

GOING OUT WITH THE TIDE.

Raise me up in my bed, wife,
There's the sound of the sea in my ear,
And it sings to my soul in a mumble
That ear it is not blessed to hear.
Open the little window, wife,
Then come and sit by my side;
We'll wait God's sweet flood-water
To take me out with the tide.

I see the harbour-bar, wife,
And my dear little boat in the bay;
But who shall be able to guide her
When her Master hath passed away?
I know that her helm, so trusty,
Will answer no other hand
As it answered mine when I knew, wife,
You were waiting for me on the strand.

Our boys are all before us, wife,
Wee Jack 't' beneath the wave,
And blue-eyed Freddie sleeps, wife,
In yonder yew bowered grave,
Where the early dailies catter
Around his baby bed,
And the thrush sits chanting softer,
In yon tree that shades the dead.

There's a chill runs through our hearts, wife,
When the harbour-bar do's mean;
But a darker grief will be yours, wife,
When you're left in the cold alone;
But a few more flows of the sea, wife,
And a few more ebbs of the tide,
Then God's sweet flood shall bring you
Again to your old man's side!

The red sun is low in the west, wife,
And the tide slinks down with the sun;
We will part with each other in love, wife;
For sweetly our lives have run,
Give me your hand, my own love,
As you gave it in the days of yore;
We will clasp them ne'er to be sundered,
When we meet in the far-off shore!

—Chambers' Journal.

Military Criticism.

"The time we are in," as Carlyle would say, is remarkable for many things, but for few things more than the inordinate amount of its military criticism. Few living persons can remember anything like it. There were no cheap papers during the continental struggles at the end of the last and the beginning of the present century; and if there had been, we very much doubt whether writers or readers would have cared very much for the military details which are now found so fascinating, in spite of the campaigning of the Peace Society and the preachments of an increasing legion of divines. During more recent periods of military fervour, in our struggles in India and China, in the Allied efforts in the Crimea, during the American Civil War, and in several other instances if there was political excitement, with constant discussion, there was nothing exhibited approaching our present passion for details, or our present facility for understanding them. We had big pamphlets now and then, warm debates in either Houses of Parliament, and capital letters from the seat of war, but no complete popular comprehension of all the points at issue, no detailed criticism of armies and systems, and no disposition to regard war from a purely scientific point of view. This dulness was mistaken for disgust, and for everything but what it was. Dreams of a new era became natural. Our modern apostles of Arbitration imagine they are brokers of novel doctrines, whereas they are merely developing and reducing into rigid formulas the notions and feelings of an age which has passed away. Instead of being before the age, they are behind it, and they know it not. Mr Richard was born out of due time. He should have been contemporary with Cobden, and with Cobden as he was in the zenith of his powers.

What has occurred to make all this difference? Simply, the very things we were told not to expect. Peace was prophesied, and we have had great wars, affecting the

map of Europe, changing its nationalities, and shifting the political centre of gravity. The dormant military feelings which are part and parcel of the nature of Englishmen, have been aroused. The imagination has been fixed. War has been lifted into the region of romance, in becoming something that it never was before—an art, a mystery, a science. The war between Austria and Prussia began the work, and the war between France and Prussia finished it, so far as it is finished. We may reduce it down by sublimation to the introduction of weapons of precision, and corresponding improvements in strategy and tactics. But improvements have been made aforesaid that never led to such a rage of military criticism, to such a passion for military history, and to such an intelligent study, by civilians, of all military matters. Two things seem to have joined—an age of conflict such as Europe has not seen during the past sixty years, and an age of discussion, which is entirely novel. Men begin to see what their remote ancestors always saw, that a nation's destiny may have to be decided in the battle field, and decided beyond anything like immediate hope of recovery, except as the nation becomes more military. To many persons, nursed on the thin pip of the Peace Society in their intellectual nonage, this simple fact has come with all the force and freshness of a revelation. The Battle of Dorking was only an innocent bit of fiction, but it drove right home the iron into the soul of many an earnest Christian patriot. Just in proportion to the previous belief in the humanizing mission of Great Britain in the world, was the dread lest any power, or combination of powers, should destroy its separate and sovereign vitality as a nation. A nation is something higher than an individual summer than a sect, and its annihilation, by conquest, whenever it was worthy of continued existence, would be an universal calamity. It is not arbitration that would save it, whenever it was threatened; it is not "the pulpit drum-ecclesiastic" that would try our enemies as in a mortar. War is now so sudden, so tragic, so swift in its approach and its ending, that we can tolerate the duldest imagination by a portrayal of its incidents and horrors.

