

had been unable to prevent the enemy's landing, and obliged to retire before numbers.

5 A GENERAL ARSENAL.

Notwithstanding that Colonel Jervois has drawn attention to the importance of a central arsenal, I cannot refrain from saying that its importance appears to me so great, that every means should be adopted to call it into existence as early as possible.

At present, all the supplies for the army are on the coast, which is at the same time the frontier, and consequently so placed as to be the most exposed to the enemy's attacks. This is contrary to the natural order of things, and might lead to the very worst consequences.

Even Woolwich is not properly placed in view of war. The central arsenal should contain all the stores of the Army, and partly of the Navy also, and should accommodate all workshops for the manufacture of war material.

In order not to weaken the active army in the field too much, the arsenal should be capable of being defended for a long time by a small number of men: this obliges us to search for a locality where nature has already done much to facilitate defence. The fortifications should be designed with a view to mere defence, for the offensive might lead to losses too serious for a small garrison. There would be a wise economy in the creation of a central arsenal, for at present the stores being scattered on the coast lead to many places being more strongly fortified than they otherwise would be, merely because they are depôts of supplies.

I am not inclined to dispute the point as to whether Sheffield or Cannock Chase would be best adapted for a central arsenal. This is matter for special local inquiry. I would only remark that the local should be one where Art comes to the aid of Nature only, and not where everything must be left to Art: for such artificial fortifications are expensive, and never can assume the large proportions to be met with where Nature herself co-operates in the defence, as she often does on a gigantic scale.

6. ARMY ORGANIZATION.

On the Continent the English military organization is often blamed, and the institution of Volunteers laughed at. For my part I have never been able to join in this blame and derision.

The system of voluntary enlistment is of course far less of an injury to personal freedom than conscription, or any form of compulsory levy; and the raising of Volunteers is less injurious still. Enlistment provides soldiers of long service, which is particularly desirable for non-commissioned officers, and also for soldiers who enter the cavalry or other special arm. Under the law of universal liability to service prevalent on the Continent, the want of old soldiers is bitterly felt, and everything put into operation to meet the disadvantage has been insufficient to wean men from the attractions of their homes. I believe, therefore that England ought to adhere to her present system of enlistment for the standing army, all the more because she requires a system of long service, scattered as her troops are over the world, and hampered by the difficulties of foreign relief.

The institution of Volunteers I would also preserve, with all its shortcomings; for it has the great advantage of being of spontaneous growth, and only requiring fostering care. I am persuaded that the Volunteers, if called to arms by the country in

earnest, would be on the spot and ready for action in a trice.

This is guaranteed by the patriotism of the Briton, his habit of self-reliance, his respect for the law and public opinion, the consciousness of the possession of institutions more liberal than any which could be given him by others, the memories of former victories, and, finally, a great contempt of the enemy. Where such powerful factors work in unison, no one should despair of such an institution, while its bare existence warns the enemy that he must use far greater foresight than if he had merely the standing army to deal with.

From my point of view, the only disadvantage of the standing army and the Volunteers is that their numbers are too small; a defect all the more sensible because, if a general war broke out, England would probably be obliged to strengthen the garrisons in India and the colonies considerably, and to send them strong reinforcements from the mother country. The words of Marshal Bugeaud on this subject are remarkable: "L'infanterie Anglaise est plus redoutable du monde, mais heureusement il n'y en a pas beaucoup."

If England has gained many victories on the Continent in spite of the small strength of her army, it must not be forgotten that she was generally acting with allies. Indeed British commanders have derived the further advantage from their allies that they have been able to use them for duties for which the English soldier is least well adapted—e.g., skirmishing; for the red* uniform, and the contempt of cover which is the consequence of an excessive daring, lead to heavy losses on such service. England should accustom herself to consider the possibility of having to rely upon her own resources in the case of a general war, and of encountering a coalition which could bring a superiority of force against her. Under such circumstances nothing remains but to develop one's own forces to the utmost; and as this pressure can only be of a temporary nature, the question of personal freedom should be set aside for the time, and every man fit for service be called to action. Without abolishing what exists, and setting up something different in its place, it would be well if England raised her Militia infantry at least in the sense of the law of universal service, training them solely as auxiliaries for the defence of the mother country.

As a pattern for such Militia, I would recommend that of Switzerland, which, though costing very little, showed in 1870 a readiness for service which did them the highest honour.

The first training of recruits, and the periodical call-out to manoeuvres, would certainly affect the national economy considerably. Colonel Jervois reckons the cost at 30*l.* sterling per. man per year; but where the independence of the country is actually at stake, money considerations sink into insignificance. If Switzerland, with her republican feelings, and her possessions, which no one covets, recognizes this universal obligation, how much more should England do so, whose riches are the envy of the Continent, and whose foreign possessions are constantly exposed to so many dangers!

7. LONDON.

Having referred to what seemed proper to supplement the first eight chapters of the

"Lecture," I now pass the consideration of what I regard as its chief conclusion—the fortifying of London* which my honoured friend wishes to see effected.

The importance of the subject is such that I think it necessary to say something on the theory of the subject; for in all matters of fortification there is a theory, and the application of it to a given case is a subsequent stage. The defence of capitals is a subject for such a special theory, and perhaps this question has never been so well ventilated as in the present century. While some advocated the defence of capitals, others, and among them even military men, have declared it to be folly; and therefore, if we ask, in this case, which is the true view, the answer cannot be made, as it so often is, that a middle course is the true one, for here there is no middle course—either fortify, or do not fortify! "To be, or not to be, that is the question."

When it is considered that in such fortification strategical and tactical data are but part of the determining factors, and that other circumstances interpose themselves which must have great practical weight, it is clear that the answer may be given with as much justice in the negative as in the affirmative, according to the special case. Wherever the whole life is concentrated in the capital, and this is exposed, to be easily reached by the enemy, as in the case of Paris, fortification appears highly necessary; but where those conditions are different, as at St. Petersburg (on the land side), or Moscow, or Madrid, the argument for fortification is lost; or if it still holds good in part, the question arises whether the expenditure which the fortification of the capital demands would not be better applied to other military measures.

It is chiefly among continental people that the question of the fortification of the capital arises. Having communication with their neighbours over dry land, they are always liable to attack; and the less the distance and intervening obstacle, the greater the apprehension. This is increased in proportion as the country is centralized, for with the capital the command of the whole country has often been lost, although a considerable extent of territory remained untouched. On this theory we maintain that in the French interest the fortification of Paris is in a high degree justifiable; while, on the other hand, Spain, which with its provincial divisions is decentralized rather than centralized, would do much better to apply her money towards the fortification of the provinces on her border than upon the defence of the capital.

Turning our attention now specially to London, it would be absurd to maintain that London fortified would not offer a much longer resistance than London unfortified. But although London forms, officially, the central point of the countries subject to the sceptre of England, can this great city be considered as a capital in the same sense as the capitals of continental countries which theorists would recommend to be fortified?

To answer this question right we must go back into the book of History, and there we find that those peoples who, like the Anglo-Saxons and Normans, took possession of the British Islands, made it their first business to divide the lands and to secure places of residence upon them. They in no way sought to collect themselves in towns; as did the founders of Venice, and, at an earlier date, those of the Roman municipalities.

* A very doubtful assertion this. Many practical soldiers declare red to be one of the best conspicuous colours at a moderate distance. C.C.C.