

## COLONEL HAMLEY ON WAR.\*

The chief peculiarity of modern strategy, as distinguished from that of ancient times, will be learned for the first time by civilians with much surprise. It appears that Prussia has reared up a new school of war, which the world is adopting, and that the characteristic of this military education is that each individual combatant "in his degree has his intelligence cultivated, and is expected to use it. An essentially new element of great force is thereby introduced into the military system." This may seem to the civilian to be an impediment to discipline, but the reverse has been proved by experience. This being so, it may be advisable that a small catechism, founded on a book like that of Colonel Hamley, should be put into the hands of every British soldier. It would familiarize him with the theory of warlike operations. The name of Thiers has been dear to every French soldier since he presented to each a copy of his great historical work. Why should not our military authorities in a similar way endeavor to throw the business of war to every man in the British army?

Colonel Hamley gives a history of the development both of strategy and tactics, or in other words of campaigning and field battles. His historical retrospect is not without its practical use; for although modern warfare differs widely from that of feudal times, yet in proportion as railways are cut, magazines captured, or communications interrupted, an army is reduced proportionately to the condition of troops in the early portions of our history. Indeed physical strength and courage will always have their weight, both in strategy and field battles.

The chief difficulty, however, of modern campaigning, is to secure supplies. For want of those Wellington had to retreat from glorious Talavera back to Portugal, Sherman's passage through Georgia, in 1864 does not, in Colonel Hamley's opinion, disprove the necessity for an easy approach to supplies, as Sherman's movement was for the sole and definite object of ravaging the enemy's territory, and thus deprive him of so much of his stores. After supplies, good roads rank next in importance. Colonel Hamley discusses this question ably and succinctly, as well as the transport of troops by railway. It is necessary to move large armies not on one, but on several parallel roads. If Napoleon the First's army had invaded Belgium by three roads instead of one, it would have extended 43 miles. When thus lengthened, a slight British force, by enveloping the head of the French column, would have inflicted a series of crushing defeats before the rear could possibly arrive on the scene of action. Armies, therefore, must be advanced by parallel roads, and these should have good lateral communications with each other. The Colonel illustrates this doctrine in a clear and simple manner by reference to the French and Austrian marches in Italy in 1859.

While armies are advancing, they must also be moving forward their magazines, establishing new ones along the route, and keeping communications open with their base. These objects were thoroughly realized by the Prussians in 1871—first, in their concentration on the Rhine about Bin-

gen, Mainz, and Worms; secondly, by the capture of French stores at Forbach and Saargemünde; thirdly, at Metz; and fourthly, at Orleans. The author does not place much confidence in railway communications. This opinion is evidently sound. He does not, however, attach sufficient importance to what is termed in military parlance, the initiative, or the power of making the enemy follow your own movements. Can any doubt be entertained of the value of the first blow, after what was found, in 1870, to ensue upon the delay of the French army on the west of the Rhine?

The power of concentration possessed by the aggressor is of incalculable value. The enemy are then in the same predicament in which they would be if their whole army was moving on one route only. It can be seen in detail, while it will still be afraid to concentrate, lest the first attack be only a feint. Aggression along a line of railway is also the best. This is not Colonel Hamley's opinion, but he does not appear to give its full value to an initiative policy of any kind. Of course the advance should be slow and cautious, but having a railway in the rear of every foot of ground is of much importance for bringing up supplies, while the possession of the line will exclude the enemy from its use until they succeed in forcing a retreat. A defensive policy also leaves the general at the mercy of politicians. If he is on the enemy's territory he can wheel about as he pleases, but any movement like a retreat on one's own soil is disastrous. The Emperor of the French experienced this in 1870, and was thus embarrassed in all his plans.

