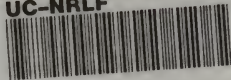


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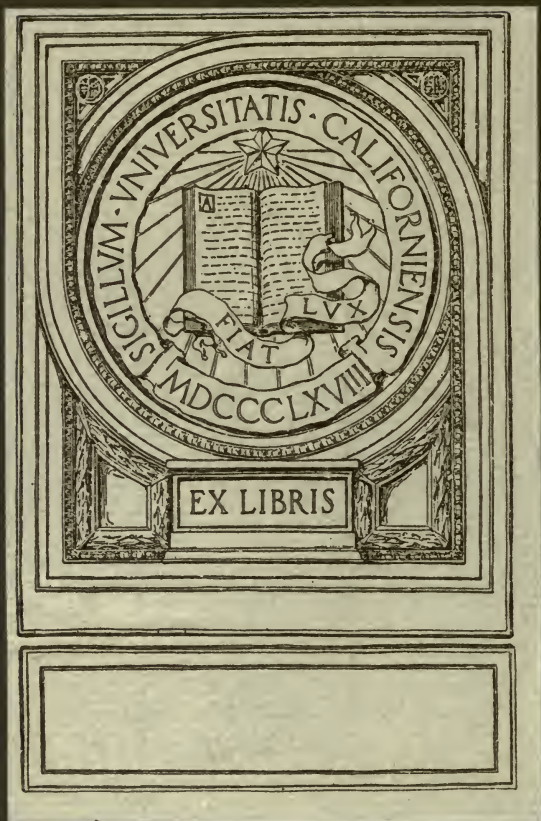
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A LECTURE
DELIVERED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
MAY 10, 1913

BY

SPENSER WILKINSON

CHICHELE PROFESSOR OF MILITARY HISTORY
FELLOW OF ALL SOULS COLLEGE

Price One Shilling net

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THE EARLY LIFE OF MOLTKE

DURING the winter of 1884-5 I had occasion to be a frequent visitor to the German Reichstag in Berlin. The house in those days had the form of a Greek theatre. On the stage, which was raised six or seven feet above what in an ancient theatre would have been the orchestra, were the seats and tables of the President and the ministers, and a stair led down from the stage to the orchestra. The members' seats were arranged in rising tiers round the semicircular floor of the orchestra, which was vacant except for the reporters' table.

There had just been a general election, so that it was a new Reichstag. At the first meeting, as soon as members were in their places, a tall officer in uniform walked up to the President's table and stood erect, in an easy attitude, behind it. The buzz of talk was suddenly hushed and the officer said, 'The law requires that at the first meeting of a new Reichstag the oldest member should preside. I was born on the 26th of October, 1800. If no other member announces that he was born before that date I shall take the chair.' After a short pause he sat down at the table and opened the proceedings for the election of a President. That oldest member was Field-Marshal Count Moltke, chief of the great general staff of the army. A few days later I passed him in the corridor of the House, and saw a face that I shall never forget. The skin was wrinkled and tanned like leather, so that it seemed like the mask of a mummy, a suggestion not belied by the smooth-lying brown hair. The features

were grandly sculptured. The firm chin and set lips had the strength of granite, and from under the high forehead looked out piercing grey eyes that seemed to sum me up in a glance, without interrupting the Olympian serenity of the mind that shone through them. I received the impression of having seen on that face the experience of infinite time combined with a power of which I had never met the like.

A few weeks later there was a great debate on colonial policy. Prince Bismarck, then Chancellor of the Empire, was replying, as I took my seat in the gallery, to some of his critics. When he sat down, Herr Windhorst, the clerical leader, rose to continue the attack. A master of irony, he began with a compliment. 'The Chancellor,' he said, 'to whom, under God, we owe the existence of the German Empire'—and proceeded to dissect the Chancellor's recent action. When he ended, Bismarck again rose to reply. 'If', he said, 'the existence of the Empire is due to the services of any one man, it is not to me, but to the Field-Marshal who stands on the floor of the House, that the gratitude of the nation is due.' Moltke was standing in the orchestra leaning easily against the wall that supported the stage from which Bismarck was speaking. Bismarck's reply to Windhorst lasted perhaps a quarter of an hour. At its close, instead of resuming his seat, he went down the steps on to the floor of the house, turned round and walked up to Moltke, to whom, with a ponderous bow, he offered his hand. Moltke, without otherwise moving a muscle, grasped the offered hand, and by a gentle inclination of his head, accepted the Chancellor's homage.

Bismarck was the first statesman of his age, perhaps one of the greatest of all time. Yet, to spectators of the scene which I have described, it was manifest that

Bismarck was in presence of a finer spirit and a nobler soul than his own. I shall attempt to-day to trace in outline the making or growth of that soul—for is not a man's life the making of himself?

