

brought away some decided impressions of what he saw, and like all young men of any intellect was enthusiastic. The only trouble was that he rashly confided in Mr. Low, or that Mr. Low elicited opinions and statements from him, which no cool and unbiased critic would pronounce, and that Mr. Low has paraded these statements and opinions to the world as coming from Sir Garnet Wolseley, while the *World*—New York journal of that name—has very gravely printed them as authentic and weighty utterances. If Sir Garnet Wolseley ever did say what Mr. Low asserts, and which we print elsewhere, the probability is that he spoke after dinner. There is a positive warmth in his opinions and statements, a rosy coloring and gilded exaggeration, that are very common in post prandial conversations over the Madeira, and under the blue clouds of aromatic Pátagas. There are few men however clear headed, who will not at such times "talk wild," but it is hardly fair to report such conversations verbatim, and gravely retail them to the world as the deliberate opinions of the speaker. The assertions paraded as coming from Sir Garnet and attributed to "Military Critics," that Lee was the greatest general the world has seen since Napoleon; that the Army of the Potomac would have marched to Washington and proclaimed McClellan dictator, had not Lincoln given him the Maryland command; that the little Ashantee campaign against a crowd of naked savages was equal to Wellington's campaign of 1814; the classing of Raglan at Sebastopol, Napier at Magdala, and Wolseley at Coomassie, with the Iron Duke at Paris, after his long and arduous campaigns, all these assertions and comparisons are so ineffectually stilted and exaggerated, that after dinner inference is irresistible, if we accept them as coming from Sir Garnet, or any other *bona fide* military writer.

It is in their application to the truth of history, and especially of our own military history, that they are interesting and somewhat offensive to Americans. Some of the absurdities are so glaring that we cannot credit them as coming from any one but Mr. Low himself, unless Sir Garnet were distinctly to avow them. To assert Lee as the greatest general since Napoleon, is a partisan statement to which the most ardent Southern historian has not yet committed himself. It is noticeable that his most ardent admirers, of the men that served under him, do not enlarge upon his superlative genius to the same extent as they do on his personal qualities of heart. Of his kindness of disposition, of his prudence, of the absolute adoration with which the Confederate general was regarded by his soldiers, there is no question. Of his great prowess in defensive war as shown in his magnificent Wilderness campaign, there is just as little doubt. That campaign bore a very strong resemblance to the once celebrated siege of Sillistria, in which Omar Pasha constantly foiled the efforts of every Russian general and great numbers of fresh troops, with his raw Turkish levies, by a very similar engineering skill. Todleben's defence of Sebastopol was fairly eclipsed by the defence of Petersburg, under Lee, with less advantages in his favor and a great disproportion of force. It is Lee's greatest glory that he was the only Southern general during the war who succeeded in foiling Grant, as Grant's crowning glory was the enforced surrender of Lee. The two men were fairly matched in the Wilderness, and the consummate skill with which Lee evaded the grip of his huge antagonist for so many months, is worthy of all praise. But to

compare this falling back from position to position in a difficult country, with the campaign of Italy in 1796, shows the disparity of genius in two commanders. With much talent and a high personal character, Lee never exhibited any of those marks of genius that stamp the really great commander. Genius in a commander is shown by overcoming the impossible, and this Lee never even attempted. A Montenotte, a Dego, a Castiglione, were beyond his ideas. A Leuthen, or a Rossbach, the defeat and rout of an enemy three times his own force, were achievements entirely beyond his capacity. With the single exception of Manassas Second, which was lost by the supineness or jealousies of some of the enemy's generals, Lee never delivered an offensive battle in which he did not suffer a bloody repulse; and his greatest defensive victories were all resultless. To compare a general of this character with Napoleon, who never delivered any but an offensive battle in his life, and won almost every engagement and who never failed to utterly ruin and adversary, once defeated, is to provoke sarcastic comment from the mildest, but from which we studiously abstain.

The assertion that the Army of the Potomac would ever have marched to Washington, to install McClellan as dictator, is another of these wild exaggerations, that could only emanate from one totally ignorant of the morale of that Army. A few months later, after his victory of Antietam, McClellan was removed in the midst of a forward movement, and not a complaint was officially heard in the Army of the Potomac. Was it probable then, that the same general fresh from a series of reverses on the Peninsula, the result of which had lowered his prestige? It is rare for soldiers to mutiny in favor of an unsuccessful commander, however unfortunate, however unjustly treated. Soldiers, like crowds, adore success. Again, we must express our disbelief in Sir Garnet as the author of any such statement.

