

IMPERIAL AND COLONIAL  
RESPONSIBILITIES IN WAR.

A PAPER READ BEFORE

The Royal Colonial Institute,

1877.

BY

CAPTAIN J. C. R. COLOMB, R.M.A.

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## IMPERIAL AND COLONIAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN WAR.

BY CAPT. J. C. R. COLOMB, R.M.A.

IN 1878 I had the honour to address this Institute on the subject of "Colonial Defence." As the remarks I am about to offer as a basis for discussion here and in the Colonies are but a continuation of that paper, I must briefly refer to general views and principles it formulated. It is necessary to do so for the reason that they were honoured by great consideration at the hands of the Colonial Press. One of the chief objects of this Institute is to bring to a focus Colonial opinions, so that national shortsightedness at home may have the assistance of Imperial spectacles; and therefore as one of its Fellows, I shall best fulfil my duty by submitting to special notice such views and arguments as are adverse to those put forth in that paper, omitting for the present, all reference to still more numerous expressions of cordial approval.

In a matter of such weighty importance as Imperial Defence, the main question at issue is this: How to secure with economy, yet truly and efficiently, Imperial safety? When any solution of that great problem is suggested—and I grieve to say no one besides myself has as ever yet considered the question as one great whole—more attention should be paid to arguments calmly and deliberately urged against its adoption, than to any outburst of sentiment, however general, which advocates its off-hand acceptance. War sweeps away all "castles in the air," all false sentiment, and leaves nothing standing but bare, naked facts. It crumbles to dust false ideas and false hopes, and consolidates the power of one Empire by scattering to the winds the fanciful delusions of another. Therefore in considering questions relating to defence, it is most important not to trust sentiment too far, but to weigh calmly and carefully practical arguments.

The paper to which I refer was a sketch of our Imperial position, the dangers to which it is exposed, and the strategical operations necessary for its safety. It may thus be briefly epitomised:—

(1) It brought to view the fallacy that Colonial Defence can be considered as an abstract question, or that national defence can be limited in its meaning to the defence of the United Kingdom.

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(2) It pointed out that the principle of "home" or "local," or "domestic defence," if indiscriminately applied, as it has been by the wholesale creation of forces which cannot be moved from the soils on which they are raised, must produce Imperial weakness, not Imperial strength.

(3) That the United Kingdom is merely the "grand base" of the Empire, that for this reason it must be rendered secure, not only from capture but also from having its communications cut near home. Were the latter contingency to happen it would be helpless as regards itself, while it would cease to be of any value to the rest of the Empire with which it could not then communicate.

(4) That even supposing the United Kingdom secured both against invasion, and the interruption of its water roads near home, there yet remained to be effectually guarded against as pressing and as serious a contingency, viz. partial investment by an enemy operating against one, or more of its communications, with the other portions of that Empire of which it is but the heart and citadel. For example: an opposing naval force operating with St. Helena as a base, at the crossings of the South Atlantic, would cut the whole of the Imperial communications round both Capes; and were the Suez Canal to be blocked at the same time, the whole Empire, except Canada and the West Indies, would be locked out from its grand base, and the United Kingdom would be partially invested.

(5) That we can only secure the Imperial water roads, first, by a firm, strong grasp at all times of the points which command them; second, by fleets adequate to the requirements of keeping free and open the lines between the points.

(6) That those fleets would be paralysed in their action if the points between which they are to operate are not held by military forces sufficient to render the protection of the sea-going fleets unnecessary; or, if there are not in addition at these points, stores of coal and means of repair adequate to the requirements of the fleets of which they are the base.

The reasons for these conclusions will be found stated shortly in that paper, and at greater length in other papers and works I have put forward during the last eleven years. They have never been disputed, and though they were most unpopular eleven years ago, because we could think of nothing at home, but our own personal safety, they are now happily attracting attention. The "genie" of the British Empire is rising out of the "pot" of the United Kingdom in which it was too long confined. May this "spirit"



never be "asked to go back to show where it came from," and let us hope the time is approaching when Englishmen will cease to talk of their "country," and at all times and under all circumstances act as citizens of a Great United Empire.

On the conclusions referred to were rested the following propositions:—

(1) That as the Imperial strategic points had been and are utterly neglected, the Colonies should combine to force on the attention of Parliament and Governments the necessity of providing means for their security and of increasing their naval resources.

(2) That a commission properly constituted on an Imperial basis, should be appointed to inquire into this matter, and that such a commission might determine the just limits between Imperial and Colonial responsibilities in the question of defence; and that thus might be prepared the way for a federation of the war forces of the Empire for purposes of defence.

(3) That an absolute and pressing necessity exists for the erection of a great Imperial dockyard at the other side of the world, which would relieve the pressure on home dockyards and fulfil duties they cannot in war perform, and in peace offer commercial advantages of construction and repairs to ships of the mercantile marine.

(4) That some change appears necessary in the administration of our war forces, because as the protection of the Imperial roads is partly naval and partly military, there is no one controlling power over both: the Admiralty may scatter fleets in one direction, the War Office tie up military forces in another, but there is no power to combine the two, and without such combination each branch of our war power of defence would be helpless.

(5) *That as the communications of the Empire are the common property of all its compound parts, each portion, according to the use it makes of them, has a direct interest in their defence and should contribute to that object.*


Lastly. That forces created for the defence of "home" must "survey the Empire," in order to behold that which they are to defend.

Now an exceedingly able writer in the *Sydney Morning Herald*,\* took great exception to some of these views. He says: "We want—we require no standing army here. If England does her duty, this Colony at least will do hers. Increased and stronger harbours and coast defences, and a gradual filling up of the ranks will go far to protect all we hold dear. Besides in these days of

\* 6th and 15th June, 1874.

rapid communication, additional troops can be landed on any shore: there is always sufficient warning of impending danger to enable the Imperial Government to send assistance to the places most likely to need it . . . . It is argued that fragmentary self-reliant forces are of no use, for to be of any value they must be fitted to move from one attacked point to another. Now this strikes at the root of what may be called our system of domestic defence. New South Wales, for instance, should not, cannot indeed be asked to pour her defenders into Ceylon, or the West Indies, nor would she expect to be similarly assisted. The only movable troops are those of the Imperial army. They ought to be shifted from one threatened or assailed place to another, as the occasion demands. The self-reliant isolated armies of the 'fragments' of the Empire will do yeoman's service on their own ground, and that is all that may be expected of them. That is the reason of their being, and that is the object of the movement which has met with such laudable success . . . . But we need not follow Captain Colomb further, unless it be to record another disagreement between us. He believes that any expense incurred in repairing 'the state of the Imperial roads,' ought to be shared by the Colonies. We think not. We impose no burdens on the mother-country for the maintenance of our safety ashore; and so long as we are integral portions of the Empire, we believe it is her duty to keep the roads in repair. Her honour and supremacy are dear to us all; but they concern herself first and principally. Our share of the obligations we willingly do, and to the statesmen of Great Britain we look for the rest. . . . Self-defence and self-reliance must be the watchwords, and each Colony will do its duty if it provides a force sufficient to protect its own territory."

