

*To the Excellence of Lloyd's*  
**IN PERIL!**

*with W. L. Woods' Complaint*  
The Heart of the Empire in Danger.

Dr. W. J. LEYDOL  
Frankenslag 337  
1892 VENETIAN

SPEECHES BY

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THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY

AND

EARL OF ROSEBERY.

WITH ARTICLES, MAPS, ETC.

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## PREFACE.

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LORD SALISBURY'S clarion cry to the nation to arm for the defence of its shores and of its capital demands the instant attention of every citizen.

For months past I have been repeating with passionate insistency the warning which at last has found so vigorous an exponent in the First Minister of the Crown. I have been ridiculed, denounced, ignored, and my demonstrations of the reality of our peril have been treated as the hysterical delusions of an unpatriotic alarmist. Now, however, that the Prime Minister has taken up the theme I venture to hope that something will be done.

Something—yes, but what ?

To answer that question it is necessary to define exactly the more immediate peril against which we have to protect ourselves. The supreme danger which Lord Salisbury indicated is the possibility of a sudden and successful attack which would place London in possession of an enemy. The weighty words in which the Prime Minister expressed his sense of the reality of this danger make this clear. He said :

“Remember what has happened to the great maritime Powers of the past—to Holland, to Spain, to Venice, and, if I might go into ancient times, to Carthage and to Tyre. In every one case the great maritime Power has been paralysed and killed not by the disasters it may have suffered in its provinces or its outlying dependencies, but in every case it has suffered by the blow directed at the heart. That is a lesson which a Power like England ought not to neglect. As long as our heart is unstruck we may look with comparative indifference to the result of any war. If our distant provinces were affected we might do as we did in the Peninsular War—we might win them back again. But if our heart is struck there is at once an end to the history of England.”

“An end of the history of England !” The sudden destruction of the British Empire by a stabbed heart ! That is the terrible catastrophe which Lord Salisbury dreads.



Lord Salisbury does not exaggerate our danger, although possibly England might survive even the capture of its capital. Lord Rosebery, speaking in vaguer terms, has anticipated his warning. That we should have to admit that the country is "denuded of its Army and Militia," and that this Empire is literally wearing its heart upon its sleeve for daws to peck at is sufficient to prove that our rulers have lost even that rudimentary faculty for government—the instinct for self-preservation. Just think for a moment what it means! The Prime Minister asserts that a blow struck home to the capital of such an Empire as ours would be an irretrievable disaster—"an end to the history of England."

Yet, although Ministers admit the peril, and admit also the possibility that at any moment the enormously increased offensive forces of modern civilisation may be hurled in one great wave upon our shores, what have they done to guard against it?

Is there a third-rate State in Europe which has not taken greater precautions to protect its capital than have been taken to protect London, the vulnerable heart of the greatest Empire in the world?

When Mr. Rhodes was in London last month I confessed to him in the bitterness of my soul that there had been a great slump in my Imperialism within the last year or two. "Why?" asked Mr. Rhodes. "Because," I replied, "while we have been expanding and annexing and conquering whole continents abroad, in the belief that we were a governing race with infinite capacity for Empire, a close examination of the state of our Army, and, above all, the unprotected condition of our capital, has driven home the conviction that the available intellect of our rulers and governors, instead of being capable of governing an Empire, is incompetent to manage an ordinary cabbage garden."

This may seem to some exaggerated. But is it not justified by Lord Salisbury's speech?

What is wanted is "a real brain." Of unreal brains the country has had enough. But what proof of real brain is there in Lord Salisbury's speech?

What is wanted is a directing brain, a Government that can govern, a leader who will lead. An exhortation to form rifle clubs is admirable, no doubt, but when we are told that "the defence of the country is not the business of the War Office or the Government," is it not time to protest?



I don't want to send Lord Lansdowne to Tower Hill or Lord Salisbury to the block. But, seriously speaking, would they not both richly deserve impeachment, if, as the result of their failure to organise the available forces of national defence, the history of England were to be brought to a sudden end in the manner Lord Salisbury has foreshadowed? Lord Alcester used to tell me in 1884 that he was quite sure he and the other Lords of the Admiralty would be hanged from the lamp-posts opposite Whitehall if ever this country were involved in war with France. "And," he added, ruefully, "it would serve us jolly well right for letting the Navy down as we have done." The Navy has been rebuilt since then, and our naval supremacy re-established. But when we examine our second line of national defence—we find a state of things that might well lead Lord Wolseley to echo Lord Alcester's foreboding.

At the beginning of Lord Lansdowne's Administration of the Army a sum of money was voted by the House of Commons to provide for the creation and maintenance of a series of fortified positions round London. These positions were not to be fortresses. They were to be fortified depots, where there would be stored trenching tools, barbed wire, and all the material of defensive war. The creation of these positions, the House of Commons was told, was regarded by the military authorities as indispensable for the protection of London from a sudden raid. If they were created and adequately provided with all the munitions of war, the Volunteers, when summoned for the defence of London, would find everything they wanted ready to their hand. It is now more than three years since that money was voted.

Will Lord Lansdowne or Mr. Wyndham say how many of these fortified positions, which were essential for the defence of London, have been constructed, and how many of them are at this moment supplied with the material of war which a defending army must have ready to hand on the outbreak of war?

This question may be answered satisfactorily, or it may be evaded. Let us at least know where we stand. The provision of these fortified positions is vital to the defence of the heart of the Empire. This preparation in advance cannot be made by the individual citizen. It is the duty of the Government, and woe be to our rulers if they have left it unperformed!

W. T. STEAD.

# IN PERIL!

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## I.—Lord Salisbury's Speech on the National Defence.

LORD SALISBURY addressed the annual meeting of the Primrose League at Albert Hall on Wednesday, May 9, 1900. After referring to various questions of Imperial interest in Africa and in Ireland, Lord Salisbury went on to speak of the need for arming the manhood of the nation in defence of its shores and its capital, its liberty and its independence. He said :

### THE ACCUMULATING MENACE.

It is not necessarily because in themselves they are more important, but if you look around you will see that the elements and causes of menace and peril are—though slowly—accumulating, and may accumulate to such a point as to require our most earnest and active effort to repel them. I am rather nervous in using words of such meaning, lest I should be thought to indicate that anything is known to say Foreign Office, or to point out any danger that for the moment I have reason to apprehend. I wish most emphatically to the that I have no idea of the kind. (Cheers.) The state of affairs, as far as I know it, and as far as the Governments are concerned, is peaceful. It is impossible to speak too highly of the careful and calm neutrality which has been observed in this trouble of ours by all the Governments in the world. (Cheers.) And nothing seems to me more to set off and illustrate their determination to act according to the dictates of justice and right than the fact that in a certain section and class of their subjects—not, I hope, a deep one, but a very



noisy one—there is at present great prejudice towards England, which sticks at no resource of invention or exasperation in order, if possible, to damage our position in the eyes of the world; and yet while this has been going on—I won't say with all, but too many of the peoples—the Governments have been uniformly guided by considerations of law and of justice and of peace.

#### THE INCREASING POWERS OF OFFENCE.

But it does not follow that we have no precautions to take. Governments may come and go; feelings may change from year to year. That root of bitterness against England, which I am wholly unable to explain, may be a mere caprice, merely something to satisfy the exigencies of the journalists of the moment, or it may indicate some deep set feeling with which at a later date we shall have to reckon. We can have no security in any confidence in the feelings or sympathy of other nations, however much we may honour them, however grateful we may be for the sympathy they have shown us—we can have no security except in the efficacy of our own defence and the strength of our own right arm. Everywhere you see the powers of offence increasing—armies become larger, navies are founded, railways, telegraphs, all the apparatus which science has placed at the disposal of war becomes more perfect and more effective; and all these things may, by one of those strange currents which sweep across the ocean of international politics, be united in one great wave to dash upon our shores.

#### THE GROWING TEMPTATION OF THE CHANCES OF WAR.

Do not imagine that I wish to paint the future in dark colours. I am not urging despair. I am not urging even a dark appreciation of the future; but I am urging the necessity of precaution in time. (Cheers.) It may be your precautions—I trust they may—will turn out to be entirely unnecessary. It will be a great matter of hearty congratulation if it is so; but the loss that you will thereby sustain is so inconceivably small compared to the loss which you will sustain if your precautions are inadequate that you will not for a moment measure one against the other. (Cheers.) Undoubtedly it is not a question so much of feeling, but it is a question of this strange phenomenon which is working itself out before our



eyes, that the material for military action, for aggression, is increasing in power and efficacy in every one of the great nations every year, while the temptations to exercise it, the territories of which it may give the possession and the key, are falling more and more at the disposal of the chances of war. You must not be blind to that species of danger which must constantly beset you; and allow me to remind you that as a great maritime Power you stand in a special position.

#### THE EXPOSED HEART OF THE EMPIRE.

The great military Powers of the Continent, disposing of great territory, have passed through unsuccessful wars which again and again have landed the enemy into their country, and yet they are as strong, or even stronger, after the experience has passed by. Can we say with confidence that that would be the fact if London were the scene of a similar operation? Remember what has happened to the great Maritime Powers of the past, to Holland, and Spain, and Venice, and, if I may go into ancient times, to Carthage and to Tyre. In every case the great Maritime Power has been paralysed and killed, not by the disasters it may have suffered in its provinces, or its outlying dependencies—in every case it has succumbed to a blow directed at the heart. (Hear, hear.) That is a lesson which a Power like Great Britain ought not to neglect. So long as our heart was unstruck we might look with comparative indifference on the result of any war. If our distant provinces were affected we might do as we did in the Peninsular War—we might win them back again—but if our heart is once struck there is an end of the history of England. (Cheers.) Well, this leads me to some very timely words which were spoken this afternoon by your Chancellor with respect to the duty of the Primrose League and of the whole population with regard to the defence of this country.

