

III.—DEEDS NOT WORDS.

It will not have escaped remark that, so far, sympathy and goodwill and promises of support in general terms have been proffered on the one side and accepted on the other, as though nothing more were wanted. But fine words, as the gnomic saying has taught us, have but a limited power of producing material results. Not that these agreeable interchanges of friendly pledges are meaningless or altogether unfruitful. They are even necessary precursors of negotiations of a more substantial and business-like character. Only, we have heard the same thing, more or less, in different forms, pretty frequently during the past ten years, and an increasing number of people are beginning to think the time has come when these flowers of rhetoric should ripen into the fruit of action.

This view has been making itself heard during the past two years, and is voiced here and there amid the general chorus of the past two months. Said *The Western Daily Press*, for example, on 22nd Jan. :—

“Meanwhile it is wise to turn from swelling periods to sober reflection, and to realise that an enormous Empire makes us vulnerable in many places. . . . Are Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, Port Elizabeth, Durban, Bombay, Hong-Kong, and innumerable smaller places absolutely safe? If not, then does it not follow that the whole matter of Imperial defence should be a joint undertaking, carefully divided between the Mother Country and the Colonies, whose loyalty it is so pleasant to note? The British Parliament is ready to do its duty in the matter of the navy; will the Colonial Parliaments do theirs?”

The Pall Mall Gazette, on 3rd Feb., puts the matter in a nutshell when it says, in speaking of congratulatory telegrams, and so forth :—

“Resolutions are all very well in their way, but they will not build a jolly-boat or equip a single rifle corps. We should like to see the Imperial defences made impregnable, and to that end Colonial contributions are necessary. Now that Australia and New Zealand have weathered their own little crisis, they might come forward with cash down.”

Take again the following from *The Belfast Evening Telegraph* of 30th Jan. :—

“We are ready for such an emergency, should it come our way,