

Statecraft and Strategy—Britain's Experience

THE military correspondent of the London Times is contributing to that paper a series of instructive articles on "Statecraft and Strategy." The first reads as follows:

War is an act of government. The higher direction of war consequently rests in the hands of statesmen. There is not one of the arts of empire that requires longer study and more diligent apprenticeship.

Preparation for war and direction of arms by statecraft are difficult enough in every country, but they are more difficult in England than anywhere else. The extent of the empire is so vast, its circumstances are so extraordinary, its commitments so great, and its points of contact with other states so exceedingly numerous along land frontiers of unequalled extent, that the surface of exposure is very large.

The statesman entering political life with a liberal education has still everything to learn. He must gain personal knowledge of the countries which compose the empire, and must become acquainted with their system of government, their resources, and their needs. He must be content to master the business of administration by practical experience in subordinate posts. He must study foreign countries and must realize the motives which sway their governors and all classes of their people. He must know the actual and the potential military strength of every state in the world, and fix clearly in the tables of his mind the relative values of various combinations. If he is not a little ahead of his generation he will be behind it. Twenty years are not too long a time for the acquirement and assimilation of this knowledge. There is no royal road to statesmanship though many seek it.

But even when all this knowledge is acquired it is practically valueless in a great national crisis unless it can be applied on the firm basis of settled principles, that is to say, unless the art of statecraft directing arms has been deeply studied in the best school. History, corrected and reinforced by exact knowledge of existing conditions, is this school. History alone, or knowledge of present conditions alone, is not enough. The two must be combined. History affords a treasury of principles, and in history alone can the experience of great masters be studied and become known. In our libraries all the most illustrious figures of the world's history become our servants. They stand and wait until we are pleased to condescend to listen to them. Honor though it be to attend a king's levee, it is a greater honor to hold a levee of kings. Without this audience all is vain. But, since the throne and the Macedonian phalanx are both a little out of date, the teachings of history can be rectified by acquaintance with the conditions of modern war and its present means, it may prove a very uncertain and misleading guide.

There is this also to be remembered, namely, that though the policy of splendid isolation and the denouncement of continental entanglements make an effective war-cry for the popular orator, England still stands where she did, and, as in the past she has never been able to remain unconcerned in the present and the future. A policy of insular self-sufficiency, particularly for a nation which evades every form of national service, is exceedingly dangerous. England, as history proves, cannot do everything herself. Entire liberty of action in foreign policy is impracticable. Every government, unless prepared to face a hostile coalition, must accommodate its policy to the general situation and to the measures taken by foreign states. The political engagements, material connections, and vital interests which unite England with all the powers of the world, disallow her to regard without concern the changes in the relations between these powers.

Predominance at sea is for the British empire a question of life or death. On that point every one is in agreement. But the means whereby this predominance has been secured in the past, and may in the future be preserved, have become blurred by the obscuration of dogma. In the wars of the 18th century, after the Dutch power had waned, only two powers besides England possessed navies worth considering—namely, France and Spain. A two-power standard covered everything when there were only two other naval powers. This situation has greatly changed, and there are now so many hungry aspirants for naval power that combinations are possible which were not possible before. Moreover, if a rival's capacity to lay down and complete capital and other ships be adequate, and if his resources prove equal to the strain, every attempt on our part to outbuild him may be met by a corresponding advance on his. What then? Unless diplomacy secures arms, and unless the teachings of history are closely regarded, we may not, even with unimaginable sacrifices equal to those of war, maintain that predominance at sea which is the indispensable condition both of our security and of our existence.

The most successful war we ever waged, the war which made the British empire what it is, was that which ended with the Peace of Paris in February, 1763. It is consequently worthy of study in relation to the foregoing considerations. For the greater part of that war the forces of Britain, whether diplomatic, colonial, naval, or military, were directed by the genius of the elder Pitt. William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, whatever his place may be in history as a statesman, was the greatest ex-

ponent of statecraft directing British arms that ever lived. He was a great man in the true sense of the word. No single Englishman ever so completely dominated both friends and foes. His fiery oratory aroused the enthusiasm of the people, and inspired others with his own ardent courage. His majestic presence and fierce invective made every opponent in the Commons cower. His wise and steadfast diplomacy preserved to his country alliances beyond price. His judgment of men and his preference for youth gave his king's forces leaders equal to their mission. He was the earthly Providence of every leader in the field. His strategic grasp embraced the world, while his foresight and preparation made victory secure.

