

perior nautical skill, enabled the Roman soldier to fight on the decks of the enemy with as much confidence as on the land. These and these alone, prevented the two columns of the wedge from being forced together, and saved the Roman van and centre. A careful study of this great sea fight in all its details cannot fail to prove instructive to the naval officer of the present day, when steamers have taken the place of the ancient war galleys, and, with proper turning power, without which, a man of war, whatever her speed, armament, or armor, is unworthy of a place in the line of battle, may and should be manœuvred on precisely similar principles.

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BARON STOFFEL'S REPORTS ON THE PRUSSIAN ARMY.

Amongst the numerous documents which have been given to the public connected with the late war between France and Germany, there is none that can be considered of greater historical importance than the reports sent from time to time by Baron Stoffel, the French military attaché at Berlin. A translation of these appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* for November and December, 1871, and the translator, Lieutenant Vincent, of the 23rd Welsh Fusiliers, has republished them in the shape of a convenient little book. The first of these reports is dated 23rd April, 1868, and points out in what lies the superiority of the Prussian Army over that of France. The first point on which Baron Stoffel lays stress is that of the relative superiority in morale of the two armies. Under this head, he declares there are two things which contribute to give the Prussian Army an incontestable advantage over every other European army:—First, the principle, that military service is obligatory on every one; secondly, the instruction that pervades every class of the nation. In Prussia, not to have served either in the army or in the Militia is looked upon as a disgrace, and the unfortunate individual who from any cause has escaped undergoing the discipline of the drill sergeant is looked upon with contempt, and has to submit to the gibes of his fellow-countrymen. With regard to the second point, enough has been said about the advantages which an army, every member of which can read and write, many of whom, also, have received a superior education, has over in which a large proportion are simply men who hardly know their right hands from their left. Baron Stoffel comments with astonishment on the apathy which characterises the upper classes in France, as to the want of some regular system of education in France similar to that in Germany. He says:—

"But is it not somewhat strange that in France, men who have a reputation for ability and clearness of mind refuse to believe in the advantages which an extension of education must afford in the composition of an army? Is it not tantamount to denying that instruction and education develop the faculties of men, and elevate his ideas by giving him a sense of his own dignity? Those savans innocently affirm that an army of rough, uncivilised soldiers, but accustomed to warfare, will defeat an army composed of well-educated men, who, however, have no war-like experiences."

Baron Stoffel says that this was the more impressed upon his mind as, after the war of 1866, the Prussian officers and sergeants told him—"When after the first battles, our men found themselves in the presence

of Austrian prisoners; when they questioned and examined them, and found that the majority hardly knew their right hand from the left, there was not a Prussian who did not conceive himself a god compared to such miserable wretches; and this conviction increased our strength tenfold." Another cause to which the unprecedented success of the Prussian armies may be ascribed is their wonderful sense of duty. Nothing can exceed the manner in which the humblest individual performs his allotted work. "Paid with a parsimony quite astonishing, and frequently burdened with a family, the men who constitute the personnel of the various Government bureaux labour all day with an indefatigable zeal, without complaining, and without appearing to aspire to an easier position."

In the second place, Baron Stoffel considers what material elements of superiority the Prussian Army possesses. The first of these is the facility which the Prussian military organisation possesses for the organisation of certain special branches, as for instance, the companies of wounded bearers, those for the repair &c., of railways, and for the laying down and working of the telegraph lines. These noncombatants are not in any way recruited from the effective personnel of the army, and are moreover, kept up during peace. Another element is the great importance attached by the Prussians to musketry and artillery instruction. They consider and rightly so, that it is of no use furnishing a man with a beautiful weapon unless you teach him how to use it to the best advantage. Although the Chassepot rifle is undoubtedly a very superior weapon to the Prussian needle-gun, still in the late war the French soldiers did not turn that superiority to any account, except to commence firing at enormous ranges and with great rapidity, but without taking aim; consequently they fired away immense quantities of ammunition without any commensurate result. Baron Stoffel remarks:—

"It is impossible to attach too great an importance to musketry instruction. In Prussia the greatest care is paid to it. Every man of a battalion receives 120 rounds yearly no matter what length of service he has. Besides which the artillery gives to those battalions, who, after their practice, return them more than a third part of the actual weight of the bullets used; a certain quantity of cartridges proportional to this excess. These latter are fired away by the worst shots, from whence there results that each soldier actually fires more than 130 rounds a year. All the regimental officers take part in this practical instruction, and are borne on the register of musketry."

