

MOBILIZATION

FOR

WAR!



THE SOUTH AFRICAN

FIELD FORCE!!

AND

HOME DEFENCE!!!

1900.



MOBILIZATION FOR WAR.

THE
SOUTH AFRICAN FIELD FORCE
AND
HOME DEFENCE.

1900.

BY
COLONEL T. STURMY CAVE,

1st Vol. Batt. Hants Regiment,

AND

CAPTAIN LOUIS TEBBUTT,

3rd (Camb.) Vol. Batt. Suffolk Regiment.

LONDON: GALE & POLDEN, LTD.,
2, AMEN CORNER, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.,
AND
WELLINGTON WORKS, ALDERSHOT.

SIXPENCE.

Post Free to any part of the World.

[ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.]

ALDERSHOT:
PRINTED BY GALE & POLDEN, LTD., WELLINGTON WORKS.

—
1900

INTRODUCTION.

This pamphlet was first published four years ago, under the title of *THE BRITISH ARMY AND THE BUSINESS OF WAR*. Its authors were convinced, after a very careful study of the subject in all its bearings, that from lack of sound organisation, mobility, and a proper proportion of artillery, the army was not equal to the business of war, and they hoped the attention of the public might be engaged if the facts were put before it. A copy was sent to every Member of the House of Commons, but the optimistic pronouncements of Ministers, and the permanent officials of the War Office, continued, and the public preferred to be deceived.

The truth of what is contained in these pages is now being brought home to us in "the cruel school of adversity," and the responsibility rests with those who refuse, in time of peace, to listen to the efforts that are made to call attention to the unsatisfactory state in which the army is allowed to remain.

To the examples given in this *brochure* of the value of mobility may now be added the war in South Africa, where this qualification places an assemblage of Dutch farmers on an equality with the highly-trained regular troops at the disposal of the British Generals.

The unreality of the regulations for mobilization has been demonstrated by the scheme having been torn to shreds in the attempt to constitute a field army for service abroad. The units allotted in the scheme for the First Army Corps were not those taken for the first three divisions detailed for Sir Redvers Buller's command, but every brigade, and many of the departmental units of the Second Army Corps, were broken into, so that when another army corps was mobilized, an entirely new scheme had to be devised. The regulations provide for no Seventh Division of regular

troops, and the one now being assembled at Aldershot is practically the very last card the authorities have to play for an over-sea expedition.

The time taken for mobilizing the troops for Seven Divisions has been over three months, with a result that they have arrived in such dribblets that the General in command has succumbed to the temptation so to split them up that he has failed in the first element of strategy, namely, to be stronger than the enemy at any particular place. The remaining troops will also arrive in dribblets. This fatal error has been brought about either from inability to mobilize seventy thousand troops at once, or a false estimate of what was required, or possibly both these causes combined.

But the most serious feature of the present situation, and it is one that calls aloud for immediate action, is that the forces for home defence are not organised into a field army. With over 400,000 troops left at home, through the neglect and opposition of the authorities, we have, absolutely, not a ghost of a field army remaining in England. As the authors have striven to point out in these pages, no matter how fine the spirit and courage of the men, or how highly they may be trained, if the organisation stops at the smallest unit, *i.e.*, the battalion, squadron, and battery, and while these remain without mobility, the force to which they belong is of no use for the purpose of war.

Again, as now being painfully demonstrated in South Africa, if the organisation has to be effected after the declaration of war, an active enemy will seize the initiative, frustrate the process, and subject the unorganised force to a series of reverses.

It cannot be too plainly stated that we did not send an Army Corps to South Africa, nor are we following it up by the dispatch of divisions. What has been done, is to send battalions, squadrons, batteries, field companies, and Army Service Corps detachments, and leave it to the General in South Africa to manufacture out of them his mobile units of the three arms, when the materials arrive on the spot, with a result that general officers are fighting without a knowledge of the "personal equation" of the com-

manding officers under them, and men are sent into action under leaders they do not know. It probably will be not far from the truth to say that every disaster met with hitherto can be traced in no small degree to this cause.

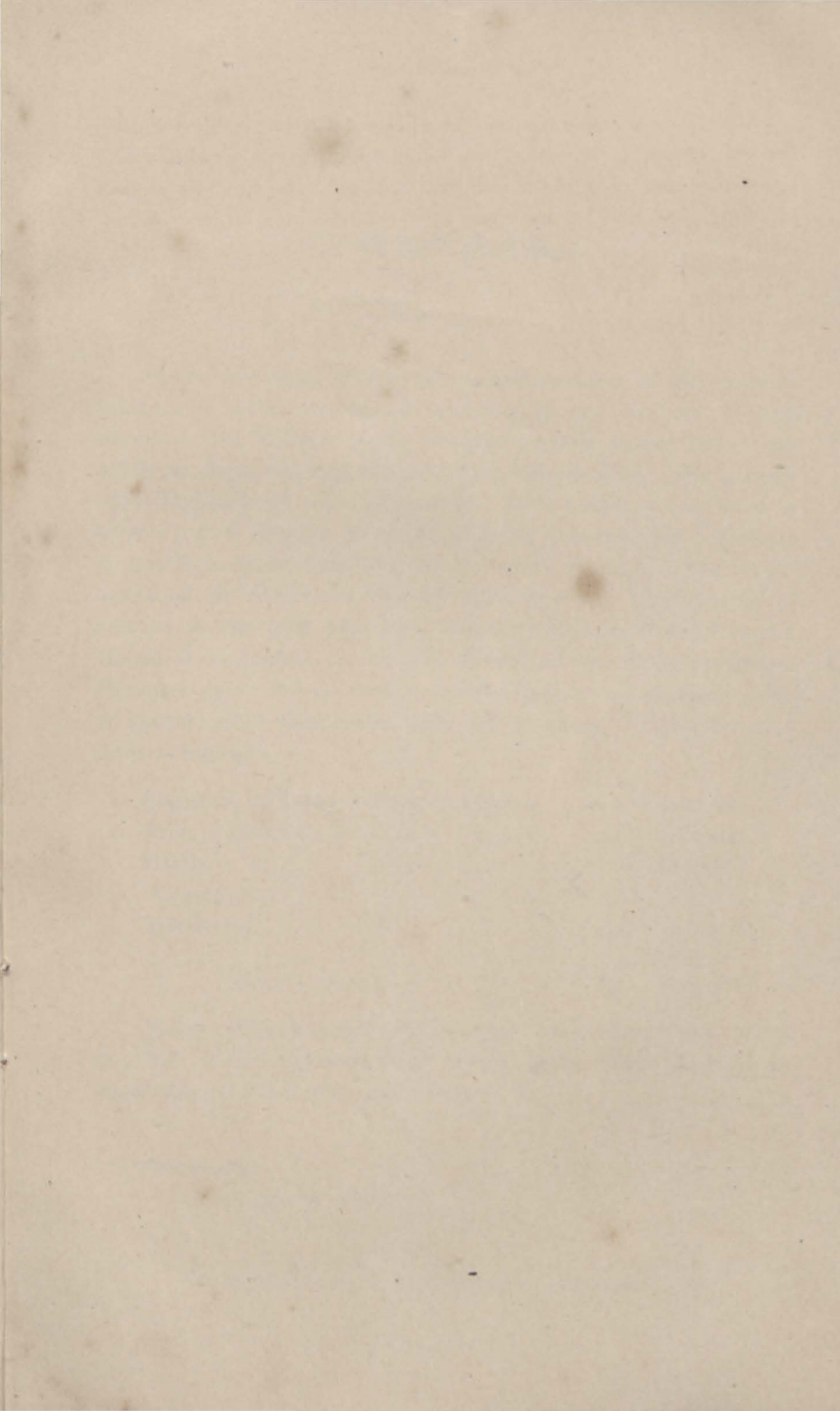
The question the authors desire to ask their fellow countrymen is, "Are the 400,000 troops left at home for defence to remain in an unorganised and immobile state; or will the public insist on having their military forces organised into an army?" That is to say, mobile units, each with its proper proportion of the three arms. One small item, to demonstrate the attitude the authorities have hitherto assumed towards the grave question of mobility for the Auxiliary forces, may not be out of place; for years an application has been annually put before them for sanction to form a Volunteer Army Service Corps Company, which is a necessary adjunct to render an Infantry Brigade mobile: the sanction is annually refused, with an intimation that the subject is under consideration; there it has remained for 15 years. The proposition is again before the War Office. If the public permits it to be refused again, and does not insist on steps being immediately taken to organise the military forces of the country into mobile units of the three arms, it must share the responsibility, with the authors of the present confusion and needless loss of life, for the still greater catastrophe which will almost certainly follow ere long.

