

amusing. It is possible to feel, however, that the fun in the long account of Tom Sawyer's artificial imitation of escapes from prison is somewhat forced; everywhere simplicity is a good rule, and while the account of the Southern *vendetta* is a masterpiece, the caricature of books of adventure leaves us cold. In one we have a bit of life; in the other Mark Twain is demolishing something that has no place in the book.

Yet the story is capital reading, and the reason of its great superiority to "Tom Sawyer" is that it is, for the most part, a consistent whole. If Mark Twain would follow his hero through manhood, he would condense a side of American life that, in a few years, will have to be delved out of newspapers, government reports, county histories, and misleading traditions by unsympathetic sociologists.

T. S. Perry.

Our National Defenses.

A SUGGESTION.

It has been generally assumed that we derive immunity from foreign attack, from:

First, our remoteness from any probable enemy;

Second, the habitually peaceful nature of our relations with other powers;

Third, our enormous resources, our acknowledged fertility of invention, and our huge population, leavened with the soldiers and traditions of the civil war.

Taking these in order, the first assumption is speedily disposed of.

We were distant from Europe half a century ago. To-day we are separated from it by a journey of a week; no longer time than would ordinarily be consumed by an army in marching from New York to Albany. In 1776 the citizens of the latter place could hardly have felt secure from attack because remote from the British force at New York. Why, then, the people of the country in general and the citizens of our commercial metropolis in particular should now rely upon a mere geographical bulwark is a mystery past finding out. They do not realize that the time spent in breaking off diplomatic relations and in reaching the actual declaration of war (which, by the way, usually follows hostilities) would be utilized in preparing a fleet of ocean greyhounds as transports that, under cover of iron-clads we are powerless to resist, could each land her regiment of men on any point of our feeble coast. They do not know that England, at least, has the transport fittings for scores of merchant steamers constantly on hand and that but a few days are needed to erect them on board. Nor do they know that every war office in Europe contains accurate plans of our harbors and alleged fortifications, complete statistics of our actual force and the number of troops, both regular and militia, which could be massed at any place in a given time, the extent and condition of our moribund floating defense, together with well-matured plans of an offensive campaign on our very soil.

Yet these gentlemen accumulate their millions, pay their taxes, and calmly look on while money that ought to be spent in insuring protection against a foe is deliberately thrown away.

To-day Spain and France reach across the Atlantic to bases of attack in Cuba and Martinique; Germany's colonial aspirations may make her a near neighbor; while England lies along our northern and lake fron-

tier, and has threatening coigns of vantage at our very door, in Halifax, Bermuda, and Nassau.

Do our Western citizens appreciate the facts that Chili could with impunity pounce on San Francisco, that at Vancouver England is building the largest dock-yard on the continent, that by the Welland Canal she could turn a fleet of gun-boats loose on Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago, or that we possess absolutely no navigable water-way between the ocean and the great lakes, upon which we are forbidden by treaty to keep more than one armed vessel?

It is idle to trust to the negative defense of distance; we are, to-day, dangerously near the coasts of Europe.

Our international relations have always been shaped with a view to peace. We have never sought a quarrel in the past, and I hope we shall never seek one in the future.

I am not sure, however, that it is not well, once in a while, to assert ourselves as standing on a right, because it *is* right, and as prepared to maintain it at any cost. Until human nature changes, the respect which the right would secure in the eyes of the world is and will be largely measured by the force with which it is backed.

A ship-owner, known to all the commercial world, tells me that he never sends his ships on a foreign cruise under the American flag. He tried the experiment faithfully for a time, but found that they were subjected to so many petty annoyances and trivial expenses at the hands of officials who care nothing for America's enormous strength at home (to them a vague tradition, not embodied in the tangible shape of an ever-ready war vessel), that, in despair, he was forced to secure them British colors and a British registry. Now they never fail to receive civility and attention, because it is known that any offense will be followed by an immediate demand for explanation, apology, or indemnity, the demand being supported by the presence of a British man-of-war.

Would this have been necessary in the days when the United States, unaided by European powers, resisted the exactions of the Barbary States, and suppressed the piracy which had levied toll on all Christendom?

Or would it have occurred in 1859, when the American flag was as common on the seas as it is now rare, and when our navy, though small in numbers, contained, class for class, the finest ships in the world?

Without discussing the merits of the case, let me ask whether Prince Bismarck would have ventured to intercept and return to the British House of Commons a resolution of sympathy addressed to the Reichstag?

Granted that our own behavior on a well-known occasion was in the highest degree dignified, it is humiliating to confess that no other course could have been open to us even had the chancellor's ill-breeding committed his country to a positive affront directed against the whole American people.

Those who give the subject thought cannot fail to recognize the influence which the Panama Canal, or any other water communication between the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans, must exert upon our international relations. If England, under the peace-loving rule of Mr. Gladstone, was forced to sacrifice life and treasure in preserving the integrity of the Suez Canal (for, after all said and done, there lies the gist of prolonged British intervention in Egypt), can the United

States hope to shirk the obligation of maintaining the neutrality of that part of her water-front which in the near future shall stretch across the great American Isthmus?