With regard to the question of artillery superiority, Baron Stoffel, unhesitatingly give it to Prussia, and warns the Minister for War that he must not think that because the Prussian Artillery could not hold its own against that of the Austrians in the war of 1866, it was so inferior as the Austrians wished to make out. He gives many good and cogent reasons, which we have not space to enter upon, to show that although the Austrian Artillery did more damage than the Prussian in 1866, it was a great mistake to cry down the latter, and that at the time he wrote, viz., April, 1868 the material of the Prussian Artillery had undergone a great change for the better. He then proceeds to speak of the great efficiency of the Prussian Staff, and of the corresponding inferiority of that of his own country.

"It is useless to conceal it; it must one day come upon us as an appalling truth. The

Prussian Staff is the first in Europe; ours cannot be compared to it."

This was strong language, and coming from the source it did, it is impossible to understand why more attention was not paid to it. When the principle was recognised, that of all the officers of the army, those of the staff must be the most capable, what steps were taken to bring it into practical effect? It was decided to recruit officers for the staff among those of every branch of the Service, and to give those who offered themselves every inducement and stimulus by rapid promotion, &c., to exert themselves, the power, however, being reserved of immediately dismissing from the staff at any moment of their career, those officers who failed to show sufficient ability or zeal in the discharge of their duties. In consequence of these measures, and candidates for the staff are all young officers ambitious; intelligent, and hardworking. Ambitious, because they seek rapid promotion, intelligent, because they knew that if they do not come up to the required intellectual standard they will be sent back to their regiments.

"The more I see of it and the more opportunity I have of comparing it with our own, the more forcibly am I struck with our own inferiority. I do not for a minute mean to deny that France possesses staff officers whose abilities are equal to those of the most capable officer in the Prussian staff corps. But the latter does not contain any officers of mediocre ability; and how many have we, on the other hand, whose education has been more than insufficient? How many do we not find who can hardly read a military map who have no knowledge of the manœuvres of the different arms, who have never studied modern campaigns, and who indeed—for we saw that it was the case in the Italian campaign of 1859—are unable to choose the camping ground fit for a brigade of infantry or a regiment of cavalry. Here we find nothing of that kind. Such officers would not be admitted into the staff corps, or at any rate, they would be expelled therefrom as soon as their inefficiency showed itself. With us the recruiting of the staff corps is left entirely to the issue of a single examination passed at the age of twenty-one, as we take the greatest majority from those cadets who pass first out of the military school of St. Cyr. Honestly, have we in the successful passing of this one examination, the smallest guarantee of the clear judgment, of the hard working disposition, of the zeal, ability, and military qualifications which, according to the Prussian system, are necessary for the service which admits of 'no mediocrity'? Nevertheless, these young men are appointed staff officers, and remain so till the day of their retirement. If after their exit from school, they do not show the smallest taste for a military life, and if they give themselves up to idleness and live in ignorance, what does it matter? We entrust during war those functions which demand the utmost activity, the greatest judgment, and the most extensive knowledge, to these officers alike incapable and disgusted with the Service.

"I repeat that in Prussia idleness and mediocrity are considered totally inadmissible amongst the officers of the staff. Speaking alone of physical capabilities, does one expect to find there as in France officers unable to ride three miles at full gallop? I am well acquainted with everything connected with the Prussian Staff, and I declare that General von Moltke would immediately dismiss any officer of that branch who was not