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The Volunteer Review,

AND

MILITARY AND NAVAL GAZETTE.

"Dare not, unbought, our swords we draw,
For and the Monarch, fence the Law."

OTTAWA, TUESDAY, JAN. 13, 1874.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Letters addressed to either the Editor or Publisher, as well as Communications intended for publication, must, invariably, be *pre-paid*. Correspondents will also bear in mind that one end of the envelope should be left open, and at the corner the words "Printer's copy" written and a two or five cent stamp (according to the weight of the communication) placed thereon will pay the postage.

The article following from *Broad Arrow* of 13th Dec., on "The Conviction of Marshal Bazaine," will place before our readers the particulars of the shameless and infamous proceedings against that gallant old soldier who has been sacrificed in order that the treason of such scoundrels as GAMBETTA, the treachery and imbecility of TROCHU, and the villainy of the ruffians that overthrew the Empire may be kept hidden from the scrutiny of the victims of their rascality and cowardice.

Broad Arrow puts the case in its true light, as one of unjustifiable political murder, and the Duc d'AUMALE has made as great a mistake as his grandfather the infamous EGALATA did, when he voted for the murder of LOUIS XVI.

THE CONVICTION OF MARSHAL BAZAINE.

The great trial which has been in progress at Versailles since the beginning of October, and which is destined to fill one of the

most important and all-engrossing pages of modern history, has been concluded by a verdict which will divide opinion for many generations to come, like that on Admiral Byng or Marshal Ney. "Our glorious Bazaine," as Gambetta once flatteringly styled him, is condemned to be stripped of all his hardly won honors, as being no longer worthy of bearing the name of a French soldier; and being thus degraded to the level of the meanest citizen of France, the comparatively trivial doom of death follows. Its commutation to any lesser sentence is only of interest in a humanitarian or purely personal point of view. For the historian, Bazaine is degraded and shot as a traitor to his country, the military charges being transparently formal, and by no means placed beyond doubt by the evidence tendered in proof.

The Council of War deliberated upon the following questions:—1. "Is Marshal Bazaine, late Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Rhine, guilty of having, on the 28th of October, 1870, capitulated to the enemy, and surrendered the fortress of Metz, of which he held the supreme command, without having exhausted all means of defence, and without having done all that duty and honor prescribed?"

2. "Is Marshal Bazaine, the late Commander of the Army of the Rhine, guilty of having capitulated on the same day in the open field?"

3. "Did this capitulation result in the Army having to lay down its arms?"

4. "Did Marshal Bazaine, before treating verbally or in writing with the enemy, fail to do all that duty and honor prescribed?"

The Council unanimously replied in the affirmative to all these four questions, and the sentence followed as a matter of course. Before the judges withdrew to consider their verdict the marshal was asked if he had anything to add to his defence. Then rising from his seat, he replied, in a louder tone of voice than he had before used during the trial, but with perfect calmness, "I wear on my breast the words 'Honor and Country' [alluding to the inscription on his Star of the Legion of Honour]. I have never been unfaithful to that legend, neither at Metz, nor during my whole service of forty-two years. That [lifting up his right hand] I swear before Christ!"

In whatever else Bazaine may have failed, he has not failed in the dignity suitable to the occasion, and the interesting question for all is, whether his words were a solemn mockery, proceeding from the lips of a man who was conscious of the black drop of treason in his heart which the sentence presupposes had destroyed his moral sense and corrupted the soldierly virtue which his very enemies concede that he once possessed. To answer this question we must not consider probabilities alone, but make a careful study of the facts; nor must our judgment be influenced by the character of the tribunal at Versailles. In estimating this latter point, account must be taken of the political circumstances of France, and the first thing to note—considering these circumstances—is, that the President of the Tribunal should be the Duc d'Aumale, who is indebted for this title of General to a royal ordinance signed by the King, his father, who was afterwards dethroned and his house banished by a revolution; and who has himself only been restored to any position at all in France by the Revolution of 1870. Length of service could certainly not entitle this young officer to preside over a tribunal composed of men growing grey in

hardness, and accordingly it was thought necessary to remark in the Commission, that he commanded in chief in actual warfare. That was in 1844—just upon thirty years ago—in the campaign against Abd-el-Kader. To be strictly just we must recall the fact that when he received intelligence of the Revolution of February, 1848, the Duc d'Aumale exhorted the colony to await peaceably the orders of the metropolitan, and when the time came, quickly resigned his powers into the hands of General Cavaignac. If the seeming parallel has had any influence on the appointment of the Prince to the office of President of the Court, or on the trial and judgment passed on Bazaine, the fact is much to be regretted. The circumstances of the Revolution of September 4th were wholly different from the Revolution of February and the position of Bazaine at Metz, with France invaded, the Emperor a prisoner of war, and Paris itself invested, was entirely unlike that of the Duc d'Aumale in Algiers when the Citizen King was dethroned.

The other judges were the Generals Dabry, Motterouge, Chaudaud Latour and Tripier, who have commanded in presence of the enemy, and Generals Princeteau, Martineau Deschenez, and Rossayre, selected locally from the First Military Division. Of all these the first alone is known to fame as having commanded the first Army of the Loire until, threatened with a court martial by Gambetta, he resigned his powers to General d'Aurelle de Paladines. Rossayre replaced General Martimprey, impeached. So far as we can judge from this composition of the court, Bazaine has not been tried by his equals, or by men whose responsibility in the face of the world was sufficient for the occasion. If an exception be claimed in favour of the Duc d'Aumale, his fairness and ability may be conceded without affecting the views we take of his sufficiency in a military point of view.

Again, we are impressed by the fact that Bazaine alone among the generals of France who equally failed of success in the late war, has been impeached, and that it was precisely his impeachment and conviction that were alone needful to vindicate the notion of Gambetta as delegated Minister of War under the Government of Defence. The inquiry this reflection suggests is one that the future historian will pursue with the most jealous care. Trochu capitulated at Paris, and surrendered a much larger force than Bazaine ever commanded, and for awhile there was a howl of execration heard against him. How is it that this cry has died out, and the cry against Bazaine increased in intensity? A complete answer to this question would lead us over much historical ground, and suggest a large amount of military criticism; but without summoning up the details, one impressive consideration presents itself. The conviction of Trochu, either for incapacity or treason, would not have served to vindicate the policy of Gambetta, as the relieving armies all round were defeated before Paris surrendered. But the conviction of Bazaine, on the other hand, exactly serves this purpose. If he was a traitor, and purposely let loose the army of Prince Frederick Charles against the Army of the Loire in the very crisis of its fate, and when the King and his whole staff were ready to retreat at a moment's notice from the walls of Paris, then obviously there is no need to seek

•• President M. le Duc d'Aumale, general de division, ayant commande en chef devant l'ennemi."