

These once landed could be brought under one command in one day, and within four days be in London. This, unprovided with defenses, would fall at once. The possession of the capital would not have meant the possession of the arsenals and dockyards, but a heavy fine would have been exacted from the wealthy inhabitants. No one knew this better than Napoleon. Had France then had peace on her own frontiers, there is little doubt of the success of the invasion of England. Revolution in Ireland would have cooperated with the invader, and Napoleon fully believed in the possibility of success, and only renounced the expedition because he foresaw greater certainty and more important results from a continental war with Austria.

"An invasion of England would be risky—not impossible." Quoting from Von Wartenburg, he adds that many events pronounced by contemporaries impossibilities have yet been carried out by commanding genius. If this study—says the author, in conclusion—should have succeeded in destroying the illusion of the unassailability of Great Britain, it will have fulfilled its object.

Since 1805 the introduction of steam and the electric telegraph have increased the favorable chances of an attack on England, the assembly and quick transport of an invading army being thereby much facilitated. In these days especially should this factor be borne in mind.

We will not venture to follow the writer in his curious readings of English history, nor do we quite see how the French Channel fleet was to have attacked and held the English Channel fleet, seeing it was blockaded by Lord Cornwallis so closely, says Captain Mahan, "that it excited not only the admiration but the wonder of contemporaries." And it is hardly to be supposed that our navy would be taken unawares now, as it was in Louis XIV's time, when it was "paralyzed by the corruption which prevailed in the public service," as one historian puts it. But those who look upon an invasion as impossible should remember that but for Nelson and the admirable handling of the British navy it would not have been so in 1805.

Since then other navies have also made great progress; and as the views of this German officer certainly prevail to a great extent on the Continent, it would be well to consider what might happen to England in the event of a coalition of two or three naval powers against us, compelling us to unduly scatter our fleet. To avoid this, it is necessary not only to maintain our naval supremacy all over the world but to exert ourselves unremittingly to raise our home defense force to a high state of completeness and efficiency in men and material, so that in the event of our ships being lured away or overpowered, our field army, aided by a well-thought-out system of field defenses, may, on every possible line of advance of an invader, hold its own.