THE BRAIN OF AN ARMY

THE

BRAIN OF AN ARMY

A POPULAR ACCOUNT

OF THE

GERMAN GENERAL STAFF

BY

SPENSER WILKINSON

NEW EDITION

WITH LETTERS FROM

COUNT MOLTKE AND LORD ROBERTS

WESTMINSTER

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE COMMAND OF THE SEA

THE BRAIN OF A NAVY

THE GREAT ALTERNATIVE

and in conjunction with

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE, BART.

IMPERIAL DEFENCE

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

SIX years ago a Royal Commission, under the presidency of Lord Hartington, was known to be inquiring into the administration of the national defence. There was much talk in the newspapers about the Prussian staff, and many were the advocates of its imitation in this country. Very few of those who took part in the discussions seemed to know what the Prussian staff was, and I thought it might be useful to the Royal Commission and to the public to have a true account of that institution, written in plain English, so that any one could understand it. The essay was published on the 11th of February, 1890, the day on which the Report of Lord Hartington's Commission was signed.

The essential feature of the Prussian staff system consists in the classification of duties out of which it has arisen. Every general in the

field requires a number of assistants, collectively forming his staff, to relieve him of matters of detail, to act as his confidential secretaries, and to represent him at places where he cannot be himself. The duties of command are so multifarious that some consistent distribution of functions among the officers of a large staff is indispensable. In Prussia this distribution is based on a thoroughly rational and practical principle. The general's work is subdivided into classes, according as it is concerned with administration and discipline or with the direction of the operations against the enemy. All that belongs to administration and discipline is put upon one side of a dividing line, and upon the other side all that directly affects the preparation for or the management of the fighting—in technical language, all that falls within the domain of strategy and tactics. The officers entrusted with the personal assistance of the general in this latter group of duties are in Prussia called his "general staff." They are specially trained in the art of conducting operations against an enemy, that is in the specific

function of generalship, which has thus in the Prussian army received more systematic attention than in any other. In the British army the assistants of a general are also grouped into classes for the performance of specific functions in his relief. But the grouping of duties is accidental, and follows no principle. It has arisen by chance, and been stereotyped by usage. The officers of a staff belong to the adjutant-general's branch or to the quartermaster-general's branch, but no rational criterion exists by which to discover whether a particular function falls to one branch or to the other. That this is an evil is evident, because it is manifest that there can be no scientific training for a group of duties which have no inherent affinity with one another. The evil has long been felt, for the attempt has been made to remedy it by amalgamating the two branches in order to sever them again upon a rational plane of cleavage.

But while the essence of the Prussian general staff lies deeply embedded in the organization of the Prussian army, the interest of the general public has been attracted by the fact

that the great strategist to whom the victories of 1866 and 1870 are ascribed was not the commander of the Prussian army, but merely the chief of the general staff of a royal commander-in-chief. It may well be doubted whether this feature of the Prussian system is suitable for imitation elsewhere. The Germans themselves evidently regard it as accidental rather than essential, for in organizing their navy they have, after much experiment and deliberation, adopted a different plan. They have appointed their chosen admiral to be, not chief of the staff to an Emperor who in war, as he takes the field with the army, cannot undertake the command of the navy, but to be "the commanding admiral."

I refrained in the first edition of this essay from drawing from the German institution which it describes a moral to be applied to the British army, and was content with a warning against overhasty imitation. At that time the nature of the relation between Moltke and the King was still to some extent veiled in official language, and nothing so far as I am aware

had been published which allowed the facts to rest upon well authenticated, direct evidence as distinguished from inference. Since then the posthumous publication of Moltke's private correspondence,[1] and of the first instalment of his military correspondence,[2] have thrown a flood of light upon the whole subject. I had the good fortune to be furnished with an earlier clue. As soon as my essay was ready for the press I ventured to send a proof to Count Moltke, with a request that he would allow me in a dedication to couple his name with studies of which his work had been the subject. He was good enough to reply in a letter of which the following is a translation :—

BERLIN, *January* 20, 1890.

DEAR SIR,—

I have read your essay on the German general staff with great interest.

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[1] See in particular the passage in Moltke, *Gesammelte Schriften*, V. 298–9, which I have translated in an essay entitled "The Brain of the Navy," p. 28.

[2] It seems incredible that so important and so interesting a work as Moltke's military correspondence in relation to the Danish war of 1864 should hitherto have been ignored by English military writers.

I am glad that on p. 63 you dispose of the ever-recurring legend according to which before every important decision a council of war is assembled. I can assure you that in 1866 and in 1870–71 a council of war was *never* called.

If the commander after consultation with his authorized adviser feels the need of asking others what he ought to do, the command is in weak hands.

If King William I. ever really used the expression attributed to him on p. 58, he did himself a great injustice. The king judged the perpetually changing military situation with an uncommonly clear eye. He was much more than "a great strategist." It was he who took upon himself an immeasurable responsibility, and for the conduct of an army character weighs more than knowledge and science. I think your excellent work would lose nothing if that passage were omitted.

You touch on p. 112[1] upon the relation between the commander and the statesman. Neither of the two can set up for himself in advance a goal to be certainly reached. The plan of campaign modifies itself after the first great collision with the enemy. Success or failure in a battle occasions operations originally not intended. On the other hand the final claims of the statesman will be very different according as he has to reckon with defeats or with a series of uninterrupted victories. In the course of the campaign the balance between the military will and the considerations of diplomacy can be held only by the supreme authority.

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[1] The reference is to a passage in the last chapter of the first edition, which has been rewritten.

It has not escaped your penetration that a general staff cannot be improvised on the outbreak of war, that it must be prepared long beforehand in peace, and be in practical activity and in close intercourse with the troops. But even that is not enough. It must know who is to be its future commander, must be in communication with him and gain his confidence, without which its position is untenable.

Great is the advantage if the head of the State is also the leader in war. He knows his general staff and his troops, and is known by them. In such armies there are no pronunciamentoes.

The constitution, however, does not in every country admit of placing the head of the State at the head of the army. If the Government will and *can* select in advance the most qualified general for the post, that officer must also be given during peace the authority to influence the troops and their leaders and to create an understanding between himself and his general staff. This chosen general will seldom be the minister of war, who during the whole war is indispensable at home, where all the threads of administration come together.

You have expressed the kind intention of dedicating your interesting essay to me, but I suggest that you should consider whether without such a dedication it would not still better preserve the character of perfectly independent judgment.

With best thanks for your kind communication,

I am, dear sir, yours very truly,

COUNT MOLTKE,

Field Marshal.

It was hardly possible for Moltke, bound as he was by his own high position, to have expressed more plainly his opinion of the kind of reform needed in the British army, nor to have better illustrated than by that opinion the precise nature of his own work.[1]

With Moltke's view that the peculiar position which he held was not necessarily the model best suited for the circumstances of the British army it is interesting to compare the judgment expressed quite independently by Lord Roberts, who kindly allows me to publish the following letter :—

SIMLA,

11th September, 1891.

DEAR MR. WILKINSON,—

I am much obliged to you for so kindly sending me *The Brain of an Army* and the other military works which

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[1] The passage which Moltke disliked was erased in the first edition, its place being supplied by words borrowed from his letter. In this edition it is printed as it was first written, in order to make the letter intelligible. The last chapter has in this edition been condensed, and I hope made simpler and clearer. One or two other slight changes in expression arise from the reconsideration of phrases which Count Moltke marked in reading the proof.

reached me two or three mails ago. Some of the books I had seen before, and *The Brain of an Army* I had often heard of, and meant to study whenever sufficient leisure was vouchsafed to me, which, alas! is but seldom. I have now read it with great interest.

One point that strikes me is the strong inclination evinced at present to assume that the German system of apportioning the duties of command and staff is deserving of universal adoption because under exceptional circumstances, and with quite an exceptional man to act as head of the Staff, it proved eminently successful in the wars between Prussia and Austria and Prussia and France.

The idea of a Chief of the Staff who is to regulate the preparations for and the operations during a campaign, and who is to possess a predominant influence in determining the military policy of a nation, is quite opposed to the views of some of the ablest commanders and strategists, as summarized at pages 17 and 18 of Home's *Précis of Modern Tactics*, Edition 1882; and I doubt whether any really competent general or Commander-in-Chief would contentedly acquiesce in the dissociation of command and responsibility which the German procedure necessarily entails. That Von Moltke was the virtual Commander-in-Chief of the German forces during the wars in question, and that the nominal commanders had really very little to say to the movements they were called upon to execute, seems to be clearly proved by the third volume of the Field Marshal's writings, reviewed in *The Times* of the 21st August last. Von Moltke was a soldier of extraordinary ability, he acted

in the Emperor's name, the orders he initiated were implicitly obeyed, and the military machine worked smoothly. But had the orders not been uniformly judicious, had a check or reverse been experienced, and had one or more of the subordinate commanders possessed greater capacity and resolution than the Chief of the Staff, the result might have been very different.

In military nations a Chief of the Staff of the German type may perhaps be essential, more especially when, as in Germany, the Emperor is the head of the Army and its titular Commander-in-Chief. The reasons for this are that, in the first place, he may not possess the qualities required in a Commander-in-Chief who has to lead the Army in war; and in the second place, even if he does possess those qualities, there are so many other matters connected with the civil administration of his own country, and with its political relations towards other countries, that the time of a King or Emperor may be too fully occupied to admit of his devoting that exclusive attention to military matters which is so necessary in a Commander-in-Chief, if he desires to have an efficient Army. A Chief of the Staff then becomes essential; he is indeed the Commander-in-Chief.

In a small army like ours, however, where the Commander-in-Chief is a soldier by profession, I am inclined to think that a Chief of the Staff is not required in the same way as he is in Germany. With us, the man of the stamp sketched in chapter iv. of *The Brain of an Army* should be the head of the Army—the Commander-in-Chief to whom every one in the Army looks up, and whom every one on

service trusts implicitly. The note at page 12 [61] of your little book expresses my meaning exactly. Blucher required a Scharnhorst or a Gneisenau "to keep him straight," but would it not have been better, as suggested in your note, "to have given Scharnhorst and Gneisenau the actual command"?

I think, too, that an Emperor or King would be more likely than a man of inferior social standing to take the advice of a Chief of the Staff. The former would be so immeasurably above all those about him that he could afford to listen to advice—as the Emperor of Germany undoubtedly did to that of Von Moltke on the occasion mentioned in the note at page 14 [64]. But the Commander of about much the same standing socially as his Chief of the Staff, and possibly not much the latter's senior in the Army, would be apt to resent what he might consider uncalled-for interference; and this would be specially the case if he were of a narrow-minded, obstinate disposition. Indeed, I think that such a feeling would be almost sure to arise, unless the Commander-in-Chief were one of those easy-going, soft natures which ought never to be placed in such a high position.

My personal experience is, of course, very slight, but I have been a Commander with a Chief of the Staff, and I have been (in a very small way) the Chief of the Staff to a Commander, with whom I was sent "to keep him straight." It was not a pleasant position, and one which I should not like to fill a second time. In my own Chief of the Staff (the late Sir Charles Macgregor) I was particularly fortunate; he was of the greatest possible assistance to me; but

without thinking myself narrow-minded and obstinate, I should have objected if he had acted as if he were "at the head of the Army."

I have been referring hitherto more to war than peace, but even in peace time I doubt if a Chief of the Staff of the German type is suitable to our organization, and to the comparative smallness of our army. In war time it might easily lead to disaster. The less capacity possessed by the nominal Commander-in-Chief the greater might be his obstinacy, and the more capacity he possessed the more he would resent anything which might savour of interference. Altogether I think that the office of Chief of the Staff, as understood in Germany, might easily be made impossible under the conditions of our service. My opinion is that the Army Head-Quarters Staff are capable of doing exactly the same work as the Grand General Staff of the German Army perform, and that there is no need to upset our present system. We have only to bring the Intelligence and Mobilization Departments more closely into communication with, and into subordination to, the Adjutant-General and Quarter-Master-General, as is now being done in India with the best results.

You will understand that the foregoing remarks are based on the assumption that in the British Service the office of Commander-in-Chief is held by the soldier who, from his abilities and experience, has commended himself to the Government as being best qualified to organize the Army for war, and if requisite to take command in the field. If, however, for reasons of State it is thought desirable to approximate our system to the German system in the selection

of the head of the Army, it might become necessary to appoint a Chief of the Staff of the German type to act as the responsible military adviser of the Commander-in-Chief and the Cabinet. But in this case the responsibility of the Officer in question should be fully recognised and clearly defined.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

FRED ROBERTS.

To SPENSER WILKINSON, Esq.

The Report of Lord Hartington's Commission, which appeared in the spring of 1890, seemed to justify the apprehension which had caused me to write, for it recommended the creation, under the name of a general staff, of a department bearing little resemblance to the model which it professed to copy. The Commission, however, was in a most awkward dilemma. It was confronted in regard to the command of the army with two problems, one of which was administrative, the other constitutional. The public was anxious to have an army efficient for its purpose of fighting the enemies of Great Britain. The statesmen on the Commission were intent upon having an army obedient to the Government.

The tradition that the command of the army being a royal prerogative could be exercised otherwise than through the constituted advisers of the Crown was not in practice altogether extinct. It can hardly be doubted that the Commission was right in wishing to establish the principle that the army is a branch of the public service, administered and governed under the authority of the Cabinet in precisely the same way as the post office. No other theory is possible in the England of our day. But the attempt to make the theory into the practice touched certain susceptibilities which it was felt ought to be respected, and the Commission perhaps attached more importance to this kind of consideration than to the necessity of preparing the war office for war.

It was no doubt of the first importance to guard against the recurrence of a state of things in which all attempts to bring the army into harmony with the needs of the time and of the nation were frustrated by an authority not entirely amenable to the control of the Secretary of State. Not less important, however, was the re-

quirement that any change by which this result, in itself so desirable, might be attained should at the same time contribute to the supreme end of readiness for conflict with any of the Great Powers whose rivalry with Great Britain has in recent times become so acute.

In the war of which a part is examined in the following pages a chief of the staff is seen drafting the orders by which the whole army is guided. He has no authority; the orders are issued in the name of the commander,—that is in Prussia, of the king. When, as was the case in 1866 and in 1870–1, the king shows his entire confidence in the chief of the staff by invariably accepting his drafts, the direction of the army, the generalship of the campaign, is really the work of the chief of the staff, though that officer has never had a command, and has been sheltered throughout under the authority of another. The generalship or strategy of the campaigns of 1866 and 1870–1 was Moltke's, and Moltke's alone, and no one has borne more explicit testimony to this fact than the king. At the same time no one has more emphasized the other fact, that he was

covered by the king's responsibility, than Moltke himself.

The work of generalship can rarely be given to any one but the commander of an army. When the commander owes his position to other than military considerations, as is the case in Prussia, where the king is born to be commander-in-chief as he is born to be king, he is wise to select a good professional general to do the work. But where a government is free to choose its commander, that officer will wish to do his own work himself, and will resent the suggestion that an assistant should prompt and guide him. The Hartington Commission proposed at the same time to abolish the office of commander-in-chief, and to create that of a "chief of the staff." This new officer was to advise the Secretary of State —that is, the Government—upon all the most important military questions. He was to discuss the strength and distribution of the army, and the defence of the Empire; to plan the general arrangements for defence, and to shape the estimates according to his plan. In a word, he was to perform many of the most important duties of a

commander-in-chief. But he was to be the adviser or assistant, not of a military commander, but of a civilian governor-general of the army.

An army cannot be directed in war nor commanded in peace under the immediate authority of a civilian. There must be a military commander, the obedient servant of the Government, supported by the Government in the exercise of his powers to discipline and direct the army, and sheltered by the Government against all such criticism as would weaken his authority or diminish its own responsibility. The scheme propounded by the Hartington Commission evaded the cardinal question which has to be settled: that of the military command of the army in war. War cannot be carried on unless full and undivided authority is given to the general entrusted by the Government with the conduct of the military operations. That officer will necessarily be liable to account to the Government for all that is done, for the design and for its execution.

The Report of the Commission made no provision whatever for the command of the army in

war. The proposed "chief of the staff" was to be entrusted during peace with the duty of the design of operations. Had the Commission's scheme been adopted, the Government would, upon the near approach of war, still have had to select its commander. The selection must fall either upon the "chief of the staff" or upon some other person. But no general worth his salt will be found to stake his own reputation and the fate of the nation upon the execution of designs supplied to him at second-hand. No man with a particle of self-respect would undertake the defence of his country upon the condition that he should conduct it upon a plan as to which he had never been consulted, and which, at the time of his appointment, it was too late to modify. Accordingly, if the scheme of the Commission had been adopted, it would have been necessary to entrust the command in war to the officer who during peace had been chief of the staff. But this officer being in peace out of all personal relation with the army could not have the moral authority which is indispensable for its command. The scheme of the Hartington Commission could therefore not be

adopted, except at the risk of disaster in the event of war.

While I am revising the proof of this preface come the announcements, first, that Lord Wolseley is to succeed the Duke of Cambridge, and, secondly, that though the title of Commander-in-Chief is to be retained, the duties attaching to the office are to be modified and its authority diminished.

The proposed changes in the status of the Commander-in-Chief show that the present Government is suffering from the pressure of an anxiety exactly like that which paralysed Lord Hartington's Commission, while from the speeches in which the new scheme has been explained the idea of war is altogether absent. The Government contemplates depriving the Commander-in-Chief of his authority over the Adjutant-General and the Quartermaster-General, as well as over the heads of some other military departments.