#### THE NAVY AND NATIONAL DEFENCE.

Of course we have the Navy, and I firmly believe that that defence will be sufficient. But considering the prodigious, the enormous, interests which we have to safeguard, is it wise that all our eggs should be put into a single basket? (Cheers.) Are we not bound to think of our national defence on land? And our national defence on land has this difficulty attached to it. The problem is that we cannot have recourse to the

remedy, to the defence, to the protection which every nation on the Continent has had occasion to set up and to preserve, and to which its existence is now owing. Nothing in the nature of a conscription—that is to say nothing of a nature which requires the population of this country to leave their homes for a certain number of years to learn the military art—that, at present, as far as we can see, is not a remedy which the people of this country would accept. (Cheers.)

#### THE PROBLEM.

And what we have to look to, what we have to determine, is how is the manhood of this country to be utilised for the preservation of the Empire. We have abundance of men. We can see in South Africa how they can fight. (Much cheering.) There are no troops equal to them in the world. (Loud cheers.) But when the need comes—if ever the need should come—we must have them in sufficient numbers to make the enterprise of any enemy that should attack us absolutely hopeless. Now, it is on that point that I think the Primrose League may really ask itself if a patriotic duty does not fall upon it. If, when the danger comes, it were possible for the Government of the day to call upon an armed people, upon a people of whom every grown up man could handle his rifle, I do not think that, after the experience we have had in South Africa, even the most apprehensive would have any cause to fear for the result. (Cheers.)

#### WHAT WE HAVE TO DO.

But what we have to do is to induce the people to put themselves in a condition to defend the homes where they were bred and the country to which they are so deeply attached. (Cheers.) We have to induce them to learn the requisite art. I do not wish to trench for a moment upon the department of the War Office. I have no doubt our military advisers will do the utmost that they can for the development of our Auxiliary forces; but I cannot help feeling that forces which are required to leave their homes can only be obtained to a certain extent and in certain numbers in our country, and that the effort to go further, however well intentioned, at all events is liable to risk of failure. I do not wish the safety of this country to depend upon any such risk of failure or to depend on any such resource.



## ORGANISATION OF RIFLE CLUBS.

Is it not possible for the members of the Primrose League, each in his own district, to do what they can to foster the creation of rifle clubs? (Cheers.) And by rifle clubs what I mean is not clubs where a man must go once in two months to the county town to take part in a competition—that will do very little for the defence of the country—but what I want is that without stirring from their homes the people of this country shall be able to practise rifle shooting, so that when the danger comes they shall be a force which no enemy could despise. (Cheers.) Of course, I know that there are difficulties. People will tell me that there is a difficulty in getting rifle ranges. People will tell me there is a difficulty because nursery maids who are passing by might get hit by bullets. (Laughter.) You can make any number of these difficulties if you please, but every one of them can be removed by any one who has his heart in the matter. What you have to provide is the means of learning the handling of rifles placed in the hands of every man within reach of his own cottage. (Cheers.) If he has not to travel away he will learn—not with any great expenditure of time and with scarcely any expenditure of money—he will learn to emulate the skill and the fame of his ancestors many centuries ago, who, by their practice in archery, first raised this country to its high level of military glory. (Cheers.) They can only gain it by constant practice.

## THE BUSINESS OF THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES.

It can only be set on foot in the parishes; it is not a thing which can come from the centre; but if once the feeling can be propagated abroad that it is the duty of every able Englishman to make himself competent to meet the invading enemy, if ever—God forefend—in the course of time an invading enemy should appear—if you once impress upon him that the defence of the country is not the business of the War Office or of the Government, but the business of the people themselves, learning in their own parishes the practice and the accomplishment which are necessary to make them formidable in the field—you will then have a defensive force which will not only repel the assailant if he come, but which will make the chances of that assailant so bad that no assailant ever will appear.



(Cheers.) This is the security for our present prosperity, for our future tranquillity, for the maintenance of that Empire of which you are so proud ; but it must be done by the population, themselves prepared to take part in the struggle for liberty and independence, and themselves provided and endowed with the practice and the knowledge that shall enable them to take part with success.

#### AN ARMED NATION.

These things are matters which I feel it will take a long time to propose to the people of this country—that it will only settle down gradually into their brains. I do entreat that each of you, in his own sphere and district, will press upon them that the defence of this country is not a matter to be obtained by writing strong letters or articles against the War Office in the newspapers (cheers) ; that it is to be done by their own personal effort, and that if they will do it, it can be easily accomplished. (Cheers.) This, I think, is the mission ; and efforts of this kind are the mission of the Primrose League to-day. We have fought, and we have fought successfully, against the internal foe. The internal foe threatens us no longer ; but we have a more formidable enemy outside, and if you are able to contribute to his effectual defeat you will have justified, in a manner in which you have never justified before, the assumption of the proud motto of “ Liberty and Patriotism.” (Cheers.) I have no more that I wish to say. My feeling is strong that we are in danger when this present war has passed by of forgetting the anxieties it has produced and the lessons it has taught us. It is for you to struggle against that tendency, and to urge upon all whom you know the necessity of placing ourselves in the position of an armed nation—such a nation, for instance, as the Swiss are, where the strength of the country is sought, not in the brilliancy of its negotiations, not in its military organization, but in the spirit and the preparation of those who love their country and are prepared to die for it. (Loud cheers.)

## II.—Lord Rosebery's Speech on the Question of Life and Death.

In the House of Lords on Thursday, February 15th, 1900, when the new military scheme was under discussion, Lord Rosebery spoke as follows upon the alarming position of the country at the present time :—

I will not interpose for very long in this debate, but I think it is not well that, on such a subject as this, and at such a time, the discussion should be confined to one side of the House. The benches on this side are not indeed fruitful in material for the continuance of the discussion, but that is, perhaps, all the more reason why any one who is not unwilling should attempt to do so. I am anxious, in the first place, to associate myself entirely, not with the remedy that the noble lord who has just sat down has proposed, for that is a matter for more consideration than we can give it on an occasion of this kind, but I am anxious to associate myself with him entirely in his view of the gravity of the crisis in which we stand and of the total inadequacy of the proposals of the Government to meet that crisis.

### THE COUNTRY DENUDED OF ITS ARMY.

What is our situation? I remember the other night that the noble marquis opposite, in setting forth his scheme in a manner so lucid and so persuasive, seemed to complain a little that certain critics had said that this country was denuded of its Army and its Militia. I do not know of any one who has said that except one authority, and that a very high authority. That is the First Lord of the Admiralty. At least twice in his speech he made use of the expression that this island was denuded of its troops and its Militia. That surely is a very grave state of affairs. The noble marquis combated that statement, which, I think, he had forgotten was made by his immediate colleague, and he brought forward some figures which I noted at the time and which the noble earl has criticised in more detail than I shall be willing or competent to do, but which inspired me, I confess, with no confidence in the War Office.



## OUR "MEN IN BUCKRAM."

He has produced a force, on paper, within these islands of 409,000 men. That in itself is a force which should command respect even in a great military nation. How is that body composed? It is composed of 98,000 Regular troops. These Regular troops, I suspect, cannot stand a very searching analysis at the present moment. They are, I suspect, men who are too young to be sent to the front, and men who are required for the dépôts, and, in any case, there is a question to be asked about them. We are going to send 50,000 men out at once, not before they are needed, to reinforce our troops in South Africa. Are these 50,000 coming from the 98,000 Regular troops, or are these 98,000 Regular troops left after the 50,000 have been sent out? The next item is 12,000 Reserves. Have they been called out, or are they at home? Then there are 7,000 Yeomanry. There are, further, 77,000 Militia. These, as I understand, cannot at present be embodied, because we have no barracks to put them in. And, last of all, we have 215,000 Volunteers.

## THE VOLUNTEERS :—AN "IMPOSSIBLE PROPOSAL."

Now, my lords, is not this statement an endeavour to blind ourselves to the facts? I have the highest respect for the Volunteers. They have given their time and their energy to their country, which have not, I understand, been always very cordially requited. But can these 215,000 Volunteers, by any stretch of the imagination, be called soldiers in the scientific sense of the word? It is perfectly certain that they cannot be. And why is it perfectly certain that they cannot be? It is so on the showing of the noble marquis himself, who recommends that they shall have a month's training, or, in the case of Volunteer artillery, three months' training, when the weather permits. How has that proposal been received? I venture to say with the unanimous condemnation of all the people whom it affects and concerns. I venture to say there is no large employer of labour in this country who sanctions such a proposal or believes it to be workable. I will take one testimony. I like always to quote from colleagues or some ardent supporters of the Government. I will take *The Scotsman*, a well-known and respected paper, and more blindly devoted to the Government than any news-



paper in these islands. *The Scotsman* sent a commissioner among all the employers in Edinburgh, hoping, I presume, to receive some benediction on the proposals of the Government, and possibly not without encouragement to some such result. The prophets cursed the scheme instead of blessing it. They said it was hopelessly ineffective; that it could not be carried out. That is what becomes of making your 215,000 Volunteers efficient. So much for defence.

“WHAT THEN? WHAT THEN?”

You are going to send out 50,000 men to South Africa. South Africa is a ravenous maw that demands many victims. You have now been at War since October 12. During that time—the auspicious news of this morning makes us hope that there may be yet better news to come—during that time you have been fighting on your own territories, you have not been able to advance an inch, you have performed glorious feats of arms, but feats of arms that have been absolutely unproductive. At the end of this time, when you are sending out 50,000 men to South Africa, you cannot but recollect that you have been sending out men by tens of thousands ever since this War began, and if these 50,000 men are exhausted and you want 50,000 more, what then? What then? “Oh,” you say, “it is indelicate to say these things. You are laying bare the nakedness of the country before foreign nations, and they may take advantage of it.” My lords, foreign nations know our position quite as well as we do, and better than some of us; better, if I may judge from the proposals of Her Majesty’s Government, than Her Majesty’s Government does. That is the position as regards the proposals of Her Majesty’s Government with respect to men. This is one point on which I should like to ask a question, not of the noble marquis, but of the Member of the Government, whoever he may be, who represents the Board of Admiralty in this House

WHAT ABOUT THE FLEET?

