

The Coming War in Europe.

In the London *Gentleman's Magazine* for January, the following able paper contributed by H. M. HOSE, Esq., appears. It discusses in an intelligent manner and purely from an English Commercial point of view the fighting capacities of the continental nations of Europe in view of the German war predicted by Mr. D. MARLÉ, as follows:—

Notwithstanding the desire that may exist on the part of the French people to rush into a war with Germany, to gain revenge for the defeat of four years ago, it is doubtful if the French Government would encourage the aspiration. Torn as France is by political dissensions, it is extremely doubtful whether any Ministry would add the cares and the perils of war to the other prominent dangers of its existence. Neither is the French army in condition—no is it likely to be for many years—to undertake a campaign of magnitude. The military organization of the Second Empire was entirely broken up by the disasters of the German war. At the present time no fixed plan can really be said to have been adopted for the organization of the army; the questions as to depots and *cadres* are still unsolved. French military men assert that their artillery is in a powerful state; but it may reasonably be doubted that in the short time that has elapsed since the enormous loss of that arm which occurred in the German war, it can have been replaced by guns judiciously selected and carefully manufactured. Though there is not a great dearth of men in the French army, it cannot be said that the recruits are of a satisfactory kind. The weakness of the commissariat arrangement was one of the potent causes of the failure of the French in the German war. It has not yet been thoroughly changed for the better. The *mitrailleuses*, which were so zealously guarded, and which were expected to strike terror in the German ranks, were found to be a failure in the war, and have now been abandoned for all practical purposes of campaigning; so that at present France is not in a condition to "rush into war." It has taken England twenty years to reorganize from the break down of her military system in the Crimean war, and a vast amount of money has been expended in effecting the changes; and it can hardly be possible that things are so much better managed in France that she can in four or five years put an army in the field with any prospects of winning back the laurels so rudely wrested from her in the last great contest.

Spain may be considered at the present moment out of the military arena of Europe. She is too much engrossed by her internal troubles to be available either as an ally or enemy in case of international disturbances. Italy possesses an army of considerable numerical force—an army which may be in round numbers said to amount to 400,000 men. But in Italy the sinews of war are wanting. The Italian Government is hard pressed by financial difficulties. The Italian army is a new machine, and, like all other new machines, it cannot be expected to work smoothly throughout. Its organization and administration were originally copied from the French; but since the breakdown of the French system the organization of the Italian army has been considerably modified. Still, it cannot be denied that the Italian military forces are a formidable power to be considered in the fighting capacity of Europe, and would cast an enormous weight into the scale on either side.

As to the two neutral countries of Belgium

and Switzerland little need be said. The neutrality of one is guaranteed by the Great Powers, and the other has perhaps a still greater guarantee of neutrality in the shape of public opinion in Europe. The Belgian army may be 80,000 strong. Perhaps they are not the finest troops in the world, but still they are not, as a great statesman is reported to have said of them, "merely all coat and musket and little man." It is certain that Belgium, unaided, could not hold her frontiers against either Germany or France, if either of these powers wished to make the Netherlands its battle field or its line of communications.

"A great and mysterious power looms up in the North." On the 1st of November last a law came into force by which every Russian subject became liable to military service, and the consequence of the decree is an enormous increase in the army. It is estimated that next year Russia will be able to put into the field 1,000,000 men. These men are excellent soldiers in many respects. They may not be acute or intelligent, but they are strong, hardy, capable of bearing fatigue, have an intense loyalty to their sovereign, believe that the Russian Government can do no wrong, and would enter upon any campaign ordered by that Government with all the religious excitement of a crusade. The organization of the army is simple and well conceived. The men are tall, strong, and fine, and if properly led and supplied with good ammunition the Russian army would be most formidable in any war. For defensive purposes Russia holds a peculiarly advantageous position. The terrible example of the First Napoleon still gives a shiver to almost anybody who contemplates the idea of invading her. No doubt an invasion of the present time would be a very different matter from what it was at the beginning of this century. Still it would be attended with enormous difficulties, not the least of which would be the inhospitable climate, the impossibility of feeding an invading army on a wild and sparsely populated country, and the necessity which would fall on the invaders of drawing their supplies almost wholly from their base. A line of communication might become so much extended that the troops requisite to guard the line, and the officers necessary to administer it, would consume more of the provisions than the line itself could bring up. In future wars it is doubtful whether, considering the number of men that would probably be engaged, it will even be possible to rely on the supply of an army from its base of communications. A weighty oppression, however, hangs over the military organization of Russia. The official administration is so corrupt that it is almost certain that in case of war speculation would be rife, and the Russian soldiers—brave, loyal, and hardy as they might be—would find themselves worsted by an internal enemy more deadly than any external foe. All this is well known and talked of openly on the soil of Russia.

