

shoulders of the people of these islands without any discussion in the House of Commons and very little in the Press. It is taken for granted that owing to the physical weakness of our urban population, their distaste for soldiering, and the confusion of our military arrangements, alliance with the brown conquerors of the Russians is, in the language of the omnibus or the Stock Exchange, "good business" for England.

But the Japanese Alliance, although indubitably convenient for the moment, is subject to drawbacks, and these items on the other side of the account are worth consideration.

First and foremost Japan is under no illusion as to the advantages of the English alliance. According to certain Japanese authorities, who are too courteous to publish their real opinions, the alliance with Japan and the new *entente* with France are signs that the tough old John Bull spirit has departed, and that our nation is suffering from relaxed fibres. Diplomatic skill of the highest order is not only consistent with military ineptitude, but the protective cunning developed by danger applies to degenerating as well as to developing States.

Japanese who have studied the actual condition of the English nation, and who know it as an analytical chemist knows the properties of oxygen gas, are aware that the English character, as revealed by Parliamentary discussion, the Press and society, has undergone change during the last dozen years—a change that is not for the better. Stalwart and solid, slow and steadfast, trusty and resolute, were epithets commonly used of the English character by its friends and its enemies in the last century. English phlegm has been succeeded by national neurasthenia. Waves of impulse pass over the nation, deflect policy, and cause contradictory and dramatic changes of mood of a kind previously strange in our national history. Only three years ago our relations with France were strained. The language of the music-halls and of the patriotic Press expressed the national dislike for our neighbours across the Channel. At that time the policy and purposes of Germany were as well known to our leaders as they are to-day; but governed by