

*Our Present Naval Forces.*

But there are those who think the naval strength of Great Britain ought to be equal to playing both parts. I think if they would consider the amount of war ships of different kinds that will be required for our various war purposes during the next great contest they would be surprised at it. We have now in the Royal navy, according to the Navy list for July, 1875, about 400 vessels of all kinds; this includes 26 building, but does not include 134 employed in permanent harbour duty, and not in commission or ever likely to be. The total tonnage by weight of these 400 vessels is about 900,000 tons; but to compare this with the tonnage of 1805, which was no doubt by old measurement, that number must be reduced to about 600,000, which is nearly equal to the total tonnage of the Royal Navy in 1805, as given by James. But our population has doubled since then, and the people are certainly not poorer; hence we may assume that, to defend the same interests, the Royal Navy in time of war will have to be doubled, and that it will not even then press so heavily on the people as in 1805. But the interests are not by any means the same; our exports and imports, which may be taken as a comparative measure of our floating commerce, have increased tenfold since 1805, and the tonnage of our merchant shipping has increased nearly fourfold. We are dependent on foreign countries for half our annual supply of the necessities of life, and we have interests and responsibilities scattered over the globe in dependencies and colonies far beyond those which, in 1805, caused so much anxiety. Our interests, therefore, have increased in a greater ratio than our population, and our war Navy must be in a greater proportion also.

But it will be said: the standard our Fleet, like that of our Army, must be determined by that of the Fleets that are likely to be opposed to us. We have some measure of comparison on that scale also. About 1805, Napoleon calculated on being able to raise, out of the Navies of Europe, 180 line-of-battle ships to oppose England (he had 80 at his disposal in 1805); the greatest number of British line-of-battle ships in commission for sea service during the war was a little over 100, the greatest number for all purposes was 249. At the present time, the total tonnage of the British iron clad fleet is about 350,000 tons, and that of all the rest of the world is about 770,000 tons. If, therefore, we may compare iron-clads with line-of-battle ships, our Navy now bears rather less proportion to the Navies of the world than it did then. But these are only the peace establishments that are now existing; in war we must expect that foreign powers will increase their Navies, not only up to the increased extent of their own interests in population and commerce, but (in case of war with England) up to the value of the British interests assailable; and we must recollect that to attack sea commerce and most colonies does not require costly iron-clads of slow growth, but vessels of a class that most nations can now manufacture quickly for themselves.

On the whole, therefore, it appears probable that there will be plenty of occupation for the whole of the present British Fleet, and a good deal more to boot, on the outbreak of serious war without including in that duty the guarding of the coasts of the United Kingdom.

## THE DRAMA OF 1805.

*First Act.*

The year 1805 was one of the most eventful in the history of England. The story of it with its surprising incidents, the great forces brought into play, the great issue at stake, reads like a grand epic drama, played upon the ocean for a stage, France and England for the actors, and all Europe for an audience. For once more in her history, as in 1588, England was standing up alone to hold mortal duel with the possessor of half Europe; once more England, the nominal champion of aristocracy, was in reality upholding the cause of true liberty; and once more her opponents, like Philip II, the self-styled liberator of the world was the true representative of absolute despotism.

The drama may be said to open with the coronation of Napoleon, at the end of 1804. Amid the thundering applause of obsequious Europe, and with the sanction of the ancient ecclesiastical authority of the Roman Empire, the young conqueror at length ascended the last step of the ladder which was put to him nearly on an equality with the Cæsars—a conqueror, a statesman, a savant, and a genius, and, withal, young and noble looking; he was as successful, as astute, and as indefatigable as Cæsar, as large-minded as Charlemagne, and as interesting as Alexander. No wonder that wherever he went, the people believed him when he said he was the giver of enlightenment and order; and that from the Baltic to the Adriatic they were ready to learn that lesson at his feet. His coronation procession may be said to have extended politically, as it almost did in reality, from Holland, throughout France, and across the Alps into Italy.

