The Nation.

NAVALISM.

The great curse of Europe to-day, and especially the curse of those countries of Europe in which the sovereign plumes himself on being before all things a soldier, is the curse which is known as "militarism." What "militarism" means is the influence exerted on society and Government by the existence of an immense army, with thirty or forty thousand officers, whose profession is fighting. When peace is full of turbulence and disgust, and to whom war brings not only practice in their calling, but a rapid advance towards the highest honors the State has to bestow. In order, too, to keep these men in suitable fighting condition, as Mr. Lecky, the historian, has so well pointed out, the sentiment of "honor"—that is, of extreme susceptibility to insult and of readiness to punish insult by bloodshed—has to be sedulously cultivated in them. They have, in fact, to take as tender care of their reputation for courage as a woman has of her reputation for modesty. In the peculiar case of Europe to-day, the responsibility of each State among its fellows (and, indeed, one may say, its very existence) is dependent on keeping these men in good humor. The Government is, in a certain degree, compelled to shape its foreign policy under their code. It has to be as touchy as they are and as ready to avenge small injuries as to the large. In fact, it has to be so constituted as to make any concession or pass over any incivility which would in the mess-rooms be considered a good cause for a fight. It may be safely asserted that to-day the relations of France and Germany are controlled by their respective armies far more than by the respective foreign offices or by public opinion. This is what keeps the European air so full of war rumors, and keeps the European business world in such a constant tremble, and surrounds the future of public liberty and civil government in all Continental countries with so much uncertainty. The growth of English liberty would never have been possible but for the stern determination of the people, from the earliest times, not to have a large standing army, or any army whose existence was assured for more than a year.

The absence of any such force and of all necessity for it has been one of the happy conditions of the existence of the United States. We have never had, either at home or abroad, any large and respectable and respected body of men among us interested in war, or eager for war, or able to force us into war in order to oblige them. Militarism has been unknown in this country, and fighting, on the whole, an unpopular profession. In truth, it was the American Government which first introduced international relations the practice of negotiating as business men, and not as soldiers. With this practice it has won extraordinary diplomatic triumphs. The Oregon boundary dispute, the Alabama dispute, and the San Juan dispute with Great Britain have all been settled satisfactorily to us without either army or navy. Our various smaller quarrels with France, Spain, and Germany have all been settled in the same way. Not once in the national existence, except when the Leopard took the men out of the Cheapeolls in 1899, have the United States had to relegate the want of a great military or naval force.

We do not use these considerations as an argument against the creation of a navy of the modern sort, to take the place of the old wooden ships which were absolutely incapable of fighting. A sham navy is worse than no navy. Moreover, common prudence requires that we should have on the ocean a force capable, if need be, of protecting American commerce, or repelling chance aggression, now that the world has grown so wide and America such a huge and far-reaching organization. But the bigger and more formidable the navy we create, the more tenaciously should we cling to the great traditions of peaceableness and good sense which have from the beginning marked our diplomacy. Franklin did not negotiate with a big sabre by his side and a long pair of spurs on his heels, and Franklin set the fashion for all our diplomats until now. Professional fighting-men have never managed to fill the departments at Washington with their peculiar and subtle sense of honor. It was the general expectation in Europe in 1895 that Grant's and Sherman's army would be used, and would have to be, to overrun Canada and Mexico; but Secretary Stanton began to disband the force and sell the stores on the evening of the fall of Richmond. That was true of every American consultation.

Our Navy Department, however, seems, and has seemed almost ever since Secretary Tracy came into office, to be determined to break completely with these great diplomatic traditions, to the amazement of those who knew him here as a cool, sensible, and highly respectable member of the bar. Whether for the purpose of helping the President in his quarrel with Mr. Blaine, or for the purpose of magnifying his own office, we do not know, but the fact that he has practically taken our foreign relations out of the hands of the State Department, and turned them over to the Admirals and Captains and Lieutenants in the navy, who, except the Admirals, are mostly young men, full of fight and eager to show what the new ships can do—so that they may fairly be considered firebrands in every foreign port. The beginning of this extraordinary policy was the Barringer affair, in which Mr. Blaine, either through weakness or blindness, acquiesced and, indeed, cooperated with Mr. Tracy in reducing the State Department to nothingness and handing the foreign policy of the Government over to navalm. In that case he permitted a naval commander who had, under the resident American Minister's direction, strictly obeyed in a foreign port the law of nations and the existing naval regulations, to be loaded with abuse and dismissed his ship for so doing.

We pointed out at the time the unfortunate effect which this episode was likely to have on the mind of naval officers, and the application it would be likely to involve us in foreign waters, and this was long before there was any sign of our trouble with Chili. We maintained that it would make them both reckless and meddlesome and lawless, and would involve us in quarrels which we could not decently uphold. We might cite a dozen illustrations from recent events in support of this assumption, but here is one which will suffice, showing how soon the poison began to work, taken from a speech of Lieut. A. V. Wadham of the Navy in Boston last February, before the Boston Boot and Shoe Club. Lieut. Wadham, be it remembered, is just thirty-five years old, is a professional fighting man, and may be any day in command of a ship in foreign waters.

"What does the arrival of the Baltimore in the harbor of Valparaiso mean? It means just this, that without any order from the home Government, without any orders from anybody else, the regulations are well established as to our duties as naval officers. The magnificent steamer that has been taken by this Administration in regard to the affairs of the killing of that Mexican on board the Pacific Mail steamer has caused great joy in the navy. That is wrong. We want to be able to say, 'You go just so far and you will come to grief,' and the time has come when a naval officer can say it."

To regard to our rights of action in emergencies which may arise, I don't suppose there will be any question hereafter as to just the extent to which a man can go. Herefore there always has been, and now, to be sure, there will be, any consulta-

But if a Prussian cavalry colonel talked in this way at a Berlin dinner, big a man as he is, what a waggish he would got! But the head of every youngster in our navy is probably filled with just such stuff, and his superiors have put it there and are keeping it there. Our State Department has been practically abolished, and its Manuel of Instruction and the textbooks on International Law are being used as fuel to get up steam. What a situation for the country of Webster and Lincoln and Seward and Marcy and Fish and Evarts!

POPULAR ELECTION OF SENATORS.

AGITATION in favor of a constitutional amendment to subject the several State Legislatures during the past year, was renewed on Saturday before the appropriate committee of the House of Representatives. Every thoughtful mind must welcome the least sign of revolt against the present composition and disgraceful tendency of the United States Senate. The election to that body of Gov. Eli, the Demo-