Let us not forget the controversial aspect of the question. Look at our military literature—how it grows, how it gathers to itself attractions in style, and what an immense range it covers! Napier's "Peninsular War" was the first of a series of highly-wrought historical narratives. This romanticism of the battle field has reached its present highest development in Kinglake's narratives, which are read by the least warlike, and read as our forefathers read novels. The attempt to paint war in the vivid style occasionally leads to inaccuracies, to unwarrantable inferences, and to an unduly affectionate regard for what is personal and striking. Bare matters of fact never excite half the controversy these historical narratives do. It is impossible to sufficiently interest readers in details as details. But when you have once presented to the imagination a bold panorama, it is astonishing what attractions are created for the controversies that spring out of them. Germany has added to this stock of military literature, and added books of immense importance. Some of them are sober narratives that cut the very ground from under the feet of hasty, sensational writers. Others make admissions of difficulty where none were supposed to exist. A third class are purely controversial, and deal with changes in

tactics, not yet accepted as a whole, or passing, by visible stages, out of scientific theory into hard, matter-of-fact practice. The necessities of modern journalism, which must needs make its readers ubiquitous, have increased this controversial tone. Marches, battles, and sieges have been described day by day, alongside religious celebrations, Parliamentary discussions, and fashionable gatherings. The greater battles are familiar to most persons, and can be succinctly described by even the uneducated. The farmer-labourer has as good an idea as to why the French were beaten as the town demagogue, if he is unable to be quite as fluent in conversation about it. Civilians and soldiers compare notes and the result cannot help being an increase in the sum total of military criticism.

These are the more general causes. But there are others more especially domestic. This peace-breathing nation of ours is very military when it is really touched. Scratch the Russian, said Napoleon, and you find the Tartar. Scratch an Englishman, a peace man, and you find the soldier, the hero. Our fondness for litigation is only another and more subdued form of our innate fighting propensity. What did all this turmoil on the Continent do for us? Did it make us amiable, complacent, ready to disarm, and turn the other cheek also? The questions answer themselves. The nation was moved to begin a military revolution—a revolution as yet incomplete. Panics we have had before, but this was something deeper and more reasonable. We abolished Purchase. It was no slight matter, and we cannot look back upon it now without wondering how anybody had the courage to do it. A little collapse and exhaustion, after such a tremendous effort, is not at all extraordinary. We had, before this abolition, been quietly concentrating troops at home, and Mr. Disraeli only repeated one of the obsolete political fallacies of all parties, when, at Manchester, he referred to this increase of the home army as unconstitutional. No one had thought it so, and the "Conservative working man" certainly did not. The army localization scheme came next in importance, followed by alterations in terms of service, in enlistment, and in the reserves. New weapons, summer camps, and a hundred other minor things, have all in their kind and degree testified to the complete disappearance of the old military apathy, best illustrated by the picture of a veteran who has fallen asleep in reading Alison's "History of Europe." It is not easy to find a well conducted newspaper that has not a military as well as a Parliamentary and political policy. A New Zealander, dropping down upon us from a balloon, and cultivated enough to read our newspapers, would think we were the most military nation under the sun; and if he chanced to come across one of Lord Elio's speeches he might be innocent enough to imagine that he was the author of the "Battle of Inkerman," or one of the generals who commanded on that terrible day, minus that pious use of expletives which, somehow, helps Englishmen to win battles. Matters seem to go worse. We are always discussing recruiting and recruits, breech loaders and muzzle loaders, long service and short service, pensions and pay, promotion and exchange, the Militia and the Volunteers; to say nothing of small controversies about fighting to maintain the independence of Belgium, the French Cadres Law, foreign cavalry tactics, ballooning, and pigeon services.

It is emphatically an age of military criti-