

Big Battalions

'This is a very respectable age,' says the Genial Showman, 'but it's pretty easily riled; and considerin' upon how slight a provocation we who live in it go to cuttin' each others' throats, it may, perhaps, be doubted whether our intellects is so much massiver than our ancestors' intellects was after all.' We do our throat-slitting, it is true, by machinery; we don't commonly beat the brains out of the wounded upon the battlefield; and we have never acquired a taste for the kidney-fat of our fallen foe. But in one respect we are verging back to the savage state of warfare, when every adult male was compelled to be a warrior, and the tribe's standing army counted the full strength of its manhood. Some 31,000 men altered the map of Europe at Crecy in 1346. The relative bagatelle of about 100,000 fighters decided the fate of Waterloo in 1815. In 1859 Sir Arthur Phelps did some heavy moralising—we might term it philosophical swearing—when he computed, after a vast deal of figuring, that the armies of Europe in that year numbered no fewer than 2,000,000 fighting men. As a matter of fact, the number was far greater. In 1889—just thirty years after the publication of Sir Arthur's scandalised reflections—Europe had become a vast armed camp: its eighteen countries had a total of 3,352,000 men constantly under arms as a State-insurance against war. In the event of hostilities they could have called out no fewer than 9,366,000 soldiers with sufficient knowledge of the throat-slitting business to look tolerably well on parade and to fire a bullet more or less in the direction of the enemy.

The current issue of the 'Daily Mail Year-Book' shows that Europe's bloated armaments still continue to 'bloat' and that the Continental Great Powers are moving steadily towards the savages' resort of an army that shall include all males capable of carrying and using a lethal weapon. Great Britain's insular position saves her the trouble of maintaining great land forces, but she is busy pouring into her war-ships greater treasures than her dear neighbors are lavishing upon horse and foot and artillery and engineers. Here is an interesting table from the 'Year-Book':—

Country.	Expenditure	Peace Strength.	War Strength.
France	£28,800,000	589,000	3,500,000
Germany	33,500,000	604,108	4,000,000
Russia	36,000,000	1,100,000	4,620,000
Great Britain	29,745,000	275,761	680,000

tails, Donnybrook fashion, by ever and ever more increase have a peace establishment of 2,193,108 men, and in a war footing could muster a grand aggregate of 12,120,000 wisps of cannon-fodder.

The Continentals are continually trailing their coat-tails Donnybrook fashion, by ever and ever more increasing their armaments by land. Great Britain is as constantly challenging all and sundry by persistent increase in her war-expenditure by sea. In 1888-9 her naval expenditure ran into £12,999,895. Ten years later—in 1898-9—it had risen to £24,068,000. And the net estimate for the current year (1903-4) is £31,457,000—greater than the combined cost of the navies of France, Russia, and Germany for last year; for Germany and Russia were each content with a naval expenditure of £10,500,000, and France with £12,200,000, all three thus showing a joint total of £33,200,000. It seems to be generally understood that the Continental Great Powers set the pace in the matter of bloated naval expenditure. In reality Great Britain is the pace-maker. During the past ten years the combined increase in naval expenditure of France, Germany, and Russia was £12,500,000. Great Britain's increase in the same period soared to £20,000,000.

This mania for vast and costly armies and navies must end either in a partial disarmament or in the bankruptcy of the weaker nations. It cannot go on indefinitely. Lord Wolseley was not in favor of cumbersome armies. He claimed that with 20,000 trained fanatics he could cut his way through Europe. And Captain Otto Prendt, the Austrian staff-officer, seems to share the opinion of the British General. In his work, 'Figures and War,' he is not by any means enthusiastic as to the value of the stupendously vast agglomerates of armed men that would cover the face of Europe in the event of a great war. 'Perhaps,' he says, 'some Alex-

ander or Buonaparte may arise, who, at the head of a small army of picked men, may fall upon that heavy and unwarlike mass and disperse them in all directions. Then nations may, perhaps, resort to the system of armies small in number, but composed of trained men, and perhaps they will let those men have the exclusive privilege of a trade which, after all, is not congenial to peaceful citizens.' 'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished.