In the seventh chapter the author gives a detailed account of the campaign of Metz and Sedan, considered with reference to the views recently expounded in the treatise, especially those relating to the configuration of frontiers. All the disasters of the campaign referred to appear to be mainly owing to the want of due preparation and the consequent delay on the part of the French. The author, who is not of the boldest school of writers (although every sentence pronounces him a brave man), censures severely the conduct of Bazaine at Borny and Vionville. It appears that the marshal laboured under "a misappreciation of the relation of a fortress to an army in the field. Instead of regarding it as a point of manoeuvre to be relinquished when its relevancy ceases, he treated it as his actual base. In clinging to Metz he acted like one who, when the ship is foundering lays hold of the anchor." Charles XII., Alexander the Great, or Napoleon I., will usually succeed in war by reason of the celerity of his movements. A Bazaine will always fail, even with the best strategic theory. Old generals, always excepting Von Moltke, are rarely brilliant or successful. "Action, action, action," is the essence of oratory, according to the opinion of the greatest of rhetoricians "Action," at all events, is the main essence of warfare. Wooden walls may protect a nation long enough, but wooden legs will certainly never enable her to make an impression on a neighbor.

The author considers that the new frontier line of France is eminently disadvantageous to that country. She must therefore, he thinks, fortify the line of the Meuse and also "form an entrenched camp, with bridges connecting it on both sides of the Moselle, across the railway at Frouard, and with a bridge head at the east bank of the Meurthe," with a base southward at Dijon and Besançon.

Colonel Hamley has thus considered the

future of Europe as well as the past. His treatise is, indeed, both elementary, exhaustive, and practical. A civilian can understand and appreciate most of it, while it contains at the same time accounts of intricate combinations, any of which might pass for a Wellington Prize Essay. In particular the campaigns of Metz and Sedan and the account of the battle of Woerth will be read with peculiar interest both by military men and civilians. The maps and plans are also of a simple construction, and greatly facilitate either a deep study or a pleasant cursory perusal of the work.

**THE ESTABLISHMENT QUESTION.**—The committee appointed by the synod of the United Presbyterian Church, in May 1871, to watch and to defeat "the attempts of the friends of the Establishments over the Kingdom to prop up the existing system," have just issued a statement which may be regarded as a manifesto of the body, and one likely to be followed by vigorous action. It sets forth in detail the various arguments urged by the committee to justify the assertions that the State Church system is—1. Unscriptural; 2. Is injurious to the interests of religion; and 3. Is opposed to political equity. Among the closing passages is one in which reference is made to the proposed abolition of patronage in the Church of Scotland, and to schemes of comprehension and Church reform in England.

**CAPTAIN STERLING, R. N.**—The death of this old naval officer is announced at the ripe age of 83 years. He had been ill for some time, but possessed the full use of his faculties till a few days before his death, when he was prostrated by a stroke of paralysis, from which he never rallied. Glen tyan Industrial School was erected mainly through his exertions and liberality. Captain Sterling took a prominent part in the formation of the Kilbarchan Volunteer Corps, and to the last was a liberal subscriber to its funds. Indeed, every good object received from him a ready and generous support. He was twice married, and has left a widow to mourn his loss.

**Sensible Advice.**—A conference of the miners delegates of Scotland was recently held at Glasgow, at which a resolution was passed expressing entire disapproval of the line of policy pursued by the men of the Wishaw, Motherwell, and Holytown districts, who have been offered 9s. a day, and then struck for 10s. The meeting advised them to return to the work immediately at 9s.

The Radical and Republican deputies in the National Assembly, at a separate meeting held last night, resolved to appoint a Committee consisting of twenty persons each who are also to appoint sub-committee, to report a plan for the settlement of the Ministerial crisis.

General Cordoba, Minister of War, persists in his determination to resign his position in the Cabinet.

It is now probable that the Assembly will not be dissolved.

REMITTANCES Received on Subscription to THE VOLUNTEER REVIEW up to Saturday, the 1st Inst.—

KINASTON, Ont.—Ens. Henry Conly..... \$2.00  
WURRY, Ont.—Capt. Joseph White..... 4.00

\* The Operations of War, explained and illustrated. By Edward Bruce Hamley, Colonel in the Royal Artillery, Companion of the Bath, Knight of the Legion of Honour and the Medjidie, Commandant of the Staff College. Third edition, William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London.