

FOOTE, G. W. The shadow of
the sword.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

THE first edition of this pamphlet was published less than two years ago. It consisted of three thousand copies, most of which were sold in the first two or three months. For some time the pamphlet has been out of print, and the present moment seems opportune for issuing a second edition.

I have retained the major portion of the first edition, only excluding a few paragraphs of temporary value. For these I have substituted remarks on the current aspects of the question; and by broadening the printed page I have found room for other additions which are chiefly statistical, and I hope always practical.

Europe is at this moment in a feverish condition. Rumors of impending war startle us day by day, and those who are supposed to know (whether they do or not) foretell a terrific struggle in the immediate future between all the leading powers. This much, at least, is certain; the prodigal preparations that are being made everywhere for war must sooner or later precipitate a terrible crisis. "How oft," as Shakespeare says, "the means to do ill deeds makes ill deeds done."

Bismarck and Moltke demand an increase of forty thousand men in the effective German army, and General Boulanger demands a fresh vote of an indeterminate number of millions to strengthen the French military machine. Already the armies of these two countries amount to nearly a million and a half each, with further available forces of nearly another million in case of necessity. It is, in fact, stated on good authority that France has cavalry and artillery ready for two million infantry, all of whom would be armed with new repeating rifles. The tension is too great to last. Without mutual disarmament, France and Germany will certainly come into collision. Yet their dread of fighting each other singly is so great, that they will strive to embroil the whole continent before they take the field. Such an enterprise is unfortunately too easy, for there is no love lost between Italy and France, the Turkish empire only awaits its final dismemberment, Austria cannot well stand alone, and England and Russia are almost hereditary enemies.

Turning our attention homewards, we find a growing clamor for further expenditure on our Army and Navy, and a constant pressure on Ministers by the Court party in the interest of anything but peace. Lord Salisbury has been offering our alliance to Austria, which is an implied menace to Russia; and his diplomacy has been carried on with the same sublime contempt of Parliament and the People which is evinced by all our Governments alike. We have been threatened with a Salisbury-Victoria war of inconceivable dimensions, for the sake of replacing the brother of the Queen's latest son-in-law on the Bulgarian throne.

In these circumstances I feel that the time is indeed opportune for a new edition of my pamphlet, whose influence, however slight, will I am confident be in favor of peace and progress.

THE SHADOW OF THE SWORD.

THE man-eating monster of fiction is terrible enough to romantic young minds under the spell of the story-teller, but he is almost genial and harmless in comparison with the real Ogre of war. Generation after generation this frightful monster gorges himself on human flesh and blood, solacing his intervals of satiety with the wine of human tears. And every time he prepares for a fresh repast, he demands a larger provision for his ravenous appetite. What struggles in previous history equalled in slaughter the contest between North and South in America, or the later death-wrestle between France and Germany? Or how could the fiercest combats between ancient empires, even that of Rome and Carthage, rival the fight between England and Russia which so many of our journalists have encouraged us to begin with a light heart? Such a struggle would have kindled the flames of war from India to the Baltic, and probably set all Europe in an unparalleled blaze. Surely the Devil's cauldron was never heated and stirred with such levity as now. A crowd of grinning apes playing with fire in a powder factory were not more grotesquely terrible.

Awful as the Ogre's blood-tax is, his impositions between meals are even worse. In the palmy days of the Roman Empire, less than four hundred thousand troops sufficed to preserve the peace of the world; and, if we except petty frontier tussels with barbarians, they often did so for thirty or forty years together. But Europe has now its standing armies, whose total is reckoned in millions, and the peace is broken three or four times in a generation. Let it also be remembered that the Roman soldier was a worker as well as a fighter, helping to carry the practical civilisation of Rome wherever her eagles floated. Our high roads, the arteries of pedestrian and vehicular circulation through England, were first made by the imperial legions, who used the pick and the spade more frequently than the sword. But the armies of modern Europe are all idlers. Their sole business is destruction. In peace they consume without producing, and in war they devour like the locust and the caterpillar. They are not the lame, the blind, the maimed, and the imbecile, but the young flower of the male population, withdrawn from productive industry, and supported by the labor of others while they "learn the art of killing men." We shall consider this economical aspect of the subject more fully presently; meanwhile let us deal with the causes of war.

"A background of wrath," says Carlyle, "which can be stirred up to the murderous infernal pitch, does lie in every man, in every creature." True, and this fierce instinct may be held to account directly for the combats of animals, for primitive human fighting, for duels among "civilised" peoples, and for street fights and all personal brawls. But it accounts only indirectly for modern warfare. "Civilised wager of

battle" is the game, not of peoples, but, to use Earl Beaconsfield's phrase, of "sovereigns and statesmen." Cowper long ago remarked that war is a game which kings would not play at were their peoples wise. The fact is, our brute instincts, racial prejudices and national vanities are systematically traded on by our rulers. Nothing is so cheap and easy as a "foreign policy," as nothing is so hard as a domestic one; and nothing so diverts attention from difficult home affairs as the simple expedient of a foreign broil. If declaring war lay with Parliament, the juggle would be more arduous. But it does not. The Government hurries us into war before we can discuss its policy, and when the matter comes up for debate, not only have things gone too far for interference, but the question resolves itself into one of confidence in the ministry, instead of approval of the particular measure. By that time also the beast in us has tasted blood. The savage thirst for more is upon us. Illustrated papers and daily war correspondence familiarise us with slaughter, and the sane voice of the keepers of reason is drowned in the clamor of the wild beasts of passion, scenting carnage and carrion.

