

## WINTER.

Thou dark robed man with solemn pace,  
 And mantle muffled round thy face,  
 Like the dim vision seen by Saul  
 Upraised by spells from Death's dark hall;  
 Thou sad, small man,—face thin and old,  
 Teeth set, and nose pinched blue with cold,—  
 Ne'er mind! Thy coat so long and black,  
 And fitting round thee all so slack,  
 Has glorious spangles, and its stars  
 Are like a conqueror's fresh from wars,  
 Who wove it in Time's awful loom  
 With woof of gory, warp of gloom!  
 Jove's planet glitters on thy breast;  
 The morning stars adorn thy crest,  
 The waxing of the waning moon  
 Clings to thy turban late or soon;  
 Orons belt is thine—thy thigh  
 His jewelled sword hangs brightly by,  
 The Pleiades seven, Gipsy's star,  
 Shine as thy soldier knots afir;  
 And the great Dog-star, bright, unknown,  
 Blazes beside thee like a throne.  
 Take heed of thy coat so long and black,  
 For it is powdered by the Northern Lights  
 Those silver arrows shot by sprites,—  
 Is powdered by the Milky Way  
 With awful pearls unknown to-day,  
 Which well make up for all the hues  
 Proud Summer bridegroom-like may use  
 Proud Summer with his roses sheen,  
 And dress of scarlet, blue and green,  
 Foods us with such a sea of light  
 We miss the faint far dales of Night,  
 And thoughtless dance, while he with lute  
 Beguiles us or assists to fruits;  
 But, like a shade from Spirit-land,  
 Dim Winter, beckons with his hand—  
 He beckons; all things darker grow,  
 Save white churned waves and wreathing snow  
 We pause; a chill creeps through our veins;  
 We dare not thank him for his pains;  
 We fear to follow, and we creep  
 To candle light, to cards, to sleep.

Yet when we follow him how deep  
 The scarlet he has got to keep!  
 How wonderful! how passing grand!  
 For peering through his storms there stand  
 The eternal cities of the sky,  
 With stars like street-lamps hung on high;  
 No angel yet can sum their worth,  
 Though angels sang when they had birth.  
 —Chambers' Journal.

ON COLONIAL DEFENCE—A PAPER BY  
CAPT. J. C. R. COLOMB (LATE R.M.A.)

READ BEFORE THE ROYAL COLONIAL INSTITUTE,  
ON 28TH JUNE 1873.

(Continued from Page 48.)

Supposing it to be neutral, it must be remembered that if purely naval power can not be entirely relied on for the local protection of our outposts, neither can it be relied on to prevent the entry into the Nile of vessels of our enemy, and once there they would have the whole of our possessions at their mercy, unless we have a force sufficient to blockade the Red Sea. But as the necessity for the existence of such a force rests on the possibility of our direct communications being cut somewhere between the Red Sea and the English Channel, it is important to consider how our fleets in the East could exist, without adequate means of supply and repair, independent of our home resources.

Such considerations as these point to the absolute necessity of having a commanding and strongly defended great naval arsenal in the Eastern hemisphere. Here we might have ships and stores in reserve; here should be the great base of naval operations in peace and war for all our Eastern fleets. It is safe to assume that the resources of Portsmouth, Chatham, and Plymouth would be equal to the task of supplying our war fleets throughout the world at such time with ships, stores, and means of repair? Can we dream of private firms during maritime war, taking contracts to maintain, in a state of efficiency, war fleets 6,000 and 1,000 miles off?

With the development of the resources of India, Australia, New Zealand, and a host of smaller possessions, the necessity for

securing their roads increases, so also increase the power of providing and supporting adequate means of defence. (a) With a Russian sea-board on the one hand, and an American sea board on the other, it cannot be said that by their remoteness from us they are removed from danger of attack: nor must it be forgotten that the very fact of their distance from us adds to our difficulties in defending them, unless by a judicious combination of Imperial resources—to which India should contribute a large proportion—we render the fleets for their defence independent to a large extent of home support.

If naval protection without military protection be productive of danger to the Empire, great disaster may also be expected to result from attempting to hold distant possessions by military force, if that force might be completely isolated and locked out from its sources of supply and reserves for want of the naval protection of its communication with the Imperial base. If it be asked what we have done to guard against the possible isolation of our army in India? the reply is, we have abolished the Indian navy and substituted nothing in its place! Though India supports the army necessary for its safety, it contributes nothing (b) towards a fleet for the protection and security of the communications of the army, without which it cannot exist.

