

weave together certain lines which, though not entirely suited to the John Brown music, were yet capable of being sung to it. I lay still in the dark room, line after line shaping itself in my mind, and verse after verse. When I had thought out the last of these, I felt that I must make an effort to place them beyond the danger of being effaced by a morning nap. I sprang out of bed and groped about in the dim twilight to find a bit of paper and the stump of a pen which I remembered to have had the evening before. Having found these articles, and having long been accustomed to scribble with scarcely any sight of what I might write in a room made dark for the repose of my infant children, I began to write the lines of my poem in like manner. (I was always careful to decipher these lines within twenty-four hours, as I had found them perfectly illegible after a longer period.) On the occasion now spoken of, I completed my writing, went back to bed, and fell fast asleep.

A day or two later, I repeated my verses to Mr. Clarke, who was much pleased with them. Soon after my return to Boston, I carried the lines to James T. Fields, at that time Editor of the "Atlantic Monthly." The title, "Battle Hymn of the Republic," was of his devising. The poem was published soon after in the magazine, and did not at first receive any especial mention. We were all too much absorbed in watching the progress of the war to give much heed to a copy of verses more or less. I think it may have been a year later that my lines, in some shape, found their way into a Southern prison in which a number of our soldiers were confined. An army chaplain who had been imprisoned with them came to Washington soon after

his release, and in a speech or lecture of some sort, described the singing of the hymn by himself and his companions in that dismal place of confinement. People now began to ask who had written the hymn, and the author's name was easily established by a reference to the magazine. The battle hymn was often sung in the course of the war, and under a great variety of circumstances. Among other anecdotes, I have heard of its having once led a "forlorn hope" through a desperate encounter to a successful issue.

The wild echoes of the fearful struggle have long since died away, and with them all memories of unkindness between ourselves and our Southern brethren. But those who once loved my hymn still sing it. In many a distant Northern town where I have stood to speak, the song has been sung by the choir of some one of the churches before or after my lecture. I could hardly believe my ears when, at an entertainment at Baton Rouge which I shared with other officers of the New Orleans Exposition, the band broke bravely into the John Brown tune. It was scarcely less surprising for me to hear my verses sung at the exposition by the colored people who had invited me to speak to them in their own department. A printed copy of the words and music was once sent me from Constantinople, by whom, I never knew. But when I visited Roberts College, in the neighborhood of that city, the good professors and their ladies at parting asked me to listen well to what I might hear on my way down the steep declivity. I did so, and heard, in sweet, full cadence, the lines which scarcely seem mine, so much are they the breath of that heroic time, and of the feeling with which it was filled.

Julia Ward Howe.



TOPICS OF THE TIME.

An Urgent Measure of National Defense.

ASIDE from the construction of ships and fortifications, to which there is reason to believe that the next Congress will give serious attention, the most pressing question of national defense relates to the naval *personnel*. Not that our officers and blue-jackets are of inferior quality: far from it. Given the materials necessary for training in modern war, and our naval force, as far as it goes, will challenge comparison with any of its rivals. The difficulty is not that it is inefficient, but that it is insufficient. It is a mere nucleus, a navy on a peace footing. Alike in the Revolution, when our enemy had a powerful navy, and in the Civil War, when he had no navy at all, the Government felt from the outset to the close the urgent want of a large body of trained man-o'-war's-men. Men were gradually enlisted, but the absence of a previous enrollment made it difficult and expensive to get them, and the absence of a previous training deferred the period of their efficiency until long after they were got.

In accordance with that sound maxim of American policy which forbids the maintenance of a large stand-

ing force, our regular army will probably never exceed twenty or thirty thousand men, and our regular navy ten or twelve thousand. But the army makes up for its small size by an ample reserve, composed of a well-organized, well-equipped, and well-trained militia. If a war should break out to-morrow, it would be easy to put into the field, in the course of a fortnight, from fifty to one hundred thousand men, officered, armed, and, to some extent, trained for war. They would be raw troops, no doubt, but they would still be troops: all the preliminary work—the enrollment, by which the Government could lay hands on them immediately, the arrangement in working organizations, the elementary training—would have been provided for beforehand, and when the crisis came, would be an accomplished fact.

The navy, on the other hand, upon which the country must place its first reliance for defence, whose forces are always scattered, and whose statutory number, of seven thousand five hundred seamen, falls short of actual peace requirements, is absolutely without a provision for enlargement. In our population of sixty millions there is not a single individual known to the

Navy Department by name, residence, or occupation,—and much less is there any organization,—upon whom or upon which it could call in an emergency to perform duty in ships of war. Plenty of men there doubtless are who would be glad to offer their services, and who might in the course of time be enlisted, assigned to duties, and made available for purposes of training; but the enlistment and assignment of any large number would take two months at least, and the training would require a month or two more. During the four months thus consumed, a properly prepared enemy would have destroyed all our construction-yards and naval stations, to say nothing of our commerce and our commercial cities.