If certain aspects of his conduct of military affairs, namely, his participation in the continental strife and his enterprises against the coasts of France, have been very diversely appreciated by different authorities, we must find the reason in the fact that his strategy has never been adequately examined as a whole, and that the relation of the part to the whole has never been fairly and judiciously estimated. The histories of his time, even the latest, are replete with exhaustive accounts of his labors to obtain power and to preserve it. In the maze of domestic intrigue his conduct of war becomes obscured. The silver thread of continuity of strategic and diplomatic purpose, which came down to him from the past, and was handed on by him to his son, runs throughout all his conduct of the war. It is this thread which is not preserved in some of the doctrines of the present day, and is seriously in danger of becoming lost by neglect.

When the Seven Years' war began the British navy was double the strength of the navy of France. When the war ended the British navy was stronger than ever, while the navy of France was half destroyed. But in 1750 the population of our islands was under nine millions, and that of France twenty-five millions. Our revenue was five millions and that of France twenty-two millions. By what means did a nation so greatly inferior in resources contrive to outbuild its rival at sea in peace, and to outlast this rival during a long war? To answer these questions, which are fundamental and have not been answered by some recent writers, we must briefly review the policy of the two countries during the preceding age and throughout the war.

When Louis XIII. died, Cardinal Richelieu laid the foundations of a great colonial empire and a great navy. It was on this foundation that Colbert built but the continental wars which filled the whole reign of Louis XIV. distracted attention from the navy and withdrew from it, from the maritime establishments, and from naval affairs generally, that financial support by which alone they could be made to flourish. The year 1692 was the culminating point of the fortunes of the French navy, and from that year forward, as a necessary and inevitable consequence of the financial exhaustion caused by the preparation for and the conduct of continental wars, the French navy steadily declined. When Louis XIV. died he left France with a debt equal to fourteen milliards of the present French money. He had been forced to melt down and to turn into cash his gold plate, his silver furniture designed by Le Brun, and even the throne of the state room reserved for the reception of ambassadors. As the royal navy of France declined its methods declined also. In place of the squadron warfare in which d'Orville, Tourville, Chateaufort, Coetlogon, Langeron, and others had shone, France resorted to privateering, which, if it made the fame, not to mention the fortunes, of many notable corsairs, and if it caused England losses almost equal in numerical value to her captures, proved also in the long run completely ineffective as a means for securing a favorable peace.

The naval establishments which Richelieu had founded and Colbert had improved were neglected under the regency and during the ministry of Cardinal Fleury. France was unable to resist the naval power of England, and the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle left her with only 22 ships of the line. Maurepas could do nothing for the navy from 1723 to 1749, nor Rohille from 1749 to 1754, and though Machault made an effort from 1754 to 1758, his work was discontinued by Berryer between 1758 and 1761, that is to say, during the critical period of the Seven Years' war. By the natural force of circumstances and events there was no money for the navy. So long as Austria, England's ally, was powerful and possessed territory west of the Rhine, France was compelled to devote her chief efforts to restrain the growth and restrict the influence of that rival state from which the greatest immediate danger threatened.

The outbreak of the Seven Years' war saw an entire change in the policy of French alliances. Instead of supporting Prussia, the only state capable of keeping Austria in check, France endeavored to destroy her. It is true that the first treaty of Versailles of May 1, 1756, was in the main a defensive convention, since France and Austria, each for her own part, did no more than undertake to supply 24,000 men against any aggressor. Had this defensive attitude on the continent been maintained, France would have been free to dispose of all her military and financial resources against England, and might have left the continental powers to weaken each other as they pleased. But France was the dupe of Kaunitz and his famous queen, who were intent upon Prussia's destruction. Madame de Pompadour, all powerful at the time, contributed

through spite of Frederick to the perpetration of the most signal error of French history, and France became once more immersed in continental strife, and this time on behalf of interests other than her own. By the second treaty of Versailles of May 1, 1757, she engaged to furnish 105,000 men, to pay Maria Theresa 12 million florins a year, and to subsidize the Wurtembergers and Bavarians. By entering at one and the same time upon the maritime contest with England, and upon the continental struggle with Prussia, France attempted to secure two different ends and failed in both.

