

THE FROST KING.

From out his winter palace
The King has started forth;
The birds have left their summer nests;
The wind is in the north.
The river and the mountain,
The brown and walled sod
Begin to show already where
His messengers have trod.

The clouds unroll their ermine,
And o'er men, low, lane, and street,
Like courtiers, spread their mantles down
Before their royal feet.
Close to the friendly corners
The hot-terred ivies cling,
And wear their emerald cloaks despite
The coming of the King.

His mien and look were haughty,
His voice is cold and stern,
And yet his kisses on the cheek
Like crimson roses burn.
Down from the crest of a mountain,
With grandeur in his tread,
The Winter King is coming with
A white crown on his head.

Not amid waving banners,
Or to the sound of drums,
Bentling their gladdest music,
This conquering hero comes;
But silently and solemnly
He enters his domain,
With twenty and a hundred good
Stout yeomen in his train.

Clasping the old earth tightly
Against his frozen breast,
As if she were his chosen Queen,
He says, "I bring thee rest,
Thou has reigned long and nobly,
Thy virtues all are known
And thou wilt not forgotten be,
Though I possess the throne!"

Contentedly resigning
Her sceptre and her crown,
Beneath a downy coverlet
The weary queen lies down,
To sleep with her companions,
Who, at the touch of spring,
Shall rise again in time to see
The going of a King.

The Prussian Army.

(From a Military Correspondent.)

BERLIN, Sept.

A General once told me he had come to the conclusion that "science in war was a mistake; that success depends not on long studied combinations, not on careful and painstaking preparation, but on accident and hard fighting." This General has the reputation of being an excellent officer. He is, I believe, a first rate drill-sergeant; and when he commanded a regiment it was in excellent order. He is almost certain in the event of a European war to have an important command. If he has, I pity him, unless he has changed his opinion. But I pity still more the poor fellows whom he will lead to certain destruction. Mr. Sidney Herbert, in his celebrated speech delivered in 1856 on the instruction of the officers of the Army, quotes the following remarkable passage, dictated by Napoleon to Montholon at St. Helena, in allusion to some observations he had made to his brother Louis at Toulon:—

"Brought to France when 14, Louis entered on the life of a man at the siege of Toulon on hearing me say to him, in the midst of the corpses of 200 grenadiers, in through the ignorance of their commander at the assault of an impregnable side of Fort Pharon, 'If I had commanded here, all these brave men would be still alive. Learn, Louis, from this example how absolutely necessary instruction is to those who aspire to command others.'"

It may be said that Napoleon was a heaven born genius, an innate commander. So he was. But those who imagine that he arrived at such a pitch of excellence without the deepest study, continued over a period of years, never ceasing—nay, more, never flagging—are grievously deceived. I cannot

do better than recommend them to read "Lanfrey's Life of Napoleon." They will there learn how complete was his early education and how continued was his subsequent industry. As has been said—"In all matters relating to war Napoleon was the most learned of men."—he repeatedly declared that the way to learn his art was "to read over and over again what has been accomplished by the best Generals." There was no war that had ever been waged with which he was not familiar, and the first intimation which his Staff had of the prospect of a campaign was the close manner in which he pored over maps and histories for many months previously. In the latter days of 1811 he wrote to his libraries for "information as complete as possible on the campaign of Charles XII in Poland and Russia." It would have been well for him, had he profited more by his study.

