall back upon; so

that, whatever might be our courage, our loyalty, and patriotism, for want of organization and the means of active resistance, they would avail us nothing, but only serve to make the yoke of the oppressor the more galling and intolerable. For it is a fact, and one which cannot be too often repeated, or too earnestly insisted upon, that while there is no country in the world so rich in what may be called the rudiments or potential resources of war, there is none so miserably deficient in its instrumentalities—its actual and realized resources. It is not that we are *imbellis* as a people, but *inermis* as a nation.

But now suppose all this changed; suppose the nation, instead of being, as it now is, completely unarmed, were completely armed; that every man had his weapon, with the skill, as well as the will, to use it; what hostile power, let me ask, or what coalition of hostile powers, unless divinely struck—seized with that judicial madness which precipitates a man upon his doom—would ever dream of attacking us?

Between an armed and an unarmed nation, there is all the difference there is between a hive of bees and a swarm of flies. It has always struck me as a most instructive fact in natural history, that the most industrious, and therefore peaceably-disposed of all creatures, and which has been well said "to teach the art of order to a peopled kingdom," should yet have its sting. And the rose, the fairest among flowers, the type of woman, is it not also armed—guarded with thorns? There is another fact, in a different department of history, which yet bears so pointedly upon my subject, that I cannot forbear alluding to it. I refer to that incident of sacred history, the rebuilding of the Temple in "troublous times," at which every man who assisted was at once a soldier and a mason. But to return.

The defensive organization of the people would have this great advantage, among others, over the augmentation of our war establishments, that the intent being so manifestly peaceful—to protect ourselves, and not to molest others—it could not excite the jealousy or

suspicion of foreign powers. Whereas regular forces, being capable of being employed offensively as well as defensively, upon occasion, it is conceivable that any considerable increase of them might draw down upon us the very evil which it was designed to guard against, by serving as a pretext for aggression.

The measure has also this to recommend it—that it would serve gradually to prepare the way for a reduction of standing armies, which all agree in acknowledging to be a great evil in themselves morally, no less than economically, however necessary as "a guard against worse ill." The plea for keeping them up in time of peace is, that they are necessary for purposes of defence; and when it is insisted that standing armies create the very danger they are intended to provide against, as, were there no standing armies, there could be no aggression, we are encountered by the argument, that in the present state of things it would be useless to expect all nations to agree to their contemporaneous reduction, and that for one nation to set the example of disarming, in the expectation of its being followed by others, would be a piece of the veriest Quixotism. And, for myself, I must confess I do not see what answer can be made to this, so long as nations have no other security against invasion than what is afforded by standing armies. But let other security, and no less effectual, be once provided, and as regards the latter part of the argument, at least—the Quixotism of one nation setting the example—the edge of the objection would be turned.

Such are the considerations which mainly weigh with me in counselling the arming of the nation in preference to an increase of our national armaments. I feel convinced that it is our true policy, under the circumstances, and that the effect would be, not only to disperse, like a thick cloud, our present fears, but effectually to secure us against their recurrence, and so free us, once and for ever, from a state of thraldom, as full of ignominy as of peril. I express myself the more confidently, because the opinion is not mine alone, but

that, I believe, of almost every man who has thought sufficiently upon the subject to be entitled to an opinion; though all may not be alike *possessed* by it.

The fear of invasion has never before been so strong and general; and now that all classes are alive to the necessity of improving our defences, and public opinion, as it may be gathered from the letters of "correspondents" published in the daily papers, and "leading articles" upon the subject, has pronounced so unequivocally for the voluntary principle, I cannot but think that it is the duty of Government to come forward and championise the movement by its formal sanction, and so give effect to the national will.

The iron is now hot; let the Executive lay bare its arm, and strike.

Only let the country be properly appealed to, and in the present temper of the people, the appeal, I am persuaded, would be nobly responded to, and the result would be to put such an interpretation on the old legend of Cadmus and the Dragon's teeth, as would astonish the nations. The whole land would be verily sown with armed men, ready to spring up on every side, at the first call, —a *seges clypeata.* Every town, and village, and petty hamlet, would send its contingent,—its regiment, its corps or company, to swell the ranks of the great national army—an army, not of mercenaries, but of freed-men; formed not to wage, but to prevent war; in a word, "to keep the peace." And thus "armed and well prepared," I ask once more, where is the power that would ever dream of attacking us? The cause of liberty and human progress would thus be permanently assured, and whatever else Europe might in time become,—

"As the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns,"

—one thing is certain, it never would become "Cossack;" —never again would the shadow on Time's dial be arrested or put back by the hand of aggressive barbarism.