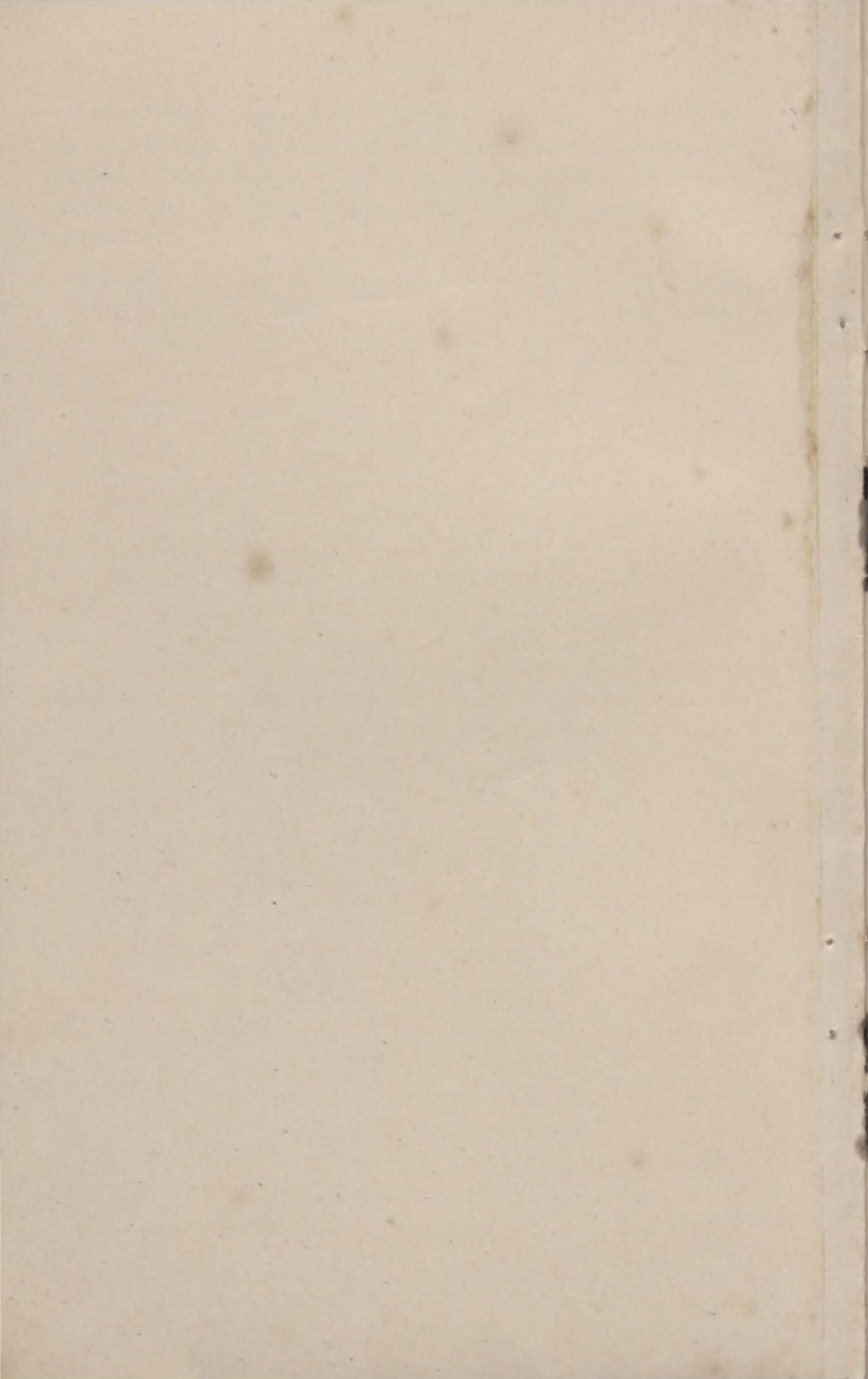
A scheme is suggested in these pages which, though it need not in every detail be the best that could be devised, yet it may be confidently stated that had it been adopted when it was first published, the state of affairs in South Africa would not be so depressing at the present moment, and the desperate risks we are running at home, by leaving the country with no field army for defensive purposes, would be altogether avoided, and we should be justified in the attitude of quiet assurance. The great crisis, which is probably within measurable distance, need not necessarily be an invasion of the country, but the fact that we are left absolutely without a field army, renders it imperative that an enormous fleet must be kept at home; to do this, may involve the loss of our empire.

Calmness is a grand national characteristic, and no one will deny the evil of panic, but there are such things as the confidence of ignorance, and phlegmatic indifference ; let us be sure we do not attribute the cheerful optimism of the authorities to the wrong cause.

Woking,

1st January, 1900.





P R E F A C E .

—♦—

Some time ago, before the commencement of the present controversy with America, it occurred to the Authors of this pamphlet that it might serve a useful purpose to put before the public the facts and suggestions within these covers. The present crisis renders it the more opportune. Most people are inclined to believe that if they see a few battalions of our splendid regiments of guards in Hyde Park, or a small force of all arms in the neighbourhood of Aldershot, that all must be well. This feeling of security is increased when the annual statement is made in the House of Commons on the introduction of the Army estimates. Ministers never fail on such occasions to show an imposing array of figures, which look exceedingly well on paper. Those for 1895 were as follows :—

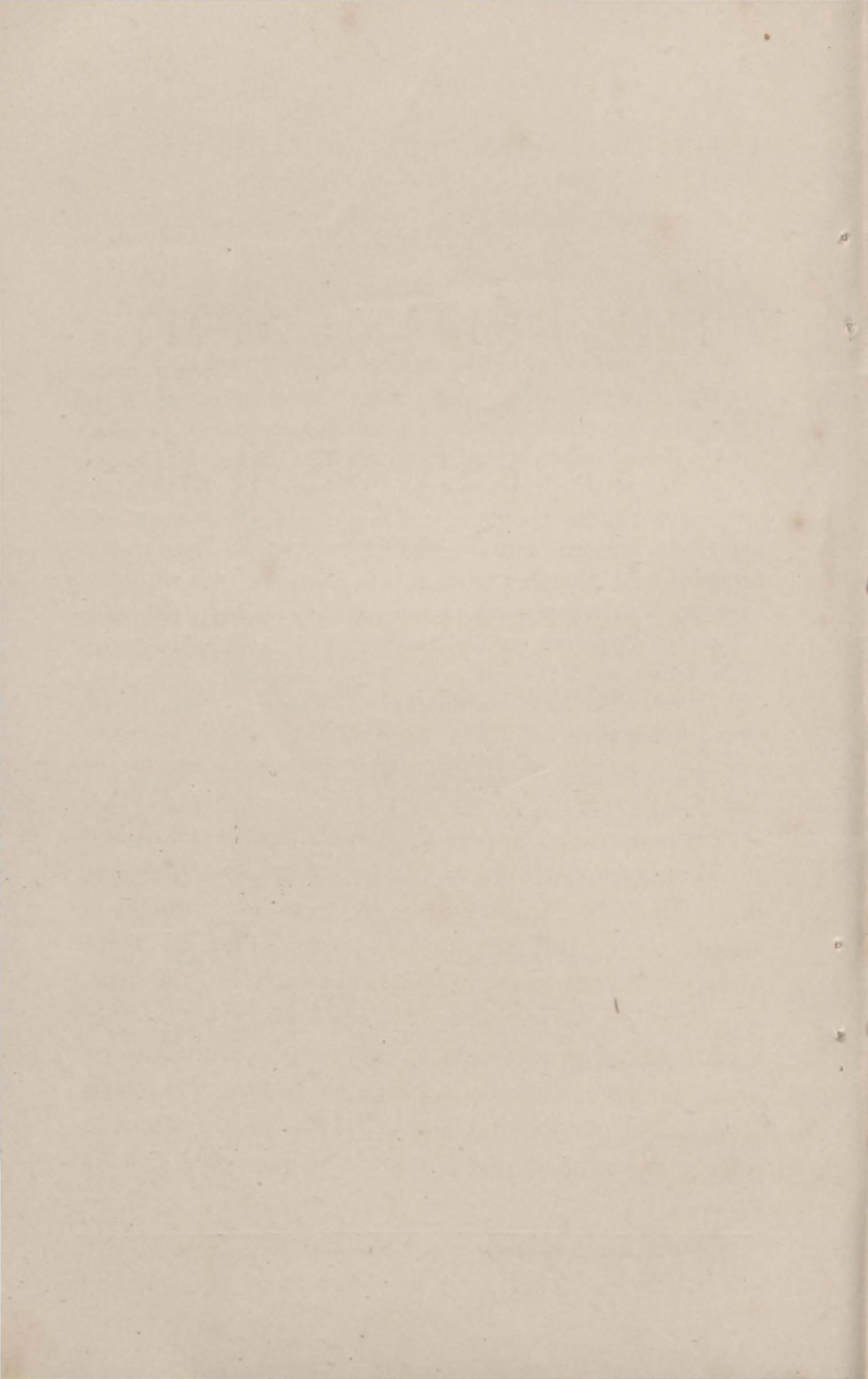
Regulars, with the colours, at home	107,810
Army Reserves	82,947
Militia	121,667
Yeomanry... ..	10,014
Volunteers	231,328
	<hr style="width: 10%; margin: 0 auto;"/>
Total at home	553,766*

The question, however, really is not that of the number of the men but of the fighting value of the force, which depends on many things apart from mere figures.

