

whenever French soldiers have charged their enemies on French soil for France's sake, they have seen in their imagination the Maid in full armour riding at their head.

But France has also been scrupulously careful to avoid giving any sort of offence, or any cause of quarrel on which the Germans, ever watchful to seize some pretext, could fasten. Every time France has seemed to be growing too strong Germany has tried hard to pretend that she was in some way wronged ; France has turned the deafest and politest of ears. I don't for a moment say that, if at any time Frenchmen had felt that they *were* absolutely ready, they would not have picked up the glove Germany tossed at them ; but they would never have tossed the glove at Germany themselves. And it is only too evident that the French army was not as ready even as Frenchmen hoped when this war began six weeks ago.

This patient, honourable attitude of France, under the most dire provocation, has gained for her not only the respect and admiration of the lesser States of Europe, but also the friendship and alliance, first of Russia, then of England. In the minds of all three of these nations the conviction has been growing, for several years past, that Germany has merely been waiting a favourable opportunity to spring upon us, yes, upon all three of us, either at the same moment or one after the other ; and we have realized that in a quiet, and always defensive, union between our three selves both our honour and our truest interest lay. I need not go into the details or the dates of the several ' quaking fits ' into which Germany has thrown us since 1870 ; the first was in 1875, the last in 1911. That last is burned into my mind by a curious experience ; in the August of that year I was returning from Iceland in a Danish steamer,