But a truce to rhetoric. What I propose is briefly

this, that measures should be taken, with the sanction and under the control of Government, for putting a weapon of some kind—sword, pike, or bayonet—into the hands of every man, able and willing to use it in his country's service, and that he should be taught to use it with effect, in obedience, *i. e.*, to the word of command, and in companionship with others. In other words, as it seems to be generally agreed that the Peace Association-plan of *having no soldiers* is impracticable, at all events for the present, I submit that, in the meantime, the alternative plan of *being all soldiers* should be tried; the practicability of which has been already demonstrated; and which, while it would answer the same purpose, would prepare the way gradually for the adoption of the other plan, which I admit to be abstractedly the best.

The idea of a national organization for defensive purposes had long been familiar to my mind, but it was not till I read in one of Kossuth's American speeches, how it had been actually carried out in the United States, that I became thoroughly impressed with its importance. I cannot recall the precise words of the speaker, I only recollect the great fact as stated by him, viz., that America has a national army of some 3,000,000 volunteers. I have seen it since asserted that the statement was numerically incorrect, and that 2,000,000 would have been nearer the truth. But this is of no importance. The fact is the same. I cannot describe the effect which the announcement had upon me when I first read it, my thoughts having been for some time strongly drawn to the consideration of the subject. It was like a new discovery. And as the fervent aspiration of my heart at the time was, "would that England had such an army," so my most devout wish for my country ever since has been, that she might have such an army. What had before presented itself only as a thing to be desired, and which I might perhaps live to see realized, but the serious suggestion of which would be sure to be received with ridicule, I now looked upon almost as a thing accomplished; and, as St. Pierre says, speaking of the in-

terest with which he watched a hive of bees at their work, "I began to form plans for my country."

In proposing, therefore, that we should raise a national army, I am simply proposing that what has been already done in the United States, should now be done in the United Kingdom. And I think I may venture to affirm that as no country stands so greatly in need of such an organization, so there is none which offers such advantages for it; from the great facilities we possess of intercommunication, the cheerful temper of the people, and the general unanimity which now happily pervades all classes.

I was particularly struck with a remark I met with the other day,—to the effect that it was not so much the reverses sustained by the British arms in the American war, as the despair of reducing to subjection a country in which almost every citizen was armed and every house a garrison, that finally led to the cessation of hostilities, and recognition, on our part, of the independence of the States. And though I have not yet verified the statement, it is too "probal to thinking" to allow of my entertaining any doubt of its authenticity.

As to the best mode of carrying what is here proposed into effect, this is a matter of very secondary consideration. When a thing is once heartily desired, the means are never long or far to seek. The only point of much importance, as it seems to me, is the part to be taken by Government in the matter.

Considering the desirableness of insuring a certain simultaneity of action and general uniformity of plan, I am very strongly of opinion that Government ought to take upon itself the responsibility of directing the movement, and giving it the benefit of its administrative aid. But beyond this I think everything should be left as much as possible to the loyalty, public spirit, and general intelligence of the country.

To show how easily it might all be done, on the assumption of Government and the public in general being

duly impressed with its importance;—let us suppose a proclamation to be issued by royal mandate, calling upon her Majesty's faithful subjects of all classes to come forward and form themselves into Free Companies for the general defence and munition of the country; and directing further that as soon as a certain number had enrolled themselves in any given locality, according to its population, a schedule should be prepared by the same authorities, assisted by a Government Commissioner, containing the names of all such persons as might be deemed most competent to take the command of the volunteer levies, who should be invited to form themselves into a regimental staff, and proceed, without loss of time, to battalionize and take the necessary steps for training and disciplining the men under their command.

In this way I conceive that a force of some 2,000,000 national defenders might be organized, equipped, and fully prepared to act with vigour and effect against any invader in the course of a few weeks, or even, in case of urgency, of a few days. I say national defenders, not soldiers. To make a good soldier, months of the most assiduous and incessant drill are required. But to make a good national defender, I believe but little beyond organization would be found necessary. For, while no enthusiasm, no amount of individual bravery and prowess, can make up for want of discipline; where these exist—the true *materiel* of soldiership—as they do with us in rich abundance, the necessary discipline would be soon acquired.