TWICKENHAM,

15th January, 1896.

* Preliminary Return of the British Army, Horse Guards, 1895.



THE BRITISH ARMY

AND THE

BUSINESS OF WAR.

*“The still unsolved problems are many, yet fuse well enough into one: How to make our mixed polity furnish an executive Government which, at once on the call to arms, and without needing yet further lessons in the cruel school of adversity, may be equal to the business of war.”**

It is now fifteen years ago that Kinglake published the words quoted above; in the interval so little has been done, that it may truly be said the problem is almost as far off solution as ever. The executive government has never in fact applied itself to the task, it has continued to wait with equanimity for further lessons in the cruel school of adversity; those lessons have not come and each party as it has alternately assumed the responsibility of office has been content to rely on the hope that this good fortune would last its time.

* (The Invasion of the Crimea, by A. W. Kinglake, Vol. VI., page 449).

The business of war can only be carried out successfully, with an army properly equipped, sufficiently trained, and above all things organized into mobile units of the three arms.

That an army to be efficient must be properly equipped will be easily understood by a civilian public, and although what may constitute sufficient training, is a matter for the experienced soldier to determine, no one will be disposed to dispute that it must form an essential element. The organization into mobile units of the three arms :—cavalry, artillery and infantry, is a condition that soldiers for the most part fully realize, but it is a matter which civilians, and executive governments composed of civilians do not appear to have grasped.

The simplest way of demonstrating that mobility is an essential element in the business of war is by an appeal to history. The Greeks at Marathon overcame vastly superior numbers because Miltiades led them down into the plain to attack a stationary force. The hosts of Darius were in a selected and prepared position when they were attacked and overthrown by the small mobile army of Alexander at the battle of Arbela ; the Carthagenians endeavoured to save their city, by occupying chosen positions to cover it, and they were worsted in a succession of engagements by the Romans under Regulus, when Xantippus taught them the value of mobility and under his leadership they attacked and defeated the legions in the plains. The wars of the middle ages teach the same lesson ; whenever a moving force came in contact with a stationary one, and other

conditions were equal, the victory invariably remained with the mobile army, as with the English at Agincourt and the ubiquitous troops of Cromwell. Right up to our own time the same laws are found to govern the business of war. The Austrians occupied a position of great strength at Koniggratz, but the mobility of the Prussian columns enabled Moltke to bring a simultaneous attack on both flanks and the brave Austrians were defeated.* Four years later the boasted army of Napoleon III. was not sufficiently mobile to concentrate and strike a blow at the advancing Germans; the French waited to receive the successive shocks the mobility of the invaders enabled them to deliver, the heights of Froeschwiller and Spicheren availed the French Marshals nothing, the forts of Metz and the carefully prepared position of Gravelotte cost the life of many a gallant German, but they did not prevent King William's mobile army corps gaining a succession of splendid victories. The Russo-Turkish campaign, in 1878, affords a striking object lesson in the uselessness, for the business of war, of the stationary force in a chosen position, the devoted Turk is an adept with the spade as well as with the rifle, he prepared the hill-sides at Plevna, there he fought with valour, and again and again repulsed the Russians with great loss, but he lacked the mobility to enable him to follow up his success, hence all was of no avail. Turkey was defeated.

* The victory of the Prussians in 1866 is frequently attributed to the superior weapon they possessed in the needle gun, but no better proof could be afforded that this was not the real cause than the subsequent events in 1870, when the French had a rifle far superior to the same needle gun.

If then mobile units are necessary for the business of war, how far has the executive government furnished us with an army so organized?

It is not necessary to argue, nor would it be true to affirm, that no improvements have been made in our army during recent years, and yet it is the fact that substantially the problem is quite unsolved. Credit may be claimed and freely accorded to the political authorities and their military advisers, who have abolished purchase, required a certain standard of knowledge in the officers, improved the equipment, instituted field training and tactical exercises. All excellent in their way, but they do not achieve any advance in the direction of the essential organization into mobile units of the three arms. This has not been attempted by the executive government. The military authorities have indeed made one or two small efforts, it will be well to take stock of them, and see how we stand in respect to the business of war.

The small fraction that has been attempted is comprised in the elaboration of a paper scheme for mobilizing the regulars at home and a portion of the militia, into three army corps, and massing a considerable part of the remainder of the militia and the volunteers, in certain localities, where they will be literally glued to the soil. They are to have neither tents nor shelter, nor the means of moving.

There is some danger of misapprehension in the mind of the public, from an improper use frequently made of the terms mobile and mobilization. The correct interpretation of the latter, is to convert into

movables ; of the former, the quality of being movable. The concentration of troops is certainly not mobilization ; indeed so much more difficult is it to feed and move one large body, than several small ones, that concentration without elaborate and complete provision for supplies and transport, is certain to render a military force less mobile rather than more so. There is then not even a paper scheme for the mobilization of more than three army corps, and four cavalry brigades, and yet for the purposes of home defence we maintain upwards of 400,000 more men, condemned to inefficiency for want of mobility. As well might the fleet attempt to guard our coasts with ironclads at anchor, with their boilers and propellers removed, as for Generals to defeat an invader with these unfortunate landmen, for whom the executive government has failed to furnish the means of mobility, whereby to render them equal to the business of war.

One other small effort in the right direction must not be overlooked, namely a half-hearted attempt to organize the volunteer infantry into brigades.

Of the paper army corps the generals and staff are not appointed, or if confidential communications have been passed to those who are to be responsible, they have at least had no opportunity of handling their forces, becoming acquainted with their subordinates, gaining confidence in those they will have to command, nor of inspiring their troops with confidence in their leaders, all of which are very important factors in the business of war.

The several battalions, squadrons, batteries, and

details will have to be brought together from the four quarters of the kingdom. The time that must necessarily be taken in this concentration will be considerable; some idea of the operation may be formed by the so-called places of mobilization of the several portions of the three army corps.*

FIRST ARMY CORPS.

Head-quarters and Staff	...	...	Aldershot.
I. Division, Head-quarters and Staff	...	...	London.
1st Brigade	...	...	London.
2nd Brigade	...	...	Devonport.
II. Division, Head-quarters and Staff	...	...	Aldershot.
3rd Brigade	...	...	„
4th Brigade	...	...	„
III. Division, Head-quarters and Staff	...	...	„
5th Brigade	...	...	„
6th Brigade	...	...	Portsmouth.
Cavalry and Artillery and other Corps details mostly	...	...	Aldershot.

SECOND ARMY CORPS.

Head-quarters and Staff	...	...	Colchester.
IV. Division, Head-quarters and Staff	...	...	Curragh.
7th Brigade	...	...	Belfast.
8th Brigade	...	...	Cork.
V. Division, Head-quarters and Staff	...	...	Dublin.
9th Brigade	...	...	„
10th Brigade	...	...	Curragh.
VI. Division, Head-quarters and Staff	...	...	Colchester.
11th Brigade	...	...	„
12th Brigade	...	...	York.
Cavalry	...	...	Colchester.
Corps Artillery	...	...	Weedon.

* Regulations for Mobilization, Home Defence, 1894.

THIRD ARMY CORPS.

Head-quarters and Staff	...	...	...	...	Maidstone.
VII. Division, Head-quarters and Staff	...	...	...	...	Chatham.
13th Brigade (Militia)	...	...	...	...	Hounslow.
14th Brigade	„	...	...	...	„
VIII. Division, Head-quarters and Staff	...	...	...	...	Chatham.
15th Brigade (Militia)	...	...	...	...	York.
16th Brigade	„	...	...	...	Preston.
IX. Division, Head-quarters and Staff	...	...	...	...	Dover.
17th Brigade	...	...	...	...	„
19th Brigade (Militia)	...	...	...	...	Maidstone.
Cavalry	...	...	...	...	Shorncliffe.
Corps Artillery	...	...	...	...	Woolwich.

In addition to these three Army Corps, there are provided for in the mobilization tables four Cavalry brigades :—

1st Brigade	...	...	...	...	London.
2nd Brigade	...	...	...	...	Aldershot.
3rd Brigade	...	...	...	...	Curragh.
4th Brigade	...	...	...	...	York.