Are you going to do anything with regard to the Fleet? Is the Fleet going to be strengthened or to be mobilised? These are not things that can be discussed in a leisurely and debating fashion, spreading over fortnights or months, or even longer than that. The crisis is urgent, the danger is upon you, and then you come to this House with proposals that in

the month of May, when the weather allows, you will put the Volunteers under canvas, and then these islands and the Empire are safe. The position as regards South Africa is that we have been making War there for four months; we have never been able, until this week, to advance an inch into the enemy's country, and the enemy has been constantly and victoriously employed on ours. But I do not keep my eye on South Africa alone. Can any man entrusted with the destinies of this Empire keep his eye on South Africa alone?

#### THE ATTITUDE OF FOREIGN POWERS.

South Africa is a very important part of the Empire, no doubt, but you have interests and engagements in every part of the world. You are known, on the confession of your own Minister, to be denuded of troops at home. You are sending every available man and gun that you can spare to South Africa. What is the amicable disposition of foreign nations on which you can reckon so that we shall be left uninterrupted to pursue this war? I know there is nothing so unpopular, nothing so distasteful to the British public, and yet nothing so salutary, as to remind them of the opinion of foreign countries. But whether pleasant and salutary or not, in the crisis in which we are placed it is absolutely necessary to take notice of it. Where is the benevolent disposition of foreign countries on which, I suppose, the Government may be able to reckon when they make partial and incomplete military proposals to the country? I do not know. I confess I watch the situation in Europe and elsewhere more closely than I watch the situation in South Africa.

#### WANT OF AMITY EVERYWHERE.

I know that last December Her Majesty's Government made public overtures to two Great Powers for an alliance—Germany and the United States—and those overtures, as far as we can gather from the proceedings in the German and American Parliaments, were not received with any such cordiality as to encourage Her Majesty's Government to pursue them. You had in France a debate the other day in which, I think, the French Government took a friendly and conciliatory course, but in which, certainly, the tone of the discussion was not likely to encourage the people of this country in the belief that that friendliness would bear any great or alarming strain.



Well, in Russia there is no Parliament, and I suppose that is a Constitution which the noble marquis would envy. But, at any rate, we see circumstances in Russia which make us pause. The ancient Empire of Persia has been the witness, in these last days, to events to which England once would have had something to say, but which appear to pass without any protest from England, and perhaps without any possibility of protest from England. When you see a want of amity on the part of foreign Powers, when you see transactions going on in which this country is interested, and in which we have no longer a hand, I say it may be given to any of us, however light-hearted we may be, to pause and to ask the Government to take a large grasp of the situation, and to make proposals to the country which are adequate to that situation.

#### AN EMERGENCY PROPOSITION.

There are two divisions in which, I think, any such proposals naturally group themselves—those which are permanent and which are great questions of reorganisation, which I freely admit should not be discussed now, and those which are temporary and which are suited to a great emergency like the present, and which should be as large and sweeping as you please. The main proposition with regard to the emergency—one which seems to me to realise the greatness of the situation—is that for calling on old soldiers between twenty-five and forty-five years of age, and the noble marquis estimated that there were 170,000 men to come under the colours once more. True, from that source he did not anticipate above 20,000 men. That is a very slight basis on which to rely at a moment like this; but, at any rate, it is a practical proposal, an emergency proposal, and one which I for one welcome as a very timely proposal. Now, my lords, in that word “timely” lies a very great part of the question. The Government, to my thinking, have never been timely, and yet the essence of all modern warfare is that you should be, if possible, beforehand with your enemy. War was declared on October 11, I think, and since that time you have been sending troops to the front. But immediately after that time, and at that time, the burgher soldiers were in possession of your territory. They did know that time was the essence of the situation, and that, it seems to me, is what Her Majesty’s Government have never yet realised and do not realise now. When this little



scheme is exhausted—because it is a little scheme, and a great part of it cannot be realised for some months yet—how do you know you will not be compelled to bring forward another ?

#### WANTED, A BOLDER SCHEME.

This scheme has already been proved to be too late in the day, and later on you will be compelled to produce another scheme of a much larger, of a much bolder, character, and one which, I believe, the country was and is perfectly prepared for. We have had one great example in this matter—the noble lord who spoke last, I think, alluded to it—the example of the United States. The United States, in their great Civil War, did not in time realise what a big business they had on hand. The first call of Mr. Lincoln's for troops was for something like 5,000 men. His Secretary of War, if I remember rightly, was anxious that the Cabinet at which that decision was arrived at should call for 500,000 men. The representative of the Treasury objected to so large a call, and so a call was made in April for 75,000 men, and in December the United States forces amounted to 660,000 ; and by the time the War was completed how large do you suppose was the number of men that the United States had put in the field ? Two and three-quarter millions ! I do not wish to be misunderstood. I am not wanting you to raise 660,000 men or 2,750,000 men. I want nothing of the kind. I want timely measures, and my view is that, if the United States had called for 500,000 men instead of 75,000 men, they might never have needed any more soldiers at all.

#### “ A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH.”

But you say, “ This is not a great crisis like that. That was a matter of life and death.” I say this is a matter of life and death. I completely adopt the words of the noble lord opposite. I do not think the Government have the faintest notion of how in the country, in the streets, in any place where men congregate, the feeling of crisis, of over-burdening crisis, of constant danger is present to the minds of the people. This is a matter of life and death. Suppose—take the hypothesis for one moment, though we will not admit it for more than a single instant—that you should not be victorious in this war. You lose South Africa. You could

not show your face in South Africa. You lose the principal colony of your Empire, you lose the most important base you have outside these islands. But if you lose South Africa you lose a great deal more than that. The noble lord—I again quote his testimony—pointed out that this Empire resting largely on prestige, these colonies that have come so enthusiastically to our support, have done so because they believe they are associating themselves with the most powerful Empire the world has ever seen. If you deprive them of that feeling, the life of your Empire is short. You will be shut up in these islands, one of which I fear does not love you, and your Empire outside these islands will break away from you, and where it is without defence it will fall a prey to other nations. In the meantime you alone with your fleet will be in the midst of a Europe which has many scores to pay off and will be only too ready to pay them off. If that be not a crisis, if that be not a matter of life and death, I know not what is.

### III.—The Threatened Heart of the Empire.

Conscription for “predominance of Empire” is impossible. It would be easy to defeat such a proposal, for the repugnance and horror with which compulsory soldierhood is regarded by our people are too strong to be overcome by all the glistening words of Jingo tempters. Nevertheless there is a real danger of Conscription coming in this country as it has come in other countries, not for purposes of Imperial aggression, but under the dire compulsion of the necessity of protecting our national independence. It is well to make this absolutely clear. Many excellent people who are zealous against Conscription are also opposed to taking any measures for protecting our shores from invasion. They fail to see that the dread of invasion is the only key which is powerful enough to open the door to Conscription. Hence everything that renders invasion less probable tends at the same time to render the advent of Conscription more remote. Conscription is adopted everywhere under one plea: the overpowering instinct of self-preservation. All secondary considerations, such as the benefit of physical training and the moral advantages of submission to stringent discipline, are mere after-thoughts—consolations of despair,



such as those by which Lord Rosebery endeavoured to show that this war had left a balance to the good. No nation would ever submit to the enforced military servitude of the Conscription for such gains. One thing, and one thing only, reconciles nations to Conscription. It is a horrible *pis aller*, but it is preferable to invasion. To keep the foreigner off the soil of our country, to preserve our frontiers intact—for that nations, even our own nation, will consent to Conscription, with all its train of attendant miseries, when once it is established beyond all doubt that there is no other way of escape, no other method of securing indispensable security from attack.

#### THE JUSTIFICATION OF OUR SUPREME NAVY.

Every great nation, and most of the small nations in Europe, have adopted the principle of compulsory military service. The only reason why we have not done so is that the silver streak afforded us a security against invasion which rendered Conscription unnecessary. If the Channel were to be dried up to-morrow, we should not discuss Conscription; we should only discuss the best method of making it effective. But the Channel is not in all cases a barrier to invasion—it is a highway to the Power which has command of the sea. The British Empire is possible because the sea renders it possible to transport armies, which if the sea had not existed could never have reached their destination. It is infinitely easier for us to transport 150,000 men 6,000 miles to Cape Town than it is for Lord Roberts to march 50,000 men 600 miles to Pretoria—even if the Boers obligingly cleared the way and permitted him to march undisturbed across the veldt. Hence the real secret of our immunity from Conscription has not been the sea, but the fact that upon the sea we possessed more ships and men, and better ships and men, than our neighbours. This it was which led me sixteen years ago to write "The Truth about the Navy," which was the turning-point of our recent naval history, and this it is which leads me to-day to turn with passionate anxiety to discuss the means by which we can avert the perils which the infatuated policy of our Ministers has brought upon the Realm.

#### THE REAL DANGER OF INVASION.

So far as the Navy is concerned, with the exception of the possible danger from submarine boats, we may rest tolerably

secure. It has never been stronger, relatively or positively, than it is to-day. Against any invasion which had as its object the conquest of the country, it is an absolute safeguard. We can only be invaded by Germany or by France. And our ships can be relied upon to render impossible the maintenance of the communications between the invading army and its Continental base, which are indispensable for supplying reinforcements, provisions, and munitions of war. But an invasion for the sake of conquest is not the only danger with which we are threatened. There is another great danger to which we are exposed, viz., a predatory incursion *à la* Jameson for the purpose of striking a deadly blow at the capital of the Empire. Against such a raid our fleet is not an adequate protection. It could prevent the expeditionary force returning to the land from which it set out. It could not prevent its landing. If we are to parry the demand for the introduction of compulsory military service, we shall have to provide otherwise for averting this peril.