I submit these passages to special notice, as they are directly opposed not only to the views stated at length in my former paper, but will not be found in accord with my further remarks to-night. They form a candid, fair, and straightforward expression of that Colonial opinion which is adverse to the adoption of any Imperial scheme of defence, as will be presently seen. Those few brief but weighty words, extracted from two very lengthy and very able articles, very favourable in other respects, are deserving of most serious attention. They cover the whole ground of possible objections to acknowledging that any Imperial responsibility rests on any fragment of the Empire outside its own boundary, save and except that portion called the United Kingdom. The truth is, that while every portion of the Empire now happily recognises fully and absolutely the necessity for defending it as one great whole, opinion



as to responsibility, if not much divided, is at all events left utterly undefined. Before, however, proceeding further I will give two passages from that remarkable paper, "Fallacies of Federation," which must be taken in conjunction with what I have already quoted. "It must be borne in mind," says Mr. Forster, "that so long as any Colonies are British Colonies the British Government is bound to protect them, and would protect them in case of war . . . and Great Britain is also bound to bear, and could not avoid bearing, the chief cost of such war." Taking this last passage in connection with the general statements of the address from which it is extracted, I conclude the chief cost means the whole cost, less only the expense of such local and purely defensive works and forces Colonies choose to create or maintain. Any Colony may or may not provide means of defence. The British Government cannot, in an Imperial sense, compel it to do so, nor exercise control over the constitution or distribution of such local forces or means of defence,—if created,—beyond Colonial limits. The fact of a Colony not adopting of its own free discretion means of defence adequate to its requirements, or to the best of its ability, simply increases the responsibility of the British Government. The responsibility, therefore, of the Government at home in the matter of defence becomes greater in exact proportion as a sense of responsibility on the part of the Colony diminishes. The less a Colony does, the more must the United Kingdom do. Now this is not a matter merely between an apathetic Colony and the mother-country, but it affects every portion of the Empire, because the extra war power necessary to put forward for the safety of that Colony is just so much deducted from the force available for the protection of other Imperial fragments.

There can be no doubt that "so long as Colonies are British Colonies, the British Government is bound to protect them" to the very best of its ability; and there can be no doubt also that "self-defence and self-reliance must be our watchwords." The point is, however, are these watchwords to be used in an Imperial sense, binding all Englishmen under an Imperial standard which they combine to defend, or is each Englishman to have a little flag of his own, and hoist it where he sees fit, and try to defend it or not, as he feels inclined?

The question to be first settled is this: What is protection? What is defence? It is really only chasing shadows to devise schemes for the protection of our Colonies; it is only a dreamer's fancy to arm for defence and to emblazon flags with "Self-reliance," if we are not clear what it is we have to protect, what it is we have

to defend. Are we going to protect the unity of the Empire, or merely to prepare to save what we can out of a possible wreck? Are the strong to defend themselves, and let the weak perish? Are Englishmen behind "increased and stronger harbours and coast defences" at Sydney to regard with complacency the capture of Fiji; to hear without dismay of the seizure of King George's Sound; or that the foe has established a base of operations at New Guinea, or in still more suitable positions on some of the neighbouring islands? I feel certain the able writer of the article would in the presence of such contingencies be inclined to think that the honour, wealth, and supremacy of magnificent Sydney was concerned "first and principally," and that so long as Sydney could spare a single man or had a single shilling available to help to prevent such a catastrophe she would not have done her duty did she not spend that shilling and dispatch that man. I rather fancy that the writer now so strongly in favour of rooting all military power of defence to the particular soil on which it is raised, would then fling away his able pen and carry a sword across the sea for the safety and honour of that Sydney he so dearly loves.

I do not ask for "standing armies in the Colonies." I only submitted that the several parts of the Empire should come to a common understanding as to the defence of the Imperial strategic points, such, for example, as Fiji and King George's Sound, and in proportion to the extent to which their honour and wealth is concerned in the security and efficiency of these positions, so should they contribute in common with the mother-country to their maintenance and safety as Imperial strongholds.

If the Colonies think it is wholly and solely the duty of the people resident in the United Kingdom to provide for the safe keeping of these Imperial keys, they should insist that they do it; they should not allow measures vital to their own safety to be so completely neglected. There is no use concealing the fact that the British Government, labouring under the pressure of home constituencies possessing all the power, cannot be reasonably expected to move far in such a matter except supported by counter pressure from without. It is idle to forget that if cavalry and field artillery be deducted [from the strength of the regular army—our only movable force—the number remaining would not provide the strategic points of the Empire with garrisons, much less furnish expeditionary forces, which the Colonies imagine we can at any moment "throw on any shore." The Imperial roads cannot be kept open unless such places are secured independently of the protection of the sea-going fleets, and therefore if the mother-country



and her Colonies do not come to some common and really Imperial understanding as to how these places are to be provided with sufficient garrisons, adequate defences, and naval resources, a great war will find our fleets helplessly watching their bases, while home and Colonial merchant ships are being chased over the ocean like hares by *Alabama* greyhounds. The injury to commerce, the paralysis of trade thus caused will be the "chief cost" of such a war. It will fall on the mother-country and her Colonies, not regulated by our own theory of responsibilities in matters of defence or warlike preparation, but practically *pro rata* on each portion of the Empire, according to its commerce and trade, the strategical advantages its territory offers for seizure or requisition, and its relative geographical position to the quarter from which the opposing war power is launched.

Whatever, therefore, may be a true or false theory of responsibility in matters of our defence, war against us will not be waged on any theory whatever; it will visibly press upon, and be most felt by the interests most exposed to attack, and leave us to settle our "*Alabama* claims" and our damages and accounts as best we can among ourselves. It is hard to say, therefore, beforehand, on what portion of the Empire the "chief cost" will in the end fall. If Fiji or King George's Sound were captured, Australasia would feel it most; were Singapore or Hong Kong taken, each part of the Empire would suffer in proportion to its India and China trade; and so on. If our squadrons are tied to these places because they are not defended nor have adequate garrisons in war, the water districts of which they are the centres would be left without efficient protection, and similar results follow.

"If," says the writer, "England does her duty, this Colony (New South Wales) at least will do hers. . . . There is always sufficient warning to enable the Imperial Government to send assistance to the places most likely to need it." Clearly, then, he considers it the duty of the people living in the United Kingdom to send military force to every place "likely to need it." If this be a correct view, it is as well the whole Empire should know England has not prepared to do so. While she now, as of yore, expects "every man to do his duty," Englishmen in the Colonies rightly expect she will do hers. But the very essence of the whole question lies not in the sentimental expression of a readiness either on the part of England or the Colonies to do their duty, but to distinctly comprehend practically what are the duties to be done. When Mr. Forster says, "the mother-country is bound to protect her Colonies," let it be asked in what way? Is her responsibility



unlimited? And are the Colonies not bound to help? Does it extend not only to guarding all the trade lines of each particular Colony, no matter in what direction they lie, but also all English homes and interests scattered over territories in the aggregate sixty\* times her size? Are Colonies neither to furnish men nor money according to their means to help the people of the United Kingdom to do so? In that case the signal of Trafalgar must be reversed so far as the Colonies are concerned. It must stand thus: England does not expect every man to do his duty, but every man expects England to do hers!

I am sure Mr. Forster differently construes the word "protect," and is very far indeed from thinking that the Colonies have no duties and no responsibilities in this matter of defence, or that Englishmen whose lot is cast in the Colonies instead of at home may absolve themselves from all obligations lying beyond their own shores, while, on the other hand, those who live in England cannot by any means do so. In the latter case, an Englishman can vary his responsibility by simply changing his residence from one part of the Empire to another.† At home he can be taxed to protect water communications, the safety of which is a common necessity to all; but in the Colonies he can escape the obligation. This is surely a very strong argument in favour of a general exodus from England to the Colonies on the eve of war. There is too much reason to fear that rather than grapple with a great difficulty which deeply concerns us all, we Englishmen at home and abroad try to hide it from our sight. We are but too apt to believe there is a wide difference between Imperial and Colonial responsibility in war: we entirely forget that no home or Colonial Legislature, no power and no man, has ever yet even attempted to draw that line which is supposed to divide distinctly the one from the other. I

\* In former papers the area of the United Kingdom to that of the Empire was stated to be as one to thirty: this was an error.