Society is now too complex for the simple rules of interpretation which apply to primitive quarrels. The Crimean war, for instance, was not fought because Englishmen and Russians were animated by mutual hatred. Dynastic and political reasons, as usual, played the chief part in the prelude to that bloody drama. Had Louis Napoleon, after usurping the French throne, not required an alliance with some old European monarchy to rehabilitate his name and veil the fact of his being a *parvenu* emperor, the struggle of thirty years ago might never have commenced. As for Italy's share in the war, it is notorious that Cavour urged the King of Sardinia into action simply to gain a military reputation for the kingdom, as a first step to the unification of the peninsula under a native sovereign; and the Austro-Italian war naturally followed the success of these tactics. Even before the Franco-German war, notwithstanding the cry of *à Berlin* raised by hired *mouchards* in the streets of Paris, it is not true that every Frenchman was yearning to grasp a German throat. The mass of the peasantry were criminally hoodwinked. They voted "Yes" for the Empire, thinking it meant Peace, and fancying, as they were told, that the Republican opposition wished to drive the country into costly and perilous foreign adventures.

Let us go back still further, and we shall see evidences of the same truth. Eighty years ago Nelson told his seamen that they had but one duty—to love old England and hate every Frenchman like the Devil. Such a sentiment was of course loudly acclaimed, but it was after all a cultivated sentiment. When Pitt began operations against France, he found it necessary to tune the pulpit, and bribe and intimidate the press in England. In due time his policy was successful. The people were grossly abused, and after a few years' fighting, when their blood was up, they were ready for anything in the shape of war. France merely stood to them as a synonym for enemy. They cursed and hated Frenchmen with the spirit of a bull rushing at a red cloak;

the cunning matador who flourished the scarlet having his own ends to serve through the creature's madness.

We may consider it a fact that war is the game of "sovereigns and statesmen." Grimly and strongly, as is his wont, Carlyle has expounded the modern meaning of war in a famous passage in *Sartor Resartus*. Let us hear him :—

"What, speaking in quite unofficial language, is the net-purport and up-shot of war? To my own knowledge, for example, there dwell and toil, in the British village of Dumdrudge, usually some five hundred souls. From these, by certain 'Natural Enemies' of the French there are successively selected, during the French war, say thirty able-bodied men. Dumdrudge, at her own expense, has suckled and nursed them; she has, not without difficulty and sorrow, fed them up to manhood, and even trained them to crafts, so that one can weave, another build, another hammer, and the weakest can stand under thirty stone avoirdupois. Nevertheless, amid much weeping and swearing, they are selected; all dressed in red; and shipped away, at the public charges, some two thousand miles, or say only to the South of Spain; and fed there till wanted. And now to that same spot in the south of Spain are thirty similar French artisans, from a French Dumdrudge, in like manner wending; till at length, after infinite effort, the two parties come into actual juxtaposition; and Thirty stands fronting Thirty, each with a gun in his hand. Straightway the word 'Fire' is given; and they blow the souls out of one another; and in place of sixty brisk useful craftsmen, the world has sixty dead carcasses, which it must bury, and anew shed tears for. Had these men any quarrel? Busy as the Devil is, not the smallest; nay, in so wide a Universe, there was even, unconsciously, by commerce, some mutual helpfulness between them. How then? Simpleton! their Governors had fallen out; and instead of shooting one another, had the cunning to make these poor blockheads shoot."

Carlyle is right. That is the truth about modern war. Democracy has appeared on the scene of politics, but it has not fully assumed its rôle. The drama is still played by the old actors of the upper classes, and will be so, until the new company is properly formed and cast for the various parts. Even in France, although the empire is gone, the old ruling classes are still in power. They defer somewhat to the Democracy in home affairs, but in foreign matters they treat it with contemptuous disregard. They carry France into all sorts of adventures for their own benefit. The Empire went to Algeria, and the Republic goes to Tunis. Louis Napoleon sent armies to Mexico, and Jules Ferry sends them to China. The motive is the same in both cases; the French deputies are cajoled and manœuvred in the same way; and the French people are fooled and plundered with the same easy impudence. It requires a Hercules to clean out an Augean stable. When a leader of Gambetta's greatness and force arises again, there may be some hope, if he turns his back on the selfish exploiters of society, sets his face resolutely to the people, and stretches out his hands to them for salvation.