The Adjutant-General's department embraces among other matters all that directly concerns the discipline, training, and education of the army; while such business as the quartering and

movements of troops passes through the office of the Quartermaster-General. These officers are to become the direct subordinates of the Secretary of State. In other words, the staff at the headquarters of the army is to be the staff, not of the nominal Commander-in-Chief, but of the Secretary of State, who is thus to be made the real Commander-in-Chief of the army.

This is evidently a momentous change, not to be lightly or rashly approved or condemned. The first duty is to discover, if possible, the motives by which the Government is actuated in proposing it. Mr. Balfour, speaking in the House of Commons on the 31st of August, explained the view of the Government.

"What," he said, "is the substance and essence of the criticisms passed by the Hartington Commission upon the War Office system, which has now been in force in this country for many years? The essence of the criticisms of the Commissioners was that by having a single Commander-in-Chief, through whom, and through whom alone, army opinion, army matters, and army advice would come to the Secretary of State for War, you were, in the first place, throwing upon the Commander-in-Chief a burden which no single individual could possibly sup-

port; and, secondly, you were practically destroying the responsibility of the Secretary of State for War, who nominally is the head of the department. If you put the Secretary of State for War in direct communication with the Commander-in-Chief alone, I do not see how the Secretary of State for War can be anything else than the administrative puppet of the great soldier who is at the head of the army. He may come down to the House and express the views of that great officer, but if he is to take official advice from the Commander-in-Chief alone it is absolutely impossible that the Secretary of State should be really responsible, and in this House the Secretary of State will be no more than the mouthpiece of the Commander-in-Chief."

Mr. Balfour's first point is that the burden thrown upon a single Commander-in-Chief is too great for one man to bear. Marlborough, Wellington or Napoleon would, perhaps, hardly have accepted this view. But supposing it were true, the remedy proposed is infinitely worse than the disease. In 1887 the Royal Commission, over which the late Sir James Stephen presided, examined with judicial impartiality the duties of the Secretary of State for War. That Commission in its report wrote as follows:—

"The first part of the system to be considered is the Secretary of State. On him we have to observe, *first*,

that the scope of his duties is immense; *secondly*, that he performs them under extreme disadvantages. He is charged with five separate great functions, any one of which would be sufficient to occupy the whole time of a man of first-rate industry, ability, and knowledge.

"*First*, he is a member of the Cabinet, and a Member of Parliament, in which capacity he has to give his attention, not only to the matters of his own department, but to all the leading political questions of the day. He has to take part in debates on the great topics of discussion, and on many occasions to speak upon them in his place in Parliament.

'*Secondly*, he is the head, as has been already observed, of the political department of the army. He may have to consider, and that at the shortest notice, the whole conduct of a war; all the important points connected with an expedition to any part of the globe; political questions like the abolition of purchase; legislative questions like the Discipline Act, and many others of the same kind.

"*Thirdly*, he is the head of the Ordnance Department, which includes all the questions relating to cannon, small arms, and ammunition, and all the questions that arise upon the management of four great factories, and the care of an enormous mass of stores of every description.

"*Fourthly*, he has to deal with all the questions connected with fortifications and the commissariat.

"*Fifthly*, he is responsible for framing the Military Estimates, which override all the other departments, and regulate the expenditure of from £16,000,000 to £18,000,000 of public money.

"It is morally and physically impossible that any one man should discharge all these functions in a satisfactory manner. No one man could possess either the time or the strength or the knowledge which would be indispensable for that purpose; but even if such a physical and intellectual prodigy were to be found, he would have to do his duty under disadvantages which would reduce him practically to impotence."

If, then, the Commander-in-Chief is overburdened, it is at least certain that the right way to relieve him cannot possibly consist in adding to the functions of the Secretary of State.

The real point of Mr. Balfour's statement of the case is in what follows. If you have a single Commander-in-Chief through whom, and through whom alone, army opinion, army matters, and army advice would come to the Secretary of State, then, according to Mr. Balfour, you practically destroy the responsibility of the Secretary of State.

It is a mark of the hastiness of debate that the word responsibility has crept in here. No word in the political vocabulary is so dangerous, because none is so ambiguous. Properly speaking, a person is said to be responsible

when he is liable to be called to account for his acts, a liability which implies that he is free to act in one way or another. These two aspects of the term, the liability and the freedom of choice implied, lead to its use in two opposite senses. Sometimes responsibility means that a man must answer for what he does, and sometimes that he may do as he pleases without being controlled by any one. The word is as often as not a synonym for authority. When Moltke speaks of the "immeasurable responsibility" of the King of Prussia, he really means that the King took upon himself as his own acts decisions of the gravest moment which were prompted by his advisers, and that by so doing he covered them as against the rest of the world; he did not mean that the King had to account for his conduct except to his own conscience and at the bar of history. A Secretary of State for War, in his relations with the army, wields the whole authority of the Government. The only thing which he cannot do is to act in opposition to the wishes of his colleagues, for if he did he would immediately cease to be

Secretary of State. As long as they are agreed with him he is the master of the army. But his liability to be called to account is infinitely small. The worst that can happen to him is that if the party to which he belongs should lose its majority in the House of Commons the Cabinet of which he is a member may have to resign. That is an event always possible quite apart from his conduct, and his actions will as a rule not bring it about unless for other reasons it is already impending. Whenever, therefore, the phrase "the responsibility of the Secretary of State" occurs, we ought to substitute for it the more precise words: "the power of the Cabinet to decide any matter as it pleases, subject to the chance of its losing its majority."

What Mr. Balfour deprecates is a single Commander-in-Chief, and it is important to grasp the real nature of his objection. If the whole business of the army be conceived to be a single department of which the Commander-in-Chief is the head, so that the authority of the Secretary of State extends to no other matters than those which lie within the jurisdiction of the Com-

mander-in-Chief, then undoubtedly the Secretary of State and the Commander-in-Chief are each of them in a false position, for one of them is unnecessary. The Secretary of State must either simply confirm the Commander-in-Chief's decisions, in which case his position as superior authority is a mere form, or he must enter into the reasons for and against and decide afresh, in which case the Commander-in-Chief becomes superfluous. It is bad organization to have two men, one over the other, both to do the same business.

Mr. Balfour's objection to this arrangement is, however, not that it sins against the principles of good organization, but that it practically abolishes the Secretary of State. It leaves the decision of questions which arise within the War Office and the army in the hands of a person who is outside the Cabinet. In this way it diminishes the power of the Cabinet, which rests partly upon the solidarity of that body, and partly upon the practice by which every branch of Government business is under the control of one or other of its members.

Both these objections appear to me to rest upon false premises. I shall show presently that the duties of the Secretary of State must necessarily include matters which do not properly come within the scope of a Commander-in-Chief, and I cannot see how the authority of the Cabinet to manage the army rationally would be impaired by a War Office with a military head, the subordinate of the Secretary of State.

But both objections, supposing them to be valid, would be overcome by making the Commander-in-Chief Secretary of State—that is, by abolishing the office of Secretary of State for War, and entrusting his duties to the Commander-in-Chief as a member of the Cabinet. Why, then, does not the Government adopt this plan, which at first sight appears so simple? There is a good reason. The Cabinet is a committee of peers and members of Parliament selected by the leader of a party from among his followers. The bond between its members is a party bond, and their necessary main purpose is to retain their majority in the House of Commons. A military Commander-in-Chief means an officer selected as

the representative, not of a party, but of a subject. He is the embodiment of strategical wisdom, and to secure that strategical knowledge and judgment receive due attention in the councils of government is the purpose of his official existence. To make him a member of the Cabinet would be to disturb the harmony of that body by introducing into it a principle other than that of party allegiance, and the harmony could not be restored except either by subordinating strategy to party, which would be a perversion of the Commander-in-Chief, or by subordinating party to strategy, a sacrifice which the leaders of a party will not make except under the supreme pressure of actual or visibly impending war.

The preliminary decision, then, which may be taken as settled—for the other party if it had been in power would certainly have come to the same conclusion—is that no military officer, either within or without the Cabinet, is to have in his hands the whole management of the army; the absolute power of the Cabinet must be preserved, and therefore no military officer is to have more than departmental authority; the

threads are not to be united in any hands other than those of the Secretary of State. This determination appears to me most unfortunate, for to my eye the time seems big with great events requiring a British Government to attach more importance to preparation for conflict than to the rigorous assertion of Cabinet supremacy. Be that as it may, the practical question is whether the proposed sub-division of the business of the War Office into departments is a good or a bad one. I think it incurably bad, because it follows no principle of classification inherent in the nature of the work to be done.

To find the natural and necessary classification of duties in the management of an army we must look not at the War Office but at war. Suppose the country to be engaged in a serious war, in which the army, or a large portion of it is employed against an enemy, who it may be hoped will not have succeeded in invading this island. In that case we can distinguish clearly between two functions. There must be an authority directing against the enemy the troops in the field; a general with full powers,

implicitly obeyed by all the officers and officials accompanying his army. There must also be an administrative officer at home, whose function will be to procure and convey to the army in the field all that it requires—food, ammunition, clothing and pay, fresh men and fresh horses to replace casualties. This officer at home cannot be the same person as the general in the field; for the two duties must be carried on in two different places at the same time. The two functions, moreover, correspond to two different arts or branches of the military art. The commander in the field requires to excel in generalship, or the art of command; the head of the supply department at home requires to be a skilled military administrator in the sense not of a wielder of discipline or trainer of troops, but of a clever buyer, a producer and distributor on a large scale. Neither of these officers can be identical with the Secretary of State, whose principal duty in war is to mediate between the political intentions of the Government and the military action conducted by the commander in the field. This duty makes him the superior

of the commander; while the officer charged with military supply, though he need not be the formal subordinate of the commander, must yet conform his efforts to the needs of the army in the field.

There are many important matters which cannot be confined either to the department of command or to that of supply. Under this head fall the terms of service for soldiers, the conditions of recruiting, the regulations for the appointment and promotion of officers. These are properly the subjects of deliberation in which not only military, but civil opinions and interests must be represented; for their definition the Secretary of State will do well to refer to a general council of his assistants, and the ultimate settlement will require the judgment of the Cabinet, and sometimes also the sanction of Parliament. In time of war it is generally necessary quickly to levy extra men, and to drain into the army a large part of the resources of the country. Such measures must be thought out and arranged in advance during peace, for the greatest care is required in all decisions which

involve the appropriation by the State of more than the usual share of the energies, the time and the money of its citizens. Regulations of this kind can seldom be framed except as the result of the deliberations of a council of military and civil officers of experience. These, then, are the rational sub-divisions of army business. There is the department of command, embracing the discipline and training of the troops, their organization as combatant bodies, the arrangement of their movements and distribution in peace and war, and all that belongs to the functions of generalship. These matters form the proper domain of a Commander-in-Chief. Side by side with them is the department of supply, which procures for the commander the materials out of which his fighting machine is put together and kept in condition. Harmony between them is secured by the authority of the Government, wielded by the Secretary of State, who regulates according to the state of the national policy and of the exchequer the amount to be spent by each department, and who presides over the great council which lays down

the conditions under which the services of the citizens in money, in property, or in person are to be claimed by the State for its defence.

The examination, then, of the conditions of war, and the application, during peace, of the distribution of duties which war must render necessary, lead to the true solution of the difficulty raised by Mr. Balfour. The internal affairs of the army are indeed one department, but the position of head of that department, while it could properly be filled by a Commander-in Chief, is not and cannot be identical with that of the minister who personifies the Cabinet in relation to the army. The minister ought to be concerned chiefly with the connexion between the national policy and the military means of giving it effect. The intention to make the Secretary of State head of the military department seems to me to prove that the Government really takes no account of what should be his higher duties. The lack of the conception of a national policy is thus about to embarrass the military management of the army.

It is not my object here to consider in detail

how the principles of organization for war should be applied to the British army. That subject has been fully treated by Sir Charles Dilke and myself in the last chapter of our "Imperial Defence," a chapter which has not been criticised except with approval. But I am concerned to show that the German practice cannot at any point be quoted in support either of the recommendations of the Hartington Commission or of the proposals now announced by the Government, which to any one who regards them from the point of view of the nation, that is of the defence of the Empire, must appear to be at once unnecessary, rash and inopportune.

3, MADEIRA ROAD,
STREATHAM, S.W.
September 3rd, 1895.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

In May, 1887, a Select Committee was appointed to examine into the Army and Navy Estimates. On the 8th of July Major-General (now Lieut.-General) Brackenbury, in the course of examination by the Committee, made a series of comparisons between the English and the German systems of army management. He referred particularly to the great general staff of the German army, which he described as "the keystone of the whole system of German military organization . . . the cause of the great efficiency of the German army . . . acting as the powerful brain of the military body, to the designs of which brain the whole body is made to work." "I cannot but feel," he said, "that to the want of any such great central thinking department is due that want of economy and efficiency which to a certain extent exists in our army."

If at any time a statesman should be found to

undertake the work of an English Minister of War, his first wish would be to grasp the nature of this keystone of the German system, to distinguish in it between essentials and accessories, to perceive which of its peculiarities are local, temporary, and personal; and what are the unchangeable principles in virtue of which it has prospered. Equipped with this knowledge, he would be able to reform without destroying, to rise above that servile imitation which copies defects as well as excellences, and, without sacrificing its national features, to infuse into the English system the merits of the German.

For such a statesman, and for the public upon whose support he must depend, this book has been written. It is an endeavour to describe the German general staff and its relation to the military institutions from which it is inseparable.

To illustrate the general staff at work in war, the campaign of 1866, rather than that of 1870, has been chosen, because it better exemplifies some of the relations between strategy and policy.

December, 1889.

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CHAPTER I

THE EVE OF KÖNIGGRÄTZ

ON the afternoon of Monday, the 2nd of July, 1866, King William of Prussia with his retinue drove into the little town of Gitschin, in the hilly region of Northern Bohemia, on the southern side of the Giant Mountains. His upright bearing scarcely showed the burden of his sixty-nine years, nor did his frank expression reveal the weight of care that pressed upon him. After months of weary diplomacy, the political crisis had been brought to a head by a resolution of the Diet of the Germanic Confederation to the effect that Prussia had violated "the peace of the Con-

federation," and that the armies of the confederated States were to be called out. This resolution, not three weeks old, meant that Prussia was at war with Saxony, Hanover, Hesse, Bavaria and Würtemberg, and with the Austrian Empire. Besides this long array of enemies there were friends of various degrees of good and ill will to be considered. Russia was a benevolent onlooker; Italy an active ally, not indeed very formidable in the field, but able to occupy a portion of the Austrian forces. France was the ambiguous busybody, waiting to take a side according to the prospect of advantage, and the French ambassador was on his way to pay his unwelcome respects to the Prussian king. Even at home there were grave difficulties. The Prussian Parliament, representing at that time a liberal electorate, was directly opposed to the whole policy of which the war was a part. The king had left Berlin to join the army only on Saturday morning, after a fortnight of constant anxiety over the complicated operations which had resulted in the capture of

the Hanoverian army and the occupation without fighting of the kingdom of Saxony.

The invasion of Bohemia by two separate armies had been ordered on June 22nd. Each of these armies had passed the mountain wall that shelters Bohemia on the north, and they were now only a day's march apart quartered in scattered villages a few hours' drive to the east of Gitschin. The troops were fatigued with a week's hard work. The Crown Prince coming from Silesia with 115,000 men had with various portions of his army fought three severe battles and as many serious skirmishes. His force lay on the left bank of the Elbe around his headquarters at Königinhof, twenty-one miles due east of Gitschin.[1] Prince Frederick Charles, the king's nephew, commanded the other army of 140,000 men, which had met with little serious resistance, though the troops were tired with the needless marching caused by ill-considered arrangements. This prince had come to report in person to

[1] See sketch map 1.

Gitschin from his headquarters at Kamenitz, six or seven miles to the east.

The exact whereabouts of the Austrian army was unknown. It was supposed to have placed itself in position behind the Elbe, which here being about the size of the Isis above Oxford, runs from north to south with a gentle curve to the east. From Königinhof to Königgrätz the straight line, five-and-twenty miles long, runs due north and south. If this line be taken as a bowstring, the Elbe corresponds to the bow, of which the handle is the fortress of Josephstadt. Königgrätz, the southern point of the bow, is in a straight line twenty-seven miles from Gitschin, and the high road roughly coincides with this line. On the Monday afternoon at Gitschin it was believed that the Austrian army was on the left (eastern) bank of the Elbe, with its flanks covered by the fortresses of Königgrätz and Josephstadt. This was an awkward position to attack, and it had been decided to let both Prussian armies rest next day, while officers should be sent to study the

approaches and make arrangements for a turning manœuvre.

Prince Frederick Charles on returning to his headquarters at Kamenitz learned that the whole supposition was wrong. Some of his officers reconnoitring towards Königgrätz had found large bodies of Austrian troops in bivouac on both sides of the high road along the valley of the Bistritz brook, which runs nearly parallel with the Elbe about seven miles to the west of that river. A comparison of reports showed that there must be at least four Austrian army corps behind the Bistritz, so Frederick Charles, interpreting this as indicating the intention to attack him next morning, determined to be beforehand with the enemy and himself to attack at daybreak. At 9 p.m. he issued his orders for this movement, and at 9.45 sent off to Königinhof a letter asking the Crown Prince to send one or more corps towards Josephstadt to occupy the enemy in that quarter. The chief of his staff was sent to Gitschin to report to the king, and arrived there at 11 p.m.