† The political aspects of the question must be left to others to discuss. It would be out of place to consider difficulties presented by internal Imperial policy in a paper which deals with the external pressure of war. If that policy weakens our power of resistance we must take the consequences; we cannot make the war operations of our enemy subservient to our particular ideas of Government. The reader who wishes to follow up the subject in its political aspects will find ample matter for close study and grave thought in the Proceedings of the Institute and in "Imperial Federation of Great Britain and her Colonies," by F. Young. It is also but right to draw special attention here to a passage in Mr. Forster's paper previously referred to: "The British Government and Parliament have no right to inflict this revolution [Federation] upon any Colony or group of Colonies unless with the *full consent* of the colonists concerned, or unless it can be shown that such a course is absolutely necessary for *Imperial interests, for the interests of the Empire generally, in short, for the interests of us all.*" [The italics are mine.—J. C. R. C.]

would submit that there is no such line; that there can be none. The problem of Imperial security cannot be solved by disintegrating that which is common to all; it is a burden resting proportionably on every fragment of the Empire, and distinctions are not those of responsibility, but simply of practical ability. The weak must bear the burden according to their weakness, the strong according to their strength. The problem is one, not of division, but of adjustment. The misfortune is, that Imperial policy has been directed, not towards adjusting the burden, but has really thrown it down, leaving the United Kingdom and the Colonies to cut off bits of it here and there according to selfish, mistaken instincts of self-preservation, and the result is that much of it remains repudiated by both. No one can say to whom the heavy remainder belongs, whether to the mother-country or to the Colonies. We will not pick it up, because we have taken all the "home defence" out of it we require; the Colonies will not touch it, because they have cut off as much "domestic defence" as they think they want. To understand what that remainder is, it is necessary to examine closely our existing arrangements for the defence of our Empire.

"Each Colony," says the article, "will do its duty if it provides a force sufficient to protect its own territory . . . our share of responsibility we willingly do, and to the statesmen of Great Britain we leave the rest." This quotation furnishes a very brief but most distinct idea of the prevailing notion existing in men's minds of the allocation of responsibilities in war. Let us examine its practical value, and take New South Wales as an example. It has a population of some 600,000 souls, scattered over an area of some 323,000 square miles, and an enormous assailable coast line, offering numerous safe places for landing troops. No very large proportion of rural population so scattered can be made really effective for military service. In that splendid essay\* by Mr. Reid it is stated that 27 per cent. of the whole population of the Colony is to be found in the metropolitan district of Sydney. These two facts taken together show that on that district rests the main responsibility of protecting the whole Colony. The forces for the protection of its territory consisted in 1875 of a naval brigade mustering 329, and military forces 4,646, all told, about one-third of which is made up by cadet corps furnished by colleges and public schools; 3,000 therefore about represents the available military force. Our ablest Engineer

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\* An Essay on New South Wales. By G. H. Reid.

officers are already considering on the spot works of defence. Doubtless they will point out a pregnant expression used by the greatest engineer England ever produced: \* "My fear would be of establishing works at very considerable expense, and afterwards being forced to abandon them for want of troops." If New South Wales is to be left when attacked entirely to its own military resources, any extensive works might have to be abandoned. The fortifications of Paris did not save France, nor can forts at Sydney save New South Wales in the absence of sufficient garrisons. Without such forts at Sydney and Newcastle the action of a movable army and a movable fleet would be completely crippled; but the forts without this army and this fleet, and without sufficient military force to defend them, would be monuments of extravagant shortsightedness. A Power in possession of Sydney or Newcastle, and also King George's Sound, could hold in an iron grasp the whole continent of Australia. In the safe custody of those positions is the whole continent "first and principally concerned." Each Colony in that continent has an equal and direct interest in the safety of such places. If, therefore, Colonies are not responsible beyond their own boundaries, if they are under no obligation to share the military expenditure necessary to secure places because they are beyond their political limits, and if these forces cannot be moved out of the Colony in which they are raised, it all comes to this—the population of Sydney must be responsible for the safety of one-half the continent, and whatever Englishmen happen to reside in the vicinity of King George's Sound must be held responsible for the other. But their responsibility does not end here, for if these points are lost the trade and commerce for a huge area around them is lost also. "Trade follows the flag," and the flag that waves triumphant over Sydney and King George's Sound will determine the nationality of the trade on the great districts of ocean of which they are the "strategic points." This is not a thing merely affecting the interests of those Englishmen who happen to reside at those particular places. It "first and chiefly" concerns Australasia, and is of vital importance to the whole British Empire. Thus does this principle of "home or local defence" indiscriminately applied place an Imperial burden on a few individuals, not because they are most capable of bearing it, not because they are alone interested, but simply because they have the misfortune to live at places of Imperial strategic importance. Such points are most liable to attack because they offer enormous

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\* The late Field-Marshal Sir John Burgoyne, R.E.

advantages as naval and military positions. When attack is resolved upon it will be delivered with such imperial or national impetus as may be deemed sufficient to offer reasonable prospects of success. The means of attack will be furnished by the available resources of a great nation; the nature and amount of force employed for the purpose will be determined by the necessities of the particular operation,—by nothing else. These necessities will be estimated by our means and method of resistance. Concentrated energy of Imperial or national power may be brought to bear on the point selected for attack. Now, suppose either Vancouver's, King George's Sound, Fiji, Newcastle, Sydney, or any other point, be so selected. If our power of military resistance at such places be regulated not with reference to the Imperial importance of the position, nor to the nature and extent of defensive work to be done, nor yet by the possible force of attack, but simply by a rule-of-thumb system of arming and drilling whatever Englishmen happen to live there, the result of contact is not a matter for speculation or for hope—it is a miserable certainty. The simple truth is that power of attack means power of concentration; and if in defence power of concentration be absent, weakness is opposed to strength, and a very natural result follows "the survival of the strongest."

Again: there can be no doubt whatever that if a Colony has no commerce, no trade, and no interests beyond its own boundaries, it will have done its duty if it provides forces sufficient to protect its own territory. But the glory of New South Wales is her external trade. "According to population her external trade average," Mr. Reid tells us, "is more than double that of the United Kingdom." Those who maintain that there is a distinction between Imperial and Colonial responsibility in war, and that the responsibility of a Colony ends on its shores, must answer this question: Why should the people of the United Kingdom pay and find the force necessary, and be responsible for the protection of the "external trade" of New South Wales, when the proportion of individual interest is as one to two? Again: but one-third of the total exports and imports of New South Wales comes to and goes from the United Kingdom. Why should the Englishmen at home be responsible for the protection of the other two-thirds which neither comes to nor goes from them, while those "first and chiefly concerned" look on from behind the "stronger harbour defences" of Sydney with all their resources and war-power carefully locked up?

