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AN
ENQUIRY
INTO THE
PRESENT STATE
OF THE
MILITARY FORCE
OF THE
BRITISH EMPIRE,
WITH A
VIEW TO ITS RE-ORGANIZATION.

ADDRESSED TO
THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM PITT.

BY

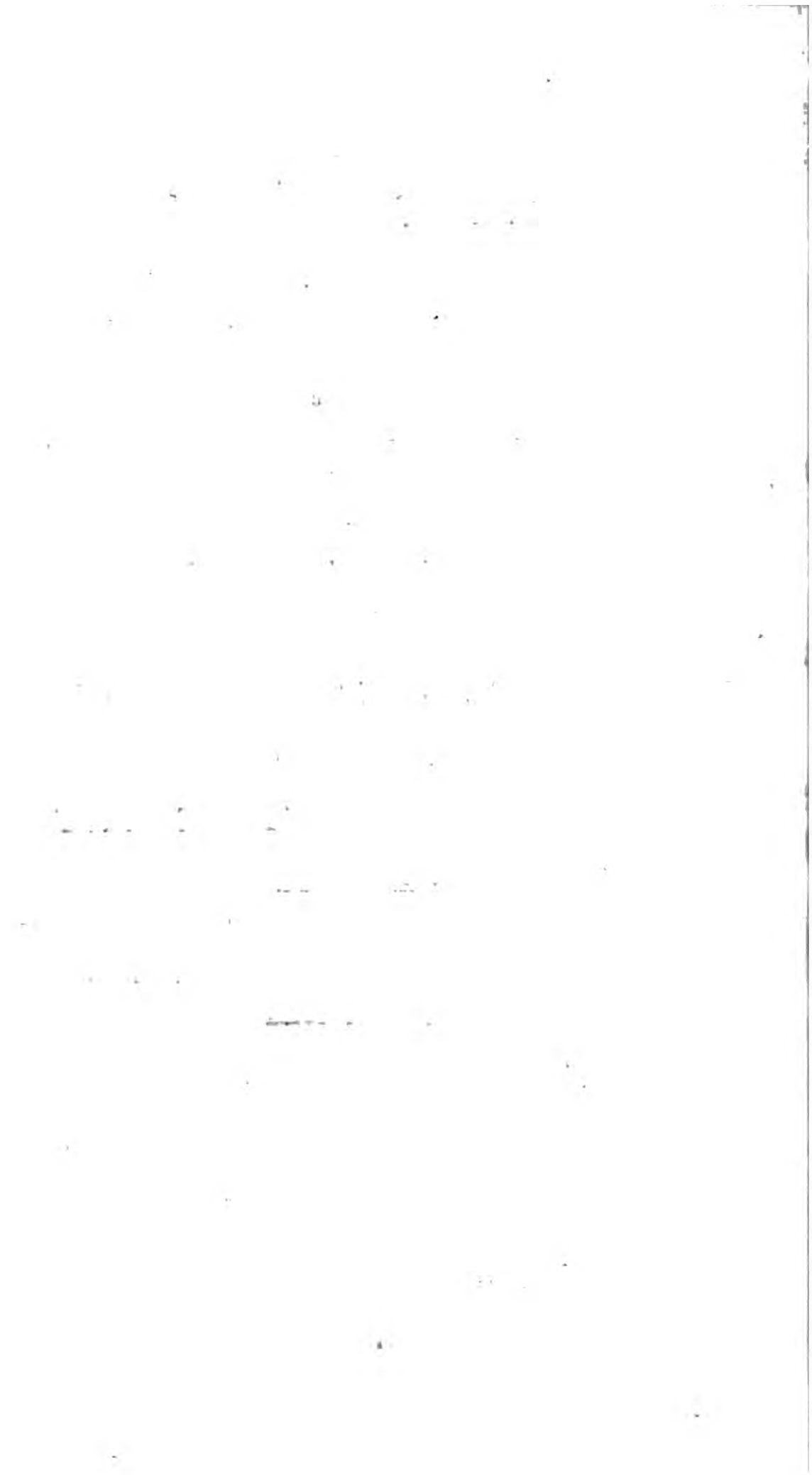
Lieut. Colonel R. T. WILSON, K. M. T.

14.

If I fail on the Thames, and split my Vessel on an Anchor; in case there be no Buoy to give Warning, the Party shall pay me Damages: But, if the Anchor be marked out, then is the striking on it at my own Peril.

Lord Strafford's Speech.

LONDON:
Printed for the AUTHOR;
AND SOLD BY T. EGERTON, AT THE MILITARY LIBRARY,
NEAR WHITEHALL.
1804.



AN ENQUIRY, &c.

SIR,

AT this moment, when public attention is so much excited to the military force of the empire; when the Government encourages enquiry, that the most efficacious means may be traced for the increase of the army, and the amelioration of its establishment, apology for any communication upon the subject would be wearisome courtesy; at the same time, as the enquiry involves matters of high importance, and yet of the most delicate character, I feel it incumbent on me to prevent the censure which might be attached to the publication of this treatise, by observing, that manuscript memorials seldom are presented to the eye for which they were designed, and that the subordinate agents of office too often presume to judge of the merits of the memoir, and decide for their superiors, whether

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their time should be occupied by the perusal of them.*

Now if my remarks be unworthy of attention, they will never intrude upon your notice; but if the public attach to them any consideration, they will be introduced under such patronage, as will ensure the desired deliberation upon their practical expediency.

Much of what I have to urge must be repetition of arguments frequently applied, and probably better expressed; but I shall endeavour to be concise, where the subject has already and recently been treated; trusting for indulgence, when I dwell upon points, which may be novel to many, but in which all will, I trust, feel the most generous interest.—I premise that my object is no more than what I profess,—the establishment of our military force upon a foundation which may be commensurate with our wealth

* France owes the discovery of many of her best Generals to the custom of transmitting memorials to the *Bureau de Guerre*. Hoche was, from this circumstance, selected by Carnot to the command of the army. There may be much time consumed in perusing uninteresting memoirs, but the custom does afford the best opportunity to ascertain the talents of officers.

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and rank in the scale of nations, and consistent with the principles of British liberty, and unsophisticated philanthropy. Conscious of the integrity of my intentions, I shall defy the hostility of prejudice, and spurn the insinuations of calumny; but happy should I be indeed, if any representation of mine shall contribute to secure that interference which has been too long withheld, but for which the present epoch presents the most favourable occasion.

The heterogeneous species of force which compose the present military strength of this empire, are classed under the heads of Volunteers, Militia, Army of Reserve, and Regulars. By the extraordinary energy of the nation, an armed body of 500,000 men have assembled to learn military exercise, and defend the country in case of invasion. At the first enumeration of this number, it must appear to superficial observers, that invasion no longer could be hazarded, even if the battalions of this force were alone destined to oppose the army which should be disembarked. The brilliant successes of the French national troops, at the commencement of the contest, have impressed the generality of all nations with false notions of the prowess of an armed populace. The change of name and of

dress have deceived mankind, and the sympathetic enthusiasm excited in favour of men fighting for liberty, has produced a voluntary failure of recollection as to the circumstance of there being near 250,000 regular instructed troops, amongst whose ranks the volunteers and conscripts were dispersed. Of which original force, two or three regiments only quitted the republican service, and but few officers, and after the first year the French army was never augmented more than one fourth, so that in fact, these volunteer battalions were as well organized as any in Europe, and as fit for service.

But the British volunteer system presents a very different formation, and they must march into the field under auspices diametrically adverse. Nevertheless with all the advantages which the French national armies retained, were they not beaten every where at the commencement of the war; and was not a tract of country instantaneously over-run by the allies, which if traversed in England by a French army, from the most distant point of debarkation, would be more than necessary to bring the enemy to London.—And how was the retreat of the Duke of Brunswick at last effected? Certainly not by force or any apparent danger.

France,

France, in all her arrogance, admits that the British are a brave people; she expects, no doubt, the most vigorous resistance which a nation jealous to defend their native country, but unprepared with a regular military defence can offer; she is no novice in that species of opposition, and has learnt full well to appreciate the full powers of what she has termed the *levy en masse*; but with all that knowledge, with the consciousness of near 500,000 armed volunteers being enrolled in Great Britain, and all the terrible consequences of defeat, would she hesitate to disembark her armies, if the safe passage of the Channel could be secured? Fortunately government does not entertain a too confident opinion of the invincibility of the force collected for the defence of the empire, as our persevering blockade for so many months evinces.

It is to be hoped that what Marshal Turenne said will be found true, if notwithstanding our fleets the enemy should land, "that the *bon Dieu* generally takes the side of the most numerous battalions," for a miracle must be indeed worked, if any early success otherwise prevents a considerable French force from penetrating very far towards the capital, if that point be their object.

If the French were once to entrench, there can be no doubt but the volunteers might, and would then display their courage with certain prospect of victory; but armed peasants, under a proper disposition, and with support from the regular army, would assault, with the same gallantry, and almost equal probability of carrying the lines. A forward movement of that nature is different from field operations. Energy, not order, would be required from the mass, and the contest, hand to hand afterwards, would, on every account, be in favour of the assailants. But in an extended sphere of warfare, when movements must be made with regularity, notwithstanding heavy momentary loss, battalions must have not only gallant officers to encourage them by their example, but of some reputation, on whose steadiness, presence of mind, and judgment they can rely, and which qualities are only to be obtained on actual service. The best troops, under different circumstances, behave very differently; with some officers they cheerfully undertake the most formidable danger, no aspect of death daunts their resolution; nor can carnage throw the survivors into disorder; but the very same troops will present a spectacle of the most unworthy cowardice, when led into action by those for whom they entertain no military consideration.

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I do not arrogate for the officers of the army superior courage, or am ignorant that the greater part of the volunteer officers possess the highest feelings of honour, and natural spirit. I know that they are fellow-men, fellow citizens, and have been educated in the same notions of manly character; but is not the novelty of action sufficiently extraordinary and agitating as to require their whole attention for their own individual demeanour, without expecting from them the responsibility of commanding others? And would not the anxiety of the men probably terminate in irresolution and panic, when they find themselves in a new danger, without theappui of confidence to invigorate their minds?—nor could they be justly stigmatized as cowards. Ignorance cannot demand the homage which is the right of experience.

He who studies the history of mankind, knows that it requires the powerful stimulus of example to infuse the energy of an active courage, which capacitates men to advance against danger, when their natural passions are not operating; and that the strong grasp of discipline and long habits of obedience can alone secure the steadiness of the mass in perilous exigencies.

Active courage and resignation to inevitable death, are very different efforts of the mind. The most abject people will die with calmness, nay, apparent indifference. Nations have submitted to slavery, torture, and individual extirpation, but, nevertheless, dared not to rise upon the handful of their oppressors. The annals of the world teem with instances of even warlike nations being subjugated by small but well disciplined armies. The rebellion in Ireland is a remarkable proof that experience and confidence in officers was requisite, and the more recent events in India establish the fact, that immense numerical superiority and equal personal courage are unavailing against troops composed of the same nations, but officered by those whose capacity to command was not problematical.

Many, unacquainted with the operations of war, presume that the use of the truly British weapon "the bayonet," would compensate for this deficiency, and imagine that the *inclination* to engage in close action ensures the *opportunity*. Perhaps I may fail in correcting this opinion, but nevertheless the idea is altogether erroneous. An able and active enemy will, in an enclosed country, mock such an attempt, and
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in security mow down the hordes of assailants. The invention of gun-powder has facilitated the enterprise of invaders, by elongating the otherwise overbearing weight of numbers, and unless the French, despising the advantage of ground, and rashly confident in presumed superiority of skill, venture upon Salisbury plain or some other particular open tract, it can only be after the most frightful loss (indeed too frightful for the best troops) that the intrepid survivors reach their ranks. But are the necessary qualities for this heroic determination, and indifference to sacrifice so instantaneously acquired? Are previous habits, the comforts of life, and endearments of existence, from which they have been so recently separated, so soon forgotten? Does the mere investiture of a British uniform endow with all the splendid military virtues? Are the influence of a military life, a particular train of consequent reasoning upon the object and chances of the profession, the habitude of considering a premature death as preferable to disgrace, a cannon ball a better destiny than the ordinary terminations of life, the perpetual practice of obedience, but imaginary advantages, without which the same results may be produced? Are submission in moments of difficulty, and patience under all privations, no longer to be considered as the
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consequences of discipline, or are we to believe that the British volunteers are favoured with præternatural powers to exhibit these phenomena, in opposition to every acknowledged principle. Had an enemy landed in this country before the army had received its reinforcements, a fatal proof to the contrary would assuredly have been manifested, and even now the errors of the establishment may only be corrected after a severe experience of their existence. The creation in time of danger of an amphibious force partially partaking of the military character, but incessantly maintaining the nature, and appuying itself upon the rights of the citizen, is no more than an artifice to impose by a return of numbers, but is in fact a body affording no real protection to the state.