#### THE FLEET NO SECURITY AGAINST A RAID.

The situation is not one for alarmist outcries. It is one which calls for vigilant examination of the actual facts. Refuges of lies, complacent sophisms, and confident assurances stand us in no stead in times of crisis. Hitherto we have relied for the safety of our capital from attack upon (1) the fleet, and (2) the army. It is admitted by our military and naval authorities that it is impossible to pin the fleet down to the Channel in time of war. One chief element in the strength of navies is their mobility, and if they are tied by the leg to any station their effectiveness is largely destroyed. The necessity for concentrating the whole available force of fighting ships at any given point might compel the most cautious Government to strip the Channel of ships for a fortnight at a time. Even without any such overpowering necessity, the Channel Fleet frequently goes down to Gibraltar, a station from which it could not return in time to prevent a sudden landing on our southern shore. Hence successive War Ministers, supported by unanimous Houses of Commons, have affirmed the necessity for making provision for the protection of London against predatory incursions. Lord Lansdowne, at the beginning of his administration, expressly affirmed the necessity of preparing betimes against such sudden attacks, and the present House of Commons has voted some trifle



towards the creation of a chain of fortified positions round London which would serve as centres for the Army of Defence and dépôts for munitions and stores needed in the defence of the capital. If this was recognised as of vital importance when all our Army was at home, how much more important is it to-day, when our Army is locked up in the entanglement of South Africa, from which it can no more be extricated than General White can be extricated from Ladysmith !

#### THE CHANCE OF FOREIGN COMPLICATIONS.

How do we stand if, in the course of the next twelve months, any one of many outstanding questions should involve us in a quarrel with our neighbours ? The gravity of our present situation lies in the fact that we have disarmed our country by interning the whole effective army in South Africa at the very time when our policy has excited against us an altogether unprecedented outburst of popular indignation. It is a veritable fury of moral sentiment, a passion of righteous wrath against what seems to every European people a piratical enterprise against the independence of two small Republics, which is prompted by the avarice of the stock-jobber and masked by the cant of the Pharisee. They may be quite wrong. That is beside the question. The fact that this is their opinion is undisputed, and their conviction will govern their conduct. Nothing unites nations or individuals like a common detestation, and in the mutual loathing of our attack upon the Transvaal even the memory of Alsace and Lorraine is forgotten. For the first time for thirty years France knows that if she were to make war upon England she would have the enthusiastic support of the German people, and could rely upon the absolute neutrality of the German Government. Even if there had been no other reason for alarm, this disappearance of the one great safeguard which has served us for a generation might well give us pause.

#### RUMOURS OF EUROPEAN ALLIANCES.

What will happen is not that France will suddenly say to herself, "Behold now my secular enemy has left her capital open to a sudden foray from the Continent. Go to, let us try and 'rush' London !" There is no danger of any such deliberately conceived bit of buccaneering. M. de Blowitz, in a very remarkable interview which appeared in the *Times* of January 20,

explains exactly the method in which France will approach the problem, the ultimate solution of which by the sword may see the French troops in occupation of Sydenham Hill before mid-summer. According to this "ex-Minister who still occupies a high position, a very well-informed Frenchman, who is thoroughly acquainted with what goes on behind the scenes," France sees her way to raise the solution of all outstanding questions, which are: (1) Newfoundland, (2) Madagascar, (3) Morocco, (4) Siam, (5) Egypt, (6) The New Hebrides. This ex-Minister said to M. de Blowitz:—

"Whatever happens henceforth, the prestige of England abroad is undergoing a fearful crisis, and I can predict and assure you that it will not be long before the attitude of an important portion of Europe will prove to England how serious this loss of prestige is, and how necessary it is for her to maintain her coolness and energy to face the new situation created for her by the Transvaal War. *Pourparlers* are now going on between three at least of the Continental Powers to force her to enter into negotiations for the settlement of the questions still pending by taking advantage of her present embarrassments."

Of these questions, that which is most likely to lead to war is that of Egypt. The ex-Minister says:—

"The Egyptian question must be broached and solved, and this we are certain we shall do with the co-operation of Europe. England may have evaded engagements, but she is now unable to do so. I can state that negotiations are going on for common action, and I may add that Germany, far from wishing to delay French action, is rather encouraging and inciting it, while Russia is far from discouraging it. The agreement once concluded—and it is not the first—between France, Germany, and Russia, Italy and Austria will be promptly sounded. As to France, I have reason to believe that M. Paul Cambon, the Ambassador in London, will shortly have full instructions for entering into a conversation with Lord Salisbury which ought speedily to lead to an application for the solutions of which I speak."

I hear from other sources that these *pourparlers* are going on, for the result of which we may not have long to wait.

#### SQUEEZED ALL ROUND.

We are to be squeezed and blackmailed all round. At some point in the process we shall resist, and then we shall plunge into the inevitable war. "Inevitable," because the position into which our Government has allowed itself to drift in South Africa absolutely invites our rivals to take advantage of our self-created impotence.



With such schemes afoot in Europe it is obvious that peace is very precarious. We may at any moment be involved in war with a European Power, which will have the moral support of all the other Powers and all the peoples on the Continent. How are we prepared to meet such a contingency? It is no use talking of Conscription as if that would be an infallible specific. The resistance which any attempt to enforce Conscription would provoke at home would more than counterbalance any advantage which might accrue from the addition to the numbers of enrolled men. What is wanted is not numbers but brains—not Conscription but forethought and preparation, and an intelligent anticipation of the probable course of events. If we should get into war with Germany or France, how would we be attacked? It is no use blinking matters. We may have to die in solving the problem before many months are over. We may as well think it over quietly before it is too late.

#### IF WE WERE AT WAR?

The first idea of our adversary will be to strike at our trade. For the protection of our commerce we must look to our Navy. That is already in existence. It is supremely "fit." We cannot improvise anything that we add to its efficiency. So with it we may rest content.

But merely to prey upon our trade will never satisfy a great military Power. When the Fashoda fever was still at its height, the *Revue des Deux Mondes* published an elaborate paper setting forth the plan by which it was confidently calculated the French would be able to cross the Channel and march an army of 170,000 men upon London. They would probably lose 10,000 men; but what is that compared with the immense importance of seizing the enemy's capital? The attack on London is a fixed idea with all Frenchmen who contemplate the possibility of war with England.

#### VON MOLTKE ON THE OCCUPATION OF LONDON.

It is not generally known, but it is equally true, that German military authorities have long evolved plans for seizing London. Several years ago, when A. W. Kinglake was in Berlin, Von Moltke remarked to him in the course of a conversation, "I cannot conceive of the possibility of Germany ever being at war with England. But if it ever happened, the

occupation of London would be mere child's play" This saying may be read in connection with the same great strategist's observation: "I know a hundred different ways of taking an army into England. I have never yet seen one which would show me how to take it out again." The point of this cryptic saying has usually been missed by those who quote it.

#### MARSHAL VON WRANGEL AND WOOLWICH ARSENAL.

Nearly twenty years ago a young English officer was dining at an officers' mess in Berlin where old Marshal von Wrangel was one of the company. The talk turned upon the possibility of war between England and Germany. "Do you know," said "Papa" Wrangel to the English guest, "how the English would first hear that war had broken out with us?" By the declaration of war, I suppose," said the Englishman. Von Wrangel replied, "The same *Times* which reported the declaration of war by Germany at Berlin at midnight would also report the destruction of Woolwich Arsenal."

On the Englishman professing a polite incredulity, Marshal von Wrangel went on: "It is the simplest thing in the world, and the most obvious. Woolwich is your only arsenal. It is close to London. In London, at this moment, we have so many—[he mentioned a definite number]—German soldiers. At present they are in civil employment—waiters, barbers, clerks; but they are all under military discipline. They would be ordered to go down to Woolwich—some by road, some by steamer, some by rail. They would not be told what they were to do until they got there. They would only take with them a stout stick and a revolver. They would arrive at their various *rendezvous* after dark. In Woolwich Arsenal you have only a night guard of so many men—[again he named the exact number]. The whole garrison is not strong, but it need not be taken into account. At midnight at Berlin war would be declared. Five minutes later the German soldiers in undress would break into the Arsenal, overpower the guard, and in half an hour the whole place would be in a blaze."

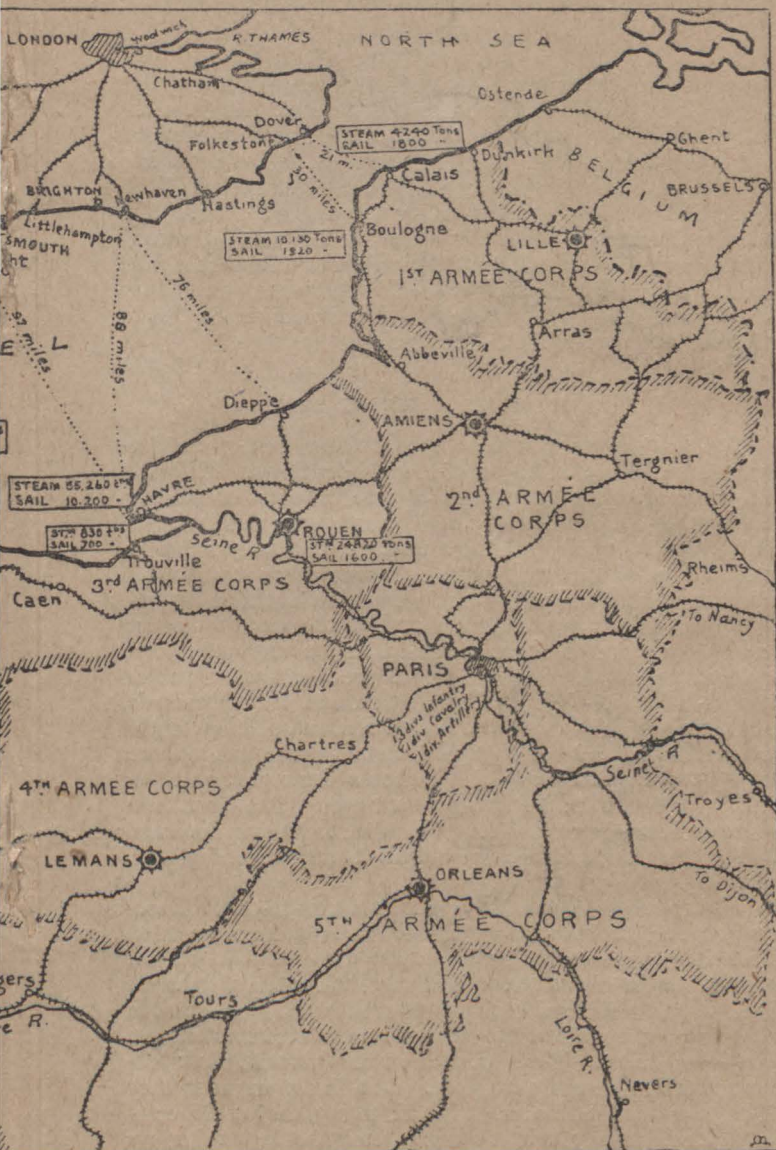
#### WOOLWICH OUR ONLY ARSENAL.

