

SELF-RELIANCE.

Aspirest thou Fame's rocky mount to scale,
Upon its crest to plant thy banner craving?
Be resolute—bollover thou shalt not fall,
And high triumphant the whilst see it waving.

Let not harsh disappointment cast thee down;
Still gather strength from every fresh disaster;
The future for ourselves we may or crown,
For Heaven on yet is Fortune's master.

The self-reliant soul all wallowing scorns,
And 'neath defeat's cruel blow rings out true metal.

Doubt dares not pluck the rose for fear of thorns,
While Confidence unhurt will grasp the noxious.

Leave "but" and "if" to vacillating minds,
Shifting and veering each succeeding hour;
Such words bet the soul inaction blinds,
"Can," "will," and "must," the spirit that would flourish.

Let nothing tempt thee from thy chosen track,
Thy fortune to accomplish alluringly plead;
Let no misfortune turn thy footstep back,
Success is only won by steadfast woeing.

Let not thy heart at adversity thus shrink,
Nor weak and fearful doubts thy strength en-
rumber;

Nor in Joy a pleasant sunshine idly sink
Into a slumber state of spirit-slumber.

Rely upon thyself, for ever bower
Within thy breast a confidence unfurling;
Preserve that talisman against despair,
And proudly gain the goal of thy aspiring.

OFFICERS' LONG COURSE.—GUNNERY SCHOOL QUEBEC.

November 1873.

"OPERATIONS OF WAR."

Question 1.—State the advantages and disadvantages of the initiative in war; the influence of railroads in offensive and defensive operations respectively, and the form of government alone capable of initiating war with success.

Answer to Question 1.—A great advantage of the initiative is that having concentrated your forces on a particular point behind your frontier, such point unknown to the enemy, you advance towards the defending army choosing the point you will attack and generally meet him with great odds in your favour as far as numbers are concerned. For an army acting on the defensive is obliged to keep dispersed on the different avenues through which the invader may advance, and up to the last moment cannot attempt to concentrate, fearing the attack directed against a point of its front is only a feint and that the real attack is to be made at a quite different point. This dubious state is still aggravated if a false attack is directed on a point at the same time as the real one. The real attack is then discerned only when it is too late to concentrate to resist it.

One course remains to the defensive army viz., to retreat, abandoning territory to the enemy. This has a demoralizing effect on the army and the nation, but is necessary, as it is the only way the defenders can manage to concentrate—other ways expose them to attack whilst moving by flank march—a very dangerous situation. The retreat of the French army on Chalons would have been attended with much beneficial effect in 1870, but the French generals were prohibited to sink of it, as such a retreat meant revolution in Paris. The result was McMahon's troops were defeated, and then Bazaine's corps d'armes nullified, and the whole army was destroyed before it could concentrate, so that each section would afford support to the other. Another advantage of the initiative is to force the enemy to conform to your movements; force him to act very often quite otherwise than he would. The Confederates forced McClellan to abandon his lines on

the Pamunkey in his advance upon Richmond by threatening to out-flank him. Another advantage of the invaders is that he lives on his enemy's country, which he may strike with heavy contribution and spare his own nation so much of the expense of warfare.

But disadvantages are also attendant on the initiative or offensive mode of warfare; as you must depend as much as possible on a few lines of communication, and as your troops move all in as compact order as possible, the result is that you cannot easily supply your army from the country you move into, consequently, the greater part of your supplies must be taken from your base of operations; consequently great magazines must be established there and great preparations for their transport must be made, increasing thus great expense at the onset. Another disadvantage is that being in great part dependant for supplies on your base of operation, and not being able readily to provide for your army except through your lines of communication, you are more strictly bound to them than if you acted on the defensive in your own country; there you can shift your base adopting a temporary one, thus enabling you to change front, if such change is advantageous.