The difference between making a good soldier and a good national defender is the difference between chiseling and modelling, working in stone or in potters' clay; the material which, in the one case, is hard and unyielding, is, in the other, soft and plastic.

"Argillâ quidvis imitaberis udâ."

Only let a body of brave men be once organized, with a clear understanding that every blow they struck would be literally, according to the old militia motto, *pro aris et*

focis, and taught to move and act *together*, to march *together*, to wheel about and charge *together*, to shoulder arms, make ready, present, and fire *together*, and do whatever else men are required to do in the presence of the foe *together*, and we may safely leave it to the hour of danger to "piece out their imperfection," and *extemporise* them into soldiers for the nonce.

We all know what an effect a little enthusiasm and determination has in abridging the time necessary to attain proficiency in any art or manual accomplishment. When a man takes an interest in his work, when his heart is in it, so that he does what he has to do *con amore*, as we say, the rapidity with which he gets over the ground is astonishing. Now, it is impossible that a common soldier ever can feel this interest in his profession. The duties he is called upon to perform are for a purpose which he does not understand, and which, if he did, he would inevitably shrink from in horror and disgust. What is the end of all his training but to enable him to make the greatest possible number of widows and orphans by killing as many fathers and husbands as possible, men who never injured him, nor ever had the least thought of injuring him, and who, though he may hear them denounced as his country's enemies, he does not, and cannot, feel to be his. It is only, therefore, by unremitting drill and discipline that any man *can* be made a soldier, and when he is made, he is, at best, but a good automaton, a very admirable piece of fighting mechanism. What makes him a soldier may be said to unmake him as a man. I speak of the men only, the privates of a regiment, and not the officers, who have what is called "glory," as "a glistering foil" to gild the bitter pill, together with the hope of rising in their profession. But how different is it with the man who enlists of his own free will into a corps of sprightly volunteers, for the defence of all he holds most dear and sacred, the protection of his native land from foreign invasion, with all its unspeakable horrors and abominations, pillage and

massacre, and "outrage worse than death"—considerations

> "To kindle cowards, and to steel with valour
> The melting spirits of women."

All the best and noblest feelings of our human nature are called into vigorous play in the case of such a man.

> "And when the mind is quickened, out of doubt,
> The organs, though defunct and dead before,
> Break up their drowsy watch, and nimbly move
> With casted slough and fresh legerity."

So that what would otherwise be gone through as so much drudgery and reluctant taskwork becomes a pastime; while the sense of its importance gives to it a reality which more than redeems it from the charge of child's-play and inanity which might otherwise be brought against it.

What was it that made the soldiers of Cæsar, Cromwell, and Napoleon so invincible in fight? Was it not mainly this—that the love and admiration they bore their leaders, under whose conduct they had so often fought and conquered, called forth an ardour and enthusiasm which transformed every man into a hero in the day of battle? The power which fashioned them, and made them what they were, was not mechanical, but moral; an illustration of the influence which mind exercises over matter, when a man's heart is in his work. And shall not the love of country, with all that is comprised under that magic name, exercise a like transforming power, when the actual presence of the hired ruffian and ravisher within our borders brings home the sentiment to every heart, and enables us to feel and realize it in all its sublime strength and impassioned tenderness—its height and depth?

I heard the question put the other day to a friend residing in the town where I am now writing, "Suppose the French fleet were to appear off B——, to-morrow morning, what should you all do." "Turn out, of course, to a man," was the magnanimous reply, "and oppose their

landing to the death, till troops could arrive to the rescue." Now, though my friend was a young enthusiast, of more zeal, haply, than discretion, I believe he spoke no more than the truth, and that his words would find an echo in every English breast. I believe we should—we, gentles and commons of the town of B——, turn out, to a man, to oppose "the insolent foe;" though with what success may admit a doubt. But now, to put the question under a somewhat modified, and, I submit, more rational form. Suppose that, from the unwonted and unexplained activity in the French dockyards, there was every reason to believe that an invasion was intended, what, *in this case*, should we do? Can there be a doubt about it? Should we not, at once, without waiting for orders, call a town-meeting, and then and there, after a few spirit-stirring speeches, brief and to the point, proceed to pass resolutions for putting B—— in a state of defence and arming its inhabitants? and would not men of all classes and of all principles press forwards eagerly at the first summons, and a little civic army of some 10,000, or, to speak modestly, say 5000 valiant citizens, be forthwith organized? who, after a few days' martial exercising, marching and countermarching on the Sussex Downs, and practising all the main and more important evolutions necessary to give unity and efficiency to a body of armed men, would be well prepared, by the time the French showed their colours in the offing, to give them such a truly frank and soldierly reception,