When a government has formed a sufficient regular army to oppose the force which menaces to attack her, then the addition of an armed population will ensure a decided superiority, and materially contribute to shorten the contest, but until the regular army is completed, all parochial military establishments counteract the proposed object, and encrease the difficulty of providing an efficient defence. Such an extension of the volunteer system is also ruinous, since a whole
 nation

nation must march to repel an invasion. Nobles, gentry, manufacturers, artizans, peasants, must all leave their homes, their occupations, and their families, whereas a well regulated defensive force would probably prevent invasion, and at all events secure the empire from the uneasiness and inconveniencies of this expensive, and after all, non-military array.

But, if the system is to be persevered in, such amendments as can be introduced, certainly ought to have immediate effect. The evils which may be remedied, should not be continued, unless the whole establishment is proposed to lapse by their operation.

All the laws and regulations which have been enacted for the organization of the Volunteers hitherto, have solely regarded the corps of great towns. The system of arrangement in the metropolis has been the basis for all the volunteers of the country, without any consideration of that distinction which a different order of men and local causes had created, and which must be consulted if the Government be desirous of the permanence of this force.

The volunteers of London may be properly
regi-

regimented : there is no great fatigue in marching from any part of the City to Hyde Park ; but when men are required to march ten miles to a regimental parade, which frequently occurs in the country corps, (and even a greater distance,) I should imagine that the greatest Martinet would not require much attention to duty upon the ground of exercise ; nor can these harrassed men feel much zeal for instruction when they arrive at their journey's end.

Many great evils arise also out of such a formation. Since rank was lavished with so profuse a grant, few gentlemen will condescend to take a regimental commission below the rank of Field Officer ; whereas, if each great land proprietor or gentleman of consideration in a county would assemble his own tenantry and dependants within their respective parishes, he must be satisfied, if not feel a pride, in heading these men as their captain, and his connexions and friends would not imagine themselves degraded by holding, under such circumstances, an inferior commission : the men would readily seize every occasion to assemble ; every one capable of bearing arms would take a musquet, and a feudal attachment would, in a great degree, supersede the necessity for any martial control.

But

But when country volunteers are regimented, the respect and affection for their own particular officers is absorbed in the enlargement of the establishment; whilst the commanding officer, or the adjutant, who is in most cases the efficient commandant, cannot possibly substitute an equal principle of action. Gentlemen finding themselves without any responsibility, neglect attendance, and gradually withdraw altogether.

It would be lamented that corps were ever regimented, if the high rank which has been granted to unprofessional men was the only bad consequence: so many self-evident evils are connected with this mistaken indulgence to gratify false pride, that men unacquainted with the secret springs of Government must be astonished at the motives which influenced their consent; but actual warfare being the most serious of all human operations, should never be offered as a subject for folly and levity to play their antics with, and when the contest is about to be for such an awful stake as our Country, private political projects should never interfere with the defensive arrangement, much less expose to injury the public service.

The volunteers assuredly now prefer to be
directed

directed by their own chieftains ; but in the day of battle will they insist upon these leaders retaining the command ? When life is upon the die, will they collect votes for their retention from those who might with great willingness and propriety commit the Constitution to their discretion ? But let us not believe that gentlemen would insist upon high military rank to gratify a vanity which cannot give them any additional real distinction ; that they ever required, as the *sine qua non* of their services, the admission of this dangerous and indecent encroachment upon the military profession.

It is singular that in the arrangement of the volunteer force those precautions were so avowedly neglected, which, from practical experience, were found essentially necessary for the regulation of all armies ; that for a remote warfare measures of precaution should be taken, which in one of so much more importance are deemed insignificant.

Six years must an officer serve in the British army before he can obtain the rank of a Field Officer, before he is esteemed as qualified (notwithstanding all that time he may have been on actual service) to undertake the responsibility of
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the command which attaches to his situation ; but the volunteer at once assumes the rank of full Colonel, by virtue of which high station he commands nearly every regiment in the king's service ; and if invasion absolutely should take place, may find himself in the command of an army.* It is no counter-argument that his discretion would induce him to consult officers of intelligence. He has a power, which ought to be delegated to no man, unto whom such a charge could not, consistent with the rules of the service, be committed. That there may be heaven-born generals among the volunteer officers is possible. In the French Revolution there were many proofs that there may be great officers without a regular initiation into the army, but such incidents do not justify so wide a deviation from established practice, nor have the officers proved themselves so unworthy of fulfilling their own duties. When once high rank was given, every nobleman and gentleman, of equal station in society, required the same concession, and thus jealousy became the true lever of the mischief which puts authority and respon-

* It is extraordinary that a Clause in the last Bill for regulating the Volunteers positively directed, that no officer under the rank of a General Officer should in any case command them.

fibility where there is no possible experience, and prevents the militia and the volunteers from being commanded by gentlemen of the country.*

The volunteers of London and great cities should alone be regimented.

The volunteers of the country should only be formed into companies, and be commanded by those on whose estates and by whose influence they are raised.

All volunteers ought to be exercised upon one system, and the companies numbered in each county, so as to avoid disputes about precedency.

In case of actual service, the companies when called out should be united, according to the exigency of the occasion and the convenience of the service, as regiments, under the direction of the senior officer, with the rank of major-commandant.

* There is no body of men more liberal than the officers of the King's army. If the bad consequence of a precedent could be avoided, there is not one who would object to the introduction of an individual who has displayed great talent and high courage.

When

When necessary, superior officers from the regular army should be appointed, at the discretion of the general, to conduct and command the corps before an enemy.

If amongst the volunteer officers there are any properly qualified from having been bred in the army, or who may have shewn particular military talent, or studied attentively the theory of war, no doubt the general would gladly employ them; but the power should be vested in him of appointing such commandants on particular services, as he may judge the best calculated to effect his objects.*

There should be no exemptions; for as it is the natural right of every man to defend his property, so is it one of the primeval laws of so-

* A colonel, with one assisting officer, is appointed now to command a brigade; but if each was worthy to be a general in chief, the united services of these individuals could not avail much in an action. How can one or two men command three or four thousand, when the regimental officers are all inexperienced. The station is a very difficult and serious one.

It is discovered that colonels are not of sufficient rank to command the volunteers as was proposed, and therefore they are now all to be made brigadier generals. Such already is the effects of the clause in the late act, which decides that the volunteers are too distinguished to be commanded by field officers from the king's army.

ciety that every citizen should defend his country. This principle was acknowledged in the freest republics, and it is applied in its most strained construction to our naval armaments. The principle is so just, so equally beneficial, that no resistance ever could be opposed to the measure being enforced; but if particular privileges be attached to this personal service, which in their effect are injurious to the community, then and then only that becomes a grievance, and must be altogether abandoned, which otherwise would have proved one of the most satisfactory and impartial modes of affording security to the state. Men are wanted for other important services, and if such a large body of the people be exempted from contributing to the providing of them, an unfair imposition is laid upon those who from a variety of reasonable and even commendable causes have not enrolled themselves.

Every house-holder should be obliged to provide and keep a stand of arms in good order. Every man in the empire should be instructed in the use of them, and in a short time the humblest individual would be ashamed if he did not know the necessary exercise. Military ardour is very readily infused, but the pursuit must not be attended with great inconvenience or expence. Nor should any danger be apprehended to the govern-

government from a people thus trained. Mis-
chief only prevails when large bodies of armed
men having a nominal organization, which is for-
midable but to their country, assemble to deli-
berate, and acknowledge no control but that
which emanates from their committees.

Military clothing is not necessary for such a
force. The eye may not be equally gratified,
but appearance is not worthy a moment's atten-
tion. With the preparations for a contest, which
ought not to last weeks, what has the attire to
do? What advantage does a splendid dress offer
to the state? Where are the funds for supplying
this expensive equipment? How will the volun-
teers reconcile themselves to appear in common
dresses, when uniforms can no longer be pro-
cured by voluntary contributions;—either the
public must provide, or they will retire in dis-
gust. If, however, some uniformity of appear-
ance, and some distinction of dress be the general
wish, why not introduce a coat, which, for con-
venience, colour, and wear, might become the
usual habit of the peasantry. A grey cloth faced
on the collar with a little piece of the county
coloured facings, might be found sufficiently
gay, and become universally worn. Russia duck
trowsers to pull over the common dress would
always give a cleanly appearance, and a cockade

in a round hat would be a sufficient distinction. The non-commissioned officers might have, in addition, particular badges to be worn when on duty, and all contributions should be expended in shoes and great coats. If the volunteers of the cities choose to wear fantastical dresses, there is no reason why they should not be indulged. The expence benefits the revenue, and as they are in general persons of property, they can afford to buy for themselves what their fancies approve.*

No volunteers should have tents, or indeed the army in England. Camp equipage is unnecessary in such a service, and may be highly detrimental. Each volunteer company is now allowed a cart to carry baggage. What a Persian array will be their line of march!† What a fatal indulgence may this not prove!

Baggage is an absolute injury to an army instead of being a benefit. All movements are impeded, and one-third of an army occupied in guarding and conveying it. Would France have conquered as she has, if in the early

* In one corps a private's dress costs 18l.

† The Persians had open country to pass through. The baggage of the volunteers of the army must be confined to turnpike roads where two waggons cannot move abreast.

part of the war she suffered her officers to have more baggage than they could carry on their own backs? Would the disgraceful capitulation after the battle of Marengo have been made, if the preservation of the baggage had not been preferred to fortresses and honour? And who is there that would not be ashamed to insist upon having more than a knapsack.* When the English marched to Cairo, was there a murmur heard on that account: and what officer of that illustrious army would not hide his head, if from an attention to such comforts success had been an hour delayed?† It is a mistaken kindness, and proves that government may be too considerate. The counter order should not, however, be deferred to the last moment.

The yeomanry are susceptible of the same improvements. Great advantage would result to that service if the corps were at least broke into

* The King, when speaking on this subject, once said, "there is no hardship in such times to wear a shirt a week; but nevertheless, if ever the enemy come, I shall take the field in person, and my example shall not be wanting to encourage my people to bear privation; I shall begin by having only a cloak case to contain my baggage."

† Lord Hutchinson himself set the most meritorious example in this respect.

squadrons.* At the present moment there is the greatest difficulty in procuring proper officers; and to complete the required number for the formation of a regiment, all descriptions of persons are admitted, without any consideration of the principle of the establishment. The yeomanry should be men of property associated together for the purpose of preserving internal tranquillity, and performing those irregular duties in case of actual service, which would enable the regular cavalry to direct their whole attention to offensive operations against the enemy. When parliament decreed that the yeomanry should be exempted from the penalties of martial law, it presumed, that the yeomanry were men composed of the most respectable class of the nation. But if parliament had known that the great proportion of many corps were the servants and lowest labourers of farmers, without a shilling of fixed property, or any horse but that which occasionally was lent to obtain the exemption from the horse tax, I must doubt whether the indulgence would have been

* I do not include in this remark the City Light Horse, and the Corps of the Metropolis; their organization appears complete, and they seem to be so well regulated, mounted and exercised, that the highest expectation may justly be formed of their service when opportunity is presented.

extended so far; and I am confident that it ought not to have been, consistent with the rights of the volunteers. The yeomanry system, as at present conducted, costs the nation an enormous sum of money, and will still more, for the officers now require pay; whereas, if only the real yeomanry of the land had been admitted, no other demand would have been made upon the nation, collectively, than some allowance for horse appointments and forage for the horses when on duty. Interest, and former experience during the scarcity, would always ensure the association of the yeomen, if zeal and public spirit, in which they most assuredly are not deficient, should not sufficiently induce them to give personal aid to their country.

