

THE  
METROPOLITAN  
MAGAZINE.

---

VOL. XIII.  
MAY TO AUGUST, 1835.

---

LONDON:  
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET;  
BELL AND BRADFUTE, EDINBURGH; SMITH AND SON, GLASGOW;  
AND W. F. WAKEMAN, DUBLIN.

1835.

## ON WAR.

*Von Kiege.* Hinterlassenes Werk des GENERAL CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ. Berlin. 2 vols. 8vo.\*

To such of our readers as may be acquainted with the German language, we cannot too strongly recommend the perusal of this posthumous production of General Von Clausewitz; than which, few publications connected with the elementary principles of war were ever more deserving of attention—none more essentially calculated to elevate the author to the highest rank amongst strategists and philosophers.

To analyze a work, where every superfluity has been avoided, and where there is so great an abundance of valuable matter, is no light undertaking. But as no translation has hitherto appeared, we shall do our best to accomplish our task, begging the reader to bear in mind, that such extracts as we have given are condensed paraphrases, rather than literal versions of the author's words.

The first chapter opens with the following question. "What is war?" and thus it is defined. "War is the act of compelling an opponent to submit to one's will. Thus force is the *medium*, and submission the *object*, and the latter can only be attained by the development of the former. In order to effect this, the enemy must be rendered powerless. This is the grand aim of all hostilities." The basis of this object, that is, submission, is founded upon a triple unity, that is, in "the reduction of the enemy's army, territory, and will. The *first* of these must be overcome, or placed in a situation completely innocuous. The *second* must be subdued, otherwise it would reproduce supplies of men and treasure, and thus revive the first. The *third* must be vanquished or worn out, or else through the means of alliances or political connexions, it may so operate on distant points, on the flanks and rear of the victor, as to distract him from his direct conquest, and thus leave the vanquished at liberty to reorganize his forces, and again trust to the hazard of collision."

The results of the French revolutionary and imperial wars, fully verify these conclusions; for whenever Napoleon discomfited his enemies in battle, and overran their territory, he lost no time in concluding treaties, by which, if he did not succeed in utterly crushing, he at least *neutralised* "the will of resistance." These treaties secured him for a time, and thus completed the object, or triple unity. This was exemplified in Italy after the battle preceding the treaty of Campo Formio; in Prussia, after Jena; in Austria, after Austerlitz and Wagram; and in Poland, after the combat of Friedland. Whereas, in Spain, although the French troops occupied nearly the whole territory, and although the national armies were constantly defeated, still, the will of resistance remained intact. The unity was incomplete, and thus a flame burst forth which eventually produced that general reactive conflagration, which led to the destruction of the mighty spirit, whom all European nations then regarded as their oppressor.

\* General Clausewitz was preceptor to the present Crown Prince of Prussia, Director of the Military School at Berlin, Inspector General of Artillery at Coblenz, and finally, Chief of the Staff to Field Marshal Gueisenaw. Upon the death of the latter at Posen, he removed to Breslau, where he died on the 16th of November, 1831. The work is edited by his widow; it consists of four books, divided into forty-six chapters.

The position of almost all continental states was nearly similar—that of Great Britain peculiar. For the integrity of her territory was maintained inviolate, and, although her brave troops were not always successful in the field, until the genius of Wellington pointed out the certain path of victory, her valiant seamen were invariably triumphant on the waters. Besides, “her will” to resist was imperishable. Augmenting with the perils that menaced her on every side, it seemed to derive nourishment and intensity from the defalcation of friends, and the agglomeration of enemies. Like pure steel, it acquired temper and nerve from heat and contact. With her, “the will” held the first rank, and was in fact the grand stimulant. It was that which upheld her courage, animated and united her people, and imparted to them that concentrated, wedgelike power, which at length succeeded in riving asunder the mighty mass that had coalesced against her. It was this “will,” comparable to those ingenious mechanical engines, the boast of her industry, which after rending to pieces the opposing block, detached parts from the whole, wrought them again together, and propelled them forward: so that France, which had previously constituted the nucleus of an almost irresistible power, became weakened; its core was laid bare, and at length it fell, enveloped in its own toils. Frederic the Great in the seven years war—Alexander after the fall of Moscow, and the Cortes after the capture of Madrid, gave proofs that without the subjugation of the will, the loss of battles or even portions of territory, is not a fulfilment of the grand object of war.

General Clausewitz classes “the will” in the *third* rank—we are inclined to consider it as the pivot, or key-stone of war. It may be objected—how is “the will” to be subjugated without the development of the two other agents constituting the medium? To this we reply, that without “the will” there could be no development on ~~either~~ side. There must be the will to commence, and that to continue, or there could be neither outset nor endurance. There must be the will to provide the sinews of war, for without them, no numerical strength can avail, and there must be a general national impulse or will, that shall unite the people with the government, and the government with the cause. If either fail, the whole must languish.

There never was a period in the history of nations, that more fully illustrated the force of will, than the occurrences of the last war. England almost to a man was unanimous. No sacrifices were too great for her generous people—no projects too vast for her enlightened statesmen—no disparity of numbers disheartened her soldiers, and no superiority of force checked the ardour of her gallant mariners. She may be said to have demonstrated in the highest degree the *genius of constancy*, whilst other nations only showed the *instinct of resistance*. It is true, she ruled the floods; the ocean quailed beneath her glorious banner, and Napoleon found, to his cost, the verity of the maxim, “that to be master of the sea is an abridgment of monarchy.” But, unless she had the will to proceed farther, she might have contented herself with this supremacy, which Bacon admirably terms “her national dowry.” She had no need to have taken other share in the war; nay, she might have gone hand in hand with the spoiler, and have purchased either his co-operation or neutrality at an almost boundless premium. But such a proceeding was unsuited to the genius of a free and magnanimous nation, and no minister would have dared propose such a Machiavelian source of grandeur to the representatives of the people.

“Will,” whether passive or active, may therefore be said to be the *primum mobile*, the true essence of war. So long as the inclination to resist remains unconquered, the destruction of any given force, or the reduction of territory, can but partially fulfil the ultimate design. Numerical strength is a fluctuating power, its diminution can be but temporary.

The laws of nations, aided by improving civilisation and science, render it a continually increasing agent. Let the momentary drainage be what it may, a brief space suffices to replenish the void. Look to Poland! In her, we have a striking illustration of the force of will. There it is constant, and forms an inherent portion of individual organization. It enters the world with the new-born, and even survives the grave, for it is bequeathed as a legacy from father to child. Extermination, or what General Clausewitz terms "the utmost application of force," can alone extirpate this will. Without extermination, Poland may be enchained, but not subdued; and after short intervals of repose, revolts will burst forth, rivers of blood will flow, and, alas! borne down by the overwhelming strength of her gigantic master—she must again succumb.

