

day possibility. In fact, any one who examines the details of that period cannot but be struck with astonishment on observing by what narrow margins and through what trivial causes the threatened attack was time and again averted. This distressing uncertainty involved the necessity, not only of much precautionary harshness, but of what we now consider a ruthless savagery in the repression and punishment of purely political offences, which not only makes terrible reading, but has left its lasting effects on the national character; for there is little doubt that the long stress of this period with its massacres and man-hunts, its spies and assassinations, is largely responsible for a certain toleration of roughness in methods where repressive justice has to be meted out, a somewhat careless use of the heavy hand and a want of regard for the sensibilities of others—though never for their rights, when recognized as such—which has given rise to the tradition of “British brutality.”

Again, from the moment that the star of Napoleon was plunged in final eclipse at Waterloo, there has been a century of profound peace and safety within the borders of the country. Remember that Sedgemoor, at the beginning of James the Second's reign, was the last actual battle fought on English soil, and that since the beginning of the XIXth. century there has not been even the remote possibility of invasion; and yet, all the time, in one quarter of the world or another, England has been incessantly at war, but always, as the borders of the Empire extended, further and further away from the seat of government and the centre of power. Is it any wonder that so many generations of perfect security have had an enervating effect on the imagination and bred the conviction that the island, because unassailed, is unassailable; and also—on comparing this immunity with the bloody ruin that has devastated pretty nearly every other country in the world at one time or another during this period—the belief that the island is not only absolutely secure, but *the only* absolutely secure place of refuge in either hemisphere?—and hence, in conjunction with the deep religious sense of the