

OUR DEFENSIVE FORCES.

Sir J. F. Burgoyne, Bart., has the following letter in the *Times*.—

From the comments which have been made on the pamphlet I have recently published on our defensive forces I perceive that some misapprehension exists respecting my views, which I should be glad to correct if you will give me the opportunity.

In the first place I do not consider that an invasion of this country with its present means of defence would afford such chances of success as to render the attempt probable, but I fully believe that we could not go to war at present with any of the Great Powers without being subject to humiliations and losses which the high spirit of this country would not brook for a moment, and of which the consequences would fall chiefly upon the unfortunate Generals who happened to be in high command at the commencement of hostilities. I am not crying out, therefore, that we are in danger, or endeavouring to create a "panic," as every effort to improve our defensive means is sometimes termed; but I wish to state what I consider to be facts relative to possible motives and means for an attack upon us, leaving those facts to be compared with our means of defence, and inferences to be drawn from the result. Those facts are:—

1. That no abstinence from interference in the affairs of others, or from giving offence, would save us from acts of aggression if we are too weak to defend ourselves.
2. That it is perfectly possible that an enemy may have such a naval superiority on our own shores as to enable them to make an attack in great force.
3. The large amount of the constantly available, trained, and fully equipped military forces of the leading States.
4. The small comparative amount of ours.
5. The imperfectness and inefficiency of our reserves.
6. The power which a nation fully prepared for war possesses now of striking a decisive blow, and of crushing an enemy in a single campaign, by the facilities which exist of concentrating enormous forces.

The disproportion of the relative forces is further aggravated by the absolute necessity for sending out reinforcements immediately on the threatening of war to many foreign stations, the garrisons of which are generally on a peace establishment.

The arrangements, then, to be sought for are—

1. The smallest amount of standing army that can be considered sufficient for a basis of defensive force, for the double purpose of saving expense and of avoiding the abstraction of so many men from the social industry of the country.
2. As powerful, ready, and efficient a Reserve Force as can be formed, with as small an expense and as few inconveniences as possible in their organization; and in proportion as the second requisite is perfected may the peace establishment of the regulars be lowered.

As regards the Reserve Force, our Volunteer organization is highly creditable, as indicating the spirit of the country and the sacrifices the population is willing to make for its defence; it is a force that would be highly useful for local protection against desolatory attacks on our shores remote from the assembled forces, for garrisons of forts and fortresses, and for many detached duties, but could never be considered available for a manoeuvring field force, without alterations totally inconsistent with

the character of the force itself. The Militia, though subject to much more regularity and control, must still be considered a very inferior class of troops to oppose the regular forces of the great military powers and on its present system can only be improved by longer periods of assembly in time of peace; but this would tend to produce the same disadvantages as in the case of the Regulars in the evils of increased outlay and withdrawal of the men from social industry. A question then arises whether this force might not be so combined with the organization of the regulars as to render it far more efficient, and reduce the imperfection now attached to both, and become a Reserve Force of good troops, always available from the population of the country. It is submitted that this might be effected by shortening the period of service in the standing army, and transferring the men at the end of a few years into the Militia, with the eventual possibility, as service in the army becomes more popular, of totally changing the composition of the Militia into a body of troops all of whom have passed through the ranks of the army. For instance, to take an extreme case, if the service became so popular that we could insure a supply of 15,000 or 20,000 recruits annually, and the men were enlisted for 20 years, five of which were passed in the standing army and 15 in the reserve, at the end of 20 years we would have a trained reserve of over 150,000 men which would thus take the place of the existing untrained Militia. This is the result that we should strive to attain, and we should endeavour to make an approximation to it as early as possible. I do not despair of such a result myself, should the popularity of the army increase in the same ratio in future as it has done within the last two years. As an instance of this I have been informed that several men have been lately tried by court-martial for making false declarations in order to get back into the service after they had been dismissed at the termination of their first term of enlistment.

