

OFFICERS LONG COURSE--GUNNERY SCHOOL QUEBEC.

November 1873.

"OPERATIONS OF WAR."

(Continued from page 23.)

**Question 4.**—What are generally the objects of military operations? What would be the objective of the United States against Canada, and why? What would be the probable base of operation, the roads, rails and rivers forming the main lines of communication from that base?

**Answer to Question 4.**—The objects of military operations are generally the securing of disputed territory, or the reduction of the military power of a nation—it may also be dynastic aggrandizement—this was the object of nearly all Napoleon's campaigns. The two first objects necessarily blend into one though the second may exist without the first; an example of the second is found in the Crimean war, Sebastopol was destroyed thus reducing the military preponderance of Russia on the Black Sea, by depriving her of arsenals and military station, from which she could prepare the invasion of Turkey. The conquest of Alsace and Lorraine is an example of the first—the Germans claiming them in virtue of the theory of similar nationalities being united under the same government; that conquest reduces the military power of France considerably, making her frontier much more vulnerable and the contingent of the Provincial armies no more available for her defence. But for her invasion these two Provinces were claimed as having belonged to the old German Empire; but these reasons were put forward after the war, which, when successful, can generally be justified for all practical purposes. The occupation of an enemy's capital would belong to a second class of objects, as by occupying the capital of a country its trade and commerce is paralyzed and its main lines of communications are closed, thus paralyzing also its power of defence; but this occupation to be most fruitful must be accompanied by the ruin of that country's defending armies. The occupation of Madrid by Napoleon paralyzed the defence of Spain so completely that it would have fallen an easy prey to the conqueror had it not been for the timely interference of a British contingent under Wellington, but that contingent nullified the effect of the French occupation to such an extent, as to finally compel the French king Joseph, to retire from the country though he had occupied the capital for several years. In case of war with the States, Montreal would be the objective point, because it is easy of access, and because it is the strategical capital of Canada as well as its commercial metropolis.

An American army might be collected at a point in rear of Rouses Point under cover of fortified positions, and move on Canadian territory, which at that point offers no favorable features for defence, being flat, and then the distance of the object from the frontier is quite short being about two days' march—forty miles—the roads are also favorable for an advance towards Montreal. Montreal by its position forms a very desirable object to the enemy it is the head of navigation and the main point where all arteries of traffic converge either from the States or from one end of the Dominion to the other. By its occupation the navigation of the St. Lawrence is interrupted and the railways & canals are in the hands of the invading army. Canada is cut in two and all succour from England or the eastern parts of

Canada is effectually prevented from reaching the West in part of the Dominion—consequently communication between the armies in the different parts of the Dominion is precluded, and consequently the defence is paralyzed. The occupation of Montreal stops all trade and traffic; commerce stopped, the supplies can no more be transferred from one end of the Dominion to the other and the only practical way of intercourse between the West and East and the outside world is closed. The political influence of Montreal would be considerable as also its moral effect on the defence. The probable base of operations of the invading force would be Albany, its situation renders it desirable as such, and it could be made a vast arsenal and magazine to which converge numerous lines of rails and navigation from all parts of the United States, replenishing it with supplies, which could from thence be forwarded by lines of communication radiating from it towards the Canadian frontier. By water—the Hudson River, Lake Champlain, and Richelieu River; by rail—the Vermont Central and the Ogdensburg Railways are the main arteries through which troops and provisions could be forwarded in. The objection to Quebec as an objective is its fortifications and its position, for even if the invader managed to reduce it he would have to meet stronger obstacles, as he advanced towards the west. Then to reduce Quebec the enemy would have to direct an invading force against Montreal at the same time, or maintain strong armies of observation to prevent his siege operations being interfered with, a thing not easily done unless he is in possession of the north shore of the St. Lawrence, and he cannot hold it securely unless Montreal falls into his hands; for he would have as a perpetual menace all the strength of the Dominion, or well nigh, threatening his communications and harassing him in every way—apart from such succor as the naval power of Great Britain would afford being in possession of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and supreme on the sea.