A yeomanry force thus constituted, would be a most respectable and efficient body, and afford an instance that the citizen and the foldier may be united in one and the same capacity, for the advantage of the state, and without prejudice to the regular army.—That there are several yeomanry regiments in England fit for any cavalry duty, no person will deny; but the dividing those regiments into independent squadrons would not by any means impair their strength or affect their discipline. The squadrons would voluntarily assemble in

those counties where cavalry may act in line, and exercise as a regiment, perhaps more frequently than under the present system; and in those counties where the irregular duties can only be performed, the independent organization of small corps is particularly requisite.

The gain of proper officers,* and the exclusion of unqualified men are great objects, and which can alone be secured by this amendment.

The yeomanry of England are the pride of the country, but under that character the lowest classes should not be mustered. If a contrary system be followed, then an horse militia would be more useful and not much more expensive. A body of national horse may be of great service, and do great mischief to an enemy's line, although there is no experience amongst them. The charge of cavalry is an impetuous movement, which requires the most powerful exertions of the riders to check when once the impetus is given, and the power of the English horse being almost irresistible, the riders would feel a confidence

* There requires also some additional allowance to the staff. —The adjutants of yeomanry are now only allowed one horse, although they must absolutely traverse in many districts above two hundred miles to attend the squadron parades of their regiment, besides attendance in the field, &c.

of superiority in such an attack,* which infantry cannot have over infantry. If cavalry be repulsed, a partial loss only follows, since they can quickly withdraw from danger; whereas if a line of infantry be broken, the carnage most frequently is excessive, and certainly the survivors are incapacitated from coming into action again on the same day; besides, the disorder may throw the whole army into confusion. The yeomanry force will be highly useful if conducted ably: they must, at all events, render some service to the country, and it would not, if properly formed, be any detriment to more general service: but as to the volunteers, the battle of Zama, by which Carthage fell, should be a warning to England; she should remember that *delenda est Carthago* is the cry of the French, and that her relative situation, as to the means of defence, are very similar—that the resemblance is painfully accurate.†

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* The great elevation of the rider also increases this confidence, which the common phrase of contempt, "I look down upon you," proves: cavalry therefore ought not to be mounted on small horses.

† Hannibal drew up his army in three lines—in the front were placed the mercenaries, in the second the volunteers and national levies, in the third the veterans and troops on whom he could depend. The mercenaries fought bravely, but being pressed by numbers required support from the second line; but the second line began to run away, which so exasperated the mercenaries,

MILITIA.

AN enquiry into the merits of the militia, when the object is to prove its inefficiency as well as deviation from the original principle upon which the militia was created, will be considered by many an invidious and arrogant attempt to depreciate the value of this force; and more particularly, since the chief arguments must be directed against the ability of the officers who command. But these times are too momentous, and the struggle which menaces too awful, for personal considerations to influence the investigation.

The militia was originally raised as a counterpoise to the standing army, and the patriot regarded this force as the constitutional check upon the infringement of British Liberty. The jealousy of monarchical encroachment has pre-

naries, that they ceased to fight with the Romans, and turned their arms upon the fugitive volunteers, slaughtering a great many. The gallant exertions and talents of Hannibal, aided by the intrepid courage of the veteran army, could not repair this misfortune; and Rome thus fulfilled the insulting menace which she had for so many years vaunted. Has England not her mercenaries (Hanoverians), her volunteers and militia, and her small corps *d'élite*—the regular army?

served

served a respect for the establishment, although it has long ceased to possess the qualities which first founded the claim upon the public estimation.

No longer are the gentlemen of landed property, influenced by motives of disinterested patriotism, zealous to hold commissions; on the contrary, so difficult are officers of any description to be procured, that regiments are frequently obliged to advertise in all the country papers of England that such commissions are vacant, and that application is requested to be made for them. In most regiments, notwithstanding this invitation to the multitude, which may be compared to the parable of the Wedding Feast, there are still several vacancies, and for which there are no candidates.

That there are individual gentlemen of the most ample fortune and consequence in militia regiments, exclusive of the colonels, is admitted; but I speak of the system collectively, and I am not afraid of hazarding an assertion to be denied, when I state that there is in general more wealth, landed property, and high connexion in the regiments of the regular army, than in the militia corps; and that the militia is of the two services the most
mer-

mercenary ; since the King's officers pay large sums of money to have the mere honour of belonging to the profession, as the pay does not return annuity interest for the purchase money.

The partizans of the militia cannot advance an argument to prove, that this force is likely to protect the liberties of the people more than what is called the king's army ; and indeed he must be an ignorant observer of these times, who apprehends that the bayonet will ever be applied to force royal prerogative, beyond its prescribed limits. Iron is not the metal of which, since the time of Cromwell, the master-key to the sanctum of freedom has been composed.

The military organization of the militia is of that nature, as to be defective of the first principle of military character. Does the militia officer command any real military respect from the foldier, for the service he has seen, and the conduct he has manifested in the day of battle ? Does that affectionate attachment subsist between them, which a participation of hardship and danger always creates ? Does the confined character of the service inculcate or cherish those high sentiments of honour which exclusively belong to the military profession, or may not the
general

general service be seriously injured by officers having high rank, who are inadequate to command, as never having had an opportunity of learning the practical part of their duty. If these questions be answered in the affirmative, which they must be, then the same arguments apply to the militia, which already have been used against the volunteers; and so much the stronger, as the establishment is much more expensive, and materially affects the recruiting of the army, as well as excluding many of the better order of men who are required for the regimental staffs. Mr. Windham was the first member who dared to avow similar sentiments, and although a partial unpopularity may have been the consequence, still the good sense of the proposition will daily gain friends to the measure, and in the great debt the country owes to his patriotic courage, and luminous counsel, this proposal will not be noted as the least of the items.

Strange and fearful times are approaching.— On British ground must Englishmen, within a few years, if not sooner, contest for the future possession of the soil. This is the arena, if Buonaparte lives, where he will combat for the empire of the world. He comes not like a thief in the night to pillage and depart, but he blazons forth his mighty preparations, his demand is

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England, and he braves in pride of daring our fiercest resistance.

It is idle, it is criminal then, to suffer the views of the selfish, or the antiquated notions of an originally false reasoning, to predominate against the positive security of the country.—When French garrisons quarter on our houses, what satisfaction will be derived from the recollection that a spirit of independence had prevented the formation of a British army. Will our posterity be grateful to their ancestors, when they learn that they were born in French vassalage, because they feared the creation of a proper military force to resist the invaders.—England enslaved by Englishmen would be still our country, oppressed not irretrievably dishonoured; but who could endure the dominion of a foreign enemy, and that dominion held by France.

If we trust the defence of the empire to volunteers and militia, we shall at least suffer ruinous disasters, for such is the miserable effect of those systems, that individual courage is of little avail, and though worthy of victory, defeat and shame will be the probable catastrophe.*

But

* I do not enter into the minor evils of this system, but for some of them I refer to the publications of Captain James, an old

But if the militia cannot be altogether extinguished, at least every benefit should be derived from it. By fixing the future establishment at 40,000 men, the principle of reduction is acknowledged, but like the abolition of the slave trade, it is too gradual in its progress.—There are at present above 20,000 men anxious to enlist from the militia into the army, notwithstanding all the checks which the mal-arrangement of the regular army opposes. Why is the country not to derive immediate advantage from such a voluntary offer of excellent recruits. Why are men to be forced to continue in a service, which hourly will become more irksome?—With all the efforts of government and individuals, not above 17,000 men have been raised this war for general service. Here then would be a powerful levy of instructed soldiers, not a dribbling augmentation, which scarcely repairs the contingent losses of the army, but a positive and immediate increase of exercised men of treble value to the new recruit.

The colonels of militia regiments possess too

old militia Officers, whose labours have contributed most efficaciously to the elucidation of all abuses, and the perfection of the whole military system, besides having produced several very valuable Works.

liberal

liberal and patriotic feeling to object to any arrangement when the interests of their country are at stake; they rather would be animated by a generous emulation, and vie with each other for the credit of sending to the army the greatest number of volunteers, and the large majority would approve of a force being created which can alone give sufficient protection to the empire.*

For the volunteers and militia this line seems to have been formed, and if the poet was not gifted with a spirit of prophecy, he has nevertheless correctly anticipated our situation.

Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis
Tempus eget.

These opinions may give offence unintention-

* A nobleman, to whose opinion the highest deference must be paid, has, it is stated, declared, that he considers the volunteers of Scotland as equal to the defence of that part of the Empire. The Scotch are certainly a very warlike people, and the poverty of the country is unfavourable to the progress of an enemy; but notwithstanding those advantages, the ability of the commander, and the heroic exertions which he will make, still, if a considerable force should land, such a triumph must at least be considered as one of those extraordinary instances which sometimes occur, to prove that military theory does not always rule events.

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ally, but gentlemen should reason candidly on such important subjects, and not wish to preclude discussion. The system, not the individuals acting under it, is the object of censure; and let any military admirer of the volunteers and militia imagine himself at a post with these raw foldiers, let him reflect what must be his answer, if asked by a general officer, how long he could defend it:—"The post is tenable such a time, provided the troops will do their duty:" but if he had with him real foldiers, would he not confidently calculate the capability of defence, according to the locality and his means, reply with assurance, and determine with precision, the time he would maintain the post, without insinuating or even harbouring the idea that the troops would retire without his particular order.

If an army should go into action, which never saw a shot fired, who can presume to affirm, that the whole may not run away at the first experiment;* but if a veteran army does give way, there is this certainty and advantage, that the battle has been bravely contested, and that the loss of the enemy has been proportionate. Men

* The brave Frederick withdrew in the first action unbecomingly.

of reading and reflection should not suffer the public vanity to stifle their memory, and over-rule knowledge and reason. England has been conquered by a foreign army, although an heroic king headed a more numerous body of equally brave men. Other powerful nations have also been subdued, for want of attention to the nature of the enemy's force by which they were attacked. Warriors can alone oppose warriors.

When Greek meets Greek, then comes the tug of war.

ARMY OF RESERVE.

AS long as the acquirement of West India islands forms the chief object of our wars, it is essentially necessary that some restraint should be imposed upon ministers, who so fatally misconceive the true interests of the nation. If the force of the empire should be altogether disposable, the mother country might be dismantled in a contest for sugar islands, which to obtain singly, costs so much blood and treasure; but which at a peace have hitherto passed from our dominion in the sweeping article of a general surrender in favour of the enemy.

If the citizens be bound to defend the state, a reciprocal obligation exists, and the government virtually contracts to provide sufficient protection to the inhabitants. A force raised upon the principle of limited service, but cherishing the military spirit, feeding the regular army, and directed by experienced officers, is assuredly a more satisfactory establishment than the militia. An intermediate service to encourage the zest for a soldier's life, is more particularly necessary if

the period of service should not be limited in the regular army.

In this school of preparation peculiar habits are acquired. The alarm which naturally exists at first, great a change subsides, attachment to comrades supersedes the regard for former acquaintance, and seven men out of ten are eventually thus induced to embrace a profession, upon which, without this initiation, they never would have resolved.*

The principal check to enlisting into the regulars from the army of reserve, is the affection which the men frequently feel towards their officers;† and in the late recruiting from the army of

* There are incontrovertible proofs of this opinion being correct. Last war the militia filled the ranks of our army, and whole regiments, who had engaged for limited service, volunteered on the Egyptian Expedition, to extend their engagements to any part of the world. At the Cape of Good Hope there was a regiment raised in Scotland, and composed of farmer's sons. When the Cape was evacuated 400 volunteered on to India.

† When every effort had failed to procure individual recruits from the Army of Reserve, an order was issued for permitting the different corps to enter into the regular service by whole regiments, when two-thirds of each corps volunteered, and all would have gone if the same allowances for the families of married men could have been extended to them when they quitted the Army of Reserve, which were in that establishment for recruiting the army inadvertently introduced.

reserve,

reserve, this attachment has been particularly exemplified; but if the battalion of the army of reserve became the second battalion of a regular regiment, bearing the name of the same county, a reciprocal identity would be established, and the regret to separate be considerably diminished, since an interchange of officers would be frequent upon the proposed plan, which I shall now state, and then argue its merits:—

1st. There should be 100,000 men raised for the defence of Great Britain; who should be enlisted to serve for the same number of years as the regular army.

