

and which, when the country shall be no longer in need of their services, it is in the power of the Legislature to extinguish in an instant."

Since then the volunteer movement has progressed steadily and surely, and its prospects soon became more settled, with yet growing numbers, and "with a firm conviction in the minds of Englishmen of its vital importance to the country." "Lord Overstone showed that the immigration to this country of any portion of the French surplus fighting population would be productive of the most disastrous results; and some events occurred which gave rise to a suspicion that although the Empire itself might be filled—paved, if that expression be allowable—with the best and most peaceable intentions, the eagles which that Empire nourished had an unpleasant habit, and a still more restless desire, of 'flying from victory to victory.'"

"It is easy, of course," remarks the *Dublin University Magazine*, "to say that untrained enthusiasm will never stand before thorough discipline, and that volunteers have only been successful against blundering commanders, or troops absurdly overmarched. Yet volunteer levies fought like veterans at Edgehill against the experienced soldiers of Lord Essex. Volunteer armies cleared France of the formidable hosts who thought to take vengeance for the cruel treatment of her king. A nation of German volunteers, under Garibaldi, harassed and defeated the Austrian troops on the skirts of Lombardy in the war of 1859; and yet, later telegrams told us how another army of volunteers, led by the same great hero of our day, beat off the last despairing efforts of a powerful Neapolitan force to bring back to his forfeit capital the king who had accompanied them into the field."

The volunteer movement which marked the war against the great Napoleon had all but passed away out of the memory of the living generation, when suddenly it was revived, in 1859, by Captain Hans Busk and others. It was at once received with the utmost enthusiasm; through the influence of Lord Bury, Lord Elcho, and other members of the two Houses of the Legislature, the approval of the Government and the patronage of her Majesty was secured for it. The Volunteer movement, however, went through its share of ridicule at first, as the pages of *Punch* and the other comic journals of the period can testify; but it has out-lived this and all other weaknesses incident to infancy, and now the brave defenders of our homes are toasted along with the army and the militia forces at every public dinner.

The movement seemed to grow almost spontaneously out of the strong irritation against France which was aroused throughout England by the braggadocio utterances of some French colonels, who were, or professed to be, angry because this country did not show, as they thought, sufficient energy in punishing the authors of a dastardly conspiracy, hatched in the happy region of Leicester Square, to murder the Emperor of France by bombs. Dr. Simon Bernard had been arrested in his lodgings at Bayswater on a charge of complicity with Orsini, and the law was being put into motion to vindicate our Imperial ally. But our English law, like all great bodies, is slow in its motions, and was far too slow to satisfy the impulsive colonels who wore the French uniform. Their impatient utterances naturally "put up the English monkey," and for weeks and months the anti-Gallican feeling was growing stronger and stronger, both in London and in the provinces.

In the next year the public indignation became less unreasonable, but it still maintained its strength, though not its heat; and, worked upon by persons of patriotic feelings and military tastes, it gave rise to one of the most important movements which ever left their mark on the social and political history of any nation. "The militia," writes Mr. Thomas Archer, in his "Life of Gladstone," "had already been strengthened and recognised; but now came a steady and determined renewal of former proposals by competent men for the formation of volunteer regiments. . . . Many thousands of volunteer riflemen, whose happily-chosen motto was soon declared to be 'Defence, not Defiance,' were rapidly enrolled under officers who at all events had plenty of energy and enthusiasm, and were not deficient in ability."

But the movement received a further impulse in the same year (1859) through the interference of the Emperor of the French with the affairs of Northern Italy, which threatened to set half Europe in a blaze, in which it was feared that ultimately even England might become involved. At this moment the formation of the Rifle Volunteer force came at once into full play. Their numbers grew with the utmost rapidity, and they soon were formed into a regular body. "Volunteer corps," wrote the Prince Consort to Baron Stockmar on the 8th of December, "are being formed in all the towns. The lawyers in the Temple go through regular drill. Lords Spencer, Abercorn, Elcho, &c., are put through their facings in Westminster Hall by gaslight, in the same rank and file with shop-keepers.

* See Vol III., p. 204.