Two circumstances have lately occurred to threaten our command or this direct route—the opening of the Suez Canal, and the removal of the restrictions placed upon Russian power in the Euxine. We agreed to the latter on moral grounds. But if on moral grounds we have practically shown our sympathy with the desire of Russia to accumulate physical force in the Black Sea, we should extend our sympathy to India and our Eastern Colonies, and be careful it takes an equally practical form, by the creation of a naval arsenal adapted to the probable requirement of the defence of their communications: thus balancing the power of resistance with the increased power of aggression which our "moral sympathy" has so generously provided.

To attempt to determine the exact site for such a reserve naval arsenal for the Eastern portion of the Empire would be beyond the scope of this paper, but considerations respecting climate, and its effects on stores, &c., point to some port of Australia as best adapted for the purpose. The strategic importance of Bombay, however, cannot be overlooked. It must be borne in mind that the appliances, such as docks & machinery for repairs, &c., would be available for our commercial fleets in peace; and hence that Imperial resources expended to provide for the contingency of war, could not be regarded as money thrown away in peace.

4th line: To India and the East, and Australasia, round the Cape. Here the points are Sierra Leone, Ascension, St. Helena, Simon's Bay, the Mauritius and King George's Sound.

5th line: From Australasia and Vancouver's Island, round Cape Horn. Here we have Sierra Leone, Ascension, the Falkland Islands, and Sydney. These points are, however, valueless for the defence of the line between Vancouver's Island and Australia, but a commanding position for this

(a) The total value of exports and imports of India, Ceylon, and Australasia is about four-fifths of the total value of exports and imports of the United States.

(b) The contribution of £31,627 per annum from the Indian Government, on account of the expense of a fleet on Indian stations, is practically nothing.

part of the line has been offered to the Government—the Fiji Islands. It remains to be seen whether the Government accepts the offer. It is a position of great importance from an Imperial strategic point of view. The Hydrographer of the Admiralty thus speaks of it: "The Fijis lie nearly in the direct track from Panama to Sydney, and if a steamer touched at one end of them for coal she would only lengthen her voyage about 320 miles, or one day's run, in a distance of 8,000 miles. In like manner, in the voyage from Vancouver's Island to Sydney, the touching at Fiji would lengthen the distance 420 miles in a voyage of 7,000. An intermediate station between Panama and Sydney will be most desirable—indeed, if the proposed mail route be carried out, it is indispensable. In the above statement I have confined myself to answering questions referred to me by the Colonial Office; but, on looking into the subject, I have been much struck by the entire want of Great Britain of any advanced position in the Pacific Ocean. We have valuable possessions on either side, as at Vancouver's Island and Sydney, but not an islet or a rock in the 7,000 miles that separate them. We have no island on which to place a coaling station, and where we could ensure fresh supplies."

A comparison between the value of our property passing and repassing in the vicinity of these islands with that of other nations, will show that we have a vastly greater interest in maintaining freedom of communications in that district than any other power. It therefore follows that the military value of the position to any other maritime power is greater when regarded as a means of aggression than as necessary for purposes of defence. But to us its possession is vital as a rallying-point of defence, though of small value as a base for offensive operation. On the principle, therefore, of "defence not defiance" the military arguments for the annexation of the Fijis should meet with the approval of the Government.

This very hasty sketch of the ground to be defended must necessarily be subject to modification and alteration on more accurate and minute survey. It must be regarded only at present as an attempt to apply general principles to the Empire as a whole.

In the selection of the points the following conditions should be fulfilled—1. They must be in our possession, and on or near a line of communication. 2. They should possess natural advantages, such as safe and commodious shelter for the war and commercial fleets, easy of access, and capable of defence. 3. They should be as far as possible the natural rendezvous at all times of vessels passing and repassing along the line, and the chief, if not the only, coaling station of the district they command.

Too much attention cannot be paid to the selection of the coaling stations of the Empire. They should be under our control. Take for example the West Indies. The great coaling station in that district—St. Thomas—is not in our possession. The consequence is, that were we engaged in hostilities in that quarter, a large portion of our force would be necessarily employed in the blockade—so far as our enemy is concerned—of this point, and would be so much deducted from the force available and required for other purposes.

It is possible at first sight Sierra Leone and Ascension may not appear to be of Imperial value, or to fulfil these conditions.