

## THE MILITARY LESSONS OF THE WAR.

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(Concluding Chapter of an Unpublished Memoir of Events of the War.)

Having thus recorded a summary of events mostly under my own personal supervision, during the years from 1861 to 1865, it seems proper that I should add an opinion of some of the useful military lessons to be derived therefrom.

That Civil War, by reason of the existence of "Slavery," was apprehended by most of the leading statesmen of the half century preceding its outbreak, is a matter of notoriety. General Scott told me on my arrival at New York as early as 1850, that the country was on the eve of "Civil War," and the Southern politicians openly asserted that it was their purpose to accept as a "casus belli," the election of General Fremont in 1856, but fortunately or unfortunately, he was beaten by Mr. Buchanan, which simply postponed its occurrence for four years. Mr. Seward had also publicly declared that no government could possibly exist half slave and half free; and yet the Government made no military preparation, and the Northern people, generally, paid no attention, took no warning of its coming, and would not realize its existence till Fort Sumter was fired on by batteries of artillery, handled by declared enemies, from the surrounding islands, and from the city of Charleston.

General Bragg, who certainly was a man of intelligence, and who, in early life, ridiculed a thousand times in my hearing the threats of the people of South Carolina to secede from the Federal Union, said to me in New Orleans, in February, 1861, that he was convinced that the feeling between the Slave and Free States had become so embittered, that it was better to part in peace; better to part any how; and as a separation was inevitable, that the South should begin at once, because the possibility of a successful effort was yearly lessened by the rapid and increasing inequality between the two sections, from the fact that all the European immigrants were coming to the Northern States and Territories, and none to the Southern.

The slave population in 1860 was near four millions, and the money value thereof not far from twenty five hundred millions of dollars. Now ignoring the moral sides of the question, a cause that endangered so vast a moneyed interest was an adequate cause of anxiety and preparation, and the Northern leaders surely ought to have foreseen the danger and prepared for it. After the election of Mr. Lincoln in 1860, there was no concealment of the declaration and preparation for war in the South. In Louisiana, as I have related, men were openly enlisted, officers were appointed, and war was actually begun in January, 1861. The forts at the mouth of the Mississippi were seized, and occupied by garrisons that hauled down the United States flag and hoisted that of the State. The United States arsenal at Baton Rouge was captured by New Orleans militia; its garrison ignominiously sent off, and the contents of the arsenal distributed. These were as much acts of war as was the subsequent firing on Fort Sumter, yet no public notice was taken thereof; and when months afterwards I came North, I found not one single sign of preparation. It was for this reason, somewhat, that the people of the South became convinced that those of the North were pusillanimous and cowardly, and the Southern leaders were

thereby enabled to commit their people to the war nominally in defence of their slave property. Up to the hour of the firing on Fort Sumter, in April, 1861, it does seem to me that our public men, our politicians, were blameable for not sounding the note of alarm.

Then when war was actually begun, it was by a call for seventy five thousand "ninety day" men, I suppose to fulfill Mr. Seward's prophecy that the war would last but ninety days.

The earlier steps by our political Government were extremely wavering and weak, for which an excuse can be found in the fact that many of the Southern representative remained in Congress, sharing in the public councils and influenced legislation. But as soon as Mr. Lincoln was installed, there were no longer any reason why Congress and the cabinet should have hesitated. They should have measured the cause, provided the means, and left the Executive to apply the remedy.

At the time of Mr. Lincoln's inauguration, viz., March the 4, 1861, the Regular Army, by law, consisted of two regiments of dragoons, two regiments of cavalry, one regiment of mounted rifles, four regiments of artillery and ten regiments of infantry, admitting of an aggregate strength of 13,024 officers and men; and on the subsequent 4th of May the President, by his own orders (afterward sanctioned by Congress), added a regiment of cavalry, a regiment of artillery, and eight regiments of infantry, which with the former Army, admitted of a strength of 39,973, but at no time during the war did the Regular Army attain a strength of twenty-five thousand men.

To the new regiments of infantry was given an organization differing from any that had heretofore prevailed in this country—of three battalions of eight companies each; but at no time did more than one of these regiments attain this full standard; nor in the vast Army of volunteers that was raised during the war, were any of the regiments of infantry formed on the three battalion system, but these were universally single battalions of ten companies; so that on the re-organization of the Regular Army at the close of the war, Congress adopted the form of twelve companies for the regiments of cavalry and artillery, and that of ten companies for the infantry, which is the present standard.

Inasmuch as the Regular Army will naturally from the standard of organization for any increase or for new regiments of volunteers, it becomes important to study this subject in the light of past experience, and to select that form which is best for peace as well as war.

A cavalry regiment is now composed of twelve companies, usually divided into six squadrons of two companies each, or better subdivided into three battalions of four companies each. This is an excellent form, easily admitting of subdivision as well as union into larger masses.

A single battalion of four companies with a field officer, will compose a good body for a garrison, for a separate expedition, or for a detachment; and in war, three regiments would compose a good brigade, three brigades a division, and three divisions a strong cavalry corps, such as was formed and fought by Generals Sheridan and Wilson during the war.

In the artillery arm the officers differ widely in their opinion of the true organization. A single company forms a battery, and habitually, each battery acts separately, though sometimes several are united or

"massed," but these always act in concert with cavalry or infantry.

Nevertheless the regimental organization has always been maintained in this country for classification and promotion. Twelve companies compose a regiment, and though probably no colonel ever commanded his full regiment in the form of twelve batteries, yet in peace they occupy our heavy sea coast forts or act as infantry; then the regimental organization is both necessary and convenient.

But the "infantry" composes the great mass of all armies, and the true form of the regiment or unit, has been the subject of infinite discussion, and, as I have stated, during the civil war the regiment was a single battalion of ten companies. In older times the regiment was composed of eight battalion companies, and two flank companies. The first and tenth companies were armed with rifles, and were styled and used as "skirmishers," but during the war they were never used exclusively for that special purpose, and in fact no distinction existed between them and the other eight companies.

The ten company organization is therefore awkward in practice, and I am satisfied that the infantry regiment should have the same identical organization as exists for the cavalry and artillery, viz.:—twelve companies, so as to be susceptible of division into three battalions of four companies each.

These companies should habitually be about one hundred men strong, giving twelve hundred to a regiment, which in practice would settle down to about one thousand men.

Three such regiments would compose a brigade, three brigades a division, and three divisions a corps. Then by allowing to an infantry corps a brigade of cavalry and six batteries of field artillery, we would constitute an efficient corps d'armée of thirty thousand men, whose organization would be simple and most efficient, and whose strength should never be allowed to fall below twenty-five thousand men.

The corps is the true unit for grand campaigns and battle, and should have a full and perfect staff and everything requisite for separate action, ready at all times to be detached and sent off for any nature of service. The general in command should have the rank of lieutenant-general, and should be by experience and education equal to anything in war. Habitually with us he was a major-general specially selected and assigned to the command by an order of the President, constituting in fact, a separate grade.

The division is the unit of administration, and is the legitimate command of a major-general.

The brigade is the next sub division and is commanded by a brigadier general.

The regiment is the family. The colonel as the father, should have a personal acquaintance with every officer and man and should instil a feeling of pride and affection for himself, so that his men would naturally look to him for personal advice and instruction. In war the regiment should never be sub-divided, but should always be maintained entire. In peace this is impossible.

The company is the true unit of discipline, and the captain is the company. A good captain makes a good company, and he should have the power to reward as well as punish. The fact that soldiers would naturally like to have a good fellow for their captain, is the best reason why he should be appointed by the colonel, or by some super