Helmuth Freiherr or Baron von Moltke came of a German family of old nobility. His ancestors had had the same country house for two hundred and fifty years, but it had passed out of their hands on the death of his grandfather. His father, a Prussian lieutenant, married, in 1797, the daughter of a well-to-do Lübeck merchant, at the same time resigning his commission at the desire of his father-in-law. He tried his hand as a gentleman farmer, and in 1800, when his third son, the Field-Marshal, was born, was living at Parchim in Mecklenburg. In 1805 he bought an estate in Holstein, of which the owner was required to be or to become a Danish subject. While he was rebuilding the house, his wife and children were living at Lübeck, where, in 1806, their house was plundered by the French invaders. Partly by reason of his unbusinesslike ways, and partly because of the distress caused by the French conquest of Prussia, Baron Moltke became impoverished, and had to give up housekeeping. His three elder sons were sent in 1809 as boarders to a clergyman in Holstein, and in 1811 to the cadet school at Copenhagen. Of his cadet life the Field-Marshal afterwards said, 'It was truly a Spartan education. The cadets were treated far too strictly. The tone was very hard; of love or sympathy there was no trace. The institution did not give the cadets a careful moral bringing up. There was a visible mistrust of them which was extraordinarily injurious in its effects. The pupils who passed through this school without damage had had a hard, but a hardening, schooling. Yet it is right to say that it produced soldiers who thought in every

respect as soldiers. The one attractive feature was the feeling of camaraderie and the deep inviolable loyalty of the cadets to one another from the highest to the lowest.' The young Moltke was most diligent and well conducted. At seventeen he passed the examination at the head of his class and became a page to the King of Denmark, and at nineteen passed fourth in the final examination for a commission. He was then gazetted second lieutenant in the Oldenburg Infantry Regiment, where he quickly won the goodwill and respect of his commanding officer.

Little is known of this early life except that it was a time of continuous hardship, for the Moltke boys had no relatives and hardly any friends at Copenhagen, and Moltke afterwards said that as a boy he had had no education, but only thrashings. We know that as a boy of nine he read the *Iliad* in Voss's translation, and that he thought few books had had greater influence on his mind. The days of his boyhood seem to us now at an infinite distance away. When he was born, Napoleon, First Consul, was presiding at the Council of State at Paris, where he had come back from his victory of Marengo. One of Moltke's earliest recollections must have been the sack of Lübeck by the French. In 1813 he went home for the holidays in a Danish ship which just escaped capture by an English brig. The campaigns of Moscow, of Leipzig, and of Waterloo would be the great events of his boyish recollection.

At twenty-one, while on leave, he went with his father to Berlin, and had his first sight of Prussian troops. An older relative, hearing that he was diligent and bent on making his way, wrote to him to suggest that he would get on better in the large Prussian army than in the tiny army of Denmark. The idea appealed to him,

and he asked and obtained permission to resign his Danish commission. His commanding officer, the Duke of Holstein-Beck, in forwarding the acceptance of his resignation, wrote, 'My dear Moltke, Let me in sending you the enclosure say how sorry I am to lose in you a young officer from whom I promised myself great things.'

[In 1822 he passed the hard examination required for a Prussian commission, and his certificate or testamur was signed by the president of the examining board, Field-Marshal Count Gneisenau.] He was appointed second lieutenant in a battalion stationed at Frankfurt on the Oder, where he had to live on his pay of two guineas and sixpence a month—less than eighteenpence a day. Yet he managed to continue his studies, and at twenty-three passed the entrance examination for the Allgemeine Kriegsschule or Staff College, of which Clausewitz was director. 'I was interested chiefly', he wrote in later years, 'in the lectures of Major von Canitz on Military History, those of Professor Ritter on Geography, and of Professor Ermann on Physics. As my parents had lost their property, I had no allowance, but I managed to get lessons in foreign languages.' In 1825 the half-starved studious lieutenant fell ill and had to be sent to Salzbrunn in Silesia to drink the waters. From Salzbrunn he wrote to his mother: 'I received your dear letter. It is always a joy to me to have a glimpse into your quiet home. How different is my situation! Yes, you are right, that the inner peace which you, thank God, now deservedly enjoy, is the only true happiness for which we should strive. And how often have I longed for it with a sore heart when disappointments, insults and enmity have depressed my spirits. But at my age this is morbid. Not till the storm has been weathered can rest give happiness, and not till then is it allowed. Here

I am gaining new strength and life. Fate has given me so little occasion for complaint, that complaints would be unpardonable did not my physical disposition make me peculiarly susceptible of sad impressions. But I may hope, after their good effects so far, that the waters here will do me good service. So with great courage I will venture on the thorny course on which far from you all and alone I am chasing my fortune. May I win it for you all!

‘Here there is a girl who well deserves to be your daughter-in-law, a Countess Reichenbach. She is beautiful and well bred; she would be the apple of your eye. But, alas, she is poor.

‘The exact opposite are some Polish acquaintances very rich and aristocratic. I do not know whether you ever had occasion to meet Poles. Nothing can be more agreeable. You are no sooner introduced than acquainted and intimate. They overwhelm you with kindness and politeness. They are all like that—cultivated, good company and merry. But I should not like to give you a Polish daughter-in-law.’