"That they should shrink under our courtesy."

But, if B——, with its population of 80,000 inhabitants, could contribute its quota of 5000 men towards a national army, battalionize, and get them into fair campaigning order in a few days, every other town could do the same, some contributing more and others less, each according to its population, and the result would be, as has been said, the raising in a few days of a national army of some 2,000,000 men. I am only saying what could be done. But, of course, unless the danger were

imminent, there would be no occasion for such impetuous haste. The great thing is, to be prepared, so that we may not be taken by surprise, like a household roused from sleep at dead of night by the cry of fire. To follow up the metaphor: let us only have our engine ready, with efficient men to work it, and we may then trust our cause with confidence to that Power which defends the right—even "the Lord of Hosts," in full assurance of victory.

But if our preparations could be made at so short a notice, why should we not wait, it may be said, till we are actually threatened? Because, I answer, *our object is prevention.* To recur to what has been said above—our desire is to impress all foes, actual or potential, with so strong a persuasion of our invincibility, as may effectually deter any but a "mad Cambyses,"—*quem Deus vult perdere,* and who, therefore, puts his head into "the jaws of death," that it may be bitten off—from presuming to assail us.

As to objections, I admit freely that there are objections. But what then? has not every plan its objections? The very time necessary to its accomplishment is an objection; and in the present case, I believe this to be the one sole objection, all others being but its various disguises, or resolving themselves into it upon analysis. But before I proceed to the consideration of it, I would submit, whether the example of the United States may not be quoted triumphantly, as an answer in full to all objections? If in a country, separated by the wide ocean from the Continent of Europe, whence alone danger could be apprehended, a national army is yet deemed necessary, how much more necessary must it be in a country separated only by a narrow channel from the most distracted and revolutionary of all the European States! It may be said, that our good cousins are blockheads for their pains, and should this be said, I do not know very well how I could reply to it, unless by what Touchstone calls "the counter-check quarrelsome." As to the objections implied in such claptrap phrases and

epithets of declamation as—impracticable, chimerical, dangerous, absurd, un-English,—is it not a sufficient answer, that what has been already established in the United States, and found to work well, cannot be thus denounced or characterized, when it is proposed to establish it in the United Kingdom?

The only real objection, as has been just intimated—the only objection that will bear discussion—is the economical objection, or, as I would propose to call it, from the importance we very naturally attach to it as a great commercial people, the Englishman's objection. Of course, with every wise man, expense is a consideration. For, though there is nothing which is worth having which is to be had for nothing, a thing may cost more than it is worth—more time, labour, money,—the terms are all practically synonymous,—and when this is the case, it is a sufficient reason for not having it, however well it may be worth having. But there is another thing which is also a consideration with every wise man, and that is security. Whatever is capable of being possessed is likewise capable of being lost or injured—liabilities or risks, which impair its value. A man of prudent counsels, therefore, is always ready to execute what is technically called "a policy of insurance" upon his property, *i. e.*, to pay annually a certain amount of hard cash as an insurance against the various risks to which any property of which he may be possessed is exposed. Now military establishments are, practically, a policy upon the property of the whole nation—an insurance against the most serious risks to which the property of every man, and every kind of property is liable; those, namely, arising from war. And, considering that it is not loss of property only that war involves, but loss of life, to say nothing of liberty and honour, I am at a loss to understand how any Michael Cassio, any really "great arithmetician," can regard them as unprofitable. Since, then, it is admitted on all hands that security is a blessing,—a thing to be desired to make a people happy, while it is evidently one we at the present time greatly desiderate,—the question comes prac-

tically to this, whether in adopting the plan here proposed we should be paying "too dear——?" in other words, whether a defensive organization of the people would constitute too high a policy on the property of the nation?