These are questions which cannot be shirked by believers in "home defence indiscriminately applied," nor passed over by those who differ from my humble opinion that there is no such



thing as a distinction between Imperial and Colonial responsibility, and that in war all must share, according to their several ability, the Imperial burden of defence. But, putting aside all this, surely it is a fallacy to assume that any Colony can "protect its own territory." Is each fragment—nay, is any fragment of our Empire, single-handed and alone, a match for any power which can possibly attack it? Could each particular Colony in Australia defy the power of the United States? Is it at all certain that New South Wales, the greatest of them, is a match for Russian power on the Pacific? Mare Island, the United States naval arsenal, is but 6,460 miles, and Vladivostock, the Russian base, but 5,000 miles, from Sydney. The Russians moved without steam power military forces, stores, and guns backwards and forwards in 1854, over a sea-line nearly 900 miles long, in the North Pacific, in complete defiance of the combined naval forces of France and England. It is not wise to rely entirely on the power of fleets to prevent the despatch of expeditionary forces from either Vladivostock or Mare Island. There is no physical impossibility to prevent either Power working from those bases to transport a complete corps of 5,000, without any great effort, to the shores of Australia. In war the only matter to be considered by them is the reasonable prospect of success. This prospect of success can only be estimated by our preparations for defence. In inverse proportion to our preparations for resistance will be the arguments in favour of attack. The less we have the power of concentration, the more possible is success to those against us. King George's Sound and Sydney command the Australian Continent; but under existing arrangements either power, in contemplating operations which would, if successful, carry the whole Continent, has not to consider the force of resistance furnished by the whole Continent, but simply to calculate the military strength of Western Australia as regards King George's Sound, and of New South Wales as regards Sydney or Newcastle. Is it to be supposed that either of the two Colonies named could protect their own particular territories from the assault of 5,000 disciplined, probably picked, men, ably commanded, furnished with accurate maps, possessing full and detailed information, and backed by the resources of a great nation? It would not be the inhabitants of Mare Island; it would not be the residents of Vladivostock appearing at Sydney, Melbourne, Newcastle, Perth, Adelaide, Hobart Town, or King George's Sound, to measure swords with the populations of each particular place. It would be the concentrated pressure of a great nation scientifically



brought to bear on the lungs of Australia, in order to leave her prostrate or to mar her life: The advantage to be gained by such an operation is an Imperial or national advantage, while under our "home defence" arrangements the military resistance to be overcome would be but fragmentary, or, in other words, Colonial. The principle of local defence, which prevents the concentration and combination of the whole war power of Australia, is one of the strongest possible inducements for attacking favourable positions there, in order to reduce each Colony in succession. Are we to assume that because Australian Colonies, each separately, are physically unable to furnish local forces sufficient to protect their own particular territories, they are each to be considered as having failed in their duty? If we are alone responsible for their safety, have we no right to insist upon a combination or federation of the war power of the great Continent? Are they at liberty to increase our responsibility, and our difficulty in defending them by objecting to combine their forces? Is the burden of Imperial responsibility to be shuffled off by the mother-country and the Colonies by a hap-hazard apportioning of our respective duties, without regard to our respective resources, and without reference to any consideration, but a pitiable desire to be rid of it? These are all questions which must be answered by those who see distinctions between Imperial and Colonial responsibilities, and who therefore argue against the federation of war forces for purposes of defence.

Again, all Colonies are not practically taking the same view of preparations for defence. Some are doing much towards providing military means to resist attack, others are doing little or nothing. In a general war, are the people of the United Kingdom to "help those who helped themselves," or are their efforts to be chiefly directed to protecting those who by their own neglect have rendered themselves more tempting objects of attack? Without some binding federal arrangement as to the distribution, organization, and maintenance of war power, the Colony that buried its talent in peace may in war reap the solid advantages of assistance from us at the expense of others who meanwhile have made ten. But, more than this, are the residents in the United Kingdom to be left to give or to withhold assistance at will, and be free from any binding Federal obligations? Or are they to be expected to have real Imperial strength without the power to draw from the whole Empire, in proportion to the resources of its several parts, real Imperial power? If there be distinctions of responsibility in war, these questions must be answered. They must not be left to

be settled when war comes, to chance and "English spirit." Sentiment without system means in these days defeat and disaster. To take a practical illustration. Canada, with a population of some three and a half millions, furnishes an example to the English race. Her commercial progress in peace does not blind her to the necessity of being prepared for war. She takes a calm view of her position, and arranges to meet possible events. She taxes her financial resources, and calls on all her sons to do their duty, and willingly do they respond. Possibly, some day or other, the eyes of the world may be fixed on North America, watching a life and death struggle for the honour of the English name. In such a case are other fragments of the Empire to despatch correspondents to give interesting accounts of the proceedings and—nothing else. The naval power of the United States, drawn from 10,000 miles of Atlantic coast would, if we do not prevent it, be concentrated on the St. Lawrence. Considering that an Englishman in Canada bears a far heavier military burden than an Englishman in the United Kingdom, surely, in common justice, we would be bound to sacrifice our whole naval power rather than permit her being invested by blockade. This involves our sending, besides a naval force superior to hers, a strong war garrison to Halifax, and a movable and purely military force for strategical coast distribution, and for counter attack. But let us turn to the South; are we there to leave Bermuda without force, and abandon to their fate the English West Indies? Our only movable military force, which is also the reserve for India, is but 100,000. This force would be at once absorbed by requirements in the West Atlantic. We may be in no danger of invasion at home, and sorely pressed for troops abroad, but meantime we shall have a military force of 300,000 men in the United Kingdom, which the principle of "home defence" has made it impossible for us to move. It is illegal to send them where they are required; therefore they must remain where they are not wanted, and look on at Englishmen being slaughtered, with the calm consciousness that, thousands of miles away from the fight, they are striking examples of the principle of self-reliance, and fulfilling Imperial responsibilities in war.

But supposing this estimate of probable requirements to be exaggerated, and that some force, naval and military, could be spared for service in other parts of the globe, is it quite certain that, in the absence of binding Federal obligations, the people of the United Kingdom who really have control would readily part with force? The Colonial Office would be pulling one way,

the Admiralty in another, and the War Office in a third, while public attention at home would be fixed upon the fact that its trade and commerce is brought to a focus in and about the Channel. The principle of "self-defence and self-reliance is as applicable to naval power as to military force, and if we are true to our principle, Colonies need not be surprised at its results. Our greatest trade centres are near home, and where our greatest danger appears to be, there, in obedience to the dictates of this principle, have we the right to concentrate more power than may be really wanted if we see fit. Public opinion at home, with the Government in its hands, free and unfettered by any binding Federal obligation, might in a panic possibly insist upon keeping the residuum of our movable forces at home. There would be some justice in the assertion that as the United Kingdom alone pays and finds the only movable forces, other parts of the Empire have no real ground of complaint if these forces are distributed without regard to their special requirements. Many arguments might at such a time be produced in favour of retaining forces at home. It would then be remembered how in 1778 Paul Jones in the *Ranger* defied our fleets, harassed our home trade, landed at Whitehaven, seized the forts, spiked the guns, set fire to the shipping, and even carried off Lord Selkirk's plate from his seat on St. Mary's Isle. Economists would point out that in the war between 1775 and 1783 eighty-two men-of-war were taken from us, besides 118 of our war vessels being destroyed or lost, and that this was the expensive result of England's fighting all over the world. In the popular excitement produced by a threatened commerce, in the chaos of our war administrative systems, and in the absence of binding federal obligations as regards defence, it is not impossible the necessity of upholding the integrity of the empire at any cost and at any risk might disappear before constitutional clamour for the adoption of a policy of "self-reliant isolation." Point might be given to such views by reference to the fact that long ago the Colonies had been told to arm themselves and to be self-reliant, and that as they were satisfied with it in peace they must take the consequences of its results now that war had come. They might be told "we could not change horses when crossing the stream." Such pictures may be considered too highly coloured, but let it not be forgotten that without any such sharp incentive as actual danger for centralising and tying up our only movable forces, that is the practical policy we are steadily and noiselessly pursuing now. We have a national (?) mobilisation scheme which has taken years to elaborate, and in that scheme there is not even an indirect allusion to any place lying beyond the

chalk cliffs of Dover. More exclusive attention year by year is being directed to the construction of such types of vessel as are useless for service on distant seas; while millions have been and are being spent on extending home dockyards which are but little use for the efficient maintenance of fleets at the other side of the world.