In time of peace or war, the privates, in such proportion as the King might direct, should return to their own homes, and follow their usual occupations.

The whole force should, however, assemble to be trained for two months in each year; and on every Sunday, the individuals should be obliged to appear in uniform, on which day pay should be granted.

The officers and staff of the regiment to be kept on permanent pay.

Head-quarters to be as stationary as possible.

The officers to be taken from the regular army; and the regimental staff from amongst the garrison battalions and from regiments of the line, who may wish to obtain such a provision for good men, but who are no longer able to endure the vicissitudes of climate, and the hardships of foreign service.*

Enlisting into the regular army to be allowed, provided that the army of reserve be not reduced above 70,000 men, but the recruiting for the full complement always to continue.

The Counties should pay to the Government the amount of the present expence which the militia costs them; this sum to be applied to the recruiting fund of the army of reserve.

Such is the general outline of an establishment which cannot prove formidable to the British Constitution, but which the enemy would regard as a permanent and efficacious system of defence, opposing to their views of conquest a force truly military, and laying a foundation for the inex-

* Non-commissioned officers and soldiers might also be placed in this army for temporary advantage.

haustible supply of the disposable army, and of distributing through the empire well disciplined soldiers.—I have endeavoured to prove that on the character, talents and energies of the officers depends the good conduct of troops. The physical courage of human nature is universally upon the same level, but its exertion awaits the due stimulus which must be applied to the mind. It is impossible to have a defensive army more respectably constituted than with officers from the regular service, and non-commissioned officers whose prime of life has been passed in the active duties of the military profession. Veterans returning to their country to pass the remainder of their days in a manner congenial to their habits, usefully employed to the last moment in the service of the State, and presenting the interesting and noble spectacle of tried fidelity and courage, receiving well-earned recompence and consideration; at the same time instructing and animating youth to enter on that career which they have run so meritoriously. Their appearance would command respect; the history of their lives inflame the ambition and curiosity of the young mind, and the prospect of an honorable as well as comfortable employment in their last years would confirm the disposition to a military life.

These are the allurements which should only be used and are only required. Go and do thou likewise—would then be the counsel of the parent and the feeling of the son.

With what confidence would not young troops under such conduct advance into action! What novelty of danger could disunite such an organization; what misfortunes could be apprehended.—The mechanism would be simple but complete, and the machinery indissoluble.

By permitting the men in time of peace to pursue their ordinary occupations, many advantages would be the result. Economy when destructive of its future consequences is a dangerous frugality, but in this instance no detriment could arise. The friends of public liberty would with pleasure see so large a body of armed men returning to the duties of civil life, and the danger of a standing army would be removed by this connexion with the people; nor could the Government fear the institution of a force so privileged, unless a very narrow-sighted policy indeed operates. If the Amendments about to be proposed for the future regulation of the armed force should be adopted, a better order of society will be introduced, and the profligate never could assume any preponderance. The formation of
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the regimental staffs would also act as a check upon any licentious disposition, and disaffection would never be engendered, if regulations were judicious and treatment humane. But no Government can long protract existence by standing armies, if the Nation at large be resolved upon an alteration. The British Government can have no fears of such a nature, all parties wish to maintain a Constitution which is found by experience to be the best practical form of government, and every man is zealous to defend his country.

* Some military men may object from the supposed disorders which this continual varied change of character might create, but the militia did not feel great inconvenience from such an arrangement; and Prussia owes her annual existence to such an establishment. Whilst economy is thus consulted, agriculture and manufactures benefited, the man is also in a state of improvement, or prevented from deteriorating by indo-

* No one, however, can approve of armed bodies deliberating or being organized under Committees. The agitation of many questions, not at first treasonable, might produce disorders which eventually would terminate in open rebellion, Great revolutions are most frequently effected without pre-intention at the moment of action.

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lence and inactivity. It is a mistaken notion that a foldier should only handle his arms ; his strength, health and morality require incessant employment, and the services which are frequently required from foldiers in actual warfare encrease the necessity of habituating them to constant labour. The Guards are certainly the best troops in the world to besiege a town, which however rarely happens in their service, because they are accustomed to hard work, can dig more rapidly, and carry heavier burthens than most other foldiers.*

The army of reserve should be allowed to wear their uniforms on a Sunday. The pride of appearing as a foldier should be encouraged ; and he should also be directed to present himself before a magistrate, or at the church of his parish, if no military garrison be in the neighbourhood, that he may be entitled, on the certificate of his proper attendance, to receive a certain allowance of pay for that day.—This regulation would tend to attach him still more strongly to

* A regiment should also be accustomed to march against time. The practice is of the highest importance, as the power of the legs is one of the most essential qualities of a foldier. In general the English march very ill, although their spirit will, for great efforts, enable them to make extraordinary exertions.

the military character, and ensure his decent demeanour, which should be the characteristic of a foldier.

The expence of maintaining the officers and staff of the army on full pay would be no very considerable tax upon the country, and the advantage to be derived is more than an equivalent. Indeed, if the non-commissioned officers were chiefly old foldiers, they would be entitled to this remuneration; and therefore that deduction must be made from the aggregate increased expence. But surely this great empire can afford to pay for her necessary establishments, nor would the nation murmur, when service was faithfully given to the public weal, at any such disposal of the public money. The pay of the army is already so small that it scarcely affords subsistence: the half-pay is absolute beggary. To reduce officers, as has been the practice, is taking advantage of the gallant spirit which actuates young men to enter into the service, without calculating the chances of being turned out again upon the wide world, after an expenditure of, perhaps, all their fortune on an allowance scarcely sufficient to support life, and totally incapacitated from obtaining a livelihood by entering into any other liberal profession. The re-
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restoration to full pay is very precarious and always difficult. The Duke of York, with all his efforts to employ officers whose services he valued and whose condition he lamented, could not have succeeded to any very considerable extent, unless the war had been renewed, and even now many are not restored to their stations in the service: how much less will he then be enabled to effect this object when he has the officers of 70,000 men to reinstate, as has been proposed by the late Bill. If, however, any officers can be procured from those gentlemen who have quitted the army, half-pay would be a sufficient encouragement and remuneration, since their leaving the service is a proof that they had other means of maintenance; but if gentlemen were in employment, their admission should in no case injure the promotion of the regular officers.*

* Those who were jealous of the army of reserve being under the total control of military men, would with satisfaction see the introduction of gentlemen who had retired upon their property, and who consequently had that stake in the country on which so much is presumed. The best of the present militia officers might also be admitted into this army; since, perhaps, some retreat for them is necessary, as so few have even the income of qualification. The great importance of the measure to the public would justify even the introduction of many into the regulars with their present rank.

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That the head-quarters should be nearly stationary in time of peace perhaps militates against former practice; but the advantages of *castra stativa* for such a force, nevertheless, counteract the inconveniencies which are more imaginary than real.

That the counties should pay the money at present required to maintain the militia is perfectly equitable, as otherwise those would be charged with an additional burthen, who have been exonerated by the Legislature for some equivalent rendered to the State.

Voluntary enrolment is preferable to ballot. The service should be too advantageous to require any compulsive support.

With a defensive force thus organized the empire would have nothing to fear from any sudden attack, and the enemy, aware of this state of preparation, would probably be less inclined to hazard a war in which her maritime inferiority would always be an insuperable obstacle to success in those enterprizes against our foreign possessions, which she could alone meditate.

REGULAR ARMY.

ENGLAND has not for many years had a disposable force which could command her any respect as a military power. But that she should provide an army commensurate with her rank in the world, her maritime empire and extraordinary wealth, is at length admitted by many of those Statesmen who most pertinaciously resisted the principle of Continental connexion and military interference. The uneasiness of a defensive war; the agitation created by the menaces of an active, formidable and unoccupied enemy hovering upon our long line of vulnerable coast, encouraging the disaffected in Ireland, and threatening desolation and ruin whenever her arms should triumph; the loss of revenue and useful labour by the consequent array of the nation have forced a more liberal and enlarged policy.*

It is not within the limits of possibility that

* Hannibal very justly said, "No great country can have long tranquillity; if it has not war abroad, it will find enemies at home."

an English army should ever be of sufficient strength to carry war into France without the aid of auxiliaries and the most powerful allies, but if she could employ 40,000 men in conjunction with the Continental Powers, and ensure the maintenance of that number, at the calculation of one half being expended each campaign, who would pretend to say that the Continent might not be excited, with other collateral assistance, to attempt its own rescue from the heavy dominion of France? Who can deny that the diversion of 40,000 men would not materially contribute to the success of Austria? There are several important points where such a debarkation would amply repay the expenditure of all the blood and treasure which might ensue. Too long has the idea prevailed that the best efforts of England would prove but like a drop of water added to the sea. Facts are forgotten, and judgment blinded, to continue this false aphorism. If Sir R. Abercrombie had disembarked in Holland with 40,000 men, there is almost a positive certainty that this essential country had been recovered as far as the Waal. If, when Buonaparte invaded Italy a second time, a quarter of the number of English troops had been but added to the Austrian army, would there have been a fatal battle of Marengo? I speak not of the prowess
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of the English, but of the augmentation to the Austrian army. That great battle was fought with not more than 40,000 troops on each side, and even the addition of 5000 either way would have, by absolute force, decided the action.* Few armies meet each other in greater strength, and when report states 60,000 men have taken the field, there are not two-thirds of the number. The Austrians should have opened the campaign 1794 with 180,000 men, but there were not more than 70,000. Even France seldom could furnish more than 40,000 effective men to each army, and the State which can provide that number of troops would justly be considered as a most important ally. If England could once prove herself possessed of such a disposable army, she would not only recover the influence she formerly had, but gain a preponderance she never had before upon the Continent. Her ambassadors would not then be insulted, her hostility defied, and her interference rejected with contempt. The talents of great ministers may do much to restore consequence, but with how much more

* The battle of Marengo, after it had been fairly won, was in fact lost by an unaccountable panic.

† Consequently all the plans of General Mack, which had been framed for the action of the large number, failed.

success

success if they could shew England in this war-like attitude.*

There is no country in the universe where finer materials can be collected for an army. Bravery is the national characteristic, and the spirit of freedom exalts this virtue to its highest elevation. The people are well made, active, and muscular. The breed of horses is the best in the world for cavalry service,† and the great wealth in the country, with the excellence of workman-

* In Cobbett's Weekly Journal of the 22d of June, there is a most excellent letter upon the subject of a standing army, which merits general perusal. Indeed that able writer has since the commencement of his undertaking, displayed such admirable talent, and reasoned with so much judgment and perspicuity on the whole military system, that he commands the utmost attention. His intrepid and patriotic exposition of the errors of the volunteer establishment has secured to his name the most honorary recollections, and the effect of his services will be permanent as long as History records the events of these times.

† Foreigners pretend, and many admirers of every thing foreign, that the English horses are not sufficiently upon their haunches—but who ever heard of a battle being won by Caracols? The superiority of the English horse consists in strength and action; an animal able to move with 18 stone upon his back with greater rapidity than any other horse in the known world.—Skirmishing may be amusement, but the impetus of the charge alone makes cavalry terrible.

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ship, commands the most complete military equipment. At the commencement of every war however, an entire new army is to be created; whereas any increase, above one-fourth of the original army, is contrary to all true principle.

Several years elapse before such a force is collected as may undertake any offensive measures; and hitherto the nation, tired with an unsuccessful struggle, have insisted on peace just at the moment that an army was formed which might repair former disasters.

The expedition to Holland was a melancholy proof of the want of such pre-arrangement; and the last year of the war only shewed a regular army which might properly receive such an appellation.

It is true, that so long as the West India islands are to be garrisoned and attacked,* there never

* Above 100,000 of our best officers, soldiers and sailors perished last war in the West Indies. Why should not troops be raised for colonial service, from the various countries bordering on the Mediterranean; a short capitulation would induce numbers to enlist, and Malta might be the depôt. I once proposed to Government, in case Alexandria had been retained, that Æthiopians should be recruited for this purpose. They are

never can be any hope of a great force being collected for European service, nevertheless improvement should perfect what there is, and the army which England pays should be in the best possible condition.

