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THE AUTUMNAL MANŒUVRES OF THE BRITISH ARMY.—NO. IV.

(From the Broad Arrow.)

"The officers' call sounds, and on an open space beside the deadly batteries with their sandbag walls, a throng forms, such as gathered on Bisleigh Common after yesterday's fight, but never before in England. There may be 200 horsemen, some horsewomen, people on foot and in carriages; but it is in the horsemen that the interest centres. First, not in rank in the field, but in the notice of all, is the Prince of Wales, in the dress of his regiment, sitting on his horse as an English gentleman should, his healthy handsome face a little tinged by the sun of the autumn summer. There is the Duke of Cambridge, a practised hardworking soldier, ready to serve his country as she would fain be served. There is the plain uniform, and the lined face, and grey eyes looking out so keenly from under the helmet of Blumenthal—one of the right hands, for it had many, of that army which had altered the map of Europe for many a day. Other uniforms are to be seen gay and curious. The fez of the Turk, the kepi of the sabreur of a soldierly face bronzed and worn by years of Algerian sands and sun, and many another strange pattern of martial head and body dress. There is more than one statesman, many nobles, and the throng is not without men foremost in letters and law, men who may be buried in Westminster Abbey and called great. These are the walking bees. Drones there are, enough and to spare; but take it from its best to its worst, and in no hall of Parliament or saloon of the season shall you find a throng so various, remarkable for so many different reasons, so well worth watching for the ten minutes it holds together while the Duke is speaking to his officers, as that which a military spectacle like to-day assembled.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH.

As the troops in the field rest to-day the business of the hour is criticism. The question of the possibility of having taken the position occupied by Sir Hope Grant yesterday excites much discussion amongst those officers who are following the movements with the view of obtaining experience and tactical knowledge. The position occupied by Grant yesterday, behind his entrenchments, was shaped like a wide-mouthed letter V, one side looking almost directly west, and the other south-east, forming together a triangle, with the Wokingham Railway for its base. The redoubts at Steeple, or Steeple's Hill, as it is indifferently called

by the people of the neighborhood, is the apex of the triangle. At this point, the apex, the ground runs out for some 300 yards, and then dips deep and short, rising within another 100 yards to a mound on a level with the plateau of Steeple's Hill. The map shows this but imperfectly; but this morning I rode over the ground to ascertain the actual features of the position. That Sir Hope Grant could not be driven back, or rather attacked with success at any other point, seems certain, and therefore all the interest attaches itself to this one spot. On referring to the map it will be seen that there is a hill with sufficient plateau facing the western side of the "V," called Fox Hill and that in a southerly direction, a little to the right there is a hill called Burrows' Hill, the former distant from Steeple's Hill half the latter three quarters of a mile. Drawing two lines from these points to the profile of Sir Hope Grant's redoubts at the apex of this angle, it will be seen that it was open to a cross fire, which might be made too strong for the slender works to sustain without giving way for any length of time.

On the other hand, it will be seen that each of these positions, at Fox Hill and Burrows' Hill, was equally open to the concentrated fire of Grant's three redoubts on either side—a fire which, would, probably, succeed in dislodging the enemy's batteries, before the profile had been broken these batteries would have been overpowered. On the west side the enemy's guns might have been multiplied by opening fresh ones on Long Down; on the other side the conformation of the ground forbade this. It will be seen then, that as yet the position is no weaker than is necessary to silence the enemy, who would, unless time were given to throw up epaulements and shelter trenches, be always more exposed. Then comes the second argument, that by a rush of infantry, supported by heavy artillery fire, the assault on the apex, Steeple's Hill, might be successful, though with enormous bloodshed. This is a more difficult argument to meet. The closer the enemy got to the guns of the redoubt the less deadly would be the effect. On the long sweep of the plain the balls brushed the surface, but here they would be fired, so to speak, point-blank at the earth. But there were two batteries that did sweep with their deadly cross fire the whole surface of this plateau. One from Lodge Bush, and the other, the one at the western foot of the knoll at Steeple's Hill. The fire from these batteries could mow down the heather itself, and leave the place bare. Add to this the three lines of infantry in the shelter trenches one above the other, and it is difficult to understand how

humanity in any shape or form could be called upon to face such a volcano. We know well that places as difficult have been taken by rush after rush of doomed men, whose mangled bodies formed the cover under which their brothers advanced; but these cases are so rare that they are exceptions not to be expected. Taking, therefore, the range of the guns, to be equal and the time short, it seems more than difficult to discover any chance of this position being overpowered. Many blamed the Duke for sounding the "cease firing" while Staveley was knocking his head against Steeple's Hill, and they maintain still that if the action had endured the place would have been theirs. There is something far greater than physical loss sustained in these hotly-contested fights, and that is the moral effect. Take by way of illustration, the number killed in well fought battles—the average number of killed and wounded is fourteen per cent. At Hericourt and around Metz this percentage will be found to include the whole number killed and wounded at the end of each day's combat. True some regiments suffer more and amount to even thirty per cent.; but, after this, the moral effect is so great that troops will not advance. Now it seems quite clear, that this percentage would have been too small for the losses sustained by a force winning the position at Steeple's Hill, and it would seem therefore, to be not too presumptuous in maintaining that it was impregnable; many thought that the weapon most to be desired here was a mitrailleuse, not one on the French system, but that now being experiment upon in Russia, one from which the balls radiate while maintaining the same level.

The following General Orders were issued from headquarters to-day:—

NO. 1. ARMY CORPS.

"The 2nd Division will for the operations of to-morrow be broken up and divided between the other divisions, which will be constituted as follows:—

"1st Division—DEFENDING FORCE.—Major General G. J. Carey, C. B., Commanding Cavalry—General His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, K. G., commanding; Colonel Baker, 10th Hussars, 1st Brigade, Colonel Marshall commanding—1st Life Guards, 2nd Life Guards, Royal Horse Guards: 2nd Brigade, Colonel Wombwell, commanding—10th Hussars, 12th Lancers, Hants Yeomanry, and two batteries of Royal Horse Artillery. Infantry—Major-General His Serene Highness Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar's Brigade, with one Field Battery; Major-General Lyson's Brigade with one