The difficulty of providing troops for India and the colonies, might, perhaps, be met by obtaining volunteers for those services from the home army by the offer of superior advantages in the way of pay and pensions. This difficulty is not so great as is sometimes supposed, as foreign service is popular with a large class of our present soldiers.

In all questions regarding an improved Reserve Force there is one matter little attended to, but of great importance, viz:—The qualification of the different ranks. All the propositions hitherto advanced have in view only the improvement of the private soldier of the reserve; whereas, what is of far more importance is a reserve of good officers and non-commissioned, for clearly a regiment of very inferiorly trained soldiers, under a complement of good officers and non-commissioned officers, would be far superior to one of first-rate trained soldiers under inefficient officers and non-commissioned officers. The first would rapidly improve while the other would rapidly deteriorate.

The death is announced of Sir Henry Wiloughby Rooke, C.B., K.C.H., at the age of eighty-seven. He was the son of the late Colonel Rooke, of the Scots Fusilier Guards, and was educated at Eton. He served with distinction at Waterloo, after which battle he was made a C.B. He attained the rank of major general in the army in 1830.

Sir N. Chamberlain is the first soldier in the Indian army, and is of vast Afghan experience.

A TERRIBLE DISAPPOINTMENT.

M. Brandimarto Saletti, Secretary of the Municipal Council of Florence, desired his head clerk last Monday to purchase four lottery tickets for him, the numbers of which he knew were not as yet sold, at £1 each, and accordingly handed him a hundred franc note. The clerk, a most trustworthy person, carefully folded the note and placed it in his waist-coat pocket. Meeting a friend on his way home, however, he utterly forgot the commission, till next morning, as he passed the lottery office, it occurred to him but, alas! it was too late: the numbers his employer had desired him to purchase had been bought up, and the list was closed. On reaching his office, he found M. Saletti absorbed in business, and he determined to delay the confession of his lapsus of memory until after the drawing. He therefore dived into his own particular office and said nothing. M. Saletti, however, an inveterate lottery player, was on the alert, and at the exact hour rushed to the nearest office where the pleasant spectacle greeted him of the four numbers he had selected having won no less than 1,800,000 francs. Wild with delight, M. Saletti rushed home to tell the glad news; and the frantic excitement of the family can be conceived. On his way back to the Hotel de Ville he met the syndic of Florence, M. Teruzzi, whose congratulations were most hearty; then Count Cambray-Digny, the Finance Minister, who did his best to calm him, and laughingly said—"Only think of its being you who thus help to empty the treasury." Once in his own office he rang. More dead than alive appeared his head clerk. "Give me quickly the receipt," said M. Saletti. "Here, sir, are the hundred francs," "What hundred francs?" "Do what you will with me, sir, send me to the galleys or the guillotine, but I forgot to buy the tickets."—*Morning Star*

BROUGHAM AND WELLINGTON.—One day when his lordship had driven down to the House in the vehicle of his own invention, which Robinson, the coachmaker, had christened after him, he was met in the robing room by the Duke of Wellington, who, after a low bow, accosted him: "I have hitherto lived under that impression that your lordship would go down to posterity as the great apostle of education, the emancipator of the negro, the restorer of abused charities, the reformer of the law. But no—you will be known only as the inventor of a carriage." "And I, my lord Duke, have always been under the delusion that your Grace would be remembered as the hero of a hundred battles, the liberator of Europe, the conqueror of Napoleon—but no, your Grace will be known as the inventor of a pair of boots." "D—n the boots, I had forgotten them; you have the best of it."—*Edinburgh Review*

The officers of the Reserve fleet all unanimously declare that the men of the Royal Naval Reserve have taken to their duties with surprising quickness, and show a remarkable readiness to submit to discipline. The Coastguard men are well spoken of. The time up to the start of the fleet was but short for any opinions to be founded safely on such a subject, but the conduct of the men no doubt fully deserved the opinion expressed. Admiral Dacres gave his opinion on the first day at sea by saying that "he never saw a finer body of men than was then being mustered on the Agincourt's quarter deck, and he could not say which he liked best—the Reserve or the Coastguard.