The objection under consideration is twofold. First, as regards the direct expense, or money, that would be required. Secondly, as regards the indirect expense, or time, that would be required.

First, as regards the money that would be required, it may be observed that it would only be for the purchase of arms and accoutrements—a sword, a pike, or a bayonet —which might be had for a few pounds, with a plain unadorned uniform; I am inclined to think myself that a loose blouse and belt, with a foraging cap, would be all that would be necessary. The permanent cost per man could not therefore exceed 5*l.*, which is about a sixteenth part of what a private of the line costs the country annually.

The cost of equipping a body of 2,000,000 men, at 5*l.* per man, would be 10,000,000*l.* Let us suppose, then, a loan to this amount to be raised for the purpose. The interest at 4 per cent. would be 400,000*l.* But, it may be said, the original outlay upon each man would not be the only expense. It is true we must allow for friction, or what is popularly called "wear and tear." A blouse, and even a belt, though only worn for a few hours, upon occasion, would in time wear out; but as this is a consideration which involves a more refined process of calculation than my arithmetical powers are at all equal to, I will be liberal, and set it down at 100,000*l.* a year, or what would be equivalent to it in a long period of years, taking one year with another. This would make the annual expense to the country 500,000*l.*, which is less than a thirtieth part of what our present military establishments cost us.

With regard to the second form of the objection—the time that would be required to drill and discipline

effectually such a body of men—I would observe that, a volunteer corps once organized, which is the main point, it would only be necessary that they should be called out for a few hours in the week for exercise and practice. I should conceive, myself, that three hours' drill one day in the week would be amply sufficient; and if it were on a Saturday afternoon, it would involve no interruption of business or loss of time whatever. But supposing that more time should be necessary, what, after all, would it amount to, considered as a loss to the community, when compared with the devotion of a man's whole life to soldiering, that is, to idleness or worse, relieved by occasional paroxysms of intense activity? For, whatever life in the battle-field may be, it is admitted on all hands that life in the barracks is the idlest and most demoralising that can well be conceived. Presumptuous as it may seem, I cannot but question the policy of withdrawing any man altogether from the peaceful arts and occupations of life, with all their humanizing influences, to make a mere engine of destruction of him. For, except in time of war, a soldier is worse than a dead loss to the community of which he is a member. Surely there is need of reform here. Our military, like all our other institutions, require to be revised from time to time, and accommodated to the growing spirit of the age. This by the way.

Having discussed what I conceive to be the only real objection to the plan proposed, and allowed to it its full weight, let me now appeal to objectors of every class, Financialists, Humanitarians, and others, and beg of them in fairness to look for a moment to the other side of the question, and consider the many indirect benefits which would accrue to the community—benefits even of a pecuniary kind—from a defensive organization of the people. For an objection being simply the indication of some evil consequence which it is supposed would result from any measure, even admitting it to the full extent, it is always a sufficient answer to point to some beneficial

consequence of the same measure, sufficient, or more than sufficient, to counterbalance the evil consequence alleged as an objection.

I have said that benefits even of a pecuniary nature would accrue from the proposed organization. What is it that makes the main difference in value between one man's labour and another's? Is it not that one puts forth more strength of body, or works with more alacrity of mind; in other words, that he has a sounder body or a sounder mind, or both? And what can be conceived more conducive to the invigoration of the body than military exercises, or of the mind than the performance of these same exercises, freely, and in companionship with others? If it would not exactly "hale three souls out of one weaver," as Sir Toby says, it would at least hale one. And your poor journeymen tailors, sitting cross-legged all day over their "goose and cabbage," would not a good blow upon Hampstead Heath or Kennington Common, marching up and down merrily, sword in hand, or lance (*alias* pike) in rest, to the sound of martial music, help to piece out their poor fractional humanity?

But the material benefits, great as I believe they would be found, are insignificant, as compared with the moral; though, indeed, the two are so intertwined, that it is not easy to distinguish between them.

