

BRITISH PLUCK.

The speedy success of Sir Garnet Wolseley and his small force, in an unknown and difficult country, and against many times their number of a really brave though barbarous foe, sheds a new lustre on British arms. Continental strategists may affect to laugh and may say that a campaign against African savages is no test at all of what our officers and men could do if opposed to European armies under the direction of such masters of the art of war as Von Moltke. It is an old Continental opinion, which has been current ever since the time of Napoleon the First, that the unquestioned bravery of British soldiers has been but insufficiently directed by thorough military competence on the part of the officers. The bravery of the officers, too, has been conceded; looking at their unhesitating charges against fearful odds, Frenchmen have been known to exclaim, "This is magnificent, but it is not war." There is reason for believing, however, that in technical military training our officers have made astonishing progress of late years, and the Continental opinion referred to may already have ceased to be even possibly true. Certain it is that both the Abyssinian expedition and this later one to Coomassie were both marvels of careful calculation and arrangement, of the adaptation of means to ends, and application of scientific resource to the overcoming of tremendous natural difficulties. It must be remembered that, even in what we are pleased to call civilized warfare, the overcoming of purely natural difficulties is an important part of generalship; the preservation of communication and supplies, moving guns and heavy baggage, crossing rivers, keeping an army in good health and fighting trim, and such like, are all problems of generalship that have to be met and solved alike on the Prah and on the Rhine. The two African expeditions referred to did not test the capacity of our officers as masters of civilized strategy, but the test of their capacity for conquering extraordinary natural difficulties was most conclusive. Our commanders have proved themselves the equals, and probably the superiors, of any in the world, in valuable quality called resource—the ability to make the most of circumstances in the face of sudden danger and surprise. European critics will probably be sparing in their praise on this as on other occasions, but the conviction will remain with them, nevertheless, that the men who pushed their way through the dangerous fastnesses of Abyssinia and Ashantee are not to be trifled with; and all over the Continent the impression will deepen that it will be wise to leave the British hon alone.

There is something more, however, to be said, with reference not merely to the pluck and capacity that Britain would have on her side in such a contest, but with reference also to the national spirit for sustaining it. Britain no longer seeks to conquer and to seize for herself new territory in distant regions, but her commercial ambition is more aggressive than ever, and she seeks commercial conquest of markets for her goods. She does not like Russia, want more territory, but sooner than see her goods excluded from markets that she desires access to she will fight. There is this great change going on, that whereas the commercial spirit has been too much on the side of peace at any price, it is now strongly interested in training old markets and finding new ones, even should it be necessary to fight for them. No such mis-calculation as that of the Czar Nicholas is

likely soon again to be made, because even the excuse that he had, such as it was, is disappearing. It was the dream of some twenty years ago, that Britain might be commercially prosperous, and still control the trade of the world, even were she almost wholly to disarm, and to abdicate her rank as a military power. That dream has now vanished, and none are more profoundly convinced than are the commercial classes in England to-day, that without strength in arms commercial supremacy would be of uncertain tenure. As a Quaker nation, unprepared to fight, and intent only on making money, England would soon cease to be a nation at all. The commercial classes, we say, have come to understand this, and the change which we indicate as having been in progress there twenty years past, explains in great part the popular discredit into which Mr. Cobden's doctrines have fallen of late, and why Mr. Bright is no longer a tribune of the people. For the tremendous blunder of showing pro-Southern sympathies during the American war, England has had to atone by submission to the Geneva award as the only possible escape from a false position. She has given the first great example of settlement by arbitration, instead of war, and her willingness to substitute the former for the latter, when at all practicable, is not to be doubted. But that, if need be, she will fight to maintain her rights is not to be doubted, and we fancy it is less doubted now than at any time during the present reign. The two important points which we note at present are these—the proof in recent time that British pluck and energy and resource have not deteriorated; and the conversion—perhaps we should say the re-conversion—of the commercial classes to the view that for Britain to maintain her greatness in trade and in arts, the maintenance of her greatness in arms is indispensable. England and America have given the world one noble example recently, but the Continent of Europe, in its present state of armed peace, and divided into armed nations, does not seem anxious to follow it; a special and powerful reason why a Quaker policy of disarmament cannot be adopted.—*Toronto Mail.*