One of the Polish ladies, with daughters, invited him to her house at Rusko near Krotoschin, and before starting to go there he wrote to his mother: ‘I am setting out for Poland with 13 thalers (39 shillings). But I hope to manage on that till I get back to Glatz, where I can borrow the money for the journey back. However much I may have to stint myself afterwards in Berlin, I shall never regret it, as I have seen so much for so little.’

The letter of 1825, from which this is an extract, just lifts a corner of the veil from the young man’s battle of life. His hard schooling had made him reserved, and in it he had acquired a rare self-control which extended not only to his acts, but to his words. Throughout his life,

and in all the fairly voluminous correspondence which is preserved, there is no trace of indiscretion, even in thought. In these years he was battling with great privations, of which his letters give a slight indication, but he never allows chill penury to freeze the genial current of his soul. To his mother he discloses the passion which he has to overcome. We know in another way how profoundly it affected him. After his stay at the Polish country house he returned to the Staff College, from which he passed out with distinction in the next year, 1826, and returned to his regiment. There at Frankfurt he wrote and published anonymously a short story entitled *The Two Friends*, in which his love for the young Countess Reichenbach finds its expression, as did Goethe's for Charlotte in *Werther's Sorrows*; but Moltke's story ends happily, and proved that in spite of his disappointment he had acquired that peace of mind for which at Salzbrenn he had been struggling. He never lost it. For the rest of his life he is imperturbable. In all his letters, from this time on, there is a play of quiet humour which reveals a mind at one with itself, and at ease in the world. His business is self-education on the basis of doing as a matter of course what he has to do, and of doing everything he undertakes with his whole power. In 1827 he was put in charge of the Divisional School at Frankfurt on the Oder, a cadet school for training officers. It was hard work, but he acquitted himself to the satisfaction of his superiors. He added to his income by giving private lessons, for his literary ventures proved unremunerative. In 1828 he writes to one of his sisters: 'You have never written to me about my story, *The Friends*. To think what flowed from my immortal pen during my illness, and to think that the publisher cheated me of the honorarium!' In 1828 he was told off to the

topographical survey, on which he was occupied for three summers, and produced the greater part of seven sheets of the map of Prussia, covering districts in the Provinces of Silesia and Posen. During the field work of the survey he was a welcome guest at country houses, where his distinction of character and manners won him life-long friends. More than sixty years afterwards an old lady, who had been the daughter of one of these houses, wrote to say how sorry they had been to part with their amiable young guest; how he had told them of his lonely life in Berlin, and that he had spent Christmas Eve wandering through the streets to comfort himself by seeing the Christmas-trees lighted in the houses.

During these winters he was working in the topographical office, and taking lessons in Russian and in dancing, but he found time for hard study, devoted chiefly to the effort to understand what was going on in the world. It was the epoch of the separation of Holland from Belgium, and in 1830 he wrote an essay on 'The Relations between Holland and Belgium, from their Separation under Philip II to their Reunion under William I'. [To his mother he wrote: 'The work has cost me no little trouble, and I have read more than a thousand pages of quarto and four thousand of octavo. To establish a general proposition, I have had to read through volumes, and in the end the reader will probably skip the sentence; but in any case I have gained a pretty good knowledge of the history of a country into which events may easily draw a Prussian army.'] In this year of the July revolution, there were disturbances not only in the West but in the East. Speaking of the troubles in Belgium and in Poland, Moltke writes to his mother: 'No state in Europe, except perhaps Austria, has at this moment such ready armies as Prussia. Prussia is without conceit or exaggera-

tion the only power which, having an army provided with all the material of war down to the smallest detail, is so sure of the feelings of its subjects that it could carry on an offensive war ; without doubt at this moment our king has the fate of Europe in his hands.' The next year a second essay gave an account of the ' Internal Conditions and Social State of Poland ', a subject which his long stays in Polish country houses and his knowledge of Russian qualified him to treat. In January 1832, Moltke writes to his mother that he has begun a translation of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 6,000 pages and twelve octavo volumes. ' This herculean task is to bring me from the bookseller 500 Thalers (£75) on publication, and 250 (£37 10s.) more after 500 copies have been sold. I shall have to work long before I receive anything, but the sum of money is worth the trouble. If there are no interruptions I hope, with diligence, to have finished in a year and a half. I employ every free quarter of an hour. The work gives me not the least difficulty, but rather pleasure, but it costs so much time that I have none left for myself, especially as I am very busy at the office of the General Staff. However, I am well and happy, for after all work, hope, and health are all that are required for contentment.' Two years and a half later, he was at work on the eleventh volume, but in the third year the publisher failed, and all that Moltke's lawyers were able to obtain for him was 166 dollars (£24 18s.), and the translation has never been seen again. Meanwhile, in March 1833, Moltke was promoted first lieutenant, and appointed to the General Staff, by which his pay was raised to £6 18s. a month with small extras, while his position obliged him to keep his own servant and two horses. About this time he writes to his mother : ' Almost without wishing it, I find