The world's peace will never be secure until the Democracy takes the reins of power into its own hands. Parliaments will be less ready to declare war than Governments. Men will vote against war when

the decision lies with them, who would not vote against their party when hostilities have begun, and it is too late to undo the mischief without overturning the ministry. The formalities of public debate would also allow a pause for reason to assert itself. The first passionate impulse of revenge would have time to subside, and wisdom, justice and humanity would gain a hearing.

At present we are "rushed" into war. The Sovereign has the power of declaring war, and in many cases it is beyond doubt that royalty is largely responsible for the inception and development of international quarrels. Was it not Lord Palmerston who had to threaten the late Prince Consort for intermeddling with the negotiations between England and Russia? And was it not the Court party, as well as the bondholders, that incited Mr. Gladstone to begin military operations in Egypt, in order that the Duke of Connaught, safely sheltered under Lord Wolseley's wing, might earn a little cheap glory and win a few bastard laurels? This is the kind of backstairs influence which our effete monarchy now wields, to our perpetual loss and disgrace. The constitutional power of the Sovereign to declare war is, of course, never exercised without the advice and consent of her responsible ministers; in other words, the Queen no more actually declares war than she actually appoints bishops. The Cabinet is really supreme, and these officials take advantage of a constitutional fiction to carry matters with a high hand. In domestic business they are obliged to consult Parliament before they can move a step; in foreign affairs they act first and consult it afterwards. Even then it is only because they need its endorsement for their acceptances. A vote of censure *may* be moved and *may* be passed upon them, as we all know; but what Ministry fears such a contingency? Earl Beaconsfield did as he pleased until the country flung him from office, and he smiled at Parliamentary votes of censure. Mr. Gladstone was just as little terrified by them. He knew that "the party" would stick to him through thick and thin. They do not like the expense of an election; they trust to the chapter of accidents to pull the Government through its troubles before the fateful day of reckoning; and meanwhile they pacify their consciences by a few timid, ambiguous speeches, and a trimming side-vote of entirely harmless protest.

All that remains to Parliament is the "power of the purse-strings," which is a ghastly sham, for what Government that can defy votes of censure need fear a stoppage of supplies? A few Radicals might challenge a division, and their action might produce a considerable moral effect on the country, but there it would end. They could no more check the Government than a road-stone checks the cart-wheel. There is a jolt, but down comes the wheel again, and steadily revolves its course. The fact is, the "power of the purse-strings" is one of the worst of the many shams of our boasted constitution. It meant something when the Sovereign really did declare war, and solicited money from the people's representatives to carry it on; but it is absolutely meaningless now that the leaders of those very representatives perform that function under a thin disguise.

Before long this question will emerge into the field of practical politics, and become a burning one indeed. It may be true, as Burke said, that "Statesmen are placed on an eminence that they may have a larger horizon than we can possibly command." But the extraordinary growth of the modern press, and the spread of education and intelligence, since Burke's time, have greatly diminished that advantage. The time has gone by for the "confidence trick" in politics. Secret-service money and diplomacy will soon have to go together. Democracy will demand that all its business be transacted in public. It will not permit a handful of politicians at discretion

" To open
The purple testament of bleeding war."

It will insist on that power being vested in the whole nation, through its elected representatives. And such a wise and just change will be one of the best guarantees of peace.

Following Carlyle, Mr. Ruskin has impeached the governing classes in respect to war. In the second letter of *Fors Clavigera*, he styled the upper classes the great Picnic Party, and inquired what they had done for the "lower orders" they lord it over with such serene audacity. "They have," he said, "spent four hundred millions of pounds here in England within the last twenty years—how much in France and Germany I will take some pains to ascertain—and with this initial outlay of capital they have taught the peasants of Europe—to pull each other's hair."

No doubt the upper classes furnish good fighting men, just like the lower classes, for brute courage is common enough, and, as John Bright says, any quantity of it can be got for a shilling a day. Yet Tommy Atkins dies as well as his officer, only he has nothing to do with the war except risking his life, all the direction and all the glory and profit resting with his superiors.

Go through the Peerage and see what an enormous number of military and naval posts are held by its scions. They command our forces, they get the lion's share of pay, they shine in the Gazettes, and they receive all the honors and rewards worth having. Poor Tommy Atkins dies unannaled and unknown, or if he survives, has to content himself with the reflection that virtue is its own reward. His wife and children (if the celibate rule of the army for *privates* allows him those luxuries) are left to semi-starvation or vice or crime, unless they gravitate to the workhouse. Tommy had much better be at home earning an honest living, as he himself generally knows; but he goes abroad to fight the battles of the upper classes because their villainous laws have starved him into the able-bodied citizen's last resource.