"The king[1] at once decided to attack the enemy in front of the Elbe with all his forces, whether the whole Austrian army or only a large portion of it should be found there. . . . Accordingly by his Majesty's command the following communication to the second army [that of the Crown Prince] was at once prepared":—

"According to the information received by the first army the enemy in the strength of about three corps, which, however, may be further reinforced, has advanced beyond the line formed by the Bistritz at Sadowa, where an encounter with the first army is to be expected very early in the morning.

"According to the orders issued, the first army will stand to-morrow morning, July 3rd, at 2 a.m., with two divisions at Horsitz with one at Milowitz, one at Cerekwitz, with two at Pschanek and Briskan, the cavalry corps at Gutwasser.

[1] *Der Feldzug von* 1866 *in Deutschland.* Redigirt von der Kriegsgeschichtlichen Abtheilung des groszen Generalstabes, p. 249.

"Your Royal Highness will at once make the arrangements necessary to be able to move with all your forces in support of the first army against the right flank of the enemy's expected advance, and to come into action as soon as possible. The orders sent from here this afternoon under other conditions are no longer valid.

"V. MOLTKE."

This note, with a shorter note to the commander of one of the corps lying between Gitschin and Königinhof (the only part of the second army at this time west of the Elbe), telling him to be ready for the Crown Prince's orders, was despatched at midnight.

The whole Austro-Saxon army (eight corps) was in fact concentrated between the Elbe and the Bistritz, not indeed for attack but for the defence of a strong position on the left bank of the brook, facing westwards. Had the arrangements of Prince Frederick Charles not been supplemented, the 3rd of July might have been an unfortunate

day for Prussia. The first army would have been engaged against an enemy strongly posted and counting nearly double its numbers. The detachment by the second army of one corps towards Josephstadt could hardly have produced a decisive effect, and the rest of the second army would have been too far away to co-operate in time. But the order sent from Gitschin entirely met the situation. Without interfering with Prince Frederick Charles's attack it brought the entire second army to his help in the direction where its action would produce the greatest effect —on the enemy's flank.

When the morning came, the attack of the first army as it developed, disclosed the great strength of the Austrian position and the numbers by which it was defended. Prince Frederick Charles was unable to do much more than keep the Austrians engaged until the second army came up. The attack of the Crown Prince's leading divisions decided the day. With their capture and maintenance of Chlum, the key of the position, the

situation of the Austrian army became critical, and the issue not only of the fight but of the whole campaign was practically settled. The resolution formed between eleven and twelve at night on July 2nd, in the Lion Inn at Gitschin, had secured the victory of Königgrätz, perhaps the greatest battle of modern times,[1] and without exception the most decisive in its results.

[1] There is a doubt whether the number of combatants was greater at Leipsic or at Königgrätz. According to the Belgian Précis (*Bibliothèque Internationale d'Histoire militaire*) the figures are :—

At Leipsic :	Allies . . .	300,000
„	French . .	180,000
	Total .	480,000
At Königgrätz :	Austrians .	215,000
„	Prussians .	220,000
	Total .	435,000

According to Rüstow (*Feldherrnkunst des 19ten Jahrhunderts*) the numbers engaged were :—

At Leipsic (Oct. 18th) :	French .	130,000
„ „ „	Allies .	290,000
	Total .	420,000
At Königgrätz, total of both sides		450,000

CHAPTER II

BEHIND THE SCENES

THE King of Prussia is reputed to have been a modest man and to have known the limits of his faculties. He was not a great strategist. He once said to his brother (the father of Prince Frederick Charles), "If I had not been born a Hohenzollern I should have been a sergeant-major." How then did he make the swift decision resulting in a success that would have done credit to the genius of Frederick the Great or Napoleon? The answer is supplied by the Prussian historian of the Italian campaign of 1859. "There are generals," says this writer, "who need no counsel, who deliberate and resolve in their own minds, those about them having only to carry out their intentions. But such generals are stars of the first magnitude who

scarcely appear once in a century. In the great majority of cases the leader of an army will not be willing to dispense with advice. The suggestions made may very well be the result of the deliberations of a smaller or greater number of men specially qualified by training and experience to form a correct judgment. But even among them only one opinion ought to assert itself. The organization of the military hierarchy should promote subordination even in thought. This one opinion only should be submitted for the consideration of the commander-in-chief by the one person to whom this particular service is assigned. Him let the general choose, not according to rank or seniority, but in accordance with his own personal confidence. Though the advice given may not always be unconditionally the best, yet, if the action taken be consistent and the leading idea once adopted be steadfastly followed, the affair may always be brought to a satisfactory issue. The commander-in-chief retains as against his adviser the infinitely weightier merit of taking

upon himself the responsibility for all that is done.

"But surround a commander with a number of independent men—the more numerous, the more distinguished, the abler they are and the worse it will be—let him hear the advice now of one now of another; let him carry out up to a certain point a measure judicious in itself, then adopt a still more judicious but different plan, and then be convinced by the thoroughly sound objections of a third adviser and the remedial suggestions of a fourth,—it is a hundred to one that though for each of his measures excellent reasons can be given, he will lose the campaign."

The one authorised adviser here described was by the Prussian system provided for the king in the person of the chief of the general staff of the army. This office had risen to importance during the wars of liberation, though at that epoch the general staff was in the peace organization a subordinate branch of the Ministry of War. The Prussians fighting Napoleon, had had no Napoleon

to pit against him. The best they could do was to put Blücher in command with Scharnhorst, and after Scharnhorst's death with Gneisenau to keep him straight.[1] In the period that followed the peace of 1815 the position of the general staff received strict definition. In 1821 Müffling was appointed its chief, and it was settled that he should not be subordinate to the Minister of War but directly responsible to the king. This constitution of the office on a new basis outside of and independent of the Ministry of War was an advance in the division of labour implying the want of a fresh organ to perform functions not before satisfactorily exercised. The business of the Ministry of War was to raise, maintain and administer the army. The business of the staff was to direct the army in war, and during peace to make such special preparations as might be

[1] It might perhaps have been better to have given Scharnhorst and Gneisenau the actual command. In any case the arrangement adopted in 1813 laid the foundation of the German system of the general staff.

necessary to this end. In order to be able to devote all its energies to the conduct of armies fighting in the field, unhampered by the details of daily administration, the general staff was placed on an independent footing. In 1829 Müffling was succeeded by Lieut.-Gen. von Krauseneck, whose successor (in 1848) was Lieut.-Gen. von Reyher. Reyher died in 1857, when the duties of the office were intrusted to Major-General von Moltke.

The division of labour between the royal commander-in-chief and the chief of the staff may be illustrated by the proceedings of the evening before the battle of Königgrätz. When General von Voigts-Rhetz (the chief of Prince Frederick Charles' staff) reached Gitschin and reported to the king, who was just going to bed, the king sent him to Moltke saying, "If General Moltke thinks this information involves a fresh decision he is to come for orders whatever be the time of night." Voigts-Rhetz went to Moltke's quarters and made his report. Moltke made up his mind what ought

to be done, and then went to the king, whom he found in bed, and explained his view that whether the whole Austrian army or only a part of it was at Sadowa the sound course was to move forward both Prussian armies, so as to take the Austrians in front and flank. An attack like this from two sides at once must in any case give the Prussians the best chance of victory they could hope for, and the result would be the more decisive the larger the portion of the Austrian army to be engaged. The king at once gave his assent. Moltke then wrote the two notes, which were sent off immediately.

It was 11 p.m. when Voigts-Rhetz reached Gitschin. The letters were despatched at midnight. In that hour fall the reports of Voigts-Rhetz to the king and to Moltke; Moltke's deliberation and determination; his visit to the king's quarters and the writing and despatching of the notes. It appears from these data that there was no discussion, and that even at this period, the opening of their first great campaign, the king's confidence in

Moltke was as thoroughly established as we know it to have been four years later.[1]

[1] In the Crown Prince's diary of the Franco-German War we read under the date January 15th, "Werder asks whether he would not do better now to abandon Belfort as he thinks he can still defend Alsace? Moltke read this out and added, with unshakeable icy calmness, 'Your Majesty will no doubt approve of General Werder being informed in reply that he has simply to stay where he is and beat the enemy where he finds him.' Moltke appeared to me admirable beyond all praise. In one second he had settled the whole affair." *Deutsche Rundschau*, October, 1888, p. 25.

CHAPTER III

FIVE SHORT ORDERS

IN one sense there is nothing remarkable in the decision of the 2nd of July. Given two armies fighting on the same side and within a day's march of each other, and a hostile army within a day's march of both of them, it is not difficult to see what the two armies should do. Nothing is easier than to solve problems of this sort in the study. Even with the imperfect knowledge of the facts which the Prussians possessed, the arrangements made at Gitschin were no more than the suggestions of military common sense. But simple as the situation seems, nothing is so difficult as to secure such a solution in the practice of war. It is a common-place in that kind of military criticism which is wise after the event that Benedek might

have avoided disaster if he had only acted on any reasonable plan and stuck to it. The merit of the Prussians lay in the system which gave military common sense its due place in the organization, so as to make sure that it would be applied when wanted. It was a matter of the judicious division of labour.

At the headquarters of an army there are a hundred different anxieties. In peace there is the recruiting, training, clothing, feeding, and arming of the troops; the distribution of commands; the maintenance of discipline. In war most of these matters continue to require attention; subordinates must be kept to their appointed tasks; above all the field of politics must be watched from day to day, sometimes even from hour to hour. The Prussian system gave to the chief of the general staff the sole duty of attending to the movements of the armies, and, regarding each new situation as a problem in strategy, of explaining the solution which presented itself to his trained judgment as the best. Free from the pressure of other cares

and responsibilities an officer in this position would be more likely to see clearly and judge coolly than one overloaded with work and distracted with the thousand worries of command. This is the division of labour according to kind, which gives each sort of work to a man specially trained for its performance. It is supplemented by an organization of responsibility which relieves a man from detail in proportion to the extent and grasp of his supervision. The army was broken up into minor armies each with its own commander and his chief of the staff, so that the chief of the general staff himself had to consider only the large problems of the campaign, the general nature of the movements to be effected by the two or three pieces on his board. The head of each army is told the general intention and the share of work assigned to his force. He in turn regards his army corps or divisions [1] as so many units, and besides a statement of the

[1] In 1866 the first army was composed of divisions not combined into army corps. The second army was worked by army corps.

object to be aimed at gives only such general directions as the corps or division commanders cannot arrange for themselves. All the detail of the movements is left in the hands of the corps or division commanders and their special staffs.

It is worth while showing by a convincing proof to what simplicity the system here described reduces the business of supreme command. On June 21 a Prussian *parlementaire* handed in to the Austrian outposts a notification of the commencement of hostilities. At that time the first army was concentrated opposite the Austrian frontier across the border that separates Saxony from Silesia; the second army was concentrated near Neisse. From that day until the decisive battle only five short orders from the king's headquarters are on record:—

(1) *June* 22.—Telegram from Berlin to both armies (at Görlitz and Neisse): "His Majesty orders both armies to advance into Bohemia and to seek to unite in the direction of Gitschin."

A letter of the same date contained a slightly

fuller explanation, and added, to Prince Frederick Charles, that as the second army had the difficult task of issuing from the mountains the first army must shorten the crisis by pushing on rapidly.

(2) *June* 29.—Telegram from Berlin to Prince Frederick Charles: "His Majesty expects that the first army by a quickened advance will disengage the second army which, in spite of a series of victorious actions, is still for the time being in a difficult situation."

(A repetition to Prince Frederick Charles, who had been losing time by his timid and methodical movements, of his original instructions.)

(3) *June* 30.—Telegram from Kohlfurt (on the way from Berlin to the army) to both armies: instructing the second army to maintain itself on the Elbe and the first army to push forward towards Königgrätz. (A modification, to suit events, of the plan of No. 1.)

(4) *July* 2.—Gitschin. Order arranging for both armies to rest on July 3, while the country to the front and the Austrian supposed position should

be reconnoitred. Cancelled the same evening by

(5) Moltke's note (quoted p. 54) to the Crown Prince.

The brevity and simplicity of these instructions find a counterpart in the orders issued by the army commanders. Moltke's note sent off from Gitschin at midnight on Monday was delivered at the Crown Prince's headquarters at Königinhof at four on Tuesday morning. At five General von Blumenthal, the chief of the general staff of the second army, sent out an army order of some twenty lines:—

"According to information received here it is expected that the enemy will to-day attack the first army which is at Horsitz, Milowitz, and Cerekwitz. The second army will advance to its support as follows:—

(1) "The first army corps will march in two columns by Zabres and Gr. Trotin to Gr. Burglitz." . . .

And so on for the other corps. In this way an

army of 115,000 men (four army corps and a cavalry division) was directed by five sentences of two lines each. This was sufficient. The details were arranged for each army corps by the corps commander with the assistance of his staff officers.

CHAPTER IV

PRELIMINARIES OF A CAMPAIGN

THE movements of an army during a campaign after the first serious engagements can rarely, if ever, be settled in detail before the war. They must needs depend largely on those of the enemy, which cannot be accurately foreseen. But before war is declared, before the fighting begins, while the troops are still in their own territory, a well-conducted government can make its preparations without hindrance. The army can be placed on a war footing, and assembled at whatever point or points are judged most advantageous. These preparations in Prussia fall in different degrees within the domain of the general staff.

The changes by which the army is placed on a war footing, known collectively as mobilization,

include the calling out of the reserves of men and horses; their distribution among the various corps and their equipment; and the creation and completion of the staffs and of the different services of supply. All these proceedings in Prussia the general staff had perfectly arranged and regulated down to the minutest detail, so that the order needed only to be issued, and the whole operation would take place as if by clockwork within a given number of days.[1] The process of mobilization is in essentials the same what-

[1] The details of the operation of mobilization are kept secret, but the elementary principles have everywhere been copied from the Prussian system and may be explained in an imaginary example. Suppose a company to have a peace strength of 120 men and to pass each year forty men into the reserve, receiving instead the same number of recruits, the war strength being 240. The public announcement of the decree for mobilization makes it the duty of each of the 120 reservists to proceed directly to the headquarters of the company, where they will arrive, according to the distance from their homes, say on the first, second, or third day of mobilization. The captain has a nominal list of the whole company, and keeps in store under his own responsibility the complete new war kit for each of the 240 men. As they arrive the men pass

ever be the frontier on which the war is to be fought. It places the troops ready at their ordinary headquarters, and in Prussia no regiment leaves its headquarters except in perfect readiness to take the field.

On the other hand, the collection of the army on the frontier is the first stage of the actual operations, resembling the opening of a game of chess, and it is of the greatest importance that the points selected should be those best suited for the beginning of the particular campaign in prospect.

The placing of an army on a war footing and its transport to a frontier are political acts of the gravest moment. They are therefore usually con-

the doctor, receive their kits, and are told off to their posts in the completed company. According to the care with which the rules have been framed (this is the staff's principal share in the work) so as to divide the labour, occupying every man from the general to the bugler and giving to each that work which he can best do, and to none more than he can do in the time allowed, will be the rapidity, ease, and certainty with which the whole mobilization will be effected.

trolled almost as much by political as by military considerations, and it is impossible rightly to appreciate them without taking into account the political circumstances by which they are affected. The influence of politics upon the two processes is however different. In regard to mobilization, which may be compared to a mechanical process, the statesman may urge its postponement or its execution by gradual instalments. In neither case is the essential nature of the operation changed, though the amount of friction involved may be increased. But the assembling of an army is the immediate preliminary to attack or defence, and the statesman's unwillingness to attack may affect the choice of time and place for the collection of the force available.

The King of Prussia was sincerely anxious to avoid a war, and until June 14 was determined not to take the initiative nor to agree to any measure which might savour of attack. He was with difficulty induced to consent to the successive stages of preparation. Not until the beginning

of May, when the Austrian mobilization was far advanced and the transport to the frontiers impending, were the orders for the Prussian mobilization issued, and that not at once, but piecemeal between May 3 and May 12. The forces thus called out formed a total of 326,000 combatants, divided into nine army corps,[1] a reserve corps at Berlin,[2] the corps of occupation in Holstein, and the corps collected at Wetzlar from the Prussian garrisons withdrawn from fortresses of the German confederation. The arrangements made for the disposition of these forces between May 12 and June 22 form the basis of the subsequent success, and may perhaps best be described in the form of a series of problems and their solutions.

1. The first step of preparation for a war is

[1] The guard with its peace quarters at Berlin, and corps I. to VIII. quartered in peace in districts corresponding in the main to the eight provinces: Prussia, Pomerania, Brandenburg, Prussian Saxony, Posen, Silesia, Westphalia, Rhenish Prussia. See sketch map 2.

[2] Called out on May 19th.

the calculation of the force required.[1] In the case of our own small wars it is self-evident that such a calculation is necessary, and the campaign of 1882 in Egypt is an instance in which it was worked out to a nicety. It might seem equally a matter of course that when two Continental states go to war each of them will assume from the beginning that its whole available force will be employed. Yet instances are numerous in which campaigns have been lost mainly through neglect to work out this calculation. In 1859 the Austrians undertook with little more than half their army a war against the combined forces of France and Sardinia; in 1885 King Milan attacked the Bulgarians without calling out the whole of the Servian army. In both cases defeat was largely due to this initial error.

[1] "What king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage and desireth conditions of peace."

The basis of the calculation is furnished by an estimate of the force which will be at the disposal of the enemy. In 1866 the Prussian staff had to face the preliminary difficulty that it was uncertain even as late as May 8 which of the German states would be on the Prussian and which on the Austrian side. The least favourable assumption was made, and it was estimated that the hostile forces would be in North Germany 36,000, in South Germany 100,000, and in Saxony and Austria 264,000, making a total of 400,000 men.[1] There could be no doubt that Prussia must employ the whole of her available forces.