In all, the force that it is proposed to put in the field as a mobile army, capable of attacking an invader, is thus composed of about 110,000 men of all arms. But it must not be supposed that the mere tabulation of this on paper is the same thing as bringing the force together and placing its component parts in the field, equipped and in all particulars ready for the business of war. Something of what will be necessary is indeed apparent from the widely separated localities in which the several combatant parts are directed to mobilize. Take, for instance, the Second Army Corps; two of its divisions will have to mobilize in Ireland, and of the remaining divisions but one

brigade is, to start with, under the eye and control of, the head-quarter staff at Colchester; the other has to mobilize at York and be brought from thence.

One of the most difficult problems, and one, moreover, that must, without doubt, take considerable time, is the incorporation of the reserves into their respective units.

The best method of gaining an insight into the detail of this problem will be to give a diary of the reservists required to complete a particular unit. For instance, if we take the 1st Battalion of the Essex Regiment, the *depôt* of this Regiment is at Warley, the battalion itself is quartered at Fermoy in Ireland, and it is detailed to the Second Army Corps, with head-quarters at Colchester.

Monday.—Mid-day orders are sent by wire from Pall Mall to Warley to mobilize. They reach the officer there at 1 p.m. At 2 p.m. the officer paying the reservists receives the notice; he despatches the intimation to the men by that night's post.*

Tuesday.—The reservist having left home for his daily employment before the morning postal delivery, does not get it at the earliest before noon, but on receipt he hurries home and catches a train that afternoon, so that he reaches Warley the same night.

Wednesday.—Presuming that a sufficient number of

* It may seem that a day is here wasted, in that the intimation might be sent to the reservists by wire, but the orders are explicit—that it must be sent by post. *Vide* Regulations for Mobilization, 1894, Part V., para. 49. Were a prepaid reply provided, information of great value would be thus obtained at the *depôt*.

the reservists, about 400, thus reach Warley, the day will be spent in fitting them with their uniforms, &c. This is assuming that it has arrived at Warley from the Clothing Dépôt, at Pimlico, where it is stored, and from whence it is not despatched until the order to mobilize has been issued.* It is therefore taking the most sanguine estimate as to the time required.

Thursday.—As a matter of fact, the Regulations lay it down that the reservists are to be sent off from the dépôt in parties of 50 or 100 at a time, but as discretionary power is given to the officer responsible (para. 72), we will give him credit for using it and having arranged for a special train for the whole of the draft early this morning, thus enabling it to reach Dublin this night by say 9 p.m., where it finds quarters for the night.

Friday.—By special train from Dublin at 6 a.m., reaching Fermoy at 1.30. In the afternoon the men are inspected and told off to companies, and the issue of arms and fitting of personal equipment is proceeded with. (Mobilization Regulations, para. 4.)

Saturday.—The battalion thus complete leaves by special trains for Dublin where the Admiralty has provided a transport ship for it (?).

Sunday.—Disembark at Holyhead, and travel all night by special trains, reaching Colchester about mid-day on Monday, having been on the move for 48 hours without night quarters.

* Regulations for Mobilization, 1894.

It will be seen that this is the most sanguine estimate, not providing for the contingency of one single unforeseen delay, but giving credit for all departments and individuals having fulfilled their duty with a care and precision, not always apparent, even in times of peace. But even so, the infantry of our army corps will not be concentrated for a week after the issue of the order, and some further time would certainly be required before all the conditions of mobility were realized.

Having followed one of the units of the combatant portions of our field army, it is necessary to consider the essential element of transport without which the force is in no sense mobile. Of the state of things in time of peace we have frequently the advantage of a valuable object lesson. When at the head-quarters of the First Army Corps, Aldershot, it is desired to carry out what are called manœuvres,* in order to move troops amounting to about one division of cavalry or of infantry at war strength, standing camps are established and stores accumulated in their neighbourhood. This takes all the available transport weeks of labour before and weeks more afterwards. There has usually been a complimentary order at the conclusion of the exercise, calling attention to the very efficient way the Army Service Corps has accomplished the work, and without doubt it has been well deserved considering the very inadequate means at the disposal

* Manœuvres properly speaking have not really been attempted since the early seventies, for since then there has never been sufficient transport available to admit of even the semblance of manœuvres. The autumn trainings have therefore degenerated into tactical exercises.

of the corps, but the result has certainly not been manœuvres, nor can the business of war be conducted in this way.

If we compare the peace establishment of the Army Service Corps with what would be necessary to render the field army mobile, it will give some idea of the prodigious task involved in bringing it up to the necessary strength for the purpose.

The peace establishment in horses is 1,311* ; the number required for the transport of the three Army Corps and four Cavalry Brigades, to fit them for the business of war, is according to the official tables 17,704, even this total has been cut down to the minimum, for we are told that it does not provide for reserve ammunition parks.† But, of course, there will be many thousands of horses required, in addition to these, for the reserve men of the cavalry and artillery. Now that there are plenty of horses in the country there is no doubt, and that they will be forthcoming if called for is equally certain, for in the first place no owner would wish to withhold them, and in the second place the 115th section of the Army Act is quite strong enough to impress them if necessary, but the enormous amount of labour in collecting, distributing, detailing to the respective branches and functions, fitting with harness or saddlery, &c., &c., will be such that it certainly will take a very considerable time.

The evils of a centralized system are apparent in every line of the present scheme. Instead of the general commanding being responsible for the efficiency

*Army Estimates, 1895, page 9. †Field Army Establishments' Home Defence, 1892.

of his army corps, every component part is dependent on instructions issued from Pall Mall until it is complete. Indeed, the general is not unlikely to find himself in a position very similar to the unfortunate French brigadier who is said to have telegraphed to Paris that he had concentrated himself at the place laid down in the orders, but that he was unable to find a single battalion of his brigade. Matters of this nature become exceedingly serious when regarded in the light of an observation to be found in the report of the Royal Commission of 1866, viz.:—

“Recent events, however, have taught us that we must not rely in future on having time for preparation. Wars will be sudden in their commencement and short in their duration, and woe to that country which is unprepared to defend itself against any contingency that may arise.”

In spite, however, of the delay that must inevitably take place before the formation of the three mobile army corps, they nevertheless furnish the most hopeful part of the scheme for home defence. It is absolutely appalling to contemplate what would take place were they not mobilized in time, or were their formation impossible, on account of the demands of service abroad having taken away the bulk of the troops from which they are to be formed. And yet it is a fact that we have no less than 450,000 more men that would still remain in the country. What is to become of these under present arrangements?

There are detailed for the garrisons of certain naval ports, 105,000; to commercial ports and estuaries,

APPROXIMATE STATIONS OF BRITISH ARMY for Home Defence AS PRESENT REGULATIONS.



There are also Garrisons allotted to Portland, Plymouth, Milford Haven, Aberdeen, Cork, Belfast, Dublin & the Severn, Mersey, Forth, Humber, Tyne, Tees, Ware, Forth, Tay Estuaries.

1. Cavalry Brigade not shown, it would probably have to remain in Ireland.

79,000 ; to occupy chosen positions to cover London, 116,000 ; and the remaining 143,000 have no position defined in the published orders.* An invader would be little likely to trouble himself with the garrisons, condemned as they would be to inaction from want of mobility, he could well afford to leave them alone, while he concentrated his energy and attention on his real objective, London. Some consideration, however, he would doubtless afford to those forces told off to occupy the defensive positions round London ; a glance at the sketch map will fairly well reveal the position of things he would find. The volunteers, of whom the position troops are composed, would, of course, have been preparing the hills on which they are placed with trenches and field works, and would no doubt have found the means of making them formidable. Nor is it likely that he would hold these forces cheap simply because they are only auxiliaries. But he would know perfectly well that they had not been provided by the executive government with the means of mobility, and he would be also aware that it takes troops of the very finest morale to sustain a defensive action successfully.

