

displayed on that occasion, and, on the other, to a due improvement of your privileges and responsibilities, for you are the children of the Reformation and members of a Reformed Church, and where much is given, shall much be required.

(To be continued.)

## War and its Gains.

BY THE REV. NORMAN MCLEOD, D. D.

"THE horrors of war" is a theme on which it is easy to descend, and one which it is impossible adequately to realize or to exaggerate. No event can more thoroughly absorb and terribly excite every faculty in man than a great battle; nor can any spectacle be more frightful or depressing than a vast battle-field when the combat is ended. We do not wonder, therefore, that Christian men, or those possessed of even the most ordinary philanthropy, should unite together and make every effort in their power for the purpose of imbruing society with a wholesome aversion to war. There are times, also, when it may be peculiarly necessary to quicken a nation's sense of the awful responsibility which it incurs, if it proclaims war before every possible means of saving mankind from so great a sacrifice have been exhausted. At all times, indeed, it is necessary to put down that light and unbecoming spirit, with which a duty so very solemn as that of sacrificing our own lives or the lives of our fellow-men is accepted by ourselves or delegated to others.

But while we do not underrate the moral and social evils among a people which a passion for war at once evidences and increases, we must not be driven to the opposite extreme of denouncing war as being itself a great crime. Such an opinion not only involves the condemnation of some of the noblest achievements of the greatest nations, but the entire lives of their noblest men, while it makes God's providential government over the world a profounder mystery, and a more inextinguishable riddle.

Let us offer a few observations upon the lawfulness of war and its gains, not, indeed, with the desire of stimulating any feelings of enmity between man and man, but of diminishing, in some degree, the weight of the burden which oppresses many a good and loving heart in contemplating war with all its losses and accompanying horrors.

Now it is our firm conviction that war, in its truest form, may be opposed neither to the letter nor spirit of Christianity; while "peace at any price" is unprincipled selfishness and opposed to both. A national war is lawful when it is resorted to as the only means left of defending the right by might; and then it is one of the noblest forms of self-sacrifice; for it is the sacrifice by the nation

of its wealth and people, and by the soldier of a thousand blessings, and of life itself, rather than part with liberty, which is essential to a nation's existence, or with righteousness which is essential to the world's progress. On the other hand, the man, who rather than fight would purchase earthly blessings by the sacrifice of the right, manifests the spirit of an animalized and degraded slave, who prefers life to duty, and shrinks from the vindication, at all hazards, of truth and honour.

It is, of course, admitted that war, if inconsistent with the exercise of Christian love towards our "enemies," is indefensible, inasmuch as love is the very spirit of Christianity, and is that eternal bond which, in no case, and in no circumstances whatever, can be broken with impunity. It is however, not only possible to fight until death, and to sacrifice the lives of our enemies, as well as our own, without hating the one more than the other, but the absence of all personal hate is one of the very characteristics of national warfare, as distinguished from personal animosity or family feuds. War, when lawful, ought to be, and may be, as free from any personal dislike of the enemy, as the condemnation or execution of a criminal is free from all private or personal hate to the criminal himself on the part of the judge or the executioner.

This is evidenced by many a fact that could be gathered from the annals of war. How often, for example, have commanders been obliged to forbid the too friendly and familiar intercourse in which the outposts of the contending armies indulged, sometimes in the exchange of mere civilities, and at other times of soldiers' luxuries. What displays of finest generosity have been witnessed on the part of the strong towards the weak, even in the very "current of the heady fight;" as when the French cavalry officer in the charge was about to cut down the wounded Napier, until, suddenly perceiving his disabled arm, he lowered his weapon, saluted him, and passed on in the *mêlée*? And should the white flag of peace be raised above the smoke of the sternest fight, and the message fly from rank to rank that the war is over, in a moment foe will meet with foe, to embrace as friend with friend. Men who an hour before were ready to seek each other's death, would in the next moment clasp each other's hands with the warmth of a common brotherhood; and veterans, whose eyes would never quail before the storm of shot and shell, will not be ashamed to drop a tear of thanksgiving when hearing the trumpet-note of peace. We thus believe that there may be less of the spirit of personal dislike in the bloodiest battle ever fought between soldiers, than in many a "religious" combat between divines; and that a tract of a Peace Society may be written by a pen guided by a more bitter personal dislike than any sword ever wielded by the hero of a hundred fights.