

points of a scheme which they were not really in earnest about. The fleet and the Channel, they said, were sufficient protection. So the army was kept down, and the militia and volunteers were left untrained as before, because to call them out for drill would "interfere with the industry of the country." We could have given up some of the industry of those days, forsooth, and yet be busier than we are now. But, why tell you a tale you have so often heard already? The nation, although uneasy, was misled by the false security its leaders professed to feel; the warning given by the disasters that overtook France was allowed to pass by unheeded. The French trusted in their army and its great reputation, we in our fleet; and in each case the result of this blind confidence was disaster, such as our forefathers, in their hardest struggles, could not have even imagined.

I need hardly tell you how the crash came about. First, the rising in India drew away a part of our small army; then came the difficulty with America, which had been threatening for years, and we sent off ten thousand men to defend Canada—a handful which did not go far to strengthen the real defences of that country, but formed an irresistible temptation to the Americans to try and take them prisoners, especially as the contingent included three battalions of the Guards. Thus the regular army at home was even smaller than usual, and nearly half of it was in Ireland to check the talked-of Fenian invasion fitting out in the West. Worse still—though I do not know it would really have mattered as things turned out—the fleet was scattered abroad; some ships to guard the West Indies, others to check privateering in the China seas, and a large