We will not follow the author through his profound philosophical researches into the theory of causes and objects, but go with him at once to the development of the "medium," that is, battle. The object of war is rather a question of politics than tactics or strategy, and is more fitted for the study of the statesman than the soldier. To the latter, the ultimate design is a secondary consideration. Causation with him is nothing—immediate effect is all. He moves mechanically, and the object he has in view is the instant defeat of the foe, not his ultimate subjugation. Resistance is his element, his existence: he reaps from it glory, advancement and honours. Submission, or in other words peace, is moral death, for it arrests him in his career, lops off his hopes, puts to flight his visions of fame, and in fact, converts him into a mere liveried stipendiary, shackled with all the restraints of military discipline, without any of its soul-stirring excitements.

Admitting the submission of an enemy to be the grand object of war—"We see," says General Clausewitz, "that various paths conduct to the goal. Not that each case absolutely depends upon the *extinction* of an opponent; for, defeat, conquest, occupation, invasion, and expeditions, based upon political relations, and finally, the passive waiting for an enemy's attack—are all means that may be had recourse to according as circumstances lead me to anticipate greater success from one or the other. We might add a whole catalogue of projects and means as shorter roads to the object, and which may be designated as arguments *ad hominem*; but it is only necessary to allude to them. To attempt specification would be pedantry. If all these collateral means are included, the paths to the attainment of the object are countless. After all, however, there is but one absolute medium, and that is battle. However diversely constituted, or however far removed from the barbarism of personal animosity; how great soever the number of intervening circumstances that may be said to be independent of actual collision, it is indispensable that all military operations emanate directly from, and tend immediately to, battle. That it must be the case, no matter how divergent the accessories, is shown by the following fact. Every occurrence of war must be effected by the aid of armies; and where armed men are employed, the groundwork of every operation must be predisposition for battle. Every thing appertaining to armies resolves itself into warlike efficiency, in which are compressed, *production, maintenance, and application*. Production and maintenance are the *means*, and application the object."

This maxim is incontestable, for the failing of any one of those three essentials must entail inevitable failure. If the ranks are not replenished, no physical efforts, no genius, however transcendent, can enable an army to maintain its ground—its powers of reproduction being the province of its creators, whilst the germs of rapid decay are immediately within itself. Again, even if its numbers be kept up to a given standard, unless it be well provided, it must go to pieces, as did the French in Russia in 1812. But the most important of all considerations is the "application," for,

however efficient and well provided, unless the employment be opportune and sagaciously conducted, it is but an idle waste of blood and treasure. The expedition to Walcheren, in 1809, may serve as an illustration of the error of application, the sage distribution of the British troops in the Peninsula, as a proof of the effects of enlightened combination. When the three requisites are united, (their union, as well as their impulsion, is the direct duty of governments,) then the art of war is reduced to a much narrower basis, that is, to the knowledge of "giving battle at the right moment."

This again brings me to a still more circumscribed sphere. The matter then becomes a business of speciality or individual capacity, for it may be said, that the just application of force entirely depends upon the selection of a commander. This may be taken as an invariable rule. It would be superfluous to adduce examples. The names of Gustavus, Turenne, Frederick, Marlborough, Napoleon, and Wellington, are sufficient illustrations. But here again, the question of individuality is one of extreme precariousness and hazard, and comes beneath the circle of what Clausewitz intitles the "*Frictions*" of war. Of all circumstances connected with the art, the most important are the three essentials above mentioned, and the last includes the *choice of a chief*. The first duty of government is to produce, the second to maintain—for without reserves and magazines, it were useless to take the field, and in these matters misplaced economy may be fatal to armies and kingdoms. A penury of battering artillery, engineers, cavalry, and other requisites, had like to have paralyzed all the combinations of the British commander in the Peninsula, and would have done so, had not his own genius, aided by the invincible constancy of his soldiers, and other fortuitous circumstances, counterbalanced the deficiency. But this could only be effected at a great expense of blood, and consequently of treasure; we say consequently, for experience shows, that it is infinitely less expensive to maintain *two* old soldiers, during a campaign, than to produce *one* recruit. It were better, therefore, for government to make a greater outfit of cannon and stores, nay, even to sacrifice a portion of them, than to risk the loss of seasoned troops for the want of them. That is, by compelling the bayonets of veteran soldiers to act as substitutes for such appurtenances, as was the case at Badajos and Burgos. This is peculiarly applicable to Great Britain, whose mode of recruiting and geographical position enhances the costs attendant upon replenishing her armies, when employed on foreign service.

Supposing, however, that a government fulfils its duty by organizing and sending forth an effective army, and by maintaining it at the original standard, an immense difficulty still remains in the selection of a commander. It may be replied, that production, organization, and maintenance, are mechanical processes, for which rulers may be held responsible, but that it is not in their power to create genius, to controul intellect, or to impart to officers a superior ability for war. True—but they can most indisputably select the most capable, and take heed that no party interest, no patronage, no parliamentary or court intrigue, shall influence their choice, in a matter involving the dearest interests of their country. The history of British military expeditions is not exempt from this flagitious blemish.

One of the first elements of success in war, whether taken collectively or individually, is "military genius." Much subtle argument may arise as to the true definition of this quality, but it will be admitted that amongst the component parts, *courage* holds a first rank. Let our author speak. "War," says he, "is the empire of peril; consequently, valour is above all things most important in soldiers. Valour is of two kinds, viz. the courage to confront *personal* danger, and that of supporting *moral*

*responsibility.* Our business is with the former. Personal courage is of two kinds—firstly, it may be a contempt for peril, arising from *individual organization, indifference to life, or habit.* In either of these three cases it must be considered as a *permanent* quality. Secondly, courage may emanate from *fluctuating* motives, such as *ambition, love of country, or excitement* of various kinds. In the latter cases, valour is not so much a quality, as an emotion or fugitive passion. Of course, both kinds operate differently. The first are more certain, since, from having become a second nature, they never abandon a man. The second are impulses, that may however urge him farther. *Firmness* is the offspring of the one, temerity of the other. The first leaves the mind more composed, the second sometimes excites, but often intoxicates. Both united compose the most perfect kind of valour.”

The elements necessary to the composition of this invaluable unity are graphically defined; but if we fully comprehend the meaning of “indifference to life,” we should be inclined to remove it from the first category, and replace it by “love of country,” which cannot, under any circumstance, be deemed ephemeral or fugitive. Notwithstanding the lucidity with which the author has treated this point, we shall venture upon a still further physiological analysis, and strive to reduce to an approximate scale, the portions as well as sum total of valour, which appears to be the heritage or characteristic of the principal nations composing the great European family.

We shall doubtless subject ourselves to accusations of overweening boldness and invidiousness, for attempting to reduce moral qualities to a numerical standard, and for venturing to apply to each nation a fixed position in the scale of courage. It is not pretended to lay down an absolute rule, all we aim at is the production of a philosophical theory.