It may be said to be but an after-dinner jest, but there was a certain gruesome realism about some of the details as "Papa" Wrangel rolled them off which seemed to indicate





MAP SHOWING THE DISPOSITION OF TROOPS IN THE  
IN THE PRINCIPAL F



THE NORTH OF FRANCE AND THE TRANSPORT AVAILABLE  
FRENCH CHANNEL PORTS.



that such an eventuality had seriously been contemplated. Certain it is that Woolwich, our only arsenal, will form the natural objective of our enemies. In 1859 the War Minister of the day wrote to the Defence Committee, and said "it had been decided" to form a second arsenal distinct from Woolwich. But the decision has never been acted upon. The Defence Committee of 1859 recommended that a second arsenal should be established at Runcorn near Birkenhead, and a central depôt at Cannock Chase. Forty-one years have passed since then. But Woolwich still remains to-day, as in 1859, the sole arsenal of the Empire.

#### THE DANGER OF A SUDDEN RAID.

If, therefore, we were at war with either France, or Germany, it is at London they would aim their blows. They will always strike at the heart! What we have to consider is whether they could strike home. The answer to this is simple. Yes, if they are willing to risk a raid. No, if they refuse to invade unless with assured communications over sea. No fleet in the world can guarantee our shores against a sudden descent. Even when we held undisputed control of the seas at the end of last century, the French succeeded in sending warships to the coast of Ireland. Later on in the great war, when we had 131 vessels in commission in the English and Irish Channels, and 153 in the Downs and the North Sea, in addition to the harbour flotillas, our coasts were again and again insulted, our booms at the entrance to the harbours destroyed, and our shipping captured and burnt before our eyes. The Channel is so narrow it can be crossed in a few hours. "Give me command of the Channel for forty-eight hours," said Napoleon, "and England is mine."

It is not necessary to ask for so long a time to-day. Napoleon proposed to cross the Channel from Boulogne in 1805 with 132,000 men and 400 guns, who were to be conveyed for the most part in row boats. William of Normandy, when he landed in 1066, fetched over 60,000 men, mostly mounted, in boats propelled by sails and oars. The mail steamers cross in a couple of hours. The French calculate that with their flat-bottomed steam barges, moving at eight knots an hour, they could cross in eight hours. That is to say, they could cross the Channel on any winter's night, and the first thing we should know about it would be their appearance in force at

any point they chose to select along the eighty-eight miles of available coast between Margate and Southsea.

I am not an alarmist, being optimist by temperament, and having a cheerful confidence in the ability of Englishmen to hold their own against all their enemies, provided that the Englishman in his heart of hearts believes that he has his quarrel just. I have no confidence, but the very reverse of confidence, in the triumph of England when our conscience with injustice is corrupted. Hence, I should not be surprised if, when we are deaf to all remonstrances and blind to warnings, we find that the loss of South Africa would be but a bagatelle compared with the dangers which threaten us nearer home.

#### IF OUR EMPIRE WERE DOOMED.

If the Enemy of Mankind were to draw up a plan of campaign for the destruction of the British Empire, it is difficult to see how he could lay his plans more effectively than events are at present shaping themselves. To gradually drain away from Great Britain all her trained fighting men, to carry them off to a distance of 6000 miles, to so entangle them in the toils of a war from which no extrication is possible for six months and probably for twelve, that would obviously be a master-stroke of Satanic policy. Such an end, however attained, would be worth the price, but even the Evil One himself could hardly have contrived that the lure which disgarrisoned England should be an object the pursuit of which would arouse against us the passionate hatred of all European nations and cool the growing sympathies of the American Republic.

#### PREPARING THE COUP DE GRACE.

This having been triumphantly accomplished, the next move in the diabolical game would be to arrange a series of combats, each more artfully designed than its predecessor, to convince our enemies that we were lacking in every element of military power except the bulldog valour of the individual soldier. Public feeling would be wrought up to such a pitch of offended pride as to blind every one to the full significance of the next step.

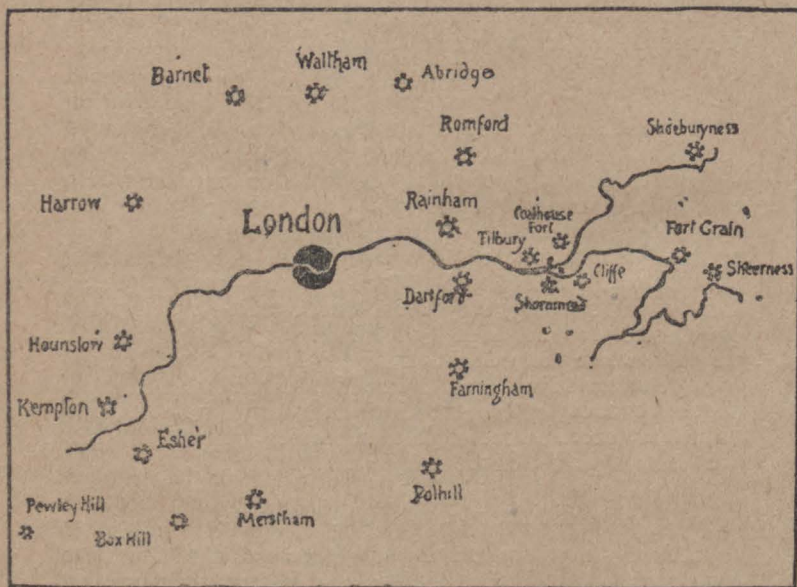
But before that step is taken the Enemy of Mankind would find it expedient to take precautions first to render our retreat impossible, secondly to inflame still further the violent hatred with which we are regarded by our Continental neighbours,



and thirdly to arrange for removing the British fleet as far as possible from the place where the *coup de grâce* must be delivered.

#### A DEATH BLOW AT THE EMPIRE'S HEART.

All this having been successfully accomplished, the way would be cleared for the last move but one before the overthrow of the Empire. Popular passion having been artfully



*From the "Weekly Daily News."*

#### LONDON'S CIRCLE OF DEFENSIVE POSITIONS.

fomented, the Press practically gagged, and the Opposition cowed into silence, what would be easier than to induce Ministers to order as a demonstration of energy the complete denuding of the country of all its military resources? So long as our fleet is supreme upon the seas no scheme of the conquest of England by an invading army can be contemplated. But we live in an age of Raids. The possibility of a bold

raid upon London by a French army is admitted by our War Office to be a contingency so probable that, after discussing the matter for eight years or more, they decided that it was imperatively necessary to create for the defence of the richest, most exposed and most defenceless capital in the world a series of fortified camps where our regular Army, with the aid of Militia and Volunteers, might hold the foreign raiders in check. It is ten years since this need was admitted in Parliament by the Secretary for War. It is three years since Lord Lansdowne proposed to make the necessary provision for the defence of London, but at present little or nothing has been done to give effect to his intentions. The garrisoning of these only partially existing fortified camps was to be entrusted largely to the Volunteers. They were to be stored with all the necessary material, and the Volunteers were to be practised every year in the methods of defence. How much of all this has been carried out? No one knows better than the French War Office.

#### WHAT MAY BE FEARED.

In all calculations heretofore as to the number of men necessary for a landing in England it has been assumed that its strength must exceed 100,000 men. But that was on the supposition that the British Army was at home. To-day the whole British Army is in South Africa. An enterprise which would have needed 150,000 men might now be chanced with 50,000. The smaller force would be more mobile. It would move more rapidly. A larger proportion could be mounted. It would be able to bring more artillery. 50,000 men with 250 quick-firing guns would find little to oppose them between Pevensey and London. The only question is whether they would have the nerve to cut themselves off from their base and boldly strike for London. Napoleon reckoned that he would be in London four days after he quitted the coast. A week's rations would not be difficult to carry. The army would live to a certain extent on the country. The only indispensable impedimenta would be the large supply of ammunition which would have to be landed and carried with the expeditionary column. They would be able to seize and utilise the railway to some extent, but they would chiefly rely upon their own transport. What force have we to oppose to such a raid?



## THE PRIOR QUESTION.

Before discussing how without any army we are to arrest the march of a well-equipped and mobile force of thoroughly disciplined soldiers, there is the prior question as to how the raiders are to get across the Channel. It is assumed by some who know nothing about the change produced by the railway that the French would need to concentrate an army at their seaports, and thereby give us notice of their intentions. But in these railway days there is no more need for a Camp of Boulogne. The troops who were despatched to South Africa went direct to the ship from the train. So if it were decided to raid England there would be no difficulty in embarking troops direct from the trains, which would bring them without loss of time from the barracks in which they are now stationed. But it will be alleged it would be necessary to accumulate a great number of ships at the port of embarkation, and this concentration would excite suspicion. Nothing of the kind is necessary. To ferry an army over the Channel is a very different thing from transporting it to South Africa. According to Lord Wolseley's estimate one ton to one ton and a half of shipping is wanted for each soldier—assuming that he is accompanied with adequate stores, guns, etc. Taking the higher estimate, the French would only need 75,000 tons of shipping to transport an army of 50,000 men and 250 guns across the Channel.