Let us now glance at the possible condition of the Pacific Ocean. Even granting we blocked the Atlantic ports of the United States, the safety of Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, and Hong Kong will then be in proportion to the force and vigour of Canada's resistance or power of counter attack. If it be sufficient to absorb the purely military power of the States any concentrated effort on any of the points named would be hardly possible; but if not, several thousand men might be poured into, say Fiji, before a single detachment of troops from England or India could reach it. For Pacific territories to assume "there is always sufficient warning of impending danger to enable the Imperial Government to send assistance to the places likely to need it" is to forget geography. Vladivostok is 8,000 miles, and Mare Island some 7,000 miles, nearer Sydney than Plymouth. The great Pacific railway across the States effectually settles the question of time: it has shortened by months the possible concentration of American military force on any point in the Pacific. On the other hand, within the last twenty-three years, complete water communication for 2,200 miles from the interior to the Pacific has been acquired by Russia, and within the last four years her naval base on her Pacific coast has come down some 800 miles nearer Hong Kong and Australia. Before the Crimean war her military forces were barred out from the sea by some 200,000 square miles of intervening territory then belonging to China. That war rendered it necessary for her to burst the barriers. While we pressed her in on the Baltic and Black Sea, she bulged out on the Pacific. Her military forces are now spread over seaboard and territories formerly Chinese, and their headquarters is now 3,000 miles nearer Australia than in the year 1854. She has one advanced military post within fifteen days' steam of Vancouver, and another within eight days' steam of Hong Kong. The Russian naval force in the Pacific is practically independent of European arsenals, and that of America entirely independent of Atlantic dockyards, while our Pacific fleets have to rely for support on Portsmouth and Plymouth, and can only receive stores and reinforcements round the Cape or through the Suez Canal, and our military force is caged at the other side of the world.

In view of such developments in the North Pacific, Australia is



vitaly concerned in the honour and supremacy of British naval power in that region. It is necessary to her security that it should be well guarded. Our fleets must keep that sea; they cannot do so without coal. Nature has provided it, and British instinct of a former age, ignorant of the value or even of the existence of this all-powerful element, secured to us the place of its abode—British Columbia. Our power of keeping the sea in the North Pacific rests entirely and exclusively on our ability to secure British Columbia against all attack, and in guarding this North Pacific gem, set as it is with black diamonds, we shall be establishing a post naturally capable of Imperial strength, about as near Australia as Mare Island. It would be an outwork against that steady advance of Russia which sooner or later will shift the real Eastern question from the Mediterranean to the Pacific. It would also “hold a pistol to the head” of San Francisco. Being 1,000 miles nearer Sydney than Panama, Australia could regard the cutting of the Isthmus of Panama without any very great apprehension of its strategical consequences. I may remark that the cutting of that canal will considerably modify the view of the able writer already quoted, and a time may come when a certain island in the West Indies may be in reality an Australian Gibraltar. But how has this huge empire, with all its wealth and intelligence, acted with regard to British Columbia? It has left it shut out from succour, it has left it to sink or swim, because to connect it by railway with the Atlantic would cost some £10,000,000, and might not pay for some time. Canada must be self-reliant and make it if she wants it, and leave it alone if she does not want it.

Now, the United Kingdom has within the last five years thought it worth while to pay £7,000,000 on account of water communications; £4,000,000 has gone into the Suez Canal, through which but one twenty-eighth of our total commerce passes; and £3,000,000 has gone, no one knows where, as a fee for Captain Semmes' lessons in sea strategy, by which we have not profited. But for a work of immense value in peace and in war, vital to our Imperial life in half the world, we cannot afford to pay £10,000,000. Thus the Empire is ready to cast down its North Pacific pearl to be trodden down by “swineherds,” whose name is—shoddy. We shall only have ourselves to blame if it is picked up and placed in the Imperial crown of Russia, or added as one more star in the flag of the United States. As we have seen, a day may come when Australia will watch with anxiety the operations of the Canadian army, so her fate may hang on a naval action fought at or near Vancouver's Island. The hauling down of the Union Jack in British Columbia



would be the ominous warning to all our Pacific territories that the hour had come when the ferocious national war strength of our enemy could "strike at the roots" of our innocent little systems of "domestic defence." Not only is Australia deeply concerned in the Canadian Pacific Railway, but it is a matter of vast importance to us at home. As I have for years persistently pointed out on every possible occasion,\* these Islands must not only be guarded against invasion, they must be also secured against investment. As our population increases, so can the successful chances of invasion be made to diminish, but so also do the dangers resulting from investment become more possible and more serious. Increase of population in the United Kingdom means more mouths to feed, more numerous claimants for national out-door relief. We are a great people, but we must have food. We at present buy in the cheapest open market, but it never seems to have struck us that there can be such a thing as an Imperial co-operative store, and that the site of the butcher's and baker's department lies between the Red River and the Rocky Mountains, and that all we want is a road to it. We forget, also, that in making this road we should also be making a short cut to the infinite supply departments of Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand. But we have up to this been so busy preparing for invasion that we have not had time to think of these things. In the event of war with America the mouth of the Mississippi will be closed, the American "Golden Gate" of the Pacific will be shut, and the other lines of our food supply will be objective points of attack by swarms of cruisers. No hostile squadrons may hover close round our shores, yet we might be in imminent danger of investment, and might possibly feel the stress of hunger. We keep Bermuda and Halifax as Imperial fortresses to provide for the contingencies of war with the States, and yet take no thought how, in that event, we are to feed our people at home. If such a war takes place before the British Pacific Railway is made, we may bitterly regret we spurned Nature's gift profusely spread at the foot of the

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\* It may be perhaps excusable to repeat the concluding passage of lectures on "The Distribution of our War Forces," delivered at a time when the "ghost" of invasion frightened the word "Empire" out of England: "As regards the United Kingdom—the citadel of the Empire—let it never be forgotten that we have two dangers to guard against—direct assault and investment, partial or complete. Though these Islands may bristle with bayonets, though, at the very name of invasion, millions of riflemen may be ready to line the hedgerows, let us not shut our eyes to the fact that our supplies might be cut off, that we could be, in short, starved out. Therefore must our war forces be distributed in such a manner as will best secure the Imperial base of operations, and ensure safety and freedom of our Imperial communications."—See *Journal Royal United Service Institution*, 1869.

