

T H E

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ALARMISTS seek to operate upon the passions and excite the fears of men by a declamatory foreboding of awful events in the future. Or perhaps a solitary circumstance of some importance, or a single trifling occurrence, in the past or the present, is swelled into a world, and made the text for a commentary that develops ruin, devastation, and calamity to mankind at large. The alarmist, then, properly ranks with the novelist, being a creature of his own creation; and his claims are no better in attempting to play upon our fears than the claims of the man of fancy in his attempt to excite our wonder.

We are not therefore to be reckoned with the alarmist, in the current and every day use of this term. Yet we frankly avow that we think it high time to blow the trumpet of alarm in the ears of the people; not however to raise a breeze by our own breath, but to give warning of the poisonous winds that already prevail, and which, although unheeded, carry death with them wherever their waftings are left. When travellers in the wilderness, unsuspecting and inexperienced, are exposed to the fatal simoom that sweeps in silence across the pathless waste, no one questions the philanthropy of a voice which says, 'Beware! beware! danger is at hand!' In this case, it is matter of fact, and not matter of fiction, which is the ground of alarm. It is not an idle parade, an unsubstantial phantom, or a fanciful nothing resting upon itself; but it is a faithful voice—a voice uttered in conscious truth—to lead and deliver from real danger.

The difference between mere feelings and facts, is a difference, which, if estimated by the inch, perch, or mile, would measure the coasts of