## A MISSION OF INVESTIGATION.

In order to ascertain how many ships there might be available at this moment in the French ports, I despatched a member of my staff to make a tour along the coast from Calais to Brest, and report as exactly as possible the number of ships, French, British and foreign, he found actually in port at the time of his visit. He reached Calais on Saturday, January 27th, and finished at Brest January 31st. The Table on pages 32 and 33 is his report as to the shipping actually lying in the French Channel ports and Brest at the end of January. The tonnage is of course estimated—under-estimated rather than otherwise. The British ships could of course be pressed into service on the outbreak of war. But even without the British steamers there were sufficient French steamers lying at the wharves of the French ports in the last days of January to transport with ease 50,000 men and 250 guns to the English coast.

## THE PASSAGE.

If the French Government believed that war was inevitable, what we might expect is that there would be a sudden manifestation of excessive amiability. Something would be contrived in Morocco which would lure our Channel Squadron to the neighbourhood of the Straits of Gibraltar. Then when the nearest British fleet was four or five days' distant, the French Channel Squadron of six ironclads, with accompanying cruisers, gunboats, and torpedo boats, would steal out for evolutionary exercise in the Channel. When all was ready, the cables would be cut late in the afternoon and the mail service suspended. Trains full of troops would steam into Calais and Boulogne, where the steamers, moved up from Havre and Rouen, would be in readiness to take them on board. When they left port they would be joined by the men-of-war, under whose escort they would steam swiftly across the narrow sea to the appointed landing-place. They might land at Worthing, as General Hamley suggested, or at Pevensy, where the Normans landed, or they might steam northward to Harwich. Whatever spot they selected, they would find no obstacle to their landing. The French Channel Squadron would be amply sufficient to protect them from attack and to cover their landing with their guns. Before the sun set the whole force would be ready for the raid on London.

## WHAT IS THERE TO STOP THEM?

Between the coast and London there is no fortified position that would arrest for a day the advance of the raiders. Lord Wolseley, in the olden days as far back as 1883, declared that we could not muster more than 30,000 men to repel an invasion at twenty-four hours' notice. How many could we muster now, when we have 200,000 in Africa? Men, no doubt, we could muster, and even men in uniform. But we have no longer an army left to defend our capital. The raiders would push on by forced marches. Napoleon calculated four days were enough to cover the distance between Dover and London. The raiders would do their best to cover the ground in three days. Time would be against them. Therefore, they would sacrifice everything to speed. But even if they only travelled at Napoleonic speed, if they sailed on Saturday night they would be in London on Thursday.



Table showing Shipping Available for Transport

	CALAIS.		BOULOGNE.		ROUEN.	
	Vessels.	Tonnage.	Vessels.	Tonnage.	Vessels.	Tonnage.
French Steamers . . . .	1	1,000	5	800	5 3	2,000 1,000
French Steam Tugs. . . .	{ 8	50	6	50	10	30
Steam Canal Boats . . . .	{ 2	20	11	20	16	20
					15	80
Total French Steam Shipping .	11	1,440	23	5,320	49	14,820
British Steamers . . . .	2	1,000	5	1,000	2	2,000
	3	500	1	500	6	1,000
	1	300				
Total British Steam Shipping .	6	3,800	6	5,500	8	10,000
Total French and British Steam Shipping . . . . .	17	5,240	29	10,820	57	28,820

## Total Available Steam Shipping (French and

French Sailing Ships . .	2	400			2	800
Fishing Boats . . . . .	50	20	96	20		
Canal Boats . . . . .					130	50
Total French Sailing Vessels .	52	1,800	96	1,920	132	8,100
British Sailing Ships . .						

## Total Available Sailing Shipping (French and

## in the Principal French Channel Ports.

HAVRE.		TROUVILLE.		CHERBOURG.		BREST.		TOTAL.	
Vessels.	Tonnage.	Vessels.	Tonnage.	Vessels.	Tonnage.	Vessels.	Tonnage.	Vessels.	Tonnage.
1	10,000			2	1,000	3	800	53	77,600
2	9,000			3	800	9	500		
1	5,000					3	200		
2	2,000								
9	900								
2	800							77	2,610
2	500								
4	100	1	30	5	40	2	20		
12	30							15	1,200
35	48,460	1	30	10	4,600	17	7,540	145	82,210
2	1,000	1	800	2	1,000			32	29,700
6	800			1	800				
8	6,800	1	800	3	2,800			32	29,700
43	55,260	2	830	13	7,400	17	7,540		

British), 177 vessels of 111,910 tons gross.

5	800			1	800	3	800	22	13,000
1	500			5	400	3	300		
125	20	35	20	50	20	40	20	351	10,800
								130	6,500
86	7,000	35	700	56	3,800	46	4,100	503	27,400
4	800							4	3,200

British), 505 vessels of 30,600 tons gross.



## HOW ARE WE PREPARED ?—IN MEN.

Our arsenals are empty. Lord Rosebery boastfully declared the other day that our enemies had not yet got to the bottom of the resources of Old England. Not quite. But we have for the moment got to the bottom of our resources in the shape of trained soldiery and modern weapons of war. To supply Lord Roberts with the troops which he needs we have drained our barracks until we have now only 10,000 more soldiers of the regular army available for service abroad. We have mustered up our last Reserves, we have called out the Militia, we have creamed the Volunteers, and have raked the country for Yeomanry. We have summoned from near and from far the available forces of the Colonies. We have done all that, and how do we stand to-day ? We are simply cleaned out of regular troops. Our barracks contain weedy boys, reservists rejected as medically unfit for service, time-expired soldiers, and untrained militiamen. We dare not withdraw another soldier from the garrison with which the Unionist Administration maintains the authority of the Queen in Ireland. The garrison in India is 15,000 below its normal standard of strength.

## ALL THE ARMY WE HAVE LEFT.

Mr. Arnold Forster, speaking in the debate on the Address, said, without being corrected or contradicted :—

“At present we were without any organised Army in the United Kingdom. As soon as the troops under orders had gone, there would be left six battalions of infantry of the Line, and three battalions of Guards—all under strength, and, as far as the Line was concerned, largely composed of men unfit for active service—and nine cavalry regiments, some without horses, and all under strength. These troops were without trains, guns, equipment, and proper reserves of ammunition and stores; and, therefore, they could not be regarded as an organised Army. As to the Militia, a large number of the most efficient battalions had been sent out of the country. One battalion now doing garrison duty in the United Kingdom was 550 strong, and 120 of the best men were drafted away to do duty as Militia reserve with the Line battalion. Two companies of the Line battalion had been added; but these men were unfit for service.

As for artillery, we have absolutely denuded ourselves of guns in order to send out batteries to Africa.

## THE VOLUNTEERS.

It will be said that we have the Volunteers. But in what a state are the Volunteers? "Yeoman," writing to the *Daily Telegraph* of February 1st, says:—

"The rest of the auxiliary forces of the country have been deliberately disorganised and depleted. There is not a squadron of Yeomanry nor a company of Volunteers that has not been reduced to a lamentable state of collapse. The best shots and the smartest soldiers, with an altogether undue proportion of non-commissioned officers, have gone, or are on the point of going, to the seat of war in the Imperial Yeomanry, the C.I.V., and the Volunteer detachments. The regiments and battalions from which these men have been drawn have been reduced to a condition of chaos, but even in regard to the actual numbers the War Office refuses all help, and the enlisting of recruits to fill the gaps in the ranks has, perforce, come to an end.

## OUR LACK OF POWDER AND SHOT.

In the matter of armaments matters are even worse. Woolwich is practically empty. Our munitions of war have been exhausted. We read about a shell famine in England, and although the phrase may be an exaggeration, we have not sufficient Lyddite shells in stock to allow the men we sent out with the howitzers opportunity to learn how to handle the new explosive before they were sent to face the Boers. Our rifles have been found faulty in their sighting, so that the shot goes four feet wide of the mark at a range of 500 yards. We have no trained horses for artillery. Nor have we any reserve of quick-firing guns. We have skinned the navy for guns to strengthen our batteries in Natal and Cape Colony, and we have not sufficient to mount on the forts which guard the mouth of the Thames or the approaches to our most important naval strongholds. Worst of all, because the most inexplicable and the most appalling evidence of our lack of preparation for eventualities, we have not cartridges for our army of defence. To keep the troops in Africa supplied, we had to loot every Volunteer armoury in the country of all its reserve store of ammunition. And this under a Government which came in on a Vote of Censure passed upon its predecessor for being short in "cordite," and which last year was voted £21,000,000 to provide for the defence of the Empire.



## WHAT THE CAPTURE OF LONDON WOULD MEAN.

The supposition that fifty thousand trained troops with two hundred and fifty quick-firing guns could capture a city of five millions may seem extravagant, and some may talk of defending the streets with barricades, etc. All that is folly. The invader, after burning Woolwich and sinking obstructions in the Thames, would have London at his mercy. He need only occupy the water-works at Surbiton to have the water supply of three millions of people in his hands. From Sydenham or Hampstead he could shell London into mad panic, and exact at discretion whatever supplies he needed for his troops. With London at his mercy he could dictate terms. Even if they were worsted in the end, the raiders, when things came to the worst, would always be in a position to exact terms of surrender that would enable them to return home. But if they had to surrender as prisoners of war, that would be nothing compared to the immense importance of having driven the blade of the invader's sword up to the hilt in the heart of the British Empire.