2. The next question was how to distribute the Prussian forces against these three sets of

[1] The numbers actually called out against Prussia proved to be :—

North Germans . . .	25,000
South Germans . . .	94,000
Austrians and Saxons . .	271,000
Total . .	390,000

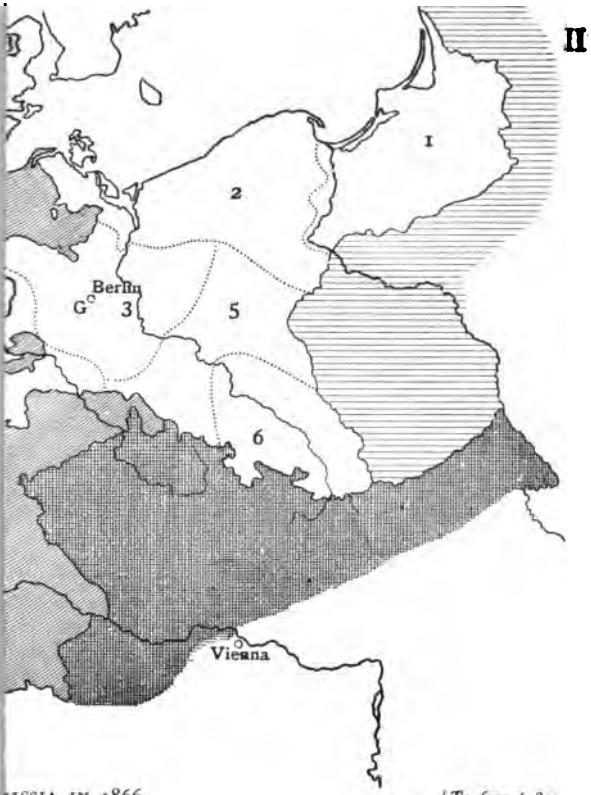
enemies. A proportionate division based on the estimate just given would have resulted in the employment of 215,000 men against Austria and Saxony, of 30,000 against North Germany, and of 80,000 against South Germany. The staff, however, expected that the South German forces would not be ready until a late stage of the war, and might in the first instance be neglected. Hanover and Hesse lying between the two halves of Prussia and separating Westphalia and Rhenish Prussia from the main body of the kingdom,[1] were more serious foes. It would be necessary to strike hard at them, if possible, before their preparations could be completed. But the fate of Prussia and of Germany really depended upon the issue of the conflict with Austria. If she were beaten here, Prussia would in any case be undone; if she were successful in this struggle, the minor states, even though not themselves beaten, must needs fall under her sway. It was decided to employ

[1] See sketch map 2.

almost the whole army (eight and a half corps and the reserve corps, 278,000 men) against Austria and Saxony, and to meet the rest of the German enemies with a scratch army (48,000) made up of half the seventh corps and of the troops assembled in Holstein and at Wetzlar. This force was destined first of all to disarm Hesse and Hanover (capitulation of Langensalza June 29), and then to attack and defeat the South German contingents.

3. The next problem is the choice of the point or points at which the army is to be assembled for the purpose of beginning the operations. This is the first act of generalship in the campaign, and a mistake here is usually the prelude of misfortune. Every general wishes, if possible, to meet with his whole force the divided forces of the enemy, and therefore his first thought is to assemble his army at one place, or at least to collect it so that all its parts may unite for battle.

The Prussian army, if assembled in Upper



USSIA IN 1866.

[To face p. 80.

Silesia, would be at the point of Prussia nearest to the Austrian capital; if assembled at Görlitz,[1] it would interpose between Berlin or Breslau and an Austrian army approaching from Bohemia. These were, therefore, the most favourable points of assembly, the one for attack and the other for defence. But the position in Silesia would lose much of its value unless it were intended, as soon as the army should be ready, to march on Vienna; and this course in the middle of May was, to the king's mind, inadmissible. There was, however, a second quite unanswerable argument against assembling the whole army at either place. The movement could not be carried out in a reasonable time. To march to either district from the distant provinces would have been an affair of many weeks, and the concentration would run the risk of being too late. The difficulty could not be overcome by the use of the railways. To move a whole army corps by a single rail-

[1] See sketch map 3.

way required, according to the nature of the line, irrespective of the distance, from nine to twelve days. But for the transport to Upper Silesia only one, and for that to Görlitz only two, through railways were available, so that a very long time would be required to move the whole army by rail to either point. Moreover, neither of the districts in question is so fertile as to be able to feed a large army for more than a few days. As the king was determined not to fight, if fighting could be avoided, it might become necessary to keep the army waiting for some weeks after its concentration. This would be to starve it before a shot had been fired. Thus it was impracticable in the political circumstances to collect all the nine corps into one army, either for offence or defence. Separate armies had to be formed, and considerations of defence to prevail. The principal centres of concentration were fixed in the neighbourhood of Görlitz and of Schweidnitz, points on the lines of an Austrian advance towards

Berlin and Breslau respectively from Northern Bohemia, where at this time (the middle of May) the Austrian army was believed to be assembling.

4. Upon the basis of this decision the movement of the troops to the frontier was arranged. The railway system, as has been seen, did not admit of moving the corps directly and speedily to Görlitz and Schweidnitz. Five railways in all were available, leading to points on the Prussian frontier facing the kingdom of Saxony and the Austrian Empire. They ended at Zeitz, Halle, Hertzberg, Görlitz, and Schweidnitz (or Neisse), places scattered along a curve some 250 miles long. The quickest practicable way of assembling the army was to use all these railways at once, and when the troops had thus been deposited on the frontier to continue the concentration by marches. The shortest lines of march to assemble the whole army would be the radii leading to the centre of the curve; but this was in the enemy's territory, so that

these lines, if they had been for other reasons desirable, could not be adopted before war had been declared. The alternative was to concentrate by marches along the circumference, and this was the plan adopted. Each corps, as soon as its debarkation from the train was complete, was marched along the arc towards the point of concentration selected for it.

The corps from Posen and Silesia, collected at Schweidnitz and Neisse (grouped together as the second army under the Crown Prince), were moved to their right to Landshut and Waldenburg.[1] Those of Westphalia (half a corps) and Rhenish Prussia were detrained at Zeitz and Halle, and marched round the frontier of Saxony to the point where the Elbe emerges from that kingdom. These troops, with the reserve corps from Berlin, formed the Elbe army, destined to continue its eastward movement by the invasion of Saxony. The corps from Pomerania, Brandenburg, and Prussian Saxony, were combined

[1] See sketch map 3.

into the first army, under Prince Frederick Charles. They were first assembled between Torgau and Cottbus, and then marched along the frontier towards Görlitz, reaching the western corner of Silesia (neighbourhood of Hoyerswerda) about the end of the first week in June, when the other movements described were also completed.

5. The staff was now anxious to begin the campaign. The three armies could not be united on Prussian soil without leaving some important district unprotected, nor await where they were the Austrian attack without the risk that one of them in isolation might be exposed to the blows of a superior force. This same risk only would be incurred in the attempt to meet by a concentric advance towards some point of Austrian territory; it would increase with every additional day allowed for the Austrian preparations. But the king still thought a settlement possible, and would not permit hostilities to commence.

6. On June 11, the Prussian staff learned

that of seven Austrian army corps destined to operate against Prussia six were in Moravia, not in Bohemia, as had been supposed. The inference was, that the Austrians contemplated advancing upon Breslau by way of Neisse, for which movement the data obtained showed that they would be able to cross the Silesian border with five or six army corps by about June 19. To meet this invasion, if it should take place, the second army was moved to the river Neisse, facing south, and was reinforced by the guard corps from Berlin, and by the first corps, moved originally from East Prussia by rail to Görlitz, and now by marching transferred from the first army to the second. At the same time the first army continued its eastward march as far as Görlitz, where it would be near enough to reach Breslau as soon as the Austrians, if they should really invade Silesia, or, if not required in that direction, could be moved readily into either Saxony or Bohemia. These movements were effected by June 19.

The Elbe army was also to be moved to the east, to join the first army, but its most convenient route from Torgau to Görlitz lay through Dresden. While the changes just described were in the course of execution, the political situation also had changed. The hostile resolution of the diet on June 14 enabled the king to make up his mind. On June 15 war was declared against Saxony. On the 16th the Elbe army crossed the border; on the 18th occupied Dresden; and on the 19th, connection having been established with the first army, now about Görlitz, was placed under the command of Prince Frederick Charles. This prince concentrated the first army to the south of Görlitz, on the confines of Saxony and Silesia, close to the Bohemian border, while the Elbe army from Dresden rapidly closed up to his right flank. The intention was that both should advance as one army into Bohemia, and move, with the left wing skirting the foot of the Giant Mountains, to meet the second army.

There had been no sign of an Austrian attack on Silesia, so the Crown Prince was ordered to prepare for a march westward into Bohemia to meet his cousin. On the 19th he was to send one corps in advance to Landshut, still keeping the rest of his force on the Neisse ready to face either south or west. A day or two later two more of his corps were withdrawn to the mountains, a single corps only remaining on the Neisse, and much trouble being taken to deceive the Austrians into the belief that the whole army was still there and was about to march towards Moravia. This was the position of both Prussian armies on June 22, when the telegram already quoted ordered them to cross the Bohemian frontier and to try to effect their union about Gitschin.

It will be observed that from the first stage of the preparations one object, the concentration of as large a force as possible for the purpose of defeating the Austro-Saxon forces, had been followed by the chief of the staff.

NTS OF THE CAMPAIGN OF 1866. [*To face p.* 88.

His arrangements were at first controlled by political considerations, the effect of which in the circumstances was to render impracticable the formation at the outset of a single army. Afterwards, before war had been finally decided upon, the armies were moved to meet the changed situation created by the Austrian arrangements at length known. The invasion of Saxony was a further stage in the general concentration. By June 22 it had become clear that the Austrians were not invading Silesia. The question was, whether to continue through Prussian territory the march of the first army towards the second—a safe course now that the Austrian position was known—or to take for both the shortest line of meeting, that into Bohemia, with the attendant risk to the second army. The bolder course was adopted, and was abundantly justified by success.

CHAPTER V

THE CRITICS

EXCEPT the conduct of military operations there is nothing so difficult as to appreciate them truly. A multitude of considerations affect the leading of armies and many of them evade the research of the historian. The critic therefore can rarely be sure that he has placed himself in the exact position of the general whose acts he is studying. If, for example, he supposes a commander to have been without information which in fact he possessed, his judgment may be founded upon a picture completely distorted. Such mistakes are made even by the most careful historians. The Prussian staff history of the campaign of 1866 alleges that the Austrian commanders were unaware of the Crown Prince's march westwards

from the Neisse. The Austrian staff history shows that very good information on the subject had reached the Austrian headquarters as early as June 25, before any of the Crown Prince's corps had crossed the border. Where it is so difficult to avoid error it is rash to be dogmatic. But it may be permissible to raise a doubt as to the value of some of the judgments that seem to have become traditional concerning this campaign. Mr. O'Connor Morris, for example, in the *Academy* of March 23, 1889, wrote:—"The strategy of Moltke is not perfection, as worshippers of success have boasted, but he never attempted, in his invasion of France, to unite widely divided armies, within striking distance of a concentrated foe, as he did at Gitschin, under the very beard of Benedek."[1] A similar criticism,

[1] If Mr. O'Connor Morris will mark on a map the positions of the Austrian and Prussian armies on June 22nd, the date of the order "to unite widely divided armies," etc., he will discover that the Austrian forces were distributed over an area not less extended than that which included both Prussian armies.

without the sneer, may be found in the Belgian *Précis*. But neither writer has explained where the mistake lay. Even the Austrian historian declares that, given the Prussian positions on the Neisse and in Lusatia, the only sound course was the advance to meet at Gitschin. Was the error in the original dispersion of the forces along the frontier? If so, the critics should explain what alternative was practicable in view of the political conditions and of the geography of the theatre of war. Would it not be safer to say that the preparations for the campaign of 1866 show the influence upon strategy of a very complicated political situation? The opening of the campaign of 1870 presented in comparison a simple problem. There was a single enemy to be faced; and there was no motive for hesitation or delay. Moreover, the German staff could count upon beginning the campaign on the least favourable hypothesis with 330,000 men against 250,000.[1] Possibly in 1866 the strategists' task would have been easier, and

[1] *German Staff History*, 1870–71, vol. i. p. 74.

posterity would have thought no worse of Prussian policy if the king had realized early in May that mobilization meant war, and had given Moltke from that time a free hand. But this again is a criticism easy to make twenty years after the event. The conflict was between Germans, and the general opinion at the time condemned the Prussian policy. Moreover, Prussia had then no important success on record since the decisive stroke at Waterloo. In these conditions the king's hesitation was natural enough, and even the anxiety to cover every part of Prussian territory is quite intelligible. Much must needs remain obscure, for it may be years before the personal history of the principal actors at this period is given to the world. Meanwhile, the function of criticism is to seek first of all to understand the events with which it deals.

It is of little purpose to read a summary of the movements of the troops during a campaign, and to be given a list of the mistakes made by the generals on each side. Such a system leads the

reader to suppose that generals as a rule have been remarkably careless, weak, and ignorant, and entirely conceals from him the difficulties which always beset the conduct of operations. But where a measure adopted in the field is shown by the result to have been attended with risks or followed by disaster, the attempt to ascertain why it was employed invariably throws light upon the nature of war; and this method of study, though it offers little satisfaction to the vanity that likes to take a side and to distribute praise or blame, rewards, by quickening the insight and forming the judgment, the labour which it requires.

PART II

THE GENERAL STAFF AND THE ARMY

CHAPTER I

THE SPIRIT OF PRUSSIAN MILITARY INSTITUTIONS

THE general staff has been described as the "brain of an army." The metaphor is peculiarly apt, for the staff, like the human brain, is not independent but a part of an organic whole. It can perform its functions only in connection with a body adapted to its control, and united with it by the ramifications of a nervous system. How then is the Prussian army adapted to receive the impulses conveyed from its intellectual centre?

An army is what its officers make it, and in the Prussian army the officers take their profession seriously. It may be doubted whether there is

in the world any body of men so entirely single-minded in their devotion to duty. Most of them are, according to English notions, ridiculously poor. Their pay is small, and they have never made the acquaintance of luxury.

In 1874 the emperor in an official address to the army wrote, "The more general the spread of luxury and comfort, the more solemnly is the officer confronted by the duty never to forget that his honourable position in the state and in society has not been gained and cannot be maintained by material wealth. Not only does an enervating mode of life damage the combatant qualities of an officer, but the pursuit of gain and comfort would dangerously undermine the very ground upon which the officer's position is built up."[1] These words fairly express the spirit of those to whom they were addressed, and many an officer takes a pride in his poverty, and starves with cheerfulness and even with merriment. Some of

[1] *Verordnung über die Ehrengerichte der Offiziere im Preussischen Heere*, May 2nd, 1874.

the superior officers have set the example by abandoning the dearly-loved cigar, and a Prussian officer's mess has decidedly no attractions for the *gourmet.*

"Teacher and leader in every department is the officer. This implies that he is superior to his men in knowledge, experience, and strength of character. Without fearing responsibility, every officer in all circumstances however extraordinary is to stake his whole personality for the fulfilment of his mission, even without waiting for orders."[1] This is the foundation stone of Prussian discipline, the secret by which is secured "the legitimate ascendency of the officers, the justified confidence of the soldiers, the daily interchange of mutual devotion, the conviction that each one is useful to all and that the chiefs are the most useful of all."[2] The attainment of the ideal thus officially set up is facilitated by the system of promotion. The principle of seniority, without which no

[1] *Felddienstordnung*, 1887, § 6.
[2] Taine, *L'Ancien Régime*, p. 108.

public service can be a profession or offer a career, is allowed its legitimate place, being modified only by the retirement of the incapable, and by special selection for the general staff. "It is necessary that the higher commands should be attained only by such officers as unite distinguished abilities and military education with corresponding qualities of character and with bodily activity."[1] Moreover, "it is the special duty of the general commanding to see that all the commandants of fortresses, all the commanders of divisions, brigades, regiments, and battalions, and all the field-officers in the district of his army-corps, retain their posts only so long as they have the bodily activity necessary for service in the field, and the knowledge and capacity needed for their several particular callings. The moment he notices in this respect the slightest change to the detriment of my service, it is his duty, for which he will be held responsible, to inform me. He must also send me the names

[1] Cabinet order of May 8th, 1849.

of all officers who distinguish themselves or are fit for a higher post."[1]

The first feature, then, of the Prussian system is the method by which it is attempted, with considerable success, always to put the right man in the right place, and having done so, to see that he keeps up to the mark.

[1] Cabinet order, *i.e.* King's order in Cabinet of March 13th, 1816.

CHAPTER II

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY

ORGANIZATION implies that every man's work is defined; that he knows exactly what he must answer for, and that his authority is co-extensive with his responsibility.

A modern army fights by army corps, and by army corps the Prussian army is managed, in peace as well as in war. Each province is an army corps district.[1] All the troops in it belong to the corps[2] and are under the command of the general, who has in military matters absolute authority, being independent of the Ministry of War and responsible directly to the king and to no one else. Every question that comes up in the

[1] The civil and military boundaries are not quite identical.