myself in the whirlpool of society, from which escape is not so easy. My day is filled up with all sorts of occupations. In the mornings I work at an estimate of the strategical importance of the Thuringian forest, or at a history of the Campaign of 1762 ; the forenoon is given to office work ; at noon one must produce one's horse on the promenade, which, in the fine weather we are now enjoying, is really brilliant. After dinner—over which from time to time I fall asleep—I study Political Economy, though my own economy gives me trouble enough. In the evening, the hair-dresser comes to arrange my head in the latest fashion, and at eight there is a ball at this Prince's or that Minister's. Here I stay just as long as I find agreeable partners, and often before going to bed I translate a few more pages of Gibbon. In the last fortnight I have been to eleven balls, and danced at each of them the whole time I was there, and am very well into the bargain. Last Saturday I was commanded to the king to a *déjeuner dansant*. These parties are small and select'—and Moltke describes the ceremony.

In 1834 he was sent on a secret military mission to the Italian Riviera, and afterwards to Copenhagen, and discharged his duties, whatever they were, so well that he was rewarded with the Order of St. John, a very high distinction confined to the nobility. In 1835 he was promoted captain, and took part in the Staff Tour of the Great General Staff, of which the scene was the district bordering on Saxony. Then he attended the royal manœuvres in Silesia, and finally the great review of the Russian and Prussian armies at Kalisch on the Polish border. Though he had been so many years second lieutenant, his promotion to captain came unusually early, so that he had caught up the four years which he seemed to have sacrificed by his early service in Denmark.

Moltke was now thirty-five—*nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*: his effort to build himself up to the full stature of a man had not been unsuccessful. A skilled surveyor, the master of five languages, deeply read in history, a lover of music and the theatre, a connoisseur in fine art, moving easily in the best society, and a favourite at Court, his various accomplishments concealed rather than revealed the fact that he was, as far as possible at his age, the master of his profession. This could be inferred from the position he had won, and is confirmed by the official records, but it does not appear from his letters, which pass over his daily tasks as something to be taken as a matter of course.

It would be consistent with truth if the story here broke off and pointed to results :

‘The courtier’s, soldier’s, statesman’s eye, tongue, sword’—

the tongue, be it noted, under bit and bridle—

‘The glass of fashion and the mould of form.’

But Moltke’s design of self-construction was far from complete. He meant to see the world that he had studied. The exercise that gave him the most delight was to follow the events of history upon the scenes where they had been enacted, and to enter into the life of mankind by the work—and play—of the historical imagination. There is perhaps no better propaedeutic for the statesman.

Accordingly, after the manœuvres of Kalisch, he obtained six months’ leave for a tour which was to take him to Constantinople, Athens, and Rome, and to enable him to review upon the actual scenes that course of history with which he was familiar. Such a tour was a considerable enterprise in those pre-railway days. In October he wrote to his mother from Vienna. ‘Here’, he said, ‘all the ways bring you to St. Stephen’s, and every morning I remain

a few minutes standing beneath the mighty vaults and between the tall slender pillars. We have ascended the tower ; 757 steps lead up to the so-called Seat of Starhemberg—a little bench in a niche—from which you survey the broad Marchfeld, and look across the plain towards Moravia and Hungary. There sat with heavy heart old Starhemberg and watched the ever-nearing forces of the Turks. The plain was covered far and wide with their tents and horses ; the great heavy chain weighing 5,000 tons, which now hangs in the Imperial arsenal, was forged in order to bar the Danube ; the Austrian army had been destroyed ; the Imperial Court had fled to Linz ; the Empire, as usual, was divided against itself, and no help to be hoped from it. In those days Vienna had none of the suburbs which to-day cover ten times the area of the town itself. The same wall that still stands, with one or two small outworks on one side, was the bulwark of Christendom. Hunger and sickness had brought the unhappy town to the last gasp ; a few days, even a few hours, and the Crescent would glitter on the spire of St. Stephen and Islam would triumph in the capital of the Christian world. What a different Europe there would have been ! In that critical moment the horsemen of Sobieski decided the fate of Europe.’

The traveller’s way went down the Danube to Orsova and thence to Bucharest, and further, with an escort of Tartars, over the Balkans to Constantinople, where he was made at home at the Prussian Embassy. After a few weeks he was presented to Chosref Pasha, then the right-hand man of Sultan Mahmoud II. The old Pasha, in the course of conversation through a dragoman, told the Prussian officer that he had in his possession the apparatus of a *Kriegsspiel* or War-game, and asked him whether he understood it and could explain it. On Moltke’s replying that he could, the

