

These are questions to be argued otherwise than in a report of the proceedings of the Association; but it may be observed generally that all the disasters of the last two years,—the lamentable sacrifice of human life by other agencies than those of sword or gun,—the squandering of millions more than would have sufficed to furnish with every luxury of life the gallant soldiers who were suffered to perish for want of its barest necessities,—in short, all the faults and follies exhibited in the disastrous Crimean campaign are not only clearly traceable to defects in the military, civil, and governmental services, which have been exposed, over and over again, in the Financial Reform Tracts, but were the necessary consequences of those defects.

If, after the harrowing details first proclaimed by newspaper correspondents, established before the Sebastopol Committee of the House of Commons, and confirmed by the Crimean Commissioners, Sir John McNeil and Colonel Tulloch, any doubt could remain as to the true source of such evils, that doubt must have been removed by the Report of the Chelsea Board of General Officers, who, in their laboured attempt to exonerate inculpated commanders and subordinate functionaries, endeavoured to show that no person was to blame for anything that occurred in the Crimea—that all that was possible was done by everybody,—and that calamities which might have been avoided by the commonest prudence, and the most ordinary precautions, were, one and all, the results of inevitable necessity. Hence, whatever may be the value of the general verdict of acquittal, at which the Chelsea Board arrived, so far as individuals are concerned, that verdict must be regarded as an unqualified condemnation of the system under which the affairs of the British army, military and civil, have hitherto been conducted.

The Council do not refer to the catalogue of blunders and disasters which constitutes the history of the winter campaign before Sebastopol, in order to show that they have been true prophets of evil. Their object is a higher and a better one. They allude to them, as proving the necessity of extensive reforms in the system, which not only rendered such things possible, but is made to serve as an excuse for them when they occur. According to the proverb, "Experience gives wisdom to fools." The dictum may be doubted; but, certainly, the lessons of this hard and stern teacher are only lost on fools; and happy would it be