Does not all experience avouch that union for any purpose, not in itself evil, is good, even when confined to individuals of the same class, and much more when it is made to embrace all classes? It quickens the circulation, to speak in the old dialect, and thus invigorating the body politic, gets rid of any morbid action which may have been set up in any part or organ. Let any one consider the amount of generous enthusiasm, the loyalty and patriotism, the cordiality, good fellowship, and reciprocation of kindly feelings, between individuals and classes which such an organization would be the means of calling forth; and the effect which it would thence have in healing the breaches of our social state,—draining off the black coagulated blood from the inward and more vital parts,

and purging away, at the same time, all those acrid humours which have been secreted so copiously of late, "the cankers of a calm world, and a long peace;" and I think he will be ready to admit that, apart altogether from its immediate object, the cost to the country would be more than compensated by the health and vigour it would impart to the whole social frame.

I am far from thinking it desirable to raise up or foster among us a martial spirit, which is always more easily raised than laid. No one could more strongly deprecate such a consequence; but I do not believe that this would be a consequence of a military organization for purely defensive purposes, such as is here proposed, or, if it would, only in such modest measure as would prove rather salutary than otherwise, by acting as a counterpoise to that spirit of selfish greed and accursed Mammon-worship which is ever the besetting sin of a great commercial people, and which, combining with another and a better spirit,—the spirit of the age, has given birth of late to a strange kind of mongrel Quakerism, which takes up its parable against war, and anathematises it, not because it is wrong, but because it is impolitic; not because it is unchristian, but because it is expensive.

A word in conclusion.

Let it be granted that the danger of invasion has been exaggerated; that it is most improbable that France should attack us, without the concurrence of the northern powers, and equally improbable that those powers should attack us, without the concurrence of France; and more improbable than either, that the forces of democratic France should be brought to act in concert, and make common cause with the armies of despotic Russia, with her twin-vassals, Prussia and Austria,—Republican and Cossack generals sitting together at the same council board, and fighting side by side on the same field. Still, as the most improbable of these contingencies might happen, when it is in our power to make them all impossible alike, ought we to hesitate?

Again, granting that difficulties innumerable, and of

all descriptions, would oppose themselves to any nation that, singly or in conjunction with others, should meditate the conquest of this country,—difficulties internal and external,—social, financial, and strategetical; still, as none are of such a nature but what it is conceivable that they might be surmounted, would it not be folly to hesitate, when it is in our power to create a new difficulty, which would be absolutely insurmountable?

We have just entered upon a new career, pregnant with consequences of the utmost moment, not only to ourselves, but to the world; let us consider, then, "the heavy blow" that it would be, "and sore discouragement" to the good cause—the common cause of man—should we be now struck down, or arrested in our course by the rude hand of aggressive violence—should mischief befall us, or should we sustain any loss of honour, any discomfiture or disgrace?

England now holds up the torch to the nations. Shall we see it snatched from our grasp by some modern Attila, and its light quenched in blood?

England is now the last sanctuary of freedom and city of refuge for the persecuted and oppressed. Shall we see it devastated and swept away by some new flood of victorious Vandalism?

The nations, in this, the hour of their anguish—the crisis of the world's destiny—look to us—*Europe expects England to do her duty.*

There is no instance in the records of time of a nation more advanced having ever been subjugated by one less advanced; but there are instances innumerable of nations more civilized being subjugated by less civilized nations. For why? The subjugated nation, for all its civilization, had ceased to be an advancing nation. It had begun to decline. The process answering to decay in the natural body had commenced. The life had died out of it, and it had become a corpse. Now there are not wanting traducers who would insinuate that this is now our case; that England, if she has not already become, is fast becoming, carrion—ravin for birds of prey—the

eagle and the kite; in short, that we have touched "the highest point of all our greatness," and are now "hasting to our setting." We may assert that it is not so, and believe what we assert; but if we would convince others, and "silence envious tongues," we must do more; we must act. And now that we have it in our power, by action, to refute the slander, and by one grand simultaneous movement demonstrate to the world that we are "not degenerated or drooping to a fatal decay"—that the spirit of our fathers, who fought at Crecy, Agincourt, and Blenheim, and on the plains of Waterloo, and conquered, still lives within us—that England is yet England—not the "inviolate" only, but inviolable "island of the brave and free,"—Men of England, Fellow-subjects, Gentles, and Commons, shall we hesitate?

My pinions flag! I beat the air in vain! I see, but cannot reach "the height of my great argument." Let me invoke, then, to my aid the muse of a great modern Patriot-Bard, to bear up and give authority to my weak words:—

"When I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
I had, my country!—Am I to be blamed?
But when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of these unfilial fears I am ashamed.