Pasha begged him to prolong his stay at Constantinople, to explain to him the mystery, so that on a second visit Moltke improvised a manœuvre on the map between two Turkish generals. Then the Pasha applied through the Ambassador for an extension of Moltke's leave, in order that he might have the benefit of the Prussian officer's advice in military matters. The three weeks' stay in Turkey which had formed part of Moltke's plan was destined to become four eventful years. He took lodgings in an Armenian house by the Bosphorus at Arnaut Kjöi, and set to work to learn Turkish. His skill as a surveyor was appreciated by the Pasha and the Sultan, who employed him in an endless series of reconnaissances. He explored and surveyed the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and undertook the enormous task of an accurate survey of Constantinople and its neighbourhood. In 1836 he visited the Troad, where he fixed upon the hill of Bunarbashi as the probable site of Troy, went to Broussa, to Smyrna, and to the Peninsula of Gallipoli. In 1837 he accompanied the Sultan upon tours through European Turkey, during which he made plans of Schumla, Varna, Silistria, Tirnova, and half a dozen other historical sites. The Sultan asked for and obtained four more Prussian officers, and in 1838, with a view to his quarrel with Mehemet Ali, his rebellious Egyptian vassel, sent them all as advisers to his generals in Asia Minor. Moltke and Mühlbach were sent to Hafiz Pasha, who had collected at Kharput, on the Upper Euphrates, an army destined in the first instance to keep in order the rebellious Kurds. Moltke and Mühlbach went by sea to Samsun, and then rode across the country by Amasia, Tokat, and Siwas, to the head-quarters at Kharput. Moltke's first task was a series of reconnaissances on a great scale, in which he always surveyed his route as he went, and, wherever

possible, made plans of interesting or important sites. In this way he explored and laid the foundations for a map of an enormous area, stretching from Kharput eastwards to Mosul, a distance equal to that from Dresden to Vienna, and westwards as far as Konia, the distance from Dresden to Amsterdam. Twice he explored the gorge of the Euphrates on a raft of inflated skins, and in the same fashion descended the Tigris from Diarbekr to Mosul. On this journey came his first military exploit ; he conducted the attack of a Turkish force on a Kurd castle, believed to be an impregnable stronghold. He reconnoitred before he attacked, and the result of his bringing up guns was the prompt capture of the fortress. One or two of his letters will give you an idea of Moltke at this period.

To Captain Fischer.

‘DIARBEKR, April 12, 1838.

‘A few days ago on a clear starry night I stood upon the ruins of the ancient Roman fortress of Zeugma. Far below in a rocky ravine glistened the Euphrates, and its rushing filled the silence of the evening. Then passed by in the moonlight Cyrus and Alexander, Xenophon, Caesar and Julian ; from this same point they had seen beyond the stream the Empire of the Chosroes, and seen it exactly as I saw it, for nature is here of stone and does not change. I determined to sacrifice to the memory of the mighty Roman people the golden grapes which they first brought to Gaul, and which I had carried from the western to the eastern border of their wide empire. I flung the bottle down from the height ; it dived and danced and glided along the stream towards the Indian Ocean. But you rightly guess that I had first emptied it ; I stood there like the old Toper :

trank letzte Lebensgluth
 und warf den heil'gen Becher
 hinunter in die Fluth.
 Ich sah ihn stürzen, trinken
 des Euphrat gelbe Fluth,
 die Augen thäten mir sinken—

I drank never another drop.

The bottle had had one fault ; it was the last.

'MALATIA, Nov. 3, 1838.

' At Newschehr I made the acquaintance of a notability of this district who bears the title of Kara Jehennah or Black Hell. This man, whose real name (I fancy Yussuf or Joseph) hardly any one knows, had played so bloody a part in the extermination of the Janissaries, and had then and since then shown such firmness, cruelty, courage and violent passion, that every one avoided him and his name was mentioned only in a deferential whisper. My Tartar twice asked me whether I really intended when I reached Newschehr to stay with the Müsselim.—“ My master wants horses at once.”—“ Your master no doubt can wait.”—“ You don't know my Bey, he is an important man.”—“ My Bey is quite another sort ; have you never heard of Kara Jehennah ? ” This dialogue had just passed between my Tartar and the servants when I rode into the court-yard. The Müsselim was at prayer, they said, and I couldn't see him. I strolled into a pretty mosque close by, with the most delicate minaret I have ever seen. When I came back I was told that the Müsselim-Effendi had not yet got up. Now I know my Turks well enough to see that nothing was to be gained by waiting or yielding, so I at once announced in a loud and confident tone to the assembled crowd of Kavasses and Agas that I meant to be brought to the Müsselim without delay, and that I was not accustomed to be received in the court-yard.

Without more ado I walked up the steps and into a room where the Bey almost immediately appeared. He was the most imposing personality I have ever come across. The Prince of Hell and I met like two men who are equally anxious not to yield any of their dignity. His fine face seemed to announce that peace or war was not yet decided in his mind. I for my part took not the slightest notice of his presence. I let my people take off my heavy riding boots, according to the custom of the country, and then, covered with the dust of all the districts I had passed, walked up to the uppermost seat. After I was established there; but not till then, I laid my hand on my breast and saluted my host with the solemn "Merhabah", and the Bey, to give me a specimen of his European breeding, answered "Addio". After the first puffs of the pipe which I had passed to me we exchanged a few phrases. The Müsselim asked me whether I knew him. "I have never seen you, but I have heard of you." "What have you heard?" "That you are a good gunner and are called Kara Jehennah." Not every man would have taken as a compliment a title derived from Hell, but it unlocked my Bey's heart. Breakfast and coffee were brought at once, and, to the delight and astonishment of my Tartar, first-rate horses, with which we hastened on the same day sixteen hours to Akserai, which we reached in the blackness of night.'