If English soldiers were not endowed with more than ordinary resolution, instead of having acquired great honour for their country, they would have lost all the pretensions to character, which had been earned in so many former struggles; but who can conscientiously assert, that the British army has not every where upheld the glory of their country? Who can arraign it with ever failing in its duty, notwithstanding the reverses it experienced? The fact is, that our expeditions are planned for the employment of a certain number of troops, but no arrangement is made for the instantaneous supply of those lost in action.* The hearts of
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are a brave, faithful and warlike people, and great numbers annually come to Cairo, and are dispersed through Asia. The Cairo Bey of the Mamelukes was an Æthiopian, and would have honoured any nation.

* The expedition to Egypt was the only one which succeeded, and that was successful against all moral probability. At the same time I must here observe, that an observation in my History of the Expedition to Egypt has been quoted, by the author of Curfory Remarks, and which was not introduced by me to criminate Ministers for sending so small a force, but to

men must be very found which could still beat high after they found that all the efforts of their courage were unavailing, as the advantage of that success, which in the day of battle they had so dearly bought, could not be retained.

When the Duke of York first came to the high situation he now holds, the character of the army was depressed below mediocrity, every abuse existed which could depreciate the profession, and represent the British military in the eyes of Europe as insignificant from their feebleness, and contemptible from the mal-administration of the service. The Duke boldly undertook the difficult task of restoring its consequence, and extirpating the prevailing evils, and he has succeeded by incessant perseverance and able regulations, to shew the actual want of information. It is but justice to observe, that I never proposed to insinuate a charge on this account, as I knew that Egypt was a country so peculiarly situated, and intelligence so difficult to be procured from thence, on account of the ignorance of the Turks and natives, that the number of French troops in the country was never ascertained until the surrender of the last fortress, Alexandria, and that previous calculation did not equal the number by seven or eight thousand men. If then this difficulty occurred when in the country, with all the power to enforce, and the inclination on the part of the inhabitants to give intelligence, there can be no blame attached to Ministers at home for not having correct returns.

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yond the hopes of his most sanguine friends.* There are, however, several obstacles to his complete success, which can only be removed by attracting the attention of the public to them. But before this subject is treated upon, the means of procuring a regular army should first be examined.

In order to appreciate the proposed plan duly, the checks to recruiting must be first ascertained, and I have no doubt that they are comprized in the present system of enlisting for life, and the frequency of corporal punishment.

It is strange, that in a free country a custom so repugnant to freedom—as enlisting for life—and the particular character of the British Constitution, should ever have been introduced, but more singular that the practice should have been continued after every other nation in Europe had abandoned it as impolitic, and as too severe an imposition upon the subject.

If in those countries, where the inferior order of society are born in vassalage, and where the will of the Sovereign is immediate law, this power has

* The Duke is too noble-minded to receive, and I am too proud to offer flattery, but it is impossible to speak of the improvements in the army, without rendering the credit due to his exertions.

been relinquished in order to incline men voluntarily to enlist ; surely there is strong presumptive evidence that the general interests of the service are improved instead of being injured by this more liberal consideration. For however requisite such an amendment is upon the principle of due attention to the rights of men, still, unless the effects were not more directly beneficial to the Government, there is no ground to suppose that in many States the experiment of reformation would have been hazarded. The advantages which would accrue to the British army are obvious ; numbers would enlist who are now restrained by the apprehension of being fixed for life to a particular service, which at one period might be desirable, but at the expiration of six or seven years may, from a variety of causes, cease to possess the same inducements. The chief alarm of parents would subside,* and curiosity, pride, and an aversion to servile labour would almost supersede the necessity of any bounty. A better class of men would embrace the profession : and those who quitted at the expiration of their capitulation would not only be ready and capable

* Every officer knows that excellent recruits are withdrawn from the service by parents, who would wish their sons to *follow their wild oats* in the army, but who cannot reconcile themselves to the idea of their engaging for life.

to assist in the home defence, but virtually act as so many recruiting serjeants for the army.*

The independence of an Englishman naturally recoils at the prospect of bondage, which gradually produces discontent against the bent even of inclination. How many men are there who have now not the faintest wish to leave their own estates, even for a journey into another county, but who, if restrained by any edict from quitting England, would find this island too narrow to contain them, would draw their breath convulsively as if they craved free air, and feel all the mental anguish of the prisoner in a dungeon. What is the inference to be now fairly drawn from the perseverance in the system of enlisting for life. Is it not that the British service is so obnoxious and little conciliating, that if the permission to retire were accorded, the ranks would be altogether abandoned, and the skeleton only remain as an eternal and mournful monument of the wretchedness of a soldier's condition? Is it not a declaration to the world that the service is so ungrateful to the feelings of the soldiery, that when once the unfortunate victim is entrapped it is necessary to secure his allegiance by a per-

* Some years must consequently elapse before this effect can be complete, but the advantages may be fairly calculated upon in anticipation.

petual state of confinement? Such must be the conclusion which the present system would sanction, if the desire of enlisting even under the present discouraging circumstances did not offer positive counter evidence.* I feel confident in the assertion, that nine-tenths of the chief officers of the army would recommend the limitation of service as to time, and equally so, that in this case the want of men would never embarrass the Government, whose sole attention would then be required to provide the means of payment.

The only objection which is ever advanced against the alteration, is founded upon the difficulty of arranging the army in our Colonies. But in time of war this inconvenience would cease; and in peace surely there is no difficulty

* The enlisting of the militia last war, the disposition of the army of reserve, all of whom would have entered into the army, if the same allowances for their families could have been continued, and the present desire of the militia, are proofs that innate spirit counteracts in a strong degree the resistance which the system opposes. The experiment of limiting the time of service would by no means lessen the supply which the present mode furnished to the army, because men who are disposed to enlist for life would gladly enlist for a shorter period. The chances are therefore in favour of the alteration; nor would the prospect of soon quitting the service cause an indifference to character, but, on the contrary, increase the value of a good name.

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to make perpetual changes if necessary, since our large fleets are continually passing and repassing. But if the inconvenience should be still greater, it never can be of sufficient magnitude to counteract the benefits of the measure. The officers of Government may have additional trouble and business, but the redundant supply to the army, its tribute to justice, and the brave efficient servants of the public, will ensure returns more than equivalent to any expence or augmented employment.

It is however to be hoped, that the day is not remote when our Colonies shall cease to be such a claim upon the active population of this country : That charnel house must be closed for ever against British troops.—The soldier who dies in the field is wrapped in the mantle of honour, and the pall of glory is extended over his relatives ; but in a warfare against climates, the energy of the man is destroyed before life is extinguished ; he wastes into an inglorious grave, and the calamitous termination of his existence offers no cheering recollections to relieve the affliction of his loss.

But even if this destructive service should be prolonged, there is the greater necessity for adopting that system which may be a counterpoise

poise to the havock. If hope, the most durable and fascinating passion of the mind be but restored to the foldier, the youth of the country will flock in crowds to their standards.—It is not that a foldier expects a long duration of life, but human nature is not so servile as to bear with resignation the thought of being for ever deprived of the rights of civil liberty, and the idea of perpetual servitude should be intolerable to Englishmen.

The second and equally strong check to the recruiting of the army, is the frequency of corporal punishment. This is truly a most delicate subject, but when the new organization of the whole military system is under consideration, and has so much excited the public attention, a fair investigation of all the impediments, and an enquiry into the abuses which operate to the prejudice of the service, becomes no longer an unwarrantable interference. Had his Royal Highness the Duke of York the power of controlling the excess or the frequency, there then could be no necessity to intrude this discussion. He has always expressed himself as anxious to maintain the greatest degree of discipline, at the same time as most interested to guard the foldier from unnecessary severity, to make officers regulate

late by attention and not by the cat-o'-nine-tails.* But not only does an Act of Parliament give certain rights and powers to commanding officers, but the militia are altogether independent of his jurisdiction in the interior management of regiments. And if a positive restraint could be issued, without previous public examination, commanding officers who were checked in their practice by this regulation would attribute every disorder in the regiment to the Duke of York's order; and it must indeed be admitted that any partial direction of this nature is very difficult, until the principle of the practice is combated by argument, and all its evil consequences exposed by reasoning.

Be this however as it may, I feel convinced that I have no object but the good of the service, and consequently to promote the Commander in

* A still greater Personage, whose principle is generosity and practice benevolence, has also frequently avowed the same sentiments.

Sir Ralph Abercrombie was also an enemy to corporal punishments for light offences. His noble and worthy successor, whose judgment must have great influence, Lord Moira, General Simcoe, and almost every General Officer in the Army, express the same aversion continually, but they have no power of interference.

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Chief's views, and that my feelings are solely influenced by love of humanity, a grateful sense of duty to brave men, and not by a false ambition of acquiring popularity. If I did not think the subject of the most essential importance, no motive should induce me to bring it forwards; if I was not aware, that however eager the Commander in Chief was to interpose his authority, that the correction of the abuse does not altogether depend upon his *veto*, and cannot, with due regard to the peculiar circumstances of his situation, be required to emanate abruptly from him. My appeal is made to the Officers of the Army and Militia, for there must be no marked discrimination between these two services, notwithstanding there may be a great difference, in their different modes of treating the soldiery.—I shall sedulously avoid all personal allusions.—The object in view is of greater magnitude than the accusation of individual malefactors.—I shall not enter into particulars of that excess of punishment which has in many instances been attended with the most fatal consequences.—I will not by quoting examples, represent a picture in too frightful a colouring for patient examination; but, nevertheless, having passed the Rubicon, I cannot recede from the enter-

enterprize, and the cause must be advocated with resolution tempered by discretion.

The present age is a remarkable epoch in the history of the world. Civilization is daily making the most rapid progress, and humanity is triumphing hourly over the last enemies of mankind.* But whilst the African excites the compassion of the Nation, and engages the attention of the British Legislature, the British soldier, their fellow countryman, the gallant faithful protector of their liberties and champion of their honour, is daily exposed to suffer under the abuse of that power with which ignorance or a bad disposition may be armed.—There is no mode of punishment so disgraceful as flogging, and none more inconsistent with the military character, which should be esteemed as the essence of honour and the pride of manhood; but when what should be used but in very extreme cases as the *ultimum supplicium*, producing the moral death of the criminal, becomes the common penalty for offences in which there is no moral turpitude, or but a petty violation of martial law, the evil requires serious attention.

How many soldiers, whose prime of life has been

* The Slave Merchants.

passed in the service, and who have behaved with unexceptionable conduct, have been whipt eventually for an accidental indiscretion; an absence from tattoo-beating, or even a dirty shirt. Intoxication is an odious vice, and since the Duke of York has been at the head of the army, officers have ceased to pride themselves upon the insensate capability of drinking, but, nevertheless, flogging is too severe as a general punishment, for what has been the practice of officers, and also most decidedly fails in correcting the disposition to drink. — Cleanliness is a virtue, and highly essential for the health of the soldier, but surely there are a thousand ways of enforcing attention to dress, and producing a love of decent appearance, without having recourse to such rigor as corporal punishment. Absence from quarters is a great fault, and must be checked; but is there no allowance to be made for young men, and the temptations which may occur to seduce such an occasional neglect of duty; would not confinement for an evening or two afterwards be a sufficient mortification?

Officers are too familiarized to consider soldiers as mere machines who are insensible to kind treatment, and on whose minds no reasoning can operate; but if they would remember that man

is an intellectual being, susceptible of reflection and endowed with faculties, they should at least try the experiment fairly, and endeavour to ascertain whether those vicious habits to which the lower classes are often addicted, may not be corrected by lenient measures, and a frequent appeal to their character as soldiers. I am positive that the *amour propre* of man, except in very bad subjects indeed, is always to be excited, that the *esprit du corps* of regiments may always be formed, and that every soldier may be rendered proud of his profession, interested in the preservation of its honour, and be sensibly affected by its disgrace. Educated in the 15th Light Dragoons,* I was early instructed to respect the soldier; that was a corps before which the triangles were never planted, where each man felt an individual spirit of independence, walked erect as if conscious of his value as a man and a soldier; where affection for his officer and pride in his corps were so blended, that duty became a satisfactory employment, and to acquire for each new distinction the chief object of their wishes. With such men every enterprize was to be attempted which could

* No corps was ever more fortunate in their commanding officers—no corps ever behaved more gallantly on all occasions, and the Duke of York is a witness of the affectionate zeal that they always manifested for the general service and his person.

be executed by courage and devotion, and there was a satisfaction in commanding them, which could never have been derived from a system of severity.