There is a school of scientific soldiers which believes in what is called the "defensive-offensive," on account of the deadly nature of modern weapons, but even those who advocate this method will acknowledge, as the compound word indicates, that it must be a defensive fight, not compelled by a lack of power to move, but

* These figures are collated from the following official returns :—Regulations for Mobilization, 1894. Ditto, ditto, Appendix-L, 1893. Annual Returns, Auxiliary Forces, 1895, and Regimental Establishments, 1895.

on the other hand, the attitude must be deliberately adopted by a force able, after repulsing the attack, to assume the offensive and reap the fruits of victory by following it up with pursuit. The great victory of Waterloo, which is sometimes quoted as an illustration of the advantage of the defensive, was, in fact, not a defensive battle at all, but as pointed out by the *Times* correspondent at last year's German manœuvres, a waiting action, the allies possessed the necessary mobility to assume the offensive when the right moment arrived, and were accordingly able to convert the repulse into a rout which they prosecuted with energy. "The operation requires the highest skill attainable in generalship. Except by the greatest captains it has never been successfully executed."*

We may be quite sure that the Volunteers have not been allotted to these defensive positions because they are considered to possess better morale than the regulars, nor to give some general the opportunity of showing that he is a great captain. No, the reason the military authorities have been compelled to adopt this course is simply because the executive government has not provided the means of mobility for the troops in question, and consequently no other plan was open to the framers of the scheme. Not even the cadres of the necessary transport exist; nay, it is even doubtful if our immobile army will be able to get to the positions assigned. The general commanding the Home District, in his report on the mobilization practice of the 1st Brigade last summer, remarks:—

* Colonel Henderson's *Spicheren*, page 37.

“There is the urgent question of transport for the Volunteers, without which the force is not mobile, and, although the District Orders are perfectly clear as to where they are to go, it is not possible for the officers in command of Volunteer brigades to carry out my orders without some organized system of transport.”*

Having thus briefly reviewed the arrangements made on paper for the military defence of the country, it will be well to look at the situation from an enemy's point of view; he too will have set out his chart of our probable positions. He will be acquainted with the nature and capabilities of manœuvring of the forces against which he will have to contend. The English literature upon the subject will enable him to understand how much we are about to rely on the enclosed nature of the country. † He will be wise enough to see that if he has to fight in enclosed country, which will militate against his winning great and decisive battles, it will equally ensure that he does not suffer a disastrous defeat; he can therefore afford to push infantry forward without much support from artillery and cavalry where these conditions apply. On the other hand, continental armies are much better supplied with mobile artillery than ours, so that if he succeeds in landing his guns he will look for the best chance of reaping the advan-

* This report is marked confidential, but the quotation given was printed in all the daily and service journals at the time it was issued, there can therefore be no impropriety in repeating it here. It may be as well to mention that every detail and particular given in this brochure is taken from information that is published for all the world, the orders and documents can be obtained by anyone of any bookseller. There can be no doubt that they have long since found their way into the Intelligence Department of every foreign army and have there been carefully digested.

† The Battle of Dorking, Blackwood's Magazine, May, 1871.

England on the Defensive, Barrington, 1881.

Military Prize Essay, R.U.S.I. Journal, 1881.

Imperial Defence, R.U.S.I. Journal, 1884.

National Defence, General Hamley, 1889.

tage that the forethought of his executive government has thus placed at his disposal. The geological map will furnish the best information as to the nature of the country. Wherever the chalk comes to the surface, there the characteristic features are bold rounding hills, open downs, and large fields with but very insignificant fences; in short the chalk formation indicates open country.

London is fortunately on a bed of clay, but the ranges of chalk hills come perilously near to it; there is a broad stretch running up from Dorsetshire, through Hampshire, Wiltshire and Berkshire to Hertfordshire, from thence, though it is still chalk on to the coast of Norfolk and Suffolk, the formation does not entirely come to the surface, so the nature of these counties does not present the same characteristics of open country. On the south of London there is the range from Beachy Head trending north-west till it joins the Hampshire hills, and another ridge from the coast of Dover, making an arc through Kent and Surrey, till it also joins the Hampshire formations; this range in fact is that known as the North Downs, on which so many of our Volunteer troops are to be deployed.

In view of these considerations, the general features of an invader's strategy will be based. The forces he has at his disposal are all organized into mobile units; so many army corps indeed can he command, that he could spare six or seven for the purpose of the invasion of England, and still retain at home by far the larger part of his military forces. It is then most probable, that he will land say three army corps in Dorsetshire,

that would follow the path marked out by chalk towards the north of London; if our First Army Corps from Aldershot were ready to move up to dispute the passage of the Thames, the invader would number three to one in the encounter. An army corps landing in the neighbourhood of Brighton, moreover, might hold the Aldershot troops and threaten the right flank of the North Down position, while one moving up the Kent range would come upon the left flank of this position, unless our Third Army Corps was ready to intercept it. If two more army corps succeeded in effecting a landing in Norfolk and Suffolk, they would be able to meet our Second Army Corps from Colchester with a superior strength of two to one, and might so time their advance as to effect a junction with those moving from the south-west, somewhere in the neighbourhood of St. Albans.

It may, to some minds, appear not only an improbable but an impossible thing, that an invading army to the number of five army corps, or say 150,000 men, could by any means land and find themselves at St. Albans, exactly in fact at that point where London will lie before it, and where none of the troops in prepared positions will intervene to stop its occupation of the Capital. It probably seemed quite impossible to our Saxon forefathers that 60,000 Normans,* mostly cavalry, could embark in the small open boats of the eleventh century, could sail or row across the channel, effect a landing and fight the battle of Hastings; and nine out of ten Englishmen at the present time have not the least notion that that was in fact the number

* Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World, page 195, 38th edition.

of the Conqueror's force. Experts, who have studied the subject carefully, have come to the conclusion that the balance of advantage, brought about by the introduction of steam and modern means of communication, is with the invader; it is owing to this belief that the executive government has been led to make the few improvements already alluded to.*

In supposing this case, it has been assumed that all regular troops for the composition of the mobile army corps are at home, but if circumstances had so fallen out that the First and Second Army Corps have been sent abroad to maintain the integrity of some of our great dependencies (and surely recent events have shown that such a contingency is not impossible), in this case it is difficult to see what there would be to prevent an invader, once landed, from marching into London without opposition at all; not because we have not an abundance of troops in the persons of the regulars still at home, the militia, yeomanry and volunteers, but because our mixed polity has not furnished an executive government, which has organized them into mobile units, and thus rendered them fit for the business of war.

It may naturally be asked, what is the official explanation of this state of things? If what has been stated here be true, the responsible authorities must be aware of it. This is undoubtedly the case, and those who care to refer to *The Army Book for the British Empire*, issued by Her Majesty's Stationery Office, will find what, for want of a better name, must be

* *The Army Book for the British Empire*, page 508.

called the official apology. In the chapter on Mobilization we are there told :—

“ In other nations the end to be arrived at, the particular military formation, whether army, army corps, brigade or other fighting body required, has been largely influential in determining the nature and composition of the units to be maintained. With us on the other hand, the various units have been brought into existence by circumstances apart, or mainly apart from military considerations.”*

The writers then proceed to apply a gracefully worded, cleverly devised literary narcotic, the chief ingredient in the prescription for which is the implied axiom that because the auxiliary forces are not at present mobile, that, therefore, it is impossible to make them so; and in the absence of this essential quality the best has been done that was possible.

But why are not the auxiliary forces a mobile body? They have at times been called upon to take part in manœuvres with the regulars, notably in 1871, and the few succeeding years that real manœuvres were attempted; they then proved that they were perfectly capable of marching and fulfilling all the duties which mobility involves, side by side with their comrades of the line. The reason then is simply that they are not provided with the necessary transport. Indeed, it is true to go a step further and say that the executive government has refused to allow them to provide the transport for themselves. In other words, where applications have been made for an increase of establish-

* Army Book, page 513.

ment to provide the necessary number of officers and men, the application has been refused.

We venture to affirm that if the executive government will encourage it and will grant the means of establishing it on a permanent basis, the volunteer force and we believe the militia force also can easily organize and train a transport service that will render the auxiliary troops mobile.

In this case they can be incorporated into the army corps for home defence, and the problem of the business of war is half solved. There is one other important element that is necessary for the formation of the forces now condemned to the chosen positions into army corps, that is, that more field artillery is wanted.

For the formation of this artillery the suggestion is made that the reserves and garrison militia artillerymen shall be used. In the tables on pages 32—34 they are called militia artillery, but strictly speaking the term reserve artillery might as justly be applied to them.

To complete the nine Army Corps for home defence, 36 additional field batteries are required, and in case the three Army Corps were away on foreign service, 54 batteries. Then as the volunteer batteries available admit of rather a large proportion of guns to each Army Corps, it is suggested that the divisional batteries be replaced from the reserve and with those already allotted sufficient will still remain for corps artillery.

Thus there would be required 54 new batteries, or practically the number of regular batteries that are now on home service.

For the formation of reserve batteries, an extra

captain might be attached to each of the regular batteries, and the guns for its reserve battery kept on charge. This captain, three non-commissioned officers and 20 men would be detailed from the service battery as cadre and for the annual training of the reserve battery, with 30 men called out from the Army Reserves and four officers and 100 men of the militia; thus the commanders, the "Number ones" and the drivers of the fighting portion of these reserve batteries would be always regulars, and the places of the 20 men taken from the service batteries would be filled in case of emergency by the Army Reserve or the Militia. It would be the duty of the captain of the reserve batteries to keep a register of the necessary horses for the battery in case of mobilization. This and the registers of horses for all other purposes required might be carried out on similar lines to those laid down in the "Pferde-Aushebungs-Reglement."* This is suggested, not because it is a patent "Made in Germany," but because it is common sense.