Those upper classes, from the Queen to the humblest member of Society (with a capital S), being divorced from honest industry, are naturally predatory and nomadic in character, and they are ever seeking to gratify their tastes in person or by proxy. They inherit from Feudal times the prejudice in favor of fighting men. They love Mili-

tarism and hate Industrialism, which has been supplanting it for centuries and will finally extinguish it. A salient, and in some respects a superior type of them, was the late Colonel Burnaby. This "dashing" fellow slipped off to the Soudan without leave and fought there without a commission. He had no more business with our troops than he most perfect stranger. He was driven there solely by his love of fighting. His motives were no more respectable than a tiger's, and he died at last appropriately stuck like a pig. One of his ambitions was to enter Parliament, where the Fighting Interest is already represented by a hundred and sixty-eight members. Add to this that two hundred and seventy-two members are connected with the Peerage by birth or marriage, and you will easily understand how England is so frequently pushed into war. Remember too that Her Majesty has a passion for soldiers, and that when she breaks the monotony of her seclusion, it is usually to review her troops or decorate a few "heroes" who have distinguished themselves on the battle-field.

Mr. Bright once said that without declaring all wars unjustifiable, he would like to see a single war justified. It was a request very difficult to comply with. Every war we enter upon is perfectly righteous, but somehow the historian afterwards writes them all down as crimes or mistakes. Self-defence is a natural instinct; it never can be eradicated, and it never should. But it implies an aggressor; and consequently all justification of war on the one side only serves to heighten its guiltiness on the other. A great conqueror is only another name for a great criminal. Nature quietly buries and conceals every trace of his ravages. Would that the world could as soon forget him, or remember him only to condemn.

Priests may consecrate our banners, without regard to the merits of the side on which they are ranged, or the awful scenes over which they float; every regiment may carry its chaplain for ghostly succor; and the Church may solicit God's blessing on every bloody enterprise we engage in. But the teachers of religion cannot decree right and wrong, nor have they any magic to transform crime into virtue. "The primal duties shine aloft like stars" beyond the reach of chance and change, however momentarily obscured by clouds of incense from a thousand altars. And if the ministers of the Prince of Peace cannot see the monstrous wickedness of war, there happily remains enough instinctive justice and mercy in the breasts of heretics to brand it as a capital crime against humanity.

Alas! how few realise the horror of war. The Romance of War is more easily imagined—the glowing uniforms, the shining arms, the prancing steeds, the martial music, and heroes contending for glory! And pulses thrill on reading feats of arms, and blood glows at the record of a "splendid charge." But, as Dickens wrote—

"When the 'splendid charge' has done its work, and passed by, there will be found a sight very much like the scene of a frightful railway accident. There will be the full complement of backs broken in two; of arms twisted wholly off; of men impaled upon their own bayonets; of legs smashed up

like bits of firewood ; of heads sliced open like apples ; of other heads crunched into soft jelly by the iron hoofs of horses ; of faces trampled out of all likeness to anything human. That is what skulks behind a 'splendid charge.'

Now let us turn from the graphic novelist to the experienced journalist. This is what Dr. Russell, the famous *Times* war correspondent, wrote from the battlefield of Sedan :—

"Let your readers fancy masses of colored rags glued together with blood and brains, and pinned into strange shapes by fragments of bones. Let them conceive men's bodies without heads, legs without bodies, heaps of human entrails attached to red and blue cloth, and disembowelled corpses in uniform, bodies lying about in all attitudes with skulls shattered, faces blown off, hips smashed, bones, flesh and gay clothing all pounded together as if brayed in a mortar, extending for miles . . . and then they cannot, with the most vivid imagination, come up to the sickening reality of that butchery."

O the glorious Romance of War ! Listen. Thirty thousand skeletons of Russian and Turkish soldiers were shipped to England in 1881 *as manure!*

Well does Byron sing of war :

"Lo ! where the giant on the mountain stands,
His blood-red tresses deep'ning in the sun,
With death-shot glowing in his fiery hands,
And eye that scorcheth all it glares upon ;
Restless it rolls, now fixed, and now anon
Flashing afar,—and at his iron feet
Destruction cowers, to mark what deeds are done."

The poet's image is daring, yet how true ! Let our own brutalities in the Soudan witness. The adult male population of whole tribes slaughtered ; women amongst the dead, and boys grasping a spear ; wives and maidens ravished by our Turkish auxiliaries ; peaceful villages burnt to the ground because the inhabitants did not wait to welcome us ; miles of desert sand cemented with blood and strewn with corpses, and thousands of desert vultures screaming joyously at their unwonted feast.

War is just in self-defence, or in defence of a neighbor unjustly attacked. We are not of those who believe in the refusal of aid between nations in all circumstances. The sword may be, for some time yet, as necessary as the lancet, but it should never be drawn except against the enemies of mankind. "The blood of man," said Burke, "should never be shed but to redeem the blood of man. It is well shed for our friends, for our country, for our kind. The rest is vanity ; the rest is crime."