The French field armies grew to 120,000 in 1757 and to 160,000 in 1761. The latter figure, according to Napoleon, represented the largest army that France, up to that time, had ever deployed on any single frontier. After the defeat of Soubise by Frederick at Rossbach on November 5, 1757, this great French army was contained and kept off Frederick's back to the end of the war by the Anglo-German army, first commanded by the Duke of Cumberland, and subsequently by Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick. Ferdinand's fame would stand higher than it does in the general estimation had it not been overshadowed by that of the Prussian king. Mr. Fortescue, and he alone among English writers, has done full justice to it. The Anglo-German army, which Ferdinand led with such admirable prudence and timely daring, was always inferior in numbers to the armies of France. It was paid and maintained throughout by English subsidies, and the largest body of British troops employed throughout the war in any single mass was engaged in this continental theatre. It was not uniformly successful, but the glories of Minden, Emsdorf, Warburg, Vellinghausen, and Wilhelmsthal are still remembered by the regiments that shared in them, and those 22,000 British troops who were with Ferdinand in 1760 remained unconquered to the last. Without them, and the aid of British subsidies, the continental campaign could not have been sustained, and both the French navy and French colonies would not have diverted from them the largest sum of French efforts and resources. America, in truth, was conquered in Germany, as Chatham said, and every attempt to color or explain away the phrase is rendered fruitless by its perfect truth.

The policy of England has always been consistent. This policy, whether the executive agent is Cecil, William III., Marlborough, Chatham, the younger Pitt, or another, is to prevent the overlordship of Europe by any single power, and, if any power other aspires to or begins to acquire a dangerous position of predominance, to use the utmost diligence of statecraft and of arms to redress the scales.

An island state, depending on and nourished by the sea, which cannot pretend, by its own unaided efforts, to resist a predominant power, or a hostile combination, and dreads that the sea control may pass into other hands, is bound to occupy the rival power or powers with other entanglements, so that their resources may be deflected from the sea. This policy, to be successful, must have full regard for the interests of allies, must pursue its aims in common with these allies, and must be prosecuted in time of war without truce or rest, to the last breath of man and horse, until the objects of the war are secured. If England, at every period of her modern history, has steadfastly endeavored to devote all reasonable effort to the expansion of her own navy it is also true that, considering her comparatively small population and revenue in the past, her predominance at sea would have been neither won nor maintained had splendid isolation been her rule, and had rival powers with large resources been able to concentrate themselves upon the sea.

The dangers which confronted England and Prussia alike, at the opening of the year 1756, were very great. Both powers were threatened by a coalition which, had it not been resisted by the whole strength of both nations, and had not the war itself been directed by Frederick and by Pitt with tenacity as well as skill, might well have crushed Prussia first and then have concentrated upon England. Whatever may have been the faults of the Duke of Newcastle, that Turk's head of every historian, it was at least his merit, when negotiations with our old ally Austria failed, that he initiated that complicated series of diplomatic acts which culminated in the treaty of Westminster on January 16, 1758. By this treaty the two contracting parties, England and Prussia, agreed to unite their forces to resist any foreign invasion of Germany, and it was on this firm foundation, approved, in the end, almost unanimously by the public opinion of the day, that Pitt subsequently built.

When Pitt, after a brief spell of office followed by dismissal, resumed office and assumed power in June 1757, the Treaties of Westminster and of Versailles were both in full operation. Moreover, Russia and Austria had become allied against Prussia by the Treaty of St. Petersburg contracted in February of the same year, and the general situation was gloomy in the extreme. Frederick, after a victory at Prague, was badly beaten at Kolin on June 24. Minorca, after a fine defence, had already been captured from us by a French expedition, and Byng had been shot for failing to relieve it. Calcutta had been lost, and the horrors of the Black Hole had occurred. Montcalm had reached Canada, and despite British predominance at sea, French expeditions under Beauséjour, de la Motte, d'Ache, and

Kersaint had left French ports unfought, and had reached Canada, the East and West Indies, and West Africa, carrying reinforcements to the distant possessions of France. To crown all, the Duke of Cumberland, with 40,000 men, was defeated by Marshal d'Estrees with 80,000 at Hastenbeck on July 26, and did not check his retreat from the Weser till he had placed the Elbe between him and his pursuers. The ignominious convention of Kloster-Seven, concluded by Cumberland at the direction of King George II. without Pitt's knowledge, wound up this record of almost unmitigated disaster.