This cardinal and all-important principle, that by work and study alone can military excellence be attained, has long been recognized in the Prussian Army. There is none in which military science is more highly valued and none in which it is more universally cultivated. Work and diligence are conceived to be the only sure road to success in war as in other sciences, and the events of recent years have not tended to contradict or falsify this doctrine. It may be said that Germany has been especially fortunate in possessing a number of able men to lead her armies to victory. In the words of Napoleon himself, "a General is the heart, the soul of his army. It was Cæsar, not the Roman Army, who conquered Gaul; it was Hannibal, not the Carthaginians, who brought terror to the gates of Rome; it was Alexander, not the Macedonian Army, who made a way to the Indus; it was Turenne, not the French, who reached Weser and the Inn; it was Frederick the Great, not the Prussian Army, who defended Prussia during the seven years against the three chief Powers of Europe." This may have been true in former days when armies were small, when means of communication were slow and limited, when campaigns lasted years in place of weeks—when, in fact, the command of an army could be under the control of a single commander. It is different now. A Frederick the Great at Gitschin could scarcely have won the victory of Nachter; a Turenne at Wöth would not have defeated Froissard at Spichenen; a Hannibal at Metz would not have achieved the triumph of Sedan. Not even a Napoleon commanding the besieging hosts round Paris could have driven back successive armies that from all sides and for many months vainly attempted to effect its release. The secret of the extraordinary successes of the Prussian Army lies not in the genius of any one commander, nor of any number of her commanders, but in the military system, by which her officers are educated and her armies are trained. Among the many Marshals that served the first Napoleon, among the many Generals that assisted Wellington to win his victories, was there any one who displayed any marvellous talent or who has bequeathed a great name to posterity? All springs of action were in those days centralized in those two extraordinary men, and when they passed away, there was no system left behind to perpetuate the military efficiency which, by themselves, they had created. It is different in this country. Of the many Generals that the last campaigns have made renowned, there is not one whose loss need be considered irreparable, nor need it be said that another equally competent would not be found to take his place. Power is

controlled from Berlin, not centralized there. Nor is there any vast machinery relieving, in peace, and ordaining from the responsibility which in war they necessarily must assume. Such a system must break down when put to a severe strain and trial, as it always has done. The English War Office, heaven knows, is large enough, confused enough, and intricate enough; fancy what the German War Office would be if managed on the same system, with about 19 army corps under its control and in time of war a million and a quarter of men under arms.

It is easy for strangers when visiting any country to pick holes in customs and to ridicule manners, which they but imperfectly understand. Similarly it is not difficult for any man possessed of a certain amount of professional and technical knowledge to point out various details in which he considers the same profession in his own country is superior. I do not think that this is the object at which those who see other countries and armies should endeavor to aim. They should seek to improve themselves, and, as far as lies in their power, to convey information to others—they should try and find out the merits and excellencies, not the faults of their neighbors. In my remarks on what I have seen of the German Army I have endeavored to follow out this principle, and have striven to avoid any needless and profitless remarks on small things in which I may fancy that other armies have an advantage.

The one point above all others which appears to me worthy of admiration in the German Army, from the highest to the lowest ranks is the distribution of responsibility. Each one in his own grade is permitted to do his work without undue interference from his superiors. The War Office has little to do compared with ours, since the Generals commanding corps are supreme in almost all matters, pecuniary as well as military, and settle questions with reference to the officials in Berlin. Officers commanding army corps are not overworked, because the Generals of Divisions under them have also their duties, and are allowed to perform them without interference. So on down to the more detailed and minute branches, the officer commanding a battalion does not attempt to command every company in it, and hence can do his own work efficiently and easily. This principle of delegation of authority is illustrated in Germany in the field as well as in the office. What specially strikes a stranger at the field days I have seen is absence of flurry and haste; there is but little galloping hither and thither with orders, and I have never yet seen here a General taking command of a company as I have elsewhere. How much better to leave subordinates to do their own work, and not imperil great matters for the sake of some trifling detail. In real war, after a General has made his first dispositions, once his troops have gone into action, it may be said that the fate of the day is out of his hands. The tide of battle ebbs and flows, but he is powerless to influence its result, except by the use of reserves on the needed spot at the critical moment, should even they serve to help him.

There is also another point which has struck me as being specially remarkable. From all I have seen and heard of other armies, a number of notoriously inefficient and incapable officers—men with physical or mental infirmities—are allowed to remain in them. The remark is often made, "Oh, it is only poor so-and-so." "He is as blind as a bat, or as deaf as a post," or "is known