Rocky Mountains. With empty stomachs we shall have no "spirit left in us" to retaliate for the loss of British Columbia, and Australia may then call in vain for help. With that railway and consequent cultivation and development of this "fertile region," the forces necessary to keep open Canada's communications would at the same time guard our food supply, and also protect the Atlantic side of the short cut to Australia. By thus making it possible for one force to perform a triple duty, we should free two-thirds of our available naval strength, and thus all other parts of the Empire not so directly concerned in this line of defence would proportionably benefit. Surely, then, as a defensive work this railway is an Imperial question, and not simply a Colonial concern. This is a part of that heavy remainder of the Imperial burden of defence we pass by. Telegraphic communication is another. While Russia has connected her naval bases in the Pacific with a continuous wire from St. Petersburg some 6,000 miles long, we cannot afford to lay 2,000 miles of wire to connect our great coaling port of the North Pacific with London. Russia can put her Pacific armies and fleets in motion three minutes after the order is given from St. Petersburg. We can only send messages through United States' officials, who are not responsible to us if they never reach their destination. This is our application of the principle of "self-reliance!" It is but the logical result of the system of "fragmentary self-defence." British Columbia can have neither armies nor fleets to move, and therefore telegraphic communication would be perhaps superfluous. We have some ships scattered over the whole ocean. There are no works of defence raised by Imperial hands at British Columbia, no forts for the protection of our coal, nothing but *prestige*, 69 militia,\* and a few constabulary guards to protect it from attack, while a powerful Russian fleet is already concentrated in this quarter of the Pacific waiting events, and its officers openly talk of taking Vancouver's Island. If that point is left to be protected by our fleet our naval force must be concentrated there. The Russian squadron has then a clear road to Australia. Supposing we try to blockade that squadron now at San Francisco, we may get into difficulties as to neutrality bounds with the States; it may, besides, slip through our fingers, as it did in 1855 in Castries Bay. In the latter case our fleet may go in hot haste to Vancouver, to find the coals burned and the mining works destroyed, and to learn the enemy with full bunkers has left for Australia, whither our fleet cannot follow because it cannot get

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\* See Official Report of No. 11 Military District of Canada, 1876.

coal. Thus it is that the principle of "self-defence indiscriminately applied" to British Columbia vitally concerns Australia, and leaves it open to attack.

For some reason or other it is assumed that in the matter of the defence of the Empire the protection of the sea and the defence of the land are two separate and distinct questions: that Colonial responsibility is bounded by sea, and what is called Imperial responsibility, is bounded by land; that Colonies have none beyond their shores, and that, with some few exceptions, Imperial duties of defence are strictly and entirely confined to the sea. It is on this assumption we have based our preparations for defence; it is this theory which has produced huge military forces "fixed as the monument on Fish-street-hill," and which cannot move across the sea or pass from one Colony to another even though nothing separated them but a political boundary. We have at home 400,000 troops. Three-fourths cannot be moved across the sea, and nearly one-half (the volunteers) cannot even be moved to Ireland. "The self-reliant armies of the fragments of the Empire will do yeomen's service on their own ground, and that is all that may be expected of them." It is, therefore, very evident that both the United Kingdom and the Colonies at present seem to believe there is neither reciprocity nor commonality of responsibility so far as land defence is concerned. The result is that when we are threatened with invasion at home we can look for no military help from abroad, and when the Colonies are threatened abroad they can get no military aid from home. We may be in no danger of invasion, and with a military force, at the very least, of 300,000 at home we are to let British Columbia, or the West Indies, or all our Colonies go rather than give military help. The Cape may let St. Helena, the Falkland Islands, and the Mauritius go rather than move a man. Queensland must not mind Fiji being captured, nor New Zealand Tasmania being taken; nor must New South Wales mind Victoria being overrun, nor Victoria stir a military finger though the enemy be encamped at Adelaide; and South Australia must look on while a hostile force occupies King George's Sound. We impose no burden (say the Colonies) on the mother-country for the maintenance of our safety ashore, therefore they must defend themselves. We impose no burden on them, therefore we must defend ourselves; and so the system of territorial defence may thus be shortly summed up—every place for itself and the Empire for none!

But weak Colonies, having neither population nor resources sufficient to make even a faint show of military preparation sometimes get a little doubtful as to the efficacy of this newfangled doctrine

of military disintegration. Mr. Forster comforts them with the assurance that the British Government at home "is bound to protect them in war." But faith in the logic of these words is somewhat disturbed by the logic of these facts—that the British Government at home ties up its military forces and omits mentioning such places altogether in its great mobilisation scheme. This creates alarm, and then we quiet them by pointing to our fleet. We give all our Colonies to understand that the fleet will, without any army, make up for every deficiency in the matter of land defence here, there, and everywhere, all over the world, and they believe it. But they must remember we ourselves do not believe it. We have created a military immovable force 300,000 strong because our Channel fleet cannot be relied on to protect an assailable coast line from the Humber to Penzance, only 750 miles in length. How, then, are ships scattered over a world of water to be relied on single-handed to protect territories with thousands of miles of undefended shores? Further, our fleets cannot keep the sea without the support of an army distributed strategically over the face of the globe to secure their bases. Our existing arrangements lock up our military forces, and provide no garrisons for the Imperial strategic points. Our fleets cannot move far away, therefore, from those places when expeditionary forces are on the sea. They cannot leave their coals to be taken or burned, nor risk the capture of their stores and means of repair. The truth is, the principle which ties up our military forces in immovable detachments also will bind with strong chains of necessity our fleets to their own depôts. In adopting this principle of fragmentary defence, which deprives us of the power of concentrating naval power or military force, we are forgetting our past history, and doing our best to deprive all British territory and all British sea lines of inter-communication of efficient naval protection in war. Our military weakness is not so much a want of force as a self-imposed inability to apply it where it is wanted. This system was not devised by the British Government, though it sprung from its neglect. Englishmen at home armed themselves because the Governments had not provided for the defence of the United Kingdom; Englishmen abroad followed their example because the same Governments left them "naked to their enemies." Those abroad "will do yeomen's service on their own ground;" those at home will only resist invasion. Between them lie our Imperial water roads, which our fleets cannot protect unless the "strategic points" which command them are efficiently garrisoned in war. The armed Englishmen abroad think it is no affair of theirs, those at home think it is



no part of their duty to garrison and defend the keys of the Empire Colonial Legislatures regard it as an "Imperial responsibility," the British Parliament seems to regard it as a Colonial "burden." Meantime places like Vancouver's, Fiji, King George's Sound, St. Helena, and others are to be left to take care of themselves. Thus, in chasing a "will-o'-the-wisp," composed of imaginary and fantastical distinctions between "Colonial burdens" and "Imperial responsibilities," we are walking into a dangerous quagmire, to find, perhaps too late, that there are no such "distinctions" and no separate "burdens," and that with a Federal army and a Federal fleet we might have defied attack, and thus prevented war.

Our fleets, however, will want other things besides military garrisons at their bases. In these days they will need dockyards near at hand, providing sufficient means of repair; and they will require a sure, steady, and certain supply of coal, and telegraphic communication.

To protect the trade lines in the Pacific Ocean, with its 70,000,000 square miles of water, we shall in war require an enormous fleet. That fleet should be entirely independent of Atlantic dockyards, and a great Imperial dockyard at the other side of the world is a most apparent necessity. Though Australia and New Zealand are first and chiefly concerned, it is not merely a Colonial want. Every portion of our Empire has an interest in that ocean, and therefore such a dockyard is a great Imperial requirement. If it be said our Empire cannot afford to create such a dockyard, then let us quietly haul down the Union Jack in the Pacific before we are ignominiously compelled to strike it. But before doing so, it may be worth considering whether it would not be a better alternative to abolish one of our home dockyards, and remove the officials, plant, and sufficient reserve ships to Sydney, the natural Portsmouth of the Pacific. The loss at home would be more apparent than real. Though there would be one Royal dockyard less at home, the pressure both in peace and war of the maintenance of fleets for half the world would be removed. The resources of private yards at home are so enormous that not only can they meet the demands of the mercantile marine in its busy time of peace, but they can turn out war vessels for our possible enemies by scores. They would be idle in war, and available for the construction and repair of war ships. There are no such private naval resources away from English shores, and therefore at present for aid, for reinforcements, and for maintenance, the enormous Pacific fleet responsible for the safety of half the world must in war rely on private and public yards crowded together in a small island in the



north-east corner of the Atlantic ocean! To use a homely phrase, "all our naval eggs are in one basket," and though we may lay them on one side of the globe, the communications on the other may be exposed or shut out from us while they are being hatched.

There are, however, economical as well as strategical aspects of the question of an Imperial dockyard at Sydney.