The Sardinians, when defeated in 1849, might have retreated on Alexandria changing their base of operation from Turin, which up to then had been their base of operation. The Austrians could not have changed their front to such an extent being bound to a line of communication through Lodi and towards the quadrilateral which was their place of refuge in case of retreat. Another disadvantage of offensive is that being able to draw supplies from their own country in all directions, a retreating army may adopt a defensive offensive mode of operation by detaching a corps on the flank of the enemy's communications; it will force him to guard the by roads by which the line of communication could be severed, forcing thus the enemy to fritter his force till ultimately he may be engaged in an action with odds against him; and the position of the two armies reversed. Napoleon's retreat from Russia affords a memorable example of the danger of insufficiently guarded and prolonged lines of communication—his line of retreat was cut at the Beresina by two Russian corps who had manoeuvred on each flank of it, starting one from the north and another from south of Prussia, and his retreat was converted into one of the most disastrous routes on record. An advantage the defensive army has over the adversary is the ease and comparative cheapness with which it can be supplied, the troops being dispersed over a large extent of territory, ready access to magazines can be had, ease of transport, and the districts themselves occupied can nearly supply the army by which they are occupied. Another example of difficulties encountered by invaders as far as supplies are concerned, is to be found in the advance of the Prussians towards Chancellorsville in the north-west of France in 1870, the invaders would have been obliged to retreat if the capture of La Mans and Couville had not replenished their exhausted trains with provisions. Railways seem to be more favorable to the defensive than to the offensive. It is true they help the offensive army to assemble much quicker than if it has to be accomplished by ordinary roads—such was the assembling of the German contingents effected in about a fortnight. It also facilitates collection of supplies, &c., but when the invader is on the enemy's territory conditions are reversed, for if the defender

cannot use his railways to concentrate by lateral movements on account of uncertainty of the point of attack, still as he is retiring if he destroys the railways in his front he lays an impediment in the way of the enemy, gaining thus sufficient time to effectuate concentration in a line in rear of that formerly occupied by him.

Taking the Waterloo campaign as an example, and supposing it had been gone through with the assistance of railways now to be found on that theatre of war, Napoleon would have concentrated his troops from Paris to Fleure by means of the Lille Valenciennes Maboyn railway as unforeseen as he actually was then, and would have found the allies dispersed watching the avenues to Brussels from the sea to the German frontier. But in the action at Ligny the Prussian corps at Cuiet and neighbourhood might have been brought up to the battle field by rail in time to take part in the conflict—and supposing Napoleon still victorious the Prussian retreat on Waterloo would have been effected by the Wavre and Gembland railways, bringing the Prussian army or a large part of them on the battle field in time for the battle, instead of their reaching there about three o'clock p.m.—Napoleon's advance on Waterloo would not have been much altered as the railways would have been destroyed as the enemy retired. This is supposing a French force had not been detached to cut them behind the retreating forces—and had succeeded—then things would become much similar to what they actually were, then Wellington's movements would not have differed very much from what they actually were—Grouchy would have pursued the Prussians much as he did. The sum total seems then in favor of the defensive when use of railways comes into question.

The best government to assume the initiative is the despotic. All the questions to be solved by political as well as tactical strategy being left to the discretion of one, the place of campaign can be more readily decided upon, the cost of the initiative being considerable. If left to the discussion of many, delay will be incurred, if left in the power of one to decide no such delays will take place, and promptness is absolutely necessary to secure the initiative. All the resources of the nation are directed towards one end with a unity of purpose and design that can be the attribute of no other government except the despotic. Napoleon is a good example which can be adduced of the influence a form of government has on the securing of the initiative. A more modern example might be found in William of Prussia, though he is sovereign of a nation and apparently governed by constitutional institutions.

The concentration of troops previous to advance in France was effected by the use of railways, the officials of which, even, were under the military control of the commander in chief of the army. These advantages are lost if the despot has bad health or weakened brain.

Question 2.—What were the reasons that induced the Confederates to stand on the defensive at the commencement of the Civil War?

Answer to Question 2.—The reasons belonged to political strategy. The President of the Confederate States prevented the advance of the Confederate army on Washington after the battle of Bull Run, because it had been stated at the beginning of the war that the object of the South was not to subjugate the other States of the Union, but to secure its independence. This secured the aid