Prior to the present scheme for home defence, there was an official plan which involved the formation of eight Army Corps. The skeleton of this scheme will be found in the Army Lists of some fifteen years ago. Its chief features were that the infantry was composed of regulars and militia only, and there not being sufficient of them, not more than three battalions were detailed to any brigade, and in some cases only two. The sound principle, however, of mobile Army Corps, as the real organization for the business of war, was

* A translation of this will be found in *Armed strength German Empire*, by Colonel Grierson, R.A., page 277.

here recognised, notwithstanding that the scheme was ridiculously weak and imperfect.

No practical aggregation of the several units of our half-million trained men into Army Corps has yet been devised ; we therefore venture to make a suggestion without for a moment pretending that it is the best in detail, though we certainly claim that it is both practical and sound, and is more likely to fulfil the necessary conditions for the successful conduct of the business of war than anything that has before been published.

The chief considerations that have guided us in the suggestions now made are that it is desirable to use the means already at hand, but that it is not necessary to assume that they are incapable of any alteration or improvement to adapt them to the purpose ; that a most important element is to have our Army Corps as much as possible localized, so that the general who commands the district in time of peace will command the same troops as an Army Corps in time of war at home, and that three Army Corps may be sent abroad without dislocating the machinery of the nine Army Corps suggested for home defence.

One alteration that will be necessary in order to send a second and third Army Corps abroad, will be a modification of the terms of service of the militia, who should be rendered liable to be so sent on active service in case of war. This change would be very popular with the militia ; they would much appreciate the distinction.*

* See Lecture at the Royal United Service Institute, by Captain, now Major Holden, 4th Batt. Worcestershire Regt. Published in the Journal of 1891, page 746.

To summarize the alterations suggested, they are as follows :—

To render the Militia liable for service abroad in case of war.

To render the Volunteers liable to serve in Ireland in case of war.

To convert 8,000* of the present garrison artillery into field batteries.

Militia and Volunteer brigades to form their own transport and bearer companies, both regimental, brigade and divisional.

Each brigade division of auxiliary field artillery to form its ammunition column.

With these modifications the existing forces can be grouped into nine Army Corps. In the composition of these for home defence, it would surely be the best plan to have a back-bone of the regular forces to stiffen and stimulate the less trained auxiliaries, so that they might practise and fight side by side. The introduction of this system fits in with localization and decentralization far better than the present scheme. It is adopted in the following tables.

The apportionment of R.E. and A.S.C. to the Army Corps is not given for want of space. It is an innovation to allot so large a force of Infantry as a brigade to corps-details, but it would add to the efficient fighting strength, and be invaluable in case the "first divisions" were on foreign service.

* There are at present no less than 53,000 regular and auxiliary garrison artillery available; surely there would still be enough and to spare for fighting every fort we possess if 8,000 of these were converted into field-artillery as suggested.

I. ARMY CORPS. LONDON.			II. ARMY CORPS. ALDERSHOT AND SCOTLAND.			III. ARMY CORPS. IRELAND AND ENGLAND.		
1ST DIV.	2ND DIV.	3RD DIV.	4TH DIV.	5TH DIV.	6TH DIV.	7TH DIV.	8TH DIV.	9TH DIV.
1st Brigade, Guards, London, 4 Battns.	3rd Brigade, Militia, London, 5 Battns.	5th Brigade, Militia, London, 4 Battns.	8th Brigade, Regulars, Aldershot, 4 Battns.	10th Brigade, Militia, South Scotland, 6 Battns.	12th Brigade, Militia, North Scotland, 5 Battns.	15th Brigade, Regulars, Dublin, 4 Battns.	17th Brigade, Militia, East Ireland, 6 Battns.	19th Brigade, Militia, Warwick, Worcester, 5 Battns.
2nd Brigade, Guards, London, 3 Battns., 1 Res. Battn.	4th Brigade, Volunteers, London, 6 Battns.	6th Brigade, Volunteers, London, 7 Battns.	9th Brigade, Regulars, Aldershot, 4 Battns.	11th Brigade, Volunteers, South Scotland, 6 Battns.	13th Brigade, Volunteers, North Scotland, 5 Battns.	16th Brigade, Regulars, Curragh, 4 Battns.	18th Brigade, Volunteers, Surrey, 6 Battns.	20th Brigade, Volunteers, London, Berks, 5 Battns.
Reg. Cav., London.	Yeo. Cav., Oxford.	Yeo. Cav., Bucks.	Reg. Cav., Aldershot.	Yeo. Cav., Ayrshire.	Yeo. Cav., Lanark.	Reg. Cav., Dundalk.	Yeo. Cav., Staffordshire.	Yeo. Cav., Warwick.
R.A., 3 Battns., Woolwich.	Militia, 3 Battns. (New Corps).	Volunteers, 3rd Kent, 4 Battns.	R.A., 3 Battns., Aldershot.	Militia, 3 Battns. Edinburgh Art.	Volunteers, Lanark and Midlothian, 4 Battns.	R.A., 3 Battns., Dublin.	Militia, 3 Battns., Wicklow Art.	Volunteers, North & East Riding, 5 Battns.
<i>Corps Details—</i> R.A. 2 Battns., Woolwich.			<i>Corps Details—</i> R.A. 3 Battns., Glasgow.			<i>Corps Details—</i> R.A. 2 Battns., Aldershot.		
M.A. 1 "	New Corps.	7th Brigade, Volunteers, London,	" 2 "	Aldershot.	14th Brigade, Volunteers, North Scotland,	" 1 "	Clonmel.	21st Brigade, Volunteers, London,
V.A. 4 "	2 Lancashire.	6 Battns.	M.A. 1 "	Fife Art.	6 Battns.	M.A. 1 "	Waterford Art.	7 Battns.
<i>Reserve Brigade—</i> Army Reserve, Guards, K.R.R., R.B., 2, 7, 57 Reg. Dists.			<i>Reserve Brigade—</i> Army Reserve, 1, 21, 25, 26, 71, 72, 42, 79, 75, 91 Reg. Dists.			<i>Reserve Brigade—</i> Army Reserve, 27, 83, 97, 88, 100, 102, 18, 101, 50, 3, 35 Reg. Dists.		