The component parts of valour are divided by Clausewitz into six fractions: let us, therefore, take these ingredients to compose our “Barometer of National Courage.” In order to accomplish this more easily, let us give to the whole, that is, to perfect valour, a supposed maximum, represented by a number, say 120—and then let 20 stand for each of the six component parts. Then, adding together the various fractions possessed by each nation, let us turn to the aggregate, which will designate the comparative degree of the highest grade of valour exhibited by each. It would have been possible to have carried the research still further, and to have affixed a graduated numerical value to each of the component parts, and in that case we should have attributed a greater specific gravity to some qualities than to others, but this would have plunged us too deeply in the mazes of theory. The following table will better illustrate our meaning.

*Barometer of National Courage.*

NATIONS.	QUALITIES.						TOTAL.
	PERMANENT.			FUGITIVE.			
	Individual Organization.	Custom and Discipline.	Patriotism	Ambition.	Excitement.	Indifference to Life.	
Austria . . .	9	15	14	10	12	3	63
France . . .	8½	12	13	18	20	6	77½
Britain . . .	15	20	18	5	8	5	71
German States	7½	13	12	9	11	4	56½
Italy . . .	5	7	8	12	13	3	48
Portugal . . .	6½	12	11	8	11	3	51½
Poland . . .	9	10	16	15	20	6	76
Prussia . . .	8½	16	15	11	13	4	67½
Netherlands	8½	12	14	5	7	5	52½
Russia . . .	12½	17	10	9	7	5	60½
Spain* . . .	8	9	15	10	10	3	55

\* The Ottomans are omitted, their reckless courage being the off-spring of fatalism.

Now supposing, by way of hypothesis, that this scale be tolerably correct: we see that the French and Poles stand highest; that is, they lay claim to a larger total than the English; but on examining the component parts, it results that the latter possess a preponderance of those qualities constituting permanent courage, consequently, though they may have less ardour, they can boast of more firmness. The enduring constancy of the British infantry is not less proverbial than the daring temerity of the French. Experience has proved that the fiery impetuosity of the one has been repeatedly extinguished by the cold impassibility of the other. It may be invidious to draw comparisons, but nevertheless we do not hesitate to give the preference to those who possess what Clausewitz indicates as inherent qualities.

We must request the reader's indulgence, whilst we attempt a further research into these qualities. By individual organization, is not only meant that physical vigour and inflexibility natural, in a lesser or higher degree, to man in his crude state, as exemplified in savages, but a more exalted organization fortified by climate, food, education, national traditions, and various accessories, tending to develop the germ, and thus gradually to mature it, until it becomes a permanent condition of the highest order. Some portion of these qualities may be said to be hereditary, or indigenous, in every country; but nowhere more so than in Great Britain. Take, for example, a child born of English parents; let him be alienated from them, and educated entirely on the Continent. In proportion as the faculties of his mind receive development, he will be found to exhibit several of those characteristics, that are the type of the British islands. He will be less vivacious, more concentrated, resolute, and independent, than the youth of the land where he may be brought up—in short, he will soon betray various physiological peculiarities clearly denoting his origin. The same typical distinctions may be remarked in other nations: but with them, the symptoms of individuality are much less prominent, and it is for this reason that we have attributed to the British so large a portion of individual organization.

Habit, or second nature, must emanate from early education, in which must be included the pastimes of youth, and their mode of settling personal disputes. It may be said (however faulty the system of education in England) that they stand pre-eminent in all those virile exercises, that are calculated to give energy and robustness to the frame; even as their manner of personal combat tends to inspire them with a contempt for danger. The point of honour, and what may be called nationality of courage, is more intimately connected with the latter than might be imagined at first sight; but the instantaneous and direct manner with which boys resent any imputation on their veracity or honour, and the horror they entertain to yielding, without a struggle, even to more powerful adversaries, may be taken as the basis of that tendency to resistance, that independence of spirit, that characterises the people. They are accustomed from earliest boyhood to avenge insult, to rise up against oppression, and to meet their opponents face to face, eye to eye, hand to hand, and only to yield when their physical strength is exhausted, and their blood has flowed; and this habit of youth is the forerunner of that inflexible courage which upholds Englishmen upon the deck, or in the square, and which propels them steadily, but irresistibly, forward, in boarding and in the charge. The severe discipline of the British system, being grafted upon these tendencies, constitute the whole secret of that remarkable endurance for which its infantry is so celebrated. We have, therefore, attributed to her people the maximum of custom and discipline.

Under the head of ambition, must be included hopes of promotion and honours. Taking the vast majority of the English army, it is indisputable that they possess less of this quality than almost any other European

nation, and the reasons are obvious. 1st. The soldiers may be said to be excluded from all prospect of advancement, reward, or notice. There are exceptions, but of extreme rarity. The mention of non-commissioned officers' or privates' names in a despatch would be an anomaly. 2nd. Subaltern officers have no prospect of honorary distinctions, or public praise. Indeed, the baneful influence of patronage, interest, and wealth, whether in the army or navy, is generally so exclusive as to render merit, in inferior ranks, a mere dead letter, and often to stifle all feelings of legitimate ambition.\* Thence it is, that Englishmen execute their duty with that cold-blooded stoicism, for which they are so proverbial. They go to battle as they would to church, for they have no other stimulant than an innate sense of duty and principle of national honour, which being handed down to them from their forefathers, and intimately connected with love of country, may be assimilated to patriotism.

This latter virtue does not alone consist in defending one's native hearth against aggression, but in sustaining the honour of one's country, though the scene of action be a thousand leagues distant. Clausewitz has placed patriotism amongst the fugitive portions of valour. This is a grievous error, for if ever a sentiment was firmly implanted in man's breast, it is the love of country. It is connected with parents, children, home, the abodes of our early friends, the graves of our ancestors, and with all that is most cherished, most permanent in the human mind. It is not the casual sentiment of a day, or the birth of circumstance, but forms an integral part of man's being, and is, generally speaking, the most durable of all moral sentiments. The English are scoffed at for carrying their customs, prejudices, and eccentricities, to the most distant portions of the globe; and, although domiciled for years in foreign parts, for still adhering to many national practises, at variance with those of other people.

Whence does this proceed? Foreigners assert from pride, and often from obstinacy. Be it so. But we would have Englishmen never abandon these nationalities, for we are inclined to attribute them to an inherent love of country, to a holy veneration and attachment for all those usages that remind them of the beloved land of their birth, of their families and predecessors. This then is patriotism, and true patriotism consists in upholding the customs as well as honour of one's country, in whatever clime fortune may guide our steps.

*Hoc opus, hoc studium parvi properrimus et ampli  
Si patriæ volumus, si nobis vivere cari.*

Indifference to life ought scarcely to be included in our barometer; for, taking it in its abstract sense, it is a dangerous, and fortunately a rare emotion, more calculated to produce evil than good, by generating excessive rashness, and destroying discretion. It may be glossed over with the specious varnish of self-abandonment, but unless a man desire death, he cannot be indifferent to life. The object of battle, however paradoxical it may appear, is to preserve life, that is, to inflict the utmost possible loss upon an enemy, at the least possible cost of blood to one's self. Indifference to life can only be a morbid sentiment, emanating from a diseased mind, or from some other cause, that renders life burthensome. The man that courts death in battle, does so, because, whilst he desires to cast off an insupportable existence, he is eager to disguise suicide in the glorious garb of self-devotion. He may also desire to compound with his conscience, and thus hope to escape that penalty which religion and morality tell us will be the consequence of our wilfully throwing away that being with which God has vouchsafed to endow us. Indifference to life, if pro-

\* We do not identify ourselves with the above remarks.—EDITOR.



ducing its extinction, is nothing else than suicide tricked out in the brilliant halo of extreme valour.