When any of these great duties call us we should be ready to defend them ; and if ever England were menaced by a brutal invader, the most peaceful citizen might well wish her to be animated by the same brave spirit that whipped the pride of the Armada and drove the hectoring Dutch fleets from the English seas. Nay, to defend the nation's liberties

in the dark hour of extreme peril, one might hope that her sons would make ramparts of their bodies, and if they could not make a pact with victory, make a pact with death; that her daughters would gladly resign their dearest in the spirit of the Spartan mothers of old; and that the very children might, like Hannibal, be dedicated to a righteous revenge.

We are then far from loving peace at any price. But there is little need to denounce such an impossible doctrine. It is not that way our danger lies. Our fighting instincts, inherited from savage ancestors, are too strong for us to submit tamely to aggression, even if the law of self-preservation did not prompt us to defend our own.

National defence was not the origin of our modern standing armies. They are legacies from Feudalism. The retainers of feudal nobles became the king's soldiers as the power of the crown strengthened over its vassals. Disguise it how you will, the institution of standing armies still savors of its origin. The military forces of Europe are the instruments of tyranny and the support of privilege. During the last fifty years they have been as often employed in suppressing liberty at home as in fighting the foreigner abroad. Perhaps England and Switzerland are the only exceptions to this rule. The notion that armies are the servants of the *people* is extremely recent. Fighting for his *king* was the soldier's recognised vocation. That spirit still half animates our British troops, as it wholly animates the troops of Russia. In Germany the idea of the fatherland may have overshadowed that of the emperor; but little more than a century ago Frederick the Great's armies fought at his absolute command; and Prussia, like every other German state, was ruled on the same patriarchal principle. Democracy is very recent, and has had no time to mould its own institutions. Those who are not conversant with history do not understand that the institutions which exist are relics of monarchy. And of these the worst is a standing army.

This fact has some bearing on the morality of a soldier's profession. A French Radical said the other day, in the epigrammatic way of his nation, that the business of an army is to defend the frontier. An admirable sentiment! But that is not the soldier's view. He goes with cheerful alacrity wherever he is sent, and if he is ordered to the other side of the globe he feels that brisk stirring of the blood which accompanies novel adventures. French soldiers, drafted from the citizen army of a Republic where the conscription is universal, set sail without misgivings for Algeria, Tunis, Madagascar or China. "Theirs not to reason why," as our Poet Laureate sings; "theirs but to do or die." Does not all this show that Democracy has had but little if any effect upon the army? When men enter it they become possessed by its spirit. And that spirit is military, authoritative, monarchical.

The English army is composed of volunteers, and is in a sense mercenary. And what are the motives that impel men to join it? "Generally," says Bacon, "all warlike people are a little idle, and love danger better than travail." The description applies admirably to our upper classes who supply the army with officers, and no doubt it fits some of the lower classes who supply it with privates. For the rest, men enter

the army as they engage in other professions, for a living ; and after a certain allowance for ties of blood, they care as little on which side they fight as a lawyer cares on which side he pleads. It is hardly fair to define a soldier as a man who engages to kill anybody for a shilling a day, for this loses sight of the fact that he undertakes to be killed as well as to kill for that sum. But the definition, although not accurate, contains a dreadful element of truth. It would be unfair to visit on the individual soldier the whole odium of the institution to which he belongs. True, and the hangman is scarcely responsible for capital punishment ; yet we should shrink from his company at our tables. Perhaps the wisest plan is to hate the institution and pity its members.

Mr. Ruskin many years ago justified the soldier's trade, or at least exalted it :—

“ Philosophically, it does not, at first sight, appear reasonable (many writers have endeavored to prove it unreasonable) that a peaceable and rational person, whose trade is buying and selling, should be held in less honor than an unpeaceable and often irrational person, whose trade is slaying. Nevertheless, the consent of mankind has always, in spite of the philosophers, given precedence to the soldier. *And this is right.* For the soldier's trade verily and essentially, is not slaying, but being slain. This without well knowing its own meaning, the world honors it for. A bravo's trade is slaying ; but the world has never respected bravos more than merchants : the reason it honors the soldier is, because he holds his life at the service of the State. Reckless he may be—fond of pleasure or of adventure—all kinds of bye-motives and mean impulses may have determined the choice of his profession, and may affect (to all appearance exclusively) his daily conduct in it ; but our estimate of him is based on this ultimate fact—of which we are well assured—that put him in a fortress breach, with all the pleasures of the world behind him, and only death and his duty in front of him, he will keep his face to the front ; and he knows that this choice may be put to him at any moment, and has beforehand taken his part—virtually takes such part continually—does, in reality die daily.”

The element of truth in Ruskin's eloquent defence of the soldier we have already acknowledged ; the rest we deem fanciful and mistaken. Miners and colliers risk their lives daily, but who calls them heroes ? Policemen often carry their lives in their hands, but who worships them ? Sailors incur on the average greater danger than soldiers, but who chants their praises ? The fact is, they have no share in the pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war. It is our fighting instincts that throw a glamor round the soldier. Our intellects approve industry, but our inherited feelings consecrate militarism. In the same way, long after the Jews had settled down to agriculture, they instinctively adored the nomadic character, and all their legendary heroes came from the pastoral state.