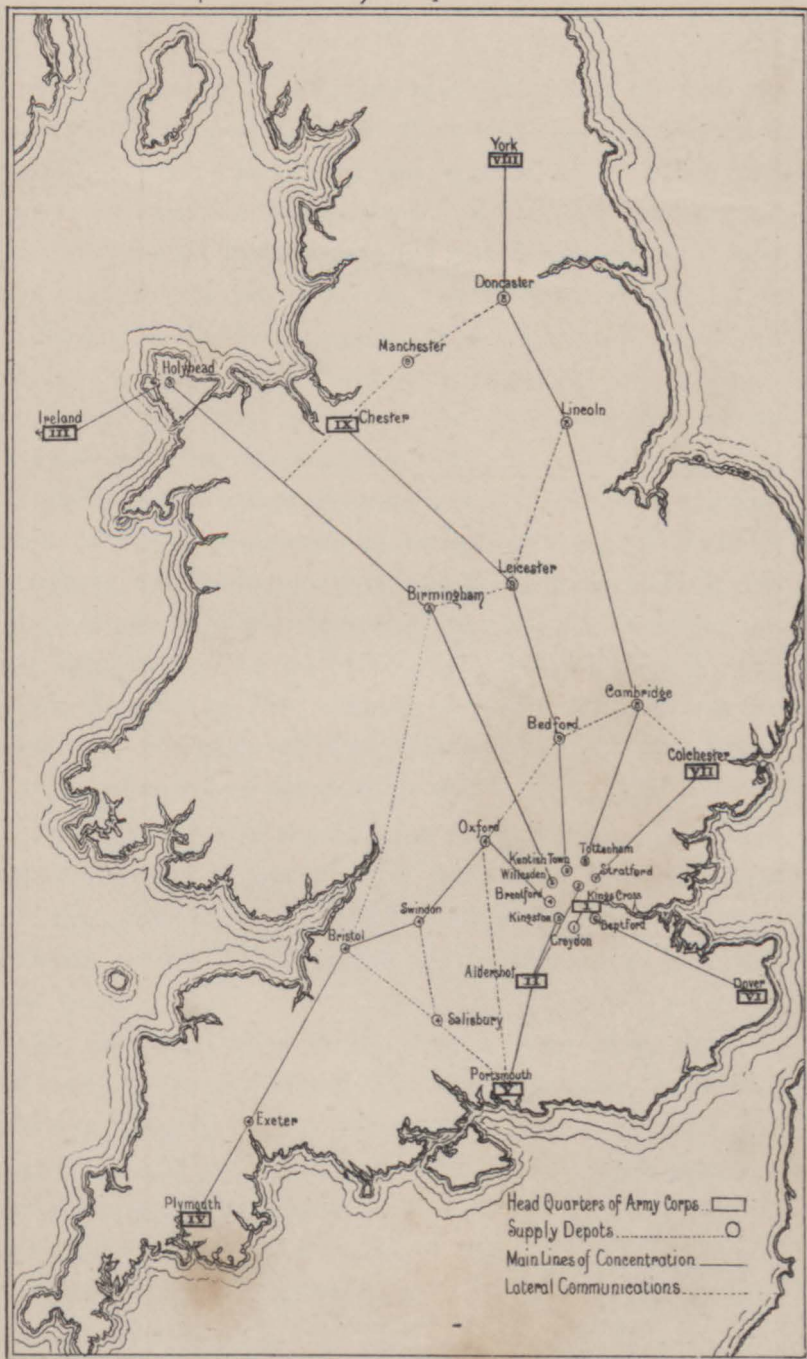
IV. ARMY CORPS. WESTERN, PLYMOUTH.			V. ARMY CORPS. SOUTHERN, PORTSMOUTH.			VI. ARMY CORPS. SOUTH EASTERN, DOVER.		
10TH DIV.	11TH DIV.	12TH DIV.	13TH DIV.	14TH DIV.	15TH DIV.	16TH DIV.	17TH DIV.	18TH DIV.
22nd Brigade, Regulars, Devonport, 4 Battns.	24th Brigade, Regulars, South Coast, 4 Battns.	26th Brigade, Militia, Devon and Gloucester. 6 Battns.	29th Brigade, Regulars, Cork and Fermoy, 4 Battns.	31st Brigade, Regulars, Portsmouth, 4 Battns.	33rd Brigade, Militia, Dorset & Oxon, 6 Battns.	36th Brigade, Regulars, Aldershot, 4 Battns.	38th Brigade, Regulars, Dover and Shorncliffe, 4 Battns.	40th Brigade, Militia, Kent, Surrey and Sussex, 5 Battns.
23rd Brigade, Militia, South Wales, 5 Battns.	25th Brigade, Volunteers, South Wales, 5 Battns.	27th Brigade, Volunteers, Devon and Cornwall, 5 Battns.	30th Brigade, Militia, South Ireland, 7 Battns.	32nd Brigade, Volunteers, Hampshire, 5 Battns.	34th Brigade, Volunteers, Shropshire and Wales, 5 Battns.	37th Brigade, Militia, Central Ireland, 6 Battns.	39th Brigade, Volunteers, Warwick and Worcester, 3 Battns.	41st Brigade, Volunteers, Kent and Sussex, 6 Battns.
Reg. Cav., Ballincollig.	Yeo. Cav., N. Devon.	Yeo. Cav., 1st Devon.	Reg. Cav., Aldershot.	Yeo. Cav., Hampshire.	Yeo. Cav., Dorset.	Reg. Cav., Aldershot.	Yeo. Cav., B'rks. & Midd'x.	Yeo. Cav., E. & W. Kent.
R.A., 3 Battns., Bristol and Exeter.	Militia, 3 Battns. Cornwall and Devon Art.	Volunteers, 6 Battns. Monmouth & 6th Lanc. Art.	R.A., 3 Battns., Hilsea.	Militia, 3 Battns. N'thumberl'nd Art.	Volunteers, 6 Battns. 2nd Shropshire.	R.A., 3 Battns., Woolwich.	Militia, 3 Battns. Kent Art.	Volunteers, 6 Battns. Sussex and H.A. Co.
<i>Corps Details—</i> R.A., 1 Battns., Aldershot.			<i>Corps Details—</i> R.A., 2 Battns., Trowbridge.			<i>Corps Details—</i> R.A., 2 Battns., Shorncliffe.		
" 1 "	Dorchester.	28th Brigade, Volunteers,	" 1 "	Christchurch.	35th Brigade, Volunteers,	R.A., 1 "	Sussex Art.	42nd Brigade, Volunteers,
M.A., 2 "	Glamorgan Art.	Devon and	M.A., 1 "	Hampshire.	Dorset and	V.A., 1 "	2nd West York.	Staffordshire, 5 Battns.
V.A., 4 "	Cheshire & 3rd Lancashire.	Gloucester, 5 Battns.	V.A., 4 "	Worcester.	Wilts, 4 Battns.	V.A., 4 "		
<i>Reserve Brigade—</i> Army Reserve 32, 11, 13, 28, 41, 24, 53, 29 Reg. Dists.			<i>Reserve Brigade—</i> Army Reserve 37, 39, 62, 49, 43, 6, 64, 38 Reg. Dists.			<i>Reserve Brigade—</i> Volunteers, Lanark, 5 Battns.		

VII. ARMY CORPS. EASTERN, COLCHESTER.			VIII. ARMY CORPS. NORTH EASTERN, YORK.			IX. ARMY CORPS. NORTH WESTERN, CHESTER.			
19th Div.	20th Div.	21st Div.	22nd Div.	23rd Div.	24th Div.	25th Div.	26th Div.	27th Div.	
43rd Brigade, Regulars, Woolwich and Woking, 4 Batts.	45th Brigade, Regulars, Colchester, 4 Batts.	47th Brigade, Militia, Essex and Suffolk, 5 Batts.	50th Brigade, Regulars, South Ireland, 4 Batts.	52nd Brigade, Regulars, York and Scotland, 4 Batts.	54th Brigade, Militia, Derby and Lincoln, 5 Batts.	57th Brigade, Regulars, Manchester and District, 4 Batts.	59th Brigade, Regulars, North Ireland, 4 Batts.	61st Brigade, Militia, Lancashire, 6 Batts.	
44th Brigade, Militia, Norfolk and Beds., 5 Batts.	46th Brigade, Volunteers, Cams., Herts., and Beds., 5 Batts.	48th Brigade, Volunteers, Norfolk and Suffolk, 6 Batts.	51st Brigade, Militia, West York, 5 Batts.	53rd Brigade, Volunteers, West York, 5 Batts.	55th Brigade, Volunteers, Derby and Lincoln, 5 Batts.	58th Brigade, Militia, Cheshire and N. Wales, 6 Batts.	60th Brigade, Volunteers, Manchester, 4 Batts.	62nd Brigade, Volunteers, N. Lancaster, 5 Batts.	
Reg. Cav., Norwich.	Yeo. Cav., Herts.	Yeo. Cav., Suffolk.	Reg. Cav., Edinburgh.	Yeo. Cav., Derbyshire.	Yeo. Cav., Leicester.	Reg. Cav., Preston.	Yeo. Cav., Cheshire.	Yeo. Cav., Lanc. Hussars.	
R. A., 3 Batts., Ipswich.	Militia, 3 Batts., Norfolk Art.	Volunteers, 1 Batt., Norfolk Art.	R. A., 3 Batts., Newcastle.	Militia, 3 Batts., Durham Art.	Volunteers, Northumberland & 1st West Yo k.	R. A., 3 Batts., Woolwich.	Militia, 3 Batts., Woolwich.	Volunteers, 5 Batts., 5th Lanes.	
<i>Corps Details—</i> R. A. 2 Batts., Colchester. M.A. 1 " Suffolk Art. V.A. 5 " { Northumberland. { Newcastle.			<i>Corps Details—</i> R. A. 2 Batts., Sheffield. M.A. 1 " York Art. V.A. 5 " { 1st Lincoln. { 2nd Durham.			<i>Corps Details—</i> R. A. 2 Batts. { Limerick, { Aldershot. M.A. 1 " Clare Art. V.A. 4 " 7th Lanca-hire.			63rd Brigade, Volunteers, Cheshire, 4 Batts.
<i>Reserve Brigade—</i> Volunteers, Manchester, 5th Batts.			<i>Reserve Brigade—</i> Army Reserve, 5, 68, 19, 14, 15, 33, 51, 65, 10, 45, 17 Reg. Dists.			<i>Reserve Brigade—</i> Volunteers, South Lancashire, 5 Batts.			