The sense of shame is the feeling which should be worked upon unless the subject is incorrigibly depraved, and then he is unfit to enjoy the advantages of a soldier's situation, but should be sent to some station where he could do no mischief by the influence of his evil communication, and where he might be employed in constant laborious duties.

Corporal punishment ought to be so rare in the British service, that whenever inflicted, such an event should be considered as remarkable, and then the impression would be advantageous; but the eye is now so familiarized to such spectacles, that the sight is no longer sickening or disgusting, and consequently, as indifference gains ground, hope of improvement by example must recede. There is no maxim more true than that cruelty is generated in cowardice, and that humanity is inseparable from courage. The ingenuity of officers should be exercised to devise modes of mitigating the punishment and yet maintaining discipline. If the heart be well disposed, a thousand different
method

methods of treating offences will suggest themselves, but to prescribe positive penalties for breaches of duty is impossible, since no two cases are ever exactly similar.

Qui fruitur pœnâ ferus est, legumque videtur
Vindictam præstare sibi. Diis proximus ille est
Quem ratio non ira movet; qui facta rependens
Consilio punire potest.

Unfortunately many officers will not give themselves the trouble to consider how they can be merciful; and if a return was published of all regimental punishments within the last two years, the number would be as much a subject of astonishment as regret. I knew a colonel of Irish militia, happily now dead, who flogged in one day seventy of his men, and, I believe, punished several more the next morning; but notwithstanding this extensive correction, the regiment was by no means improved.

Corporal punishments never yet reformed a corps, but they have totally ruined many a man who would have proved, under milder treatment, a meritorious foldier. They break the spirit without amending the disposition.— Whilst the lash strips the back, despair writhes round the heart, and the miserable culprit, viewing himself as fallen below the rank of his fellow species, can no longer attempt the recovery of

his station in society. Can the brave man, and he endowed with any generosity of feeling, forget the mortifying vile condition in which he was exposed? Does not therefore the cat-o'-nine-tails defeat the chief object of punishment?* And is not a mode of punishment too severe which for ever degrades and renders abject?—Instead of upholding the character of the soldier as entitled to the respect of the community, this system renders him despicable in his own eyes, and the object of opprobrium in the state, or of mortifying commiseration.

Military punishments, more severe than the common penalties of civil law, are undoubtedly required, the soldier knows well the necessity, but when they exceed the bounds which a due regard to justice and mercy prescribes, they only deprave the mind, and operate as an encouragement to perseverance in misconduct. Pain will not reform; the discipline of the mind is far

* It is to be remembered that flogging is the common treatment, not an awful extraordinary example. If the practice of some militia regiments was imitated throughout all, the whole seventy thousand would be flogged round in something less than six years; but even the average of the common practice in many corps would reach to that amount at no very distant date; there are, however, some regiments most kindly treated and consequently better regulated.

more efficacious than the discipline of the body, and how much more satisfactory?

It is a melancholy truth that punishments have considerably augmented, that ignorant and fatal notions of discipline have been introduced into the service, subduing all the amiable emotions of human nature. Gentlemen who justly boast the most liberal education in the world, have familiarized themselves to a degree of punishment, which characterizes no other nation in Europe.*

When a commanding officer finds disorder in the regiment, instead of applying himself to discover and remove the cause, by prudent and conciliating arrangements, he too frequently considers the cat-o'-nine-tails as the only *vis medicatrix*; and by an intemperate use produces a general disorganization, rendering the good bad, instead of amending the profligate.

How many regiments have gained admiration when passing in review, for their appearance and manœuvre, whilst the high and exalted feelings

* It must also be admitted that officers who have been raised from the ranks are generally more severe than other members of a court-martial, or as commanding officers.

of the soldier had long been extirpated by a system of terror? How many officers have established a false reputation, whose registers of punishment should have branded them with disgrace, and rendered them unworthy of their stations in the service?

In proportion as officers are ignorant of their duty, and unequal to the command of men, punishment is more frequent, notwithstanding there are such strong proofs of the inefficacy of such severity. The 52d regiment is at this moment indisputably one of the first corps in the service, in every respect. The cat-o'-nine-tails is never used, and yet discipline is there seen in the highest state of perfection. In other corps continual punishments are taking place on the fruitless attempt of rivalling the 52d, whereas the very means employed for ever prevent the possibility of their attaining mediocrity.

The 10th battalion of reserve was raised and formed within six months, as a most complete corps, regular in its conduct, and fit for any service, with only the punishment of three old offenders, who had come from other regiments, and none even of these received more than fifty lashes. A different system was however followed

in other corps, and a number of men punished beyond what I feel myself at liberty to state.*

Whence comes this indifference to our fellow species? This neglect of men, on whose exertions the life and character of officers must depend, by whose blood they acquire their fame, and by whose generous sacrifice they expect the reward of victory?

There is a great distinction between the romantic theory of false philosophy and practical conduct. No person can deny, that as in the community there are many vicious members, there must also be many bad men interspersed in the army, whom kind treatment will not influence, and who are callous to the sentiment of grati-

* Brigadier General Levifon Gower was once ordered to take the command of the flank companies of the line, in which great disorder had prevailed, and where the men had been most severely punished. He reformed the battalion, and put it into the best order without any flogging whatever. The 2d battalion of the 53d is now in Ireland, and in the highest possible condition, and although 1100 strong, has never had but eight courts martial. These are creditable instances, and bear unquestionable evidence that excess of punishment may be in most instances attributed to the mismanagement of the commanding officer.

tude.* Profligate beings must and should suffer without commiseration, but the general principle should be lenity, and the general abhorrence tyranny.

Nor does the requisite judgment of a regimental court martial interpose a sufficient check upon the severity of some commanding officers. Young men are allowed to be members, who have never considered the moral effects of punishment; they are familiarized to severity, by the recorded instances of their predecessors. They are instructed to consider particular offences as forcing *de se*†

* A relaxation of discipline to acquire popularity is equally culpable, and fails of the object, since soldiers do not esteem an officer who does not perform his duty, and preserve good order in the regiment.

† Punishment affects men very differently: some bear a great many lashes without suffering much; others would die under the same number. But there is a great cruelty in bringing men out at different times to receive the remainder of a sentence as soon as the tender skin has covered former wounds. I could mention some terrible instances if evident reasons did not check me; and if the correction of such abuses can be secured in future, there is no necessity to distress the mind with circumstances which have had already their full operation; but only in very aggravated cases of criminality indeed should the remainder of a sentence be inflicted at different periods,

a precise award, without the consideration of a man's previous character: they are accustomed to trust to the mercy of the commanding officer, when the presence of the lieutenant colonel or the major may from the different disposition of these officers make a variation of the punishment of the most serious nature; they too frequently assemble without a thought upon the important trust committed to them, they hear with levity, and decide without reflection.

When General Fox commanded in the Mediterranean, he sent back those courts martial which awarded excessive sentences, observing that punishment should never be cruel, and that no court should sentence a soldier to receive more lashes than what the members themselves thought right to be actually inflicted.

How different were such maxims and conduct to the intemperate resentment of other officers, who have threatened courts martial with the accusation of contumely, for refusing to aug-

periods, particularly as the excess and not the prescribed mode of punishment, as is frequently the case in civil law, prevents the execution of the whole sentence in the first instance.

ment an already awarded sentence, when their reasons for lenity were but too well founded.

There is scarcely a general officer in the service who does not lament the flippancy with which the cat-o'-nine-tails is used; but they have no power of preventing regimental punishments either in the line or the militia.

England should not be the last nation to adopt humane improvements; France allows of flogging only in her marine; for men confined together on board ship, require a peculiar discipline, and the punishment is very different from military severity. The Germans make *great* criminals run the gauntlet, a mode of punishment by which every one of their comrades becomes their corrector, and thus a greater opprobrium is inflicted; but in their courts martial a private always sits where a private is to be judged, and a non-commissioned officer when a non-commissioned officer is the prisoner. It is true that a field officer may order his serjeant to inflict upon his own authority, for petty misdemeanors thirty blows with a cane; a captain, twenty; a subaltern, twelve; but as this punishment is instantaneous, the offender escapes imprisonment, and his comrades

comrades have, in consequence no additional duty.*

The introduction of that practice of striking soldiers might not be congenial to the sentiments of Englishmen, who are accustomed, from infancy, to consider trial as previously necessary to any execution of punishment; but it is absolutely necessary that there should be some revision of the military penal code, as it is faulty in many respects. No doubt it is easier to destroy than to build; but the defects are so palpable, and the improvements so evident, that there is no fear of the attempt at reformation failing. In the interim, I presume to propose that the following regulations would materially contribute to diminish the frequency of corporal punishment.

No officer under age should be allowed to sit as a member of a court martial.

All witnesses should be sworn to evidence.

No commanding officer should send back a

* The Germans have an horror of being tied up to receive punishment. In a German regiment, in our service, where punishment was very rare, two men destroyed themselves to avoid this increased disgrace.

sentence

sentence for augmentation of corporal punishment.

Commanding officers should be instructed to avoid as much as possible the ordering of courts martial for slight offences, but to use their own discretion as to the direction of offenders suffering the minor punishments; * such as imprisonment, temporary marks of disgrace, increase of fatigue duty, deprivation of all food but bread and water, &c.

That with every general return a statement of the offences committed, the sentences of the courts martial, and the inflicted punishments should be transmitted to head quarters; and that there should occasionally appear in the general orders of the army some remarks upon the extent or diminution of crimes and punishments grounded upon these reports.

Such preventive checks would not be dif-

* Artaxerxes used to whip sometimes only the garments of the culprits, and many a man has been saved to the service by only suffering the discredit of the preparation, and who afterwards has declared, that if a lash had been given he never should have regarded his future conduct.

pleasing

pleasing to the officer who regulates his regiment upon proper principles; on the contrary, he would feel laudable pride in this exposition of the good conduct of ~~the~~ corps, which the army would attribute to his management; but the resistance of the unqualified and severe would afford an additional argument for interference with their at present ill-considered authority.

If every officer would read "Beccaria on Crimes and Punishments," he would not only have his mind expanded, but become practically a better man, and be more ready to regard with indulgence the infirmities of human nature. *

* I certainly did most strenuously urge the propriety of flogging two volunteers in the West of England, one of whom had struck his officer on parade, and the other had encouraged this act of mutiny; independent of the magnitude of the offence, it was essentially necessary to make such an example on so favourable an occasion. The men were punished; and Sir John Kennaway, in whose corps they were, shewed a firmness and zeal for the public service which did him the highest honour. It is not every gentleman who would have undertaken the responsibility of inflicting the first punishment, and at all events risking his popularity in the county. The good sense of the majority of the volunteers, however, prevented any such consequences.

THE enlistment for life being altogether abolished, and a different practice of punishment introduced, a redundance of recruits would soon come forwards for the army, and the anxiety of parliament would not be excited about a bill which after the operation of a twelvemonth, will not gain more than 13,000 men; a force which in modern days is of no significance, and which will not repair the common wear and tear of the army in Europe without a continental war. If men be thus raised by driblets, England can never have a disposable force, for the supply is not equal to the present expenditure; and yet she must levy above 30,000 men to complete the present military establishment.

If the militia was reduced, or even the men allowed to enlist until there were not more than 40,000 men left, the army might then derive advantage from the action of the new bill; but at best it is only an half measure, not equal
to

to the exigencies of the times, and not in any degree qualified to assist in the relief of the continent. Nevertheless, as the military regulations do not emanate from the executive government, but form in detail subjects for discussion before a tribunal where there is a predilection in favour of, or prejudice against particular advocates, and where the majority of the judges must be ignorant of all military principles, where no military axiom, however positive in its nature, has not been controverted, there must be always great difficulties in the way of new propositions, and impediments to complete arrangement, which never perhaps can altogether be removed, and which no minister, even to preserve his own credit, can publicly notice.

But all parties seem disposed to approve of the enlisting for a shorter term of years, and the measure cannot be too soon submitted for their sanction.