A soldier holds not only his life, but his conscience, at the service of the State. Ruskin does not notice that. But, as civilisation advances and morality refines, the fact will become more obvious. Hosea Biglow is not so eloquent as the author of “ Unto this Last,” yet he utters many a sound truth in quaint language.

“Ef you take a sword and dror it,
 An’ go stick a feller thru,
 Guv’mment ain’t to answer for it,
 God’ll send the bill to you.”

What does Ruskin say to that? We fancy it would grate harsh truth through his most melodious eloquence.

Our inherited fighting instincts account also for the applause with which we greet the upper classes when they reward successful generals at our expense. Sir Beauchamp Seymour was made a lord for bombarding Alexandria, and received a present of £25,000. Lord Wolseley had a grant of £25,000 for the Ashantee war, the only remaining trophy of which is King Coffee’s umbrella; and another £30,000 for his Egyptian victories. Oh for another Swift to satirise this monstrous absurdity! In the sixteenth number of his *Examiner*, that splendid wit compared the rewards, amounting to over half a million, heaped on Marlborough, with the reward given to “a victorious general of Rome, in the height of that Empire.” Nearly a thousand pounds might have been spent on a triumphal arch, a sacrificial bull, and other features of public celebration in honor of the general; but the only *thing* he actually received was a crown of laurel worth two-pence, and perhaps an embroidered robe. The laurels of a modern general are more costly. He fights for solid pudding, not for empty praise.

Before we leave the morality of war let us print the last century’s butcher’s bill. It is an edifying document:

YEARS	LOSS OF MEN.
1793 to 1815 ... England and France	1,900,000
1828 ... Russia and Turkey	120,000
1830 to 1840 ... Spain and Portugal	160,000
1830 to 1847 ... France and Algeria	110,000
1848 ... Civil Strife in Europe	60,000
1854 to 1856 ... Crimean War	784,000
1859 ... Franco-Austrian War	63,000
1863 to 1865 ... American Civil War	800,000
1866 ... Austro-Prussian War	51,000
” ... France and Mexico	65,000
1864 to 1870 ... Brazil and Paraguay	330,000
1870 to 1871 ... Franco-German War	290,000
1876 to 1877 ... Russo-Turkish War	180,000
Total ...	<u>4,913,000</u>

This prodigious slaughter-bill does not include those killed in the various English and French expeditions. M. Beaulieu estimates the French losses alone in these at 65,000. *Over five millions of men* sacrificed to the Moloch of War in less than a century! Imagination shrinks appalled. What a hecatomb of victims to “low ambition and the pride of kings.”

The wickedness of war is only exceeded by its folly. Of the Crimean War, Mr. Kinglake says that "it brought to the grave a million of workmen and soldiers, and consumed a pitiless share of the wealth which man's labor had stored up as the means of life." Yet what advantage did it bring anyone? The treaty of peace which closed it has been torn to shreds; every provision in it is a dead letter. What a glorious result after sacrificing a million lives and wasting three hundred and forty millions of money! The myriad graves in the Crimea are tenanted by murdered victims of *la haute politique*, and the churchyard of Sebastopol is as great a monument of criminal folly as the pyramid of skulls erected by a Tamerlane or an Attila.

What should we think of a man in private life who whipped out a sword every time he quarreled, and tried to cut his opponent's throat? He would soon be relegated to the prison or the asylum. What, also, do we think of a man who sticks to his opinion, however rash it may be, and refuses to abandon it because he has once taken it up—as though his infallibility were the chief thing in the universe, to which all else must be subordinated; and who would sooner be ruined than confess to a mistake? We consider him a dolt, a mule, a vain idiot. And if he refuses to submit his differences with others to friendly or legal adjudication, we regard him as still worse; for we naturally think with Grotius that "the party who refuses to accept arbitration may justly be suspected of bad faith."

Now, what peculiar logic is there that can render the folly of an individual wisdom in a nation, or transform private wickedness into a national virtue? We have not the slightest doubt that quarrels between nations will eventually be settled as quarrels between individuals are settled now, by appeal to an acknowledged tribunal. That is the certain tendency of our age. Even Prince Bismarck, the man of blood and iron, assists it by playing the part of "the honest broker."

The Geneva Arbitration of 1872 on the "Alabama" dispute was the inauguration of a new era. The arbitrators' award mulcted England in £3,000,000, but that sum is trivial to what the dispute might have cost us had it rankled into a war. Since then no less than sixteen international disputes have been settled in the same way.

