

REPUBLICS AND STANDING ARMIES.

Among the fundamental principles which governed the original founders of the American Republic, there was none more firmly rooted and generally accepted than that a large standing Army is incompatible with the liberties of a free people. The Declaration of Independence recited, among other weighty charges against the offending King of Great Britain, that "he has kept among us in times of peace standing armies without the consent of our Legislatures, and has affected to render the military independent of and superior to the civil power." Inasmuch as the theory on which the allegiance to the British Crown of her North American colonies was rudely severed by rebellion was to the effect that "Government derives its just rights from the consent of the governed," the fathers of the Republic strenuously maintained that no Army would ever be wanted except for resistance to foreign aggression. It was never imagined that, to quote the phrase of our American kinsmen, "the best Government that the world ever saw" would have to draw the sword against its own disaffected and recalcitrant citizens. Even within the decade immediately before the outbreak of a war which brought nearly two millions of combatants upon either side into the field, it was an axiom of every American statesman that a small standing Army is an essential condition of transatlantic liberty. And the very exhaustion of the South, consequent upon the long protraction of the war, has rendered the maintenance of a large standing Army by their victors superfluous and unnecessary. For these reasons we learn with little surprise that the U. S. Army, which had dwindled since the war from 50,000 to 30,000 men, is now about to undergo a further reduction of 10,000 bayonets. The Federal authorities, warned by the paramount importance of contracting expenditure to the utmost, now find that a standing army of 20,000 men is all the force requisite to carry on the functions of government over an area of territory covering 3,314,365 square miles.

It is alleged, in the advices which reach us from the other side of the Atlantic, that General Sherman, the Commander-in-Chief of the U. S. Army, has done his utmost to resist the curtailment by one-third of the force under his command. Nothing can be more natural than that a soldier who regards the machine over which he presides with military rather than statesmanlike eyes, should object to the abatement of lustre and loss of prestige to which, as an individual, he has thus condemned. We can all of us imagine the military obloquy with which a Prime Minister of any party would be overwhelmed in these islands were he to propose a reduction in the British rank and file that extended even to 5,000 men. But calm reflection will serve, as it seems to us, to convince General Sherman that a standing force of 20,000 men is amply sufficient for any exigency likely to be imposed upon U. S. Army. The abolition of slavery has removed the only pretext upon which the Southerners are again likely to take up arms; and, if a commercial quarrel should ever arise in the great republic, the South will find itself in complete harmony with the West, and between them they will have little difficulty in peacefully coercing New England and the other manufacturing States of the Eastern seaboard. It is absurd to pretend that any foreign power has the slightest disposition to invade the Territory of the United States, and the 20,000

American soldiers are wanted mainly to keep down the aboriginal tribes of red Indians, which have always served to familiarize our kinsman with warfare, just as Algeria has for the last thirty years been, in the Duc d'Angoulême's phrase, "a wholetone for French military valor, and as Hindostan has contributed to the organization and discipline of our own regulars. But, in addition to the absence of all internal reasons necessitating the maintenance of a large standing Army by the United States, we hold, with De Tocqueville, that all well-wishers to the stability of a republic ought to resist the establishment in its centre of a machine essentially aristocratic in its type and constitution. For two years after the outbreak of the transatlantic civil war the Southerners gained an advantage because the South was more aristocratic than the North. The owners of the large plantations scattered over Virginia, the Carolinas, and Gulf States occupied a position somewhat analogous to that of our own feudal nobility in the Middle Ages. When war arose they ascended naturally and automatically to the position of military leaders, and easily inquired the "means whites" who followed them to battle with their own headlong and haughty courage. In the Northern States, on the other hand, where the theory has always prevailed that Jack is as good as his master, if not better, the anomaly that officers and privates called each other by their Christian names, and sometimes occupied the same tent and sat at the same mess table, militated not a little at the outset against the establishment of due subordination. It was not until the best officers of West Point, and especially Generals Grant, Sherman, and Meade, had introduced into the Federal armies the same discipline which prevailed in the Southern from the first, that the superior strength of the North began to tell upon its weakened opponent.

