

ARTILLERY RETROSPECT

OF

THE LAST GREAT WAR, 1870.

BY LT.-COL. T. B. STRANGE, DOMINION INSPECTOR OF ARTILLERY.

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"*Pends-toi, Crillion; nous nous sommes battus et tu n'y étais pas,*" was the laconic letter of the royal soldier *Henri Quatre* to his comrade,—the same soldier-king who gave the right royal response, when asked for a standard :

"Where'er ye see my white plume shine,

"Amid the ranks of war,

"Then be your oriflamme to-day

"The helmet of Navarre."

A great war—alas ! I fear, by no means the last great war—has passed into history ; and as I was not there to see, how can I venture on a retrospect without craving your indulgence?—which you may be more likely to give when I tell you that, to gratify no idle curiosity, but simply as a soldier to learn, I asked and obtained the sanction of H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge to join either of the contending armies, but was given to understand that political reasons forbade me or any of my brother-officers availing ourselves of the permission, even at our own risk and cost.

Permission was subsequently granted to a few as newspaper correspondents ; but no English artillery officer was present at the great drama of the Prussian siege of Paris. We were disappointed, but not inclined to follow the advice of *Henri* to his friend. At the conclusion of peace I visited the remains of both armies and many of their battle-fields. I had some friends among the officers of the French artillery, acquaintances made in happier days at Châlons. I never saw them again ; and in spite of the contempt heaped upon the unsuccessful by the unthinking, I cannot but feel, from what I saw and heard from their enemies, that they did their duty.