We are living in a fool's paradise. The rude awakening must come. Already we have been longer at peace than is our wont. It behooves us to make ready, so that if called upon to stand up for justice and right, we shall respond like men, and not hang our heads like cowards, buying a servile peace with hard dollars.

No, we cannot trust to the even tenor of our diplomatic relations to escape troubles, at least until the millennium comes.

It is taken for granted that in some mysterious, if not providential, manner we shall be able to raise and equip armies, forge guns, build forts, and launch iron-clads.

Let us not be deceived. Matters have changed since 1861.

Although more is exacted of him now than then, the foot-soldier is soon manufactured; the cavalryman less speedily; field artillery slowly, while cannon fit to defend our harbors cannot be made in very many months. There is hardly a power, European or South American, with which we might be embroiled, that could not send here one or more armored ships whose sides would shed our puny projectiles as easily as they would peas. Guns which they would have cause to dread take over a twelvemonth in building, while modern ships are years on the stocks.

To construct guns of to-day, vastly more is needed than an iron furnace and a casting-pit. Plant is demanded for the production of steel of suitable texture and, in adequate masses, hydraulic presses or heavy steam-hammers for shaping it (one of a hundred tons would be required for some pieces, and the whole country contains none heavier than seventeen tons), etc., etc.—a host of appliances which simply *do not exist* on this side of the Atlantic.

Our fertility of resource is phenomenal, but we cannot construct formidable guns as pins and screws are made, nor can effective ships be built as gun-boats were built during the war of secession, in ninety days; yet upon guns, ashore in forts and afloat in armored ships, will the issue of the next conflict depend.

Thanks to the tremendous development of implements of war, the fate of a campaign is now decided almost at its outset. If to-day we neglect our duty to ourselves, we must expect to pay dearly when the day of reckoning comes. Money judiciously spent at present will be but a small premium to pay for security, and will save itself a thousand-fold.

I am not urging such colossal armaments as have crippled three European states financially. Ours is not a military bully among the nations. I only plead for the lock and bolt with which every man provides his house and the revolver with which he purposes defending his family and his household goods when the thief tries to break in.

It is unnecessary to bring proofs as to the condition of our defenses. Every one knows that our forts are obsolete in design and useless in the few cases where money has been forthcoming for their maintenance; that we have no proper guns ashore or afloat, no torpedo boats, and no ships. Surely a lower ebb is out of the question. Let us hope the tide will turn ere long.

In providing a remedy where everything is lacking, it is hard to say which want is most pressing. It would appear, however, as if the fortifications were in the least hopeful condition.

In this respect I speak with much diffidence, but my observation and reading impel me to believe that for ordinary sites properly designed earthworks afford ample protection.* If their walls are not less than from thirty to forty feet thick, stand fifty feet or more above the water's edge (the more the better), and have high parapet crests, then the ship may expend all the ammunition she can carry without much hope of destroying their defensive integrity. Of course in certain places, armored forts will be indispensable. Types of these are without end: casemates, turrets, cupolas, disappearing guns, etc., etc., a real embarrassment of riches.

The majority of our forts will, it may be assumed, be earthworks, and neither complex nor costly. But forts do not consist of mounds of earth alone. They must be armed with the best guns obtainable if they are to have the breath of life. And the best guns will involve a host of adequate appliances in the shape of approved gun-carriages, shot-lifts, loading machinery, etc., that must be seen to be realized. Here true economy lies in the direction of a wise liberality. As the manufacture of the largest guns (if made of American metal, a consummation devoutly to be wished for) could hardly begin within two years were the word given to-day, longer delay is simply suicidal.

Stationary torpedoes will be needed to keep an enemy from pushing by, but torpedoes are passive in their nature and limited in their range. By themselves they are valueless. They could not, for example, prevent a ship from approaching Coney Island and tossing her shell over into New York. Moreover, I doubt whether we have on hand enough cables and cases to control the channels past Sandy Hook alone.

If any one element of coast defense stands approved by more universal acceptance abroad than another without having been subjected to the crucial test of war, it is the fast torpedo boat. While not sharing personally the general belief that its attack is neither to be repelled nor avoided, I am strongly of opinion that herein the defense may find a very deadly and indispensable weapon. The Germans, who treat military subjects from a purely business stand-point, are creating a torpedo navy of one hundred and fifty boats for their short stretch of coast. And we—have absolutely nothing.

Given forts and torpedoes of the best kinds, they must be supplemented by mobile floating batteries, to act as scouts and skirmishers, undertaking hostile operations in conjunction with shore batteries, reinforcing a hardly pressed point, or covering the weak places between strong strategic centers; in other words, fortifications and ships, both in design and numbers, must be built with a view to effective coöperation.