The united northern power of Sweden and Norway possesses certainly a small but excellent army, but probably would be too wise to enter upon any European war, even of great dimensions. It would have little to gain by descending into the theatre of contest, and possibly might lose some provinces to Russia. Denmark might, indeed, be anxious to join an alliance against Germany, for the sore of the Schleswig-Holstein campaign is not yet healed over. But she has been so hampered by the war of 1864, and her population has been so reduced, that her tiny army of 40,000 men would rank as comparatively insignificant in the consideration of the military capacities of the Continent,

Turkey is always a source of danger in European policy, and must be "almost a nightmare in every foreign office." The men of the army are good, but the administration of Turkey is much more corrupt and venal even than that of her northern neighbour, Russia. The small principalities which form the kingdom of Roumania have an army which is not to be despised. They could put in the field about eighty thousand men, and these not all bad troops.

It is Germany, which is universally considered at the present time to be the first rate military power of Europe, and towards it all eyes are directed. The German army has proved itself to be a most admirable military machine. Most armies after such successes as those which have attended the German army would have got idle and claimed the right to rest on their laurels and enjoy luxury and ease, but it is a notorious fact that the German officers, high and low, have been working harder perhaps than they worked before the late war in order to keep their army from retrograding and to bring it steadily forwards. The opinion of those who witnessed the late German manoeuvres is, that at no time has the German army ever been in such first rate condition as it is at the present moment. Not content with the needle gun, which showed an inferiority to the Chassepot during the French war, experiments have been instituted, and a new arm has been adopted, which, it is confidently asserted, will be much more superior to the Chassepot than ever the Chassepot was to the needle gun. It is believed by the best judges that the German army now is the best armed force in Europe. As to the organization of the army there cannot be two opinions; it has passed through the fire of three wars, and has proved its capacity. The Empire could, at the present time, put 1,200,000 fighting men in the field in case of actual necessity; and the reorganization of the Landsturm will increase that force to perhaps 1,600,000 men. As to the policy of Germany towards other powers, it is a great mistake to attribute blood thirstiness to the Emperor William or his heir, the Prince Imperial. It is known by everybody who has a knowledge of the character of the Emperor that he is peculiarly kind and just, and rather soft hearted; he is loved by those who are brought in connection with him, and his household, and it is only been after the strongest representations from his Ministers, severe mental struggles, self torture, and deep and anxious prayer, that he consented to enter upon hostilities with neighbouring powers. As long as the Emperor of Germany can exert his individual will there can be no doubt that, although Germany will be strictly fenced and guarded against any attack from without, and will be held in a state of the highest military preparation for every contingency, she herself will not willingly commence a war, or without very grave and serious cause draw the sword from the scabbard. Yet, though the princes and people of Germany alike combine in an honest desire for peace, circumstances may arise which may render them powerless to avert bloodshed. There can be no doubt that dislike exists between the people of Russia and Germany, but at the same time there is a strong personal affection between the head of the House of Hohenzollern and the Emperor of Russia springing from family connection and matured by reciprocal respect; and as long as the present Emperor of Russia lives, hostilities between the two powers are not imminent. According to all human calculations the life of Alexander may continue for some time.

It has been said that the danger of war be-