Pitt had inherited rather than approved the continental war. In opposition he had denounced it, though not consistently. If power and knowledge had confirmed his disbelief in the efficacy of continental pressure, the Convention of Kloster-Seven would have afforded him an excellent reason for abandoning it. Pitt, on the contrary, determined to repudiate the Convention, to recreate and expand the Anglo-German army under a leader of Frederick's school, and to renew the war by land and sea with the utmost energy and determination. It was not when England's fortunes were at their zenith that Pitt was greatest, but rather at the moment when they were at their lowest depths.

By the Convention of April 11, 1758, Pitt confirmed and extended the Treaty with Frederick, establishing the relations of the allies for the remainder of the campaign. By this Convention Frederick received a subsidy of £500,000 to be used in the common interests of the contracting parties, while the two powers undertook to make neither pact nor truce with belligerent States except in common. England agreed, besides, to support an army of 35,000 men in Germany and to dispatch a force for the protection of Embden. The Convention was for one year only, since it was supposed that the war would be finished by that time. When this hope was falsified by events, a new Convention was drawn up in nearly similar terms, and was continued year by year until 1760. In all, Frederick received £2,680,000 in subsidies, while the cost of maintenance of the Anglo-German army began at £1,800,000 in 1758 and steadily rose as its number increased, until in 1761 it was calculated that the cost of the continental war to England was between six and seven millions a year.

The great successes and the material gains of England during the war were mainly due to this policy. The preservation of Prussia from annihilation was due to the same cause. Ferdinand held the French at arm's length, and Frederick was no longer troubled by them. The influence of the continental pressure upon British fortunes was even more strongly marked. French troops and French revenue became more and more engaged each year in the continental war, and both the French navy and the French colonies were first starved and then abandoned to their fate. When Montcalm pleaded for support to enable him to withstand the attack which eventually destroyed French predominance in Canada, he was answered in February, 1759, that "it was necessary for France to concentrate the whole strength of the kingdom for a decisive operation in Europe, and therefore the aid required cannot be sent." It was the same in India, where Lally, after a gallant struggle, was overwhelmed for want of support. It was the same in the West Indies and in West Africa. The absorption of France in continental wars caused her to begin the war insufficiently armed at sea and in her distant possessions, and the same cause denied her the power of recovering herself during the campaign.

When Pitt was attacked for having followed when in office a course of action which he had condemned when in opposition, he replied disdainfully that he "had unlearned his juvenile errors," and that "it was especially important to support the allies, since, if one wheel stopped, all others might." He said that "they who talk of confining a great war to naval operations only, speak without knowledge or experience," and after he left office Barrington wrote to Newcastle that "Pitt blames nobody but those who are for ending the continental part of the war, concerning whom he speaks with contempt." Pitt knew, as Dr. von Ruville says, that "the chief reason for the continuity of continental policy and for the maintenance of the alliance with Prussia was the necessity for confining the French army to the Eastern frontier," and the German author declares that "the final results in America were for the most part not directly attributable to the events of the colonial war."

If Pitt had merely pursued his continental policy because he had found the Treaty of Westminster in operation when he took office, it would be conjectured that on his return to power he would have changed his methods. The Cabinet Minutes of 1760 tell a different tale. It is therein disclosed that at his very first Cabinet meeting he passed a resolution for forming a Triple Alliance with Russia and Prussia; and that he desired to invite Denmark, Sweden, Holland, and certain German princes to join this league, which was described as a "firm and solid system in the North to counterbalance the great and formidable alliance created by the House of Bourbon." The plan failed because circumstances were no longer the same, and because Chatham, worn out by his distempers, was only the pale shadow of Pitt. The desertion of Frederick by England after Pitt's fall, an act described by him as "insidious, tricking, base, and treacherous," had left Frederick in no mood for an English

alliance but, on the contrary, anxious to pay off an old score. He declined, and gave his reasons, while Russia's alliance could only be secured if the casus foederis were extended to a Turkish war, terms which Chatham considered inadmissible.