But throughout the whole of the magnificent spectacles that succeeded each other in these months, his mind was deeply occupied with the coming struggle between himself and the one European power which had shown itself determined to resist him. Hitherto, as M. Thiers points out, the two combatants had been resting as it were looking at each other, each holding the dominion on its own element, but neither willing to enter on the other to strike the first blow. And this careful calculator of chances had no desire to precipitate the contest, until he had extracted out of his subject kingdoms a naval force sufficient to make the operation almost a certainty. His early intentions were to have had 100 line of battle ships before he made the first stroke, even if he waited ten years for it; and all that great show of preparations at Boulogne in 1803 was partly to occupy the minds of the French people, and partly to keep England in a state of alarmed passive defence. The threatening attitude of Russia and Austria in 1804, brought about mainly by the ability of Pitt, forced him to act before he otherwise intended; and at the end of that year the hostilities commenced by England against Spanish vessels gave Napoleon an opening for completing a close alliance with that country, by which he obtained control over their fleet. This power of utilizing towards his great scheme the maritime resources of all the States subject to his influence, was always made by him *a sine qua non* in his treaties, and showed the bent of his real desires. Early in 1805 he had therefore at his disposal towards the great project about 80 ships of the line and 180,000 men; he trusted that his genius and his prestige would compensate for the deficiency of the former. Here we, judging after the event, can see a defect in this

mighty mind, in basing his calculations for sea operations on quantity without regard to quality; he could not appreciate the full effect of individual character in ocean warfare. It may be doubted whether he did, or whether any continental nation at the present time do, fully appreciate its effect in land warfare. On the Continent where all armies are alike drawn by conscription from all ranks and all conditions, numbers alone may decide the day; but in England we can afford to put a higher value on each individual who voluntarily takes up soldiering as a profession. Colonel G. T. Chesney struck a true national chord when he advocated an army organization based on this principle at this Institution in 1874. In ocean warfare it is true that steam has now done much towards putting seamen of all nations on an equality—so much the worse for us—nevertheless, it is still to a great extent true that the real seafaring race cannot be created artificially, they must grow by nature to be true sons of Neptune.

Now, here is the plot of the drama we are reviving, in the words of the great author himself, written immediately after its failure confidentially to his Minister of Marine, in September, 1805.

## "CHAPITRE I.

"*Quel a été mon but dans la Création de la Flotille de Boulogne.*

"Je voulais réunir quarante ou cinquante vaisseaux de guerre (ships of the line) dans le port de Martinique, par les opérations combinées de Toulon, de Cadix, du Ferrol, et de Brest; les faire revenir tout d'un coup sur Boulogne; me trouver pendant quinze jours maître de la mer; avoir cent cinquante mille hommes, et dix mille chevaux campés sur cette côte; trois ou quatre mille bâtiments de flotille, et aussitôt le signal de l'arrivée de mon escadre, débarquer en Angleterre, m'emparer de Londres et de la Tamise. Ce projet a manqué de réussir. Si l'Amiral Villot, neuve, au lieu d'entrer au Ferrol, se fût contenté de rallier l'escadre espagnole, et eût fait voile sur Brest pour s'y réunir avec l'Amiral Gantheaume, mon armée débarquait, et c'en était fait de l'Angleterre.

"Pour faire réussir ce projet, il fallait réunir cent cinquante mille hommes à Boulogne, y avoir quatre mille bâtiments de flotille, un immense matériel, embarquer tout cela, et pourtant empêcher l'ennemi de se douter de mon projet: cela paraissait impossible. Si j'y ai réussi, c'est en faisant l'inverse de ce qu'il semblait qu'il fallait faire. Si cinquante vaisseaux de ligne devaient venir protéger le passage de l'armée en Angleterre, il n'y avait besoin d'avoir à Boulogne que de petits bâtiments de transport; et ce luxe de prames, de chaloupes canonnières de bateaux plats, de péniches, &c., tous bâtiments armés, était parfaitement inutile. Si j'eusse ainsi réuni quatre mille bâtiments de transport, nul doute que l'ennemi n'eût vu que j'attendais la présence de mon escadre pour tenter le passage; mais en construisant des prames et des bateaux canoniers, en armant tous ces bâtiments, c'étaient des canons opposés à des canons; des bâtiments de guerre opposés à des bâtiments de guerre, et l'ennemi a été dupe. Il a cru que je me proposais de passer de vive force par la seule force militaire de la flotille. L'idée de mon véritable projet ne lui est point venue; et lorsque les mouvements de mes escadres ayant manifesté qu'il s'était aperçu du danger qu'il avait couru, il s'est effrayé, et a été dans les conseils de