

to sustain the offensive effectually, it is evidently the least expensive course in the long run since decisive success will throw the burden of the war on the conquered territory. Thus Napoleon, in several offensive campaigns, almost without a check, ruined the military power of great monarchies, and imposed on them what terms he pleased. But such rapid successes are exceptional where armies are not very unequal in force, and it is necessary to consider the position of an invader who advances continually from his base against strong opposition.

An army operating in its own territory is not restricted, like the invader, to a single line. It is true that its efforts may all be directed to cover a single point aimed at by the enemy, as the efforts of the army of Virginia had for their grand object to defend Richmond. But to defend a point it is not necessary to interpose directly between it and the enemy. Provided supplies can be obtained in other directions, the defensive army may assume a front on one side of the line by which the assailant is advancing, and parallel to it; and so long as it is undefeated, it is evident the enemy cannot advance except under penalty of being cut off from his base. Thus McClellan advances upon Richmond from the Pamunkey at White House, while the Confederates are spread over a front extending from Richmond to Winchester in the Shenandoah Valley. But the force in the Valley under Jackson, drawing its supplies probably from Lynchburg, advances in an easterly direction upon Hanover; the troops before Richmond join it; the front of the Confederates thus no longer looks north but east; and McClellan, fearing at the next move to be cut from his base, lets go his hold of the Pamunkey and transfers his stores to the James river just in time to save his army from destruction.

This mode of operating, then, which is open to the whole defensive army, is also open to a part of it. A single corps drawing its subsistence for a time from points on the prolongation of the flanks of the general line may operate on either side against the roads which connect the invader with his base. The enemy must protect these roads either by occupying all the avenues by which they could be assailed with adequate forces, in case those avenues are few; or, should the exposed points of the line of communication be numerous, then by detaching moveable corps to guard it through out its length, and to protect the convoys. With each step that the invader makes in advance the difficulties of guarding the line increase in proportion to its length, and the force detached for its protection increases also. Nothing except the disabling of the enemy by heavy defeats can prevent these enterprises against the communications; but the force which can be collected for battle is constantly decreasing with the length of the line, till the defender may find himself, notwithstanding the losses he may have suffered earlier in the campaign, superior in number on the point of collision in the later stages, and, snatching the initiative, may force his adversary to defend himself in retreat.

A notable illustration of the dangers of a long line of communication is furnished by Napoleon's Russian campaign. During his advance upon Moscow, two Russian corps were moving, the one from Finland, the other from the south of the empire, toward his line of communications. They struck it where it crossed the Beresina, and caused the horrible disasters of that famous retreat.

If a defensive army were to restrict itself

entirely to parrying blows, the enemy, feeling secure in his communications from the inertness of his opponent, would be enabled to keep his fighting power undiminished by detachments in the rear. To pursue such a course, then, even when very inferior in force, is suicidal in a defender; since a detachment judiciously menacing the enemy's communications may hold him in check (or let us say, in military parlance, may contain) a much greater number of the enemy, and proportionably diminish the disparity between the main armies. It does not follow, then, that because an army is defending a territory it must confine itself to the defensive; on the contrary, it will best effect its purpose by actively threatening its adversary, and by taking the lead whenever an opportunity offers.

Such are some of the advantages and disadvantages which attach respectively to offensive and defensive warfare, and which mainly depend on the question of magazines and lines communicating with them. The offensive confers, at the outset, the power of concentrating on the flank or centre of the enemy's line of defence, and so turning or breaking it. The defender must either oppose the enemy with an inferior force at first, or abandon territory in order to assemble his forces at some point further back. On the other hand, offensive war demands great resources, and success itself, if not absolute, entails fresh difficulties on the invader. And when he has penetrated far within the defender's territory, the situations of the antagonists differ greatly, inasmuch as the army on the offensive is bound to its base, be that base wide or narrow, while the defensive forces may base themselves on any part of their territory which will supply them, and which their front protects.