* * * * *

It is not to be thought of that the flood
Of British freedom, which to the open sea
Of the world's praise from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, 'with pomp of waters, unwithstood,'
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands—
That this most famous stream in bogs and sands
Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Th' armoury of the invincible knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spoke; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held. In all things we are sprung
Of earth's best blood,—have titles manifold."

POSTSCRIPT.

It is one of the evil incidents of a free State—for freedom itself, as we understand it, at least, that is, very imperfectly, has its evils—that it gives too much occasion to that "thief of Time"—procrastination. The period of incubation, or interval between the first conception of a new idea, and its final application to affairs,—which is its birth,—is often hurtfully, and even fatally protracted.

An idea is enunciated,—having been first suggested, probably, not *by* any single mind, but *to* the minds of many, at the same instant, by the circumstances of the times;—for thought is not only contagious but endemic —in the air;—it takes shape—the new idea—rounds itself, and passes quickly, like a ball, from hand to hand, is thrown up, caught and re-caught; in short it becomes public property. All agree that it is a good idea, an excellent idea, and ought to be applied,—harnessed and made to draw. But no one moves; there is an universal backwardness in coming forwards; individuals hang fire; every one shirks the responsibility, as he affects to call it, of taking the first step. It would be presumptuous in a humble individual like himself to lead the way; it is his place to follow; only let the subject be once taken up, and a beginning made, and he will join the movement gladly, and do his best in furtherance of its object, of which no one can more heartily approve*.

* These, to my own knowledge, are almost the very words in which more than one individual, on being consulted as to the propriety of

Thus,—through this "craven scruple," which will not bear dissection, being ever "three parts coward," whatever may be the nature of the fourth,—time, precious time, and many a golden opportunity, is lost;

> "And enterprises of great pith and moment,
> With this regard their currents turn awry,
> And lose the name of action."

Now, to this evil a wise and patriotic Government, without in the least trenching on the liberty of the subject, or straining its prerogative, has it in its power to apply a remedy; by acting, in these cases, the part of Fugleman, and giving, as it were, the sign; or, should this seem too mean a metaphor, let us say, playing the

getting up a volunteer corps of some kind in the town where I am now residing, has excused himself from coming forwards as a prime mover in the matter; which I mention, not by way of censure, but by way of evidence. I think I may, however, venture, without offence, to intimate a doubt, whether, in the generality of cases, when individuals thus *fight shy*, to speak in the vernacular, on questions confessedly of vital interest to the community, modesty has as much to do with it as might be at first supposed. The fact is, brave as we unquestionably are as a nation, individually we are most of us sad cowards; or, at least, as Claudio says, "by no means valiant." For is not the true proof of valour to be true—to speak ever strictly what we think, and act as we feel? But who does this? Who dares to do it?

Why, if I believe that B—— ought to have its volunteer corps, should I not go forth, as a true man, and lay hands on the first acquaintance I meet, and never let him go till I have talked him over to my views; which, if I am right, and in earnest, and he a man worth talking over, I should of course have little difficulty in doing; and then, why should we not both set off together, arm in arm, to call upon our mutual acquaintance A, and talk him over; and then, why should we not all three sally forth, to call upon our common acquaintance B, and talk him over; and so on, to the last letter of the alphabet? The answer is obvious. It would be *thought* pragmatical, and any one who should go about to act such a part would inevitably be set down as a busybody and *a bore*, and *cut* accordingly. For what business is it of his? Is it not everybody's business, and therefore nobody's?

This, I think it must be admitted, is an ill state of things; and, for myself, I see no remedy for it but the one here suggested, namely, that Government should consider what is everybody's business as its own—not to do, but to see done, "taking the oversight," a sort of secular Episcopate.

Patron's part, and, by a little mild encouragement, overcoming this universal coyness, which, however natural, and even commendable, it may be, abstractedly, is highly inconvenient in practice.

In every county, every town and village, throughout the kingdom, Government has its agents—its official staff,—a body of men, who, holding under it,—*in capite*, at least—are ready at all times to second its endeavours; —a subtle interpenetrative system ramifying through, and coextensive with, the whole social body, and which performs, or might be made to do so, the same function in relation to it that the nerves do in relation to the natural body.