**Question 5.**—Supposing sufficient force and supply, could this line of action be reversed on the United States, and, if so, what advantage would Great Britain have in changing her base, and in what direction?

**Answer to Question 5.**—Undoubtedly. Gunboats could be directed on Lake Champlain through canal and river Richelieu. An invading force might advance, concentrating from east and west near Montreal, and be directed over the United States frontier, ruining its magazines and occupying its towns, while a powerful diversion could be organized on the lakes with gunboats and troops of disembarkation, (a) and at the same time by the whole strength of the British navy and contingent in New York, or some other important city of the Union, disembarking troops at some favorable point to operate in junction with armies directed from Canada, and occupying the political capital of the United States. The disaffected South could probably be made to rise up and claim its independence if England guaranteed its recognition and thus creating another diversion in favor of Canada, thus the States would be attacked east and north west and south and obliged to divide its armies to meet the invaders whilst the Pacific coast might become the theatre of another maritime enterprise on

the part of Great Britain (a). The naval power of the State is null, and its coasts are as many vulnerable points which a strong naval power might attack with certainty of success. A navy is not improvised, especially when an enemy's men of war are bombarding and destroying the navy yards where the ships are to be constructed. By taking the sea as her base Great Britain would no longer fear flank attacks for her communication would be perpendicular to her base—*sic ut contingents from Nova Scotia along the Maine frontier they are exposed to flank attacks on their line of advance.*

**Question 6.**—Give a short historical sketch of the growth of the present military system of organization and supply, from the feudal period to the introduction of standing armies, the subsequent growth of fortresses as magazines, and the final elaboration of the system of supply? What was the ancient Scottish method mentioned by Froissart?

**Answer to Question 6.**—During the feudal period armies were composed of noblemen with their retainers, semi independent in their actions; these fractions were partly under the king or the commander named by him. The king then had only the resources of his private domain—no right of levying taxes, and could not afford the expense of providing for the food of his army which was obliged to subsist on territories it occupied alike ruinous for friend or foe; an armed rabble more than an army they were obliged in order to subsist to divide and live wide apart and could not be brought together for lengthened operations, for when joining they ruined the country, they had then to disperse again.

But as the power of the kings increased the independence of nobility diminished and taxation before an impossibility was resorted to in order to obtain the necessary funds for supplying armies more regularly. These troops were also paid by the sovereign and in his permanent employ; and the progress of military organization would have been more rapid had it not been for the roads and means of communication which passing through barren and thickly inhabited countries of small traffic were not sufficient for the transport of cumbersome trains and artillery, but as countries became more prosperous roads improved, and fortresses which had up to then sufficed to protect populations at the first sign of invasion could no longer resist artillery. Vauban, and before him other engineers perfected these fortresses which became strongholds which an invader was obliged to force if he wanted to advance in an enemy's country; as these fortresses were situated on great commercial arteries, &c., they became also places of refuge for repulsed armies and magazines into which provisions, arms, and recruits were armed and formed previous to their being sent forward into the theatre of war. The fall of such a place constituted the object of a whole campaign, and battles were fought to maintain the siege or to have it raised. Frederick the Great recognizing the dissolving influence of famine and want of supplies upon the discipline of an army was very particular in that respect and the result was that troops became of such importance that the securing of one deserved, it was thought, worth the altering of the plan of a whole campaign. The armies became cumbersome unwieldy machines totally inadequate to cope with an active enemy, as the

(a) It is forbidden by treaty to build gunboats on the lakes, but if a canal was made from the Coteau Landing on the North Shore, British gunboats could run up to the lakes—the Beauharnois Canal would be probably seized by the United States.

(a) 70,000 British and Sikhs could, perhaps, be landed at San Francisco from India. If allowed to loot California, the Sikhs troops would be ugly customers; but it would be necessary to hang Mr. Bright and Gladstone before commencing operations. Also Mr. C. Dilke.