Were a whole army to be animated with such a sentiment, they would be like a host of maniacs, rushing blindfold upon destruction. They would hurl themselves upon the enemy's bayonets with heedless temerity, and, losing all self-possession or controul over their passions, would defeat the sagest combinations. It is, however, in the French and Polish ranks, more than in any other, that we find instances of this reckless, unreflecting valour, bordering almost upon mental aberration. Indeed, so closely is indifference to life allied to hallucination, that it may be confounded with it. However, when we come to analyse this emotion amongst the French, it will often be found to be the offspring of extreme temporary excitement, grafted on ambition.

Under the category of excitement must be classed that feverish ardour of the moment, that indescribable intoxication of the soul, which propel men to the most desperate exertions, and urge them to confront peril with a contempt inconceivable to those who have never witnessed or experienced the influence of these stimulants. It, in fact, baffles description, as much as in many instances it overcomes all resistance. It may have its source in national spirit, hatred, revenge, or from the nerves being acted upon by the tumult, the movement, or the various indefinable emotions that rush to men's hearts and elevate them, as it were, above themselves during the heat of battle. When tempered by prudence it is an admirable quality in soldiers, but dangerous in the highest degree when unrestrained.

Individuals liable to excitement should never command in chief. As seconds, under the guidance of others, they may do well, "for in council it is good to see dangers, and in execution not to see them." Excitement in the hands of a skilful general is an admirable lever; but even then it is sometimes detrimental. Thus, the impetuosity of the British horse has frequently caused much mischief, and the public despatches tell us that the guards at Talavera compromised themselves by a similar excess. Excitement may be likened to shocks of electricity, which decrease in intensity at each successive application. It is too much allied to passion to be durable, and in soldiers *endurance* and *self-possession* are the most desirable of all qualifications. It is certain that passion and self-command are two incompatible elements. Excitement is a fever, that influences the mind, and hurries man headlong onward; but if he encounter determined opposition, it is likely to evaporate, or at least to lose much of its elasticity. The result is depression, and thence repulse. Excitement can only be called into life by extraneous means, whereas, self-possession being permanent either from habit or organization, requires no support; it is of itself sufficient to sustain a man's mind through all the vicissitudes of battle. The French possess to an eminent degree the fever of action, the British are masters of the more constant virtue.

( To be continued. )

---

ON WAR.<sup>1</sup>

*Von Kiege.* Hinterlassenes Werk des GENERAL CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ. Berlin. 2 vols. 8vo.

OUR former article terminated with some developements and explanations of the component parts of valour, upon which we founded our hypothesis of the barometer of courage; let us now return to the author and follow him to another sphere. "War," says General Clausewitz, "is the empire of corporeal struggles and sufferings, and in order to enable a man to steel himself against them, a certain degree of physical and moral strength, whether natural or artificial, is absolutely requisite. With a due proportion of these qualities, under the influence of sound judgment, man is already a very capable implement for war. But to arrive at any pre-eminence, much more is required of him; and if we search deeper into the demands that war exacts from its votaries, we then come to the most essential of all—superior intellect.

"War is the dominion of uncertainty. Three-fourths of the occurrences on which its mechanism is hinged, lay enveloped in a haze of greater or lesser incertitude. Here then it is where a penetrating, subtle mind comes into play, and by tact and perspicuity succeeds in extracting light from this darkness. A common understanding may once *accidentally* hit upon the truth, or an extraordinary display of courage may serve as a substitute. So a man in a dark chamber may find the object he seeks, but the chances are that he strikes against the wall. Thus in most cases the average result of war is—an exposure of moral blindness.

"War is also the empire of accident; there is no human undertaking in which so much latitude must be accorded to this intruder; for, war and hazard are twin brothers, and these perpetually augment the uncertainty of the issue, and disturb the balance of calculation. The only counterpoise to accident is *genius*. But how brilliant soever genius may be, it cannot always rise superior to the uncertainties in which all results are shrouded. In order, however, that a commander may successfully wrestle with this omnipresent foe, two qualities are essential. The one, a mind capable of catching some glimmering of light, even amidst the blackest obscurity: the other, the moral courage to follow up this feeble light. The former is defined by what the French term *coup d'œil*, the latter by *decision*. The first, when reduced to its most absolute sense, is the *art of discovering the real point of attack or defence*. This embraces choice of position, errors committed by adversaries, and so forth. If one analyze this faculty still further, it will prove to be nothing else than an instantaneous power of discovering luminous points, where all is obscurity to common minds. But the enjoyment of this admirable privilege is insufficient, unless a man have firmness to act. By firmness is not meant personal courage, but force of mind to brave responsibility, and consequently moral courage to resist moral perils, such as chances of failure, and the like."\*

<sup>1</sup> Concluded from p. 71.

\* We may adduce as a singular illustration, that one of Napoleon's marshals, still living, was so devoid of this species of courage, that he was repeatedly known, upon critical occasions, to seek the hottest of the fight, in the hopes of being wounded and carried off the field. He had the courage (few were braver) to support physical sufferings, and to despise death; but not strength of mind to bear up against responsibility.—*Note of Translator.*

This kind of valour is aptly termed *courage d'esprit*, or strength of mind, since it emanates from the soul. It is not, however, so much an action of intellect as of the heart. Mere intellect, however luminous, would not constitute moral courage. For we have seen some of the wisest people utterly devoid of all firmness. Intellect is, however, necessary to give life to courage, and then courage sustains intellect. The former could not have being without the latter, and the latter would degenerate into mere brute ferocity without the former. Besides, in moments of emergency feelings are more puissant than thoughts.

*Coup d'œil*\* and firmness lead me to speak of presence of mind, another essential, with which they are closely allied. Presence of mind is, in fact, nothing but a sudden victory over, or a skilful repulse of, that which is unexpected. We admire the presence of mind displayed in a ready retort to a sudden proposition, as we applaud the development of rapid resource at the instant of unlooked-for peril. Neither the reply nor the resource need be extraordinary, providing they be apt; for that, which, if delivered or executed after mature and calm consideration, might appear trivial or common-place in point and action, by a rapid thro' of intellect or unexpected application, will often produce the most conclusive results. Presence of mind denotes the facility with which man is able to avail himself of latent natural resources. This invaluable faculty, that has so often saved armies and nations, is to be ascribed either to the properties of the mind, or to the equilibrium of the soul, according to the nature of circumstances; but both are essential. An apt reply, for instance, denotes the spontaneous operation of a clever head, whilst ready resource, in sudden danger, bespeaks tranquillity and composure of soul.