What would be easier, then, than for a wise and patriotic Government, whenever an impression becomes general, as to the necessity of doing something requiring extensive co-operation, and which it would be, therefore, useless attempting to do at all, unless a large proportion of the community were ready to take part in and aid the work—what would be easier, I say, than for a Government, wise and patriotic, and therefore popular, and therefore strong, on all such occasions, to employ this universal agency, to expedite and give effect to the national will; by directing its officials, high and low, in town and county, to take the initiative, and not only act themselves, but invite others to co-operate with them; just as the brain, the organ of the mind, electrically charged, transmits its orders, at the same instant, to every limb and member of the body, through that marvellous telegraphic mechanism—the nervous system, which, communicating with the muscles, and instigating them to act, the whole living organism is put in motion, and the man rises, walks, runs, leaps, dances—in short, does what he wills.

The effect would be the same *in kind*, as if all the most influential individuals in the kingdom, each in his own district, had come forwards, simultaneously, of their own free will; but much more efficacious *in degree*. For,

however little influence, personally, any individual agent of the Executive might possess; when acting in his public character, as a representative of Royalty, he would be *charged* with power, so to speak, derived from the most influential personage in the land. For Majesty itself, it must be remembered, in a free State, is representative—the symbol of the National Unity; the man, therefore, who, as the subject of such a State, regards religiously the publicly-expressed pleasure of his Sovereign, and obeys it, is no lay Idolator, acting a fond or superstitious part, but simply a good member, or rather particle, of the social organism, yielding submission to that higher will, of which our individual wills are units; for,

> "As each body is an aggregate
> Of atoms numberless, each organized,
> So countless myriads of self-conscious minds
> Are one all-conscious spirit, which informs,
> With absolute ubiquity of thought,
> All its involved monads."

And hence the individual will which is not sympathetically identified with this higher will, as evidenced in a cheerful prompt obedience to its behests, is as an offending particle of the natural body, and, like it, doomed, in the end, to be eliminated.

As then the brain, according to my conception of its function, is the galvanic battery of the body, the nervous and ganglionic fibres serving the purpose of conductors; so Government, according to my conception of its function, is the brain of the community, while its various subordinate local agencies and powers answer to the nerves and ganglia.

Just drop into a vessel, the contents of which are on the point of freezing, the smallest particle of ice, taken from a window on a needle's point, and the electric process, for such no doubt it is, at once commences and spreads concentrically,—the small crystallized particle serving for a nucleus,—till in a few minutes the whole

body of fluid is changed, as if by magic, into one hard compact crystalline mass.

But to work thus electrically, *ut Magus*, it is indispensable that a Government should be strong—not in the possession of imperial power, or, indeed, power of any kind, but such as is *given* by high qualities,—a sort of natural tribute spontaneously paid, and rising to and following after them, just as the waters of the sea rise to the sun, and follow it—but in the public confidence, the general persuasion that those who, for the time, compose the Government, pursue undeviatingly the highest ends, and by the means best fitted to attain them. And as this is an indispensable, so is it the sole, condition.

But am I not speaking of impossibilities? Is such a Government any longer with ourselves a thing attainable? Have we not reached that period of national development, when governmental power must, in the nature of things, inevitably decline, fading out and becoming insensibly obliterated by diffusion,

> " Like a circle in the water,
> Which never ceases to enlarge itself
> Till by wide spreading it disperse to nought "?

For nothing is more certain, than that—like every other institution, or instrumentality of means which, having its origin in evil, is thence essentially provisional—Government has its list, and term of office—is foreordained to perish.

Should this be so, we have then no choice, but it becomes our duty, a duty we all owe to one another, to take such steps as an enlightened patriotism may suggest, to fill up the void.

If a strong Government is an impossibility, we must do without it, and it only remains to consult how we may best do without it, and supply its lack of service, out of our own resources, as a nation.

But this is a wide question, and I feel I have not yet sufficiently considered it to justify a final judgment. Like

land at sea, seen through a lowering fog, it looms prodigious and half-spectral to my view. The events of the next few months will no doubt, however, throw much light upon it, and make our course more clear. For the present I think it enough to have just indicated the conclusion which may possibly be forced upon us. The full consideration of the subject I reserve for a future time.

Cras ingens iterabimus æquor.

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