The first engagement for the infantry should not exceed ten years.* A bounty superior to the bounty for recruits in the army of reserve should

* The boy regiments for India service could be raised upon a distinct system.

be given ; but no man enlisting for that service should have more than the difference, otherwise men would always enlist there in the first instance to secure double bounty.

At the expiration of this service, if the soldier presented a certificate of good conduct, he should be entitled to all the civil rights and immunities of the citizen.

The second engagement should not exceed six years. The soldier should receive additional bounty, and wear some badge of distinction, if his previous conduct had been meritorious.

The third engagement should also be for six years, and in addition to bounty and an additional badge, he should be exempted from all duties of fatigue, and for the remainder of his life receive a pension from government.

If from casual sickness he should be ordered from foreign service, to do duty until his recovery in the army of reserve, that time so passed from his regiment should not be deducted from the period for which he engaged.

But

But no soldier leaving the disposable army to enlist in the army of reserve without directions from the commander in chief, in consideration of peculiar reasons to prevent his continuance in the regular army, should be entitled to the pension.*

The bounty to be given at each engagement to be of the same value, and not to exceed six guineas for the man who is enlisting.

The period of service for the cavalry should be more extended in the first instance, and also for the artillery. In both cases, longer time is necessary for their instruction; and they enjoy advantages and comforts of which the infantry service does not admit. Three years are requisite to make a complete dragoon. Their capitulation should therefore be not for less than fourteen years, and instead of dividing their service into three portions, it would be more advisable to require only two from them; thus divided, the time might be fourteen years and eight years.

* In a memoir of this nature detailed arrangements are not necessary. The admission of the principle is the object, and the minor regulations are easily traced.

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The artillery is a peculiar branch where the mind must in a certain degree be cultivated by mathematical science ;* a particular arrangement should therefore be formed for that service, of which I am not competent to hazard a further opinion. But as the public pay to the physician and counsellor high fees, not as appreciating the value of the immediate advice given, but in consideration of that time which was expended without any immediate gain, in the prosecution of studies necessary to qualify them for their professions, so has the state a right to demand an equal return of service from those for whose instruction she is at a great expence, and who she is maintaining a considerable time without any reciprocal benefit.

I cannot conclude these remarks upon the

* The British artillery is a most respectable body, and on all occasions the corps has done its duty with the greatest intrepidity and zeal. It appears singular that the officers who have more scientific instruction than the officers of the army, and whose practice must give them great knowledge of ground, should be restricted from serving as general officers with the line when they attain that rank. Such service could not injure the artillery establishment, and the general service must be benefited by the introduction of officers so well qualified.

means

means of recruiting, and the better arrangement of the regular army, without mentioning, that the Duke of York has, by his personal influence and perseverance, within these two months, effected a measure which he has long meditated, and which is as creditable to him as it is just to the veteran whose manhood has been devoted to the service of the country.

Until this time, the foldier who from long and faithful service was no longer enabled to perform his duty in the regiment, and of course unequal to gain any other livelihood by his labour and industry, received the pittance of 7l. per annum, which scarcely could give him maintenance. His unavoidable distress rendered his last days miserable, and he involuntarily appeared as the beacon of national ingratitude, warning all to avoid the service of a state wherein his gallant bark had been shattered for her defence and glory, and which refused her aid to bring the wreck into port. There were a few individuals who received a shilling per day, but so few that the bounty was scarcely a benefit.

The commander in chief has finally succeeded in extending this allowance to all old foldiers
 G who

who are discharged, and recommended as meriting the liberality of the country.*

* In addition to this great advantage for the army, an asylum for the children of soldiers, and the military academy, have both been founded during the Duke's administration. These are noble improvements, and confer lasting benefits.

GUARDS.

IN re-organizing the army some attention ought to be paid to the enormous encrease of the Guards which bears very hard upon the regiments and officers of the regular army. Although the Russian army consists of 480,000 men, there are only 10,000 guards, including the cavalry. In Prussia there are but 4000 guards to an army of above 250,000 men. In Austria not so many, although the privates of the Hungarian guards are all noblemen, in an army of near 400,000. Whereas in our small military establishment there are considerably above 10,000 Guards.

When it is remembered, that these Guards never serve in the East or West Indies, the extension on that account alone would not be desirable, as throwing so much more duty upon the regulars; but the augmentation most seriously affects the rank and promotion of the officers of the army, since the promotion of the Guards is not only extraordinarily rapid, but to preserve them as effective battalions all their major generals are immediately and necessarily employed, notwithstanding the claims of much older and experienced officers who have done their duty in all climates.

That the King's household troops should have particular privileges,* that the rank of lieutenant and major should only be known upon their own parades has always been the custom, and is sanctioned by the practice of other services; but surely some restraint might justly be imposed upon the extension of such privileges, which really injure as well as discontent those who are entitled to every consideration. If from the facility of enlisting men, which this establishment offers, there must be an augmentation beyond the original proposed numbers, surely there would be no injustice in confining hereafter these excessive privileges of acquiring rank, (without passing through the regular gradations of the general service,) to the officers of the old establishment; and such as may, by this arrangement, arrive within that select number.

To those who are zealous for the maintenance of the establishment in all its splendor and character, such a regulation must be desirable; since the extreme increase removes the estimation in

* The privileges of the guards are not confined to the increased rank, but form a distinct code of service for themselves, which code, however, is not in writing.

The guards, at the latter part of their service in Egypt, very handsomely, however, waved all privileges which might impede the general service.

which

which the officers were formerly held, as being all men of fortune and high connexion, and which ought to be the peculiar characteristic of the King's household troops.

I do not detract from their credit when I observe, that the Guards are not more useful on service than other troops. The regiments of the line behave with equal intrepidity, and are as well disciplined; but the encrease becomes formidable to those who, having studied the history of other nations, are accustomed to calculate past events as the criterion by which they may reason on what is likely to happen in future.

The Guards when in the metropolis are necessarily more dissolute, and less acquainted with their officers than the troops of the line; for which reason, as well as consideration to the rest of his army, Louis the XIVth, in the splendor of his power, did never allow of more than 10,000 guards, notwithstanding their cavalry was entirely composed of the nobility of the realm.

The great expence of this establishment might also be urged, and many other topics, which are not proper for public discussion, but which all contribute to render the extensive augmentation of the guards a subject for great regret.

P A Y.

AFTER considering the means of providing the requisite number, and the proper description of soldiers for the regular force, enquiry naturally proceeds to an investigation of the pay for that body.

The non-commissioned officers and privates are paid full enough and perhaps more than is equal to their wants. Provision at the expiration of their service was only required, and the commander in chief has secured this allowance. But the pay for the officers having never been increased, except in a very trifling degree in favour of the subalterns, since the time of Queen Anne, the same satisfactory admission cannot be conceded on their account. Either the parliament in Her Majesty's reign or our time have adopted erroneous principles. There is so great a difference between the value of money in those days, and the present, that there can be no congruity between the two grants. Queen Anne's parliament voted pay to the officers equal to their
their

their maintenance, and the character of their respective stations. The parliament of the twenty last years have neither considered the one or the other necessary, but voted the allowance because such had been the custom. If this be not the literal explanation of their vote, such at least must be the inference deduced from the effect. Is there any honest man who will deny that the country should pay those servants who serve her faithfully and zealously, with whose conduct she is satisfied, and who often gain her approbation for voluntary exertions beyond the prescribed contract of required duty? Is there in the state one man, however great an enemy he may be to standing armies, who will not agree, that the officers of the army should have pay equal to the spirit of the original grant of parliament, and that they have a demand on account of their honest service upon the liberality as well as the justice of the nation? Is there any minister who would pretend, that this empire would resist the application of the public money to satisfy this debt of duty and justice?

What class of society feel more than the officers the depreciation in the value of money, the increase of taxes upon articles of

prime necessity,* and the rise in the price of provisions.

How happens it, that all other public servants have had their income augmented with reference to the pressure of the times; but that the salary of those who are required to make the greatest sacrifices of which human nature is capable, should not only have no addition, but be reduced five per cent. by the income tax.

Is there any income which is more entitled to exemptions, which should have been esteemed more sacred? The profit to the country in absolute return of money, is not very considerable, and the effect is highly detrimental: there is not a more loyal or generous body in the country;

* The dinner meal, which, within these last ten years, cost only 1s. is now every where 2s. 6d.; nor can the demand of the inn-keeper be treated as exorbitant. The Chancellor of the Exchequer very properly stated in the House of Commons, that from the pressure of the times, and the depreciation in the value of money, there had been an increase of 60 per cent. of his Majesty's household expences within the memory of many Members in that House. Surely then the same causes produce the same effect in an officer's income, and his case is still more grievous, for the officer may lose his liberty, his prolonged confinement eventually deprive him of his commission, and the State of his service.

there

there are no men more ready to contribute voluntarily to the exigencies of the state; but in as much as they were liberal in so much ought they to have been protected in their military income, which is but a life annuity, not yielding five per cent., and the life is also at the disposal of the granter.

If an argument frequently applied should be admitted, the pay might be almost altogether abrogated, for the approvers of the tax, and the opposers to the increase of pay assert, that the demand, and the high price given for commissions, is a proof that the officers do not consider their situation as very unprofitable, or themselves aggrieved in the service; but the principle of this reasoning is not just.

Young men of fortune eagerly embrace a profession which is esteemed the most liberal, as being the most disinterested, and which is most congenial probably to their habits. Other young men attracted by the military reputation, prevail on their friends to purchase them a commission, or embark the little property which they can command in this speculation, anticipating gratuitous promotion from their merits, and in the delightful delirium of ambition, forget to calcu-

calculate how they are to provide the necessary income for their maintenance, until the bounty of this presumed good fortune arrives. *

But although an increase of pay is not required by the first class, still as the second suffer from the want of it, the riches of one should not cause poverty to the other. In civil life is reference made to the private property of the person employed? are not labour and services paid for according to their own value, or is the price directed by the extra income of which those employed are in the receipt?

In some instances wealth, and its attendant consequence, founds a claim for higher remunerations, but in none does it produce a drawback, except in the army, where only a very small minority have even independence.

The principal leaders of the different professions would be much astonished if they were paid less than they had a right to expect, because their fortunes were reputed large; and if the whole

* There is another class who have commissions given, but although they suffer much, they must not openly complain. Who dare look in the mouth of a gift-horse?

profession suffered on account of that individual wealth, from which they derived no benefit, would they not justly consider themselves as grievously injured ?

Are the salaries of the officers of state, and the public offices regulated by this principle, or is not the allowance formed upon the presumed service rendered to the country, notwithstanding some are always occupied by noblemen of large fortune.*

How many eligible young men are excluded from the army by their friends, because the pay is not sufficient to afford a livelihood after the commission is purchased. What prudence can prevent distress if the pay be the only income? Happy is he in that case, who never visits again his native country, when once he has the good fortune to escape abroad with his regiment.

It is the interest of the country to pay the officers of her army liberally. Embarrassment not only oppresses the individual, but tends to the

* Are not the salaries of ambassadors to be increased as an inducement for noblemen to accept the appointment ?

violation of that character, which is the fundamental principle of the profession.

It is true that no service presents such integrity and loyalty as distinguishes the British officers ; pillage * and treason are unknown vices amongst them ;

* Perhaps the aversion to the idea of pillage is carried a little too far. In the retreat from Holland in the year 1794 and 95, many valuable works of art were left behind, which might have been taken away, but which the French did remove, and particularly some of the most valuable pictures, which are now in their gallery of Paris. Their practice of plunder was known, and therefore the fate of this interesting property foreseen. The Venus de Medecis was once in our possession, but was restored to grace Paris ; Cleopatra's needle was not brought to England, because there was an apprehension that the Turks might consider the removal, as an act of plunder ; for the prohibition was sent from those, who were ignorant at the time, that permission had been granted by the Turks themselves. How often have the march of our armies been impeded from a regard to the inhabitants ! How often have the soldiers abroad wanted provisions when there was an abundance in the different farm houses ! If France, by the contribution she raises in money and kind, can conquer Europe ; if by a disregard of the usual practice of war amongst civilized nations, she can make the world her subjects, she surely should be opposed with similar arms ; for although war may be made more dreadful to the wretched natives, still the consequences would be propitious to our posterity. It is one instance where honesty is not the best policy, and after all success, in public opinion generally justifies the means, and

them; but these very virtues, this resistance to temptation incites as an additional interest in their favour, and augments the demand upon the generosity of the nation: nor have they common duties to fulfil in return for their subsistence. Their qualifications are far above mediocrity. A virtual exile from their country—a life of hardship, restlessness and anxiety, when on foreign service,—a cheerful sacrifice of all the endearments and attachments to existence at the mandate of duty,—enthusiastic devotion to the British glory,—the most incorruptible fidelity and exalted sense of honour, are qualities expected from them, and which expectation they do not disappoint.