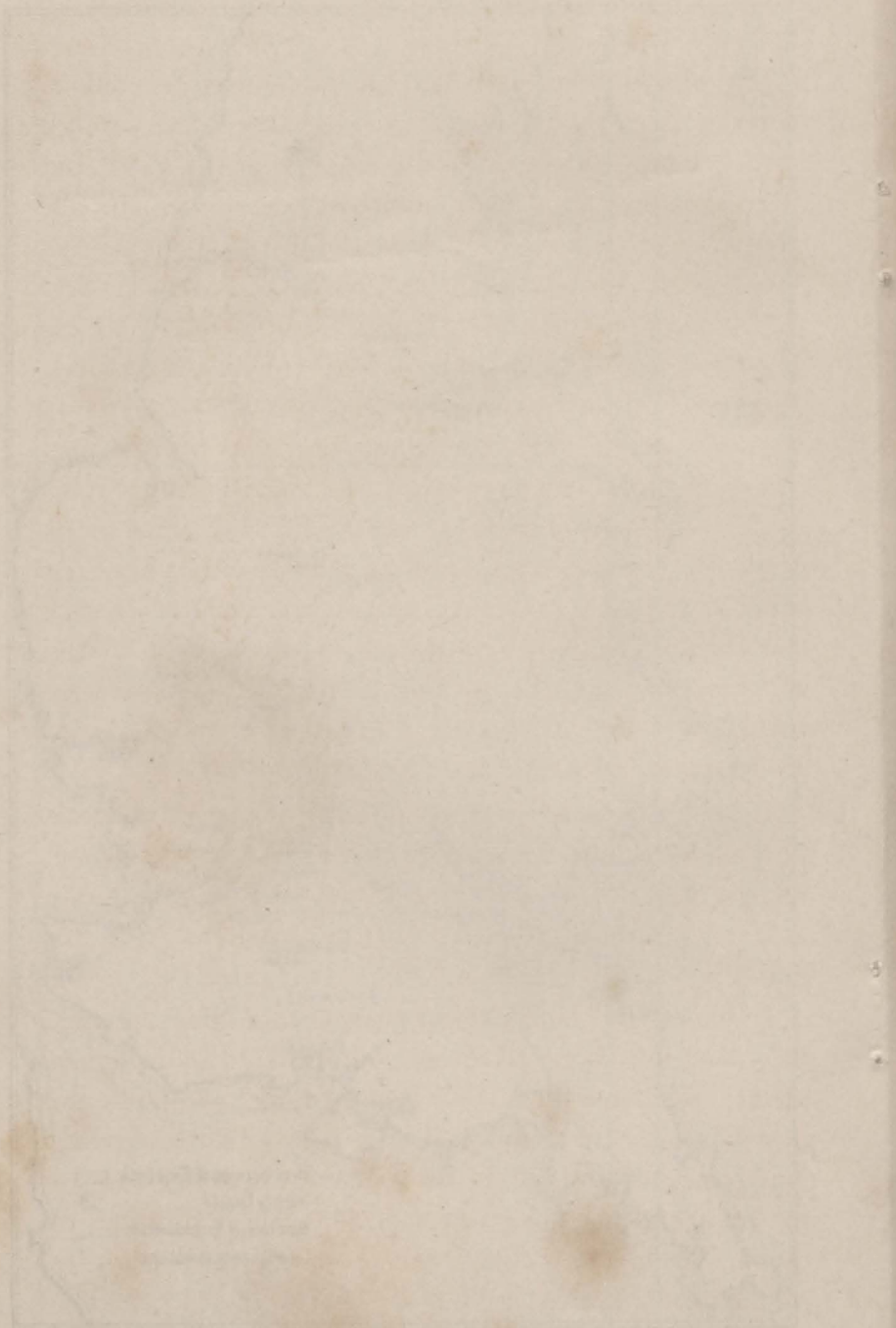
CAVALRY BRIGADES.

1ST CAV. BRIGADE.	2ND CAV. BRIGADE.	3RD CAV. BRIGADE.	4TH CAV. BRIGADE.	5TH CAV. BRIGADE.
Reg. Cav., Leeds. " " York. Yeo. " 13th Yeo. Brigade. 1 Batt. R.H.A., Aldershot.	Reg. Cav., London. " " Colchester. Yeo. " 17th Yeo. Brigade. 1 Batt. R.H.A., London.	Reg. Cav., Aldershot. " " Aldershot. Yeo. " 5th Yeo. Brigade. 1 Batt., R.H.A., Aldershot.	Reg. Cav., Curragh. " " Curragh. Yeo. " 4th Yeo. Brigade. 1 Batt. R.H.A., Newbridge.	Reg. Cav., Dublin. " " Dublin. Yeo. " 3rd Yeo. Brigade. 1 Batt. R.H.A., Newbridge.

Nine Proposed Army Corps for Home Defence.



THE GARRISONS WOULD BE PRACTICALLY UNAFFECTED BY THE FORMATION OF THESE ARMY CORPS.



At present the mobilization tables do not tell us what it is proposed to do to render the home defence Army Corps effective if the troops of the First and Second Corps have been mobilized for service abroad. In the scheme here suggested the First Army Corps for service abroad will be composed of the first divisions of the first three corps for home defence, as these divisions each contain a regiment of cavalry; sufficient of this arm will be provided for corps troops without intrenching on any of the cavalry brigades, from which, if necessary, a division of regular cavalry might be drawn for foreign service. For corps artillery, two batteries must be taken from each of the home corps details to make up two brigade divisions for the foreign service corps details. In reference to the other details, in like manner a proportion would be furnished by each of the three home service Army Corps to complete the one for service abroad.

In a similar way the Second Army Corps for service abroad would be constituted from the first divisions of the 4th, 5th and 6th Army Corps for home defence. The Third Army Corps from the 7th, 8th and 9th.

In case the nine Army Corps and five cavalry brigades were mobilized for home defence, it would absorb 340,000 men, leaving 213,000 available for garrisons and the defence of estuaries. In the extreme emergency of the whole twelve Army Corps being in the field at once, the transfer of the reserve brigades to the field army would still leave 177,000 for the duties alluded to.

It will thus be seen that our First Army Corps for service abroad will consist entirely of regulars. When ordered abroad the places of these divisions in their Army Corps at home will be filled by the corps brigade of Volunteers and the reserve brigade of the corps. Half the infantry of the Second and Third Army Corps for foreign service would thus be drawn from the militia, and their places filled up in the same way.

In no instance would the nine Army Corps for home defence be each without at least a brigade of regulars, a proportion of regular artillery, and its corps Army Service Corps Company. Though, of course, the proportion of regulars in the Army Corps at home would be much larger if none were on service abroad; the expression, service abroad, is used here to indicate war abroad; the ordinary Indian and Colonial service would not be effected in any way. In times of peace the usual garrisons would be maintained, and the regular reliefs proceed in the ordinary course.

The great advantages of the proposed organization are apparent; the general in command of the district and his staff would be the general and staff of the Army Corps. With the main portion of their auxiliary troops they would always be in contact, and very frequently with all or a part of the regular details. It is only by an arrangement such as this that a general can really be made responsible for the efficiency of the troops. Manœuvres could actually be conducted annually in every district with the whole or a part of the Army Corps of the district, and when the head-quarter staff thought it desirable, one Army Corps

could manœuvre against another, or even larger combinations might be occasionally effected for the purpose of practice.

The principal responsibility of the commander-in-chief would then be the selection of the several district commandants, the test of their fitness would be the efficiency of their Army Corps, as it was exhibited in the organization and execution of their annual manœuvres.

In the eventuality of war, instead of everything depending on instructions issued from Pall Mall and the only base of operations being London, each Army Corps would be self-contained; to start with, its base would be its own head-quarters. If it were ordered to proceed to take part in the defence of London, its line or lines of railway to proceed thither would be already defined, the necessary loading platforms having been already constructed, the depôts on the roads established, the time table worked out, and copies in the hands of all concerned, and lastly, a new base organized at the Metropolitan end of its destination. Its supplies could then be drawn either from the one end of its line or the other, according to whether it was to form part of the defensive army of London, or fulfil some other function.

Nothing that has been said here is intended to depreciate for one moment the possible value of field works in modern fighting. It may very possibly be that they will exercise all the influence that their advocates claim for them, but if certain positions have thus to be held, it will increase the possibilities of success in such tactics if the force told off to prepare and hold them be parts or the whole of a mobile Army Corps, ready at

any moment to assume the offensive, not merely the tactical offensive of a local counter attack, but the real attack and pursuit of a mobile force. This would be entirely out of the question with the volunteers as at present detailed for the Kent, Surrey and Essex hills.

It is by taking steps of the nature here described, that an executive government will produce an army, which, on the call to arms, will at once be ready for the business of war. We shall not have much longer to wait in order to see if our mixed polity has, at the last general election, yet accomplished this important end on which our existence as a nation will some day depend. Let us hope that there may be yet time before that terrible day comes.