## HOW IT MIGHT COME ABOUT.

Of course I do not for a moment suggest that the French will deliberately say to themselves, "Go to, now. Our hated rival has voluntarily cast aside her military armour. Let us endeavour to strike at London." Things will not come about in that way. What is much more likely to happen is that we shall get into a quarrel with France either about Newfoundland fisheries or about Delagoa Bay, or about any of the innumerable incidents which crop up from time to time between Englishmen and Frenchmen in all parts of the world. Quarrels arise easily enough in times of profound peace; but when war is in the air, and the atmosphere is tremulous with cannon thunder, the excitable temperament of our neighbours is much more likely to give way under the promptings of passion and of pride. We have, to say the least, set them a very good example on that score. France was needlessly humiliated by the fashion in which the evacuation of Fashoda was forced upon them the year before last. There is hardly a soldier in France who does not feel that France has much more to avenge in Fashoda than ever we had about Majuba. They have

behind them the universal sentiment of the Continent, and they know they can rely for the first time for thirty years on the sympathy and moral support of the German people. In those circumstances, what is more likely than that some trifling dispute—the seizure of a French ship, the shooting of a French officer, or another of Mr. Chamberlain's speeches—might bring about a collision which would involve us in war?

#### IF WAR, THEN THE RAID.

If we were at war with France the French would of necessity be compelled to strike at our heart. They have no hope of success on the sea single-handed against England, but they would do what they could to prey upon our commerce, and keep their ironclads for the most part shut up in fortified harbours where they would be as inaccessible as if they were at the North Pole. Hence, if they were to do anything at all they must attempt some such raid as I have suggested. The best military authorities admit that there is no impossibility in such a predatory raid being carried out. The Channel Fleet cannot be kept permanently in the Channel. If it is not to be deprived of the mobility which constitutes so large an element in naval strength, it must be free to go wherever it can find the enemy.

#### THE DEFENCELESSNESS OF LONDON.

The danger is one which every Government has admitted since 1889. Successive Governments have proposed to make provision in the shape of fortified stations and stores of material of war round which our forces could muster to check the rush on London; but these fortified stations are not finished, and the stores which they ought to contain are still reposing at Woolwich. No steps have been taken to carry out the recommendations of the military authorities in the way of mobilising the Volunteers so as to accustom them to undertake the defence of the capital. Many things have been sketched out as to what ought to be done, but little or nothing has been done; and yet at this time, when feeling on the Continent is running against us higher than it has ever run for a century, we have denuded ourselves of our Regular army, and have completed



the general *débâcle* by making pie of the whole Volunteer force. In those circumstances where should we be if the possible, nay, the probable event should happen of an armed collision with France ?

#### EN ROUTE TO SEDAN.

I sincerely hope that this supreme disaster will not befall us ; but such a catastrophe is at least as much within the pale of possibility as the capture of Paris was to the Parisians when they launched the legions of the Second Empire on the famous march to Berlin which terminated at Sedan. The overthrow of France, although directly brought about by the superior skill and numbers of the Germans, had nevertheless its roots in the moral deterioration of the people. Can any one who has looked over the London Press for the last three months doubt that most of the elements which led to the overthrow of France in 1870 are present in our midst to-day ? In Mr. Chamberlain we have a second and more blatant Emile Ollivier, and Lord Lansdowne, judging from the results apparent in South Africa, is no better prepared than was Napoleon III. for a great trial of international strength. It may so happen that a merciful Providence will afflict us with sufficient disaster in South Africa to compel our people to look facts in the face seriously ; but if the warning hitherto written in letters of flame on the walls of our African Empire should fade and disappear, wiped out by a victorious march to Pretoria, it is to be feared that we, too, may find our Sedan nearer home, and say good-bye to our position as a Great Power among the nations of the earth.

#### WHAT SHOULD BE DONE ?

What should not be done is to postpone doing anything until the Government has forced through Parliament the Bill enforcing the ballot for the Militia. What is wanted is not compulsion to collect more food for powder. We want brain to use the men we have already at command. When I discussed the question of Conscription with M. de Laveleye a dozen years ago I remember posing him by asking what was the use of demanding the arming of millions when our authorities are quite incapable of welding the half-a-million

of Regulars, Volunteers, and Militia into a mobile defensive force. What we have to do is to start just where we are, and as we are, and ask ourselves what we should have to do if to-morrow the French landed at Shoreham, or the Germans at Harwich?

#### MATÉRIEL DE GUERRE.

The first thing to do is to replenish our arsenals. It is simply criminal to have allowed our supply of munitions of war to have run so low that if we were threatened with an invasion to-morrow we should not be able to supply the firing line with cartridges. The waste of ammunition in modern war is colossal, and the victory will belong to those whose reserve of cartridges gives out last. We need good rifles, rightly sighted. We need quick-firing guns and plenty of them, with ample store of ammunition. We want guns that will not be out-ranged and out-classed, and that will be more rapidly fired than the guns of the possible invader. We want spades and trenching tools, we want dépôts and magazines containing all manner of entanglements, such as barbed wire and the like. We want—Heaven only knows what we want, but we want almost everything that an army needs to offer any adequate resistance to the foe.

#### MANŒUVRES FOR THE VOLUNTEERS.

What we should do, and at once, is to arrange for bringing up the whole enrolled Volunteer force of the kingdom to go through experimental manœuvres, having for their object the defence of London against a foreign raid. On an early date, let the signal be given and see how long it takes to put 250,000 in line on the threatened front of London. Then let them entrench themselves along the positions which they would have to take up in war time and see how we can manage to feed, control, and direct such an unwieldy mob. Let them act in everything, except the firing of ball cartridge, as if they were face to face with a foe. If we have sufficient Regulars and Militia left to furnish men and guns for an invading force, the whole operation might be rehearsed on the actual theatre of war. It would cost a good deal—no doubt. It would inconvenience many people—admitted. But it would at least, for



the first time, enable us to understand where we are, and to realise what we need to put our capital in a proper posture of defence.

#### STRENGTHEN THE VOLUNTEERS.

From this day onward every effort should be made to increase the number and efficiency of the Volunteers. The effort made by Mr. R. M. Littler, Chairman of the Middlesex County Council, to secure the co-operation of all County Councils in developing the Volunteer corps cannot be too warmly commended. Mr. Littler, in the circular which began his movement, declares quite truly that the position of the Volunteers is not satisfactory. "They are not provided with the necessary number of drill sheds, nor are there sufficient ranges. Scarcely one of the corps is fully equipped for all emergencies, while the Government allowance of ammunition is insufficient to make marksmen of the average recruit." Over and above these deficiencies, none of the Volunteers are exercised in the indispensable art of digging trenches in which they can shelter themselves from the enemy's fire. The spade is as indispensable as the rifle in modern warfare, and everyone should be taught to use it. The Municipality or the County or Parish Council should be encouraged to maintain a rifle range in every village. It need not be a long range. The shooting gallery at rural fairs shows how popular shooting at a target is with our common people. Rifles and cartridges should be provided at a nominal price for all who choose to practise at the bulls.

#### DEVELOP THE CYCLIST VOLUNTEERS.

The lessons of the Boer War will indeed have been thrown away upon us if we do not realise the priceless value of mobility in a field force. There is no chance of our being able to improvise a force of mounted infantry. What we can do is to recognise that in the cycle we have an admirable substitute for the Boer pony. The cycle needs no provender. It is as hard as nails. It has no feelings, and it never tires. The Cyclist Corps could cover twenty or thirty miles a day with ease, and go fresh into action. If a Cyclist Corps 10,000 strong were to be raised—and it might easily be done, especially if women were permitted to enter the ranks—it would be an

incalculable addition to the effective force of the defenders of London. All this can be taken in hand at once. All that the Volunteers need is encouragement. They need spades, cycles, cartridges, and direction. At present they have none of these things. The result is no one takes them seriously, and in this hour of England's peril if war broke out to-morrow no Volunteer would have the least idea as to what he ought to do, where he ought to go, or how he was to be fed and supplied with cartridges.

#### DEFENCE NOT DEFIANCE.

What is absolutely indispensable is that there must be no muddling up and mixing the Volunteers, who are enrolled for the defence of our shores, with the forces which are being used for the predatory excursions of an aggressive Jingoism. To all schemes for strengthening the force despatched to prosecute an unjust war we offer the most uncompromising opposition. Any attempt to seize men by force and compel them to fight in this war of foreign conquest would justify both passive and active resistance. But the defence of our own shores is another matter. That must be undertaken by the nation. Volunteers enough will be forthcoming if the Government will treat them with civility, organise them with intelligence, and supply them with weapons and opportunities for becoming efficient. But there is no time to be lost.

#### POSTSCRIPT.

March 30.

After spending a week in Paris, I was painfully impressed by the similarity—nay, almost the identity—of the frenzy which afflicts both nations. Our affair Kruger is the English counterpart to the *affaire* Dreyfus.

The strange thing is that the Nationalists, who are pursuing this delirious course, are utterly unable to see that our Jingoism, who are breaking meetings, gagging journals, and wrecking houses, are suffering from the same malady which afflicts France. Hatred, intolerance, suspicion, all the deadly sins converted into political virtues, breed the same evil results in both countries. But the sufferers are afflicted with mutual hate. Victims of the same malady, they detest in each other the symptoms of their common disease. The Nationalists are



passionately opposed to our war in the Transvaal. Everywhere you hear the same talk, "Our brothers of the Transvaal." They do not say, "Our Brother Boer," but the assertion of brotherhood with the burghers is universal. Even the gamins, and the concierges, and the peasants are full of the notion that France has failed in her duty to their brothers in Africa. In more educated circles they speak of what we are doing in Africa as English Liberals used to speak of Russian doings in Poland, when

Hope for a season bade the world farewell,  
And Freedom shrieked when Kosciusko fell.

At the carnival of Mi-Careme, the set piece in the popular procession was to have been a tableau representing a company of sturdy Boers overturning a British giant. It was stopped at the last moment by the authorities, who feared that the spectacle might have provoked protests from English visitors which might easily have brought about bloodshed. But although the tableau was forbidden, Boers were conspicuous among the masqueraders. They might have been mistaken for Italian brigands had they not provided themselves with the trade-mark of the Burgher in the shape of massive German pipes.