(1) A ship fitted out in England for the Pacific would be at least two months later on the scene of action than if fitted out at Sydney. The expense of her maintenance during that passage would be saved. While passing from England to the Pacific or back the vessel cannot be counted as effective force, either in that ocean or at home, and coal consumed would alone add very considerably to her value by the time she reached her destination.

(2) The resources of such a dockyard at Sydney would be available in peace for the repair and construction of merchant shipping.

(3) The extent of the ocean and the nature of the service to be performed points unmistakably to the conclusion that in war the chief demand to be met will be for swarms of small unarmoured or partially armoured cruisers. Those who have read the admirable paper on "Civilisation in the Pacific,"\* by Mr. Coleman Phillips, and studied Mr. Read's essay, do not require to be told that such vessels can be constructed at Sydney cheaper than in any other part of the world.

(4) As we must expect great development in that English mercantile marine having its birthplace and its home in the great Pacific Ocean, so must we prepare to protect it in war. The ties of youth are not easily broken, and a little care and attention to a mercantile marine starting in life may be the means of binding together the interests and the sympathies of our peace and war navies on the other side of the world.

There is a cloud no bigger than a man's hand hovering near Cape Horn; it is a warning for the Empire to "gird itself up and run for the entrance of the gates of Sydney." Developments and civilisation are steadily advancing to the South, and we have allowed the coal in the Straits of Magellan to slip through our Imperial fingers. Six miles from Sandy Point a coal mine has been opened and connected by rail with the wharf. "Vegetables of all kinds are grown in abundance, and there is excellent pasture for sheep. The Settlement now to a great extent produces enough to supply itself, and it is to be hoped," says Mr. Rumbold,† "that

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\* See *Journal Royal Colonial Institute*, 1875-6.

† *Report on the Progress and General Condition of Chili*, 1875.

it will ere long even supply the Falkland Islands." Where we have not the command of coal, we shall not in war have the power of military and naval communication. A damaged or worn-out ship must under our existing arrangements sail the whole way from Sydney to Plymouth, 18,000 miles, and take chance of falling an easy prey to any small steamer having coal in her bunkers.

The Chinese Empire in the last ten years has converted one hundred and seventeen acres of ground into a dockyard and arsenal, with means and appliances both of construction and repair, quite equal to such as we require for our Pacific fleets. It is rather too much to suppose the English Empire cannot follow in the wake of the Chinese!

When we turn to the Cape, the same arguments apply towards the Imperial necessity of providing naval resources, but they are considerably modified by its proximity to England. The same Imperial reasons for providing adequate means of naval repair and protected coal stores apply to this great strategic point of empire. Powers of construction are not required, but localisation and self-reliant support of naval force in that district of ocean are equally necessary. The protection of the road round the Cape is a matter which, though it first and chiefly concerns that Colony, is nevertheless, a matter in which every portion of the Empire has a vital and direct interest. The fleet-centres appear to be England for the North Atlantic, Baltic, and Mediterranean. The Cape for the South Atlantic, Bombay for the Indian Ocean, and Sydney for the Pacific. The smaller links of the chain of responsibility which must bind the whole Empire together by defending its lines of communication must not be neglected, remembering that the whole strength is but equal to that of its weakest part. Means of minor repair, stores and coal must be provided at squadron-centres such as St. Helena, Antigua, Mauritius, Singapore, and several other points to which I have elsewhere referred. It is impossible in a short paper, on so huge a subject, to enter into details. They will all require strong garrisons in time of war; many of them have but few English residents, and are but comparatively small worth to trading enterprise. But places of little commercial importance in peace, will be by war suddenly transformed into positions of immense value, to which our helpless merchant shipping will naturally run for shelter and our exhausted war vessels look for succour and support. If there are no forts and no garrisons they may seek and look in vain. There is no law of nature which strategically distributes populations, and if we hope to solve the problem of Imperial defence by the simple process of arming

residents, we may suddenly find the whole fate of our Empire depending on a corporal's guard, and reap the consequences of adopting a system which has had no place in history, dating from a time when the "four kings" waged the first war in the world, and even these "were joined together in the vale of Siddim which is the salt sea."

It was naval and military combinations saved our Empire in the past, and that power alone can do so in the time to come. It was the ready unfettered power of combining naval and military force applied by us at the strategic points which brought down to the dust the power of the Dutch. Let us be warned by the lesson of St. Eustatius in 1781. The Dutch power was great in the Spanish Main, their Colonies were of immense importance, and their commerce great. War was going on all round them, but true to their purely commercial instincts they neglected means of defence—it was regarded as unnecessary because they were neutral. The centre of their trade and commerce was the small island of St. Eustatius. They were making money by supplying our enemies, and thus it happened we suddenly declared war on the 21st December, 1780. Instructions were at once sent to our Admiral (Rodney) in those seas "to attack and subdue the possessions of the States General," and saying "the islands which present themselves as first objects of attacks are St. Eustatius and St. Martin's, neither of which it is supposed are capable of making any considerable resistance." These orders reached the Admiral at Barbadoes 27th January, 1781. He embarked military forces under General Vaughan, and on the 3rd February dropped anchor at St. Eustatius. He gave the Island one hour to surrender, and to use his own words, "the astonishment and surprise of the garrison and inhabitants was scarce to be described." The place instantly surrendered. Thus in an hour not only had the keys of the Dutch position in the West Indies passed into English hands, but also 130 ships besides a Dutch frigate of thirty-eight guns, which was immediately manned by British officers and seamen, and a few days later was cruising against the Dutch and capturing Dutch ships! "Had the Dutch," says Rodney, "been as attentive to their security as they were to their profits the Island had been impregnable." Thus was St. Eustatius taken, and with it fell the islands of Saba and St. Martin, and seven weeks later the Colonies of Demerara and Essequibo. Now, had the forces of General Vaughan been rooted to Barbados, Rodney could not have struck this Imperial blow at the centre of national Dutch power.

We carefully study Napoleon's preparations for invasion, in order

to learn how to resist it; we take no notice of his elaborate arrangements for the capture of our strategic points abroad, particularly St. Helena, then strongly garrisoned and defended. So little do we value it now, that though at the outbreak of war with Russia in 1854 a heavy Russian frigate was known to be in the South Atlantic on passage to the Pacific, no official notice that the English Empire was at war was sent to the Government of our most important outpost in that sea.\* It is important to remember this in connection with what I have previously stated, viz. that the seizure of St. Helena means the partial investment of the United Kingdom, the lock-out of all our Colonies whose lines pass round both Capes, the loss of our command in half the world. Though the United Kingdom is first and chiefly concerned in the defence of St. Helena, every portion of the British Empire is vitally interested in its security.

If we do not value such places because they are ours, let us remember what we suffered when they were in an enemy's hands. Take the Mauritius as an example of this. Napoleon recognised the importance of that strategic position, and amply provided for its requirements. De la Bourdonnais, some sixty years before, had developed its resources as a naval base. As a French post it was a thorn in the side of British India and British trade in the East. The Marquis of Wellesley resolved in 1800 to take it, and a military force 1,800 strong was collected for the purpose at Trincomalee, commanded by Colonel Wellesley, afterwards the Duke of Wellington. It could not go without a naval escort, it was helpless without the fleet, and there it had to wait for Admiral Rainer's squadrons. When they arrived the Admiral objected to the proceedings, and the expedition had therefore to be abandoned.† Now those who think a fleet can go anywhere and do anything without a movable army, or that naval bases can be left unprovided with fortifications and garrisons, should carefully study history. I submit one passage from the secret and private despatch of Marquess Wellesley, 5th February, 1801: "A naval war of the most destructive nature is now actually waged by the enemy against the commerce of India by the aid of those French Islands, and cannot be terminated without their reduction." It is generally supposed

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\* I have this on the very best authority.

