II.

THE DEFENCES OF THE LAKES.

Sir,—"What is wanting in Canada is not a General, "or general officers and troops, but a naval superiority on "the lakes; till that superiority is established it is *impossi-* "*ble* to maintain an army in such a situation as to keep an "enemy out of the frontiers, much less to make any con-quest from them." Such was the opinion given in his own words, of the great Duke of Wellington in 1814 just before the close of the American War.

The Governor of Michigan, in a recent message to the Legislature of that State, says: "I think we need not so "much fortifications, as a full supply of arms for the people, "and a powerful marine on the lakes. Michigan is to be "defended, if it comes to that, not on our own ground, but "on the soil of Canada. Give us arms for the people, and "the *undoubted* control of the lakes, and fortifications may "safely be left to the most convenient season."

"Experience confirms the truth of a maxim, that the "master of the sea will always acquire the dominion of the "land."—*Gibbon.*

These opinions, coinciding as they do, will scarcely be disputed by any one. It is only necessary to ascertain with accuracy the present actual condition of the balance of power on the Lakes, in order to determine what must be done by our authorities in regard thereto. In the recent report of the Military Committee in the Congress of Washington, it is asserted that the United States commercial marine on the Lakes numbers 1,200 vessels, whilst that of Canada only amounts to 300—or in the proportion of four to one against us. But this is not the worst feature of the case. They have 107 Screws (which alone are available for war purposes) measuring in the aggregate 50,018 tons, and averaging 467; whilst we have but 15 with a gross tonnage of 4,562 tons and an average of 304. I have in my possession a list of the names and tonnage of 104 vessels, on these Lakes, the majority of which are screws too large to descend the Welland Canal. This list was made out in the autumn of 1860, and the average burthen may be set down at 600 tons. Since then a great number of these large