And that brings me to another strange, significant thing. For thirty years France has been arming against Germany. Now, when her armaments are complete, all trace of hostility to the conquerors of Alsace and Lorraine has disappeared. No one talks of *revanche*. For a new passion of hatred has taken possession of the French Chauvinist. He invokes the sainted memory of Jeanne D'Arc, and revives the story of Waterloo, in order to feel that his determination to be avenged for Fashoda has foundations deep laid in the history of the past. The brutality with which we pressed our advantage two years ago has left a scar on the popular memory. The earlier victories of the Boers were as new wine to thirsty souls. Fashoda was being avenged at Colenso, at Stormberg, and at Magersfontein. To-day, the reverses of the Boers fill them with profound melancholy. "Will the English," they ask, "be quite *impitoyable*? Are they really going to trample out the last spark of national independence? And are they going to tax the French shareholders of Rand stock?" That the English are capable of anything is admitted; but will they be allowed?

There are mutterings of a Congress, as at Berlin at the close of the War; for Europe, it is asserted, cannot allow the extinction of a sovereign international State—as the Orange Free State is admitted to be—without having a word to say in the matter. There is no fixed intention to interfere; there is only a deep-seated, passionate desire to make things as unpleasant as possible for England. They feel towards us as Messrs. Fitzpatrick, Rhodes, and Co. felt towards Paul Kruger twelve months since. They do not intend to declare War, but they feel that England must be humiliated somehow and somehow, and they are not likely to be very particular as to the weapon by which this is to be brought about.

The present Ministry is free from this passionate pre-occupying thought of the Frenchman in the street. It is entirely pacific, and absolutely under the influence of the money power, which is so potent in London and in Washington. But they told me that M. Delcassé is more and more under the influence of M. Hanotaux, and that not a month ago he actually meditated re-opening the Egyptian question, in the belief that the moment was propitious for fixing a date of the English occupation. Fortunately, the Prime Minister, M. Waldeck Rousseau, heard of it before M. Cambon received his final instructions, otherwise the fat would have been in the fire indeed. We are not likely to have any serious trouble of that kind until after the Exhibition is over. But then?

After the Exhibition the deluge! The Ministry will not be upset till then. The influx of foreigners will keep the tradespeople and ouvriers well employed. But when the Exhibition is over we have the experience of Chicago to guide us as to the reaction and want of employment that follows. In the Army there is a universal wish for some general of the Boulanger type, who will make France once more respected among the nations. But for fatal jealousy among the generals a military dictatorship would have been established last year. If the political and economic crises should coincide at the close of the Exhibition with an international complication in South Africa or elsewhere we may not have long to wait before experiencing somewhat of the wretchedness we are so busily inflicting upon the Dutch of South Africa.

There is no fixed resolution on the part of the wildest French Chauvinist to make war upon England. Military and naval experts, of course, discuss the probable course of such a



war, as 'tis their duty to. But our danger does not lie in the reasoned adoption of a policy of war. It is much more serious. The man in the street in France and in England at this moment is rolling drunk with the heady wine of Nationalism and Jingoism. They regard each other with intense suspicion and deep-rooted dislike. Both are armed to the teeth. In their promenade up and down the international thoroughfare no one can say how soon or how violently they may reel up against each other in some narrow alley where one or the other must back down and out. And there is only one opinion everywhere that if that should occur France will fight. Never again will she submit to a Fashoda humiliation. Those who are optimist, and believe that peace is a possibility, say that there will be no war because England is so crippled by her entanglement in South Africa, she will have to back out and give in. The possibility that France will accept another Fashoda is absolutely out of the question. But with Mr. Chamberlain—"the most dangerous animal at present at large in the world," as a French journalist described him the other day—apparently supreme in the British Cabinet, that hope of peace is but slight.

And if there should be War, of one thing we may count with absolute certainty. However difficult, however desperate the venture may seem, the French will attempt to rush London. There may be, probably will be, a landing in Ireland, but the whole hope of the French will lie in a thrust at the heart of the Empire. They are well acquainted with our lack of artillery, and the utter breakdown of all military organisation at home, resulting from the War in South Africa. Give them but twenty-four hours' command of the Channel, and they believe nothing could stop them from being in London in a week.

I can only say, in conclusion, that I came back more than ever convinced that while no sane or responsible person in France wills a war with England, the state of public feeling on both sides of the Channel is so exasperated that no one can feel any security that War may not break out before Christmas. And that being the case I am disposed to press more urgently than ever for an experimental mobilisation round London at Whitsuntide of the whole Volunteer force of the country, if only that we may realise what is absolutely indispensable to safeguard the capital from a sudden raid from France.

## IV.—The Danger of War between France and England.

Baron Pierre de Coubertin is one of those Frenchmen who know and love England almost as well as they know and love their own native country. He has travelled much in America and in Great Britain ; he has friends everywhere, and he is quite justified in maintaining, as he does in his article in the *May Fortnightly Review*, that there is no one better qualified to speak than he as to the dangers of the present position. He is no pessimist ; on the contrary, few men have a more cheery, optimistic outlook on the world and its affairs ; and when such a man feels constrained to tell us, as he does, that there are signs of a forthcoming conflict between England and France, it would be criminal to refuse to pay attention to his warning. Why then, it will be asked, is there any danger of a war between these two countries ? What ground of quarrel is there which could possibly embroil the two Western nations ? Baron de Coubertin admits at once that "there is no matter in dispute between France and England which could legitimately lead to war."

### NEWFOUNDLAND.

Of all the outstanding questions, he thinks that of Newfoundland is the only one which threatens a serious difference of opinion. Even in Egypt he thinks that the French will not object so long as French *savants* are allowed uninterruptedly to carry on their researches—a very optimistic view characteristic of the man. But the Newfoundland question seems to him a grave one. He says :—

"It is really a very grave problem, and no settlement can be hoped for unless the two countries are first convinced, one of the legitimate nature of the Newfoundlanders' grievances, and the other of the great difficulty confronting France when she tries to discover any form of compensation which would benefit the French fishermen. That is the only question which could put a match to the train, and it ought not to issue in any



such catastrophe, if the argument is conducted on both sides with a sincere desire to avoid such a calamity. But is there such a desire? Certainly one would think not, after perusing many French and English newspapers; they seem to be deliberately trying every means of hurrying on war. Nor is this any new attitude on their part; it dates from a very long way back."

#### THE REAL DANGER.

Thus we have it that the real *causa causans* of trouble is the existence of the journalist. He is rapidly becoming the enemy of the human race. Of course Mr. Chamberlain would have us believe that the French caricaturists are the only people to blame in this matter; but, as Baron de Coubertin says, our Press is by no means blameless. He says:—

"It must not be thought that the three or four offensive caricatures of the Queen (that was the sum total) which appeared in Paris made at all a good impression outside the circle of boulevardiers, who have no respect for anything. Such manifestations were very severely condemned by French public opinion, and I met with more than one Frenchman, by no means friendly to England, who had been roused to indignation. But this indignation was much diminished when it was seen that though the English Press was angry with France, it affected complete ignorance of the more numerous and serious attacks issuing from Germany."

He complains that the English attacks on France in the English Press have been much more virulent and bitter than any that have appeared in France upon England. He says:—

"I have myself noticed that in every English-speaking country the Press habitually uses insulting terms in speaking of France; both in the United States, and still more in Australia, its pronouncements have been absurdly malevolent."

#### AN ANTI-FRENCH SYNDICATE ?

Why the newspapers should deliberately set about goading two nations into war he frankly declares he does not understand, but he makes a suggestion which is very curious. He says:—

"There is really no possible explanation, except mere force of habit, for the bitterness and insult indulged in to such excess by the Press of both countries. Lately these attacks have grown so violent, especially in England, that we have begun to credit the English Press with obeying a word of command, or with having been bribed to incite France to war.

The idea is absurd enough, yet it might have this much truth in it. There are certain English merchants and manufacturers who would have an interest in war, or who might, any way, make some profit out of it. There is nothing to prevent these men from forming a syndicate, in view of their future business interests, when war should really have been declared. Such syndicates would naturally be open to the proprietors and shareholders of leading newspapers; then insensibly, almost unconsciously, these papers would come to defend the idea of a war, to be familiar with it, to think it natural and normal, to speak of it as a thing inevitable. That is a very real danger."

#### IGNORANT OF EACH OTHER'S STRENGTH.

The mischief which the newspapers could do would be slight if it were not for another reason which Baron de Coubertin does well to point out. France and Germany will not be goaded into war by any amount of newspaper campaign, because both countries know each other's strength; but it is different in the case of England and France. He says:—

"Nations, like individuals, show a tendency, more widespread than noble, to harry the weak, to take their goods, and to reduce them to servitude. Now, by a most unfortunate aberration of mind, both England and France imagine that neither could resist the attack of the other."

France, he says, has never been stronger than she is now:—

"England is, therefore, the victim of the strangest and most unfortunate illusion if she believes in the decay of her neighbour. Thirty years of peace, internal tranquillity and prosperity, during which she has steadily looked to her defences, have made France a Power to be reckoned with. She scarcely knows it herself, she is ignorant of her own strength, and of the weight of the blows which she has it in her power to deal. But she is equally ignorant of the might of England, and there is nothing in the world so hard to bring home to a Frenchman's mind as the nature of that power."

#### A MOTIVELESS WAR.

Hence great danger. France despises the military power of England. England is utterly ignorant of the enormous resisting power of France. The Jingoës who precipitated us into a war with the Transvaal in the belief that it would be a walk over at Pretoria, are equally capable of precipitating us into a war with France, which might easily result in Imperial catastrophe. To avert such a disaster is the object with which



Baron de Coubertin has written the admirable article which he concludes as follows :—

“Here, then, is my conclusion. There is no motive for war, yet war is possible, and even probable, if the two nations continue to cherish such illusions about each other, if they make no serious efforts towards mutual comprehension; if they are not firmly resolved to respect each other, even where comprehension fails; if French opinion does not silence the caricaturists and national faddists; and if, on the other hand, English opinion does not call upon its Government and its newspapers to confine themselves to the proper limits of international courtesy, which have too often been overstepped.”

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