† It is worthy of note than in 1794, at Bastia, the same description of administrative difficulty arose, but with the conditions reversed. General Dundas would not do as the Admiral (Hood) and Nelson wished. In this case, however, the navy did what the general "after mature consideration" considered to be impossible. No one, however, was more astonished at the successful result of the naval siege of Bastia than Nelson himself.



"Trafalgar" effectually settled our supremacy of the sea all over the world, but that is a mistake. The batteries and garrison of this French strategic position enabled the French fleet to defy our naval forces on Indian seas for five long years after that decisive battle was fought. The damage that fleet inflicted on our commerce was almost past calculation. "In 1807," says Beveridge,\* "the port of Calcutta alone in six weeks sustained losses by capture to the amount of £300,000." In 1809 four frigates under Captain Willoughby, with a detachment of the 83rd and 69th regiments attempted to take Port Louis. We lost all four frigates in the fruitless attempt. They fell a sacrifice to naval and military combination and shore batteries. When the French boarded Captain Willoughby's ship they found nothing but wounded, dead, and dying, and he himself sitting on the capstan, his arm dangling in its socket, his eye hanging on his cheek, singing, "Rule Britannia." Britannia, however, did not rule in this region for another year, when the place was taken by 10,000 troops and eighteen ships of war. These are useful facts to remember in days of free trade, when the wealth of the English race covers the world "as the water covers the seas." Let the advocates of the simple system of undefended coal ports, dockless and unfortified naval bases, and self-reliant immovable detachments remember that at present a filibustering force even can take most of them, and once taken from us we shall have no movable military force available to recapture them, for the moment they are taken they will at once be put in a state of defence. Let it also not be forgotten that even if England and her colonies combine to fortify and defend them now before it is too late, hornets' nests may still be established round Australia, the Cape, and the West Indies, and we must in war have movable military forces to root out and to destroy them.

It seems to be forgotten that free trade in peace means in war naval armaments of all descriptions and sorts beyond calculation great. We are not and we never can be a great military nation, but if we are to live as an empire, if we Englishmen are to live at all, we must hold together on the sea. To do so England and her Colonies must combine and the British Empire "grapple to its soul with hooks of steel" the strategic points of power on the sea.

The aggregate annual value of exports and imports of British Colonies and Possessions is something like £300,000,000. The value of exports and imports of the United Kingdom in 1806 was but some £60,000,000, while last year it was £655,000,000, there-

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\* History of British India.

fore the Colonies alone have five times and we have ten times a greater stake in the sea than we had in the year succeeding Trafalgar. The navy estimates for 1805 were £14,493,848; in 1814 they were £22,000,000, or a little over one-fourth of the value of our exports and imports of that year. The value of exports and imports of Australian colonies alone is now equal to that of England and France together in 1802—the year of the peace of Amiens. Such facts as these sufficiently indicate that the burden of protection of our common commerce in war must be shared and justly distributed according to the capacity of the several joints in the Imperial back; they point unmistakably, first, to Federal naval positions, and next to a Federal fleet and a Federal movable army to support that fleet.

If the Empire has deliberately accepted the principle that each portion of it should be independently responsible for its territorial defence, no matter whether the population or internal resources of each are sufficient for the purpose or not; it has accepted a principle which renders it liable in war to subjugation in detail, unless the fallacy be assumed that the fleet of the United Kingdom can everywhere prevent any hostile attack exceeding in power means of isolated local defence. More than this, it risks the command of the sea, without which territorial defence in the United Kingdom means starvation, and in the Colonies ruin. I venture to think the Colonies have never been asked a question in the matter, and have simply accepted this principle of "domestic defence" because they were left no choice but to adopt it. They are loyal, and they are true, and though they must each and all, except Canada, acknowledge military weakness, they trust implicitly to one of two things—first, that war may not come till time has made them strong; second, that if it does come before they are ready, they trust to the statesmen of England to provide for every deficiency, and to cover every defect: they look to them, in short, to do "the rest." Now it is just these very deficiencies, it is just these very defects; it is, in short, "the rest" of Imperial defence that the statesmen of England cannot provide for without the spontaneous pressure of hearty, willing, and practical co-operation of the Colonies. They require watching and urging on, and they would not be human if they did not.

It is most important to remember that in 1854 we drifted into a war wholly unprepared. We declared war, and left "the rest" to the War Office and the Admiralty, and land transport, food, and clothing for our Crimean army was lost in the gulf which lies between the two departments. In that year the Secretary of State

for War ceased to be also Secretary for the Colonies, and their affairs passed into the hands of a separate officer of State. It is worthy of note that the requirements of a great war which threatened the Colonies rendered it necessary to transfer in 1794 their affairs from the Home Office to the War Department, while the necessities of a smaller war which—as Russia was then weak in the Pacific—did not threaten them, caused the care of the Colonies to be transferred to an office altogether separate. The next great war will find all matters relating to Colonial defence between three stools instead of two. Now, this may account for a good deal of that fog which envelops Imperial defence.

The War Office regards it as chiefly an Admiralty or Colonial Office question: the Admiralty views it as either a War Office or Colonial Office matter; and the Colonial Office, having neither fleets nor armies at its disposal, feels quite certain it only concerns the War Office and Admiralty. The easy way out of the difficulty is to leave each Colony to provide for its own defence in any way it thinks fit, and to trust "the rest" to "English pluck" and "English spirit." There is no Colonial branch of the Admiralty or War Office, there is no war branch of the Colonial Office, and therefore it is not surprising that every military and naval change has hitherto tended to distort the English vision from taking one wide view of the whole great question; nor should we wonder that Imperial defence has been split up into little bits and strewed about the world.

The people of the United Kingdom would, I believe, spend their last shilling, and fight to their last man, to preserve the Empire intact, and would prepare to do so, and to take their full share of Imperial duty in defence, if they only knew how, if they could only grapple with that "rest," which the Colonies look to the statesmen of England to do. Englishmen in the Colonies are not different from Englishmen at home, and an Imperial commission, such as I ventured to suggest ten years ago, and have humbly pleaded for many times since, would let in a flood of Imperial light upon the "parochial" English mind, and let the world know we meant to stick together in defending each other.

It is for Home and Colonial Legislatures, it is for England's sons all over the world to make their voices heard on this matter. We of this generation are the pioneers of the next. When all Europe is an armed camp, and when one single Power like Germany, which had but one corvette and two small gunboats in 1848, bids fair to be soon the third great naval power of the world, we cannot go unarmed. We push to the front Home and Colonial

statesmen to warn us of dangers and difficulties ahead; they are the scouts of our history yet to be written, and in days of consolidating power they must not be blind.

We can hear behind us the measured tread of a host of advancing English nations, whose common path we are to prepare to make plain, and to render safe. We see before us tangled masses of confused systems, which we must do our best to clear away. We are warned of the dangers of our path by the whitened bones of empires which have gone before and perished.

But through the sunshine of peace, or through the darkness and gloom of war, our clear duty and our only hope is still to advance "shoulder to shoulder," helping the weak and cheering on the strong until we have prepared for those who come after us a safe camping-ground on the shores of a great future. Then, and not till then, can we take the rest of the weary, confident that so far as in us lies, we have done our part to ensure that our Empire shall remain one and indivisible "till wars have ceased in all the world."

*[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible due to bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. It appears to be a continuation of the author's reflections on imperial responsibilities.]*

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