The proper composition and disposition of our joint land and sea defenses form a question not yet solved—scarcely even thought of. Yet none is of more vital importance to-day. It cannot be decided by one man,

* The question has been discussed *à propos* of the bombardment of Alexandria in a public document accessible to all interested in the technical details.

for it extends beyond the range of a single mind. The naval officer is apt to exaggerate the weight of his branch of the profession of arms, while the soldier in turn looks upon his share in the task as paramount. The truth probably lies between these extremes. Each may, therefore, properly bring his quota of experience to the common fund of knowledge, but neither is fitted to act as the final judge, awarding to every element its due place and value.

Until the subject of our necessities is treated in a broad, catholic manner, and authoritatively revealed in all its shocking magnitude, public opinion must remain vague and ineffectual, through lack of a well-defined end in view. Therefore, besides the immediate establishment of the gun-factories recommended by the "Gun Foundry Board," I urge, as of pressing moment, the forming, under act of Congress, of a commission to inquire into our wants and to suggest the remedy. This commission should be composed of distinguished citizens and officers of the army and navy. To such a board the nation would look for guidance out of its perils, nor would it look in vain.

We may buy peace as butter and cheese are bought, or we may preserve it through being able and ready to fight for it. The choice lies with the people. They shall decide.*

C. F. Goodrich,
Lieutenant-Commander U. S. N.

General Sam Houston: A Correction.

CERTAIN statements of mine concerning what is called the archives war in Texas, which appeared in an article entitled "General Sam Houston" (*THE CENTURY* for August, 1884), having been challenged, I desire as a matter of justice to myself, to *THE CENTURY*, and to those who took part in the so-called war, to make a correction.

I was forced to draw my material from various sources, and I find to my regret that I have allowed some errors to creep into my statements. I should have given my authority or else have sought to verify the newspaper story upon which some of them were founded.

The statement I desire to correct, being the only one to which my attention has been called, may be found on

* Since the above was written I have read a British War-office pamphlet on "The Protection of Heavy Guns for Coast Defense," issued by General Sir Andrew Clarke, Royal Engineers, Inspector General of Fortifications. In his preface Sir Andrew says:

"In my opinion it is undesirable in the highest interests of the country that questions of defense should be dealt with as the special prerogative of a handful of officers in a single office, and I strongly hold that the more minds are brought to bear upon them the better. It is, I consider, of special importance that naval and artillery officers should have an opportunity of hearing and expressing opinions upon matters relating to coast defense. These views cannot fail to act as a wholesome corrective to those of engineers. The opinions advanced in this paper may not, therefore, receive universal acceptance. They are merely put forward as suggestions open to discussion and criticism."

I hope, sincerely, that so laudable an example of the sinking of personal ambitions and class jealousies for the good of the country, may be followed on this side of the Atlantic, and be applied to the larger problem awaiting our solution.

page 503 (*AUGUST CENTURY*), and refers to an attempt made by President Houston to remove the state archives from Austin, where they were in danger from the constant incursions of the Mexicans and Indians, to a place of safety in the temporary capital; also to a duel between a certain Colonel Morton and a scout called Deaf Smith. I gleaned the details of these events from a letter appearing in a leading New York paper purporting to have been written from Austin, Texas.

To be brief, no such man as Morton lived about Austin at that time, and no such duel took place. Deaf Smith had been dead at the date given for five years. The story is a fabrication of a well-known spinner of historical yarns of those days, Judge A. W. Arrington, of Texas. Early in March, 1842, General Vasquez at the head of twelve hundred Mexicans, sacked San Antonio. The citizens of Austin and the vicinity armed for resistance. The President, with the heads of departments, rode out of the place. The seat of government was removed from Austin to Houston, and afterward to Washington on the Brazos. Certain of the public records had been taken away, but a large portion still remained in Austin.

In a few weeks the citizens of Austin returned, and finding their town, which they looked upon as the legal capital, almost deserted, organized themselves into committees to see to it that no further removal of public records took place. During the unsettled and precarious condition of the country in the summer and fall of 1842, President Houston made several attempts to obtain the archives by persuasion, but failed. In December of the same year, after new perils from the Mexicans under General Wool, Houston sent Captain Thomas Smith (confounded with Deaf Smith in Arrington's story) and Captain Chandler to proceed to Austin and remove the papers of the Land Office. The attempt came very near proving successful; the archives were packed and loaded on wagons, ready for removal, before the citizens took in the situation and rallied in sufficient force to resist the measure. A small cannon was trained and fired upon the party at the Land Office, but Captain Smith, protected in the rear by the building, began his march toward Brushy Creek. The citizens followed, continually strengthened by accessions, and compelled the restoration of the archives. Captain Smith's posse, under plea of going to the creek to water their horses, quietly escaped, and the archives remained in Austin until annexation restored the whole government to that place. For a time bitter animosities existed, till annexation left them in the rear.

I am indebted to Judge Joseph Lee, of Austin, and Hon. John Henry Brown, of Dallas, actors in these events, for the account here presented, the facts having come to my knowledge since the *AUGUST CENTURY* was issued.

This correction is intended to be as frank as it is full.

Alexander Hynds.

DANDRIDGE, TENN., December 10, 1884.