Napoleon himself, in the solitude of St. Helena, dreamed of "the application to the great European family of an institution like the American Congress, or that of the Amphictyon in Greece"; and he asserted that "this agglomeration of European peoples must arrive, sooner or later, by the mere force of events." How many eminent men have since expressed the same view. Victor Hugo has uttered the right great word "The United States of Europe." A recognised international tribunal, a high court of nations, would allow of a great reduction in the armies of Europe. Public opinion would restrain the fractious; or as Tennyson says, "then the common sense of most would hold a fretful realm in awe." Even the most selfish State, in its moment of intensest excitement, would shrink from violating international law if the outrage brought upon it swift punishment by the armed comity of Europe. Gradually, with the cessation of war and the growth of peaceful senti-

ments, Europe would become ashamed of its barbarous past; and we might reasonably hope that the benign process would continue,

“ Till the war-drums throbbled no longer, and the battle-flags were furled
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.”

We promised to say more on the economical aspects of war. Take the following (1885) list of European States, with the cost of their armies and navies, and the interest on their national debts:—

Country.	Army and Navy.	Interest on National Debt.
Austria	£13,400,000	£21,400,000
Belgium... ..	1,900,000	4,100,000
Denmark	1,000,000	500,000
France	35,500,000	47,000,000
Germany	18,200,000	13,400,000
Great Britain ...	28,900,000	30,000,000
Greece	1,000,000	875,000
Holland	2,700,000	2,700,000
Italy	19,000,000	20,000,000
Norway	450,000	270,000
Portugal	1,400,000	2,900,000
Roumania	1,100,000	2,000,000
Russia	33,000,000	28,500,000
Servia	350,000	310,000
Spain	7,500,000	10,750,000
Sweden	1,200,000	600,000
Switzerland ...	700,000	78,000
Turkey	4,500,000	12,330,000
	£171,800,000	£197,713,000

Here is a grand total of *three hundred and seventy millions* spent every year on war preparations and on account of past wars.

Let it also be noted that the annual war-bill of nearly every country goes on *increasing*. England is no exception. Mr. Gladstone started well when he took the reins from Earl Beaconsfield, but his military and naval expenditure went up year by year, until his twenty-six millions grew to thirty, to say nothing of the £9,451,000 vote of credit he obtained to put him in a position to play the game of brag with his old friend the Czar of Russia.

Now take the cost of a few great wars during the last thirty years :

Crimean War	£340,000,000
Italian War (1859)	60,000,000
American Civil War*	1,400,000,000
Austro-Prussian War	66,000,000
France-Prussian War	500,000,000
Russo-Turkish War	210,000,000
Zulu and Afghan Wars	30,000,000
	£2,606,000,000

* This was the cost to the Northern States alone. The cost to the Southern States would probably bring the total bill up to £2,000,000,000.

This would allow £2 for every man, woman and child on the globe. It would make two railways round the earth at the rate of £50,000 a mile. It would provide every adult male in Europe with a freehold farm of 100 acres in the United States.

During the present century England alone has spent on her army and navy, and the interest of her national debt, *nearly six thousand millions*. A third of that sum would buy up her whole soil from the landlords, restore it to the people, and settle the Land Question for ever. Out of every pound of taxes we now pay, 16s. 1½d. goes for War, War Debt, or preparation for War, and only 3s. 10½d. for all other purposes. And as the chief part of our national income is raised by indirect taxation, it follows that the main burden of war falls upon the shoulders of the PEOPLE.

Compare with the colossal sum we spend on War the paltry amount we spend on Education, and then ask whether we are not afflicted with insanity. Ruskin once inquired what was the proper view of a rich householder who expended ten pounds a year on his library and five hundred on policemen to guard his shutters. Such a householder is Christian Europe.

England's National Debt is over *seven hundred millions*, and nearly every penny of it has been contracted by our class-government since the "glorious revolution" of 1688, solely for the purpose of maintaining "the balance of power" in Europe, which simply meant interfering with other people's business, or sharing in their quarrels. We began, at the accession of William III., with a paltry debt of £664,264; but small as the sum was, it acted like a vital germ, from which was developed a huge system of financial corruption. When the taxes of the country were once pledged, it was easy to draw further drafts on posterity for the conduct of enterprises that would never have been undertaken if their expenses had to be borne at the time. Accordingly, we find that, at the accession of Queen Anne, the Debt amounted to £12,767,225. Marlborough's campaigns nearly trebled it, for at the accession of George I. it had increased to £36,175,460. Under that imported monarch it rose to £52,523,023; and under his successor to £102,014,018. Then came George III., who was for a long while mad and always blind; and under his perverse and foolish rule, the Tory government involved us in a wanton war with our brethren in America, and afterwards in a mad war with the French Republic. The result was that when George III. departed to whatever place is reserved for his like, the Debt amounted to the prodigious sum of £834,900,960.

At this moment the male population of England, that is, every actual or potential head of a family, is indebted £85 4s. 8d. to the national bondholders, because preceding governments, without obtaining or soliciting the people's consent, went fighting at large in Europe and America, wherever an opportunity for a scrimmage presented itself.