Thus at a moment when alert and vigorous minds were directing the policy of France and Spain, and when Choiseul was working day and night to prepare the French navy for that revenge which he had planned, the fatal error of Bute in breaking with the old policy produced its natural and inevitable consequences. It was too late—and but a little while after Chatham's death—the formidable coalition against England, so long and so successfully ward off by the Great Commoner, brought England near to ruin, and was, not certainly the first, but the ultimate and immediate cause of the inadequacy of the British Navy in the day of trial and of the loss of the colonies in North America.

CONCERNING THE NIGHTINGALE

As is the general but by no means invariable rule with birds which have great gifts of song, the nightingale's plumage is plain and sober," says a writer in the London Times. "It is not difficult to get a view of the bird while it sings; for although it nests in dense bushy places, and sings in the neighborhood of its nest, it is fond of mounting for song to some spray in the upper and clearer part of the thicket, where it can often be watched for some time before it takes alarm and slips back into denser cover."

"Yet in spite of its modest hues of brown above and pale grey beneath, only relieved by a warmer touch of russet about the tail, the nightingale has a certain distinction of appearance. Though it is a good deal smaller than a thrush or blackbird, it has just so much advantage of size over most other birds of the thicket as serves to attract the attention; and the quiet, clean contrast of its plumage is itself attractive. It has also a noticeably large and intelligent head and eye; and this is one point in which it displays its close scientific relationship to the robin and the various species of thrush."

The Robin and Nightingale

"At first sight the family likeness between the nightingale and the robin is obscured by the difference of their habits; for the nightingale is nearly as retiring, except when it is transported by song, as the robin is confident and obtrusive. Yet when the nightingale is seen lightly hopping among the branches of the thicket, or searching for food along the grassy edge of some woodland ride, many of its movements and gestures are seen to be closely similar to those with which the robin has made us familiar. The close kinship between the two birds is shown still more strongly by a comparison of their nests, eggs, and young."

Young Birds

"The young birds in their first plumage have in both cases that livery of tawny brown, spotted with dull ochre, which is common, indeed, to many other species in the same group, and is held to represent the plumage of the common ancestor of the tribe before the differentiation of the present kinds. The nest of both birds is a very loose structure, chiefly of dry leaves packed together, but provided with a neat and comfortable central hollow, which is lined, as a rule, with horsehair. The birth of the young nightingales brings the end of the old birds' song, except for a few rare and casual notes. The cocks are regularly employed henceforward in helping to feed the four or five naked nestlings, lifting on wavering necks their gaping mouths and blind, goggle eyes in the direction of any stir that they take for their parents' coming. In contrast with the supreme music which the cock poured forth before the hatching of the eggs his utterance is now almost the slightest and harshest among all the bird-voices of the grove."

The Birds' Cry

"Even in his time of song he would sometimes utter a low, dull croak to express uneasiness or resentment at an intruder. This frog-like cry, alternated with a short piping note which is almost equally inarticulate, is anxiously repeated by both birds when they consider that the young are threatened, either in the nest or after they have left it. By the time that June is a fortnight old, this dumb undoing has fallen upon all the nightingales, except for a rare straggler or two still occupied with a second nest after his first was destroyed, who utters a few half-hearted snatches among the silence of his rivals of May."—Public Opinion.

Not Fair

"Look here, Abraham," said the judge, "it's been proved right here in court that instead of doing something to help support your wife and children, you spend your whole time hunting 'possum!"

The old negro hung his head. "Now, Abe, you love your wife, don't you?" "As suttinly does!" "And your children?" "Yas, suh!" "And you love them both better—" "Better ev'ry day, jedge!" Abe broke in. "Better than a thousand 'possum!" "Look hyah, jedge," exclaimed Abe, with widening eyes, "dat's takin' a coon at a pow'ful disadvantage!"—From The Bohemian magazine for July.

THE HO GARDEN CA

Plant: Many Hard-
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Sow: Cabbage for
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Cress, Dwarf Beans, L-
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THE FIFTY

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