The principal elements against which a commander has to struggle, may be summed up in a few words; *danger, physical obstacles, moral causes, uncertainty, and accidents*. To enable him to make head against, or to overcome them, the following qualities are strictly necessary. *Presence of mind, coup d'œil, decision, energy, firmness, constancy, and strength of heart and character*. We will not follow the author through his elaborate definitions of these properties, further than to explain the difference between firmness and constancy. "The one," says General Clausewitz, "betokens resistance against isolated shocks, the other relates to the duration of resistance." Both are absolutely necessary to the ultimate success of any measure beyond a mere *coup de main*, and then the first is only demanded. The distinction may appear subtle; for, although there may be firmness without constancy, there can be no constancy without firmness. The one partakes more of the physical, the other of the moral, qualities of the system. Firmness is necessary to support positive suffering, constancy to bear up against a succession of shocks, or against others that may be anticipated.

In treating of the dangers of war in the fourth chapter, we find the following animated and graphic passages:—

"The picture that a man draws of war, before he has learned to know it in all its nakedness, is, generally speaking, more attractive than repulsive. When soldiers rush upon the enemy in all the drunken ardour of the charge,—who stops to count the bullets or the fallen? To close the eye for an instant, to confront death, uncertain whether we shall escape it or not:—and that, at the golden moment of victory, when the ripe, luscious fruit for which our soul pants, hangs temptingly within our grasp—can that be difficult? It would not be difficult, and would appear less so, if such moments were the mere action of a pulsation, as it is sometimes

\* This expression, which has no equivalent in our language, ought to be naturalized in our dictionaries, for it is alike applicable both in war and diplomacy.

supposed; but of such moments there are few. No! the danger of war, like medicinal tinctures, must be swallowed diluted, and robbed of half their impulsive stimulants.

“Let us, for example, accompany the young soldier to the battle field. As we approach, the thunder of artillery, alternating with the rushing of shot, booms louder and louder upon the ear. A few yards further, and the half-spent balls attract the attention of the inexperienced, for they now commence striking and bounding close around, above, before, and behind. We cast a side-long glance, and advance towards the height on which stands the general-in-chief, surrounded by his staff. Here the plunging of cannon shot and bursting of shells are so frequent, that the seriousness of the situation penetrates through the ideal veil with which our youthful fancy had bedecked it. Suddenly a friend falls—his blood tinges our very cheek—a shell drops into the centre of the group, explodes, and causes an inevitable wavering. One begins to feel that he is not altogether so completely indifferent or collected. Even the bravest must be somewhat affected. Proceed a few yards further into the battle, which rages before one, as upon a theatre, and approach that general of division. Here ball follows ball, and shell succeeds shell, whilst the roaring of our own guns adds to the fearful din, and augments the deep interest of the picture. From the general of division let us hasten to the general commanding a brigade. He, a man of tried valour, prudently places himself and people behind the covert of a hillock, a building, or clump of trees—a certain indication of increasing peril. Showers of grape rattle through the thatch, or tear the branches; volleys of cannon shot furrow up the earth or rend the air, whilst the hissing of myriads of musket balls tell one that those long lines of smoke conceal the enemy. But onwards, and in an instant we are beside the troops; beside the valiant, indefatigable infantry, who for hours have been withstanding with unflinching steadiness the murderous fire of musketry. Here the air is filled with the incessant whistling of shot, which announce their proximity by the sharp, short whiz with which they dart by, an inch distant from one’s head, one’s ear, one’s very heart. Then come to satiety all the heaving of the bosom, the affections of the mind at the loss of comrades and friends, and at the sight of the mangled, who fall fainting or groaning to the ground.”

Those who have any experience will admit the correctness of this picture; and we believe that there is no man, who, honestly placing his hand on his heart, will affirm that he has remained altogether unmoved on such occasions; or that the light of his thoughts has not been affected or broken in upon by other emotions than those that are its ordinary tenants. Indeed, “he must be a most extraordinary individual,” as the author observes, “who on his first initiation does not lose some portion of the faculty of immediate decision. It is true, custom soon blunts the emotion. In half an hour we commence feeling greater indifference; some more, some less; but a man of *ordinary* intellect never arrives at full independence of mind, or complete elasticity of soul; and *extraordinary* men are rare. It results, therefore, that little can be expected from ordinary men; and this is the more applicable in proportion as the sphere of action becomes more extensive. When tranquilly sitting in one’s cabinet, this self-conquest appears a matter of easy attainment; but when removed to the theatre of action, a man must possess a vast store of innate, stoical courage, mental abstraction, imperious ambition, or long intimacy with danger, before he can overcome all counteraction.”

General Clausewitz includes danger as one of the *frictions* of war; what is meant by this appropriate term will be explained by the following extract:—

“So long as we have no experience of actual war, one cannot com-

prehend wherein consist the difficulties of which so much is said, or where the genius or extraordinary powers required of a commander, come most into play. Every thing appears so simple; all requisite knowledge so plain, all combinations so insignificant, that they are apparently trifling in comparison with the higher problems of mathematics or philosophy. But where a man has seen war; above all, when he has commanded, then all is comprehensible. And yet it is no easy matter to describe what the nature of the difficulty is, or to identify the various counteracting fluctuations.

“Every thing is simple in war; granted; but even the very simplest movements are difficult and uncertain of execution. Let one suppose, for instance, that a traveller has only two more relays to complete his journey. Twenty miles, with post horses and a high road—why it is nothing! He reaches the last stage but one, and can procure no horses, or bad ones: then, it is a mountainous country, the roads are broken up, it is pitch dark, and an axletree breaks: he thinks himself fortunate to reach a neighbouring village after infinite fatigue and delay, and is happy to put up with any accommodation he can meet with. Thus it occurs in war, that in consequence of the multitude of trifling obstacles, which never appear upon paper, the ablest combinations often fail, and the object is defeated. A firm and imperative mind may overcome these frictions, and vanquish every obstacle, but not without destroying the acting agent; for even the most energetic will is the slave of friction.”

Look to the campaign of Moscow, to the non-arrival of Grouchy's corps on the afternoon of the battle of Waterloo, and other historical examples.

We must be pardoned if we give another instance of friction that occurred to our own troops during the Peninsular war. It affords a striking proof of the manner in which the most insignificant causes may defeat the ablest combinations, and that the reputations of commanders are often subservient to hazard. During the last siege of Badajoz, a corps was thrown out by Albuera, upon the Seville road, in order to cover the operations of the besiegers. A strong French detachment occupied Llerena, an open town, and it was determined to cut these off by a *coup de main*.\* The operation was well combined, and success appeared infallible. It was proposed to move across the country by a rapid forced march, and then, enveloping the place, to fall sword in hand upon the enemy. The troops and officers, though ignorant of the immediate object, easily divined the general motive; they were full of ardour, and after marching nearly the whole of twenty-four hours, arrived almost within gun-shot of their prey. It wanted but an hour to dawn, and with daylight the capture of the enemy seemed inevitable. The night was pitchy dark, the troops with swelling hearts but silent tongues moved eagerly onward. Of a sudden, however, a shot fell in front of the centre column, this was followed by several others from the advance guard, and was taken up rapidly and sharply during a brief space by the main body. No one knew the cause; but an alarm was thus given, and as the grey mists of morning commenced yielding to the power of the sun, the last bayonets of the enemy's rear guard were seen winding up the adjacent mountain. The expedition had failed. It was asserted, we do not vouch for the fact, that this “friction” arose from an officer's servant, who with a led horse strayed from the road, advanced beyond the columns, and then finding out his error, was hurrying back; when, being mistaken for an enemy's patrol, he was fired upon by the videttes, and this giving the alarm to the enemy, they were enabled to escape. Now, here was a

\* Lord Lynedoch commanded the infantry, amongst which were the brigade of Guards; Lord Combermere the cavalry.