'MALATIA, April 12, 1839.

'Just now, when we should like to make use of it, the Euphrates has risen fifteen feet, and the Pasha was very anxious to know whether under these circumstances it could be navigated, and whom he should entrust with the somewhat precarious attempt. The most experienced Keletschi or steersmen declared it to be quite

impossible to pass the rapids, as even with a favourable condition of the water two attempts out of three had failed. At dinner the Pasha suggested that I might try my hand, so I rode the same evening to Ecebeh on the Murad, where my Kelek or raft was quickly built by torchlight, and was launched soon after midnight. Towards sunrise I reached Kymyrhan, where the awkward places begin. It certainly was bad. What had been rapids were now a waterfall, so that before the Jilan Degirmeni, I had to resolve my ark into its component parts, to have poles, skins, and baggage carried overland, and have them put together again below the cataract, losing two hours over the operation. It rained heavily, but that seemed to be a minor detail, as we were independently well soaked by the waves, which in many places poured over us. Above Telek the raft had to be taken to pieces again as it was impossible to think of passing through the waterfalls and the whirlpool. It was pitch-dark when we landed at Telek, where we stayed for the night and dried ourselves as well as we could. We had made in six hours a journey which afterwards required four-and-twenty by land. With me were a Colonel of Engineers, Mehmet-Effendi, and an attendant. They explained that they did not feel called upon to accompany me further, as they had had enough, a statement which I did not gainsay. Besides an Aga of the Pasha's, I had four Keletschi on board and took a fifth from the village as a pilot. But next morning, as I was embarking, my Tschusch or sergeant also announced that he could not have the honour. I told him without more ado to take his place unless he wished to be sent back in fetters to Malatia. The poor devil explained that he would go with me through the fire on land, but water was none of his business; but when he saw that it

must be, he made the best of it. I soon felt I should have been sorry to have forced him, for we had hardly pushed off from the bank when off went the raft like an arrow, and I think we hardly took 10 or 15 minutes to go an hour's journey. The Murad, which higher up had been 250 paces across, narrows to 100 and to 80 paces and even less. The whole mighty mass of water rushes headlong through this funnel, pouring over blocks of stone that cause powerful whirlpools and waves. In some places the water leaps up five feet into the air like a sheaf, while the boiling stream shoots past on each side. The waves literally broke over our heads, and the raft was sometimes under water. But the sheepskins always found their way up again, and the only danger was that the raft might upset in going up and down the short high waves. Steering was out of the question; two of the Keletschi fell overboard, but they were tied with ropes; there was the greatest confusion among the rest of the furniture and the raft went on about a mile *istedi gibi*—"as it thought fit"—until Allah guided us aside into a whirlpool and there twirled us round and round a dozen times, which enabled us to come to ourselves again. The oars were now plied with every exertion, but it seemed for a long time doubtful whether we should reach the land or be carried by the stream to a fresh cataract. The poles which form the framework of the raft are $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 inches thick, but three of them were broken; four of the sheepskins had burst and two had been carried away. At last we happily neared the shore. Suleiman-Tschausch, to escape from the situation, jumped, like William Tell, at the risk of his life, on to a projecting spur of rock. There he fell down, turned towards the Caäba and raised his hands in prayer. Aly Aga vowed to sacrifice a lamb as Kurban.

' I was convinced from beginning to end of the whole affair that we should probably get safely through, for there is no harder craft than the Kelek. Of course you must make up your mind to sit from head to foot in water, which at the season of the melting snows is not exactly delicious ; but having once made a beginning I felt a great interest in carrying the business through to the end—there could hardly be anything worse in store. I therefore resolved to send back the " Kalabalik ", and offered two of the Keletschis a purse if they would try again with me alone, for at the pace the stream was going we could have been by midday at Gerger below the cataracts.—" Not for Venice ! " No one would go on with the game.'