[2] The garrisons of fortresses are exceptions.

corps can be finally settled by its commanding general, except a very few matters which require the king's assent, or an arrangement with the Ministry of War. But comparatively few questions of detail come as high as the commanding general.

His corps is at all times organized very much as it would be in war. In the infantry four companies make a battalion, three battalions a regiment, two regiments a brigade, two infantry brigades with their due proportion of cavalry and artillery form an infantry division. In the cavalry four or five squadrons form the regiment, two or three regiments the brigade, and two or three brigades the division. In the artillery two or three batteries form a group (*Abtheilung*, now officially translated brigade division), two or three groups a regiment, and two regiments a brigade. The corps is made up of infantry divisions, a cavalry brigade or division,[1] and an artillery brigade.

[1] In recent years the cavalry division has been made independent of the army corps.

Responsibility and authority begin with the smallest units, the company, squadron, or battery. The captain, the commander of such a unit, is the lowest officer who has the power of punishment. In his hands lies in peace the training, and in war the leading of the company, squadron, or battery. The lieutenants and in a lower sphere the non-commissioned officers are his assistants acting under his responsibility. In the company, to take the infantry as the type, the captain is supreme. The methods of instruction, the distribution of time, and the order to be followed in the process are matters which he settles according to his own judgment. His superiors abstain from any interference. They are concerned only with the result, of which they satisfy themselves by inspection at the end of the period assigned to company training. If any of the soldiers have not been properly instructed, or if the company is not fit to take its place in the battalion, that is the captain's fault, and he is likely to lose his chance of promotion.

The battalion commander receives his trained

companies and practises them in battalion manœuvres. His business is with the battalion as a body composed of four units, not with the internal affairs of the companies. In battle as on the parade ground this rule is observed. For example: "If a battalion receives the order to attack a farm its commander must assign to the several companies the part which each is to play, must prescribe the points of attack, and at least in general terms the directions of their advance. He must also arrange the time of their coming into action so that they may co-operate. But how each company is to accomplish the task assigned to it, in what formation it is to fight—these and similar details he will do well, if he knows that his captains have the necessary insight, to leave to them."[1]

In this way authority and responsibility are graduated throughout the army corps. Every commander above the rank of captain deals with a body composed of units with the interior affairs

[1] Blume, *Strategie*, p. 136.

of none of which he meddles, except in the case of failure on the part of the officer directly responsible. The higher the commander and the greater his authority, the more general becomes the supervision and the less the burden of detail. The superior prescribes the object to be attained. The subordinate is left free to choose the means, and is interfered with only in exceptional circumstances. Thus every officer in his own sphere is accustomed to the exercise of authority and to the free application of his own judgment.

By this system the labour and responsibility of commanding an army corps are reduced to practicable dimensions. Regimental affairs are settled by the colonels; brigade affairs by the major-generals. The divisions commanded by lieutenant-generals are completely organized bodies capable, in case of need, of independent action and requiring little supervision from the corps commander. The general commanding the army corps has to deal directly with only a few subordinates, the commanders of his infantry divisions, of his cavalry

brigade or division, and of his artillery brigade, and with the heads of the corps organizations for such purposes as supply and medical service. He inspects and tests the condition of all the various units, but he does not attempt to do the work of his subordinates. He is thus at liberty to keep his mind concentrated upon those essential matters which properly require his decision, for example, in war, whether he will advance or retire, whether he will move to the right or to the left, whether to fight or to postpone an engagement; how to distribute his force;—what portion he will at once engage and where he will place his reserve. When he receives an order from the army headquarters he is able to deliberate upon the best way of realizing the intention conveyed, for he is as far as possible unhampered by the worry of detail. He can make up his mind coolly, a very necessary process, seeing that he will stake life and reputation to carry out what he has once decided.

CHAPTER III

THE SYSTEM OF TRAINING

"THE demands which war makes upon the troops must determine their training in peace. . . . The tasks of the soldier in war are simple. He must always be able to march and to use his weapon. He can do both only so far as his moral and intellectual qualities suffice and his bodily and military training has been effective. Moreover, his performance will be fully useful only when it is guided by the will of the leader and regulated by discipline." [1]

The ideal here formulated is realized by devoting much time and attention to training and teaching each individual recruit. Next comes the exercise of the company, also as thorough as

[1] *Felddienstordnung*, §§ 1, 2.

possible. These two stages of schooling occupy the greater part of the military year. Then when the companies are perfect they take their places in the battalion, and the battalions in due time in the regiment and in the brigade. The crown of the whole training is formed by the manœuvres, in which divisions and occasionally army corps are assembled for practice, resembling as nearly as may be the operations of actual war.

Several objects are served by these manœuvres. In the first place, the separate exercise of brigades preceding the manœuvres proper completes the formal training of the troops, and gives practice in the evolutions of large homogeneous masses of each of the three arms. The manœuvres of divisions and army corps serve to accustom the three arms to act in concert, and to overcome the great friction which at first always impedes the movements of such large composite bodies. All the various manœuvres, moreover, give the superior officers the opportunity of inspecting the work of their inferiors, that is, of ascertaining

how far the training of the troops has been thorough, and with what degree of skill they are handled.

Not the least important purpose of the manœuvres is the training of commanders. The troops are divided into two parties supposed to be enemies at some stage of an imaginary war. The commander of each side learns from the umpire the nature of the supposed operations which have brought his forces into their actual situation, together with such information concerning the enemy as in real war he might be presumed to have obtained. He has then to act according to his own judgment. In this way the generals are practised and tested in the power of rapidly and surely grasping situations such as occur in war and of acting upon the insight thus gained. The arrangements are so made as to afford practice like this to as many officers as possible of all ranks, though it is chiefly the generals, the commanders of brigades, divisions, and army corps who profit by them.

Thus the Prussian system of training produces as the net result on the one hand an army corps as an instrument pliable to its commander's touch, so that it can be surely and easily handled in any situation, and on the other hand a general skilled in the manipulation of this powerful and complicated instrument.

CHAPTER IV

THE ARMY CORPS

THE Prussian army in 1866 consisted of nine army corps. The German army to-day has twenty, and in case of war the number would be increased. Large forces like these are rendered manageable by grouping them into armies of four or five corps, and dealing with the armies as units. It is evident that the working of the armies and therefore of the whole depends upon the ease and certainty with which the several corps are directed. Some of the means taken to secure this end have been already touched upon. In the first place each of the component parts of the corps must be perfectly trained and disciplined. Secondly, the corps must have had so much practice in working together as a whole that it

has none of the weaknesses of a "scratch team." Thirdly, the general must be a real commander, able to read a battle-field, to judge a situation coolly, and to decide promptly. These qualities are secured partly by the selection [1] exercised in the appointment of generals, partly by the frequent opportunities for practice and testing afforded by the manœuvres.

But it is not enough to secure a general of tactical and strategical ability and experience. He must be protected against the danger of being absorbed by the worries of administration.

Before a body of 30,000 men can be assembled on the ground selected for manœuvres or on the field of battle, a vast amount of business must be transacted, requiring for its performance abilities of quite another sort than those needed to handle and lead the troops in action. The men must all be clothed and equipped. They

[1] The thoroughness of this selection has increased in recent years, inasmuch as most of the generals appointed have enjoyed the special training of the staff. An incapable of any rank is ruthlessly retired.

must be properly and regularly fed. The task of supplying an army corps with provisions is like that of feeding a small town which, instead of remaining in its place, moves every day to a new site ten or fifteen miles distant from the old one. Among 30,000 men there will always be a number of sick who require attention. If the corps should meet the enemy there may be thousands of wounded to be tended, removed, protected, and fed. Order must be maintained, so that a special set of functionaries is needed to apply and enforce the laws by which the army is regulated. The numbers of the corps can be maintained only by a constant stream of fresh men, trained soldiers not before employed in the war, arriving from its peace quarters.

Every one of these matters needs constant attention, or the whole machine would get out of gear and cease to work.

The friction that inevitably arises from these complicated necessities is diminished and to some extent overcome by the organization of responsi-

bility among the several bodies composing the army corps. But the anxieties of the commanding general can never be removed. In order to realize the magnitude and variety of his cares, the attempt may be made to draw a rough picture of the army corps at work during a campaign.

The corps is moving westward along one of the great Continental high-roads. A vast forest spreading on each side for many miles confines the troops to the actual roadway.

The cavalry division is looking out for the enemy in the open country twenty miles in advance to the west of the forest. Parties of hussars in every road, lane, and bypath are watching the country as they move on across a front of eight or nine miles, followed two or three miles behind on the main road by the rest of the division, a column two miles long of dragoons, uhlans, and horse artillery. At the head of this column is the lieutenant-general commanding the cavalry division, with his staff. It is ten o'clock in the morning, and under the

hot July sun a cloud of dust envelops all but the leading squadron as horse and guns move on at a steady trot. Now and then a fitful breeze carries the dust towards the south and reveals for a moment the long cavalcade.

The pace has just slackened to a walk as two horsemen gallop towards the road from the north-west. They are a young officer of hussars and a private whose bandaged arm shows that he has been wounded. Both are covered with dust, and their horses show signs of extreme fatigue. As they approach the road the general and his suite move on to a pasture field to the right to meet them, the column continuing along the road. The lieutenant respectfully salutes and tells his story briefly. A few questions are asked and answered. The column is halted, and during the short rest which ensues the general dictates a note which is written by one of his officers. The note is handed to an uhlan, who gallops off at once along the road towards the rear. A few minutes later the signal to mount is given, and

the whole mass of horsemen and guns in a succession of parallel columns leaves the road and trots over the fields to the north-west, soon disappearing in a fold of the ground.

The uhlan sent back with the letter approaches after a five-mile gallop a group of comrades lying by the roadside, with their horses tethered near in the grass. One of the horses is saddled and bridled, and as the messenger comes up its rider springs into the saddle. A few sentences are exchanged as the new-comer, dismounting, hands the note to the fresh rider, who in turn gallops off along the road towards the rear. Three times the note thus changes hands. The fourth rider, whose station was five miles from the western edge of the forest region, is continually meeting troops on the march. He passes first a few squadrons of cuirassiers, then a mile or two further infantry, guns, more infantry, and then a string of waggons a mile long, laden with cartridges, shell, bridging material, and appliances for the comfort of wounded men. All

this is merely the advanced guard of the army corps.

As the rider draws nearer to the wood he finds a mile of clear road, and then meets the general commanding the corps to whom his note is addressed.

The hussar lieutenant had started before dawn, and after riding many miles to the front, evading the enemy's scouting parties, had watched a hostile cavalry division break up from its bivouac. He had been able to identify the division and to ascertain that it was unusually strong both in cavalry and horse artillery. On his return he had been seen by an enemy's patrol, and had escaped capture only by running the gauntlet.

The information thus obtained is of great importance, not only to the cavalry division, whose commander has promptly acted upon it, but to the army corps and to the army of which it is a part. The general commanding the army corps therefore sends an officer with the report and a further note from himself to the army head-

quarters in rear, on the east of the forest. This officer having to follow the high-road, meets and rides past the main body of the army corps on the march.

The leading brigade of infantry, with a number of guns and ammunition waggons, covers the road for a mile and three-quarters; then for another mile and a half is the corps' artillery, then the whole second division of infantry (with its cavalry regiment and its artillery) trailing its length for four and a half miles. Then after having the road to himself for a quarter of an hour, as he emerges from the forest on its eastern side, the rider passes the heavy baggage, a line of military carts and waggons conveying those requisites which the troops need every night for comfort, and which cannot be carried in the knapsacks. These waggons stretch for a mile and a half along the road. Soon after passing them the rider takes a cross-road leading to the north, just as he is meeting the foremost portion of the army corps trains, which in their turn

would cover the road for eleven or twelve miles with their long succession of vehicles: ammunition waggons for guns and small arms; provision stores for four days for 30,000 men; hay and oats for the horses of cavalry, artillery, and waggons; the corps pontoon train; the hospital carts, and a multitude of country carts pressed into the service to enable extra stores of provisions to be taken on, and to relieve the military waggons.

Thus from the general to the rear of the baggage proper would be nearly twelve miles, from the rear of the baggage to the rear of the trains, if all were on the march at the same time, another twelve miles, while the general himself was found nearly five miles behind the front of the advanced guard of the corps.

When the officer, late in the afternoon, rides back from the army headquarters with a letter for the corps commander, he finds a different scene. At a village in the middle of the forest the leading waggons of the train are beginning

to form up north and south of the road. There is here an extensive open space, which before night will be packed with waggons. Farther on the road is clear. The heavy baggage has dispersed among the cross-roads, each set of waggons seeking the quarters of its regiment. At the western edge of the forest the troops of the army corps have taken possession of all the villages on the road and in the neighbourhood, so that within a radius of six miles from where the road enters the open country every farm or cluster of buildings is tenanted by its company or battery. The villages farthest to the west contain the advanced guard, and beyond them still the outposts have placed picquets and sentries in all the roads and lanes leading to the west.

The general's quarters are in a straggling village on the main road, at the White Cross Inn. In front of the house an officer is explaining to an old farmer that the provisions produced by the villagers are satisfactory, that no further

requisition will be made, but that for a further supply of oats, cheese, and bacon, if delivered next morning, payment will be made in cash. In a small parlour of the inn two officers are busy examining the contents of half a dozen mail bags collected from post-offices in the district.

Upstairs the general, who has just come in from the outposts, is hearing reports. The corps intendant proposes to form a temporary depot at the village where the trains are parked, and to send back the requisitioned carts next morning to the railway terminus assigned to the corps. Another officer announces that the telegraph from army headquarters will by evening be opened as far as the same village, a third that 150 horses are unserviceable, and that it will be two days before fresh horses from home will reach the depot. A fourth brings a list of the number of men who are disabled by sore feet, diarrhœa, and sunstroke. At this moment comes the letter from army headquarters, which instructs the general to be ready at short notice to march

his whole corps towards the north, along the front of the forest. This involves the movement of the trains along a cross-road through the forest, and arrangements must be made to ensure this road, which is a bad one, being cleared of hindrances and made fit to bear the heavy traffic.

The examination of the mail bags has yielded fresh information about the enemy. All the officers but one are dismissed, and the general, with his confidential secretary, is proceeding to study the new situation thus revealed when a fresh messenger gallops up to the house with a note to the effect that the advanced guard of the neighbouring corps ten miles to the south is attacked by a superior force of the enemy, and that its commander begs the general to move his corps to its assistance, so as to be able to join in the action before noon next day.

This picture is a mere shadow of the reality.[1]

[1] The details of organization on which it is based are those of the German army in the period between 1875 and

It may help however to illustrate the dual nature of the cares by which a general is distracted. He has at the same time to perform the military functions of command and to superintend the business of management. His duty as a commander involves continuous attention to the enemy's movements and to the instructions of his own chief. He must study the intentions of the army commander to whom he is subordinate and conform to them in his own movements against the enemy. But the mere management of his corps requires an effort which tends to absorb his energies and make him forget both his commander and the enemy.

A good system must as far as possible relieve the general from these cares of management, so that he can keep his mind free to study his in-

1885. The materials for a similar account of the Prussian army corps of 1866 are not accessible. The reader may imagine the confusion which would follow a battle, especially a defeat which might compel the corps to retreat as best it could through the forest, with its trains perhaps entangled in the cross-road leading north.

structions and watch his foe. Accordingly side by side with that distribution of authority among the combatant units which facilitates the exercise of the general command is an organization upon similar principles of the administrative services. The supervision of each branch is in the hands of an executive officer in the *entourage* of the general.

The corps intendant is responsible for the supplies of provisions, stores, and money, and for their transport. The hospitals and ambulance work are controlled by the surgeon-general. The legal business is conducted and prepared for the general's decision by an officer called the corps auditeur.

The strictly military functions of command fall naturally into two classes, according as they are concerned with the direction of the troops as pieces in the game played against the enemy, or with their internal management. The every-day life of a soldier is to a great extent a matter of routine. In every regiment there are

at all times guards and sentries and an officer of the day; there are patrols and fatigue parties. These duties are undertaken by all in turn, and they therefore need to be equitably distributed from day to day. A roll of the regiment is therefore made every day accounting for all the officers and men. The working of all this internal mechanism is in every regiment arranged by the adjutant, under the authority and supervision of the commanding officer. The brigade, the division, and the army corps are each of them in like manner provided with an adjutancy, which in the case of an army corps is formed by a bureau of four officers.

CHAPTER V

THE GENERAL STAFF IN THE ARMY CORPS

THERE remain as the general's special province the communication with the army headquarters and the direction of the troops as fighting bodies; the regulation of marches, halts, and combats; the reconnaissance of the country with a view to these operations; the collection and sifting of news about the enemy; and the compilation of reports for the information of the higher commanders and for the records of the army corps.

The bureau or department which assists the general in these matters is the general staff of the army corps. It consists of a colonel or lieutenant-colonel as chief, one field officer, and two

captains.[1] The functions of the general staff of a division or army corps during war may be summarised under the following heads:[2]—

(1) Elaboration in accordance with the situation from time to time of all arrangements concerning the fighting, marching, repose, and safety of the troops.

(2) Communication of these arrangements in the form of orders.

(3) Collection, sifting, and appreciation of all information about the enemy.

(4) Maintenance of the efficiency of the division or army corps and of an uninterrupted knowledge of its condition in every respect.

(5) Keeping record of all operations.

(6) Reconnaissances.

[1] In peace there is usually only one captain. The lieutenant-general commanding a division has the assistance of a single officer of the general staff, usually a captain or a major. In the smaller units, comprising only a single arm, the general staff is not represented.