“friction” no human being could have anticipated, and yet the reputation of the commander unjustly suffered. War furnishes a thousand similar illustrations ; but let us return to the author.

“Friction,” says he, “is the only word that can tolerably well indicate the difference between *actual war* and *war upon paper*. The military machine, that is, an army, and every thing appertaining to it, is in theory extremely simple, and appears easily handled. But it must be borne in mind, that no part of it is composed of one consolidated piece, and that the whole is made up of individual particles, each of which brings its own particular friction. Theoretically, this may appear of little consequence, for a commander of a regiment or battalion is responsible for the execution of his orders, and as the battalions are filed down by discipline to one solid instrument, the machine works like a cast iron beam, and with little comparative friction.

“But it is otherwise in reality. In actual war all the inequalities of joints and adjunctions immediately show themselves. A battalion, however homologous, must ever remain a machine composed of an assemblage of individuals, of whom the most insignificant has it in his power to cause delay or irregularity. The dangers and casualties inevitably attendant on war; the immense physical efforts that are required, augment this evil so much, that they may be considered as the principal causes of it.

“This prodigious *friction*, which is not concentrated on one or two given points, as in mechanics, is every where to be found in contact with accident, and thus produces results that cannot be anticipated, since they are solely the offspring of the latter. Take, for instance, accidents of the weather. Here a fog prevents the discovery of the enemy, the correct firing of a brigade of guns, or the arrival of a report to the commander-in-chief at the proper moment. There a sudden deluge of rain destroys a road, swells a ford, and impedes the advance of a battalion, or the junctions of squadrons, since they must march thirty instead of ten miles. These two instances will suffice to explain to the reader the meaning of this most active obstacle to success. It is the knowledge of friction in all its possible bearings, that constitutes one of the most essential qualities in a good general. However, *he* is not the most efficient, who lays too much stress upon friction, for such over deference would produce that want of energetic decision which is often met with, even amongst the most experienced. An officer should be intimately acquainted with all possible frictions, and make allowance for them, as mariners for the force of currents, but he should never permit himself to be imposed upon or depressed by them, or there would be an end to all action, and he would be unfit for command. His mind must rise superior to all hazards, let the consequences be what they may. A perfect knowledge of friction can never be acquired from theory, it can only be derived from experience. When this experience is backed and supported by an energetic mind, it forms one of the highest qualifications for commanders.”

In the first chapter, second book, the author examines “the art of war,” dividing it under two principal heads, “tactics and strategy.” An intimate knowledge of the former may be said to be necessary to those commanding portions of an army, a perfect acquaintance with the latter to such as command in chief. We may here observe, that the British military annals afford strong grounds for affirming that those, on whom has devolved the important trust of selecting commanders-in-chief, have, on various occasions, either confounded the two sciences, or been fascinated by officers’ reputations as able tacticians ; and thus neglected to examine whether they were well versed in the sublimer art. And yet, there is as wide a distinction between the two, as between the powers for active command of such an officer as the late General Dundas, and those

of the Duke of Wellington. The definition given by the author is, "Tactic is the study of employing armed bodies in battle—strategy that of employing battles in order to attain the object of war." A perfect knowledge of both is the perfection of the art. The first may be considered as the absolute employment of a given force, upon a definite space before the enemy; the second the general development of such force as is connected with ulterior objects, and the grand basis of the war itself. Evolutions during action are essentially tactical; movements prior or subsequent to battle belong to strategy. History affords a thousand examples of the effect of victories being neutralized by a deficiency of this science. The formation of a line, column, or square, the placing a battery, in short, positive collision, are tactical operations. The predetermining a system of attack or defence, the distribution of force, and the knowing *how, where, and when* to employ it, are the provinces of strategy.

"For instance, when a column or army is ordered to keep to this side of a river or chain of mountains, it is a strategical disposition, since the object, in the event of battle, is to force the enemy to combat on the ground selected by us. But when a corps is actually before the enemy, and in lieu of holding to the low ground is thrown upon the adjacent heights, or, breaking into small columns, takes possession of a ravine, a defile, or breastwork, then it is a tactical disposition, since it proves the *immediate* mode in which it is intended to employ the troops during an encounter."

It is not easy to define whether the act of marching belongs *most* to strategy or tactics; for marching being an integral part of battle, and battle being the exercise of tactic, and development of strategy, both in this instance are so nearly allied, as to render the distinction almost impossible. Stratagetical combinations do not always lead to tactical results, for one may so combine marches and manœuvres, as to obtain the object without firing a shot; whence some argue, that an enemy may be vanquished without a battle. Clausewitz considers this as an error, and we are inclined to coincide with him. Stratagetical combinations may disturb an enemy's plans and neutralize his manœuvres, and he may be forced to choose a new basis of operations; but to effect any thing decisive, collision must ensue. The dissolution of armies, or the submission of a country, without the belligerents coming into contact, is of such rare occurrence, as to be looked upon as impossible; of course we only speak of powers equal in numerical strength. A battle may be postponed—a campaign may be devoted to marches and counter-marches, but the hour of collision must come. It is true, the antecedents to battle may be so preponderant, the prefatory operations so skilful, the combinations so unerring, and the frictions or hazards so trifling, as to render the issue nearly infallible; but, still the encounter takes place, and there it is that the triumph of strategy over tactics becomes more evident, and its results more decisive.

The battle of Jena determined the fate of Prussia, that of Waterloo the destiny of France. But the antecedents were totally at variance. One was the result of strategy, the other of tactics. Never were mightier effects derived from more opposite causes. Again, the Peninsular War may be said to have been a war of strategy; for, the moments of collision were trifling, in comparison with the duration of the contest, and the marchings and counter-marching of the opposing armies. The turning the British position at Busaco, though prefaced by a gross error on the part of Massena in attacking so strong a position in front, was a fine illustration of tactic; the retreat of the Duke of Wellington to Torres Vedras, a brilliant example of strategy. We know of no other events that can better illustrate our meaning, and yet the subsequent defeat of Massena, (for his retrograde movement was an absolute defeat,) was effected

without a shot being fired. But the battles of Albuera and Salamanca brought up the balance. These were essentially tactical.\*

"Many readers," says General Clausewitz, "will consider it superfluous to endeavour to define the difference between two sciences apparently so nearly related as strategy and tactics, since the knowledge can have little influence on the art of war. A man must indeed be a great pedant were he to seek for the theoretical separation through its positive operations on the field of battle."