The consideration leads us naturally to a contemplation of the admirable sagacity with which the national military school at West Point was established by its founders. The principal moral taught by the American civil war was that regularly-trained officers are enormously superior when nations take arms, to civilians, or, as they are scornfully called in the United States, "mustangs" generals. During the war of 1846, between the United States and Mexico, it had already been ascertained that "politicians" make contemptible soldiers. During the terrible disruption of the Union which commenced in 1861, there was hardly a general of eminence upon either side who had not learned his business at the National Academy of West Point, Lee, Jackson, Longstreet, Sidney Johnson, Beauregard, Joseph E. Johnston, Ripley, Hood and Stuart were the heroes of the Confederacy; while Grant, Sherman, Meade, Macpherson, McClellan, Kilpatrick, Pleasanton, and other Alumni of West Point, carried away all the honors on the Northern side. The only two civilians who distinguished themselves during the war were, among the Federals, General Terry, by whom Fort Fisher was taken; and among the Confederates, General Forrest, who was popularly believed, to have had thirty horses killed under him. Some of the best military heads that the United States have produced—and it is not denied by those foreigners who are acquainted with the Country that there is no nation with greater aptitudes for soldiering than our transatlantic brethren—have often expressed surprise that England has not two or three such national schools for manufacturing officers as that which exists at West

Point. From the moment when a cadet joins the transatlantic Military Academy he is the nation's property. His friends at home are forbidden to send him any pocket money, he has pay, rations, and uniform assigned to him as though he was serving on a campaign, and for the first two out of the four years that he passes at West Point he is allowed no leave or holidays. The result was that few more capable officers were turned out of training by any European nation than those who graduated at West Point before the great civil war. While it is notorious that the French military Engineers educated at Saumur, St. Cyr, and the Lycée Napoleon are unable to hold their own in the construction of railways and bridges against their civilian rivals, there is hardly a great work within the area of the United States which has not sprung from the brain of an officer brought up at West Point. Some of the best mathematicians and topographical engineers in the world hail from the same laborious seminary. Every well-wisher to the great Republic will rejoice that President Grant has overruled General Sherman, and determined that 20,000 men constitute a sufficient force for the Regular Army. But it is of equal importance that West Point be maintained in its ante-bellum efficiency, and that politics should be banished from the parade ground and quarters of officers who, let us hope, will never again be engaged in antagonistic and fratricidal strife.—*London Telegraph.*

ATHLETICS IN THE ARMY.

The circular which has just been issued by the Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief affords only another proof of the almost paternal solicitude which his royal highness feels with regard to everything that can promote the efficiency and well-being of the army. His royal highness strenuously exhorts all our young officers to devote a large portion of their leisure time to athletic games, in company and competition with the non-commissioned officers and men, believing, as he emphatically says, that such course would make both good officers, and good and strong and active soldiers, the latter being what, after all, is the great desideratum.

We have no doubt but that his royal highness's exhortation will be warmly responded to by the gentlemen to whom it is addressed, as the British gentlemen in uniform have just as warm an affection for muscular sports as the British gentleman in muff; and taking this for granted, we shall take the liberty of giving one or two hints which may have the effect of directing the zeal which we feel convinced will be created into a proper and profitable channel. We should, in the first instance, caution our intending athletes from having too much confidence in the training of the gymnastic school. Gymnastics, that is to say, the gymnastics of the poles and bars and ropes, are a German invention, and may do very well for men of sluggish nervous systems and little vital momentum, and who therefore would not be likely to be very successful in outdoor exercises. To reduce the German gymnastics to their first principle, they mean pulling, pulling your body up by ropes, and swinging about without any exertion of your own. But if gymnastics, when taught as a science and on a system, are to be useful to our officers, they should teach them to march, to run, to strike hard, and to resist striking, whether with sword or "butt," or