I will not pretend that every officer in the King's army is entitled to such commendations; nor is even animal courage, much less the *avida periculi virtus*, so frequent a quality as the greater part of mankind is disposed to believe, but there is no order in society, or perhaps any other army, in which so much general courage and so

even the most injured are frequently the first to offer a voluntary homage to the conquerors, forgetting their own wrongs in the admiration of the brilliant triumphs by which they were subjugated.

many

many patriotic virtues are collected, as in the officers of the British army.

What general who has been on service, will not testify that in the heat of battle, he has seen the poorest subaltern making exertions, as if the empire of the world was to be his prize.—In European warfare, there can be no collateral inducement besides honour* to animate his sense of duty; and in the east, the British officers have in the last campaign well earned their rewards, as well as the admiration of every people.

The country and the service also suffer materially from this deficiency of proper income to the officers.

How many excellent and experienced men quit the army at the rank of lieutenant-colonel and colonel, in order to realize the money they have laid out upon their commissions, influenced by the fear of attaining the rank of major general, some appointment, which would take from

* In Asia the *spolia opima* may also animate to enterprize; but no troops, except in that country, obtain any prize money; even the Egyptian troops, although ships were taken, as well as great quantities of cannon and stores, have not received a shilling.

them

them their regimental commission, and which ceasing at the conclusion of a war, would leave them for years upon the half-pay of colonel, an income not amounting to 200l. per annum.

What an allowance is this for a whole life expended in the service of the country? what feeble encouragement for men to continue their lives in the service, and risque the loss to their families of the capital they embarked in their commissions. The want of good general officers is sensibly felt in the British army, and this is one of the causes which occasions such a dearth.

If the war had not broke out again, probably many general officers who had been employed all the war, and rendered most gallant services, would have been now, and for many years to come, reduced upon this pittance, for the staff could not have been encreased, and no extraordinary mortality was to be expected amongst the generals who had regiments.*

If a certain income could be attached to the rank, independent of any active employment, or

* There are several General officers now in this melancholy situation.

the acquirement of a regiment, another advantage would also result to the service, since regiments might then have effective officers;* whereas the rank of major-general necessarily removes the lieutenant-colonel, major, or captain having that brevet rank from the corps, which may essentially suffer from the absence of the superior officers.

Most officers who attain the rank of a general officer have deserved at least a decent competence, but to deny it is impolitic as well as unjust. The battalions of the army of reserve, if given to such general officers would be a means of provision, without charging the revenue; but if any battalions be once given to those who have never been in the army, however respectable the individuals may be who obtain them, still such a door is open for abuse, that eventually the army may lose the whole advantage of this augmen-

* Regiments are not so profitable either, as may be generally supposed. There are but few Generals who would not prefer a certain income to off-reckonings. The payment for the freight, and insurance of cloathing to the foreign stations, is also a most heavy and unaccountable drawback, when so many store ships are continually passing, sometimes half empty. On an average the expence is five shillings additional to each suit of cloathing.

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tation in the number of regiments. It has been done no doubt with the view of raising men by the local influence of noblemen of large property and high character; but nevertheless the benefit is not an equivalent for the violation of an honorary contract with the army.

The service should be so advantageous, that no individual could, in so very essential a degree, become necessary for the procuring of a supply of men. If noblemen and gentlemen can command, during a war, high rank, *ad libitum*, what encouragement is given to the regular officers for toiling during many years of peace through the ranks and submitting to all the inconveniences of absence, &c. from their native country and families. Besides the rich should not deprive those who may be in want of the emolument and which they have a right to expect; or because they are of high distinction assume command when command is alone desirable from those who have prepared themselves for such responsibility by regular promotion: but unfortunately no commander in chief can act altogether independently, although the whole burthen of encroachment on his own regulations is laid upon him, and this is the principal reason why a military force cannot be properly formed in this

country, and why so many unaccountable events take place in the government of the army.

Whether commissions should or should not be sold, is a question which has frequently been agitated, and must always remain undecided. If the militia be abolished, the argument is certainly strengthened in favour of the purchase of commissions to a certain extent; but all must agree, that the present plan of allowing officers to sell only those commissions which they have purchased is an excellent regulation, and which only in very peculiar cases should ever be broken. If, however, an increase of pay should be granted, it is very requisite that some precautions should be taken to prevent the increase in the price of commissions, and the consequent injury to those officers on whom Fortune has not lavished her bounty, although nature may have gifted them with every good quality.

The present check upon the sale of commissions is nugatory in its proposed effect, and highly censurable in its moral consequences.*

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* An officer signs a paper, in which he declares, upon the word and honour of an officer and gentlemen, that he neither
pays

The honour of an officer should be inviolable, and every subterfuge deemed derogatory to the military character. If an officer was asked in a court of law whether he had subscribed his name, under so solemn a pledge, to what was false, would the jury on his answering in the affirmative consider him as an immaculate witness. It is very wrong to subject honourable men to such exposure; for out of the army the plea of custom would be no justification and but partially extenuate.

The raising of men for rank is a very injurious measure, and one which makes a bad impression on foreign nations, as to the composition of the English army. Before the present Commander in Chief was appointed, foreigners conceived that the only difference between a subaltern of foot

pays or receives, directly or indirectly, more than the King's regulation; whereas almost every officer has paid or received more than the stipulated sum, and this practice is so general and so well understood, that no infamy is attached to the transaction. But if an officer should be brought to a court martial for such an offence, the sentence must be cashiering, although every member might be equally culpable. At the Custom House, it is said, this business is better regulated: there stands a man who takes (for a fee) all the necessary oaths, as a custom time immemorial, and who bears the emphatic name of the *darned soul*.

and a general of horse, consisted in the want of money to purchase the latter rank. The absolute aristocracy of wealth is a very unprofitable establishment in a service where courage and talents are the essential properties. Latterly, qualified officers have alone been allowed to obtain by these means promotion, but the successors of the Duke of York may not discriminate with so much integrity, and therefore what may be made an instrument of injustice, should be altogether avoided.*

* A friend of mine and of mankind wrote a very ingenious Essay on this subject, in which he recommends, that the custom should be extended to the navy, and all the civil institutions of the country. Thus a lieutenant might become a captain of a man of war; a captain, an admiral; an apothecary, a physician; a common physician, physician extraordinary; an attorney, a counsellor; a counsellor, a judge; a doggerel rhimer, a poet laureat; a charge d'affaires, ambassador; an underling of office, chancellor of the exchequer, &c. &c. &c.

DISTINCTIONS.

— Non levia aut ludicra petuntur præmia.

MILITARY Distinction is a subject more congenial to the military character than an investigation of pay, although in the British service these honourable feelings have not been much encouraged, nor has this cheap defence of nations been sufficiently estimated. Much has been done to destroy this generous ardour, to direct the attention of the foldier to more substantial but not equally satisfactory remunerations. Distinctions which were considered as such, because they were the appendages of meritorious services, have ceased to retain their value since they no longer testify as the positive evidence of any merit.* There are now so many Royal uniforms in the different corps of our heterogenous army, that to see a regiment without the blue-facing is a matter of surprize. The Parliament of England has even been induced to bestow the thanks of the nation

* The value of honorary rewards consists in their rarity. It is even better that some men should not receive such recompences which may be their due, than that by their too liberal distribution the fruit of the invention should be lost.

for anticipated service, where such an approbation should only follow the most distinguished good conduct. The army has hitherto been disposed to regard the thanks of the British Senate as a consecrated eulogy—as the most gratifying and highest reward which could be conferred. But the sanctity of the act has been violated, and the charm much weakened if not altogether dissolved.*

That distinctions are of great use there can be no difference of opinion. They encourage enterprize, create a generous ardour, and secure the best affections of the soldiery: they produce an energy which no pecuniary remunerations can excite, and form the spirit which should characterize the profession. If a ribbon or any decoration can bring into action all the noble feelings of which human nature is

* The inference which I am about to draw is certainly not strictly applicable, but it is extraordinary that the well-informed proposer of that measure did not remember that the best historians have observed, that as States are declining, honours are lavishly distributed. Thus when Cicero demanded for Sulpicius, who died on a journey, the same honours as were decreed for those ambassadors who were killed at their post, it was regarded as a certain inclination of the tottering condition of the Common Wealth.

susceptible, even the philosopher cannot despise such an acquiescence with a generous pride, since, although the motive may be selfish, it cannot be stigmatized as fordid.

There is one military order in England—The Bath,—but it is in name only military. Those who have distinguished themselves as ministers, ambassadors, or in any other department of the state, or order of society, are well worthy of the highest honours; but if they be admitted as members of a military order,* those really military should have some marked distinction in addition to the common decoration. Upon the Order of Bath there might also be a second and third class established, according to the different services performed, and with reference to the command which the candidate had at the time of his rendering himself worthy of the distinction. For the soldiers there might be silver and gold medals, as are granted in the Austrian service. But if these orders should ever be established, it will be highly necessary that the honours be recommended, after a due examina-

* Or rather military men introduced into the Order of the Bath since it was only made a military order by his present Majesty.

tion of the claims, by a Council of Officers to the Sovereign through the Commander in Chief; and that the first statute should be most sacredly maintained. “No political interference shall influence in any way directly or indirectly the decision of the Council. To bestow such honours unmeritedly would be, in fact, to do what Antisthenes so poignantly ridiculed when he proposed to the Athenians to make a decree, “that *asses* should be *horses*.”

This is the moment to offer such encouragement, to animate the soldiery unto the highest feelings of emulation, for the time is not very distant when recourse must be had to every exciting principle which can augment natural courage—when every power of the state, and all the energies of a great people, must have the most vigorous impulse applied, to resist the desperate enterprize of a presumptuous but active and war-like enemy. *

Perhaps

* The custom of granting public monuments in St. Paul's is very praise-worthy—but every Captain in the Navy, because he has fallen in an action, should not have this honour, which should imply the possession and display of great talents as well as valour.—Every Colonel in the Army killed in battle at the head of his regiment in a great line, would have equal

Perhaps many may consider the opinions which I have advanced as arrogant, but if the facts be authentic, the conclusions natural, the improvements proposed consistent with good sense, policy and justice, no reference should be made to the prejudice of the writer from any personal consideration of his rank or age; but if the effect for which I have hazarded some inconvenience be secured, I shall console myself with the reflection that my motives are honest and disinterested, and exult in a success even if obtained by my own sacrifice.*

equal pretensions, and then the universality would defeat the object.—When Lord Nelson commanding a fleet, cried out, “I will earn this day a Peerage or a Monument in Westminster Abbey!” he rendered homage to both distinctions, and gave a strong proof of the value of such honorary rewards; that although the estimation of posterity is the true object of great and noble minds, a feather, a title, or a cenotaph may be made an additional incentive to the most heroic actions. It is, however, a wise regulation in France, which directs, that no tomb shall be raised in the Pantheon, until the merits of the deceased are acknowledged, after the lapse of ten years.

* Sir Ralph Abercromby is a memorable instance, that even licentiousness and misconduct is not always to be censured.—To the Irish militia he said, “You are formidable only to the peaceful inhabitants of your own country;” and immediately he was removed from his command. His integrity never could be doubted: events proved his judgment, and the authority for such a severe observation. No troops are braver than
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than Irish soldiers with cudgels alone, as a very gallant officer, lately killed in India, said, and whose regiment had suffered much in a partial affair, "they would attack and beat at least an equal number of Frenchmen who had no flints in their muskets, or only armed with swords." But if General Humbert had landed with 50,000 picked troops, would he not have reached Dublin before he laid down his arms? This question General Humbert put himself to a most intelligent officer, whose answer was, however, necessarily adverse to his private opinion.

THE END.