To ordinary minds we grant that such definition may be superfluous; but, as the whole art of war resolves itself into an intimate knowledge of these two sciences, to those who would fain see clearly into all its recesses, and remove all confusion from their minds, the limits that divide the two cannot fail to be deeply interesting. Indeed, we again affirm, that its study should be a paramount consideration with those on whom devolves the selection of commanders-in-chief.

The degree of knowledge, and the essential qualities for a man intrusted with this important charge, are subjects of frequent discussion. We have stated that *coup d'œil*, *strength of mind*, *energy*, *promptitude*, and a *knowledge of "friction,"* are absolutely requisite, and that the details of tactics are secondary considerations. General Clausewitz thus expresses himself on this subject.

"It is notorious that many distinguished officers, and above all, commanders-in-chief, have signalized themselves in war though their early education and resources of mind had been turned to other occupations. It is not less remarkable also, that the most illustrious soldiers have never sprung from amongst what is termed the class of learned men or scientific officers: indeed, taking all circumstances into consideration, there is not one who could boast of any great share of science. Consequently, those persons have always been laughed at as pedants, who held it necessary, or even useful for the education of a future commander, that he should be instructed, or deeply versed in detail knowledge. Indeed, it is not difficult to comprehend that this study of detail might be more detrimental than useful; for the mind must naturally be biassed by the ideas that are imparted to it, and receive its impressions from the subjects with which it is occupied. It is only by the loftier elements that the soul can be elevated towards the sublime; insignificant minutie have an immediate tendency to render men narrow-minded."

When speaking of the higher qualifications necessary for a commander-in-chief, the author gives the following passage.

"It is not required that he should be a learned historian or writer, but he must be acquainted with the higher elements of general politics; he must be well versed in its tendencies, its conflicting interests, and prominent features, and he must learn to judge the principal actors correctly. It is not requisite that he should be a profound searcher into human nature, nor a hair's-breadth anatomizer of man's character; but he must study the dispositions, mode of thinking, habits, and endeavour to discover the failings as well as particular merits of those under his command. He may be ignorant of the mechanical composition of gun-carriages, projectiles, or the horsing of a battery, but he must know how to calculate their effects and movement, and be able to judge of the time necessary for the march of a column under every obstacle."

The eye of the commander must be like that of the eagle, which embraces at one swoop every object within its elevated sphere of vision—not like that of the astronomer, who can only descry objects within the

\* The former may be objected to as an example; for the deplorable want of tactical skill displayed by the commander was only counterbalanced by the heroic devotion of the soldiers.



focus of his lenses. There never yet existed a distinguished commander of confined vision. Here we speak of spiritual optics; but examples are frequent of men who have filled secondary situations with rare merit, but who have fallen beneath mediocrity when raised to supreme command, and this, because they possessed all the minutæ of tactical detail, without any of the loftier or more expansive qualities of strategical genius. On the other hand, instances are not unfrequent of great commanders, who never rose above mediocrity as regimental or brigade generals. Their minds required a more extended field of action. The instances that might be adduced would fill a volume.

The fourth chapter is devoted to "method." By method is meant system, order of battle, or formations peculiar to any given power or period. The basis of the whole may be said to spring from the same source, but the means of development have passed through various modifications, all however converging to one centre. We will not accompany the author through the definitions of what he terms "the logical hierarchy of system," but merely take one or two of his illustrations: for instance, "The oblique order of battle, peculiar to the school of Frederic the Great; the long diffuse lines of the revolutionary generals, and the bloody and concentrated energy of Napoleon's masses." The British possess no absolute system, though their order of battle partakes more of the two first than the latter method: indeed, the use of the column may be said to have been little employed until a late period of the war. The line and square were the most salient characteristics, but this arose from the fact, that in four cases out of five the British troops *received the enemy*. The mode of formation by two ranks is peculiar almost to English troops, but this is a question of direct tactics. Whilst the author admits the necessity of not banishing fixed principles or method altogether, he deprecates a slavish adherence to it, and in this all men of experience must concur. The evil is, that every given method must originally have been grounded upon some peculiar local circumstance, and consequently, as circumstances are perpetually changing, method must outlive the events that gave them birth; the one becomes permanent, the other is evanescent. It is this slavish adherence to system, that theory, aided by enlightened criticism, should endeavour to counteract.

"For instance, by adhering to the oblique method of Frederic in 1806, the Prussian generals, Prince Louis, at Saalfeld, General Tauenzien, on the Dornberg, near Jena, and General Grawert in front, and Rùchel behind Kappeldorf, plunged themselves into the abyss. This was not only a grovelling adherence to obsolete system, but the uttermost poverty of mind, to which method ever conducted. Thus, the army of Prince Hohenlohe was defeated in a manner of which there is scarcely any precedent in history."

The frankness with which the author criticises the operations of his countrymen is remarkable: the reader will find another interesting example of this frankness further on, when speaking of Blücher's disasters in 1814. The fifth chapter is devoted to "criticism," and demonstrates its importance in correcting errors, modifying systems, and introducing improvements.

"The effect of theoretical truths on practical life are produced more by the aid of criticism than study; for criticism is an application of these truths to positive occurrences. The one brings the other into life. The former accustoms the mind to the reception of the latter. We esteem it necessary, therefore, to place the point of departure of theory upon a level with that of criticism. The latter must, however, be distinguished from the simple narration of an historical occurrence, which merely reproduces events, or, at best, only touches upon such matters as are intimately connected with them. Three operations of the mind are

necessary to criticism. Firstly, the historical discovery and determining of doubtful occurrences; but this is mere research unconnected with theory. Secondly, the deduction of effects from causes; this is essentially theoretical, for by this means conclusions and inferences are borne out and enlightened by experience and results. Thirdly, the examination of any proposed measure. This is the truest and most beneficial criticism, including praise or oburgation. Here history, and the examples derived from it, act as auxiliaries. In the two latter operations, the effect or utility depends upon the application, and upon the tracing up events to their primitive creation, that is, to positive facts, and not, as is too often the case, merely going half way, and contenting oneself with arbitrary conclusions or presuppositions."

In the whole scope of criticism nothing is more opposed to the first part of Boileau's maxim, "*la critique est aisée, et l'art est difficile*," than strictures upon military operations. In almost all other occurrences in life, the subject, whether moral or physical, is before one's eyes. In literature, science, politics, finance, and mechanics, the facts may be said to be tangible, and are so embodied as to be within one's grasp; but in war, all is speculation, hazard, and uncertainty. A combination fails, we cannot positively say, had this or that been done, success was inevitable; for, up to the last moment of combat, victory may still elude one's grasp. The operations of war are multifarious, divergent, rarely arising from, or being confined to, one given point or space. They are constantly struggling against a thousand conflicting elements that are countermining each other. Military criticism may be said to be entirely theoretical or speculative, for there is scarcely any tangible rule by which we are enabled to decide, unless, indeed, some palpable error has been committed, and then criticism is superfluous, and blame imperative.