This National Debt handicaps us with an initial burden of over twenty-two millions a year in the shape of interest. Our fathers danced to a sorry tune, and we have to pay the exorbitant piper. And as

most of our taxation is raised *indirectly*, it follows that this yearly interest is a perennial burden on our national industry. During the present century, to go back no farther, we have paid *in interest alone* the terrific sum of £2,310,735,582. Surely a visitor from a distant planet (say Voltaire's Saturnian) on learning these facts, would suppose that he had lighted on a race of madmen.

Who can point to a single particle of good which our lavish expenditure on war and warlike preparations has conferred on any human being, except generals, army contractors, and bondholders? When the little boy, in Southey's poem, wants to know what the battle of Blenheim was all about, and what benefit resulted from the rival armies leaving their empty skulls as memorials to future ages, old Kaspar is nonplussed.

"I really cannot tell," said he,
"But 'twas a glorious victory."

A *glorious* victory! Yes, the adjective is thrown over it to hide the misery and folly. "Glory" is the bait on the despot's hook; the gilded fetter on a strutting slave; the plume in the helm of a mailed freebooter. True and lasting glory is only won by the victories of peace. "These are matters so arduous," as Milton told Cromwell, "that in comparison of them the perils of war are but the sports of children."

People still talk of "glory," but wherein consists the true greatness of England? In the noble language of Landor—

"The strength of England lies not in armaments and invasions; it lies in the omnipresence of her industry, and in the vivifying energies of her high civilisation. There are provinces she cannot grasp; there are islands she cannot hold fast; but there is neither island nor province, there is neither kingdom nor continent, which she could not draw to her side and fix there everlastingly, by saying the magic words *Be Free*. Every land wherein she favors the sentiments of freedom, every land wherein she forbids them to be stifled, is her own; a true ally, a willing tributary, an inseparable friend. Principles hold those together whom power would only alienate."

Would that the Jingoës, the halting Liberals, and the half-hearted Radicals meditated this profound scripture. We should then be spared such irredeemable crimes as our invasion of the Soudan by a professedly Liberal government, and the wholesale butchery of men who, in the Premier's own language, were "rightly struggling to be free." There are at present only two countries in Europe that cherish a constant friendship for England. One is Greece, whom we aided in her gallant struggle for emancipation; the other is Italy, who remembers our sympathy when she revolted against the Austrian yoke.

Meanwhile, let it be noticed that our governing classes always keep a bogey to frighten us with. Long ago it was France; now it is Russia. Earl Beaconsfield traded on that bogey, and Mr. Gladstone followed suit; in fact, he nearly involved us in a war with Russia through a squabble over an Afghan outpost. England is perpetually warned against the stealthy advances of "Russian aggrandisement." But are not our shocked feelings a little amusing? Russian conquests during

the last hundred and thirty years amount to 1,642,000 square miles, with a meagre population of 17,135,000 ; while England's conquests in the same period amount to 2,650,000 square miles, with 250,000,000 people. Our Jingoës appear to think that England may steal sheep, but Russia must not catch a rabbit.

All over Europe the same game is played. Peoples are filled by their rulers with a blind and passionate hatred of each other. Austria glares at Russia, and Russia at Austria. France and Germany vie with each other in military organisation, waiting with feverish blood and panting breath for the next death-wrestle. Italy prepares herself to strike in the combat as it suits her interest. And the smaller States, like Switzerland and Belgium, tremble lest their neutrality should be violated in the bloody strife. Christendom is armed to the teeth ; and as Sir Henry Maine too truthfully observes, "During the last quarter of a century, a great part, perhaps the greatest part, of the inventive faculties of mankind has been given to the arts of destruction." The workman in the factory and the peasant in the field know that they may at any moment be summoned from their peaceful avocations by the trumpet of battle. They know also that war has become more and more scientific, that horrid explosives have made it more ghastly, and that they would be marshalled for hideous slaughter, where each man sees the comrade fall at his side but not the enemy who strikes him dead. Some of them who sicken at the prospect, not with coward fears but with manly disgust, might almost cry with Shakespeare's Northumberland :

Let heaven kiss earth ! Now let not Nature's hand
Keep the wild flood confined ! Let order die !
And let this world no longer be a stage
To feed Contention in a lingering act ;
But let one spirit of the first-born Cain
Reign in all bosoms, that, each heart being set
On bloody courses, the rude scene may end,
And darkness be the burier of the dead !

Europe is the modern Damocles. The ancient bearer of that name envied the wealth of Dionysius of Sicily, who jestingly gave him a taste of royal pleasures. Damocles ascended the throne and gazed admiringly on the wealth and splendor around him. But looking up, he perceived a sword hanging over his head by a single hair. The sight so terrified him that he begged to be removed from his position. Europe likewise sits at its feast of life, but the fatal weapon suspended overhead mars its felicity. Serpents twine in the dance, arms clash in the song, the meats have a strange savor, there is a demoniac sparkle in the wine, and a poisonous bitterness in the dregs of the cup. All is darkened by the Shadow of the Sword.