

As to the British Army, the question is—What do you mean to do with it? If you want to go masquerading about on the Continent you could do that in the time of Frederick the Great with 50,000 men. You can't do it to-day with less than 500,000. Your Lordship can have that army to-day if you like to introduce conscription (whereat Lord Palmerston shook his head); or if you can persuade the country to pay for it (whereat Lord Palmerston laughed). In the alternative we must have the Guards, and we must have the Indian Army. The present system of enlistment will suffice, for these purposes, with variations from time to time according to the fluctuations in the state of the wages market. For the rest—Back the Volunteers.

H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge is reported to have cut it still shorter by saying: "I'll give you an Army to-morrow if you like to pay for it." In time there came Mr. Brodrick's scheme, of which everybody made sport. But, in the opinion of one humble observer, the only person in the House who did not look foolish on that occasion was Mr. Brodrick. What he said was, in effect: "If you want to use eighteenth-century machinery to do twentieth-century work, this is the price that you must pay." It was a very valuable lesson. Then came Mr. Arnold-Forster, probably the most learned civilian in military matters who ever existed. What everybody expected was that, so soon as he had held office long enough to meet the charge of having come into power with his mind made up, he would have told the nation plainly that neither he nor anybody else could make one man do the work of ten; and that if we wanted a twentieth-century army we must adopt twentieth-century methods. Now we have Mr. Haldane; and if Mr. Haldane can make one man do the work of ten he will be cleverer than Lord Palmerston, and the Duke of Cambridge, and Mr. Brodrick and Mr. Arnold-Forster all put together. But it is improbable that Mr. Haldane will proceed on that assumption; so the Tories have nothing to hope from War Office blunders. The nation realises that all the possible experiments have been made, and that nothing remains except to shift the pegs from time to time. There is, perhaps, a small cloud on the serene War Office horizon—Japan.