The country once explored, Moltke set to work and trained the army. By the spring of 1839 it was the best-drilled force a Sultan had ever had, but there was no discipline and the Kurd soldiers, brought in by the press-gang, had no love for the Turks. Moltke had to move the camp from a site where disease was destroying the army to a healthier place which he had selected. Then it was brought down to the plain to a position of Moltke's discovery. Ibrahim Pasha with his Egyptian army must aim at moving through Syria and crossing the Taurus to strike through Konia towards Constantinople. If Hafiz with his Turkish army was posted at Biradshek on the Euphrates the Egyptian army could not pass it without exposing its own rear and its communications. So the Egyptians must attack. Biradshek was a strong position with both flanks covered by the river. In such a position the worst army could defend itself. This was the plan—the precursor of Moltke's later plan for the defence of Berlin against an Austrian army. But when Ibrahim's army was as yet a long way off the Mullahs

(preachers) persuaded Hafiz to go out from his secure position and put his army at Nisib, where its flanks were unguarded and there was only a poor position for the front. Moltke's remonstrances were unheeded. Ibrahim came up and camped in front of the Turkish position. After examining it he decided to march round the Turkish army and strike it from the rear. Moltke then urged Hafiz to fall back to his good position by the river. The Pasha said that to retire would be a disgrace, whereupon Moltke on the spot resigned his position on the staff and asked for his passport—you remember the old Turkish Tessereh—to Constantinople. But he would not leave the Pasha in the lurch, and took charge of the artillery, with which he bombarded the Egyptians during their movement. He helped the Pasha to execute a change of front, and when the Egyptians advanced directed the artillery. But as soon as the Egyptians attacked the Turkish army ran. Moltke and his two friends had no choice but to ride away, and they rode in one spell without food for themselves or their horses ninety miles to Marasch. A month later one of the Prussian officers who had been through the campaign wrote :

' Moltke has behaved in all circumstances as a *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*. Though ill and by rights in bed he was never wanting when needed. He was always with every reconnaissance, daring and dashing. The Turks looked on him as a sort of legendary hero. Before the approach of Ibrahim's army he had been six weeks ill of dysentery in his tent. On that news, however, he got up at once and has had no rest ever since. I cannot understand how he has endured the fatigues.'

When the Prussian officers rejoined their now armyless General they were met by the news of Sultan Mahmoud's death and their own letters of recall. They rode back to

the coast and took steamer to Constantinople, where Moltke reported on the campaign and convinced the new Sultan that Hafiz Pasha was not to blame.

His Turkish experiences brought Moltke into contact with the men who were directing the affairs of an Empire. His letters show that among them all he had the best grasp of the meaning of whatever was going on. During the two years when he was attached to Hafiz Pasha his position was identical with that of the Chief of the Staff of a European army. Without authority, he was there to advise. His judgement was never at fault; he understood the weakness of the Turkish army, which is considered in all his proposals. His plan of campaign, based upon the utilization of what is called flank position, is a masterpiece. It failed because his commander had not the strength of mind to abide by it, and in the crisis Moltke without hesitation risked everything on the attempt to make the Pasha take the right course.

The East, especially the Moslem East, is the sphere of personality, the school of command. There the European must be the first or the last, the ruler or the ruled. Unless he can assume and maintain an ascendancy he is lost. These conditions stimulate the will and make the character. Moltke rose to every occasion. At the supreme moment he staked himself on the determination to make the Pasha do right in spite of himself and of his Mollahs. But against lawful authority inspired by superstition no personal ascendancy of a subordinate could prevail. Moltke thus learned the hardest and greatest of lessons—that there are conditions which limit the power of the strongest will. That lesson Napoleon failed to learn, and this difference between the two men explains how it came about that Napoleon with absolute authority ended in

failure, and that Moltke with no authority at all carried his campaigns to complete and durable success.

In the last days of 1839, after a journey delayed by serious illnesses, Moltke reached Berlin. A long rest and a stay at the seaside were required to restore his health after the exertions and privations of his life in Asia Minor and Syria, and it was not till August 1840 that he could resume his duties as a staff officer. During his absence he had constantly written letters home, to his mother while she lived, and after her death in May 1837 to his father or to one of his sisters. On his return he collected, revised, and arranged these letters, which were published in 1841 under the title, *Letters about Conditions and Events in Turkey in the years 1835-9*. The volume forms the best account of Turkey that has ever been written, and has come to be recognized as a masterpiece of German writing. The author gradually introduces the reader to the scenes and conditions of Turkey, and to the chief actors in the Turkish world of that time. Then come the preparations for the campaign against the Egyptian, the long reconnaissances, the hardships of the camp, the sufferings of the disease-stricken, ill-disciplined army. By this time the reader is prepared for the catastrophe, which is well described, and the drama over, the swift return journey brings the reader back through a changed Constantinople to the Europe with which he is familiar.

As a staff officer Moltke found leisure enough to digest his rich experience. The volume of letters was followed by the engraving and publication of the maps of the Bosphorus, of Constantinople, and of the plans of towns and sites in Asia Minor, while the materials furnished by the reconnaissances were handed over to the geographer Kiepert for the reconstruction of the map of Asia Minor.

The plans made in Bulgaria and Roumania were made use of in another volume: *The Russo-Turkish campaign in European Turkey, 1828 and 1829, described in the year 1845 by Baron von Moltke, Major in the Royal Prussian General Staff*, a military history which ranks with those of Clausewitz but is far better written.

