

is a complex one, and not without its sentimental confusion of issues to-day. It has never been held contrary to civilised practice for a General to prevent by every means in his power the conveyance of provisions to a besieged city. Starvation is a recognised means of forcing a surrender. That non-combatants, women, children, sick and aged, in the invested locality will suffer with the combatant garrison is one of the tragic outcomes of war. It may be of definite value in securing capitulation. At the siege of Wesel, in 1671, when, as the Prince de Condé relates, the women of the town, terrified at the progress of the siege works, demanded leave to quit, they were told, "He could not think of depriving his triumph of its greatest ornament," a compliment the sufferers could hardly have been expected to appreciate. "His calculation," the record continues, "was just; those very women prevailed on the governor to surrender at the end of three days." Exactly a hundred years later, during the siege of Cracow, the commandant of the castle offered to give up one hundred civilian prisoners, and asked permission for the clergy and their attendants to leave. Count Suvorov refused, "in order to increase the distress of the garrison by so many useless mouths." The "Green Curve" has long had recognition in siege warfare. But when the same principle is applied on a larger scale there are sentiment-mongers to-day who will make outcry against sufferings wrought by a state of blockade, which is simply a comprehensive naval siege, and who will demand that food at least be permitted to reach the non-combatant inhabitants of the enemy country. Setting aside the difficulty of differentiation between combatant and non-combatant, and the impossibility of preventing such supplies, once admitted, reaching both alike, or even combatants to the exclusion of non-combatants in extreme cases, why should, as a matter of abstract justice, the exclusion be permitted in the first case and not in the second? From the days when Jews and Romans made treaty, in Maccabean times, provisions have been included with arms, ships, and money, as contraband of war.