

How well the English admirals of 1588 had understood this.

In 1805 they failed in doing so owing to the excellent arrangements made by Napoleon for the protection of the harbors—over 600 heavy guns had been mounted on shore batteries along the French coast. The organization of the fleet of transports progressed unremittingly.

The leading principle was kept in view of having the fleet kept for fighting and the invading force to have its own transport.

One thousand two hundred and forty gun sloops, gunboats, etc., and 625 transports to follow his second line, were ready in Vimerieux, Ambleteuse, Boulogne, and Étables.

By means of these, 100,000 men could be thrown on the coast of England at one crossing.

The troop boats were specially designed for their transport, being capable of being rowed or sailed, while they only drew 6 or 7 feet of water, and were keelless, to enable a landing to be effected even at ebb tide.

Each gun sloop carried one company and four heavy ship's guns; the gunboats one company, one ship's gun, and one field gun, for which two horses were carried amidships.

It was reckoned by the most eminent seamen in France that forty-eight hours would have sufficed with such preparations to embark and pass over 132,000 men and 400 guns, and that the train with 1,000 horses could follow within a week, during which time it would, of course, be necessary for Napoleon to remain master of the Channel. But since the battle of the Nile the French fleet had been in every way inferior to the British. Only by sacrificing a portion for the benefit of the whole, therefore, could success be hoped for. The author then contrasts the two fleets of the present day with those of 1804. In the mouth of the Thames there were then 12 ships of the line to watch the Dutch fleet in Texel, 7 or 8 ships of the line at Spithead, with a number of frigates, brigs, and gunboats, some not equipped. Both squadrons were inferior to the Dutch fleet. Lord Cornwallis blockaded Brest with 19 ships of the line, 21 French ships of the line were lying there under Vice-Admiral Ganteaume. If the British squadron had timely notice of the passage it could return within four to six days to Dover, followed, of course, by the French, who would attack them. The rest of the British fleet was in pursuit of the French Admiral Villeneuve, who had left the West Indies with 21 ships of the line bound for Ferrol. He had orders to raise the blockade of Ferrol or Brest, uniting with the French squadrons, then to return to cover the passage of the army invading England.

"This is an unaccountable order," says the writer; "the very contrary should have been done." He would, had he obeyed it, have been followed by the British fleet. Now, this should, by every means, have been lured away from the Channel, and the Channel fleet attacked by the French home fleets.

However, Napoleon was, he says, by this time no longer in keen earnest about the invasion. The fact remains that the largest portion of the English fleet was 187 miles west of Ferrol, and that Nelson was off Gibraltar; therefore these squadrons could not have returned to the Channel in less than a fortnight; while the French Channel fleet could have engaged and held in check that of the British there, so that in the middle of July the invasion was possible. The British militia and volunteers of that day, with their antiquated organization, could hardly have resisted Napoleon's great military genius and his experienced soldiers imbued with the spirit of self-confidence and led by young but practiced generals eager for glory. The way in which the English scattered their troops all along the coast, against all the rules of war, says little for their capacity. States which, like England, depend on volunteer forces, will have a rude awakening when opposed to regular troops.

The French troops were distributed as follows:

Vimerieux (Lannes).....	14,000
Ambleteuse (Davout).....	26,000
Boulogne (Sault and the Emperor).....	40,000
Étable (Ney).....	22,000
Texel (Marmont).....	25,000
In reserve .....	27,000
Total.....	154,000