To remedy this glaring defect, a plan must be prepared which shall receive the substantial approval of the mercantile and maritime community on the one hand, and of the Government on the other; for these are the two forces whose coöperation is necessary to insure success. Its two underlying features are the enrollment of volunteers from the merchant service, the fishing fleet, and the yacht squadrons, as officers, petty officers, and seamen of the United States Naval Reserve; and secondly, their training from time to time, for short periods—three weeks or a month at the most—in regularly commissioned ships of war, organized, if possible, as a squadron of evolutions. The volunteers should receive compensation while actually in service, and, the period of training finished, they should be free to return to their vocations, retaining their connection with the service by a permanent registration. The details of the plan require careful deliberation, but they present no serious difficulties, and call for no great outlay. Registers opened at the commercial seaports should be inscribed with the names of those desiring to associate themselves with the naval reserve. The Navy Department should devote to the work some of the modern ships of which its home squadron will shortly be composed, with selected officers in sufficient numbers to provide for the instruction of the volunteers. The latter, wearing the uniform of the service, and subject to its regulations, would perform their tour of duty at periods that would cause the least possible interruption of their ordinary occupations.

The plan would not make sailors out of landmen, but that would not be its object. The volunteers, being seafaring men, already know half their business, and they would be given an opportunity to learn the other half,—the handling of weapons, the routine and discipline of a ship of war, and the intelligent use of its manifold mechanical appliances. The adoption of such a plan would enable the Government, at the first sign of war, to fit out at once all the ships laid up at its yards, instead of marking time while its squadrons returned from distant stations, or, worse still, while Congress deliberated upon the best method of mobilizing a force that was not yet organized, trained, or even recruited. Certainly no measure of national defence is more reasonable or practical than this, and there is none that calls more urgently for immediate action.

The Niagara Reservation.

Few public measures, based upon considerations other than those of economic benefit, have met with such wide-spread and hearty approval as has greeted

the establishment of the Niagara Reservation. No question involving simply the public's chances of future pleasure can have a greater interest than the question, What now is to be done with this property which the people of the State of New-York hold in trust for the people of all the world?

Entrance-fees have already been abolished, and many eyesores and incumbrances in the shape of mills and fences and vulgar places of amusement have already been removed. But it will easily be understood that a great deal of further work—and of a constructive as well as of a destructive character—will be required if the Reservation is to show that its owners appreciate its value and the responsibility which its possession lays upon them. We are sorry to say that there is no immediate prospect of this work being undertaken. That is, no money has yet been appropriated by the Legislature to begin it. But the Board which has the Reservation in charge has accepted the plan of improvement suggested by the landscape artists to whose consideration the matter was submitted;* and we think it only needs that the outlines of this plan should be laid before the public to excite a strong wish that it shall as soon as possible be put in execution. Seldom, we think, has a task of the kind been approached in a spirit which so unites common sense with artistic feeling, and so carefully holds the balance true between what is due to the property itself and what is due to the persons who will visit it.

The problem was by no means an easy one to master. Its very first theoretic stages were, indeed, simple enough. Of course, as Messrs. Olmsted and Vaux begin by saying, it is desirable “that whatever is done shall tell toward a general result that shall be lastingly satisfactory, nothing being wasted on matters of temporary expediency”; and of course this means that preparation must be made for the presence of even greater crowds of visitors than have been in the habit of assembling in the past. Again, it is obvious that “the greatest good of the greatest number” is the one aim to be kept in view. The rights of local property-owners have already been made to yield to it; and to it must be subordinated also the privileges of individual tourists in so far as they seem likely to conflict with general enjoyment.

Up to this point no great difficulty presented itself. But then to decide what really is the greatest good in such a case, and, this having been settled, so to elaborate a plan of improvement that it might be thoroughly well secured, but that individual privileges might be interfered with no more than strict necessity compelled, and in such a manner as to excite the least possible feeling of constraint in the most selfish of tourists—these were matters which demanded the exercise of patient thought, clear judgment, wise foresight, and that practical knowledge which could only have grown from long experience with similar problems.

As revealed in their lucid, full, and logical statement,

* “General Plan for the Improvement of the Niagara Reservation.” New York: Martin B. Brown, 49 & 51 Park Place. 1887. (A pamphlet containing the report addressed to the Hon. William Dorsheimer, President of the Board of Commissioners of the State Reservation at Niagara, by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, Landscape-architects; and a large map of the property as it will appear if remodeled in accordance.)