THE FIJI MISSIONS

REPLY TO REV. W. SLADE.

From a reliable and well-informed source in Fiji we have received the following communication, under date April 4:—

'I was greatly surprised at reading in the Christ-church "Press" of March 7, an address by the Rev. W. Slade, exalting the "wonderful success" of Methodism in Fiji and containing an attack upon the Catholic missions in these islands.

'The "wonderful success of the Fiji Methodist mission" is not by any means so manifest in these islands as it is made to appear abroad. Your readers, for instance, will remember the speech made a short time ago in Melbourne by Mr. Duncan—Mayor of Suva and a non-Catholic—to the effect that the Fijians are still savages under their Methodist skin. For the rest the

"Wonderful Success"

claimed for the Methodist missions in Fiji may be estimated from the following facts:—

'Sixty-eight years of work by an average of ten white missionaries has, indeed, resulted in the greater part of a whole people giving at least a nominal adherence to Methodism; but the last half century has witnessed, side by side with that fact, the melancholy spectacle of the same people vanishing almost off the face of the earth in a manner that is unexampled in history, except, perhaps, in the sad story of the Methodist missions in the Hawaiian group. The Fijian race is doomed, and the story of their decay makes sad reading.

'In 1844 the Rev. Mr. Hunt, a Wesleyan missionary, estimated the population of Fiji at 300,000. So did the Rev. W. Lawry in 1847, and Captain Erskine of the Royal Navy. In 1858 the Rev. T. Williams (in his 'Fiji and the Fijians,' page 102) also estimated their number to be 300,000. This was in 1858. A few years later Fiji was advertised to the world to be as "all Wesleyan and Christian." Three hundred thousand converts were claimed in dark Fiji. In 1874, when Fiji became British, the Methodist missionaries claimed 200,000 adherents. In 1875 their number had dwindled to 130,000, as against 7000 Catholics. In the present year of grace they have only 90,000, while

The Catholic Population

has risen to between 11,000 and 12,000—and, bear in mind, 11,000 to 12,000 who are not "tossed about by every wind of doctrine," but know what they are to believe, and, as a rule, live up to the faith that is in them. European Catholics in Fiji are proud of their Fijian co-religionists, and it is a happy sight to see them and their colored fellow-Catholics meeting together to assist at the same august mysteries and partake of the same Sacraments. The Catholic Church is advancing steadily in Fiji. The Methodist mission, according to their own returns, have dwindled from a following of 300,000 to 90,000. If the Rev. Mr. Slade considers this a "wonderful success," all I can say is this, that he is easy to please, and that it is about time that he should begin a reform in the dictionary meaning of plain English words.

'In fact, on reading the story of the decay of the Fijian people, it would almost seem as if the more Wesleyan a province is the more rapidly its people appear to die out. The Wesleyan Report, for instance, gives the population of the very Methodist island of Kadavu in 1886 as 12,089 souls. In 1889, according to the same Report, it had fallen to 7406. The Rev. Mr. Young, in 1881, gave the population of Bau as 1500. To-day they are less than 500. The island of Viwa was for years the Wesleyan headquarters in Fiji. Their missionaries were there from 1839 to 1894. The Rev. Mr. Calvert had 180 natives in the town of Viwa, on that island. They, or all others, were under the immediate eye and fostering care of the missionaries. Yet, when the missionaries left there, there were only 80 natives in the wretched place. Is all this a part and parcel of the "wonderful success of the Fiji Methodist mission?"

There remains the question of

Spiritual Success

This is obviously a more difficult matter to deal with than that of counting heads. But it lends itself, nevertheless, to treatment and here, as before, I shall not follow the Rev. Mr. Slade's method of dealing in vague generalities, but will fall back upon public and notorious facts.

'In 1892, about 400 Fijians from Draunivatu (Viti Levu) were deported to Kadavu by order of the Government for gross disobedience to the constituted authorities. They were all Wesleyans. They had preachers, teachers, and Bibles. And the Bibles they were able to