

**CAPTAIN SWORD AND CAPTAIN  
PEN, A POEM. WITH A NEW  
PREFACE, REMARKS ON WAR, AND  
NOTES DETAILING THE HORRORS  
ON WHICH THE POEM IS FOUNDED**

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Captain Sword and Captain Pen, a Poem. With a New Preface, Remarks on War, and Notes Detailing the Horrors on Which the Poem Is Founded by Leigh Hunt

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**LEIGH HUNT**

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**Captain Sword and Captain Pen.**

**A POEM**

**BY LEIGH HUNT.**

**THE THIRD EDITION.**

**WITH**

**A NEW PREFACE, REMARKS ON WAR,**

**AND NOTES**

**DETAILING**

**THE HORRORS ON WHICH THE POEM IS FOUNDED.**

**LONDON :**

**CHARLES GILPIN, 5, BISHOPSGATE WITHOUT.**

**1849.**

# A FEW MORE FIRST WORDS,

OCCASIONED BY

## IMMEDIATE EVENTS.

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SINCE this book went to press, the Peace Congress at Paris has added to the importance of the movements against war, and the startling letter of Mr. Gurney corroborated the financial arguments of Mr. Cobden and others. All the reasoning which has been adduced on the other side of the question may be found in the columns of the *Times* newspaper, set forth with the usual wit and fine writing which distinguish that extraordinary journal. But the reasoning is not new, nor does it seem very self-satisfied. The instincts of the writer's

better genius are against it, whatever his "knowledge of the world," or his sense of the political expediency of the moment, may induce him to say in favour of common-places.

It is related of Queen Victoria, that when she heard of the first war that broke out within the bounds of the empire since her accession to the throne, her Majesty said, with the tears in her eyes, that she "had hoped to have a bloodless reign." I know not if the story be true; but it is in unison with all that is understood of her sensible and considerate nature. And who indeed can doubt, that she would fain have every one of her subjects as safe and sound as peace and prosperity could make him? Is a time never to come, when the desire of every human heart, from the throne to the cottage, shall work out a corresponding determination? Shall we acquiesce in an evil, and think it irremediable, merely because it is enormous? That may be an argument with superstition, and with other slavish states of the human mind. It was once an argument against interfering with plague and pesti-

lence. But we now take steps against pestilence, because it is at our doors. Shall we take none against war, merely because it tears our friends and children to pieces at a distance?

We know what the Prime Minister thinks of war. We know what the majority of statesmen, both in England and France, think of the inexpediency of it at the present moment. But the ministers and statesmen of other countries, it is argued, may not be so wise, and they are under Sovereigns very different from our own.

Refuse them the supplies, says Mr. Gurney. Refuse them for your own sake, or wars will make you bankrupt.

Refuse them, says Mr. Cobden, for humanity and decency's sake; and refuse them also, (if that is not sufficient,) for the sake of the very considerable chance of non-return. You are lending money for bad purposes, to men who have repeatedly been insolvent.

This admonition has been strangely called a violation of the principles of free trade; as if



freedom of action, and indifference to its consequences, were identical. It might as well be argued, that a druggist had an equal right to sell poison to the best and worst man in his neighbourhood, and that it would be mere officiousness in a by-stander to warn him against the mistake.

Elemental necessity in the nature of things (like poison itself, or hydrogen), or unavoidableness, owing to the passions of men (which might amount to the same thing), or expediency in the particular instances, must either be the grounds on which war is defended, or the advocate must fairly say, at once, "It is a perplexing and painful subject, and I do not choose to argue it." Now, unless arguments have been advanced, which I have overlooked in the perusal, this latter determination, however it may seem to have talked otherwise, appears to me to be the real state of the case at present with those who could surely argue better than they do, if they went to the root of the matter at all.

I still, therefore, cannot but think it incum-

bent on a hatred of war to endeavour to render it as intelligible and hateful as possible.

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To descend to a climax of "tremendous insignificance," (as the Gascon gentleman said,) I am afraid that the references of some of the notes to their authorities, in this edition of my poem, are incorrect. The copier had omitted them; illness has prevented my going to the British Museum to ascertain them; and I have been unable to procure the books in other quarters. But due pains will be taken for their rectification, should the poem be republished; and, at all events, the writer feels that he is under no necessity of vouching for his veracity. The passages extracted speak for themselves;—to say nothing of his character as an honest man.

One word more. The first and second editions of the poem were dedicated to a noble and learned Lord, for whom the writer has never ceased to entertain great and grateful respect; but as his lordship's opinions on the subject appear to have undergone some modi-

fications that might have rendered the address to him not so proper, I have done what I thought least unbecoming to the space which it occupied, by leaving it unappropriated to anybody.

LEIGH HUNT.

*October 12th, 1849.*