[2] Bronsart von Schellendorf, *Der Dienst des Generalstabes*, vol. i., p. 4.

The peace duties of the bureau are a preparation for those of war. They embrace the elaboration of the arrangements for mobilization, which require periodical, almost continuous revision, all arrangements for marching and quarterings, the selection of a site and all other preparations for the autumn manœuvres, and the superintendence of the railway and telegraph service of the army corps.

The chief of the general staff of the army corps is authorized to represent the general in his absence and to issue in his name such orders as will admit of no delay. Accordingly he has a general supervision over the whole staff and may control not merely his direct subordinates, but the adjutants, the intendant, and the auditeur.

It is one of the duties of the general staff to attend to the material well-being of the troops, so as to secure their being at all times in condition to march or to fight. The heads of the several departments specially concerned with this care can work efficiently only in so far as they

are kept in touch of the military situation. They must know, for example, when an advance or retreat is contemplated, or a battle is in prospect, so as to make their arrangements accordingly. For this purpose the chief of the general staff of the army corps is the organ of communication between them and the commanding general. All the orders for the movement of the troops and for their distribution in quarters pass through his hands, and he is also responsible for the collecting and sifting of information concerning the enemy. His three assistants relieve him from too much absorption in mechanical detail. He is thus a sort of confidential secretary to the general, preparing for him all important correspondence and serving as an *alter ego*. He knows the general's views and intentions and can therefore see with the general's eyes. He is familiar with the methods and ideas of the army headquarters, for he has been trained in the great general staff at Berlin under the personal influence of its chief. He is familiar with the working

of the army corps, for he has held his post during years of peace before the war, and has been responsible for the arrangement of the corps manœuvres. Thus his training and experience peculiarly qualify him to be the general's right-hand man, to translate the general's wishes into detailed orders, and to submit for his approval at any time such suggestions as will meet the situation.

The system here described provides as effectively as may be for the judicious employment of the army corps. Each branch of administration is so organized as to centre in a competent special manager whose decisions, though they must be submitted to the general, will seldom require to be revised or reversed. The general, while in this way in touch with all that is done in and for his corps, can give his main attention to the military operations. These also are prepared for him and the details elaborated by a group of officers specially trained and practised in this particular branch: the art of command.

CHAPTER VI

COMPOSITION OF THE GENERAL STAFF AND ITS DISTRIBUTION THROUGH THE ARMY

THE Prussian general staff forms a corps by itself. The officers belonging to it wear a special uniform, and their names do not appear in any regimental lists. The proposals for their promotion are made by the chief of the staff of the army,[1] and advancement in its ranks is quicker than in the army generally.

The corps thus constituted is, however, not a close corporation. By the rule that regimental service must alternate with employment on the general staff, the connection between the army

[1] In the case of regimental officers these proposals are made by the commander of the regiment; cf. Cabinet order of March 22, 1864.

and the staff is maintained, and the practical competence of the staff officers is secured. The first appointment to the staff and the subsequent return to it are alike dependent upon selection, or, in other words, upon special merit.

A captain on the staff after four or five years' work is transferred to a regiment. A year or two later he may be again selected for the staff as major. After a further term he will receive the command of a battalion, then return to work on the staff, and afterwards be promoted to the command of a regiment. From this post he may again be chosen to the staff, returning eventually as a major-general to the command of a brigade.

Those officers who are selected for the purely scientific work of the general staff, such, for instance, as the geographical and topographical surveys, are considered to have embraced a special career and to have given up the prospect of command in the field. They are placed on an auxiliary establishment or side list of the general staff. As a rule they are students rather than

fighting men, or officers of distinguished scientific attainments who have not the bodily activity required for service in the field. They remain on the auxiliary establishment, and do not revert to the wider field of active service among the combatants.

The Prussian general staff numbers altogether about 200 officers, 90 of whom are distributed among the divisions and army corps,[1] whilst about 100, half of whom belong to the auxiliary establishment, form the great general staff at Berlin. Service in the staff office of a division or army corps alternates with employment on the great general staff, so that the officer whose diligence and ability have opened for him the staff career, and whose performance secures his periodical return to it, passes through the various stages of regimental service, of service on the general staff of the great constituent units of the

[1] Four of the German army corps—those of Saxony, Würtemberg, and Bavaria (two corps)—do not belong to the Prussian army.

army, and of employment in the great central agency of direction.

Thus the general staff is not merely the intellectual spring which gives the impulse to the whole army, but it forms also a medium of circulation by which all the parts are kept in uninterrupted communication with the centre. At the great general staff the art of command is studied with special reference to the employment of the German army as a weapon against France, Russia, or any other probable adversary, and in conjunction with the Austrian, Italian, or any other allied army. The wide views thus acquired are applied to the handling of the several units of which the army is composed, while the central office in all its general studies has the benefit of the practical experience obtained in the management of the company, the squadron, and the battery, as well as of every unit up to the division and the army corps.

The influence of the general staff is not limited to the work of the 200 officers who comprise it

at any given time. Many of the commanders of regiments and battalions have been members of the general staff, and are taking their turn of practice with the troops. Nearly all the higher commanders have passed through the various stages of duty in the general staff. The great general staff is perpetually training fresh generations. Some sixty junior officers are temporarily attached to it without being incorporated, that is, without ceasing to belong to their regiments. They are the pick of the 100 lieutenants who every year leave the Kriegsakademie, or Staff College, at Berlin. They work for a year at the central general staff office, under the personal supervision of the chief of the general staff of the army, who thus acquires an intimate knowledge of their ability and character. At the end of their year they rejoin their regiments. After a term of regimental work the best of them will be chosen as captains to the general staff to fill up vacancies caused by promotions. In this way the general staff keeps up its numbers by the continual selection of the fittest.

III

'ERAL STAFF

ERRATA.

page 9, line 6, for *have* read *has*

page 10, line 21, for *occasion* read *occasions*

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PART III

THE GREAT GENERAL STAFF

CHAPTER I

AN INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT

THE chief of the general staff of the army, assisted by the great general staff, which is his special organ, and which has its permanent abode in Berlin, is occupied during peace with preparations for the conduct of the army in war. The work undertaken with this object divides itself naturally into three branches, according as it consists in actual arrangements for particular wars regarded as probable, in the training of officers to the art of command, or in the scientific study of war as a means of forming and exercising the faculty of generalship.

The direct preparation for probable wars consists in arranging, in anticipation of each of the various possible complications, the most suitable distribution of the forces available, their concentration on the frontier, and their transport

from the peace quarters to the districts selected for this purpose.[1] These matters require for their decision a thorough knowledge of the countries forming the theatre of war and of the armies of all the probable combatants.

The great general staff in time of peace is constantly engaged in the collection and digestion of such information. For this purpose it is organized into three divisions,[2] to each of which a portion of Europe is assigned. The first division deals with Sweden, Norway, Russia, Turkey, and Austria; the second with Germany, Denmark, Italy, and Switzerland; the third with the western states of Europe and with America. Of the thoroughness with which the work is done some idea may be formed by an examination of the reference index,[3] which was for many years (1869–1883)

[1] See Part I. Chap. IV.

[2] The details of this organization have been modified in recent years.

[3] *Registrande der Geographisch-Statistischen Abtheilung des Grossen Generalstabes.* Berlin, 1869–83.

annually printed and published. The reader who opens one of these volumes at the chapter headed "British Empire" will find there a mass of ordered information such as is hardly anywhere else accessible. It begins with a detailed account of the progress of the Ordnance survey during the year, dealing separately with England, Scotland, and Ireland, and with the Admiralty surveys. Then under the heading land and people, comes a list of new statistical publications, an abstract of the census and of the Registrar-General's reports, and a note of any works that illustrate the subjects. Succeeding headings, worked out with great minuteness, are: constitution, administration, and finance, intellectual culture, emigration, mining, agriculture, forestry, and marine economy, industry and trade. Communications are subdivided into railways, post, telegraphs, and inland navigation. Several pages are devoted to an exhaustive catalogue of every publication issued during the year, English or foreign, bearing upon the

British army, including official publications, controversial pamphlets, and magazine and newspaper articles. The navy is treated in a similar manner, though less space is devoted to it; and lastly, there is a review of all new guide-books, books of travel, and maps relating to Great Britain, especially of county guides, histories, maps and plans. The progress of the British colonies is followed in the same fashion.

The minute systematic study which is thus devoted to the resources of every European country gives a basis for judging of its fighting power far more certain than the collection of mere military statistics. For the reference index is only a groundwork upon which the military study of the countries can be founded. It is not the product of the three divisions, but of the geographical and statistical section, which belongs to the auxiliary establishment, and in this way it prepares the materials upon which the three divisions are to work.

The index is no longer given to the world;

but the volumes already published are a monument of systematic research, and reveal the depth and breadth of the foundation upon which the great general staff builds, in other words, the accuracy and fulness of the knowledge at the disposal of its chief when he frames a plan of operations. It is therefore not a matter of surprise that in 1866 the chief of the Prussian general staff was well informed concerning the position and condition of every part of the Austrian army up to the time when the special preparations for the war began; was able to gauge very fairly the time that would be required for its mobilization and transport, and knew perhaps as well as any one in Austria the difficulties in which that empire would be placed by an effort to continue the struggle. A still more complete knowledge of the adversary's military and other resources was revealed by the German general staff at the opening of the campaign of 1870.

The German staff has now no longer a mono-

poly of these studies, as may be seen by a glance at the *Revue Militaire de l'Étranger*, published fortnightly (since 1872) by the second bureau of the French general staff. The intelligence division[1] of our own War Office performs somewhat similar duties of geographical and statistical research.

The transport of the portions of the army from their peace quarters to the places of assembly selected for the commencement of operations has been referred to in the account of the campaign of 1866. It was then effected partly by marching, partly by railway. Immediately after that campaign the veteran critic Jomini, in an essay upon its lessons, urged the importance of "the serious study of the modifications which railways will cause from this time onwards in the general direction of the operations of war,

[1] See a lecture delivered at the Royal United Service Institution in 1875 by the late Major-General, then Major C. B. Brackenbury, R.A., entitled "The Intelligence Duties of the Staff at Home and Abroad," in reading which, however, the date of its production should be remembered.

i.e. in strategy," and spoke of the want of this study as "the gap at present existing in the theory of the art of war."[1] The gap, one would think, had been pretty well filled up already by a staff which in twenty-one days had moved 197,000 men, 55,000 horses, and 5,300 military vehicles over distances varying from 120 to 360 miles without a single accident, and without any serious departure from the pre-arranged time-tables.

The great general staff has a special division devoted to the manipulation of railways in war, and the attempt is made to give every officer of the general staff the benefit of a period of service in this particular branch.

The production of maps for the army is so closely connected with the study of the various probable theatres of war that the two duties cannot safely be entrusted to different institutions. In Germany the principal government

[1] Jomini, *Troisième Appendice au Précis de l'Art de la Guerre*, Paris, 1866.

geographical establishment is a branch of the great general staff, the officers employed in it being on the auxiliary list. This service is arranged in three departments, the trigonometric, the topographic, and the cartographic, all of which are under the supervision of the chief of the National Survey, who is himself a subordinate of the chief of the general staff of the army.

CHAPTER II

A MILITARY UNIVERSITY

THE distinctive feature of the regeneration by which modern Prussia was raised up, after the Prussia of Frederick the Great had been shattered in the first conflict with Napoleon, was the effort to lay a solid foundation in healthy institutions and especially in a sound education. The work which was done for Prussian institutions by Stein and for liberal education by Humboldt, was done for the army by Scharnhorst, to whom military education was the corner-stone of army reform. The University of Berlin began its work on October 15th, 1810, and on the same day[1] was opened the War School for officers, the great

[1] Schwartz, *Leben des Generals Carl von Clausewitz*, etc., vol. i. p. 151.

military high school of Germany, now known as the War Academy. It was the creation of Scharnhorst, whose greatness is nowhere more conspicuous than in his educational work.

As early as 1792, before he had ever seen a battle, he had published a *Soldier's Pocket-book*, in which the principles and details of field service were explained and illustrated by examples from then recent wars. The experiences of his first campaigns in 1793 and 1794 led him during his last years in the Hanoverian service to draw up a series of memoirs in which military education occupies a prominent place, and when in 1801 he joined the Prussian service, one of his first appointments was that of lecturer to the classes of young officers which had been instituted by Frederick the Great and still continued to be held. Scharnhorst rearranged and extended the courses of instruction, and himself as "Director of the Academy" taught to the higher class the important subjects of tactics and strategy. The lectures which he gave between 1801 and 1805

have been preserved in a fragmentary state, and show that he was the first to concentrate the attention of his pupils on the conduct of the operations of war, instead of merely busying them with the details of the several technical arts and sciences which subserve that end. The regulations for the Academy which he drafted in 1805 contain the outlines of the system which in a more developed form is still characteristic of the highest Prussian military education. Scharnhorst's best pupil at this time was Carl von Clausewitz, who in after years attributed to these early lessons the intellectual impulse which produced his masterly essays, and the historical method in which all his theory has its roots. Lectures and classes were abruptly ended by the mobilization of 1805, which was followed in 1806 by the great catastrophe.

The War School of 1810 aimed at the higher training of selected officers whose ability gave promise of a career in the superior ranks. It was distinct from the lower schools intended to

give a professional training to young men preparing to become officers, and was closely connected with the general staff, in which Scharnhorst, at this time its chief, paid great attention to the instruction of the younger members. One of the first professors appointed was Clausewitz.

The wars of liberation practically dissolved the War School, which, however, after the peace of 1815 was re-established without substantial modification, though it was placed in the department, not of the chief of the staff, but of the inspector-general of military education. During the subsequent long period of peace, the Academy had the services of many distinguished men. From 1818 to 1830 Clausewitz was its director. The great geographer Karl Ritter was from 1820 to 1859 one of its professors. In 1859 the title of War Academy was definitely adopted, and in 1872 the institution was again placed under the superintendence of the chief of the general staff.

The regulations at present in force, though of recent date, are little more than a codification

of the system which has been gradually developed on the foundations laid by Scharnhorst, and their value and the authority which attaches to them are in great measure due to the long and unbroken tradition which they represent.

They are embodied in two short codes entitled respectively "Order of Service," and "Order of Teaching of the War Academy." A concise account of these documents will best explain the workings of this institution.

The Order of Service is one of the few results of the brief reign of the lamented Emperor Frederick, whose signature it bears. It begins in true German fashion with a definition: "The object of the War Academy is to initiate into the higher branches of the military sciences a number of officers of the necessary capacity belonging to the various arms, and thus to enlarge and extend their military knowledge and to clear and quicken their military judgment.

"Side by side with this direct training for their profession, they are to endeavour, in proportion to

the requirements of the army, to penetrate deeper into certain departments of formal science, and to acquire mastery in speaking and writing one or two modern foreign languages."

The Academy in its scientific working—as an institution for teaching and study—is under the chief of the general staff of the army, who is responsible for the appointment of the teachers, for the selection of officers as students ("the call to the Academy"), for their dismissal in case of need, and for the permission to attend a particular course occasionally granted to officers not "called." For the discipline and management of the Academy, the director, a general, is responsible. He is assisted by one or two deputies and by a Board of Studies, over whose nomination the chief of the staff has a controlling influence. The duties of the board are to approve of the programmes of the several professors' courses, and to conduct the examinations at the beginning and at the end of the course. The complete course lasts three years, with a long vacation of three months each

summer. The appointment or "call" of students is in each case only for a year, its renewal depending upon diligence and good conduct. Any officer of five years' service not yet within four years from his turn of promotion to captain may apply for admission to the Academy, which is regulated by examination.

"The object of the entrance examination is to ascertain whether the candidate possesses the degree of general education and the knowledge requisite for a profitable attendance at the lectures of the Academy. The examination is also to determine whether the candidates have the power of judgment, without which there could be no hope of their further progress." The questions set are to be such as cannot be answered merely from knowledge stored up in the memory, and should test the capacity for clear, collected, and consistent expression. The military subjects required are tactics, formal and applied, the nature and construction of firearms, fortification and surveying. The general subjects

are history, geography, mathematics, and French. The paper in applied tactics must be as simple as possible. It must consist of a problem for solution, so as to oblige the candidate to make a decision and give his reasons for it. Each candidate must send in an essay written at home on one of a list of subjects announced some months beforehand. This is particularly intended to test his power of judgment and the degree of general education he has attained. It may be either in German or French. "Of those officers whose work is judged the best (by the Board of Studies) the director may submit to the chief of the general staff of the army, with a view to their being called to the Academy, the names of any number not exceeding a hundred. The chief of the staff communicates his decisions to the generals commanding army corps, who inform the officers concerned."

The *Order of Service* lays down that in the instruction given at the Academy certain practical applications shall never be omitted :—

"As a continuous commentary on the lectures, the students, under the guidance of their professors, are to visit the military workshops, technical institutions, and exercising grounds at Berlin and Spandau, and the fortifications of Spandau. They are to attend the exercises of the railway regiment, and make journeys of instruction on the military railway.

"The lessons in tactics, fortification, and transport are to be supplemented by practical exercises. Moreover, during a portion of the holidays after the first and the second year, each officer is attached for instruction to a regiment of one of the two arms to which he does not properly belong. Lastly, the third year's course is always to conclude with a three weeks' tour, for practical instruction in staff duties."

The *Order of Service* concerns itself no further with the scope and method of teaching, but decrees that these shall be determined by the order of teaching to be issued by the chief of the general staff of the army.