The comparison of Sir Garnet's campaign in Ashantee with that of the Allies in 1814 against Napoleon, is another of those Programisms that have hitherto been looked on as peculiarly American by the average Dickens-reading Englishman. The "military critics" who jumble the said campaign up with the siege of Sebastopol, Havelock, and Napier, are possibly of the "war correspondent" kind, like our old friend Dr. Russell, but we are certain that Sir Garnet himself in his normal state, would laugh at the assumption. After dinner, there is of course no counting on any man, not even on Socrates, as we learn from Plato's Dialogues. Such comparisons are very apt to provoke counter comparisons, which will occur to every military student.

The Ashantee campaign of Wolseley was a good example of a prudent advance with disciplined and well armed troops against savages. Curiously enough, the tactics of the final battle will be found exactly laid down and enjoined by Vegetius in his *Maxims*, just about fifteen hundred years ago. The Roman writer prescribes the oblong square as the best possible formation in a case where your own troops are immensely superior in quality to those of the enemy, and accordingly by the use of the oblong square Sir Garnet moved through the midst of the naked savages with little or no difficulty. The only danger he really seems to have run was the same which befell Napier at Magdala, the surrounding of a difficult country. Armed opposition, as in Abyssinia, was the nearest fear. The negroes, with plenty of individual courage, lacked both

discipline and weapons, while the English with their artillery and breech loaders, mowed them down with little danger to themselves. In our own little campaign against the Indians of Texas and New Mexico, mentioned elsewhere, the handful of American troops that has brought in 40,000 prisoners has accomplished more work, against an enemy ten times more dangerous than King Koffa. The modern Indian of the South West, with his Winchester rifles and Colt's revolvers, his patent cartridges in plenty, and his long training in border warfare, is an enemy that would do credit to any soldier to subdue. Were such enemies and such soldiers within H. B. M.'s dominions, the present winter would have witnessed a probable crop of baronets, with a possible peer or two, that would have fairly amazed our simple majors and colonels who once commanded divisions and corps, and now are deprived of the empty consolation of a brevet.

Altogether, we are inclined to think, that for Sir Garnet's credit, Mr. Low might better have left much unwritten that he has, and the genius of the *World* might better have left the "military critics" to their rest over the virtuous but soporific pages of the *United Service Magazine*.

Wolseley on Lee.

(From the N. Y. World):

Major General Sir Garnet J. Wolseley, K. C.B., G.C.M.G., the victorious commander in the Ashantee war of 1873-74, is the newest of the popular heroes of England. He well deserves the admiration of his countrymen, for his campaign in the rugged, feverhaunted country of the Ashantees, where with his handful of brave Englishmen he fought nature and the negroes every inch of the way to Coomassie, and overcame both, was as brilliant an achievement of generalship as the military annals of England can boast of since the memorable campaign against Napoleon I., which ended at Paris in 1814. Of course it is not intended to compare the Ashantee war, in magnitude and importance, with the wars in the Crimea and in India, nor even with that in Abyssinia, but it is the opinion of military critics that Wolseley displayed as much ability in planning his campaign and handling his troops as Raglan did at Sebastopol, or Havelock in India, or Napier in Abyssinia. After returning home from Africa with his veterans to receive an ovation at the hands of royalty and the British people, and to rest for a few months on his laurels, he has again been sent into active service. The cable announced a few weeks ago that Sir Garnet had been ordered to the colony of Natal in Eastern Africa to compose the difficulties which have arisen between the settlers and their Dutch neighbors of the diamond country. A later despatch has announced his departure. About such a man much may be said that is interesting, but there is an episode in his life which is particularly so to Americans. He was stationed in Canada during our civil war—then plain Colonel Wolseley—and made an underground visit to General Lee just after the battle of Antietam. In the *United Service Magazine* there is being published monthly a biographical sketch of Sir Garnet Wolseley, written by Lieutenant Low, late of the Indian navy, who is the author of the "Life of Sir George Pollock." In the last number of the magazine the biographer reaches the period in his hero's life when he was in Canada and made his visit to Lee. The reader is enabled to obtain from this narra-