DEATH OF CHEVALIER MURRAY.—The report of the death of this gallant young officer has, we regret to say, been confirmed by telegrams forwarded to his friends and relatives in Canada. We learn that he received a severe wound at the storming of Manresa by the Carlists, from the effects of which he died. It was only in August last that we announced in these columns the departure of the deceased gentleman to join the army of Don Carlos in Spain, and we then wished the gallant young soldier success and a safe return to his home and friends, little dreaming at the time that we would have been so quickly called upon to chronicle his death. Chevalier Murray was a nephew of the Bishop of Kingston, was formerly an officer in the Pontifical Zouaves, and was wounded at the battle of Mentana. He was afterwards decorated for gallantry in action, made Knight of the Order of St. Pius V. by the Pope, and personally otherwise honoured on different occasions by the Holy Father. We deeply sympathize with the relatives and friends of the Chevalier in their bereavement, but they have the consolation to know that he died as he lived, a brave soldier and a Christian gentleman.—*Kingston News.*

THE TACTICS AT OMOAFAU.—An intelligent study of Sir Garnet Wolseley's report of the battle of Omoafau will lead to understanding how completely unlike ordinary modern tactics he employed against the Ashantees. In fact, as the *Pall Mall Gazette* observes, they were thrown back many centuries by the peculiar circumstances under which Sir Garnet Wolseley's force was engaged. The nature of the ground, especially the very limited range of fire it allowed, and the overwhelming numerical superiority of the enemy, compelled the soldiers to act in a general way very much as the Grecian phalanx or Roman legion did ages ago when overthrowing their swarms of savage foes. The extension of the fighting front which has become the universal model in European infantry tactics was exactly reversed, and in its place we find a quadrangular formation carefully arranged, with almost as much fighting power for either flank as for direct advance, and with the expectation of being attacked on both sides and resisting the attack, without allowing them to interfere seriously with the general advance. Against a superior and outflanking enemy shooting at long range such a procedure would be suicidal. For the special case to be dealt with it was exactly suitable. And just as no number of Orientals in Xenophon's days could resist the slow thrusting forward of the phalanx, invincible by its weight at the point of contact; nor any mob of Gauls, however brave, could bear the terrible though gradual pressure of the advancing front of the legion, so it was—allowing only for the difference of the power of firearms in a bush and of pikes and javelins in the open—with the 42nd Highlanders and the defenders of Omoafau. The problem is such a case has always been to defend the flank effectively without pausing in general movement; and no Grecian or Roman commander appears ever to have solved this prime difficulty of the breaking through a crowd of enemies with a living military wedge more successfully than did the English general on the 31st January.

An article in the *Cologne Gazette*, on "The new iron fortifications of Germany," says that the drilled cast iron gun stands and iron clad revolving turrets which have, since 1869, been completely tested in a series of experiments on the great artillery shooting ground at Tegel, will now be used for the new works to be begun in the German fortresses. Two of these turrets will maintain a secure communication between the forts of St. Quentin and St. Privat at Metz, and two of the flank works which will be attached to these forts, so as to command the valley of the Moselle and the Sille, will probably be made in the form of the gun stands referred to. All the iron for these fortifications can be cast on the spot, of any required thickness, in foundries especially erected for the purpose. Each of the works will be constructed with a few huge plates, which will fit into one another by means of joints made in the casting. The gun stands are made to hold only one gun each, but a number of these may, if necessary, be placed side by side, and they may be connected so as to form single work. The embrasures are made so small as to prevent the entrance of any projectile fired at them, and the whole is protected by an earth work with apertures to carry away the gas and diminish concussion. During the trials of 1869 seven shots from a 200 pounder (the 24 centimeter gun) hit the plate of a gun stand of this kind without disabling it for further use. The writer