The *Order of Teaching* of the War Academy at present in force was issued by Count Moltke at the close of his career at the head of the Prussian staff.[1] Its value can be made clear only by a reproduction of its principal clauses. But a true judgment of an educational institution must be based upon the existence of a standard of comparison, an ideal which may be readily accepted as the measure of perfection. Such a normal type may be sought in the best University training of the present day, of which the spirit may perhaps be expressed in a few sentences.

A system of instruction, intended not for children but for men, which is not an attempt to make good the defects of early education, but addresses itself to minds already trained and disciplined, cannot be regulated mechanically. In all intelligent education the order of teaching is at once natural and rational. The subjects

[1] It is dated August 12th, 1888; Count Moltke's resignation as chief of the general staff of the army is dated in the *Gazette*, August 10th, 1888.

group themselves by their relation to the end in view, and the necessity of each new advance is evident to the student as soon as he is prepared for it. Such a course of study has a unity, and a completeness, which is of great significance in view of the formation of a type of character. The highest education, however, has features peculiarly its own. It is founded in the conception of science, not as a department of knowledge, but as "the proper method of knowing and apprehending the facts in any department whatever."[1] From this idea of method flow practical consequences. The student, as soon as maturity is approached, abandons the general realm of knowledge, and concentrates himself upon a single province,[2] in which, however, he becomes not merely a follower, but an independent worker, seeing and judging for himself and co-operating with his teacher in advancing the bounds of knowledge. Above all,

[1] Mark Pattison's *Suggestions on Academical Organisation, with Especial Reference to Oxford*, p. 307.

[2] Cp. Pattison's *Suggestions*, p. 262.

"it is not the substance of what is communicated, but the act of communication between the older and the younger mind, which is the important matter."[1]

From this educational standpoint, Count Moltke's *Order of Teaching* deserves a close examination. Its opening paragraphs must be given in full:—

"THE COURSE OF STUDY.

"In accordance with the objects for which the Military Academy is instituted, its course of study must aim at a thorough professional education; it must not lose itself in the wide field of general scientific studies.

"A sound formal education is the indispensable pre-requisite of a thorough military professional education. The deepening of the formal training, of the general intelligence and judgment, must therefore never be lost sight of during, and side by side with, the professional studies. Accordingly the course will be based upon the knowledge gained in the cadet corps, the military schools, the

[1] Cp. Pattison's *Suggestions*, p. 165.

school for artillery and engineers, and, as regards general knowledge, in the gymnasia. But a simple repetition of things already known, by way of refreshing the memory, cannot be sufficient. As the whole course aims at a higher culture, it must proceed independently, entirely free from the constraint of a school.

"The practical abilities of the officers, acquired during five years' service, offer in many respects a foundation upon which the teachers can build.

"METHOD OF INSTRUCTION.

"The instruction at the Military Academy begins with the elements of the various subjects, the object being, in the first instance, to strengthen and enlarge the grasp of what has already been learned. It proceeds, as the subjects develop, to more difficult matters, aiming, as its ultimate goal, at the thorough preparation of the officer for the modern requirements of war. The instruction in the formal sciences must for this purpose proceed in a different manner from that adopted in

the military subjects. The scientific teaching may take the form of lectures, which appeal merely to the comprehension and the memory of the hearer, while in the military subjects, everything depends upon the pupil learning to apply and to make the most of the knowledge which he acquires. It is, moreover, essential to bring about an active process of mental give and take between teacher and pupils, so as to stimulate the pupils to become fellow-workers. The awakening effects of co-operation like this will never be seen where the one only expounds, and the other only listens. But it will naturally be produced by the combination of clear exposition, with practice in the application to specific concrete cases of the knowledge gained. (The so-called 'applicatory method' of teaching. Cp. p. 187, note.)

"Accordingly, in the purely military subjects the lectures are, as far as possible, to be interspersed with practical examples, in which the details are explained upon the map. Moreover, in this department, there will be opportunities of

encouraging the pupils from time to time to deliver original addresses, the preparation of which should lead to the formation of independent opinions. The subjects of these addresses are to be military, and never merely scientific.

"If the teacher succeeds by the force of his word and his person in developing the mental powers of his pupils so that they eagerly look forward to the next year's course and are thoroughly roused to work for themselves, he has accomplished his task. For the Academy is not to give fragments of disconnected knowledge; in its course of teaching the necessity of every new subject must rest upon truths which the pupils have already perceived and made their own."

The general framework being thus erected, the *Order of Teaching* proceeds to review the several subjects[1] taught in the Academy, indicating in each case the reason why the particular subject is to be taken up, and the manner in which it is to be treated.

[1] List of the subjects taught in the Academy, with

The following paragraphs, which deal with the number of hours per week in each year's course devoted to each :—

MILITARY SUBJECTS.	1st year's course.	2nd year's course.	3rd year's course.
Tactics	4	4	2
Military history	3	4	4
Early history of armies	1	—	—
Construction and nature of weapons	3	—	—
Fortification	3	—	—
Means of communication	—	2	—
Military surveying	—	2	—
Military law	—	1	—
Military hygiene	—	1	—
Military geography	—	2	—
Duties of the general staff	—	—	4
Siege warfare	—	—	3
NON-MILITARY SUBJECTS.			
History	3	3	3
General geography	2	—	—
Administration and law, including international law	—	—	2
Mathematics	4	3	2
Physical Geography	2	—	—
Physics (Mathematical sciences as alternatives for language.)	—	2	—
Geodesy	—	—	3
Chemistry	—	—	2
French	6	6	6
or			
Russian	6	6	6

Every candidate for admission to the Academy is required to say whether he proposes to take up the subjects grouped as mathematical sciences, or a language, and if a language whether French or Russian.

four principal subjects of instruction, give a sufficient insight into the system:—

"TACTICS.

"The object of the tactical instruction, to which, above all, pre-eminent importance must be attached, is (1) to give the officers a thorough knowledge of the tactical regulations in force in our army and those of our great neighbours, and (2) by teaching and by setting problems to make them familiar with the endless diversity of the conditions of modern battle.

"The first year's course comprises (*a*) the outlines of the historical growth of our army organization and of our tactical forms; (*b*) our drill-books, order of field service and musketry instruction, so far as they are important for the use of the troops in the field; (*c*) thorough explanation of the forms of battle of the great European armies of to-day.

"Hand in hand with this formal instruction, the German regulations dealing with march, combat,

and rest must be illustrated by problems involving a small detachment of all arms. In these problems the principal stress is to be laid on the co-operation and mutual support of the various arms.

"In the second and third years' course only applied tactics will be taught. During the second year the duties of the infantry and cavalry division, with special regard to the issue of orders and the conduct of battle, must be thoroughly studied. The third year's course embraces the functions of an army corps acting as a portion of an army.

"The teacher must throughout endeavour to make his instruction suggestive by examples and by exercises on the map and in the open air. In this he will be successful in proportion as he makes use of the experiences of modern and of recent wars.

"MILITARY HISTORY.

"The lectures upon military history offer the most effective means of teaching war during

peace, and of awakening a genuine interest in the study of important campaigns. These lectures should bring into relief the unchangeable fundamental conditions of good generalship in their relation to changeable tactical forms, and should place in a true light the influence of eminent characters upon the course of events and the weight of moral forces in contrast to that of mere material instruments.

"These lectures must not degenerate into a mere succession of unconnected descriptions of military occurrences. They must regard events in their causal connections, must concern themselves with the leadership, and must at the same time bring out the ideas of war peculiar to each age. They will acquire a high value if the teacher succeeds in bringing into exercise the judgment of his pupils.

"This judgment, however, must never degenerate into mere negative criticism, but must clothe itself in the form of distinct suggestions as to what ought to have been done and decided.

"The lectures in the first year's course will treat of one or more of the campaigns of Frederick the Great; in the second year's course, campaigns of the Revolution or of Napoleon I.; and in the third year's course, campaigns of the period since Napoleon, especially those of the time of the Emperor William I.

"HISTORY.

"A thorough historical knowledge is a necessary part of general scientific education, and is also of manifold value in the professional life of an officer. Accordingly, the lectures which are to lay the foundations for it are continued throughout the three years' course. Their object is to show consecutively the general development of the human race in the successive stages of religious conceptions, of political and social forms, and in the results of science, art, and philosophy. All these phases of human progress are to be illustrated in the history of representative nations and individuals. Growing forms are to be

explained in connection with previous conditions, and finally the exposition must reach the present time, the ground upon which the officer's work is founded, and of which therefore he must understand the gradual historical growth.

"GENERAL STAFF DUTIES AND PRACTICE TOUR.

"This course is to deal with the functions of the general staff, and with the service of the general staff officer in peace and war. It includes, in any order preferred by the teacher—

"The historical development of our general staff.

"The corresponding arrangements of the other Great Powers.

"The subdivision of our army as based upon the Imperial Constitution, the military laws, and the conventions.[1]

"The office work of the general staff officer in its general outlines; the preparations for the

[1] The conventions are the agreements with Prussia by which the armies of Saxony, Bavaria, and Würtemberg are regulated.

manœuvres and for mobilization; the various constituent parts of the mobile army.

"Railways and transport.

"The duties of the general staff officer in the field, especially his position and functions in relation to the general command.

"The principles of the supply of armies in peace and war, the resources and means available for the purpose, and the methods employed.

"The war strength and composition of the armies of our great neighbours.

"The practice tour[1] with which the course terminates offers the opportunity of testing the capacity, knowledge, and endurance of each officer—of finding what he can do. Upon the basis of simple general and special ideas, usually framed by the teacher who conducts the exercise,

[1] The practice tour (*Uebungsreise*) is a sham fight, or rather a sham campaign, carried out in the district chosen for the purpose by officers without men. The troops are imaginary, but the officers taking part in the exercise are assigned to the several posts of command, and upon the basis of the imaginary situation, communicated by the umpire, work out all the necessary orders and dispositions.

the decisions of the general commanding and the general staff officer's share in the measures adopted will be illustrated. For this purpose it will be useful to form two sides, neither of which should, as a rule, exceed the strength of an imaginary infantry division on a war footing. The exercise should be so arranged as to occasion in turn practice in formal work such as may promote facility in the issue of orders and a knowledge of the arrangements of our army, discussions upon the spot of tactical situations, analyses of the effects upon the troops of dispositions given, and lastly, comprehensive examinations of the situation presented by the campaign or battle. Each officer who joins the tour should have the opportunity of grappling with as many as possible of these various kinds of difficulties."

The advocates of original research as the true instrument of higher education may not at first sight recognise their ideal in Moltke's *Order of Teaching*. They may smile at an academy where

natural science and history are taught in lectures appealing only to the intelligence and the memory. But the school at Berlin has a practical aim. It is a school of war, and in all that relates to war the German staff officer learns to apply that science which consists in the true method of apprehending. Moreover, the *Order of Teaching*, like all other German military regulations, does not fully reveal the thoroughness of the work executed in obedience to its precepts. In military history, for instance, it lays down that the third year's course is to deal with "campaigns of the time of William I." This phrase would be met by very superficial work. The letter would be fulfilled by a perusal of a *précis* of the campaigns of 1866 or of 1870. A study of one of these campaigns in the official history might seem completely to fulfil the requirements. But in practice the students at the Academy work out the selected campaign on a still wider basis. In the probationary year which follows the Academy course they are allowed access to the materials

from which the staff histories were written, and are expected to form their own judgment on the campaign from the study of the original documents themselves. This is the very ideal of the ideal professor of history.

There is no doubt another point of view from which the War Academy may be differently judged. A University, strictly speaking, is a school of free thought, and should give to those who have lived its life and breathed its spirit a view of the world, of nature and of humanity, of which the characteristic is freedom, spontaneity, independence. The man who in this sense has had a liberal education may be reactionary or progressive in his sympathies, may be democratic or authoritative in his leanings, but in any case if the University has done its work he will choose his own way. He will take his bearings for himself, and his thought will be conditioned by no ordinances and limited by no authority. At this intellectual freedom the War Academy does not aim. Its business is not with the progress of

humanity, but with the training of good servants for the King of Prussia. Whether this immediate object is a means to the higher end is a question for the historian in some future century.

CHAPTER III

THE ADVANCEMENT OF LEARNING

THE condition of success in the higher education is that the teacher should be himself a student. He should have in his subject that vital interest which comes of the endeavour to extend his mastery and to widen in his own particular branch the existing bounds of knowledge and achievement. The true teacher does not study his subject in order to be able to teach, but teaches because he is possessed by his subject. The benefits of teaching in the higher stages are therefore never one-sided. The pupil returns in a different form the help which he receives. For while the elucidation of principles acquires a peculiar freshness and force in the hands of an active pioneer of knowledge, the necessities of

exposition compel the investigator to keep his researches in contact with the system or body of doctrine which he expounds. This fundamental relation between teaching and research is realized in the connection between the War Academy and the great general staff.

It has already been shown how the great general staff is the organ by which during peace its chief collects and sifts the information upon which he bases his plan for the opening of a campaign, and how, when the operations have begun, the general staff, through its several ramifications, keeps him supplied with the data concerning his own army and that of the enemy which he requires from time to time in order to shape his further decisions.

All this is but preliminary or preparatory work. The decisive act is that by which the chief of the staff, from the information he has thus acquired, constructs a problem and designs its solution—puts to himself the question, What is now to be done? and answers it. Thus in the last analysis

the soul of the organism resides in the chief of the staff, and is manifested in the exercise of his peculiar faculties. It therefore becomes necessary to investigate the nature and origin of the qualities in virtue of which he is fitted for his post.

The *Order of Teaching* of the War Academy explains the method by which, in an elementary stage, the intellectual faculties requisite for command are developed and trained. The mental outfit of the ideal general is there analyzed into its constituent parts, which are classified according to their importance. The highest place is assigned to military history as "the most effective means of teaching war during peace."[1] Accordingly the study of military history, to which so large a space is assigned in the course of the War Academy, is pursued on a higher plane by the great general staff, which has a special department for its cultivation. In this historical work, and in the method

[1] Cf. Colonel Maurice in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* article "War," p. 345: "There does not exist, and never has existed . . . an 'art of war' which was something other than the methodic study of military history."

on which it is conducted, lies the secret of Prussian generalship.

The leading ideas of the school must be sought in the writings of Clausewitz,[1] the great exponent of the lessons learned in Prussia from the wars against Napoleon. Clausewitz distinguishes the mere narration of events, which gives at most the superficial relations of cause and effect, from their critical examination. In the critical method applied to military history he defines[2] three stages or operations. There is first the historical process proper, which has for its object the ascertainment of the facts so far as this is possible with the existing materials. Upon the basis thus furnished the military student will proceed to seek to understand the events in their relations

[1] It is interesting to note that Moltke was a pupil at the War Academy from 1823 to 1826, while Clausewitz was its director. The director, however, is not a teacher, and Clausewitz did not publish any of his principal works during his lifetime, so that the evidence does not prove a personal influence of Clausewitz upon Moltke.

[2] See Vom Kriege, *Hinterlassenes Werk des Generals Carl von Clausewitz*, Zweites Buch, Fünftes Capitel.

as cause and effect, and then when their real historical connection[1] has thus been determined will undertake to form a judgment as to the fitness of the means employed for the ends which it was sought to attain.

It is in this last process that the educational ue of military history is to be sought. The sian School aims not only at developing the of comprehension, but also at forming the character.[2] Accordingly it requires that the student should not merely make himself acquainted with the facts of a campaign, and with the general bearings of theory upon its events. He is expected in every case to form a definite conclusion as to what ought to have been done. He must clearly make up his mind what course

[1] Clausewitz is fully aware of the difficulty with which this critical study has to contend, that the real causes, the motives which led to the adoption of a particular measure, are in many cases unknown.

[2] It may be interesting to compare with what follows Foster's *Essay on Decision of Character*, Letter VI., in which the value of a "conclusive manner of thinking" is discussed.

he would himself have adopted in the circumstances which confronted the general whose operations he is studying.

The influence of the ideas of Clausewitz upon the historical studies of the general staff is clearly marked. In 1862 was published "The Italian Campaign of the year 1859, compiled by the Historical Department of the General Staff of the Royal Prussian Army." It is an open secret that this work was written by Moltke himself; and therefore it is worth noting that the preface describes the object of the book almost in the words of Clausewitz: "to ascertain as accurately as possible the nature of the events in Northern Italy during those few eventful weeks, to deduce them from their causes—in short, to exercise that objective criticism without which the facts themselves do not afford effective instruction for our own benefit." The history of the Italian campaign is a model of this positive criticism. At every stage the writer places himself in turn in the position of the commander of each side, and

sketches clearly and concisely the measures which at that moment would, in his opinion, have been the most appropriate. This is undoubtedly the true method of teaching the general's art, and the best exercise in peace that can be devised for those who have acquired its mastery.

In 1867 appeared "The Campaign of 1866 in Germany, compiled by the Department for Military History of the Great General Staff." This work is described in its preface as "drawn from the official reports of the Prussian troops, and intended in the first instance for their use. The description," the writer goes on to say, "is one-sided, because hitherto our late antagonists have not made disclosures such as would suffice to explain the motives of their action." A similar qualification may be applied to the account of the Franco-German war published by the great general staff. But both works supply, within the limits laid down by their authors, precisely the kind of history which is of the greatest value to the military student. The utmost pains have

been taken to secure a true statement of facts, and a clear exposition of the guiding motives on the Prussian or German side. Accordingly these works, and the account published more recently of the campaign of 1864 in Denmark, form rich storehouses of material for that "objective criticism" in the exercise of which lies the principal means of maturing the military judgment.