There was one other consequence of Moltke's adventures in Turkey. His letters of course had been read by all the family circle. One of his sisters, before his departure for the East, had married a widower named Burt, an Englishman, whose daughter Marie by his first wife was a girl of nine when Moltke left and when he came home was just growing up. The weather-beaten soldier's heart went out to this fresh life full of fun and frolic, and the young girl could not but love the hero of so many wanderings. They were betrothed in 1841, and married in 1842, and the union was one of unbroken happiness, each being to the other so much that the absence of children, though felt, could be endured.

Moltke had saved £1,500 while in Turkey, and on his return invested it in the Hamburg-Berlin railway, a new venture, of which he became a director. In 1843 he wrote an essay on the principles of laying out and working a railway, which proved that he was a director not only in name but in truth. In 1866 and in 1870 the swiftness and the crushing nature of his victories were due in large part to his being the one general in Europe who had mastered the use of a network of railways as a weapon of war.)

But his travels were not ended. His early plan of grasping the past policies of nations had included a visit to Rome which had not been made. In 1845, however, he was unexpectedly appointed adjutant to Prince Henry, a Prussian prince who lived at Rome. To

Rome, therefore, Moltke went with his young wife, making the journey in his own carriage, and there they lived for four years, during which the major—he had been promoted to major at the time of his wedding—devoted part of his now ample leisure (for his official duties were only nominal) to his old practice of surveying, so that after his return to Berlin he published the first and perhaps the best map of the Eternal City.

His prince died in 1846, and his duty required him to bring back the body. He chose the sea route, for there was no railway. But the voyage was stormy, and he was so ill that the captain would not be responsible for him and put him ashore at Gibraltar. He travelled by land through Spain, France, and Germany, and reached Hamburg before the steamer which conveyed the corpse for which he was responsible. After bringing his wife home from Rome he returned to his normal business of a staff officer, living a year at Coblenz and seven years at Magdeburg.

It is not possible in the time at our disposal to continue the story in detail, but I may give an idea of its course and meaning. The year at Rome enlarged Moltke's grasp of the great currents of human affairs. Then came ten years of professional work, which left leisure enough for him to follow with close grip and deep interest all the movements of European policy, which centred for him in the abortive movement for German unity. There is, however, a fundamental condition, without fulfilling which it is hardly possible for any man to see as it is the world of men and of affairs. It is disinterestedness—the absence of a personal end to be served. Moltke's experience at Nisib seems to have cured him of any other ambition than that of the poet's prayer :

Schaff' das Tagwerk meiner Hände,
 Hohes Glück, dass ich's vollende

—establish Thou the work of our hands upon us. In 1848 he writes to his favourite brother that he is thinking of retirement. 'Without war the military profession offers a poor prospect. I am compelled, moreover, to say to myself that I have not the qualifications for a wider sphere of action than hitherto. . . . My idea is that we should settle down together on some plot of land, each contributing such capital and power of work as he has acquired. I should best like a property on our beloved German soil. But if things grow worse here at home I have no objection to another hemisphere.'

The man who wrote that had no 'axe to grind', could have a single eye and see clearly. He did see clearly. It was 1848, the year of revolutions. Within a month he writes: 'A strong Prussian Government and Germany's union can be accomplished by Prussia.' All through the dark years, 1848 to 1851—from the riots at Berlin to the Prussian collapse at Olmütz—he follows with profound interest every phase of German affairs and every thread of European policy. In the disappointment after Olmütz he writes: 'The worst government cannot ruin this people. Prussia will yet come to the head of Germany.'

No one so well understood the causes of Germany's failure in 1848-51; no one had more absolute faith in the future of Prussia. The call of duty came when least expected, and took at first a shape which seemed to point away from action. In 1855 Moltke was appointed Adjutant to Prince Frederick William, afterwards Crown Prince, and in that capacity made repeated visits to the English Court and to those of Paris and St. Petersburg. Thus his political grip was strengthened and enlarged. Then, again unexpectedly, he was appointed Chief of the General Staff of the army. He at once began a series of special studies of war with a view to be ready to direct

the army in the new conditions that had grown up. His plans were based not upon the traditions of the past, though no one was better acquainted with them, but upon the conditions, which he alone foresaw, of the next war. When it came he, and he alone, was ready. Never for a moment was he taken by surprise or found at a loss. The most remarkable power which he displayed was not his strategical insight, perfect as it seems to those who are best able to appreciate it, but his clear view of the policies of all the Powers of Europe.

When we read Moltke's first memorandum, working out in 1860 his plan of operations against Austria, we are struck by his amazing exposé of the situation and strategical possibilities of each of the States of Europe.

Only the life that I have sketched to you could have made possible the statesmanship which that paper reveals.

I have attempted to put before you in a concrete case a part of the education of a leader in war. [Military studies and military exercises, however necessary and however thoroughly carried out, will not suffice for it. The great soldier must also be a statesman, which is impossible without a profound insight into the course of history. But the soldier and the statesman must above all be a great man, and to be that he requires not only a trained intellect but a character—not merely knowledge, but a steeled and tempered will.

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