Military critics have rarely an opportunity of judging upon the spot, or of ascending into causes, which latter are either secrets confided by governments to commanders, or emanate from circumstances known only to themselves. The critic, however impartial, experienced, and enlightened, is always surrounded by a greater or less obscurity. He cannot define an issue, for effects must always be problematical, and therefore the most sagacious criticism must ever have its basis upon speculation. Thus, it has its origin in theory, and its termination in doubt; for it is not less difficult to mount up to causation than to descend to results. But the great error fallen into by the generality of critics, has been specified by General Clausewitz: for men generally content themselves with blame without devising the remedy.

Criticism may be likened to anatomy or medicine. What, then, for instance, should we say of a surgeon, or physician, when called in to consult upon a case, were he to exclaim, "You are ailing, the seat of your malady is in the digestive organs, you have pursued a pernicious regimen, a different system ought to have been adopted, I disapprove of all that has been done;" and, having said so, quits the room.

"True criticism," observes the author, "is not only an examination of the means actually employed, but of all other means, that might have been employed, and no man is justified in condemning unless he has a better method to propose."

We have selected the following example of the author's illustration of criticism, because it contains some speculations not commonly known, and which must have the greater weight and interest, as coming from such a source. General Clausewitz's intimate knowledge of facts cannot be called in question.

"When Napoleon, after beating Blücher's army, in 1814, in the battles of Etoges, Champaubert, Montmirail, &c., turned his force against Schwarzenberg's corps, and defeated it at Montereau and Mormant,

every one was filled with admiration ; because Napoleon, by thus marching and countermarching his main body, brilliantly availed himself of the error committed by the allies in separating their forces ; and certainly if these splendid and unilateral operations did not save him, it is the *general opinion* that the fault was not his. However, no one has hitherto asked the question—what would have been the result, if in lieu of abandoning Blücher to attack Schwarzenberg, he had followed up his successes against the former, and pursued him to the Rhine ? It is our conviction that a total revolution must have ensued in the campaign, and that the grand allied army, instead of moving upon Paris, *would have recrossed the Rhine*. We do not desire any one to adopt our opinion, but no one, who comprehends the subject, can deny, that the *mention* of the alternative is but the natural result of a critical consideration of the case. Let us introduce two or three simple truths in illustration of our hypothesis.

“ Firstly,—It is generally admitted that it is more advantageous to follow up successes in one direction than to waste one’s strength in marches and countermarches, because the latter is not only a loss of time, but the force of an enemy being diminished by defeat, fresh advantages are more likely to be obtained by rapid pursuit ; and besides, one does not then throw away the moral advantages already acquired, or give the foe time to breathe and reorganize \*

“ Secondly,—Blücher, though numerically weaker than Schwarzenberg, was a much more dangerous adversary, on account of his enterprising character, and in fact the grand point of action that carried every thing else with it, was centered in him.

“ Thirdly,—The loss Blücher had suffered was tantamount to defeat, and gave Napoleon so great a superiority over him, that his retreat to the Rhine could scarcely be doubtful, more especially as upon this line there were no reinforcements or important reserves.

“ Fourthly,—No other possible result could have acted more powerfully upon men’s minds, or have produced more gigantic moral consequences. In an army so notoriously undecided and timid as that of Schwarzenberg, this retreat would have been looked upon as a death-blow. The losses sustained by the Crown Prince of Wurtemberg and Count Wittgenstein at Montereau and Mormant, were correctly known to Prince Schwarzenberg, but those endured by Blücher along his extensive and detached line of operations from the Marne to the Rhine, were only brought to his ears through the medium of report. The desperate demonstration made by Napoleon on Vitri, in March, when he essayed the effect that would be produced on his enemies by menacing to turn their flanks, was evidently based upon the principle of inspiring terror. But circumstances were totally altered, for he had failed at Laon and Arcis sur Aube, and Blücher had joined Schwarzenberg, with nearly one hundred thousand men. There will, doubtless, be many persons who will not be satisfied with these considerations, but at all events they cannot give us any reply ; for Napoleon, by pressing upon the Rhine, would have menaced Schwarzenberg’s basis of operation, whilst Schwarzenberg could only endanger that of Napoleon by threatening Paris ; and we have endeavoured to show, that had Napoleon pursued Blücher, Prince Schwarzenberg would never have thought of moving upon the French capital.”

The last chapter of the second book is devoted to the illustration of “ Example,” which may at first sight appear so intimately connected with experience as to render definition superfluous. But the difference is greater

\* Military critics find fault with the Duke of Wellington for having more than once neglected this principle ; but they are not aware of the local difficulties that clogged his movements.

than is supposed. Experience being the result of what we see, comes in all its virility and vigour home to the mind. Example being the produce of what we read, nothing in military study is more difficult to seize with discrimination. Indeed, it requires no ordinary talent to sift the ore from the dross, and to retain such portions as may lead to beneficial consequences. Of what use is it to store one's mind with examples culled from history, unless our intellect guides us to a proper application? and this is the more perplexing, since example is in constant contradiction to itself. For instance, we find twenty occasions where the adoption of a given method has produced the most fortunate results, whilst at the same time twenty more instances can be adduced when the employment of the same measure has entailed destruction.

It is not enough, therefore, to store one's mind with precept, it is the genius to extract light from it that is most requisite: otherwise the mind would be only comparable to a vast arsenal, where the stores were thrown in promiscuously without order or classification. It is a trite saying, "take warning from example;" but in war, where so much depends upon locality, hazard, and upon unforeseen accidents, example loses much of its influence. Battles are perpetual innovations on precept, and differ as much one from the other as the face of one man from that of his neighbour. Battles have not unfrequently been fought on the same ground; but there is, we believe, scarcely one instance of commanders recurring to antecedents for the disposition of their troops. The genius, the inspiration of the moment, must decide.

"When one considers," says General Clausewitz, "the various influences of example, one can well comprehend the urgent necessity of mature study. A circumstance that is not carefully sifted and examined, in all its bearings, may be compared to an object seen at a distance, its sinuosities and proportions are veiled, and it appears equiform to the eye.

"In fact, examples have often tended to produce the most conflicting opinions. Let us take, for instance, Daun's campaigns, which were models of prudence on one side, and of indecision and timidity on the other. Again, Napoleon's passage of the Alps in 1797, may be considered as a proof of the most daring energy, but it was utterly devoid of prudence."

But our extracts have already exceeded all just limits; we must, therefore, take leave of the author for the present, proposing to return to the remaining books upon some future occasion. In the mean time we strongly reiterate our recommendation of the work to those, who have any inclination to profit from the rich stores of enlightened knowledge that abounds in almost every page.\*

---

\* There is, we believe, no translation of this work in any language, although it is a book that ought to be in the hands of all military men, and is well adapted for the Military College.