The great general staff began in 1883 to publish a series of historical monographs, of which the object is, in the case of subjects chosen from recent campaigns, "to throw light upon important questions relating to the art of command, in particular the mode of employing, and the performance possible to, the several arms; the service of security; minor warfare; fortification; the composition and preservation of armies." Those of the essays which take their subjects from earlier campaigns are intended "to enrich our insight into the nature of war, and to make possible a profounder and more correct judgment of events, and of the persons concerned in them."

The *Order of Teaching* of the War Academy describes the purpose of all these studies in military history. They are to lead to a knowledge of "the unchanging conditions upon which good generalship depends, in their connection with changing tactical forms." Before there can be good practice there must be a true theory, and a true theory can be acquired only from historical study pursued according to a sound method. Moreover, the theory can never have an independent existence; it must always derive its sustenance from fresh contact with the historical reality of which it is the abstract. It is like the giant Antæus, whose strength fails whenever he is lifted up from the touch of his mother Earth. On the other hand, historical study which did not yield a theory would be barren and useless.

This connection between history and theory finds expression in the tradition of the Prussian service. The general staff has been no less active in the production of theoretical works than in that of historical studies. But in the department

of theory each work is published on the responsibility of its author. There is no official theory;[1] only the theories of individual officers. A short account of the principal works which in this way emanated from the general staff during the reign of King William I. will show that the accepted body of military doctrine is almost entirely due to this one source.

In 1865 appeared as a supplement to a military newspaper an anonymous memorandum of eight pages, headed "Remarks on the Influence of the Improved Firearms upon Battle." This short essay, of which the authorship was after-

[1] The drill-books and regulations for field service embody an official theory, and it is, of course, indispensable that they should. But these books are not prepared under the responsibility of the general staff. The usual practice is to appoint a committee composed of a number of combatant officers of all ranks,—a general commanding an army corps, commanders of divisions, brigades, regiments, and battalions. They will, as a rule, have had the general staff training, but it is as experienced commanders that their judgment is asked. They prepare a draft code of regulations, which is first issued experimentally, and only adopted after full criticism and revision.

wards acknowledged by Moltke, gave a searching analysis, based upon exact historical data, of the modifications in the handling of troops on the battlefield to be looked for from the adoption of rifled cannon and breechloading rifles. The writer drew with a master's hand in a few strokes the characteristics of the physiology and psychology of the modern battlefield, as results of the new arms. The rifled gun can change its target without changing its position. Its long range and its accuracy, where the distance is known and the target visible, must prevent the enemy from employing large columns within a mile. The breechloading rifle requires soldiers carefully taught to shoot. But sharpshooting must be the exception. Decisive results on a large scale must be sought by reserving the fire for those short ranges at which errors in estimating the distance are immaterial. A strict control of the fire by the officers must prevent the waste of ammunition. The formation for firing will be the line two deep; that for manœuvring in the range of the enemy's

rifled guns will be a line of small columns, which can rapidly deploy, are easily handled, and admit of the full use of the ground for protection and concealment when in motion. The new firearms produce their full effect only on open ground. Accordingly the defender will seek positions such as are formed by a gentle slope of the ground offering a free and extensive field of fire. The attacker will seek for his advance the protection afforded by broken ground or by woods and villages. Though in the abstract the new weapons are favourable to the defence, so that a general on the defensive will try to force the enemy to attack him in a good position, the breechloading rifle, if it can be brought within effective range of the defender, will quickly bring about a decision. The defenders will not be able to sustain the hail of bullets, and if they attempt to charge with the bayonet will be effectually stopped by the rapid fire of the needle-gun.[1]

[1] The *précis* given in the text needs only the alteration

The views here expressed were put into practice, and proved to be sound, on the battlefields of 1866. The battle of Nachod, in which the Crown Prince's left column, emerging from the mountains, defeated the Austrian corps which tried to prevent its debouching, illustrated the leading ideas of Moltke's essay. The position was on the crest of a long slope, up which the Austrians attacked. The Prussian troops were handled in small columns, which deployed to resist by steady and rapid fire at short ranges the advance of the Austrian masses. After the war, a younger officer of the general staff, Major, afterwards Lieutenant-General Kühne, published a critical history of these early battles of the Crown Prince; and it is worth noting that he

of two words to bring it perfectly up to date. For "a mile" substitute "two miles," and for a "line two deep" substitute "line in single rank" = "line of skirmishers." For a recent and interesting but heterodox discussion of tactical questions the reader may be referred to *Ein Sommernachtstraum* (*Midsummer Night's Dream*), which is by a well-known officer, long a member of the general staff.

found the chief cause of success on the actual battlefields to have lain in the thoroughness with which the men had been taught to handle the needle-gun, and in the judgment with which the officers applied the small column for manœuvre and the deployed formations for firing. At Königgrätz itself was illustrated the view that the attack would find its advantage in broken or covered ground, for the decisive blow was prepared essentially by Fransecky's hard fighting in the wood of Maslowed.

After the war of 1870, the Prussian staff was for many years engaged upon its history, which was not complete until 1881. During this period the main business of military criticism was the sifting of that war, with a view to the improvement of theory, in other words to the better management of future wars. It has always been thought remarkable that this criticism should have been undertaken by the Germans themselves. The bulk of this work also was done by the general staff, in the shape of unofficial

publications by members of that body. Between 1870 and 1875 appeared the studies of Verdy du Vernois in *The Art of Command*, works which have exercised the profoundest influence on the military literature of our time, and which recall the efforts of Scharnhorst to teach, not a series of disconnected sciences, but a doctrine of the conduct of war.[1] Verdy's studies were based on his work in the historical department of the staff, where he was engaged on the records of both the great campaigns. In 1882 appeared the essay on *Strategy* of Blume, who had prepared for it by a strategical history, published in 1872, of the campaign of 1870 from the battle of Sedan onwards. In 1883 was published the brilliant popular work of Von der Goltz, *The Nation in Arms*, also the outcome of extensive historical

[1] Verdy's practice is to use the history of a campaign real or imaginary as a series of problems set to the student. This is called in Germany "the applicatory method," and its introduction is ascribed to General von Peucker, who was Director of Military Education in Prussia from 1854 to 1872.

studies.[1] All these writers were members of the Prussian general staff.

The tactical discussions which immediately followed the war were conducted in the main by writers whose experience had been gained, not on the staff, but in the actual command of fighting units. Boguslawski, Laymann, Tellenbach, and May had been company leaders on the French or Bohemian battlefields. But even here the influence of the staff was considerable. Bronsart von Schellendorf, who wrote the reply to May's *Tactical Retrospect*, Von Scherff, whose essays on formal tactics were very widely read at the time of their publication (1873), and Meckel, whose treatise on tactics in 1881 condensed into a systematic shape the substantial results of the ten years' controversy, were all officers of the general staff. Thus it is hardly too much to say that for more than twenty

[1] Von der Goltz's papers on Rossbach and Jena appeared in 1882.

years the Prussian general staff has done a great part of the military thinking of Europe.

The school through which a Prussian officer must pass before he can become a general has been described, at least in its most striking features. After five years' service as a lieutenant he has mastered the elementary duties, and assimilated the spirit of his class, with its ideals of work and intelligent but absolute obedience. In three years at the War Academy he has learned the nature of war, and acquired an insight into the conduct of the armies. At the same time he has been taught to deal in a practical way with practical questions, never allowing himself to shrink from the effort of forming a decision. He has now arrived at full maturity in frame, intelligence, and character, and spends the more active years of manhood in the higher studies of the great general staff, the executive and practical activities of command, and the comprehensive and instructive functions of the general staff of

the division or the army corps. During these years and in all these varied occupations his energies are put forth to their full extent, for advancement can only be secured by valuable work in each successive sphere. By the time he attains to general rank he has acquired a vast and varied experience; a practised eye, whose rapid and penetrating glance on the march and in the field seems to the layman almost miraculous; and a sureness and swiftness of judgment which decides without fail in an instant nine-tenths of the questions which arise in the exercise of command.

It is not contended that the system here described is perfect. Every system has its failures, and there is no possibility of entirely excluding the influences of favour or prejudice. But it may be asserted with confidence that the high average of practical ability secured in the superior officers of the Prussian army is due in the main to the practice of selection, the careful inspection by the superiors at every

stage, and to the mature wisdom by which the higher education of the general staff is directed.

The intellectual advancement of the officers of every army is confronted by a peculiar difficulty. The foundations of all military institutions are authority and obedience—principles which appear to be directly opposed to the free movement of intelligence. Every army is constantly in danger of decay from mental stagnation. Free criticism is liable to undermine discipline, and the habit of unconditional obedience too often destroys the independence of judgment without which moral and intellectual progress is impossible. The Prussian general staff has escaped from this dilemma by itself taking the lead in scientific progress, and organizing itself, in regard to all that concerns the business of national defence, as an institution for the advancement of learning.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF

IN the best work the man is more than the school. An ordinary man gives out no more than has been put into him. All his performances can be explained by his antecedents. But the best workers contribute from themselves an element which no analysis can adequately explain. A Newton or a Columbus, a Stanley or a Whitworth, has some unseen spring of force and insight.

A man of this stamp is required at the head of an army, and above all at the head of the organization entrusted with the design of operations.

The eve of a war is always accompanied by a great outburst of feeling, which in ninety-nine

men out of a hundred manifests itself as an excitement, a disturbance, interfering with the action of the judgment and distorting the view of persons and events. But this is the very time when the weightiest decisions must be taken. The provisional plan of concentration, the result of careful preparation in quieter times, has to be reconsidered in relation to the circumstances of the moment, and definitely settled and adopted. The judgment of the strategist must therefore be perfectly clear, uninfluenced by the emotions which he shares with the rest of his countrymen.

When the concentration has been ordered, and while the armies are in movement, come the first collisions, following one another in quick succession. Every day brings its surprises, even to the best informed and best prepared headquarters. The strategist's equilibrium must be disturbed as little by unexpected events as by the throbs of national emotion. He must prepare the way for a decisive battle.

No one knows better than he the terrible nature of the sacrifices which it will involve, and the stakes which are risked upon its issue. The lives of thousands will be lost; many thousands will be wounded; a mistake, miscalculation, or mishap may lead to defeat, with far-reaching, perhaps disastrous, consequences to his country. But under the weight of this vast responsibility the strategist's judgment must work smoothly and easily, like the compass in a storm, with no derangement of its delicate equipoise.

The man whose insight remains clear, whose judgment retains its even balance, when the greater part of mankind are stunned with the awe of great events, who remains true to himself while others are carried away by what seems an irresistible current, is not cast in the common mould. Ordinary men shrink into insignificance beside him. He is separated from the average officer by a gulf which no system of training can bridge. The inner calm which neither great occurrences, nor danger, nor responsibility can

disturb cannot be imparted, and no method can be prescribed for its acquisition.

The natural place for a leader of men is in the supreme command. Where a general of this type is at the head of an army he will himself superintend the work of strategical preparation such as is carried on in the office of the great general staff at Berlin. His chief of the staff will be a confidential assistant, whose main function will be to lighten for him the burden of detail, and the two men will stand to one another in the same relation as that which subsists between the general commanding an army corps and the chief of the general staff of the corps.

In Prussia the king is the head of the army, and there are good reasons why he should take the field in person—reasons which have not been weakened by his becoming also German Emperor. A king who keeps in his own hands the general direction of the Government cannot very well work out for himself the problems involved in

the strategical preparation of a campaign. His chief of the staff becomes his strategical adviser, alike during peace and war, and occupies a position of far greater importance than the assistant to a professional commander-in-chief. King William I., in the two great wars in which he took the field, reposed entire confidence in his chosen chief of the staff; and to the fine character which could do this without loss of dignity, as well as to the genius of Moltke, must be attributed the success with which in these wars the armies were directed. Moltke always attributed to the king the responsibility for the strategical decisions, and that quite correctly; but the king equally correctly regarded Moltke as their source, and attributed the success of the army to Moltke's "conduct of the operations."[1] The victories of Prussia in 1866, and of Germany under Prussian guidance in 1870, were due to the perfect understanding

[1] See the king's letters to Moltke of Oct. 28, 1870: "Ihrer . . . weisen Führung der Operationen," and of March 22, 1871: "Die unübertreffliche Leitung der Kriegsoperationen." Moltke, *Gesammelte Schriften*, i., 268, 9.

between the king and Moltke, a relation equally creditable to them both. It must not be forgotten, moreover, that the king exercised the supreme political as well as the supreme military authority, and that in the political department, too, he had in Bismarck a trusted adviser, the counterpart of Moltke. Thus was secured the harmony between the political and the military direction which is essential to great success in war. From the exceptional characters of the king, of Bismarck, and of Moltke, and from the equally exceptional relation between them, it would be rash to deduce a system, which in any case could be applicable only to the case of a king wielding the entire executive power.

The relation between the Commander-in-Chief and his chief of the staff must thus be regarded as a personal one, which will vary in its nature according to the characters and gifts of the two men. If the commander has in himself the necessary intellectual power, the chief of the staff should be of subordinate mould; if the commander requires

help in the conception of the operations, his assistant must be able to supply the initiative required. It is evident that the case in which the subordinate is the source of inspiration implies on the part of the commander a magnanimity far from common, and that, therefore, this arrangement must be considered to be rather the exception than the rule.

The element of permanent value in the Prussian system is the classification of duties according to which it regulates the division of labour. The whole authority of the Government is concentrated in the person of the king who is the head of the army. The king does nothing himself; every part of the work is done for him. The whole of the business of the army is divided up into compartments, so as to leave nothing over, and at the head of each compartment is an officer, who within it exercises the king's authority. The king's supervision does not appear to consist in his doing over again the work of these officers. They submit to him any important new

decisions which they propose, for they are responsible to him. But in case the king is unable to agree with the course proposed, there is reason to believe that the officer who suggests it retires, his place being filled by a successor who shares the king's view. In this way the authority of the king is maintained without impairing the initiative of his chosen and authorized assistants.

The actual command of the troops is in the hands of the generals commanding army corps and of the governors of fortresses; they account directly to the king, and all their subordinates to or through them. The general concerns of the army pass through one of three departments. Personal matters, such as the appointment and promotion of officers, retirements, rewards, and decorations go to the king's military cabinet, which has its own chief. Administrative affairs, that is questions of organization, equipment, armament, and fortification, belong to the ministry of war. The third department, that of the general staff, is principally occupied with the

strategical and tactical rather than with the administrative direction of the army. These various departments communicate directly with one another, a process which is facilitated by regulations leaving no doubt which of them upon any given point has the power to decide.

It thus appears that the institution of a general staff as one of the organs of the management of an army is based upon a true analysis applying equally to all civilized armies, and to all ordered warfare.

Military success requires primarily the intelligent direction against the enemy of the forces employed. The general staff originated as the auxiliary instrument of this direction, and as such is found, at least in a rudimentary form, in every army. In Prussia alone its full importance was understood, and it received an organization peculiarly suited to its purpose. The distinction was steadily kept in view between the all-important conduct of the operations against an enemy and the subordinate though necessary

business of administration.[1] Every function directly bearing upon the conception or design of the action of the army or of its principal parts against the enemy was assigned to the general staff, which thus became an enlargement of the commander's mind, serving to facilitate his performance of his most characteristic and most difficult duty. To the command thus strengthened the army was rendered pliable partly by means of a suitable subdivision into permanent autonomous bodies, and partly through the organization of the administrative side by side with the military services.

The army corps—managing its own internal affairs—having its adjutancy, its auditoriat, and its intendancy to supply its needs with the

[1] The function of the military administrator is to transform into military force so much of the resources of the State as the Government thinks proper. The process is continuous, and goes on during war as well as during peace. In Prussia it is conducted by the ministry of war, the channel or instrument by which the resources of the country are rendered available for employment against the enemy. Cp. p. 61.

assistance of and in connection with the ministry of war—is a body easily amenable to the strategical direction proceeding from a general centre. Thus the growth of the organ of strategical direction was necessarily accompanied by a corresponding development of other military institutions by which the perfect adaptability of the organism to the directing agency was attained and preserved.

The importance of the office of chief of the general staff of the army led to its being filled by selection. The confidence reposed in a chosen chief implied that he should be unhampered in the means of fulfilling his duties. He was therefore entrusted with the selection, and eventually with the training, of the officers for his own department.

The design of military operation involves the most complete knowledge of the military sciences, and the most perfect mastery of the military art. Accordingly the great general staff has become a school of generalship, from which have emanated

a series of masterpieces of military history and historical criticism, while its individual members have produced valuable works dealing with the various branches of the theory of the art of war.

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The common devotion of the general staff in all its branches to that portion of military activity which makes the most exacting demands upon the intellectual faculties as well as upon the will, finds its expression in the unity of the general staff through all the branches of the army. A consequence of the selection by which the corps is composed, and of the requirement of practical familiarity with the duties of leadership and with the life and spirit of the troops, is the constant passage of officers to and fro between regimental and general staff service, and their alternate employment in the various branches of the general staff itself.

The general staff, in short, is the brain, and something more than the brain, of the army.

"Its chief and his 200 officers prepare beforehand for all probable campaigns; they follow the progress of the armies of their neighbours at the same time that they study the several theatres of war; they work out together the methods of war; they familiarize themselves with the machinery of the army, bringing their influence to bear upon all questions of organization and training; they form an organism whose arteries spread all through the army, gathering practical experience and carrying wherever they go the same continuous stream of principles and of doctrines."[1]

[1] *Revue militaire de l'Étranger*, vol. xxxii. p. 261.

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