As facility for transporting troops and material increases, so the power of concentrating the military resources of an empire on a distant frontier, for entrance on a foreign theatre of war, increases also, and so far his railways are of great help to an invader. But as he cannot count for subsequent aid on the railways of the districts held by the enemy, nor be certain that the course of events will not make districts where there are no railways the scene of operations, he must be dependent on horses and vehicles for further supplies. Thus we find great preparations made by France for transport in Italy in 1859; and the railways of the Northern States of America did not prevent a vast expenditure of transport animals in the different invasions of the South. Offensive, compared with defensive war, must still be enormously costly. But the invader will retain, and even augment, by means of his railways, the advantage of making a sudden concentrated advance on part of an extended line of defence; and even the combined resources of telegraphs and railways could not avail to meet the first onset under circumstances geographically unfavorable to the defence, such as will be described in subsequent chapters; especially when it is considered that the defender must labor under the same doubts as before in divining whether attack is real or a feint.

But, on the other hand, the defender, if forced to retreat, will easily destroy for the time the railways in the territory which he is quitting, while preserving the full use of those which he still covers; whereas the assailant must either content himself with the ordinary roads, or pause to repair the railways and to reorganize the means of supply through those channels. Thus the advantages of the initiative will, in such a case, be much more transient than before, and

the defender will concentrate on the threatened line with far greater comparative facility.

Taking the example of the Waterloo campaign, let us suppose the theatre covered with the railways that now exist there. Napoleon would have concentrated his troops with great ease in the same space within which he assembled them, by means of the railways from Paris, to Lille and Valenciennes, to Maubouge, and to Philippeville, and the lines connecting them. His advance, no less unforeseen by the Allies than it really was, would have carried him over the Sambre and on Fleurus. But the Prussian corps which halted at Ligny would have been reinforced by the two corps from Cinoy and Namur; and Bulow's junction could scarcely have failed, as it actually did, of accomplishing in time for the battle. Thus the Prussians would have effected their concentration with more ease and certainty. But there is no apparent reason why Wellington, still doubting if the enemy's advance was real, and expecting their attack on his right, should have assembled his troops on the 16th so much faster than he actually did as to effect more than to check Ney's progress. So far then, the invading force supposing it on a fair equality in numbers with its adversaries, would have held the advantage. Granting that under such circumstances it should still be victorious at Ligny, the Prussians, however, would now have had the aid of two lines of rail by which to retire behind the Dyle, that of Gembloux-Ottignies-Brussels, and that of Tilly-Ottignies-Warwe. The movement having been contemplated in the plan of campaign, platforms for embarking and disembarking would have been laid, and rolling stock accumulated, the heavy baggage could have been kept at a distance, and preparations made for supplying the army for a time through Louvain, by means of the line from Liege to that place. Under these circumstances not only would the roads have been left unencumbered to the troops, but the infantry, at least, of two corps might have been conveyed beyond the Dyle, by rail, and the whole of the army might have passed the stream on the afternoon of the 17th, while part of it would have had ample time to reach the field of Waterloo before night. Napoleon, following Wellington to Waterloo, would therefore have been confronted by the united armies of the Allies.

This, however, is an extreme case, because Belgium is more thickly intersected with railways than any country in Europe. In the campaigns of 1859 and 1866, the more important movements of troops were not effected by rail—the railways are few, and were chiefly un-ful as lines of supply.

It would appear from the course of the foregoing argument that an invader (supposing other circumstances to be favorable) should direct his attack on a part of the theatre where railways exercise small influence, since their effort is on the whole in favor of the defender.

The movement to a flank, of large bodies, by rail, within reach of the enemy, must be especially dangerous, because the troops follow each other in small isolated fractions, and are very defenceless if attacked during their transit. An insignificant detachment may therefore, with little risk to itself, interrupt the movement of a considerable force, and even inflict on it serious injury, by a well timed and well directed attack; whereas the compact march of a large body by ordinary roads could only be impeded by a force proportionately great.

(To be continued.)